English Provincial Newspapers
and the Politics of the
Seven Years' War,
1756-1763

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts in History
in the
University of Canterbury
by
Austin Gee

University of Canterbury 1985
This thesis examines the treatment of the national political events of the Seven Years' War by six provincial newspapers. It seeks to establish the connections between the reporting of those political issues and provincial political opinion. In doing so, it attempts to answer whether there existed a distinctive provincial 'political consciousness'. Only comment and reporting in provincial newspapers on national issues is studied, with reference to the reaction of some London newspapers to the same issues. Local politics are dealt with only incidentally.

It is argued that to understand the significance of newspaper comment it is first necessary to take account of the limitations of the evidence: the way the newspapers were produced, the audience for which they were intended, and the potential size and breadth of that audience. The conclusion is drawn that a picture of provincial political opinion, although a distorted one, can be formed from the contents of the newspapers.

Those contents show that the six papers differed significantly from their metropolitan counterparts only in few instances, and that generally they presented what can be described as an 'opposition version of politics'. Nevertheless, signs of the emergence of provincial political independence are apparent in the provincial newspapers of the war period. It is suggested further that this growing articulacy points to the emergence of a distinctive provincial political identity.

These conclusions add to the wider view of national politics in the 1750s and 1760s. There is evidence for the survival of
local political divisions on party lines in provincial cities at a time when it has been suggested party divisions had disappeared in high politics. Additionally, the evidence of the six newspapers supports the picture of the growth of a wider 'political nation' during the 1750s and its active and independent interest in political issues before the Wilkes and North American stamp tax controversies of the 1760s.
Contents

List of Abbreviations i
List of Illustrations ii
Preface 1
Prologue 12
I. The Six Provincial Newspapers 21
II. Politics and the Provincial Newspapers 67
III. Provincial Newspapers, Politics and the War, 1756 113
IV. New Allegiances, 1756-1757 143
V. Pitt and Provincial Newspapers 179
VI. Victories Abroad and Problems at Home 220
VII. Pitt's Resignation and the Peace 254
Conclusion 296
Bibliography 301
List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABG</td>
<td>Aris's Birmingham Gazette: or, The General Correspondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBJ</td>
<td>Boddely's Bath Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFBJ</td>
<td>Felix Farley's Bristol Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJ</td>
<td>The Leicester and Nottingham Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM</td>
<td>The Norwich Mercury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YC</td>
<td>The York Courant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Illustrations

Facsimile of the four pages of Felix Farley's Bristol Journal for 5 February 1757: Following p.20.


Preface

This study of English provincial newspapers and the politics of the Seven Years' War entails the examination of the political reporting and comment of a sample of country newspapers. Only those issues or events are considered that provoked sustained interest, or could be expected to have attracted attention, on a national scale, in both the London and provincial press. Specifically metropolitan politics and issues peculiar to individual provincial centres are not considered, except when the latter had a connection with national issues. A sample of six diverse weekly papers was used. They are Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, Boddely's Bath Journal, Aris's Birmingham Gazette, the Leicester and Nottingham Journal, the York Courant and the Norwich Mercury. They each selected, rearranged and reprinted news and comment from London newspapers. The study of provincial newspapers therefore also involves comparisons with metropolitan newspapers, and tracing the origin of articles, where possible.

The period is limited to the years 1756 to 1763 because it encompasses a controversial and relatively neglected period in the history of both politics and newspapers. The political emphasis was chosen because politics was the most controversial of the papers' areas of reporting, and yet has been little studied because of the restrictions of the secondary sources.

It is worth studying the provincial cities at all because it cannot simply be assumed that 'provincial opinion was no more than a delayed and passive replica of attitudes in the capital.'

Although London, the largest city in Europe with more than a tenth of England's population in 1801, overwhelmingly dominated the still predominantly rural provinces, the relative importance of large provincial cities increased markedly. By 1750 the combined populations of all provincial centres exceeded that of London.  

Provincial opinion is significant in the light of claims that the wider 'political nation', composed of those who were politically articulate, was growing in the mid-eighteenth century. The provincial approach is a counterbalance to the predominantly metropolitan emphasis of many secondary works. Many political histories of the period ignore the provincial perspective, from which many contemporary observers saw politics, and which many Westminster politicians took seriously. The differences between provincial and national politics have also been little explored.

The subject is restricted significantly by the availability of both primary sources and secondary information against which to compare the evidence from provincial newspapers. Because there is much information about politics in the newspapers, it is easier than for non-political subjects to make a relatively comprehensive study without unpublished primary sources. Most of the useful secondary studies are political, rather than social, histories. Even so, the details of local politics are often obscure or inadequate, and are much less well documented than London politics.

Few studies deal with the period of the war in its entirety.

Concentration on the war period as a whole cuts across the normal divisions for political, and many other, histories of 1754-1760 and post-1760. It leads to some difficulties with general studies, many of which take the accession of George III in 1760 as their start or end point, consequently showing little of the continuity of the period. The two major studies of provincial newspapers stop in 1760, with little discussion of the influence of the war.\(^3\) The effects of the war have been relatively neglected; the last major study of the war itself was published in 1918.\(^4\) Nevertheless, the years bridging the two periods are important because they possibly encompassed significant changes in politics and its reporting in provincial papers.

The great bulk of information for the study of provincial newspapers was obtained from microfilm copies of six examples. The newspapers were acquired for part of Pitt and Popularity, a study of William Pitt and public opinion during the Seven Years' War,\(^5\) but, as it eventuated, the subject was limited to London opinion, so the provincial papers were unused. They were used instead for this broader study of the provincial view of national political events. The selection of newspapers reflects the initial purpose for which they were to be used. For example,

---

   Roy McKeen Wiles, *Freshest Advices Early Provincial Newspapers in England*, (Columbus, Ohio, 1965).


Boddenly's Bath Journal was chosen because of Pitt's links with Bath. However, it also provides a valuable example of the provincial connections of Westminster politics.

The selection of newspapers was made not as a representative sample of contemporary local newspapers but rather because the cities in which they were published represented a range of different types of provincial centres. However, the choice proved to be a useful one from the point of view of providing a range of political attitudes. The six chosen include newspapers from the two largest cities, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal and the Norwich Mercury. The York Courant was selected as a representative of the large and influential Yorkshire interest, and Birmingham and Leicester as typical second-rank provincial industrial towns. Leicester was an old, established industrial city overtaken by its neighbours during the eighteenth century, while Birmingham was a new town still in the early stages of its growth into a giant industrial centre. Birmingham later became the political and cultural centre of the west Midlands, and Aris's Birmingham Gazette was thought likely to provide evidence of the emergence of a local 'political culture'.

Generalisations cannot safely be made on the evidence of these six papers alone. There was no single 'provincial opinion' but instead a series of local opinions. Nor was there a general provincial newspaper opinion that could be identified with by a representative sample of local newspapers. All six examples used were published in relatively large cities, so the sample does not reflect the existence of local newspapers in quite small towns.6

6. For example, Lewes;
However, the choice is an appropriate one for the study of political opinion, since it is probably only in the larger towns and cities that conclusive evidence of an indigenous political culture is likely to be found. Yet if the development of a local political identity is to be investigated, it would have been preferable to have copies of all the newspapers that circulated in particular areas. In Bristol, for example, the view would be more balanced if issues of Felix Farley's Bristol Journal's contemporaries, the Bristol Journal, the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer and the Bristol Chronicle, were available. Unfortunately, very few issues of such competitors have survived.

The selection of newspapers was thus also restricted by the survival of few complete, or almost complete, runs of newspapers for the period. Consequently, some papers lack copies for large periods of their publication. Most significantly, no issues of the York Courant were available for between January 1757 and December 1759, and none of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal before January 1758. Nevertheless, there remained too many issues to read thoroughly in the time available, so only every fourth issue of each paper was read completely. Because each paper carried substantially the same news, the copies read were staggered to provide a full chronological coverage, with different papers for each week. All the copies for a period were read when it became apparent that one or several papers displayed unusual interest in an issue, or when a controversy was known to have attracted attention in London. All reporting of national,

metropolitan and provincial politics was noted. Comment was recorded, both that explicit in the printers' comments and readers' letters, and that implied by the nature, size, prominence and frequency of reports.

Additional material on provincial and national politics and the nature of provincial society was provided by secondary works. Great reliance has been placed on the two major histories of the provincial newspaper to 1760. On the whole, little has been found in the detailed examination of six papers to contradict their conclusions which are based on a much broader survey. There are many provincial social and political histories, the most useful of which are for Bath, Bristol and Norwich. The dominance of Pitt in the provincial newspapers' view of national politics in much of the period has made Pitt and Popularity, a study of the bases of Pitt's popularity in London, important; the debt owed is apparent from the footnotes.

It was initially intended to identify local political comment on issues related to the management of the war. Unfortunately, there proved to be very little direct local comment of any kind, so the approach changed in the light of the evidence. All comment, direct or implied, was noted, together

---
7. R. S. Neale, Bath 1680-1850 A Social History or A Valley of Pleasure, Yet a Sink of Iniquity, (London, 1981);
Phillips, Electoral Behaviour, p.43;
with the way in which the issues were reported. Rather than simply setting out the explicit opinions of the individual newspapers, the study thus became one of how the papers dealt with the issues of the war and what that treatment implied about provincial opinion. Attention to the development of the newspapers' reporting of the war has made it possible to question accepted ideas of the development of provincial newspapers.

The primary question this study attempts to answer is whether there was a provincial 'political consciousness' recognisable in the six provincial newspapers before the emergence of the Wilkes and North American stamp tax issues in 1763-1765. It has been argued that only these issues produced a provincial reaction sufficient to stimulate provincial newspapers into independent comment and to give national coherence to the wider political nation. The provincial press' growing interest in politics, evident since the 1730s, was, it has been said, accelerated by the Wilkes affair and, particularly, the Middlesex election controversy of 1768-1770. The purpose of this thesis is to question whether this acceleration of political interest took place earlier, in the circumstances of the Seven Years' War. By considering how the six papers dealt with the exceptional issues of the war, it has been possible to find at least the precursors of the provincial reaction to the Wilkes issue.

Studying the issues that attracted substantial provincial or London reaction involves not only comparison of the six papers' treatment of the issues, but also comparison with the London papers' treatment. Two further questions then arise: why the

---

newspapers dealt, or failed to deal, with the issues as they did, and whether the way they treated the issues implies the existence of a distinctively provincial attitude. There is often a variety of possible reasons for a particular paper's treatment of an issue, related to the way the newspapers were produced as well as the opinions of their printers. The treatment of an issue is usually significant only when it points to a distinctive provincial attitude reflected by the local newspaper.

For a provincial newspaper to be considered to have displayed a distinctive reaction to an issue, it must be shown to have adopted a consistent line that was not achieved simply through copying or selecting the opinions of a London paper. Even when the development of a distinctive newspaper attitude can be identified, the link with a provincial political identity remains unproven. The development could be attributed to the development of the provincial newspapers themselves from merely reproducing London debates to presenting opinions distinctly their own. Alternatively, any distinctive newspaper attitude could be attributed to developments within their provincial cities. The growth of political organisation and discussion, in clubs and debating societies, would be expected to have influenced, and have been influenced by, the content of local newspapers. The connection is difficult to prove, not least because the evidence for local political articulacy largely comes from those newspapers.

If provincial political articulacy did develop during the war, conclusions can be drawn about the nature of provincial politics. Provincial political rivalries have been regarded as having had no connection with national politics. Although
expressed in terms of Whig and Tory, provincial partisanship allegedly was based on local factors.\textsuperscript{9} This view can be tested against the contents of the six papers, and against what independent information is available. In most cases these sources enable a picture of local political activity to be formed. If the relationships between provincial partisanship and the local newspapers can be established, then the newspapers' reactions to national issues can provide some indication of the attitudes of local opinion to those issues.

The two introductory chapters of this thesis set out the nature of the evidence and explain how it restricts the conclusions that can be drawn from it. The first chapter establishes the weight that can be given to the evidence of the papers by examining the background and influence of each individually. The influence of each is gauged by its area of circulation and the size of its potential audience. The significance of the treatment given to news and comment is then established by outlining the practical limitations on the newspapers' ability to report and comment freely. The second introductory chapter examines the ways in which comment, and political comment in particular, appeared in the light of the practical restrictions considered earlier. For each of the six papers, such comment is used to identify a consistently-adopted political stance, if it existed, on both local and national issues. The attitudes adopted by the newspapers are compared with the known dispositions of the bodies of opinion in their

respective cities, where it has been possible to study them. The extent to which the newspapers' stance on the national issues of the war can also be taken to represent 'provincial opinion' is then shown by questioning whether there was any connection between the treatment of local politics in the papers and the attitude of those consistently and actively interested and involved in local politics.

The newspapers' attitudes to those issues are identified in the remaining five chapters, which deal with the principal issues of the war chronologically and from the point of view of the provincial newspapers and their audience. Political changes, like the resignation of the Newcastle ministry and the formation of the Devonshire-Pitt ministry in 1756, the latter's dismissal and the formation of the Newcastle-Pitt coalition in 1757, and Pitt's resignation in 1761, gave rise to a great deal of comment and reporting in provincial papers. Similarly, the events of the war, like the loss of Minorca, coastal expeditions against France, British involvement in Germany and the conclusion of a peace, each generated considerably controversy. Much less attention is given to, for example, the workings of parliamentary politics, because both London and provincial newspapers printed little on the subject.

* * * * *

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of the interloan staffs of several libraries and the provision of microfilm by the department of History and my supervisor. I am particularly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Marie Peters, for her guidance, limitless patience and
helpful advice, which has prevented this thesis from being far worse than it would have been otherwise. Any faults that remain are entirely the fault of the typist.
Prologue

The Seven Years' War was the greatest of the European and colonial conflicts of the eighteenth century before the French revolutionary wars. It combined contemporaneous conflicts in Europe, between Prussia and Austria and Russia, and between France and Britain's German allies, with conflicts in colonial territories in North America, the West Indies and India between Britain and France, and later Spain. The retrospective importance of the war was due to Britain's acquisition of a substantial part of its colonial empire, particularly Canada and a strong position in India, and Prussia's consolidation of its position in eastern Europe. What had begun as a small-scale colonial conflict was transformed by the outbreak of the European war in 1756. After initial French successes, the European war had become deadlocked by 1760. While France was preoccupied in Germany, Britain isolated the French colonies and made significant captures in the West Indies and North America. Spain entered the war allied to France at the start of 1762, but a peace was concluded within the year. Russia withdrew from the war after the death of the Tsarina in 1762, and Prussia, Austria, and France came to terms soon after.

British involvement in the Seven Years' War is known principally for events like the Black Hole of Calcutta in 1756, Wolfe's victory at Quebec in 1759, and the \textit{annus mirabilis} of 1759, but at the time other events seemed of equal or greater significance. Initial defeats had great impact, and victories on the continent were given as much attention as those colonial victories that have retained their significance. From the perspective of those events of the war that attracted political
controversy, a distinctly different picture emerges. Political direction, strategy and the conduct of the war attracted at least as much attention in the press as the great victories. These issues provoked major debates on the extent of British involvement in the war in Germany, and whether the war in North America had greater priority. Once British troops were committed to the continent, criticism of the expense, length and relative lack of success of the German war grew, becoming particularly serious by 1760. When, in 1759, it seemed possible to capture all the French North American possessions, a debate arose over the relative importance of Canada and the West Indies, which became more important when peace negotiations began in earnest in 1761 and 1762.

These debates in the press took place against the background of a war which, although later unprecedentedly successful, had started badly. There were three major areas of the war: Europe, North America and India. The war in Germany was the most controversial, because it involved questions of British involvement not in its own interests but in those of George II's Hanoverian possessions. Tories and many other opposition politicians favoured a 'Blue Water' strategy whereby Britain avoided involvement on the continent and restricted itself to maritime attacks and the war in the colonies. A practical expression of this was the series of three expeditions launched against western French ports in 1757 and 1758, promoted by Pitt, but largely without useful results.

The war in Germany also went badly at first. Britain had initiated major changes in European alliances in late 1755 which provoked its former allies Austria and Russia to join France
against Britain's new ally Prussia.\textsuperscript{1} In June and July 1757 both
Prussian forces and the Army of Observation, provided by
Britain's German allies, were defeated. Britain increased its
financial assistance to its allies, and in August 1758 the highly
controversial step of sending British troops to Germany was
taken. The allied army was increasingly successful towards the
end of the year, when the first important successes in North
America became known.

The war in North America was less controversial than that in
Germany because the aim of the war was generally agreed, and the
lines of attack were restricted. In each campaigning season it
was planned to capture the main centres of French Canada, Quebec
and Montreal, by way of the St. Lawrence River, the Hudson valley
and the Ohio valley. In June 1758 the first of the offensives,
against Louisbourg, the main French naval base, was successful.
French forces were increasingly isolated; Quebec was captured in
September 1759 and Montreal a year later.

The other aspects of the war were equally successful for
Britain. The war in India was conducted by the East India
Company with some military and naval assistance. After a
decisive victory at Plassey in June 1757, the company controlled
Bengal, and by January 1760 had ended French influence in
southern India. Several minor aspects of the war in the colonies
involved commerce raiding. Two expeditions to West Africa in
1758 captured the French trading settlements at Goree and on the
Senegal River. In the West Indies, Guadeloupe was captured in
1760 and Martinique in 1761.

During 1759, a threatened French invasion of Britain was

\textsuperscript{1} Langford, The Eighteenth Century 1688-1815, (London, 1976),
pp.139-140.
fought off by the destruction of the two main French fleets in August and November. By 1760, however, the war in Europe was stalemated, and criticisms were made, particularly by Tories, of its increasing expence. Peace negotiations with France broke down in late 1761, and Spain entered the war on the side of France at the start of 1762. Negotiations resumed against the background of continuing British successes, and the preliminary articles of peace were signed in December. The Peace of Paris, under which Canada was ceded to Britain and most of the captured islands returned, was signed in February 1763.

The seven years of the war were also important ones for developments in high politics. The death of Henry Pelham in 1754 had led to the break up of his broadly-based ministry and to political instability solved only partially by the formation of the broad Newcastle-Pitt coalition in 1757. The accession of George III in 1760 transformed the political situation, producing a series of short-lived ministries based on factional groupings throughout the 1760s. The consequent political instability, of a distinctly different nature to that preceding 1757, ended only at the end of the decade with the formation of Lord North's ministry. The war period can therefore be seen either as one of relative stability, or as the cause of political changes that led to one of the most protracted periods of political instability that century.

A major debate has emerged over the developments in party organisation in high politics in the 1750s and 1760s. The accession of George III in 1760 ended total Tory exclusion from office, and many of the leading politicians of the 1760s were new men with Tory backgrounds. The dispersal of the parliamentary
Tories and the fragmentation of the Pelhamite Old Corps by the 1760s has been attributed, variously, to the dimming of party allegiances, to the dying out of party to be revived in the 1770s, or to a revolution in political alignments in the mid-1750s. Political allegiance based on party organisation seems to have given way to groupings based on personal factions. It has been suggested that the size of the electorate, and the size of the 'political nation', were growing in the same period, with consequent effect on popular political articulacy.

An aspect of the instability of the 1760s, to which the acceleration of the development of local political articulacy has been ascribed, was the prominence of John Wilkes. He became a controversial figure nationally over the general warrants and Middlesex election issues largely because of the skill with which he exploited the variety of political propaganda made possible by the development of the press.²

If the rapid development of local political articulacy in the 1760s is to be shown to have been foreshadowed during the war, it is most likely to have been apparent in the treatment of William Pitt in the provincial press. Although he made few apparent attempts to use the press himself, Pitt became a major figure in the provincial newspapers during the war. He gained a reputation as a great war minister as a result of the great victories won while he was Secretary of State. Pitt occupied a possibly unique position as a 'Patriot minister'; he owed his political strength to the popularity gained by adopting an opposition 'Patriot' stance which, highly unusually, he contrived to retain while in office.³

3. Peters, p.266.
A 'Patriot' was considered to be one who put the interests of his country before purely personal interests, and was usually 'synonymous with high-minded opposition to government'. Patriot measures were closely connected with 'Country' views, held by those distant from, and suspicious of, high politics. They favoured constitutional reforms to restrict the power of the executive, including the exclusion of pensioners and placemen from parliament and the return to shorter parliaments, and favoured the militia as a counterpoise to the standing army. On foreign policy, 'country' opinion opposed 'continental connections', that is British involvement in continental affairs, and favoured instead concentration on maritime and colonial war, where it was believed Britain's true interests lay.4

The presentation of political events by the newspapers was an important source of Pitt's Patriot reputation in the provinces. However, Pitt's prominence in the provincial newspapers was a wartime phenomenon. While Paymaster of the Forces in Henry Pelham's ministry, Pitt had a low public profile. When, in 1754, the Duke of Newcastle succeeded his brother as First Lord of the Treasury and leader of the parliamentary Old Corps, the body of administration Whigs that had formed the basis of ministries since Walpole's time, Pitt and Henry Fox became the main rivals for the leadership of the House of Commons. They combined in late 1754 and early 1755 to attack the ministry's foreign policy, and Pitt was dismissed. Pitt was supported by Leicester House, the court of the Prince of Wales, but Fox had the favour of the king and was bought off with a

Secretaryship of State.

When the loss of Minorca became known in July 1756, there was an immediate and long-lived outcry against the ministry. Fox resigned in October, precipitating the collapse of the ministry. On Newcastle's resignation a month later, Pitt formed a weak ministry with the small group of his supporters. The ministry did not have the confidence of the king, who dismissed it as soon as he thought the ministers could be replaced, in April 1757. However, a replacement ministry was not agreed until the end of June, when Pitt returned as the weaker partner in coalition with Newcastle.

The ministry faced the problem of an unsuccessful war, and Pitt faced the problem of maintaining his independent support within the coalition without appearing to have compromised his Patriot professions upon which that support was based. This was achieved partly through the division of responsibility between Newcastle and Pitt. Newcastle was concerned with finance and the management of the House of Commons, leaving Pitt to manage the war almost undisturbed. It appears that Pitt escaped responsibility for potentially unpopular actions by attributing them to his colleagues or by diverting attention from them with popular, but often impractical, measures like the reform of the militia, a major issue in 1757 and 1758. The ministry, because it included most potential critics, enjoyed a period of relative political quiescence.

Criticism of the cost, length and relative lack of success of the German war was growing when, in October 1760, the king died. His grandson George III upset the by then well established political settlement. He mistrusted Pitt, and disliked Newcastle
and what he saw as the corrupt Whig oligarchs. The new king was anti-Hanoverian and favoured an early peace. However, when negotiations with France broke down in 1761, Pitt, who favoured the continuation of the war, resigned in October. Newcastle resigned over a dispute on the direction of the war in May 1762, and was replaced by George III's closest advisor, the Earl of Bute. The king has been accused of seeking to extend the power of the crown, but he was acting with what was at the time constitutional propriety in reasserting royal prerogatives. Bute, however, became the subject of violent attacks in the press and in person, which intensified when the peace preliminaries were debated in December. After the peace had been concluded, Bute resigned in April 1763. His place was taken by George Grenville, whose first major task was to face the controversy generated by Wilkes' *North Briton*, No.45.

This thesis seeks not only to discover if provincial political articulacy predated the Wilkes affair but also to discover evidence, if any, of the growth in the wider 'political nation' of which the provinces were a substantial part. Until recently it had been assumed that political debate in the eighteenth century was limited to a small group of people in the higher ranks of society. This view has been called into question by studies of popular politics, which have suggested that the group of people who took a direct interest in political debate, that is the 'political nation', was larger and broader than hitherto suspected. Also contrary to earlier presumptions that the size of the parliamentary electorate was shrinking in the eighteenth century, recent local studies have suggested that the opposite was the case. The extra-parliamentary 'political nation' was given coherence by articulate political societies and
organisations, by centres of debate like coffee houses and taverns, but most particularly by newspapers. This study therefore attempts to add to the understanding of the formation of this wider political opinion through the evidence of provincial newspapers.
To the Printer, &c.

SIR,

A putrid bout between my self and [illegible] as a
plan to get rid of me, I have now removed to [illegible].

I hope you will be so kind as to let them know that I am
there, and that I shall be glad of your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

FELIX FARLEY.

BRISTOL JOURNAL.

Published at the Printing-office at Shakespeare's Head in Small-street.

SATURDAY, February 5, 1757.

[Vol. VI.]

To the Printer, &c.

SIR,

A putrid bout between my self and [illegible] as a
plan to get rid of me, I have now removed to [illegible].

I hope you will be so kind as to let them know that I am
there, and that I shall be glad of your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

FELIX FARLEY.

Sunday and Monday's Posts.

Arrived a Man from Plymouth.

FRIDAY, February 5.

The Mill is drawn to this City under O'Ferrall. His title, and name, and authority, are shewn in an officious letter to the Editor, in which he says, that he has been at Plymouth, and that the Earl of Northumberland has given him a commission to draw the Mill, and to draw the Easement for the Mill. He says, that he has been at Plymouth, and that the Earl of Northumberland has given him a commission to draw the Mill, and that the Earl of Northumberland has given him a commission to draw the Mill.
Alcohol may be considered a legal drug in the EU, but its consumption is still heavily regulated. The EU has strict laws regarding the sale and production of alcohol, and the use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in certain areas, such as public transport and workplaces. However, the consumption of alcohol is still a significant issue, and efforts are being made to reduce its negative impact on health and society.

In conclusion, the impact of alcohol on society is complex and multifaceted. It is important to continue researching and understanding the various aspects of alcohol consumption, and to develop effective strategies to mitigate its negative effects.
Cromwell, Board for Jamaica, which they were from the Phoebe.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.

For the next twenty years, a French war was declared, and the two fleets met in the Strait of Malacca, where the English fleet was vastly superior. The French fleet, under the command of Admiral de Grasse, was engaged in a desperate battle with the English fleet, under the command of Admiral John Byng.
JOHN WRIGHT.
A Mathematical, Philosophical and Optical Instrument Maker in London.

The reader, who is acquainted with the English Language, will readily perceive the following advertisements to be of the greatest importance. They contain a variety of useful and interesting information. The descriptions are clear and concise, and the prices are moderate. The instruments are of the highest quality, and are made to order. The maker is well-known in the scientific community, and is highly regarded for his precision and accuracy. The advertisements are printed in a fine type, and are easy to read. The layout is well-organized, with clear headings and subheadings. The overall impression is one of professionalism and reliability. This is a valuable resource for anyone interested in mathematics, philosophy, or optics.

JOHN HOOPET and HENRY DAVIE.
Linen Drapers and H dolorers.
Near the Corn-Market in the City of London.

We are pleased to announce the opening of our new shop in the City of London. We offer a wide range of high-quality linen drapes and habiliments, including curtains, tablecloths, and bed linens. Our products are crafted from the finest materials, and are designed to last a lifetime. We also offer a comprehensive range of services, including tailoring and alteration. Our staff are knowledgeable and friendly, and are always happy to assist with any queries. Our shop is conveniently located near the Corn-Market, and is easily accessible by foot or public transport. We look forward to welcoming you to our new establishment.

WILLIAM SPEARMAN.
A Farrier in the City of London, having the best Sorts of Horses, Grooms, &c.

William Spearman is a highly experienced farrier, with many years of experience in the care and management of horses. He offers a wide range of services, including shoeing, dressing, and trimming. His attention to detail and commitment to the health and welfare of his clients' horses is second to none. He is an expert at identifying and treating common equine ailments, and is highly regarded within the horse-riding community. His shop is conveniently located in the City of London, and is easily accessible by foot or public transport. He looks forward to welcoming you to his establishment.

JACKSON'S TINCTURE.
Published by Virtue of the King's Royal Letters Patent.

Jackson's Tincture is a highly respected and trusted brand in the field of herbal medicine. The tincture is made from a selection of high-quality herbs, and is highly effective in treating a wide range of conditions. The instructions for use are clear and concise, and the packaging is attractive and professional. The tincture is available online, and can be delivered to your door. The company offers a comprehensive range of services, including consultations and personalized advice. They are committed to providing the highest quality products and service, and are highly regarded in the field of herbal medicine. They look forward to welcoming you to their website.

WILLIAM BOWES, ET AL.

William Bowes and associates are highly experienced and respected in the field of mathematics and philosophy. They offer a wide range of services, including tutoring, consultation, and research. They are knowledgeable and approachable, and are always happy to assist with any queries. They are committed to providing the highest quality service, and are highly regarded within the academic community. They look forward to welcoming you to their website.

John and James Macfarlan.

John and James Macfarlan are highly experienced and respected in the field of chemistry. They offer a wide range of services, including consultation, research, and development. They are knowledgeable and approachable, and are always happy to assist with any queries. They are committed to providing the highest quality service, and are highly regarded within the scientific community. They look forward to welcoming you to their website.

J. W. BOWERS.
A Chemist in London.

J. W. Bowers is a highly experienced and respected chemist, with many years of experience in the field. He offers a wide range of services, including consultation, research, and development. He is knowledgeable and approachable, and is always happy to assist with any queries. He is committed to providing the highest quality service, and is highly regarded within the scientific community. He looks forward to welcoming you to his website.
The above account was summed with the following:...
JOHN WRIGHT, 

Mathematical, Philosophical, and Optical Inventions Made in Ireland.

The most interesting and useful inventions are here illustrated, including the Scorpion, a remarkable machine for lifting heavy objects, and the Dynamo, a device for generating electricity. The Scorpion is described as a powerful and efficient lifting device, suitable for use in mines and factories. The Dynamo is said to be capable of producing a strong current, suitable for lighting and powering machinery.

NOW on sale for the first time, a new type of firearm, the Scorpio, designed for both Land and Sea use. The Scorpio is a fearsome weapon, capable of piercing thick armor and inflicting severe damage. It is particularly effective against naval vessels, making it a valuable addition to any fleet.

JOHN and JAMES MACRAKEN, 

At the new Lime Warehouse.

New Dance in the City of London, at the new Lime Warehouse, with an extraordinary variety of dances, including the latest French and Italian steps. The music is provided by a renowned orchestra, and the refreshments are supplied by a local grocer. Tickets are available at the door.

John Hooper and Henry Davis, 

Lincoln's-Inn Fields and Hackney.

Now for Sale! A new selection of toys, including the latest mechanical models and wooden figures. These toys are ideal for children of all ages, providing hours of entertainment and educational value. They are available in a range of sizes and prices, suitable for both small and large collections.

Wm. Yarworth, Carter and Tymman, 

Westminster, the Corner of the Palace, 

New Stock of Cutlery-Wares and Toys, 

Offering a great variety of both sorts.

We beg Leave to inform the Public, that, 

Two New Machines, Will be set up on Monday next, the 28th Inst. 

The first, a new type of printing press, capable of producing thousands of pages per hour. The second, a new type of weaving machine, capable of producing high-quality textiles. These machines are the result of years of research and development, and are expected to revolutionize the printing and textile industries.

WILLIAM SPEAKMAN, 

Merchant, in the Middle of the Street, near the New Bridge, 

will Sell, or Imprint, by Order of Messrs. Wollaston and Sons, 

WILLIAM TAYLOR, 

Fully Inscribed, with Great Elegance, 

To Let immediately.

A large, newly constructed house, suitable for a large family or a commercial office, is now available for rent. The house is located in a quiet neighborhood, close to the shore and the market. The rent is negotiable, and the landlord is willing to consider long-term tenancies.

JACOB'S TINCTURE, 

Published by W. and J. King, at the Royal Exchange, 

Sold by all the principal Grocers in the City, 

A neat and elegant bottle containing a decoction of the finest herbs and spices, suitable for use as a medicine or as a culinary ingredient. The tincture is said to have a pleasant aroma and a soothing effect on the body. It is available in both small and large bottles, suitable for individual use or for sharing with friends and family.

For Sale, 

A neat and elegant bottle containing a decoction of the finest herbs and spices, suitable for use as a medicine or as a culinary ingredient. The tincture is said to have a pleasant aroma and a soothing effect on the body. It is available in both small and large bottles, suitable for individual use or for sharing with friends and family.
I. The Six Provincial Newspapers

Provincial newspapers were a product of the eighteenth century. The establishment of newspapers in English provincial cities followed the success of newspapers published in London after 1695. Between 1665 and 1695 the sole English newspaper officially allowed under the provisions of the Printing Act of 1663 had been the London Gazette.¹ The act lapsed between 1679 and 1692, and was not renewed when it expired in 1695. Since newspapers no longer needed to be licensed, a large number of new publications rapidly appeared in London. Newspapers published in provincial cities for a local audience followed soon after at the start of the eighteenth century. The first, the Norwich Post, by the evidence of existing copies, is thought to have commenced in September or November 1701, and the Bristol Post-Boy similarly is believed to have been first printed in November 1702. Sam. Farley's Exeter Post-Man was established probably around 1704, and a newspaper was established at Shrewsbury possibly in the following year.²

Most early provincial newspapers were published in cities and towns on main roads more than a day's journey from London. By 1760 there are known to have been 150 provincial newspapers in sixty towns and cities in existence at various times. Many were short lived, either because they attracted insufficient support


or because of competition from London or other local newspapers. Between 1720 and 1760, newspapers were established in competition with existing newspapers in twenty-four towns and cities. Half of all the newspapers established lasted less than five years. Of the eighty-six papers established before 1740, only seventeen, or slightly less than a fifth, still existed in 1760. Additionally, many cities were without a local newspaper for long periods. A quarter of the centres that had at one stage supported a local newspaper did not have one in existence for more than ten of the first sixty years of the century. However, important provincial centres like Bristol, Norwich and York were seldom without a local newspaper after 1720, and sometimes had more than one. There were some exceptions, however. There was probably no newspaper published in Liverpool between 1712 and 1756, and the first newspaper to be published in Leicester did not appear until 1753.

After the first decade of the century, the average number of newspapers established each year remained relatively constant. For each decade until 1760 an average of about three papers a year was established, except for the decade 1720 to 1730 when only sixteen were started, or slightly more than three every two years. Newspapers were not set up in a steady progression, since several might be started to take advantage of a fresh source of news. Some would survive because of the unusual availability of news when they otherwise might have failed, but others collapsed when the events creating the unusual situation ceased. There

3. calculated from Wiles, Appendix B, opposite p.373.
were rushes to found newspapers at the time of the second Jacobite rebellion and at the start of what became the Seven Years' War. Fourteen provincial newspapers were founded between 1744 and 1746, and the same number was established in a similar three-year period between 1754 and 1756, in both cases almost half the number established during their respective decades.\(^6\)

The origins of the six provincial newspapers chosen for study reflect several stages in the development of provincial newspapers. The first provincial newspaper was probably established in Norwich, then the second largest town in England, and the city continued to support a vigorous press for most of the first half of the eighteenth century. Norwich had been the largest provincial city, but by 1750 had been overtaken by Bristol. The population of Norwich in 1752 is estimated to have been 36,169, compared to around 50,000 in Bristol.\(^7\) Norwich was important not only as a regional administrative centre but also as a major manufacturer of worsted cloth and a centre for food, clothing, leather and brewing industries.

The \textit{Norwich Mercury} was the oldest of the provincial newspapers used in this study, directly descended from the \textit{Transactions of the Universe: Or the Weekly-Mercury}, started in 1713. In 1707, when only six provincial newspapers had appeared in the whole country, Norwich had three newspapers, but from 1720 till 1753 there were only two, the \textit{Norwich Gazette} printed by

\begin{itemize}
\item[6.] Calculated from Wiles, Appendix B, opposite p.373.
\end{itemize}
Henry Crossgrove, and the Norwich Mercury printed by William Chase. Both printers died in 1744, and Chase's widow and later his son William continued the Mercury, the latter from 1750 till 1781. From the cessation of the competing paper in 1753 until the establishment of the Norfolk Chronicle in 1761, the Norwich Mercury was the only newspaper printed in Norwich. Thus for eight years, and most of the war period, the Norwich Mercury was the only local source of news, and was seemingly in a position to present its opinions without contradiction. The Mercury had favoured Whig administrations in opposition to the Tory Norwich Gazette. However, without competition there was less reason to adopt or maintain strong views. Nor was the Mercury the only source of news for the residents of Norwich. The Ipswich Journal was sold, and advertisements taken in, by Abraham Brook, a bookseller and stationer in Norwich. London evening papers were readily available, although at a higher cost than the weekly local newspaper.

The Norwich Mercury appears to have had a wide circulation in the eastern counties. Two lists, of militia forces and of sheriffs appointed, both suggest that the circuit of the newspaper comprised Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire,

---


10. Advertisement in NM 656, 27 Nov.1762, p.1 c.2.
Huntingdonshire and Lincolnshire.¹¹ The circulation within each county was not necessarily extensive: during 1754 the printer announced each week that advertisements were taken in at only three inns in Lincolnshire, at Spalding, Holbeach and Long Sutton.¹² However, the network of distribution did allow for a readership in minor country towns. Under the mast head the printer advised readers that 'All Persons living at a Distance from such Places as our NEWS-MEN go thro', may have this PAPER left in Market Towns or other Places where they shall appoint.'¹³

York also acquired several local newspapers relatively early. York was another major regional centre, but with a greater area of influence than Norwich. Yorkshire was the largest English county, and York was its social, political, legal and economic capital. York's pre-eminence and distance from London made it the leading city in the north of England. The city's economy relied on inland trade, and local industry was restricted to small handicraft trades. Like Norwich, York was outranked by other provincial cities during the course of the eighteenth century. York grew slowly throughout the century to have a population of 16,000 in 1801. In comparison, the West Riding textile town of Leeds grew from an estimated 7000 inhabitants in 1700 to 28,861 in 1801.¹⁴

The York Courant was the second oldest of the six papers,

¹¹ NM 318, 15 May 1756, p.2 c.1;
NM 356, 12 Feb.1757, p.3 c.1.


founded in 1725. Until at least 1731, it competed with the first York newspaper, the York Journal or the Weekly Courant, which had been established in 1719 as the York Mercury. The York Courant passed through three printers before it was acquired by the booksellers and stationers, Richard Chandler and Caesar Ward, in 1739. Ward had sole responsibility for the publication of the newspaper, but was declared bankrupt after the financial collapse of his partner in 1745. Ward was reinstated with the help of friends, and continued to publish the paper until his death in April 1759. Caesar Ward’s widow, Ann, took over the business, assisted by the compositor David Russell. The York Courant had no competitor in York after the collapse of the York Journal, latterly the Protestant York Courant, in 1753. Ward’s Courant was described by Thomas Gent, former printer of the York Mercury, as ‘a paper that transcends those of his contemporaries as much as the rising sun does the falling stars.’

The Wards controlled one of the largest printing establishments in the north of England. When owned by John White in the 1730s, the business had three presses, but the absence of press numbers on books produced by the Wards in the late 1750s suggests that they used no more than two presses, one


16. Wiles, p.418; Sessions, p.34.

17. Davies, p.248.

18. Davies, p.311; Sessions, p.41.
of which would have been used regularly to produce the newspaper. The business supported seven apprentices at various times between 1720 and 1763, and usually two or three apprentices concurrently in the 1760s. Three workers were needed for each press. If they employed journeymen in the same proportion to apprentices as was done in London in 1818, the Wards possibly had three compositors and three pressmen on their staff during the 1760s. If this was so, it was exceptionally large by provincial standards. A typical printer's establishment was a master, a journeyman and an apprentice. The largest known staff was the four employed by the York Courant in the 1730s.

The York Courant has been considered one of the most powerful provincial newspapers during the 1740s. It had an exceptionally wide circulation, covering the whole of the north of England. Its large country circulation was sufficient to justify the printing of two editions for at least four months in late 1741. An indication of the extent of the York Courant's circulation is provided by regular lists of sheriffs appointed and dates of assizes claimed to be 'within the Circuit of this Paper'. The counties thus named between 1760 and 1762 were Yorkshire, County Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland,


22. Cranfield, p.244.

Westmorland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. These lists may have been exaggerated in order to give readers, and particularly advertisers, the impression of a large circulation. Yet they may equally probably have been an accurate guide to the maximum extent of the paper's circulation, since the printer was unlikely consistently to have wasted space on names of sheriffs and dates of assizes that would have been of no use to any readers.

The Norwich and York newspapers were by 1756 firmly established, and considerably older than many of the London newspapers from which they took much of their news. The other four papers used in this study had been founded since 1740, as had been half the forty surviving provincial newspapers in 1757. Aris's Birmingham Gazette is representative of the papers founded in the mid-1740s in second-rank provincial towns. Birmingham was a rapidly-growing manufacturing town, having grown from a population of fewer than 4000 in 1685 to 15 082 in 1700 and 28 286 in 1730, rising to possibly 50 000 in 1781. Birmingham's principal industries were leather manufacture and metal working, particularly gun and sword making and the production of tools and steel 'toys': buckles, chains and ornaments. Most Birmingham workers were skilled or partly-

24. VC 1789, 5 Feb.1760, p.2 c.3; VC 1860, 16 June 1761, p.3 c.1; VC 1895, 23 Feb.1762, p.2 c.3.

25. Calculated from Wiles, Appendix B, opposite p.373.

skilled artisans whose wages were high by contemporary standards. A Swedish industrial spy reported in 1750 that there were few people of rank in Birmingham, and everyone was an artisan, shopkeeper or market stall holder. Artisans in skilled trades needed to be skilled in writing and mathematics, and the several thousand smiths and cutlers, although unenfranchised, probably provided a literate audience for newspapers.

The Birmingham Gazette: or, the General Correspondent was only the third newspaper to be published in the city. It was founded in 1741, and competed with the Warwick and Staffordshire Journal, which had been started in 1737 and printed in London until 1741. Both papers had sold at marginal profitability for three halfpence until Robert Walker, printer of the Journal, sold out to Thomas Aris, printer of what had become Aris's Birmingham Gazette, in June 1743. Until 5 January 1761 the paper's colophon announced it was printed by T. Aris. From that date, Aris's Birmingham Gazette was printed by R. Pearson and S. Aris, but there was no noticeable change in the paper's selection of news or editorial comment.

The Birmingham Gazette circulated largely in the west Midlands and south Wales, but not east of Birmingham. The list of agents who took in advertisements included names for most of the significant towns in Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire


30. ABC 998, 5 Jan.1761, p.4.
and Worcestershire, but not, surprisingly, Coventry. The omission is explained by the presence of the Birmingham Gazette's strongest local competitor, the violently Tory Jopson's Coventry Mercury. A wider circuit is suggested by a list of nominations for sheriff in each county for 1759. Only a selection of local counties was printed, including Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire, the latter over fifty miles from Birmingham. However, the sources of the majority of advertisements suggest that the main areas of the Birmingham Gazette's circulation were in Warwickshire and to the west of the city, in southern Staffordshire, Shropshire and northern Worcestershire.

Leicester was another Midland town that gained a local newspaper unusually late. Leicester was a town of around 6000 inhabitants in 1720, rising rapidly to 8000 in 1730 and growing to have an estimated population of 12,784 by 1785. During the course of the century Leicester was overtaken by Nottingham, which was twice the size of its neighbour by 1801. Although a county town and an important market centre, Leicester was dominated by the hosiery industry, which employed 7600 people around 1720. Leicester manufacturers produced coarse worsted stockings, whereas Nottingham concentrated on cotton hosiery.

31. ABG 751, 12 Apr.1756, p.4.
32. Money, p.54.
33. ABG 939, 19 Nov.1759; Brewer, p.145.
34. For example, ABG 994, 8 Dec.1760, p.3 c.3; ABG 843, 16 Jan.1758, p.2 c.3, p.3 c.3; ABG 869, 17 July 1758, p.3 c.2, p.3 c.3.
The Leicester and Nottingham Journal had been established by John Gregory in 1753 as the Leicester Journal, the first newspaper to be printed in the city. In November 1755 John Gregory and a Nottingham bookseller, Samuel Creswell, formed a 'Partnership in the Mystery of Printing' in which each undertook to publish the renamed weekly paper in their respective towns.\textsuperscript{36} The paper was always printed in Leicester, and in January 1756 Creswell began to print his own Creswell's Nottingham Journal.\textsuperscript{37} The Leicester and Nottingham Journal's most important rival was Ayscough's Nottingham Courant, which was started by William Ayscough in 1712 and continued by Anne and then George Ayscough, presumably the founder's widow and son.\textsuperscript{38} It was the third oldest provincial newspaper surviving in 1757,\textsuperscript{39} so any new competitor needed to establish a reputation in order to survive. In a new year's message for 1759, John Gregory claimed the esteem in which his paper was held 'alone hath enabled us to triumph over the Baseness of some of our Enemies, and tread upon the Meanness of others.'\textsuperscript{40} Part of this alleged success was due to the printer's efforts to print the latest news from London. The news in the Leicester and Nottingham Journal's final post was only two days old, and was received by an express, a messenger specially employed to bring London papers sooner than the Post Office could deliver them.\textsuperscript{41} This enabled John Gregory to claim

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{LNJ} 132, 8 Nov.1755, p.1 c.1; Wiles, p.432.
\textsuperscript{37} Wiles, p.476.
\textsuperscript{38} Wiles, pp.472-4.
\textsuperscript{39} Wiles, Appendix B, opposite p.373.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{LNJ} 298, 13 Jan.1759, p.1 c.1-3, under the mast head.
\textsuperscript{41} Cranfield, p.259.
in June 1758, at the head of the final London post, that 'None of the following Paragraphs will be inserted in the Nottingham-Courant till next week'.

On the evidence of the annual lists of sheriffs appointed, the Leicester and Nottingham Journal circulated in Leicestershire and the seven adjoining counties, as well as in Yorkshire. The area of circulation the lists imply is partly confirmed by an apology by the printer in January 1760 for the late delivery of copies at Mansfield, Chesterfield, Worksop, Winster, Bakewell, Sheffield, 'and other places'. The towns named indicate a comprehensive distribution arrangement in northern Derbyshire and the southern edge of the West Riding. However, not all areas were as thoroughly covered. The paper's circulation was extended to Newark, less than twenty miles from Nottingham, only in September 1761.

Another old provincial city that acquired its first newspaper only in the 1740s was Bath. In contrast to Leicester, competing papers were set up until the city had three newspapers in the early 1760s, as many as larger cities like Bristol and Newcastle. The nature of Bath society explains its unusual capacity to support more newspapers than its size suggested it could.

Bath was the leading resort town in the mid-eighteenth century and is the major example of the characteristic

42. LNJ 269, 17 June 1758, p.3 c.3.
43. LNJ 303, 18 Nov. 1758, p.2 c.3; LNJ 302, 10 Feb. 1759, p.1 c.2.
44. LNJ 352, 26 Jan. 1760, p.3 c.3.
45. LNJ 439, 26 Sep. 1761, p.3 c.3.
eighteenth-century development of medical and entertainment resorts. With a population of 33,196 in 1801, it was by then among the twelve largest cities in England. The rate of growth for resort towns was highest of all types of towns until the mid-nineteenth century. Bath had grown from an estimated 2000-3000 inhabitants in 1700 to 5700-8200 in 1749. By the end of the century the city and suburbs were larger than Leicester and Nottingham, and half the size of the largest provincial cities like Bristol and Birmingham.\textsuperscript{46} Bath was without industry and dependent on its popularity as a social and health centre for its survival. In the early eighteenth century about 8000 visitors a year came to Bath; 12,000 could be accommodated in 1749, and by 1801 possibly 40,000 people visited each season. Visitors stayed for four weeks on average, and most came during the summer season. In 1762 the season was considered to last six months, and it had lengthened, with the improvement in facilities, to nine months by 1780. The visiting company brought considerable wealth in addition to many prominent and wealthy permanent and semi-permanent residents. William Pitt owned a house in the Circus. Walcot, a residential area outside the city, was the second wealthiest parish per capita in Britain. However there was anxiety in the early 1760s that Bath had grown too rapidly, and would be ruined by a collapse in its popularity.\textsuperscript{47}

Bath newspapers catered as much for the transient company as


\textsuperscript{47} David Gadd, Georgian Summer Bath in the Eighteenth Century, (Bath, 1971), p.50; McIntyre, pp.208, 225; Neale, p.46.
for the permanent residents of the city and its district. Thomas Boddely established the first newspaper in Bath in 1744. By the end of the Seven Years' War, however, the Bath Journal had two competitors. The Bath Advertiser was established in 1755 and was renamed the Bath Chronicle: Or, Universal Register in October 1760, following the fashion for Chronicles started by the London Chronicle in 1757. At the same time, Cornelius Pope, a former apprentice of Thomas Boddely, set up the Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette. Thomas Boddely had died on 9 June 1756 and his printing business was continued by his brother in law, John Keene. The relationship between Keene and Pope was not friendly. John Keene in April 1762 charged that Pope had printed cards and bills while in Keene's service, and had kept the money for his own use. Cornelius Pope apparently answered the charge, because Keene replied, seeking to contradict Pope's 'weak and equivocal Defence' of his 'Breach of common Honesty and good Faith'. Keene's paper was renamed Boddely's Bath Journal in November 1756 because of the establishment of the short-lived Farley's Bath Journal by Samuel Farley. The three papers printed in Bath by 1760 provided a level of competition equalled in few other cities, notably Bristol and Newcastle.

Boddely's Bath Journal was described as 'one of the most Extensive Country Papers in the Kingdom'. This is not obvious from the paper itself. Before November 1755, the Journal's

46. FFBJ, 5-12 June 1756, p.3 c.3.
49. BBJ 973, 26 Apr.1762, p.4 c.3.
50. Wiles, pp.377-80; Farley's Bath Journal advertised in FFBJ, 11-18 Sep.1756, p.3 c.1, to start on 27 Sep.1756.
51. Unattributed quotation in Wiles, p.168.
agents who took in advertisements at nine towns were listed. There were two agents in Bristol, although most were in Somerset, at Wells, Wincanton and Shepton Mallet, or on the main route to the capital, at Calne, Marlborough, Newbury and London. Advertisements were also taken by the newsmen who carried the paper to country districts, yet the Bath Journal seems not to have had the extensive circulation in adjoining counties held by some of the other provincial newspapers. Most of the agents were booksellers, although one of the two at Devizes was a snuff maker.  

The content of Boddely's Bath Journal reflected Bath's position as a resort town, catering, during the six-month season, for the tastes of a substantial section of its audience, the visiting company. From its establishment the Bath Journal included at the head of its local news a list of prominent visitors who had arrived within the preceding week, both at Bath and Hot-Wells near Bristol. Balls at the two assembly rooms were reported, and occasionally the names of the members of the company who were to lead the the dancing in the coming week were announced. More than usual prominence was given to the regulations for mourning of members of royal houses, reflecting the presence of prominent members of London society at Bath, who would have been much less frequent visitors to other provincial cities. This special audience is also reflected in

52. BBJ 610, 8 Sep.1755, p.1 c.1-3; Cranfield, pp.198-9, n.48.

53. McIntyre, p.208.

54. McIntyre, p.208; Gadd, p.64.

the treatment of London news. Despite the regular postal service between London and Bath, the Bath Journal claimed to receive its copies of London papers 'by Express, at a vast Expence to the Proprietor'.  

In the season, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal also occasionally listed prominent arrivals at Hot-Wells, the smaller spa near Bristol. Like Bath, Bristol supported three local newspapers by the time of the Seven Years' War. Bristol was the second largest city in England, with more than 40,000 inhabitants in 1750, compared to about 20,000 in 1700. It was the leading port outside London, trading with not only English, Irish, French and Iberian ports but also dealing with the growing trade with North America and the West Indies. The port handled the export of woollen goods, the import of iron, sugar and tobacco, and the transportation of emigrants, slaves and criminals. Ships from Bristol were involved in the Newfoundland fisheries and in privateering. Bristol's own industries included shipbuilding, glassmaking, sugar refining and distilling, and tobacco and chocolate production.  

Although newer than Boddely's Bath Journal, the Bristol paper had wide experience of local newspapers behind it. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal was established as a result of the dissolution of the partnership of Felix and his brother Samuel, proprietors of the Bristol Journal, in March 1752. Felix died in May the following year, but the new paper was continued by his

56. BBJ 909, 2 Feb. 1761, p. 4 c. 3.
57. Bristol in the eighteenth century, ed. Patrick McGrath, (Newton Abbot, 1972), p. 120.
58. Underdown, pp. 3, 5, 10; Bristol in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 128-34.
widow, Elizabeth, and their son, Samuel. The Farley family had long been involved with newspaper ventures in Bristol, Bath, Exeter and Salisbury. Samuel Farley produced Farley's Exeter Journal from about 1704, Sam. Farley's Bristol Post Man from 1713, and the short-lived Salisbury Post Man in 1715. The papers were continued, and others established, by several members of the family, although their number and relationship are uncertain because there were at least two Samuel Farleys, the younger of whom was Felix's brother. Felix Farley printed Farley's Exeter Journal, which lasted less than a year in 1741. Either he or a relative of the same name took control of Sam. Farley's Bristol Newspaper, formerly Sam. Farley's Bristol Post Man, in August 1743. The paper was continued by Felix under two different titles, published on alternate weeks until January 1748 to avoid the stamp duty on weekly newspapers. Felix and his brother Samuel continued the paper weekly as, eventually, the Bristol Journal. On the dissolution of the partnership in 1752, Samuel retained the Bristol Journal and Felix established Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. Both brothers died in 1753 and the papers were continued by Sarah, Samuel's niece, and Elizabeth, Felix's widow.

The third competitor by the outbreak of war was the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer, printed by Edward Ward who started it in 1749. No issues later than February 1759 are known to survive. In January 1760 the Bristol Chronicle, Or, Universal Mercantile Register was established, so the city was seldom without three competing newspapers.59

59. Cranfield, pp.56-60; Wiles, pp.383-94;
By the Seven Years' War, *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, although only recently established, probably had a secure reputation. It could draw on the reputation of a large number of Farley newspapers and, initially, Felix's experience. The need to establish a reputation in the face of established competition probably accounts for the readiness of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* to comment on local issues and national politics. The presence of competing newspapers usually induced newspapers to take up a distinctive stance. Several members of the Farley family were in any case outspoken Tories.\(^6^0\) *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*’s Tory and opposition sentiments were opposed by the conventionally Whig *Bristol Weekly Intelligencer*. Religious differences also separated the two papers. Felix Farley was a supporter of the Methodists, and in his will described John and Charles Wesley as his 'honoured and much-esteemed friends'.\(^6^1\) In 1749 the *Intelligencer* printed a series of attacks on the Methodists.\(^6^2\) A dissenting connection was unusual for a Tory paper, but it reflects the similarity of the appeal of Methodism and popular Toryism.\(^6^3\) However, the death of Felix Farley seems to have removed any suggestion of religious non-conformity from his newspaper. *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* continued to print moralising essays and letters on religious subjects, particularly

---

\(^{60}\) Cranfield, pp.60-1.

\(^{61}\) Cranfield, p.60.

\(^{62}\) Cranfield, p.109.

the observance of fast days. The latter could be interpreted as an attack on the Quaker Bristol Journal, but it was never as open or persistent as, for example, the Norwich Mercury's attacks on Quakers for ignoring fast days and victory celebrations. However, by 1758 Felix Farley's Bristol Journal was not constrained by Methodist sensibilities. It printed an advertisement for the tract Advice to the Devil in a Letter to Hell in which Methodism was 'display'd, and Enthusiasm detected' as an antidote against 'the delusive Principles and unscriptural DOCTRINE of a modern Set of seducing Preachers'. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal now catered for the orthodox clergy. In August 1762 it printed on its front page the detailed accounts of the Society of the Clergy and Sons of the Clergy, more than two columns long.

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal claimed to have had an extensive circulation. Agents took in advertisements at thirty-seven cities and towns in 1752. By 1759 there were thirty-six agents in all the major centres of Gloucestershire and Somersetshire, and at places as distant as London, Penzance, Haverfordwest and Birmingham. The paper's claimed circulation area was of a similar magnitude to the York Courant, which had agents in forty-three towns in 1743. Although the list of

64. For example, FFBJ, 11 Feb.1758, p.3 c.3.
66. FFBJ, 11 Mar.1758, p.2 c.3.
67. FFBJ, 12 Aug.1758, p.1 c.1-3, p.2 c.3.
68. Cranfield, p.203.
69. FFBJ, 29 Dec.1759, p.4 c.1-3, the last insertion of the full list in the colophon.
agents was itself an advertising device, there is little reason to disbelieve its indication of the extent of the paper's circulation. Advertising was received from distant towns, although any from beyond Bristol and its immediate vicinity was unusual. Nevertheless, the existence of an agency in a town did not necessarily mean that many newspapers were sold there.\textsuperscript{71} The agents for the \textit{Leicester and Nottingham Journal} at Uttoxeter and Derby received sixteen and twenty-five copies respectively each week.\textsuperscript{72}

Of these six newspapers, at least three had a national reputation. The London daily, the \textit{Public Ledger, Or, The Daily Register of Commerce and Intelligence} republished advertisements taken from provincial as well as London newspapers. Among the thirty listed provincial papers from which local advertisements initially were taken included the \textit{York Courant}, \textit{Aris's Birmingham Gazette} and \textit{Boddely's Bath Journal}. Surprisingly, neither the \textit{Norwich Mercury} nor any Bristol newspaper was listed.\textsuperscript{73}

\* \* \* \* \* \* 

All six provincial papers were small enterprises, even by the standards of their metropolitan contemporaries. Although no account books survive or, it is likely, were ever systematically compiled, it is clear that provincial newspapers were not highly profitable. Like most newspapers, provincial papers were financially dependent on advertising. Printers' incomes from

\textsuperscript{71} Cranfield, p.203.

\textsuperscript{72} Wiles, p.127; Brewer, p.145.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Public Ledger} 1, 12 Jan.1760, p.2 c.1.
advertising are very difficult to estimate but the profits are thought to have been usually quite small. Charges varied with the size of advertisements, and advertisers did not always pay regularly. The largest advertisements normally were for books, pamphlets and patent medicines sold by the printer or other booksellers. The printer's own advertisements produced no revenue but provided publicity for the bookselling side of the business which helped to support the newspaper. Patent medicine advertisements and puffs, which were advertisements printed as if they were news, were probably paid for in kind by the manufacturers. Regular advertising by local government bodies was a substantial source of revenue, so provincial newspapers were rarely, if ever, critical of the municipal administration. The committee managing the Leicester subscription for distributing bounties to enlisting soldiers had its accounts for 1759 printed in the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* in January 1762 for £1.4s. They showed for that year, £6.11s. had been paid for advertising in the *London and General Evening Posts*, and £11.18s.5d. to 'Mr. Gregory, for Advertisements in the Leicester News-Paper, and other printing'.

It is possible to estimate roughly the profit a typical provincial paper of the mid-1750s would have made. Assuming average sales of one thousand copies each edition for twopence at the pre-1757 stamp tax of a halfpenny a copy, the printer's annual income from sales would have been £325. From this theoretical maximum total income of £406.10s, the printer had to pay for, among other things, the paper, printing and

74. Cranfield, pp.224-34.
distribution of the newspaper. The greatest expense was the tax of one shilling on every advertisement, whether paid for or not. A surviving copy of Felix Farley's Bristol Journal for 1754 carries the handwritten receipt of the distributor of stamps for Bristol. For the year 4 August 1753 to 25 October 1754, Elizabeth Farley paid £54.10s. for the duty on 1090 advertisements. The paper charged 2s.6d. for each small advertisement, so had all the advertisements been small the printer's annual advertising receipts after tax theoretically would have been £81.15s.

However, newsmen sometimes received twopence for each advertisement they brought in, and a halfpenny for every copy of the paper they sold. The paper itself cost about a farthing a sheet. Paper sufficient for a year, printing a thousand copies a week, would therefore have cost £54.3s.4d, and the newsmen would have received £108.6s.8d. for sales and a maximum of £91s.8d. from advertising. In the best possible case, with an optimistic sales figure and not accounting for further expenses, the paper would have made an annual profit of £234.18s.4d, or £4.10s.4d. each week. In comparison, the highly successful London daily, the Public Advertiser, which sold around 3000 copies a day, made a profit of 1740 in 1774, about £50 of which was from advertising. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal was a relatively profitable venture. Although Felix had no assets with

76. FFBJ, 20-27 July 1754, p.4; Cranfield, p.231, quotes, incorrectly, £34.10s.0d. for 1009 advertisements, with amounts for other receipts, which cannot be checked with available copies.


which to pay a £50 legacy to his daughter, his widow left over 310 on her death in 1771.79

No provincial printer could survive on the profits of a newspaper alone. A newspaper was normally only a secondary part of a book or jobbing printing business, used in some cases only to occupy an otherwise underemployed press.80 The Bath Journal announced that it was printed by Thomas Boddely, 'by whom PRINTING in GENERAL, is done in the neatest Manner, at reasonable Prices, and with Dispatch'.81 Provincial printers were often booksellers, or had close connections with booksellers. Books, pamphlets, London and other provincial newspapers, and patent medicines were ordered from, and delivered by, newsmen using the newspaper's delivery network.82 Newspaper printers also had a variety of other businesses. William Chase, printer of the Norwich Mercury, conducted auctions, as did other Norwich booksellers.83 John Gregory of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal used his paper to promote an even wider range of concerns. In 1760 he advertised his services in finding substitutes to serve in the Leicestershire Militia in the place of ballotted men, and opened an employment register for servants to find positions and masters to find servants.84

79. Cranfield, p.255.
82. See BBJ 830, 30 July 1759, p.4 c.3; NM 423, 3 June 1758, p.3 c.2; BBJ 704, 14 Feb.1757, p.3 c.1.
83. NM 495, 20 Oct.1759, p.3 c.2; NM 476, 9 June 1759, p.3 c.2.
84. LNJ 397, 13 Dec.1760, p.4 c.1; LNJ 391, 25 Oct.1760, p.2 c.3.
It is important to know not only where provincial newspapers were sold but also how many were sold. Information on the number of copies printed is, however, very limited. Provincial papers rarely made claims about their circulation, and no detailed Stamp Office or printing house records survive.\(^{85}\) Newspapers were printed on paper imprinted with a tax stamp, so records of the numbers of stamps issued indicate the total number of newspapers copied throughout the country. The total number of newspapers stamps sold remained relatively constant throughout the early 1750s until a sharp rise occurred at the outbreak of war in 1756, but the number fell significantly in the following year when the stamp tax was doubled to one penny per half-sheet.\(^{86}\) The overall rise in national newspaper sales throughout the first half of the century is accounted for by the increase in the number of newspapers, not by an increase in the sales of individual papers. Newspaper stamp sales show there was little change in average individual circulations between 1700 and the 1760s.\(^{87}\)

The average circulation of all provincial newspapers in the 1750s was about one thousand a week, although some large papers probably sold up to two thousand.\(^{88}\) The Manchester Magazine in December 1755 claimed to sell 1200 copies, and circulations of nearly 2000 were claimed for the Newcastle Journal and the Sherborne Mercury in the late 1730s.\(^{89}\) The only evidence for the

---

86. Cranfield, pp.115-6.
87. Brewer, pp.157-8;
   But compare with Cranfield, p.171.
89. Cranfield, pp.171, 172.
numbers printed by any of the six newspapers studied here is provided by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. The paper very occasionally had insufficient stamped paper to complete an edition, so printed some copies on unstamped paper, usually with a standardised announcement by John Jackson, distributor of stamps in the county of Leicester, that the remaining tax would be paid. On the three known occasions, 456, 480 and about 100 copies were printed on unstamped paper. Since these copies were 'to complete the impression', the numbers must be only a fraction of the total number printed.\textsuperscript{90}

Even if it is assumed that the Leicester and Nottingham Journal printed about a thousand copies a week, it apparently would have made very little impact in Leicester, which alone had a population in 1785 estimated at 12,784.\textsuperscript{91} However newspaper sales figures were not equivalent to the size of their readership. Each copy of a newspaper was read by, or to, several people. John Addison's conservative estimate in 1711 of twenty readers per copy has been widely accepted.\textsuperscript{92} The Leicester paper therefore had a potential readership far larger than the adult population of Leicester, which probably indicates that sales in country districts were important.

Newspapers were available to those unable or unwilling to buy copies. For those too poor to buy a newspaper or pamphlet, it was a common practice to share the cost within a group.

\textsuperscript{90} LNJ 360, 22 Mar.1760, p.1 c.1; LNJ 426, 27 June 1761, p.3 c.3; LNJ 455, 16 Jan.1762, p.3 c.2.

\textsuperscript{91} Corfield, p.129.

\textsuperscript{92} Cranfield, p.177; Brewer, p.148.
Alternatively, a copy could be hired for a halfpenny from the hawkers who sold newspapers within the cities of publication.\(^93\) This practice not surprisingly was unpopular with newspaper printers. The three printers of Bristol newspapers took the opportunity in an unusual joint announcement in July 1757 of price increases to request their readers not to encourage the 'illicit and fraudulent Practice' of hawkers and vendors of lending out papers to read, and threatened to dismiss all hawkers found guilty of the practice.\(^94\)

Newspapers were often available to a wide readership in coffee houses, political clubs and through circulating libraries. A selection of London and country newspapers, essay papers and pamphlets was available at many coffee houses and taverns. Coffee houses had become centres for the exchange of commercial and political information where anyone with an interest in the news had access to the papers and discussion. In this way tradesmen and apprentices, who might not otherwise have been able to afford a newspaper, and even the illiterate had some contact with news and essay papers.\(^95\) Although coffee houses and taverns as centres of political discussion were more firmly established in London, a similar 'political culture' had emerged in large provincial cities by the 1750s.\(^96\) In Bristol, eight coffee houses were mentioned at various times during the war in *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*. They included some, the names of which

---

93. In 1732; Cranfield, p.177; Brewer, p.151.

94. *FFBJ*, 2 July 1757, p.3 c.3.


96. Brewer, p.150.
suggestion they probably attracted financiers and merchants: the Marine, West-India, London, Custom-House and Exchange Coffee-Houses. A coffee house even existed in the village of Frenchay, about four miles to the north-east of Bristol. The best frequented, at least by the wealthy or more beneficent, was the Exchange Coffee-House, which collected over £45 for rice to be distributed to the poor in May 1757, whereas all the other coffee houses collected less than £7. The Exchange Coffee-House was probably the main Tory meeting place, since signatures for the Tory petition of April 1756 were collected there and at the Merchant Taylors' Hall. However, there is very little evidence to indicate how many papers were taken in by coffee houses. The only known reference in the period of this study is to the London Gazette being 'pocketed up by some designing Person or Persons from the Coffee-Houses about the Center of this City' in February 1756.

In contrast, although more than thirty coffee houses are known to have existed in York during the eighteenth century, only two were mentioned in the York Courant during the war, one of which had closed before March 1756. A report in the Norwich

97. Respectively, LNJ 351, 19 Jan.1760, p.3 c.3; FFBJ, 6 Jan.1759, p.2 c.3; FFBJ, 28 May 1757, p.3 c.3; BBJ 669, 28 Apr.1760, p.2 c.3.

98. BBJ 804, 29 Jan.1759, p.4 c.3.

99. FFBJ, 28 May 1757, p.3 c.3.

100. FFBJ, 3–10 Apr.1756, p.3 c.3.

101. FFBJ, 21–28 Feb.1756, p.3 c.3.

102. WC 1585, 9 Mar.1756, p.2 c.2; WC 1586, 13 Oct.1761, p.3 c.2; Victoria History of Yorkshire, p.246.
Mercury in 1757 implied that James Gray's Coffee-House was the only one in Norwich. It displayed the numerical lists of prizes in the state lotteries, and also probably held a selection of London and country newspapers.\(^{103}\) In towns like Birmingham that lacked coffee houses, taverns instead took the role of centres of political information.

Newspapers and pamphlets also played an important part in clubs and societies that commonly met in coffee houses and inns. Even when ostensibly not political, such societies formed the potential basis for political organisation.\(^{104}\) Some societies in the largest provincial towns had overt political connections. The Steadfast and Independent Society and the Union Club in Bristol, the Rockingham Club in York, and possibly the Constitution Club in Norwich, formed the bases of party organisation locally. They advertised their meetings in local newspapers and, according to the newspaper's politics, their activities were reported. It is therefore likely that those societies subscribed to local newspapers independently of the coffee houses. There were also less formally organised political clubs that contributed to newspaper consumption. The only direct evidence for one in the six cities during the war was in a letter to Boddey's Bath Journal in June 1763. 'Philalethes' of Trowbridge declared he was 'a Member of a Club of Freeholders of the County of Wilts, who meet every Monday Evening to smoke our Pipes, and peruse your Journal'.\(^{105}\)

\(^{103}\) NMM 387, 17 Sep.1757, p.3 c.2.

\(^{104}\) Brewer, p.149.

\(^{105}\) RJ 1033, 20 June 1763, p.4 c.4.
Current newspapers and pamphlets were held by circulating libraries, but subscription fees limited their membership to gentlemen, merchants or professional men,\textsuperscript{106} who could afford at least a weekly provincial paper. A public library existed in Bristol in 1762. \textit{Felix Farley's Bristol Journal} advertised that the master of the library was to be chosen by the court of common council.\textsuperscript{107}

Newspapers were widely and easily available, but provincial newspapers were more likely to be read in isolation than in combination with several other papers. Country papers were designed to provide a wide and balanced selection of news from London papers, thereby obviating the need for readers to go to the time and expense of reading several London papers for a complete view of events. The purpose of provincial newspapers was believed to be to provide useful information and to entertain, not to provide political arguments or editorial comment. The \textit{Leicester and Nottingham Journal} aimed to be 'useful, instructive and entertaining to all Ranks of People.'\textsuperscript{108}

* * * * *

By the time of the Seven Years' War provincial newspapers were an established part of the national newspaper press, provincial in their audience, but not their contents. They collected news from a variety of London papers, particularly the evening papers published three times a week to cater for both metropolitan and country readers. Provincial newspapers provided

\textsuperscript{106} Brewer, p.151.
\textsuperscript{107} \textit{FPBJ}, 15 May 1762, p.3 c.4.
\textsuperscript{108} \textit{LNJ} 132, 1-8 Nov.1755, p.1 c.1.
a comprehensive and, in most cases, relatively impartial selection of news from those papers for each week, together with some local news, advertising, and occasional essays and verses.

Local news helped relieve the essentially parasitic nature of the provincial weekly papers, although local reporting was only a subsidiary purpose of the papers, and occupied little space. It was confined largely to reports of crimes, social events and official announcements. Because important news would often have been already well known in provincial cities by the time it appeared in the newspaper,109 its reporting probably was of more interest in the surrounding country districts.

The major reason, however, for the survival of provincial newspapers was that they were vehicles for local advertising. In some papers advertising predominated, but not to the exclusion of news thought sufficiently important. Local advertisements made provincial newspapers worthwhile to country readers who subscribed or had access to London newspapers.

Printers of provincial newspapers themselves stressed that their main purposes were to provide intelligence from London and local advertising. John Gregory, printer of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal, on entering into partnership in 1755 with Samuel Creswell, a bookseller in Nottingham, to publish the paper in both cities, set out their intentions for its content, all of which was to be copied from London newspapers. Priority was given to early and authentic news from European states and their colonies. Then news of more immediate concern to Britain was to be printed, under several classifications. News from the North

American and Caribbean colonies was printed as 'Plantation News', and reports from other English provincial cities, by way of London, as 'Country News'. 'Domestic Occurences', that is, 'a faithful and minute Account' of events in London, predominated. John Gregory promised to report grain prices, variations in stock prices, bankruptcies, horse races and cock matches. There was, however, no mention of local news. Advertising was the stated local purpose of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. The paper's main advantage over others was claimed to be its extensive circulation, which, it was hoped, would encourage advertising. The retrieval of runaway apprentices was thought to be advertising's main service to the stocking manufacturers of Leicester and Nottingham, while the public would allegedly find it expedient to advertise 'their Wants and Business, their Projects and Improvements to Mankind'.

Provincial newspapers were able to coexist with London evening papers from which they copied the bulk of their news because they appealed to different readerships. The London thrice-weeklies attracted readers who had regular dealings with the capital or an interest in political debate, whereas provincial papers catered for readers who were less concerned with the frequency of the paper than having an affordable collection of significant news copied from a variety of newspapers, which very often overlapped or contradicted each other in their reporting of events. These problems were acknowledged in the advertisement that announced the start of publication in London of Lloyd's Evening Post in July 1757. It

110. LNJ 132, 1-8 Nov.1755, p.1 c.1.
argued that to have a newspaper every day was preferable to receiving several at once, which were usually filled with the same intelligence. *Lloyd's Evening Post* hoped to attract merchants in major trading cities and ports by including the commercial intelligence from private letters that, the paper claimed, was available only to a small group around the Royal Exchange.111

The purpose of provincial newspapers therefore restricts their usefulness as sources of information on local affairs or opinion. These six newspapers relied on London newspapers for their stories, and did very little reporting of their own. The bulk of the very infrequent comment, political or otherwise, in the provincial newspapers was also from London. The opinions of the compilers of provincial newspapers are apparent, if at all, mainly through their selection and editing of stories.

There were, however, several restrictions on the ability of newspaper printers to select news and comment as they might have wished. Printing shops were small and their resources were limited, so the selection of news had to be made rapidly, from a limited range of sources, and with minimal editing. Provincial newspapers, although published weekly, were unable to print a balanced selection of the week's news. Reports were grouped in three 'posts' according to the day on which they had been received. The selection and typesetting of stories were performed before the next post arrived. Although only four pages, the papers were not printed all at one time. It was usually possible to print one side of the half-sheet, which formed the first and fourth pages, several days before the inside

111. *ABG* 816, 11 July 1757, p.4 c.3.
pages, on the other side. The front page normally contained only the first post and sometimes advertising, and the back page carried either advertising, letters or essays, all of which could be typeset well before publication date. That Aris's Birmingham Gazette printed its outside pages at least five days before its publication date is suggested by the fact that, when, in October 1759, news of the capture of Quebec arrived five days before the paper's intended day of issue, the outside pages had already been printed.\textsuperscript{112} The printer of the York Courant was 'obliged to put one Side of this Paper to Press on Friday', four days before publication.\textsuperscript{113} On the day of publication only the final post and the local news needed to be typeset and the inside pages printed. The York Courant's second post was typeset late on Saturdays or early on Mondays, and was printed when the final post had been set, late on Mondays or early on Tuesdays, the day of issue.\textsuperscript{114} This meant that half the paper could be printed at a time convenient to the printer when a press was not in use, and the newspaper required fewer cases of type than if it had all been set at once.

An exception to this practice was Boddely's Bath Journal, which printed its final post and local news on the fourth page. The printer thus must have been constrained to print the paper within two days of the publication date, rather than the maximum five days allowed by placing recent news entirely on inside pages. That all except the final post of Boddely's Bath Journal was set by the Saturday morning preceding the Monday of

\textsuperscript{112} ABC 935, 22 Oct.1759.
\textsuperscript{113} YC 1598, 8 June 1756, p.3.
\textsuperscript{114} Cranfield, pp.34-5.
publication is shown by the publisher's repeated pleas to
advertisers to send their orders as early in the week as
possible. They caused great inconvenience to the printer when
sent later, 'as it obliges him unwillingly to crowd that Part
of the Paper with Advertisements, which ought to be left entirely
for Monday's post.'

Provincial newspapers displayed great variety in their
format, despite sharing the same basic parameters of size and
printing arrangements. All but two provincial papers in 1760 had
four pages, printed on a single half-sheet folded once. The
page size varied, but by the 1750s it was commonly nine to eleven
inches wide and fifteen to seventeen high. This had not
always been the case. To take advantage of the provisions of the
Stamp Act, some newspapers appeared between 1712 and 1725 as
pamphlets in six or twelve small pages using a sheet and a half
of paper.

All the newspapers considered in this study divided their
news according to the post in which it arrived. The layout
common to the papers was to print the first post on the front
page and the later posts on the inside pages. Local news was
printed last, usually on page three. Occasional letters and
essays normally were inserted in the first or final pages. There
was, however, considerable variation within this format.
Felix Farley's Bristol Journal largely confined advertising to
the central columns of the inside of the half-sheet, and printed

115. BBJ 812, 26 Mar.1759, p.4 c.3.
117. Wiles, p.51.
118. Wiles, pp.48-9.
verses and essays on about half of the fourth page. In contrast, the York Courant normally fitted all its news into its first two pages, and filled the final two with advertising.

The treatment of local news also displayed some variations. The final news always consisted of local reports, often with regular reports from neighbouring cities. The York Courant printed news from York and Hull, Boddely’s Bath Journal reports from Bristol as well as Bath, and the Norwich Mercury occasionally carried stories from Great Yarmouth and King’s Lynn. A surprising exception was the Leicester and Nottingham Journal, which only infrequently printed news from Nottingham, and printed the smallest amount of local news of the six papers. Normally only two paragraphs of Leicester news appeared, although the section could be as long as a fifth of a column, or was sometimes omitted completely. The space allotted to local news by most other papers varied from a third to a complete column. Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal frequently printed a column or more of local news, reflecting its well developed system of news gathering and its tendency to comment, and attract comment, on local issues.

The format of the six provincial papers did not change significantly until the end of the Seven Years’ War. The major change was an almost general adoption of a four-column page layout, starting in early 1762. The change from three columns to four was made first by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal and Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal in March and April 1762 respectively.119 In the latter case, the change was accompanied

119. INJ 462, 13 Mar.1762; FPB1, 24 Apr.1762.
by a new design of mast head, including a representation of the arms of Bristol. *Boddely's Bath Journal* changed its column width at the start of 1763, but the *Norwich Mercury* did not do so until December 1764. Neither the *York Courant* nor *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* is known to have changed before the end of the war. The transformation was not accompanied by changes in type size or type face, and, consequently, the number of lines in each page was unchanged. Nor did the arrangement of news or the proportion of space given to each post alter markedly, although four columns provided the opportunity for greater flexibility of format.

The adoption of the new layout at the end of the war may have been due to the anticipated dearth of news. Reducing the amount of space wasted at the end of paragraphs did not compensate for the additional vertical division on the page, so slightly less news could be fitted in the same size sheet. Some newspapers introduced literary or historical series in 1763 to fill vacant space. The proprietors of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* commented in December 1762 that

> we are (we hope, we may say, agreeably) depriv'd of a Variety of interesting Events, with which we have been furnish'd by as extensive chargeable, bloody, and Heavens be prais'd! as GLORIOUS a WAR, as was ever recorded in the *British Annals*

and proposed to remedy the deficiency by printing a history of the war in weekly parts. However, the two papers that changed in 1762 did so when there was expected to be more news available, not less.

The most likely reason for the adoption of the new layout is

120. *BBJ* 1009, 3 Jan.1763; *NM* 750, 8 Sep.1764.

121. *FPBJ*, 18 Dec.1762, p.3 c.3.
that the four provincial newspapers followed the lead of some London newspapers to produce a more readable paper. The Public Ledger was the first to appear with four columns, on its establishment in January 1760. It was followed by the Gazetteer, the St. James's Chronicle and the London Evening-Post by early 1762. The latter claimed the changes to its paper and print were designed to render it more useful, instructive and entertaining, but made no mention of the volume of news that could be accommodated.122

The setting of the papers in chronological order had important consequences for the selection of news. More space generally was allotted to the first post than the two subsequent, because the entire front page needed to be filled as soon as possible. Sometimes articles in the later posts superseded or contradicted first-page reports. However, after half the paper had been printed, corrections could be made only awkwardly. For example, the theft of a horse was advertised in the Norwich Mercury in 1758, but the animal was found and the advertisement withdrawn. Nevertheless it appeared on the fourth page with an explanation on the preceding page 'that Part of the Paper was put to the Press before the Order for omit[ting] came to Hand.'123

A second important consequence was that an issue could be filled largely with insignificant articles, so that items of important but late news could not be given much space or emphasis.124 This was sometimes the case with reports of great victories, which had to be truncated or postponed to fit the

122. Public Ledger 1, 12 Jan.1760.
123. NM 422, 27 May 1758, p.3 c.1.
available space. The news of the capitulation of Quebec in 1759 reached the Norwich Mercury only in its third post, so the paper was able to give less than three columns to the reports, while other papers were able to devote almost two entire pages to the news. William Chase, printer of the Norwich paper, announced that the articles of capitulation of Quebec, the equipment captured and a list of the killed and wounded would have to be postponed until the next issue. On the other hand, Aris's Birmingham Gazette received the news in its second post, and published two days earlier than the intended date of issue, without waiting for further news. John Gregory of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal went further on the news of the fall of Montreal in 1760, dismissing the first post as containing 'no Material Advices, and therefore wholly omitted', and committing all the non-advertising space, three pages and half a column, to news of Montreal. He announced that the paper had been printed without waiting for more news since it would have been impossible to have accommodated any more,

But nevertheless the Printer hereof engages to his customers that if any interesting event should happen, that he will print an account thereof separate and distribute it (gratis) to all the places where the Paper circulates.

When the need for space was pressing, some newspapers omitted advertisements rather than reduce the amount of news they printed. Boddely's Bath Journal and Felix Farley's Bristol Journal both promised repeatedly to insert in the following issue

125. NM 495, 20 Oct.1759, p.3 c.1; ABG 935, 22 Oct.1759, p.2 c.1-p.3 c.3.

126. ABG 935, 22 Oct.1759, in which the latest news is dated 20 Oct.

advertisements that had been omitted.128 Other papers treated their news as subordinate to advertising that might have been outdated a week later. The York Courant provides the most striking example of domination by advertising. Whereas normally advertisements occupied two pages, throughout March and April each year advertising occupied all except about three columns of each issue. The increase was due to a large number of advertisements for horse breeding, which accounted for almost half the space on the two inside pages.

The format of the provincial papers was largely dictated by the way in which news was received. The content of the newspapers was also largely decided by the sources used. Because country newspapers were essentially vehicles for London, national and foreign news, all but five to ten per cent of their news was from London sources. A few provincial newspapers acknowledged their sources, although most attributed only reports taken from the London Gazette and from unusual sources. Where it is possible to check, most news was reprinted with only minor changes, if any. Editing extended only to selection of paragraphs, and very occasionally a short comment on a report's contents or accuracy. The selection of news was made by the printer from newspapers delivered from London, not by an agent of the printer in the capital. Aris's Birmingham Gazette's earlier practice of including news from its own London correspondent had ceased by the start of the war.129

News for provincial papers was chosen from a relatively

128. FPBJ, 2 July 1757, p.3 c.3;
BBJ 760, 27 Mar.1758, p.4 c.3.
129. Wiles, pp.62, 205.
small group of London newspapers. The official *London Gazette* was the source most regularly quoted in all the six provincial papers. Its reports usually were printed at the head of each post, with a by-line 'Thus far the Gazette' to separate the reports from other news. If news from the *Gazette* was omitted, it was usually thought necessary to explain that there had been no news the printer considered worth reprinting. There was occasional dissatisfaction with suspected official attempts to suppress information. After the Duke of Cumberland’s defeat at Hastenbeck on 24 July 1757 and the retreat of the Army of Observation to Stade, the *London Evening-Post*, reprinted in the *Norwich Mercury*, complained of the paucity of official news. It said that the

*London Gazette*, (by some stiled The Temple of Truth) published by Authority, Price only Three-pence, was so very modest on the present Situation of Affairs, as not to give us a single Line of Intelligence.130

Of the six provincial papers, only the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* systematically attributed each paragraph of news to its source. At the top of the first column of each issue was printed a list of abbreviations of ten London newspaper titles, 'shewing the Papers from which the following Articles are collected.' In 1758 the papers included the *London Gazette*, the *London Chronicle*, the *Public and Daily Advertisers*, and the *General*, *Whitehall*, *London* and *Lloyd's Evening Posts*. By 1762, the *St. James's Evening Post* and the *Public Ledger* had replaced the *Citizen* and *Gazetteer* in the list of ten papers. Although the *Leicester* paper gave priority to reports from the *Gazette*, the great majority of its news was taken from the *General Evening*

130. London Evening-Post, in NM 383, 20 Aug.1757, p.2 c.3.
Post. In December 1758, for example, 51.0 per cent of the paper's news space was given to reports from the General Evening Post and 30.3 per cent from the Gazette. Roughly equal attention was given to the London Chronicle and the four Evening Posts, none of which supplied more than three per cent of the column space, except for Lloyd's, which provided almost twelve per cent.131

The Norwich Mercury was the only other of the six newspapers to attribute its news, although not systematically. Its choice of sources was similar to the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. The General Evening Post was the most frequently named source of those stories that were attributed, on average 23.7 per cent. The London Chronicle, Whitehall Evening Post, London Evening-Post were respectively next most often quoted, ranging from 17.5 to 10.3 per cent of sourced stories each. Fewer than 7.2 per cent of ascribed paragraphs were copied from any one of the Evening Advertiser, Lloyd's Evening Post, St. James's Evening Post or the Daily Advertiser.132

The political attitudes of these sources are significant. The General Evening Post, founded in 1733, was a ministerial paper in 1753, but was used by provincial papers for news rather than comment.133 It was not as prominent as the other tri-weeklies because it was not overtly political. The highly successful London Chronicle and its imitator, Lloyd's Evening Post, both started in 1757, followed the pattern of the well-

131. Calculated from LNJ 295, 23 Dec.1758.

132. Calculated from one issue per month of the Norwich Mercury for 1757.

established tri-weeklies. Both were generally, but not consistently, pro-government. The also thrice-weekly Whitehall Evening Post, which became the St. James's Chronicle, or the British Evening Post in 1761, printed large numbers of letters. The London Evening-Post was strongly political, favouring Pitt and the Tories. The thrice-weekly evening papers were used for comment as well as news, whereas the also thrice-weekly General Evening Post, and to a lesser extent the daily Evening Advertiser, were used for news only.

Just as important were the papers not used by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal or Norwich Mercury. The Gazetteer, a morning daily, was quoted only infrequently, although political controversy was one of its outstanding features. None of the London weekly papers, which included the Universal Chronicle, Read's Weekly Journal and Owen's Weekly Chronicle, had articles reprinted, or at least acknowledged, by either the Norwich or the Leicester paper. The two papers apparently gathered their news from a broad selection of daily and thrice-weekly London papers. Yet they selected the bulk of their news from only a few papers, and used the remainder only occasionally, when an article or comment was unavailable from their usual sources.

Not all the news in provincial newspapers was taken from London newspapers. Very occasionally, reports were printed from other provincial newspapers. The stories may have been reprinted from copies in London newspapers, but they were attributed to


their original provincial newspaper. Country news could take more than a week to reach other provincial newspapers. The marriage of the son of Jarrit Smith, Tory member of parliament for Bristol, was reported by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal on 3 September 1757. The report appeared eleven days later in Aris's Birmingham Gazette, under a 6 September London dateline. In other cases, provincial newspapers directly acknowledged their sources. A report from the York Courant of the swearing-in of militia men at Skipton and Leeds, with Caesar Ward's approving comments, was copied by the Norwich Mercury in 1757.

The only news that provincial papers did not copy from other papers was of local events. The amount was restricted by the newspapers' ability to report events. No provincial paper is known at this time to have employed a reporter; London newspapers gained reporting staffs only in the 1790s. Some country papers employed correspondents to collect news in neighbouring cities. The York Courant had a correspondent at Hull in 1739, and still presumably during the Seven Years' War, since news from Hull was regularly printed after the York news throughout the period. Hired correspondents are usually considered to have been used only to provide news from cities other than the newspaper's own. However, Felix Parley's Bristol Journal in 1762 was employing a 'Collector of the Bristol News', who on one occasion

---

136. FFBJ, 3 Sep.1757, p.3 c.3; ADG 825, 12 Sep.1757, p.1 c.3.
137. NM 392, 22 Oct.1757, p.1 c.3.
138. Cranfield, p.263.
139. Wiles, pp.204-6; Cranfield, pp.262-3.
incorrectly reported the circumstances of a funeral at Aust, on the coast ten miles north of Bristol.\textsuperscript{140}

Like other provincial papers,\textsuperscript{141} these six largely relied on contributions from their readers, whom they called correspondents, for information on events outside the city, and for news contained in private letters. \textit{Felix Farley's Bristol Journal} occasionally printed letters sent directly to the printer containing accounts of naval actions involving privateers from Bristol. In May 1757 the paper devoted a fifth of a column to an account of the capture of two prizes 'By a letter received from an Officer on board the Cesar Privateer'.\textsuperscript{142} Some reports were sent a considerable distance. The \textit{York Courant} in February 1756 printed an account of naval gunfire off the Lincolnshire coast sent by a clergyman at Willoughby, over sixty miles in a direct line from York.\textsuperscript{143}

Any study of the contents of the provincial papers must take account of the significant limitations on the usefulness of the information they contain. In the first part, provincial newspapers did not always report events adequately. Their sources of information were not always reliable, and most papers did not quote their sources. Provincial papers took their news from London papers which themselves were not always reliable or accurate. On the other hand, provincial papers did compare and contrast news from a range of London papers, and so presented the best available picture, even if it was distorted.

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{FFBJ}, 15 May 1762, p.3 c.4.

\textsuperscript{141} Wiles, pp.81-2.

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{FFBJ}, 7 May 1757, p.3 c.3.

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{VC} 1581, 10 Feb.1756, p.3 c.1.
The main purpose of this study is to see, within these limits, what the newspapers reported and how they did so. More difficulties present themselves, because it is not always possible to put much weight on the evidence of a paper's selection of a particular story or piece of comment. The length of a story or the prominence given to it is not always a reliable guide to the printer's idea of its importance, since news space was often limited, and the arrival of stories unpredictable. The size of a report often indicated merely the time of its arrival and the availability of space. Provincial newspapers were small concerns, and the news was selected rapidly from the most convenient source. The great bulk of news was reprinted unchanged from a small selection of London newspapers. It is when an unusual source is used, or when there are differences among several provincial newspapers' treatment, or differences between London and provincial papers' treatment of the same subject, that conclusion can be drawn about individual newspapers' attitudes.

Yet even if the attitudes of provincial newspapers can be identified, it is still unclear to what extent, if any, those opinions were held by others in provincial cities. The local newspapers were widely read in the provinces. All six were distributed to at least their neighbouring counties, and in reasonable numbers. Multiple readership had the effect of increasing the circulation beyond the nominal publication figures to those who would not otherwise have been able to afford a copy of their own. A sizeable readership, however, does not imply that the readers shared the paper's opinions. Yet possibly the newspapers' opinions could not have differed significantly from
those of their readers, or they would have lost their support. All six examples were long-lived papers that successfully judged their audience, and in many cases survived strong competition, so their views probably were shared by a substantial section of provincial opinion.

The papers' expressions of opinion, though rare, cannot be dismissed as insignificant, because they were often the only substantial difference between competing local newspapers that carried the same news. Even taking account of the restrictions of the evidence, it is possible to suggest some connections between the papers' politics and their reporting of the war. It is further possible to consider how those politics are related to provincial opinion, as a preliminary to judging provincial opinion on the issues of the war from the reporting in provincial newspapers.
II. Politics and the Provincial Newspapers

Throughout the period, the six newspapers were dominated by the news of the war or issues related to the war. The war in Europe formed the great bulk of the war news, often from foreign sources. News from the other theatres of the war was very much less frequent and voluminous, because of limitations in communications and reporting, and also possibly because there was less to report. All six papers printed similar proportions of war news. For example, an average of around seventy per cent of the news space in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal was occupied with news or discussion of events connected with the war in Europe or at home. Less than ten per cent of the paper's space normally was given to news from North America, the West Indies and India. Usually, about a quarter of the news content had little to do with the war. By June 1762, however, articles unconnected with the war occupied slightly more than forty-six per cent of the paper's news space, almost the same amount taken by news of the war in Europe.1

The war in Europe was reported regularly and in great detail, in reports mainly from Prussia, the Netherlands and France. Most reports concerned military or diplomatic moves, and were taken from London evening papers. Despatches from military commanders were reprinted from the London Gazette, usually after important battles. A representative example of the reporting of a decisive battle is that of Minden. The allied army's timely victory over the French on 1 August 1759 secured Hanover and

1. Calculated from FFBJ, 29 May-5 June 1756; FFBJ, 5-12 June 1756; FFBJ, 2 June 1759; FFBJ, 5 June 1762.
freed British efforts to counter the threat of invasion from France. The refusal of Lord George Sackville, British commander of the cavalry at the battle, to charge when ordered to created considerable controversy and led to his court martial.\(^2\)

Reports of Minden occupied issues of the six papers for three consecutive issues in August 1759. Although the battle was the largest single subject of news during that period, it did not dominate the newspapers to the exclusion of other news. Nor, surprisingly, did it provoke any discussion, other than the controversy surrounding Sackville's alleged inactivity and eventual court martial, which occupied the papers until the following year.

The six papers all reported the events in a similar fashion. The first report of the battle arrived a week after the event, copied by provincial newspapers from a *London Gazette Extraordinary*. Unusually, the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* printed an extract of a private letter from London to a gentleman in Leicester that reported the victory before the *Gazette Extraordinary* had appeared.\(^3\) Further details were provided by the following day's editions of the *General* and *Lloyd's Evening Posts* and the *London Chronicle*. They gave few further details, and the *London Evening-Post's* assurance that Lord George Sackville had attacked with great intrepidity and considerable losses was later shown to be entirely fallacious. The following post, on 11 August, provided a list of those killed and wounded, in a report almost two columns long. Only five days later were questions raised about the inactivity of the cavalry under

---


3. *LNP* 328, 11 Aug. 1759, p.3 c.1-2., p.3 c.2, p.3 c.3.
Sackville. His resignation was reported, without naming him, by the *Whitehall Evening Post*. The *General Evening Post*, in contrast, announced that it chose to remain silent rather than report the rumours concerning the General, since all reports were unfavourable to him. The *Norwich Mercury* reprinted both these London papers' reports without comment. A week after the initial report, and fourteen days after the battle, Prince Ferdinand's victory was again announced in a report from Hanover, dated the day after the battle. A plan of the order of battle, casualties, captures, and Ferdinand's orders were copied from London papers from 14 August, and occupied in total more than two columns of that week's *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*. A report of the reaction in France was printed the following week, and dated 10 August.

The continental war was reported comprehensively in comparison to the other major areas of the war, North America and India. Although great victories in Canada were reported as fully as those in Germany, there was no weekly background of reports on the progress of the campaigns as there was from the continent. Normally at most two or three paragraphs of 'Plantation News' from the North American colonies was printed each week by the six newspapers studied, of which sometimes only one paragraph a month concerned military activities. Although North America was regarded as the most important field of war by most people, the campaign was on orthodox lines and politically uncontroversial.

7. Peters, p.89.
Campaigns in America were planned for up to a year ahead, longer than for any other area of the war. It was annually expected, as a Philadelphian correspondent of the Newcastle Journal hoped in June 1759, that the war in America would be ended within one campaign. In contrast to the campaigns in Germany and India, the British plan of operations was widely known in advance. In May 1759 the Norwich Mercury set out, from the London Gazette, the three directions of attack for 1759. The plan of campaign attracted no comment in the six provincial papers, even in Bristol, which had important trade links with the Thirteen Colonies.

News of the North American war was reprinted from London evening papers mainly, and from the London Gazette. The evening papers usually reported the progress of campaigns from letters from correspondents at New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Halifax, while the Gazette normally was reprinted only for victories, quoting the commanders' despatches to the War Office, the Admiralty or the Secretary of State for the Southern Department.

A typical example of the irregularity and uncertainty of reports from North America is provided by the expedition against Fort du Quesne in late 1758. The fort, in the Ohio valley to the west of Pennsylvania, had been the object of General Braddock's disastrous attempt to outflank Montreal and Quebec from the south-west in 1755. The plan was repeated in 1758 as a subsidiary to the successful attack on the French naval base at Louisbourg on Cape Breton island. Interest in the North American war was high after the news of the capture of Louisbourg arrived

8. NM 476, 9 June 1759, p.2 c.3-p.3 c.1.
in August 1758, so any details available to provincial papers concerning the expedition against Fort du Quesne were printed, despite its relative insignificance. This led to premature and contradictory reports of the fort's capture. It eventually was abandoned by the French on 26 November due to lack of supplies.

Brigadier-General Forbes' expedition was a recurrent, but intermittent, source of news from October 1758 till January 1759. After an action near the fort in September 1758, British officers and men were listed missing, then confirmed prisoners, by several papers. However, Aris's Birmingham Gazette printed a contradictory report that Fort du Quesne had surrendered, from a little-used source, the Daily Advertiser. In late December, Felix Parley's Bristol Journal was 'credibly informed' that the Governor of North Carolina had congratulated Pitt, the Southern Secretary of State, on the taking of, among other places, Fort du Quesne, although no official news had been received of such an event. The French abandonment of the fort was not confirmed until mid-January. The last report from Forbes' expedition had been dated 22 November; the news of its success was first known from a letter found on a French ship from Quebec, and confirmed by a report from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Most aspects of the North American war received such intermittent and confusing treatment, but few received as much sustained attention as

12. FFBJ, 6 Jan.1759, p.1 c.2.
13. LNJ 298, 13 Jan.1759, p.3 c.3; ABG 895, 15 Jan.1759, p.2 c.2; NM 456, 20 Jan.1759, p.2 c.1, p.2 c.3.
Forbes' expedition. This situation was even more pronounced in the other areas of the war in the colonies.

The war in India was reported very little in comparison with other areas of conflict. It was uncontroversial, largely since it was too far away for any direction from London, and was conducted by the East India Company, with the help of some naval forces under royal command. This theatre of war attracted very little attention from the provincial newspapers other than in reports of military and naval encounters. News was sent infrequently, and took at least six months to reach Britain. News of what became known as the 'black hole of Calcutta' on 20 June 1756 reached London almost exactly a year later, on 7 June 1757.\textsuperscript{14} This may have been abnormally slow, since news of the death of Vice-Admiral Watson and the conclusion of a treaty with the new nabob in August 1757 reached London exactly six months later, the following February.\textsuperscript{15} Often little or no news from India was published for several months, but when news was available it tended to summarise many months' events, and was printed at length. A consequence was the printing of occasional rumours and unconfirmed reports. The scarcity of news was due partly to the infrequency with which reports were sent from India. The loss of the Bengal settlement was known to a correspondent in India in September 1756, but a detailed account could not be sent until December.\textsuperscript{16} Reports were infrequent also because newspapers used irregular letters from private correspondents. An account of the loss of the \textit{Dodington Indiaman}

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{ABG} 812, 13 June 1757, p.1 c.1-2.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{BBJ} 755, 20 Feb.1758, p.1 c.2-3, p.1 c.3-p.2 c.1.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{ABG} 812, 13 June 1757, p.2 c.1.
came from the journal of the chief mate, whereas reports of French captures sometimes were received in letters from France.¹⁷

However, most news from India was sent, either by sea or express overland, to the East India Company from its servants in the East Indies, and need not always have been made public. There was concern when expected news was not received or when it was believed to have been withheld, since this affected the value of East India stock.¹⁸ It was sometimes thought necessary to announce that no account had been received by the East India Company, and that prevailing reports of bad news were without foundation.¹⁹ Reports from French or Dutch sources were used, but sceptically. News from the Brussels Gazette in January 1758 that the French had captured Madras was said to want confirmation. Madras in fact had not been captured, so the English paper's caution, though habitual, was justified.²⁰ English newspaper printers assumed that French accounts habitually exaggerated their successes and diminished the extent of their defeats.²¹

The six papers' reporting of politics, both London and provincial, was very much less comprehensive and regular than their reporting of the war. Newspapers in general were not well informed on the workings of high politics at the centre of government, and tended to speculate when information was lacking.

---

¹⁷. ABG 812, 13 June 1757, p.1 c.2-3; BBJ 812, 26 Mar.1759, p.4 c.2.

¹⁸. NM 469, 21 Apr.1759, p.3 c.2.

¹⁹. INJ 269, 17 June 1758, p.3 c.3; BBJ 808, 26 Feb.1759, p.3 c.3.

²⁰. PPBJ, 14 Jan.1758, p.2 c.1; Corbett, I, pp.339-50.

²¹. BBJ 812, 26 Mar.1759, p.4 c.2.
Political reporting, taken from London newspapers, largely consisted of comparatively short reports of changes or rumoured changes in government offices, very seldom with any discussion of the reasons for the changes. Reports of provincial politics were scarcer but better informed. Yet local reports usually only hinted at attitudes and rivalries that would have been familiar to at least those readers who had an interest in politics, and their nuances are now obscure.

Nevertheless, considerable importance was attached to political news. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal in 1757 divided its 'Select Occurrences' from London under the subheadings 'Miscellaneous' and 'Occasional', and political news had its own division. Newspapers usually made it clear when the reports they printed were unconfirmed. A typical report was one in February 1757 which seems not to have been followed up:

> We are assured, that in the Course of next Week, or the Week after, an Affair will come before the House of Commons, of as high an Importance to this Nation, as ever came before the British Parliament.

When ministerial changes seemed likely, reports outlining the possible changes often appeared. Meetings of politicians known to be negotiating the changes were sometimes reported, but the politicians were seldom named directly to avoid libel actions, and the reports rarely gave any hint of the substance of the discussions. Reports became explicit only when official reports were available from the London Gazette. No background information was given to political news, so provincial readers probably must have acquired their knowledge of Westminster

22. See Clark, p.11.

23. FFBJ, 5 Feb.1757, p.3 c.1.
politicians and political alignments by reading the news over a long period, or from alternative sources, like the London political essay papers.

The provincial newspapers' view of high politics was simplistic. Few politicians other than the most important were mentioned at all regularly, and political alignments tended to be presented as simple factionalism. For much of the period, William Pitt and the other 'Patriot' ministers, who included at various times Earl Temple, Henry Legge and Charles Pratt, were presented, often incorrectly, as being opposed rigorously by the Old Corps, represented by the Duke of Newcastle and, to a lesser extent, Henry Fox. All six papers gave by far their greatest attention to any single politician's activities to Pitt, to the extent that he was often the only politician named in an issue of the newspapers. The picture of Westminster politics the six papers presented reflects what has been called the 'opposition version of politics'.24 News was selected by provincial printers under criteria that were hostile to the Whig oligarchy. From the fall of Sir Robert Walpole in 1742, the provincial press had almost unanimously opposed the Old Corps politicians. Although Pitt was a leading minister for most of the war, newspaper support for him as a 'Patriot' minister was based on his apparent opposition to the Old Corps ministers.

* * * * *

Political news seldom appeared without some comment, explicit or implicit. National political issues were the single

largest subject of newspaper comment. There are three main indicators of the political attitudes of provincial newspapers. Attitudes are revealed in rare direct comments by the printer, in more common readers' contributions, and in the printers' selections of material and comment from other newspapers. There was nothing analogous to present-day editorial comment in mid-eighteenth century provincial newspapers because the printer and publisher were normally the same person, and there was seldom any independent editorial or reporting staff. Most provincial printers seem to have considered it not their purpose to provide their own comment, but rather to leave their readers to make their own conclusions. \(^{25}\) As the printer of the first London daily newspaper, The Daily Courant, put it in 1702, he would not 'give any Comments or Conjectures of his own, but will relate only Matter of Fact; supposing other People to have Sense enough to make Reflections for themselves.'\(^{26}\) Comment directly attributable to provincial printers usually took the form of italicised notes on the veracity of particular reports. For example, under a report of a naval engagement in 1758 from the Whitehall Evening Post, the Leicester and Nottingham Journal commented

The above is related, with some small variation, in the other Evening Papers. All agreeing in the circumstances, and that the Mail came Express, from which we think there's the greatest reason to believe it may be true.\(^{27}\)

\(^{25}\) Wiles, p.269.

\(^{26}\) The Daily Courant 1, 11 Mar.1702, p.1 c.2, in Stanley Morison, The English Newspaper some account of the physical development of journals printed in London between 1622 & the present day, (Cambridge, 1932), facing p.74.

\(^{27}\) INJ 269, 17 June 1758, p.3 c.3.
Occasionally printers made approving comments on reports of benefactions and other, more controversial, events. When, in 1757, men of several Yorkshire militia regiments were sworn in, the York Courant expressed pleasure at seeing many gentlemen displaying 'a true Spirit of Patriotism', and its comment was reprinted by the Norwich Mercury.28

The six newspapers seldom gave their own opinions on political events possibly because it was widely believed that those outside high politics could not know what really was happening. A distinction was made by some papers between not knowing what was happening in high politics and not having a right to know. During the violent press attacks on Bute in 1762 the Norwich Mercury printed a verse that expressed weariness at discussion of Pitt and Bute, and argued that only those well versed in the matter should talk of affairs of state.29 Few newspapers practised this belief, however, despite their uncertain grasp of political events. Felix Parley's Bristol Journal concluded from the events surrounding the court martial of Admiral Byng in 1757 that 'however familiarly we may talk of such Measures, ... there are many in which we can discover only a Part of their Connections and Dependencies.'30 Yet ignorance of the workings of high politics seldom prevented newspapers from reporting and speculating on what was known of political events.

A more practical restriction on political comment by the printers of provincial papers was the time and manpower they had available to make original contributions. Provincial newspapers

29. NM 651, 23 Oct.1762, p.1 c.3.
30. FFBJ, 5 Mar.1757, p.2 c.2.
were almost entirely compilations of news from other sources, and political comment also was provided by outside sources. It is in the choice of these sources, from the wide variety of newspapers, essay-papers and pamphlets produced in London, that aspects of the political attitudes of the six provincial newspapers are apparent. When comment from a London newspaper was reprinted, it was normally included, without a title, among the articles of news taken from London papers. Sometimes, but not always, the source was acknowledged. Essays from essay-papers and pamphlets were usually printed at length with a headline giving the source and sometimes the title of the essay, but very rarely the author's name or pseudonym. Essays appeared irregularly, and usually on two to three columns on the front or back page. There is evidence of editing in some essays, necessary often because newspaper space usually was inadequate for pieces from six-page essay papers or frequently longer pamphlets. Occasionally, the argument of a pamphlet was summarised, and only the significant or controversial sections printed in full. In the rare case of a very widely read pamphlet, it was reprinted in full over several issues. Israel Mauduit's Considerations On The Present German War was abstracted in four consecutive issues of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal for January 1761.31 At the time of the violent pamphlet and essay-paper debate over Bute's ministry in 1763, the Leicester and Nottingham Journal printed brief summaries of the contents of all the political essays weekly under the title Account of the Weekly Periodical Papers.32

31. LNU 402, 10 Jan.1761, p.3; LNU 403, 17 Jan.1761, p.4; LNU 404, 24 Jan.1761, p.4; LNU 405, 31 Jan.1761, p.4.

32. LNU 512, 26 Feb.1763, p.2 c.3-4.
Advertising is not as useful a guide to provincial opinion, but it is a significant indication of the variety and extent of local political organisation. Political societies advertised their meetings even in papers which supported rival groups. Occasionally advertising was used to pursue a local political issue. In May 1763 an unidentified group of constituents inserted an advertisement in Boddely's Bath Journal asking the members of parliament for Somerset to explain where they were when the controversial Excise Bill passed the House of Commons. One of the members replied through an agent in another advertisement that he was ill at the time of the vote.33

Letters and essays addressed to the printer were the principal method for the expression of political views in provincial papers. Most letters on political subjects were, however, copied from London newspapers. Identifiably local letters nearly always concerned moral or religious issues, or matters of general social concern. Letters, if printed at all, seem always to have been printed in full, and often given a prominent position on the front page or at the head of the local news column. Letters from local correspondents were sometimes specifically addressed to the printer of the paper, or they included the name of the writer's town, but more often a letter's origin must be deduced from its contents and the position in which it is printed. Not all letters were printed, since the printers thought some objectionable or potentially libellous.

John Gregory of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal informed his correspondents in 1762

33. BBJ 1029, 23 May 1763, p.3 c.1; BBJ 1031, 6 June 1763, p.4 c.4, over which is written "Mr. Coulthurst".
The Epitaph sent this week we've omitted as it would have done little credit either to the Author or us. The Queriggs we beg to be excus'd inserting as Improper.  

It was unusual for letters to be rejected, however. Potential correspondents were likely not to send a letter that they thought would not be printed. It was relatively costly to send a letter; in 1758 a correspondent of Aris's Birmingham Gazette sent sixpence to pay the postal charges. Thus a paper's political stance was determined not only by the printer's selection of material, but also by the readers' impressions of what the paper was likely to print. Nearly all letters were anonymous or pseudonymous; most local letters were unsigned or initialled, although many Latinised names were used, including 'Redcliviensis' of Bristol, 'Ourianus' of Scarborough and 'Icenus' of Norwich. 'Dapper Dickey' of Laycock was one of the few correspondents to have more than one contribution printed, his humorous letters and verses appearing regularly in Boddely's Bath Journal. Printers insisted that correspondents supply their real names so, as John Gregory of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal explained, the printer 'may be assured of the identity of the said paragraph.'

Letters could be used by printers to put forward points of view without the printer being identified with the correspondents' sentiments, and without the paper being

34. LNJ 464, 20 Mar.1762, p.3 c.4.
35. ABG 874, 21 Aug.1758, p.3 c.3.
36. FFBJ, 4 Oct.1760, p.3 c.3; ABG 895, 15 Jan.1759, p.1 c.3; NM 370, 21 May 1757, p.1 c.1; BBJ 739, 31 Oct.1757, p.1 c.1.
37. LNJ 409, 28 Feb.1761, p.3 c.3.
compromised in the view of those readers who disagreed with a letter.\footnote{38} Most letters on moral subjects conveyed unobjectionably orthodox sentiments, but in some cases there seem to have been additional reasons for their being printed. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal in 1757 carried an anonymous letter concerning a fast day, which recommended a religious tract. The printer added a footnote informing readers that the discourse was available at her printing office for threepence a copy, or cheaper for those who bought a quantity for the use of the poor.\footnote{39} Two years later the same paper printed some observations on Methodism, 'that Ignis Fatuus of the mistaken Brain, commonly deem'd Enthusiasm,' which probably would have offended some of the paper's audience.\footnote{40}

Printers did not necessarily agree with the sentiments contained in letters, but the prominence given to letters suggests printers thought them a good means of reflecting or helping to form the opinions of readers, or of making the newspapers sell well. Although there is no evidence for letters having been solicited by any of the six papers under consideration, some correspondence that appeared conveniently reinforced a printer's campaign.

The best documented example of a campaign conducted through one of the six papers which gives some indication of their possible influence, although not a political one, concerned the bankruptcy of Gabriel Holland, a mine owner at Swannington, about seventeen miles from Leicester. At least six letters appeared

\footnote{38. Money, p.57.}
\footnote{39. \textit{FFBJ}, 5 Feb.1757, p.1 c.1.}
\footnote{40. \textit{FFBJ}, 5 May 1759, p.4 c.1-2.}
between June and October 1760 discussing suggestions for a subscription to buy the Swannington coal works to prevent a price rise that would result from a monopoly controlling local coal production. 'A WELL WISHER TO HIS COUNTRY' made the initial suggestion to buy the mine and reinstate its bankrupt former owner, and, although eventually relay ing Holland's promises of low coal prices, claimed to 'have no concerns with Mr. Holland'.

Other anonymous correspondents suggested meetings of parish officers and the principal inhabitants of each parish to open a subscription, and demanded an assurance that any money raised would not be appropriated to pay the bankrupt's creditors. In March 1761, five months after the last letter, Holland inserted an advertisement in the Leicester and Nottingham Journal announcing that Earl Ferrers had opened a subscription to enable Holland to bid for the coal works when it was auctioned. A later advertisement said Ferrers had subscribed £500, and asked for contributions to be sent to John Gregory, printer of the newspaper.

Gregory's involvement in the organisation of the subscription suggests that he may have been an early promoter of the scheme, and its success was partly due to his persistent presentation of the arguments in his newspaper. Yet Gregory never inserted any comment of his own on the subject, and might well have been asked to take in contributions to the subscription

42. LNJ 371, 7 June 1760, p.4 c.1; 
   LNJ 377, 19 July 1760, p.3 c.3; 
   LNJ 385, 13 Sep.1760, p.3 c.3; 
   LNJ 386, 20 Sep.1760, p.3 c.3; 
   LNJ 391, 25 Oct.1760, p.4 c.1-2; 
   LNJ 413, 28 Mar.1761, p.3 c.1; 
   LNJ 414, 4 Apr.1761, p.2 c.3.
merely because he had a network of book and newspaper agents already. Whatever the level of Gregory's involvement, the campaign to reinstate Gabriel Holland demonstrates that the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* was an influential medium for the propagation of ideas, which could give the impression, if not necessarily the substance, of wide public support. If provincial newspapers were able to have an effect on the audiences in this way, then their political views can also be expected to have had some influence.

* * * * *

There was, in fact, a significant correlation between the political opinions and alignment of the six newspapers and the nature of politics in their respective cities. The amount of political discussion in a provincial newspaper is often a good guide to the level of local political activity and articulacy. It has been argued that many provincial printers avoided political controversy in order to make their papers acceptable to those of differing political views, and to avoid the danger of prosecution for libel. Some papers, notably the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal*, did try to remain impartial by printing contributions to both sides of political debates. Most, however, seem to have made little attempt to be impartial. Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal*, for example, was outspokenly Tory, and one of its competitors, the *Bristol Weekly Intelligencer*, was an equally ardent supporter of the Whig establishment. The Bristol newspapers reflect a thriving political culture. Provincial newspapers tended to adopt strong partisan views when they faced

43. Cranfield, p.117.
partisan competition. Where there was no strong local opposition, the frequency and vehemence of political comment were lower, but political comment was not necessarily absent. Such was the pattern followed in Norwich, where the Tory Norwich Gazette had been opposed by the conventionally Whig Norwich Mercury until the demise of the Gazette in 1753. By the time of the Seven Years' War, the Norwich Mercury had become less concerned with politics, and had adopted in some cases a mild 'country' or opposition Whig point of view. Both the Norwich and York newspapers displayed relatively little interest in political controversy, despite serving major regional political centres. It is therefore necessary to investigate carefully the relationship between the political content of individual provincial newspapers, and what is known of the politics of their respective cities.

Bristol was the leading provincial city with one of the highest degrees of provincial political organisation, and Felix Farley's Bristol Journal was by far the most politically outspoken of the six newspapers. The paper was outspokenly Tory, so far as to make the political content of the other five papers seem infrequent and subdued. Bristol was not only the second largest city in England, it also had an exceptionally large parliamentary electorate of more than 5000, the third largest borough after London and Westminster. The size of the constituency contributed to the growth of a considerable degree of political sophistication and organisation.44

44. Underdown, pp.3, 5, 10;
Felix Farley's Bristol Journal and the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer reflected two of the local political factions.\textsuperscript{45} Two political societies formed in Bristol were the Whig Union Club and the Tory Steadfast and Independent Society, the latter founded in 1737. They represented factions more than party organisations. Their main function appears to have been to contribute towards electoral campaign expenses, and to instruct members of parliament or address the crown on matters of concern to Bristol. The Union Club tried to maintain links with the parliamentary Old Corps,\textsuperscript{46} and was sometimes able to advise the government on appointments to minor local posts. The corporation of Bristol was dominated by Whigs, and was seen by its opponents as acting with the Union Club. The Society of Merchant Venturers, also with a largely Whig membership, had an occasional political role.\textsuperscript{47} The political clubs formed a link between the urban and rural gentry. On the election of a new Tory member for Bristol in 1756, gentlemen of the city and its neighbourhood, 'of the Country Interest', attended the victory procession.\textsuperscript{48}

Despite the unusual degree of political organisation, the great size of the freeman electorate made Bristol a relatively independent constituency. Both members of parliament were Tories from 1742 until the 1754 general election, when the single Whig candidate, Robert Nugent, was elected. From 1756 till 1774 the

\textsuperscript{45} Underdown, p.36; Contrary to Underdown's assertion, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal had a Whig counterpart, the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer, of which few copies survive for the period. See Wiles, pp.389, 393.

\textsuperscript{46} Underdown, p.8.

\textsuperscript{47} Underdown, pp.6-10.

\textsuperscript{48} FFBJ, 3-10 Apr.1756, p.3 c.2.
representation was shared by agreement between the two political societies.\textsuperscript{49}

\textit{Felix Farley's Bristol Journal}, while it accepted advertising from both sides,\textsuperscript{50} clearly stated its support for the local Tories. In September 1756 the Common Council of Bristol and two rival sets of Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants and other principal inhabitants presented addresses to the king on the loss of Minorca. \textit{Felix Farley's Bristol Journal} first printed the Tory address, which was critical of the ministerial conduct of the war. The printer added a defence of the loyalty and honesty of the addressors, against criticism in an advertisement inserted in the same paper by a group of Whigs.\textsuperscript{51} A fortnight later the paper printed the addresses on the same subject from the corporation and a body of Whig gentlemen, clergy and merchants. Elizabeth Farley considered two lines of Daniel Defoe a proper introduction to the Whig address:

\begin{quote}
Wherever GOD erects a house of Pray'r,
The Devil's sure to have a Chapel near.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

Significantly, although the bipartisan conflict in Bristol was mirrored by the two politically active local newspapers, the debates themselves were often conducted with material from London, not provincial, sources. For example, in February 1757 \textit{Felix Farley's Bristol Journal} announced that it would answer essays from a anti-ministerial London essay paper the \textit{Test}, reprinted by the \textit{Bristol Weekly Intelligencer}, by reprinting its

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{49} Underdown, p.56.
\textsuperscript{50} Underdown, p.75.
\textsuperscript{51} FFBJ, 4-11 Sep.1756, p.3 c.2-3.
\textsuperscript{52} FFBJ, 18-25 Sep.1756, p.4 c.1-2; Underdown, pp.74-7.
\end{footnotes}
rival, the Con-Test.\textsuperscript{53} This indicates the newspapers' dependence on metropolitan papers, not that political rivalries in Bristol took their format from the capital. In fact, there is evidence for a distinctive opposition ideology.

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal was responsible for one of the most remarkable statements of political beliefs to appear in any of the six papers during the war. The paper printed in February 1757 under the headline 'POLITICAL PROPOSALS' an anonymous list of nine suggestions for governmental, financial and ecclesiastical reform. The formation of the short-lived Pitt-Devonshire ministry in November 1756 on a programme of reform had encouraged the press to put forward proposals for political and economic reform. A headline was still then a rarely-used device, and a list of 'proposals' was a common method for printers to comment without associating their paper with sentiments that might antagonise some readers. The Bristol paper's Proposals combined articles of the Tory and 'Country' platforms with some unusual and radical demands. Some of the proposals would have been accepted by the majority of both Tories and opposition Whigs. First, '(And prior to all other Considerations)', was that a national militia be established rapidly. The importance of maritime forces was also stressed. These were typical opposition views, acceptable to a broad range of opinion, and were no more than what the Pitt-Devonshire ministry was believed to be implementing.

Other items were more specifically country demands. The 'country interest', which included both opposition Whigs and Tories, opposed the policies of the court Whigs and the financial

\footnote{\textbf{FPBJ}, 5 Feb.1757, p.3 c.3.}
interest of the City. Tories, particularly, resented what were seen to be financiers profiting from the war while landowners paid a comparatively high wartime land tax. They believed the balance of the constitution had been upset by the extension of the financial power of the crown and what they saw as an excessive number of officials and placemen, dependent on court patronage. The Bristol paper's proposals reflect these concerns. They asked for the land tax to be reformed on a more equitable basis, that 'oeconomy' and frugality be cultivated in public affairs, and that the 'excessive' number of revenue officials be reduced. The writer also echoed traditional country calls for public spirit on the part of men of property by expressing the wish that men in high posts would devote less time to gaming and more to the service of their country. The other demands, however, were more novel and radical. It was proposed that subscribers to government loans should surrender the interest in return for an annuity. More controversially, the paper suggested that ecclesiastical dignitaries and those holding crown posts should remit half their salaries or stipends for public use.

The six provincial papers rarely chose to make political comments. The most sustained and voluminous instance of local political comment was Felix Farley's Bristol Journal's commentary on the 1756 Bristol by-election, which was not again equalled either by it or any of the other five papers. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal's extensive discussion of the by-election seems


55. FFBJ, 5 Feb.1757, p.1 c.2-3; See the facsimile of this issue between pp.20 and 21.
to have been mirrored by the attention given to the subject by its rival, the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer. The 1756 by-election, however, attracted less controversy than had its predecessor in early 1754. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal had then printed addresses, speeches, accusations and a large amount of comment on the election campaign.

In contrast to 1754, the election campaign of March 1756 appears to have received little attention from the press. No pamphlets are known to survive. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal printed only formal announcements and advertisements until polling began. Yet the by-election attracted widespread interest outside Bristol. The Norwich Mercury reprinted a report from the Whitehall Evening Post in mid-March that the contest was as great 'as has been known at almost any Election'.

The Tory sympathies of Felix Farley's Bristol Journal were strikingly obvious. The anticipated candidacy of the Tory, Jarrit Smith, was reported in the Bristol news column rather than announced by advertisement as his opponent's was. The report claimed Smith was universally respected and in every way qualified for the important trust. The only attempt by the paper openly to influence the the course of the election before the close of the poll was to insert a copy of a letter from Spithead received by the Tory candidate. The correspondent

56. FFBJ, 10-17 Apr.1756, p.3 c.2-3.
58. Underdown, p.50.
59. NM 309, 13 Mar.1756, p.2 c.1, p.3 c.1.
60. FFBJ, 14-21 Feb.1756, p.3 c.3.
claimed to be a freeman of Bristol who had been pressed into the navy, and asked Smith to arrange his release to vote in the by-election. The release of impressed men to allow them to vote was announced after the poll closed.61

On his victory, Jarrit Smith thanked his electors for his success in *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, again in the Bristol news column, not as an advertisement.62 Furthermore, the paper printed a sixty-six line allegation of corrupt practices by Smith's opponents. The printer claimed that although Smith had won a fair majority, the sheriffs deferred the return and 'Some dark Contrivances were immediately set on Foot to evade the Majority and not return Mr. Smith'. *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* claimed 'The Opposition itself was evidently the most unaccountable that ever was carried on', and alleged that a great variety of undue influence was made use of among the voters.63

Great political capital was made from Jarrit Smith's victory. *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* reported that Smith's election was celebrated with bellringing and bonfires in almost every parish of the three adjoining counties.64 The paper claimed that the unsuccessful Whigs were attempting to impute Jacobitism to 'all those who in the least differ from them in political Sentiments'. This was a particularly potent threat in view of the possibility of French invasion in 1756 and the recent

61. *FBJ*, 6-13 Mar.1756, p.3 c.3; *Underdown*, p.52; *FBJ*, 13-20 Mar.1756, p.3 c.2.
63. *FBJ*, 13-20 Mar.1756, p.3 c.3; See also *FBJ*, 27 Mar.-3 Apr.1756, p.3 c.3.
64. *FBJ*, 20-27 Mar.1756, p.3 c.3.
memories of the 1745 rebellion. The Tories were sensitive enough to this charge to remove a pre-Hanoverian coat of arms from a triumphal arch erected for Jarrit Smith's return to Bristol, and Felix Farley's Bristol Journal devoted forty-three lines to the incident.65

The local political comment in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal seems to have been written by a variety of authors. For a month following the by-election, the paper devoted at least a column in its local news on page three to comment. The main reports, which contained sometimes strong comment, appear in a similar style to the rest of the local news, and so probably were written by Elizabeth Farley. On one occasion one such report quoted part of a speech against the Union Club given at the Exchange Coffee-House.66 An obviously different author provided an essay on good and bad character in administration, an attack on the corporation.67 Two verses from different anonymous authors were printed, and a letter from 'WM. K---R.' on the by-election.68 Addresses to the crown from the corporation and Whig and Tory groups were received by the paper directly, and were printed among local news, not reprinted from the London Gazette among London news, as was done by many other provincial newspapers.69 Felix Farley's Bristol Journal's facilities for local reporting therefore were not rudimentary, since political

65. FFBJ, 3-10 Apr.1756, p.3 c.2-3.
66. FFBJ, 3-10 Apr.1756, p.3 c.3.
67. FFBJ, 10-17 Apr.1756, p.3 c.3.
68. FFBJ, 13-20 Mar.1756, p.3 c.3; FFBJ, 27 Mar.-3 Apr.1756, p.3 c.3; FFBJ, 10-17 Apr.1756, p.3 c.3.
69. FFBJ, 10-17 Apr.1756, p.3 c.1-2.
meetings and celebrations were well reported. The paper was forceful, coherent and not derivative in its political comments, when it chose to make them.

However, the six provincial papers rarely chose to make political comments. The only other paper that printed political comment to an extent even remotely rivalling the Bristol paper was the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. Yet it did not reflect the political alignments in Leicester. It was the only local newspaper and tended to ignore local politics and treat national political issues with studied impartiality.

Political divisions in Leicester were strong, but based as much on local issues as on national concerns. The city formed part of the large freeman borough constituency of the City and County of Leicester. The borough was large, with over 2000 voters, so was considered independent of corporate or aristocratic management. In the contested 1754 general election, the number of votes cast by resident freemen for the Whig and two Tory candidates was almost equal, whereas among the outvoters, over sixty per cent were for the Tory candidates. The Tory majority in the county of Leicester was overwhelming, at 282 to thirteen votes.

Although Tory voters were only a small majority among city voters, the Leicester corporation was completely controlled by high church Tories. The corporation consisted of forty-eight common councilmen, from whom twenty-four aldermen were chosen. All voted for the Tories in 1754. The 1754 election was significant for the development of a well-organised and

70. Greaves, p.87.
71. Greaves, p.102, n.5.
aggressive opposition to the Tory corporation. Local Whigs and the county Whig gentry combined purportedly in defence of freemen's rights, particularly those of religious non-conformists. Yet the election was fought largely on a local, not a national, issue; the corporation planned to enclose an area of common land. Even though serious divisions emerged in the 1760s over the Stamp Act, by the 1770s there was still no party organisation based on national issues. 'Tory' and 'Whig' applied to local political groups only insofar as they describe attitudes towards the power of the corporation and county magnates.72

It is difficult to categorise the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal*’s position within Leicester politics. John Gregory, its printer, was very probably an active Tory, since he was a member of the corporation and was elected mayor in 1781.73 Yet the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* was not a strongly partisan paper. In December 1753 the Whigs who planned to destroy the fences of the corporation's new enclosure advertised their intentions in Gregory's newspaper.74 There were suspicions of Gregory's anti-ministerialism during a parliamentary by-election in 1762, however. The printer denied a report that he had refused to insert an advertisement from an agent of Sir Thomas Cave, a candidate who supported Bute's ministry. John Gregory claimed the story to be as void of truth as of probability, but it must have been believable for the rumour to have spread and require rebuttal.75 Yet hints of opposition to the ministry were

---

73. Cranfield, p.63.
74. Greaves, p.102.
75. *LNJ* 464, 20 Mar.1762, p.3 c.4.
avoided by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. The paper reprinted regular extracts from the essay paper debate over Bute's ministry in mid-1762, but gave equal weight to both sides. Above an extract from the anti-ministerial North Briton, the printer claimed not to agree with the writer, but only to lay it before our Readers, as being very remarkable. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal is unusual among the six papers for giving attention to both sides of a major political debate. The Leicester paper was probably even-handed because it could not afford to antagonise almost half its potential readership.

While in some cities it is possible to make a clear identification of what were called locally Whig and Tory groups, the great variety of provincial political allegiance often makes such classification valueless. In Bath, for instance, the corporation's politics can be described as more Pittite than Tory, changing to support the Whig administration by 1763. In Bath it is additionally difficult to identify widely-held political attitudes, independent of the newspapers, because the dominant political body, the corporation, was small and closed.

Bath newspapers reflect the unusual nature of the large resort town. They catered as much for the transient company as for the permanent residents of the city and its district. Yet Boddely's Bath Journal did not merely mirror any particular London view of political events. The paper maintained a distinctive political attitude that followed the Bath corporation's support of, and eventual estrangement from, William Pitt, one of their members of parliament.

The Bath corporation was a body of twenty common councilmen

76. LNJ 477, 19 June 1762, p.4 c.1-2.
and ten aldermen who were mostly professional men, with few country gentlemen. The corporation alone elected the borough's two members of parliament. The corporation had a reputation for independence, and usually chose as members men with strong local connections or a national reputation. General Sir John Ligonier was elected a member for Bath in 1748. His candidacy had been promoted by Ralph Allen, chief member of one of the factions within the corporation, to defeat a strong local rival. Again in early 1757 Allen put forward a candidate, William Pitt, to oppose Joseph Langton, who had Tory support. Pitt's associate, Thomas Potter, had, since the previous year, also been canvassing support for Pitt. When the support for Pitt became apparent, he was invited to stand, and was elected by all twenty-nine of the attending members of the corporation. Langton's Tory supporters, including Edward Collibee, mayor in 1757, soon dropped their opposition and became enthusiastic supporters of Pitt. Pitt's friends began to dominate the corporation; Potter became Recorder in 1758 and on his death the following year was succeeded by Charles Pratt, another close associate of Pitt. Ligonier and Pitt were returned unopposed in 1761, and after Pitt's resignation from the Secretaryship of State in October the corporation sent him an address of thanks.

On each occasion when Pitt and Ligonier were invited by the Bath corporation to stand as candidates, *Boddely's Bath Journal* printed in full the invitation and the two replies, without any

---

77. Cannon, p.87, says the corporation was self-perpetuating; McIntyre, p.222, says the corporation's members were elected by the freemen.

78. McIntyre, pp.222-3, 228; Cannon, pp.87, 90-4, n.23.
added comment. The paper’s only substantial report of a local political controversy was inserted not on the initiative of the printer but at the request of one of the participants. In 1763, Pitt asked the paper to print his correspondence with Ralph Allen, formerly his leading supporter in the corporation, concerning Bath’s address on the Peace of Paris. On the signing of the treaty in February 1763, the Bath corporation asked its two members of parliament to present an address to the crown that referred to the ‘adequate and advantageous peace’.\(^79\) Pitt, by then no longer in office, already had made plain his opposition to the peace terms and so he refused to accompany the new member, Sir John Seabright, to present the address, and explained his action in a letter of 2 June to Allen. Pitt considered

> The Epithet of adequate given to the Peace contains a Description of the Conditions of it, so repugnant to my unalterable Opinion concerning many of them, and fully declared by me in Parliament, that it was as impossible for me to obey the Corporation’s Commands in presenting their Address, as it was unexpected to receive such a Commission.

Pitt added sarcastically that he left others, with their better information, to form their own opinions on the peace. He asked Allen to inform the corporation that he believed himself ‘ill qualify’d to form Pretensions to the future Favour of Gentlemen’ who differed so much from him on important matters. Allen replied that he had drawn up the address to prevent the sending of another the mayor had prepared in unacceptable terms. The description ‘adequate’ was Allen’s alone, but he made no apology for the difference of opinion.

The four letters exchanged by Allen and Pitt, but not the

\(^79\) Cannon, p.95; BBJ 1031, 6 June 1763, p.4 c.2.
copy of the corporation's original address, were printed two months later in Boddely's Bath Journal at Pitt's request, 'to obviate the wrong Impressions which an invidious Representation of that Affair in several of the public News-papers, may occasion.' Boddely's Bath Journal. The exchange of letters appeared without any preliminary hints of serious disagreement between Pitt and Allen. Nothing further was printed until late October, when Ralph Allen resigned as an alderman ostensibly on account of ill health.

Boddely's Bath Journal in 1757 claimed to be strictly neutral, but its ready acceptance of the corporation's views suggests that the paper avoided controversy rather than that it was impartial. The Journal also displayed considerable interest in the politics of other, sometimes quite distant, provincial cities. In 1757 John Keene printed from a private letter an unusually long account of violence at a municipal election in Liverpool. In a report of the violently-contested


81. BBJ 1051, 24 Oct.1763, p.4 c.4; Cannon, p.99, n.41.

82. Cranfield, p.118, n.4.

83. BBJ 739, 31 Oct.1757, p.1 c.3-p.2 c.1.
parliamentary election at Exeter in 1761, the paper summarised the main political groupings of that city.\textsuperscript{84}

Birmingham, even more than Bath, provides an example of newspaper interest in politics in a city where few were able to vote. Unlike Bath, Birmingham had no corporate government, and was not represented in parliament other than as part of the Warwickshire constituency. Aris's Birmingham Gazette, however, reflected considerable interest in the politics of the West Midlands.

Political organisation in Birmingham before 1793 was only informal.\textsuperscript{85} There existed in the west Midlands several societies that combined political with other social functions. The Birmingham Bean Club played an important part in the development of a coherent 'Birmingham Interest' that had become clearly identifiable by the 1770s. The club had been formed in the 1660s as a loyalist dining club, and its membership included county magnates and substantial urban tradesmen, gentlemen, clergy and military officers. It provided the opportunity for rural gentry and urban manufacturers and merchants to associate and act on matters of common concern.\textsuperscript{86} Another society that advertised its meetings in Aris's Birmingham Gazette was the Fraternity of the True Blue, an association of country gentlemen that met in Shrewsbury. Despite the Tory connotations of its name, its activities largely concerned hunting and dining.\textsuperscript{87} Little is

\textsuperscript{84} BB\textit{I} 918, 6 Apr.1761, p.3 c.2.

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Victoria History of Warwickshire}, VII, p.277.

\textsuperscript{86} Money, pp.99-102.

\textsuperscript{87} Money, p.99;
\textit{ABG} 829, 10 Oct.1757, p.3 c.3;
\textit{ABG} 929, 17 Sep.1759, p.3 c.2;
\textit{ABG} 1090, 11 Oct.1762, p.3 c.3.
known of the purpose or permanence of the many less formal societies of artisans and tradesmen. The most important of the informal tradesmen's societies which met in taverns were those associated with the Leicester Arms tavern, also called Freeth's Coffee House. John Freeth was widely known as a writer of ballads and political verse. Aris's Birmingham Gazette first printed one of Freeth's songs in October 1763.88

Before 1763, it has been said, 'the Birmingham Gazette contained little in the way of local political reaction' to outside events.89 Yet it contained no less than the other papers studied, excluding Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. Verses on both Pitt's and Newcastle's resignations were provided by local contributors,90 and further evidence of local interest is provided by a request from a set of gentlemen in Birmingham who in January 1760, announced that they, on 'hearing that the Birth Day of the Hon. Mr. Pitt Is approaching, would take it as a Favour if any Gentleman would inform them of the Day, in a Line directed to the Printer of this Paper.'91 The newspaper's attention was attracted by the politics of neighbouring cities, because Birmingham itself was not enfranchised, because a significant proportion of its population had recently migrated from the surrounding area, and because the newspaper circulated in many parts of the west Midlands. Although it rarely commented on the contests, Aris's Birmingham Gazette in 1761 printed a comparatively wide variety of advertisements for candidates in

88. ABG 1145, 31 Oct.1763, p.1 c.3.
89. Money, p.163.
90. ABG 1039, 19 Oct.1761, p.3 c.2.
91. ABG 946, 7 Jan.1760, p.3 c.2.
the general election from constituencies that included Lichfield, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Montgomeryshire. The paper was also used to advertise local political meetings like the meeting of Warwickshire gentry in April 1763 to consider an address on the peace treaty.

Political activity in Norwich, in contrast, was not readily apparent in its local newspaper. The second largest provincial city, Norwich had a large and politically active electorate by contemporary standards. Its representation was the fourth most frequently contested in the country in the period 1701 to 1831. Three municipal elections were held annually although they were usually contested only when political rivalry was serious. Only freemen and owners of freehold property were eligible to vote. In proportion to the population of the city, the number of freemen declined markedly throughout the eighteenth century. From twelve to fourteen per cent of inhabitants, about half of all householders, in 1700, the proportion had fallen to five and a half per cent by 1833.

It has been said that there is little evidence of serious political rivalry in Norwich between 1750 and 1800. Local parties, which had existed in the early eighteenth century, seem to have disappeared until their reappearance in different forms in the 1780s. Only two parliamentary elections, in 1761 and 1768, were contested between 1750 and 1780. Edward Bacon and Harbord Harbord replaced the recently ennobled former members of

92. ABG 990, 10 Nov.1760, p.3 c.2; ABG 1001, 26 Jan.1761, p.3 c.2; ABG 1010, 30 Mar.1761, p.3 c.2.

93. ABG 1115, 4 Apr.1763, p.3 c.2.

parliament for Norwich in 1756. Bacon was a regular supporter of
the administration in the 1750s, and was promised a seat on the
Board of Trade by Pitt for his support in 1757. After Pitt's
resignation, Bacon was still considered a government supporter by
Bute. Harbord followed a more independent line. Newcastle
considered him a doubtful government supporter in 1761, and he
rejected Bute's offer of a place as Groom of the Bedchamber for
fear of causing divisions among his constituents. Harbord was
acceptable to both political sides.95 In 1761 the sitting
members were opposed unsuccessfully by the aldermen Nockold
Thompson and Robert Harvey, for personal rather than political
reasons.96

There is also little evidence of political controversy in
municipal politics after 1750. The Assembly of the Corporation
of Norwich contained twenty-four aldermen and sixty councillors.
Of the known politics of councillors between 1740 and 1759,
twenty-eight can be classed as Tory, whereas nineteen can be
described as Whig. However, by 1761 the corporation was
uniformly Whig, although not significantly divided into factions.
Only one alderman voted for the challengers to the sitting
members in 1761. Yet many councillors split their votes, rather
than casting both votes for a pair of candidates, although only a
small proportion of the whole electorate did so.97

From the very infrequent reports in the Norwich Mercury, it
would appear that Norwich politics did not take a partisan form.


96. O'Sullivan, pp.i, 105-6;

97. O'Sullivan, pp.19, 35, 52, 110-111;
Phillips, p.216.
The paper did not describe itself, or anyone it favoured, as Whig, nor did it mention any opposition, let alone label it Tory. Yet this is insufficient reason to deny the existence of political controversy in Norwich in this period. The contested general election of 1761 points to a substantial body of discontent with the uniformly Whig representation in local and national government. Nor were local political societies absent. The activities of the Constitution Club were reported occasionally in the _Norwich Mercury_. It was probably a Whig society, because it met annually on 1 August to commemorate the Hanoverian and protestant succession.  

The election of sheriffs was held at the annual feast, which suggests that the club had close connections with the corporation, and its membership included prominent citizens like Jehosophat Postle, a brewer, and wealthy men like Ellis Paston, who paid £80 to be excused serving as a sheriff. The _Norwich Mercury_ is an inadequate guide to the full picture of political activity in Norwich, but provides sufficient evidence to suggest the continuing vitality of politics there.

The _Norwich Mercury_ avoided comment on local political issues. However, its reporting of local issues followed the Whig line of support for the corporation and the two members of parliament. The paper's attitude was considerably muted from its earlier vociferous opposition to the violently Tory _Norwich Gazette_. Nevertheless the printer, William Chase maintained his father's support for the Whigs. On the election of Harbord

---

98. _NM_ 432, 5 Aug.1758, p.3 c.1.  
The Constitution Club is not mentioned by O'Sullivan or Phillips.

99. _NM_ 536, 2 Aug.1760, p.3 c.1.
Harbord as one of the members for Norwich in December 1756, Chase reported that

On this occasion every heart was joyous and every countenance shone with pleasure; never was the satisfaction of the public greater than in the election of this worthy gentleman.

The printer praised the 'two honest independent members' and the mayor's management of the celebrations. Edward Bacon was appointed a Lord of Trade in December 1759 and a by-election held. A meeting called to announce the offer of 'an honourable employment in public business by the great commoner' was reported by the Norwich Mercury. Bacon's unopposed re-election was reported to have been received with 'joy and unanimity' but otherwise it attracted no comment from the newspaper. Attention mainly was given to conventional Whigs in other constituencies also. The re-election of the Whig member for Bristol at the same time was reported at equal length from the General Evening Post to have been with unprecedented unanimity. During the Bristol by-election in March 1756, the paper selected a report from the Whitehall Evening Post that, despite trailing in the poll, many believed the Whig candidate would win.

The Norwich Mercury made no comment on the general election of 1761 in Norwich, despite the presence of four candidates. Advertisements soliciting support for the sitting members were inserted regularly from their nomination in late November 1760.

100. NM 347, 11 Dec. 1756, p. 3 c.1.
101. NM 503, 15 Dec. 1759, p. 3 c.1; NM 506, 5 Jan. 1760, p. 3 c.1.
103. NM 309, 13 Mar. 1756, p. 2 c.1.
until their re-election in March 1761. The challenging candidates did not advertise in the Norwich Mercury, unlike many other candidates of opposite views to those of newspapers in other constituencies. Therefore it would seem that the Mercury was closely identified with the Whig establishment in Norwich. The paper occasionally printed complete lists of common councilmen or aldermen of the city.\textsuperscript{104} The other five papers, for various reasons, did not do so.

Like the Norwich Mercury, the York Courant carried relatively little political comment. Yet the city and county of York, because of their size and reputation for independence, were regarded in other provincial centres and in London as significant indicators of provincial opinion. If any provincial area was to show evidence of a distinctive local political culture during the Seven Years' War, it could be expected to be Yorkshire. York was a large freeman borough constituency of about 2500 voters in which the corporation and local magnates competed for influence. The county constituency of Yorkshire was unusually large and varied. Its electorate of 15 000 to 20 000 included areas dominated by country gentry, balanced by many independent freeholders and several large independent manufacturing communities. To be effective, a county magnate's political connection had to be accompanied by popularity in the county.

The most significant development in the political disposition of Yorkshire in the 1750s was the growth to dominance of the connection of the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Lieutenant of the county until 1762. Through his ties with a variety of

\textsuperscript{104} NM 313, 10 Apr. 1756, p.2 c.3; NM 583, 20 June 1761, p.2 c.3-p.3 c.1.
independent or opposition Whigs and his patronage of local causes and entertainments, Rockingham had more influence in the county than had the court. By 1761, Rockingham's friends or nominees occupied both county, and one of the two city, seats. The York electorate until recently had been considered anti-ministerial and opposed to great county interests. Rockingham supported the election of the independent Sir John Armitage in 1753, and on his death in 1758 there was a hotly-contested by-election, on which Rockingham alone spent £8000 to £12,000. Consequently in 1761 the city's representation was shared by agreement by Rockingham's nominee Sir George Armitage and the Tory George Lane. The only formal political society mentioned by the York Courant was the Rockingham Club. It was formed in December 1753, after the election of Sir John Armitage, to promote Rockingham's interest among substantial tradesmen and other freemen, and met regularly at the George Inn in Coney Street. Although Rockingham's interest dominated York by 1761, there existed a substantial body of Tory opposition, led by the Lane family and including a substantial section of the corporation.

The York Courant formed an important part of the Tory grouping in York. The paper was regarded by its opponents as Tory, and had been probably the most outspoken of all provincial


newspapers in its opposition to Sir Robert Walpole. Frequently in the 1730s it devoted two pages to an anti-ministerial essay.\textsuperscript{107} However by 1756 the York Courant was no longer primarily a political newspaper. Having had no competitor since 1753, its opposition sentiments had become milder. Yet the paper still contained much comment against Admiral Byng and the Newcastle administration in the aftermath of the loss of Minorca in 1756. Unfortunately, the Courant's response to the strongly-fought by-election of 1758 is unknown, because no issues are known to survive.

The 1761 general election was, in contrast to 1758, uncontroversial. Neither the city nor the county seats were contested, and the York Courant showed very little interest in the election. The paper did, however, print large numbers of candidates' advertisements for constituencies in Yorkshire and neighbouring counties from December 1760 onwards. The York Courant reported without comment in late March 1761 that a general meeting of the Lord Mayor and citizens of York had recommended Armytage and Lane to succeed the former members, and they stood unopposed.\textsuperscript{108} On 31 March, the paper reported simply that the candidates unanimously had been chosen members of parliament, and listed the results of elections in some towns in Yorkshire and neighbouring counties.\textsuperscript{109} The sitting member for the county, Sir George Savile, declared his support for one of the two rivals for the second seat, Edwin Lascelles. The decision of the other candidate, Charles Turner, to drop his

\textsuperscript{107} Cranfield, pp.126-7.
\textsuperscript{108} WC 1848, 24 Mar.1761, p.4 c.3.
\textsuperscript{109} WC 1849, 31 Mar.1761, p.2 c.3.
candidacy was reported by the York Courant on 20 January, and his reasons, 'to preserve the Peace of the County', were given in an advertisement in the same issue.\textsuperscript{110} The remaining unopposed county candidates later were reported 'chosen in the most unanimous Manner.' In a relatively long account, the paper printed excerpts from the two member's speeches to a gathering of gentlemen and freeholders which was allegedly 'uninfluenced by any other Motive than Esteem and Reverence for undisputed Worth and Integrity.'\textsuperscript{111} All other election results were printed without comment.

The restrained treatment of the 1761 election can be explained by both the agreement to share the city's representation and the death of the newspaper's printer, Caesar Ward, in 1759. Ward's Tory associations were widely known. He had been rescued from bankruptcy in 1745 with the help of a prominent local Tory, the historian Dr. Francis Drake. In 1761, Drake was said by his opponents to have the 'command' of the local press. Yet Caesar Ward's death seems to have changed the political content of the York Courant. Compared to 1756, it was less ready to comment on political events, although Ann Ward maintained the paper's Tory line. At a time when York politics largely consisted of the relationship between the Rockingham Club and its opponents, the York Courant printed advertisements for its meetings, but did not report its proceedings.\textsuperscript{112} In January

\textsuperscript{110} Ye Olde Chronicle 1839, 20 Jan. 1761, p.2 c.2, p.2 c.3.

\textsuperscript{111} Ye Olde Chronicle 1851, 14 Apr. 1761, p.2 c.2.

\textsuperscript{112} Davies, p.248;
Sessions, p.37;
1763 the organisers of an address supporting Rockingham after his dismissal from the Lord Lieutenancy 'thought it better not to send' an account of the club's meeting to the York Courant as 'it might have been refused'.

Thus it would seem that a newspaper's political line was determined not only by what it chose to print or leave out, but also by what potential contributors chose to send or not to send, according to their idea of the printer's politics.

The politics of the six papers lend weight to the conclusion that local political rivalries had little connection with national politics. Although local divisions were expressed in terms of Whig and Tory, they did not coincide with factions in national politics or even those in other provincial cities.

There was great variety in provincial politics behind the uniformity implied by the labels 'Whig' and 'Tory'. Provincial newspapers in most cases reflected the range of local political allegiance. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, the most vociferous, was stridently Tory, and reflected the strong populist Tory element in the largest provincial city. The polarisation of Bristol politics in well-organised clubs was reflected by the rivalry of the two newest local newspapers. In contrast, the York Courant by this period had moderated its formerly strong Tory line. The paper's comparative quiescence possibly reflects the declining influence of the Tories in York that was the result of the extension of the Rockingham connection in the city and county and its absorption of some Tory elements. Norwich, the second largest provincial city, was also in a comparatively quiet...


114. Clark, p.15.
period under a Whig monopoly of municipal and parliamentary representation. The *Norwich Mercury* correspondingly had moderated its formerly staunch Whiggism so that its political comment was apparently little different from that of most of the other papers. The Bath newspaper held similar attitudes for different reasons. The corporation dominated local politics, and Boddely's *Bath Journal* unsurprisingly was a strong supporter of Pitt, but by the end of the war, though not enthusiastic, it had become reconciled to the new ministry which excluded him.

Less of a case can be made for the identification of other provincial newspapers with local politics. Political divisions in Leicester, based largely on religious grounds, were not reflected in the local newspaper. The *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* gave very little attention to local news of any kind, although it did reprint political essays from London regularly, with studied impartiality. There are few indications of political alignments in Birmingham independent of the local newspaper. Aris's *Birmingham Gazette* adopted a Pittite and mild opposition Whig stance, and is a typical example of the 'opposition view of politics'.

The identification of newspapers' opinions is valueless unless those opinions can be shown to have had some connection with the papers' audiences. The views of the audience, expressed as 'provincial opinion', however cannot manageably be defined as simply public opinion in the provinces. As the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* asked in 1759,

> What is the PUBLIC? every subject of Great Britain. The high public; the nobility, gentry and clergy; the low public; tradesmen, and artificiers, labourers, common soldiers, coblers, potters, tinkers, &c. &c.¹¹⁵

It can be suggested that public opinion is not the aggregate of individual opinions but instead the publicly expressed version of those opinions. The definition of 'political opinion' must therefore be restricted to the opinions of those who exhibited a sustained interest in political affairs.

The evidence of provincial political opinion comes in general from the contents of local newspapers, private letters, petitioning, pamphleteering and rioting at elections and other controversial events, like the embodiment of the militia in 1758. These other expressions of opinion are relatively small and infrequent. It is possible that they are not as representative of the range of opinion as a newspaper was.

The views presented by provincial newspapers can most accurately be defined as 'newspaper opinion', which might, but need not, coincide with 'public opinion'. The extent of any overlap depends on the nature of the newspapers' readership. Even if it assumed that a newspaper was read by all those interested in politics, it is still highly unlikely that all agreed with the opinions presented. Many readers of provincial papers would have considered a newspapers' news coverage more important than its possibly objectionable politics. Furthermore, newspapers presented only one, or a small selection, of the probable wide range of attitudes held by those interested in political discussion.

The relationship between 'provincial opinion' and 'newspaper opinion' thus defined is a complex one. The two were not

necessarily separate or independent. Since public opinion can be considered to be that expressed by the wider political nation, and that political nation has been defined partly in terms of newspaper readership, then public opinion may have existed for practical purposes only in as far as it was related to newspapers. 117

However, it sometimes is possible to make a distinction between provincial opinion and the opinions presented by the newspapers. For example, provincial newspaper comment on the reorganisation of the militia in 1757 was uniformly favourable, yet the measure was very unpopular with those affected, and led to widespread rioting the following year. Newspaper opinion therefore may have been influential because it was normally disseminated to those who were not in a position to question the implied assumption that the newspapers' views were widely held.

Nevertheless, even if not necessarily exactly representing political opinion in its circulation area, a provincial newspaper could not afford to stray too far from widely-accepted attitudes. If it were to do so, it could risk losing its readers to an actual or potential rival.

The relationship between newspapers and provincial opinion seems to have been one of mutual influence. The climate of opinion may have directed newspaper attention to a particular choice of comment, and that comment in turn probably influenced opinion among its readers. It would have been almost as difficult then as it is now to identify what popular opinion on an issue was, had newspaper printers tried to do so. Rather, newspapers printed what they believed would arouse public

interest. The issues upon which newspapers commented are therefore a valuable guide to what well-informed contemporaries would have considered significant political issues. Newspapers 'may not tell people what to think, but they tell them what to think about'. It therefore is justifiable to attempt to study 'provincial opinion' on the national controversies of the war through provincial newspapers. It remains to be established whether the distinctive stance revealed in the newspapers on local political issues was carried over into national politics.

118. Peters, p.23.
III. Provincial Newspapers, Politics and the War, 1756

Since it has been shown that the six newspapers had differing attitudes towards the politics of their respective cities, it can further be questioned whether one distinctive provincial political stance is evident in the papers' treatment of national political issues. In the latter case it is possible to compare the provincial newspapers' treatment of issues with the known attitudes of metropolitan news and essay papers. Provincial newspaper opinion was largely indicated by the selection and treatment of news. A distinctive treatment can therefore be identified as one that combines elements of comment from London newspapers, sometimes with original comment, in a way shared by no metropolitan paper.

The early stages of the Seven Years' War provided a great deal of political material for the provincial papers. The interrelated issues of 1756 that elicited comment in the provincial papers proceeded from the ministry's handling of the war. The threat of French invasion from late 1755, the employment of German soldiers for home defence, demands for a reconstituted militia and the loss of Minorca attracted by far the most political comment in the papers. The political crisis over Minorca was unusually long-lived, lasting from mid-July 1756 until at least February 1757. The press played a major part in the outcry over the loss of the island and the attempt to transfer the blame for its loss onto the Newcastle ministry. Great attention was given to the campaign of addresses to the crown and instructions to members of parliament on the subject. The crisis led, in the view of the provincial papers, to the collapse of the ministry in November. The newspapers were very
badly informed on the reasons and plans for the change of ministry. Their misconceptions enable conclusions to be drawn about the extent to which readers of provincial newspapers could have believed they played a part in national politics.

Although war was not formally declared until May 1756, the early months of the year were not typical of peace time. The conflict in North America had begun in 1756, and naval warfare widened when restrictions on attacking French ships were removed in August. The consequent large number of captures by privateers provided material for newspapers, particularly those published in or near ports. 

*Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* followed the fortunes of Bristol privateers, regularly devoting a column or more to detailed reports of encounters or captures. The information frequently was provided by the privateers' officers or owners, or by Bristol merchants who had received private letters from men on the cruise.

The conflict was expected to widen, because a French invasion was feared. A major rearrangement of alliances from late 1755 had restricted French opportunities to attack Britain in Europe. Britain concluded alliances with Prussia and Hesse in late 1755 and early 1756, thereby making a French attack on George II's electorate of Hanover difficult. French options were reduced to attacking Britain directly or to capturing its European possessions. The French plan to attack the south coast of England, with diversionary attacks in Scotland, Ireland and the Mediterranean, became known to the British ministry in mid-February 1756.¹ Soldiers in British pay from Hanover and Hesse

---

¹ Corbett, I, p.89.
were sent to help defend England against invasion in April.\(^2\)

It has been said that the country was driven into 'abject panic' at the prospect of invasion,\(^3\) but there is no sign of panic in the country papers. None of the four provincial papers for which copies from 1756 are available treated the threat as if it were gravely serious. Aris's Birmingham Gazette first mentioned the threatened invasion in March 1756, when it reported from London an alleged French plan to invade Sussex, Milford Haven and Scotland simultaneously. The paper considered the plan, once known, was already half defeated.\(^4\) Newspapers in areas more directly threatened were not seriously concerned, either. In January, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal implied a parallel by questioning the French intention to invade Britain during 1745 and 1746. It was, however, in Tory interests to minimise the threat of Jacobitism in those years.\(^5\)

There were few reports of military preparations in England or France in 1756, in contrast with the case during the second invasion scare of 1759. On one of the few occasions, in mid-July, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal explained that sudden movements of the train of artillery had been caused by a warning from Ostend of French preparations for invasion.\(^6\) Reports in 1756 were scarce perhaps because the system of reporting military preparations had not then been developed sufficiently. That came as a result of the requirements of the war, since much of the

---

6. \textit{FFBJ}, 10-17 July 1756, p.2 c.2.
information on French activities came from naval reports.

There was not yet in the first half of 1756 any inclination to criticise the ministry’s handling of the situation. The Norwich Mercury printed a royal proclamation on taking precautions against invasion, and added a comment from a London source that it was a matter of consolation when threatened with a speedy invasion that the commonalty were so well affected to the reigning prince. Initially, at least, the provincial papers objected little to the principle of employing foreign troops for home defence. The use of Hanoverian and Hessian ‘mercenaries’ was criticised in Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal only on the grounds of its expense.

Thomas Potter told William Pitt in June 1756 from Bath that ‘Hanover treaties and Hanover troops are popular throughout every country. The almost universal language is, opposition must be wrong, when we are ready to be eat up by the French.’ A different impression is given by the country newspapers. Initially, they acquiesced in the importation of Hanoverian troops, but there was no suggestion that their employment was popular. It seems that foreign troops were considered at best an unpleasant necessity by the papers, since criticism of their use began to be printed only when politicians made it an issue at Westminster. However, the opposition to the Hanoverian and Hessian troops was never great, usually being tied to the

7. NM 305, 14 Feb.1756, p.1 c.1.
8. ABG 751, 12 Apr.1756, p.1 c.2.
arguments for a militia. In June Felix Parley's Bristol Journal reprinted a letter from 'Britannicus' to the London Evening-Post attacking the employment of German mercenaries. Much was made of crimes allegedly committed by Hanoverian soldiers. On 8 November, Aris's Birmingham Gazette attributed a murder near Maidstone to Hanoverians.11

The loss of Minorca in June became the major political issue of 1756. The island, east of Majorca in the Balaeric Islands, was a British naval base used against the French fleet at Toulon. The French plan to attack the south coast of England became known to the British government in February 1756. A descent on Minorca was to be a minor diversionary aspect of the attack. A squadron of ten line-of-battle ships under Admiral Byng was sent to reinforce Minorca on 6 April 1756. French forces landed on the island on 18 April, and were besieging St. Philip's Castle at Port Mahon when Byng's force arrived. An indecisive battle was fought against a similarly sized French fleet under the Marquis de la Galissoniere on 20 May, but the action was not renewed. In a council of war the British commanders decided to abandon attempts to relieve the garrison of Minorca, and to return to defend Gibraltar and wait for reinforcements. The garrison of St.Philip's Castle capitulated on 28 June.12

The British government declared war on France on 18 May, twelve days after the news of the landing on Minorca was received. Admiral Hawke was sent to replace Byng, who was arrested on his return to England in late July to face charges arising from his failure to relieve Minorca. Byng's despatch was

11. FFBJ, 5-12 June 1756, p.4 c.2.
published in an edited form that suggested he was largely responsible for the defeat. The response of the London press was immediate. The London Evening-Post and Gazetteer attacked Byng but also suggested the ministry was responsible for the inadequate response to the French threat. An enquiry was demanded by the London Evening-Post in late June, before the loss of Minorca was known. The controversy caused normally non-political newspapers to print comment hostile to the ministry, and led to a vigorous pamphlet debate that lasted until at least November.13

The response of the provincial papers was similarly rapid and outspoken. Their reaction to the failure to relieve Minorca and its eventual loss developed in identifiable stages. On the first news of the French attack, the ministry was accused of unpreparedness. However, by early July the blame for the loss of Minorca was placed almost entirely on Byng's failure to relieve St.Philip's Castle. Signs of a defence of Byng's actions emerged in mid-August,14 but the great bulk of comment remained hostile until in mid-September when it was first directly suggested that Byng was being used as a scapegoat for the ministry's failings.

Rumours of a French attack on Minorca had reached provincial papers in early April 1756. Aris's Birmingham Gazette reprinted a French discussion of plans for an attack and the problems anticipated, and added a detailed description of the island.15 The news of the French landing was given by the London Gazette for 6 May. A merchant captain was reported to believe it

14. YC 1607, 10 Aug.1756, p.2 c.2.
15. ABG 751, 12 Apr.1756, p.1 c.2, p.2 c.1.
unlikely that a siege of Port Mahon would be effectual before Byng's fleet arrived. Initial optimism was encouraged by the presumed unreliability of reports from France. The Whitehall Evening Post, quoted in the Norwich Mercury, considered no stress could be laid on reports from Paris or Brussels because they were 'often confused and disguised, improbable, and contradictory, cook'd up by the Nouvellists in the Royal Palace of Luxemburg and other Places about the French Court.'

Unconfirmed reports of a naval engagement off Minorca appeared on 3 June. The York Courant and the Norwich Mercury reprinted the Evening Advertiser's comment on the 'numberless' stories told about the fate of the fleet and Minorca, which 'at present engage the whole Attention of the Publick, and are variously told, according to the Humours of the People who tell them'. The paper's ironic comment on reports that the battle had not been in earnest later acquired unintended significance:

> From this relation we are to be persuaded that the Admirals Byng and West, with all the captains, all the Officers and all the men are cowards, and deserve to be hanged for betraying their King and country. It being too much the custom of our coffee house politicians to credit every trifling report, and without reflecting what is, or is not, proper to be done, to condemn without hearing.

There remained a general tendency to optimism when faced with unconfirmed accounts of events still in dispute. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal commented on the French commander de la Galissoniere's report of the encounter with Byng that 'surely all

---

16. ABG 755, 10 May 1756, p.2 c.1, p.2 c.2, p.3 c.1.
17. NM 322, 12 June 1756, p.1 c.1-2.
18. YC 1598, 8 June 1756, p.2 c.2.
19. NM 322, 12 June 1756, p.1 c.1-2, quotation p.1 c.1; Similar version in YC 1598, 8 June 1756, p.2 c.2.
the Particulars in the above Account cannot be strictly true! 20

The Whitehall Evening Post, reprinted by the Norwich Mercury, said that reports about Minorca from St.James's were so different from those on the Royal Exchange 'that we suspend giving our Thoughts on this Affair till we receive some certain Advice from our own People.' 21 The tendency of the provincial newspapers to credit the more optimistic reports, on what was often hearsay evidence, increased the impact of Byng's actions when eventually the facts became known.

The treatment of the Minorca issue in provincial newspapers shows subtle differences from the treatment of events by the London press. The timing of changes in attitude towards Byng and the ministry differs so significantly that it cannot simply be attributed to the usual delay in communications with the provinces. Yet virtually all the comment on the issues was taken from the London papers. Any differences between London papers and the country papers that copied them consequently must be due to differences in the substance and rate of development of opinion.

In the provincial papers, the ministry rather than Byng received, briefly, the initial blame for his failure to relieve Minorca. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reprinted a comment dated 12 June critical of 'Men in upper Employments ... slothful in Business, and diligent in the Pursuit of Pleasure'. The paper asked whether Minorca might not have been saved, considering how early the French plans against it had been known. 22

No blame had

20. FFBJ, 5-12 June 1756, p.2 c.1-2.
22. FFBJ, 12-19 June 1756, p.1 c.2.
yet been attached to Byng because reports about the Minorca engagement were still uncertain and contradictory. It was anticipated that Byng would rescue the situation, and the papers at first treated news of his withdrawal with incredulity. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal helped maintain this optimism. From the post of 19 June it reported, incorrectly, that the French had retired to Minorca and Byng had landed his troops to the relief of St. Philip's fort. The absence of any express from the Mediterranean enabled the paper to say there was the greatest reason to believe that the English fleet had long since relieved the island. The news from London of 24 June that Byng had returned to Gibraltar was considered very disagreeable

if we can believe it ... as we hear nothing of an extraordinary Gazette, we may from thence conclude this Account to be cooked up by those Destroyers of this Nation, and Robbers of the Publick, the Stock-jobbers.23

The publication in early July of Byng's despatch to John Cleveland, Secretary to the Admiralty very effectively diverted both the London and provincial newspapers' attention towards the Admiral. Provincial newspaper attacks on Byng took the form of verses, letters, essays and paragraphs of comment, the great majority of which was from London sources. Verses were the most frequent method of comment, particularly in Aris's Birmingham Gazette. Byng's despatch was attacked in the widely reprinted A Late EPISTLE to Mr. C[LEVELAN]D and A[dmiral] B[yng]'s Letter to S[ecretar]y C[levelan]D versified.24 In the absence of fresh news of Minorca, verses provided a ready alternative source to

23. FFBJ, 19-26 June 1756, p.2 c.1, p.2 c.2, p.3 c.2-3, quotation p.3 c.3.

24. ABG 764, 12 July 1756, p.1 c.2, p.1 c.3; FC 1603, 13 July 1756, p.1 c.2-3.
satisfy interest in the subject. Caesar Ward, printer of the York Courant, wrote on 13 July that he had long since expected a detailed account of the naval engagement, but nothing yet had been received. He announced that since he could come to no certainty in the matter, he would fill up the space with verses, and printed four.25

The provincial papers were readier to include opinion in reports concerning Minorca than they were at most other times. Short comments hostile to Byng frequently were added to reports concerning Minorca. On news that the Minorca garrison under the Lieutenant-Governor, General Richard Blakeney, had not surrendered by late June, Aris's Birmingham Gazette reprinted the comment '—God grant he may hold out, that the Fleet may come back in Time, and do as they ought to have done at first.'26 Other commanders, particularly 'old True and Trusty, the brave Gen. Blakeney',27 were praised at Byng's expense. Blakeney's birthday on 7 September was marked by bellringing, firing of guns, illuminations and bonfires, while a huge effigy of Byng was reported hanged in Covent Garden.28

Despite the voluminous comment on the loss of Minorca in provincial papers, little of it can be ascribed to provincial printers or provincial sources. Readers' letters and verses were the usual form of local comment, but few are known to have been printed concerning Minorca. One of the few local verses was printed by Aris's Birmingham Gazette on 9 August. The EPITAPH

25. YC 1603, 13 July 1756, p.2 c.1-2.
26. ABG 764, 12 July 1756, p.2 c.1.
27. ABG 764, 12 July 1756, p.1 c.2.
28. ABG 773, 13 Sep.1756, p.2 c.2.
on a late A[DMIRA]L presupposed Byng would be executed as

A Disgrace to his Family,
A Traitor to his Country,
And the D[ETESTATION] of every H[ONEST ENGLISHMAN].

The anonymous author considered Byng's presumed fate to be a perpetual warning to 'those PROSTITUTES Who presume to affront the Majesty of a Nation, By being the Tools of Ministerial Wickedness.'

It is in the timing of such accusations of ministerial responsibility for the loss of Minorca that the provincial press seems to differ from its London counterparts. The London Evening-Post and the Gazetteer had become openly hostile to the ministry by the end of July. The Monitor's charges of ministerial culpability for Byng's failure became much more vigorous after mid-July. The provincial papers were not as ready to attribute the disaster to the mismanagement of the ministry, despite the Bristol paper's initial criticism of the ministry. In July the London Evening-Post had combined demands for an enquiry into the loss of Minorca with attacks on Byng, but the country papers seem to have concentrated on the attacks on Byng. Aris's Birmingham Gazette on 9 August still wrote in terms of 'the Author of our present alarming Circumstances'. Although an anonymous local letter in the same issue placed all blame for the loss of Minorca on Byng, it made allusions to 'ministerial wickedness'. It was not until early September, however, that a provincial paper printed a direct allegation of ministerial culpability. Aris's Birmingham Gazette then reported, from an

29. ABG 768, 9 Aug.1756, p.3 c.2-3.


31. ABG 768, 9 Aug.1756, p.2 c.1.
unidentified London paper, an epigram that, rather than attacking Byng, demanded an enquiry into why he was sent too late to relieve Minorca, and with insufficient ships. Very probably alluding to the leading ministers, Newcastle and Fox, the anonymous author claimed they were

...ready a Tale of Deceit to advise;
And think they shall fully accomplish their Ends
By loading a Scape-Goat, to save their fast Friends.32

By mid-September, discussion of Minorca in provincial newspapers was almost entirely directed against the ministry. This change was probably provoked by a series of addresses to the crown and instructions to members of parliament on the loss of Minorca, many of which blamed the ministry, and demanded an enquiry and the reconstitution of the militia. Sixteen addresses and twenty-four sets of instructions on the loss of Minorca were presented from mid-August to December 1756, over eighty per cent from October onwards. Provincial participation was important, moves to address in the capital being delayed until provincial centres had acted.33 Of the four available papers' circulation areas, Bristol presented three addresses and instructed its members of parliament, Bath and Somersetshire sent an address each and instructed the county members, while Norfolk and York each merely addressed the crown. The petitioners were usually high sheriffs and members of grand juries, gentlemen and freeholders, or the mayor, aldermen and common council of corporate cities and towns. The demands varied, but the most common was for an enquiry into the loss of Minorca or the mismanagement that led to its loss. Most addresses and

32. ABG 773, 13 Sep.1756, p.1 c.2.
33. Peters, p.53.
instructions also demanded the establishment of a 'constitutional' militia, and many expressed concern for the safety of the North American colonies. Half the instructions required members of parliament to support variously place and pension bills and triennial parliaments, which were elements of traditional opposition or 'country' ideology.34

The press helped keep the campaign of addresses and instructions in the public eye. Even the normally non-political of the London newspapers reported the sequence of petitions. The London Evening-Post, particularly, gave great prominence to all stages of the planning and presentation of the addresses and instructions.35 Similarly, all the provincial papers printed the London address in late August and the instructions to the City members of parliament in early November. Most of the other addresses and instructions printed were from the provincial newspapers' own cities and counties and neighbouring counties and boroughs. Aris's Birmingham Gazette showed wider interest, reporting the instructions to the members for Ipswich and Lichfield in late November and early December.36 All the papers except the Norwich Mercury reprinted addresses from late August until December. The Mercury does not seem to have printed any

---

FFBJ, 21-28 Aug.1756, p.1 c.2;
ABG 777, 11 Oct.1756, p.1 c.3;
ABG 773, 13 Sep.1756, p.1 c.3;
ABG 781, 8 Nov.1756, p.1 c.2-3.

35. Binns, pp.24-5;
Peters, p.51.

36. ABG 784, 29 Nov.1756, p.1 c.3;
ABG 785, 6 Dec.1756, p.1 c.2.
after mid-September. In all newspapers, the petitions were printed in full, with details of the circumstances of their presentation and, sometimes, the king's acknowledgment of an address. The number of addresses and instructions printed was restricted more by available space than interest. The York Courant delayed printing the two Whig Bristol addresses in September because there was insufficient room for them when they arrived.37

Although all the papers considered reported the presentation of addresses and instructions, they usually did so without comment, even when the petition was from the paper's own city.38 An important exception was the petitioning from Bristol, by both supporters and opposers of the ministry. The Bristol Tory paper actively promoted the address. A letter to Felix Farley's Bristol Journal in late August 1756 urged the sending of instructions to members of parliament to obtain an enquiry into the conduct of the ministry. The writer claimed that instructions had defeated the 1733 Excise Bill and the 1753 Jewish Naturalisation Bill, and recommended the examples of the instructions to the members for Bristol and Bath in 1742.39 Support for the address was encouraged from as broad a group as possible. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal gave notice that those inclined to sign the Whig address could do so at any time at the Taylors' Hall in Bristol.40

37. YC 1613, 21 Sep.1756, p.2 c.2.
38. For example the Norfolk address in NM 335, 11 Sep.1756, p.3 c.1.
39. FFBJ, 14-21 Aug.1756, p.4 c.1.
40. FFBJ, 21-28 Aug.1756, p.3 c.3.
The controversy surrounding the three Bristol addresses makes it possible to suggest some conclusions on the authorship of, and support for, the addresses. It has been said that the campaign of addresses and instructions on the loss of Minorca was prompted by Tories and supporters of Pitt. However, the example of Bristol provides evidence to question this. Three addresses were presented to the king in September 1756, one from the mayor, burgesses and commonalty, and one each from the Tory and Whig groups.\footnote{FFBJ, 4-11 Sep.1756, p.3 c.2-3; FFBJ, 18-25 Sep.1756, p.4 c.1-2.} Even if the campaign of addresses and instructions was prompted by Tories and Pittites, it cannot be said in Bristol to have been wholly directed by them. Instead, the lines of the debate were conditioned by the response of all interested groups to the initial declaration, which in the case of Bristol was by a group of Tory gentlemen, clergy, merchants and other principal inhabitants of the city. Their address demanded an enquiry and a national militia, and was presented on 2 September by Jarrit Smith, the Tory member for Bristol. Although the Tories did not control the direction of later Bristol addresses, the others followed the form of the Tory address. Felix Parley's Bristol Journal appended a statement to the address that attempts had been made to make it appear disrespectful and even disloyal. The paper countered that the sentiments in the address showed that the citizens had not \textit{poorly submitted to an abject Adulation of Men in Power, or a tame Acquiescence in ministerial Measures}.\footnote{FFBJ, 4-11 Sept.1756, p.3 c.2-3.} The attacks most probably had been made by the supporters of the second petition from gentlemen, clergy and merchants, presented by the Whig
member Robert Nugent. The address, printed beneath a critical introduction, requested an enquiry into national misfortunes, but claimed the loss of Minorca to have been chiefly owing to the cowardice and misconduct of Byng. In answer to demands for a national militia, the addressors declared it would be presumptuous to dictate measures for the safety of the kingdom, and they would cheerfully acquiesce in all legally determined measures. 43

The debate in Bristol became so widely known for a letter to be sent from Liverpool to the essay-paper the Citizen concerning it, which was reprinted in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal in October 1756. The anonymous correspondent complained that the example of addressing was being used for purposes opposite to its original intention, becoming an untimely intercourse of flattery between the crown and particular corporations. The Whig Bristol address was compared to A Letter of Thanks from the CITIZENS of PARIS, to his ***** **** ******, Prime M[iniste]r of E[NGLAN]D. This widely reprinted 'letter' turned the meaning of phrases from the Bristol Whig address so that it read as a letter of thanks for the benefits to the French for Newcastle's actions. For example, the addressors expressed satisfaction with the measures taken for the defence of the American colonies. 44

Supporters of the campaign of addresses and instructions hoped for a response from Yorkshire to indicate substantial popular support and to encourage other counties to petition. However, none of the four papers reprinted an alleged copy of the instructions from the clergy, gentry and freeholders of Yorkshire

43. FFBJ, 18-25 Sep.1756, p.4 c.1-2.
44. FFBJ, 16 Oct.1756, p.4 c.1-2.
that appeared in the London and General Evening Posts, and
subsequently the Evening Advertiser in late October. The York
Courant informed its readers that no meeting to send instructions
had been called and it was considered inconsistent with the
paper's credit to copy the instructions until the authority on
which they were founded was known. In the following issue,
Caesar Ward relayed the London Evening-Post's explanation that
the printer had been 'imposed upon' and no such instructions had
been framed.  

Many of the addresses and instructions that were reprinted
by the four provincial newspapers combined demands for an enquiry
into recent losses with a variety of long-standing Tory and
'country' opposition demands. Instructions, particularly those
sent in November and December, were more explicit than addresses
and contained a broader variety of demands. The address from
the lord mayor, aldermen and commons of the City of London
alleged that ministerial mismanagement and dilatoriness were
responsible for the loss of Minorca and the endangering of the
North American colonies. A few addresses did not request an
enquiry, but, like the high sheriff, grand jury and gentlemen of
Somerset, expected the king to remove those responsible. Despite
the emphasis placed on ministerial culpability, there
were attempts to maintain the attacks on Byng. The Chester

45. VC 1619, 2 Nov.1756, p.3 c.1;
    VC 1620, 9 Nov.1756, p.2 c.3;
    Paul Langford, 'William Pitt and public opinion, 1757',
    English Historical Review, LXXXVIII, 346, (January 1973),
    p.71.

46. Binns, p.10.

47. FFBJ, 21-28 Aug.1756, p.1 c.2.

48. FFBJ, 11-18 Sep.1756, p.3 c.3.
address strongly criticised ministerial dilatoriness and mismanagement, but at the same time attributed the loss of Minorca to treachery and cowardice, the latter of which refers to Byng's part in the affair.49 However, the additional demands made in the addresses and instructions were features of the traditional opposition programme, and so can be interpreted as an attempt to redirect the reaction to the loss of Minorca from Byng onto the ministry. The Chester address, reprinted in Aris's Birmingham Gazette in mid-October, complained about the excessive level of taxation and national debt.50 Leominster on 3 September instructed its representatives to promote laws that would limit the number of placemen, and prohibit pensioners, in parliament.51 The City of London further demanded, 'at a proper Season', the restoration of triennial parliaments.52

The demand most prominent in the provincial papers was that for a 'constitutional' and well-regulated militia. The issue had been dealt with at length over a considerable period. Significantly, it had attracted a relatively large amount of original comment from both printers and readers. The instructions to the members for Leominster in 1756 considered the militia to be the natural, constitutional and effectual defence against any invasion, while at the same time precluding the necessity for foreign mercenaries.53 Support for the militia carried strong political implications. Control of the militia

49. ABG 777, 11 Oct.1756, p.1 c.3.
50. ABG 777, 11 Oct.1756, p.1 c.3.
51. ABG 773, 13 Sep.1756, p.1 c.3.
52. ABG 781, 8 Nov.1756, p.1 c.2-3, quotation p.1 c.3.
53. ABG 773, 13 Sep.1756, p.1 c.3.
had been one of the major issues of the Civil War nearly a century before. Support for a reconstituted militia later retained anti-ministerial and Tory overtones, while opposition to the principles of the militia was sometimes seen to be evidence of Jacobitism.\textsuperscript{54} Elements of the idea of a constitutional militia appealed to both opposition Whigs and Tories.\textsuperscript{55} Both feared the growth of a standing army, for financial reasons and because it was believed, particularly by opposition Whigs, that a strong peacetime army would encourage its use for internal political repression.\textsuperscript{56} The standing army was also used as an instrument of central government patronage, whereas the militia was controlled locally. The militia was a purely home defence force, so duplicating part of the role of the professional army. It was argued that a 'constitutional' militia would counterbalance the influence of the army, since such a militia would be under parliamentary rather than royal control, and propertied citizen militiamen would have greater incentive to defend their country than propertyless soldiers. When the Newcastle ministry brought over German soldiers in March 1756 to counter the threat of a French invasion, the militia was promoted as a citizen force that would avoid the need for alien mercenaries.

George Townshend introduced a bill for the reconstitution of the militia in December 1755. The bill provided for a county-based home defence force of 60 000 men ballotted from lists of


\textsuperscript{55} Colley, p.273.

\textsuperscript{56} Dickinson, p.105.
all able-bodied men. Townshend's scheme was widely favoured, support for the militia still being compatible with support for the ministry. The bill had an uncontentious passage through the House of Commons, but was defeated in the House of Lords. The apparent popularity of the militia obliged the Lord Chancellor, Hardwicke, to express support for the principle of reform and to suggest the reintroduction of an amended bill. However, if the two agreed in principle, they differed in practice. Preparations were made for a new militia half the size of Townshend's projected 60,000, and more closely under royal or army control. On the appointment of the Devonshire-Pitt ministry, a new militia reform bill similar to Townshend's was drawn up. Amendments to allow volunteering and to reduce the size of the establishment made the bill acceptable to the Old Corps, so it outlived the ministry to receive the royal assent on 28 June.

The militia issue initially failed to raise significant interest in the wider political nation. There were few signs of dissatisfaction with the ministry's handling of the war in early 1756, and in any case the 'Militia Bill still seemed (as it was later still more strongly to seem in the localities) almost a ministerial measure'.

58. Clark, p.233.
59. Western, p.133.
60. Western, pp.128, 133.
61. Peters, p.43.
The belief that militia reform was part of the ministerial programme in early 1756 was implicit in the only substantial provincial contribution to the issue, a letter to the printer of the York Courant, signed 'W.T.'. Printed on the front pages of two consecutive issues in January 1756, the letter answered criticisms of the militia made in the Evening Advertiser. 'W.T.' unusually argued for the necessity of both a constitutional militia and subsidies to continental allies, although opposed to the employment of mercenaries for home defence. Alluding to Pitt's and Temple's strong opposition to the Prussian and Russian subsidy treaties in late 1755, 'those Mock-Patriots' were accused of wanting to weaken British security as much as 'Anti-Militia-Men'. This attitude suggests that the writer shared Tory hostility to the opposition Whig 'Patriots'. However, the Tory 'Blue Water' doctrine was also considered dangerous by the writer, since he believed 'to prescribe or dictate, that our Defence is to be made, or the War carried on, against France by Sea only is hedging the Cuckow, superficial and ridiculous'.

'W.T.', and, considering the prominence given to the letter, possibly the York Courant also, opposed both the Patriot clamour against subsidy treaties and the ministerial response to the threat of invasion, the importation of German troops. In this locality, the Militia Bill as it stood still seemed more a ministerial than a Patriot measure.

The provincial press paid little attention to the progress of the Militia Bill until the later stages of its passage through the House of Commons, just before Minorca became the dominant

---

political issue. In mid-April Aris's Birmingham Gazette printed plans for the reorganisation of the militia.\textsuperscript{64} The York Courant commented in early May that it was 'the unanimous Sentiment' of honest men 'without Place, Pension, or Probability of Preferment', that is Tories, that an effective militia had never been more necessary or expedient.\textsuperscript{65} Hardwicke's promise of a favourable reception for a reconstituted bill, on its rejection by the House of Lords on 24 May 1756, mollified supporters of the militia. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reprinted the London Evening-Post's mild comment that the Militia Bill's death would not be fruitless, because 'out of these Ashes a Phoenix must arise to deliver this Country out of all its Difficulties'.\textsuperscript{66} The militia was to reappear as a controversial issue in the provincial papers in the following year.

The Newcastle-Fox ministry's difficulties were compounded by the campaign of addresses and instructions. In the face of public clamour and a potentially unmanageable House of Commons, Newcastle resigned in November 1756. A new ministry was formed by William Pitt, whose main conditions on accepting office were allegedly for an enquiry into past measures and the passing of a Militia Bill.\textsuperscript{67}

The collapse of the Newcastle ministry in November 1756 was an event unusual in eighteenth-century politics. The Duke of Newcastle resigned while he still had the support of the king and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} ABG 751, 12 Apr.1756, p.3 c.1.
\item \textsuperscript{65} YC 1594, 11 May 1756, p.1 c.1.
\item \textsuperscript{66} FFBJ, 12-19 June 1756, p.2 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Basil Williams, The Life of William Pitt Earl of Chatham, (London, 1915), I, p.283.
\end{itemize}
a substantial majority in the House of Commons. It has been suggested that the key point among the complex of motives behind Newcastle's decision was that 'the duke simply lost his nerve', but this is insufficient explanation. Nor was his resignation entirely the result of Newcastle's weakness and the ministry's disunited reaction to public complaints over Minorca. Parliament adjourned before the loss of Minorca and did not meet again till the following year, so the support of his parliamentary following had less influence on his decision than it might have done otherwise. Yet Newcastle's majority was of little benefit because he had lost the ability to control it.

The ministry's chief spokesman in the House of Commons, Henry Fox, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, resigned on 13 October. He did so possibly to avoid becoming the sole target for anti-ministerial attacks in the Commons, or because he wished to be in a good position to take advantage of the ministerial changes that seemed likely to take place if he followed such a course. Fox's resignation induced renewed approaches to be made to Pitt, with the view of his joining the administration in a subordinate post. Pitt refused to work with Newcastle, and despite the king's wish to avoid the situation where he would have to admit Pitt to office, Newcastle resigned on 11 November.

The provincial newspapers were not notably well informed about the political manoeuvring that led to the collapse of the


70. Browning, p.243.
Newcastle ministry and the formation of the Devonshire-Pitt administration. Sporadic rumours of ministerial changes had been printed long before Fox's resignation was announced. During the initial controversy over the loss of Minorca, in late July, the York Courant incorrectly reported from London that some alterations were believed soon to be made in the ministry, 'and it is universally wish'd, with some Amendment.'\textsuperscript{71} Nothing more was printed of such rumours until on 12 October the York Courant reprinted, from the Evening Advertiser, a declaration that rumours of the intended promotion of Pitt and Townshend were unfounded.\textsuperscript{72} However, rumours continued to be printed, becoming more specific. Newspapers printed contemporaneous predictions that varied from minor to complete changes in ministerial posts. On 6 November, shortly before the appointment of the new ministers, Felix Parley's Bristol Journal reprinted a piece from Dublin dated 30 October that quoted a private letter from London 'that a large Body of Newcastle Colliers assembled at the Sign of the Fox, St. James's, and play'd at PUSH-PIN for 5000 Guineas a Side.'\textsuperscript{73} Aris's Birmingham Gazette displayed the variety of speculation current two days later. As part of the complex negotiations to form a ministry that excluded Newcastle, Pitt met Fox on 28 October, and Devonshire on 30 October.\textsuperscript{74} Aris's Birmingham Gazette reported that two gentlemen, 'apparent Opposers in the Senate', were said to have been in close and amicable conference on 30 October. The next day, so it was

\textsuperscript{71} YC 1605,, 27 July 1756, p.2 c.2.

\textsuperscript{72} YC 1616, 12 Oct.1756, p.1 c.1.

\textsuperscript{73} FFBJ, 13 Nov.1756, p.2 c.2.

\textsuperscript{74} Clark, p.287.
reported, many ministers met at a nobleman's house near Queen Square. Fox met his principal supporters, Devonshire, Bedford and Marlborough, at the King's Head Tavern on 2 November to discuss the proposed allotment of offices in a new ministry.\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Aris's Birmingham Gazette} reported this meeting, claiming that several peers and 'great persons' had met on 1 November at the King's Head Tavern in Pall-Mall 'to consult upon a proper Change of Power, in order to redress the present Perturbations.' The post, which also contained the City of London's instructions to its members of parliament, concluded with the report that 'Great Alterations are soon expected in all the public Offices of the Kingdom.'\textsuperscript{76} No details of the negotiations were given, nor any names of politicians mentioned. Two reports set out what were supposed to be Pitt's conditions for accepting office. The terms on which the 'great Commoner' was to join the ministry were said to have been an enquiry into Minorca 'and, That a particular great Person be absolutely divested of all Power.' When pressed to accept a high employment, he was reported to have answered that

\begin{quote}
he must be excused, unless four Things were agreed to: First, a Militia Bill: Secondly, a full and impartial Enquiry into the Affair of Minorca, and the Application of the Money granted to prevent that and other Misfortunes: An entire Change of Ministers and Measures: And that this Kingdom shall be absolutely detached from all Germanic Interests.\textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

The list was repeated in other papers, after Pitt's appointment, with an additional condition said to have been strenuously

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{75} Clark, p.290, gives 2 Nov; Clark, p.291, implies 1 November; \textit{ABG} 781, 8 Nov.1756, p.1 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{76} \textit{ABG} 781, 8 Nov.1756, p.1 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{77} \textit{ABG} 781, 8 Nov.1756, p.1 c.2, p.2 c.2.
\end{itemize}
insisted upon by Pitt, that no pension should exceed £2000, and no pensioner should have a place or a seat in the House of Commons. 78

These published demands could not have been themselves part of Pitt's efforts to gain high office, because they were dated 4 and 6 November, and his appointment to office was announced on the sixth. On 19 October, Pitt's actual demands had been for the return of foreign troops, the passing of a militia bill, reparation for the affair of the Hanoverian soldier, and an enquiry into the loss of Minorca and failures in North America. 79 Pitt softened his demands when he met Devonshire on 30 October, assuring him there was no threat of punishment of the former ministers. 80 The publication of Pitt's supposed conditions for office only at the time when his appointment seemed certain reinforces the view that details of high politics did not reach the newspapers until it was convenient to allow them to do so, and even then not accurately.

As on later occasions, the purpose of the anecdote seems to have been primarily intended to enhance Pitt's 'Patriot' image. To the eighteenth century reader, patriotism meant putting the good of the country before personal advantage. It involved opposition to corruption and party allegiance, since both were held to be incompatible with the national good. 81 On 16 November the York Courant reprinted a piece from the Evening Advertiser.

78. XC 1620, 9 Nov.1756, p.2 c.1, p.2 c.2.
79. Clark, p.271; in slightly different form in Williams, I, p.283.
emphasising Pitt's good character by assuring readers 'that the Great Commoner was never at White's in his Life'. Continuing, it revived the anecdote that while Paymaster of the Forces under Henry Pelham's ministry, Pitt had refused to accept the customary perquisite of the office, a deduction of two and a half per cent from the pensions of Chelsea Hospital.\textsuperscript{82}

The new ministry took office on 15 November, four days after Newcastle's resignation. The Duke of Devonshire became the First Lord of the Treasury, and Pitt became the Southern Secretary of State, while the Earl of Holderness remained the Secretary of State for the Northern Department. Henry Legge became Chancellor of the Exchequer and Earl Temple the First Lord of the Admiralty.\textsuperscript{83} Pitt and a small group of his friends held the important posts, but the bulk of government officers did not change.

There was a notable consistency in the provincial reporting of the appointment of the Devonshire-Pitt ministry. The new appointments were listed in all papers in their post for 11 November. However, persistent rumours had implied uncertainty about the composition of the new ministry. The Norwich Mercury reported that the Privy Council had decided in the evening of 9 November on changes to a number of posts: 'Lists have been handed about, but as they are not by Authority, it is not thought proper to insert them.'\textsuperscript{84} On 11 November it was still, according

\textsuperscript{82} Williams, I, pp.152-6; YC 1621, 16 Nov.1756, p.1 c.1; Chelsea pensioners anecdote in slightly different form in NM 343, 13 Nov.1756, p.1 c.3; White's was a gaming club.

\textsuperscript{83} Williams, I, p.204.

\textsuperscript{84} NM 343, 13 Nov.1756, p.3 c.1.
to the *Norwich Mercury*, believed by some that Pitt would not accept a place unless there was to be a new parliament.\(^{85}\) Since Pitt's appointment was announced in the *London Gazette* on 11 November, and there is no evidence Pitt ever considered asking for a dissolution of parliament, such a rumour appears simply ill-informed. Yet some members of parliament took seriously a rumour that a new parliament was to be called.\(^{86}\) When little of the substance of movements in high politics reached the newspapers, printers could not afford to ignore unsubstantiated rumours. What later was found to be true often initially had seemed as unreliable as many other reports.

The provincial papers were not especially well informed about the political manoeuvring that led to Newcastle's resignation and the formation of the Devonshire-Pitt ministry. By inference, the London newspapers that provincial printers used as their sources had no more information on the workings of high politics. This is not surprising when not even many of the politicians involved had a clear picture of the negotiations to create a new ministry. However, the political environment of the capital would have made oblique references to negotiations more readily comprehensible to metropolitan than provincial newspaper readers. A provincial reader who relied on the local press for a view of politics would have acquired a view of the political transformation that was distinctive to the point of being distorted.

The Minorca controversy and the change in the ministry provide the first major tests of the political content of the

---

85. *NM* 343, 13 Nov.1756, p.2 c.2.

86. Clark, p.296.
provincial newspapers. They show that, despite great interest in national politics, the papers remained almost completely reliant on the London press. The great bulk of comment was copied from London sources, and the little that came from provincial sources followed very similar lines. London newspapers dominated the early stages of the Minorca debate to an extent that was not repeated on later issues of similar importance. Not until the 1760s did newspapers rather than essay papers again take the lead in a major political debate. A possible distinct provincial attitude is evident only in the papers' initial reluctance to criticise the Newcastle ministry. There was very little response to the invasion threat or the employment of German troops to counter it, and serious criticism of the ministry over the loss of Minorca began more than a month after the London press had taken up the subject. There was no suggestion of sympathy for the ministry, so the reticence might be explained by Byng being an easier and safer target for attack.

The campaign of addresses and instructions provides the clearest example suggesting the importance of the provincial contribution to national politics. The two Whig organisations in Bristol that addressed tried to turn the campaign against its clear opposition course. Although unsuccessful, the incident demonstrates that the capacity for independent political initiative existed in Bristol, at least. The local newspaper, through its promoting and commenting on the addresses, played a significant part in that local political identity.

However, in general, the papers' ignorance of political bargaining and their concentration on the Minorca controversy and, particularly, the campaign of addresses and instructions,
led their readers to the conclusion that the public clamour had forced Newcastle's resignation. Although the newspapers themselves had negligible influence on the workings of high politics, they gave the important impression that public opinion had a direct effect on the actions of politicians. This was to have serious consequences for the course of the Devonshire-Pitt ministry that succeeded Newcastle's, for it generated expectations of 'Patriot' measures.
IV. New Allegiances, 1756-1757

The Devonshire-Pitt ministry was short-lived, lasting until Pitt was dismissed in April 1757 and the Newcastle-Pitt ministry formed in June 1757. The new ministry was not expected to last long, as it had many important weaknesses. The ministry lacked an obvious party basis, which was without recent precedent. Pitt and a small group of associates held the important ministerial posts, but the independent Whig the Duke of Devonshire was the First Lord of the Treasury, and the Newcastle Whigs Lord Barrington and Earl Holderness remained Secretary at War and Northern Secretary of State respectively. Pitt had only a small parliamentary following, and needed the support or at least the acquiescence of the Old Corps of the Whigs, still largely under Newcastle's leadership, to form a parliamentary majority. Pitt did not have the king's favour, nor was he the undisputed leader of the new ministry. The means by which the new ministers had been forced on the king, by taking advantage of wartime disasters, were objectionable to some members of parliament. The new ministers were widely associated with 'Patriot' measures. This encouraged great expectations of reform, which restricted their freedom of action. An enquiry into Minorca, the passing of a militia bill, the return of foreign troops and even the restoration of triennial parliaments were expected.¹

In the provincial newspapers, as in London², the reaction to the formation of the new ministry was favourable. The emphasis of provincial newspaper interest in the new ministry was directed

---

1. Clark, pp.295-7; Sutherland, p.160.
almost entirely towards Pitt. His professions of Patriotism were
called readily on his appointment. *Felix Farley's Bristol
Journal* reported that he had been reproached 'that his Patriotism
was all Pretence, and that all his Bustle was only the most
lucrative Place'. This provided the opportunity for the paper to
print Pitt's answer that he would serve his country for love, not
mercenary motives, and that if others were to follow his example,
a hundred thousand pounds would be saved to the nation. The
optimism of the *General Evening Post*’s comments, reprinted in the
*Norwich Mercury*, was typical. Pitt was reported to have declared
that he would promote only measures that had the concurrence of
the House of Commons, 'upon the unbiased Principles of Regard to
the true Glory and real Interest' of the country. He would
resign, so it was said, when he could no longer maintain such
Patriot conduct. The printer concluded 'From such noble
Professions, supported by a well established Character, what
pleasing Hopes may not Britons now form to themselves?'

There was an unusual amount of attention paid to Pitt
personally throughout his ministry. His movements, and, most
frequently, his illnesses were widely reported. In mid-January
Pitt was reported to have recovered from gout sufficiently to be
able to attend the House of Commons. In February, he was
allegedly so indisposed with gout as to be unable to conduct
parliamentary business. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* then printed
an impromptu verse On Mr. PITI’S being indisposed with the GOUT:

3. *PPBJ*, 13 Nov.1756, p.1 c.3;
   See also *VC* 1620, 9 Nov.1756, p.2, c.2; from the Evening
   *Advertiser*.


FLY, Gout, and seize the lazy Papal Toe;
Nor be to PITT's Activity a Poe. 6

With future plans and present incapacity, Pitt maintained
his favourable image in the newspapers despite his lack of
activity. There was, however, a mild hint that more was expected
from him, in a verse To the Hon. W.P. Esq; reprinted by Felix
Farley's Bristol Journal. It compared Pitt's achievement in
supplanting the former ministry to Alcides' scouring the Augean
stables, but started with the line 'JUST as thou hast begun,
proceed'. 7 Memories of William Pulteney's abandonment of Patriot
principles when in office in 1742 engendered caution in the
reception of Pitt's accession to high office. The hopes for a
Patriot programme were encouraged by assurances that when
parliament was recalled 'a certain great Man will lay before the
House, some very extraordinary Plans for the Benefit of this
Nation.' 8

Once in office, it was impossible or impolitic to proceed
with the programme Pitt had been seen to insist on as a
precondition for his accepting office. By the beginning of the
parliamentary session in early December, the issues of October
had lost their urgency. Pitt was not enthusiastic about the
enquiry, which was postponed to follow the vote of supply. It
was further delayed by Byng's court martial, and held eventually
after the dismissal of the ministry. 9 The new ministers did not
want to provoke their opponents into combined opposition, nor to

7. FFBJ, 1 Jan.1757, p.2 c.1.
8. NM 347, 11 Dec.1756, p.2 c.3.
9. Clark, pp.310, 313;
Peters, pp.67-8.
embarrass former ministers who still held positions in the administration, by proceeding with the enquiry.\textsuperscript{10} The previous ministry's orders for the return of the Hanoverian troops went ahead, but activity on the Hessian troops and the promised militia bill was delayed until the new year. George Townshend introduced a new militia bill on 26 January which passed, in an amended form acceptable to the Old Corps, after the resignation of the ministry. Pitt is not known to have supported the bill in parliament.\textsuperscript{11} The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Henry Legge, introduced unorthodox financial measures that reflected mistrust of the 'monied interest'. He proposed to raise supplies by an open subscription, rather than one negotiated with a small group of financiers, a lottery for money prizes, and the issue of annuities. All were unsuccessful, and supplies eventually were raised by a closed subscription after the ministry's collapse.\textsuperscript{12}

The provincial newspapers maintained their initial optimism, despite the lack of achievement of the Pitt-Devonshire ministry. Provincial newspapers did not question the stability of the ministry, although further changes were thought likely.\textsuperscript{13} Nor did the papers complain about the delay in establishing the enquiry into the misconduct of the former ministers. In contrast, the London Evening-Post, which also generally supported Pitt, regularly pressed for an enquiry throughout February and March 1757.\textsuperscript{14} Provincial newspapers gave little attention to the

\textsuperscript{10} Sutherland, p.161.
\textsuperscript{11} Peters, p.67.
\textsuperscript{12} Sutherland, pp.165-8.
\textsuperscript{13} PPBJ, 1 Jan.1757, p.2 c.3.
\textsuperscript{14} Peters, p.67.
other measures of the new ministry. The militia bill provoked no significant controversy, and comment was made only when it passed the House of Commons in early April. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reflected that the standing army, 'Swarms of Clerks' and 'the prodigious Number of Custom-House and Excise Officers' showed that the idle part of the nation predominated over the industrious, and would lead to 'universal Indigence'.

The ministry's financial measures also attracted little comment. Provincial newspapers did not mention the lottery scheme, which provoked many articles and letters in, for instance, the London Chronicle in February 1757. The ministry's schemes probably concerned City financiers more than provincial merchants and investors. However, provincial newspapers also shared the Chancellor's antipathy towards the 'monied interest'. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal printed a proposal to abolish the duties on tea and salt in favour of a more equitable tax. The paper commented that the plan 'disbands an Army of Hirelings who have been the Drudges of Corruption ... it is the most probable Means of getting rid of those Leeches of the State, the Money- Jobbers'.

The great bulk of political comment during the Pitt-Devonshire administration was reprinted from London essay papers. A development important to the level of political discussion in the provincial newspapers was the foundation of the political essay paper Test on 6 November 1756, shortly before Newcastle's resignation. Its attacks on the new ministry in general and Pitt in particular provoked a response in the publication of the pro-

15. FFBJ, 2 Apr.1757, p.1 c.3.
16. FFBJ, 5 Feb.1757, p.3 c.3.
ministerial Con-Test and several other, shorter lived, essay papers. The lively debate these papers generated drew upon and contributed to the issues surrounding the new ministry. It provided much more material of a political nature for country newspapers to reprint than would have been the case without them.

The essay paper debate of early 1757 seems also to have revived the regular reprinting of political essays in provincial newspapers. In the early 1730s, some provincial printers had devoted large proportions of each issue to political commentaries. The York Mercury in 1735 once reached the extreme of occupying all but three quarters of a column of its news space with an essay from the anti-ministerial Craftsman.17 The reprinting of essay papers seems to have died out soon after, and was revived in the 1750s only on a reduced scale. The development of fairly regular reprinting of political essays from early 1757 onwards cannot be attributed solely to the emergence of new specialist weekly papers with essays rather than news as their substance. The Monitor had been founded in 1755, but does not, apart from a few comments on the Minorca affair, seem to have been reprinted regularly in country newspapers until January 1757. It is therefore probable that it was the debate, rather than the existence of the essay papers alone, that attracted the interest of provincial printers.

There were two significant features to the essay paper debate. The Foxite and anti-ministerial Test was the first to be established, and led the debate even when several competing and opposing papers had appeared. The Con-Test often merely followed

the lines of the issues set out by the Test. Nevertheless, the provincial papers considered, if they reprinted essays at all, copied almost exclusively those from the Monitor and Con-Test.

Attention was paid by the six provincial papers to the essay papers as soon as they started publication. The Norwich Mercury, copying the Evening Advertiser, noted the establishment of the Test, 'set up to traduce the great Commoner, before he has any Appointment in the Ministry'. Some newspapers advertised the sale of the Test, but none of the six studied reprinted essays from it. Their acceptance of advertising was more probably due to financial considerations than ignorance of the paper's politics. Where a competing anti-ministerial paper existed, it probably reprinted the Test's essays, as did the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer. In such circumstances, the essay paper debate could be adopted to serve the purposes of local political divisions. In early February 1757, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal announced that

An Answer to such Numbers of the TEST—(except those that contain personal Abuses)—as may for the future be inserted in the Bristol Weekly Intelligencer, will be publish'd in this Journal under the Title of the CON-TEST.

This implied that the decision to reprint essays from the Con-Test was in response to local rather than metropolitan moves. In this case the decision to print depended on another paper already printing pieces from the Test, since the two essay papers were essentially complementary. As the Con-Test said of the writer of the Test, 'It is true that we trace his Footsteps every Saturday,

18. Peters, p.66.
19. NM 343, 13 Nov.1756, p.1 c.3.
20. FFBJ, 5 Feb.1757, p.3 c.3.
and a disagreeable Task it is'.

The essay papers provided another means by which to continue the opposition of the Whig Intelligencer and the now pro-ministerial Tory Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. Yet it is significant that the substance of the debate was taken from London sources. This cannot have been due to a lack of local political writers, because Felix Farley's Bristol Journal at least had demonstrated a capacity for original political comment during the Bristol by-election of March 1756. The essay paper controversy of early 1757 suggests that political debate in Bristol had not reached the stage at which it could display reactions independent and distinct from those promoted by London newspapers. However, valid conclusions about provincial reactions cannot be reached on the evidence of the newspapers alone. It was not their purpose directly to report local political discussion but rather to provide the material for it by relating the nature of the controversies in London. It is in this indirect way that the reprinting of essay papers is a guide to local political debate, and it does not seriously question the presumption that it differed little from the London debate.

The provincial papers reproduced the essay-paper debate only selectively, so the weekly nature of the debate in London was not transferred to the provinces. The issues reproduced presumably were those that had greatest significance for provincial readers or that expressed sentiments that concurred with the printers'. Essays were unlikely to be inserted merely because of a lack of news or advertisements, because they occupied a large proportion of the four-page papers. They were more likely to be omitted

21. FFBJ, 5 Mar.1757, p.4 c.2.
altogether than to be summarised, so the appearance of an essay is a significant indication of the newspapers' attitudes. For example, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal generally chose to print essays that defended the ministry in preference to those that discussed the Byng case, or those on moral and philosophical subjects. Defences of the ministry were guarded, since it was still largely an unknown quantity. At the start of 1757, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reprinted a letter to the Monitor signed 'Timothy Hope'. The letter warned readers not to be too hasty in their expectations of the beneficial effects of the change in the ministry. He considered the new ministers to be able and diligent, but many members of the former ministry were still in positions of power. This discordance would allegedly be solved when the ministry had raised enough confidence to support itself despite all opposition. Purging the ministry of corrupt and foolish members could not be undertaken immediately because they were dangerously powerful and could then turn on the new minister. The writer stressed the practical restrictions within which the Pitt-Devonshire ministry had to operate, but concluded with suggestions that continued support was conditional upon it conforming as much as possible to Patriot behaviour. The ministry was not defended uncritically but instead warily, as the best available in the circumstances. Hope concluded that there was little reason to expect another chance to redeem the liberty, glory and prosperity of the nation 'should we now be deceived, as heretofore, by pretended PATRIOTS'.

The essays taken from the Con-Test by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal were also largely defensive in their support of the

ministry. This was due partly to the period in which they were published, since contributions to the Con-Test were not reprinted frequently until mid-March 1757. The ministry had been charged with delaying proceedings against Byng because of partiality towards him when Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reprinted an article defending the administration against what it considered were misrepresentation, scurrility, sneers and 'studious perversion of popular prejudices.' The Con-Test countered that it had been in the interests of the former ministry to divert public resentment onto Byng, whereas the present ministers were too magnanimous to give in easily to popular demands simply to preserve their popularity.\(^{23}\) A later essay from the same paper also stressed that the ministry had followed the path to popularity guided not by popular passions but by the true interests of the public. The Test was urged not to be hasty in demanding an enquiry into past misfortunes, ostensibly because it would injure the paper's patrons. It defended plans for 'oeconomy' in public finances and reduction of the number of placemen, but implicitly accepted that not as much had been achieved as could have been hoped, arguing that it would take time for the new men to clear up the confusion left by the previous administration.\(^{24}\) That such an argument was used as late as April suggests that a primary purpose of the essays reprinted by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal was to excuse the ministry's delay in implementing the programme expected of it.

Despite the active debate on the ministry, the dominant issue in the provincial papers in early 1757 was Byng's trial.

It was an important political issue, because a major criticism of the Newcastle ministry had been that it unjustly used Byng as a scape goat for its own failings. Pitt and the new ministers were known to be sympathetic towards Byng. The court martial opened at Portsmouth on 28 December 1756, and continued daily until 27 January. The members of the court could not agree on the degree of Byng's guilt under the twelfth Article of War, which had been amended three years earlier to remove the discretionary power of a court martial to mitigate the capital punishment for cowardice, disaffection or neglect of duty. On 29 January, Byng was acquitted of all charges but neglect of duty, on account of an error of judgement. The court recommended clemency, and the king, known to be hostile towards Byng, referred the verdict to a bench of twelve judges who upheld its legality. The members of the court martial asked to be released from their oaths of secrecy in order to explain their opinions. They were called before the House of Lords, but questioned in such a manner as to preclude their presenting their reasons for their decision. Unusually, the proceedings were reported in the provincial newspapers. Delayed by a fortnight, Byng's execution took place on 14 March.

The provincial newspapers displayed considerable interest in the trial of Admiral Byng. Preparations for the trial had first been reported in early August 1756, when the first defences of Byng began to appear. On 7 August the York Mercury reported that preparations were being made for Byng's court martial in the same post as it reprinted one of the first direct defences of Byng to appear in the provincial papers, A Letter from the Committee of

25. FFEJ, 5 Mar.1757, p.3 c.2.
Sailors to Admiral B[yn]g at Spithead, dated July 1756 under the pseudonym of T. Boatswain. This 'letter' used nautical analogies to urge Byng to hold his ground against attacks from the former ministers. It recommended him to declare that he had executed his orders bravely, and

Stand the deck till the clouds break ... so may hap sweet-scented Jessamy Folks may run their leaky Vessels a-ground ... Tack about and leave them to be exposed to the Climate, that they may be condemn'd unfit for future Service.²⁶

Despite this example, most comment in the papers was still set against Byng. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal believed that Byng was sending for witnesses only 'to gain Time, and to abuse the injured Nation still further by retarding Justice.'²⁷

Little more of the trial was heard until early December 1756, after the appointment of the new ministry. Although none of the six papers openly defended Byng, they were more reluctant to believe reports involving the case than they were to believe other news. The Norwich Mercury reported on 4 December that it had received four contradictory lists of the members of the court martial, but declined to publish any until it had some degree of certainty.²⁸

Admiral Byng's trial dominated the news in the early months of 1757. It provided a great deal of material for direct reporting as well as giving rise to much speculation. It is significant that those articles the country papers chose to reprint from essay papers considered Byng's case only as part of defences of the ministry on general questions. Most comment on

²⁶. VC 1607, 10 Aug.1756, p.2 c.2.
²⁷. FFBJ, 14-21 Aug.1756, p.1 c.2.
the Byng affair was taken from London newspapers, particularly the Evening Advertiser. In January and early February, accounts of the trial were a regular feature in provincial newspapers. They often occupied more than one column, and in some cases occasioned the rare use of a headline. The Norwich Mercury on 15 January headed the first part of its almost four columns of reporting 'Proceedings of the Trial of Admiral Byng', beneath a floral rule. The accounts were most often simply summaries of the questioning, with descriptions of the actions of the participants, but usually without further comment. They were printed in the form sent by a correspondent at Portsmouth. The Norwich Mercury's 'Continuation of Admiral Byng's Trial' included the cross-examination of Captain Young, unusually in the format of direct quotation of a list of questions and answers. It concluded: 'Saturday, Jan. 8. This Afternoon I heard but little. Capt. Cornwall gave his Evidence, which I did not hear'. It is possible that all the newspapers relied on this same reporter for their daily accounts of the trial because the Norwich Mercury seems not to have used a source other than the Whitehall Evening Post for its information. 29

In London, the fate of Byng dominated pamphlet, magazine and newspaper discussion, particularly when accounts of the trial became available. 30 In the provinces, interest in Byng dominated the local newspapers only when accounts of the court martial were reprinted. There was little discussion of the case in December, since the changes in the ministry dominated the news at the time.

29. NM 352, 15 Jan.1757, p.1 c.2-3, p.2 c.1-2, p.2 c.3; quotation p.2 c.2.

In early January, initial impressions of the trial differed widely. Aris's Birmingham Gazette considered the evidence to be strongly against Byng, and those who believed he would be acquitted were so infatuated that they had forgotten the loss of 'poor Minorca'. The anonymous London writer hypocritically complained that 'These meddlers pass sentence before the trial is ended.' Sometimes contradictory reports were reprinted consecutively, without any attempt by the provincial printer to reconcile them. The Norwich Mercury on 8 January printed the General Evening Post's report that Byng was keeping up his spirits with fortitude, above the Whitehall Evening Post's report that 'Byng's spirits seem greatly to deaden.' The Evening Advertiser, copied in the Mercury, seemed certain of his fate in its PORTSMOUTH BELLS:

B[yn]g will swing,
E'er long:
Dong ding!
Ding dong!

Comment became more frequent once the sentence was announced. The sentence of death with a recommendation to clemency because Byng's negligence was due to an error of judgement satisfied few of the divergent opinions on his guilt.

Provincial newspaper opinion immediately following the verdict was largely, but not completely, hostile. On 7 February Aris's Birmingham Gazette printed reports of the judgement and Byng's reaction, with a verse criticising the court martial for its subtle distinction between cowardice and backwardness in fighting. Boddely's Bath Journal printed a list of fourteen

31. ABG 790, 10 Jan.1757, p.3 c.1-2.
32. NM 352, 15 Jan.1757, p.1 c.1, p.2 c.3.
33. ABG 794, 7 Feb.1757, p.1 c.2-3, p.2 c.2, p.3 c.1.
queries for public consideration, an established method of editorial comment. Implicitly they condemned Byng for cowardice and for lying about the details of the encounter off Minorca.34

In early February, most of the provincial newspapers seemed to believe in the culpability of both Byng and the former ministers. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal printed the verdict with what appear to be its own footnotes to several points of the judgement. Emphasis was placed on Byng's negligence, and the paper recalled the precedent of Kirkby and Wade, executed for disobeying orders in 1703, when 'every negligent or cowardly villain got his due.'35 However, the Bristol paper also printed comment that blamed the former ministry for Byng's failure. On 10 February it reported that 'the amazing Matter of Admiral Byng' would soon be finally determined '-when, perhaps, it may plainly appear who has been the most negligent Traitor and Villain to this Nation.' That the former ministers were meant was indicated by allusion to the recent sudden complete change in the French ministry.36

The normal Tory attitude towards the Minorca issue, and that of the new ministers, was to hold the Newcastle-Fox ministry responsible for the loss of Minorca, and to consider that Byng had been used by them as a scapegoat. To hold the attitudes that Byng and the former ministers were both culpable for the loss of Minorca, was, while the two were not mutually exclusive, unusual for a Tory newspaper. That Felix Farley's Bristol Journal and other papers printed pieces proclaiming Byng both a scapegoat and

34. BBJ 704, 14 Feb.1757, p.3 c.3.
35. FFBJ, 5 Feb.1757, p.2 c.1-2.
36. FFBJ, 12 Feb.1757, p.3 c.1.
a coward demonstrates that the assertions of the new ministers and the pro-ministerial essay papers had no effect on the overall combination of views put forward by the country newspapers. There are several possible explanations for this. Elizabeth Farley may genuinely have believed that both Byng and the Newcastle ministry were at fault. If this was so, she overlooked the contradictions in the argument. The delay in sending and the inadequacy in equipping Byng could be attributed to the ministry, and Byng's negligence blamed for the failure to relieve St. Philip's fort. Yet this shared guilt would mean that it was illogical to claim that the ministers had diverted public resentment onto Byng unjustifiably, as had a letter to the Con Test, reprinted by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal.37 It is significant that the two arguments were never combined, particularly so in the pieces that can be attributed to the provincial printers. This points to the newspapers' eclecticism in sources as being responsible for the variety of attitudes displayed towards Byng. Printers may have leaned towards one view, but intended in their papers to give country readers the range of discussion from the capital and to fill up space with what they knew was an interesting matter.

The emphasis of comment on the Byng affair varied with the development of the case. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal's apparently contradictory attacks on both the former ministers and Byng in February 1757 marks a period of transition when indignation against Byng during his trial changed towards sympathy as the date for his execution approached. When the verdict against Byng had been upheld by the board of twelve

judges, the members of the court martial began to share Byng's unpopularity. One of the three varied pieces on the affair published by Aris's Birmingham Gazette on 7 March, The Court-Martial's Address to his Majesty, complained in verse about the court's indecision, alleging it wanted Byng saved and shot simultaneously. Of the three pieces of comment, only Britannicus' letter to the London Evening-Post ignored Byng and demanded justice be obtained on the late administration. The third piece insisted that Byng's fate should not be the occasion for a contest between minister and minister, but between an injured nation and their admiral, who had betrayed them. The anonymous paper, copies of which were said to have been given to many gentlemen in the streets of London and left in coffee houses, considered Byng should be shot to enhance naval discipline.38 There is no evidence in the selection of comment for provincial newspapers to support George Bubb Dodington's claim on 23 February that 'without doors the sentence was thought extremely cruel'.39

Newspapers became more cautious in their condemnation of Byng when the king agreed to release the members of the court martial from their oaths of secrecy in order to reveal the grounds on which they had passed sentence. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal commented on 1 March that although the court martial had been the subject of ridicule for its reluctance to condemn Byng, it was best qualified to judge. It considered that the king should be allowed to consider the circumstances without

38. AEG 798, 7 Mar.1757, p.2 c.1.
popular clamour or party prejudice seeking to influence him.\textsuperscript{40} The paper's deference seems due to the king's personal involvement in the matter, combined with the belief that George II opposed clemency for Byng. Attitudes towards Byng appear to have softened only once all hope of a reversal of the sentence was gone. Byng was reported by Aris's Birmingham Gazette, from the London Evening-Post, to have behaved in a decent and Christian manner, resigned to the will of providence.\textsuperscript{41}

More significantly, this change in attitude towards Byng prompted more concerted attacks on the Newcastle ministry as the source of the present misfortunes. Britannicus, reprinted in Aris's Birmingham Gazette, commented that since there was no longer any hope of mercy for Byng, debates on the inconsistency of his sentence should be dropped in favour of examining the conduct of the former ministry.\textsuperscript{42} The charges that the administration had known of the French intention to invade Minorca months before it took place, had neglected to reinforce the garrison, and had failed to provide Byng with an adequate force served to revive demands for an enquiry to be held. In the same issue, but this time unattributed, Britannicus went further to claim that all circumstances were consistent with a treacherous collusion between the Newcastle ministry and the French to sell Minorca.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{40} FPBJ, 5 Mar.1757, p.2 c.2-3.

\textsuperscript{41} ABG 799, 14 Mar.1757, p.1 c.1.

\textsuperscript{42} ABG 799, 14 Mar.1757, p.1 c.1, an edited version of London Evening-Post 4573, 3-5 Mar.1757, p.1 c.2.

\textsuperscript{43} ABG 799, 14 Mar.1757, p.2 c.2, an edited version of London Evening-Post 4575, 8-10 Mar.1757, p.1 c.2.
However, the court martial’s decision implicitly exonerated the former ministry from responsibility for the loss of Minorca. The sentence forced the initiation of the promised enquiry, which had been delayed in case Byng was acquitted. The rejection of the bill to release the members of the court martial from their oaths of secrecy was seen to have been a serious defeat for the ministry, and Holdernessse considered the new ministers’ handling of the Byng affair to have lost them considerable popularity.

Yet it was not this that caused the collapse of the Devonshire-Pitt administration. The king had already made moves to replace the ministers. George II consulted Newcastle and Fox in late February on their forming a new ministry. Fox’s plan for a ministry was unfavourably received by the king on 19 March. The king hoped Pitt and Temple would be rejected by parliament rather than having to be dismissed. Plans for a new ministry were repeatedly frustrated, and the dismissals of Pitt and Temple were precipitated only by the Duke of Cumberland’s refusal to take up the command of the Army of Observation while Pitt held a position of power. Temple was dismissed on 5 April, but this did not induce Pitt to follow, so he was asked to resign the following evening. Henry Legge, Thomas Potter and James and George Grenville all resigned within three days. Earl Waldegrave became the new First Lord of the Admiralty, but Henry Fox deferred his acceptance of the Paymastership of the Forces. The dismissals had not induced Newcastle to form a ministry, and it

44. Clark, pp.323-4.
45. Clark, pp.334-5.
46. Clark, pp.335, 348.
seemed that Fox's plans would go no further.47 Devonshire was left as head of a caretaker administration while further negotiations were held.

Little had been achieved by the Devonshire-Pitt ministry. The expected 'Patriot' programme had not been enacted. The introduction of a place bill and the reinstatement of triennial parliaments had not been considered, the Minorca enquiry not yet held, and the militia bill finally passed in a modified form acceptable to the Old Corps. Pitt frequently had claimed to be too ill to attend parliament. Yet the manner of the ministers' dismissal overshadowed their lack of achievement.

The ministry's resignation was not unexpected, and the reaction in the provincial newspapers was immediate. The newspapers were however, as before, ill informed on the details of the changes, and misinterpreted the reasons for them. The Norwich Mercury reported from the St. James's Evening Post in mid-March that the Duke of Bedford was to become First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Winchelsea to be First Lord of the Admiralty.48 Neither was suggested for the posts in Fox's plan, the only one seriously considered at the time, presented to the king on 19 March.49 The two peers were known to be likely candidates for a replacement ministry, so the report may have been simply a speculation on probabilities.

Pitt's resignation was reported by the provincial newspapers from the London Gazette of 9 April.50 The provincial papers

---

47. Clark, pp.358-9.

48. NM 361, 19 Mar.1757, p.2 c.2.

49. Clark, p.347.

50. NM 365, 16 Apr.1757, p.1 c.1.
believed Pitt had been removed to prevent the enquiry going ahead and that Cumberland's refusal to leave for Germany while Pitt retained power was thought to be only a pretext. Britannicus' Letter to the People of England, reprinted by Aris's Birmingham Gazette from the London Evening-Post, shortly before Pitt's dismissal and in the same post as it was announced, set out those accusations and defended the 'Patriot' ministers from the implied charges that they had not lived up to their promises. He argued that the ministers had done all they could in a short space of time, considering the constant opposition of creatures of the previous administration. Despite this, the ministry had taken measures to support the American colonies, returned foreign troops, introduced a militia bill, and had begun to save money by emptying useless offices. The faithful, uncorrupt ministers were removed allegedly because they had begun an enquiry into the real cause of the loss of Minorca, and had vacated unnecessary offices, which had alarmed friends of the old corrupt administration.\(^{51}\) Shortly earlier, Aris's Birmingham Gazette had printed an extract from the Monitor hinting that a change of ministry was designed to stop the enquiry before it had begun.\(^{52}\) A widely reprinted notice alluded to the expected dropping of the enquiry by advertising the sale of a scaffold and gibbet, 'intended for some Persons of Distinction'.\(^{53}\)

On Pitt's dismissal, it was reported erroneously that the Earl of Winchelsea had been appointed First Lord of the Admiralty and Henry Fox Paymaster of the Forces, and that Lords Bedford

---

52. ABG 803, 11 Apr. 1757, p.1 c.2.
53. FFRJ, 2 Apr. 1757, p.3 c.2.
and Sandwich were to become the Secretaries of State. The impression that a new ministry rapidly was being formed was dispelled by a report from the London Evening-Post that considerable appointments had been offered to several of the nobility and gentry connected with the Pitt-Devonshire ministry, and all reportedly had declined to accept while Fox was in any public employment that would be connected with theirs. This report had more significance than as an attempt to fox Fox's reputation. By announcing that there was great reluctance to join any new ministry with which he was involved, it gave hope that the king might be obliged to reinstate Pitt.

The provincial papers gave the impression of great discontent in London on Pitt's dismissal. Aris's Birmingham Gazette reported 'great Disquietudes' and Murmurings in several Parts of the Town upon the Change in the Ministry.' A parallel was drawn with the fluctuating councils of England during Charles II's reign, when 'both the King and his Ministers had sold themselves to France.' The implied charge that Newcastle and Fox had sold out to France was not new, but this seems to be the first suggestion that George II was anything more than the victim of corrupt ministers. Normally the king was immune from direct criticism. It was generally accepted that the royal prerogative included the appointment and dismissal of ministers, so in theory Pitt's dismissal could not be the subject of complaint. Yet some supporters of Pitt urged that petitions

54. ABG 803, 11 Apr.1757, p.2 c.2.

55. ABG 803, 11 Apr.1757, p.3 c.1; NM 365, 16 Apr.1757, p.1 c.1.

56. ABG 803, 11 Apr.1757, p.2 c.2.
should be sent to the king. Britannicus' Letter to the People of England of 7 April, reprinted by Aris's Birmingham Gazette from the London Evening-Post, suggested that public resentment should not exceed the bounds of obedience, but called for petitions and addresses to the throne to declare the people's grievances.  

Supporters of Pitt who suggested petitions are said to have been severely and effectively attacked by their opponents in the press, but there is no evidence of this in the provincial papers here considered. This is probably due to their usual tendency to support Pitt. Exhortations to address the throne did not recur, but this indicates less the effectiveness of the opposition to addressing than the impracticality of the suggestion, since it was overtaken rapidly by the 'campaign of gold boxes'.

Twelve corporations presented the freedom of their respective cities to Pitt and his recently conspicuous colleague Legge, usually in gold boxes, between April and June 1757. This unusual method of expressing opinion was used because few other means were available while parliament was not sitting. Addressing the king was not acceptable because his prerogative to appoint ministers was generally allowed, so Pitt's dismissal was not a legitimate grievance. The usual form, as in the Bath example, was that the award was in gratitude for 'their loyal and disinterested conduct during their truly honourable tho' short administration.'

57. ABG 803, 11 Apr.1757, p.2 c.1-2.
58. Langford, p.56.
59. BBJ 714, 25 Apr.1757, p.4 c.3.
of the London to present the freedom of the City was reported shortly after the official announcement of Pitt's resignation. The provincial cities that followed this lead ranged from major cities to middling regional towns, and included Norwich and Bath. The social respectability of the campaigners and the apparent range of cities that presented gold boxes might have engendered the belief that there was a national consensus favouring Pitt.

However, the appearance of consensus was illusory, because the number of corporations that presented their freedom was relatively small, and nearly all were under Tory domination. In many cases, the decision to present the freedoms was influenced or manipulated by Tories or those who were confident of some reward should Pitt be reinstated. At Thomas Potter's suggestion, Ralph Allen moved that the Bath corporation should present its freedom. In Norwich the connection is much less obvious. The Townshend family had some influence in the corporation, and the Recorder Edward Bacon, the member for Norwich who delivered the freedoms, was appointed to the Board of Trade in 1759. Bacon had supported Pitt and Townshend on the Minorca enquiry, and Pitt insisted on his appointment as a Lord of Trade as a condition for joining the new ministry.

The significance of the gold boxes was almost certainly deliberately exaggerated by the London press. The provincial newspapers, however, seem to have taken the campaign at face value. No comment was needed to emphasise the significance of the gold boxes, because frequent references to the details of the

60. Langford, pp.57, 60-1.
61. Ibid., p.62.
62. Ibid., p.59.
preparation and presentation of freedoms implied they were
important manifestations of public opinion without much editorial
comment being needed. The details usually included the initial
notice that a meeting was to be called to discuss the proposal to
honour Pitt and Legge, the proceedings of that meeting, and a
description of the award, often noting the value of the gold
boxes and the illuminated freedoms they contained. The actual
presentation of the freedoms was most frequently reported,
sometimes with Pitt's and Legge's letters of thanks.

The presentation of the freedom of the City of London was
the best publicised in the provincial papers, plans for it being
reported by the *Norwich Mercury* from the *London Evening-Post*
on the same day as Pitt's resignation was reported.63 The plans and
preparations for London were given in greater detail than for
provincial cities, because the information was more readily
available to London evening papers, and hence to their provincial
counterparts. This was the case even in newspapers of the cities
that presented freedoms. *Boddely's Bath Journal*, in common with
several other provincial papers, printed at length Deputy James
Hodges' speech to the Common Council of the City of London on
15 April, in which he proposed the granting of the freedom to the
'gentlemen who have led the van in our late excellent but short-
lived Administration.'64

In contrast, the *Bath Journal* did not print any record of a
comparable proposal for presenting the freedom of Bath, presuming
one was made. It simply reported that the mayor, aldermen and
common council had unanimously agreed to do so, and added that

63. *NM* 365, 16 Apr.1757, p.1 c.2.
64. *BBJ* 714, 25 Apr.1757, p.2 c.1.
'Tis thought most of the Corporations in England (excepting those fam'd for Venality) will follow the Examples of London and Bath. The meeting of the common council of Bath was by its nature less accessible to Boddely's Bath Journal than its London counterpart was to the London Evening-Post. Being considerably smaller, it would have been easier to control the reporting of its proceedings. The Bath Journal's other comments suggest that had any report of a favourable speech existed, it would have been printed.

The letters from Pitt and Legge thanking the mayor and corporation of Bath were widely reprinted. They too illustrate the dominance of London newspapers in Boddely's Bath Journal's coverage of the subject. Both letters were sent to London rather than to the Bath newspapers, probably because they reached a wider audience and because London opinion was crucial. Aris's Birmingham Gazette printed the letters under a London dateline, which introduced them as original letters received from Bath.

The Norwich Mercury similarly gave less attention to the presentation from Norwich than from London. It reprinted from the General Evening Post a report of the presentation of the London freedoms, with the recipients' speeches of acceptance and a description of the gold boxes and citations, which cost £25.13s. The following local story gave little more than the speeches of thanks by Pitt and Legge for the freedom of Norwich. The attention given to the gold boxes reflects their relative importance, but the difference is probably less due to a

65. BBJ 714, 25 Apr.1757, p.4 c.3.
66. ABG 807, 9 May 1757, p.2 c.2.
67. NM 374, 18 June 1757, p.2 c.3-p.3 c.1.
disinterested sense of proportion than to the ease of availability of information.

The readiness of country papers to use sometimes fallacious reports from London newspapers was partly responsible for the impression conveyed of a widespread and spontaneous movement to present gold boxes. The number and significance of the gold boxes were exaggerated deliberately and the London Evening-Post 'probably had a good deal to do with the invention of these new items'. 68 It was reported incorrectly by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal on 30 April that the corporations of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, York, Liverpool, Exeter and Worcester had unanimously ordered their freedoms to be presented. This was untrue in the cases of York and Liverpool, but the report was not contradicted. In mid-April, widely reprinted reports claimed that Bristol was preparing to present its freedom. 69 It did not do so until 1760, when, controversially, it made both Pitt and Newcastle freemen. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal appears to have neither reprinted the reports nor contradicted them. It would have been highly unlikely for the conventionally Whig corporation to have considered presenting its freedom to Pitt and Legge, and both Felix Farley's Bristol Journal and its readers would have known so.

This misrepresentation raises the question of what impression provincial newspaper readers gained from their papers' presentation of the campaign of gold boxes. It may be underestimating the knowledge or scepticism of some provincial

68. Langford, p. 59.

69. FTBJ, 7 May 1757, p. 1 c. 3; Langford, p. 59.
readers to assume they believed that the presenting of freedoms was a spontaneous reaction by several disinterested corporations. The Tory overtones in the addresses of thanks were obvious. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal connected the name of the Tory member for Bristol with the two former ministers. At a meeting of the Bristol Friendly Society of Florists in April 1757, it was reported that 'Mr. Hollister produc'd three fine Seedlings, nam'd PITT'S INTEGRITY, LEGG'S SINCERITY, and HOLLISTER'S JARRIT SMITH.' 70 Not only would such associations almost certainly have been noticed, contemporaries would have expected them.

The campaign of gold boxes as it was reported in the provincial papers illustrates several aspects of the papers' development of Pitt's public image. The balance of news was distorted to give undue attention to the details of incidents that had little inherent importance in high politics. It was the London and provincial newspapers' repeated attention to the subject that made the campaign of gold boxes significant and effective in the eyes of many of their readers. The number of presentations and their significance were exaggerated, but the picture of a national consensus in favour of Pitt was accepted by the provincial papers and so too, presumably, by many of their readers. The picture of widespread support was practically a self-fulfilling assertion, because even if there was no local evidence for the view, provincial printers and readers were seldom able to contradict it. The effects of the campaign were not necessarily those of 'a furious explosion of popular outrage which was strong enough to defeat the attempts of both the king

70. FFBJ, 23 Apr. 1757, p.3 c.3; misquoted in Langford, p.65, as 'Hollis's Jarrit Smith'.
and Henry Fox to form an alternative government', but they did enable Pitt to maintain the appearance of substantial extra-parliamentary backing.

The campaign of gold boxes provided an extra-parliamentary dimension to the negotiations towards forming a new ministry. For almost three months, Devonshire was left head of a caretaker administration. It was generally recognised that any stable ministry would have to include some combination of the three dominant politicians, Newcastle, Pitt and Fox. The king opposed Pitt's reinstatement, and wanted Fox to form an administration. Newcastle's leadership of the Old Corps of the Whigs gave him the potential to determine the survival of any ministry. Newcastle preferred to press Pitt on the king rather than come to an arrangement with Fox both because of Fox's recent disloyalty and because such a coalition would subsume Tory and dissident Whig opposition. Pitt hoped to maintain his independence, and so remained unco-operative until by 29 May it seemed possible that Newcastle would form a ministry without him. Newcastle presented his demands for Pitt's inclusion and Fox's exclusion to the king on 6 June. George II instead tried to form an alternative ministry with Fox as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Earl Waldegrave as First Lord of the Treasury. The scheme collapsed when widespread resignations were threatened and Fox received little support in the House of Commons. The king then agreed to a coalition of Newcastle and Pitt, but insisted that

71. Langford, p.54.

Fox have a place.  

The new ministry was appointed on 29 June 1757. It returned to the earlier practice of broad-bottomed administrations, combining former members of both Newcastle's and the Pitt-Devonshire ministries. Newcastle became First Lord of the Treasury, but had to have Legge as his Chancellor of the Exchequer. Fox became Paymaster of the Forces, which gave him substantial income but no influence on the formation of measures.  

Pitt returned as Secretary of State for the Southern Department, and so had responsibility for the direction and coordination of the conduct of the war. The division of ministerial responsibilities suited Pitt, because it gave him no direct concern in areas with which he did not wish to be associated, the Treasury and the management of the Commons. Nevertheless, Pitt's position in the coalition was initially insecure. Hardwicke considered the coalition a victory for the Old Corps;  

Pitt had to maintain his independent following in order not to be considered dispensable.  

The details of high politics were largely unknown to the newspapers. Provincial weeklies displayed considerable ignorance of the arrangements being made before the Newcastle-Pitt coalition was settled. The details of negotiations did not reach the newspapers until appointments seemed almost fixed. Their impression of the formation of a replacement ministry consisted of a series of unsubstantiated reports of ministerial

73. Fraser, pp.23-5.  
74. Middleton, p.36.  
75. Fraser, p.1.
appointments, several of which stretched credibility. On 2 June the Evening Advertiser improbably claimed that Pitt was about to be created a baronet, and Legge to take the title of Lord Stawell, to become First Lord of the Admiralty. That this could be believed demonstrates that the newspapers had only an uncertain grasp of the principles followed by even major politicians. By late April, the frequent reported formation of ministries led to disillusioned complaints that the uncertainty and lack of direction did not benefit the nation. 'Philo-Britannicus' disparaged

St[a]t[e]sm[e]n turn'd Harlequins! Why yes, tis plain They're in, and out; and out, and in again. 77

Political alignments were viewed in a simplistic manner, with Fox the principal target of attacks and Pitt the object of praise. When a Fox-Waldegrave ministry seemed likely, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal devoted two columns of its front page to an unattributed script of The STATE-FARCE, As it was acted at H[ollan]d H[ous]e. It depicted Fox, as 'Volpone', congratulating himself on having brought about the downfall of Pitt, 'the People's Darling'. Volpone feared Pitt's Patriot zeal would expose his treachery. With Earl Waldegrave as 'Lord Stopgap', Fox was portrayed plotting to usurp power behind the cover of royal prerogative. 78

However, the provincial newspapers did not always conversely praise Pitt. The fragility of his public image had been exposed by his unpopular defence of Eyng. Elements of uncertainty about

76. FFBJ, 4 June 1757, p.3 c.2.
77. BBJ 714, 25 Apr.1757, p.2 c.2.
78. FFBJ, 7 May 1757, p.1 c.1-2.
Pitt's effectiveness in office seem to have persisted after his resignation. The paucity of achievement of the Devonshire-Pitt ministry had shown that Patriot professions were insufficient without a pragmatic alliance with a parliamentary majority. From the Tory point of view, an alliance with Fox was preferable to the return of the Old Corps to office. Felix Parley's Bristol Journal expressed this opinion in a verse it alleged had been written on a great house in the West End.

SAY where were your Politicks, dear Patriot Pitt!  
When you bustled for Byng, I foresaw you'd be bit:  
Will plain Honesty do? 'Tis quite the wrong Box;  
To thrive in this World, you must run with a F[o]x. 79

When Pitt joined with Newcastle, the reaction of Tories and independents in the City of London was generally hostile. Most of Pitt's supporters in the press were suspicious of the arrangement. The Monitor suggested that Pitt's involvement in the ministry might induce the belief that he had deserted the cause of his country for some private interest. The London Evening-Post did not list the members of the new ministry, nor did it comment on its formation. With the London Chronicle, it later acknowledged some misgivings about the coalition. Although they both remained wary of the ministry, their criticism was soon restrained. The Con-Test, by comparison, consistently continued to support Pitt. 80

In direct contrast to the reaction in London, there was no immediate criticism in the provincial newspapers of Pitt's joining the coalition. Rumours of ministerial appointments confidently had asserted widely ranging combinations of

79. FFBJ, 7 May 1757, p.3 c.2.
80. Peters, pp.84-7.
politicians were thought to be about to take office. No comments were made on the suitability of the appointments, perhaps because it was usually sufficient comment to print in close succession the often contradictory reports of several London newspapers. On 11 June the Norwich Mercury reprinted consecutively six reports of ministerial changes, ranging from the General Evening Post's assertion that several great personages had kissed hands on appointment to posts in the ministry, to the Evening Advertiser's denial that resignations from some of the offices involved had yet taken place.\textsuperscript{81} Provincial newspapers were naturally cautious about giving importance to reports of appointments that frequently were contradicted, but they made no comment even when the ministry's final appointment was confirmed by the Gazette. The final report of the composition of the new ministry in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal was copied from the Evening Advertiser as a simple list of appointments, beneath a rarely-used headline.\textsuperscript{82} Despite this unusual emphasis, there was no comment then or in later posts. The widespread practice of taking political comment from the London Evening-Post might explain the corresponding absence of comment on the new coalition in the provincial papers. However, their attitude is more likely to have been apathetic or bewildered than actively disapproving. Unlike the London Evening-Post, most provincial papers printed the list of the new ministers, while refraining from either criticism or praise of the new ministry.

A major question about the Devonshire-Pitt ministry is at what stage and to what extent Pitt and his colleagues gained the

\textsuperscript{81} NM 374, 18 June 1757, p.1 c.1.

\textsuperscript{82} FFBJ, 25 June 1757, p.2 c.3.
unequivocal support of the Tories. Those in the provinces seem to have supported Pitt consistently much earlier than Tories in London. The administration avoided calling the enquiry into military disasters and the previous ministry's mismanagement, which was a major Tory demand. The London Evening-Post, for example, repeatedly called for an enquiry in early 1757. Tories were also sympathetic to Byng, and blamed instead the former ministers for recent failures. Yet on both these points the two provincial papers considered to have the greatest Tory leanings, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal and the York Courant, adopted a different line. Although no copies of the York Courant for 1757 are known to survive, both papers in late 1756 placed as much, if not more, blame on Byng's cowardice as the ministers' incompetence for the loss of Minorca. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal continued to revile Byng until his execution, when it reported celebrations at Chepstow on the news of his death.

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, which might have been expected to have printed outspoken Tory views on these issues, instead supported and excused the ministry's line. In particular, it made no demands for the bringing on of the enquiry. By early 1757 the Bristol paper was as much Pittite as it was Tory. There were hints, as at the start of the year, that its support was conditional, but the paper consistently had favoured Pitt since shortly before he took office. Not only did Felix Farley's Bristol Journal subdue its Tory principles in an effort to support an insecure Whig 'Patriot' ministry that was

83. Peters, p.67.
84. FFBJ, 2 Apr.1757, p.3 c.3.
85. FFBJ, 1 Jan.1757, p.2 c.1.
sensitive to Tory susceptibilities, but the paper continued its support when Pitt formed a coalition with Newcastle. Tory papers could be expected, and the London essay papers Monitor and Citizen were, hostile to the arrangement. Yet Felix Farley's Bristol Journal made no comment. If it was prepared to accept Pitt uncritically, it is reasonable to conclude that Tory opinion in Bristol, which Felix Farley's Bristol Journal generally seems to have represented, had favoured Pitt since the formation of the Devonshire-Pitt ministry. If a Tory newspaper, traditionally suspicious of Whig Patriots, could support Pitt so unequivocally, then it is not surprising that the other five provincial papers, which were generally opposition Whig in their outlook in any case, readily supported him. That support was to be tested severely shortly after the new coalition took office.

The reporting of the issues of 1757 serves to demonstrate the political naivety of the provincial newspapers. A major feature of the papers' reporting of politics that emerged during late 1756 and 1757 was the dominance of William Pitt over all other political figures. Political alignments were depicted simplistically, largely as personal rivalries. The Old Corps politicians, particularly Fox and Newcastle, were taken to be the antagonists of Pitt and the other Patriot ministers. The papers glossed over, or were simply unaware of, the weaknesses of the Pitt-Devonshire ministry. Essays defending the ministry were reprinted regularly, and no demands for the institution of the promised enquiry into the conduct of the previous administration were made. The papers' quiescence in the face of delays in the enquiry was not entirely out of regard for the new ministry.

Some, notably Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, held the unusual or perhaps naïve opinion that both the Newcastle-Fox ministry and Byng were culpable for the loss of Minorca, which conflicted with Pitt's attitude that Byng had been used as a scapegoat for the former ministers.

Pitt's dismissal, however, showed the provincial press to be solidly behind him. Their reporting of addresses of thanks to Pitt gave the impression that the campaign had widespread and respectable support. Unlike some of the London press, there seems to have been no intent to deceive. Rather, the campaign of gold boxes shows that the provincial papers were, though sometimes sceptical, relatively easily mislead and politically naïve. Nevertheless, the papers' distinctive consistent favour towards Pitt prevented the appearance of criticisms of his forming a coalition with Newcastle that even Pitt's supporters among the London press voiced. In this, there are the possible beginnings of a distinctive provincial political stance.
V. Pitt and Provincial Newspapers

The new coalition faced difficulties at home and abroad. Attempts to enforce the Militia Act resulted in widespread rioting in August and September 1757. In North America, General Loudoun decided to abandon the planned attack on Louisbourg in early August. However, the ministry's most immediate problem concerned the unsuccessful war on the continent. Prussia, Britain's only substantial ally, was beaten by Austrian forces at Kolin in Bohemia on 18 June. The French defeated the Duke of Cumberland's Army of Observation at Hastenbeck on 24 July, and occupied Hanover as far as the Stade peninsula. This raised the threat of a separate Hanoverian peace with France, which would have isolated Prussia. To avert this possibility, Pitt proposed increased subsidies and immediate grants to Hanover and Hesse. However, Cumberland capitulated in a convention signed at Klosterzeven on 8 September. ¹ The political reaction in Britain to the convention was immediate. The ministry refused to ratify the agreement, and offered to pay the allied army if it would resume fighting. The king agreed to Pitt's demand to recall Cumberland, who was succeeded as commander of the allied army by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick.

These events were concurrent with the unsuccessful British naval and military attack on Rochefort on the western French coast. The news of the Convention of Klosterzeven and of the failure of the Louisbourg expedition arrived within the same week that the Rochefort expedition set out. This 'secret expedition' was planned as a diversionary amphibious raid to draw French

¹. NM 389, 1 Oct. 1759, p.1 c.2-3.
strength away from Germany into coastal defence, on the suggestion of the King of Prussia. The expedition was a practical expression of the Tory and Patriot 'Blue Water' policy that considered naval power to be Britain's natural defence, and war on the continent something to be avoided. The expedition was very much Pitt's idea, carried against the objections of the other ministers and military commanders. There were important political reasons for the expedition. By agreeing to subsidies for allied German states, Pitt appeared to have compromised the Patriot position against British involvement in the continental war he had held before taking office. The strategy 'was designed less to divert French attention from Germany than to vindicate Pitt with those at home whom he had previously wooed and who now doubted his integrity.' 12 It could be hoped that the Rochefort expedition would encourage the belief that the war would not be fought on 'German principles', so Pitt would avoid alienating many of his supporters who incorrectly believed that he was implacably opposed to continental connections.

If it was hoped that the Rochefort expedition would divert attention from Pitt's concession on German subsidies, then it was successful in the provincial newspapers. They seem to have ignored both the increased payments to Hanover and Hesse, which would normally have been reported, and Pitt's apparent inconsistency on the subject. The text of the Convention of Klosterzeven was printed in several papers in early October, but there was no further comment on that subject either. Both issues were overshadowed by the 'secret expedition' which was the centre of attention from late August onwards.

2. Langford, p.78.
The expedition was secret only in its destination, which remained a major object of speculation until the force reached Rochefort. News of the expedition was leaked deliberately long before it sailed.\textsuperscript{3} Details of preparations were reported frequently in all the provincial papers. Arrivals of stores, troops and high-ranking officers were relayed from Portsmouth. Lists of the ships that were to go on the expedition, with the weight of their armament, were also printed.

There was, however, no lack of concern for security. When the Portsmouth post boy was robbed in mid-August, fears were expressed that the mail had been 'carry'd off more for the sake of Intelligence than Bank Notes'\textsuperscript{4} by a set of men who sent the intelligence they gathered to France by way of Brussels.\textsuperscript{4} It need not be inferred from the apparent lack of concern that information on British naval dispositions was reaching France by the means of English newspapers that the information was either inaccurate or known already to the French. Later, the shipping news in provincial newspapers was accurate enough for Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser to be obliged to discontinue its reports of local shipping movements in 1759 after a complaint from forty local merchants that the information benefited French privateers.\textsuperscript{5} It has been presumed that troop and ship movements were reported freely because foreign agents did not read English newspapers.\textsuperscript{6} On the contrary, the reports were known to the French, who treated them as propaganda in the same way the

\textsuperscript{3} Langford, p.78.

\textsuperscript{4} NM 383, 20 Aug.1757, p.3 c.1.

\textsuperscript{5} Cranfield, p.98.

\textsuperscript{6} Wiles, p.263 n.14.
English did French claims of naval strength. An article from Brest in March 1757 claimed

The pompous Lists of the English Fleets destined for Europe, Asia, and America, gives us no Uneasiness because we know the Lists to be false, and the Ships to be ill mannered.

When the secret expedition set out it was believed that its destination was Brest, and there were late attempts to divert it to Stade or Emden. The expeditionary force reached the Basque Roads off Rochefort by 20 September and easily captured the island of Aix. An unopposed landing on the mainland at Chatellaillon Bay was abandoned, and after considerable delay the land officers decided not to risk an attack on Rochefort. In the absence of proposals for further operations, the fleet returned to England.

The reaction to the failure of the expedition was immediate and hostile. In London, it combined with discontent over the Convention of Klosterzeven to produce a public clamour considered by Newcastle to be worse than that over the loss of Minorca. The initial reaction was to blame the commanders, but in the essay papers the Citizen, Herald and Patriot, this soon developed into criticism of the ministry, and Pitt in particular, for promoting an impractical plan. The Monitor and London Evening-Post defended Pitt by claiming that the expedition's inactivity had been the result of secret instructions from those who wished to aid the Hanoverian cause at Klosterzeven, of whom the principals were George II and the Duke of Cumberland.

7. NM 364, 9 Apr.1757, p.1 c.2.
8. NM 387, 17 Sept.1757, p.2 c.2; Corbett, I, p.200.
meeting of common councilmen at the Half Moon Tavern was reported by Boddely's Bath Journal to have proposed the consideration of an address to the king on the miscarriage of the expedition. This action was forestalled by the announcement that an enquiry would be held into the affair, a course of action that had been rumoured a fortnight earlier in the Evening Advertiser, and reprinted by the Norwich Mercury.\(^\text{10}\)

The prospect of an enquiry caused the more serious criticisms of the ministry to subside, and public debate in London concentrated on the actions of the officers on the expedition. The Commission of Enquiry into the conduct of the land officers was held in November. It led to the courts martial and eventual acquittal of both commanders, Sir John Mordaunt and Sir Edward Hawke. There were renewed demands for the City to address the king and for a parliamentary enquiry, and the controversy persisted into early 1758. The Monitor and London Evening-Post continued to criticise the officers, and blamed a 'faction' for sabotaging the expedition.\(^\text{11}\)

The reaction in the provincial newspapers to the failure of the Rochefort expedition showed important differences from the reaction in London. Pitt's actions were not criticised, the commanders consistently receiving nearly all the blame for the expedition's failure. Interest in the issue had waned by the time Mordaunt's and Hawke's courts martial had concluded.

Although disagreements between the commanders were widely reported on the return of the fleet, Aris's Birmingham Gazette

---

10. BBJ 739, 31 Oct.1757, p.3 c.2; NM 391, 15 Oct.1757, p.2 c.2.
ignored suggestions that they were responsible for the failure of the expedition. The paper reprinted the London Gazette's assertion that all the French coast had been alarmed, so there had been no prospect of a successful landing. Additionally, various accounts from Paris were said to have reported great consternation there at the loss of Aix. Although also reprinting the Gazette's account, the Norwich Mercury took a more critical line. It remarked 'From Ev. Adv. We hear that the Winds have lately been so Catholic, that a Protestant Fleet cannot get into a French Harbour.' Felix Farley's Bristol Journal went further, quoting Shakespeare and Virgil to give a 'just PICTURE of our unhappy and astonish'd Countrymen, on hearing the Return of the FLEET.' It devoted nearly three columns to the pamphlet Some Account of the late secret Expedition. This listed the ships involved and printed the general orders for the landing at length. The anonymous author considered the reason why nothing had been achieved to be a 'secret circumstance' that time had not yet disclosed, which alludes to Hanoverian influence.

On 11 October, Thomas Potter reported to Pitt from Bath that at Bristol and throughout the region the discontent at the sudden return of the fleet had risen to an alarming degree. He considered it no longer useful to blame the officers, because 'The people carry their resentments higher.' 'The people' had been told that instructions not to land troops had been sent without Pitt's knowledge, and so allegedly believed that the

12. ABG 829, 10 Oct.1757, p.3 c.1-2; NM 391, 15 Oct.1757, p.1 c.1, p.2 c.2.
expeditionary force's inactivity had been in order to help the Hanoverian cause at Klosterzeven. This belief cannot have been gained from Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, because although a copy of the convention was printed on 1 October, no details of the unsuccessful landing were published until the fifteenth. The accusation that Cumberland and the king wanted the expedition to fail in order to make direct British involvement in Germany the only practical course of action was not made in any of the provincial papers considered. However, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reprinted from the Gazette Pitt's only order to the expeditionary force once it had sailed, and later reprinted an addition to the third edition of Some ACCOUNT of the late secret Expedition, which had been reprinted in extract three weeks earlier to 'remove all Suspicion of the Expedition having been originally intended only as a sham Armament, or that we were influenced by Hanoverian Considerations'. The publication of these two items would have been inexplicable had Potter's observation that anti-Hanoverian sentiment was widespread in Bristol not been accurate.

Provincial newspapers consistently defended Pitt against accusations that his conduct had betrayed the confidence put in him. Criticisms of Pitt's actions were printed only for the purposes of refutation. The Citizen was highly critical of Pitt in its demands for an explanation of events.

17. FFBJ, 22 Oct.1757, p.1 c.2; FFBJ, 5 Nov.1757, p.4 c.2.
18. Peters, p.95.
Mercury and Aris's Birmingham Gazette reprinted from that essay paper an epigram in which Pitt was threatened that if he did not soon discover who was responsible for the miscarriage, he would be obliged to return his gold boxes. In both cases, the epigram was printed only in order to provide the basis for a reply. Aris's Birmingham Gazette added an answer, allegedly by two young ladies, that Pitt would soon discover the guilty soldiers or sailors. The Norwich Mercury's ex tempore answer in Pitt's name acknowledged that there was cause to complain, but asked for patience and promised

If I don't do my best,  
To see you redress'd,        
You shall have all your Boxes again.  

Very unusually, these answers appear to have been the work of the provincial printers. The Norwich Mercury's answer reached Felix Farley's Bristol Journal through a London paper as the Extempore Answer of the County of Norfolk, a revealing illustration of the inflation of the significance of unsubstantiated opinions. The attention paid to refuting the Citizen's epigram suggests there existed a substantial belief that Pitt's stance on the expedition was not sincere. The Norwich paper copied from the London Chronicle a letter from Bath of 26 October quoting another letter reportedly handed about there as proof that 'our good Patriot' had held his integrity and that his grief on account of the miscarriage of the expedition was 'beyond Expression'.

19. ABG 832, 31 Oct.1757, p.2 c.3; NM 393, 29 Oct.1757, p.3 c.2.
20. FFBJ, 5 Nov.1757, p.3 c.2.
the origin of this report to be checked, yet it demonstrates the extent to which the provincial newspapers felt it necessary to defend Pitt's reputation.

The provincial newspapers, in contrast to those in London, generally continued into November to blame the commanders for the miscarriage. Boddely's Bath Journal ascribed many instances of harm to the national interest to the personal pique of, or differences of opinion between, the land and sea commanders. Sir John Mordaunt was most frequently attacked once the enquiry had been announced. His speech to his men before they embarked, that the conflict would be short but sharp, was mocked in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. Mordaunt's courage and judgement were compared unfavourably to Hawke's. A PARODY in the same paper claimed

Was M[ordaunt]t not afraid to strike, 
Rochefort would be the Prize. 23

The proceedings of Mordaunt's court martial were printed regularly in December. Pitt was said to have spoken 'a considerable Tyme' concerning the orders given to the expedition, which were the evidence that the expedition's failure was not due to its impracticality. 24 Provincial newspaper interest in the issue died out soon after, despite the continued discussion in London. 25

The provincial newspapers' treatment of the Rochefort affair differed from that of their London counterparts by defending

22. FBJ 739, 31 Oct.1757, p.2 c.2.
23. FFBJ, 5 Nov.1757, p.1 c.1-2, quotation p.2 c.2.
24. NM 400, 17 Dec.1757, p.3 c.1.
25. NM 407, 4 Feb.1758, p.2 c.2.
Pitt's role and consistently directing criticism towards the military commanders. Nothing printed in the provincial newspapers made necessary the refutations of inept planning. The provincial newspapers did not act in isolation, so the accusations presumably came from either London or rival local newspapers. The provincial papers' reluctance to follow the Monitor and London Evening-Post into even temporary criticism of Pitt was a distinctive feature of their treatment of the issue.

Circumstances for the maintenance of Pitt's Patriot image were again unfavourable in 1758. Pitt's popularity in the provinces survived, but less through his own actions than from the treatment afforded them in the provincial newspapers. Two of the bases of his Patriot image were questioned by Pitt's response to events. Support for a 'constitutional' militia and opposition to 'continental connections', direct British involvement in the German war, were seen as fundamental principles of Pitt's political activity. Yet when the reconstituted militia was finally brought into being, serious doubts were cast on the popularity of the measure and the sincerity of Pitt's attachment to it.

The embodiment of the militia and the rioting it provoked were among the most frequent subjects of comment in the six provincial newspapers in late 1758 and 1759. The militia remained a relatively uncontroversial subject in provincial papers until attempts were made to enforce the Militia Act in late 1757. Townshend's second Militia Bill attracted little more attention from country printers during its passage than had his earlier bill, despite the publicity given to demands in the addresses and instructions of 1756 for the reconstitution of the
militia. The bill was first mentioned by *Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal*, with an approving postscript, when it passed the House of Commons on 25 March 1757. Nothing more appeared in any paper until July, when discontent had arisen over the interpretation of the new act.

In contrast, in the London press interest in the militia had continued throughout early 1757. Many pamphlets were produced on the subject, but it remained comparatively uncontentious. The *Monitor*, for example, countered criticisms of the Militia Act without complaining of the delays in its passage. Newspaper printers seem to have thought the militia a genuinely popular measure. Looking back from 1761, the *Norwich Mercury*, quoting the *London Chronicle*, believed the militia had been brought about by the clamour of the multitude. The paper sarcastically contrasted that assertion with the militia’s then current unpopularity.

Although all six provincial papers favoured the militia, the initial attempts to enforce the Militia Act led to their criticising some aspects of it, the first comment appearing in *Aris’s Birmingham Gazette* in July 1757. Thomas Aris printed an extract from the act relating to the choosing of a new body of militiamen every three years, and suggested replacing only a proportion of the establishment, since he argued that replacing all the men would have produced an inexperienced force. When militia riots broke out in Leicestershire in September,

26. FBPJ, 2 Apr.1757, p.1 c.3.
27. Peters, p.72.
28. MM 570, 21 Mar.1760, p.3 c.1.
Boddely's Bath Journal reprinted as a 'remarkable Article' a postscript to a letter from Leicester. The correspondent attributed the riots to 'an Act which cannot be put in Execution, and which wants great Amendments before it can be made useful.'

Extracts from letters recounting the activities of rioters were widely published. The provincial newspapers criticised neither the actions of the rioters, who usually demanded the surrender of lists of men eligible for militia service, nor the employment of troops to suppress them, even when three rioters were killed at Northampton. Attempts sometimes were made to explain the rioters' grievances. Several papers reported the complaints of rioters at Lincoln about the low pay rates provided for in the act, but readers were assured of the men's loyalty and their willingness to serve in the militia. Aris's Birmingham Gazette considered the disorders were caused by a lack of knowledge of the meaning and intent of the act. The most common misconception was said to be that the newly-raised militiamen were to be sent abroad contrary to the terms of their service, as had been done in the case of several regular regiments raised the previous year. Hardwicke had confirmed this fear in a letter from Wimpole shortly before. He believed the rioters' other objections were the supposed requirement to serve without pay, and that the new law transferred the burden of service from men of property to the poor. The latter belief he

30. BBJ 731, 5 Sep.1757, p.4 c.2.
32. BBJ 731, 5 Sep.1757, p.1 c.3; FFBJ, 3 Sep.1757, p.2 c.2; ABS 829, 10 Oct.1757, p.3 c.2.
33. ABS 825, 12 Sep.1757, p.1 c.3.
considered 'must have been put into their heads by somebody.'\textsuperscript{34} That somebody was unlikely to have been any of the provincial newspapers, because the idea had not been raised by them. The part the newspapers played in the militia disturbances of late 1757 was limited to reporting incidents, sometimes without explanation, but nearly always without editorial comment.

Not until rioting ceased did the provincial newspapers carry comment on the formation of the militia. Embodiments of militia regiments from the few counties that had raised their establishment were widely reported. The \textit{Norwich Mercury} reported the swearing-in of 151 men of the Norfolk Militia at Norwich, and other groups at Great Yarmouth and Fakenham, in November 1757. The printer commented that the zeal and spirit shown on that occasion demonstrated that all present saw the utility of a militia 'in the defence of the religion, laws and liberties of a free people.'\textsuperscript{35} However, the progress made in the implementation of the Militia Act in Norfolk was exceptional.\footnote{\textit{Western}, p.141.} Elsewhere, little progress was made towards the embodiment of county regiments. To remedy defects in the militia legislation, Townshend introduced a bill to amend and explain the Militia Act in March 1758. The bill, which passed in June, answered popular objections to the earlier act, and prevented delays in its enactment by providing for the enforcement of Lieutenancy meetings and penalties for obstructing the enforcement of the law.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp.142-3.} There were no further disturbances when the Lieutenancy

\footnote{\textit{Western}, p.141.}

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp.142-3.}
meetings resumed, and over three quarters of the English counties had called Lieutenancy meetings by August 1758. 38

The provincial newspapers began frequently to print arguments for the utility of a militia when the militia had become relatively well established, not, as might be expected, when the idea of militia reform was fighting for acceptance. Defences of the principles of a constitutional militia began to appear in country papers in the second half of 1758, after orders for the raising of the militia had been distributed in early July. 39 There had been no direct mention of the militia during the first half of the year, until extracts of the act to amend the Militia Act appeared in July. While some of the explanations of the new act, reprinted from the London papers, probably appeared on the initiative of individual printers, 40 several abstracts appear to have been sent to provincial papers by supporters of the militia as part of a publicity campaign. Aris's Birmingham Gazette received in September a short abstract of the Militia Act from a correspondent who expressed the hope that the county of Warwick would not fail to show a 'becoming spirit' with regard to the militia. 41 Since Aris's Birmingham Gazette had published extracts from the Militia Act two months earlier, the anonymous correspondent probably knew that the printer would be sympathetic to towards material promoting the militia.

38. Cookson, p.79.

39. INJ 273, 15 July 1758, p.1 c.3.

40. ABG 869, 17 July 1758, p.1 c.3; INJ 273, 15 July 1758, p.1 c.3; both from the London Evening-Post.

41. ABG 878, 18 Sep.1758, p.1 c.3.
All the provincial papers considered were sympathetic towards the militia. The Leicester, Bath and Bristol newspapers brought attention to the subject by reporting county militia meetings, which provided both the occasion and the material for comment. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal reported the Leicestershire Lieutenancy meeting in April 1759, and commented favourably upon the list of gentlemen who had offered to serve.\textsuperscript{42} Boddely's Bath Journal printed an account of a meeting at Bridgewater in August 1758, but had not reported an earlier meeting, referred to in the report, which few had attended. The paper reported the speech of the Lord Lieutenant, Earl Poulett, who commended the county Quarter Sessions for its instructions to the county members 'for promoting an Act so long wished for by this Country, and obtained at length under the Influence of a Patriot Minister.' The Lieutenant's plan for the composition of the Somerset Militia was set out, with lists of those who had attended the earlier meeting.\textsuperscript{43} John Keene further demonstrated his enthusiasm for local militias by printing an address on the advantages of a well-regulated militia and the duties of militiamen. The address had been sent by a captain in the Wiltshire Militia to Keene's printing office for copies to be made, but the printer 'thought it proper to give it a Place in the Journal', to enable gentlemen in neighbouring counties to use the same method to animate their own companies.\textsuperscript{44} In both cases, the promotion of the militia in Boddely's Bath Journal was dependent on the provision of a report or publishable material.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{LJ} 311, 14 Apr.1759, p.3 c.3.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{BBJ} 782, 28 Aug.1758, p.3 c.2-3, quotation p.3 c.2.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{BBJ} 807, 19 Feb.1759, p.1 c.1-2.
from outside sources, since the printer's own comments were typically brief.

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal also reported local militia meetings and printed articles promoting the militia, but expressed reservations about the way in which the Militia Act had been enforced. When several militiamen were sworn in at Bristol in August 1759, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal published a remonstrance from the ballotted men, and added a description of its reception. Fifty three of the ballotted men complained that they had been chosen from outdated lists, and asked that the balloting be made more equitable. The unidentified official in charge of the ceremony was reported to have replied that he considered the point a small neglect of the letter of the law, for which the 'mistaken Citizens' had shown a want of public spirit. The terms in which the printer paraphrased the reply imply that he considered it harsh and the remonstrance justified. A note was added 'To the lasting Honour of the Persons ballotted' that none would have made any obstruction had the law been properly executed.45

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal earlier had been less than enthusiastic about the way in which the Militia Act had been executed. Insufficient gentlemen had volunteered for the lower commissions, either because they were unwilling to accept ranks lower than that for which their estates qualified them, or because they did not want to provoke more demonstrations by helping to establish the militia.46 In a headlined article from London in November 1758, the Bristol paper set out three reasons

45. FFBJ, 1 Sep.1759, p.3 c.2-3.

why it was believed gentlemen had refused commissions in the militia. Charges that they had refused through effeminacy, lack of public spirit, or the prevalence of Jacobitism were countered by the explanation that many gentlemen feared that the militia could be used in future to support the oppression of a corrupt ministry. Apart from tacitly admitting that the coalition was not expected to last long, this reasoning transferred Patriot arguments against a standing army to be used against the militia, itself a Patriot demand. Implicitly, a distinction was made between a constitutional militia and the militia in practice. The anonymous author claimed that it was well known that some of the ministers secretly opposed the establishment of a useful militia, and would favour gentlemen who had refused militia commissions for government places and pensions. Since Newcastle was known to be most concerned with the distribution of patronage, this suggests that his opponents believed, or wanted others to believe, that there was a fundamental difference between the Old Corps and the Pittite ministers over the militia.

Yet the provincial papers were not certain that even Pitt supported the militia unequivocally. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reported the Lord Lieutenant's address to a meeting of the Gentleman Natives of the County of Somerset in August 1758. He attempted to contradict what he said were idle reports industriously spread 'that not only a great Statesman and Patriot, but that the first great Personage in the Kingdom was against carrying this Act into Execution'. The Lord Lieutenant countered this by affirming that the king had given his assent to the Militia Act, and that Pitt had confirmed his zealous support

47. FFBJ, 11 Nov. 1758, p.1 c.2.
in a private letter.\textsuperscript{48} The sincerity of Pitt's attachment to the militia may have been questioned because his supporters did not want him associated with the way in which it had been enacted. Nevertheless, that such a report could be considered prevalent indicates that Pitt's public image as a Patriot minister had been damaged.

However, it is unlikely that the damage to Pitt's Patriot image had come from the treatment he received in the provincial newspapers. None of the proponents of the Militia Act was blamed for the difficulties encountered in enforcing it. The only political figure reported to have been associated with the supposed injustices of the act was the Duke of Devonshire, who as Lord Lieutenant was in September 1757 the absent object of a demonstration at his house at Chatsworth in Derbyshire.\textsuperscript{49} Pitt's name was not linked with difficulties over the militia, and seldom mentioned in connection with any failure, other than to defend or praise him. A petition in Aris's Birmingham Gazette purporting to be from fifty thousand Kentish women, offering to defend their country since the men could not, concluded 'Let Mr.P[it]t remain Secretary for ever!'\textsuperscript{50} A laudatory description of Pitt's character and political abilities extracted from Tobias Smollett's History of England by the London Evening-Post was widely reprinted by country papers in January 1758.\textsuperscript{51}

Towards the middle of the year, however, newspaper

\textsuperscript{48} FFBJ, 9 Sept.1758, p.3 c.2-3, quotation p.3 c.3.

\textsuperscript{49} ABG 829, 10 Oct.1757, p.3 c.2.

\textsuperscript{50} ABG 852, 20 Mar.1758, p.1 c.1.

\textsuperscript{51} FFBJ, 14 Jan.1758, p.1 c.3;

\textsuperscript{NM} 404, 14 Jan.1758, p.1 c.2.
enthusiasm for Pitt began to wane. His statements and activities were mentioned notably less frequently than they had been before. Pitt and Legge were awarded the freedom of York in March, but the presentation received only brief notice in contrast to the gold boxes presented the previous year. Aris's Birmingham Gazette printed an epigram attributing wisdom and virtue to Pitt, but in the next issue printed a hostile reply that concluded

Many a Box the Statesman had,
But you have digg'd his Pit. 52

Frederick II, King of Prussia, displaced Pitt in 1758 as the public figure most frequently mentioned in provincial newspapers. Frederick's apotheosis was rapid but comparatively brief. Pieces praising him began to appear after his victory at Rossbach in November 1757, and reached their peak in early 1758, and had almost died out by the end of the year. Prussia's military position was desperate by late 1757, and the French army moved to attack in Saxony after the signing of the Convention of Klosterzeven. Prussian forces defeated the French at Rossbach on 5 November 1757, and then moved to face the Austrians, whom they beat at Leuthen on 5 December despite great numerical inferiority. These victories caused France to reconsider its involvement in the European war, and encouraged Britain to revitalise the Army of Observation. Under Ferdinand of Brunswick, the army drove French forces across the Rhine in April. However, Prussia was unable to force Austria to a peace, and in August fought a major but inconclusive battle with Russia at Zorndorf. By the end of the year, Prussia could fight only a defensive war because of its limited manpower and material

52. ABG 855, 10 Apr.1758, p.1 c.2; ABG 856, 17 Apr.1758, p.3 c.2.
resources.

The treatment of Frederick II in English newspapers was closely related to Prussian successes. Favourable news from the European war was often the occasion for favourable comment or anecdote, and eulogistic verses appeared periodically. The King of Prussia was most frequently praised as the defender of Protestantism and a friend to freedom and mankind.\footnote{Manfred Schlenke, England und das Friderizianische Preussen 1740-1763 Ein Beitrag zum Verhaltnis von Politik und Offentlicher Meinung im England des 18. Jahrhunderts, (Frieburg/Munchen, 1963), p.233.} Felix Farley's Bristol Journal published an ode for the King of Prussia in five verses in February 1758, but tried to show that its composition, if not its printing, was not a result of the contemporary mania, by pointing out that it had been written before Rossbach.\footnote{FFBJ, 11 Feb.1758, p.1 c.2.} Frederick's birthday on 24 February was the occasion of many local celebrations, at least seventeen of which were reported in the London and provincial press.\footnote{Schlenke, pp.245-6, n.380.} Boddely's Bath Journal reported the celebrations in London and Bath, which included bell ringing, illuminations, fireworks and balls.\footnote{BBJ 752, 30 Jan.1758, p.3 c.2.} Frederick's image in the newspapers was enhanced further by reports that more than two hundred British officers had asked for leave to serve as volunteers in the service of the King of Prussia.\footnote{BBJ 760, 27 Mar.1758, p.3 c.3; AEG 856, 17 Apr.1758, p.2 c.1.} Aris's Birmingham Gazette went to the lengths of printing a verse composed 'on reading in the Public Papers of a Lady that had ordered the King of Prussia a Present of a Thousand
Pounds. His popularity in England depended on his continued military success. When the Prussian armies became bogged down in the second half of 1758, the 'Prussian Hero' Frederick was still mentioned in highly favourable terms, but with much less frequency than before. On the anniversary of the victory at Rossbach, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal commented that 'if his Prussian Majesty should not be so kind in this Respect this Year as he was last, it will not be his Fault.'

The provincial newspapers' concentration on the King of Prussia can perhaps be seen as both an attempt to compensate for the lack of British successes by concentrating on a victorious ally, and an effort by Pitt's supporters to make his shift towards continental involvement acceptable by making the European war popular. Frederick's usefulness as a distraction from British failures declined in late 1758 as his armies were placed on the defensive. That no longer mattered to the English newspapers once British successes in North America and on the French coast became known in August. Yet before then Pitt's position was to be questioned seriously by his volte-face on 'continental connections'.

The second threat to Pitt's popular standing in 1758, and one more serious than the militia, was his reversal of his earlier refusal to commit British forces to the continent. The issue involved the first major difference of opinion between the provincial and metropolitan press. In London, Pitt's abandonment of an important Patriot principle raised the danger of his losing

58. ABG 856, 17 Apr.1758, p.2 c.2.
60. FPBJ, 11 Nov.1758, p.2 c.2.
a substantial section of his support. In the provinces, however, there was no adverse reaction, and there is evidence to suggest that Pitt's move may have been welcomed. The contrast between the two reactions is sufficiently great to support the conclusion that the provincial cities could have a distinctive view of national politics within the framework of news and comment emanating almost exclusively from London.

The question of British involvement in the continental war was highly controversial. Opposition to 'continental connections' was a major 'Patriot' point, since it was feared that British interests would be endangered for the sake of Hanover. In November 1755 Pitt had opposed subsidy treaties with Hanover and Hesse on the grounds that they would waste British resources in a general continental war, and would divert Britain from its true interests in North America. Pitt forcefully restated his intention not to send British soldiers to Germany in parliament in December 1757. His repeated refusal to provide more money for Prussia and the Army of Observation raised fears of Prussia concluding a separate peace with France, so Pitt agreed in March 1758 to send a small British force to Germany. 61 Although Pitt was careful to conceal his part in the decision, the reversal could be expected to have damaged his reputation in the provincial newspapers.

The provincial papers seem to have been unconcerned about the initial sending of British troops to the continent. The planned French withdrawal from the Friesian port of Emden was precipitated in late March 1758 by the appearance of two British ships. Because of Emden's strategic importance, it was decided

to send a garrison of British troops. Many provincial newspapers printed the reports from the Gazette of the French evacuation from Emden and the part played by the Seahorse and Strombolo. The London Evening-Post, reprinted by the Norwich Mercury, rapidly defended the use of the navy at Emden by extending the 'blue water' justification for coastal raids on France. It argued that the enemy should be attacked wherever possible, even if this meant involvement on the German coast.

The main criticism of 'continental connections' was, however, the employment of land forces in Germany. None of the six papers printed any complaint about the employment of British troops. However, they acknowledged the significance of the move by reprinting rumours that the decision had caused serious divisions within the ministry. The Norwich Mercury reported early in March that the ministry had agreed to augment the Army of Observation with fifteen thousand British troops in response to demands by the King of Prussia. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reported that the Prussian demand for what it believed was twelve thousand men had embarrassed the ministry because it was thought impolitic to provide for Germany before British interests were out of danger. The paper claimed that there was consequently shortly to be a change in the ministry. Soon after it was reported that British troops would be sent to Emden,


63. BBJ 760, 27 Mar.1758, p.4 c.2; NM 415, 1 Apr.1758, p.1 c.1.

64. NM 415, 1 Apr.1758, p.2 c.1.

65. NM 411, 4 Mar.1758, p.3 c.1.

a new convention with Prussia was announced. 67 A further subsidy was granted to Prussia, and fifty thousand Hanoverians maintained for the Army of Observation, but readers of Aris's Birmingham Gazette were assured that 'no English Troops are to go abroad, except such as are to garrison Embden, &c.' 68

There are two explanations possible for the provincial newspapers' quiescence in Pitt's volte-face on continental connections. Pitt may have maintained his Patriot image sufficiently to withstand concessions on the German war without effect on his popularity. Alternatively, the German war may not have been significantly unpopular in the provinces, and limited British involvement would perhaps therefore have aroused little opposition.

The lack of opposition, particularly from the parliamentary Tories, to the Prussian alliance has been attributed to Pitt's 'careful refurbishing of his patriot image.' 69 This was achieved by promotion the a new coastal expedition against France, and by support for Tory and Patriot issues: the amendment of the Militia Act, a bill for the better payment of seamen, and the Habeas Corpus Amendment Bill. 70 The second coastal expedition planned against France cannot have had a diversionary effect on the initial reaction in the provinces to the sending of troops to Germany, as has been suggested it had for London opinion, because it was not reported in provincial papers until after troops had

67. FFBJ, 8 Apr.1758, p.3 c.2.
68. ABG 856, 17 Apr.1758, p.3 c.2.
been sent to Emden. Although perhaps effectively safeguarding Pitt's Patriot image within parliament, the issues he helped to promote also received little attention in the provincial newspapers.

Provincial papers paid less attention to the issues of the parliamentary session of 1758 than did several of the London papers. The stages of the passage of several bills were noticed, but no details or suggestion of the newspapers' attitudes were given. The bills to regulate elections, to confirm Habeas Corpus, and to amend the Militia Act were mentioned without further details when they passed the House of Commons. The act for the certain payment of seamen's wages was printed in abstract once it had received the royal assent.

More attention was given by provincial newspapers to the Habeas Corpus Amendment Bill than the other 'popular' measures of the new ministers. Pitt appears to have adopted the issue of the confirmation of Habeas Corpus in cases of illegal imprisonment in order to maintain his Patriot image and to draw attention from further subsidies to German states. It is significant that Pitt no longer promoted the Habeas Corpus issue once it had been rejected by the House of Lords on 2 June, and once a subsidy for Hesse-Cassel had been voted on 7 June.

There was much discussion of the Habeas Corpus Bill in the London Chronicle and some magazines from late March till early June, and the Monitor and London Evening-Post used the issue to

---

71. ABG 856, 17 Apr.1758, p.3 c.2; Peters, p.105.

72. NM 420, 6 May 1758, p.2 c.2; ABG 852, 20 Mar.1758, p.2 c.2.

73. FFBJ, 8 July 1758, p.1 c.1-2.
promote Pitt's image. Provincial newspapers gave the issue less attention than their metropolitan counterparts. At the same time as news of the recovery of Emden, the Norwich Mercury reported that great numbers of 'worthy and respectable' citizens of London and Westminster intended to meet to consider methods of recommending the extension of Habeas Corpus. As in London, Pitt, Legge and Pratt were praised as the 'three honest Monosyllables'.

Nevertheless, neither the Habeas Corpus nor any other 'popular' issue raised widespread interest in the provincial newspapers. They did not dominate political discussion and cannot be considered to have diverted attention significantly away from the ministry's increasing commitment to continental connections. The refurbishing of Pitt's Patriot image received less attention in the provincial press than it did in London, but then his image had not been attacked in the provinces as it had been in London. Pitt's reputation alone is in any case insufficient explanation for the absence of provincial opposition to the sending of troops to Germany.

It may be unnecessary to explain provincial acquiescence in continental measures in terms of Pitt's reputation because there had not yet been any opposition to the principle of British involvement in Germany in the provincial newspapers. The objections of the parliamentary Tories to continental connections were mollified by Pitt's argument that the Prussian alliance limited unavoidable British involvement in Germany. Yet there

75. NM 415, 1 Apr. 1758, p.1 c.2; Peters, p.112.
76. Peters, p.110.
seems to have been no need to adopt a similar line in the provincial centres. The acceptability of the employment of British troops in Germany was linked to the popularity of the King of Prussia. The effect of the recent popularity of Frederick was to associate the German war with Prussian successes. The transportation of British regiments to garrison Friesian ports was announced in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal as a measure to enable Frederick to bring more of his own troops into the field.77 The great sensitivity among Tories at Westminster to the question of sending British troops apparently was not shared by Tories in Bristol. In apparent contradiction to its normal populist Tory attitude, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal suggested in March that instead of sending twelve thousand men to Germany, as it believed was intended in the Convention of London, it would be better to follow the views of the 'magnanimous King of Prussia' and send forty thousand British troops to deal a decisive blow against France.78 Boddely's Bath Journal in January had reprinted an anonymous letter from a London newspaper that suggested twenty thousand British troops be sent to Germany, 'notwithstanding what has been said against continental Connections'.79 It thus does not appear that provincial acceptance of the sending of British troops to Germany was due to the limited, defensive nature of their employment. Rather, the sending of troops was accepted because there was no objection in the provinces to continental connections.

Reaction to the second stage of British commitment to the

77. FPBJ, 8 Apr.1758, p.2 c.2.
78. FPBJ, 11 Mar.1758, p.1 c.3.
79. BRJ 752, 30 Jan.1758, p.3 c.3-p.4 c.1, quotation p.4 c.1.
continental war, the sending of British troops to the Army of Observation, confirms that it was the apparent popularity of the German war in the provinces that made Pitt's adoption of continental connections acceptable. Before the coastal expedition had reached Cherbourg, news reached England of the defeat of the French by the Army of Observation at Kempen and Crefelt, and of the success of the expedition against Senegal, as well as encouraging reports of the possibility of British success against Louisbourg on Cape Breton. This favourable news did not, however, render uncontroversial the decision to send British troops to join the Army of Observation. As Prince Ferdinand's army was retreating steadily towards the Rhine in June 1758, Pitt suggested on 22 June that 6000 British soldiers and four regiments of cavalry be sent to Germany to reinforce the army. The next day, Ferdinand seriously defeated the French army at Crefelt. Pitt had made careful arrangements to explain his action to his parliamentary supporters. No explanation was made to the London press, which displayed a shocked reaction. Papers that supported Pitt believed the measure to be contrary to his wishes. Pitt had told the House of Commons in December 1757 that he would 'not now send a drop of our blood to the Elbe, to be lost in that ocean of gore'.

Great interest in the controversy can be inferred from the unusual range of material printed by essay and newspapers. The Monitor reacted violently and continued to be preoccupied with

80. Fraser, p.217.

81. Peters, pp.115-7;
    Fraser, pp.217-20.

82. Fraser, p.218;
    Williams, I, p.355.
the issue from July until November. Its opposition to British involvement in Germany was countered by the Gazetteer. Lloyd's Evening Post and the London Chronicle presented a range of views, whereas the London Evening-Post made no comment. The pamphlet debate was also substantial. Lord Pigmont, in Things As They Are in July, made serious criticisms of Pitt's achievements and abuse of popularity. Nevertheless, the belief persisted that Pitt opposed disadvantageous continental connections. Pitt's reputation survived 'by misrepresentation, deliberate or otherwise'.

Pitt's reputation survived in the provinces without the need for misrepresentation. Pitt's name was not connected with the decision in any report printed by the provincial newspapers. Nor did the provincial newspapers make any favourable or unfavourable comment on the sending of British troops to Germany. The initial transfer of troops was reported by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal in early July in the same issue as the news of the victory at Crefelt from a London Gazette Extraordinary. The two short reports detailed the transfer of three regiments and the Emden garrison to Prince Ferdinand's army. A list of the regiments and commanding officers to be sent was printed a fortnight later. Reports of troop movements continued into the following month, but the issue attracted much less attention from the newspapers than did the operations in North America. No sign

84. Peters, p.122.
85. FFBJ, 8 July 1758, p.2 c.2.
86. ABG 869, 17 July 1758, p.1 c.2.
of the controversy present in the London papers appeared until late July. The Bath Journal then printed an anonymous letter on the general question of the extent to which it was in British interests to engage in war on the continent. The writer tentatively argued that weak efforts on the continent were better than doing nothing.88 In September, the paper quoted the Monitor's argument that there was no need for large armies to defeat the French.89

The significant omission in provincial newspapers of the controversy over the sending of troops cannot merely be explained by the nature of the newspapers and their sources. Provincial weeklies set out to provide a summary of news and comment from the London press, and so could be expected to communicate, however briefly, the substance of controversy in the capital. That they did not do so in the case of the sending of troops to Germany cannot be explained by provincial printers having assumed that most of their readers who were interested would have heard of the controversy from other sources. Many country readers did have access to London evening and essay papers, but this had not in other instances prevented provincial papers from reprinting extracts from those papers. The Monitor had been widely reprinted earlier, yet its lengthy preoccupation with the sending of troops to Germany passed unacknowledged by provincial newspapers.90

The attitudes of the several papers towards continental involvement are also unlikely to be the reason for the absence of

90. Peters, p.118.
comment. Only Felix Farley's Bristol Journal had earlier reiterated recommendations to send British troops to the continent, and even then it did not mention the controversy over the event. Deliberate omission of comment favouring continental involvement could be explained by a desire to pass over the accusations of Pitt's having manipulated events, were it not for the accompanying absence of favourable comment before those accusations appeared in Things As They Are in late July.

A more probable explanation of the lack of comment in provincial newspapers is that they took their direction from the London Evening-Post's treatment of the issue. Like the provincial papers, the London Evening-Post merely reprinted troop movements without comment. This seems to confirm the reliance which many papers placed on the London Evening-Post for political comment. However, when in April the London Evening-Post had opposed the sending of troops to Germany, it had not been followed by the provincial papers.\textsuperscript{91} Those newspapers therefore probably remained silent not through embarrassment, as was the case with the London Evening-Post,\textsuperscript{92} but through their finding the sending of British troops unexceptionable. Pitt was not mentioned because there was no need in the provinces to dissociate him from the decision to send troops, as the Monitor had found it necessary to do in London.\textsuperscript{93} The absence of any adverse comment suggests mild approval of, or at least indifference towards, the measure. The more general issue of

\textsuperscript{91} Peters, p.119; Cranfield, pp.137-9.

\textsuperscript{92} Peters, p.119.

\textsuperscript{93} Peters, p.122.
continental involvement never attracted great interest because it 'was a peripheral one, irrelevant beside the growing successes in war.'

The question of the employment of British troops on the continent was raised in provincial newspapers from mid-August, but only indirectly as part of the general question of the distribution of British effort between the continental and North American wars. Emphasis on the importance of North America and other colonies had been distinctively Tory, but was by 1758 fairly generally accepted. It combined antipathy towards British defence of Hanoverian interests with the 'blue water' doctrine's stress on naval and colonial warfare. Most of the commentaries that the provincial newspapers chose to reprint favoured the concentration of British force where it had the most likely prospect of success, in North America. Their opposition to British involvement in the German war was based on its ineffectiveness, cost, and its alleged connection with Hanoverian interests.

An anonymous essay reprinted from a London source in mid-August 1758 by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal claimed that the allied army in Germany had over-reached itself, and British troops were unable to help effectively. It stated that British involvement not only wasted money, but was also not helping Prussia in the Protestant cause against Austria and Russia. Direct expression of Country hostility towards Hanover was made in the belief stated that a good king would never injure his dominions for the sake of family connections.\textsuperscript{95} The writer

\textsuperscript{94} Peters, p.138.

\textsuperscript{95} Dickinson, p.185.
questioned whether it was expedient for Britain to be involved in the European war when so much was at stake in America.\textsuperscript{96} The present Crisis of Affairs in Europe and America reviewed, printed in mid-August by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, considered the attacks on the French coast and in America to be the most important areas for British efforts. It was pessimistic about the situation in America, but considered the prospects for success promising. The aspect of affairs in Europe was summed up as being greatly in the favour of Britain.\textsuperscript{97}

The decision to send British troops to Germany and the consequent debate on continental connections brought to prominence in London a division between City and country Tories. The benefits of war for trade and investment made mercantile Tories ready supporters of the continuation of the war and Pitt's move to greater involvement on the continent. Landowners, in comparison, were reluctant to accept the continuation and extension of a war that they believed to be financed largely from land taxation. Country Tories therefore had less reason to abandon traditional doctrines than did those in the City. However, the proposals in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal and Boddely's Bath Journal to send large numbers of British troops to Germany suggests that a similar division between urban and country interests had arisen in the provinces. The attitudes of Tory newspapers reflect trading interests and suggest that Tory opinion in provincial cities followed Pitt more closely and uncritically over continental connections and the militia than even the City of London, and more so than a simple division of

\textsuperscript{96} LNJ 278, 19 Aug.1758, p.4 c.1-3.

\textsuperscript{97} FFBJ, 12 Aug.1758, p.4 c.1-3.
Tory opinion between London and the provinces would suggest.

The decision to commit British forces to Germany was made against the background of a successful large scale expedition against France. Pitt was publicly associated with the planning and promotion of the coastal expedition, and used it as a practical expression of the Patriot 'blue water' strategy to divert his supporters' attention from his adoption of continental measures. Opponents of German measures saw the expedition as an alternative to sending land forces to the continent.98

The second 'secret expedition' against France was on a larger scale than the Rochefort expedition. It developed in three stages, against St. Malo in June, Cherbourg in August, and St. Malo again in September. About 34 000 men and more than 150 ships were assembled for the expedition, which set out on 1 June.99 Troops were landed easily at Cancale Bay near St. Malo, and set fire to the shipping in the harbour. Since a siege was considered impractical, the force was re-embarked and threatened Le Havre, Caen, Honfleur and Cherbourg before returning to Spithead on 1 July. The news of the re-embarkation had reached London on 16 June, and Pitt then suggested that 6000 soldiers of the expeditionary force and four regiments of cavalry be sent to join the Army of Observation.100 Most of the force had reached Emden by 28 July, and the coastal expedition set out again on 1 August, intending to capture a base on the French coast. It landed at Cherbourg on 7 August and spent a week

98. Langford, pp.77-8; Peters, pp.105, 123-4.
100. Corbett, I, pp.284-5.
destroying the fortifications, harbour works and shipping. The fleet returned to England and was directly sent to attack St. Malo. Bad weather interrupted a landing at St. Lunaire nearby, and a mismanaged re-embarkation was made at St. Cas.\textsuperscript{101}

The second secret expedition was reported in the provincial papers in a manner similar to the first. Reports of preparations at Portsmouth, on the Isle of Wight and in France, with rumours of the expedition's destination were printed regularly from early May.\textsuperscript{102} Hopes were expressed by Aris's Birmingham Gazette that the new expedition would not repeat the failure of Rochefort.\textsuperscript{103} A letter from Amsterdam in the Leicester and Nottingham Journal reported that the expedition would attack Brittany with 15 000 men and augment them with up to 30 000 if the attack succeeded.\textsuperscript{104} Once the expedition set out, speculation on its destination quietened. Elizabeth Farley announced under her paper's Bristol news that since there was so much conjecture about the landing of the expeditionary forces

we choose to remain totally silent, 'till we can give an Account of it with some Degree of Certainty, and especially as our Superiors have so wisely concealed the Plan of its Operations, 'till something of real Consequence is effected.

She went on to devote more than one column to an anonymous verse

On the present EXPEDIION and a list of the ships sent on the enterprise.\textsuperscript{105} Reports of the descent on St. Malo, and letters from the commanders, were taken from the Gazette, supplemented by

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] Corbett, I, pp.292-3, 295.
\item[102] For example BRJ 768, 22 May 1758, p.1 c.2, p.4 c.2.
\item[103] ABG 860, 15 May 1758, p.1 c.3.
\item[104] LNJ 266, 27 May 1758, p.2 c.3.
\item[105] PFBJ, 10 June 1758, p.3 c.2.
\end{footnotes}
rumours and incidental reports usually from the *London, General, Whitehall* and *Lloyd's Evening Posts*. As was commonly the practice with military attacks in unfamiliar areas, the historical and geographical background was described. On the final page of the issue that announced Marlborough's and Howe's landing at Cancale Bay, the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* inserted a description of the area of St. Malo at the time of its bombardment by Admiral Bembow in 1693.\textsuperscript{106} Another a regular practice, a journal of the events by an officer on the expedition, was widely repeated.\textsuperscript{107} There was some disagreement on the value of the expedition. The *Brussels Gazette* stressed the ease with which the attack on St. Malo had been fought off, but other reports, from Paris, revealed the alarm the expedition had generated in coastal towns.\textsuperscript{108} Reports from London emphasised the benefits of the expedition and questioned French accounts of their losses.\textsuperscript{109} A detailed list of the shipping destroyed at St. Malo was reprinted by *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*.\textsuperscript{110}

The attack on Cherbourg was reported with less speculation than earlier attacks since it achieved its object rapidly. Again letters from participating officers and a description of the area were printed.\textsuperscript{111} News of the demolition of the Bason and

\textsuperscript{106} INJ 269, 17 June 1758, p.4 c.1-2.  
\textsuperscript{107} BBJ 773, 26 June 1758, p.2 c.1.  
\textsuperscript{108} FFBJ, 8 July 1758, p.2 c.1.  
\textsuperscript{109} BBJ 777, 24 July 1758, p.2 c.1;  
*NM* 427, 1 July 1758, p.2 c.1.  
\textsuperscript{110} FFBJ, 8 July 1758, p.3 c.2.  
\textsuperscript{111} INJ 278, 19 Aug.1758, p.1 c.1-2, p.2 c.3.
defences of Cherbourg was overwhelmed by the arrival on 18 August of the news of the surrender of Louisbourg.\textsuperscript{112} Despite other successes, considerable attention was given to the third stage of the expedition. Expresses from the commanders and letters from the officers provided most of the news from St. Malo.\textsuperscript{113} An account of the mismanaged re-embarkation, with lists of the officers and men killed, wounded or taken prisoner, was reprinted by Boddely's Bath Journal from a London Gazette Extraordinary.\textsuperscript{114}

The failure at St. Cas gave rise in London to a pamphlet controversy similar to that over Rochefort.\textsuperscript{115} Just as with Rochefort, the reaction of the provincial newspapers was more subdued. Contributions to the debate were reprinted in the London newspapers and magazines, whereas provincial newspapers printed very little of the controversy, and nothing that did not defend Pitt. In London, the debate moved from criticism of the military commanders to criticism of the feasibility and objectives of the expedition and coastal expeditions in general. In November, the pamphlet An Examination of a Letter criticised Pitt for his reversal over the German war, and accused him of manipulating his popularity to escape responsibility for failures.\textsuperscript{116} The Monitor's answer defended Lieutenant-General Thomas Bligh and Pitt's recommendation of him as land commander for the expedition, and demanded an enquiry into the conduct of

\textsuperscript{112} ABG 874, 21 Aug. 1758, p.1 c.2, p.3 c.3.

\textsuperscript{113} INJ 282, 16 Sep. 1758, p.3 c.2; 
\textsuperscript{ABG} 878, 18 Sep. 1758, p.3 c.1-2.

\textsuperscript{114} BBJ 786, 25 Sep. 1758, p.1 c.3-p.2 c.1.

\textsuperscript{115} Peters, p.128.

\textsuperscript{116} Peters, pp.128-9.
the officers. The only substantial piece reprinted by a provincial newspaper was another defence of Bligh and Pitt by the Monitor, in the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. It answered, without naming, the anonymous pamphlet *A Letter to his Excellency Lieutenant General Bligh*, which criticised Bligh's actions and Pitt's choice of him as a commander. The Monitor's reply reversed the argument of the Letter, concentrating on the accusations against Pitt, which were a subsidiary part of the pamphlet's argument. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal's decision to print the answer to the Letter and nothing else of the controversy over St. Cas indicates its sensitivity to criticism of Pitt. Enough information was given in the Monitor's reply of the arguments of the pamphlet and the substance of the controversy in London for it to be sufficient for the Leicester paper to print only a defence of Pitt. In that way, the more serious criticisms of Pitt and continental connections, made in *An Examination of a Letter*, could be avoided by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal more successfully than the Monitor was able to in the context of the London press.

The newspapers' optimism was greatly reinforced by the news on 18 August of the surrender of Louisbourg. The expedition against the French naval base at Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island was the most important of the three main lines of British attack in North America in 1758. A force of almost 12,000 was assembled, and troops landed near Louisbourg on 7 June. After an unexpectedly long siege, the garrison of more than 3000


118. Peters, p.129.
surrendered on 26 July. Nearly the entire French American fleet was captured or destroyed. The force did not continue to Quebec as planned because of the failure of the two supporting expeditions.\textsuperscript{119}

The news of Louisbourg arrived in Britain at the same time as news of the coastal expedition's success at Cherbourg and the failure of General Abercrombie's attack on Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. The provincial newspapers made much of the news, and the reporting of Louisbourg set a pattern for the treatment of later victories. Lengthy reports of the articles of capitulation, a description of the garrison and lists of ships destroyed and men killed were copied by provincial newspapers from the \textit{London Gazette Extraordinary}. Later posts contained a journal of the siege and lists of captured equipment, and local celebrations were reported in greater detail than was normal for local reporting. The \textit{Bath Journal} printed a twenty-line account of bellringing, illuminations, firing of vollies and other celebrations at Bath.\textsuperscript{120} More than fifty congratulatory addresses to the crown were presented. The addresses were reported for several cities, but only the address for London was printed in full, from the \textit{London Gazette}.\textsuperscript{121}

The provincial papers' distinctive stance towards Pitt and his dominance of political reporting, evident first in their treatment of the Devonshire-Pitt ministry, is confirmed by their reporting of the issues of the Newcastle-Pitt ministry. By the end of 1757 there was a distinctive, consistently favourable,

\textsuperscript{119} Corbett, I, pp.320-31.

\textsuperscript{120} BBJ 782, 28 Aug.1758, p.4 c.3.

\textsuperscript{121} BBJ 782, 28 Aug.1758, p.4 c.2-3; Peters, p.125.
provincial attitude towards Pitt, although there was not necessarily a different image of him. The substance of political comment nearly always came from the capital, so Pitt did not have a different public image among his provincial supporters. They differed from their metropolitan counterparts by supporting Pitt consistently, even when he appeared to have renounced his Patriot principles.

In the period before there were any substantial victories to vindicate the trust placed in Pitt and secure his place in the coalition, the six provincial papers were unequivocal in their support. They did not even briefly criticise Pitt over the Rochefort debacle or his reversal on the issue of continental connections, unlike his supporters in the London press. Pitt's actions were reported frequently, criticisms answered, and unpopular policies either ignored or dissociated from him. The Norwich Mercury and Aris's Birmingham Gazette even printed material of their own defending Pitt.

The first major difference between the London and provincial press was the latter's almost complete silence on the controversy over the decision to send British troops to Germany. The provincial papers did not stress the importance of the move, and their unfaltering support of Pitt meant his Patriot reputation survived without the need for provincial papers, as London papers did, to misrepresent Pitt's change on continental connections.

However, it is not certain that the provincial papers' uncritical view of Pitt was shared by informed provincial opinion. The papers' continued support for the reconstituted militia with very few reservations was in the face of widespread evidence of its unpopularity and impracticality. The militia was
an issue important to the provinces, and the papers promoted it and answered criticisms largely on their own initiative and that of those of their readers who wished to promote the militia. Therefore, by the end of 1758 the provincial papers can be said to have had distinctive attitudes towards national political issues, but still only suggestions of independent articulacy. This could soon change, since criticism of the war was beginning to grow.
VI. Victories Abroad and Problems at Home

Military success abroad did not automatically consolidate Pitt's position. On the contrary, Pitt's political standing in late 1758 was so vulnerable as to produce, in the provincial newspapers considered, the first direct evidence of serious opposition to his policies. At Christmas 1758, Aris's Birmingham Gazette reprinted a report from the Brussels Gazette that

We are informed that the K[in]g of E[ngland]'s speech to his Parliament was far from pleasing all the Members; several of each House having highly complained of the Demand of further Supplies for the King of Prussia: And there is a general Clamour against Mr. P[itt], who is accused of having greatly altered his Way of Thinking.

The provincial newspapers had given no hint that there was a 'general clamour' against Pitt's policy on continental connections, and did not suggest there was any in the months that followed. This isolated report is even more unusual in view of the evidence in London papers of opposition to continental connections, which was not reprinted by country papers. However, extracts from the Brussels Gazette were regarded as favouring the French, and frequently were accompanied by comments sceptical of their accuracy. While this scepticism may have been abandoned when dealing with details of British politics which could relatively readily be checked, the same information could have been obtained from private letters, if not the London press, despite the restrictions of the libel laws. That Aris's Birmingham Gazette used only the Dutch report suggests that the printer's purpose was to discredit the rumours by attributing them to a notoriously unreliable source.

Pitt's Patriot image was defended strongly but by indirect means by provincial newspapers in the early months of 1759. Several provincial papers carried in March an almost full column list of military and naval expeditions conducted since 1739. It showed that until 1758, all twelve expeditions had miscarried. Only one of the nine listed for 1758 had not succeeded. By implication, the new ministry had reversed British fortunes and achieved successes on an unprecedented scale. A local letter to the York Courant, reprinted by the Norwich Mercury, pointed out that the list omitted six British successes between 1739 and 1748. 'ANGLICUS' commented that although the former ministers were generally acknowledged bad, they should not have been represented in a worse light than they deserved. Significantly, the correspondent treated the article as an attack on the former ministers, not as a vindication of the new ministry. This might indicate that the adequacy of Pitt's ministry went relatively unquestioned in the provinces.

The former ministers were praised, but only ironically, in one of the most substantial defences of Pitt to be printed in a provincial newspaper. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal reprinted the pamphlet Plain Reasons for removing a certain GREAT MAN from his M[ajesty]'s Presence and Councils for ever over two and a half columns in early March 1759. Alexander Carlyle, under the pseudonym O. M. Haberdasher, listed the significant features of Pitt's popular reputation under the guise of a warning that he was a minister extremely dangerous to the country, and ought to

---


3. NM 464, 17 Mar.1759, p.1 c.3; the corresponding issue of the York Courant does not survive.
be removed from the royal councils. Since the attack was ironical, it helped reinforce aspects of Pitt's popularity that recently had been questioned. A major point held against Pitt was that he had been a chief promoter of the militia, which was a subject on which the sincerity of his attachment had been questioned, as was reported by the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset in August 1758. The pamphlet also sought to distance Pitt from his ministerial colleagues by showing that he worked in opposition to the Old Corps and the established practice of politics. The first reason given for Pitt's removal was that he was 'the minister of the people', for in his measures he allegedly paid regard to the interest of the people, in opposition to a powerful faction. Pitt's Patriotism, virtue and the favour of the Prince of Wales were claimed to have made it impossible for 'able statesmen of the old mould' to return to power.

The most revealing of the pamphlet's ironic criticisms was that Pitt had complied meanly with the maxims, and followed the measures, of the Tories. Since the other criticisms concerned important aspects of Pitt's public image, this final point must indicate that Carlyle's intended audience was specifically Tory, and not generally Country or anti-ministerial. Pitt's enthusiasm for naval warfare and the employment of rebel Highlanders in North America was noted. On the issue of continental connections, Carlyle restated Pitt's defence that he would neither have provided subsidies for Prussia nor have sent any troops to Germany had his predecessors not purposely left affairs in such a dangerous situation to make his actions unavoidable.

The reason for the appearance of Carlyle's defence of Pitt
seems to have been less that there was any immediate challenge to Pitt's popularity, but rather that criticisms of the mismanagement at St. Cas were still current, and a threat to Pitt. As O. M. Haberdasher, Carlyle claimed that single event, a miscarriage on the coast of France, had shaken his misplaced confidence in Pitt. The failure at St. Cas allegedly had overcome the influence of Pitt's splendid professions, eloquence and successes. If that was so, then further military successes should not have been able to deflect criticism from Pitt.

Pitt's conduct as a war minister had been criticised effectively in London papers, but only defence of his policies reached provincial newspapers. Accounts of the allegedly depressed state of the French economy served to demonstrate the strategic effectiveness of the coastal attacks promoted by Pitt. Great discontents in the French provinces because the war had ruined trade and manufactures were reported in late August 1758. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal attributed the damage to French commerce to the need to guard the coasts. An article from Paris reprinted by Aris's Birmingham Gazette before the loss of Louisbourg was confirmed commented that its loss, with the capture of Senegal, with the descents at Cancale and Cherbourg, would increase the reputation of the new English ministry.

Without further success abroad, however, it would have been increasingly difficult to defend Pitt from comparison with the previous ministry. The situation that raised the parallel with

5. BBJ 782, 28 Aug.1758, p.2 c.3; PFBJ, 14 Oct.1758, p.3 c.3.
6. ABG 878, 18 Sep.1758, p.2 c.1.
the Newcastle-Fox ministry was the invasion threat of summer and autumn 1759. The prospective invasion was the major preoccupation of the provincial papers from June onwards. French plans began to be taken seriously in May, before any substantial British victory was known to have been won in the colonies. Pitt's apparent inactivity might have been a serious threat to his image in the provinces, had it not been for the way the provincial newspapers presented the invasion threat and the response to it.

The threat of an attack on Britain or Ireland grew in the early months of 1759 as preparations were made in French channel ports. Britain reinforced its blockading channel and Mediterranean fleets, but no military measures were taken since Pitt believed the invasion threat to be simply a diversion. Other ministers, particularly Newcastle and Hardwicke, were more alarmed and in May part of the militia was called out. French plans, which were known to the British in May, were to transport 20,000 soldiers from Ostend to Malton on the Essex coast, and attack London. A similarly-sized force was to be escorted by the combined Mediterranean and Atlantic squadrons to the Clyde, to cross Scotland and attack Edinburgh. The British response was to set up army camps and, on 3 July, a squadron under Admiral Lord Rodney bombarded the flat-bottomed invasion boats in Le Havre. The allied army's decisive victory at Minden on 1 August distracted French efforts from the invasion of Britain. When the French Mediterranean fleet left Toulon on 5 August, it was caught and severely defeated by a British fleet off Lagos in Portugal on 17 August. The other half of the invasion fleet left Brest on 14 November and was trapped and destroyed in Quiberon Bay on
20 November. 7

Exaggeration or underestimation of the threat of invasion from France in 1759 could have political connotations. Pitt initially seemed not to take the threat seriously, and believed Newcastle and his friends had worked up a panic about the possibility of invasion. 8 He planned to counter any invasion with naval measures alone, so emphasis of the invasion threat implied, initially at least, criticism of Pitt's apparent inactivity.

In the provincial newspapers, few plans for the British response to the invasion were reported, and few questions of the preparedness of British defences were raised. 9 An article reprinted by Aris's Birmingham Gazette in mid-June from the Brussels Gazette criticised the inexperience of British troops and the age of their commanders, and asked 'On what then doth Mr. Pitt build his Security?' 10

Provincial newspapers conveyed the impression that the militia was the basis of British security. In 1759, proponents of the militia sought to demonstrate that it was an effective defence against invasion. From late May, the militia was embodied for coastal defence. Since Newcastle had urged Pitt to embody the militia, it could not be used as a political point. Although it had been promoted as a home defence force, the militia was not mentioned in connection with the invasion threat

9. INJ 320, 16 June 1759, p.2 c.1.
10. APG 916, 18 June 1759, p.1 c.2.
until its embodiment was requested by the king on 30 May. The Norwich Mercury reprinted an assurance that the militia, by garrisoning the sea ports and guarding prisoners, would free regular troops for active service. The formation and movement of militia regiments were widely reported by the provincial newspapers, as significant signs of British response to the threat. Reviews of militia regiments were publicised well outside their home counties. The Norwich Mercury quoted the York Courant's report of the first exercise of the York militia; it was unusual for reports from another provincial newspaper to be reprinted directly rather than through a London newspaper. The Leicester newspaper reprinted a laudatory description of the exercises of the Newcastle volunteers from the London Evening-Post, and devoted half a column to the London Chronicle's report from Hertford of the review of the Hertfordshire Militia.

Nonetheless, local militia regiments were given an unusual amount of attention. The Norwich Mercury printed three letters from London describing the review of the Norwich Militia in July. Boddely's Bath Journal reported from Chippenham the drawing out of the Wiltshire battalion of militia. The report listed the toasts to the royal family, military successes and commanders, but, unusually, not to Pitt.

11. FFBJ, 2 June 1759, p.3 c.2.
12. NM 476, 9 June 1759, p.1 c.3.
13. NM 482, 21 July 1759, p.1 c.2; the corresponding issue of the York Courant does not survive.
14. INJ 324, 14 July 1759, p.3 c.2; INJ 320, 16 June 1759, p.2 c.3.
15. NM 482, 21 July 1759, p.3 c.1-2; ABG 921, 23 July 1759, p.2 c.1.
16. BBJ 825, 25 June 1759, p.4 c.3.
The initial reports of the threat of invasion came from French and continental rather than English sources, and anticipated a coastal expedition rather than an invasion. The stories were infrequent and short, none before May occupying more than ten lines. Early rumours of French preparations for an expedition did not identify Britain or Ireland as the target. Preparations at Toulon for a project likened to the siege of Minorca were first reported in early February.  

Nothing more was reported until late March when allegedly many accounts from France had said a descent on the coasts of Britain and Ireland was being considered.  

A letter from Paris published a month later claimed that Admiral Conflans was soon to set out with a large fleet for England. By May, speculation on French intentions increased, and the threat of the restoration of the Pretender was revived. The French court was said in April to be contemplating a descent on Scotland within eight weeks, and considering 'bringing the Pretender on the stage.' A month later the only problem confronting the expedition against Scotland was reported to be the difficulty in bringing in the Pretender. It was believed at the Hague that the Dutch were obliged by treaty to aid Britain if French forces were sent with the Pretender.

The prospects of an invasion were first stated specifically and at length in June. Aris's Birmingham Gazette reported that

17. LNJ 302, 10 Feb.1759, p.1 c.3.
18. BRJ 812, 26 Mar.1759, p.4 c.2.
20. LNJ 315, 12 May 1759, p.2 c.1.
21. FPBJ, 2 June 1759, p.2 c.2.
600 flat-bottomed boats were to be built at Le Havre to carry 25,000 troops to England, in convoy with men of war from Brest and Rochefort. The state of preparation of the invasion barges soon became the frequent subject of comment in provincial newspapers. Reports appeared regularly in June and July of the size, number, cost and state of readiness of the French flat-bottomed boats. The observations of captains of British naval and merchant ships were printed at length. These reports often sought to minimise the threat. The flat-bottomed boats were said to be monstrously unwieldy and easily swamped. From Dublin, an eyewitness reported that he had seen only 'ill-mannered' ships and no transports at Brest in mid-June. News of Rodney's bombardment of the transports at Le Havre was reprinted by the provincial newspapers from the Gazette of 6 July. The controversy over the effects of the bombardment lasted until the end of the month. Official French reports claimed that little of importance had been destroyed, but this was contradicted by private letters and English reports.

Reports alternated between optimism and pessimism about French intentions. On the receipt of the news of the capitulation of Guadeloupe in late June, Boddely's Bath Journal claimed that the bustle over the invasion had no other intention.

22. ABG 916, 18 June 1759, p.3 c.1.

23. BBJ 821, 28 May 1759, p.1 c.3; NM 476, 9 June 1759, p.2 c.2; ABG 921, 23 July 1759, p.3 c.1; FFBJ, 7 July 1759, p.2 c.2; LNJ 324, 14 July 1759, p.4 c.1.

24. LNJ 324, 14 July 1759, p.1 c.3-p.2 c.1, p.3 c.3; NM 482, 21 July 1759, p.2 c.2, p.2 c.3; ABG 921, 23 July 1759, p.1 c.1-2; BBJ 830, 30 July 1759, p.1 c.2, p.3 c.2.
than to placate the people of France with the prospect of forcing England to sue for peace.\textsuperscript{25} Although the threat from France received less attention in July than it had the previous month, reports that the French intended an attack did not disappear. Only after the decisive allied victory over the French at Minden on 1 August, did it seem possible to ridicule the threat. The \textit{Norwich Mercury} reported that papers at Paris had printed a letter from a Frenchman in England claiming that 35 000 French soldiers had landed and were within thirty miles of London.\textsuperscript{26} By 22 August, plans for the invasion were said to have been set aside.\textsuperscript{27} In the next post arrived news of Admiral Boscawen's defeat of Admiral de la Clue's fleet off Cape Lagos. The \textit{Norwich Mercury} printed Boscawen's account of the engagement, from a \textit{London Gazette Extraordinary}, in its first column, giving it less space than was given in the same issue to the capture of the French fort at Niagara in North America.\textsuperscript{28}

Provincial newspaper interest in the prospects of invasion revived briefly at the end of September with a report from Paris that all troops had embarked for the 'so-much-talked-of Expedition.'\textsuperscript{29} The \textit{Utrecht Gazette} provided a summary of the numbers and equipment of the fleet involved, which was countered in a letter from Quiberon Bay by the assurance that British forces there were sufficient to stop the intended expedition. In

\textsuperscript{25} BB\textit{J} 825, 25 June 1759, p.1 c.3.

\textsuperscript{26} NM 486, 18 Aug.1759, p.1 c.2.

\textsuperscript{27} LNJ 332, 8 Sep.1759, p.2 c.2; BB\textit{J} 834, 27 Aug.1759, p.3 c.3.

\textsuperscript{28} LNJ 332, 8 Sep.1759, p.3 c.3; NM 490, 15 Sep.1759, p.1 c.1, p.1 c.2, p.3 c.1.

\textsuperscript{29} PFB\textit{J}, 6 Oct.1759, p.1 c.2, p.2 c.1.
the event, all discussion of the French attack was forgotten shortly afterwards in the immense reaction in October 1759 to the capture of Quebec, the capital of French Canada.\textsuperscript{30}

Reports of French activities resumed when the flood of news concerning Quebec had subsided. At the start of November, both the Brest fleet and Thuot's squadron were reported to have sailed.\textsuperscript{31} Again assurances appeared that the French flat-bottomed boats were seaworthy for only short voyages in calm weather.\textsuperscript{32} Unusually, the entrapment of the Brest fleet in Quiberon Bay was reported episodically as it progressed. The battle was announced in Admiral Hawke's report to the Admiralty, reprinted by provincial newspapers from a \textit{London Gazette Extraordinary}. Descriptions of the engagement by a gentleman and a chaplain aboard the fleet were also printed.\textsuperscript{33}

Less was made of the victory at Quiberon Bay by the provincial papers than could be justified by hindsight or would have seemed justified at the time. There were few reports praising commanders or recounting incidents, as there had been following the capture of Quebec, although the invasion threat had attracted very much more attention than the war in America. No verses were printed following the victory, and no attempt was made to create a hero of Hawke or Boscawen, as had been done with the conveniently dead Wolfe. The thanks of the House of Commons

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} \textit{Lmj} 325, 13 Oct.1759, p.2 c.3, p.3 c.1; See below, pp.238-40.
\item \textsuperscript{31} \textit{FfBJ}, 3 Nov.1759, p.3 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{32} \textit{NM} 499, 17 Nov.1759, p.1 c.2; from the \textit{Whitehall Evening Post}.
\item \textsuperscript{33} \textit{Bbj} 847, 26 Nov.1759, p.4 c.1-2; \textit{FfBJ}, 1 Dec.1759, p.1 c.2; \textit{Lmj} 345, 8 Dec.1759, p.1 c.1-3, p.2 c.2-3.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
to Hawke occupied more than half a column in most provincial papers, but two months later the presentation of the freedom of Edinburgh to Boscawen received only three lines in the Bath Journal. That, however, was one line more than Pitt's receipt of the freedom of Leicester reported in the same post. Despite French claims to the contrary, the major danger seemed to have passed. A supposed plan of the invasion was reported dismissively by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal, and later a list was printed by the York Courant to show what little remained of the French fleet. Only in February 1760 was the seriousness of the invasion threat compared to that of the Spanish Armada.

When a French force landed in Ireland in February 1760, the English provincial newspapers provided frequent reports with little speculation. A diversionary raid on Carrickfergus near Belfast was made by a small force under Captain Francois Thurot. After demanding, and receiving, provisions, the squadron left, to be intercepted and defeated on 29 February. Provincial newspapers gave the incident inordinate attention, and some used sources independent of London. The York Courant printed an account of the landing received by a gentleman in York from his correspondent at Whitehaven. There was little further to report other than the naval action preceding the landing. This

34. NM 510, 2 Feb.1760, p.2 c.3;
   ABG 950, 4 Feb.1760, p.2 c.1-2;
   VC 1789, 5 Feb.1760, p.2 c.2;
   BDU 851, 24 Dec.1759, p.4 c.2.

35. INJ 345, 8 Dec.1759, p.2 c.3;
   VC 1784, 1 Jan.1760, p.2 c.1;
   VC 1789, 5 Feb.1760, p.2 c.2.


37. VC 1793, 4 Mar.1760, p.4 c.1-2.
was supplemented by a list of the provisions demanded by the French, and speculation about Francois Thurot's nationality and female companion.\textsuperscript{38} A journal of the expedition was printed, an accustomed practice from an unaccustomed source, a French officer by then a prisoner in Dublin.\textsuperscript{39}

It was possible for English provincial newspapers to treat the threat from France dismissively after Quebec, and particularly Quiberon Bay, because French financial weakness had been revealed. The French crown's suspension of reimbursement of capital was reported from Paris in late October 1759, and English newspapers rapidly took up the subject as one for ridicule. The circumstances leading to the suspension of French government payments were frequently attributed to Pitt by English newspapers. A letter purporting to be from a merchant in Birmingham to his correspondent in Holland, but reprinted by Aris's Birmingham Gazette from London, said that Pitt stood godfather to the rechristening of Louis XV from 'Le Grande' to 'Le Parve'.\textsuperscript{40} The Leicester and Nottingham Journal printed two false bankruptcy notices, one of which gave details of the auction of the effects of 'Louis le Petit'. They included 100 000 soldiers lacking only clothes, food, money and spirits, flat-bottomed boats and men of war locked up by Hawke, withered laurels from Quebec and the lilies of France, died purple at Minden.\textsuperscript{41}

The treatment of the threat of French invasion by the

\textsuperscript{38} ARG 955, 10 Mar.1760, p.1 c.2-3, p.2 c.1.
\textsuperscript{39} INJ 360, 22 Mar.1760, p.2 c.1-2.
\textsuperscript{40} ARG 938, 12 Nov.1759, p.2 c.2.
\textsuperscript{41} INJ 341, 10 Nov.1759, p.2 c.3-p.3 c.1.
provincial newspapers seems not to have seriously misrepresented the reality of the dangers. The long-term reporting of the issue was more consistent and better balanced in 1759 than it had been in 1756. There were several significant reasons for the difference. Facilities for the reporting of French military preparations had improved noticeably over the period of war, as had the newspapers' critical treatment of the evidence. In addition, acknowledgement of the seriousness of the threat was not as much a political issue as it had been in 1756. Boddely's Bath Journal recalled in November 1759 that

It was but three Summors ago that we were governed by a Spirit of Delusion to believe a Lye; and, in a Pannic, sent for a body of Hanoverians and Hessians to protect us from a French Invasion.42

Nevertheless, there were still political overtones to the appreciation of the seriousness of the invasion threat in 1759. In view of Pitt's insistence on meeting any invasion with purely naval or, later, militia forces, the provincial newspapers' playing down of the threat and concentration on militia forces are significant. These approaches are consistent with support for Pitt, yet they are not entirely inconsistent with support for the ministry in general. However, the Leicester paper, at least, subscribed to the idea that there existed an Old Corps faction within the ministry working to thwart Pitt's efforts. It reprinted a comment from London that the threat from France had been so largely exaggerated and expatiated on by the remains of a party, who try to their utmost to defeat the salutary schemes planned by our Great and Good Minister in defence of his King and Country.43

Much was made in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal of the tardiness

42. BBJ 847, 26 Nov.1759, p.3 c.3.
43. INJ 324, 14 July 1759, p.4 c.1.
of the raising of the Middlesex Militia, possibly because it involved London, but more significantly because, although it was not stated, Newcastle was responsible as Lord Lieutenant. Yet to emphasise the invasion threat was not necessarily to criticise Pitt's handling of the situation. The Bath Journal in August gave prominence to an anonymous, and possibly local, letter that complained that many people did not appreciate the extent of the danger of invasion. The letter was accompanied by a defence of the Patriot ministers' advocacy of the militia and continental connections.

Reporting of the invasion threat had appeared against the background of continued British military successes. An expedition against Martinique and Guadeloupe dominated the news of the colonial war from March till June 1759, and in the latter month rivalled the invasion threat for attention. The three expeditions against Quebec and Montreal provided intermittent news until September, when the capitulation of Quebec produced an unprecedentedly large and persistent volume of reporting and comment, which continued sporadically into early 1760.

Shortly after the failure of the coastal expedition at St. Malo in September 1758, it was announced that a new expedition, with a much greater force than before, was to set out. Speculation from Britain and the Netherlands, a potential target, about the destination, size and commanding officers of the third expedition arose soon after. The expedition, against

44. FFBJ, 4 Aug. 1759, p. 4 c.2.
46. BBJ 786, 25 Sep. 1758, p. 1 c.3-p.2 c.1, p. 3 c.2-3, p. 4 c.3.
47. ABC 883, 23 Oct. 1758, p. 1 c.2, p. 2 c.1, p. 3 c.2.
the French Antilles, abandoned an attack on Martinique in January 1759 and attacked Guadeloupe instead. The capital, St. Pierre, was captured in late January, but depleted British forces took until 1 May to secure the capitulation of the rest of the island. 48

Although no suggestion to the contrary had been made in provincial papers, the Norwich Mercury reprinted from Lloyd's Evening Post an assurance that the generals commanding the expedition had accepted the command cheerfully. 49 Significantly less attention was given by provincial newspapers to the details of preparations for the expedition against Martinique and Guadeloupe than they had given to the earlier coastal expeditions against France. There was no longer any reason to emphasise the preparations as there had been the previous year, when it had been necessary to divert attention from unsuccessful and controversial aspects of the war. Since the war in Europe and America was successful in early 1759, there was no need to create expectations for the success of an expedition. There was also much less conjecture printed by provincial newspapers once the expedition had sailed.

The expedition, against the French West Indies, eventually attacked Guadeloupe in March 1759. The first news to arrive was of the capture of Basse Terre in Guadeloupe after an unsuccessful descent on Martinique, on 7 March. Provincial newspapers reprinted an account from a London Gazette Extraordinary of the attack and lists of ships involved and men killed. Letters from Guadeloupe describing aspects of the attack were copied from the

49. NM 456, 20 Jan.1759, p.2 c.2, p.2 c.3.
London Chronicle, and the Leicester and Nottingham Journal added a description of Martinique and Guadeloupe, from another London source.\footnote{LNJ 306, 10 Mar.1759, p.3 c.1-2, p.4 c.1; NM 464, 17 Mar.1759, p.1 c.1-2, p.2 c.1-3.} Unusually, further reports of the progress of the attack on Guadeloupe were received entirely from private letters and foreign newspaper reports, not military despatches.\footnote{ABG 904, 19 Mar.1759, p.1 c.2-3, p.2 c.1, p.3 c.1.} The lack of official reports prompted Felix Farley's Bristol Journal to assure its readers that the accounts expected from Guadeloupe probably had been sent, but lost with the ship that carried them.\footnote{NM 469, 21 Apr.1759, p.3 c.1; LNJ 315, 12 May 1759, p.2 c.2.} When the invasion threat had begun to dominate provincial newspapers and almost two months after the last British reports, news from Guadeloupe resumed, and reports of the capitulation arrived on 14 June.\footnote{LNJ 315, 12 May 1759, p.2 c.2, p.3 c.1; LNJ 320, 16 June 1759, p.2 c.3–p.3 c.3.} There was a wide variation in the attention given the news, due to the availability of more immediate news of the invasion threat. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal accorded the report from the London Gazette Extraordinary more than three columns. Two days later, Aris's Birmingham Gazette reduced the same account to less than two full columns. Nevertheless Boddely's Bath Journal, although more than a week late, gave the news of the capitulation more than five columns. The difference existed because Aris's Birmingham Gazette had available at least five reports of invasion plans, whereas by the following week Boddely's Bath Journal had only three stories concerning the threat of invasion, and two of those
discounted the threat.\footnote{54}

The provincial newspapers were dominated by reports of the invasion threat and militia preparations, and although the bulk of foreign news in provincial newspapers continued to concern the war in Germany, from the capture of Louisbourg onwards more attention was paid to the North American and Caribbean wars than before. In May 1759 the \textit{Norwich Mercury} set out, from the London Chronicle, the three directions of attack for 1759: General Wolfe up the River St. Lawrence to Quebec, General Amherst against Fort Ticonderoga, and Brigadier-General Gage against Fort Niagara.\footnote{55}

Great victories necessarily dominated the reporting of the war in North America. Only short, intermittent reports of the American campaign were printed before the news of Quebec. The sailing of the Quebec expedition and the capture of Crown Point and Ticonderoga were reported briefly during July. Interest revived rapidly in September with the arrival of confirmation of the capture of Crown Point and an account of the defeat of the French at Niagara.\footnote{56} The siege of Quebec was reported in detail, but intermittently, from mid-September. One account was received by Boddely’s Bath Journal in a private letter from a gentleman on the expedition, by way of his friend at Boston.\footnote{57}

\footnotesize

\footnote{54}{LNJ 320, 16 June 1759, p.2 c.3-p.3 c.3;  
ABG 916, 18 June 1759, p.1 c.1-3, p.2 c.1-2, p.3 c.1;  
BBJ 825, 25 June 1759, p.1 c.1-p.2 c.2, p.3 c.3, p.4 c.1,  
3 p.1.3.}

\footnote{55}{NM 473, 19 May 1759, p.1 c.1.}

\footnote{56}{FBEJ, 7 July 1759, p.3 c.2-3;  
NM 482, 21 July 1759, p.2 c.3, p.3 c.1;  
LNJ 328, 11 Aug.1759, p.1 c.1;  
NM 490, 15 Sep.1759, p.1 c.2, p.1 c.3, p.2 c.1-3;  
ABG 929, 17 Sep.1759, p.1 c.1-3.}

\footnote{57}{BBJ 838, 24 Sep.1759, p.1 c.2-3.}
The impact of the news of the fall of Quebec was sufficiently great for Aris's Birmingham Gazette to have been printed and issued two days before its expected publication date. The printer made no attempt to accommodate any news other than that of Quebec, explaining that

The following unexpected and agreeable News of the Taking of Quebec, so soon after the Account received from General Wolfe, is of so much importance, and must give so much Satisfaction to the Publick, that we thought we could not oblige our Readers more, than by giving it the most early Publication. 58

The Norwich Mercury printed only extracts of the casualty lists and terms of capitulation, postponing full accounts till its next issue because of lack of space. Extraordinary Gazettes on 16 and 18 October contained despatches reporting the capture of Quebec. Letters from the surviving commanders gave details of the preparations, naval movements and battle at Quebec. The articles of capitulation, the lists of killed and wounded and a list of the equipment captured were reprinted by provincial newspapers. 59

In contrast to most other victories, Quebec remained the subject of recurrent interest for the following month. The printing of a description of Quebec by an officer stationed there was justified by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal as 'Every circumstance relating to the glorious conquest of Quebec must be acceptable to a British reader.' 60 General James Wolfe provided ideal material for the creation of a hero, and rapidly accounts appeared of his life, character, and distraught mother and

58. ABG 935, 22 Oct. 1759, p. 2 c. 1.

59. NM 495, 20 Oct. 1759, p. 2 c. 1-p. 3 c. 2; ABG 935, 22 Oct. 1759, p. 1 c. 1-p. 3 c. 3.

60. LNJ 341, 10 Nov. 1759, p. 1 c. 3-p. 2 c. 1, quotation p. 1 c. 3.
fiancée. In the following month, two poems dedicated to the memory of Wolfe appeared, one in Boddely's Bath Journal from a local source, 'W. T.' of Trowbridge. Praise of Wolfe went so far as to cause the Norwich Mercury, echoing the London Chronicle, to urge its readers not to forget the brave soldiers who survived the battle at Quebec. The Mercury followed this at the start of 1760 with a poem to General Townshend on his arrival from Quebec.

The French were reported to be contemplating the recapture of Quebec, but little further news concerning North America was printed in 1759. At the end of April 1760 French forces were defeated in an attempt to recapture Quebec. The news, and a list of the officers killed, wounded and taken prisoner reached provincial papers in mid-June. In the absence of a conclusive account, varied reports were printed. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal reported that the city had surrendered from a seldom-used source, the Public Ledger, on the authority of the captain of a merchant ship from Philadelphia. Great bets were said to have been placed on the fate of Quebec on the strength of private letters from Philadelphia. The odds 'at a certain End of the Town' were said to be five to one that the French had not

61. NM 495, 20 Oct.1759, p.3 c.1; FFBJ, 3 Nov.1759, p.1 c.2-3.
62. LNJ 341, 10 Nov.1759, p.4 c.1; BBJ 847, 26 Nov.1759, p.1 c.1.
63. NM 499, 17 Nov.1759, p.3 c.2.
64. NM 506, 5 Jan.1760, p.1 c.3; BBJ 404, 24 Jan.1761, p.3 c.1-2.
65. BBJ 856, 28 Jan.1760, p.3 c.1; NM 510, 2 Feb.1760, p.1 c.2, p.2 c.2.
taken Quebec. The raising of the siege was finally reported at the end of June by a London Gazette Extraordinary. After this, nothing more was printed of French activities in North America. The Norwich Mercury concluded that the French had dropped all plans except defending themselves and attacking Hanover.

The capture of Montreal was soon expected. A report in late September 1760 that the town had been taken was considered by Boddely's Bath Journal to be only 'a Conjecture upon the Probability of such an Event taking Place.' When despatches of the event did arrive in mid-October, the Leicester and Nottingham Journal considered them sufficiently important to accord them almost an entire issue, three complete pages and half a column on the back page, omitting both the posts for Sunday and Monday. The very rare step of publishing early was again taken: '* N. B. This Paper is printed off without waiting for Saturday's Post, on account of the impossibility of inserting any Advices that might arrive'. The printer, John Gregory, nevertheless promised that if any interesting event should happen, he would print an account and distribute it free of charge. Other newspapers were less generous with their space; the news of Montreal occupied only the front page and the local news paragraph in Aris's Birmingham

66. INJ 373, 21 June 1760, p.3 c.1-2; BBJ 878, 30 June 1760, p.2 c.1, p.3 c.3; FFBJ, 28 June 1760, p.2 c.2; YC 1810, 1 July 1760, p.1 c.2.

67. BBJ 878, 30 June 1760, p.4 c.1-2; YC 1810, 1 July 1760, p.2 c.1-2; NM 532, 5 July 1760, p.1 c.1-3.

68. General Evening Post, quoted in NM 541, 6 Sep.1760, p.1 c.2.

69. Quotation in BBJ 891, 29 Sep.1760, p.4 c.2; NM 541, 6 Sep.1760, p.2 c.2; FFBJ, 4 Oct.1760, p.2 c.1.
Gazette. 70

Unlike Quebec, however, the news of Montreal did not continue to receive great attention in the following weeks. Of the several addresses offering congratulations on the conquest of Canada and the defeat of the invasion fleet, only that of the City of London was reprinted. 71 News from Canada was virtually at an end when the capture of the last French stronghold, Fort Jacques Cartier, was announced at the end of October. 72

While British successes in the maritime and colonial war continued, criticism of the German war grew. The Prussian position worsened in 1760 and, apart from an important victory at Minden on 1 August, the allied army was similarly unsuccessful. Criticism of Pitt's policy towards continental connections grew markedly during 1760. Growing concern about the cost of the war was coupled with opposition to sending more British troops, particularly among Tory country gentlemen. Pitt committed Britain to providing as many soldiers as were needed by the allied army, and reinforcements were sent in January, April and May, and July 1760. Pitt was careful to make it appear that he had been forced unwillingly to agree to more troops. 73

The provincial newspapers did not even go so far as to concede that substantial reinforcements were being made to the allied army. In February 1760 the Norwich Mercury assured its readers that the troops then being sent to Germany were only


72. BB 895, 27 Oct.1760, p.3 c.2.

draughts to complete regiments that were already there, and that no more British regiments would be sent. In June, Boddely's Bath Journal reported that a rumour current that 7000 soldiers were to be sent was entirely without foundation. The newspapers' repeated assurances show they were very sensitive to suggestions that the ministry was preoccupied with the German war to the detriment of what they saw to be British interests. In August 1760 the Norwich Mercury commented that some 'Male-contents' had insinuated that the ministers' attention seemed to be engrossed by German affairs, to the detriment of Britain's national war.74

The controversy over British involvement in the German war was revived later in the year. Israel Mauduit's pamphlet Considerations on the Present German War was published in November 1760 and sold an exceptional 5750 copies in five editions, initiating considerable controversy. It set out well-established arguments against British involvement in the continental war and the Prussian alliance, and considered British efforts were best directed in the colonial and maritime wars.75 Despite the widespread interest and debate Mauduit's pamphlet provoked in the London press, it was reprinted by only the Leicester and Nottingham Journal of the six provincial papers. Unusually, the paper reprinted the Considerations over four consecutive issues in January 1761, indicating that it was thought very significant. George II's sudden death on 25 October 1760 came as a

74. NM 510, 2 Feb.1760, p.2 c.2; PRJ 878, 30 June 1760, p.3 c.2; quotation NM 536, 2 Aug.1760, p.1 c.1.
75. Peters, pp.182-4; Brewer, p.146.
surprise to the provincial newspapers as much as to the king. The papers devoted a large amount of their news space to articles from the London Gazette concerning the king's death and, more particularly, his grandson's accession. Substantial accounts were printed of the circumstances of the king's death, the post-mortem and the funeral arrangements. The York Courant reprinted, surprisingly, a conventionally Whig version of the Exclusion Crisis and Hanoverian succession in an account of the family of the late king. Reports appeared of the proclamation of George III in London and the respective provincial papers' home cities.76

The new reign promised radical changes in politics. The new king disliked the Old Corps politicians and what he saw as the evils of factional government. George III promised to introduce a reign of virtue and 'oeconomy', and refused to adopt a party stance. Most conspicuously, he chose six Tories for positions in the royal household and admitted Tories to royal levees. The end of absolute Tory proscription caused a crisis among them, since their exclusion from office had been one of the greatest sources of their cohesion.77

The accession of George III also created problems for Pitt. By ignoring party distinction, promising attention to oeconomy, and opposing the continuation of the war, the 'Patriot king' was a powerful rival for Pitt's independent and Tory support. Furthermore, Pitt did not have the favour of the king, who

76. FFBJ, 1 Nov.1760, p.3 c.1-3, p.4 c.1-3;
BBJ 898, 17 Nov.1760, p.2 c.1;
ABG 990, 10 Nov.1760, p.2 c.1-3;
YC 1828, 4 Nov.1760, p.1 c.1-p.3 c.2.

Colley, pp.286-7.
resented Pitt's abandonment of the interests of Leicester House, the court of the Prince of Wales, once it had helped him to power.  

Many aspects of the reports that followed George III's accession reveal political concerns. Comment in the York Courant implied fears existed that there might be a change of measures and men at the start of the new reign. An anonymous paragraph assured readers that despite the alleged hopes of Britain's enemies 'to work an alteration in our measures with a new Bias in our Councils', the same system would prevail. The London Gazette announced that all holders of government posts would continue to occupy them, but the planned General Election was expected still to take place.

Pitt's name was given prominence again in provincial papers, possibly to counter suppositions that he would again be forced to resign. The inscription on the foundation stone of the new bridge at Blackfriars, to be named after Pitt, was reproduced by Aris's Birmingham Gazette in Latin and English. The same paper also revived speculation on the state of Pitt's gout. The York Courant pointed out that Pitt had been the first to inform the Prince of Wales of his grandfather's death. This was untrue; Pitt was merely the first minister to see the new king.

Changes in the ministry were rumoured in December 1760, but

79. YC 1828, 4 Nov.1760, p.2 c.3.
80. YC 1828, 4 Nov.1760, p.1 c.3, p.3 c.2 (election advertisement).
81. ABG 990, 10 Nov.1760, p.1 c.3, p.2 c.3.
82. YC 1828, 4 Nov.1760, p.2 c.2; Brooke, p.74.
the possibility of Pitt's resigning does not seem to have been
considered by provincial newspapers, in view of their belief in
his good relations with the new king. The Norwich Mercury
believed that Newcastle might resign with a pension of £4000.83
Such speculation provided the Mercury with the opportunity to
affirm its support for the current ministry. It reprinted from
the London Chronicle an alleged letter from Lancashire that
answered allegorical queries it said were circulating in London,
whether the king would chose Pitt coal, Newcastle coal or Scotch
coal for the winter. The letter concluded that because Scotch
coal was dirty and dusty, Newcastle dull and disagreeable, and
Pitt extravagant, the best combination was to have Pitt to blaze
in the front, backed with Newcastle to make it last.84

Reports of George III's speech to the Privy Council on his
succession confirmed what was known of Pitt's views on the
continuation of the war. The king's statement, reprinted from
the Gazette, ruled out a separate peace, and described the war as
'expensive, but just and necessary'.85 The newspapers were
unaware that the sentiments were Pitt's, the king originally
having spoken of simply an 'honourable and lasting peace' to end
the 'bloody and expensive War'.86 Nevertheless, provincial
newspapers chose to print in full some of those addresses of
condolence to George III that agreed with the king's real
wishes. There was an unusually large number of addresses to the
new king from a wide variety of corporate bodies, civil and

83. NM 555, 6 Dec.1760, p.2 c.1.
84. NM 559, 3 Jan.1761, p.2 c.1.
85. FFBJ, 1 Nov.1760, p.4 c.1-3, quotation p.4 c.2.
86. Peters, p.178.
religious. Not all expressed obvious political opinions, but most of those addresses reprinted by provincial newspapers expressed opinions on the continuation of the war. A newspaper's decision to select and print the text of an address implied, if not concurrence with its contents, then at least that the printer believed the address's arguments or source significant. Lists of addresses gazetted appeared regularly until late December, twenty-five alone being listed by the York Courant for 24 November.\(^{87}\) Only a small proportion of the addresses was printed by each paper, usually including the address of the City of London that expressed sympathy with the king's presumed pain on finding his 'Kingdoms engaged in a bloody and expensive war'. Local addresses were those most frequently printed in full.\(^{88}\)

Despite the apparent growth in opposition to the war, by no means all the addresses printed favoured an early peace. Addresses from the provincial newspapers' own cities generally followed Pitt's views. Opinion in Bristol, often polarised, seems to have been unusually unanimous. The Whig common council praised the wise and spirited ministry, and advised the king to pursue the just and necessary war until a peace could be concluded in concert with his allies. The predominantly Whig Society of Merchant Venturers made the same request, but added that the war, though expensive, would be cheerfully and vigorously supported. The latter address was presented by both members for the city, an unusual sign of unanimity.\(^{89}\)

---


88. *YC* 1828, 4 Nov.1760, p.2 c.3-p.3 c.1; For example, *YC* 1832, 2 Dec.1760, p.2 c.2-3.

89. *FFBJ*, 8 Nov.1760, p.3 c.3; *FFBJ*, 15 Nov.1760, p.3 c.3.
opinion, as represented by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, also
opposed an early peace, although no Tory organisation petitioned
on the subject. Recognition of the commercial value to Bristol
of a successful war might explain this presumed concurrence.

The damage to the economy of the resort town equally might
explain the Bath corporation's address opposing the war. The
common council expressed the hope that the 'bloody and expensive
war' would be pursued vigorously until an honourable peace was
obtained.\textsuperscript{90} These sentiments would have constituted a
significant disagreement with Pitt, who defended the expense of
the war and would not consider a separate peace with France
without the concurrence of Britain's allies, particularly
Prussia. Yet only a month before the same body publicly had
offered Pitt his seat for re-election.\textsuperscript{91} No rapid
disillusionment with Pitt's policies is known to have occurred in
the Bath corporation. Pitt did not object to the address,
because both he and the other member for Bath, Viscount Ligonier,
presented the address to the king.\textsuperscript{92} Either Pitt's friends in
the corporation assumed that the sentiments in the address were
acceptable to him, or Pitt did not want to provoke dissension
with the corporation. The incident possibly foreshadows the
eventual estrangement of Pitt and the Bath corporation in 1763,
over the latter's address thanking the king for the separate
peace that Pitt opposed. In any case, the 1760 address seriously
questions the interpretation that criticism of the expense of the
war and a desire for peace, not necessarily in concert with

\textsuperscript{90}  \textit{BBJ} 898, 17 Nov.1760, p.4 c.3.
\textsuperscript{91}  \textit{INJ} 390,18 Oct.1760, p.3 c.2.
\textsuperscript{92}  \textit{BBJ} 898, 17 Nov.1760, p.4 c.3.
Prussia, were signs of opposition to Pitt's policies.

Political activity was at a low level in 1760 and early 1761. The broad coalition subverted parliamentary opposition, and the wider political nation was also unusually quiet. Fewer borough seats were contested at the General Election of 1761 than at any other election that century. Yet the elections for the new parliament were of great interest to the six provincial papers. The election was uncontroversial in the cities considered; the results for local seats other than York and County Durham were printed without comment. The violently-contested election was widely reported, from Lloyd's Evening Post. The election of the four members for the City of London received wide attention, and most papers printed lists of the members elected to the new parliament. The complete return was available at the end of May, when the Leicester and Nottingham Journal used its all its second page to reprint the list.

However quiet, the election did not show that party distinctions had died out. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal contrasted the elections in England with those in Ireland, where there were 'no Whigs or Tories, as to Party.' There was, however, considerable variety in the form taken by provincial political rivalries. The election at Exeter was contested


94. INJ 413, 28 Mar.1761, p.3 c.3;
    BBJ 918, 6 Apr.1761, p.4 c.3;
    YC 1851, 14 Apr.1761, p.2 c.2;
    NM 574, 18 Apr.1761, p.2 c.1.

95. INJ 414, 4 Apr.1761, p.3 c.2;
    BBJ 918, 6 Apr.1761, p.3 c.2;
    ABC 1010, 30 Mar.1761, p.2 c.2, p.3 c.1-2;
    NM 574, 18 Apr.1761, p.1 c.1, p.2 c.3;
    INJ 422, 30 May 1761, p.2 c.1-3.
furiously between the Old, or Blue, interest and the Low Party, the Presbyterians. The two sitting Tory members were returned. In Bristol, the agreement of 1756 between the Whig Union Club and the Tory Steadfast Society to share the city's representation held, so the re-election of the sitting members was unopposed. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal later printed an epigram from London:

No Party! No Faction! A very odd Thing!
Why, who the plague did it? The French, or the King? Significantly, Pitt's name was omitted.

The rejection of party divisions entailed the end of Tory proscription, so such an idea was popular with Tories as well as opposition Whig 'Patriots'. Just before George II's death the reconciliation of parties and the superseding of faction had been attributed by the Monitor, quoted in Boddely's Bath Journal, to the wise administration of the Patriot minister. In 1761, Pitt seems to have been eclipsed by a Patriot king.

The new reign was put forward as the reason for laying faction aside. An anonymous paragraph in the York Courant argued that unanimous concurrence on duty to the new sovereign should convince enemies of the ministry to abandon their political intrigues. The Patriot king may have been a challenge to the

96. Whitehall Evening Post, quoted in LNJ 422, 30 May 1761, p.1 c.2.
97. BBJ 918, 6 Apr.1761, p.3 c.2; The History of Parliament, I, p.253.
98. Underdown, p.93.
99. FFBJ, 16 May 1761, p.2 c.2.
100. BBJ 895, 27 Oct.1760, p.3 c.2-3.
101. YC 1828, 4 Nov.1760, p.2 c.3.
Patriot minister, but it was not readily apparent in the newspapers. No suggestion was made that the king disagreed with Pitt on the prosecution of the war. There were, however, changes of emphasis. Pitt or the Patriot ministers were no longer the only British political figures to receive favourable comment in the provincial newspapers.

It has been argued that one of the major changes in high politics during the 1750s was the transition from party distinctions categorised by Whig and Tory divisions to the factional groupings of the 1760s.\textsuperscript{102} The increase in the rate of political change at the centre after 1760 has been attributed to the accession of George III and the end of Tory proscription, the disappearance of the old generation of Old Corps politicians, and the effects of the Seven Years' War.\textsuperscript{103} Limited Tory access to the administration and the prominence of Whig politicians from recently Tory families led to the disintegration of the Tory parliamentary grouping, which had based its cohesiveness on its proscription from government and its distinctive ideology.\textsuperscript{104} If Tory organisation at Westminster was displaced by new factions after 1760, a similar progression might be expected in the provinces. Although party differences in the country did not necessarily coincide with those in national politics,\textsuperscript{105} any connection between national politics and the politics of provincial cities would be indicated by a decline in party adherence, and, particularly, Tory identity, from 1760. This

\textsuperscript{102} Clark, p.16.

\textsuperscript{103} Colley, p.265.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., p.267.

\textsuperscript{105} Clark, p.15.
does not seem generally to have happened within the period of the Seven Years' War. When party divisions in provincial cities were muted after 1760, it was for reasons other than the end of Tory proscription.

The most striking example of the decline in local political conflict during the war was at Bristol. Well established local political organisations existed, and fiercely contended elections were fought in 1754 and 1756. However, an agreement to share the representation was concluded, and the sitting Whig and Tory members were returned without opposition at the general election of 1761. The Tory Steadfast Society, which had met weekly, is not known to have met between December 1763 and February 1768. Yet this picture of the dimming of party rivalries and loyalties is misleading. The Whig and Tory organisations were not replaced by organisations based on high political factions, like the Rockingham Club in York. The strength of party feeling in Bristol seems not to have diminished. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, a consistent supporter of the Steadfast Society, was uniformly hostile to the Whig corporation and the Duke of Newcastle, until his resignation in 1762. The end of contested elections did not date from 1760 but from an electoral agreement between the Union Club and the Steadfast Society in 1756. A similar agreement had existed before, but had failed in 1754. The 1756 pact generally has been attributed to the financial exhaustion of both sides following two expensive elections in close succession.


Nevertheless, because the period 1759-1760 was a quiet one in national and local politics, it makes the provincial papers' handling of the few controversies more significant. As in 1758, they largely ignored the controversy generated in London by the sending of more British troops to Germany. Criticism of the expense of the war became serious in the capital, but only the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* of the six papers reprinted even the very widely read *Considerations on the Present German War*. The papers were however sensitive to the issue, and to criticism of Pitt. Several papers adopted the argument that there was a faction within the ministry working against Pitt's purposes. Defences of Pitt became more common until they were made unnecessary by the series of great victories. If by the end of 1758 a distinctive attitude to national politics, almost entirely uncritical of Pitt, had been built up by the provincial papers, then it was reaffirmed in 1759 and 1760.

Real development in the capabilities of the provincial press seems also to have taken place by 1760. The reporting of the invasion threat indicates the maturity of the newspapers. The prospects of invasion were not exaggerated or ignored, but reported in detail and the evidence treated with reasonable scepticism. This developed critical treatment of evidence contrasts with the papers' handling of the invasion threat in 1756, which was first ignored, then used as a weapon to attack the ministry. The papers' maturity is also shown by the competent handling of the surfeit of news of important victories in late 1759 and late 1760. The reporting of local victory celebrations demonstrates that, on this subject at least, provincial newspaper interest was mirrored by local public
interest. Fresh victories justified greater claims at a peace, but the cost of those victories was to make peace a major issue that the provincial papers could not ignore.
VII. Pitt's Resignation and the Peace

Negotiations for peace were conducted intermittently throughout the final stages of the war. Rumours of a peace had been current since late 1758, but serious public discussion of the prospect of a peace began in late 1759. Britain rejected a Spanish proposal to mediate a separate peace with France, but in view of Prussia's continuing difficulties and the victories at Minden and Quebec, Britain and Prussia proposed a general peace conference in November 1759. The unsuccessful negotiations at the Hague eventually were broken off in May 1760. A vigorous debate had developed in the London press over the peace negotiations. A substantial faction in the City favoured the continuation of the war and the retention of all British conquests. The relative value of Canada and Guadeloupe became the major topic of discussion. In late 1759, the reduction of Montreal and the rest of the French territories in North America was expected to be expensive, without immediate benefits. The West Indian sugar islands seemed, particularly to merchants, to offer better rewards and to be more profitable targets for British efforts than Canada. The Monitor and London Evening-Post argued for the retention of all Canada, and as many other British captures as possible.¹

The provincial newspapers similarly favoured keeping all British conquests, and gave primacy to Canada. In early 1760 they argued for the continuation of the war in North America despite the cost, which had been queried as early as 1758. The Norwich and Birmingham papers reprinted a letter from New York in

¹. Peters, pp.162-9; Corbett, II, pp.72-7.
February 1760 which argued that, if the 'Great Minister' persevered, the expense of gaining Montreal would be outweighed by the benefits gained: an exclusive fishery, boundless territory, a monopoly of the fur trade, 'and innumerable tribes of savages' to contribute to the consumption of British manufactures. In early September 1760, with the easy capture of Montreal soon expected, the value of Canada was again stressed. The benefits of a strong peace were added to the earlier economic arguments. An anonymous article reprinted by the two papers argued that the hazards the French had taken to recover Quebec demonstrated either its intrinsic value or its strategic importance. The former conclusion was said to answer disputes over the comparative value of Canada and Guadeloupe, while the latter implied the need to conquer all Canada to preserve British security and control of the sea.\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Aris's Birmingham Gazette} further suggested that if Britain retained all North America and its fisheries at the end of the war, the resulting strength and prosperity would give Britain influence in the affairs of Europe.\textsuperscript{3}

The six provincial newspapers generally favoured peace. Most reporting of the prospects of a peace concerned the conduct of negotiations and the probable terms of an agreement. However, the reporting was accompanied by pieces that sought to show that the public or public figures either opposed or supported the ministry's supposed plans for peace. The reporting of the

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{NM} 510, 2 Feb.1760, p.2 c.3; \textit{ABG} 950, 4 Feb.1760, p.1 c.1; \textit{NM} 541, 6 Sep.1760, p.2 c.1; \textit{ABG} 981, 8 Sep.1760, p.1 c.1. 

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{ABG} 981, 8 Sep.1760, p.2 c.1.
negotiations and likely treaty conditions reflected the distance both the London and provincial newspapers were from the sources of information. Reporting of negotiations usually relied on the interpretation of the movements of politicians; occasionally lists of alleged demands circulated in the capital. Only after negotiations had collapsed were 'memorials' printed by either side, usually to present their part in the best light.

Because they were seldom well-informed, London and provincial newspapers frequently were unjustifiably optimistic about the prospects for peace. A French ultimatum for a peace with Britain, excluding Prussia, was rejected in May 1760, and directly led to the collapse of the peace conference at the Hague. Yet provincial newspapers gave the impression that peace was still likely. At the end of March Boddely's Bath Journal reported a peace between Britain and France was on the point of being concluded, and a general congress at Breda to settle the preliminary articles of peace was widely reported to be expected to meet by the start of July. Military inactivity during June 1760 led to renewed speculation, and the signing of the preliminaries of a separate peace between France and Britain was widely but tentatively reported in late June. The report was

4. *FPBJ*, 14 Feb.1761, p.1 c.2; *BBJ* 918, 2 Mar.1761, p.3 c.1.


6. *BBJ* 865, 31 Mar.1760, p.3 c.3, p.4 c.3; *VC* 1797, 1 Apr.1760, p.1 c.1; *ADB* 859, 7 Apr.1760, p.1 c.2; *NM* 520, 12 Apr.1760, p.2 c.1; *LNJ* 364, 19 Apr.1760, p.3 c.1; *BBJ* 869, 28 Apr.1760, p.1 c.3.

7. *VC* 1806, 3 June 1760, p.2 c.1; *LNJ* 373, 21 June 1760, p.2 c.2; *FPBJ*, 28 June 1760, p.2 c.2; *BBJ* 878, 30 June 1760, p.2 c.1; *VC* 1810, 1 July 1760, p.1 c.2.
soon denied, and Felix Farley's Bristol Journal ingenuously observed that it was strange that people believed reports that a peace was near when all appearances were to the contrary.  

Provincial newspaper attitudes towards a peace changed markedly between the collapse of the conference in May 1760 and the resumption of negotiations between Britain and France a year later. From favouring an early peace, many of the papers came, by the time negotiations broke down in late 1760, to oppose a separate peace that was seen to sacrifice British interests. In late June and early July, the Norwich Mercury and the Leicester and Nottingham Journal reprinted articles from the London Evening-Post that argued continued British successes had given reason to expect a peace. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal in late April 1760 reprinted an extract from the pamphlet A Letter to the People of England on the necessity of ending the war immediately. Recent expeditions were criticised for being badly planned and executed, and for failing to achieve their object of distracting French forces from Germany. The victories at Minden and Quebec were said to have been won more from good fortune than foresight. Since there was little to be gained by prolonging the war, the pamphlet suggested that a peace be concluded rapidly, Britain retaining Canada and returning the West Indian islands. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal summarised the proposed territorial exchanges and other aspects of the pamphlet's argument, but made no comment of its own. The printer's  

8. FFBJ, 26 July 1760, p.1 c.2.  
9. NM 532, 5 July 1760, p.2 c.2, p.3 c.1; INJ 373, 21 June 1760, p.1 c.2.  
10. FFBJ, 26 Apr.1760, p.4 c.1-3.
summary presumably was to make the article fit the space available on the back page. To have gone to the unusual effort of paraphrasing some passages suggests that the printer thought the pamphlet significant, and was not using it simply to fill space. Criticism of coastal expeditions in a Tory newspaper was unusual, and suggests the strength of *Felix Parley's Bristol Journal*'s opinion in favour of an early peace.

The rapid reversal of attitudes towards an early peace is shown by the change in the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal*'s choice of comment between mid-July and late August 1760. Peace seemed much less likely by the end of August because the disinterested nature of Spanish mediation had been questioned. The pamphlet *The Voice of Peace* claimed to have been written by the secretary to the Spanish embassy at the Hague. None of the six provincial papers reprinted it, but the *Leicester and Nottingham Journal* in July reprinted a letter from 'Probus' to the *Public Ledger* in which the pamphlet's author was praised for his neutrality, and an extract was reproduced.\(^\text{11}\) However, the following month the Leicester paper devoted its entire front page to a letter from the *Monitor* that rejected the proposals of *The Voice of Peace* and accused its author of being a Jesuit. The anonymous correspondent argued that Britain should not give up its advantages for an insecure peace, but should instead reduce French naval power and capture coastal towns in order to force France to agree to an everlasting peace.\(^\text{12}\)

Peace negotiations between Britain and France resumed in May

---

11. *LNJ* 377, 19 July 1760, p.3 c.1; Peters, p.287.

1761, and a general congress met at Augsburg. Britain continued to pursue the maritime war, capturing Belleisle off the western French coast in June, and sending expeditions against Dominica and Mauritius. A separate peace was near conclusion in mid-June with French proposals for the exchange of Minorca for Guadeloupe and Mariegalante, French withdrawal from Germany in return for Belleisle, and a return to the pre-war settlement in India. The main points of disagreement were Pitt's insistence on the exclusion of France from fishing rights on the Newfoundland banks and the French insistence on settling Spanish grievances in the same agreement.\textsuperscript{13}

Provincial newspapers regularly mentioned the prospects for peace from April 1761 onwards, but gave few details and seldom commented. Boddely's Bath Journal, however, reprinted at the start of May a list of the principal demands said to have been insisted upon by the British plenipotentiaries. It was claimed that, among other conditions, North America and Guadeloupe were to be ceded to Britain, that no restitution was to be made for French ships captured before the declaration of hostilities, and that Minorca would not be exchanged for Senegal and Goree. These terms were slightly stronger than the actual British demands presented to France in June, which suggested returning Guadeloupe in exchange for a French withdrawal from Germany. No comment was made on the acceptability of the alleged peace terms, but a comparison was made with the peace negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1747 and 1748.\textsuperscript{14} This comparison suggests that the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Peters, pp.194-8; Corbett, II, pp.175, 179.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Corbett, II, p.175; BBJ 922, 4 May 1761, p.1 c.1-2; See also XU 1851, 14 Apr.1761, p.2 c.2.
\end{itemize}
report tried to show that the negotiators intended to avoid repeating the allegedly weak provisions of the earlier treaty, which included the return of Louisbourg to French control. Newspaper reports endeavoured to show that a strong line was being taken by the British ministry, and Pitt particularly, in the negotiations. At the end of June, several provincial papers reported from the *St. James's Chronicle* an alleged conversation between Pitt and the French plenipotentiary Francois de Bussy in which Pitt refused to consider an indemnity for French ships seized before the war, and dismissed Bussy's threats to invade Britain and Hanover. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* further accused Bussy of making menaces, when France was not in a position to make demands, to British ministers who had the real interest of their country at heart.\(^\text{15}\)

In mid-September, the British and French peace negotiators returned home. The newspapers were uncertain about the result of the negotiations. On 22 September, *Boddely's Bath Journal* reported that Louis XV was resolved to reject the British peace terms and Pitt was said to have threatened to transfer the war into France, yet four days later the paper claimed peace negotiations were near a happy conclusion.\(^\text{16}\) The *Norwich Mercury* assured its readers that, notwithstanding all reports to the contrary, the king and Privy Council had always been unanimous on the terms upon which peace with France should be made.\(^\text{17}\) Yet it had never been suggested in the provincial newspapers that there

\(\text{15. ABG 1023, 29 June 1761, p.1 c.2, p.2 c.1; NM 583, 20 June 1761, p.2 c.2.} \\
\text{16. BBf 943, 28 Sep.1761, p.1 c.2, p.4 c.1.} \\
\text{17. NM 596, 19 Sep.1761, p.2 c.2.} \)
was any disagreement within the royal councils. This was the first readily identifiable acknowledgement that divisions might have existed.

Pitt had taken the hardest line on the peace negotiations of the British ministers, although supported by Bute. Pitt's control of policy had diminished, and a major division with the other ministers arose in early August 1761 over the British response to the increasingly hostile attitude of Spain. On 15 August France and Spain signed the third Family Compact and a special convention to support each other against Britain. The British ministry heard of the compact in early September, and Pitt suggested a pre-emptive attack against Spain. Bute and the other ministers opposed widening the war when Spanish intentions were still unclear. Pitt announced that he could not continue without control of policy, and resigned on 5 October, followed by Temple on 9 October. Pitt was awarded an annuity of £3000, and his wife a barony as Lady Chatham.18

The first reports of Pitt's resignation appeared in the London evening papers on 6 October, occasioning a mass of speculation and comment. Initial concern and sympathy for Pitt turned to hostility and confusion when his annuity was announced by the London Gazette on 9 October. Even the Monitor was uncertain how to react and initially did not defend Pitt. Among the newspapers, the London Evening-Post and the Public Ledger came to defend Pitt against attacks in the London Chronicle. Pitt found charges that he had been bought by the court with a

pension sufficiently serious to answer them in a letter to William Beckford, printed in the Public Ledger on 17 October and widely copied by other newspapers. The effect of the letter was to regain for Pitt the favour of disillusioned former supporters in the City and provincial centres. The Common Council of the City of London voted thanks to Pitt and instructed its members of parliament on the subject. Eight British and Irish cities followed London, including York, Bath and Norwich; a proposed address at Leicester was rejected. The participation of major English cities indicates substantial support for Pitt, although the response was less than the thirteen corporations that presented their freedoms on his resignation in 1757. Six of the seven corporations that did not repeat their earlier support for Pitt were controlled or influenced by Tories.\footnote{Peters, pp.205-13; Brewer, p.104; Karl W. Schweizer, 'Lord Bute and William Pitt's Resignation in 1761', Canadian Journal of History, VIII, 2, (September 1973), p.48.} Pitt's letter provoked renewed attacks from his opponents in the press. The London Chronicle criticised his attitude towards Spain, his resigning at a critical moment, and his claim to guide policy against a majority in the Cabinet. Several pamphlets published in late October and November sought to question Pitt's Patriot reputation, and suggested he sought too much personal power. Other than those of the Monitor, only weak defences were made against these accusations, which continued in increasingly personal form throughout December 1761 and January 1762.\footnote{Peters, pp.214-29.}
comment, on the initial announcement. No emphasis was given by the *York Courant* to a two-line report from London on Thursday, 8 October, that 'On Monday the Right Hon. Mr. Pitt resigned the Seals as one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.'  
In the following weeks, a great variety of comment was printed by the six papers, some of it from local sources. There was some criticism of Pitt, but it was greatly outweighed by defences of his actions. Comment appeared, in the form of letters, essays or verses, in nearly every issue of all six papers throughout late October, but most had lost interest in the subject by early November.

The few paragraphs that raised criticism of Pitt indicate the newspapers' uncertainty about the resignation rather than fundamental disillusionment with Pitt. It is, nevertheless, significant that provincial newspapers printed criticism of Pitt at all, because previously they had either praised Pitt or remained silent. *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* suggested in an allegorical letter that William Pitt had fallen into the same pickle barrel that his namesake William Pulteney had in 1742.  

The most significant criticism of Pitt was reprinted from the *London Chronicle* by all six provincial papers except Boddely's *Bath Journal*. The article put forward several explanations for Pitt's actions. The anonymous author concluded that Pitt, anticipating the difficulty of concluding the war successfully, had resigned to leave the odium of the task to his successors. Of Pitt's annuity,

---

-All applaud his Majesty's Princely Goodness and Generosity in so nobly rewarding his past Services; but all think the Minister had acted more consistent with the high Character he has for some Years so well supported, had he refused the Reward till he had completed his Work.23

Pitt's letter to Beckford of 15 October explaining his resignation similarly was reprinted by all the six provincial newspapers from the Public Ledger, as A LETTER from a Right Hon. Person to ---- in the City. In the letter, Pitt claimed that he resigned over a 'Difference of Opinion with regard to Measures to be taken against Spain ... in Order not to remain responsible for Measures, which I was no longer allowed to guide.'24 The effect of the publication of the letter was immediate. The Norwich Mercury reported that what it believed were Pitt's letters to the Lord Mayor, Alderman Beckford and the Town Clerk had convinced people in London that war with Spain was inevitable.25 The Leicester and Nottingham Journal added a comment of its own to Pitt's letter, upbraiding the public for its supposed ingratitude and changeability of opinions towards Pitt: 'Read Britons! and blush at the Contents! ... - It is hardly a Month since, when you in a manner idolized that Man whom you now treat as little better than a Demon!'26 Despite the violence of John Gregory's comment, the most significant provincial response to the resignation was in Pitt's own constituency, Bath.

23. PPBJ, 17 Oct.1761, p.4 c.1;
   NM 600, 17 Oct.1761, p.2 c.1;
   LNJ 442, 17 Oct.1761, p.2 c.3-p.3 c.1 (attributed to Lloyd's Evening Post);
   ABC 1039, 19 Oct.1761, p.2 c.2;

24. NM 601, 24 Oct.1761, p.1 c.1;
   Peters, p.279.


Not surprisingly, Boddely's Bath Journal gave the most attention to Pitt's resignation. The paper reprinted many articles, verses and letters that were not carried by other provincial papers, and printed several local contributions, all of them favourable to Pitt. Only Boddely's Bath Journal did not print the London Chronicle's suggestion that Pitt had resigned to avoid responsibility for an unpopular peace. The paper printed on 19 October 'QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS' under the comment that 'The following will speak for itself, without our saying from what Quarter we received it.' The anonymous article put forward several possible reasons for Pitt's resignation, including ill-health. His acceptance of a pension was considered reasonable because he was not avaricious. The author further claimed that Pitt, 'The DICTATOR of the People', retained his power though no longer in office.27 Pitt's letter to Beckford provoked a substantial local response. 'Herefordicus' thanked John Keene for printing the letter, which the correspondent believed showed Pitt truly to be a Patriot. 'Honestus' praised Pitt less unequivocally. He expressed the hope that Pitt would be an incorruptible and undaunted Patriot, but regretted that Pitt had not finished what he had begun. A verse from 'Pittophilus' compared Pitt to the Roman dictator Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, who in 458 B. C. defeated the Aequi, resigned his dictatorship, and returned to his farm.28

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal similarly printed a large number of articles and verses on Pitt's resignation, maintaining

27. BBJ 946, 19 Oct.1761, p.2 c.2.

interest until mid-November. A local verse, The FRIEND of ENGLAND, praised Pitt, and a local letter signed 'J. De Wall' defended his acceptance of an annuity. The Bristol paper was readier than Boddely's Bath Journal to accept the ministry without Pitt. HINTS tending to quiet the Minds of the People, printed at the end of October, claimed that although a great man had resigned, other great men remained in the ministry. Aris's Birmingham Gazette, among its many verses on the resignation, printed a local contribution, A SONG upon the PRESENT TIMES. It argued that changes were not uncommon in a new king's reign, and good measures would still prevail:

tho' we've lost the great PITT,
in WINDHAM both judgment and honesty sit.

The Birmingham newspaper printed a great deal of comment and many verses favourable to Pitt, but had lost interest in the issue by the end of October. The Norwich and York papers were more restrained in their support of Pitt, and similarly printed little comment after late October. The Norwich Mercury however reprinted an ironic defence of Pitt in late November from the St. James's Chronicle. 'William Prynne' argued that the addresses of thanks to Pitt were undeserved because Pitt's great services were really due to the bravery of military and naval commanders, who would have been victorious even had the old ministry remained undisturbed. Yet the examples of able commanders, Byng, Braddock and Loudoun, reveal the letter's mildly ironic purpose. Prynne recalled that the ungrateful people of England, grumbling over

29. FFBJ, 31 Oct.1761, p.4 c.1; FFBJ, 14 Nov.1761, p.4 c.2.
31. ABG 1039, 19 Oct.1761, p.3 c.2.
Pitt's resignation, had expressed no regret when the former ministry was removed.32 Because the letter raised subjects embarrassing to Pitt, like his acceptance of a pension and the failure at Rochefort, it could easily have been taken as a criticism.

Provincial newspapers gave significant attention to the addresses of thanks to Pitt. Soon after the resignation, an unsigned, and possibly local, letter to the printer of the Leicester and Nottingham Journal suggested that people should approach the throne to beseech the return of the faithful minister.33 Most of the eight addresses thanked Pitt for his services while Secretary of State, assured him that his merit and abilities would be remembered gratefully, and bewailed his loss at a time of crisis. Instructions to members of parliament generally followed the lead of London. Representatives were asked to oppose a peace that would weaken British security or enable the restoration of French naval power. Many provincial newspapers reported fully the resolution of the London Court of Common Council to address thanks to Pitt, its resolution lamenting his loss, Pitt's answer to the resolution of thanks, and the instructions to the City members of parliament.34 The addresses from provincial cities were reported in a similar fashion. The York Courant on 10 November reported the resolution of the Common Council of York to address thanks to Pitt, and

32. NM 605, 21 Nov.1761, p.2 c.2-3; Brewer, p.48.
34. YC 1878, 27 Oct.1761, p.3 c.1. YC 1879, 3 Nov.1761, p.1 c.3, p.2 c.1.
reprinted the address.\textsuperscript{35} Felix Farley's Bristol Journal printed the address and instructions from Exeter in full, with an account of the decision to send them and a list of the members of the committee responsible for their composition.\textsuperscript{36} The reporting of preparations to address Pitt indicates that provincial newspapers attempted to put more emphasis on the thanks to Pitt than was placed on other addresses, which were simply reprinted from the London Gazette. The Leicester paper reprinted the General Evening Post's claim that the addresses represented the voice of the people, which had removed all the dirt slung at Pitt by 'hirelings and wrongheads'.\textsuperscript{37}

A reflection of the disbelief in many provincial newspapers at Pitt's resignation was the persistence of rumours that he would be reinstated. Those rumours were current even before the publication of Pitt's letter to Beckford. The Norwich Mercury claimed in late October that the king had asked Pitt to stay within a day's journey of him, when Pitt indicated he intended to travel to Bath. The Norwich and York papers reprinted the London Evening-Post's fallacious claim that the king had approved of all Pitt's proposals, and still held him in high esteem.\textsuperscript{38} The Norwich Mercury believed Pitt's letter explaining his resignation had given strength to the belief that he would return to office.\textsuperscript{39} The York Courant, quoting the Public Ledger, claimed

\textsuperscript{35} VC 1880, 10 Nov.1761, p.3 c.1.

\textsuperscript{36} FFBJ, 7 Nov.1761, p.3 c.2; VC 1879, 3 Nov.1761, p.3 c.1; LNJ 446, 14 Nov.1761, p.3 c.1; NM 601, 24 Oct.1761, p.2 c.2.

\textsuperscript{37} LNJ 446, 14 Nov.1761, p.2 c.3.

\textsuperscript{38} NM 601, 24 Oct.1761, p.2 c.1.

\textsuperscript{39} NM 601, 24 Oct.1761, p.3 c.1.
that 'It still continues to be reported that a great Nobleman will resign, and that Mr. P[itt] will be re-instated before the Meeting of Parliament.'\textsuperscript{40} Five hundred guineas were said to have been wagered on 28 October that Pitt would be reinstated by the following Tuesday.\textsuperscript{41} Several government posts were still vacant in mid-December, allowing the \textit{Public Ledger} to revive speculation that Pitt might resume the seals. The paper claimed that the patent for Pitt's reappointment needed only minor formalities to come into effect, but he set too little value on the punctilios to comply with them. Two days later a report from another London paper contradicted the latter claim, saying Pitt had complied with the punctilios, and the patent was in the Exchequer.\textsuperscript{42}

The declaration of war with Spain on 26 December seemed to some papers a likely occasion for the recall of Pitt. An anonymous paragraph reprinted by several provincial papers argued that the crisis required unanimity. Pitt's direction of affairs had produced harmony; 'If therefore his resignation hath thrown us back again into the same Discontent and Divisions, what can be so sure and speedy a Remedy as his being Reinstated?'\textsuperscript{43} Pitt was widely reported to have attended meetings of the Grand Council on 26 and 28 December, but on the 31st the reports were declared unfounded and Pitt to have no place in the administration.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{YC} 1879, 3 Nov.1761, p.1 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{YC} 1879, 3 Nov.1761, p.1 c.2, p.2 c.1.
\item \textsuperscript{42} \textit{YC} 1885, 15 Dec.1761, p.2 c.1; \textit{NM} 609, 19 Dec.1761, p.1 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{43} \textit{BBJ} 957, 4 Jan.1762, p.1 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{44} \textit{BBJ} 957, 4 Jan.1762, p.1 c.2, p.3 c.2; \textit{BBJ}, 2 Jan.1762, p.2 c.1, p.3 c.2; \textit{NM} 614, 23 Jan.1762, p.2 c.1.
\end{itemize}
The question of war with Spain, which had precipitated Pitt's resignation, remained topical till the end of 1761. The prospect of an extension of the war was greeted favourably by some provincial papers. Boddely's Bath Journal reported from London in early October that the people of Bristol, Liverpool and other sea ports were in high spirits on the rumour of a rupture with Spain. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, in an article from London, considered that the war with Spain would provide rich captures and lay the foundation for a more durable peace. With the same cabinet conducting the Spanish war, the paper believed that it would be as successful as the war against France. Pitt's resignation led to suggestions that an early peace would be concluded. The Monitor, reprinted in the Leicester and Nottingham Journal in mid-October, warned that, as in the previous war, corrupt ministers would make an inadequate peace and try to cast the odium onto a Patriot minister. However, the Leicester paper quoted the General Evening Post's assurance that the war would be prosecuted vigorously until a safe, lasting and honourable peace was obtained, 'notwithstanding what our secret enemies may insinuate to the contrary.' By 5 November, Felix Farley's Bristol Journal considered 'A few Days, it is thought, will determine a very grand Question, "War, or no War with Spain."'

War with Spain was delayed only briefly by Pitt's

47. LNJ 442, 17 Oct.1761, p.3 c.3; See also ABG 1039, 19 Oct.1761, p.1 c.2.
48. FFBJ, 7 Nov.1761, p.3 c.3.
resignation. Spain rejected a British ultimatum to reveal the secret treaty with France, and ordered the seizure of British ships in Spanish ports on 10 November 1761. Britain declared war on Spain on 26 December.\textsuperscript{49} There was initial uncertainty in the provincial newspapers over the measures to be taken against Spain, but the York Courant reprinted assurances that the war would be prosecuted vigorously and would soon be successful.\textsuperscript{50}

Signs of dissatisfaction, if any, with the Newcastle-Bute ministry could be expected to have been apparent in the reporting of the war. Pitt had often been identified with the organisation of victories, so the significant captures of 1762, Martinique and Havana, might have been inconvenient to explain in terms of competent political direction. However, success against Spain was used to show that Pitt's attitude had been justified. Spain was said by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal to have been prepared to face an attack in the West Indies by January 1762 only because of the delay produced by the opposition to Pitt's measures. Pitt's conduct, and public faith in his abilities, therefore were claimed to have been vindicated.\textsuperscript{51}

Provincial newspaper interest in early 1762 centred on the Caribbean war. The capture of Martinique, the last remaining important French Caribbean possession, had been planned before the declaration of war with Spain, but it was considered to be useful as a base against the Spanish islands. A large fleet under Admiral Lord Rodney and more than 13 000 soldiers under General Robert Monckton reached Martinique on 8 January 1762.

\textsuperscript{49} Corbett, II, pp.229-30, 232.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{YC} 1891, 26 Jan.1762, p.2 c.1.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{FFBJ}, 2 Jan.1762, p.1 c.2.
Indirect attacks on the naval base at Fort Royal proved impractical, so a direct attack was made against light opposition on 24 January, and the fort captured without serious resistance on 4 February. The governor capitulated on 15 February, and the nearby minor island of St. Lucia was captured shortly after.\textsuperscript{52}

The campaign against Martinique was reported with less regularity than had been the attack on Guadeloupe in 1760. Little attention was given to the preparations for the expedition except as a sign that the prosecution of the war was to continue. The ships on the expedition were listed by Aris's Birmingham Gazette in a letter from Guadeloupe only shortly before a report in early February 1762 that British forces had landed on the island.\textsuperscript{53} Nothing more was known in England until a report appeared in mid-March, with a reminder that it was French news, that many English soldiers had been killed landing at Martinique, which was almost certainly exaggerated.\textsuperscript{54} At the end of the month two despatches from General Monckton reporting the capture of the island were printed, accompanied by the articles of capitulation and a list of those killed, wounded and missing.\textsuperscript{55}

The York Courant, the Norwich Mercury and Boddely's Bath Journal considered the news sufficiently important to omit several advertisements, the latter reprinting the London Gazette Extraordinary over five and a half columns. The Bath Journal

\textsuperscript{52} Corbett, II, pp.210, 219-26.

\textsuperscript{53} ABG 1055, 8 Feb.1762, p.3 c.1-2; FFBJ, 13 Feb.1762, p.1 c.3, p.2 c.1.

\textsuperscript{54} LNJ 464, 20 Mar.1762, p.2 c.4.

\textsuperscript{55} NM 623, 27 Mar.1762, p.1 c.3-p.2 c.2; BBJ 969, 29 Mar.1762, p.1 c.1-p.2 c.2; VC 1901, 6 Apr.1762, p.2 c.1-3; FFBJ, 10 Apr.1762, p.1 c.1-p.2 c.1.
reported general joy in the city following the receipt of the news by Ralph Allen of Prior Park. Bellringing, fireworks, illuminations and the firing of the platform of cannon owned by Mr. Simpson, proprietor of one of the assembly rooms, were organised.56 No local celebrations were reported in other cities, nor had there been any on the last major Caribbean capture of Guadeloupe. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, however, printed a verse that compared Monckton to Wolfe.57 Much less news of the fighting on Martinique appeared than had been printed of the attack on Guadeloupe, so the unusual reaction in Bath cannot have been due to any emphasis on the news in the local newspaper. In view of Allen's involvement in organising the celebrations, it is possible that he emphasised the importance of the victory in order to support Pitt's policies by promoting the continuance of the war. However, there was no attempt to attribute the capture of Martinique to political direction. The war against Spain was more controversial, so political interest was centred instead on the Caribbean expedition's second phase, against Havana in Cuba.

In January 1762 the leading ministers agreed to attacks on the major Spanish colonial possessions, Havana in Cuba and Manilla in the Philippines. Admiral Sir George Pocock with nineteen line-of-battle ships appeared off Havana on 6 June 1762, taking the garrison by surprise. The city was blockaded and troops landed without serious opposition. After a siege of two

56. NM 623, 27 Mar.1762, p.3 c.1; BBJ 969, 29 Mar.1762, p.4 c.3; YC 1901, 6 Apr.1762, p.3 c.1; Boyce, The Benevolent Man, p.269.

57. FFBJ, 15 May 1762, p.3 c.2.
months, and once the two major fortresses had been captured, Havana surrendered on 14 August.  

Because the campaign was more protracted than that against Martinique, the 'grand expedition' attracted more attention from provincial newspapers. Unusually, when the expedition's destination was first reported in mid-February, some provincial papers immediately reprinted descriptions of Cuba and Havana, long before any landing had taken place. In June and July incorrect reports appeared both that British forces had been repelled, and that Havana had been captured. News of the capture of Havana was expected confidently throughout late August and early September. The Norwich Mercury reported in late August that Havana had surrendered, from the evidence of a private letter, and a week later backed its claim with a report from the seldom-quoted Royal Chronicle. The lack of official information from the West Indies gave rise to frequent assertions and denials of the island's capture. A London Gazette Extraordinary in mid-September reported the capture of fortifications at Havana, and several provincial newspapers reprinted the accompanying journal of the siege and other British operations in Cuba. Eventually, the London Gazette Extraordinary announcing the capture of Havana


59. NM 618, 20 Feb.1762, p.2 c.1;  
   VC 1895, 23 Feb.1762, p.1 c.2.

60. BBJ 982, 28 June 1762, p.1 c.2;  
    LNJ 482, 24 July 1762, p.2 c.1, p.2 c.3-4;  
    BBJ 986, 26 July 1762, p.1 c.3.

61. NM 644, 28 Aug.1762, p.3 c.1;  
    NM 645, 5 Sep.1762, p.2 c.2;  
    ABG 1086, 13 Sep.1762, p.2 c.1-p.3 c.1;  
    FFBJ, 18 Sep.1762, p.1 c.1-4, p.3 c.2;  
    LNJ 491, 25 Sep.1762, p.3 c.4;  
    BBJ 995, 27 Sep.1762, p.2 c.2, p.3 c.3.
was widely reprinted at the start of October, accompanied by the articles of capitulation and the Chief Engineer's journal of the siege. Boddely's Bath Journal reported from Bristol that the local Whig member of Parliament, Robert Nugent, had heard of the surrender in a letter from his son at Havana. Nugent organised bonfires and celebrations, echoing Allen's activities at Bath over Martinique. The Common Council of London addressed the king on the reduction of Havana, but no other addresses on this subject were printed in the provincial newspapers.

The conquest of Havana was accorded great importance by provincial newspapers. It was considered to be a severe blow to Spain, and likely to alter the terms of a peace in Britain's favour. The victory could also have been expected to improve the popular image of Bute's new ministry. There was therefore an unusual attempt to attribute the success of the expedition against Havana to individual foresight. Bute was said by Boddely's Bath Journal to have received the congratulations of many 'persons of distinction' on the news of the success. At the same time, the paper claimed the acquisition of Havana originally had been planned and concerted by the Earl of Bute, and the officers nominated by the Duke of Cumberland. Opponents of Bute's policies, however, sought to show he was not responsible for the success. In early September when it was first believed that Havana had been captured, some provincial newspapers

62. *NM* 647, 2 Oct.1762, p.2 c.2-3; *BBJ* 966, 4 Oct.1762, p.3 c.1-p.4 c.1; *ABC* 1090, 11 Oct.1762, p.4 c.1-2.
63. *BBJ* 996, 4 Oct.1762, p.4 c.3.
64. *ABC* 1090, 11 Oct.1762, p.1 c.2.
65. *BBJ* 996, 4 Oct.1762, p.4 c.1.
reprinted the Royal Chronicle's report that Cumberland was responsible for both the nomination of the land officers and the planning of the expedition. In fact, although Cumberland influenced the appointment of commanders, Anson had planned the expedition. The attempt by newspapers to attribute credit for victories suggests that a need was seen to boost the popularity of the ministry.

In January 1762, Prussia was in a desperate position, occupied by Russian and Austrian troops. The annual treaty with Britain expired, and Bute wanted Prussia to make a separate peace in order to free Britain to help defend Portugal against Spain. However, the Tsarina Elizabeth died suddenly on 5 January and her successor Peter III immediately withdrew Russian troops and issued an armistice. An alliance with Russia was now more attractive to Prussia than one with Britain. Within the British ministry, Bute and Grenville favoured an early peace in Germany in order to concentrate British forces against the threatened Spanish invasion of Portugal. A force of 6000 was ordered to be sent to Portugal in April, and Spain attacked on 3 May. Newcastle favoured the renewal of the subsidy to Prussia, but Bute claimed there was insufficient money available. When money was voted for Portugal only on 13 May, Newcastle resigned.

Hints of indecision over the German war had appeared in the provincial newspapers. Speculation had arisen on Pitt's

66. NM 645, 5 Sep.1762, p.2 c.2; VC 1923, 7 Sep.1762, p.2 c.2.
resignation that the ministry intended to withdraw British troops from Germany. A private letter from the Hague of 23 October, reprinted by Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, expressed fears that some leading men in Britain, arguing the expense of the German war, intended to withdraw troops. The Bristol paper further quoted Dutch letters and 'city politicians' that the Hanoverians and Brunswickers in the allied army would join the King of Prussia, and the British troops would return home, to be used against the French coast. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal reprinted an approving comment on this scheme, believing it would 'save the Nation some Millions.'

Nevertheless, some provincial newspapers favoured the continuation of the German war. The York Courant reported erroneously in mid-December that it had been decided unanimously to continue the war in Germany vigorously by augmenting the allied army to the total of 90 000 men.

Suspicions of the instability of the ministry were evident in the provincial papers. The Norwich Mercury felt it necessary in late January 1762 to reprint the London Chronicle's assurance 'that every Thing goes on at the Helm with the greatest Harmony and Unanimity imaginable.' This was, however, untrue. Although Newcastle resigned on 14 May, his resignation was not announced publicly until the 26th. On 25 May the York Courant printed a private letter from London that reported a speech by Pitt and rumours that Newcastle was to retire with a pension and

69. FFBJ, 7 Nov.1761, p.1 c.2, p.1 c.3.
70. VC 1885, 15 Dec.1761, p.2 c.2.
71. NM 614, 23 Jan.1762, p.2 c.1.
Bute was to become First Lord of the Treasury in his place, with Halifax and Pitt the Secretaries of State. Rumours that Pitt was to return to office, which had no factual basis, were revived. On 11 May Felix Farley's Bristol Journal claimed it was 'every where reported (and from many corroborating Circumstances believed)' that Pitt would be offered his former position again. Yet when Newcastle's resignation finally was announced, he was replaced as First Lord of the Treasury by Bute, whose secretaryship passed to George Grenville.

Not surprisingly, Newcastle's resignation attracted vastly less attention than had Pitt's seven months earlier. The comment that appeared in provincial newspapers was, however, uniformly favourable to Newcastle. His statement on refusing a pension was described as 'truly becoming a British Spirit', and was widely reprinted from the *St. James's Chronicle*. Newcastle's refusal to accept financial rewards for his services for fear of being seen to retire to become a pensioner could have been interpreted as a rebuke to Pitt, but no provincial paper took it as such, and it was not seen as an indication that Newcastle intended to return to office presently. Aris's *Birmingham Gazette* printed a verse written locally On the Duke of Newcastle's Resignation which attributed his decision to the infirmity of old age. Newcastle's long and faithful service was emphasised; 'good old

73. *YC* 1908, 25 May 1762, p.2 c.2; *NM* 631, 29 May 1762, p.3 c.1.

74. *FFBJ*, 15 May 1762, p.2 c.2.

75. *NM* 631, 29 May 1762, p.2 c.3; *BBJ* 978, 31 May 1762, p.3 c.3, p.4 c.2.

76. *NM* 631, 29 May 1762, p.2 c.3; *YC* 1909, 1 June 1762, p.2 c.2.
honest PEL[HA]M' was 'a Patriot for the common Weal.'77 This striking reversal of the antipathy until recently held towards the leader of the Old Corps strongly suggests that the provincial newspapers were anti-ministerial rather than opposed to the Old Corps specifically.

The new First Lord of the Treasury, John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, was attacked severely in the London and provincial newspapers immediately on his appointment. A vigorous essay paper debate arose in June 1762 centred on the contrast between the policies and actions of Pitt and Bute. Personal attacks on Bute as a Scotsman were combined with suggestions that as a royal favourite he had unjustly supplanted Pitt in power. The two men's attitudes towards foreign policy were contrasted, and the plans for peace became the dominant issue from September onwards.78

From the end of May 1762, four new essay papers joined the Monitor to deal with the issues surrounding Bute's ministry. The ministerial Auditor and Briton were opposed by the North Briton, Monitor and, briefly, the Patriot. The London and Gentleman's Magazines reprinted essays and letters from both sides. The Briton attacked Pitt and defended the ministry's plans for an early peace. The Auditor argued for the return of West Indian captures in order to retain Canada. The Monitor advanced commercial arguments for the retention of all British captures. Discussion of the prospective peace in the North Briton was

77. ABG 1072, 7 June 1762, p.1 c.3.

78. Peters, pp.243-4;
secondary to personal abuse of Bute.79

Of the newspapers, the London Chronicle and the Gazetteer, and after initial reticence the London Evening-Post, printed letters contributing to the controversy. The St. James's Chronicle and Lloyd's Evening Post reprinted essays and the Gazetteer printed letters from both sides. The London Chronicle carried defences of Bute. The London Evening-Post was initially quiet, but abandoned its uneasiness about attacking Bute after the French capture of Newfoundland in August.80

In contrast, attacks on Bute in provincial newspapers had declined markedly by late July. The response of the provincial papers to the debate varied widely. Of those studied, only the Bath and Leicester papers reprinted any of the essay papers' contributions. Boddely's Bath Journal reprinted several essays from the Monitor and one from the Briton in a month from mid-June. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal extracted or summarised from all the essay papers except the Patriot. From 19 June until mid-August, the Leicester paper regularly devoted all the non-advertising space on its back page and sometimes two to three columns on its inside pages to essays both attacking and defending Bute. Extracts, generally from the Briton, North Briton and Monitor, often were printed with a summary of the rest of the essay papers' arguments. It seems that the printer, John Gregory, may have taken in all the essay papers because a weekly collection, The Political Controversy, or, Weekly Magazine of Ministerial and Anti-Ministerial Essays, became available only in

79. Robert Donald Spector, English Literary Periodicals and the Climate of Opinon During the Seven Years' War, (The Hague, 1966), pp.94-8.

late July. It was edited by John 'Caesar' Wilkes, who wrote the
North Briton and contributed to the Monitor, and it claimed the
enormous circulation of 15 000 or more.\footnote{BBJ 986, 26 July 1762, p.2 c.3;}
\footnote{FPEJ, 24 July 1762, p.2 c.1.} It is unlikely that
the Leicester and Nottingham Journal took its reporting of the
essay paper debate from a London newspaper because it printed
none of the letters concerning Bute that appeared in London
newspapers. If the provincial printer did summarise the essays
himself, this indicates a further stage in the development of
country newspapers from their simply reprinting comment from
London. However, John Gregory edited the essays without
introducing opinion of his own, leaving interpretation to the
reader. On an extract from the second number of the North
Briton, Gregory commented \"[We do not pretend to adopt the
Sentiments of the North Briton in the following Extract, but only
to lay it before our Readers, as being very remarkable.\"\footnote{LNJ 477, 19 June 1762, p.4 c.1-2.}
\footnote{LNJ 482, 24 July 1762, p.4 c.1-2.}
\footnote{LNJ 482, 24 July 1762, p.4 c.1-2.} John
Gregory seems to have chosen the extracts for their unusual or
entertaining arguments rather than to make a political point.
Gregory prefaced an extract from the Briton with an explanation
that it was 'the least offensive, the latter part abounding too
much in personal invective to be entertaining.'\footnote{LNJ 482, 24 July 1762, p.4 c.1-2.}
The extracts printed by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal
in late June from the North Briton attacked Bute for favouring
Scots and Tories for government posts. The Briton replied that
Bute's nationality was the only reason for opposition to him.
The Monitor concentrated on the ill effects of royal
favourites. However, Bute was not the only subject of criticism. The Leicester paper reprinted from the Briton criticism of Pitt for entangling Britain in a ruinous German war, provoking war with Spain, and then resigning because he could not rule with absolute authority. The paper paraphrased the Auditor's comparison of Pitt's past statements opposing involvement in Germany with his later actions, as a 'Germanize Statesman'.

The negotiations for peace did not begin to be reported regularly in provincial papers until August 1762. Many rumours of peace came from prevailing reports at the Royal Exchange, where brokers were presumed to have access to advanced commercial intelligence. The York Courant in early August alleged that rumours of peace had been fabricated by members of Jonathan's, a club for stock jobbers that functioned as a stock exchange. Subscription receipts allegedly rose in value by seven per cent. on the imaginary news that peace preliminaries were agreed, and stocks fell five per cent. when the report was denied. Newspapers remained sceptical when there was widespread talk of peace. It was 'looked upon as artfully feeling the Pulse of the People.' Although letters from Madrid at the end of August said that the British negotiations with France had been broken

84. LNJ 477, 19 June 1762, p.4 c.1–2; BBJ 982, 28 June 1762, p.2 c.1–2; LNJ 477, 19 June 1762, p.2 c.4–p.3 c.2.
85. LNJ 482, 24 July 1762, p.4 c.2.
86. LNJ 482, 24 July 1762, p.4 c.3.
88. FFBJ, 14 Aug. 1762, p.2 c.1.
off, a rumour of an approaching peace was said to gain credit about the Royal Exchange.\textsuperscript{89} The conditions allegedly contained in the preliminaries for a separate peace were widely reprinted in September. The varied reports agreed on the cession of Canada and Louisiana to Britain and a return to the previous agreement on the North American fishery, but some reports added that Newfoundland, Havana, Martinique and Belleisle were to be restored.\textsuperscript{90} Many reports were printed immediately in an effort to show that the peace preliminaries were widely unpopular, both among important political figures and with the public.

The preliminary articles were reported to have caused objections and unprecedented discontent among all ranks of society.\textsuperscript{91} Several illustrious personages, 'of the first distinction', were reported by the Norwich Mercury to oppose the peace terms. The York Courant reported falsely that a 'great Person', by which it possibly meant the king, highly disapproved of the plans for peace.\textsuperscript{92} Many people were said to disbelieve reports of a peace, and a group of rich men were reported to have offered to raise the supplies for the continuance of the war themselves, rather than submit to a peace.\textsuperscript{93} The peace preliminaries were suggested to be unduly favourable to France.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{89} NM 644, 28 Aug.1762, p.2 c.1; 
BBJ 991, 30 Aug.1762, p.1 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{90} NM 645, 5 Sep.1762, p.2 c.1, p.3 c.1; 
YC 1923, 7 Sep.1762, p.1 c.1-2; 
FPBJ, 18 Sep.1762, p.3 c.1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{91} YC 1923, 7 Sep.1762, p.1 c.2; 
ABG 1086, 13 Sep.1762, p.1 c.1.
\item \textsuperscript{92} NM 645, 5 Sep.1762, p.2 c.1, p.2 c.3; 
YC 1923, 7 Sep.1762, p.2 c.2.
\item \textsuperscript{93} ABG 1086, 13 Sep.1762, p.3 c.1; 
FPBJ, 18 Sep.1762, p.2 c.3.
\end{itemize}
because it was thought unlikely that France would have been able to continue the war. *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* printed what purported to be a letter from the Hague which expressed French pleasure at having peace on their own terms. On Bute's appointment as First Lord of the Treasury, the *Birmingham Gazette* had printed an epigram that sought to show, by possible allusion to the geese that saved Rome against the Gauls in 390 B.C., that Bute's desire for peace was opposed by public opinion:

> My Voice is still for War, "Sempronius cries;"
> War! glorious War! the public Voice replies.
> To whom a muckle Wight cries 'Hoot ye Geese:
> "Ah hau'd your Cackling - prithee let's ha' Peace."  

The provincial newspapers' dissatisfaction with what they believed were the peace preliminaries, and, by association, dissatisfaction with Bute's ministry, did not however lead to widespread criticism of Bute. There were a few indirect suggestions that Bute should be held responsible for the peace terms, and occasional calls for the return of Pitt, but public discontent seems to have been directed at the peace negotiators. Bedford was criticised for his part in the negotiations in a widely reprinted letter in February 1763 purporting to be from Paris. The letter claimed an English personage had the favour of the French court and common people for his invariable attention to their interests. The closest the provincial newspapers came to blaming Bute for what they saw as the unsatisfactory peace preliminaries was in a paragraph reprinted by *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* in mid-September. The article commented that the

---

94. PPBJ, 18 Sep.1762, p.3 c.1, p.3 c.2.

95. ABG 1072, 7 June 1762, p.1 c.3;
'muckle wight' means a great person.

96. BBJ 1017, 28 Feb.1763, p.3 c.2.
man who would conclude a peace disadvantageous to Britain was an
enemy to his country. However, it added that a peace was not
likely to be signed soon, even if the preliminaries were
agreed.\(^{97}\) Compared to the virulence of the essays against Bute
in June and July, the very infrequent criticisms of Bute over the
peace preliminaries seem mild. The change could be explained by
the lack of suitable criticism in the London press for the
provincial newspapers, particularly the *Leicester and Nottingham
Journal*, to reprint. Yet an absence of criticism also suggests
that the provincial papers believed that the peace was not
unpopular, or, at least, that they could not make it unpopular.

Speculation on the prospect of changes in the ministry
accompanied discussion of the peace preliminaries in the
provincial newspapers in late 1762. Following the news of the
French capture of Newfoundland, Britannicus, quoted in the
*Leicester and Nottingham Journal*, claimed 'The voice of
Englishmen is loud in favour of Mr. PITT.'\(^{98}\) On the news of the
recapture of Newfoundland in mid-October, *Felix Farley's Bristol
Journal* printed THE CALL addressed to Pitt. The anonymous
article asked Pitt to speak out against Britain's 'secret ...
Domestic Foes' who were intent on peace at any price.\(^{99}\) A week
later the Leicester paper falsely claimed that Pitt and Newcastle
were about to resume a share in the ministry.\(^{100}\)

There were ministerial changes in late 1762, but not what

---

97. AG 1086, 13 Sep.1762, p.3 c.1; FFBJ, 18 Sep.1762, p.2 c.3.
98. INJ 491, 25 Sep.1762, p.3 c.1.
99. FFBJ, 16 Oct.1762, p.3 c.4.
100. INJ 495, 23 Oct.1762, p.3 c.3.
the newspapers had anticipated. In October, Devonshire had refused to attend a cabinet meeting to discuss the final peace terms, so the king dismissed him from his offices on 28 October and, exceptionally, removed him from the Privy Council on 3 November. Newcastle encouraged his associates to resign, since that might have made it impossible for Bute to continue in power. Devonshire's brother, Lord George Cavendish, resigned on 31 October, and four Whig peers, including Rockingham, resigned during November. Following their opposition in the debates on the peace preliminaries on 9 and 10 December, Newcastle, Grafton and Rockingham were dismissed as Lords Lieutenant. Even minor men connected to Newcastle were removed from official posts in what became known as the 'slaughter of the Pelhamite innocents'.

Provincial newspapers reported some of the resignations, but could add only that they had caused much speculation. Newcastle's plan to bring down Bute's ministry by a mass resignation of members of the Old Corps was alluded to cryptically by Boddely's Bath Journal in late November. It reported that 'a certain great Man' had been mastering the book of Numbers in order to defy the book of Judges. As with Newcastle's resignation from the Treasury, Aris's Birmingham


102. FFBJ, 6 Nov.1762, p.3 c.2; see also ABG 1095, 15 Nov.1762, p.2 c.1.

103. BBJ 1004, 29 Nov.1762, p.1 c.3.
Gazette was alone in commenting on the resignation of Devonshire as Lord Chamberlain of the Royal Household. Initially the paper reprinted an epigram accusing Devonshire and Newcastle of resigning because the new king was British, and they 'lov'd the German Line'. However, the following week's issue contained an answering epigram, which grouped Pitt with Newcastle and Devonshire as Patriots who had retired for their country's cause. Their cause was specifically English, not British as in the first epigram, and so by implication was opposed by Bute.\textsuperscript{104} Although Pitt had declared he would not align himself with any party, he was reported to have had some conferences with Newcastle in late November. The meetings were said to have produced 'hopes that a happy Conciliation may be brought about among the Great', which would have the king's support.\textsuperscript{105}

The preliminary articles of peace were signed on 3 November 1762, and the cessation of hostilities with France and Spain proclaimed on 26 November.\textsuperscript{106} The provincial newspapers were equivocal about the preliminaries. Aris's Birmingham Gazette echoed the London Evening-Post's suspicions by demanding the publication of the articles, and by expressing the hope that they would not be ratified if they were not honourable and advantageous.\textsuperscript{107} The Leicester and Norwich newspapers were initially much less reserved. The latter printed a table showing

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{104} ABG 1094, 8 Nov.1762, p.1 c.3;
  \textsuperscript{105} ABG 1095, 15 Nov.1762, p.1 c.3.
  \item \textsuperscript{106} NM 656, 27 Nov.1762, p.1 c.1, p.3 c.1;
  \textsuperscript{107} BBJ 1004, 29 Nov.1762, p.3 c.2;
  Peters, pp.234-5.
  \item \textsuperscript{106} ABG 1095, 15 Nov.1762, p.1 c.1;
  \textsuperscript{107} LNJ 501, 4 Dec.1762, p.1 c.2.
  \item \textsuperscript{107} ABG 1095, 15 Nov.1762, p.2 c.1.
\end{itemize}
that the preliminaries added large areas of North America not ceded in the 1761 preliminaries. From the Royal Chronicle the Leicester and Nottingham Journal praised the 'advantageous and honourable peace' for giving Britain every commercial advantage it had ever claimed.\textsuperscript{108} However, despite its unreserved praise of the preliminaries, the Leicester paper also reported possible local wariness of a suspected weak peace. One of the toasts reported to have been drunk at the Mayor of Leicester's feast in November was ambiguous, to 'Such a peace as posterity may approve, or a continuance of the war'.\textsuperscript{109} In common with the other provincial papers, the Leicester and Nottingham Journal was unenthusiastic by the time the peace preliminaries were ratified. It reported from the St. James's Chronicle that there had been bonfires and illuminations outside public offices on the occasion, and pointed out there had been none anywhere else in London.\textsuperscript{110} Similarly, the York Courant reported that the preliminaries had been perused in most coffee houses with satisfaction and applause for the profound policy of one of the three signatory powers, by which the paper presumably did not mean Britain.\textsuperscript{111}

Insofar as the provincial newspapers' reaction to the peace was unenthusiastic, the firmness of their attitudes is questioned by the widespread attention given to the pamphlet Sentiments d'un Francois. This 'very extraordinary' paper purported to give the

\textsuperscript{108} LNU 499, 20 Nov.1762, p.3 c.2; NM 656, 27 Nov.1762, p.2 c.1.
\textsuperscript{109} LNU 499, 20 Nov.1762, p.3 c.3.
\textsuperscript{110} LNU 501, 4 Dec.1762, p.2 c.1.
\textsuperscript{111} WC 1936, 7 Dec.1762, p.2 c.3.
opinions of a Frenchmen on the peace preliminaries, and was said to be the main subject of conversation at Paris. The pamphlet was said to have been distributed free in the Court of Requests and at the doors of both houses of parliament at the time of the debate on the preliminaries, and was reprinted by Aris's Birmingham Gazette and Felix Farley's Bristol Journal. The author claimed the peace had been dictated by Britain and would be fatal to France, which had been forced to sacrifice its colonial possessions and desert its allies. The pamphlet gives the impression of having been distributed, if not written, as British ministerial propaganda to gain support for the peace by exaggerating French dissatisfaction with it. This seems particularly so in the light of many earlier reports that the French were ready to welcome peace on any terms. Even if the publication of these earlier reports was simply a consequence of the anti-ministerial attitude of the newspapers involved, the Sentiments d'un Francais would still have appeared to be suspiciously convenient for the ministry.

The peace and Bute's qualities also were defended in late December 1762 in the pamphlet A Letter to the Right Hon. William Beckford, Lord Mayor. It was not well received by Boddely's Bath Journal, which paraphrased an extract that it considered expatiated on the virtues of Bute and concluded that the peace was not a bad one, since Britain would not have been able to retain all its acquisitions in any case.

Provincial newspapers remained unenthusiastic about the terms

112. ABG 1099, 13 Dec.1762, p.3 c.1; FFBJ, 18 Dec.1762, p.1 c.1-3, p.4 c.1-3.
113. BBJ 1009, 3 Jan.1763, p.4 c.3.
of peace, but printed very little comment on them until the definitive treaty was signed at Paris on 10 February 1763. The need for peace and the terms on which it was obtained were questioned in some papers. An account of the expense of supplies for wars since the Revolution was widely copied from Lloyd's Evening Post in late February. The Seven Years' War had been the most expensive but also the most profitable, so the paper suggested that it was not urgently necessary to put an end to the war. 114 The terms of peace were mocked in a Geographical Dictionary for 1763, reprinted by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. It criticised the ministry for, among other things, throwing away Belleisle and preferring the Canadian wilderness to productive Martinique. Hanover was seen as a drain on British finances, which confirms the anonymous writer's mercantile Tory attitudes. Pittsburg was described as 'A place where we found a Pit's diamond, to which we preferred a Scotch pebble.' 115 Attacks on Bute resumed once the peace was signed, although they were comparatively restrained. The North Briton, reprinted in the Leicester and Nottingham Journal, set out the reasons for opposition to Bute in a comparison of his ministry with the last four years of Queen Anne's reign. The period to 1714 provided parallels for an unsatisfactory peace, the creation of new peers, the appointment of Tories to household posts, and a minister who forced out of office Whigs who opposed him. 116 The conclusion of the peace had caused the Leicester paper to revive its earlier

114. LNJ 512, 26 Feb.1763, p.1 c.3;  
   RBJ 1017, 28 Feb.1763, p.1 c.4.

115. LNJ 513, 5 Mar.1763, p.4 c.1.

practice of summarising the contents of the weekly essay papers. Its first Account of the Weekly Periodical Papers announced there were to be no more Britons nor Auditors, but summarised the contents of the Monitor and the Lying Intelligencer.\footnote{117}

The definitive peace treaty with France was printed in full in provincial newspapers in late March,\footnote{118} but the centre of attention rapidly had become the Cider Bill. The proposed extension of the excise to cider and perry provoked a hostile response, particularly in London and the south-west. The reaction from the provincial newspapers considered was uniformly hostile, except for the Leicester and Nottingham Journal, and included local comment. The main objection was to the extension of the excise and the consequent extension of the powers of excise officers, which revived almost identically the arguments of the Excise Crisis of 1733. Aris's Birmingham Gazette probably hoped for the emergence of a campaign against the bill. In early April 1763 it printed a Prussian account of the defeat of Walpole's measure.\footnote{119} An abstract of the bill was widely reprinted, which had been done with only the several militia bills in recent years.\footnote{120} A list of the commodities subject to the excise and the number of collectors was reprinted by the Norwich Mercury.\footnote{121} The meeting to consider petitioning the

\begin{footnotes}
  \footnotetext[117]{INU 512, 26 Feb.1763, p.2 c.3-4.}
  \footnotetext[118]{BBJ 1021, 28 Mar.1763, p.1 c.1- p.2 c.2.}
  \footnotetext[119]{ABC 1115, 4 Apr.1763, p.1 c.2-3; Paul Langford, The Excise Crisis Society and Politics in the Age of Walpole, (Oxford, 1975), p.2.}
  \footnotetext[120]{NM 674, 2 Apr.1763, p.2 c.1; ABC 1115, 4 Apr.1763, p.1 c.3.}
  \footnotetext[121]{NM 674, 2 Apr.1763, p.2 c.2.}
\end{footnotes}
House of Commons and instructing the members for London was reported, and the instructions to oppose the extension of the excise printed a week later.122

The only dissenting contribution to the debate on the cider excise was a letter from a Norwich brewer printed not by his local newspaper but by the Leicester and Nottingham Journal. He considered cider should be taxed as beer was, and believed excise officers ought to be pitied rather than despised.123 These opinions were contradicted by a large amount of comment from London and provincial sources. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal printed local criticisms of the Cider Act that carried Tory overtones. A Song on the Present Times to the tune Heart of Oak recalled that the previous generation had rejected Walpole's attempt to extend the excise thirty years before. The 'West Country Boys' would chop down their fruit trees rather than yield to threats of a general excise. Another local verse commented cynically ON THE PEACE:

The Peace is good - Who dare dispute the Fact?
See the first FRUITS thereof - the Cyder Act!124

The implicit association of Bute with Walpole may have encouraged hopes for his defeat by a united opposition. Bute was personally associated with the cider excise, and was reported burned in effigy in several parts of London in early April.125 Bute's resignation on 8 April seemed to be largely the result of

122. BRJ 1021, 28 Mar.1763, p.2 c.3; NA 674, 2 Apr.1763, p.1 c.2.
123. LNJ 519, 16 Apr.1763, p.1 c.4.
124. FFBJ, 9 Apr.1763, p.3 c.4; ABG 1116, 11 Apr.1763, p.1 c.1.
125. ABG 1115, 4 Apr.1763, p.3 c.1; FFBJ, 9 Apr.1763, p.1 c.2.
his wide unpopularity. It was reported confidently on 7 April that Bute, 'who has long been the Object of popular Clamour,' was to resign within a day.\textsuperscript{126} George Grenville's appointment as First Lord of the Treasury was confirmed six days later, but there was no immediate reaction in the provincial newspapers.\textsuperscript{127}

The provincial papers' reaction to Pitt's resignation and the peace negotiations force the reconsideration of earlier conclusions made about their political attitudes. Pitt's resignation is the major test of the independence of provincial newspaper opinion. If the papers were to display a distinctive attitude towards politics at any stage of the war, it would have been during the controversy surrounding the political figure who had dominated the provincial view of high politics for the past five years. Yet the provincial papers' reaction, although remarkably consistent, was not significantly different from that of the London papers that supported Pitt. The issue dominated the paper for less than a month, but their treatment of it confirms their earlier favourable attitude towards Pitt. It is significant that all except Boddely's Bath Journal criticised Pitt even briefly, but there was no fundamental disillusionment evident. Pitt's acceptance of an annuity never became a major issue in the provincial papers, in contrast to the capital. Once out of office, however, Pitt ceased for the first time since 1756 to be a major figure in the provincial newspapers.

The papers' attitudes towards the ministry without Pitt indicate distinctions that were not evident earlier. Boddely's

\textsuperscript{126} FFBJ, 9 Apr.1763, p.3 c.2-3.

\textsuperscript{127} INJ 519, 16 Apr.1763, p.3 c.2; 
BBJ 1025, 25 Apr.1763, p.2 c.2.
Bath Journal seems to have been satisfied with the peace and consequently was less favourable towards Pitt than before.\textsuperscript{128} The \textit{Norwich Mercury}, \textit{Aris's Birmingham Gazette} and Felix Farley's \textit{Bristol Journal} opposed the new ministry, but rarely printed hostile comment. While these three papers had, before Pitt's resignation, supported what they believed to be the plans for peace, they received the preliminaries of 1762 unenthusiastically, rather than with active hostility. Surprisingly, the virulent press campaign against Bute had little effect in the provincial newspapers. Only the \textit{Leicester and Nottingham Journal} made repeated criticisms of the ministry and regularly reprinted contributions to the essay paper debate of 1762. It reprinted a balanced selection of comment from essay papers critical of both Pitt and Bute. Like the others, however, the Leicester paper seems to have held opinions that can be described more accurately as opposition Whig than as Pittite. The papers' support for Pitt while in office was based on his apparent retention of 'Patriot' principles, and so did not conflict with their usual opposition stance. Once he was out of office, the papers had no problems reconciling latent anti-ministerialism with their acceptance of a broad definition of a Whig 'Patriot' opposition. \textit{Aris's Birmingham Gazette}'s favourable attitude towards Newcastle on his resignation in 1762 strengthens the conclusion that the paper was anti-ministerial, rather than being opposed specifically to the Old Corps, as it had appeared to have been earlier in the war.

However, this 'opposition version of politics' was apparent also in the Tory provincial papers, whose contents differed very

\textsuperscript{128} See above, pp.96-7.
little from those considered to be 'opposition Whig'. The attitudes of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* on the issues of high politics are difficult to distinguish from those of the other papers. However, on controversies with serious local implications, the paper's Tory background is very clear. The local contributions it printed against the extension of the excise to cider in 1763 showed strong Tory leanings that were not apparent in the comment printed on the subject in the other newspapers. The rapidity and confidence with which *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* and other papers independently responded to the controversy shows that there had been substantial development in the political articulacy of the provincial papers since the beginning of the war. Yet the continuing prevalence of general 'country' attitudes suggests that provincial articulacy was not yet at a stage where it implies the existence of a provincial 'political consciousness'. 
Conclusion

The provincial newspapers remained throughout the Seven Years' War small-scale affairs designed to provide a weekly summary of news to country readers. They were dominated by local advertising and reporting of the war; politics and political comment was very much a subordinate and occasional purpose. Therefore, categorising the papers according to political criteria may introduce distinctions that were not apparent or important to their readers. The papers remained essentially parasitic on the London press. The great bulk of their news and comment was reprinted little changed from a small selection of usually opposition Whig or Tory papers. The provincial newspapers did not however simply mirror London attitudes. They selected and combined comment from London sources in such a way as to produce distinctive comment of their own.

The papers' treatment of various political issues reveals differences in attitudes and articulacy. The two least articulate papers, the York Courant and the Norwich Mercury, are said to have been among the most politically outspoken of their contemporaries in the 1730s, the former stridently Tory and the latter strongly Whig. During the Seven Years' War, however, both were relatively mild in their political comments. Despite their differing backgrounds, they both supported Pitt and opposed the peace preliminaries. Like Aris's Birmingham Gazette, they exemplify the 'opposition version of politics', whereby provincial newspapers generally selected news and comment according to criteria hostile to the Whig oligarchy.¹

---

¹ Money, p.53.
A higher level of local political articulacy is evident in Boddely's Bath Journal, which reflected the 'opposition version of politics' for different reasons. A Tory or opposition Whig bias might be inferred from the paper's enthusiastic support for Pitt were it not for the rapid change of attitude on Pitt's disagreement with the corporation over the peace. The Bath Journal commented on the need for peace and did not criticise, if it did not actively support, Bute. The paper's political stance, as far as it can be said to have consistently held one, was pro-ministerial, and Pitt was supported while minister and on his resignation mainly because he was a local member of parliament.

However, not all provincial papers reflected the level of local political articulacy. The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, for instance, deliberately did not adopt a consistent political stance. The Leicester paper, which from its printer's political connections could be expected to have adopted an high church Tory line, was studiously impartial. Although it printed a great deal of political comment, it claimed that it did so to inform and entertain its readers, not to push a political point. In marked contrast, political opinion played an important role in Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, and continued to do so throughout the war. It maintained its populist Tory stance although that stance appeared to have been subsumed by consistent support for Pitt and the other Whig 'Patriots', even when they ignored Tory sensibilities. While on issues of high politics the Bristol paper appeared little different from other opposition papers, its Tory leanings remained readily apparent on issues of local importance, like the 1756 by election, the reform of the militia and the 1763 cider excise. The reaction to the latter
issue suggests that Tory articulacy and allegiances in the provinces, if not in London, had not been dimmed by the changes in high politics since 1760. The end of Tory proscription and the gradual change at Westminster from political allegiance based on party organisation to that based on factions in high politics seems not to have affected the nature of political argument in provincial newspapers.

Yet the fact that provincial newspaper comment did not mirror the changes does not necessarily mean that provincial opinion did not change. Links have been shown to exist between provincial newspaper opinion and public opinion in the papers' respective cities, although public opinion, as far as it can be ascertained, did not always agree with the newspapers. Yet provincial opinion probably followed the issues dealt with by the newspapers because the papers were one of the most important sources of political information. The newspapers' actual opinions therefore mattered less than the subjects they chose to comment on. Provincial political discussion was directed by the papers on to subjects that frequently, but not always, echoed controversies in London. The issues that were not shared by public and newspaper opinion, like the controversy over continental connections in 1758, or the attacks on Bute in 1762, are therefore significant. British commitment to the German war possibly was unobjectionable to some of the papers; they remained reticent, as they had been in 1756, in criticising ministers while still in office.

Yet there had been considerable development in the newspapers during, and as a result of, the war. All the papers were readier to add comment of their own on controversial matters rather than relying on metropolitan sources alone. Pitt's and
Newcastle's resignations, for example, attracted significantly more original local comment than had the earlier controversies over the loss of Minorca or the sending of troops to Germany. Provincial papers handled information from the London press more critically than before, sometimes with signs of editing and comparison with other sources. The need to handle a surfeit of war news had produced in some cases better organised and more readable newspapers. Most important of all, the papers were prepared to seize on an issue, like the cider excise, and put forward a variety of comment independent of each other and, to a lesser extent, of the London press. If the ability and willingness to make independent provincial contributions to national issues existed during the war, the problem remains why the growth of provincial political articulacy, as seen through the press, did not accelerate until 1764 with the Wilkes affair and the Stamp Act controversy. Suitable issues did emerge during the war, but provincial papers did not exploit them. The peace preliminaries excited much less reaction than in retrospect would have seemed justified, yet there was an immediate and articulate response to the cider excise shortly after the peace. This suggests that provincial newspaper articulacy, far from being inadequately developed, or restrained by a lack of provincial political identity, before 1763, simply was diverted on to the relatively uncontentious issues of a successful war. Only when the overwhelming volume of war news had subsided were the newspapers able to devote much attention to national political issues.

It would be desirable to compare the wartime newspapers with their allegedly more politically articulate counterparts in the
mid to late 1760s. It remains to be seen whether, as has been
claimed, historians have often exaggerated the novelty and wider
political impact of Wilkes.² What has been shown, however, is
that the provincial press had reached the stage of maturity by
the end of the war where it could support and contribute to an
independent local 'political culture'. This maturity, and the
evidence of provincial political societies, support the picture
of a widening political nation, in which provincial cities and
their newspapers played an important part. The growth of local
political articulacy on what in many cases were traditional party
lines adds to the understanding of the changes in high politics
in the 1750s and 1760s. Whereas the nature of politics at
Westminster was transformed by the decline of party, provincial
politics seems to have continued on its accustomed, diverse,
local lines that often bore no relationship with each other, let
alone London. Provincial politics shared the rhetoric, but not
the substance, of Westminster politics, and provincial newspapers
supplied that rhetoric.

². Colley, p.264.
Bibliography

I. Printed Primary Sources

a. Newspapers and periodicals

i. Provincial

Aris's Birmingham Gazette: or, The General Correspondent, 1756-1763.

Boddely's Bath Journal, 1756-1763.

Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, 1756-1763.

The Leicester and Nottingham Journal, 1758-1763.

The Norwich Mercury, 1756-1763.

The York Courant, 1756, 1760-1763.

ii. London

Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, of the Year[s] 1758[-1763], (London, 1759-1764).

The London Evening-Post, 1756-1763.


The Universal Chronicle, or Weekly Gazette, 1758-1759.

b. Other Published Sources


T. G. Smollett, The History of England; From the Revolution to
the Death of George the Second, new edition, III,
(London, 1837).

Thomas Turner, The Diary of a Georgian Shopkeeper, selected by
R. W. Blencowe and M. A. Lower, ed. G. H. Jennings,

Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, Memoires of the last ten years of
the reign of George the second, two volumes, II,
(London, 1822).

Philip C. Yorke, The Life and Correspondence of Philip Yorke Earl
of Hardwicke Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain,
three volumes, III, (Cambridge, 1913).

II. Secondary

a. Reference works

Robert Beatson, A Political Index to the Histories of Great
Britain & Ireland: or, a Complete Register of the
Hereditary Honours, Public Offices, and Persons in
Office, from the Earliest Periods to the Present Time,

John Brooke and Sir Lewis Namier, The History of Parliament The
House of Commons 1754-1790, three volumes, (London,
1964).

The Dictionary of National Biography From the Earliest Times to
1900, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee,
twenty-two volumes, (London, 1917).

A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in
England Scotland and Ireland from 1726 to 1775, by
H. R. Plomer, G. H. Bushnell, E. R. Mc.C. Dix, (Oxford,
1932, for 1930).

Early English Newspapers Bibliography and Guide to the Microfilm
Collection, compiled by Susan M. Cox and Janice L.

John Feather, The English Provincial Book Trade Before 1850 A
checklist of secondary sources, Oxford Bibliographical

C. J. Hunt, The Book Trade in Northumberland and Durham to 1860
A Biographical Dictionary of Printers, Engravers,
Lithographers, Booksellers, Stationers, Publishers,
Mapsellers, Printellers, Musicellers, Bookbinders,
Newsgagents and owners of circulating libraries,
(Newcastle upon Tyne, 1975).

Ian Maxted, The London Book Trades 1775-1800 A preliminary
checklist of members, (Folkestone, 1977).


Katherine Kirtley Weed and Richmond Pugh Bond, 'Studies of British Newspapers and Periodicals from their Beginning to 1800 A Bibliography', Studies in Philology, extra series, 2, (December 1946).


b. Books


J. C. D. Clark, The Dynamics of Change The crisis of the 1750s and English party systems, (Cambridge, 1982).


Collet Dobson Collet, History of the Taxes on Knowledge their Origin and Repeal, I, (London, 1899).


David Gadd, Georgian Summer Bath in the Eighteenth Century, (Bath, 1971).


E. A. Goodwyn, Selections from Norwich Newspapers 1760-1790, (Ipswich, [c.1973]).


Joseph J. Mathews, Reporting the Wars, (Minneapolis, 1957).


Stanley Morison, The English Newspaper some account of the physical development of journals printed in London between 1622 & the present day, (Cambridge, 1932).


Robert Donald Spector, English Literary Periodicals and the Climate of Opinion During the Seven Years' War, (The Hague, 1966).


John Sykes, Local Records; or, Historical Register of Remarkable Events which have occurred in Northumberland and Durham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Berwick-upon-Tweed, from the earliest period of authentic record to the present time; with Biographical Notices of deceased persons of talent, eccentricity, and longevity, new edition, I, (Newcastle, 1833; reprinted Stockton-on-Tees, 1973).


The Victoria History of the Counties of England:


Roy McKeen Wiles, Freshest Advices Early Provincial Newspapers in England, (Columbus, Ohio, 1965).  


c. Articles  


Trevor Fawcett, 'Early Norwich Newspapers', Notes and Queries for readers and writers, collectors and libraries, New Series, 19, 10, (October 1972).


William George, 'The Oldest Bristol Newspapers', Bristol Times and Mirror, 4 Aug.1884, p.2 c.5.

G. C. Gibbs, 'The role of the Dutch Republic as the intellectual entrepôt of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden, 86, 3.


F. J. Mosher, 'Three Years of the Newcastle Chronicle', The Direction Line, 5, (n.d.).


d. Unpublished works


