

'Wild As Colts Untamed'; Radicalism in the Newbury area during the early modern period

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In a recent article, in which he investigated traditions of lower class radicalism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Christopher Hill remarked

I suggest as a hypothesis for further investigation that there may have been a continuing underground tradition – not necessarily organization – in which we can identify certain heretical and seditious beliefs.¹

While studying the Berkshire county community in the early seventeenth century,² the present writer discovered that the town of Newbury enjoyed a considerable reputation as a centre of radical opinions on both religious and political issues. Further investigation has revealed that such a reputation extended over a much long period. In this article I shall outline the evidence which suggests that, during a period of two centuries or more, many of Newbury's inhabitants harboured radical opinions, and then put forward some possible explanations for this fact.

Newbury lies on the River Kennet, in the 'champion' mixed farming district of south-west Berkshire. Its population rose from about 1,600 in the mid sixteenth century to over 4,000 by the early nineteenth century.³ During the early modern period it was an important market town, particularly for the corn trade, lying on two major trade routes, the main West Country road from London to Bath and Bristol, and the road from Southampton to Oxford and the north.⁴ The manufacture of woollen cloth was an important element of the town's economic life from the early fifteenth century, and by Henry VIII's reign Newbury was a centre of cloth production of national significance. By 1600, cloth production had spread out to the surrounding villages; the inhabitants of Shaw, Speen, Thatcham and Greenham were employed in the cottage production of yarn, and Benham Valence, Thatcham, Colthrop and Brimpton possessed their

own fulling mills. Broadcloth manufacture in Newbury entered a period of serious decline in the economic depression of the 1620s, and was further hit by the dislocation of the Civil War years. By the early eighteenth century it had been almost entirely replaced by the making of poor quality shalloons.⁵

From the early sixteenth century the town was dominated by a small oligarchy of aldermen, often master clothiers, whose extensive powers were confirmed in a new town charter granted by Elizabeth I in 1596.⁶ The authority of these aldermen was largely unaffected by interference from the gentry of the surrounding rural area. However, despite being one of Berkshire's wealthiest boroughs, Newbury returned no M.P.s to Westminster during the period under discussion.

II

The earliest suggestions of Newbury's radical proclivities date from the fifteenth century. In the aftermath of Cade's rising in Kent in 1450, Henry VI's government felt it necessary to exhibit at Newbury part of the quartered body of one of the leading rebels. Newbury nevertheless retained its hostility towards the government, and support for Richard Duke of York, whose restoration to high office had been demanded by Cade. In 1460, when the struggle between York and the government reached a climax, commissioners were sent to Newbury, and several of the townspeople executed for treason. In 1483 the town was once more a focal point for resistance to the government, when the Berkshire rebels who supported the Duke of Buckingham's rising against Richard III rendezvoused there.

Newbury was also during the late fifteenth century a conspicuous Lollard centre, which according to Thomas Man contained

'a glorious and sweet society of faithful followers who had continued the space of fifteen years together till at last by a certain lewd person whom they trusted and made of their counsel they were betrayed; and then many of them to the number of six or seven score were abjured, and three or four of them burnt.'⁸

In January 1491 Thomas Taylor, a Newbury fuller, was charged with a number of heretical beliefs, including objecting to pilgrimages and claiming that 'it was better to give a penny to a poor man than to go to Santiago.' Later in the month a further six suspects were examined

by an episcopal court. All were extremely hostile to priests whom they described as 'scribes and pharisees who deceived the people and did not profit them, leading them to temptation as the blind lead the blind.' The hearings continued in February when further suspects expressed disbelief in transubstantiation, objected to images in churches and looked for an imminent second coming of Christ.⁹

Despite pressure from the bishop, heretical opinions seem to have persisted. In the winter of 1502/3 a woman from Bisham in east Berkshire claimed during examination that 'those whom ye call heretics which were brand(ed) at Newbury were apostles and martyrs of Christ', and in 1504 a layman and a curate from Newbury were charged with possessing heretical books. In the autumn of 1521 several suspected Lollards being examined by the Bishop of Lincoln, revealed the names of a number of people in Newbury who still subscribed to Lollard beliefs.¹⁰

In view of this strong association with Lollardy, it is not surprising to find that Newbury was quick to embrace Protestantism in the mid sixteenth century. Writing in 1660, Thomas Fuller remarked that Newbury 'started the first . . . in the race of the Reformed Religion' and that 'the town appears the first fruits of the Gospel in England'.¹¹ In 1556, during the Marian reaction, several inhabitants of Newbury were burnt at the stake in the town.¹² During the period 1560 to 1640 many of Newbury's inhabitants clearly desired a more reformed Church than that established by the Elizabethan settlement. A recent study of Puritanism in Elizabethan Berkshire found Newbury to be 'one of the most interesting and important areas of the county for the student of Puritanism'.¹³ For nearly thirty years from 1568 the minister at Newbury was the noted puritan preacher Hugh Shepley, and for much of this period the master of the grammar school was another puritan, Robert Wright. In 1619 the Newbury living came to another staunch puritan William Twisse. Twisse objected strongly to the publication of James I's Book of Sports, and during the 1640s was prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Twisse's friend Thomas Porter, who also favoured reform in the Church, was master of the grammar school in the early seventeenth century; he emigrated to New England in 1634, and helped found the town of Newbury in Massachusetts.¹⁴

These men were clearly popular within the town, and their opinions influential. There is much evidence of enthusiasm for preaching in the wills of townspeople, and in 1627 a weekly lecture-ship was established by the will of one Thomas Bennett. Thomas Fuller comments on Twisse's popularity, stating

'though generally our Saviour's observation is verified 'A Prophet is not without honour save in his own country' – yet here he met with deserved respect.'¹⁵

On several occasions during the 1630s Twisse's churchwardens were in dispute with the Bishop of Salisbury. In 1631 they were accused of selling the church organ and of neglecting to present in the church courts women who refused to wear veils while being churched and five years later they were in trouble for ignoring instructions from the conservative Laudian hierarchy to remove the Communion table to the upper end of the chancel and surround it with rails.¹⁶ By the 1630s an early separatist congregation was also meeting at Newbury.¹⁷ Mrs. Connolly's study of Berkshire puritanism concluded that in the period preceding the Civil War

'Newbury had a national reputation for religious zeal, unshared with any other town in the county.'¹⁸

The same period from 1560 to 1640 witnessed a number of incidents in the Newbury area involving the voicing of subversive opinions and threats to public order, which caused concern to both the local and national authorities. In 1593 one Stephen Bachiler was reported to the Privy Council for delivering in a sermon at Newbury 'very lewd speeches, tending seditiously to the derogation of Her Majesty's Government', and in 1615 Thomas Standen was arrested for making 'certain lewd speeches touching His Majesty' in an inn at Speenhamland just outside the town.¹⁹ In 1604 Robert Brooke, vicar of the neighbouring parish of Enborne, was accused of tearing up a prayer book and a copy of Archbishop Bancroft's ecclesiastical canons, and of 'casting abroad a libel in contempt of the religion established in His Majesty's dominion.' He only avoided serious punishment through the intercession of a sympathetic local gentleman.²⁰

A serious threat to order developed in the winter of 1630, when many of the townspeople were suffering great hardship as a result of a poor harvest and widespread unemployment. At the beginning of November 'a great company of poor people' assembled outside the town at Greenham 'then and there to watch for carts laden with corn coming that way towards Reading.' No violence occurred on this occasion, but the following week at Speen a crowd attacked some carts and assaulted their owners. The local justice subsequently examined a number of 'poor ragged women whereof many of them were very aged', committing seven to the house of correction and ordering another five to be whipped 'for further terror and example

of others.²¹ Later in the 1630s Newbury was in trouble with Charles I's government for refusing to contribute towards ship money. The town was one of the earliest centres of resistance in Berkshire, and in January 1637 its mayor was summoned to the Privy Council to explain its backwardness.²²

III

Newbury's reputation as a centre of disaffection is perhaps most clearly seen during the mid seventeenth century. In February 1643 the royalist Lord Grandison wrote to Prince Rupert

'... there is two gentlemen now come from Newbury frightened from thence last night by intelligence they had of some of the enemy forces, [that they] were to come into Newbury, invited thither by the townsmen, who have only reported the plague to be there to keep the King's troops out. How slight soever this may be, sure I am that that disaffected town cannot be too much punished by your Highness for at my coming from Basingstoke, they stopped all our baggage and had detained it but they heard we were strong enough to revenge it.'²³

Several months later, when Newbury's mayor wrote secretly offering his help to the King, Charles I is reported to have remarked that he was glad there was 'one righteous man left in Sodom.'²⁴ The following autumn the townspeople prepared a great welcome for the Earl of Essex's army which was returning from raising the siege of Gloucester, only to be disappointed by the surprise arrival of the royalists.²⁵ At the end of 1643 the Governor of the royalist garrison at Donnington castle, which overlooked the town, complained that he had

'such ill neighbours as the factious town of Newbury which lately betrayed some of His Majesty's friends, not so much as giving me notice that I might in time have relieved them.'²⁶

In August 1644 a Royalist newsbook described Newbury as 'the very Colchester of Berkshire.'²⁷

Following the ending of the first civil war, a number of radical religious sects appeared in the town. Edmund Calamy states that at this time it was 'overrun with strange opinions and divided into many parties',²⁸ and the activities of one anabaptist group were described in

an anonymous pamphlet, *A Looking Glass for Sectaries or True News from Newbury*, published in December 1647.²⁹ Prominent in this group was a school-mistress, subject to fits and convulsions, who believed she was to be taken up bodily into heaven. A large crowd gathered on the appointed day to watch her fail in her attempt.

In view of Newbury's attachment to the parliamentary cause and some of the more radical forms of Protestantism, it is not surprising that serious trouble occurred in the town following the restoration in 1660. In June 1662 three aldermen were removed from office under the act for regulating corporations.³⁰ The following year Newbury's presbyterian minister, Benjamin Woodbridge, was ejected and replaced on the King's presentment by a more conservative incumbent, Joseph Sayer, and in February 1664 Thomas Voysey, the popular presbyterian minister of Thatcham, was charged at Reading Assizes with complicity in a plot to assassinate Charles II, and imprisoned in Windsor.³¹

A violent reaction to these events broke out in April 1664, when a large crowd interrupted Sayer and the aldermen who were meeting in the church vestry to choose new churchwardens. Sir Thomas Dolman, the local justice called in to investigate the disturbance, commented on their 'insolent and tumultuous manner' and 'strange rudeness and reproaches'. The ringleaders demanded a say in the choice of churchwardens, but Dolman believed that this was merely a pretext 'to engage the multitude in a tumult and sedition and cast contempt upon the King's authority'.³² He advised that the ringleaders should be charged at the Quarter Sessions the following week and discussed the possibility of packing the grand jury with outsiders who would declare the incident a riot. He concluded his report to the Lord Lieutenant.

'The plain trouble is, my Lord, this place is in very great disorder, the multitude upon all occasions flying as high as they dare against the King and the Church . . . My Lord this town is on those terms that they only want an opportunity to begin a rebellion, and I believe three parts of four would quickly take arms.'³³

Dolman later suggested that the real reason for the riot was that the presbyterians in the town were infuriated that Sayer had persuaded about 300 people to receive communion over the Easter weekend. Their leader was one William Milton who ran a coffee house in the town and held conventicles in his house. Milton, according to Dolman, was

'a very rigid presbyter, has been a rebel in the armies from his cradle, comes not to church because Mr. Sayer was presented by His Majesty, keeps a coffee house where all the malcontents of this place frequently meet with great confidence in his secrecy. This fellow is of high value amongst all the non-conformists and being seditious to the highest point and bold, having little to lose, they think him a fit instrument to belch out all their affronts against the book of common prayer and conformity.'³⁴

Further disorders occurred several days later when Dolman was examining Milton at the mayor's house. A large crowd assembled in an attempt to rescue Milton, and shots were fired. Dolman led his guards into the street and 'forced the seditious rabble into their houses.' He later discovered that during the night

'Some odd fellows, whose names we cannot learn, have thrown so many handfuls of dirt upon the sign of the Crown [Inn] that it is but discernable what sign it is.'³⁵

His explanation was that the rioters were angry with the inn-keeper who had testified against Milton, but the act was also probably symbolic. Dolman's intervention appears to have forestalled further trouble; the ringleaders were indicted at the Abingdon Assizes in 1665 and heavily fined.³⁶ His first hand testimony, however, reveals the continuing popularity of nonconformity, and the close connexion between dissent and political disaffection in the town.

Despite the efforts of Sayer and Dolman, nonconformity remained popular in Newbury. In 1669 a survey carried out by the Bishop of Salisbury revealed that at least 600 people regularly attended presbyterian services on Sundays. They were described as mainly 'ordinary persons', though the wife of one local gentleman, Mrs. Roger Knight, also attended, and some of those purged from the corporation in 1662 were named as 'abettors'. The survey commented

'these meetings consist of such as have been engaged (as generally the whole town was) in the late war against the King.'³⁷

By the 1660s there were also Quakers in the town. The bishop's survey mentions meetings at the houses of Robert Wilson and Thomas Merrimans and there was a regular monthly meeting from 1674.³⁸

IV

While the evidence for Newbury's radicalism is strongest for the seventeenth century, there are indications that a tendency towards unorthodoxy and unruliness persisted. Newbury remained a strong non-conformist centre throughout the eighteenth century. Following the 1689 Toleration Act, the presbyterians built themselves a meeting house in 1697. An Independent meeting house was erected in 1717, and the Baptists erected a place of worship in 1702. The Quakers continued to worship in a building near St. Bartholomews Street.³⁹ The early Methodists met near Cheap Street, and were preached to on several occasions by John Wesley. Wesley's entry in his journal for 1 March 1790 reads

'I left Brentford early in the morning and in the evening preached at Newbury. The congregation was large and most of them attentive but a few of them were wild as colts untamed. We had none such at Bath the following evening but all were serious as death.'⁴⁰

The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also witnessed periodic outbreaks of unrest and disorder in and around Newbury. A riot occurred in 1706 when a crowd attempted to rescue four impressed men; several soldiers were assaulted and one died of his injuries. One of the soldiers later testified that he had 'desired the people in Her Majesty's name to separate but some of [th]em answered they did not care for anybody.'⁴¹ There was more trouble in 1766 when the series of food riots that his Berkshire in that year originated at a market in the town.⁴² In 1800 several hundred labourers gathered at Thatcham in an attempt to force up wages,⁴³ and in 1830 the 'Captain Swing' machine breaking riots began in Berkshire, and were concentrated in an area within a ten mile radius of Newbury. According to Hobsbawm and Rudé these riots at one stage 'threatened to engulf the whole Hungerford and Newbury area in a general labourers' insurrection.'⁴⁴

V

For several centuries or more, therefore, Newbury contained many people who harboured unorthodox religious and political opinions and who could be provoked into active and violent opposition to the

ecclesiastical and secular authorities. During the seventeenth century in particular the town enjoyed a widespread notoriety as a centre of radical anti-authoritarian attitudes. Attempts to account for this must involve discussion of the commercial and industrial make-up of the town, the pattern of local authority and the possibility of the existence of a local radical tradition.

As an important market town, lying on major east-west and north-south trade routes, Newbury was visited by a constant stream of travellers, traders and itinerant workers. These people brought with them a great variety of news and opinion, to which the townspeople were exposed in their market-place and inns. In their work on the 1830 riots, Hobsbawm and Rudé discovered that trouble was most likely to occur near

'more important centres of trade and communications, and therefore of news, discussion and action.'⁴⁵

If the trading communities were more exposed to radical ideas, they also contained the social elements which provided a receptive audience for them. Buchanan Sharp has recently stressed the involvement in popular disorder of artisans, 'skilled men in rural areas or small towns working in non-agricultural employments',⁴⁶ and R. Tudor-Jones in his study of congregationalists in England stated that

'The Newbury Independent Church reflected the economics of the market town amongst its hearers with three gentlemen and forty tradesmen.'⁴⁷

Newbury traded principally in corn and cloth; both may have rendered it particularly susceptible to disturbance. Dissatisfaction and resentment develop quickly amongst the hungry and are likely to lead to rioting where basic foodstuffs are bought and sold. The 1630 riots in Newbury were provoked by the shipment of grain out of the area at a time of great scarcity and in 1766 the townspeople were again roused to direct action by the exceptionally high prices in the market. In his study of eighteenth century food riots, Walter Shelton acknowledged the 'provocative nature of grain exports in a time of expected famine',⁴⁸ and John Stevenson similarly found that 'transhipment points, market towns and ports' were particularly prone to disturbance.⁴⁹

Newbury was for several centuries the home of, and visited by, large numbers of clothworkers, a notoriously unruly group well known for their heretical beliefs. Some of the Newbury Lollards were

clothworkers, and Lollard ideas may have originally reached the town along the trade routes from the clothing regions of Essex, the 'breeding grounds for Lollardy.'⁵⁰ Professor Dickens stated that

'certain periods at least saw a flow of information and ideas between the communities of Buckinghamshire, of East Anglia, of London and the Thames Valley. Tudor provincial society contained large mobile elements, and the part played by wandering clothworkers in the dissemination of heresy has already been observed.'⁵¹

Christopher Hill also believes that 'Lollardy and later heresy are found especially in clothing counties.'⁵²

The connection between clothing and non-conformity remained strong down to the late seventeenth century; in 1675 many of those presented by the churchwardens for non-attendance at church were clothworkers.⁵³ The town authorities were also clearly anxious to regulate their numbers in the town; the Quarter Session records for the late seventeenth century contain numerous cases of the ejection of weavers, and the authorities insisted that all lodgers should obtain a certificate allowing residence.⁵⁴ Nor were the radical ideas confined to the industry's wage labourers. During Elizabeth I's reign three of the prominent master clothiers, Philip George, Philip Kystell and John Holmes, were noted puritans.⁵⁵

The cloth producing communities of early modern England were particularly vulnerable to periodic economic recessions, causing a drop in demand and inevitable unemployment amongst the clothworkers. With the makeshift relief systems unable to cope with such crises, the unemployed became desperate and direct action often ensued. The disturbances at Newbury in 1630 followed the lay-off of large numbers of clothworkers during the recession of the 1620s. The mayors of Newbury and Reading reported to the Privy Council in December 1630 that

'the manufacture of mingled and coloured cloth was much decayed in respect of what it was formerly, whereby the petitioners were much prejudiced and many poor people left destitute of work and employment to their utter ruin.'⁵⁶

The extent of the problem was revealed in another report compiled several months later. At this time over 100 families were completely dependent upon work provided by the workhouse, and the poor rate was 'very great and exceedeth very much our neighbouring parishes

proportionately.⁵⁷ In such circumstances tension was heightened throughout the community, resentment developed, and the likelihood of violence increased.

If Newbury was exposed to a wide range of radical ideas and contained receptive socio-economic groups, such attitudes were perhaps able to gain a firm hold because of the outlook and authority of the town's governors. As mentioned above the aldermen controlled virtually all aspects of town life; their relative autonomy may help to explain the persistence of radical opinions in Newbury, as on occasions they clearly took a lenient attitude towards those who professed them. The puritanism of some of the master clothiers, who also sat as aldermen, has already been noted. In 1662 several members of the corporation were ejected by the government, and they were later reported to be involved in presbyterian conventicles.⁵⁸ In this report about the 1664 riot, Sir Thomas Dolman attached much of the blame for the incident to the attitude of the mayor, whom he claimed was 'more forward to excuse this riot than to take notice of it.' According to Dolman the mayor 'suffers himself to be governed in secret by those that do what they can to hinder obedience to the King and his laws and conformity to the Church.' Dolman feared that, unless the Privy Council intervened, the next mayor would be 'of the same temper.'⁵⁹

Even if the borough authorities had wished to enlist outside help to quash heterodoxy, it is doubtful whether it would have been available. During Elizabeth I's reign Newbury was the most poorly served deanery in the archdeanery of Berkshire; deanery surveys in 1561 and 1586 reveal large numbers of non-resident clergy.⁶⁰ In addition, for much of the early seventeenth century there was only one resident justice in the Newbury division of the county, as opposed to four or five in the other divisions, a fact which clearly reduced the power of central government and was mentioned as a matter of concern by several justices in the 1630s.⁶¹ While Sir Thomas Dolman of nearby Shaw may have been appalled by the condition of Newbury and have regretted his lack of jurisdiction over the borough, his feelings were not shared by most other gentry families in the surrounding district. The dominant local families of the Chokes, Fullers, Goddards and Knights were conspicuous in their support for puritanism or non-conformity.⁶²

The *Victoria County History* for Berkshire states 'all through the history of Newbury, popular movements centred around ecclesiastical institutions,'⁶³ and Newbury's religious radicalism was clearly fostered and preserved through the influence of secular and ecclesiastical teachers. From the mid sixteenth century the town was served by

a succession of preachers, notably Shepley, Twisse and Woodbridge, whose influence over the inhabitants was remarked upon by contemporaries.⁶⁴ In 1664 Thomas Voysey, vicar of Thatcham, was reported to have had a 'strange influence' over the rioters.⁶⁵ In addition, the town was regularly visited by itinerant preachers; Man, the Lollard, preached at Newbury; in 1593 Stephen Bachiler, vicar of Wherwell, Hampshire, was accused of delivering a seditious sermon in the town; and in 1640 one Barnard preached in support of the presbyterian Scots covenanters.⁶⁶ After the restoration the Presbyterian conventicles were addressed by visiting preachers.⁶⁷ Townspeople were also subjected to radical views at an early age in their schools. Amongst the masters of the grammar school were the puritans Robert Wright and Thomas Parker, and in the 1640s a school-mistress was prominent amongst the anabaptists.⁶⁸

Thus far the reasons put forward to explain Newbury's radicalism correspond closely to those discussed in recent studies by Buchanan Sharp and Peter Clark. From a study of riot in the west of England during the period 1586 to 1660 Dr. Sharp concluded:

'Food riots occurred most frequently in the rural broadcloth-making areas of Western England . . . , in the new-drapery towns of Essex and Suffolk, and in the clothing areas of Berkshire and Hampshire. Although the social status of participants in these riots was not always recorded, such evidence as is available invariably characterizes the rioters as clothworkers – weavers, spinners, fullers, and the like . . . Capitalists had come to dominate the broadcloth industry and the new drapery – products, aimed at an export market, which demanded considerable investment in raw materials and in the distribution of the finished product . . . The locations of such industries were amongst the most disorderly places in the kingdom and the connection between landlessness, rural industrialism and direct action can hardly have been accidental.'⁶⁹

From his investigation into similar radical trends in Gloucester between 1540 and 1640, Dr. Clark identified economic instability, industrial malaise (especially in the cloth industry), social polarization, and the existence of a powerful puritan oligarchy as contributing factors in the town's radicalism. He suggested that all communities evidencing such tendencies in the seventeenth century were both dominated by '*puritan potentiores*' and suffered from 'acute economic and social instability.'⁷⁰ Newbury conforms to such a pattern, but the greater length of its radical complexion prompts consideration of

one further explanation – whether radical views may have persisted because they were handed down in the form of an ongoing local tradition.

It is extremely difficult to establish conclusive proof of the existence of underground traditions of radicalism. Individuals were naturally reluctant to own up to proscribed opinions when confronted by those who might have left documentary evidence about them, i.e., the prosecuting authorities; they were less likely to have been willing to, or given the opportunity to explain how they acquired such views. However, it remains true that significant numbers of people in Newbaury over a period of at least two centuries, did consistently voice opinions on religious and political matters which challenged the established authorities, a fact which may not be entirely explained by the town's socio-economic make-up.

That these people were consistent in their radicalism throughout their lifetimes is suggested by Dolman's comments in 1664 that William Milton had been 'a rebel in the armies since the cradle', and that 'most of the ordinary rabble in this riot were such as had been in arms against the King.'⁷¹ The 1669 Bishop's survey also commented that the town's conventicles were frequented by 'such as have been engaged . . . in the late war against the King.'⁷² One should, therefore, perhaps not discount the possibility that these strongly held attitudes were passed down within families. Christopher Hill has pointed out how easy it is to underestimate the importance of the verbal transmission of ideas,⁷³ and Dr. Sharp has acknowledged the existence of a 'tradition of artisan radicalism' in the West Country, stretching from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.⁷⁴ In an attempt to explain why labour disputes erupted at Thatcham on several occasions in the early nineteenth century, Hobsbawm and Rudé speculated that 'it may be too that a local tradition of labour militancy played a part.'⁷⁵

Those historians who suspect the existence of such underground radical traditions, can turn for support to some recent sociological research. In their book *Political Socialisation*, Richard and Karen Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt suggested

' . . . outlooks and identifications regarding ethnic, racial, religious, social class and regional groupings as well as certain basic political attachments are acquired at an early age. They too are transmitted by the family . . . The evidence is that these types of political orientations tend to be developed early, persisted in long, and that they are transmitted at least initially through the family . . . '⁷⁶

They also found that ideas acquired in this way were very difficult to displace, and concluded

'The persistence of partisan attachments or particular political perspectives within geographical regions, among members of specific sub-groups and persons who share a particular position in the socio-economic structure, result in part from the tendency of those group-related attitudes to be passed on within a family from one generation to the next.'⁷⁷

These conclusions, the result of a study of modern American communities, should apply even more strongly to a small community of early modern England, less exposed to other sophisticated mechanisms for the dissemination of information and opinion. We should perhaps therefore suggest that heretical and seditious attitudes may have persisted for so long in Newbury during the early modern period, not only because of the efforts of teachers, the particular economic and social structure of the community and the attitudes of those in authority locally, but also because the acquisition of such opinions was an important element in the cultural inheritance of successive generations of townspeople.

Notes

¹ Christopher Hill, 'From Lollards to Levellers' in: Maurice Cornforth (ed) *Rebels and Their Causes: Essays in Honour of A.L. Morton* pp. 62-3 (1978).

² C.G. Durston, 'Berkshire and Its County Gentry', Unpublished Reading University Ph.D. thesis (1977).

³ Walter Money, *A History of the Ancient Town and Borough of Newbury in the County of Berkshire* p. 571 (1887).

⁴ A. Everitt, 'The Marketing of Agricultural Produce' in: J. Thirsk (ed) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales Vol. 4* pp. 495-500 (1967).

⁵ W. Page and P.H. Ditchfield (eds), *The Victoria County History of Berkshire* Vol.1, p. 393, Vol.2, p. 198, Vol.3, p. 138 (1924), R.F. Dell, 'The Decline of the Clothing Industry in Berkshire', *Transactions of the Newbury District Field Club* Vol.10, No.2 pp. 50-64, Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through England and Wales, Divided into Circuits or Journeys* (Everyman Edn. 1959) Vol.1, p. 288.

⁶ V.C.H. Berks, Vol.3, pp. 139-40.

⁷ Money, *Newbury* pp. 182-8.

⁸ Josiah Pratt (ed), *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe* Vol.4, p. 213 (1877).

⁹ J.A.F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards 1414-1520* pp. 75-9 (Oxford 1965).

¹⁰ Ibid pp. 82-3, 92-3, *Acts and Monuments* Vol.4, pp. 235-40.

¹¹ Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England* (1660) (1811 edit.) Vol.1, p. 87.

¹² *Acts and Monuments* Vol.8, pp. 201-19, Money *Newbury* pp. 209-10.

¹³ M. Connolly, 'The Godly in Berkshire from the reign of Elizabeth to c. 1642', Unpublished Reading Univ. M. Phil. thesis (1977) p. 126.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 126-134, *Dictionary of National Biography* William Twisse (1578?-1646).

¹⁵ Fuller *Worthies* Vol.1, p. 93.

¹⁶ Connolly thesis p. 132.

¹⁷ Henry W. Clark, *The History of English Non-Conformity* (1911) Vol.1, p. 301, Edward Whitaker Grey, *The History and Antiquities of Newbury and its Environs* (Speenhamland 1839) pp. 121, 127.

¹⁸ Connolly thesis, p. 133.

¹⁹ J.R. Dasent (ed), *Acts of the Privy Council 1592-3*, p. 268 (1901) Council to Bishop of Salisbury 29 May 1593, *Acts of Privy Council 1615-6* p. 254 (1925) Warrant to John Hawkins 11 July 1615.

²⁰ *H(istorical) M(anuscripts) C(ommission)*, *Salisbury MSS* Vol.17 pp. 73, 76-7, 98-9, 118.

²¹ P(ublic) R(ecords) O(ffice), *State Papers Charles I*, SP.16. 172.4. William Hunt to Council 15 Dec. 1630, SP.16. 176.35. Gabriel Dowse to Council 6 Dec. 1630.

²² P.R.O. SP.16. 344.12 Council to Mayor Newbury 15 January 1636/7, Privy Council Registers P C 2, 47 f. 164 Appearance of Mayor 25 January 1636/7.

²³ W.A. Day (ed), *The Pythouse Papers* (1879) p. 8 Grandison to Rupert 8 February 1642/3.

²⁴ I.G. Philip (ed) *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, Oxford Records Society Publs. Vol.29 (1947) pp. 73-4, 12 May 1643.

²⁵ Brit(ish) Lib(rary) Thomason Tracts E.67.38, *True Informer* 23 September 1643.

²⁶ Bod(leian) Lib(rary) Rawlinson MSS. D. 395 f.141. Casimirus Stuart to Lord Percy 12 November 1643.

²⁷ Brit. Lib. E. 9.5. *Mercurius Aulicus* No.34. 24 August 1644.

²⁸ Edmund Calamy: *The Non-Conformists Memorial* (1802 ed.) Vol.1 pp. 290-1.

²⁹ Brit. Lib. E. 419.20. 12 December 1647.

³⁰ *C(alendar) of S(tate) P(apers) D(omestic) 1661.2*, p. 419 Certificate of Commissioners for Regulating Corporations 26 June 1662.

³¹ *Money Newbury* pp. 504-6, Calamy *Memorial* Vol.1, pp. 295-6. Calamy claims the charges against Voysey were fabricated by a local landowner upset by his preaching. He remained in prison for over a year before being released and returning to his native Devon.

³² P.R.O. State Papers Charles II. SP. 29. 96. 110. Dolman to Lovelace 14 April 1664.

³³ P.R.O. SP. 29. 96. 97. Dolman to Lovelace 12 April 1664.

³⁴ P.R.O. SP. 29. 96. 129. Dolman to Lovelace 17 April 1664.

³⁵ *Ibid.* and see P.R.O. SP.29. 96. 114. Dolman to Lovelace 15 April 1664.

³⁶ The Newbury churchwardens accounts for 1665 include payments to witnesses who testified at Abingdon, *Money Newbury* p. 537, see also the wrongly dated entry in *C.S.P.D. 1675.6*, p. 479. Gohory and Gallwey to King.

³⁷ G. Lyon Turner (ed), *Original Records of Early NonConformity Under Persecution and Indulgence* (1911) Vol.1, p. 110.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Berkshire Records Office Newbury Corporation MSS D/F2 B2/1. Newbury and Oare monthly meeting minutes 1674-1779. For the attempt of the town authorities to prevent these meetings see Berks. R.O. N3/20 Quarter Sessions Journal ff. 162-3, 174, 186, 213, and Joseph Besse, *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers*. (1713) Vol.1 pp. 29, 34, 36.

- ³⁹ Grey. *History* pp. 121-9.
- ⁴⁰ John Wesley, *The Journal of the Reverend John Wesley* (1906 edit.) Vol.4 p. 496.
- ⁴¹ Brit(ish) Mus(eum) Harley Papers, MS. Loan 29. 193. f.12. Deposition 12 January 1706, ff. 31-3. Examinations of William Littler and John Kay 21 January 1706, f.59. Examination John Southby 2 February 1706, *H M C Portland MSS* Vol.4, pp. 279, 281, 284, Vol.8, pp. 211-2.
- ⁴² Walter J. Shelton, *English Hunger and Industrial Disorders* (1973) pp. 24, 32, 39, 41, *Oxford Gazette and Reading Mercury* No.238 August 1766. I am grateful to Mr. Richard Williams for this reference.
- ⁴³ *Reading Mercury* 16 June 1800, see also Samuel Barfield, *Thatcham Berks. and Its Manors* (1901), Vol.2, p. 46, and A.S. Humphreys, *Bucklebury, a Berkshire Parish : The Home of Bolingbroke 1701-1715* (1932) pp. 377-8.
- ⁴⁴ E.J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (1969) pp. 134-40, 215, 311-58. *Reading Mercury* 6 December 1830, quoted by Humphreys *Bucklebury* pp. 379-81.
- ⁴⁵ Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing* p. 180.
- ⁴⁶ Buchanan Sharp, *In Contempt of All Authority : Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England 1586-1660* (1980) p. 257.
- ⁴⁷ R. Tudor-Jones, *Congregationalism in England* (1962) p. 126. Jones was referring to the year 1715.
- ⁴⁸ Shelton, *English Hunger* pp. 34, 39.
- ⁴⁹ J. Stevenson, *Popular Disturbance in England 1700-1870* (1979) p. 109.
- ⁵⁰ Hill, 'Lollards to Levellers' pp. 51-2.
- ⁵¹ A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (1964) p. 33.
- ⁵² Hill loc.cit.
- ⁵³ Money *Newbury* p. 526.
- ⁵⁴ Berks R.O. N3/20 Quarter Sessions Journal 1666-1732 ff.14, 16, 38, 40, 45, 55, 65, 74, 79, 80, 115, 174, 225-6, 233, 253. The earlier journals have not survived.
- ⁵⁵ Connolly thesis pp. 126-134.
- ⁵⁶ P.R.O. SP.16. 177. 60. Petition of Mayors of Newbury and Reading to Council 31 December 1630.
- ⁵⁷ P.R.O. SP.16. 192.14.ii Report of William Hunt and Gabriel Coxe 16 May 1631.
- ⁵⁸ C.S.P.D. 1661-2 p. 419, Lyon Turner *Original Records* loc.cit.
- ⁵⁹ P.R.O. SP.29. 96. 129, Dolman to Lovelace 17 April, 1664.
- ⁶⁰ Connolly thesis p. 63.
- ⁶¹ P.R.O. SP.16. 176.35 Gabriel Dowse to Council 6 December 1630, SP. 16. 267.3. Certificate of Richard Browne 9 April 1634.
- ⁶² Connolly thesis pp. 96-98, 106-7, Lyon Turner *Original Records* loc.cit, Barfield *Thatcham* Vol.1, pp. 294-300.
- ⁶³ V.C.H. *Berks* Vol.3, p. 143.
- ⁶⁴ Connolly. thesis, pp. 126-134, Fuller *Worthies* Vol.1, p. 93. Calamy *Memorial* Vol.1, pp. 290-1.
- ⁶⁵ P.R.O. SP.29. 96. 97. Dolman to Lovelace 12 April 1664.
- ⁶⁶ Thomson, *Later Lollards* p. 137, *Acts of Privy Council 1592-3* p. 268, P.R.O. SP. 16. 460. 48. Fra. Read to Rob. Read 16 July 1640.
- ⁶⁷ Lyon Turner, *Original Records* loc.cit.
- ⁶⁸ Connolly, thesis loc.cit, Money *Newbury* pp. 564-5, Brit. Lib. E. 419.20.
- ⁶⁹ Sharp *Contempt* pp. 3, 7.
- ⁷⁰ Peter Clark, 'The Ramoth - Gilead of the Good. Urban Change and Political Radicalism at Gloucester 1540-1640' in: Peter Clark, Alan G.R. Smith and Nicholas

Tyacke (eds), *The English Commonwealth 1547-1640. Essays in Politics and Society presented to Joel Hurstfield* (Leicester 1979) pp. 167-187. Clark lists as other radical centres Northampton, Salisbury, Barnstaple, Colchester, Taunton and Coventry.

⁷¹ P.R.O. SP.29. 96. 110 Dolman to Lovelace 14 April 1664, SP. 29. 96. 129. Dolman to Lovelace 17 April 1664.

⁷² Lyon Turner, *Original Records* loc.cit.

⁷³ Hill, 'Lollards to Levellers' p. 56.

⁷⁴ Sharp, *Contempt* p. 266.

⁷⁵ Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing* p. 135.

⁷⁶ R. and K. Dawson and K. Prewitt, *Political Socialisation* (Boston 1977) p. 121.

⁷⁷ *ibid* pp. 135-6.