

THE HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT

THE  
HOUSE OF COMMONS  
1690–1715

*Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley  
and D. W. Hayton*

III  
MEMBERS  
A–F

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# MEMBERS

## A–F

**ABERCROMBY, Alexander** (1678–1729), of Glassaugh, Fordyce, Banff.

SCOTLAND 1707–1708

BANFFSHIRE 1708–1727

*b.* 5 Nov. 1678, 3rd but 1st surv. s. of Alexander Abercromby (o.s. *d.v.p.* of John Abercromby of Glassaugh) by Katherine, da. of Sir Robert Dunbar, MP [S], of Grangehill, Elgin. *m.* by 1703, Helen (*d.* aft. 1744), da. and coh. of George Meldrum (*d.* 1692) of Crombie, Marnoch, Banff, minister of Glass, Banff, 2s. 4da. *suc.* gdfa. 1691.<sup>1</sup>

Commr. judiciary for Highlands [S] 1701, 1702; lt. 21 Ft. (R. Scots Fusiliers) 1706, capt. 1707, lt.-col. (half-pay) 1721; commr. Equivalent [S] 1707–19; a.d.c. to Duke of Marlborough (John Churchill<sup>1</sup>) in Low Countries 1711; lt. gov. Fort William 1726–?*d.*<sup>2</sup>

MP [S] Banffshire 1706–7.

Burgess, Edinburgh 1724.<sup>3</sup>

Falling into dependence on his Banffshire neighbour Lord Seafield (later 4th Earl of Findlater), Abercromby profited rather less than might have been expected from his patron's extended ministerial career under Queen Anne. But, although occasionally resentful in private, he always performed his public duty as befitted one unflatteringly described by an outside observer as Seafield's 'creature' and praised by the Earl's agent as 'the surest friend . . . that my lord has'. Descended from a younger son of Sir Alexander Abercromby of Birkenbog, grand falconer to King James VI, Abercromby had evidently inherited no strong religious or political principles, his immediate family background suggesting instead a survivor's pragmatism. In 1685 his father-in-law, a Presbyterian minister, had eventually been deprived after a lengthy period of conformity, but at the same time his own father and grandfather were demonstrating their pliability by taking the test; and each served both James II and William III as commissioners of supply for their county. Having entered into possession of the Glassaugh estate while still a boy, Abercromby complained soon after coming of age that his finances were

in 'great disorder', a state of affairs for which his tutor, Sir James Abercromby of Birkenbog, may well have been at least partly responsible, since Birkenbog's management of his own property left something to be desired. Abercromby himself was no model of sobriety, for in January 1702 he was fined by the local Kirk authorities for 'scandalous conduct', but he took care to make himself an agreeable guest at Cullen House, providing the 3rd Earl of Findlater with books and obliging companionship. Through Findlater's influence he was nominated to the commission of the peace for Banffshire, and the commission of judiciary for the Highlands. Slower in coming was the salaried position in hope of which he had pledged his 'entire engagement' to Seafield's family. Advised in 1702 to 'change the plough for the sword', he set his mind on a military commission, but had to wait until February 1706 before he was made a lieutenant in the Royal Scots Fusiliers through Seafield's intercession, as part of that general gratification of the Court grouping in Scottish politics by which the ministry sought to pave the way for the Union.<sup>4</sup>

Abercromby was brought in by Seafield to the vacant parliamentary commissionership for Banffshire in 1706 in order to give a vote for Union. This he did, adhering to a straight Court line in all divisions, except for two unimportant absences. In the middle of the session he was able to purchase a captaincy for £1,000, and to make doubly sure of him, the ministry had included him in the Scottish civil list for a pension of £450, though whether this sum was ever paid must be open to question. Afterwards he was appointed to the commission on the Equivalent, again at Seafield's request. Predictably, he was also one of the Court contingent selected to represent Scotland in the first Parliament of Great Britain.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Equivalent commissionership remained disappointingly unremunerative, Abercromby gave no indication of dissatisfaction with the Court during his first session at Westminster. Indeed, until his departure for Scotland on active military service in

mid-March 1708, he was surprisingly forward for someone so inexperienced. On 25 Feb. 1708 he told against a Junto- and Squadrone-inspired motion to alter the order of payments from the Equivalent; and his remaining appointment of significance, on 11 Mar., was to the drafting committee for a bill designed to counter the invasion threat by absolving Highland clansmen from their obligations to Jacobite chieftains.<sup>6</sup>

Abercromby was not only returned on Seafield's interest for Banffshire at the 1708 election, he acknowledged that the decision on whether he should stand at all belonged to his patron. Seafield was able to boast of him as one of 'my friends . . . who, I hope, will serve her Majesty faithfully in the Parliament'. He was entrusted with carrying to Flanders the address of thanks from the House to the Duke of Marlborough, obtaining a leave of absence for this purpose on 25 Jan. 1709. He took the opportunity to solicit the Duke in person for military advancement, but to no avail. Returning to Westminster, he was nominated to draft a bill for the more effectual prohibition of wine imports on 9 Mar. 1709, and told on 31 Mar. against receiving the report of the Earl of Lindsey's (Robert Bertie, Lord Willoughby de Eresby\*) estate bill, something of a party cause since Lindsey's turn to the Whigs, and thus a sign that Abercromby, as would be expected, was staying with the Court against the Junto and Squadrone. On 7 Apr. he told against the motion for a committee of the whole on the African Company bill, signalling his disapproval as a Scot for an initiative that appeared prejudicial to the equality of trade promised under the Union. Included in the renewed commission of the Equivalent in 1709, he continued to support the Court and voted for the impeachment of Dr Sacheverell in 1710. By this time he had set his eyes on another plum, the estate of James Douglas, an Aberdonian who had died intestate. Douglas' illegitimacy meant that, according to Scottish law, the property came to the crown, and it was customary in such cases for the discoverer to be granted either the whole estate or a substantial portion. Claiming to have 'discovered' the case, and citing his own 'good services' to the ministry as additional justification, Abercromby put in his request in March 1710. Initially, Seafield obtained a promise from Lord Treasurer Godolphin (Sidney<sup>†</sup>) that a grant would be made, but before the barons of the Scottish exchequer could send the necessary report a rival claimant emerged in the shape of the burgh council of Aberdeen. Exploiting the political leverage they derived from the imminent dissolution of Parliament, councillors enlisted in their cause such powerful advocates as the Earl of Mar and thereby succeeded in blocking prompt action, so that

for Abercromby, abroad with his regiment, the summer of 1710 dragged by without the anticipated gratification from the Treasury. Moreover, Seafield's influence suffered considerably with the change in ministry. The best that could be done for Abercromby was to postpone a final judgment on the Douglas estate until another round of representations might be made.<sup>7</sup>

Abercromby's behaviour in the Parliament of 1710, to which he was returned unopposed with Seafield's blessing, faithfully reflected the political manoeuvring of his patron, who, starting from a position of loyalty to Godolphin, in due course made his peace with the new ministers. Abercromby appears as a Whig in the 'Hanover list', but as an episcopal Tory in the analysis of the Scottish returns by Richard Dongworth, episcopalian chaplain to the Duchess of Buccleuch. Neither classification bears much resemblance to reality. The first clue to Abercromby's political alignment in the new House was his vote on 10 Feb. 1711 in favour of the Squadrone Member, Mungo Graham, over the disputed election for Kinross-shire. This followed a fortnight's leave, granted on 26 Jan. 1711, and preceded a further prolonged absence on the Continent from May onwards, which seems to have lasted the entire campaigning season. According to Abercromby himself, he had intended to rejoin his troops earlier still, but 'my Lord Seafield, Mr Boscawen [Hugh, II\*], and some others of my Lord Godolphin's friends . . . advised my stay' to perform his duty in defence of the old ministry. When at last he did get away he applied himself immediately to Marlborough, armed with earnest recommendations from Seafield on his behalf. In reply, the Duke gave little more than promises: 'you may assure Lord Seafield', Marlborough told his Duchess, 'that whenever it is in my power I shall be glad to serve Captain Abercromby, for I know him to be a very honest and a good-tempered man'. All the Duke could do was appoint Abercromby as one of his aides-de-camp, but what was required was something altogether more substantial, especially since it now seemed less and less likely that the gift of Douglas' estate would materialize. In desperation Abercromby turned to Seafield:

As my endeavouring to serve his Grace in Parliament or otherwise was upon your lordship's account, so it must be by your lordship's interest with him that I can expect anything. I therefore beg your lordship will write to him and use what arguments you think proper, in which you may represent the expense I have been at, as also my losing the gift of bastardy.

This letter also contained an ambiguous statement about promises made to him, via one Captain Middleton, of being 'better protected last year if I would join the new party'. Although in Scottish terminology the Squadrone was often dubbed the 'new party' it seems more likely (on the assumption that the Argylls' client, John Middleton II\*, was the go-between) that Abercromby was referring to the new Scottish Court Tory interest supporting the Harley ministry.<sup>8</sup>

Returning to London for the beginning of the next session, Abercromby made a last effort to squeeze from Marlborough the performance of the various promises the Duke and the former lord treasurer had made. Having voted with the Whigs on 7 Dec. 1711 in favour of the 'No Peace without Spain' motion, he dispatched a letter two days later to one of Marlborough's confidants, declaring that unless he received some financial relief he would be obliged to quit London for his Scottish estates, such was the dismal appearance of his affairs. He concluded with the reproach that 'besides my expense and attendance my zeal and fidelity to his Grace's interest has made me refuse from others what I would [have] been proud of accepting from his hands'. Subsequent events were to expose the level of disingenuousness in these remarks. As far back as April 1711 there had been contact between Abercromby and Robert Harley\*, and an assurance given by the new chief minister that the affair of Douglas' estate would be settled in Abercromby's favour. Nothing had happened, but towards the end of December, in the middle of the crisis over the Duke of Hamilton's patent and the peace terms, with Harley hunting every available Scottish supporter in the Lords, Seafeld (now Earl of Findlater) renewed solicitations on his client's behalf. He wrote to Harley (now Lord Treasurer Oxford) to recommend Abercromby to his consideration:

He is very willing to attend the Queen's service in Parliament and observe your lordship's directions in everything, for this I have earnestly recommended to him, but, having attended all the Parliaments and served all the campaigns since the Union without any assistance, he writes that he must return home unless your lordship do something for him . . . If your lordship do for him he will be very faithful to you and useful.

Harley must have responded with more promises, for on 18 Jan. 1712 Abercromby wrote to Findlater to assure him that he was 'fully resolved to support the Union' and that he had 'satisfied my lord treasurer of my inclination to serve the Queen and ministry in everything except what concerns private persons who are my old friends'. Absence from the House, rather

than support for the government, ensued when Abercromby obtained two months' leave on 26 Jan. He therefore took no part in proceedings over the controversial Scottish Toleration Act. In the 1713 session he opposed the ongoing campaign by Sir Alexander Cumming\* and Thomas Smith II\* to regulate procedures for apportioning land tax in the convention of royal burghs, telling on 29 Apr. 1713 against an additional clause in the land tax bill for 'a rule whereby to tax the royal burghs of Scotland'. In this he was following the wishes of his patron, a pattern of behaviour equally evident during the malt tax crisis and the campaign to dissolve the Union. Abercromby told on 21 May against the obnoxious clause which charged malt produced in Scotland at 6*d.* a bushel, and attended the meeting of Scottish Members on 23 May calling for united action with Scottish peers. He acted as unofficial clerk at the ensuing meeting of lords and commoners where the proposal for a motion to dissolve the Union was broached and Findlater was named as the peer to introduce it in Parliament. Then, with his patron and the rest of the Scots courtiers, he returned to administration over the issue of the French commercial treaty, voting in favour of the bill confirming its 8th and 9th articles, both at the second reading on 4 June and again at the engrossment on the 18th.<sup>9</sup>

In spite of his loyalty to Findlater and Oxford, Abercromby was no better off financially: the Douglas estate grant still hung fire, and his salary as an Equivalent commissioner was hopelessly in arrears. By May 1713 his domestic affairs were moving towards a crisis. His wife delivered an ultimatum that if no preferment was forthcoming in the current session he would not be able to entertain the prospect of another expensive journey to Westminster, and might even have to 'sell his plate next Whitsunday'. Findlater, who had already spent substantial amounts of his own money in propping up Abercromby's estate, through the purchase of land and the redeeming of wadsets, felt obliged to intervene once more, with an advance of £1,000. 'I cannot see Glassaugh in distress', he wrote. But not even this sum seemed likely to afford more than temporary relief, for the problems were deep-set. One of the Earl's local agents reported:

We have had a conference with Glassaugh anent his affairs and find the half and much more is gone. I am heartily sorry I have occasion to tell you this but there is no help for it but sell he must. He imputed a great deal of his loss to his serving my lord, which he [Findlater] is not now in a condition to repay by getting anything done for him . . .

What Findlater's assistance was able to achieve was to calm Mrs Abercromby's fears and keep the family

afloat until the general election in which, with strong backing from his patron, Abercromby overawed a persistent challenger and secured another unopposed return. But Abercromby evidently failed to keep his promise to 'live upon his pay' and the year ended with Findlater expending more money to satisfy Abercromby's creditors and casting around desperately for some item of patronage on which to base a longer-term rescue. Several times Findlater applied to Oxford, pledging that Abercromby would 'serve with great fidelity' in the Commons, but received in return no more than repetitions of the old promise that £300 would be given of the Douglas estate.<sup>10</sup>

Abercromby's ultimate dependence was therefore on the lord treasurer, and with his re-election newly secured he approached Oxford directly:

Being unanimously chosen, which I flatter myself I shall always be in this shire while I think it convenient or desirable, I take this opportunity to assure your lordship that in the Parliament you have not one more entirely devoted to your service than I shall be on all occasions and in everything to the utmost of my power. So you may acquaint the Earl of Findlater when my being in London can do you any service you shall find a ready compliance to testify what I do so sincerely profess, and since my Lord Findlater informed me how mindful you were of me after my departure from London, and the promises you were pleased to make there, I beg you to let the Earl or me know from whom I should receive your lordship's commands . . .

Still nothing was forthcoming, and after making the journey down to Westminster Abercromby tried again. In mid-April he sent Oxford a memorial setting out his claim to a grant from the Douglas property and reminding him of the many previous assurances,

which . . . encouraged me, contrary to my own and friends' inclinations, to be at the expense of being returned this Parliament, notwithstanding I had ruined myself and family by the expense of attending, and by close adhering to every measure I judged most agreeable to your lordship forfeited all manner of reputation and expectation of friendship from those who had done me service formerly and still declared their willingness when able . . . it was upon the Earl of Findlater's call, and the late assurances he had from your lordship that I came up, and . . . as I have so will I strive to the utmost of my power to support every measure that may be agreeable and acceptable to your lordship; and lastly, had it not been upon the faith of these promises I could not have raised money to have brought me up, far less does my circumstances allow me to bear the charges of attending, and by trusting thereto both I and my numerous family must be reduced to great straits unless made good.

Not even these heartfelt pleas had any effect, a failure which may have helped to harden Abercromby's

outlook. Already in Lord Polwarth's analysis of the Scottish returns he had been marked as a Hanoverian; and a tellership on 29 Apr. 1714 in favour of a Squadrone supporter over a Tory rival in the disputed election for Anstruther Easter Burghs was followed on 12 May by a vote for Robert Walpole II's wrecking motion to extend the scope of the schism bill to cover 'popery'. He was later described as a Whig in the Worsley list and, despite continued professions of service to the lord treasurer, may well have sided frequently with opposition. Early in June he had warned Oxford that, unless 'you will make good your repeated promises both last year and this', he would be forced to return to Scotland. The fact that he remained in attendance may indicate that at last he had penetrated the treasurer's defences. His contributions to the business of the House give no hint of his attitude to the ministry, since they dealt with matters of personal or Scottish interest. For example, on 24 June, on the third reading of the bill to discharge the commissioners of the Equivalent of the money they had already disbursed, he led the opposition to a clause proposed by George Lockhart\* and others, which would have obliged the commissioners to account for the surplus moneys granted, in accordance with their legislative authority, to assist the wool-producing areas of Scotland. Having been the principal speaker against the clause, he told against it. Then on 2 July he was a teller again, with fellow Scotsman George Yeaman, against an amendment to the soap and paper duties bill which concerned the leather export bounty.<sup>11</sup>

Abercromby welcomed the Hanoverian succession, being one of the signatories to the proclamation of George I at St. James's on 1 Aug. 1714; and in November he presented a loyal address from Banffshire. Findlater secured his re-election the next year, and thereafter he voted consistently with the Court. After recovering financial solvency, he lost heavily in the South Sea and Mississippi Bubbles and was reduced once more to dejection and dependence. Petitions for preferment flowed from his pen. Some minor relief came through inclusion on the half-pay list, and a belated appointment as lieutenant-governor of Fort William. His sons were also provided for: one as a professional soldier, the other, an artist, with a life patent as King's limner in Scotland. Still a 'perfect friend' of Findlater, he followed the Earl into the Argyll connexion and at the 1727 election, although standing down himself, actively assisted Lord Ilay's burgh managers. He died on 23 Dec. 1728.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>*Hist. Scot. Parl.* 2; C. D. Abercromby, *Fam. of Abercromby*, 87–88; *Diary of Brodie of Brodie* (Spalding Club), 351, 398, 406;

*SRO Indexes*, xviii. 7, 474; Shaw and Gordon, *Hist. Province of Monay* (1882), iii. 391; *Recs. Co. Banff* (New Spalding Club), 39. <sup>2</sup>*CSP Dom.* 1700-2, p. 339; 1702-3, p. 354; Boyer, *Anne Annals*, vi. 234; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* xxiii. 234; xxix. 342; xxxi. 579; info. from Dr P. W. J. Riley on members of Scot. parl.; *Cal. Treas. Pprs.* 1714-19, p. 450. <sup>3</sup>*Scot. Rec. Soc.* lxii. 1. <sup>4</sup>*HMC Portland*, x. 333; SRO, Seafield mss GD248/561/49/17, John Philp to William Lorimer, 25 May 1713; GD248/561/50/2, Findlater to [-], 2 Nov. 1714; GD248/567/92/1, same to Lorimer, [1713]; Abercromby, 87-88; *Diary of Brodie*, 339; *Reg. PC Scotland*, 1684-5, pp. 164-6, 474-5; 1685-6, p. 357; *APS*, viii. 469; ix. 74; *Seafield Corresp.* 333-4, 338, 347-8, 354, 357, 368; *Annals of Banff* (New Spalding Club), ii. 73; *Recs. Co. Banff*, 232; *Hist. Scot. Parl.* 2; Fraser, *Melvilles*, ii. 196. <sup>5</sup>Fraser, 196; info. from Dr Riley; Riley, *Union*, 331; Stowe 246, f. 17; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* xxii. 116; Riley, *Eng. Ministers and Scotland*, 209; R. Walcott, *Pol. Early 18th Cent.* 232. <sup>6</sup>*Cal. Treas. Bks.* xxii. 79; *Seafield Corresp.* 466, 470-1. <sup>7</sup>*Seafield Corresp.* 470-1; *Seafield Letters*, 109; *Marlborough-Godolphin Corresp.* 1216-17, 1222, 1225-6; *HMC 14th Rep. III*, 208, 224; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* xxiv. 48, 196, 587; *Cal. Treas. Pprs.* 1708-14, pp. 174, 193-4, 207-8; *HMC Portland*, x. 333. <sup>8</sup>G. Holmes, *Pol. in Age of Anne*, 357-8; *SHR*, lx. 64; SRO, Montrose mss GD220/5/808/18a-b, Graham to Montrose, 13 Feb. 1711; Add. 61136, f. 165; *Marlborough-Godolphin Corresp.* 1669-70; Seafield mss GD248/572/1/7/9, Abercromby to Seafield, 24 Sept. 1711. <sup>9</sup>Stowe 246, f. 17; Add. 70051, memo. from Abercromby, 20 Apr. 1714; 70048, Findlater to Oxford, 22 Dec. 1711; Seafield mss GD248/572/1/7/10, Abercromby to Findlater, 18 Jan. 1712; NLS, ms 1392, f. 80; Aberdeen Univ. Lib. Duff House (Montcoffer) mss 3175/2380, 'Resolution of the Commons to Call a Meeting of the Lords', [23] May 1713; *Lockhart Pprs.* i. 424; *Parlty. Hist.* i. 69. <sup>10</sup>*Cal. Treas. Bks.* 1708-14, pp. 594, 613; Seafield mss GD248/561/49/10, 16-17, 30-31, 43, 56, William Lorimer to [Findlater], 7 Feb., 26 Sept. 1713, John to William Lorimer, 16 May 1713, John Philp to same, 25 May 1713, Abercromby to [Findlater], 29 Sept. 1713, John Carnegy\* to [same], 31 Oct. 1713, Findlater to William Lorimer, 17 Nov. 1713; GD248/561/48/36-37, 39, same to same, 30 Apr., 19 May 1713, John Lorimer to same, 13 May 1713; GD248/572/1/7/11, Abercromby to [Findlater], 12 Oct. 1713; GD248/566/86/10, John Philp to [Findlater?], n.d.; GD248/567/92/1, Findlater to William Lorimer, [1713]; *HMC Portland*, x. 211, 309; v. 351. <sup>11</sup>Add. 70048, Abercromby to Oxford, 29 Oct. 1713; 70051, memo. from Abercromby, 20 Apr. 1714; *HMC Portland*, x. 316, 318, 461-2; *Lockhart Letters* ed. Szechi, 107. <sup>12</sup>Boyer, *Pol. State*, viii. 117-18; *London Gazette*, 6-10 Nov. 1714; *Mystics of the North-East* ed. Henderson (3rd Spalding Club), 169-72; *Cal. Treas. Pprs.* 1720-8, p. 262; J. S. Shaw, *Management of Scot. Soc.* 107-9.

D. W. H.

**ABERCROMBY, James** (d. 1724).

DYSART BURGHS 16 Jan.-21 Sept. 1710

illegit. s. of William Douglas Hamilton, 3rd Duke of Hamilton [S]. Prob. *unm. cr.* Bt. 8 Mar. 1710.<sup>1</sup>

Ensign 1 Ft. (R. Scots) 1696, half-pay 1697, capt. 1701, brevet maj. 1706, lt.-col. 1709-Dec. 1710, Mar. 1711-17, brevet col. Nov. 1711; capt. and lt.-col. Coldstream Gds. Dec. 1710-Mar. 1711; a.d.c. to Earl of Orkney 1704-c.1709; town maj. Dunkirk 1712-?16; commr. inspecting demolition Dunkirk fortifications 1713-16.<sup>2</sup>

The illegitimate son of the 3rd Duke of Hamilton, Abercromby made his army career in the Royal Scots, the regiment commanded by his half-brother, George,

1st Earl of Orkney. As Orkney's aide-de-camp, he fought at Blenheim and Malplaquet, his deeds on the battlefield winning him a baronetcy. His brief appearance in Parliament was directly owing to Orkney and his elder brother, the 4th Duke of Hamilton. Abercromby was returned unanimously for Dysart Burghs at a by-election in 1710, but only after some convoluted manoeuvres. In the House Abercromby voted with the Court in order to earn the preferment he repeatedly solicited from the Duke of Marlborough (John Churchill<sup>1</sup>). According to Lockhart, he voted for the impeachment of Dr Sacheverell, notwithstanding the conflicting evidence in contemporary lists.<sup>3</sup>

Abercromby did not seek re-election in 1710, and although he contemplated standing for Dysart or Linlithgow Burghs in 1713, in the event contested neither seat. His professional fortunes, however, prospered under the Tories, as in the summer of 1712 he was appointed town major of Dunkirk under its new governor, John Hill\*, a position that proved safe even against Hamilton's unexpected death at the end of the year. Having taken responsibility for the evacuation of French forces and the installation of an allied garrison, he subsequently supervised the withdrawal of those troops and the destruction of the fortress, accumulating in the process considerable arrears of pay and allowance. A memorial in his behalf was submitted to the Treasury in July 1714 and two years later he was still in pursuit of over £2,700 due to him. In 1717 he was obliged to dispose of his regiment to ease these 'hardships' and was granted £1,000 as royal bounty to tide him over. Abercromby died *s.p.* 'at his habitation in Charing Cross' on 14 Nov. 1724.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SRO, Hamilton mss GD406/1/6507, Orkney to Hamilton, 1 May 1701. <sup>2</sup>*Cal. Treas. Bks.* xxvii. 299; xxxi. 151, 397; *Ailesbury Mems.* 579-80. <sup>3</sup>Boyer, *Pol. State*, xxviii. 529; *EHR*, xix. 310, 318; SRO, Montrose mss GD220/5/805/9, Mungo Graham\* to Montrose, 15 Dec. 1709; *Lockhart Mems.* ed. Szechi, 287; Add. 61283, ff. 3, 5. <sup>4</sup>*HMC Portland*, iv. 626-7; v. 101, 199; Boyer, *Pol. State*, iv. 22; *Bolingbroke Corresp.* ii. 411-12; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* xxviii. 104-5; *Cal. Treas. Pprs.* 1708-14, pp. 596-7; 1714-19, pp. 221, 287-8; Add. 61602, ff. 157-8; *The Gen. n.s.* vi. 106.

D. W. H.

**ABNEY, Sir Edward** (1631-1728), of Willesley Hall, Leics. and Portugal Row, Lincoln's Inn Fields.

LEICESTER 1690-1698

b. 6 Feb. 1631, 2nd but 1st surv. s. of James Abney of I. Temple and Willesley, sheriff of Derbys. 1656, by 1st w. Jane, da. of Edward Mainwaring of Whitmore, Staffs.; bro. of Sir Thomas Abney\*. *educ.* Ashby-de-la-Zouche (Mr Porter) and Measham (Mr Houlton) schs.; Christ's,

Camb. 1649, BA 1652–3, MA 1656, LL.D. 1661, fellow 1655–?70. *m.* (1) 21 July 1661, Damaris (*d.* 1687), da. of Thomas Andrewes, fellow of Christ's, Camb., 1s. (pres. *d.v.p.*) 3da.; (2) 18 Dec. 1688, Judith, da. and coh. of Peter Barr, merchant, of London, 2s. (1 *d.v.p.*). Kntd. 2 Aug. 1673; *suc. fa.* 1693.<sup>1</sup>

Clerk in Chancery 1670–82; commr. of public accts. 1694–5.<sup>2</sup>

Freeman, Leicester 1690; Fishmongers' Co. 1696.<sup>3</sup>

A branch of the Abney family had been established at Willesley since at least the early 15th century. Abney's father had participated in the Royalist defence of Ashby Castle in 1645. Before entering the House at the age of almost 60, Edward Abney's career was devoted to civil law. Initially he pursued an academic existence at Cambridge, having been allowed to retain his fellowship at Christ's after marrying the stepdaughter of the college's master, Dr Ralph Cudworth, the eminent Platonist theologian. Until 1662 his elder brother was still living and consequently the retention of this post was clearly of importance, especially as his marriage brought him no property. He was re-elected a fellow again in 1669, but in the year following obtained a highly lucrative place as one of the six clerks in Chancery.<sup>4</sup>

In 1685 Abney, a Presbyterian, stood for Leicestershire but was defeated. It was rumoured during the electoral preparations early in 1690 that he was to stand at Tamworth but in fact he stood for Leicester where initially his chances were considered doubtful, the corporation being dominated by Churchmen, 'the majority and best party'. He was returned, however, after a busy campaign in which he had the support of the earls of Stamford and Huntingdon, he being on particularly good terms with the latter as a family friend and legal adviser. Classed as a Whig by Lord Carmarthen (Sir Thomas Osborne<sup>†</sup>) in March 1690, he was noted in Robert Harley's\* list, compiled c. April 1691, as a Court supporter. Grascome also classed him as such in a slightly later list. By 1694 Abney had obviously achieved sufficient prominence in the House, presumably through his committee work, to obtain election on 12 Apr. with 121 votes as one of the seven commissioners of accounts for 1694–5, with a salary of £500 p.a. It would appear that his candidacy was promoted by the Rose Club of which he was a member. He was not reappointed in 1695, and missed nomination in 1696 coming 11th in the ballot on 1 Feb. On 23 Apr. 1695 he was one of 24 MPs selected for the joint committee of both Houses to receive evidence from Sir Thomas Cooke\* regarding bribes from the Old East India Company. Cooke's evidence led to the Commons'

decision on the 27th to impeach the Duke of Leeds, and Abney was put on the committee charged to initiate the proceedings which were shortly afterwards aborted with the close of the session. Evidence for Abney's pro-Court stance can be found for the next Parliament to which he was re-elected in 1695. In January 1696 he was forecast as a Court supporter on the proposed council of trade; he took the Association at the end of February, voted in late March in favour of fixing the price of guineas at 22s. and on 25 Nov. supported the attainder of Sir John Fenwick. On 12 Feb. 1697 he was elected in the ballot for a new commission of accounts, coming second with 132 votes, but the appointing bill failed to pass.<sup>5</sup>

Abney stood down at the 1698 election when he was listed in about September as a former Court supporter. He died at his seat, Willesley Hall, on 3 Jan. 1728, having been blind for the last 20 years of his life. In drawing up his will in 1718 he excluded his eldest surviving, but mentally unfit, son, leaving his estates in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire to his youngest son Thomas, later a judge of the common pleas.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nichols, *Leics.* iii. 1032; J. P. Yeatman, *Feudal Hist. Derbys.* v(9), p. 52; *The Gen.* v. 87. <sup>2</sup> *Chancery Procs. 1649–1714* (Index Lib. xxix), i. p. xxii. <sup>3</sup> *CJ*, xi. 154, 703; *Reg. Leicester Freeman*, i. 173; Guildhall Lib. mss 5587/1. <sup>4</sup> Yeatman, v(9), pp. 52, 93; Trinity, Dublin, Lyons (King) mss 2002/1105, Abney to Abp. King, 9 Aug. 1704; *CSP Dom.* 1668–9, p. 349. <sup>5</sup> *Parl. Hist.* v. 127; Bath mss at Longleat House, Thynne pprs. 24, ff. 134–5; Huntington Lib. Hastings mss HA10245, HA8, Thomas Piddocke to Earl of Huntingdon, 2 Feb. 1690, Abney to same, 1 Mar. 1690; Hereford and Worcester RO (Hereford), Harley mss C64/117; *HMC Kenyon*, 339. <sup>6</sup> *The Gen.* v. 87; n.s. vii. 156; Boyer, *Pol. State*, xxxv. 107; PCC 1 Brook; Foss, *Judges*, vii. 82.

A. A. H.

**ABNEY, Sir Thomas** (1640–1722), of Stoke Newington, Mdx. and Theobalds, Herts.

LONDON 1701 (Dec.)–1702

*b.* Jan. 1640, 4th but 3rd surv. s. of James Abney of I. Temple and Willesley, Leics., sheriff of Derbys. 1656, by his 1st w. Jane, da. of Edward Mainwaring of Whitmore, Staffs.; bro. of Sir Edward Abney\*. *educ.* Loughborough, Leics. *m.* (1) lic. 24 Aug. 1668, Sarah (*d.* 1698), da. of Rev. Joseph Caryl, of Bury Street, London, 7ch. *d.v.p.* (at least 4s. 1da.); (2) 21 Aug. 1700, Mary (*d.* 1750), da. of John Gunston of Stoke Newington, 1s. *d.v.p.* 3da. Kntd. 2 Nov. 1693.<sup>1</sup>

Freeman, Fishmongers' Co. 1666, asst. 1691, prime warden 1704; common councilman, London 1689–90, alderman 1692, sheriff 1693, ld. mayor 1700–1.

Commr. taking subscriptions to Bank of Eng. 1694, 1709, Greenwich Hosp. 1695; dir. Bank of Eng. 1694–d.

(with statutory intervals); trustee, receiving loan to Emperor 1706.

Manager, Common Fund 1695; member, New England Co. by 1698; pres. St. Thomas' Hosp. 1707–*d.*<sup>2</sup>

Abney gained prominence as a leading spokesman for Dissenters, his piety leading his biographer to declare that 'the honour and service of God were his aim and business in life'. As the youngest son he moved to the capital to establish himself in trade, and quickly enjoyed a 'considerable increase' in fortune. He also became an important figure in Nonconformist circles, attending the Silver Street congregations of Presbyterian ministers Thomas Jacombe and John Howe. He also married a daughter of the ejected Independent divine Joseph Caryl, thereby proving that he was 'of a catholic spirit, and loved all true Christians rightly holding Christ the head'. However, he played no active role in the London corporation until after the Revolution, his acceptance of which can be gauged by his willingness to lend the government £800 in 1689.<sup>3</sup>

In October 1690 Abney demonstrated his support for his co-religionists by contributing a £10 subscription to the Nonconformist Common Fund, an organization of which he later became a gentleman manager. Under William he sought rapid promotion within the London corporation, briefly serving as a common councilman for St. Peter's Cornhill before becoming an alderman in December 1692. Only seven months later he was chosen as sheriff in an uncontested poll, and while serving in that office he received a knighthood. His standing within the City was further attested when he was appointed in June 1694 as one of the commissioners to take subscriptions for the Bank of England. He was duly elected one of its founding directors, and served intermittently in that capacity for the rest of his life. Another government scheme to receive his backing was the loan to circulate Exchequer bills, to which he subscribed £400 in May 1697. He also invested in the East India trade, but by the spring of 1698 had sold his £1,000 stake in the Old Company.<sup>4</sup>

In September 1699 Abney strongly contested the City's mayoral election, but although one of the two candidates to be returned to the court of aldermen, he failed to gain the chair. He stood again the following year, only to find himself at the centre of a bitter party dispute. His main rival on this occasion was the Tory (Sir) Charles Duncombe\*, who topped the poll of freemen with 800 votes more than Abney. However, in the court of aldermen Sir Thomas achieved victory by 14 votes to 12, a result which infuriated the City Tories, who had been confident of gaining the major-

ity there. Amid 'great animosities' in the capital, Sir Thomas Cooke\* led a campaign to remove Abney, but all Tory efforts to undermine his election proved unsuccessful. At that time Abney was actually cited by the Prussian envoy Frederick Bonet as a 'bon Anglican', but he did not sever his ties with the Dissenters, qualifying himself for office by an occasional conformity to the Established Church.<sup>5</sup>

Abney's mayoralty proved as eventful as his election, his attendance at Dissenting meetings causing renewed controversy. Most significantly, he was cited as the catalyst for Daniel Defoe's *An Inquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters in Cases of Preferment*, which was prefaced by a direct challenge to John Howe to justify the presence of Nonconformists at Anglican services. The corporation itself was a scene of much party manoeuvring, and Abney was subjected to royal pressure when the London common council tried to petition the crown concerning the imprisonment of the Kentish petitioners. Although 'very zealous for the cause of liberty in opposition to illegal and arbitrary power', Abney bowed to the King's wishes and gave his casting vote to defeat the council's motion to address William. Later that year he led the City campaign to address the King to denounce Louis XIV's recognition of the Pretender. 'Though much opposed by a number of his brethren', Abney prevailed, and the wave of loyal addresses imitating London's example was reported to have given 'new life to the Whig interest at home and abroad'. He subsequently gained much credit for this political initiative, a 'considerable person' observing that Abney 'had done the King more service than if he had given him thousands, or raised him a million of money'.<sup>6</sup>

Such prominence led to Abney's candidature at the City election of November 1701, which saw an overwhelming victory for the Whigs. Not content with third place in the London poll, Abney also sought to thwart his Tory rival Sir Thomas Cooke at Colchester. In a letter to the aldermen of the Essex borough, Abney accused Cooke of opposing the recent London address, and then launched another attack 'which was worse than the former'. However, Cooke managed to secure an uncontested return. Abney proved an inconspicuous Member, his only significant contribution to Commons' business resting with an appointment to the drafting committee on a bill to employ the poor. Moreover, even though he clearly sat in the Whig interest, his name does not appear on any parliamentary list. The accession of Anne effectively ended his Commons career, since at the City election of July 1702 a resurgent Tory party managed to oust him and two of his

fellow Whigs. Shortly before the contest his standing in the capital had been weakened by his removal from the colonelcy of a London militia regiment.<sup>7</sup>

Although destined never to sit in the House again, Abney petitioned the Commons on 7 Feb. 1704 in order to defend one of his Hertfordshire properties against the threat of a bill to resume royal grants. Thereafter his contribution to public life was largely confined to City affairs, for he was appointed in February 1706 as a trustee for receiving the loan to the Emperor, and three years later was chosen as a commissioner to enlarge the Bank's stock. He remained true to his political principles, voting in the Whig interest at the City elections of 1710 and 1713. Moreover, as a stubborn defender of Dissenting rights he found the Occasional Conformity Act of 1711 'one of the great trials' of his life. He chose to worship privately rather than lose his City office, a decision taken in consultation with 'several persons of distinction', and one which received the direct support of the Hanoverian court. Within the corporation he continued to play a prominent role, serving as acting mayor in September 1712, and featuring in May 1713 as one of the seven Whigs who withdrew from the court of aldermen to defer the aldermanic election of Tory Joseph Lawrence. A second clash with the Tory aldermen followed in December when Abney supported the publication of an anti-papist sermon, arguing that 'we are in a strange case now when no minister can preach against popery and slavery but it must be called sedition'.<sup>8</sup>

Having sacrificed public worship 'that he might be capable of serving his country and securing the interest of King George', Abney obviously welcomed the Hanoverian succession. He did not gain office under the new King, but remained politically active, attending a meeting of a Whig club in December 1716 to plan the party's strategy for the forthcoming common council elections. He was also said to have 'made several remonstrances to some of the ministers of state' concerning the repeal of the Occasional Conformity Act, and once the campaign had achieved its goal in 1719, he resumed his attendance at Dissenting meetings. For the previous seven years his religious needs had been administered by the great Nonconformist hymnodist Isaac Watts, who for over 30 years resided with the Abney family. Watts also led the widespread mourning which followed Abney's demise on 6 Feb. 1722, an event which was 'universally lamented'. The Father of the City at his death, he was praised as a wise and just magistrate who had encouraged 'all regular endeavours for the reformation of manners'. Moreover, his reputation for philanthropy 'without distinction of parties' had evidently earned

him much respect. St. Thomas' Hospital remained his favourite charity, but two other causes to benefit from his support were the London corporation of the poor and the New England Company, both of which had close ties to Dissent. In the absence of a male heir, his 'very great estate' passed to his widow and three surviving daughters. Together they ensured that Abney House in Stoke Newington remained a mecca for Dissenters, and his widow Dame Mary Abney received special praise as 'a generous friend and succourer of gospel ministers'.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>J. Nichols, *Leics.* iii. 1032; J. Smith, *Magistrate and Christian*, 37; *The Gen.* v. 90–92; Luttrell, *Brief Relation*, iii. 218. <sup>2</sup>Guildhall Lib. mss 5587/1; 5570/6, p. 145; Beaven, *Aldermen*, ii. 118; NLS, Advocates' mss, Bank of Eng. pprs. 31.1.7, f. 146; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* xxiii. 77; Add. 10120, ff. 232–6; Boyer, *Anne Annals*, iv. 126; Dr Williams' Lib. O. D. 68, f. 3; W. Kellaway, *New England Co.* 289. <sup>3</sup>Smith, 2, 37, 41, 66–67; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* ix. 1972, 1979. <sup>4</sup>Dr Williams' Lib. O. D. 67, f. 6; Luttrell, iii. 123; Univ. London mss 65/3; Bodl. Rawl. A.302, ff. 224–7. <sup>5</sup>Luttrell, iv. 566; *HMC Portland*, iii. 631; Centre Kentish Stud. Stanhope mss U1590/053/9, James Vernon I\* to Alexander Stanhope, 4 Oct. 1700; *Vernon-Shrewsbury Letters*, iii. 139; Add. 30000D, f. 288. <sup>6</sup>E. Calamy, *Mems. of Life of John Howe* [1724], 210; Calamy, *Life*, i. 435–6; Smith, 62; G. S. De Krey, *Fractured Soc.* 201. <sup>7</sup>Add. 70075, Dyer's newsletter 27 Nov. 1701; Luttrell, v. 193. <sup>8</sup>*London Poll of 1710*; *London Rec. Soc.* xvii. 66; Smith, 49–50; Folger Shakespeare Lib. Newdigate newsletter 25 Sept. 1712; Beaven, i. 411; Huntington Lib. Hastings mss 44710, ff. 373–4. <sup>9</sup>Calamy, *Life*, ii. 245–6; *London Rec. Soc.* 39, 45; Smith, 51–52, 63; *DNB*; Boyer, *Pol. State*, xxiii. 234; Macfarlane thesis, 324; S. Price, *Funeral Sermon . . . of Dame Mary Abney* [1750], 40.

P. L. G.

**ACLAND, John** (c.1674–1703), of Woodleigh, Devon.

CALLINGTON 1702–May 1703

b. c.1674, 1st s. of Sir Hugh Acland, 1st and 5th Bt.<sup>†</sup>, of Killerton, Devon by Anne, da. of Sir Thomas Daniel of Beswick Hall, Yorks. *educ.* Exeter, Oxf. matric. 12 May 1692, aged 17. *m.* 24 Mar. 1696, Elizabeth, da. of Richard Acland of Barnstaple, Devon and sis. of Richard Acland\*, 5s. (1 *d.v.p.*) 1da.<sup>1</sup>

Acland was the son of a Tory baronet who had represented Barnstaple in the first Exclusion Parliament and Tiverton in the Parliament of James II. He was returned unopposed for Callington in 1702 on the interest of his kinsmen the Rolles, but made no significant contribution to the 1702–3 session. On 30 Oct. 1704 he was classed as a probable supporter of the Tack, but he had in fact died *v.p.* the previous year. He was buried at Broad Clyst 20 May 1703, aged 28, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Hugh<sup>†</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Vivian, *Vis. Devon*, 5. <sup>2</sup>Ibid.

E. C.

**ACLAND, Richard** (1679–1729), of Fremington, Devon.

BARNSTAPLE 1708–1713

*bab.* 22 Jan. 1679, 1st s. of Richard Acland of Barnstaple by his w. Mary. *educ.* Exeter, Oxf. 1697. *m.* 22 May 1700, Susanna (d. 1747), da. of John Lovering, merchant, of Barnstaple and Countisbury, Devon, 3s. (2 *d.v.p.*) 9da. (6 *d.v.p.*). *suc.* fa. 1703.<sup>1</sup>

Acland's father, a wealthy Barnstaple merchant, had purchased the manor of Fremington, three miles from the town, in 1683 and had been nominated mayor under the charter of 1688. His uncle Arthur sat for Barnstaple in the second Exclusion Parliament. Acland was returned for the borough in 1708, succeeding his wife's brother-in-law Samuel Rolle II, but left virtually no mark on proceedings. He voted against the impeachment of Dr Sacheverell early in 1710, and after his re-election later in the year was classed as a Tory in the 'Hanover list' of the new Parliament. On 19 Mar. 1711 he was given leave of absence for a month, though his behaviour had been sufficient to place him among the 'Tory patriots' opposed to the continuance of the war, and the 'worthy patriots' who contributed towards detecting the mismanagements of the late ministry. Another month's leave was accorded him on 21 Mar. 1712. He declined re-election in 1713 and made no subsequent attempt to regain his seat. He died in October 1729, his burial taking place at Barnstaple on the 16th.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Trans. Devon Assoc.* xxxviii. 168, 182. <sup>2</sup>*CSP Dom.* 1687–9, p. 275; Lysons, *Devon*, 241; *Trans. Devon Assoc.* 168.

E. C.

**A'COURT, Pierce** (c.1677–1725), of Ivy Church, nr. Salisbury, Wilts. and Rodden, Som.

HEYTESBURY 1713–1715, 1722–7 Mar. 1725

*b.* c.1677, o. s. of John A'Court of Bath, Som. and Rodden, Som. by Mary, da. and h. of Robert Pierce, MD, of Bath. *educ.* Lincoln, Oxf. *matric.* 29 Mar. 1694, aged 16. *m.* 27 Nov. 1705, Elizabeth (d. 1746), da. and (in her issue) h. of William Ashe I\*, 5s. (1 *d.v.p.*) 1da. *d.v.p.* *suc.* fa. 1701.<sup>1</sup>

Freeman, Wilton 1710–*d.*<sup>2</sup>

A'Court's family originally held land in Somerset and Bristol. He was defeated at by-elections for Bath in 1707 and 1708, but was eventually brought in by his Ashe relatives at Heytesbury. Although he made little recorded contribution to the work of the House, he proved himself a loyal Whig, voting on 18 Mar. 1714

against the expulsion of Richard Steele, and being classed as a Whig in the Worsley list.<sup>3</sup>

A'Court was dropped in 1715 in favour of another brother-in-law, William Ashe II\*, but was returned again in 1722. He made his will on 20 Feb. 1723, bequeathing £200 to his wife and cousin and a further £100 to the caretaker of his house in Bath. His properties at Ivy Church and Almondsbury, Gloucestershire, were left to the trustees Edward Ashe\* and Peter Bathurst\* to pay outstanding debts and secure £150 p.a. for the education of his three surviving younger sons. A'Court died at Ivy Church on 7 Mar. 1725 and was buried next to his father in Haddon chapel, Rodden.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hoare, *Wilts.* Heytesbury, 119, 121. <sup>2</sup>Wilts. RO, G25/1/22, pp. 15, 47, 49. <sup>3</sup>Hoare, 119. <sup>4</sup>*The Gen.* n.s. vi. 208; Hoare, 119; PCC 105 Romney.

D. W. H.

**ACTON, Sir Edward**, 3rd Bt. (c.1650–1716), of Aldenham Hall, nr. Bridgnorth, Salop.

BRIDGNORTH 1689–1705

*b.* c.1650, 1st s. of Sir Walter Acton, 2nd Bt.<sup>†</sup>, of Aldenham Hall by Catherine, da. of Richard Cressett of Upton Cressett and Cound, Salop. *educ.* Queen's, Oxf. *matric.* 4 May 1666, aged 16, MA 1667; I. Temple 1670. *m.* 8 Dec. 1674, Mary, da. and. h. of John Walter of Elberton, Glos., 3s. 5da. *suc.* fa. 1665.<sup>1</sup>

Freeman, Bridgnorth 1673, recorder 1686–*d.*; freeman, Much Wenlock 1676, bailiff 1686–7; sheriff, Salop 1684–5; freeman, Ludlow 1697.<sup>2</sup>

On re-election in 1690 Acton was listed by Lord Carmarthen (Sir Thomas Osborne<sup>†</sup>) as a Tory and as a probable Court supporter, while in December Carmarthen again noted him as a likely supporter. The following April, Robert Harley\* classed Acton as doubtful but possibly a Court supporter.<sup>3</sup>

The increasing influence of the Whigs moved Acton into opposition. He was removed from the Shropshire lieutenancy in 1693 through the influence of Hon. Richard Newport I\*, and although he signed the Association in February 1696, he had been thought likely to vote against the Court over the proposed council of trade in January of that year, and in March voted against fixing the price of guineas at 22s. and in November against the attainder of Sir John Fenwick<sup>†</sup>. Acton's record of attendance in Parliament was noticeably poor: he was given leave of absence on 25 Jan. 1693 for 21 days, on 25 Jan. 1694 for his health, and again on 7 Mar. 1695 and 17 Dec. 1696. On 16 Dec. 1697 he was ordered into custody for non-attendance. Released on

12 Jan. 1698, he was granted leave of absence again on 21 Apr. following. In an analysis of the general election results compiled about September 1698, Acton was marked as a member of the Country party and was also forecast as likely to oppose a standing army. After 1700, his voting reflected the changes in the government: he was listed in February 1701 as likely to support the Court in agreeing with the committee of the supply's resolution to continue the 'Great Mortgage', and in the aftermath of that session was blacklisted as one who had opposed the making of preparations for war. He then voted on 26 Feb. 1702 in favour of the resolution vindicating the conduct of the Commons in the impeachments of the Junto ministers. In Anne's first Parliament he continued to vote with the High Tories, dividing on 13 Feb. 1703 against agreeing with the Lords' amendments to the bill for enlarging the time to take the oath of abjuration, was also forecast in March 1704 as a supporter of the government's actions in the Scotch Plot, and voted for the Tack on 28 Nov. 1704. His having been a 'Tacker' may have cost his family the seat, for although he possessed a considerable interest at Bridgnorth, his son Whitmore\* was defeated there by two Whigs at the 1705 election. Acton died on 28 Sept. 1716.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. Salop Arch. Soc.* liv. 195–6; *Glos. N. and Q.* iii. 237. <sup>2</sup> Salop RO, Forester mss, copy of Much Wenlock corp. bk.; Ludlow bor. recs. min. bk. 1690–1712. <sup>3</sup> *Luttrell Diary*, 143; Luttrell, *Brief Relation*, iv. 319–20. <sup>4</sup> Add. 70235, Sir Edward Harley\* to Robert Harley\*, 28 July 1693; *HMC Portland*, iv. 271; *Trans. Salop Arch. Soc.* 195.

D. W. H.

**ACTON, Whitmore** (1678–1732), of Aldenham Hall, nr. Bridgnorth, Salop.

BRIDGNORTH 1710–1713

*bap.* 1 Apr. 1678, 1st s. of Sir Edward Acton, 3rd Bt.\*; *educ.* St. Edmund Hall, Oxf. 1695; M. Temple 1699; *m.* c.1710, Elizabeth, da. of Matthew Gibbon of Putney, Surr., 1s. 3da. *suc.* fa. as 4th Bt. 28 Sept. 1716.<sup>1</sup>

Freeman, Much Wenlock 1695, Ludlow 1697; sheriff, Salop 1728–9.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Hearne remembered the young Acton at Oxford:

He was a tall, handsome young man, and wore his own long hair. The daughter of Alderman Eustace of Oxford was a great companion of his, tho' she was married at the same time to a Gentleman Commoner (Mr Gower) of Merton College, and he used to entertain her in Edmund Hall, and to spend the nights with her and often walked out with her.<sup>3</sup>

A Tory like his father, Acton was defeated at Bridgnorth in 1705 but regained the seat for his family in 1710 after a stiff contest. Classed as a Tory in the 'Hanover list', he had entertained Sacheverell during the doctor's visit to Shropshire earlier that year, and in the first session of the new Parliament was one of the 'worthy patriots' who detected the mismanagements of the previous ministry. He was also a member of the October Club. Otherwise, however, he left no imprint on the proceedings of the Commons.<sup>4</sup>

Acton stood at Bridgnorth again in 1727 but was unsuccessful, and died at Aldenham on 9 Jan. 1732.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IGI, Salop; A. W. Gibbons, *Gibbons Fam. Notes*, 45; *Trans. Salop Arch. Soc.* ser. 4, v. 66. <sup>2</sup> Salop RO, Forester mss, copy of Much Wenlock corp. bk.; Ludlow bor. recs. min. bk. 1690–1712. <sup>3</sup> *Hearne Colls.* i. 118. <sup>4</sup> Forester mss, Sir William Forester to George Weld, 15 July 1710; G. Holmes, *Trial of Sacheverell*, 246. <sup>5</sup> *Hearne Colls.* xi. 21.

D. W. H.

**ADDERLEY, William** (d. 1693), of Lincoln's Inn, and East Burnham, Bucks.

NEW WINDSOR 17 May 1690–June 1693

3rd s. of William Adderley of Colney Hatch, Mdx. by Margaret, da. and h. of Edmund Eyre of East Burnham. *educ.* L. Inn 1658, called 1670. *m.* bef. 1666, Sarah, 4s. 2da. *suc.* fa. 1664.<sup>1</sup>

Collector sixpenny writs in Chancery 1668–9; cursitor, Beds. and Bucks. by 1671–?83; examiner in Chancery May 1685–Aug. 1691.<sup>2</sup>

Clerk of the peace, Mdx. 1673–83; commr. recusants, Bucks. 1675.<sup>3</sup>

Although only the third son, Adderley was heir to his father's property in Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, including lands at Burnham and New Windsor, because his elder brothers had taken the name Eyre in order to inherit the estates of their maternal grandfather, Edmund Eyre (d. 1650). Having trained as a lawyer, Adderley seems to have preferred a career in legal administration. In September 1668 he received a commission to collect the profits of sixpenny writs in Chancery at an annual rent of £1,400. This position only lasted for a year, but it was probably a mere adjunct to his Chancery office as cursitor for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire which he was recorded by Chamberlayne as holding in 1671, the first year such details were noticed. As these officials were responsible for making out the writs of course which kept the ordinary law courts functioning there was an obvious link with his role in 1668–9. In 1673 he was probably the William Adderley who was appointed clerk of the peace for Middlesex. Other activities

included appointment to the commission of 1675 for seizing two-thirds of recusants' lands in Buckinghamshire, an activity entirely compatible with his willingness in 1679 to act as a surety for Richard Deerham, the receiver of recusant estates north of the Trent. Rather surprisingly, he is recorded as resigning from the clerkship of the peace in 1683, and it is possible that he relinquished his place as cursitor (worth as much as £1,300) at the same date because although Chamberlayne records him as *in situ* in 1682, he was out by 1687. In the early months of James II's reign he was named as an examiner in Chancery, a place he retained until 1691. His response to the events of James II's reign is unknown: indeed when the 'three questions' were asked in Buckinghamshire it was noted that, although a deputy-lieutenant, he had never been sworn into office.<sup>4</sup>

No evidence survives concerning Adderley's attitude to the Revolution of 1688, although he contested the elections for the Convention at New Windsor. He was probably a Tory, for when he petitioned Parliament his target was Henry Powle\*, the Whig Speaker, rather than the other successful candidate, Sir Christopher Wren\*. Some contemporary observers saw his challenge as inspired by Tory manoeuvres to remove Powle from the Chair, but Adderley chose to fight on the principle of a wide franchise for the borough. Although the House upheld Powle's election, Adderley was eventually to prove his point. On 17 Dec. 1689 he provided the Lords with information on the fees taken by the examiners in Chancery. Defeated again at New Windsor at the general election of 1690, he petitioned successfully on the issue of the franchise, being seated on 17 May 1690. His name appears on Lord Carmarthen's (Sir Thomas Osborne<sup>†</sup>) list of December 1690, probably indicating his support for the embattled chief minister in case of an opposition attack in the Commons. In April 1691 Robert Harley\* classed Adderley as a Court supporter. However, Adderley's impact on the House was minimal and he made no recorded speeches. He was buried at East Burnham on 28 June 1693.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lipscomb, *Bucks.* iii. 221; *VCH Bucks.* iii. 175; IGI, London; *Coll. Top. et Gen.* iv. 287. <sup>2</sup>*CSP Dom.* 1667-8, p. 588; 1668-9, p. 607; *HMC Lords*, ii. 327. <sup>3</sup>Stephens, *Clerks of Counties 1360-1960*, p. 127; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* iv. 788. <sup>4</sup>PCC 65 Grey, 110 Mico; *Coll. Top. et Gen.* 278; *CSP Dom.* 1667-8, p. 588; 1668-9, p. 607; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* ii. 439, 619; iii. 285; iv. 788; vi. 72; G. E. Aylmer, *King's Servants*, 223; Duckett, *Penal Laws and Test Act (1883)*, 145. <sup>5</sup>*HMC Lords*, ii. 327; *Coll. Top. et Gen.* 287.

**ADDISON, Joseph** (1672-1719), of Sandy End, Fulham, Mdx.; St. Margaret's, Westminster, and Bilton Hall, Warws.<sup>1</sup>

LOSTWITHIEL 1708-20 Dec. 1709  
MALMESBURY 11 Mar. 1710-17 June 1719

*b.* 1 May 1672, 1st s. of Lancelot Addison, DD, chaplain in ordinary to Charles II and James II, and dean of Lichfield 1683-*d.*, by his 1st w. Jane, da. of Nathaniel Gulston, DD, rector of Wymondham, Leics., sis. of William Gulston, DD, bp. of Bristol. *educ.* Amesbury (Thomas Naish), Salisbury g.s., Lichfield g.s. 1683-6, Charterhouse 1686-7; Queen's, Oxf. 1687; Magdalen, Oxf. (demy) 1689-97, BA 1691, MA 1693, fellow 1697-1711; travelled abroad (France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, United Provinces) 1699-1704. *m.* 9 Aug. 1716, Charlotte, dowager Countess of Warwick, da. and h. of Sir Thomas Myddelton, 2nd Bt.<sup>†</sup>, of Chirk Castle, Denb., sis. of Sir Richard Myddelton, 3rd Bt.\*., wid. of Edward Rich, 6th Earl of Warwick and 3rd Earl of Holland, 1da. *suc. fa.* 1703.

Commr. appeals in excise 1704-June 1708; under-sec. of state 1705-Jan. 1709; sec. to Lord Halifax (Charles Montagu\*) on mission to the United Provinces and Hanover Apr.-Aug. 1706; chief sec. [I] Jan. 1709-10, Sept. 1714-Aug. 1715; PC [I] 1709-*d.*; keeper of recs. in Bermingham tower, Dublin Castle 1709-15 June 1719 (apptd. for life Oct. 1715); sec. to Lds. justices Aug.-Sept. 1714; Id. of Trade Dec. 1715-July 1717; PC 16 Apr. 1717; sec. of state (south) Apr. 1717-18.<sup>2</sup>

MP [I] 1709-13.

Freeman, Dublin 1709.<sup>3</sup>

Addison, the Whig *littérateur* and administrator, was born into genteel poverty as the son of a High Church clergyman whose hopes of preferment beyond his deanery of Lichfield had been effectively terminated by the Revolution of 1688. With both grandfathers parsons and an uncle a bishop, and having grown up in a bookish household, he began an academic career, being chosen a demy of Magdalen College, Oxford in the 'golden election' of 1689, and proceeding to a fellowship eight years later. However, neither scholarship, which he dismissed as narrow pedantry, nor a religious vocation held enough attractions for him, and he determined to make his way in the wider world, perhaps aiming at a classical ideal of citizenship, the combination of 'patriotism and urbanity'. He made his early reputation in Oxford as a Latin poet, and already by the time he became a fellow of Magdalen had gained admittance to the coterie of London wits that congregated at Will's coffee-house, and had even received praise from Dryden. He had also applied himself to seeking out patrons from among the leading Whig politicians, flattering Charles Montagu with inclusion in his 'account of the great

English poets', and dedicating poetry to Lord Somers (Sir John\*). Despite his father's example, and the influence of High Tory tutors and friends at Magdalen, of whom the most notable was Henry Sacheverell (according to tradition, his room-mate), Addison had early shown himself a Whig, publishing in 1689 a tribute to the new regime, and in 1690 congratulatory verses on King William's safe return from Ireland. These convictions, in particular his faith in the Revolution of 1688, remained throughout his adult life. His partisanship was never of the strident kind, however. His correspondence, for example, betrayed few traces of his commitment to the Whig cause. This was partly a reflection of his natural diffidence, described somewhat acidly by Pope as

Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,  
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;  
Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieg'd,  
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged.

Later, as the 'Spectator', Addison was to condemn 'a furious party spirit', which

when it rages in its full violence, exerts itself in civil war and bloodshed; and when it is under its greatest restraints naturally breaks out in falsehood, distraction, calumny, and a partial administration of justice. In a word, it fills a nation with spleen and rancour, and extinguishes all the seeds of good nature, compassion and humanity.

This discreet temperament, allied to his talents and political reliability, recommended him to his Whig patrons, and in 1698, at the prompting of Montagu and Somers, he was granted £200 by the Treasury towards the expenses of a European tour, designed to help him prepare for the diplomatic service. Montagu also interceded with the authorities at Magdalen to obtain for him a dispensation from ordination, so that he could keep his college fellowship. Although he was able to meet many prominent European literary figures, travel, especially in France and Italy, confirmed Addison's prejudices, against Catholicism and against France: 'the French', he wrote, 'are certainly the most implacable, and the most dangerous enemies of the British constitution . . . we are thus in a natural state of war . . . with the French nation'.<sup>4</sup>

Addison arrived back from the Continent early in 1704 to a changing political climate, with his two protectors, Montagu (now Lord Halifax) and Somers, out of office but acquiring increasing weight with the Godolphin–Marlborough administration. There was no diplomatic posting for him, but he did not return to Magdalen, remaining in London to polish his account of his *Travels in Italy* and to join the Kit-Cat Club. At Halifax's suggestion, Lord Godolphin (Sidney<sup>†</sup>)

approached him via the chancellor of the Exchequer, Hon. Henry Boyle\*, to compose a public poem to celebrate Blenheim, and so successful was the outcome, 'The Campaign', that he was rewarded with a commissionership of appeals, to the value of £200 a year, with a promise of further advancement, which materialized the following year in the form of an appointment as under-secretary in the southern department. His smooth progress, interrupted only by the occasional sniping of Tory satirists, was much envied by Defoe, who wrote in 1705,

Envy and party spleen h' has never known,  
No humbling jails has [sic] pulled his fancy down.

Having accompanied Halifax to Hanover in 1706, he published the next year a strong statement of the Whig case for the resolute pursuance of the war until the 'French and Spanish monarchies' were 'entirely dis-united'. *The Present State of the War . . . Considered* drew upon personal experience to denounce France as a 'constant and most dangerous enemy to the British nation'. At the 1708 election he was brought in at Lostwithiel in a last-minute arrangement made by his master in the secretary's office, Lord Sunderland (Charles, Lord Spencer\*), with a local Whig interest. Inevitably, he was listed as a Whig. Once elected, he promptly sold his excise place, presumably to prevent disqualification from sitting, and not, as his most recent biographer has argued, because he was short of money, a state of affairs which in any case seems highly unlikely. Then in January 1709 he was appointed as Lord Wharton's (Hon. Thomas\*) chief secretary in Ireland, sailing to Dublin in April. According to the (admittedly suspect) testimony of his friend Swift, the behaviour of the Irish Whigs 'extremely offended' Addison's sensibilities: 'he told me they were a sort of people who seemed to think that the principles of a Whig consisted in nothing else but damning the Church, reviling the clergy, abetting the Dissenters, and speaking contemptibly [sic] of revealed religion'. In this office Addison proved a faithful servant and an assiduous correspondent, but he does not appear ever to have participated in the political management which was one of the Castle administration's most important functions. It went against his character, and in any case the viceroy's extrovert personality left little room. Likewise, although he attended debates in the Irish parliament, no evidence of any contribution survives, and there are apocryphal tales of his extraordinary bashfulness in this context. With Wharton his relationship was comfortable but never close, and some idea of his true feelings may be gleaned from his reaction to news of Tory plans to impeach the lord

lieutenant in the 1709–10 session of the British Parliament. ‘For my own part’, Addison wrote, ‘though perhaps I was not the most obliged person that was near his lordship, I shall think myself bound in honour to do him what right I can.’ His ‘obligation’ consisted not only of the chief secretaryship, worth £2,000 a year, but a grant of the sinecure of keeper of the records in the Bermingham tower of Dublin Castle, ‘an old obscure place’, as Swift called it, to which an enhanced salary of £400 was then attached. Addison was subsequently to press Godolphin unsuccessfully to increase this sum by £100 and alter the tenure from pleasure to good behaviour. One of the incidental uses of the appointment may have been to oblige his resignation from the seat at Lostwithiel before the hearing of what was to be a very powerful petition against the return, and he made considerable efforts to prove his title to the office before the British parliamentary session of 1709–10 opened. In fact the Lostwithiel petition was heard, and he was unseated, before he had accomplished the proof, and he had to try to speed up the process again before a by-election arose in another suitable constituency. Fortunately he had succeeded when, in March 1710, a vacancy suddenly occurred in one of Wharton’s boroughs, Malmesbury, where, coincidentally, the son of a former pupil of Addison was also lord of the manor. The by-election took place late enough for him to avoid any potential embarrassment over the impeachment of Henry Sacheverell, and he departed once more for Dublin in April, returning in August with, if Swift is to be believed, the praises of Irish Tories as well as Whigs ringing in his ears.<sup>5</sup>

Loss of office in the ministerial revolution of 1710 was a financial blow to Addison, but not a grievous one, especially since, through the favour of the new viceroy of Ireland, Ormond, he was able to keep his sinecure in the Dublin Castle muniment room. Always careful in money matters, he was sufficiently well off not to need to come to any arrangement with the Tory ministers. Indeed, his friendship with Swift cooled when the latter began to write for the incoming ministry, though, typically of Addison, there was no serious rupture. He was even able to pass a pleasant evening at table with Henry St. John II\* and to ‘talk in a friendly manner of party’. George Berkeley, a visitor to London, reported in 1713 that Addison and Richard Steele\* had declared themselves ‘entirely persuaded there is a design for bringing over the Pretender’, though this particular conviction was short-lived. On the whole, Berkeley thought Addison ‘more earnest in the Whig cause than Mr Steele’, and indeed he was a dutiful member of the Hanover Club as well as the

Kit-Cat. After his ‘easy and undisputed’ re-election at Malmesbury in 1710 he was classed as a Whig in the ‘Hanover list’, and on 7 Dec. 1711 voted for the ‘No Peace without Spain’ motion. In general, however, he took little or no part in parliamentary business, except for one occasion on 16 May 1713 when old loyalties obliged him to appear as a teller for an amendment intended to soften the terms of a resolution concerning Lord Wharton proposed in the aftermath of the report of the commissioners of accounts. Writing had now become his main preoccupation. Having collaborated with Steele on the *Tatler* in 1709–10 he began in March 1711 its successor, the *Spectator*, which for 18 months purveyed a hugely popular mixture of polite philosophy and gentle social satire, Addison’s avowed aim being ‘to bring philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses’. Although the authors disclaimed any ‘stroke of party’, the general tone was distinctively, if mildly, Whiggish, an antidote to the furious polemic of the Tories. From time to time more obvious political propaganda crept in. As the presiding genius of the Whig wits at Button’s, Addison could not entirely avoid the task of writing for his party. He had, in September 1710, endeavoured to answer the *Examiner* with his *Whig Examiner*. Later he offered a verse to lament the exile of a former hero, Marlborough (John Churchill†), in 1712:

O censure undeserved! Unequal fate!  
Which strove to lessen Him who made Her great.

And following the defeat in 1713 of the French commerce bill, which he had voted against on 18 June, he contributed a ‘playful Whig parable’, *The Late Trial and Conviction of Count Tariff*, attacking the *Examiner* again, among other Tory targets. In private he assisted a Hanoverian minister in preparing official papers for submission to the British government. However, his most successful piece of writing in this period was his reworked play *Cato*, which was produced to great acclaim in 1713, proving to be ‘so subtly ambiguous or strictly non-party’ in its ‘political innuendoes’ that both sides ‘applied’ it ‘to themselves’ and, like the Whigs and Tories in Ireland, vied with each other in the volume of their applause of the author.<sup>6</sup>

Before the 1713 election Addison paid some £8,000 to purchase Bilton Hall, near Rugby, in order to make himself eligible for a parliamentary seat under the 1711 Landed Qualification Act, and also to acquire the rural retreat essential for any Augustan statesman. He continued to sit for Malmesbury, though, and did not attempt a Warwickshire constituency. Among several

advisers consulted by Steele in the composition of *The Crisis*, in his case in the correction of drafts, he was one of those nominated by the Kit-Cat Club to prepare Steele's defence against the projected Commons' motion of expulsion. In the event, it was Robert Walpole II\* who provided the basis for Steele's speech, though Addison prompted Steele from a nearby bench. Subsequently, as Steele recounted, Addison was 'sent out after me, from my friends, to bid me not be seen till I heard what will be the censure'. Naturally, Addison voted on 18 Mar. 1714 against Steele's expulsion, and was classified as a Whig both in the Worsley list and in a list of the Members re-elected in 1715.<sup>7</sup>

Addison was appointed, through Lord Halifax's intercession, as secretary to the regency upon Queen Anne's death. This office seemed to many to be an augury of immediate high preferment, possibly as a secretary of state. Addison himself looked forward to a place on the Board of Trade, and was bitterly disappointed to find himself once again chief secretary for Ireland, this time under his former superior as secretary of state, Lord Sunderland. He was, however, in the next few years to secure not only the post on the Board of Trade, but also the secretaryship of state for the southern department in Sunderland's administration. In neither capacity did he cut a figure in the Commons. He died on 17 June 1719.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, this biography is based on P. Smithers, *Life of Joseph Addison* (1968) and *Addison Letters* ed. Graham. <sup>2</sup> SP 63/362/10-11; Add. 70677, Misc. 48; *Liber Munerum Publicorum Hiberniae* ed. Lascelles, i(2), 78-79. <sup>3</sup> *Cal. Ancient Recs. Dublin* ed. Gilbert, vi. 397. <sup>4</sup> G. Holmes, *Trial of Sacheverell*, 8; J. Carswell, *Old Cause*, 158; H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, 100; W. L. Sachse, *Ld. Somers*, 195, 199. <sup>5</sup> G. M. Trevelyan, *Eng. under Queen Anne*, i. 422; *Poems on Affairs of State* ed. Ellis, vi. 666; vii. 166; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* xix. 400; Carswell, 106; *Swift Works* ed. Davis, x. 58; *Cal. Treas. Pprs.* 1708-14, p. 163; Hayton thesis, 192. <sup>6</sup> *Bolingbroke Corresp.* iv. 112-13; Add. 47027, ff. 13-14; *HMC 7th Rep.* 238; *Swift Stella* ed. Davis, 52; A. L. Rowse, *Early Churchills*, 316; *The Late Trial and Conviction of Count Tariff* (1713); Trevelyan, iii. 258; *Wentworth Pprs.* 330. <sup>7</sup> Cobbett, *Parly. Hist.* vi. 1239, 1268; *Steele Corresp.* 295, 478; Coxe, *Walpole*, i. 45. <sup>8</sup> *Wentworth Pprs.* 410.

D. W. H.

**AISLABIE, John** (1670-1742), of Studley Royal, nr. Ripon, Yorks. and Red Lion Square, London.

RIPON 1695-1702  
NORTHALLERTON 1702-1705  
RIPON 1705-8 Mar. 1721

*b.* 4 Dec. 1670, 3rd s. of George Aislabie (*d.* 1675), registrar to abp. of York, by Mary, da. and h. of Sir John Mallory of Studley Royal. *educ.* York (Mr Tomlinson); St. John's, Camb. 1687; Trinity Hall, Camb. 1692, LL.B. 1692. *m.* (1) 2 June 1694 (with £5,000), Anne (*d.* 1700),

da. of Sir William Rawlinson of Hendon, Mdx., 1s. 3da. (1 *d.v.p.*); (2) lic. 25 Apr. 1713, Judith, da. of Sir Thomas Vernon\*, wid. of Dr. Stephen Waller of Hall Barn, Beaconsfield, Bucks. *s.p. suc.* bro. George 1693.<sup>1</sup>

?Registrar to abp. York ?c. 1675; asst. Ripon Nov. 1698, alderman Dec. 1698, mayor 1702-3.<sup>2</sup>

Commr. Aire and Calder navigation 1699, building 50 new churches 1712-27.<sup>3</sup>

Ld. of Admiralty Oct. 1710-Apr. 1714; treasurer of navy Oct. 1714-18; PC 12 July 1716-21; chancellor of Exchequer, 1718-21.<sup>4</sup>

Originally Baltic merchants, the Aislabies were well established in York by the end of the 17th century. Aislabie's father very much enhanced their fortunes and status by marrying into one of the oldest landed families in the county, although in 1675 his marriage 'above himself' was to lead indirectly to his death in a duel with (Sir) Jonathan Jennings\*, who had insulted Aislabie, calling him 'the scum of the county'. In 1693 John Aislabie inherited the estate of Studley Royal from his elder brother. The proximity of this estate to Ripon gave Aislabie a considerable interest in the borough, though in the 1690s he still relied upon the support of his wife's uncle, Archbishop Sharp, who had much influence in Ripon, to secure his return to Parliament. Prior to the 1695 election the Duke of Leeds (Sir Thomas Osborne<sup>1</sup>) informed the archbishop that he could do good at Ripon if he used his interest there to influence the election result: 'As Mr [Jonathan] Jennings\* . . . will be sure of the first with a little of your Grace's countenance, so with your Grace's help Mr Aislabie may be the other member.' Although opposed to the idea of endeavouring to influence elections in general, the archbishop agreed to interpose at Ripon, and secured Aislabie's return. His ensuing political career was governed by voting patterns and party allegiances that 'defy classification', though he 'was taken by his contemporaries for a Tory'.<sup>5</sup>

Aislabie was the first member of his family to enter Parliament. His early career was relatively quiet, although from the outset a pattern of association with trade and revenue matters became apparent. In a probable forecast for the divisions of 31 Jan. 1696 on the proposed council of trade he was listed as likely to oppose the Court. He signed the Association promptly, though he was not recorded as voting in the division on the price of guineas in March. On the 28th he told against a motion for receiving an amendment from the Lords to the bill for encouraging the recruitment of seamen. In the 1696-7 session he voted on 25 Nov. for the attainder of Sir John Fenwick<sup>†</sup>. On 14 Jan. 1697 he was appointed to the drafting committee for a

clause, or clauses, for better explaining the recoinage acts, the first of many pieces of legislation with which he was to be associated. In the 1697–8 session, following the presentation of a petition from the corporation and inhabitants of Ripon, Aislabie was appointed on 26 Jan. 1698 to the drafting committee for a bill for the more effectual prevention of the export of wool. Returned again for Ripon in the 1698 election, he was classed as a Court supporter in an analysis of the election results compiled in about September. However, he was included also on a forecast of those likely to oppose a standing army, and has been identified, from his absence from the Court side in the division on the disbanding bill on 18 Jan. 1699, as a Country Whig. Aislabie's affiliation with the Whigs during the last years of William III's reign appears to have been a temporary relationship. The following session, in 1699–1700, proved to be a distressing time for Aislabie. On 11 Dec. 1699 he was ordered into the custody of the serjeant-at-arms for being absent from a call of the House. Having been discharged on the 14th, personal tragedy struck when his wife and a daughter died in a fire at his house in Red Lion Square in January 1700. His son was only saved by being carried out of an upper window. The fire was said to have been started deliberately by a servant to conceal the theft of a casket of jewels.<sup>6</sup>

The death of his wife and daughter may have accounted in part for Aislabie's lack of political activity over the next few years. However, an analysis of the House into interests compiled in early 1700, while listing Aislabie under the interest of Archbishop Sharp, noted that this classification was 'doubtful'. This may have been due to Aislabie's successful endeavours to improve his personal interest in Ripon through the purchase of burgages, thereby releasing him from a dependence upon the archbishop. Aislabie was returned once again for Ripon in January 1701, and in February was listed as likely to support the Court in agreeing with the resolutions of the committee of supply to continue the 'Great Mortgage'. However, his absence from the House was noted on 6 June, when Thomas Frewen\*, executor to the late Archbishop Frewen of York, presented a petition which required Aislabie's presence. Three days later Aislabie was in attendance at the House, when the petition was heard. He was returned again for Ripon in November in a contested election, and in keeping with his fluid party allegiances, was classed by Robert Harley\* with the Tories in December. His parliamentary activity seems to have been hampered in 1702 by his election as mayor of Ripon, even though the corporation passed a resolution allowing him to dispense

with the requirement to be resident in the borough during his term of office on account of his being an MP. His time as mayor, which may have excluded him from contesting the Ripon election, may also explain the accommodation reached between him and the Whig Sir William Hustler\* for the 1702 election. Aislabie was returned for Northallerton, Hustler's normal constituency, while Hustler was returned in Aislabie's place at Ripon. The success of this arrangement suggests that Aislabie's interest in Ripon was already strong, though he improved it further when mayor, paying for the reconstruction of the market cross at a cost of about £500, restoring 'the wakerman's horn', and, 'besides other presents' to the corporation, presenting his fellow aldermen with a handsome silver cup for the use of future mayors. However, Aislabie did attend the House on occasion, and on 11 Feb. 1703, while dining at Archbishop Sharp's in the company of Bishop Nicolson, he informed the company of 'the long remonstrance of the Commons (this day) against the ministry in the last reign'.<sup>7</sup>

From 1704 onwards Aislabie became more active in Parliament and politics in general. Having had a quiet time during the 1703–4 session, in which he acted as a teller on 10 Jan. 1704 in favour of a motion for a second reading of the wine duties bill, Aislabie's Country Tory affiliations began to come to the fore during the 1704–5 session. In October 1704 he was forecast by Harley as a probable opponent of the Tack, and he did not vote for it on 28 Nov. On 7 Dec. he acted as a teller against committing the bill to regulate button-making, while on 13 Jan. 1705 he was appointed to the drafting committee for a bill to exclude those placemen from the House who held offices created since 1685. Aislabie's continuing interest in economic matters was signalled by his telling. On 23 Feb. he acted as a teller against an amendment to the bill prohibiting trade with France, which was designed to legitimize the importation of French wines through a friendly country, where such trade agreements were already contracted. In February and March he took an active part on behalf of the Commons in the Aylesbury case, serving on committees of inquiry and for managing a conference over the writs of error. On 13 Mar. he was named as a manager for a conference over the Lords' refusal of the Tory-inspired amendment to a naturalization bill, which aimed at denying voting rights to property-holding naturalized foreigners. However, even in this instance Aislabie has been identified as one of three managers 'of doubtful political leanings'.<sup>8</sup>

Returned once again for Ripon in 1705, and having been recorded by Bishop Nicolson in his diary as part

of a 'throng' of MPs he met at Doncaster who were rushing to the new Parliament for the vote on the Speaker, Aislabie demonstrated his flexible allegiances by supporting the Court candidate in the division on 25 Oct. On 12 Nov. he was the first-named to the drafting committee for a bill for the ease of sheriffs in their office and in passing their accounts, which he saw through all its stages in the Commons. In a contribution to the debate on the Tories' 'Hanover motion' on 4 Dec. he again demonstrated his tendency to act independently, when he appeared to oppose the proposed address to bring over the Princess Sophia, observing that those who had previously been for an address were now against it. His Country credentials also came to the fore on the 13th when he was one of four Members appointed to prepare a bill for limiting the number of placemen in the House, while on the 19th, when the Tory Charles Caesar accused 'a great lord' [Lord Treasurer Godolphin (Sidney)] of corresponding with St. Germain in the previous reign, Aislabie favoured showing 'compassion' to Caesar and advocated a reprimand rather than confinement in the Tower. In January 1706 Aislabie figured prominently among those who favoured the insertion of a place clause in the regency bill. Aislabie's contributions to the debates on this 'Whimsical clause' demonstrated his Country instincts. On 12 Jan. he argued that, without some such provision, 'all officers then in being may sit' in the Parliament which would convene at the Queen's death. He spoke again on the 15th, and on the 21st argued that the clause would 'perfect' the regency bill. On the 24th he told in favour of an amendment to the clause, which imposed a specific penalty on placemen who sat in Parliament, by making them ineligible to sit for ten years and fining them £500, instead of the non-specific reference to the punitive clauses of an act of Charles II's reign for excluding Catholics from Parliament. In keeping with his early speeches, he did not support the Court in the division on the place clause on 18 Feb. It was reported the next day that 'Aislabie is allowed by all, even the Whig Lords who heard the debate, to have spoke as well in it as ever anybody did in any'.<sup>9</sup>

In the summer of 1706 Aislabie was in contact with Secretary Harley, in relation to matters of an official nature. However, this contact also may have been the beginning of an endeavour on Aislabie's part to attach himself to a particular interest for the purposes of attaining government office. On 19 June he forwarded to Harley information received from the mayor of Ripon about a local lawyer who had allegedly declared that 'all who frequented any public worship where the Queen was prayed for were rebels and traitors', while

on 15 July he sent him a loyal address from Ripon corporation for presentation to the Queen. The 1706-7 session saw Aislabie's involvement in a miscellany of legislative initiatives. First-named on 17 Dec. to the drafting committee for a bill for the sale of part of the Yorkshire estates of the late Christopher Lister\* for the payment of debts, he presented this bill on 22 Jan. 1707. The following day he acted as a teller against a motion that the Whig Daniel Harvey\* had been duly elected for Clitheroe. On 4 Feb. he was appointed to draft a Yorkshire estate bill. In the summer Aislabie was in contact with Harley once more, writing on 4 June to request some preferment in the navy for his kinsman Edward Blckett. On 11 Dec. he was first-named to the drafting committee for a bill concerning Irish forfeited estates, which he later presented to the House. He was also nominated on the 11th to the drafting committee for the bill to complete the Union, and on 21 Feb. he reported from the committee of inquiry into the representation of the commissioners for the Equivalent. Accordingly, on the 23rd, he was first-named to the body ordered to draft the bill for further directing payment of the Equivalent. The need for clarification of laws affected by the Union led to his appointment on the 27th to the drafting committee for the ease of Scottish Quakers. He also told on two occasions in March: on the 9th, when he told in favour of an amendment to Bishop Nicolson's cathedral bill, for allowing appeals from a bishop's local visitation, and on the 23rd, when he told against agreeing with a Lords' amendment to the East Riding land registry bill. The next day he was appointed to the drafting committee for a Yorkshire estate bill.<sup>10</sup>

In keeping with Aislabie's fluid political allegiances he was classed as a Tory in a parliamentary list of early 1708 and as a Whig in a later list of 1708. Returned again at Ripon in 1708, in the first session of the new Parliament he was noted for opposing certain expedients suggested by the Court party in the debates, following the Queen's Speech, on proposals for completing the Union. His occasional incarnation as a Tory was signalled on 15 Jan. 1709, when he told against the Whig Sir Cleave More, 2nd Bt.\*, being declared duly elected for Bramber, and on 8 Mar. when he acted as a teller in favour of the Country Tory Robert Orme\* being declared duly elected for Midhurst. However, despite his apparent affiliation with the Tory party, his continued adherence to Country principles was reported by John Pringle\* in March when he included Aislabie among a group of Country Whigs who made occasional, although unsuccessful, attacks upon the ministry. Aislabie's role in the preparation of various economic and financial

measures continued with his appointment to prepare a bill for the more effectual prohibition of imports of French wine and other goods (9 Mar.). His involvement in Scottish affairs included telling, on 8 Apr., for an amendment to the provisions for treason trials in Scotland in the bill for improving the Union, which represented a success on the part of his Country Whig associates. He also acted as a teller on the 18th against an amendment to the same bill. His Country principles were again visible in the 1709–10 session, when, on 25 Jan. 1710, he was one of the Members ordered to prepare a place bill. On 10 Feb. a complaint was made of a breach of privilege committed against Aislabie by a sheriff's bailiff, John Farrington, though by the 20th Aislabie was able to inform the House that Farrington 'had given him satisfaction', and the matter was dropped. On the 16th he was first-nominated to the drafting committee for a bill for the better security of rents and to prevent frauds by tenants, seeing the bill through all stages in the House. During the trial of Dr Sacheverell Aislabie displayed a dry sense of humour on 27 Feb. when the clerk was calling Members in alphabetical order of counties for proceeding to Westminster Hall. Several Scottish MPs objected to being relegated to the end, even after Wales, but Aislabie 'laughed off their protests that Aberdeenshire should have been called first by assuring them that when one of their own countrymen was impeached, they should have the precedency with pleasure'. Whether in keeping with his Country Tory affiliations or his independent nature, he voted against Sacheverell's impeachment.<sup>11</sup>

Following the fall of the Godolphin administration Aislabie again turned his attention to Harley, writing on 20 Aug. 'to congratulate you upon the happy turn of affairs, and to praise you the author of so great a revolution. I am not capable of advancing the public service except in respect of such elections as shall serve you.' It would appear Aislabie's intention was to procure a place in government through Harley's patronage, and by 21 Sept. rumours were spreading that Aislabie was to succeed Robert Walpole II\* as treasurer of the navy. However, on the 24th, Lord Orrery (Hon. Charles Boyle II\*) confirmed that no decision had been made, when he informed Harley that

I find by Mr Aislabie that he would take it well if you would either say something to him yourself or commission me to say something to him before he goes into the country [for the elections], which I believe he designs to do in a few days. The town has given him a place which I perceive would not be so agreeable to him as another employment in the hands of the same gentleman whom it is reported he is to succeed, and as that employment

would be more pleasing to him, so in my poor judgment he would be more fit for that than the other.

Despite Aislabie's interest in the office of treasurer of the navy, over the following days the rumours changed, with the prospective office now being that of a lord of the Admiralty. On the 29th Orrery again wrote to Harley requesting that he 'would endeavour to speak to Mr Aislabie as soon as possible, and make him some civil compliment of your inclination to him'. By the beginning of October it was confirmed that Aislabie was to be an Admiralty lord, which in view of his interest in the office of treasurer of the navy, appears to have been a disappointment to him. On 8 Oct. Sir Edward Blackett, 2nd Bt.\*, wrote that

Mr Aislabie is now with me and [I] perceive by him that he does not design to continue the Admiralty, and though he should, he tells me it does not lie in his way to give any manner of preferment to any one that is worth accepting. I believe in a very little time he will have another employment.

However, Aislabie did not display his dissatisfaction to Harley, and instead made the most of his involvement in the Yorkshire elections, not only securing his own return at Ripon, but also claiming in a letter to Harley on 27 Oct. that 'I have made use of the liberty you gave me to come down and have carried the county election triumphantly [for the Tory Sir Arthur Kaye, 3rd Bt.]: so there is an end of a Parliament bully [Sir William Strickland, 3rd Bt.]; no more lopping of heads and scandalous minorities'. He also requested that Harley 'take this county into your protection, and not suffer us to be governed by an old-fashioned interest; it is an easy matter to model it to your service and to make it yours'. In the 1710–11 session of the new Parliament, Aislabie partook in the Tory attacks on the Whigs on 19 Dec. over the 1708 charter for Bewdley. Lord Cowper (William\*) noted in his diary that while certain Members had behaved well towards him when he attended the House in relation to the case, Henry St. John II and Aislabie had been 'particularly rude, both without any provocation'. However, Aislabie's Country instincts remained stronger than his official ties to the Tory ministry, as was noted by Kaye on 29 Jan. 1711, who recorded that 'the place bill was read the 3rd time and passed after long debate, by a majority of 235 to 143. All who have had, or now have, or are in hopes to have places, dividing against it, except for Sir William Drake, Mr [Robert] Benson, and Mr Aislabie'. Despite voting for the place bill, Aislabie remained in favour, and was made a justice for Westminster and Middlesex in February. On 31 Jan. he delivered information from the Admiralty on naval

orders relating to the Palatines. At this time he was listed as a 'Tory patriot' who opposed the continuance of the war, and among the 'worthy patriots' who were said to have been responsible for detecting the mis-managements of the previous administration. He was also listed as one of the principal members of the newly founded High Church Tory October Club. These associations and activities kept him in favour with the ministry, St. John commending Aislabie to Harley on 19 Apr. for his behaviour towards the Queen.<sup>12</sup>

However, it was not long before Aislabie's independent nature asserted itself again. In the 1711-12 session he was to the fore among those Members who were dissatisfied with the government's attitude and policies, and who were to become known as the 'whimsicals', and later as the Hanoverian Tories. However, Aislabie was one of a few independent Tories who seem to have co-operated more openly with the Whigs than with any 'whimsical' group. He was also one of the first of these groups to express his concern, on 7 Dec. 1711, in the division over the 'No Peace without Spain' motion. According to the Dutch envoy, Aislabie was one of the proposers of the amendment to the Address. Thomas Smith II\* noted that the clause was supported 'by all the considerable speakers of the Whigs . . . and by Mr Aislabie, who used to be on the other side'. It was also reported that Aislabie was one of several Tories who spoke against the peace negotiations during the debate. The peace issue also affected the October Club, with Aislabie being one of the first dissidents within it. However, Aislabie's dissidence did not interfere with his commitments of office in Parliament, and on 22 Dec. 1711 he presented the estimates of the navy debt, with an account of what part of the debt had been, and would be, satisfied by the South Sea stock. The lengthy debate on the barrier treaty on 14 Feb. 1712 kept him from dinner with Bishop Nicolson. He again distanced himself from the Tories on 25 Feb., when he successfully opposed a motion by Henry Campion which constituted part of the attack on the Duke of Marlborough (John Churchill<sup>13</sup>), wherein Campion proposed that a bill be prepared for forcing Marlborough to repay the 2.5 per cent deductions taken from the pay of foreign troops. Aislabie, along with Sir William Drake, countered this by saying that since the House had already put this affair before the Queen, it would not be very decent to take it out of her hands. Aislabie's involvement in financial matters continued during the session. He managed through all its stages in the House a bill for collecting and recovering the duties granted for the support of Greenwich Hospital, and on 24 May told in favour of

implementing a resolution relating to marine pay arrears.<sup>13</sup>

Despite his tendency to oppose the ministry, Aislabie still seemed to remain in favour with Harley. He informed James Grahme\* on 21 Oct. that 'I have not yet seen the Coll. [Harley], Captain [St. John], or Lieutenant [Robert Benson] but design to pay my homage tomorrow'. He also assured Grahme that he would 'do my endeavour', presumably at the Admiralty, to get arrears of pay for Grahme's friends. It was reported on 30 Dec. that Aislabie, in his capacity as an Admiralty Lord, was endeavouring to facilitate the Duchess of Marlborough's request for a yacht to take her to join her husband abroad. In the 1713 session Aislabie continued to fulfil his Admiralty role, presenting the ordinary naval estimates on 17 Apr., the estimates for sea officer half-pay on 20 May, and, on the 22nd, the estimates of naval officer half-pay. However, it was not long before his independent instincts came to the fore again, over the French commercial treaty. In the debate on the 8th and 9th articles of the new treaty on 18 June 'Sir Thomas Hanmer [4th Bt.], Mr Aislabie of the Admiralty . . . and divers others went with the Whigs against the Court', both Hanmer and Aislabie speaking and voting against the treaty. Aislabie was classified as a 'whimsical' in a list relating to the division. On 24 June a motion was made for an address, requesting an estimate of the half-pay for the marine regiments that were to be disbanded. Boyer attributes this motion to Aislabie.<sup>14</sup>

Despite siding against the ministry, Aislabie was continued in office following the 1713 session, Harley deciding against any purge of government. On Lord Chancellor Harcourt's (Simon I\*) advice, Harley argued that it was 'best that Aislabie should be spared, and keep the rod over him'. He was included in the new Admiralty commission in January 1714, and, having been returned for Ripon once again, was still in office when the new Parliament met in February. On 18 Mar. he delivered information on the navy's strength and finances. He was not listed among those Members who voted against the expulsion of Richard Steele on that day. On the 24th he delivered information on naval expenditure and the sale of old ships and stores. However rumours of his pending removal from the Admiralty were confirmed in early April, after which he aligned himself squarely with the Whigs in opposition to the Tory ministry, as was evident from his inclusion as a Whig in the Worsley list. He was one of the chief speakers against the Court in the debate of 15 Apr. on whether the succession was in danger, his contribution being recorded thus:

On any attempts of Pretender he hoped messenger to Hanover would not be so long or mistake his way as of late. Well being of England now depends on mediation of France to all the courts of Europe. Such troops as these are only for this ministry. We are to procure amnesty to the Catalans and a better commerce for ourselves by prayers and fears. The first year of peace well worth six million and the 2nd year to cost us seven million. Did they mean the inability of the [kingdom] or of themselves to carry on the war? I won't say they forgot our trade to Portugal or Holland. The fondness of the Dutch in pressing so much to have but the half or that *asiento* which our South Sea Company would not take. I won't say our ministry gave up a Town in Flanders or a port in the South Sea for it.

He attacked the Court again on the 17th, over an address sent from the Lords relating to the treaties with France and Spain. He was reported to have said that

I hope it is not expected we should swallow down an address that has been cooked up above by the Lords and the ministry, 12 new-made peers and 16 Scotch pensioners, which would reduce us to a parlement of Paris. But rather that we should examine this peace step by step, for this is the only time for every honest man to speak, for as soon as this is got over we may expect to see five or six of the new garbled companies of the guards come and tell us 'this is your King'.

Consideration of the address was postponed until the 22nd, when Lord Downe (Hon. Henry Dawnay) and William Gore proposed the motion to fill up the blank in the address with the words 'and Commons'. In the following debate Aislabie supported (Sir) Peter King and other Whigs, speaking 'with great vehemence against the ministers, for having made so precarious a peace'. He was satirical and witty at first, insinuating that Downe and Gore would get peerages for their efforts, and that the address, like money supplies, was to be given as 'Plaister for [the] ministry's qualms, every sessions as long as they are in pain'. He also focused on the *asiento*, which he declared 'some took for a great country, others for the Golden Fleece, others for a bear skin . . . if we are to thank the ministry we hope we shall do it especially for the *asiento*'. He then became serious, turning to the plight of the Catalans:

A people, that the Queen had said she thought herself obliged in honour and conscience to see they had their just rights and privileges, scandalously abandoned, but a Reverend Divine [Jonathan Swift] that was intimate with the ministry had let them into the secret, how it happened; for in his spirit of the Whigs, he treats them as a parcel of rebels, and as such not fit to be trusted with the privilege of giving money, which was very apt to put

republican principle in them. If this doctrine prevailed it might in time be applied to them of that House. He concluded if the ministry could not sleep without such continual healing votes, to save the dignity of the House he would come into giving them an act of indemnity, but he dreaded a ministry that was too proud to ask one.

Another report described the opposition to the address as being part of the 'strugglings of the indefatigable party', but it was hoped that the debate had 'given a decisive period to their attempts', seeing as those 'against it' (Robert Walpole II, Aislabie and others) did not 'think fit to divide upon the question'. Aislabie continued to act in opposition, and in early May, when the House was considering doubling the taxes on soap and starch, he seconded Walpole's motion that the sum required be made up by the fourth part of the *asiento* which was reserved for the Queen.<sup>15</sup>

Aislabie's failure to toe the line within the Tory ministry had ultimately cost him his office, but his increasing identification with the Whigs was to prove beneficial following the Hanoverian succession. Whether his opposition to the Court during 1711–14 had been due to his disappointment over his place in 1710, or to his natural independent or Country instincts, his actions had 'ingratiated him very much with the Whigs', and resulted in his promotion in October 1714 as treasurer of the navy, which was the office he had originally desired. Unsurprisingly, Aislabie was classed as a Whig on two lists which compared the 1715 Parliament with its predecessor. However, his promotion under the Whigs and his previous actions gave some credence to the view expressed by Speaker Onslow (Arthur<sup>†</sup>), who wrote that Aislabie was regarded as a 'dark', 'cunning' man, 'suspected and low in all men's opinion', though he also acknowledged that Aislabie was a man of 'good understanding, no ill-speaker in Parliament, and very capable of business'. Aislabie's public career flourished under George I, when he rose to be chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Sunderland's (Charles, Lord Spencer\*) right-hand man in the South Sea affair. When the bubble burst in 1720, his deep involvement in the affair put an end to the rumours that he was to receive a peerage, and led to his resignation from office in January 1721 and expulsion from the Commons and temporary incarceration in the Tower in March. Subsequently, he was debarred from standing again. Still a wealthy man, Aislabie spent much of the remainder of his life developing Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey, which had come into his possession in 1716, with lavish buildings and landscaped gardens. His personal estate was such that he was able to give one daughter a portion of £13,000 in 1724. He

continued to control the elections in Ripon until his death on 18 June 1742. By his will his son, William Aislabie†, inherited everything.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Yorks. Arch. Jnl.* xxxvii. 263–4; W. Yorks. Archs. Vyner mss, 544–86, 5836, 5556, 5933 (ex. inf. Mr William Barber); *Fountains Abbey* (Surtees Soc. lxvii), 235–41. <sup>2</sup> *Yorks. Arch. Jnl.* 263, 267; *Ripon Millenary* ed. Harrison, 81, 83. <sup>3</sup> *HMC Lords*, n.s. iii. 204; E. G. W. Bill, *Q. Anne Churches*, pp. xxiii–xxiv. <sup>4</sup> Cobbett, *Parly. Hist.* vi. 912; Add. 17677 DDD, f. 606; 42181, ff. 29–30; *Cal. Treas. Bks.* xxix. 20, 700; xxxii. 27–28; *HMC Var.* viii. 297, 299. <sup>5</sup> *Yorks. Arch. Jnl.* 263–7; *Ripon Millenary*, 67; W. A. Speck, *Tory and Whig*, 53; Glos. RO, Sharp mss 4/K27, Leeds to abp. of York, 10 Sept. 1695; Speck thesis, 97–98. <sup>6</sup> *Party and Management* ed. C. Jones, 76; *Yorks. Arch. Jnl.* 267; *Bull. IHR.* sp. supp. 7, p. 50; Luttrell, *Brief Relation*, iv. 605; *Fountains Abbey*, 240; *Yorks. Diaries* (Surtees Soc. lxxv), 340. <sup>7</sup> Vyner mss, 231–4180, 5067–78, 5637, 5743–4, 5782 (ex. inf. Mr William Barber); N. Yorks. RO, Swinton mss, Danby pprs. persons to be elected at Ripon, 24 Nov. 1701; *Fountains Abbey*, 238; *Ripon Millenary*, 83–86; *HMC Portland*, vi. 138; *Nicolson Diaries* ed. Jones and Holmes, 202. <sup>8</sup> *Bull. IHR.* xl. 157. <sup>9</sup> *Nicolson Diaries*, 282; *Bull. IHR.* xxxvii. 34; *Cam. Misc.* xxxiii. 42, 54, 56, 63, 67, 79, 81; G. Holmes, *Pol. in Age of Anne*, 117; Centre Kentish Stud. Stanhope mss U1590/C9/31, Sir John Cropley, 2nd Bt.\*, to James Stanhope\*, 19 Feb. 1706; *Party and Management*, 80. <sup>10</sup> *HMC Portland*, iv. 313, 317, 417; *Yorks. Arch. Jnl.* 267–8. <sup>11</sup> Speck thesis, 97–98; Cunningham, *Hist. GB*, ii. 137; SRO, Ogilvy of Inverquhar mss GD205/34/4, Pringle to William Bennet\*, 1 Mar. 1709; G. Holmes, *Trial of Sacheverell*, 124. <sup>12</sup> *HMC Portland*, iv. 570, 600, 604, 617, 676; J. Carswell, *S. Sea Bubble*, 50; Huntington Lib. Stowe mss 57(4) pp. 151, 161, 166; Churchill Coll. Camb. Erle mss 2/12, James Craggs 1\* to Thomas Erle\*, 23 Sept. 1710; *Addison Letters*, 241; Add. 31143, f. 571; Northumb. RO, Blackett mss ZBL 189, Newby letter bk. Blackett to Edward Denniston, 8 Oct. [1710], same to John?, 14 [Oct. 1710]; *Yorks. Arch. Jnl.* 268–70; Cowper, *Diary*, 50–51; *Cam. Misc.* xxxi. 329; Boyer, *Pol. State*, i–ii. 160, 117; Tindal, ii. 235. <sup>13</sup> Holmes, *Pol. in Age of Anne*, 280, 283; NSA, Kreienberg's despatches 7 Dec. 1711, 29 Feb. 1712; NLS, Advocates' mss, Wodrow pprs. letters Quarto 6, f. 45; Add. 47026, f. 103; *Bull. IHR.* xxxiii. 226–8; D. Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Pol.* 97–98; Boyer, *Anne Annals*, x. 208; *Nicolson Diaries*, 587. <sup>14</sup> Bagot mss at Levens Hall, Aislabie to Grahme, 12 Oct. 1712; Add. 22226, f. 257; 31144, f. 381; 17677 GGG, f. 230; Boyer, *Pol. State*, v. 233, 388–9, 393; vi. 103; Chandler, v. 1, 40–41; SRO, Cromartie mss GD305 addit./bdle. 15, [–] to [Earl of Cromarty], 20 June 1713; Cobbett, vi. 1223; Tindal, 320; *Yorks. Arch. Jnl.* 273–4. <sup>15</sup> *Bull. IHR.* xxxiii. 331; Add. 70382, Harley to Lord Harley (Edward\*), 24 Oct. 1713; 31139, ff. 78, 91; 17677 HHH, f. 41; Boyer, *Pol. State*, vii. 56, 410; Stowe mss 57(10) p. 47; Szechi, 154; Wodrow pprs. letters Quarto 8, ff. 95–96; Douglas Diary (Hist. of Parl. trans.), 15, 22 Apr. 1714; Herts. RO, Panshanger mss, D/EP F35, p. 79; Cobbett, vi. 1348; Tindal, 355; *Wentworth Pprs.* 377–8; BL, Trumbull Alphas. mss 52, Thomas Bateman to Sir William Trumbull\*, 23 Apr. 1714; Bodl. Ballard 25, f. 113; Glos. RO, Ducie mss, D340a/c20/9, [–] to Matthew Ducie Moreton\*, [?] 19 May 1714. <sup>16</sup> *HMC 14th Rep. IX.* 510–11; *Wentworth Pprs.* 427, 430; *HMC Portland*, v. 597, 606; vi. 137–8; Carswell, 70–71, 228–9, 242, 250, 259, 262–3, 268; Vyner mss, 6068, parcel T.30/2, indenture for repayments by Aislabie, 19 Mar. 1723; *Clerk Mems.* 148–9; *Fountains Abbey* (Surtees Soc. xli), 221; *Yorks. Diaries*, 254, 470; *HMC Hastings*, iii. 2; *Yorks. Arch. Jnl.* xxvii. 325; *Fountains Abbey* (Surtees Soc. lxvii), 239–41; *Ripon Millenary*, 85.

E. C./C. I. M.

**ALCOCK(E), Lawrence** (1677–1723), of Midhurst and Trotton Place, Suss.

MIDHURST 1701 (Feb.)–1713

*bab.* 25 June 1677, 1st s. of Lawrence Alcock, ?filazer, protonotary and exigenter for Monmouth 1692–d., of Midhurst, by his w. Jane. *educ.* New Coll. Oxf. 1694; I. Temple 1694. *m. lic.* 6 May 1701, Anne (d. 1737), da. of Edward Fuller of Watford, Herts. 5s. (4 *d.v.p.*) 2da. *suc.* fa. 1699.<sup>1</sup>

Alcock's father had settled at Midhurst in the mid-17th century, when he began buying burgages there in alliance with the viscounts Montagu, lords of the borough, subsequently becoming steward there. Alcock himself was returned for Midhurst in February 1701 a few years after coming of age and continued to represent the borough until 1713. He was classed as a Tory by Robert Harley\* in December 1701 though was not an active Member. In January 1703 he was given three weeks' leave of absence for his health. In October 1704 he was noted as a probable supporter of the Tack, but after being lobbied by Harley voted against it on 28 Nov. On 6 Nov. he had been given 14 days' absence due to his wife's illness. Classed as 'Low Church' on a list of about June 1705, he voted against the Court candidate for Speaker on 25 Oct. 1705 and was listed as a Tory in early 1708. In another list of 1708, updated with the election returns, he was also classed as a Tory, and in 1710 he voted against the impeachment of Dr Sacheverell. He was given leave of absence for his health in January 1710. Having as usual been returned for Midhurst in 1710, he subsequently appeared in published lists as one of the 'Tory patriots' who opposed the continuance of the war, and as one of the 'worthy patriots' who, in the first session of this Parliament, detected the mismanagements of the previous administration. He did not stand again after 1713 and died on 3 July 1723. Since all his own sons died without issue, the property passed to his daughter's second son, John Radcliffe, who was to sit for St. Albans in 1768.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Berry, *Suss. Gens.* 108; Add. 5699, f. 130; *London Mar. Lic.* ed. Foster, 12; PCC 66 Pott. <sup>2</sup> *Cowdray Archs.* ed. Dibben, 28; PCC 21 Richmond.

P. W.

**ALDORTH, Charles** (c.1677–1714), of Frogmore, Berks. and Somerset House, Westminster.

NEW WINDSOR 21 Jan. 1712–21 Sept. 1714

*b.* c.1677, o. s. of William Aldworth† of Frogmore by his w. Anne. *educ.* King's, Camb. 1693; I. Temple 1695, called 1703. *unm. suc.* fa. 1700.<sup>1</sup>