

The Rise and Fall of Jacobitism in Oxford

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SUMMARY

Oxford's Jacobitism is a relatively well-known subject, but it has been more often written about than understood. Oxford, as a centre of loyalty to both the Church of England and to the Stuart monarchy, was understandably unenthusiastic about the establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty in 1714. In the following year, there were a large number of public instances of Jacobite activity in the city, by both scholars and townsmen. Some academics were also Jacobite, though in a less public manner. Following the arrest of a number of conspirators and the garrisoning of the city by regular troops, this activity diminished and local Whigs grew more confident. By 1717, Jacobitism in Oxford, as it was nationally following the defeat of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion, was in decline. Yet it could still rear its head, as in 1733. But the responses in Oxford in 1745, if not wholly loyalist, were certainly far less infused with Jacobitism than had been the case 30 years earlier. Outbreaks still occurred up to the 1750s, but, as elsewhere, these were the dying embers of a cause which seemed less and less politically relevant.

Oxford had the reputation of being a staunch bastion of support for the Anglican church and the Stuart monarchy in the 17th century, except briefly when James II interfered with the rights of property by appointing a Catholic as head of Magdalen College in 1687. Even so, there was a statue of James II – one of the very few throughout England – erected at the second gateway of University College and it was later joined by that of Queen Anne, patron saint of the Tory Anglicans. Furthermore, in the 1690s, undergraduates celebrated the acquittal of those involved in Jacobite plotting and also the death of Queen Mary.¹ Such religious and political affiliations continued into the 18th century. That rabid Tory, Dr. Sacheverell (himself a fellow of Magdalen College) was welcomed to Oxford in 1710 by a great multitude.² It is hardly surprising then, that the accession of the first Hanoverian monarch, the Lutheran and Low Church sympathiser, George I, to the throne of Britain in 1714, led to an unenthusiastic response by both university and city, especially as he strongly favoured the Whigs.

It cannot be said that Oxford Jacobitism is an unknown subject, but, despite the recent renaissance of writings about Jacobitism, relatively little work has concentrated upon it. Naturally enough, most have attempted a broader survey, covering the whole of the country.³ Although many histories of Oxford include references to local Jacobitism, they have done so in little depth and tend to concentrate on Jacobitism and the university, perhaps not surprisingly since most primary sources were written by those associated with the university. There seems to have been a difference of opinion between those who consider it to have been serious, those who regard it as trivial or those who see it as political muck-raking on the part of the Whigs. Mallett considers that Jacobitism in Oxford was strong for some years after its high water mark of 1715.⁴ Hobson agrees, writing 'The loyalty of the

¹ *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii, 198; *Alden's Guide to Oxford* (1947), 54; P.K. Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (1989), 169.

² *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 179.

³ Monod, *Jacobitism*; M.G.M. Pittock, *Jacobitism* (1998).

⁴ C.E. Mallett, *A History of the University of Oxford*, iii: *Modern Oxford* (1927), 50-4.

university to the early Hanoverians was also very lacking'.⁵ However, more recent opinion has dissented from this view. Ward tends to discount its political significance, referring to the disorders which did occur: 'These gave the greatest opportunity to the enemies of the university, and have been the chief evidence for the wholly unwarranted opinion that the university was a hot bed of Jacobitism for more than half a century after the Revolution'.⁶ Rowse notes Jacobite activity, but dismisses it thus: 'it is doubtful if this was really important. Oxford's Jacobitism...was sentimental rather than wholly serious'.⁷ Langford has discussed Jacobitism at the university, concluding it was similar to the Jacobitism espoused by many of the Tories – that it was occasional and cautiously opportunistic. As with the wider Tory party, there were some Jacobites, some Hanoverian Tories and some who flitted to each wing, depending on the circumstances. Thus the Jacobite faction was relatively strong in 1715–17, but, at best, weak in 1745.⁸

Work on the city's Jacobitism (as upon the city of Oxford) has been at a relative discount compared to that on the university. Both Hobson and the *Victoria County History* refer to its strong Jacobite sympathies, but they do not discuss this topic in any depth. According to Hobson, the disloyalty of the city can be taken as read: 'As is well known, the city of Oxford during the whole of this period [1701–1752] was very pro-Jacobite'.⁹ The highpoint of Oxford Jacobitism is usually thought of as occurring in the first few years of George I's reign, but according to Monod, historian of Jacobitism in England, 'The passage of time cured none of Oxford's disloyalty to the Hanoverians'.¹⁰

This article intends to examine the rise of Jacobitism in Oxford, and its eventual cooling off, within the framework of national politics. The method of this enquiry is to survey, in roughly chronological order, the accusations of Jacobitism, as well as those manifestations of Jacobitism which undoubtedly did occur. The prime question to be answered is to assess how important Jacobitism was in Oxford during the reigns of the first two Georges. It will suggest that Oxford's Jacobitism was a fluctuating phenomenon, as it was in the rest of England, and that even in this alleged haven of Jacobitism, there were those who opposed it.

There were a number of flashpoints which will be examined. Firstly, the responses to the accession of George I and immediately afterwards. Secondly, the highpoint of Jacobite rioting of 28–9 May 1715, which resulted in the destruction of Dissenters' property. Thirdly, that period following the rioting which included the arrests of Jacobites in October 1715 by the military, following rumours of an armed conspiracy. This period also coincided with the outbreak and eventual suppression of actual rebellion in Scotland and the north of England. Fourthly, there were attacks by soldiers garrisoning the city on scholars and townsmen's property, as well as demonstrations by both Jacobites and Whigs throughout the period under discussion. Finally, outbursts of Jacobitism and support for the House of Hanover during George II's reign will be discussed.

It is worth at this point trying to define Jacobitism. A Jacobite, by definition, is one who supported, after 1688, the claim of the exiled Stuarts to the throne of Britain. Yet though all Jacobites possessed this creed, their behaviour in support of it varied immensely. At one end of the spectrum, there were those who were willing to enlist in the ranks of the Pretender's

⁵ M.G. Hobson (ed.), *Oxford Council Acts, 1701–1752* (Oxf. Hist. Soc., new ser. x, 1954), p. v.

⁶ W.R. Ward, *Georgian Oxford* (1958), 55.

⁷ A.L. Rowse, *Oxford in the History of the Nation* (1975), 148–9.

⁸ L.S. Sutherland and L.S. Mitchell (eds.), *History of the University of Oxford, v: The Eighteenth Century* (1986), 126.

⁹ *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 77; Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, pp. v–vi.

¹⁰ Monod, *Jacobitism*, 276.

armies to fight for him; at the other were those who preferred to drink his health in private. Others drank his health in public, often in the streets or in the taverns, or demonstrated against the supporters of King George, attacking property and shouting Jacobite slogans. Oxford contained elements from all these groupings. To an extent there was an overlapping between Tories and Jacobites, too.

Fortunately there are a number of excellent primary sources from a variety of viewpoints, Tory, Jacobite and Whig, with which it is possible to illuminate the conflict. Principal among these are the diaries of Thomas Hearne (1678-1735), a Non-Juring Oxford antiquarian. Hearne had been sub-librarian of the Bodleian Library. Expelled from his post, given his refusal to take the oaths to George I, his diaries are full of venom for the Hanoverians and their local supporters. Hearne's diaries (which he kept from 1705-35) are guarded as to his own conduct, but biased as they are, they do record his comments on men and affairs as well as the behaviour of Jacobites and Whigs in Oxford.¹¹ Other sources include the correspondence of the Tory Dr. William Stratford (1672-1729) of Christ Church.¹² The contemporary booklet *An Impartial History* gives the Tory viewpoint on the riots of 28-9 May 1715.¹³ From the Whig side, there is correspondence among the State Papers concerning the rioting in Oxford and other seditious behaviour there that came under the cognizance of the law.¹⁴ The Whiggish *Flying Post* took a perverse delight in reporting Jacobite outrages in Oxford and elsewhere.¹⁵ Finally, Rae's contemporary *History of the Late Rebellion* devotes some space to the Oxford rioting.¹⁶

The immediate political background to the accession of George I was one of intense party strife. Anne's reign had seen violent party clashes between Whigs and Tories, principally over the conduct of the War of Spanish Succession and religion. That war was over, but its consequences were not. Religious strife, between the Tories, anxious to uphold the dominance of the Anglican church, and the Whigs, who supported some measure of relief for their Dissenting allies, carried on just as strongly. Anne had been a partisan for the Tories; George was for the Whigs because of their unequivocal support for his claim to the throne, whereas some Tories hankered after a Stuart Restoration.

That Oxford should prove especially troublesome to the House of Hanover and the new Whig status quo is not surprising. The behaviour of some in Oxford in the two decades before 1714 has already been alluded to. Furthermore, as Professor Black states, it was 'a centre of Tory intellectual activity'.¹⁷ The two university MPs were always Tory in the early 18th century and their attitude towards their political enemies was sharpened by their opponents' actions. Hearne recorded on 16 August 1715 that the purge of Tories from offices and their replacement by Whigs 'hath justly caused Abundance of Discontent'.¹⁸ The Jacobite duke of Ormonde, chancellor of the university, was attainted in 1715 and forced to flee to France. The graduates voted for his brother, the earl of Arran, rather than the Whig candidate, the earl of Pembroke, as his successor. Arran became chancellor on 26 September

¹¹ D.W. Rannie (ed.), *Hearne's Remarks and Collections*, iv, 1712-14 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xxxiv, 1897); v, 1714-16 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xlii, 1901); vi, 1717-19 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xliii, 1902); H.E. Salter (ed.), vii, 1719-22 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xlviii, 1906); viii, 1722-5 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. i, 1907); ix, 1725-8 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxv, 1914); x, 1728-31 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxvii, 1915); xi, 1731-5 (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxxii, 1918).

¹² H.M.C. Portland MSS. vii.

¹³ Anon., *A Full and Impartial History of the Oxford Riots* (1715).

¹⁴ PRO, SP 44/116.

¹⁵ *The Flying Post*, 1715.

¹⁶ P. Rae, *The History of the Late Rebellion* (1718).

¹⁷ J. Black, *The Eighteenth Century, 1688-1783* (1999), 216.

¹⁸ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 97-8.

1715. The vice-chancellor, Dr. John Baron (1679-1722) said, 'The name of Ormonde was very dear to the University' – something the Whigs later recalled.¹⁹ The university was certainly thought to be not only Tory, but predominantly Jacobite. The *Flying Post* thought that, 'there's hardly a college servant, such as manciples and cooks but are Jacks, particularly Manciple Woods and Wright the Cook'.²⁰ Finally, the existence of a large body of young men with time on their hands (the scholars) was also a source of potential trouble. As Beloff wrote, 'Only Oxford rivalled London in turbulence, for the undergraduates of the day far outshone their successors in the scope of their nocturnal disorders'.²¹

Daniel Defoe wrote of the close relationship between the city and university of Cambridge, and this probably applied to Oxford too:

But as the colleges are many, and the gentlemen entertain'd in them are a very great number, the trade of the town very much depended upon them, and the tradesmen may justly be said to get their bread by the colleges; and this is the surest hold the university may be said to have of the townsmen, and by which they secure the dependence of the town upon them, and subsequently their submission.²²

Whigs certainly thought that such pecuniary relationships inhibited any open Whig sympathies being displayed among shopkeepers and other tradesmen. For example, in Newcastle in 1716, a tailor who had been militant in defence of the Hanoverian succession became bankrupt as local Tories set his creditors on him.²³ The Oxford city council itself was Tory – both MPs were Tory – and the corporation was Tory dominated. In August 1715, a portrait of the late patron of the party, Queen Anne, was hung in the council chamber.²⁴

It should be remembered, though, that not all in Oxford were Jacobite. Wadham College was sympathetic to the Whigs, as evidenced by the portraits of William III and George I which hung there. Dr. Mills (1645-1707), principal of St. Edmund Hall, illuminated his lodgings to celebrate Marlborough's victories.²⁵ The Whig Constitutional Club included eight men from Oriel, two from Christ Church, ten from New College and seven others. Its leader was Charles Ingram (1698-1748) of Oriel, brother to Viscount Irwin, lord lieutenant of the East Riding of Yorkshire. Others included George Lavington, later bishop of Exeter, and one Captain Thomas.²⁶ One unfriendly source referred to the very name of the Constitutional Club thus: 'not that they were firmer friends to the present settlement, but that they might make a very ill use of a good name'. Whig sympathisers tried to have some of the Tories/Jacobites arrested, or as one source put it, 'to procure innocent persons to be arrested'.²⁷ Their numbers were probably limited; Stratford wrote, 'It consists only of Whigs; by that you can guess how numerous it is'.²⁸ They were blamed for the disturbances, too. The Recorder, John Wright (d. 1766), was accused of having stirred up the mob by illuminating his windows to honour George I.²⁹

¹⁹ *Political State of Gt. Britain*, x (1715), 331; *The Flying Post*, 3694, 30 Aug.-1 Sept. 1715.

²⁰ *The Flying Post*, 3694, 30 Aug.-1 Sept. 1715.

²¹ M. Beloff, *Public Order and Popular Disturbances, 1660-1714* (1963), 32.

²² P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens (eds.), *Defoe's A Tour through the Whole Island* (1991), 39.

²³ PRO, SP 35/2, f. 117.

²⁴ Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 92.

²⁵ *V.C.H. Oxon.* iii, 282, 331.

²⁶ Anon., *Impartial History*, 8-9.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 2, 6.

²⁸ *H.M.C. Portland MSS.*, 222.

²⁹ *The Flying Post*, 3680, 4-6 Aug. 1715.

On 3 August 1714 the city became aware that Queen Anne had died and that George I was now king. Richard Broadwater, the mayor, along with the Recorder, aldermen and bailiffs, all decked out in their full regalia, made a great procession to Carfax on the following day, in order to proclaim the new king. Baron and some other academic staff were present, but, according to Hearne, 'There was but a small Appearance of doctors and masters'.³⁰ However, though there was little positive enthusiasm for the new king, nor was there any outright public hostility. In 1658, when Richard Cromwell had been proclaimed as the new Lord Protector, the civil dignitaries had been pelted by undergraduates.³¹ Some applauded the new monarch – one James Tyrell told Hearne that he thought George would maintain his throne and extolled parliamentary right.³²

Official celebrations included illuminations on the evening of 4 August, and in the following month both city and university sent loyal addresses to the new king, as was customary at the onset of a new reign.³³ One local Jacobite did his best to put a dampener on these activities. A letter had been sent to Broadwater on 2 August, warning him against proclaiming the new king and advising him to proclaim James III instead, or at least to delay the proclamation.³⁴ Baron 'expressed great abhorrence of it' and offered a £100 reward for the finding of the culprit, whom he did not think was a scholar.³⁵ William Bromley, the Secretary of State (and also one of the MPs for the university), who was dealing with the matter, was certainly pleased, writing, 'Thanks for the zeal and affection you have shewn to His Majesty'.³⁶

On Coronation Night (20 October) there were further official celebrations in Oxford, by way of illuminations and bonfires. Dr. William Talbot (c. 1659-1730), bishop of Oxford and dean of Worcester, preached a Coronation sermon.³⁷ Yet Hearne reported that rejoicings were limited on this occasion, too. 'Nor did any persons I know of drink King George's health, but mentioned him with Ridicule'.³⁸ Three days later a notice was found hanging on the Schools gate reading, 'A KING, A CUCKOLD, A PRINCE, A BASTARD'.³⁹ However, the level of Jacobitism at this stage was muted – unlike some towns in England, there were no Coronation riots in Oxford.

Clerical reactions were mixed. John Middleton (1680-1734), chaplain of Merton, preached against the Pretender on 31 January 1715, though Hearne noted that, 'There were several good things in his sermon'. On 6 March, Mr. Shaw of Magdalen preached a sermon at St. Mary's, which must have been Jacobite in tone, since Hearne noted that it was 'a good, honest sermon and there were some things in it relating to the Rascals of this Age'.⁴⁰

Such latent Jacobitism was given further stimulus by rumour. After the accession of George I, there was a suggestion by some of the bishops that a Bill should be presented which would give the king power to nominate all the chief officers of the university and all the heads of houses. Such a notion did not come to pass, but it did give the Jacobites scope for their propaganda. Jacobitism in Oxford was encouraged by the Old Pretender himself.

³⁰ Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 86-7; Hearne, *Remarks*, iv, 389.

³¹ *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 77.

³² Hearne, *Remarks*, iv, 389.

³³ *Ibid.* 389, 410; Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 87.

³⁴ Bodl., B. Gardiner, *Appendix* (1717), 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 1-2.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 2.

³⁷ Hearne, *Remarks*, iv, 422.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 417-18.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* v, 19, 30.

On 20 October 1715, he wrote to the two universities to stir up discontent. Claiming that his enemies were planning to ruin them by depriving them of their lands and reducing their establishments, he promised that he, on the other hand, would maintain their rights and privileges and would protect them and maintain the Church of England (his father, too, had promised this, but had gone back on his word). As another Jacobite claimed, a year later, the university of Oxford thought themselves the heart and soul of the church.⁴¹

However, it was during May 1715 that the most serious outbreaks of Jacobitism erupted. The political calendar provided opportunity for a number of potential flashpoints for both supporters and opponents of the Hanoverian succession. These were as follows: 28 May (George I's birthday), 29 May (the day marking the Restoration of Charles II, and thus symbolising the hoped-for return of the Stuarts), 10 June (the Pretender's birthday), 1 August (George's accession to the throne), 20 October (his Coronation day), 30 October (the birthday of his son, later George II) and 5 November, marking both the uncovering of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and the arrival of William of Orange in 1688. This calendar gave scope for the Jacobites in the first half of the year, with their opponents having to wait until the second half for most of their chances.

The year 1715 was marked by rioting throughout much of England, apparently in favour of the Stuarts, certainly anti-Hanoverian at any rate, and Jacobite rhetoric was often employed. These disturbances occurred in the south-west, the Midlands, especially in Staffordshire, London, Lancashire, Oxford, and to a lesser extent, Yorkshire. They resulted in the destruction of many Dissenting chapels. Some of the riots were to an extent religious (anti-Dissent); some may have been economic – the recent end of the War of the Spanish Succession had led to unemployment among returning soldiers and sailors, and for those workers in industries related to the war effort.⁴² They may have been, as Nicholas Rogers has suggested, a method of cocking a snook at political pomposity, only using the language of Jacobitism as an idiom of protest.⁴³ However, Paul Monod takes the view that such Jacobitism was genuine.⁴⁴

On the first date of the political calendar of 1715, George I's supporters in Oxford celebrated his birthday. According to Hearne, who habitually referred to George as 'the Duke of Brunswick', 'some bells were jangled in Oxford, by the care of some of the whiggish fanatical crew'. Of the seven city churches for whom bell-ringing accounts survive, six record that their bells were rung on this date, so Hearne was probably indulging in wishful thinking. He further claimed that this made little impact: 'it was little taken notice of (unless by way of Ridicule) by other honest people, who are for James III'. Hearne wrote that the people 'heartily wish'd' that he be restored, describing the support for Jacobitism thus, 'There was such a concourse of people going up and down and putting a stop to the least sign of rejoicing, as cannot be described'.⁴⁵

The Whigs, 'the loyal Nobility and Gentry in and around Oxford', according to Rae, or 17 undergraduates and some masters, according to the hostile *Post Boy*, who had formed themselves into the Constitutional Club, met at the King's Head tavern in the High Street (which had in the past been used by the Tory Borlace Club) in the evening.⁴⁶ Apparently, they

⁴¹ H.M.C. Stuart MSS. i, 483; iii, 328.

⁴² J.D. Oates, 'Responses in North-east England to the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745' (Reading Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2001), 585-6.

⁴³ N. Rogers and D. Hay, *Eighteenth Century English Society* (1996), 66-7.

⁴⁴ Monod, *Jacobitism*, 161-2.

⁴⁵ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 61; Oxfordshire Record Office [hereafter ORO], PAR199/4/F1/2, f. 72; PAR208/4/F1/71; PAR202/4/F1/2, f. 52; PAR200/DD/C1, f. 130; PAR211/4/F1/5, f. 11; PAR213/4/F1/4, f. 139.

⁴⁶ Rae, *History*, 140; *The Post Boy*, 4032, 2-4 June 1715.

were 'about to carry on extravagant designs' in order to celebrate the king's birthday. These involved lighting candles to illuminate the windows and lighting a bonfire in the street.⁴⁷ A mob, numbering 'many thousands as never had been seen by the oldest man' composed of people from nearby villages as well as the gownsmen and their dependents, assembled outside the tavern. Ingram claimed they were shouting 'an Ormond, no Constitutioners'.⁴⁸ According to Rae, they had heard a 'lying story... That the Whigs had a Design to burn the late Queen, the Duke of Ormond, the Lord Bolingbroke, the Pope, the Doctor [Sacheverell] and the Devil in Effigy'.⁴⁹ However, though the *Flying Post* claimed that only Ormonde, Sacheverell and the pope were to be burnt, this was a provocative gesture in any case.⁵⁰ The Whigs threw coins to the multitude below and urged them to shout up for their hero, the duke of Marlborough. Although the money was taken and drink bought, no one did as urged. Above the room in which the Whigs were meeting were a number of Tories (led by Messrs Manard and Man, according to Ingram) who also threw down money, urging the throng to shout for Ormonde, which they did. The author of one account claimed that the bonfire was pulled down by the people independently of the gownsmen, partly because there was a fear that it might cause a general conflagration in the city. The mob then took the faggots home.⁵¹

The final straw came allegedly when the Whigs decided to light their candles to illuminate the windows⁵² and were pelted with stones by the mob. According to Rae 'in particular, a well affected Nobleman was cut to the skull'. The mob then apparently cried 'Murder them' and called for a 'New Restoration'. The Whigs fled through a rear exit.⁵³ Others who had been drinking in nearby taverns joined the mob.⁵⁴ The proctors briefly restored order, though rather reluctantly, but disorder broke out afresh once they had retired. An Oriel Whig fired his gun at them, injuring a Brasenose man and enraging the mob still further. Illuminated houses were attacked and loyal Whigs terrorised. Oriel had its windows broken, too. Yet there were no fatalities and relatively few injuries.⁵⁵

Finally, unable to pursue the Whigs anymore, and despite the pleadings of Baron, the mob attacked the Presbyterian meeting house in St. Ebbe's, pulling down a wall and damaging the interior. The furniture, together with an effigy of the Presbyterian minister, William Roby, was burnt in the street. It was alleged by Stratford that Roby was put in the stocks. Roby was probably a target because he had preached a thanksgiving sermon for the peaceful accession of George I.⁵⁶ He eventually fled to London. Cries of 'an Ormond, an Ormond, a Bolingbroke, down with the Roundheads, no Constitutions, no Hanover, a new Pretender' were heard.⁵⁷ William Deering (1685-1735) the senior proctor, tried to disperse the mob, but without success. There were too few city constables and no night watch to assist him.⁵⁸ A constable who investigated the meeting house disturbance was knocked down. According to Stratford, no friend of the Whigs, 'They were so numerous and furious, that nothing but disciplined forces could pretend to restrain them'.⁵⁹

⁴⁷ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 62-3; *H.M.C. Portland MSS.*, 222.

⁴⁸ *H.M.C. Portland MSS.*, 222.

⁴⁹ Rae, *History*, 140.

⁵⁰ *The Flying Post*, 3656, 9-11 June 1715.

⁵¹ Anon., *Impartial History*, 2.

⁵² *H.M.C. Portland MSS.*, 222.

⁵³ Rae, *History*, 140.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *H.M.C. Portland MSS.*, 223.

⁵⁶ Rae, *History*, 140; *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 179.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Anon., *Impartial History*, 3; Gardiner, *Appendix*, 11.

⁵⁹ *H.M.C. Portland MSS.*, 222.

In the press battle which followed the debacle at the Whig bonfire, the Tories blamed the disturbances on the Whigs. One pamphlet accused the Constitutional Club of not being true friends of the constitution and said that their bonfire posed a dangerous risk of setting the city on fire.⁶⁰ The Whigs said the blame for stirring up the mob lay at the door of the Tories, especially the university dons. The *St. James' Evening Post* claimed 'such farce could come out of the mouths of those who almost every day lecture...Our doctors are upon the full spur, returning to their vomit of Popery and Presbytery'. It also pointed out that Tory opposition to a bonfire to celebrate the king's birthday would only have been reasonable if the Tories had been equally opposed to a celebration of Queen Anne's birthday.⁶¹

Given the events of the previous day, party feeling was at fever pitch on 29 May. According to Hearne 'the rejoicing this day...was so great and publick in Oxford as hath not been known hardly since the restauration. There was not a house in the street but was not illuminated.' People ran along the streets crying 'King James the third! the true King! No usurper! The duke of Ormond!' Many wore oak boughs in their hats. Healths were drunk to another Stuart restoration. Bonfires were lit. Six out of seven churches for whom accounts survive record ringing their bells on this occasion, though this was not necessarily a sign of Jacobitism, since to ring on this date was a longstanding custom.⁶²

Anyone who showed open disrespect had their windows broken. Oriel was thought to be harbouring members of the Constitutional Club. The mob marched towards it and tried to gain entry by force. Shots were fired by the Whigs.⁶³ Hearne recorded that two or three were wounded, one of these being one of the ringleaders from Brasenose.⁶⁴ They then retreated, seeking easier targets for their wrath. In the evening, dissenting chapels were attacked. The Quaker meeting house was ransacked and the Presbyterians and Baptists had their chapels pulled down.⁶⁵ All in all, the government were to give £146 8s. 3d. in compensation. Another six houses were damaged. However, the mob did not disperse and further violence was feared, especially against the members of Oriel.⁶⁶

The lot of the Dissenters in 1715 was similar to that of the Catholics in 1688 (and earlier). During the Popish Plot, the pope had been burnt in effigy and Catholic houses searched in Oxford. There had been anti-Catholic feeling in 1686. This reached a higher pitch in 1688, when the Catholic landlord of the Mitre claimed he wanted to see the city destroyed. On this occasion, windows of known Catholic properties were destroyed.⁶⁷ Dissent had been persecuted officially and unofficially in the 1660s and 1670s, but less so thereafter.⁶⁸ Yet just as James II and his religious supporters were hated in the 1680s, so were those of George I in 1715. At times of acute political crisis and uncertainty, religious minorities were the targets of the wrath of the Anglican majority, for both religious and political reasons.

As has been already noted, the city magistrates and university authorities were not entirely idle in dealing with these disturbances, whatever their political sympathies. Yet they were hardly zealous until urged into action from above. This action occurred due to the severe reprimand which was administered to them by Viscount Townshend, one of the

⁶⁰ Anon., *Impartial History*, 2.

⁶¹ *St. James' Evening Post*, 58, 6-8 June 1715.

⁶² Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 62-3; ORO, PAR213/4/F1/4, f. 139; PAR200/DD/C1, f. 130; PAR211/4/F1/5, f. 11; PAR199/4/F1/2, f. 72; PAR202/4/F1/2, f. 52; PAR208/4/F1/71.

⁶³ Anon., *Impartial History*, 6.

⁶⁴ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 62-3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*; *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 415-17.

⁶⁶ *Cal. Treasury Books*, 1717, ii, 185.

⁶⁷ *V.C.H. Oxon.* iv, 179.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Secretaries of State, in June 1715. After noting the riots of 28 and 29 May, he wrote to Dr. Arthur Charlett (1655-1722), master of University College, who was acting for the vice-chancellor in his absence, on 3 June:

His Majesty is extremely surprised that you did not as Vice Chancellor [sic], interpose your authority with ye scholars to prevent and suppress such extravagant and seditious proceedings, but suffered them without any discouragement from yourself or the respective officers under you...your behaviour...has been very remiss...and by no means suitable to that Zeal and Duty that persons in your situation ought to have shewn.⁶⁹

Likewise, Sir Daniel Webb, as mayor, was reprimanded and ordered to 'use your utmost endeavours to make a full and particular enquiry in order to discover and to bring to condign punishment the persons that were concerned in these seditious and treasonable riots'.⁷⁰

As we have seen, the authorities' interventions on 28 May were of limited effect. According to Stratford, 'The Mayor came often, they would go off, but return as soon as the Mayor was gone'. Likewise the university authorities, 'the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors walked and cleared all the public houses; the mob was quiet but would not separate'.⁷¹ However, it was emphasised that the authorities were making more of an effort on 29 May: 'But our governors are taking all the precautions they can...they will patrol this night, and orders are given in every college for all who belong to it to be within at nine, and the gates are to be shut'.⁷² Furthermore there was a general meeting at Convocation House of the vice-chancellor and proctors to determine resolutions to be formulated in order to counter the unrest, including the nine o'clock curfew. Orders were also drawn up to remind scholars of the punishments they would receive if they misbehaved by disrupting the peace.⁷³ Of course, how far these were put into action is another question altogether.

Charlett replied to Townshend at once. He claimed that he had no fore-knowledge of the disturbance and that no one asked him to intervene. Even if they had, he wrote that he would have been unable to suppress it. According to him, and aligning himself with the Tories, it was the Constitutional Club who was to blame: 'That this brought the multitude together, and incensed them, and that without this the riot had not been, is the general opinion of the city and university'.⁷⁴ Townshend was unimpressed, 'it does not give him [the King] the satisfaction which he wished'. Townshend claimed that the university authorities should have acted on 29 May, given the events on the previous day. He told Charlett in no uncertain terms what was expected: 'Nothing less than the most strict and impartial enquiry into the authors and actions of these riots will be sufficient to convince His Majesty that the officers of the University in general are so dearly concerned of the tranquillity of his government as they ought to be'. Townshend was concerned that the vice-chancellor's scheme to investigate the riots did not mention how the informants against them were to be encouraged, nor how future riots were to be curtailed. He also pointed out why this matter was so important. 'You cannot but be sensible of what fatal consequence it must be to the peace of the Nation to have the seeds of sedition and disaffection gain ground in a place dedicated to the education of youth'.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ PRO, SP 44/116 (293).

⁷⁰ Ibid. (294).

⁷¹ *H.M.C. Portland MSS.*, 223.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Gardiner, *Appendix*, 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 4-5.

⁷⁵ PRO, SP 44/116 (295-7).

On 14 June, Townshend had read another letter of Charlett's, and deemed himself satisfied at the latter's behaviour. 'His Majesty [is] very well pleased to find that you proceed in conjunction with the Mayor and the Recorder to take the most effectual measures for discovering the late Rioters'. On a personal level, Townshend noted that the king's 'good opinion' of Charlett had been maintained. There is no reason to doubt that Charlett tried to obey these instructions, though as will be noted later, he may have had Jacobite sympathies.⁷⁶

According to Hearne, Charlett obeyed Townshend. On 10 June, that red letter day for Jacobites, relatively little occurred in public. Hearne recorded 'tis probable there had been very great publick rejoycings here amongst some people had not Dr. Charlett who is pro-Vice Chancellor and the proctors and others being very industrious to hinder them'. Illuminations were seen at that reputedly Whig college, Wadham, though these were soon extinguished. Of course, it was impossible to stop Jacobite tipping in private. As Hearne remarked, 'King James' health drunk privately it is thought'. Some, such as Hearne, left Oxford on that day. He went with a group of 'honest men', mainly from Balliol, and were 'very merry at Foxcombe'.⁷⁷

University officials tried to emphasise their loyalty to the government. In August 1715, Charlett ordered that tutors must counsel their charges to behave themselves. The university officials were told to be vigilant and visit public houses, and, aided by the magistrates, arrest any miscreants found there. Dr. Bernard Gardiner (1668-1726), warden of All Souls, told Townshend that the king 'has not more loyal subjects in his Dominions than those at the University of Oxford', though this sounds an exaggeration at best.⁷⁸ Likewise, at the meeting of the Grand Jury at Oxford on 5 August, loyalty to George I was declared, as was the abhorrence of all riots. They claimed that the ringleaders of the mob were 'a set of men, whose principles are opposition to Monarchy', a hit on extreme Whigs who were often equated with republicans.⁷⁹

The city and university authorities were in a difficult position. Since they were Tory and probably also had some Jacobite sympathies, they hardly had tender feelings towards the Whigs and Dissenters. Yet they were responsible for public order, and the government were not slow in reminding them of this fact when they appeared to neglect it. Their behaviour against Jacobite-inspired disorder was therefore lukewarm, though this is in part also due to the limited effectiveness of the means of control at their disposal – and they would have been reluctant to call upon the military. No one was indicted at the assizes or quarter sessions in 1715 for their part in the rioting. The behaviour of the magistracy is similar to that elsewhere. For example, in Leeds, the Tory corporation was accused of inaction against supposed Jacobite disorders. Yet they also tried to display their loyalty towards King George.⁸⁰

Conversely, the official position taken by the clergy at this stage was to disavow the Jacobites. This was evident even before the earl of Mar had risen the standard of revolt at Braemar on 6 September. Towards the end of August, a loyal address was forwarded by the bishop and clergy of the diocese of Oxford to the king, to attest their loyalty to him. Yet neither the city nor the university sent such addresses at this time, despite rebellion breaking out in both Scotland and England in September and October 1715.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Ibid. (302-3).

⁷⁷ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 65.

⁷⁸ Gardiner, *Appendix*, 7-8.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 9.

⁸⁰ *The Flying Post*, 3660, 18-21 June 1715; Leeds Archives, TN/PO3/3C/6.

⁸¹ *London Gazette*, 5360, 30 Aug.-3 Sept. 1715.

Seditious behaviour continued in Oxford. Nicholas Amhurst, a Whig scholar, noted:

It is well known that Owen, the rebel, and his companions, were entertain'd publicly by most of the heads of the colleges, that they walked about the streets, at noon day, with the mob at their heels, huzzaing King James and the Duke of Ormonde forever, and no usurpers, in defiance of the government and the friends of the government...they instigated great numbers of students and others in the Pretender's cause; that they mark'd all the horses fit for service and waited only for the news of the Duke of Ormonde's landing in the west; upon the first reception of which, they designed to fly off in a body to join him; I need not mention that the Pretender's health was drunk openly and unreservedly in all places...all sermons, public speeches and declarations were stuff'd with reproaches and insults upon the King and his Ministry.⁸²

The first anniversary of George's accession, 1 August 1715, was designated as an official day of rejoicing. Gardiner certainly called it one, but Hearne thought otherwise. He 'kept [it] in a mourning condition at home'. Baron, Webb and the heads of the colleges did not organise bonfires or illuminations. Dr. Matthew Panting (1683-1739), master of Pembroke, preached a thanksgiving sermon, but made little reference to the king. Indeed, it was full of praise for the late queen, who was much beloved by High Anglican Tories. In any case, few heard it. Furthermore, some shopkeepers kept their shops shut out of sorrow.⁸³ Hearne wrote that some bells were rung, but 'only jumbled, being pulled by a parcel of children and silly people...there was not so much as one good peal rung in Oxford'.⁸⁴

There was also some explicitly Jacobite behaviour. One man had been put in the stocks by a Tory constable for crying, 'No Ormond and God bless King George'. Other constables did disperse the mob, but did not try and arrest anyone. Others broke some of the illuminated windows.⁸⁵ On 13 August, one Pritchard, a former soldier, cursed King George while he was in a tavern. He was arrested and sent to gaol, but was rescued by a number of scholars.⁸⁶

Yet there was also public rejoicing. Despite Hearne's comments on the bell ringing, five out of the seven city churches for which accounts survive rang their bells on this date.⁸⁷ The *Flying Post* said that Webb and the aldermen attended a sermon at Carfax Church, where the Revd Reynolds of Corpus Christi made 'so loyal and good a sermon' and that the church was 'pretty full'. One Wright, 'a worthy and loyal Gentleman', ordered hundreds of candles to be lit in his windows. Others followed suit. These included Mrs. Burroughs, an ironmonger, who resided in the High Street, Caleb Coulton, publican of the Star, Messrs Keats and Spindler, mercers, and one Baker, a wiremaker, on the Cornmarket. The Constitutional Club met at the King's Head to drink the king's health and to make other loyal toasts.⁸⁸

This demonstration of open loyalty to George I did 'much to provoke the Faction', despite Baron reading the proclamation for keeping the peace and ordering the constables to walk the streets. According to the *Flying Post* 'there was a very great mob of Schollars and rascally fellows, who went around hissing and threw stones at the Recorder's windows'. Their shouts were familiar: 'Down with the Rump, Down with the Roundheads, an Ormond'. Mrs.

⁸² L.M. Quiller-Couch (ed.), *Reminiscences of Oxford... 1559-1850* (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xxii, 1892), 70-1.

⁸³ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 83-4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *The Flying Post*, 3680, 4-6 Aug. 1715.

⁸⁶ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 87-8.

⁸⁷ ORO, PAR199/4/F1/2, f. 72; PAR208/4/F1/71; PAR202/4/F1/2, f. 52; PAR213/4/F1/4, f. 139; PAR200/DD/C1, f. 130.

⁸⁸ *The Flying Post*, 3680, 4-6 Aug. 1715.

Burroughs was ordered to extinguish her lights, and on refusing to do so, they were broken. Similar treatment occurred to Mr. Spindler's windows. Coulton stood guard outside his property with his musket and none dared approach him.⁸⁹

Apart from the conflict between Whigs and Jacobites in the city and university, there were also clashes between Jacobite scholars and townsmen on the one hand and soldiers on the other. These had Jacobite overtones. On 15 August, a recruiting party in Oxford was hissed at by scholars. The soldiers cursed them and swore in return 'God damn Oxford, the Duke of Ormonde, the Lord Bolingbroke and the rest'. Nor was the recruiting a success. Few men enlisted, according to Hearne, and these were but 'poor, shabby, beggarly, mean spirited fellows'.⁹⁰ Three days later, a recruiting officer was again hissed. Balliol scholars cried, 'An Ormonde, Down with the Roundheads'. A gentleman at the Angel Inn drew his sword and forced the officer to shout 'An Ormonde, God bless the Duke of Ormonde'. The crowd shouted the same phrases as the scholars.⁹¹

Another recruiting party found itself in hostile territory when it ventured to Oxford on 28 August. Scholars threw stones at a sergeant and his men. They shouted, 'An Ormonde and no King George' and tried, unsuccessfully, to encourage the men who had just taken the king's shilling to copy their words. Sir Henry Osade of Worcester College and Castleton of Balliol were assaulted. Coulton's pub and the property of other Whigs were threatened. The brother of Captain Burrows, the officer in charge of the soldiers, was affronted by Woods, manciple of Balliol. The riotous proceedings of the 600-strong mob were brought to a temporary halt by Baron and Webb.⁹²

In the evening, 17 soldiers, 'all brisk, stout fellows', guarded Coulton's pub, yet the disturbances continued. Five Masters of Arts passed by the door of a loyal Whig, shouting 'Ormonde' and when challenged shouted, 'No Toleration, Down with Old Burrows, pull down the meeting houses'. One Dick Matthews at the Maiden's Head cursed King George and promised to take up arms against him.⁹³ Yet the provocation was not all one-sided. According to Gardiner, soldiers attacked scholars and one soldier promised, 'That he would have the blood of the scholars before he left the town'.⁹⁴

Attempting to arrest suspects was, unsurprisingly, perilous, as Nathan Willcox, King's Messenger, discovered. He had been sent to Oxford to arrest Mr. Boyce, a mercer, and Mrs. King, mistress of the Angel Inn. Although he managed to do so with ease, at 11 o'clock at night a mob gathered outside the Star where he was staying. The mob threatened to murder him and rescue his prisoners. Webb read the Riot Act, but to little avail. They 'grew more outrageous crying Damn the mayor don't mind him, and assaulted the house with stones...broke all the windows and tore the palisade to pieces'.⁹⁵

Willcox threatened to use his pistols and was treated to Jacobite cries of 'James the Third, Ormonde, Bolingbroke'. He replied with 'God bless King George' and other expressions, calling them 'Trayterous Dogs' before firing on them, wounding some. They made a second attack, but again Webb dispersed them. Webb said he could not supply arms to men who claimed they would help Willcox. After a third attack had been repulsed by use of swords and pistols, Willcox left Oxford.⁹⁶

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 96-7.

⁹¹ Ibid. 98.

⁹² *The Flying Post*, 3694, 30 Aug.-1 Sept. 1715.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Gardiner, *Appendix*, 12.

⁹⁵ PRO, SP 35/2, f. 46.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

This was surely the high noon of Oxford Jacobitism and reports of it certainly made the authorities jittery. The letter of an Oxford scholar to a friend in London was particularly alarming: 'I think myself very happy in being settled in this LOYAL PLACE, and only want your good company to compleat it; for here we fear nothing, but drink James' health every day'.⁹⁷ How serious and widespread this behaviour was is another question, but given what had happened in Oxford already, there is little wonder that it was taken seriously. In October, the Pretender was proclaimed in public, though at night time, and the property of local Whigs was attacked.⁹⁸

Oxford Whigs thought themselves discriminated against at best or in mortal danger at worst. Amhurst referred to a gentleman at Merton who had his first degree delayed for two years because he had drunk the king's health. He added that the Whig scholars feared being murdered.⁹⁹ Likewise, David Wilkins was told by a friend to take care in case a Jacobite victory in Scotland led to him having his throat cut.¹⁰⁰

More worrying was the fear that a conspiracy was being hatched at Oxford to raise an armed insurrection. It was already known in July that an attempt was being planned to restore the Stuarts. There were a number of 'broken officers' who had 'formented and propagated the spirit of sedition and rebellion, drinking publicly and uncontroll'd the Pretender's health'. These men included Colonel Owen, Captains Halstead, William Kerr, John Gordon and John Dorrell. Apparently, the plot being hatched was in conjunction with Jacobites in Bath and Bristol. The scheme was to seize Oxford for the Pretender and then arm a regiment of scholars for his service. According to Wilkins, 'They heartily rejoiced at ye news of ye late Duke of Ormonde's design upon ye west of England'.¹⁰¹ No wonder the Whigs claimed 'the Seminary of Learning...was turned into a sink of Debauchery and school of sedition'. Yet for all this, only one scholar is known to have taken up arms for the Pretender: Lionel Walden of Christ Church, nephew of Robert Cotton, a Huntingdonshire non-juror.¹⁰²

The discovery of a consignment of arms in Oxford added weight to the suspicions of conspiracy. A barge carrying two hogsheads and one trunk arrived in the city in October. One hogshead was opened and found to conceal 140 swords and 244 bayonets. No one collected these items and they were eventually seized by soldiers.¹⁰³ As events transpired, the rising in the west proved abortive, but a jittery government was not to know that and so it acted decisively, and with force.

Dragoons under Major-General Pepper were sent to Oxford to arrest the nucleus of 16-18 key suspects. Pepper sent Cornet Visseuse in disguise to spy out the land, followed by the main body which arrived on 6 October at four in the morning.¹⁰⁴ According to the *Flying Post*, Pepper 'puts his orders in execution with so much conduct and spirit, as made the Jacobites both to sweat and tremble'. The troops marched in with fixed bayonets. Pepper was concerned that the scholars might make trouble, so he told Baron to keep them indoors or he would be forced to 'mow them down'. The Riot Act was put into force. The troops secured the city gates and the suspected colleges and inns. Patrols of soldiers went through the

⁹⁷ *The Political State of Great Britain*, x (1715), 332.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 346.

⁹⁹ Quiller-Couch, *Reminiscences*, 70-1.

¹⁰⁰ Christ Church Library, Arch. W. Epist. 19, f. 39v.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Political State of Great Britain*, x, 346; Monod, *Jacobitism*, 319.

¹⁰³ Gardiner, *Appendix*, 14-15.

¹⁰⁴ *Political State of Great Britain*, x, 343-4.

streets. Baron and his colleagues were told to assist in making arrests and holding suspects. Despite Baron's earlier favourable opinions of Ormonde, he was now a changed man, 'trembling, with a down cast look, in a broken speech, made large professions of loyalty'. Even when one head of a college claimed his sickness prevented him from seeing Pepper, the excuse went unheeded. Twelve men were arrested, including Halstead, Gordon, Kerr, Dorrell, Mr. Spelman of Norfolk, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lloyd of London. Yet Owen, forewarned, escaped through Magdalen and he was not pursued. The soldiers left with their prisoners on the same day and marched to Abingdon. It was rumoured that arms were also seized.¹⁰⁵

Local reactions to this punitive action were mixed. Hearne thought that had the city been forewarned, it would have been possible to have repelled the soldiers for they were only 'a parcel of pitifull tired raw fellows'. Some from the university and city thanked the officers for clearing the city of 'those pestilent fellows, who fomented sedition' and who were a 'Nusiance to all the well affected'. Loyal Whigs such as Coulton were rewarded. He became Postmaster.¹⁰⁶

Three of the Oxford conspirators (Gordon, Kerr and Dorrell) who had been seized in October were tried before the King's Bench and sentenced to death for high treason on 28 November 1715. They were executed at Tyburn nine days later. Apparently they were to have helped Owen lead an impossible number of 10,000 scholars and 300 townsmen in open rebellion after the Pretender had been proclaimed at Bath.¹⁰⁷

Letters addressed to the new archbishop of Canterbury, William Wake, in 1715-16, depict a mixed picture of the state of Oxford Jacobitism. In November 1715, one John Russell told Wake:

You cannot be ignorant of the deplorable condition of the University of Oxford in which there is an entire opposition to His Majesty and his government and what is to be most lamented, is this being the Nursery of above one half of the clergymen of the kingdom, the principles of rebellion are diffus'd from hence thro the whole Nation and those who should watch over and care for other are infected themselves...Principles of opposition have taken deeper root than you or any person else can imagine. Rebellion is avowedly own'd and encouraged...Some tutors read lectures to their pupils on Hereditary Right.¹⁰⁸

Two months later, when excitement over the rebellion was at a lower pitch, George Bristol of Christ Church gave a different impression:

The whole University doth at present lie in respect to their supposed disloyalty. I do not pretend, that there is no ground for such an impression, but I beg leave in mitigation of that charge to declare to you my sincere opinion built upon ye best observation I have been at to make ye Disaffection is neither of so early a date nor so widely spread, nor in the measure and degree of it so vehement, as hath been represented.¹⁰⁹

Although Jacobite activity may have dampened down a little towards the end of 1715, the first months of the following year saw a limited resurgence. There were at least four incidences of it in Oxford in early 1716. On 25 January, the prince of Anhalt, first cousin to

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 344-6; *The Flying Post*, 3708, 8-11 Oct. 1715.

¹⁰⁶ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 125; *The Flying Post*, 3708, 8-11 Oct. 1715.

¹⁰⁷ *Political State of Great Britain*, x, 526-7, 585.

¹⁰⁸ Ch.Ch. Lib., Arch. Epist. 15, f. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. f. 43.

the prince of Wales, was being entertained at Oxford by the Whigs, including a visit to the Sheldonian Theatre. His party was abused on both their arrival and departure.¹¹⁰ In early March, there were shouts for King James, Ormonde and Bolingbroke in the High Street. On 24 March, seven scholars toasted the Pretender and cast aspersions on the Hanoverian royal family while drinking in a coffee house.¹¹¹ On 31 March the great soldier and Whig hero, the duke of Marlborough, rode through the city, but according to Hearne, there was no rejoicing until after he had left.¹¹² Although these incidents were relatively minor compared to the rioting in the previous year, they do indicate that the Jacobites had not been entirely cowed by the lack of success of the rebellion of 1715, the sparks of which were finally dying out in Scotland with the flight of the Pretender and the retreat of the rebels in face of the British and Dutch forces.

Conversely, their opponents, perhaps buoyed up by national events turning in their favour and the local presence of soldiers, grew bolder. On 28 May there were celebrations by the Whigs at the Three Tuns, especially by Merton Whigs. According to one source, 'The whole street resounded with, may George live forever, and all the city echo'd with joyful Acclamations'. The Jacobite reaction was to wear green boughs and to hiss at the Whigs, a mild response compared to a year earlier.¹¹³

Although, as in 1715, there were 'great [Jacobite] rejoicings in Oxford' on 29 May 1716, Hearne noted that they were 'nothing equal to what was last year'. Nevertheless, Jacobites wore oak boughs in their caps, drank to the new restoration, sang 'the King shall have his own again' and insulted the Whigs by calling them Oliverians and Roundheads. Scholars were not locked in their colleges in the evening, so could join their fellows in the streets. Squibs were thrown. As before, churches rang their bells. Some Whigs drew their swords and routed some of their enemies, beating one up. But all this was at a lower tempo than in the previous year.¹¹⁴

After the rebellion, a loyalist sermon was preached and later published. Robert Pearse, vice-principal of St. Edmund Hall, preached before Webb and his aldermen on 7 June at St. Martin's. He said that God had given the victory over the rebels. The rebellion was described as 'unnatural', a sinful act against the 'pious and wise' king who was a friend to the church. The rebels were castigated as being motivated by pride and discontent, guilty of ambition, rage, malice and perjury. In contrast, George I represented the Protestant religion, the law, the constitution and liberty.¹¹⁵ The sermon did not provoke any action by Jacobite sympathisers. Of the six churches whose records survive, only St. Michael's rang its bells for the recapture of Perth from the rebels, but four rang on 7 June, the day appointed for thanksgiving for the defeat of the rebels.¹¹⁶

Jacobitism still existed at the university in 1716, but perhaps to a lesser extent than previously. Bristol told Wake that he would do all he could to snuff it out and to promote loyalism.¹¹⁷ However, Wilkins reported its continued existence. According to him, Charlett, apparent foe of Jacobitism in public in 1715, drank Ormonde's health at high table, and that

¹¹⁰ *The Weekly Journal*, 4 Feb. 1716.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 371, 31 Mar. 1716.

¹¹² Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 192-3.

¹¹³ *The Weekly Journal*, 431, 9 June 1716.

¹¹⁴ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 229.

¹¹⁵ R. Pearse, *A Sermon preach'd at St. Martin's in Oxford* (1716), 17, 26, 34.

¹¹⁶ ORO, PAR213/4/F1/4, f. 145; PAR211/4/F1/5, f. 11-12; PAR202/4/F1/2, f. 54; PAR208/4/F1/71.

¹¹⁷ Ch.Ch. Lib., Arch. Epist. 15, f. 44v.

was the least of his 'outrages'. Dering of Oriel had also praised Ormonde in public and had accused the Constitutional Club of causing the rioting of the previous year. He also claimed that Caesar did not make any reference to King George at that year's degree ceremony.¹¹⁸

Jacobitism, though, was still thought by the government to be a serious force in Oxford, even after the rebellion had been quashed. On 20 August the city JPs responded to an order from the Privy Council to search for arms that they had 'with the utmost care and diligence applied our selves to that purpose'. The city's Catholics, non-jurors and suspected Catholics were summoned before them to take the oaths of allegiance to the king and to abhor the pope and Pretender. Those who would not comply had their arms, apart from any thought necessary for self-defence, confiscated.¹¹⁹

Local Jacobitism may have been, paradoxically, reinforced by the presence of the soldiery. Oxford was not a garrison town and had not known military occupation since the Civil War. From October 1715 to July 1716 it was occupied by Handasyde's regiment of foot and from July 1716 by the Royal Irish regiment.¹²⁰ In October 1716, there were plans to disarm them, provided that 50 resolute men could be found, which was thought to be no difficult feat. This scheme, however, came to nothing.¹²¹ There were complaints in Oxford later that month about the outrages committed by the soldiers, which came to a head on 30 October, but relations between the soldiers and the city and university had clearly been sour for some time.

Generally speaking, civil-military relations in 18th century England were poor. On one level, the standing army in peace time was deemed to be both an unnecessary financial burden and a potential tool of tyrants. Tory theorists deemed the maintenance of a national militia under gentry control to be the only necessary land-based force.¹²² On another level, since there were very few barracks, soldiers were billeted on civilians when based in towns and the depredations of such a large number of bored and potentially violent young men soon became unpopular locally, especially as it was clear that they were not there to defend against any external threat, but to keep order against resident malcontents.¹²³ Troops stationed elsewhere at this time, such as in Leeds and Newcastle, were not popular, certainly not in the eyes of Tory commentators.¹²⁴ It is, perhaps, no surprise in such a Tory city as Oxford, that relations were sour, especially as the city was occupied for almost two years. According to Thomas Rowney (c. 1667-1727), one of the city's two MPs, this had led to 'the entire ruine of several, and almost to the ruine of many more who keep publick houses'.¹²⁵ Of course, we should also bear in mind that the army was on the sharp end of having to deal with the Jacobite rebels in battle if need be, so it should not be surprising that soldiers were hostile to Jacobites anywhere.

Stratford mentions a number of incidents between the soldiers and locals, in his letters to Edward Harley. On 17 November, at Hamilton's coffee house, Captain Houghton, after ostentatiously parading his loyalty to George I and remarking about the recent victory at Preston, struck William Borlase (1696-1772), an Exeter scholar. Later that evening, another

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 19, ff. 39, 72.

¹¹⁹ PRO, SP 35/4, f. 43.

¹²⁰ PRO, WO 5/20, ff. 143, 280-2.

¹²¹ H.M.C. *Stuart MSS.* iii, 48.

¹²² *Gentleman's Magazine*, iii (1733), 8.

¹²³ A.J. Hayter, *The Army and the Crowd* (1978), 20.

¹²⁴ Leeds Local Studies Lib., Diary of John Lucas, 5; B.L. Add. MS. 22,560, f. 48.

¹²⁵ Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 328.

scholar, Edward Bertie (1696-1733) of Christ Church (the son of James Bertie, the other Tory MP for the city) was discussing this incident in Lyne's coffee house, and was assaulted by Major Duncombe. Stratford claimed that there may have been some unwise expression on Bertie's part, 'but nothing was said that could justify striking'.¹²⁶ Hearne recorded that some soldiers attacked some scholars and the latter came off best, taking the soldiers' swords back to college with them.¹²⁷ On 13 June 1716, Stratford recorded more violent quarrels between the two groups 'every day for the last week'. In August, the sergeant of a recruiting party insulted some scholars by asking them 'if they had a Pope in their bellies'. Stones were thrown at the soldiers and one of them drew his sword, promising retribution. The next day, there was another confrontation. The soldiers provoked the scholars into making Jacobite cries and were then beaten by the soldiers. The mob rose and there would have been a more serious disturbance had not Tobias Paine, the mayor, and Baron intervened.¹²⁸ In an undated letter, possibly from Webb, there was a reference to 'the illegal proceedings of the souldiers here'. One soldier was arrested for housebreaking and other offences and was hanged in 1717. According to Hearne, the fact that there were soldiers camping on Bullingdon Green near Horspath in June 1716 was 'very invidious'.¹²⁹

A report from one Thomas Mason on 22 August 1716 suggested that Jacobitism was still alive among some of the scholars. Tavern cries from both scholars and townsmen of 'down with the Roundheads', 'the King shall enjoy his own again' and references to Bolingbroke and Ormonde, could still be heard. When an officer asked a man in the street if he would serve King George, the reply was 'God damn King George and all his family'. He was brought before a JP and ordered to be committed to gaol. Before this could happen, 300-400 scholars from University College, shouting 'Down with the Roundheads', knocked down the constable and rescued his prisoner.¹³⁰

Mason concluded that the scholars drank James III's health 'as frequently as loyal men drink King George's'. A Whiggish scholar, when pressed as to the loyalty of his fellows, claimed that 'above two thirds of the university was disaffected to King George'. He also thought that the clergy promoted disaffection, referring to the 'vileness and villainy of the clergy here'.¹³¹

However, despite the evident Jacobitism of many of the scholars, few were indicted, probably because of the difficulty of procuring witnesses. Often the latter were soldiers. In 1716, two scholars were indicted at the Oxford assizes. These were John Sterling of Balliol, a Scot, who not only refused to drink the king's health, but damned him. He was found not guilty. The other was one Mr. Gibson, who said in the company of some Exeter friends, 'The man will have his name again' and there could be little doubt as to who that man was. Francis Nicholls (1698-1778), another Exeter scholar, was tried for drinking Ormonde's health and for challenging a soldier to a duel. He was fined £5 and gaoled for three months and had to beg pardon in Convocation house.¹³²

All these conflicts came to a head on 30 October 1716, birthday of the prince of Wales. According to Hearne this day was not celebrated in Oxford and church bells were left unring. There was an exception – St. Peter in the East. Stratford rather disingenuously

¹²⁶ *H.M.C. Portland MSS.* 214; Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 334-8.

¹²⁷ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 237.

¹²⁸ *H.M.C. Portland MSS.* 215-17.

¹²⁹ Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 325; Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 255; vi, 56.

¹³⁰ PRO, SP 35/4, f. 45.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² PRO, Assizes 5/36; Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 268.

remarked 'nor was there any provocation of any kind'. Major Peter d'Offrainville ('a French Refugee and a zealous man for the Duke of Brunswick' according to Hearne), who was in day-to-day command of the troops in Oxford while his lieutenant-colonel was indisposed, was furious.¹³³ He entered a coffee house and accosted a Brasenose man, cursing and swearing. D'Offrainville allegedly ordered his men to break all the windows of the disloyal colleges, though claimed he only said this was his wish, rather than a direct command. He was also said to have told a city magistrate that similar treatment should be meted out to the townsmen. Certainly Stratford stated that these orders had been given.¹³⁴

At five in the evening of 30 October, the soldiers were lined up in the High Street. A mob had gathered, possibly due to such high-handed behaviour and threats as outlined above. They shouted 'Down with the Roundheads' and the major replied by threatening to assault any Jacobite in the crowd. However, for the moment, the conflict remained verbal. The troops discharged three volleys in the air to mark the auspicious date and were then dismissed.¹³⁵

The officers and local Whigs retired to the Star Inn in Cornmarket to partake of a celebratory dinner. The major had arranged for a bonfire to be built in the street. After dinner, they gathered there in order to drink loyal toasts to the king, the prince of Wales, the royal family and to William III of blessed memory. Having done so, they once again retired to the comforts of the inn.¹³⁶

Apparently it was then that the inn had its windows broken by the mob, though it was later claimed that these windows had been broken prior to that time. Whatever the case, the soldiers then decided to attack the property of the Jacobites and their sympathisers. Thomas Rowney in St. Giles's House had his windows broken and was insulted by the soldiers.¹³⁷ John Hunt, a Jacobite ironmonger, suffered likewise, and so did others. A cutler who drank King George's health told the soldiers that there were few of his fellows who were of his mind, and that he had suffered for his loyalism.¹³⁸ It is interesting to note that the shopkeepers suffered thus – presumably many of them were sympathetic towards Jacobitism, possibly influenced by the fact that much of their trade was with members of the university, as noted by Defoe.

Rowney claimed that not only did the soldiers break windows, they assaulted the magistrates who were trying to restore order. He alleged that the officers, especially d'Offrainville, encouraged their men in this disorder. The latter was supposed to have told Hunt's wife, 'I will pull your house down, and set it on fire. God damn these Jacobite rascals; we have made them suffer for it now'. Richard Wise, the mayor, and Baron claimed that the inhabitants were terrified, and no wonder, as their windows were being smashed. However, it would seem that the soldiers were actively seeking out those with Jacobite sympathies, though in settling old scores their behaviour was hardly legal.¹³⁹ These commotions only ceased when the commanding officer agreed to Wise's request that his men be recalled.¹⁴⁰

Both d'Offrainville and Wise, assisted by Rowney, began collecting evidence for what had happened on 30 October. D'Offrainville collected affidavits ('certainly as to the main false

¹³³ H.M.C. Portland MSS. 217; Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 333.

¹³⁴ Anon., *The Several Depositions concerning the Late Riot at Oxford* (1716), 12-13; Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 335; H.M.C. Portland MSS. 217-18.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 326.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid. 328, 330.

¹³⁸ Anon., *The Several Depositions*, 3, 6.

¹³⁹ Ibid. 8; Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 328-60.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 332.

oaths' according to Stratford) signed by soldiers and members of the Constitutional Club. Baron and Wise signed these without interrogating the witnesses, allegedly on Wright's advice. Wright thought that a loyal address, showing the city's abhorrence of the riots, should have been drawn up, rather than despatching protests, but he was overruled. Both townsmen and scholars gave evidence concerning the actions of the soldiery. The evidence was sent to London in early December, over a month after the riot had occurred.¹⁴¹

This incident was the subject of a debate in the House of Lords, with the government winning by 65 to 33 votes. The conduct of the soldiers was vindicated and Wise and the university were held to blame for not organising any public acts of rejoicing. This was not altogether fair, to say the least. The authorities certainly had not celebrated the day, but nor had they stirred up the mob to antagonise the soldiers into committing outrages on their property. Both soldiers and civilians had had to endure each others' company for more than a year; clearly tempers had frayed and then snapped. However, the government could hardly own itself and its agents to be in the wrong and only had minimal sympathy for a city which was deemed disloyal.¹⁴²

November 5, 1716, was not marked by ostentatious behaviour. Hearne marked it in his diary as 'Gunpowder Treason' and commented that there was not much activity in Oxford to mark the anniversary of the arrival of William of Orange in 1688.¹⁴³ However, four of the six churches for whom accounts exist, did ring their bells.¹⁴⁴

From 1717, reports of Jacobite activity in Oxford lessen. This was apparent in both their number and in the fact that Whig confidence was returning; few of the activities of the latter were now disturbed by their opponents. In part this may be because of the departure of the soldiery in May 1717. Stratford wrote on 21 May, 'This day came orders for the march of our soldiers, they go on Thursday and Friday. This is the best news we have had for many a day'.¹⁴⁵

The Whigs were certainly able to celebrate in public without any danger. On 19 January 1717, to mark the safe return to England of George I, Oxford Whigs made 'great rejoicing' and the halls and colleges were illuminated 'greater than ever were known here upon any occasion'. Healths were drunk and bonfires lit in the streets. Bitterly, Hearne recorded that this was due to the 'Cringing Temper of this Age'.¹⁴⁶ There were no disruptions on 28 May, nor on 1 August. On the latter occasion there was a bonfire and illuminations as the Constitutional Club met at the Three Tuns to celebrate.¹⁴⁷ On 30 October 1717, Hearne records 'Great Ringing of Bells all day in Oxford, from near four o'clock in ye morning till night, tho' the year before there was little or no ringing at all on this day'. Indeed, five out of six churches rang their bells.¹⁴⁸ The defeat of the Jacobite rebellion of 1719 was marked on 20 October 1719 when 'more than ordinary Rejoycings were made...at Wadham'.¹⁴⁹ However, the trend was not smooth. In 1724, George's accession was not celebrated, but on 30 October, 'There was in Oxford mighty ringing of bells at Christ Church and other places'.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 328-60; *H.M.C. Portland MSS.* 217-18.

¹⁴² *Political State of Great Britain*, xiii (1717), 444.

¹⁴³ Hearne, *Remarks*, v, 335.

¹⁴⁴ ORO, PAR 208/4/F1/71; PAR202/4/F1/2, f. 54; PAR200/DD/C1, f. 131; PAR211/4/F1/5, f. 12; PAR213/4/F1/4, f. 145.

¹⁴⁵ *H.M.C. Portland MSS.* 221.

¹⁴⁶ Hearne, *Remarks*, vi, 16.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. vi, 56, 76-7.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 102; ORO, PAR213/4/F1/4, f. 145; PAR208/4/F1/71; PAR211/4/F1/5, f. 13; PAR199/4/F1/2, f. 75v.; PAR189/4/F1/2, f. 123.

¹⁴⁹ Hearne, *Remarks*, vii, 57.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. viii, 247, 287-8.

Jacobite celebrations in public certainly declined, but were not entirely eclipsed. On 29 May 1717, Hearne recorded 'very great ringing and other Rejoycings, greater than the day before'.¹⁵¹ Yet one year later he was forced to note 'to my great amazement, there was less ringing [on 29 May] in Oxford than there was yesterday'.¹⁵² On both 10 June 1717 and 1718 Hearne left the city, allegedly to study antiquities, but whatever they did in private, there is no comment about any displays of Jacobitism in public.¹⁵³

Jacobitism was now less public. Thomas Warton, Tory professor of poetry, 'made a pointed Jacobite sermon' on 25 May 1719 on the theme that the country had destroyed itself (presumably by accepting the Hanoverian dynasty) but that salvation (in the form of the Stuarts) was at hand.¹⁵⁴ Hearne continued to scribble Jacobite jottings in his diaries. On 10 June 1720 he noted 'This is the King's birthday'. On 5 November that year, Dr. William King (1685-1763), principal of St. Mary's Hall, showed him a medal depicting the Old Pretender's wife. Hearne still referred to George I as the duke of Brunswick. His son, the future George II, was merely 'the pretended Prince of Wales, the bastard son of George, Duke of Brunswick'. To comfort himself in the face of growing Whiggery, Hearne put his enemies' success down to the corrupting influence of 'Money and Interest'. Yet even Hearne's Jacobitism was failing. Only once more did he note the restoration day and never again referred to the Pretender's birthday during 1725-35. Appropriately enough, he died on 10 June 1735.¹⁵⁵

Whereas George I's first year on the throne had been a time of disorder in Oxford, as it had been elsewhere, the same could not be said of the first year of his son's reign. Celebrations of George II's coronation in October 1727 passed off smoothly, with no known disturbances.¹⁵⁶ However, there was a brief resurgence of university Jacobitism in public over the Excise Bill crisis in 1733. The Revd Meadowcourt of Merton wrote on 16 April 1733 that 'Great Numbers of Gownsmen appear'd openly in the streets...reviving the old cries of Ormonde, Bolingbroke, King James for ever'. Yet we should note three further points: firstly, as Meadowcourt noted, Jacobitism 'for some years has slept at Oxford'; and the procession was dispersed by the mayor and proctors. Finally, though Hearne notes the rejoicings in Oxford, he does not note any Jacobite behaviour, which is curious for one who noted such with relish. All these points suggest the level of Jacobitism in Oxford in 1733 was limited.¹⁵⁷ This was, then, a brief and muted revival of a political movement which had not been seen for some years, and which was dealt with promptly and locally by the city and university authorities.

Twelve years later in 1745, when the Young Pretender made a bid for his father's throne, Oxford's reactions were mostly loyalist. The corporation sent loyal addresses at both the onset of the rebellion and after its defeat, which it had not done 30 years previously. As noted below, the university also sent a loyal address, again, unlike the case in 1715. The city also recorded its thanks for a loyalist sermon of thanksgiving for the defeat of the rebels. Regular troops were fêted outside Queen's College, which would have been unthinkable three decades earlier. As the *Oxford Gazette* observed:

¹⁵¹ Ibid. vi, 56-7.

¹⁵² Ibid. 180-1.

¹⁵³ Ibid. 61-2, 185-6.

¹⁵⁴ Black, *Eighteenth Century*, 129.

¹⁵⁵ Hearne, *Remarks*, vii, 139, 185; viii, 287-8; ix, 310; xi, 462.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. ix, 355.

¹⁵⁷ W. Coxe, *Memoirs of an Administration*, Walpole, iii (1798), 137; Hearne, *Remarks*, xi, 185.

It is impossible to express with what demonstrations of Joy they [the soldiers] were receiv'd, which was visible in everyone's countenance; the innkeepers with great Alacrity furnishing them and their horses with all necessaries, for which they refus'd to be paid a farthing; and the great numbers of the scholars of the University employ'd themselves in giving the soldiers liquor.¹⁵⁸

The bells of the city churches (at least those seven whose accounts have survived) rang loudly and often on loyalist occasions – the king's birthday, the anniversary of his accession and coronation, 5 November, the prince of Wales's birthday – as well as for extraordinary events, presumably on hearing the news of the victory of the duke of Cumberland at Culloden.¹⁵⁹

When the day came for official thanksgivings for the suppression of the rebellion, on 9 October 1746, one account read:

A Day of Thanks for the Success of His Majesty in extinguishing the late unnatural Rebellion. The same was observed with great solemnity. A Sermon was preached before the Reverend and Worshipfull Vice Chancellor and the learned Body of the University and before the Mayor and the Honourable Corporation of the City; and in the evening there were extraordinary illuminations, fireworks and many loyal healths went cheerfully around.¹⁶⁰

Jacobitism was not wholly extinguished in Oxford, though it was a very low flame. No one was indicted for Jacobite offences and none were reported as occurring in Oxford in 1745-6, but the Loyal Association was not signed by Thomas Rowney MP (c. 1693-1757), nor by twenty others whose names were noted. Yet Rowney's Jacobitism should be qualified. Although he was an enthusiastic drinker of Jacobite healths, once the Young Pretender arrived in Scotland, Rowney ordered his chaplain to pray for King George.¹⁶¹ The suspicious Horace Walpole wrote that the university, having sent a loyal address to George II, sent 'I suppose a duplicate of it to Edinborough', though this is wholly uncorroborated.¹⁶²

In February 1748 there was a riot in Oxford, deemed to be Jacobite in nature (the last of its kind), and three scholars of New College were indicted for seditious language. It was also noted that William Purnell, the vice-chancellor, did not take strong measures against them, although the university did make decrees condemning and combating tumults of this nature. Dr. King used Jacobite terminology in a speech on opening the Radcliffe Camera in 1749. Seditious verses were found near Carfax in 1754. Yet all this is nothing to compare to the Jacobite activity in Oxford in 1715-16.¹⁶³

In fact it would seem that political muck-raking was at the heart of the 1754 controversy. One source comments on the 'regular and unblameable behaviour of the scholars' during the election and suggested that 'some persons in Oxford, who are always industrious to depreciate the university...contrived to raise a clamour about treason and the pretender'. According to this source, the seditious verses were part of a conspiracy to discredit the Tories.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ *London Gazette*, 8468, 17-21 Sept. 1745; Hobson, *Oxf. Council Acts*, 250, 254, 256; *Oxford Gazette*, 2, 25 Nov. 1745.

¹⁵⁹ ORO, PAR211/4/F1/5, ff. 46-9; PAR208/4/F1/2; PAR200/DD/C1, ff. 166v.-7; PAR213/4/F1/5, ff. 17, 19; PAR199/4/F1/3, ff. 22v., 27v.; PAR189/4/F1/3, ff. 138, 143; PAR202/4/F1/2, ff. 118-19.

¹⁶⁰ Bodl. MS. Top. Oxon. d.247.

¹⁶¹ *An Authentick Copy of the Association* (1745); G. Holmes and D. Szechi, *The Age of Oligarchy, 1722-1783* (1993), 47.

¹⁶² W.S. Lewis (ed.), *Horace Walpole's Correspondence* (1937-83), xxx, 98.

¹⁶³ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 18 (1748), 214, 234, 521-2; 19 (1749), 281; 24 (1754), 289, 377-8; Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence*, xx, 6, 50.

¹⁶⁴ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 24 (1754), 338-9, 377-8.

It is surely significant that there was a painting of George III at St. John's College. This was, of course, symptomatic of changing times. The general decay of Jacobitism in England continued after Culloden, and more so as the appeal of Charles Edward plummeted. James Woodforde (1740-1803) was an undergraduate of New College from 1759-63 and recorded responses to the death of George II in 1760. On 1 November 1760 Woodforde bought a mourning suit for the late king's memory and on 25 January 1761 noted, 'We went into second mourning for his late Majesty'. Such behaviour would have been rare in 1727, but would appear to have been unremarkable in 1760. Yet only a year prior to this second mourning, a few, at least, in the university had some attachment to the Stuarts. Woodforde recorded, 'Went and heard Doctor Blackstone's Lecture on the Crown being Hereditary'.¹⁶⁵

Yet as late as 1923 there was a White Rose Club, of which Evelyn Waugh was a member. This was clearly an anachronism, when the whole political tenor of the city was leftwards. Waugh recalled

I also joined the White Rose, an occasional dining-club devoted to the Stuart cause. It had been under the Vice Chancellor's ban since 1745, when two members were reputedly hanged under Magdalen bridge. We commemorated their anniversary, the Restoration, the birthday of the Bavarian pretender (to whom we addressed loyal greetings) and other events in Stuart history by dinners at the Golden Cross... Those who could sang Royalist songs. I was as little concerned with the outcome of the affairs at Westminster as with the Stuart restoration.¹⁶⁶

Jacobitism in Oxford was a strong force in 1715-16, among large and vociferous sections of both city and university. In the disturbances against Whig celebrations and in the Jacobite demonstrations, both townsmen and scholars took part. Yet at the same time there were Whigs among both Town and Gown. It was the former, though, who had the upper hand in 1715. Oxford Jacobitism was neither trivial nor sentimental, certainly not in 1715 or 1716, and whereas the Whigs may have exaggerated its extent, there seems to be no doubt as to its reality. The government would hardly have sent down a regiment during the period of active rebellion in England and Scotland if it had not been real; and even less likely to have retained troops there for almost two years had Jacobitism merely been a fantasy. Nor is it easy to shrug off the widespread use of Jacobite rhetoric by the scholars; such youths would hardly be so politically naïve as not to know what they were saying on repeated occasions. Jacobitism was the creed both of a large section of the university and of the city, too, such were the numbers of townsmen who participated in disturbances in the streets. The latter seem to have been either led by, or at least influenced by, the university. The city Jacobites, though, were not merely the lower orders; when the soldiers caused disorder in 1716, it was the shopkeepers who suffered, and so it is reasonable to assume that many of the city tradesmen were Jacobite.

This Jacobitism took many forms; there was the drinking of healths by dons, there were numerous instances of Jacobite cries being heard in the streets and the taverns, and confrontations with Whigs and soldiers. Dissenting houses were attacked and there were brawls with soldiers. There was even talk of insurrection at a time when the Jacobite high command were planning to stir up rebellion in the west country. All this Jacobitism must have been buoyed up by the possibility – some would say probability – that the Pretender

¹⁶⁵ J. Beresford (ed.), *James Woodforde: The Diary of a Country Parson, 1758-1802* (1987), 4-6.

¹⁶⁶ E. Waugh, *A Little Learning* (1964), 183.

was about to be restored. Furthermore, it does not appear that Jacobitism in Oxford was an idiom for other grievances, as has been suggested about the rioting in 1714-16 more generally.

Such behaviour began to decline, at least in public, from early 1716. Partly this may have been because of the failure of the rebellion to restore the Pretender in the previous year. Partly it may have been because of the garrisoning of the city, though this was also provocative and led to clashes and verbal confrontations. The increase in the confidence of local Whigs was given a boost by these factors, too. In any case, Jacobitism as a whole in England had passed its high watermark. The Hanoverian dynasty was here for the long term.

Jacobitism, however, did not die in Oxford after 1716. As in the years prior to 1715, it retained its hard core of adherents. How great this number was, is impossible to say, for their activities ceased to be in the public eye. Yet their confidence was clearly dented. It is also worth observing that the university, or at least elements of it, remained Jacobite whereas the city did not. The outbursts of Jacobitism in 1733 and 1748-54 all appear to be the work of those associated with the university. Indeed, the mayor played his part in suppressing the Jacobite disturbance of 1733. It is only after the 1750s that one can talk of sentimental Jacobitism, that is, after the Jacobite cause had ceased to be politically realistic. At its peak, in 1715-16, it was a serious and widespread political force in both the city and university of Oxford.

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