



*Civilian soldiers in Staffordshire 1793-1823*

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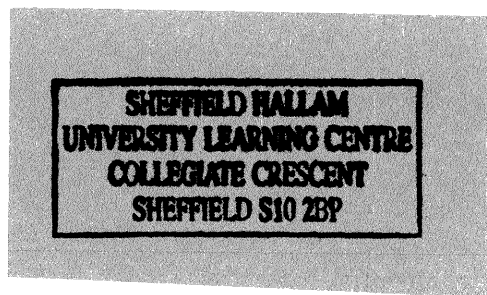
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**CIVILIAN SOLDIERS  
IN STAFFORDSHIRE**

**1793 — 1823**

**MICHAEL R HALES**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of Sheffield Hallam University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Submission July 1995**



# ABSTRACT

The thesis is concerned with civilian soldier movements raised in Staffordshire between 1793 and 1823: – the militias, the volunteer infantry movements and the yeomanry cavalry. In order to assess standards of performance in the various movements, it has been necessary to draw comparisons with similar forces throughout the country, but more especially those in the Inland Area.

In Staffordshire there were three, separate, volunteer infantry movements. The Staffordshire Yeomanry did not disband, as did many cavalry units in 1802 and again in 1815, but its nature changed, so in effect, there were three movements. There were three militias – the regular, supplementary and local militias. The work has concentrated on the procedures for raising, enrolling and financing all the movements. It has considered their service, behaviour, efficiency and their military contribution to the war effort. It has examined the use of corps as *posse comitatus* and the impact they made on their neighbourhoods or, in the case of the militias, their stations. The period 1793 to 1816 covered the service of the militias and the voluntary movements during the war years. The post-war period, 1815 to 1823, has been concerned with the service of the yeomanry corps and their aid to the civil power, and the voluntary infantry raised between 1819 and 1823. Throughout the work, the relationship between the three movements has been studied, as has their relationship with the army.

The work has considered the reasons given by government for raising, maintaining and financing such large civilian forces, and how happy the administrations were with so many armed civilians, in war-time, when there was a great fear of Radical activity. It has examined the bureaucracies given the task of administering and controlling the movements and the role played by Whitehall. It has sought to discover what part the civilian movements were expected to play in the event of a French invasion.

From 1793 to 1807, considerable legislation was enacted to raise the forces, to alter their status, to give government powers to direct men into voluntary movements, and to rationalise such matters as pay, training and service, so the question of national rather than local movements has been discussed. In the light of increased government involvement in the infantry and yeomanry, the voluntary nature of the two forces has been questioned.

The militia and the army were generally detested and feared. In the light of this, the thesis has sought to discover why considerable numbers of civilians were willing to join voluntary military movements, who they were, and how far they were prepared to accept military discipline and the increased demands made upon them, and their localities, by government as the wars progressed. The great civilian mobilisation, in the form it took, was unique. No modern work exists in Staffordshire, or possibly elsewhere, which has undertaken a thorough, comparative study of all three local military associations during the European and Napoleonic Wars and the post-war period to 1823. The work therefore adds to the existing knowledge of civilian movements. It advances the argument that they were social rather than military movements; it defines a continuous link between the early associations, those of mid-Victorian Britain and the Local Defence Volunteers of 1940.

# ABBREVIATIONS

## THESIS ABBREVIATIONS

PRO	Public Record Office
BCRO	Bedfordshire County Record Office
BuCRO	Buckinghamshire County Record Office
CCRO	Cheshire County Record Office
DCRO	Derbyshire County Record Office
HCRL	Hanley Central Reference Library
MCRL	Manchester Central Reference Library
NYRO	North Yorkshire Record Office
SRO	Staffordshire Record Office
StAd	Staffordshire Advertiser
UKL	University of Keele Library

## STAFFORDSHIRE RECORD OFFICE ABBREVIATIONS

AqP	Aqualate Papers
PP	Paget Papers
SP	Sutherland Papers
TP	Talbot Papers
YP	Yeomanry Papers
DYP	Dyott Papers
DartP	Dartmouth Papers
MiscP	Miscellaneous Papers
ALP	Allcock Papers

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# INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 1660, a large standing army had always been distrusted, disliked and feared in England. It was thought to be unnecessary since it was believed that the navy would always protect the island from an invasion. The expense was resented, and there were those who saw a standing army in the country as encouragement to arbitrary government.<sup>1</sup> The army, until the European Wars broke out, was never a large force, and it was thought politically expedient to keep the greater part of it abroad. In the event of internal disorder or an invasion threat auxiliary movements were preferred as a means of defence. The war which broke out in 1793 posed a greater danger of invasion than any previous conflict. To meet the danger of invasion and internal dissent great numbers of men were enrolled in the auxiliary movements.

This work will seek to establish a framework, based upon research, to discover how effectively the United Kingdom mobilised and used civilian soldier movements against internal and external enemies between 1793 and 1823, and why, since the army was so feared and despised, men chose voluntarily, to join a military movement.

Militias were the traditional defence forces and the main aid to the civil power in maintaining internal order. The first militia statute was enacted in 1558, after which it was reorganised and reformed from time to time as the situation demanded.<sup>2</sup> It had always been the hope that respectable citizens and yeomen would come forward, voluntarily, to join this force which was led by the gentry. This rarely happened and an element of compulsion was always necessary to fill the ranks. In general the burden of militia service fell upon the poorest in the community. The Act of 1757 introduced the ballot to meet county quotas. The Act was not popular, and as late as 1779, sixteen counties including Staffordshire, had not raised a militia. Until 1757, the cost of the movement was met by the counties after which government financed the force. During the European and Napoleonic Wars the militias never numbered less than 40,000 and by 1813 the total numbers serving in the three militias totalled 291,033. A few regiments served in Ireland with the army to suppress the rebellion of 1798.

By 1812 some regiments were deemed reliable enough to be used against rioters in Lancashire. Otherwise the militias performed garrison duties, manned coastal defences and guarded prisoners of war, but in the main they spent most of their time marching about the Kingdom, rarely staying long in any posting. One explanation advanced for the maintenance of a large militia was that it provided a reservoir of trained men for the army. Statutes prevented the army from recruiting directly from the militia so trained militiamen were encouraged, with limited success, to volunteer for the army which otherwise had to rely on volunteers. Hay claimed that between 1793 and 1814 the army secured 100,000 men from the militias.<sup>3</sup> It is, however, an explanation which is only partially successful in explaining why such large numbers of men were kept under arms but served no apparent military function. In 1816 the last of the militias were disembodied and the force became moribund.

The first time that voluntary movements were raised by statute as separate forces, was during the European and Napoleonic Wars. The Act of 1794 authorised lords lieutenant to accept the services of infantry and cavalry volunteers for the defence of the country.<sup>4</sup> The Acts of 1798 and 1802 gave local authorities the power to direct men into the voluntary movements which introduced an element of compulsion.<sup>5</sup> During the twenty-two years of war, thousands of citizens came forward to 'defend their hearths and homes' against foes foreign and domestic. At the peak of recruitment between 1803 and 1805 nearly 400,000 citizen soldiers or 3.5% of the male population were under arms, most of whom were in infantry companies.<sup>6</sup> A few volunteer infantry companies were called upon to aid the civil power but none was ever used against a foreign foe and it was generally doubted whether they could ever have constituted an efficient military force. In 1806 there were moves to raise a home army, and subsequent administrations sought to reduce the voluntary movements, particularly the infantry. In 1808 volunteer infantrymen were encouraged to transfer into the new, local militias.<sup>7</sup> The discouragement of the volunteer infantry and the formation of a local militia indicated that administrations were far happier with militias which emphasised the existing social divisions and were under the control of the gentry. Staffordshire's volunteer infantry had been disbanded by 1812, and in the country none remained after 1814.

Apart from a brief period between 1819 and 1823, when four infantry movements were raised in England, one in Staffordshire, because of internal dissent, there was to be no volunteer infantry corps until 1859, when a new movement was raised.

The volunteer cavalry or yeomanry was preferred by the civil power. No serious attempt was ever made to disband them though post-1815, there were moves to reform the corps and reduce numbers. Most counties retained their yeomanry regiments after 1815 as an aid to the civil power. The Staffordshire Yeomanry, raised in 1794, remained in continuous service until 1907 when all volunteer movements became part of the territorial army. Although used extensively by the civil power, no yeomanry regiments, with one exception, were ever used against a foreign foe.

It was an unprecedented shift in official policy to raise and maintain statutory, voluntary movements which were expensive, not particularly efficient, nor loyal. Western and Beckett have suggested that although raised ostensibly to defend the Kingdom against a French invasion, the main reason why governments maintained volunteer movements, and more especially the yeomanry, was to retain a political force to suppress any form of opposition to government.<sup>8</sup> It appeared that the voluntary movements were, after 1798, intended to replace the militia as *posse comitatus*, since after 1795, that movement was considered to be unreliable.

A wide cross section of the community joined the voluntary movements. A variety of reasons were given for enrolment in a military movement. Patriotism was the motive most commonly advanced at the time to explain why men joined but it was not the sole reason. Compulsion apart, it may not even have been the main motive. Many early volunteers joined to protect property and privileges. The yeomanry in particular saw this and the maintenance of order as their *raison d'être*. Other reasons advanced were fear of invasion, class hatred, pecuniary and social advantage and the glamour associated with military movements.

The relationship between the civilian movements and their local societies was a close one both during the war and afterwards. Communities provided the men, and the extra money without which most voluntary infantry and cavalry movements could not have survived, since government grants were never enough to clothe, arm and equip men.

Michael Howard wrote, 'Armies are a microcosm of their societies which are changed by the battles they win'.<sup>9</sup> Although the auxiliary movements fought no battles with a foreign foe, how far they changed or influenced the societies from which they came is a relevant question. It has been asserted that the real function of the two voluntary movements was to give cohesion to their societies in time of war. There was also, it has been argued, a moral dimension. Those who joined the voluntary movements were seen as respectable and an example to others in a time of crisis. Volunteers moreover had a propaganda value, vital to governments worried by invasion threats, dissent and unrest. It is possible to argue also, that putting civilians from all social groups into uniform, in a disciplined force under the control of the gentry, acted as a social control mechanism rather than an effective military movement. How far this argument is tenable will be discussed.

Since the main use of the yeomanry was against sections of the community, it is important to distinguish those who supported the movements and why they did so, from those against whom the movements were deployed and for what reason? The use of armed Englishmen against their fellows was nothing new but the degree of hatred evinced by some yeomanry against rioters, strikers and demonstrators was a new phenomenon which requires an explanation.

The volunteer infantry and militia had all been disbanded by 1816. Their effect on society, however, was to continue. Ex-militia men were in evidence when post-war demonstrations were being planned, they drilled and showed demonstrators how to organise and march. It was believed also that the experience of association had taught men negotiating skills which would be valuable in the struggle for enfranchisement and reform. The fear of 'armed parliaments' was evident.<sup>10</sup>



How far this influence affected the struggle for reform and how long it continued is unclear but the issue will be discussed. An enduring effect was the clubs formed by ex-volunteers. Men were reluctant to end an association which had in some cases lasted for much of the war. Ex-volunteers formed rifle clubs, military clubs and marching clubs in many counties including Staffordshire. These quasi-military clubs were to form a link between the early movements and the volunteer movement formed in 1859.

It was fortunate for this research that detailed military records existed in the Stafford Record Office. Notable were papers concerned with the Pagets, Earls of Uxbridge and later Marquises of Anglesey, the Gower / Sutherlands, the Talbots and the Aqualate papers concerned with the Fletcher / Boughey family. In addition there were extensive Yeomanry records for the period under discussion and beyond. These have enabled an analysis to be made of the efficiency, the service, the funding, the enrolment and the public attitude towards the county's auxiliary movements. It has been possible, by using these records and those kept by gentry in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, to draw comparisons between Staffordshire and its neighbours in the Inland Military Area. Research in the Record Offices of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, North Yorkshire and Birmingham Central Reference Library, Manchester Central Reference Library, Hanley Reference Library, Dudley Reference Library, Keele University Local Collection, the National Army Museum, the Staffordshire Regimental Museum and the Public Record Office has enabled wider comparisons to be made with country movements outside the military area.

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# STAFFORDSHIRE AND ITS INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

## INTRODUCTION

In 'The Lessons of History' Michael Howard ascribed a key role in society to armies.

They were, he wrote,

'often the core of their societies.'<sup>1</sup>

The civilian military movements raised during the European and Napoleonic Wars were microcosms of the local societies from which they were drawn, and within which they served.

It will be argued that they too played a key role in their societies during the wars.

At the outbreak of war in 1793, existing industries in areas such as Staffordshire, Cheshire and Lancashire were expanding and modernising whilst the economies of counties such as Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire remained based on agriculture. In order to understand the nature and role of the civilian forces in Staffordshire, it is necessary to understand the societies from which they were drawn.

The period 1793-1823 was one in which government and local authorities raised, maintained and supported large, civilian soldier forces at considerable public cost. At its peak in 1805, Staffordshire's quota was, in addition to its militia, 6,000 volunteers. Most of the men who joined the volunteer infantry, came from the new urban areas in the county; most yeomanry troops were raised in the county, and the militia was balloted from every hundred.

There was a close relationship between all the movements and their communities.

The urban developments from which volunteer soldiers came, and in which industrial strife and Radical activity occurred, were new. The two major industrial areas in Staffordshire; the north Staffordshire potteries and the south Staffordshire coalfield had developed during the last half of the eighteenth century. Few of the new urban conurbations in Staffordshire, the North West, the Midlands and North East had local government structures until the Act of 1835.

Until that date counties were controlled by the Lords Lieutenant who nominated the justices and deputy-lieutenants. They, with other unpaid officials, were the de facto government of the English counties. Most officers in the yeomanry, the army and some in the militia came from the same upper class grouping, and therefore, shared the same interests, and had the same desire to maintain their political power and protect their wealth and status from encroachments by an emerging working class which began to demand representation, more especially post 1814.

Staffordshire magnates and entrepreneurial potters were fortunate in that vast deposits of excellent clay, coal, iron and limestone lay under their land. After 1780, enterprising landowners in Derbyshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire, together with a new, emergent middle order, seized the chance to exploit this mineral wealth. Where capital was needed magnates were forward in moving capital and profit from land for the development of industry.

The new, wealthy upper class formed by the land-owning gentry and a growing, entrepreneurial middle class constituted, by the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, a powerful political, industrial and military grouping which was well represented in both Houses of Parliament.

Manufacturing in most midland counties was not new as was the textile industry. Since early times, in counties such as Shropshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire, income from farming had been supplemented by income from rural industry. Records indicated that in Staffordshire iron, coal, lead and copper mining, smelting, pottery, and metal-working had existed as cottage industries, in some cases since the thirteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The early industrialists were usually farmers and small-holders, who produced manufactured goods, such as butter pots, for nearby markets or mined small quantities of coal and iron from shallow pits.

There is evidence that from the sixteenth century Staffordshire iron, coal and pottery was being exported to other parts of the country.<sup>3</sup>

It may be concluded therefore that, the bases of all Staffordshire's main industries were well established by the mid-eighteenth century. A crucial factor in the labour market and in the stimulation of domestic demand for coal and metal goods was a rising birth-rate which, in Staffordshire as elsewhere, showed a steep rise from 1750 onwards. A steadily growing population and a move towards industry by sections of the populace, placed increased demands on agriculture, and output barely kept pace with demand. The riots, shortages and price increases which followed the poor harvests of 1795, 1800 and 1801 showed exactly how fragile the balance was between supply and demand. Crafts had claimed also that, until 1824, industrial output was barely able to satisfy the demands of the domestic markets, because any increase in output proved to be only commensurate with population growth.<sup>4</sup>

The European wars, 1794 to 1814, did not interrupt the phase of industrial expansion and social change which began in 1780. Government and local military contracts for food and military supplies during the war years stimulated demand, and encouraged expansion in manufacturies such as iron, textiles, metal working, salt, coal and brick making as well as traditional industries such as leather working, food and agriculture. Mathias emphasised that a major factor in the expansion of many industries was the demand created by the enormous increase in all the military forces. The figure he gave of 500,000 men in the services at their peak would have included those in the auxiliary movements.<sup>5</sup>

After the war the collapse of markets at home and abroad caused wide-spread bankruptcies in Staffordshire and the country as a whole. In Staffordshire the business failures were more evident among the small, underfunded concerns.<sup>6</sup>

During the period 1750 to 1830, reliance on agriculture as the major employer of labour, and the greatest economic factor in the gross national product, diminished. Crafts' figures show that during the period from 1801 to 1821 in Britain as a whole there was an overall shift of workers from agriculture to manufacturing.

By 1821 twenty-eight per cent of all men were engaged in agriculture, thirty-eight per cent worked in industry, twelve per cent were in the construction industry, whilst the remainder followed traditional occupations such as taking service or rural crafts.<sup>7</sup>

Crafts' figures relate to the country as a whole, but in the predominantly industrial counties a far greater change had occurred which is illustrated by the percentage of working men engaged in the major areas of employment in 1841.

**Percentage of men employed in mining, manufacturing  
and agriculture by 1841**

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	<u>Mining</u>	<u>Manufacturing</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>
Cheshire	2.6	43.4	22.2
Derbyshire	9.3	36.5	23.4
Northumberland	14.3	30.3	23.1
Staffordshire	13.0	39.5	19.0
Warwickshire	1.4	46.8	21.1

*Source: Crafts, British Economic Growth during the Industrial Revolution, p4.*

Of all the counties in the country only Northumberland, Durham and Glamorgan had significantly more men in mining than Staffordshire. It was the major mining county in the Midlands and North West, but although its manufacturing base was significant, it was not as large as those in neighbouring counties such as Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire and Cheshire.

When Robert Plot visited Staffordshire in 1677 to write his History, he found it convenient to divide the county into what he saw as two natural regions, North and South Staffordshire. The northern region began at its boundaries with Cheshire in the north west and Derbyshire to the north. The boundary ran south east, following the line of the River Trent to Burton-on-Trent on the Derbyshire border. To the south of the Trent lay Plot's second region. This ran from the River south to the county border with Worcestershire. In the west the county was bounded by Shropshire and Cheshire whilst to the south east it was bounded by Warwickshire. Plot's divisions are convenient and will be used throughout this work. (Map 1)

## (i) THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERY DISTRICT

Pottery making was already an ancient craft in North Staffordshire by the time Plot arrived. By 1870, pottery making dominated the industries of the area to such an extent that it gave the whole area its name, 'the Potteries' or 'the Pottery District'.<sup>8</sup> The early industry was centred on Burslem, one of six towns making up the Pottery District. (Map 2)

When the supply of wood for firing kilns was exhausted, a seemingly inexhaustible supply of suitable coal to fire the ovens was found, easily accessible, in outcrops or just below the earth's surface. As a result, many master potters developed their coal interests in conjunction with pottery manufacture. Plot noted that not only was there a thriving cottage industry but also an export market.<sup>9</sup> Writing in 1902, Josiah Wedgwood claimed that much of the early pottery was 'crude in finish and design'.<sup>10</sup>

Most of the land in and around what was to become the Pottery District was poor upland, lying on millstone grit measures. This provided some security, but it did not earn more than a meagre living, therefore for many years most farmers had used the clay which abounded in Staffordshire to make simple pottery which they sold at local markets. Exhibits in the Hanley Museum depict typical farmers' houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth century; each house has an integral oven specially built for clay firing. There was, therefore, a large reservoir of skill available when it was needed, and unlike the textile industry, there was never any large scale immigration of workers into the district.

By 1750, economic conditions, both locally and nationally, meant that there were now greater opportunities for new and larger enterprises in the Pottery District. Physical conditions in Staffordshire proved to be extremely favourable for the development of a major industry. The adoption by the Royal Family of Wedgwood's cream ware stimulated further an already growing national domestic market for earthenware. An increase in the demand for coal by industry, and for domestic use, led to further growth and expansion of the coal trade. The expansion of trade ensured greater economic independence for those with initiative who were willing to change from a cottage industry and invest in new manufacturies.

By 1760, a new class of entrepreneur had emerged from poor, potting families; these included famous names such as Adams, Wedgwood, Spode and Davenport. By this time a new and distinct Pottery District had begun to take shape. Most enterprises were still those of 'small masters', men who employed a few journeymen and worked alongside their employees. At the same time large scale manufacturies which employed hundreds of workers were being built.<sup>11</sup> When they were allowed to join the volunteer companies in 1798, and again in 1803, it was journeymen potters and their masters who provided many of the recruits for corps raised at Newcastle, Stoke, Hanley, Etruria and Longton. Some master potters such as Wedgwood, Spode and Adams were now wealthy enough to afford estates in the country and membership of the yeomanry. The system of land tenure in the north of the county meant that the great landlords could not become involved in the pottery manufacture, and the industry was to remain in the hands of potters.

To summarise, pottery manufacture in Staffordshire expanded to a position of national importance between 1750 and 1800. It was able to draw on the skills of an existing, local workforce. The wealth it generated provided support for the volunteer companies raised in the new urban districts. Masters and journeymen potters provided most of the officers and men who manned the corps.

Although the gentry in the northern area of Staffordshire were not involved in the pottery industry, men such as Colonel Ralph Sneyd, Earl Granville and the Duke of Newcastle created an iron and coal trade from the mineral resources on their land. When food riots occurred in 1800, it was the colliers and furnacemen who led the disturbances, not the potters.

The success of the pottery industry was due to its early entrepreneurs, men such as Wedgwood who not only improved china and earthenware but initiated other beneficial enterprises. It was largely due to him that roads were built in the 1760s, which linked the area with London and Liverpool. The Trent and Mersey Canal, completed in 1777, was built because of Wedgwood's efforts.



The roads and canals connected what had been an isolated and inaccessible area to the Midlands, and to the ports of London and Liverpool with commensurate benefits to trade, and to the community as a whole. Communications between the workers living in the North West and those in the Midlands were also facilitated. A consequence of this was that the disaffection which grew amongst working men as a result of the social and economic problems of industrialisation was quickly transmitted from one area to another. When this discontent became serious and necessitated moving troops to contain it, the new roads and canals ensured quick movement from barracks in Weedon and Birmingham to the Midlands and North West.

To conclude, structural change from 1780 onwards was both rapid and fundamental, and it was necessarily linked to the industrial changes which had occurred. Men and their families were required to live close to the new factories: they were required to work full-time for a set number of hours, and meet production targets. In exchange for conforming to these requirements, men were paid set wages. These changes sundered them from their old lives. They were no longer able to work at their own pace. Similarly, time and space for leisure were restricted. Outside the factory gate no one was responsible for them, the factory and its importance now came to dominate men's lives since they were utterly dependent for their livelihoods upon a master who, in the larger works, they might never see or know. A new generation of masterless men evolved which was the most fundamental of all the changes which occurred. The changes did not occur smoothly, it took many years and many disputes before men fully accepted the discipline of the factory and their urban environment. Despite the new restrictions imposed upon them, potters, by the very nature of their craft, retained a good deal of control over production.

The first factories to be built to meet the new requirements were small, and adapted from existing buildings with no more than five ovens side by side on sites in Hanley, Burslem, Cobridge and Longton. (Map 1)

In the first phase of the creation of the Pottery District, forty-three factories were built, and in 1750, their combined output was worth £6,417. By 1799, over thirty new, large factories had been built. Wedgwood's purpose-built factory at Etruria contained 'all the disciplines of factory life'.

In 1792, it was calculated that the total worth of Staffordshire's pottery trade was £200,000 to £300,000 per annum. Unlike the coal and iron industries in the south of the county, this money provided no income for land-holding magnates, it was a new middle order which profited from the trade. To man the new factories a larger workforce was required. It is estimated that in 1715, there were 500 potters in the area, and at the onset of industrialisation in 1760, numbers had increased to 7,000 working in 500 factories. By 1785, this number had risen to 15,000 operatives.<sup>12</sup> In addition, there was a large, skilled, ancillary workforce engaged in coal mining, paper-making, crate-making, engraving, modelling and colour making. To this number must be added large numbers of unskilled labourers.

Manufacture of pottery in North Staffordshire was contained within a relatively small area. Simeon Shaw, writing in 1829, put the length of the Pottery District, that is the six towns which comprised the area:- Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton, and Longton, at about ten miles, and its width at about three, dimensions which have not altered appreciably over the years.<sup>13</sup> The concentration and importance of this industry in a relatively small area was an important factor when considering the development of working class movements in the Potteries.<sup>14</sup> (Map 2)

There was no ordered planning of the new urban districts. Houses were now sited adjacent to manufacturies in narrow, winding streets amongst the pot banks, clay-pits, mines and mills. Here it was easy for a mob to gather and pelt the military, safe in the knowledge that numbers of armed men could not operate in such areas, and narrow, winding streets became a trap for mounted men when troubles erupted.

The factories which were necessary for industrial processes were a new concept, and there was no precedent for controlling the large numbers of workers who were gathered into these innovative buildings. The only large bureaucracy in existence at this time was the army, and many factory owners turned to the military for their model, introducing disciplinary procedures into their factories similar to those practised in the army.

Some of the large producers such as Copeland, Adams and Wedgwood were strict but humane men who took an interest in their workers' lives beyond the factory, and built decent houses, schools and chapels for them. On the other hand, there were, absentee masters such as those remembered by Charles Shaw, where drunken brutality resulted from ill-supervised pottery works, which was particularly hard for young workers.<sup>15</sup> The pottery industry was notorious even by the standards of the day, and Marx was moved to write of pot making,

'that it was a branch of industry by the side of which cotton spinning assumes the aspect of a pleasant, healthy occupation'.<sup>16</sup>

Potters were an intelligent, politically motivated, artisan group. It is a paradox that although they may have had Radical leanings they were intensely patriotic: despite the fact that their liberties and activities were restricted by law, great numbers of potters joined the volunteer companies.

To conclude, after the food riots of 1800, the Pottery district remained calm and, until 1816, when trade fell off, it was prosperous. The post-war depression in the area, according to Ward, did not last long and trade had begun to pick up once more in 1818.<sup>17</sup> Recovery, however, was not rapid. There were alarms during this period and the yeomanry was called out several times but no serious incidents were reported. This was in sharp contrast to the south Staffordshire coalfield and in the cotton towns of the North West where violence was endemic from 1812 onwards. The area was, in general, more prosperous and did not suffer as badly in the post-war period as the south which may account for a lack of trouble.

Two other factors may also have affected the situation. Skilled potters, although often at odds with their employers, still controlled the process of pottery manufacture which gave them some powers denied them as members of a union. Secondly there were a great number of small masters in the area. It was relatively cheap to set up a pottery, and raw material cost nothing. The interests and aspirations of masters and men were identical and this may have prevented some industrial strife.

## (ii) THE SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COALFIELD

This district, later to become known as the Black Country, stretched from Wolverhampton and West Bromwich westwards to Dudley in Worcestershire. (Map 3)

It was an area which had been settled since ancient times, and there were a number of old, established towns such as Bilston, Tipton, Walsall, Wednesbury and Wolverhampton.

It was an area which differed greatly from north Staffordshire. It was flat and its economy was different. There was, with few exceptions, little intercourse between north and south.

The primary industries were iron and coal working. There were also major secondary industries such as the manufacture of metal goods, glass production, chemicals and brick making.

Mining, smelting and metal working were all well-established, ancient crafts when Plot arrived to write his History. Staffordshire was at that time without good communications with the rest of the country, but nonetheless Leland, writing in the seventeenth century, noted that the smiths in Birmingham,

'had their yren out of Staffordshire and Warwickshire and see coale out of Staffordshire'.<sup>18</sup>

Physical conditions in the area were extremely favourable for its rapid exploitation.

Coal, iron and limestone were to be found in abundance, the measures lay close to the surface and were easily mined. The coal measures were the thickest in the country, some being thirty feet in depth. The coal excelled in quality and variety but its production was, until 1824, secondary to that of iron, its function was to fuel the blast furnaces and meet a domestic demand.

The early importance of the area derived from iron and its products.

The conjunction of the necessary physical conditions was essential for the success of a major industry but not sufficient to create what was to become the country's major manufacturing region by 1850. Considerable investment was required to build blast furnaces and iron works, and to sink deep, modern pits and build pit-head installations. In Staffordshire it was the landed aristocracy such as Gower, Granville, Dartmouth and Newcastle who provided much of the capital required.

Money was available because what appeared to be a radical decision had been made to shift money from investment in land, hitherto considered the basis of the nation's economic stability, to investment in industry. It was a departure from customary practice yet the first signs of a new attitude towards returns on investment had occurred two decades earlier when the great landlords had begun to require a return on the outlay made to improve agricultural working. The management of large estates such as that of Lord Stafford began to be dominated by a profit motive rather than by customary relationships.<sup>19</sup> Many agricultural workers in south Staffordshire, moved from the land to work in the new industries developed on estates such as that of Dartmouth at Sandwell.

The magnates were fortunate, not only did they have capital but it was also under their land that most of the mineral wealth lay, and by 1780, the commercial exploitation of coal and iron had begun. Most peers and gentry took a keen interest in their industrial activities but they usually relied upon lessees or managers to run their affairs. Involvement in industry and commerce represented an enormous change in attitudes. As Cannadine has pointed out, magnates, from being solely landowners drawing income from rents, had now become industrialists.<sup>20</sup> To ensure control of land and to further increase their incomes, the aristocracy and gentry in Staffordshire were active in buying up estates and mineral rights whenever they came up for sale. Such was the wealth, power and rank of these men that there was little opposition to their activities in Staffordshire.<sup>21</sup> All the evidence suggested that tradesmen, gentry and peasant entrepreneurs, far from opposing the magnates, joined in the exploitation of the new wealth.<sup>22</sup> The investment, and huge incomes now enjoyed by the aristocracy, gentry and middle orders meant that they all had an interest in seeing that peace and order was maintained in the industrial districts, and that the new, emergent working class were kept in a subservient position. It is plausible to suggest that the generous donations made by the upper and middle classes to support the voluntary military movements were more to do with the protection of property, the continuance of industry and the maintenance of order in the manufacturing districts than defence against invasion. The war provided an additional stimulus for the iron and metal working industries and this resulted in an expansion of existing manufacturies.

The ending of hostilities in 1814 was followed by a short boom, but after 1816 many iron markets collapsed altogether and there was fierce competition to secure orders. Stagnant markets, a lack of continuous, firm orders and price-cutting caused a recession in south Staffordshire. The adequately-funded concerns were better able to survive but most of the small, under-funded concerns failed. Few escaped the consequences of recession altogether and many hitherto well-paid craftsmen were reduced to destitution and misery. In 1819, according to Ward, trade had begun to improve,

'though many were successful, many were ruined'.<sup>23</sup>

It was Ward's contention that those who were ruined were those without experience of manufacture, commerce or trade. He was particularly gloomy about the number of bankruptcies, the resultant misery and unemployment which followed. There was, he wrote in 1819,

'a growing lack of social cohesion'.<sup>24</sup>

Although trade had improved by 1820, there was to be little certainty of permanent, sustained employment for colliers, miners, blast furnacemen and metal workers for the remainder of the century. Unemployment, low wages, cost cutting and the resultant misery were blamed upon government and employers. After 1816, there were a growing number of strikes and protests, many of which were violent and required the military to suppress them.

To conclude, the conditions in mining were always harsh and dangerous and the attitude of many employers was characterised by greed and lack of concern for their workmen.

During the war workers were well-paid but recession resulted in large-scale lay-offs and wage cuts. It is not surprising therefore to find a climate in which expressions of anger and protest resulted in violence.

Structural changes in industry resulted in large scale alterations in working practices. Deeper, modern pits required a skilled, disciplined, knowledgeable team to cut and transport the differing varieties of coal and iron to the surface. Although well-paid by comparison with pottery workers men had to accept the discipline and work practices imposed by masters in order to ensure continuous production. Unlike potters, they had little control over the method of production.

Conditions in the blast-furnaces were, if anything, more hazardous than those in the mines. In the primitive, ill-regulated furnaces there were frequent spillages of molten metal, and if this did not kill or maim, dust and heat caused chronic chest complaints which ended the careers of most iron workers by forty.

The major, secondary industry was metalworking. The area was famous for locks, guns, keys, trays, nails, and chains. The appalling degradation and cruelty suffered by workers in the workshops was described in Disraeli's novel 'Sybil'.<sup>25</sup>

Industrial change was accompanied by great social change in the lives of workers. By 1810, aristocratic estates had been changed beyond recognition by industrial development. Workers were made to live in houses provided by their masters. Even by the lax standards of the nineteenth century the mining districts were notorious for dirt, squalor and disease. Workers' dwellings were situated in despoiled areas where land had been abandoned, amongst derelict pit heads, slag heaps, engine houses, ponds and heaps of refuse. There were towns but the unregulated building on land which had no further industrial use destroyed the old municipal boundaries, and an area of industry, waste land and houses stretched unbroken from Birmingham westwards into Worcestershire. The sight which met travellers' eyes was a continuous vista of unpaved streets, courtyards, houses, canals, stagnant ponds and mud mingled with manufacturies. Over all hung a pall of smoke. There was no sanitation and no fresh drinking water. Subsidence was common and underground, fires raged out of control.<sup>26</sup>

The condition of the majority of people living in the area in 1816 can best be understood by considering Barnsby's figures. In a study of Coseley, just outside Wolverhampton, he found that 822 people had no resources or income whatsoever, seventy-four received one shilling each per week and 130 received two shillings per week. These figures represented the income of 80 per cent of Coseley's inhabitants. To put these findings in perspective, Barnsby found that ten pence halfpenny per day was allowed by the poorhouse for the upkeep of paupers.

It must be assumed therefore that six shillings and a penny halfpenny per week was the minimum sum required to keep a person alive.<sup>27</sup> White, writing of the period, complained that the recession was also affecting the middle orders adversely since the burden of maintaining so many paupers fell upon them.<sup>28</sup>

To conclude, this was the area in which the majority of disputes, between 1816 and 1823, which involved the yeomanry occurred. It is not surprising, given the debased working and living conditions in which most people were obliged to live and work, that the inhabitants of the region earned a reputation, largely from the accounts of middle class commentators, for savage and uncouth behaviour. Colliers and miners were a hardy race determined to resist cuts in wages by strikes, which was the only course left to them. The post-war behaviour of managers, lessees and owners in cutting wages, and the subsequent deprivation and misery which this caused, provoked widespread strikes which usually occasioned violence. As a consequence, the military, from 1816, were frequently called out to police a troubled area and suppress disorder so that manufacturing could continue.

## **CONCLUSION**

Britain in the period between 1790 and 1820, according to F.M.L. Thompson, came close to anarchy and disintegration.<sup>29</sup>

Staffordshire in this period has to be seen as two separate areas. Until 1842, when Chartist riots brought about a situation in the Potteries bordering on revolt, there was nothing remotely approaching anarchy in the area which during the post-war period remained peaceful.

The Masters and Servant Act of 1823 provided employers with a powerful weapon which they used in north Staffordshire to control workers. These factors undoubtedly played a part in keeping the area peaceful but equally so was the strong control pottery workers exercised over the manufacture of ware, a power colliers and metal workers lacked. In addition, the number of small workshops in which masters and men worked side by side provided a different working situation from the mines and furnaces where masters were never seen.



An area, Barnsby has claimed, saw only four full years working after 1816 to the turn of the century.<sup>30</sup> To say of Staffordshire that the situation approached one of anarchy would be wrong. There were violent confrontations between striking workers and the military from 1816 through to a particularly violent period in the 1830s, and again in 1842. The situation never approached total lawlessness with a complete breakdown of law. There were always those who wished to work, but it was the power of the magnates and their use of the yeomanry which, although it produced violent clashes, always triumphed over the striking workers.

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## THE MILITIA 1793-1823

### INTRODUCTION

The militias raised between 1793 and 1823 were not voluntary associations as were the volunteer infantry and the yeomanry. The majority of those who served in the ranks were chosen by ballot which was a type of conscription. The chapter on the militia will be used as a comparative study when dealing with the other two civilian, military movements since it was the only civilian military movement with which governments had any experience.

Concepts of the militia all embodied the notion of the responsible citizen willing to take up arms when called upon by the civil power to defend his country, keep the peace and defend property.<sup>1</sup>

Except in wartime, the reformed militia established in 1757 was a part-time, civilian, military movement; organised, uniformed, armed and equipped as regular troops of the line.

It was mustered once a year for twenty to twenty-eight days' training. Militias could be called out at any time by magistrates as *posse comitatus*. It was also the Home Defence Army called out to defend the country in time of danger. When embodied for full-time military duties, it served under the Army District Command, but under no circumstances could it be forced to serve overseas. Militiamen were required to serve for a period of between three and five years, which in wartime was extended for the duration of the conflict. When embodied, militias were subject to the Mutiny Act and Articles of War.

There were three militias during the period 1793 -1816 all of which had differing terms of service. More importantly, the nature of the regular militia changed during twenty-two years of conflict. The question as to why this occurred and the nature of the changes will be addressed by this chapter. A further important question to be considered is why the government maintained such a large, expensive organisation whilst at the same time it encouraged voluntary organisations which were raised initially for the same purpose as the militias.

It is proposed to deal only with general details of the militia relevant to this study.

Western and Hay have both written extensively on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

The political organisation of the militia was laid down in 1663 and was broadly to remain in force until 1852. The Lords Lieutenant of the Counties were given wide powers to raise and control militias, aided by considerable numbers of deputy lieutenants appointed by the crown.

It was never a popular force either with the gentry who were supposed to officer it or the poor who had to serve in the ranks. It was unpopular with opposition members of parliament because of the cost, and because they feared the political power it conferred upon the ministers who controlled it.

Militias were raised by conscription whilst the regular army had to rely upon volunteers, pressed men, crimps and criminals to fill its ranks. This raised the question as to why, in war-time, governments allowed a situation which protected the militias and operated to the detriment of the army?

Militias were civilian military forces controlled by the Home Office, armed by Ordnance, equipped by the War Office, paid by the Treasury.

There was no agency for raising a militia, therefore the county bureaucracies were made accountable, by law, for raising and administering the militias. The clerk to the justices, a solicitor, was responsible for the administration of County Militia Regiments. The nature of the task can be understood by examining the accounts of William Lockett, Clerk to the Derbyshire Justices. In 1794 he claimed £60/12/6d for attending on deputy lieutenants and arranging meetings concerned with the ballot. He charged the county £9/6/0d for attending training at Chesterfield in July 1803. In the months from June to February 1804 he charged £22/4/0d for attending to discharges, vacancies and balloting to make up numbers. Sub-clerks who performed much of the actual work were paid separately and on a lower scale.<sup>3</sup>

The militia was armed with the India Pattern musket carried by most line regiments and volunteer corps. The musket was fifty-five inches long and with the bayonet fixed seventy-three inches in length. It weighed nine pounds eleven ounces, and its calibre was a nominal 0.76 inches. The ammunition had a diameter of 0.693 inches.<sup>4</sup>

The efficiency of a militia regiment depended upon its having a full complement of competent officers responsible for discipline and control, and who were also expected to understand, and if necessary bear the expense resulting from the complex financial arrangements relative to regimental supplies and equipment. Without them not only did men suffer but the discipline and control of regiments broke down. This occurred notably in 1795, 1810 and 1812.

The breakdowns were due in some part to poor leadership on the part of officers.

As Western put it, the officers were 'the Achilles heel' of the militia, and the men were so badly led 'that it is doubtful if they could have faced seasoned troops with any hope of success.'<sup>5</sup>

Control and discipline were undoubtedly affected by the service expected of militias. Regiments were always posted well away from their home counties, and most spent the greater proportion of their service marching about the country which in itself caused difficulties. The militias embodied in 1793 were much larger than earlier movements and there was no precedent or experience for dealing with such large bodies of men who rarely stayed in one place for long. Having arrived at a posting regiments were often divided into detachments which were marched off to other locations. There was always a shortage of accommodation so most soldiers were either billeted in inns or were tented where they lived in cramped, unhygienic conditions. When duty was finished men were dismissed and left to their own devices which often meant drinking, gaming and/or whoring, all of which, as Mayett in his diary records, was made easy in inns and was detrimental to good discipline.<sup>6</sup>

The pay of senior officers was considerable. In 1807 the daily rate of pay for a colonel was 18/5d; lieutenant colonel 14/10d; major 10/8d; captain 9/5d; lieutenant 6/6d; ensign 4/8d; quartermaster 6/6d; surgeon 11/4d; and the adjutant 8/8d.

The plight of junior officers with no additional income can be appreciated when they were faced with mess bills which could amount to fourteen shillings per week. An Act of 1793 allowed families of embodied militiamen to claim one shilling per week for each child under ten years of age charged to the public purse.

The composition of a civil, military force had a direct bearing on its organisation, efficiency, discipline and reliability. The men who served in the ranks were usually the poorest who could not afford to pay for a substitute, such as Samuel Newells, a papermaker, or Robert Ewbank, a lock maker, both from Derby. The Derbyshire Court Rolls show that of 2,680 men drawn to serve in the Derbyshire Militia between 1803 and 1807, only 362 served in person, the rest paid either for a substitute or the ten pounds fine. Substitutes were mostly labourers or unemployed and it was common practice for parishes to make up their quotas from vagrants or itinerant workers. There were numerous instances recorded of those who were too poor to pay for a substitute running away after enrolment, for example, Ewbank, Newells and Luke Bradley, himself a substitute, ran away after being enrolled.<sup>7</sup> Criminals arraigned before magistrates could be directed into the militia. Burgoyne noted that in Berkshire when enrolment took place several highway robberies occurred 'owing to men of loose character having gone to Newbury in the hope of being paid as substitutes'.<sup>8</sup> There were a few volunteers, men such as Mayett, a Buckinghamshire labourer, who like others from the poorest section of the community, joined to escape unpleasantness at home.<sup>9</sup>

The time which most regiments spent on the move can be better understood by looking at the service of the Bedfordshire Regiment which served on twenty-seven stations from 1793 to 1814 and twice in Ireland. These figures were not unusual nor do they take into account the detachments marched off to smaller locations once the regiment had arrived at the main site. Most regiments undertook garrison duties, they guarded and escorted prisoners of war; manned coastal fortifications; guarded strategic harbours and points on the coast vulnerable to assault from the sea. It was unusual for any regiment to remain long on any one posting. Mayett grumbled that if regiments were not marching about the country, they were engaged in 'a great deal of Common duty which was only ceremonial and useless'.<sup>10</sup>

It would be implausible to suggest that militias were embodied simply to drill, march about the country and perform garrison duties for short periods whilst waiting for an invasion.

Beckett claimed that the militia was embodied in 1793 because of fears of 'a perceived revolutionary potential in Britain' following the French Convention's Decree of 1792.<sup>11</sup>

It appeared to be a plausible argument since at that period, there was no other force the civil power could call upon for the maintenance of internal security and order, but after 1795 they were considered unreliable and were not used again as *posse comitatus* until 1812.

It must be concluded that the transformation of the militia into what amounted to an army reserve was the strongest reason for its retention. Though the numbers which 'volunteered' for the army were never as great as the army would have liked, without these men the war could not have been prosecuted. It is Western's contention that had the war lasted any longer the demands made upon the army would have necessitated either, the introduction of conscription, or the merger of the militia with the army in order to provide the manpower needed.<sup>12</sup>

Conscription was anathema to most politicians, therefore a merger with the army would have been the most likely course of action.

## **THE MILITIAS IN STAFFORDSHIRE**

### **(i) Staffordshire Militias pre-1793**

The first returns of a Staffordshire Militia are for 1539 when 5,457 men were mustered on 1 March and the 27 April 1539. It is unlikely that many of these men were either trained or fully armed. The figure reflected the number of able men available for training. In April 1588 the muster for the defence against the Armada showed a force of 400 trained men of whom seventy-eight were cavalry and twenty-six carried petroneles. In 1644 Parliament authorised Colonel Bowyer of Knypersley to raise a militia regiment and two troops of horse. The Militia Returns for 1697 show Staffordshire as having a force of 500 infantry and two troops of horse numbering 120 under the command of Lord Paget, the Lord Lieutenant.<sup>13</sup>



Staffordshire was one of sixteen counties which did not raise its statutory militia in 1758. It had been proposed to raise one of 560 men in 1763, but this failed because no gentleman would take a commission. Staffordshire finally raised its militia in 1773. The Enabling Act of 1795 allowed the cumulative fine of £3,300 for non compliance with the law to be paid into a County fund to recruit extra forces for home defence.<sup>14</sup>

The regiment of eight companies, 560 rank and file, was mustered and issued with arms in 1778 when France allied itself to the Americans. The colonel was Lord Paget, the lieutenant colonel until 1779, when he transferred into the army, was Sir John Wrottesley, Bt. He was replaced by Lord Lewisham, and the Major was Walter Sneyd. Seven companies were based at Lichfield one of which was a volunteer company, another three were stationed at Burton-on-Trent. In August 1779, the whole regiment assembled at Lichfield. The following month, it marched to Bristol, leaving detachments at Andover, Basingstoke, Whitchurch and Overton. The corps was given a route to Liverpool in January 1780, and from there to Scarborough. Returning to Staffordshire in 1782 the regiment was billeted at Stone, Lichfield, Newcastle, Stafford, Rugely and Penkridge. Its next posting was to Warley camp in Essex, from where it marched into Buckinghamshire. In 1783 the Regiment returned to Staffordshire to be disembodied. Before this could occur it was called upon to suppress a riot in Newcastle-under-Lyme which was put down efficiently. A letter dated 29 March 1783 from Lord Sydney to Earl Gower, the Lord Lieutenant, enclosed the warrant for disembodiment of the corps. It commended the action taken by Lord Lewisham and expressed the King's pleasure at his zeal in 'suppressing Riot and Violence at Newcastle-under-Lyme on 13th March 1783'. The King noted particularly the active part taken by Major Walter Sneyd who appeared to have acted both as an officer and a magistrate on that occasion. The King commented on the unpleasant service required of the Regiment, the conduct of the officers and the orderly behaviour of the men, and he directed the Regiment to be disembodied.<sup>15</sup>

## II) Staffordshire Militias 1793-1816

In 1792 the county militia was embodied. Lord Stafford, the Lord Lieutenant, attested before the General Sessions that a Militia of 637 rank and file had assembled for twenty-eight days' training between 29 May and 26 June 1792.<sup>16</sup> On 1 February 1793 he attested that the Regiment was fully mustered. The roll now listed 805 rank and file.<sup>17</sup> The Act of 1796 authorised a supplementary militia which was a simple device for enlarging the regular militia.<sup>18</sup> The quota set for Staffordshire was 2,095 men to be raised by ballot.

### Figures for the rank and file in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Staffordshire

#### Militia 1792-1815

<u>1792</u>	<u>1793</u>	<u>1795</u>	<u>1798</u>	<u>1799</u>	<u>1803</u>	<u>1804</u>	<u>1805</u>	<u>1807</u>	<u>1809</u>	<u>1810</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1812</u>	<u>1813</u>	<u>1814</u>	<u>1815</u>
637	805	1300	2400	988	1105	1044	1205	1015	1176	1203	1132	1172	1139	1051	925

### Figures for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion the Staffordshire Regiment

#### 1803-1805

<u>1803</u>	<u>1804</u>	<u>1805</u>
825	617	605

*Figures taken from regimental returns in the Paget Papers.*<sup>19</sup>

In 1808 the quota set for The Staffordshire Local Militia was initially 6,000 men, to be increased in direct proportion to the decrease in numbers of the voluntary movements. Four regiments were raised in 1809 totalling 4,361 men, a fifth was raised in 1813 which brought the total up to 5,388. This militia was disembodied in April 1814 though the staff and officers remained in being until 1829.<sup>20</sup>

### (iii) Organisation

The Regular Staffordshire Militia was not up to full strength in 1793 and vacancies had to be filled. This was a constant problem for parishes which were required to replace men who had been discharged, died or had deserted. A fine was levied for all vacancies not filled by the parish which, after 1804, rose to forty pounds per man. Large numbers were supplied by balloting a supplementary militia.

From time to time recruiting parties were permitted to recruit in Staffordshire by 'beat of drum'.

This was very important because men enrolled on these occasions were volunteers.

In September 1810, Colonel Disbrowe writing to Colonel Lord Uxbridge, commended Major Lord Lewisham as 'a good attentive officer'. He had enrolled 160 men, 120 of whom had arrived and another forty were on the road. In October 1810, Disbrowe informed Uxbridge that Major the Hon J Talbot had sent 164 recruits and that another seventy were on the road and added,

'it is very good for the times',

from which it may be inferred that suitable men were becoming scarce after nearly seventeen years of war.<sup>21</sup>

The Staffordshire Regiment was one of the five largest militias in the country. In 1793 its colonel commandant was Henry Paget, Earl Uxbridge, the lieutenant colonel, was Walter Sneyd and its major was Edward Disbrowe. Among the captains were Earl Gower, Lord Bagot and the Hon W Bagot. Until 1805 it was a ten-company regiment; in 1803, with an increased establishment, Disbrowe became the second lieutenant colonel, and in 1805 when Sneyd retired, the senior field officer. At full strength there were eight to nine battalion companies containing eighty to ninety men; two to three flank companies, one grenadier and, after 1805, two light companies each of ninety to 120 men.<sup>22</sup> In 1803 Lord Uxbridge signed a contract with Henry Siebe appointed as bandmaster. The contract was for six years. Siebe was paid a premium of thirty guineas and was to receive a further thirty when he commenced duty and a further thirty when the contract expired. He was to receive six shillings per day when on duty and when not required was to be allowed to wear civilian clothes and undertake private contracts. The money for the band came from regimental funds or when, as in 1810 there was no money left, from Uxbridge himself. The permanent staff appointed by the Crown comprised an adjutant, paymaster, quartermaster-lieutenant, surgeon-lieutenant, sergeant-major and one permanent sergeant for each company.

Compared with most other regiments the service of Staffordshire Regiment was unusual. It did not march about the country a great deal, for most of the war it guarded King George at Windsor, and accompanied him when he moved to Weymouth, Portsmouth, Kew and other Royal venues. The organisation and disposition of the Regiment was affected less by military matters, the exigencies of war or internal dissent than by the King. In 1805 the Regiment was augmented by 200 men from the disbanded 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. The King then 'vexed Disbrowe' by insisting on a reorganisation of the Regiment. He wanted the Regiment to have two companies of grenadiers and two light companies leaving six battalion companies. Writing to Uxbridge in September 1805 Disbrowe gave it as his opinion that,

'a second Company of Grenadiers would be very bad'.

The King wanted ten companies, but Disbrowe wanted eleven. A compromise was reached whereby the King agreed an extra light company, and Disbrowe obtained an additional company. Once it was settled the King was, 'extremely anxious for this to pass into execution', which, as Disbrowe, writing to Uxbridge in 1807 said,

'will be cheaper than another company of Grenadiers'.<sup>23</sup>

Despite such a pleasant service there were grave deficiencies in the organisation of the Regiment. After an inspection in September 1798, Major General Gwyn, District Commander, wrote to Uxbridge in October and listed a series of serious complaints. Gwyn concluded by emphasising the rule which required the commanding officer majors and adjutants to attend drills and exercises.<sup>24</sup> This would have been difficult as the senior officers were either in attendance on the Royal Family or on leave. However, if the army can be cited as an example officers took little or no interest in drills or exercises as this was regarded as the duty of the NCOs and, as Mayett's testimony shows, this was general practice in the militia.<sup>25</sup>

The organisation of the Staffordshire Regiment was affected by a high turnover of junior officers, this was not unusual. The constant change and the shortages of captains, lieutenants and ensigns had an adverse affect on efficiency and control. Many junior officers transferred into line regiments, and there were a great many resignations.

A good deal of the correspondence in the Paget Papers deals with the shortage of officers, promotions, resignations and applications for commissions. Some applications received by Uxbridge show little appreciation of military service. W.H.Marston who had a clear income of £400 per annum wanted a majority at once, R.Higgot and J.G.Smith-Child, each with an income of £200, wanted to enter as captains. None had any military experience. Others such as a half-pay captain returned with his health broken in the West Indies and desperate for lack of funds were pathetic.<sup>26</sup> Between August and September 1807 there were thirteen applications for commissions in the Regiment, and between January and March 1809 there were twelve. These figures represented the changes which continued to affect the Regiment. It was an unsatisfactory situation and in 1804, Lord Hawkesbury wrote to Uxbridge and urged him to be more cautious before accepting officers' resignations, and to judge whether it was proper for him to do so.<sup>27</sup> Uxbridge presented those applications he thought suitable to the King, and signed the parchments when names were approbated.

Promotion in the militia was normally by seniority, but in the Old Staffordshire Regiment the magnates and greater gentry always filled the senior ranks. After joining as captains Lords Dartmouth and Talbot rose quickly to field rank. Between 1778 and 1816 no one outside the ranks of the county elite rose to field rank in the Regular Regiment.<sup>28</sup> Those of lesser social standing rarely rose beyond the rank of captain. Captain Heming, commissioned in 1779, had to wait twenty-four years for his majority, and when one was granted at Sneyd's request, it was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, a Supplementary Militia Regiment which was inferior in standing to the Regular Militia.<sup>29</sup>

**1793-1816**

Earl Uxbridge was Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire and Anglesey and Colonel Commandant of both County Regiments. Because of his other duties, and by 1809, failing health, Uxbridge was absent from the Regiment for long periods so that the command and control of the Regiment increasingly devolved upon the executive lieutenant colonel, although Uxbridge was always consulted on important matters. On the death of Uxbridge in 1810, Lord Dartmouth, who had joined the Regiment in 1805, became colonel commandant and Edward Disbrowe remained the senior lieutenant colonel.

Men in the Staffordshire Regiment led an easy life compared with other militias. Stationed in permanent quarters at Windsor, they moved only to escort the King. Captain Vallance, the Adjutant, used this to explain a poor response to the call for volunteers for the army when he wrote to Uxbridge.<sup>30</sup> The Regiment, nonetheless, was plagued with desertion. The only unusual aspect here was that men were willing to leave such a comfortable life in the knowledge that if they were caught they would be severely punished. Pelham wrote to Uxbridge in 1803 and desired him, and all other magistrates in Staffordshire, to act with urgency against deserters.<sup>31</sup> In that year the King proclaimed an amnesty for all deserters who returned to their regiments; nonetheless, desertion remained an intractable problem for the Staffordshires. Writing to Uxbridge in 1810, Disbrowe complained that he had been plagued by desertion and would in future resort to court martial.<sup>32</sup> This is the first time that a Court Martial had been mentioned for privates in the Staffordshire Regiment. Until that time Disbrowe had either dispatched serious offenders to Line Regiments serving in foreign parts, incarcerated them in the Black Hole, fined them or brought them before a magistrate for imprisonment in a civilian gaol.<sup>33</sup>

## (v) Financing the Regular and Supplementary Militias 1793-1816

The costs of the Staffordshire Militias were commensurate with its size as one of the five large regiments in the country. In 1798 the Corps drew £19,956/0/9½d in pay and allowances; in the following year this had increased to £20,134/0/0d. By 1800 expenditure had increased to £28,218/6/2d. There was a further increase in 1801 to £28,765/2/6d. As the Militia was disembodied in 1802 the costs were less, the Paymaster drew only £11,380/4/3d, but when the Regiment was embodied in April 1803 it cost the Exchequer £24,777/1/4d. The last year for which there are accounts is 1804 when the cost for maintaining the Regular Militia had risen to £32,379/16/6d. Any profits which accrued or surpluses which remained from the official allowances were placed in the Regimental fund. This was used to cover recurring expenses. In 1806, for example, Captain Miller, the Paymaster, reported to Uxbridge that the fund was already in debt, but there were outstanding items of expenditure which needed to be met: new colours which would cost thirty-two guineas; painting the drums would cost forty two pounds; repairing ninety grenadier caps would cost £120, and the gold lace for the bandsmen's jackets between thirty and forty pounds.<sup>34</sup> Instruments for the band were paid for either from regimental funds or by Uxbridge. In 1810 the cost of replacing instruments amounted to £373 and unless they were replaced, noted Disbrowe, the band would be spoiled. At this time there was nothing in the regimental funds. As the band was recorded as playing at Surbiton in 1811 it seems likely that Uxbridge met the costs of replacement.<sup>35</sup>

Expenses for officers in the militia were heavy. They were required to uniform and equip themselves which would have been particularly important at a prestigious posting such as Windsor. In addition there were mess bills, baggage costs and incidental expenditures associated with their companies to be met. Officers were also required to pay for their commissions. Officers, and more particularly junior officers, needed an additional income: for example, an ensign received only 4/3d per day; if this had been paid on time it would have been insufficient to meet the expenses outlined above. The expense proved too much for Lieutenants Wyckham and Green who resigned because they could not afford the expense and inconvenience of Windsor.

Unfortunate officers such as Captain Simpson fell into debt. Simpson was imprisoned for an unpaid debt of sixty pounds, with many other writs waiting to be served. His brother officers saw to it that he received any comforts necessary during his incarceration, but Colonel Disbrowe was adamant that Simpson must never be allowed to rejoin the regiment.<sup>36</sup>

#### **(vi) Service of the Regular and Supplementary Militias 1793-1816**

The Regiment marched to Plymouth in February 1793, leaving a detachment at Launceston. In 1795 the Regiment was inspected by the King in Winchester who, much impressed by their bearing, signified his pleasure that the Regiment should be sent to Windsor on Royal duties. Here they remained until 1802. Their duty was to guard the Monarch and his family, escort them when they moved and attend any drills the King chose to supervise. The King was so impressed with the bearing and the services they performed that he bestowed upon them, as a mark of his esteem, the title of 'The King's Own Staffordshire Militia'. Their cuffs and facings, hitherto yellow, were now to be royal blue. As a further mark of his esteem the King granted officers the privilege of wearing waist buckles with the inscription Windsor Castle. The officers' mess also received a set of crystal decanters, still in use, from the King.<sup>37</sup>

In 1800 the Staffordshires accompanied the Royal Family to Weymouth where they were brigaded with the army. It was here that Ensign Thomas Fernyhough recounted the execution of army deserters. The militia was also made to watch the administration of 1,000 lashes to another four deserters.<sup>38</sup> The discipline of the attendant forces was so uncertain that two field guns were mounted during the execution in case a rescue attempt was made by comrades of the deserters. Undoubtedly the exercise was meant to deter desertion. In December 1800 the Regiment marched back to winter quarters in Lichfield and Stafford. In May 1801 they were once more ordered to Windsor and accompanied the Royal Family to Weymouth that summer. When the Peace of Amiens was signed in March 1802 they marched back to Stafford where 'they were received by the inhabitants with much enthusiasm'.<sup>39</sup> They were then disembodied and their arms stored after nine years' service.



In May 1803 the Regiment was embodied once more. It moved off to Windsor in July and thence to Weymouth. In the Autumn they returned to Windsor where the men remained until 1812. During this time they provided permanent guards at Hungerford and Kew.

In July 1805, 200 men under Colonel Disbrowe moved off to Portsmouth where, with the Hampshire Regiment, they went on manœuvres with the army. They returned to Windsor in September having been joined by the remnants of the now disbanded 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.

The Regiment moved off to Colchester under its new Commandant the Earl of Dartmouth in 1812, but in November 1813 the Staffordshires were once more summoned to Royal duties at St James' Palace. The Regiment, each man supplied with sixty rounds of ball, relieved a Guards' Regiment. When the Treaty of Paris was signed the Regiment, in three divisions, was marched back to Stafford where it was disembodied. In March 1815 Napoleon landed in France, and the Regiment was called out in April. They received a route for Derby, and from there to Nottingham. Their final destination was Dublin, where they remained until April 1816, when they returned home to be disembodied for the last time.

Apart from their regimental duties the officers, and especially the field officers, were in constant attendance upon the King, Queen and members of the Royal Family. Disbrowe, writing to Uxbridge before Sneyd retired in 1805, informed him that he was,

'now in attendance upon the Queen'.

Later that year, and as senior lieutenant colonel, he again wrote to Uxbridge to inform him that he had,

'been sailing in the Channel with the King to review the Fleet until 10 o'clock at night'.

Most commentaries on life at the Court of George III conclude that it was dull and stifled by protocol. Something of this comes across in the letter from Disbrowe to Uxbridge who, in 1810, was taking the waters at Bath. Life at Windsor he commented consisted of,

'Chapel, parade and riding in the morning, whist and speculation in the evening'.<sup>40</sup>

It was a prestigious posting for a county militia, but there was a price to pay.

In a letter to his agent, Walter Sneyd, a man of some wealth who enjoyed the friendship of the King and Queen, commented to his man of business upon life at Windsor,

'they are the most expensive quarters in the Kingdom'.<sup>41</sup>

Walter Sneyd enjoyed a close relationship with the royal couple. Queen Charlotte stood god-mother to both his daughters and the records show that gifts were exchanged from time to time.

Despite a prestigious posting the regiment was not excused the calls made to volunteer for the army. The Staffordshire Sentinel claimed that in over twenty-two years of war the County's militias provided 100 officers and 4,000 men for the army.<sup>42</sup> The Paget Papers do not support these figures. They indicated that men from the Regular Militia were averse to volunteering. On one occasion only men appeared to have volunteered in great numbers. In 1793, Lord Henry Paget, by letter, raised a volunteer regiment, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Foot. It was reported that 700 men from the militia volunteered into the new regiment. Even if the figure of 4,000 is accepted it amounts to about 160 men per year from the Regular and Supplementary Militias.

The normal quota for transfer was an expected quarter or fifth of a regiment's strength, which in the case of the Staffordshires would have amounted to between 200 and 250 men; therefore, 160 was well short of that. The evidence shows that on some occasions the transfers barely reached double figures. In 1796 when the militia was reduced to encourage volunteering, Uxbridge promised two guineas extra bounty for all those who volunteered for the 82<sup>nd</sup> Foot though privately he,

'did not think many would do so'.<sup>43</sup>

In May 1804 three sergeants, five corporals and 200 men, mainly supplementary militia from the disbanded 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion volunteered for the line. This is the largest single entry in the records, but it still fell short of the expected quota which was 273. In 1807 Order N<sup>o</sup> 408 for volunteering to the line was received. In a letter to Uxbridge the Adjutant Captain Vallance wrote to say he did not think many would volunteer and the recruiting exercise would have to be repeated.<sup>44</sup> The response was poor, as he predicted.<sup>45</sup> In 1810 there were transfers from the Local Militia to the Regular Militia, when fifty two men and NCOs were received by Disbrowe at Windsor.

To conclude, the Old Regiment was never used as *posse comitatus*. Although in such a prestigious posting it was not exempt from a requirement placed on all militias to supply volunteers for the army, the numbers supplied were never very great. Its service from 1795 and throughout the war was to guard the Monarch. Compared with most other militias, the service of the Staffordshire Regiment was very comfortable, financially rewarding for the men and socially rewarding for officers.

#### **(vii) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of Staffordshire Militia 1803-1805**

This was a Supplementary Militia Battalion, raised by ballot in 1797, to replace men who it was hoped would transfer to the army. It was planned that men should be called up in twentieths, trained for twenty days, and then sent home. This did not occur; all the men were called out in February and April 1798 which, with the Regular Militia, resulted in a force of 2,400 men. It was proposed to divide them into three battalions: the Old Regiment was to become the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion commanded by Uxbridge; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was to be a Volunteer Line Battalion, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot, commanded by Earl Gower who had raised it at a cost of £5,000; the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Francis Percival Eliot, a deputy lieutenant who had been largely responsible for raising the yeomanry in the county. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion which contained 300 volunteers was not accepted by the army, Fernyhough says it was because Gower was not confirmed as colonel of the new Battalion.<sup>46</sup> In 1799 the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions were partially disembodied, and the remainder transferred to the Regular Regiment. Eliot's appointment as commandant of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion caused a great deal of friction between Gower and Uxbridge. The command should have gone to Edward Disbrowe, the senior major, but Gower contended that Eliot was a deputy lieutenant and the command was his by right. In this he was supported by Hawkesbury. On the dissolution of the Battalions Uxbridge was given discretion as to which officers he retained, but was ordered to keep Eliot as supernumerary lieutenant colonel a situation which the officers of the Regular Militia were not prepared to accept. Headed by Sneyd, they tendered their resignations to Uxbridge.

However, Gower announced his resignation as Lord Lieutenant and Uxbridge was appointed in his place. This appears to have appeased Uxbridge and Eliot was allowed to remain on sufferance.<sup>47</sup>

With the declaration of war in 1803 the Old Militia was embodied, and in March a warrant for a Supplementary Militia was issued. It was estimated that 1,400 men would be embodied, too many for one regiment, therefore Colonel Sneyd proposed to Uxbridge that a second Battalion be formed, largely of officers and men from the Supplementary Militia. In 1803 Eliot, as Deputy-Lieutenant, conducted the ballot for the Supplementary Militia in the Hundred of Offlow and the City of Lichfield. He contended he would know the best men to choose.<sup>48</sup> Uxbridge first offered the Command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion to Earl Talbot who refused it, so the command was given to Eliot without any opposition. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was to be enrolled by July and mustered on the 12 August 1803. Eliot was colonel commandant, Charles Wolseley lieutenant colonel and Francis Heming major; there were ten captains, twelve lieutenants, eight ensigns. One ensign doubled as a company officer and quartermaster, and another as company officer and assistant surgeon. There were thirty-four sergeants, thirty-four corporals, twenty-two drummers, the adjutant Captain H Rogers, pay-master Captain Charles Wilkinson, Sergeant-Major Cooper and 699 privates. In July 1803 when it became certain that the Battalion would be established Eliot complained to Uxbridge that Colonel Wolseley, Captain Campbell and two lieutenants, although doing duty, could not be paid as their commissions had not arrived. He was also two ensigns, ten sergeants and 208 men short of whom he says, 103 were defaulters.<sup>49</sup> Later that month, writing to Disbrowe at Windsor, he asked him to urge Uxbridge to sign commissions quickly as disputes were breaking out among his captains over seniority; he said he was in the awkward position of having an ensign with a commission as the senior officer.<sup>50</sup> In August 1803 he wrote to Uxbridge asking for clarification as those commissions which had arrived caused more trouble: the captains were disputing over seniority again, and could Uxbridge tell him whether service dated from appointment or receipt of the commission parchment?<sup>51</sup>

In August he wrote to Disbrowe to complain that an officer from the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment had arrived, selected twenty-six of the best men from a draft of thirty-eight and marched them off without telling him.<sup>52</sup> In September he complained to Uxbridge that by now most of his officers had served for six weeks and were doing duty, but few had actually been commissioned and therefore they had not been paid.<sup>53</sup> Despite Eliot's supervision of the ballot, he complained to the Clerk of the Justices, William Keene, in October 1803 that he was still short of his total of 699 men, because sixty had paid a fine, and 100 men 'had taken the bounty and run away', therefore the ballot for his Battalion was uncompleted. It became a habit with Eliot to blame others, in this case he said the fault lay with the deputy-lieutenants of the other Hundreds.<sup>54</sup>

The Regiment received its route for Newcastle-upon-Tyne in September 1803, and two divisions, one under Heming and the other under Wolseley, set off. Eliot remained behind to await clothing, equipment and 200 men. He finally set off in October. In January 1804 Keene, replied to complaints about shortages of men in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion passed on to him by Uxbridge.<sup>55</sup> Eliot apologised to Uxbridge in June 1804 for the lateness of his returns.

He explained that this was because so many of his officers were absent or had transferred into the army or marines. He was still short of men, his numbers being just 617 rank and file. Eliot was to suffer a good many changes among his officers. In January 1804 Ensign Parker was promoted lieutenant and Messrs Bilson and Jackson joined as Ensigns. In March Ensign Hart joined the Regiment. In April, A Edwards, J D Colt and A Wilkinson were promoted lieutenants. In July, because there was no captain, Ensign John Waddam was promoted lieutenant to command the Light Company at Tynemouth Barracks. He was replaced as ensign by Mr William Davies, a most gentlemanly officer, the son of a clergyman. Lieutenants Ward and Mellor and Ensign Femyhough, one of three brothers in the militia, transferred to the marines. The latter was replaced by William Whyley. In September Robert Fernyhough and Charles Bennett were commissioned lieutenants. In October H Devey and W H Brooks joined as Ensigns.<sup>56</sup> At Tynemouth, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, brigaded with regular troops, became part of the coastal defence force. Camp was established at South Shields. The main body was under canvas. The light company was quartered in Tynemouth Fort and entrusted with its defence.

The Battalion moved to Whitley Bay in 1804 and Hull in 1805 to guard prisoners of war.

At Tynemouth there were manoeuvres with the regular corps, and although beset with shortages and change, Eliot wrote to Disbrowe in July 1805 to boast of the superior discipline and efficiency of his Battalion.<sup>57</sup>

Eliot was not to keep his command for long. Writing to Uxbridge in February 1805, he asked him if he knew anything about the Chancellor's intention to reduce the militia. He wished to know because he had intended to take a house in Newcastle and remove his family thither, but if the regiment were to be reduced he would not bother. Uxbridge replied that he only knew what he had seen in the newspapers.<sup>58</sup> In May Uxbridge had written to Captain Wilkinson, the paymaster, telling him that the remainder of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion would be incorporated into the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, and did he want a lieutenancy which would indicate that Uxbridge knew in advance of the official announcement that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was to be disbanded?<sup>59</sup> In July 1805, Eliot was informed that a quota from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was to be allowed to 'volunteer' into the army, the remainder were to be turned over to the Old Militia. It was suggested to Uxbridge that deserving NCOs should be kept on to make up his establishment.<sup>60</sup> The King ordered that captains, lieutenants, ensigns, staff and sergeant majors not retained should receive six months' pay and allowances so that 'they would not be offended'. He thought that field officers should not really require this though any reasonable expenses would be indemnified.<sup>61</sup> Uxbridge was allowed to select those officers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion whom he wished to join the Old Militia, a choice not necessarily to be made on seniority. Those selected were informed that to join the Regular Militia they would have to buy new commissions as they held only Supplementary Militia commissions, but on their threatening to resign the matter was dropped. Disbrowe informed Uxbridge in September 1805 that the men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion had now been absorbed. He had examined the arms they had brought, and had found them 'in bad order'. As for the men they are young, 'but not as good as expected'. This either amounted to a direct contradiction to Eliot's assertion that his Battalion was a 'crack concern', or it represented a dislike of Eliot and a willingness to denigrate him.<sup>62</sup>

The King may have thought that field officers should not require pay, but Eliot, Wolseley and Heming all asked for it on the grounds of the inconvenience and expense incurred marching men from Hull to Portsmouth and then returning to Staffordshire.<sup>63</sup> In a letter to Uxbridge, Heming pointed out that he had been a captain in the militia for twenty-four years, and he had thought his majority would be permanent. Since Uxbridge could have given him the vacant majority in the Regular Militia which had been given to Lord Lewisham instead, would Uxbridge obtain a barrack master's post for him?<sup>64</sup> His is one of three letters asking for similar posts written by officers faced with dismissal from the service and a corresponding loss of income.

Much of Eliot's trouble arose because 1803 was the period of invasion alarm. Considerable demands for arms and equipment were made on suppliers not only by militias but also by the large voluntary organisations.

It is difficult to assess how far the lieutenancy was to blame for not supplying him with replacements, since Eliot on his own admission was late with his returns.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, his letters to Uxbridge deal with what appear to be justified complaints concerning lack of replacements, delays in signing commissions and lack of information. It seems plausible to suggest that Eliot's unpopularity was due to the fact he was not a Staffordshire man: he was a protégé of Earl Gower whom Uxbridge and the officers of the Regular Regiment saw as an outsider foisted upon them by Gower.

#### **(viii) The Local Militias in Staffordshire 1808-1814**

In 1807, with the introduction of the Local Militia Act Staffordshire volunteers were faced with a choice: they could transfer with arms, rank and precedence to one of four new regiments it was proposed to raise in the County, or they could leave the volunteer movement.<sup>66</sup> The Act encouraged all volunteers to join the new militias and some, more especially those in the urban districts of north Staffordshire, did so. It is not very clear what the role of the Staffordshire Local Militias was or what their function was intended to be.

They were never permanently embodied nor was it the intention that they should be. Four of the five regiments in Staffordshire met at most once a year for fourteen days' exercise until 1812, when the training days were reduced to seven. The fifth regiment was not raised until 1813, as a consequence it could not be considered to have been trained at all.

Castlereagh entitled this militia, a Home Army, but as all the evidence showed, the Staffordshire Regiments did nothing but train for a few days, so the idea that they could ever have constituted part of an efficient defence force or even a trained reserve, cannot be considered seriously.

The Staffordshire Regiments were disembodied in April 1814 with the thanks of the King and Parliament.

#### **(ix) Organisation and Control**

Castlereagh hoped that sufficient men would transfer to make it a wholly voluntary militia.

In Staffordshire the movement attracted only 1,000 volunteers. This was insufficient to meet the quota set at 6,000 men, so the ballot was used in 1808 and 1809, to fill 4,000 vacancies.

There were significant differences between this militia and the regular militias. The fine for non-enrolment was not fixed at ten pounds, but was calculated at ten per cent of a man's income, although in 1813 this was amended to a standard fine of thirty shillings.

No substitutes were allowed and it was forbidden to take out insurance against serving in the force. Employers were not allowed to dismiss men called out to serve nor was service in this militia to result in loss of benefit from Friendly Societies. The normal exemptions applied.

Service was initially set at five years, although this seems to have been reduced later to four.

The original intention had been to call sections of the militia out each year to train for twenty-eight days until every man had been certified efficient but this provision was not included in the Act of 1808. Between 1808 and 1812 all the Staffordshire regiments met for fourteen days each year. By 1813 training had been reduced to seven days half the men in each regiment, mustering in alternate years. In 1814 there was no muster at all.



The amending legislation of 1813 contained an important clause: commanding officers were now empowered to certify militia sergeants who had served for twenty years (including any service in the army), and who had been discharged on grounds of infirmity, for a place in the Chelsea Hospital.<sup>67</sup>

The command of four new regiments placed too great a strain on the Earl of Uxbridge; in 1810 he obtained permission from the Home Office to appoint Earl Talbot as vice-lieutenant.

Talbot now assumed responsibility for the new militias and the voluntary movements.

He clashed with Uxbridge in 1808. He had believed that to raise and administer the Local Militias was his sole responsibility without reference to the Lord Lieutenant. Lord Hawkesbury in fact sent all information, circulars and correspondence concerned with the militias directly to Talbot. What Uxbridge said has not been kept but it appeared to have been a rebuke.

In his reply Talbot indicated his distaste for the job and his unwillingness to continue.<sup>68</sup>

The affair appears to have been settled because Talbot continued in control of the local militias.

The only restriction placed upon him was over the appointment of officers: commissions for junior officers required only the approval of Uxbridge, though Talbot signed the parchments; the appointment of field officers required the approbation of the King.

The new militias started slowly in Staffordshire for which Talbot blamed the lieutenancy's inefficiency.<sup>69</sup> In 1809 however, he was able to report a considerable improvement in recruitment to Uxbridge.<sup>70</sup> The new militia did not prove popular with all the rank and file of the volunteer movement. Talbot suggested to Uxbridge that four regiments should be raised. He thought that these should be based upon the largest Hundreds in the Divisions: a Northern Regiment in Pirehill North; a Western Regiment in Seisdon North and South, and Cuttleston East and West; the Eastern Regiment in Pirehill South and Totmanslow; the Southern Regiment in Offlow North and South, and in the City of Lichfield. (Map 4)

The plans were approved, and by June 1809 four regiments had been formed. The Northern based on Newcastle-under-Lyme had 1,188 men; the Eastern based at Cheadle had 909 men; the Western based at Wolverhampton had 850 men, and the Southern at Tamworth had 906.

When the fifth or Central Regiment was formed in 1813, based on Stafford, there were 1,300 men in its ranks. At the first muster of the regiments in 1808 the Northern Regiment was the largest because, said Talbot,

‘so many men had transferred from the Volunteer Infantry.’<sup>71</sup>

The good response from urban areas such as north Staffordshire and poorer ones from rural areas such as the central and eastern divisions is one which Beckett has claimed followed a national trend.<sup>72</sup> The establishment for these militias was the same as for the regular militia except that the commandants were lieutenant colonels. The Establishment for the Staffordshire Regiments was two lieutenant colonels, two majors, ten captains, ten lieutenants, ten ensigns, forty sergeants, forty corporals, twenty drummers. The staff comprised an adjutant, quartermaster, sergeant-major, drum major and ten staff sergeants. As the number of companies per regiment increased, extra staff sergeants were engaged to ensure a minimum of one per company.

According to the Paget Papers, command of the Northern Regiment was first offered to Talbot who refused it. There was some confusion after this. Apparently, Sir John Fenton Fletcher Boughey, Bt MP was appointed, but the returns for 1809 show Lieutenant Colonel Walter Sneyd was the commandant.<sup>73</sup> Sneyd on his retirement from the regular militia assumed command of the Stone and Sandon Volunteer Infantry, one of the larger infantry battalions. In 1808, he transferred to the Northern Militia as commandant. The Aqualate Papers give no reason for his displacement of Boughey. For the first year Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Wilson was listed as his second in command. There is evidence of some collusion between Boughey and Sneyd to oust Wilson and in 1810 Sir John Boughey took his place and Wilson assumed command of the Eastern Regiment. Boughey’s commission as lieutenant colonel is dated 5 May 1810 and was signed by Lord Talbot. Prior to that, Boughey had been captain commandant of the Audley and Betley Loyal Volunteer Infantry which was disbanded in 1810. Boughey assumed full command of the Northern Militia Regiment in March 1813 when Sneyd retired.

His second in command was Lieutenant Colonel Walter Hill Coyney who had previously held a commission as a captain in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Staffordshire Militia between 1803 and 1805. The Southern Regiment was commanded by Sir Robert Lawley MP; the Western Regiment by Sir John Wrottesley, Bt, MP; the Eastern by Thomas Wilson, and the Central by George Chetwynd.

Sneyd clothed his corps in grey kerseymere jackets, white shirts, black stocks, white pantaloons, long, black gaiters, black shoes and a round hat with a feather. When they were re-clothed in 1813, Colonel Boughey changed the uniform to the regulation scarlet. The government allowed two years to elapse before inspecting field officers for the local militias were appointed. A circular of 1810 suggested to inspecting officers that they should proceed with caution and moderation when inspecting this militia.<sup>74</sup> This may be taken as an indication that from the outset the government did not expect a high standard of discipline or efficiency from this force. Yet this militia had been instituted to replace the volunteer infantry because it was alleged that force had become poorly disciplined and controlled. This raises the question as to the necessity of replacing the volunteers with a new militia?

When Boughey assumed command of the Northern Regiment of Local Militia in March 1813, he set out to reorganise his command. To do so he had to alter much of Sneyd's organisation. In 1813, writing to J Filstone, his man of business and clerk he said,

'they must not be in too much of a hurry to overturn all Colonel Sneyd's appointments'.<sup>75</sup>

When Sneyd retired in March 1813 a number of senior officers resigned with him leaving Boughey with vacancies for two majors, a captain, three lieutenants and an ensign.<sup>76</sup>

His immediate problem was to find and appoint two majors. This was essential because the majors were responsible for officers' drill, training and behaviour. Before he did this he had decided to rid his regiment of some ex-volunteer, senior captains whom he thought socially undesirable. This behaviour on the part of Boughey was not unusual but it reveals some confusion in official thinking. Volunteer officers had been encouraged to transfer with rank and precedence to the local militias. In Staffordshire, both Sneyd, and Talbot encouraged them to join the new movement.

Beckett has claimed however, that as early as 1808 there were moves in some counties to 'weed out' volunteer officers. The problem arose, he said, because most volunteer officers serving in 1807 were from the middling classes or those who aspired to be so. Castlereagh had hoped that propertied men would come forward to officer the new militia but they had not done so in any great numbers. In 1809 therefore, ex-volunteer officers formed the bulk of the officer corps. Some lords lieutenant either refused them commissions or restricted the numbers they accepted. In most cases, those accepted were denied the rank of field officer.<sup>77</sup>

The problem was a social one. If such men were commissioned, it was said, the force would have little standing in the country, and they would be accorded little respect by the ranks.

Should invasion have occurred they would have taken rank in the army which would not have been tolerated by regular officers. These attitudes were those of Boughey. In his regiment there were many volunteer officers. Had Boughey promoted according to tradition the majorities would have gone to the senior captains, Steele and Lomax, both of whom had long service in the Lane End Volunteer Infantry and four years service in the militia. Boughey and Coyney however, decided that neither man was suitable for promotion; in fact, they decided it would be better if both men resigned altogether. There was never any suggestion that either Steele or Lomax was incompetent, nor if their letters are anything to go by, were they uneducated men. They were, however, socially undesirable according to Boughey.

Both had been sergeants in the Lane End Volunteer Infantry, and had been commissioned by Sneyd into the local militia. The problem arose because both men were 'in trade', Lomax was a draper and Steele a publican, and by the canons of gentility at that time people in trade were not gentlemen. Amending legislation of 1812 prohibited publicans from holding staff appointments. It was claimed moreover, they were known to consort with 'unsociable and ungentlemanlike company'.<sup>78</sup> Gentility was a loose concept at this time. The distinction to be made was that between tradesmen and people in trade. Boughey, Coyney, Sneyd and Wedgwood were tradesmen, as were doctors, lawyers and manufacturers, since they all earned their incomes. Many, if not all, of the officers Boughey appointed were tradesmen who earned their living, but classed themselves as gentlemen. Some would have been received at court.

Lomax and Steele were not gentlemen because unlike Boughey and Sneyd, they actually served the public. Furthermore, as Boughey complained to Talbot, these men,

'consorted freely with their men after parade'.<sup>79</sup>

This was normal practice in the volunteers and yeomanry but Boughey thought it bad for discipline. Coyney urged Boughey to appoint two majors 'out of the Regiment'.<sup>80</sup> He hoped that Boughey would be able to get people of this description quietly out of the Regiment, as a benefit to the service. It could be argued that in getting rid of Lomax and Steele, Boughey sacrificed military considerations for social reasons, and had Steele and Lomax been promoted, some of the disciplinary problems which plagued the regiment might not have occurred. Both men came from the areas of recruitment and knew the men well, something that neither Boughey or Coyney ever did. As an MP, Boughey spent much of his time in London, therefore he was unable to give much attention to regimental matters; consequently he left Coyney to obtain the resignations. Neither Boughey or Coyney come out of the affair well. They sought to rid the corps of the two officers without attracting opprobrium to themselves. Firstly, Boughey sought to rid the regiment of the two men on the grounds that they possessed insufficient property qualifications although volunteer officers were not required to fulfil these qualifications. He had asked Lord Talbot to seek their resignations on these grounds, but Talbot was reluctant to act unless either man proved to be unsociable or insubordinate.<sup>81</sup> Boughey could not substantiate charges of unsociability or insubordination. Instead he left it to Coyney to persuade Lomax and Steele to resign. Later Coyney wrote to Boughey saying he,

'hinted to Steele that keeping an inn ought to disqualify him from holding a post in the Militia'.

Steele replied that after four years in the Militia he thought everyone had to resign and was willing to do so,

'if Boughey wanted his resignation then he could have it'.

Lomax demurred, writing to Boughey after a visit from Coyney he demanded to know,

'how he had offended'?

He believed that Boughey merely wanted his resignation so that he could,

'fill up my place with your friends'.

Although he resigned, he told Boughey,

'he will make enquiries into this business'.<sup>82</sup>

The resignations of the two men in May 1813 left Boughey with vacancies for four captains and two majors. The difficulty of finding two suitable officers to be majors, at this stage of the war, led Boughey to make some peculiar proposals. Sneyd's son aged nineteen was offered a majority which was properly refused. The second Josiah Wedgwood refused because he said he had not sufficient time.<sup>83</sup> A similar offer was made to Wedgwood's son, but it was refused. In June 1813 Boughey was able to announce to Talbot that Thomas Twemlow and Thomas Fitzherbert had accepted majorities, and they were gazetted the following month. The regimental return for July 1813 made at the annual muster, showed that all the officers had joined the Regiment, but unfortunately for Boughey some transferred immediately to the regular militia. The return listed four field officers, eight captains, seven lieutenants, three ensigns, forty-four sergeants, thirty corporals, twenty-four drummers, three staff and 900 men. There were vacancies for two captains, three lieutenants, seven ensigns, fourteen corporals and 200 men.<sup>84</sup>

The Aqualate Papers show that Boughey spent much time in dealing with what appears to have been tiresome minutiae. Much of this was concerned with the selection and appointment of socially acceptable officers. The time taken up with this indicated the difficulty of finding men he considered suitable to be officers, and the considerable turnover which occurred among the junior officers through resignation and transfer. Property qualifications were waived for junior officers but field officers were expected to fulfil normal militia property requirements. Boughey listed his Staffordshire property as an estate at Fenton which gave him a clear yearly income of £600 per annum. Indicative of the time-wasting correspondence dealt with by Boughey over commissioning was the lengthy correspondence conducted with John Bennett. In April 1813 Bennett wrote to Boughey and announced that he had been balloted but he thought that his health would not bear the fatigue of service. If he had to serve it would only be on the condition he was promised a captaincy. Eventually, tired of the correspondence, Boughey referred Bennett to Talbot. A last letter to Boughey revealed that Bennett had been under a misapprehension.

He had believed he would be fined 10 per cent of his income for not enrolling. He then understood that the fine was now only thirty shillings which he was willing to pay, and declined to serve because of his ill-health.<sup>85</sup> In the same month, Richard Pratt late of the Lane End Volunteers applied for a commission as a lieutenant. Boughey required two referees to vouch for his character, income and social correctness. He sent the adjutant to check on the original application as well as the referees' statements. Above all he wanted to know whether Pratt lived in respectable society. His enquiries revealed that Pratt was the brother of a small earthenware manufacturer at Delph. Richard Pratt worked in the warehouse of his brother's firm as a clerk. He had some small expectations on his mother's death. Captain Cooper thought him a good looking man, but an ensign's commission was all he could expect. Pratt gratefully accepted the commission.<sup>86</sup> Thomas Jones, a solicitor of Hanley, applied for a commission in 1814.<sup>87</sup> A return of August 1814 showed Jones as lieutenant. John Arbuthnot Prowse, a Hanley attorney, was recommended as being 'a respectable, had good abilities, independent means and was educated'. Indicative of the high turnover of officers was the quick promotion of Prowse who in August 1814 was promoted captain. Selby Aspinall was recommended by Colonel Coyney, commissioned lieutenant in 1814 and promoted to captain in March 1815.<sup>88</sup> There were other tiresome incidents with which Boughey had to deal, for example, in June 1814 he had to decide what action to take over Captain Bagshaw who, on being assaulted by Mr Robertson in a Newcastle street, proposed a duel with fists which Robertson refused. Fortunately, Captain Evelyn of the 44<sup>th</sup> Foot, a friend of Bagshaw, intervened and sent Boughey a long account of the matter enclosing an apology from Robertson. Boughey decided to take no further action, and approved of Bagshaw's conduct.<sup>89</sup> There were also problems with the regular drill sergeants. Captain Cooper, the adjutant, reported to Boughey in June 1813 that another six drill sergeants were required because twelve sergeants was the minimum establishment for the Regiment. Cooper dismissed those suggested by Sergeant-Major Lowe as being of no use since they were all his old 'pot companions', none of whom had any military experience. There was a long-standing enmity between Cooper and Sergeant Major Lowe. In August 1813 Lowe had written to Boughey complaining that Cooper had shouted at him in the street for not joining the recruiting drive.<sup>90</sup>

As a Burgess of Newcastle, Lowe thought he should have been appointed adjutant and petitioned Sneyd for the post which instead was given to Cooper. Another factor in this troubled relationship was the fact that Captain Cooper had been the sergeant-major of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion and had been commissioned into the regiment by Sneyd. The fact however that he had previously been an NCO may have weakened his standing as an officer. In 1813, Boughey wanted to dismiss all the permanent sergeants appointed by Sneyd. Lord Sidmouth to whom application had been made forbade this. He pointed out to Boughey that he could not simply dismiss staff NCOs. If he wanted to rid the regiment of them, he must convene a court martial and charge the sergeants with specified offences which warranted dismissal.<sup>91</sup> Boughey was on stronger ground when it came to sergeant Smith. He was dismissed for insolence, insubordination and refusal to take part in recruiting for the regular militia. Smith, who was discharged in September 1813, claimed that to have done so would have interfered with his civilian occupation. As Cooper remarked,

'he wanted the money but didn't want to work for it'.<sup>92</sup>

Considering the problems the Regiment had with officers and NCOs, it is not surprising that control broke down in June 1812, during the annual muster of the Northern Regiment in Newcastle. A riot broke out among the men who were dissatisfied with their pay and the organisation of food supplies. The disturbance was sufficiently violent for the Mayor to write to General Dyott asking for dragoons to suppress the riot.<sup>93</sup> General Maitland, the District Commander, did not send any dragoons because he did not want to cause any more mischief, and,

'give unwelcome publicity to a military riot'.<sup>94</sup>

Maitland doubtless had in mind the riots which had involved the local militias, in various parts of the country, since 1809. He wrote to Boughey on 25 June and expressed his concern about the riot.<sup>95</sup>

The trouble subsided quickly without the necessity of any intervention by regular troops. It had not been a serious riot, for instance, one man only had been arrested and imprisoned, and order was soon restored by the officers and NCOs. Ostensibly the riot was caused by the poor quality of the bread and meat issued. Boughey was well aware that problems with supplies existed in July 1813 he was still trying to correct the abuse.



Inferior rations may have been the overt cause of the riot, but there were serious underlying reasons for discontent. In 1812 trade was bad in the Pottery District because of the Non Intercourse Act, and the collapse of the potters' North American market which followed the outbreak of war with America. The men who were balloted for the North Staffordshire Regiment came from Newcastle and the Pottery District, and it is plausible to suggest that they were disaffected and discontented as a result of poor trading conditions caused by the war, and by being drawn away from their trades at such a bad time. Moreover, once men had taken the oath the old fear arose once more that they would be forced to serve abroad. Added to which men were now subject to Military Law and were liable to suffer the lash for offences committed whilst training.

The riot in Newcastle was not an isolated instance of disorder involving a local militia. In June 1809 the Royal Berkshire Militia laid down its arms on the King's Birthday parade, incited to do so by drunken volunteer infantry. In 1810 the Hertfordshire, Herefordshire, Bath, Tivy, Wiltshire and Cambridgeshire Local Militias rioted. The Hereford riot was put down by the Gloucester Militia who were on duty for ten days. In Cambridge regular troops had to be called in. The ring-leaders of this riot were flogged. In 1812 the Derby Militia rioted. The Reverend Mr Haden, JP complained to Lord Talbot in 1812 about the riotous behaviour of the Militia in Wolverhampton, a charge which Colonel Wrottesley vigorously denied although at least one man was seduced to join the rioters. An inspector's report on the regiment in 1813 recorded that discipline was now much better.<sup>96</sup> Boughey's comment to Sneyd on the riot at Newcastle indicated that he was unaware of the temper of those under his command.<sup>97</sup> It was all the more surprising since he represented the town in Parliament and the Borough had a long history of Radical dissent. It is plausible to think he should have been aware of this, as he should of the recession.

The dragoons were not called out in Newcastle, though the yeomanry was called to Wolverhampton to deal with the militia disturbance. There is no record of severe punishments being handed down in Staffordshire.

With the exception of the Mayor of Newcastle no one appears to have taken the event very seriously which may have been a reflection of the poor regard authority had for this force. The remedy against further trouble was the traditional one of marching the men with the dinners in their knapsacks a good way out of town each day.

Boughey, writing to the Clerk to the Justices in order to arrange a date for the annual muster in 1813, refused to assemble the Regiment on market day due to the likelihood of a disturbance.<sup>98</sup> It was a sad admission for a commanding officer to have to make of a regiment which had had four years to establish its discipline and control. When the Northern Regiment assembled in June the regimental return listed four field officers, eight captains, seven lieutenants, three ensigns, forty-four sergeants, forty-three corporals, twenty-four drummers and 872 men. There were vacancies for two captains, five lieutenants, nine ensigns, one sergeant, two corporals and 100 men. Nineteen men were absent without leave. The staff return for the muster of 1813 listed the adjutant, quartermaster, sergeant-major, twelve sergeants, the drum major and five drummers. Although the official establishment of the Regiment was large, trouble in filling vacancies meant that it always fell short of its full establishment. This revealed a problem unforeseen by Castlereagh, who apparently thought that most men would renew their service after the initial four years, but most did not. This meant that the parishes upon whom the burden fell for finding replacements, either had to ballot or pay men to serve and extra ballots were constantly required. Staffordshire parishes were reluctant to comply with this obligation because they claimed it was a voluntary militia.<sup>99</sup>

In 1813 training commenced without Boughey. Coyney reported to him on the 15 June, that training was going well.<sup>100</sup> By the time Boughey arrived discontent showed itself once more. Two anonymous letters were received by him on 25 June 1813. (Appendix 2) They were written by men who claimed to be Burgesses of Newcastle which town Boughey represented in Parliament. The letters criticised Boughey's control, organisation and his attitude towards those who had voted for him.<sup>101</sup> The main complaint centred on drill.

One letter complained that men were drilled for two and a half hours before he [Boughey] appeared, and were then drilled for a further one and a half hours before breaking their fast. The other letter said that they had been under arms for as long as nine hours at a time, and questioned how would he like it? It was alleged that men were 'harassed about until they go into a stupid careless way'. Nor were they vagrants that volunteered, but they were mostly respectable tradesmen taken from their families and their business, and for what purpose? One letter pointed out that Boughey owed his seat in Parliament to them [the Burgesses]. They had voted for him to protect their rights liberty and security. The more abusive of the two letters ended by saying,

'Colonel Coiney is a man and he is a soldier',<sup>102</sup>

a remark which indicated the poor regard the men had for Boughey.

Peace in 1814 meant that the Local Militia were not to be embodied again. In March 1814, Lord Talbot told Boughey that he did not think that the government intended to call out the full regiment that year. In April Lord Sidmouth wrote that it was no longer necessary for the permanent staff to raise men for the regular militia, and in May he informed Earl Talbot by circular that it was not intended to call out the militia that year which effectively marked the end of the Staffordshire Local Militias. Although the Regiment was not embodied, Boughey and his staff remained on full pay. In May 1814 Circular N<sup>o</sup> 229 informed Boughey that 'full pay shall be issued to no greater numbers of Sergeants than shall be equal to the rate of one for every two Companies [exclusive of the sergeant-major]'.<sup>103</sup> Cooper recommended the discharge of three sergeants; one who had been off sick for many months and whom no one had ever seen, sergeant Charles Boon 'a rogue and a great shuffler, the worst in the Regiment for recruiting', and sergeant Hallmark who, contrary to regulations which required permanent staff to live within one mile of the barracks, lived in Newport, Shropshire.<sup>104</sup> Although he knew his sergeants were inadequate, Boughey was clearly surprised at Cooper's letter which listed the faults of those considered worthy of dismissal. Boughey questioned Cooper as to why he had not said anything about the incompetence of the drill staff when they had consulted earlier on the discharges.<sup>105</sup>

A return for the Headquarters' Staff in July 1814 showed a reduced establishment consisting of the adjutant, quartermaster, sergeant-major, six sergeants, drum major and five drummers.

In August 1815 Cooper wrote to Boughey to complain about the behaviour of Sergeant-Major Lowe. He said Lowe was insolent and dishonest. He wanted him court martialled for embezzling money entrusted to him by officers for regimental stationery.<sup>106</sup> In reply Boughey admonished Cooper, and asked why it had taken so long for this to be reported? In Boughey's view Lowe had behaved well for four years.<sup>107</sup> However, when Boughey received an unpaid stationery bill from a Mr Chester, Lowe having been given the money to settle it, Lowe was ordered to pay and to apologise to Cooper for his insubordination and insolence. In his letter of apology to Cooper, Lowe claimed that much of what had happened was due to his having been in liquor, and he acknowledged how much of a friend Cooper had been to him.<sup>108</sup>

Industrial discontent erupted once more in 1812 during which armouries were attacked by mobs anxious to acquire weapons. The militia armoury in Sheffield had to be defended by the staff for two days against such an attack. It was this situation which prompted Lord Sidmouth to write to Boughey in March 1815, urging him to ascertain that his depot was secure, and could be defended if attacked. He suggested that as a precaution all the bayonets and locks from the muskets should be taken and placed in a very secure place away from the regimental depot.<sup>109</sup>

In April 1816 Circular N<sup>o</sup> 320 informed Boughey that the permanent pay of the sergeant-major, the quarter-master, the remaining sergeants and the drummers would cease on 24 April.

In the meanwhile he was to employ his permanent staff in seeing that the arms, drums, accoutrements and clothing were sent into the public stores from which, properly packed, they could be sent off to government depots. Any suits of the grey clothing which had not been given to the men to whom they belonged should now be delivered up to them.

A note attached to the circular from Boughey to Cooper on 15 April authorised him to supervise the instructions contained in the circular. Cooper was also to discharge all debts from the regimental fund and the balance was to be referred to Boughey.<sup>110</sup>

The disembodiment of the militia meant hardship for many who had spent the war years in one or other of the militia forces. The permanent NCOs were probably worst off because many had no civilian trade to which they could return after so many years in the service, and in any case jobs were scarce and competition for them was fierce. Sergeant-Major Lowe who had no prospects in civilian life wrote to Boughey asking him to find a job for him as a barrack-sergeant.<sup>111</sup>

Boughey was kept busy until 1817 completing the winding up of the Regiment. He was required to return to stores 957 muskets and bayonets; eight carbines, forty-six swords and 1268 complete sets of uniform. A great deal was missing; twenty-eight muskets, three sergeants' spears and seventeen drums. Boughey argued in a long correspondence with the War Office and Ordnance that he should not be held responsible for missing material because much of it had been issued to Sneyd and subsequently destroyed by 'time and accident'.<sup>112</sup>

#### **(x) Composition of the Staffordshire Local Militia and its service 1808-1814**

While he gives no examples to qualify his assertion, Beckett has claimed that the elites in the counties had been unable to exercise much control over the volunteer infantry. Despite this, in many cases, senior officers in the volunteers simply took commands in the local militias. Of the six militia commandants in Staffordshire, three could be said to have belonged to the county elite, all of whom had commanded volunteer corps. George Chetwynd, who commanded the Central Regiment, was a relative of Lord Talbot, and Sir John Wrottesley, Bt, who commanded the Western Regiment, came from an ancient, landed family which had been settled in Staffordshire for many centuries. Colonel Walter Sneyd was a gentleman iron-master whose family had lived at Keele for over four centuries. Sir John Boughey, Bt, the son of Major Sir Thomas Fletcher, Bt, who had commanded the Newcastle Volunteer Infantry between 1798 and 1802, was a banker and MP, Thomas Wilson who commanded the Eastern Regiment was a manufacturer who had copper smelting and leather working interests. Nothing is known of Sir Robert Lawley, MP. Thomas Twemlow was a local businessman. The junior officers came from the middle orders, for example, Jones and Prowse were attorneys and Pratt was a clerk.

The ranks contained a wide cross-section of the community; tradesmen, mechanics, farmers, small businessmen and professional men. Compulsory service in local militia in Staffordshire appears to have aroused the same resentment as it did in the old militia. According to Cooper, 200 men took their two guineas and ran away when the Regiment was first mustered.<sup>113</sup>

There was a good deal of variance in the service performed by local militias. Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Cheshire had local militia regiments on stand-by should trouble occur. It has to be questioned however what service they performed because in these counties, as in Staffordshire, it was the yeomanry which magistrates called upon to deal with riots and disorders. There is no evidence of offensive action by a local militia in Staffordshire. Writing to Boughey in 1815, Talbot ordered him to make sure the militia staff were kept on permanent duty ready to assist the civil power 'in these unsettled times'.<sup>114</sup>

Balloting for the militia continued until 1833 although in Staffordshire it was never enrolled or mustered again. In 1829 all the permanent staff were dismissed.

#### **(xi) Financing the North Staffordshire Local Militia 1809-1814**

When embodied local militias received regular army pay and allowances. For the year 1812-1813 the account of the North Staffordshire Local Militia shows that a total of £1,888/3/7d was paid into Regimental Accounts. Although an account for 1813-1814 has not come to light, an estimate based on previous known figures suggested a sum of about £2,600/0/0d would have been needed because in this year the Regiment was reclothed in scarlet.

When embodied all militiamen had a statutory right to claim relief from their parishes for their dependants where necessary. In September 1813 Boughey certified to the Overseers of the Poor in Newcastle and Burslem that seventy-four men from the former and sixty-eight men from the latter parish had been embodied for training and they were, therefore, entitled to £38/12/1d and £31/15/8d respectively. The actual payments to each man depended upon the number of children he had under ten, whether his wife worked and whether there were others dependent upon his labour.

## **(xii) Conclusion**

On the evidence provided by the Aqualate and Paget Papers, compared with the regular militia, and to some extent the volunteer infantry, the local militias in Staffordshire were not efficient, well trained, disciplined regiments. In this they were not very different from many other local militias in the country. They were not called upon to assist the local power nor perform any military duty. They trained for a very short period, so short that Coyney thought it impossible to assess the efficiency of the movement.

The failures encountered by Boughey and other commandants can be attributed to two main factors. The first concerned the manner in which the new militia was raised. Castlereagh had wanted a Home Army, composed largely from existing volunteer regiments. This did not occur since not enough men transferred, and the ballot had to be used. This caused resentment among tradesmen, such as those in Newcastle, who considered militiamen to be little better than vagrants, and who were taken away from their vocations at a difficult period, and for reasons they were unable to fathom. Although he expected men of property to come forward to officer the force, ex-volunteer officers were also encouraged to transfer. This was not popular with some counties or commandants who either refused them commissions or denied them promotion. As Boughey found this caused problems and resentment. Castlereagh assumed that the new movement would be popular and that after four years most men would sign on for more service thus providing continuity and stability to a new movement. After four years there were vacancies in all ranks. To fill the vacancies there was recourse to the ballot which caused irritation and opposition from Staffordshire parishes.

The second factor was a shortage of competent men to officer the corps. After fifteen years of war most able men were either in a military movement, had served their time or were prepared to pay a fine to exempt themselves. If the northern regiment is a good example, there were not sufficient competent NCOs either. Boughey therefore spent much time seeking socially acceptable officers to fill vacancies and at the same time was forced to accept inferior non-commissioned officers.

There were two plausible explanations for financing and raising local militias. Had the war lasted much longer, they would have replaced the regular militia which would, according to Western, have necessarily been amalgamated with the army. They would in turn have been called upon as a source of recruitment for the army. Secondly, in war-time, and at a period after 1810 when dissent began to occur, it was sensible to have as many able-bodied men under some sort of control, and government was always happier with a militia officered by the gentry. As was frequently the case with auxiliary movements, what government hoped for and what actually occurred were very different. There were frequent break-downs in discipline and it was perhaps fortunate for government that the wars ended when they did thus avoiding more trouble from a resentful, ill-trained, badly led and inefficient militia.

## CONCLUSION

The militias embodied in 1793 were, in number, organisation and terms of service little different from those raised under the Acts of 1756. Pay and rations had not been altered for twenty years. It was assumed the militias raised in Staffordshire in 1793 were to undertake their ancient roles of Home Army and *posse comitatus*. There was no reason then to doubt that these were the roles they would fulfil effectively, as they had done in the years from 1773 to 1793, when they had proved to be reliable and acted, when called upon, with commendable discipline and steadiness. Most militias, including those of Staffordshire did not fulfil their ancient roles. The scale of the European and Napoleonic wars was unprecedented.

Governments were unprepared for the size of the armies required, the number of fronts on which they would be required to fight and the losses they would sustain. There was no conscription so the armed forces came to see the militia as a ready, trained supply of recruits. Undoubtedly numbers of men did transfer freely or were coerced into doing so, without these the government would either have had to withdraw from the wars or introduce conscription.

Another factor in the changed role of the militias was the unreliability of the movements in 1795 and 1796. Their role as *posse comitatus* was thereafter assumed by the yeomanry.



From 1795 the militias were perceived as being unreliable and most regiments spent the war years marching round the country, well away from their home counties, from posting to posting. At their designated posting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Staffordshires guarded prisoners of war, manned coastal defences, manoeuvred and drilled, in common with many regiments. It is plausible to suggest that should an invasion have occurred they would have been ready to resist but the actual threat of invasion covered a very short period so for many years this large force did very little in the way of offensive military activity. It could be argued that once trained they could have been sent home, and recalled at need and for training, thus saving a great deal of money. Against that it was sensible, from the government's point of view, to have as many able-bodied men under control at a time when Jacobinism, democracy and a popular uprising were feared more than the French.

The Old Staffordshire Regiment was an exception. It did not march about the country after 1795. Its war-time military service consisted of guarding the monarch and his family at Windsor, St. James, Weymouth or any other royal residence and when it was his pleasure, the King drilled them. Their service depended much upon the whims of the King. Despite such a prestigious posting they were still expected to provide recruits for the army but they nonetheless led a very comfortable and profitable life during the wars. The regiment was one of the largest. On paper its numbers rarely dropped below 1,000 men. It seemed doubtful that it was necessary to maintain such a large regiment solely to guard the King and Royal Family for most of the war. It must be supposed therefore that the power the monarch was such that he could have his way in such matters.

In 1808 a local militia was raised as a Home or sedentary army. It would train briefly and then be sent home, to be called out only in case of an emergency. It was a very large movement and because it trained, at the most, for fourteen days and after 1812 for fewer days, it was not well trained or disciplined. In the Staffordshire ranks there was resentment at having to serve in a despised movement and it was questioned by the ranks as to what it was for. Certainly it did nothing else but train. There was only one, partially satisfactory, explanation for its existence.

It was to provide trained men for the regular militia who in turn provided 'volunteers' for the army. It is just possible to argue that it was another way of bringing able-bodied men under control of loyal officers but such was the temper of many local militias, including that of Staffordshire, that control broke down on occasions.

The Old Staffords guarded the monarch; the militias as a whole provided recruits for the army. The regular and supplementary militias served in Ireland. All militias constituted the Home Army. These were reasons advanced for retaining an expensive force. One of the most important reasons however for its retention was the influence of the lords lieutenant and the gentry. The lieutenants, many of whom commanded their county regiments, and the gentry, jealously guarded their control of the militias. Any attempt to interfere with their prerogatives was fiercely resisted. Pitt was a 'friend of the militia' which was well represented in both Houses of Parliament by serving officers who watched over its interests. More importantly from the gentry's point of view, control of the militias was seen as conferring strong political power on the commandants and senior officers. Whatever other reasons have been advanced, without the support of the county elites the militias could not have been either raised or maintained.

Whatever its use the militia remained after 1793 a wasteful, cumbersome, unfair, expensive, inefficient military system at every stage, starting with the ballot and ending with transfers to the army. The government nonetheless preferred it to conscription. Whether, had the war continued, they could have maintained their stance is a matter for speculation. Supposition suggested they could not. To replace the mounting losses and demands from the army it would have been necessary from both a financial and military point of view to have merged the army and the old militia and upgraded the local militia to a Home Army.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- 22.SRO: PP Disbrowe to Uxbridge, 12 September 1805. D.603/0/2/43.
- 23.SRO: PP Disbrowe to Uxbridge, 16 September 1805. D.603/0/2/43.
- 24.SRO: PP Major-General Gwyn to Uxbridge, 16 October 1798,  
'...There were', said Gwyn, 'discrepancies between the numbers on  
the returns and the actual numbers in service. Too many men were  
acting as officers' servants and were able to avoid parades and  
guard duties. This must cease!', ordered Gwyn, 'They are soldiers  
first and must be trained and take guard as others do. Only after  
their duty is finished my they act as servants.' D.603/0/2/19.
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D.603/0/2/43-44.
- 28.SRO: PP Lord Dartmouth joined the regiment in 1805 as a captain, he was  
promoted to major in 1806, lieutenant colonel in 1809 and colonel-  
commandant in 1812. D.603/0/2/44-52.
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the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. D.603/0/2/47.
- 30.SRO: PP Adjutant, Captain Vallance to Uxbridge, 19 September 1807.  
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General Court Martial for subsequent offenders.' D.603/0/2/52.
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- 43.SRO: PP Uxbridge to Disbrowe, 4 November 1799. D.603/0/2/23.
- 44.SRO: PP Captain Vallance to Uxbridge, 19 September 1807. '...if we can turn out 360 in a month we shall have finished with it but if not the volunteering will have to go on every three months. I do not think we shall have many volunteers from either officers or men.' D.603/0/2/47.
- 45.SRO: PP Vallance to Uxbridge 19 September 1807. ' the nine that have volunteered will do no credit to your recommendation,' Of the lieutenant and two ensigns who volunteered he remarked, '...Ensign Fox is a loss to us.' D.603/0/2/47.

- 46.Fernyhough.T: Military Memoirs, p2.
- 47.SRO: PP Uxbridge to Sneyd, 3 January 1800. D.603/0/2/24.
- 48.SRO: PP Eliot to Uxbridge, 29 June 1803, Reference to the ballot of 1796: '...in the absence of anyone in authority many infirm men were picked by magistrates who were incapable of duty, and that nineteen out of twenty-eight men enrolled had to be discharged in 1799. This time he (Eliot) was going to choose young men between eighteen and twenty who in a year's time will be fine soldiers.' D.603/0/2/35.
- 49.SRO: PP Eliot to Uxbridge, June/August 1803, re: Charles Wolseley. D.603/0/2/35.
- 50.SRO: PP Eliot to Uxbridge, 25 September 1803. D.603/0/2/35.
- 51.SRO: PP Eliot to Uxbridge, 23 July 1803. D.603/0/2/35.
- 52.SRO: PP Eliot to Uxbridge, 29 June 1803. D.603/0/2/35.
- 53.SRO: PP Eliot to Uxbridge, 12 August 1803. D.603/0/2/35.
- 54.SRO: PP Eliot to Keene, 20 October 1803. D.603/0/2/35.
- 55.SRO: PP Keene to Uxbridge 4 January 1804. '...any deficiencies are not attributable to the Lieutenancy BUT because returns are not being received from Colonel Eliot so he [Keene], does not know of the vacancies.' D.603/0/2/39.
- 56.SRO: PP Eliot to Uxbridge, 1 June 1804. D.603/0/2/38.
- 57.SRO: PP Eliot to Disbrowe, 14 July 1804. '...we are looked upon as a crack concern up here. General Mackenzie complemented him on the most complete and perfect field day he had ever witnessed. There was' he said 'a state of discipline superior to anything he could ever have expected.' D.603/0/2/43.
- 58.SRO: PP Eliot to Uxbridge, 8 February 1805. D.603/0/2/43.
- 59.SRO: PP Uxbridge to Captain Wilkinson, 13 May 1805. D.603/0/2/43.
- 60.SRO: PP Lord Hawkesbury at the War Office to Uxbridge, 12 July 1805. D.603/0/2/43-44.
- 61.SRO: PP Hawkesbury to Uxbridge, 12 September 1805. D.603/0/2/43-44.

- 62.SRO: PP Disbrowe to Uxbridge, 12 September 1805. D.603/0/2/43.
- 63.SRO: PP Eliot, Heming and Wolseley on pay. September 1805. D.603/0/2/44.
- 64.SRO: PP Heming to Uxbridge, 8 October 1805. D.603/0/2/44.
- 65.SRO: PP William Keene to Uxbridge, 4 January 1804. D.603/0/2/39.
- 66.Act: 1807 George III cap 3 (Local Militia Act).
- 67.Act: 1812 George III cap 38.
- 68.SRO: PP Earl Talbot to Uxbridge, 27 October 1808. '...I did not think it necessary or worthwhile to trouble your Lordship on the subject. In any case Lord Hawkesbury has directed me on certain matters viz: the precedence given to former volunteer officers and the appointment of adjutants. If he [Uxbridge] wishes to do this it will give me the greatest satisfaction to be relieved of the most unpleasant business I was ever engaged in.' D.603/0/2/49.
- 69.SRO: PP Talbot to Uxbridge, 17 March 1808. Writing to Uxbridge, he complained '...there has been supineness in the enrolments and few arrangements have been made.' D.603/0/2/49.
- 70.SRO: PP Talbot to Uxbridge, 18 June 1809. '...as the measure of the force became more understood to the County the volunteers more generally transferred their service' D.603/0/2/49.
- 71.SRO: PP Talbot to Uxbridge, 18 June 1809. D.603/0/2/49.
- 72.Beckett.I.F.W: The Amateur Military Tradition, pp116,117.
- 73.SRO: PP Talbot to Uxbridge, 17 March 1809. 603/0/2/49.
- 74.SRO: PP WO Circular, R.Ryder to Uxbridge, 1 May 1809. The appropriate paragraph directed the inspectors that, '...without compromising or impeding the primary purpose of rendering the Corps effective and fit for service, it appears to call for a more moderate Exercise of their Command than might be necessary or even proper in the case of a Force more habituated to Military Discipline; and it would likewise require a due deference to the wishes of the Lords Lieutenant of the Counties.' D.603/0/2/49.

- 75.SRO: AqP Col. Boughey to J.Filstone, 6 June 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3.
- 76.SRO: AqP March 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3.
- 77.Beckett.I.F.W: The Amateur Military Tradition, pp115,116
- 78.SRO: AqP Boughey to Talbot, 6 May 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3.
- 79.SRO: AqP Boughey to Talbot, 6 May 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3
- 80.SRO: AqP Coyney to Boughey, 22 March 1813. '...There is a danger in the country of allowing men to be officers, more particularly Field Officers who have been in constant familiarity with the men they are to command.' D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3.
- 81.SRO: AqP Talbot to Boughey 7 May 1813. In refusing Boughey's request Talbot wrote. '...He won't press it because if he did so it might in the future exclude other and more suitable men BUT if they [Lomax and Steele] are unsociable and insubordinate he will send in their resignations.' D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4
- 82.SRO: AqP Coyney to Boughey 22 March 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3.
- 83.SRO: AqP Boughey to Wedgwood, 7 May 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3.
- 84.SRO: AqP. Regimental Return, June 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4.
- 85.SRO: AqP Bennett to Boughey, 23 March 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3.
- 86.SRO: AqP Captain Cooper to Boughey, 13 March 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4.
- 87.SRO: AqP Ward to Boughey, 15 April 1814. Referee for Thomas Jones: '...Judging by the line of business he takes it does not augur very favourably though the man himself is very respectable.'  
D (W) 1788, P1, B7/5.
- 88.SRO: AqP Coyney to Boughey, April 1814. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/5.
- 89.SRO: AqP Captain Bagshaw and Mr.Robertson's proposed duel: 10 June 1814. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/5.



- 90.SRO: AqP Sergeant-Major Lowe to Boughey, 16 August 1813.  
'...since Colonel Sneyd left Cooper has been a Tirant amongst the permanents particularly the sergeant-major. Nor is he a friend to Boughey.' D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4.
- 91.SRO: AqP Lord Sidmouth to Boughey, 10 June 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4.
- 92.SRO: AqP Cooper to Boughey, 10 August 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4.
- 93.SRO: AqP General Dyott to Sneyd, 22 June 1812, '...The Mayor of Newcastle claimed the Regiment is in a state of insubordination, the lives of officers have been threatened and they have no power of them [ the men].' D (W) 1788, P1, B7/2..
- 94.SRO: AqP General Maitland to Boughey, 24 June 1812. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/2.
- 95.SRO: AqP Maitland to Boughey 25 June 1812. '...he was not complaining about the regiment and once the officers and the Regiment had 'got together', all would be well. He did not think it would be a good idea to move the regiment nor had he or General Dyott entertained anything but good wishes for the Regiment.'  
D (W) 1788, P1, B7/2.
- 96.SRO: Wrottesley to Dyott, 4 April 1812. D.661/9/6/2/3/1.
- 97.SRO: AqP Boughey to Sneyd, 26 June 1812. '...it certainly has been an unfortunate thing for us as a Regiment to have assembled in Newcastle when God knows for what reason the people are so disaffected.' D (W) 1788, P1, B7/2.
- 98.SRO: AqP Boughey to William Keene, Clerk to the Sessions, 4 May 1813. '...it is out of the question ( to assemble on market day) because many of the men will be drunk and difficult to control.'  
D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4.
- 99.SRO: AqP Boughey to Talbot, 9 May 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/3.
- 100.SRO: AqP Coyney to Boughey 15 June 1813. '...the training is going well. Captain Cooper is a great treasure; training was going on but the time is too short to discover the true merit of the men; the officers are being drilled by a major.' D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4.

- 101.SRO: AqP Anonymous letter to Boughey from a Burgess of Newcastle, 25 June 1813: We are '...men who voted for freedom but have fallen into the filth of slavery [the militia].' D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4.
- 102.SRO: AqP Second anonymous letter to Boughey 25 June 1813 complained about excessive drill. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4
- 103.SRO: AqP Cooper to Boughey, 5 July 1814. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/5.
- 104.SRO: AqP Boughey to Cooper, 27 January 1815. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/6.
- 105.SRO: AqP Cooper to Boughey, 27 January 1815. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/6.
- 106.SRO: AqP Boughey to Cooper, 27 January 1815. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/6.
- 107.SRO: AqP Sergeant-Major Lowe to Cooper, 29 January 1815. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/6.
- 108.SRO: AqP Lord Sidmouth to Boughey , 10 March 1815. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/6..
- 109.SRO: AqP Boughey to Cooper, 15 April 1815. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/7.
- 110.SRO: AqP Lowe to Boughey 1 May 1816, Asking for a barrack masters post: '...He [Lowe] had a wife and family and no money in the bank, no job and did not expect to find one.' D (W) 1788, P1, B7/7.
- 111.SRO: AqP Boughey to Secretary at War, 1817. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/9.
- 112.SRO: AqP Cooper to Boughey, 25 June 1816. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/6.
- 113.SRO: AqP Talbot to Boughey, 1 April 1815. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/7.
- 114.SRO: AqP Boughey to Cooper, 24 September 1813. D (W) 1788, P1, B7/4..

## **VOLUNTEER INFANTRY 1794-1823**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Until 1794, volunteer companies were raised locally when the situation demanded it. Nominally they were under the control of the lords lieutenant but they were normally raised at the expense of the gentry in the counties or municipalities. During the eighteenth century volunteer companies were twice raised to fight against the Jacobites. Control of these early volunteer movements was a prerogative of the nobility and gentry and one which they guarded jealously, because the control of auxiliary, armed forces was seen as conferring political power on those who raised and controlled them.<sup>1</sup> It maintained their power and status, and more importantly it excluded those who might have threatened existing social structures. As late as 1854 when a new volunteer force was being discussed, Lord Churston opined that to put arms into the hands of the middle classes, 'was a very dangerous proceeding'.<sup>2</sup>

Once the emergency had passed, all armed associations were quickly disbanded and disarmed. In general those who volunteered were gentlemen, yeomen, property owners or their servants.

Following the outbreak of war with France in 1793, two volunteer infantry movements were raised. The first, in 1794, was raised in much the same manner as its predecessors. Most of the early movements were raised in rural areas until 1798, when recruitment of working men increased the number of associations in urban districts such as those in North and South Staffordshire, Stockport, Derby and Nottingham. Government showed little interest in the volunteers until 1798 when they intervened and offered financial support and encouragement to the associations. The first infantry movement ended with the Peace of Amiens in 1802, when it was quickly disarmed and disbanded.

In 1803 the second, much larger, infantry movement was raised with the active encouragement of government, ostensibly because of impending invasion. It lasted effectively for four years though after 1805 numbers began to decline. Between 1808 and 1812 most units had been disbanded and disarmed. A few corps remained in being until 1814; these were wealthy corps such as the Duke of Cumberland's Sharpshooters.

The third movement raised in 1819 and disbanded between 1823 and 1825, had more in common with the pre-1798 movements. There was no national organisation or regulation. The four volunteer associations raised in England were autonomous, self-supporting, local corps, enrolled by municipalities and some counties. Government had little to do with the movement beyond accepting their services and supplying some arms.

This chapter will consider two main questions:

1. why, considering the enormous demands made on the Exchequer, and on manpower by the army and militia during the war, was a volunteer movement authorised by government in 1794, and augmented at the behest of government in 1798?
2. why, at a critical period in the war, was an even larger movement raised by government in 1803?

In 1819, four corps of infantry were raised in England. Why this small movement was thought necessary at all will be examined. Secondly, why, if service in the army and militia was detested and feared, did men apparently choose to join a military movement such as the volunteer infantry? Answers to either set of questions are not likely to be straightforward and some will be speculative. The difficulties in arriving at answers were compounded by the differences between what governments claimed was the role of the volunteers, what they intended the movements to do, and what the movements actually encompassed. It is equally difficult to assess why men volunteered, since their stated motives could not always be equated with what services they offered and what duties they actually performed. There is, moreover, a paucity of information concerning the lower orders. What there is comes usually from middle or upper class commentators.

The Act of 1794 authorised lords lieutenant to accept the services of those coming forward to defend their property, and the country against internal depredation and invasion, the order of priority was important, since it indicated how men saw the danger.<sup>3</sup>

The records of Rode Heath, Brixham, Tetbury and Wolverhampton show that the efficiency and reliability of these movements was doubtful, as was their discipline. It will be questioned, therefore, whether the volunteer force could have contributed militarily to the defence of Britain or acted as a police force.

If the answers are not to be found in the military or police activities of the volunteer infantry, the claim that the first two movements were part of a government propaganda exercise will be examined. The exercise, it was claimed, was designed to prove that great numbers of men were loyal and supported government policies, as well as showing ordinary people that they were being protected.<sup>4</sup> It was a measure intended also to give cohesion to a society under the threat from invasion and rebellion. How far this alone would have justified the considerable sums disbursed from the public purse to give some support to the movements, has to be questioned.

Patriotism and loyalty were the reasons given, at the time, to explain why so many men of all orders came forward to volunteer in 1794. A further factor, that of fear, may also be added though this is rarely mentioned. Patriotism and loyalty are difficult to define and evidence that either of these motivated all, or any, men is difficult to find. There were probably other and more compelling explanations why men joined a military association. The evidence available has suggested that selfishness, prudence, gain and entertainment motivated some to join the volunteers. Attempts have been made to explain the actions of the many poor men who joined the movements, after 1798, at some cost to themselves. Claims were made for their patriotism and loyalty but very little is known about the motivations of the poor, since they left few records. The company undoubtedly became a central factor in the life of many volunteers. The club-like aspects, the entertainments, the sense of importance it gave, the opportunities for public display, and above all it provided respectability. These were powerful incentives for men to remain in the movements once they had joined.

Whether social factors were initial motivators remains to be examined. The character of a nation is difficult to define or assess as an influence on events. It has been asserted that the war with France had made men extremely conservative and virulently anti-French. This, it was claimed, motivated many, irrespective of any other reason to join a volunteer company.<sup>5</sup> Lastly the title, volunteer, may have been a misnomer in many cases. The 1798 Act gave wide powers to magistrates to direct men into the movements. In addition, the great landowners and major employers were known to have coerced tenants and employees into joining associations.

Despite criticism, the volunteer infantry survived for most of the war periods. Many explanations advanced for the survival of the volunteer infantry can be questioned. Arthur Young, for example, believed the force should be encouraged because, left with too much spare time and money the lower orders engaged in debauchery. It was believed by others that the movement would solve the problem of unemployment.<sup>6</sup> How far these notions were wishful thinking will be examined, but there is little doubt that the political support enjoyed by the movement in Parliament was one of the most important factors in its survival. Why Conservative administrations should, until 1807, have given financial support and supplied arms to a movement known to be democratic and only partially under government control, is an interesting question. It is also a matter of speculation why the administration offered support to the infantry and used the yeomanry as *posse comitatus*, when a large militia had been embodied which, moreover, it was quite clear that the civil power preferred.

Government gave no support beyond supplying arms to the third movement raised in 1819. There was an initial reluctance on the part of Whitehall to allow the movement at all. Corps were raised ostensibly because imminent revolution was feared and expected. This should have been an adequate answer but for the fact that few corps were raised, even in the larger manufacturing towns.

Evidence from towns such as Macclesfield and Stockport has shown that the authorities in most of the manufacturing areas did not believe the situation was serious enough to require another voluntary corps in addition to the yeomanry. Why the volunteer force was raised therefore, warrants an answer, considering that of the four associations known to have been raised in England, only the Bath Corps were ever used to aid the civil power. Government, employers, county elites and the gentry all showed an initial reluctance to recruit the lower orders unless they had the power, to select and control men absolutely. Apart from a fear that working men would use the arms supplied against their employers and social superiors, it was believed that the discipline training and association acquired in the volunteers would give working men extra power to demand the reform of parliament, that 'armed parliaments' would be formed. How far governments were right to be afraid of political power being conferred on the lower orders by the movements will be examined.

To resume, there are several questions to be answered regarding the real reasons or explanations as to why the volunteer infantry was authorised, raised and given support by successive administrations. A similar number of questions remain to be answered as to why men joined or volunteered to enrol in a military movement designed to support a government which acted against the interests of many in the middle orders and most in the lower orders. There is, moreover, a question as to whether it was a truly voluntary movement.

### **(1) Raising the Volunteers 1794-1823**

The Volunteer Act of April 1794, authorised lords lieutenant to accept volunteer companies with exemption from the militia ballot. The preamble to the act declared that the force was to form part of the defence of the Kingdom in case of invasion, an ever present fear for coastal areas and London.<sup>7</sup> The report submitted by Sir David Dundas to Parliament in November 1796, echoed this, 'in his opinion, the news of a French landing would have caused panic in the City, a run on the banks, and it might well have paralysed commerce and government'.

At the same time, he thought, 'people would be driven to revolt by famine and unemployment; the situation would be exacerbated by the activities of domestic enemies of existing order who had never been so well prepared and ready for action'. It was his belief that a military invasion would succeed only if a Jacobin fifth column had the opportunity to seize power beforehand.<sup>8</sup> It is Colley's view that in the early years of the wars,

'the government was – rightly or wrongly – as afraid of its own people as the enemy'.<sup>9</sup> This was the reason Emsley claimed, despite an alleged fear of invasion, the government vacillated over raising an armed volunteer movement. They did not, he believed, want the force at all. A year was allowed to elapse after war was declared before accepting offers of service and authorising a volunteer movement. The problem which exercised government was the wisdom of arming the middle and lower orders. Sir Onesiphorous Paul, a prosperous manufacturer and Justice of the Peace, believed that workers who had been armed as volunteers would, at a later date, employ those arms against authority and employers.<sup>10</sup> There was an even greater fear of unauthorised groups arming and drilling.<sup>11</sup> The Pottery District, and in particular Newcastle, was thought to be 'ripe for revolution'; therefore, Burnett's warning may have been issued with this in mind.<sup>12</sup> In 1797 Dundas attempted to limit the membership of the first movement to 'those respectable house-holders who resided in great and populous towns'.<sup>13</sup> He assumed that men with property had something to defend and would be eager to do so.

To resume, far from welcoming a volunteer infantry movement in 1794, there was considerable doubt in the minds of government, local authorities and employers as to the wisdom of raising such a movement.

In 1798 there occurred what appeared to be a volte face on the part of the administration. The lower, middle and labouring orders were now to be encouraged to join volunteer movements. Existing corps were to be augmented, and new companies raised. The seriousness of government intention was underlined by the 1798 Defence of the Realm Act.<sup>14</sup> This was followed by a further Act in 1801, to strengthen the movement.<sup>15</sup> These policy changes marked the beginning of an alteration in the volunteer movements. In return for government grants, corps had to agree to serve anywhere within their military district.



The introduction of compulsory elements marked the end of a truly voluntary movement.

The size of corps increased and the composition of the ranks altered. From being a movement of small, local, self-supporting, autonomous companies, composed of men, mainly from the professional and property owning classes, who voluntarily gave up time and incurred expense to defend their locality, the movement began a tentative move towards becoming a regulated, national movement similar in many respects to a militia. The changes in policy did not effect an immediate, efficient, swift, smooth transition, and were never completely effected.

The changes were not universally welcomed, some were resisted, especially demands to march out of localities. Many volunteers, such as Lieutenant Kinnersley of the Newcastle Corps, refused to accept any aid or government direction since, he claimed, to do so would be in contravention of his original oath and terms of service.<sup>16</sup> The Tamworth Volunteers remained an autonomous corps until 1805. Other corps bargained for some aid in return for some alterations in their terms of service. The fact that the government did not compel corps to accept the changes in terms of service meant that the volunteer movement was to remain ineffective as a defensive military movement.

There are several explanations for the change in government policy. The fear of invasion was heightened in 1797 with Tate's abortive landing at Fishguard on 24 February. The seriousness of the French invasion threat was heightened, when The Directory in Paris established the Army of England, a force which in May 1798, amounted to 56,424 troops under General Bonaparte. Another factor which influenced some lords lieutenant to raise additional companies of volunteer infantry was the militia riots of 1796. Staffordshire, along with the other counties in the inland area, made no effort to raise extra volunteers at that time. A month after Buckingham's initiative, Pitt announced government support for the volunteer movement.

The volunteer force in 1798 was a large, loosely structured, autonomous, armed movement and one not wholly under government control.

Where there was a forceful lieutenant such as the Marquess of Buckingham or Lord Salisbury, who actively participated in the raising and control of their county movements, no concern was felt but when bakers and lesser men assumed command considerable fear was expressed since these men were not socially or politically acceptable as officers.<sup>17</sup> It was the intention of Pitt that the volunteers should now act as a police force to maintain internal order.

To ensure that all corps were reliable and could be counted on to give magistrates assistance, the lords lieutenant disbanded 'unreliable' movements such as the one in Brixham, other corps disbanded themselves because they disagreed with government policies.<sup>18</sup> Sheffield volunteers absented themselves from duty at any meetings where they might have been called upon to disperse crowds composed of fellow workers and wives.<sup>19</sup> In May 1800 Wolverhampton Volunteers refused to obey a magistrates' order to quell a food riot.<sup>20</sup>

Most of the early units categorised as loyal came from rural areas in Scotland and many were tenants of great landlords, such as the Earl of Breadalbane. The corps deemed unreliable tended to come from urban industrial areas. Corps such as those raised in Wednesbury, Newcastle, Warrington and Stockport were raised from householders and property owners, and were firmly under the control of local elites such as the 'Junta' in Warrington, the manufacturers of Stockport, employers, such as Major Davenport in Longton, gentry such as Sir Thomas Fletcher, Bt, in Newcastle or in the case of Hertfordshire, the Lord Lieutenant, the Marquis of Salisbury. These could be counted on to protect property, maintain order and defend the King and constitution. Even so, many of these, for example, the men of Wednesbury, Newcastle and Tamworth, would not march out of their neighbourhoods even had an invasion occurred.<sup>21</sup>

Most urban corps, after 1798, contained a high proportion of poor urban workers.

Emsley has argued, these men were likely to render corps unreliable since they were themselves suffering from high prices and shortages. They were also vulnerable, as the Sheffield Corps demonstrated, to attack from those amongst whom they lived should they have taken action against fellow workers.<sup>22</sup> The political alignment of many corps, hitherto loyal to government, changed therefore, after 1798. The corporate attitude of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Volunteers, for example, altered when forty poor, journeymen potters were enrolled.<sup>23</sup>

Whatever the intentions of government may have been for this force, with a few exceptions, the volunteer infantry was never used as *posse comitatus*, that task was left to the yeomanry.

The financial aid provided by government in 1798 enabled considerable numbers of working men, such as the journeymen of Sheffield and Etruria, to join existing companies. An argument for political expediency on the part of government can, therefore, be made. Working men may not have been loyal but they were patriots who revered the King and would have fought to defend their country. Government did not need the volunteer infantry to suppress radicalism, even had the threat been serious. To defend the country there was a very large militia and the navy. Government did need to have as many men as possible in uniform. It can be argued that the volunteer infantry was both a moral force, and served as a propaganda exercise. Those who volunteered were seen to be loyal patriots doing their duty, supporting the government and confounding internal enemies. Those who did not join the movement were disloyal.

The strength of this argument is evidenced in the letters General Greenfield wrote to Major Fletcher and other Staffordshire commandants on the occasion of the King's birthday parades in June 1801.<sup>24</sup> Once enrolled, the belief was that drill and acceptable social activities would keep large numbers of young men from mischief and idle dissipation, thus raising the moral tone of the community.<sup>25</sup>

To resume, there was no military justification for maintaining the first volunteer movement nor were they used nationally as *posse comitatus*. Despite government aid, most Staffordshire corps were, to a large measure, self-sustaining and to disband them in war-time would have been politically inexpedient. Companies were highly visible, and, therefore useful as an instrument of government propaganda. Naim, quoted above, suggested that there was an innate conservatism in English society. If that were so, it would have bound men of all classes together against the French and ensured cohesion in war-time society. The only problem with Naim's assertion is that many men would not leave their neighbour-hoods to fight the French. In Staffordshire the earliest corps recorded was the Loyal Staffordshire Volunteers. Raised in 1794 and commanded by Colonel George Piggot, they had their headquarters in Wolverhampton.

Most of the associations in the Inland Military District: – Bedfordshire, Northants, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Oxfordshire, and neighbouring industrial towns such as Stockport, Macclesfield and Warrington, were raised between 1797 and 1798. A local return of 1798 shows that in Staffordshire there were 1,024 volunteers, enrolled in nineteen associations, evenly divided between the county's hundreds. These figures should be compared with those of neighbouring counties. Derbyshire raised 460 men; Cheshire 1,230; Warwickshire 1,245; Bedfordshire 346; Oxfordshire 600 and Leicestershire 980. They show that Staffordshire raised numbers comparable to the other industrial counties, all of which raised larger movements than those of the rural counties, the exception being Derbyshire. There were in 1798 between 80,000 and 100,000 infantry volunteers, a figure which remained relatively stable, and one considerably larger than other civilian military movements. Its offensive activities were limited, or in Staffordshire non-existent. Otherwise, as a movement it did very little in a military sense. It drilled, although Emsley claimed, because of the independence of various corps there was little uniformity in the training. No army officer might intervene to correct matters unless corps were called out on permanent duty.<sup>26</sup> Drill placed a great emphasis on strenuous, parade ground training. This was deemed necessary since the movements practised on the parade ground were the movements to be executed on the battlefield. Exercises consisted of marching, forming squares and columns, advancing, retiring and manoeuvring as platoons, companies and corps; there was arms drill, fixing bayonets, charging and saluting exercises. The drills in the Pottery District were usually held in town centres and often drew large crowds which turned exercises into an entertainment and presumably a propaganda exercise. The Newcastle men were fortunate since General Greenfield afforded them the opportunity of exercising with regular troops nearby at Wolstanton.<sup>27</sup> No consideration was ever given to the guerrilla warfare in which they would have been involved had the French landed. The ammunition returns made by Captain Bent, show that the Newcastle companies used a good deal of ball, powder and flint which would indicate that they must have had a firing range and that considerable practice occurred.<sup>28</sup>

A major factor which always decided the activities of the volunteer infantry was cost.

Cousins has said that although the government introduced payments it was 'parsimonious' in its treatment of the movement.<sup>29</sup>

Severe food rioting occurred between 1800 and 1801. The Duke of Portland, fearful that the movement of grain about the country would be hindered and cities and towns would be denied grain, ordered the lieutenants to take every effort to ensure the passage of grain to markets. In an important departure from normal policy he empowered volunteer commandants, where their corps were threatened or where they saw mischief likely to occur, to assemble their men without the permission of a magistrate.<sup>30</sup> Staffordshire was not disrupted by food rioting such as that in Bristol, Derbyshire and Buckinghamshire. Of the incidents which did occur in the county, that in Wolverhampton has been recounted. The other minor incident occurred in the north of the county and was dealt with peaceably by a yeomanry troop. The food riots of 1800 and 1801 were more serious. On 23 and 24 September 1800 a crowd of 1,000 colliers and potters 'mobbed' through Hanley and its surroundings emptying the provision shops. On the 23 September, Major Fletcher assembled the Newcastle corps but it was the yeomanry who which called upon to disperse the crowd which they did without any trouble or bloodshed. The volunteer infantry remained in reserve. The reaction of Lieutenant Sims, a corn merchant of Hanley – reluctant to leave his business unguarded – is indicative of the attitudes of many in the corps.<sup>31</sup>

To resume, the sole military activities of most Staffordshire infantry associations were drill, exercise, musketry, parades on the King's birthday, and on other ceremonial occasions. They indulged also in a great deal of entertainment, otherwise they did nothing save make their presence known to their neighbourhoods.

In 1802 the Peace of Amiens was signed and the volunteer infantry were disbanded. All weapons, held by the Staffordshire movements, even those bought privately, had to be surrendered, at once, to Ordnance.

Most commandants in Staffordshire offered to continue their services but all offers of extended service were firmly refused.<sup>32</sup> The speed with which the movements were disbanded, and their arms collected, has to be compared with the desire, expressed by government, that the yeomanry remain in being. It can be inferred from this that the government did not value or trust the infantry highly enough to continue supporting it and they were relieved to be able to disarm the movement.

When war broke out in 1803, the second volunteer infantry movement was brought into being on 31 March, under the Act of 1802.<sup>33</sup> The Act indicated the determination of government to raise a statutory volunteer movement because of a real threat of invasion. The *Levée en Masse* gave the lieutenants unprecedented powers. Despite the legislation and the threat of invasion, Colley claimed that there was a poor response to volunteering in rural districts.<sup>34</sup> Edward Thompson claimed that in Yorkshire and Norfolk there was a great deal of opposition to volunteering.<sup>35</sup> In the manufacturing districts of Staffordshire there was no rush to volunteer. The government, as a measure to rectify an unsatisfactory situation, agreed on 27 July to suspend the *Levée en Masse* if at least three quarters of the county quotas were met by volunteers. There is evidence, however, that in rural district such as Bedfordshire, magistrates had directed men into their local companies.<sup>36</sup> In Staffordshire no instance is recorded of men being directed into corps by magistrates. This does not mean that coercion did not exist; there were at least three large works' corps formed at Etruria, Longton and Hanley, so prudential volunteering cannot be ruled out. It is noticeable however, that most corps in Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire and Cheshire were formed after 27 July, the last being Rugely which was not raised until November 1803. As late as 17 August Sir George Chetwynd wrote to the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire and complained that gentlemen and other ranks were not coming forward under the present regulations.<sup>37</sup> When men did start coming forward, the lieutenancies and the War Office were embarrassed by the great numbers who offered their services. It has been estimated that by 1805, there were between 340,000 and 350,000 volunteers. The figure varies with different authorities but if Derbyshire and Staffordshire are taken as indicators, it was three times the size of the previous movement.<sup>38</sup>

The government having used its powers under the 1802 act to coerce men into the movement miscalculated the great numbers which turned up to enrol, and with which the authorities could not deal adequately. The government was now faced with enormous costs for arming and equipping the movement, a problem exacerbated by the fact that a supplementary militia had also been raised. They, because of the emergency, were allowed to draw directly on government stores. Lord Palmerston estimated that for a force of over a third of a million volunteers there were, 'scarcely arms for 5 or 6,000'.<sup>39</sup> The true intentions of government toward the movement at this juncture seemed questionable. Beckett has claimed that it was never the intention of the government to arm all the volunteers. He believed that the original intention was to issue arms to twenty-five in each 100 men, and to concentrate most arms and resources on the invasion coasts. Even this modest proposal would have left many unarmed, such were the numbers. To arm the rest, Beckett claimed, Ordnance issued 100,000 pikes, though he gives no reference for this. There are however, two references to pikes in the NYRO. The Duke of Leeds wrote to W. Chaytor, his deputy lieutenant, on the 3 November 1803, and asked where they (the pikes) should be deposited.<sup>40</sup> This was another instance of how ill-prepared the authorities were to deal with the numbers who volunteered. It was also by inference that the government had no real faith in the ability of the movement and no real desire to maintain a volunteer force.

As is so often the case in dealing with the volunteers, there appeared to be a contradiction. If there was no real desire to raise the force, why was the *Levée en Masse* implemented? No pikes were issued in Staffordshire, Bedfordshire, Cheshire or Derbyshire. In Cheshire and Yorkshire the Lords Lieutenant were constrained to ask gentlemen to surrender their private arms, and extra bullet moulds were ordered to deal with the variety of bores.<sup>41</sup> In Newcastle one company of gentlemen supplied itself with rifles, as did the Stockport Rifles; some Shropshire corps bought their own weapons. It was not until the end of 1804 that sufficient muskets had been produced to arm the force. It should be noted that in 1940, when invasion threatened, the issue of pikes to arm the Local Defence Volunteers was mooted once more. It is plausible to argue therefore, that an invasion threat to this country always catches governments unaware and that it takes a long time to organise its armed forces.

Emsley claimed that government faced with huge numbers of men requiring arms, uniforms and equipment tried to restrict numbers by financial constraints. Between 31 March and 3 August 1803 pay and allowances for volunteers were altered four times, each time pay and conditions were reduced, and those corps whose service was accepted after 3 August 1803 received only a contingency allowance.<sup>42</sup> Once again there appeared to be little desire or lack of ability, to maintain an efficient force. What a corps received therefore, depended upon when its services were accepted by the King, not when it offered its services to the Lord Lieutenant. A result of this was that associations which had offered their services between the 31 March and 3 August 1803, depending on exactly when they were accepted, received differing pay and training allowances. The differing rates of pay and allowances caused great annoyance and irritation, especially to those accepted after 3 August. The situation was not wholly the fault of the administration. Neither the War office nor the Home Office had sufficient, experienced staff to deal with an unprecedented situation.

The delays in dealing with offers meant that Staffordshire associations such as those at Lane End, Etruria, Longport, Burton-on-Trent, Tamworth, Lichfield, and Hanley Volunteers, all of which offered their services in July 1803, were not accepted until 28 August and found themselves entitled only to the restricted allowances. There is a further factor which has to be taken into account and one which may have accounted for delays in the official acceptance of offers. The present Marquess of Anglesey, writing of his forbear, the Earl of Uxbridge, said that,

'he was averse to paper work and put off completing it'.<sup>43</sup>

As all offers had to be sent to the lord lieutenant for acceptance before being sent to London, delays may have occurred as a result of Uxbridge's tardiness. It says much for the temper of men that they remained. Major Davenport of the Lane End Volunteers wrote to Lord Uxbridge in August and complained that they had, 'led the way' in the county and had volunteered in July but had now been denied the appropriate allowances.<sup>44</sup>

The inadequacy of the bureaucracies was compounded by the fact that all the civilian military forces were controlled by three government departments. General control was exercised by the Home Office but military and financial aspects were dealt with by the War Office.



Ordnance supplied weapons. Had an invasion occurred, the War office and Ordnance were to assume total control. The chaos caused by the political and administrative ineptitude is better understood by examining the returns made to the War Office by volunteer corps between December 1803 and February 1804: 362 corps were serving under what were known as the June allowances, of that number 152 restricted their services to their military district, 108 corps offered to serve anywhere in the event of invasion, and fifty-six were available for service, anywhere in the Kingdom, at any time. A total of 1,165 corps, by far the greatest number, were serving under the August allowances but of these, seven stipulated differing terms and one unit only offered to serve anywhere at any time. In addition there were eleven units serving under no specified terms of service and forty-three supernumerary corps – these were units raised and allowed to remain in addition to the county quotas but receiving no pay, allowances or arms and no exemption from militia service. Most of the Staffordshire Corps served under the 3 August allowance and with two exemptions agreed to serve anywhere in the county.<sup>45</sup>

There is a problem when dealing with numbers in this movement. Beckett claimed that Staffordshire failed to fulfil its quota whereas the Paget Papers show clearly that 6,808 were accepted which was the county quota.<sup>46</sup> In October 1803, Whitehall pointed out to Uxbridge that Staffordshire had 7,000 volunteers enrolled which was 200 in excess of the quota.

To add to the confusion was the offer made in September 1803 by Sir John Wrottesley Bt. He offered Uxbridge 1,000 volunteers which Uxbridge declined because he said the quotas had been filled. Sir John could, said Uxbridge, act as a supernumerary force. Sir John in his reply refused and claimed, with some justification, that out of the twenty-two corps listed in Staffordshire, two only had been accepted from the south of the county which was the most populous area. The dispute eventually reached the ears of the King who suggested to Uxbridge that some way might be found to accommodate Wrottesley. There is no evidence to suggest that Uxbridge did so.

The problems encountered in raising the second movement stemmed from lack of precedent, bureaucratic inefficiency, a lack of firm direction and a lack of policy as to what sort of reserve force was wanted. The indecision was exemplified by the events of 1804 and 1806.

The Act of 1802 confirmed volunteers' exemption from the ballot thus removing a third of a million men from recruitment to any other force. In 1804, Addington legislated for a combined army of reserve and supplementary militia.<sup>47</sup> Windham's Training Act of 1806 intended to bring into being a sedentary army of up to 60,000 men.<sup>48</sup> Both Acts sought to bring into being forces which were in direct competition for recruits with the volunteer infantry.

To resume, the volunteers in both movements, because of the differing terms of service, remained ineffective as a defence force for the United Kingdom. In 1798 and 1802, the government by facilitating the enrolment of great numbers of men and giving them protection from the ballot, hindered recruitment for the militia and the army. Administrations never appeared to be easy with the volunteers.<sup>49</sup>

The Volunteer Consolidation Act of 1804 was intended to resolve the problems besetting the volunteer movements. It laid down pay and allowances, it set out establishment, length of training required, and controlled the rules and regulations of the associations. It did not address the central problems which concerned the differing service offered by corps. Failure to tackle this aspect of service limited the effectiveness of the volunteer infantry as a defence force.<sup>50</sup> In another move to increase effectiveness the Duke of York set up an inspectorate, in 1804, to improve efficiency.

The active life of the second movement was short. As far as the inland counties were concerned, the threat of invasion had passed by 1805. Cox wrote that in January 1804 the total volunteer strength was 341,000 after which, 'military fervour evaporated' and the numbers in the volunteer infantry decreased sharply.<sup>51</sup> The death of William Pitt in 1806, an enthusiastic volunteer, removed the movement's most influential supporter. His support for the volunteers in Parliament with that of 110 volunteer MPs – nearly a fifth of all English MPs, undoubtedly sustained the movement in the face of much adverse criticism. One of its fiercest critics was William Windham.

A volunteer commandant himself, when he became Secretary for War in the new administration of 1806, he cut drastically all grants and allowances to the voluntary movements because he thought the volunteers were useless and too expensive.<sup>52</sup> His behaviour was not calculated to inspire volunteers, to improve standards or to remain in the force. A new government under Castlereagh, aware of the volunteer representation in the House, restored the allowances to the August 1803 levels but in 1807 Castlereagh ordered all lords lieutenant to, 'admit no more (volunteers) a new internal plan shortly'.<sup>53</sup>

This was followed by the Local Militia Act of 1807, the avowed aim of which was to replace the volunteer force with a local militia. Volunteers were to be persuaded to transfer, with their weapons, under preferential terms, into the new militia. The response was uneven, in Staffordshire of the 6,000 men required for the new militia only 1,500 volunteers transferred. In Bedfordshire only six volunteered from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion which was promptly disbanded. Divine wrath appeared to have been visited upon one poor wretch who refused to transfer. Headed 'A Dreadful Fate', the Northampton Mercury 2 October 1808, revealed that 'William Smith of Tingreth in Bedfordshire who would not transfer, ate a great quantity of wood nuts and died by the visitation of God'. Once the Act came into force, Ordnance acted quickly to collect all the weapons supplied to the volunteers in order, it was claimed, to equip the new militia. The legislation of 1807 was so effective that, the Staffordshire Advertiser reported, there were no volunteers in the County after 1812; most companies had disbanded by 1810.<sup>54</sup>

The second movement, like the first movement, drilled. In September 1803, the Stockport Rifle Volunteers drilled every morning at 7 o'clock including Sunday. In October the corps drilled every afternoon at 3 pm and Fridays at 1 am. Sunday was a field day lasting from 9 am to 1.30 pm.<sup>55</sup> In March 1804, the Duke of York, determined to make the movement efficient, encouraged volunteers to undertake ten paid days' permanent duty. Peter Rugely writing to Matthew Rugely from permanent duty at Peterborough in May 1804, claimed men had trained for seven hours a day: 7am to 9am; 11am to 2 pm; and 6 pm until 9pm. His letter does not reveal the fact that for a company of 120 men there were only twenty muskets.<sup>56</sup> Staffordshire volunteers in Leek, Clough Hall and Tunstall were short of muskets until November 1804; only those rifle companies such as the one in Newcastle could train properly.

The companies drilled strenuously without arms nonetheless. Staffordshire, Yorkshire, Bedfordshire, all counties without a full complement of arms, must be classified as inefficient until November 1804. Counties such as Derbyshire, Bedfordshire and Yorkshire undertook a week's permanent duty. There is no evidence that men in Staffordshire did so, they held field days, usually on a Sunday. It was easier for corps in agricultural counties to undertake annual training since there were slack times in the calendar. In the industrial districts there were no slack times, and employers resented men being off work. The military activities of the Staffordshire corps in the second movement were concerned with drill. Some coastal corps manned artillery which fired at French ships; Mansfield Volunteers were employed against Luddites, but these are the only corps in the second movement known to have performed active service. A curious incident occurred in Lichfield where a Mr Hawkins Brown claimed to have discovered a plot to blow up the powder magazine of the volunteer movement in the city. In his letter to Whitehall, he said that this was the work of seventy to eighty French prisoners of war on parole in Lichfield. Whitehall justifiably alarmed, ordered Colonel Patton to mount a twenty-four hour guard on the magazine until it was removed to safer premises.<sup>57</sup>

Detractors levelled charges of indiscipline and unreliability at the movement. There were incidents which justified such charges. In 1803 the Chester Corps attacked the city gaol to free a volunteer illegally press-ganged.<sup>58</sup> The Sandbach Corps gained notoriety for drunken and quarrelsome behaviour on and off parade.<sup>59</sup> The ill-behaviour of the Tetbury Corps which included pissing against the church and being out of uniform on training days drew a strong rebuke from the commandant.<sup>60</sup> None of the records available has indicated any behaviour of this sort on the part of the Staffordshire men. Other writers such as Leary, writing in 1897, emphasised the moral effect the second movement had upon men. He claimed that since it was raised, manners had improved, churches were better filled, swearing was banished and every man looks to his character.<sup>61</sup> It is a claim difficult to prove, and it is plausible to suggest in the light of behaviour already noted, that it was to some extent wishful thinking on the part of supporters of voluntary movements.

To resume, there was a real danger of invasion between 1803 and 1805, but it must be questioned, in the light of the confusion which ensued in 1803 and 1804, and the legislation of 1804, 1806 and 1807, whether, despite the draconian powers enshrined in the Act of 1802, the government wholeheartedly wanted a volunteer force? Why large forces, such as Staffordshire's, which were not fully armed until late 1804, and were therefore, militarily useless, were supported from the public purse? Why a movement with which administrations found difficulty in dealing was tolerated? The answers are not clear, but supposition suggests that once more volunteers were part of a propaganda exercise and added cohesion to society in the face of danger. When Pitt died, Parliamentary support for the volunteers lessened and ministers such as Addington, Windham and Castlereagh were then able to end the movement.

New legislation was not required to raise volunteer units in 1819. Offers to raise infantry movements had been made as early as 1816 by interested groups of influential citizens, ex-volunteers and ex-militiamen. The earliest offer made in Staffordshire was from a banker, Edward Kinnersley, in Newcastle. His offer made on 11 February 1817, at a meeting requisitioned by Thomas Sparrow JP, to raise 'an Armed Association for the Support of Government and Protection of the public' was not accepted.<sup>62</sup> In 1819, government reversed its policy and allowed corps to be raised because of unrest in the industrial parts of Britain, and the unease voiced at the unrest by some municipalities and county elites, among them, those of Staffordshire and Cheshire. The new infantry movement was raised solely to combat riot, revolution and the expected attacks on property. Unlike the earlier movements, only four small movements were raised in England, since there was no general agreement in the country that a new infantry movement was required. Macclesfield for example, the scene of bitter disputes in 1812 and 1819, did not raise a corps, it was considered no serious danger existed.<sup>63</sup> Movements were raised in Newcastle under Lyme, Leeds, Bath and the County of Cheshire and an unknown number were raised in Scotland. The movements raised were totally self-supporting save for the muskets supplied by Ordnance. The lack of financial support by government may have been the deciding factor in those areas which did not raise movements.

The decision to raise a volunteer force in Staffordshire was taken at a meeting in the Shire Hall, Stafford in September 1819. At the meeting it was proposed to augment the yeomanry and that respectable householders should be encouraged to join infantry movements which would be under the control of the yeomanry. The proposal was opposed by Viscount Anson, Sir Charles Wolesley and Mr George Chetwynd, JP. They contended that the situation was not serious enough to warrant raising another infantry movement. Their protests were ignored and the proposal was approved.<sup>64</sup> Only one movement, that of Newcastle-under-Lyme, was raised. This was a five-company battalion which was mustered, enrolled, sworn in and armed by October 1819. In Leeds a company of 100 men was enrolled to defend the town from riot and disorder.<sup>65</sup> Of the four corps raised in England, the Bath corps was the only one called out to aid the civil power, otherwise little is known of volunteer activity during the period between 1819 and 1825. The Newcastle corps was disbanded in 1823, that in Cheshire, between 1825 and 1826.

To conclude, the movement was short-lived and apart from the instance noted, it was never called upon to act. The history of one Staffordshire battalion raised in 1859 noted that when the movements were disbanded some Staffordshire men formed military clubs. Here they could wear uniforms, drill, and where licensed, they practised shooting.<sup>66</sup> This meant that there was always a nucleus of 'volunteers' ready, should the situation demand it. During the Chartist troubles in the 1830s and 1840s, volunteer corps were easily formed. When a new national movement was raised in 1859, the ease and speed with which companies were formed in Staffordshire indicated that military clubs simply re-formed as volunteer companies.

## **(ii) Enrolment**

No machinery existed expressly for raising a volunteer force. It was only by harnessing the bureaucracy of local government to military purposes that any civilian military movement could be administered once it had been enrolled and sworn in. The lieutenancies however, played little part in actually raising the volunteer force, though zealous lieutenants, such as Lord Buckingham and Lord Salisbury, had a great impact on recruiting.<sup>67</sup>

Raising the movements was a cumbersome, inefficient and haphazard process and success depended upon public-spirited men who saw the need to raise a corps. Those who wished to raise a company were required to requisition meetings for the purpose through a deputy-lieutenant, magistrate or sheriff. Once permission had been granted, the meeting was then advertised in local papers. Posters and leaflets signed by the proposers which announced the time, venue and date of the meeting were distributed throughout the recruitment area.

The meetings usually took place in Town Halls and the principal inns of a district.

Large counties such as Staffordshire required more than one meeting to cover a district.

At the meetings it was always desirable to have on the platform local dignitaries, magistrates, deputy-lieutenants and nobility, one of whom took the chair. The meetings served three purposes: to give vent to patriotic and loyal rhetoric, secondly to raise a local corps and lastly to secure finance to support the corps once raised.

The usual format, once the loyal speeches had finished, was to propose a corps be raised and its title. If these were accepted, a set of crucially important proposals was debated by the meeting. The most important of these were the terms of service and subscriptions.

Some meetings failed to raise a corps because no agreement could be reached on these proposals. The meeting at Silsoe in Bedfordshire ended without raising a corps because it was proposed to charge a subscription of twenty guineas which most members thought too much. Farmers at the meeting had objected earlier to terms of service which would have committed the corps to service anywhere in the Kingdom. They argued that if the tenants, workers and agricultural craftsmen were marched away there would be no one to tend the crops upon which the economy of the county and country depended. Lady Lucas the local landowner was much annoyed at the failure to raise a corps.<sup>68</sup> If the main proposals were accepted, there usually followed a series of proposals dealing with organisation. The meeting held in Hanley at the Swan Inn on 20 April 1797 had before it thirteen resolutions. Once it had resolved to raise a corps, it was decided that only respectable householders were to be admitted as members and men coming forward after 5 May were to be subjected to election by a ballot, taken at a general meeting of the whole corps. A committee to administer the affairs of the association was then elected. A set of rules for the new corps was approved as was the time, frequency of drills and their venue.

The style and cost of the uniform was decided, and who was to supply it. A further resolution proposed that all uniforms once purchased should then become the sole property of the corps. To discuss all the items proposed required two meetings; therefore, a second meeting was convened for the 27 April. The final resolution passed at this meeting was that an account of the proceedings should be published in all the local papers and Arris' Birmingham Gazette.<sup>69</sup> The formation of the Newcastle Corps required two meetings in March 1797. These followed a similar pattern to that of Hanley Corps, the only marked difference from the Hanley meeting was a decision to wear a blue coat whereas Hanley chose to wear a red jacket. The process for raising a corps varied little in 1803 when the second movement was raised. On 25 July 1803 the manufacturers of Longport, under the chairmanship of John Davenport, a leading earthenware manufacturer, met at the Bridgewater Inn, Longton, where it unanimously resolved: 'A volunteer corps of infantry be immediately raised, armed, trained, exercised and be liable to service within any part of the Kingdom of Great Britain'.<sup>70</sup> The resolutions concerning the second movement were, possibly in the light of experience, fewer than in 1797. The meeting at Longport concerned itself solely with the title of the corps, its uniform, the numbers to be enrolled and its terms of service. The officers were elected, Davenport being chosen as Major Commandant.<sup>71</sup> On 23 August 1803, John Peel wrote to Earl Talbot, the Vice-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, and informed him that a meeting held in Burslem had agreed to offer the service of over 400 volunteers to the King. He enclosed a nominal roll of officers and men which he headed as lieutenant colonel.<sup>72</sup>

The enrolment of the third movement was different. In Newcastle, once the mayor had received permission from the lord lieutenant, he opened a book in the Guild Hall and invited signatures from those who wished to volunteer. The officers were appointed either from among those who had held commissions in the previous volunteer movement or local militia which by then was in abeyance. The commandant was Lieutenant Colonel Dr Northen who had commanded the Newcastle Battalion of Volunteer Infantry from 1803 to 1810.

In all three movements, once details of the preliminary organisation had been completed, the nominal roles and the lists of officers were forwarded, in Staffordshire, to the vice-lieutenant.



The lord lieutenant was the required to place the names of field officers before the King for approbation, all other officers were approved by the lord lieutenant or vice-lieutenant, Earl Talbot. Once the names of officers and men had been approved, men were sworn in by JPs. In Newcastle, this took place at the Guild Hall.

After 1798, the number enrolled in manufacturing areas such as the Pottery District, Newcastle, Sheffield and Stockport overtook those in the rural areas. Although these were areas thought to be politically unreliable, it did not appear to have stopped men from volunteering or lords lieutenant accepting their services. It was much easier to raise a large corps in populous areas such as the Potteries, Stockport and Macclesfield than in the rural areas of Bedfordshire or Derbyshire. Men were concentrated in a smaller area, and it was far simpler to reach greater numbers by advertising or for employers to raise corps. It was also easier for larger numbers of men to reach inaugural meetings and, it is plausible to add, because so many had become accustomed to factory discipline, it was easier to organise and control them. Burchill and Ross have claimed also that political awareness played a part.<sup>73</sup>

In rural areas of the Kingdom such as Bedfordshire and Derbyshire, where villages were usually small and widely separated, it was more difficult to call a meeting at which sufficient men to form a company could be gathered. This made it a slow process and moreover, some resistance to volunteering had to be overcome. Tilbrook in Bedfordshire was a good example of the problems faced by recruiters. In 1803, the constable of the division estimated – he could not be sure or was not willing to be more accurate – there were 219 inhabitants. Forty men were in the eligible categories, laid down in the 1802 Act; of these, eleven only were willing to volunteer.<sup>74</sup>

To resume, the administration of the movements was the task of the lieutenantcies. All of which cost the government nothing. If the volunteers were neither military nor police, it could be concluded that in encouraging volunteer corps, government exploited the patriotism and zeal of its citizens for its own purposes. Membership of associations throughout the country was uneven, the main areas of recruitment after 1798 were the growing industrial areas which provided the largest corps.

In country areas, there was also considerable resistance to the movement, mainly from farmers and landowners who viewed the volunteers as either an impediment to working the land or a challenge to their traditional power.

### **(iii) Organisation and Control**

The defence of the country devolved upon some regular army units, the militia and the auxiliary forces. The country was divided into military districts, each commanded by a lieutenant general under whose command, had an invasion occurred, would have come all the military forces in the district. Until that event occurred, he and the War Office had little authority over the voluntary movements. The lack of central authority for the auxiliary forces resulted in considerable differences in control and organisation between the various volunteer infantry corps in the country, and even between those in the same county. Attempts were made throughout the war by the Home Office and the War Office to impose tighter control, achieve greater conformity and improve military efficiency and discipline. As a result of the Acts of 1798, 1802 and 1804, and intervention by the commander in chief, some improvements were effected, more especially after 1804, but government never achieved total control of the first two volunteer infantry movements, and it showed little interest in the third movement at all.

The first movement authorised in 1794 and disbanded in 1802 consisted, until 1798, of a number of self-supporting, autonomous corps. This affected the way movements were organised. The Hanley corps agreed at its initial meeting in 1797 to co-operate with other corps and accept regimentalisation if required, but no evidence can be found to say that this happened in Staffordshire or elsewhere. Corps existed and functioned in isolation, each jealous of its independence. Associations chose the style of uniform their members would wear, the weapons they would carry, the subscriptions they would pay, who they would admit as members, what rules they would accept, their terms of service, and the officers under whom they would, or in some circumstances, would not serve. The first associations, as a condition of acceptance, had to be totally self-supporting. No support was offered by government until 1798. This support, though never generous, was vital for corps with increased numbers of poor men.

After 1798 most corps still found it necessary to raise money to survive. The Newcastle Corps claimed in 1802, that they had to raise £200 per annum for each year of their existence.<sup>75</sup> This measure of self-support meant that most movements still retained a great deal of independence post 1798, even though in receipt of government grants.

In 1804 the Duke of York, the Commander in Chief, introduced measures which he considered necessary if the second volunteer movement was to survive as a military force. Inspectors were appointed; paid, annual training was introduced but was not compulsory; all volunteers were required to wear the standard militia uniform; the rules and regulations governing volunteer companies required Whitehall's approval; establishments for the various corps were laid down; permanent staff were appointed and paid for by government, and accurate, monthly returns of efficient to Whitehall were required.<sup>76</sup> These measures were undoubtedly necessary. Their implementation however, required that Whitehall, the inspectorate and generals commanding districts maintain a delicate balance between coercion and persuasion. It would have been difficult to force a voluntary movement which was not totally dependent on government financial aid, and was not subject to martial law, to obey, to the letter, every government regulation. Much depended upon the units themselves, and it proved impossible to check the accuracy of monthly returns made by commandants and upon which most of the grants were based. These factors proved to be a weakness in the first two voluntary movements, since in the absence of any central authority the efficient implementation of policies ultimately depended upon the honesty and enthusiasm of the commandants and zealous lords lieutenant. The government was never able or interested enough to take further steps to impose its will more firmly on the movements. Characteristic of the situation in both movements were the numbers of corps which refused government aid and determined their own terms of service. They were nonetheless, still recognised by government. In addition there were the supplementary corps, recognised as existing but not part of the county quota. Until 1805 therefore, there were two groups of volunteers totally independent of government control.

It is plausible to argue that given adequate financial backing, a firm commitment from government for its survival, and strict implementation of legislation, coupled with the apparent desire of men to be volunteers, the second movement might have come to resemble a local militia, and one which might well have proved more efficient and reliable than the militia which replaced it.

The third volunteer movement was composed of four corps in England. They were responsible to the Lord Lieutenant of the County but beyond that no evidence has been found which suggested that the War office tried to impose any control in the various corps.

The key role in all the auxiliary forces was that of the lieutenancy. The lord lieutenant was appointed by the government in power and it was crucial that he could be depended on to support and implement government policy especially in war time. The lieutenancy was therefore, for most people in a county the de facto government. The Lords Lieutenant of the Counties had, since the seventeenth century, been responsible for the county militias, a responsibility which was now extended to the two voluntary movements. The lieutenants had considerable powers at their disposal for the ordering of all the auxiliary forces.

They could accept or refuse offers of service; they were empowered to remove the colonel and the officers of a regiment if they misbehaved, and if necessary, order the disbandment of a corps. Neither of the two voluntary movements could cross the county boundary without the permission of the lord lieutenant. The responsibility of the lieutenancies involved implementing legislation; receiving and dealing with all correspondence, circulars and amendments to legislation concerning the county movements. The lieutenancies noted and approved dates of assembly for training and inspection. They and the general officers commanding districts received the reports of inspection, and the lieutenant could, where necessary, institute requisite action.

Should an outbreak of civil disorder prove serious it was the duty of the lord lieutenant to assume control of the operation to end it. In that event, all troops, auxiliary and regular, came under his command.<sup>77</sup> In all matters which concerned the conduct of a county's military movements, the lords lieutenant were answerable to the King.

The lieutenant did not personally deal with the minutiae of administration; that was normally the function of the bureaucracy headed by the Clerk to the Justices, though all important decisions in Staffordshire, Cheshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Leicestershire were taken by the lords lieutenant. Earl Uxbridge did not appear to have taken much interest in either of the two voluntary movements. The present Marquess of Anglesey writing of his ancestor noted that he was not a very energetic man.<sup>78</sup> It is a damning report of the King's representative and one which did not augur well for the energetic supervision of the volunteers. The Duke of Leeds was little better.<sup>79</sup> William Chaytor eventually took most of the important decisions. Governments considered it desirable, in order to ensure greater control of the auxiliary movements, that the deputy-lieutenants, sheriffs, high constables and magistrates, whenever possible, should hold senior rank in the county movements. In Staffordshire, Major Sir Thomas Fletcher, Bt, commandant of the Newcastle Volunteers between 1794 and 1802 was a deputy-lieutenant, John Fenton Fletcher Boughey, captain of Audley Volunteers, was a deputy-lieutenant, as was Walter Hill Coyney. George Chetwynd, captain of a volunteer company, Sir Robert Lawley, MP, commandant of a volunteer battalion were deputy-lieutenants. Major Powys, commandant of the Leek Volunteers, was a Justice of the Peace.

To resume, the lack of any machinery at national and county level expressly designed to organise or control voluntary forces placed great emphasis on the zeal and abilities of the lords lieutenant and the commandants of the corps. In the absence of interference by, or indifference on the part of lieutenants, associations were left to organise themselves. Where lord lieutenants, such as the Marquis of Salisbury and Earl Spencer, took an active interest in the movements, the discipline, efficiency and organisation of the associations appeared to have improved.<sup>80</sup> Where they did not, as was the case in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, movements appeared to have remained as semi-autonomous units whose efficiency and discipline attracted adverse criticism from inspectors. Lack of an efficient organisational structure meant that it was never very clear exactly how many corps there were in existence in the first movement. Lord Fauconberg wrote to William Chaytor in March 1798, to ascertain the number of volunteer corps there were in the North Riding in order that the General Officer Commanding could accurately determine the force upon which he could call in case of emergency.

Chaytor in his reply was not quite certain how many there were and promised to make an immediate enquiry.<sup>81</sup> The Acts of 1798, 1802 and 1804 promised to redress this sort of muddle, restrict the autonomy of the second movement and effect reforms, but none of the legislation tackled the problems which prevented the organisation of an effective, unified national, military movement.<sup>82</sup>

In 1803 corps were enabled to apply for permanent staff, paid for by government.<sup>83</sup> All applications for permanent staff had to be made to the lord lieutenant. The staff appointed depended upon the numbers of effectives in each corps. This figure was determined by the accuracy of returns by the commandants and these were hard to verify. Company commanders were not all honest; for example, Captain Bent wrote to Major Fletcher in December 1800 and suggested that it might be better that the returns to General Greenfield should be delayed.<sup>84</sup>

In 1804 The Duke of York gave general officers commanding districts the power to appoint two inspecting officers with the rank of lieutenant colonel for each voluntary movement in their districts. They were to inspect corps regularly, where necessary make suggestions for improvement, revisit corps to see what improvements had been made, submit reports to commandants, the general commanding, Whitehall and the lord lieutenant. No evidence is available to indicate what happened to movements which never reached acceptable standards nor is there evidence to show any inefficient corps being disbanded in Staffordshire or in the Inland Military District.

The desire, after 1803, to organise an efficient military movement was inevitably weakened by a refusal on the part of the government to require all corps to serve anywhere within their military districts and be subject to martial law. There was however, another factor which no amount of legislation could have altered. Harries Jenkins has pointed to civilianism as being a weakness in the officer corps.<sup>85</sup> Officers, he claimed, despised the professionalism of their continental counterparts and remained civilians in outlook, even to the extent of leaving campaigns to pursue social and civil interests. From the evidence available, volunteers throughout the century, like the officer corps, were determinedly civilian and intended to remain so.

Most accepted the uniforms, trappings and ceremonials of the army but had no wish to become soldiers. In addition, as the evidence produced above showed, many were not inclined to defer to authority. From a military standpoint, officers and NCOs, in the short periods of drill and training available, could not inculcate the military values of the regular forces which most volunteers would have rejected anyway.

The second volunteer movement provided an interesting comparison with the militia since both were recruited from the same social grouping. The militia deemed in 1795 to be politically and militarily unreliable was by 1812, after seventeen years of service, inculcated with 'correct' military values. Regiments ordered to fire on striking operatives did so without demur.

Volunteers could and did refuse to obey orders they disliked.<sup>86</sup> Most units in the first movement were small, there were few battalions and no evidence of the external military organisation imposed on the second movement. In Staffordshire there were, in 1798, two large corps, those of Lichfield with 128 men on roll and Newcastle with 120. These were three company corps, commanded by majors. The other ten associations were of company size, nine had variously eighty to ninety men on roll whilst Walsall the smallest, had sixty men on its books. With two exceptions all these movements were commanded by captains. By 1801 most corps had increased in size. Tamworth Volunteers commanded by Captain Lyons had 119 men enrolled, an increase of twenty-nine men, and Newcastle had increased its strength to 200 men.

Allowance had always been made for regiments and battalions but regimentalisation was not introduced until January 1804 when the War Office wrote to all lords lieutenant 'requesting' that volunteers should be formed into regiments and battalions.<sup>87</sup> There were obvious problems with such a proposal. In the urban areas of Cheshire, Stockport, Staffordshire and Warwickshire for example, where communications were good, and populations were closely grouped, it was relatively easy to combine companies and form battalions which could meet and exercise together without much difficulty. Most employers in the Pottery District approved of the associations, some such as Wedgwood, Davenport and Whitehead raised movements from their own workforces. In 1805, nine of the twenty-two associations in Staffordshire were of battalion size.

These were at Burton-on-Trent, where Lt Col John Peel commanded a battalion of 457 men; Hanley and Shelton where Lt Col James Whitehead commanded a battalion of 502, many of whom were his workmen. In Lichfield Colonel James Patton commanded a battalion of 545. The Stone and Sandon Battalion numbered 505. The battalions at Stoke, Stafford and Tamworth numbered 400 being commanded by Lieutenant Colonels Daniel Whalley, William Horton, and Sir Robert Lawley. Three corps only numbered fewer than 100 but most numbered between 150 and 300.<sup>88</sup> In rural counties such as Bedfordshire and Derbyshire by comparison, where small villages were widely scattered and communications poor, assembling and exercising even a company proved difficult. In Bedfordshire, for example, it became necessary to send drill sergeants to visit separate villages and exercise small units otherwise no drill would have been undertaken.<sup>89</sup> These difficulties constituted an inherent weakness in the overall organisation of volunteer units should an invasion have occurred. To overcome this, administrative battalions were created. These were paper organisations intended to facilitate the assembly of a battalion from scattered units, should an invasion have occurred. There was a regimental commander and staff, there were known rendezvous points and plans for mobilisation. The policy ensured that there was uniformity of drill training and words of command. It was nonetheless, an administrative scheme and except in an emergency or when annual training took place, the commandant served only as an administrator, since he had no effective battalion. In Bedfordshire, where two such battalions were formed, there was no consultation with company commanders. Captain Rugely was informed in November 1803, by the Clerk to the Justice, that the Potton Company now formed part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bedfordshire Administrative Battalion which was comprised of fifteen companies, from a wide area of the county, and was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Pym.<sup>90</sup> (Map 5)

In the third movement corps were small. The Newcastle battalion was a five-company battalion of 250 men. Leeds mustered 100 men and Cheshire 400 infantry.

To resume, a much greater attempt on the part of the War Office and the Duke of York was made to organise the second movement and turn it into a military force which between 1803 and 1805 might well have been needed to repulse invaders.



Unfortunately there was no command structure and no staff for this purpose. The evidence suggested that despite legislation the government had to rely on the zeal of its lords lieutenant and the commandants of corps to produce plans for efficient organisations. This reliance was not well founded considering the indolence of Uxbridge and the need of commandants to return the greatest number of efficient monthly. Burgoyne writing of 1803 claimed that many of the London Volunteer companies existed on paper only.<sup>91</sup> Even had these difficulties been overcome, two factors would have hindered the movement from becoming an effective military force.

The varying terms of service offered by movements and the civilian attitudes of the men.

The details outlined above have dealt with external organisational factors and how far they were successful in transforming the first two movements into efficient military forces.

Whatever intentions the government and the commander in chief may have had as regards the organisation and control of the volunteer infantry movement, the real control in both movements was always exercised at corps level. The organisational framework of associations in the first two movements; name, size, establishment, rules, subscriptions was decided at inaugural meetings. During the course of the meetings, officers and NCOs were elected after which company committees were formed. Once the corps had been sworn in the elected committee assumed control, and it was the committee in both volunteer infantry movements which became the main unit of organisation and control. There is no evidence in the records or the literature to indicate how or why this unusual, democratic practice arose in the volunteer infantry and the yeomanry. Writing about the Warrington Volunteers, Vincent has drawn attention to those he called peasant entrepreneurs, men who formed a considerable proportion of both the movements raised in the town.<sup>92</sup> These were small, self-made businessmen who became self-supporting volunteers, able to equip them selves and pay subscriptions. These men Vincent, has claimed, were radical by inclination. Speculation might suggest that men with a radical outlook, used to managing their own business affairs, and having a financial interest in the companies may well have demanded a voice in their own movements, more especially if contracts for supplies were to be awarded.

It was this democratic aspect of the volunteer movement which attracted the notice of detractors of the volunteer infantry. William Cobbett, an ex-soldier, who had been imprisoned for his radical views condemned the volunteer infantry as being,

'too republican and democratical'.<sup>93</sup>

The election of officers to high rank outraged the army but what appalled ministers was the power invested in the volunteer company committees. Committees had an emotive meaning at that period. Committees were formed by sailors who mutinied in 1795 and the French Revolution was notorious for its committees. It is plausible to suggest therefore, committees were feared by the authorities for whom anything democratic could be equated with revolution. It is notable however, that the elected troop committees in the yeomanry were not criticised in the same way, which indicated the differing perception society and government had of the two movements even though in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, the social composition of the ranks in the two movements was not very different.

The powers of the committees were such that Major Fletcher was able to assemble his men in 1800, should they have been required, to subdue the mob, only 'by permission of the committee'.<sup>94</sup>

In 1795 the Dumfries Volunteers elected a committee composed of eight men and all the officers: every three months the eight rankers were replaced with another elected eight men.<sup>95</sup>

The Stockport Volunteer Rifles, in 1803, adopted a similar practice.<sup>96</sup> The Hanley Volunteers and the Newcastle Corps, in 1803, followed the practice of the first movement and elected eight men for six months who with the officers were the committee. This appeared to have been altered later because in 1798 there were six elected men on the committee.<sup>97</sup>

The function which demonstrated most clearly the powers of the committees was their role in enacting, amending and enforcing company rules and regulations which controlled every aspect of company life. The Hanley committee declared that the rules and regulations were binding and obligatory on all members. The rules and regulations came to resemble a contract. Breaking their signed contract rendered persistent offenders in the Pentrich Corps liable to be brought before magistrates for sentencing in a civil court.<sup>98</sup>

Usually the most extreme measure a committee took was to expel, with disgrace and ignominy, those who repeatedly broke the rules or were guilty of really serious offences.

Company rules were important since they indicated the misbehaviour and indiscipline with which the movements had to deal in attempting to control civilians in a new, part-time military movement, and by inference the type of men who joined the movement. Equally important were the changes made by committees in the light of experience. The rules of the Newcastle Volunteers promulgated in 1797, for example, contained no rule on drunkenness. In the following year however, the committee promulgated a new rule for those appearing drunk in uniform, for which a fine of 1/0d was imposed.<sup>99</sup> There were similarities in company rules throughout the United Kingdom and it is plausible to argue that this was because those who joined the movements came from similar backgrounds. It is apparent that certain types of misbehaviour and indiscipline in both the yeomanry and the infantry were the same. The rules of the Newcastle Volunteers first promulgated on 5 May 1797 will serve to indicate the type of regulations which governed most corps. The rules ordered that members should parade for military exercises on Tuesday and Fridays at five o'clock in the afternoon except for one day in the month when a general muster or field day would take place at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, notice of which day was 'to be given on the parade prior'. To summon men to exercise the drummer was to parade through the town at half past four with a short beat of the drum. As the church clock struck five he was to change to a long beat. Men were then to assemble and the roll called. Unless volunteers provided a reasonable excuse for absence a fine of sixpence was imposed for those not in place at five o'clock, and sixpence for every subsequent absence. For turning out improperly dressed or equipped a fine of sixpence for each offence was to be levied. Men speaking or laughing whilst at attention were fined sixpence. Officers who offended were to pay double the fine imposed upon privates.<sup>100</sup> A fund was set up on 8 February 1797, by the committee, to purchase substitutes for those members balloted for the militia.<sup>101</sup> In May 1799 the committee agreed to a resolution that anyone wishing to resign should give one month's notice, and on the succeeding field day, state his motives for resigning to the whole company. If the company accepted that his motives were honourable then he should receive an honourable discharge.

If the company decided his motives were not honourable the man was to be given one month to consider. Should a volunteer proceed 'contrary to sense' his name was to be struck publicly from the roll by the drummer and the man was to be subjected to such disgrace as the company thought fit.<sup>102</sup> Disgrace of this kind in small communities could not pass unnoticed, and as membership of a corps was equated with respectability, loyalty and patriotism, the result of ignominious expulsion on a man's social standing and on his trade or employment may only be speculated.<sup>103</sup> It is probable that by 1798 initial fervour in Newcastle had worn off and drill was interfering with other activities. The twice weekly parades were abandoned. A general order stated that a muster was now to be held once every six weeks on a Thursday at eleven o'clock. This was in line with Lord Portland's letter which suggested that once trained, men need not assemble so often.<sup>104</sup> On 10 October 1799, a new set of rules was promulgated. These were to be, on pain of expulsion, accepted unconditionally. Under the new rules unexplained absence was now to merit a fine of half-a-crown, officers to pay five shillings. Implicit in this charge is that absenteeism and indiscipline which plagued both voluntary movements had increased. The new rules required all cases of indiscipline to be reported to the sergeant-major and related, on parade, to the assembled corps by the sergeants. The most serious cases of indiscipline were to be considered by the whole corps which would then decide the appropriate sentence including that of expulsion.<sup>105</sup> Two serious disagreements in the Newcastle Corps are recorded in the Aqualate Papers. In 1798 the corps had accepted government aid and at the same time accepted the service of eighty working men dependent solely on their wages for subsistence. In return the corps were required to extend their service to the whole of the Inland Military District which stretched from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire in the north, Leicestershire in the east, Berkshire in the south and Buckinghamshire in the west. In August 1798, the committee of six men and six officers meeting at the Red Lion, Newcastle agreed unanimously to extend the service of the corps to the military district.<sup>106</sup> Discussions over the extension of military service had proved troublesome but if government aid was to be accepted then the corps had no option but to accept. The disagreement stemmed from the original intention and composition of the Newcastle Corps which when formed obviously did not see itself as a national defence movement.<sup>107</sup>

There were resignations but no expulsion is recorded and the resolution to accept the new terms of service was signed by the committee and forwarded to Earl Gower. The incident reflected the clash of two ideologies. The majority of the corps were still the original volunteers, self-supporting, willing to defend property, maintain the peace, loyal but not willing to move beyond the parish boundaries. A third of the corps after 1798 were workmen who were patriotic but totally dependent upon aid. They were willing to march anywhere to fight the invader. The Tamworth Volunteers refused the new terms of service but remained in being. The second dispute concerned working men who had enrolled in 1798. Forty-four men, mostly journeymen potters from Wedgwood's Etruria works, wrote to Major Fletcher in February 1799, and complained that the eleven o'clock parade was inconvenient and diminished their wages. They wrote to Fletcher and asked that the parades begin at three o'clock.<sup>108</sup> In the same bundle of documents, and of similar date, another letter signed by nineteen working men from the same factory condemned the behaviour of those men who on parade laid down their arms. It is plausible to suggest that this was a move to make the committee change parade times. The letter goes on to request the men be dishonourably discharged. If this were not done, said the signatories,

'disaffection will creep in and well meaning men will leave [the corps] in disgust'.<sup>109</sup>

There was no sudden diminution of numbers so it may be assumed that some accommodation was reached. The year 1799 was a bad one for this corps. Lieutenant Kinnersley an original volunteer resigned because he could not in all conscience agree to the new terms of service. James Bourne, William Breeze and Richard Sheard resigned because, they claimed, attending parades interfered with their business. They refuted any suggestion of cowardice, and claimed that disunity has crept in among the corps which has determined many to leave.<sup>110</sup>

In spite of efforts to devise regulations which would cover every eventuality most corps had a catch-all rule, the offence of 'unsoldierly conduct'. This was designed to deal with all those faults and misdemeanours not otherwise specified in the rules. The two main problems facing most commanders were indiscipline and absenteeism. The behaviour expected of a corps was laid down in the regulations but enforcing it often proved difficult. Ideally social rank was thought to be the only way in which control could be maintained in military movements.

Harries Jenkins has said 'the army believed that birth and education were the sole criteria for breeding leaders'.<sup>111</sup> Simon Whitbread and General Fortescue gave it as their opinion that the problems encountered with discipline in the volunteer infantry arose because officers were either lesser magnates or of the same class as the men.<sup>112</sup> The only problem with this assertion was that the yeomanry in Staffordshire suffered from the same problems with discipline and control as the volunteers and they were officered by the elite of the county's nobility and gentry. The normal punishment for the infringement of rules was a fine. Repeated infringements brought heavier fines and eventually expulsion. This was the limit to which the Newcastle Volunteers were prepared to go. The records consulted indicated that indiscipline was worse in the second movement than in the first. The reason for this is probably contained in a note Captain Bent wrote to Sir Thomas Fletcher in 1803. In it he remarked, the composition of the second movement was very different from that of the first in Staffordshire.<sup>113</sup> Bent noted that working men – most of whom may have been reluctant volunteers who, had they not volunteered, would have been directed into the militia – had largely replaced businessmen, professional men and skilled artisans in the ranks. The rules of the neighbouring Sandbach volunteers published in 1804 are interesting because they relate to very serious problems of control. Either they were more honest than the Staffordshire corps or Sandbach men were more difficult to control. The rules which are unique to this research cover offences such as striking a superior officer on parade and gross disobedience, both of which carried a fine of five shillings. The records for February 1804, detailed a long list of men waiting to be brought before a court of enquiry to answer charges of laying down arms on parade, challenging officers and NCOs to fight, drunkenness, fighting in uniform and also on parade. One whole company was charged with being drunk on parade. A court of enquiry was the closest the volunteer came to a courts martial. The Sandbach court was composed of officers only and excluded the commandant. The most serious offenders in the Sandbach Corps were expelled with ignominy and any pay due to them was withheld.<sup>114</sup> Whether the Staffordshire men were more amenable to discipline or easier to control than their rural neighbours twenty miles away is speculative but no record of such behaviour or expulsions are noted in the records of Staffordshire movements.

To conclude, there was much criticism of poor discipline and control, mainly of the second movement. Criticism was made, usually by those who wished to get rid of the volunteers. Concern centred on the great expense of the force which many saw as being militarily useless, and one moreover, which hindered recruitment for the army. The indiscipline of the corps is frequently mentioned but discipline and absenteeism in the volunteers were no worse than any other military force. The problems encountered with indiscipline and absenteeism in the militia were, if anything, worse than those in the volunteers and discipline broke down completely in the army from time to time. It would be wrong therefore, to see the problems of absenteeism and indiscipline in the volunteers as being very different from other land force.

#### **(iv) Finance**

The financing of the volunteer movements has to be dealt with under two headings, grants from the public purse and private subscriptions. When the first and third movements were raised their service was accepted by government on the understanding that they were to be self-supporting. After 1798 grants were made and arms supplied. The second movement raised in 1803, although the recipient of much greater government aid nonetheless, still had to rely on subscriptions for its proper maintenance. When discussing finance a distinction has to be made between grants and pay. All the movements, even those which were self-supporting, were entitled to pay for a specified number of drill days, annual training, inspections and when / if they were called out to aid the civil power. The King thought only the very poorest should actually draw pay, and a number of corps such as the Stockport Rifles refused pay.<sup>115</sup> The records of the Newcastle Corps show, in 1797, between 14 June and 6 October, Major Fletcher attended seven parades for which he was paid 14/0d, Lieutenants Smith and Bent attended one parade between 19 May and 3 November for which they received 2/0d each. Private William Mellor attended twenty-one exercises between 19 May and 3 November for which he received 10/6d, Corporal John Massey attended a similar number during that period for which he received 13/6d.<sup>116</sup> Not only do the accounts show what was paid but they indicated that some officers felt little compulsion to attend parades but accepted pay when they did.

The War Office wrote to Sir Thomas in May 1798 and informed him that the Secretary at War would now issue the requisite warrant for arms according to the establishment which in the case of the Newcastle companies amounted to eighty muskets for the working men newly joined. To speak of companies being self-supporting in Staffordshire was wrong. Most corps contained a mixture. There were those such as the gentlemen in Newcastle who were self-supporting and formed a separate company but there were four battalion companies which required assistance. It is probably true to say that, the very wealthiest corps apart, all associations received and needed government aid. They depended also on public support, money raised by subscription and donations. Berry claimed that by 1798 the people of this country had raised two and a half million pounds to support the various voluntary associations.<sup>117</sup>

It must be concluded, some members of all three movements armed, clothed and equipped themselves, others received varying degrees of support. Funds controlled by the company committee were raised by fines, subscriptions from company members, money donated by manufacturers, the neighbourhood, the county and wealthy magnates, added to which were government grants and pay.

In June 1801 Lord Hobart wrote to the lords lieutenant and informed them that all corps, irrespective of when they were formed, were now entitled to a clothing grant but corps which had not extended service to their military districts were not eligible. The attested or staff sergeant was to be re-clothed annually, all other effectives every three years. These regulations were to remain in force for the second volunteer infantry movement. Corps were to receive the same rates of pay as the army for days of drill, annual exercise, inspections and should they be called out to aid the civil power.<sup>118</sup> The Consolidation Act of 1804 laid down, for all volunteers, irrespective of when a corps was raised, uniform rates of pay, allowances, number of paid training days, annual training days and pay for extra inspection days. It was possible for officers and those who clothed themselves to spend large sums on a uniform, the sets of uniform required of officers depended to some extent on the social standing of a corps, but no officer could hope to equip himself for less than £50.<sup>119</sup>



There was also under the Act provision for the appointment of a paymaster at the War Office with sole responsibility for pay and claims relating to the voluntary movements.

The voluntary movements were criticised not only because they were seen to be of little military value but also because they were expensive. Windham claimed, incorrectly, that the voluntary movements raised in 1803 had cost the Exchequer £5 millions: this figure actually included those sums raised by public subscription.<sup>120</sup> Cox, in his History, put the cost in 1804 to the Exchequer at £2,020,567, a figure comparable with militia costs.<sup>121</sup>

Considerable sums were disbursed by the Exchequer to the voluntary movements raised in 1803. From 20 August 1803 to 24 December 1806, the Sandbach Corps, a small, two-company corps, received £390 for clothing. Between 8 and 24 June 1806, a period of annual training, pay for officers amounted to £167/15/3d and that for the men £398/18/10d. In the year 1803-1804, company captains received £27/10/6d in contingency allowances and £16/5/6d for the repair of arms. This small corps, over a three-year period, if it is assumed annual training took place each year, would have received approximately £20,023.<sup>122</sup> The accounts of the Audley and Betly Volunteers, a Staffordshire movement of 200 commanded by Captain J F F Boughey show that from 1806 to 1810 when the corps was disbanded, the cost to the Treasury in grants to this corps was £1,164/11/7d, and this was a period during which allowances had been severely reduced. Of this sum, £606/13/0d was pay for privates and corporals, the remainder would have been for re-clothing, contingencies and officers pay. The drill sergeant, George Boulton, was paid £127/11/2d. He was not expected to live on this alone, it was normal practice for such men to work at a civilian occupation when not engaged in military duties. The records show also that during a four year period, Ordnance supplied this association with flints, powder and ball.<sup>123</sup> All the movements needed to raise extra funds. Boroughs such as Richmond, Newcastle, Scarborough, and townships such as Wednesbury and Hanley raised and equipped their own corps. The Newcastle Volunteers, raised in 1797, and supported by the town, nonetheless claimed that it had been necessary in each of the four years of its existence to raise £200 in order to survive.

In May 1802, Major Fletcher, during the course of correspondence with the Board of Ordnance over the return of arms, pointed out that of the 200 muskets demanded only eighty had been supplied by Government. The remainder he claimed, belonged to the town of Newcastle and so 'could they have an allowance for them?'<sup>124</sup> A letter from Whitehall 14 march 1794, headed 'General Subscription' made it quite clear that the government thought the volunteers should cost the Treasury as little as possible.<sup>125</sup>

It must be concluded that even with government help, which was never generous, no corps, save the very wealthy could have survived without the continued assistance from their members and the public. Many corps experienced problems with finance and some went to extreme lengths to obtain due payments. The Dumfries Volunteers presented Robert Burns, on his death bed, with a bill of £7/10/0d for his uniform.<sup>126</sup> The accounts of the Newcastle Volunteers indicated the problems faced by large movements. When it was raised a subscription book was opened. By March 1798, £390/3/0d had been subscribed. The audited accounts published in 1802, showed that in the four years of existence the total raised in subscriptions amounted to £828/5/0d. Of the sum total, Sir Thomas Fletcher gave £155, Lord Stafford, £100, Lieutenant Swinnerton, £30, and the other officers, £5, each. If the larger donations are deducted, it can be seen that the total subscribed from other sources was modest. Considering the modest income of this corps it was surprising to find that in 1798 it was decided to recruit a band the cost which amounted to £186/14/6d for uniforms and instruments. To add to the problems of the Newcastle Corps, Bent informed Fletcher in 1799 that subscriptions had fallen off.<sup>127</sup> To recruit a band at a time when the corps was in debt to Heeley's, the gunsmiths for £300/3/6d, appeared to have been irresponsible. They were still in debt in April 1802 after the corps had been disbanded. Heeley's reminded Major Fletcher then that £74/8/4d was still owed which with interest amounted to £82/19/6d.<sup>128</sup>

The second movement raised in 1803 was still dependent upon public and private subscriptions. Nearly 60 per cent of the ranks were filled with men whose only subsistence was what they earned and who could contribute nothing to company funds. It was therefore, a requisite at recruiting meetings that subscription books be opened to fund the new corps.

In August 1803, the villages of Ripley and Butterley in Derbyshire raised £354/1/0d to support a company this sum was increased to £448/16/0d by a subscription from the Duke of Devonshire.<sup>129</sup> The township of Rugeley in Staffordshire pledged itself to raise and equip a corps of 120 men by November 1803, if the government would supply arms. A total of £373/6/6d was raised, which was increased further by a donation of £81/10/0d from Lady Curzon, wife of the commandant. A letter from Captain Curzon to Lord Uxbridge, thanked him for his 'very generous donation'.<sup>130</sup>

At the initial meeting to raise an infantry movement at Burton-on-Trent, £800 was raised this sum was increased to £1,200 within the following week. Sir Thomas Fletcher, now too old and infirm to command the new movement, donated £100 to the funds of the second Newcastle Corps, 'raised in the town of my birth'. A general list was opened at Trentham to support the volunteers in Staffordshire. The Marquis of Stafford and his son Earl Gower each gave £100, Earl Granville, Gower's half-brother, gave £50 and Sir John Heathcote, commandant of the Trentham Yeomanry, gave £25. It was probable that the money collected went to Longton to support a corps of 300 poor volunteers.<sup>131</sup> The third movement was supported by the municipalities of Leeds, Bath and Newcastle. It is not recorded where support for the Cheshire Legion came from. Refusal by government to support the infantry was not unreasonable during a period of financial stringency. Considerable grants had been made in 1817 and 1819 to augment the yeomanry in order to combat rising violence in industrial districts of the country. Not all those who joined the Newcastle corps were men of substance. Apart from the company of gentlemen, there were four battalion companies. When the corps was disbanded in 1823 the men were feasted and given gifts of clothing which suggested that there were poor men in the ranks.

The economic impact of the volunteers affected a much wider section of society than the corps themselves. Peter Mathias has drawn attention to the effects of war on the national economy. He demonstrated how government contracts for weapons, clothing, food, textiles and other raw materials led to the expansion of certain sections of industry such as iron, textiles and agriculture.<sup>132</sup> The enormous numbers of volunteers must be included in these calculations.

The considerable purchasing power of the volunteers from grants and subscriptions benefited and boosted local economies. The opportunity for gain was apparent to local tradesmen when they became aware of the fact that corps would require uniforms, equipment, food and drink. In his History of Derbyshire Cox wrote,

'military fervour produced a harvest for contractors'.<sup>133</sup>

A problem for many committees lay in providing uniforms which would both satisfy the men and not cost too much. The custom of corps was sought assiduously both from local tradesmen and also by London outfitters. A letter from E Scott to Captain M Rugely of Potton, solicited custom for providing the sixty uniforms required for his company. In his letter, Scott mentioned that General Osborne, a deputy-lieutenant, had desired him to use his name. The letter was written from Chicksands Priory, the home of Osborne.<sup>134</sup>

Extravagance and debt have been noted in the first movement there were similar occurrences in 1803. The Stockport Rifles decided to arm themselves with rifles each of which cost almost four times as much as a musket. The bill for £170 could not be met, and an action was commenced against the corps. The problem here was that members not only agreed to serve without pay, furnish their own arms, clothes, accoutrements and ammunition but also to pay a subscription of two guineas or more a year. Some corps fell inextricably into debts they had little hope of paying. On 26 December 1807 Colonel Patton, of the Stafford Volunteers, wrote to Lord Talbot saying that the corps was now £600 in debt with no hope of paying creditors.<sup>135</sup> The third movement was entirely funded by the public. No evidence of subscription lists remain but it is plausible to assume that the wealthy would have been expected to contribute to a force raised to protect property. It is almost certain that the Newcastle Battalion would have benefited from the subscription list opened at the meeting on 29 September 1819, in the Shire Hall Stafford, convened to approve the augmentation of the yeomanry and to raise a volunteer infantry battalion. Both of the first two movements presented advantageous opportunities for pecuniary gain to tradesmen who were also volunteers. In the first Newcastle Company, William Ensor supplied the colours and arranged for the drums to be painted. Lieutenants Cook and Swinnerton supplied the corps with gunpowder, flints, swords and sergeants' pikes.

In the second movement, Sergeant Steele of the Longton Company was a local inn-keeper, known to drink with men after parades.<sup>136</sup> In London, Peter Laurie, a poor Scot and a saddler by trade, joined a local corps although he disliked soldiering. He was able to sell his comrades belts and other leather accoutrements at a discount. From such humble beginnings he went on to secure important government contracts to supply military equipment and ended his days a wealthy man and a Lord Mayor of London.<sup>137</sup>

In conclusion, it is apparent that after 1798 even the most frugal and careful corps could not have survived on government grants alone. There was undoubtedly extravagance amounting to irresponsibility in some corps but this apart, there was still a necessary dependence on the generosity of the public, members of corps and the wealthy in order to meet the gap left between government grants and necessary military expenditure, particularly on uniforms. In the second movement money raised by subscription amounted to almost half the cost of maintaining associations. It must be questioned whether, had there not have been support by the public and private individuals, associations would have been allowed to fail? No record in Staffordshire or any of the other records consulted showed that any corps had disbanded because of lack of finance. Cunningham, writing of the mid-century movement, commented on what appeared to be a crucial factor that once raised associations, whatever their difficulties, showed a remarkable ability to survive.<sup>138</sup> There is a parallel here, since the problems experienced by earlier movements such as the Newcastle Corps, due to lack of money were similar, yet they too showed this power of survival once raised. Many companies nevertheless fell into debt and remained so after they had been disbanded in 1802 and 1810. This placed the burden of support on unfortunate suppliers such as Heeleys. It is possible to argue therefore that the government was willing to exploit the generosity, patriotism and goodwill of the British people without which all but the wealthiest of corps would have ceased to exist. Something which would have gratified critics of the movement such as Windham.

## (v) Membership

It had been the hope of the government when it authorised the volunteer movement in 1794, that those coming forward would be respectable householders, men of property and/or their sons. It was never envisaged that labourers or the working poor should be armed. Where loyal but poor men were recruited, their service was accepted on the understanding that they were to be strictly supervised and controlled by their landlords or employers. Many corps were formed by loyalist clubs. Dickinson has claimed that whilst historians have paid much attention to radical clubs in this period, they have virtually ignored loyalist clubs which he claimed may have numbered over 2,000, in 1793.<sup>139</sup> His examination of the club rolls showed that the membership was significant to the composition of the early volunteer movements. Members included mayors, councillors, JPs, clergymen, farmers, workhouse masters and overseers of the poor, all those who wielded power in the localities. Some of these clubs such as the one in Wednesbury, in 1794 transformed themselves into loyal volunteer companies which provided military movements, ready to protect property, maintain order in the localities, suppress political dissent and support the government. They would also provide limited military support should an invasion occur. This however, was not seen as their primary role. In fact, although loyal to government, and defenders of the Constitution, few in the early movements were prepared to march out of their localities whatever the emergency. This seemed to contradict the loyal and patriotic rhetoric, and raised the question as to whether they were acting only in self-interest?

The units raised between 1794 and 1797, were largely composed of men of property and influence in their neighbourhoods. The Song of St Martin's Volunteers, although light-hearted, lists the type of membership which could be found in most urban areas.<sup>140</sup> They represented the urban, propertied and professional classes which had much to lose had an insurrection occurred or should the French have sailed up the Thames, or the Mersey as the Warrington men believed would happen. There were instances of companies and corps being drawn entirely from a single profession. In Edinburgh, a corps was raised from lawyers which did not function in summer since, as the courts were in recess, the advocates betook themselves to their country houses.<sup>141</sup>

Country town associations provided a mix of the comfortable middle classes in their corps.<sup>142</sup> The Newcastle, Wednesbury and Wolverhampton Associations drew their members from professional and business men, tradesmen, artisans and mechanics. Lieutenants Simms, Kinnersley, Cook and Swinnerton of the Newcastle Corps were respectively, a corn merchant, banker and general merchants. Major Sir Thomas Fletcher, Bt, although a banker, must be counted a gentleman. In the ranks were small master-potters such as Corporal Hamlet Wood, Privates J Bourne, R Sheard and William Breeze. It is likely they served alongside their journeymen employees.<sup>143</sup> In Stafford and Lichfield volunteers were drawn from the professional and business classes along with clerks and rural craftsmen. Membership of the first movement in Staffordshire conformed closely to the national pattern that is, most were men of some substance with something to defend or those in whose best interests it was to join.

The composition of the second movement was different in that the percentage of working men increased and that of the middle orders decreased. In North Yorkshire the ranks were filled with agriculture workers. In the manufacturing districts of Bradford and Sheffield volunteers were operatives in textile and metal trades. In Lancashire and North Cheshire workers in the cotton industry filled the ranks. Derbyshire drew its men from both rural and industrial areas whilst Bedfordshire recruited solely from among agricultural workers and craftsmen.

In Leek, Macclesfield and Congleton silk operatives were recruited into associations.

In Staffordshire the movement raised in 1803 contained twenty-two associations all but two of which were raised in the industrial north of the county. In Hanley, Stoke Longton, Burslem and Newcastle, battalions were raised by pottery manufactures such as James Whitehead, Thomas Adams, John Davenport and Josiah Wedgwood all of whom commanded their movements. A battalion raised in the Moorland Division of Staffordshire was commanded by Col Thomas Wilson who had interests in copper smelting and leather manufacture. Colonel Walter Sneyd who commanded at Stone and Sandon was a gentleman iron-master. Captain John Fenton Fletcher Boughey who commanded at Audley and Betly was, like his father, Sir Thomas Fletcher, a banker. He also served as an MP for Newcastle. In 1803, Dr F H Northen succeeded to the command of the Newcastle battalion. Colonel Sir Robert Lawley, Bt, MP commanded at Tamworth.

Captain George Chetwynd at Berkswich and Captain the Hon H Curzon at Rugely were scions of noble houses.<sup>144</sup> Yorkshire numbered one earl, one baron, two viscounts and nine baronets among its commandants.<sup>145</sup> One fact did emerge, the control of most movements in 1803 remained firmly in the hands of major employers, the gentry and nobility.

Dr F H Northen commanded the Newcastle Battalion raised in 1819. Two of his captains had resigned from the local militia, then in abeyance, to join the new movement. Beyond that, little is known of the officers. Once company was composed of gentlemen carrying rifles the other four were battalion companies which, it must be presumed, were recruited from working men.

Much was made at the time of the loyalty and patriotism of men who came forward, voluntarily, to join military movements in order to defend their country. The two terms, loyalty and patriotism were often used synonymously yet they did not always mean the same thing. A distinction has been made by Newman who saw patriotism as a universal attachment to the country's prestige especially in the context of foreign relations and in regard to military matters.

The French in the eighteenth century, he claimed, came to pair the King with whole of his people in one patriotic entity.<sup>146</sup> There is no reason to think that such feeling was different in Britain. Even among the lower orders there was a reverence for the monarchy.<sup>147</sup> Loyalty, Newman argued, was a group orientated feeling, a very distinctive species of patriotism, dominant under certain conditions. It was possible to equate loyalty between 1794 and 1823 with narrow self-interests such as, the protection of property and the maintenance of order. When the loyalist clubs spoke of loyalty they saw it as protecting the status quo and attacking democracy or any other creed which would erode or destroy privilege. As Newman pointed out however, loyalty for some did not clash with patriotism. The ruling elites tended to see the country as a glorified private estate owned by themselves and their friends and were able to ignore the lower orders and their wants.<sup>148</sup> Loyalty will therefore be taken to mean those who supported government policies insofar as they related to themselves. Patriots were those who for no other reason than love of country wished to defend it and many of those who joined the movements raised between 1794 and 1797 did so to protect their king and country. The oaths the Wednesbury and Newcastle men swore indicated that this was not the reason they had enrolled.<sup>149</sup>



There was no hint of defending the country, the emphasis is on the protection of town and property and support for the government. They claimed to be loyal, but as with most associations, they were not prepared to move outside their parish boundaries. Despite the patriotic rhetoric it was estimated in 1798 that of 84,000 volunteers in England over half had stipulated that they would not march out of their localities in the event of an invasion. Few of the remaining movements were prepared to move beyond their military district. Colley has claimed that at this stage of the war most prosperous Englishmen were more interested in defending their homes and businesses against domestic unrest than against foreign invasion.<sup>150</sup> There are however, mitigating factors. The danger of insurrection was, as has been noted, linked to an invasion and the two were almost synonymous in the minds of elites and property owners. Most people, certainly those living inland, did not think it possible an invasion could occur until Tate's abortive landing in 1797.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that many of those who 'voluntarily' joined the movements between 1794 and 1798 were motivated by self interest. Those who argued that men who defended property, suppressed Radicalism and maintained order were in fact, defending their country failed to explain the refusal of most corps to move beyond their local boundaries even had an invasion occurred.

To resume, most of the early corps were not willing move 'anywhere in the Kingdom' should it be required of them. Most were willing only to defend their own property and localities from internal disorder. Therefore the idea of a coherent, national defence force failed to materialise. The motives of those who joined the second movement had little to do with loyalty. Patriotism was the motive most often ascribed by contemporary commentators to men who enrolled in 1803. Unfortunately the poor left very few documents so their feeling will never be accurately known.<sup>151</sup> Some information is available to gauge the feeling of specific groups towards the prosecution of the war and the threat of invasion. The Acts of 1798 and 1802 required a census of all men between the ages of 16 and 60 and their eligibility and willingness to volunteer. The census of 1802 had to be completed and forms returned to the lords lieutenant within a fortnight. It was therefore carried out in some haste.

The accuracy of the census depended upon the literacy, honesty and bravery of those who carried it out. It is the variation in the reports which casts doubt on the patriotism of the volunteers. In the section of the form left for the constable to list all those willing to volunteer there were statements such as the one from a Brecknockshire parish, 'all the men in this parish are ready and willing to serve'.<sup>152</sup> This must be contrasted with the reports received from Sharnbrook and Tilbrook in Bedfordshire where few or none were noted as being willing to serve.<sup>153</sup>

In the second movement, in contrast with the first movement, on average 22 per cent of men in rural areas volunteered between 1803 and 1804, as against 35 per cent in the industrial regions. Staffordshire for example easily exceeded its quota. More than a third of a million men, the greater proportion in the industrial regions of the country, volunteered between 1803 and 1804.

Can it be assumed that patriotism motivated all these men, more especially those in the industrial conurbations, to join the volunteer force? Patriotism is a difficult concept. It has been suggested above that it was subject to different interpretations by different groups of men. Cunningham writing of the mid-century movements found it difficult to assess.<sup>154</sup>

His was a conclusion particularly apposite when discussing the early movements, especially the second one. The rhetoric apart, it was not readily apparent, that all or most men were motivated by patriotism, in which case, as so many men 'volunteered' there must have been other compelling reasons for their actions.

There is no evidence which indicated Staffordshire landowners forced men to join an infantry movement. Over the border in Derbyshire Sir Henry Harper Crewe, Colonel of the County Yeomanry, expected his former tenants to ride with the yeomanry and his poorer tenants to join infantry corps.<sup>155</sup> In Staffordshire, undoubtedly the greatest influence in 1803 was exerted by the great manufacturers in the pottery industry. There is no hard evidence of coercion, but it may have been prudent for employees of Davenport, Adams, Wilson, Wedgwood and Whitehead to join companies raised and commanded by their employers. Prudence apart, peer pressure influenced men's actions.<sup>156</sup>

At a time when civil liberties had been curtailed respectability was an important issue. Respectable citizens were loyal citizens and the volunteers conferred respectability upon their members. As General Greenfield's letter made clear, respectability was most important.<sup>157</sup> It was prudent therefore to join a company.

In 1802, for the first time in the history of the United Kingdom the government took powers to implement conscription for auxiliary movements. As far as can be ascertained no one in Staffordshire was drafted in to a company. By 1804 more men than were required had volunteered in the County but it was significant there was not a great rush to volunteer in April 1803, despite the threat of invasion. In June 1803, the government made it known that it would use its powers to introduce conscription unless more men volunteered. Most corps in Staffordshire and the surrounding industrial counties were not raised until July and August 1803. It might be plausible to argue that the threat issued by government had some effect since the penalty for refusing to enrol was embodiment in the militia ballot. Exemption from the militia ballot was an immense advantage for the poorest in the community. Artisans, skilled craftsmen, business and professional men could usually afford to pay the fine or purchase a substitute to escape militia service. The poor could not, so they provided the bulk of substitutes. The volunteers provided an easier and more acceptable option for poor men. They could serve with their friends in their own localities and under a much easier regime than that of the army or militia. Their families were not left to fend for themselves or rely on assistance from the Poor Law. It was not surprising therefore, to find that in both movements men enrolled simply to escape the ballot (or doing anything at all). Once enrolled these men took no further parts in volunteer activities. A War Office Circular of 6 June 1801 warned all commandants,

'people have joined the Volunteer Corps with a view to avail themselves of exemption from the ballot, as soon as the ballot is taken, they withdrew themselves.

This must be stopped! The Act 39 Geo.3, cap.14, must be strictly obeyed'.

All commandments would have been well aware of this but as numbers on the nominal role decided the income a company received many took little action to stop the abuse.

It must be concluded therefore, that pragmatism and not patriotism was the main reason why many joined the volunteers. This does not mean that they were necessarily poor soldiers or would not have fought well but it does cast doubt on the voluntary nature of the second movement in particular.

There were also in the ranks those, more so in the first movement who could have afforded to purchase a militia substitute or pay the £10 fine for not enrolling. What motivated such men to voluntarily join a military movement? Nairn has argued that in Britain there was a virulent anti-French feeling in the populace. He has claimed this acted as a cohesive factor which motivated all, regardless of class, to resist the French.<sup>158</sup> Undoubtedly there was much anti-French feeling in the country. A series of cartoons by Gillray which enjoyed a wide circulation lampooned the reluctant, conscripted French soldier, extolled the British, and depicted the horrors of a French occupation.<sup>159</sup> How far these reflected the attitudes of the average volunteer will never be known. Thompson has said that the volunteers in Yorkshire were resentful because their precious free time was taken up drill and the women of Northwich resented their men being volunteers. A popular broad sheet from Newcastle upon Tyne appeared to support Nairn's views in its violent language.<sup>160</sup> This, taken at face value, undoubtedly supported Nairn's assertion, as well as being a patriotic ditty. It may well have revealed a darker side to men's nature and one which may have been a stronger motivator than patriotism.

It was commonplace throughout the nineteenth century to depict the British as a nation of peace-loving John Bulls. The bellicose nations, it was claimed, were all to be found on the other side of the English Channel.<sup>161</sup> This may have been wishful thinking. Colliers in Staffordshire and Newcastle upon Tyne were noted for their rough behaviour. So hardy were the former that a combined force of yeomanry and regular infantry could not defeat them in open conflict during a strike near Bilston in 1822. It might be plausible to argue that men such as these joined up more for the prospect of a fight than any other motivating factor. If the exploits of the Sandbach corps or anything to go by, these volunteers were not very particular as to who they fought, foe or fellow volunteers.<sup>162</sup>

There is a danger of taking the volunteer movements too seriously. Judging from their behaviour, many did not do so themselves. Most corps were resolutely civilian in outlook and appeared determined to remain so. They spent a great deal of time enjoying themselves. Evidence from some of the earlier movements, such as that of Hanley, suggested that some movements were more like exclusive clubs, that is, membership was by election and subscription fees were payable. The concept of the company as a club was understandable at a time when traditional past-times were under threat and in the new conurbations there were few, respectable leisure activities available for most men. The company provided recreational activities, not otherwise available for their members. Much social activity revolved around eating and drinking. It was normal for corps to drink together after parades and drill.

One Cambridgeshire businessman refused to join because he said 'he would acquire such a taste for pleasure and be rendered unfit to earn his living'.<sup>163</sup> Drink was a problem in the army, the militia and in the nation as a whole and it continued to be a problem throughout the nineteenth century as John Burnett showed in 'Plenty and Want'. It was nonetheless acceptable in the volunteers as the accounts of the Newcastle Corps show. In November and December 1798 Captain Bent, on behalf of Major Fletcher, settled bills for 114 gallons of ale consumed by the corps which came to £11/8/0d. Other bills show that in 1800 two guineas were paid by the men for twenty-two gallons of beer and eight guineas for eighty-nine gallons of beer.<sup>164</sup>

There were more formal social occasions such as that in August 1799 when Sir Thomas Fletcher entertained his men and another unnamed corps at Aqualate House. A letter on 12 August from Captain Bent, on behalf of the association, thanked Fletcher for the entertainment the officers and men had received. A sense of relief is discernible in the letter. As Bent said,

'it was all orderly and well conducted'.<sup>165</sup>

In September 1800 Bent wrote to Sir Thomas concerned about an invitation the Newcastle Association had received from the Longton Volunteers to attend a parade when new colours would be presented to the corps. Afterwards there was to be feasting. Bent suggested the invitation be accepted:<sup>166</sup> Bent had reason to be concerned, men on the march were not likely to be awed by their surrounding as they had been at Aqualate. The return march took the corps across the centre of the Pottery District, an area notorious for ale houses and drunkenness. There were many occasions in the life of a volunteer where eating and drinking played a part.

The King's birthday, the birthday of a member of the Royal family, Royal births, the recovery of King George's health, the anniversary of his accession to the throne, important victories, presentation of colours and burials, with full military honours. All these occasions were celebrated with due military ceremonial to be followed by eating and drinking. The volunteers and their bands were much in demand for fetes and public ceremonies. Those corps with wealthy patrons fared better than the more modest associations.<sup>167</sup> In the second movement, possibly because of the threat of invasion and the change in composition of the ranks, there were fewer accounts of feasting and drinking. In this movement, the excitement for poor men of belonging to an organisation which gave them a uniform, a musket, a sense of importance and entertainment cannot be underestimated. The social aspects of volunteering, the entertainment, the eating and drinking, the music and fellowship which for a short period transcended class barriers was therefore an important part of volunteer life. It is unlikely to have attracted men initially but once in the corps it may have had a powerful influence in retaining membership. Its influence, in some cases, lasted after corps had disbanded. Units such as the Warrington Volunteers formed themselves into the Pitt Club with a badge and a place to meet and talk.

The explanation for men's actions so far examined has dealt with patriotism, loyalty, self-interest, coercion, prudence, political influence, gain, social and financial benefits and comradeship. It is not clear that any one of these motivations more than another was attributable to all volunteers.

Linda Colley has argued that fear was the greatest motivator and the threat of a French invasion caused men to volunteer. At the time there was some dispute about the actual danger which threatened. There was a state of alert in coastal areas between 1803 and 1804. The voluntary movements along with the militia were placed on permanent duty for considerable periods. Professional opinion on the other hand, believed that there could be no invasion because of the need for the necessary conjunction of several crucial factors which were unlikely to occur. It was pointed out there needed to be an exact combination of wind and tide to allow the barges to cross in safety and most important of all the powerful Channel Fleet needed to be defeated first.

A letter from Teresa Cholmeley to her son Francis written in October 1803 indicated that fear had subsided in her part of Yorkshire.<sup>168</sup> Ralph Creyke wrote to William Wilberforce in November 1803, in answer to a question about anti-invasion preparations in Yorkshire. Creyke in reply queried whether there was a genuine fear of invasion.<sup>169</sup> It has to be remembered that even when movements were raised in 1803 there were insufficient arms which to ordinary men might have suggested that there was not much need for alarm. Inland the old system of alerting the country by bonfires sited on prominent points, to be lit when invasion occurred, was reintroduced. Even this had its problems. People had to be persuaded, with some difficulty, not to light bonfires on Guy Fawkes night. A system for the mobilisation of voluntary forces existed in Cheshire and Hertfordshire but these appeared to be the work of local magnates such as, Colonel Sir John Leicester and Lord Salisbury. In Staffordshire there were similar plans for the yeomanry but none for the infantry. No corps inland was called out for permanent duty. Life in Staffordshire went on much as usual, there were no overt signs of panic or fear though Colley claimed that fear had spread inland as far as Northamptonshire.<sup>170</sup> This does not carry too much conviction. The experience of France in 1914 and 1940 showed that true fear sent people on to the roads to escape the invaders. If there were a national fear in 1803, and it seemed doubtful there was, it subsided very quickly. There is no evidence that men flocked to join up because of fear. By the end of 1804 men were beginning to leave the voluntary movements and by 1806 moves to end the infantry had begun.

The fear experienced in post-war Britain by property and privilege cannot be dismissed so easily as a motivating factor when the third infantry movement was raised. The manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and south Staffordshire, towns such as Stockport, Macclesfield and Manchester had been disturbed since 1816 by industrial violence and agitation for political reform. The unprecedented size and discipline exercised by those crowds which attended meetings to demand reform frightened local authorities. The meeting in St Peter's Fields held in September 1819 is a good example. Estimates vary but between 60,000 and 100,000 people marched into Manchester, in disciplined formations, behind flags and bands.

It was 'known' that in remote parts of the country men were being drilled by ex-soldiers and militiamen.<sup>171</sup> Rumour was rife.<sup>172</sup> All these factors undoubtedly influenced the authorities in 1819 when it was proposed to raise an infantry battalion at Newcastle. Once permission had been given by Earl Talbot to enrol men, the Mayor of Newcastle, Ralph Clewes issued in October 1819, a poster calling for volunteers and for loyal citizens to sign a public declaration of loyalty. The emotive language employed on the poster was instructive in that it showed the true fears of local authority.<sup>173</sup> The fear underlying the rhetoric was of attack on privilege and the establishment. A similar poster issued at Himley spoke of 'lawless plunderers' which once more indicated the fear of property. There is no evidence to show that the greatest proportion of the population, the workers, the poor, the unemployed, the hungry and destitute were afraid of insurrection. Their fear was of hunger and destitution. If they rioted it was because they had no work, were hungry or had had their wages cut. When violence did erupt the yeomanry and the army were used against the striking colliers and miners of south Staffordshire. It is plausible to argue that these were the people who frightened the property owners and the privileged.

Fear there was, how great is difficult to ascertain. It was confined to those who believed they had something to lose should reformers achieve their goal. Without denying such fears, it is still difficult to understand why the movements were raised. Most counties, as had Staffordshire, augmented their yeomanry in 1817 and 1819, and this movement was the one called out to 'defend' property. It did however, allow the infantry to don uniform and perform safe military rituals in public which may have offered additional comfort to the burgess of Newcastle.

## **CONCLUSION**

The volunteer movements of 1794 and 1803 represented the largest statutory civilian military movement ever raised in Britain. Ostensibly raised for defence, they were never used militarily. The varying terms of service offered by corps, a lack of serious training, a dislike of military attitudes, and alleged indiscipline rendered the force ineffective as national military movement for defence.



In 1798 its main role according to Western was to be an anti-revolutionary force, replacing the militia. This was also to be the role of the small movements raised in 1819. With few exceptions the volunteer infantry were never required to combat serious internal disorder. The one instance recorded in Staffordshire at Wolverhampton was notable in that the corps refused to obey the magistrates. The associations in Staffordshire like most counties offered varying service, some refused to march beyond borough boundaries, some refused to march out of the military district others were prepared to march anywhere the King ordered. Their military activities were concerned with drill and range practice. They did not, as did neighbouring counties, undertake permanent duty. The volunteer movement in Staffordshire, as elsewhere was supported by public and private donations. It also received pay and grants from the Treasury after 1798. The men who joined the volunteers came from a wide cross-section of society. Some, the poorest, joined to escape the militia ballot, some joined because it was prudent, some volunteered to defend King, constitution and country. It is difficult to offer a general explanation. Some were undoubtedly patriots, some were loyal, some were coerced, some were prudent, others such as the Wednesbury Volunteers joined to defend their own property and privilege. It is unlikely that the term volunteer could have been applied to all men.

It was always a civilian movement, it was never inculcated with military values, it was a movement that determinedly went its own way. In spite of government funding it never became a national defence movement, it was never fully under government control. It earned a reputation for democratic and ill-behaviour. This was not always deserved. Certainly they were no worse behaved than other civilian military corps. They were supported by Pitt and over 100 volunteer MPs, they were disliked and attacked by ministers such as Windham. Whenever it was politically expedient, administrations rid themselves of the movement. It appeared that governments were happier with militias.

Between the years 1798 and 1814, governments funded a force they had been reluctant to raise which was rarely if ever used, and one which earned the dislike of politicians. Despite the efforts of the Duke of York it never became a unified, military movement.

On these grounds it is difficult to understand why administrations supported the volunteer movements and expected the public to do so. The first tenable explanation that can be offered was that the movements acted as a cohesive force in war-time, they were an example of men doing their bit for government and people. The Newcastle men paraded and drilled in public, they were highly visible. These were known, respectable citizens apparently supporting government, and there for the protection of the borough. They soon became part of the structure of local government. How far this was purposed policy is unclear. Secondly it was the will of the volunteers, once raised, that sustained the corps in the face of debt and government restriction. Throughout the century men wanted to be volunteers. In uniform and out they were formed what amounted to military clubs which when the need arose were easily transformed into new companies.

The legacy of volunteering is perhaps more important. In 1859 and in 1940 it proved easy to raise volunteers in much the same way as the volunteers of 1794.

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1803. D (W) 1788, P1,B/5.
- 98.Derby County Record Office [DCRO]  
Rules and Obligations of the Pentrich Volunteers, 9 October 1803.  
For men who persistently broke rules or failed to pay fines, there was  
provision for distress of goods or in default, imprisonment for not  
more than one week, at the discretion of a JP.' D.503 B/45.
- 99.SRO: AqP Rules of the Newcastle Volunteers, agreed unanimously on  
parade, Friday 15 May 1797; Regulations for better attendance  
drawn up by the committee, 10 October 1799. D (W) 1788, P1, B/4.
- 100.SRO: AqP Rules of Newcastle Association, November 1797, amendment,  
drunk whilst in uniform, fine 1/0d., officers to pay double.  
D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.
- 101.SRO: AqP Notice from Sir Thomas Fletcher, 8 February 1799. "...any  
member balloted to be allowed the sum , not exceeding ten guineas,  
to raise a substitute. The funds for defraying this cost to be found  
from fines. If this proved insufficient all members to subscribe 2/.6d.  
for the purpose. Members who did not pay their fines before 25  
March next shall not receive the benefit of this fund."  
D (W) 1788, P1. B/6
- 102.SRO: AqP Resolution, agreed unanimously by the Newcastle Corps 20  
May 1799, "...one months notice of resignation to be given to the  
whole corps, on a field day, with the motives for wishing to resign."  
D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.
- 103.SRO: AqP Derbyshire Mercury, Court of Enquiry, Derby, November 1798.  
'Charles and Francis Brentnal to be expelled from the volunteer  
corps at Derby....with that degree of disgrace which must attach to  
men who have declined a duty they had engaged to perform.'  
D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.
- 104.SRO: AqP Portland, Whitehall to the Marquis of Stafford, 15 January 1798:  
'...exercise days to be reduced.'  
D (W) 1788, P1, B/6.
- 105.SRO: AqP New Rules of the Newcastle Volunteers, 10 October 1799.  
D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.

- 106.SRO: AqP Service of Newcastle Volunteers extended to the Military District, agreed by the Committee 25 August 1801. "....anyone receding from such an agreement must be deemed as being improper and dishonourable and any volunteer who did not attend the next parade on 3 September would be accorded disgraceful expulsion." D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.
- 107.SRO: AqP Resolution by some volunteers of the Newcastle Volunteers, 23 March 1788: '....refusal to march out of Newcastle as proposed by Lord Dundas' copies sent to Lord Stafford and to Major Sir Thomas Fletcher. D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.
- 108.SRO: AqP Letter to Sir Thomas Fletcher signed by forty-four journeymen volunteers from Etruria re: parades on Thursday mornings at 11 o'clock. D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.
- 109.SRO: AqP Letter signed by nineteen journeymen volunteers from Etruria protesting at the behaviour of volunteers who laid down their arms on parade. D (W) 1788, P1,B/5.
- 110.SRO: AqP Letters of resignation from J.Bourne and R.Sheard, March & April, 1799. D (W) 1788, P1,B/5.
- 111.Harries-Jenkins.G: The Army in Victorian Society, p17.
- 112.BCRO: Glencross Ms Simon Whitbread – the political nature of command, p84.
- 113.SRO: AqP Bent to Fletcher, 17 May 1803, "....existing members (volunteers) will not extend their service, better to raise a new corps from men in a more dependent station." D (W) 1788, P56, B/18.
- 114.CCRO: Sandbach and Rode Heath Volunteers, Court of Enquiry, February 1804. DJW, 1/111-113.
- 115.CCRO: Stockport Rifles, Record Book, 14 August 1803. DDX 311/1.
- 116.SRO: AqP Pay Records 1797. D (W) 1788, P1, B/3.
- 117.BCRO: Berry.P: History of the Volunteer Infantry, London, 1903, in Glencross Ms p69.
- 118.SRO: PP Hobart to Uxbridge, 6 June 1801. D.603/0/2/21.
- 119.Beckett.I.F.W: The Amateur Military Tradition, p107.
- 120.Beckett.I.F.W: The Amateur Military Tradition, p107.

- 121.Cox.J.C: Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals, p200.
- 122.CCRO: Returns and Accounts – Sandbach and Rode Heath Volunteers: 24 December 1803 - 24 December 1804 and 20 August to 24 December 1806. DJW 1/112.
- 123.SRO: AqP Accounts Audley and Betley Volunteers: 1804, 1805, 1808, 1809 and May - November 1810.  
D (W) 1788, P56, B/23.
- 124.SRO: AqP Fletcher to Board of Ordnance, 10 May 1802,  
D (W) 1788, P1, B/4a.
- 125.NYRO: Whitehall – General Subscription 14 March 1794.  
'....it seems generally desirable a general subscription should be opened to be applied under the direction of a Committee for the purpose of assisting in carrying into Execution all or any of the measures therein suggested.' ZFW 7/2/87/9.
- 126.MacKay,J.B: 'The Royal Dumfries Volunteers', in The Military Chest, p30.
- 127.SRO: AqP Accounts, Newcastle Volunteers, April 1802,  
D (W) 1788, P1, B4 : and Bent to Fletcher, 22 May 1799.  
D (W) 1788, P56, B/6.
- 128.SRO: AqP Heeley's, Gunsmiths, to Fletcher, 13 June 1802, ".....required payment as they were much distressed for want of money."  
D (W) 1788, P1, B/4.
- 129..DCRO: Pentrich Volunteers – Subscription List, August 1803. D.503, B/45..
- 130.SRO: PP Rugely Subscription List, 3 November 1803. D.603/0/2/26.
- 131.SRO: PP Trentham Subscriptions, 3 September 1803, D.603/0/2/26.
132. Mathias.P: The First Industrial Nation, (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) London, 1963, pp40-43,206-207.
- 133.Cox.J.C: Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals, pp200-203.
- 134.BCRO: H.E. Scott to Captain Rugely, 4 September 1803. X 202/101.
- 135.SRO: PP Col.Patton, Stafford Volunteers, to Earl Talbot, 20 December 1807,  
D.603/0/2/31.
- 136.SRO: AqP Accounts, Newcastle Volunteers, April 1802.  
D (W) 1788, P1, B/4.
- 137.Guildhall Library, London, Peter Laurie, Ms 20, 334, fol 17, in Colley.L:  
Britons, pp301-302.

- 138.Cunningham.H: The Volunteer Force, p153.
- 139.Dickinson.H.T: 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism' in Dickinson. H.T: (ed) Britain and the French Revolution, pp110-118.
- 140.Colley.L: 'Whose Nation: Class and Class Consciousness in Britain, 1750-1830' in Past and Present N<sup>o</sup> 113, November 1986, p108.
- 141.Abbotsford Ms Vol 872, fol 79-80, note 1, in Western.J.R: 'The Volunteers as an Anti-Revolutionary Force', p613.
- 142.Cookson.J.E: Patriotism and Structure: the Ely Volunteers, 1798-1808 (unpublished) in Colley.L: Britons, p288.
- 143.SRO: AqP Newcastle Volunteers, Records,1798-1799, D (W) 1788, P1, B/4-5.
- 144.StAd: Military Forces in Staffordshire, list of Volunteer Commandants, p29.
- 145.NYRO: Ashcroft.M.Y: To Escape the Monster's Clutches, Commandants in North Yorkshire, pp80-83.
- 146.Newman.G: The Rise of English Nationalism, London, 1987, pp52-54,162.
- 147.Colley.L: 'Whose Nation,' "....the only National Cult that was safe was the Cult of Monarchy", p109.
- 148.Newman.G: The Rise of English Nationalism, p53.
- 149.Journal for Army Historical Research [JAHR]:  
Vol lii, N<sup>o</sup> 212, Winter, 1974. Oath of the Wednesbury Loyal Volunteers:  
"We enrolled for the defence of our King (whom God long preserve), our excellent Constitution, and the protection of the Town and Parish of Wednesbury....to strengthen the hand of government, the security of private property, and the preservation of order in the town and Parish."
- 150.Colley.L: Britons, pp289, 294.
- 151.Wells.R: Insurrection: the British Experience, 1795-1803, Gloucester, 1983.  
"....we know so little about the thousands of ordinary men who formed the second movement it would be idiotic to assume the patriotism of the British masses during the final and most dangerous war with France", p262.
- 152.Colley.L: Britons, p290.
- 153.BCRO: Enrolment and Classification of Men, DD HA 15/2-4.

- 154.Cunningham.H: The Volunteer Movement, "...the patriotism of volunteers has proved to have the quality of vapour; it eludes the grasp. The motives which (appeared to) induce men to volunteer began to appear more complex", p153.
- 155.DCRO: Quartermaster Greaves to Col. Sir Henry Harpur Crewe: Membership of yeomanry and infantry, May-September 1798. D.2375/M/83/8.
- 156.National Library of Wales: Tredegar Ms 396, R..Fothergill to C.Morgan, 6 May 1798, "...two thirds of our men are really volunteers, the rest have signed through influence or fear of being rallied by the rest."
- 157.SRO: AqP General Greenfield to Sir Thomas Fletcher, 7 June 1801, King's Birthday Parade. D (W) 1788, P1, B/4.
- 158.Nairn.T: The Break-up of Britain, pp272-273.
- 159.Gillray.J: 'Consequences of the French Revolution', for Sir John Dalrymple, 1,5,15, March 1798. and 'French Volunteers Marching to the Conquest of Great Britain' for H.Humphrey, 25 October 1803.
- 160.The Pitman's Revenge:  
     'Then to parade the pitmen went,  
     Wi' hearts both stout and strong man,  
     God smash the French we are so strang;  
     We'll shoot them every one man;  
     God smash me sark if I would stick,  
     To tumble them down the pit,  
     as fast as I could thra a coal.'
- in Colley.L: Britons, p303.
- 161.Gillray.J: 'The Blessings of Peace' for The Crown and Anchor Society, 12 January 1795.
- 162.CCRO: Sandbach and Rode Heath Volunteers, Court of Enquiry, 23 February 1804: charges of drunkenness and fighting on parade and whilst in uniform. DJW 1/111-113.
- 163.Hardwicke Papers: Add Ms 35667, fol 52. in Western, 'The Volunteer Movement as an Anti-Revolutionary Force', p606.
- 164.SRO: AqP Payment for ale, December 1798 & August 1801. D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.
- 165.SRO: AqP Bent to Fletcher, 12 August 1799. D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.
- 166.SRO: AqP Bent to Fletcher, 7 September 1801. D (W) 1788, P1, B/5.

- 167.BCRO: Busby.J.H: 'Local Military Forces in Hertfordshire', pp16,17. X550/18/47/10.
- 168.NYRO: Ashcroft.M.Y: To Escape the Monster's Clutches, Teresa Ann Cholmeley to Francis Cholmeley, 23 October 1803, "....feel more comfortable about the French. Mr. Hawley's letter was very consoling. He says all the best naval officers think invasion impracticable. I wonder this should not have been found out sooner", p72.
- 169.NYRO: The Correspondence of William Wilberforce, Vol 1, London, 1840, p288, in Ashcroft.M.Y: To Escape the Monster's Clutches.
- 170.Tibble.J.W & A: (eds) The Prose of John Clare, London, 1951, '....people even listened at intervals to fancy they heard the French rebels in Northampton knocking it down with their cannon', p51.
- 171.Gash.N: 'After Waterloo,' in Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol 28, 1978, pp150-151.
- 172.Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Yeomanry Cavalry, In 1817 troops and yeomanry was brought into Manchester because rumour had it that there was to be a general uprising.
- The evidence was never substantiated, no one was charged, nothing happened, pp55-56. see also P.G.C. Webster:
- The Records, '....it was known that 10,000 men were being drilled in Northumberland', p40.
- 173.SRO: AqP Poster, Newcastle, October 1819: D (W) 1788, P2, B/1.
- "In this present eventful crisis when every device that perverted ingenuity and systematic malice can employ is industriously directed to demoralise and deprave the minds of Englishmen and lead them to the denunciation of Religion, the overthrow of Lawful Government, and the open violation of the Laws, Liberties and peace of Empire.
- We most seriously deplore the dissemination of Blasphemy and Sedition, which by gross abuse of the Press has of late carried on in a manner and to an extent most alarming....we call upon every well-wisher to exert his means of influence and authority to stop the progress of this mighty Evil which seems calculated and intended to overwhelm us in one common deluge".

## THE YEOMANRY CAVALRY 1794-1823

### INTRODUCTION

The yeomanry, a term not used previously, was one of two voluntary movements raised under the Act of 1794. This movement varied in its composition. Derbyshire raised three troops, Bedfordshire, three and North Yorkshire four, all of them autonomous, mounted troops. In Staffordshire a five-troop regiment was raised. The yeomanry was raised, ostensibly, to defend the country from a French invasion. The reality was different; the cavalry saw its purpose as protecting the localities from the depredations of dissentients, encouraged by the example of the French. In the main, though not wholly, it was a county movement since men were supposed to own or have easy access to a horse. They were, like the infantry, subject to the control of the lord lieutenant.

There are certain misconceptions about this mounted movement which need to be examined. Emsley, for example has claimed that the cavalry was drawn from the propertied classes, men who owned horses and were able to equip themselves in the manner of a cavalry corps.<sup>1</sup> Most of the early troops were raised by county magnates, and the greater gentry and it was they who officered and commanded the cavalry. Some troopers, however, were poor tenant farmers, and whilst it remained essentially a county movement, cavalry troops were raised in urban areas such as Stockport, Macclesfield and Manchester by employers and tradesmen rode in the ranks. In Staffordshire at least two urban troops, those of Hanley and Burton, were raised in 1797. It is plausible to argue therefore, the social class of some early troops was not very different from that of the infantry nor was it a movement confined solely to the wealthy.

Most early corps, including the Staffordshire Regiment, entitled themselves 'Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry'. This usage had died out by 1798 and the simple title yeomanry cavalry was used thereafter. The term yeomanry was curious for a force raised by great landowners and men of property for their self-protection.



The enclosure acts, enforced by the greater landowners, had squeezed out the small, independent yeomen and by this period they were a dwindling class. The use of the term was however, significant. Morgan claimed that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was a glorification of a mythical yeoman who, it was said, from Saxon times had been a bulwark against Norman invaders, Kings, courtiers, all who had sought to oppress the poor. To entitle the movement yeomanry, Morgan has claimed was a plea for all landowners to defend property against an internal threat.<sup>2</sup>

This would suggest that all who joined a cavalry troop did so of their own free-will, which was not the case. Great landowners such as Sir Henry Harpur Crewe in Derbyshire, and the Marquis of Stafford required tenants rich and poor to ride in the local troops, in some cases they provided horses for the poorest.<sup>3</sup> Some regiments, including that of Staffordshire, agreed to serve anywhere in the country others refused to move from their military district or even their localities. This made the yeomanry movement as a whole, like the infantry, ineffective as a defence movement. The yeomanry movement was never strictly controlled, regiments and individual troops always retained a good deal of autonomy. It was a much wealthier movement than the infantry; its uniforms were lavish, highly decorative and flamboyant. Most regiments were dressed and equipped according to the taste of the colonels. Some dressed as light dragoons, some as hussars and there was a troop of lancers in Macclesfield. The Staffordshire Regiment, for much of its history dressed, armed and equipped themselves as light dragoons.

The militia and volunteer infantry were disembodied in 1802 when the Peace of Amiens was signed. The government requested the yeomanry to remain in being and offered generous financial aid to those corps which did so. Some, such as the Staffordshire Regiment, chose to remain in being but neighbouring movements in Cheshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Hertfordshire and Worcestershire disbanded. The outbreak of war, and an increased threat of invasion in 1803 resulted in regiments being raised and the augmentation of existing corps.<sup>4</sup> The Staffordshire Regiment doubled the number of its troops from six to twelve.

The yeomanry was the only voluntary movement used widely by government and local authorities during, and after the European wars. Its main function was to serve as *posse comitatus*.

When called out by JPs they proved zealous, if not particularly efficient, in suppressing food riots, combating industrial violence and breaking up political demonstrations. This was to be the main function of the movement until the introduction of county police forces in 1856.

The only military actions of note concerned the Castlemartin Yeomanry which, with the aid of the militia and some local women, defeated an invasion by Tate's Legion Noire, and those regiments in the southern coastal areas which were kept on permanent duty for considerable periods during the invasion scare of 1803-1805.

With the end of the war in 1814 some regiments disbanded but the Staffordshire Yeomanry remained in being, and continued its service until, after 113 years of continuous service, it became part of the Territorial Army in 1907. The Regiment still retained its identity and title although part of the Territorial Army. The Staffordshires served with distinction in the South African War and both world wars though by 1939 they were an armoured car regiment. Today there is still a unit which bears the title of the Staffordshire Yeomanry with headquarters in Stafford.

To conclude, although raised ostensibly as a defence force, its importance was its use as a police force. When troops were raised there was always a stress on their use against insurrection, protection of property and maintenance of order. It was an expensive movement but clearly important both to government and local administrations as a loyal, dependable, armed force to be used against dissent of any kind. It was preferred to the militia and the volunteers by the civil power. How far this preference was justified will be examined in the light of its performance and military efficiency when called out.

The yeomanry received grants and pay from the Exchequer but it also made considerable financial demands upon its members and the public. Why there was such a measure of support from the public is a question to be explored.<sup>5</sup> It is important, in the light of the service expected of yeomen, to note who actually joined the movement and why. The nobility and gentry were well represented in all ranks of the corps as were prosperous farmers, businessmen and manufacturers. Poorer men were also represented in the ranks; in Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Manchester, Staffordshire and Stockport tradesmen and skilled craftsmen rode with the corps.<sup>6</sup> One of the great problems for the movement were the numbers of men who joined but who were too poor to own a horse.<sup>7</sup>

The emphasis placed on loyalty and patriotism when the motivation of volunteer infantry was being explained was not so evident in the case of the yeomanry. Most yeomen joined to defend property and suppress Radical activities which threatened the privileges enjoyed by property. It was alleged by Edward Thompson that a hatred of the lower orders motivated small businessmen to join the Manchester Yeomanry.<sup>8</sup> It was apparent that landlords expected their tenants to ride with their local troops. Evidence will show that these were often reluctant 'volunteers.' The cavalry had always been represented as being a superior corps as far as the social class of its members was concerned, and as such, the yeomanry may have served as an attractive, military pastime for members of county society or those who aspired to become part of it. Unlike membership of the militia or volunteer infantry, membership of the yeomanry conferred a social cachet upon its members which meant that some, who would not otherwise have been received in the best houses or at court, were as yeomen, considered presentable.<sup>9</sup>

Control of a military movement was important. It always lay with elites, the lords lieutenant, nobility, gentry, JPs, landowners and wealthy manufacturers who raised, commanded and officered the movement. No evidence has come to light of working men raising or officered yeomanry troops. It was unlikely that the elites would have relinquished the political power conferred by control of such a powerful force to lesser men.

(i) **Raising the Yeomanry 1794-1823**

The Volunteer Act of 1794 authorised the lords lieutenant to accept the services of volunteer cavalry and infantry, with exemption from the ballot.<sup>10</sup> Captain Webster Adjutant, of the Staffordshire Regiment of Yeomanry, claimed it was Arthur Young who persuaded Pitt to introduce the necessary legislation for raising cavalry troops. In Essay 129, *The Annals of Agriculture*, Young postulated the necessity, on the grounds of national safety, of a yeomanry movement.<sup>11</sup>

The county movements accepted for service in 1794 were troops of horsemen which should, according to the Plan of Augmentation of the Forces for Internal Defence, have numbered not less than fifty and not more than eighty.<sup>12</sup> North Yorkshire raised four troops, each of fifty-four officers and men, Cheshire raised six troops numbering 336 officers and men. Lord Salisbury raised six troops each of fifty men. Staffordshire raised a five troop regiment of 300 men in 1794. There were also two additional, autonomous troops at Tamworth and Burton-on-Trent. By the end of 1794, thirty-two cavalry corps were listed in the United Kingdom.

The Act of 1794 saw the yeomanry as part of the defence force of the Kingdom. It was quite clear however, the yeomen themselves saw their main duty as protecting their county and property, which meant maintaining civil peace. Newman has pointed out this did not mean there was a necessary difference in aims, since for the elites defending property was defending the country.<sup>13</sup> The impetus for raising the yeomanry came from the upper classes rather than from the force of legislation. In October 1795, the Lord Lieutenant, Earl Gower, Colonel Commandant of the Staffordshire Regiment, made this quite clear, in a speech thanking his wife for presenting standards to the Lichfield, Newcastle and Stafford Troops. He reminded his audience why they had enrolled last year. It was, he said,

‘in defence of property and in support of our nation’.<sup>14</sup>

Even those corps which agreed to move anywhere in the country were not allowed by the lords lieutenant to let the whole force depart; one fifth of all corps were always to remain to defend the county. Some such as the Somerset and Hertfordshire yeomanry declined under any circumstances to serve out of the county.

A further, recurring problem, and one which occasioned some doubt as to the selfless service of the various corps was harvest time. Whatever the circumstances no regiment drilled, exercised or undertook annual training during harvest-time. Lord Somerville of the West Somerset Corps stated quite explicitly in June 1794, that he would exercise his men at times, 'only as will not interfere with the Harvest of Hay and Corn'.<sup>15</sup> He claimed this safeguarded the private interests of his men by 'protecting property and not injuring it'. The Act of 1796 legislated for a supplementary militia and a force of constitutional cavalry (mounted militia).<sup>16</sup> It was a piece of legislation which must have raised doubts as to the role of the yeomanry, and how much government valued the movement, since the proposed force would have replaced the voluntary cavalry had it succeeded. The Act was never fully implemented since it proved difficult to implement, and the legislation simply caused a rush to join the yeomanry since it was believed, quite correctly, that if the yeomanry increased its numbers the provisional cavalry could not be raised. Six regiments of provisional cavalry had been raised by 1798 but by 1800 the scheme had been abandoned, those regiments not incorporated into yeomanry corps were disbanded. Although the scheme had failed it meant that some yeomanry regiments were augmented by elements of the provisional cavalry. One return in the yeomanry papers of Staffordshire lists the cavalry as 'Provisional' which suggested that the regiment received some extra troopers from disbanded units.

The act of 1798 was designed by government ostensibly to strengthen the defence of the country. Henry Dundas urged upon lords lieutenant the formation of further voluntary corps. His detailed letter to the lords lieutenant pressed strongly for the formation of extra corps.<sup>17</sup> He insisted that none but the most respectable should be enrolled. As a rider he added, 'cavalry troops raised in town should have their service restricted to those towns and if required the government would supply arms'.

In 1800, after the augmentations, the yeomanry force in the United Kingdom stood at 30,000 men, compared with 100,000 volunteer infantry.

To resume, the first yeomanry movement was small. Most regiments numbered little more than 300 men. Government displayed some ambivalence in their attitude towards the cavalry by trying to raise a mounted militia between 1797 and 1799. The yeomanry and county elites proved strong enough to thwart government intentions. It seemed clear from statements by colonels, such as Earl Gower, that the yeomanry saw its role as protecting property and suppressing disorder of any kind though they were ostensibly part of the auxiliary defence forces of the United Kingdom. Its behaviour demonstrated that it was prepared to limit its military activities, should these interfere too much with normal life. Unlike the volunteer infantry, some yeomanry units did not appear to have been so keen to remain in being. Once the Peace of Amiens was signed, many regiments disbanded, although not that of Staffordshire.

At the onset of hostilities in 1803 regiments which had disbanded in 1802 reformed and the whole movement was augmented. Government could, had it been necessary, have directed men into the cavalry under the provisions of the 1802 Act. It seemed however, that they did not wish to risk another fiasco such as happened when they attempted to raise provisional cavalry. They asked for volunteers before taking any harsher action. An explanatory circular dated 30 July 1803, made this clear.<sup>18</sup> The numbers needed to augment the cavalry troops appeared to have been found without any trouble, and no evidence has been found which indicated men were directed into the corps. There were tenants riding in the troops raised by landlords, these were directed, but not by government, and had they refused service, they would have been subject not only to the wrath of their landlords but also to the militia ballot.

In 1803 the Staffordshire Corps was augmented by two additional troops which raised its strength to 467 men. By 1804 numbers had increased once more the regiment now had eight troops of eighty-three men and twenty-four officers. In addition there were, until 1813, two independent troops in the county.<sup>19</sup> The augmentation of yeomanry regiments was not an orderly process. The confusion described in Chapter III which attended the raising of the infantry was present when the yeomanry was augmented.<sup>20</sup>

The Hertfordshire Regiment, re-formed in 1803, now had eight troops plus a troop of horse artillery and numbered 567 men.<sup>21</sup> Cheshire raised two regiments, a total of fourteen troops and 732 men.<sup>22</sup> Derbyshire remained a small movement, in 1805 it had six troops and 330 men.<sup>23</sup> The Ridings of Yorkshire which included Durham raised between them 21 troops numbering 1146 men.<sup>24</sup> In 1803 the cavalry numbered 31,000 men.<sup>25</sup>

In 1806 Pitt died and the new Secretary for War, William Windham, applied the same financial restrictions to the cavalry as he did to the infantry. It appeared that he disapproved of voluntary movements in general. In 1808, Castlereagh restored most of the allowances to the yeomanry. There was a call by government, in that year, for all volunteers, infantry and cavalry, to transfer to the Local Militia. No evidence has been found in the records of Cheshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Hertfordshire or Staffordshire of any yeomen transferring. The end of the wars brought with it a period of financial stringency in government spending. In 1814, a debate in the Commons on the future of the yeomanry so alarmed Colonel Sir John Leicester, commandant of the Cheshire Regiment, that he wrote to Lord Palmerston to enquire about the government's intentions as regards the Cheshire association. Palmerston was at pains to allay Leicester's fears.<sup>26</sup>

To conclude, the second yeomanry movement was, like the volunteer infantry, augmented in 1803 and its members served under the provisions of the 1802 Act. Most yeomen, however reluctant, were volunteers and there is no evidence that men were directed into the movement under the provisions of the Act. By early 1805 numbers had increased so that it was nearly double the size of the earlier movement but by the end the year numbers had begun to decline. Coastal corps were embodied for considerable periods between 1803 and 1804 and the experience gained from this continuous service served as a justification for annual training schedules to be introduced for the whole movement. Pressure was exerted by the Officer Commanding the Inland District, General Maitland, to make corps undertake annual training to improve their efficiency.

This was important since, unlike the infantry, the yeomanry formed part of an integrated strategy of action for the Inland District should invasion have occurred. It was also a sensible arrangement since, as a mounted force, they could have been mustered and moved about the country far more quickly and easily than infantry.

The post-war movement was smaller, some regiments disbanded and most decreased in size because interest and enthusiasm waned. The greatest influence on the condition of the yeomanry post-1815, was the financial, political and industrial climate in the country. Those corps which remained had to accept that financial constraints meant any extra finance required would have to be found either from their own pockets or from that section of the public which continued to support them. This restricted recruitment. Whilst government continued to grant allowances to existing movements and pay those troops called out by the civil power, any new troops that were raised attracted no grants and no pay. This restriction applied also to the augmentation of existing troops. In 1816, despite troubles in the eastern counties which required the services of yeomanry, the government halved the clothing allowance, nor would Lord Palmerston promise that this would not be further reduced in any subsequent year. This announcement did not affect the supply of Ordnance arms and accoutrements which continued. It was not until 1817, when the services of the corps were once more much in demand by the civil power in order to maintain internal peace, that government changed its policy and increased grants once more. The change in policy although tardy was undoubtedly due to an increase in political activity post-war by those who wanted the franchise, and industrial protest on the part of those who wanted work and adequate wages. The two forms of protest frequently colluded. When trouble occurred the only local force immediately available to aid the civil powers were the yeomanry.

Peace in 1814 ended an external threat which had lasted longer than most men could remember. There was nothing in its place on which the nation as a whole could focus its attention thus retaining the cohesion of the war years. National unity disappeared, social, industrial and political divisions once more emerged. The situation was exacerbated by poor trading conditions and a slack labour market.



In addition, a third of a million ex-service men had been discharged onto the labour market by 1816 where jobs after 1815, in the industrial regions were increasingly difficult to find.<sup>27</sup> Long service in the armed forces meant that many men found difficulty in settling back into civilian life.

Gash has said that ex-servicemen did not cause agitation or protest but that they influenced the course of events because they had the discipline and knowledge to organise protest.<sup>28</sup> It was an influence which alarmed authorities. It was manifest in the orderly marching of huge crowds behind their banners and bands to protest meetings which showed evidence of military drill and discipline.<sup>29</sup>

Post-war administrations, burdened by war-time debt, were forced to cut expenditure and pursue a policy of cheap government. Auxiliary movements were reduced or disembodied, numbers in the armed forces were drastically reduced, and wherever possible regiments were sent abroad.

In the immediate post-war years there was a strong demand by the middle orders, manufacturers and tradesmen as well as working men, for reform, since they all held the government responsible for the economic and social ills which beset the country from 1815 onwards. Prosperous manufacturers in the Pottery District believed an extension of the franchise would cure the damage caused by government mismanagement.<sup>30</sup> The change of mood which so alarmed the government was apparent in the way protest was now carried out. Petitioning was nothing new but when the Blanketeers, all members of Manchester's political clubs, set out in March 1817 to walk to London, they carried with them, not a petition, but a demand for political reform. The actions of government and the civil power showed they wanted a return to the pre-war status quo, and chose to treat any protests, whether they were violent or peaceful, as traitorous conspiracies and threats to national order. Most events, however peaceful, were attended by the yeomanry.

Once it became apparent that agitation was likely to incur government wrath, and that the military would be invoked, the middle orders in Staffordshire withdrew from any form of active protest which left the struggle for reform to working men.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time as campaign for political representation was being mounted, there was agitation for industrial reform. Industrial peace had reigned in most areas of the country since, according to Thompson, Radical activity had been forced underground in 1800. Industrial violence erupted once again in 1811 when there were cases of machine breaking in Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. In 1812 there was serious industrial violence in Stockport, Manchester, Macclesfield and in the Midlands because of wage-cuts, unemployment and short-time working. Unrest was nothing new but it was the careful organisation of this unrest and the size and organisation of protest meetings which frightened government. Thomis and Holt say that although protest was well organised and orchestrated it was local and there was no evidence to suggest any national co-ordination of violence and unrest.<sup>32</sup> It was moreover, often difficult to discern the differences between political and industrial unrest and food riots. All forms of agitation demanded government reform or intervention. Staffordshire, unlike the east midlands, the north and the textile areas during the period 1815-1820 experienced no political violence and few incidents of industrial unrest were reported. The County remained relatively calm until 1820 when severe outbreaks of industrial strife occurred in the southern coalfields.

A very real fear of revolution was entertained by government, the civil power, county elites and respectable people. The attack on the Prince Regent as he returned from opening Parliament in January 1817 confirmed the fears of many that revolutionaries were active. Thomas Henry, Lord Stafford's man of business, wrote to James Loch, the factor at Trentham in Staffordshire, to inform him of the event and to warn him that the lower orders were now the enemy of respectable society.<sup>33</sup>

In 1816 thirty-six prominent manufacturers and magistrates from Stockport wrote to Lord Palmerston to express their fears about the general state of the country and lament the deep divisions which existed in manufacturing society. They hoped for continued government support for the yeomanry since the force would afford protection not only against a foreign foe but also the domestic foes which threatened riot and disorder.<sup>34</sup>

To conclude, government financial support for the yeomanry decreased between 1815 and 1817. Ministers welcomed and praised the services rendered by the movements which had been in action during 1811 and 1812 but were not prepared to offer more than minimal finance to a movement some thought unnecessary. Those corps, such as the Cheshires and Staffordshires, which remained in being were forced to raise the extra funds necessary just to support existing numbers. The government was content to leave a major part of yeomanry support to the generosity of the public and the purses of the yeomen. It was not until 1817 when increased political and industrial unrest grew, in addition to a perception that revolution was imminent, that there was a reversal of government policy. From 1817 a limited expansion of the corps was allowed and in 1819 full government grants were restored to support new troops. Public attitudes changed also: yeomanry in Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire found it easier, in the climate of unrest, to raise considerable sums from public subscription lists for their support.

In the Inland Area the results of the change in government policy first occurred in 1817. On 5 July 1817, Lord Sidmouth approved a proposal by the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire to augment the County Regiment. Thirty-four men were added to the Calke, Chesterfield, Chadderton and Derby Troops.<sup>35</sup> This meant that each man would now receive a full clothing and contingency allowance, and pay should they be called out. In 1817 Lord Sidmouth informed Earl Talbot that government was prepared to accept a troop of yeomanry raised in Newcastle-under-Lyme by William Kinnersley.<sup>36</sup> In 1819 government reversed its earlier policy of refusing to allow clothing grants to be drawn three years in advance as it had done in war-time. The events in Manchester and Stockport did not go unnoticed in Staffordshire.

Two new troops were added to the corps in 1817 which made it a ten-troop regiment.

A further two troops were added in 1819 after a County meeting at Stafford approved a proposal to augment the regiment because of the serious situation in the country.<sup>37</sup> The Staffordshire Yeomanry then became a twelve troop regiment which numbered 838 troopers and thirty-three officers and made it one of the larger movements. This was the peak of enrolment after which numbers gradually declined. In 1821 the returns for December listed 821 rank and file. During a combined field day held in 1824 for corps in the inland area Earl de Grey noted that the Staffordshire Regiment although it had a nominal roll of 600 men, only 500 were present.<sup>38</sup>

To conclude, the yeomanry suffered from cuts in government funding from 1814 to 1817 although government and many local authorities appeared to want the force. Prominent citizens in Stockport petitioned for government support for the corps as early as 1816.<sup>39</sup> For those corps which remained in being after 1814 with only limited support from the public purse, it was left to the public and the yeomen themselves to raise extra funds for their maintenance. Unfortunately for the movement, the period between 1814 and 1817 was a time of relative peace internally, so the yeomanry was not greatly in demand as a peace-keeper, which accounted for a lack of public support. When political and industrial agitation commenced and unrest erupted in 1817 government grants were restored, public support increased, and by 1819, recruiting for the regiments was being encouraged. Between 1817 and 1819 there was a great increase in the number of yeomen enrolled; during this period a number of regiments reformed; those such as the Staffordshires added extra troops. In 1823 yeomanry returns showed a force of 29,000 officers and men although there was some doubt in the mind of Sir Robert Peel, the Home Secretary, and a Staffordshire yeomanry officer, as to the accuracy of the returns.<sup>40</sup> Whether the numbers returned were exact or not there had been a great increase in numbers overall between 1817 and 1823. Whether the increase was justified remains to be examined.

A few regiments served in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798. Lord Cawdor's troop of Castlemartin Yeomanry was part of the force which forced Tate's invasion force of 1,400 soldiers to surrender. Coastal forces remained on alert during the invasion scare of 1804-1805. These were the only purely military operations undertaken by the yeomanry.

No militia riots were recorded in Staffordshire in 1796 and 1797, but in counties such as Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire, the cavalry was active in quelling militia riots and restoring order thus enabling the ballots to proceed peacefully.<sup>41</sup>

Yeomen were called out to suppress food riots which marked a change in government policy. In the eighteenth century food riots were a manifestation of public discontent and recognised as such. Thompson has claimed that they were a traditional protest against the high cost of bread and food.<sup>42</sup> Prior to 1790 food riots were treated by magistrates with some sympathy and troops or militia were only called out when matters got out of hand. After 1790 government criminalised food riots, on the grounds that they were inspired by Jacobins; this ensured that any rioters convicted faced heavy penalties. Food shortages, the imposition of market forces enabled landowners and forestallers to make large profits which in turn forced up the price of food which caused misery for the poor. Food riots occurred because urban working men had no peaceful recourse with which to redress the situation. They were so hedged about with restraints that riots rather than strikes were inevitable. The justification for turning out armed yeomanry against such riots, the arrest and arraignment of ring-leaders on charges of treason, required a sleight of hand upon the part of government. They relied upon the dubious grounds of a judgment made by Lord Mansfield. He had held that any attempt to change, prejudice or repeal the law by force or by intimidation was levying war against the King and was therefore, high treason. This judgment was later to be enshrined in the Treasonable Practices Act.<sup>43</sup> The government and civil power argued that food riots were inspired by Jacobins; therefore, they were disloyal and treasonable, which necessitated the severest penalties under the criminal law.

The food riots of 1794-1795 and 1800-1801 were sparked off by two very bad harvests.

The situation was exacerbated by the war-time restrictions on grain imports and an increased demand from the military. These factors caused a steep rise in the price of bread, in the seven years between 1793 and 1800 the price of a four pound loaf more than doubled but wages did not keep pace with increased prices. Riots occasioned by unreasonable food prices sought to prevent grain from leaving the countryside for towns or by disrupting food markets. In some outbreaks the grain was sold by rioters at reasonable prices and the money returned to farmers. Very little violence was directed at persons. In 1796 there were outbreaks in Carlisle, Gloucester, Nottingham, Newcastle, Wisbech, Derbyshire, Wales, Devonshire, Bristol and Birmingham. One very small confrontation between yeomanry and rioters was recorded in Staffordshire. On 6 August 1795, at about six in the evening, the Stafford Troop commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Edward Monckton were called to Radford Bridge by Mr Sparrow JP. Accompanied by the magistrate the troop arrived at the bridge where a mob had detained a grain wagon. Mr Sparrow was able to disperse the crowd without calling upon the yeomen. There was no disturbance, no violence and it was not a riot although it was officially classed as one.<sup>44</sup>

The yeomanry was widely praised for its activities.<sup>45</sup> Major Percival Eliot who had largely been instrumental in ensuring a yeomanry force was raised in the county, wrote to Earl Gower in October 1795. In his letter he claimed that the yeomanry had been instrumental in preserving peace in a very difficult period.<sup>46</sup> Eliot expressed fears which went far beyond those which food riots could have caused, especially as Staffordshire had experienced little trouble during 1795-1796. Despite these eulogies Emsley has pointed out that the deployment of cavalry on these occasions further angered hungry crowds who saw farmers and landowners, in uniform, defending their right to profit from the misery of the poor. Their actions allowed grain to be taken from them and sent to the cities.<sup>47</sup> The yeomanry was employed again between 1800 and 1801 to suppress food riots. This was a much graver crisis than the previous occasion. Soup kitchens were set up in Warwick and Bristol during the winters of 1799-1800 and 1800-1801. In Bristol food prices were exorbitant.

It was claimed at the time that a four pound loaf of bread had increased in price by 200 per cent between March 1798 and March 1800. In Birmingham, Pickards Mill in Snow Hill was attacked and the yeomanry was called out. In Staffordshire food prices were high in 1800, not because there was any shortage of food or grain, according to White. He claimed that prices were forced up 'by monopoly and greed'.<sup>48</sup> In September 1800 Captain Keen and the Stafford Troop were called out twice to quell food riots. No details were given but they were serious enough to require the assistance of a troop of 17<sup>th</sup> Dragoons, and was recorded that pistols were used on this occasion during which rioters were wounded, though no deaths are recorded.<sup>49</sup> In Hanley on 3 September 1800, a mob estimated to contain over 1,000 colliers, miners and potters rampaged through the town forcing shop-keepers to sell food at reasonable prices. Mr Sparrow JP was reported to have sent for the militia but it was the Newcastle Troop and a troop of 17<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons which faced the crowd in front of the windmill in the centre of the town. This small force was able to prevent 'any very outrageous acts'.<sup>50</sup> A squadron of the Walsall and Lichfield Troops, commanded by Major Sir Nigel Gresley, was called out to disturbances in Wolverhampton on 11 September and remained on duty until the 15 September, suppressing riot and disturbance in the neighbourhood of Walsall and Wolverhampton. For their services they received a public commendation from the Mayor of Wolverhampton.<sup>51</sup> In the north of the County the Newcastle Troop and the Light Dragoons were constantly on patrol in the Lane End area during September. In all the incidents reported, the Stafford incident excepted, no violence or injury was noted. From 1801 to 1810 the County remained quiet.

It may be concluded that most of services the yeomanry was called upon to perform between 1794 and 1801 had a peaceful outcome. Rude, in the Crowd in History, has claimed that in 1795–1796 of all the food riots which took place in the country only fifteen could be classed as serious and the most serious undoubtedly were those which involved the militia. In 1800–1801 there were just twelve serious riots, of those reported above, two Rude classed as being serious. The Staffordshire Troops appeared to have behaved as well as any other corps called out, but as an armed police movement the mettle of the yeomanry had not been seriously tried.

In three of the incidents noted, regular cavalry was brought out in support of what was still a very new and untried force. At this stage in the confrontations the cavalry usually had an advantage in that they were mounted on heavy horses which were their greatest and most fearsome weapon, provided they were in open surroundings. Demonstrations, although they had a purpose, were usually ad hoc affairs commenced by hungry people and lacked any detailed organisation. These factors contributed to a lack of effective opposition on the part of rioters. There was nonetheless, after 1810, an increase in unrest.<sup>52</sup>

Two factors were responsible for the upsurge in violence. Britain was able to withstand the blockade imposed by Napoleon, largely due to a network of smugglers and the vigilance of the Royal Navy but prices increased, the price of grain, for example, reached 103/0d a quarter in 1810 which caused a steep rise in the price of food generally. Secondly, the policy of the British government towards neutral shipping from 1807 onwards caused relations with America to worsen until war broke out between the two countries in 1812. The American government had, in 1809 introduced the Non Intercourse Act, which forbade trade with Britain. This had a disastrous effect on the textile and pottery industries both of which had established thriving export markets in America. As a result of these actions, the market was permanently damaged for British exporters. A trade recession followed which inevitably caused lay-offs, unemployment and short-time working. In May 1810 there were riots in Birmingham, Dudley and Wolverhampton. On 30 May the Bilston Troop was called out to quell a riot in Wolverhampton Market, colliers and miners on their way to a meeting overturned stalls and forced stall-holders to sell produce at reasonable prices. On 31 May the Teddesley Troop arrived and the squadron was able to suppress the disturbance and arrest the ring-leaders.<sup>53</sup> These were the only incidents noted in Staffordshire after which the county remained peaceful until 1815.

In the neighbouring counties of the Inland Area the yeomanry in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire were called out in 1812 to deal with the Luddite riots, further north the West Riding Yeomanry was involved in the outbreak.



To deal with the riots the Derby, Chaddesdon and Radbourne Troops were called out and remained on duty for several days until relieved by the Scots Greys.<sup>54</sup> During these riots the South Nottinghamshire Yeomanry was on duty for three months. In all the records consulted there appeared to be little actual violence directed against men. In April 1812 the Manchester Mercury reported that a serious depression was affecting the manufacturies of Stockport and Macclesfield, added to which provisions were dear. On 13 April 1812 a mob marched from Stockport to Macclesfield where they broke into shops, threw provisions into the streets, assaulted the gaol and released all the prisoners. The Royal Cumberland Militia, called out, proved unable to suppress the riot and a detachment of Cheshire Yeomanry was called out. They arrived at 4.00pm. The crowd withdrew to the rubbish tip which afforded them safety from whence the troopers were assaulted with stones and brickbats which badly cut and bruised some. At 7.00pm the crowds assembled in the streets once more and the yeomanry attempted to disperse them. This proved both difficult and dangerous in the narrow alleys and streets of Macclesfield. Men perched on walls and buildings showered the riders below with missiles. With some difficulty the rioters were driven out and into the churchyard from which they could not be dislodged. The yeomanry patrolled the town throughout the night, peace was maintained, factories protected and the streets remained quiet. During the clashes with rioters most yeomanry received some injury but two troopers received serious wounds. Alderman Higginbottom suffered a broken arm and Mr Grimsditch received a serious wound to his head from a sabre taken from a yeoman by a rioter. During the night the mob quietly made its way back to Stockport and on the 14 April entered the town. They broke into grocers' shops and great damage was caused in the centre of the town, Edgley Mill was looted, and the owner's house set on fire. It was the timely arrival of the whole Regiment of Cheshire Yeomanry accompanied by detachments from the Scots Greys which prevented the mill from being fired. The mob retired to Cheadle Heath where the following day, in open country, the mob was dispersed by the combined cavalry force, ring-leaders were arrested and escorted to Chester Castle. The Manchester Mercury reported that the prisoners appeared at a special commission held on 25 May 1812, before Mr Justice Burton and Mr Justice Dallas.<sup>55</sup>

The cavalry was praised for its actions in the press but what was not mentioned in the report was the presence of the regular cavalry and the Buckinghamshire Militia which fired three rounds into the rioters at Stockport. This may have had the greatest effect in calming the situation.

Post-war unrest in the country prompted the Home Secretary, in 1815, to write to the lords lieutenant. He instructed them to take immediate steps to ensure their yeomanry regiments were able to assemble in the least possible time, should they be required by the civil power. Earl Talbot wrote to Colonel Edward Monckton Commandant of the Staffordshire Yeomanry Cavalry, on 8 March 1815 to inform him of these instructions.<sup>56</sup> The Adjutant, Captain Mayne issued a Regimental Order on 10 March 1815 which designated three rendezvous points at which specified troops were to assemble should the Regiment be called upon to render assistance. The Lichfield, Tamworth and Walsall Troops were to assemble at Lichfield; the Stafford, Teddesley and Weston Troops were to assemble at Penkridge though should the Regiment be required to march north their rendezvous point was then to be Stafford. The Leek and Bilston Troops, presumably because they were too far away from other troops to assemble with any promptitude, were to remain in their localities until called for.<sup>57</sup>

Trouble occurred in Walsall on 12 October 1815. The local troop were not available as they had no uniforms and could not act, so Captain Clark was summoned from Handsworth. He marched his troop with a company of foot some twelve miles to the disturbance. Two days later on 14 October the Stafford and Teddesley Troops were called out to deal with disturbances arising from a strike in Wolverhampton where striking miners and colliers had attempted to prevent those who wished to work from doing so. Turnouts toured the district, anyone ignoring their demands risked being ducked in pit-head ponds, a procedure which had resulted in one death. To ensure an absolute cessation of work the strikers removed the plugs from steam engine boilers. On this occasion the yeomanry was not conspicuously successful in suppressing the violence.

When the cavalry attempted to charge the crowd which stoned them, the strikers took shelter among the spoil heaps at the pit-heads, where the horsemen could not manœuvre without putting themselves in danger. In an area despoiled and ravaged by mining the cavalry was at a disadvantage. The heaps of mud, spoil and slag, the pit head ponds and the uneven surface caused by subsidence prevented them from riding abreast, and therefore, they could not charge. If they attempted to ride in single file the colliers pulled them from their horses. This was an unprecedented situation. The yeomanry was faced by intelligent, hardy, disciplined colliers and miners, men whose life underground depended upon discipline, leadership and co-operation, qualities which they now brought to bear in this confrontation and which rendered the cavalry impotent. By 16 October the whole Regiment had been called out and in addition to the cavalry, there were at the scene a company of Foot and a detachment of the 9<sup>th</sup> Dragoons, in all some 400 armed men had been assembled to defeat unarmed strikers. So successful were the strikers' tactics that not only did they keep an armed force at bay, but only two strikers were ever caught.<sup>58</sup> There were three incidents in 1817, which attracted national attention, and in which considerable numbers of yeomen were involved. The year started on an ominous note with the attack on the Prince Regent's carriage in January. The first of the incidents was the march of the Blanketeers. Forty political clubs in Manchester proposed a march by working men to London where they would present the Prince Regent with demands for relief for the unemployed, and a reform of Parliament. Each man was to carry food and his own blanket, and the march was to be peaceful. On 10 March 1817 40,000 people assembled in St Peter's Fields to see off 1,000 marchers. It was not an illegal march, neither had there been an official ban on its taking place, yet enormous efforts were made by authority, on the orders of the prime minister, to hinder the marchers and to prevent them reaching London. A strong military presence was assembled at the start of the march. The Cheshire Yeomanry had been called out, there were also present detachments from the King's Dragoon Guards, the 54<sup>th</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup> Regiments. To heighten tension, excite fear and add resistance en route it was put about that marchers' food supplies would not last beyond thirty to forty miles and thereafter they would plunder as they went. At Stockport the bridge was held by the yeomanry on the orders of Sir John Byng. No marcher was to be allowed to pass.

This order was countermanded by the Stockport Magistrates. Whether they pitied the men or they did not want trouble, which might have incited the Stockport workforce to violence, is not known. Despite the freeing of the passage, scuffles broke out between marchers and yeomanry during which one man, John James, was killed by a blow to his head from a sabre which indicated the savagery with which troopers were capable when dealing with unarmed people.<sup>59</sup>

When they reached Macclesfield, the magistrates allowed them to lodge there for the night. 400 set out the following morning for Leek. On 11 March the respectable inhabitants of Leek were agitated by the expected arrival of the marchers, they were nonetheless determined that the march should not proceed to London. The Reverend Edward Powys, JP, was summoned and desired to take the necessary measures to stop the march. The marchers were not allowed to rest. Two or three identified as ring-leaders were arrested by constables the rest were shepherded on their way to Ashbourne. The Leek troop under Lieutenant Coupland took three hours to assemble, to be inspected and deemed ready to act. The yeomanry, Powys, the High Constable, the Constable of the Hundred, the Churchwarden of Leek and several respectable inhabitants of the town then galloped in pursuit of those Webster described as,

‘the much to be pitied marchers’.<sup>60</sup>

The Derbyshire magistrates had been warned beforehand so that when the march approached Hanging Bridge, a mile short of Ashbourne, they were confronted by three magistrates, two troops of Derbyshire cavalry and some gentlemen from the neighbourhood. Behind them were the Leek Troop. The combined cavalry then drove the marchers back to Macclesfield where they were relieved by the Cheshire Yeomanry who shepherded the marchers back to Manchester.<sup>61</sup>

Such was the fear engendered by the march that Powys then swore in 400 special constables to serve for six months, and the Leek Troop remained on duty for another three days.

In Ashbourne all bridges were placed under strict guard. Lord Sidmouth had ordered county magistrates to stop the march since the government was fearful that had it continued unhindered, it would have gained more strength as it neared the capital and turned into a national demonstration against the government. By engaging the full force of the county yeomanry to prevent the march reaching London, the government gave a clear signal that they were not prepared to accede to any demands for industrial or political reform.

Nor would they tolerate any agitation, however peaceful, in support of demands for reform. It was clear in this instance that the civil power, at the behest of the Home Office and local opinion, relied entirely upon the yeomanry to stop the march. Following the successful frustration of the marchers' intentions, all the magistrates concerned were entertained to a civic dinner in Manchester where a piece of plate was presented, in appreciation, to the Manchester Bench. The Prince Regent, the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Sidmouth at the Home Office and General Byng all sent letters of appreciation and thanks to the magistrates concerned and the yeomanry who had carried out the orders of government.<sup>62</sup> The second 'incident' which attracted national attention occurred in Manchester. It illustrated very clearly the apprehension and fear which permeated this period. On 25 March the civil power in Manchester claimed to have received information 'upon which they could rely' of a traitorous conspiracy. This was nothing less, it was said, than open rebellion and insurrection. It was alleged that the plotters planned to seize barracks, banks and the houses of prominent citizens. The repercussions of the plot stretched as far as Staffordshire thirty-five miles away. The King's Dragoon Guards stationed in Manchester were reinforced by the 15<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons. The 54<sup>th</sup> Foot arrived in the town on 26 March and the 85<sup>th</sup> Foot arrived on 27 March after a forced march from Warrington. The Knutsford Troop of Cheshire Yeomanry marched to Ashton-under-Lyne, other troops were sent to Altrincham, Macclesfield, Northwich and Stockport. Detachments of the Staffordshire Yeomanry was marched into Cheshire to replace those troops sent to Manchester. Gunsmiths over a wide area had their stock removed to safe places. In Manchester and the surrounding towns the streets were patrolled by yeomanry, infantry and special constables for three days. A number of alleged plotters were arrested at Ardwick and sent to London but they were subsequently freed, no charge was preferred against them. No hard evidence was ever produced to support the claim that revolution was about to break out, no weapons were seized, no crowds assembled. Had a revolution actually occurred it could scarcely have caused more alarm, fear, trouble and expense. After three days of intense military activity the infantry were returned to barracks and the yeomanry returned home. The Cheshire cavalry received the thanks of the Prince Regent, Lord Sidmouth, The Home Secretary, the magistrates of Manchester and General Sir John Byng.<sup>63</sup>

The third was the Pentrich Rebellion. The attempted revolt was led by Jeremiah Brandreth. The declared aim of the revolutionaries was to seize power and set up a provisional government. The 'uprising' took place in the early morning of 10 June 1817. An ill-led, poorly-equipped band of sawyers, stocking frame knitters, farmers, blacksmiths and labourers were easily dispersed by twenty hussars riding with two magistrates, Mr Mundy and Mr Rolleston, twenty-eight prisoners were taken with seventeen small arms and forty-five pikes. The Derbyshire Yeomanry was called out in the aftermath, as part of a massive government effort to round up as many of those involved as possible.<sup>64</sup> The few rebels could not have possibly done much damage but given the climate of unrest, and the demands for reform, it suited the government to exaggerate the danger posed by Brandreth and his men in order to give sanction to its actions against reformers. The captured men were charged at Derby Assizes with high treason, a charge hitherto never brought against common people. Four were sentenced to death, three were executed, thirty were transported for various terms and twelve released on account of their age. The Duke of Newcastle issued a declaration defending government action which he said was to protect the Constitution.<sup>65</sup>

There were no incidents in north Staffordshire during 1817 but the county as did most others, suffered from a poor harvest. One of Lord Stafford's tenants, C V Lichfield, wrote to James Loch, Stafford's factor in Staffordshire, to say he could not pay his rents. He claimed that a combination of bad weather, poor crops and low prices had left him with very little money.<sup>66</sup> This was not an isolated complaint since Loch had to inform Stafford that there would be a deficiency in the rents that year. He further commented that in his opinion the situation would deteriorate, and that many would have to kill store cattle to survive the winter of 1817 and spring of 1818. He gave it as his view that the Corn Laws, dear food, unemployment, a bad harvest and an increased population would mean an increased want in the county which would lead to trouble. In the south of the county, on 9 June 1817, the GOC District, General Sir James Lyon, ordered all troops in the Wolverhampton area to be held in readiness to march to Birmingham at 'a moment's notice'. To ensure that the district was not left unguarded the magistrates called out the Bilston Troop commanded by Captain Bickley.

The captain and his men quartered themselves at the King's Arms where they remained on duty until 16 June, drawing full pay and allowances for the whole period. The cavalry records for the period gave no reason for the situation.<sup>67</sup> No trouble was recorded in Birmingham or Wolverhampton and the Bilston troop was stood down. It is difficult from the evidence available to ascertain whether it was known that trouble was brewing and the presence of the yeomanry acted as a deterrent or whether it was the reaction of a nervous authority to the general instability of the country in 1817. In his memoirs, Earl de Grey, Commandant of the Yorkshire Yeomanry, commented on a general mood of hostility in York.<sup>68</sup>

It must be concluded that the incidents recorded for 1817 revealed a country which the poor suffered from dear food, high unemployment and want; the upper classes, the government and respectable citizens in a state of nervous anticipation, awaited revolution which did not materialise. Captain Webster claimed, even the loyalty of respectable people was shaken, the public mind was affected by numbers of cheap publications which persuaded people that they were badly governed. A radical reform of parliament was needed, it was claimed, to govern the country in accord with the will of the people.<sup>69</sup> There was distress and fear; people's faith in government may have been weakened but no hard evidence has been produced to show that there was a real danger of revolution in 1817. None of the actions recounted amounted to a revolution nor did they cause any military problems either for the yeomanry or the army. Had the Blanketeers reached London it might have proved politically embarrassing for the government but nothing of a revolutionary nature was intended. The response of government, magistrates and respectable citizens to these incidents revealed more about their perceived fears, the unstable condition of the country, and the determination of government to resist reform, than any revolutionary activity. It is plausible to suggest the reason why the courts reacted savagely when prisoners appeared before them was because government and the upper classes felt threatened by demands for reform. Any form of protest, whatever its nature, was criminalised in order to exact the maximum penalties. In dealing with protest, the government proved to be very successful and this, in no small part, was due to the loyalty of the yeomanry which, it can be argued, acted as an instrument of Tory oppression.

So successful was the policy of government that Palmer has claimed, Britain was the most successful counter-revolutionary nation in Europe.<sup>70</sup> It was the combination of government and upper class interests which made suppression of reform successful. It was the upper class which formed the government and whose members were supported by the government. It was the upper class and the respectable class which raised, officered, manned and controlled the yeomanry. It was the upper class which was prepared to use the yeomanry, and the courts, to protect their interests and maintain their power. The respectable class, if the evidence of Leek is an example, identified their interests with those of the upper class.

There were further industrial disturbances the north during 1818. The Home Secretary again wrote to lords lieutenant in the north west and the midlands, as he had done each year since 1815, ordering them to hold yeomanry in readiness to render immediate assistance and support to the civil power.<sup>71</sup>

In 1818 clashes between yeomanry and striking operatives were recorded in Manchester, Stockport and Macclesfield. The Stockport Yeomanry was called out on 14 July 1818 when violence flared up once more.<sup>72</sup> The Mere, Tabley and Knutsford Troops which had ridden hard to cover the ten miles into Stockport to give support did not arrive until after the trouble had subsided, which was an indication of the transient nature of much of the violence. Sixteen 'rioters' were brought before the courts. Two ring-leaders received goal sentences of one and three years respectively which, considering the violent nature of the riot, were very lenient, compared with those handed down to the Stockport rioters of 1812, and compared with the treatment accorded the Pentrich 'revolutionaries', almost derisory.<sup>73</sup> In York, where the Yorkshire Regiment met for annual training in 1818, de Grey noted that the city,

'was a place where a very low and seditious spirit was at that time prevalent'.<sup>74</sup>

At the end of this annual training Earl de Grey attempted to address his regiment.

His patriotic speech was greeted by the watching citizens of York with jeers and ridicule.

This incident was followed by a series of scurrilous attacks upon de Grey in the Black Dwarf.<sup>75</sup>



The incidents in Cheshire were serious, those in Yorkshire revealed much about the temper of working people. Other incidents which occurred were neither industrial nor political and verged on the comical, they nonetheless indicated unrest and a contempt for the law. Worcester, for example, which remained free of any sort of industrial or political trouble between 1818 and 1820, witnessed a rather peculiar type of disturbance which was neither political nor industrial.<sup>76</sup>

The action in which yeomanry achieved national notoriety and their behaviour was condemned, occurred in 1819. A reform meeting, to be addressed by Orator Hunt, had been called for 16 August 1819, in St Peter's Fields Manchester. The city's magistrates had banned the meeting, an order which was ignored by the organisers of the meeting. Great numbers of people marched into the Fields, in serried ranks, behind bands and banners. Estimates of the number in the crowd varied but it was somewhere between 60,000 and 100,000. The magistrates who watched the gathering became alarmed as the numbers in the Field increased. They ordered special constables in to arrest Hunt but these failed to effect an arrest so great were the numbers surrounding Hunt. The Manchester and Cheshire Yeomanries, who were on standby, were then ordered in to arrest Hunt.<sup>77</sup> When the accounts of the 'massacre' were known protest meetings were held in the north west and midlands. Black banners with 'Vengeance' printed upon them were carried although little actual rioting occurred in the wake of what came to be known as Peterloo. The only other occurrence noted in the records consulted was at Macclesfield.<sup>78</sup>

There was evident apprehension that trouble would follow. On 31 October, three troops of Staffordshire Cavalry were called out; the Stafford under Lieutenant Simpson, the Leek under Captain Cruso and the Newcastle Troop under Captain Kinnersley. The men were deployed at Leek, Stone, Burslem and Newcastle. No reason was given but the report in the cavalry records ended with a note to say,

'the force was sufficient to prevent disturbances'.<sup>79</sup>

It may be inferred however, that the cavalry had been in attendance at protest meetings held after the Manchester incident.

The events of 16 August 1819 still arouse spirited debate.<sup>80</sup> At the time however, whilst workers vowed vengeance, the yeomanry, despite conduct which appeared not only inept but discreditable, was publicly thanked by Lord Sidmouth and the magistrates of Manchester, Lancashire and Cheshire. The Northwich Troop was greeted when it arrived home by the town's leading citizens with great applause.<sup>81</sup>

The incidents in Manchester had considerable repercussions. Parliament reassembled early and the 'Six Acts' were rushed through. In November there were rumours of a general uprising. In the Lords, it was stated, 'in Durham and Northumberland a force of 100,000 men could be assembled'. No evidence was produced to substantiate such a claim but it was indicative of the climate of fear in the country that it was believed. In Staffordshire the Clerk to the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions of 1819 issued a statement to this effect signed by the Bench.<sup>82</sup>

A meeting, typical of many in the country, was requisitioned, and met in the Shire Hall at Stafford in September 1819. The meeting had placed before it a proposal to augment the county yeomanry regiment. Sir Charles Wolsley, Bt, in a letter addressed to the meeting, expressed his opposition to any further expansion of the force. He inquired, 'in the name of common sense where was the peace disturbed in Staffordshire?' He referred also to the Manchester business which he claimed had been condemned by all good men.<sup>83</sup> His comments were ignored.

A meeting was held in Hanley to protest at the deaths of working men in St Peter's Fields. At the time it was claimed by captain Webster that these meetings were composed of men, 'goaded by misery and inflamed by seditious harangues and were very dangerous'.<sup>84</sup>

No violence was reported arising from this meeting or in the county. In November 1819 the Prince Regent informed Earl Dartmouth, Vice-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, that,

'he was highly gratified by proof of the public spirit of the County'.<sup>85</sup>

His gratification undoubtedly referred to those who had volunteered to join the county yeomanry, the great increase in the strength of the regiment, and those who supported the corps. It did not refer to the working men of Staffordshire against whom the force was to be used. The year 1819 closed with one more call on the Staffordshire Yeomanry.

On 13 December a Radical meeting was planned in Manchester. This aroused fears of more violence. A squadron of the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers and a detachment of the 90<sup>th</sup> Foot were deployed in Macclesfield. The Newcastle Troop of Yeomanry marched to Congleton. In order that Newcastle should not be left defenceless, the Stafford Troop marched to Newcastle and a detachment of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot marched in from Lichfield. The alert lasted until 16 December when all the military were stood down. No violence or disturbance was noted.<sup>86</sup> After this there were no reported outbreaks of violence in Staffordshire nor were the cavalry called out in the County until 1822. In Worcestershire, the Dudley magistrates requested the assistance of the Himley Troop in 1820 because they feared trouble might occur at the annual Waterloo celebrations. The Himley Troop under Lieutenant Wrottesley, the Dudley Troop and a company of infantry were in attendance at the illuminations and festivities 15 November 1820, which, in the event, passed off peaceably.<sup>87</sup>

Trouble occurred in south Staffordshire in 1822, unrest was caused by the recession. Barnsby's figures have illustrated the poverty and misery suffered by workers in south Staffordshire post-1815.<sup>88</sup> The poverty he illustrated was exacerbated by further wage cuts and lay-offs. These provoked the strikes of 1822. To justify cutting wages, laying men off and imposing short-time working, managers in the coal and iron industries constantly referred to the poor state of the markets. Pitt's History claimed that so bad was the situation in the southern coalfield that hitherto well paid colliers, now starving, were reduced to begging in the streets of the mining towns.<sup>89</sup> In April 1822 a further wage-cut was proposed for Bilston and Wolverhampton colliers. This provoked an angry response from colliers. The subsequent strike followed previous patterns, gangs of colliers and miners toured the district and called upon all workers to down tools in support. Most did so, either from conviction or fear although it was known that a considerable number of men wished to work. It was these men who approached the magistrates to ask for protection. The justices acted promptly and on the 15 April 1822 the Himley Troop arrived to protect non-strikers. A cavalry report noted that they were able to ensure the safety of those who carried on working and prevented them from being maltreated.<sup>90</sup>

On 23 April the Bilston Troop was called to Monmore Green Colliery to prevent working colliers being assaulted by strikers. This turned into a serious confrontation and the troopers fired their heavy pistols to disperse the crowd. One man, named Roberts, was fatally wounded. Three days later the same troop dispersed a mob which had surrounded the Highfield Iron Works in Bilston. In this engagement several ring-leaders were captured. In May, Mr. Firmstone, the manager of the Rough Hills Colliery at Bilston was attacked by strikers and injured. The Bilston Troop arrived and drove the attackers off, capturing seven men alleged to be ring-leaders.<sup>91</sup> The situation was now sufficiently serious for the presence of Earl Talbot, the Lord Lieutenant.<sup>92</sup> The wording of the letter is curious. The lord lieutenant of a county was a powerful political figure, directly responsible to the King for the affairs of his county. If, therefore, Talbot had been ordered to act it would have been by Robert Peel acting for the sovereign. Pressure from the Marquises of Stafford and Anglesey, the Earls of Dartmouth and Dudley, Edward Littleton, MP, and other prominent county figures may have been exerted to bring about a speedy conclusion to the strike since all of these drew a major part of their income from coal and iron working whereas Talbot did not. Despite the presence of a considerable force of yeomanry the strike persisted. The cavalry had not, despite killing one man and arresting several others, brought an end to the disturbances. It was unlikely that they would ever have done so by military means as they were fighting in the colliers working environment which was unsuitable for the large scale deployment of a cavalry force. In order to break the strike, guile was used. On 4 May 1822, at three o'clock in the morning, a considerable force assembled. Present were two local JPs, the reverends Clare and Leigh, the Teddesley Troop commanded by Captain Edward Monckton, the county militia staff commanded by Captain Musgrave, the second in command of the yeomanry, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Littleton, MP, and a number of special constables. The cavalry report noted, with satisfaction, the preparations for the operation.<sup>93</sup> The armed force had surrounded and entered the houses in which the principal instigators of the strike were thought to be sleeping. Some men were secured and handed over to the civil power. Seven of the men were committed to Stafford Assizes charged, not with striking but with rioting, a crime which carried the death penalty. The men were in fact transported. Two conclusions can be drawn from this incident.

One was the inability of the yeomanry as a military force to deal with intelligent working men fighting in the environment of the pit-heads. It must be concluded also that the government wished a speedy end to what was a provincial, civil, industrial dispute, and not a particularly serious one at that. No suggestion was ever made that the strikers or anyone else, were revolutionaries. The concern of government was indicated by the order, unique in the experience of this research, to the lord lieutenant to take command, and their approbation of the actions of the civil power in assembling such a powerful force, which had to act in a covert manner, to arrest a few sleeping men. Local magistrates claimed the action was to ensure that those who wanted to work could do so but it is clear that the government exerted pressure to ensure the strike was broken. Following the arrests, magistrates issued handbills promising ample protection for those who wished to work. The action they had taken was, they said, in response to complaints from stone-getters and colliers, that they were deterred from working by threats made by the disorderly.<sup>94</sup> The actions of the authorities broke the strike and men returned to work. From the point of view of the civil authorities it was a successful action, nonetheless, the area remained under military control for some time. To police the area, Talbot had at his disposal six troops of yeomanry; the Weston under Captain Crockett, the Stafford under Lieutenant Simpson, the Teddesley under Captain Monckton, the Bilston under Captain Barber and the Himley Troop under Captain Hawkes. There was also present a detachment from Handsworth. The Dudley Troop rode in from Worcestershire and were stationed at Tipton. To reinforce the civilian cavalry, there were a detachment from the Scots Greys, two companies of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Foot, two companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment and the staff of the county militia. If all the military were at full strength, Talbot had at his disposal 800 men to police the district, something which further emphasised the seriousness with which the situation was viewed by government and the local authorities. The Himley Troop was on duty for twenty-three days, other troops were gradually withdrawn and on 9 May the Himley Troop, the last on duty, was stood down, the area being deemed peaceful. On 22 May, trouble flared up in Dudley and the Himley Troop was called out, crossed the county border and was on duty for four days.

In June 1822 Sir Robert Peel, whose estate lay at Tamworth nearby, wrote from Whitehall to Earl Talbot and commended the actions of the yeomanry and the civil authorities. He had, he wrote, 'not failed to represent these to His Majesty.'<sup>95</sup>

The contents of the letter were communicated to Colonel Monckton, Commandant of the Yeomanry and to the Regiment.

The Newcastle Troop was called out in 1823 to quell an election riot. Following the death of Captain Kinnersley, MP, commandant of the troop, a by-election was called. As was not unusual, it was marred by violence and the town was in a disturbed state for some days. On the polling day, 24 July 1823, a mob of colliers rioted and broke all the windows of the Roebuck Inn as well as those of nearby houses. The situation was serious enough to require the extra assistance of Lieutenant Simpson and the Stafford Troop before order was restored. No blood was shed and no arrests were made.<sup>96</sup>

An analysis of the disturbances to which the yeomanry was called between 1794 and 1823, in the United Kingdom, indicated that alleged revolutionary activity was not the cause of most, if any, disturbances. The greatest number were concerned with grievances over food and employment, and where demonstrations were concerned with reform they were usually linked to a demand for a betterment of social and industrial conditions.

The record of the post-war service of the Staffordshire Regiment was summed up by Lieutenant Colonel Edward Littleton, MP, in his speech to the assembled corps at the end of annual training in 1824.<sup>97</sup> The only neighbouring regiment whose service could compare with that of Staffordshire was the Cheshire Yeomanry.

The Regiment was to enjoy three years of peace until 1826 when industrial trouble broke out once more in the southern coalfield. From this time until 1845 there were few years when some part of the corps was not called out to aid the civil powers. The statutory requirement that county police forces be formed in 1856, marked the end of the policing role of the yeomanry. The last time the Staffordshire corps were called out was in 1856.

To conclude, the yeomanry in Staffordshire was regularly used between 1794 and 1823 by the civil power to police the community. After 1815, with the reduction in numbers of the regular forces, the yeomanry remained the only major force available to act as *posse comitatus*. Although it usually turned out promptly, there was some doubt as to its efficiency and help from regular cavalry was often required. In carrying out their duties there is evidence to support the claim that some corps, though not the Staffordshires, behaved, at times, with unnecessary savagery. From 1815 onwards there was a growing belief by government and the upper classes that revolution was imminent although most of the disturbances to which the corps were called were industrial disputes. These were frequently characterised by the courts as riots and therefore, became criminal acts. It is plausible to argue that the worth of the yeomanry was to intimidate the populace, deal with minor incidents and lessen the burden placed upon the few regular regiments left in the country post-1815.

## **(ii) Enrolment**

The enrolment procedures for the early yeomanry movements were almost identical with those described for the volunteer infantry in Chapter III. In the early circulars from Whitehall, and the notices of meetings to enrol volunteers, there was a tendency to speak of raising volunteers, a term which encompassed both yeomanry and infantry movements. The provisions of the volunteer acts applied equally to both infantry and the cavalry and until 1798 both movements were viewed by Whitehall and local authorities as a single entity for defence.<sup>98</sup> One difference which did emerge was the date of enrolment. In many areas cavalry troops were enrolled earlier than volunteer infantry companies. In Staffordshire, for example, the yeomanry regiment had been formed in 1794 whereas the bulk of infantry corps did not enrol until 1797. Enrolment meetings followed a similar pattern throughout the country. Meetings were requisitioned to enrol men. In some cases the type of persons acceptable were specified. In Derbyshire the High Sheriff requisitioned a meeting at the Derby East Session in 1794 to raise yeomanry. The meeting took place in Derby on 21 May 1794. In Hertfordshire, Lord Salisbury requisitioned a meeting for the 7 May 1794 at Hertford. In Buckinghamshire a meeting was requisitioned by the Sheriff, William Clowes, to be held at Aylesbury on 3 May 1794.

Worcestershire raised a very small number of men. A meeting requisitioned for the 29 April 1794 in the Guildhall at Worcester proposed to enrol two troops of cavalry. Until 1803 this was the total yeomanry force for the county.<sup>99</sup> The Earl of Aylesford chaired a meeting held at Warwick in June 1794 where a proposition was approved to enrol four troops of yeomanry. Cowdray's Manchester Gazette reported that on 13 May 1797 six troops of cavalry mustered in Chester for the first time.<sup>100</sup> All the cavalry reports consulted sought to show how early their corps had been enrolled and their service accepted. This reflected the importance attached to precedence in the army lists which depended on when service was accepted by the King. The seniority of yeomanry officers depended upon the position of their corps in the army lists. Leary has claimed the first four regiments to be formed were, in order, the Cinque Ports, Kent, Rutland and Dorset.<sup>101</sup> There was however, confusion, in The Records, Webster declared the Staffordshire regiment was enrolled and its service accepted in July 1794 which would have made it fifth in order of precedence. This is contradicted by the notice of a meeting called to enrol cavalry troops in Staffordshire which was dated August 1794. The meeting took place at the Swan Inn, Stafford on Friday 8 August 1794. It was chaired by Earl Gower, the Lord Lieutenant. As was usual, a number of resolutions were placed before the meeting. The first was that Staffordshire should raise a regiment of Gentlemen and Yeomen Cavalry. This title was adopted but changed in 1796 to The Staffordshire Regiment of Yeomanry.

It was resolved at the meeting,

'six troops of cavalry, of fifty-six men each, officers included, shall be raised in this County, and that each troop shall have one captain, one lieutenant, one cornet, three sergeants, one to be furnished by government, three corporals and one trumpeter'.<sup>102</sup>

According to Freeman it was agreed that,

'if the King required it they were willing to be marched to any part of the Kingdom'.<sup>103</sup>

Freeman thought this was unusual. There is some evidence to show that many, if not most of the early regiments, stressed the view that suppression of disorder and insurrection was their main purpose, and refused to march far from their locality, and certainly not from their counties.<sup>104</sup>

It was agreed also that the Staffordshire Corps should wear a red jacket with yellow facings, white waistcoat, white leather breeches, black boots and a helmet with a bearskin crest and a feather.



Enrolment for the regiment began in earnest in late August 1794 and continued on into September so there was no likelihood that its service could have been accepted in July as Webster had claimed. The actual enrolment was carried out by Earl Gower, Lord Bagot, Hon Edward Monckton, Major Francis Eliot, Sir Edward Littleton, Bt, Sir John Peshall, Bt, Sir John Heathcote, Sir John Chetwode, Bt, and fifty-two gentlemen, among whom were the nominated troop captains.<sup>105</sup> Although six troops were proposed only five were raised. Staffordshire was a large county so although the individual troops were based on the main town in the various hundreds they enrolled from a wide area. The first troops to be enrolled were the Stafford Troop commanded by Lieutenant Colonel the Hon Edward Monckton; this included men from Rugely and Penkridge; the Lichfield Troop commanded by Major Percival Eliot, included men from Tamworth and Burton-on-Trent; the Newcastle Troop, commanded by Colonel Earl Gower, took in men from Betly, Stone and the Pottery District; the Walsall Troop, captained by William Tenant enrolled men from Wolverhampton and what came to be called the Black Country and the Leek Troop, commanded by James Buckley recruited men from Cheadle and Uttoxeter. (Map 4) It is not surprising therefore, that when called out it took some time to assemble a whole troop. There was a resolution on eligibility concerning those who could not serve. It stated that those gentlemen or yeomen who for 'reasonable cause' were prevented from serving in person may be at liberty to appoint a substitute.<sup>106</sup> The requirements were equivalent to those asked of men seeking a commission in the militia. It was noticeable that of those who attended the enrolment meeting, many of whom later rode with the corps, seventy-three were listed as being armigerous. The requirements were stringent when compared with those of the Worcestershire Corps.<sup>107</sup> The fact that Worcester would accept tradesmen was an indication that all corps were not composed of wealthy landowners and farmers. The Staffordshire resolution was not adhered to since it restricted membership and was modified to allow men of lesser social and financial status to join the ranks.

To conclude, it was understandable why commentators gained the impression that the yeomanry was a movement of nobility, gentry and wealthy farmers. Enrolment meetings were in every case called by county elites and often by the lord lieutenant. In some cases officers were elected at the initial meetings or as in the case of Staffordshire, nominated beforehand. The records show, troop captains and field officers were always gentry or nobility. Recruiting notices were addressed to those thought socially and financially desirable. Reality was otherwise, although there were always considerable numbers of wealthy and substantial men in the movements there were also numbers of men, usually tenants of the great landowners, many too poor to own a horse. There were also quite considerable numbers of urban tradesmen in some corps as well as substitutes.<sup>108</sup>

By the end of 1794 there were thirty-two corps in existence. In 1799, Cox gave a figure of 30,000 men enrolled in cavalry corps compared with 100,000 enrolled in the volunteer infantry and 76,300 enlisted in the militia.<sup>109</sup>

Yeomanry corps such as those of Cheshire, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Hertfordshire and Yorkshire disbanded in 1802 when the Peace of Amiens was signed even though the government desired them to remain in service and offered generous incentives to those which did so. The Staffordshire Regiment did not disband.

When war broke out in April 1803, what amounted to a second and much larger yeomanry force was created. The Staffordshire Cavalry, now augmented, paraded as an eight troop regiment in 1804. The first squadron was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Sir John Heathcote and comprised the Stafford Troop commanded by Captain Keen and the Newcastle Troop under Lieutenant Spode; the second squadron was commanded by Captain, the Earl of Bradford and was comprised of the Weston Troop commanded by Lieutenant Crockett and the Teddesley Troop under Captain Walhouse; the third squadron was commanded by Captain Dobson and included the Leek troop commanded by Lieutenant Badnal and the Pottery Troop under Captain Simpson; the fourth squadron commanded by Major Sir Nigel Gresley, Bt, was composed of the Walsall Troop commanded by Captain Terry and the Lichfield Troop under Lieutenant Grove.

In 1800 Earl Gower resigned the lieutenancy and his command, which passed to the Hon Edward Monckton. The new Lord Lieutenant, Earl Uxbridge, did not show any interest in the yeomanry. In 1806 two extra troops were added; one enrolled at Bilston under Captain W.S Bickley and one at Tamworth, commanded by Captain Thomas Bagot.

When the war ended in 1814 some regiments disbanded though not that of Staffordshire. The government made no attempt to disband the voluntary cavalry, and although not generous with financial aid, indicated that it wished the force to remain. The yeomanry, post 1814 and until 1870, ceased to be part of the defence force of the Kingdom and became, in effect, an armed police force. Many men left the movement and individual troops such as the Pottery and Newcastle Troops disbanded. The conditions of post-war service changed though the duties remained the same.

The Staffordshire Corps though depleted in strength remained a ten-troop regiment until 1817 when the Newcastle Troop was reformed. This troop was raised solely by the exertions of William Kinnersley, a banker and MP, for Newcastle-under-Lyme. He called a meeting at his own house and because he was a man of considerable influence in the neighbourhood had no difficulty in raising a troop of cavalry. So many of the men who attended the meeting were eligible for commissions that the post of cornet had to be decided by lot. The service of the new troop was accepted by the Prince Regent on 25 March 1817.<sup>110</sup> The County meeting held in Stafford on 8 November 1819 authorised Colonel Monckton to augment his regiment. He sought permission to do this from Whitehall which was speedily given and each of the ten troops was increased to eighty men and NCOs.<sup>111</sup> In December 1819 further permission was sought to increase the size of the regiment. This being granted two new troops, one from Uttoxeter commanded by Captain William Bagot and one from Himley commanded by Captain Thomas Hawkes were enrolled. The Uttoxeter Troop was raised largely by the efforts of the local magnate, Lord Bagot. The Himley Troop was raised by the exertions of the Earl of Dudley and the Earl of Stamford and Warrington. A meeting was held at Burton-on-Trent where the Marquis of Anglesey urged his tenantry to form an armed troop.

The Burton Troop was commanded for a time by Lieutenant Worthington until such time as the Hon Berkley Paget, uncle to the Marquis of Anglesey, could be persuaded to take command.<sup>112</sup> The Regimental Records are not at all clear at this period but it appeared that for some time the regiment had thirteen troops. At the end of 1819, there were 838 non-commissioned officers and privates listed as serving in the corps. The situation was rarely stable for very long, some troops disbanded, new troops were raised, troop captains resigned and new appointments made. In 1822 command of the Teddesley Troop had passed to Captain Edward Monckton as Edward Littleton became lieutenant-colonel, Lord Bradford had resigned from the Weston Troop to take command of the Shropshire militia. Captain Crockett assumed command of the Weston Troop and Captain Barber now commanded the Walsall Troop. Captain Bickley who had raised and commanded the Bilston Troop for eighteen years resigned to be succeeded by Captain Yates who sought to change the title of the Troop to that of Sandwell. An apt concluding note to this period of the regiment's history is to be found in a memorandum, written by the first adjutant, Captain Mayne, on his retirement in December 1829.<sup>113</sup>

Compared with Staffordshire, Derbyshire mustered a very small movement. During the period from 1803 to 1814 the regiment varied in strength from five to seven troops which totalled between 250 and 350 men. After 1819 the Derbyshire Yeomanry lacked the cohesion, resolution and discipline of the Staffordshire Regiment and had ceased to exist by 1827. When the Yorkshire Regiment re-formed in 1803 Earl de Grey, was appointed troop captain. He had been told that if he joined his tenantry would form a troop.<sup>114</sup> By 1812 the Yorkshire movement numbered 400 rank and file. Regiments such as the Cheshires reformed in 1803. The Cheshire Cavalry returns for 1803 showed a corps of six troops and 355 officers and men. The Manchester Mercury of the 3 October 1803 announced the formation of a another six-troop regiment to be called the Western Cheshire Volunteer Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Crewe Dod, Esquire. Cheshire now had two regiments which represented a total force of fourteen troops and 732 rank and file. In 1823 Peel noted that Buckinghamshire had three regiments of yeomanry which he thought too many.<sup>115</sup>

To resume, at its peak in 1804 yeomanry numbers reached nearly 35,000 men. By 1805, numbers had decreased and returns showed 25,000, enrolled. Thereafter there was a steady decline in the strength of the movement. Membership increased once more in the troublous period between 1817 and 1819 when numbers approached 25,000. In 1823, Peel writing to Lord Grantham contended that not more than 18,000 of these were effectives.<sup>116</sup> The size of the movement varied with the threats posed to the country by its foes, external and internal. When there was an emergency such as in 1803, and again in 1817-1819, there was little difficulty in attracting recruits. When danger receded numbers decreased, yeomen were not so keen to remain embodied as the volunteer infantry. There was a marked difference in interest in the corps which formed the Inland Area Brigade. Staffordshire, a predominantly industrial county, although its numbers varied, remained in being. By comparison Derbyshire and Worcestershire had disbanded their regiments by 1827.

It was always difficult to assess the efficiency of the yeomanry particularly when it was not involved in any activity. The usual way was to count efficient but in 1823 there was official concern at the discrepancy between numbers enrolled and those actually thought to be efficient. A further difficulty in trying to determine the actual number of yeomen were the autonomous troops known to exist in Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire though in Staffordshire there were no autonomous troops after 1813. It is plausible to suggest however, that where independent troops did exist, they were allowed to do so because they were always controlled by the upper classes and constituted no danger. One factor remained constant to all corps in the country; recruitment, control, command and use rested always with the upper classes.

### **(iii) Organisation and Control**

All the voluntary movements enrolled in 1794 were raised as part of the defence force against invasion. The control of the movements was left to the lords lieutenant, the commandants and troop captains. The efficiency of the yeomanry relied upon the zeal and interest of these men. There was throughout the period no national command structure. Had invasion occurred, the GOC Area would have assumed control of all the auxiliary forces.

The yeomanry, although part of the defence of the Kingdom, was, by its own inclination and its use by the civil power, an armed, social control mechanism – although this term was not then in use. Until the statutory formation of county police forces in 1856, it was used by the civil power to suppress opposition, of any kind, to government. Their use, to a great extent, determined their organisation. Chapter III showed the determined efforts on the part of Whitehall to turn the volunteer infantry into an home army. Similar attempts were made to improve the military efficiency of the cavalry force. They were brigaded and placed in areas or divisions during the invasion scares of 1803. Where the yeomanry was brigaded with regular troops its control, discipline and efficiency improved. Attempts, not always successful, were made to institute a continuous period of annual training for all yeomanry units. As part of the process to improve efficiency cavalry inspectors were appointed to inspect and advise the movement. The attempts to improve military skills and organisation met with limited success for three reasons. The main obstacle was the selfish motive underlying most yeomanry service. Yeomen saw their appointed task as protecting property and suppressing any disturbances which threatened the peace. Secondly the social rank and wealth of many yeomen enabled them to determine what they would do and what they refused to do. If for example, like the Trentham Troop, it was considered too much time was spent in being inspected, the whole troop, including their captain Sir John Heathcote, resigned.<sup>117</sup> Civilian attitudes meant that most corps refused to let yeomanry service interfere too much in their normal lives. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, due to inspect the northern sub-region of the Inland Area in July 1805 was forced to postpone his inspection because most regiments refused to turn out during the harvest period.<sup>118</sup> Captain Dobson of the Leek Troop threatened Colonel Monckton with the resignation of the whole troop if they were ordered to turn out as the harvest had just begun.<sup>119</sup> No corps ever held its annual training, field days or drills during harvest time. It is speculation, but it seemed unlikely, had invasion actually occurred that all yeomen would have rallied to the defence of their country until crops were gathered in.

The yeomanry was organised as a mounted military movement. They were armed, dressed and equipped in the same fashion as the regular cavalry, although what type was left to the choice of the commandant or those who raised the corps. The operational unit in the yeomanry was the troop. This was raised and based in a locality. Troops were named either after their commandant or patron, for example, the Anglesey Troop because of its connection with the Anglesey family estates; the name of the area or town in which they were based, for example, the Bilston Troop. Two troops formed a squadron which was entitled to fly a guidon or pennant. The minimum requirement for a regiment was three squadrons. Those men nominated and approved of by the King would receive temporary commissions. All plans and regulations had to be approbated by his Majesty. Initially no public money was to be made available for the civil cavalry, no levy was to be exacted from the counties. Men had to provide their own horses with the appropriate furniture. Arms and accoutrements were to be provided by Ordnance. Under the Defence of the Realm Act of 1798 those yeomanry regiments which accepted the provisions of the act concerning their service were then granted allowances for clothing and contingencies. Under the Act the King, the Lords Lieutenant or Sheriffs of Counties could call upon the corps in time of invasion, tumult or riot to act in their own county or neighbouring counties. The corps were bound by the strict obligation not to assemble or drill without permission from the lords lieutenant or warrant from the King. When called out the corps were to receive pay as regular cavalry and be liable to the provisions of the Mutiny Act.<sup>120</sup>

A troop was commanded by a captain, officered by a lieutenant, a cornet and two sergeants one of whom was paid for by government. The colonel's troop was commanded by a captain-lieutenant and was entitled to an extra lieutenant. In 1798 paid staff were seconded to yeomanry movements. A corps of not fewer than 300 was entitled to an adjutant and a sergeant-major; a corps of fewer than 300 but greater than 120 was entitled to a sergeant-major only. These officers were appointed by the Horse Guards at the request of the lords lieutenant.

Officers and NCOs appointed had to have served in the regular forces or militia for at least four years in an appropriate rank. Captain Mayne, the adjutant appointed to the Staffordshire Regiment, came from the regular militia. He had to refuse an adjutancy in the army as he had no private income.

In the first yeomanry movement most training normally took place as a troop, initially two days each week. Regiments met as a whole once a year for annual training which lasted from seven to fourteen days. It was therefore essential that troop training was carried out regularly. There were however difficulties. Staffordshire troops drew men from a wide area and assembling the whole troop for training presented problems for efficient training.

Yeomanry officers were required to have social rank. Colonel Monckton, son of Viscount Galway, was an Indian nabob, Colonels Earl de Grey, Sir John Leicester and Sir Henry Harpur Crewe were great landowners, none had military experience. The burden of training and organisation fell upon the captains, permanent staff and NCOs. Where there was a zealous Lord Lieutenant, such as Earl Spencer in Northamptonshire, it appeared to improve the efficiency, organisation and discipline of the regiment, where it was lacking as in Staffordshire, there was indiscipline and the noticeable lack of organisation.

The troop captains and their NCOs, whatever their military experience, were responsible for the training and efficiency of the troops and together they were in effect responsible for the efficiency of the regiment. Recognising that many officers had no military experience, Colonel Charles Herries of the Westminster Light Horse published a book of cavalry movements, drill and the use of arms. It became the accepted text book for yeomanry corps.<sup>121</sup> Unless officers had an experienced NCO, this was their only aid. Even so many did not use it and General Erskine, after a poor inspection, was moved to order the officers of the Derbyshire Corps to read their drill books.<sup>122</sup> The role of captain was crucial in other respects to the success of the regiment. Captains such as W S Bickley of Bilston raised their own troops. Once raised it was the duty of the captain to see that any vacancies were speedily filled.



On 23 March 1811 Captain Mayne had occasion to write to Captain Coyney, commandant of the Lichfield Troop and ordered him to augment his troop, by five men, immediately to bring the strength up to forty-five before the next general inspection. He was reminded that troop recruitment was his responsibility.<sup>123</sup> In 1817 Sir Henry Harpur Crewe admonished Captain Pole of the Radbourne Troop for similar dereliction of duty.<sup>124</sup>

It was the duty of the adjutant and the permanent staff to see that efficient training and drill was undertaken and where necessary improve organisation and discipline. It was also the duty of adjutants to visit individual troops to inspect horses, equipment, uniforms and arms and report to the commandant on the state of the individual troops. In the pursuance of these duties Captain Mayne was required to visit each troop twice a month and he was required to make monthly reports on his activities to Monckton. Under the supervision of the colonel he was required to act as paymaster and quartermaster. Lastly he was responsible for the training of officers. It was a considerable burden for one man. Carried out efficiently and thoroughly, the role of the adjutants was central to the organisation, training and discipline of the regiments. It was, in a large county, an arduous task. Until the institution of an efficient rail system adjutants had to travel on horse and, like Mayne, spent most of the year on the road, away from home. In addition to his pay, Mayne received a government grant for two horses and forage. In a memorandum written in 1829 he said that wherever he went he received great hospitality but, nonetheless, he had to pay for himself and his servant at inns when he was out on duty.<sup>125</sup> Mayne's duties increased considerably from the time of his appointment to his retirement in 1829 but apart from an increase of two shillings a day, his income remained the same between 1798 and 1829.

In addition to the visits of the permanent staff, the cavalry inspectorate considered it essential that field officers should regularly visit each troop to assess discipline and efficiency and it was the responsibility of the commandant to see that this occurred.

The yeomanry had been regimentalised in 1798 but there were however, until 1813 in Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire autonomous, local troops. To increase efficiency and control in the movements, Lord Sidmouth, in 1804, wrote to the lords lieutenant to request that they and the colonels commandant should seek to amalgamate these corps into the regiments.<sup>126</sup> It was not until 1814 that most independent troops had either disbanded or been absorbed into the county movement. In 1804, for greater military efficiency, yeomanry regiments were brigaded in military areas or divisions. The Staffordshire Regiment, initially in the North West Area, was placed in the Inland Area. This stretched from Derbyshire in the north, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire in the east to Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire in the south. The first GOC was Lieutenant General Maitland who established his headquarters at Stafford. The area was divided into two; the northern sub-area was commanded by Brigadier General Erskine and the southern by Major General the Earl of Southampton. Despite brigading and regimentalisation the yeomanry until 1870 remained a very local movement. It was normal to call out individual troops to deal with trouble, very rarely the regiment. Commandants therefore, had to rely on the troop captains to maintain efficiency and when captains such as Coyney, Pole and de Grey failed in this respect, it undermined the discipline of a regiment.

To resume, the dilemma for the yeomanry was that the government treated it as a military movement, but the yeomen themselves and the civil power saw the movement as a *posse comitatus*. Government grants and pay were allocated to a military movement and therefore the yeomen had to organise themselves as cavalry regiments. Their organisation necessarily, therefore, derived from regular cavalry practice. The difficulty encountered by a volunteer cavalry in trying to organise as a regular regiment is best understood by an examination of how the regular cavalry was organised.

A cavalry regiment depended upon its horses. They were the main weapon when used against infantry, and were bred for their designated role. Heavy dragoons rode taller and heavier horses than hussars or lancers.

It was normal practice for all the horses in a regular cavalry regiment to be of the same size, colour and age. In addition there were always horses in reserve to replace wounded, sick or injured horses. Cavalry officers were expected to maintain several serviceable horses. To oversee the welfare of the horses, regiments had farriers and veterinary surgeons. No yeomanry regiment could possibly have matched this organisation.

From the start it was clear that horses would pose a major problem for the civilian cavalry. Cowdray's Manchester Gazette of 13 May 1797 emphasised the problem when it reported the first assembly of the Cheshire Regiment.<sup>127</sup> The availability of suitable horses for all yeomen continued to be a problem throughout the history of the movement. In theory each yeoman was supposed to have his own horse, in practice this proved to be impossible. The Orderly Book of the Calke Troop indicated a lamentable state of affairs in the colonel's own troop where a majority of troopers depended upon others for their mounts.<sup>128</sup> This undoubtedly affected the time taken to assemble and may have been a reason for absenteeism, in that horses were not always available. The problem was not only a military matter. Yeomen were exempt from the horse tax provided the colonel was prepared to swear that the horses ridden were healthy, trained horses, but few yeomanry horses could have been retained solely for military purposes, most were working horses, more used to agricultural work than military service. Evidence submitted to The Select Committees on the yeomanry, suggested that if government wanted an effective cavalry movement, it should either make money available for horses or supply cavalry horses.<sup>129</sup> This was rejected on grounds of expense. The evidence showed there were a few wealthy troops which could afford to reject any man who did not own a serviceable horse, and there were wealthy troop captains such as the Earl of Dudley who could afford to provide matching greys for his troop. Successive reports on the yeomanry concluded therefore, that without substantial government aid for horses, it would prove impossible to field an effective civilian, military cavalry movement. If the movement was to be allowed to continue it had to be accepted that some men would always turn up without horses, some would turn up with unsuitable horses, many would have to borrow horses. Perhaps the ultimate in dismounted cavalry was the troop of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Cavalry, none of whom had a horse and who rode to duty in wagons.<sup>130</sup>

The resolutely civilian attitudes of yeomen proved to be a problem for those who tried to organise cavalry movements. A regiment, when trained, was a uniform body of trained, disciplined men and horses. This could be achieved only by long hours of training by NCOs and riding masters. Like the infantry of the line, the cavalryman was inculcated with regimental and army values. Once enrolled he ceased to be a civilian. The strict arduous training undergone by regular troops, and the inculcation of military mores proved to be an impossibility for the yeomanry given the problems concerned with both horses and men. GOCs, government and commandants had to accept, therefore, that the yeomanry as a whole would never be a disciplined, highly organised military movement, and there would be wide variations in efficiency. Some, such as the Hertfordshire Regiment, were rated as being fit to serve with regular cavalry, others such as the Staffordshire and Derbyshire Regiments were rated as being poor by the inspectorate.

If the role of the yeomanry was to be one of policing the populace, no specific training was provided to deal with civilian crowds, rioters and strikers. In dealing with dissent, the yeomanry behaved as if it were on a battlefield. Robson has summed up the attitude of most cavalry officers. He said that it simply came down to an officer pointing his sword in the direction of the enemy and charging hell for leather.<sup>131</sup> From the evidence known of yeomen in action against crowds, it was an attitude which they embraced.

Rigorous schedules were laid down for training in an attempt to train an efficient military movement. An insight into how this efficiency was to be achieved may be gained by examining the Rules of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Calke Troop of the Derbyshire Regiment issued in 1803, which covered drills and exercises.<sup>132</sup> When a troop met for practice the drills covered, trotting, trotting in file, trotting in open order, trotting in columns of division, and oblique marching to form a line of advance. Before any drill commenced Sir Henry Harpur Crewe insisted that troop captains examined all the horses and troop captains were obliged to submit a monthly report on the state of horses to Sir Henry. He ruled that no trained horse was to be sold without his permission and he let it be known he did not approve of grey horses.<sup>133</sup> Paid training was not popular.

Those regiments enrolled before 22 June 1803 were entitled to eight-five paid days training, those enrolled after that date, twenty days. There was always, despite pay, a good deal of absenteeism from drills.

The Staffordshire Regiment met for its first annual training of ten days, on Fradely Heath in 1794.<sup>134</sup> It was proposed in 1804 that annual training should last for a period of between ten and twenty-eight days. Annual training was not popular in the Inland Area where, between 1803 and 1805, regiments met for a maximum of fourteen days plus any marching in time. At the height of the invasion threat in June 1803, the Staffordshire Regiment was 'invited' by General Maitland to assemble for a period not exceeding a month for training. It is clear from the correspondence between the Adjutant General and Colonel Broughton of the Cavalry Inspectorate that many men refused to attend. Maitland refused to countenance any compromise which did not include a general muster at Lichfield and a readiness to march away from Staffordshire if ordered to do so. There is no evidence that the regiment complied with the invitation. It did meet at Lichfield in 1804, from 9 February to 24 February, but there is no record that the Staffordshire men ever met for longer than fourteen days.<sup>135</sup> On 6 June 1805, the Regiment assembled only for eight days. By 1817, the annual training period had been reduced to seven days plus marching in time. This was only allowed for corps of three troops or more. Some regiments chose to meet twice for shorter periods.<sup>136</sup> In 1817 and 1822, because they had been called out in aid of the civil power for long periods, the Staffordshire Regiment did not assemble for annual training.<sup>137</sup> There was some variation in the way annual training was organised. On 25 September 1804, for example, the Cheshire Yeomanry marched to Liverpool, where they were brigaded with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Shropshire Militia and a detachment of 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoons for fourteen days of exercises. This was repeated in 1805 and 1819.<sup>138</sup> On 10 June 1809 the Staffordshire Corps, which normally did not leave the county, marched to Derby for its annual training in three divisions. It remained there until the 21 June. It was a combined exercise carried out with the Derbyshire Regiment and the Local Militia.

Annual training took place under strict military discipline and conditions. It was a period when commandants, field officers and the inspectorate could exercise the regiment as a whole. At the start of the training, the commanding officer was required to read the Articles of War to his regiment. This subjected all men to the Mutiny Act and martial law. A circular of 1817, reminded all yeomen that whilst on permanent duty they came under the command of the General Commanding the District. The Act of 1804, gave all commandants the powers to fine or imprison offenders for the duration of the training.<sup>139</sup> It was known from experience with the militia that if men could be segregated from the civilian populace, either in barracks or under canvas, officers and men benefited from military discipline, control and training. It was a further benefit if they were brigaded with regular units.<sup>140</sup> This was another problem the movement had to face, the Staffordshire Regiment, like most other corps, had no tents or access to barracks. It did rent and clear an exercise ground on Whittington Heath, outside Lichfield, for training but this only drew the general public to watch, and worse still, hucksters who sold liquor. Most regiments were forced therefore, to billet officers and men in the inns of towns even though this was known to have a deleterious effect both on control and discipline.<sup>141</sup>

The programme for annual training did not vary much from regiment to regiment. During their annual training at Buxton in 1804, the Derbyshire Regiment's day started at six o'clock with the trumpet call 'stables'. Men rose, groomed, fed and watered their horses which were then inspected by the troop officers. At six forty-five men were paraded in individual troops for carbine drill, this finished at seven forty-five when men were dismissed for breakfast. At nine o'clock the trumpet call 'boots and saddles' called men out on parade, shaved, washed and correctly uniformed. At nine-thirty the trumpet call 'saddles' signalled a regimental parade and inspection. At ten o'clock the regiment moved off for exercises which continued until two in the afternoon at which time dinner was taken. At four o'clock exercises commenced and continued until six or seven in the evening. The last call was 'stables' when horses were groomed, fed, watered and bedded down for the night. After which, unless men were detailed for duty they were free.<sup>142</sup>

Strenuous efforts were made to exert military discipline, at all times during the training constant checks were made on numbers, a daily return to the adjutant had to be made since pay depended upon attendance. There were checks on weapons, horses and uniforms and reports made to the adjutant. A colour guard of a sergeant, corporal and twelve men was mounted during daylight hours and when the colours moved into the field they were carried by a cornet with the accompanying guard in full-dress uniform. Each troop took it in turn to provide this guard. A piquet was mounted each night from sun-down to sun-up. It consisted of a captain, a lieutenant, a sergeant and ten men. The piquet guarded the camp and policed the annual training. It had powers to arrest those acting in an unsoldierly manner. Each troop supplied the guard in turn. Some regiments, such as the Staffordshires, punished men who turned up without a horse by placing them on permanent guard duty, the Derbyshires sent men home which meant a loss of pay. Although attempts were made to control men and make them act in a military manner at all times it was not always successful. Piquet, for example, was an unpopular duty since it interfered with men's free time and there was always difficulty in mounting it as both officers and men failed to turn out.

Annual training was a testing time for regiments and more particularly for the men.

In addition to the mounted exercises there were foot drills, exercises with swords, pistols, carbines and muskets. After 1815 there was much debate on the role of cavalry. By then it was known that the cavalry could no longer overrun well positioned infantry.<sup>143</sup> The failure of crack French cavalry corps to break the British squares at Waterloo confirmed the belief of army reformers that the role of the cavalry would have to alter. The role now envisaged for mounted units was that of scouts, skirmishers and forward look-outs on infantry flanks. The old role of the dragoon was revived that of a mounted infantry force which could move swiftly up to the enemy, dismount and fight on foot. These changes were resisted fiercely by cavalry regiments, including the yeomanry, who saw themselves as superior to the man on foot and heirs of the mediaeval knights and therefore, change was slow. Skirmishing and scouting were introduced into yeomanry training post-1814 since, in action, they would have acted as scouts for the militia.

The value of such exercises has to be questioned since the yeomanry had no military role until the reforms of 1870, and battlefield scouting and skirmishing was of little value when dealing with striking miners.

All annual training was attended by cavalry inspectors, appointed by the GOC Area, and responsible to him. They inspected the competence of officers, individual troops, discipline and the organisation of the regiment. They reported their written findings to the lords lieutenant, GOC and the commandants. On 22 February 1804, at the end of their annual training, the Staffordshire Regiment, was inspected by Colonel Broughton who expressed himself,

'highly gratified at the soldier like appearance and discipline of the men'.<sup>144</sup>

In the report he commented favourably in his report on the utmost order and regularity he observed among the 500 men billeted in Lichfield. During the training period of 1805, the regiment was inspected twice by general officers, General Pigot, the new GOC Area on 22 June and Brigadier General Erskine, OC northern sub-area on 25 June. In the period during which invasion was expected inspections of the Staffordshire Corps were frequent. In 1805 the regiment was inspected over twenty times. On 1 April, the Lichfield and Walsall Troops were inspected by Lieutenant Colonel Cook, and on the 2 April by General Erskine. On 9 April, Erskine inspected the Trentham and Stafford Troops. On the 14 and 15, Colonel Cook inspected the Leek Troop twice. On 16 and 17 he visited the Trentham and Stafford Troops.

On 16 August, the Bilston and Walsall Troops were inspected, in full marching order, by Colonel Madden. On 27 August, Madden inspected the Leek Troop; on 28, the Trentham Troop; on 29, the Stafford Troop; on 31, the Lichfield Troop. All those inspected by Madden were required to be in full marching order. On 7 October, General Erskine inspected the Leek Troop. On 15, the Lichfield, Walsall and Bilston Troops were inspected on Aston Heath by Colonel Madden. On 16, Madden inspected three troops at Stafford and on the following day two at Trentham. On 10 December, Erskine inspected the Walsall Troop; on 11 December the Stafford and Trentham Troops and on 12 December the Newcastle Troop. The number of inspections that year caused dissent in the regiment and the Trentham Troop resigned.<sup>145</sup>



This action represented a clash of attitudes. Erskine was worried that an invasion was about to take place and it was his duty to see that the yeomanry, which was part of the auxiliary defence force of the Kingdom, was in a complete state of preparedness.<sup>146</sup> The attitude of the Staffordshire men, and many in the Inland Area between 1804 and 1805, at the height of the invasion threat, was represented by the resignation of the Trentham Troop, and the refusal of the whole of the Inland Division, to turn out for the review by HRH the Prince of Wales on 27 July.<sup>147</sup> One result of his clash with the Staffordshire Corps was the cancellation, by Erskine, of a number of proposed inspections in 1806. The attitude of the Staffordshire men was not an isolated one. The Orderly Book of the Calke Troop recorded considerable absenteeism when inspections took place.<sup>148</sup>

All the evidence shows that yeomen saw little purpose in practising military drills which they would never use. Above all it was inspections which irritated them. The army believed that an efficient, properly organised, civilian, cavalry force needed thorough, disciplined training. The only way efficiency could be judged was by authoritative inspection. From a civilian point of view it was unreasonable to spend so much time and money on what were seen as unnecessary inspections which took them away from their avocations. Inspections were themselves time consuming but it was also the time needed to prepare beforehand; horses had to be taken from the fields or borrowed, furniture, weapons, the correct uniform all to be brushed and cleaned. Full marching order necessitated packing valises in the correct military manner with spare clothes, toilet articles and capes correctly rolled behind saddles. Once preparations had been completed, men had to march in at a pace that ensured horses were not blown to the point of inspection. This meant a halt every five to six miles. It meant, for Staffordshire men, living well away from the inspection point, an extra day added to the inspection time. In 1812 the situation had not altered.<sup>149</sup> The efficiency of the Staffordshire Regiment had deteriorated after 1805. Colonel Corbet inspected the Corps on 20 October 1810. Monckton was not present at the inspection. The report, although couched in language which verged on the obsequious, contained serious criticism of a regiment which had been established for sixteen years, the last ten of which Monckton had been in command.<sup>150</sup>

Corbet opined that when a regiment was to be inspected it should be ensured that men turned up correctly uniformed with their weapons and equipment in good order, and that men should assemble at least an hour before the inspection was due.<sup>151</sup> The adjutant, Corbet reported, would be able to inform Monckton of the disgraceful state of the weapons, many of which were quite useless, including those of some permanent sergeants, in particular that of the Bilston pay-sergeant. He concluded his report with a warning.<sup>152</sup> He commended to Monckton the practices of the Leicestershire and Rutland Regiments which never exercised without the whole regiment being present. The faults he observed in the Staffordshire Corps were due, in his opinion, to the fact that field officers did not visit the troops which meant that the men gave themselves no trouble whatsoever. A good example was set, he claimed, by Earl Spencer of the Northampton Yeomanry, a large force of 700 men, who made it a frequent practice to visit and overlook his regiment since he found it necessary. The advice was not heeded. Earl de Grey when Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, present at an Inland Area field day in 1824, and was most critical of the Staffordshire Yeomanry.<sup>153</sup>

From the reports it is clear that the organisation of Monckton's corps had, in five years, deteriorated badly. At the time of the 1810 inspection Monckton was sixty-six years old which might explain a certain amount of inactivity on his part, although he was not to retire for another nineteen years, and then only because he could not climb into his saddle. There were however, younger field officers and a permanent staff who ought, as Corbet said, to have involved themselves. The conclusion nonetheless, must be that there was no firm leadership from Monckton who was known to be an easy going man. In addition, there was either little incentive on the part of the senior officers to improve matters or they were frightened that many would resign if they tried to impose too much control. The only authority who could have rectified matters, the lord lieutenant, did not intervene. On this evidence they compared badly with their counterparts in the volunteer infantry.

The most significant measure of control in the yeomanry was exercised by the troop committees and in some cases the whole troop. The committees were powerful bodies which controlled most troop activities, and thus the regiment. They were responsible for drawing up and amending rules, they were responsible for the election of officers and the admission of new members. They acted as a court if any disputes arose over disciplinary procedures. They were responsible for organising entertainments and raising funds. The powers of the committees were extensive. The Stockport Troop Committee, in 1815, wrote to Colonel Sir John Leicester, Commandant of the Cheshire Regiment saying that a majority of the troop disapproved of Captain Gee's behaviour.<sup>154</sup> At Burton-on-Trent the corps, composed mostly of Lord Anglesey's, tenants would under no circumstances serve under Lieutenant Worthington as captain. Faced with the disbandment of the troop Lord Anglesey persuaded his uncle, the Hon Berkley Paget, to take command.<sup>155</sup> Troop Committees in Staffordshire consisted of all the officers and eight elected men. Until 1806, they promulgated and amended troop rules. They acted as a court which decided on the penalties for misbehaviour not covered by the rules; they decided what action should be taken for the non-payment of fines; an obstinate refusal to obey rules, and persistent absence. They could order the expulsion of offenders but in this case the accused could demand a court of honour composed of the whole troop which then judged the offence and determined the correctness of the sentence. In all the records consulted there was one case only of expulsion. This occurred in the Derbyshire Regiment but no reason was given.<sup>156</sup> From the inception of the Staffordshire Regiment the committees decided that all pay should be pooled, placed in a central fund and distributed equally to all members.

The committees were elected in exactly the same manner as the volunteer infantry, their powers were, if anything, more extensive. The committee of the Westminster Light Horse, for example, decided that each member of that corps should take it in turn to act as an NCO. Whereas the volunteer infantry were seen as being 'too democratical' even Republican, the yeomanry, which operated a similar, democratic system, were not castigated in the same manner.

The only reason tenable to explain the difference in attitude was that many in the ranks of the yeomanry, and all the officers, were drawn from the elites and were therefore, judged to be loyal. Corps were governed by troop and regimental rules and standing orders. These were central to the organisation and control of the corps. These were intended to govern every aspect of training, organisation and behaviour of a troop and regiment. Rules were constantly amended and to deal with new organisational matters and recurrent or new types of misbehaviour. All rules, under the 1802 Act, had to be approbated by Whitehall, a measure intended to ensure greater uniformity of organisation, and enforce stricter discipline and control. In most corps, as in the volunteer infantry, there was the 'catch all' rule of behaving in an unsoldierly manner.

Harries Jenkins has said that in the nineteenth century rank and birth were believed to be the essential qualities for leadership and control of any kind. It was an accepted belief that the ranks would unreservedly obey and follow these born leaders.<sup>157</sup> It was unfortunate therefore, that yeomanry officers did not always set the best example. The annual assemblage of the Yorkshire Regiment took place at Scarborough in 1803. The distance from York to Scarborough is forty miles which took de Grey's troop two days to complete. As de Grey remarked, it was 'tedious and slow'. At the end of the training his troop asked to stay in Scarborough an extra night and claimed that they could reach York in time for the regimental review the following day. The following morning they were all 'still desperately drunk' and in this condition they took six hours, non-stop marching, to reach York. When they arrived for inspection, their uniforms were dusty, their horses dead beat and their accoutrements were dirty.<sup>158</sup> In Staffordshire, the yeomanry was led by the cream of county society which should have ensured perfect control and discipline. The rules indicated that this was not the case, they showed that the yeomanry was just as undisciplined and needed as much control as its infantry and militia counterparts. It appeared surprising that fines needed to be levied on officers but the sort of behaviour narrated above would explain the necessity.

The rules of the Derbyshire Corps promulgated by Sir Henry Harpur Crewe in 1803, were typical of the rules for most yeomanry regiments.

They were taken from a book written by Sir William Young.<sup>159</sup> Each member of the regiment was given a copy, along with separate rules for field days and reviews, all of which men were expected to learn by heart. Punctuality was essential for efficiency, troopers were to be at the assigned place before time. Those coming late on parade were not to be allowed to fall in. Regular attendance at all meetings and subordination to exercise was most requisite. Only 'ONE' person was to direct, and the rest were to be directed either by an NCO or an officer. Strict silence under arms had to be observed, and this was to become a matter of habitual practice and discipline. From the moment the commanding officer gave the word attention not a word was to be spoken until the troop was to sit at ease. Standing Orders for field days warned that those who turned up without a horse or with an unfit animal would be sent home. Those on guard or piquet duty were at all times to be in full uniform.<sup>160</sup> Hair appeared to be a matter for national concern. Adjutants orderly books constantly bemoaned the untidy state of men's hair. The Calke Troop of the Derbyshire Corps required its troopers to have their hair cut short. When in uniform men were not to walk in the street in a slovenly manner or with coats unbuttoned. They were to be properly dressed and clean at all times.<sup>161</sup> Sir John Heathcote's Troop of the Staffordshire Regiment had a similar rule. Fines were the usual punishment, there was no recourse to imprisonment for persistent disobedience or non-payment of fines. Otherwise the misdemeanours listed and the fines levied bear a close resemblance to those of the volunteer infantry. After a preamble which ordered all men to take the Oath of Allegiance and obey superior officers at all time, the Cheshire Regiment issued a printed list to all its members of the fines to be levied.

#### **MISDEMEANOUR**

#### **FINES**

	<b><u>Trooper / NCO</u></b>	<b><u>Officer</u></b>
Absent for roll call	6d	1/0d
Arriving half an hour late for parade	1/0d	2/6d
Absent from drill	2/6d	5/0d
Talking in the ranks whilst at attention or any other irregularity	6d	-
A dirty uniform	1/0 per item	-
Drunk on parade	5/0d	21/0d

Excuses for absence were allowed on the grounds of proven sickness or official leave.<sup>162</sup>

Fines were imposed in the Staffordshire Regiment in 1804, for similar offences although they were heavier, roughly twice as much, and in addition the corps levied additional fines not noted elsewhere. One was for discharging a weapon in the street that indicated a level of irresponsibility which must cast doubt on the suitability of some yeomen to be armed, and also on the organisation and discipline which allowed this to happen.

#### MISDEMEANOUR

#### FINES

	<u>Trooper / NCO</u>	<u>Officer</u>
Failure to turn out in aid of the civil power when ordered to do so	2 guineas	4 guineas
Changing a horse / not providing a suitable replacement without permission of a captain	1 guinea	2 guineas
Discharging a weapon in the street	2/6d	5/0d

All fines were collected at muster by the troop sergeant and paid into the troop funds.<sup>163</sup>

In 1801 the Calke troop's fines amounted to three guineas, by comparison, in 1806, one troop sergeant in Staffordshire collected twenty-one pounds during a year. The rules of Lieutenant Colonel Sir John Heathcote's Troop published in 1803 contained a rule unseen elsewhere concerning social drinking.<sup>164</sup> From which it may be inferred that, as in all the armed forces, drunkenness was a problem in the yeomanry.

Military requirements were the cause of trouble in the Staffordshire Regiment during 1805.

Disaffection in the regiment was serious enough to threaten its existence. Monckton summoned all his troop captains to a meeting on 10 January 1806 to ascertain whether the Regiment could continue. He demanded of his captains detailed reports of the number of inspections, and the reactions of the men. It is a significant comment on Monckton's leadership that as the commandant he was not aware of this without having to ask. On 30 July 1806 Monckton called a meeting of the officers and private gentlemen.

The outcome of the meeting was an order from Monckton to all troop captains to,

'sound out their men and to gain the sentiments of gentlemen for their future service and a list made of those willing to continue'.<sup>165</sup>

He added a footnote; those who resigned would, under the Act of 1802, be liable to the ballot for militia service; for those who remained he promised to make service, 'as easy as possible'. He promised, subject to the King's approval the regiment would be required to assemble once a year for no more than ten days, exclusive of marching in time. Any other days of exercises were to be fixed by troop captains, 'after consultations with their men'. Monckton concluded with an admonition to those who remained in service, that absenteeism would no longer be tolerated.<sup>166</sup>

On 29 August 1806 the Rules and Regulations to be observed by the Regiment of Staffordshire Yeomanry Cavalry were promulgated by Monckton. This was undoubtedly an initiative to improve discipline and, belatedly, establish greater control and improved efficiency. The standing orders laid down an annual assembly of twelve days inclusive of marching in time. Monckton invoked powers given him under the Act of 1804 which allowed him to fine offenders. Any man, at time of assembly, exercise or to aid the civil power, who when ordered to do so, failed to turn out properly dressed, fully accoutred and on a suitable horse was to be fined 10/6d per day as long as the troop was on duty, officers to pay double.<sup>167</sup> The rules were reiterated over the years but as the adjutant's orderly book showed, just as frequently ignored. On 11 June 1810, for example, Monckton had occasion to call attention to the rules because it had come to his notice that troops 'called out' had been improperly dressed. He now decreed that any troop called out on such duty must first assemble for an inspection. Troop officers were to check horses, uniforms, cleanliness, weapons and accoutrements. Men, he ordered, were to be in full marching order with valises packed in a regulation manner and were to contain a spare shirt, a pair of stockings, toilet articles and curry combs. Any man who failed to fulfil the criteria laid down must fall out. This was to count as an absence and therefore, incurred the fine of 10/6d per day, loss of pay and entry in the records. When the full procedure had been carried out the troop could move off. This further increased the time between the call from a magistrate and arrival at the scene of disturbance. Monckton insisted that on arrival the troop officer was to report to the magistrate or senior military officer for instructions.<sup>168</sup>

On 26 November 1810, after Corbet's inspection, Monckton issued a series of regimental orders.<sup>169</sup>

It is clear from these orders that Corbet's strictures had been noted and General Dyott, himself a Staffordshire landowner, had intervened to remedy an unsatisfactory situation.

To conclude, the use of the corps by the justices, and the belief and behaviour of yeomen, indicated that most did not view the corps as being a military movement. They were not prepared to accept military attitudes, and the strict training and discipline necessary to satisfy inspectors. Whatever their beliefs may have been, the yeomen were nonetheless a uniformed, armed, mounted military force supported by government, whose officers took rank in the army.

The appointment of inspectors indicated that government expected, even in peace time, military standards of control and discipline. It was this which caused trouble in the yeomanry when men refused to accept the necessity of obeying Whitehall absolutely. The rules and entries in adjutant's orderly books indicated that there was a great deal of indiscipline.

Some of it, such as talking in the ranks, lateness, improper dress and long hair was indicative of civilian attitudes. They were trivial offences but subversive of discipline and control, and irritating to those attempting to organise and train cavalrymen. Other behaviours noted were either dangerous or deplorable, and questioned the suitability of some yeomen to be in uniform. Absenteeism and the lack of suitable horses in most regiments remained intractable problems for officers and NCOs attempting to train and organise a military movement. All these factors, and a lack of time to train properly, affected every aspect of control, discipline and service.

It meant that not only were regiments ineffective militarily, but they were not, as the Staffordshire and Derbyshire records show, always reliable when it came to performing what they saw as their role, the main aid to the civil power. Where there were interested lieutenants such as Earl Spencer and the Marquis of Salisbury county movements appeared to be well organised and disciplined. The lieutenants in Staffordshire following Earl Gower, the Earls Uxbridge, Talbot and Dartmouth took no interest in the county yeomanry. Their lack of interest permitted a slack leadership which resulted in a poorly organised regiment.



#### (iv) Finance

Like the volunteer infantry, Yeomanry corps were required, when they were raised in 1794, to be self supporting, although aid with arms was forthcoming from Ordnance. The Act of 1798 made provision for financial support to be given to volunteer movements. Government in 1800 offered to pay for a regimental adjutant, a sergeant and trumpeter for each troop, and make an allowance for forage for their horses. In December 1799, Colonel Earl Gower received a grant of £2,412 to clothe the Staffordshire Regiment which then numbered 268 men.<sup>170</sup> Thereafter, government finance for the yeomanry was regulated by the various volunteer acts, most notably those of 1802 and 1804.

The financial provision made for the yeomanry, like that of the volunteer infantry, can be listed under two headings, public and private. Money was provided, after 1798, from the public purse for clothing, contingencies and pay.<sup>171</sup> In 1804, the Consolidation Act allowed a contingency allowance of up to £120 per troop, £60 to be drawn each half year. This was reduced in 1806, partially restored in 1808, reduced again in 1814 and 1816. In 1816 when the contingency allowance was halved regiments had to make up the deficiencies themselves. The Staffordshire Regiment estimated that when all allowances had been taken into account they would still need to find £426/12/0d. In May 1817 the clothing allowance was increased to 30/0d per man, back-dated to 25 December 1816.<sup>172</sup> A captain in 1817 received an additional daily allowance of 2/2d. Quartermasters received an extra 5/6d per day as did sergeant-majors. Troopers now received 5/0d daily in lieu of all other charges. The daily rate for adjutants had risen from eight to ten shillings. A small corps such as the Derbyshire Regiment claimed £1,395/16/0d for clothing and contingency allowance in 1806.<sup>173</sup> In 1816 the Derbyshire Corps claimed £400 in pay and expenses for duty in aid of the civil power, in 1817, they claimed £421/10/3d for duty in January, March and June.<sup>174</sup> It may be computed that when the Bilston Troop were on duty for seven days in 1817 that their claim for pay alone, amounted to over £100, for which they were required to do nothing.

There were many items of expenditure for a yeoman. Annual training could be expensive. In 1809, for example, officers in the Staffordshire Regiment were charged 5/2d per day for dinner in the mess, wine and beer were extra; visitors had to be paid for, unless invited by the mess, in which case the expense was shared equally. Another major item of expenditure in yeomanry corps was clothing. The years between 1794 and 1814, were ones when uniforms reached a peak of colour design and tailoring. The uniforms of continental cavalry units such as hussars and lancers were copied. Uniforms were worn on parade, in the ballroom and in the street. Many corps had to enforce regulations forbidding the wearing of uniforms whilst at work. The wealthier the corps the more flamboyant the uniform. In 1795 Lord Egremont designed a uniform for his Sussex Corps.<sup>175</sup> Colley has claimed that lavish uniforms embodied authority, patriotism, loyalty and service to the nation. A great deal of time, creativity and money was spent in designing them. She also added that so cunning was the tailoring that a uniform could, and did, hide imperfections such as small heads, bandy legs, paunches and short stature.<sup>176</sup> These uniforms, impractical for military purposes, nonetheless created a splendid martial appearance. It was evident also that the grants provided by government could never purchase the uniforms which most yeoman appeared to want. Uniforms were so impracticable and easy to damage that money had continually to be found in order to keep them in a state of smartness and repair. The Staffordshire Regiment, after one bruising encounter with striking miners who pelted them with coal, mud and filth, had to raise over £600 to re-clothe themselves.<sup>177</sup> The clothing allowance of £3 for each trooper was much greater than the £1/10/0d allowed for the volunteer infantry, because yeomanry uniforms were made up of sergeant's cloth; even so, it was never enough to pay for uniforms. In 1812, for example, when the Cheshires re-clothed, they chose a most extravagant uniform.<sup>178</sup> Research into the uniforms of the various regiments shows great variations in colour, style and type. The uniforms worn by the Staffordshire Regiment were simpler and cheaper than those of their neighbours in Cheshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire.<sup>179</sup> Uniforms, however decorative, did not satisfy the tastes of all men. There were constant orders by adjutants which forbade the addition of extra braid to trousers. The Derbyshire men were admonished for adding gold fringes to their jackets and wearing officer's feathers.<sup>180</sup>

When the Tabley Troop of the Cheshire Yeomanry was re-clothed in 1806, local tradesmen were employed.<sup>181</sup> It cost £10/17/4d to clothe each trooper. The government grant was £495 so the troop was faced with a deficit of £105 for clothing alone. This can be compared with the cost of clothing a volunteer infantryman. Captain Rugely of Potton, in 1803, spent £1/15/9d to clothe each man and this left a deficit of 5/9d per man which for the whole company amounted to somewhat over £15.<sup>182</sup> Officers received no allowances and a full set of uniforms and accoutrements could cost over £300. The Staffordshire notes indicated that young men were loath to accept commissions and the expense of uniforms could have been a reason for this.<sup>183</sup> Other extravagances were recorded in 1816, at a time when allowances had been reduced.<sup>184</sup> As regimental expenses proved to be so heavy, the Cheshire Regiment invested some of their funds in South Sea stock and used the income to meet outstanding expense, although in the post-war years, they were forced to sell the stock to finance new recruits. By 1814 the cost of equipping a troop had risen further.<sup>185</sup>

The extravagance of the movement meant that they depended heavily upon public subscriptions. It was normal practice to open a subscription list when a troop was raised. When the Staffordshire Regiment was raised in 1794, fourteen inns were used as recruiting centres and books were left in all of them, as well as town halls, so that subscribers could pledge money. Advertisements and posters then instructed subscribers where the money should be handed in. In most cases, solicitors were designated as agents. After the money had been collected, as was usual, a County Defence Committee to administer the funds for all the voluntary movements was set up.<sup>186</sup> The money raised in Staffordshire came from a wide section of the populace.<sup>187</sup> An initial grant from the fund of £10 per man was made to assist Gower in equipping the Staffordshire Regiment in 1794. Similar meetings are recorded throughout the inland area in Chester, Worcester, Nantwich, Buckingham and Derby, when considerable sums were raised for the voluntary movements.<sup>188</sup> The meeting held in the Shire Hall at Stafford on 19 November 1819 to consider augmenting the Staffordshire Yeomanry raised £5,000 immediately, and within a fortnight over £8,000 had been collected to support the county movement.<sup>189</sup> This was absolutely essential as Regimental funds were low.

A letter written by J Fenton to James Loch in 1817 desired Loch to inform the Marquis of Stafford that a new troop was being raised in Newcastle by Mr Kinnersley. He informed Loch that the funds of the regiment were too low to permit anything being drawn from them towards equipping the new corps. He thought it hard that those who volunteered to serve should have to bear the whole of the expense of clothing and equipment, and considered a grant of £10 per man would ease the burden on each trooper. He had heard that Mr Kinnersley, Mr Spode, Mr Bourne and Mr Davenport were prepared to donate £50 each. He did not ask Stafford directly for a donation but there is no doubt that this was the intention of the letter since Stafford had subscribed generously in the past to the voluntary movements.<sup>190</sup>

To resume, considerable sums of money were donated by the public to aid the yeomanry. Without this measure of public support the yeomanry would have found it difficult to survive, especially post-war. On the figures known it seemed likely that over half the money required to clothe and maintain cavalry regiments was raised from public sources, and yeomen themselves were required to subscribe to troop funds. The government continued its support for the cavalry throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The policy was not without its critics. Robert Peel was concerned that the country was not receiving true value from the movement in return for the £85,000 spent in 1823. It was his contention that many listed as efficient were not; few actually turned out for annual training. He listed abuses of the system: effectives were certified by commanding officers but it was in the best interests of commandants, he said, to return the maximum numbers possible, whether accurate or not, because these numbers determined pay and allowances. He thought this system open to abuse, and believed that hundreds were claiming allowances,

‘whose services would not be worth a farthing’.<sup>191</sup>

Throughout the years between 1794 and 1823, and for much of the nineteenth century, the same problems concerned with finance arose and the same questions were posed. How many men were efficient? Was the government paying out for inefficients, absentees and non-existent yeomen?

How corrupt was the system in allowing claims for allowances to be made by corps to which they were not entitled? How could savings be made without reducing the efficiency of the movement? Throughout the century government attempted to introduce measures to save money and improve efficiency. Reports and Commissions on the State of the Yeomanry indicated that whatever steps were taken little of importance was achieved.<sup>192</sup>

In war-time the cavalry could have expected, and did receive wide public approbation and support during the wars. In peace-time doubts were raised as to the necessity of supporting the yeomanry and financial support lessened until internal dissent disturbed the country. It was evident also that the greater proportion of the industrial populace, for example those of the south Staffordshire coalfield, the operatives in Stockport and Manchester, neither supported nor liked the movement. In counties such as Buckinghamshire, Cheshire, Northamptonshire and Staffordshire there was post-war, diminished but continued support, for the movements. In a period of doubt and financial restraint, the impetus for raising finance from the public came from local elites whose influence in local government had increased dramatically by the early nineteenth century. Cannadine has said that by the late eighteenth century a new territorial elite had emerged into which growing numbers of patrician clergymen, magistrates and landowners were assimilated, and it was this elite which had assumed control of local government.<sup>193</sup> The responsibility for governance, law and order and local defence rested entirely with them. It was they who called meetings to augment the yeomanry. It was they who controlled the movement. The yeomanry, like the volunteer infantry, became a part of the local government structure. It upheld and protected ancient traditions, it played its part in municipal ceremonies. After 1814 it remained the main executive instrument of the justices in the enforcement of the peace and order, in an age which perceived a breakdown in law and order. Whilst much of the effort of the elites, including the use of the yeomanry, was to protect their status, privileges, business interests and property, in the process they also protected the respectable classes. Wealthy farmers, businessmen, entrepreneurs and the professional classes had every reason to provide financial support for the yeomanry since their interests were being protected.

## (v) Membership

There are some serious misconceptions in the literature about the membership of the yeomanry. Mileham, for example, has claimed that membership of the movement was limited by the expense of a horse and equipment to an exclusive stratum of rural society, a claim echoed by Emsley.<sup>194</sup> It is possible to distinguish at least four social groups which rode with the cavalry. There is little doubt that yeomanry commandants were always drawn from the nobility or gentry; Sir John Leicester, Bt, in Cheshire, Sir Henry Harpur Crewe, Bt, in Derbyshire, Sir Watkyn Williams Wyne, Bt, in Denbeighshire, Earl de Grey in Yorkshire, the Earl of Aylesford in Warwickshire, Lord Somers in Worcestershire and Lord Somerville in Devon. The officers were usually, but not always, drawn from the same class. In 1803 the Hertfordshire Regiment numbered among its eight captains, two earls and two baronets; the Warwickshire Regiment listed two baronets as captains; only one baronet is listed in the Cheshire Regiment. The Staffordshire Regiment was commanded by Earl Gower until 1800, when the command passed to the Hon Edward Monckton, MP. He held his command for twenty nine years. He retired in 1829 at the age of eighty-six. Monckton, who had no military experience, made a large fortune in India as an underwriter with the East India Company. In 1779 he returned to Staffordshire, where he purchased several large estates to the north of Wolverhampton. His main interest from that time onwards was the acquisition and improvement of land. He was said to be an easy going man and to this may be attributed some of the disciplinary and organisational problems suffered by his regiment.<sup>195</sup> He was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel E Littleton, MP. The Littleton's were an old established county family with estates at Teddesley near Penkridge. Their money came from rents and coal. Littleton's Parliamentary duties proved so onerous that he could not combine them with the active command of the regiment. In 1834, he resigned in favour of Lieutenant Colonel the Earl of Lichfield who had joined the regiment as a trooper in 1808 and was commissioned captain four years later. The Lichfield estates lay at Shugborough. The Staffordshire Regiment throughout its long history, with two exceptions, was commanded by noblemen, the two exceptions were Colonel Walter Bromley Davenport, MP, a Cheshire gentleman and businessman and Colonel Levett, a Staffordshire Squire and landowner.

Earl Gower raised the regiment and his descendant, the Duke of Sutherland, was its last commandant before it became part of the Territorial Army. Most of the county nobility; the Ansons, Bagots, Bridgefords, Chetwynds, Gowers, Granvilles, Jervises, Legges and Wards rode with the cavalry at some period. County gentry supported the movement; Sir Nigel Gresley, Bt, Sir Reginald Harvey, Bt, Sir John Heathcote, Sir Robert Peel, Sir Charles Wolesley, Bt, and Sir John Wrottesley, Bt, all served in the corps.

In its early years the yeomanry was, in the main, a county movement. There was, as might be expected, a preponderance of farmers and landowners in the movement, though not as many as some commentators have claimed. Figures from Buckinghamshire and Derbyshire between the years 1798 to 1804, show that in the various troops between 19 per cent and 69 per cent of men were classed as farmers. Unfortunately, the records used the term farmer to include a large group of men, but did not show a man's wealth and standing, or whether he owned a riding horse. Many farmers, as the Derbyshire and Staffordshire records have shown, did not. The return of 1801 for Danby in the North Riding listed sixteen farmers, only five of whom owned riding horses, although most owned draft animals.<sup>196</sup> Tenants, even the poorest, were expected to ride with the yeomanry. The correspondence between Quartermaster Greaves and Sir Henry Harpur Crewe in May 1798 made it quite clear that tenants were expected to join the Calke Troop. Earl de Grey's troop was formed largely by his tenants and trained by his quartermaster, a farmer, although he noted that there were some tradesmen from Ripon in the ranks.<sup>197</sup> Fenton writing to Loch in 1817 suggested that Lord Stafford might agree to mount two or three of his tenants as he had in the past, for the newly formed Newcastle troop.<sup>198</sup> Correspondence between Stafford's bailiff at Lilleshall and James Loch at Trentham indicated tenants were reluctant to join the yeomanry. The bailiff at Lilleshall pointed out that in 1817, returns from the land were so poor that these men were loath to leave their farms at such a time. They were willing to join the yeomanry only if they were 'granted indulgence over drills and exercises'.<sup>199</sup>

Lord Bagot, the Earls of Dudley, Stamford and Warrington were publicly commended for their efforts in raising troops. Their success was due entirely to the fact that they raised troops from their tenantry and employees.<sup>200</sup> Increasingly, considerable numbers of professional men, businessmen, tradesmen and craftsmen were to be found in the corps, more especially after 1803.<sup>201</sup> In 1819 Burton on Trent sent nineteen tradesmen to the Anglesey troop.<sup>202</sup>

By 1853 the Marquis of Anglesey had cause to complain crossly to his agent that the troop which bore his name was now composed mainly of 'the gallant men of Burton' and where were his tenants?<sup>203</sup> There were from an early date urban troops. In 1803 a troop was raised in the Pottery District by Sam Spode, a master potter, who was its captain. Lieutenant Simpson who commanded at Stafford was another potter. Hamlet Wood who transferred from the volunteer infantry was another small master potter. Captain Kinnersley who re-formed the Newcastle Troop in 1817 was a banker and MP. Captain Coyney, commandant at Lichfield, and later to be second-in-command of the northern local militia, was a Liverpool businessman, Captain Cruso of Leek was an attorney and land-agent. Captain James Loch was Stafford's man of business at Trentham. Cornet Bass and Lieutenant Worthington of the Anglesey Troop were both prominent brewers. After the killing in St Peter's Fields, the local press published lists of those who had ridden with the Manchester corps.<sup>204</sup> An analysis of the membership of the Manchester Regiment by K O Fox showed thirty-nine occupational groupings riding with the cavalry. Within those groupings there were nineteen professional men, thirty-six tradesmen, eighteen craftsmen and six manual workers.<sup>205</sup> Beckett has pointed out that this sort of analysis may not be accurate. His objection was based on the fact that Fox took his statistics from War Office lists which did not show that some men were substitutes and were likely to have been of a lower social standing than their principals.<sup>206</sup>

It is clear from the evidence that the yeomanry was not, even at its inception, composed wholly of wealthy farmers and landowners. Corps raised in predominantly agricultural districts were likely to contain more farmers but within all corps there were poor tenant farmers so that it was never a movement composed solely of the wealthy.



After the wars there was increased urban recruitment, as the Wolverhampton Minute Book has shown, a trend which continued throughout the remainder of the century.<sup>207</sup> There were substitutes and remnants of the provisional cavalry in the ranks these were said to be of a lower social standing than other yeomen which in the light of the lists above seems debatable.

The presence of substitutes raises the question as to the voluntary nature of the movement. It has been shown that tenant farmers were under some compulsion to serve but Staffordshire Records showed that there was a moral obligation on the part of gentlemen to serve or provide a substitute.<sup>208</sup> The composition of the ranks varied and to some extent depended upon where the corps were raised. What did not vary was the command structure, field officers and corps commandants were always recruited from the upper classes.

If there was one motivation above all others which caused all men to join a civilian military movement it has proved difficult to isolate it with any accuracy. It is plausible to assume that most yeomen were wealthy enough to pay a fine or provide a substitute to avoid militia service and therefore, need not have joined any movement. Beckett has suggested three possible explanations as to why such a diverse group of men joined a cavalry regiment.<sup>209</sup>

The primary motive appeared to be selfish, a desire to defend property and privilege, secondly, it was socially more desirable to join the yeomanry than the volunteers or militia and lastly, there was always the patriotic desire to defend one's country. Other explanations have emerged during the course of research. There was a certain amount of compulsion on the part of great landowners. It has been claimed that those publicans who rode with the Manchester corps did so because magistrates had threatened them with the loss of their licences unless they complied. There were substitutes so some rode for money. All yeomen therefore, were not true volunteers. The Manchester Observer of 1817 claimed snobbery was a motive.<sup>210</sup>

In an age when patronage was important it may however, have been prudent to join the regiment of a powerful magnate in order to gain favour. Edward Thompson has advanced the thesis that it was class hatred which caused some to join the cavalry.<sup>211</sup>

Certainly anyone who joined a corps would have been aware that if called upon to ride down his fellow countrymen he must obey. Men must have been aware that a primary duty was to suppress demonstration and break strikes. Beckett has claimed that membership of a yeomanry troop gave entree to exclusive county society and at the balls and entertainments which ended annual training all were invited, but how far this extended outside cavalry events is not certain. Anti-Semitism existed and was to continue to do so throughout the century. According to Cripps however, Jews in Buckinghamshire, previously excluded from county society, were as yeomen granted entree to society.<sup>212</sup> Entree was granted to brewers such as Cornet Bass, Lieutenant Worthington, and potters such as Captain Spode and Lieutenant Simpson. It must be noted however, these were all wealthy men, and removed from the actual manufacturing processes. Bass was to say in later years he was admitted largely because he kept a good pack of fox-hounds and was generous with money. The old middle orders, the newly-emergent middle class, wealthy manufacturers and tradesmen, joined the corps or supported them because they could identify their interests with those of the elites. The preservation of internal stability, protection of trade and property allowed them to profit without interruption.

The appearance of artisans, craftsmen and one or two labourers in the ranks is somewhat puzzling. It is speculative, but it must be supposed that they were well established and had comfortable means, possible those Vincent called peasant entrepreneurs. The explanation for their membership could possibly have been a psychological one. Theory has asserted that they were the class which would feel most threatened by those immediately below them and the one from which they had emerged.<sup>213</sup> This would account for what Thompson has called class hatred. No convincing explanation exists to account for the labourers and manual workers in the corps unless they rode as substitutes or it is just possible that they were men who enjoyed riding and fighting, and the yeomanry was the only corps to provide that opportunity.

During the European wars much was made of the patriotism and loyalty of volunteers, and was offered as the explanation as to why so many men from all classes volunteered.

When the cavalry was first raised in 1794 it was a movement of largely autonomous troops raised to defend local interests. Earl Gower's speech of 1795 indicated that those who had joined saw their primary purpose as defending local property, and that in effect, meant privilege. The oaths they swore reflected these objectives. There were those like the Marquis of Buckingham who considered that an anti-invasion force should be created which included the yeomanry, he believed this was necessary for the defence of the country after Tate's landing. The only problem with this was the fact that many yeomanry forces would not move outside their own counties which rendered the movement, as a defence force, ineffective. Pitt envisaged the enlarged voluntary forces as being part of an anti-revolutionary movement designed to suppress Radicalism. The yeomanry proved to be 'trustworthy if not always efficient police'.<sup>214</sup> They played a major part in suppressing political agitation, and demonstrations which included food riots. In this respect, those who joined and turned out did so because they supported government, which meant they were loyal.

Self-seeking and selfishness were common complaints levelled against the yeomanry. Farmers and landowners in the corps, it was alleged, joined and supported the force for their own selfish ends.<sup>215</sup> The yeomanry protected its interests by suppressing food riots, protecting grain and food markets and ensuring the safe passage of grain around the country.<sup>216</sup>

In conclusion, the yeomanry was a loyal force but the limited service offered by some units casts doubt on their patriotism. A defence force, and a force to maintain internal stability and protect property were not mutually inconsistent? Dundas had pointed out that, in his view, a French invasion could only succeed if there was an internal revolt by discontented labour fomented by Jacobins. These revolutionaries, as Young had written, would attack property and privilege. Newman argued the elites saw England as being their property, and as they owned or controlled most of the land, the defence of property, and the defence of the Kingdom in their eyes, amounted to the same thing. The yeomanry, controlled by the upper classes, defended property, maintained peace and suppressed Radicalism. They could, therefore, be considered both loyal and patriotic.

The lower orders were never considered unless they made a nuisance of themselves. When this occurred they, not the French, became the enemy. The upper classes therefore, in supporting the yeomanry, were taking measures to defend their own privileges and rights and were more interested in suborning the lower orders than attacking the French. It was in the interests of the middle class to support the corps since it ensured peace and ability to carry on with business and professional affairs.

The yeomanry made a great point of displaying its loyalty. Public ceremonial activities were turned into demonstrations of loyalty to the King, Parliament, the constitution and Protestant religion. The presentation of colours, for example, was an important event, and usually declared a public holiday. Large crowds gathered to watch these ceremonies and listen to the loyal rhetoric.<sup>217</sup> The Cheshire Yeomanry received their standards from Prince William Frederick, Commanding Officer of the North West Division, at a ceremony in Tably Park, Knutsford in 1804. The standards were gold fringed and bore the Prince of Wales Feathers. Each one cost £55/10/8d. Loyalty could be expensive.<sup>218</sup>

Those who joined the yeomanry post-1814, would have done so in the knowledge that the corps could be called out by the civil powers and the government to suppress civilian disorder. The Staffordshire Regiment, and most of the corps in the inland division, were used to suppress political demonstrations, break strikes and police districts. Two instances apart, both attributable to incompetence rather than disobedience or refusal, all the corps turned out when called upon. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the movement acted as an instrument of Tory repression, and moreover, that it was selfish. Their actions ensured that commerce and privilege remained firmly in the hands of a wealthy minority which, by use of the yeomanry, was able to suppress ruthlessly the wishes of the majority.

## CONCLUSION

The Staffordshire Yeomanry, as with similar movements, was raised in 1794 to be part of the defence force guarding the Kingdom but as this chapter has shown the role of regiments in Staffordshire and other movements in the Inland Area was that of a police force. Yeomen considered their role was to protect property, maintain order and lastly defend their hearths and homes against a foreign invader. The Staffordshire Regiment, unlike many, agreed to serve anywhere in the Kingdom although a fifth of the corps had to remain to defend the County. There was also some doubt about the service they, and most corps in the Inland Area, would offer during harvest time. Pitt considered them, along with the infantry, to be an anti-revolutionary force ready to put down any form of dissent.

With two exceptions, the yeomanry was never called upon to take part in any offensive action against a foreign foe. The Castlemartin Yeomanry was part of a combined force which thwarted Tate's landing in Pembroke and a few regiments served in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798.

The Staffordshires responded loyally to calls by the civil power and with the help of regular cavalry were usually successful in containing riots and strikes. The yeomanry was, despite their policing role, uniformed, armed, and trained as a military movement. There were therefore contradictions between what they were trained for and their actual role. There was dissent, there were resignations and there was a great deal of absenteeism, much of which was due to the attitude of governments and the inspectorate. The problem was compounded by the fact that the corps, despite their gorgeous uniforms, remained resolutely civilian in outlook. In Staffordshire yeomanry duties were not allowed to interfere too much with ordinary life. After 1805, the discipline of the Staffordshire Regiment deteriorated and by 1810, the inspecting colonel considered there were few areas of their organisation to be praised and that they were likely to grow worse if nothing was done.

To resume, the Staffordshires, like many of their counterparts in the Kingdom, were not particularly efficient or well trained nor were they prepared to train too hard. They were prepared, unlike other regiments, to march out of their County if the King required it, but it is unlikely that any regiment would have marched at harvest time. Given these factors, all of which were known to the inspectorate, the Lords Lieutenant and the government it is plausible to say that it was neither an effective military force or a defence force.

The question originally posed therefore remains to be answered: why did successive administrations support the yeomanry movement and why was there a large measure of public support, without which the movement could not have existed?

The question of government support was not a straightforward issue. Cannadine has traced the emergence in the last half of the eighteenth century of a new, wealthy and powerful upper class. Their influence and power continued to increase well into the nineteenth century. They were able to use Parliament as an instrument to effect legislation which benefited them. Measures such as enclosure and ejectment acts enabled magnates to improve estates. In industrial areas such as Staffordshire they were able to increase incomes by adding to their holding of mineral rights. At the same time a new and wealthy middle order had emerged whose interests were closely identified with the upper classes. It was not to be supposed that these powerful groupings would tolerate any challenge to their authority and privilege. This powerful group preferred the yeomanry which they supported and largely controlled, however inefficient and undisciplined, to a police force which the upper classes feared would be removed from their control. It is plausible to argue that in some respects the yeomanry was an arm of government and therefore it was not a question of disinterested government support but one which enabled the continued protection of power and privilege. Harries-Jenkins has written of this elite which controlled national and local affairs, and of the cavalry they controlled,

'(some) corps at times appeared to be the private army of a particular territorial magnate'.<sup>219</sup>

To speak of public support for the movement requires some qualification. Support was limited to certain groups of people. It did not include the vast mass of the populace, many of whom had good reason to dislike the cavalry. Those who supported the force, and who raised money, were the upper classes, the professional and business classes and respectable citizens. These were the classes who, with the French Revolution in mind, had reason to fear revolution. They were equally scared of parliamentary reform and a consequent loss of power and privilege. They were worried about rising poor law rates, the loss of income due to interruption of trade, strikes and a perceived rise in crime. If not particularly efficient, the local corps were a comfort to those who feared reform and perceived revolution.

This chapter set out to discover why men joined the yeomanry cavalry. Most who did so would not have been threatened by the militia ballot since they could have afforded to buy a substitute or pay a fine. They must be counted volunteers. Some were not true volunteers, they were either poor tenants obliged to join by landlords or urban members suborned by magistrates. Those who joined can be divided into three groups; the upper classes; a wealthy middle order which contained farmers, business and professional men and manufacturers. Of these two groups it is plausible to say that their interests were identical and they will be treated as one. The last group was made up of small entrepreneurs and manual workers. The magnates and territorial elites joined and controlled the movement because it was their prerogative to do so. They depended also upon the yeomanry for protection of property and their incomes. They joined it and supported it to ensure its control and use.

There is no evidence which suggested why the last group joined the corps therefore any conclusion is speculative. It is plausible to argue that these men wished to defend what they had gained by their wit, ingenuity and skill as fiercely as the upper classes. They chose the yeomanry because socially it was better and more powerful than the infantry, and if it did not gain them entry to county society, it set them apart and placed them physically above the class they had left.

It was Edward Thompson's belief that it was the latter class which displayed such hatred for those they rode down in St Peter's Fields and which would indicate they felt threatened by those just below them on the social scale. It is puzzling and disturbing to note the willingness of the yeomanry, unlike the volunteer infantry, to attack and kill their fellow men. It can be concluded however, whatever actions the yeomanry took on behalf of the civil powers or the government, whatever damage or pain was caused to those they attacked, yeomen would usually receive commendation, the thanks of government, the GOC Area, and often those of respectable citizens. Any attempt at censure was brushed aside.

Once the county police forces were instituted in 1856, and accepted by the elite, the use of the yeomanry as the main aid to the civil power decreased. Under the 1870 military reforms it was to form part of the territorial force of the Kingdom.



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The owner, Mr. Garside, had brought in Staffordshire workers to break the strike which incensed the strikers and violence erupted.  
The Stockport Troop already in attendance were assailed with stones and brickbats, most troopers received some injury, one sergeant was hurt very seriously. (continued...)

The Troop was surrounded by the crowd and the situation deteriorated rapidly, and had not a troop of the 13th Dragoons arrived they would have been overwhelmed. During the melee, a number of troopers had been pulled from their horses and beaten. The actions of the crowd may be attributed to the yeomanry who, on being called to the disturbance galloped through the town. It was alleged that Sergeant Broomhill fired his pistols through a window whilst another shouted, at the top of his voice, 'Murder, Murder!'

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The Riot Act was read but ignored, special constables proved ineffective in stopping the demolition. A troop of yeomanry, exercising nearby, were called upon by the magistrates to intervene.

As they advanced towards the crowd the cavalry were met by a shower of stones and brickbats. After this confrontation the yeomanry were glad to retire the safety of the yard of the Star and Garter leaving the citizens of Worcester to complete the demolition.' p2.

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- 118.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 27 July 1805. D1300/1/1.
- 119.SRO: Miscellaneous Letters, Dobson to Monckton, June 1804. D.1300/6/1.
- 120.NYRO: Ashcroft.M.Y: To Escape the Monster's Clutches, Plan of Augmentation for forces of Internal Defence, 14 March 1794, p10.
- 121.Emsley.C: 'The Volunteer Movement' in Guy.A.J: The Road to Waterloo, p42.
- 122.DCRO: Orderly book, Calke troop, 7 July 1804. D.2375/M/41/37.

- 123.SRO: Adjutant's Orderly book, Mayne to Coyney, 22 March 1810.  
D.1300/1/1
- 124.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke troop, Col Sir H. H. Crewe to Captain Pole,  
4 July 1817.  
Crewe complained that when called out to aid the civil power it proved  
difficult to assemble the whole troop and when it finally assembled  
it was incomplete. He further complained that the conduct of the  
men and one man in particular, had been most improper on the last  
field day. Pole was ordered to bring his troop up to strength without  
delay, ensure no irregularities occurred in future and improve  
discipline.' D.2375/M/83/5.
- 125.SRO: Miscellaneous Letter, Memorandum Captain Mayne, 1829, '...those  
dear times required an economical management to afford a decent  
subsistence which precluded every extravagance as well as a chance  
of saving.' D.1300/3/3/.
- 126.CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry,  
Home Office, 29 October 1813, to Lords Lieutenant, Amalgamation  
of Small Units for Greater Efficiency. '...for greater efficiency small  
troops and independent troops and small corps should be  
amalgamated into regiments of not less than six troops.' p33.
- 127.CCRO: Cowdray's Manchester Gazette, 13 May 1797, 'In the Earl of Chester's  
Regiment it is almost needless to observe that the unequal size,  
various colours and different trim of the horses have rendered their  
meeting a very motley assembly.' p5.
- 128.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, 1800, '...of the seventy-three troopers,  
twenty-six rode horses supplied by their fathers, two rode horses  
which belonged to their brothers, five horses were supplied by uncles  
or aunts, ten troopers borrowed horses from undisclosed sources and  
one rode his father-in-law's horse. The majority of the troop  
depended upon others for their mounts.' D.2375/M83/1.
- 129.Manchester Central Reference Library [MCRL]:  
Sessional Paper, Committee of Enquiry to Consider the Condition of  
the Yeomanry, 1875, evidence of Captain Webster, pp29-31.
- 130.MCRL: Sessional Paper, evidence of Col. Seager, Inspecting Officer  
Auxiliary Cavalry, '...dismounted men in wagons, clerks and working  
men, not in the same class as mounted men.' p12.
- 131.Robson.B: 'Warranted Never to Fail: Cavalry Sword Patterns 1796,' in Guy.A.J:  
(ed) The Road to Waterloo, p66.

- 132.DCRO: Orderly book, 2<sup>nd</sup> Calke Troop, Rules and observations, 1803, Section 1. 'The trooper at all times to keep his sword clean no young visitor was to be allowed to hack or draw his sword. Great care was to be taken of horse furniture; bits were to be rubbed clean and all leather oiled. Horses were to be practised at home. Riding exercises were to be undertaken such as; reining back, passaging and standing fire with a pistol. This exercise was to commence by firing forty to fifty yards in front of the horse, then on the flanks, the distance to be reduced to be reduced gradually as the horse heard the sound of the pistol. At all times riding was to be practised with the reins in the left hand leaving the right free for the sword.' D.2375/M/41/37.
- 133.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, Standing Orders, 2 October 1803. D.2375/M/41/37.
- 134.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, Eliot to Gower, June 1794. D.1300/5/1.
- 135.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 20-24 February 1804. D1300/1/1.
- 136.DCRO: Orderly Book Calke Troop, Field Day Regulations, August, October, 1809. 'The Derbyshire Corps met, in 1809, for two periods of four days in August and October.' D.2375/M/41/37.
- 137.Webster.P.G.C: The Records, pp47,64.
- 138.CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, p22.
- 139.Act: 1804 George III, cap, 56 (Volunteer Consolidation Act).
- 140.Western.J.R: The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century, London,1965, pp349-420; MCRL Sessional Paper, 1892, evidence, p40. C6675.
- 141.Ibid
- 142.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, 5-7 May 1804. D.2375/M41/37.
- 143.Ferguson.K: 'The Army and the Irish Rebellion' in Guy.A.J (ed): The Road to Waterloo. The 9<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards lost twenty-four men whilst charging pike-men at Old Kilcullen Church in May 1798 and the 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards lost twenty men at Rathangan a month later, p94.
- 144.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 22 February 1804. D.1300/1/1.
- 145.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 1-12 May 1805. D.1300/1/1.

- 146.SRO: YP General Erskine to Col Monckton, 11 August 1805: to all Troop Captains, '...large bodies of men are embarking on the coast of Holland and the enemy have given symptoms of increasing activity at Boulogne. ...I am directed to inform you of the possibility of the yeomanry and the volunteer force being speedily called upon for service.' D1300/1/1.
- 147.SRO: Miscellaneous Letters: Captain Dobson to Col Monckton, 27 July 1804, '...his men had just begun the harvest and would not turn out until it was gathered in, and if Monckton insisted all the troop would resign'. D.1300/3/3.
- 148.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, March 1801-October 1810, Reports on exercise days. Colonel Madden inspected the Troop in February 1806. There were twenty-eight absentees from the seventy strong troop, ten without excuse. The Troop was inspected on 1 April 1807 when thirty-nine men were absent. The records, which ran from 1801-1810, indicated that the figures for absentees were quite normal. From which it may be inferred that men did not care sufficiently for inspections to make an effort to be present.' 2375/M/8/31.
- 149.Webster.P.G.C: The Records, 1812, Mayne, '...men are sick to death of inspections.' p37.
- 150.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 20 October 1810: Col Corbet to Col Monckton 'I am induced to trouble you with some observations which I consider would prove of advantage sincerely trusting you will be pleased to admit my apology for taking such a liberty.' D.1300/1/1.
- 151.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 20 October 1810, Corbet to Monckton, '...what few of the Bilston troop attended for inspection, came on the ground scampering away as if they were coming to meet a pack of fox hounds. As a matter of course, the permanent sergeants should make sure the troop comes perfect to parade.' D.1300/1/1.
- 152.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 20 October 1810, Corbet to Monckton, '...if something were not done, each year would see further deterioration in standards.' D.1300/1/1.
- 153.BCRO: Ms. Memoirs of Earl de Grey, February 1824: de Grey observed, '...it was a force nominally 600 strong but only 500 were present, a great many of these were on foot, and mounted rode horses not fit for the ranks.' p33. CRT 190/45/2.

- 154.CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, Committee of the Stockport Troop to Sir John Leicester, 29 December -1 December 1815, '...a majority of the troop disapproved of the behaviour of their captain, Robert Gee, and were resolved not to serve under him.' p43
- 155.SRO: PP Letter to Lord Anglesey, signature illegible, 24 April 1820. D.603/0/2/58.
- 156.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, 4 March 1807 – discharge of R.W.Peach, and erasure of his name from the records on the complaint of Captain Wright. D.2375/M/41/37.
- 157.Harries-Jenkins.G: The Army in Victorian Society, pp16,17.
- 158.BCRO: Ms Memoirs of Earl de Grey: With utter unconcern for this lapse in discipline de Grey wrote of the inspection, '...what sort of return to the War Office could have been made of us I cannot conceive.' p13. CRT. 190/45/2.
- 159.DCRO: Orderly Book, 2<sup>nd</sup> Calke Troop, 1803. In a foreword to Regimental Rules, Sir Henry wrote, '...it is the attention of Englishmen thinking themselves bounden to support the government which best protects their own Persons and Property, that the establishment of the yeomanry originated; it is in the Attention to the Duties of the Military Situation which they have engaged in, by which alone they can render it of public benefit; and effectual Purpose of its Institution.' D.2375/M/41/33.
- 160.Ibid
- 161.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, Regulation for Field Days 1803, D2375/M/41/37.
- 162.CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, p10.
- 163.SRO: YP Regulations for Lt.Col Sir John Edensor Heathcote's Troop, 14 October 1803. D.1300/2/5.
- 164.SRO: YP Regulations for Lt.Col Heathcote's Troop; Rule N<sup>o</sup> xi:  
'On the occasion when the troop shall meet together for Refreshment, they shall equally be under the direction of the Commanding Officer when present, as far as may relate to harmony and good order.  
(continued...)

No wine shall be introduced except by permission of the Commanding officer or the Committee; and the troop shall break up and retire on the order of the Commanding Officer or every defaulter to forfeit 2/6d. D.1300/2/5.

- 165.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 30 July 1806. D.1300/1/1.
- 166.SRO: YP Monckton to the Regiment, 30 July 1806, '...he wished it most distinctly explained that at both the time of the Annual Assembly of the Regiment and days of exercise of troops the attendance of Gentlemen will absolutely be required. And the thin musters which he is sorry to have the occasion to observe can no longer be permitted. Therefore, he hopes that gentlemen will conform strictly to the Act of Parliament.' D.1300/1/1.
- 167.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 29 August 1806, Rules and Regulations to be Observed. D.1300/1/1.
- 168.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, Regimental Order, 11 June 1810, 'The Troop Captain, in case of tumult or riot, is not, so long as the assemblage of people continues without committing a breach of the peace amounting to a felony, to do anything but under the guidance of a Justice of the Peace, the Justice himself being actually present, except taking precautions as shall be necessary for the security of his troop.' D.1300/1/1.
- 169.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book Regimental Orders, 25 November 1810 and 11 February 1811, 'All Field Officers shall at least once a year see all troops and report their condition to the Commandant. On 11 February General Dyott will see all trumpeters and sergeants and will enquire strictly as to their fitness. Those who are incapable of carrying out their duties must not be retained and troop captains must provide others before the meeting with General Dyott.' D.1300/1/1.
- 170.SRO: YP Cavalry Returns, 1799. D.1300/3/1.
- 171.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, Circular, Whitehall, 25 May 1817. D.2375/M/83/5.
- 172.SRO: YP Returns and Pay, Staffordshire Regiment, 1817. D.1300/3/1.
- 173.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, claims, 1806. D.2375/M/41/32.
- 174.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, claims for duty in aid of the civil power, 1816-1817. D.2375/M/83/5.

- 175.Hudson.A: Volunteer Soldiers in Sussex During the Revolutionary Wars, 1793-1816, Sussex Archaeological Collection, N° 122, p179.
- 176.Colley.L: Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837, London, 1992, p186.
- 177.SRO: Alcock Papers, S.870.3529.
- 178.CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry.  
'The uniform consisted of a blue jacket, richly ornamented with silver braid, scarlet collar and cuffs, plated regimental buttons; pantaloons of French grey cloth richly ornamented with silver; overalls of regulation mixture cloth, with cross-flap pockets with three regimental buttons on each, edged with scarlet, strapped in the same cloth, open with a fly at the bottom to button with metal buttons, booted with black patent leather, and straps under the feet; black felt hussar cap with rich silver laced band, silver plated ear loops, rosette and button, patent leather tops, falls and peaks with hussar feather; Hessian boots with polished steel spurs; patent leather holster flounces with plated stud ornaments and buff leather pouch and sword belt. The trumpeters wore bearskin caps with scarlet cloth bags and richly plated instruments.' p30.
- 179.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, 24 March 1808. When first raised the Staffordshires wore a red jacket, yellow collar and cuffs, similar to that worn by the County militia, white waistcoat, white leather breeches, black leather boots, light dragoon helmet with a bearskin crest, white feather and cockade. In 1806 the red jackets were discarded for blue ones and a different type of helmet was worn. An extra 12/6d. was allowed for the new jackets. In 1808 the blue jackets were ornamented with white facings, silver lace and buttons. Blue Cloaks were issued for the first time. In 1816 the leather breeches were discarded for grey Wellington Cloth trousers. D.1300/1/1.
- 180.DCRO: Cox.J.C: Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals, p212.
- 181.CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry,  
Local tradesmen were used when the Tabley Troop were reclothed in 1806: Buckley the jackets, Slater the breeches, Morton boots and Clark the drill jackets. Hawkes of London supplied the helmets and accoutrements, p212.
- 182.BCRO: Potton Volunteers Clothing Account, September 1803. X.202/102.
- 183.SRO: YP Adjutant's Orderly Book, Mayne to Coyney, 26 November 1810. D.1300/1/1.



- 184.CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, 'In 1816 when allowances had been cut, Colonel Sir John Leicester engaged a band of thirteen musicians whose contract was to run for three years. The band-master was required to supervise all music and instruct the bandsmen. When on duty each bandsman was to receive five shillings. The money for this was to come from Regimental funds as did the cost of instruments,' p59.
- 185.CCROR: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, 'It cost £1,000 to clothe and equip the new Stockport Troop. Of this sum £600 came from the County Fund for Internal Defence, the rest came from Sir John Leicester's pocket.' p48.
- 186.SRO: YP Staffordshire Volunteer Cavalry, Report of Meeting, 8 August 1794, p3. D.1300/5/1.
- 187.SRO: YP Staffordshire Volunteer Cavalry, Report of Meeting, 8 August 1794: '...the money raised for the cavalry came from a wide cross-section of the community; 2,000 subscribers gave, in all, £8,426/6/10d. The largest sums came from towns and villages: Colwich raised £63/7/9d., Cheadle raised £93/10/0d., Newcastle, £123/1/0d., West Bromwich, £305/17/6d., Gratwich, 5/6d. The Marchioness of Donegal pledged £100 pounds annually for the duration of the war, Robert Pigot, a relation of Monckton, pledged £50 and Jonathan Gaundy £10.' p5 D.1300/5/1.
- 188.AM: Smith.R.J: Worcestershire Yeomanry, 19 April 1794, '...the City and County raised £6,000, 15 August a further £1,000 was raised.' p1.  
CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, at Nantwich 1819, £4,000 was raised; between 1817 and 1819, the County of Chester raised £9,000, pp83-92.
- 189.StAd: Military Forces in Staffordshire, p20.
- 190.SRO: SP Fenton to Loch, 12 March 1817. D.593/K/1/2/8.
- 191.BCRO: Peel to Grantham, 14 January 1823, '...he (Peel) knew of cases where adjutants had been appointed to regiments which claimed to have 300 men but which have nothing of the kind, the same went for sergeant-majors'. He asked Grantham, '...whether there was any mode by which it could be ascertained what men were really efficient against those who were not, and by making reductions under that heading, add to the credit of those who really were efficient.' L.30/18/41/6.

- 192.MCRL: Sessional Papers on Yeomanry, 1875, evidence Col Seager; '...men other than yeomen were placed on muster rolls to obtain additional grants.' p12.  
Evidence of inefficiency, see digests of evidence on lack of horses, quality of officers, unpopularity of training at Aldershot for adjutants, officers and NCOs, Reports 1861, 1875, 1892.
- 193.Cannadine.D: Aspects of Aristocracy, London, 1994, pp1-25.
- 194.Kitchener House Museum:  
Mileham.P.J.R: The Yeomanry, Yeomanry Association, Arborfield, 1972, p6.
- 195.Staffordshire County Library (off-print):  
Godwin.J: Some Notable 18<sup>th</sup> Century Staffordshire MP's, Stafford, 1884. 'As they had voted for him his (Monckton's) constituents thought they had an absolute right to hunt his lands and fish his waters. This they did with such thoroughness that Monckton feared he would have no game, or for that matter domestic animals to eat himself. He was forced to make an agreement with his constituents, under which he agreed they had a right to help themselves to his game but insisted they must leave him his domestic poultry or he would have no Christmas dinner.' p12.
- 196.NYRO: Ashcroft.M.Y: To Escape the Monster's Clutches, Lieutenancy Returns, as required by the Act: 38 George III cap 27. 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1801, p117.
- 197.DCRO: Orderly Book, Calke Troop, Quartermaster Greaves to Col. Sir Henry Hapur Crewe, 9 May 1798. D.2375/M/83/8.  
BCRO: Ms Memoir of Earl de Grey, 1803. CRT. 190/45/2, pp14-16.
- 198.SRO: SP Fenton to Loch 12 March 1817. D.593/K/1/3/8.
- 199..SRO: SP Conditions of the poor, and distress on Stafford Estates, 1817-1819. D.593/K/1/3/5.  
Will Lewis to Loch, 23 March 1806, declining to join the yeomanry;  
Richard Fox, to Loch, 22 March 1817, declining to join the yeomanry. D.593/K/1/3/5
- 200.Webster.P.G.C: The Records, p57.
- 201.Beckett.I.F.W: The Amateur Military Tradition, Figures from Buckinghamshire and Derbyshire show that in 1798, in those two corps between sixteen and thirty-nine per cent of the troopers were skilled craftsmen, p76.

- 202.SRO: PP Thos. Landor, (agent to Lord Anglesey) to T.Beer, Esq., 25 February 1853, noted that in 1819 Burton sent nineteen tradesmen to the Anglesey Troop. D.603/K/17/73.
- 203.SRO: PP Lord Anglesey to Landor, 20 February 1853. D.603/K/17/73.
- 204.Thompson.E.P: 'Thompson on Peterloo' in Manchester Regional History, Vol iii, N<sup>o</sup> 1, Spring / Summer, 1989.  
'It was alleged that there were in the ranks, eleven cotton manufacturers, thirteen publicans, seven butchers and two cheese-mongers. Thompson has listed shop-keepers, dealers, dancing masters and the rest.' p72.
- 205.Fox.K.O: 'Making Life Possible' in The Amateur Military Tradition, p135.
- 206.Beckett.I.F.W: The Amateur Military Tradition, p136.
- 207.SRO: YP Wolverhampton Troop, Minute Book, March 1892, composition of the Troop and proposals for new members. Over twenty-five per cent were classed as small tradesmen or shopkeepers, e.g., draper, chemist, baker, grocer and butcher. D.1300/1/13.
- 208.SRO: YP Staffordshire Voluntary Cavalry Meeting, 8 August 1794, p1. D.1300/1/5.
- 209.Beckett.I.F.W: The Amateur Military Tradition.
- 210.Marlow.J: The Peterloo Massacre, London, 1969, '...the fawning dependants of the great with a few fools and a greater proportion of coxcombs who imagine they acquire considerable importance if they wear regimentals.' p98.
- 211.Marlow.J: 'The Day of Peterloo' in Manchester Regional History, Vol iii, N<sup>o</sup> 1, Spring / Summer, 1989, words used by the yeomanry, '...spare your lives? Damn your bloody lives.': '...Damn you, I'll reform you.': '...I'll let you know I'm a soldier today.' p5.
- 212.Cripps.F.H: Life's A Gamble, London, 1957, p64.
- 213.Chinoy.E: Society, New York, 1967, pp168-177, 188-199.
- 214.Beckett.I.F.W: The Amateur Military Tradition, p76.
- 215.Emsley.C: 'The Volunteer Movement' in A.J.Guy. (ed) The Road to Waterloo, p44.

- 216.Beckett.J.V: 'Landownership and Estate Management' in G.E. Mingay (ed): The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol vi, 1750-1850, London, 1989,  
'...this enabled farmers and forestallers to make huge profits from the sale of grain and other produce, largely at the expense of the poor. As a result land became extremely profitable.
- The rentals on English estates increased between seventy and ninety per cent between 1794 and 1814; in Wales between sixty and in some cases 180 per cent; in Scotland rents increased eightfold.' pp620-625.
- 217..Urban.S: Gentleman's Magazine, Vol lvi, pt 2, London, 1796.  
The Presentation of Colours to The Lincolnshire Yeomanry in 1796:  
'...Lady George Sutton, dressed in the colours of the Lincolnshire Corps, presented standards of royal purple fringed with gold to adjutants of the squadrons in Spalding Market Place.  
The standards were blessed and consecrated, after which the Regiment, before the waiting crowds, displayed their equestrian and military skills. The regimental band played and finally there was a march past and the salute taken. The Corps then marched to church for a service of blessing. At three o'clock 150 men sat down to a sumptuous repast, venison being supplied by friends to the cause.' pp959,960.
- 218.CCRO: Leary.F: The Earl of Chester's Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, p17.
- 219.Harries-Jenkins.G: The Army in Victorian Society, pp250,251.

# CONCLUSION

The framework of this study was devised to discover how effectively the United Kingdom mobilised, funded and used civilian soldier movement between 1794 and 1823, as a defence against invasion and internal dissent. It also sought to discover why men chose to join military movements when the army was despised and feared. A question which emerged during the research concerned the relationship between the movements and their localities as all three movements were dependent upon localities for man-power, financial and moral support. The thesis has sought to discover who actually supported the movements and against which sections of the community were the movements used, and what effects the movements had on their communities in war-time and in peace-time?

The attitudes of administrations shifted as the wars progressed. The statute of 1794 enabled voluntary movements to be raised for defence, as a supplement to the militias. A policy change occurred in 1798 when both volunteer movements, but more especially the yeomanry, were seen as instruments for controlling internal dissent. The second movement of 1803 was raised simply as an auxiliary defence force. Governments were never happy with the volunteer infantry especially following a great increase of working men in its ranks after 1798 and 1803, and usually disbanded them as soon as was expedient. From 1804 there were attempts to raise a Home Army none of which were successful. In 1808, local militias were raised and the volunteer infantry was effectively ended; in Staffordshire no corps existed after 1812. No serious attempts were made to disband the yeomanry which, though not particularly efficient, remained the favoured force and the main aid to the civil power until 1856. Some regiments disbanded in 1814 but the Staffordshire Regiment remained in service until 1907, when it became part of the Territorial Army.

The militia, traditionally the defence force, came to be regarded as a reservoir of trained manpower upon which the army could call to replace its losses and increase its strength. Enabling legislation between 1805 and 1813 made it easier for militia men to 'volunteer' into the regular forces.

The militia has to be seen as a tiered system; the supplementary militia supported and replaced vacancies in the regular militia, the local militias were the last layer of support for the other militias. It is probable that had the conflict lasted much beyond 1814, because of the enormous calls made upon the regular army, the regular and supplementary militias would have been merged with the army leaving the local militias as the 'Home Army'. In all it amounted to a covert form of conscription.

Shifts in government policy allied to changing political and military situations altered the *raison d'être* of the three movements as the wars progressed. None ever faced a Continental army and after 1798 it was unlikely that their role was to be a military one save in an absolute emergency.

All auxiliary movements were raised locally: the militia by ballot, the two volunteer movements by interested gentlemen or lords lieutenant. Having called the voluntary movements into being and mobilised the militias, government failed to provide, or saw no reason to do so, an authority solely responsible for them. The main control was exercised by the Home Office with assistance from the Horse Guards and Ordnance but these ministries were in London and tended to be remote from the lieutenancies which administered the auxiliary movements.

Throughout the wars Whitehall relied on the lieutenancies to control and administer the movements, but as more Exchequer money was expended on the civilian forces attempts were made by central government to impose greater control on the voluntary movements. The eventual aim appeared to be the creation of a national force or home army but this failed for a number of reasons. The absence of a commander-in-chief with a military staff, solely responsible for the civilian military movements, serviced by an efficient central bureaucracy proved to be a serious hindrance to the creation, co-ordination and maintenance of a unified force. Even had these been established, it would not have been easy to create a national force. The local, individual nature of the voluntary movements and, to some extent the militia, resulted from the extensive powers of governance vested in the lords lieutenant.

They, and the local gentry, resented any government interference in what they saw as their movements. As a result, the efficiency of movements depended on the zeal of individual lieutenants and commandants. As a consequence there were great variations in standards of organisation and discipline across the country. The yeomanry in Hertfordshire, for example, were said 'to be fit to serve with line regiments', whereas inspections of the infantry and yeomanry in Derbyshire and Staffordshire showed those movements to be deficient in organisation and discipline. Given the powers of the lords lieutenant it would have been impossible to impose national standards without government legislation amounting to constitutional reform of the lieutenancies. The weakness of the system at a time of danger was emphasised in 1803 when chaos resulted because of the inability of the lieutenancies to deal with the thousands who came forward to volunteer. In Staffordshire the volunteer infantry were over-subscribed by at least 1,000 men, who had to be turned away. The government had raised more men than it foresaw, wanted or with which it could deal. There was no indication that anyone had a clear idea of what was wanted, whether all were to be armed, organised and uniformed or a proportion only. Ordnance was unprepared for the demands made upon it. Units in Staffordshire and Bedfordshire had to wait almost a year before they were fully armed. Corps in Staffordshire bought their own weapons, pikes were issued in Yorkshire. It must be concluded that the government had either accepted the views of senior naval officers that an invasion could not possibly succeed, or that they had dismissed the auxiliary movements as being of little military use, and were quite willing, despite inefficiency, muddle and chaos, to leave the control and organisation of movements in local hands to avoid offending local elites and volunteers. Another possibility is that they were caught unawares by events.

There was such criticism of the civilian movements. This centred on their lack of discipline, the question of their military effectiveness, cost and reliability and the democratic nature of the infantry. Inspection reports, letters, newspaper articles, memoirs, personal papers, local archive material and government circulars indicated that control and discipline in most of the forces examined was poor. The militia suffered from poor leadership and a high desertion rate.

Disbrowe's despairing letter to Uxbridge showed discipline in the Staffordshire Regiment, which led a much more comfortable life than most, was poor and the desertion rate troublesome. The county's voluntary movements were little better on these scores. Absenteeism was high, and there was a tendency to behave in an autonomous fashion when it suited them. A general conclusion must be that most civilian movements, including those in Staffordshire, were militarily poor value for the money expended.

The service of the civilian movements was limited by statute to mainland England and Wales. Some regiments of militia volunteered to serve in Ireland, men could not be forced to serve there; otherwise they usually performed garrison duties. Much of their time was spent in marching about the country or drilling. This was because the militias were perceived as being unreliable after the riots of 1795 and 1796, and because of the numbers of disaffected men believed to be in the ranks. Magistrates were therefore reluctant to use the militia against civilians. Regiments were rarely allowed to remain in any place for long in case disaffected militiamen joined forces with local, dissentient elements. Not until 1812 were they to be used once more as *posse comitatus*. The retention of such a large, under-used, military force has been justified by quoting the numbers who 'volunteered' into the army. This is not totally satisfactory since over twenty-two years the numbers which transferred amounted to about 4,500 men annually, far fewer than the army really needed to make up its campaign losses and the formation of new armies. Despite its unsatisfactory record, and despite criticism from the army and ministers such as Windham that the militias actually hindered recruitment for the army, the force was retained. This, as General Napier concluded in 1859, was because it was the traditional defence force and governments were much happier with militias over which there was supposedly a greater measure of control than the volunteer infantry. An exception to normal militia service was that of the Staffordshire Regiment. This large corps from 1795 to 1813 spent their time guarding and attending the King and the Royal Family at Windsor and other Royal residences. The service of this militia had little to do with the prosecution of the war. The senior officers were in attendance on the King and Queen. The organisation and service of the Regiment were directly affected by the whims, movements and directives of the King.



The service offered by volunteer units was even more restricted than that of the militias; prior to 1800 most volunteers would not serve outside their localities. Some corps, after 1789, agreed to serve within their military district but even when invasion threatened many would not move from their localities and a majority would not move from their county or military district. A very few volunteer infantry companies prior to 1800 were called upon to aid the civil power. In the second infantry movement coastal corps manned defences during the invasion scare but most, apart from training, performed no military service. The yeomanry in the coastal areas remained on duty for long periods during the invasion scare. The Castlemartin Yeomanry was largely responsible for defeating Tate's invasion force. In general however, the movement appeared to have defined its role as a social police force, a role which was accepted and applauded by successive administrations.

It cannot be supposed that governments were not aware of the state of the auxiliary movements. Whitehall received the reports from inspectors appointed by the GOCs of the Areas. It is puzzling that, despite all the evidence available to them, governments took no resolute action to reform the voluntary movements. The Act of 1802 gave them wide powers of coercion and control. Far from using these powers, the government sought in 1803 actually to reduce the numbers which volunteered; Staffordshire was reminded sharply by the Home Office that it had exceeded its quota. The evidence pointed to the fact that in the first place administrations could not, would not or did not know how to control the democratically-organised infantry it had called into being. It must be assumed, moreover, that having called it into being, the government, once the invasion scare had passed, did not know what to do with a large infantry force of dubious reliability and military efficiency. The government, respectable citizens and the elites ~~did~~ not relish the thought of large numbers of organised, armed civilians from the middle and ~~lower~~ orders, however loyal and patriotic they proved to be. After Pitt's death, Castlereagh's administration, in 1808, speedily replaced the movements with local militias.

Dickinson has argued that the sole reason for the retention of the volunteers was their propaganda value. They were a uniformed, government movement supported by the gentry and their communities, they were highly visible, the Newcastle Corps drilled publicly in the Town and advertised the fact by drum beat. This sort of activity focused public attention on the government's prosecution of the war. In the absence of the army the civilian forces were the military movements which reinforced local authority, strengthened municipal rituals and demonstrated apparent support for government policies. This is a sound defence of the movements provided all were efficient, well disciplined and absolutely loyal. As the evidence showed, this was not the case. It is difficult to know whether it was policy to retain them as propaganda. Government may, initially, have cashed in on the virulent anti-French feeling to engage, after 1798, as many men as possible in uniform.

Whether there was any clear policy for retaining the volunteers, more especially the infantry, is not clear, but without political support it is doubtful whether the volunteer movements could have survived. That they continued to be maintained was largely because of the support given by a considerable number of MPs and members of the House of Lords who were officers in the auxiliary movements. Of even greater importance was the support of William Pitt, himself a volunteer officer. Significantly, Pitt's death marked the end of the volunteer infantry which he had zealously supported. The militias were different. Their direction was a prerogative of the lieutenancies and gentry any steps to alter or reform them met with fierce opposition.

Unlike the infantry the yeomanry appeared to offer some return for the grants they received. The cavalry, never a very large movement, acted as a police force, if not a very efficient one. They were loyal and played a part in the suppression of industrial and political disputes. The Staffordshire Regiment was very active in the southern coalfields suppressing strikes. However, the true value of their service needs to be assessed in the light of yeomanry records. From 1810 onwards the Staffordshire troops when called out usually needed support from regular cavalry detachments to operate efficiently. Without this support, troops such as the Manchester Yeomanry in 1819 were frequently in grave danger from mobs. If the Staffordshire Regiment was an example, yeomanry movements would not let public service, military training or invasion threats interfere with their normal lives to any great extent.

The Trentham Troop resigned because of too many inspections, the Leek Troop threatened resignation if military requirements interfered with the harvest. It can only be concluded therefore, the yeomanry would generally act only if it suited them.

One factor which emerged from this study was the close relationship between local communities and their civilian movements. During the wars, at all times, the volunteer cavalry and infantry, and to a lesser extent the militia, relied on financial support from their communities. The government was parsimonious in its funding of auxiliary movements which had to rely heavily on subscription lists, the two voluntary movements in particular, for their survival. Most counties instituted a defence fund. These raised something in the order of six million pounds during the twenty-two years of war to support local movements, as well as raising other funds to support the war effort generally. In war time this was not unusual, though we may question the role of government which relied so heavily on voluntary, public support for those movements raised to defend the country. The Staffordshire subscription lists for 1794 show that all classes and communities gave to the county funds which initially raised in excess of £8,000. It may therefore be concluded that, in general, the country agreed with the government's policies and was prepared to pay for them. Post-1815, government funding was restricted and the yeomanry was left to make up any deficits itself. After 1817, with the eruption of political and industrial violence, considerable financial support once more came from those who relied on the yeomanry to protect position, property and privilege. The conclusion must be that they, and many who served in the movements, saw the yeomanry as protection for property, privilege, wealth and commerce and the subjection of the feared lower orders. Once more however, it is a possible indictment of government policy that it was left to public subscriptions, very largely, to augment yeomanry troops. The yeomanry post-1815 were, according to Harries-Jenkins, more like private armies to be used against anyone threatening privilege and commerce. In Staffordshire the regiment was prominent in suppressing disputes which threatened the coal and iron trade from which the nobility, the gentry and the middle orders drew their considerable incomes.

This study also raised the questions: why did men volunteer and how voluntary were the movements? The army and militia were both feared and disliked, yet thousands of men, apparently willingly, joined military movements uniformed and organised like the regular forces. They submitted themselves to what was, for many, physically tiring and taxing military drill, as well as endless inspections. Those who had money were expected to contribute to funds and pay for equipment. It is important here, to the understanding of volunteers, to stress the amateur concept in volunteering. Volunteers did not regard themselves as being like regular soldiers or militias. They were civilians acting as soldiers because they had decided to and not because anyone had forced them to. The cavalry and infantry were statutorily voluntary movements but how many men would have volunteered had there been absolute freedom is open to question. Membership of a voluntary organisation gave exemption from the militia ballot, and after reading Mayett's Diary which graphically illustrated the harshness of militia life, it is very clear that the volunteers were a much softer option than the militia. It is unlikely that yeomen and most of those who joined the first movements between 1794 and 1802 did so to escape the militia since most could have afforded the fine, nonetheless even in these movements there were tenants from large estates who served in both the infantry and cavalry at their landlords' behest for fear of losing their tenancies. The situation was less clear in 1803 when over fifty-seven per cent of all volunteer infantrymen were from the lower orders, men more likely to be drafted for militia service. E P Thompson has drawn attention to the unpopularity of the movement in Lancashire because men were required to drill on Sunday, their only day of rest. From this it would appear that men had been drafted into the infantry movement and were not volunteers. Volunteering was also, as the government circulars showed, open to abuse; considerable numbers of men enrolled but once mustered never actually turned up for drill or duty. A general conclusion must be that although there were true volunteers in both the cavalry and infantry, there were an unknown number who volunteered to escape the ballot or because their landlords or magistrates had directed them into the ranks.

The limited service offered by volunteers, the emphasis on defence of property and the maintenance of order in the first infantry movement and the yeomanry suggested selfishness as a primary motivator. In the period under discussion however, property was perceived as being the basis of the country's wealth, therefore defence of property was defence of the Kingdom. The yeomanry and some infantry represented those who owned most of the land, property and industry; therefore, in defending these from depredation by rioters and possibly against the French, they were seen as loyal and patriotic. Not all yeomen and certainly not all infantrymen were propertied. It must be assumed that they volunteered (if they actually volunteered and were not coerced) either because it was in their best interest to serve, because they identified their interests with those of their landlord, because it conferred respectability or because it was prudent. Colley has argued for the patriotism of the poor; she has claimed that after 1798 many poor men did volunteer, and that they wished to defend their King and country just as willingly as other men.

Patriotism was the term used at the time to explain why men volunteered but a distinction has to be made between patriotism and loyalty, terms often confused. Most men were patriotic in that they would have fought against the French. Not all men were loyal, the Wolverhampton and Sheffield Volunteers for example would not support authority against internal disorder. This explains why the volunteer infantry, although patriotic, was not widely used to aid the civil powers. There were practical advantages to be gained from membership of a volunteer movement. Military rank was important socially and used on all occasions. For the gentry, there were honours and the power conferred by commanding armed men. These were deemed to be their right and offered a powerful motive for joining, at the same time keeping inferiors out.

For lesser men, much has been made in the literature and in paintings of the social life, the uniforms, ceremonial, the ability of tradesmen volunteers to make money from serving their fellows. There was for some the social cachet of belonging to the yeomanry which gave them entree to county society to which they otherwise would not have been admitted.

All these factors have been quoted as reasons for joining movements; it seems unlikely that these were prime motivators, but they may have induced men to stay once they had joined.

There is not enough evidence to say why, apart from coercion, men joined. Prudence is probably one of the strongest reasons; otherwise, it is plausible to argue that most joined from a multiplicity of reasons. One thing is clear, once the invasion threat receded in 1805, many men left both voluntary movements.

An important question emerged as the research progressed which concerned the impact the civil forces had on their communities. The financial impact was considerable. All the movements were supplied with food, drink and lodging by the local tradesmen. It has been claimed that this demand alone forced up prices. All commandants received clothing grants and their custom was assiduously sought by local and national tailoring concerns. All the movements had to be armed. Of the three million muskets produced, a large proportion went to the voluntary forces and the militia; this was in addition to the considerable numbers purchased privately which stimulated the iron and metalworking trade in Staffordshire. The other impact was less easy to define. Undoubtedly the volunteers gave cohesion to their communities. Judging by subscription lists, the attendance at drill days and presentation of colours and their presence at municipal functions, they were both a popular force and a focal point for communities in a country engaged in war.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this research was the continuity between the attitudes of successive governments. In 1745 the government was totally unprepared for invasion and local volunteers had to be raised by noblemen. In 1794 the same thing occurred. The government was then totally unprepared to deal with the volunteer forces it raised and had it not been for the keenness of most volunteers, the zeal of the gentry and expense borne by the volunteers themselves and their communities, the movements would not have survived. Of more importance was the preparation for resisting invasion. It was left to the lords lieutenant and the local forces and as far as can be ascertained was, in the main, parade ground drill and musketry practice. Once more in 1914 the government was totally unprepared.

Many Territorial units, as the Staffordshire Advertiser recorded at the time, were physically unfit and militarily unready to face the Germans. On 14 May 1940 history repeated itself; Anthony Eden announced, in a radio broadcast, that a Local Defence Volunteer Force was to be raised. Anyone between sixteen and sixty, by handing in their names at a police station or just turning up for enrolment, could join. The force was to prevent what had happened when the Germans invaded Belgium and France. A personal recollection of this period recalls the raising of a Local Defence Volunteer company in Yardley, Birmingham. The initial muster, in June 1940, took place in army huts left over from the first world war. Once more the government had raised a force it could not arm. For 100 men there was one rifle but no ammunition, and one uniform. Changing the guard necessitated some hurried dressing and re-dressing, and quick lessons in rifle drill. The commandant was a local, prosperous manufacturer and there were numerous old soldiers who became NCOs. Training consisted of parade ground exercises and patrolling the streets at night on the look-out for German parachutists. No one had any idea of the sort of guerrilla combat they would have to undertake should the Germans land. When after many months weapons did appear they were American, First World War rifles, totally incompatible with regular army weapons and ammunition. There was no lack of will on the part of volunteers but it took a long time to uniform and arm the Home Guard and bring it up to anything resembling a military force. Captain Mainwaring's men may, to a modern generation, appear to be rather foolish and perhaps comical but my recollection of the period is that the behaviour of the Warmington-on-Sea Company represents a reasonably accurate picture. How far the Home Guard would have been militarily effective in its early years is difficult to assess but there was strong argument for its primary use as propaganda: it was, once more, a positive way for thousands to show that they wanted to serve and 'do their bit'.

It must be concluded that in this country we are always caught out by military events.

The lessons of the past are not heeded. The Local Defence Volunteers of 1940 were a replica of the volunteers of 1794 to 1814.

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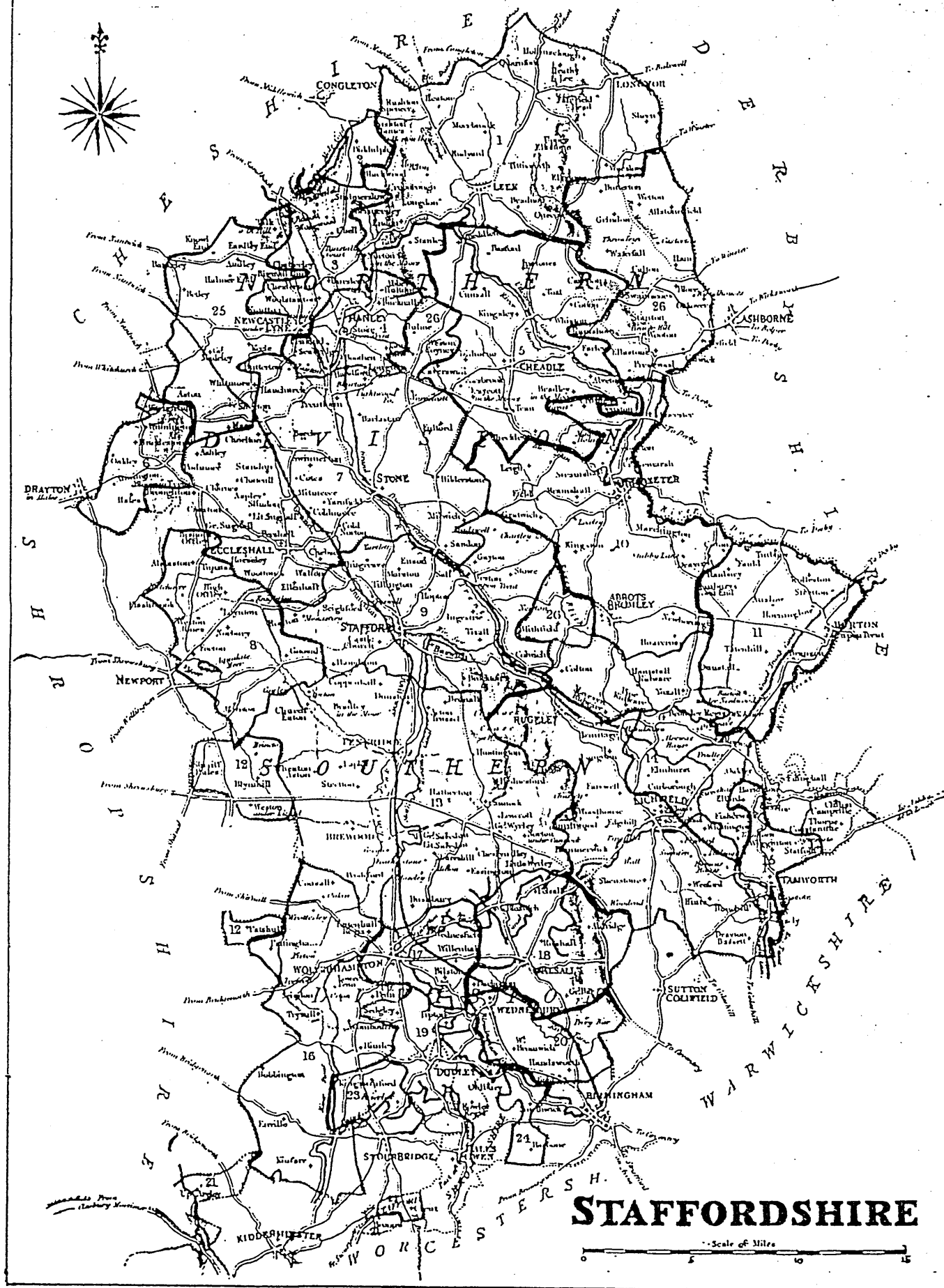
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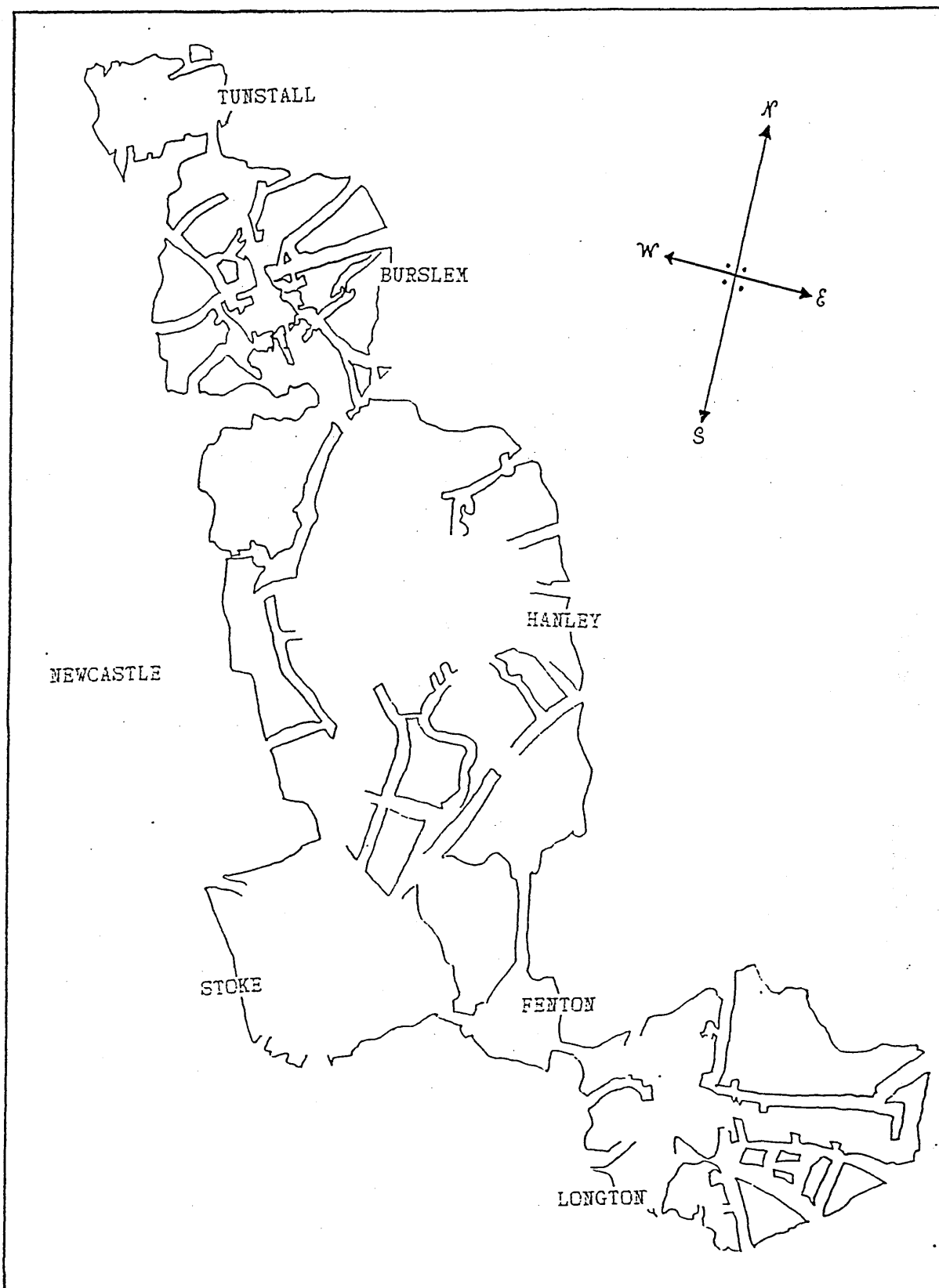
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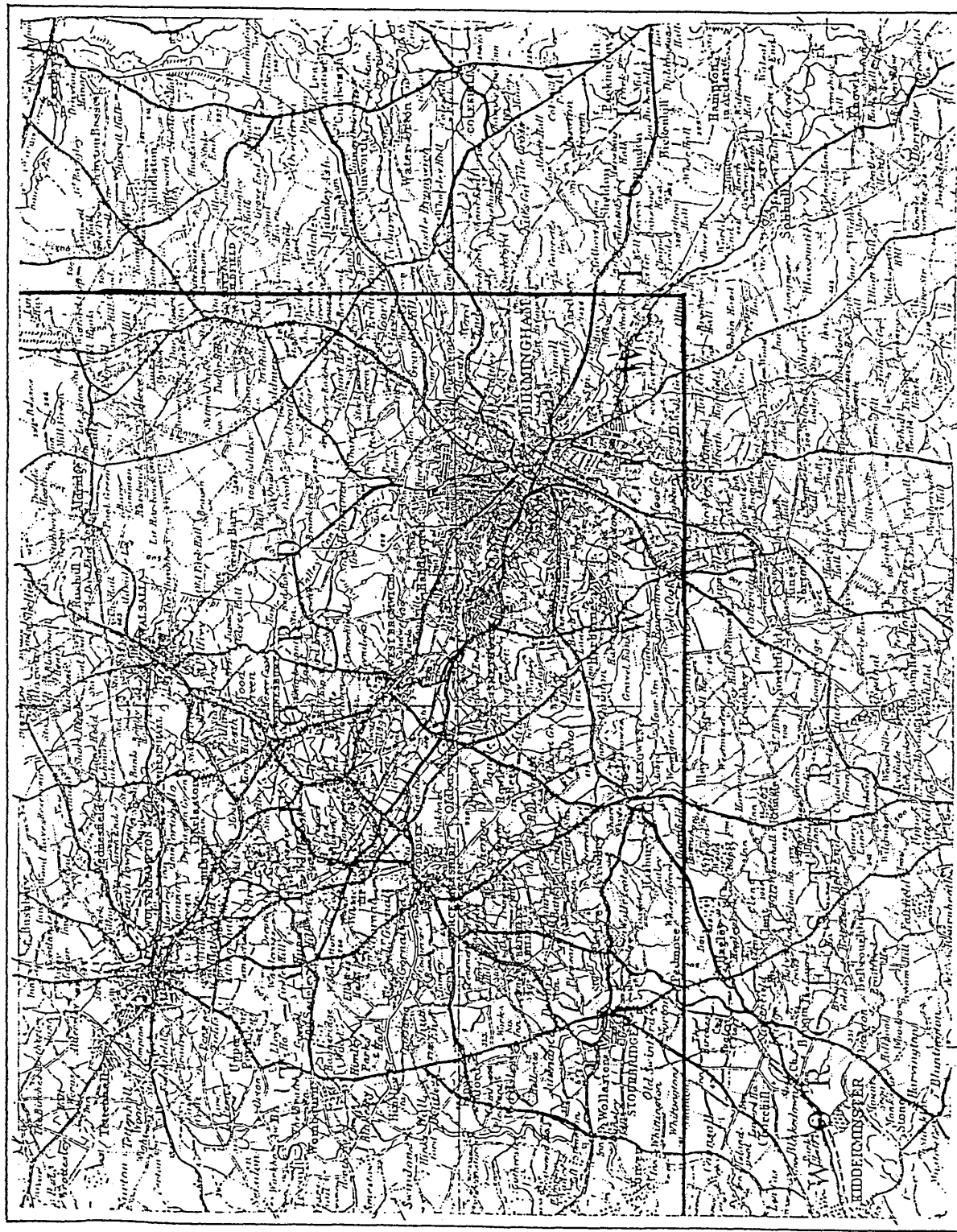
Reproduced from a map by R. Creighton, engraved by J.C. Walker, 1831.





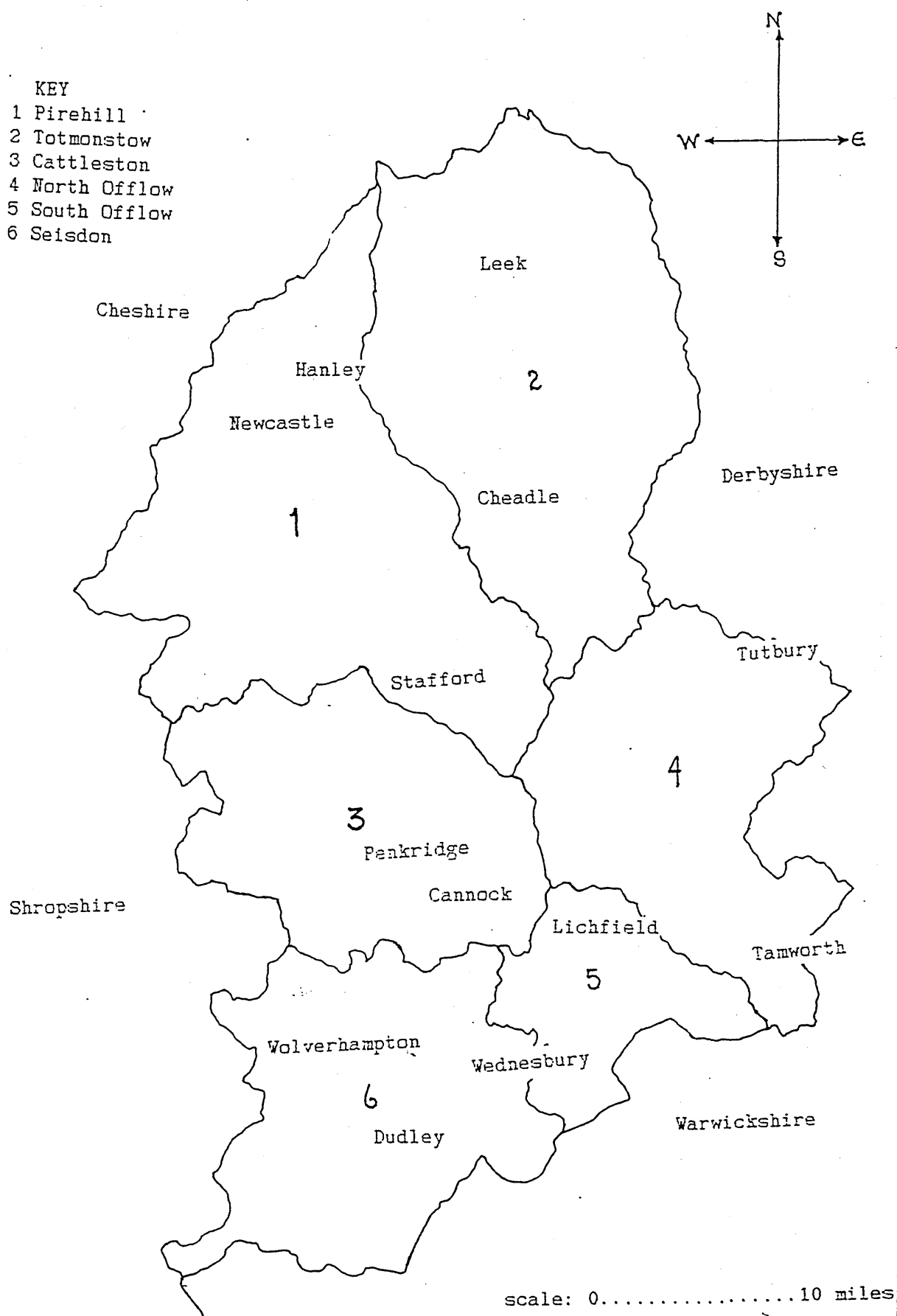
The North Staffordshire Pottery District.

Reproduced from the Stoke-on-Trent Tourism map, 1994.



The Black Country.  
 Reproduced from The Black Country and its Borderland by  
 T. R. Bennett, 1969.

- KEY
- 1 Pirehill
  - 2 Totmonstow
  - 3 Cattleston
  - 4 North Offlow
  - 5 South Offlow
  - 6 Seisdon



# STAFFORDSHIRE HUNDREDS

Reproduced from The Topographical Dictionary of England and Wales  
ed. E. L. Blanchard. Undated.



Bedfordshire. Prepared from parish maps by the County Archivist.

Newcastle Friday. 25<sup>th</sup>

Sir John I am sorry that I am forced  
to write to you to Inform you that you  
are Using your Friends in such a Manner  
that they must and Will complain of your  
Cruell Treatment . . . . .

Sir When you Observed Mens eyes cast at you  
it was to tell you but I am forced to Pronounce  
it that you are a Villian to them . . . . .

For on Thursday we were Under arms  
9 hours & half but do you think we are Slaves to  
you to be used in such a manner but the day  
will come when you will wish them to turn their  
eyes on you Sir I have been your Friend and  
will you Repay Me for it

P.S. Is that Forgots a Friend Deserves a Fox  
it Cuts Me in Mind of Colonel Cooney as he was  
Represented to be a Bad man to Soldiers but  
God Bless us he is a Man and what is as Much  
to us Lydett he is a Soldier  
but Sir John I now go with me Division your use you  
Quicks I Look to Profiter Beale 14<sup>th</sup> October

Two anonymous letters from a Newcastle Burgess to Colonel J.F. Boughey.  
Undated, but probably June 1813. Q(W) 1788 P1 B7/4

Sir

I feel very sure that they are in the  
present position by our unfeeling  
conduct towards your Regiment of  
Social Mission has argued me that if  
you will aware of it, a great benefit  
your Correction; for you should

insist that the men are drilled  
for hours and a day before you enter  
the field every morning and you still  
keep them on for a least one hour half  
longer now. Sir consider whether you  
could bear the same fatigue with so little  
ease every morning without breaking your  
fast. It has been said often that they  
go through the Barranuel and Station

you are nearly equal to a regular English  
Regiment and with great steady maps  
considering there is a forward of this kind  
serenity and in your plainly saw on  
Wednesday evening that the men were  
laurels about with the they were of it into  
a stupid careless way but the principle  
of their exercise has been found.  
Command of the honorable Lieutenant  
Colonel Hoggins and you in you  
and consider that they are not as some  
Regiments that follow their horses  
but a great part of them are respectable  
hard men and men of good abilities that  
that are taken from their families and  
and their homes and you who purpose  
they know more