

## CHAPTER XV.

*First Signs of Revolution—The Inhabitants of Wigan and the Parliamentary Vote—The Corporation—Mayor's Badge—Writ for 1639—Condition of Wigan at the beginning of the Great Rebellion—Potters of Wigan—Cotton—Flax—State of Roads—Religion in Wigan—Puritans—Education—Excitement during Election—Polling—The new Claimants of the Franchise—Abortive Parliamentary Petition.*

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**M**EN'S eyes at the beginning of the seventeenth century were being opened to see that they were not created to be the subjects of tyrannical kings, or the tools of political parties. The political awakening was gradual, and the vista strange to all, bewildering to many, and as a dream to not a few. The constitutional history of the past arrayed itself before thinking and representative men, and the dread danger of taking action appeared like a huge goblin before those who could neither review the past nor penetrate the future. The evils of the time were apparent to all, although the cure was but dimly seen by a few. People were not bold enough to rise against constituted authority, yet everyone seemed to long for a revolution, by which their difficulties might be banished with benefit to the masses without destroying or degrading the prerogatives of royalty. Even those holding the most radical views desired to proceed with the most conservative motion. Stronger and stronger, as people brooded over their increasing wrongs, grew the desire for revolution, coupled with the almost determination to repel rebellion. At length the whole nation seemed to conclude that something should be done, and that the unpleasant journey should be commenced and vigorously pursued, little dreaming of the terrible results that, step by step, they were bringing upon themselves before their ends could be attained. Conciliation was earnestly longed for, but that could only be obtained through the Parliamentary representatives; yet there had been no Parliament for eleven years. At length, in 1639, the rumour spread that the king would call a Parliament, and every man who had an influence in the returning of members beheld with joy the approaching tide of fortune, and felt that he could be an instrument in the longed-for peaceful revolution. Excitement spread to every county and representative borough, and nowhere was it more lively than in Wigan,

for there not only the duly enrolled burgesses but the ordinary inhabitants were eager to vote. For this year the mayor was James Molyneux. The aldermen were Roger Bradshawe, R. Standish, Robert Mawdesley, George Rigby, Richard Worsley, Christopher Bancks, James Hardy, William Forth, Robert Markland, William Pennington, and John Bullocke. The bailiffs were Robert Barrowe and Edward Sumpner. The two attorneys were Roger Baron and E. Sherrington, and the two scriveners, clerks, or solicitors were William Watson and Joseph Pennington.

The country was then passing into a new era of British history, like passengers in an express train rushing through a dark tunnel from one county to another. The whole country was being perceptibly smitten by a great delirious political fever. Wigan, too, was working herself up to the raving point. Many spoke openly in her streets and private houses of the abuses of royal power, yet few voices were raised against the king in person. There were dark whispers of not very distant troubles and terrors, revolutions, and even rebellions; yet the king was toasted in every tavern in the borough and prayed for in the church. The members of Parliament were both able men, and one, at least, was the very personification of loyalty, who, with true Lancashire stubborn steadfastness, determined to stand by the king, come weal or come woe. For the first time, at the then approaching election of 1639, indifference to the franchise gave place to enthusiastic interest on the part of the ordinary inhabitants, showing very healthy signs of advanced civilisation. Political speeches and public meetings were for the first time the common vehicles of the inhabitants for denunciation or approval. Unity in the guilds and unionism amongst tradesmen had proved a convincing strength that could not be overcome by any individual power, even when that was of a regal nature. Everyone now knew that the government of the country depended on the representatives of which the Parliament was composed, and also that these representatives depended on the choice of the individual voter, and hence the interest taken in their general election. There was neither expense, honorarium, nor paraphernalia in connection with the mayoralty in those early times. Had it been an expensive office, as it is now, few of those who could afford it would have accepted it. The town could not afford to attach either a salary or paid assistants. The early Corporation of Wigan was not a wealthy one. The great necessity—a *loving cup*—was their sole possession, useful and ornamental. Gifts, but no purchases, were added. The mayor was for the first time adorned with a Corporation badge—and it is a very superior and expensive gold one—on the occasion of the Prince and Princess of Wales visiting the borough to open the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary in June, 1874. Less than twenty years ago, when the mayor was invited to attend a meeting in London, he had to buy his own gown, and this in a town that could boast of an unbroken line of mayors for more than

six hundred years. Many wealthy and great men have been mayors, but in early times the citizens who were elected were worthy men, though rarely in such affluent circumstances as to permit of any lavish expenditure *pro bono publico*. The mayor in 1639 was James Molyneux, the bailiffs Robert Barrow and Edward Sumpnor, and these three were commanded by the sheriff, Robert Holte, Esq., to return two Parliamentary representatives to Westminster on the 13th day of April of that year. The following is a copy of the sheriff's order:—

Lanc. C.                      Robte Holte, Esqre., Sherriffe of the sd. county aforesaid.

To the Maior and Baliffes of the Burrow and towne of Wigan greeting.

Whereas I have received his Ma<sup>ty</sup>s writt for the elecc<sup>o</sup>n of the knights of the Parliament to be holden att Westminster on the thirteenth day of Aprill next comeinge, and for the elecc<sup>o</sup>n of two citizens in every citie and two burgesses within every burrow within the said countie accordinge to the statute in that case made and provided, and that such elecc<sup>o</sup>n of the citizens and burgesses bee passed and returned unto mee by way of indentures respectively as named by the said writt is comanded. These are, therefore, to will and require you, and nevertheless, by virtue of the said writt, to comand you, that forthwith upon receipt *hereof* you elect and choose two burgesses of yor said burrow accordinge to the s<sup>ts</sup> of the statute in that case made and provyded, and that you pass over unto mee the names of those burgesses for to be elected by indenture on Saturday, beinge the one and twentieth day of this instant March, at Preston-in-Amounderness, and that you cause the said burgesses to bee att Westmr. on the said thirteenth day of Aprill next, haveing full and sufficient power for themselves and the com<sup>o</sup>nalties of the said burrow to doo and agree unto such matters and things as shall happen to be ordained by the Comon Councell and his Ma<sup>ty</sup>s Parliament of England concerning the good of his Ma<sup>ty</sup>s state and kingdom, so that I may make return of the said writt accordinge as I am therein and thereby comanded, whereof fail not, as you will answer the contrary att yor p<sup>l</sup>le, bringinge with you this prept.

Given under the seale of my office the fift day of March 1639.

ROBTE HOLTE.

Seal of the Sheriff of County.

Although many conclude that, because the town is now certainly not advancing in unison with the nineteenth century pace, it has always been some hundreds of years behind, the conclusion is indeed the very antipodes of truth. Judging from the reliable evidence left behind of the period into which we have now entered, there was no better governed town in England, nor one in which sanitary laws—rude, but advanced, for that age—were more strictly enforced. People were often fined at Court for not keeping their drains in order, and the idea is false that the town was not drained, and that heaps of filth or middens poisoned the air, and that dogs, cats, and heavy rains were the only scavengers of the period. Many inhabitants had vegetable gardens of their own beyond the walls, to which refuse was generally wheeled for productive uses. No town in England could possibly be more guarded in the reception of new inhabitants. Every able-bodied man is of monetary value to a town or country, but the old burghers of Wigan did not altogether appreciate this fact, but looked further. They did not consider that a

fresh comer who brought valuable services to the town was bestowing a service on the borough for which he deserved to be paid; but, after the strictest scrutiny of his character, antecedents, and petition for admission to the town, these worthy burgesses would admit him as a great favour on payment of a large fine. The more important his trade was to the town, and the more likely he was to prosper, the greater his fine was. No one was allowed to stay in the town without special permission, which was never given without a satisfactory certificate from the last place of location, and good and substantial proof that the in-comer was not likely to become a burden to the borough. Of course many tried to evade the law; but, judging from the many cases disposed of by the jury of burgesses at the Court Leet, very few, if any, could have escaped, for, moreover, anyone harbouring such strangers, or "foreigners," as they were called, were subject to excessive fines, which were always enforced when such cases were proved against them. Moreover, officials called "gatewaiters" were appointed to watch every entrance to the town, and to supervise the different districts for the express purpose of putting a stop to such increase of population. Every gatewaiter was held responsible for his district, and at many of the Court meetings they were fined for "neglect of duty" when they failed to detect any foreigner. Their fines were generally 3d. and 4d. a piece. Foreigners were usually fined three and ninepence, and ordered to get out of the town, whilst those harbouring them were fined the same amount, and ordered to turn their lodgers out of doors forthwith. The fines for being admitted burgesses or inhabitants ranged from three to ten pounds. By such strict legislation natives were generally the only inhabitants, and poverty was reduced to a minimum.

The entire population of England before the great Rebellion was only about five millions, and, although Wigan was considered a large town, the population was certainly under 5,000. The principal parts of the town were Standishgate, Millgate, Wallgate, Hallgate, Scholes, and Woodhouses, the first four of these being within the town walls. Houses in the borough were not numbered, but generally named, and strangers were directed to special ones as being so many doors from the Old Dog, Rose and Crown, Black Horse, or similar signs hung over taverns where the evenings were spent in drinking beer, listening to the news or gossip of the day, or singing rude ballads. Fights in the street were of frequent occurrence, and, although no cases of "purring" are reported, the admiring crowds rejoiced when an eye was knocked out or a finger chopped off. A servant to be beaten by a master, or a wife belaboured by her husband, was too common an occurrence to attract attention or sympathy. It was the duty of servant and wife to submit. The laah was the schoolmaster's chief assistant. The Moot Hall or Jail in the Wallgate had seldom its apartments unoccupied, and was so filthy and badly managed as to

become a nursery of disease and crime. The dress of the rich was more picturesque than that of any period in English history, but that of the poor was the other extreme. What has now become one of the staple trades of Wigan was then only in its infancy. Cotton wool was largely imported from Cyprus, and Smyrna, in the Levant, manufactured here, and vended in London. There were no mills with monster engines and a thousand looms, but the weaving was done on the hand-loom in the houses of the poor, although the owner of a loom was not then considered a poor man. The thread was spun on their own distaff by the younger ones of the household, whilst the father, wife, or older offspring wove the web—treading the mill all day long. A coach passing through the town—for there were none belonging to it—brought all the inhabitants out of their alleys with a rush, to gaze with open mouth, to admire and talk about it. An extensive trade in flax was carried on with Ireland. The yarn was brought over to Wigan and Manchester (which had only ten streets and a population of 6,000, and no member of Parliament), spun into fustians, dimities, and other such stuff, and bleached on the fields in the neighbourhood. Next to bell-founding the most important trade in the town was that of the potters, of whom there were many in Wigan, although both of these trades have long since entirely left the town. The clay was obtained from the waste lands of the manor. This important local trade is thus referred to in the award of Bishop Bridgeman in 1664 :—“ Nevertheless also I further award that the potters of Wigan for the tyme being may dig clay in the wasts of the said manor as heretofore potters of Wigan have used to doe, provided the places so digged be forthwith after the digging sufficiently amended.” The wages of the workmen were only six shillings a week, and their chief food rye, barley, or oat cakes. Children had to work for their living when only six years of age. Many were engaged, at very low wages, in getting coal for the neighbourhood, Manchester, and London, although in counties where it was not easily obtained wood was used for fuel, until the fear came over the nation that all the wood in the country would soon be consumed, and none be left for the building of ships and for manufacturing purposes. There were merchants and artificers in the town, and yeomen or small farmers without, in large numbers, and of great influence, although rough and poorly educated. Being on the high road to the North, the accommodation of Wigan was considered good by travellers, who always found there clean beds and well-aired sheets. Although clergymen stood low in the social scale, yet Dr. Bridgeman, Rector of Wigan, Lord of the Manor, and afterwards Bishop of Chester, was of good family, and had a high social standing. His house was a lordly, well-defended one outside the walls, although his many retainers lived within, in the old Hallgate. The walls of the town, battered by the



storms of ages and assaults of many a foe, still stood, with their bulwarks, hornworks, redoubts, and batteries at intervals. There were four gates, strongly fortified. One, on the great Northern road, was near the present *Crown Inn*, in Standishgate, another near the present entrance to the London and North-Western Railway Station. The Hall Gate was near the Rectory, and the Mill Gate on the opposite side of the old town, near the Douglas. Outside the walls were tanneries, bleach fields, and many gardens and orchards. Beyond were dense woods with their wild denizens. The waters of the Douglas were clear, for even the salmon had not forsaken them. The streets were paved with boulders, but the suburban roads were so bad that six horses were often necessary to drag a coach through the mud. Cromwell, a few years after this, said he never rode over such bad roads. The crooked streets, winding alleys, and numerous narrow courts were never lighted, and thieves very easily escaped the vigilance of the night watchmen, while highwaymen were numerous in the country.

Like every town in England at this time, Wigan was divided against itself about religious belief. Men had slumbered, but this was the great time of awaking. They had lulled themselves into a soothing religious and political indifference, but now stormy convictions raged in their hearts. Numerous new sects sprang up with mushroom growth, each one believing that every other was the device of the wicked one, a mere will-o'-th'-wisp to waylay men's souls. The hearts of many and the heads of not a few were softened. Some strong men, during the religious revival, cried like children over the past, became new creatures, and then bellowed like bulls at their unconverted brethren. Uneducated labourers became parsons, and, regardless of the excruciating tortures to which they subjected their native tongue, vehemently denounced all but themselves. Notwithstanding the numerous ranting hypocrites, there were many sincerely good men. Episcopalians, Puritans, Presbyterians, Muggletonians, Milenarians, Quakers, and other sects were mingling and argumentatively wrestling in the church and on the streets of Wigan. They were in the throes of religious travail, and something approaching abortive anarchy was their offspring. Many wished to see in the Parish Church the gaudy ceremonials of the Romish faith, by which, so said their opponents, little minds, feeble intellects, and vain-glorious spirits were captivated. They wished to patronise pictures, images, crucifixes, and lights in the church. The communion table now received the Papal name of altar, and officiating clergy were more showily dressed. The Puritan clergy were persecuted, the Church was at war, and excitable people were driven to fanatical views and projects.

Education was at a low ebb. The Free Grammar School, with its head master and usher, on the present site of the Free Library; and near the walls, was the

local seat of learning. The vast majority of the townspeople could not write their own names, indeed the children had no time to go to school, for even Christians said they ought to begin to work for a living when six years old. Theirs was a hard lot, for they had to work ten and twelve hours a day, after which their little weary limbs were too tired for play, and, as they could not read, they were early trained to spend their evenings in gossip and singing of ballads. Their only education was how to live and bring their mites into the family purse.

It was an age of allegorical talk. Men seemed to pin their faith to high-sounding words, and believe that parables could be used only in the language of inspiration and truth. Though many were themselves hypocrites at heart, they acted as if they had no belief in the existence of hypocrisy, or as if they purposely and successfully educated themselves to deceive themselves. Even people who could not, without difficulty, lisp respectable sentences in English delighted to dress their mutilated mother-tongue in bombastic verbosity. What people did not understand themselves, they pretended to explain in language of awe, and thus ignorance passed for intelligence in the garb of supernatural unintelligibility. Even the most conventional conversation was reduced to farcical allegory, and yet out of the tumuli of Puritan verbosity had been unearthed that which has been acknowledged by all unprejudiced critics to be the grandest of all allegories, "The Pilgrim's Progress."

No means had been spared to Christianise the people. Acts of Parliament had been passed to force men into heaven, after which, if they did not attend divine service, they were liable to have their properties confiscated, &c. Everyone who refused to go publicly through the forms of English Episcopalianism had been treated as a Popish recusant, and under this head came even the quiet Quakers of Lancashire. Many local people had thus suffered for conscience sake, as Edward Symm, his wife, son, and two daughters; James Summer and his wife Ellen, as well as John Dike and his wife Jane, of Winstanley. Again, by order of the Long Parliament, Commissioners were sent into all parts of the country, Wigan amongst other places, to purge all churches and chapels of images, superstitious pictures and relics. Each sect, when in the ascendant, seemed to domineer with greater bigotry than its predecessor over the suffering people.

It was no difficult matter to stir and foment the political feelings of Wigan after the longed-for news came of a new election, for excitement creates desire for more excitement, and in the issuing of the writ there were seen signs of food for gratification. It was well known throughout the town that the election would be particularly lively. Between the delivery of the writ and the day of election the town was literally given over, and that for the first time, to electioneering. Every man was a politician in his own small way. All who could make speeches did so,

and that in the most violent and consequently most persuasive language that could be composed out of their very limited vocabulary, and many more attempted public speaking with the not unusual result of utter failure. The day of the election in March came round. There were neither hustings nor polling booths, nor even the votes given secretly, as by ballot. The election took place in the Moot Hall, where were gathered together about two hundred baronets, knights, yeomen, gentlemen of quality, and tradesmen, all sworn and enrolled burgesses of the ancient town, and many inferior persons, labourers, and handicraftsmen, who looked on eagerly and wistfully. The Town Clerk called the roll, and each burgess, as he was named, said what candidate or two candidates he voted for, and the names were immediately written down opposite the voter's. Thus there was neither secrecy nor unseemly publicity, and as every burgess was well known there could be no personation. Very few boroughs in 1639 registered in their poll books, as Wigan did, two hundred and ninety-six burgesses; yet not one-half of these voted, as if the town were still wrapt in that political lethargy which had long kept it in the background when it might have been in the front ranks of diplomacy. A close examination of this poll book, the original of which is temporarily in my possession, will show that, instead of the townsmen being callous about political matters, they had, politically, risen in the national estimation, and the following dozen years of their history prove they were worthy of esteem. Nearly twelve years had passed away since a Parliament had been called, and therefore this seemingly cold indifference to political matters is the more marked. The townsmen of Wigan were certainly not indifferent about their general election. The list of 293 burgesses is made up of two classes, viz., out-burgesses and in-burgesses. The former, filling rather more than half the book, were the local gentry, living generally at considerable distances beyond the walls. It is remarkable that only forty out of this list of one hundred and sixty-two recorded their votes. One earl, four baronets, and eight knights did not register their votes. All the other non-voters in this list were esquires and gentlemen. Amongst the townsmen, however, there is scarcely a man who does not vote. No less than six candidates had been nominated to stand for the election, although only two could sit in the House, and of these six three alone, Alexander Rigby, Ar., Orlando Bridgeman, Ar., and Robert Gardner had any claim to consider themselves favourites. The other three were altogether out of it. Simon Every (!) only polled one, although that one vote was given by Sir Roger Bradshaigh. Sir Anthony St. John polled four, and Edward Prescott (apparently a working man's candidate, if there were such in those days, for he is styled *taylor* in one place), after having scored about a dozen, was scratched like a horse when the owner has sold the race. Orlando Bridgeman obtained 112 votes; Alexander Rigby,



104; Robert Gardner, 72; Anthony St. John, 4; Edward Prescott, 1 (scratched out, as if he retired before the end of the poll); and Simon Every (?), Ar., 1, and thus the old poll book testifies that the townsmen were anxious about the government of the country and their own representatives. The first page of this old poll book for the general election of 1639 has been kept apparently as a scroll by the clerk, who, opposite the name of each candidate, made a *stroke* for every vote recorded, so as to be able to say at any time how the election was going. As this is the only poll book extant taken after the fashion of those for 1627 and 1640, and as it has not previously been published, I give a correct copy of it direct from the original:—

Jacobus molyneux, maior—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Willus Comes Derby.  
 Dutton . . . Gerrard.  
 Gilbertus Hoghton, miles and Barronett—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Radus Ashton, Barronett.  
 Willus Gerrard, Barronett.  
 Edrus Stanley, Barronett.  
 Alex. Radcliffe Balnei, miles.  
 Anthonius Sanct John, miles.  
 Cicell Trafford, miles.  
 Johes Stanhope, miles.  
 Johes Talbott, miles.  
 Robtus wingfeilde (?), miles.  
 Thomas Perient, miles.  
 Vivian molyneux, miles.  
 Ricus Houghton, Ar.  
 Petrus Venables, Ar.  
 Chrofrus Anderton de Lostocke, Ar.  
 Thomas Gerrard, Ar.  
 Ricus Shuttleworth, Ar.  
 Chrofrus Bannester, Ar.  
 Robtus Blundell, Ar.  
 Alex. Rigby de Burgh, Ar.—Mr. Alex. Rigby and Mr. Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Johes Atherton, Ar.—Mr. Alex. Rigby and Mr. Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Hugo Rigby, Ar.  
 Alex. Rigby de Midleton, Ar.—Mr. Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Orlando Bridgeman, Ar.  
 Radus Ashton de Midleton, Ar.  
 Thomas Standish, Ar.  
 Johes moore, Ar.  
 Edus. Ashton, Ar.  
 Thomas Chernocke, Ar.  
 Johes Poole, Ar.  
 Radcliffe Ashton, Ar.  
 Willus Houghton, Ar.—Mr. Alex. Rigby and Mr. Orlando Bridgeman.

Radus worthington, Ar.  
 Jacobus winstanley, Ar.—Mr. Orlando Bridgeman and Mr. Alex. Rigby.  
 Randulphus Read, Ar.  
 Henricus Bannester, Ar.  
 Thomas Langtree, Ar.—Mr. Alex. Rigby and Mr. Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Thomas Cottam, Ar.  
 Petrus Daniell, Ar.  
 Thomas Stanley, Ar.  
 Hugo Chumley, Ar.  
 Johes Culbeth, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Rogerus Nowell, Ar.  
 Ricus Alport, Ar.  
 Johes meare, Ar.  
 Johes Gerrard, Ar.  
 Edrus Bromley, Ar.  
 franciscus Downes, sen., Ar.  
 franciscus Leigh, Ar.  
 Petrus Leigh, Ar.  
 ffirus Downes, jun., Ar.  
 Edrus Bridgeman, Ar.  
 Radus Snead, Ar.  
 Henricus Byron, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Ricus Ormeston, Ar.—Mr. Alex. Rigby and Mr. Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Josuah Radcliffe, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Abrahamus Langton, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Edrus Scarsbreicke, Ar.  
 Henricus Oagles, Ar.  
 Petrus Birn, Ar.  
 Robtus Chernocke, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Georgius ffog, Ar.  
 Adamus Hulton, Ar.  
 Johes Rigby, Ar.  
 Robtus Browne, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Bartholemeus Hesketh, Ar.  
 Thomas Lee, Ar.  
 Johes Houlcrofte, Ar.  
 Henricus Turvile, Ar.  
 Willus Bradshawe, Ar.  
 Josephus Klinesman, Ar.  
 Willus Smith, Ar.  
 Ricus Holland, Ar.  
 Hamlett Hyde, Ar.  
 Robtus Hyde, Ar.  
 willus ffarrington, Ar.  
 Rogerus Kirby, Ar.  
 willus Radcliffe, Ar.  
 Ricus Bavane, Ar.  
 Robtus molyneux, Ar.

Georgius Lee, Ar.  
 Hugo Adlington, Ar.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Edrus Chisnall, Ar.  
 Ricus Hackmall (or Hackinall), Ar.  
 Thomas Longworth, Ar.  
 Thomas Gerard, sen., de Ince, gen.  
 Edrus Hoult, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Edrus Morres, gen.  
 Edrus Rigby, gen.  
 Ricus Ashton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Alex. Hoult, gen.  
 — markland, gen.  
 Abrahamus Launce (?), gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Johes Bretherton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Radus Browne, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Thomas markland, gen.  
 Georgius warren, gen.  
 Lyonell farrington, gen.  
 Johes Dunbabin (?), gen.  
 Radus Heaton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Thomas Ince, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 willus westbie, gen.  
 Ricus fleetwood, gen.  
 Henricus fleetwood, gen.  
 Carolus walmaley, gen.  
 Thomas Standishe, sen., de Duxbury, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Mathew Anderton, gen.  
 Thomas Berrington, gen.  
 Petrus Bennett, gen.  
 Johes Eccleston, gen.  
 willus Dicconson, gen.  
 Petrus ffulks, gen.  
 Thomas Houlcrofte, gen.  
 Petrus Travers, clicus.  
 Thomas Bridge, clicus—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Carolus Knott, clicus.  
 Robtus fogg, clicus—Mr. Rigby.  
 Jacobus whittakers, clicus.  
 Edrus Eltonhead, gen.  
 Edrus Tarbocke, gen.  
 Alex. Bradshawe, gen.  
 Radcliffe Gerrard, gen.  
 Gilbertus Gerrard, gen.  
 Hugo Houghton, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Ricus Standishe, gen.  
 Alex. Standishe, gen.  
 Rogerus Urmeston, gen.  
 Thomas Sergeant, gen.

Edrus Boulton de Abram—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Johes Hulton, gen.  
 Johes Osbaldeston, gen.  
 Ricus Bannestre, gen.  
 Josephus Rigby, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Robtus Shawe de high bullocke, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Hugo forth, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Olivus martin, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Alex. Greene, gen.  
 Johes Greene, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Radus Bancks, gen.  
 Robtus Booth, gen.  
 Johes Aynscowe, gen.  
 Johes Croston, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 willus stopforth, gen.  
 Radus Laughton, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Alex. Jollie, gen.  
 Thomas Gerard de Newhalle, gen.  
 Edrus Parr, gen.  
 Edrus Parr, gen.  
 Thomas Albrugh, gen.  
 Eliz'eus Hey, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Georgius walton, gen.  
 Phillippus Osborne (?), gen.  
 Egidius Heyshaw, gen.  
 Willus Prescott, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Sir Anthony St. John.  
 Ricus Sankey, gen.  
 Thomas Brears, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Johes Gardner, gen.  
 Abell Ashworth, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Radus Scott de Pemberton, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.

The above are seemingly, although not certainly, *out-burgesses*, and the following *in-burgesses*, for which a new page is otherwise unnecessarily commenced:—

Rogerus Bradshawe, Ar., Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Mr. Every (?)  
 Radus Standish, Ar., Ald.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Robtus maudesley, Ald.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Georgius Rigby, Ald.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Ricus Worsley, Ald.  
 Chrofrus Bancks, Ald.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Jacobus Harvey, Ald. (*mortuus* in different handwriting, apparently written after).  
 Radus forth, Ald. (scratched out) *mortuus est*—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 willus forth, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Robtus markland, Ald.  
 willus Pilkington, Ald.—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Johes Brighouse, Ald.  
 Johes Bullocke, Ald.  
 Robtus Barrowne, gen., un Balli.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.

Edrus Sumpner, gen., alter Balli.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Rogerus Baron, un Attor. Cur.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Balf. Sherrington, alter Attorn.—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 willus watson, S'vien—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Josephus Pennington, alter, S'vien.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Edrus Lloyd, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 willus Browne, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Thomas Turner, gen.  
 Georgius Rudall, gen.—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Alex. Thompson, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Jacobus Scott—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Robtus Jollie—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Thuretanus whalley—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Rogerus Scott, gen.—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Johes Scott—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Ricus Casson—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Radus forth—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Willus Baldwin—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Laurencius fford—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner (?).  
 Robtus mason (scratched), *mortuus est* in different handwriting.  
 Robtus Gerard.  
 Willus Bancks—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Robtus Bancks—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Georgius Vanse—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Alex. fford—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Henricus mareden—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Gorrardus Bancks—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Gilbtus forth—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Johes Standishe—Mr. Rigby.  
 Jacobus Atherton—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 willus Gardner—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Radus Browne, Dyer—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Jacobus Langshawe—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Thomas Rylands—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 willus marshe (scratched), *mortuus est*.  
 Rogerus Laithwaite—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Radus Astley—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Gilbtus Ashton—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Robtus Woods—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Jacobus Higham—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Robtus Baldwin—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Alex. forth, sen.  
 Josephus Pennington (scratched).  
 Robtus markland, Braseer—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Johes Hindley—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 willus Wakefelde—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Chrofrus Gardner (scratched), *mortuus* in strange writing.  
 Edmundus molyneux—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.



Thomas Barron—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 willus Browne, Pewterer—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Ambrosius Jollie—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Robtus markland, jun.  
 Michus Pennington—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 willus ford de le gate—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Robtus Baron—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Thomas Kidd, al's freland—Sir Anthony St. John and Robert Gardner.  
 Radus Hindley—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Petrus Greene.  
 Hugo Laithwaite.  
 Robtus Langshawe—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Edrus Letherbarrow—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Robtus winstanley—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Edrus Ormeshawe—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Rogerus Bibbie—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Jacobus Croucke—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Carolus Bancks—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Robtus Shugsmith (?).  
 Radus forster—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Thomas Pilkington—Robert Gardner and Sir Anthony St. John.  
 Edrus fairclough—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Johes Platt—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 willus Cockson—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Ricus Bullocke (scratched), *mortuus est* in strange handwriting.  
 Thomas Marsden—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Edrus Boulton, Taylor—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Ricus Leigh—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 willus Lythgoe—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Humffrus Croytchloe—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Johes molyneux—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Robtus Brighthouse.  
 Thomas fairclough—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Alex. ford, jun., Pewterer—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 willus Glover—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Gilbtus forth, Braseer—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Radus Scott—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Rogerus wood—Robert Gardner and Prescott, *taylor*.  
 Edrus Pembton—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Henricus Wakefelde—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Alex. Pennington.  
 Johes winstanley—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Thomas Orrell—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Seath Mason—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Gilbtus Leigh—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Humffrus Leigh.  
 Jacobus fynch—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Thomas Tarleton—Robert Gardner and Orlando Bridgeman.

Edrus Baron—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Robtus Brigge—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Radus Bancks—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Johes Rigby—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Rogerus Scott—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Thomas Cottrell.  
 Jacobus Baldwin.  
 Alex. fforth, jun.—Orlando Bridgeman and Robert Gardner.  
 Galfrus mouldingo—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Milo Turner—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Jacobus watson—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Robtus Prescott—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Alex. Ormeshawe.  
 Hugo Cowper—Robert Gardner and Mr. (torn away).  
 Thomas Lowe—Mr. (torn away).  
 Edrus Mason—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Edrus Prescott—Orlando Bridgeman and Alex. Rigby.  
 Ricus Scott—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Hugo Scott—Robert Gardner and Alex. Rigby.  
 Petrus Anderton—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Johes Gregson—Orlando Bridgeman and Sir Anthony St. John.  
 Ricus Seddon—Alex. Rigby and Orlando Bridgeman.  
 Johes Lee—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.  
 Thomas Thomas—Alex. Rigby and Robert Gardner.

When the names of all the registered voters were called over, a new but not unexpected incident took place. There had been many fiery electioneering speeches made during the preceding week. There were well-to-do people in the town, who were treated equally with burgesses, but who had not taken the burgess oath, and been formally enrolled in the book kept for that purpose. They declared they were entitled to vote, and in violent speeches publicly mentioned they were to vote, and if they were not allowed they were determined to petition Parliament against the election, and so unseat the members and have a new election.

The election was over, but not the excitement, for the intense interest which the "handicraftsmen and inferior persons" had taken in the exercise of the franchise had fixed in them that unreasonable conviction that there could be no fair election in which they were not privileged to take a part. It was impossible to prove their claims were illegal, but it was just as impossible to prove that they were legal, and therefore those in authority disallowed their claims, and asked them to prove their right. All that was required by the law was that two burgesses should be sent to Parliament to represent the borough; but, although no law declared that these two burgesses could only be returned by burgesses, yet there was the powerful precedent of custom that members had never been returned by any except duly enrolled burgesses standing against the new claimants. That custom was as strong as law itself, and,

had it been possible for these gentlemen, who, indeed, had all the privileges in the town of unenrolled burgesses, to prove any precedent of this custom having been violated, then they would thus have proved themselves entitled to vote. Such was the conclusion that the mayor and bailiffs came to, the claimants could not show the precedent required, and, for the time, their claims and enthusiasm died away like a nine days' wonder.

In certifying the Houses of Parliament of their conduct and proceedings, the mayor and bailiffs designated these as "inferior persons, labourers, and handicraftsmen," and owned that they had all the privileges of proper burghal traders, but at the same time denied their right to vote. In a body they came forward in the Moot Hall when the roll-call was over, and demanded that they should have a voice in the election. They were not hastily or scurrilously thrust away as interlopers, but in a dignified manner requested to prove their right of voting by naming a precedent of any unenrolled burgess voting. They were unable to do so, but still asserted their right. They were the first inhabitants of Wigan who took a lively and active interest in the franchise, and who showed their determination to have their political rights. They must have come to the conclusion that, as a body, they were not sufficiently organised to fight the battle, for they certainly did not petition. With the consent of the chosen members, the following letter was addressed and delivered to the Houses of Parliament in connection with this matter:—

To the Right hono<sup>ble</sup> The k<sup>ts</sup> Citizens and Burgesses to bee assembled in the Comons house of the ensueinge Parliam<sup>t</sup>

May it please you to be certified that the Maior, bailiffs, and Burgesses of the Burrowe of Wigan, in the Countie of Lanc<sup>re</sup> are by that name an ancient Corpora<sup>con</sup> by p<sup>r</sup>scrip<sup>con</sup>, and that all such persons as are or have bene Burgesses of that Corpora<sup>con</sup> have always bene received into that Corpora<sup>con</sup> by elecon made by the Burgesses for the tyme p<sup>r</sup>sent of that Corpora<sup>con</sup>, and have been afterwards sworne and enrolled as burgesses in the Burges rolle of the towne there kept for that purpose, and that all Burgesses sent to Parliam<sup>t</sup> to serve for that Burrowe have for the tyme whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary been chosen onely by the enrolled Burgesses of the Corpora<sup>con</sup>, and not by such persons as weare onely free to trade within the said Town, and weare not enrolled burgesses of the Corpora<sup>con</sup>. And that wee, the now p<sup>r</sup>sent Maior and bailiffes of the said towne, having lately received from the Sheriffe of the said Countie a warr<sup>t</sup> for the choosinge of two Burgesses to serve for this towne att this ensueinge Parliam<sup>t</sup> did give due and ppublicue notice of that elecon to be upon this p<sup>r</sup>sent munday, beinge the 26th day of this p<sup>r</sup>sent moneth, in the comon moote hall of the said towne, att w<sup>ch</sup> tyme and place, there beinge a greate assembly of Barron<sup>ts</sup>. k<sup>ts</sup>. esqrs., gen. of quality, and others, to the number of neare two hundred persons, all enrolled Burgesses of the said Corpora<sup>con</sup>, there was a free and ppublicue elecon made by the greater votes of them upon the call by the polle, and thereby Orlando Bridgeman and Alexander Rigby, Esqrs., two burgesses of the said Corpora<sup>con</sup>, weare by the more voyces chosen to serve as Burgesses for the towne att the ensueinge Parliam<sup>t</sup>. w<sup>ch</sup> done it happened that att the verie end of the elecion div<sup>rs</sup> inferior persons, labourers, and handicraftsmen, beinge free onely to trade within the said towne, and

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not enrolled Burgesses of the said Corporacion, did require voyces in that eleccon, and thereupon they weare demanded by us, the said Maior and bailiffes, to make it to appear that they or any others of their condicon hadd any tyme foomly any voyces in eleccon of the Burgesses for the Parliamt. but they could not see doo, and therefore wee denyed to suffer them to vote in that eleccon. All w<sup>ch</sup>. att the instance of the said Mr. Bridgeman and Mr. Rigby, wee have made bould to certifie. And in testimony thereof have sworn (?) to subscribe our names, and affixed the seale of the Corporacion, this 26th day of October, in the sixteenth yeare of the Reigne of our Sov<sup>a</sup>igne Lord Kinge Charles ov<sup>r</sup> England, Scotland, france, and Ireland.

The above is but the original draft copy of the petition, has several erasures, is not signed by the Mayor or bailiffs, and has not the seal of the Corporation attached.