

On Stage at the Theatre of State:
The Monuments and Memorials in
Parliament Square, London

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Abstract

This thesis concerns Parliament Square in the City of Westminster, London. It is situated to the west of the Houses of Parliament (or New Palace at Westminster) and to the north of St. Margaret's Church and Westminster Abbey. This urban space was first cleared at the start of the nineteenth-century and became a "square" in the 1860s according to designs by Edward Middleton Barry (1830-80). It was replanned by George Grey Wornum (1888-1957) in association with the Festival of Britain (1951). In 1998 Norman Foster and Partners drew up an (as yet) unrealised scheme to pedestrianise the south side closest to the Abbey.

From the outset it was intended to erect statues of statesmen (sic) in this locale. The text examines processes of commissioning, execution, inauguration and reaction to memorials in this vicinity. These include: *George Canning* (Richard Westmacott, 1832), *Richard I* (Carlo Marochetti, 1851-66), *Sir Robert Peel* (Marochetti, 1853-67; Matthew Noble, 1876), *Thomas Fowell Buxton* (Samuel Sanders Teulon, 1865), *fourteenth Earl of Derby* (Matthew Noble, 1874), *third Viscount Palmerston* (Thomas Woolner, 1876), *Benjamin Disraeli* (Mario Raggi, 1883), *Oliver Cromwell* (William Hamo Thornycroft, 1899), *Abraham Lincoln* (Augustus Saint-Gaudens, 1887/1920), *Emmeline Pankhurst* (Arthur George Walker, 1930), *Jan Christian Smuts* (Jacob Epstein, 1956) and *Winston Churchill* (Ivor Roberts-Jones, 1973) as well as possible future commemorations to David Lloyd George and Margaret Thatcher.

Parliament Square has consistently been characterised as a "sacred", memory-laden site. It is analogous to a public park. In the thesis it is envisioned as a 'stage at the theatre of state' and dramatic moments of authorized celebration and unsanctioned behaviour are narrated throughout the text. Occasions of official rite and ritual are accordingly paralleled by irreverent irruptions, concluding with the 'Reclaim the Streets' protests of 1 May 2000.

Key words:

ceremony, commemoration, identity, memorial, memory, monument, nation, pantheon, park, profane, protest, public, sacred, sculpture, space, statue.

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Preface

Addressing the *nadir* of English sculpture

The present time will probably be looked on in future years as the *nadir* of English sculpture.¹

Francis Turner Palgrave's (1824-97) gloomy prediction for mid-Victorian sculpture was by no means unique either during the period in which it was written or at any time since. Indeed, contemporary Victorian critics and subsequent commentators alike have expressed their opprobrium for sculpture produced in Britain from, broadly speaking, the 1840s until the 1880s. It was then that the statue as a mode of commemoration became codified and commonplace. Its formal limitations mean that this genre remains susceptible to denigration and disregard in equal measure. Thus echoes of Stanley Casson's castigation of nineteenth-century sculpture can still be heard with regard to analogous work produced today.² For Casson (1889-1944), writing in *Some Modern Sculptors* of 1928, was convinced that:

The Industrial Age rendered sculpture superfluous and undesirable, and monuments of the mid-Victorian age like the Albert Memorial served but to dot the i's and cross the t's of its death sentence, by emphasizing the divorce of sculpture from architecture... Statues were segregated in bunches, as in the Albert Memorial, or marooned in lonely squares like lepers.³

The thesis that is to follow valiantly strives for a stay of execution. The 'lonely square' in question is Parliament Square in the City of Westminster, London and the marooned lepers are the statues of statesmen erected in that locale beginning with George Canning in 1832 and concluding with Winston Churchill in 1973. The exact

¹ Francis Turner Palgrave, *Essays on Art*, Macmillan, London & Cambridge, 1866, p. 109. 'Nadir' is a noun meaning 'the lowest or deepest point; *the nadir of despair*'. Marian Makins (ed.), *Collins English Dictionary*, HarperCollins Publishers, Glasgow, third edition, 1991, p. 1034.

² A marble statue of Baroness Margaret Thatcher completed in February 2002 (see 7~2) was condemned by Brian Sewell, art critic of the *London Evening Standard* as an 'utterly contemptible' example of 'twentieth-century art at its worst'. His equivalent at *The Times* sighed that it was 'necessarily bland'. Cited in David Charter, 'Iron Lady meets match in statue's steely gaze', *The Times*, 2 February 2002, p. 3.

³ Stanley Casson, *Some Modern Sculptors*, Oxford University Press, London, 1928, p. 5.

location of this seemingly inauspicious space can be ascertained from a range of images in the accompanying disk (see Plates 1, 3-5 & 106). It forms the hub for a variety of distinguished buildings: the Houses of Parliament lies to the east, beyond which is the River Thames. To the south is St. Margaret's church, which is, in turn, overshadowed by Westminster Abbey. Other structures of note include the early twentieth-century New Public Offices and the contemporaneous Middlesex Guildhall (see 6~2 & 6~7; Plates 36-40). The square is similarly at the confluence of three important thoroughfares in central London, namely: Victoria Street, Westminster Bridge and Whitehall (the latter leading to Trafalgar Square).⁴ The significance of these routes is in part derived from their symbolical connotations. This is most evident during momentous occasions such as the State Opening of Parliament and other royal ceremonies and national rituals. The latter includes, for example, the commemoration every November of 'Armistice Day' at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

*

Given the prominence and centrality of Parliament Square it might well seem surprising that a definitive historical account has not already been written. That this appears not to be the case accounts for the space allotted in this thesis to the history of the square in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This dearth extends to some of the associated protagonists, many of who have not been treated kindly by posterity. This explains the biographical moments of the text, the most prominent example being the rather luckless Edward Middleton Barry (1830-80). Second son of Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860), the illustrious architect of the new Houses of Parliament (1839-60), he was responsible for the actual design of Parliament Square in 1866-68. This arrangement no longer exists due to the fact that it was superseded by George Grey Wornum's (1888-1957) layout commissioned as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations of 1951. Even the traces left behind in the form of archival images of the

⁴ Whitehall merges with Parliament Street immediately to the north of Parliament Square. Similarly, to the west, Bridge Street covers the short distance to Westminster Bridge. Meanwhile, Broad Sanctuary links the southwest corner of Parliament Square with Victoria Street. The remaining thoroughfares from the square are, to the northwest, Great George Street and, to the southeast, St. Margaret Street. The latter leads to Old Palace Yard and then Abingdon Street before turning into Millbank (which follows the line of the River Thames past Lambeth Bridge and as far as Vauxhall Bridge).

former arrangement have at times been erroneously ascribed to E.M. Barry's father (Plate 9).⁵

In a recent book entitled *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, the architectural historian James Stevens Curl despondently pronounced: 'Unfortunately, Parliament Square itself is such a non-event as a public space that the statues are somewhat lost there.'⁶ This misleadingly succinct dismissal takes no account of the fact that the square is no longer a Victorian space. The nineteenth-century statues once radiated around the flower-filled enclosures delineated by low, ornate bronze railings (Plate 12). Today their far less privileged position sees them ranged in a line beneath the trees on the western side of Grey Wornum's mid-twentieth-century formulation (Plates 8 & 132).

So, with such an inadequate assessment of the "frame" it is not surprising that the "picture" within (the nineteenth-century statues) has been either derided or ignored. This points to a larger process of occlusion: it was only with the publication of Benedict Read's *Victorian Sculpture* in 1982 that there occurred something of a resurgence of interest in what had been for many years a much maligned subject.⁷ To a large extent this thesis is a direct result of Read's pioneering work.⁸ In 1976 he, along with Philip Ward-Jackson, compiled the first in a series of illustrated volumes of eighteenth and nineteenth-century sculpture taken from the photographic archive of the Courtauld Institute. Fittingly enough the first two parts focus on London and include all the Victorian statues in the vicinity of Parliament Square.⁹ The superb

⁵ 'Parliament Square [was] laid out by Sir Charles Barry in the eighteen-fifties.' John Betjeman, *Victorian and Edwardian London from old photographs*, B.T. Batsford Ltd., London, 1969, Plate 21. See also Gavin Stamp, *The Changing Metropolis: earliest photographs of London 1839-1879*, Viking, Harmondsworth, 1984, Plate 11.

⁶ James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, Sutton, Stroud, 2000, p. 220.

⁷ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1982. There had, however, been earlier studies such as Lavinia Handley-Read, *British Sculpture 1850-1914: A loan exhibition of sculpture and models sponsored by The Victorian Society*, Fine Arts Society, London, 1968. One must also cite Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, The Abbey Library, London, 1968. Although the title suggests otherwise this invaluable reference work includes biographies of such sculptors as Matthew Noble (1818-76) and Thomas Woolner (1825-92), both of whom are principal figures in this thesis.

⁸ Benedict Read ran the Master of Arts programme in Sculpture Studies in the Department of Fine Art at Leeds University that the author followed in 1995-96.

⁹ Benedict Read and Philip Ward-Jackson, *Courtauld Institute Illustration Archives. Archive 4: Late 18th and 19th century sculpture in the British Isles. Part 1: London*, Harvey Miller in association with

photographs that appear in these volumes are an important source for the Plates that illustrate this thesis. These images have been scanned and stored on a CD-ROM inserted at the end of this volume.

The Courtauld Institute project in many ways laid the foundations for the on-going activities of the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (PMSA). Founded in 1991 it has as its ‘main aim the raising and maintenance of public awareness of our national heritage of public monuments and sculpture.’¹⁰ The principal means of achieving this was the inception of a National Recording Project and it was Benedict Read’s ‘unfailing and active support’ that was of crucial importance to the success of this project.¹¹ This has led to a highly informative series of volumes published by Liverpool University Press.¹²

Benedict Read was also a contributor to a volume edited by Chris Brooks and published in 2000 entitled, *The Albert Memorial. The Prince Consort National Memorial: its History, Contexts and Conservation*.¹³ It concerns the decidedly chequered history of George Gilbert Scott’s (1811-78) grandiose sculptural edifice built during the years 1863-72. The book emphasises the fact that, as the Stanley Casson quotation cited above suggests, ‘for much of the twentieth-century rejection if not ridicule has characterised the popular perception of the Memorial as a work of

the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, London, 1976. The second part appeared in the following year and by 1984 the series had reached twelve volumes: parts five, seven and ten focus on areas of London whilst the others examine such cities as Glasgow, Edinburgh and Greater Manchester as well as the counties of Gloucestershire, Lancashire and Northamptonshire.

¹⁰ Benedict Read, ‘Preface’, p. v in Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 1997.

¹¹ See the ‘Note’ by Jo Darke in Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 1997, p. v. This thesis is a result of a bursary provided by Nottingham Trent University as match funding to support the establishment of a Regional Archive Centre to document the public sculpture of Nottinghamshire as part of the PMSA National Recording Project.

¹² At the time of writing the list of volumes published in Liverpool by LUP are: Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, 1997; George T. Noszlopy, *Public Sculpture of Birmingham including Sutton Coldfield* (edited by Jeremy Beach), 1998; Paul Usherwood, Jeremy Beach and Catherine Morris, *Public Sculpture of North-East England*, 2000; Terry Cavanagh and Alison Yarrington, *Public Sculpture of Leicestershire and Rutland*, 2000.

¹³ Benedict Read, ‘The Sculpture’, pp. 160-205 in Chris Brooks (ed.), *The Albert Memorial. The Prince Consort National Memorial: its History, Contexts and Conservation*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2000.

art.’¹⁴ An indication that such attitudes have shifted is the fact that, from 1994-98, the dilapidated structure was comprehensively conserved and restored by English Heritage at a cost of £11.2 million.¹⁵ This undertaking, by increasing our understanding of, and appreciation for, the sculpture of nineteenth-century Britain, inevitably has numerous important implications for this thesis.

The elaborate spectacle that accompanied the re-inauguration of the Albert Memorial by Queen Elizabeth II served to re-vision the monument.¹⁶ Whilst this new-found regard is of enduring importance, the level of attention attained during such a ceremony is inevitably transient. Indeed, the Austrian Robert Musil (1880-1942), writing in 1927, went as far as arguing that, since ‘[a]nything that endures over time sacrifices its ability to make an impression’, a permanent, tangible memorial becomes ‘conspicuously inconspicuous. There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument.’¹⁷

At this juncture it is necessary to make some comments on terminology. The literature consulted whilst researching this thesis prompts the use of some apparently incongruous words: ‘effigy’, for instance, appears in an 1867 *Illustrated London News* article concerning the commemoration of George Canning¹⁸ (see 3~9); Lord Rosebery deployed it in his speech of November 1899 to inaugurate a sculpture of Oliver Cromwell¹⁹ (5~8); and it even featured in a very recent piece of journalism relating to a statue of Margaret Thatcher²⁰ (7~2). The definition of ‘effigy’ in this context is closer to ‘a portrait of a person, especially as a monument or architectural decoration’

¹⁴ Michael Turner, “‘It is so much less ugly dull’: Maintenance, Repairs, and Alterations 1872-1983”, pp. 341-361 in Chris Brooks (ed.), *The Albert Memorial*, 2000, p. 341.

¹⁵ Alasdair Glass, ‘Repair and Conservation 1983-1998’, pp. 364-391 in Chris Brooks (ed.), *The Albert Memorial*, 2000.

¹⁶ Deborah Collcutt, ‘Queen revives golden age of Albert’, *Times*, 22 October 1998, p. 1; Julian Champkin, ‘Return to a golden glory’, *Daily Mail*, 22 October 1998, pp. 22-23.

¹⁷ Robert Musil, ‘Monuments’, pp. 61-64 in *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*, translated by Peter Wortsman, Penguin, London, 1927/1995, pp. 61-62.

¹⁸ Anon, “‘Nothing in the Papers’”, *The Illustrated London News*, 20 April 1867, p. 387.

¹⁹ Archibald Philip Primrose, fifth Earl of Rosebery, *Oliver Cromwell. A Eulogy and An Appreciation. An Address delivered by the Right Hon the Earl of Rosebery, K.G., on the occasion of the unveiling of a statue to the Great Protector*, A. Melrose, London, 1900, pp. 34-35.

²⁰ Simon Hoggart, ‘We are a statue! And larger than life!’, *Guardian*, 22 May 2002; <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/columnist/story/0,9321,719921,00.html> [accessed 22 May 2002].

than it is ‘a crude representation of someone, used as a focus of contempt or ridicule’.²¹

The title of this thesis indicates that it concerns the ‘*monuments* and *memorials* in Parliament Square’. The juxtaposition of the two words echoes Stanley Casson’s aforementioned comment on the ‘*monuments* of the mid-Victorian age like the Albert *Memorial*’ (see above). This seeming superfluity is in fact both deliberate and significant. The word ‘monument’ is a noun (‘an obsolete word for statue’) usually meaning ‘an obelisk, statue, building, etc., erected in commemoration of a person or event or in celebration of something.’ ‘Memorial’ frequently has more general connotations signifying ‘something serving as a remembrance’ and, as an adjective, ‘serving to preserve the memory of the dead or a past event.’²²

As the dictionary definition of ‘monument’ indicates (‘an obsolete word for statue’), the meaning of these words – like the objects that they signify – is far from fixed. This is particularly relevant in the context of the present work given that the time frame extends from the early nineteenth-century until the present day. There is therefore a deliberate reluctance to ascribe set definitions to ‘memorial’ and ‘monument’, especially given that their partial exchangeability helps alleviate excessive repetition. However, this is not to say that they are identical. The word ‘monument’ is suggestive of the physical, tangible thing itself, the mute object. ‘Memorial’ is instead more indicative of symbolism and the ‘meaning’ of the artefact as a sign: its designation suggests that that which has been commemorated continues to linger in public memory.

Moreover, these words, with their somewhat different inflections, are indicative of a historical process: for what was once a ‘memorial’ almost inevitably at some point becomes a ‘monument’. This is not a linear development because certain events might occur that cause it to revert back to the condition of a ‘memorial’, for instance its re-inauguration to mark an anniversary, or its topical relevance to a contemporary event. Richard Westmacott’s 1832 representation of George Canning (Plates 56-57)

²¹ Marian Makins (ed.), *Collins English Dictionary*, p. 497, definitions 1 & 2. The latter was, however, applicable during the recent fracas over fox hunting, when a ‘crude representation’ of the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was paraded through Parliament Square (see 7~1).

²² Marian Makins (ed.), *Collins English Dictionary*, pp. 975 & 1013.

illustrates this particularly well: from its keenly contested inception onwards this artefact has continue to shift from the condition of ‘memorial’ to ‘monument’ and back again (see 2~1–3, 2~6; 3~9; 6~9). The same example also facilitates some additional observations on language. The lexicon of John Wilson Croker (1780-1857), who was closely associated with the commemoration of this statesman, includes: ‘memorial’, ‘statue’ and ‘out-of-doors monument’ (see 2~1–2).²³ These alternatives are suggestive of the range of themes addressed in this thesis: namely the “public” nature of the works, their commemorative associations and sculptural qualities.

Just as this particular case study enables wider conclusions to be drawn regarding the ebb and flow of meaning and attention so too does the aptly named ‘Buxton memorial fountain’ erected in 1865 (see 3~5; Plates 78 & 81). Its removal from Parliament Square after the Second World War was due in part to the perceived diminution of its commemorative significance. Prior to that the Office of Works had refused to take responsibility for it on the grounds that it was a fountain and neither a public statue nor a ‘memorial’ (see 6~7).²⁴

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Benedict Read has reflected that, with specific regard to Victorian “memorials”, the sculpted ‘object itself may have shifted from our physical gaze as much as from our critical focus.’²⁵ They have frequently been moved due to the exigencies of traffic. This demand was the substantive reason for the alterations not just to the statues but also to the entire layout of Parliament Square after the Second World War. In line with this monuments were often relocated to parks or other less visible sites thus making them easy prey for vandals.²⁶

²³ J.W. Croker to J.E. Denison, 18 February 1828. Denison Papers, Os C 48, Nottingham University.

²⁴ See PRO WORK 16/1722 & 20/266.

²⁵ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 4. The wider implications of this were debated at length during the conference ‘Making Visible Monuments and Making Monuments Visible’ held at The Finnish Institute in London from 8-9 January 1999. See the conference report written by the present author in the *Henry Moore Institute Newsletter*, No. 22, February / March 1999.

²⁶ In the City of Nottingham Albert Toft’s 1905 memorial to Queen Victoria and James Harvard Thomas’s statue of the politician Samuel Morley (1809-86) were moved in 1927 and 1953 respectively in favour of the motorcar. The former now stands in the Victoria Embankment Memorial Gardens but has sustained some damage including the loss of her sceptre. The latter fared less well: it fell from the lorry that was transporting it to Nottingham Arboretum, damaging it beyond repair. See ‘L92 Statues’,

This was accompanied by more deliberate acts of iconoclasm. Upon the death in 1876 of the two sculptors John Graham Lough (born 1798) and Matthew Noble (born 1818) their widows donated over three hundred and sixty sculptural models to the Corporation of Newcastle. Only nine survive.²⁷ Matthew Noble was responsible for two statues in Parliament Square: that of the fourteenth Earl of Derby (1799-1869) inaugurated in July 1874 (Plate 89) and Sir Robert Peel in December 1876 (Plate 98). The fact that so much of his output including sketch models, maquettes and plaster casts are now lost must impinge upon any proper assessment of his work. An indication of changing attitudes was the exhibition of Frederick Thrupp's (1812-1895) models at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds entitled *Survivals from a Sculptor's Studio*.²⁸ The Thrupp collection of some fifty plaster models and one hundred and fifty clay maquettes represent 'probably the largest single surviving collection of a Victorian sculptor's work'.²⁹ Such fragile preparatory work was not valued as intrinsically interesting in the nineteenth-century. This mind-set was compounded by subsequent authorities who saw in them so little artistic value that they sanctioned their destruction.³⁰

Even the avoidance of such obliteration is no guarantee of longevity. It can become less visible simply due to neglect. Following years of atmospheric damage the Albert Memorial is now observable in a way that it had not been since John Henry Foley's (1818-74) gilded figure of the Prince Consort was placed beneath Gilbert Scott's elaborate canopy in the winter of 1875. The 'return to glory' of this 'blackened hulk'³¹ stands in marked contrast to the fate of the nineteenth-century Parliament Square: its very fine railings by Francis Skidmore (1817-96) of Coventry were melted-down during the Second World War and thus only exist in documentary photographs (Plates

Local Studies, Angel Row Library, Nottingham; Terry Fry, *Nottingham's Plaques and Statues*, Nottingham Civic Society, Nottingham, 1999, pp. 24-25.

²⁷ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, pp. 33-34.

²⁸ *Frederick Thrupp 1812-1895. Studio Models from the collection of Torre Abbey, Torquay*, exhibited at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds from 21 January to 28 February 1999.

²⁹ Martin Greenwood, *Frederick Thrupp (1812-1895). Survivals from a Sculptor's Studio*, Essays in the Study of Sculpture, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 1999, p. 1.

³⁰ 'The low esteem in which mid-Victorian sculpture was held from the end of the 19th century helped to seal the fate of many studio collections.' Martin Greenwood, *Frederick Thrupp*, 1999, pp. 8-9.

³¹ Jo Darke, letter to *The Times*, 4 November 1998, p. 23.

12-13 & 101). However, an indication of their quality can be ascertained by viewing the superbly restored metalwork of the Albert Memorial, produced by Skidmore during exactly the same period.³²

Although the monuments under consideration in Parliament Square have survived, their present condition is far from satisfactory: the most notable example being the Buxton memorial fountain (see 3~5; 6~7 & Plate 81). The statues have fared better. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the 'original patina [of bronze] is considered an integral part of the sculpture's aesthetic history' any variation in colour is all too often lost due to a widespread tendency to cover public sculpture with a mixture of lanolin and beeswax.³³ All the standing Victorian statues in Parliament Square are blackened, thus diminishing both their presence and their aesthetic appeal.

On a happier note, the restoration of the Albert Memorial presaged a renewal of interest in Victorian culture and society that greeted the centenary of Queen Victoria's death in 1901.³⁴ The millennium has similarly encouraged a reassessment of Britain at the turn of the previous century and marked the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Great Exhibition, resulting in a series of books on the event.³⁵ The year 2000 also saw the first substantial publication on the history, art and architecture of the Houses of Parliament since M.H. Port's edited volume of 1976.³⁶

³² For this as well as a biography of Skidmore see Peter Howell, 'Francis Skidmore and the Metalwork', pp. 252-285 in Chris Brooks (ed.), *The Albert Memorial*, 2000.

³³ Although such a practice has become so prevalent that '[w]e have become... accustomed to seeing London's statues with black patinas', the '[a]rtists who originally patinated their sculptures green, gold, brown or toned probably did not intend their works to turn black or be disfigured with green and black streaks.' Jackie Heuman, 'Perspectives on the Repatination of Outdoor Bronze Sculptures', pp. 121-127 in Phillip Lindley (ed.), *Sculpture Conservation: Preservation or Interference?*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1997.

³⁴ This was embodied in the exhibition *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain* held at the Victoria & Albert Museum from 5 April to 29 July 2001. See John M. Mackenzie (ed.), *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*, V & A Publications, London, 2001.

³⁵ On the former see Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1999. For the latter see John R. Davis, *The Great Exhibition*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 1999; Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1999; Louise Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2001.

³⁶ M.H. Port (ed.), *The Houses of Parliament*, Yale University Press [for] the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (London) Ltd, New Haven and London, 1976; Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament: history, art, architecture*, Merrell, London, 2000. Benedict Read contributed sections on the sculpture in both volumes (pp. 232-245 & 252-269 respectively).

In the light of increased attention and past neglect this thesis seeks to *narrate* the history of Parliament Square. Indeed, a dense narrative (or what the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz termed ‘thick description’³⁷) is the only way to contextualise a topic which is at the overlap of so many social, political and cultural spheres. The text will therefore pivot around the formal laying out of the square in the 1860s (see 3~4; 3~8). Preceding and succeeding this narrative are detailed examinations of specific statues, from their actual inception and inauguration through to their occupancy of the space and the events that encroached upon them. Whilst retaining the general chronology of events this method also facilitates a thematic account with issues including political reform (2~3), abolition and temperance (3~5) and the park movement (4~1). A discernable narrative running throughout the thesis serves to structure these themes, provide linkages between them, and offer moments of explanation and elucidation. Additional variety is derived from the attention devoted to the specific memorials: at times they are assessed in pairs (2~6) or collectively (4~2), whilst the fifth chapter is devoted to only one statue, that of Oliver Cromwell. Such an approach contrasts with the opening chapter, which seeks by way of introduction to proffer collective comments across both time and space. The monuments are therefore correlated around a variety of holistic themes: from sacralization and aesthetics (1~3; 1~5) to gender and identity (1~4; 1~7–8).

It should be clear from this that the methods chosen and the varying thickness of the narrative reflect the value judgements made as to the relative importance of particular moments and monuments. It also testifies to the richness of the accompanying historical narrative. This thesis draws heavily from the parliamentary records of Hansard and reactions in the media of the day. This public discourse is complimented by archival sources, foremost being the Public Record Office, which retains a great deal of official correspondence between elected officials and civil servants on the one hand and the individuals and groups associated with the various memorials in Parliament Square on the other. Other archival deposits have also been of particular value and are listed in the bibliography (9~1). This wealth of primary material is in

³⁷ Clifford Geertz, ‘Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture’, pp. 3-30 in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: selected essays*, Fontana Press, London, 1993; Eric Kline Silverman, ‘Clifford Geertz: Towards a More “Thick” Understanding?’, pp. 121-159 in Christopher Tilley (ed.), *Reading Material Culture: Structuralism, Hermeneutics and Post-Structuralism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1990.

sympathy with the very *raison d'être* of Parliament Square: it is intended to be a place of memory, of “record”. By extracting and filtering archival information pertaining to this space and its monuments the thesis itself becomes an extension of, and enrichment to, this record.

Literature on commemorative monuments in central London prevalently takes the form of general guidebooks, such as C.S. Cooper’s *The Outdoor Monuments of London* and Lord Edward Gleichen’s *London’s Open Air Statuary*, both of 1928.³⁸ Preceding these two works is a very authoritative survey conducted by G.L. Gomme, Clerk of the London County Council ‘under the direction of the Local Government, Records and Museums Committee’ and published in 1910. The title gives a clear indication of its scope: *Return of outdoor memorials in London, other than statues on the exterior of buildings, memorials in the nature of tombstones, memorial buildings and memorial trees*.³⁹ Among later surveys is Margaret Baker’s *London Statues and Monuments* published originally in 1968.⁴⁰ Such works serve as useful preliminary sources of factual information pertaining to the person commemorated and include such details as the cost and materials of a monument. In this genre mention must be made of a publication that provides a considerably more penetrating analysis: John Blackwood’s *London’s Immortals: The Complete Outdoor Commemorative Statues* of 1989 (Plate 120) provides a concise entry for all the monuments addressed in this work.⁴¹ However, rather than a discursive, city-wide guide with succinct factual entries intended to be used as a source of reference, this thesis seeks to scrutinise a very select number of monuments within a particular locale. It aspires to engage with

³⁸ C.S. Cooper, *The Outdoor Monuments of London. Statues, Memorial Buildings, Tablets and War Memorials*, London, 1928; Edward Gleichen, *London’s Open-Air Statuary*, Cedric Chivers Ltd., Bath, 1928/1973.

³⁹ G.L. Gomme, *Return of outdoor memorials in London...*, London County Council, London, 1910.

⁴⁰ Margaret Baker, *London Statues and Monuments*, Shire Publications, Princes Risborough, 1995; see also Godfrey Thompson, *London’s Statues*, J.M. Dent, London, 1971; Tancred Borenius (with photography by E.O. Hoppé), *Forty London Statues and Public Monuments*, Methuen, London, 1926.

⁴¹ John Blackwood, *London’s Immortals: The complete commemorative outdoor statues*, Savoy Press, Oxford, 1989.

public sculpture by using it as a lens through which to scrutinise the cultural and societal milieu of which it forms an integral part.⁴²

⁴² This focus has been informed by the work of Alison Yarrington concerning memorials of the early nineteenth-century and her technique of very close observation of specific monuments to address themes of style, commemoration and hero worship in the formation of civic and national identities. See her thesis *The Commemoration of the Hero, 1800-1846*, Garland Publishing, New York & London, 1987; see also 'Nelson the Citizen Hero: State and public patronage of monumental sculpture 1805-18', pp. 315-329, *Art History*, Vol. 6, No. 3, September 1983; 'Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830', pp. 22-31 in Penelope Curtis (ed.), *Patronage and Practice, Sculpture on Merseyside*, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, 1989.

1

Parliament Square's principal themes: sculpture, space, identity and memory

1~1 Introduction

In the year 1868 preliminary work began on the construction of a building to accommodate the Home and Colonial Offices (Plate 48).¹ The architect was George Gilbert Scott, designer of the contemporaneous Albert Memorial (see preface). The location of these premises was Parliament Street – the thoroughfare leading to Whitehall just north of the late Sir Charles Barry's recently completed Houses of Parliament. The same year (1868) saw the laying out of Parliament Square according to the designs of Edward Middleton Barry. This was later to provide a forum for the erection of commemorative statues to prominent statesmen.

The façades of Scott's building were to be similarly adorned. The sculptors John Birnie Philip (1824-75) and Henry Hugh Armstead (1828-1905) executed busts and statues of explorers, philosophers, scientists and colonial secretaries.² In addition Armstead carved allegorical spandrel sculptures representing the continents whilst those depicting the arts, industries and other professions were produced by Philip.³ Both sculptors were simultaneously collaborating on the aforementioned Albert Memorial where they were responsible for the frieze of eminent cultural figures running around the base of the monument (see 1~9).

Following the completion of Scott's so-called New Government Offices an article entitled 'English Sculpture in 1880' was published in the *Cornhill Magazine*. Its

¹ M.H. Port, *Imperial London: Civil Government Building in London 1850-1915*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1995, p. 2 & Appendix 3a.

² See Neil Robert Bingham, *Victorian and Edwardian Whitehall: Architecture and Planning 1865-1918*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1985, pp. 73-77.

³ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1982, pp. 269-270 & figures 338-340; M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 258 & Plates 278-279.

author was Edmund Gosse (1849-1928).⁴ In his essay he commended the architectural sculpture embellishing Scott's building.⁵ Gosse's praise was, however, tempered by the fact that he feared few would raise their eyes to appreciate the carvings. This reflected his general conviction that there existed a gulf between the sculptor and the public.⁶ Allied to this was a long-standing and widely held belief that sculpture was deemed to be divorced as much from an architectural context as from its audience.⁷

Gosse sent a copy of 'English Sculpture in 1880' to Armstead who responded by writing to say that he shared the author's pessimistic view 'as to the position of Sculpture in England now' whilst thanking him for his 'extremely flattering remarks' regarding his own work. The sculptor also concurred regarding 'the evils of competition' adding that he had never yet competed for a public statue: with the consequence that no such commission had been confided to him. Given the current trends in statuary this was a situation that did not trouble him unduly:

On the whole – as long as committees fix the form – i.e. design the work – by insisting on the unmitigated Statue 8 or 10 feet high placed on the ever recurring Lump of Granite – I am not very sorry, as my own artistic enjoyment of such work would rather consist in making compositions combining architecture (designed by the Sculptor) with such Statues and so not making the 30/- Trousers quite the most prominent part of the Compositions.

You are, I believe, quite right as to the relative value of ability in the Sculpture now – it is quite nauseous – to read in the papers – the stereotyped remark, that "as to the Sculpture that need not detain us long" and then to find the writer – like Mrs. Squeers – ladling out his brimstone and treacle in the most slipshod manner.⁸

*

⁴ Gosse coined the term 'New Sculpture' used to characterise the sculpture produced in Britain from the closing years of the nineteenth-century up until the First World War. See Edmund Gosse, 'The New Sculpture 1879-94', *Art Journal*, 1894, pp. 138-42, 199-203, 277-282, 306-11.

⁵ Edmund Gosse, 'English Sculpture in 1880', *Cornhill Magazine*, 1880, pp. 184-5. Susan Beattie referred to this article in her important book *The New Sculpture* (Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1983, pp. 38-39), although she seemed unaware that the author was Gosse.

⁶ This was expounded upon at length in 'The Future of Sculpture in London' published in *Magazine of Art* of 1881. See Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture*, p. 39.

⁷ This was later to be expressed in its most extreme form in the Stanley Casson extract cited in the preface. However, as early as 1868 'A Working Carver' lamented in the pages of the *Builder* about the 'inartistic manner' of sculpture in general and questioned how it was 'that carvers and architects... [did] not work more hand-in-hand with each other.' "A Working Carver", *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1302, 18 January 1868, pp. 49-50.

⁸ Correspondence from H.H. Armstead to Edmund Gosse, 2 August 1880. Brotherton Library Collection, Leeds University.

Gosse's article and Armstead's response set in trail the research for this thesis, even if the themes and narratives subsequently chosen have frequently departed from this initial point of reference. The monuments in Parliament Square, like the statues and busts on Scott's building, constitute a commemorative "pantheon", a cultural form that is commented on later in this section (see 1~9) and developed as a case study in the fifth chapter concerning Oliver Cromwell, 'a regicide in a royalist pantheon'. Furthermore, Armstead's allegorical continents for the Colonial Office alongside the statues of important protagonists in the imperial project point towards the function of art (and perhaps especially sculpture) in the concretisation of the British Empire (see 1~8). These clusters of statues have much to do with the formation of identity (1~4; 1~8). It is also telling that these portraits are so often of individual men. Representations of women almost exclusively take the form of non-specific allegorical figures such as those created by Armstead for Scott's building. However, it is revealing that the symbol denoting *Government* takes a masculine guise (Plate 49). The issue of gender is addressed at the outset (1~7) and also returned to in the penultimate section when thoughts turn to possible future commemorations in Parliament Square, not least the potential inclusion of Margaret Thatcher (7~2).

Gosse's concern about the lack of public awareness and difficulty in appreciating sculpture resurfaces throughout the period under scrutiny. For our purposes this stance can be related to the intended function of the commemorative monument: a past person or event is inserted into the present to guarantee recollection by future generations. However, the ceaseless march of time means that this relationship is inevitably a brittle one, perpetually susceptible to fracture and forgetfulness. The very same memorial may be of acute significance at one moment whilst slipping into anonymity at another, and vice versa. If nothing else the monuments in Parliament Square testify to the ebb and flow of memory and meaning.

Another subordinate line of enquiry suggested by Gosse and Armstead is the relationship between sculpture and architecture. Parliament Square exists solely because of the Houses of Parliament. Its pedestalled statues have a reciprocal relationship with their innumerable siblings both inserted within and appended upon the adjacent building:

Outside the House of Commons stand the statues of great statesmen, black and sleek and shiny as sea lions that have just risen from the water. And inside the

Houses of Parliament... here, too, are statues— Gladstone, Granville, Lord John Russell— white statues, gazing from white eyes at the old scenes of stir and bustle in which, not so very long ago, they played their part.⁹

Such a correlation also exists, although in a very different fashion, in the instance of Oliver Cromwell. The siting of a statue to the Lord Protector on the periphery of Parliament Square in 1899 was due, at least in part, to his *exclusion* from the scheme of architectural sculpture (see 5~2; Plate 107). Therefore, rather than a literal combination with architecture, the statues in Parliament Square have a no less interesting conceptual affiliation with the spaces and structures around them.

This thesis is, then, unashamedly about a series of unmitigated statues eight or ten feet in height placed upon ever recurring lumps of granite. This would almost certainly be to the chagrin of H.H. Armstead who railed against these ubiquitous erections with their conspicuous ‘30/- Trousers’. Alas, such attire is amply in evidence in the works under discussion. Allied to questions of aesthetic appearance are issues pertaining to scale and location. It is these seemingly arcane and inane topics, preserved in the traces of dialogue that survive as archived memoranda or as snippets in periodicals and newspapers, which bring to life these trousered effigies. To use the words of Philip Ward-Jackson, by far the most informed present-day commentator on Parliament Square: ‘the statuary in the vicinity of the Houses of Parliament looks disordered, not to say insignificant, which is to some degree the result of the dramas that lie behind it.’¹⁰

The wrangling between the main protagonists constituted an essential ingredient in the process of commissioning a statue. Those with vested interests included the sculptor, the committee of subscribers, and the First Commissioner of the Office of Works whose parliamentary duty it was to give permission for the erection of any such monument in the vicinity of parliament. Not surprisingly this inspired a myriad of public and private reactions, very often of the most ethereal and ephemeral kind: from individual letters to public writings; newspaper articles to Hansard reports;

⁹ Virginia Woolf, “‘This is the House of Commons’”, pp. 37-44 in *The London Scene: five essays by Virginia Woolf*, The Hogarth Press, London, 1982, p. 37.

¹⁰ Philip Ward-Jackson, ‘Introduction’, pp. iii-iv in Benedict Read and Philip Ward-Jackson, *Courtauld Institute Illustration Archives. Archive 4: Late 18th and 19th century sculpture in the British Isles. Part 7: London*, Harvey Miller in association with the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, London, 1976, p. iv.

meetings of subscribers to debates in parliament. This meant that comments were made and judgements passed on such monuments from the moment they were first announced, during the commissioning process, and through to completion.

It is the intention of this thesis to recover and reconstitute some of these narratives. Hopefully this will not be done in a ‘slipshod manner’ like some latter-day Mrs. Squeers, but rather in an informed, if not exactly riveting, style.¹¹ Firstly therefore, before embarking on the biographies of any specific monuments, a number of key themes pertaining to the commemorative memorial in general must be foregrounded. For it is the re-emergence of such issues as location, style and scale that testifies to their continued currency from Canning to Churchill.

1~2 Monuments and the commissioning process

Each one of the monuments addressed in this thesis was the result of a collective decision-making process. The semi-private character of this consensual procedure determines the nature of the monuments in question: erected in urban space and paid for by a collective of like-minded individuals they are “public” artworks serving a commemorative function. And yet an analysis of the group that instituted a specific memorial indicates that it was the activity of a very particular section of society. It is important to acknowledge this as it provides a more sophisticated appreciation of the precise “public” nature of the resulting edifice. An examination of the “little politics” of each monument is therefore a fruitful and indeed very necessary task. This is nowhere more evident than the commemoration of Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850) in Parliament Square, the process for which covered a period of twenty years, three sculptures, two sculptors and a fluctuating committee (see 2~5; 3~7; 4~2).

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¹¹ ‘Mrs. Squeers stood at one of the desks, presiding over an immense basin of brimstone and treacle, of which delicious compound she administered a large instalment to each boy in succession: using for the purpose a common wooden spoon, which might have been originally manufactured for some gigantic top, and which widened every young gentleman’s mouth considerably: they being all obliged, under heavy corporal penalties, to take in the whole of the bowl at a gasp.’ Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, pp. 88-89.

Following the death of a prominent public figure it was not unusual for a group of individuals with professional or personal links to that person to unite with the intention of commemorating the deceased. A chairman and secretary might then be appointed and a subscription opened for other persons or groups to contribute. The type of commemoration might take several forms: from naming parks, hospitals, schools or streets to the establishment of a fund to aid deserving causes. This variety is again most clearly demonstrated in the many schemes proposed in the wake of Sir Robert Peel's death in 1850 (see 2~4).

When a tangible sculptural and/or architectural monument was proposed the committee would seek permission to site it in an appropriate location. The power and influence of these committees over the form these memorials took was such that H.H. Armstead claimed that they were, in effect, responsible for the actual design. The committee frequently decided to initiate either an open or limited competition for the work. This led to so many quarrels and disputes between artists and patrons that many leading practitioners refused to compete.¹² The memorials in Parliament Square, with one exception, appear to all have been directly requested from an individual sculptor and paid for by public subscription.¹³

However chosen, the relationship between sculptor and commissioner often became strained. This situation, as has already been noted, was further complicated in the case of the statues erected in the vicinity of parliament because permission had to be sought from a politician appointed by the governing party of the day: the First Commissioner of the Office of Works.¹⁴ In June 1860, a few months after his appointment to the post, William Cowper (1811-88) asserted that it was his 'duty, in the first instance to [assess] the general effect which a statue may produce on the

¹² In February 1911 twenty-seven sculptors were invited to enter a competition for a memorial to the late King Edward VII to be erected outside the Victoria Rooms in Bristol. Four refused on the grounds that they did not compete for commissions: Albert Bruce Joy (1842-1924), William Robert Colton (1867-1921), Henry Alfred Pegram (1862-1937) and George Frampton (1860-1928). 'King Edward VII Memorial Committee'. Bristol Record Office, 03919 (1-107).

¹³ The exception is the memorial to the South African, Jan Christian Smuts erected in 1956 (see 6~7).

¹⁴ For a complete list of these protagonists see M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, 'Appendix I: First Commissioners of Works, 1851-1915', p. 275.

ornamentation of the metropolis'.¹⁵ Such consideration was often motivated as much by politics as by aesthetics.¹⁶

The sculptor Armstead's distaste for committees was likely to have been motivated by the fact that a group of subscribers might well have been desirous for as unembellished a likeness as possible. He no doubt considered that this – as with the unequal relationship between sculptor and architect – impinged on his aesthetic freedom. The stylistic preference in monuments of the nineteenth-century among these committees was, as the disgruntled sculptor stated, for a portrait statue of at least one-and-a-half times the size of life. Questions of scale and dimension were much debated in each of the figures included in Parliament Square. This was prompted in part by the 'colossal' proportions of the Canning statue, which formed a problematic precedent for those that followed (see 2~6, 3~9, 4~2). Added to this was the tendency for memorial committees to seek permission for a larger scale in order to increase the prominence of the person they sought to commemorate (see 4~2).

Given economic strictures and governmental efforts to limit the more expansive enthusiasms of memorial committees the statue was indeed very often an 'unmitigated' object. It was set-apart from its everyday setting by virtue of being elevated on a pedestal ('the ever recurring Lump of Granite'¹⁷). This arrangement assisted in bringing it to the attention of as many passers-by as possible. It also served to symbolically emphasise the hierarchical nature of the commemoration: the otherworldly body is situated above and beyond the viewer (Plate 104). Such elevation indicates the intended didacticism of the monument: it can be seen as serving to inspire, admonish and educate in equal measure. A spectator is directed to be respectful to both the memorial and what it memorialises. In her book *On Longing*, Susan Stewart asserts that, in public space, it is imperative that 'the gigantic be situated above and over, that the transcendent position be denied the viewer.' She goes on to argue that art in such a setting resembles 'an eternalised parade, a fixing of the symbols of public life, of the state' and the 'reduction of the individual viewer'.

¹⁵ Cowper to Shelburne, 11 June 1860 (copy). PRO WORK 20/253.

¹⁶ M.H. Port has commented that '[t]he Office of Works ranked low in the [political] hierarchy and its head was frequently moved.' M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 17; see also Neil Bingham, *Victorian and Edwardian Whitehall*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁷ H.H. Armstead to Edmund Gosse, 2 August 1880. Brotherton Library Collection, Leeds University.

The latter must ‘acknowledge the fallen, the victorious, and the heroic, and be taken up in the history of place.’¹⁸

The pedestal served to frame the statue by providing a surface on which to inscribe the name and dates of the person commemorated.¹⁹ It also ensured the maintenance of the status quo between the remembered and the remembering by placing the sculpture beyond easy reach. When this distance is narrowed – during times of public disturbance, for example – the censure of those in authority is roused. A pedestal’s protective role was alluded to in connection with the statue of George Canning (1770-1827) during the volatile period of the Reform Bill in 1832 (see 2~3):

The bronze statue by Westmacott has been kept, we are told, from its pedestal beside Westminster Hall, because the fury of the mob was dreaded, should any disappointment ensue in the matter of Reform... We see the artist is *busy heightening the pedestal* [italics added].²⁰

The sight of a person standing on a pedestal and occupying the same space as the statue is both uncanny and disturbing as it represents a challenge to the norm, something that is most clearly apparent in images of the May Day riots of 2000 (Plates 123-5).

Many of the themes central to this thesis are illuminated by this insurrectionist phenomenon. A physical assault on a commemorative statue is of considerable significance because it undermines the sense of concord that is fundamental to a “public” (as opposed to “private”) monument. Official responses to acts of desecration serve to indicate which commemorative objects still possess significance for which sections of society. The perceived requirement to defend these effigies and inscriptions from effacement provides an indication of the “sacred” nature of such artefacts and the spaces they inhabit. The repetition of such aggression and defence further reinforces a sense of historical continuity in this account of Parliament Square and its monuments. These twin themes of unanimity and sacralization will now be addressed in turn.

¹⁸ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the collection*, Duke University Press, Durham, N.C. & London, 1993, p. 90.

¹⁹ That this was the norm is indicated by the fact that the absence of an inscription on the memorial to the Earl of Derby was remarked upon by a member of the public before being swiftly rectified (1~5).

²⁰ Anon, ‘Our Weekly Gossip on Literature and Art’, *Athenaeum*, No. 234, 21 April 1832, p. 259.

1~3 Commemoration and sacred sites

In spite of linguistic and cultural differences notions of ‘separateness, respect and rules of behaviour’ are common to all sites that are considered to be sacred.²¹ It has been suggested that such an environment becomes “sacralized” by its ascribed associations’.²² The ‘stages of sight sacralization’ as set out by Dean MacCannell are of value to an understanding of the reasons behind the formation and re-formations of Parliament Square: in outline this theory concerns the official labelling and protection of sights (and, for our purposes, *sites*) deemed worthy of preservation. This significance is amplified by its replication and dissemination in the form of words, images and souvenirs.²³

The area that was to later become Parliament Square was initially fashioned at the close of the first decade of the nineteenth-century following the clearance of streets and properties in the vicinity of Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster. It has recently been observed that, in the eighteenth-century, the bulk of Westminster’s ‘[s]lums were largely confined to the maze of narrow medieval streets round the Abbey, where Thieving Lane lived up to its name, and open drains carrying excrement still ran down the middle of the streets as late as 1808.’²⁴ Between the years 1800 and 1814 seven acts of parliament enabled the compulsory purchase and removal of properties and the laying out of new thoroughfares to replace this labyrinth of insalubrious streets (Plate 2).²⁵ This was done in order to improve access to and increase ‘the security and accommodation’ of the Houses of Parliament as well as the

²¹ Jane Hubert, ‘Sacred beliefs and beliefs of sacredness’ in David Carmichael et al., *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*, Routledge, London & New York, 1994, p. 11.

²² G.J. Ashworth & J.E. Tunbridge, *Building a New Heritage: Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe*, Routledge, London & New York, 1994, p. 19.

²³ Dean MacCannell, *The tourist: a new theory of the leisure class*, Macmillan, London, 1976, pp. 43-48. For a more fully developed analysis see Stuart Burch, ‘Shaping symbolic space: Parliament Square, London as sacred site’ Angela Phelps, G.J. Ashworth & Bengt O.H. Johansson, *The Construction of Built Heritage: A north European perspective on policies, practices and outcomes*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2002, pp. 223-236.

²⁴ Liza Picard, ‘Westminster’s slums and squares’, pp. 15-16 in *Dr Johnson’s London. Life in London 1740-1770*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2000, p. 15.

²⁵ The Acts were 41 George III to 48 George III. To carry out this legislation the Treasury allocated the sum of £102, 339 12s 10d between 1805 and 1808. Six thousand of this was for paying the surveyors and workmen whilst the remainder went on the compulsory purchase of property. Of this the rebuilding of certain edifices; the construction of an additional entrance to Westminster Hall; repairs to St. Margaret’s Church; and ‘paving, railing and planting the new Square’ amounted to £12, 022 2s 1d. *Parliamentary Papers [PP]* 1810-11 (251) II.225, pp. 6-7.

courts of law then housed in Westminster Hall.²⁶ The cleared areas would also provide the space necessary during times of ‘public solemnities’ (see 1~4). It had the further effect of providing

all travellers passing over Westminster Bridge, whether entering into or departing from the Metropolis... [with] a striking and magnificent view of Westminster Abbey in its whole extent, from Henry the Seventh’s Chapel eastward, to the great Towers of its western entrance.²⁷

It thus led to the isolating (what MacCannell might term ‘framing or elevating’) of the principal architectural monuments: Westminster Hall, Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret’s Church. To perpetuate this ‘magnificent view’, it was directed that no subsequent structures be allowed to ‘interfere with the view of the Abbey from the intersecting centre of Bridge-street and Parliament-street’.²⁸ The preservation of Parliament Square as an open space was therefore protected by legislation from the outset and this remains the case today (Plate 3).

A ‘large portion’ of the area that was once covered by a plethora of domestic properties, workshops and coffee-houses was ‘railed in, and turfed and planted’.²⁹ This open space, grassed-over and planted with trees, became known (MacCannell would say ‘named’) as Garden Square; either St. Margaret’s Churchyard or St. Margaret’s Square; and by its present epithet: Parliament Square. This variety of nomenclature reflects the fact that it was physically connected to the grounds of the adjoining church. This was severed in the 1860s by the extension east of Victoria Street and the realisation of E.M. Barry’s design. It thereafter became a square in the full sense of the word. The central enclosure was bisected by a pedestrian walkway. On either side, lined by railings and decorated with bedding plants, were sites ready to accommodate commemorative statues of eminent statesmen.

Parliament Square’s retention of memorials of the past is complemented by its facilitation of the orderly transportation of people and business in the present: it stores and regulates. In the 1850s the journalist George Augustus Sala (1828-95) wrote that

²⁶ *PP* 1808 (231) III.1, p. 3.

²⁷ *PP* 1808 (231) III.1, p. 6; see also J. Mordaunt Crook & M.H. Port, *The History of the King’s Works, Vol. VI 1782-1851*, London, HMSO, 1971, pp. 515-516.

²⁸ *PP* 1810-11 (251) II.225, pp. 109-110.

²⁹ *PP* 1810-11 (251) II.225, p. 6.

Leicester Square functioned as ‘the liver of London’.³⁰ The liver acquires the products of digestion, breaks down fats, produces bile and blood-clotting factors and expels toxins such as alcohol from the blood: it therefore serves to store and regulate.³¹ In contrast, Sala described Westminster before the urban clearances as ‘a *cloaca* of narrow, tortuous, shabby, stifling, and malodorous streets’.³² This is visualised in an image such as David Cox’s (1783-1859) *Old Westminster, 1811* where the sublime towers of St. Margaret’s Church and the Abbey form the ecclesiastical background to a densely constructed terrace of undistinguished houses.³³

A ‘cloaca’ can be defined as ‘a sewer; a cavity in birds and reptiles, in which the intestinal and urinary ducts terminate’.³⁴ This vision of obstruction and toxicity was observed by the *Building News* in 1868: it equated a city’s streets with ‘the veins of a complex animal’, any narrowing or blockage of which constituted ‘a kind of aneurism’. Using such an example as this Lynda Nead has recently opined that the ‘principle of circulatory movement was central to debates concerning the design of urban space in the mid-nineteenth century’.³⁵ The construction of parliament as a sacred entity entailed its protection from protest and pollution. Thus, when E.M. Barry was requested to submit designs for the enclosing of New Palace Yard, he was instructed to allow for railings which, whilst they ‘should not necessarily interrupt the view’, had to ‘be sufficiently high and strong to exclude a mob on important occasions’ (see 3~6).³⁶

The necessity for unobtrusive protection was a means of providing security but without impeding those who wished to pay homage to these seats of political and ecclesiastical power. This is the case at one point during the novel *Robert Elsmere* of

³⁰ G.A. Sala, ‘XVI. Leicester square’ in *Gaslight and Daylight, with some London scenes they shine upon*, Tinsley Brothers, London, 1872, pp. 174-175.

³¹ Denise Dresner, (ed.), *Collins Paperback Encyclopaedia*, Harper Collins, Bath, 1995, p. 538.

³² G.A. Sala, *London up to Date*, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1894, p. 78.

³³ This image (watercolour over pencil, 33 x 45.5, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle) is reproduced in Celina Fox (ed.), *London - World City 1800-1840*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1992, Plate 237.

³⁴ Catherine Schwarz, (ed.), *Chambers Giant Paperback Dictionary*, Chambers Harrap, Cambridge, 1997, p. 193.

³⁵ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2000, pp. 16 & 163.

³⁶ Alfred Austin to E.M. Barry, 26 November 1864 (copy). PRO WORK 11/20.

1884, when a protagonist is described as experiencing ‘a sense of emotion and reverence’ whenever in Parliament Square, feeling himself as he did ‘at the centre of human things... more thrilled by Westminster than [the Forum] of Rome’.³⁷ Similarly, in July 1901 Reginald Brabazon, twelfth Earl of Meath, described this portion of Westminster as ‘the centre of one of the most interesting and historic portions of the kingdom... it is the Mecca of educated subjects of his Majesty in all parts of the world’.³⁸ Evident in all of this is a rivalry – both real and imagined – between London and other imperial cities, be they of the present or the past.

In this Parliament Square can be seen as a microcosm of the city as a whole. For, whilst it was ‘the centre of a world-embracing empire... [London] had failed to achieve either monumentality or beauty.’³⁹ This pronouncement comes from M.H. Port’s *Imperial London*, which gives a fulsome description of civil government building in the capital from 1850 until 1915. The second chapter, entitled simply ‘Imperial City’, provides a succinct and informative account of London in a European perspective. It demonstrates how it differed from other international cities – from Paris and Rome to Vienna and Munich – in that it was by no means a ‘planned city.’ London suffered from an absence of adequate government to implement large-scale projects. ‘There were, however, two areas in which the government acknowledged a special responsibility: the Royal Parks and the approaches to the Houses of Parliament.’⁴⁰

An outcome of the latter was Parliament Square. Yet with its self-effacing proportions and modest statuary there is a decided lack of ostentation to this urban clearing. This contrasts with perhaps its closest international precursor: *l’aile Richelieu* in the French capital. Laid out in the 1850s to connect the Louvre with the Tuileries it provided a grandiloquent setting for a whole series of newly constructed offices of state (Plate 11). The vast open space of *l’aile Richelieu* is articulated by ponderous memorials sited within a rigid network of paths, plantings and lawns.⁴¹ This ensemble resembles

³⁷ Mrs Humphrey Ward, *Robert Elsmere*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1967 [1884], p. 411.

³⁸ Lord Meath, ‘The Enclosure in Broad Sanctuary’, letter to *The Times*, 17 July 1901. PRO WORK 11/53.

³⁹ M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 11.

⁴⁰ M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 20.

⁴¹ M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 14 & Plate 13.

an enormously inflated version of Parliament Square. Accordingly, as the latter neared completion in October 1867, an anonymous critic in the *Builder* took the opportunity to lampoon this ‘wretched lark’s-cage patch’.⁴² In this article ‘the smoke-begrimed statue of Canning’ is brought to life and, eyeing with dissatisfaction his novel surroundings, the loquacious sculpture describes how a Parliament Square ‘worthy of the name and the country’ should properly appear. A wholesale clearance of buildings and streets in the vicinity of parliament and the Abbey, demarcated by sumptuous government buildings and replete with statues, would have provided a “‘Mecca of architecture’” genuinely reflecting the ‘greatness and dignity’ of the nation and its institutions.

Instead the actual, Lilliputian Parliament Square has a quiet ordinariness and discreet orderliness that is only occasionally disturbed, sometimes by a passing rabble of protestors but more often by a dutiful crowd of sightseers. It is unobtrusive and, in the main, overlooked. Yet both the form and appearance of this space eloquently reflect the story of its inception: it was born of political wrangling and parsimony. Nevertheless for some, like the fictional character in *Robert Elsmere*, it could (and still can) inspire a surge of nostalgic euphoria. G.A. Sala numbered amongst those so affected: in 1894 he found himself able to classify the ‘south-western extremity of Parliament Street’ as ‘*the* corner of the civilised world’ (Plate 17).⁴³ The fact that Sala was able to make such an association testifies to the significance of Parliament Square. It also explains why those who wish to politically demonstrate or nationally celebrate so often choose to do so at the extremities of Parliament Street and Whitehall, be it Trafalgar or Parliament Square. It also accounts for the voluble official reaction to violent protest in these domains: it undermines the foundations of the political status quo because it chips away at its symbolic corner stone.

⁴² Anon, ‘Parliament Square’, *Builder*, Vol. 25, No. 1287, 5 October 1867, pp. 725-6.

⁴³ G.A. Sala, *London up to Date*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1894, pp. 71-81.

1~4 Preserving memories and shaping identities

Benedict Anderson, in his seminal work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, famously characterises the nation as ‘an imagined political community’.⁴⁴ He goes on to assert that:

As with modern persons, so it is with nations. Awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet of “forgetting” the experience of this continuity... engenders the need for a narrative of “identity”.⁴⁵

Public spaces are arenas in which such communal (national) identities are manifested. Rather than being a neutral domain they are, on the contrary, foci of contestation in terms of memory. John R. Gillis has argued ‘that the notion of identity depends on the idea of memory, and vice versa.’ Memories held in common define an individual or group and provide the basis for its identity. Gillis comments upon the mutability of the terms – they are constantly under revision and the struggles over selection are determined by the loci of power. This renders the process ‘inscriptive rather than descriptive’.⁴⁶

Memory and identity have a historical relationship that can be traced through the ‘social and political’ process of commemoration. In the public sphere commemorative activities, whilst appearing to be consensual, are in fact products of ‘contest’ and ‘struggle’.⁴⁷ This will be in evidence throughout the following account of Parliament Square, not least in the question of democracy and the right to vote, an issue most forcibly illustrated in the striving for universal adult suffrage (see 1~7). Nevertheless, the nineteenth-century witnessed the deployment of the past, ‘ritualizing and commemorating to the point that their sacred sites and times became the secular equivalent of shrines and holy days.’⁴⁸ These ritual ceremonies are a principal element in the formation of what Pierre Nora has termed *lieux de mémoire* or ‘realms of

⁴⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2nd revised edition), Verso, New York, 1991, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 205.

⁴⁶ John R. Gillis, ‘Introduction. Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship’, pp. 3-24 in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁷ John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, p. 5.

⁴⁸ John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, p. 19.

memory'. This he defines as 'any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element in the memorial heritage of any community'.⁴⁹

Ceremonial spaces would thus appear to constitute the epitome of a 'realm of memory'. These domains are utilised as a means of bolstering national and imperial identity through ceremony by encouraging the masses to take to the streets to mark important occasions. As we have seen the opening-up of space in the vicinity of the Palace of Westminster in the early nineteenth-century was 'an accommodation much wanted upon all public solemnities'.⁵⁰ The need to construct increasingly grandiose stadia to house the cheering subjects was a prime motivation in the clearing of spaces around key sites and buildings, including the area that became Parliament Square (Plate 46). This was spectacularly the case during the coronation of George IV on 19 July 1821.⁵¹ This was succeeded by even greater acts of display to mark the jubilees of Queen Victoria in 1887 and 1897.⁵² Such occasions have prompted David Cannadine to assert that 'the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth was a golden age of "invented traditions"'.⁵³

Legislation was necessary to facilitate the ritual articulation of these spaces of power. In 1839, for instance, an act was passed to give the police powers to keep 'order' by ensuring the free flow of traffic and preventing the streets from being obstructed. This referred in general to 'Places of public Resort' and, in particular, 'the immediate

⁴⁹ Pierre Nora, 'Preface to the English Language Edition', pp. xv-xxiv in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past. Vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p. xvii; Richard Parish, 'Recalling of things French', *The Times Higher*, 16 April 1999, p. 27.

⁵⁰ *PP* 1810-11 (251) II.225, p. 6.

⁵¹ See Valerie Cumming, 'Pantomime and pageantry: the coronation of George IV', pp. 39-50 & Plate 39 in Celina Fox (ed.), *London - World City 1800-1840*. When, on 1 June 1820, signs appeared on three boards in St. Margaret's Churchyard indicating that the 'Ground [was] to be let for the erection for scaffolds to view the Coronation', it prompted an angry response from the incumbent Dean who forbade the cutting down of the trees. Draft letter dated 7 July 1820. Westminster Abbey Muniment Room & Library [WAM] 51331A & 51333.

⁵² For the latter see Colonel Peter Walton, *A Celebration of Empire: A Centenary Souvenir of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria 1837-1897*, Spellmount, Staplehurst, 1988.

⁵³ David Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c. 1820-1977', pp. 101-164 in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 138.

Neighbourhood of Her Majesty's Palaces' including 'the High Court of Parliament'.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, these rules outlawing obstruction were not applied to the police during such times of 'public rejoicing'. In January 1877, the authorities sought permission to erect 'Barriers' in the vicinity of Whitehall, including 'at the end of Great George Street [i.e. Parliament Square]... on the occasion of the opening of Parliament by Her Majesty the Queen on the 8th of February next.'⁵⁵

In *Trafalgar Square Emblem of Empire*, Rodney Mace examines in detail public demonstrations in this ceremonial space. He contrasts the encouragement given to officially endorsed celebration – such as Queen Victoria's jubilee celebrations or the relief of Mafeking in May 1900 – with the prohibition of expressions of protest.⁵⁶ Whilst this thesis is concerned with state sanctioned gatherings of people it is equally concerned with manifestations of dissent. This contradictory pairing is apparent from the first memorial discussed to the last.

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Whilst considering the two effigies that open and close this thesis (Canning and Churchill) it is pertinent to foreground their aesthetic similarities. Of similar proportions these two corpulent figures are enveloped in heavy attire: something approaching senatorial robes in the case of George Canning and a greatcoat for Winston Churchill (Plates 57 & 120). They offer solutions to H.H. Armstead's criticism of the conventional portrait statue: that it made 'the 30/- Trousers quite the most prominent' element of the composition. This points to a central dilemma throughout the nineteenth-century and beyond: namely the most appropriate method of attiring a figure. Sir Robert Peel's death marked the widespread emergence of contemporary dress in statuary (see 2~4). In the case of Peel this element strengthened his association with the populace at large and indicated that his origins were from the manufacturing as opposed to the aristocratic classes. This was something that would appeal to industrialists in the newly enfranchised north where the bulk of the statues

⁵⁴ 'An Act for further improving the Police in and near the Metropolis', 2 & 3 Vict. c.47, 17 August 1839, section 52.

⁵⁵ The Assistant Commissioner of Police made this request to the Westminster District Board of Works. Westminster City Archives [WCA] E3332 / 1(a), Letters (not-submitted), January 1877.

⁵⁶ Rodney Mace, *Trafalgar Square Emblem of Empire*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1976.

commemorating him were erected. His appearance as an educated individual very much of his own time was intended 'to please the expressed views of the business-like Manchester mind'.⁵⁷

Although the deployment of modern dress might have symbolic import it did not alleviate the aesthetic difficulties that this incurred. There were at least three means around this dilemma: firstly to swathe a figure in a pseudo-Antique drape (as with Westmacott's statue of Canning, see 2~1); secondly to cloak it in an honorary guise such as a peer's robes (Mario Raggi's depiction of Benjamin Disraeli: 4~5 & Plate 99); or, thirdly, to even leave it nude (Westmacott and Wyatt's memorial to Nelson at Liverpool: 2~4). This conundrum was linked to the wider problem of how 'to choose a notable and joyous dress for men'. Oscar Wilde identified this matter as one of the most insurmountable problems of the age: failure to introduce a broader spectrum of colour in contemporary fashion had resulted in the loss of 'all notability of dress' with the effect being that they had

almost annihilated the modern sculptor. And, in looking around at the figures which adorn our parks, one could almost wish that we had completely killed the whole art. To see the frockcoat of the drawing room done in bronze, or the double waistcoat perpetuated in marble, adds a new horror to death.⁵⁸

G.A. Sala, writing a decade earlier in 1872, had similarly deplored 'the disagreeable uniformity of costume' that made it impossible 'to tell any one man from another (our own immediate acquaintances excepted) by his dress alone'.⁵⁹ Moreover, Sala held that it would be inconceivable to imagine erecting a memorial to fashion. Instead 'we allow the corpse of fashion to putrefy in the gutter... [and] after his death we scoff and jeer at him, and are tremendously satirical upon the ridiculous, hideous, frightful, preposterous fashion that he was.'⁶⁰ The plethora of statues thus attired had the effect of doing just this whilst also making identification of the commemorated person and his station in life a far from easy affair (see 1~5). The iconoclasm wrought upon Carlo Marochetti's Peel statue in 1868 (3~7) was, it was claimed, based upon the fact that

⁵⁷ "X", 'Salford Peel Testimonial Competition', *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 412, 28 December 1850, p. 617.

⁵⁸ Oscar Wilde, *Essays and Lectures*, 1882 cited in Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Men's Clothes 1600-1900*, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1964/1994, p. 156.

⁵⁹ G.A. Sala, 'XXXIV. Where are they?', pp. 384-397 in *Gaslight and Daylight, with some London scenes they shine upon*, Tinsley Brothers, London, 1872, pp. 384-385.

⁶⁰ G.A. Sala, 'XXXI. Fashion', pp. 354-361 in *Gaslight and Daylight*, pp. 360-361.

the figure was ‘fetched up in a frockcoat... unknown to any London or Parisian tailor’.⁶¹

The insuperable dilemma of the thirty-shilling trousers serves to highlight one of this thesis’s key assertions: namely that the monument occupied an uneasy position between the (arguably separate and frequently antagonistic) spheres of art and politics. The copious amount of press and parliamentary attention that monuments garner during moments of insurrection (see 6~9–10) indicates that such reactions were and remain invariably motivated by reasons that were external to the work in question and often betray a lack of artistic sensitivity. This helps explain H.H. Armstead’s equation of a newspaper critic with Dickens’s Mrs Squeers, ‘ladling out his (sic) brimstone and treacle in the most slipshod manner’ (see 1~1). As with the matter of scale the question of costume frequently revealed the diverging priorities of sculptor and commissioner. It also pointed out the paramount importance placed on “realism”, a pressing concern lest the portrait fail in its overriding objective: to portray the semblance of a deceased individual to his contemporaries and their descendants.

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An artist is habitually perceived to exist independently of mundane, worldly pressures and, as a consequence, a work of art ‘functions... to give free expression to creativity and imagination.’⁶² The notion that “Art” is characterised by a lack of societal restraint has the effect of diminishing the status of commissioned portraiture given that it is inevitably constrained by pressures other than the purely aesthetic. One art historian has correctly observed: ‘Perhaps more than any other form of art, portraits have played a public and utilitarian role that often obscures or even overrides their purely aesthetic qualities.’⁶³ Given that restrictions of style and utility are no more so apparent than in the series of commemorative statues in Parliament Square this has the effect of relegating them below the echelon of “Art”.

⁶¹ Anon, ‘The *Fiasco* in Palace-Yard’, pp. 160-161, *Art Journal*, 1868, p. 160.

⁶² Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire: Design and Society since 1750*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1986, p. 7.

⁶³ Shearer West, ‘Portraiture: Likeness and Identity’, pp. 71-83 in her edited volume *Guide to Art*, Bloomsbury, London, 1996, pp. 74-79.

An appreciation of the need to go beyond sole consideration of ‘significant form’ in art by contemplating ‘the world of human interests’ is a key component of what has become known as “the new art history”.⁶⁴ Adrian Forty’s *Objects of Desire: Design and Society since 1750*, from which these quotations derive, has affinities with such an approach. The author is emphatic in his avowal that ‘the history of design is also the history of societies’.⁶⁵ It is precisely for this reason that this thesis devotes so much attention to the societal context of the monuments: the meanings accrued by Parliament Square and its monuments can only be fully understood by closely considering the altered circumstances and ephemeral episodes which impinge on it through time. Nevertheless, decisions made about which aspects of the historical record to focus upon and how this ought to be interpreted are still questions of value. This thesis, for example, has been composed at a particular moment in time and space. It is from the vantage point of the present that the past is assessed and articulated. The Parliament Square of the early twenty-first-century is the frame of reference for the Parliament Square of the 1860s or the 1950s. The history of public monuments is also the history of societies – both then and now.

The conclusion to Adrian Forty’s sentence cited above reads: ‘the history of design is also the history of societies: any account of change must rest upon an understanding of how design affects, and is affected by, the processes of modern economies.’⁶⁶ Yet, as we have seen, one has only to look at the first and last statues considered in this thesis to note the stylistic affinities between the two. From this one surely cannot infer that there were no differences in British society in 1832 and 1973. Instead one ought more correctly to conclude that the language of the figurative commemorative monument must be a restricted one.⁶⁷ And, what is more, reactions to such

⁶⁴ Attention to ‘significant form’ to the exclusion of all else was most clearly espoused in Clive Bell (1881-1964). See Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (eds.), *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell, Oxford & Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992, pp. 113-116. For a challenge to this approach see A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello (eds.), *The New Art History*, Camden Press, London, 1986. See also Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, Macmillan, London, 1981.

⁶⁵ Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire*, p. 8. Although there is obviously a clear distinction between the histories of design and sculpture the reference to Forty in this context is a revelatory one, even if it is not entirely apposite.

⁶⁶ Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire*, p. 8.

⁶⁷ James Stevens Curl has gone so far as to suggest that ‘the designing and making [of] monumental works in a tradition of civic art... has been virtually destroyed.’ James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, Sutton, Stroud, 2000, p. 219. It is fairer to say that what Curl describes as ‘the

monuments are, at times, equally homogenous. It is for these reasons that this thesis concludes with the riotous events of 1 May 2000 and focuses specifically on the vandalised statue of Winston Churchill (6~9). Given the similarities (both cultural and political) between the commemorations of Churchill and Canning one needs to be particularly wary of ahistorical pronouncements. This further reiterates the necessity for close historical scrutiny to chart the shifting significations of these monuments.

1~5 Monumental bodies: meaning and value

The writer Rosalind Krauss has made the important observation that sculpture ‘is a historically bounded category and not a universal one.’ It is a convention like any other with its own relatively restricted parameters: its logic being that of the commemorative monument. As such its usual form is figurative, upright and elevated upon a pedestal to serve three dominant functions: to respectively represent and commemorate; mark a place and give it meaning; and to intercede ‘between [the] actual site and representational sign.’⁶⁸ The long and productive span of this convention faltered at the end of the nineteenth-century and its eclipse was embodied in the oeuvre of Auguste Rodin (1840-1917). The rejection of his statue of Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) of 1898 rendered it site-less in that it failed to occupy the place intended on the grounds that it was too subjective. When it was eventually erected in Paris in 1939, long after the death of the sculptor, its inscription dedicates it to both Balzac *and* Rodin: it thus marks the transition of the monument from the

Classical language’ has in fact changed. Numerous examples exist of commemorative monuments in an abstract idiom: an instance of this being *Industry and Genius* by David Patten (1954-) erected in Centenary Square, Birmingham in 1990. Commemorating the printer and typographer John Baskerville (1706-75) it consists of six Portland stone blocks each surmounted by a bronze letter to spell the word ‘Virgil’, the name later given to one of Baskerville’s typefaces. The form of the work echoes the portico of the adjacent Baskerville House and is capable of being read in a number of differing (even potentially subversive) ways. George T. Noszlopy, *Public Sculpture of Birmingham*, pp. xxi & 25. Mel Gooding, ‘Public:art:space’, pp. 13-20 in Sara Roberts (ed.) *Public:art:space*, Merrell, London, 1998, p. 14.

⁶⁸ Rosalind Krauss, ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’, pp. 31-42 in Hal Foster (ed.), *Postmodern Culture*, Pluto Press, London, 1985, pp. 33-35. This essay was originally published in the spring 1979 issue of the journal *October*.

representation of the subject to its creator.⁶⁹ The ‘failure’ of the monument occurred when individual subjectivity superseded universality as the espoused objective.⁷⁰

Krauss’s observations on the historically bounded nature of sculpture combined with the eclecticism of its contemporary form means that the very term has ‘become almost infinitely malleable.’⁷¹ The monument in its nineteenth-century guise has now become marginalized within an expanded field. Moreover, following Rodin, modernist sculpture is characterised as being alienated from its site and shorn of its commemorative role. In addition, a critical standpoint voiced since the 1970s, is that ‘traditional memory sites actually discourage engagement with the past and induce forgetting rather than remembering.’⁷² Indeed, it has been observed that common history, most potently in the case of a nation, entails consensual memories at the same time as it necessitates what Benedict Anderson has termed ‘collective amnesia’.⁷³ This can be allied with W.J. Reader’s *At duty’s call: a study in obsolete patriotism*, which notes how the events during the Indian Mutiny (1857-58) were ‘plentifully commemorated by monuments to its leading figures.’ Reader’s book was avowedly ‘a study of obsolete patriotism’, because it was/is written in ‘an age which has dispensed with heroes. The men of the Mutiny, even the greatest of them, even the Lawrences, are forgotten, so thoroughly has imperial glory been expunged from public consciousness.’⁷⁴ More recently the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone made a call for the bronze sculptures of two Victorian generals to be removed from Trafalgar Square on the grounds that he was unaware of their identity.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ The bronze statue, cast in 1937 and standing over nine feet in height, stands at the junction of Boulevard Montparnasse and Boulevard Raspail in Paris. See Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture 1900-1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 67.

⁷⁰ Susan Beattie cited ‘the exposure of private symbolism to public view’ as a hallmark of the so-called ‘New Sculpture’ produced in Britain during the *fin de siècle*. Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture*, p. 8.

⁷¹ Rosalind Krauss, ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’ in Hal Foster (ed.), *Postmodern Culture*, p. 31.

⁷² John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, p. 16.

⁷³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chapter 11 ‘Memory and Forgetting’, pp. 187-206; see also John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, pp. 7-8.

⁷⁴ W.J. Reader, *At duty’s call: a study in obsolete patriotism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York, 1988, pp. 43-44.

⁷⁵ The statues are of General Sir Charles Napier (1782-1853) by George Gamon Adams (1821-98) and Major General Sir Henry Havelock (1795-1857) by William Behnes (1795-1864). See Kate Watson-Smith, ‘Livingstone: Take down Trafalgar Square’s irrelevant generals’, *The Independent*, 20 October 2000, p. 8; Michael Evans, ‘Livingstone tries to push generals of their plinths’, *Times*, 20 October

An awareness of the restricted language of the figurative monument and recognition of the fragility of its power to retain any commemorative significance serves to undermine the medium's two essential functions: aesthetic appeal and historical association. The former is of crucial importance to notions of 'artistic enjoyment' of nineteenth-century statuary. Marina Warner gives an explanation for the homogenous and seemingly unimaginative appearance of figurative public sculpture and the 'deadening effects of a state commission.'⁷⁶ She argues that:

The hardness, bigness, and roundedness of public statuary of the nineteenth-century strive to contain the fugitive thoughts the sculptures depict; their appearance does not altogether result from the sculptor's lack of skill, but arises anagogically from the semantic field in which this kind of art belongs... Abstract concepts, containers of absolute significance, are more often treated in the nineteenth-century in stone and metal to look unassailably solid, and inert and impervious: bronze remains bronze, marble, marble, in conformity with [Henry] Weekes's anxiety that 'a too literal rendering of Nature renders a work... commonplace'.⁷⁷

It is instructive to align these observations with Nigel Llewellyn's *The Art of Death: visual culture in the English death ritual c.1500-c.1800*. This text is of value because it provides a parallel account of the process of commemoration in the ecclesiastical context of an earlier period. Llewellyn makes the simple but important observation that art commissioned for this purpose was intended to both describe the past life of a deceased individual whilst simultaneously establishing that person's future reputation. Llewellyn usefully shows how collective memory and private thoughts converged

2000, p. 6; Philip Johnston, 'Old statues given marching orders... by the Left', *Daily Telegraph*, 20 October 2000, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens. The Allegory of the Female Form*, Pan Books, London, 1987, p. 127. This comment was with regard to François Rude's (1784-1855) *The Marseillaise: The Departure of the Volunteers in 1792* (1833-36, high relief, limestone, Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, Paris). Warner argues that, in this instance, the sculptor was skilful enough to overcome these restrictions. The fact that it was extensively reproduced underlines its success: Warner cites a stamp issued in 1917 to aid war orphans and in a military poster depicting the French army of 1914-18. *Paris délivré par son peuple*, a pamphlet cover of 1944 makes similar use of Rude's iconic female allegory. See Marianne Ryan (ed.), *La France. Images of Woman and Ideas of Nation 1789-1989*, South Bank Centre, London, 1989, illustration p. 62. One can compare Warner's comment on 'the deadening effects of a state commission' with Shakespeare's remark concerning 'art made tongue-tied by authority'. Sonnet 66 cited in Katherine Duncan-Jones (ed.), *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Arden Shakespeare, London, 1997, p. 243.

⁷⁷ Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, pp. 260-262. According to Rupert Gunnis, Henry Weekes, RA (1807-77) developed 'a considerable practice as a monumental sculptor' and also became a noted art critic: 'his essay on the Fine Arts Section of the Great Exhibition of 1851 won him a Gold Medal in the following year.' Gunnis lists fifteen statues by Weekes including that of Charles II (1870) for the new Houses of Parliament (see 5-4) and over fifty busts. Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, The Abbey Library, London, 1968, pp. 418-420.

over the ‘monumental body’.⁷⁸ Patrons exercised a close supervision of this object with issues of location, design and scale operating as manifestations of power. A ‘latent competitiveness’ is identified as existing between patrons in such funereal spaces as St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.⁷⁹ In addition Llewellyn comments on similarities of composition, decoration and inscription of family monuments in the aisle of a Parish church to demonstrate that the ‘designs imposed on these materials were determined by the ritual demands of function and iconography.’ As such, formal innovation took less precedence than the demand for both a ‘continuity of lineage’ and ‘continuity of culture’.⁸⁰ The influence of the patron equates to ‘the world of human interests’ that lies beyond the domain of traditional art history which, as we have seen, places a premium on ‘significant form’. In art historical terms this is indicative of, at best, paucity of artistic imagination and, at worst, artistic failure. Yet, as Llewellyn clearly shows, it is this continuity that ‘proves the power of the monumental body’: ‘They tied families, places and histories together in an apparently seamless web of continuity that still characterizes for so many people the local history of England.’⁸¹ One might expand this to a national level in the present discussion: the pantheon of statues and memorials in Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square manifest competing shows of power whilst evincing secular continuities of statesmanship in both royal and political terms.

Westminster Abbey was considered to be a ‘valhalla’, a temple housing monuments commemorating British worthies, a fact that was acknowledged in the mid-eighteenth-century by Pierre-Jean Grosley.⁸² The Abbey was filled with sculpted memorials of national heroes throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries.⁸³ Monuments to Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) and Charles James Fox (1749-1806), both by Richard

⁷⁸ Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: visual culture in the English death ritual c.1500-c.1800*, Reaktion, London, 1991, p. 101.

⁷⁹ Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death*, p. 106 & Plate 78.

⁸⁰ Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death*, p. 125.

⁸¹ Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death*, p. 127.

⁸² The French visitor’s commentary in his book *Londres I* published in 1770 (pp. 355-356) is addressed at length by Joan Michèle Coutu, *Eighteenth-century British Monuments and the Politics of Empire*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1993, pp. 27-28.

⁸³ Julian Orbach, *Victorian Architecture in Britain (Blue Guide)*, A & C Black, London, 1987, pp. 214-216.

Westmacott (1775-1856) are in the nave.⁸⁴ Peter Cunningham's guide to London of 1850 drew the visitor's attention to William Wordsworth's (1770-1850) poem *Patriotism* on the 'inscribed stones covering the graves of the rival statesmen, Pitt and Fox':

The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier...⁸⁵

Other adversaries include George Canning and Viscount Castlereagh, Marquis of Londonderry (1769-1822), who preceded Canning as foreign secretary from 1812-22, led the Grand Alliance against Napoleon and attended the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Both are commemorated in the north transept.⁸⁶ Benjamin Disraeli, first Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-81) and William Gladstone (1809-98) are also commemorated side-by-side in the same transept (Plate 54).⁸⁷ Wordsworth provides a vision of Westminster Abbey as the shrine of the nation's 'heroes, patriots, bards, and king's' where discord is replaced by a collective patriotism:

If ever from an English heart,
O, *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside...⁸⁸

This sense of inclusiveness was constantly reiterated throughout the nineteenth-century: Dean Stanley made a clear evocation of it at the funeral of Henry John Temple, third Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865) (see 4~3). Prior to that John Wilson Croker (1780-1857), whilst applauding the call for George Canning to be memorialised within the Abbey, was firmly against a statue in the streets of Westminster (see 2~1). The ensuing fracas during the passing of the Reform Bill

⁸⁴ The monuments date from 1807-15 and 1809-15 respectively. See Francis Bond, *Westminster Abbey*, Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, 1909, pp. 308-310; Marie Busco, *Sir Richard Westmacott: sculptor*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 70 & 76, Figs. 56-7 & 60.

⁸⁵ 'Patriotism' by William Wordsworth cited in Peter Cunningham F.S.A., 'Westminster Abbey' pp. 529-540 in *Hand-book of London Past and Present*, John Murray, London, revised edition, 1850, p. 535.

⁸⁶ Francis Bond, *Westminster Abbey*, p. 167 and illustrations pp. 168-169.

⁸⁷ The statues are by Edgar Boehm and Thomas Brock respectively. See Francis Bond, *Westminster Abbey*, p. 167 and illustrations pp. 170-171.

⁸⁸ William Wordsworth, 'Patriotism', pp. 640-645 in Arthur Quiller-Couch (ed.), *The Oxford Book of English Verse 1250-1918*, Granada, St. Albans, 1980, p. 643.

indicated an unspoken concern that the patina of consensus might be tarnished. Similarly the thoughtful deliberations of First Commissioner William Molesworth concerning the statues of Canning and Peel for Parliament Square indicate the difficult negotiations required to ensure that prejudice and ‘partial feeling’ were indeed seen to be cast aside (see 2~6). In reality – as Nigel Llewellyn has indicated – even *within* the Abbey there was an incipient competition between the patrons of memorials.

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In his book, *The English Face* first published in 1957, David Piper described the innumerable painted and sculpted portraits executed in increasing number throughout the nineteenth-century as a ‘mute invasion’.⁸⁹ This aphasia is not aided by the fact that, as we have seen, the historical associations have been severed: the persons commemorated are largely forgotten, just as the sculptors and architects responsible are equally occluded. This thesis can be understood therefore as a process of recovery (see preface). In this regard the work of James E. Young on Holocaust memorials is instructive. He avers that, seen in isolation ‘monuments are of little value, mere stones in the landscape.’ Memorialisation is instead an active, contextualising process: the fact that monuments and memorials accumulate meaning through rite and ritual means that they possess both the ‘capacity for change’ and the scope for reinterpretation.⁹⁰ Young argues that only by ‘returning to the memorial some memory of its own genesis’ can this be realised.⁹¹ He entitles his book on the meaning of holocaust memorials *The Texture of Memory*. By referring to these artefacts and our responses to them as ‘memorial texts’ Young can be considered to be making an explicit avowal for them to be both “written” and “read”.⁹²

However, in terms of figurative sculpture this represents something of a dilemma. This can be best appreciated by recourse to two recent exhibitions at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds. The first, entitled *Return to Life*, sought to provide ‘a new look at the

⁸⁹ David Piper, *The English Face*, Thames & Hudson, London, Aylesbury, 1957, p. 263.

⁹⁰ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1993, pp. 2-3.

⁹¹ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 14.

⁹² James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 1993, p. xii.

portrait bust'. In the accompanying catalogue the curators commented on the fact that this once prestigious sculptural form was now so neglected that we have disremembered how to "read" or "look" at it. This is largely on the grounds that it appears so formulaic, something that the exhibition sought to challenge by focusing attention on its 'subtle and inventive variations'. This was attempted by placing a range of works within the "white cube" of the gallery and by reproducing specially commissioned documentary photography. Yet this points out a further complication: the two catalogue essays focus on such issues as setting, communal identity, the sitter/sculptor relationship and questions pertaining to representation.⁹³ The first two issues – setting and identity – are crucial to a contextual understanding of the work and are therefore fundamental to this thesis.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, as the *Return to Life* catalogue makes clear, the space of the museum/gallery as well as other 'urban centres' – both interior and exterior – serve to cast a 'veil of invisibility' over the portrait bust (and, by extension, portrait statue). In the words of Malcolm Baker, for the contemporary viewer they 'have become part of their settings rather than images to be considered and engaged with in their own right.'⁹⁵

A subsequent exhibition at the Henry Moore Institute entitled *Taking Positions* also dealt with an 'apparently... homogenous figurative tradition.' The curator, Penelope Curtis, was, as with *Return to Life*, 'looking for difference within similarity'. However, this later display was 'about reading difference in relation to extreme political circumstances', namely the Third Reich.⁹⁶ These notions of formal similarity within a (albeit very different) political context are closely aligned to the issues surrounding the monuments in Parliament Square. This adaptation also enables one to make an important comment on the contemporary status of figurative sculpture. As a

⁹³ Malcolm Baker, "'A sort of corporate company": approaching the portrait bust in its setting', pp. 20-35 and John Gage, 'Busts and identity', pp. 36-48 in Penelope Curtis, Peter Funnell & Nicola Kalinski, *Return to Life: a new look at the portrait bust*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2000.

⁹⁴ The latter theme was addressed by the present author in the unpublished conference paper: "'A noble and imperishable record": the sculpted portrait and national identity in nineteenth-century Britain', *Postgraduate Seminar on Portraiture*, 21 October 2000, Henry Moore Institute. See Jonathan R. Jones, 'Portrait or Bust? Report: Postgraduate Seminar on Portraiture', *Henry Moore Institute Newsletter*, No. 33, December 2000 / January 2001.

⁹⁵ Malcolm Baker, "'A sort of corporate company": approaching the portrait bust in its setting' in Penelope Curtis et al., *Return to Life*, p. 20 (see also 'Introduction' p. 7).

⁹⁶ Penelope Curtis, *Taking Positions: Figurative Sculpture and the Third Reich*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2001, p. 8.

cultural form the monuments in Parliament Square now possess strong connotations with the politically extreme regimes of the twentieth-century. This factor further conceptually denigrates the figurative form in this medium. Whilst the exhibition *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators, 1930-45*, held at the Hayward Gallery in 1995, incorporated sculpture it did so within a political rather than an artistic context.⁹⁷ The more recent display in Leeds represents a bold attempt to *aesthetically* evaluate such work. This was particularly innovative given that (like the portrait bust) it is a cultural form that has frequently been considered to be both stylistically undifferentiated and artistically moribund.⁹⁸

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Neither condemnation of aesthetic quality nor concern over the commemorative longevity of nineteenth-century sculptural monuments are restricted to the present era. It is clear that there existed anxieties over the literacy of these monuments even at the time of their erection. Difficulties about ‘reading’ such memorials (and a useful adjunct to present-day difficulties in this regard) can be construed from an incident connected with the memorial to the fourteenth Earl of Derby (Plate 89). In the winter of 1878 a Mr Henry A. Palmer, wrote from Westminster Palace Hotel in Victoria Street to the First Commissioner:

Frequenting, almost daily, the precincts of the Palace of Westminster, and much admiring the Statues of our 4 Deceased Premiers, – George Canning, – Sir Robert Peel, – Viscount Palmerston, – and the Earl of Derby – which adorn the locality, I am forcibly struck by the remark, often made, that whilst the names of the 3 first are inscribed on the Pedestals, that of the Earl of Derby, does not appear. Sightseers from the Country, constantly ask, “Whom does this Statue represent?” for though the beautifully sculptured bronzes inserted in the block of granite on which it stands, admirably depict 4 of the illustrious Earl’s principal achievements, and thus interpret the image to those who are versed in his political career, yet, with others, & Especially with the rising generation, the identity of the person is left open to question.

Permit me therefore to suggest that “Earl of Derby” should be Engraved either at the foot of the Statue, or on the plinth at its base; – in one or other of which places

⁹⁷ See Dawn Ades et al (ed.), *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators, 1930-45*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1995.

⁹⁸ See Martin Bailey, ‘The Third Reich on a pedestal’, *The Art Newspaper*, No. 114, May 2001, p. 15. The exhibition was, interestingly enough, also criticised by Germaine Greer on the grounds of the differing ways in which the male and female figure was displayed. See Maggie Pringle, ‘The lost giants of Aryan art’, *Sunday Express*, 27 May 2001, p. 58.

the words would be conspicuous; – instructive; – and, in relation to the other Statues, symmetrical.⁹⁹

As a consequence of this letter the appropriate name and dates were inscribed in early April 1879. Palmer's letter is an important document because it highlights some key concerns. Firstly it indicates that the question: 'Whom does this Statue represent?' might well have been asked from the moment of inception. The writer and poet Coventry Patmore (1823-96) was well aware of the vicissitudes of history when he warned against hastily erecting monuments to the recently deceased given that such alacrity risked creating abiding memorials of 'transient enthusiasm'.¹⁰⁰ Patmore was writing during the second half of the nineteenth-century. This was the era of 'statuemanía' in Britain: a term used to characterise the spate of commemorative statuary that occurred after the demise of Sir Robert Peel in 1850 (see 2~4) and which was subsequently experienced throughout Europe and beyond.¹⁰¹

The comments made concerning the statue of Derby suggest that latter-day ignorance may well have been prefigured by contemporary miscomprehension. The comment on 'the rising generation' points to the rapidity with which a monument shifted from topicality to history.¹⁰² The absence of an inscription suggests that additional indicators (that were 'conspicuous' as well as 'instructive') were required to articulate a memorial. In the case of the Derby statue this is notable given that the work was already embellished with narrative panels. The call for an inscription in order to ensure that the four statues were 'symmetrical' is also of interest with regard to notions of the "pantheon" (see 1~9). One can furthermore associate this with anxieties over accusations that a particular commemoration may have been in receipt of more favourable attention than another. It is also possible to link the formal similarity of the

⁹⁹ Henry A. Palmer writing from Westminster Palace Hotel, Victoria Street to Gerard Noel, 26 November 1878. PRO WORK 20/42.

¹⁰⁰ Coventry Patmore, 'Shall Smith have a statue?', pp. 141-145 in *Principle in Art Etc.* London: George Bell & Sons, 1889, p. 141.

¹⁰¹ Sergius Michalski, *Public Monuments: art in political bondage, 1870-1997*, Routledge, London, 1998.

¹⁰² This is most clearly expressed in Charles Barry's opinions concerning the statues of Canning and Peel at Westminster (2~5). As we shall see he expressed reservations about erecting colossal statues to individuals one had been 'personally and familiarly acquainted' or juxtaposing statues of figures from the 'present generation'.

statues to the comments by Nigel Llewellyn cited above (1~6) in regard to tomb monuments and the establishment of continuity.

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The Derby example points towards yet another aspect of the Parliament Square monuments. Although notions of aesthetic value have already been alluded to an important facet has been deferred until now. It concerns whether or not one can distinguish between “good” and “bad” nineteenth-century sculpture. Other writers have been less troubled by this matter, as the writings of Francis Turner Palgrave and Stanley Casson vividly testify. A cursory glance at the Parliament Square statues will certainly see more similarities than differences. These bronze sculptures are all mounted on granite pedestals and represent standing, solitary male figures of similar age. Most hold sheets of paper, one holds a book, another a jacket. They silently point and gesture or else stand rigidly, hand on hip, perpetually gathering up their garments. They are firmly rooted to the plinth on which they stand. Yet, careful scrutiny reveals that the toes of one of these bronze feet jut almost imperceptibly over the edge: the subtlest of hints that these lifeless effigies just might transgress their lofty station (Plates 96 & 98).

Although distance from the period under discussion allows us to be more dispassionate in our judgements than, for example, F.T. Palgrave, are we in a position to confidently judge the statues on grounds of style and artistic excellence? When Nikolaus Pevsner came to write about Parliament Square in his guide to London he appended a small asterisk after the statue of Derby to denote that it was of particular interest.¹⁰³ He therefore sought to distinguish it from the others on aesthetic merit. Matthew Noble’s statue (Plate 89) is indeed a work of considerable appeal, employing what the *Illustrated London News* described as the subject’s ‘graceful flowing robes of Chancellor of the Oxford University’ to theatrical effect.¹⁰⁴ According to the *Builder*, Derby was in fact shown in his peer’s robes, holding a ‘despatch’ in his left hand and with the other outstretched, ‘as if addressing the House of Lords.’¹⁰⁵ This

¹⁰³ Nikolaus Pevsner, *London. 1: The Cities of London and Westminster*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973, p. 621.

¹⁰⁴ Anon, ‘The late Earl of Derby’, *Illustrated London News*, 18 July 1874, p. 60.

¹⁰⁵ Anon, ‘Statue of the Late Lord Derby for Westminster’, *Builder*, 10 May 1873, p. 372.

disparity demonstrates that the statue could be imaginatively construed in a variety of ways. The work, as well as allowing scope for interpretation, was also of technical excellence, being cast from a single mould (see 4~4). Although the densely populated scenes on the pedestal reliefs (Plates 91-94) do not lend themselves easily to visual stimulation, they do nonetheless give additional interest to the monument. The polished Peterhead granite pedestal is itself decorated by a bronze band of acorns wreathed in oak leaves.

This multiplicity is less apparent in, say, Thomas Woolner's figure of Henry Temple, third Viscount Palmerston of 1876 (Plates 95-96). The statue, standing as it does upon an unadorned pedestal, appears more formal and stilted than the sculpture of Derby. The depiction of the former in contemporary attire, with his jacket slung over one arm is far less imaginative than the robed figure of Derby. In addition the treatment of the bronze differs: there is considerably more texture and variety to Noble's work, creating a play of light and dark in the modulated surfaces that is absent from the smooth finish of Woolner's statue. Indeed, the reaction of contemporaries to the latter seems to confirm this diminution of appeal: it was unkindly likened to a "bottle holder", the person who held the attire of a fighter during a boxing bout.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, such verdicts remain subjective in the extreme.¹⁰⁷

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Philip Ward-Jackson has observed that the 'British qualities extolled [in sculpture] at the mid-century were restraint and consistency'.¹⁰⁸ This is what F.T. Palgrave termed 'the look of the real thing' (see 3~7). Support for this view can be found in the words of an anonymous 'working sculptor' who wrote to the *Builder* in August 1853:

It has been said that that sculpture can scarcely sustain itself in England, that it is an art not suited to the English taste, and which never can flourish here... In a word, have our aristocracy a sufficient knowledge of art to enable them to judge whether a

¹⁰⁶ See John Blackwood, *London's Immortals: The complete commemorative outdoor statues*, Savoy Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 192.

¹⁰⁷ This is borne out by the fact that Benedict Read opined that Woolner's Palmerston statue 'improves on the nearby *Peel* of Matthew Noble of the same date only by virtue of its enhanced realism in detailing.' Benedict Read & Joanna Barnes (eds.), *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture: Nature and Imagination in British Sculpture 1848-1914*, The Henry Moore Foundation in Association with Lund Humphries, London, 1991, p. 27.

¹⁰⁸ Philip Ward-Jackson, 'Introduction', pp. iii-iv in Benedict Read & Philip Ward-Jackson (eds.), *Courtauld Institute Illustration Archives... Part 7: London*, p. iv.

piece of sculpture is good or bad? I see enough of them to know that very few of them have this knowledge... I say, then, educate our noblemen; teach them to see that [John] Flaxman's [1755-1826] severity is worth their attention, and that French showy deformity should be despised. That Italian and German hardness is not that which Englishmen should seek... All foreigners are very clever in the eyes of English nobles, and therefore anything they do goes down; but let them once be taught the true principles of art, and foreign work will no longer please.¹⁰⁹

Susan Beattie concluded that this was 'a thinly-veiled allusion, no doubt, to royal patronage of such men as [Baron Carlo] Marochetti and [Sir Joseph] Edgar Boehm whose success in England was then a frequent source of irritation and controversy.'¹¹⁰ It was indignation at the showy, spectacular nature of Marochetti's work that led him to be attacked by F.T. Palgrave. This quality (perhaps best understood as a kind of theatricality) is most evident in a work such as Marochetti's *Coeur de Lion* (see 2~8). To cite Lord Gleichen: 'The King is in skin-tight chain mail, muscles well-defined, not a fold showing anywhere; one wonders indeed how he managed to get into it.'¹¹¹ This medieval hero sits, sword raised aloft, on a resplendent horse (Plates 66-68). Beneath are bands of narrative relief sculpture that further articulates this chivalric fantasy (Plate 69-72). Yet the exact same sculptor was simultaneously producing much more prosaic work in the form of statues to the engineers Brunel, Locke and Stephenson (Plates 84-85). These conform far better to the general 'restraint and consistency' of mid-nineteenth-century British sculpture. Conventionally depicted in contemporary attire and holding the obligatory sheaves of paper they could be mistaken for any of the statesmen in Parliament Square: a good enough reason for them to be expelled from the environs of the Palace of Westminster (see 3~5; 3~9).

In the light of Nigel Llewellyn's comments on the formal homogeneity of funereal monuments it is apparent that there exists a necessary balance between difference and similarity within any pantheon. Parliament Square is no exception and, as such, the distinctions between the individual elements are of necessity likely to be both subtle and limited in extent. Be that as it may, one may legitimately argue that, in this thesis, questions of aesthetic value have been left aside in the interest of "context". To a

¹⁰⁹ 'A Working Sculptor', 'Remarks on the state of sculpture in England', *Builder*, 1853, Vol. 11, No. 548, p. 504.

¹¹⁰ Susan Margaret Beattie, *English Sculpture 1875-1910*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1981, p. 18.

¹¹¹ Lord Edward Gleichen, *London's Open-Air Statuary*, p. 36-37.

certain extent this is true. It has been noted that there has, until now, been a paucity of historical research pertaining to Parliament Square and its memorials. The present text seeks to rectify this by providing as much data as possible. It is hoped that this will serve to demonstrate that, contrary to expectation, the statues in this space are of notable value. There has been a deliberate reticence about the aesthetic merit of the individual works because this imperils the creation of a hierarchy of value, something that this thesis has attempted to avoid in the interests of presenting Parliament Square as a holistic entity. That said it ought to be stressed that from the very outset this doctoral research has been driven by a genuine interest in, and appreciation of, the monuments of Parliament Square as works of art.

1~6 Space and the texture of memory

An appreciation of the interchange of value, meaning and signification between monuments and betwixt monuments and their site is of crucial importance. It additionally serves to reiterate and reinforce James E. Young's notion of reading/writing 'memorial texts' and the very 'texture of memory' alluded to above. This deployment of 'a textual metaphor for understanding culture' is close to the work of Clifford Geertz (see preface).¹¹² In order to develop this concept it is instructive to refer to Henri Lefebvre's use of the word '*texture*'. He avers that it is 'made up of a usually rather large space covered by networks or webs; monuments constitute the strong points, nexuses or anchors of such webs.' He goes on to stress that monumental works are 'not *read*' as a text is read but rather they are '*acted*':

A monumental work, like a musical one, does not have a "signified" (or "signifieds"); rather, it has a *horizon of meaning*: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of – and for the sake of – a particular action.¹¹³

¹¹² Eric Kline Silverman, 'Clifford Geertz: Towards a More "Thick" Understanding?', pp. 121-159 in Christopher Tilley (ed.), *Reading Material Culture: Structuralism, Hermeneutics and Post-Structuralism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, p. 121.

¹¹³ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Blackwell, Oxford, [1974] 1997, p. 222.

Observations made by those in the field of dance corroborate this performative dimension by indicating that objects – including ourselves – ‘both change and are changed by the space around’ and that a ‘sense of space is only partially visible – we experience it through movement, touch and sound’.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, in an excellent volume of collected essays concerning *Imperial Cities* it is convincingly argued that ‘[a]ny discussion of the iconography of ceremonial spaces... must pay attention to the complex of meanings surrounding their representation and use.’¹¹⁵ It is for this reason, for example, that the 1827 funeral of George Canning at Westminster Abbey is analysed in detail (see 2~1).

In these terms one might posit the space of Parliament Square as a ‘texture’ that both articulates and is articulated by the monuments located there. The appearance, unveiling, shifting and vandalising of these nexuses represent the ‘particular actions’ which are played out against the background (or ‘horizon’) of the square and which constitute the ‘shifting hierarchy [of]... meaning’. In this thesis the limits to this ‘horizon of meaning’ have, in the first instance, been physically determined by the extent of the square and its monuments. In addition, the primary, archival sources consulted during the research establish a curb on the ‘multiplicity of meanings’ and serve as a directional guide towards the truth claims and moments of conjecture within the text.

Lefebvre’s perspective on monumental works suggests that inter-relationships between the monuments in a forum such as Parliament Square are essential to the meanings that they accrue and the forms they take. With regard to the former an instance of the potential readings of two monuments in juxtaposition is clearly demonstrated in the case of the existing statue of George Canning and the proposed commemoration alongside it of Sir Robert Peel (see 2~6). This can be further illustrated by the aforementioned memorial of the late Benjamin Disraeli in Westminster Abbey and its conjoining with that of Gladstone. When approached with

¹¹⁴ Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay, *Body Space Image: Notes towards improvisation and performance*, Dance Books Ltd, London, 1993, ‘Working with space’, p. 82. The photograph on the facing page appears to be an aerial view of the Embankment in London and is captioned: ‘Rosemary Butcher, improvisational studies for *White Field*, 1977 / Dancer Dennis Greenwood / Photo Geoff White’.

¹¹⁵ Felix Driver & David Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, p. 8.

the Beaconsfield commission the sculptor, Edgar Boehm let it be known that he would ‘normally be guided in a great measure in designing his work by the style of the monuments by which it will be immediately surrounded.’¹¹⁶

When it was proposed that another statue of Disraeli in Parliament Square be cleaned and repatinated ready for the anniversary of the statesman’s death, the Office of Works did not consider it ‘advisable to deal with the... Statue separately’.¹¹⁷ Whilst this was ostensibly an aesthetic consideration it must have also struck the officials that the maintenance of one statue over another might, quite correctly, indicate that the significance of one memory was taking precedence over the others. This was particularly the case with the special commemorative status afforded by the Disraeli memorial, which was for many years annually bedecked by flowers on ‘Primrose Day’ (see 4~5 & Plate 101). Furthermore, his role as an imperial hero during the high Victorian period and his equation with ceremony and display is of particular import to an understanding of the language of the monument and of memorial space (see 5~8).

Grasping the full implications of Lefebvre’s ‘*horizon of meanings*’ the format of this thesis allows for more conceptual cross-referencing. One such sub-theme concerns the abolition of slavery. A relief sculpture on the pedestal supporting the fourteenth Earl of Derby’s statue depicts the above statued figure as Colonial Secretary speaking in the old House of Commons in favour of the abolition of slavery on 14 May 1833 (Plates 93-94). The Buxton memorial fountain which stood in the north-west corner of the square until its removal in 1957 (see 3~5; 6~6) has abolition as its principal theme (Plates 81-82). Similar associations, albeit with regard to the United States, are inspired by the statue of Abraham Lincoln that is still located there (6~6~7).

An even more significant ‘network or web’ (to recall Lefebvre) are themes of democracy and reform of the electoral franchise that pervade the space of Parliament Square and its monuments. Canning’s statue was enveloped in the maelstrom of the first Reform Bill of 1831-32 (see 2~2). His role as Prime Minister is notable given the

¹¹⁶ Beaconsfield statue in Westminster Abbey: PRO WORK 6/400/4, f.1 [copy].

¹¹⁷ The sculpture by Mario Raggi was unveiled in 1883 (see 4~5). The sculptor himself sought permission to alter the patina of the work: letter from Raggi of 44 Osnaburgh Street, Regent’s Park N.W., to the First Commissioner, and reply 27 March and 9 April 1889 respectively. PRO WORK 20/48. The quotation cited above is from an unsigned internal memorandum dated 28 February, the sentiments of which contrast with those expressed in the actual letter sent to Raggi.

fact that he did not owe his position to aristocratic forebears, a quality even more apparent in the figure of Sir Robert Peel, who represented a key rallying point in the demand for enfranchisement of the newly emergent industrial cities. Disraeli is closely associated with the passing of the second Reform Act of 1867 and his presence in Derby's Cabinet of that year is visualised in another of the bronze reliefs on the surface of its pedestal (Plate 91). Similarly making their presence felt in the matter of democracy and liberty are the statues of Oliver Cromwell (see 5~7) and Winston Churchill (6~9). The right to the franchise is also played out in another nearby monument: Arthur George Walker's (1861-1939) statue of Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) of 1930 (see 6~7; Plate 116).¹¹⁸

1~7 Gender distinctions

It is telling that the sex of the allegorical representation of *Government* (Plate 49) by J.B. Philip for George Gilbert Scott's New Government Offices situated on Parliament Street is male. Almost all the others, such as agriculture or the arts, deploy a female figure. A simple explanation is that at the time – and in many ways still today – the political sphere is a masculine domain. As this thesis concerns the monuments of statesmen commemorated in Parliament Square it inevitably precludes women.

Women did not attain equal voting rights as men until 2 July 1928. The lengthy and vociferous campaign to achieve this included violent protest in Parliament Square. The streets around the Palace of Westminster were the scene of one of the seven Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) marches numbering half a million people that converged on Hyde Park during "Women's Sunday", 21 June 1908. Nine days later an evening demonstration in Parliament Square was forcibly broken up by the police, resulting in the arrest of twenty-seven women.¹¹⁹ In October some sixty thousand gathered in the square to witness a suffragette group attempt to make their way into the House of Commons. Two years later there was a series of riots in

¹¹⁸ Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, Allen Lane, London, 2001, pp. 409-411.

¹¹⁹ June Purvis, 'Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928) and votes for women', pp. 109-134 in June Purvis & Sandra Stanley Holton (eds.), *Votes for Women*, Routledge, London & New York, 2000, p. 119.

Parliament Square and Downing Street following the vicious assault of three hundred women outside parliament on “Black Friday”, 18 November 1910.¹²⁰ June Purvis has written that the ‘sexual nature of many of the assaults’ on that day ‘could leave no doubt in the minds of suffragettes about the subordination and brutality that women could suffer at the hands of men when they sought to enter men’s public space.’¹²¹

In the vicinity of these turbulent past events stands the statue of Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928). Commissioned by a committee of subscribers led by Margaret Haig Thomas, Viscountess Rhondda (1883-1958) it depicts the suffragette in gown and lorgnettes and was unveiled on 6 March 1930 by the Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin (Plate 116).¹²² Since its re-inauguration in 1959 (see 6~7) the pedestal has carried a relief portrait of her daughter Dame Christabel Pankhurst (1881-1958) alongside a version of the WSPU prison brooch of 1905-1914.¹²³ Both women were leading protagonists in the fight for votes for women: in the aftermath of their attempt to “rush” parliament in October 1908 Emmeline Pankhurst was sentenced to three months incarceration whilst her daughter Christabel received ten weeks.¹²⁴ Their memorial continues to serve as a locus for female political representation.¹²⁵ In 1998 Dari Taylor, Member of Parliament for Stockton South, stood before it to be photographed by Victoria Carew Hunt for the project *One Two One Women in*

¹²⁰ Diane Atkinson, *Votes for Women*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 24-25, 29-30.

¹²¹ June Purvis, “‘Deeds, not words’: daily life in the Women’s Social and Political Union in Edwardian Britain”, pp. 135-158 in June Purvis & Sandra Stanley Holton (eds.), *Votes for Women*, p. 139.

¹²² The sculpture is in bronze and measures 2.14 m (seven feet) in height. It is signed ‘G A Walker, ARA, 1930’; *Times*, 12 February 1930, p. 18 and the *Illustrated London News*, 15 March 1930, p. 439.

¹²³ Buried in the plinth of the statue is the prison badge and hunger striker’s medal of Rosamund Massey who, along with Katherine Marshall, were secretaries of the Pankhurst Memorial Fund. Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, pp. 409-411.

¹²⁴ Diane Atkinson, *Votes for Women*, p. 26.

¹²⁵ It is pertinent to note that Emmeline Pankhurst’s younger daughter Sylvia (1882-1960) is pointedly *not* commemorated. She too was a suffragette but was expelled from the WSPU in 1914 for the socialist activities of the East London Federation of Suffragettes which she founded that year. In 1915 it was renamed The Worker’s Suffrage Federation and sought to alleviate the suffering of the poor in East London. Sylvia Pankhurst was a pacifist and, unlike her sister and mother, did not suspend her campaign for universal suffrage during the Great War. This rift led to her exclusion from the official stadia erected for the unveiling ceremony. She nevertheless observed the proceedings from the crowd and in the years to come went on to publish articles in the press contesting the central importance of her mother and sister. Diane Atkinson, *Votes for Women*, pp. 23-24, 37-38; Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts*, p. 411. Steps have been made to rectify this lacuna: see Seumas Milne, ‘Sylvia Pankhurst memorial wins support’, *The Guardian*, 15 September 1999, p. 10; Andrew Pierce, ‘Sylvia Pankhurst statue campaign’, *Times*, 18 August 1999, p. 1.

Parliament, reflecting the record number of women elected to the House of Commons following the general election of 1997.¹²⁶

The fact that such a memorial remains rather exceptional has led Janet Monk to avow that ‘gender distinctions are clearly evident in the landscape of public monuments’. She considers that the urban environment manifests ‘a heritage of masculine power, accomplishment, and heroism’ penetrated by women only ‘occasionally if they enter the male sphere of politics or militarism’.¹²⁷ The female form instead appears as abstract, moralising symbols which, according to Marina Warner, ‘hardly ever interact with real, individual women.’¹²⁸ This can be illustrated by recourse to two specific public monuments. Firstly the equestrian monument to the Unionist General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-91) by Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) erected in New York in 1903.¹²⁹ The second example is William Hamo Thornycroft’s memorial to the Liberal Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98) unveiled on the Strand in London during 1905.

In both monuments the male figures portrayed represent specific men accompanied by at least one iconic female figure: the ‘real’ and the ideal. Sherman on horseback is ‘preceded’ – as opposed to being led or guided – by a winged allegory of Victory carrying a palm frond (Plate 115).¹³⁰ This is a longstanding motif that dates back to

¹²⁶ The book was published to raise money for the charity Breakthrough Breast Cancer. Dari Taylor’s image is accompanied by text from a poem by A.E. Housman (1859-1936): ‘When summer’s end is nighing / And skies at evening cloud, / I muse on change and fortunes / And all the feats I vowed / When I was young and proud.’ Victoria Carew Hunt, *One Two One Women in Parliament*, Politicos Publishing, London (and Breakthrough Breast Cancer), 1998, p. 113.

¹²⁷ Janice Monk, ‘Gender in the landscape: expressions of power and meaning’, pp. 123-138 in Kay Anderson and Fay Gale (eds.), *Inventing Places: Studies in Cultural Geography*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1992, p. 126.

¹²⁸ Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, p. 28. Saint-Gaudens’ Victory for the Sherman memorial (see below) *does* in fact represent a portrait of an individual: Elizabeth Cameron from New York posed for the face whilst another American woman in Paris acted as the model for the body. Maureen Barraclough, *Sovereigns and Soldiers on Horseback. Bronze Equestrian Monuments from Ancient Rome to Our Times*, Ipswich Press, Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1999, p. 208.

¹²⁹ Begun in New York City in 1892 the full-size monument was first shown at Paris in the Salon of 1899 and the Universal Exposition of 1900 where it won a *grand prix*. The over life-size bronze with gold leaf now stands on a granite pedestal at Grand Army Plaza, Fifth Avenue. Maureen Barraclough, *Sovereigns and Soldiers on Horseback*, p. 206.

¹³⁰ H.W. Janson, *Nineteenth-Century Sculpture*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1985, pp. 257-259; Maureen Barraclough, *Sovereigns and Soldiers on Horseback*, p. 209.

antiquity.¹³¹ Victory is a virginal ‘ornament of *raffiné* appeal’ attired by an unspecific classicising robe, in contrast to the puckered, unshaven soldier dressed in plain military costume.¹³² Similarly the standing figure of W.E. Gladstone is encircled by allegories of Brotherhood, Education, Aspiration and Courage (Plate 114).¹³³ The politician is encompassed by heavy drapery, which covers his body in weighty pleats (Plate 113). His veined hands, in contrast, evoke vulnerability and reveal the fact that he is ‘human, not ethereal’.¹³⁴ The female figures encircling this statue (including Courage about to decapitate a snake) act as a foil to this potential insecurity: their enlarged limbs create an impression of power suggesting that they are simultaneously impermeable and impervious. For, as Lynda Nead has suggested, artistic representations of the female nude can be seen as metaphors for ‘processes of separation and ordering’.¹³⁵ The multiplicity of guises to which the female figure has been culturally fashioned for such purposes in a French context is readily apparent in the exhibition catalogue *La France: Images of Woman and Ideas of Nation 1789-1989*.¹³⁶

It is possible to extrapolate the gender divide appreciable in commemorative memorials to wider societal distinctions between men and women. This is apparent in a text such as *Man Does, Woman Is. An Anthology of Work and Gender* edited by Marion Shaw. It derives its title from a volume of poems by Robert Graves (1895-1985) and offers a succinct summation of the notion of female identity as being passive and inactive in comparison to that of men. This stereotype was particularly prevalent in the nineteenth-century with ‘the notion of separate spheres for men and

¹³¹ This is confirmed by Marina Warner who juxtaposes a photograph of the Sherman monument with a gold medallion of Emperor Justinian I, c. AD 534. Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, Plates 42 & 43.

¹³² Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, pp. 16-17. Taken literally the presence of the figure of Victory, as with much allegorical arrangements, is incongruous. Apparently those from the South, with little reason for praising this commemoration, made comments about it being typical for a Northerner to ride and let a woman walk, or going into battle behind a woman to avoid being shot. Louise Hall Tharp, *Saint-Gaudens and the Gilded Era*, Little, Brown and Company, Toronto, 1969, p. 322. See also p. 315 for an excellent photograph of the full-size plaster work in the studio.

¹³³ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 382 & Plates 472-476.

¹³⁴ Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, p. 260 & Plate 55.

¹³⁵ Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude. Art, Obscenity and Sexuality*, Routledge, London and New York, 1992, p. 7.

¹³⁶ Marianne Ryan (ed.), *La France. Images of Woman and Ideas of Nation 1789-1989*, South Bank Centre, London, 1989, illustration p. 8.

women'.¹³⁷ This was espoused by Samuel Smiles (1812-1904) who proposed in *Self Help* (1859) that femininity was domestic and angelic and that the nation was nurtured in the nursery.¹³⁸ Joy S. Kasson's *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture* demonstrates how this ideology stimulated an interest in 'ideal' sculpture, resulting in 'a pantheon of idealized women: passive, submissive, vulnerable.'¹³⁹

In contrast the commemoration of men in stone and metal celebrated such qualities as action and strength in the spheres of culture and politics at both home and abroad. The fact that there was variation in the manner of depicting male figures should also be noted for, as R.W. Connell has observed, 'different masculinities are produced in the same cultural and institutional setting.'¹⁴⁰ The statues of the politicians examined in this thesis represent a full repertoire of these types. Differences in costume and scale create alternative kinds of masculinity: from the massive frame of Canning in his antique drapes (Plates 56-57) to the slender body of Sir Robert Peel wearing a figure-hugging suit (Plate 98). This diversity is revelatory of the fact that such a space as Parliament Square and the monuments therein constitute *versions* of masculinity and – by extension – versions of the nation, a theme that is addressed in the next section.

¹³⁷ Marion Shaw, 'Introduction', pp. vii-xiii in her edited volume *Man Does, Woman Is. An Anthology of Work and Gender*, Faber & Faber, London, 1995, pp. xiii-ix. For a further discussion of this concept see Janet Wolff, 'The Culture of Separate Spheres: The Role of Culture in Nineteenth-Century Public and Private Life', pp. 12-33 in *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990.

¹³⁸ Lynda Nead recently addressed this matter when she challenged the 'mythic invention' that Victorian London was a dark and dangerous place, especially for women. 'A Narrative of footsteps-women and streets in Victorian London', unpublished paper given at the conference *The Victorian Face of London*, Museum of London, 11 March 2000.

¹³⁹ Kasson stresses that the 'embedded assumptions about gender' manifest in these works were questioned at the time. Social and economic changes led to a 'climate of doubt and insecurity': whilst industrialisation meant the marginalisation of women in the economic sphere, she simultaneously became central to the domestic and emotional wellbeing of the family (as Samuel Smiles appreciated). Those women who took the new opportunities available in the working environment risked being 'portrayed as unnatural monstrosities', in marked contrast to the physical perfection and quiescence of the sculptural subjects drawn from biblical, historical and mythological narratives. Consequently these idealistic representations of women 'and the narratives they inspired in their audiences seethed with contradictions.' From the art and its reception 'emerges a complex portrayal of the cultural construction of gender in nineteenth-century America.' Joy S. Kasson, 'Introduction', pp. 1-4 in *Marble Queens and Captives. Women in Nineteenth-Century American Sculpture*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1990.

¹⁴⁰ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995, p. 36.

1~8 Sculpture and national identity

One instance of the representation of masculinity in the military sphere is the *Outram Shield* designed by H.H. Armstead for Messrs Hunt & Roskell of London. Executed in damascened steel it was presented to Sir James Outram (1803-63) to commemorate his military successes and was displayed at the International Exhibition in London of 1862 where it was described as ‘one of the productions of which both this country and age may feel proud’.¹⁴¹ Encircling the central scene in high relief are eight portrait heads, including that of Sir Charles James Napier (1782-1853), governor of Sind from 1843-47. Beyond these are narrative scenes in low relief circumvented by an inscription that runs around the edge of the plate. This artefact provides a chronicle of imperial achievement narrated around a number of leading male protagonists. Outram was an imperial hero memorialised in Westminster Abbey, commemorated on the Thames Embankment, and monumentalised by an equestrian statue in Calcutta.¹⁴²

The connection between sculpture and empire was pronounced both during and immediately before this period. Throughout the nineteenth-century and beyond statues ‘symbolizing social status, power, and colonial dominion’ were exported to British dominions in South Asia.¹⁴³ Similarly, in her thesis entitled *Eighteenth-century British Monuments and the Politics of Empire*, Joan Michèle Coutu addresses the nearly two hundred monuments by British sculptors sent to the North American and West Indian colonies during the 1700s. From the outset the author makes three clear assertions regarding these artefacts: that they were intended to be public, propagandist and permanent.¹⁴⁴ Coutu regards these monuments as ‘embodiments of nationalism’ with which the inhabitants claimed ownership over the land: ‘To this day, the monuments fulfil their function as permanent reminders both of the people who lived in the eighteenth-century British colonies and of the geographical extent of the eighteenth-

¹⁴¹ Quotation taken from a panel accompanying the object in the exhibition *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain* held at the Victoria & Albert Museum from 5 April to 29 July 2001.

¹⁴² The London works (1863 and 1871) are by Matthew Noble whilst the Calcutta statue is by Foley (1864). Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, pp. 154 & 274-275.

¹⁴³ Mary Ann Steggies, *The Empire Aggrandized: A Study in Commemorative Portrait Statuary Exported from Britain to Her Colonies in South Asia, 1800 to 1939*, Vols. I-II, unpublished doctoral thesis, Leicester University, 1993, pp. v-xiv.

¹⁴⁴ Joan Michèle Coutu, *Eighteenth-century British Monuments and the Politics of Empire*, pp. 13-14.

century British Empire.’¹⁴⁵ In a postscript to the thesis it is remarked that this process continued into the following century when ‘India displaced the West Indies as the focus of Empire.’¹⁴⁶ This shift had already been presaged at the close of the preceding century by the commencement of the shipping of funerary monuments to India, the extent of which is evident in Barbara Groseclose study of *British Sculpture and the Company Raj*.¹⁴⁷

In a concluding remark, Coutu averred that, as ‘the British Empire became more and more firmly entrenched around the world in the nineteenth-century, public monuments to governors and monarchs became the norm.’¹⁴⁸ By the end of the century Benedict Read has observed that ‘[s]culpture quite literally followed the flag’.¹⁴⁹ Queen Victoria was extensively memorialised in many overseas dominions.¹⁵⁰ Shearer West has made a pertinent observation on the iconic nature of this phenomenon. She states that, in antiquity, sculpture was employed to edify the populace by disseminating the image of rulers through sculpture and coinage and by erecting monuments of emperors in the principal cities of the empire. This was analogous to the distribution of the image of Queen Victoria in the nineteenth-century, as evidenced by the plethora of statues erected in India: ‘Where the monarch was unable to appear, the image was sent instead.’¹⁵¹

The sculptural form was also implicated in nation and empire in other ways. During the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries Britain vied with France for the acquisition of archaeological pieces. The successful foreign policy of the former meant that the British Museum emerged as one of the most important collections of ancient sculpture

¹⁴⁵ Joan Michèle Coutu, *Eighteenth-century British Monuments and the Politics of Empire*, pp. 236-237.

¹⁴⁶ Joan Michèle Coutu, ‘Postscript: The end of an era: Monuments shipped to the West Indies in the nineteenth-century’, pp. 233-235 in *Eighteenth-century British Monuments and the Politics of Empire*.

¹⁴⁷ Barbara Groseclose, *British Sculpture and the Company Raj: Church Monuments and Public Statuary in Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay to 1858*, Delaware, Newark & London, 1995.

¹⁴⁸ Joan Michèle Coutu, ‘Postscript...’, pp. 233-235 in *Eighteenth-century British Monuments and the Politics of Empire*.

¹⁴⁹ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 368.

¹⁵⁰ This is an example of an ‘individual woman’ (to recall Marina Warner, see 1~7) who was commemorated. This was in part because her body was also synonymous with the matriarchal symbol for the nation.

¹⁵¹ Shearer West, ‘Portraiture: Likeness and Identity’, p. 81.

in the world.¹⁵² These genuine artefacts were complemented by plaster casts in order to provide a comprehensive ‘chain of art’ according to the Victorian conception of ‘Progress’. Within this sequence the co-called ‘Elgin Marbles’, acquired by the British Museum in 1816, constituted ‘the embodiment of the peak of civilisation.’¹⁵³ This is most evocatively recorded in the photography of Roger Fenton (1819-69). A superb example from 1857 depicts the Gallery of Antiquities of the British Museum.¹⁵⁴ The Parthenon marbles provided Fenton with the subject for the entire contents of an issue of the monthly *Stereoscopic Magazine*.¹⁵⁵

The importance of casts to this sculptural ‘chain of art’ led to the inception at the British Museum in October 1873 of the Cast Courts or Architectural Courts.¹⁵⁶ This was similarly the case with the South Kensington Museum, established in 1857 and renamed the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1899. Tim Barringer has suggested that this institution, by ordering and displaying objects acquired ‘from areas of the world in which Britain had colonial or proto-colonial political and military interests’, led to the constitution of ‘a three-dimensional imperial archive. The procession of objects from peripheries to centre symbolically enacted the idea of London as the heart of empire.’¹⁵⁷

One can consider the grouping together of commemorative monuments of leading protagonists in the field of culture and politics as an analogous three-dimensional national/imperial archive and a concretisation of the nineteenth-century notion of ‘Progress’. That this was the case is demonstrated by the language employed to

¹⁵² See Ian Dennis Jenkins, “*The Progress of Civilisation*”: *The Acquisition and Arrangement of the Sculpture Collections of the British Museum*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1990, pp. 8-17.

¹⁵³ For an account of ‘Progress’ and the ‘chain of art’ see Ian Jenkins, “*The Progress of Civilisation*”, pp. 78 ff.

¹⁵⁴ Roger Fenton, *The British Museum, Gallery of Antiquities*, c.1857, albumen print, 262 x 293 mm, The Royal Photographic Society, Bath. This was the year in which he took a photograph of *The British Museum, façade*, 1857, albumen print, 331 x 421 mm, Trustees of the British Museum. (Sydney Smirke (1799-1877) was responsible for the design of this building from 1823-48.)

¹⁵⁵ John Hannavy, *Roger Fenton of Crimble Hall*, Gordon Fraser, London, 1975, p. 38.

¹⁵⁶ Paul Williamson (ed.), *European Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1996, p. 183.

¹⁵⁷ Tim Barringer, ‘The South Kensington Museum and the colonial project’, pp. 11-28 in Tim Barringer & Tom Flynn (eds.), *Colonialism and the object: empire, material culture and the museum*, Routledge, London, 1998, pp. 11-12.

describe the works of Sir Francis Legatt Chantrey (1781-1841), a sculptor that received a number of prestigious commissions in a variety of secular and religious settings. The resulting 'striking assemblage of great men' was characterised as 'a noble and imperishable record' of the age (see 2~2).¹⁵⁸ This was perhaps nowhere more in evidence than at Westminster Abbey, for the interior of which Chantrey and his studio produced not less than eleven statues, busts and monuments.¹⁵⁹ These include in the Statesman's Aisle¹⁶⁰ (Plate 54) the 1833 statue of Sir John Malcolm, a general who served in India. The same work is replicated in Bombay, thus reinforcing the notion of nation and empire alluded to earlier.¹⁶¹ Chantrey was also responsible for the marble statue in the Abbey of George Canning, who died whilst he was Prime Minister in 1827 (see 2~1). Standing alongside and by the sculptor John Henry Foley is the statesman's son, Earl Canning the last Governor-General of India and the first Viceroy – a tenure that coincided with the Indian Mutiny. Completing the series is Edgar Boehm's Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, the Ambassador at Constantinople during the Crimean War.¹⁶² This familial grouping indicates the extent to which the nation is being imagined as a family. The stylistic similarity of the sculptures – as discussed with reference to Nigel Llewellyn (see 1~5) – reinforces this concept of continuity.

This was a principal motivation behind the foundation of a National Portrait Gallery in London during June 1856. At the time the Prime Minister, the third Viscount Palmerston, declared in Parliament:

There cannot, I feel convinced, be a greater incentive to mental exertion, to noble actions, to good conduct on the part of the living, than for them to see before them the features of those who have done things which are worthy of our admiration and whose example we are more induced to imitate when they are brought before us in the visible and tangible shape of portraits.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ *Athenaeum*, No. 268, 15 December 1832, p. 811.

¹⁵⁹ Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, pp. 91-96.

¹⁶⁰ On this see John Physick, 'Prime Ministers in Westminster Abbey', *Transactions of the Church Monuments Society*, Vol. 9, 1994, pp. 93-106.

¹⁶¹ Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, p. 93.

¹⁶² See Francis Bond, *Westminster Abbey*, pp. 167 & 169.

¹⁶³ Cited in Gertrude Prescott Nuding, 'Portraits for the Nation', pp. 30-36 in *History Today*, Vol. 39, June 1989, p. 32.

These images with their supposed fealty to nature provided records of the nation's heroes for posterity and were thus imbued with moral and intellectual merit. It has been argued that such objects, by constructing a particular historical narrative, were intended to 'shape social behaviour. The representation of the past (and therefore the present) was to act on the individual at both a mental and a physical level, a shaping of both mind and body.'¹⁶⁴ Throughout the nineteenth-century portraits of specific, usually male individuals were increasingly deployed to foster the sense of civic, national and imperial identities. Such a lineage of portrait images spanning the centuries were seen as evidence of the stability of the nation's political and economic past given that, unlike other collections in Europe, Britain's heritage remained relatively intact.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, it has been argued that strong support for this venture in the House of Lords indicated that the gallery 'represented the process of transforming the private history of the aristocratic seat into a national and public space... to recreate the concept of family history on a national scale'.¹⁶⁶ This implied an evolutionary and inclusive pattern to the nation's history, sentiments that were particularly necessary during times of potential insurrection, as with the issue of electoral reform in 1831-32 (see 2~3). This latter point also casts light on the fact that, rather than being homogenised, such lineages constitute *versions* of the nation. Similarly, the figures commemorated in Parliament Square and the differing ways in which they are 'imagined' (to recall Benedict Anderson) in like fashion evince this sense of variation and difference in the definitions of the nation. This is most clearly apparent in, for example, the memorialisation of the abolitionist Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (see 3~5) or the alternative versions of masculinity played out in the depictions of George Canning, Sir Robert Peel or Benjamin Disraeli.

¹⁶⁴ Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, 'Counting visitors or visitors who count?', pp. 213-232 in Robert Lumley (ed.), *The Museum Time-Machine*, Routledge, London & New York, 1988, p. 224.

¹⁶⁵ See Gertrude Prescott, 'Portraits for the Nation', p. 31.

¹⁶⁶ Paul Barlow, 'The imagined hero as incarnate sign: Thomas Carlyle and the mythology of the 'national portrait' in Victorian Britain', pp. 517-545 in *Art History*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1994, p. 521.

1~9 The Parliament Square pantheon: a stage at the theatre of state

The National Portrait Gallery was originally located on Great George Street, a thoroughfare forming the northern side of Parliament Square. The latter, an open-air forum akin to both the gallery and the nearby Westminster Abbey, was to similarly feature a ‘striking assemblage of great men’.¹⁶⁷ Such commemorative accumulations – or “pantheons” – were characteristic of the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. This fact, combined (as we shall see) with the way in which the pantheon can be “read” as an historical document, means that a close analysis of this phenomenon in relation to the Houses of Parliament and its sculpture is of especial pertinence to a study of the monuments in Parliament Square.

Henry Hugh Armstead’s letter to Edmund Gosse (see 1~1) had called for ‘compositions combining architecture (designed by the Sculptor)’.¹⁶⁸ His work had indeed led to close involvement with architectural design. One such collaboration of relevance to this thesis was Armstead’s alliance with Edward Middleton Barry. As we have seen, the architect was responsible for the completion of the new Houses of Parliament throughout the 1860s including the design of both Parliament Square and New Palace Yard, the latter being a space lying just to the east and within the precincts of parliament. For the façade on the southern side of this enclosure Armstead was commissioned to carve a series of statues of over life-size monarchs.¹⁶⁹ In this undertaking the sculptor at least partially fulfilled his stated aspiration to produce sculpture in conjunction with architecture.

The same practitioner was similarly involved in the most prominent instance of the combination of sculpture and architecture: the aforementioned Albert Memorial (see preface). The architects invited to compete for the commission were informed that

the design for the Architectural portion of the Memorial should be regarded chiefly as a means of ensuring the most effective management of the sculpture which is to

¹⁶⁷ *PP* 1808 (231) III.1, p. 6

¹⁶⁸ H.H. Armstead to Edmund Gosse, 2 August 1880. Brotherton Library Collection, Leeds University.

¹⁶⁹ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 262; M.H. Port (ed.), *The Houses of Parliament*, Yale University Press [for] the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (London) Ltd, New Haven & London, 1976, p. 178.

complete it; the object being to provide an Architectural base for groups of Sculpture surmounted by the Statue, which is required to be conspicuous.¹⁷⁰

The architect of the memorial, George Gilbert Scott, enlisted the services of H.H. Armstead (Plate 50). Scott had first encountered the sculptor's work 'during the great Exhibition of 1862' when his attention had been drawn to the 'beautiful figure-groups on the Outram shield' (see 1~8).¹⁷¹ Their subsequent collaboration included carvings executed by Armstead for Gilbert Scott's New Government Offices at Westminster (see 1~1). The soffits above the first floor windows feature busts of such persons as David Livingstone (1813-73), William Wilberforce (1759-1833) and Sir John Franklin (1786-1847).

Sculptural 'compositions combining architecture' frequently led to the realisation of a commemorative *pantheon*. In 1978, Paul Hetherington compiled a list of fourteen such pantheons dating from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries preceded by a short essay in which he noted that the concept was 'confined almost exclusively to the nineteenth-century'.¹⁷² He accounts for this by examining 'the particular frame of mind' in which critics and historians of that period perceived the present and the past. This included 'eclecticism of taste', 'the growth of historicism', and a wish to disseminate knowledge to a wider audience than hitherto, combined with the confidence to render their value judgements in 'permanent form.' (This final aspect is acknowledged as being absent in our present era thus differentiating it from the nineteenth-century, a matter discussed later: see 7~1-2.) A pantheon therefore consists of a grouping of prominent individuals chosen for the purposes of demonstrating the development of culture (or politics). This has the effect of ennobling the society responsible for that pantheon whilst seeking confirmation and validation in the selection of personages made. Their location in the public domain disseminated this message, affirming the "'establishment" nature' of the phenomenon. As such they are invariably didactic in nature and frequently nationalistic in tone.

¹⁷⁰ Cited in Geoffrey Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 272.

¹⁷¹ Scott cited in Benedict Read, 'The Sculpture', pp. 160-205 in Chris Brooks (ed.), *The Albert Memorial. The Prince Consort National Memorial: its History, Contexts and Conservation*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2000, p. 167.

¹⁷² Paul Hetherington, 'Pantheons in the *Museum*: An Aspect of the History of Taste', pp. 214-228 in *Art History*, Vol. I, No. 2, June 1978, p. 215.

Their historical value lies in the fact that they ‘read as documents of their period’ that ‘can be surveyed in terms of notable inclusions and notable exclusions.’¹⁷³

The crucial importance of the selection process meant that it frequently became a contentious issue. This was the case with the figures selected for inclusion on the façade of Gilbert Scott’s New Government Offices. The architect revealed that work on the sculptural decoration was ‘delayed owing to the excessive difficulty in the selection of a series of persons to be represented’.¹⁷⁴ Given that one of the most complex pantheons of the nineteenth-century was in relation to the new Houses of Parliament it is unsurprising that the matter of commemorative portraiture became a focus of intense debate.

Provision for a new legislative centre became a pressing concern following the destruction by fire of the ancient Palace of Westminster on 16 October 1834.¹⁷⁵ The foundation stone of its replacement – a magnificent neo-Gothic or Elizabethan edifice designed by Sir Charles Barry and A.W.N. Pugin (1812-52) – was laid in 1840. The House of Lords was in use by 1847 and, with both chambers substantially complete, it was formally opened five years later.¹⁷⁶ A contemporaneous guide to London written by Peter Cunningham (1816-69) acclaimed the ‘New Houses of Parliament’ or ‘New Palace at Westminster’ as ‘[o]ne of the most magnificent buildings ever erected continuously in Europe – probably the largest Gothic edifice in the world.’¹⁷⁷ Alfred Barry’s biography of the architect refers to it as ‘a sculptured memorial of our national history.’¹⁷⁸ Similarly in 1852 *The Times* claimed that it would endure ‘as long as England is the seat of freedom and power.’ Its walls were

¹⁷³ Paul Hetherington, ‘Pantheons in the *Museion*’, pp. 218-219.

¹⁷⁴ PRO WORK 12/96/2, ff.347 (14 November 1874) & 354 (10 December 1874) cited in M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 258. Port speculates that the busts were produced by the firm Farmer & Brindley.

¹⁷⁵ On this matter see Anna Milford, *London in Flames: The capital’s history through its fires or the impact and impetus of London’s fires*, Comerford & Miller, London, 1998, pp. 93-96. J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851) executed a series of watercolour sketches and oil paintings of this spectacular sight. See Celina Fox (ed.), *London - World City 1800-1840*, Plates 691-692.

¹⁷⁶ Montagu H. Cox and Philip Norman (eds.), *London County Council Survey of London, Vol. X: The Parish of St. Margaret, Westminster.- Part 1*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1926, p. 55.

¹⁷⁷ Peter Cunningham, *Hand-book of London Past and Present*, p. 235.

¹⁷⁸ Alfred Barry, *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry, RA, FRS*, John Murray, London, 1867, p. 193.

girt with the heraldic insignia of a long race of kings – its chambers glow with the all the associations of Chivalry, of Religion, and of Justice; and the Palace of Westminster will, ere long, comprise, as in one perfect whole, the staple memorials of our National History, and the living organs of our Political Strength.¹⁷⁹

With reference to this ‘decorative sculpture’ a contemporary commentator observed that John Thomas (1813-62) ‘acting of course under the direction of Sir Charles Barry... was alone responsible’.¹⁸⁰ An iconographical analysis by Benedict Read serves to emphasise the monarchical nature of the architectural sculpture.¹⁸¹ On the main floor of the east front facing the river are the coats-of-arms, names and dates of royal rulers from William I to Queen Victoria (the west front facing New Palace Yard has a similar chronology of statues). The north and south returns of the river façade hold statues of Saxon kings and queens from the Heptarchy to the Conquest. The oriel windows of the towers support the arms of Queen Victoria indicating when construction of the building took place. Victoria also appears there in statue form; as she does on the façade to Old Palace Yard; and again on the eponymously titled Victoria Tower where she is accompanied by statues of her antecedents and various saints. Her presence also forms part of the iconography of the Royal Approach through this tower. Finally, on the Public Approach, in the archway niches of St. Stephen’s Hall and Central Hall, there is a chronological series of statues from William I to the then present monarch.

¹⁷⁹ Cited at the beginning of Anon, *Palace of Westminster. Catalogue and Guide to the New Palace of Westminster*, J. Thompson, London, c. 1852.

¹⁸⁰ Charles L. Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show how the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England during the Two Last Centuries has since been Encouraged and Developed*, (1872) edited and introduced by J. Mordaunt Crook, Leicester University Press, Old Woking, 1970, p. 185. It has more recently been observed that ‘many of the best-known mid-Victorian artists’ were involved in this decorative undertaking. In the field of sculpture these included: John Gibson (1790-1866), John Evan Thomas (1810-73), Patrick Macdowell (1799-1870), John Bell (1812-95), Edward Hodges Baily (1788-1867), John Henry Foley (1818-74), William Calder Marshall (1818-94), William Theed (1804-91), John Edward Carew (c.1785-1868), William Frederick Woodington (1806-93), James Sherwood Westmacott (1823-1900). John Physick and Michael Darby, ‘The Houses of Parliament’, pp. 32-26 in *‘Marble Halls’. Drawings and Models for Victorian Secular Buildings*, HMSO, London, 1973, p. 32. Each sculptor is listed in Rupert Gunnis’s *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*.

¹⁸¹ Benedict Read, ‘The Architectural Sculpture’, pp. 232-245 in M.H. Port (ed.), *The Houses of Parliament*, p. 244; Anon, *The Palace of Westminster, with a descriptive Account of the House of Lords*, W. Warrington & Son, London, 1848, pp. 4-5.

From the outset there was a distinction made between the aforementioned architectural sculpture and the ‘free-standing or “insulated” sculpture’.¹⁸² Of the latter, Charles Barry predicted that ‘the entire number of public monuments that the building and its quadrangles could accommodate would be, in isolated monuments or statues, two hundred and seventy, and in mural monuments and tablets about four hundred, or, in the whole, six hundred and seventy monuments of all kinds.’¹⁸³ In 1841 the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, had decided to establish a Royal Fine Arts Commission (RFAC) ‘for the encouragement of British Art’. He appointed Prince Albert (1819-61) as chairman and Sir Charles Locke Eastlake (1793-1865) as secretary.¹⁸⁴ On 17 August 1843 Peel had written to the commissioners of the RFAC instructing them to consider both the site and the selection of names of those ‘to be honoured by so distinguished a Record of National Gratitude, and the best mode of combining the public acknowledgement of eminent service with encouragement to the Arts in this country.’¹⁸⁵

A sub-committee appointed to address this matter considered potential cultural and military figures, explorers, scientists and monarchs and produced a ‘List of distinguished Persons to whose memories Statues might be erected’ (see 5~2).¹⁸⁶ An article that appeared in *The Times* in October 1845 concluded that it ‘must have been a very difficult task to search through the British annals for the purpose of finding a class of distinguished men who would fit a series of narrow Gothic niches.’¹⁸⁷ The truth of this matter became all too apparent with the intractable question of whether or not to incorporate Oliver Cromwell within the royal lineage. The difficulty of including the Lord Protector was to a large extent due to the fact that the walls of the

¹⁸² Benedict Read, ‘The Architectural Sculpture’ in M.H. Port (ed.), *The Houses of Parliament*, p. 233.

¹⁸³ By 1861 the number of sculptures was calculated at 220; see Anon, *The New Palace of Westminster. (A descriptive account)*, Warrington & Co., London, 1861, p. 8.

¹⁸⁴ T.S.R. Boase, ‘The Decoration of the New Palace of Westminster, 1841-1863’, pp. 319-358 in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 17, 1954; Julian Treuherz, *Victorian Painting*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1993, p. 42.

¹⁸⁵ Peel’s letter, addressed to Charles Eastlake, is printed in *Copy of letter from the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel to Charles Locke Eastlake, Esq., on the subject of the Erection of Monuments to eminent Civilians*, PP 1843 (636) XXX.583.

¹⁸⁶ Fourth Report, PP 1845, [671] XXVII.151, Appendix 1, ff. 159-160. This list, drawn up on 6 March 1845 and revised on 14 March, was reproduced as ‘Fourth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts’, pp. 1019-1020 in *Athenaeum*, No. 938, 18 October 1845, pp. 1019-1020.

¹⁸⁷ *Times*, 16 October 1845, p. 5b.

new Houses of Parliament were, as we have seen, ‘girt with the heraldic insignia of a long race of kings’.¹⁸⁸

It has been suggested that this structure was ‘pre-eminently Victorian in one notable aspect: its didactic function.’¹⁸⁹ Roland Quinault has even gone so far as to characterise Barry’s design as a tangible rendering of Britain’s unwritten constitution.¹⁹⁰ Hugh Miller (1802-56), writing in the nineteenth-century, described the parliamentary buildings as ‘the Marble History of England’.¹⁹¹ However, the very fact that this construction was also known as the ‘New Palace at Westminster’ suggests that this was a decidedly *royal* history of England (sic). It is the ‘insulted’ images, be they frescoes, mosaics or statues that provide an alternative historical sequence.¹⁹²

It is this secondary “pantheon” that has led Chris Brooks in a recent analysis of the building to argue that, taken ‘cumulatively’, the narrative is ‘open-ended’, evoking the struggle between the British people as subjects and citizens.¹⁹³ Nevertheless, a perhaps more convincing stance is provided by David Cannadine’s evaluation of the entire ensemble as more a ‘royal residence than a democratic legislature’. For him the plethora of monarchical statues and the splendour of the House of Lords in contrast to the cramped, spartan House of Commons render it a ‘theatre of state’ in which

¹⁸⁸ Cited at the beginning of Anon, *Palace of Westminster. Catalogue and Guide to the New Palace of Westminster*, J. Thompson, London, c. 1852.

¹⁸⁹ Benedict Read, ‘The Architectural Sculpture’ in M.H. Port (ed.), *The Houses of Parliament*, p. 232.

¹⁹⁰ ‘The British constitution is unwritten, but not unbuilt.’ Roland Quinault, ‘Westminster and the Victorian Constitution’, pp. 79-104 in *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 1992, p. 79.

¹⁹¹ Hugh Miller, ‘The Cromwell Controversy’, pp. 30-40 in *Essays Historical and Biographical, Political and Social, Literary and Scientific*, William P. Nimmo, London & Edinburgh, 1879, p. 30.

¹⁹² For a comprehensive account of this rich and varied decoration see R.J.B. Walker, *A Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture and Engravings in The Palace of Westminster*, 1961. Although this multi-volumed text is unpublished copies are accessible at a number of archives, including the House of Lords Record Office (HLRO).

¹⁹³ Of the works the RFAC oversaw Brooks cites a series of statues in St. Stephen’s Hall of parliamentarians such as John Hampden (1594-1643) and frescoes by Charles West Cope (1811-90) of 1856-66 in the Peers’ Corridor evoking the Civil War. (The latter were described at the time as ‘illustrating some of the greatest epochs in our constitutional, social, and ecclesiastical history.’ Anon, *Palace of Westminster: Catalogue and Guide to the New Palace of Westminster*, J. Thompson, London, c. 1852, p. 23.) In addition, in the House of Lords a sculptural group of figures representing the signatories of the Magna Carta ‘look down on the throne whose powers they curtailed’. Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1999, pp. 214-220.

pageant took precedence over democracy.¹⁹⁴ It was envisaged as the ‘imperial parliament’ in which the House of Lords, the monarch and the ceremonial were transcendent. Yet by the end of the century Home Rule for Ireland threatened to undermine its role as the legislature for the four kingdoms of the United Kingdom.¹⁹⁵ These changes have exacerbated since the Second World War with the loss of the empire overseas, the erosion of national identity and devolution. Nevertheless, as Cannadine observes, the ‘protean’ identities of nation, empire and politics are elided and concealed by the architecture and decoration of the seemingly immutable New Palace at Westminster.¹⁹⁶ This sense of immutability can help to explain why Cromwell’s presence was so problematic. He made a very belated appearance on the fringe of the Palace of Westminster’s sculptural pantheon in 1899 with the erection outside Westminster Hall of a statue by Hamo Thornycroft (Plates 107-109).

This very monument and the other statues of statesmen that articulate the adjacent Parliament Square are at the core of this thesis. These publicly sited, free-standing (or ‘insulated’) statues stand in the shadow of parliament’s illuminated Clock Tower housing “Big Ben” (Plates 17-18 & 122), the chimes of which reverberate around the globe on the BBC World Service. And, if this New Palace at Westminster is indeed the ‘theatre of state’, then Parliament Square can be considered to be its proscenium.¹⁹⁷ The long-running play being performed is concerned with identities: be they of a specific, monumentalised individual or of innumerable unnamed compatriots; as well as the identity of a city, a nation and an empire. The principal actors on the stage are, in the most literal sense, an ‘imagined political community’. At times the audience, rather than being passive spectators, also take to the stage and become part of the show. As a result, the performance, although scripted, is constantly

¹⁹⁴ David Cannadine, ‘The Palace of Westminster as Palace of Varieties’, pp. 11-29 in Christine Riding & Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament: history, art, architecture*, Merrell, London, 2000, pp. 14-16. A version of this article was given in a lecture at the Public Record Office, London on 15 June 1999.

¹⁹⁵ David Cannadine, ‘The Palace of Westminster as Palace of Varieties’, p. 17. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1992, pp. 349-350.

¹⁹⁶ David Cannadine, ‘The Palace of Westminster as Palace of Varieties’, pp. 26-29.

¹⁹⁷ In actual fact the monuments in Parliament Square have *literally* been cast as characters in a play: in Alfred Julian Talbot’s *All Fools’ Eve: A fantasia in Parliament Square. In one act*, French’s Acting Edition, London & New York, 1934.

mutating. This podium – an overtly civilised domain – is in truth a contested space, perpetually susceptible to profanation and departures from the script.

The present thesis (to continue this analogy) is akin to the report of a theatre critic. After seeing the play such a reviewer has now to articulate their reactions for the benefit of the few who might have also been there – and for the many who were not. He or she therefore constitutes the eyes and ears of the public. Certain conclusions are made based on the events witnessed (value judgements that are arrived at by comparing the work with other analogous cultural manifestations either seen or read about by the commentator). Our attention could be drawn to anything from scenery to lighting; script to performance; duration to audience reaction. In this résumé some aspects will be foregrounded, just as comment will be passed on particular actors whilst less attention will be paid to others. It is to be hoped then that the conclusions of the writer, although inevitably subjective, are yet both relevant and illuminating. At best they should prompt the reader to see the performance in order to enjoy it for themselves, so that they might find grounds for agreeing with the reviewer as well as coming to their own conclusions.

Riot, reform and royalty: Canning to Coeur de Lion

Farewell, great Statesman! whose elastic mind
 Clung round thy country, yet embraced mankind;
 Who, in the most appalling storms, (whose power
 Shook the wide world), *wast equal to the hour!*
 Champion of measured liberty, whence springs
 The mutual strength of people and of Kings,
 'Twas thine, like CHATHAM'S patriotic task, to wield
 The people's force, yet be the Monarch's shield.
Not wholly lost! – for both the worlds shall tell
Thy history in theirs! Farewell! Farewell!¹

George Canning (1770-1827) was a protégé of William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) and a leading Tory politician in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, particularly during his tenure as foreign secretary from 1822-27. He subsequently rose to the position of Prime Minister, a post he held for only five months before his death in August 1827. The verse that introduces this chapter written following Canning's encapsulates a number of the topics to be addressed in this section. The author asserts that the statesman's fame was due as much to the part he played in the furtherance of Britain's foreign interests (he 'embraced mankind') as to its domestic policy. This was vitally important given that it succeeded the Napoleonic Wars, a conflict that 'shook the wide world'. The nation was guided through these 'most appalling storms' through the 'mutual strength of people and of Kings'. This was in sharp contrast to the fate of the monarchy in France and, as a result of such insurrection, Canning became a 'champion of measured liberty'. These themes, especially the latter issue of electoral reform, will constitute the frame of reference for a detailed discussion of Canning's monument sited outside parliament in 1832.

¹ William Croker, *The Right Honourable George Canning. Non Omnis Moriar*. Denison Papers, Os C 49. Department of Manuscripts & Special Collections, Nottingham University. The author of this poem could just perhaps be Major William Croker. He served in the 17th Regiment, Bathurst Commandant during the years 1832-34. See *The Wellington Valley Project: Papers Relating to the Church Missionary Society Mission to Wellington Valley, New South Wales 1830-42* http://www.newcastle.edu.au/discipline/history/wv-project/vol2/index_c.html [accessed 11 December 2002].

This, the earliest commemorative memorial to be discussed, will serve as an introductory case study to both this chapter and the thesis as a whole. The statues that came later were inevitably evaluated in comparison with this prototype. That this was a problematic relationship became clear following the death of Sir Robert Peel in 1850. Calls for the erection of a statue of him in close proximity to that of Canning prompted the Office of Works to establish a legal framework to govern and protect such monuments in the vicinity of the Houses of Parliament. It was the discussions that took place in this regard that determined the official parameters and conventions of these commemorations. These regulations facilitated the institution of a public square of statues in the 1860s.

2~1 Commemorating Canning

In October 1827 the political allies of the recently deceased Prime Minister initiated a subscription for a commemorative memorial.² A committee was established for this purpose and included Lords Anglesey, Carlisle, Devonshire and Stafford with George James Welbore Agar-Ellis, first Baron Dover (1797-1833) as chairman.³ They soon raised £9,500⁴ and nominated Sir Francis Legatt Chantrey (1781-1841) as their preferred sculptor. Chantrey was eminently qualified for the task, as he had previously executed busts of Canning from life. These included a commission of 1818-19 from Colonel John Bolton that was to form the model for the head of a later statue at Liverpool⁵ (see 2~2). Other works comprise busts of 1821 (at the National Portrait Gallery) and 1826 (at Chatsworth), as well as a statue of Canning at Athens (c. 1830) and the memorial in Westminster Abbey (1829-34).⁶

² Anon, 'Bust of Mr. Canning', *London Literary Gazette*, 22 September 1827, p. 620. For detailed accounts of the commission and sources of reference see John Blackwood, *London's Immortals. The complete commemorative outdoor statues*, Savoy Press, Oxford, 1989, pp. 178-179; Marie Busco, *Sir Richard Westmacott: sculptor*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 79-81.

³ *London Literary Gazette*, 22 September 1827, p. 620.

⁴ John Blackwood, *London's Immortals*, p. 178.

⁵ This bust is now in the Palace of Westminster. See Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 1997, p. 75.

⁶ See Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, The Abbey Library, London, 1953, pp. 93-94; Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, p. 75; Alison Yarrington, 'Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830', pp. 22-31 in Penelope Curtis (ed.), *Patronage and Practice, Sculpture on*

The subscribers to the latter met on 18 February 1828. Although unable to attend, John Wilson Croker (1780-1857) wrote on that day to J.E. Denison, a fellow contributor:

Inevitable business prevents my attending the meeting at the Thatch'd House today, but the interest I feel in Mr. Canning's monument is so great that I trouble you with my sentiments on the subject in the hope that they may a little influence you, who, I know, will have a share in the determination.

I am decidedly for a statue in Westminster Abbey – a statue by Chantrey, who knew him so well, & acted so liberally when the thing was first mentioned to him.⁷

This was in fact what happened. Chantrey agreed with Agar-Ellis on 18 June 1829 to execute the Westminster Abbey monument for £3000 with half of the amount paid on that day and the remainder in July 1834.⁸ The sculptor's status was rendered particularly notable by the number of statues he executed in the Abbey (see 1~8).⁹ However, a further proposal by Croker in his letter to Denison was *not* carried out. He had urged that, given that the amount collected was 'more than enough for a mere statue', the pedestal ought to be 'enrich'd by basso-relievos descriptive of his public life.'¹⁰ Instead the 'modest circular pedestal of dove-coloured marble'¹¹ incorporated a lengthy inscription.¹² It made reference to Canning's 'Rare Combination of Talents'

Merseyside, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, 1989 (see plate 10, p. 30 for a photograph of the Westminster Abbey statue).

⁷ J.W. Croker to J.E. Denison, 18 February 1828. Denison Papers, Os C 48, Nottingham University.

⁸ John Physick, *Inscriptions on Abbey Monuments*, unpublished, 1991, [133], Westminster Abbey Monument Room & Library [Abbey 7/2/019 (No. 6)]. He describes its location as in the North Transept, on the north side of the arch between first and second bays from the north. Physick also relates that there is a drawing and plaster model relating to the work in the National Portrait Gallery and the Ashmolean respectively.

⁹ Cunningham's guide of 1850, for example, lists three 'portrait-statues of Francis Horner, George Canning, and Sir John Malcolm.' Peter Cunningham, 'Westminster Abbey', pp. 529-540 in *Hand-book of London Past and Present*, John Murray, London, revised edition 1850, p. 536.

¹⁰ Denison Papers, Os C 48, Nottingham University.

¹¹ Anon, 'New Statue of Canning in Westminster Abbey', *The Times*, 21 August 1834, 5b.

¹² The full inscription reads: 'George Canning, / Born 11th. April 1770. Died 8th. August 1827. / Endowed With A Rare Combination Of Talents, / An Eminent Statesman, / An Accomplished Scholar, / An Orator Surpassed By None, / He United / The Most Brilliant And Lofty Quality Of The Mind / With The Warmest Affections Of The Heart. / Raised By His Own Merit, / He Successively Filled Important Offices Of State, / And Finally Became First Minister Of The Crown. / In The Full Enjoyment Of His Sovereign's Favour / And Of The Confidence Of The People, / He Was Prematurely Cut Off/When Pursuing A Wise And Enlarged Course / Of Policy, / Which Had For Its Object The Prosperity And Greatness / Of His Own Country, / While It Comprehended The Welfare / And Commanded The Admiration / Of Foreign Nations. / This Monument Is Erected / By His Friends And Countrymen.'

as statesman, scholar, and orator. In his rise from various ‘Important Offices Of State’ to ultimately become

First Minister Of The Crown,
In The Full Enjoyment Of His Sovereign’s Favour
And Of The Confidence Of The People,
He Was Prematurely Cut Off
When Pursuing A Wise And Enlarged Course
Of Policy,
Which Had For Its Object The Prosperity And Greatness
Of His Own Country,
While It Comprehended The Welfare
And Commanded The Admiration
Of Foreign Nations.
This Monument Is Erected
By His Friends And Countrymen.¹³

*

Before the late nineteenth-century, as Nicholas Penny has averred, it was rare that funerals and the mourning of a prominent individual should be treated simply. Instead ‘display’ was essential and ‘it was positively irresponsible for anyone of high “station” in life to treat their funeral as a private affair.’¹⁴ This is most clearly apparent when private grief is partially immolated in order that provision is made to ensure as wide a public as possible pay homage to a deceased sovereign. Penny has shown that in the nineteenth-century and before this was also true with regard to an eminent nobleman, such as a duke, when the funeral retinue would pass through local communities ‘with streets draped in black and muffled bells tolling.’¹⁵ One of the most dramatic was that of the Duke of Wellington in 1852. Around one-and-a-half million spectators attended the highly elaborate funeral procession numbering some 10,000 people as Wellington’s body was conveyed to the Abbey in a highly ornate funeral car. The occasion represented a substantially more theatrical spectacle than

¹³ The inscription was reproduced in *The Times* on 21 August 1834, 5b. Some slight anomalies include: ‘This monument was erected by his friends and countrymen.’ The original text puts this in the present tense: ‘This monument is erected...’

¹⁴ Nicholas Penny, *Mourning*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, HMSO, 1981, p. 15.

¹⁵ Nicholas Penny, *Mourning*, pp. 15-16.

that marking the internment of Horatio, Viscount Nelson (born 1758) in 1806 and provided an imperial event to rival the cortege at Napoleon's funeral.¹⁶

Such matters should be taken into account when considering the funeral of George Canning that took place at Westminster Abbey on Thursday, 17 August 1827. Recent work on this figure demonstrates the extent of his influence during 'the shifting orientation of early nineteenth-century politics, away from the closed world of Westminster towards the wider world outside.' This was embodied in Canning's decision in 1812 to 'turn away from the aristocratic political arena of Westminster' and stand for election at Liverpool, thus making him 'the first major Tory figure... to sit for a populous borough'. This enabled him 'to take his own brand of Toryism... not only to the people of Liverpool but also to newly significant sections of the population throughout the nation.'¹⁷ This widespread appeal was vividly demonstrated on the day of his interment.

The funeral was described in considerable detail in the subsequent day's edition of *The Times*.¹⁸ It claimed that 'the assembled multitude' which thronged the streets surrounding Westminster Abbey evinced a display of 'regret... more strongly and intensely than... was witnessed at the death of any subject within the memory of the oldest person now living.' Although intended to be a private affair attended by 'near relatives', a few friends and those colleagues 'who remained in town', the occasion could only have been characterised as private from 'the absence of that great pomp and splendour which sometimes attend the last obsequies of the great'. Instead 'thousands of the most respectable classes' formed a procession which, when combined with 'the still more numerous assemblage of persons of all descriptions who thronged every avenue and place by which it was to pass... gave it the

¹⁶ See Michael Greenhalgh, 'The Funeral of the Duke of Wellington', *Apollo*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 139 (NS), September, 1973, pp. 220-226; John Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians*, Studio Vista, London, 1971, pp. 80-90. It was not just politicians or military figures deemed worthy of such national honour. On 6 April 1878 the architect Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-78) was buried in Westminster Abbey after a three-hour funeral procession to which Queen Victoria sent an empty carriage. Gavin Stamp, 'Introduction', pp. c-m in his edited volume of Sir George Gilbert Scott, *Personal and Professional Recollections*, (first published 1879), Paul Watkins, Stamford, 1995, p. c.

¹⁷ Stephen M. Lee, *George Canning and the Tories, c. 1801-1827*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1999, pp. 20, 93, 127 & 244.

¹⁸ Anon, 'Funeral of Mr. Canning', *The Times*, number 13,360, 17 August 1827. Denison Papers, Os C 46, Nottingham University.

appearance, not only of a public, but, if we may so describe it, of a national funeral.’ The newspaper went on to give the reasons why so many should have been united in their ‘general grief’. Canning was popularly associated with domestic and foreign policies upon which depended ‘the political and commercial prosperity’ not only of Britain but also ‘the tranquillity of the Governments in the old world, and the permanence of those lately established in the new.’

The scene of the funeral was set in dramatic terms: the solemn tolling of the Abbey bell was audible from early morning until the body reached ‘the silent tomb’. Just after eleven o’clock ‘two mutes, dressed in the usual manner¹⁹, with scarfs (sic), sash and wands, were stationed at the doors of the Foreign Office’. Shortly before one o’clock the coffin was conveyed from that building to a ‘hearse drawn by six fine black horses’ and the ‘mournful procession’ commenced. A stark and striking image of a coffin, labelled ‘THE BODY’²⁰, is inserted into the newspaper text to head a list of the distinguished mourners arranged simultaneously in both hierarchy of importance and their status in the cortege. Leading the carriage were Mr. Jarvis the undertaker, his two Pages and two pairs of ‘Mutes in silk dresses’ with, between them, a ‘Plume of ostrich feathers.’²¹

Despite the heavy rain the ‘immense crowd’ observed the movement down Parliament Street and via St. Margaret’s Square to the western entrance of the Abbey, where the body arrived some forty minutes later. At this ‘great gateway’ waited the Reverend Bentinck who met the coffin ‘near the monument of Mr. Pitt [the Younger]’. Canning was then lain: ‘Upon a temporary platform, erected for the purpose, over the grave of Mr. Pitt... while the burial service was in the course of performance.’ *The Times* described the ‘audible sobs’ or ‘suppressed grief’ of relatives, friends and ‘strangers’

¹⁹ See note 21. For a contemporary illustration see The Rev. Septimus Buss, *A mute*, oil on tin, c.1830s, Museum of London, reproduced in Nicholas Penny, *Mourning*, Figure 7, p. 24.

²⁰ The actual inscription on the coffin is transcribed later in the article: ‘Depositum. / The Right Hon. George Canning, / One of His Majesty’s Most Honourable Privy Council, / First Lord Commissioner of His Majesty’s Treasury, / Chancellor and Under Treasurer of the / Exchequer of Great Britain and Ireland, / And a Governor of the Charter-house, &c. &c. / Born 11th April, 1770. / Died 8th August, 1827.’

²¹ These roles were later modifications of sixteenth-century funerals of the English nobility arranged by the College of Heralds. The undertaker’s mute superseded the “conductor” and the “featherman” substituted the “hatchments” (the ‘crested helmet, sword, shield, coat of arms, and coronet’ held by a line of heralds). See Nicholas Penny, *Mourning*, p. 16.

both inside and outside the Abbey. This was due in part because: ‘The place in which they were now assembled, holding in its precincts the sacred ashes of the departed sages, heroes, patriots, and Kings, was of itself calculated to inspire sensations of melancholy regret, and to produce a conviction of the frail, and uncertain tenure on which all earthly grandeur and distinction is enjoyed’. This sense of mortality was never more apparent than on this occasion given that Canning, who ‘was full of honours if not of years, had raised himself by his own talents from a comparatively humble condition, to the highest situation to which a subject’s ambition can aspire under a regular Government’. *The Times* was quick to underscore the fact that ‘this great empire’ was united in bereavement: all those excelling in science, academia, politics, commerce, and those of ‘hereditary rank’. In addition

the brute vulgar... embalm with their tears... the memory of him, who did not think himself too highly raised above “their order” to feel for their wants, and to relieve their grievances. Every lover of freedom in the old world and in the new, – every friend to his species in every civilized nation under heaven... feels that he has lost in Mr. Canning an associate, a protector, and a powerful benefactor.²²

This was in stark contrast to the funeral of Canning’s political adversary, Robert Stewart, First Viscount Castlereagh (1769-1822) following his suicide in August 1822. The crowds reportedly cheered as his coffin was carried in to the Abbey.²³

The suddenness in which ‘the magnificent hopes’ invested in Canning had been dashed prompted *The Times* correspondent to remark upon ‘the extraordinary coincidence’ between this ‘British patriot’ and a Roman equivalent: Marcus Licinius Crassus (c.115-53 BC) who, in 60 BC, had held power with Gaius Julius Caesar (100-44 BC) and Pompey (106-48 BC) in the first triumvirate. In the words of Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC), Crassus had died at the height of his career and the “event covered his family with sorrow, his country with disappointment, and all good men with distress.”²⁴ It was to be hoped, however, that the parallel would not follow with regard to the disasters that befell the Roman Republic following the death of Crassus. But the newspaper was confident that an enlightened King, upright Ministers

²² Anon, ‘Funeral of Mr. Canning’, *The Times*, 17 August 1827. Denison Papers, Os C 46, Nottingham University.

²³ Andrew Roberts, ‘Lord Castlereagh’, *BBC History Magazine*, Volume 6 Number 2, p. 98.

²⁴ Anon, ‘Funeral of Mr. Canning’, *The Times*, number 13,360, 17 August 1827. Denison Papers, Os C 46, Nottingham University.

and, especially ‘the increasing intelligence and manly energies of the people’ would stave off such calamities: ‘Fortunately for ourselves, our own interests and those of mankind at large are at present closely united’.

Citing *The Epistle of Lord W. Russell to Lord W. Cavendish* by Canning’s own father, the journalist concluded that should some ‘paltry faction, headed by “– some upstart, train’d in slav’ry’s school”’ arise ‘eager and anxious to dissever that proud union, we pray, in the language of Milton, that “a cleaving curse may be the inheritance to the latest generations.”’ This notion of divine retribution is a facet of the evangelical conception of the British nation, seen as a modern day Israel, its Protestantism standing in contrast to the sinful evils of Roman Catholicism. One commentator has characterised the evangelicals as ‘a most important formative influence on the Victorian mind.’²⁵ They believed ‘that the world was providentially ordered and sustained by God’ with a nation, like an individual, being subject to His guardianship. However, divine judgement was to be found not in the next world but in the prosperity or otherwise of this. Therefore, whilst celestial providence was to ward off revolution in Britain in 1789, 1831 and 1848, heavenly censure was interpreted in, for example, the cholera outbreaks of 1832 and 1848. This explains the allusion to Milton’s ‘cleansing curse’ providing worthy recompense should the nation become yoked under “‘despotic rule.../ Sordid in small things, prodigal in great, / Saving for minions, squandering for the state. – ”’ Such premonitions also served to throw into sharper relief a belief in the positive moral and political character of this recently deceased statesman.

2~2 Identity: civic, national and political

With this in mind let us return once more to Croker’s letter of February 1828. Whilst expressing his enthusiasm for the Westminster Abbey memorial he declared himself to be

altogether against any out-of-doors monument; it suits neither our climate nor our taste. Let his memorial be, as his remains were, placed in that sacred & immortal

²⁵ John Wolfe, ‘Evangelicalism in mid-nineteenth-century England’, pp. 188-200 in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity. Volume I: History and Politics*, Routledge, London and New York, 1989, p. 188-189.

neighbourhood where are concentrated the most glorious names & recollections of our history.²⁶

His plea went unheeded. Chantrey (who despised any form of public competition) declined the London offer given his unwillingness to submit plans to the committee. Richard Westmacott (1775-1856) was instead offered the ‘out-of-doors’ commission.²⁷ He accepted and Agar-Ellis wrote to the Treasury on 20 May to inform them that the Canning Committee had ‘come to the conclusion that the most eligible situation for the Statue in question is at the west end of New Palace Yard, a spot the occupation of which they are not aware can cause inconvenience in any way.’ Westmacott, who was ‘now executing’ the monument, was prepared to meet with them if it was considered necessary to verify ‘the exact spot which it is wished the statue should occupy’.²⁸ It appears that as a result of this meeting a letter was written to Westmacott to inform him that it was ‘not advisable to erect Mr. Canning’s Statue in Palace Yard.’²⁹ This explains the accompanying plan labelled ‘Mr. Canning’s Statue’ showing four alternative locations for the monument (Plate 55).³⁰ Eventually a site was chosen to the west of New Palace Yard (Plate 14).³¹ Westmacott was paid 7,000 guineas for the work. It was unveiled on 2 May 1832 with the bronze head of Canning turning to face the entrance to the House of Commons. The colossal body beneath is wrapped in a swirling mass of drapery, enhanced by the left arm that hangs loosely to one side whilst the right hand is just visible resting on the hip (Plates 56-57). That this was a much-criticised arrangement will become evident in due course.

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Chantrey and Westmacott were rivals in their pursuit of prestigious commissions. The former was especially careful to maintain his political neutrality, whilst Westmacott’s

²⁶ Denison Papers, Os C 48, Nottingham University.

²⁷ Anon, ‘Statue of Mr. Canning’, *The Times*, 19 January 1828.

²⁸ Agar-Ellis, Spring Gardens to the Treasury, 20 May 1828. PRO Treasury Papers, T1/4029 No. 9334.

²⁹ Agar-Ellis’s letter of 20 May includes a further note by ‘E.W.’: ‘Mr. Westmacott written to / Mr. Ellis being abroad that it is not advisable to erect Mr. Canning’s Statue in Palace Yard.’ PRO Treasury Papers, T1/4029 No. 9334.

³⁰ The title is inscribed on the verso. PRO Treasury Papers, T1/4029 No. 9334.

³¹ The location can also be ascertained from a lithograph of 1835: *View of New Palace Yard and the entrance to Westminster Hall*. Guildhall Library, No. 20693, Pr. W2/HAL/ext, p5420451. See as well Ann Rickman’s drawing, *Canning/opposite New Palace Yard*, signed ‘A. R. 1832’, 10¼" x 13⅝", Westminster City Archives, E138 Parliament Square (1).

earlier work for Whig patrons may have been a disadvantage when vying for the Liverpool commission.³² Chantrey was the leading portrait sculptor of the period and his works were promoted as possessing particular national characteristics. As Allan Cunningham wrote: 'England may be justly proud of Chantrey; his works reflect back her image as a mirror'.³³ The endorsement of this sculptor can also be appreciated in the art reviews of the *Athenaeum* periodical. In a survey of the second volume of T.K. Hervey's *Illustration of Modern Sculpture*, the journal said of Chantrey:

His inspiration has in it nothing of a foreign air; – and his genius has been content to clothe itself in the costume of the country which produced it. The cathedrals, the churches, the libraries, and the sculpture-galleries of Britain, furnish a noble and imperishable record, at once, of the sculptor's 'life and times'; – and, while they secure for himself a distinguished place in that striking assemblage of great men, whose memories they perpetuate, they identify him prominently, and for all time, with the history of art, as applied to our own island.³⁴

The *Athenaeum* took the opportunity to promote Chantrey in their comparison of his statues with those by Westmacott. For example, in March 1833, it reported that the former was preparing his sculpture for Westminster Abbey and unequivocally stated: 'we are glad to see this, for we cannot consider the bronze statue of the same great statesman by Westmacott, as at all happy.'³⁵ The journal further lauded another statue of Canning by Chantrey at Liverpool Town Hall (1829-32).³⁶ At the time the sculptor wrote informing a friend: 'I have refused the London monument and accepted the one for Liverpool; many honourable men have daubed their fingers with the London job; mine, thank God, are clean, for I have not touched it.'³⁷ Canning was a Member of Parliament for Liverpool from 1812 to 1822 and thus had numerous friends and allies in the city. The commission stemmed from a petition signed by fifty prominent

³² A suggestion made by Alison Yarrington, 'Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830', p. 28.

³³ Cited in Alison Yarrington, 'Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830', p. 28 from Cunningham's article in *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 36, 1826, pp. 131-133.

³⁴ Anon, 'Fine Arts' review of T.K. Hervey's *Illustrations of Modern Sculpture. No. II*, London, Relfe & Unwin, pp. 811-812 in *Athenaeum*, number 268, 15 December 1832, p. 811.

³⁵ Anon, 'Our Weekly Gossip on Literature and Art', *Athenaeum*, No. 236, 5 May 1832, p. 288.

³⁶ In March 1832 it reported that Chantrey's Liverpool statue was complete and his work for Westminster Abbey 'has been for some time modelled... The public will, therefore, be enabled to compare the work of Chantrey with that of Westmacott, whose statue of Canning will soon, we hear, be on its pedestal in Palace Yard.' Anon, 'Our Weekly Gossip on Literature and Art', *Athenaeum*, No. 228, 10 March 1832, p. 163.

³⁷ Cited in John Blackwood, *London's Immortals*, p. 178; see also Alison Yarrington, 'Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830', Plate 2, p. 23 for a photograph of this statue.

citizens to the Mayor of Liverpool, Thomas Littledale. A meeting was called and a public subscription initiated to raise money for a monument to express the city's gratitude for their political representative and to acknowledge his national achievements.³⁸

In an essay on public sculpture and civic pride in Liverpool during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century, Alison Yarrington argues that Chantrey's statue of Canning provides 'tangible proof of local aspirations wedded to a sense of national identity.'³⁹ The commission coincided with a boom in the city's economy and population, both of which led to a concomitant increase in civic confidence. Throughout the century this was articulated via the built environment and public sculpture. In addition to the self-assuredness of the civic leaders, the desire to commemorate Canning stemmed from a wish to strengthen the Tory party after difficulties over Catholic emancipation and Reform. Yarrington argues that this memorial emphasised Tory 'political allegiances [by] focusing public attention upon the merits of one of its most important leaders'.⁴⁰ Such considerations must also have influenced many of the subscribers to the London monument. Political realignment was necessary due to the split in the Tory party caused by the termination of Robert Banks Jenkinson, second Lord Liverpool's (1770-1828) lengthy administration after his stroke in February 1827. Internecine rivalry and disagreement over political relief for Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics caused the party to implode during the years 1827-30. However, it has been argued that Canning's brief premiership in 1827 split both the Tory *and* Whig parties because the "Protestants" from Liverpool's cabinet (Wellington, Lord Eldon and Sir Robert Peel) refused to serve under him and were replaced by Whigs (Tierney, Lansdowne and Carlisle), much to the irritation of the Whig leaders including Charles, second Earl Grey (1764-1845).⁴¹ In April 1822 the Whig politician Agar-Ellis had seconded Canning's motion to abolish the

³⁸ See Terry Cavanagh, *Public Sculpture of Liverpool*, pp. 75-79.

³⁹ Alison Yarrington, 'Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830', pp. 27-28.

⁴⁰ Yarrington likens this to the commemoration of another "bulwark of the Protestant cause", Frederick Augustus (1763-1827), which eventually led to the 'Duke of York's Column' at Carlton House Terrace, London by Westmacott (1829-34). Alison Yarrington, 'Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830', pp. 27-28.

⁴¹ Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832*, Routledge, London & New York, 1983/1994, pp. 39-40.

prohibition of Catholic peers voting in the House of Lords and it was he who chaired the London subscription committee for the Canning monument. So, whilst a public commemoration of Canning would suggest reform in the case of lifting Catholic disabilities it would equally – and more crucially – represent strong opposition to electoral reform. Unease about this latter point and the concomitant vacuum in leadership following this premature death created a discomposed political mood. It was the very issue of widening the franchise that was responsible for delaying the erection of the Canning monument.

2~3 Civil commotion

In the wake of a new Corn Law passed in 1815 there followed a series of disturbances culminating in the ‘Peterloo Massacre’ of 1819. The harvest failure of 1829, rising unemployment, and the ‘Swing Riots’ of 1830-31 has led one commentator to opine that ‘Britain has never in modern times been closer to revolution than in the autumn of 1831.’⁴² At that moment it is estimated that fewer than thirteen percent of the adult male population was entitled to vote in England and Wales.⁴³ These factors resulted in the Whig administration of Charles Grey passing the Reform Bill by a single vote on 22 March of that year. This was followed by a general election in April and May after which the Bill passed a third reading, this time with an increased majority of one hundred and forty. However, on 7 October the Lords rejected the legislation by a majority of forty-one. This sparked off riots throughout the country, most notably in Bristol and Nottingham (both with electorates of just 5,000). In the former the focus of hostility was the Recorder of Bristol, Sir Charles Wetherell a vociferous opponent of the Reform Bill. During a banquet with the Lord Mayor at Mansion House on 29 October a mob ransacked the building and forced Wetherell to flee.⁴⁴ Riots had broken out in Nottingham two weeks earlier (on the very day that the Lords threw out the bill) resulting in the destruction by arsonists of Nottingham Castle, the property of the fourth Duke of Newcastle.

⁴² Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832*, p. 54.

⁴³ Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832*, Appendix 2, pp. 74-75.

⁴⁴ Anon, ‘Mobs’, pp. 710-726, *Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. 15, 1867, pp. 724-725.

The first Duke of Newcastle had begun rebuilding this fortress in 1674 and his son completed the new “castle” and grounds in 1679.⁴⁵ The former was portrayed in an equestrian statue carved in stone by Sir William Wilson (1641-1710) over the north-east front. The Newcastles infrequently lived in their new mansion. By 1795 it had become a boarding school and although the terraces and grounds retained their fashionable allure for affluent locals, the building itself was empty from 1829. Consequently it became an easy yet strategically inflammatory target for a sizeable percentage of a population incensed by the seeming intransigence of the Lords to parliamentary reform. On the night of 10 October 1831 rioters, in the process of torching the building, took one of the sculpted horse’s legs as a trophy and mark of their hatred for the Duke of Newcastle, seen as the epitome of a ruling class whose stubborn refusal flew in the face of a populace clamouring for change.⁴⁶ Such disturbances did much to confirm the perceived ‘stagnation’ of art which the *Athenaeum* attributed to ‘civil commotion; – and who would choose to add such precious objects to the destructible contents of a mansion which he is obliged to barricade against a mob?’⁴⁷ This emphasis on property and the threat to the home was made shockingly manifest by the burning of Newcastle’s mansion.

An instance of the ‘civil commotion’ berated by the *Athenaeum* in January 1832 was directed against Chantrey’s statue of William Pitt the Younger. It was unveiled on 22 August 1831 on the south side of Hanover Square and that morning protesters threw a rope around its neck in an ineffective endeavour to pull it down.⁴⁸ Pitt had in fact already made two unsuccessful attempts at electoral reform in 1783 and 1785. However, the upheavals in France of 1789 abruptly halted any thought of a widened franchise. It was this insurrection that led the Louvre to be declared a public

⁴⁵ The following details regarding the history of the castle have drawn heavily on two brief accounts of the building: John Sheffield and David Mills, *Nottingham Castle*, John Sheffield and David Mills, Nottingham, 1994; Anon, *Nottingham Castle and Museum Guide*, Castle Museum, Nottingham, 1984.

⁴⁶ The statue (c. 1680) was supposed to have been carved from a single block of stone but the leg taken by the rioters proved to be made of wood. See Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, pp. 433-434.

⁴⁷ Anon, ‘Our Weekly Gossip on Literature and Art’, *Athenaeum*, No. 221, 21 January 1832, p. 50.

⁴⁸ John Blackwood, *London’s Immortals*, p. 173.

institution, a symbol of the fall of the Old Regime and the rise of the new.⁴⁹ Eric J. Evans has noted that, as a consequence of the French Revolution, Pitt and his followers were unequivocally hostile to parliamentary reform. Evans cites Canning in particular as an individual not averse to change: it was he, as foreign minister from 1822-27, who was credited with the ‘new point of departure taken by English foreign policy... by acknowledging the independence of the Spanish American colonies... He called the new world into existence to redress the balance of the old.’⁵⁰ This was alluded to in the Westminster Abbey inscription and the subsequent report of Canning’s funeral in *The Times* (see above). He was also, as we have seen, a leading critic of the disabilities placed upon Catholics. Yet Canning, and others including Liverpool and Viscount Castlereagh, who grew to political maturity under the shadow the French Revolution were consistent opponents of electoral reform.

Canning, in the words of Stephen Lee, ‘regarded parliamentary reform as unnecessary, impractical and dangerous.’⁵¹ Such a stance was shared by J.W. Croker: in 1822 he had remarked ‘we should not give an inch to parliamentary reform.’⁵² An authority on the French Revolution, he referred to calls for ‘*moderate reform*’ as ‘moderate gunpowder!’⁵³ During the Reform Bill debate in September 1831 he challenged Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59) when the latter attributed ‘the downfall of the French nobility to an injudicious and obstinate resistance to popular opinion’. Croker considered the ‘direct reverse’ to be the ‘notorious fact, – so notorious, that it is one of the common-places of modern history’.⁵⁴

It was the political insurgency across the Channel and the resulting purges that followed which ‘convinced a generation of political leaders that the fight against

⁴⁹ Carol Duncan, ‘From the princely gallery to the public art museum. The Louvre Museum and the National Gallery, London’, pp. 21-47 in *Civilizing Rituals inside public art museums*, Routledge, London & New York, 1995, p. 22.

⁵⁰ Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography [DNB]*, Oxford University Press, London, 1922, Vol. III, p. 878; John Blackwood, *London’s Immortals*, p. 178.

⁵¹ Stephen M. Lee, *George Canning and the Tories, c. 1801-1827*, p. 154.

⁵² Croker to Robert Peel, 1 February 1822 cited in Bernard Pool (ed.), *The Croker papers 1808-57*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1967, p. 70.

⁵³ Croker to Lord Lowther, 26 January 1831 cited in Bernard Pool (ed.), *The Croker papers 1808-57*, p. 138.

⁵⁴ Cited in Bernard Pool (ed.), *The Croker papers 1808-57*, p. 144.

parliamentary reform was a crusade for civilisation.’⁵⁵ This campaign was alluded to by a reviewer of Augustus Granville Stapleton’s *The Political Life of the Right Hon. George Canning* published in three volumes in 1831. He or she asserted that whilst there could be legitimate differences of opinion over the consistency of Canning’s policy

there can exist none, as to the fact, that Mr. Canning dealt the first deadly blow at the Holy Alliance; and, by doing so, paved the way for the regeneration of the continent, as well as for the ultimate triumph of reform in this country – although to the progress of the latter principle, he never ceased to profess himself hostile. His opposition to reform will not, of course, conduce much to his popularity at the present moment.⁵⁶

The reviewer skilfully defended Canning’s concession to the aristocracy, with his antipathy to parliamentary reform, by arguing that the times necessitated such action ‘in order to preserve the power of serving the cause of freedom in any way whatever.’ Canning had been renowned for his skills as an orator and was closely associated with international affairs following his two periods as foreign secretary from 1807-09 and 1822-27. The *Dictionary of National Biography* said of Canning’s tenure in the foreign office during the Napoleonic Wars:

The capture of the Danish Fleet [by Lord Cathcart] was planned by Canning, and it was certainly one of the boldest and the most successful operations of the whole war. It entirely disabled the northern confederacy against England, which Napoleon had formed with so much care, and put the finishing strokes to the work of Nelson at Trafalgar.⁵⁷

Given Canning’s associations with such imperial triumphs and the preservation of Britain’s international standing despite a changing world order, coupled with the maintenance of the political status quo at home in the face of revolution abroad, it is unsurprising that his political allies should conspire to render his image for perpetuity surveying the seat of parliamentary power in Westminster. It must also be borne in mind that the erection of a Canning memorial was not necessarily an avowal of anti-reform sentiment amongst the subscribers. Agar-Ellis, chairman of the committee was

⁵⁵ Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832*, pp. 33-34.

⁵⁶ Anon, ‘*The Political Life of the Right Hon. George Canning, &c.* by Augustus Granville Stapleton, Esq., 3 volumes, 8 Vols., London, 1831, Longman & Co.’, *Athenaeum*, number 170, 29 January 1831, pp. 67-68.

⁵⁷ Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. III, p. 874.

himself in favour of change. He had written from Dover House on 26 September 1831 to Miss Mary Berry (1763-1852), his mind laden with the knowledge that

next week the Bill will bring us permanently to London. As the decision of the House of Lords approaches, it makes one very nervous – never was there a question on which the two parties were more equally balanced – & never certainly was there a question entailing more important consequences. – I have no doubt of course that Reform will eventually win the day – but if it does not win at once, we shall have an awkward winter.⁵⁸

The commemoration of Canning formed an element of the symbolic debate that stemmed from such ideological battles. In 1828 supporters of change had advocated the erection of a ‘Doric column of solid granite eighty feet high without joint, in honour of Reform.’⁵⁹ The *Athenaeum* opined that the ‘Reform Bill promises to be fertile in matters of art.’ It was rumoured that an ‘eminent sculptor’ was to be commissioned ‘to perpetuate in marble the labours of the chief men of the ministry; the hint is to be taken from the signing of the Magna Charta’. It was similarly claimed that portraits of Lords Althorp, Brougham, Russell, Sir Francis Burdett, Earl Grey and Mr. Coke of Norfolk ‘and other Reformers were to put on the sentiment of patriotism in Parian stone.’ Further talk of columns to Reform was noted including a one-hundred-and-eighty foot pillar surmounted by the King and decorated with ‘bas reliefs, describing in bronze the different stages of the Reform Bill with its final triumph.’ However, the *Athenaeum*’s correspondent sensibly predicted that nothing would come of such proposals.⁶⁰ The most flamboyant proposition was that sent to William IV by Richard Trevithick (1771-1833). The engineer’s suggestion for a column of iron measuring one thousand feet in height was received unenthusiastically

⁵⁸ British Library Add MSS 37726 ff.189-192.

⁵⁹ This report went on to criticise the choice of a Doric column because it would represent ‘only a mass of stone, and may mean anything.’ Whilst, in contrast, ‘an Egyptian obelisk is covered with characters, and an old English cross has saints and madonnas, and each tell their story wherever they are removed to’. Anon, ‘Our Weekly Gossip on Literature and Art’, *Athenaeum*, No. 247, 28 July 1828, p. 491.

⁶⁰ The writer compared such grandiose suggestions with John Flaxman’s (1755-1826) unrealised colossal statue of Britannia for Greenwich Hill. See ‘Our Weekly Gossip on Literature and Art’, *Athenaeum*, No. 250, 11 August 1832, p. 524. This contemporary predilection for such colossi is further evidenced by an unexecuted design of 1834 by Chantrey for a 130 foot high statue of Nelson intended to be erected by the sea at Yarmouth. It was to be illuminated at night and stand ‘on a pedestal made of the bows of vessels taken from the enemy.’ See Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, p. 93.

by the King who had little desire for such symbols of Reform.⁶¹ Nevertheless, there were columns erected to other causes at the time including the Walker Memorial of 1828 at Londonderry that was ninety feet in height and commemorated the governor of that city during the siege of 1689 as well as the Duke of York's Column at London by Westmacott (1829-34).⁶²

Towards the end of May 1832 *The Weekly Dispatch* reported on proposals for statues of Earl Grey to be erected in London, Edinburgh and Dublin. Their cost was to be met by public donations of one shilling per subscriber with the names and addresses of all those who contributed to be recorded as a mark of their 'admiration of the conduct of Earl Grey, especially with reference to the Reform Bill.'⁶³ These small donations indicate the wish to demonstrate that the politics of these statesmen appealed to the broadest range of society, irrespective of rank or wealth. The same journal also noted that plans were afoot at Edinburgh 'to erect a column to Lord Grey, in commemoration of the great victory obtained during the past fortnight.' As well as donations of £100 from Lord Breadalbane and £50 from his son, Lord Ormelie: 'Boxes have been placed in the most public situations, and it is expected that a large sum will be raised by shillings and sixpences, and even smaller sums, as general appeal has been made to all the Reformers in Scotland to aid the subscription.'⁶⁴

Meanwhile, the unveiling of the Canning monument had been delayed until Lord John Russell's amended Reform Bill had passed its third reading in the House of Commons in December 1831 and approved by the Lords in April 1832. The *Athenaeum* reported that:

The bronze statue by Westmacott has been kept, we are told, from its pedestal beside Westminster Hall, because the fury of the mob was dreaded, should any disappointment ensue in the matter of Reform. We think, when the statue of Pitt stood through last year's turmoil, that the figure of Canning might be trusted; still

⁶¹ Information derived from Adam Hart-Davis, *Inventors Imperfect*, transmitted on BBC Radio 4, 8 May 2000, 11:00-11:30 a.m.

⁶² On the latter see note 40. The former was blown up in August 1973: see Nicola C. Smith, *Medieval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, unpublished thesis, University of Manchester, 1979, note 7, p. 194.

⁶³ Anon, 'The Funds', *The Weekly Dispatch*, No. 1616, 27 May 1832, p. 172.

⁶⁴ *The Weekly Dispatch*, No. 1616, 27 May 1832, p. 173.

there may be some foundation for the rumour. We see the artist is busy heightening the pedestal.⁶⁵

Although waiting until the following month to erect the statue, only four days later tensions rose again due to a wrecking amendment carried by the House of Lords in the first week on May.⁶⁶ Despite the best efforts of those opposed to the bill, the Reform Act gained royal assent on 7 June 1832. William IV did not attend the Lords in person to give his consent and all public displays were forbidden.⁶⁷ In spite of this volatile situation no violence was directed against the statue of Canning. However, reactions to it were decidedly mixed. The *Athenaeum* observed that

it is curious to read the various opinions of the various papers on its merits and defects. With one it is all elegance and nature: with another, the figure stands in a posture unnatural and absurd: while a third declares it to be far inferior to the statue of Pitt, by Chantrey, in Hanover Square... The most remarkable circumstance is, that one of the papers attributed it to Chantrey, and railed at the artist in good set terms for making a statue so unworthy of his fame.⁶⁸

The *Athenaeum* had already given a lengthy account of Westmacott's newly erected monument. It described the twelve-foot bronze statue as 'colossal'. The statesman's head was bare and his body clothed by a 'loose robe' from his shoulders to the plinth (Plate 56). This is an apposite term: Canning's attire is made up of non-specific drapery rather than, for example, a toga.⁶⁹ In order to find a possible precedent one can find stylistic parallels with the upper band of relief sculptures decorating the *Ara Pacis Augustae* (13-9 BC, marble, reconstituted from discovered fragments, Ara Pacis Augustae, Rome). This altar, dedicated to the Pax Augusta, is the greatest work of the era of Augustus (27 BC-14 AD). The imagery symbolises the prosperity which peace has brought to Rome. A procession of figures (Plate 58) serves to 'make a close association between the official aspects of religion, with its priests, and imperial

⁶⁵ Anon, 'Our Weekly Gossip on Literature and Art', *Athenaeum*, No. 234, 21 April 1832, p. 259.

⁶⁶ Marie Busco, *Sir Richard Westmacott*, p. 80, John Blackwood, *London's Immortals*, p. 178, Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832*, p. 54.

⁶⁷ Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832*, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Anon, 'Our Weekly Gossip on Literature and Art', *Athenaeum*, No. 237, 12 May 1832, p. 307.

⁶⁹ This can be verified by comparing it with the *Statue of a man wearing a toga*, from Periate (c. 260-270 AD, bronze, Museo Arqueológico, Granada) reproduced in Xavier Barral i Altet, 'The Roman World', pp. 147-237 in *Sculpture [Volume I]. The Great Art of Antiquity from the Eight-Century BC to the Fifth-Century AD*, Taschen, Köln, 1996, p. 215.

power as mediated by the family of Augustus.’⁷⁰ Some of the male figures gather up their robes in one hand whilst holding a scroll in the other, exactly as Westmacott depicts Canning.

It was suggested in the *Athenaeum* regarding the image of Canning that ‘the likeness, though not very striking, will probably satisfy the public more than the outline or the form of the statue.’ However, this was deemed to be a major flaw, as a recognisable human shape was crucial to the success of such a statue because ‘a bronze figure is only a dark mass, when viewed from a little distance’. Westmacott, it was argued, had ‘so little heeded’ this fact that

the back of the figure looks like a cloak spread out in the air; nor is the front view any better a little way off – we can only guess it to be a man, from seeing a head at the top.⁷¹

The pedestal was as little to the liking of the *Athenaeum* as the statue: though not large, it was divided into stories, to produce a ‘clumsy’ effect of no merit to either ‘the eminent artist or distinguished orator’ (Plate 56). Perhaps this was a result of the perceived necessity of raising the pedestal to keep the sculpted body beyond the reaches of the ‘mob’. A final criticism concerned the colour, described as ‘glowingly green’. Although aware that this patina would change with its exposure to the open air, the journal could not help but conclude that both the ‘shape and the hue will call forth many sharp remarks’.

Such barbed comments were shortly to come from the pages of the broad-sheet newspapers. However, the initial reaction of *The Times* was favourable, albeit rather brief: ‘it forms a conspicuous object, on the most appropriate site which could have been selected – the approach to the House of Commons, the scene of most of the gifted deceased’s great political labours.’⁷² Nonetheless, within a few weeks it was abundantly clear that a change of heart had taken place. The newspaper seems to have delayed expressing its opinion on the aesthetic merits of the work until kindred journalists had voiced theirs. This was true to such an extent that the newspaper reproduced an earlier article from the *Observer*, whose judgements *The Times* felt

⁷⁰ Xavier Barral i Altet, ‘The Roman World’, pp. 147-237 in *Sculpture [Volume I]*, p. 196.

⁷¹ Anon, ‘Public Statue of Canning’, *Athenaeum*, No. 236, 5 May 1832, p. 291.

⁷² Anon, *The Times*, 4 May 1832, 3a.

able to ‘entirely concur’ with. The former had pronounced that: ‘Nothing so vile in taste, or so defective in execution, has outraged public opinion for some years, and we apprehend that it must eventually be consigned to the furnace.’⁷³ The arguments for siting the monument in its present location were now revealed to be a mere ‘pretence’ and, rather than casting a steady eye upon the scenes of his ‘great political labours’, Canning had instead ‘turned his back to the house’. Such ‘perverse ingenuity’ was also displayed via the sculptor’s vain efforts to capture ‘the light and fragile figure of the orator, by giving him the paunch of a Falstaff and the muscle of a Hercules.’ The writer then proceeded to give an intriguing revision of the reason behind the procrastination in erecting the statue. It was rumoured that the delay, supposedly because ‘it might suffer injury from the hands of the populace’, was in fact a ‘pretext’. The journalist instead suggested ‘that the artist himself must have had his own misgivings on the subject’.⁷⁴

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The eulogising poem written following Canning’s death – cited at the beginning of this chapter – declared that the statesman had withstood ‘the most appalling storms, (whose power / Shook the wide world)’ and ‘*wast equal to the hour!*’. On the very same page of *The Times* of 21 May 1832 in which Westmacott’s statue was criticised an editorial declared: ‘The ship has been righted, and again in safety pursues her way through the waters. The Bill is now invulnerable, and the peace of the country is secured.’⁷⁵ Given that the turbulent political storm had abated it was perhaps less contentious to criticise the merits of the sculpture *as* sculpture. Of course there is rarely such a clear division between criticism based on artistic or political criteria: rival factions frequently based their attacks on aesthetic grounds, as will become apparent later in this chapter. Furthermore, we have seen that the *Athenaeum* had much earlier commented on Canning’s statue and ‘the various opinions of the various papers on its merits and defects’. Nevertheless the conjunction in *The Times* of the ship of state surviving the gale of reform combined with the dismissal of any threat to the Canning monument from a rioting public forms a closure over these recent events.

⁷³ Anon, cited in *The Times*, 21 May 1832, 2e.

⁷⁴ *The Times*, 21 May 1832, 2e.

⁷⁵ Anon, ‘London, Monday, May 21, 1832’, *The Times*, 21 May 1832, 2e.

Order and, from the newspaper's point of view, "normality" has been restored. The role of even the most disputatious politician becomes less tendentious and the significance of his commemoration has less and less direct bearing on the political events of the day. This temporal process suggests a framework by which such a public monument might be seen to pass from the explicitly political domain into the artistic; and from contemporary history to the historical past. It moreover shifts from being a highly visible symbol at the crux of debate, to a much quieter historical marker taking its place amongst a host of later emblems and superseded by other events and newer commemorations, the first of which being that to Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850).

2~4 Tributes of respect to the late Sir Robert Peel

Peel, the son of a Lancashire industrialist, restored the Conservative Party in the wake of the Reform Act. His many political achievements included founding the Metropolitan Police during his second period as Home Secretary (1829-30) and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The latter split the party and ended his premiership (1841-46). His sudden death was precipitated by falling from his horse on 29 June 1850 when a rib punctured his lung leaving him to die an agonising death on 4 July at the age of 63. A plethora of monuments were erected to his memory. The numerous statues of Peel have been regarded as marking the beginning of the spate of statues that so characterise the nineteenth-century urban landscape.⁷⁶ Following the first Reform Act and especially after Peel's demise this form of memorial became to a degree less elitist both in terms of subject matter but also the spectrum of society that gave their support to commemorative monuments.

Sculptors often attempted to anticipate demand during the life – and especially death – of a prominent person. A spate of models would be produced in the hope of winning a future commission for a public or private memorial. An 'extreme example' was the centenary of Robert Burns' (1759-96) birth in 1859 when sketches, models and the like proliferated.⁷⁷ Similarly Joseph Nollekens (1737-1823), 'after reading of the

⁷⁶ Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture 1900-1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 38.

⁷⁷ Robin Lee Woodward, *Nineteenth Century Scottish Sculpture*, unpublished Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 1977, Vol. I, pp. 16 & 23 note 48.

death of any great person in the newspaper, generally ordered some plaster to be got ready, so that he might attend at a minute's notice.' In the latter part of the eighteenth-century this sculptor produced approximately thirty marble replica busts of the Whig politician Charles James Fox and over sixty of Fox's adversary, William Pitt the Younger, in addition to around six-hundred plaster copies.⁷⁸

Rather surprisingly Benedict Read has estimated that nationally the 1830s only witnessed around eighteen public statues commemorating a dozen individuals, and the 1840s saw eleven works of some ten subjects. Following Peel's death there were over twenty statues to his memory alone. The bulk of these occurred in the north of England reflecting his industrial roots and the identification of the middle classes, enfranchised since 1832, with Peel's own social status.⁷⁹ The perceived selflessness of Peel's abolition of the Corn Laws further enhanced his standing with a large section of society. This connection was made explicit in *Punch's Monument to Peel* of 1850 (Plate 63). In this drawing a thankful couple and their needy children sit in front of a pyramid of loaves with the inscription 'CHEAP BREAD' surmounted by a sign reading simply: 'PEEL'.⁸⁰ This sentiment was echoed in a number of realised statues: in Edward Hodges Baily's bronze at Bury's Market Place of 1852 the figure of Peel stands upon sheaves of corn; Peter Hollins's monument of 1855 at Birmingham was originally surrounded by railings, designed by the sculptor, which signified 'large clusters of wheat ears to commemorate the repeal of the Corn Laws'.⁸¹

The significance of Peel's life and death can be suggested through the words of George Augustus Sala. In his autobiography he claimed to have been 'utterly indifferent' as to whether Peel or the Liberal Lord John Russell were in office. Yet the dramatic fatality of the former was momentous: 'His death was deplored throughout the Empire. A Tory to the backbone in many respects, he had twice sacrificed the

⁷⁸ These details and the preceding quotation (from J.T. Smith's *Nollekens and his Times* of 1828) are taken from John Gage, 'Busts and identity', pp. 36-48 in Penelope Curtis, Peter Funnell & Nicola Kalinski, *Return to Life: a new look at the portrait bust*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2000, pp. 36 & 39.

⁷⁹ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1982, p. 107.

⁸⁰ This image appeared in *Punch*, Vol. 19, 1850, p. 157 and is reproduced in John R. Davis, *The Great Exhibition*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, 1999, p. 79.

⁸¹ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 147 & Plate 182; George T. Noszlopy, *Public Sculpture of Birmingham*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 1998, pp. 103-104 (quotation cited from R.K. Dent, *Old and new Birmingham*, 1880).

principles in which he had been nurtured, and yielded to that which he wisely recognised as inevitable.’ Sala sagaciously perceived that the average citizen was little-interested in the Maynooth Grant or the Irish Coercion Bill:

But the people at large did care and enthusiastically care for the Conservative Statesman who had sacrificed power to give the millions cheap bread, and there was scarcely a schoolboy who had not got by heart Sir Robert Peel’s pathetic expression of his hopes that his name might live in the homes of those whose lot it was to labour, when at the end of their day’s toil they recruited their exhausted strength by “abundant and untaxed food, no longer leavened by a sense of injustice.”⁸²

Given the profusion of Peel commemorations it is pertinent to focus on just some of the difficulties incurred by such commissions as reported in the *Builder*. By mid-July the publication stated that ‘[p]ropositions... [were] already starting up throughout the country for the collection of subscriptions for the erection of monuments to this distinguished gentleman.’ One was ‘for the collection of a penny subscription throughout the country, for the erection of a poor man’s monument to Sir Robert’s memory.’⁸³ A week later it confirmed that the Commons had voted monies for a monument in Westminster Abbey.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the Lord Mayor had chaired a meeting of wealthy Londoners on ‘Monday last’ at the Egyptian-hall, Mansion-house. A committee was appointed but no definite scheme had been decided upon. The proposals ranged from a Peel-wing for London Hospital to a conventional statue in the Guildhall. The article went on to say that it had also been decided to arrange a subscription amongst the poor with a meeting to take place in Pentonville. Lord John Russell and other Members of Parliament had agreed to co-operate in this matter. The police were also to take an active role. Outside London an obelisk was envisaged for Peel Park at Salford, with a further memorial planned for Ashton-under-Lyme and an esplanade at Portsmouth whilst ‘in other manufacturing centres’, such as Leeds and Birmingham, ‘large amounts... [had] been promptly subscribed.’⁸⁵ It was reported in

⁸² G.A. Sala, *The Life and Adventures of George Augustus Sala. Written by Himself*, Cassell & Company, Ltd., London, Paris & Melbourne, 1896, pp. 220-222.

⁸³ Anon, ‘Monuments To Sir Robert Peel’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 388, 13 July 1850, p. 334.

⁸⁴ Anon, ‘Monuments To Sir Robert Peel’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 389, 20 July 1850, p. 341. A month later the Prime Minister, in response to a question, replied that the subject of a competition for the Westminster Abbey memorial had not yet been considered. Anon, ‘Peel Monuments’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 389, 17 August 1850, p. 389.

⁸⁵ Anon, ‘Monuments To Sir Robert Peel’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 389, 20 July 1850, p. 341.

August that 'Public baths' were to be erected at Heywood, Bury, and named 'the Peel Baths'.⁸⁶ In the same month it was also revealed that subscriptions at Blackburn had reached between two and three thousand pounds. Meanwhile at Brighton moves were being made 'to have a public library and museum in his honour'.⁸⁷

In assessing the significance of this wealth of memorials to a single individual one can usefully recall Alison Yarrington's comment that Canning's statue at Liverpool evinced 'tangible proof of local aspirations wedded to a sense of national identity'⁸⁸ (see 2~2). The erection of monuments to local worthies with national or imperial reputations was an important means of establishing the nation as 'an imagined political community' (1~4). Locally based projects to commemorate figures such as Peel indicate that 'distinct effusions of "local patriotism" were essential to the establishment of the state'.⁸⁹ That civic rivalry played a part in the minds of the subscribers perhaps accounts for an abortive attempt

to unite the suffrages of the various Peel Memorial Committees, in an endeavour to realise the sum of 124,000*l.*, required to complete the fund necessary for erecting churches in the remaining eighty-six of the new districts formed under Peel's Act for subdividing populous parishes.⁹⁰

Just as this national undertaking failed so too did local efforts run into difficulties when a memorial was tied to other civic improvements, as was disclosed in September 1850: 'The attempt to unite the proposed memorial to Sir R. Peel at Leeds with the project for a public hall appears to be a failure, as not one-third (6,460*l.*) of the necessary sum has been subscribed.' In addition to the greatly increased costs the donators made it clear that they wished to keep their memorial separate.⁹¹

A concern for the quality of any resulting monument was apparent in the minds of the subscribers at Manchester who had raised £5,000 for a colossal statue in the infirmary

⁸⁶ Anon, 'Mems. In The Provinces', *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 391, 3 August 1850, p. 365.

⁸⁷ Anon, 'Peel Monuments', *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 389, 17 August 1850, p. 389.

⁸⁸ Alison Yarrington, 'Public Sculpture and Civic Pride 1800-1830', pp. 27-28.

⁸⁹ Stuart Burch, 'The Holbrook Bequest for commemorative plaques: tradition, narrative and "local patriotism" in Victorian Nottingham', pp. 155-170 in *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire*, Vol. 105, 2001, p. 166.

⁹⁰ It was proposed to name these edifices *Peel District Churches* and 'in each to erect a tablet to the memory of the late baronet'. To achieve and 'procure contributions' a 'central memorial committee' had been established. Anon, 'Peel Memorials', *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 397, 14 September 1850, p. 442.

⁹¹ Anon, 'Notes in the Provinces', *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 398, 21 September 1850, p. 449.

grounds (seemingly in the middle of a pond). It was announced that they were unwilling to advertise for sculptors as ‘they did not want young artists or cheap artists, but men of the highest character and talent that Britain could produce; and if the money now obtained were not sufficient, more must be procured.’⁹² It transpired that the committee had turned to the editor of the *Builder* to ask his advice on how to acquire a statue of Peel ‘worthy of the country.’ He suggested a limited competition with safeguards to ensure ‘an equitable decision’ and ‘urged that something more should be sought in a statue than a mere coat-and-trowsers (sic) portrait.’⁹³

The complexity of the competition system was readily apparent at the end of 1850 with the contest for the ‘Salford Peel Testimonial’. It was to be an open affair in which the competitors were free to choose the character of their submission, be it ‘architectural, sculptural or otherwise’.⁹⁴ Out of a total of sixty-eight entries, fifteen were derived from the Eleanor Crosses, eighteen columns and obelisks, twenty-one porticoes, temples and other buildings, and the remaining were a variety of statues, bell turrets, tombs and a gateway. The *Builder* opined that the fifteen cruciform submissions were in a variety of gothic styles, all which seemed ‘quite unsuitable to the object of the Peel monument.’ The architectural pieces, in the correspondent’s opinion, threatened to cost at least double the financial limit placed on the contest. One such entry, marked “Truth”, was reminiscent ‘of a presentation-piece, *to be done in silver*’ with stone allegories of Legislation, Commerce and Genius topped by a nine foot bronze of Peel. This twenty-seven foot ensemble must surely have exceeded the sums available.

Furthermore, the twenty-four models submitted allowed for an estimation of the proposed statues. The most elaborate was an eight feet figure beneath a ‘floriated ironworked canopy’ supported by four ornate pillars and topped by a roof of ‘coloured porcelain tiles’. It gave the incongruous effect of a ‘sign lamp’ with a greatly enlarged base. Despite such unorthodox proscenia the sculpted figures remained prosaic and platitudinous. There did

⁹² Anon, ‘Peel Monuments’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 389, 17 August 1850, p. 389.

⁹³ Anon, ‘The Peel Statue for Manchester’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 402, 19 October 1850, p. 500.

⁹⁴ Anon, ‘Competition for Salford Peel Testimonial’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 411, 21 December 1850, p. 603.

not appear much originality of composition, or even a departure from the conventional attitude which the few public statues in England commonly display; yet some of these designs in particular have been very successful in impressing the idea of an educated statesman in a habit characterising the manners of the time in which he lived, together with the desire to please the expressed views of the business-like Manchester mind, and which, if perpetuated in bronze or marble, might carry down to an admiring posterity the *cut* of every variety of coat from the “dress” to the “Nicolls’ paletot” and the “railway wrapper”.⁹⁵

The final comment was a reference to the vexed question of whether or not to depict an individual in realistic dress or to cloak him in an unworldly robe. In 1861 the First Commissioner, William Cowper equated this disputation with the ‘Battle of the Styles’ in the field of architecture.⁹⁶ Joshua Reynolds in his eighteenth-century *Discourses on Art* had discussed the propriety of modern dress in painting and sculpture.⁹⁷ The problem of how to sculpturally commemorate a hero was apparent in 1802 with John Charles Felix Rossi’s (1762-1839) monument to Captain Richard Rundle Burgess in St. Paul’s Cathedral in which the hero is presented without clothes. Alison Yarrington has stated that ‘[a]lthough the depiction of a modern hero as a classical nude was accepted academic practice, its reception in monumental sculpture was mixed’.⁹⁸ This is further evidenced by Richard Westmacott and Matthew Cotes Wyatt’s memorial to Lord Nelson of 1807-13 at Liverpool in which the nude hero is draped in a standard to conceal his disfigurement. This notion is derived from the Ancient Greek ‘sculptural genre’ of the ‘heroic nude’. Hugh Honour identified the importance of this idiom during the neo-classical period in that it provided the representation of ‘a man stripped of all deceptive externals and freed from the trammels of time, against the background of eternity’. Added to this were the ‘moral implications’ conveyed by an idealised, nude physique. The portrait head of a living

⁹⁵ “X”, ‘Salford Peel Testimonial Competition’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 412, 28 December 1850, p. 617.

⁹⁶ With reference to the Westminster School memorial by J.B. Philip that was at the time being constructed he spoke of the ‘extraordinary incongruity of placing statues in the mediæval style on a classical column.’ This incongruous result was ‘a compromise, which like other compromises, has been less successful than a frank adoption of either alternative.’ ‘The monument at Westminster’, *Parliamentary Debates [PD]*, Vol. 162, 17 April 1861, p. 668.

⁹⁷ Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (ed. Robert Wark), London & New Haven, 1988, especially Discourse III, pp. 39-53 & X, pp. 173-188.

⁹⁸ Alison Yarrington, ‘Nelson the Citizen Hero: State and public patronage of monumental sculpture 1805-18’, pp. 315-329, *Art History*, Vol. 6, No. 3, September 1983, p. 324.

individual upon such a torso conferred spiritual ennoblement.⁹⁹ Alongside the statue of Nelson in Liverpool stands the anonymous figure of a sailor in contemporary dress. This unusually early introduction of a member of the lower ranks served to provide a link between the heroic commemoration and the audience: 'The inclusion of such a figure helped to generate a sense of the immediacy of the event rather than presenting the events of modern history in Graeco-Roman guise.'¹⁰⁰

The dilemmas and vicissitudes of dress in sculpture are perhaps most evocatively illustrated in the various representations of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821).¹⁰¹ He was born at Ajaccio, Corsica and the island boasts a number of monuments to its most famous son. The Place Maréchal Foch (originally the Piazza Porta) has a fountain of 1827 by Jérôme Maglioli, an Ajaccien painter and sculptor, with four lions and surmounted by Laboureur's bronze statue of Napoleon as First Consul dressed in a toga. The Place General de Gaulle (until 1945 the Place du Diamant) is the site of A.E. Barye's equestrian statue of Napoleon in Roman dress surrounded by his four brothers clad in togas. Viollet-le-Duc designed the monument, erected in 1865. A further memorial in the Place d'Austerlitz has a 1938 version of a statue of Napoleon by Seurre. He is represented in frock coat and bicorne hat. The original now stands in the courtyard of the Invalides in Paris and was on top of the column in the Place Vendôme from 1833-63. Meanwhile, in the town of Bastia stands Bartolini's marble statue of Napoleon erected at the Place Saint-Nicolas in 1853. He is depicted in a toga. But perhaps the most impressive representation is Antonio Canova's colossal nude statue of 1810.¹⁰² Measuring over eleven feet in height and carved from a single block of Carrara marble it was sent to Rome in 1811. However, the superstitious sitter disliked the winged allegory of victory in the figure's outstretched hand because it looked likely to fly away. It lay neglected in the Louvre until Wellington presented it

⁹⁹ Hugh Honour, 'Canova's Napoleon', pp. 180-184 in *Apollo*, Vol. 98, No. 139 (NS), September 1973, p. 183.

¹⁰⁰ Alison Yarrington, 'Nelson the Citizen Hero', *Art History*, Vol. 6, No. 3, September 1983, p. 324.

¹⁰¹ Unless otherwise stated the information in this paragraph is derived from Roland Gant, *Blue Guide Corsica*, A & C Black, London, 1992, pp. 35, 38, 40 & 89.

¹⁰² Hugh Honour, 'Canova's Napoleon', pp. 180-184.

to the Prince Regent in 1816 after the British Government had bought it for less than £3000.¹⁰³

With these foreign precedents in mind it is unsurprising that this matter was to plague the commissioners of portrait statuary throughout the second half of the nineteenth-century following the demise of Robert Peel. It has been claimed that the '1860s and early 1870s was a transition period in which drapery on portrait busts was characterized for the most part by an ambiguity of style.'¹⁰⁴ Robin Lee Woodward has indicated that John G. Mossman's (1817-1890) statue of Peel of 1859 at Glasgow was 'one of the first unambiguous representations of modern dress in Scottish public sculpture.' It was also 'the first major public commission to be awarded to a sculptor resident in the west of Scotland and as such represents an important development in the history of patronage.'¹⁰⁵ Both points indicate the association between Peel and the populace. The fact that he was nearly always represented in contemporary attire was a visual indication of this. A notable exception was his memorial in Westminster Abbey by the sculptor John Gibson (1790-1866).¹⁰⁶ The white marble carving of around six feet in height presents the statesman 'dressed as a Roman' in classical drapery.¹⁰⁷

That recourse to a pseudo-antique drape was not without its problems was underlined by Francis Turner Palgrave who described Chantrey's 1819 marble bust of Canning as

¹⁰³ Malcolm Rogers, *Blue Guide Museums and Galleries of London*, A & C Black, London, 1991, p. 135.

¹⁰⁴ *Scotsman*, 20 July 1859, p. 4, col. 5 cited in Robin Lee Woodward, *Nineteenth Century Scottish Sculpture*, p. 210.

¹⁰⁵ Robin Lee Woodward, *Nineteenth Century Scottish Sculpture*, p. 140.

¹⁰⁶ The classicising tendency of this Peel statue extends even to the signature of the sculptor: 'Opvs Ioannes Gibson / Romae'. Gibson went to Italy in 1817 where he remained for most of his life. He received training from both Canova and Thorvaldsen and established an extremely successful studio in Rome. In 1850 he returned to England to execute a statue of Queen Victoria for the Houses of Parliament. This took him five years to complete and during that time, his last period in Britain, he began his contentious *Tinted Venus* and, in 1852, the statue of Peel for the Abbey. See Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, pp. 171-173. Gibson must have also executed at least one further sculpture of Peel because included at the Manchester (Art Treasures) exhibition of 1857 was exhibit 130 'Sir Robert Peel (marble)' in the possession of H. Cardwell. See Algernon Graves, *A Century of Loan Exhibitions 1813-1912*, Vol. I, Kingsmead Reprints, Bath, 1913-15/1970, p. 415.

¹⁰⁷ The quotation is from Francis Bond, *Westminster Abbey*, Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne, 1909, p. 167 and illustration p. 171. The incised Roman capitals of the inscription read: 'ROBERT PEEL / BORN FEBRUARY 5. 1788 DIED JULY 2. 1850'. John Physick, *Inscriptions on Abbey Monuments*, unpublished, 1991, [141], Westminster Abbey Muniment Room & Library [Abbey 3/2.001 (No. 10)].

being attired 'in a kind of fancy toga'.¹⁰⁸ However, it was a hoped-for sense of timelessness that was engendered by the 'loose robe' cloaking Westmacott's figure of Canning. This intended perpetuity was shattered in 1867 by his unceremonious removal just at the moment when further electoral reform was being contemplated (see 3~9). The first challenge to Canning's splendid isolation had occurred much earlier however when, soon after Peel's death, steps were taken to erect a statue at Westminster. As we have seen, commemorations of this statesman were many and varied with the fortunes of each local action depending upon the ambitions of the committee and the type of memorial envisaged. It is in this context that the activities of the London Peel Testimonial Committee will be discussed in the following section.

Yet first a word of warning is perhaps in order. The efforts to honour Peel in the vicinity of parliament were exceptionally long and protracted: it involved three different statues by two sculptors until the final version was completed in December 1876 (see 4~2). It has already been averred that the widespread commemoration of this statesman triggered the phenomenon known as 'statue mania' from the mid-nineteenth-century onwards. Out of this welter of memorials the statue of Peel focused upon here is of particular importance: it prompted the Office of Works to enact legislation governing this and future commemorations in the symbolically sensitive environs of the New Palace at Westminster. The fact that it was this specific monument that was its catalyst is clear from letters written to the chairman of the London Peel Testimonial Committee by Sir William Molesworth, First Commissioner from January 1853 until July 1855. These include many draft versions with extensive amendments and deletions as Molesworth struggled to establish a viable precedent for future decisions concerning such monuments. His success can be gauged from the enactment in July 1854 of an Act to place Public Statues within the Metropolitan Police District under the Control of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Works and

¹⁰⁸ The bust (signed 'Rt. Hon. George Canning 1819') was bought from the Bath Club and is now located on the Committee Stairs of the Palace of Westminster. Walker speculates that this might have been executed for Mr. Bolton of Liverpool. Other busts include that by Nollekens (1811, Apsley House) a copy of which is at 10 Downing Street. R.J.B. Walker, *A Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture and Engravings in The Palace of Westminster*, Volume 3, Part IV, 'Sculpture', 1961, p. 15.

Public Buildings.¹⁰⁹ It was this legislation that served to govern all the subsequent nineteenth-century memorials addressed in this thesis.

2~5 The London Peel Testimonial Committee and the search for a suitable site

On 27 July 1850 the *Builder* reported that, on the previous Tuesday, ‘a public meeting was held in Willis’s Rooms to promote the erection of some lasting monument at the west-end of the metropolis in honour of the late Sir Robert Peel.’ This gathering of the ‘London Peel Testimonial Committee’ was addressed by the Duke of Wellington, Lord Ashley, Lord Hardinge, ‘and other noblemen and gentlemen. Appropriate resolutions were passed, and a subscription was opened with sums amounting to upwards of 1,600l.’¹¹⁰ Chairing these proceedings was George Hamilton-Gordon, fourth Earl of Aberdeen (1784-1860), ‘the recognised leader of the Peelites’.¹¹¹ As first Lord of the Treasury he had formed a so-called ‘Cabinet of All the Talents’ and it was in this role that he led the subscription for the monument.

Some years were to pass before Esward Cardwell (later first Viscount Cardwell), secretary of a committee of the ‘Political friends of the late Sir Rt. Peel’, wrote to Molesworth.¹¹² Informing him that the statue had already been executed by Baron Carlo Marochetti (1805-67), Cardwell went on to address the question of a suitable site. He stated that the committee members had

¹⁰⁹ 17 & 18 Vict. c. 33. The Bill which led to this Act was prepared and brought-in to parliament by Sir William Molesworth and the Attorney General and was printed on 4 May 1854 as: *A Bill to place Public Statues within the Metropolitan Police District under the Control of the Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Works and Public Buildings. Parliamentary Papers [PP] 1854 (85) V.601.* It came into force on 10 July 1854.

¹¹⁰ Anon, ‘Another London Monument To Sir Robert Peel’, *Builder*, Vol. 8, No. 390, 27 July 1850, p. 358.

¹¹¹ Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. III, p. 202. He had held the post of Foreign Secretary first under the Duke of Wellington in 1828 and then, from 1841 to 1847, in Peel’s administration. Aberdeen, like Peel, supported the repeal of the Corn Laws, the success of which precipitated the split in the Conservative Party from which they were obliged to resign. Aberdeen became Prime Minister after the Earl of Derby’s resignation in 1852. The subsequent coalition government, although popular at first, became associated with the mismanagement of the Crimean War in 1854 and Aberdeen was forced to resign in February of the following year.

¹¹² Cardwell to Molesworth, Board of Trade, 22 March 1853. PRO WORK 20/31.

been for obvious reasons desirous that it should be within the precincts of the Houses of Parliament; and at a Meeting held on Saturday last, it was considered that a spot in Palace Yard... would most satisfactorily fulfil the several conditions in conformity with which such a testimonial should be erected.

In their belief that this area was 'vested in the Queen as appurtenant to the Palace of Westminster' they therefore sought the concurrence of the First Commissioner. The intended sculpture measured twelve feet in height. They envisaged that it would stand on a pedestal of some fifteen feet which, when 'protected by an appropriate iron Railing 'would occupy a space of '10 feet square'. Cardwell stressed that this addition to the yard 'would not in any way involve an interruption of the footpath which divides the Area of New Palace Yard from the public Highway in front of Mr. Canning's Statue.'¹¹³ It would appear that nothing had been confirmed by mid-December, when Cardwell wrote again to Molesworth, this time enclosing a letter from Marochetti. The latter wished to know the intended site for the monument as soon as possible 'in order to have the base made accordingly'.¹¹⁴ The sculptor argued that this was necessary because the site would determine the nature of the pedestal.

Molesworth sought advice from Sir Charles Barry, architect of the New Palace at Westminster. His reply took the form of a confidential memorandum in which he cautioned against granting consent to the committee's wishes.¹¹⁵ Barry was of the belief that the 'formation of Statues much above the size of life particularly of those with whom we have been personally and familiarly acquainted... [was] a mistake.' At worst they were 'monstrous' with 'no true feeling for art or propriety'. He was particularly withering with regard to the proposed Marochetti monument: a statue of twelve feet upon a pedestal of seventeen (considerably more than Cardwell's estimate) would present 'a mounting of one thing upon another' with the base representing neither a column nor a pedestal. This echoes similar criticism of the 'clumsy' effect produced by the plinth supporting Westmacott's statue of Canning.

The architect was also critical of the site on the west side of New Palace Yard adjoining the crossing with St. Margaret Street. He argued that the 'particular political

¹¹³ Cardwell to Molesworth, 22 March 1853. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹¹⁴ Cardwell to Molesworth, 21 December & Marochetti to Cardwell, 20 December 1853. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹¹⁵ It is marked 'Private' and is undated. PRO WORK 20/31.

rancour' which existed between Peel and Canning meant that it would be in 'worst taste' to oppose them as statues, 'particularly as both belong[ed] to the present generation'. This would be exacerbated by the fact that Peel 'would have the prominence by 3 feet in the height of the pedestal'. This anomaly was potentially compounded by another that was 'likely to give rise to a political demonstration, of perhaps a violent character; in which it might perhaps be said that, whilst Peel was received within the precincts of the New Palace, Canning was excluded from them.'

This led on to his consideration of the monuments as works of art. Aesthetically 'the monstrous size of the Peel statue, as particularly exemplified in the features of the face' would be 'enhanced' both by the limited space and the 'minute details of the new Palace.' Furthermore, the proposed location was uneven and lacking in necessary symmetry with the footpaths of New Palace Yard. Its location near this pedestrian route would mean that the vast majority of visitors to parliament would not gain a proper frontal view of the statue and, as the principal entrance was via Westminster Hall, the only view would be of its back. The only anterior angle, being from the adjoining footpath, was 'a painful one' because it would foreshorten the features and 'exhibit offensively their monstrous size' and 'make it difficult to realize a likeness.'

However, these arguments were preliminary to Barry's principal concern: that it would interfere with his plans for the completion of the Houses of Parliament, namely the conversion of New Palace Yard into a courtyard by building wings on the exposed north and west sides (see 3~6). In the light of Barry's report Molesworth decided not to allow the statue to be erected near parliament.¹¹⁶ Other sites were subsequently put forward, foremost among them being 'opposite to the Treasury, and between the Gardens of Gwydyr and Montague Houses in Whitehall.' By January 1855 the Peel committee was prepared to accept this site, whilst still harbouring an aspiration that their original wishes be fulfilled.¹¹⁷ Striving to convince them Molesworth urged that

¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, it would appear that, prior to consulting Barry, Molesworth *had* given his preliminary agreement to a site in New Palace Yard. Cardwell informed him that he had seen Lord Aberdeen and told him that Molesworth 'had offered to carry into effect the determination you arrived at last Spring with the Peel Memorial Committee of placing there Marochetti's Statue of Sir Robert Peel.' He was to say that "Lord Aberdeen desired me on the part of the Committee to accept that offer," & I do so accordingly'. Edward Cardwell, Whitehall Gardens to Molesworth, 19 February 1854. HLRO 2/251.

¹¹⁷ Cardwell wished to 'express our hope that the Board of Works is still willing to give us the site according to the original Plan.' Cardwell (writing from Whitehall Gardens) to Molesworth, 25 January 1855. PRO WORK 20/31.

this alternative location was given additional relevance by its facing opposite the Treasury rendering it as ‘appropriate for the Statue of a great Minister’ as any other in the precincts the Houses of Parliament. However, he added (rather inaccurately) that requisite permission ‘would depend exclusively with Her Majesty’ as it formed a part of the Hereditary Land Revenues of the Crown.

A memorandum by Charles Gore¹¹⁸ in April 1855 indicates that it had been decided to widen the existing road from Whitehall to the Privy Gardens to allow a carriageway either side of the proposed statue. This was to be formed from a section of the existing garden of Gwydyr House. Subsequently sanctioned by the Office of Woods, it gained the assent of both the Queen and the Lords of the Treasury.¹¹⁹ John Phipps’s¹²⁰ memorandum of 29 May 1855 provided an estimate for setting back the railings and the widened road at £170. This was all to no avail because on 13 July it was revealed that Lady Clare, who held a lifehold interest in Gwydyr House did not give her consent.¹²¹ Eight days later Sir Benjamin Hall (1802-67) succeeded his fellow Liberal as First Commissioner, a position he held until February 1858. This must have further taken the impetus out of the search for an available site. The matter was left unresolved until the mid-1860s, at which time it made a disastrous re-emergence as ‘the fiasco in New Palace Yard’ (see 3~7).

¹¹⁸ Gore (1811-97), a civil servant, was appointed Commissioner of Woods and Forests in 1851. See M.H. Port, *Imperial London. Civil Government Building in London 1850-1915*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1995, p. 138.

¹¹⁹ Office of Woods to J. Thornborrow (assistant secretary at the Office of Works), 24 May 1855. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹²⁰ Phipps (c. 1796-1868), Assistant Surveyor, London District, at the Office of Works and Board of Trade. The ‘best-paid official architect’ after Pennethorne, Phipps was ‘in charge of all the major public offices’ and retired in 1866 after sixteen years service. See M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, pp. 288, note 40 & 338.

¹²¹ Letter on Lady Clare’s behalf from Bray, Warren & Harding of 37 Great Russell Street to the Secretary of the Commissioners of Royal Parks, 13 July 1855. PRO WORK 20/31. A plan exists of how the arrangement would have looked. Signed by Charles Barry on 23 March 1860, it shows the location of the Peel monument as it was intended to be erected at the entrance to the Privy Garden, and the road widened on its north side, formed from ground included in the present lease of Gwydir House. PRO WORK 20/31.

2~6 Canning and Peel: friendship or feud?

As he struggled to formulate his response to the London Peel Testimonial Committee, Molesworth had sent an unidentified recipient ‘Sir C. Barry’s memoranda on Cardwell’s letter, and a sketch of a reply to Cardwell.’¹²² The First Commissioner was obviously seeking help in this delicate matter when he conceded that much of the architect’s objections were ‘too technical’ for him ‘to make use of.’ His extensive preparatory notes at the end of December indicate the complexity of the arguments. The key issues concerned the questions of site, commissioning and official sanction. Molesworth’s negative response to the committee was sent in early January 1854. A heavily annotated draft letter indicates that he considered ‘that the site chosen by Mr Cardwell & Committee’ was ‘ill advised, from the fact that the statue would be placed immediately fronting that of Mr Canning – this in ~~consideration~~ consequence of their antagonistic political feelings would be in bad taste.’¹²³ Following Barry’s recommendations he suggested as alternatives either the centre of New Palace Yard or in the Privy Gardens opposite to the Treasury. Indeed, it is clear that the architect’s memorandum played an influential part in Molesworth’s decision.

The First Commissioner’s initial objection fell ‘exclusively within the province of Art’ given that he feared that the Canning and Peel statues would have ‘nothing in common’. He considered that it could ‘be taken as a principal that Statues standing in immediate proximity to each other, and visible from the same point of view, unless originally designed to be so placed, and as parts of one general plan must injure the effect of one another.’ In this instance it would most likely ‘provoke comparison... to the disadvantage of the Memorial to Sir Robert Peel.’ This was exacerbated by the differences in height and the fact that the statues would not be ‘in immediate juxtaposition’. Canning could be seen to advantage from all angles, unlike the distortions of foreshortening that Barry feared would affect the figure of Peel. However, it was not so much the position of Canning as ‘the quiet of its back:ground and the repose which the accompaniments of wood and foliage are known to give to Sculpture, and its various kindred productions.’ Molesworth perceived that the ‘background and accompaniments of the Statue of Sir Robert Peel would be in all

¹²² This was sent on 28 December 1853. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹²³ Draft letter from Molesworth to Cardwell, 6 January 1854. PRO WORK 20/31.

respects the reverse of those of Mr Canning's Statue.' Added to 'the minute and delicate details of Gothic Tracery..., and until the convenience of Parliament should give way to the requirements of Art, would be those of a Stand for Cabs and other hired Carriages.'

At the time of writing, Molesworth claimed that there were no plans to make the spaces around the Houses of Parliament available for monuments to statesmen although such a scheme *was* desirable. This meant that any commemoration should not be expected 'exclusively to engross the honours of that locality.' Instead, it would 'be followed, no matter how remotely, by the erection of similar Testimonials in honour of other Public men... [The] present time [was therefore] especially appropriate for the consideration of this question.'¹²⁴ This was rendered even more so by the proximity to the Canning Statue, prompting Molesworth to stress that this existing monument established 'no precedent' for the course envisaged by the committee.

Although Parliament Square was not within the grounds of the Houses of Parliament, its proximity and character meant that, as it was more suitable

in many respects for the erection of such Testimonials than any open space within the actual precincts, it could scarcely be omitted from any general Plan for the erection of Public Statues to Public Men in that vicinity.¹²⁵

Its isolation from parliament by the main road meant that it should be 'an arrangement of itself, unfettered by the arrangements in Palace yard.' Therefore decisions made outside that enclosure should not 'suggest any general arrangement' even less to 'indicate a fitting position for the erection of any particular Statue'. In short, before any general plan was agreed it was inappropriate that Peel 'be placed in immediate opposition to that of Mr Canning'.

¹²⁴ Draft letter from Molesworth to Cardwell, 6 January 1854. PRO WORK 20/31. Many of Molesworth's thoughts quoted in this and subsequent paragraphs are scored through in the original draft document (for example: '~~exclusively to engross the honours of that locality~~'; '~~be followed, no matter how remotely, by the erection of similar Testimonials in honour of other Public men~~'; '~~the present time is especially appropriate for the consideration of this question~~'). They have been cited here even if they did not feature in his final letter as they indicate many of the contemporary issues relating to the statue. These semi-private deliberations informed the publicly voiced opinion and the wording of the 1854 bill concerning statues in the vicinity of parliament (see 2~7).

¹²⁵ Draft letter (scored through) from Molesworth to Cardwell, 6 January 1854. PRO WORK 20/31.

With this position established Molesworth went on to set out ‘the principle which should regulate the erection of all Public Testimonials of this character’. These he felt ‘should be broad and intelligible to the popular mind.’ Distinctions of such importance to a committee might ‘flatter the political convictions of a party in the State’ only to be ‘thrown away’ by the general public. Should Peel be placed where the subscribers suggested, ‘would it appear intelligible to the passer by that the Statue of one Statesman stood within the Precincts of the Houses of Parliament, and that of the other beyond those limits?’ If so, then it was ‘unworthy of the State’ these statesmen served; and, if not, then the ‘distinction... [was] obviously worth nothing.’ An analogy was drawn between this matter and the ‘nearly parallel cases’ of the statues to Pitt and Fox: ‘It would be idle for me to remind them that Hanover Square was considered to be an appropriate site for the one, and Bloomsbury Square for the other.’¹²⁶ To place them ‘in direct opposition’ even if in the Houses of Parliament could surely not be held to be ‘in the same pure taste’.¹²⁷ It was, however, certainly correct to honour both so as not ‘to give a triumph to Political friendships, or to perpetuate the remembrance of political feuds.’ It was instead surmised that ‘the isolation of these Statues in their present sites is the better both in taste and principle, and that it leaves the differences of Political opinion where we ought to keep them – in the shade.’

Molesworth finally returned to perhaps the most pressing issue, to which he spent considerable time deliberating throughout late December and early January.¹²⁸ This was his belief that ‘no statue should be erected within the Precincts of the Houses of Parliament, unless with money which has been voted by Parliament or upon a site which the Sovereign, with the concurrence of Parliament, shall have approved.’ Neither applied in this instance. It was

in fact a private testimonial to the merits of a Public Man, differing but little from many other Statues which have been erected to his honour in various parts of the Country, except in the skill which has been employed in its production and the rank

¹²⁶ William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) by Francis Chantrey, Hanover Square, erected 22 August 1831; Charles James Fox (1749-1806) by Richard Westmacott, Bloomsbury Square, erected 19 June 1816. See John Blackwood, *London's Immortals*, pp. 174-5 & 172-3 respectively.

¹²⁷ In contrast Westminster Abbey was able to tolerate these political rivalries (see 1-5).

¹²⁸ In his January draft Molesworth added (but scored through) that this matter was ‘the principal’ issue. Molesworth to Cardwell, 6 January 1854. PRO WORK 20/31.

and political importance of those at whose instance the work has been accomplished.

These reasons were ‘increased by the fact of the leading Members of the Committee being also Members of the Government.’ Without such a rule Molesworth could ‘foresee the greatest inconvenience from the indiscriminate selection of sites for the erection of Political Statues within the precincts of the Houses of Parliament.’ As First Commissioner he was therefore unwilling

individually... to entrust the appropriation of a spot which it is highly probable will be consecrated to the purposes of doing honour to our Public men, either directly to the Government, or indirectly, to the influence of the Government of the day.

To alleviate such difficulties he suggested to the committee that a Resolution be put to both Houses of Parliament to ask for royal assent. The result being that, rather than just Peel’s ‘Political friends’, it would allow the public ‘through their representatives in Parlt’ to pay ‘the most appropriate homage to his character’. As a consequence the ‘Statue would then cease to be the mere embodiment of the opinions of a party in the State.’ As we have seen these views held firm and the Peel monument (for the time being at least) failed to win approval.

It has already been noted that this call for a statue of the late Sir Robert Peel precipitated an act passed in 1854 to formalise the situation regarding commemorative monuments. The question of the Peel statue in relation to Westmacott’s memorial of George Canning was instrumental to the passing of this legislation. In mid-January 1854, during their investigation into monuments, the Office of Works received verification from Sir Richard Westmacott that his statue of Canning was erected by private subscription.¹²⁹ Before addressing this in detail it is necessary to provide a preliminary legal context by outlining earlier legislation pertaining to monuments and their protection.

¹²⁹ Westmacott’s brief reply ran to only one sentence: ‘Mr. Canning’s Statue was erected by private subscription.’ Sir Richard Westmacott to T.W. Philipps, 13 January 1854. HLRO 2/242.

2~7 Iconoclasm and national monuments

Although insurrection was avoided in the main during the Reform Bill, the 1830s and 1840s remained a troubled time. Given this situation a Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art was set-up in 1841. Timothy Clifford has observed that the political disturbances of the 1840s were accompanied by ‘acute concern for “national monuments”’. Despite such anxiety advances toward the setting up of a Museum of National Antiquities and the establishment of a Commission for the Conservation of National Monuments faltered.¹³⁰ In 1845 the exquisite piece of Roman glassware known as the Portland Vase was smashed in the British Museum. As the legal position regarding museum artefacts was unclear, it was only possible to charge the person responsible with breaking the cabinet holding the vase. This led to An Act for the better Protection of Works of Art, and Scientific and Literary Collections.¹³¹ Prior to passing this act was A Bill for the Protection of Property contained in Public Museums, Galleries, Libraries, and other Public Repositories, from Malicious Injury. It was to be amended twice: once by committee and once by the House of Lords.¹³² The most significant change by the former was the removal of any mention of whether or not the object in question had any ‘intrinsic value’. The initial bill stressed that it was the artistic, scientific, literary or ‘curiosity’ worth of the item that determined its inclusion. The committee also inserted a clause to the effect that those ‘who shall abet, counsel, or procure the Commission of any Offence against this Act shall be punished as the principal Offender.’ The Lords amendments included mention of ‘public Statues and Monuments from wanton injury.’ It also stipulated that the collection was to be open to the public. The ‘public’ was defined as ‘any considerable number of persons’ and their admission included ‘either by permission of the proprietor... or by the payment of money’. Finally the penalties for convictions were considerably reduced: from two years down to six months and the possibility for

¹³⁰ Timothy Clifford, ‘Protecting the Monuments: archaeological legislation from the 1882 Act to *PPG 16*’, pp. 38-56 in Michael Hunter (ed.), *Preserving the Past. The Rise of Heritage in Modern Britain*, Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, Stroud, 1996, pp. 39-40.

¹³¹ 8 & 9 Vict. c. 44 dated 21 July 1845. See Timothy Clifford, ‘Protecting the Monuments’, p. 40; D.E.L. Haynes, *The Portland Vase*, British Museum, London, 1975, pp. 11-12.

¹³² The initial Bill was *PP 1845 (143) IV.645* dated 18 March 1845. The first amendment was *A Bill [as amended by the Committee] for the better Protection of Works of Art, and Sculpture and Literary Collections*, *PP 1845 (182) IV.647*. This was followed by the Lords amendment, *PP 1845 (439) IV.649* dated 3 July 1845.

a male of up to three *public* whippings was ameliorated to private flogging (although the alternative – hard labour – was retained).

It was in the 1840s (with its ‘acute concern for “national monuments”’) that the reconstruction of the New Palace at Westminster commenced. From his vantage facing New Palace Yard the bronze figure of George Canning looked on impassively during 16 October 1834 as the bulk of the original palace was destroyed in a great conflagration. The rebuilding of parliament was accompanied by commemorative embellishment. The role of the Commissioners of Works regarding statues was first broached in 1843 by Sir Robert Peel in his letter to Sir Charles Locke Eastlake (see 1~9). Just over a decade later William Molesworth’s detailed and carefully considered responses concerning the Peel monument provide a preliminary explication of the act concerning public statues of 10 July 1854. It explains the necessity of a framework in which to regulate the erection of commemorative monuments, especially in the symbolically charged vicinity of parliament. The decision lay with the First Commissioner as a direct result of the 1854 act.¹³³ This referred to an appended schedule of fifteen statues, including that ‘to the Right Honourable George Canning, erected in Parliament Square, facing New Palace Yard.’ It also made provision for the inclusion of future works erected in ‘any Street, Square, Court, or other like Place within the Metropolitan Police District into or upon or over which there is any Public Right of Ingress, Egress, and Regress, or Thoroughfare.’ In such places the Commissioners of the Office of Works were authorised to erect a statue ‘with any Fence or Railing’ paid for by parliament. They were likewise responsible ‘for restoring, amending, and repairing any Public Statue, and the Railings and other Fences surrounding the same’. The consent of the Office of Works had to be granted before any statue could be erected. Owners of a statue could choose, with the assent of the commissioners, to transfer it to the jurisdiction of the Office of Works. Section six furthered some of the measures brought in by the Act for the Protection of Works of

¹³³ An Act to place Public Statues within the Metropolitan Police District under the Control of the Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Works and Public Buildings, 17 & 18 Vict. c. 33. The bill which led to this Act was prepared and brought-in to parliament by Sir William Molesworth and the Attorney General and was printed on 4 May 1854 as: A Bill to place Public Statues within the Metropolitan Police District under the Control of the Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Works and Public Buildings. *PP* 1854 (85) V.601.

Art of 1845 mentioned above. It stated that persons who ‘unlawfully and maliciously destroy[ed] or damage[d]’ either statue or railings were to be punished.

It is worth doubly reiterating that the jurisdiction of the Office of Works in these matters was confirmed in the act of 1854. Moreover, Molesworth’s concern that such works ‘should be broad and intelligible to the popular mind’ as well as voted for by parliament rather than representative of just one shade of political opinion was significant. It partook of the same ideals espoused by those who set up the National Gallery and other such institutions established for the moral and intellectual rectitude of a newly imagined ‘nation’. Brandon Taylor, for example, has demonstrated how the new National Gallery defined the nation by identifying the objects on show as the intellectual property of the country and people as a whole.¹³⁴

This is an issue to be elaborated on presently (see 2~8). Prior to that it should be noted that the 1854 act also coincided with a ‘report... on the state of the Royal Monuments in Westminster Abbey’ commissioned by Molesworth from George Gilbert Scott.¹³⁵ The latter was appointed architect to Westminster Abbey in 1849, succeeding the architect and archaeologist, Edward Blore (1787-1879).¹³⁶ The First Commissioner asked Scott to provide suggestions for future action with regard to the monuments in question.¹³⁷ It was commenced in mid-January 1854 and forwarded to the Office of Works later that month. Scott was fearful that he had ‘rather gone beyond what he [the First Commissioner] contemplated’ but that the poor condition of the royal tombs prompted him to do so.¹³⁸ In his report he reflected that:

It is probable that no building in existence contains a series of Monuments so interesting both from their historical importance, their value as illustrations of the

¹³⁴ Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation. Exhibitions and the London public 1747-2001*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1999, pp. 43-46.

¹³⁵ An enquiry made by the Royal Institute of British Architects had prompted this investigation. See the correspondence between the then Prime Minister, fourth Earl of Aberdeen and Molesworth, 21 June [copy] 23 June 1853. British Library Add MS 43200, f.18, 24-25.

¹³⁶ The Sub-Dean since 1835 was the Reverend Lord John Thynne (1798-1881). Scott’s early activities included the application of ‘shell-lac’, first applied to the Royal Tombs before ‘gradually indurating all the internal surfaces.’ Gavin Stamp (ed.), *Personal and Professional Recollections* [of Sir George Gilbert Scott], pp. 151, 153-154 & 527.

¹³⁷ G.G. Scott, *Westminster Abbey: Royal Monuments*. PRO WORK 6/120.

¹³⁸ He had no need for concern given that his ‘able & judicious Mem^{dm}’ met with the approval of both Victoria and Albert. Scott to Office of Works, 16 & 21 January 1854; Albert, Windsor Castle to Molesworth, 8 February 1854. HLRO, 2/250.

state of art at their several periods and the wonderful picturesqueness and solemnity of their grouping and general effect, as the Royal Tombs in Westminster Abbey – and while in many other Countries we find such Monuments to have been ruthlessly destroyed, it is most pleasing to an Englishman to reflect that amidst all the changes which have affected our history, with a single exception, no Royal Monument has ever, so far as I can gather, been intentionally destroyed.¹³⁹

The architect indicated that some equated the ‘erecting [of] a Monument to a person intimately connected with the history of his Country’ with similar commemorations made by families to their loved ones and ‘Colleges or other Corporate Bodies’ to their founders (or, for our purposes, statues of statesmen for Parliament Square). The responsibility for their upkeep and occasional repair lay with the house or institution responsible. This is, in effect, exactly the consequence of the 1854 act concerning statues in the vicinity of parliament: they became the responsibility of the nation and were therefore “public” property. Analogously, in the case of Westminster Abbey, Scott felt that it should be the ‘duty... [of] a Nation to perpetuate the monuments of its Kings’. Whereas a familial monument might, in the course of time, become obsolete, this was ‘not the case with Nations’. For memorials to ‘private individuals’ it was possible to equate the material durability of a monument to the duration of its existence: but this ‘would be absurd in the case of Kings and Royal personages’. Again, this is comparable to the guardianship of future statues in Parliament Square.

Scott’s report proffered an additional word of warning. He ruefully lamented that more damage had been inflicted on the royal tombs since the middle of the eighteenth-century (‘at the hands of that intelligent Public, who, one would have imagined would have been the guardians rather than the pilferers of our national monuments’) than when Oliver Cromwell’s troops were actually within the Abbey.¹⁴⁰ Their degradation reflected the general decay of the Abbey’s fabric. G.A. Sala spoke of the ‘deplorable condition of dilapidation and neglect’ of the Chapter House: ‘the interior being lined with tier upon tier of deal pigeon-holes, crammed with obsolete

¹³⁹ George Gilbert Scott, *Westminster Abbey Royal Monuments*, 21 January 1854. PRO WORK 6/120, pp. 1-2. The exception being the shrine of Edward the Confessor, destroyed in the time of Henry VIII.

¹⁴⁰ G.G. Scott, *Westminster Abbey: Royal Monuments*, p. 39. PRO WORK 6/120.

parchment writs and other processes of the Courts.’ This was prior to Scott’s comprehensive programme of restoration.¹⁴¹

In his report the architect included a copy of the ‘Statement of the present regulations’ for the Abbey.¹⁴² It contained ‘all the monuments erected at Public expense (except Royal Monuments) and the greater proportion of others.’ Scott recommended that the Abbey be freely open every day except Sunday. He suggested that a flat fee of 6d be given to one Receiver and no other gratuities. This suggestion came only two years before Viscount Palmerston spoke in Parliament in support of the establishment of a National Portrait Gallery. As we have seen (1~8) an unbroken lineage of historical figures was used to articulate and underline the *peaceful* transitions marking the gradual changes that took place in the nation’s history (something that would be equally in evidence during a visit to the Abbey).

The Reform Act of 1832 initiated the beginning of the end of unrivalled oligarchical power wielded by the aristocratic few. It is not surprising therefore that this privileged minority should simultaneously write their own private histories into the national story and thus ameliorate the loss of complete political control by acquiring both the historical past as well as the cultural present. The profusion of public, commemorative imagery in the nineteenth-century, most visibly manifest in the portrait statue, is to a large extent accounted for by this phenomenon. Politicians began to replace monarchs as the foremost subjects for these monuments and their public settings – either in galleries or on the streets – reflected both their arena of influence and the widening mandate they received from an expanding electorate.

This is further evinced in the sculptural commemoration of George Canning at Westminster. Agar-Ellis, chairman of the memorial committee, strongly believed in the social and moral benefits of ‘Art’. As first Baron Dover he was both a patron and collector of art, a trustee of the National Gallery and the British Museum, president of the Royal Society of Literature and, briefly in 1830, First Commissioner of Woods

¹⁴¹ George Augustus Sala, ‘Five P.M.: A Corner of the World- Westminster’, pp. 71-81 in *London up to Date*, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1894, p. 79. Whilst working on this, Scott had ‘planned a great sepulchral cloister on the south side of the Abbey buildings, extending along College Gardens’. A pantheon in other words. However, he saw ‘no prospect of it being carried into execution.’ Gavin Stamp (ed.), *Personal and Professional Recollections [of Sir George Gilbert Scott]*, p. 287.

¹⁴² G.G. Scott, *Westminster Abbey: Royal Monuments*, pp. 40-41. PRO WORK 6/120.

and Forests in Charles, second Earl Grey's administration of 1830-34. In July 1823 he had urged the government to purchase the art collection of John Julius Angerstein, a Russian émigré businessman who had made his fortune in shipping insurance during the war with France.¹⁴³ The Patriotic Fund that Angerstein established at Lloyds in 1802 promoted his reputation for national loyalty. Upon his death in 1823, Agar-Ellis successfully proposed that this collection of some thirty-eight masterpieces should form the basis of a national gallery. The politician argued that such an institution would serve to elevate 'the general taste of the public' by giving them easy access to 'pictorial beauty'. Furthermore, he exhorted that such an establishment should be located in the very centre of London, devoid of any entrance fees and thus open and accessible

to every decently dressed person... to all ranks and degrees of men – to the merchant, as he goes to his counting house – to the peers and commons, on their way to their respective houses of parliament – to the men of literature and science, on their way to their respective societies – to the King and the court, for it should always at least be supposed that the sovereign is fond of art – to the stranger and the foreigner who lodges in some of the numerous hotels with which St. James's Street, and the neighbouring streets (the quartier which may fairly be called the centre of London) abound – to the frequenters of clubs of all denominations – to the hunters of exhibitions (a numerous class in the metropolis) – to the indolent as well as the busy – to the idle as well as the industrious. In short, we consider the present abode of the National Gallery to be the very perfect solution.¹⁴⁴

Agar-Ellis was referring to the opening of just such a gallery at 100 Pall Mall on 10 May 1824. Westmacott's statue of Canning had been standing for over six years by the time that a much-enlarged National Gallery, housed in a grandiose building designed by William Wilkins (1778-1839) and positioned on the north side of John Nash's imperially fashioned Trafalgar Square opened on 9 April 1838. Agar-Ellis's aspirations for the moral improvement and intellectual instruction that a national art collection would bring to individuals of every class, profession and disposition can be taken as the motivating context for the desire to erect a public and similarly accessible monument to George Canning. It was in this contemporary context that art was being employed to re-vision the concept of state, class and people.

¹⁴³ Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. VI, pp. 695-696.

¹⁴⁴ Cited in Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, pp. 34-35.

2~8 Baron Carlo Marochetti and the warrior on horseback

That culture played an essential role in constructing versions of the nation was clearly demonstrated in the formation of a *National Gallery*. During the nineteenth-century a particularly important aspect of ‘cultural nationalism’ was the portrait (see 1~5).¹⁴⁵ Painted or sculpted likenesses brought together under the aegis of a body such as Westminster Abbey or the National Portrait Gallery could furnish ‘a noble and imperishable record’ of the nation (see 1~8). It should come as little surprise therefore to learn that, in tandem with such constructions of the nation, xenophobic sentiments were directed toward “foreign” sculptors working in England (see 1~5; 3~7). This is an indication that, in the cultural production of a society’s exemplars, the identity of the artist clearly mattered, especially when it came to the most prestigious and keenly fought sculptural commissions.

This was doubly the case with the larger than life personality of Baron Carlo Marochetti.¹⁴⁶ It has been convincingly argued that this most aristocratic of artists ‘did not belong to any nation’.¹⁴⁷ A Piedmontese he had come to Britain via the court of Louis-Philippe in Paris and quickly established himself as a leading sculptor in mid-Victorian Britain. He consequently became a focus of controversy in the press and resentment among native sculptors. Francis Turner Palgrave, the most prolific writer on sculpture in mid nineteenth-century Britain, was damning of Marochetti’s ‘vaulting ambition’.¹⁴⁸ This stemmed from the fact that, to cite Benedict Read, ‘Marochetti was *the* favourite sculptor of Prince Albert’.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ For an account of ‘cultural nationalism’, albeit in a very different context, see Byron J. Nordstrom, *Scandinavia since 1500*, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis & London, 2000, pp. 186 ff.

¹⁴⁶ For a brief biography see John Physick, *The Wellington Monument*, Victoria & Albert Museum, HMSO, London, 1970, pp. 23-27 & Plate 13.

¹⁴⁷ Philip Ward-Jackson, ‘Carlo Marochetti: Maintaining Distinction in an International Sculpture Market’, pp. 174-190 in Cinzia Sicca & Alison Yarrington (eds.), *The Lustrous Trade: Material Culture and the History of Sculpture in England and Italy c. 1700- c. 1860*, Leicester University Press, London & New York, 2000, p. 180.

¹⁴⁸ Francis Turner Palgrave, ‘Sculpture’, pp. 85-119 in *Descriptive Handbook to the Fine Arts Collections in the International Exhibition of 1862*, Macmillan, London & Cambridge, 1862, p. 117.

¹⁴⁹ Benedict Read, ‘Sculpture and the New Palace at Westminster’, pp. 253-269 in Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament: history, art, architecture*, Merrell, London, 2000, pp. 267-268.

His presence in the environs of the Houses of Parliament serves to reiterate the sensitivity of Parliament Square in terms of national identity. This was evident from the very outset, as the case of the Peel statue eminently testifies. For it ought to be recalled that, in Charles Barry's deliberations on this commemoration and the Canning monument (see 2~5), the architect had drawn attention to the fact that they were 'productions of an English and Foreign artist, both now living'. He felt that such a conjunction would be 'likely to exert criticisms and invidious comparisons'.¹⁵⁰ This was exacerbated by the fact that, at the same time, another considerably more grandiose work by this 'foreign' sculptor was being promoted for the environs of parliament: namely 'the Statue of a Warrior on Horseback'.¹⁵¹ This representation of Richard I exemplified Marochetti's 'vaulting ambition' in the minds of his detractors.

The equestrian statue in question was first exhibited as a full size plaster model outside the western entrance of Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, the venue of the Great Exhibition in 1851 (Plate 65).¹⁵² This work obviously held a prominent and highly visible location.¹⁵³ The *Builder*, in an obituary of the sculptor, reflected that the 'model brought the sculptor into very general notice in this country.'¹⁵⁴ Marochetti's plaster statue was thus a brilliant piece of self-promotion. His eminence and celebrity was proven by the fact that, by the time of the exposition of 'The Association for the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations' at New York in 1853, Marochetti had repeated his feat with a further equestrian statue, this time of George Washington. It took pride of place in the centre of the exhibition beneath the main dome and was the show's largest exhibit.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Undated memorandum. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹⁵¹ Draft letter from Molesworth to Cardwell, 6 January 1854. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹⁵² See Anon, *The Great Exhibition. A Facsimile of the Illustrated Catalogue of London's 1851 Crystal Palace Exposition*, Gramercy Books, New Jersey, 1995, p. xxi & illustration on p. xii, 'Western Entrance to the Great Exhibition'.

¹⁵³ The area to the west of the pavilion was used to exhibit examples of natural materials in either their raw state or fashioned into obelisks, columns and anchors. Items of agricultural machinery were also displayed there and in a number of images one can glimpse Marochetti's statue behind steam engines and roughly hewn rocks. See C.H. Gibbs-Smith, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, HMSO, London, 1981, Figures 46 & 52.

¹⁵⁴ Anon, 'The Death of Baron Marochetti', *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1301, 11 January 1868, p. 35.

¹⁵⁵ See John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*, Studio Vista, London, 1977, p. 27 and Plate 17.

It was with similar bravura that he succeeded in securing the erection in bronze of the Coeur de Lion statue in Old Palace Yard on 26 October 1860. The casting costs were defrayed by public subscription under the auspices of a committee chaired by Lord Hatherton. However, in a letter to Henry Fitzroy on 1 July 1859, Hatherton observed that the £5000 raised for the casting

was quite below the value of so large a work in bronze. It left the Artist by the general acknowledgement of the profession no compensation for the idea & the model. Nevertheless Marochetti accepted it – in the hope that publicity by its erection in some frequented place would confer on him credit and public favour.¹⁵⁶

The history of this work can thus be seen as a skilful act of self-publicity and it was such audacity that led to his condemnation by the likes of Palgrave.

Confirming Marochetti's favoured royal status Hatherton stressed that the committee's decision to present it to the government was 'on the suggestion of the Prince Consort, who took an especial interest in the proceedings'.¹⁵⁷ A photograph from Albert's collection dating from 1853 shows the work temporarily positioned in the centre of New Palace Yard.¹⁵⁸ By May 1856 it had been cast into bronze and the committee requested that the government allocate it 'some conspicuous site in the metropolis.'¹⁵⁹ To determine where this ought to be the opinions of both the Royal Fine Art Commission (RFAC) and Sir Charles Barry were sought.¹⁶⁰ Unsurprisingly the latter was decidedly fixed in his opinion:

The propriety of such a site, is I think questionable; but looking at the colossal size of the Statue, I am of the opinion that Old Palace Yard, is too limited in area, and too irregular and unsymmetrical in its form and approaches, to give due effect to it, as a work of art, or render it an effective monument, in that locality.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ The money had been raised following a meeting at 'Willis's Room' in June 1853. Hatherton to Henry Fitzroy, 1 July 1859. PRO WORK 20/28.

¹⁵⁷ Hatherton to Henry Fitzroy, 1 July 1859. PRO WORK 20/28.

¹⁵⁸ Gavin Stamp, *The Changing Metropolis: earliest photographs of London 1839-1879*, Viking, Harmondsworth, 1984, Plate 121.

¹⁵⁹ Hatherton & W. Henry Reece (16 Chester Square) to Benjamin Hall, 8 May 1856. PRO WORK 20/28.

¹⁶⁰ Works to Treasury, 16 May & 22 July 1856; Trevelyan to Works, 5 August 1856. PRO WORK 20/28.

¹⁶¹ Barry to George Russell, 11 August 1856. PRO WORK 20/28.

Ultimately this was to no avail as by early 1859 the foundations had been dug at that very location.¹⁶² In August the House of Commons voted a sum of £1650 for the pedestal and by the autumn of 1860 the work was complete (Plate 66).¹⁶³ At least its prolonged history meant that Barry, who died on 12 May, was spared the sight of the finished sculpture in the environs of his building. Indeed it was not until the mid-1860s that relief sculptures were added to the pedestal. According to the sculptor these 'represent[ed] the Victory over the Saracens at Ascalon [Plates 69-70], & the ... death of the King, & the pardon he granted to the man who wounded him [Plates 68 & 70-72].'¹⁶⁴ The former was completed in the summer of 1866 whilst the latter was affixed in March of the following year at a cost of £750 each.¹⁶⁵

These final additions occurred during the decade in which Charles Barry's son, Edward Middleton Barry, was charged to oversee the culmination of his father's work. The 1860s was the decade in which Parliament Square took shape, again under the direction of the younger Barry. It was the period when Marochetti's statue of Peel made a disastrously brief appearance in New Palace Yard and when the Canning monument was moved to a seemingly less troublesome location in the newly arranged Canning Enclosure.

¹⁶² Barry to Manners, 25 February 1859. PRO WORK 20/28.

¹⁶³ Marochetti to Russell, 27 October 1860. PRO WORK 20/28.

¹⁶⁴ Austin to Marochetti, 20 May 1866. PRO WORK 20/28. In May 1864 Marochetti had averred that these 'ought to be Alto-rilievos in the Style of the Ghiberti's doors of the Battisterio at Florence, they ought to be four of them representing: one the coronation of Richard at Westminster Abbey, the second the taking of Ascalon, the third Richard prisoner and the fourth: his death. I think two thousand pounds would be a fair remuneration for them.' Marochetti to Works, 2 May 1864. PRO WORK 20/28.

¹⁶⁵ Works to Marochetti, 20 November 1865; Austin to Marochetti, 20 May 1866. Marochetti to Works, 24 March 1866; Works to Marochetti 24 February and 28 March 1866. Works to 'The London Joint Stock Bank', 3 September 1866. PRO WORK 20/28.

**‘A place of honour for statues of public men’:
E.M. Barry, Parliament Square and the New
Palace at Westminster**

John Summerson has suggested that during the 1860s ‘London was more excavated, more cut about, more rebuilt and more extended than at any time in its previous history.’¹ There was a plethora of new streets, drains, sewers, gas and water subways and railways. The latter – both underground and mainline – saw the construction of bridges, viaducts, stations and hotels. The extension of the South Eastern Railway from London Bridge to Charing Cross, for example, necessitated over ‘seventeen bridges, a hundred and ninety brick arches and an iron viaduct, with the destruction of a hospital, the removal of eight thousand bodies from a graveyard and the construction of a new Thames bridge’.² From 1863-65, Edward Middleton Barry was the architect of the new station and hotel at Charing Cross as well as the reconstructed Eleanor Cross in its forecourt. At that time he was also superintendent of the New Palace at Westminster with the responsibility for completing the building following his father’s death in 1860. This chapter seeks to outline a biography of the architect in order to properly examine his role in the planning of the spaces around this building, especially Parliament Square. In 1865 the Metropolitan District Railway received permission to build an underground line in close proximity to the Houses of Parliament and directly beneath the square. Following extensive excavation work E.M. Barry was commissioned to redesign the space to provide ‘a place of honour for statues of public men’.³ This chapter therefore examines Parliament Square as it took physical and symbolical shape in the mid-1860s. It was then that it became confirmed as a special domain with sacral connotations. Furthermore, with the exclusion from

¹ John Summerson, *The London Building World of the Eighteen-Sixties*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1973, p. 7.

² John Summerson, *The London Building World of the Eighteen-Sixties*, p. 7.

³ Barry to Austin, 6 July 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

that space of a sculptural series depicting eminent engineers, it became defined as a commemorative zone solely ‘reserved for statues of eminent statesmen’.⁴

3~1 A sculptural architect

Edward Middleton Barry was born on 7 June 1830 and died on 27 January 1880.⁵ His elder brother provides the most comprehensive account of his life: the Reverend Alfred Barry’s⁶ ‘Introductory Memoir’ to his edited collection of E.M. Barry’s *Lectures on Architecture delivered at the Royal Academy*.⁷ Edward’s initial training was in the office of Thomas Henry Wyatt before entering that of his father, Sir Charles Barry whom he assisted until the latter’s death in 1860. He had been a student at the Royal Academy since 1848, became an associate in 1861 and a full academician in 1869 and succeeded Sir George Gilbert Scott as professor of architecture at the Royal Academy in 1874, a post he retained until his death.

The younger Barry developed a considerable country house practice. Mark Girouard has contended that his architectural style of the 1860s reflected French influences in his use of the mansard roof seen in his designs for three large country houses exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1872. The grandest was the residence at Wykehurst, Sussex (1871-74) built for Henry Huth, the son of a City banker.⁸ The influence of the French Renaissance had been ushered in by such buildings as Westminster Palace Hotel dating from 1859. Designed by W & A Moseley it stands at one end of Victoria Street with J.T. Knowles’ Grosvenor Hotel (1860-61) at the other. This style allowed for much decoration, including portraiture: the spandrels in the upper floors of the Grosvenor, for example, feature medallions with portrait busts

⁴ Austin to Manby, 14 December 1868. PRO WORK 20/253.

⁵ He is buried in Paddington Cemetery in London. Hugh Meller, *London’s Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1995, p. 239.

⁶ Alfred Barry (1826-1910), the second son of Charles Barry, was primate of Australia and, from 1891 until his death, Canon of St. George’s Chapel, Windsor. See Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography [DNB]*, Oxford University Press, London, 1922, Vol. I, pp. 103-105.

⁷ Edward M. Barry, R.A., *Lectures on Architecture delivered at the Royal Academy. Edited (with introductory memoir) by Alfred Barry, D.D. With Portrait and Illustrations*, John Murray, London, 1881.

⁸ The others houses were both in Surrey: Cobham Park (1870-73) and Shabden (1871-75) both designed for men who had made their money in the City. Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, pp. 12-13 & 132-4.

including Palmerston, Lord Derby and Lord John Russell.⁹ Later in the century the Russell Hotel was to be similarly embellished by a pantheon of worthies (see 1~9; Plate 53). Such hotels provided luxurious settings for the rising middle class and an indication that London was now the commercial centre of the world.¹⁰ By the 1890s G.A. Sala wrote of ‘the many gigantic and palatial hotels which at present adorn the British Metropolis.’¹¹

During the 1860s Barry was responsible for two such hotels for the railway stations at Charing Cross and Canon Street. The former included his design for an Eleanor Cross that was recreated in front of the adjoining railway station (Plate 75).¹² This monument was commissioned by the Charing Cross Hotel Company to advertise their business (Plate 76). An inscription on it indicates that the foundation stone was laid on 21 May 1864.¹³ Built of Portland and Mansfield stone as well as Aberdeen granite and standing almost seventy feet in height, the cross cost nearly £1,800 and was finished in 1865.¹⁴ Nicola Smith has provided an excellent descriptive account of the

⁹ Niklaus Pevsner, *London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1957/1973 (3rd edition revised by Bridget Cherry), pp. 101, 518-519, 661.

¹⁰ Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, p. 134.

¹¹ George Augustus Sala, ‘Nine P.M.: After Dinner at the Hotel Brobdingnag’, pp. 137-147 in *London up to Date*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1894, p. 137.

¹² The site of Hubert Le Seur’s equestrian statue of Charles I was thought to mark the location of the original Eleanor cross. Le Seur’s sculpture was initially set up at Lord Weston’s estate, Roehampton in 1633 before being re-erected at the top of Whitehall after the Civil War in 1676 by Charles II. John Blackwood has written: ‘In choosing that spot Charles was reinforcing his own triumphant return, since some of those who had condemned his father to death were themselves executed close by. He was also filling a void left by Puritan vandalism, for on that spot had stood the greatest of the Eleanor Crosses erected by Edward I to mark the progress of his beloved wife’s body from Harby in Lincolnshire to Westminster Abbey.’ John Blackwood, *London’s Immortals. The Complete Outdoor Commemorative Statues*, Savoy Press, London, 1989, pp. 19-21. See also Nicola C. Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1979, p. 218, note 2.

¹³ Smith speculates that the unobtrusiveness of this, the only inscription, suggests that ‘although Barry was not trying to imitate the original cross, he still wanted to produce a monument which could be mistaken for a mediaeval one.’ Nicola Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, p. 126. David Gentleman instead says that: ‘The Victorian “Charing Cross”... is not a restoration or even an accurate reconstruction but a Gothic Revival work of the imagination’. David Gentleman, *A Cross for Queen Eleanor. The story of the building of the medieval Charing Cross, the subject of the decorations on the Northern Line platform of the new Charing Cross underground station. Printed to mark the occasion of the opening of the Jubilee Line by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, 30 April 1979*, 1979, p. 10. Copy held in the London Metropolitan Archive [LMA] collection.

¹⁴ This contrasts with the use of artificial stone from Blanchard’s manufactory for the hotel. Pevsner (who describes Barry as ‘the successful hotel architect’) repeated the belief that this represented the first extensive use of such a material for the exterior of a building. Barry’s Charing Cross Station Hotel and his later Cannon Street Station Hotel (1865-66, now demolished) both employed white glazed

cross, finding derivations from George Gilbert Scott's Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford¹⁵ and the Waltham Cross¹⁶. The latter was the precedent for the 'encircled cross motif' which Smith points out as being the sole 'decorative link' between monument and hotel.¹⁷ Scott's memorial provided the precursor for the eight niches each containing a statue of Queen Eleanor. Half of this number represents her with orb and sceptre, the other half holding a variety of Christian attributes, including a model of Westminster Abbey to indicate her burial place (Plate 77).

Contemporary responses to Barry's cross were in the main favourable, although the *Art Journal* believed that Queen Victoria should have been included amongst the heraldry and statues.¹⁸ The *Builder* expressed its unfavourable opinion of what Smith terms 'medieval advertisements for modern businesses':

Dear to the shareholders, this cross
Uplifts its head on high:
'Why stands it there?' the critic asks,
And Echo answers, 'Why!'
'Carissima croce! Che fatte là?'
'Non so, car' amico, en verità.'¹⁹
['Beloved cross! Why are you standing there?'
 'I truly do not know, dear friend.']

Barry's Eleanor Cross indicates that he was experienced in the design and location of monuments in conjunction with his architecture. The work also necessitated close collaboration with sculptors and craftsmen, in this instance the firm of Thomas Earp

terracotta as a cladding material. Niklaus Pevsner, *London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, pp. 106, 185 & 318; *Builder*, Vol. 22, 1864, pp. 876-8, 930-2.

¹⁵ Scott won the limited competition for the memorial in 1840, the foundation stone was laid on 19 May 1841 and the monument completed in the spring of 1843. See Nicola Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, pp. 50-70 & Plate 52.

¹⁶ One of the twelve original Eleanor Crosses, only three of which survived until the eighteenth-century (the others being at Geddington and Northampton). The considerably dilapidated Waltham Cross at Cheshunt, Hertfordshire was restored from 1833-34. See Nicola Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, pp. 17-20 & Plates 26 & 27.

¹⁷ Other iconographic repetitions from the original Eleanor Crosses include the shields carrying the arms of England, Castile, Leon and Ponthieu. Smith observes that '[c]uriously, the gables usually found above the arches of these panels [i.e. the shields in the basement] are lifted up above the first parapet, and the space below is filled with diaper-work enclosing heraldic motifs- the castle of Castile and the lion of Leon- which resembles the design on the pillow and couch supporting the effigy of Queen Eleanor, by William Torel, in Westminster Abbey.' Nicola Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, p. 127.

¹⁸ Nicola Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, p. 127.

¹⁹ *Builder*, Vol. 23, 1865, p. 594; see also *Builder*, Vol. 22, 1864, pp. 587 & 931.

(1828-93). Earp was born in Nottingham and studied at the Nottingham School of Art and Design that had recently opened in April 1843. This institution was part of a national programme providing ‘Elementary Instructions, Instruction in Design for Manufacture and in the Historic Principles and Practice of Ornamental Arts.’²⁰ He went on to work for George Myers, contractor for Pugin’s Catholic Church of Saint Augustine at Nottingham, before moving to Myers’s workshop at Lambeth, close to the New Palace at Westminster.²¹ Earp became a prolific sculptor of the Victorian period and the extent of his practise can be gauged by the fact that a census of 1861 indicated that he had twenty-one employees as well as eight apprentices.²² The commission for the Eleanor Cross was but one instance of an established collaboration between Earp and Edward Barry. This had begun in the previous decade with the pulpit and reredos for St. Saviour’s Church at South Hampstead of 1856 and the elaborate tomb at West Norwood Cemetery for the linen draper Alexander Berens who had died in 1858. The latter, resembling a ‘mediæval sarcophagus’, cost £1,500 and is constructed of a rich variety of types of granite, limestone and marble with Portland stone statuary.²³

Barry’s predilection for sculpture was already apparent in a design for the Oxford University Museum.²⁴ His short-listed entry, ‘*Fiat Justitia*’ (c.1851-54) was in a Palladian style. The elevations feature very extensive figurative and equestrian groups mounted on ground floor pedestals on either side of the proscenium entrance.²⁵ Peter Howell has recently speculated that Barry’s comprehensive use of sculpture would have surely rendered the proposal financially unfeasible.²⁶ Nevertheless, Barry’s

²⁰ Cited in Anthony Mitchell, *Thomas Earp Master of Stone. The Life and Works of this noted Sculptor of the Victorian era*, Barracuda Books Ltd., Buckingham, 1990, p. 16.

²¹ Anthony Mitchell, *Thomas Earp Master of Stone*, pp. 17-19.

²² Anthony Mitchell, *Thomas Earp Master of Stone*, p. 60.

²³ Hugh Meller, *London’s Cemeteries*, p. 220.

²⁴ Information on this is derived from Howard Colvin, *Unbuilt Oxford*, Yale University, New Haven & London, 1983, pp. 125-134; Peter Howell, ‘The Oxford Museum’, unpublished paper, *Ruskin and Architecture*, Victorian Society conference, Linnean Society, Burlington House, London, 4 March 2000.

²⁵ The elevation of the façade is reproduced in Howard Colvin, *Unbuilt Oxford*, Plate 133.

²⁶ The competition for a museum stemmed from an 1851 decision by Convocation. This was originally at a cost of £53,000 but was eventually reduced to £30,000. Peter Howell, ‘The Oxford Museum’, unpublished paper, 4 March 2000.

proposal does point to his keen interest in the assimilation of sculpture into his buildings. The numerous standing figures around the circumference of the structure would probably have included statues of individuals chosen for their achievements in the field of natural sciences for which the museum was intended. This would perhaps have resembled the realised pantheon of worthies erected in the interior of the built structure designed in a Gothic style by Sir Thomas Deane (1792-1871) and Benjamin Woodward (1815-1861).

Sculpture also played a part in Barry's reconstruction of Sir Robert Smirke's Opera House at Covent Garden (1808-09) damaged by fire in 1857 and the erection of the adjacent Floral Hall the following year.²⁷ In the former Barry re-used the sculpted figures of Melpomene and Thalia by J.C.F. Rossi and, in an altered state, Flaxman's frieze, *Tragedy and Comedy*.²⁸ This involvement with sculpture was contemporaneous with the elaborate use of decorative and figurative forms by Earp for the Berens tomb at West Norwood Cemetery, just as Barry's design for the Eleanor Cross coincided with his entry for the Albert Memorial competition.

As has been seen in the earlier discussion of the Albert Memorial (1-9) the phenomenon of the pantheon was widespread in the nineteenth-century. A further manifestation of this was the rooms designed by E.M. Barry for the National Gallery completed in the autumn of 1876. Arranged in the form of a Greek cross four richly decorated galleries disseminate from a central octagonal hall.²⁹ They feature sculptural decoration by the studio of Edward William Wyon (1811-85). At the end of each of the radiating rooms and visible from the central hall is an allegorical lunette. The subjects include: Raphael and his pupils (representing painting); Phidias before Pericles (representing sculpture); Michelangelo offering the reigning Pope a model of

²⁷ Pevsner (*London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, pp. 103 & 352) noted the 'florid' treatment of the 'very intricate cast-iron decoration' in the Floral Hall. The hall was badly damaged by fire in 1956.

²⁸ Niklaus Pevsner, *London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, pp. 352-353.

²⁹ Pevsner describes them as 'the finest rooms in the building'. He adds that Sir John Taylor (1833-1912), a surveyor and long-term employee at the Office of Works, was equally influential with regard to the vestibule and Central Hall (c. 1885-87) of the National Gallery. See Niklaus Pevsner, *London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, p. 327; Geoffrey Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 206 & Plate 82 for the main staircase by Taylor built on the site of Pennethorne's gallery and sculpture room of 1860-61; see also M.H. Port, *Imperial London: Civil Government Building in London 1850-1915*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1995, 'Appendix I: First Commissioners of Works, 1851-1915', p. 342 *passim*.

the dome of St. Peters (representing architecture); Queen Victoria and two putti (representing colour and form).³⁰ In the spandrels of the domed hall are busts of Raphael, Reynolds, Turner, Titian, Murillo, Hogarth, Gainsborough and Michelangelo.³¹ Along a frieze above the Corinthian entablature is the inscription: 'THE WORKS OF THOSE WHO HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF AGES HAVE A CLAIM TO THAT VENERATION TO WHICH NO MODERN CAN PRETEND'.³² The text was derived from a lecture given by Sir Joshua Reynolds and met with some criticism.³³ There was also felt to be an anomaly between the number of busts of British painters in the decorative scheme and the fact that most of the paintings hung there were by Italian artists.³⁴

This observation indicates the nationalistic aspirations inherent in the decorative scheme. Further evidence for this had occurred at the Louvre in 1810, where allegorical medallions appear representing the art-historical school of Egypt, Greece, Italy and France. Carol Duncan has argued that this was intended to declare France's status as the 'most civilized and advanced nation-state'.³⁵ She demonstrates how each subsequent political regime incorporated their insignia within the decorative iconography of the museum so as to emphasise its cultural credentials. In 1848 the Second Republic implemented a scheme of artists' portraits in profile for the Salon Carré and Hall of Seven Chimneys. This precursor to the Barry Rooms at the National Gallery commenced with artists from foreign schools followed by those from France. Duncan observes that the nineteenth-century established 'the category of great artist', thus fuelling a demand in order that 'on the one hand, the state could demonstrate the highest kind of civic virtue, and on the other, citizens could know themselves to be

³⁰ 'The National Gallery', *The Illustrated London News*, 18 November 1876, p. 483.

³¹ The contemporaneous Central Hall also incorporated a series of busts with, outside the hall, Rembrandt, Leonardo and Van Dyck, as well as Rubens, Titian and Raphael inside.

³² 'The National Gallery' and accompanying illustration, 'The new rooms in the National Gallery', *The Illustrated London News*, 18 November 1876, pp. 483-484.

³³ The *Builder* considered that 'a weaker inscription for such a position could scarcely have been found'. Cited in Michael Wilson, *J. Paul Getty Jr Endowment Fund Report*, 1987, unpaginated. National Gallery Archive.

³⁴ When these rooms were renovated in 1984-86 it was substituted by a new exhibition of British paintings from the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. See 'Refurbishment of Gallery finest suite of rooms', *National Gallery Press Release*, 15 October 1986. National Gallery Archive.

³⁵ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: inside public art museums*, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 27.

civilized.’³⁶ This was a principal motivation for the ‘pantheon’ in the nineteenth-century and the linking of nationalism with the edification and refinement of the population in this manner is central to an examination of Parliament Square and its commemorative statuary.

3~2 A disappointed architect

E.M. Barry’s entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* records that his involvement with the National Gallery was but one example of his numerous professional ‘disappointments’.³⁷ Barry claimed that he had been requested to design ‘an entirely new building’³⁸ to replace the existing National Gallery of 1834-37 by William Wilkins.³⁹ This was, however, reduced merely to the construction of ‘additional rooms without any alteration in the present frontage’. This led the *Dictionary of National Biography* to conclude: ‘We must, therefore, remember that he never had the opportunity of executing the best thing he ever designed.’⁴⁰

In this Barry was a victim of the disordered state of the architectural profession in the nineteenth-century. The impact of the industrial revolution, combined with technical innovations, had led to the demand for new building types such as banks, railway stations, museums and factories. Yet at the same time as this expansion ‘architects felt under threat, most of all from building contractors, whose role in the building process was expanding at architects’ expense.’⁴¹ These factors meant that architecture, like many other aspects of Victorian society, was subject to ‘an emergent professionalism throughout the nineteenth-century’.⁴² This had only begun in 1834 with the founding of the Royal Institute of British Architects. It has been argued that this marked the

³⁶ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, pp. 27-32.

³⁷ See Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. I, p. 1236.

³⁸ Barry to Mitford 6 March 1877. PRO WORK 17/14/5, ff. 63-68.

³⁹ Barry was appointed on 16 June 1868 and requested to prepare designs on 24 October of that year. See PRO WORK 17/14/5. Geoffrey Tyack described this unrealised design to be in a “‘Wrenaissance’” manner. Geoffrey Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London*, p. 205.

⁴⁰ See Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. I, p. 1236.

⁴¹ Ruth Richardson and Robert Thorne, ‘Architecture’, pp. 45-61 in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel (eds.), *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1994, pp. 44-45.

⁴² J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel (eds.), *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, p. 5.

‘transition [of architecture] from the status of applied art to that of quasi-art.’⁴³ As a consequence aesthetic concerns became as important as technical and functional requirements. The most apparent manifestations of this being the diversity of styles that could be employed and which led, to cite the most conspicuous example, to the Battle of the Styles regarding the Foreign and War Offices in 1857.⁴⁴

It has been remarked that the competition system (although not solely a nineteenth-century innovation) matched this ‘incredible growth of building’ resulting in contests being ‘arranged for not only the great national buildings, but for town-halls, schools, libraries, hospitals, swimming-baths, churches, cathedrals, cemeteries, memorials and much else’ (see 2~4).⁴⁵ Such an increase in technical, utilitarian and aesthetic demands, combined with professional immaturity, meant that complaints about the competitive system were frequently voiced in the architectural press and other publications where calls for the method to be codified, especially for governmental commissions, were frequently made.

Edward Barry’s ‘disappointments’ were particularly notable instances of bad practice. An example was the general contest for the New Courts of Justice in 1867. David Brownlee has written that ‘the laws courts possessed a symbolic and real importance nearly equal to that which the Houses of Parliament held for early Victorians.’⁴⁶ The chairman of judges, William Cowper, had informed the Treasury that, whilst Barry’s submission was considered ‘the best in regard to plan and distribution of the interior’, G.E. Street’s design was deemed ‘best in regard to merit as an architectural composition’. It was therefore suggested that the two architects ‘act conjointly’, Barry being responsible for the interior arrangements and Street for the elevations. This unworkable compromise was abandoned in May 1868 when the Lords appointed Street as sole architect, leaving Barry suitably aggrieved.⁴⁷

⁴³ John Physick and Michael Darby, *Marble Halls*. *Drawings and Models for Victorian Secular Buildings*, HMSO, London, 1973, p. 9.

⁴⁴ See Ian Toplis, *The Foreign Office. An architectural history*, Mansell, London & New York, 1987.

⁴⁵ John Physick and Michael Darby, *Marble Halls*, p. 17.

⁴⁶ David B. Brownlee, *The Law Courts. The Architecture of George Edmund Street*, The Architectural History Foundation & MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. & London, 1984.

⁴⁷ See ‘New Courts of Justice. Treasury Minute of 23rd December 1865:- Award of the Judges:- And, further Correspondence relative to the New Courts of Justice’, *PP*, 1867-68 (339) LV.329. Pevsner claimed that Street’s Law Courts (1874-1882) ‘is not a popular building now and perhaps never will

The very next month the unwitting architect received the National Gallery commission. Eight years after his appointment Barry wrote a lengthy letter to Mitford, secretary at the Office of Works. The ‘small portion of the building’ he had been allowed to commence was by that time complete and the pictures hung. Despite this extra space the architect had been ‘informed that every part of the galleries is already crowded, and that there is no space for future acquisitions.’ He therefore characterised the National Gallery as ‘obviously patched, incomplete, and injuriously affected (as far as its external architecture is concerned) by the recent works’. This was exacerbated by the fact that the elevations of his extension were of brick and were thus more conspicuous than intended, thus adding ‘an external disfigurement to the existing façade’. Arguing that ‘public opinion’ would demand a ‘new and improved National Gallery... to be erected on a scale worthy of its National importance’, Barry added that he did not wish his future reputation to be based upon arrangements ‘only provisional, and liable to be misunderstood.’⁴⁸

Barry was right to be concerned about his posthumous reputation.⁴⁹ As well as the Reverend Alfred Barry, Edward’s siblings included the architect Charles Barry Junior (1823-1900) and the engineer John Wolfe Barry (1836-1918). Both Charles and Edward assisted their father at the Houses of Parliament. In 1840 the former entered his father’s office and his diaries for 1841-7 indicate that he had responsibility for details such as the ornamentation for the Clock Tower. In July 1846 Charles became General Superintendent to his father on the project.⁵⁰ Alongside his brother Edward he entered two designs in the competition for the Albert Memorial: an equestrian statue

be.’ However he urged that ‘one should appreciate how much judgement and visual discrimination has gone into Street’s elevations.’ This latter comment goes some way to validating the original assessment of the competition jury. Niklaus Pevsner, *London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, pp. 320-322.

⁴⁸ Barry to Mitford, 6 July 1876. PRO WORK 17/14/5, ff. 45-51.

⁴⁹ His disappointment regarding the Law Courts competition made him feel that he had lost ‘the opportunity of obtaining lasting fame and advantages by having... [his] name connected with the largest and most important Public Building of the age’. Barry to the Office of Works, 14 July 1868, cited in Geoffrey Taunton, ‘The Refurbishment of E.M. Barry’s Rooms in the National Gallery, London’, pp. 121-141 in *The International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, 1987, 6, p. 123.

⁵⁰ Jan Piggott, *Charles Barry, Junior and the Dulwich College Estate*, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, 1986, pp. 6-7.

and an Italianate cupola with an apse. He designed the Institution of Civil Engineers building in Great George Street that has since been demolished.⁵¹

All the Barry brothers were to remain in the shadow of their illustrious father, but none were more eclipsed than Edward for it was he who took on the daunting responsibility of completing Sir Charles's work. This, in part, must have prompted Mark Girouard to opine that Edward Barry, much more than his elder brother Charles, 'assumed the mantle of his father, and became a public figure and a successful, if not always a discriminating, architect.'⁵² The latter comment stems from such observations as that regarding Edward's early plans for the above-mentioned Wykehurst house in Sussex. Girouard notes that an early design for this building of June 1871 was 'remarkably feeble' and he speculated whether Barry later brought in some 'expert assistance'. Such qualified acclaim points towards wider critical neglect and it is rare indeed to find any praise for him.⁵³ It is sadly in keeping with this that his layout of Parliament Square should have been erased in favour of a new design to mark the Festival of Britain in 1951 (see 6~5). Recent work on Covent Garden Opera House drew attention to the superb ironwork of the Floral Hall (3~1), but in none of the articles in the media was the architect's name mentioned.⁵⁴

3~3 A parliamentary architect

Barry's appointment by the government in 1860 to complete the New Palace at Westminster is charted in two volumes of correspondence held at the Public Record

⁵¹ Jan Piggott, *Charles Barry, Junior and the Dulwich College Estate*, p. 31.

⁵² Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, p. 195.

⁵³ One exception being Jan Piggott who has pointed out that Edward Barry defied his father regarding the design of St. Giles' National School, Endell Street, built by Mansfield and Son. (This view is informed by a comment in E.M. Barry's *Lectures on Architecture* (p. 23).) See Jan Piggott, *Charles Barry, Junior and the Dulwich College Estate*, note 6, p. 37. For an illustration of the building see John Summerson, *The London Building World of the Eighteen-Sixties*, Plate 39.

⁵⁴ 'Façade of the new Royal Opera House' (*Guardian*, 27 September 1999, p. 2) is the misleading caption for David Sillitoe's photograph of the magnificent iron work on Barry's Floral Hall. On a happier note, in the mid-1980s- as has been noted- Barry's rooms for the National Gallery were exactly restored to their former state as envisaged by the architect. See Geoffrey Taunton, 'The Refurbishment of E.M. Barry's Rooms in the National Gallery, London', p. 6.

Office.⁵⁵ This includes material pertaining to the area immediately to the west of that building known as New Palace Yard and, beyond St. Margaret Street, the opening that was to become Parliament Square. These and other commissions led to Barry's collaboration with a variety of some of the most significant artists, craftsmen and contractors of that period in Britain – just as his father had done before him.

One such was the building contractor William Field (1801-68) who played a significant role in the works at the Houses of Parliament. From 1853 until his death he had business premises at 13 Parliament Street and from 1857 his workshop was on Millbank. The latter enabled the efficient movement of stone, just as his office was in convenient proximity to parliament from which he secured important commissions. In the *Dictionary of Business Biography*, M.H. Port observes that, as both a building contractor and marble mason, Field was in the unusual position of being both a craftsman and contractor.⁵⁶ From 1861-68 he was responsible for E.M. Barry's restoration of St. Mary Undercroft, the medieval chapel of the Palace of Westminster. This led to their collaboration on the laying-out of New Palace Yard and completion of the west face of the Clock Tower as well as the formation of the new Canning Enclosure (see 3~9) and a subway beneath Bridge Street.

Another figure of significance was the designer and manufacturer, John Hardman (c.1811-1867), the son of a Birmingham button manufacturer.⁵⁷ During the year 1838 he, in partnership with his brother-in-law William Powell and A.W.N. Pugin, set up a firm to supply the demand for ecclesiastical commissions in metal and stained-glass in

⁵⁵ These are PRO WORK 11/20 & 11/21 (volumes I and II respectively). Volume I covers the period from 1860 to 1865 and Volume II from 1866 to 1870. They consist of copies made of various letters between E.M. Barry and the Office of Works. Many of the original letters are to be found in other files, for example WORK 11/22/3. A summary of WORK 11/20 and 11/21 exists in the HLRO (*Houses of Parliament: Erection Correspondence between the Office of Works and E.M. Barry* (2 volumes)) and also of WORK 11/22/2 (ff. 1-100). A memorandum by J. Charlton speculates that the former 'were presumably compiled for use in the two Parliamentary Papers, Nos. 154 and 199 (1870) concerning E.M. Barry's duties as architect to the new Palace at Westminster. WORK 11/22/2 (1863-71 *Correspondence between Office of Works and E.M. Barry about Queen's Robing Room and other works under contract*) contain certain additional matter like departmental minutes and correspondence with the Treasury.' HLRO 8/L/15/1(1)-(17); (6).

⁵⁶ M.H. Port, *Dictionary of Business Biography*, pp. 354-5, a copy of this extract is held in HLRO 8/L/15/1(2).

⁵⁷ Gavin Stamp, 'Appendix 3: Notes, mainly biographical', pp. 494-531 in his edited volume Sir George Gilbert Scott, *Personal and Professional Recollections*, (first published 1879), Paul Watkins, Stamford, 1995, p. 505.

a medieval style for the increasing market brought about by the Gothic Revival.⁵⁸ In 1845 the company expanded into the field of stained glass. During these early years Pugin was responsible for many of the designs employed to decorate the New Palace at Westminster. The death of Hardman in 1867 led to his son John Bernard Hardman (1843-1903) assuming the partnership. Similarly, John Hardman Powell (1827-1895) succeeded Pugin as principal designer for John Hardman & Co in 1852.⁵⁹ The architect George Gilbert Scott, when commenting on ‘all the branches of decorative art as connected with Gothic architecture’, stated that the work produced by Hardman, Powell and Pugin at the Palace of Westminster was of the highest quality.⁶⁰ However, he went on to opine that, after the death of his master, Hardman’s work had ‘become from year to year more diluted’.⁶¹ Moreover, in an article on the firm, Philippa Bassett comments on the international reputation of the firm despite ‘numerous letters from clients concerning delays in the supply of orders.’⁶²

Frustration at missed deadlines and poor standards were features that characterised much of the correspondence between Edward Barry and the firm between 1860 and 1870.⁶³ His awareness of the company must have predated this by many years given his father’s professional contact in connection with the work at Westminster.⁶⁴ In September 1861 he, along with his brother Charles, commissioned the firm to produce a memorial plaque for Westminster Abbey to commemorate their recently deceased father.⁶⁵ This much-delayed work ought to have provided him with a prelude of things

⁵⁸ This paragraph is informed by Philippa Bassett, ‘John Hardman & Co., Stained Glass Manufacturers and Ecclesiastical Metal Workers of Birmingham’, *Catholic Archives*, No. 13, 1993, pp. 54-57.

⁵⁹ Gavin Stamp (ed.), *Personal and Professional Recollections* [of Sir George Gilbert Scott], p. 516.

⁶⁰ Gavin Stamp (ed.), *Personal and Professional Recollections...*, pp. 218-219.

⁶¹ Gavin Stamp (ed.), *Personal and Professional Recollections...*, p. 218.

⁶² Philippa Bassett, ‘John Hardman & Co...’, p. 57.

⁶³ The year 1883 saw the establishment of Hardman, Powell & Co., a separate venture specialising in metalwork. Many of E.M. Barry’s letters regarding metalwork for the New Palace at Westminster are addressed first to the elder Hardman and then, after his death, to J.H. Powell. In the absence of any named recipient the general term ‘Hardman & Co.’ has been adopted. Barry’s letters regarding metalwork are held in Birmingham City Archives, Hardman papers, contracts for metalwork, ‘B’ correspondence [hereafter ‘BCA’].

⁶⁴ Edward Barry was a personal client of the firm from at least as early as the autumn of 1860 when he wrote to James Powell regarding some items of jewellery he had ordered. See his letters to Powell from 1, Old Palace Yard, dated 16 & 18 October 1860. BCA.

⁶⁵ Barry (21 Abingdon Street) to Hardman & Co., 16 September 1861. BCA. Sir Charles Barry is one of four architects with memorial brasses in the nave of the Abbey, the others being Sir Gilbert Scott,

to come.⁶⁶ As we shall see, the constant prevarications of the Hardman firm led to their failure to secure the contract for the Parliament Square railings. The commission went instead to the firm of Francis Skidmore (1817-96) of Coventry (see 3~8). With reference to this influential firm Gilbert Scott declared that ‘metal-work’ had made ‘considerable progress, though it... suffered from its share of the eccentric mania of the day. Mr. Skidmore can claim an eminent place both in skill, progress, and eccentricity.’⁶⁷

It was Barry’s unenviable task to mediate between the political and artistic spheres. As architect to the New Palace at Westminster he worked under a number of First Commissioners of the Office of Works. Towards the abrupt end of his employment he wrote to the outgoing director of this office, the Liberal politician, Austin Henry Layard (1817-94). The latter’s departure was to Barry’s chagrin on both ‘public and private grounds.’ It brought him ‘pleasure to work with a First Commissioner whose interest and sympathy went with his own’ and he feared that his fate might now lie in ‘unsympathetic hands.’⁶⁸ This was prophetic given that the very day after this letter Acton Smee Ayrton (1816-86) succeeded Layard as Liberal First Commissioner. Ayrton was eager to put a stop to what he considered to be the excessive amount being spent on the seemingly never-ending work on the parliamentary buildings.⁶⁹ In August 1870, less than a year after his letter to Layard, a melancholy Barry wrote to George Russell (1830-1911), secretary at the Office of Works, to state that it was ‘with no ordinary feelings’ that he found his ‘present official connection with the Palace abruptly terminated’.⁷⁰

J.L. Pearson and G.E. Street. See Francis Bond, *Westminster Abbey*, Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, London, New York, Toronto & Melbourne, 1909, p. 310.

⁶⁶ It was only on 15 October 1864 (letter to Hardman & Co., from Lapsewood, Sydenham Hill) that Charles Barry was able to congratulate the firm on the well executed memorial brass to his father, and enclose a cheque for £240.

⁶⁷ Gavin Stamp (ed.), *Personal and Professional Recollections* [of Sir George Gilbert Scott], pp. 214 & 216.

⁶⁸ Barry, 24 Oxford Square to Layard, 25 October 1869. BL Add MSS 38997 ff 39-40.

⁶⁹ See Neil Robert Bingham, *Victorian and Edwardian Whitehall: Architecture And Planning 1865-1918*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1985, p. 75.

⁷⁰ He lamented: ‘As Architect to the building since my father’s death in 1860, and accustomed from boyhood to give it the foremost place in my thoughts, and to visit it almost daily, I cannot however fail to retain a lively interest in all that relates to it.’ Barry, 21 Abingdon Street to George Russell, 9 August 1870. *Houses of Parliament (Architect)*. *Copy of all Correspondence between the First Commissioner*

Barry did continue other work well into the 1870s but he must have been immensely disillusioned and frustrated by his treatment in the sphere of architecture.⁷¹ It is not surprising to discover ‘that at times, under the sting of many disappointments in later days, he even used to doubt whether he had chosen his vocation in life rightly.’⁷² In 1874 he assumed the role of professor of architecture at the Royal Academy and proceeded to debate on a wide variety of topics. In one lecture on ‘Town Architecture and Modern Problems’ he put forward a novel solution to the ‘wasted’ space of the urban square. Beneath the surface of such a square he proposed the construction of subterranean kitchens, wash-houses, swimming baths and gymnasiums for the inhabitants of the surrounding houses (Plate 28).⁷³ Barry reflected that this communal space could be covered with soil and planted in a manner akin to ‘the gardens of Parliament Square, Westminster, close to the Houses of Parliament, under which the Metropolitan District Railway now passes.’ With some pride he was able to add that these gardens were ‘as regards flowers, among the most brilliant in London during the proper season.’⁷⁴ As he spoke these words the ageing architect must have been pained to recall that – remarkably – these plants had in fact been the final reason for his dismissal from the role of consulting architect at the Palace of Westminster. He must also have cast a wistful glance even further back to his initial proposals for the layout of the square some seventeen years earlier.

3~4 Shaping the commemorative forum (I): Parliament Square 1861-63

In August 1860, shortly after his appointment, Barry was asked to identify what work remained outstanding at Westminster from the estimates drawn up in 1858.⁷⁵ This

of Works and Mr. Edward Barry (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 154, Session 1870). PP 1871 (199) LVI. 297, No. 24, f. 305.

⁷¹ In addition to his country house commissions Barry was also responsible for the Inner Temple Buildings on the Thames Embankment from 1875-79. Pevsner likened it to ‘a block of expensive flats, with fully fashioned angle projections, figures, termini caryatids, and so on.’ Niklaus Pevsner, *London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, p. 339.

⁷² Edward Barry, *Lectures on Architecture delivered at the Royal Academy*, p. 24.

⁷³ Edward Barry, *Lectures on Architecture delivered at the Royal Academy*, pp. 177-178.

⁷⁴ Edward Barry, *Lectures on Architecture delivered at the Royal Academy*, p. 178.

⁷⁵ ‘Specification and estimate of the Works comprised in the Estimate of 1858 which have not been executed either wholly or in part’, 27 August 1860. PRO WORK 11/20.

included the completion of the carriage roads, pavements, lodges, gates, ironwork, lampposts and gas supply, and boundary walls to the northern and southern entrances, the river landings and New Palace Yard. Barry emphasised the importance of the work given that it affected ‘the access to the New Palace, and also its drainage, lighting and security.’⁷⁶

William Francis Cowper (1811-88) held the post of First Commissioner from February 1860 until July 1866. During this period he addressed the unfinished aspects of the parliamentary buildings and, in the spring of 1861, accordingly turned his attention to the open spaces on the western side of the Houses of Parliament that had been cleared some fifty years earlier (see 1~3). He instructed Barry to consider

the Works proposed in Parliament Square with the object of providing suitable positions for Statues of public men, and securing at the same time as much uniformity in the treatment of their pedestals, and accessories, as may be consonant with the dictates of Architectural propriety and good taste.⁷⁷

In response Barry proposed an enclosure formed by a combination of wrought and cast iron railings⁷⁸ ‘placed upon a low wall or plinth of granite and divided into compartments by pedestals surmounted by lamps.’⁷⁹ Twelve of these pedestals were to have polished dies in the middle and, as they were intended to define both the corners of the square and the entrance gates, they ‘would be larger than the rest and suitable for statues requiring prominent positions.’ An additional series of seventeen smaller stone pedestals were to bear lamps although these too would be

of a large size suitable for statues, and when it may be desired to place such works of art upon them, the lamps could be removed for the purpose. As however, in all possibility, some time may elapse before such necessity may arise, the lamps might be placed upon them in the first instance to give light to both the interior and exterior of the enclosure, and to secure the latter from presenting an unsightly and unfinished appearance.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Barry to Alfred Austin, 4 September 1860. PRO WORK 11/20.

⁷⁷ Barry to Alfred Austin, 30 May 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

⁷⁸ Cast iron could be melted and cast into a mould making mass production a possibility. The earlier wrought iron was capable of being forged, rolled and shaped, but not cast and was not therefore produced as widely. See Lucinda Lambton, *Vanishing Victoriana*, Elsevier-Phaidon, Lausanne, 1976, pp. 50-55.

⁷⁹ Barry to Alfred Austin, 30 May 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

⁸⁰ Barry to Alfred Austin, 30 May 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

Due to the slope of the ground the statue pedestals were to be eight feet in height facing St. George's Street rising to eleven feet at the south end fronting St. Margaret's Church. It was proposed 'for the present' to place the statue of George Canning at the centre but Barry stressed that, should it be necessary to site further statues 'of similar description' there,

it would be desirable to give an architectural character to the interior of the enclosure which could be made to contain several excellent sites for statues in such a manner as to add greatly to the adornment of the neighbourhood.⁸¹

This initial arrangement is preserved in a fragmentary tracing entitled *New Palace at Westminster. Proposed Enclosure in St. Margaret's Street*, signed and dated 28 June 1861.⁸² Provision is made for a drinking fountain at the north end, as it was understood that one 'already made' was intended to be located there.⁸³ The architect estimated that the wall, railings, footpaths and new road formed by the square would cost £5,440. This sum did not take into consideration the amount raised by the sale of the existing railings nor 'the expense of the pedestals of the statues which it is presumed will be supplied by other parties.' Despite this Cowper still considered the railing to be too 'elaborate and costly'.⁸⁴ Barry countered this by indicating that this aspect formed 'but a small part of the estimate' and added that this limited saving

would necessarily cause great injury to the effect of the whole enclosure and considering that it is proposed to treat the latter as a place of honour, for statues of public men, to be erected at their expense, it would be most undesirable that the railing between the statues should appear poor or common place.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Barry to Alfred Austin, 30 May 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

⁸² 'New Palace at Westminster: Proposed Enclosure in St. Margaret Street', signed 'Edward M. Barry A.R.A. Arch^t, 1 Old Palace Yard, Westminster, June 28th 1861'. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.5. Unfortunately this plan is now too fragile to be copied.

⁸³ He appeared to have sent a previous design earlier that month and this later proposal incorporated 'modifications' suggested by the Office of Works. Austin sent the architect receipt of the plans on 7 June 1861 and Barry was asked to provide an estimate of the cost for 'the enclosure in Parliament Square with the modifications which you directed me to make from my original plan.' It has not been possible to trace these initial designs.

⁸⁴ Austin to Barry, 2 July 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

⁸⁵ The total cost was estimated at £5464 (rounded up to £5500). Barry itemised the amount as follows: 'Concrete and brickwork for foundations, Stone plinths and dwarf wall: £2782. Removing Canning Statue from present site and refixing the same in centre of enclosure on new foundations and concrete: £164. Iron railing all round enclosure with two pairs of gates with locks &c: £1540. Forming new street adjoining St. Margaret's Church draining the same paving footpaths and macadamising roadway; and altering enclosure of St. Margaret's Church Yard: £978.' Barry to Austin, 6 July 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

However, it was at this point that an alternative and influential voice entered the debate. Moreover, this individual was already well versed in the extreme sensitivity of Parliament Square as a space for sculpture. In March 1861 Baron Carlo Marochetti had met with Cowper and indicated his willingness to recast an alternative statue of Sir Robert Peel on a much smaller scale.⁸⁶ This was to replace his unsatisfactory work of 1853 which, as has been noted, was criticised for its aesthetic appearance and unduly large size: aspects which struck a discordant note when seen in relation to its near neighbour, Westmacott's statue of George Canning (see 2~6).

The reason for this *volte face* was the fact that Marochetti was now 'convinced that colossal proportions' were 'not suitable for statues in modern costumes'. In the light of this he considered that a large scale work 'would certainly injure the effect of the surrounding buildings' and that 'a second colossal figure would make it necessary that any future Statue that might be erected on that spot, should also be colossal, a necessity much to be regretted.' Marochetti did not, however, believe that the existing sculpture of Canning 'would have any injurious effect on a comparatively smaller Statue' measuring some eight feet so long as they were 'not to be placed as companions.'⁸⁷ Cowper therefore decided (after gaining approval from the Queen and Prince Albert) to allow this version to stand in New Palace Yard. He indicated the location as: 'where the Lamp Post now is, on one side of which Carriages go in to the Door of Westminster Hall, and on the other side go out from it' (cf. Plates 20 & 64).⁸⁸ In June 1861 he referred to the plan to move Canning into 'the centre of St. Margaret's Square' to ensure that it was far enough away to avoid an unfavourable contrast between the differently sized figures.⁸⁹ Neither idea was realised.

Marochetti's involvement in the sculptural embellishment of the environs of parliament promised to increase still further with commissions to produce statues of eminent engineers. By July of 1861 he had completed portraits of Isambard Kingdom

⁸⁶ Marochetti to Cardwell, 34 Onslow Square, Brompton, 21 March 1861. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁸⁷ Marochetti stated that he was also prepared to produce 'an appropriate pedestal at my own expense as I feel responsible to the public for any bad effects the Statue might produce.' Marochetti to Cardwell, 21 March 1861. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁸⁸ Cardwell to Cowper, 26 March 1861. Cowper to Cardwell, 9 June 1863. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁸⁹ Cowper to Cardwell, 5 June 1861. PRO WORK 20/31. The fact that this predates Barry's plan might suggest that the decision to move the Canning statue to the centre of the square was Cowper's.

Brunel (1806-1859) as well as George Stephenson (1781-1848) (Plates 84-85), and was about to finish an additional statue of Joseph Locke. It was suggested that they be sited in Westminster, as it was 'the centre of all the Engineering activity in the Country' by virtue of its proximity to the Institution of Civil Engineers in Great George Street.⁹⁰

Cowper initially opposed this proposal and instead suggested Trafalgar Square as a more fitting venue. He pointed out that the monument of the physician Edward Jenner (1749-1823) recently erected there indicated that the site could not 'be considered as exclusively devoted to Warriors and Kings.'⁹¹ He was clearly eager to reserve Parliament Square for memorials to statesmen. In the House of Lords there was some doubt expressed over 'the propriety of the juxta-position' of the Canning memorial alongside statues of engineers in the vicinity of parliament.⁹² As a compromise Cowper expressed his willingness to preserve the east side of the square facing the Houses of Parliament for politicians whilst allocating the opposite side adjacent to the Institution of Civil Engineers for the statues of Brunel, Stephenson and Locke.⁹³ This was the position on 5 July 1861 when Charles Manby (honorary secretary of the joint committees) and Marochetti visited the First Commissioner to discuss the matter further.⁹⁴ In early August the sculptor met with George Russell and the latter, at the behest of the First Commissioner, arranged that Marochetti be sent Edward Barry's sketch of Parliament Square to ascertain his opinion.⁹⁵

The sculptor had already sent Russell a 'plan of St. Margaret Square' in July before being 'called suddenly to Turin.'⁹⁶ Upon his return he cast a critical eye over the

⁹⁰ Earl of Shelburne to Cowper, 7 June 1860. PRO WORK 20/253.

⁹¹ Cowper to Shelburne, 11 June 1860. PRO WORK 20/253. The bronze seated figure on a Portland stone and Aberdeen granite pedestal was executed by William Calder Marshall (1813-94). Unveiled on 17 May 1858 it was moved to Kensington Gardens in 1862. Godfrey Thompson, *London's statues*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1971, pp. 67-68.

⁹² 'Statues of Brunel and Locke' in *PD*, Vol. 164, 19 July 1861, p. 1145.

⁹³ See the jointly authored letters from Shelburne and Lord Hanover (chairman of subscribers for the Stephenson memorial) to Cowper, 23 April 1861 and Austin's reply of 3 May 1861. PRO WORK 20/253.

⁹⁴ Charles Manby to Cowper, 1 July 1861. PRO WORK 20/253.

⁹⁵ Marochetti to Russell and reply, 2 & 7 August 1861. PRO WORK 11/22/3 ff.10-11.

⁹⁶ Marochetti to Russell, 27 July 1861. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.9. His trip to Turin must have been in connection with his commission to execute a bronze equestrian statue of Carlo Alberto of Savoy,

alternative proposal (Barry's authorship of it was apparently kept from him). The sculptor, in his own proposal, had previously cautioned that 'a heavy appearance' would be generated if all the pillars around the square were of the same size.⁹⁷ He was therefore highly uncomplimentary about the anonymous design he had been sent to evaluate and informed Russell that it would 'be a pity to do anything like that in such a place as St. Margaret Square'.⁹⁸ He was no less complementary in his reply to Alfred Austin (1805-84), secretary at the Office of Works and Russell's superior.⁹⁹ Whilst the railing was of 'a pretty design' the supporting pillars were unsatisfactory, especially given that they were 'to be pedestals for Statues eight feet high and in modern costumes!' Contradicting his previous stance on the problem of uniform pillars he pointed out that that, in this design, they were to vary in size with those 'in the angles and at the end of a line' indicated as 'being larger than the center ones.' Marochetti's solution (set out in an untraced drawing) was to 'enlarge them by keeping the same design and size but making them octagonal and the others nearby square'. It appeared to the sculptor that the unnamed designer had not thought 'about it as seriously as he would have done being rightly interested in the arrangement of St. Margaret place'. This was in contrast to himself 'as having to execute the Statues of Stephenson and Brunel' he had 'looked at it with much more care than any body very likely has done'. He was 'certain that the pattern of the railing' was of 'very small importance but that the size, shape and general arrangement of the pedestals with the general proportions of the railing' were essential to the success of both the plan and the subsequent statues.

Cowper was somewhat disappointed with this evaluation. He had evidently asked Marochetti to comment solely on the railings and added 'that little consideration had been given in that drawing to the form & size of the Pedestal'. The First Commissioner nevertheless wished to know 'what size and what design' he considered the pedestals should take to ensure that they harmonised with the

erected there in 1863. Marochetti was on friendly terms with the 'aristocratic' assistant secretary of Works. For information on Russell see M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 59 & 288 note 31.

⁹⁷ Marochetti to Russell, 2 August 1861. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.10.

⁹⁸ Marochetti to Russell, 10 August 1861. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.12.

⁹⁹ Marochetti to Austin, 10 August 1861. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.13.

statues.¹⁰⁰ Although there is no record of any reply, Marochetti's negative opinion of Barry's plan did little to assist its realisation. As a consequence the issue of both the square and its statues lay dormant until January 1863 when Barry submitted a charge 'for professional services in respect of the arrangement of St. Margaret's Square to receive statues of public and distinguished men.' This prompted the Office of Works to write to the Treasury requesting that they honour his payment, claiming that this was to come from the money voted by parliament 'for a railing and dwarf wall in St. Margaret's Square'.¹⁰¹ The Treasury was somewhat surprised at the high cost of Barry's fees (some £112) given that they were 'preliminary designs for a work estimated only at £680' and sought further clarification.¹⁰²

Cowper's response provides a record of his intentions in this matter. He believed that the area in question between St. Margaret's Church to the south; the Law Courts and New Palace Yard to the east; and Great George Street to the north

might be turned to better account and made to harmonize with the grand edifices on two of its sides. It might be decorated by allowing certain portrait Statues purchased by private subscription to be placed there according to a settled place. The Statues erected by subscription to commemorate the public services of eminent men in London have generally been dropped into unsuitable positions and in some instances they injure instead of enhancing the architectural effect of the contiguous buildings.¹⁰³

The Parliament Square question had been temporarily put on hold given that 'the final arrangement of New Palace Yard & the widening of Parl[iamen]t St[reet] & King St[reet]... [were] still undetermined' (cf. Plate 106).¹⁰⁴ Before the design of the square

¹⁰⁰ Office of Works to Marochetti, 12 August 1861. PRO WORK 11/22/3 ff.14-16.

¹⁰¹ £380 had been voted for the year 1861-62 and £300 for 1862-63. Office of Works to the Treasury, 2 March 1863. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.19.

¹⁰² Treasury Chambers to Office of Works, 11 March 1863. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.20.

¹⁰³ Cowper to Treasury, 14 March 1863. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.21.

¹⁰⁴ The Treasury was still not convinced, claiming that 'the employment of Mr Barry had reference to a Plan which was not in contemplation at the period when the Votes for £380 and £300 for a railing and dwarf stone wall in St. Margaret's Square were taken'. As such it was felt that Barry's charge could 'not properly be defrayed out of the balances of those Votes.' The Office of Works responded by stating that the planned improvement of the Square was 'taken into consideration early in 1861' but that the First Commissioner thought it desirable that Barry should clarify the idea in the form of a plan with an estimated cost. The vote of 1861-2 was intended to cover such an expense. No payment was made out of this and it was felt that the £300 voted for the next financial year would be sufficient to remunerate Barry and cover any expenses incurred in the subsequent work. Barry was not paid the amount until 10 August 1865. Mr. Peel, Treasury Chambers to Cowper, 20 May 1863; Office of Works to Treasury, 24 July 1863. PRO WORK 11/22/3 ff.22-23; WORK 11/19/4 ff.43-44.

surfaced again another monument had been sanctioned in the vicinity of parliament. It was not a statue but a drinking fountain and, as such, was both commemorative and utilitarian.

3~5 The Buxton memorial fountain: temperance and abolition

Howard Malchow has characterised ‘the water question [as] one of the eminent social issues of the nineteenth-century.’¹⁰⁵ The ‘health giving virtues’ of water was a central concern throughout the Victorian era. Its origins were to be found in the spa resorts of the eighteenth-century such as at Leamington. In 1849, when the popularity of the spa was at its peak, the medical officer for Leamington District contrasted the unrivalled state of health amongst those who resided in the expansive streets and squares of the town with the squalid conditions endured by the poor. From the 1870s Henry Bright, later Mayor of Leamington, campaigned for cleaner water and a better drainage system: for which he was commemorated by a drinking fountain surmounted by an obelisk erected on nearby Holly Walk in 1880.¹⁰⁶

The initial impetus for public drinking fountains was driven by the civic pride of northern cities, before spreading to London through the actions of ‘Quakers with northern connections.’¹⁰⁷ Thus, in April 1859, the Quaker, businessman and Liberal politician Samuel Gurney (1816-82) and the barrister Edward Thomas Wakefield founded the Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountains Association (MFDFA).¹⁰⁸ This saw the start of a widespread campaign to supply free, pure water that led to the

¹⁰⁵ Howard Malchow, ‘Free Water: the Public Drinking Fountain Movement and Victorian London’, pp. 181-203 in *The London Journal: A Review of Metropolitan Society Past and Present*, Volume 4, Number 2, 1978, p. 181.

¹⁰⁶ In 1892 a marble plaque in the town reminded: ‘YE WHO DRINK OF THESE WATERS / REMEMBER / BENJAMIN SATCHWELL, / WHO IN 1784 DISCOVERED AND PROCLAIMED / THE HEALTH GIVING VIRTUES OF THIS SPRING, / THIS TABLET WAS IN 1892 ERECTED TO HIS MEMORY BY / EDWARD TRACY TURNERELLI’. This is now incorporated into an exhibition at the Art Gallery and Museum (Royal Pump Rooms) relating aspects of the history of Leamington. Elsewhere in the display it is recorded that Satchwell (1732-1810) was a postmaster and ‘poor man’s lawyer’ and, in 1806, established free spa baths. The latter ultimately led to the Warneford Hospital renamed in 1855 in honour of Samuel Wilson Warneford (1763-1855) who bequeathed £10,000 to the institution.

¹⁰⁷ Howard Malchow, ‘Free Water: the Public Drinking Fountain Movement’, p. 183.

¹⁰⁸ In 1867 it assumed the name of the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. See the letter from Hugh Gurney, chairman of that organisation in 1949, writing from the MDFCTA, 70 Victoria Street, Westminster to *The Times*, 22 December 1949, 5f.

provision of nearly six hundred fountains and over six hundred and thirty cattle troughs by 1886.¹⁰⁹ This campaigning group therefore represented a prominent organisation in the mid-Victorian preoccupation with the provision of water.

To achieve this the MFDFA had approached a welter of officials at local and national level to promote their cause. A number of prestigious individuals assisted in this campaign, including its president, the Earl of Carlisle, and vice-presidents, the MPs Charles Buxton (1823-71) and W.F. Cowper, aforementioned First Commissioner of Works from 1860-66. It also garnered scientific support from, for example, Dr Henry Letheby (1816-76), Medical Officer to the Corporation of London. In 1861 the association distributed a circular ratified by thirty-one 'Medical Officers' to claim that the MFDFA had

already done much good by the erection of Public Drinking Fountains, supplying a filtered and pure water to the poorer inhabitants of the metropolis, thus preventing much of the evil arising from the drinking of alcoholic beverages on the one hand, and of the impure pump waters on the other.¹¹⁰

In a request for financial support it was asserted that at least two hundred fountains were required to adequately supply the streets of London and ensure 'the welfare of the metropolis'. In a further corroborative statement, Dr Chalice, Medical Officer of Bermondsey, testified 'to the already great, material, and moral benefit, to the working classes' of a fountain in his area. He claimed that it was also effective in the prevention of the spread of disease, especially in children.

The indisputable scarcity of readily available, clean drinking water was seen as a reason why the masses turned to alcohol. Fountains, at the same time as they provided clean water for the urban poor, were also believed to divert the lower classes from the moral and social impurity of drunkenness. In this they were closely aligned to the temperance movement which, as well as the principal issue of abstinence, also addressed a range of moral, social, medical, religious, cultural, political and legal issues.¹¹¹ Charles Buxton's membership of the MFDFA was thus in part motivated by

¹⁰⁹ Howard Malchow, 'Free Water: the Public Drinking Fountain Movement', p. 188.

¹¹⁰ Circular dated 1861 included in a letter from H.J. Hewitt, Secretary of the MFDFA, 11 Waterloo Place to J. Jebb, Clerk of Westminster Board of Works on 21 May 1862. WCA E3326/14.

¹¹¹ Olwen C. Niessen, 'Temperance', pp. 251-277 in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel (eds.), *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society*, pp. 251-253 *passim*.

the fact that, upon leaving university, he had become a partner of the brewers Truman, Hanbury, Buxton and Co. of Spitalfields. His father, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786-1845) had worked for the company since 1808.¹¹² It has been observed that some members of families (notably those that were Quakers) involved in the brewing industry 'were as active as teetotallers in promoting drinking fountains in the 1860s'. This included Fowell Buxton's wife, Lady Hannah Buxton (died 1872) whose brother, Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847) was 'a prominent member of the National Temperance Society and author of *Water is Best*.'¹¹³ J.J. Gurney was the uncle of Samuel Gurney, co-founder of the MF DFA.¹¹⁴

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In November 1859, E.T. Wakefield had written to the Office of Works requesting permission to erect 'a costly and handsome fountain in Palace Yard or some other site contiguous thereon'. Such provision was essential given the 'extremity of... want' amongst the poor inhabitants of Westminster.¹¹⁵ In a negative response the Liberal First Commissioner, Henry Fitzroy (1807-59), anticipated 'great difficulty in finding a Site which would be in all respects eligible for the object in view.'¹¹⁶ His successor, William Cowper, as member of the MF DFA, had other ideas and swiftly made provision to erect a fountain in the vicinity of parliament.¹¹⁷ It was not, however, until November 1863 that the architect Samuel Sanders Teulon (1812-73) wrote to Cowper and sought possession of the ground allocated 'whereon Mr. [Charles] Buxton proposes to erect his Memorial Fountain.'¹¹⁸ This matter was as yet unresolved and it remained thus until July of the following year when Buxton met with the First

¹¹² Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. III, pp. 557 & 559.

¹¹³ Nicola Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, pp. 128-129.

¹¹⁴ His father, also named Samuel Gurney (1786-1856), had, along with his siblings J.J. Gurney and Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) as well as T.F. Buxton, striven to improve discipline in prisons and reform the criminal code. They also (and Fry in particular) worked to alleviate the problems of poverty and homelessness. Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. VII, pp. 734-736; Vol. VIII pp. 809-810.

¹¹⁵ E.T. Wakefield, MF DFA to Office of Works, 16 November 1859. PRO WORK 20/84.

¹¹⁶ Office of Works to E.T. Wakefield, 21 November 1859. PRO WORK 20/84. Fitzroy died shortly afterwards on 22 December.

¹¹⁷ Cowper wrote to a Mr. E.H. Muscrop of 22 St. George's Square on 3 November 1860 to decline his offer to erect 'a simple but substantial Fountain in Granite' at the 'North End Corner of the Garden containing Canning's Statue' on the grounds that one had already been assigned. PRO WORK 20/84.

¹¹⁸ S.S. Teulon, 9 Craig's Court, Charing Cross to Cowper, 4 November 1863. PRO WORK 20/84.

Commissioner.¹¹⁹ A site was subsequently allocated ‘at the corner of the enclosure near the junction of Great George St. with King Street’ and Teulon forwarded plans of the intended structure. He received permission on 1 August before being granted possession of the land later that month.¹²⁰ The fountain was completed in April 1865 and appeared as an engraving in the *Builder* at the end of January 1866 (Plate 78).¹²¹

It would appear from this that Charles Buxton commissioned the fountain rather than the MFDFA.¹²² Due to financial problems within the organisation, donors who gave more than £25 were able to design and site a specific fountain. Howard Malchow has indicated that this led to ‘a tension between utility and ostentation’ with donors more intent on the latter and in prominent locations.¹²³ The Buxton memorial fountain, perhaps *the* most richly decorated example from the period to have survived, had as its architect S.S. Teulon,¹²⁴ with Thomas Earp as contractor. The actual design has been ascribed to Charles Buxton himself, an amateur architect with an interest in Gothic and vernacular architecture. This had been enhanced by his involvement in a prize-winning entry submitted to the Government Offices competition of 1857.¹²⁵ The following year the statesman was appointed to a Select Committee drawn up to address the question of the proposed Foreign Office. Buxton was thus directly involved in the quarrel over the architectural style most appropriate for such a public building. He and other Liberals who favoured the Gothic Revival attacked Palmerston

¹¹⁹ Cowper to Teulon, 17 November 1863; Charles Buxton, Fox Warren, Cobham to Cowper, undated [July 1864]; Office of Works to Buxton, 28 July 1864. PRO WORK 20/84.

¹²⁰ Teulon to Works, 1 August 1864; Works to Buxton, 28 July 1864; Phipps (Works) to Teulon, 17 August 1864. PRO WORK 20/84.

¹²¹ W.H. Prior, ‘Memorial Drinking Fountain, St. Margaret’s, Westminster.- Mr. S.S. Teulon, Architect.’ *Builder*, 27 January 1866, p. 65.

¹²² It is difficult to be certain over this as the ‘archives of the association were sacrificed in the war salvage drive’. Hugh Gurney, letter to *The Times*, 22 December 1949, 5f.

¹²³ Howard Malchow, ‘Free Water: the Public Drinking Fountain Movement’, pp. 188 & 194.

¹²⁴ See C.S. Nicholls (ed.), *The Dictionary of National Biography: Missing Persons*, Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York, 1993, p. 666.

¹²⁵ Buxton’s proposal for a new Foreign Office building was drawn up in conjunction with the brothers Edward and William G. Habershon and was awarded equal fifth, sixth and seventh place. It is likely that the contribution of the former extended only to the Gothic elevations. Buxton at this time also redesigned his home, Foxwarren Park in Surrey, in collaboration with Frederick Barnes, an architect from Ipswich. Ian Toplis, *The Foreign Office*, pp. 44 & 54; Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. III, p. 558; Nicola Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, note 7, p. 219.

over their party leader's view of architecture.¹²⁶ There is no better indication of Buxton's predilection for this architectural style than the memorial fountain he helped erect in Westminster (Plates 81-82).

The fountain's commemorative associations with Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton thus stem from his son's direct involvement. In 1846, before he co-founded the MF DFA, Samuel Gurney joined the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and went on to serve as its president for eighteen years.¹²⁷ Such an organisation had existed since 1823 due to the activities of William Wilberforce (1759-1833) who, in May 1824, requested that Fowell Buxton succeed him as leader of the anti-slavery movement. It was the latter's petitioning which contributed to the passing of the abolition bill in August 1833. On 1 August of the following year, 'emancipation day', there was a meeting at Fowell Buxton's house where he was presented with 'two handsome pieces of plate.'¹²⁸ This achievement was later to be recorded in one of the three brass plaques originally attached to the subsequent drinking fountain:

“And those members of Parliament who with Mr. T. Fowell Buxton advocated the emancipation of the slaves throughout the British Dominions achieved in 1834. It was designed and built by Charles Buxton, M.P., in 1863, the year of the abolition of slavery in the United States. S.S. Teuton (sic), Architect.”¹²⁹

The overall octagonal structure of this edifice, with its four granite basins, was originally surmounted by eight bronze statuettes representing rulers of England from Caractacus to Victoria.¹³⁰ It is also encircled by a series of coloured mosaics. Although most of these feature aquatic scenes, one represents a black slave to indicate the abolitionist theme (Plate 82). This decoration allied with the inscription indicates that the memorial fountain had two principal objectives. It was motivated by the concerns of the MF DFA and the ideology of the temperance movement espoused by members of the Gurney family. It is equally a memorial to the abolitionist movement

¹²⁶ Ian Toplis, *The Foreign Office*, pp. 66 & 202.

¹²⁷ C.S. Nicholls (ed.), *The Dictionary of National Biography: Missing Persons*, p. 279.

¹²⁸ Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. III, p. 560.

¹²⁹ This was according to Hugh Gurney in 1949 who also claimed that one of the plates was later stolen. *The Times*, 22 December 1949, 5f.

¹³⁰ A variety of other materials were used: polished Devonshire marble for the shafts whilst the spire is made of iron with enamel decoration. Given the present deplorable state of the fountain it is ironic that the careful use of these elements was intended to withstand the effects of pollution. See Nicola Smith, *Mediaeval Monuments and Modern Heroes*, pp. 128-129.

and commemorative of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and such colleagues as William Wilberforce, Henry Peter Brougham (1778-1868), Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838) and Stephen Lushington (1782-1873). This is confirmed by the fact that, many years later, G.R.Y. Radcliffe recalled a conversation he had had with one of Lushington's daughters: she recounted that the site of the fountain was deliberately chosen beneath the window of 2 Great George Street, her father's home from 1821 to 1835, 'and in which the supporters of emancipation used to meet for consultation before the debates in the House.' Samuel Gurney attended these meetings and the eldest daughter of Sir Henry Holland ('an intimate friend' of Lushington) later married Charles Buxton. Radcliffe concluded that, as Lushington was still alive during the erection of the fountain, Buxton must have taken 'over the whole project from the association' after he 'realized that no more appropriate spot could be found for the memorial he had in mind'.¹³¹

This final comment serves to indicate a matter of particular importance when considering the monuments and memorials under consideration in this thesis. It is the fact that each commemoration represents a *version* of the nation. The minor skirmishes between the rival factions of each statue (such as Canning and Peel) make this clear. Groups of interested people sought to gain permission to place their "private" commemoration in the public domain. Competition for a prestigious site – such as the precincts of the Palace of Westminster – was intense due to the awareness that, if successful, the memorialised person or event would garner collective, national recognition and, hopefully, protection. It is revealing that the actual nature of the familial role played by Charles Buxton in the memorial to his father was only voiced in the mid-twentieth-century at a time when calls were being made for the fountain to lose its privileged position by being moved to a less prominent site elsewhere (see 6~7). To achieve this goal the fountain's detractors sought to undermine its claim to universality by stripping it of its national status; its defenders strove to do exactly the reverse.

¹³¹ G.R.Y. Radcliffe, New College, Oxford to *The Times*, Saturday 24 December 1949, 5e.

3~6 New Palace Yard: excluding a mob and maintaining the view

In early 1864, prior to sanctioning the fountain, Cowper requested from Barry a 'Report on the proposed completion of the New Palace at Westminster'. He responded by sending preliminary sketch elevations relating to New Palace Yard.¹³² In his designs for Parliament Square of 1861 Barry had expressed a desire to harmonise it with the wider architectural environment formed by Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. He had been quick to point out that his proposals would have been especially congruous with the latter 'in the event of any further works being carried out on the East side of St. Margaret's Street.'¹³³ This was a reference to the enclosure of New Palace Yard to form a quadrangle, something 'always contemplated' by his late father. He cited an 1853 report to the Office of Works that additional buildings in this location would solve 'the irregular, disjointed and incongruous character' of the west façade. Furthermore, since then the houses on the south side of Bridge Street had been demolished; those in the north west corner of New Palace Yard were soon to be destroyed; and permission had been granted to remove Sir John Soane's (1753-1837) Law Courts then attached to the west façade of Westminster Hall (see 5~1; Plate 14). In marked contrast to this increasing amount of space the shortage of accommodation for public offices was so acute that it had become necessary to rent property at considerable expense. Edward Barry thus made a renewed call for this quadrangle featuring 'a triple archway flanked by Towers' to be 'designated the Albert Gateway'.

This was rendered even more pressing given that the Metropolitan District Railway Company had proposed to construct an underground line passing some nineteen feet beneath New Palace Yard to a new station on the north side of Bridge Street (Plate 4). Barry opposed it on the grounds that it would restrict the foundations of the proposed buildings and also threatened to disfigure the 'fine approaches' to Westminster Bridge and the Thames Embankment. To safeguard these vistas he 'proposed to erect on the North side of Palace Yard a Cloister one story high above Bridge Street.' This would

¹³² Barry to Austin, 12 February 1864. PRO WORK 11/20.

¹³³ Barry to Austin, 30 May 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

afford a grandiose entrance complemented 'by a handsome flight of steps' and provide a worthy setting for commemorative statues within the cloister.¹³⁴

The architect met with Cowper to discuss this matter in early March of 1864 when, despite the pressing need for additional accommodation, the quadrangle scheme was finally rejected, on primarily economic grounds.¹³⁵ The First Commissioner instead requested 'a plan for laying out New Palace Yard as an open space' and protected by railings. It was stressed that:

The railings must be sufficiently high and strong to exclude a mob on important occasions, but should not necessarily interrupt the view. The enclosure of Parliament, or St. Margaret's Square is to be remodelled, and the roadway is to be carried through the centre of what is now enclosed.¹³⁶

Thus, in the spring of 1865, with the two spaces of New Palace Yard and Parliament Square now loosely defined, Barry submitted plans and estimates for their layout.¹³⁷

The former was to feature a 'covered Arcade' at the foot of the Clock Tower 'and an arched subway under Bridge Street'.¹³⁸ In July, Barry produced nine contract drawings relating to the Clock Tower, the Arcade, and the paving of New Palace Yard in addition to the iron railings, gates, lamps and piers for the west and east sides.¹³⁹

The commission was put to tender and, in October 1865, the contract was awarded to the firm of William Field.¹⁴⁰ Construction commenced following Edward C.

¹³⁴ Barry to Austin, 12 February 1864. PRO WORK 11/20.

¹³⁵ Roland Quinault, 'Westminster and the Victorian Constitution', pp. 79-104 in *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 1992, p. 86. The proposal was revived, again unsuccessfully in the 1880s following the demolition of Soane's Law Courts. Chris Miele, 'The Battle for Westminster Hall', pp. 220-244 in *Architectural History*, Volume 41, 1998, p. 226; for the involvement of Charles Barry Junior see Jan Piggott, *Charles Barry, Junior and the Dulwich College Estate*, p. 31.

¹³⁶ Austin to Barry, 26 November 1864. PRO WORK 11/20.

¹³⁷ Barry to Austin, 25 April & 3 May 1865. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹³⁸ Barry's designs and estimates were sent for approval on 3 May 1865. At the end of the month Austin requested 'specifications and working drawings' for the casing of the Clock Tower, 'for the subway, for the iron railing, gates, and lamps, and for the Wall and piers connected with it, that are to surround New Palace Yard on the Northern and Western sides.' These were approved in mid-June. PRO WORK 11/20.

¹³⁹ Barry to Austin, 27 July 1865. PRO WORK 11/20. See also *Detail of railings to New Palace Yard and to the Enclosure in St. Margaret's Square*. PRO WORK 29/2076. For the actual plans and elevations see PRO WORK 29/2091-2094.

¹⁴⁰ Field set the cost of work at £31,337 17 2. Barry's previous estimate was £35,700, a sum which included the speculated cost of laying Parliament Square at £5500 and the formation of a tunnel from the Clock Tower to the Embankment at £1000. Neither of these was included in this tender leaving his estimate for the works at £29,200, or seven percent less than Mr. Field's charge (Barry cited a rise in labour costs as the reason for the difference). The eventual cost of the tender (£24, 917 9 2) was

Pressland's appointment as clerk of works on 4 December. A separate tender for the arcade in New Palace Yard was also won by Field and work began in the autumn.¹⁴¹

Since January 1865 Barry had informed John Hardman that he was 'designing an arrangement for New Palace Yard'. He had requested estimates for 'an iron railing and stone piers' with a 'dwarf railing round an inner enclosure in the centre and a lamp for such.'¹⁴² The draft of Hardman's reply dated 17 January along with some small sketches are still extant (Plate 21). The latter form the basis of two designs sent to the architect relating to the nine foot outer and two foot six inch inner railings alongside details of lamps supported by stone pillars. Hardman professed that it was difficult to ascertain costs at this early stage. It was also indicated that the pattern for the larger section could be made of cast iron panels but the contractor felt that this would not create as good an effect as wrought iron. Barry's request would seem to have predated any firm decision as to the arrangement of New Palace Yard.¹⁴³

Barry appears to have been keen to secure as much work as possible from this company despite repeated delays, problems over cost and poor design. By the end of 1866 the architect admitted that he was 'all at sea with the railings.' The uprights supplied by Hardman were not long enough to go into the piers and any lengthening would cause considerable weakening. To compound these shortcomings William Field had drawn his attention to the poor quality of the painting on the railing. As a consequence they had begun to rust and this had stained the stone work.¹⁴⁴ When the lamp bases for New Palace Yard belatedly arrived they proved to be too large for the

confirmed by Austin in mid-November with the proviso that Field's tender of £6420 0 8 awaited 'a Vote of the House of Commons next session'. Barry to Austin, Austin to Barry, 16 October & 17 November 1865. PRO WORK 11/20.

¹⁴¹ The original amount was £6420 0 8 but, due to a rise in costs in the intervening time, Field put in a new tender via Barry on 2 June 1866 for £7,700. This was agreed upon on 10 August 1866. Works to Barry, 16 August 1865 & 7 May 1866; Barry to Works, 17 August & 7 December 1865, 24 July & 4 October 1866. See also Barry's 'Report on the State of the Works under the direction of Mr. Edward M. Barry.' PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁴² Barry to Hardman, 12 January 1865. BCA.

¹⁴³ In June 1865, in a letter marked 'Private', he wrote: 'The First Com.^r has now decided on an iron railing & Gates for New Palace Yard and I wish to place the work in your hands if I find it possible to do so.' He called for the prompt despatch of an estimate as well as tracings indicating 'especially the parts to be of cast and those of wrought iron' despite the fact that the firm only received definite confirmation that the scheme was to proceed in March of the following year. Barry, presumably to Hardman, 17 June 1865. Edward C. Pressland (on Barry's behalf) to Powell, 10 March 1866. BCA.

¹⁴⁴ Barry to Hardman, 13 December 1866. BCA.

granite pedestals and, to make things worse, Barry lamented that the metalwork had a rough finish.¹⁴⁵

At the Palace of Westminster Hardman & Co was contracted for a great deal more work besides that at New Palace Yard. This included the railings and chandeliers for St. Stephen's Crypt, glass for Westminster Hall, gates for the entrance to Westminster Bridge and statues for niches in the Royal Robing Room. There would seem to have been problems with each and every commission. Barry tried – and failed – to maintain his good humour at the equivocations of his contractor. At one point he noted: 'In writing last night I forgot to enquire for my little friends for the Robing Room niches. They must be quite old women by this time.'¹⁴⁶ These delays coincided with the National Gallery affair (see 3~2) and added to the architect's woes.

Hardman's failings were described as bringing 'great trouble & expense & delay & injury' to work at the Palace of Westminster.¹⁴⁷ Barry characterised the hinges supplied for the doors to the Clock Tower as 'wretched', 'flimsy and artificial'. He professed to prefer to leave the door plain than to disfigure it with such examples of shoddy workmanship.¹⁴⁸ The architect's patience was all but exhausted by February 1869 when he penned a letter to the firm that read simply:

10 Feb. 1869

Wanted –

1. A Smith fixer who has run away.
 2. Half a screen & a pair of Gates.
 3. Hinges supposed to have been broken up as old iron.
- Information thankfully received & believed as much as possible.¹⁴⁹

This situation made Barry highly susceptible to criticism, particularly following A.S. Ayrton's appointment as First Commissioner in October 1869.¹⁵⁰ Hardman's lack of

¹⁴⁵ Barry to Hardman, 8 April 1868. BCA.

¹⁴⁶ When two of the twenty-six figures did eventually arrive they were of a 'rough' appearance and too tall to fit within the niches. Barry despondently concluded that he would have to place them 'on the dark side of the room as they are so high up the faces should look down.' In May 1867 he resigned himself to the firm's failure in this matter: 'I give them up as a bad job.' Barry to Hardman, 29 December 1866, 15 February & 4 May 1867. BCA.

¹⁴⁷ Edward Pressland to Hardman, 5 August 1868. BCA.

¹⁴⁸ Barry to Hardman, 20 August 1868. BCA.

¹⁴⁹ Barry to Hardman & Co., 10 February 1869. BCA.

¹⁵⁰ However, already in January 1867 he had implored Hardman to: 'Please remember that all this delay is a serious thing to me.' In March of that year he declared: 'I always get in a scrape with your work...

professionalism threatened to cause ‘a great row’ with Barry’s nemesis.¹⁵¹ The stress of this had already played a part in Barry’s poor health.¹⁵² His worries about the First Commissioner were justified, as he wrote in January 1870: ‘I am anxious about the New Palace at Westminster. Ayrton is playing this d_____ and I don’t know what may happen.’¹⁵³ It is evident that Hardman’s delays put Barry ‘in an injurious position’¹⁵⁴ and were a significant factor in his abrupt dismissal: ‘you really get me into frightful scrapes by causing me to make official promises in the faith of assurances which are not kept.’¹⁵⁵ What must have been even more galling for Barry was that at the same time the firm also failed to reach their deadline for work commissioned by him for Crewe Hall. They were responsible, for example, for a series of standards, fashioned into various animals and used to carry lamps.¹⁵⁶ Rather like the First Commissioner at Westminster, Barry found that Lord Crewe blamed him for the delay.¹⁵⁷

In spite of all this the undertaking in New Palace Yard was ultimately completed in February 1869.¹⁵⁸ The overall scheme had already had a favourable review in the *Builder*. It related that the levelling and lowering of the ground by up to ten feet in

Do pray put your shoulder to the wheel or we shall all be smothered in the mud together.’ Barry to Hardman & Co., 26 January & 28 March 1867. BCA.

¹⁵¹ Barry to Hardman, 10 December 1869. BCA. This was not the first time that Hardman & Co. had got Barry into difficulties with a First Commissioner: in November 1868 Lord John Manners ‘was much disappointed not to find the screen’ for St. Stephen’s Crypt and the following month Barry gave a hollow promise to Layard that it would be finished by the time Parliament was prorogued. See Barry’s letter to Hardman & Co. from 21 Abingdon Street dated 18 November and from 1, Old Palace Yard of 27 December 1868. BCA.

¹⁵² Barry to Hardman, 10 March 1869. BCA. His postscript reads: ‘I have been very ill but am now better.’

¹⁵³ Barry to Hardman, 25 January 1870. BCA.

¹⁵⁴ Barry to Hardman & Co., Crewe Hall, 9 August 1870. BCA. This letter, marked ‘Private’, makes it difficult not to feel sorry for Barry as he lists the catalogue of delays and dissembling on the part of Hardman & Co.

¹⁵⁵ Barry to Hardman, 10 December 1869. BCA. ‘Think how many times these things have been promised. Breaking promises may be fun for you, but it is something different to me.’ Barry to Hardman, 4 July 1870. BCA.

¹⁵⁶ A lengthy memo by Barry concerning the ‘Heraldic Animals’ at Crewe Hall exists in the ‘B’ letter file for 1868. BCA. For a rough sketch by Barry of the design see his letter to Powell, 21 Abingdon Street, 10 March 1870. BCA.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Lord Crewe is unhappy at the supporters taking so long and rather blames me for not having ordered them before.’ Barry to J.H. Powell, 21 Abingdon Street, 10 March 1870. BCA. ‘Everything here shews evident signs of completion except your work.’ Barry to Hardman & Co., Crewe Hall, 5 September 1870. BCA.

¹⁵⁸ On 13 February Barry informed Russell that the work was complete and that the gate keys had been given to Mr. Fincham. See also Barry’s earlier report of 17 December 1868.

addition to the building of the cloister was meant to increase the apparent height of Westminster Hall and lessen the appearance of it being 'sunk in a hole.' The journal was of the opinion that it did mask the difference in height to some extent.¹⁵⁹ The new railings, constructed of wrought iron and divided into bays of seventeen-feet in length, were formed by three groups of bars arranged to form a cross-pattern. The upper section featured beaten metal in the form of a Tudor rose and the lower held the Westminster portcullis motif. Piers of Portland stone carrying cluster lamps separated the bays. Hardman is credited for the railings, the firm of Stevens & Son the light fixtures, and Crace the gilding on the 'tops, and some other portions of the railing and lamps'.¹⁶⁰ The Cloister at the base of the Clock Tower was said to find its precedent in the Belgian town hall. The façade was polychromed by bands of red Mansfield stone and an exterior of Portland stone. Thomas Earp and his assistants were responsible for the carvings under the contractor, William Field. At the time of publication H.H. Armstead's niche statues of Alfred and William I were in place, forming two in an intended series of six statues of kings (see 1~9).

3~7 The fiasco in New Palace Yard

If Barry speculated that Hardman & Co.'s long overdue statues for the Royal Robing Room must have been 'quite old women' by the time they made an appearance, it must be wondered about the great age and infirmity of Marochetti's memorial of Sir Robert Peel. The reorganisation of New Palace Yard had delayed yet further its appearance.¹⁶¹ In March 1866 Cowper informed Barry that permission had been given to erect the monument 'close to the ornamental railing in the centre of the Entrance to the Western side' of New Palace Yard. He was to instruct Marochetti to fix the

¹⁵⁹ Anon, 'New Palace Yard, Westminster', *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1301, 11 January 1868, p. 28 and the accompanying engraving: 'New Palace Yard, Westminster.- Mr. E.M. Barry, A.R.A., Architect', p. 29.

¹⁶⁰ Barry was to later work with the Crace family on the commission for additional rooms at the National Gallery of 1872-76 (see above). See Michael Wilson, *J. Paul Getty Jr Endowment Fund Report*, 1987. National Gallery Archive.

¹⁶¹ Given its inordinately long existence the Peel Memorial Committee had had to reconstitute. Lord Arhburton and Colonel Wilson Patten remained from the original membership, whilst the Duke of Newcastle, Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Stanhope, Lord Hardinge and Mr Gladstone replaced Lord Aberdeen, Lord Canning, Lord Hardinge, Mr Hubert and Sir James Graham. Cardwell (writing from 74 Eaton Square), to Cowper, 25 May 1863; Cowper to Cardwell, 9 June 1863. PRO WORK 20/31.

foundations and erect the statue 'at the proper time.'¹⁶² This placed added pressure on Barry to complete the work and explains his frustration at Hardman's equivocations. In July he hastened Hardman to complete the railings stating:

I have promised the Peel Statue Committee that the railing behind the Statue shall be finished before Christmas next. Please send it up as soon as you can. The part from A to B will be that which will be last required but it is very important to get as much as possible finished before Parliament meets again in February.

His accompanying sketch (Plate 64) shows Peel's statue located on the western side, beyond the enclosure and between the two entrances.¹⁶³

Towards the end of January 1868 the *Builder* reported that the statue (positioned on a pedestal of polished red Aberdeen granite and a plinth of grey marble) had been erected on the western side of New Palace Yard 'exactly opposite to that of Mr. Canning in its new position.'¹⁶⁴ It became swiftly apparent that this location was unsatisfactory. The Peel Memorial Committee met with Barry on 12 March when 'they unanimously & strongly desire[d] to be permitted to remove the Statue from the Site, which it now occupies, to the alternative site proposed.'¹⁶⁵ The Office of Works sought clarification from Barry whilst informing Cardwell that the First Commissioner did not object to their moving of the statue.¹⁶⁶ It is not altogether clear where this new site was to be nor why the agreed position was so criticised. It is just possible that the spot indicated in the plan was *not* in fact where the statue was erected and it might instead have been placed in the north west corner of the enclosure.¹⁶⁷ This would at least account for the anger of the memorial committee and serve to explicate an article in *The Art Journal* entitled 'The *Fiasco* in Palace-Yard'.¹⁶⁸

In this scathing report the periodical described a 'new sensation' in London: from behind the railings of New Palace Yard peered 'a quaintly-formed knob' resembling a

¹⁶² Office of Works to Barry, 26 March 1866. See the tracing 'New Palace Yard - Plan shewing enclosure now in progress', dated 'Westminster Feb^y. 1866'. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹⁶³ Barry to Hardman, 12 July 1866. BCA.

¹⁶⁴ Anon, 'New Palace Yard, Westminster', *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1301, 11 January 1868, p. 28. Anon, 'Westminster Hall', *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1303, 25 January 1868, p. 55.

¹⁶⁵ Cardwell to Manners, 13 March 1868. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹⁶⁶ Russell to Barry & Russell to Cardwell, 17 March 1868. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁶⁷ The rear view of a statue in just this location is visible in a contemporary photograph. See York & Son archive, National Monuments Record, London, DD97/00178 Palace of Westminster.

¹⁶⁸ 'The *Fiasco* in Palace-Yard', pp. 160-161, *Art Journal*, 1868, p. 160.

‘chess-pawn’. However, on further inspection ‘some feeble attempt’ at modelling could be discerned:

A frock-coat, such as is unknown to any London or Parisian tailor, made of material an inch thick, with round solid cuffs of the same substance... As you come round, a grim and grimy face looks down upon you, and you find that you are in the presence of the latest ornament which modern taste has bestowed upon London – the Peel statue.¹⁶⁹

The journalist alluded to a recent debate in the Commons and echoed Lord Elcho’s ‘pithy recommendation, “Melt it.”’ This was exactly what was done after the Commons voted to remove it.¹⁷⁰ Fortunately Marochetti, who had died the previous year, did not live to see this indignity.

Layard, as First Commissioner, had given his ‘powerful assistance’ in the facilitation of this action. This was according to Francis Turner Palgrave who wrote to congratulate him on his assault on Marochetti’s statue, declaring that the outcome was pleasing ‘for the sake of English art’.¹⁷¹ It should be recalled that the same commentator had been searing in his criticism of the Coeur de Lion statue (see 2~8). He took this opportunity to condemn practically every example of public sculpture by this ‘worthless artist’ and to pour scorn on his ‘illadvised (sic) friends who so long endeavoured to silence criticism upon his works’. Palgrave believed that the Peel statue was ‘not appreciably worse than those of the same kind which he produced throughout his career’. The only work that he found any merit in whatsoever was the equestrian statue of Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy at Turin (for which he had received a barony from the King of Sardinia¹⁷²). Yet this was ‘either due to the pains given to a first work, or to the fact that the statue was, in truth, modelled by a clever French artist with whom he studied at Paris, & who died shortly after.’ Whilst admitting that this opinion was based only on hearsay Palgrave considered that there was ‘nothing in the personal character of Marochetti, & much in the character of his subsequent work, to support it.’¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ ‘The *Fiasco* in Palace-Yard’, *Art Journal*, 1868, p. 160.

¹⁷⁰ *PD*, Vol. 192, 1868, pp. 2138-2149.

¹⁷¹ Palgrave (5 York Gate) to Layard, 1868. British Library, Add MSS 38995 ff.166-167. My thanks go to Benedict Read for drawing my attention to this letter.

¹⁷² John Physick, *The Wellington Monument*, Victoria & Albert Museum, HMSO, London, 1970, p. 23.

¹⁷³ Palgrave to Layard, 1868. British Library, Add MSS 38995 ff.166-167.

Such damning criticism can scarcely be considered as objective. Palgrave was guilty of conflating the sculptor's personality and his work. It was Marochetti's capacity to ruthlessly secure prestigious commissions ahead of less carnivorous indigenous sculptors combined with his popularity among influential patrons (not least Victoria and Albert) that rankled (see 2~8). The fact that he might, at one time, have had not less than five commemorative monuments in the immediate vicinity of parliament and was therefore 'about to monopolize this most significant area of the metropolis',¹⁷⁴ indicates his great facility for self-promotion and helps explain the resentment that he generated as a result.

That this was couched in xenophobic terms is clear from the manner in which Palgrave concluded his vitriolic letter to Layard (the statue of Peel had, after all, been sacrificed 'for the sake of *English* art'). The writer had learnt that a statue of Lord Palmerston was to be executed by the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas Woolner (1825-92) (for a discussion of this see 4~2). Palgrave was optimistic that, just as his personal opinion of Marochetti was gaining popular credence, so too did he hope that Woolner's work would 'justify, in public opinion, the very high place which his power in art... deserve[d]'.¹⁷⁵ This championing of his close friend was criticised at the time, especially when it was accompanied by stinging attacks on other sculptors – not least Marochetti.¹⁷⁶ Palgrave employed Woolner's work to further enunciate his disdain for the output of this émigré. He urged the single quality of 'simple earnestness' in sculpture as epitomised by Woolner.¹⁷⁷ An illustrative example of this might be a marble bust of the geologist and natural scientist Professor Adam Sedgwick (1785-1873) at Trinity College Cambridge of 1860 (Plate 97). Sedgwick was made President of the Geological Society in 1831 and Woolner's naturalistic detail of the seventy-five year old and the supplementary relief on the pedestal make

¹⁷⁴ Philip Ward-Jackson, 'Carlo Marochetti: Maintaining Distinction in an International Sculpture Market', pp. 174-190 in Cinzia Sicca and Alison Yarrington (eds.), *The Lustrous Trade: Material Culture and the History of Sculpture in England and Italy c. 1700- c. 1860*, Leicester University Press, London & New York, 2000, p. 186.

¹⁷⁵ Palgrave to Layard, 1868. British Library, Add MSS 38995 ff.166-167.

¹⁷⁶ Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1982, pp. 22-24.

¹⁷⁷ Palgrave's *Introduction* to the British sculpture in the International Exhibition of 1862 cited in Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 18.

this an excellent example of Palgrave's 'simple earnestness' and 'the look of the real thing.'¹⁷⁸

In December 1868 Marochetti's statue of Peel was stored beneath Whitehall Chapel.¹⁷⁹ It was not to emerge for a number of years, and then only to be melted down (see 4~2). Whilst his triumvirate of engineers was spared such a fate they too, as we shall see, failed to find a permanent resting place in their intended location. Meanwhile, Marochetti, in his final years, no doubt had a number of critical remarks to make on the layout of Parliament Square as it finally took shape under the direction of Edward Barry.

3~8 Shaping the commemorative forum (II): Parliament Square 1865-9

At the end of July 1865 Barry submitted his drawings and specifications for New Palace Yard (see 3~6). At the same time he also supplied designs 'for the works proposed to be carried out in... St. Margaret's Square.'¹⁸⁰ The Metropolitan District Railway had received sanction to construct their underground tunnel in January of that year.¹⁸¹ This necessitated the removal of the railed enclosure and the uprooting of the trees within. In early December Barry indicated that his replacement scheme could commence as soon as these works were 'sufficiently advanced.'¹⁸² He proposed 'to lay out the enclosure... in geometrical forms which might be filled with flowers or evergreens according to the season of the year.' A central walk was intended to be flanked by eight statues 'of public men' of uniform size and on pedestals of 'similar

¹⁷⁸ Benedict Read and Joanna Barnes (eds.), *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture: Nature and Imagination in British Sculpture 1848-1914*, The Henry Moore Foundation in Association with Lund Humphries, London, 1991, pp. 153-154; Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 19.

¹⁷⁹ Manners to Cardwell, 14 July and 8 September 1868. Memo by John Taylor, surveyor at the Office of Works, 23 December 1868. PRO WORK 20/31.

¹⁸⁰ Barry to Austin, 27 July 1865. PRO WORK 11/20.

¹⁸¹ Works wrote to the Treasury on 6 July 1866 with reference to their sanction of 26 January 1865 to allow the Metropolitan District Railway to excavate the enclosure. Works requested that the sum of £1500 paid to them by the company be used to defray Barry's charge of £153 5 0 for his designs thus 'rendered useless.' This could then be excluded from the sum of £6500 voted in that year's estimates 'for laying out Parliament Square according to the Designs entirely different from those referred to in that Bill.' PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.37.

¹⁸² 'Report on the State of the Works under the direction of Mr. Edward M. Barry', 7 December 1865. PRO WORK 11/20.

design.’ The enclosures on either side were each to feature ‘a small fountain’. The scheme, with the exception of the water features, was estimated at £6,500.¹⁸³ Some months later the Office of Works requested a further design for a fountain to be placed at the centre of the square, adding that the supply of water was to equal each of the fountains in Trafalgar Square.¹⁸⁴ Cowper signalled his approval on 1 June and Barry was instructed to estimate the overall cost so that the project could be put to tender.¹⁸⁵ Shortly after this, on 6 July 1866, Lord John James Robert Manners (1818-1906) became the Conservative First Commissioner of Works.

On 24 August Barry informed Hardman that he was ‘obliged to fix a sum at once for the inner railing & lamps in Parliament Square.’¹⁸⁶ The following day he sent Austin designs for the square ‘modified in accordance with the wishes of the First Commissioner of Her Majesty’s Works as expressed to me on the occasion of his recent visit to the works.’¹⁸⁷ He added that he had not included provision for a fountain or flower-beds but that both could be ‘introduced at a future time if desired.’ It would appear from this that Manners had made some slight alterations to the scheme (the removal of the fountain for instance) following his appointment as Cowper’s successor.

When the rearrangement of Garden Square was initially contemplated in 1861 Barry had argued that the formation of a square in the full sense of the word would allow for ‘a convenient communication from St. Margaret’s St. to the West end of Victoria Street.’¹⁸⁸ When he recommended this improvement in February of the following year he again urged this ‘decided public improvement’ as it presented an opportunity that could ‘hardly recur.’ The ‘vacant piece of ground’ beside St. Margaret’s Church in

¹⁸³ Barry to Works, 18 December 1865. PRO WORK 11/20.

¹⁸⁴ Austin to Barry, 29 May 1866. PRO WORK 11/21. This occurred just a few months after the Buxton memorial had been completed (see 3-5) so it is unsurprising that it was never realised. Barry’s tracing of 30 May 1866 is however still extant: ‘Parliament Square Design for a fountain: Scale 8 feet to an inch’, signed Edward M Barry and dated ‘Westminster 30 May 1866’. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.30.

¹⁸⁵ Barry was in fact eager for the contract to be given to the firm of William Field who was willing to execute the whole plan for £6,875. Provision for the work amounted to £6,300, this, together with the purchase money paid by the railway company for the ground they acquired, produced a total matching Barry’s estimate of £7,000. Barry to Austin, 28 June 1866. Austin to Barry, 3 July 1866.

¹⁸⁶ Barry to Hardman, 24 August 1866. BCA.

¹⁸⁷ Barry to Austin, 25 August 1866. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁸⁸ Barry Austin, 30 May 1861. PRO WORK 11/20.

which to create this road would be gained 'by adopting the centre line of New Palace Yard with the centre line of the enclosure'. Barry stressed the inconvenience of carriages having 'to pass along three sides of the square for want of the fourth being open.'¹⁸⁹ In October 1866, following the appointment of Lord Manners, he stressed that the continuation of traffic to Victoria Street was something 'imperatively required by public convenience.'¹⁹⁰ The railway excavations had already encroached on part of the churchyard and some graves had been removed (see 4~7). Barry suggested that a section of the existing enclosure near to the church with the trees that were still standing could be incorporated into the churchyard and that this would also serve to reduce the noise of traffic from the church. Co-operation and part-funding from both the Metropolitan and the Westminster Board of Works allowed this to be realised.¹⁹¹

Some time elapsed though before a decision was made about the square and Barry, who had recently met with Manners on-site, was obliged to spur the Office of Works into action in mid-December 1866.¹⁹² This had the desired effect and the work was put to tender. Before this however, the Office of Works decided that a 'low stone kerb' was to be substituted for the 'iron railing' originally intended.¹⁹³ The deadline for tenders was 2 January 1867 and, of the four competitors, the lowest estimate came from Messrs. Mansfield, Price and Company who were accordingly given the commission.¹⁹⁴ This was confirmed in March and, following some minor revisions,

¹⁸⁹ On 26 February 1862 Barry sent Cowper a copy of part of the plan for Parliament Square (no longer extant) that had originally been sent a year earlier. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁹⁰ Barry to Russell, 30 October 1866. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁹¹ For details of this see the letters from John Pollard, Clerk of the Metropolitan Board of Works to Edward Hollis, his equivalent at the Westminster District Board, 9 & 23 December 1867. Correspondence: E3327/22(a) Letters submitted to Board - December 1867.

¹⁹² Barry to the Office of Works, marked 'Private', 14 December 1866 (PRO WORK 11/21) enclosing a copy of the letter and plan he had sent on 25 August of that year. This was sent soon 'after Lord John Manners had been down and decided what should be done.' Barry urged that action should be taken on this 'as soon as possible or we shall be in chaos when Parliament meets.'

¹⁹³ Austin to Barry, 17 December and Barry to Austin, 19 December 1866. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁹⁴ Mansfield, Price & Co., Henry Street, Gray's Inn Road, W.C. Their price was conveyed to Austin on 3 January 1867. See PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.48.

the sum of £6,065 was determined.¹⁹⁵ As they carried out the work the firm cleared the trees and former railings from the site.¹⁹⁶

Whilst work was underway the Prime Minister, the fourteenth Earl of Derby (1799-1869), requested 'a block plan' indicating the envisaged alterations. Barry reiterated the benefit of the new road he had espoused the previous October and added that he was also 'having a small model made' in order to show more clearly his intentions.¹⁹⁷ The explanatory memorandum sent to Derby stated that the plan had been decided on by Cowper when First Commissioner. He added that it also accorded with the 'Report of the Thames Embankment Commission' and was also included in 'the plan printed with their Report.'¹⁹⁸

It was in the spring of 1867 that the delays in Hardman's railings for New Palace Yard had begun to be 'the subject of much unfavourable remark.' As we have seen, Barry openly doubted the propriety of commissioning further work from the firm. He nevertheless strove to do so and requested designs for lamps and 'details & estimate for a low railing (2 feet) round Parliament Square.'¹⁹⁹ It was stressed that the rail should be 'independent of struts at the back and the top must not be level as the London Grannies will sit upon it all day long.'²⁰⁰ The architect urged that the arrangements had to be done 'at once... as it is most important to have all finished by Christmas.'²⁰¹ He visited the Hardman workshop in Birmingham at the end of September to inspect the model for the St. Margaret's Square lamps.²⁰²

Mansfield, Price and Company completed the preliminary granite kerb around the square in October 1867. Barry received an example of the cluster lamps from

¹⁹⁵ Austin to Barry, 7 March and Barry to Austin, 19 March 1867. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁹⁶ They purchased these materials from the government. Barry to Office of Works, 13 April 1867; Austin to Barry, 15 April 1867. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁹⁷ Barry to Manners, 23 May 1867. PRO WORK 11/21. Barry's 'Model of enclosure of Parliament Square to place in Libraries of The New Palace at Westminster' cost £43 4 0. PRO WORK 11/22/3 f.66.

¹⁹⁸ Barry to Manners, 23 May 1867. PRO WORK 11/21.

¹⁹⁹ In May 1867 Barry admitted that, although he had 'other work to do... I scarcely can trust it to your firm.' He was to contradict himself only a few weeks later. Barry to Hardman, 4 & 21 May, 19 June 1867. BCA.

²⁰⁰ Barry to Hardman, 19 June 1867. BCA.

²⁰¹ Barry to Hardman, 5 September 1867. BCA.

²⁰² Pressland to Hardman, 6 November 1867. BCA.

Hardman & Co. early the following month.²⁰³ He felt the shaft was too big and wanted the arms to project more but urged Hardman to ‘go ahead with them at full steam’ and supply seven sets (a reduction in number as Barry was considering ‘dispensing with lamps on two of the larger pedestals’).²⁰⁴ In December the architect hoped that it was being done ‘with real vigour’ and that, if all the lamps were not finished before Parliament met again on 13 February, he would be ‘in a great mess’ and ‘get into a great scrape’.²⁰⁵ Hardman’s failure to send any of the iron clusters meant that the lamps could not be made. Barry, however, did not settle on the precise design until mid-December. His alterations involved changes to the ‘ball’ of the lamp and lowering the base, the enlargement of the ‘terminals’ and changes to the ‘scrolls’.²⁰⁶ He emphasised that it was ‘very important to have the lamps for Parliament Square fixed and paid for’ before 24 March 1868.²⁰⁷ On 12 March and only two days after this demand, Powell was told that ‘objections to so many clusters in Parl.^l Square’ meant that only the eight corner pedestals were to be so adorned whilst the four in the middle were to support single lamps.²⁰⁸

By the month of May ‘uncertainties of the political horizon’ served to heighten the already strained relationship.²⁰⁹ Barry nevertheless saw fit to increase Hardman & Co.’s already heavy workload by reiterating his request of a year earlier for railing designs to encircle the square. He desired ‘first rate’ workmanship with ‘a variety of detail in the terminals’. The ‘cast iron standards’ were to be heavy in order to ‘fix well and solidly’ and two of the bays were to open as gates. Setting a quantity of eight

²⁰³ Barry to Hardman, 7 November 1867. BCA.

²⁰⁴ Barry to Hardman, 15 November 1867. BCA.

²⁰⁵ Barry to Hardman, 13 & 17 December 1867. BCA.

²⁰⁶ Similar revisions affected the New Palace Yard lamp clusters, with the removal of two branches resulting in the reduction in the number of lights from five to three. These, as has been noted, were also delayed. Barry (1, Old Palace Yard) to Hardman, 17 & 25 December 1867. BCA.

²⁰⁷ Barry to Hardman, 10 March 1868. BCA.

²⁰⁸ Barry to J.H. Powell, 12 March 1868. BCA.

²⁰⁹ At that time Hardman & Co.’s incomplete projects (in addition to the Parliament Square lamp standards) included items for St. Stephen’s crypt as well as both the carriage gates and hinges for the foot gates to New Palace Yard. Barry to Hardman, 4 May 1868. BCA.

hundred and fifteen feet Barry requested an estimate for the completed work, fixed and including ‘changes of all kinds.’²¹⁰

The work for which Mansfield, Price & Co. were contracted had been satisfactorily completed by mid-July 1868 (Plate 9).²¹¹ The previous month John Manners formally requested from Barry ‘drawings of the ornamental wrought iron railing and gates’ proposed for Parliament Square.²¹² These were sent on 26 June: it is evident, therefore, that the architect had commissioned designs from Hardman & Co. *before* he was officially instructed to do so by the Office of Works. When the ironwork was put to tender the lowest estimate came from the firm of Francis Skidmore and, as a consequence, it was they who were contracted to supply the railings.²¹³ Details about the tenders for the railings had been sent to the Office of Works not by Barry but by his assistant, Richard Barrow. The architect was at that time away from Westminster and only on his return did he discover that the Office of Works had ‘given the Parl^t Square railing to Skidmore.’ Whilst expressing his regret at this turn of events Barry tried to placate J.H. Powell by assuring him that he had done all he could ‘to dissuade them from competition but without effect.’²¹⁴ Powell seems to have expressed his disappointment leading Barry to reply petulantly that he could ‘know little of Government if... [he] expect[ed] fairness in consideration from it. Competition run

²¹⁰ Barry to Hardman, 27 May 1868. BCA. The leeway for alterations stipulated by Barry came into service almost immediately when, in July, the firm was sent ‘a detail slightly varied of the iron railing in Parliament Square’ for which Barry desired an estimate for the work ‘fixed and complete and painted 4 coats’. Barry to Hardman, 27 May & 13 July 1868. BCA.

²¹¹ Final payment to Mansfield was in two instalments in September 1868 and February 1869. Barry to Manners, 12 October 1867. Works to Mansfield, 3 September 1868; Russell to Barry, 11 February 1869. PRO WORK 11/21.

²¹² Austin to Barry, 20 June 1868. PRO WORK 11/21.

²¹³ In Barry’s annual report submitted on 13 December 1867 he estimated the expenditure for ‘ornamental wrought iron railing and gates’ to be £3,360. Skidmore’s tender was only £2250 and, with Austin’s approval, he signed the drawings and specification on 16 September 1868. Richard Barrow to Austin, 7 September 1868. PRO WORK 11/21.

²¹⁴ Barry (writing from Penshurst, Tonbridge) to Hardman, 5 October 1868. BCA.

wild is now the order of the day.’²¹⁵ Barry listed (lest Powell had forgotten) a plethora of the firm’s unfinished and unsatisfactory commissions.²¹⁶

There were additional costs incurred as work on Parliament Square neared completion: for example, it was originally intended that the pedestals were to be of stone but this was changed to granite at a later stage.²¹⁷ By mid-March 1869 Skidmore had fully discharged his duties with regard to the new railings and gates in Parliament Square (Plates 10 & 12-13).²¹⁸ A fitting indication of Barry’s increasingly untenable position was a debacle over the planting of both Parliament Square and New Palace Yard. In this the architect was accused of implementing work without the sanction of the Office of Works.²¹⁹ During August 1869 he learnt that there would not be enough to cover the £850 needed for the plants and lamented that this was the first he had heard of the matter.²²⁰ By the time the square was planted in the 1870s under the direction of the gardener, John Gibson (1815-1875) (see 4~2), Barry had been unceremoniously dismissed. Prior to that, and before the abrupt termination of his

²¹⁵ Barry chose to inform Powell on the very same day that, as ‘funds [were] running short’, he was obliged to cancel the clustered lamps in front of Westminster Hall ‘and substitute for them plainer & cheaper posts.’ The recipient’s reaction to this news can only be guessed at. Barry to J.H. Powell, 9 October 1868. BCA.

²¹⁶ Barry to Hardman, 5 October 1868. BCA. As well as requesting a tender for the Parliament Square railings, Barry had previously asked for a costing to supply the Royal Court Gates. He added that, given the ‘unsatisfactory manner’ in which the firm had executed the gates for New Palace Yard, he was ‘tempted’ to contract another company but had not done so, ‘in the first place for the sake of auld lang syne’. In the event their estimate was too high so they were ordered in London instead. Barry to Hardman, 3 & 17 July 1868. BCA.

²¹⁷ The twelve granite pedestals cost £27 as opposed to the £10 for those in stone. Other items included the setting back of the entrance to the Churchyard (£100); the additional width of the new road some seven or eight feet wider than on the plan (£117 8 0); assistance given to the cleaner of the statues (£40 16 8). There was also additional expenditure with the purchase of eleven ‘extra size... globes beyond contract’. However a saving was made on sixteen lamps with the omission of a globe from the centre of the clusters. This came to a net addition of £510 4 10. Barry to Office of Works, 22 August 1868. PRO WORK 11/22/3 ff.66-68.

²¹⁸ Barry to Russell, 16 March 1869. PRO WORK 11/21.

²¹⁹ This accusation included, in addition to the plants, a series of mosaics representing the patron saints of Great Britain and Ireland for the Central Lobby. Only saints George and David by Sir Edward John Poynter (1836-1919) were executed (1868-69). Saints Andrew and Patrick by Robert Anning Bell (1863-1933) were not carried out until 1923 and 1924 respectively. See Malcolm Hay and Jacqueline Riding, *Art in Parliament: the permanent collection of the House of Commons*, Jarrold, Norwich, 1996, pp. 104-107.

²²⁰ Barry to Works, 5 August 1869; Works to Barry, 23 August 1869; Barry to Callander, 4 September 1869; Russell to Barry, 9 September 1869; Barry to Works, 18 September 1869.

contract, E.M. Barry had overseen the laying out of another site for sculptural memorials: the Canning Enclosure.

3~9 Relocating the idol of 1827

Although the Reform Act of 1832 had placated demands for political change and diffused a volatile situation, dissatisfaction among those still disenfranchised quickly resurfaced. This was most clearly demonstrated by the emergence of the Chartist movement in the 1830s and 1840s. David Cannadine has observed that, by 1865, Britain had ‘one of the narrowest franchises in Europe’ with only one-in-five adult males in England and Wales eligible to vote.²²¹ A secret ballot was only to be introduced in 1872 and universal suffrage would not be achieved until well into the twentieth-century. However, one key stage of the gradual widening of the franchise was the Second Reform Act of 1867. Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81) introduced a Reform Bill to the House of Commons on 18 March 1867. Since February of that year he had been the leading protagonist of a policy that he hoped would benefit the electoral chances of the Tory party whilst also protecting his position in that party by winning a notable victory and outwitting his great rival, William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98). In contrast to the disunited character of the Tories at the time of the first Reform Act, the second was deliberately exploited by Disraeli (in the words of John Walton) to help ‘remake the Conservative Party as a credible party of government’ and ‘to conjure up his reputation as a founder of the modern Conservative Party’.²²² The Act did little to alter the electoral system nor, given the much less explosive situation compared to 1832, did it forestall an impending revolution. Nevertheless, the awkward issue of electoral reform again provided the background to the second chapter in the eventful history of the Canning monument.

On 16 April 1867, *The Times* reported that, ‘in a course of a day or two’ the Canning statue was to ‘be removed from its present site’ due to the construction of a new Metropolitan District Railway line to Westminster station. It was feared that the

²²¹ David Cannadine, ‘The Palace of Westminster as Palace of Varieties’, pp. 11–29 in Christine Riding and Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament: history, art, architecture*, Merrell, London, 2000, p. 17.

²²² John K. Walton, *The Second Reform Act*, Routledge, London, 1983/1996, pp. 17 & 48.

monument was to be moved ‘to an obscure vacant piece of ground in the rear, in close proximity to Westminster Sessions-house’ (cf. Plate 29).²²³ Four days later, the *Illustrated London News* used somewhat less restrained language when it called for

an injunction... to prevent sacrilegious action until the House of Commons should know what it is proposed to do with the effigy of one who was its pride and ornament, and whose bronze face was intended to be turned towards the place where he gained his fame.’²²⁴

It bemoaned the fact that George Canning ‘the idol of 1827’ was to be so displaced by, of all things, a railway and fretted that this could set an ominous precedent: ‘who shall say that the noblest and proudest memorial will be safe?’ In reality monuments had considerably less to fear from railways than they did from Members of Parliament, as demonstrated with the Peel statue almost exactly one year later (see 3~7).

Prior to being ‘refixed’ Edward Barry had suggested that the sculpture be cleaned. He recommended J.S. Westmacott (1823-1900) for the task on the grounds that he was a practising sculptor and a member of the same family ‘who designed and executed the Statue.’²²⁵ Westmacott gave an estimate of between £40 and £50 for the work, although he was unable to be exact until the bronze had in part been cleaned to remove a ‘thick crust of dirt’. This provides an indication of the extent to which urban pollution adversely affected the appearance of such sculpted figures. The resulting ‘thick crust of dirt’ is a wonderfully lucid description of the condition of this particular work after thirty-five years exposure. By early August the job was complete. The statue was described as being ‘re-bronzed’: this must have removed the artificial patination of the metal by Richard Westmacott and which had produced adverse criticism (that it was ‘glowingly green’).

Both its new appearance and location ultimately met with a favourable response from the *Illustrated London News*, which now described it as lying ‘close to the new street

²²³ Anon, ‘Canning’s Statue’, *The Times*, 16 April 1867, p. 12, col. b.

²²⁴ Anon, “‘Nothing in the Papers’”, *The Illustrated London News*, 20 April 1867, p. 387.

²²⁵ Barry to Austin, 3 May 1867, PRO WORK 11/53. They were cousins: James Sherwood (who at that time resided at 14 St. George’s Road, Pimlico) was the son of Henry Westmacott (1784-1861) by his first marriage. Henry was the thirteenth child of Richard Westmacott the Elder (1747-1808) who was also the father of Sir Richard Westmacott, R.A. (1775-1856), sculptor of the Canning statue. For biographies of many of the Westmacotts see Rupert Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851*, The Abbey Library, London, 1968, pp. 421-429.

leading from Victoria-street to the new Palace at Westminster'.²²⁶ The *Art Journal* added that the newly constructed 'paved walk' dividing Parliament Square led 'across to Canning's Statue' (Plate 29).²²⁷ It thus commanded considerable visual prominence in this new plan. Nevertheless, it was not to the satisfaction of Lord Stratheden. Both he and Lord Stratford de Canning were in favour of placing it 'a little to the rear of the original position'.²²⁸ This suggests that the political prominence accorded the statue by its proximity to parliament had been lessened.

The new setting of the Canning monument offered scope for an additional grouping of statues. Attention inevitably turned to Marochetti's homeless engineers. The pedestals of the Stephenson and Brunel statues had, since June 1865, been deposited 'in the Enclosure at the Corner of Great George Street where the drinking fountain is being erected.'²²⁹ Two years later a meeting took place between the sculptor, Barry and the First Commissioner, John Manners. Marochetti was still campaigning for sites in Parliament Square.²³⁰ He was instead offered – as a 'provisional' measure – 'the Gardens' in which the Canning statue stood, with 'Stephenson's [statue] facing Great George Street and Brunel's facing Westminster Abbey'.²³¹

This seemingly inadequate compromise remained unfulfilled when, in October 1867, Barry suggested that improvements be made to the environment of the Canning statue. He drew a pencil sketch to show the monument within a niche formed by railings and flanked by elaborate gas lamps on granite pedestals. Trees with thick foliage provide a background for the work (Plate 59).²³² He met with an employee of the Office of Works at the end of the month where it was agreed to 'plant a row of trees within the railing excepting in front of the statue [and] also to level and turf the Enclosure.'²³³ At the same time the architect also proposed an improved setting for

²²⁶ Anon, "Nothing in the Papers", *The Illustrated London News*, 15 June 1867.

²²⁷ 'Parliament Square', *Art Journal*, 1867, p. 259.

²²⁸ Anon, 'Questions and Replies in the House of Commons', *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1329, 25 July 1868, p. 548.

²²⁹ Works to Marochetti, 10 June 1865. PRO WORK 20/253.

²³⁰ Marochetti to Manners, 27 June 1867. PRO WORK 20/253.

²³¹ Works to Marochetti, 3 July 1867. PRO WORK 20/253.

²³² Barry to Russell, 23 October 1867 (along with the sketch). PRO WORK 11/53.

²³³ This was to cost £110. Mr. Mann to Russell, 31 December 1867. PRO WORK 11/53.

the Buxton memorial fountain, arguing that ‘the Site of Canning’s Statue would gain greatly in importance by such an arrangement.’²³⁴ It was not until the following March that the Office of Works drew up a plan for the layout of the ground around Canning’s statue and the drinking fountain.²³⁵ This, along with an on-site discussion with the First Commissioner informed Barry’s proposed alterations. It was his wish to ‘increase the public convenience’ by ‘display[ing] to the best advantage the statue and the fountain.’²³⁶ To do so required the setting back of ‘the present railing of the enclosure... [in order] to cut off the corner of the enclosure next [to] Great George Street, so as to allow the Fountain to be approached from all sides’ (Plate 19).²³⁷

No mention was made of the Stephenson and Brunel statues. Charles Manby as secretary of the memorial committees must have grown increasingly impatient, especially following the removal from New Palace Yard of Marochetti’s statue of Peel.²³⁸ In March 1868, following Marochetti’s sudden death the previous December, Manby had agreed to Edward Barry’s proposal that they be put at the two corners of the iron railing ‘to be rearranged near to the Drinking fountain at the corner of Great George Street’ (Plate 83).²³⁹ Barry nevertheless demonstrated a marked lack of enthusiasm for their location in this area of Westminster.²⁴⁰ Moreover, his arrangement of the statues around the drinking fountain reversed Manners’s previously stated desire for them to be ‘kept well in the rear’ of Canning’s Statue’ with one facing Great George Street and the other Westminster Abbey.²⁴¹ This

²³⁴ Barry writing from Taunton to Russell, 25 October 1867. Correspondence [in transcript form] between Office of Works and E.M. Barry Esq., R.A. Vol. II 1866 - 1870. PRO WORK 11/21.

²³⁵ Austin to Barry, 4 March 1868 [copy]. PRO WORK 11/21.

²³⁶ Barry to Austin, 9 March 1868 [copy]. PRO WORK 11/21.

²³⁷ He estimated the cost of the works, ‘exclusive of plantings and earthwork to the enclosure’, at £960. Barry to Austin, 9 March 1868 [copy]. PRO WORK 11/21. This is also recorded in Barry’s plan: ‘Enclosure to Canning Statue N^o 1 General Plan’ signed and dated on 4 August 1868. PRO WORK 38/66.

²³⁸ Following the House of Commons debate on the Peel statue in New Palace Yard, Austin asked the Committees if they ‘still desire[d] that these statues should be erected on the sites assigned to them in Parliament Square Gardens.’ The following day Manby replied that the memorialists ‘would not only desire; but respectfully request that the statues should be erected on the sites assigned to them’. Austin to Manby, 3 July 1868; Manby to Austin, 4 July 1868. PRO WORK 20/253.

²³⁹ Barry to Austin, 24 March 1868. PRO WORK 20/253. Barry, Manby and Manners met at the Canning statue at 3 p.m. on Saturday 28 March.

²⁴⁰ Manners to Austin, 31 July 1868; Barry to Austin, 4 August 1861. PRO WORK 20/253.

²⁴¹ Memo from Austin to Manners, 5 August 1868 and reply 6 August 1868. PRO WORK 20/253.

impasse was broken with the appointment of Austin Henry Layard as First Commissioner on 9 December (he who had given his ‘powerful assistance’ in the assault on Marochetti’s Peel statue: see 3~7). The following day he requested measurements of the three statues in question and their pedestals, following which, as Barry had argued all along, the incongruities of scale became readily apparent.²⁴²

Layard had little choice but to refuse permission: ‘First, because that site should be reserved for Statues of Eminent Statesmen, &, secondly, because the two statues in question differ altogether in proportion from the Statue of Canning.’²⁴³ Manby, on behalf of his fellow subscribers, expressed his ‘respectful remonstrance against the decision thus announced’. He was critical of such a decision given that the statues had been ready for erection for nearly six years and had been sanctioned by not one but two holders of the post of First Commissioner. This entirely justified complaint met with no response from the Office of Works and the monuments were removed to the Whitehall Chapel store in May 1871.²⁴⁴

In the parliamentary votes for the year 1868-69 a sum of £1000 was allocated to enable the realisation of Barry’s scheme for the Canning Enclosure.²⁴⁵ He petitioned for the work to be put to a tender that was won by Field & Co. in December 1868.²⁴⁶ The firm was instructed to proceed immediately and the alterations to the railings and

²⁴² Memo from Layard, 10 December 1868; reply from Taylor, 12 December 1868. PRO WORK 20/253. The latter indicated the following: ‘Canning without pedestal: 11'8"/Pedestal 14'6", grey granite. Brunel without pedestal: 8'5". Stephenson without pedestal: 9'. The height of the red granite pedestals was estimated at 6'6" (they were currently in pieces) and that they ‘appear[ed] to be alike in shape but [were]... entirely different from the pedestal of the Canning Statue.’

²⁴³ Austin to Manby, 14 December 1868. PRO WORK 20/253.

²⁴⁴ Memo by Taylor, 16 May 1871. PRO WORK 20/253. The two committees later agreed on their removal: that of Stephenson in June 1871 and Brunel in April 1877. The former represents Stephenson in a frock coat suit with his left hand resting at his side and the right hand holding a scroll. The nine feet statue on a pedestal of some six feet six inches, bearing his name and dates, was erected in Euston Square during 1871. The Brunel statue, eight feet five inches in height, depicts the engineer holding a pair of dividers. When, in 1877, it was re-erected in the Victoria Embankment Gardens, opposite Strand Lane, it was placed on a pedestal that formed the central portion of a curved screen wall in Portland stone designed by Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912). The inscription reads: ‘Isambard Kingdom Brunel - Civil Engineer, Born 1806, Died 1859’. PRO WORK 20/253; citing G.S. Cooper’s *The Outdoor Memorials of London* and the *L.C.C. Return of Outdoor Memorials*. The latter stated that the London and North Western Railway Company was originally responsible for the Brunel monument.

²⁴⁵ Austin to Barry, 31 July 1868 [copy]. PRO WORK 11/21.

²⁴⁶ Their tender was £1038. On 17 December 1868 Barry recorded: ‘For ornamental railings and Gates in Parliament Square and for rearrangement of the ground occupied by Mr. Canning’s Statue: £1020’. This, plus his own commission charge, came to a total of £1071. Barry to Austin, 21 December 1868; Austin to Barry, 21 December 1868. PRO WORK 11/21.

the planting of trees commenced in January. By 15 April 1869 Barry was able to forward the Office of Works a key to the gate of the Canning Enclosure.²⁴⁷ This was the seemingly resolved and satisfactory state of affairs in which the Canning statue was to remain for the next fifteen years, before it became apparent that the arrangement had produced some unexpected and undesirable consequences: matters that will be addressed at length in the next chapter.

3~10 A place of honour established: reflections and recapitulations

However, prior to that it is important to review some of the principal themes raised in this section. These conclusions also constitute an important preface to the issues yet to come. This middle chapter has recounted the events surrounding the laying out of Parliament Square. The narrative has been deliberately detailed in order to clearly reveal the forces that influenced the form and character of the space. Through this it is abundantly clear that those elements suggested for – yet denied – inclusion are as important as any of the aspects that *were* realised. Any account of an entity such as Parliament Square ought therefore to include definitions of exclusion. Thus the memorials of the engineers were so excluded just as, for different reasons, was an Egyptian obelisk in the 1870s: a matter that will be addressed in the next chapter (4~6). An appreciation of the reasons why certain monuments were refused permission to permanently enter this domain is instructive to an understanding as to why particularly undesirable members of society might also be ejected: a topic that will again merit imminent discussion (4~9). The playing out of these specific instances represents the processes of sacralisation in action (1~3).

This sense of events, whether haphazard or sequential, as they unfold through time is also revelatory. The Parliament Square of the late 1860s emerged as a formally structured, well-ordered and regulated domain. As such it is suggestive of meticulous planning in the fulfilment of a long-planned objective. It is clear from the narrative of this chapter that the actual process was far more contingent. From initial impetus to final form the matter was assailed by differing factions, chance occurrences and

²⁴⁷ Barry to Austin, 18 March and 5, 15, 26 April; Russell to Barry, 2 January and 31 March 1869. PRO WORK 11/53.

pragmatic compromises. As such it mirrors the vicissitudes of the architectural profession of which the unfortunate Edward Middleton Barry was a pre-eminent example. Parliament Square, in keeping with its physical function and location, was subject to a myriad of interested parties: from subscribers of memorials to the practitioners executing the work; and from the architect of the square to the politicians to which he was beholden.

Such turbulence beneath the apparent calm of the finished square did not cease when construction came to a close. Yet to come were the statues envisaged for each segment of the stage. These individual elements interacted in exactly the same manner as the monuments that preceded them. The inception of each additional memorial wrought changes both subtle and dramatic to the host already gathered. Commemorative meanings and aesthetic criteria fluctuated and the significance of each memorial shifted within this hierarchical microcosm of the nation. In the absence of any fixed definition or set of relationships the narrative of Parliament Square continued to unfurl. So, with the stage set and the place of honour established, it is now time again to resume this story but at another chronological moment and in the context of a new thematic setting.

Enclosures and squares: meccas of the educated or haunts of the verminous?

With the formal layout of Parliament Square complete, attention moved to the other spaces in the vicinity: Canning Enclosure (discussed in the last chapter) and St. Margaret's Churchyard (to be addressed in this section). In time these too were cleared and opened to the public, a process that is hereby examined in detail and assessed within the wider context of the park movement during the second half of the nineteenth-century. From the 1870s to 1883, a further four statues were permanently sited within the railings of Parliament Square. Edward George Smith Stanley, fourteenth Earl of Derby (1799-1869) by Matthew Noble was unveiled on 11 July 1874 (Plate 89), whilst Thomas Woolner's Henry Temple, third Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865) was completed on 2 February 1876 (Plates 95-96). They were erected on either side of the walkway facing east, towards parliament.¹ A final version of the Peel statue, also by Matthew Noble, was erected on the north side of the square in December 1876 (Plate 98).² Finally, Mario Raggi's (1821-1907) statue of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield was inaugurated on 19 April 1883 (Plates 99-100).³

These commissions were seen through to completion and the resulting works still occupy Parliament Square.⁴ As we have seen in the preceding chapter this was an area explicitly 'reserved for Statues of Eminent Statesmen'.⁵ Nevertheless, in the 1870s an unsuccessful attempt was made to erect there the obelisk known as 'Cleopatra's Needle', newly shipped from Egypt.⁶ This scheme, ultimately abandoned due to

¹ See 'Earl of Derby 1870-1879'. PRO WORK 20/42. 'Lord Palmerston 1866-1877'. PRO WORK 20/40.

² See 'Sir Robert Peel 1853-1877'. PRO WORK 20/31. Even this statue outlived its creator as Matthew Noble died on 23 June that year. *The Times*, 11 December 1876, 7a.

³ See 'Earl of Beaconsfield 1881-1889'. PRO WORK 20/48.

⁴ The original locations of the statues were altered when the space was redesigned after the Second World War, a theme to be addressed at length in the sixth chapter (see 6-6).

⁵ Austin to Manby, 14 December 1868. PRO WORK 20/253.

⁶ See 'Historical notes on statues not in charge of Department 1846-1959'. PRO WORK 20/253.

structural concerns, is relevant because it serves to articulate the symbolism and meanings associated with Parliament Square towards the close of the nineteenth-century.

4~1 Breathing space: parks and gardens

The siting of the four statues of politicians and the ceremony associated with them fulfilled the role envisaged for Parliament Square as conceived by Edward Barry. Its memorial function and delineated plots provided a framework for future commemorations as and when required. The space around each pedestal was intended to be decorated with flowers. Each section between the ornate railings was initially planted under the direction of John Gibson (1815-1875), a plant collector and landscape gardener. In 1871 he had taken charge of Hyde Park, Green Park, St. James's Park and Kensington Gardens and in 1874 he was commissioned to produce a design for the layout of the Leicester Square garden.⁷ The plan was reminiscent of a Celtic cross: two paths are cut through the square, their point of bisection forming a circular opening ringed by seats facing a central fountain. Another trail creates an outer ring leading to four circular clearings, one at each corner. In each there are further seats flanking a portrait bust. This formed the basis for the scheme as executed. Gibson's arrangement of flowerbeds in conjunction with sculpture was repeated in his contemporaneous proposals for Parliament Square, where his duties were 'confined to the turf and flowers.'⁸

In June 1874 foundation work for Matthew Noble's Derby memorial was under way (Plate 88).⁹ Whilst this was being done, John Gibson drew-up a 'sketch for five different modes of arranging the Flower-beds' in connection with the monument

⁷ Biographical details about Gibson, along with a reproduction of his plan for Leicester Square, are derived from Miles Hadfield, Robert Harling and Leonie Highton, *British Gardeners: A Biographical Dictionary*, Zwemmer, London, 1980, pp. 130-133.

⁸ These duties had been defined by Willis of the Office of Works in a memorandum of 1 June 1874. There had been some confusion over responsibilities between Gibson and Taylor. This occurred when papers sent from Messrs Macdonald & Company, contractors for the Derby Memorial, went to the former, instead of Taylor. The ensuing delay prompted Willis' intervention. PRO WORK 20/42.

⁹ Gibson to Works, 18 & 21 May 1874. PRO WORK 20/42.

(Plates 24-25).¹⁰ A sum of £200 had been allocated for plantings in Parliament Square, New Palace Yard and Canning Enclosure.¹¹ In mid-July the beds were cut out and covered with bedding plants as approved by the First Commissioner.¹² Similarly, after the siting of the Palmerston memorial in January 1876 it was decided to rearrange the adjacent 'flowerbeds to correspond with those round the statue of Lord Derby, and to make good the turf.'¹³

*

The widespread promotion of green spaces in the urban environment meant that parks and their flora held significance on a civic, national and, by extension, imperial level. This is evident in the career of Sir Joseph Paxton (1803-65). In 1826 he became head gardener of Chatsworth, the seat of William George Spencer Cavendish, sixth Duke of Devonshire (1790-1858). Ten years later J.C. Loudon was to describe the latter as the 'greatest encourager of gardening in England at the present time.'¹⁴ Cavendish went on to become president of the Horticultural Society, a position he held from 1838 until his death twenty years later. His partnership with Paxton formed one of the most important and influential collaborations in British gardening history. These two men were responsible for sending Paxton's trainee, the aforementioned John Gibson, to India in order to gather rare plants.¹⁵ He left in September 1835 and arrived in Calcutta in March the following year after a journey taking him via Maderia and the Cape of Good Hope. He explored East Bengal, Assam and the Khasi Hills and spent many months adding to his collection at Chirra Poonje. Regular contact was maintained with Chatsworth to which he dispatched numerous dried orchids, ferns

¹⁰ Gibson to Lennox, Palace Entrance, 17 June 1874. PRO WORK 20/42. These sketches of the same date are signed 'J. Gibson Jnr'. Gibson undertook the corresponding flowerbeds around Woolner's Palmerston statue in February of 1876: this was a year after his death as recorded in *British Gardeners: A Biographical Dictionary*. It would therefore appear that Gibson had a son who was responsible for this work.

¹¹ Memo by Willis, 22 June 1874. PRO WORK 20/42.

¹² Minute dated 17 July 1874. PRO WORK 20/42.

¹³ The grass was renewed and re-laid by 24 February. Works to Woolner, 5 January 1876; memo from Taylor to Secretary 2 February 1876; Gibson to Secretary 24 February 1876. PRO WORK 20/40.

¹⁴ Cited in Miles Hadfield et al, *British Gardeners: A Biographical Dictionary*, p. 99.

¹⁵ The following details concerning Gibson are taken from Miles Hadfield et al, *British Gardeners A Biographical Dictionary*, pp. 6 & 130-133; George F. Chadwick, *The Works of Sir Joseph Paxton 1803-1865*, The Architectural Press, London, 1961, p. 23.

and other rare plants before returning in the late summer of 1837 at which point he became foreman of Chatsworth's Exotic Plant House. Twelve years later he took up the post of Superintendent of Victoria Park at London. In this position he was able to assist Paxton in his labours connected with the Great Exhibition of 1851. Paxton later went on to landscape the environs of the Crystal Palace on Sydenham Hill (1852-56). This formed an influential model for subsequent park design. The stated aim of Paxton and the Crystal Palace Company who owned the site was to offer 'refined recreation to elevate the intellect and instruct the mind'.¹⁶ It incorporated numerous water features, plants and terraces. The latter formed promontories from which to take in the view as well as appreciate the statuary sited throughout the park.¹⁷

Hazel Conway has recently claimed that 'floral displays' did not constitute a major element in public parks until the 1850s and 1860s.¹⁸ She cites three reasons for the emergence of this phenomenon, which rapidly became the principal attraction in the majority of parks. The sharp increase in 'flowering hybrids' and the problem of industrial pollution were two considerations. The latter necessitated regular, sometimes annual, replanting. It was far cheaper to restock bedding plants than replace large number of trees. The third factor governing the 'increasing emphasis in parks on flowers, bedding plants and carpet-bedding' was Paxton's Crystal Palace Park. Bedding produced strong (some thought gaudy) swathes of colour laid out on mounds or inclines to show them off to good effect. John Gibson ameliorated the relative monotony of this technique in his work during the 1860s at Battersea Park. He had begun designing this park together with Sir James Pennethorne (1801-1871) in 1856. The innovation occurred in the subtropical garden where Gibson put his first-hand experiences to good effect by choosing to create visual effects through the use of plants with interesting and unusual foliage and leaf shapes rather than relying on vivid colours.¹⁹ He was equally creative at carpet bedding, a more permanent technique than massed bedding, which relied on flowering plants. The former, as the name

¹⁶ Cited in Hazel Conway, *Public Parks*, Shire Publications Ltd., Princes Risborough, 1996, p. 17. See also Conway's account of the Crystal Palace Park and the illustration, pp. 18-19.

¹⁷ See the wonderful photograph of the Crystal Palace, Sydenham taken in 1896 reproduced in John Betjeman, *Victorian and Edwardian London from old photographs*, B.T. Batsford Ltd., London, 1969, Plate 172.

¹⁸ Hazel Conway, *Public Parks*, p. 65.

¹⁹ Hazel Conway, *Public Parks*, p. 65 & illustration p. 66.

suggests, used dwarf foliage plants that could be clipped to generate a cover or carpet over the bed.²⁰

Gibson's involvement with Parliament Square indicates that there was a close affinity between this arrangement of space near the New Palace at Westminster and the public park. Hazel Conway has posited that parks 'were texts which were sometimes subtly coded and at other times more explicit'. The latter was particularly evident when it was deployed as the venue to mark an important occasion: political and social meaning was encoded in 'the plantings, the buildings, the statues and the activities permitted within the parks'.²¹

In his account of *The Government of Victorian London*, David Owen stated that '[d]uring the second half of the nineteenth century... Londoners were becoming increasingly aware of the importance of open spaces in their metropolis, which was expanding at an alarming rate.'²² One manifestation of this was the protection and proliferation of public parks and commons: in the final years of its existence the Metropolitan Board of Works (which was superseded by the London County Council in 1889) was custodian of over 2,600 acres of such open spaces.²³ It is vital to evaluate both the formation and the appearance of Parliament Square in this broader context. The parks movement stemmed directly from the 'condition of England' debate in the 1830s and 40s, prompted by the appearance of cholera in 1832 (4~7). Open spaces were characterised as the 'breathing zones'²⁴ or 'lungs'²⁵ of towns and

²⁰ Hazel Conway, *Public Parks*, p. 67.

²¹ Hazel Conway, *People's Parks: The Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 3, 4-5 & 141-163.

²² David Owen, *The Government of Victorian London 1855-1889: The Metropolitan Board of Works, the Vestries, and the City Corporation*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, 1982, p. 148.

²³ David Owen, *The Government of Victorian London 1855-1889*, p. 146.

²⁴ This phrase was coined as early as 1829 in J.C. Loudon's article: 'Breathing Places for the Metropolis'. See T.H.D. Turner, 'John Claudius Loudon and the inception of the public park', pp. 33-35, *Landscape Design. Journal of the Landscape Institute*, No. 140, November 1982, p. 33 & note 5.

²⁵ A descriptive term used throughout the century: see, for example, an article in *Blackwood's Magazine* of 1839, 'The Lungs of London' cited in Hazel Conway, *People's Parks*, p. 55. See also an article of 1890 by the Earl of Meath (Lord Brabazon), 'Lungs for Our Great Cities' cited in Harriet Jordan, 'Public Parks, 1885-1914', pp. 85-113, *Garden History: The Journal of the Garden History Society*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Summer 1994, pp. 85-87 & note 3.

cities. The unsanitary state of the metropolis was later brought home to MPs by the pollution of the Thames, especially apparent in the dry summer of 1858.²⁶

Such concerns provided the impetus for the establishment of the Commons Preservation Society (CPS). A memorandum of July 1870 indicates that, of the twenty-one committee members in this influential pressure group, two men had been or were to become First Commissioners of Works: William Cowper-Temple was the CPS president and George Shaw Lefevre (1831-1928) its chairman. The memorandum stated that the organisation had been ‘formed in 1865, with the view of helping to preserve the Commons near large towns, and especially near London, from the many dangers from which they are exposed, either of actual inclosure under various pretences, or of gradual decay from the absence of any efficient superintendence.’²⁷ On 20 March 1866, Cowper-Temple, whilst First Commissioner, had adopted CPS measures against enclosure on behalf of the government leading to landmark legislation in the form of the Metropolitan Commons Act, 1866.²⁸

An indication of the CPS’s objectives can be accrued from the text ‘A Glance at the Commons & Open Spaces Near London’ published in the *Parochial Critic* of 1867. The Holy Writ was cited with regard to the rapid growth of London:

“The land is as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea and nothing shall escape them.” In the crowded lanes and alleys of London a poisoned atmosphere is a permanency. Reeking churchyards and noisome factories fill the air with foul and fetid gases, while the smoke from a forest of chimnies (sic) hangs like a funeral pall. Alas for the poor London operative!²⁹

Given the subsequent ill health and high mortality rate of many in this polluted metropolis it was imperative that:

The Open Spaces in and around London relieve the darkness of the picture. They are its salt and its preservatives from the forms of disease at once mysterious and terrible... London is suffering from past, defect government... Many of the

²⁶ See Stephen Halliday, *The Great Stink of London: Sir Joseph Bazalgette and the Cleansing of the Victorian Metropolis*, Sutton, Stroud, 2001, esp. pp. 71-76.

²⁷ See *Commons Preservation Society Memorandum, July 1870*, p. 30. Westminster City Archives [WCA] E3328/9 Westminster Board of Works - Letters submitted July - August 1870.

²⁸ 29 & 30 Vic., c. 122 dated 10 August 1866. See *Commons Preservation Society Memorandum*, WCA E3328/9.

²⁹ ‘A Glance at the Commons & Open Spaces Near London.’ Reprinted from the *Parochial Critic*, pp. 31, London, G. Hill, 1867, p. 5. WCA E3328/9 Westminster Board of Works - Letters submitted July - August 1870.

breathing spaces that remain appear to be more the result of accident than of design. Those suburban spots where our sturdy bowmen were trained to acquire the distinction which they did at the battle of Cressy have been covered with houses, and are now only known by name.³⁰

The CPS contrasted ‘the *elegance negligée* of the Commons’ with the artful artificiality of parks and recreation grounds. They found it ‘very surprising... that whilst many men are eager for parks and recreation grounds, they are apathetically allowing their wild lands to be taken from them.’³¹ This vision of untrammelled nature is akin to the ‘utopian romance’ dreamt by William Morris in his *News from Nowhere* of 1890 in which the polluted unsightliness of industrial nineteenth-century London was replaced by ‘sunny meadows’ and the ‘dappled shadow’ of ‘a beautiful wood’.³² Trafalgar Square was transformed into an orchard of apricot and pear trees. Faced with such a vision the narrator shut his eyes

on this fair abode of gardens, and for a moment there passed before them a phantasmagoria of another day. A great space surrounded by tall ugly houses, with an ugly church at the corner and a nondescript ugly cupolaed building at my back; the roadway thronged with a sweltering and excited crowd, dominated by omnibuses crowded with spectators. In the midst a paved be-fountained square, populated only by a few men dressed in blue, and a good many singularly ugly bronze images (one on top of a tall column). The said square guarded up to the edge of the roadway by a four-fold line of big men clad in blue, and across the southern roadway the helmets of a band of horse-soldiers, dead white in the greyness of the chilly November afternoon –

I opened my eyes to the sunlight again and looked round me, and cried out among the whispering trees and odorous blossoms, ‘Trafalgar Square!’³³

A principal reason why the utopian vision of untamed nature espoused by the CPS remained unrealised in subsequent public parks is encapsulated within this extract. In it Morris alludes to 13 November 1887, otherwise known as ‘Bloody Sunday’, when three demonstrators were killed by the police. The months preceding this saw Trafalgar Square as the focal point for protests about the living conditions of the unemployed. On 8 November such demonstrations in the square were officially forbidden. The subsequent march in support of freedom of speech led by socialists

³⁰ *Parochial Critic*, p. 6. WCA E3328/9.

³¹ *Parochial Critic*, p. 7. WCA E3328/9.

³² James Redmond (ed.), *News from Nowhere or an epoch of rest being some chapters from a utopian romance by William Morris*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1970, pp. 19, 22 & 34.

³³ James Redmond (ed.), *News from Nowhere*, pp. 34-35.

such as Morris was violently opposed by the authorities. In *News from Nowhere* Morris conceives this event as marking the origin of the revolution and the end of the class war fostered by capitalism.³⁴ It is pertinent that, at this pivotal moment, his description of the ranks of blue-clad policemen and ‘dead white’, helmeted ‘horse-soldiers’ renders them analogous to the ‘singularly ugly bronze images’ in the square. These petrified commemorations are explicitly associated with the present-day privileged elite, kept in power by a police force that was swift to exercise its authority. In contrast to ‘the *elegance negligée* of the Commons’ G.A. Sala, writing later in the century, expressed a desire to see more cafes and statues on the Embankment as in Paris’s Left Bank. He had in mind

National Folksgardens: – comely, roomy, prettily decorated, where the working classes and their wives and children can sit, not only in the evening, but in the afternoon when work is over, and refresh themselves, if they like, with light beer, and listen to first-rate instrumental music.³⁵

As this quotation suggests, parks, as well as having benefits to physical health, were promoted as providing a catalyst for moral improvement: a well laid out and maintained park was taken to reflect the virtue of the society that had produced it. They represented an ideal of ‘Nature’ ennobled by ‘Art’. Hilary Taylor has examined the ‘exquisite delineation of the natural world’ in Pre-Raphaelite paintings such as Ford Madox-Brown’s *Walton-on-the-Naze* (1860, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery) in order to gauge the particular form of countryside that was introduced into the city. She argues that nature served as a ‘metaphor for an ideal and rational society’.³⁶ This carefully controlled and defined environment in which various classes came into closer proximity was governed by the Parks Regulation Act of 1872.³⁷ A schedule listed some seventeen Royal parks and gardens managed by the Office of Works (including ‘Parliament Square Garden’). It was enacted in order to prevent ‘injury’ to these sites ‘and to secure the public from molestation and annoyance’ when using them. A list of regulations (see 4~10) was to be displayed at each venue, with a

³⁴ James Redmond (ed.), *News from Nowhere*, Chapter XVII ‘How the Change Came’, pp. 87-111 & 187.

³⁵ George Augustus Sala, *London up to Date*, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1894, pp. xi-xii.

³⁶ Hilary A. Taylor, ‘Urban Public Parks, 1840-1900: Design and Meaning’, pp. 201-222, *Garden History: The Journal of the Garden History Society*, Vol. 23, Winter 1995, pp. 203-204 & 209-217.

³⁷ *An Act for the regulation of Royal Parks and Gardens*, 35 & 36 Victoria c.15.

maximum fine of £5 imposed on anyone in contravention of the rules. Public addresses were forbidden, ‘intoxicated person[s]’ excluded and no-one was permitted to ‘drill or practice military evolutions, or use arms, or play any game or music, or practice gymnastics or sell or let any commodity’. Furthermore, damage to trees, plants and flowers; the defacement of ‘any building, structure, seat, railing’; and the erection of ‘any advertisement, posting bill, or other paper’ were all outlawed. The regulations also forbade park-goers ‘to commit any act in violation of public decency, or use profane, indecent, or obscene language to the annoyance of other persons’.³⁸ This raft of restrictions was to be enforced by the park-keeper who, within his jurisdiction, had ‘all such powers, privileges, and immunities, and... [was] liable to all such duties and responsibilities, as any police constable’.³⁹

A park handbook of 1872 (the same year as the Parks Regulation Act) advocated that each city should ‘provide what is in reality a moral, intellectual and physical sanatorium for the ailments that unavoidably attack crowded communities’.⁴⁰ Howard Malchow has observed that the use of the word ‘sanatorium’, with both its restrictive and medical connotations, was characteristic of the Victorian approach towards a more mobile and less deferential proletariat.⁴¹ The same writer has elsewhere noted that the locating of fountains in ‘public gardens and churchyards helped to create the illusion of *rus in urbe*’ and cites the City of London’s medical officer who, in 1849, wrote of the necessity of water to facilitate the ‘civilization of the poorer classes’ (see 3~5). The elevating didacticism of the museum or gallery was transferred to the fountains, statues and memorials that appeared in the streets and parks of everyday life.⁴²

³⁸ See parts seven to nine, thirteen and fourteen of the first schedule of *An Act for the regulation of Royal Parks and Gardens*, 35 & 36 Victoria c.15.

³⁹ Their status was confirmed by the severe punishment of a twenty pounds fine and imprisonment, possibly with hard labour, for up to six months of a person found guilty of assaulting anyone in that capacity. Sections six and seven of *An Act for the regulation of Royal Parks and Gardens*, 35 & 36 Victoria c.15.

⁴⁰ C. Goodhall, *Illustrated Royal Handbook to Roundhay Park*, cited in Howard Malchow, ‘Public Gardens and Social Action in Late Victorian London’, pp. 97-124, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Autumn 1985, p. 102.

⁴¹ Howard Malchow, ‘Public Gardens and Social Action in Late Victorian London’, p. 102.

⁴² For this and the earlier quotation (the latter from John Simon’s *English Sanitary Institutions* of 1890) see Howard Malchow, ‘Free Water: the Public Drinking Fountain Movement and Victorian London’,

These observations provide further evidence of the contrast between the anarchic character of the commons as envisaged by the CPS and the regimentation and control of the park. The strict railed geometry of Parliament Square with its formally arranged plants and carefully protected monuments provides, in microcosm, an example of an ideology shaped by a belief in the physical and moral benefits of nature and the discipline of the park.

4~2 A harmonious whole: ‘the two gardens in Parliament Square’

The problematic history of the commemoration of Sir Robert Peel at Westminster must have provided ample proof of the necessity for a more holistic, structured approach to the commissioning of memorials in the vicinity of parliament. With a character like Acton Smee Ayrton in the role of First Commissioner this was, not surprisingly, swiftly implemented. Under his stewardship the Office of Works became more proactive than hitherto. In March 1871 the Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98) appointed an investigative committee consisting of Edward Barry, Henry Weekes and James Fergusson.⁴³ Their report was to identify the ‘open-air spaces... in the immediate vicinity of the Palace of Westminster’ suitable for the commemoration of statesmen and to determine the number of statues that could be progressively accommodated there ‘without presenting the appearance of mutilated or incomplete arrangements’. It was also requested that they indicate the ‘size of the statues, or other particulars, which ought, in their judgement, to be borne in mind with a view to the ultimate exhibition of an effective and harmonious whole.’⁴⁴

Their response of May 1871 concluded that ‘the two gardens in Parliament Square’ were the only such spaces available.⁴⁵ It was their contention that, if the central path

pp. 181-203 in *The London Journal: A Review of Metropolitan Society Past and Present*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1978, pp. 182 & 195.

⁴³ ‘Westminster Palace (Open Spaces). Copies “of Minute to the Board of Treasury, dated 23rd day of March 1871, appointing a Committee to Report upon the Open Air Spaces available in the Vicinity of the Palace of Westminster for the Statues of Statesmen. And, of the Report of the Committee, dated the 8th day of May 1871.”’ W.E. Baxter, Treasury Chambers, 22 May 1871. *PP* 1871 (248) LVI.363-366.

⁴⁴ ‘No. 1. Treasury Minute, dated 23 March 1871’, f.363. *PP* 1871 (248) LVI.363.

⁴⁵ ‘No. 2. Report of Committee. To Her Majesty’s First Commissioner of Works, &c., 8th May 1871’, ff.364-7. *PP* 1871 (248) LVI.363.

between the two gardens was widened from twenty feet to twenty-eight feet, then ten statues could be sited there ‘without crowding, and so as to form a pleasing and appropriate approach to the Houses of Parliament.’ It was added that this arrangement was set out in Barry’s model (commissioned in 1865 and submitted in 1868) and this along with a plan was included with their report (Plate 22).⁴⁶ In order to avoid an appearance of incompleteness it was urged that a minimum of six pedestals should be erected and that four of them be used for that number of statues thought to be then nearing completion whilst the remainder should ideally be commissioned in pairs. If this was fulfilled a further eight statues might be placed at the ‘truncated angles of the square’. It was recommended that the statues ‘as a general rule, be one-half larger than life size’ inclusive of a plinth of some five inches and each should stand on a pedestal of approximately eight feet. The minor discrepancies in size would thus reflect the differing heights of the individuals in real life. This would avoid any danger of monotonous uniformity. To further ‘prevent incongruity of effect’ it was proposed that any potential statues were to be erected temporarily in model form and should only be cast and erected permanently with the written approval of the First Commissioner.

The findings of this report were published in the *Builder* in June 1871.⁴⁷ In August it returned to the matter following a parliamentary debate on the role of the First Commissioner in regard to statues. Ayrton dismissed any notion of eight or ten statues and said that only those to Peel, Palmerston and Derby were intended. He believed that ‘the fine arts... [were] beginning to look up’ due to the fact that he ‘had not assumed that exclusivity and extraordinary knowledge of all matter of art which some people did.’ Instead of having ‘gathered together half a dozen gentlemen who professed to be great connoisseurs of art’ he had instead arranged for ‘the director of the National Gallery’ and the sculptors concerned (Matthew Noble and Thomas Woolner) ‘to meet together and arrange the technical details which had to be considered’.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The latter is entitled ‘Plan of Parliament Square Gardens’, *PP* 1871 (248) LVI.365.

⁴⁷ Anon, ‘Statues of statesmen’, *Builder*, Vol. 29, No. 1479, 10 June 1871, p. 453.

⁴⁸ Anon, ‘Statues at Westminster and the Chief Commissioner’, *Builder*, Vol. 29, No. 1489, 19 August 1871, p. 650.

From the very moment he was appointed Ayrton had been quick to stifle the aesthetic demands of any prevaricating connoisseurs or the wiles of self-interested memorial subscribers. This was apparent in July 1870 when Sir John Packington (afterwards Lord Hampton) chairman of the Derby Committee, wrote to the recently appointed First Commissioner, to request a site ‘in one of the little plots of garden recently made opposite to the Entrance to Palace Yard.’⁴⁹ In his reply the First Commissioner referred to the contemporaneous arrangements for statues of Peel and Palmerston and asked ‘for the dimensions of the Statue & Pedestal... in order that the several Statues may be placed in harmonious relation to one another.’⁵⁰

Packington, evidently unhappy at this precipitous request for detailed information, wrote back stating that, as Ayrton had not give a ‘decided answer’ to his request, it was difficult for the sculptor (Matthew Noble) to give the intended scale as he wished ‘to adapt his designs to the Site selected.’ However, the committee proposed that the statue should be ‘from 10 to 12 feet in height – the pedestal must of course depend partly on the Statue, partly on the Site.’ Packington added that the envisaged statues of Peel and Palmerston were ‘much smaller than we propose for Lord Derby. Canning’s is about the same size.’⁵¹

Westmacott’s immense figure was thus still providing an unhelpful precedent. By December 1870, Ayrton had made it clear that the statue was to measure nine feet on a pedestal of eleven feet high.⁵² He forwarded a plan of Parliament Square showing the location for the Palmerston monument and adding that this was ‘irrevocably settled’ and that he hoped the Derby Committee would adopt Pakington’s idea ‘of placing it to correspond on the South East with Lord Palmerston’s on the South West.’⁵³ The Committee, evidently dissatisfied with the restrictions imposed by the Office of Works, negotiated with the Metropolitan Board of Works for an alternative

⁴⁹ Packington, 9 Eaton Square to Ayrton, 20 July 1870. PRO WORK 20/42.

⁵⁰ Ayrton to Packington, 22 July 1870. PRO WORK 20/42.

⁵¹ Packington to Ayrton, 29 July 1870. PRO WORK 20/42.

⁵² Ayrton to Packington, 20 December 1870. PRO WORK 20/42.

⁵³ Ayrton to Packington, 20 December 1870. PRO WORK 20/42.

location. Proving unsuccessful, the Committee ‘acquiesced unwillingly in the limitation as to height’ and accepted Ayrton’s initial offer.⁵⁴

Shortly after this, on Saturday 5 August, a ‘gray plaster’ sculpture of Oliver Cromwell was erected on a wooden pedestal in Parliament Square, opposite Old Palace Yard.⁵⁵ Ayrton had given instructions for the model to be taken from Noble’s studio in order to ascertain the site and dimensions most appropriate for the statues of statesmen that were intended to decorate the square as set out in the parliamentary report of May 1871. As a result a plan of Parliament Square was marked with the letters A, B, C, and D, indicating the potential locations of the Derby, Palmerston and Peel statues (Plate 23).⁵⁶ Copies of this along with an accompanying letter were sent to Packington, Cowper Temple and Cardwell, responsible for the Derby, Palmerston and Peel memorials respectively. It was stipulated that the statues were ‘to be one & a half life size, on a Pedestal 9 feet high.’ The latter were ‘to be similar in general Gothic style’.⁵⁷

By July 1874 the Derby memorial was complete and in situ. It provided a template for the Peel memorial that was also being worked on around this time. Arrangements for this replacement had commenced in October 1870 when an appointment had been made for Matthew Noble to see the earlier statue by Marochetti. Noble was officially commissioned to undertake this commission in August 1874 and later that month he received the existing sculpture.⁵⁸ The committee met at Montague House on 5 March 1875 to discuss the current situation and report that instructions had been given for a new work to be undertaken.⁵⁹ The £650 pedestal was paid for out of money voted by

⁵⁴ Packington to Ayrton, 2 August 1871. PRO WORK 20/42.

⁵⁵ ‘The Statue before Palace-yard’, *The Times*, 10 August 1871, p. 7e. See also *Illustrated London News*, 12 August 1871, p. 143.

⁵⁶ Works to Packington, 8 August 1871. PRO WORK 20/42.

⁵⁷ It was added that the ‘Lampposts on the iron railing round Parliament Square [were] to be removed by, & at the cost of the office of Works.’ Works to Packington, 8 August 1871. PRO WORK 20/42. Works to Cardwell, 8 August 1871. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁵⁸ Cardwell was under the impression that Marochetti’s sculpture was ‘under the Act of 1854, public property, and no longer the property of the Committee’. However, Lennox replied that it was to be delivered to the Committee ‘at whose expense it was erected, it being still their property.’ Cardwell to Lennox, 15 August 1874; Lennox to Cardwell, 21 August 1874. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁵⁹ Cardwell to Lennox, 6 March 1875. PRO WORK 20/31.

parliament for public buildings.⁶⁰ This was modelled on the Derby monument and carved in granite at Aberdeen.⁶¹ It was completed by March 1876, two months prior to Noble's death on 23 June.⁶² This, the third and final statue of Sir Robert Peel, took its place within the ornamental railings on the north side of Parliament Square in December 1876.⁶³ They thereby joined another very recent arrival: the statue of Palmerston was also set-up in February of that year. Given the temporal as well as spatial proximity of these three sculptures it is well worth describing them together. But before that it is necessary to give an account of the final chapter in the Palmerston saga.

Palmerston, like Peel, was originally intended to stand in new Palace Yard. Its exact location was mentioned as 'at the North West Corner... facing the junction of Bridge Street, Parliament Street, Great George Street, and St. Margaret's Street' (Plate 20).⁶⁴ This appeared to have appeased the committee of subscribers in their wish to secure 'some prominent and conspicuous place in the vicinity of the House of Commons... [in] honour of the memory and great public services' of Viscount Palmerston.⁶⁵ This situation was reiterated in early January 1868, just before the disastrously brief appearance of the Peel statue (see 3~7).⁶⁶ Just over a year later Thomas Woolner, the sculptor commissioned to execute the work, was in communication with E.M. Barry. The architect was to design the pedestal and between them they arranged for the erection of a temporary model in order to ascertain its appearance.⁶⁷ Woolner was anxious that the work should remain on view for as short a time as possible given that

⁶⁰ Memo by Taylor, 19 July; William Law at the Treasury to Works, 8 July 1875. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁶¹ Mitford to Noble, 21 July 1875; Noble to Mitford, 23 July and 29 December 1875. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁶² Mrs. Frances Noble to Office of Works, 15 September & 3 August 1876. Memorandum by Taylor, 23 September 1876. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁶³ *The Times*, 11 December 1876, 7a. The Treasury authorised the Office of Works to take charge of the monument on 23 May 1877. Cardwell to Mitford, 12 May 1877; Treasury to First Commissioner, 23 May 1877. PRO WORK 20/31.

⁶⁴ Austin to Barry, 12 July 1866. PRO WORK 11/21 (this letter, in draft form, is also included in PRO WORK 20/40).

⁶⁵ Mr. A. Fleming to Cowper, 25 June 1866. PRO WORK 20/40.

⁶⁶ Anon, 'New Palace Yard, Westminster', *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1301, 11 January 1868, p. 28.

⁶⁷ The fact that Barry designed the Palmerston pedestal is also asserted in Lord Edward Gleichen, *London's Open-Air Statuary*, Cedric Chivers Ltd., Bath, 1928/1973, p. 35.

it was 'being worked from and in a discoloured state and would call forth shouts from an unenlightened public.'⁶⁸

This was carried out in mid-June 1869.⁶⁹ The sculptor's anxiety that it be should only 'be uncovered for the time necessary for a short inspection' was shared by the then First Commissioner, A.H. Layard. His reasons for concern were not aesthetically minded however, as is indicated by his instructions for 'the Police on duty on Parliament Square to watch the model of the Statue of Lord Palmerston erected in the Square, with a view to prevent any injury being done to it.'⁷⁰ Layard planned to go abroad in the autumn of 1869. After seeking the advice of one of his predecessors, William Cowper, he left an explanatory memorandum with his secretary, George Russell. Cowper suggested that he ought to clarify the fact that he had not approved of 'Woolner's Statue because it was out of scale with the surroundings of the site' and that another version should be submitted by the committee for his evaluation. Cowper was confident that: 'Such a memo would place on record the reason why the first statue was not erected there & perhaps facilitate the application that will have to be made for another one.'⁷¹ This was on 18 October 1869, just over a week before A.S. Ayrton took up his new post as First Commissioner.⁷² By the end of November a further model by Woolner had been completed and permission been given for its erection.⁷³

There was then a lengthy hiatus until 11 June 1874 when the sculptor noted in his diary that 'Mr. Ayrton called to see Pal[merston] St[atue]'.⁷⁴ He was at that time still

⁶⁸ Barry to Layard, 8 April 1869 (enclosing Woolner's letter of 24 March). PRO WORK 20/40.

⁶⁹ The Office of Works reconfirmed the site as that chosen by Cowper in June of that year, and stated that Layard wished the model to remain in place until he had seen it for himself. It was erected on 14 June, on which day Barry wrote to ask the First Commissioner for an order to uncover it. Works to Barry 10 April and Barry to Russell, 14 June 1869. PRO WORK 20/40. Lord Gleichen asserted that the statue was erected 'on the northern green plot facing New Palace Yard on 18 June 1869'. Edward Gleichen, *London's Open-Air Statuary*, p. 35.

⁷⁰ Works to Lt Col Henderson, 18 June 1869. PRO WORK 20/40.

⁷¹ Cowper (writing from Broadlands, Romsey) to Layard, 18 October 1869, British Library, Add MSS 38997 ff.69-70. My thanks go to Benedict Read for drawing my attention to this letter.

⁷² In November Cowper personally related to Ayrton the fact that the first Palmerston statue had been considered too small and Woolner had been instructed 'to prepare another model of a larger size which is to be placed there on trial.' Cowper to Ayrton, 27 November 1869, WORK 20/40.

⁷³ Works to Cowper, 30 November 1869. PRO WORK 20/40.

⁷⁴ Thursday, 11 June 1874. HMI J2 f.47.

working on the larger version. Following Ayrton's visit the Office of Works gave the sculptor 'permission to erect a wooden model' opposite Derby.⁷⁵ The design must have satisfied Cowper Temple, who sent Woolner a second instalment of £500 on 24 July.⁷⁶ However, although the model was temporarily erected on 18 August 1874,⁷⁷ it was not until 1 January 1876 that Woolner asked the then First Commissioner, Lord Henry Lennox, for permission for the statue and pedestal to be put into position.⁷⁸ This was granted on 5 January and it was unveiled without ceremony on 2 February 1876.⁷⁹

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They are a number of similarities between this triumvirate of statues (see 1~5). The earlier versions of Woolner's figure, like those of Peel by Marochetti, have been lost. Whilst it is impossible to pass comment on their appearance, the final, still extant likenesses of Palmerston, Peel and Derby can still be appreciated *in situ*. The former is perhaps the least successful, a testimony no doubt to the problems that beset the lengthy commission. The only aspects of detail or texture on what is a generally monotonous surface are the curled hair and a neckerchief in addition to the contours of the face. Palmerston's striking visage is hinted at through tentatively wrinkled skin and a slightly furrowed brow (Plates 95-96). This serves as a reminder that Woolner was capable of far better work (see 3~7; Plate 97).

There is little animation to the figure as a whole, although the left arm does gesture outwards from the elbow with the palm facing upwards. The other arm is held to the side and is partly concealed by a jacket slung over the wrist. This is obviously an attempt on the part of the sculptor to relieve the dullness of the contemporary attire in which the subject has been placed. The close-fitting suit is fully buttoned and the wavy line of the fastened coat only serves to emphasise the lack of *contrapposto* to the

⁷⁵ Works to Woolner, 11 July 1874. PRO WORK 20/40.

⁷⁶ HMI J2, f.59.

⁷⁷ Edward Gleichen, *London's Open-Air Statuary*, p. 35.

⁷⁸ Woolner to Works, 11 August 1874 & Woolner to Lennox, 1 January 1876. PRO WORK 20/40.

⁷⁹ *The Times* 3 February 1876, 9e. On 18 April 1877 a letter from the Treasury Chambers to the First Commissioner stated that the Palmerston memorial was to be taken over by the Office of Works 'under the provisions of Section VII of the Act 17/18 Vict. caps 33.' On 16 May 1877 the Duke of Cleveland wrote to the Office of Works giving formal permission for the transfer. PRO WORK 20/40.

stilted figure. This contrasts unfavourably with the open jacket of Matthew Noble's Peel statue, which at least provides a degree of surface and tonal variation (Plate 98). Moreover, unlike the frontal stance of Palmerston, Noble gives a slight turn to the body of Peel. The arms are rather more animated and the downward pointing index finger of the right hand is marginally more interesting than the palm of Palmerston (even if the latter is linguistically apposite).

Peel's splayed fingers find an echo in the same sculptor's contemporaneous statue of Derby. It is not necessary to dwell on this work given that it has already merited favourable attention elsewhere (1~5), suffice to say that, in the context of a discussion of the other two statues, its aesthetic qualities are clearly evident. This is, of course, aided by its accompanying relief sculptures (Plates 91-94). The facing panel depicts the House of Commons in 1833, the upper galleries of which provide a strong perspectival arrangement that is appreciable from some distance (Plate 89). This illusionary space appears to penetrate the mass of the pedestal. It therefore helps to further alleviate the sense of bulkiness, a hindrance to the animation of any sculptural representation.

4~3 Ceremonial rites and ritual remembrance

Woolner's inanimate statue of Palmerston, compounded by its inordinately long gestation period, perhaps accounted for the lack of ceremony to mark its completion. This was in considerable contrast to the state funeral that had accompanied the politician's demise over a decade before. This was Arthur Penrhyn Stanley's (1815-81) 'first public funeral' as Dean of Westminster Abbey.⁸⁰ The procession was depicted in the *Illustrated London News* on 4 November 1865 where the coffin, with a pall bearing the Stanley coat of arms draped over it, is shown entering the Abbey.⁸¹ Stanley recalled that the ceremony 'created much excitement' and that the 'collection of eminent statesmen who stood round the grave, opposite Mr. Canning's statue,

⁸⁰ Dean Stanley, *Recollections of Events Connected with Westminster Abbey* [unpublished], p. 3. WAM.

⁸¹ The elaborate detail of this occasion contrasted with the considerably less ornate hearse employed to transport Palmerston's body from Brocket Hall, his Hertfordshire seat, to London. Trevor May, *The Victorian Undertaker*, Shire Publications Ltd, Princes Risborough, 1996, illustrations pp. 6 & 15.

(which had been chosen because of Lord Palmerston's early connection with that statesman) was very impressive.⁸² The claims for the universality of this event was reinforced by Stanley's description of a 'deep shade' over the Abbey 'which appeared almost to wrap, as in a black and funeral shroud, the whole group which stood around the grave'. Not until 'the body had sunk into the vault' did a ray of sunlight alleviate this melancholy gloom.⁸³ The Christian context of this funeral sought to annul all shades of political opinion. In Stanley's *Recollections* this is characterised by a literal shadow cast over the host of 'eminent statesmen' who are presented as portraying the spectrum of political ideology from every side of the party divide. This was enacted as a national, collective ceremony. To emphasise this fact parliament voted money on 22 February 1866 for a sculptural memorial as a permanent reminder of Palmerston and these ceremonial final rites. Four months later Cowper, as First Commissioner, wrote asking the Dean for a suitable site.⁸⁴ Stanley suggested the pillar opposite 'the site of the statue of Mr. Canning.'⁸⁵ Robert Jackson was commissioned to execute the work for £2000.⁸⁶ Following his approval of the clay model representing the statesman in garter robes, Jackson set about carving the over life-size marble statue and by 2 June 1870 he informed the Office of Works that it had been fixed into position.⁸⁷

It has recently been observed that the ceremonial unveiling of monuments is 'a ritual in the process of monumental statuary... [which] transferred the monument out of the hands of the executive committee, and into the hands of its public. It was thus a real – if only vaguely understood – transferral of ownership.'⁸⁸ This *ritual* is thus a crucial moment of transition (from the private to the public) and heightened visibility when awareness of the commemoration is at its peak (the figure is quite literally revealed).

⁸² Dean Stanley, *Recollections of Events Connected with Westminster Abbey*, pp. 5-6. WAM.

⁸³ Dean Stanley, *Recollections of Events Connected with Westminster Abbey*, p. 6. WAM.

⁸⁴ Cowper to Stanley, 25 June 1866. WAM 57687.

⁸⁵ 'Palmerston memorial Westminster Abbey'. PRO WORK 6/400/3, f.3.

⁸⁶ Cowper researched the expense incurred with the Peel monument in the Abbey and discovered that it cost considerably more (£5250). PRO WORK 6/400/3, f.7; *Estimate of the Expense of Erecting a Monument to the Memory of the late Sir Robert Peel, Bart* that was 'pursuant to an Address of the House of Commons, dated 12 July 1850.' PP 1850 (617) XXXIV.517.

⁸⁷ It is signed 'Rob^t Jackson Sc. 1870'. See PRO WORK 6/400/3, ff.2-3, 7, 10, 12, 26 & 29. John Physick, *Inscriptions on Abbey Monuments* [unpublished], 1991, [128]. WAM.

⁸⁸ Penelope Curtis, *The Sculpture Business: Documents from the Archive*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 1997, p. 48.

This was particularly the case regarding the Derby memorial, the execution of which was consistently characterised by ritualised ceremonial acts.

4~4 An exemplary memorial of the fourteenth Earl of Derby

In mid-May 1873 the *Builder* announced that the Derby statue had been recently cast ‘at the foundry of Messrs. Young, in Ecclestone-street, Pimlico.’ Praise was accorded to the foundry given that the sculpture was ‘cast in a single piece’, a technically challenging task which necessitated the inversion of the mould beneath the floor of the casting room. Above the base was a ‘trough’ into which ‘four tons of molten metal’ held in a cauldron was to be transferred by crane from the furnace. ‘Lady Constance Stanley with the help of the Duke of Richmond’ was to ‘depress the lever’ that would remove three plugs from the bottom of the trough and release the metal in one action.⁸⁹

Just over a year later, at midday on Saturday, 11 July 1874, the recently elected Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, unveiled the monument before ‘a large and distinguished assemblage.’⁹⁰ A detailed description in *The Times* indicates the choreographed and hierarchical nature of the event by which the memorial was ‘presented to the nation’ (cf. Plate 100).⁹¹ The ‘enclosure’ in Parliament Square was restricted to ticket-holders chosen by the committee of subscribers. They included members of both Houses of Parliament and other dignitaries. In the space beyond was ‘a serried mass of spectators’. A ‘covered platform in immediate proximity to the Statue was erected for the accommodation of the Premier and the Memorial Committee’ as well as the Earl of Derby and ‘most of the leading members of the Derby Administration.’

Hampton, as Chairman of the subscribers, was first to speak. His theme concerned Derby’s nobility: nobility of birth, rank, patriotism, intellect and honour. Disraeli, Derby’s ‘friend and colleague and... worthy... successor’, released the canvas drape

⁸⁹ ‘Anon, ‘Statue of the Late Lord Derby for Westminster’, *Builder*, Vol. 31, No. 1579, 10 May 1873, p. 372.

⁹⁰ See the illustration, ‘Mr. Disraeli unveiling the statue of the late Lord Derby in Parliament-square’ in *Illustrated London News*, 18 July 1874, p. 68.

⁹¹ ‘The Derby Memorial Statue’, pp. 10a-b in *The Times*, 13 July 1874, 10a.

to reveal the statue (Plate 89).⁹² *The Times* accorded the sculpture merit ‘both as a work of art and a faithful representation of the noble mien and characteristic features of the deceased statesman.’ The nobility of character alluded to by Hampton was thus to be rendered perpetually visible in this bronze sculpture so that, in the words of Disraeli, ‘the semblance of a man who for half a century influenced opinion and largely contributed to the [nation’s] history’ should look upon both Houses of Parliament in ‘which his public life was about equally divided.’ He added that the statue was erected ‘not only as a Memorial, but as an example, – not merely to commemorate, but to inspire. (Great cheering.)’.

In his speech Disraeli stressed that, irrespective of his hereditary privilege, Derby ‘would have become memorable.’ He concentrated on

three Measures which figure[d] in colossal proportion, and which were the result of his [Derby’s] own individual energy and creation. He abolished slavery (cheers), he educated Ireland (cheers), and he reformed Parliament. (Cheers.)⁹³

The Reform Act of 1832 was due to Derby’s ‘daring determination’, and it was similar qualities which, thirty-five years later, saw the passing of the second Reform Act during Derby’s administration of 1866-68 (in which Disraeli was Foreign Secretary). The legislation of 1867, it was argued, ‘supplied the deficiencies and repaired the injustice of its predecessor, because it restored to the working classes of this country those franchises which in 1832 they were deprived of.’ This event is alluded to in a bronze relief on the pedestal depicting a cabinet council meeting at 10 Downing Street during 1867 (Plate 91).⁹⁴

Each face of the granite base has a similar panel and there is reason to suppose that they are by Horace Montford (died c.1912), who later became Curator of the Sculpture School at the Royal Academy at London in 1881 before emigrating to Australia.⁹⁵ Replicas of the reliefs (in either terracotta or painted plaster) are extant

⁹² For a description of this accomplished work see 1~5.

⁹³ ‘The Derby Memorial Statue’, *The Times*, 13 July 1874, pp. 10a-b.

⁹⁴ This along with the three other pedestal bas-reliefs ‘were cast by Messrs. Cox and Sons, of Southampton-street, Strand, under the direction of Mr. Moore, their manager.’ Anon, ‘The late Earl of Derby’, *Illustrated London News*, 18 July 1874, p. 60. Inscribed on the side of the plinth is: ‘M NOBLE Sculpt. London.’

⁹⁵ Edward Gleichen, *London’s Open-Air Statuary*, p. 35. His son, the sculptor Paul Raphael Montford (1868-1938) was born in Australia before returning to Britain to study at Lambeth School of Art, the

and were presented to the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool by Sir Thomas Edwards Moss.⁹⁶ They are entitled: 'HOUSE OF COMMONS 1833.' representing Derby as Colonial Secretary speaking in the old House of Commons on the abolition of slavery 14 May 1833; 'CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY. OXFORD 1853.' where he is speaking in Latin during his inauguration as Chancellor; 'THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COTTON FAMINE RELIEF COMMITTEE. MANCHESTER 1865.' and the aforementioned 'CABINET COUNCIL 1867.'. The scene concerning Derby's speech of 1833 (Plates 93-94) provides an additional dimension to the abolitionist theme implicit in the Parliament Square monuments. It provides a narrative context in which to further appreciate the nearby Buxton memorial fountain. The space is articulated by these memorial markers which, if read together, can be construed as a holistic – albeit haphazard – espousal of freedom and democracy.

4~5 The Earl of Beaconsfield and the Primrose League

When commenting on the Derby pedestal the *Builder* saw fit to state that in each relief the depiction of Derby, as 'the principal figure' was 'surrounded and thrown into prominence by those of fellow-workers whose names, like his, will live in history.'⁹⁷ Not least among these was Benjamin Disraeli, and it is appropriate that the man who unveiled this statue should also be memorialised in both Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square. Following the death of the Earl of Beaconsfield (the title given to him upon entering the House of Lords) the First Commissioner, Herbert Gladstone (1854-1930) requested that Dean Stanley designate a site in the Abbey for a memorial

Royal Academy Schools and, in 1898, become modelling master at the Chelsea Polytechnic. He executed numerous sculptures for town halls in the 1890s. In the first decade of the twentieth-century he embellished the screen between the Foreign Office and J. M. Brydon's New Public Offices in Whitehall (see 6~7). He was asked to reflect in his sculpture the fact that the bridge linked the Home Office, the Education Board and the Local Government Board. See A. Stuart Gray, *Edwardian Architecture. A Biographical Dictionary*, Wordsworth Editions, Hertfordshire, 1985, pp. 264-264.

⁹⁶ These *Four Bas-reliefs illustrating incidents in the life of the 14th Earl of Derby* are numbered WAG 4541, 4542, 4543, 4544 respectively. They are all framed and two of the four are glazed. The dimensions are recorded as between 37½" x 27½" and 38" x 29". Some of the more elevated parts of the reliefs have been broken off and the Oxford University scene is affected by damp. The insurance value in 1917 was £10.

⁹⁷ The slavery panel is described as the 'Lancashire relief Committee' by the *Builder*. See Anon, 'Statue of the Late Lord Derby for Westminster', *Builder*, Vol. 31, No. 1579, 10 May 1873, p. 372.

to be executed by Sir Joseph Edgar Boehm.⁹⁸ Costing 2,000 guineas (£2,100) and unveiled on 12 April 1884, the over life-size white, marble statue measuring about six feet presents the statesman in Garter robes with one hand to his breast (Plate 54).⁹⁹

At the same time that this work was commissioned the 'Beaconsfield National Committee' was established, chaired by Sir Stafford Northcote. In July 1881 he informed George Shaw Lefevre, the First Commissioner, that they envisaged a statue 'of Bronze or Gun Metal... on the same scale as that of the late Earl of Derby'.¹⁰⁰ Their chosen sculptor was Mario Raggi (1821-1907) who agreed to produce the work for 3000 guineas (£3150). Raggi (or Razzi) was born at Carrara but spent the bulk of his life in Britain.¹⁰¹ After studying under Raffaele Monti (1818-81) and Matthew Noble he went on to produce a number of monuments, statues and bas-reliefs and also became known for his decorative sculpture, especially in the Sheffield area.¹⁰²

Shaw Lefevre gave his provisional approval and wished to inspect a sketch of the intended design in order to ensure that it would be 'in general correspondence as regards size and material with the other statues in the same square.' He considered the most appropriate location to be in the centre of the southern side facing St. Margaret's Church with the Derby statue to its left.¹⁰³ After some delay Raggi made arrangements to measure the existing monuments in the vicinity and it was not until February 1883 that the work was approaching completion.¹⁰⁴ It was unveiled on 19

⁹⁸ 'Beaconsfield statue in Westminster Abbey'. PRO WORK 6/400/4 ff.4-5.

⁹⁹ PRO WORK 6/400/4 ff.7 & 9. The inscription on the cylindrical grey marble pedestal reads: 'Erected By Parliament / To / Benjamin Disraeli / Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G. / Twice Prime Minister / Born 1804 Died 1881'. John Physick, *Inscriptions on Abbey Monuments* [unpublished], 1991, 3/2.001, No. 9. WAM. He gives the location as the North Transept on the east side by the south side of the column between the second and third bays from the north.

¹⁰⁰ Northcote (later to become the Earl of Iddesleigh), 30 St. James Place to Works, 29 July 1881. PRO WORK 20/48.

¹⁰¹ At the time of the Disraeli commission Raggi was residing at 31 Devonshire Street, Portland Place. He died at Farnham, Surrey on 26 November 1907 and is buried in Norwood Cemetery in the London Borough of Lambeth. Hugh Meller, *London's Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer*, Scolar Press, Aldershot, 1995, p. 229.

¹⁰² James Mackay, *The Dictionary of Western Sculptors in Bronze*, Antique Collectors Club, Woodbridge, 1977, p. 310.

¹⁰³ Shaw Lefevre to Northcote, 2 August 1881. PRO WORK 20/48.

¹⁰⁴ Sidney Herbert, 10 Mandeville Place to Shaw Lefevre, 19 February 1883. PRO WORK 20/48.

April by Northcote (Plate 100).¹⁰⁵ The charismatic Disraeli was a good subject for portraiture and Lord Gleichen (who also sculpted this individual) says of the Raggi statue that the subject is ‘dressed in Cabinet Minister’s uniform half hidden by his Peer’s robes, which he holds up, thus disclosing his sword-hilt and Garter.’¹⁰⁶ The sculptor put his decorative skills to good use in this work. The figure is enveloped in the heavy folds of his ceremonial gown. These ornamental drapes form a pleasing contrast with the visible parts of the body and this manages to give a sense of otherworldly drama to the staid conventions of the statue.

Raggi’s monument swiftly became a focal point for expressions of political ideology. Writing in April 1882 G.A. Sala commented on the ‘extensive demand among the west-end florists for little bouquets of primroses, the favourite flower of the deceased statesman.’¹⁰⁷ The memorial in Parliament Square retained its significance beyond the transient moment of its inception by being annually festooned with such flowers on 19 April, the anniversary of Disraeli’s death (Plate 101). The concept of the Primrose League was suggested by Sir Henry Drummond Charles Wolff (1830-1908) to Lord Randolph Churchill following the unveiling in 1883.¹⁰⁸ This idea took root in the autumn of that year and soon served as a useful party political tool. The stated aspiration of this organisation (which had ranks, titles and badges) was ‘to devote their best ability to the maintenance of religion, of the estates of the realm, and of the imperial ascendancy of the British Empire’.

¹⁰⁵ *The Times*, 20 April 1883, 11a-b. It is signed: ‘M. RAGGI. Sct. Fecit 1883. London’. Edward Gleichen, *London’s Open-Air Statuary*, pp. 37-38. In June the Office of Works officially took charge of the monument (letter from the Treasury to the First Commissioner, 11 June 1883). PRO WORK 20/48.

¹⁰⁶ Gleichen’s statue of Disraeli is located in the Committee Corridor of the Palace of Westminster. The marble figure depicts the statesman with arms folded and a roll of papers in right hand and the despatch box and a pile of books behind him. Signed ‘Gleichen 1883’ it was formerly in the collection of the Conservative Club and transferred to the Palace of Westminster in 1959. A further marble bust by Gleichen in the Norman Porch depicts Disraeli with the star and ribbon of the Knight of the Garter. It was presented in 1963. R.J.B. Walker, *A Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture and Engravings in The Palace of Westminster*, Vol. 3, Part IV, ‘Sculpture’, 1961, pp. 9-10.

¹⁰⁷ Sala likened this to the violets worn by Bonapartists on the anniversaries of the deaths of Napoleon III and the Prince Imperial: an ‘occult emblem assumed by the partisans of Napoleon the First in 1814, as a reminder that ‘Corporal Violet’ would return from Elba in the spring-time.’ G.A. Sala, ‘April 1882’, pp. 119-156 in *Living London. Being “Echoes” Re-echoed*, Remington, London, 1883, p. 139.

¹⁰⁸ This information and the quotation are derived from Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography [DNB]*, Oxford University Press, London, 1922, Vol. III, p. 700.

It is entirely appropriate that Disraeli's statue should be the centre of such ceremony given that he was so influential in dictating the visual expression of empire at the close of the century (see 5~8). This was not to everyone's liking however. Sala was of the opinion that 'in matters of public pageantry we have within late years sadly degenerated.'¹⁰⁹ However, by the close of the century, especially with Queen Victoria's Jubilee of 1897, London was indeed an imperial city in both reality and in ceremony. Jonathan Schneer's publication *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, as the title suggests, presents the capital as the centre of empire. The opening account of 'The Face of Imperial London' states that the city was 'dotted with... reminders of Britain's imperial rule.'¹¹⁰ The image he uses to illustrate this 'face' is Cleopatra's Needle, one of a pair of monoliths erected around 1450 BC by Pharaoh Thothmes III for the Temple of the Sun at Helipolis, north of modern-day Cairo. They accordingly represent the supreme deity, the sun.¹¹¹

4~6 Imperial marker: an Egyptian obelisk in London

On 17 June 1846 the architect of the Ambassador's residence in Constantinople (built 1844-51), William James Smith, wrote to Viscount Canning with details of a gift 'nearly twenty five years ago' to the British nation from the viceroy of Egypt, Mohammed Ali (1769-1849).¹¹² This concerned the presentation of one of a pair of obelisks known as the Cleopatra's Needles to mark the coronation of George IV in 1820. One of these monuments was still standing whilst the other lay prostrate beside it. The offer was renewed at the time of William IV's ascension to the throne in 1831 but by then the French had been promised the standing monolith.¹¹³ Smith related that 'a French antiquarian' had examined the two obelisks and chosen the best preserved

¹⁰⁹ In his support he cited Mr. Cobden who 'railed' in Parliament against this 'barbaric pomp.' G.A. Sala, 'November 1882', pp. 502-503 in *Living London*, pp. 502-503.

¹¹⁰ Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1999, p. 17 & Plate 2.

¹¹¹ R.A. Hayward, *Cleopatra's Needles*, Moorland, Harington, 1978, Appendix: 'The Hieroglyphic Inscriptions', pp. 119-124.

¹¹² For information about W.J. Smith see J. Mordaunt Crook and M.H. Port, *The History of the King's Works, Vol. VI 1782-1851*, London, 1971, pp. 193, 635-638.

¹¹³ R.A. Hayward, *Cleopatra's Needles*, pp. 21-22.

and most important. The British Government instead instructed their Consul to ignore both of them in favour of an obelisk at Karnak near Luxor, ‘the largest of all existing monoliths’ (measuring some eighty-two feet in height and eight feet square at the base).

Canning forwarded Smith’s letter to the Earl of Aberdeen on 4 July 1846.¹¹⁴ This in turn prompted an investigation by the Office of Works. Extracts from their previous correspondence indicated to them that the two needles were intended for the French but the ‘best’ – that at Karnac (sic) – was ‘for his [the viceroy’s] friends the English.’ There was no formal record of this nor were any preparations made on the part of the British Government. Indeed, the more orthodox version of events is that it was meant as a gift to Charles X. The French authorities appear to have made preparations to move it when rumour reached them of British intentions and it arrived in France in 1833 prior to being erected in the Place de la Concorde, Paris in October 1836 before a crowd of jubilant spectators. The obelisk (located where the guillotine had been placed for the execution of Louis XVI in January 1793) was to form the centrepiece of a redesigned and renamed square, encircled by sculpted allegories of eight French cities. Mary Hamer remarks that the Egyptian monument ‘flattered national pride with its reminder of Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt and again asserted, in the spot where rupture was being created, a continuity with a proud national past.’ She also notes that, in the early years of the century, ‘Egypt functioned as a signifier of the cultural superiority of the French nation.’¹¹⁵ The successful acquisition of the obelisk by Britain’s arch imperial rival was a politically symbolic triumph. Moreover, the imperial significance of the remaining two obelisks was further emphasised by the fact that they were sited in close proximity to the battle at Alexandria of 21 March 1801 between the French and British for control of Egypt. The commander of the victorious British contingent who oversaw the subsequent hand-over of the territory to the Turks suggested at the time that one of the Needles be removed to Britain as a memorial to Abercromby and his men who sacrificed their lives for the “liberation” of Egypt.¹¹⁶ In his letter of 1846 the architect W.J. Smith had implored Canning to

¹¹⁴ Canning to Aberdeen enclosing a copy of Smith’s letter, 4 July 1846. PRO WORK 20/253.

¹¹⁵ Mary Hamer, *Sign of Cleopatra: History, Politics, Representation*, Routledge, London & New York, 1993, pp. 78, 82-84 & 144.

¹¹⁶ R.A. Hayward, *Cleopatra’s Needles*, pp. 17-19.

resolve this matter by bringing it to the attention of the British government so that it might one day ‘add to the embellishment of the metropolis of England’. Almost thirty years later, with the obelisk still unclaimed, an advocate for its acquisition lamented:

It seemed that the glorious victory of Aboukir, achieved by the heroic Nelson, was forgotten, that the battle of Alexandria where the brave Abercromby received his mortal wound, and the other services in Egypt were of little account to this generation, since we allowed the gift of Mohamed Ali Pasha in 1820 to rest ignominiously in the dust.¹¹⁷

There were unsuccessful attempts to transfer an obelisk to Britain in 1840 in connection with Trafalgar Square, again in 1849 and then in 1853 by the Sydenham Crystal Palace Company.¹¹⁸ During the nineteenth-century the obelisk form became a familiar symbol in the urban environment.¹¹⁹ The aforementioned imperial connotations and the extent to which Britain coveted this ancient emblem can be demonstrated by the fact that the 1862 International Exhibition in London had, at the end of the central nave, a golden obelisk nearly seventy feet in height. Constructed of canvas covered with gold leaf over wooden poles it was entitled ‘Victoria’s Gold Trophy’ and symbolised the enormous volume of gold accrued from Britain’s Australian colony which amounted to over eight hundred tons from 1851-61.¹²⁰

Many years were to pass before the Metropolitan Board of Works wrote to inform the First Commissioner on 21 July 1875 that they ‘would be prepared to find a site for the obelisk in the event of Her Majesty’s Government causing it to be brought over.’ Secretary Mitford immediately enthused to his superior that this ‘magnificent specimen of Egyptian art’ was ‘the property of the nation’ and should therefore be the

¹¹⁷ Major General Sir James Alexander to Lieutenant Colonel Sir James Hogg, 30 June 1875 [copy]. PRO WORK 20/253.

¹¹⁸ R.A. Hayward, *Cleopatra’s Needles*, p. 24. Hayward cites the *Illustrated London News* of 21 June 1851 which stated: ‘England appears, from her apparent bewilderment about the matter, to be in the position of the elderly lady who has won an elephant in a lottery.’

¹¹⁹ Mary Hamer, *Sign of Cleopatra*, note 16, p. 144. An earlier instance of the use of an obelisk as a political symbol occurred in the mid-eighteenth-century at Stowe, Richard Earl Temple’s private landscape garden in Buckinghamshire. Erected in 1761-62 it commemorates William Pitt the Elder and Temple’s protégé General James Wolfe (1727-59) and is strategically placed in connection with the Temple of Concord and Victory. See Joan Michèle Coutu, *Eighteenth-century British Monuments and the Politics of Empire*, unpublished Ph.D., University of London, 1993, pp. 66-72 & figure 18. Royal Leamington Spa provides an example of the ubiquity of the obelisk in Victorian towns and cities: the memorial fountain to Henry Bright of 1880 takes this form, as does that to Edward Willes dated 1875 at Jephson Gardens (see 3~5).

¹²⁰ John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions*, Studio Vista, London, 1977, p. 38.

responsibility of their office. The First Commissioner, with equal haste, remarked that the Trustees of the British Museum considered its merits rather less exemplary.¹²¹

This offer had been initiated some weeks before by Major General Sir James Edward Alexander (1803-85), a fellow of the Society of Scottish Antiquarians, in a letter to Lieutenant Colonel Sir James M. Hogg, Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works.¹²² He claimed that the fallen obelisk was in danger of being broken up by the Frenchman who owned the ground 'as though gifted to the British Nation it seemed to be so little valued as it was not removed'. Alexander listed a plethora of excuses and reasons that had hindered the matter: the high cost; the fact that the object was not entirely complete; the Egyptian viceroy's decision not now to allow its removal; and the small matter of its partial submergence under a wall of the fortifications. The Major had visited the site earlier in the year and met with Waynman Dixon, brother of the civil engineer John Dixon. They had cleared the sand from the obelisk (which they estimated to weigh about one hundred and eighty-seven tons and measure sixty-eight feet) and a subsequent translation of the hieroglyphics found its providence to be of King Thotmes III's reign. As this, he claimed, would date it from 1600 BC it meant that the obelisk was 'of great historic and archaeological interest and value'. Alexander related that, in 1872, the engineer Bazalgette had suggested a garden site on the Embankment 'east of the iron bridge'. Two other potential locations had since been put forward: 'a vacant square near Lord Derby's statue at the Houses of Parliament and the foot of the gardens of Northumberland House near the river.' The military man concluded:

The time seems favourable for undertaking this national work and it is hoped it will be favourably viewed by the Metropolitan Board of Works for its execution will no doubt be highly popular in this country.¹²³

This 'national work' was closer to reality in the summer of 1877 when John Dixon, who had given his full support to the scheme, wrote from London to the First Commissioner, Gerard James Noel (1823-1911) that the obelisk would 'soon be on its

¹²¹ Memo from Mitford, 22 July 1875 and the First Commissioner's memo response, 23 July. PRO WORK 20/253.

¹²² Alexander to Hogg, 30 June 1875 [copy]. PRO WORK 20/253.

¹²³ Alexander to Hogg, 30 June 1875 [copy]. PRO WORK 20/253.

way to England'.¹²⁴ The question of the site remained unresolved as he was yet to find a location on the Embankment that was 'quite apropos.' At the suggestion of the Earl of Harrowby, Dixon recommended 'the middle of the central path dividing the flower beds by New Palace Yard' as being 'a peculiarly appropriate position'. Should this be acceded to and alterations made to the railings, Dixon offered 'to place it there on a suitable pedestal at... [his] own expense'. It was in his opinion that, if the railings and plantings were to remain, then a 'plain base' without steps would be most appropriate as the latter 'would absorb a lot of space without adding to the effect.' He provided a sketch to show the design he had in mind (Plate 87).¹²⁵

On 25 June Noel informed parliament that four sites were currently under consideration, including 'the centre of Parliament-square.'¹²⁶ On the same day Dixon addressed a letter to Noel listing alternative sites of his own, with the square as 'the best and most appropriate of all.'¹²⁷ He believed that it 'would form an artistic centrepiece to the nondescript group of statues' and was 'far enough from the Tower of St. Margaret's to stand out totally independent'. It would furthermore represent 'an attractive object' should Parliament Street be widened. It was his intention to present Noel with a perspectival drawing and 'scale models of the Statues & Obelisk' in the hope of convincing the First Commissioner 'of the fact that the Obelisk will form a splendid centre to the group.'

Dixon returned from Egypt in September 1877 more certain than ever of the propriety of the Parliament Square site.¹²⁸ By mid-November a wooden model of the obelisk (painted, in full scale and paid for by the engineer) had been temporarily erected in

¹²⁴ Dixon to Noel, 5 June 1877. PRO WORK 20/253.

¹²⁵ If this site was agreed upon, Dixon wished the obelisk to be landed on the banks of the Thames to the west of the Victoria Tower in order to allow its transferral up Abingdon Street to Old Palace Yard. Dixon to Noel, 5 June 1877. PRO WORK 20/253.

¹²⁶ Anon, 'Site for Cleopatra's Needle', *Builder*, Vol. 35, No. 1795, 30 June 1877, p. 671.

¹²⁷ These included Horse Guard's Parade, which Dixon said was 'appropriate for a monument of the Egyptian campaign' although it posed difficulties both in moving the obelisk there and also due to the opposition of the Duke of Cambridge. He also promoted the Whitehall Stairs of the Thames Embankment as being 'the next best' place after Westminster. Dixon to Noel, 25 June 1877. PRO WORK 20/253.

¹²⁸ Dixon to Mitford, 25 September 1877; memo on verso: 'Water color (sic) sketch of Parlt. Square showing proposed position of obelisk lent to Mr. Dixon 25 September 1877.' PRO WORK 20/253.

turn at the various proposed locations (Plate 86).¹²⁹ To bolster his claim, Dixon had printed a pamphlet entitled *OPINIONS upon Proposed Site for EGYPTIAN OBELISK*. This contained typed transcripts of letters from a number of distinguished men in favour of Westminster.¹³⁰ It was averred that Edward Barry had verbally informed both the First Commissioner and Dixon that he was ‘strongly in favour’ of it. Gilbert Scott had written to Dixon expressing his worries that too expansive a space would be ‘injurious to the apparent height of the Obelisk’, however, when he witnessed the model erected in Parliament Square, it seemed ‘to convey the idea of large scale quite sufficiently.’ The architect felt that two more steps should be added to the base as did G.E. Street (who saw the model *in situ* on 3 October) who believed the site to be ‘an extremely good one’ but that the pedestal and steps were too small. The artists Alma Tadema and Edward J. Poynter both gave their support. The latter opined that there was no better place than ‘St. Stephen’s Green’ (sic) and that, were it placed outside the British Museum, ‘the Obelisk would always have the appearance of a museum specimen, too big to be placed inside.’¹³¹

A.P. Stanley, Dean of Westminster Abbey, dealt with ‘the question of juxtaposition with Christian buildings’ in a sermon in the October 1877 edition of *Good Words*.¹³² He felt that ‘so venerable a monument of antiquity’ required ‘an historical situation in England’ and that there was probably none more suited than Parliament Square. He also claimed that the Egyptian arrangement whereby obelisks were always erected in pairs could not be replicated, as ‘when transplanted to Europe they are always single.’ As such he considered ‘the Place de la Concorde at Paris and the neighbourhood of the Palace of Westminster in England... to present the chief advantages.’

Given the weight of support for the positioning of the obelisk in Parliament Square an explanation is in order as to why this was not in fact carried out. The answer appears to be that the manifold merits of the site were eclipsed by more mundane structural

¹²⁹ Dixon to Noel, 9 November 1877 regarding models erected in various sites. PRO WORK 20/253.

¹³⁰ ‘OPINIONS upon Proposed Site for EGYPTIAN OBELISK.’ PRO WORK 20/253.

¹³¹ ‘OPINIONS upon Proposed Site for EGYPTIAN OBELISK.’ PRO WORK 20/253.

¹³² Gilbert Scott also touched upon similar concerns about a ‘pagan monument’ in ‘the neighbourhood of Westminster Abbey’ and, although he felt ‘less able to form an opinion’ considered it ‘open to favourable interpretation’ especially given that ‘the anomaly has been condoned at Rome’, a reference to the obelisk in front of St. Peter’s and also Bernini’s *Fountain of the Four Rivers* at Piazza Navone. ‘OPINIONS upon Proposed Site for EGYPTIAN OBELISK.’ PRO WORK 20/253.

concerns. The statue of Canning had been permanently removed following the construction of the Metropolitan District Railway (see 3~9). When news reached them that an even weightier monument might be erected directly above their line the directors of the company insisted upon perpetual indemnity against its collapsing into the tunnel.¹³³ It was this factor more than any other that militated against its erection between the Palace of Westminster and St. Margaret's Church. Thus, by January 1878, Dixon had admitted defeat and instead promoted a location at the Adelphi Steps between Waterloo and Hungerford bridges. His full-size replica was removed from Parliament Square and re-erected there for a period of ten days prior to the approval of the site by the Metropolitan Board of Works on 15 February.¹³⁴ By October 1878 the obelisk had been erected.

At the beginning of that year an unidentified diarist had observed that

Cleopatra's needle after a stormy and perilous voyage is landed, or not exactly that but towed in to Blackwall, London, packed in the special vessel which had been constructed to bring her or it across to England... At the same time Mr. H.M. Stanley, the African traveller, arrives in England after his perilous and daring adventures.¹³⁵

Sir Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) was a journalist who led three major expeditions to Africa from 1874-77, 1879-84 and 1887-89. His first voyage to that continent had led to the successful discovery of David Livingstone (1813-73), a missionary who was in search of the source of the Nile.¹³⁶ By linking these explorers with Cleopatra's Needle the anonymous diarist serves to further emphasise the imperial connotations of the obelisk (even if its protracted attainment reflected the somewhat haphazard nature of Britain's colonial acquisitions¹³⁷). The promotion of Parliament Square as an eminently suitable site underscores the importance of this

¹³³ R.A. Hayward, *Cleopatra's Needles*, p. 79.

¹³⁴ R.A. Hayward, *Cleopatra's Needles*, pp. 79-91.

¹³⁵ Diary entry of an unidentified person (possibly a journalist), Tuesday 22 January 1878. Bristol Record Office, 40301.

¹³⁶ Marian Makins (ed.), *Collins English Dictionary*, HarperCollins, Glasgow, 1991, pp. 911 & 1506.

¹³⁷ It has been argued (albeit in not an entirely convincing fashion) that Britain's widespread acquisition of antiquities was 'accidental' and 'without any obvious political intent.' This was in marked contrast to the 'French spoils of imperial conquest' instigated by Napoleon for propagandist purposes. See Ian Dennis Jenkins, *"The Progress of Civilisation": The Acquisition and Arrangement of the Sculpture Collections of the British Museum*, University of London, 1990, pp. 8 & 17.

locale in terms of national identity. An account of the obelisk in the context of this thesis is therefore essential, irrespective of the fact that it failed to find a home there because it serves to explicate the numerous references equating this space to the 'heart of the empire' (see 6~7).

In a wider context the associations with power and empire generated by Cleopatra's Needle were harbingers of the increasingly imperialistic character of London at the end of the nineteenth-century. During that period Reginald Brabazon, twelfth Earl of Meath (1841-1929) was a leading advocate and promoter of the British Empire.¹³⁸ After entering the diplomatic service in 1868, he served in Berlin during the Franco-Prussian War and then in Paris before retiring in 1877. However, from 1873 onwards, he was involved in philanthropic activities. These included the Hospital Saturday Fund Committee and the Early Closing Association. In the 1890s he successfully campaigned for an Empire commemoration day to be celebrated on 24 May, the birthday of Queen Victoria. Furthermore, in '1893 he persuaded parliament to permit the union jack to be flown over the palace of Westminster... In promoting the Empire Day movement, Lord Meath expounded far and wide the idea of a lofty patriotism based on social service and civic duty.'¹³⁹ These activities were of particular significance given that at the time there was 'no officially recognised national flag'. He sought to rectify this and disseminated a large number of Union Jacks.¹⁴⁰

Brabazon founded the Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard, and Playground Association in 1880. This was the forerunner to the longstanding and highly influential fraternity more commonly known by the appellation of the Metropolitan Public Garden Association (MPGA). Brabazon as its chairman estimated that this organisation, from 1884-1922, laid out 120 parks, gardens and playgrounds and assisted in the acquisition of a further 57 parks and open spaces. This totalled over 2,200 acres at a cost approaching £60,000 and was 'in addition to the purchase of thousands of trees and seats for the enjoyment and comfort of Londoners.'¹⁴¹ From

¹³⁸ Details of Brabazon's life are taken from his entry in the Dictionary of National Biography. J.R.H. Weaver (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography 1922-1930*, Oxford University Press, 1937/1967, pp. 100-101.

¹³⁹ J.R.H. Weaver (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography 1922-1930*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁴⁰ Reginald Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, John Murray, London, 1923, p. 328.

¹⁴¹ Reginald Brabazon, *Social Arrows*, Longmans, London, 1886, p. 227.

1898-1901, as an alderman of the London County Council, Brabazon was the first chairman of its parks committee.

The ideal of 'wild' nature espoused by the Commons Preservation Society (see 4~1) was eclipsed by the concept of 'rational recreation' championed by the MPGA under the campaigning organisation and bombastic personality of its chairman. It is apparent from the causes championed by Brabazon alongside his promotion of green spaces in the urban environment that parks and their flora held national significance. As will become evident, this was manifest in the characteristic rhetoric he employed to describe the spaces in Westminster. In the early 1880s his association supplied seats in Parliament Square as well as 'the neighbouring Church yard of St. Margaret's.' These were provided to allow people to appreciate 'the majestic grandeur of the adjacent venerable pile of buildings.'¹⁴²

4~7 The 'local or imperial improvement' of St. Margaret's Churchyard

For decades the appearance of St. Margaret's churchyard had run counter to this 'majestic grandeur'. On the contrary it would have eminently substantiated the antipathy towards 'reeking churchyards' expressed by the CPS in the late 1860s. Their concern was not merely aesthetic: thirty years earlier the surgeon G.A. Walker had been of the opinion that '[b]urial places in the neighbourhood of the living... [was] the cause, direct, or indirect, of inhumanity, immorality, and irreligion.'¹⁴³ Cholera had first appeared in England in 1831 and until the 1880s many believed that it was a "fever" generated by atmospheric pollution. The outbreak that hit London in February 1832 is, in the words of Donald J. Olsen, 'usually regarded, quite correctly, as providing the impetus for the whole movement of sanitary reform... of the Victorian period.'¹⁴⁴ Overcrowding in cities was considered as a major factor in the

¹⁴² Brabazon, 83 Lancaster Gate to Works, 22 March 1884. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁴³ G.A. Walker, *Gatherings from Graveyards*, 1839 cited in John Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians*, Studio Vista, London, 1971, p. 32.

¹⁴⁴ Olsen goes on to argue that the epidemic 'was equally significant as providing the shock that contributed most to the changed perception of London.' Whether accurate or not the 'clean and healthy' reputation of Georgian London became replaced in the contemporary imagination by the 'dirty and deadly' metropolis of the Victorian era. Cited in David Owen, *The Government of Victorian London 1855-1889*, p. 11.

spread of the infection. This was particularly the case with the ‘poisonous exhalations’ of graveyards.¹⁴⁵ It was the right by common law for every parishioner to be buried in his or her parish church. As a consequence an extremely high number of burials took place within very restricted areas: the two-hundred feet square churchyard of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, for example, was estimated to hold up to seventy thousand bodies by the 1840s. This situation prompted the establishment of the public cemetery during the Victorian period. Kensal Green was the first of seven commercial cemeteries set up in the London suburbs by Acts of Parliament between 1832 and 1841. These, along with similar burial places established in other cities, were carefully landscaped.¹⁴⁶

The Metropolitan Interments Act of 1850, repealed two years later by the Burial Act, enabled the Board of Health to close churchyards to further interments and construct new cemeteries.¹⁴⁷ The environs of the Palace of Westminster as reported in the *Builder* in 1850 provide a valuable insight into some of the urban problems experienced at this time. During August 1850 the House of Commons had been informed ‘that eight officers of the House had been seriously indisposed by complaints such as usually arise from exhalations from graveyards and sewers, since the opening of the drains in the immediate vicinity of the House.’¹⁴⁸ A subsequent ‘Report on Extramural Sepulture’ drew attention to the ‘offensive emanations’ from the overcrowded burial ground of St. Margaret’s churchyard. This prompted a correspondent to write to the *Builder* to urge that the ground be closed and instead ‘adorned with small trees and shrubs; and what a far better effect would they give the abbey than the nasty, irregular, uneven stones that are now scattered at various heights upon its surface.’¹⁴⁹ Peter Cunningham’s *Hand-Book of London* of 1850 also called for the burial ground to be ‘closed as a common thoroughfare.’¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ John Morley, *Death, Heaven and the Victorians*, Chapter 3 ‘God’s Acre’, pp. 32-40.

¹⁴⁶ Trevor May, *The Victorian Undertaker*, pp. 23-26.

¹⁴⁷ Hugh Meller, *London’s Cemeteries*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁸ Anon, ‘Sewerage Operations, Parliament Gardens’, *Builder*, Vol. VIII, No. 393, 17 August 1850, p. 394.

¹⁴⁹ “Le Feu”, ‘St. Margaret’s Churchyard, Westminster’, *Builder*, Vol. VIII, No. 411, 21 December 1850, p. 605.

¹⁵⁰ Cunningham captures the sense of the long overcrowded nature of this churchyard by mentioning the poet William Cowper’s (1731-1800) moment of inspiration when, as a schoolboy, a protruding

As early as 1808 a parliamentary report had concluded that, with St. Margaret's churchyard being so 'disproportionately small, in comparison with the size and populousness of the Parish', provision ought to be made 'for excluding all burials in future from a place now brought so much into public view'.¹⁵¹ A special report of a Select Committee of 1852 and 1853 reiterated that evidence given to a similar committee in 1814 had led to the conclusion that 'the effluvium which arose from the churchyard of St. Margaret's was highly prejudicial to the health and comfort of the inhabitants near that locality and that further burials ought to be prohibited.'¹⁵² It also repeated the words of a former rector, Dr. Milman, who spoke of the 'impropriety' of further burials to a Committee of Health and Towns in 1842. This was not to be realised until the Burial Act a decade later. Whilst, as has been mentioned, this facilitated the closure of such churchyards, Hazel Conway has recently pointed out that 'no provision was made for their maintenance'. It was not until the Open Spaces Act 1881 and the Disused Burial Grounds Act 1884 that local authorities were empowered to convert them into gardens and recreation grounds.¹⁵³ These bodies, as we have seen, were explicit in their disdain for the aesthetic and sanitary depredations of St. Margaret's church and its burial grounds. Whilst this reflected similar problems in urban centres the length and breadth of the country it gained added symbolic significance in this particular corner of Westminster. It was elevated from a local, to a national, to an imperial disgrace. Despite having being closed to more interments since the early 1850s, this unsightly, dilapidated and neglected churchyard remained unchanged for nearly thirty years.

Condemnation of the churchyard was accompanied by criticism of the church itself. A committee report of 1844 pointed out that the architectural 'incongruity' of the building in such close proximity to the Abbey was 'frequently noticed and lamented'. It was feared that this would only be exacerbated with the completion of the New

skull hit his leg. Peter Cunningham, *Hand-book of London Past and Present*, John Murray, London, revised edition 1850, p. 313.

¹⁵¹ *PP* 1810-11 (251) II.225, pp. 5-6. The visibility of this site had increased following the extensive urban clearance that took place in the environs of parliament during the early nineteenth-century (see 1~3).

¹⁵² Cited in *Select Committee on Westminster Improvements Bill Special Report 1852-53*, prepared and brought-in by Edmund Denison and printed 29 June 1853. *PP* 1852-53 (685) XXXIX.465.

¹⁵³ Hazel Conway, *Public Parks*, p. 29.

Palace at Westminster. There were two possible solutions: either the complete removal of ‘this great architectural anomaly’ or, failing that, altering its façade to make it ‘enriched in design and rendered pure in detail.’ Given the high cost of either option the committee urged the relocation of the ecclesiastical structure to a nearby site and the removal of the cemetery. This was fully supported by the committee of 1853 which cautioned that until these changes were effected ‘the full and best effect of the new Houses of Parliament will be materially curtailed, and the general improvements very incomplete.’ This was reiterated in Charles Barry’s unrealised ‘General Scheme of Metropolitan Improvements’, exhibited in 1857 (Plate 27). His ambitious and costly plan ‘recommended that large areas should be laid open... for ample thoroughfares and ornamental gardens’ in the vicinity of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. The western side of this extensive ‘Abbey-close’ was, it was proposed, where St. Margaret’s Church ought to be repositioned.¹⁵⁴

By the summer of 1869 the rearrangement of New Palace Yard, Parliament Square and the Canning Enclosure had all been completed. Given the marked contrast between these sites and the environs of the churchyard the then First Commissioner, A.H. Layard, turned his attention to ‘the condition of the ground around St. Margaret’s Church and Westminster Abbey abutting on St. Margaret’s Square and Old Palace Yard’. He requested that Canon Conway, Rector of the church, gauge the reaction of the vestry and the ‘Parochial authorities’. Nothing appears to have been achieved until December 1877 when the Office of Works forwarded this correspondence to Canon Frederic William Farrar (1831-1903), Conway’s successor.¹⁵⁵

At this time in the 1870s the churchyard was described as being ‘covered irregularly with grave stones’ through which ran a number of unfenced footpaths. There was thus ‘free access over the whole Church yard, and in consequence the inscriptions on the

¹⁵⁴ Alfred Barry, *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry, RA, FRS*, John Murray, London, 1867, pp. 294-295.

¹⁵⁵ Mitford to Farrar, 28 December 1877. He presumably enclosed Russell’s letter dated 17 June 1869 to Conway, 17 Dean’s Yard, Westminster [copy] and Conway’s subsequent reply. ‘St. Margaret’s Churchyard. Laying out of grounds & future maintenance.’ ‘St. Margaret’s Churchyard. Laying out of grounds & future maintenance’. PRO WORK 11/141. Farrar had succeeded Conway on 9 May 1876 following the latter’s death. See ‘Grant unto the Rev^d Frederic William Farrar of a Canonry in the Collegiate Church of Saint Peter Westminster with the Rectory of St. Margaret’s Westminster’. WAM 53590.

grave stones... [were] to a great extent effaced.’¹⁵⁶ A deputation that included Dean Stanley met with First Commissioner Gerald Noel to remedy this unsatisfactory situation on 18 January 1878.¹⁵⁷ Their ideas met with ‘the favourable reception’ of Noel and a public meeting took place in Jerusalem Chamber ten days later to formulate a plan.¹⁵⁸

This gathering was in direct response to ‘the charming effect produced by the Parliament Gardens’. Many had drawn attention to the ‘dilapidated state of St. Margaret’s Churchyard... [which had] appeared, alike to Inhabitants and Visitors, more and more incompatible with its grand surroundings, and also with due respect for the dead interred therein.’ A committee was established ‘to communicate with the Public Authorities &c as to carrying out this Local or Imperial Improvement’ and a public subscription for contributions initiated.¹⁵⁹ They expressed a desire to ‘preserve’ and ‘perpetuate’ by ‘ground plan’ and ‘mural tablets’ all the inscriptions on the grave stones ‘by introducing marble mural tablets with letters cut in lead, into the proposed boundary walls.’ These walls were to be of ‘moderate height’ and ‘with a dwarf iron railing on the top’; there were to be public footpaths but the remaining space was to ‘be walled off in the same manner... [as] Parliament Gardens are now protected.’ Plans by George Highton had been drawn up accordingly and approval was sought from the various authorities, including the First Commissioner.

Noel, however, felt unable to make any recommendation to the Treasury due to the excessively large amount of money requested from his office, especially given that the Office of Works was ‘to permanently maintain the turf and flowers, within the

¹⁵⁶ A. Alexander to Noel, 23 January 1878. PRO WORK 11/141. Prompted by an item in *The Times*, he intimated to the First Commissioner that he had written on this topic in the *Builder* ‘a year or two ago’. He suggested regrouping the existing headstones symmetrically along the north railing, paving the paths and railing them with ‘stout low iron hurdles such as are used in the Parks’. This resembled the resolutions drawn following the meeting of 28 January (see below).

¹⁵⁷ Published advertisement for the meeting of 28 January by Stanley, Farrar and John Jennings, Rector of St. John’s; Dean’s Yard, 24 January 1878. PRO WORK 11/141.

¹⁵⁸ Stanley to Noel, 21 March 1878. PRO WORK 11/141.

¹⁵⁹ *St. Margaret’s Church yard Copy of Resolutions and Names of Local Committee*. PRO WORK 11/141. Its members included Lord Hatherley (Speaker of the House of Commons), Dean Stanley, Archdeacon John Jennings (Rector of St. John’s), Canon Farrar, J.G. Talbot Esq. M.P., Sir Rutherford Alcock, J.K. Aston Esq., W. Bardwell, W.J. Bennett, Z. D. Berry, E. Easton, J. Hutt, R.C. Nicholls, W.M. Scudamore, J.P. Seddon, H.B. Spink, and G.A. Spottiswoode.

boundary walls, in uniformity with the adjoining Parliament Gardens'.¹⁶⁰ He had been asked to contribute £3000 of the £5000 total cost, with a further £1000 coming from the Westminster District Board of Works and the remainder being made up by public subscription. It is apparent that this calculation had been made to appease ratepayers who were reluctant to fund the improvements.¹⁶¹

Following Noel's negative reaction the matter rested until July 1880, when a meeting was arranged between Farrar and the new First Commissioner, the Liberal William Patrick Adam (1823-81). Events nevertheless proceeded slowly and it was not until April of the following year that yet another head of the Office of Works, George Shaw Lefevre, requested a plan and estimate of the intended works.¹⁶² Submitted the following day, it was now 'proposed either to remove or bury the obliterated gravestones, & to turn the unsightly and often desecrated piece of ground into an enclosure of green turf with walks and borders, surrounded by a handsome railing.' It was felt that the churchyard would 'then resemble the green plots in Parliament Square' and a plan was drawn up accordingly (Plate 26).¹⁶³ Lefevre, with Treasury approval, agreed to this revised scheme when they were asked to provide a third of the £3000 deemed necessary. The other third was to come from the Metropolitan Board of Works in recognition of the fact that some ground was to be conceded from the existing churchyard to widen the road lying on the south of the square. Furthermore the Parish was to maintain the enclosure and raise the remaining sum through subscription.¹⁶⁴

It was decided to alter the burial ground by improving its surface and widening the adjoining footpath along Broad Sanctuary thus reducing the dimensions of the burial ground. As a result a number of human remains needed to be re-interred within the

¹⁶⁰ Works to Stanley, 2 April 1878 [copy]. PRO WORK 11/141.

¹⁶¹ Vestrymen representing ratepayers had withdrawn their objections to the scheme when they were informed that Parliament would supply £3000 of the total with £1000 provided 'by private subscription.' Stanley to Noel, 21 March 1878. PRO WORK 11/141.

¹⁶² Works to Farrar, 25 April 1881 [copy]. PRO WORK 11/141.

¹⁶³ 26 April 1881, numbered 5028 with enclosed plan. PRO WORK 11/141.

¹⁶⁴ Lefevre to Treasury, 18 April 1881 [copy] and reply, 5 May 1881. PRO WORK 11/141. On 10 August 1881, F. Cavendish of the Treasury Chambers included this in the monies voted for the year ending 31 March 1882 towards the building of the Palace of Westminster. 'Civil Services 1881-82... Supplementary Estimate... for the Building of the Houses of Parliament, including a Grant in Aid of the Improvement of the Precincts of St. Margaret's Church, Westminster.' *PP* 1881 (389) LXII. 771.

churchyard, the level of which was to be lowered. The headstones, lain horizontally, were to be covered with soil and turf. Prior to that the inscriptions were to be recorded and the stones described. It was also decided 'to copy such names verbatim upon the granite memorial Tablet which it is intended to erect in the Tower [of the church]'.¹⁶⁵ A plan of the churchyard was divided into forty-four sections and each of the 564 memorials (dating from the 1660s to the early 1850s) was listed.¹⁶⁶ The legible texts were subsequently recorded in *St. Margaret's Westminster. Inscriptions on Tomb Stones in St. Margaret's Churchyard, Westminster. Transcribed before the whole area to the North of Westminster Abbey was grassed over.*¹⁶⁷ This was undertaken in order to ensure that there were no legal difficulties in identifying who was buried and where and announcements had been made to allow any descendants of those whose graves were to be altered the right to contest such actions. It is particularly important to bear in mind that the erasure of these memorial markers coincided with the erection of monuments to former prime ministers. One can deduce from this that whilst these specific individuals were given prominence and accorded longevity the traces of the many buried in the same vicinity were removed.

Farrar took this opportunity to link the improvement of St. Margaret's Churchyard with a proposed restoration of the church itself. He sent a circular to potential contributors in Westminster, including the nearby Westminster Palace Hotel on Victoria Street.¹⁶⁸ In it Farrar lamented that the church was in a 'dingy & deplorable a condition' and argued that the restoration was 'one of the first spiritual needs' of a Parish in which the poor were 'densely crowded'. Showing an awareness of more worldly considerations (the 'lower ground') he added that it would also 'improve the

¹⁶⁵ The 'Faculty for alterations to Churchyard', consisting of Vestrymen and Parishioners of St. Margaret, Westminster met on 8 July 1881. The plans were by Frank L. Pearson, son of the architect J.L. Pearson. Report by John Harris, Vestry Clerk of St. Margaret, Westminster. WCA E3333A/7, July 1881. Directions for masonry work to be done and specifications for iron railings exist in WAM 61130. Although undated it is highly likely that they refer to these alterations of 1881-82.

¹⁶⁶ The plan on which this was based was drawn up by B. Mansfield and dated 25 November 1881. WAM (P) 455. The 'Faculty for alterations to Churchyard', signed by John B. Lee and dated 23 August 1881, stated that the churchyard had been 'closed for Interment by an Order in Council for the last Twenty nine years'. This would have been at the time of the Burial Act of 1852 (see above). St. Margaret's Church Faculty for Alterations to Churchyard, WAM.

¹⁶⁷ The cover is further inscribed: 'Presented by Mr. Frank L. Pearson, son of the late John Loughborough Pearson, R.A., (died 1897) sometime Surveyor to the Fabric.' WAM 62356. There is also a folio volume and map in the Strong Room of the WAM archive.

¹⁶⁸ Farrar to the proprietors of Westminster Palace Hotel, 16 November [c. 1881]. WAM 67160d.

prosperity of the neighbourhood' and boost the number of guests frequenting the adjacent hotel. He indicated that £3000 of the £8000 necessary 'to carry out the beautiful design of Sir Gilbert Scott' had already been raised.¹⁶⁹

The Canon's spry optimism was short-lived, however, and by December 1881 he was obliged to ask the Office of Works to make an early payment of their contribution because less than £400 in donations had been raised. No amount of appeals ('even leading articles in the *Times* &c') had succeeded and it was 'fear[ed] that this grand opportunity for a national improvement... [would] be to a certain extent lost.'¹⁷⁰ A subscription list made mention of the contributions already received as fundraising ponderously continued with the distribution of a printed appeal dated December 1881, partly written by the churchwarden, Stewart Helder. It concluded:

As the intention is mainly to improve the approach to Westminster Abbey – so dear to all classes of Englishmen – and as there is now an opportunity not likely to recur, I appeal with every confidence to the Public for sufficient Funds to enable the Committee to carry out the whole of the contemplated improvements in a manner worthy of its national character.¹⁷¹

Such lofty claims must be tempered by the fact that raising a comparably small sum to realise this 'national' project proved almost impossible. In the light of this one should question the actual importance that the vast majority attached to Westminster's monuments and memorials. It was only authorial figures and groups with vested interests in the matter who made such large claims for these symbolic entities.

Nevertheless, as the project neared completion in the spring of 1882, it was evident that the alterations to the churchyard were an undoubted improvement, despite

¹⁶⁹ Scott's plan entitled 'S. Margaret's Church Westminster Proposed Refitting', with numerous rows of pews illustrates the very ordered interior to which Farrar and the architect aspired. 'S. Margaret's Church Westminster Proposed Refitting. Scale 8ft to 1 inch.' Signed 'Sir G. Gilbert Scott R.A. 31 Spring Gardens, London.' [n.d.] WAM (P) 353.

¹⁷⁰ He did not trouble to conceal his state of mind: 'Considering that I have thus set on foot a great public improvement which does not at all concern me individually, & have had much labour & anxiety, & expended much precious time with marvellously little encouragement...' Farrar to the Office of Works, 1 December 1881. PRO WORK 11/141.

¹⁷¹ 'Improvement of St. Margaret's Churchyard, Westminster Committee.' Subscriptions included £50 from the Duke of Westminster; £21 from J.F. Bateman; £20 from W.H. Smith M.P.; and £25 from Messrs. Watney & Co. It also lists the members of the Committee, including its Chairman Canon Farrar, the Dukes of Buccleugh and Westminster, the Lord Chancellor, the Members of Parliament W.H. Smith and Lord Richard Grosvenor with Stewart Helder as Treasurer. PRO WORK 11/141.

savings that had had to be made regarding the quality of the railings.¹⁷² It was into this enclosure, in the summer of 1883, that the seating supplied by the MPGA was installed (see 4~6). It is likely that Henry Lazarus & Son, ‘Complete Manufacturing House Furnishers’, were the suppliers of these benches. Its proprietor claimed that this firm supplied ‘all the seats to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association’. The designs they chose appeared as number twenty in the Lazarus catalogue: these had cast iron frames with oak panels painted green. They came in two sizes: the larger, measuring six feet six inches in length had a ‘divisional arm in [the] centre’ and cost twenty-seven shillings. The other, a foot shorter and without a divisional arm, cost twenty shillings.¹⁷³ The same company also produced other seats ‘suitable for Streets, Parks, Railway Platforms, and Public Places’. Measuring eleven feet or more in length they cost upwards of £3.¹⁷⁴

In March 1884 Brabazon proclaimed that the opening to the public of the disused churchyard was ‘now pronounced a success in every way.’ This was despite the fact that some had ‘feared... that these seats would in time become a public nuisance’.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the presence of undesirable persons perverting the lofty intentions of the authorities and other philanthropic organisations by making use of these open spaces and their facilities was a recurring problem. When the layout of Parliament Square was being considered E.M. Barry had stressed that the surface of the low railing ‘must not be level as the London Grannies will sit upon it all day long’ (see 3~8).¹⁷⁶ As will become clear, it was not so much the fear of attracting grandmothers as ‘idle roughs’ that made this a necessity. Indeed, the MPGA may well have deliberately chosen shorter designs for their benches (sometimes with a ‘divisional arm’) in an attempt to prevent these comfortable seats from becoming the feared ‘public nuisance’. The form that this took is encapsulated in a superb photograph from 1900 entitled *Tramps in the*

¹⁷² Farrar remarked on ‘how immense an improvement has been effected. Even the removing of Sir C[hristopher] Wren’s Railing to the side of the Abbey has thrown out the proportions of the Abbey with astounding effect.’ Farrar to Works, 4 February 1882. PRO WORK 11/141.

¹⁷³ Henry Lazarus to J.E. Smith, 27 April 1886. WCA E3337/4 April 1886.

¹⁷⁴ Item eight in *Drawings of Garden Seats, Chairs, Awnings, and Tables. Registered by Royal Letter Patent*. ‘Henry Lazarus & Son Complete Manufacturing House Furnishers, Wholesale & for Exportation. 287 to 289, Old Street, London... Manufactory:- Grosvenor Works, Rufus Street, Hoxton Square’. WCA E3337/4 April 1886.

¹⁷⁵ Brabazon, 83 Lancaster Gate to Works, 22 March 1884. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁷⁶ Barry to Hardman & Co., 21 Abingdon Street, 19 June 1867. BCA.

Green Park (Plate 33).¹⁷⁷ This threat will now be examined in length with regard to an analogous site adjacent to St. Margaret's Churchyard, namely the Canning Enclosure.

4~8 Inspecting nuisances: monuments and uncivilised behaviour

As we have seen, the provision of parks and open spaces was considered to be beneficial in terms of health and morality. Monuments and memorials – frequently located in such spaces – were also meant to be ennobling and edifying, presenting role models to be emulated. Thus, collectively memorialised, these individuals and their attainments were meant to provide the sum achievement of the nation. This was manifest even when an edifice did not actually commemorate a specific person or event, as was the case with Cleopatra's Needle. The broader significance of these markers meant therefore that legislation was necessary to prevent and punish anti-social behaviour that ran counter to this ethos of education and control.

Soon after the erection of the Egyptian obelisk on Victoria Embankment, a bill was prepared and brought-in to parliament. It put forward that its maintenance 'would be to the advantage of the Metropolis'. To ensure that this remained the case powers were conferred to the Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW) 'with respect to the erection, preservation, and maintenance of monuments, statues, and other works of art... upon any of the said embankments and lands.'¹⁷⁸ Their duties were characterised by such words as 'preserve', 'maintain' and 'control' with regard to objects that had been conferred to the MBW (such as the obelisk), commissioned, or accepted as a gift or bequest. They were intended to be 'for the benefit of the public'. Given the general good perceived to stem from these symbolic edifices, section five of the legislation sanctioned against those whose actions resulted in damage to or disfigurement of a monument. It was decreed that: 'Any person... who posts any bill or placard, or who

¹⁷⁷ John Betjeman, *Victorian and Edwardian London from old photographs*, Plate 129.

¹⁷⁸ *A Bill for Conferring powers upon the Metropolitan Board of Works with respect to the Obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle, and other Monuments*, printed 2 April 1878. PP 1878 (140) V.251. This was preceded by an earlier Bill that was not printed: *A Bill Empowering the Metropolitan Board of Works to accept and maintain the Obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle and other Monuments, and to provide for the erection of the same on the Thames Embankment and other Lands, and for other purposes*. PP 1878 (133) V.249.

writes, cuts, prints, draws or marks in any manner any word or character, or any representation of any object' was liable to a fine of £5.

Earlier, in 1839, an act had been passed regarding policing in the capital. The twelfth clause of section fifty-four governed against the selling, distribution or exhibition of 'any profane, indecent, or obscene Book, Paper, Print, Drawing, Painting, or Representation', the use of any 'any profane, indecent, or obscene language', or the writing or drawing of 'any indecent or obscene Word, figure, or Representation'.¹⁷⁹ This legislation was built upon in the 1860s when steps were taken to prohibit the distribution of pornography.¹⁸⁰ It was at this time that section six of the Public Statues act of 1854 (see 2~4-6) was repealed.¹⁸¹ The preamble to this fresh legislation referred to six acts (24 & 25 Vict. cc. 94-100) in the current session relating 'to Offences against the Person, Malicious Injuries to Property, Larceny, Forgery, Coining, and Accessories and Abettors'. Sir William Holdsworth's *History of English Law* refers to these acts and indicates their division into laws against either the person or property.¹⁸² The latter was dealt with in the seventy-nine sections of An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Statute Law of England and Ireland Relating to Malicious Injuries to Property (24 & 25 Vict. c. 97) of 1861. It was section thirty-nine, 'Injuries to Works of Art' that superseded both the sixth section of the 1854 act and the entirety of the Act for the Better Protection of Works of Art of 1845 (see 2~7). As with section one of the latter it covered all manner of objects kept in any publicly accessible repository. Furthermore, any 'Statue, Monument, or other Memorial of the Dead' in both religious and secular contexts were incorporated, including those 'in any Street, Square, Churchyard, Burial Ground, Public Garden or Ground, or any Statue or Monument exposed to Public View, or any Ornament, Railing, or Fence

¹⁷⁹ 'An Act for further improving the Police in and near the Metropolis', 2 & 3 Vict. c.47, 17 August 1839, section fifty-four, clause 12.

¹⁸⁰ Lynda Nead, 'From Alleys to Courts: Obscenity and the Mapping of Mid-Victorian London', pp. 33-46 in *New Formations*, No. 37, 1999.

¹⁸¹ Section one of *An Act to repeal certain Enactments which have been consolidated in several Acts of the present Session relating to indictable Offences and other Matters* 24 & 25 Vict. c. 95 dated 6 August 1861. Although the preamble was removed by the *Statute Law Revision Act, 1892* (55 & 56 Vict. c.19) and the title slightly shortened (it became *An Act to place Public Statues within the Metropolitan Police District under the Control of the Commissioners of Works*) the 1854 act still remains in force today.

¹⁸² Sir William Holdsworth, *A History of English Law*, Vol. XV edited by A.L. Goodhart & H.G. Hanbury, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1965, p. 151.

surrounding such Statue or Monument'. Persons found to 'unlawfully and maliciously destroy or damage' any of the above could be imprisoned for up to six months, with or without hard labour, and, if male and under sixteen-years of age, subjected to whipping. Just over a decade later the Parks Regulation Act of 1872 came into force, which, with its extensive list of regulations and associated punishments, provided additional legislative powers to restrict and control undesirable behaviour (see 4~1).

It has already been observed that parks and churchyards were frequently embellished with both statues and fountains. In his discussion of the Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountain Association, Howard Malchow has stated that, from its inception in 1859, 'damage and misuse of fountains was a major problem.' The police (and park-keepers) co-operated to protect these fountains from a form of vandalism that was, in Malchow's opinion, 'to some extent a protest against the intrusion of middle class temperance moralizing and religiosity, and a physical attack on the symbols of wealth, ostentation, and charity.' He also records that many fountains were heavily used, both day and night. He speculates that, during the hours of darkness, the majority of 'drinkers must have been working class – rag pickers, men on night shifts or long tramps, hackney coachmen, and prostitutes.'¹⁸³ Whilst referring to the 'civilising' function to which the providers of fountains aspired (see 4~1), Malchow makes an interesting observation on the inauguration of London's first public drinking fountain as depicted in the *Illustrated London News* on 30 April 1859.¹⁸⁴ An arc of policemen, some wielding batons, keeps a crowd of workmen away from the small group of dignitaries clustered around the fountain. Meanwhile a group of boys cling disrespectfully from the railings above. The disjunction between the philanthropic, paternalistic aspirations of the fountain's benefactors and the actual response of its less privileged recipients is vividly encapsulated in this example.

There was an evident need for legal protection for public monuments and fountains. Another excellent example of this requirement was the Canning memorial following its relocation in 1867 so that it stood alongside the Buxton memorial fountain at the rear of Parliament Square near the so-called Canning Enclosure (see 3~9). The

¹⁸³ Howard Malchow, 'Free Water: the Public Drinking Fountain Movement and Victorian London', pp. 198 & 200.

¹⁸⁴ The engraving from this journal and the comment on it is in Howard Malchow, 'Free Water: the Public Drinking Fountain Movement and Victorian London', pp. 184-185.

fountain would have potentially drawn a great deal of people of all description to drink from the waters. This is superbly demonstrated in Gustave Doré and Blanchard Jerrold's *London a Pilgrimage* of 1872 (Plate 79).¹⁸⁵ It describes in word and image the 'general scamper under the florid drinking fountain' during an early morning shower. The design is characterised as 'a bit of modern Christianity – pure as the fountain, at which the foot-sore wanderer is bidden to slake his thirst.' Doré's accompanying illustration shows an eclectic crowd of men, women and children as they dash for cover from the driving rain. The indomitable Clock Tower of the Palace of Westminster stands directly behind the fountain's canopy. In the foreground, apparently oblivious to the inclement weather, is a solitary police constable. His dignified stroll past the scrum of people attracts the narrator's admiration: 'The stolidity of the policeman in the storm was excellent.' This was just as well because his commanding presence in the area would have been very much in demand. The adjacent alcove formed by the railings arcing behind the pedestal of the Canning statue (Plate 19) unwittingly served as an ideal retreat for some decidedly unsavoury characters who, having quenched their thirst at the fountain, went on to consume some considerably stronger liquid in the leafy shade of the monument (Plate 59).

The first intimation that difficulties had arisen came at the end of December 1872 when Edward Hollis, clerk of the Westminster District Board of Works (WDBW), wrote to George Russell, his equivalent at the Office of Works. He was prompted by a number of complaints made to them about 'the nuisances constantly being committed behind Canning's Statue in the Broad Sanctuary' and suggested the erection of an iron railing to alleviate this problem.¹⁸⁶ A memo by John Taylor at the Office of Works gave the reasons for these 'nuisances'. In it he expressed criticism of the statue's current location because, in his opinion, it 'should have been placed within the straight line of railing and it ought to have been fixed parallel to the avenue across the Parliament Square Gardens which it is intended to centre.' The rail instead arched *behind* the pedestal in the form of a semicircle. This had unfortunate consequences, as

¹⁸⁵ Gustave Doré & Blanchard Jerrold, *London a Pilgrimage*, Dover, New York, 1872/1970, p. 100.

¹⁸⁶ Hollis to Russell, 30 December 1872. PRO WORK 11/53. For this particular letter see also WCA Correspondence E3332/13-18. 13. Canning Statue, where a copy is also included in the correspondence dating from 6 December 1871 to 10 April 1873 [E2769 (No. 14)]. The ink used throughout is very faded and practically illegible. It has not, therefore, been possible to verify if any of the letters of complaint referred to by Hollis exist in this collection.

Taylor rather eloquently put it: 'There is no doubt that at present the back of the base of the statue is little better than a urinal, and idle persons continually loiter there in fine weather.'¹⁸⁷

There was evidently no official response to these solicitudes because in March 1874 John Harris, Hollis's successor as clerk of the WDBW, was obliged to reiterate that 'complaint continues to be made... the evil being much on the increase'.¹⁸⁸ He was reassured that the matter would be put to the First Commissioner for his consideration.¹⁸⁹ Harris next wrote in October of the following year to castigate 'the evils arising from nuisances committed in the open space behind the Statue of Canning in Parliament Square'. His committee, 'under the circumstances, [felt] that the Statue should be fenced off from the footway.'¹⁹⁰ This, at last, galvanised Works into action. The Treasury was contacted on 16 November and their attention drawn to these oft-repeated complaints adding that, in their opinion, 'the only efficacious remedy' was 'to set back the Statue & to erect an iron railing in front in a line with the present railing'. The estimated cost, some £200, prompted the Treasury to request a cheaper alternative.¹⁹¹

With negotiations stalled Harris tried a more forceful tactic. He stated categorically that the WDBW was 'willing to rail off the Statue from the footway' and asked whether there was any objection to this.¹⁹² Such a proactive stance did receive a terse reply from Works in January the following year: it stated that the First Commissioner, Lord Henry Lennox, '[could not] entertain the proposal.'¹⁹³ Harris responded to this rebuff by urging 'upon the notice of his Lordship the very serious nuisance which the Statue, as at present arranged, is the cause of being committed'. Should Lennox, therefore, persist in refusing to accept their offer it was their hope that he would 'take such other steps as... [would] effectually remedy the evil.'¹⁹⁴ This was on 22

¹⁸⁷ Memorandum from Taylor, 22 April 1873. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁸⁸ Harris to Russell, 6 March 1874. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁸⁹ Works to Harris, 9 March 1874. WCA E3332/13.

¹⁹⁰ Harris to Works, 21 October 1875. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁹¹ Works to Treasury and reply, 16 & 25 November 1875. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁹² Harris to Mitford, 29 December 1875. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁹³ Works to Harris, 14 January 1876. WCA E3332/13.

¹⁹⁴ Harris to Works, 22 February 1876. WCA E3332/13.

February 1876, the same day that WDBW forwarded ‘a further complaint of grievous nuisance existing at the back of the Statue of Canning in Parliament Square all kinds of filth being deposited there producing in hot weather very offensive smells.’ This was in turn communicated to the Treasury as further evidence to support their proposal of the previous November: ‘to move the Statue back & to continue the Railing in front of it as in the case of the Statues of Lords Derby & Palmerston’.¹⁹⁵

William Law of the Treasury again refused to meet ‘the cost of so large an operation’. However he felt that their Lordships would consider the ‘small outlay’ necessary to erect a rail in front of the statue that ‘would have the effect of preventing the nuisances complained of’.¹⁹⁶ Faced with little alternative Mitford communicated to Harris on 13 May that Works agreed to ‘bring forward the railing’ and, on the understanding that John Taylor was to act as an intermediary, he drew up a plan to this effect.¹⁹⁷ Accordingly, on 30 June, an appeased Harris informed Mitford that the WDBW would order the work to begin.¹⁹⁸ However, clearly wishing to capitalise on this favourable turn of events, Harris also took the opportunity to make a further suggestion. The agreed plan necessitated additional railings at a cost of £80. In light of this, the ‘Works and General Purposes Committee’ of the WDBW had resolved that ‘this sum would be very much better expended if applied in part payment of the cost of setting back the statue and continuing the Railing through in front of the same’.¹⁹⁹ This would have perhaps proven a more satisfactory solution rather than the somewhat jarring juxtaposition of pedestal and railing as it was then envisaged.

Works appeared to have hesitated in their response to this fresh proposal.²⁰⁰ In an internal memorandum by Willis the protracted circumstances of this affair were outlined alongside a small sketch indicating how that the railings were to be brought forward to the very *rear* of statue (Plate 60). This was drawn in response to a succinct

¹⁹⁵ Works to Treasury, 9 March 1876. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁹⁶ Treasury (William Law) to First Commissioner, 28 April 1876. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁹⁷ Mitford to Harris, 13 May 1876. PRO WORK 11/53. Mitford to Harris, 30 May 1876. WCA E3332/13. ‘CANNING’S STATUE WESTMINSTER PROPOSED NEW RAILING’, 31 May 1876. PRO WORK 11/53.

¹⁹⁸ Mitford to Harris, 4 August 1876. WCA E3332/13.

¹⁹⁹ Harris to Mitford, 12 August 1876. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁰⁰ On 7 November 1877 Harris complained to Mitford that he had still not received a reply to his letter of the previous year. PRO WORK 11/53.

note from Gerald Noel, the current First Commissioner, stating, in no uncertain terms: 'I object to any course which involves the placing of iron rails before the Statue.'²⁰¹ This latest impediment was articulated to a surely exasperated WDBW on 22 November 1877.²⁰² This again stalled the process until, in mid-January 1878 a deputation of the WDBW led by Harris called upon the First Commissioner.²⁰³ Despite what must have been a somewhat lively affair, it seems to have come to nothing.

The next instalment in this seemingly interminable saga did not commence until July 1881 when Harris sent the First Commissioner 'a copy of a Report made by the Sanitary Officer with reference to the nuisances committed in the space behind Canning's Statue in Parliament Square'.²⁰⁴ This was drafted by the 'Inspector of Nuisances', Charles J. Hughes and dated 7 July 1881:

I have again to report to you upon the very serious nuisances committed every night, and often during the day, at the rear of Canning's Statue in the Broad Sanctuary; during the recent hot weather the stench from there has been very bad, and no amount of cleansing will make the place sweet, as the stones are thoroughly saturated with wine and excrement, and it appears to [me] desirable that some steps should be taken to exclude the public and loiterers from using the open space behind the Statue.²⁰⁵

John Taylor must have read this before concluding: 'At present the matter is discreditable to all concerned.' He felt that Works had 'no power to prevent the nuisance' that took 'place at the back of the Statue, on the pavement in charge of the Vestry.' It was his opinion that '[n]othing short of the moving of the Statue or the fixing of a railing in front of it... [would] get rid of the difficulty.'²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ This (undated) memorandum and Willis' sketch are in PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁰² The letter read: 'objecting as he [Noel] does personally to any course which involves the placing of iron rails before the statue, he is unable to advise Her Majesty's Government to incur any responsibility in the matter.' WCA E3332/13.

²⁰³ This took place on Tuesday, 22 January at 3pm. Others in attendance included Mr. Berry, Mr. Piper, Mr. Hamborg, Mr. Hutt, Mr. White and Mr. Aston. This is listed as a minute in a letter detailing the Deputation dated 14 January 1878. WCA E3332/13.

²⁰⁴ Harris to First Commissioner, 8 July 1881. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁰⁵ This is included in Harris's letter of 8 July 1881. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁰⁶ Memorandum by Taylor dated 13 July 1881. PRO WORK 11/53.

With the report by Charles Hughes in mind it is pertinent to examine the role of the ‘Inspectors of Nuisances and Pavements’ of the WDBW.²⁰⁷ In the preceding century there had been at least eighty scavengers paid by the Westminster authorities contracted to clean the district.²⁰⁸ The duties of the Inspectors of Nuisances were set out in the Metropolis Local Management Act. Under the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Act their areas of responsibility included ‘Street Cleansing, Watering, Dusting and Lighting of the District’, ‘Slaughterhouses, and Cowhouses’, sewers and drainage.²⁰⁹ It was their duty to ensure that “‘all dust, ashes, filth, dung and soil are removed by the Scavengers, and [to] report any neglect or omission therein to the “Street Cleansing and Sanitary Committee.””²¹⁰ They were also to report ‘any pool, ditch, gutter, water-course, privy, urinal, cesspool, drain, or ashpit, so foul as to be a nuisance, and upon all other nuisances arising within their particular districts.’²¹¹ It seems that a perennial problem was dust. The author of a letter to Robert Richard Arntz, the surveyor of WDBW, said that the situation on the roads was ‘disgraceful. We are literally smothered.’²¹² Associated with this was the necessity of materially maintaining the streets in the Westminster District (cf. Plate 16).²¹³

²⁰⁷ In 1868 the positions of Inspectors of Nuisances and Pavements had been taken by Robert Gifford, Owen Williams and Samuel Smith, although, on 13 May 1868, a ‘Special Committee’ was appointed with the aim of filling the vacancy ‘of Inspector of Nuisances for St. Margaret’s Parish.’ Dissatisfaction with the standard of the applicants led them to place advertisements in *The Times* and *Telegraph*. WCA E3328/2.

²⁰⁸ This was at an annual cost of £4, 127. See Liza Picard, ‘Westminster’s slums and squares’ in *Dr Johnson’s London. Life in London 1740-1770*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2000, pp. 15-16 & 18.

²⁰⁹ Metropolis Local Management Act - The Board of Works for the Westminster District - Bye Laws for Regulating the business and proceedings of the Board, the business and duties of the several committees, and the duties of the various officers [‘submitted and confirmed by the Board [of Works for the Westminster District] 12 June 1868’], ‘Street Cleansing and Sanitary Committee’, pp. 16-20. WCA E3328/2.

²¹⁰ ‘Duties of the Inspectors of Nuisances and Pavements’, No. 3, pp. 32-35. WCA E3328/2.

²¹¹ ‘Duties of the Inspectors of Nuisances and Pavements’, No. 7. WCA E3328/2. They were also instructed to keep ‘Report Books’. I have not located any of these but they would undoubtedly prove of interest.

²¹² Mr. Edward Davidson Doughty to Arntz, 25 May 1868. WCA E3328/2. The Office of Works experienced similar problems in September 1869 in their department’s recently occupied offices at 22 Parliament Street. Russell to Hollis, 10 September 1869. WCA E3328/5.

²¹³ In 1870 Arntz drew up his ‘Surveyor’s Report as to the bad state of the principal thoroughfares in the District’. This included the ‘re-coating’ of Parliament Street at a cost of £250; similar repairs and partial re-coating of Broad Sanctuary and Bridge Street and Whitehall were also necessary. Dated 24 January 1870. WCA E3328/6.

The unsavoury condition of the Canning memorial was thus clearly within the remit of the Inspector of Nuisances. The complaints continued and, on 19 July 1881, the WDBW received a letter on behalf of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis. This was duly passed on to Works and read: ‘the Superintendent of the Division reports, that late at night many persons commit nuisances at the back of the Pedestal. The Police frequently have their attention called to this place and they are directed to do their utmost to check the nuisance; but it is impossible to keep a Constable permanently stationed there.’ The conclusion, inevitably, was that ‘the space round the Statue [should be] railed off flush with the railings of the adjoining Enclosure’.²¹⁴

On 28 September the Treasury informed Works that they at last agreed to ‘sanction the proposal to place the statue within the line of the enclosure and to continue the railing in front of it’. This was to cost ‘not more than £120’, a sum that was to come from savings in that year’s vote of money for Houses of Parliament expenditure.²¹⁵ As a consequence, by 1 March 1882, the statue had been moved and the railings extended in advance of the pedestal. Mitford confirmed that his office were ‘much pleased with the great improvement effected and the excellent manner in which the works’ had been executed by the WDBW.²¹⁶

4~9 The profanation of sacred sites

It is clear that the difficulties over the Canning memorial centred on the railings that Edward Barry had introduced in the late 1860s. ‘Railings’ were intended to exclude the undesirable and protect the privileged in this sacred site (see 1~3). In November 1864, after deciding that New Palace Yard was to remain an open space, William Cowper had instructed Barry to enclose it with an ornate fence (3~6). As we have seen the First Commissioner had added: ‘The railings must be sufficiently high and strong to exclude a mob on important occasions, but should not necessarily interrupt

²¹⁴ The assistant to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, 4 Whitehall Place to Works, 19 July 1881. PRO WORK 11/53.

²¹⁵ Treasury to Works, 28 September 1881. PRO WORK 11/53.

²¹⁶ Mitford to Harris, 28 April 1882 [copy]. PRO WORK 11/53.

the view.’²¹⁷ Or, in other words, having the robustness to physically bar but also the unobtrusiveness to visually permit.

That the latter requirement was in many ways as important as the former can also be substantiated by recourse to the Canning monument. Gerald Noel, when First Commissioner, stated that he personally ‘object[ed] to any course which involves the placing of iron rails before the Statue.’²¹⁸ He was presumably troubled by the resulting connotations: that the commemoration of Canning was – for some – an unwelcome intrusion into the public sphere requiring protection from an unruly populace. That this was nevertheless the case is confirmed by an alternative arrangement to that actually carried out. It survives in the form of an undated tracing simply labelled *Plan No. 2*. In this scheme the railing would have continued in a line flush with the rear edge of the pedestal: this is shown in both plan and elevation (Plate 61). The latter is especially interesting as it shows the railings fanning out in two arcs of vertical spikes on either side of the monument. This very imposing and decidedly aggressive design would have considerably altered the character of the monument.

Needless to say something *did* have to be done because, in the recess of the enclosure and in the shadow cast by the additional gaslights, was a motley crew indeed. In one of the letters written by John Harris cited above he referred to ‘the very serious nuisance which the Statue, as at present arranged, is *the cause of being committed*’ [italics added].²¹⁹ This problematic situation was thus generated or (at the very least) exacerbated by Barry’s design. Harris appeared to have been in no doubt that it was ‘the cause’ of the dilemma. If so, the dubious form of homage paid to the Canning statue (‘thoroughly saturated with wine and excrement’²²⁰) comprehensively subverted the very *raison d’être* of such a sculptural commemoration. The connection between this form of antisocial behaviour with dirt and disease is the obverse of the carefully ordered urban spaces around the New Palace at Westminster. Those responsible clearly failed to fit into this societal model that it manifested. They were

²¹⁷ William Cowper to Barry, 26 November 1864. PRO WORK 11/20.

²¹⁸ Undated memorandum (probably November 1877). PRO WORK 11/53.

²¹⁹ ‘Canning Statue’. WCA E3332/13.

²²⁰ Charles J. Hughes’ ‘Report made by the Sanitary Officer with reference to the nuisances committed in the space behind Canning’s Statue in Parliament Square’, 7 July 1881. Copied in Harris to First Commissioner, 8 July 1881. PRO WORK 11/53.

instead quite literally polluting the physically and symbolically structured plan of Parliament Square and the Canning Enclosure. These constructs were officially sanctioned and paid for to both structure and regulate the strategically sensitive environs of parliament, the law courts and the principal seat of the Church of England.

The inebriated congregation sheltering in the shadow of Canning's monument not only defiled this sacred site they also subverted its symbolic intents. Their presence reverted this 'liver' back into a 'cloaca'; the 'civilised corner' became anarchic and disrespectful (see 1~3). On this basis there would seem to be an interrelation between the sacred and profane, a fact confirmed by a reading of *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. This book contends that 'cultural categories of high and low, social and aesthetic... are never entirely separable.' The authors, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, address 'four symbolic domains – psychic forms, the human body, geographical space and the social order'. They aver that in each

the vertical extremities [of high and low] frame all further discursive elaborations. If we can grasp the system of extremes which encode the body, the social order, psychic form and spatial location, we thereby lay bare a major framework of discourse within which any further "redress of balance" or judicious qualification must take place.²²¹

In our present example the Canning monument and its ordered, regulated setting as distinct from the wine and excrement saturated pedestal constitute the limits of this discourse. By grasping the full implications of the 'symbolic inversion'²²² perpetrated by these heathen worshippers one can establish the parameters of this symbolic realm. This text is even more instructive when it refers to Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895-1975) vocabulary of the classical / grotesque body. The former is the expression of 'the high official culture' most tangibly manifest in the form of the 'classical statue': placed on a pedestal it is 'elevated, static and monumental... We gaze up at the figure and wonder. We are placed by it as spectators to an instant – frozen yet apparently

²²¹ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Methuen, London, 1986, pp. 2-3.

²²² This term is derived from Barbara Babcock's *The Reversible World* (1978): "Symbolic inversion" may be broadly defined as any act of expressive behaviour which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, social and political.' Stallybrass and White use it to demonstrate the manner in which they employ the word 'transgression'. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, pp. 17-18.

universal – of epic or tragic time.’²²³ This body is singular, transcendent, complete and impermeable whilst, in contrast, the grotesque body is ‘usually multiple..., teeming, always already part of a throng.’²²⁴ These two extremes were brought into obscene proximity in the case of the Canning monument during the 1870-80s and, as we shall see, with the Churchill statue on 1 May 2000 (see 6~9).

The core ideas in *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* proffer an extension to the concept of the ‘sacred site’ as discussed in the opening chapter (see 1~3). The authors suggest that ‘[w]hat is socially peripheral may be symbolically central.’²²⁵ This is certainly the case with the Canning statue and Parliament Square: an appreciation of the emblematic scope of this site and the monuments that articulate it is enriched and informed by analysing and evaluating the socially peripheral just as much as the socially endorsed. It is the latter that will be now addressed in the final section of this chapter.

4~10 ‘A resting place for foreigners & strangers’

Little over a year after the railing-in of the Canning statue a seemingly oblivious John Tennant of the MPGA wrote to the Office of Works to enquire ‘whether there would be any objection to throw[ing] open the space where Canning’s Statue stands to the public.’ His suggestions included provision for a gate, paths and a few seats.²²⁶ A prompt reply made it clear that ‘the proposal [was] liable to many objections’ and that there were already ‘a large number of open spaces in the neighbourhood... accessible to the public’.²²⁷ The recommendation was therefore both unnecessary and

²²³ Compare this with Susan Stewart’s aforementioned comments on monuments as ‘an eternalised parade, a fixing of the symbols of public life, of the state’ and the ‘reduction of the individual viewer’ (see 1~2).

²²⁴ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p. 21.

²²⁵ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, p. 23.

²²⁶ Tennant to Works, 18 July 1883. PRO WORK 11/53.

²²⁷ Works to Tennant, 23 July 1883 [copy]. PRO WORK 11/53. A memo of 20 July reveals these open spaces to be St. James’s Park, the Embankment, and Parliament Square Gardens. Brabazon later countered the argument that the nearness of St. James’s Park rendered ‘the want of this open space useless’ by citing ‘the case of the Burial Ground of St. John’s Chapel’ which was ‘highly regarded’ by the locals despite being only separated from Regent’s Park ‘by the adjacent roadway.’ Brabazon to ‘The Chairman of Westminster Board of Works’, 28 February 1885. WCA E3336/2.

unwelcome given that the tortuous tale of Canning's statue and railings must have still been fresh in the minds of the civil servants at the Office of Works.

The MPGA did not officially return to the fray until March the following year, when its chairman, Lord Brabazon, wrote to the First Commissioner. The recipient's attention was drawn to the 'fair sized plot of grass' populated by numerous 'well matured plane trees' behind the Canning statue and the railing denying public access. He opined that there was

at present no spot from whereon a quiet view can be obtained of the magnificent range of buildings which may be seen from this spot, comprising Dean's Yard, the Westminster Memorial Column, Westminster Abbey, Palace Yard and some of our finest statues. There are few sites in continental cities of greater beauty combined with historical and archaeological interest.²²⁸

Brabazon was surprised (as has already been noted in 4~7) that there were no facilities, such as seating, to appreciate 'the majestic grandeur of the adjacent venerable pile of buildings.' A remedy could be found if a gate should be opened to allow the public access, at certain times of the day, to a pathway and benches. With the successful opening-up of St. Margaret's Churchyard he urged a similar treatment for the Canning Enclosure. It was his belief that, 'abutting... on a busy and leading thoroughfare', there would be 'always a plentiful supply of police at hand who would be able to check any ill behaviour on the part of the public using it.' Brabazon was aware of the 'considerable cause for complaint' when 'a short time since, a very small portion of this ground immediately surrounding this statue, was open to the public'. He felt that 'this was in no way to be wondered at, forming as it did a cul de sac, an arrangement that gives rise to many objections in all such matters.'²²⁹

An internal memorandum revealed that those at the Office of Works were scornful of this 'useless and frivolous request' and Mitford swiftly communicated their unaltered position, although in rather more conciliatory terms.²³⁰ Finding his path yet again frustrated Brabazon strove instead to woo the WDBW with a letter entitled "The Ground Surrounding the Statue to Canning". In it he argued for the 'public improvement' that would be procured if the environs of the monument 'were thrown

²²⁸ Brabazon, 83 Lancaster Gate to Works, 22 March 1884. PRO WORK 11/53.

²²⁹ Brabazon to Works, 22 March 1884. PRO WORK 11/53.

²³⁰ Memorandum, 26 March 1884; Works to Brabazon, 27 March 1884. PRO WORK 11/53.

open to the public'. He enthused that a 'joint deputation' of the MPGA and the WDBW would present 'such an expression of local and general opinion [that it] could not fail to make a most favourable impression.' As with his correspondence to Works, Brabazon lauded 'one of the finest and most varied views in the Metropolis' could be had from this enclosure. On this occasion he cited 'Westminster School, the Crimean Memorial, the fine old Abbey with the Houses of Parliament in the middle and Westminster Bridge in the background.'²³¹

Following another letter to the WDBW²³², Brabazon sought the response of a new First Commissioner, Archibald Philip Primrose, fifth Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929). The latter declined any offer of a 'joint deputation', arguing that he was unable to alter his predecessor's stance of July 1883.²³³ The following month H.R. Potter of WDBW responded to yet another Brabazon letter by reiterating the opinion of Works and wearily concluding that, 'in these circumstances, it would be useless for him to give the deputation the trouble of meeting him.'²³⁴

Three years and one day after his last salvo Brabazon (who in 1887, following the death of his elder brother, had attained the title of twelfth Earl of Meath) took to the fray once more: this time in the House of Lords with a question to Lord Henniker. He indicated that the seats provided by his association located near to the Abbey did not afford a vantage point from which to see the Palace of Westminster. To rectify this he called for the Canning Enclosure to be opened to the roadway as was the case with such areas in 'Continental towns'. However, bearing in mind his notable lack of success in this matter Brabazon tried a different tack. With sleight of hand he attempted to circumvent earlier objections to his proposal by saying that he was *not* advocating an 'open space' of the kind usually espoused by the MPGA, for there were sufficient numbers of these near the Houses of Parliament already:

²³¹ Lord Brabazon, 'Chairman of The Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard, and Playground Association', 28 February 1885 to 'The Chairman of Westminster Board of Works'. WCA, E3336/2.

²³² Brabazon to Chairman of WDBW, 21 April 1885, WCA, E3336/4.

²³³ Brabazon to Rosebery, 13 May; Works to Brabazon, 19 May 1885. PRO WORK 11/53.

²³⁴ On 16 June 1885 G. Thompson had sent the Westminster Vestry Clerk a copy of a letter from Works regarding the ground surrounding Canning's statue and the joint deputation. Brabazon's letter was dated 13 June and Potter's reply 19 June 1885. See WCA, E3336/6.

but there was no spot where a foreigner or any individual who visited the Metropolis could sit down in peace and quiet and contemplate and study carefully the architectural beauties which surrounded Parliament Square.²³⁵

The Office of Works had been given prior notice of this question. The ‘Bailiff of the Parks’ passed on Brabazon’s seemingly modified proposal for ‘a resting place for foreigners & strangers who could sit down & view the Abbey and Houses of Parliament at their leisure.’ The peer was yet again of the opinion ‘that there were plenty of Policemen on duty in this neighbourhood who could look after this Enclosure whilst open.’²³⁶ The following day, however, William Browne penned an internal memorandum to Colonel Wheatley and wasted little time in expressing hostility to the proposal. He noted that any entrance to such an enclosure ‘on the west side and within a few yards of a Public house’ (cf. Plate 34) would pose ‘a most unsuitable and difficult point for foreigners and strangers to find’. He therefore suggested a gate on the eastern side and added:

In the absence of any Rules and Regulations I presume that Children and idle roughs could not be excluded from the Enclosure & that the result would be the disfigurement of the place & a nuisance to the tenants of the lower rooms in the new buildings (16 Great George Street) which forms a portion of the western boundary of the Enclosure.²³⁷

He opined that ‘it would be useless to rely upon the chance supervision of the policemen on duty to look after the place when open’ and added that he failed to ‘see how the police... [were] to distinguish foreigners and strangers from other people.’ In contrast he felt that there was ‘ample space for one or two seats on each side of the footway between the two flower garden plots in Parliament Square.’

Wheatley’s response focused on the point about reserving this “‘open space’” for only ‘a certain Section of the Public’ as being indeed ‘impracticable.’ He considered that it either be kept closed ‘or the Public must be admitted indiscriminately. If the latter be done, “Rules” must be made and a Park Keeper be appointed or arrangements be made with the Metropolitan Police to patrol the ground.’²³⁸ This formed the basis of Henniker’s reply given in the Lords on behalf of the First Commissioner. Given the

²³⁵ ‘Open Spaces (Metropolis)’, pp. 77-82, *PD*, Vol. 327, 1888, 14 June 1888, p. 80.

²³⁶ Memorandum dated 8 June 1888. PRO WORK 11/53.

²³⁷ Memorandum to Colonel Wheatley, 9 June 1888. PRO WORK 11/53.

²³⁸ ‘MJW’ memorandum dated 11 June 1888. PRO WORK 11/53.

absurdity of reserving such a space ‘for any particular class of persons’, he felt the Canning Enclosure to be unsuitable for the admittance of the ‘general public’.

Even the Prime Minister spoke on this matter: Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, third Marquess of Salisbury (1830-1903) felt that any ‘contemplative persons’ would be somewhat indisposed by the ‘small boys of London [who] would infest and take possession of the Square’ in contrast to the hoped-for aesthetes.²³⁹ Henniker, fearing ‘injury to property’, concurred. He went on to offer the olive branch of seeking the First Commissioner’s permission to install seats in Parliament Square. And, with inevitable prompting from Brabazon, this promise was carried through: ten seats were ordered, six for the centre and one at each corner ‘outside the railings, where there was ample space for them.’²⁴⁰

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Over a decade passed until, on 19 June 1899, William Wells Addington, third Viscount Sidmouth (1824-1913) wrote to Ackers Douglas, the First Commissioner.²⁴¹ He spoke of the ‘inappropriate situation’ of Canning’s statue, obscured as it was by the trees planted in the enclosure some thirty years before. Sidmouth, contending that Westmacott’s statue was one of the best art works in London, had apparently expressed a wish for it to be placed on the western side of Westminster Hall. When he learnt that a statue of Cromwell was intended for this location he returned to the subject with renewed vigour by pursuing the matter in the House of Lords (see 5~7). Responding on behalf of the First Commissioner, the Earl of Pembroke, although sympathetic, considered that it would be difficult to move the bronze Canning to Parliament Square given its considerably larger proportions in comparison to the other monuments. The Duke of Rutland was of the opinion that the statue was so large that it should stand alone, as it did at present.²⁴² Rather than move the monument it was instead decided to cut back some of the lower branches of the adjacent trees.²⁴³

²³⁹ ‘Open Spaces (Metropolis)’, *PD*, Vol. 327, 14 June 1888, p. 81.

²⁴⁰ *PD*, Vol. 329, 1888, p. 1369.

²⁴¹ Sidmouth, 78 Eaton Place SW to Ackers Douglas, 19 June 1899. PRO WORK 11/53. For Sidmouth see *Who Was Who*, Vol. I 1897-1915, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1966, p. 649.

²⁴² ‘The Canning and Cromwell Statues’, *Standard*, 22 June 1899. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁴³ A memorandum indicates that this was done by 26 June of that year. PRO WORK 11/53.

This remained the situation until Brabazon made another reappearance in July 1901. Speaking in the Lords he advocated opening the Canning enclosure to the public and providing seats south of the statue in Broad Sanctuary. In its report of the following day *The Times* quoted a characteristic statement from Brabazon that ‘this place was the centre of one of the most interesting and historic portions of the kingdom, which was the Mecca of educated subjects of his Majesty in all parts of the world.’²⁴⁴ The lobbyist had in fact already visited the Office of Works – the First Commissioner of which was Aretas Akers-Douglas (1851-1926) – and a memorandum from Browne to Colonel Wheatley dated 12 July makes reference to a still extant map setting out a plan of the area.²⁴⁵ Affixed to this are five smaller sheets, upon each of which is an alternative scheme. The more elaborate of these envisaged the opening up of the entire enclosure and incorporating a meandering path leading from an entrance alongside the Buxton fountain, running along the back of the Canning statue and branching out into a ‘Y’ shape at the southern end facing the Abbey (Plate 30). This was considered too expensive and instead a proposal for just the southern-most end of the enclosure was selected. Marked ‘A’ it is inscribed with the words: ‘This space opened to the Public – as proposed by Lord Meath’. The newly opened area, in the form of a balloon-shape, was to be levelled, gravelled and furnished with seating for the public (Plate 31). The semicircular railings were to be ‘taken up and re-erected on line A-B’: this formed a path from east to west running parallel to the walkway in Parliament Square. A crescent-shaped opening at the mid-point was to accommodate seats.

There was some concern over the cost of these amendments, which in September William Browne estimated at just under £400.²⁴⁶ There was a delay due to the construction of seating for a ‘very exceptional occasion’: the coronation of Edward VII (1841-1910). Brabazon was of the opinion that this gave weight to his proposal

²⁴⁴ ‘The Enclosure in Broad Sanctuary’, *The Times*, 17 July 1901. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁴⁵ A memo dated 4 July indicates that Brabazon had met the First Commissioner in advance of his question in the Lords of 16 July. The plan is signed by Browne and dated 12 July 1901. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁴⁶ Memoranda between Browne and Wheatley dated 27 August and 10 September 1901. The exact cost was estimated to be £372 14 2. It had been speculated that £47 10 0 was necessary to move the gate and alter the curved end at the south of the enclosure. Estimate from Turner & Co. Engineers, Smiths & c of 1 George Street, Lisson Grove to Browne, 9 September 1901. PRO WORK 11/53.

given that such provision would be necessary for similar future occasions. He added that the removal of this temporary stand might provide opportunity for alterations given the marks it would leave behind.²⁴⁷

In early 1903 the completion of the scheme was drawing closer. With some satisfaction at this prospect, Brabazon wrote to Lord Windsor with the recommendation that the railings to the rest of the enclosure behind the statue be retained in order to secure it after dark. He added: 'I think there might be two entrances to avoid a cul-de-sac' (Plate 32).²⁴⁸ This was of no little importance given the innumerable 'disturbances' in this locale over the years. As the summer approached attention moved to the hours that the enclosure was to remain open. Comparison was made with St. James's Park after it was decided that the duration of access to the Victoria Tower Gardens was 'rather too restricted'.²⁴⁹ James Davie, Inspector for Central Parks, indicated that the former opened at either five or six in the morning and closed at between eight or nine at night depending upon the season and month of the year. In contrast, Victoria Tower Gardens was open from seven or eight o'clock until four in December; whilst in June and July it remained unlocked until nine in the evening.

The Canning Enclosure opened without ceremony on Monday 17 August 1903.²⁵⁰ Given its rather limited dimensions Brabazon had concurred with the First Commissioner, Lord Windsor, that a drinking fountain ought not to be placed there. Furthermore, he had also reduced the number of park benches from fourteen to eight, still enough it was argued to accommodate over fifty persons.²⁵¹ Some four months after opening a memorandum from the Commissioner of Police reached the Office of Works: it 'anticipated the same nuisances from "Verminous Persons" on these Garden seats, as in Trafalgar Square.'²⁵² He therefore suggested that the 'Rules for the Canning Statue Enclosure' should include Hyde Park Rule number fifteen: "'no idle

²⁴⁷ Meath to Akers Douglas, 29 November 1901. The disturbance of the grounds by the stands was confirmed in a memorandum of 15 December 1902. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁴⁸ Meath to Lord Windsor, 11 February 1903.

²⁴⁹ Memorandum dated 13 June 1903. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁵⁰ Memorandum by Major Hussey, 18 August 1903. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁵¹ Meath to Windsor, 19 June and 9 July 1903; memorandum dated 1 July. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁵² Memorandum dated 28 January 1904. PRO WORK 11/53.

and disorderly persons”’. This was ‘in connection with the Regulations prescribed by “The Parks Regulation Act, 1872”’ (see 4~1). Still extant is a typed document of these restrictions, amended in pencil where appropriate:

2. No unauthorised Person shall ~~drill or practice Military Evolutions, or use Arms,~~
or play any Games or Music, or practice Gymnastics, or take Photographs, or set or let any Commodity.
3. No unauthorised Public Address may be delivered in the enclosure... No person shall use any obscene, indecent or blasphemous words, expressions or gestures.... No money shall be solicited or collected in the enclosure...
4. Brawling, fighting, quarrelling, gambling, betting, playing with cards or dice, begging and telling fortunes are prohibited within the Enclosure...
5. No idle and disorderly person or rogue or vagabond or person in an unclean and verminous condition shall loiter or remain in the enclosure or occupy the ground or any of the seats thereof and it shall be lawful for any Park Keeper to exclude or remove from the enclosure any person committing any breach of this Rule.²⁵³

The anxieties expressed in such prohibitions were well founded. In June 1904 there was some concern over the lack of surveillance and it was averred that, as the park keepers did little more than open and shut the gates, it might be advisable to get official agreement from the police that they would watch the enclosure. A telling note read: ‘The loafers have claimed the use of the seats from the time of opening it, and very few persons of respectable appearance are ever seen there.’ A memorandum from Major Hussey in reply added: ‘The seats seem much appreciated by the Class for which they were not entirely intended.’²⁵⁴ As a result the Metropolitan Police agreed to survey the area.²⁵⁵

That this was a topical issue is indicated by an article that appeared in the *Telegraph* on 20 September 1904 under the title: ‘Travelling Tramps’. It observed that an ‘unwritten law’ had conceded such seating ‘to the vagrants of the town.’ This threatened to lead to a state of affairs ‘violating the intention of the scheme which made over the seats in Canning enclosure to public use.’ The writer claimed that this space was primarily meant for reposing pilgrims from the Abbey; it had subsequently become a resting-place for workpeople about the area; and had then become a refuge

²⁵³ The name of this act is amended in pencil to ‘CANNING STATUE ENCLOSURE’. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁵⁴ Memorandums from Major Hussey to Jordan and reply, 7 & 8 June 1904. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁵⁵ Whilst agreeing to this it was stressed that the opening and closing of the gates was to remain the responsibility of the park keepers. Works to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis at New Scotland Yard, 13 June; reply from the Chief Clerk 22 June 1904. PRO WORK 11/53.

for convalescents from the nearby Westminster Hospital (Plates 42-43). In stark contrast it was now the haunt of dirty tramps thus prompting the newspaper correspondent to demand the strict enforcement of the 1872 Parks Regulation Act, noting that this legislation ‘even dominates the character of the language to be used in the enclosure.’²⁵⁶

Presumably after reading this piece a clearly disgruntled member of the Office of Works noted: ‘This invasion of the Canning Enclosure should be watched: it might become a serious evil.’²⁵⁷ Lord Windsor concurred: ‘I think we must prevent the verminous person from appropriating these seats & the latter sh^d be regularly washed.’²⁵⁸ At the end of September 1904, an internal report indicated that the park keepers visited the enclosure approximately twelve times per day. Moreover, on 16 September it was reported that ‘a woman was charged with being drunk and disorderly and with using obscene language, on the 20th inst. a man was similarly charged.’ The former was ‘sentenced to 14 days H.[ard] L.[about]’ whilst the latter was ordered to pay a twenty shilling fine or face a similar punishment.²⁵⁹

Members of Parliament, irrespective of the location of their constituency, were presumably frequent visitors to Westminster. Nevertheless many seem to have been oblivious to the actual purveyors of this enclosure situated just a little to the west of their place of work. This was the case when, on 16 June 1904, the First Commissioner was asked whether the area around Canning’s statue might be opened to the public, ‘so that it should correspond in appearance and utility with the plot of garden which adjoins it to the south [i.e. Parliament Square].’ The questioner was evidently unfamiliar with the somnambulant tramps photographed reclining on a bench in Green Park in 1900 (Plate 33) because one year later, and still none the wiser, he

²⁵⁶ The correspondent also provided a satirical observation on the various classes of this street walkers, noting that it was ‘a difficult matter always to discriminate between grades of tramps’. This cutting is included in the Canning file. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁵⁷ Memorandum dated 21 September 1904. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁵⁸ Memorandum by Windsor, 24 September 1904. PRO WORK 11/53.

²⁵⁹ Memorandum from Jordan to Hussey, 30 September 1904. PRO WORK 11/53.

repeated his request. Lord Balcarres politely but firmly responded ‘that he was unable to give any such undertaking’.²⁶⁰

This final rebuff brings to an end this chapter. Its contents have made it abundantly clear that the august aspirations of memorial committees and governments alike were regularly affronted and debased. Matters of aesthetics and design were compromised by questions of finance, practicality and utility. The fora that were created were just as likely to entice the least fortunate in society as they were to attract the most noble-minded. Following ceremonious initial enthusiasms these sites gradually shifted from view, just as their commemorative memorials began to slip imperceptibly from memory. The act of commemorating an individual or historical event laid claim to its universality. That the values and beliefs of a cultural or political elite were *not* universally shared is indicated by the fact that these sites needed to be policed by rules and regulations. The nineteenth-century memory of Oliver Cromwell discussed in the following chapter further enunciates just how partial and divisive such memorials could become.

²⁶⁰ Whitmore to Lord Windsor, 16 June 1904; Whitmore to Lord Balcarres, 29 June 1905. Questions in parliament noted in PRO WORK 11/53.

A regicide in a royalist pantheon: Oliver Cromwell and the New Palace at Westminster

5~1 Cromwell and the vicissitudes of history

The figure of Cromwell has emerged from the floating mists of time in many varied semblances, from bloodstained and hypocritical usurper up to transcendental hero and the liberator of mankind.¹

In the late 1960s a group of historians met to discuss the status of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) in the nineteenth-century. They surmised that his memory was considered 'dangerous' due to the fact that the 'paradoxes and ambiguities of his person and policies were re-enacted in his rôle in nineteenth-century history'. The deployment of Cromwell was a constituent part of an 'intense living history' that had 'contemporary importance' for the politics of the period.²

That Cromwell's significance has been readily (and inconsistently) connected to numerous divergent issues since the seventeenth-century is very well enunciated in the volume of collected essays entitled *Images of Oliver Cromwell* published in 1993.³ Roger Howell's opening chapter engaged with this matter by questioning the very basis on which the past is 'rewritten'; how aspects of the past are selected; and what value judgements formed. Howell argued that this was of special importance when history is focused on 'high politics and "great men"'. These individuals

tended to become symbols, patriot heroes or villainous counter-examples, figures which summarised important points, often of a moral nature, about the past of their nation and who were carefully woven into that partly mythic view of national

¹ John Morley, *Oliver Cromwell*, Macmillan, London, 1910, p. 1.

² These observations stemmed from 'a History Workshop on the subject of the Self-Educating Working Man, held at Ruskin College' in November 1967. The quotations are derived from the report by T.W. Mason, 'Nineteenth-Century Cromwell', *Past and Present*, No.40, July 1968, pp. 187-191.

³ R.C. Richardson (ed.), *Images of Oliver Cromwell: Essays for and by Roger Howell, Jr*, Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York, 1993, especially pp. 20-31.

development which societies foster as a way of defining themselves and of socialising their young to the predominant values of the society.⁴

Ideas and opinions towards such figures are never static and reassessments made at one moment in time may be inverted at another. John Morley (1838-1923), a Liberal politician as well as a biographer of Cromwell,⁵ described this process as ‘the way a great name is dragged into the polemics of an hour – Luther, for example – when it serves the turn either to exalt or to depress him.’⁶

J.W. Burrow’s *A Liberal Descent: Victorian historians and the English past* is ‘based on the premise that one of the ways in which a society reveals itself, and its assumptions and beliefs about its own character and destiny, is by its attitudes and uses of its past.’⁷ He explains the importance of seventeenth-century history to nineteenth-century politics by citing the historians Henry Hallam (1775-1859) and W.E.H. Lecky (1838-1903). The former referred to it as ‘the period from which the factions of modern times trace their divergence; which, after the lapse of almost two centuries, still calls forth the warm emotions of party-spirit, and affords a test of political principles’. Lecky’s *The Political Value of History* of 1892 includes the memorable phrase: ‘We are Cavaliers or Roundheads before we are Conservatives or Liberals.’⁸

It is therefore through attitudes towards such an equivocal subject as Oliver Cromwell that much can be gleaned about later epochs, as Morley suggested when he wrote that ‘Carlyle looked at the seventeenth century through the spectacles of the nineteenth’.⁹ Indeed, an essential determinant in Cromwell’s rehabilitation as a positive symbol in

⁴ Roger Howell, Jr, ‘Images of Oliver Cromwell’, pp. 20-32 in R.C. Richardson, *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, p. 20.

⁵ John Morley, *Oliver Cromwell*, Macmillan, London, 1910.

⁶ John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Macmillan, London, 1917, Vol. II, p. 49.

⁷ J.W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian historians and the English past*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 1-2.

⁸ Henry Hallam, *Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of George II*, 1827, Vol. II, p. 85; W.E.H. Lecky, *The Political Value of History*, 1892, p. 19 both cited in J.W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, p. 14.

⁹ This is cited as the view of a ‘learned authority on the Civil Wars’ (probably Samuel Rawson Gardiner). John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 49.

the nineteenth-century was the writings of Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881).¹⁰ His *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches: with elucidations* first appeared in 1845 and the *Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle* was published in sixteen volumes in 1857.¹¹ Prior to that, in 1840, he had given six lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, the last of which examined the 'The Hero as King' and dealt with Cromwell, Napoleon and 'modern revolutionism'.¹² In 1854 the *Illustrated Magazine of Art* pronounced that, due to Carlyle, the 'world at length understands Oliver Cromwell... He was the first to expose the misrepresentations that have grown and thickened these last two hundred years.'¹³ Six years later a parliamentarian reiterated that Carlyle's writings 'had rescued his fame from those who had calumniated him.'¹⁴ Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930), when First Lord of the Treasury, was later to state:

His reputation has, as we all know, gone through strange vicissitudes... he has now for more than a generation – largely through the labours of Mr. Carlyle – been raised on a pedestal which, in my opinion at all events, is too high. Thomas Carlyle is largely responsible for what I cannot help regarding as something in the nature of an historic legend.¹⁵

The metaphor of the pedestal is an apt one. Edward Morris has rightly observed that, by 'the late eighteenth-century, Cromwell had been assimilated into British history as "a great man"' and accordingly portrayed by the leading sculptors of that era.¹⁶

¹⁰ Ivan Roots, 'Carlyle's Cromwell', pp. 74-95 in R.C. Richardson, *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, pp. 67-71.

¹¹ Thomas Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches: with elucidations*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1845; *Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, Chapman & Hall, London, 1857.

¹² They were published in London the following year by James Fraser. See also 'The Hero as King. Cromwell, Napoleon: Modern Revolutionism', pp. 178-222 in P.C. Parr (ed.), *Carlyle's Lectures on Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1920.

¹³ 'Oliver Cromwell', pp. 369-70 in *The Illustrated Magazine of Art*, Vol. II, London, 1854, p. 370.

¹⁴ William Coningham (1815-84) cited in *Parliamentary Debates* [hereafter 'PD'], Vol. 160, 3 August 1860, p. 678. Coningham, a Liberal who supported Palmerston, has been described as 'an advocate for "free trade, reform, and retrenchment".' Michael Stenton, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament. A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons based on annual volumes of 'Dod's parliamentary companion' and other sources*, Vol. I 1832-1885, Harvester Press Limited, Hassocks, 1976, p. 88.

¹⁵ PD, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, p. 967. To cite a later commentator, his championing by Carlyle meant that: 'Once Cromwell was placed on that pedestal, it was impossible to return him to the object of hatred and derision he had once been.' Roger Howell, Jr, 'Cromwell, the English Revolution and political symbolism in eighteenth-century England', pp. 63-73 in R.C. Richardson, *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, p. 63.

¹⁶ He mentions John Michael Rysbrack (1694-1770), Louis François Roubiliac (c.1702-1762), John Cheere (1709-1787), Joseph Wilton (1722-1803) and Thomas Banks (1735-1805). Edward Morris,

Margaret Whinney stated that, at that time, portrait sculptures of Cromwell and other “British Worthies”, were greatly in demand for the adornment of grottoes or garden buildings, or for the decoration of libraries, and reflect the growing sense of the glory of England’s past’.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the depiction of Cromwell in *public* sculpture remained a highly contentious issue.¹⁸

Roger Howell observed that: ‘For much of the nineteenth-century Tories had difficulty in embracing the Cromwellian imagery; it was, after all, most often used to attack them and the position of the established Church.’¹⁹ Consequently, in the mid-century it was High Tories who objected to his suggested inclusion within the series of royal statues at the New Palace at Westminster on the grounds that the Lord Protector was a regicide whose rule had no legitimacy.²⁰ However, an intimation of the quarter from which objections were to later issue was made in 1845 when Daniel O’Connell (1775-1847) remarked of statues to Cromwell and George Monck (1608-70) that ‘they only wanted a third to make up a trio complete– they should have added the statue of the Devil. The group would then have been completed by the presence of their master.’²¹ When Cromwell was eventually commemorated at London in 1899 with a statue sited in the ‘sunken garden’ alongside Westminster Hall one vociferous opponent likened it to Mephistopheles ‘rising from the nether world.’²²

‘Nineteenth-Century Paintings and Sculptures of Cromwell’, pp. 173-176 in Joseph Nicholes, Kenneth R. Johnston and Thomas Prasch (eds.), ‘Cavaliers and Roundheads First. Interdisciplinary Essays on Romantic and Victorian Recuperations of the English Civil War’, *The Wordsworth Circle*, Vol. 25, No.3, Philadelphia, Summer 1994, p. 173. Joseph Wilton sent a bust of Cromwell to the second exhibition of the Society of Arts in 1761 and another in 1766, the latter ‘from the noted cast of his face preserved in the Great Duke’s gallery at Florence.’ Whilst the last exhibited work of Thomas Banks was a bust of Cromwell in 1803. Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography [DNB]*, Oxford University Press, London, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 1054 & Vol. 21, p. 623.

¹⁷ Margaret Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain 1530 to 1830*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1964, p. 88.

¹⁸ Morris goes on to address this in his article (a copy of which was kindly sent to me by the author). This essay and that by Roland Quinault (‘Westminster and the Victorian Constitution’, pp. 79-104 in *Royal Historical Society Transactions*, 1992) have been essential to my understanding of the ‘Cromwell Controversy’ (to cite Hugh Miller of 1845, see below).

¹⁹ Roger Howell, Jr., “‘Who needs another Cromwell?’ The nineteenth-century image of Oliver Cromwell”, pp. 96-107 in R.C. Richardson, *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, especially p. 104.

²⁰ Roland Quinault, ‘Westminster and the Victorian Constitution’, p. 88.

²¹ The *Lancaster Gazette*, 1 November 1845 cited in R.C. Richardson (ed.), *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, especially p. 103.

²² Albert Yorke, sixth Earl of Hardwicke (1867-1904). *PD*, Vol. 77, 27 October 1899, p. 751.

There can have been few occasions when the question of a statue played a part in the downfall of a government.²³ However, this was the case with the aforementioned monument designed in the years 1895-99 by a leading sculptor of the day, William Hamo Thornycroft (1850-1925).²⁴ This monument represented but one in a series of crises precipitating the fall of the troubled premiership of Archibald Philip Primrose, fifth Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929) that lasted from only 5 March 1894 until 23 June 1895.²⁵ Cromwell's commemoration formed the crux of three principal and interrelated issues of the day: political leadership, Ireland and empire. Votes in parliament for public money to be expended on such a memorial succumbed to the wrath of Irish Nationalists and the party politics of Conservatives and Unionists who had split with the Liberal Party over Home Rule. Oscar Wilde's (1854-1900) play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, written in August and September 1894, makes a telling comment on the divisions in the Liberal Party caused by the question of Home Rule for Ireland:

Lady Bracknell – 'What are your politics?'

Jack – 'Well, I am afraid I really have none. I am a Liberal Unionist.'

Lady Bracknell – 'Oh, they count as Tories. They dine with us. Or come in the evening at any rate.'²⁶

John Morley observed that, by the 1890s, 'Cromwell' had become 'a name on an Imperialist flag.'²⁷ It was, indeed, primarily for Cromwell's military success abroad that he was lauded by the 'anonymous donor' of the statue – as Rosebery was

²³ For an account of this see Robert Rhodes James, *Rosebery. A Biography of Archibald Philip, Fifth Earl of Rosebery*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1963, pp. 381-382; A.G. Gardiner, *The Life of Sir William Harcourt*, Vol. II (1886-1904), Constable & Co. Ltd., London, Bombay & Sidney, 1923, pp. 360-361.

²⁴ See his *Self Portrait Bust* (1923, plaster, 20 x 13 cm, Leeds Museum & Gallery) reproduced in Penelope Curtis & Terry Friedman, *Leeds' Sculpture Collections Illustrated Concise Catalogue*, The Centre for the Study of Sculpture, Leeds, 1999, p. 22.

²⁵ At the inauguration of Cromwell's statue at St. Ives of 1901 (see below) Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice stated that the Westminster memorial 'was one of the contributory causes... of the fall of a recent ministry.' 'The St. Ives Cromwell Statue', pp. 3-4 in *Hunts County News*, Saturday 26 October 1901, p. 3. However, to cite Rosebery in his speech on the evening of the statue's unveiling: 'A statue was promised, and the sculptor was commissioned somewhere about June, 1895, for I remember it preceded almost immediately the fall of the late Government- but not that I associate the two facts in the slightest degree, (Laughter).' 'The Cromwell Tercentenary. Speech by Lord Rosebery', p. 7a-d in *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7a.

²⁶ Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, (introduction by Tim Bezant), Heinemann, Oxford, 1994, pp. 17-18.

²⁷ John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 49.

subsequently compelled to style himself. And it is fitting, given the ‘paradoxes and ambiguities’ encumbering his memory, that Cromwell’s commemoration at Westminster should be ultimately sanctioned by a Conservative administration under the third Marquess of Salisbury (1830-1903).²⁸

Before directly addressing this event at the close of the century it is necessary to examine preceding memorials erected elsewhere in addition to earlier calls for Cromwell’s commemoration at Westminster. Moreover, a balanced analysis requires an examination of the architectural development of parliament and an account of the historical narratives associated with the buildings and their site. Full understanding of Cromwell’s omission can only be ascertained by addressing the existing selection of individuals memorialised therein. As such Paul Hetherington’s identification of the key facets of the pantheon discussed in the opening chapter (1~9) can be usefully adapted for the purposes of our present investigations.²⁹ From this it is possible to argue that the establishment, in a manner that was intentionally didactic, and for purposes that were overtly nationalistic, dictated parliament’s investiture with commemorative and symbolic meanings. These signs are demonstrative of the political ideologies of those responsible for writing an historical account through the iconography of parliament. Throughout the nineteenth-century Cromwell was posited on the margins of a cumulative pantheon formed by the sculptural embellishment of the Westminster parliament. The inclusions within the statuary groupings and the reasons for Cromwell’s periodic rejections are thus revealing of the differing political values and prejudices current at various times throughout the century.

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The site of the Houses of Parliament – and Westminster Hall in particular – possesses innumerable historical associations. The medieval hall was one of the few survivals

²⁸ This administration had earlier accepted the gift of an eighteenth-century bust of Cromwell (currently in the Lower Waiting Hall of the Palace of Westminster) presented to the House of Commons by Charles Wertheimer. Rosebery used this in his defence of the public monument by arguing that he did not ‘quite understand the difference between a statue in the open air and outside Parliament and a bust in the very heart and centre of Parliament itself.’ *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7a. See also the Cromwell holdings at the Heinz Archive & Library of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

²⁹ Paul Hetherington, ‘Pantheons in the *Mouseion*: An Aspect of the History of Taste’, pp. 214-228 in *Art History*, Vol. I, No.2, June 1978, pp. 218-219.

from the fire of 1834.³⁰ Perhaps of all the buildings in London, Westminster Hall has consistently been considered to be more imbued with history than any other.³¹ With its incorporation into Charles Barry's New Palace at Westminster it became a 'magnificent link between the present and the past'.³² Some of the most evocative historical connections to Westminster Hall are with Oliver Cromwell. The Dean of Westminster Abbey, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815-81) wrote that 'in the adjacent Hall, his Highness Oliver Cromwell was "installed" as Lord Protector' on 26 June 1657.³³ Prior to that, on 20 January 1649, King Charles had stood trial there before his execution at Whitehall ten days later. Twelve years after the monarch's beheading Oliver Cromwell's grisly skull, alongside that of Henry Ireton (1611-51) and John Bradshaw (1602-59) were, according to Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), foisted upon poles and 'set upon the further end of the Hall' facing New Palace Yard.³⁴ There they remained for over twenty years.³⁵

³⁰ Parts of the original Hall built by William Rufus (1097-99) were incorporated into Henry Yevele's reconstruction (1394-99) which saw the erection of Hugh Herland's (c.1330-1411) exceptional oak hammer-beam roof. At over seventy metres long and nearly thirty metres wide it represents 'one of the largest ancient buildings in Europe undivided by columns'. Bryan H. Fell and K.R. Mackenzie, *The Houses of Parliament: A Guide to the Palace of Westminster*, 15th edition revised by D.L. Natzler, HMSO, London, 1994, p. 2.

³¹ In his *Hand-book of London Past and Present* published in 1850, Peter Cunningham described the hall in such a way as to allow a 'spectator to picture' the associated historical events unfold. He notes, for example, that the early parliaments were held there and the structure, in its new form, held its first meeting 'for deposing the very king by whom it had been built', namely Richard II. Peter Cunningham, 'Westminster Hall', pp. 541-543 in *Hand-book of London Past and Present*, John Murray, London, revised edition 1850, p. 541. Even more recent commentators have become seduced by history: Westminster Hall 'still stands substantially unaltered after six hundred years of political change and turmoil, the proud symbol of the continuing link of Crown and Parliament, and a national shrine'. Patrick Cormack, 'Westminster Hall', pp. 11-40 in *Westminster Palace and Parliament*, Warne, London, 1981, p. 11.

³² W.D. Arnold, *The Palace of Westminster and other historical sketches*, John W. Parker & Son, London, 1855, p. 20.

³³ Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, John Murray, London, 1867/1924, p. 75.

³⁴ Henry B. Wheatley (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, Vols. I-III 1659-1663, G. Bell and Sons Ltd., London, 1924, p. 317. Bradshaw's head was placed in the middle flanked by those of Cromwell and Ireton. See Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, pp. 161-162. Peter Cunningham, 'Westminster Hall', pp. 541-543 in *Hand-book of London Past and Present*, p. 542.

³⁵ Cromwell's head is believed to have passed into the custody of Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge, his former place of study. It was buried in the grounds and a plaque was erected reading: 'Near to this place was buried on 25 March 1960 the head of OLIVER CROMWELL Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland. Fellow Commoner of this College 1616-17'. Cited in Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1973, p. 698 and illustration facing p. 701.

Very close to where these severed heads had been placed a statue of the Lord Protector by Sir Hamo Thornycroft was erected in 1899 (see 5~7). It was positioned in the so-called 'sunken garden' below the level of St. Margaret Street and Parliament Square. This space, whilst physically 'empty' was in contrast replete with symbolism and imbued with meaning: it was created following the removal of Sir John Soane's (1753-1837) controversial and much maligned Law Courts (1824-1825) attached to the western side of Westminster Hall (Plate 14).³⁶ These had been removed in 1883, following the completion of George Edmund Street's (1824-81) Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand in November 1882.³⁷

The significance of the title the 'New Palace at Westminster' in relation to the Houses of Parliament is especially pertinent to the commemoration of Cromwell. The fact that it is 'girt with the heraldic insignia of a long race of kings' whilst the envisaged statues of non-monarchical figures remained largely unrealised, gives this new palace a decidedly regal character. All the external and the majority of the internal architectural statues are of monarchs. David Cannadine's assertion that the New Palace at Westminster represents more a 'royal residence' instead of a 'democratic legislature' permanently renders any memorial of the Lord Protector as both anomalous and awkward (see 1~9).³⁸ It is not surprising therefore that his appearance should be belated and that his commemoration should be beyond the walls of the building, with his back to Westminster Hall.

³⁶ See Dorothy Stroud, 'The New Law Courts, Palace of Westminster, London', pp. 221-225 in *Sir John Soane, Architect*, Giles de la Mare Publishers Limited, London, 1996; J. Mordaunt Crook & M.H. Port, 'The Law Courts', pp. 504-512 in *The History of the King's Works, Vol. VI 1782-1851*, London, HMSO, 1971. The photograph *Palace of Westminster: showing old Courts of Justice*, taken prior to its demolition is held in the BEC Howarth-Coomes collection [BB83/1044A] of the National Monument Record (NMR) at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of England (RCHME).

³⁷ For the stylistic criticisms of Soane's designs see Alexandra Wedgwood, 'Soane's Law Courts at Westminster', pp. 31-40, *AA Files*, 24, autumn 1992. Following the courts' demolition the medieval walls and buttresses of Westminster Hall were laid open to view, and their preservation were campaigned for by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, founded by William Morris in 1877. They were highly critical of John Loughborough Pearson's (1817-97) wing and two-storey cloister subsequently annexed to the exposed side of the hall (1885-88). The debates in the 1880s affirm the architectural as well as symbolical importance of the ancient hall. For a full account of this see Chris Miele, 'The Battle for Westminster Hall', pp. 220-244 in *Architectural History*, Vol. 41, 1998.

³⁸ David Cannadine, 'The Palace of Westminster as the Palace of Varieties' in Christine Riding & Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament: history, art, architecture*, Merrell, London, 2000, p. 15. A version of this article was given in a lecture at the Public Record Office, London on 15 June 1999.

Chris Brooks states that Westminster Hall (the public's entrance)

took people through the sites of their own political history – from the spot where Charles I stood trial, through the place where parliamentarians had championed constitutional government.³⁹

However, the notable lacuna in this political history was Oliver Cromwell who was to be consistently excluded from the series of statues. The highly significant historical events associated with Cromwell and Westminster Hall were nowhere alluded to except indirectly through the commemoration of Charles I such as the brass plaque indicating where the king sat during his trial.⁴⁰ Such claims that the New Palace at Westminster represented 'in one perfect whole, the staple memorials of our National History' rang hollow with the attempted erasure of Cromwell. Indeed, *nationally* it was only in the latter part of the century that Cromwell was to be so memorialised, for example at Bradford (1873) and Manchester (1875). And it was only to be in the penultimate month of the penultimate year of the nineteenth-century that he was to have a permanent monument at Westminster. Henry Lonsdale (1816-76), in his biography of the sculptor Musgrave Lewthwaite Watson (1804-47), may well have had the New Palace at Westminster in mind when he contrasted 'the marble busts and portraits of the men of renowned Italy' that he had seen in Florence with England's neglect of her intellectual aristocracy:

In London, statues of imbecile, dethroned, and riotous kings stride the thoroughfares, and foreigners look in vain for the sculptured portraits of England's greatest sons, – its Bacon, Newton, Shakespeare, Cromwell and Raleigh.⁴¹

5~2 Should Cromwell have a statue?

William Williams (?-1865) was Member of Parliament for Coventry (1835-47) and then Lambeth (1850-65). A radical Reformer he was described as advocating the 'strictest retrenchment in the public expenditure', the extension of suffrage and vote by ballot.⁴² In the Commons on 30 July 1845 Mr. Hutt (1803-82) assured him that 'his

³⁹ Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1999, p. 214.

⁴⁰ Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men*, footnote p. 281.

⁴¹ Henry Lonsdale, *The Life and Works of Musgrave Lewthwaite Watson, Sculptor*, George Routledge & Sons, London, 1866, pp. 56 & 59.

⁴² Michael Stenton, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. I, p. 411.

hon. Friend's favourite ruler was not excluded from the list of those about to be erected.'⁴³ This preceded the publication in October of that year of the Fourth Report of the Royal Fine Art Commission (RFAC). The document considered the site and the selection of names of those 'to be honoured by so distinguished a Record of National Gratitude, and the best mode of combining the public acknowledgement of eminent service with encouragement to the Arts in this country'.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, *The Times* later noted that:

Cromwell is, however, passed over in silence; and it is only when we come to figures, by adding up the number of statues to be allotted for the Sovereigns, that we find there is not even a narrow niche for the head of the state during the period of the Commonwealth.⁴⁵

His exclusion was due to opposition by High Tories such as John Wilson Croker (1780-1857). Henry Phillpotts (1778-1869), Bishop of Exeter, wrote to Croker in April 1849 to congratulate him on 'rubbing off the varnish which Macaulay had so shamefully thrown over Cromwell.' This was a reference to Croker's review in the preceding month's *Quarterly Review* of Thomas Babington Macaulay's (1800-59) *History of England from the Accession of James II*, the first two volumes of which had been published in 1848.⁴⁶ His assessment was party political in character and scathing of a book that he claimed was 'as full of political prejudice and partisan advocacy as any of his [Macaulay's] parliamentary speeches.' As a consequence there was 'hardly a page – we speak literally, hardly a page – that does not contain something objectionable either in substance or in colour.'⁴⁷ Croker's central charge was Macaulay's 'injustice to every principle of monarchical loyalty' and his 'habitual partiality... towards every form of rebellion, and especially its archetype Cromwell' ('the wolf' of 'proverbial duplicity and audacious apostasy').⁴⁸ Macaulay is accused

⁴³ 'Supply- Statues in the New Houses of Parliament', *PD*, Vol. 82, 30 July 1845, p. 1256. Hutt-member for Hull (1832-41) and Gateshead (1841-74)- was described as taking 'an active part in Colonial and commercial questions.' Michael Stenton, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. I, p. 206.

⁴⁴ Fourth Report, *PP* 1845, [671] XXVII.151.

⁴⁵ *The Times*, 16 October 1845, p. 5b.

⁴⁶ J.W. Croker, 'The History of England from the Accession of James II by Thomas Babington Macaulay', pp. 549-630 in *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 84, No.168, John Murray, London, March 1849.

⁴⁷ J.W. Croker, 'The History of England', pp. 549-550.

⁴⁸ J.W. Croker, 'The History of England', p. 574.

of condemning Charles I ('the lamb') of 'perfidy'. This is criticised by Croker, as is Macaulay's praise for Cromwell's success abroad. Croker believed that such achievements were denied the King, weakened as was he was by the Whigs who were 'often in rebellion and always in faction against the Government'. Conversely, Cromwell's strength derived from the fact that a 'usurper is always more terrible both at home and abroad than a legitimate sovereign'.⁴⁹

The Bishop of Exeter's letter to Croker prompted by this review claimed:

The Liberal Committee for building and decorating the Houses of Parliament thought fit to insult their loyal and honest countrymen, be they few or many, by placing a statue of the arch-regicide among the monuments of our national gratitude to departed merit. The people of St. Ives are, I see, about to collect a subscription for another monument to him in his native place. Your little caution is well timed...⁵⁰

This allusion to a 'Liberal Committee' referred to the sub-committee of the RFAC (of which Macaulay was a member) that produced the 'List of distinguished Persons to whose memories Statues might be erected.'⁵¹ Macaulay's *History of England* had been preceded in 1827 by *The Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of George II*, written by his fellow commissioner, Henry Hallam. They both informed the selection process of the list of memorials and also the choice of scenes depicted in the frescoes lining the corridors leading to the two parliamentary chambers. These were the final realised elements of the 'integrated scheme' determined by the RFAC in 1847.⁵² The 'Whig interpretation of history'⁵³

⁴⁹ J.W. Croker, 'The History of England', pp. 576-77.

⁵⁰ Bernard Pool (ed.), *The Croker papers 1808-57*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1967, p. 221. It was to be a full fifty years before St. Ives was to erect a statue of Cromwell (see below).

⁵¹ Whether it was truly a 'Liberal Committee' is debatable. Apart from Macaulay the only other Liberal politician was Thomas Wyse (died 1862), who opposed the repeal of the Union. He sat for Tipperary (1830-31) and Waterford (1835-37). Sir Benjamin Hawes (1797-1862) was a Reformer who favoured triennial parliaments and the ballot. Viscount Mahon (1805-75) and Robert Harry Inglis (1786-1855) were both Conservatives with interests in history and Antiquaries to the Royal Academy. The former wrote extensively on the subject whilst Inglis became one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society of Antiquaries. See Michael Stenton, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. I, pp. 183, 207-208 & 256.

⁵² The remaining, unrealised schemes were replaced by alternative arrangements in the twentieth-century. Paul Barlow, 'The imagined hero as incarnate sign: Thomas Carlyle and the mythology of the 'national portrait' in Victorian Britain', pp. 517-545 in *Art History*, Vol. 17, No.4, 1994, note 53, p. 544.

⁵³ For an account of this see J.W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, pp. 2-3.

could be construed from the statues of the Magna Carta signatories in the House of Lords; the St. Stephen's Hall series commencing with the Civil War protagonists, Hampden and Falkland; and the frescoes depicting seventeenth-century events. The latter was described in an 1852 guide to the New Palace at Westminster as 'illustrating some of the greatest epochs in our constitutional, social, and ecclesiastical history'.⁵⁴ These frescoes culminate in the Glorious Revolution, which Macaulay construed as the moment when the monarchy's powers were curtailed and from which evolved the democratic process that culminated in the Reform Act of 1832.⁵⁵ Benedict Read has observed that it was this legislation that at last enfranchised 'the mercantile middle classes, particularly of the industrial North... It was for this parliament that the new palace was built and decorated' preceded, in 1834, by Sir Robert Peel's election as the 'first Prime Minister to come from a rich industrial family'.⁵⁶

The exclusion of Cromwell from the sculptural decoration of this newly enfranchised parliamentary building explains the appearance, in *Punch* of October 1845, of a cartoon by John Leech (1817-64). Cromwell is depicted being turned away at a half-opened door by Prince Albert who admonishes: "IT'S ALL VERY WELL, MR. CROMWELL; BUT YOU CAN'T LODGE HERE."⁵⁷ This was a wry comment on the 'Should Cromwell have a statue?' debate in parliament⁵⁸ and subsequently in *The Times* during the previous two months. In the latter the first to leap to his defence was the appropriately styled 'Clio' – 'the muse of history' who wished to claim the Cromwell affair and 'wrest it from party heat' for 'reasons not sectarian, but national.' As such the correspondent thanked the editor of the newspaper for making this 'a subject of national thought.' S/he described Cromwell's omission as 'a senseless departure from

⁵⁴ Anon, *Palace of Westminster. Catalogue and Guide to the New Palace of Westminster*, J. Thompson, London, c. 1852, p. 23.

⁵⁵ William Vaughan, "'God Help the Minister who Meddles in Art": History Painting in the New Palace at Westminster', pp. 225-239 in Christine Riding & Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament*, p. 232.

⁵⁶ Benedict Read, 'Sculpture and the New Palace at Westminster', pp. 252-269 in Christine Riding & Jacqueline Riding (eds.), *The Houses of Parliament*, pp. 263-264.

⁵⁷ *Punch*, Vol. 9, 4 October 1845, p. 151.

⁵⁸ *PD*, 1845, Vol. 82, p. 1256; *PD*, 1857, Vol. 146, p. 160.

the truth of things... [H]is presence is necessary to the symmetry of our history... his absence will be a national lie.’⁵⁹

“A. Templar” expanded upon ‘this scheme of exclusion’ as being ‘in character with the age’. The politicians of today (‘the stop-gaps of the times’) feared Cromwell’s marble shadow and ‘[shrank] from sitting under the earnest eyes of Oliver.’⁶⁰ Similarly “Judicium commune” believed that, at the very least, a figure of Cromwell would administer ‘a lasting warning for the time to come.’⁶¹ Those who wished to deny Cromwell a statue had ‘lamentably mistaken’ the duty they owed to posterity because such a memorial served as ‘transmitters of historical events’. History belonged ‘to no one set of men in particular, to no one faction, but to the whole world, the past, the present, and to come.’ In the same vein another correspondent considered that Cromwell’s omission was as absurd as excluding Robert Blake (1599-1657) from a list of admirals or John Milton (1608-74) from poets.⁶² The defenders of Cromwell also applauded his military success abroad: ‘He humbled the haughty power of France, and made ancient Kings bow down to the simple, the uncrowned Englishman.’⁶³

The grounds for excluding Cromwell were his ‘defective title’ and ‘defective virtue’.⁶⁴ Nevertheless this was quickly countered by those who questioned every monarch’s legitimacy after William I and a great many in their claim to moral uprightness (Henry VIII was described as ‘a brutal monster of six wives’⁶⁵). Peter Hutchinson was a key voice against Cromwell’s inclusion arguing that he should not be commemorated simply because he wielded power. Stating that ‘to erect a statue to any man is always supposed to be an honour’, he feared that to so venerate him would

⁵⁹ Clio, ‘Should Cromwell have a statue?’, *The Times*, 29 August 1845, p. 5f ; 13 September 1845, p. 6a.

⁶⁰ A. Templar, ‘Should Cromwell have a statue?’, *The Times*, 3 September 1845, p. 7f.

⁶¹ Judicium commune, ‘Should Cromwell have a statue?’, *The Times*, 17 September 1845, p. 5f.

⁶² W., ‘Should Cromwell have a statue?’, *The Times*, 9 September 1845, p. 8f.

⁶³ A Friend of Liberty, ‘Should Cromwell have a statue’, *The Times*, 11 September 1845, p. 8c. Cf. ‘Under his guidance the foreign policy of England prospered.’ W., ‘Should Cromwell have a statue?’, *The Times*, 9 September 1845, p. 8f.

⁶⁴ W., ‘Should Cromwell have a statue?’, *The Times*, 9 September 1845, p. 8f.

⁶⁵ A Friend of Liberty, ‘Should Cromwell have a statue’, *The Times*, 11 September 1845, p. 8c.

be to state that 'evil is now our good'.⁶⁶ Hutchinson argued that if the state was to commemorate Cromwell then so too should the likes of the anti-establishment rebel Jack Cade (?-1450) and the executioner Jack Ketch (?-1686) be so memorialised.⁶⁷ Another correspondent pointed out that the title of 'Protector' was not recognised in a constitution that valued 'hereditary right, or election by the free voice of the people'. It would also appear contradictory for a state to raise a statue to a regicide given that prayers were said for Charles I.⁶⁸

This latter point was also commented upon, albeit disparagingly, by Hugh Miller when he wrote on 'The Cromwell Controversy' in October 1845. His thoughtful deliberations on 'the Marble History of England' led him to the realisation that

in order to impart to the record any degree of truth at all, it must contain a vast number of clauses that will do no honour to the marble, and that will be unable to receive honour from it.⁶⁹

There were three possible alternatives⁷⁰: firstly that 'the singularly brilliant clause Oliver Cromwell... should, like the clause William the Conqueror, or the clause Richard III, be introduced in full'. An alternative suggestion was that it should be omitted entirely 'and that there should be even no hiatus left to indicate its existence'. A third possibility was that, in order 'to halve the difference', Cromwell 'should not be inserted, but that its place should be represented by a wide blank' akin to an ellipsis in a text. As will become evident, Cromwell was to be omitted from the 'marble history' at the Palace of Westminster but included in the 'plaster history' at the Crystal Palace at Penge, near Sydenham.

⁶⁶ Peter Hutchinson, 'Should Cromwell have a statue?', *The Times*, 5 September 1845, p. 8d; 11 September 1845, p. 8b. His name recalls an earlier Hutchinson who had rather contrary opinions- Peter Hutchinson (1615-64) was a parliamentarian and regicide.

⁶⁷ Peter Hutchinson, 'Should Cromwell have a statue?', *The Times*, 5 September 1845, p. 8d.

⁶⁸ Whitehall?, 'Should Cromwell have a statue?', *The Times*, 17 September 1845, p. 5f.

⁶⁹ Hugh Miller, 'The Cromwell Controversy', pp. 30-40 in *Essays Historical and Biographical, Political and Social, Literary and Scientific*, William P. Nimmo, London & Edinburgh, 1879, p. 30.

⁷⁰ Hugh Miller, 'The Cromwell Controversy', pp. 30-31.

5~3 A pantheon in plaster at the Crystal Palace

In February 1855 *The Illustrated London News* published an illustration of the statues decorating the niches in the Central Hall and St. Stephen's Hall (Plate 102).⁷¹ This image completed the series begun the preceding year.⁷² Forming part of Charles Barry's scheme for statues of sovereigns from the Conquest to the present, it is stated that they were 'designed by, and executed under the superintendence of, Mr. John Thomas'. Carved in Caen stone, the plaster models for these and the other royal statues were subsequently lent to the Crystal Palace Fine Art Company.⁷³ In April 1854 the then First Commissioner, Sir William Molesworth, opined that: 'They ought to perfect the list by procuring a statue of Cromwell, which to the disgrace of the country has not been placed in the Palace of Westminster.'⁷⁴ The following day Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820-77) of the Crystal Palace Fine Art Company wrote to Molesworth's secretary:

Will you kindly assure Sir William Molesworth that his liberal sentiments in respect to Oliver Cromwell have been anticipated, and although the drawing does not show it, our contract with Mr. Thomas the Sculptor includes the making of a bran new Oliver. The design and labour of which are a generous donation to the Palace on his part. May I assume the expression of Sir William's approbation as a permission to have Thomas' Studio relieved of thirty or forty which he has now repaired and which we are most anxious to get down at once, so as to avoid breaking again and to allow him to repair others.⁷⁵

Thomas had recently repaired up to forty out of the ninety-four statues. He and Richard Westmacott (1799-1872) were responsible for setting the figures up within

⁷¹ 'Statues in the New Palace at Westminster', *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. 26, No. 727, 10 February 1855, pp. 136-137.

⁷² 'Royal Statues', *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. 24, No. 666, 4 February 1854, p. 115 & the illustration 'Statues in St. Stephen's Hall, and the Central Hall', p. 113.

⁷³ This burgeoning collection of sculpture 'nearly all' consisted of works in gypsum, also known as 'plaster of Paris'. See the account of this material in 'School of Sculpture at Sydenham. Egyptian Court and North Transept', *Art Journal*, New Series, Vol. VI, 1854, pp. 256-259.

⁷⁴ Draft of a letter to Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, most probably for the attention of Trensham Walsham Philipps (1795-1855), private secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Works from 1827 until 1855. HLRO 2/257. See *The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. Report on the papers of JAMES WILLIS (senior clerk of the Office of Works) 18th-19th century*. Listed by Carole Rawcliffe, London, 1974.

⁷⁵ Wyatt to Philipps, 18 April 1854. HLRO 2/258.

niches at the exhibition, as arranged by Digby Wyatt.⁷⁶ During the transfer of objects from the Great Exhibition to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, Wyatt – an architect and writer on art – worked alongside Owen Jones as superintendent of the fine arts department and together they devised the various national and period-style courts.⁷⁷ Forming the largest exhibition of sculpture since that seen in Westminster Hall in 1844, this rapidly growing collection of sculpture prompted the *Art Journal* to opine that it ‘promise[d] to form, eventually, by far the most extensive and diversified exhibition of such works in the world.’⁷⁸

The engraving of the royal statues published in February 1855 by *The Illustrated London News* does in fact include Cromwell, with the date of his representation set at 1649 (Plate 102). He is shown between Henrietta (Queen of Charles I) and Charles II.⁷⁹ Thomas’s subsequent statue of Cromwell, executed in 1854 (or perhaps 1855), was photographed by Philip Henry Delamotte (1821-1889), as part of a series he was commissioned to take of the Crystal Palace during its reconstruction at Sydenham.⁸⁰ The sculpture bears a close resemblance to the engraving. Cromwell’s inclusion within the series at the Crystal Palace emphasises his absence from the sequence at the Palace of Westminster. As has been already mentioned, Wyatt informed Molesworth that the ‘design and labour’ for this sculpture were ‘a generous donation to the Palace on his [Thomas’s] part.’ This act of benevolence does not appear to have been gratefully received.

⁷⁶ 18 April 1854; 22 April 1854. HLRO 2/260. See Benedict Read, ‘The Architectural Sculpture’, pp. 232-245 in M.H. Port (ed.), *The Houses of Parliament*, Yale University Press [for] the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (London) Ltd, New Haven and London, 1976, pp. 243, Plate 166 & p. 244.

⁷⁷ Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. 21, p. 1097.

⁷⁸ ‘Sculpture at the Crystal Palace’, *Art Journal*, New Series, Vol. VI, 1854, p. 58. ‘The Value of the “Courts” of Architecture and Sculpture at the Crystal Palace’, *Art Journal*, Vol. VI, 1854, p. 233.

⁷⁹ ‘Statues in the New Palace at Westminster’, *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. 26, No. 727, 10 February 1855, p. 136.

⁸⁰ P.H. Delamotte, *Photographic Views of the Progress of the Crystal Palace, Sydenham taken during the progress of the works*, 1855, Plate 61. This is reproduced in Edward Morris, ‘Nineteenth-Century Paintings and Sculptures of Cromwell’, Fig. 15, p. 192. See also Mark Haworth-Booth (introduction), *The Origins of British Photography*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1991, (unpaginated) biography entry and Plate 12.

5~4 Cromwell and the House of Stuart

Late in the evening of 3 August 1860 the question of Cromwell arose again in relation to the vote for work on the New Palace at Westminster. It was in connection with a supplementary scheme by the RFAC in their Fourth Report of 1845 for a series of over-life size statues of English monarchs to decorate the grand staircases as well as the Royal Gallery, Victoria Hall and the Norman Porch.⁸¹ This was not actually commenced until 1860 when statues of James I and Charles I were commissioned from Thomas Thornycroft as well as George IV and William IV from William Theed.⁸² The intention was to place twelve statues in the Royal Gallery representing 'the Houses of Brunswick and Stuart' (Victoria's forebears from James I to William IV). They were to be in marble and not less than seven feet in height and placed upon new pedestals. Smaller scale sculptures in metal were suggested: the Queen's Robing Room was to hold a Tudor series whilst the Norman Porch and its various landings were to feature representatives from the Saxon and Norman periods.⁸³

The Thirteenth Report of 1863 indicated that a further two statues had been commissioned: Thomas Woolner's (1825-92) William III and Alexander Munro's (1825-71) Mary II.⁸⁴ However, in their Twelfth Report, the commissioners acknowledged that this scheme had 'excited an apprehension' amongst Members of Parliament that 'an indefinite series' of monarchs was being proposed. This led to the suspension of the Tudor, Saxon and Norman sequences.⁸⁵ Furthermore, during the debates in the summer of 1860 Edwin James (?-1882), despite being thought of as 'sincerely and essentially a reformer'⁸⁶ nevertheless felt that a Cromwell statue in parliament 'could only be regarded as a declaration against monarchical principle.'⁸⁷

⁸¹ Fourth Report, *PP* 1845 [671] XXVII.151, Appendix 4, ff. 162-163.

⁸² These were to cost £800 each. Twelfth Report, *PP* 1861 [2806] XXXII.213, Appendix 1, f. 225, dated 15 June 1860 with the names Albert, Stanhope and Llanover.

⁸³ Twelfth Report, *PP* 1861 [2806] XXXII.213, Appendix 1, f. 225.

⁸⁴ This report appeared in 1863. Thirteenth Report, *PP* 1863 [3141] XVI.317, Appendix 1, f. 328. See also Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1982, p. 121; R.J.B. Walker, *A Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture and Engravings in The Palace of Westminster*, Vol. 3, Part IV, 'Sculpture', 1961, pp. 100-101 & 107.

⁸⁵ Twelfth Report, *PP* 1861 [2806] XXXII.213, f. 223.

⁸⁶ Michael Stenton, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. I, p. 209.

⁸⁷ *PD*, Vol. 160, 3 August 1860, p. 676.

The Conservative Charles Newdegate (1816-87) was not averse to such a commemoration elsewhere but felt that ‘there were many considerations that rendered it highly improper to place his statue among the crowned heads.’⁸⁸ The Liberal First Commissioner, William Cowper (1811-88) mentioned that the original position in 1845 was for all the English Sovereigns from Egbert and Canute to be commemorated. However, he stressed that the RFAC wished to commence with William IV and George IV and go backwards and that this meant that the question of the Commonwealth would not arise for some years. At this stage the considerably emasculated scheme now numbered only four statues, one at each corner of the Royal Gallery. Parliament subsequently voted to omit the item regarding £1,600 for the series of statues to monarchs.⁸⁹

Nevertheless, sixteen years after his first solicitation, William Williams made a further unsuccessful plea to Sir Benjamin Hall (1802-67), the Liberal First Commissioner in 1857.⁹⁰ He repeated it yet again on 1 July 1861. On the latter occasion Cowper, then in charge of the Office of Works, assured him that this ‘distinguished person had not been forgotten’, however he did not commit himself to undertake it.⁹¹ Edward Ball (1793-1865) a Conservative who, whilst contented to live in a monarchy, lauded Cromwell’s achievements and hoped that any statue of him ‘would not be placed in some obscure or hidden corner’.⁹² The Disraeli-supporting Lord Claud Hamilton (1813-84) considered, from the point of view of British history, that ‘it would be a perfect farce to exclude the statue of Cromwell... [and] a mockery and delusion’.⁹³ However, the Cromwell question was just as often tied up with the issue of building costs incurred at the Palace of Westminster as it was with political ideology. This was the case with the Conservative Reformer Sir Henry Pollard Willoughby (1796-1865) in his criticisms over expenditure.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ *PD*, Vol. 160, 3 August 1860, p. 679. Newdegate was ‘attached to the principles of the Constitution as established in 1688.’ Michael Stenton, *Who’s who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. I, p. 284.

⁸⁹ *PD*, Vol. 160, 3 August 1860, pp. 679 & 683-684.

⁹⁰ *PD*, Vol. 146, 22 June 1857, p. 160.

⁹¹ *PD*, Vol. 164, 1 July 1861, pp. 165-7 & 169.

⁹² *PD*, Vol. 164, 1 July 1861, pp. 168-169.

⁹³ *PD*, Vol. 164, 1 July 1861, p. 170.

⁹⁴ *PD*, Vol. 164, 1 July 1861, p. 169.

The debate about which sovereigns were to be commemorated continued. Viscount Palmerston cautioned against the setting up of any arbitration committee because of the difficulty of satisfying ‘the public at large.’ He thought that it should be left to the RFAC. Palmerston went on: ‘You cannot obliterate the history of the country. One man, as he reads over history, may think one Sovereign good and another bad, but there they are – they are persons who have reigned, and whose reigns form part of the history of the country.’⁹⁵ The great difficulty of selecting the monarchs (let alone Cromwell) was therefore very apparent. The plans for a chronological series starting from the beginning were jeopardised by cost; and then the question of choosing individuals on merit or importance proved impossible given that parliament could never reach a consensus.⁹⁶

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E.M. Barry was asked his opinion of the royal statues in July 1866.⁹⁷ He thought the sculptures were too large for the niches in the Royal Gallery and that they would ‘interfere with the pictures’ and be detrimental to the ‘architectural effect’ of the space. He also believed that the Queen’s Robing Room would be just as unsuitable and that the Grand Staircase would be too small for the pedestals, which should be removed as they were not part of his late father’s plan. Instead he suggested

that the scheme of executing a series of British Sovereigns should be carried out, and the statues placed against the end and side walls of Westminster Hall, where they will be well seen and lighted, and where they will confer an additional interest in that noble hall, connected as it is with reminiscences of British Royalty for centuries.⁹⁸

There was a much earlier precedent for sculpture of this ilk: Westminster Hall was embellished with statues of kings from the late fourteenth-century. In approximately 1385 at least thirteen stone statues of kings from Edward the Confessor to Richard II

⁹⁵ *PD*, Vol. 164, 1 July 1861, p. 171.

⁹⁶ *PD*, Vol. 164, 18 July 1861, pp. 1091-1092.

⁹⁷ Alfred Austin’s letter of 4 July 1866 and Barry’s reply of the following day are reproduced in *Correspondence between First Commissioner of Works and E.M. Barry, respecting Proposal to place Statues of British Sovereigns in Westminster Hall*, *PP* 1867-68 (152) LV 359.

⁹⁸ *PP* 1867-68 (152) LV 359.

were commissioned from the sculptor Thomas Canon.⁹⁹ Six were subsequently set into niches above the dais.¹⁰⁰ Two larger statues, possibly of Richard II and his patron Edward the Confessor, decorated the outer façade above the north door. Of these fifteen nine still exist in the interior, six set into niches supplied by Charles Barry and three in window recesses on the east side.¹⁰¹ Lawrence Stone asserted that these ‘portentous statues’ were to provide influential models for royal figures in the fifteenth-century.¹⁰²

As on other occasions Edward Barry’s ideas for Westminster Hall echoed those of his father. Charles Barry had wished that it ‘be made the depository, as in former times, for all trophies obtained in wars with foreign nations.’ Alongside historical paintings he suggested twenty pedestals, the same as the number of architectural ribs, ‘to form a central avenue, 30 feet in width, from the north entrance door to St. Stephen’s porch, for statues of the most celebrated British statesmen’. A complement of ‘naval and military commanders’ with accompanying paintings of military victories in chronological order was also proposed. This union of the arts to form ‘an object of national interest’ was in the spirit of what Alfred Barry termed a ‘British Walhalla’.¹⁰³ Cunningham’s London guide of 1850 stated that ‘the central lines [of] two tiers of pedestals [were] to be occupied by figures of those eminent Englishmen to whom Parliament may decree the honour of a statue. The conception is grand, and appropriate to the building in which so many Englishmen have been distinguished.’¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ R. Allen Brown, H.M. Colvin & A.J. Taylor, *The History of the King’s Works Vol. I*, London, HMSO, 1963, p. 528. See also Malcolm Hay and Rachel Kennedy, *The Medieval Kings c.1388. An Exhibition of Three Statues from the South Wall. Their History and Recent Conservation*, Westminster Hall, June & July 1993. HLRO 8/L/15/1(3). Lawrence Stone notes that, at the time of Anne Boleyn’s coronation of 1533 the series of kings (originally on the ‘inner south end’ of the hall) was also complemented by four statues of queens and erected on the exterior north façade. Lawrence Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: the Middle Ages*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, note 64, p. 264.

¹⁰⁰ The original niches, now lost, were by Walter Walton. Lawrence Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: the Middle Ages*, p. 194. The other seven statues were set into some of the twenty-two niches later added to the base of the north façade. See J. Buckler’s drawing of 1814 reproduced in R. Allen Brown, H.M. Colvin & A.J. Taylor, *The History of the King’s Works Vol. I*, Plate 23.

¹⁰¹ Bryan H. Fell & K.R. Mackenzie, *The Houses of Parliament*, Plate 1.

¹⁰² Lawrence Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: the Middle Ages*, p. 194 & Plate 153(B).

¹⁰³ Alfred Barry, *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry*, John Murray, London, 1867, pp. 186-7 & 245.

¹⁰⁴ Peter Cunningham, ‘Houses of Parliament (New), or, The New Palace at Westminster’, pp. 235-238 in *Hand-book of London Past and Present*, p. 236.

This did not transpire, leading W. Watkiss Lloyd in the *Builder* of January 1868 to criticise Sir Charles Barry's adaptation of Westminster Hall as 'a mistake'. Due to its large scale the viewer was 'confronted with the grossest architectural climax' because, in the opinion of the writer, 'what was a hall became reduced not even to an anteroom but to a passage.'¹⁰⁵ An attempt to rectify the rather redundant nature of this space was announced in the very same issue of the journal. It was reported that Edward Barry had proposed 'a complete series of statues of our monarchs from William the Conqueror to her present Most Gracious Majesty.' The latter was to appear at the top of the flight of stairs from the hall. The others were to flank the side walls on which were to be placed 'bas-reliefs representing the principal events in the reign of the king whose statue occupies the adjoining pedestal.'¹⁰⁶

During 1867 Parliament had voted money towards the Edward Barry's 'experiment' of placing the statues in Westminster Hall.¹⁰⁷ This came to fruition at the start of the following year when the *Builder* reported that statues of five monarchs were shortly to be erected there.¹⁰⁸ The site on the east side near to the private entrance of the House of Commons was not meant to be permanent and the marble figures were placed on wooden pedestals. They included James I and Charles I by Thomas Thornycroft; George IV and William IV by Theed; and William III by Woolner.¹⁰⁹ Munro's Mary II and, finally, Charles II by Henry Weekes completed the set of seven commissioned works.¹¹⁰ Barry subsequently arranged for John Birnie Philip to provide an alternative

¹⁰⁵ W. Watkiss Lloyd, 'The Works of Barry' in *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1301, 11 January 1868, p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ Anon, 'Westminster Hall', *Builder*, Vol. 26, No. 1303, 25 January 1868, p. 55.

¹⁰⁷ This was according to Lord John Manners; see *PD*, Vol. 190, 12 March 1868, p. 1451.

¹⁰⁸ 'Westminster Hall', *Builder*, Vol. 26, No.1303, 25 January 1868, p. 55.

¹⁰⁹ The Return listing these works dates their erection at 1867 and describes them as 'Unfinished'. See *Return "of the Public Statues or Public Monuments in London belonging to the Nation, exclusive of those in Palaces other than St. Stephen's Hall, in the Palace of Westminster, or Cathedrals, and now under the Charge of the Chief Commissioner of Works, specifying the Date of Erection and Names of the Artists, if known, and from what Funds purchased or erected (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 366, of Session 1862.)"* John Manners, Office of Works, 17 July 1868. *PP* 1867-68 (480) LV.357.

¹¹⁰ According to the Corporation of London Records Office these statues measure approximately six feet eight inches in height on pedestals of five feet one inch. Both Thomas Thornycroft and his wife Mary Thornycroft (1814-95) are credited for the sculptures of James I and Charles I (both dated 1867). The other dates are Mary II (1863); George IV and William IV (1867); William III (1868); and Charles II (1870). Information supplied by James R. Sewell of the City Archives, Corporation of London Records Office.

collection for the Royal Gallery¹¹¹ and the originals were moved to Westminster Hall, before being finally relocated to E.W. Mountford's (1855-1908) New Sessions House at the Old Bailey in 1914-15.¹¹² These statues in their Westminster Hall settings can be seen in contemporary photographs (Plate 103).¹¹³

Following their erection in the hall, the Liberal John Candlish (1816-74) wanted to know from Lord John Manners whether the Government had any objection to a statue of Cromwell appearing between Charles I and Charles II. The First Commissioner had no intention of calling for a vote on this matter. He was, however, willing to answer 'on a future occasion' Candlish's differently worded enquiry: 'In the event of the public or of private persons executing a statue of Oliver Cromwell, would the Government allow it to be placed in Westminster Hall?'¹¹⁴ It came to pass that this dilemma was not to occur until the administrations of Lords Rosebery and Salisbury at the end of the century. In the meantime, to cite Hugh Miller's prophetic observations of 1845, it transpired that, in this instance, the Oliver Cromwell 'clause'

¹¹¹ William Field was E.M. Barry's contractor for the niches in the Royal Gallery. He provided eight Sicilian marble pedestals combined with canopies of carved and gilded Caen stone. See PRO WORK 11/20. Benedict Read, 'The Architectural Sculpture', pp. 232-245 in M.H. Port (ed.), *The Houses of Parliament*, p. 233; Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 121.

¹¹² The Government offered to loan the seven statues in perpetuity to the Corporation of London in May 1913 because work in Westminster Hall necessitated their removal. It was planned to place them in the Corporation's Art Gallery but their weight was prohibitive so the trustees of the Crystal Palace were approached instead. Some of the statues were moved to storage in the summer of 1914. In January 1915 the large hall on the ground floor of the Central Criminal Court was put forward and the Sydenham proposal was dropped (rather fortuitously given the disastrous fire that was to later destroy the latter on 30 November 1936). In 1915 three stone figures by John Bushnell (c.1630-1701) complemented the Westminster series. Depicting Sir Thomas Gresham, Charles I and Charles II they date from 1671 and were originally at Jarman's Royal Exchange. Margaret Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain 1530 to 1830*, p. 42 & Plate 28. Information supplied by James R. Sewell of the City Archives, Corporation of London Records Office. A photograph of Woolner's William III appears in 'Thomas Woolner', pp. 21-33 in Benedict Read and Joanna Barnes (eds.), *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture: Nature and Imagination in British Sculpture 1848-1914*, The Henry Moore Foundation in Association with Lund Humphries, London, 1991, p. 27, Fig. 20. The replacement sculpture of William III by John Birnie Philip (1869) for the Royal Gallery also appears on the same page, Fig. 21.

¹¹³ Six statues to the left of Westminster Hall facing St. Stephen's Porch are visible in the c. 1869 photograph in John Harrington, *The Abbey and Palace of Westminster*, Sampson, Low, Son & Marston, London, 1869, 'Westminster Hall', Plate IV. See also *Interior of Westminster Hall*, York & Son collection, CC97/01704. *Mary Queen of Scots*, CC97/00702; *James I*, CC97/00703; *Charles I*, CC97/00704; *Charles II*, CC97/00705; *William III*, CC97/00706; *George IV*, CC97/00707; *William IV*, CC97/00708. York & Son collection, NMR RCHME.

¹¹⁴ *PD*, Vol. 190, 12 March 1868, pp. 1450-1.

was ignored altogether and the ‘flat moody clause Charles I’ did indeed ‘run in without break... with the miserable clause Charles II’.¹¹⁵

5~5 The Manchester Cromwell: a national reproach removed

The image of Cromwell nevertheless did appear with some frequency in the nineteenth-century. For example, the National Portrait Exhibition of 1866 contained at least four paintings thought to depict the Lord Protector by the artists Samuel Cooper (1609-72), Sir Peter Lely (1617-80) and Robert Walker (1599-1658).¹¹⁶ The National Portrait Gallery, from its foundation in 1856 until the end of the century, acquired at least eight images of Cromwell. The earliest acquisitions, purchased in 1861 and 1877, were busts in terracotta (height 41.9 cm) and bronze (height 63.5 cm) based on works by Edward Pierce (c.1635-95).¹¹⁷ In 1879 three paintings were transferred from the British Museum¹¹⁸ and in 1899 a plaster cast from a bust in the Bargello Museum, Florence was purchased.¹¹⁹ A further act of restitution was Dean Arthur Penrhyn Stanley’s (1815-81) decision in 1866 to place a vault stone in Henry VII’s Chapel of Westminster Abbey to list and record the names of Cromwell, his relations and associates who were disinterred in 1661.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Hugh Miller, ‘The Cromwell Controversy’, pp. 30-31.

¹¹⁶ Catalogue numbers 803, 798, 790 and 799. Algernon Graves, *A Century of Loan Exhibitions 1813-1912*, Kingsmead Reprints, Bath, 1913-15/1970, pp. 204, 683 & 1597.

¹¹⁷ Catalogue numbers NPG 132 & NPG 438 respectively. Mary Pettman (ed.) & K.K. Yung, *National Portrait Gallery: Complete Illustrated Catalogue*, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1981, p. 141. In 1895, Lionel Henry Cust wrote that the terracotta model was taken from a marble bust then in the possession of E.J. Stanley at Quantock Lodge, Somerset. Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. 15, pp. 1143-1144.

¹¹⁸ Robert Walker (c.1649, 125.7 x 101.6 cm, oil on canvas, NPG 536); after Samuel Cooper (1656, 75.6 x 62.9 cm, oil on canvas, NPG 514) and (1656, 22.2 x 16.5 cm, oil on canvas, NPG 588). A further, unattributed work thought at one time to be of Oliver Cromwell and his daughter was acquired before 1896 (78.7 x 67.3, oil on canvas, NPG 982g).

¹¹⁹ Catalogue No.1238. A further cast (1238a) from the death-mask in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford by D. Brucciani & Co. (1815-1880) is also in the collection but its date of acquisition is uncertain. The remaining three-dimensional portrait is an electrotype of Thomas Simon’s (1618-65) *Dunbar Medal* of 1650 (3.5 x 2.8 cm, silver, NPG 4365) given by Herbert Appold Greuber in 1885 (NPG 747). Mary Pettman (ed.) & K.K. Yung, *National Portrait Gallery*, p. 141. Antonia Fraser proposes that the bust in Florence was a contemporary replica of Simon’s funeral effigy made for the State funeral of Cromwell. Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men*, p. 682 & illustration facing p. 701.

¹²⁰ The stone, in the easternmost chapel, carries the inscription: ‘IN THIS VAULT WAS INTERRED / OLIVER CROMWELL 1658 / AND IN OR NEAR IT / HENRY IRETON, HIS SON-IN-LAW 1651 / ELIZ^{BTH} CROMWELL, HIS MOTHER 1654 / JANE DESBOROUGH, HIS SISTER 1656 / ANNE FLEETWOOD / AND ALSO OFFICERS OF HIS

Given these instances of reparation there must have been some anticipation that the state would commission a statue of Cromwell. An undated letter from Thomas Woolner to Lady Walter Trevelyan (died 1866) confirms this.¹²¹ The sculptor enquired whether she or her husband could give him ‘a push forward in the matter of Cromwell’s statue’. He confessed that this would ‘be a gigantic service’ in the fulfilment of his unconcealed aspiration: ‘What I want is, that if ever the Government determines on having a statue of the Protector in the Palace of Westminster that I may obtain the promise of its execution’.¹²²

It was obviously a prized commission. Woolner had worked with the O’Shea brothers on the sculptural embellishment of Alfred Waterhouse’s (1830-1905) Assize Courts at Manchester (1859-64). This incorporated various busts and statues of kings and queens, including a head of Cromwell.¹²³ In like manner Cromwell appeared in a sculptural sequence of monarchs on Lockwood and Mawson’s Bradford City Hall (1873). Farmer and Brindley carved these thirty-five statues for the third floor arcade. Standing seven feet in height they follow a chronology from William I to Henry VIII with Elizabeth I and Victoria flanking the main entrance.¹²⁴

The Protector’s next appearance was actually in the environs of the Palace of Westminster: the statue by Matthew Noble temporarily erected in Parliament Square during August 1871 (see 4~2). An article in *The Times* praised the sculpture for its veracity and effect, lauding it to be ‘the aggregate of the whole man’. Claiming it to

ARMY AND COUNCIL / RICHARD DEANE 1653 / HUMPHREY MACKWORTH 1654 / SIR WILLIAM CONSTABLE 1655 / ROBERT BLAKE, ADMIRAL 1657 / DENNIS BOND 1658 / JOHN BRADSHAW 1659 / (PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE) / AND MARY BRADSHAW, HIS WIFE / THESE WERE REMOVED IN 1661.’ My thanks to Miss Christine Reynolds, Assistant Keeper at the Westminster Abbey Muniment Room & Library for forwarding details of this inscription. See also Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. V, p. 182; Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), *An Inventory of the historical monuments in London. Vol. I: Westminster Abbey*, HMSO, London, 1924, p. 103.

¹²¹ The following letter referring to Cromwell probably dates from the 1860s and cannot be later than 1866. For Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, the first wife of Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan (1797-1879) see Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. 29, London, 1908, p. 1137.

¹²² Cited in Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, p. 79.

¹²³ The building has since been demolished but the Cromwell bust survives and is inside Waterhouse’s Town Hall. John H.G. Archer (ed.), *Art and architecture in Victorian Manchester: ten illustrations of patronage and practice*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1985, pp. 10 & 13; Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture*, pp. 237-238.

¹²⁴ Each figure carved in Cliffe Wood stone cost £63. Johanna Darke (ed.), *A User’s Guide to Public Sculpture*, Public Monuments and Sculpture Association, English Heritage, 2000, p. 102.

have no rival in all the permanent monuments of London, the newspaper called for its swift transfer into marble or bronze and concluded: 'For our part we should like to see Cromwell in his place among the Sovereigns in Westminster-hall, for the sake of history as well as for the sake of art.'¹²⁵ Despite its professed role as a mere experiment, the significance and interaction of location and subject were not lost on *The Times*: 'In buff coat, belted and booted in the fashion of his time, the great Protector stands, his face towards the Houses of Parliament the keys of the locked doors of which he once carried in his pocket.'¹²⁶

This temporary appearance does not seem to have dwelt long in the collective memory. A firm of 'Lantern Specialists' wrote to the Office of Works in October 1896 stating that, whilst preparing a lecture on Cromwell, they had 'come across a slide entitled "Statue of Cromwell at Westminster"'. It occurred to them that Noble's monument at Manchester bore a striking similarity. They therefore asked if it was indeed the same and enquired when and why the Westminster figure was removed. In their reply the Office of Works was unable to provide any information.¹²⁷

Their assertion was nevertheless correct. At the very end of Matthew Noble's career, shortly before his death, a bronze version of this statue had indeed been erected in Manchester. Elevated upon a pedestal of Cornish granite, this monument was paid for by Mrs Elizabeth S. Heywood, née Goadsby. Her late husband, the alderman Thomas Goadsby had first suggested a Cromwell monument in 1860, a proposal that was supported by prominent local Liberals.¹²⁸ It was originally intended to be in marble and placed inside Alfred Waterhouse's Town Hall (1867-80), then under construction.¹²⁹ As at the Assize Courts, Manchester's connection with the civil war

¹²⁵ 'The Statue before Palace-yard', *The Times*, 10 August 1871, p. 7e. Although it remained there for only a few days photographs of it *in situ* survive. York & Son, CC97/00606; CC97/00665. NMR. My thanks go to Stephen Porter of the Survey of London for drawing my attention to these images.

¹²⁶ 'The Statue before Palace-yard', *The Times*, 10 August 1871, p. 7e.

¹²⁷ Henry W. Nettleship & Harold Rose, Lantern Specialists, 61 Aldersgate Street to Primrose, 16 October 1896 and reply from the Office of Works, 3 November 1896. PRO WORK 20/100.

¹²⁸ This paragraph is informed by entry number twenty-eight of Derek Brumhead & Terry Wyke, *A Walk Round Manchester Statues*, Walkround, Manchester, 1990, pp. 48-50. See also J.D. Bennett, *Discovering Statues in Central and Northern England*, Shire Publications, Tring, 1968, p. 27.

¹²⁹ After Matthew Noble considered that there was no suitable site inside the building the Corporation of Manchester sought an external location. Bronze was substituted for marble as it was deemed to be more resilient to the polluted air of the industrial city. 'Art in Ireland and the Provinces', *Art Journal*, Vol. 13, 1874, p. 248; John H.G. Archer (ed.), *Art and architecture in Victorian Manchester*, p. 12.

was again referred to in the embellishment of this building. The architectural sculpture includes a statue of the general Charles Worsley of Platt, whilst *Bradshaw's Defence of Manchester, AD 1642* (1892-93, 145 x 320 cm, Manchester Town Hall) forms one part of Ford Madox Brown's mural scheme for the building.¹³⁰ However, by 1874 it had been decided to erect Noble's statue near to the cathedral, facing what was then Victoria Street.¹³¹ Unveiled on 1 December 1875, it prompted a heated debate in the local media, with the Conservative press expressing its hostility. A further note of contention was sounded at a ceremony to mark the handing-over of the work. Thomas Bayley Potter (1817-98), a Unitarian, former chairman of the Manchester branch of the Complete Suffrage Society, and current Member of Parliament for Rochdale, expressed an aspiration that the Houses of Parliament would follow Manchester's lead and commission a statue for London.¹³²

It was with some relief that the *Art Journal* was able to declare that: 'At last there is in the England he ruled, a statue of the great Protector, and a national reproach has been removed.'¹³³ The periodical did not wish to get embroiled in arguments about 'whatever crooked policy he may have adopted' but rather that the nation, over two centuries hence, should 'leave his actions to the records of history, with the earnest hope that his example may never have his counterpart in England.'

A further statue of Cromwell by Frederick William Pomeroy (1856-1924) was unveiled by Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice in the Market Place at St. Ives, Huntingdon on

¹³⁰ Julian Treuherz, 'Ford Madox Brown and the Manchester murals', pp. 162-207 in John H.G. Archer (ed.), *Art and architecture in Victorian Manchester*, especially p. 201 & Plate 87. See also Julie F. Codell, 'Ford Madox Brown, Carlyle, Macaulay, Bakhtin: The Pratfalls and Penultimates of History', pp. 324-366 in *Art History*, Vol. 21, No.3, September 1998, p. 327 & p. 333, Plate 20.

¹³¹ Its deliberate siting was intended to be "on the spot where the first man was killed during the Parliamentary War." 'A Statue of Cromwell', *Art Journal*, Vol. 15, 1876, p. 30. Nevertheless, in 1968 the monument was moved to Wythenshawe Park, six miles south of Manchester city centre. It faces Wythenshawe Hall, a Tudor building that was home of the Tatton family for six-hundred years. The Royalist Robert Tatton (1606-69) defended the hall from Cromwell's forces from November 1643 until February 1644, when Colonel Robert Duckenfield took control of it, Tatton having fled to Oxford. The siting of Noble's statue in front of this building is thus a fitting one. See Peter Riley, *Wythenshawe Hall and the Tatton Family*, P & D Riley, Warrington, 1999, pp. 9-11.

¹³² It is interesting to note, given the later turn of events regarding the commemoration of Cromwell that, in 1886, Potter stood for parliament in support of Home Rule for Ireland. Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. 22, pp. 1153-4. Potter was the benefactor of a bust of Cromwell given to Manchester Council, possibly that by Noble dated 1874. Derek Brumhead & Terry Wyke, *A Walk Round Manchester Statues*, p. 50.

¹³³ 'A Statue of Cromwell', *Art Journal*, Vol. 15, 1876, pp. 30 & 108; see also the engraving of the statue by H.C. Balding facing p. 108.

23 October 1901.¹³⁴ The bronze sculpture on a Portland stone pedestal and Aberdeen granite stepped base had been exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition earlier that year.¹³⁵ It presents Cromwell with a sheathed sword and holding a book.¹³⁶ The statue was planned following the celebration of the Cromwell Tercentenary of 1899.¹³⁷ Proposals for a statue at Cromwell's birthplace of Huntingdon proved unsuccessful after only £100 was raised.¹³⁸ So it was with great satisfaction that the supporters of the St. Ives memorial could claim that it was the only such monument to Cromwell paid for by public subscription.¹³⁹ They had good cause for celebration as their communal efforts had succeeded where the Westminster parliament spectacularly failed, as Rosebery's Liberal administration had found to its cost the previous decade.

5~6 Memories of Drogheda: Cromwell and the Liberal Government

The nineteenth-century evaluation of Cromwell was, as has been mentioned, indubitably linked to the writings of Thomas Carlyle. However, it has been argued that Carlyle's relatively straightforward image of Cromwell as hero was not as dominant as that espoused by the Nonconformist historian Samuel Rawson

¹³⁴ An inscription on the front of the pedestal reads: 'OLIVER CROMWELL / 1599-1658'. On the north and south sides respectively is written: 'ERECTED BY SUBSCRIPTION / 1901. // H. I. HANKIN / MAYOR. - G. D. DAY / TOWN CLERK.' and 'A TOWNSMAN / OF S^T. IVES. / 1631-1636.' Bollards linked by railings encircle the monument along with four lamps inscribed: 'A. J. BERNASCONI / HUNTINGDON ENGLAND'. For details about the monument see 'The St. Ives Cromwell Statue', pp. 3-4 in *Hunts County News*, Saturday 26 October 1901; 'The Unveiling of the Cromwell Statue at St. Ives', *The Huntingdonshire Post*, 26 October 1901. Cuttings of both are in the holdings pertaining to Cromwell at the Heinz Archive & Library of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

¹³⁵ No.1700. Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy Exhibitors*, Kingsmead Reprints, Bath, 1905/1970, Vol. III, p. 175. The work in situ at St. Ives is signed: 'F.W. Pomeroy. / Sc-1900'.

¹³⁶ A contemporary account described the figure as 'somewhat different in character from most other statues of Cromwell, showing him more in the character of the "farmer of St. Ives" than as a military genius.' 'The St. Ives Cromwell Statue', pp. 3-4 in *Hunts County News*, 26 October 1901, p. 3. An illustration of the monument appears as a supplement to that day's newspaper. Cuttings held in the archive of the National Portrait Gallery, Orange Street, London.

¹³⁷ Although it appears to have been suggested at least as long ago as 1849 (see the Bishop of Exeter's letter to J.W. Croker cited above).

¹³⁸ Cromwell had left Huntingdon aged 32 to start farming in the vicinity of St. Ives, from whence he went to Ely. *Hunts County News*, 26 October 1901, p. 3.

¹³⁹ Approximately £50 was still required on top of the £1,168 7s. 6d. that had been raised by the time of the inauguration. *Hunts County News*, 26 October 1901, p. 3.

Gardiner.¹⁴⁰ John Morley commenced his 1900 biography of Cromwell by stating: ‘Everybody who now writes about Cromwell must, apart from the old authorities, begin by grateful acknowledgement of his inevitable debt to the devoted labours of Mr. Gardiner, our master historian of the seventeenth century.’¹⁴¹ Roger Howell has argued that it was through him that Cromwell became a Puritan hero whose politics ‘took on many of the familiar aspects of nineteenth-century liberalism, including toleration and patient reforming. In a way that had profound meaning for Gardiner, Cromwell’s very incongruities became his essential, almost defining characteristic.’¹⁴² Nevertheless, this equivocation in assessment was reflected in the divergence of opinion that characterised the debate around Cromwell and his commemoration at Westminster.

The origins of the statue can be traced back to July 1894 when Robert Lacey Everett (1833-1916) asked the First Commissioner, Herbert Gladstone (1854-1930) whether Cromwell could be added to the other statues in ‘the precinct of the House?’¹⁴³ He was later to explain that, as a new Member of Parliament, ‘he was struck by the absence of one of the most conspicuous figures in English history’ from the numerous statues in the Palace of Westminster. Unlike politicians from Ireland who were to attack this suggestion, Everett, a Liberal Yeoman farmer and member for Suffolk, Woodbridge, came from an area of England where Cromwell was held in high esteem. He concluded: ‘The statue would simply be an historical tribute to a great man, one of the strongest who England ever knew.’¹⁴⁴

Gladstone headed the Office of Works in Lord Rosebery’s administration that had come to power in March of that year. He was a former history lecturer and a Liberal who supported Free Trade, Home Rule for Ireland and the abolition of the veto rights

¹⁴⁰ His writings include *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate 1649-1656*, 4 Vols., Longmans, Green, & Co., London, New York & Bombay, new edition 1903; *Oliver Cromwell*, Longmans, London, New York & Bombay, 1901.

¹⁴¹ John Morley, *Oliver Cromwell*, p. v.

¹⁴² Roger Howell, Jr, ‘Images of Oliver Cromwell’, pp. 20-32 in R.C. Richardson, *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, p. 28.

¹⁴³ ‘A statue of Oliver Cromwell’, *PD*, Vol. 26, 12 July 1894, pp. 1483-1484.

¹⁴⁴ *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, pp. 1192-1193.

of the House of Lords.¹⁴⁵ In his reply to Everett he set out the events by which names had been selected in 1845 and Cromwell's inclusion in the list for which there had not be unanimity. This situation was far from fixed, as proven by the commemoration of another name from that section: William III (a matter to be discussed presently). Despite the fact that there were no available funds at that time, Gladstone was 'glad to consider the matter.'

These exchanges prompted John Bell (1811-95) to write to the First Commissioner. This 83 year-old sculptor was a leading advocate of Cromwell's perpetuation in sculpture.¹⁴⁶ Bell referred to the 'many discussions in Parliament' including those of July 1861. He claimed: 'The Prince Consort spoke of him as "one of the greatest of our rulers" & Her Majesty in my studio said to me "perhaps you are not aware that at Windsor is the best collection in existence of portraits of him."' ¹⁴⁷ On 3 October 1894 he informed Gladstone about 'a number of data' in his possession connected with Cromwell, including a mask copied 'from the original'.¹⁴⁸ This had been lent to the sculptor by a Mr. Field of the Royal Mint to assist him whilst he was modelling a work for the Coalbrookdale Showrooms exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition. This was later displayed at the Crystal Palace where it was 'placed upon an iron pedestal raising it to the height of about 30ft.'¹⁴⁹ Beneath the ten feet high statue were allegories of Peace and War.¹⁵⁰ At least as early as 1895 an additional cast

¹⁴⁵ Michael Stenton & Stephen Lees, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament. A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons based on annual volumes of 'Dod's parliamentary companion' and other sources*, Vol. II 1886-1918, Harvester Press Limited, Hassocks, 1978, p. 137.

¹⁴⁶ Such enthusiasm was shared by Hamo Thornycroft, who even named his son 'Oliver' in admiration of the Lord Protector. Elfrida Manning, *Marble and Bronze: The Art and Life of Hamo Thornycroft*, introduced by Benedict Read, Trefoil Books, London, 1982, p. 129.

¹⁴⁷ John Bell, 15 Douro Place, Victoria Road, Kensington to the First Commissioner. PRO WORK 20/100. The sculptor concluded by revealing that he had 'a letter from the late Lord Ebury strangely advocating the erection of a Statue of Cromwell in London.' Robert Grosvenor, first Baron Ebury (1801-1893) was a Whig whose protestant beliefs led him to criticise the ritualism of high-church practice. At the very end of his life he voted against Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of September 1893. Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. 22, pp. 793-794.

¹⁴⁸ John Bell, 15 Douro Place, Victoria Road, Kensington to the First Commissioner. PRO WORK 20/100.

¹⁴⁹ Henry Eyres of the Coalbrookdale Showrooms to the First Commissioner 15 February 1895. Eyres, who also sent a sketch of the statue, had been prompted to write by the debates in the Commons of the previous night. PRO WORK 20/100.

¹⁵⁰ These were variations of the allegorical figures carved in marble accompanying the statue of the Duke of Wellington in the Guildhall, City of London, 1854-56. Richard Barnes, *John Bell: The Sculptor's Life and Works*, Frontier Publishing, Norfolk, 1999, pp. 51-52 & Plates 56-58. The original

could be seen inside the main entrance of the South Kensington Museum, on the aptly named Cromwell Road.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, in 1893 an iron cast of the statue was bought by Frederick Monks and erected at Warrington, where the purchaser was a councillor.¹⁵²

Henry Primrose (1846-1923), secretary at the Office of Works and cousin of Lord Rosebery,¹⁵³ wrote to Bell on 6 December 1894 and asked to borrow his copy of the mask. The sculptor's long-time 'assistant and friend' Charles Stoatt (?-1897) delivered it and also accompanied Gladstone in February 1895 when he viewed the statue at the South Kensington Museum. The First Commissioner's favourable response led Bell to suggest that, should Gladstone feel so inclined, he could consult H.H. Armstead and Sir John Everett Millais (1829-96) for 'their opinion of it being worthy of perpetuation for a public site, in marble analogous to that used for the Relievi & Groups of the Albert Memorial.'¹⁵⁴ Sadly this was not to transpire as Bell died on 14 March 1895.¹⁵⁵

The next public reference to a statue is a letter of reply from the Office of Works in early October 1894 to a descendant of Sir William Brereton (1604-1661) indicating that, as yet, nothing had been settled regarding the monument.¹⁵⁶ However, Gladstone informed the Commons on 11 February 1895 that, although the 'question of the exact site [was] still under consideration', provision for a statue of Cromwell was 'included in the Estimates for the Houses of Parliament for 1895-96, with the view to the early erection of the statue.'¹⁵⁷ Three days later he was able to add that the amount

forms of War and Peace were exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1856 (No.1253 and 1259 respectively). Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy Exhibitors*, Vol. I, p. 174.

¹⁵¹ Eyres to Gladstone, 15 February 1895. PRO WORK 20/100. Bell had taken an active role in the establishment of this institution (now the Victoria and Albert Museum). See Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee (eds.), *DNB*, Vol. 22, p. 166.

¹⁵² Richard Barnes, *John Bell*, pp. 61-62 & Plate 41.

¹⁵³ He was secretary from June 1886 until June 1895. M.H. Port, *Imperial London: Civil Government Building in London 1850-1915*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1995, 'Appendix I: First Commissioners of Works, 1851-1915', p. 275.

¹⁵⁴ Bell to Primrose, 14 & 19 February 1895. PRO WORK 20/100.

¹⁵⁵ For an obituary of John Bell see the *Standard* of 22 March 1895. PRO WORK 20/100.

¹⁵⁶ George Brereton to Works, 20 September 1894 and reply, 8 October 1894. PRO WORK 20/100.

¹⁵⁷ Answer to question 40 given on 11 February 1895 by Herbert Gladstone, the First Commissioner, to William Johnston. 'A statue of Oliver Cromwell', *PD*, Vol. 30, p. 452.

proposed for the undertaking was ‘an instalment of £500.’ He assured the House that ‘full opportunity’ for expressions of opinions about this would occur when parliamentary approval for the estimates was sought.¹⁵⁸

The question of a suitable site must have taken place soon after. Sir William Harcourt (1827-1904), Rosebery’s Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons, gave his support for the memorial.¹⁵⁹ In April 1895 he wrote to the Prime Minister and George Shaw Lefevre (First Commissioner from August 1892 to March 1894), stating that Cromwell should only be celebrated ‘as *Ruler* of England, between Charles I and Charles II in Westminster Hall.’¹⁶⁰ Alternatively, in the event of an equestrian statue being executed, this should stand alongside ‘his predecessor at Charing Cross.’¹⁶¹ Harcourt was strongly against the ignoble setting envisaged: ‘in the damp ditch which has been dug round the façade of Westminster Hall’. He was equally critical of the disrespect that would be accorded Cromwell if he were to be placed ‘outside amongst a ruck of Prime Ministers’.¹⁶²

Gladstone’s assurances that ‘full opportunity’ for expressions of opinions on the matter were more than adequately fulfilled. On 14 May 1895 Luke Patrick Hayden (1850-97), MP for Roscommon South from 1892-97 and described as an “‘Irish nationalist” of the Parnellite section’,¹⁶³ enquired if Irish as well as English taxes were to fund the statue and if the people of Ireland had been consulted. Gladstone responded that no contract had yet been drawn up. Further exchanges were reported in the following day’s *Morning Post*:

¹⁵⁸ Answer to question 58 given on 14 February 1895 by Gladstone, the First Commissioner, to W. Hayden. ‘A proposed statue to Oliver Cromwell’, *PD*, Vol. 30, p. 744.

¹⁵⁹ This would appear to contradict John Morley’s assertion that Harcourt was ‘no admirer of Cromwell. Oliver’s work perished with him, so he maintained. “I am like Clarendon and Burke, too much a conservative.”’ John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 96.

¹⁶⁰ Letter to Lord Rosebery and Shaw Lefevre dated 6 April 1895 reproduced in A.G. Gardiner, *The Life of Sir William Harcourt*, Vol. II, p. 361.

¹⁶¹ This is the statue of King Charles I (1675-77) by Hubert le Seur sited just of Trafalgar Square where the Charing Cross once stood (see 3~1).

¹⁶² Letter to Lord Rosebery and Shaw Lefevre dated 6 April 1895 reproduced in A.G. Gardiner, *The Life of Sir William Harcourt*, Vol. II, p. 361.

¹⁶³ Michael Stenton & Stephen Lees, *Who’s who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. II, pp. 163-164.

Mr. BARTLEY – Is this statue for the Houses of Parliament, or is it to be sent to Ireland? (Laughter.)

Mr. H. GLADSTONE – The question of the site has not yet been determined. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. CLANCY – Will the contract be entered into before the discussion takes place in the House?

Mr. H. GLADSTONE – I think not.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON – Can the right hon. Gentleman say if tenders will be invited from Ireland? (Laughter.)

No answer was given.¹⁶⁴

Undeterred Gladstone, Rosebery and Thornycroft made plans to meet in Palace Yard on 24 May 1895 to discuss the site.¹⁶⁵

On 14 June 1895 Hayden again strove to deduct the £500 allocated to the statue in the Civil Service Estimates.¹⁶⁶ The reasons why he and the Nationalist representative for Clare East, William Redmond (1861-1917) were so hostile to it were apparent from their comments on that day. Hayden cited S.R. Gardiner's *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate 1649–1656* on the Drogheda Massacre of 1649, which saw the 'slaughter' of Irish Papists, a 'deed of horror [that] was all Cromwell's own.'¹⁶⁷ (In 1894, according to the Liberal and parliamentary journalist Henry William Lucy (1848-1924), William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98) was also 'against doing honour at Westminster to the ruthless soldier responsible for the massacre at Drogheda.'¹⁶⁸) The suggestion of Irish money contributing to a statue was therefore considered offensive and Hayden wished to know the reason why Cromwell was being commemorated.¹⁶⁹ This was particularly perplexing given that Rosebery's

¹⁶⁴ William Johnston of Ballykilbeg (1829-1902) was a Protestant Conservative and representative for South Belfast from 1885-1902. Sir George Christopher Trout Bartley (1842-1910), founder of the National Penny Bank, was the Conservative member for North Islington. John Joseph Clancy (1847-1928) sat for the north division of County Dublin and was an Irish Nationalist on the editorial staff of *The Nation* newspaper. A newspaper cutting of this is held in PRO WORK 20/100. The Hansard account has some minor differences and omits any mention of laughter. *PD*, Vol. 33, 14 May 1895, p. 1168.

¹⁶⁵ Gladstone to Thornycroft, 23 May 1895. C283 HMI (Hamo Thornycroft Archive at Leeds Museums & Galleries (Henry Moore Institute) [hereafter HMI]).

¹⁶⁶ *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, pp. 1181-1182.

¹⁶⁷ *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, pp. 1181-82. See Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, Vol. I, pp. 118-120; S.R. Gardiner, *Oliver Cromwell*, pp. 172-173.

¹⁶⁸ H.W. Lucy, *A Diary of the Unionist Parliament, 1895-1900*, J.W. Arrowsmith, Bristol, 1901, p. 370.

¹⁶⁹ Hayden's comment indicates that Cromwell was *the* most contentious historical figure. This is borne out by a recent historian: 'Too much in Ireland's reconquest after 1649 is attributed to Cromwell.' See

administration was supposed to be a Radical government ‘of the people’, and ‘incomprehensible’ given their avowed ‘sympathy with the Irish people’.¹⁷⁰ Three days later the author of an *Outline of Irish History*,¹⁷¹ Justin Huntly McCarthy (1859-1936) said that he could not understand this ‘insult upon the Irish people’ by not only a ‘Liberal Government’ but ‘above all a Home Rule Government’ as well.¹⁷²

Such comments affirm David Thomson’s assertion that, for politics in England throughout the nineteenth-century, ‘Ireland had been the greatest single source of violence and political upheaval’.¹⁷³ When Daniel O’Connell equated Cromwell with the devil (see 5~1) he did so in 1845, the year the potato crop failed in Ireland. It was O’Connell who had revived the Catholic Association and sought to elect to the Westminster parliament Protestants who were against the disabilities placed upon Catholics. His association was suppressed in 1829, the year in which the Roman Catholic Relief Act was passed. However, to cite David Thomson again: ‘Religious equality was given with one hand, civil and political liberties were taken away with the other: a rankling sore remained to poison Anglo-Irish relations, and the political system of Ireland, until modern times.’¹⁷⁴ From W.E. Gladstone’s election in 1868, and especially after his conversion to the concept of Home Rule in the 1880s, Ireland was to attain increasing significance. Gladstone made a Home Rule pledge during his short-lived administration of 1886, thus splitting the Liberal party. Both Hugh Kearney and Richard Shannon convey the manner in which this perennial dilemma was ‘neither domestic not entirely external’ but was instead ‘considered to have serious implications for the rest of the British Isles and for the British empire at large.’¹⁷⁵ As such the ensuing debate surrounding the Cromwell monument needs to be evaluated in the context of Liberal party politics and in the wake of the

Toby Barnard, ‘Irish images of Cromwell’, pp. 180-206 in R.C. Richardson, *Images of Oliver Cromwell*, p. 181.

¹⁷⁰ William Redmond cited *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, p. 1182.

¹⁷¹ J. H. McCarthy, *An Outline of Irish History from the earliest times to the present day*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1883.

¹⁷² *PD*, Vol. 34, 17 June 1895, p. 1341.

¹⁷³ David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*, Penguin, London, 1991, p. 182.

¹⁷⁴ David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 61-62.

¹⁷⁵ Richard Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915*, Granada Publishing Limited, Frogmore, 1976, p. 16; Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 233-234.

overwhelming and, as it transpired, terminal rejection by the House of Lords of Gladstone's final Home Rule Bill in September 1893. According to the historian Alan O'Day, this defeat and Gladstone's retirement the following year 'marked the close of the Liberal party's pre-occupation with Home Rule'. Rosebery had never been 'an unreserved exponent of Home Rule' and, upon assuming the Premiership in March 1894, his 'predominant partner speech', in which he concurred that a majority of Member of Parliament in England would be needed to pass Home Rule, was a considerable set-back to the nationalist cause.¹⁷⁶

It was in the wake of this that Harcourt sought to pacify Irish members of the Westminster parliament regarding Cromwell. He countered criticism of the statue by recourse to the likes of Macaulay and Walter Scott who referred to the reconciling role of the memorials to political adversaries in Westminster Abbey (see 1~5), not to mention the statues of Falkland and Hampden in St. Stephen's Hall. For Harcourt it was a question of history: Cromwell's omission would strike those coming from abroad with 'astonishment'. He added that a recent decision by the Corporation of Dublin 'to repair the statue of William III... was a broad and enlightened view to be taken on behalf of the people of Ireland'.¹⁷⁷ The Corporation had in fact commissioned this lead equestrian statue from Grinling Gibbons (1648-1721) in 1699. Sited in College Green it was inaugurated on 1 July 1701 to mark the tenth anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne. Judith Hill has argued that the 'figure of King William III lay at the foundation of Protestant Ireland.'¹⁷⁸ As a consequence the monument became 'a focus for establishment identity': Tories opposed the commemoration because of the Whig associations with William III and sectarian antagonism increased by the end of the century when the Orange Order, founded in 1795, used the memorial as a focus for their annual celebrations. Discord increased through the nineteenth-century and the statue needed to be restored after it was

¹⁷⁶ Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York, 1998, pp. 169-174.

¹⁷⁷ *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, pp. 1187-88.

¹⁷⁸ Judith Hill, *Irish Public Sculpture: A History*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1998, p. 41.

attacked by nationalists in 1836. The (by now decapitated) figure was eventually removed in 1929.¹⁷⁹

A.J. Balfour, a Unionist who represented Manchester East from 1885-1906, was Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1887-91 and later became Prime Minister from July 1902 to December 1905. He agreed with Harcourt's sentiments of reconciliation but wished to know why Cromwell in particular had been singled out. There were numerous theories: some claimed that Rosebery had done so to 'commemorate England's greatness'¹⁸⁰ others that it was merely 'by way of showing the desire of the Government to patronise Art.'¹⁸¹ The Irish Nationalist, Joseph Nolan (1846– after 1918) brought the proceedings to an end with the emotive words: 'Cromwell cut off his King's head, he killed off the Irish people and swept them out of their land, and he put an end to the House of Commons. In these circumstances Cromwell was the last man to whose memory he should be inclined to erect a statue.'¹⁸² Such statements had an effect because Hayden's motion was only narrowly defeated by 152 votes to 137.

This small margin prompted the Irish Nationalists to press the matter further. On 17 June 1895 Harcourt conceded that he 'should be very glad if gentlemen would pay for the statue themselves.'¹⁸³ Later that day Justin McCarthy again strove to negate the £500 of public money promised for the statue. John Morley, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, was amazed at the 'intense heat' of fires started 'two-and-a-half centuries ago', despite the fact that 'Cromwell' was 'a name... written in our history.' He conceded:

When you are erecting a national memorial you should have pretty general assent... I was not aware we were treading on the smouldering ashes of these treacherous fires now they have burst forth it seems to me that the best thing that we can do in the interests of the House is to extinguish them as soon as we can.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Judith Hill, *Irish Public Sculpture*, pp. 41-44 & 254, note 13; Nicola Smith, 'Walpole, Whigs and William III', pp. 19-38 in Patrick Eyres (ed.), *The Political Temples of Stowe*, New Arcadian Journal, No. 43/44, New Arcadian Press, Leeds, 1997, pp. 19 & 33, note 3.

¹⁸⁰ Balfour claiming to cite 'a recent speech of Rosebery's. *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, p. 1191.

¹⁸¹ Hayden citing Rosebery's recent speech at the Royal Academy. *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, p. 1182.

¹⁸² *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, pp. 1193-1194.

¹⁸³ *PD*, Vol. 34, 17 June 1895, p. 1271.

¹⁸⁴ *PD*, Vol. 34, 17 June 1895, pp. 1343, 1346 & 1355.

The government must have been weary of this wrangle, especially given that at the time of Morley's capitulation (he did 'not regard it as a matter of first-rate importance'¹⁸⁵) it had passed one o'clock in the morning. His summation was that if the statue were not to be 'a national recognition of one of the greatest names' then it would 'miss the purpose for which the vote was proposed' and that being the case the government would not object to its withdrawal.¹⁸⁶

Persevering in favour of the statue was the patronising Conservative member for Westminster, William Burdett-Coutts (1851-1921) who stated: 'The whole of our public statues were erected in our midst for the edification of intelligent foreigners and intelligent children. He was not aware that any grown man in the country took any particular interest in any of the statues, which adorned their surroundings'. However, he did question 'whether the historical records of this country would be complete without some honour were done to him.'¹⁸⁷ This was too weak a defence and when the House divided a majority of 137 voted against the allocation of money for the statue.¹⁸⁸ In his *Recollections* published in 1917, John Morley recounted with some bathos this 'mortifying incident' when 'Nationalist wrath was aided by Unionist satire.'¹⁸⁹ Another politician had earlier recalled that the 'humiliating scene' was unbeknown to the then Prime Minister, Lord Rosebery.¹⁹⁰ It transpired, as Morley was to record, that 'private munificence set up a stern statue of him within the most august precincts in the capital'.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ *PD*, Vol. 34, 17 June 1895, p. 1355.

¹⁸⁶ *PD*, Vol. 34, 17 June 1895, p. 1346. In a rather more jocular vein Morley was to later recollect that it was his 'agreeable duty' to withdraw the vote 'on the specious ground that it would in face of opposition so varied and apparently so hot no longer mean a really national recognition of the Protector's grandeur.' John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 48.

¹⁸⁷ *PD*, Vol. 34, 17 June 1895, pp. 1358-9.

¹⁸⁸ Those in favour numbered 83, those against 220. *PD*, Vol. 34, 17 June 1895, p. 1361.

¹⁸⁹ John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 48.

¹⁹⁰ R.W. Perks MP made this claim in his presiding speech at the tercentenary celebration of Cromwell's birth held in City Temple. See *The Times*, 26 April 1899, p. 6c-d.

¹⁹¹ John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 48.

5~7 The private munificence of an anonymous donor

Hamo Thornycroft met with Rosebery, Gladstone and Arthur Herbert Dyke Acland (1847-1926) on 13 June 1895. It was then that the Prime Minister opted for, what was in the sculptor's opinion, the 'best' site, 'backing on Westminster Hall'. Thornycroft recorded in his diary Gladstone's prophecy that 'the Irish, except Ulster, were going to fight hard against the erection of the Cromwell statue.'¹⁹² On the day of the Commons defeat the First Commissioner wrote to the sculptor and revealed that he was disappointed although not surprised at the outcome but was dismayed that the government was unable to commission the work. Nevertheless he felt confident it could be funded 'by public subscription' and had 'reason to think that... within a few days the necessary money will be promised' and that the Commons vote would 'make but little appreciable difference'.¹⁹³ On 20 and 21 June Harcourt was asked in parliament if the site would be given to a statue paid for by the public. The Chancellor replied that this would be taken into consideration but that no decision had been made.¹⁹⁴

Not long after this Thornycroft and Gladstone met to agree terms for the commission. The latter recapitulated them 'on behalf of the donor of the money' in a letter to the sculptor on 6 July. The design for a statue of 'heroic size' was 'to be submitted to the donor for approval' and set at £3000. There was an additional £200 for the pedestal, with provision for more should the 'sunken garden' site require a 'larger base' and foundations.¹⁹⁵ The location was not discussed at the interview. Gladstone made explicitly clear that: 'To prevent misconception I have to say that this commission is given on behalf of a private individual and not by the Government.'¹⁹⁶

Before he left his post as First Commissioner, Gladstone took steps to prepare an account of the history of this inflammatory affair thus far.¹⁹⁷ It indicated that the

¹⁹² Cited in Elfrida Manning, *Marble and Bronze*, p. 129.

¹⁹³ Gladstone writing from the Office of Works, 12 Whitehall Place to Thornycroft, marked 'Private', 18 June 1895. C284 HMI.

¹⁹⁴ *PD*, Vol. 34, 20 June 1895, pp. 1546-1547; *PD*, Vol. 34, 20 June 1895, pp. 1670-1671.

¹⁹⁵ As the sunken garden was selected the cost of the pedestal rose to £600. Thornycroft writing from 2^A Melbury Road, Kensington (copy) to the Office of Works, 18 November 1898. C641 HMI.

¹⁹⁶ Gladstone, writing from the Reform Club, Pall Mall to Thornycroft, 6 July 1895. C284A HMI.

¹⁹⁷ Gladstone's memorandum is dated 28-29 June 1895. PRO WORK 20/100.

‘Government [had] decided to give a commission to Mr Thornycroft for a standing figure of heroic size at a cost of £3,000.’¹⁹⁸ It had been decided to site it ‘in the centre of the sunk garden on the West side of Westminster Hall.’ The withdrawal of money during the vote in parliament was, as Morley stated at the time, due to the objections of ‘a large minority’ and the fact that ‘a national memorial lost its grace when it had to be forced through the House by a small minority’. The following morning Gladstone received money from ‘an anonymous donor’ to complete the statue on condition that the sculptor, scale and site remained unchanged. In keeping with past precedent (‘whenever a statue paid for by public or private subscription & of sufficient public interest and artistic merit, was offered as a gift to the Government’) Gladstone agreed to accept it and sought ‘to allot a fitting site.’

Thornycroft continued his work and in January 1896 he was undertaking a quarter-size model.¹⁹⁹ In early March Rosebery had drawn his attention to a ‘very powerful and interesting contemporary bust of Cromwell’ in the possession of Lord Wemyss.²⁰⁰ Rosebery insisted on pretending that he was writing on behalf of the ‘anonymous donor’, in whose name he sent the first instalment of £500 on 19 March.²⁰¹ A year earlier in 1895, Thornycroft had been informed of a plaster death mask of Cromwell which he was invited to examine.²⁰² Work continued on designs for both statue and pedestal and in February 1897 W. Goscombe John wrote to say that he ‘was greatly struck with the fine sketch’ of the monument he had been shown.²⁰³

Aretas Akers-Douglas, first Viscount Chilston (1851-1926) became the First Commissioner of Lord Salisbury’s Conservative administration in July 1895. Given the circumstances surrounding the Cromwell statue he felt honour bound to ‘redeem’ the ‘pledge’ given by the Rosebery government. Some time later he described this as a

¹⁹⁸ According to James Munson, Thornycroft also had the option of executing an equestrian statue for £5,000. James Munson, ‘Objections overruled’, pp. 172-173 in *Country Life*, Vol. 183, No. 44, 2 November 1989, p. 172.

¹⁹⁹ Elfrida Manning, *Marble and Bronze*, p. 199.

²⁰⁰ Rosebery, writing from 38 Berkeley Square to Thornycroft, 9 March 1896. C535 HMI.

²⁰¹ Rosebery, 38 Berkeley Square to Thornycroft, marked ‘confidential’, 31 March 1896. C537 HMI.

²⁰² T. Cromwell Bush writing from Bath to Thornycroft, 24 May 1895. The cast belonged to his father, Canon Bush, a descendent of Cromwell who also possessed a painting of his antecedent by Robert Walker. C125 HMI.

²⁰³ Goscombe John, writing from 2 Woronzow Studios, Woronzow Road, St. John’s Wood to Thornycroft, 19 February 1897. C289 HMI.

wish to 'preserve a continuity of policy.'²⁰⁴ He appended to Gladstone's account of the Cromwell affair a transcript of a letter from Thornycroft of 24 May 1898 stating that the statue was finished and at the foundry²⁰⁵ waiting to be cast. The sculptor wrote: 'I shall be glad to hear that the site appointed, – that is, due east of Henry VIIIth Chapel – has been definitely granted, and that I may proceed and prepare the pedestal and base.' He offered to show a maquette of the statue as approved by Rosebery and 'a small model in clay of the site and its immediate surroundings'. Akers-Douglas saw the model at the end of May and wrote to inform Herbert Gladstone that it presented 'the site on the side of the pavement, thus bringing the statue in closer proximity to the statues in Parliament Square.'²⁰⁶ Whilst keen 'to meet the views of the donor', Akers-Douglas was concerned that the figure's 'heroic size' and high pedestal would 'dwarf' the other monuments.

It is clear that Thornycroft wished to re-site the memorial nearer to the road on a more elevated part of the garden. At the end of July 1898 the sculptor requested from the Office of Works both a 'plan & section of the sunk garden and parapet surrounding the site proposed'. He also asked 'to have a note of [the] height of the Beaconsfield statue (without plinth) and also the height of the pedestal of the same statue above [the] pavement.'²⁰⁷ This must have been when Thornycroft sketched an undated drawing showing a side-view of the balustrade to Westminster Hall and the sunken garden (Plates 104-5).²⁰⁸ The statue occupies two positions, the first being more advanced with the bottom of the pedestal at the same level as the pavement. The second is further away, within the enclosure and on a much higher pedestal. In both locations the overall height was equalised by the variations to the size of the bases, the only difference occurring in the proximity of the statue to the roadway. A figure

²⁰⁴ *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, p. 956.

²⁰⁵ This was J.W. Singer & Sons of Frome. In March 1898 the cost was set at £325 and was expected to take seven months. Letter to Thornycroft, 29 March 1898. C590 HMI; see also D.S. James, *A Century of Statues (A history of the Morris Singer Foundry)*, pp. 15-19 of an unpublished manuscript, 1971-72, p. 18. EM17 HMI.

²⁰⁶ Akers-Douglas to Gladstone, 8 July 1898. PRO WORK 20/100.

²⁰⁷ Thornycroft to the Secretary of the Office of Works, 28 July 1898. PRO WORK 20/100.

²⁰⁸ D53/2 HMI.

standing behind the balustrade is shown viewing the sculpture, with the angle of his / her field of vision indicated.²⁰⁹

In his reply to Akers Douglas, Gladstone indicated that the former government had contemplated a number of alternative sites. These included the ‘head of the new Parl[iame]nt. St.[reet]’. Since the 1860s there had been proposals to widen the southern end of this important route where, on the approach to the Palace of Westminster, it narrowed as it ran parallel to King Street.²¹⁰ Some years later, George Shaw Lefevre, the Liberal First Commissioner from 1880-85, tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Prime Minister, W.E. Gladstone, of the advantages of this scheme. He argued that ‘the widened street would form a noble approach to the Houses of Parliament and the Abbey, not surpassed in general effect in any city in Europe. Along the greater part of it the Abbey would be in full view.’²¹¹ In 1895 Herbert Gladstone made a similar suggestion as his predecessor when he proposed that the buildings between the two thoroughfares should be demolished and replaced by a grassed area, thus opening up a vista to the Abbey (Plate 106).²¹² Although the subsequent Conservative administration eventually succeeded in widening Parliament Street by the removal of King Street, Gladstone’s clearing was not realised (see 6~7; Plates 34, 39-40).²¹³

It was this open area that was considered with regard to the Cromwell statue. However, Gladstone’s doubts about the propriety of this site were fourfold: a lack of room; pollution (‘it would be smothered in dust most of the year’); a diminution of its dominance over the existing Parliament Square statues; and a ‘fatal objection’ regarding ‘the back view.’ It is probable, given the hostility expressed towards the

²⁰⁹ This skilful manipulation of the site and its restrictions were informed by his earlier experience with the Gordon memorial in Trafalgar Square (see 5~8). There was some criticism that the ten feet statue was too small in relation to the other monuments. Thornycroft in contrast considered them too large, however, in order to prevent the diminution of his figure, and because of the high terrace and Nelson’s Column in front and behind, he placed it on a tall pedestal thus raising its overall height to some twenty-nine feet. Sketches during the gestation of the memorial indicate his careful attentiveness to the subsequent effects of foreshortening. Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, Henry Moore Institute for the Study of Sculpture, Leeds, 1991, p. 50; Plates 14 & 26.

²¹⁰ See M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 22; Plates 122a-b & d, 123-4, 128.

²¹¹ Lefevre to Gladstone, 24 September 1883, cited in M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 22.

²¹² Illustrations from the Parliamentary Papers of 1896 pertaining to this matter are reproduced in M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, Plate 137.

²¹³ Instead the monumental New Public Offices was ultimately erected at the corner of Parliament Street and Great George Street from 1898-c.1912 (see 6~7).

commemoration of Cromwell, that issues of security and protection were uppermost in their minds. The selection of the ‘sunken garden’ site made it prominent and highly visible, whilst also affording it a high level of protection given its physical inaccessibility. Although this consideration is not stated explicitly it does help to explain why both Gladstone and the ‘anonymous donor’ (Rosebery) favoured the original site, namely ‘the centre of the garden.’²¹⁴ This necessitated the loftier of the two pedestals as depicted in Thornycroft’s sketch (Plate 104).

Of the alternative sites proposed for the monument one appears to have been in Parliament Square, near to the Canning statue.²¹⁵ However, this existing memorial was already the focus of discontent (see 4~10). Viscount Sidmouth’s criticism of the statue’s position was inflamed in the light of news that Cromwell was intended for ‘the most unbefitting [spot], as it seems to me that could be found in London for a memorial of the man who overthrewed both Houses of Parliament’. Sidmouth called for Canning to oust this regicide and prevent this ‘ludicrous perversion of history’. Given Cromwell’s tendentious relationship with parliament, he thought that there might be a more suitable site for this ‘most extraordinary man... without offence to anyone.’ To illustrate his point he scoffed that to place George III opposite the White House in Washington or Louis XVI near the Elysée (official residence of the French president) in Paris would be ‘almost as ridiculous’.²¹⁶ Sidmouth would have been enraged to discover that the very day after his letter permission was given for the contractor to hoist stone, ballast and scaffolding over the parapet and into the garden.²¹⁷ By 4 July the constructors, T.H. Adamson & Sons had sunk a test hole of over three feet on the intended site.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Gladstone to Akers-Douglas, 15 July 1898. PRO WORK 20/100.

²¹⁵ James Munson, ‘Objections overruled’, p. 172.

²¹⁶ Harcourt had used a similar argument when he averred that should Cromwell be occluded one ‘might just as well expunge Napoleon from his position between Louis XVI and Louis XVIII.’ Letter to Lord Rosebery and Shaw Lefevre dated 6 April 1895 reproduced in A.G. Gardiner, *The Life of Sir William Harcourt*, Vol. II, p. 361.

²¹⁷ Memorandum dated 20 June 1899. PRO WORK 20/100.

²¹⁸ T.H. Adamson & Sons, High Street, Putney to Thornycroft, 4 July 1899. C5 HMI. Mr. Jones, Clerk of Works for the Houses of Parliament also assisted in the erection. B. Westcott, Office of Works to Thornycroft, 7 July 1899. C731 HMI.

By the autumn, with work well advanced, petitions against the ‘erection on public land’ of a statue of Cromwell were laid before the Commons on Tuesday 24 October 1899.²¹⁹ On the following Friday, Albert Edmond Philip Henry Yorke, sixth Earl of Hardwicke (1867-1904) moved a resolution that it was ‘inexpedient that memorial statues should be erected within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster without the sanction of Parliament’.²²⁰ Hardwicke found difficulty in understanding how, despite objecting to it when in opposition, A.J. Balfour, as First Lord of the Treasury, was now willing to endorse the commemoration. The Earl of Wemyss had travelled all the way from Scotland to second this.²²¹ He feared that the scale of the statue and pedestal would mean that the other representations of Palmerston and Beaconsfield would ‘look like so many pigmies at his feet.’²²² Opponents of Cromwell cited popular support for their cause: Sidmouth claimed to have ‘thousands of signatures’ from all over the country and Hardwicke later had a list of 274 petitions.²²³

Hardwicke’s debate took place on the final day before the prorogation of parliament: this marks the end of the current Session when all motions on the Order Paper, committees, and bills not on the statute book are ‘killed automatically by prorogation.’²²⁴ This gives some explanation for this bout of last-ditch hysteria on the part of the few stalwart opponents of the statue. Their actions won them few allies and it was widely condemned as bringing parliament into disrepute. The end of the session was traditionally meant to be ‘of a purely formal character’ and intended to conclude parliamentary business.²²⁵ As a consequence only ten peers voted with a margin of six to four in favour. Blind to the preposterousness of this situation, Hardwicke felt that this decision, combined with the Commons vote of 17 June 1895, was reason enough for the gift of the statue to be debated in parliament prior to its erection.²²⁶ Henry

²¹⁹ *PD*, Vol. 77, 24 October 1899, p. 569.

²²⁰ *PD*, Vol. 77, 27 October 1899, p. 749.

²²¹ *PD*, Vol. 77, 27 October 1899, p. 753.

²²² *PD*, Vol. 77, 27 October 1899, p. 754. Conversely Augustine Birrell’s view of the monument was: ‘If it has any fault it is that it reduces the frock-coated gentlemen in the square with great parliamentary names to their proper level.’ *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, pp. 962-963.

²²³ *PD*, Vol. 77, 27 October 1899, p. 756; *PD*, Vol. 84, 21 June 1900, p. 589.

²²⁴ Eric Taylor, *The House of Commons at Work*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1958, p. 82.

²²⁵ Earl Halsbury, the Lord Chancellor cited in *PD*, Vol. 77, 27 October 1899, p. 758.

²²⁶ See Hardwicke’s letter to *The Times*, 31 October 1899, p. 8b.

Lucy considered Hardwicke's conduct as 'deplorable'.²²⁷ *The Times* similarly described this behaviour on the part of the statue's detractors as 'absurd'.²²⁸ With greater gravity it correctly reflected that the result of 1895 was due to 'political tactics. The Radical Government of that day were compelled to yield to the demands of their Irish allies. The Conservative Opposition were tempted to widen the gap between the Ministers and the Nonconformists.' This explains Rosebery's annoyance that the issue had become 'a football for contending factions in the House of Commons'.²²⁹ Speaking in parliament, Thomas Power O'Connor (1848-1929) was to point out the inconsistency on the part of Conservative and Unionist Members of Parliament: all but thirteen opposed the statue when in opposition to the Liberal government but went on to sanction it when in the majority.²³⁰ These circumstances dictated the manner in which the statue appeared, and led *The Times* to conclude that the matter should have been debated 'on broader grounds'. It was critical of the way in which the monument had been 'huddled through': 'If Cromwell's memory is to be publicly honoured, it should not be in a hole-and-corner fashion'.²³¹

Such objections had not hindered the affixing of the top stone of the pedestal on 4 September, nor did they prevent the erection of the statue on 31 October, followed by a bronze lion for the base on 2 November 1899 (Plate 107).²³² However, on 3 November, with the statue 'now on the spot', the indefatigable Hardwicke sent the First Commissioner a petition signed by thirty-three members of both houses demanding that 'the erection of the statue be not at present proceeded with.' On 13 November 1899 (a day before the "unveiling") he sent a further letter with four more signatories.²³³

²²⁷ H.W. Lucy, *A Diary of the Unionist Parliament, 1895-1900*, p. 367.

²²⁸ *The Times*, 1 November 1899, p. 9d.

²²⁹ *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7a.

²³⁰ *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, pp. 970-971. See an account of this in H.W. Lucy, *A Diary of the Unionist Parliament, 1895-1900*, pp. 343-344.

²³¹ *The Times*, 1 November 1899, p. 9e.

²³² Thornycroft's diary entries read: 'Top stone erected on Cromwell pedestal.' 'Cromwell statue put on pedestal.' 'Lion put on pedestal'. D14 fo.36^v & D14 fo.40^v HMI.

²³³ The petition and the names of the undersigned, along with Esher's reply from the Office of Works is reproduced in *The Times*, 10 November 1899, p. 8b. Others appended their names later, for example Viscount Sidmouth (see his letter to *The Times*, 14 November 1899, p. 7f).

Thornycroft, his work nearing completion, sent Reginald Baliol Brett, second Viscount Esher (1852-1930) a sketch of suggested inscriptions for the pedestal.²³⁴ Rosebery had proposed either simply ‘Oliver Cromwell’ or ‘Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland’.²³⁵ Thornycroft expressed his opinion that the text should be brief and the letters of a large size given its distance from the pavement and the difficulty of arranging a lengthy inscription.²³⁶ It accordingly reads: ‘OLIVER / CROMWELL / 1599 / 1658’ (Plate 107).

On 10 November, the Office of Works decided that the statue was to be ‘uncovered without any ceremony on Tuesday morning’ with the scaffolding removed the proceeding morning. This event had initially been set for 31 October as was reported in *The Times*, which also noted that a ‘committee is being formed to make preparations for a national demonstration the same evening.’²³⁷ This explains the unusual circumstances of the “inauguration”. At 7:30 am on the fourteen day of a ‘dark November morning’ the monument ‘was stealthily unveiled by a workman... without one word of panegyric.’²³⁸

Four days later Viscount Esher and Sir John Taylor stepped out from behind their desks at the Office of Works to see it for themselves and reported with satisfaction on the ‘fine simple design’.²³⁹ It appears that even Sir William Harcourt, despite earlier reservations about the site, ‘had nothing but praise for the statue itself.’²⁴⁰ The satisfaction of these protagonists was repeated on a much larger stage when a plaster version of the sculpture was exhibited at the Paris International Exhibition of 1900.

²³⁴ Thornycroft to Brett, 1 November 1899. PRO WORK 20/100.

²³⁵ Rosebery, writing from Mentmore, Leighton Buzzard to Thornycroft, 7 August 1899. C542 HMI.

²³⁶ Thornycroft to Brett, 1 November 1899. PRO WORK 20/100. Thornycroft, had similar concerns with the Gordon monument for Trafalgar Square and was eager for the inscription to be concise and legible, and accordingly abbreviated Gordon’s middle name. The inscription reads: ‘CHARLES G GORDON C B / MAJOR GEN ROYAL ENGINEERS // KILLED AT KHARTOUM / XXVI JANUARY / MDCCCLXXV’.

²³⁷ ‘The Cromwell statue’, *The Times*, 19 September 1899, p. 6c.

²³⁸ Hardwicke cited in *PD*, Vol. 84, 21 June 1900, p. 590; letter to *The Times*, 16 November 1899, p. 12a.

²³⁹ Brett and Taylor made this observation in a minute dated 18 November 1899. PRO WORK 20/100.

²⁴⁰ Cited in a letter from the Dean of Westminster to Thornycroft, 16 November 1899. C738 HMI.

This contributed to Thornycroft being awarded a Grand Prix.²⁴¹ The previous year it had been included in the Royal Academy Exhibition.²⁴² It is appropriate that such a keenly contested work should have received so widespread an audience.

5~8 A nation and its heroes: Lord Rosebery and the ideal of Oliver Cromwell

It was John Morley's estimation that, at the close of the nineteenth-century, Oliver Cromwell had become a symbol for 'some of the notions of the day about representative government, the beneficent activities of a busy State, the virtue of the Strong Man, and the Hero for Ruler.'²⁴³ These qualities of leadership were espoused by John Robert Seeley (1834-95) as Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University from 1869-95. In 1878 he published a biography of Heinrich Frederick Carl Stein (1757-1831), the Prussian leader of the coalition against Napoleon from 1813-15. Five years later appeared his influential book *The Expansion of England*. Rosebery and the other great Imperialist, Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914) saw themselves 'as candidates for the role of historical leadership sketched by doctrinaires such as Seeley, who looked for an English equivalent of the great reconstructor of the Prussian state, Stein, to fulfil the prophecies of *The Expansion of England*.'²⁴⁴ When Rosebery became Prime Minister in 1894 he immediately knighted Seeley.²⁴⁵

Morley, in his analysis of that era, went on to add (as has been already noted above) that, by the 1890s, 'Cromwell' had become 'a name on an Imperialist flag.'²⁴⁶ A key progenitor of these 'notions' was Lord Rosebery who had, since the 1870s, been setting an imperialistic agenda. In the following decade he became chairman of the

²⁴¹ Thornycroft's two other works were *Joy of Life* (RA 1895) and *Bather* (RA 1898). See Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1983, p. 251. See also Tancred Borenius's entry in J.R.H. Weaver (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography 1922-1930*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1937/1967, p. 842.

²⁴² No. 1910: 'Oliver Cromwell; colossal statue, bronze. To be placed near Westminster Town-Hall.' Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy Exhibitors*, Vol. IV, p. 387.

²⁴³ John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 49.

²⁴⁴ Richard Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915*, p. 252.

²⁴⁵ Richard Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915*, p. 499.

²⁴⁶ John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 49.

Imperial Federation League (founded in 1884) and was appointed Foreign Secretary in W.E. Gladstone's administration of 1886.²⁴⁷ An accomplished orator, his speeches on foreign affairs were nevertheless largely rhetorical, advocating 'continuity of policy' with the Conservatives in order to forestall disagreement within the nation and, crucially, within his own fragmented party.²⁴⁸ Rosebery perceived the ill-defined concepts of imperialism and patriotism – central to the emergence of the Cromwell statue – as a means of achieving unity for a political party described by Harcourt in 1898 as 'hopelessly split up not only on Foreign Policy but on all great domestic questions'.²⁴⁹ It is somewhat ironic, therefore, that this monument threatened 'disunion and dissension' between his fellow Liberals and the Irish Nationalists.²⁵⁰

Despite misgivings over Home Rule, Rosebery remained loyal to W.E. Gladstone. In February 1885 he had agreed to the Prime Minister's offer of the post of First Commissioner of Works with a seat in Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal.²⁵¹ This acceptance was prompted by the fall of Khartoum in February 1885, an event that inspired Rosebery to declare: 'The question... is one less of policy than of patriotism'.²⁵² To explicate the emergence of 'patriotism' and 'imperialism' as a phenomenon within British politics and society at this time, and to establish the preliminary context for the positioning of Cromwell within this ideology, it is necessary to turn once again to W.J. Reader's *At duty's call: a study in obsolete patriotism* (see 1~5).²⁵³

Reader identified the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny and the institution of the Victoria Cross in the 1850s as providing 'all the ingredients for a powerful brew of military hero-worship and imperial pride.' The events in India were 'plentifully

²⁴⁷ J.R.H. Weaver (ed.), *DNB*, Vol. 1922-30, pp. 688-691.

²⁴⁸ H.C.G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists: The ideas and politics of a post-Gladstonian élite*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, pp. 11 and 195.

²⁴⁹ Cited in H.C.G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists*, p. 138.

²⁵⁰ Alfred John Webb (1834-1908) cited in *PD*, Vol. 34, 14 June 1895, p. 1184. Webb was an anti-Parnellite and a Protestant supporter of Home Rule. His *A Compendium of Irish Biography: comprising sketches of distinguished Irishmen, and of eminent persons connected with Ireland by office, or by their writings* was published at Dublin in 1878. Michael Stenton & Stephen Lees, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. II, p.365.

²⁵¹ He held this post from 13 February to 24 June 1885. M.H. Port, *Imperial London*, p. 275.

²⁵² Cited in E. Charteris's entry on Rosebery of 1937 in J.R.H. Weaver (ed.), *DNB*, Vol. 1922-30, p. 689.

²⁵³ W.J. Reader, *At duty's call: a study in obsolete patriotism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester & New York, 1988, especially pp. 41-50.

commemorated by monuments to its leading figures.’ With the election of Benjamin Disraeli as Prime Minister in 1874 there occurred a ‘new imperial tone in the national voice’. This was characterised by a ‘series of theatrical gestures’ initiated by this ‘Conservative royalist’ such as the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India in 1876. The 1880s saw an amplification of such imperial ambitions. The extravagant celebration of Victoria’s jubilee had been preceded two years earlier by the death of Major-General Charles George “Chinese” Gordon at Khartoum in the Sudan on 26 January 1885. In Britain, news of his death at the hands of Mohammed Ahmed of Dongola (c.1843-85) a Mahdi or prophet who had led a revolt against Egypt in 1881, was followed by a national day of mourning on 13 February. Gordon (born 1833) was popularly seen as the epitome of a Christian martyr manifesting military courage for the furtherance of the empire.²⁵⁴ His death came a year after he had been sent by W.E. Gladstone’s administration to oversee Egypt’s withdrawal from the Sudan. The historian Richard Shannon described this appointment as an ‘aberration’ given that Gordon ‘was entirely unfitted for discharging the task.’ It came to an equally unpropitious end that was very damaging for the government, not least because Gladstone continued the evacuation and refused ‘to be deflected into a futile policy of punitive revenge.’²⁵⁵ As has been noted, it was these events that precipitated Rosebery’s entry in government.

Hamo Thornycroft was responsible for memorials of Gordon unveiled in Trafalgar Square on 16 October 1885 (Plate 112) and in Parliament Gardens at Melbourne, Australia on 26 June 1889. Whilst the statues are identical, the pedestals and bas-reliefs differ. At London two panels depict female allegories identified as ‘Charity and Justice’ on one side with ‘Fortitude and Faith’ on the other. In the Melbourne version Gordon’s ‘aims and motives’ are visualised by historical incidents associated with the general. They were suggested by the committee for the monument and appear in four panels on the sides of the socle. The first was chosen as illustrative of Gordon’s ‘moral power’, depicting him as ‘a Christian soldier’ in China during the Taiping Rebellion (1863-4). He is then presented as ‘the philanthropist’ teaching destitute

²⁵⁴ Judith Prendergast, ‘G.W. Joy’s *The Death of Gordon* the real story?’, *Leeds Arts Calendar*, No.97, 1985, pp. 3-6.

²⁵⁵ Richard Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915*, pp. 166-167.

boys at Gravesend (1865-71). His civilising and redemptive qualities are evidenced by his actions to free slaves whilst governor-general of Sudan from January 1884, prior to his supposedly selfless death at Khartoum, as shown in the final relief. Adam White, in an analysis of the memorial, correctly emphasises their importance in presenting Gordon ‘as a moral exemplar’.²⁵⁶ Combined with this moralising import, the appearance of the statues in London and Melbourne underscores Gordon’s imperial significance. Comparable notions of morality and empire were also being appended to Cromwell at this time.

The self-effacing naturalism of the Gordon statue was met with widespread critical acclaim with comment focusing on the merits of this representation of a hero.²⁵⁷ Thornycroft’s depiction of Gordon (as ‘resolute, solitary, but not sad’²⁵⁸) was to have aesthetic similarities with his later statue of the Protector. This is visualised in a photograph of Thornycroft’s studio at the time of his death: it includes the quarter-size models of the Gordon monument and, behind it, the statue of Cromwell (Plate 111).²⁵⁹ In the former the general, left foot resting on a shattered cannon, looks down, with right hand supporting the chin, in an introspective attitude ‘as if he were thinking upon some distant object towards which he earnestly gazes’.²⁶⁰ It would appear that he based his representation on an account of Gordon’s death in which he led the defenders of Khartoum to an Austrian church where some explosives were stored.²⁶¹ Consequently, in his left palm is a bible modelled from Gordon’s actual volume, then

²⁵⁶ This and the preceding quotations pertaining to the reliefs are from 1887 and are cited in Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, p. 35. See also Adam White, ‘General Gordon, large and small’, pp. 7-14 in *Leeds Arts Calendar*, No.97, 1985.

²⁵⁷ Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, pp. 17-20 & 59-60. The popularity of this representation led to the distribution as a reduced scale statuette by Arthur Collie in 1889. See Martina Droth, Jason Edwards, David Getsy and Matthew Withey, *The Cult of the Statuette in Late Victorian Britain*, Essays in the Study of Sculpture, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2000, p. 6.

²⁵⁸ Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, p. 50.

²⁵⁹ Terry Friedman, Derek Linstrum, Benedict Read, Daru Rooke, Helen Upton, *The Alliance of Sculpture and Architecture: Hamo Thornycroft, John Belcher and the Institute of Chartered Accountants Building*, Henry Moore Centre for the Study of Sculpture, Leeds, 1993, Figure 41. For a detail of this image showing the Cromwell and Gordon maquettes see Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, Plate 25.

²⁶⁰ Thornycroft in a letter to the Agent General of 12 November 1886 cited in Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, p. 17. A stylistic precursor to this pose can be found in John Henry Foley’s *Memorial to Sidney, Lord Herbert of Lea*, 1867, Waterloo Place, London. See Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, Plate 22.

²⁶¹ Judith Prendergast, ‘G.W. Joy’s *The Death of Gordon* the real story?’, pp. 3-4.

in the possession of the Queen. This, combined with the fact that he has his heel on a broken cannon, emphasised, according to the sculptor, Gordon's 'dislike to bloodshed and war'.²⁶² The effect produced is of an isolated, contemplative figure (intimated by a downward glance), a Christian (he holds a bible) and a soldier (his attire and the attribute of the cannon). This is repeated a decade later in the similar pose of the Cromwell statue, with a 'sword in one hand and Bible in the other.'²⁶³ For Rosebery this representation was 'the nearest equivalent' to Cromwell as a man of action but also with a spiritual side.²⁶⁴

During the gestation of the monument he had urged the sculptor to make his Cromwell 'more militant' and facing directly ahead.²⁶⁵ Thornycroft laboured hard over the figure's head, as is confirmed by the fact that at some point he decapitated the statue and made a replacement.²⁶⁶ His thoughts are revealed in an undated memorandum indicating that the statue 'represents the Protector as a soldier', a 'solitary character', bare headed and clutching a bible. The proximity of parliament and the Abbey was noted, his disinterment in the latter is observed as lying 'not a hundred yards distant' from the statue which 'in some way atones.' The height of ten feet was deemed necessary because of the 'massive buttresses' of the adjacent Westminster Hall and 'the proximity of the colossal statue of Coeur de Lion.'²⁶⁷ Furthermore, when the Liberal Government was debating possible locations, Herbert Gladstone revealed that it 'was the idea of "aloofness"' which made him 'rather jump

²⁶² Cited in Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, p. 17.

²⁶³ There is a further, serendipitous link between the Gordon and Cromwell statues. The general's memorial was removed from Trafalgar Square during the London Wings for Victory Week of 1943 and it was temporarily stored (along with Hubert Le Seur's equestrian *Charles I*) at Mentmore, the Buckinghamshire seat of the Earls of Rosebery. The Gordon statue was eventually relocated to the Thames Embankment in November 1953. Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, pp. 60-3.

²⁶⁴ 'The Spiritual Side' in 'The Cromwell Tercentenary', *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7c. Thornycroft's original sketches for the Gordon monument dated 25 September 1885 show the figure holding a sword. Adam White, *Hamo Thornycroft & the Martyr General*, Plates 2-4.

²⁶⁵ He similarly wondered if the lion was 'not too dolorous'. Rosebery, 38 Berkeley Square to Thornycroft, marked 'confidential', 31 March 1896. C537 HMI; Rosebery, 38 Berkeley Square to Thornycroft, 2 December 1898. C541 HMI. See also Elfrida Manning, *Marble and Bronze*, p. 131.

²⁶⁶ For Rosebery's acquisition of the original see above and also his letters to Thornycroft sent from 38 Berkeley Square dated 9 and 16 April 1900. C548-9 HMI.

²⁶⁷ Note on the back of a letter addressed to Thornycroft from Antonio Dimarco (undated). C205 HMI.

at the site' in the sunken garden.²⁶⁸ When it was in situ, *The Times* was to remark that the pedestal had turned the potentially awkward site to positive advantage: the statue was raised to eye-level and, given the backdrop of Westminster Hall, was unencumbered by any visual distractions (Plate 107).²⁶⁹

Rosebery's request for Cromwell to face straight ahead was not heeded (Plate 109). A sketch by Thornycroft dated 2 May 1896, provides some evidence to suggest why this was the case. It shows the head and shoulders of Cromwell in three-quarter profile. Marginal notes pencilled alongside refer to his features ('hair "red going grey"'; 'mouth not large but firm; 'end of nose heavy') and mentions that Cromwell is depicted as he might have appeared after the battle of Worcester in September 1651.²⁷⁰ It is fitting if this is the case as this conflict 'was Oliver's last battle, the "Crowning Mercy."' ²⁷¹ These final words were Cromwell's in the wake of victory and proved entirely apposite for, as Antonia Fraser succinctly put it: 'The last Royalist army had been destroyed.'²⁷² She provides more of Cromwell's thoughts at this momentous time: 'The dimensions of this mercy are above my thoughts. It is for ought I know, a crowning mercy.' One is justified in the supposition that it is exactly this mental state that is palpably rendered in Thornycroft's skilful and emotive representation of this 'solitary character'.

These facets imbue this commemoration with the symbolic and associative verity of the site, combined with the fulfilment of its aesthetic potential, thus rendering it one of the most striking of all London's many statues. It was given full and deserved praise at a 'national meeting' held on 14 November 1899, on the evening of the

²⁶⁸ Gladstone to Akers-Douglas, 15 July 1898. PRO WORK 20/100. He added that this site was 'originally suggested to me by Sir John Taylor.' For details concerning Taylor see chapter three, note 27.

²⁶⁹ *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7a.

²⁷⁰ Cromwell would have been fifty-one years old but Thornycroft notes his age to be 'cir 46' (this appears to have been amended from '50'). D53/1 HMI. A common prototype for many of the later portraits of Cromwell is Samuel Cooper's miniature painted when the sitter was in his early fifties. There is a reproduction of this work (the original is in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch) in Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men*, final illustration between pp. 412-413.

²⁷¹ John Morley, *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 345.

²⁷² Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men*, p. 389.

work's 'unveiling'.²⁷³ It was chaired by Lord Welby in the Queen's Hall and was followed with an address by Herbert Henry Asquith (1852-1928). Towards the end of proceedings Asquith stated that, from 'a political point of view' (rather than in a 'party sense'), 'no more appropriate site could possibly have been chosen' because Cromwell's 'presence' would offer a 'salutary warning' to the legislators.²⁷⁴ This rousing occasion closed with the singing of the National Anthem.

Examined in detail, Rosebery's speech concentrated on three Cromwellian traits.²⁷⁵ Firstly, as a soldier 'he won every battle that he fought.' Secondly, as a ruler (it was too short a period for him to be a 'statesman') it was admitted that, 'in reality he was a destructive agent, appointed as it were to put an end to the feudal monarchy, and to be the introducer of a new state of things'. Nevertheless, he 'was the first ruler who really understood and practised toleration. (Cheers.)' The third, most important attribute was as 'a great raiser of and maintainer of British influence and power abroad. (Cheers.)' Rosebery paid homage to the 'extraordinary deference... Europe paid to him.' As such, it was proclaimed, there was present need of a Cromwell, not in the 'externals' (as regicide and rebel) but as a general, ruler, statesman; strenuous as well as sincere and unwilling to compromise his principles. Such a Cromwell, coloured by the needs of the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, would espouse God and freedom and the influence of Great Britain in promoting both. Rosebery concluded with a hope that that they would all be 'animated in our patriotism by no lower ideal.'²⁷⁶

It is evident that there was a great deal of fervency in this espousal of national identity. The reasons why are clear: on 11 October war had broken out for the second time in the Afrikaner republics. The attributes affiliated to Cromwell need to be seen in the light of 'Rosebery's formula of unspecific patriotic speeches' made during that

²⁷³ *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7a. See also Archibald Philip Primrose, fifth Earl of Rosebery, *Oliver Cromwell. A Eulogy and An Appreciation. An Address delivered by the Right Hon the Earl of Rosebery, K.G., on the occasion of the unveiling of a statue to the Great Protector*, A. Melrose, London, 1900, p. 13. (A second authorised edition of the speech was published in the same year in London by A.L. Humphreys.)

²⁷⁴ Asquith concluded: 'he beheaded the Sovereign, he abolished the House of Commons, and he reformed the House of Lords'. *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7d.

²⁷⁵ *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7b-c.

²⁷⁶ *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7c.

anxious period. He considered that the current hostilities would have profound consequences for Britain's position in the world, highlight the inadequacies of government, and impact on the imperial debate within his party.²⁷⁷ Salisbury and Balfour, the nation's Conservative leaders, betrayed considerable incompetence at the start of the conflict.²⁷⁸ However, since the 'decay of Parliamentary Liberalism' caused by the rift of 1886, there had been no adequate opposition to Conservative hegemony. Rosebery made this clear at the City Liberal Club in May 1899 when he made an explicit link between imperialism and the party divide. For Rosebery this 'greater pride in empire' represented a change in 'the whole aspect of British politics' since 1886. This was an all-pervasive phenomenon permeating 'every section and almost every individual of the community'. As such policy differences should have been considered at an end, replaced by a common ground that was paramount in the face of external threats. With such comparatively minor differences overcome, the way was open for a reunification of the party as it was prior to the issue of Home Rule.²⁷⁹

In reality the war represented a further cause of division with the 'pro-Boer' party of John Morley and Campbell-Bannerman countering Rosebery's combative stance.²⁸⁰ However, the common ground of which the later spoke was 'sane Imperialism' – in contrast to 'wild, hot Imperialism': he argued that, in reality, this was 'nothing but... a larger patriotism. (Cheers.)'²⁸¹ It is exactly this tone that was struck in mid-November at Queen's Hall. Whilst acknowledging that some in the 'nation' would not agree, Rosebery stated that what he believed was

that the vast majority of our people are inspired by a nobler creed; that their Imperialism, as it is called, is not the lust of dominion or the pride of power, but rather the ideal of Oliver Cromwell. (Cheers.) If that be so, a statue more or less matters little. So long as his influence pervades the nation the memory of Cromwell is not likely to suffer disparagement for the want of an effigy. And even if it were so, he has a surer memorial still, for every one, I think, every one, at any rate, who is worth anything has in his heart of hearts a Pantheon of historical demigods – a shrine of those who are demigods for them, not even demigods, for they would then be too far and too aloof from mankind, but a shrine in which they consecrate the

²⁷⁷ H.C.G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists*, pp. 45-47.

²⁷⁸ Richard Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915*, p. 294.

²⁷⁹ 'Lord Rosebery in the City', *The Times*, 6 May 1899, p. 15f.

²⁸⁰ David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 208.

²⁸¹ *The Times*, 6 May 1899, p. 15f. See also H.C.G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists*, p. 139.

memories of the best and noblest of born men. In that Pantheon in many English hearts, and those not the worst – whether the effigy of Cromwell be situated outside or inside Parliament or, indeed, invisible altogether – would be found eternally engraved the monument and memory of the Great Protector. (Loud cheers.)²⁸²

Rosebery's personal obsession was such that he purchased the original head removed from the Cromwell statue by its dissatisfied sculptor (who afterwards provided it with a small pedestal and inscription). Rosebery confessed that his admiration for the portrait was such that he found it irresistible, even though he had nowhere to 'place so colossal a head' given that he already had 'a colossal head of Julius Caesar on the floor.'²⁸³ This juxtaposition of Cromwell and Julius Caesar in Rosebery's personal pantheon is illustrative of his 'wish for a dictator'.

This revelation was made the day before his Cromwell speech, when he opened a complex of 'new model artisans' dwellings' in the Shoreditch Vestry at Hoxton. It was after lamenting the fact that such laudable ventures were swathed in 'bonds of red-tape' that he suggested his rather extreme remedy. The address, as reported in *The Times*, includes the audience response to his comments. His calls for a 'tyrant' were met with laughter thus confirming (should any confirmation be necessary) that it was a light-hearted plea. The subsequent request for 'a man of large mind, large heart, and of iron will' was greeted with seemingly spontaneous 'cries of "Cromwell"'. He continued that this leader 'should hold power for a year, and at the end of it his head should be cut off (cheers), for fear his existence should imperil our liberties. (Laughter and cheers.)' However, with greater realism, Rosebery wistfully concluded: 'We shall never have a dictator, so that this is only the sort of dream which one can indulge in

²⁸² The published text has some slight differences:

'But what I believe is that the vast majority of our people are inspired by a nobler creed; that their Imperialism, as it is called, is not the lust of dominion nor the pride of power, but rather the ideal of Oliver Cromwell. If that be so, a statue more or less matters but very little; and so long as his influence pervades the nation, the memory of Cromwell is not likely to suffer disparagement from the want of an effigy. But if it were so, he has a surer memorial still. For everyone- at any rate everyone, I should think, who is worthy of anything- has in his heart of hearts a pantheon of his historical demi-gods for them- and yet not even of demi-gods, for they would be too far aloof from mankind- a shrine in which lie the sacred memories of the past, and of the noblest of born men. In that pantheon, in many English hearts, and those not the worst, whether the effigy of Cromwell be situate outside or inside Parliament, or whether it be invisible altogether, in that pantheon, in many English hearts, will be found eternally engraved the monument and memory of the Great Protector.' Rosebery, *Oliver Cromwell. A Eulogy and An Appreciation*, pp. 34-35.

²⁸³ Rosebery to Thornycroft, 9, 16 April & 28 December 1900. C548, C549 (with sketch) & C551 HMI.

under the shadow of your dwellings in the middle of Shoreditch on an autumn afternoon. But you have something, a great deal, in your hands.’²⁸⁴

This final comment perhaps brings us closer to Rosebery’s genuine (and more credible) attitude towards strong leadership. In a brief text on Horatio Nelson written some six years later, Rosebery stated: ‘We cannot, like the Americans, condense our worship of civil and military virtues in a single figure like that of Washington. We find our various types of excellence in different individuals.’²⁸⁵ He was to add in another context that: ‘The path of the statesman rarely skirts the heights, it is rough, rugged, sometimes squalid, as are most of the roads of life. We are apt to make idols, to ignore shadows, and to fancy that we see stars; not too apt, for it is illuminating worship.’²⁸⁶ For Rosebery, then, hero-worship had the potential to edify on a personal, societal and national level. He felt therefore that: ‘A country must cherish and guard its heroes.’²⁸⁷ He practised this through his authorship of a number of biographies including *Napoleon: the last Phase* (1900) and *Lord Randolph Churchill* (1906) in addition to shorter works on Sir Robert Peel (1899) and William Windham (1913).²⁸⁸ His life of Pitt (1891), along with Frederic Harrison’s *Oliver Cromwell*, was included in a series edited by John Morley and published by Macmillan entitled ‘Twelve English Statesmen’.²⁸⁹

In 1910 Rosebery also wrote a book on the early life of William Pitt the Elder, first Earl of Chatham (1708-78) in which he averred: ‘All careers have their blots’ but that

²⁸⁴ ‘Lord Rosebery in Shoreditch’, *The Times*, 14 November 1899, p. 4a-b.

²⁸⁵ Lord Rosebery, ‘Nelson’, pp. 16-21 in *Miscellanies Literary and Historical*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1922, Vol. I, p. 18.

²⁸⁶ Lord Rosebery, *Chatham: His Early Life and Connections*, Arthur L. Humphries, London, 1910, p. 511.

²⁸⁷ Lord Rosebery, *Chatham*, p. 512.

²⁸⁸ Lord Rosebery, *Napoleon: the last Phase*, Arthur L. Humphries, London, 1900; *Lord Randolph Churchill*, A.L. Humphreys, London, 1906; *Miscellanies Literary and Historical*, Vol. I, ‘Sir Robert Peel’, pp. 185-237; ‘William Windham’, pp. 145-159.

²⁸⁹ J.R.H. Weaver (ed.), *DNB*, Vol. 1922-30, p. 695. The volumes in the series were: Edward A. Freeman’s *William the Conqueror*, Mrs. J.R. Green’s *Henry II*, F. York Powell’s *Edward I*, James Gairdner’s *Henry VII*, Bishop Creighton’s *Cardinal Wolsey*, E.S. Beesley’s *Elizabeth*, H.D. Traill’s *William III*, John Morley’s *Walpole* and *Chatham* and J.R. Thursfield’s *Peel*. An advertisement listing these volumes is included at the end of Lord Rosebery, *Pitt*, Macmillan, London, reprint 1892.

the best lives were those where the ‘blemishes are obscured by high achievement.’²⁹⁰ He considered this to be equally the case with Chatham as with his son, William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806), whom Rosebery praised for his ‘patriotic spirit’.²⁹¹ In October 1899, Rosebery was given as opportunity to link both men when he was invited to Bath to receive the freedom of the city and inaugurate a series of plaques erected on the former homes of significant persons. He unveiled two tablets, one each to Pitt the Elder and Younger.²⁹² Rosebery spoke at length on Chatham, whom he considered should be merited with a statue in that city due to his unsurpassed achievements in the space of four years:

He seized one empire in Canada. He took half an empire in India. Your ships sailed supreme on every sea, and your armies were victorious on land. There was never a moment at which the power of Great Britain reached so completely its acme as it did under the administration of Pitt. (Cheers.)

This leader had invigorated a despondent and pessimistic nation, ‘made commerce flourish in the midst of war’, and managed to ‘extinguish party from this brilliant Administration.’²⁹³ It was for these reasons that Rosebery declared: ‘I regard Mr. Pitt as the first Liberal Imperialist.’ They were duty bound to maintain Pitt’s legacy – ‘the largest share’ of the British Empire – and thus it was ‘the party of Liberal Imperialism’ that was ‘destined to control the destinies of this country. (Cheers.)’ Should this be otherwise, history supplied ominous forbearances in the shape of Pitt the Elder: ‘Twenty years after his epoch of glory, three years after his death, Britain has reached the lowest point in her history.’ This was the acknowledgement of American Independence by the British in November 1782. This salutary caution was of great significance due to the current events in South Africa, warning that ‘no wars are small’.²⁹⁴ Rosebery deployed nautical analogies reminiscent of those used during the reform bill crisis (see 2~3). He envisioned the nation as a ‘little island... floating,

²⁹⁰ Neither did Rosebery claim that Pitt the Younger ‘was a perfect character or a perfect statesman. Such monsters do not exist. But it may be confidently asserted that few statesmen and few characters could bear so close a scrutiny.’ Lord Rosebery, *Pitt*, p. 285; Lord Rosebery, *Chatham*, p. 511.

²⁹¹ Lord Rosebery, *Pitt*, p. 287.

²⁹² These bronze plaques with copper lettering were placed on 7 The Circus, Pitt the Elder’s home from 1757-66 during his period as Member of Parliament for Bath, and 15 Johnstone Street where Pitt the Younger, in poor health, lived in 1802. ‘Lord Rosebery at Bath’, *The Times*, 28 October 1899, p. 9b-e.

²⁹³ *The Times*, 28 October 1899, p. 9c.

²⁹⁴ *The Times*, 28 October 1899, p. 9e.

as it were, so lonely in these northern seas... so friendless amongst nations'. He continued: 'you will do well to trust the man at the helm when you are passing through a storm (cheers)'. Calling for a 'united front', Rosebery invoked Chatham's call at that time of great difficulty: "Be one people, forget everything for the public"²⁹⁵.

In the case of Pitt the Younger there was an equally pertinent parallel when, in July 1800, Pitt as Prime Minister oversaw the legislation that became the Act of Union with Ireland of 1801. This 'gaunt spectre of the Irish question', coinciding as it did with war against France, 'has never passed into history, for it as never passed out of politics.'²⁹⁶ With a comment that was as equally applicable to Oliver Cromwell, Rosebery stated that critics should

judge him by the standards and ideas of his time, and not by the standards and ideas of their own... To Pitt alone is meted out a different measure. He alone is judged, not by the end of the eighteenth, but by the end of the nineteenth century. And why? Because the Irish question which he attempted to settle is an unsettled question still.²⁹⁷

This was exactly the reason why the statue of Cromwell was so fiercely contested. The Irish problem was also a principal cause for Rosebery's own failure of leadership in 1894-95. He became Prime Minister in the aftermath of the abortive Home Rule bill of 1893. His administration was irrevocably handicapped by the fact that the two bulwarks of his party – W.E. Gladstone and Home Rule – were both at an end, meaning, as Richard Shannon put it, that both 'moral authority and political prestige [were] hopelessly compromised'.²⁹⁸ Rosebery's authority was further undermined by the fact that Sir William Harcourt, a senior figure and rival for party leadership, wielded considerable power in the House of Commons. It is revealing that Harcourt, whilst a strong advocate for the statue of Cromwell was nevertheless very vocal in his criticism of setting it in the 'damp ditch' favoured by Rosebery.

In personal terms Rosebery, an insomniac and still mourning the death of his wife in 1880, had neither the constitution nor the tenacity for adequate leadership in such

²⁹⁵ *The Times*, 28 October 1899, p. 9d.

²⁹⁶ Lord Rosebery, *Pitt*, p. 172.

²⁹⁷ Lord Rosebery, *Pitt*, pp. 191-193.

²⁹⁸ Richard Shannon, *The Crisis of Imperialism 1865-1915*, pp. 245-246.

troubled circumstances and his resignation ushered in a decade of Conservative government. From 1896 Rosebery increasingly withdrew from politics. The day after war broke out in southern Africa, a letter from Rosebery appeared in *The Times* in which he admitted that he was 'loth (sic) to re-enter the field of politics.'²⁹⁹ His rhetoric of imperialism and patriotism represent his efforts to return to this arena whilst remaining detached from party disputes. The keen fascination with strong leadership seen in his speeches and writings must be seen in the light of his own failings. The statue of Cromwell was begun during the period of his premiership and completed at a moment of imperial crisis.

5~9 Cromwell and the continuing vicissitudes of history

Criticism did not cease, even after the statue's inauguration. In the Commons on 23 February 1900, John Dillon (1851-1927), the leader of the Irish Nationalists, along with John Gordon Swift MacNeil (1849-1926), National Liberal member for South Donegal, launched a stinging attack on the monument.³⁰⁰ It must have been a striking scene given the description of one of the speakers in the *Dictionary of National Biography*: 'MacNeil was an exuberant and untidy talker: enthusiasms, information, and gossip tumbled pell-mell from a ragged beard and prominent, excited light-blue eyes.'³⁰¹ Augustine Birrell (1850-1933), the MP for West Fifeshire and a future Chief Secretary for Ireland, lambasted the ensuing debate for reducing parliament 'to the level of a small boys' debating society.'³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Letter to *The Times*, 12 October 1899, p. 10a.

³⁰⁰ *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, pp. 949-950, 952-954.

³⁰¹ J.R.H. Weaver (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography 1922-1930*, pp. 549-550. MacNeil was author of *The Irish Parliament, what it was, and what it did*, Cassell & Co., London, 1885. See Michael Stenton & Stephen Lees, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. II, p. 236. MacNeil apparently had a habit of 'whirling his arms in windmill fashion' to attract the attention of the Speaker. See H.W. Lucy, *A Diary of the Unionist Parliament, 1895-1900*, illustration p. 93.

³⁰² *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, p. 961. This tendency for debates on the memorialisation of Cromwell to slip from their tenor of lofty seriousness was never far away. In 1845, Hugh Miller was confident that his readers 'must have remarked with some degree of amusement' the development of the 'Cromwell Controversy'. Hugh Miller, 'The Cromwell Controversy', p. 30.

However, Birrell's stated opinion that the statue would serve as 'a very useful *memento mori*'³⁰³ indicates that there were broader and more serious political grounds for these attacks by Irish Nationalists. MacNeil, who was tenacious in his hostility to the statue, later characterised it as 'an emblem of insult' to him and his political allies from Ireland who were compelled to sit in the Westminster parliament.³⁰⁴ William Hoey Kearney Redmond (1861-1917) observed that it was not just past history that was at stake: 'there still remains much in the government of Ireland which was instituted by him [Cromwell]. Injustices still remain to be remedied, and until those injustices are remedied the Irish people will neither forget nor forgive the conduct of Cromwell and the injustice which he inflicted upon our country.'³⁰⁵ This, as we shall see, remains a current issue today.

Rosebery and his supporters did not share these meanings with which Cromwell was invested. In his speech of 14 November 1899, Rosebery instead made only 'the very fewest and sparsest observations' on two of the most contentious themes. Regarding Cromwell's Irish policy he merely conceded that it was 'cruel and ruthless in the extreme' and sought explanation in the 'great provocation' he faced combined with his Puritan beliefs.³⁰⁶ With similar fleet of foot Rosebery concluded his brief comments on the execution of Charles I with the words: 'Happy is the dynasty which can permit without offence or without fear the memory of a regicide to be honoured in its capital. (Loud cheers.)'³⁰⁷

The Cromwell statue is not a 'national' memorial in the sense that no public money at all was spent on it and it remained a 'private' gift from an 'anonymous donor'.³⁰⁸

³⁰³ *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, pp. 961-962.

³⁰⁴ *PD*, Vol. 81, 2 April 1900, p. 916. He made this comment during a speech at nearly midnight on 2 April 1900. It met with no response. Undeterred he returned to the fray on 3 August, declaring that: 'So long as the statue of Oliver Cromwell defiled the precincts of the House he would in season and out of season raise his voice in protest'. *PD*, Vol. 87, 3 August 1900, pp. 710-714, p. 710. Even this was not the end of the matter. Lord Fitzmaurice's speech at the inauguration of the St. Ives Cromwell in October, 1901, mentioned: 'The House of Lords the other day prayed the Crown to be relieved of the neighbourhood of that same statue.' 'The Unveiling of the Cromwell Statue at St. Ives', *The Huntingdonshire Post*, 26 October 1901.

³⁰⁵ *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, p. 975.

³⁰⁶ *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7a-b.

³⁰⁷ 'The Execution of Charles I' in *The Times*, 15 November 1899, p. 7b.

³⁰⁸ As Henry du Pré Labouchere (1831-1912) pointed out, the only publicly funded money was 'the trifling sum needed to polish or wash the statue, which will probably not be more than £2 or £3.'

Lord Michael Morris and Killanin (1826-1901), Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, ‘with the privilege of an Irishman’³⁰⁹, ensured that Rosebery’s anonymity was short-lived.³¹⁰ The Prime Minister, the Marquess of Salisbury, opined that foreigners would peruse the statues in the vicinity of Westminster and conclude: “Behold the banishment that a just monarchical Government inflicts upon a rebel and a regicide!”³¹¹ Fittingly, however, this had been contradicted by one of the correspondents in *The Times*’ Cromwell debate of 1845 who lived to see the appearance of the statue. Identifying himself as the octogenarian, Thomas Hornblower Gill he thought the site outside was a fitting place if Cromwell was not to be ‘placed among the statues of English Sovereigns’. He also felt that it went some way to repairing the ‘many sores and shames of the Restoration’ such as ‘the indignities offered to the body of the Lord Protector’ and his cohorts.³¹²

The statue continued to serve as a focal point for contention. For example, on 1 September 1908 there was an application from the Secretary of the Protestant Alliance based in the Strand, London to place a wreath around Thornycroft’s statue with the text: “Oliver Cromwell, died September 3rd, 1658. 250th anniversary of his death. Remember.” It was noted that permission had been given for this in connection with the Manchester memorial to Cromwell and as a result members of that city’s Jewish community as well as local suffragists campaigning for a universal franchise placed wreaths near the monument.³¹³ Nevertheless, Harcourt declined to give the assent of the Office of Works.³¹⁴ The National Protestant Association made a similar request to mark Cromwell’s birthday on 25 April of 1910 but it too met with a negative

Labouchere (an ‘advanced Liberal, in favour of the disendowment and disestablishment of the Church of England, and Home Rule for Ireland’) could not therefore understand the grounds on which Redmond and MacNeil were basing their attacks. *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, p. 978. Michael Stenton & Stephen Lees, *Who’s who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. II, p. 200.

³⁰⁹ H.W. Lucy, *A Diary of the Unionist Parliament, 1895-1900*, p. 370.

³¹⁰ ‘It is childish to continue to talk of the donor being anonymous when everyone knows in this House and in the street- a favourite place now to appeal to- who the anonymous donor is. He was the Prime Minister of the Crown, and his First Commissioner of Works accepted the statue.’ Cited in *PD*, Vol. 84, 21 June 1900, p. 596.

³¹¹ *PD*, Vol. 84, 21 June 1900, p. 595.

³¹² ‘Cromwell’s statue’, *The Times*, 13 November 1899, p. 16e.

³¹³ Derek Brumhead & Terry Wyke, *A Walk Round Manchester Statues*, p. 50.

³¹⁴ Transmitted in a telegram dated 3 September 1908 from Mr. J. Fitzgerald I.S.O. Assistant secretary of Works and published in the *Daily Telegraph*, 8 September 1898. PRO WORK 20/100.

response.³¹⁵ Harcourt considered it ‘undesirable to extend the practice of placing wreaths etc., on Public Statues.’³¹⁶

By 1910 the bronze figure had begun to show signs of the adverse affects of the polluted London air.³¹⁷ It was decided to remedy this and a memorandum written by H.E. Seccombe of the Office of Works reads: ‘I propose to start the work in the recess as I find it will be more convenient.’³¹⁸ Perhaps this ‘convenience’ stemmed as much from the avoidance of any barbed comments that might accrue should parliament have been in session. However, past hostility may have been softened with the passing of time. In February 1925, shortly before his death, Hamo Thornycroft gave a speech at a dinner of the Royal Society of British Sculptors in which he addressed the perennial neglect of sculpture amongst the ‘people in England’. He spoke in response to an opinion that ‘all London’s statues should be carted off to Land’s End, and thrown over among the granite boulders into the foaming sea.’ Cromwell was among those specifically singled out for such treatment. Thornycroft, however, felt that sculpture was, like music, of ‘rather abstract character’. He speculated that, due to the absence of colour, ‘Sculpture leaves more to the imagination.’ He was of the opinion that it had ‘a beneficent effect upon the modern mind and, could, ‘in its higher forms, “soothe the savage breast.”’³¹⁹

This is an interesting turn of phrase given the spleen vented on his depiction of the Lord Protector a quarter of a century earlier. As we have seen it was during this period that the fifth Earl of Rosebery made his numerous speeches on imperialism and patriotism. A further question of longstanding importance to him and other Liberals

³¹⁵ Sparling Hadwyn of 10 Huggin Lane Queenhythe to the First Commissioner, 23 April 1910. PRO WORK 20/100.

³¹⁶ Harcourt to Sparling Hadwyn, 23 April 1910. PRO WORK 20/100. A disgruntled Hadwyn replied that, whilst the First Commissioner was ‘quite entitled to enunciate his personal belief’, the National Protestant Association wished to remind him ‘that His Majesty’s Office of Works exists as a matter of public convenience- the tax payer is not in being for the benefit of the Government Dept in question.’ There is no record of any reply.

³¹⁷ A report by A.B. Burton concluded that ‘in several parts of the Statue it has a very rough surface which causes the corrosion to gather on more quickly’. He suggested that this surface be removed, the appendages mended and a coat of protective solution applied at a total cost of £30. A.B. Burton to H.E. Seccombe of the Office of Works, 15 June 1910. PRO WORK 20/100.

³¹⁸ The memorandum is dated 4 July 1910. PRO WORK 20/100.

³¹⁹ This speech occurred at the twenty-first ‘birthday dinner’ of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. HTP Y9-2¹⁻² HMI.

was the House of Lords. In 1900 the Liberal Member of Parliament for East Lothian, Richard Burdon Haldane (1856-1928), called for the upper house to be converted into an Imperial Senate so that it 'would no longer represent a party in a majority of 10 to 1, but the Empire at large'.³²⁰ This had been, incidentally, the margin by which, in September 1893, peers had rejected William Ewart Gladstone's Home Rule Bill after it had twice passed the House of Commons.³²¹ This Tory hegemony meant that Liberal governments would continually face what Rosebery termed 'the dead brick wall of the House of Lords'.³²² For this reason John Morley linked the contemporary theme of 'representative government' with Oliver Cromwell.

Testimony to the longevity of this association was paid almost exactly one hundred years after the completion of Thornycroft's statue when it was again drawn into a political dispute: namely the attempt by Tony Blair's "new Labour" administration to end hereditary peerage in the House of Lords. A correspondent to the *Daily Telegraph*, writing on the anniversary of Charles I's execution, drew attention to 'the sad face' on a lead bust of that monarch placed within a niche on the east façade of St. Margaret's Church in 1950 (Plate 110).³²³ The statue of the regicide directly faces the bust of the beheaded sovereign. The letter writer believed this to be a deliberate arrangement 'to emphasise the power of Parliament over the Monarchy.' She speculated whether the current government had 'a similar intention in mind when, in... the proposed reform of the House of Lords, it excludes members of the Royal Family from sitting in a second House?'³²⁴ This prompted another reader to question 'why we permit a huge, triumphant statue' of 'a foul regicide and oppressor of Parliament' 'to disfigure the grounds of the Palace of Westminster itself.' He concurred with the analogy between 'Cromwell's conduct and the attempts of our present Lord Protector to impose subservience on the House of Lords'.³²⁵

³²⁰ Cited in H.C.G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists*, p. 170.

³²¹ Harold Wilson, *A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1977, p. 124.

³²² Rosebery in 1905 cited in H.C.G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists*, p. 261.

³²³ John Blackwood, *London's Immortals. The complete commemorative outdoor statues*, Savoy Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 208.

³²⁴ Celia Ebbage, 'Parliament's threat?', *Daily Telegraph*, 30 January 1999, p. 23.

³²⁵ R.C.H. Genochio, 'Cromwell out', *Daily Telegraph*, 1 February 1999, p. 21.

Such comments echo those of a century before and demonstrate the extent to which events and personages of the past continue to be deployed to illustrate and enunciate the present. This is further apparent in a photograph of a Cromwell death mask that appeared in *The Times* on 22 May 2000.³²⁶ It was positioned between news items concerning the current precarious situation of the peace process in Northern Ireland, and a further development in the search for members of the Irish Republican Army responsible for a bomb in Deal, Kent that killed eleven Royal Marine bandsmen in September 1989. The mask, loaned by the Cromwell Museum in Cambridgeshire, is described as forming part of a display at the Drogheda Heritage Centre. Its inclusion sparked a demonstration with the town's Deputy Mayor, Frank Godfrey reported to have 'likened the exhibition to displaying Hitler's head in a Jewish community.' In a reference to the events of 1649 he is quoted as saying: 'The people of Drogheda suffered greatly. They were slaughtered, children, mothers and fathers... This man's face is the last thing we want to see.'³²⁷ It appears that, for some at least, William Redmond's words that, in Ireland, 'injustices still remain to be remedied, and until those injustices are remedied the Irish people will neither forget nor forgive the conduct of Cromwell' remains as true today as when they were spoken on 23 February 1900.³²⁸

This affirmation of the continuing vicissitudes of history in relation to the Cromwell statue indicates the present-day significance of these monuments and memorials of the nineteenth-century. Although their meanings have altered due to changes in the context by which they are mediated, they nevertheless retain traces of their original significance. It is this process of reinterpretation that is to be addressed in the following chapter.

³²⁶ Christopher Walker, 'Cromwell exhibition angers Irish town', *The Times*, 22 May 2000, p. 8. Walker, the newspaper's 'Chief Ireland Correspondent' was also responsible for the accompanying article, 'Trimble hit by Sinn Fein police rejection'. On the same page is Daniel McGrory, 'Deal bombing case reopened'.

³²⁷ Tom Reilly, the historian who organised the exhibition, challenged this account, stating that Cromwell's 'reputation was blackened by the spin-doctors of the English Reformation. He has been presented as a bloodthirsty dictator who killed thousands of innocent people, but... those who died were soldiers who had been defending the town.' 'Cromwell exhibition angers Irish town', *The Times*, 22 May 2000, p. 8.

³²⁸ *PD*, Vol. 79, 23 February 1900, p. 975.

Redesigning the hub of Empire: Parliament Square in the twentieth-century

This chapter concerns the history of Parliament Square in the twentieth-century. The removal of E.M. Barry's troublesome bronze railings as part of the war effort in the 1940s facilitated a comprehensive redesign at the start of the following decade. Attitudes towards the space at this time can be gauged by analysis of a number of contemporaneous issues. This includes a passionate debate over the propriety of erecting a vast new Colonial Office adjacent to the west front of Westminster Abbey. The objections made on aesthetic and symbolic grounds indicate the enduring sacral associations of this vicinity of Westminster. This was reiterated with specific reference to Parliament Square when a bill was put before parliament proposing to re-plan the layout so that it might better cope with an anticipated increase in traffic caused by the Festival of Britain. This landmark event, centring on the South Bank in the summer of 1951, was intended to boost the post-war population by celebrating the unique qualities of British society and by imaginatively speculating on its potential future development. During this time of national reassessment, proposals to move the monuments in Parliament Square meant that they temporarily took on an enhanced significance, as indicated by comments made in both chambers of parliament in relation to the Parliament Square (Improvements) Bill of 1949.

The haste in which it became enacted was due in large part to Herbert Stanley Morrison, Baron Morrison of Lambeth (1888-1965), who became known as 'Lord Festival' for his exertions concerning the celebrations of 1951. Alterations to the square were swiftly implemented according to designs by the architect George Grey Wornum (1888-1957). This shuffling of the sculptural pack shifted the monuments from their central positions to the periphery whilst providing a vacant site for at least one further monument: namely Winston Churchill (1874-1965) by the sculptor Ivor Roberts-Jones (1913-96) erected in 1973. It is this statue, sited so closely to the original location of George Canning and of markedly similar scale and appearance, which signals the conclusion of this thesis. Dominating Parliament Square both

physically and symbolically this bronze sculpture of the wartime leader seemed imperturbable in its immutability, until the explosive events of 1 May 2000. Clambered over, daubed with paint and suffering the indignity of a grass mohican it became a focus of attention. This sacrilegious event and the ensuing media reaction brought together a welter of themes and issues that have appeared repeatedly throughout this thesis. Serving therefore as both conclusion and coda it references Henri Lefebvre's concept of '*texture*' alluded to in the opening chapter (see 1~6). To reiterate, he can be understood to argue that the monumental work ought to be '*acted*' rather than '*read*' in order to ascertain its '*horizon of meaning*'. The 'May Day' protestors were the catalyst for this most revelatory of interpretations and served to indicate the on-going signification of Parliament Square as a space of heritage, identity and power. By therefore concluding with recent political events that have impinged on Parliament Square light can be thrown on past and present attitudes towards the space and its memorials.

6~1 Coeur de Lion as wartime symbol

It was in the Second World War – “the People’s War” as it was proclaimed in 1940, at the time when enemy invasion seemed imminent – that a radical-patriotic version of the idea of “heritage” seemed to enter into its own... [The] notion of “heritage” was freely extended to what a series of propaganda booklets called “the spirit and framework of British institutions”.¹

Raphael Samuel, who wrote these words, identified Westminster as the foremost exemplar of this ethos: it was “the mother of parliaments,” [...] the cradle in which the idea of democracy had been born.² This garnered ever more potency during the blitz. Marochetti’s Coeur de Lion emerged from a bombing raid in September 1940 with its sword bent – but not broken (Plate 74). ‘The message contained in the event was soon realised: thus would democracy bend but not break under the attack of tyranny.’³ Underscoring this was the release in the same year of a short ten-minute

¹ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol. I: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, Verso, London & New York, 1994, pp. 208 & 218.

² Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, p. 218.

³ John Blackwood, *London’s Immortals: The complete commemorative outdoor statues*, Savoy Press, Oxford, 1989, p. 15; see also John Physick, *The Wellington Monument*, Victoria & Albert Museum, HMSO, London, 1970, p. 26.

film vehemently entitled *London Can Take It*. Directed by Humphrey Jennings (1906-50) with commentary by the American journalist Quentin Reynolds (1902-65) it was a highly successful propaganda film produced by the Ministry of Information.⁴ Recently Colin McArthur has described it as orientating a ‘new “London discourse”... which mobilises particular London landmarks such as the dome of St. Paul’s and [Ralph] Vaughan Williams’ (1872-1958) *London Symphony* to create a narrative about a proud city enduring under the bombardment of the Luftwaffe.’⁵ Envisaged for an American audience, a shorter version was however released domestically entitled *Britain Can Take It*. The tone was muted and the effect was intended to be both factual and objective.⁶ Its message was one of unassailable defiance:

It is true that the Nazis will be over again tomorrow night and the night after that and every night. They will drop thousands of bombs and they’ll destroy hundreds of buildings and they’ll kill thousands of people. But a bomb has its limitations. It can only destroy buildings and kill people. It cannot kill the unconquerable spirit and courage of the people of London.
London can take it.⁷

The superlative metaphor of this indomitable national spirit represented by Richard I’s dislocated blade remained visible until safety concerns necessitated its replacement in 1947.⁸

⁴ Other films by the same director include *Words for Battle* and *Fires Were Started*. Jennings was influenced by *The People’s Land* a film produced by the National Trust to celebrate its centenary with music composed by Vaughan Williams. Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, pp. 208 & 223, notes 14-15.

⁵ Colin McArthur, ‘Chinese Boxes and Russian Dolls: Tracking the Elusive Cinematic City’, pp. 19-45 in David B. Clarke (ed.), *The Cinematic City*, Routledge, London & New York, 1997, p. 35.

⁶ Anthony Aldgate & Jeffrey Richards, *Britain can take it: the British Cinema in the Second World War*, Basil Blackwell Limited, Oxford, 1986, p. 120.

⁷ Cited in Anthony Aldgate & Jeffrey Richards, *Britain can take it*, p. 122.

⁸ The equestrian statue had been cleaned and repaired in 1909. A.B. Burton, ‘Bronze Statue Founder and Art Worker’, wrote to H. Hawks at Works on 1 March 1909 and warned that the statue was ‘in a very dangerous state’. Frost damage had caused two large cracks to appear in two of the legs, forced open when trapped water had frozen inside. The following month Burton informed Hawks that: ‘After thoroughly examining the Statue I find it generally in a bad state owing to its having been poorly executed in the first place.’ He estimated that between sixty and eighty places needed pins to prevent water getting in and that the reigns, stirrup and stirrup strap were all loose. His conclusion was that the statue had ‘never been fitted properly on to the pedestal - it has simply been resting on the two ends of the bases.’ PRO WORK 20/28.

During the war Parliament Square hosted a machine gun post, disguised as a W.H. Smith & Son newsagent kiosk (Plate 47).⁹ The square itself, as has already been noted, was denuded of its railings: those ornate barriers for so many years a thorn in the side of poor Edward Barry.¹⁰ The Palace of Westminster, the Abbey and Buckingham Palace all suffered damage. Yet Westminster stood firm, even when a bomb devastated the House of Commons on 10 May 1941 during a particularly intense night of the blitz.¹¹

6~2 Safeguarding sacred spaces (I): Westminster House

In this corner of Westminster, danger from without had perhaps already been presaged by negligence from within. In 1931 a real estate company 'proposed to erect a tall office building' on the site of the properties at 14-16 Great George Street for which they had acquired the lease.¹² The Westminster House Real Property Company received planning permission from the London County Council [LCC] to erect a building in 1934.¹³ This was made possible the following year by the demolition of houses at the corner of the Canning Enclosure nearest Great George Street. The preliminary designs for this office block, named Westminster House, date from 1934-37. The architects (Adrian Albert Montague and Edmund Frazer Tomlins) had their plans revised in 1937 by Giles Gilbert Scott (1880-1960).¹⁴ He was brought in as

⁹ A photograph of this exists in the Guildhall Library and is reproduced in Isobel Watson, *Westminster and Pimlico Past. A Visual History*, Historical Publications, London, 1993, Plate 185.

¹⁰ A similar fate threatened to befall the lamps in New Palace Yard. Mr. Hollis asked in the House of Commons on 23 January 1951 whether the 'balloon lamps in New Palace Yard' were to be restored. Mr. Stokes, the Minister of Works, replied in the negative. It was instead 'proposed to replace the lamp standards surmounting the piers of the railings round New Palace Yard by stone caps, in accordance with a design which has been approved by the Royal Fine Art Commission.' *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, Vol. 483, 23 January 1951, p. 16. The present day spherical lights are subsequent restorations.

¹¹ Isobel Watson, *Westminster and Pimlico Past*, p. 137.

¹² These events concerning *Westminster House* were outlined by Lord Morrison, Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Works, when the Parliament Square (Improvements) Bill received its second reading in the House of Lords on 13 December 1949. *PD*, Lords, Vol. 165, 1948-49, p. 1402.

¹³ For an account of this by Lord Llewellyn see *PD*, Vol. 165, 1948-49, pp. 1411-1415.

¹⁴ Sir Giles Gilbert Scott was later responsible for the new House of Commons (see 6~4). His other works include Liverpool Cathedral and Bankside Power Station (now 'Tate Modern'). He was the grandson of Sir George Gilbert Scott. See Gavin Stamp, 'Introduction', pp. c-m in his edited volume of Sir George Gilbert Scott, *Personal and Professional Recollections*, (first published 1879), Paul Watkins, Stamford, 1995, pp. l-m.

consultant architect after public concern was voiced regarding the intended scale of the building for a site between the Middlesex Guildhall and Great George Street. The former is a very fine neo-gothic structure designed by J.G.S. Gibson (1861-1951) with extensive architectural sculpture by Henry Charles Fehr (1867-1940) dating from 1911-13.¹⁵

A series of architectural drawings deposited at the Royal Institute of British Architects indicate why there was hostility towards this proposed new building.¹⁶ These include elevations to Little George Street, Great George Street, Parliament Square and the Canning Enclosure. In addition the floor plans show how the rather featureless block would have fitted between Little George Street and Canning Enclosure: one elevation depicts Westminster House dwarfing the adjoining Guildhall.¹⁷ There would have been seven main floors surmounted by an elevated section adding two further stories taking the overall height to one hundred and six feet.¹⁸

In the wake of anxieties expressed about this new structure Middlesex County Council promoted a Private Bill for the compulsory purchase of the site. This prompted the authorities to make moves to purchase it and, at the close of 1938, the government agreed to contribute £100,000 to preserve it as an open space. This decision was influenced by the Ministry of Transport, which had prepared a radical transport plan for Parliament Square. After the war additional financial assistance came from the LCC, Westminster City Council, the Pilgrim Trust and the Institute of Chartered Surveyors. The land was eventually bought in early 1948. The criticisms levelled at Westminster House that led to the preservation of this open space can be best understood by recourse to another even more contentious proposal: a new Colonial Office near Broad Sanctuary at Storey's Gate.

¹⁵ A. Stuart Gray, *Edwardian Architecture. A Biographical Dictionary*, Wordsworth Editions, Hertfordshire, 1985, pp. 177 & 188; see also *Builder*, 3 March 1911, Vol. 100, No. 3552, pp. 271-272.

¹⁶ RIBA Drawings Collection, Phase C Scott Family, Reel S 37, 'London: Westminster House, Parliament Square, Westminster', Numbers 1¹⁻³⁷. See Geoffrey Fisher, Gavin Stamp & others, 'The Scott Family' in Joanna Heseltine (ed.), *RIBA Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, Greg International, RIBA 1981, p. 179. See also *Builder*, Vol. 148, 1935, pp. 139-140.

¹⁷ RIBA, C. S., 1⁴. In front of the building are the Buxton Fountain to the right and a Parliament Square statue to the left.

¹⁸ RIBA C. S., 1³¹.

6~3 Safeguarding sacred spaces (II): Colonial Office

In 1947, following India's independence, the India Office was dissolved. Any remaining duties were transferred to Church House, Great Smith Street. In that year the Commonwealth Relations Office was formed. This remained located in the Foreign Office building until 1966, when it joined with the Colonial Office. Two years later the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Office merged.¹⁹ The changing status of Britain as a colonial power combined with the increasingly impractical design of George Gilbert Scott's Foreign Office building had led to calls for alternative premises to house these modified institutions. It was under these circumstances that the proposals for a new Colonial Office were put forward.²⁰

In November 1950 an indignant Lord Noel-Buxton was prompted to write to *The Times* to condemn the government's 'callous attitude towards a piece of open ground under the shoulder of the Abbey' (Plate 41).²¹ The focus of this wrath was the new Colonial Office. It was to provide 120,000 square feet of office accommodation on eight stories. The plans for the Ministry of Works were prepared by T.S. Tait, of Sir John Burnet, Tait and Partners in consultation with the Royal Fine Art Commission. A perspective of the building as seen from the corner of Princes Street and Broad Sanctuary appeared in the *Builder* during July 1949 (Plate 44).²² Further plans and elevations exist in the RIBA archives.²³ In addition there are four photographs taken from various angles with the Colonial Office pencilled in to give an impression of the effect that the new structure would have had on the existing buildings.²⁴ From this

¹⁹ Susan Foreman, *From Palace to Power. An Illustrated History of Whitehall*, The Alpha Press, Brighton, 1995, p. 162.

²⁰ Equally contentious- and also unrealised- was the contemporaneous plan to append an additional two stories on to John Nash's Carlton House Terrace to house the new Foreign Office. For an account of this see *Builder*, 29 December 1950, p. 684; 5 January 1951, p. 6; 12 January 1951, p. 75; 27 April 1951, pp. 574 & 591; 9 February 1951, p. 211; *Architectural Review*, February 1951, pp. 123-124.

²¹ Noel-Buxton, House of Lords, 16 November 1950 to *The Times*, 18 November 1950, 7e.

²² 'The New Colonial Office', *Builder*, 29 July 1949, Vol. 177, No. 5554, p. 129.

²³ RIBA RAN 57/K/10(1-3). For the plan see part (2). See also (1) for a further plan in black ink with the proposed Colonial Office drawn in pencil. Part (3) provides an elevation of the site as it would have appeared if the Colonial Office had been realised. Central Hall is visible in the background.

²⁴ The views are from Westminster Bridge, St. Margaret Street and St. Margaret's Churchyard. RIBA RAN 57/K/10(4-7).

material it is difficult to deny that such a monumental building, in a style so different from the existing structures, would not have had an overbearing influence.

The proposed Colonial Office was to be sited where Westminster Hospital stood in Broad Sanctuary prior to its demolition in 1950 (Plates 42-43). The building had been designed by William Inwood (c. 1771-1843) and his second son Charles Frederick Inwood (1789-1840) and built from 1832-33.²⁵ Charles Eastlake speculated that the Tudor style had been chosen due to its proximity to Westminster Abbey.²⁶ In September 1950 *The Times* published a photograph beneath the title 'Changes at Westminster'.²⁷ It showed the demolition in progress and how this had provided 'a new view of Westminster Abbey from the north-west.' This was echoed a month later by a camera angle looking down onto the cleared site.²⁸ The caption included an extract from a letter to the newspaper from Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, First Earl of Halifax and current High Steward of Westminster (1881-1959). He 'earnestly hope[d] that we might seize the passing opportunity of securing for all time this view of one of London's greatest possessions by leaving the site vacant.' He argued that this would have been a fitting commemoration of the imminent Festival of Britain and properly reflect 'the value, to all sides of our national life, that we place upon the things for which the Abbey and the beauty of it stand.'²⁹

It was this 'delightful view' that prompted Norris Kenyon to write to *The Times*. His conclusion that any decision to build on this site would be 'lamentable' was arrived at after seeing the architect's drawings at a Royal Academy exhibition. This opposition was in part prompted by his belief that the 'Crown... [was] exempt from town planning control'. He nevertheless considered it to be 'incompatible' with the Abbey given that it would be 'dwarfed' and its access to lighting restricted. Alan C. Don, writing from the Deanery, Westminster agreed. Don thought that the retention of the

²⁵ In 1950 it was stated that 'the top storey [of Westminster Hospital] was added some comparatively few years ago.' H.A.N. Brockman, 'Parliament Square Revisited. A Panorama of the Gothic Revival', pp. 524-526 in *Builder*, 24 November 1950, Vol. 179, No. 5623, p. 524.

²⁶ Charles L. Eastlake, *A History of the Gothic Revival*, edited and with an introduction by J. Mordaunt Crook, Leicester University Press, 1970, Appendix, No. 14, p. <66>.

²⁷ 'Changes at Westminster', *The Times*, 12 September 1950, p. 10.

²⁸ 'The Abbey and its setting', *The Times*, Thursday 16 November 1950, p. 12.

²⁹ 'Westminster Hospital Site', letters from Norris Kenyon, Connaugh Court, W.2 and Lord Halifax, 7 Kingston House, North Princes Gate, S.W. 7 to *The Times*, Saturday 11 November 1950, 7d.

Broad Sanctuary site might provide ‘some compensation for the destruction of aesthetical and ethical value’ entailed by buildings that the Government intended to erect in Abingdon Street, to the south east of the Abbey.³⁰

The *Builder* concurred in its leading editorial of 24 November 1950: this ‘sacred spot’ was under threat by a building which, if constructed, would ‘diminish the solemn supremacy of the Abbey.’³¹ This threat prompted it to publish in the same issue H.A.N. Brockman’s article ‘Parliament Square Revisited’.³² The square is elevated as the best and most complete vista ‘of that exclusively English art movement, the Gothic Revival.’ The writer admitted that the merits of this style was ‘still a highly controversial matter’ but that, now that its last examples were approaching a century in age: ‘it is then that public taste begins to change its view and the otherwise ugly monstrosity begins to change into something “rich and strange.”’ Whilst it ‘would be artificial in the highest degree to attempt to perpetuate the Gothic in any new buildings erected around this site’ Brockman did concede that, just possibly, ‘[f]uture generations may well regard all these buildings as members of one family of many generations.’ The invocation of nationalism and community (‘that exclusively English art movement’, ‘one family of many generations’) is indicative of the terms used and the metaphors drawn in this highly charged debate concerning the environs of Westminster.

But this “community” was under threat: a bus passenger travelling along Victoria Street was gripped with a nightmare vision of ‘more typewriters, more files, more forms housed in towering concrete and glass’.³³ This seems to have been a fantasy shared by others: Noel-Buxton demanded: ‘Grass must come to Broad Sanctuary – not tiers of typewriters.’³⁴ Such expressions of public hostility led to the matter being re-examined in the House of Lords on the last day of January 1951. It was there that Noel-Buxton suggested that the site of Westminster Hospital, the Stationary Office

³⁰ Alan C. Don, writing from The Deanery, Westminster, S.W. on 11 November 1950 to *The Times*, 13 November 1950, 5f.

³¹ ‘The Westminster Hospital Site’, *Builder*, 24 November 1950, Vol. 179, No. 5623, p. 521.

³² H.A.N. Brockman, ‘Parliament Square Revisited’, pp. 524-526.

³³ Edmond L. Warre, writing from 21 Carlyle Square, Chelsea, S.W.2 on 12 November to *The Times*, 15 November 1950, 7e.

³⁴ Noel-Buxton, House of Lords, 16 November 1950 to *The Times*, 18 November 1950, 7e.

and the whole Abbey precinct ‘should be regarded as sacred.’ No one coming from the colonies would be pleased to see that it had been ‘given over to a building haunted by the click of typewriters.’³⁵ (This alarming intimation of a ‘New London’ of the future was visualised the following decade in the sketchbook of the artist Claes Oldenburg (1929-). His *Proposal for a Building in the Form of an Office Machine* of 1966 (Plate 45) superimposes a huge typewriter onto a postcard view of the London skyline, almost completely eliding the Post Office Tower in the process.³⁶)

The parliamentary debate witnessed the maiden speech of Henry John Alexander Seely, second Baron Mottistone in which he speculated whether an alternative, more spacious site could not be found for the Colonial Office. He felt that the model of the building ‘indicated how deplorable would be the projection of the new building on that historic spot.’³⁷ The envisaged layout would be detrimental both to the Abbey and Central Hall and Mottistone urged that the south façade of the new building be set back to allow for ‘a dignified square’.³⁸ This ‘Central Hall’ is the Wesleyan Methodist Hall, an ostentatious Edwardian design by the architects Henry Vaughan Lanchester (1863-1953) and Edwin Alfred Rickards (1872-1920). Dating from 1905-11 it is as stylistically antipathetic to the nearby Abbey as the proposed new building. Unsurprisingly the Minister of the Hall urged that: ‘A little more space at this crowded heart of the Empire would be very welcome.’³⁹

Cyril Forster Garbett (1875-1955), Archbishop of York from 1942 to 1955, favoured the preservation of the site to form an open space that would provide an ideal memorial to the last war and be used ‘afterwards for various national memorials as occasions arose.’ This had been advocated earlier in November by A.R.N. Roberts, Honorary Secretary of the War Memorials Advisory Council. He thought that the

³⁵ ‘Use of Old Westminster Hospital site’, *The Times*, 1 February 1951, 4c.

³⁶ ‘Notebook Page: *Proposal for a Building in the Form of an Office Machine* London, 1966’ (Ball-point pen, felt pen, pencil and clipping on postcard, total dimensions 29 x 21.6 cm, collection of the artist). Reproduced in Germano Celant, *A Bottle of Notes and Some Voyages. Claes Oldenburg: Drawings, Sculptures, and Large-Scale Projects with Coosje van Bruggen*, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, 1988, p. 47.

³⁷ ‘Use of Old Westminster Hospital site’, *The Times*, 1 February 1951, 4b.

³⁸ ‘In Parliament. Westminster Hospital Site’, *Builder*, 9 February 1951, Vol. 180, No. 5634, p. 213.

³⁹ W.E. Sangster, Minister of the Central Hall, President, Methodist Conference, writing on 13 November 1950 to *The Times*, 15 November 1950, 7e.

Westminster Hospital and Abingdon Street sites should become 'a memorial garden in the heart of the Empire'. This could be paid for by voluntary subscriptions and commemorate the contribution of the Commonwealth during the war.⁴⁰

The concept of a war memorial voiced by the Archbishop of York was prompted in part by his concern for housing. He wished to know how many homes could be erected for the amount of money to be expended on the new offices.⁴¹ On 26 April 1951, addressing the Town and Country Planning Association of which he was president, he declared that the planner

aims at reducing the slums and overcrowding in the centre of the towns, for the housing problem still remains a grave menace to the health and happiness of the people. It is one of the most urgent of our national problems and is still far from solution.⁴²

It was claimed that a key reason for this lack of success was the 'widespread indifference' of the public. Nevertheless these issues of urban planning were crucial at this time (as suggested by the title of an article in the *Builder* – '1951: A year of decision in planning'⁴³). An introduction to Lionel Brett's article on 'Post-war housing estates' in the *Architectural Review* of July 1951 commenced with the statistic that, since the end of the war, 'well over a million houses' had been constructed providing accommodation for more than three million Britons: 'Wherever you go evidence of this immense building effort is at hand.' However, Brett's text represents a scathing attack on the 'immense blindness to all the decencies of landscape architecture, both rural and urban.'⁴⁴ The Archbishop of York's comments in parliament on the Colonial Office provides a significant connection between the procurement of public offices and public housing during this era of substantial urban

⁴⁰ A.R.N. Roberts, Honorary Secretary, War Memorials Advisory Council, 6-8 John Adam Street, Adelphi to *The Times*, 18 November 1950, 7e.

⁴¹ 'Use of Old Westminster Hospital site', *The Times*, 1 February 1951, 4c. In November 1950 he drew attention to the housing crisis at the National Housing and Town Planning Council's conference at Harrogate: 'I wonder if a question in Parliament would extract information as to how many houses for working people would be built if the money, material, and labour for this proposed extension [the offices on the Westminster Hospital site] were devoted to housing?' 'Housing drive needed: Dr. Garbett's appeal. Priority over public building', *The Times*, 25 November 1950, 4d.

⁴² '1951: A year of decision in planning', *Builder*, 11 May 1951, Vol. 180, No. 5647, p. 663.

⁴³ The housing question is no less pressing today. See Richard Rogers & Philip Gumuchdjian, *Cities for a small planet*, Faber & Faber, London, 1997, especially pp. 116-119.

⁴⁴ Lionel Brett, 'Post-war housing estates', *Architectural Review*, Vol. 110, July 1951, pp. 16-26.

change. A further link is established by the fact that Grey Wornum (architect of the new Parliament Square) was closely involved in the question of the provision of new homes in post-war Britain as he designed a number of important housing estates. After the Great War⁴⁵ he entered into partnership with Louis de Soissons (1890-1962). They were responsible for the bulk of the 'Haig Memorial Homes' including those at Morden, Liverpool, Sheffield, Warrington and Penzance. Wornum worked on housing schemes in Dorking, Lambeth and Coventry (the latter with Richard Sheppard FRIBA). He built flats at Kensington and Lambeth, as well as Birmingham in collaboration with A.C. Tripe FRIBA.⁴⁶

However, the debate in the House of Lords on 31 January 1951 continued along rather more emblematic lines. Lord Mancroft and the Earl of Halifax made unfavourable comparisons between London and other European capital cities where it was claimed that such things would never be allowed to happen. Nonetheless, both Philip Cunliffe-Lister, first Earl of Swinton (1884-1972) and the Labour peer Robert Samuel Theodore Chorley (1895-1978) thought it would be equally unsatisfactory if the area in question was left vacant. In an indication of the political importance of this matter, Chorley commentated that the Prime Minister 'had had more than one meeting about it in recent days.' Equally revealing was Herbert Stanley Morrison's reminder to the house that, if the matter had not be raised 'in the last few weeks the Minister was within ten days of calling for tenders for the excavation.' Opposition had thus been both emotive and expeditious. Lewis Silkin, first Baron Silkin (1889-1972) (a former Minister of Town and Country Planning) was one such latter-day convert who opined that 'some Labour peers felt equally strongly about the desirability of preserving the beauty of this most historic site in Westminster.'⁴⁷ He and others had been involved in the choice of location in the late 1940s when there had been no contrariety, however it was claimed that 'their æsthetic sense had improved since 1947.' Notice of intent had been made in October 1946 and a subsequent bill, the Public Offices (Site) Act of 1947, had 'commanded general approval'. The original statement of 1946 referred to:

⁴⁵ Wornum was blinded in his right eye on the Somme. See the photograph in 'Royal Gold Medal for Architecture. Award to Mr. G. Grey Wornum', *Builder*, 4 January 1952, Vol. 182, No. 5681, p. 3.

⁴⁶ 'Royal Gold Medal for Architecture. Award to Mr. G. Grey Wornum', *Builder*, 4 January 1952, Vol. 182, No. 5681, p. 3.

⁴⁷ 'In Parliament. Westminster Hospital Site', *Builder*, 9 February 1951, Vol. 180, No. 5634, p. 213.

‘A building... in keeping with the historic surroundings and worthily expressing the high value which the people and Government of this country place on the friendship and co-operation of the Colonial peoples.’⁴⁸ Morrison, Lord President of the Council, correctly observed that the appropriate time to oppose the plan had been during the drafting of the bill and that, whilst the Government was looking at questions of scale, it would be wrong to have wasted so much time and money.⁴⁹

The use of high-sounding rhetoric was characteristic of the language employed in this dispute. The far from modest Lord Broughshane claimed to speak not only for the nation but all her dominions as well when he pronounced: ‘Westminster Abbey is generally recognized as the most precious jewel in the nation’s treasure-house, and not only Westminster or London but the Empire and Commonwealth are deeply concerned with anything affecting it.’⁵⁰ A correspondent to *The Times*, George L. Pepler, warned the Government not to ‘inflict irreparable injury on a national shrine in the heart of the Commonwealth’.⁵¹ Faced with such bombast the government had little choice other than to cancel the new Colonial Office. It was allowed to quietly disappear with the ‘decision to curtail the programme of Government office building’.⁵² They dropped what at the outset had been a simple planning proposal but which, at the last moment, had been dreadfully recognised for what it really was: a dire contrivance which threatened to inflict a mortal wound upon an unsuspecting and increasingly debilitated national identity.

This was explicitly alluded to by Lord Blackford, Chairman of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. Wishing to take a longer, common sense view he argued that if, Britain wished to retain her ‘colonial empire, it could be done only by guaranteeing more and more self-government to its constituent parts, and it would seem that the Colonial Office was one that would shrink in size.’ He suggested a smaller office and asked to know what the India Office was currently being used for

⁴⁸ This was cited by Lord Morrison and reported in ‘Colonial Office Site’, *Builder*, 1 December 1950, Vol. 179, No. 5624, pp. 575-576.

⁴⁹ ‘Use of Old Westminster Hospital site’, *The Times*, 1 February 1951, 4d.

⁵⁰ Broughshane to *The Times*, 15 November 1950, 7e.

⁵¹ George L. Pepler, 49 Rivermead Court, Hurlingham, S.W.6 wrote on 16 November 1950 to *The Times*, 17 November 1950, 5f.

⁵² ‘New Colonial Office’, *Builder*, 20 July 1951, Vol. 181, No. 5657, p. 97.

given that the former colony was now an autonomous state.⁵³ This is a matter that will be expanded upon in the next section.

6~4 ‘The heart of the Commonwealth’: reconstructing the House of Commons

Although the new Colonial Office failed to materialise another scheme aimed at symbolically bolstering Britain’s imperial significance *was* executed: the restoration of the bomb damaged House of Commons. A Select Committee was appointed in 1943 to determine how it should be reconstructed. Building commenced in 1946 after the Minister of Works had appointed Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and Dr. Oscar Faber (1886-1956) as architect and consulting engineer respectively. Scott’s report to the Select Committee stressed that the Gothic style of the original was to be replicated because ‘modern architecture in its present state is quite unsuitable for the rebuilding of the House of Commons’.⁵⁴ This would also ensure that the manner would be ‘sympathetic’ to the rest of the building. Scott nevertheless considered the ‘Gothic detail of the old Chamber was lifeless and uninteresting’. Whilst the former decoration was not restored ‘the general form and arrangement’ of Barry’s design was followed although with some changes to the upper level to increase the amount of seating.⁵⁵ The embellishments were made from ‘English oak cut and prepared in the Shropshire district’ along with Clipsham, Portland, Caen and Hopton Wood stone quarried from various parts of the country. These domestically acquired materials were complemented by ‘the Dominion and Colonial gifts for furnishing the Chamber and Members’ rooms’.⁵⁶ These included the Speaker’s Chair from Australia; the Table of the House from Canada; entrance doors to the new Chamber from India and Pakistan; two despatch boxes from New Zealand; three clocks from Northern Ireland; tables and chairs from Tanganyika, Bahamas, Cyprus, Singapore and Gold Coast

⁵³ ‘Use of Old Westminster Hospital site’, *The Times*, 1 February 1951, 4c.

⁵⁴ ‘The House of Commons Rebuilding’, pp. 453-459 in *Builder*, Vol. 179, No. 5621, 10 November 1950, p. 454.

⁵⁵ For a photograph of work in progress see, for example, ‘Rebuilding of the House of Commons 16.1.48’. 96.0 PAR (T57/511). LMA.

⁵⁶ ‘The House of Commons Rebuilding’, *Builder*, 10 November 1950, pp. 455-459.

along with a series of silver ashtrays from, for example, Gambia, St. Vincent, Zanzibar, Fiji, the Falkland Islands, the Isle of Man, British Guiana, Basutoland and Bechuanaland Protectorate.

This painstaking reconstruction with items derived from all four-corners of the world contributed to the meticulous resuscitation of the seat of government. It emerged phoenix-like from the flames of fascism that had threatened to destroy democratic Britain. Prior to the war the Statute of Westminster of 1931 had set out the 'British Commonwealth of Nations' as consisting of member states that were 'autonomous communities... in no way subordinate to one another... though united by a common allegiance to the Crown'.⁵⁷ According to Martin Kitchen this legislation 'put an end to the "imperial parliament"'.⁵⁸ In his account of *The British Empire and Commonwealth*, he describes how 'the Labour Party cautiously set about dismantling the Empire amid the ruins of the domestic economy... Few were strictly speaking anti-imperialists, but most were eager to loosen the ties with the colonies. They had little choice'.⁵⁹ Kitchen later adds that: 'Labour inherited an Empire with 457 million inhabitants in 1945. By 1951 it had only 70 million... Many of the Conservatives who were returned to power in October 1951 were determined to hang on to what was left of the Empire... Ironically it was a Conservative administration that finally brought the Empire to its end'.⁶⁰

The rebuilt House of Commons represented the most tangible of attempts to bolster the Palace of Westminster as the imperial parliament. Nevertheless the British Empire inexorably fragmented. The division of India in August 1947 saw it and Pakistan achieve autonomy. So, by the time George VI re-opened the Commons chamber on 26 October 1950, India was already an independent republic within the Commonwealth. In ensuing years the other dominions took the same course.⁶¹ This

⁵⁷ Cited in D.A. Low, *Eclipse of Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 327.

⁵⁸ Martin Kitchen, *The British Empire and Commonwealth: a short history*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996, p. 77.

⁵⁹ Martin Kitchen, *The British Empire and Commonwealth*, p. 101.

⁶⁰ Martin Kitchen, *The British Empire and Commonwealth*, p. 122.

⁶¹ Of the countries referred to above: Tanganyika became independent in 1961 and united with Zanzibar in 1964 to become the United Republic of Tanzania. The Bahama Islands was a British Colony until 1964 and achieved nation status within the Commonwealth in 1973. Cyprus became an independent republic in 1960 prior to its virtual division after Turkey invaded in 1974. Singapore was

was reflected in the language used during the inauguration of Elizabeth II on 2 June 1953 when reference was made to the monarch's position as head of an independent Commonwealth of Nations.⁶² To mark the coronation Constance Spry (1886-1960), an 'artist in flower arrangement', was appointed as an advisor to the Minister of Works – as a result of which she was awarded an OBE. Spry, who had established a floristry school in the 1930s, was responsible for the flowers in the annexe of Westminster Abbey as well as on various points on the route of the royal cortege. In Parliament Square she oversaw the planting of the flora that had been sent from different places in the Commonwealth.⁶³ Such an undertaking, allied with the deliberate reconstruction of the Commons as the imperial repository, provides an explication for numerous references made during the proposals to redesign Parliament Square: that it symbolised the 'heart' of the British Empire.

6~5 Parliament Square and the Festival of Britain⁶⁴

The rebuilt House of Commons inevitably aroused interest in the longer history of the Palace of Westminster and following the completion of work the *Builder* published a detailed historical account of the building.⁶⁵ It was also decided to mount an

self-governing from 1959 and became a nation within the Commonwealth in 1965 after two years during which it formed part of the Federation of Malaysia. Gold Coast united with British Togoland in 1957 to be re-named as Ghana in 1960, a republic within the Commonwealth. The Gambia achieved the same independence in 1965, as did British Guiana, which became Guyana in 1966. In the same year Basutoland and Bechuanaland Protectorate were re-named Lesotho and Botswana respectively following their independence. Fiji remained a British Colony until 1970 whilst St. Vincent and the Grenadines gained full independence in 1979. Information derived from Marian Makins (ed.), *Collins English Dictionary*, HarperCollins Publishers, Glasgow, third edition, 1991.

⁶² She was crowned 'Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith'. Richard Lockett has observed that, '[i]f the middle part of the formula seemed a little loose, it nevertheless adequately represented a rapidly changing state of affairs.' See Antonia Fraser (ed.), *The Lives of the Kings & Queens of England*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1993, p. 350.

⁶³ See Julia Cairns's entry in E.T. Williams & Helen M. Palmer (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography 1951-60*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971, pp. 915-916; Jennifer Uglow, *The Macmillan Dictionary of Women's Biography*, (revised 3rd edition by Maggy Hendry), Macmillan, London, 1999, p. 510.

⁶⁴ This brief section is based upon an unpublished paper given by the author entitled: "'Redesigning the heart of empire": Parliament Square and the Festival of Britain', *'Making Connections': 27th Association of Art Historians Annual Conference*, Oxford Brookes University, 29 March-1 April 2001.

⁶⁵ G.J.H[owling], 'The Palace of Westminster and the Houses of Parliament', pp. 450-452, *Builder*, 10 November 1950, Vol. 179, No. 5621.

exhibition entitled 'Parliament Past and Present'. Tracing the history of the palace from the twelfth-century it introduced the workings of parliament, related the Houses of Lords and Commons and concluded 'with the spread of representative Government from Westminster to other Commonwealth countries and the relationship and similarity of procedure in their parliaments and legislatures.' The exhibition was designed to be portable so that 'it could tour the provinces or be sent abroad.'⁶⁶ Initially situated in the Grand Committee Room it was publicly accessible via Westminster Hall throughout August 1951 and formed Parliament's contribution to the Festival of Britain.

In the book *A Tonic to the nation*, published in 1976 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Festival of Britain, Misha Black, co-designer of the one of the main attractions – the *Dome of Discovery* – recollected that:

For the co-ordinating architects and designers the two years preceding the opening days [of the Festival of Britain] were continuous anguish and anxiety... It was a battle against time, against the weather... against labour disputes, against budget cuts, ... against the pundits who predicted that the number of expected visitors would inevitably cause panic and disaster, [and] that London's traffic would grind to a halt.⁶⁷

Although eight and half million people visited the Festival, with as many as 100,000 on some days, the capital *did* avoid gridlock. The redesigning of Parliament Square was one element of this endeavour yet it was also in tune with the ideology of the festival. Hazel Conway has recently written that, in addition to the South Bank and the Battersea Pleasure Gardens, it was the intention of the Festival of Britain organisers 'to beautify parks and open spaces across the country'.⁶⁸ The layout of Parliament Square by the architect George Grey Wornum should be understood in this context. Nevertheless, the new design was little noticed either at the time or since. The following account seeks to rectify this by analysing the ethos behind the markedly different structure of the square to that of Edward Barry's just under one hundred years before.

⁶⁶ 'Parliament- Past and Present. A Festival Exhibition', *Builder*, 10 August 1951, Vol. 181, No. 5660, p. 186.

⁶⁷ Mary Banham & Bevis Hillier, *A Tonic to the Nation: the Festival of Britain 1951*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1976, p. 85.

⁶⁸ Hazel Conway, 'Everyday Landscapes: public parks from 1930 to 2000', pp. 117-134 in *Garden History*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Summer 2000, p.125.

6~6 George Grey Wornum and Parliament Square

In July 1949 the *Builder* published an article setting out Grey Wornum's proposals for Parliament Square.⁶⁹ The text stressed how imperative it was that the scheme be approved for immediate execution in order to be ready to accommodate the increased number of visitors to London during the Festival of Britain. To this end the Ministry of Traffic (which 'laid out the general lines') wished to see a square with sides as long as possible to allow for the most extensive "weaving" lengths for traffic on all four sides'. For their part the Metropolitan Police wanted pavements to be absent from around the new island.⁷⁰ The boundaries would instead be formed by 'a curb, a 7-ft. deep hedge and a dwarf stone wall behind it.' Public access was to be only from designated 'road islands' at the north-west, south-east and south-west corners. Pedestrian access in the form of a subway was not an option given the underground railway just beneath the surface (Plate 4). A key theme of the new arrangement was the provision of 'a worthy pedestrian approach across it from the north side of the Square to the Abbey.' Consequently a large part was to be taken up simply by a turf lawn to create 'an appearance of brightness to the approach to the Square.'

The statues were to be moved⁷¹ beneath the existing trees on the western side in what was then the Canning Enclosure and were to be accompanied by 'a terrace garden with flower-beds, seats and large stone jardinières.' For its part the Canning Enclosure to the west of the enlarged Parliament Square was to be much reduced (Plate 5). The statue of Canning was to be moved slightly to the north with, just to the south, the memorial of Abraham Lincoln (Plate 117). Designed by the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens it had been unveiled on 28 July 1920 by the Duke of Connaught. Dated 1887 it is a copy of the original statue that stands in Lincoln Park, Chicago.⁷² It was presented to the British People in 1914 by the American National Committee to

⁶⁹ 'Replanning of Parliament Square. Grey Wornum, F.R.I.B.A., Architect', *Builder*, 29 July 1949, Vol. 177, No. 5554, pp. 137-139.

⁷⁰ The other public authorities involved, in addition to the ministries already mentioned and the police, included the London County Council, Middlesex County Council and Westminster Council, as well as 'all the services of electricity, gas, Post Office, etc.'

⁷¹ All the statues were photographed *in situ* prior to being moved in 1949-50. See PRO WORK 20/266.

⁷² It is signed 'Augustus Saint-Gaudens Sculptor MDCCCLXXXVII'.

celebrate one hundred years of peace between English speaking peoples.⁷³ Saint-Gaudens was a sculptor who paid particular attention to the bases supporting his monuments in an attempt to unify the whole stylistically and thematically. For this work he employed the architect Charles Follen McKim. The result is a rectangular pedestal, with curved projections at either end; the dado is decorated with a band of foliage and series of laurel wreaths whilst the cornice is formed by a rocky incline (Plate 118). This leads Maureen Barraclough to reflect that ‘the real and the ideal elements are combined to enhance the bronze figures presented above.’⁷⁴ Grey Wornum, in his plans for Parliament Square, had originally intended to place the newly sited monuments on to new pedestals. The integral part played by the pedestal of the Lincoln memorial (in addition, for example, to the relief panels of the Derby monument) made this unfeasible.

The architect’s scheme also allowed for an additional monument on the north-east corner of the square, a site commanding excellent views from the Whitehall approach. It was noted in passing that ‘some existing monument might be moved there temporarily.’ Alongside the text outlining Wornum’s concept are two illustrations drawn by Denis M. Jones. These include an eye-level view from Great George Street and a bird’s-eye view from the Clock Tower of the Houses of Parliament (Plate 35).⁷⁵ The former shows the rear of the Palmerston memorial and a perspective along the terrace lined by the other three statues and the preserved trees (formerly in Canning Enclosure). The elevated viewpoint is at a right angle to this.⁷⁶ The statues are picked out as distant silhouettes between the trees. The proposed arrangement is very much as it is today, the exception being that Marochetti’s equestrian statue of Richard I was proposed for the site now occupied by the bronze figure of Winston Churchill.⁷⁷

⁷³ R.J.B. Walker, *A Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture and Engravings in The Palace of Westminster*, Vol. 3, Part IV, ‘Sculpture’, 1961, Appendix X, p. 139.

⁷⁴ Maureen Barraclough, *Sovereigns and Soldiers on Horseback. Bronze Equestrian Monuments from Ancient Rome to Our Times*, Ipswich Press, Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1999, p. 213.

⁷⁵ Accompanying these images are two comparative plans showing the existing and proposed layout of the area. ‘Replanning of Parliament Square’, *Builder*, 29 July 1949, pp. 137-139.

⁷⁶ The original of this drawing is in the RIBA RAN 57/K/10(12). Signed in capitals in the bottom left hand corner: ‘G. GREY WORNUM F.R.I.B.A ARCHITECT / DERIS M. JONES Delt. 1949’.

⁷⁷

The sketches by Grey Wornum concerning Parliament Square are held by the RIBA.⁷⁸ Apart from the aforementioned Clock Tower view there exist four tracings detailing two pairs of alternative short and long-term improvements.⁷⁹ The first depicts E.M. Barry's layout with Wornum's proposal drawn over it (cf. Plate 5). This clearly shows how the new arrangement extends further west, incorporating the Canning Enclosure.⁸⁰ A second drawing extends its scope further west of the square to include the provision of new premises at Storey's Gate and the clearance of Westminster Hospital and the Stationary Office. The latter is replaced by a 'New Garden' lined by trees on the north side.⁸¹ The first of the two more ambitious long-term schemes includes the removal of the Middlesex Guildhall and the reconstruction of substantial areas of Victoria Street, Tothill Street and Great George Street.⁸² This would have provided a considerably larger Parliament Square stretching further west beyond the trees formerly in the Canning Enclosure. The alternative envisaged even more demolition including the Middlesex Guildhall.⁸³ Provision could then have been made for more expansive open areas in the vicinity of St. Margaret's Church and north of New Palace Yard. This has affinities with Charles Barry's equally impracticable nine-acre 'Abbey Close' of 1857 (Plate 27).

Wornum was elected Fellow of the RIBA in 1923 and became its Vice-President for 1950-51. He is best known for designing the RIBA building in London which was the result of an open competition amongst the organisation's members in 1932.⁸⁴ Four years later, in conjunction with two other architects, he was responsible for organising the decorations in Regent Street, Strand, Whitehall and Parliament Street to celebrate

⁷⁸ The references are RIBA RAN 57/K/10 (1-12). The items in these twelve sections are stamped 'RIBA DRAWINGS COLLECTION' and numbered in pencil '1988.53'.

⁷⁹ These, numbered 1-4, are drawn on yellow tracing paper in pencil, black pen, green pencil colouring and red pencil (the latter to indicate either a new façade or 'NEW BUILDING SITE').

⁸⁰ 'Existing and Short Term Improvement St. in Parliament Square. (1)', RIBA RAN 57/K/10(8).

⁸¹ 'Short term Improvement Scheme Parliament Square. Erection of new office Buildings at Storey's Gate & Clearance of site of Westminster Hospital and Stationary Office. (2)', RIBA RAN 57/K/10(9).

⁸² '(3) Long Term Scheme involving removal of Middlesex Guildhall, buildings fronting the Sanctuary, and new frontage lines on rebuilding at the junction of Victoria Street with Tothill St. and Great George Street. In addition the drawing shows a new garden between the Houses of Parliament & Scotland Yard which would require refronting on the exposed façade.' RIBA RAN 57/K/10(10).

⁸³ '(4) Alternative Long Term Plan.' RIBA RAN 57/K/10(11).

⁸⁴ A. Trystan Edwards, 'The RIBA building' first published 8 November 1934 and reprinted in the *Architects Journal*, 27 June 1984, pp. 76-77.

the coronation of George VI (1895-1952).⁸⁵ The latter commission meant that he must have been well aware of the requirements for public ceremonies and national rituals. Given its symbolic associations and proximity to both the Palace of Westminster and the Abbey, Parliament Square provides a forum for such gatherings. Its rearrangement during the middle of the twentieth-century reflects both the practical as well as representative shifts that had occurred since Edward Barry had laid out the square almost a century before. The emotive associations that this space prompted in the minds of members from both Houses of Parliament were voiced during the debates on Wornum's proposal and they will be set out in detail in the following section.

6~7 The 'hub of the Empire' debated in Parliament

The Parliament Square (Improvements) Bill was characterised by Sir Harold Webbe, Conservative Member of Parliament for Westminster Abbey, 'as one of the most important improvement schemes which has been brought before Parliament for a considerable time.'⁸⁶ The central location of the square both symbolically and geographically can best be appreciated from aerial photographs of Westminster (Plate 1). A particularly visible edifice lying to the north of this space is the New Public Offices (Plates 39-40). This monolithic structure dates from 1898-c.1912 and was designed by John McKean Brydon (1840-1901) with modifications by Sir Henry Tanner (1849-1935).⁸⁷ The construction of this grandiose building had necessitated the demolition of King's Street and the widening of Parliament Street. It was therefore built on the site of an array of unassuming buildings including a public house (Plates 13 & 34). Their replacement confirmed the fact that this district was now solely concerned with the running of government both domestic and imperial. This exacerbated the national significance of Parliament Square and increased the

⁸⁵ 'Royal Gold Medal for Architecture. Award to Mr. G. Grey Wornum', *Builder*, 4 January 1952, Vol. 182, No. 5681, p. 3; Julian Osley, 'Royal Gold Medallists 1848-1984', pp. 39-83 in *RIBA Journal*, Vol. 91, No. 5, May 1984, p. 72.

⁸⁶ 'Parliament Square Bill- Select Committee', pp. 1901-1907, *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 1903.

⁸⁷ M.H. Port, *Imperial London: Civil Government Building in London 1850-1915*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1995, Plates 139, 199, 255; see also the photographs 'The New Government Offices' & 'The Circular Court', *Builder*, 6 July 1907 & 8 August 1908.

perceived necessity of redesigning it to make it fit more harmoniously with the enlarged scale of Brydon's lofty edifice.

The first reading of the bill occurred in the House of Commons on 10 November 1949.⁸⁸ It was reported in the following day's edition of *The Times*, which speculated that the rearrangement of the roads and statuary was expected to cost £60,000.⁸⁹ The LCC was responsible for this amount although two-thirds of the money was a grant from the Ministry of Transport. The LCC agreed to accept the cost of moving the Lincoln statue and the Buxton memorial fountain as part of the road works.⁹⁰ Five days later the newspaper published a letter authorised by T.J. Barnes and C.E.C. Browne⁹¹ issuing further details. Principally these included provision to shift the statues and fountain, vest the land to the Minister of Work, and limit public access to the 'pavements and kerbs... on special occasions or for special purposes'. Relevant plans setting out the scheme were available to public inspection from 16 November.⁹² The following day Westminster City Council petitioned against the bill. They were not in opposition to it but rather wished to protect their interests because they felt that 'the grave economic situation' warranted a postponement.⁹³ It was later claimed that this was 'the only way to draw attention to the need for alteration'.⁹⁴ Representatives of the Middlesex County Council voiced their dissent the following month.⁹⁵

On 23 November the bill was read for the second time. It was moved by the Rt. Hon. Charles William Key (1883-1964), Labour Member of Parliament for Bow and Bromley and the Minister of Works from February 1947 until February 1950.⁹⁶ He

⁸⁸ It was stated that the bill, "to authorise certain improvements in and around Parliament Square, and for purposes connected therewith"; [was] presented by Mr. Key; supported by Mr. Herbert Morrison and Mr. Barnes; read for the First time; to be read a Second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 203.] *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 469, p. 1414.

⁸⁹ *The Times*, 11 November 1949, 2a.

⁹⁰ 'Parliament Square Bill- Second Reading', pp. 464-485, *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 469.

⁹¹ Solicitor for the Affairs of His Majesty's Treasury and Parliamentary Agent respectively.

⁹² *The Times*, 16 November 1949, 1e.

⁹³ *The Times*, 18 November 1949, 4f.

⁹⁴ As reported in *The Times*, 24 November 1949.

⁹⁵ The MCC's objections were, however, declared invalid by a House of Commons Select Committee, which concluded that it 'had no *locus standi* before the committee.' *The Times*, 6 December 1949.

⁹⁶ Michael Stenton & Stephen Lees, *Who's who of British Members of Parliament*, Vol. IV 1945-1979, Harvester Press Limited, Hassocks, 1981, p. 204.

began by erroneously stating that the former name of the area in question was ‘Green Square’ before expressing a desire ‘to enable the Square once again to live up to its old name.’⁹⁷ He recounted the events of the 1930s regarding the Middlesex County Council’s actions to protect the site and the Ministry of Transport’s scheme that had been curtailed by the outbreak of the war. The latter had advocated the lengthening of the island’s northern side in order to reduce ‘the frequent traffic blocks’ at the junction of Bridge Street and Parliament Street. Key continued that in 1947 the LCC revived the scheme in an amended form. It had subsequently received added necessity by the decision to hold the Festival of Britain on the South Bank. He stated that the Public Record Office had provided the Treasury Solicitor with ‘42 boxes containing some 600 documents’ thus confirming the not unexpected complex legal position regarding the land given its long history and proximity to the Palace of Westminster. This was the reason why it was felt a bill was necessary, ‘not... to authorise the scheme as a whole, but... limited to removing any doubts about title to ownership and to powers to carry out details of the scheme.’⁹⁸ However, it also intended to seek the authority to ‘remove statues and re-erect them.’ Plans and a model had been exhibited to MPs in the summer and were again displayed in the Commons’ Library.

The Minister of Works stated that ‘at the urgent request of the police’ there was to be no footpath around the island. Instead the garden was to be ‘surrounded by a narrow curb and a low wall’. Parallel to these would run ‘paved walks’ and ‘lines of flowerbeds.’ The hope was that this would ‘discourage pedestrians crossing to the central island and thus to reduce the accident risks.’ Entrances on the north and south would be provided with ‘special pedestrian crossings’. The statues of Peel, Palmerston, Derby and Disraeli were to be ‘arranged along the western side of the island’ whilst Canning and Lincoln were to be replaced in what remained of the Canning Enclosure. The north-east corner of the new square was intended to hold an, as yet, unspecified equestrian statue. The scheme, despite the lack of clarity in its details, had been approved by the RFAC. Key openly admitted that, whilst the statues were to be re-erected, the fate of the Buxton Memorial fountain was undecided although it was ‘not proposed to re-erect it in Parliament Square.’ He did not rule out

⁹⁷ ‘Parliament Square Bill- Second Reading’, pp. 464-485, *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 464.

⁹⁸ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 465.

any future statues ‘if they are felt to be essential.’⁹⁹ A suggestion to move a cast of Auguste Rodin’s *Burghers of Calais* from Victoria Tower Gardens to the square had been declined.¹⁰⁰

The attention given to the statues prompted some adverse comments as to their aesthetic value with one parliamentarian averring that he was ‘a bit dubious about putting back the statues in the middle of this very great traffic improvement.’¹⁰¹ Most criticism was centred on the aforementioned Buxton memorial. In his 1928 guide to *London’s Open-Air Statuary*, Lord Gleichen paused briefly to note this ‘dreadful little drinking fountain’ at the corner of Great George Street before urging his readers to ‘hasten away.’¹⁰² An echo of this was heard in parliament where at least one speaker stated that it had ‘no artistic merit whatsoever.’¹⁰³ This attitude was not new. When in 1900 the Office of Works undertook to clean the memorial they declined to repair the water pipes and refused to pay for the water. The National Drinking Fountain Association (NDFA) offered to hand over responsibility for the monument to Westminster City Council in 1901. This was agreed to in October of the following year on the condition that the NDFA repaired and maintained it. Further reconstruction followed in the mid-1920s at a cost of just under £500, with two-fifths funded by Lord Sidney Buxton and the Anti-Slavery and Aboriginal Protection Society. Since then Westminster City Council had made several unsuccessful attempts to get the Office of Works to take responsibility for it. This was refused on the grounds that the object in question was a fountain and neither a public statue nor a memorial.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 466-469.

¹⁰⁰ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 469. Erected in 1915 it was one of three casts of the famous sculptural group made prior to Rodin’s death. When in 1910 it was acquired by the National Art Collections Fund the sculptor lobbied unsuccessfully for it to be erected near to Marochetti’s *Coeur de Lion* (had he been alive at the time Francis Turner Palgrave would surely have railed against this!). For an account of the Rodin group see Susan Beattie, *The Burghers of Calais in London: The history of the purchase and siting of Rodin’s monument, 1911-56*, Arts Council, London, 1987; Paul Waugh, ‘Campaign to rescue Rodin’s unloved *Burghers of Calais*’, *The Independent*, 31 July 2000, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ This was Mr Gibson, the Member for Kennington. *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 473.

¹⁰² Lord Edward Gleichen, *London’s Open-Air Statuary*, Cedric Chivers Ltd., Bath, 1928/1973, p. 41.

¹⁰³ This was Mr Keeling, the Member for Twickenham. *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 474.

¹⁰⁴ For details concerning restoration and ownership see PRO WORK 16/1722 & 20/266.

It *did* have some defenders however: A.J. Irvine (Labour representative for Edge Hill at Liverpool) defended the fountain on both aesthetic grounds and the fact that it was ‘a memorial to the emancipation of the slaves.’ He stressed that whilst his party were committed to social and economic structural change they ‘yield[ed] to none in... [their] desire to preserve historical monuments.’¹⁰⁵ Herbert Morrison felt that, given the many contrary views regarding statues, it was far safer to avoid the topic, fearing the reaction of the Primrose League should Benjamin Disraeli’s memorial be ‘played about with’.¹⁰⁶

The setting of these statues generated even stronger responses. The Minister of Works was prevailed upon ‘to find people who will give us an English garden, not too extravagantly modern perhaps, but one which will at any rate add to the beauty of that part of London.’¹⁰⁷ The strongest proponent of this view was the aforementioned Sir Harold Webbe. He was of the opinion that although this was ‘in a sense of small Bill’ it took on much greater significance given that ‘it is the site of the very heart of the Empire’ and therefore of national, indeed imperial importance.¹⁰⁸ For this reason he and others such as Robert Speer Hudson (1886-1957) (Conservative member for Southport, a former diplomat in the Foreign Office and later first Viscount Hudson), regretted the undue haste in dealing with the legislation. Herbert Morrison again cautioned petitioners that ‘it would a tragedy if this great public improvement did not come about’ given the traffic implications for the Festival of Britain.¹⁰⁹

This did not placate Webbe, who bluntly stated:

The proposed arrangement of the garden is almost a monstrosity. I do not know whether those who have drawn this plan of gardening arrangements are gardeners. I very much doubt it, because no gardener could obtain satisfaction in the planting of some of the beds.

The whole scheme is terrifically modern. It offends all canons of gardening development and design. It is extraordinarily restless. It avoids in a studied manner any attempt at symmetry. There is nothing symmetrical about it even where there is an opportunity for symmetry. In the paved portion with the beds inside, symmetry is deliberately avoided by placing two of the L-shaped beds in the same direction

¹⁰⁵ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, pp. 476-477.

¹⁰⁶ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 483.

¹⁰⁷ Gibson cited in *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 473.

¹⁰⁸ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 470.

¹⁰⁹ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, pp. 478-481.

instead of facing one another to frame the statue between them. So far as I can see, the only explanation is that this is to be a space in the centre of a traffic roundabout, and quite clearly the only underlying idea of the design is that the whole of the features in the garden should chase one another round in the same direction as the traffic moves. It is shockingly restless, and I hope that before the Ministry are committed to this particular design for the gardens, they will at least look at it again. The only restful thing in the whole of that site is the statues of the dead Prime Ministers.¹¹⁰

Webbe was most aggrieved by the deliberate attempt to restrict pedestrian access to the central area¹¹¹ and he was fearful that the new layout might constitute a ‘death-trap’.¹¹² This was especially unsatisfactory given that ‘on ceremonial occasions’ the footpaths of Parliament Square constituted ‘one of the best grandstands in London’ (cf. Plate 46 & 132).¹¹³ Morrison had some sympathy with this position. He confessed to deriving particular pleasure from witnessing ‘the crowd of people, on the days when Parliament is opened, standing around the Square.’¹¹⁴

After the second reading in the Commons it was decided to commit the bill to a Select Committee of six Members.¹¹⁵ This took place on 7 December and was chaired by Major James Milner (1889-1967), Labour Member for Leeds South East and later first Baron Milner of Leeds.¹¹⁶ In this committee, the Conservative Richard Austen Butler (1902-82) (later Baron Butler of Saffron Walden) felt due consideration to be appropriate for what he declared to be

the centre of the whole Commonwealth and a site which must be treated with the utmost care and attention. I think it is satisfactory to reflect that in considering this site we have not only considered its beauty but have also made further provision

¹¹⁰ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 470 and extensively quoted in *The Times*, 24 November 1949.

¹¹¹ Similar concerns were expressed concerning new traffic regulations and the introduction of zebra crossings. See ‘Pedestrian Crossings. The new regulations’, *The Times*, 1 February 1951, 4a-b.

¹¹² Giving his imagination free reign, Webb feared that at Parliament Street: ‘Old ladies who will try to get across there will measure more than eighteen inches [a reference to the size of the proposed kerb], even if you take them sideways, and the plight of pedestrians who are marooned at these spots when they are trying to find holes into which they can bolt for safety is one which no one can seriously contemplate.’ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, pp. 471-472.

¹¹³ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 1902.

¹¹⁴ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 474.

¹¹⁵ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 485.

¹¹⁶ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, ‘Parliament Square Bill- Select Committee’, pp. 1901-1907; *The Times*, 8 December 1949, 6f.

than previously existed for crowds to assemble on suitable occasions and to see ceremonies which take place.¹¹⁷

Butler was also anxious about the exact location of the statues and that Webbe's observations about the garden be taken on board (it was Butler's concern that it ought to 'be a scene of rest and beauty'). Key assured him that, although the exact locations for the statues had not been fixed upon, he thought 'they will be sufficiently separated not to fall out one with the other.'¹¹⁸ Webbe had in fact drawn attention to the 'substantial amendments' made since the second reading. The 'restless features' had 'been somewhat subdued' and an additional route into the square provided so that the square had 'given point to the paved pathway round the two sides, which in the original plan led nowhere except to the same way back.'¹¹⁹ These included 'the retention of the footways facing the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey', replacing the previously intended narrow kerb.

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These debates in parliament prompted a vigorous deployment of the letters page of *The Times*. The opening salvo by C.W.W. Greenidge appeared on 12 December and drew attention to the drinking fountain. He urged that this memorial to Fowell Buxton and his fellow abolitionists Wilberforce, Clarkson, Macaulay, Granville, Sharp, Dr. Lushington 'and others whose names are inscribed on it' should not be neglected:

The removal of this historic monument from the symbolic heart of the Empire would offend the feelings not only of many in this country, but of a large number in British colonies oversea (sic) who still venerate the memory of the British abolitionists.¹²⁰

Greenidge went on to cite the historian Lecky who described the abolition of slavery as "among the three or four perfectly virtuous acts recorded in the history of nations." Greenidge thought it was imperative, given that the statue of Lincoln was to be re-erected in the square, that an 'equal honour should be paid to the memory of the British abolitionists.'

¹¹⁷ 'Parliament Square Bill- Select Committee', *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 1905.

¹¹⁸ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, p. 1906.

¹¹⁹ *PD*, Commons 1948-49, Vol. 470, pp. 1902-1903.

¹²⁰ C.W.W. Greenidge, writing from Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road to *The Times*, 12 December 1949, 5d.

This provoked other letters of support: the historian Sir Reginald Coupland (1884-1952) firmly believed that none were more deserving than the abolitionists to be honoured by a ‘prominent memorial in the central city of the British Commonwealth’. He pointed out that the concern was not merely a national one but had significance for ‘the peoples of Africa who are now fellow-members with us of the Commonwealth.’¹²¹ This echoed the case put forward by Lord Macmillan, chairman of the Pilgrim Trust, who noted that his organisation had contributed ‘a large sum towards the expenses of enlarging and rearranging Parliament Square’. He concurred with Greenidge in proclaiming the importance of this symbol to the

greatest of human rights – the right of a human creature, whatever his colour and origin, to be regarded as a human being and not as the property and chattel of another man. Surely, this monument should continue to find its place in the central area to which visitors from all over the world turn their eyes to see who are among the Parliamentary heroes whom we still hold in the highest honour.¹²²

A photograph appeared in the same issue of the newspaper depicting the fountain in its original location. Prominently encircling the monument are the statuettes of monarchs that were subsequently removed (Plates 78-79).¹²³ The following day the artist, writer and cartoonist Nicolas Clerihew Bentley (1907-78) wrote that, whilst Greenidge’s motives were laudable, ‘surely there should be other considerations to bear in mind besides homage to the abolitionists?’ He argued that this ‘indefensible monstrosity’ should be moved ‘to a less public spot on aesthetic grounds’ no matter how ‘strong the pleas in its favour on grounds of sentiment and association’.¹²⁴

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The day preceding this letter the Parliament Square (Improvements) Bill received its second reading in the House of Lords presided over by Lord Morrison.¹²⁵ Repeating earlier concerns expressed by Webbe and Hudson in the Commons there was some dispute that the alterations to the square were being rushed through on the spurious

¹²¹ Sir Reginald Coupland, letter to *The Times*, 13 December 1949, 5e.

¹²² Lord Macmillan, writing from the House of Lords to *The Times*, 13 December 1949, 5e.

¹²³ *The Times*, 13 December 1949, p. 10.

¹²⁴ Nicolas Bentley, Flat 3, 44 Queen’s Gate Gardens to *The Times*, 14 December 1949, 5g.

¹²⁵ *PD*, Lords, 1948-49, Vol. 165, pp. 1402-1442.

notion, in the view of John Jestyn Llewellyn (1893-1957)¹²⁶ among others, that it was vital to the success of the Festival of Britain. The Conservative peer Robert Arthur James Gascoyne-Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury (1893-1972) cautioned against any hasty ‘redesigning of what is really the hub of the Empire.’¹²⁷ In March 1952 Salisbury became secretary of state for Commonwealth relations. Among these Conservatives mention of an equestrian statue for the north-east corner of the square prompted them to suggest that a suitable candidate might be the Lord President of the Council (i.e. Morrison) riding his high horse.¹²⁸

This comment by Llewellyn, indicating the party political nature of the debate, implies that Parliament Square could only properly be attended to by members of the Conservative Party, and that the interference of the Labour Government in this domain of former Prime Ministers from Llewellyn’s party was misplaced. Confirmation of this is provided by Earl Howe who expressed surprise that Llewellyn, an ex-Minister of Transport, was not aware that traffic blocks in one area would affect another. Howe’s wish to see underpasses as in Paris with the Avenue Foch were, as Morrison pointed out, impossible due to the Metropolitan line running beneath the square.

Llewellyn and the Liberal John Allsebrook Simon (1873-1954) were also concerned that Marochetti’s Coeur de Lion might be moved to the vacant north-east corner. Morrison *had* intimated that one proposal was indeed to place it in the new square. The Earl of Iddesleigh stated that the equestrian statue had the distinction of a perfectly adequate site already and that ‘it would be extraordinarily out of place in a garden devoted to the commemoration of nineteenth-century Prime Ministers.’¹²⁹ If an

¹²⁶ In 1953 Llewellyn became the first governor-general of the Federation of Rhodesias and Nyasaland.

¹²⁷ *PD*, Lords, 1948-49, Vol. 165, p. 1419.

¹²⁸ Llewellyn cited in *The Times*, 14 December 1949, 6a.

¹²⁹ Contrary to Iddesleigh’s opinion, the position of Marochetti’s monument had had detractors from its inception (see 2~8). This resurfaced in June 1896 when Westminster wrote to Aretas Akers-Douglas, later to become first Viscount Chilston (1851-1926), the First Commissioner, lamenting: ‘We are not very fortunate in our statues in London! and we sometimes don’t make the best of them by placing them in suitable positions- that of the “Coeur de Lion” by Marochetti is a case in point. It looks, where it is, as if it had been put there “out of the way”.’ He wished to slightly move it to a more “reasonable” site in front of the entrance to the Lords and facing the recently re-opened Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. Akers Douglas was favourable to this: ‘I quite agree that a more suitable site should be found for the statue than the corner to which it is now condemned.’ He advocated its

equestrian statue was deemed appropriate he felt that it should be that of the only politician on horseback: the Duke of Wellington. Morrison's fears over the consequences of a statutory debate were becoming realised and he hastily asserted that the Royal Fine Art Commission (RFAC) was to decide on any repositioning of the monuments.

The detractors turned their attention back to matters horticultural. Iddesleigh was of the opinion that any such changes should be restricted to 'formal gardening':

People do not go to Parliament Square in order to see quaintness or to delight in floral beauty; they go to be impressed by the majesty of the centre of the British Empire. Therefore, I hope the Office of Works will not give rein to a passion for rusticity which I have observed in some of their recent works, and I hope that in the Parliament Square of the future they will give us nothing which will be quite so offensive as that miserable little "pocketful of posies" which has stood there during the lifetime of the present Government.

Furthermore, Llewellyn's meddling took on a new guise when, in a committee of the entire house, he argued that, in return for the prompt action played by the Middlesex County Council, it should be ensured that no new public carriageway pass within sixty-five feet of the Middlesex Guildhall. Despite Morrison's avowal that this would be impossible without a complete redrawing of Grey Wornum's plans, this amendment was agreed to by 57 votes to 28.

Another amendment concerned the third clause of the bill. Viscount Simon noticed that it failed to ensure, should the Buxton memorial be removed, that it would be re-erected. This contrasted with the protection in this regard afforded to the statues. He argued for the importance of the anti-slavery movement on the part of the leading protagonists that led to the abolition legislation of 1833. As such the fate of the fountain should properly be for parliament to decide and not just one minister.¹³⁰ The Marquess of Reading agreed. He also pondered why, at the direction of the RFAC, the statues were being put back:

because of their intrinsic beauty or because of their historical interest[?] But if it be, as I fear, having gazed upon them, largely for their historical interest, I can see little

removal to 'the vacant space recently cleared at Poets Corner.' Duke of Westminster to Akers Douglas, 9 June 1896 and reply dated 1 July 1896. PRO Work 20/28.

¹³⁰ *PD*, Lords, 1948-49, Vol. 165, p. 1428.

distinction in principle between them and the fountain which it is now proposed to cast into oblivion.’¹³¹

Reading linked this with the pressing issue of the Charter of Human Rights, to which he found no better starting point than the commemoration of Buxton and his associates. This may have been inspired by the Labour peer Hugh Patterson Macmillan, Baron Macmillan’s (1873-1952) letter in that day’s edition of *The Times*. He believed that ‘far more important’ than the style of the structure were the individuals it memorialised and their belief in basic human rights.¹³² Reginald Thomas Herbert Fletcher, Baron Winster (1885-1961) reiterated these sentiments and took this opportunity of alluding to the surfeit of ‘statues in London... of mediocre men’.¹³³ Echoing others before him he declared that insult was added to national injury given that provision was to be made for the statue of the United States president, whilst simultaneously to ‘forget the man [Buxton] whose act preceded the action of Lincoln.’

The disputatious historical and aesthetic merits of the Buxton fountain formed the main focus of opposition to the bill. In defence of the proposed legislation Lord Morrison strove to put a different complexion on the matter by proffering detailed information regarding the Metropolitan Free Drinking Association. His research had revealed that first mention of the fountain was made in 1859. In the ten years of correspondence he failed to find a single mention of the abolition of the slave trade.¹³⁴ This inspired a series of letters to *The Times*, seemingly confirming Charles Buxton’s role in the fountain and its commemorative associations with his father (see 3~5). During debate in the Lords, Viscount Simon was successful in ensuring that, should an alternative site be chosen for the fountain, it would then only be accepted if ‘agreed on by Resolution of each House of Parliament’.¹³⁵

On 14 December the bill was returned to the Commons for consideration of the peer’s amendments. The Minister of Works dismissed out of hand the amendment excluding

¹³¹ *PD*, Lords, 1948-49, Vol. 165, p. 1429.

¹³² Lord Macmillan, writing from the House of Lords to *The Times*, 13 December 1949, 5e.

¹³³ *PD*, Lords, 1948-49, Vol. 165, p. 1430.

¹³⁴ *PD*, Lords, 1948-49, Vol. 165, pp. 1433-1434.

¹³⁵ *PD*, Lords, 1948-49, Vol. 165, p. 1439.

any carriageway from passing within sixty-five feet of the Middlesex Guildhall. This was for a host of reasons: that changes to the route would damage the roots of the trees; cause the statues to have to be re-sited; alter the appearance of the square; compromise the intended traffic flow; and postpone the scheme until after the Festival of Britain. There was a hostile response to the minister's intransigence given that the present scheme would have been impossible without the Middlesex County Council's objections to Westminster House made in the 1930s.¹³⁶

Further debate on the aesthetics of the Buxton memorial replicated comments made in the upper chamber. However, Key rejected the other amendment regarding the necessity of ensuring the approval of both Houses of Parliament should he as Minister of Works decide to relocate the fountain. It transpired that this was a source of embarrassment for the government because Key's counterpart in the House of Lords, Lord Addison, had in fact already agreed to this as a conciliatory measure.¹³⁷ The former favoured exercising his right by Statutory Instrument, the draft of which was to be 'laid before Parliament.' This discomfiture was compounded by the fact that Key, 'a junior Minister in the Commons' had disagreed with 'such a senior Cabinet Minister as Lord Addison'. Acknowledging his error he agreed to the amendment regarding the resolutions of both houses when the bill was resubmitted to the House of Commons late into the evening of 15 December.¹³⁸ The haste with which the bill became an act was such that it gained royal assent along with over thirty other acts the following day, Friday 16 December when Parliament was prorogued.¹³⁹

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The Parliament Square (Improvements) Act of 1949¹⁴⁰ enabled the LCC to construct 'a new carriageway... through the Canning Enclosure to replace the existing

¹³⁶ 'Parliament Sq. scheme protest', *The Times*, 30 December 1949, 4e.

¹³⁷ For *The Times* this ensured that the proceedings reached 'a decorously muted note of high comedy.' 'Parliament Sq. Fountain: Sequel in Lords to "misunderstanding"'. From our Parliamentary Correspondent', *The Times*, 16 December 1949, 4f.

¹³⁸ 'Parliament Sq. Fountain: Sequel in Lords to "misunderstanding"'. From our Parliamentary Correspondent', *The Times*, 16 December 1949, 4f. 'The Buxton Memorial: Lord Addison on a misunderstanding', *The Times*, 16 December 1949, 6a & 6e.

¹³⁹ 'Royal Assent to over 30 Acts', *The Times*, 17 December 1949, 4a.

¹⁴⁰ See Rosemary Devine (compiled by), *Index to the Local and Personal Acts 1850-1995*, 4 Vols., London, HMSO, 1996.

carriageway' (Plates 36-37) and empowered the Minister of Works to lay 'a new central garden' over the existing arrangement.¹⁴¹ A pavement was to be provided 'round the greater part of the east and south sides of the new central garden.' The Minister was also to arrange 'the new west garden' on part of the site formerly occupied by the Canning Enclosure.¹⁴² All the materials and lamps to be used were to 'be of a character and design approved by the Commissioners [of Works].'¹⁴³

It was stipulated that once the layout was completed 'all public rights of way... within the garden in question shall be extinguished.'¹⁴⁴ As a result the rights of Westminster City Council for paving and repairing certain ways defined in the Parliament Square and other Streets Act, 1929 ceased to be exercisable.¹⁴⁵ This transfer of duties did not alter the fact that 'the said carriageways and footways shall remain part of the Palace of Westminster' and the Crown reserved the right to close or regulate these ways for ceremonial purposes.¹⁴⁶ Consequently the 'public right of way' over the new kerbs and pavements was 'subject to such limitations as the Minister may by order specify for enabling the ways in question to be stopped up on special occasions or for special purposes' and 'for securing the passage of members to and from both Houses of Parliament.'¹⁴⁷ These limitations were however not to 'prejudicially affect any right, power or privilege of the Crown'.¹⁴⁸

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In December 1950 Lord Noel-Buxton asked Morrison whether the Buxton memorial was to be re-erected in Parliament Square or, if not, whether some other marker would record that a memorial to the abolitionists was once there. This suggestion was

¹⁴¹ Parliament Square (Improvements) Act, Preamble (a) & (c).

¹⁴² Parliament Square (Improvements) Act, Preamble (f) & (d).

¹⁴³ Parliament Square (Improvements) Act, s.1 cl.(1)(b).

¹⁴⁴ Parliament Square (Improvements) Act, s.2 cl.(2).

¹⁴⁵ 'An Act to transfer from the Commissioners of Works to the Council of the City of Westminster powers and duties with respect to the paving repairing lighting watering and cleansing of certain carriageways and footways within the Palace of Westminster and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid.' 19 & 20 Geo. 5, c. v, 27 March 1929.

¹⁴⁶ Parliament Square (Improvements) Act, s.1 cl.(1)(a).

¹⁴⁷ Parliament Square (Improvements) Act, s.2 cl.(7) & s.6 cl.(4)(b).

¹⁴⁸ Parliament Square (Improvements) Act, s.6 cl.(4)(a).

ultimately realised.¹⁴⁹ Whilst he considered the fountain to be ‘ugly and out of keeping with its surroundings’ he, like Viscount Simon, felt that it was vital to preserve some recollection of the abolition of slavery. Simon cautioned that ‘to omit such a record from Parliament Square or the immediate precincts would show a grave disregard for one of the greatest Parliamentary achievements, and one of which we are all proud.’¹⁵⁰ The fountain was eventually moved to the central clearing of Victoria Tower Gardens in 1957 following the redesigning of the area the previous year.¹⁵¹ This edifice is now in a parlous state (Plate 81). Given its formal and material similarities with the Albert Memorial it would be fitting if it too could undergo an extensive restoration programme so that it might also ‘return to glory’ (see Preface). The fountain is currently on a site formerly occupied by Arthur George Walker’s statue of Emmeline Pankhurst, which was in turn moved closer to the Victoria Tower (see 1~7; Plate 116).¹⁵² The fact that the Buxton and Pankhurst memorials are located at one remove from Parliament Square is suggestive. It implies that excessively Liberal and radical commemorations have difficulty in maintaining a presence in what is a politically conservative (indeed Conservative) space.¹⁵³

This impression is borne out by reference to recent developments (see 7~1–2). It was also apparent in events that occurred a year before the re-erection of the Buxton fountain when it was superseded by a further memorial: the statue of Jan Christian Smuts (1870-1950) by Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) was funded by Parliamentary vote and unveiled by the Speaker of the House, Herbert Morrison on 7 November 1956

¹⁴⁹ Noel-Buxton thought this reminder could take the form of a ‘plinth of Portland stone, keeping the old inscription, or alternatively a statue of an African boy’ placed between Canning and Lincoln. *PD*, Lords, 1950-51, Vol. 169, pp. 850-851. The former was chosen. It reads: ‘FROM 1865 TO 1950 THERE STOOD ON THIS SITE THE MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN IN MEMORY OF SIR THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON BART MP AND OTHERS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES UNDER THE BRITISH FLAG IN THE YEAR 1834. THE MEMORIAL NOW STANDS IN THE VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS.’

¹⁵⁰ *PD*, Lords, 1950-51, Vol. 169, pp. 850-851.

¹⁵¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 21 July 1980, p. 14.

¹⁵² The latter was given a new pedestal and general design by Sir Herbert Baker to replace the original Portland stone flower vase. The re-inauguration took place on 13 July 1959. *The Times*, 14 July 1959, 4c; R.J.B. Walker, *A Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture and Engravings in The Palace of Westminster*, Vol. 3, Part IV, ‘Sculpture’, 1961, Appendix X, p. 139.

¹⁵³ The omission of Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960) from her mother’s memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens provides another instance of exclusion (see 1~7, note 123).

(Plate 119).¹⁵⁴ It occupied a vacant space on the northern side of the square alongside Thomas Woolner's Palmerston monument. The decision to allow this commemoration was a controversial one: Smuts was to be memorialised primarily for his role in Churchill's War Cabinet and for his 'outstanding service to the British Commonwealth as a whole'. However, L.S. Amery of the Commonwealth Relations Office stressed that Smuts 'was first and foremost Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa' and that the British government's decision to commemorate him in such a manner might be 'misconstrued in certain quarters in South Africa.' Amery thought that it was inadvisable to initiate 'schemes for the erection of memorials to statesmen of other Commonwealth countries and any other precedent, once created, might prove a very embarrassing one.'¹⁵⁵ He was, however, unsuccessful in his call for the statue to be paid for by public subscription.

Parliament Square's perennial role as a forum for debate is clearly in evidence with regard to the Smuts memorial. When it was first proposed to choose the sculptor by competitive means it was decided to confine the participants to citizens of the United Kingdom and South Africa, for fear of 'an Indian or a Pakistani winning the competition.'¹⁵⁶ This provides an additional facet to the issue of the abolition of slavery raised by both the Buxton memorial and the statue of Lincoln. Questions of race and racism, like those of electoral reform and the franchise, are conceptual nexuses linking the monuments in Parliament Square. The former is only faintly perceptible given the marginalization of the Buxton memorial and yet it is there nonetheless, as the archival documents pertaining to Smuts testify. Racism and national identity were also present as a sub-theme to the May Day riots that took place in Parliament Square in 2000 (see 6~9).

The Smuts debate also related to the wider theme of Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth. The rapidly changing character of the British Empire at that time has already been discussed in connection to the new House of Commons (6~4). In the light of this it is unsurprising that anxiety should have been expressed about erecting

¹⁵⁴ *The Times* 8 November 1956, 12d.

¹⁵⁵ L.S. Amery, Commonwealth Relations Office, 9 January 1951 to A.W. Cunliffe. 'Field Marshal J.C. Smuts'. Parliament Square 1950-1953. PRO WORK 20/222.

¹⁵⁶ It appears that this was at the suggestion of Lord Ismay. David Eccles to the Prime Minister, 14 November 1951. PRO WORK 20/222.

permanent memorials at a time of great change. However, it is equally predictable that a figure such as Smuts should occupy a space in Parliament Square given his strong connotations with Britain and its empire during the Second World War. His statue can thereby be understood as a precursor to the long-anticipated Churchill memorial. Even today the latter retains its significance due in large measure to its affinity with that conflict and the concomitant repercussions the war continues to have in terms of national identity.

Another topic inspired at the time by the Smuts memorial was the general question of the nature and number of statues that were in future to be erected in Parliament Square. With the exception of Lincoln the space was restricted to former British statesmen. As such it was advocated that Lloyd George and Churchill ought to be remembered there for the part they played in leading the nation during the two world wars.¹⁵⁷ To contemplate any further commemorations was felt to be inappropriate. This was a view shared by the architect of Parliament Square, who considered that 'it would be a great pity to start filling up the garden as if it were a graveyard.'¹⁵⁸ Wornum, concerned about the clash of styles between the existing statues and new commissions, favoured restricting future work to a series of 'monumental portrait busts' inserted into a wall on the north of the square, although he felt this form would be insufficiently grand for a military figure of the standing of Field Marshal Smuts.

This pointed to a further complication in the matter of the Smuts memorial: whether he was to be remembered as a soldier, statesman or academic. Visits by officials to the studio of the sculptor to inspect the work's progress commented that Epstein appeared 'rather confused as to which of the many-sided Smuts he... [was] meant to represent.'¹⁵⁹ In addition, the commissioners were anxious that the end result was to 'be a "work of art"'. Upon returning from Epstein's studio one protagonist in the commission confessed:

I fully recognize that it will be argued that a site in Parliament Square will be so restricting to the imagination that a work of art cannot result. It may be that

¹⁵⁷ Eden to Rutter, 21 November 1951. PRO WORK 20/222.

¹⁵⁸ Wornum (1020 Green Street, San Francisco) to Rutter, 18 December 1951 [copy]. PRO WORK 20/222.

¹⁵⁹ See the correspondence between Lord Harlech (the Chairman of the selection committee) and Normann dated 13-14 July 1953. PRO WORK 20/222.

Parliament Square is wrong – it certainly is in danger of becoming an out-of-doors “Great Public Figures Corner” complementary to the in-doors one for poets in the Abbey.¹⁶⁰

The constraints of the site are evident in Epstein’s statue. When it was eventually unveiled, the leaning figure of Smuts, hands clasped behind his back, met with mixed reviews with the animated posture of the statue criticised by some on account of the fact that it appeared to be ‘striding off his pedestal’ (Plate 119).¹⁶¹

Opinions on the next, and currently last, memorial were considerably less divided. And it was to Winston Churchill that Grey Wornum was referring in his letter of December 1951 in which he cautioned against ‘filling up the garden as if it were a graveyard’. He nevertheless looked upon the north-east corner of Parliament Square ‘as one of the finest sites in London for a future monument to another great man still living’.¹⁶² Discussion of this statue most properly comes in the final section of this chapter. Prior to that it is necessary to indicate how Parliament Square in its Grey Wornum form fared from 21 April 1951 when – with the statues relocated, the roads reopened and the azaleas, geraniums and hydrangeas planted – the reconstruction work came officially to an end.¹⁶³

6~8 London traffic

Work was already well underway in the summer of 1950 when a panoramic photograph entitled ‘The changes in Parliament Square’ was published in *The Times*.¹⁶⁴ This indicated the alterations that had taken place: although not yet open the new carriageway to the west of the existing road was well advanced and the Lincoln statue has already been re-sited. Niklaus Pevsner, writing a few years after its completion, declared that the ‘rearrangement of the statuary was a great improvement’. He nevertheless commented that

¹⁶⁰ Louis Osman (9 Barton Street, Westminster) to David Eccles, 9 May 1952. PRO WORK 20/222.

¹⁶¹ Niklaus Pevsner, *London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1957/1973 (3rd edition revised by Bridget Cherry), p. 621.

¹⁶² Wornum to Rutter, 18 December 1951 [copy]. PRO WORK 20/222.

¹⁶³ ‘Brighter London’, *Daily Telegraph*, 21 April 1951, p. 4.

¹⁶⁴ *The Times*, 26 June 1950, p. 10.

the formal lawn tends to look dismal. The buildings surrounding the square and the incoming streets do not justify the Grand Manner. The statues have abandoned it successfully, the planting layout should do the same. One good tree sited asymmetrically near one of the corners of the lawn would make a great deal of difference.¹⁶⁵

Despite this qualified praise Grey Wornum had received the gold medal of the RIBA for 1952 for his Parliament Square design.¹⁶⁶ At the time Mr. H. Austen Hall praised it 'as one of the most intelligent of any open space in London.' He pointed out that the terraces corresponded with the north door of Westminster Abbey and the Clock Tower of parliament and that all the statues were aligned and facing in the same direction. It was his opinion that if this should mark 'the beginning of a general clear-up in London' it would result in the city becoming a much more beautiful place.¹⁶⁷ W.H. Ansell echoed this acclaim. In a letter to *The Times* he observed that Wornum's success had 'passed almost unnoticed by the general public', not least because 'access to it and egress from it are not unattended without considerable personal risk'. Nevertheless he characterised the arrangement as an 'object lesson' in how to treat the squares of London which had been opened to the public since the war. Ansell urged that this 'opportunity to create little oases of ordered beauty in London should not be lost.'¹⁶⁸

In September 1951, following the completion of the Wornum scheme, the 'sacred' nature of Parliament Square was reiterated. A decision of the WCC, upheld by the Minister of Local Government and Planning, forbade the erection of blue fluorescent tube letters measuring up to 2 ft. 3 in. in height on two façades of the building at the corner of Parliament Street and Bridge Street. The Minister decreed that 'the display of the illuminated signs would be completely out of keeping with the character of Parliament-square and the surrounding buildings, and would be prejudicial to the amenity of the square.'¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Niklaus Pevsner, *London I: The Cities of London and Westminster*, p. 621.

¹⁶⁶ Wornum was the 103rd one-hundred-and-third recipient of the medal. See Julian Osley, 'Royal Gold Medallists 1848-1984', p. 72.

¹⁶⁷ 'Parliament Square replanning. Architect praised', *The Times*, 13 November 1952, 3b.

¹⁶⁸ W.H. Ansell (The Athenaeum, Pall Mall) to *The Times*, 19 November 1952, 9e.

¹⁶⁹ 'Parliament Square. Ban on Illuminated Signs', *Builder*, 21 September 1951, Vol. 181, No. 5666, p. 396.

Wornum's design was indicative of what Kenneth Browne was to term 'roundabout fever' in an article published in *Architectural Review* during the summer of 1952. This witty piece does not refer to Parliament Square directly but provides a fitting critique of the roundabout: 'a No-Man's-Land, an island isolated from its surroundings, forbidden territory to the pedestrian.'¹⁷⁰ Browne was scathing about how, in his view, the 'traffic stream' (especially roundabouts) fragment the townscape by disrupting 'the all-important relationship between floor surface and buildings'. His complaint was that what might seem perfectly logical in a drawing-board plan appears far less satisfactory seen from 'the only view that matters – the view from the ground.' The kerbs and 'meaningless' pavements invariably encircle a glut of signs, plant pots, railings and lampposts resulting in the 'complete dislocation of the street achieved by treating every available space as an island.' Three classifications of roundabout are identified: the 'Rustic' or 'Olde Worlde style' ('camouflaging traffic control as nursery gardening'); the 'Wired' ('A good, strong fence makes it clear that the garden is not for the public'); and the 'Public Convenience' ('Ill-named on account of the inconvenience of access across traffic, it is generally the dumping ground of sand-bins and a multitude of signs conflicting in shape, lettering and instruction').¹⁷¹

Parliament Square as it appeared in 1951 possessed a number of these familial characteristics identified in Browne's essay. Indeed it might be thought of as the most eminent and prestigious example of the post-war roundabout. It can therefore be considered a prototype for twentieth-century traffic solutions. This part of Westminster had experienced some of the densest traffic in the metropolis since at least the mid-nineteenth-century. Evidence for this stems from the fact that the road leading to Westminster Bridge was the site of the world's first traffic lights. John Peake Knight (1828-86), Traffic Manager for the London to Brighton Railway Line, invented the system.¹⁷² His first proposal for an arrangement based on railway signalling was made in 1866. Official figures for the period of 1 March to 31 December of that year revealed that 102 people had been killed and 1,334 maimed or

¹⁷⁰ Kenneth Browne, 'Roundabouts', pp. 388-392 in *Architectural Review*, Vol. 111, No. 666, June 1952, p. 388.

¹⁷¹ Kenneth Browne, 'Roundabouts', pp. 391-392.

¹⁷² *Westminster Reporter*, Issue 36, May 1999, p. 9.

injured on London's streets. This included the four who died and the ninety-seven that were hurt in Westminster.¹⁷³ Two years later the junction at Bridge Street saw the installation of the inaugural traffic lights.¹⁷⁴

A little under a century later, in mid-November 1952, Raymond Chandler commented disparagingly on an article written by Sir Sacheverell Sitwell in the *New Yorker*. Sitwell had opined that the traffic in New York was 'better managed than that in London'. Chandler considered this to be

about as idiotic a remark as I have ever heard or read. New York traffic isn't managed at all. It is absolute chaos. London traffic, generally speaking and considering the fantastic pattern of the streets, is superbly managed. Of course the system wouldn't work in New York because it depends on a certain element of decency and obedience to the law.¹⁷⁵

In the very same month the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research published its findings on 'The Effect on Traffic Speeds and Journey Times of the Enlargement of Parliament Square'. It stated that:

In 1950, the size of Parliament Square was enlarged with the object of providing greater traffic capacity... It seems, however, unlikely that the average journey time would have been appreciably changed if the inflow had remained at its value before the layout was altered.¹⁷⁶

The storage capacity for vehicles on the north side of the square *had* been improved, leading to a slight increase in average speeds. However, these advantages were entirely lost owing to the fact that the enlargement of the square had increased the distance needed to travel around it. It would appear that such a potential outcome had not occurred to the civil servants at the Ministry of Transport.

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At the time of the Festival of Britain there seemed little doubt that making extensive provision for motorised traffic was both positive and necessary. When Grey

¹⁷³ 'Return of the Number of Accidents to Persons run over by Carts and Carriages in the Public Streets of London, 1866-69', *PP* 1870 (26) LV.1.

¹⁷⁴ The threat to pedestrians persisted however. In the first six months of 1869 one person was killed and thirty-six injured by traffic in Westminster. In the whole of London the total was sixty-two killed and 764 hurt. 'Return of the Number of Accidents', *PP* 1870 (26) LV.1.

¹⁷⁵ Raymond Chandler to Dale Warren, 13 November 1952 cited in Paul Bailey (ed.), *The Oxford Book of London*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 340-341.

¹⁷⁶ PRO DSIR 27/261.

Wornum's scheme was implemented there could have been little conception of the upsurge in traffic that was to come. The architect Richard Rogers (1933-) states in his book *Cities for a small planet* that by the mid-twentieth-century there were 2.6 billion people on the planet and 50 million cars. Whilst the former has doubled in the last fifty years the latter has increased tenfold and it is anticipated that the number of vehicles will rise to a billion in another twenty-five years.¹⁷⁷

This escalation is such that, according to Rogers: 'Grand spaces like Parliament Square, Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park Corner and Marble Arch have all been overwhelmed by cars.'¹⁷⁸ In 1996 (a decade after the Richard Rogers Partnership exhibition of 1986 *London as It Could Be* had advocated the pedestrianisation of the north side of Trafalgar Square) the then Minister of the Environment, John Gummer commissioned a feasibility study into the pedestrianisation of an area from Trafalgar Square to Parliament Square.¹⁷⁹ A subsequent report by a multidisciplinary team led by Sir Norman Foster and Partners attested to the marked shift in attitudes towards the urban environment since the mid-twentieth-century.

Foster's opinion is coloured by his belief that:

The London of the postcards is the nucleus of Britain, the most precious site in the land... Yet the innate harmony of Westminster is today invisible. Although pockets are well known and loved, the pieces do not fit together, severed by traffic arteries. There are more barriers than links. Sadly, the settings for some of the finest buildings are so appalling that they cannot be appreciated. To ignore the paucity of space and allow traffic to rush past them is a national disgrace.¹⁸⁰

His partnership's far-ranging study entitled *World Squares for All* sought to reverse the dominance of the car over the pedestrian by prohibiting private transport from part of Trafalgar Square, Whitehall and Parliament Square. The third and final phase of this £50 million scheme recommended closing the south side of Parliament Square in order to 'create an improved and appropriate setting for the World Heritage Site...

¹⁷⁷ Richard Rogers & Philip Gumuchdjian, 'Sustainable cities', pp. 24-63 in *Cities for a small planet*, p. 35. Rogers goes on to report (p. 122) that in 1997 two-thirds of journeys within London are made by car, and government estimates are for this traffic to rise by 142 per cent.

¹⁷⁸ Richard Rogers & Philip Gumuchdjian, *Cities for a small planet*, p. 126.

¹⁷⁹ Richard Rogers & Philip Gumuchdjian, *Cities for a small planet*, p. 133 & illustrations p. 132.

¹⁸⁰ Norman Foster, 'The New Golden City', *The Guardian (Features)*, 19 April 1997, p. 5.

[which] at present... is divided by heavy traffic and poor materials, with insufficient space for pedestrians'.¹⁸¹ In the unlikely event of this being realised the division between the Abbey and Parliament Square would be elided thus reversing the schemes of both E.M. Barry and Grey Wornum. The necessity of this process is demonstrated by the fact that Parliament Square is *already* linked with Westminster Abbey by being included within the same Conservation Area.¹⁸² It is in other words 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.¹⁸³ Such a designation is intended to address 'the quality of townscape in its broadest sense as well as the protection of individual buildings.' This includes recognition of 'the historic layout', 'particular "mix" of uses', 'vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of spaces between buildings'.¹⁸⁴

Such terminology is strikingly close to that used in the second decade of the nineteenth-century when Parliament Square was first cleared (see 1~3). It was at that time stipulated that no edifices were to be erected there that would block the 'magnificent view' as travellers entered into Westminster. The protections afforded by Conservation Area status are bolstered even further in this particular instance: there are still in force today 'Strategic Views Corridors', consisting of cone-shaped areas three-hundred metres in width, which are intended to further preserve the aspect of the Houses of Parliament, St. Margaret's Church and Westminster Abbey (Plate 3).

The area addressed by *World Squares for All* consists of four Conservation Areas and over one hundred and seventy listed structures, more than thirty of which are ranked Grade I.¹⁸⁵ It is, in its entirety, a "sacred site" rather than a series of discrete clusters of 'buildings of outstanding or exceptional interest'.¹⁸⁶ This, a definition of a Grade I listed building, is reserved for structures 'of particularly great importance to the

¹⁸¹ Foster and Partners, *World Squares for All Masterplan*, London, 1998, pp. 58-61 & 76.

¹⁸² Westminster City Council demarcates this Conservation Area as 'CA 20'.

¹⁸³ 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990', Section (69)(1)(a).

¹⁸⁴ PPG 15, *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment*, Department of the Environment / Department of National Heritage, 1994, 4.2.

¹⁸⁵ Foster and Partners, *World Squares for All Masterplan*, p. 21.

¹⁸⁶ National Audit Office, *Protecting and Managing England's Heritage Property*, London, HMSO, 1992, p. 7.

nation's built heritage' and 'likely to be of international significance'.¹⁸⁷ Included within this category are St. Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster. Moreover, in 1987, these buildings achieved the status of World Heritage Site, for being illustrative, among other things, of 'significant stages in human history'.¹⁸⁸

It has been observed that the 'boundaries' of many World Heritage Sites 'are inconsistent and are generally acknowledged as needing reviewing'.¹⁸⁹ Dr Christopher Young, current Head of World Heritage and International Policy at English Heritage, has stated that the borders of the Westminster World Heritage Site were 'drawn very tightly' around the buildings and that, in retrospect, this has proven inconvenient. He believes 'it likely that the World Heritage Site Management Plan for Westminster, on which work is likely to commence shortly, will want to re-open the question of boundaries'.¹⁹⁰ As currently configured they divide it into two parts, with the Palace of Westminster in one section and the area around Westminster Abbey in another (Plate 3). It has been remarked that this arrangement 'has the curious result that Parliament Square with its statues of statesmen... [is] excluded from the site, despite being an integral part of the immediate setting of the Palace and the Abbey'.¹⁹¹ The occlusion of the area in this regard gives a strong indication that, despite its central location and undeniable importance, Parliament Square has been and remains to this day an oddly neglected, marginal place.

6~9 In one word: Churchill

Nevertheless, at certain moments and in appropriate contexts this disregard can be temporarily put aside. On such occasions a monument or group of monuments attain a prominence that belies their actual importance. Times of ceremony and celebration

¹⁸⁷ R.W. Suddards & J.M. Hargreaves, *Listed Buildings: The Law and Practice of Historic Buildings, Ancient Monuments, and Conservation Areas*, Sweet & Maxwell, London, 1996, pp. 47-48.

¹⁸⁸ UNESCO, *Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List: Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage*, 1972, 12-15; No. 426, 1987.

¹⁸⁹ R.W. Suddards & J.M. Hargreaves, *Listed Buildings*, p. 70.

¹⁹⁰ Christopher Young cited in correspondence to the author, 12 March 2001.

¹⁹¹ ICOMOS UK, *The English World Heritage Sites Monitoring Reports*, London, 1995, p. 143.

witness the gathering of crowds, the erection of stands, and the giving of speeches (cf. Plates 46 & 100).¹⁹² These events, as we have seen, are diligently recorded and reported in the media. This was as applicable in the nineteenth and the twentieth-centuries as it is in the twenty-first. Events succeeding the demise of the one-hundred-and-one year old Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother on 30 March 2002 provide ample proof of this. For the subsequent ten days she lay in state on a catafalque in Westminster Hall, a sight witnessed by a shuffling line of tens of thousands 'of people motivated by a mixture of loyalty, nostalgia and curiosity.'¹⁹³ On 9 April '[h]undreds of thousands (sic) gathered in Parliament Square to glimpse the grandest funeral procession Britain has seen since the state funeral of Sir Winston Churchill the wartime prime minister, in 1965' (Plate 132).¹⁹⁴ Churchill's body too had rested in Westminster Hall before his national memorial service in Westminster Abbey. This was yet another occasion when multitudes of people were drawn onto the Parliament Square stage.

These were not the only Churchillian memories with which the square is imbued. On 9 May 1945, with peace declared in Europe, a euphoric crowd cheered Churchill as he threaded his way through a heaving Parliament Square.¹⁹⁵ On that jubilant day this most famous of British statesmen passed through the place where, on 1 November 1973, the last great unveiling in Parliament Square's history was to take place. It was then that Lady Churchill, accompanied by Queen Elizabeth II, released the cord to reveal a bronze figure measuring 3.66m (12 feet). The Lord Mayor of Westminster then addressed the crowd thronging the area and gave thanks to those who contributed to the £32,000 it cost to commission the statue.¹⁹⁶

In 1968 a public subscription had been set up through the auspices of the Lord Mayor of Westminster's 'Winston Churchill Memorial Statue Appeal', chaired by the

¹⁹² The detailed nature of the arrangements made for the unveiling of the statue of Jan Christian Smuts on 7 November 1956 can be gleaned from PRO WORK 20/222 and also WORK 16/1938 where there is a map showing the seating plan for the ceremony.

¹⁹³ David White, 'Media at odds in run-up to Queen Mother's funeral', *Financial Times Europe*, 9 April 2002, p. 10.

¹⁹⁴ Cathy Newman, 'Queen Mother's funeral brings Britain to a halt'; 'A terribly British farewell for the Queen Mother', *Financial Times Europe*, 10 April 2002, pp. 1 & 9.

¹⁹⁵ 'A face in the crowd', *The [Daily] Express Century*, 29 May 1999, p. 11.

¹⁹⁶ Terry Coleman, 'Dominant Churchill in Westminster', *The Guardian*, 2 November 1973, p. 7.

politician John Tilney. In December 1969, after consultation with the Royal Fine Art Commission, a competition was proposed to commission a full-length statue to stand in the north-east corner of the square.¹⁹⁷ Nine sculptors were initially invited and two of them, Oscar Nemon (1906-85) and Ivor Roberts-Jones, were asked to submit revised designs. Nemon had from the beginning garnered a great deal of influential support, not least from Lady Churchill herself. Furthermore, in 1969 he completed a statue of Churchill for the Members' Lobby of parliament (Plate 121).¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless the commission of the RFAC – which included Henry Moore (1898-1986) and John Piper (1903-92) – as well as a committee of MPs assisted by an additional group of assessors including Lord Kenneth Clark (1903-83) and Sir Philip Hendy (1900-80), agreed to give the commission to Roberts-Jones. This was announced on 10 February 1971. A full-size maquette was shown to the commissioners and parliamentarians in October 1972 and the work was completed a little over a year later (Plate 120).

Terry Coleman, writing in *The Guardian* on 2 November 1973, observed that attending the unveiling ceremony were ten former Prime Ministers: half that number in flesh-and-blood, and half as bronze effigies.¹⁹⁹ He described the newest sculpture as

the most conspicuous statue of all... [It is] taller than the rest... with its back to all the others and immediately facing Big Ben. If Churchill chose the site himself, as he is said to have done, he chose the best... Nobody condemned it, not even rival sculptors. It dominates the square and on its plinth is one word, Churchill.²⁰⁰

Peter Cannon-Brookes was later to similarly opine that this representation depicts the wartime leader in the ebullient mood of the Normandy landings. As such 'the figure exudes total confidence: facing the Houses of Parliament, their greatest servant in

¹⁹⁷ This paragraph is substantially informed by Peter Cannon-Brookes, 'Winston Churchill Monuments', pp. 51-59 in *Ivor Roberts-Jones, Y Daith i Harlech / The Journey to Harlech*, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1983.

¹⁹⁸ Malcolm Hay & Jacqueline Riding, *Art in Parliament: the permanent collection of the House of Commons*, Jarrold, Norwich, 1996, p. 60.

¹⁹⁹ Terry Coleman, 'Dominant Churchill in Westminster', *The Guardian*, 2 November 1973, p. 7. The former contingent consisted of Anthony Eden (1897-1977), Harold Macmillan (1894-1986), Alec Douglas-Home (1903-95), Harold Wilson (1916-95) and Edward Heath (1916-). Eden was Prime Minister from 1955-57, Macmillan (1957-63), Douglas-Home (1963-64), Wilson (1964-70 and 1974-76) and Heath (1970-74). Wilson was the only Labour statesman, the others being Conservatives.

²⁰⁰ Terry Coleman, 'Dominant Churchill in Westminster', *The Guardian*, 2 November 1973, p. 7.

modern times is portrayed as a giant at the height of his powers.²⁰¹ The success of the work is indicated by the fact that Roberts-Jones received a number of subsequent commissions: statues of Churchill by him stand in Oslo and New Orleans, unveiled in 1975 and 1977 respectively.

Positioned on almost exactly the spot once occupied by Westmacott's George Canning the magnitude and dominance of this statue is unmistakable. Whereas the colossal scale and antique appearance of Canning was to prove problematic, it would appear that in the case of Churchill there was both political and artistic accord. The evident disparity between this figure and the existing statues seemed to be not only overruled but in fact deliberately invoked. Occupying the prime location beneath the Clock Tower it makes an overt claim to universal adulation (Plate 122). This is underscored by the most succinct of inscriptions: 'Churchill'. Dates and further details are deemed superfluous with the presumption that all will know whom the figure is and what he represents. The absence of birth and death dates posits this individual outside of time.

By the start of the twenty-first-century a vocal minority shattered this illusion of universality.²⁰² On 1 May 2000 "Reclaim the Streets" activists undertook some impromptu "guerrilla gardening" in Parliament Square, paying paid scant respect for the symbols around them.²⁰³ Their horticultural conduct somewhat contradicted the pronouncements of the Earl of Iddesleigh made in 1949 during the debate on the Wornum plan (see 6~7). He was confident that people did 'not go to Parliament Square in order to see quaintness or to delight in floral beauty' but instead 'to be impressed by the majesty of the centre of the British Empire.' The "Avant Gardeners" of 1 May were evidently not overawed by this imperial splendour: the range of 'floral

²⁰¹ For this author's full assessment of the work see Peter Cannon-Brookes, *Ivor Roberts-Jones*, p. 57.

²⁰² The account that follows is in part based upon an unpublished paper given by the present author entitled: 'Parliament Square: commemoration and contestation', *Third International Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference*, Birmingham University, 21-25 June 2000.

²⁰³ Paul Baldwin, Richard Eden & Sally Pook, 'Rioters dishonour war heroes', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2000, p. 1; Andrew Mullins, Andrew Buncombe & Steve Boggan, 'Guerrilla gardeners came to plant, but they carried with them the seeds of destruction', *Independent*, 2 May 2000, p. 3.

beauty' growing in the square by the summer of 2000 included 'cannabis, gladioli, onions, carrots, barley, broad beans and potatoes'.²⁰⁴

Accompanying those responsible for this harvest was a loose coalition of anti-globalisation protestors. They left Parliament Square and blocked the traffic in Great George Street before fighting a running battle with the police up and down Whitehall.²⁰⁵ In the process they daubed paint onto the Cenotaph. This, the national war memorial evoking the tomb of the unknown warrior in Westminster Abbey, is meant as a universal symbol for all those lost in conflict.²⁰⁶ Whilst that concept sought to encapsulate the many, the statue of Churchill in the north-east corner of the square represents the individual who, perhaps more than any other, currently equates to a British national hero. They scrawled obscenities on the granite pedestal, added red paint to the figure's mouth to imitate blood, and draped a strip of mohican-like turf over his head.²⁰⁷ The front pages of the *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail* consisted of large colour photographs of the monument daubed with graffiti and surmounted by jubilant protestors (Plates 123-4). The accompanying headline of the former invoked a modified Churchillian phrase: 'This was their vilest hour' (Plate 124).²⁰⁸

It is only by reflecting on the veneers of symbolism and power that lie, layer upon layer, over Parliament Square is it possible to fully account for this outraged reaction. Those arrested in connection with the events of 1 May included James Matthews, a twenty-five year old student and ex-soldier with service experience in Bosnia and Croatia. A photograph of him, spray can in hand and clinging to the lapel of the Churchill statue, was widely published in the press (Plate 125).²⁰⁹ Matthews took such a newspaper cutting and presented it at a police station.²¹⁰ At his trial he received a

²⁰⁴ Matt Born, 'Commons goes to pot as seeds of protest blossom', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 July 2000, p. 13.

²⁰⁵ See the map entitled 'The protesters' route', *The Independent*, 2 May 2000, p. 3.

²⁰⁶ Designed by Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869-1944) and originally built in plaster, it was reconstructed in Portland stone and inaugurated on 11 November 1920. An inscription pertaining to the Second World War was unveiled by George VI in 1946. See Margaret Baker, *London Statues and Monuments*, Shire Publications, Princes Risborough, 1995, p. 22.

²⁰⁷ John Stillwell, 'Anarchy thugs riot in Central London [photograph]', *The Times*, 2 May 2000, p. 1.

²⁰⁸ Jeff Edwards, 'This was their vilest hour', *The Mirror*, 2 May 2000, p. 1.

²⁰⁹ Charles Rae, Mike Sullivan & John Coles, 'Blair: name and shame the thugs'. Picture A: 'Nasty piece of work... rucksack carrying yob uses spray can on statue of wartime leader Winston Churchill. Do you recognise him?', *The Sun*, 3 May 2000, pp. 4-5.

²¹⁰ Paul Peachey, 'Churchill vandal jailed for 30 days', *The Times*, 10 May 2000, p. 11.

fine and a thirty-day prison sentence for ‘actions [that had] caused a great affront to many British people and many people overseas.’²¹¹ In court the accused claimed that: ‘On a day when people all over the world were gathering to express their human rights of freedom and free expression, it was acceptable to challenge an icon of the establishment.’ He went on:

For many the statue [of Churchill] symbolised thuggery against miners in the general strike of 1926, the thuggery shown to thousands of ordinary people in Ireland and the thuggery meted out to suffragettes. If some people have been offended by my graffiti, many others have been offended by such a reactionary politician who was imperialist and anti-semitic.²¹²

Such an interpretation of the statue utterly contradicts the intended commemorative associations on the part of its creators and defenders. This not only reiterates the fact that one memorial can have many connotations; it also serves to demonstrate that the official historical narrative is but one reading of the past. Those espousing the dominant discourse will have the capacity to erect statues and memorials to verify this version and give it the aura of universality. Individuals and groups that disagree or seek to challenge this authorial account do not have the wherewithal (or perhaps desire) to erect competing symbols within a ‘realm of memory’ such as Parliament Square. If they wish to draw attention to the ‘silences of history’ they must incur the wrath of the state by reacting against existing monuments and memorials.²¹³ One ought to think very carefully before dismissing events such as those that occurred in Parliament Square on 1 May 2000 as mere ‘mindless thuggery’.²¹⁴ It is this therefore that will be discussed at greater length in the concluding section.

²¹¹ Stipendiary magistrate, Roger Davies cited in Anon, ‘Churchill protestor is jailed’, *The Guardian*, 10 May 2000, p. 13.

²¹² David Millward, ‘Ex-soldier who defaced Churchill statue is jailed’, *Daily Telegraph*, 10 May 2000, p. 13.

²¹³ These terms, borrowed from Pierre Nora, will be acknowledged and referred to again in the penultimate chapter.

²¹⁴ Following the riot Tony Blair, the Prime Minister ejaculated: ‘The people responsible for the damage in London today are an absolute disgrace. Their actions have got nothing to do with convictions or beliefs and everything to do with mindless thuggery.’ Cited in Will Woodward, Paul Kelso & John Vidal, ‘Protests erupt in violence’, *Guardian*, 2 May 2000, p. 1.

Parliament Square in the twenty-first century

7~1 Protesting in a realm of memory

At the outset of this thesis Parliament Square was put forward as an eminent example of a ‘realm of memory’ (see 1~4). To reiterate, this phrase (*lieux de mémoire*) was defined by Pierre Nora as ‘any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element in the memorial heritage of any community’.¹ In the following discussion the views of this scholar will be quoted extensively and at length in order to present as fully as possible the exact nuances of his argument.²

In Nora’s opinion we are now living in ‘the era of commemoration’ and are in fact experiencing symptoms of ‘commemorative bulimia’.³ This is because ‘traditional forms of national and civic commemoration have been swallowed up by politics’ due to the fact ‘that no event since World War II has been fully assimilable to a unified national memory.’ Nora characterises this as a liberating phenomenon, but with ‘two contradictory consequences’. Firstly, the ‘control of the interpretation and meaning of commemoration has passed into the hands of private groups, political parties, trade unions, and other organisations, with a concomitant potential for internal conflict and controversy over the staging of every ceremony, as each detail affects the overall symbolic signification’. In contrast, ‘commemoration at the national level has become less a matter of militant expression of the unity of a single group and more a matter of pluralistic unity of the many groups with conflicting agendas that constitute a democratic polity’.⁴

¹ Pierre Nora, ‘Preface to the English Language Edition’, pp. xv-xxiv in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past. Vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p. xvii.

² It should be noted that, whilst Nora is working in a specifically French context, his writings nevertheless possess valuable resonance for the themes discussed in relation to Parliament Square.

³ Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory: the construction of the French past. Vol. III: Symbols*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 609.

⁴ Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory... Vol. III: Symbols*, p. 616.

It is therefore claimed that “the silences of history” are beginning to be spoken and, accordingly: ‘Everything has its own history and has a right to that history’.⁵ The appreciation of all aspects of (French) heritage (*patrimoine*), it is argued, has given voice to a ‘subgroup’ of identities rather than an ‘overall collective identity’: whereas formerly ‘there was *one* national history and there were *many* particular memories. Today, there is *one* national memory, but its unity stems from a divided patrimonial demand that is constantly expanding and in search of coherence.’ As a result ‘the national memory is not a secure possession or closed inventory’. It is instead ‘subject to continual change [as] private memories become shared memories’. For Nora, ‘the term [*lieux de mémoire*] makes it possible to reassemble the shattered national whole’.⁶

This analysis ends, however, with the assertion that the ‘bed of memory cannot be extended indefinitely’ but that ‘the rise of the memorial is an affirmation of continuity’.⁷ Such continuity, coupled with a belief in the persistence of a single ‘national memory’, would suggest that ‘the shattered national whole’ is not as fragmented or fractured as Nora claims. And, if so, it would appear that there is no fundamental difference between a singular ‘national history’ and ‘national memory’. Whilst acknowledging that a dissemination of memory must augur a plethora of contradictory claims and interpretations, Nora fails to adequately address notions of contest. If a unitary, national memory persists (as is clearly apparent in the ‘realm of memory’ that is the Palace of Westminster and Parliament Square) where are the contributions from ‘the many groups with conflicting agendas that constitute a democratic polity’?

Discord and dissent in fact lie beneath the veneer of oneness espoused by the architecture and memorials of Westminster. This is used to excellent effect in the opening scene of the Bosnian writer-director Jasmin Dizdar’s black comedy *Beautiful People* of 1999.⁸ Set in 1993 at a time when England’s football team is abroad playing a World Cup qualifying game the film explores the discords of nationalism from

⁵ Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory... Vol. III: Symbols*, pp. 627 & 636.

⁶ Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory... Vol. III: Symbols*, pp. 632 & 635-36.

⁷ Pierre Nora (ed.), *Realms of Memory... Vol. III: Symbols*, p. 637.

⁸ Jasmin Dizdar (writer/director), *Beautiful People*, 108 minutes, Tall Stories, Alliance Atlantis, 2000.

Wales to Yugoslavia. In the opening scene a Serb encounters a fellow refugee from Croatia on a double-decker bus as it moves along Victoria Street towards the Houses of Parliament. The brawling exiles are ejected from the bus and, under the watchful eye of the resolute bronze statue of Winston Churchill, they embark on a mini-Bosnian war in the heart of London. As they chase each other across Parliament Square the staccato eye of the camera focuses on the ubiquitous symbols of national identity that pepper the City of Westminster: the statues and buildings, tourists and policemen, lollypop ladies and red double-decker buses. These staples of 'Englishness' – and by extension 'Britishness' – bespeak both unity and control as well as of impermeability. Within this context the embattled fragility of the identities of these refugees becomes even more starkly apparent.

The sacredness of such national symbolism identified in Dizdar's *Beautiful People* explains the incandescent rage of the British media to the May Day furore in London on the first day of that month, 2000.⁹ This riotous behaviour came at exactly the time when memories of World War II moved from memory to history and when questions of national identity were being challenged. In such a climate memorials attain added significance, as is clearly apparent with regard to current attitudes toward memorials to the First and Second World Wars. Discomfiture is experienced when the physical erosion of the names of those commemorated coincides with the passing away of the last survivors. The words 'Lest we forget' written on innumerable war memorials indicate that these monoliths punctuate our streets intending to serve as permanent reminders.¹⁰ They seek to guard against compounding the futility of so many deaths by our negligence.¹¹ In November 1999, English Heritage launched a campaign to

⁹ Sandra Barwick, Paul Baldwin & Richard Eden, 'Pensioner's disgust as Churchill's statue becomes a target for thugs', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2000, pp. 4-5; John Vidal, 'Ben threw the first stone – and the garden party erupted into running fights with police', *Guardian*, 2 May 2000, p. 3. Edward Black, Cyril Dixon, Anthony Mitchell, Greg Swift & John Twomey (with photography by Jon Bond, Rosie Hallam, Tony Sapiano & Chris Sharpe, 'May Day Mayhem: Terror on the streets as carnival demo turns into riot', *Daily Express*, 2 May 2000, pp. 1-3.

¹⁰ 'In a nation where the ranks of men and women whose direct experience of war is dwindling steadily, these tributes should be a lasting reminder of the sacrifice made by previous generations... As the collective memory of world war ebbs, the ties to the past become more important. War memorials should not die, nor should they fade away'. Anon, 'Memorials Day: A timely campaign for the monuments of war', *The Times*, 10 November 1999, p. 25.

¹¹ To take but one example: a quotation, attributed to John of Oxenham, inscribed on a war memorial in Boston, Lincolnshire reads: 'He died the noblest death a man may die / Fighting for God and Right and

safeguard the nation's 60,000 war memorials.¹² Similarly, an attempted re-enactment of the sixtieth anniversary of the Dunkirk evacuation was a manifestation of this struggle to staunch the ebbing away of memory, as the number of living survivors dwindled.¹³

Given that May Day 2000 coincided with this period of historical fracture there was a heightening of sensitivity towards such memorials. In the wake of the demonstration Tony Blair 'led a chorus of political outrage against [the] rioters'.¹⁴ This did not deter the Conservative opposition from striving to portray the unrest as an example of government failings over law and order. As this was just prior to local elections in over one hundred and fifty English councils both sides succumbed to the temptation of using the potent symbolism of Churchill and the Cenotaph as a means of playing party politics.¹⁵ Further heat was generated due to the fact that race and racism was at the time a burning political issue. The publication of Sir William Macpherson's report into the racist murder of the black youth, Stephen Lawrence (1974-93) appeared in February 1999 and found the police to have been incompetent and 'institutionally racist'.¹⁶ The issue of asylum seekers entered party politics. Charles Kennedy, leader of the Liberal Democrats accused William Hague, his counterpart in the Conservative Party, of 'pandering to prejudice', a charge that was vigorously rebuffed.¹⁷ This did not prevent a cartoon by Peter Brookes from appearing in *The Times* newspaper in

Liberty / And such a death is immortality'. The words 'Lest we forget' feature upon a corner obelisk commemorating the RAF Association.

¹² Michael Evans, 'Memorial rescue mission launched', *The Times*, 10 November 1999, p. 4. See also Peter Hitchens, 'If we can't defend our war memorials we may find we can't defend Britain', 21 February 1998, p. 10; Alan Judd, 'Who forgets all loses all', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 July 1998, p. 20.

¹³ See the series of articles published by the on-line version of the *Daily Telegraph*: 'Dunkirk's ageing little ship veterans prepare for final journey'; 'Weather defeats Dunkirk's "little ships"'; 'Cheers ring out as Dunkirk spirit sails again'; 16, 29 May & 3 June 2000 [all accessed on 24 January 2001 from the site <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>>].

¹⁴ Michael White & Will Woodward, 'Blair vents outrage at rioters: PM calls on families and friends to name and shame the culprits', *The Guardian*, 3 May 2000, p. 2; Charles Rae, Mike Sullivan & John Coles, 'Blair: name and shame the thugs', *The Sun*, 3 May 2000, pp. 3-4.

¹⁵ Blair accused the leader of the opposition of 'leaping on any passing bandwagon', to which William Hague responded that it was Prime Minister 'that went out to the Cenotaph yesterday, peeled an onion and said it can never happen again.' Cited in George Jones, 'Hostilities begin over vandalism at Cenotaph', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 May 2000, p. 8.

¹⁶ Sir William Macpherson, *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (1999), Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny*, HMSO, CM 4262, London.

¹⁷ David Hughes, 'Hague and Kennedy go to war on asylum'; Stephen Glover, 'Just who is stoking up the race fires?' *Daily Mail*, 2 May 2000.

which the portly figure of Kennedy is seen throwing mud at a statue of William Hague in the form of Ivor Roberts-Jones's memorial of Churchill (Plate 127).

This state of affairs was exacerbated in October 2000 when the Runnymede Trust, founded in 1968 as an 'independent think tank on ethnicity and cultural diversity', published its findings on *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*.¹⁸ Despite running to more than four hundred pages the media focused almost exclusively on their assertion that 'Britishness is racially coded. "There ain't no black in the Union Jack"'. This led to attacks on 'multi-culturalism' and the so-called 'liberal elite'.¹⁹ A cartoon in the *Daily Express* explicitly connected this report to the riots in Parliament Square (Plate 129). The Mayor of London, the socialist Ken Livingstone (1945-), is shown, rope in hand, at the head of a column led by the Prime Minister and his then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett (1947-). From the pocket of the latter (who happens to be blind) protrudes a copy of the Runnymede Report. Meanwhile, his guide dog looks up nervously at the quivering statue of Winston Churchill as the rope, attached to the figure's walking stick, threatens to bring it toppling to the ground.²⁰ Occupying perhaps the most prominent urban space in London and, for a vocal contingent, equating to *the* embodiment of the nation the drubbing of this statue at the hands of a vociferous minority had clearly struck the right-wing media as one sacrilege too many.

One year after the May Day riots of 2000, a number of the monuments in Parliament Square – including the statues of Canning and Churchill – were encased in wood in

¹⁸ See www.runnymedetrust.org [accessed on 24 January 2001]. 'Runnymede... a meadow on the south bank of the Thames at Egham near Windsor, Surrey. It is famous for its association with Magna Carta, which was signed by King John in 1215 there or nearby'. J. Pearsall & Bill Trumble (eds.), *The Oxford English Reference Dictionary* (2nd ed.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, p. 1265.

¹⁹ See the *Guardian's* 'Special report: What is Britain?', www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/britain [accessed 24 January 2001]. Questioning of national identity has been prevalent in recent years: see for example the five part report 'Real Britannia: what does it mean to be British?', *The Independent*, 20-24 July 1998.

²⁰ Cartoon by 'Allen' illustrating an article by Peter Hitchens, 'Don't let the Left take a monumental liberty', *Daily Express*, 23 October 2000, p. 19. A speech-bubble from Livingstone's mouth reads: 'BY THE TIME WE'VE FINISHED NOBODY WILL HAVE HEARD OF HIM EITHER!' This is a reference to the Mayor's call for two Victorian statues to be removed from Trafalgar Square on the grounds that he had no idea who they were (see 1-5).

order to forestall a repeat of this profanity (Plate 126).²¹ The perceived necessity of such barriers indicates the proximity of profanity in such a 'sacred' space. It is also suggestive of the visibility of such memorials: they become most apparent when either they or the values that they represent are under threat. The damage wrought upon them meant that they became the focus of media attention. It is revealing that certain monuments – notably Churchill and the Cenotaph – remain both relevant and meaningful whilst, in contrast, the Victorian statues (although similarly damaged) received comparatively less attention.²² The former retain associations with national identity through connections with both the First and Second World Wars. In addition it was possible to conceptually manoeuvre them to a position in which they could articulate present-day political and social concerns. It also, as has already been noted, indicated the authorial nature of the monuments: they were defended by the establishment after coming under attack by the marginalized and the dispossessed who were both unwelcome and unwilling to partake in these 'shared' symbols of the nation.

Far from being an isolated incident, such an unofficial reconfiguration of symbols and spaces in the urban landscape can take innumerable forms. During the incarceration of Augusto Pinochet (1915-) in Britain 'a forest of tiny crosses was planted in Parliament Square... in remembrance of the thousands killed, lost or tortured during the regime of the Chilean dictator' that lasted from 1974-90.²³ The deployment of small wooden crosses is a recurring feature of Armistice Day (11 November) commemorations, with the national 'field of remembrance' being at St. Margaret's churchyard.²⁴ Its proximity to Parliament Square and the Palace of Westminster must have prompted the anti-Pinochet activists to choose this site for their protest.

²¹ Justin Sutcliffe, 'Churchill goes under cover as London prepares for May Day riots [photograph]', *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 April 2001, p. 1. Fiona Cummins, 'The riot shields: Monuments safe from demo louts', *The Mirror*, 30 April 2001, p. 17.

²² Tim Reid, 'Nation's heroes may never recover"', *The Times*, 3 May 2000, p. 4.

²³ Martin Godwin, 'Final countdown to Pinochet extradition ruling [photograph]', *The Guardian*, 24 March 1999, p. 4; Kim Segupta, 'Chileans ready to reclaim Pinochet', *The Independent*, 24 March 1999, p. 10; Frances Gibb & Joanna Bale, 'Lords Boost for Pinochet', *The Times*, 24 March 1999, pp. 1-2.

²⁴ Stephen Lock, 'The Field of Remembrance at St. Margaret's Church, Westminster [photograph]', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 November 1999, p. 1.

The most recent (and as yet unresolved) dispute to encroach upon Parliament Square concerns government proposals to ban hunting with hounds. This led to a 'snap protest' by the Countryside Alliance in June 2000 when an effigy of the Prime Minister was paraded in Westminster. Within just forty-eight hours a demonstration had been organised which culminated in 2,500 protestors bringing traffic to a standstill around Parliament Square. A spokesman for the Alliance stated: 'If people read about this on Friday and can fill Parliament Square by Monday, it shows the extraordinary force in the countryside that is prepared to cause considerable difficulty for this Government'.²⁵ Debate within parliament was matched by protest without: those in favour of hunting brought their horses and hounds to the square matched by opponents who raised aloft the corpse of a fox against the silhouette of the Clock Tower (Plate 128).²⁶ This *rus in urbe* was again very much in evidence in May 2002 when pro-hunters on horseback occupied the square whilst their hounds darted in and out of the traffic.²⁷

These forms of expression are fleeting, unlike the *seeming* permanence of the statues in Parliament Square. This thesis has demonstrated that these bronze effigies and stone memorials, whilst possessing greater longevity, are no less susceptible to change in both physical location and symbolic import. As such the invisible, occluded and forgotten events impinging on the square have quite properly been voiced in this thesis. In such a way it is hoped that Parliament Square along with its monuments can be shown for what it is: a fascinating text illuminating contemporaneous events.

Societal happenings are frequently narrated against a backdrop of Westminster, its monuments and memorials.²⁸ Although rarely examined or explained in detail this factor indicates the continuing relevance of these silent artefacts and suggests that they are still more than capable of being articulated and engaged. As symbols they

²⁵ Charles Mann cited in Tim Reid, "We will turn to civil unrest", *The Times*, 13 June 2000, p. 5.

²⁶ Tom Pilston, *The Independent*, 18 January 2001 (photograph), p. 1; Hugo Philpot, *The Guardian*, 18 January 2001 (photograph), p. 1.

²⁷ Stefan Rousseau [photograph], 'We shall rein: Country lobby rides to parliament to back fox hunting', *The Guardian*, 23 May 2002, p. 12; Anon, 'Horses and hounds join protest', BBC News Online, 22 May 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/uk_politics/newsid_2002000/2002229.stm [accessed 22 May 2002].

²⁸ See the magnificent photograph of a convoy of tractors rumbling past parliament as part of a yet another Countryside Alliance demonstration: 'Farmers drive home message', *Financial Times Europe*, 18 April 2002, p. 9.

demonstrate an unerring ability for metamorphosis to suit contemporary needs and complement current affairs. By unearthing past histories and former manipulations of these symbols this quality can only be enriched and deepened. As such the objectives of this thesis are not solely antiquarian or anachronistic. Indeed, the “interpretation” of Parliament Square (allied with an acceptance that this is only a passing moment in a continuing narrative) indicates that this thesis is but one more stage in the unfolding history of the square and its many and varied spaces of memory.

7~2 Future commemorations

Although Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) urged ‘us [to] give up making statues and inscribing them with impossible virtues’ she was shrewd enough to realise that this would not come easily to pass.²⁹ The mania for memorials remains undiminished. This is despite the fact that today we have less confidence than our Victorian predecessors in rendering our value judgements in ‘permanent form’ (see 1~9). This legacy of our post-modern anxieties concerning hero-worship is brilliantly articulated in the guise of Charles Cleasby, the fictional first-person narrator of Barry Unsworth’s novel *Losing Nelson*. Cleasby is a reclusive eccentric who venerates Horatio Nelson to such an extent that he dedicates his entire existence to paying homage to his idol. This constitutes a forlorn and ultimately tragic struggle to convince himself and others of Nelson’s unimpeachable integrity. At the end of the novel he encounters a scholar who shatters his illusions:

‘Don’t you know it yet?’ he said. ‘Heroes are fabricated in the national dream factory. Heroes are not people... There are no dreams out there, Mr Cleasby, there are only fears and dreams and the process of fabrication.’³⁰

Cleasby’s exemplar is deified in Trafalgar Square. Yet this is a realm of ‘obsolete patriotism’ to such an extent that some have advocated the removal of its defunct commemorative statues (see 1~5). These dual themes (heroes and monuments) are

²⁹ ‘The mind, it seems, likes to perch, in its flight through empty space, upon some remarkable nose, some trembling hand; it loves the flashing eye, the arched brow, the abnormal, the particular, the splendid human being.’ Virginia Woolf, “‘This is the House of Commons’”, pp. 37-44 in *The London Scene: five essays by Virginia Woolf*, The Hogarth Press, London, 1982, pp. 43-44.

³⁰ Barry Unsworth, *Losing Nelson*, Penguin, London, 1999, p. 304.

encapsulated in Trafalgar Square's 'Empty Plinth' debate.³¹ This concerns an on-going struggle to find a suitable sculpture to occupy a pedestal that has remained vacant for over one hundred and fifty years.³² At the start of the twenty-first-century a series of three contemporary works were temporarily exhibited there: Mark Wallinger's *Ecce Homo* (a life-size resin figure of Christ); Bill Woodrow's *Regardless of History* (a bronze ensemble featuring a tree, a head and a book); and Rachel Whiteread's *Plinth* (a transparent resin replica of the existing pedestal).³³ This was much to the disgust of John McEwen, a former adviser to the project, who lambasted these concepts for their 'fashionable disavowal of bravery and self-sacrifice, the constant trashing of authority and elitism'. His primary objection lay in his conviction that

Trafalgar Square is no place for fantasy. Its statues form a pantheon of monarchs and heroes, motley perhaps, but appropriate in the context of military heroes who form a cavalcade down Whitehall to Parliament Square and its pantheon of parliamentarians... It is high time we acknowledged that without our heroes, sung and unsung, and without the residual power and wealth derived from our hard-earned and brilliantly realised empire... we would not now enjoy the peace and culture that affords us the indolent luxury of historical amnesia. Trafalgar Square is the literal measure of our nation.³⁴

This thesis, in its analysis of Parliament Square, wholeheartedly concurs with a belief in the enduring significance of this 'pantheon of parliamentarians' but it strongly challenges the deadening conclusion that such a locale is 'no place for fantasy'. These "imagined communities" (populated as they are by historical actors metamorphosed into monstrous effigies in stone or metal) are entirely fantastical. The many and varied activities that have occurred over time between these colossi are even more imaginative, capricious, shocking and exceptional. Parliament Square should itself be

³¹ Paul Usherwood, 'Situation vacant', *Art Monthly*, December/January, 1998-9, pp. 13-15. See also Valentine Low, 'Who would you rather put on a pedestal: Posh or HM?', *Evening Standard*, 13 July 1999, pp. 10-11; 'How are readers would fill that 150-year gap', *Evening Standard*, 22 July 1999, pp. 10-11; <http://www.fourthplinth.com> [accessed 8 May 2002].

³² Sir Charles Barry laid out Trafalgar Square in 1841. The vacant north-west pedestal was originally intended to house an equestrian statue of William IV to harmonise with that of George IV by Sir Francis Chantrey erected on 1 December 1843. This was abandoned due to lack of money. Will Bennett, 'Christ fills a gap in the heart of London', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 July 1999, p. 1.

³³ Maev Kennedy, 'Modern art wins the battle of Trafalgar Square: Vacant plinth will be showcase for contemporary sculpture', *The Guardian*, 13 May 2000, p. 3.

³⁴ John McEwen, 'How to dumb down Britain's pantheon of glory', *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 January 1999, 'Review Arts', p. 9.

regarded as an “empty plinth” ready to be filled and drained at a moment’s notice. The latest such occurrence in the life of Trafalgar Square has recently come to a close and the unconsummated “fourth plinth” has now reverted to its former barren state. In this un-heroic age of fleeting notoriety there appears to be little consensus over what, if anything, would merit a permanent home on this most prestigious of sites.³⁵ It is telling that no less a figure than the Director of the Henry Moore Foundation should recommend that ‘it remain permanently empty – perhaps as a memorial to unknown heroes.’³⁶ It should come as no surprise therefore to read that the statue of Winston Churchill at Parliament Square

was probably the last commemoration of its kind. An age more inclined to pillory prominent figures than to praise them has little use for official memorials to its great and good, even when it can agree on who the great and good might be.³⁷

This thesis began with a death sentence and threatens to conclude with a lament. Yet the announcement of the memorial’s demise is far too premature.

*

In the opening chapter it was suggested that the “little politics” of the monuments in Parliament Square evince that such memorials were scarcely “public” in a universal sense (see 1~2).³⁸ The narrowness of the commemorative franchise meant that even at the height of “statuemanía” concern was being expressed about ‘the amiable folly of... [erecting] an abiding memorial of our possibly transient enthusiasm.’³⁹ The genre nevertheless survived and continues to do so, even when such cautionary

³⁵ It is, however, likely to have a royal resident in the not too distant future: namely an equestrian monument of the present queen, although this will have to wait until after her death. Meanwhile, in April 2002, the *Daily Mail* newspaper launched an appeal for the erection of a statue to the late Queen Mother (a proposal wonderfully lampooned in ‘*The Angel of the South...* and a few other designs for a Trafalgar Square memorial to the Queen Mother’, *Guardian*, 15 April 2002, G2 pp. 6-7).

³⁶ Timothy Llewellyn cited in Anna McPherson, *Report by Sir John Mortimer’s Advisory Group on the future of the vacant plinth in Trafalgar Square*, Department for Culture Media and Sport, July 2000, p. 17.

³⁷ Anon, ‘Obituaries: Ivor Roberts-Jones’, *The Times*, 14 December 1996, p. 21.

³⁸ A persuasive argument to the contrary is given by Paul Usherwood (‘Situation vacant’, *Art Monthly*, December/January, 1998, pp. 14-15) in his reference to the nineteenth-century memorials of ‘a newly assertive bourgeoisie’ epitomised by the likes of Havelock, Napier and Nelson in Trafalgar Square (and for that matter Sir Robert Peel in Parliament Square).

³⁹ Coventry Patmore, ‘Shall Smith have a statue?’, pp. 141-145 in *Principle in Art Etc.* London: George Bell & Sons, 1889, p. 141.

precedents are compounded by anxieties concerning figurative portraiture in contemporary art (see 1~4). The statesmen in Parliament Square are almost certain to get a new neighbour. The leading candidate at present is David Lloyd George (1863-1945), social reformer and Prime Minister during the Great War. As early as 1951 it was recommended that this figure should complement his Second World War counterpart (see 6~7). A belated petition was launched on the eightieth anniversary of Armistice Day and the David Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust established to raise the necessary sum of £400,000.⁴⁰ The commission was advertised in March 2000.⁴¹

The thought of Lloyd George joining the Parliament Square pantheon produced a decidedly mixed response. Some, such as his biographer John Grigg, declared that he merited 'one for his extraordinary record as a social reformer, even before he became one of our greatest war leaders.'⁴² Others referred to him as a 'notorious philanderer' who raised money by selling peerages and knighthoods.⁴³ The debate, as usual, became a barometer to test the current state of British politics, including accusations of political favours in return for financial donations to the Labour Party and alleged nepotism in the bestowal of honours. Just as the statue of Cromwell loomed over the end to the hereditary principle (see 5~9) so too did the ghost of Lloyd George haunt further proposed reforms to the House of Lords.⁴⁴ Parliament Square and its statues are about the past but they seem destined to be perennially entwined with the political present.

One of the most vocal opponents to the memorialisation of Britain's last Liberal Prime Minister was the historian and former Conservative politician Alan Clark

⁴⁰ It was led by three former Prime Ministers: Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, Sir Edward Heath and John Major. Roland Watson, 'Statesmen launch appeal to honour Lloyd George', *The Times*, 12 November 1998, p. 4.

⁴¹ 'NEW SCULPTURE COMMISSION: The David Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust wishes to commemorate the life of the outstanding British Statesman and Reformer, David Lloyd George, by commissioning an artist of international standing to design and produce a contemporary memorial to be sited in Parliament Square, London. Expressions of interest from sculptors are invited. The trust is also keen to receive recommendations from the public for accomplished artists thought to be appropriate. Requests for more information should be made in writing to Ms Philomena Davidson, The Davidson Arts Partnership, Studio 2, George & Dragon Hall, 41 Mary Place, London W11 4PL.' *The Art Newspaper*, No. 101, March 2000, p. 24.

⁴² John Grigg, 'A peace too soon', *The Times*, 6 November 1998, p. 23.

⁴³ Anon, 'Plea to honour wartime leader', *Guardian*, 12 November 1998, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Valerie Low, 'Political sleaze: Lloyd George knew how to go further', *Evening Standard*, 30 January 2001, p. 19.

(1928-99).⁴⁵ His objections were overtly based on criticisms concerning Lloyd George's effectiveness as a political leader, but there was an implicit hostility to his inclusion within the predominately Conservative, non-radical domain of Parliament Square. It should be recalled that, before its removal, the Buxton memorial fountain occupied an uneasy position in Parliament Square due to the fact that it was as ideologically problematic as it was aesthetically awkward (see 3~5).

At the same time as he railed against Lloyd George, Alan Clark fawned over Margaret Thatcher (1925-). He urged that she ought to be commemorated alongside an existing statue of Lloyd George in the lobby of the New Palace at Westminster (Plate 121).⁴⁶ And this has come to pass with such remarkable rapidity that the convention of delaying such a commemoration until the subject has been dead for at least ten years might be uniquely waived.⁴⁷ It bespeaks of an urgent desire to memorialise her so that she might be elevated as hastily as possible to the pantheon of great leaders, whilst simultaneously consigning her to history. The existence of the flesh and blood Margaret Thatcher alongside her marble likeness enabled her to unveil a statue of herself at the Guildhall Art Gallery.⁴⁸

Neil Simmons was commissioned to execute the latter by the Commons Art Committee. The eight-foot Carrara marble likeness depicts the indomitable lady with a characteristically fixed expression (Plate 130). It not surprisingly generated a great deal of media attention, not least because the statue measures 2.4 metres in height.⁴⁹ If it was to have taken its place at the centre of parliament it would have 'tower[ed] over other eminent nineteenth and twentieth-century figures – Disraeli, Churchill, Lloyd

⁴⁵ Anon, 'Row over statue plan for former premier', BBC on-line, 27 October 1998, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/uk_politics/newsid_202000/202143.stm [accessed 27 October 1998]. This report was based on a typically bombastic performance on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme.

⁴⁶ The statue of Lloyd George dates from 1963 and is by Uli Nimpf (1897-1977).

⁴⁷ A memorial must also wait at least twelve years until after that person has left office. Nigel Morris, 'Thatcher's statue inches nearer to Commons', *Independent*, 7 February 2002, p. 12.

⁴⁸ Anon, 'Järnladyn förevigad i sten', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 24 May 2002, p. 33. The statue has been temporarily lent to the Corporation of London for display in the Guildhall pending a decision on when it could take its place in parliament.

⁴⁹ Benedict Brogan, 'Marble Lady's handbag takes swing to the right', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 February 2002, p. 3; David Charter, 'Iron Lady meets match in statue's steely gaze', *The Times*, 2 February 2002, p. 3.

George, Asquith, Balfour and Clement Attlee.’⁵⁰ Questions of scale are born anew, providing a variation on the long running theme established ever since the Canning versus Peel fracas in the 1850s (see 2~6). As with scale so too (quite literally) with dress: the stone is fashioned into a flowing skirt and buttoned jacket alongside such details as a necklace of pearls and her most important political trademark: a handbag hung over one arm. Her hands are clasped together and grip a Commons order paper. The pedestal features but one word: ‘Thatcher’. As with Ivor Roberts-Jones’s sculpture of Churchill, it would appear that any other information would be unnecessary. There seems little danger of ‘Sightseers from the Country, constantly ask[ing], “Whom does this Statue represent?”’⁵¹

One newspaper commented that Simmons’s carving was ‘not entirely representational – the mouth, for instance, is shut.’⁵² Yet Margaret Thatcher’s commemoration appeared immediately before she herself had fallen silent: ill health will prevent her from ever giving a public address again.⁵³ However, the extent to which she still held sway over British politics was demonstrated by the fact that her withdrawal from the political stage coincided with a notable shift in Conservative Party policy.⁵⁴

Thatcher can thus legitimately enter into memorialisation now that the ‘voice that dominated the world stage is stilled’.⁵⁵ It will soon be time for the “Iron Lady” to enter onto another stage: that of Parliament Square. Her status as the first female Prime Minister will rectify, to some degree, the gendered nature of Parliament Square for, as one newspaper editorial put it: ‘The handbag is severely under-represented in the world of statuary.’⁵⁶ It would also underscore the ideological disposition of the

⁵⁰ Anne Perkins, ‘Larger than life: Iron Lady immortalised in marble’, *Guardian*, 2 February 2002.

⁵¹ This extract from Henry A. Palmer’s letter to First Commissioner of Works Gerard Noel and written in November 1878 was cited in 1~5. It referred to the Derby statue, which was at the time without an inscription.

⁵² Simon Carr, ‘Handbagged! The Marble Lady has nowhere to go’, *The Independent*, 2 February 2002, p. 1.

⁵³ Oonagh Blackman, ‘Silenced’, *The Mirror*, 23 March 2002, p. 1; George Jones, ‘Voice of Thatcherism falls silent’, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 March 2002, p. 1. She characteristically ignored this advice on the twentieth anniversary of the Falklands war.

⁵⁴ Philip Webster & Michael Gove, ‘Duncan Smith speaks out as Thatcher falls silent: Tory relaunch as party of the vulnerable’, *The Times*, 23 March 2002, p. 1.

⁵⁵ David Williams & Graeme Wilson, ‘Silenced: Voice that dominated the world stage is stilled – by her doctors’, *Daily Mail*, 23 March 2002, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Anon, ‘Plinth sense’, *Independent*, 2 February 2002, ‘The Weekend Review’, p. 3.

square: it leans, as Alan Clark implied, decidedly to the political right. The presence of Thatcher would consolidate its status as a 'realm of memory' but one that is expressive of the dominant, official national record. It will be in the crowds that gather in Parliament Square (that inconspicuous, so often overlooked space) that 'the silences of history' will be fleetingly spoken.

A common attribute shared by all the Prime Ministers addressed in this thesis, from Canning to Thatcher, is that they were all 'fiery orators'.⁵⁷ But their likenesses are mute, even if the sculptor valiantly attempts to depict the subject in mid-speech (as in the case of, for example, Lord Derby). The statues, like puppets on a string, need to be articulated and any means will suffice. A representation of Margaret Thatcher alongside that of Winston Churchill would only increase public awareness of the other Parliament Square memorials and perhaps counter Robert Musil's disheartening verdict that 'there is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument.'⁵⁸

A memorial of Lady Thatcher will be visible so long as she continues to inspire respectful homage and virulent abuse.⁵⁹ Clear and dramatic evidence of this occurred serendipitously at the very end of this thesis:

Lady Thatcher's larger-than-life status as Britain's most loved and hated prime minister since Sir Winston Churchill was confirmed yesterday when a man decapitated the marble statue of the former Conservative leader on display at the Guildhall Art Gallery in the City of London [Plate 131].⁶⁰

Yet another act of 'mindless vandalism', perhaps?⁶¹ Challenging this easy dismissal the assailant Paul Kelleher, a thirty-seven year old theatre producer, claimed that it

⁵⁷ A phrase used to describe Lloyd George in Roland Watson, 'Statesmen launch appeal to honour Lloyd George', *The Times*, 12 November 1998, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Robert Musil, 'Monuments', pp. 61-64 in *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*, translated by Peter Wortsman, Penguin, London, 1927/1995, pp. 61-62.

⁵⁹ A fact appreciated by the political satirist Simon Hoggart who, on witnessing Thatcher unveiling herself in the Guildhall remarked: 'The effigy... is so alabaster white you yearn to spray it with slogans.' Hoggart also noted that Tony Banks, chairman of the Commons Art Committee, concluded that Thatcher was 'as controversial in marble' as she was in life. Simon Hoggart, 'We are a statue! And larger than life!', *Guardian*, 22 May 2002; <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/columnist/story/0,9321,719921,00.html> [accessed 22 May 2002].

⁶⁰ Michael White, 'Heads they lose...', *Guardian*, 4 July 2002, p. 1; see also Tom Baldwin & David Charter, 'The Iron Lady loses her marble head', *The Times*, 4 July 2002, p. 1.

⁶¹ Andy McSmith, 'Vandal knocks head of £50,000 Thatcher statue', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 July 2002, pp. 1-2; Paul Waugh, 'Statue of Thatcher decapitated in gallery', *Independent*, 4 July 2002, p. 5.

was a protest against global capitalism.⁶² Whatever the merits of this act it undoubtedly increased the presence of the sculpture and drew in a host of competing meanings concerning the memorial. The most penetrating analysis came from Philip Howard, a correspondent in *The Times*. He contextualised this ‘wanton vandalism’ within a heritage of iconoclasm before concluding:

So let us not replace the head on the statue of Lady Thatcher. With it she would become just another in the cold procession of dead political pomp and power that clutters the corridors of Parliament... Headless the statue retains living power. It shows that politics can outlive marble. And ideas are stronger than bronze.⁶³

An image of her in the sacred yet so vulnerable domain of Parliament Square would infuse it with ‘living power’. For the statue, taking its rightful place alongside Churchill, would be finely posited between veneration and disdain and then, in the fullness of time, between neglect and ignorance.

Yet the extent to which Margaret Thatcher generates passionate support and implacable rage must surely continue for the foreseeable future. Such a high profile addition would, therefore, draw much needed attention to the space itself. There continues to be a pressing need for Parliament Square to be reconnected with the day-to-day life around it. The conclusions reached by Norman Foster and Partners’ *World Squares for All* report (see 6~8) were greeted at the time with tempered enthusiasm by the media.⁶⁴ When the scheme was first promoted in 1997 an editorial in the *London Evening Standard* enthused: ‘The idea of transforming the historic heart of London into an accessible area which can be enjoyed by people on foot is vastly attractive.’ But it cautioned that such pedestrianisation schemes would be ‘impracticable’ without the implementation of ‘concrete policies which will substantially improve public transport and discourage the use of cars in the city centre’.⁶⁵ Steps have been taken to

⁶² Lewis Smith & Dalya Alberge, ‘How Thatcher lost her head for crimes of state’, *The Times*, 5 July 2002, p. 9; Steven Morris, ‘Thatcher accused says: I’m no criminal’, *Guardian*, 5 July 2002, p. 2.

⁶³ Philip Howard, ‘Fear not, this mindless act of vandalism gives Thatcher a head start for posterity’, *The Times*, 5 July 2002, p. 22.

⁶⁴ The series of proposals were put to public consultation in a display held at the Royal Services Institute, Whitehall (6-8 November 1997). The vast majority of those who responded were in favour of the most radical proposals. See <http://www.archinet.co.uk/wses/index.html>; <http://www.worldsquaresforall.com> [accessed 8 May 2002].

⁶⁵ ‘A people’s London’, *Evening Standard*, 6 November 1997; this editorial was preceded by an extensive feature on the scheme: Geraint Smith & David Taylor, ‘Stepping out in the capital’, *Evening Standard*, 5 November 1997, pp. 20-21. See also Anon, ‘A vision of the heart of London without

do just that: the year 2002 at last saw the closure to traffic of the north side of Trafalgar Square; and a system of toll charges for driving vehicles into central London is to be implemented in the immediate future. It is thus appropriate and in keeping with the history of Parliament Square that its fate should be so intimately connected to much wider political and social concerns: as with Edward Barry in the mid-nineteenth century, so too with Grey Wornum in the mid-twentieth. What does or does not happen to this corner of London in the twenty-first century remains to be seen. But one thing is certain: it will be a sign of the times and constitute yet another chapter in the eventful and unfolding history of Parliament Square.

traffic', *Independent*, 6 November 1997, p. 11; Anon, 'Traffic free piazzas planned for central London', *Guardian*, 6 November 1997, p. 10; Mark Henderson, 'Cars face ban from London landmarks', *The Times*, 6 November 1997, p. 7.

8

Conclusion

It has been the intention of this thesis to narrate a history of Parliament Square. The method used to achieve this has been to relate a substantially chronological account interspersed with thematic groupings, many of which were identified in the opening chapter. This conclusion seeks to further prioritise these themes in order to analyse them in the light of what has gone before. These principal issues concern *space*, its creation and imbuing with significance; the *aesthetic* appearances and values of the square and the objects within; *memory* and the phenomenon of remembering and forgetting; allied to this is the processes of *commemoration*, its mechanisms and consequences; this in turn touches upon notions of individual, collective and national *identity*. These five themes will now be addressed in such a way as to conclude and condense the foremost issues of the thesis.

Space

The physical clearances of the early nineteenth-century and the demarcations of Parliament Square in the 1860s and 1950s demonstrate how space can be defined and imbued with meaning. The fact that this locale absorbs events in its historical record is testified by archival sources and embodied in the actual memorials erected. Moreover, these traces show that, once established, it can also influence and shape the space around it, both physically and conceptually.

It is clear that the process of sacralisation is a key component of this and that, in turn, this is an incremental phenomenon. Even in the case of Parliament Square, this procedure is haphazard and subject to reversals. Its form is contingent upon other events that impinge with alacrity or encroach gradually over time. The former is most evident when the space has been co-opted for unintended purposes such as occurred on 1 May 2000. Two things are clear from this: firstly – and perhaps surprisingly – there is a lack of continuity in a place such as this, and, secondly, alternative meanings can be ascribed to it at different times.

The legislation enacted to preserve the special status of Parliament Square testifies to its sacral associations. It also confirms that the site (and 'sight') must be policed: there has therefore to be elements of a society that may not share these associations. Whilst this sacred site is physically available, it is legally and conceptually accessible only to those willing to abide by the prescribed rules of behaviour. The sacredness is defined by law. Or, to put it another way: the rules that govern this site make it extraordinary. It becomes clear that the space is deliberately 'empty'. The fact that this can occur despite the pressures of roads and real estate show that this is special terrain and should not be used for 'normal' purposes. This is made clear by the traffic that revolves around Parliament Square but cannot cross through it. (Strangely enough, to create the square in the first place permission was granted to drive a road through St. Margaret's churchyard, thereby disinterring some of the dead.) However, the shape of the square is defined by traffic: as when it was enlarged in the 1950s. This transformation increased the special nature of the square, if only because it became harder to enter its domain.

A space does not necessarily have to be a religious site to have sacred connotations. The special domain of a park, for example, has similarly reverential nuances, as has been demonstrated by equating this phenomenon with Parliament Square. The latter is an important example because it is at the coalescence of the sacred and the secular: its hallowedness stems as much from its proximity to the Houses of Parliament as it does from Westminster Abbey. Its insertion into the protective embrace of a Conservation Area and its proximity to the World Heritage Site give it another form of sanctity as well as international recognition.

Yet it is clear that a direct religious correlation does not guarantee protection: for many years the graveyard of St Margaret's church was overcrowded and literally polluted. Paradoxically it was only with the clearance of its headstones and the disguising of its religious nature that it became more sacrosanct in the guise of Parliament Square.

The sacred nature of the space means that access is restricted, either literally or morally. However, these revered connotations mean that it is taken out of and beyond private ownership. It is now the property of the nation. This does not mean that it is freely accessible or that anyone can use it for what they want. The fact that this does happen emphasises the transgressive nature of a protest or a temporary occupation.

Pollution of a sacred site becomes very evident. It is clearly not allowed, although there might seem no reason why not. This suggests that the sacredness has seeped into the collective unconscious. *Why* such a space should be special might be harder to pinpoint. The research done for this thesis gives an indicative explanation. It also shows that what might now seem 'natural' was in fact constructed. These spaces with their symbols must, it is widely felt, be safeguarded somehow. If these domains are allowed to be transgressed then it does not bode well for the pillars of the state. Conversely, when the authorities use such spaces for its own purposes, as with a royal coronation or the State Opening of Parliament, this is permitted and 'proper'. When these occasions take place they reveal which element of society has ownership of the space and its memory.

The order of the space is only apparent in contrast to the chaos of the everyday. In just such a way the moments of protest or celebration are fleeting. All traces of euphoria or outrage are swiftly eradicated so that only the intended symbols remain: the plantings, statues, plaques, railings and so forth.

Aesthetics

Notions of style, appearance and artistic value are at stake when it comes to an assessment of Parliament Square and its monuments. That there is an aesthetic dimension to the layout of this space is evident from the debates incited by the proposals of E.M. Barry and George Grey Wornum. The merits or otherwise of these schemes were vigorously scrutinised by contemporary critics and subsequent commentators alike. Barry's efforts were lampooned by his rival Marochetti. Wornum was to be awarded a prestigious architectural award. Yet the fact that the former has been forgotten and the latter overlooked suggest that the visual qualities of the square have never really been widely appreciated or understood.

This is perhaps because, in their outline and structure, such schemes are dictated to a certain degree by utilitarian considerations. Moreover, it is their function, at least in part, to be somewhat effacing: they are intended to act as a foil to the bustling, built-up spaces around them and, nearer to hand, the monuments in their midst. Nevertheless, the arrangements of this space; the routing of pedestrian thoroughfares; the locating of plantings; and the siting of statues are all matters of artistic

consideration. Furthermore, the marked differences between the mid-nineteenth-century formulation and that which came a hundred years later reflect the stylistic predilections and societal concerns of these two very different eras.

Another crucial aspect delineated in this thesis is the value in aesthetic terms of the statues and monuments. As with the square, their form is dictated by concerns that go far beyond the rarefied domain of 'art'. Nevertheless, each and every element – from pedestal to plinth, statue to sculptural decoration – has been deliberated on by the sculptor. They should be appreciated as such, for they represent the work of some of the most distinguished practitioners of that genre in mid and late-nineteenth-century Britain. There is therefore considerable merit to this serried rank of statues, despite their superficial similarities. For in addition to the subtle differences in detail, finish, size, dress and patina, the memorials under scrutiny manifest in microcosm the gamut of monumental types: conventional standing portrait statues; an exquisite equestrian group; an ornate fountain and an antique obelisk. This constitutes a tremendous array of material, style and scale thus demonstrating the great visual variety of this most public yet, paradoxically, least appreciated of art forms.

This grouping of monuments in Parliament Square constitutes an ensemble of related, harmonious parts (even if, at times, this accumulation was haphazard in the extreme). As a consequence, the interest of Parliament Square and its monuments is greatly amplified when they are appreciated collectively and in their proper contextual setting. It is this milieu that serves to augment the symbolic and commemorative significance of the memorials. Before enlarging on these aspects it is firstly necessary to address another of this thesis's primary themes: memory.

Memory

Parliament Square is implicated in processes of remembering and forgetting. This is borne out by the distinction that was drawn at the outset between *monument* (where little attention or awareness is paid to any commemorative significance) and *memorial* (in which the physical shape is still imbued with meanings and appreciated as such). These distinctions lead on to considerations of time. Aspects of the past are recollected in the present through tangible memorials such that it can be carried into the future. This configuration is subject to change. Any 'present' might dispense with

certain aspects of the past in favour of others. In such circumstances particular memorials might be forgotten, and thus relegated symbolically or even physically in favour of others. It is therefore the succession of presents which determine to a large degree the ordering of the past: precedence is accorded to those things which resonate with current values and priorities. Memorials that have become irrelevant may be allowed to rest unobtrusively, unseen and unregarded. These quiet symbols could be thrown into attention should they be threatened or assaulted. This form of vandalism is matched by officially sanctioned iconoclasm such as with the removal of the Peel statue or the attempts to withhold a memorial of Cromwell.

These factors deal with the permanence of monuments in material and commemorative terms. They are supposed to endure. If they do not, important conclusions can be drawn about changes in value, society, and those in power. This account of Parliament Square shows that these seemingly imperturbable objects are, in fact, frequently shifting. Even if they do not physically move or change, their significance inevitably alters over time as events transfer from memory to history and with the appearance of other memorials in the vicinity. Each new arrival enters into a dialogue with its predecessor thereby serving to modify their meaning and prominence. Some memorials are deliberately temporary (as with Matthew Noble's plaster statue of Cromwell) or unintentionally so (Marochetti's rejected sculptures of Peel for instance). Others can be rededicated with new significance, as was evident with the bent-but-not-broken sword of Richard Coeur de Lion during and immediately after the Second World War. More typically the fragility or vulnerability of memorials is shown when there are moments of protest or destruction.

Identity

Parliament Square is implicated in identity in numerous ways. One manifestation is in terms of the individuals captured in bronze. From this one can also appreciate the identity of certain groups in society that commissioned or acknowledged any given memorial. Class and political identities are consolidated and articulated through the statues that feature in Parliament Square. By extension conclusions can also be drawn about the nation through the shaping and preservation of the square, not least because it has consistently been posited at the 'heart' or 'hub' of the nation, empire or

Commonwealth. It is a political centre, adjacent as it is to the Palace of Westminster. Its proximity to Westminster Abbey equally renders it a religious centre. Both are drawn into the royal domain when special events occur: as with the pageantry that accompanied the Lying-in-State and funeral of the Queen Mother.

In these questions of identity it is also clear that Parliament Square is a conservative realm. This thesis has shown how liberal elements have consistently been pushed to the margins: whether it be suffragism in the form of Mrs Pankhurst; abolitionism with the Buxton memorial fountain; or liberalism and the efforts of those who would rather not see a memorial to Lloyd George erected there. The political left and marginalized groups (including women and those from ethnic minorities) have no symbol to associate with in this forum of debate. The elite are there as individuals: their statues superseding the headstones of St. Margaret's churchyard which were eradicated in favour of the recollection of a privileged few.

The carefully structured square, complete with its rules and regulations are suggestive of the civilising aspirations of the place. It is a clearance that allows for the public to be imbued with the grandeur and history of the buildings around it. It is also about making the individual feel small in comparison to the state. Yet this is in continual tension, due to an oft-repeated dissatisfaction concerning the diminutive, 'domestic' scale of the space.

The viewer is the visitor, the 'stranger' who comes to pay dutiful respect. Nuisances must be cleared, the uncivilised tamed or expelled: the establishment continually perceives the populous as a problem. Crowds are meant to come if they are willing to pay homage or after gaining permission from the authorities. This, however, does not stop people from congregating if they wish to express their own identity in support of a cause that they find particularly pressing.

Commemoration

Another merit of this thesis is that it has revealed the mechanisms of commemoration. The legal processes of gaining permission to erect a memorial in this sensitive area have been examined in detail. The role of the actors and agents has been charted: from the Office of Works to subscription groups and sculptors; and from the media to Members of Parliament and the serried ranks of the public. In the area around

parliament, the Office of Works was central, a fact legally confirmed by the still-current 'Act to place Public Statues within the Metropolitan Police District under the Control of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Works and Public Buildings' of 1854. Its permission had to be sought for the erection of any memorial, and then, once the work was finished, it could be vested in the department and thus become public property.

The site of a commemoration is a perennially contentious issue: it is a matter of primary importance from the inception of any memorial. Once a plot has been granted and filled, any question of relocation is met with loud disapproval from those with a vested interest. This indicates how important the context is to a commemoration. Each separate statue was seen in connection with others that had come before it and also speculations as to what might appear afterwards.

It is clear that the nineteenth-century was a period characterised by commemoration, as is epitomised in the phenomenon of the pantheon. They constitute a means of providing role models to inspire and admonish in equal measure. The inclusions and exclusions from such a collection can be especially revealing about the values and ideas of a particular society. A sense of continuity is crucial to the commemorative process. This is clear from the pantheon concept, where individuals selected from different moments in time and space are brought together in a linear fashion. Those nearer to the present are thus represented as present-day equivalents of these forebears. This has the effect of ennobling the nation and era responsible for that pantheon.

Ritual is a crucial aspect of the space and its memorials. Commemorations are associated with ceremony throughout the creation process: the constitution of a subscription group; the necessity and manner of gaining the permission of the authorities; the execution of the work; its siting, erection and subsequent unveiling; and, finally, the ongoing rites associated with anniversaries and re-inaugurations as well as steps to protect the memorial should it be threatened either by a new political regime or the anger of a disenfranchised group.

*

It is perhaps the theme of commemoration that encapsulates most clearly the innumerable facets of Parliament Square, and indeed any analogous forum. Thus the

aesthetic appearance of a commemorative memorial and its positioning in a particular space serve to codify its meaning and significance. The intentional dedicatory connotations accrue additional, often unintended and unforeseen nuances through time. It is a process that is bound up with issues pertaining to memorialisation. Equally salient are notions of identity. For it is a space such as Parliament Square with its many memorials and associations that serves as a gauge by which the nation can be characterised and understood. The fact that it can be read in so many different ways through time and from alternative perspectives indicates that it is indeed a domain where a host of fascinating and complex issues coalesce. Indeed, this coming together of so many matters is indicative of the rather circuitous history of Parliament Square and its memorials. This is a reminder of the contingent character of the space. Its form pays subtle testimony to the largely forgotten events and circumstances that have encroached upon it over time. The narrative form of this thesis is therefore necessary and appropriate to the telling of such a story.

This work recounts but one history of Parliament Square. There are many alternative readings, some perhaps more satisfying than this. Be that as it may, it is to be hoped that the present dissertation will open up fresh avenues of research and enquiry. One of the most fruitful may well involve comparative case studies, drawn from other spaces both near and far. Greater attention could be paid to the similarities and differences between Parliament Square and Trafalgar Square. Is the historical appearance of the former a peculiarly English phenomenon? What factors have influenced the disposition of the spaces surrounding other legislative buildings in capital cities elsewhere? Answers to such questions would build on and enrich the work so far undertaken. It is therefore to be hoped that the present account will serve to stimulate further research as well as increasing an understanding for, and appreciation of, Parliament Square and its many monuments and memorials.

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