Captain Swing in the North: the Carlisle Riots of 1830.

By Katrina Navickas

On the evening of Tuesday, 30 November 1830, incendiaries set fire to a wheat stack and a haystack situated in two fields a quarter of a mile outside Carlisle, Cumberland. Large crowds gathered at the sites of both fires and proceeded to riot. Disturbances continued the following day when workmen attempted to salvage what little remained of the stacks. Local newspapers and witnesses at the ensuing trial assumed that the incidents were the work of 'Captain Swing', the imaginary leader of the wave of arson and agricultural machine breaking that was concurrently raging across southern England. This impression of the unusual nature of the agitation was amplified when, some days later, the clerk of the peace and several local gentlemen received threatening letters signed with pseudonyms, including that of 'Swing'. Two handloom weavers, James Mendham, alias Montgomery, aged twenty–six, and Robert Thursby, aged thirty–eight, were eventually arrested and tried for arson, and five other men were charged with rioting.[1]

This outbreak of 'Swing' in Carlisle was highly significant, not least because the Swing riots are more usually associated with the arable flatlands of southern England rather than with the rugged hills and industrial ports of Cumberland. Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé noted only briefly in their classic study, *Captain Swing*, that Cumberland and the other northern counties were 'affected by rick–burning'.[2] Hobsbawm and Rudé's *opus* inspired numerous studies of rural disturbances in Kent, Sussex, and other 'Swing' counties in southern England, but few north of Derbyshire. 'Swing Unmasked', the innovatory project involving family and community historians, found over fifty incidents (broadly defined) in northern England, but these

have not been examined in detail.[3] Superficially, therefore, the Carlisle example could simply be used to shift historians' focus on Swing northwards. Northern inhabitants responded forcefully to political and social unrest in 1830 by creating their own Captain Swing. The Carlisle riots were followed a few days later by another stack fire at nearby Dalston; at least a dozen other major fires or disturbances occurred in Yorkshire between 1830 and 1834.[4] However, it cannot be denied that the upsurge of incendiarism and agricultural machine–breaking in the early 1830s, which historians have conveniently condensed into the metonym of 'Swing', was predominantly a southern phenomenon. The unconnected reports of arson and threatening letters in northern England pale into insignificance in comparison with over three thousand Swing–related incidents reported in the southern counties.[5] Many of the Yorkshire cases, moreover, were proven to be products of private grievances, often fostered by recently dismissed servants of the attacked.[6]

So the occurrence of the Carlisle riots, while illustrating that Swing had some influence beyond the Trent, is not the main point of this essay. For what this study reveals is a need to rethink more generally the meaning and significance of Swing. Swing in the North complicates previous grand narratives of popular unrest in the 1830s. The Hammonds dubbed the Swing riots broadly as the 'last labourers' revolt'. Hobsbawm and Rudé believed that the southern agitation originated in a plebeian reaction against severe rural distress exacerbated by capitalist landowners seeking to maximize profit by installing labour–saving machinery.[7] Roger Wells emphasized political radicalism among the causes of the disturbances, while Andrew Charlesworth believed that the system of communications centred on London was crucial to the spread of the movement. All essentially framed Swing as a vehicle for nascent class consciousness among dispossessed agricultural labourers moulded by

the orations of the radical writer William Cobbett.[8] Once the dust clouds generated by Marxism had settled in the 1980s, however, there was no ‘agricultural proletariat’ to be seen among the disorganized and shadowy incendiaries and machine–breakers of the 1830s. The search for class floundered and set back the history of Swing.

E. P. Thompson criticized *Captain Swing* for viewing ‘the riots through a slight haze and at a great distance’. Hobsbawm and Rudé cagily acknowledged in their second edition that in–depth case studies could supplement (but not replace) their methods.[9] It is only recently, however, that protest historians have begun to re–conceptualize agricultural unrest in this period. Steve Poole, Peter Jones, Carl Griffin, and Adrian Randall, amongst others, have broken the hold of Hobsbawm and Rudé’s influential but broad–brush approach to Swing. They place ‘outbreaks of Swing into the context of local employment and social relations’, and seek a longer history of regionally–specific causes. Only then, they argue, can the complexities of the agitation can be understood.[10] They furthermore underline the dynamic between social elites and local communities. Poole noted the lack of response to Charlesworth’s plea back in 1991 for ‘serious studies of the mounting frustration of magistrates, assize judges, military commanders, lord lieutenants, local landowners, and bewildered editors of urban newspapers over their inability to penetrate what J. E. Archer has called the “enormous solidarity, even covert sympathy of the majority of working people towards the instigators of the fires”’.[11]

This essay builds on this new approach to Swing. Although the agitation in northern England was influenced by the idea of ‘Captain Swing’ emanating from the south, its causes and contexts were distinctive. The first part of this essay investigates how the Swing riots in Carlisle were a conflagration of a long history of social and political conflict in the city. In particular, it calls upon historians to pay closer

attention to the impact of 'the reactive and proactive behaviour' of magistrates, police, and the newspapers upon how Swing was perceived and spread. The Carlisle case also points to the permeable periphery between rural and urban areas: Swing was not a wholly agricultural phenomenon.[12]

These structural factors rationalize the disturbances and place them into a definable socio–economic context. Yet we still have to deal with 'Captain Swing', the slippery and intangible character that distinguished the agitation of the early 1830s from the other waves of incendiarism that beset rural society throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The second part of this essay unpicks the myth of Swing. Most of the evidence of the character's existence comes from the anonymous threatening letters and the shadowy figures reported in newspapers and magistrates' correspondence with the Home Office. The content of Swing letters often represented a multiplicity of voices with myriad grievances, and thus make it impossible for historians seeking to attribute rational motives to events that were often only indirectly connected.[13] Nevertheless, the idea of the mythical leader became a convenient framework for understanding the complexities of popular unrest in the early 1830s.

This perception of Swing returns to my rethinking of the meaning of 'General Ludd', the mythical leader of the industrial machine–breakers in 1812. I argued that Ludd was imagined by disparate groups of workers who were militarized by the Napoleonic war but lacking a prominent political leader to unite them. Yet crucially, the authorities also fostered the myth. Ludd was a way of making sense of what was in many ways an intangible threat, and to cover up for the magistrates' weakness in enforcing order.[14] By contrast, there is little evidence that arsonists or agricultural machine–breakers in 1830–4 saw Captain Swing as a figurehead. The only self–

identification came from the anonymous threatening letter writers, who cannot be connected directly with the rioters and arsonists. Unlike Ludd, the pseudonym of Swing was not a point of coherence for a 'movement' of agricultural labourers, and even less so in the isolated instances in the North. As Jones has identified in Kent, Swing was a product of 'those who required an enemy on which to focus their fears and disapproval rather than protesters who sought a mythical ally'.[15] In the early 1830s, local authorities found it convenient to tar popular agitation with the sticky brush of Swing, even though it had little to do with incidents of arson down south. Rioters and the forces of law and order alike came to conclusions aroused by rumour and panic, emotions that consequently fed back into perceptions of the disturbances.

*

The Carlisle riots of November 1830 involved more twists and turns than a detective novel. Hobsbawm and Rudé gave the impression that radical politics was at the heart of the conflict. They very briefly described the rick–burning as 'an act of political reprisal' and noted that 'three weavers – described as Radicals – were arrested'.[16] As we will see, this formed only part of the story. The father of the main suspect James Mendham, alias Montgomery, had been imprisoned in 1802 for belonging to an illegal trade combination participating in political activities connected with the republican United Scotsmen. Montgomery was turned in by his family, who used the reward money to pay for his legal defence.[17] The two other weavers, Daniel McCrory, aged 22, and James Cully, aged 55, were put under an arrest warrant but escaped capture. In December, a magistrate suspected that Cully, 'one of the worst characters in Carlisle', had unsuccessfully attempted to 'summon the Radicals in this neighbourhood to go to Carlisle to attempt to rescue a prisoner who is in the gaol'.[18] It

was Montgomery with a Robert Thursby, however, and not McCrory and Cully who faced the assizes in February 1831.

The riots in Carlisle coincided with intensified pressure for parliamentary reform during the autumn of 1830, so it is unsurprising that Hobsbawm and Rudé instinctively connected the incendiarism with political radicalism. The county capital and port was situated on the main routes between the textile centres of Lancashire, Northumberland, northern Ireland, and southern Scotland. It was well used to the passing through of trade union and political 'delegates', such as the fiery Scottish orator, 'Jemmy Weems', who led the last wave of radical agitation in 1819.[19] Revolution in France in July 1830 reinvigorated radical energies across Britain. Carlisle was by no means on the periphery of these developments. In September 1830, working–class radicals held large meetings on Carlisle Sands to draw up petitions for universal suffrage. A group of merchants, solicitors, and other middle–class reformers formed a political union with the tentative co–operation of a delegation of handloom weavers from among the radicals.[20] On 2 November, the Duke of Wellington made a defiant declaration in the House of Lords against reform, provoking furious reaction by reformers inside and outside parliament.[21] On 5 November, a handbill appeared calling for a public meeting at Carlisle market place. It castigated local authorities for opposing the radicals, proclaiming: 'It looks as if our Magistracy wishes to load Reformers with the Epithet of Plunders [*sic*] or Robbers to sink starving people in the estimation of their fellow Citizens and to shed Blood'.[22] Although the handbill did not associate itself directly with Swing, the author was clearly aware of the potency of posting such a notice on Guy Fawkes' night.

Radical agitation came to a head on 8, 9, and 10 November. London was concurrently convulsed by violent rioting, exacerbated by the inhabitants' reaction

against the new metropolitan police.[23] Radicals in Carlisle demonstrated in a highly ordered, though equally threatening, manner. Each night, large processions moved out of the working–class suburb of Caldewgate, entered the city, and paraded three times around the market cross in front of the town hall. On 8 November, the procession culminated with the burning of an effigy of Wellington, who was still holding firm against reform. The next night, an effigy of Sir Robert Peel, Home Secretary and founder of the metropolitan police, was consigned to the flames. On 10 November, a placard inscribed 'Death to the Constitution', was the subject of the same ritual.[24] The police commission responded by holding a meeting at the end of the week to swear in 150 special constables, 'principally shopkeepers', and the magistracy issued a caution against tumultuous behaviour. On 18 November, when news arrived of the resignation of Wellington's ministry, yet another torch–lit procession marched through the main streets and again circled the market cross three times before returning home. These rituals were reputedly observed by up to six thousand inhabitants, that is, around a third of the population.[25] The processions were neither unthinking nor spontaneous. They drew from a common practice of burning effigies of local and national figures now transposed by the radicals to the new political circumstances.[26]

The rapidly changing social geography of Carlisle underpinned the tensions that erupted in 1830. By the early nineteenth century, economic development had profoundly altered what had once been an administrative and military border capital surrounded by farms and a port.[27] The population of the city swelled from just over four thousand in 1763 to about nineteen thousand in 1831. Carlisle 'within the walls' was bursting to the seams with urban infilling, but the most rapid growth occurred in the suburbs of Caldewgate (encompassing Shaddowgate) and Botchergate, situated outside the walls and along the main roads into the city. Between 1788 and 1841, the

population of Caldewgate tripled to over five and a half thousand. Handloom weaving and other textile industries formed the main employment of these outlying districts. Mass immigration further served to change the character of the city. In 1832, of 7130 males over the age of twenty in Carlisle, 1870 had been born in Ireland and about a thousand in Scotland. The majority of these immigrants settled outside the walls.[28]

Carlisle was divided by class, employment, and authority. Caldewgate and Willow Holme, the two areas where the Swing attacks occurred, sustained a distinct sense of apartness from the rest of Carlisle. Although some of the city walls were demolished earlier in the century, the high west walls remained. These walls and the river Caldew separated the new industrial suburbs from the city centre above, particularly as they were traversable only at the north end by an old bridge named 'Irish Gate'. Unrest occurred in a liminal periphery that was neither solely rural nor completely urban. The resident Irish and Scottish communities were known as 'Shaddongaters', which suggests the strong bonds among them.[29] Dissent, religious or political, was often a feature of marginal districts of old towns.[30]

Yet herein lay the twist in the tale. Neither radicals nor ordinary 'Shaddongaters' incited the Swing rick–burning of 30 November 1830. What Hobsbawm and Rudé did not take into account was the reason why the case against Montgomery and Thursby was dismissed by the assize court. Witness depositions taken during the rioters' trial in March 1831 revealed that the arsonists were in fact *agents provocateurs* hired by the authorities. The fires had been started at the instigation of one William Huntington, a petty criminal, whom the chief constable of police, Benjamin Batty, had employed along with another ex–convict, James Wallace, 'to look after' the 'Radical Concern'.[31] Wallace had passed these duties onto Huntington in order to avoid detection by the populace; he explained that, 'as it was

known I did a little business with him [Batty], I thought the people in Shaddowgate would not let me go amongst them so much as I used to do'.[32] Furthermore, Batty's account for paying the agents was remunerated by the mayor and town clerk rather than by his employers the police commissioners.[33] The governing authorities of Carlisle therefore appear to have colluded to provoke the attacks under the convenient banner of Swing. It is likely that they did so in order to find an excuse to clamp down on the radical political activity in Caldewgate. The reformist *Carlisle Journal* was loud in its condemnation:

> A system of espionage is here developed as dangerous to the peace of the city as it is disgraceful to the police establishment […] How many more are in Batty's service did not appear […] but from the whole tenor of the disclosures made by Wallace and Huntingdon [*sic*] – coupled with the hope that they entertained of poaching the rewards of £600 as the price of innocent blood they endeavoured to shed – little doubt remains in our minds but that a most extensive system of espionage has been carried on.[34]

The scandal echoed previous controversies during the Luddite disturbances of 1812, when magistrates in Lancashire had employed 'blackfaces' to stoke up unrest in order to arrest suspected political and trade union activists. Southern Swing rioters blackened their faces as both disguise and to symbolize customary community justice.[35] The 'blackfaces' in this case were the spies. It demonstrated how little had changed since the well–publicized case of 'Oliver' the spy that had aroused much indignation across the country in 1817.[36]

So the arsonists were not the agents of Swing. Although it is hard to discount radicals being involved in the riots that followed, neither can it be proved that the incendiarism was part of a concerted radical conspiracy.[37] On the contrary, it is possible that the *agents provocateurs* fired the stack at Willow Holme belonging to the spirit merchant John Andrew because he was warm to reform. The following year Andrew granted permission for the radicals to hold a meeting on his property, even though such assemblies had been prohibited by the mayor.[38] Indeed, radical individuals appear to have attempted to help rather than hinder the owners of the stacks. The bookseller James Arthur, soon to become prominent as a Chartist leader, made his first public appearance attempting to put out Scottish farmer James McCutcheon's burning stack at Caldewgate. His ladder was 'pulled down and thrust into the flames' by the rioters.[39]

Chief constable Batty's plan backfired, however. Either out of over–eagerness to arrest the radicals, or from naïve assumptions about the loyalty of Carlisle inhabitants, the authorities seem not to have expected the exuberant reaction of the spectators. Indeed, the actions of the majority of the Caldewgate inhabitants were more significant than the fires themselves: the crowds were wildly enthusiastic, and prevented the authorities from putting out the blaze. Not only this, they took great pains to destroy the machinery of the fire engines. The *Carlisle Journal* reported:

> The feeling exhibited by a considerable portion of the crowd was certainly that of exultation, and they not only refused to assist in extinguishing the flames, but were active in preventing others from assisting. The buckets were taken from those carrying water and tossed into the flames, amidst considerable

> cheering; the pipes of the fire–engines were cut in six pieces, and a police officer […] was knocked down by a stone.[40]

Benjamin Batty made a vivid deposition to the assizes about his ordeal at the Caldewgate stack:

> I very soon found there was a great pressure from the Crowd upon the people working the Engine so as to prevent them working and I was standing between the Pipe and the burning Stack and the pipe was pressed towards me so as to push me towards the fire. I repeatedly admonished the people to keep back until I perceived that it was evidently intentional for the purpose of preventing the engine from working and when the people saw that the engine was stopped and that I was overpowered they repeatedly cheered.

Upon finding that the pipe had been cut, Batty was met with 'a more vehement cheering from the crowd than before and a more violent pressure was made against me towards the fire'.[41] The rioters were less concerned with the owners of the stacks therefore than with the chief constable. Batty escaped, mustered military reinforcements, and eventually rescued the ruined engine. Although no more stacks were fired, the anger of the Caldewgate inhabitants revived the next day, and they drove off the workmen removing what was salvageable from the stacks.[42] Rumours of continuing disorder were spread by the national newspapers. The police commissioners felt obliged to issue a poster to counteract the 'most erroneous impression throughout the Country that the people of Carlisle and its suburbs are in a state bordering on Insurrection'.[43]

The rioters therefore misconstrued the aims of the authorities, but their actions cannot easily be categorized. Of course, enthusiasm for the fire may have been fuelled by drink and the spectacle of the event. The five people arrested for rioting were men aged between fifteen and twenty, and we cannot discount adolescent exuberance among factors inciting them to violence.[44] Nevertheless, the reaction of the crowd paralleled general cases of arson in East Anglia in the 1830s and 1840s. J. E. Archer noted the importance of 'the enormous solidarity, and even overt sympathy, of the majority of the working people towards the instigators of the fires'. He attributed this sympathy to the moral economy, an expression of community justice against a landowner or local notable who had transgressed unwritten social laws. Arson 'gave labouring communities the opportunity to transform an act of covert protest into a collective and overt display of hatred against farmers'.[45] Other areas experienced similar responses, but for different reasons. Peter Jones equated Swing attacks in Kent to community enforcement of the moral economy against increasingly tight–fisted poor law authorities.[46]

In Carlisle, various social and economic grievances were aired during the disturbances. The *Carlisle Journal* reported that the phrase 'This will teach them to make Corn laws' was heard from one part of the Swing crowd.[47] Although the veracity of this allegation cannot be verified, Whig merchants had blamed the protectionist legislation for the severe economic distress that had afflicted the port in the late 1820s. The introduction of new powerlooms had also depressed weavers' employment and provoked machine–breaking in Lancashire in 1826. During the 1826 election, Tory candidate Sir Philip Musgrave's support for agricultural protection enraged the crowd at the hustings. He was forcibly put on a loom and made to weave, while his supporters and members of the Corporation were ducked in the mill dam.

Relations between local inhabitants and the governing elites were soured further when three people were killed after the military fired over the heads of the crowds in Caldewgate.[48]

The Swing riots were in fact a conflagration of a running debate about policing and authority in the city. It is clear that the crowd had one primary target on 30 November 1830: the police commission. Historians are familiar with the formation of the metropolitan police in 1829, and the forces created following the Swing riots and Chartist agitation, especially after the 1839 Rural Police Act. Robert Storch has charted the severe popular resistance to the new police across the industrial districts of northern England in the 1840s.[49] Yet before 1829, local elites had already sought to solve the problem of keeping order in expanding urban areas. In 1823, manufacturers and professionals in Carlisle, led by a solicitor named Henry Pearson, set up their own police office in defiance of the Tory Corporation. The two sides jostled over an application for a new police bill.[50] Rivalry between the old elites and the merchants and manufacturers framed the prolonged conflict, a situation that troubled other industrializing towns before the Whigs increased their dominance over local government in the 1830s.[51] The debate over policing also reflected wider opposition to the Lowthers, lords Lonsdale, the leading Tory magnates in Cumberland. Sir William Lowther was busy developing his economic interests in the port of Whitehaven, but he retained a strong hand in the Carlisle district as lord lieutenant, and as patron of the Corporation, one of the borough's MPs, and the *Patriot* newspaper.[52]

The anti–Corporation faction eventually succeeded in having themselves elected as police commissioners in 1827. They appointed eighteen constables headed by Batty. The 1827 Carlisle police act was an attempt on the part of the middle classes to defend their property and to enforce order in the expanding city, but essentially

they failed. Batty was brought in to circumvent local influence, but his outsider status marked him out as a target for disgruntled local inhabitants. The funding of the police commission continued to be a bugbear in the relations between the Whig middle classes and the Corporation.[53] Relations were soured further when some of the Whigs formed the political union campaigning for reform in 1830. Pearson, together with Peter and John Dixon, major employers of handloom weavers in Caldewgate, were prominent among the political union.[54] The new police were deemed to be as ineffective as parish constables because both were assumed to share the sympathies of the crowd. A corporation official reported to Lord Lowther about the problems of keeping order during the week after the Swing riots. He attributed the disturbed situation to the infirmity of the two city magistrates, and the 'utter inefficiency of our police – fifty men of various opinions and some of them revolutionary'.[55] It is difficult to ascertain whether this was the case. The comment nevertheless reflected a sustained fear among the Tories about 'Jacobinical police' and their Whig supporters.[56] The Tory Corporation may have funded the agents of Swing to avenge themselves against the Whigs, but it may also be likely that the moderate reformers condoned the set–up in attempt to distance themselves from the radical working classes with whom they had previously allied.

Yet again the distinctive social geography of the city shaped the turn of events. It is no co–incidence that the Swing rioters singled out chief constable Benjamin Batty for attack. Significantly, Batty came from Manchester and had served as a deputy to Joseph Nadin. The latter was notorious for his involvement with 'Oliver' the spy in 1817, and for his part in the 'Peterloo Massacre', when local elites ordered the yeomanry to suppress a peaceful reform meeting in Manchester in 1819.[57] Batty's first venture into Caldewgate upon his appointment in 1827 had already demonstrated

the helplessness of a civilian force in the suburb and his role as a figurehead (and scapegoat) for authority. After dividing the rest of the city into police districts, he attempted to do the same over the river. However, 'Mr Batty and the officers under him, met with serious resistance from the Irish, Scotch and other weavers in Shaddongate when making their first survey of that part of the suburbs; when the then turbulent inhabitants, unused to the interference of an effective police, became so outrageous that it was necessary to call in the aid of the military'.[58] One of the suspected 'ringleaders' arrested for the attack on Batty in 1827 was none other than Daniel McCrory, the very same man whom the authorities in 1830 put under warrant for taking part in firing the stacks at Caldewgate.[59] The *Carlisle Patriot* reported that McCrory, 'a good looking and well dressed young man', protested innocence, but 'Mr Batty recognised him in the crowd dressed in a soldier's jacket'.[60] McCrory was one rioter amongst many on that night in 1830, but it is possible that Batty and the informants singled him out deliberately because they knew him and his previous opposition to them. One of the other rioters was a William Mendham, possibly a relation of James Montgomery or his radical father Richard. Another man arrested in 1827 was Robert Armstrong, another Shaddongate weaver, who gave testimony for the defence during the Swing rioters' trial: Huntington the informer worked in his son's workshop.[61]

The riots of 1830 were therefore the culmination of a build–up of social and political tensions among a divided population. The Carlisle elites blamed the new industrial communities outside the city walls, especially their immigrant inhabitants, for fomenting the unrest. The mayor, Thomas Lowry, reported to the Home Office that 'the principal Cotton Manufacturers' had remonstrated with their weavers about the disturbances and 'they received assurances that every endeavour should be used to

repress the more violent among their body'. Another indication of tensions within and without the city was the fact that the magistrates had trouble recruiting sufficient numbers of special constables to put down the disturbances. Lowry had to send out summonses to many who refused to be sworn in, and raised the possibility of issuing legal proceedings against the defaulters.[62] On 4 December, when the authorities had finally gathered 200 special constables, they defiantly headed out of the Town Hall to Caldewgate in order to arrest those suspected of fomenting the crowd violence and the senders of threatening letters. The reaction of the inhabitants was vehement: 'Women assembled in different parts of the streets and heckled the special constables'.[63] Batty presumably felt forced to retire back to Manchester, but a new chief constable took over in 1831.[64]

Reform agitation continued to stoke up popular resentment against policing. During the general election of April 1831, veteran radical Jemmy Weems headed a meeting attended by over 3000 workers on Carlisle Sands. They resolved not to 'hire themselves as bludgeon–men to assist the anti–Reformers'.[65] The demonstrations from January to April 1831 followed the same patterns, routes, and rituals as before. They carried and burned an effigy of Lord Lonsdale, 'on the breast of which was painted in large letters, "The Great Beelzebub of the North"'.[66] Disturbances broke out again on 21 March 1832, the day appointed for a national fast to pray for an end to the cholera pandemic then sweeping across the country. The working classes regarded the official abstinence as representative of elite hypocrisy against their distressed situation. Irish and Scottish weavers repeated the ritual of parading from Caldewgate over the river and into the city, this time carrying placards bemoaning that food shortages caused cholera. An effigy of Spencer Perceval, the MP who had put forward the motion for the fast, was burned at the market cross. The prosecution at the

subsequent trial of the rioters alleged: 'While they remained in the Market place their disposition towards the Police was Manifested by their attack upon a Man who had offended them in some way upon which there was a general cry "D – m him he is a Police Officer"'.[67] Hostility to the police, though heightened during unrest, was a constant theme. Resistance to new forms of authority imposed from outside continued to shape the later campaigns against the new poor law of 1834 and the rural police in the 1840s.[68]

The Carlisle Swing riots had distinctive causes, but their socio–economic context was mirrored in other parts of the region. On 5 December 1830, a wheat stack was fired on Dalston common, five miles south–west of the city: 'the reflection of the light was seen at Carlisle and excited great alarm'.[69] Little other evidence about the incident remains, and it may have merely been a work of mimicry by a lone incendiarist. On the other hand, the town experienced similar patterns of immigration and industrialization, resulting in comparable tensions that may have manifested themselves through Swing and other forms of resistance. Dalston and Carlisle weavers and spinners co–operated in unionized activity in the late 1820s. Dalston radicals had burned an effigy of Wellington on 20 November 1830, and during the 1831 election, over sixty trees were secretly maimed in plantations owned by prominent supporters of the Lowthers. The weaving districts of both towns went on to foster Chartist associations in 1838.[70]

*

This essay has so far suggested structural causes for Swing riots in Cumberland. But we cannot leave Carlisle without an examination of the threatening letters sent to local notables and accumulated by the constabulary in 1830–31. A comparable sample of Swing letters was collected by Henry Lascelles, second Earl of Harewood and Lord

Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and these will be examined here.[71] This evidence of course must be treated with care. As E. P. Thompson lamented, we cannot be sure whether the threats were representative of genuine protest or merely 'the voice of a crank'.[72] Nevertheless, the letters are invaluable in explaining the myth of Swing and its spread. They reveal a complex narrative of rumour, panic, and imitation that went far beyond the immediate causes and consequences of the rick–burning. They made the disturbances – or how they were perceived – distinctly 'Swing', rather than being just another wave of rural incendiarism.

The Carlisle and West Riding letters share common characteristics that indicate they had little to do with actual disturbances but rather developed a discourse of their own. Firstly, most letters were dated or received in December 1830. The Carlisle letters were therefore reactive to the agitation. Rather than forewarning action (as was usually the case with incendiarism), they were an opportunistic product of the heightened social and political tensions.[73] Of course, these particular letters may have only survived because magistrates were more concerned to retain evidence after the disturbances; there may have been earlier letters that were discarded, although these were not mentioned in any trial depositions. Secondly, the early letters were signed not by 'Swing' but by more common generic pseudonyms such as 'A. Radical' (2 December) and 'A. Philanthropist' (10 December).[74] These aliases suggest that their writers were following a set pattern of what they expected anonymous letters to look like. Threatening letters had long been a feature of rural crime and unrest, and their generic format was printed in newspapers reports and reward notices throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[75] Once the authors realized the utility of the myth of Swing, the format of the letters mutated. The first letter in the Carlisle collection to be signed 'Swing' was dated 4 January 1831. William Hodgson, the

city's clerk of the peace, was warned by 'Swing' in the name of the 'committee' that 'your house and other property shall be burnt to ashes from the bad character you have with the people of Carlisle'. It may have aimed to tap into the wider reaction to authorities' suppression of the disturbances, and the author by now knew that the trope of Swing would amplify the threat in a way that more generic pseudonyms could not. It may also have been a wider expression of discontent against the Lowthers: Hodgson was Lord Lonsdale's agent in Carlisle.[76] As a piece of evidence, the letter nevertheless remained unverifiable, especially as it was postmarked Nottingham.[77]

What led Hobsbawm and Rudé to assume that the Carlisle riots were instigated by radicals were two handbills posted near the lockup in Caldewgate after the arrest of Montgomery in December 1830. One handbill sardonically offered: '£1000 reward, in the apprehension of Borough–mongers, Stockjobbers, Tax–eaters, Monopolizers, Special Constables, and the Extinguishers of Freedom – by order of the Swing Union'.[78] The other was addressed by 'Sargin Swen' to 'the company' urging attendance at a meeting, 'for we are determined to release these three men that is [*sic*] in the [Caldew] gate'.[79] Though the second poster may have had connections with Cully's later effort to secure the prisoners' release, the authorship of the first handbill is impossible to ascertain. Again, it is likely that the handbills were the work of radical individuals using the riots as a convenient opportunity to express their own political grievances. Such autonomous use of the myth of Swing was demonstrated on 13 December at a meeting held by the Whig middle classes to discuss their petition for parliamentary reform. A deputation of weavers was invited to attend by the committee, but the *Carlisle Journal* alleged that one of them declared:

> The burnings throughout the country have had a great effect in opening the eyes of the landowners. It is the notorious Captain Swing who has made so many Reformers.[80]

By a fortnight after the riots, ‘Swing’ had become a powerful threat and a useful metonym to give the impression of strength and a wider spread for individuals or small groups who in fact had little connection to outbreaks of arson in their district let alone further afield.

Finally, most letters threatened to burn threshing machines, the harvest machinery that comprized the apparent vanguard of agricultural ‘improvement’ and capitalist endeavour. This focus was out of line with the predominant feature of disturbances in the north (and indeed in the southern counties), the firing of stacks. Only a few threshing machines were known to have been attacked in Yorkshire, and none in Cumberland, in this period.[81] The first letter in the Carlisle collection, dated 2 December, warned Mr Studholme, a surveyor, against retaining ‘the Corn thrashing machine’ that he had erected on his premises.[82] In early December 1830, the Mayor of Doncaster received a letter signed by ‘Swing’ that ordered him as an intermediary to ‘put down all threshing machines instantly’. A similar letter was received by a farmer at Rigton, near Leeds, that read:

> Sir, take notice that we send you word that your threshing mashine shal be burnt too ashishes before the month end and if you y it all Rigton wee will Burn it Dawn and Burn its too and so no more at present from me Mr Swing.[83]

These scraps of paper prove little apart from signalling that the myth of Swing had eventually taken hold as a useful trope for individuals with disparate motives, whose only connection with the rioting was a sense of common grievance against the local authorities. There is little other evidence that Swing was intended to be a co–ordinated campaign against the agricultural revolution.

Most of the evidence that the riots were connected to the general idea of Swing, if not directly to the disturbances in the south, came from the prosecution witnesses at the assize trial. Yet these deponents' testimonies are suspect because they were either involved with the *agents provocateurs* or were marked out by the crowd as targets. The evidence from James Cully, for example, who fled under warrant after calling out 'Jack Swing' during the riot, came from the informant William Huntington, and therefore cannot be verified.[84] Christopher Johnson Spencer, an upholsterer, stated that he heard a man in the crowd cry, 'It is the Swing System and it is to burn'. However, when Spencer attempted to help put out the fire, he was resisted with a shout of 'Down with the "—" Upholsterer'.[85] It is therefore unclear whether all the rioters believed they were taking part in a specifically 'Swing' attack or rather, it was the authorities and the attacked who made the easy but fearful assumption that the incident was connected to the southern disturbances.

The mythical Swing of the letters was a metonym that, as Peter Jones has suggested, although originating from the winding bye–lanes of rural Kent, quickly became stretched and spread by 'the imaginations of newspaper correspondents and leader writers', before filtering into the suspicions of magistrates and landowners and 'back into the countryside again'.[86] Newspapers played a significant role in fostering the myth of Swing and perpetuating rumours in the North. Earlier in the century, governments had put pressure on editors not to report arson for fear of encouraging

imitative attacks; it is also likely that newspapers did not report minor fires in rural areas beyond their reach. But by the early 1830s, certain newspapers fed upon and fostered popular interest in Swing.[87]

The Whig–leaning *Carlisle Journal* was relatively neutral in its reporting but the Tory *Carlisle Patriot,* patronized by the Lowthers, was inflammatory. On 4 December, the *Patriot* detailed the Swing attacks in the south, 'spreading with frightful rapidity over a large district of country', before describing the Carlisle arson as 'after the manner of Kent and the other southeastern counties of the kingdom'. The narrative of the events of 30 November was headed somewhat sensationally 'The Incendiary System in Carlisle', thereby conveying an impression of the Swing attacks as being connected as a coherent 'movement'. Within this column, it not only reported facts but also gossip, for example, a rumour 'in general circulation' at Carlisle and Dalston that 'the corn stacks of William Blamire Esq of Thackwendnook are to be fired some of these nights' owing to suspicions that the magistrate 'had bought up a large quantity of corn and used his influence with the farmers to hold back their produce from the markets'.[88] Though unproven, this accusation perhaps echoed a popular longing for an ideal of moral economy and community justice.

The sensationalism of the Tory press was mirrored by willingness – if not a desire – among the authorities to believe in the myth of Swing for their own purposes of defeating the unrest. A key feature of both phenomena of Luddism and Swing was that the authorities as well as the protagonists in the action shared in the delusion of disparate groups being united under a mythical military leader. The idea of a 'movement' connected by threatening letters, trade unionists, or political radicals, and embodied in Captain Swing, was as much a product of the rumour–obsessed imaginations or cunning guile of its opponents as of the actions of the crowd or the

rather more patchy and unreliable evidence of the anonymous letters.[89] It is here that emotions came into play over and above objective considerations of structural forces. Fear, panic, rumour, and hostility were all core responses that helped to engender solidarity among social and political groups and to foster opposition between them.[90] We should not presume that magistrates and other local forces of order, by their position against the fervour of the rioting crowd or the 'mysterious brotherliness' of the Irish immigrants, were entirely rational in their assessment of the situation.[91] The authorities believed in General Ludd and Captain Swing too, if only as a means of providing a convenient excuse for their inability to control the disturbances.[92]

The press manipulated deeper emotional impulses among local communities, particularly the common fear of the stranger. The newspapers were eager to speculate about any unexplained cases of arson. In December 1830, at Barrow, near Barton–upon–Humber, though the local inhabitants assisted willingly in attempting to extinguish the blaze, and though the owner Mr Westonby had 'received no threatening letter as had been reported', the *Wakefield and Halifax Journal* surmised that his stacks had been fired 'by a stranger' because 'he had a threshing machine on his premises'.[93] Similarly, in February 1832, a farmer from Fauld, near Longtown, eight miles north of Carlisle, suffered arson attacks on stacks on two successive nights. The *Carlisle Patriot* noted that 'a suspicious looking person, supposed to be a man dressed in woman's clothes, was seen in the neighbourhood shortly before the fire was discovered'.[94] Magistrates and other officials reported the appearance of anonymous letters in tandem with general suspicions about 'strangers'. These imaginings added extra layers to the myth of Swing. In December 1830, Edward Donedin, magistrate of Doncaster, reported to Earl Harewood that fourteen anonymous threatening letters directed at several prominent individuals had been

'found in the street' in the township of Crowle. Both Donedin and Harewood believed that there was a connection between the letters and the appearance of 'suspicious persons moving about in the neighbourhood seeking for work'. Harewood noted: 'it is stated to me that the arrival of Strangers has always proceeded [*sic*] acts of outrage'. In some cases, even the most respectable of the local notables were prone to panic. William Prest of Sherburn near Doncaster wrote to Harewood that he regarded his magisterial colleagues' action of swearing–in of 300 special constables because of a 'few foolish letters' as an absurd product of their collective hysteria.[95]

Such suspicions suggest that at times of crisis local elites duped themselves into believing rumours propagated by the press: respectable mayors would not have reported them for fear of losing credibility. The incendiary, working individually, anonymously, and surreptitiously at night, had long been prone to be mythologized as a stranger, outside the normal realms of local jurisdiction and observation.[96] This anxiety reflected the more general fears of magistrates and poor law officials about itinerant landless labourers, beggars, and vagrants. In the years preceding the 1834 new Poor Law, most overseers of the poor regarded vagrancy as representing 'a full–blown crisis of labour–discipline', that is, a nightmare of anonymous and uncontrollable bands of migrant workers produced by industrialization and enclosure. Such concerns also echoed the fear of strangers engendered by folk tales and oral tradition, keenly fostered in areas where parish boundaries were still perambulated and common rights to land or work were determined by local custom.[97] The suspicious stranger was a common bogey–man and a product of frenzied imaginations, constructed by magistrates and employers who wanted to portray their own inhabitants as 'loyal'. This brings us back to the community outside the walls of Carlisle, where rumour and hostility to strangers combined to produce resistance.

After the initial assault upon Benjamin Batty during his first entry into Caldewgate in 1827, the *Carlisle Journal* remarked that 'Old wives' reports flew about as usual, that they had proceeded to rebellion and in short for two hours business was at a stand and the town was in complete disarray'.[98] While the myth of Swing may have taken a few issues of the weekly local paper to foster, therefore, more immediate reactions could be commanded by word of mouth and the habitual strength of 'old wives' tales'.

*

Peter Jones argued that the mythic creation of Captain Swing was 'less a conscious act on the part of agricultural labourers than the result of a symbiotic relationship between labourers, cranks, crackpots, Radicals, leader writers, frightened farmers, correspondents, and finally the imagination of a public hard–wired in 1830 to find Frenchmen, Free Irishmen, and radical agitators hiding behind every haystack and lurking down every country lane'.[99] To this motley list we must add the authorities and local elites. The magistrates and police commission in Carlisle set up an incendiary attack in the mode of Swing in order to put down radicalism. But the riots of 30 November veered out of their control, beyond the stock narrative of Swing that they had determined would be enough to suppress the inhabitants of Caldewgate. Yet they, and their colleagues over in Yorkshire, continued to spread of the myth of Swing with less deliberate or even conscious intent and in a new direction. Feeding from the sensationalism of the Tory newspapers, they produced a scapegoat in order to account for their own weaknesses. They hoped for, if not imagined, the existence of Captain Swing in order to describe, conceptualize, and comprehend their inability to deal with popular unrest within a rapidly changing society and economy. In less feverish times, they probably would have realized the absurdity of taking a 'few foolish letters' too seriously, but with reports of mass incendiarism and machine–breaking in southern

England weekly reported in the northern press, they decided not to take the chance to dismiss the isolated threats as harmless. Swing was not quite 'La Grande Peur' that had swept through revolutionary France, but it reflected a more general atmosphere of myth–making that took in millenarianism, a belief in a 'general rising', and imagined leaders in the early nineteenth century.[100]

The background to the Carlisle riots in some ways parallels that of the southern Swing agitation: a long period of political disaffection, aggravated by economic depression and the extraordinary national and international events of 1830. The Swing rioters were not solely agricultural labourers: indeed, Roger Wells has pointed to 'journeymen artisans' leading role in some Swing theatres'.[101] Yet there were important differences. In the North, incendiarism occurred close to expanding urban and industrial areas. In Carlisle, the tensions caused by that expansion created a framework for the disturbances. In the West Riding, patterns of suspected arson or anonymous letters in some cases echoed the old outlines of Luddite strongholds.[102] Swing did not spread in the same way as they did in the south: that is, disturbances did not spread from village to village, fostered by bands of marauding rioters or lone itinerants. Rather, newspapers played a prominent role in perpetuating both the idea of Captain Swing and a heightened atmosphere of fear. The agitation of the period 1830–2 would have just been a continuation of older forms of resistance and crime had it not been for the willingness of the authorities (indeed more than the perpetrators) to employ Captain Swing as an eponym for what they believed to be a much larger conspiracy. The incidents in Cumberland and Yorkshire underline the significance of emotion and the imagination in both social movements and the actions of those who set out to suppress them.[103] Swing in the North was a product of rumour as much as of

action, and of deliberate and unconscious myth–making as much as of genuine grievance.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

This research was funded by a small grant from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland.

[1] *Carlisle Journal*, 4 December 1830; National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA): Home Office disturbance papers, HO 52/6/533–542, Carlisle depositions, December 1830; Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle (hereafter CRO): Carlisle constabulary papers, Ca 2/472, bundle 2, December 1830–January 1831.

[2] Eric J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing*, London, 1969, p. 168.

[3] Mike Matthews, *Captain Swing in Sussex & Kent: Rural Rebellion in 1830*, Hastings, 2006; Carl Griffin, ' "There was No Law to Punish that Offence": Re–Assessing "Captain Swing": Rural Luddism and Rebellion in East Kent, 1830–31', *Southern History* 22, 2000; Stephen Hussey and Laura Swash, *'Horrid Lights': Nineteenth–Century Incendiarism in Essex*, Chelmsford, 1994; Michael Holland (ed), *Swing Unmasked: the Agricultural Riots of 1830 to 1832 and their Wider Implications*, Milton Keynes, 2005.

[4] *Carlisle Journal*, 11 December 1830. In Yorkshire, stacks were burned in: Baildon; Sheffield; Kirkheaton; Elland; Rotherham; Barrow; Lotherton–cum–Aberford, and Denby, among other places. West Yorkshire Archives, Leeds (hereafter WYAL): Lieutenancy papers, WYL 250/6/2/box 2; TNA: HO 64/3/274, 331, HO 64/4/39; *Wakefield and Halifax Journal*, 17 December 1830; *Huddersfield and Halifax Express,* 2 April 1831; *The Times*, 18 December 1831.

[5] Michael Holland, 'Swing Revisited: the Swing Project', *Family & Community History* 7: 2, 2004, p. 90.

[6] For example, in November 1832, three barley stacks were fired by a labourer who had been dismissed from his employment on the Harewood estate near Leeds: *Derby Mercury*, 5 December 1832.

[7] J. L. and B. Hammond, *The Village Labourer, 1760–1832*, London, 1911, ch. 10; Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*, p. 242.

[8] Roger E. Wells, 'The Development of the English Rural Proletariat and Social Protest, 1700–1850', and Andrew Charlesworth, 'Comment', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 6, 1979, and 8, 1980; Roger Wells, 'William Cobbett, Captain Swing, and King William IV', *Agricultural History Review* 45: 1, 1997.

[9] Eric J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing*, 2nd edn, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. xv.

[10] See the special 'Swing' issue of *Southern History* 32, 2010; Peter Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing: Protest, Parish Relations, and the State of the Public Mind in 1830'; Adrian Randall, 'Captain Swing: a Retrospect'; and Carl Griffin, 'Swing, Swing Redivivus, or Something after Swing? On the Death Throes of a Protest Movement, December 1830–December 1833', *International Review of Social History* 54: 3, 2009, pp. 419–97.

[11] Steve Poole, '"A Lasting and Salutary Warning": Incendiarism, Rural Order and England's Last Scene of Crime Execution', *Rural History* 19: 2, 2008, p. 164; Andrew Charlesworth, 'An Agenda for Historical Studies of Rural Protest in Britain, 1750–1850', *Rural History* 2: 2, 1991, p. 235; John E. Archer, *By a Flash and a Scare: Incendiarism, Animal Maiming and Poaching in East Anglia, 1815–70*, Oxford, 1990, p. 160.

[12] Archer, *By a Flash and a Scare*, p. 129.

[13] Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing', p. 437.

[14] Katrina Navickas, 'The Search for General Ludd: the Mythology of Luddism', *Social History* 30: 3, 2005.

[15] Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing', pp. 436, 442.

[16] Hobsbawm and Rude, *Captain Swing*, p. 168.

[17] June Barnes, 'Popular Protest and Radical Politics: Carlisle, 1790–1850', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Lancaster, 1981, p. 105; *Carlisle Journal*, 15 March 1831.

[18] CRO: Ca 2/472/2, Fletcher to Ranson, December 1830.

[19] June Barnes, 'The Trade Union and Radical Activities of the Carlisle Handloom Weavers', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* 78, 1978, p. 157.

[20] *Carlisle Journal*, 4 and 25 September 1830.

[21] Michael J. Turner, *The Age of Unease: Government and Reform in Britain, 1782–1832*, Sutton, 2000, p. 215.

[22] TNA: HO 52/6/485, handbill, 5 November 1830.

[23] Roger Wells, '1830: the Year of Revolutions in England, and the Politics of the Captain Swing Insurrection', 2007, p. 8, http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/arts-humanities/history-and-american-studies/history/WebPublications.aspx, accessed 7 May 2010.

[24] *Carlisle Journal*, 13 November 1830.

[25] *Carlisle Journal*, 20 November 1830.

[26] Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain*, Oxford, 1998, p. 186.

[27] Sydney Towill, *Georgian and Victorian Carlisle*, Preston, 1996, p. 48.

[28] Barnes, ‘Popular Protest and Radical Politics’, pp. 25, 40; Donald MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict, and Migration: the Irish in Victorian Cumbria*, Liverpool, 1998, p. 32.

[29] *Carlisle Journal*, 10 February 1827; Towill, *Georgian and Victorian Carlisle*, p. 51.

[30] Katrina Navickas, ‘Moors, Fields, and Popular Protest in South Lancashire and the West Riding, 1800–1848’, *Northern History* 46: 1, 2009, p. 97. Pockthorpe in Norwich provides a striking parallel later in the century. The working–class inhabitants sustained a fierce campaign against intrusions into their district by the city corporation: Neil MacMaster, ‘The Battle for Mousehold Heath, 1857–1884: “Popular Politics” and the Victorian Public Park’, *Past and Present* 127, 1990, pp. 120–2.

[31] *Carlisle Journal*, 5 March 1831.

[32] TNA: ASSI 45/63, Examination of James Wallace, 13 December 1830.

[33] Barnes, ‘Popular Protest and Radical Politics’, p. 105.

[34] *Carlisle Journal*, 12 March 1831.

[35] Graham Seal, ‘Tradition and Agrarian Protest in Nineteenth–Century England and Wales’, *Folklore* 99: 2, 1988, p. 150.

[36] *The Blackfaces of 1812 [...] With an Introduction Containing Some Notice of the Spy System in 1812, 1817, and 1819*, Bolton, 1839; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Harmondsworth, 1963, p. 489.

[37] Wells argued to the contrary in ‘William Cobbett, Captain Swing, and King William IV’. See Jones, ‘Finding Captain Swing’, p. 443.

[38] *Carlisle Journal*, 12 March 1831.

[39] Barnes, 'Popular Protest and Radical Politics', p. 103; *Carlisle Patriot*, 4 December 1830. Arthur was elected president of the Chartist Convention in Manchester in August 1842: *Life of Thomas Cooper* (1872), Leicester, 1971, p. 208.

[40] *The Times*, 7 December 1830.

[41] TNA: ASSI 45/63, Examination of Benjamin Batty, 2 December 1830; same in Cumbria RO: Lowther papers, D LONS/L1/2/140.

[42] *The Times*, 7 December 1830; *Carlisle Journal*, 4 December 1830.

[43] CRO: Ca 2/472, bundle 1, f. 10.

[44] *Carlisle Journal,* 26 February 1831. In January 1831, three males aged sixteen to eighteen were charged with setting fire to a wheat stack in Sheffield. It emerged that they had initially intended to kill a sheep for fun, but on a whim they decided to burn the stack instead: *Huddersfield and Halifax Express*, 2 April 1831.

[45] Archer, *By a Flash and a Scare*, pp. 157, 159–60.

[46] Peter Jones, 'Swing, Speenhamland and Rural Social Relations: the "Moral Economy" of the English Crowd in the Nineteenth Century', *Social History* 32: 3, 2007.

[47] *Carlisle Journal*, 4 December 1830.

[48] Towill, *Georgian and Victorian Carlisle*, p. 104; Barnes, 'Trade Union and Radical Activities', p. 157.

[49] David Taylor, *The New Police in Nineteenth–Century England: Crime, Conflict and Control*, Manchester, 1997; David Philips and Robert D. Storch, *Policing Provincial England, 1829–1856: the Politics of Reform*, London, 1999, pp. 27–9; Robert D. Storch, 'The Plague of the Blue Locusts: Police Reform and Popular Resistance in Northern England, 1840–57', *International Review of Social History* 20: 1, 1975.

[50] *Carlisle Patriot*, 15 February 1823.

[51] Eric C. Midwinter, *Social Administration in Lancashire: Poor Law, Public Health and Police*, Manchester, 1969, p. 142.

[52] *Morning Chronicle*, 16 January 1827; J. V. Beckett, *Coal and Tobacco: the Lowthers and the Economic Development of West Cumberland, 1660–1760,* Cambridge, 1981, p. 13.

[53] Phillips and Storch, *Policing Provincial England*, p. 29. Manchester was seemingly a lead exporter of chief constables, as the head deputy of the new day police in Halifax, Yorkshire, was also a professional hired from the city.

[54] *Carlisle Journal*, 18 December 1830.

[55] CRO: D LONS/L1/2/140, Hanson to Lowther, 17 November 1830.

[56] Taylor, *The New Police*, p. 43.

[57] CRO: pamphlet, *The Problems of Policing Carlisle*, Carlisle, 1827; *Carlisle Journal*, 27 January 1827; Archibald Prentice, *Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester*, London, 1851, p. 34.

[58] Towill, *Georgian and Victorian Carlisle*, p. 104, citing Parson and White, *Directory of Carlisle*, Carlisle, 1829.

[59] *Morning Chronicle*, 13 February 1827.

[60] *Carlisle Patriot*, 18 February 1827.

[61] *Carlisle Journal*, 5 March 1831.

[62] TNA: HO 52/6/228, f. 488, Lowry to Home Office, November 1830.

[63] *Carlisle Journal*, 11 December 1830.

[64] *Carlisle Journal*, 30 April 1831.

[65] *Carlisle Journal*, 30 April 1831.

[66] *Carlisle Journal*, 1 January and 30 April 1831.

[67] CRO: D HOD 13/61, Cumberland Easter Sessions 1832; *Carlisle Journal*, 24 March 1832. The *Carlisle Patriot*, 24 March 1832, attributed the agitation to radicals. See Sean Burrell and Geoff Gill, 'The British Cholera Riots of 1832', in Holland, *Swing Unmasked*, pp. 184–228.

[68] John Knott, *Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law*, Beckenham, 1986; Storch, 'The Plague of the Blue Locusts'.

[69] *Carlisle Journal*, 11 December 1830.

[70] *Carlisle Journal*, 20 June 1829, 20 November 1830, 21 May 1831; *Northern Star*, 22 December 1838.

[71] CRO: Ca 2/472, bundle 2; WYAL, WYL 250/6/2/box 2.

[72] Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing', p. 437; E. P. Thompson, 'The Crime of Anonymity', in Douglas Hay et al (eds), *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth–Century England*, London, 1975, pp. 273–4.

[73] Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*, p. 122.

[74] CRO: Ca 2/472, Bundle 2.

[75] Thompson, 'The Crime of Anonymity', p. 274.

[76] J. C. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660–1914,* Oxford, 1986, p. 54.

[77] CRO: Ca 2/472, Bundle 2, 'Swing' to Hodgson, 4 January 1831; Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*, p. 168.

[78] TNA: HO 52/6/485; *The Times*, 7 December 1830.

[79] Hobsbawm and Rudé, *Captain Swing*, p. 168.

[80] *Carlisle Journal*, 18 December 1830.

[81] Whereas Hobsbawm and Rudé believed that machine breaking was the most common type of 'Swing' activity, the 'Swing Unmasked' project found that incendiarism occurred far more frequently: Holland, 'Swing Revisited', p. 91.

[82] CRO: Ca 2/472, Bundle 2, 'A. Radical' to Studholme, 2 December 1830.

[83] WYAL: WYL 250/6/2/box 2, Wilkinson to Harewood.

[84] NA, HO 52/6/492, evidence of William Huntington, November 1830.

[85] CRO: D LONS/L1/2/140, and TNA: HO 52/6/499, examination of Christopher Johnson Spencer, 1 December 1830.

[86] Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing', p. 440.

[87] Carl Griffin, 'Knowable Geographies? The Reporting of Incendiarism in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth–Century Provincial Press', *Journal of Historical Geography* 32: 1, 2006, p. 50.

[88] *Carlisle Patriot*, 4 December 1830.

[89] Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing', p. 442.

[90] Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta (eds), *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, Chicago, 2001, pp. 4–5.

[91] Clive Behagg, 'Secrecy, Ritual, and Folk Violence: the Opacity of the Workplace in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', in Robert Storch (ed), *Popular Culture and Custom in the Nineteenth Century*, London, 1982, p. 155.

[92] Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing', p. 442; Navickas, 'The Search for General Ludd'.

[93] *The Times,* 18 December 1830; *Wakefield and Halifax Journal*, 17 December 1830.

[94] *Carlisle Patriot*, 10 February and 17 March 1832.

[95] WYAL: WYL 250/6/2/box 2, Donedin to Harewood, 5 December 1830; Harewood to Donedin, 5 December 1830; Wood to Harewood, 5 December 1830; Prest to Harewood, December 1830.

[96] Archer, *By a Flash and a Scare*, p. 170.

[97] K. D. M. Snell, 'The Culture of Local Xenophobia', *Social History* 28: 1, 2003, pp. 7, 23; Seal, 'Tradition and Agrarian Protest', p. 160.

[98] *Carlisle Journal*, 10 February 1827.

[99] Jones, 'Finding Captain Swing', p. 442.

[100] Roger Wells, *Insurrection: the British Experience, 1797–1803*, Gloucester, 1983.

[101] Wells, '1830: the Year of Revolutions in England', p. 36.

[102] For example, near Bradford, Denby, and Elland: *Huddersfield and Halifax Express,* 2 April 1831.

[103] Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, *Passionate Politics,* p. 4.