RELUCTANT REFORMERS? : POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN KINGSTON UPON THAMES 1830-1900

PAMELA READING

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ABSTRACT

The reputation of Kingston Borough Council during the nineteenth century has been that it was dilatory in operation and reluctant to meet the challenges that were associated with an expanding community. The thesis, reassesses that reputation, in comparison to similar communities, and addresses possible reasons for reluctance. As the main theme is the response of the local authority to both permissive and mandatory legislation imposed by central government, research has had to consider who constituted the local authority. Questions have therefore focused on the type of men who served on the council for the period following the introduction of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 and ending in 1900. In particular, the occupational representation on the council has been analysed in order to establish whether there may have been influence from any one sector of the social and economic life of the borough, and whether that changed over the period of research. Answers have been sought also as to the level of kinship, both contemporaneous and between generations, and the social networks, or associations, which linked councillors.

To facilitate analysis of data retrieved from sources that recorded the life and work of individual councillors, including council and newspaper reports, a computer database has been designed to bring together information from the contemporary sources, both manuscript and printed. Capable of supporting analytical procedures, the database is in the form of a list of 240 names compiled from the councillors listed in the Council Minutes, Board of Guardian Minutes and the recorded proceedings of other formal bodies.

Other possible causes for the manner in which Kingston council reacted to the needs of an expanding population have been sought. What influenced the decision making process most, was it inexperience, an inability to accept the changing machinery of government, both central and local, a lack of understanding of the role of modern local governance or other issues which fuelled the lengthy debates that preceded every move toward improvement? It has been necessary to consider the extent to which Kingston council's dilatory behaviour, if proven, rests with the caste of men who exercised authority, concern about finance or whether there was a combination of contributory factors.

What emerges from the analysis is a picture of a council dominated by a group of men who made up the burgeoning middle class society of the borough. It would be an

exaggeration to call them a self perpetuating oligarchy, but they certainly had a core of first families who, for much of the nineteenth century, sought to maintain the status quo.

By studying the various inputs into a particular local authority, for instance the level of competence, local circumstances, reaction to change, professionalism and financial management, to name but a few, it could be possible to determine why it functioned as it did and make a contribution to the administrative history of the region.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

CEB	Census Enumerators' Books
CFLHS	Centre for Local History Studies, Kingston University
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
HLRO	House of Lords Record Office
IHR	Institute of Historical Research
KRSA	Kingston Rural Sanitary Authority
KSN	Kingston and Surbiton News
KUSA	Kingston Urban Sanitary Authority
LGB	Local Government Board
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LSE	London School of Economics
LWW	Lambeth Water Works
MCA	Municipal Corporation Act 1835
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
NK	North Kingston Local History Room
SA	Surrey Advertiser
SC	Surrey Comet
SHS	Surrey History Service
TNA	The National Archives
VCH	Victoria County History

MAPS, TABLES AND CHARTS

MAPS

TABLES

CHARTS

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

> ...the impact of national legislation on the local conditions of different kinds of community in mid-and late-Victorian England is a research study in itself.[1]

1. Reason for undertaking this research

The impetus for this research into the condition of local government in Kingston in the nineteenth century was the report on Kingston in the 1835 *Royal Commission of Enquiry into Municipal Corporations in England and Wales*, to the effect that: 'The Corporation as a body is extremely inactive; and with the extensive jurisdiction, numerous offices, and a considerable revenue, is rather harmless than useful to the town.'[2] This judgement reflected the general finding of the commissioners in their reports on the 285 towns throughout the country that were examined:

> The most common and striking defect in the constitution of the Municipal Corporations of England & Wales is that the corporate bodies exist independently of the communities among which they are found. The Corporations look upon themselves, and are considered by the inhabitants, as separate and exclusive bodies; they have powers and privileges within the towns and cities from which they are named, but in most places all identity of interest between the Corporation and the inhabitants has disappeared. [3]

Before 1835, and indeed for much of the next forty years, many corporations saw their prime responsibility confined to the properties and income of their towns. Following local government reform, the idea of localism, that is preference for local control or initiative, was slow to take root in Kingston. The increasing permission and encouragement from central government to take charge of wider, and more urban, liabilities must have presented something of a dilemma to some councillors. On the one hand, local control was to be welcomed as a right, as in its limited remit it always had been, while how to initiate local action or take advantage of the permissive legislation now being offered was uncharted territory. A further facet of unreconstructed corporations was, as Webb comments: 'being responsible to no one, the corporations were often corrupt; they were likely to be extremely cautious...and, with few exceptions, they were totally lacking in imagination'.[4] When the Mayor and Corporation of Kingston considered the

report of the 1835 Royal Commission they were much offended and, as the council minutes record:

> The report of Charles Austin Esquire the Commissioner who attended the enquiry into the affairs of the Corporation was produced in which the Commissioner had thought fit to charge the Corporation as being an extremely inattentive Body and to make use of other most undeserved observations on the Magistry of the Town imputing to them a want of energy and impartiality in the discharge of the Duties of their Office and other general remarks reflecting on their conduct in the administration of the Trusts reposed in them as Corporators of this Town, which report having been considered and a statement of facts in direct opposition to those observations being read at this Court it is ordered that a Petition embodying those facts be presented to the House of Lords and that the same or some notice of the contents thereof be inserted in the daily newspapers; they resolved that a petition contradicting Austin's observations be presented to the House of Lords and that some notice of the contents be inserted in the daily newspapers.[5]

There is confusion as to whether such a petition was ever made. Curiously, two years later, the following letter, appeared in a national newspaper:

> Sir, Being a member of the town-council of Kingston-upon-Thames, and seeing in your paper of the 26th inst. the statement 'that Lord Brougham presented a petition from the mayor, alderman and councillors of Kingston-upon-Thames, under the seal of the corporation, expressing their gratitude for the boon of municipal reform, etc.' I shall feel obliged by your correcting the same, as no such petition has, at any time, been sent from this corporation. [6]

For the Kingston councillors, the Royal Commission report was doubtless the first experience of external judgement on their performance as town managers. June Sampson's assessment of these men is that: 'Kingston in the nineteenth century was largely managed by men with little knowledge of the world beyond the borough boundaries.' [7]

If the application of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 (MCA), a landmark in the organisation of local government, provides a recognisable starting point, it seems logical to seek an equally eventful piece of legislation which offers a similarly notable end point, such as the establishment of elected County Councils in 1888. [8] This enabled Kingston candidates to stand for election to Surrey County Council and marked the beginning of the borough council's gradual, if temporary, loss of some administrative responsibilities for quarter sessions, education, housing and planning. However, as Kingston's relationship

with central government, particularly with the officials of the Local Government Board, continued to be strained until the turn of the century, the end date of 1900 is deemed preferable. As an example, as late as 1893, Kingston council, in its role as urban sanitary authority, was still inclined to see itself as being accountable to no higher authority. Despite repeated criticism from the Medical Officer of Health, Board of Guardians and Surrey County Council, councillors saw no need to provide an isolation hospital. A minute written by an official of the Local Government Board in November 1893 shows central government's response to the local unwillingness to provide this statutory improvement:

> It seems to me that this Urban Sanitary Authority is systematically ignoring the Board, and neglecting its duty. It is still refusing to provide an Infectious Hospital and its refusal places the Guardians (whose workhouse is in the district) in the gravest difficulty. I think that a note should be made in all departments to this effect, and that the board should hesitate before sanctioning any future loans for electric lighting, or other so-called 'improvements' until actual necessaries [underlined] are provided for the district.[9]

Kingston's resentment at the 1835 verdict of ineffectiveness seems not to have been tempered by 60 years experience of borough government. Provincial attitudes and pride were still opposed to centralisation emanating from London. The thesis will consider whether or not the comments of central government officials in 1835 and in 1893 give a true picture of the relationship between Kingston council and central government, and other authorities and major institutions over the period 1835-1900, and if so, why.

While it is not part of this research to look in detail at how Kingston was governed before 1835, there is evidence that the 1835 report on the borough may not have been entirely impartial. In 1833, when the commission to enquire into the state of the government of boroughs was set up, assistant commissioners who carried out the investigations were drawn from the ranks of young liberal barristers. The secretary of the commission was Joseph Parkes, a radical liberal who was later to become an electoral agent for the Liberal party.[10] Thus it could be expected that their judgements, on existing corporations which were pre-eminently Tory and Anglican in disposition, would be less than favourable.

Kingston was not the only town to receive a less than positive assessment by the 1835 commissioners. The commissioners for Maidstone were more damning, alleging that bribery and corruption surrounded elections to the common council.[11] Nor did Reading fare any better. The commissioners reported that members of the same family had been running the Corporation for the last fifty years, leading the inhabitants to view the authority with a degree of jealousy and dissatisfaction.[12] Not all reports were as critical. The commissioner who reported on Saffron Walden: 'was full of praise for the way accounts were kept, money was spent, business conducted.'[13]

Of the 285 towns investigated by the Commissioners, most were found to be unsatisfactory. The more politically naïve of the councillors would be unaware that the commissioners' brief was to find evidence to justify the corporation reform measures. Indeed: 'It is now known that the commissioners were expected to select evidence to justify a new statute already decided upon, hence the highly partisan published report included many exaggerated comments on some of the 300 towns visited.'[14] Prior to 1835 little had changed the way in which communities had been ordered, in some cases since medieval times. The Reform Act of 1832 had gone some way to recognise the changing patterns of demographic growth. It had addressed the anomalies of 'rotten boroughs' and provided a democratic channel for the ambition of rich industrialists who represented a new power base which, unharnessed, was perceived as a potential threat to political stability by the aristocratic majority in parliament. This reform of the basis of parliamentary representation did nothing to change the random and archaic systems by which *local* government was organised.[15] The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act provided a nation-wide unitary framework within which all incorporated boroughs were expected to operate, replacing the self-electing corporations of the past. The advantage of this legislation, for parliament, was that most local authorities could now be organised in one standard framework through which national legislation could be introduced.

It is debatable how far the changes as introduced into most of the smaller corporations and boroughs, such as Kingston, actually altered the way in which local government was conducted. At this date few public services were provided

by the old corporations, consequently there was little administrative function in place. As a tool for breaking party monopolies in the larger towns and cities, such as Leeds, Leicester and Liverpool, they were indeed effective. Given many similar predominantly Tory local monopolies and the radical persuasion of most of the commissioners, one of the principal targets of the Act becomes clear.[16] This notion of manipulation on the part of a reforming government suggests that either Kingston's epithet of 'Somnus Town' was accurate (and welcome) evidence to the Commission, or it may have been exaggerated.[17]

Before 1835, the town was governed by a Court of Assembly composed of a complex hierarchy of bailiffs, and aldermen, leet jurymen and freemen. This had been so since the fifteenth century, except for a period in the seventeenth century (1685-1688) when James II tried to remodel various corporations under a new charter providing for 'government by Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors'. This did not become the permanent rule until 1835.[18] The freemen were chosen from the free tenants of the manor, and under the names of gownsmen, peers and fifteens.[19] These, together with two bailiffs, a high steward and a recorder formed the Court of Assembly in 1835. To the Royal Commissioners of 1835 it appeared that, in Kingston: 'many persons have been elected...who were either newcomers in the town or young in point of age, and had served none of the troublesome offices of overseer, surveyor, churchwarden...whereas many persons of greater age and longer resident in the town have been passed over.'[20] Witnesses who provided the evidence to the commissioners evidently held considerable grievance against the system, for the report continues:

> It appears from the list of the members of the corporation that these officers must be frequently chosen from amongst the retail tradesmen of the town. It is said that such persons are too dependent upon the favour of their customers...to act with proper energy and impartiality...instances were adduced in proof of this statement.[21]

Although witness statements to the 1835 Royal Commission indicate an atmosphere of dissatisfaction with the status quo, Kingston was not noted for any restlessness amongst its population, rather the opposite to judge from contemporary observers. Some years after the commissioners' report was written, a young William Biden, later to be a significant source for Kingston history,

thought: 'Kingston fixed itself...as a town dedicated to dullness; and the people were the scarcely living representation of inactivity and frigid unfriendliness.'[22]

When the Royal Commission considered local authorities in the south of England, Section IV (the South East Circuit) covered Surrey with the exception of Guildford and Kingston which were covered in the Home Circuit.[23] The Home Circuit comprised towns in the immediate neighbourhood of London; namely Gravesend, Guildford, Hertford, Kingston, Maidenhead, Romford, St Albans, and Windsor. These towns are all within a thirty mile radius of London but Kingston is the nearest to the metropolis, a mere twelve miles.[24] It might have been a logical, even an elegant, exercise to use this contemporary official grouping as the basis for comparing progress over time but given their disparate nature, for example the 'royalty' of Windsor, the city status of St Albans and the maritime nature of Gravesend, which, due to its position, has always been one of the most important shipping towns on the Thames, this has not been pursued. Comparisons will be made with some of those included in the Home Circuit, in addition to other towns in southern England. The latter group includes Bromley, Chelmsford, Colchester, Croydon, Enfield, Maidstone, Reading and Saffron Walden. The justification for using these communities is that, in most cases, recent publications include documented evidence detailing their respective local authority's response to challenges similar to those facing Kingston. Comparison of developments in these communities, which had problems, if not solutions, in common, will provide a bench-mark against which to judge the councils' performance in Kingston.

2. Kingston in the nineteenth century

Kingston is located twelve miles south west of London, for the most part on the south bank of the Thames, which makes a natural boundary between the modern counties of Surrey and Middlesex, although Surrey in the nineteenth century included part of what is now Middlesex and extended east to Southwark. Kingston has historically provided one of the staging posts for travellers between the south coast and London. These boundaries are shown in the map at Appendix1.1. The nineteenth century road approached Kingston via the Portsmouth Road and left via London Road. This was a major coaching route before the arrival of the railway. The first recorded bridge crossing of the Thames

at Kingston is in the twelfth century but by 1835 a modern toll bridge had recently been opened.[25] The river itself provided an important transport link, allowing Kingston to operate almost as an inland port with barges loading and unloading commodities such as timber, corn and coal at the wharves and landing stages which are shown in Figure 1.4 (p.15). Consequent upon this traffic, tanneries, timber yards, brewing and boat building were thriving local industries in the early nineteenth century and continued until locomotive transport made barges, if not obsolete, definitely less economic as the century progressed. A brick making industry flourished with the expansion of the town.

A town with a proud and royal history, being situated between the royal palaces of Richmond and Hampton Court, Kingston was an agricultural market town for much of its history.[26] Beyond the heart of the borough there were many market gardens and farms which supplied grain for the breweries, as well as meeting the daily food needs of the population. The local cattle market survived until the twentieth century. Trade companies were established in the town in 1579 and their restrictive practices remained in force until the nineteenth century. These companies were the woollen drapers, mercers, butchers and shoemakers. Only freemen of the companies, either by way of family inheritance or apprenticeship, were allowed to trade, thereby ensuring a trade monopoly for the townspeople. The four companies, or guilds, between them covered allied trades such as tailoring, brewing, food supply and brick-making, many of which formed a substantial part of Kingston's economy in the nineteenth century.[27] Chapters 7 and 8 will show how these trades still dominated the town in the nineteenth century. Outsiders were occasionally allowed to trade if the Kingston Court of Assembly (as it was known pre-1835) thought it beneficial, but only tolerated on payment of a fee. Notices were served on various traders for carrying on trades while not being freemen of the town, although exemptions were being granted as late as 1834.[28] These exclusive rights were abolished in 1835, by a clause in the Municipal Corporations Act.

The MCA recorded the town of Kingston in the early 1830s as stationary with respect to trade. An 1823-24 directory says nothing of the economy of the town, being content with various references to 'pleasing aspects of the town.'[29] Ten

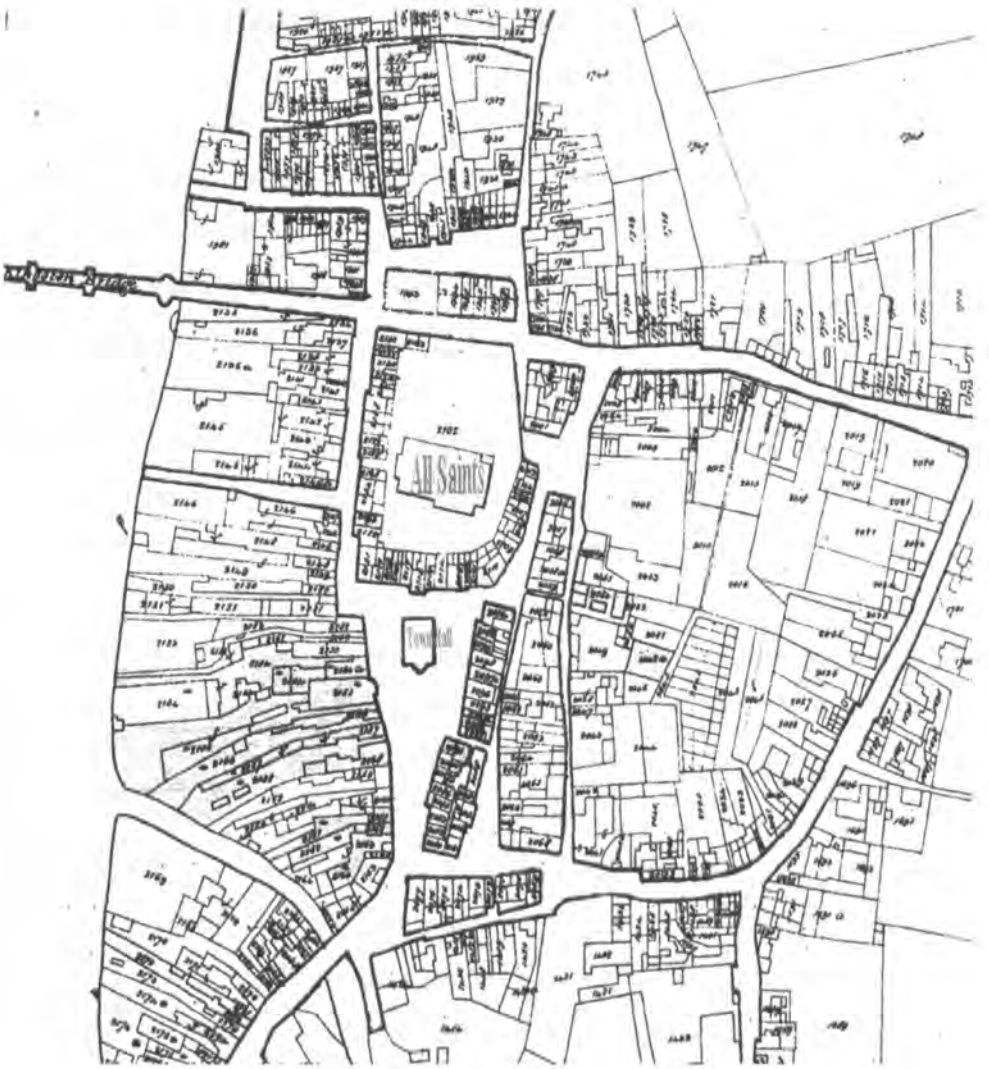
years later a two page directory entry for Kingston states: 'The trade of this town is principally in malt, of which a great quantity is made; there are also flour and oil mills, two distilleries and several, extensive breweries'.[30] This 1832-3-4 directory includes a list of 58 'nobility, gentry and clergy'. Only six of these have titles, three being women and a third of the entries have addresses in Ham, a hamlet two miles east of the Market Place, towards Richmond, not in Kingston. There is also a list of 309 tradesmen, craftsmen and retailers plus eighteen professionals, the latter confined to legal and medical vocations. The addresses of most these entries are in and around the immediate environs of the Market Place. By 1839 a description of Kingston in a local directory was: 'although in appearance not the most prepossessing, this is a very ancient and respectable place and has always been one of considerable consequence, both in history and local trade.'[31] No doubt this opinion was tempered by commercial necessity to make any description of the borough as appealing as possible in order to attract potential subscribers.

It is true, however, that in the 1830s the small market town of Kingston did derive importance from its location on one of the main roads from the south coast into the metropolis. It was a staging post for both mail and passenger coach traffic. The town's position on the Thames was also a factor in its commercial popularity. River traffic brought malt and barley for the several mills in the town and timber for the local ship-building industry. The economy of the town was dependent on being a regional centre for road and river commerce. Prosperity came from the marketing of produce, both locally-grown and brought in from other parts of Surrey, work for the lightermen and barge masters who worked on the river, the brewing and malting to keep the numerous coaching inns supplied, tanning, brick-making and candle-making. Figure 1.4 (p.15) shows a number of the wharfs and landing stages which still survived in the 1890s and one of the major breweries, the Eagle Brewery, and the tannery. However in September 1839 the town warranted four pages in Pigot and Co.'s directory of that date, evidence of a thriving commerce.[32] When Frederick Gould (to become a prominent member of Kingston's establishment) arrived in Kingston in 1839 his first impression of Kingston was that:

> it was delightfully situated quaint old town, eminently desirable as a riverside resort. Many of the houses were then ancient half-timbered

Elizabethan dwellings with overhanging bedrooms, and presented a picturesque appearance. Kingston was then a celebrated malting town; there were malthouses in all directions.[33]

Figure 1.1 Kingston 1840



Source : Kingston Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1840-1842.[34]

The Kingston tithe map of 1840-42, as at Figure 1.1 (p.9) showing the numbered tithe plots gathered tightly around the church and market, gives a distinct picture of how Kingston life centred round the Market Place in mid-century.[35] The parish church, All Saints, and the Town Hall share prominence at the heart of the borough's activities. The Market Place is surrounded by a throng of shops and houses. That the plots represent dwellings as well as businesses is recorded in the Apportionment.[36] Many of the councillors lived and carried on

trades in this area. At the date of the 1851 census five serving councillors had businesses in property in the Market Place. A further fourteen with addresses in the Market Place were past or future councillors. Even when they moved their domestic residences to the new housing developments which were built from the 1860s onwards they kept their commercial activity in and around the Market Place.

By mid-century, the Post Office Directory of 1855 devotes seven pages to Kingston, five of which list 'gentry' and three which list over 500 'traders'.[37] The preamble describes several mills worked by the Hog's Mill as it ran through the town 'much augmenting the traffic' as well as the considerable business of Kingston market on Saturdays.[38] Further evidence of a busy bustling market town is the thirty insurance companies which had agents in the town. Not only was there a Post Office in the Market Place but two sub post offices in Surbiton, where 'a great many handsome villas are in the course of erection.'[39] Many of the expanded gentry list had addresses in Surbiton although the majority of the traders still worked from addresses near the Market Place, albeit gradually spreading out along the High Street (called West-by-Thames at that date) and up Surbiton Hill towards the new development which was viewed with some suspicion by the long established traders in the Market Place. Figure 1.4 (p.15) shows some of the expansion of the town away from the Market Place by 1865 (Chapter 5 details three particular areas of building expansion) and with these developments one can see the beginnings of Kingston as a suburb of the metropolis: 'Kingston is rapidly losing all traces of a rural character and acquiring the uniform appearance of a London suburb.'[40] The economic well being of the town was no longer dependent upon the surrounding farms, although the nursery gardens were still supplying fruit and vegetables to the growing population.

These developments impacted on the occupational structure of the town during the years covered by this research. The growth of residential development had the result of increased activity in the dealing and retail sectors, as well as an expansion of the numbers employed in domestic service. Alongside the increase in the supply to meet domestic needs came the requirement for public services and professions such as school teachers, lawyers, and chemists.[41] Kingston was

maturing into what Shaan Butters has described as: '...the economic focus of Surrey and its own suburbs... gaining that dual function - London commuter town and regional economic centre.'[42] This transition in the local economy was typical of what was happening in a number of London suburban towns and was the result of such factors as population growth, transport improvements and middle class preferences.

In 1879, in contrast to the economic importance of agriculture and road and river traffic in the 1830s, one yearbook states that trade in Kingston was: 'confined almost exclusively to the wants of the place as a popular suburban resort for residents and visitors.'[43] As the century progressed, with the transport of goods gradually moving from river to rail and many of the Thames-side wharfs becoming redundant, the development of the leisure possibilities of the river became an attractive marketing alternative. 'The River Thames affords special facilities for boating and angling' according to an 1891 directory.[44] This 1891 directory, far more substantial than directories of either the 1830s or 1850s, does not distinguish between gentry and private residents. Many of these residents have addresses in the new developments described in Chapter 5, on Kingston Hill, Spring Grove and along the Portsmouth Road. Kingston had begun to develop a sense of civic pride based on what it could achieve, as opposed to what its long history had bequeathed, and realised its potential as a visitor attraction with public gardens and a promenade being laid out beside the river.

The development of this promenade, named Queen's Promenade, in 1856 was not however paid for out of local taxation. It is an example of Kingston council's attitude to the funding of anything other than a necessity. It was only accomplished with private funding and assistance from The Chelsea Water Company and the City of London Corporation. Private funding came in the form of subscriptions, the largest of which was from William Woods who was building riverside villas nearby and therefore not an entirely altruistic gesture.[45] The water companies and the City of London supplied surplus materials and technical assistance. Having engineered this significant town improvement, at minimal cost to the borough exchequer, the council then refused to contribute to its ongoing maintenance. Lack of imagination and understanding of how to sustain beneficial

revenue costs was a driving factor in decision-making. Ten years after opening, the promenade's future had to be ensured by further private subscriptions, boosted by a large sum from the Mayor, John Williams.[46]

Local authority involvement with the provision of recreational activities was not without critics, and the acceptance of municipal funding and public works was slow to develop in Kingston, as it was in other towns at this period. The permissive legislation of mid-century did not meet with the approval of the majority of local ratepayers. The growing philosophy of civic pride in public space and institutions, conveying what Simon Gunn calls the 'symbolic identity' of a community, which was becoming prevalent in larger cities and towns, took some time to spread. Robert Morris and Gunn both address this aspect of urban development.[47] In Kingston, the concept of municipal funding of libraries, museums, public baths, parks and improved housing was slow to take hold. As late as the 1860s and 1870s the council was still not prepared to use tax revenue to fund municipal investment, preferring instead to encourage the funding of civic amenities by public subscription. However, whatever council members' attitude might be to public finance, by the last quarter of the century they had to face the realities of managing a thriving residential suburb, more demanding of their abilities than the small market town of the first half of the century. Chapters 4 and 5 address the struggle to come to terms with both the basic infrastructure requirements of the expanding community and the cultural (in its widest sense) expectations of what was becoming a middle class electorate.

The expansion of the borough can be seen in a series of maps over time. In 1835, the Market Place was the hub of the trading life of the town, with most of the businesses also being the domestic address of the owner. At this date the town, would not have differed much from that shown in the map drawn in 1813 at Figure 1.2 (p.13). This shows the parish church, All Saints, at one end of the Market Place with the site for the proposed new Town Hall at the opposite end. The existing town hall is shown in the Market Place and the old bridge across the Thames, to the north. In keeping with Kingston's civic conservatism, when the town hall was rebuilt in 1840 the new site was rejected in favour of rebuilding on the old site in the heart of the town. The 1813 map shows old street names such

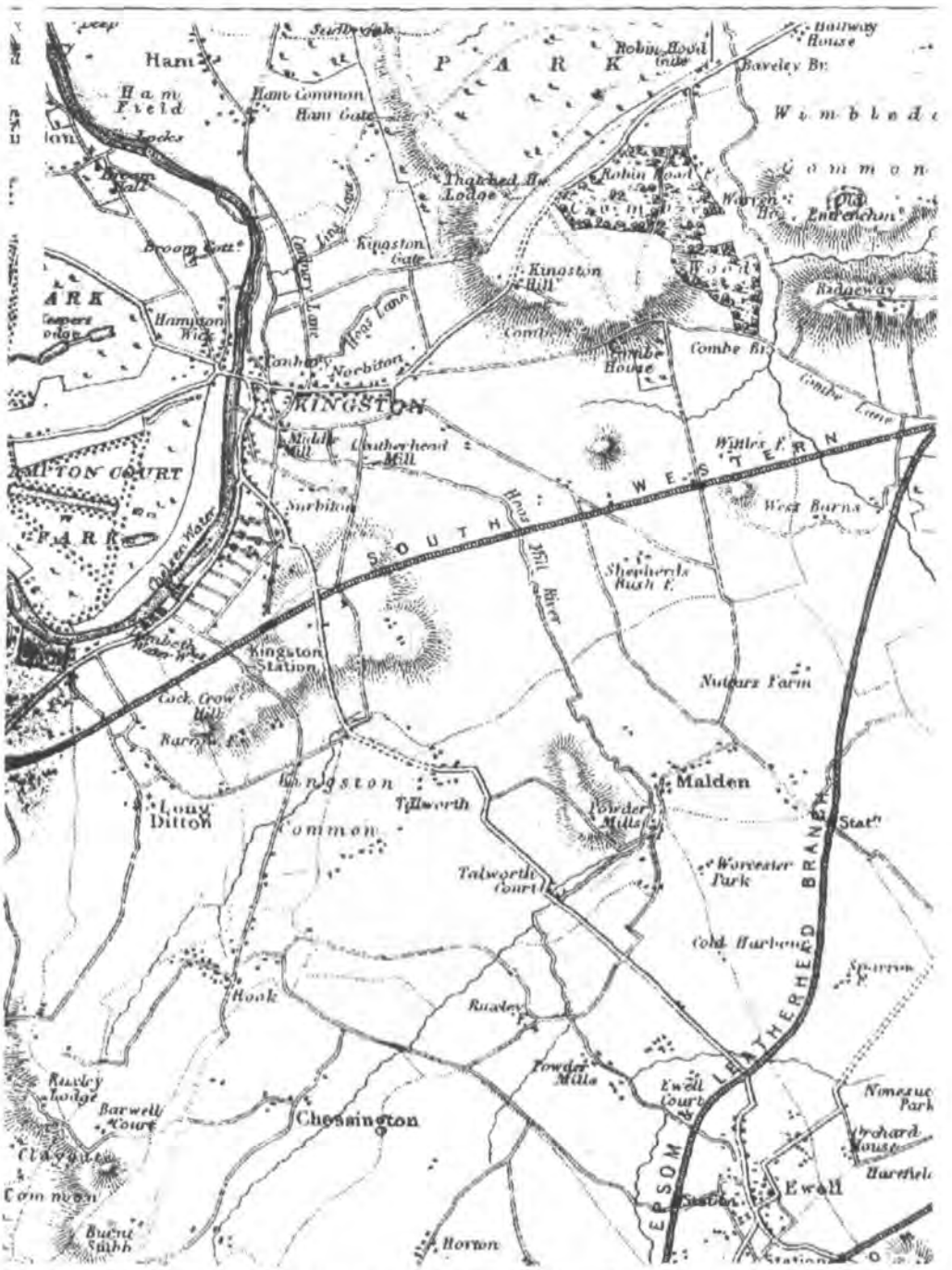
as Heathen Street (later to be renamed Eden Street) and West by Thames Street (later to be named the High Street) which were still in use at the time of the 1851 census. Shaan Butters suggests that Heathen Street got its name from the presence there of those who supplied labour for the dirtier industries of the town such as tanning and meat slaughtering.[48]

Figure 1.2 Kingston 1813

Source: Plan of the town and parish of Kingston upon Thames, surveyed and published by T. Horner, June 1813

Figure 1.3 (p.14) shows the location of the first 'Kingston Station' (later to be known as Surbiton Station) indicating clearly how Kingston town was cut off from the modern means of rail transport

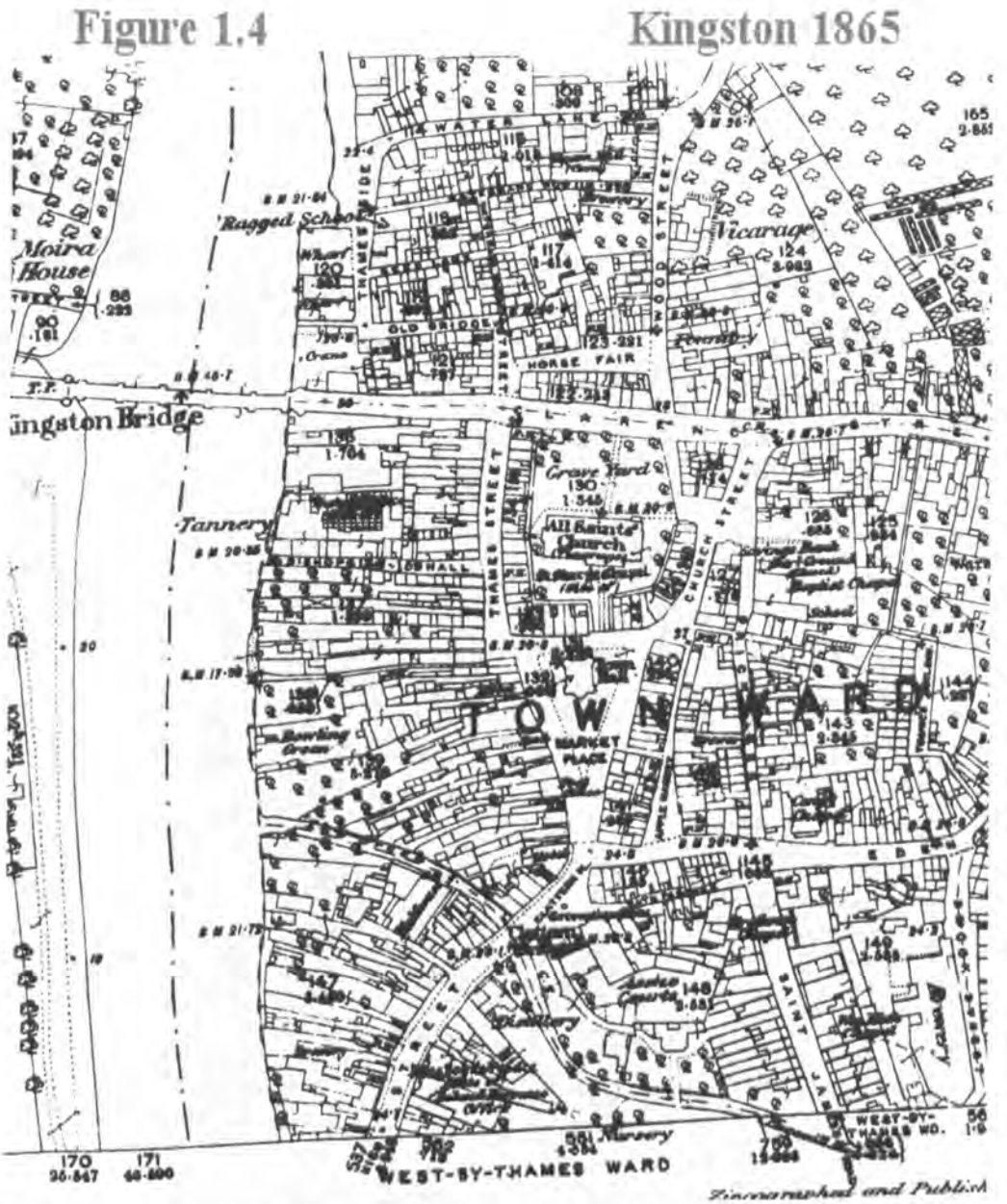
Figure 1.3 Kingston 1863



Map from *The Dispatch Atlas* of 1863 showing the district just before the railway reached Kingston.

Source: Edward Weller, *Weekly Dispatch Atlas* (1863).

Figure 1.4 (p.15) gives an idea of the amount of new development within the parish by 1865 and shows the position of the new bridge.



Source: Ordnance Survey, County Series 1:2500. Surrey sheet vi 16. Survey 1863.

Change was obviously much afoot in 1877 when Chapman wrote 'the timber built houses which are disappearing fast but [of] which a few still remain, while the others are being replaced by dwellings which betoken increasing wealth and comfort.'[49] He extolled the virtues of an attractive town providing for all intellectual and domestic needs. Figure 1.5 (p.16) shows Kingston Station and the

extensive development which had grown up around it by 1894. The new bridge carrying the line across the Thames can be seen, as well as the new sewage works and landing stages for pleasures boats which were starting to replace the barge wharves.

Figure 1.5 Kingston 1894

Source: Ordnance Survey, County Series 1:2500. Surrey Sheet vi, Rev. 1894

Although the railway station did not open in Kingston until 1863, the main line station which opened in 1838 in Surbiton, giving easy access to London, led to a rapid expansion of the surrounding area. This growth of prosperity had two effects. Firstly, Kingston Council, which had turned down the idea of the railway in the town in the 1830s, realised the opportunity for rating income from the new

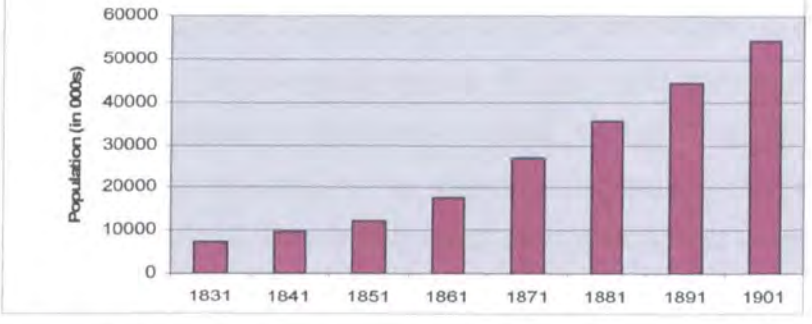
suburb and attempted to extend the borough boundaries to include Surbiton.[50] This prompted the astute inhabitants of that community to react by promoting their own Improvement Bill and this attitude is reflected in correspondence of the day in the local press as shown in Appendix 1.2. When both Bills came before the House of Commons on Tuesday the 17th April 1855 the main opposition to the Kingston Bill was on behalf of the Surbiton District. The ratepayers, who had been the instigators of the Surbiton Bill, principally on the grounds that although they paid rates to Kingston they received little in the way of the expected services, won the day. The Surbiton Improvement Act was passed in May 1855, effectively making Surbiton independent, and creating an administrative and economic divide between the two communities which was to lead to bitter arguments between the two authorities for many years.[51] With some foresight of likely problems ahead, a leader in the *Surrey Comet* tried to heal the breach:

> The decision arrived at by the committee of the House of Commons may be considered as tantamount to the actual passing of this measure. During its discussion we purposely abstained from offering any opinion either for or against it, contenting ourselves with giving the amplest information that could be obtained. As the bill is now all but part and parcel of the law of the land, we trust all former differences will vanish and as a conciliatory spirit has been already manifested we trust that one of the benefits that will result from this enactment, will be, that the bonds of union and good fellowship will be more firmly cemented; that all past differences will be forgotten and that the only rivalry that may in future exist will be that laudable kind that seeks to outwit one another in furnishing means and opportunities for the promotion of the welfare and general good of all who reside within this large and populous parish.[52]

Secondly, the development of Surbiton led to its prosperity spilling over into Kingston and, as the town in general expanded, both land owners and local builders were quick to see the advantage of becoming housing developers. As the century progressed, the nature of Kingston town's economy changed. The change was gradual but followed the pattern found elsewhere in Britain. The railway took over the coaching business and much of the barge trade, and the corn and linseed mills ceased production by the end of the century. Conversely, building-related trades, such as brick making and timber yards, thrived and consumer outlets to provide for the villa owners and rail commuters had to upgrade to appeal to more sophisticated customers. The Market Place shopkeepers began to buy property in the new developments and separate their places of business and home. Although the Market Place remained the centre of the town, and the council still met there,

Kingstonians were moving away from the centre to the new suburban estates such as Spring Grove and Kingston Hill, both developed in the 1860s.[53] Many of the pressures on local councils in the mid nineteenth century arose from the problems created by an increase of population accompanying the economic change normally referred to as industrialisation. Although industrialisation had a relatively minor impact on Kingston, it is necessary to look at exactly how and when the population did expand. Figure 1.6 shows how the population of Kingston expanded over the century, according to the census figures for Kingston parish, including the districts of Hook, Ham, Norbiton, Surbiton and (when it existed) New Malden.[54] The growth curve for the population for the whole of England over the same period indicates a more uniform increase, based on the decennial figures, as in Figure 1.7:

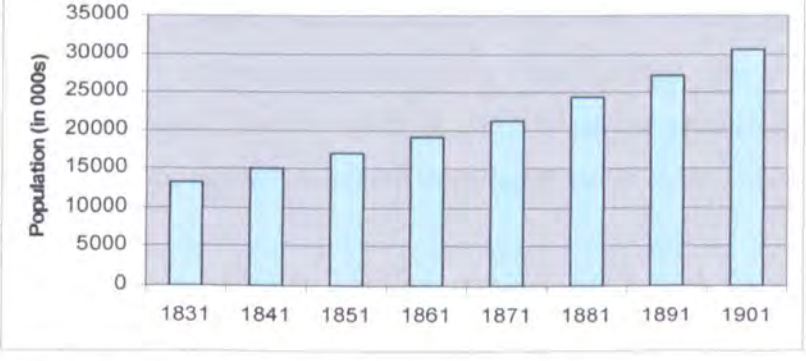
Figure 1.6 Kingston Population 1831 - 1901



Source: John West. *Town Records,* 1983. [55]

Figures 1.6 and 1.7 show the relative decennial increase of population over the century but not the relative *rate* of increase:

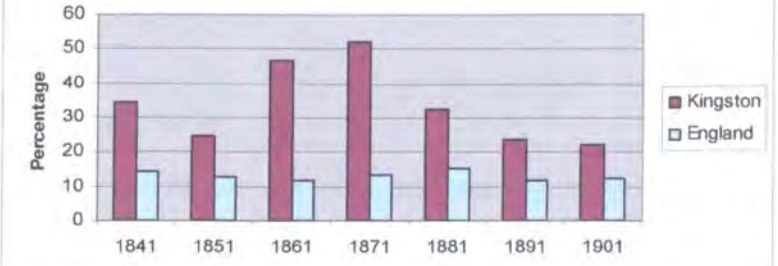
Figure 1.7 Population of England 1831-1901



Source: B.R. Mitchell with the collaboration of Phyllis Deane. *Abstract of British Historical Statistics.* [56]

To show the real difference in terms of growth rate between the whole of England and Kingston, it is necessary to compare the percentage growth over the century as in Figure 1.8:

Figure 1.8 Growth of Population in England and Kingston, 1841-1901, showing relative percentage growth



Source: Mitchell and Deane and *Victoria County History: Surrey*[57]

Figure 1.8 shows that the population of Kingston was growing at twice the national rate for much of the century and thrice the national rate in the decades of 1860s and 1870s. The economic reasons for this rapid growth rest to a large degree with the coming of the railway stations, both at Kingston and Surbiton, which was quickly followed by the expansion of housing development. New estates attracted city dwellers to a suburban environment from whence they could either commute to London or find employment in what was becoming a growing regional centre for north east Surrey. Domestic staff were in demand to ensure the smooth running of the new villas and the market for household supplies ensured the prosperity of the town's retailers. Queen Victoria is reported to have visited George Phillipson's book shop in the Market Place and Shrubsole's store 'was already a store of the highest social standing, favoured with the custom of Queen Victoria ...when enlarged and reorganised on London department store lines in 1866.' [58] A rival to Shrubsole was Frank Bentall who acquired a small drapery business in Clarence Street in 1867 which he gradually expanded and developed into one of the best known department stores in the region.

It would be tempting to suppose that another reason for the increase in population by mid century was better public health and housing. In the case of Kingston this was unlikely to be as significant a cause as the increase in newcomers and consumers, given that the local authority was not over zealous in its responsibility for health and housing, as will be seen in Chapter 5. To what

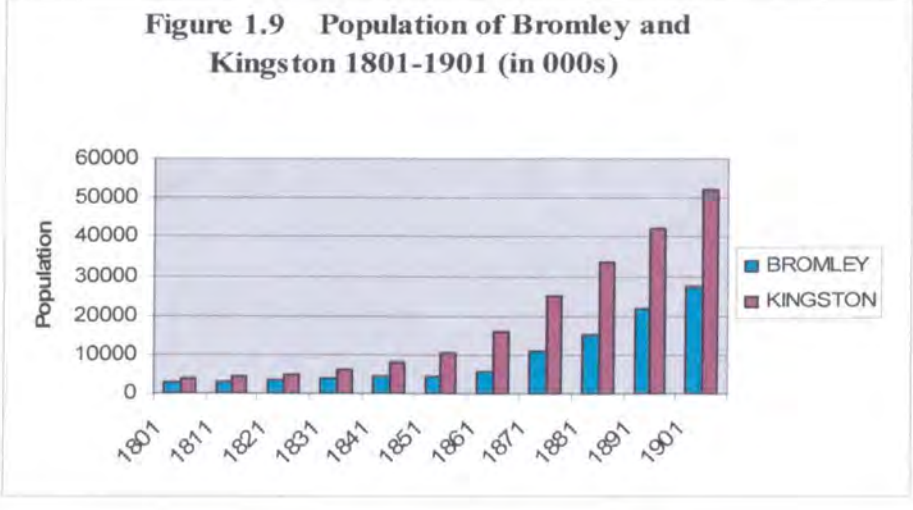
degree the increase in population by mid-century can actually be related to better public health or housing provision remains an interesting area for study. However, the local authority's record of lack of enthusiasm for such responsibilities suggests that an acceleration of housing development following the opening of Kingston Station in 1863, as will also be discussed in Chapter 5, was the catalyst for the growth of population.

3. Aims of the study

The first aim of this study is to examine the work of Kingston council in the years between 1835 and 1900, with particular reference to public health and housing, comparing local activity with the national picture and analysing the response of the Kingston local authorities to the opportunities for social reform created by national legislation. The provision of education, a further strand of local government activity is also relevant, but it rated a lower local profile than public health and housing.[59] There were local debates about the provision of education but it was public health and housing which generated most comment from the borough's Medical Officers of Health, the Local Government Board and the local press. For this reason it is not intended to include the development of education in Kingston as part of the research. The second aim is to evaluate what factors influenced the councillors in their decision making. These factors include economic self-interest, middle class ideals, political expediency and attitudes toward the adoption of permissive legislation and compliance with mandatory laws designed to improve social conditions between 1835 and 1900. Were Kingston leaders reluctant to reform and, if so, how far was their apparent lack of awareness of the changing needs of society a result of the above-mentioned factors? This leads to the third aim, that is to compare and contrast this local study of society and politics with similar local studies, especially those based on other towns in south east England.[60] The continuum of progress in Kingston will be compared and contrasted with other, chiefly southern, towns. Local authorities such as Bromley, Enfield, Maidstone, Reading, Romford and Saffron Walden, may not have been the exact equals to Kingston in size, population or location, but they had many factors in common and their governing bodies were facing the same challenges as Kingston.

For example, in the mid-19th century Bromley, like Kingston, was a small market town 10 miles from London. The population statistics from 1801 to 1901 show that its growth was not as rapid as Kingston's but nevertheless by the late 1870s Bromley was one of the leading Kent suburbs, with a large percentage of its middle class residents travelling daily to work in the capital.[61] In contrast to Kingston's steady growth, Bromley's population actually dipped slightly in mid-century, before a further continued rise over the rest of the century, as shown in Figure 1.9. Population apart, however, there were similarities. There was a rapid decline of coaching trade in Bromley following the opening of the South East railway route to Dover via Redhill and Tonbridge, and there were similar concerns expressed about the effect of urban growth on the basic structure of the town. By 1866 there were numerous complaints in the local press about the state of the roads, drainage and ratepayers not getting value for money.

Figure 1.9 Population of Bromley and Kingston 1801-1901 (in 000s)

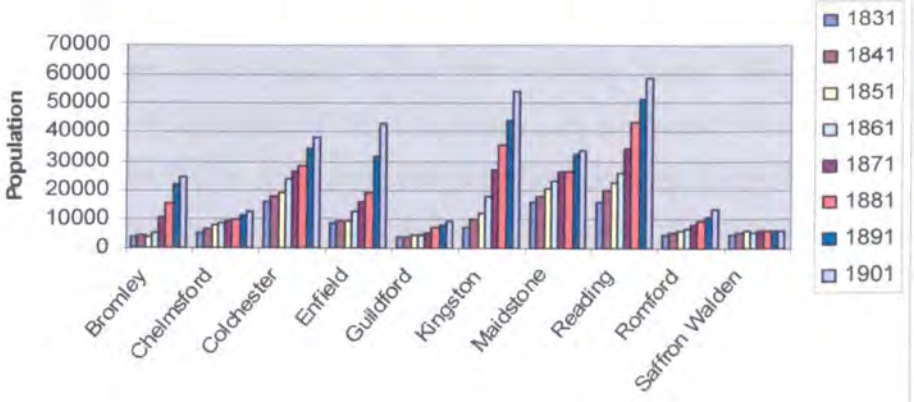


Source: John West, *Town Records.*

Romford owes its inclusion in the comparison group to the fact that it is one of those included with Kingston in the Home Circuit under the 1835 Municipal Corporation Act. Also, it was, like Bromley and Kingston, a market town, situated 14 miles from London. It lies on the main road to Colchester with a busy coaching trade. These authorities responded to the changes brought about by expansion and pressure from central government in differing ways however, and there are now numerous local histories, based on similar aims, making comparison a profitable area of research. It is intended to provide a comparable study of a moderately small, but growing, market town to add to the literature.

Figure 1.10 shows the relative growth in individual towns, used for comparison, over the period. It can be seen that whilst Saffron Walden appears to have experienced no significant expansion of population at any particular period during the century, Chelmsford, Guildford, Maidstone and Romford grew steadily but not dramatically. In contrast, Enfield, Kingston and Reading (and Colchester to a lesser degree) expanded at a much greater speed, especially from 1861 onwards.

Figure 1.10 Comparison of population growth, 1831-1901, in towns referred to in text (in 000s)



Source: John West, *Town Records.*

The final aim of the research is to provide an insight into the development of Kingston from an insular, inward-looking borough to the thriving community which it became in the twentieth century, using the role of the local authority as principal evidence. This is a study of a different type of urban society and a different geographic area from most that have already been published. It is about the people who managed Kingston and how they went about the business of managing the affairs of the borough. It will look at what connections or networks (social as well as business) may have influenced their decisions. It will seek to discover what changes, if any, took place in the backgrounds of these managers and whether, and why, they became more or less proactive over the sixty years under review.

4. Hypotheses

The term 'reluctant reformers', in the title of the thesis, requires some explanation. In many of the existing local histories of Kingston, there are references to the curious lethargy which afflicted Kingston throughout the nineteenth century; local newspapers, documents and books mention it repeatedly.[62] Councillors were seen as slow to respond to the challenges of an expanding population and to the opportunities made possible by central legislation. To investigate whether this reputation for dilatory behaviour is justified and what conditions might have caused it, certain suppositions have been made as the basis for argument.

The first is that 'a little baker and a little beershop keeper and that class of men' were typical members of the Corporation of Kingston for much of the nineteenth century.[63] Can it be demonstrated that Kingston councillors serving between 1835 until the end of the century were increasingly recruited from the shopkeeper class, the same set of property owners who held most of the votes and who exercised them in favour of minimal local taxation, as Szreter, and others, maintain was the case in many local authorities?[64] Secondly, given that Kingston was a relatively small community, it is possible that the economic and social networks of councillors may have fostered common cause between them when deliberating in the council chamber. Any argument put forward for the existence of economic networks, or business association, between the councillors is likely to be consequent upon the evidence relating to their occupation. Social networks in this context refer to family relationships, both contemporaneous and between generations. Other networks, or associations, which are likely to have existed, were the various voluntary organisations active in the borough. Research questions therefore need to address, in detail, the occupations of individual councillors and any family or business connections between them. A third hypothesis to be considered is that reluctance, or resistance, to initiate improvements was hampered by a lack of understanding of the issues and the demands of a modernising society. Christopher Hamlin suggests that [in local government]:'what was recognised as resistance to progress was often bewilderment and frustration with technical and legal complexities and fear of taking a wrong step.'[65] Finally, in order to put the local governance of Kingston in

a regional context, comparisons will be made with other boroughs in southern England.

Some of the sources used for this thesis are not new, but they are being looked at afresh and used to ask new questions of the past and to take the perception of Kingston as 'Somnus Town'[66] into the arena of what Trainor and Morris refer to as the way in which 'urban history... including the study of municipal affairs has become increasingly concerned with the connections among spheres of urban activity.'[67] To determine whether there is any foundation for the town's apparent lack of motivation for progress, later chapters include the issue of how Kingston councillors reacted to central government pressure to concern themselves with the consequences of urbanisation, such as water, sewage and recreational facilities. Correspondence between the council and the Local Government Board will shed light on the relationship between local and central authority. Analysis of a database of the councillors will be used to find out to what extent their economic and social backgrounds might have influenced their attitude to municipal problems.

Christopher Hamlin has suggested that in investigating the process of public health reform for instance, at local level, some historians have confined their research to the momentum as derived from cause and effect, neglecting to investigate the actual processes of administration. He propounds a route which might be taken to remedy this lack, 'the more clearly we recognise the difficulty of determining and carrying out a course of sanitary improvement the more pressing it will become to look inside that black box of local government and to discover, case by case, the complex determinants of success.'[68] The concept of a black box has been adopted from the flight-recorder installed in aeroplanes. In that instance it is a device designed to record the operating data from the plane's on board computer system via a group of data collection programmes. From the recorded data inside the black box it is possible to discover what processes and judgements have determined the operation of the plane. Hamlin uses the idea to identify the complex interactive factors that motivated and influenced the decisions of local government. By studying the various inputs into a particular local authority, for instance the level of competence, local circumstances, reaction

to change, professionalism and financial management, to name but a few, it could be possible to determine why it functioned as it did.

[1] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 377.

[2] Although the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames was the proper title for the town throughout the period of research, since 1965, with the incorporation of the borough into Greater London, the hyphens have been dropped. In the interest of concision Kingston is the title used throughout the thesis.

[3] House of Lords Record Office (to be referenced in future as HLRO): *Parliamentary Papers* Volume xxiii, 1835 Paragraphs 71 and 72.

[4] R. K. Webb, *Modern England from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, 2nd ed. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980),p.225.

[5] North Kingston Local History Room (to be referenced in future as NK): KB/1 *Court of Assembly and Borough Council Minutes,* 18 August 1835.

[6] Letter to *The Times*, 29 April 1837, signed by Charles White Taylor (councillor 1835-1837).

[7] June Sampson, *All Change, Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden in the 19th Century,* Revised ed. (Kingston upon Thames: News Origin Ltd., 1991), p.3.

[8] Municipal Corporations Act (MCA) 1835, 5 & 6 Wm. IV., c.76 and Local Government Act 1888, 51 & 52 Vict. c. 41, which created 66 county councils. These councils became responsible for the management of roads, bridges, drains and general county business.

[9] The National Archives (to be referenced in future as TNA): MH12/124447. Records created or inherited by the Ministry of Health and its successor the Department of Health and Social Security, Local Government Boards and related bodies relating to the provision of health and public health services.

[10] Joseph Parkes (1796-1865). He was a member of the Birmingham Political Union, one of the earliest nineteenth century movements formed to promote the cause of parliamentary reform.

[11] Peter Clark and Lyn Murfin, *The History of Maidstone* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1995), p.104.

[12] Alan Alexander, *Borough Government and Politics: Reading 1835-1985* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), p.1.

[13] Jacqueline Cooper, *The Well-Ordered Town* (Saffron Walden: Cooper Publications, 2000), p.56.

[14] Cooper, *The Well-Ordered Town*, p.57.

[15] The pressure for municipal reform was generated, principally, by concern to maintain order in the rapidly enlarging industrial centres. The presence of a new urban elite in these centres who found barriers to gaining a representative voice on local corporations from the entrenched Tory-Anglican establishment.

[16] For exploration of the effect of the Municipal Corporations Act on these towns see Derek Fraser, *Power and Authority in the Victorian City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979).

[17] Sampson, *All Change*, p.117.

[18] Surrey County Council, *Inventory of Borough Records*, vol. III (1929), p.33.

[19] According to the *Victoria History of the County of Surrey* (Constable, 1911) (VCH), the fifteens, so called from their number, were first mentioned in the sixteenth century. They were elected and had to take an oath to conform to the customs of the town. Before 1835 the town clerk acted as senior coroner, as well as solicitor and attorney to the corporation. The Chamberlain acted as treasurer.

[20] Municipal Corporations Act, p.3904.

[21] MCA, p.3906.

[22] W. D. Biden, *The History and Antiquities of the Ancient and Royal Town of Kingston upon Thames* (Kingston, 1852), p. vi.

[23] House of Lords Record Office (HLRO): Municipal Corporations in England and Wales: *First Report from the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations.* Parliamentary Papers Volume xxiii 1835 (116).

[24] Eton 19, Guildford 27, Gravesend 22, Hertford 21, Kingston 12, Maidenhead 22, Romford 12.5, St. Albans 19 and Windsor 19 miles from London respectively.

[25] The new bridge designed by E. Lapidge was opened in 1828.

[26] Only remnants of Richmond Palace remained by the nineteenth century, but Hampton Court still had an influence on Kingston. Councillor Thomas Jackson, a fruiterer, received supplies from the Palace gardens and William Roots, son of Councillor Sudlow Roots was surgeon to Her Majesty's establishment at Hampton Court.

[27] The borough town clerk acted as secretary to these companies for a fee of 5s per annum.

[28] North Kingston Local History Room (NK): KB1/5 *Minute Book of Court of Assembly.*

[29] Pigot and Co., *London and Provincial New Commercial Directory for 1823-24* (J.Pigot and Co. London, 1824).:.

[30] Pigot and Co., *National, London and Provincial Commercial Directory for 1832-3-4* (London & Manchester: Pigot, 1834).

[31] Pigot & Co., *Royal National and Commercial Directory and Topography* (1839), p.188.

[32] Pigot and Co., *Royal National and Commercial Directory and Topography of the Counties of Kent, Surrey and Sussex.* (London:.Pigot & Co.,1839), pp.189-192.

[33] *Surrey Comet*, Jubilee Edition, 1897.

[34] Surrey History Service (SHS) : P33/2/1-67

[35] SHS: P33/2/1-67

[36] SHS: P33/2/1-67

[37] Kelly and Co., *Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex.* (London: Kelly and Co.,1855), pp.715-21.

[38] Kelly and Co., *Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex,* p.715.

[39] Kelly and Co., *Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and* Sussex, p.716.

[40] I. Robinson, *Spring Grove 1865-1880* (no publisher or date), p.1.

[41] For example, the proportion of the work force engaged in agriculture dropped from 11% **0** in 1851 to 3% in 1891 and that in manufacturing from 20% to 16%. Those in dealing increased from 10% to 14 %, in public service and the professions from 7% to 11% and in domestic service from 28% to 34% over the same period. The proportion of the workforce in building remained the same at 9% whilst in transport there was a slight increase from 4% to 5%. These proportions have been calculated from the Kingston Census Enumerators' books for 1851 and 1891 and have been taken from C. J.French, 'Servants, shopkeepers and stockbrokers': the occupational structure of Kingston upon Thames in the second half of the nineteenth century', unpublished paper.

[42] Shaan Butters, *The Book of Kingston* (Frome: Baron, 1995), p.101, as cited in unpublished paper by Christopher French, 'Servants, Shopkeepers and Servants: The Occupational Structure of Kingston upon Thames in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century'.

[43] *Municipal Corporations, Directory and Yearbook* (London:Waterlow, 1879).

[44] Kelly and Co., *Post Office Directory of Kent, Surrey and Sussex,1891 [Part 3, Surrey]*,p.1343.

[45] William Woods was a builder who was responsible for developing a row of large villas along the Portsmouth Road, facing the river.

[46] Sampson, *All Change*, pp. 124-26.

[47] Robert J. Morris, 'Structure, culture and society' in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.395-426, and Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 50-4.

[48] Butters, *The Book of Kingston,* p.48.

[49] W. Chapman, *A Handbook of Kingston* (Kingston upon Thames: W.C. Chapman, 1877), Preface.

[50] The railway was initially rejected as it was seen as a threat to the vested interest of the lucrative coaching and hostelry trade of the borough.

[51] For a detailed commentary on the history of these two Bills see Richard Statham, *Surbiton Past* (Chichester : Phillimore, 1996), pp.34-8.

[52] *Surrey Comet*, April 21 1855.

[53] For a detailed story of these developments see Isobel Robinson, *Spring Grove 1865-1880* and G. N. Gandy, 'The life of a Victorian suburb', *Surrey Archaeological Collections,* vol. 63, 1966, pp.157-66.

[54] Stephen Royle 'The development of small towns in Britain,' in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. III, pp.151-84 presents different figures, also based on census returns, in his analysis of the development of small towns: 6279 in 1851 and 15263 in 1871.

[55] John West, *Town Records* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1983), pp. 32-41.
West states that these figures are taken from the Victoria County History for Surrey, 1920. They are listed in VCH vol. 4, p.449.

[56] B. R. Mitchell with the collaboration of Phyllis Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1962), pp. 8-9.

[57] *Victoria History of the County of Surrey* (Constable, 1911) (VCH).

[58] Sampson, *All Change*, p.95.

[59] At national level however there was considerable debate about the necessity of providing education for all children, indeed even of the wisdom in doing so.

[60] Much work has been published on northern and industrial cities and towns such as Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester; for example the chapters on Manchester and Middlesborough, in Asa Briggs' *Victorian Cities*, on Leeds in E. P. Hennock's *Fit and Proper Persons* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), and Bolton and Rochdale in John Garrard's *Power and Leadership in Victorian Industrial Towns 1830-1880* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983).

[60] J. M. Rawcliffe, 'The Social and Economic Development of Bromley 1841-1881', unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent (1976).

[62] Sampson, *All Change*, p.117.

[63] Sampson, *All Change*, p.117. This enforces the criticism quoted earlier, by the MCA, that 'officers must be frequently chosen from amongst the retail tradesmen of the town.'

[64] Simon Szreter, 'A central role for local government? The example of late Victorian Britain,' from www.historyandpolicy.org/archive/policy-paper-01.html. Accessed 20 November 2005.

[65] Christopher Hamlin, 'Muddling in Bumbledon: on the enormity of large sanitary improvements in four British towns, 1855-1885', *Victorian Studies*, vol.32 (1), 1988, pp.55-83.

[66] Sampson, *All Change*, p.117.

[67] Robert J. Morris and Richard H. Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000), p. ix.

[68] Hamlin, 'Muddling in Bumbledon', p.59.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF SECONDARY LITERATURE AND PRIMARY SOURCES

> The notion of originality is very closely related to the function of the search and analysis of the literature...through a rigorous analysis of research literature one can give focus to a topic. It is through this focussing process that an original treatment of an established topic can be developed.[1]

1. Introduction

The purpose of this review referring to both primary and secondary sources is to submit an evaluation of the existing body of work, relevant to the themes of the research set out in Chapter 1, and to identify those historical studies which have usefully dealt with the key question of reluctance. The literature sources are wide ranging, drawing on material relating both to specific topics, such as sanitary matters and provision of public amenities, and those which provide the national context. In a currently vigorous area of research there is an abundance of work available for study. Julian Hoppit commented in 1994, albeit in reference to a different field: 'early in this century it was possible to be a master of the secondary literature. Today it is not.'[2] The volume of published secondary literature generated by a growth of interest in nineteenth century local government stems, in part, from the increasing availability of, and access to, primary sources. A generation of historians, such as R. J. Morris, Richard Trainor, Barry Doyle, Simon Szreter and Gerry Kearns, writing from the last ten years of the twentieth century to date, have been able to look at Victorian life in more depth than their predecessors as more archive material becomes accessible. However, the contribution of earlier twentieth century writers such as Oliver MacDonagh, E. P. Hennock and Derek Fraser to the historiography of urban history is acknowledged as a starting point for the review. Hennock and Fraser have been influential upon the methodology as detailed in Chapter 3.

This investigation is to analyse how Kingston local authorities responded to the opportunities for social reform, made possible by national legislation. Topics of the relevant literature being reviewed cover some of the major themes of nineteenth century concern: public health, urban growth, reform and the political

context in which local authorities operated. However, most local authorities at this time had to come to terms with not only the involvement of central government in their conduct of affairs, but with the more tangible changes taking place around them. Coaches and barges were giving way to railways, market gardens were making way for villas and shops were developing in to department stores. There was migration into the borough of : 'a new and moneyed class of resident eager to display its wealth in opulent standards of home and dress.'[3] Change was all around, not just within the town hall and the literature is therefore wide-ranging.

To demonstrate how theories in these subject areas have helped in understanding the concept of reluctance, the literature has been grouped under the broad headings:-

Context
Urban Governance and Civil Society
Public Health and Housing
Local Histories
Journals
Primary Sources

2. Locating the context

To understand the wider circumstances and context within which local authorities in the nineteenth century managed their communities one has to explain two major national debates exercising politicians, economists and reformers. The first was how to manage the problems caused by large scale urbanisation, coupled with a rising population. The second was about how far the state should intervene in remedying the physical and social ills associated with these factors. Underlying these debates was the dilemma of how to address the pressure for a widening of the electoral franchise, in spite of a perception on the part of some parliamentarians, that this would result in a voting population which would not support higher taxation.[4] Robert Millward and Sally Sheard point out, that a consequence of central government dictating standards for local development without granting the necessary funding, was to create a severe fiscal problem especially for the rapidly growing urban areas. The effect of financing

improvements from local taxation income caused rates to rise and ratepayers to indeed wary of spending local tax income on anything other than strict grumble.[5] As will be seen in later chapters, Kingston council was necessity. James Moore in his study of Liberalism in Manchester suggests that:

> Study of suburban politics reveals that not only were local amenities often regarded as inadequate, but that local landlords were frequently perceived as resisting public improvements and political modernization in order to protect their own interests.[6]

In Kingston, many of the local landlords were councillors and it was in their political interest to maintain the status quo.

Nineteenth century local government had evolved over centuries and was not designed to meet the dynamism of the changing nature of society. Local services, such as they were, were subject to no central control or inspection. England was, for the most part, governed locally prior to the 1830s. Central government was no better equipped to understand the nature of the problems, let alone administer change, than local government and, at Westminster, the arguments about legislating the means to control the new unwieldy, possibly volatile, breed of populace was heated. In brief, the key political debate was between reformers and those who, though not necessarily against change, were more cautious. Oliver Macdonagh covers this debate in detail in *Early Victorian Government 1830-1870* (1977) postulating that nineteenth century reforms were prompted by a reaction to the pressures of industrialisation and urbanisation as a virtue of necessity, rather than the outcome of political or philosophical ideology. It was the pressure generated by social problems consequent upon industrialization, the increase in the concentration and mobility of the population and the pressure of public opinion, as expressed through the letters' pages of the press, *The Times* in particular that motivated reform. This notion that public pressure was necessary to provoke action introduces the idea that reform, in the case of Kingston, was in the face of council reluctance. The argument that pragmatism in the face of demographic change on a large scale smoothed the way for more radical ideas to prosper, identifies only one of the strands in the dialogue of reform. This can be seen also at local authority level, where Garrard concludes: 'municipal politics were far more complicated than a simple analysis of the political resources of the

elites' (in the three towns which he studied).[7] Power was changing hands, in terms of wealth, from the landed elite of the eighteenth century to the new industrialists and entrepreneurs and, by force of numbers, to an urban population. This concept of an 'elite' governing group in relation to Kingston will be explored in later chapters.

The second debate was about laissez-faire versus central control. A. J. Taylor considers various definitions of laissez-faire in his contribution to the debate on the relative influences of laissez-faire and state intervention.[8] In reference to social policy (which is the sense most relevant to this thesis) those opposed to state intervention, such as Samuel Smiles and John Stuart Mill, argued that, at the level of 'the man in the street', paternalistic state support would undermine the individual's ambition for self-improvement.[9] The influx of the social problems of sanitation, housing and public safety was too overwhelming to be left to well meaning philanthropists and the state could not apply the theory of free trade to the welfare of the nation. Some measure of intervention was essential to regulate a new order of urban landscape:

> while the claims of the non-interference principle could never be wholly excluded from ministerial calculation, decisions on policy often took an interventionist course. Even when the invalidity of non-interference was conceded in principle, expediency demanded and secured policies which breached both the letter and the spirit of laissez-faire.[10]

It was against this atmosphere of polemic that Kingston council sought to carry out its duties.

3. Urban Governance and Civil Society

The concept of governance, as opposed to governing or government, is not confined to the actions of municipal councils, which are the chief object of the research but also: 'stretches into other arenas...notably the non-municipal arms of local government, voluntary institutions, and the organisations of professional and business life.'[11] This could apply equally to the term 'civil society' as used in this study of the work of a local authority. That is, to describe the network of civic and social organisations existing in the small market town. It was not a formalised network, but an amorphous group of institutions which were connected, in the

case of Kingston, by a commonality of background. In Chapter 7 and 8 it will be seen that many of the town councillors had similar occupations and had connections outside the council chamber, such as intermarriage, church, commercial undertakings and voluntary organisations. This constituted civil society in Kingston.

In their introduction to *The Victorian City, a Reader in British Urban History,* published in 1993, R. J. Morris and Richard Rodger also refer to many authors writing at that time on the subject of urban culture in the nineteenth century.[12] John Smith of the Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester refers to these studies, in general terms, as 'descriptive studies'.[13] It is true that they are more narrative than analytical in content, focusing on particular towns or cities without relating the municipal activity within them to the changes in urban governance in general.[14] Nevertheless this early work provides the groundwork for modern urban studies plus comparative research. Most of the research in this group is related to provincial cities such as Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester, concerned with the management of problems arising from large scale and accelerated changes of population and industry in predominantly regional locations. These may seem unrelated to the issues of a provincial borough such as Kingston but many of the problems were different only in scale. For instance, debates on the provision of public health measures provoked antipathy to centralisation in small towns as well as large. Derek Fraser's *Urban Politics in Victorian England* (1976), uses newspaper reports for analysis of political activity in Birmingham, Leeds and Liverpool to reveal a level of debate, which have echoes in newspaper comments on Kingston council meetings, as will be seen later. Fraser's conclusions, firstly, that: 'the pattern and boundaries of politics ...were determined by a struggle for control between social groups, a conflict over the exercise of power in urban society' and, secondly, that: 'municipal government was enmeshed in the urban political scene, partly because the local 'House of Commons' councils were politically contested', is debatable in the case of more parochial communities, where arguments were articulated at a level of a more personal rivalry.[15]

Little evidence of Kingston political activists with ambition beyond their borough territory has emerged.[16] In Chapter 6 there will be as detailed a review of 'politics' in Kingston as the evidence permits. Kingston, councillors although located close to metropolitan influence, retained an agenda of parochial detachment from national debate when managing the borough. For example the Town Clerk advised Kingston council in 1872 (as detailed in Chapter 5) that it was not necessary to take any action on the Public Health and Local Government Bill, although, if passed, it would affect the town. It is unlikely all the councillors were ignorant of current affairs, which were covered in the local press, they simply did not see the need to be involved. Indeed, it may be that the phrase 'politics and society' in the title of the thesis is somewhat misleading. Politics in this sense is not mainstream party politics.[17] Fraser says: 'Politics for Victorians, unlike ourselves, began not at Westminster but at their own front gates. Whether the pavement was drained and swept, whether the poor should be incarcerated in workhouses.'[18]

E. P. Hennock's *Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth Century Urban Government,* (1973), using case studies of local authority conduct in Birmingham and Leeds, is important for the thesis for suggesting the methodology used to analyse the evidence of changes in council representation over time. Hennock's conclusions in identifying party politics (Conservative versus Liberal) as the driving force for improvement is at odds with John Garrard, who posits that local decisions did not rest upon such a simple political argument but had to take into account the influence of non elected citizens, that is the ratepayers.[19]

The term 'urban governance' has become common parlance for the study of the growth and reform of urban local government, local-centre relationships, public health and local finance. Students of urban history now look beyond the 'how' to the 'why', focussing on specific aspects of local government and extending the arguments by comparative analysis of the topics such as the occupational structure of town councils. As Trainor and Morris say in their preface to *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (2000): 'urban

governance encapsulates the way in which a new phase of urban history in Britain both builds on and goes beyond the approach of former decades.'[20] *Cities of Ideas: Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain 1800-2000,* (2004) brings together work by many current writers in the field of urban governance.[21] The words 'civil society and urban governance' beg the question as to the definition of civil society in the context of the nineteenth century. The term has attracted considerable philosophical attention, much of it Marxist in derivation. One definition in the present context is: 'a sphere of association in society in distinction to the state, involving a network of institutions through which society and groups within it represent themselves in cultural, ideological and political senses.'[22] In *Civil Society in British History* (2003) Jose Harris defines civil society as those public institutions that exist largely, but not entirely, outside the sphere of government.[23] Joanna Innes, addressing how political thinking influenced the perceived nature of civil society over time, argues it is shaped by 'products of a particular time and place.'[24]

Other historians who address these themes include, for example, John Garrard who concludes that authority in local government rested on economic and social networks, not on party politics. Garrard addresses one of the main interests of the research, that it was the economic and social networks upon which the authority of boroughs like Kingston's rested. His article: 'explores the utility of the squirearchical model to understanding the character and power of urban elites in the period up to around 1880 when local leadership in many industrial towns seemed most generously endowed with attributes to which the model might apply.'[25] This model is an interpretation of a pattern of governance, previously founded on the economic and social power vested in a local elite representing aristocracy and land ownership, applied to the new commercial and industrial elite of the nineteenth century. Garrard applies his model to communities significantly larger than Kingston, such as Birmingham, Bolton, Liverpool and Salford. These towns also had a greater scale of manufacturing industry, providing larger units of dependent (as opposed to self-employed) employment. However, the feasibility of adapting this illustration of a hierarchical society based on the power of self made men and industrialists can be applied to a market town such as Kingston.

'Substantial landed estates, visibly displayed opulence, long family lineage' can be replaced by successful businesses, long family association with the town and high profiles in local institutions. Tristram Hunt goes further, and is positive that: 'local authorities were dominated by the rate-paying small property-owner.'[26]

There was not of course a clear cut shift of power. As Morris suggests, the old regime: 'danced to the tune of the organised hierarchical, responsible, family based, property-owning middle class.'[27] Garrard's supposition of an urban elite will be pursued further in Chapters 7 and 8, where the idea that this model of a local social hierarchy can be adapted to a market borough will be explored.

What Kingston Council seemed to have lacked was professional employees to whom minor business might be delegated. This specific area is addressed in Gloria Clifton's *Professionalism, Patronage and Public Service in Victorian London* (1992) and Penelope J. Corfield's *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (1995) which cover the rise of professionals such as surveyors and engineers.[28] Clifton looks in detail at the backgrounds of both the members and employees of the Metropolitan Works Board to examine the premise that:

> The increase in the number of clerks, administrators and professionals was part of a trend towards the expansion of the service section which has been a feature of modern economic growth...local government was an expanding area of employment in the second half of the nineteenth century. [29]

Although an important aspect of Kingston's struggle to provide adequate public services was the reluctance to accept professional men to design and organise on the councillors' behalf, it has been difficult to find evidence relating to the employment of administrative and clerical support. Clifton stimulates ideas for future areas of local research such as methods of recruitment, origins and status of staff and officials' educational background and employment. Two writers on the relationship between central and local government (an area charged with the potential for misunderstanding and peevishness, particularly for Kingston councillors) are Christine Bellamy and Royston Lambert. Bellamy's *Central-Local Relations 1871-1919* (1988) provides an erudite and detailed, if somewhat inaccessible, review of the debates on centralisation. Lambert's article on the Local Government Act Office (1962) is an in-depth critique of the Local

Government Act of 1858, revealing the insecurity which affected the working of the Local Government Act Office, following the abolition of the General Board of Health. [30] David Owen (like Hennock) addresses the type of men who served on this major Board: 'it was composed of men whose experience in public affairs had been limited...In the early 1860s the majority were tradesmen...and men retired from business'; much the same as suburban Kingston. [31] Where the Board does differ however, is in the engineers and architects among the members in the 1860s. Kingston was still very much in the grip of tradesmen and brewers.

How altruistic were the motives of Kingston councillors in governing the borough? Hennock, referring to a mid nineteenth century consensus, states:

> It was generally agreed that ideally town councillors possessed two or possibly three crucial characteristics. They were men of station or respectability, they were men of substance or property or wealth and they were men of intelligence or education. They were never merely intelligent without being also men of station and substance. It was station and respectability that appeared on all occasions as the indispensable criterion, and it was substance or property that most commonly linked with it.[32]

An earlier contribution from Hennock, to the study of local government, adds, as a requirement for successful municipal government, 'a marked flair for business.'[33] This notion of what characteristics might be possessed by Kingston councillors lies at the heart of the thesis and the hypothesis that they were typically: 'a little baker and a little beershop keeper and that class of men'. Simon Gunn's recent research has, like Briggs, Fraser and Hennock thirty years before him, concentrated on the industrial cities of Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester. Instead of the makeup of the governing institutions Gunn's interest is in the public culture of the middle class.[34] 'Middle class' needs to be defined as used in a particular context. Trainor addresses this requirement for definition referring to a group: 'which shares a similar economic situation, level of prestige and eligibility for key positions'- with the caveat that it cannot be assumed that such a group necessarily thinks and acts alike.[35]

Volume III of *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000), edited by Martin Daunton, covers the years 1840-1950, with a wide range of topics addressed by acknowledged experts in their fields. [36] Part II with five contributions

gathered together under the heading of 'governance' is particularly relevant with chapters by current authorities such as Robert Millward, an expert on the complex subject of financing progress, R. J. Morris on 'Structure culture and society in British towns' and Barry Doyle on the 'Changing functions of urban government: councillors, officials and pressure groups.' Doyle charts the area of urban activity, making the point that to understand the development of local government in this period: 'it is vital to understand local governors, both elected and administrative, how their powers and composition changed over time, the framework within which they operated and the pressures they faced from beyond the council chamber.' [37]

4. Public Health and Housing

Major areas of local government responsibility which feature in the thesis are public health, housing and publicly funded recreational facilities. The main evidence for Kingston councillor's reluctance, or otherwise, to provide the residents with a healthy environment rests on their performance in the drainage question and the provision of an isolation hospital. It is evident that repeated pressure from the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) was not very effective in Kingston. It may be that unlike some other Medical Officers of the period those appointed by Kingston were not as forceful as they might be. The effectiveness or otherwise of an MOH reflect the outlook of those who appointed him and their criteria. Anthony Wohl's book *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain* (1983) has an extensive examination of the attitude of local vestries in greater London to the advent of medical officers.[38] The examples he quotes go some way to explain why the MOH in Kingston can be seen to be treading a path balanced between professional integrity on the one hand and the need to keep a dialogue going with their doubting employers on the other. This employment of professional, qualified officers came hesitantly to councillors in Kingston (as will be seen later) and, as Wohl says in introducing this area of research:

> The participation of doctors in local government is of particular significance to the urban historian, for, throughout much of the nineteenth century, medical officers of health represented professional training and skills, in what were otherwise predominantly amateur and part time governments.[39]

Gerry Kearns in an essay 'Town Hall and Whitehall: sanitary intelligence in Liverpool 1840-1863' acknowledges the role of the MOH in medico-political disputes.[40] The MOH's professional role often took on the dimension of a 'political' agenda when he was trying to push for improvements. Paul Laxton also takes Liverpool, or more specifically the city's MOH from 1847-63, as the subject for his essay 'Fighting for public health: Dr. Duncan and his adversaries, 1847-63.'[41] This essay, an analysis of William Henry Duncan's efforts to carry out his principles in Liverpool, identifies an argument that was also carried on in Kingston about the need for full time officers and whether professional employees of the council should also continue in private practice. If they did so, of course, the salary provided by the council could take a private income into account.

Brian Lancaster's work on the making of the Croydon Board of Health and the Croydon typhoid epidemic of 1852-3 is a sharply focussed case study of health reform. The creation of a local Board of Health in Croydon in 1849 raises questions to ask about Kingston's attitude to reform, in particular the response to the Public Health Act of 1848.[42] Croydon is also the subject of a paper on the problems faced in trying to provide an environmentally acceptable drainage scheme for the borough.[43] Like Kingston, Croydon had a: 'sewage problem which had become by the late 1850's the most difficult and expensive issue.'[44]

Martin Daunton's *House and Home in the Victorian City* (1983) stimulates areas of housing research such as how to find the answers to questions about who owned working class housing in the nineteenth century and what policies the owners adopted in respect to their tenants.[45] Also in the field of housing is Enid Gauldie's *Cruel Habitations* (1974) which places a detailed local study of nineteenth century housing in Dundee in the context of the housing improvement legislation over the period of her study (1780-1918).[46] What is very pertinent to the housing situation in Kingston in the latter part of the century is her comment:

> Each successive step taken by Parliament towards the improvement of the environment had shifted the responsibility away from central government and on to the shoulders of the local authorities. The creation of Local Boards of Health, the power to appoint sanitary inspectors, to order demolition for slum clearance, to make building regulations and to borrow money for the purposes of housing and town improvement were all planted

> within the sphere of local government. This made it possible for leaders of the country in Westminster...to voice their sympathy for the poor and homeless...but it was in the provincial council chambers that action had to be taken and local councillors were not among those most influenced by progressive social theories.[47]

This confirms what Hennock had said earlier about reliance on local initiative and local standards remaining the dominant feature of local government throughout the nineteenth century.[48]

5. Local Histories

There are several modern (that is post 1950) books on the story of Kingston but few can be called academic. What is missing is a well referenced and charted (literally) study of the nineteenth century. Shaan Butters' *The Book of Kingston* (1995) is comprehensive chronological social history of the borough.[49] The chapter 'Apathy and Improvement' is particularly relevant to the theme of 'reluctance' detailing as it does the drawn out battle to provide adequate drainage . ' It required a major shift in attitude for the long-established Corporation to accept responsibility, not just for protecting local trade, but also for improving both environment and living conditions...progress was slow, hampered by complacency, apathy, ignorance and self-interest.'[50] This echoes Hamlyn's conclusions. Isobel Robinson's *Spring Grove 1865-1880: Birth of a Community* (no date), identifies it as a true piece of local history, tracing the development of a typical small suburban community of the Victorian period.[51] There is a resonance for the theme of the thesis, and several of the protagonists appear on the database which is described in the methodology in Chapter 3. *Kingston's Past Rediscovered* by Joan Wakeford (1990) is based on a more specialised collection of papers relating to archaeological research in Kingston, which contribute significantly to local topographical history.[52] June Sampson's several books on Kingston, for example, *All Change: Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden in the 19th Century* (1991) and *Kingston Past* (1997), are packed with local information selected with journalistic flair and have been invaluable both as an approach for learning about Kingston and for background and anecdote.[53]

Studies used in looking at other local authorities in order to draw out comparisons with Kingston are all in academic vein. Alan Alexander's, *Borough Government and Politics: Reading 1835-1985,* is particularly valuable in its assessment of a council, made up of brewers, millers and grocers, attempting to provide modern services. Others, such as Peter Clark and Lyn Murfin's *The History of Maidstone,* Jacqueline Cooper's *The Well-Ordered Town; a Story of Saffron Walden, Essex 1792-1862,* David Large's *The Municipal Government of Bristol* and Hilda Grieve's history of Chelmsford, *The Sleepers and the Shadows. Chelmsford: a Town, its People and its Past* all have points of reference with which to make comparisons.[54] Grieves gives a particularly detailed account of the history of drainage development in a borough with several historical similarities to Kingston.[55] *The History of Maidstone* is the first comprehensive history of the town since the nineteenth century covering (as well as earlier and later periods) urban growth and the rise of public services from which to draw comparisons with progress in Kingston. David Large's history of Bristol's municipal government between 1851 and 1901, provides several examples of how to present the development of Kingston as a local authority using original sources such as council minutes, complemented by reference to the local press. The chapter on 'The structure and politics of the council 1851-1901' is a model for use when looking at other authorities.[56] David Pam's *A History of Enfield Volume Two-1837 to 1914* (1992) explores much of the same ground as the thesis, with particular relevance to the governance of the community of Enfield. Unlike Kingston however, Enfield was governed by a series of local boards rather than a town council, that is a highway board, under the Highway Act of 1835 and a local board of health, under the Public Health Act of 1848. Enfield became an urban district under the Local Government Act of 1894.[57]

6. Journals

Recent journal literature has provided a number of articles on social conditions in Kingston, before 1900. These have helped to give context to the thesis analysis of the extent to which Kingston council responded to reformist opportunities. Although Kingston was developing into a relatively prosperous suburban town by the closing decades of the century it still had a number of slum areas (in contrast

to the new developments in Chapter 5). These areas – in particular the Back Lanes the Canbury area and a few individual roads, including Asylum Road and Fairfield place were characterised by high levels of infant mortality, overcrowded working class housing and deteriorating environmental conditions. As the research by French and by French and Warren shows, infant mortality in the Canbury area, for example, was considerably higher than in Kingston as a whole. The slum housing in Asylum Road and Fairfield Place had occupancy levels well into double figures by the late nineteenth century. However, these problems were largely ignored by Kingston managers. Indeed as local contextual research has shown, slum landlords could also be members of the council. One example, George Street, owned and rented out many properties in Asylum Road and Fairfield Place while enjoying a successful career as a local councillor for Norbiton Ward before becoming mayor of the borough in the early twentieth century.[58]

Keeping abreast of the latest research in the field of local government requires diligent attention to appropriate journals. There are the obvious titles such as, *Urban History*, the *Economic History Review*, *Local Population Studies* and *Victorian Studies*. *Urban History*, while approaching worldwide issues in an interdisciplinary philosophy, provides a forum for contemporary British urban historians such as John Smith, Simon Gunn, Robert Morris and Penelope Corfield. Articles by Smith, Gunn and Morris are informing on one of the key elements of the thesis, the question of whether an elite group of governors existed in Kingston.

An article by Robert Millward and Sally Sheard in the *Economic History Review* has already been referred to. Although not directly quoted from, Millward and Frances N. Bell's article 'Economic factors in the decline of mortality in late nineteenth century Britain' in the *European Economic History Review* gives contextual background to attempts by central and local governments to regulate housing improvement, as addressed in reference to Kingston in Chapter 5.[59] The publications of the British Association for Local History and the Family and Community Historical Research Society provide publication opportunities for both professional and amateur local historians. The more specialist publications

such as *History and Computing* and the *Social History of Medicine* also contribute to either the technical aspects of analysis or the context of research.

The journal articles which have been key elements in directing research have of course been written by scholars engaged in urban history and change throughout the nineteenth century. Most of these are listed in the bibliography but one of special mention is Christopher Hamlin's essay, 'Muddling in Bumbledon: on the enormity of large sanitary improvements in four British towns 1855-1885' brings council and public health together in suggesting some reasons why councils were slow to undertake health reforms.[60] One was that the early Public Health Acts were permissive, not obligatory and were therefore dependent upon pressure at local level for any enactment. Resistance to incurring expenditure which would lead to a rise in rates could create opposition to any local progressive movement. Hamlin's conclusions about the reasons for some authorities' lack of enthusiasm for sanitary reform will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. In looking at those who made up Kingston's town council two articles addressing the idea that many Victorian towns were governed by a local elite, John Garrard's, 'Urban Elites 1850 -1914: the Rule and Decline of a New Squirearchy?' and John Smith's 'Urban Elites c.1830 – 1930' show that the burghers of Kingston were typical of many other local authorities in the second half of the nineteenth century in their choice of shopkeepers and small merchants as governors.[61] John Smith reviews the ways in which the role and influence of 'urban elites' have been interpreted in the past. He identifies two phases, descriptive studies and interactional studies. It has been the intent of this thesis to interpret the available evidence about various aspects of the lives of Kingston councillors in a method somewhere between the two phases. On the one hand is the occupational analysis set out in Chapters 7 and 8 and on the other is seeking to evaluate 'the influence of parliamentary legislation and the growing complexity of municipal business'.[62]

This evaluation of a selection of the secondary literature relating to the subjects of the thesis makes no claim to be comprehensive. It is intended to reflect the range of scholarship available to the researcher. Many other sources, not mentioned in this chapter, are referred to in other chapters and in the bibliography.

7. Primary sources

Primary sources researched are detailed and referenced in the appropriate chapters of the thesis and this review is therefore a brief overview of those available. Primary sources for local history research can be categorised, broadly, into unpublished or published material but both provide contemporary evidence of historical events. These include parish records, registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths, wills, vestry minutes, and papers relating to businesses, local organisations, hospitals and charities, and essentially in this instance, council and committee minutes. Published sources include printed records such as maps, directories, journals and a wide range of newspapers. In addition there are contemporary histories, and occasionally personal diaries. All provide information, evidence or data on different levels, ranging from the simple interest of nineteenth century style to evidence of the prevailing social codes of the period. Sometimes this is implicit, but mostly the very explicitness of the language is itself evidence of the writer or editor's confidence in contemporary mores. In the specific context of Kingston, all of these nineteenth century categories can be defined as contemporary, having been created during the period under research. By combining evidence from these sources it is possible to produce a composite picture of municipal Kingston.[63] What is more essential than a 'picture' is the extraction, from the data, of evidence to show what made Kingston 'tick', what motivated the local authority's decision-making process.

Included under the heading of official records are the Census Enumerators' Books from 1851 to 1891 (CEBs), which are now available on a database at the Centre for Local History Studies (CFLHS) at Kingston University. These will be referred to in more detail when discussing methodology.[64] Although the 1901 census records are now in the public domain, and parish registers for Kingston are accessible at the CFLHS, it is considered, that as the CFLHS database is the main source for census data used for the thesis database, its date limits should be adhered to. However, reference will be made to the 1901 census when appropriate. In addition to the statutory documentation there is a quantity of correspondence between Kingston Council and various boards such as the Local Government Board (LGB).[65] Official records are not confined to parliamentary

level, although to identify non-parliamentary papers it is perhaps more accurate to refer to them as formal or institutional records. In this category are local records including the Council minutes, company minutes such as the Kingston Gas Light and Coke Company Minutes 1854–1884, Poor Rate Valuation Records and Tax Assessment Appeals from 1867 onwards.[66]

An essential tranche of primary source material is the press. Local newspapers can be the most revealing contemporary source about what happened in a town and the number and type of organisations that flourished there. Principal among Kingston papers is the *Surrey Comet*, first published on 5 August 1854. The paper covered a wide area of north Surrey (remembering that, until 1888, Surrey still extended as far as Southwark) but was edited and printed in Kingston, giving it very much a Kingston bias. Other papers covering Kingston news were often short lived; for example, the *Surrey Post*, appeared on 28 March 1857, but was discontinued on the 5 September 1857, that is a mere twenty four issues later. The *Surrey Standard* dating from 1835 did continue under various versions of the title for many years, having the 'intention to fill the gap with a paper for Surrey as all other counties do have a newspaper.' Despite its aim to be entitled to be considered as the '*Surrey County Journal*' all that remained in later years was a regular column under that heading.[67] Much of the 1830s editions were filled with verbatim reports of parliamentary proceedings. The Kingston sales agent for this very Conservative paper was Mr Benton Seeley, bookseller, publisher and one time councillor.

It was the *Surrey Comet* which achieved real local impact and popularity. The paper's reports about a particularly controversial council meeting or local event, and particularly its editorials, can add significant detail to the bare reported minutes. The editorial must of course be treated with caution, bearing in mind the subjective view of the individual editor. Sources can only be as useful as one's ability to interpret them, but the *Surrey Comet*'s original terms of reference in 1854 suggest that the intention at least, was for balanced reporting:

> To the Public - The Surrey Comet and General Advertiser is established with a view to afford facilities for advertising...to be open to communications from persons of every shade of opinion in Local Politics,

> with a view to the improvement of Parochial Government, and the furtherance of objects of general usefulness...of no distinctive class, it will adopt whatever is reasonable and good in the suggestions of all Parties, and endeavour to promote harmony and good feeling, where there are contending opinions.[68]

On the whole, and certainly in the early years of its existence, the *Surrey Comet* did maintain this promise of even handedness, and indeed continued to allow all shades of opinion to be expressed through its letters columns. However, as the years of unfulfilled hopes of drainage and housing improvements dragged on, the editorials became critical of the councillors' lack both of initiative and a business like manner of conduct. Even as early as 1865 there were signs of discontent, when the editor was sufficiently provoked by the wrangling over a relatively petty matter to say that 'it would seem impossible for the Town Council of Kingston to adopt any beneficial measure for the town, without in the process involving it in so much unpleasantness as to destroy all association that might agreeably commend it either to the members themselves or the public.'[69] In 1869, the paper was particularly scathing:

> Within a few days, as we are now, of the opening session 1869-70 of our Municipal governing body, a seasonable opportunity is presented for urging every member to be up and doing, not contenting himself with merely taking his place at the table and there remaining a cipher. It is not given to every man to be able to express himself fluently and clearly upon topics that may be brought to notice; but to one and all of those now forming the Corporation is given a mind and an amount of capability for business. Let each man then strive for the welfare of the borough and his constituents as if he were working for his own benefit. Want of knowledge on matters affecting the interests of the town should be met by enquiry, and above all things it is incumbent on him who would do his duty as a representative to acquire information for himself and not trust too implicitly to what is imparted by others.[70]

It would appear that the council was seen to be carrying some dead weight amongst it members.

The *Surrey Comet* retained its important status in Kingston, throughout the nineteenth century, because it was truly local, being published in Kingston. Additionally, for most of the period, the editor resided in the borough. *The Surrey Reformer* was a self-professed 'Liberal journal for the Kingston and Richmond Division and adjacent districts', carrying lengthy and vociferous anti-Tory

articles. Regrettably, for the historian, it lasted for only seven months (April–November 1886) but those few issues do convey the sense of a local liberal faction struggling to make its voice heard. Two other local publications published toward the end of the nineteenth century were the *Kingston and Surbiton News* (1881) and the *Kingston and Richmond Express* (1886). *The Kingston and Surbiton News* was owned and edited by W. Drewett, who had previously been editor of the *Surrey Comet* following Russell Knapp's death in 1863 (although the proprietor and major influence was Knapp's widow Mary Ann).

What is noticeable about most of these papers, the *Surrey Comet* in particular, is that after 1888 more prominence was given to the coverage of county council affairs than the borough meetings. With the passing of the Local Government Act in 1888 and the advent of Surrey County Council, based in Kingston, the county reports took precedence over the Borough.[71] Although three Kingston councillors were successful in being elected to the County Council, it is noticeable that the first members of the latter included several men with titles or military rank. The county evidently demanded a greater level of deference from the local press, as well as being more attractive to a rank of men of more influence and who had not thought it appropriate, or worthwhile to their talents, to serve on the borough council.

Local trade directories are useful but must not be taken as authoritative. In nineteenth century directories the personal or business information printed is what the subscriber wished to be published. Trade is the key word in the title of the majority. The official information, such as a potted history of the borough (a useful starting point for local history), is sometimes copied year to year with little updating. Locally published directories such as Lindsey's *Directory* series are helpful in including information about the composition of the borough council. One quarter of the subscribers to an 1852 Kingston directory were councillors past and present, indicative to some extent of the intended market for such publications - and of the background of men who became councillors. The lists of residents, usually segregated into 'gentry' and 'trade' are subjective, and far from comprehensive. Michael Williams cautions that information in directories should

be confirmed as far as possible with other sources because of the subjectivity and social pretension attached to directories at this time.[72] Nevertheless they make a valuable contribution, especially for addresses and trades, but it must be borne in mind that these are commercial directories designed to promote the business community. Advertisements in both newspapers and directories are invaluable in tracing the fortunes of tradesmen over time. Local directories, especially those published in the second half of the century, list the Union guardians, overseers, members of the burial board, public offices and institutions; as the century progressed, the names of savings banks, building societies and social and sporting clubs appear. Apart from adding to the information about individuals on the database of councillors, this provides insight into the social development of the borough. The appearance of saving banks and building societies suggests a growing property market and standard of living.

The earliest contemporary history of Kingston which has contributed to this research is Biden's *History and Antiquities of the Ancient and Royal Town of Kingston upon Thames* published by William Lindsey in Kingston in 1852.[73] Contemporary diaries can be a valuable primary source in providing a personal, as opposed to 'official' evidence. Regrettably the only diary, so far located, which says much about Kingston in the nineteenth century is that quoted in *The Hardman Papers*.[74] Although not published until 1930, nor confined to Hardman's life in Kingston, the references to his life at Norbiton Hall provide a commentary on Kingston society in the 1860s from the perspective of one of the borough's more authoritative legislators. Hardman's descriptions of life in Kingston show his assured acceptance (pompous but not arrogant) of the difference in social standing between his family and the rest of the townspeople but also reflect some affection for them. In his description of a horticultural exhibition which he allowed to be held at his home he tells a friend:

> It is unnecessary for me to say that nothing was injured - the public respected what was intended for their enjoyment. The grass of the lawn was slightly worn by the many feet, but the rain and cool weather since have entirely made the damage good. Everybody was delighted, especially the shilling folks; and my praises, and laudations of my grounds and liberality are in everybody's mouth. A great many people had no idea there were such beautiful grounds in Kingston. I have since presided at the meeting for the

> distribution of prizes, and delivered myself of a neat speech with much applause.[75]

F. S. Merryweather's *Half a Century of Kingston History* (1887) with the sub title of *A Jubilee Retrospective* is both the author's 'contribution to the literature of gratitude which the gloriously progressive reign of our beloved Queen seems so irresistibly to call forth' and what he himself calls a 'sketch' of the social history of the parish. This is to deny the wealth of detail that is contained in these memoirs.[76]

Between 1835 and 1900 Kingston council embarked on what was to prove a laborious road to the improvement of the borough. Asa Briggs writes in *The Age of Improvement*:

> For all the sense of triumph in 1835 it is important not to consider the new act as the instrument of an enthusiastic 'civic gospel'. The functions of the newly elected councils were few, and contemporaries saw the triumph in terms of an extension of the principle of representation rather than as a means to comprehensive municipal action[77].

For many towns as the century advanced, there would be no escaping the need for municipal action, comprehensive or not. Kingston was one of these; whether the post-1835 councillors realised just how much would be asked of them we cannot now judge, but the primary sources available promise to shed light on the way in which they responded to the challenge set by the inevitable problems of progress.

[1] Chris Hart, *Doing a Literature Review* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), p.23.

[2] Julian Hoppit (ed.), *The Industrial Revolution in Britain* (Oxford: Black, 1994).

[3] June Sampson, *All Change: Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden in the 19th Century,* revised ed. (Kingston upon Thames: News Origin Ltd., 1991), p.91.

[4] For a detailed analysis of this conflict see Norman Gash, *Pillars of Government and Other Essays on State and Society c1770-c1880* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), pp. 49-54.

[5] Robert Millward and Sally Sheard, 'The urban fiscal problem, 1870-1914: government expenditure and finance in England and Wales', *Economic History Review,* xlviii (3) 1995, p.501.

[6] James R. Moore, 'Liberalism and the politics of suburbia: electoral dynamics in late nineteenth-century South Manchester', *Urban History*, 30 (2) 2003, p.249-250.

[7] John Garrard, *Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns 1830-80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p.222.

[8] Arthur J. Taylor, *Laissez-faire and State Intervention in Nineteenth-century Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 11-12.

[9] Samuel Smiles, *Self Help* (London: 1859).

[10] Taylor, *Laissez-Faire and State Intervention*, p. 48.

[11] Robert Trainor and Richard Morris (eds.), *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.ix.

[12] R. J. Morris and R. Rodger (eds.), *The Victorian City: a Reader in British Urban History* (London: Longman, 1993)

[13] John Smith, 'Urban elites c1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, vol. 27 (2), 2000, pp. 255-75.

[14] 'Governance may be in danger of being 'Heinzed' with at least 57 varieties of definition but it can usefully be defined as : a set of institutions, rules and procedures by which an area is governed' said by Mike Goldsmith in opening session of the Urban History Group Conference, Leeds 1998.

[15] Derek Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England, the Structure of Politics in Victorian Cities* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1976), p.279.

[16] Although several borough councillors did stand as candidates for the new Surrey County Council in 1888.

[17] There were however Conservative and Liberal Associations in the borough by the 1860s.

[18] Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England*, p.9.

[19] E. P. Hennock, *Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth-Century Urban Government* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973).

[20] Robert Morris and Richard Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.ix.

[21] Robert Colls and Richard Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

[22] Michael W. Foley, 'The paradox of civil society', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. (3), 1996, pp.38-52. http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/hafa3/cs.htm. Accessed 20 January 2005.

[23] Jose Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[24] Joanna Innes, 'Central Government 'interference', changing conceptions, practices and concerns c.1700-1850', in Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions,* p.40.

[25] John Garrard, 'Urban elites 1850-1914: the rule and decline of a new squirearchy?' *Albion,* vol. 27 (4), 1995, p.583.

[26] Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem, the Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p.292.

[27] R. J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party, the Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester: 1990), p.331.

[28] Gloria Clifton, *Professionalism, Patronage and Public Service in Victorian London* (London: Athlone Press, 1992) and Penelope J. Corfield, *Power and the Professions in Britain 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[29] Clifton, *Professionalism, Patronage and Public Service in Victorian London,* p.2.

[30] Christine Bellamy, *Central-Local Relations, 1871-1919* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) and. Royston Lambert, 'Central and local relations in mid Victorian England: the Local Government Act Office 1858-1871', *Victorian Studies,* vol. (6) 1962, pp. 121-50.

[31] Lambert, 'Central and local relations in mid Victorian England', p.156.

[32] Hennock, *Fit and Proper Persons*, p.308.

[33] E. P. Hennock, 'Finance and politics in urban local government, 1835 – 1900', *Historical Journal*, vol. 1 (2), 1963, pp. 212-25.

[34] Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

[35] For an analysis of the middle class in urban Britain, see Richard Trainor 'The middle class', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. III, pp. 673-713.

[36] Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. III.

[37] Barry M. Doyle, 'The changing functions of urban government; councillors, officials and pressure groups', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. III, p.287.

[38] Anthony S Wohl, *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain* (London: Dent, 1983).

[39] Wohl, *Endangered Lives,* p.603.

[40] Gerry Kearns, 'Town Hall and Whitehall: sanitary intelligence in Liverpool, 1847-63', in Sally Sheard and Helen Power (eds.), *Body and City* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 89-108.

[41] Paul Laxton, 'Fighting for public health: Dr. Duncan and his adversaries, 1847-63', in Sheard and Power (eds.), *Body and City,* pp. 59-88.

[42] Brian Lancaster, *The 'Croydon Case': Dirty Old Town to Model Town. The Making of the Croydon Board of Health and the Croydon Typhoid Epidemic of 1852–3* (Croydon: Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society, 2001).

[43] Nicholas Goddard and John Sheail, 'Victorian sanitary reform: where are the innovators?', in C. Bernhardt, (ed.), *Environmental Problems in European Cities in the 19th and 20th Century* (Münster: 2001).

[44] Goddard and Sheail, 'Victorian sanitary reform: where are the innovators?'

[45] M .J. Daunton, *House and Home in the Victorian City* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983).

[46] Enid Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations,* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974).

[47] Gauldie, *Cruel Habitations*, p.151.

[48] Hennock, 'Finance and politics in urban local government, 1835-1900', pp. 212-25.

[49] Shaan Butters, *The Book of Kingston* (Frome: Baron, 1995).

[50] Butters, *The Book of Kingston*, p.121.

[51] I. Robinson, *Spring Grove 1865-1880* (no publisher or date).

[52] Joan Wakeford, *Kingston's Past Rediscovered* (Chichester: Phillimore for Kingston Upon Thames Archaeological Society, 1990).

[53] June Sampson, *All Change: Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden in the 19th Century,* revised ed. (Kingston upon Thames: News Origin Ltd., 1991) and *Kingston Past* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1997).

[54] Alan Alexander, *Borough Government and Politics: Reading 1835-1985* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985), Peter Clark and Lyn Murfin, *The History of Maidstone* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1995), Jacqueline Cooper, *The Well-Ordered Town; a Story of Saffron Walden, Essex 1792-1862* (Saffron Walden: Cooper Publications, 2000), David Large, *The Municipal Government of Bristol 1851-1901* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1999) and Hilda Grieve, *The Sleepers and the Shadows. Chelmsford: A Town, Its People and its Past* (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 1994).

[55] For example, the name Chelmsford dates back to Saxon times: Kingston was celebrated for being the place where Saxon Kings were crowned. In 1199 King John granted Chelmsford the right to hold a market. Kingston's first charter was also granted by King John, in 1200.

[56] Large, *The Municipal Government of Bristol 1851-1901*, pp. 1-39.

[57] David Pam, *A History of Enfield Volume Two 1837-1914* (Enfield: Enfield Preservation Society, 1992).

[58] The details of this local research into social conditions in Kingston before 1914 are covered in the following articles: Christopher French, 'Infant mortality in Asylum Road, Kingston upon Thames, 1872-1911: an exercise in microhistory', *Family and Community History*, vol. 7 (2), 2004, pp. 141-55: Christopher French, 'Taking up "the challenge of micro-history": social

conditions in Kingston upon Thames in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', *The Local Historian*, vol. 36 (1), 2006, pp. 17-28; Christopher French and Juliet Warren, 'Infant mortality in the Canbury area of Kingston upon Thames 1872-1911', *Community and Change*, vol. 22 (2), 2007, pp. 253-78. George Street's position as a slum landlord is examined in the first two of these articles.

[59] Robert Millward and Frances N. Bell, 'Economic factors in the decline of mortality in late nineteenth century Britain', *European Review of Economic History*, vol. 2, (3), 1998, pp. 263-288.

[60] Christopher Hamlin, 'Muddling in Bumbledon: on the enormity of large sanitary improvements in four British towns, 1855-1885', *Victorian Studies*, vol.32 (1), 1988, p.60.

[61] John Garrard, 'Urban Elites 1850 -1914: the Rule and Decline of a New Squirearchy?' *Albion*, vol. 27 (4), 1995, pp. 583–621. and John Smith, 'Urban elites c1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, vol. 27 (2), 2000, pp. 255-75.

[62] Smith, 'Urban elites c1830-1930 and urban history', p.258.

[63] Indeed for the database which has been created, and will be discussed later in the chapter as an essential analytical tool for the thesis, it is essential to use as many sources as practicable in order to achieve depth of personal background as well as corroboration of identity.

[64] A comprehensive database has been constructed from the complete census enumerators' returns for each census year 1851-1891 (145,000 records).

[65] The Local Government Board was set up in 1871 to bring together local government functions formerly discharged by the other departments including the Home Office and the defunct General Board of Health .

[66] North Kingston Local History Room (NK): KB1/5-9.

[67] *Surrey Standard*, 28 February 1835.

[68] *Surrey Comet*, 5 August 1854.

[69] *Surrey Comet*, 20 May 1865.

[70] *Surrey Comet*, 6 November 1869.

[71] County Hall was built on land bought from C. F. Jemmett - son of C. E. Jemmett the long serving Town Clerk for Kingston Council.

[72] Michael Williams, *Researching Local History* (London: Longman, 1996), p.60.

[73] W. D. Biden, *The History and Antiquities of the Ancient and Royal Town* (Kingston upon Thames: William Lindsay, 1852).

[74] William Hardman, *The Hardman Papers: Memoirs of Sir William Hardman* (London: Constable, 1930).

[75] Hardman, *The Hardman Papers,* p.253.

[76] F. S. Merryweather, *Half a Century of Kingston History* (London: Oasis Books, 1976), Preface.

[77] Briggs, *The Age of Improvement*, p.277.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

> Database management systems offer powerful tools for the storage, organisation and retrieval of historical data. However, the benefits they offer are only attainable if the data are properly organised.[1]

1. Introduction

Methodology for the thesis is based on archival research, database compilation and computation, case studies and comparative analysis. A database is an organised body of information and the database of Kingston councillors is a key element of the analysis. The database is designed to record as much information as possible about individuals who were active in the public life of Kingston between 1830 and 1900. The advantage of a computer database is that records can be retrieved according to individual criteria. Every opportunity has been taken to note the names (along with, addresses, occupations and any other available information) of key players in Kingston - from newspapers, directories, census returns, minutes and local histories. The original database which contained some 300 records of Kingston persona, including officers and Kingston notables, such as the editors of the *Surrey Comet,* in addition to councillors, has been refined to list 250 members on the council, who were active in the life of the borough, at some time, during most of the period under examination. The database is a key tool for investigating the hypotheses as posited in Chapter 1.

2. Methodology

The first source to be drawn upon for the database were the council minutes. Analysis of the monthly, quarterly and annual meetings, starting from the inaugural meeting of the corporation (following the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act) held on 1 January 1836, enabled the names of all the aldermen, councillors and a few named council employees to be recorded.[2] Each monthly council meeting lists the names of councillors present, providing the basis for a database of civic-minded men. Verbatim newspaper reports of council meetings and other meetings such as Poor Law Guardians provide further names of prominent townsfolk evidence of civic involvement. Analysis of reports of voluntary organisations, the Volunteer Rifle Brigade for example, masonic lodge registers (admittedly limited in information) and social events such as annual dinners all add names of people

with a high profile and contribute further to the councillor records. The initial criteria for inclusion in the database were:

> service as a councillor or council employee between 1835 and 1900.
> status as a prominent businessman or tradesman or 'committee' person over the same period. However, the records used for the thesis analysis have been confined to those of councillors.

The justification for using a computer database is purely as a means of handling and retrieving a relatively large amount if data. The term 'database', as used in the thesis, is simply a collection of data, recorded in either textual or numerical form. It would not be appropriate for the current project to consider a more complicated range of possible systems, but experience suggests that it could be enhanced in the future to include pictorial evidence. Appendix 3.1 shows the list of field names, or data headings, which have been used to enter information. It would be ingenuous not to admit that a simple computerised record system is without inbuilt disadvantages. Headings used have to be specific, without any scope for possible different versions, of a name for instance. Once chosen, the attribute or code used to describe occupation, place, social status et alia are fixed with no room for personal interpretation. It is important therefore that the user of such a system in historical research is aware that analysis results should not be accepted as fixed in stone, but simply as a powerful guideline.

As the database is the foundation element enabling the statistical analysis used to support the argument at the heart of the thesis it is appropriate to explain five main points about the information recorded in the database:[3]

1. The dates for service on the council are the first and last date as shown in council minutes.[4] This does not necessarily mean that service was continuous. It was initially intended to produce a short list of councillors who had served over a period of at least ten years but, given the limited number of names resulting from applying this criteria all recorded councillors have been included to provide a working tool of 240 names for analysis.

2. It has not been possible to detect the occupations for all councillors, especially those serving before 1841 for which there are no detailed census returns. Where evidence of occupation is available from other sources, such as directories,

it has been used to fill in gaps, or corroborated by data in the Centre for Local History Studies (CFLHS) database compiled at Kingston University.[5] The ambiguity of certain occupation terms is not a new problem. The Kingston Medical Officer of Health (MOH) expressed his frustration in 1899 (when trying to assign illegitimate births for the year to different classes): 'it is sometimes exceedingly difficult to assign the correct place to a 'clerk' and persons similarly described.'[6]

3. Little of the official paperwork recording the election of councillors, in the years covered by this research, has survived. Those forms and declarations which are available do not contain sufficient detail to distinguish between possible subjects of the same name and within the appropriate age range. In the task of clarifying identity the CFLHS database has proved to be a vital resource. However, as in the council minutes, the database contains many instances of entries for the exact same surname and forename, for example James Walker. In such instances, firstly the years as councillor are used to delete the impossible, that is where the person would have been too young (or dead) at the dates in question. Secondly, the occupations are looked at. Whilst trying not to over-emphasis class, it is fairly safe to assume that, at this date, a bookseller is more likely to be the councillor rather than the labourer with the same name.

4. Another difficulty is with the families in which the eldest son always takes the father's name, for example the Lookers. In 1834 there is a councillor Benjamin Looker. In 1858 there are councillors Benjamin Looker senior and Benjamin Looker junior. Thereafter there is a councillor Benjamin Looker until 1865, with no distinguishing qualification. Looker senior was still alive so can we assume that it was Looker junior who was the councillor in later years? Where only an initial is given in the minutes, for example was it James or Joseph East who proposed a particular motion in council, how are the nine Frickers on the database related, if at all? In the absence of any other reference to Councillor Harry Selfe, other than in the council minutes, was he known more formally as Henry Selfe when listed in the 1855 trade directory in the gentry list? Michael Williams identifies the problem:

> During the lifespan of an individual person...they may be referred to numerous times in written records...It is generally true to say that on the occasion of the creation of each of these original records, the recorder had no ambiguity whatsoever in their mind, concerning the identity of the person they were recording. However, those of us who come many years after, hav-

ing no personal experience of the people mentioned, often find ourselves questioning whether any two records...do refer to the same individual.[7]

Clearly, certainty is not always possible, but with judgement allied to commonsense and experience one can be confident of a high level of accurate identification.

5. As the main thrust of research is to determine whether perceptions about the employment character of Kingston councillors can be proved, it follows that analysis of the occupations as listed in the CEBs is of major importance. However, various problems of understanding the nineteenth century terminology of the census forms have to be considered.

Occupations can be ambiguous; for example, an 'engineer' could be an engine driver or a designer of engines. He might maintain mechanisms or be a civil engineer. The Booth-Armstrong coding system, which is used to analyse occupations in the thesis database, does not allow for a detailed breakdown of work. This system only uses the occupational headings as formalised in census returns without recognising the myriad occupations as given by individuals. Broad categories such as clerks, managers and teachers lead to a somewhat unsophisticated picture of the population. A further drawback is that this coding does not allow for distinctions between levels of occupational employment; a 'builder' may be self- employed, work for a building firm or even own the firm. Indeed, the broad and elementary headings of the Booth-Armstrong occupation coding system tend to distort analysis. In both 1835 and 1845 one of the councillors is a brick-maker as well as a farmer. The historic fact that this man, as recorded in the CEB of 1851, is described as a 'Farmer, 5 men on the farm, Brick-maker employing 33 men' is transcribed as in the agricultural sector rather than manufacturing sector can be attributed to transcription rules of using the first named occupation as the main definition.[8] Similarly another councillor is an auctioneer and an upholsterer, but the accident of recording puts 'auctioneer' first, thus transposing him from a manufacturer to a dealer.[9]

The broad categories of the Booth-Armstrong occupation tables, based as they are on sectors of the economy within which people worked, obscure the true delineations of employment. The 'building sector', for instance, encompasses archi-

tects, carpenters and painters/plumbers et cetera. Therefore, on analysis by the Booth-Armstrong coding, the architect is grouped alongside plasterers and gasfitters rather than the solicitors and physicians who are coded in the 'public service and professional sector.' However, still taking the building sector as an example, it is possible to identify the hierarchy within the broad coding by using sub sectors such as 'management' and 'operatives' and a break down of these sub-sectors into trades or occupations allows for a more precise analysis. An architect therefore, is seen first under the sector code – 030000 (Building Sector), then 030100 (Management sector), thirdly and finally by occupation 030101 (Architect). He is still classified as a builder however rather than a professional. It can be seen from this one example that, to achieve a greater depth of analysis of occupations, it should be based, at the very least, on the sub-sector codes and, if possible, at the level of occupation code rather than the broad sector coding. This is however only really effective where there are large numbers to analyse. Where there is only a small number, such as the 250 names in the Kingston1.mdb, the fragmenting of the classification of sectors into sub-sectors, and further into specific occupations or trades, leads to an ambiguous picture from which it is difficult to deduce any meaningful conclusions.[10] W. A. Armstrong recognised this limitation in 1972.[11] He realised that the local historian would have a different perspective from the administrator analysing information gathered on a nation-wide base, and advocated that, where a more detailed classification scheme would add clarity:

> There is no reason why particular occupations should not be singled out for special analysis where appropriate, and alternative schemes can and should be applied according to individual interest. At the same time, if all would consider these schemes alongside their own, their findings could be tabulated in forms meaningful to other workers in the field [12]

Analysis of occupations therefore can only provide an initial guide toward the nature of the council. It will be necessary to look at wider markers such as whether the individual is in skilled or unskilled employment, whether a manager or an employee and indicators from the economic status based on the type of domestic residence and size of household. Dual occupations and change of an individual's employment adds further dimensions to complicate continuity of analysis.

Another way to use the information about occupation is to identify social class also to be used in the thesis.[13] Occupational social class was first introduced as a classification scheme in the 1911 Census by T. H. C. Stevenson, then the Registrar General. His classification mixed occupational and industrial groups. While Stevenson conceived society as divided into three basic social classes (the upper, middle and working classes), in fact he produced an eight-fold classification by introducing intermediate classes between the upper and middle classes and between the middle and working classes; and adding three industrial groups for those working in mining, textiles and agriculture.[14]

Armstrong dismisses the 1911 scheme as being too crude and advocates the creation of alternative schemes to suit local circumstances and specific research objectives, suggesting that the historian has to make a choice between the 1921 and 1951 classification schemes.[15] Although Armstrong admits that there is little to choose between the 1921 and 1951 schemes, he favours the latter, and in particular with his own modifications. The former has the merit of giving social class allocations, in that occupational groups are (broadly) assigned to an appropriate social class, and the latter has a practical merit of being widely available in printed form. The 1951 classification was introduced providing a more social scientific measure. Higgs discusses Armstrong's search for, and development of, an appropriate and practicable twentieth classification scheme to analyse the nineteenth century rhetoric.[16] Later schemes may have the advantage of greater distinction in various general terms such as 'clerk' and acknowledgement of the increase in women having occupations in their own right.

The justification for using the 1911 allocations for Kingston is that the scheme is the nearest in date to the period of research and therefore appears to be most appropriate in terms of historical continuity. Given the limited range of occupations in the thesis database (and no necessity to include female occupations for the purpose), it does have the merit of separating personal occupation from the employment sector, which is what is required to search out the finer distinctions of occupations recorded in the thesis database. An alternative method might be to apply occupational level markers such as:

manager/owner
self employed
employee

This simple format has the merit of being suitable for a small number of records. Allied with the information from the Rating Valuation lists of 1859 a reasonably accurate assessment can be made of the economic standing of a significant number of councillors. To test these suppositions, that is whether either the 1911 coding, or a level marker scheme would show any significant result in analyzing a small database these have both been applied to the Kingston dealing sector, as will be seen in Chapter 7.[17] For analysis, in the interest of accuracy and continuity the names to which no occupation has been attached have been included in the overall total. The 'domestic' category has *not* been included, there being no instances, of occupations recorded, falling within this area of work.

The original database of some 300 records, referred to earlier, drawn from the sources indicated, has been refined, first to a core group of people who emerged as being multi-referenced.[18] That is, an identifiable group of people who were involved in many aspects of Kingston life have left their mark or 'fingerprints' in a variety of records. This is not a totally inclusive group, but a group of people whose lives connected at certain points. It can be thought of as a diagram of circles, not concentric but with boundaries overlapping to a lesser or greater degree. To enable the principal aim of examining the background of the councillors of Kingston between 1835-1900, the database has been further refined to contain only the records of 240 councillors of the period. This database can be used to show any significant change in occupations and class or family connections over a period of sixty-five years. It can be used to show whether the apparent monopoly of a culture of shopocracy on the council is consistent, or otherwise, over the period. The design of the database includes fields recording references found in local directories, minutes, organisation reports and contemporary histories.[19] For the councillors listed, the years in which they served are recorded. Analysis of this part of the database, together with a record of comments from primary sources, adds to the individual profiles and will help to show if there is any change over time in the profiles of those governing Kingston.

Evidence of another shift over time is that derived from addresses, especially of tradesmen and retailers. In the first half of the nineteenth century most of the addresses of these men are confined to the area around the Market Place. As the century progressed and the growing prosperity and development of the borough allowed a separation of work and dwelling place, these addresses gave way to the newer roads and crescents a mile or so away from the centre, such as the new developments discussed in Chapter 5. Stephen Royle, in his essay on 'The development of small towns in Britain', refers to Kingston as becoming a 'substantial urban place' in the latter half of the century, suggesting that small towns close to London became 'enmeshed in metropolitan development.'[20] However, in the period circa 1850-80, years during which Kingston council struggled with the problems of providing health and safety for its growing population, there appears to have been a curious detachment, on the part of the councillors, from affairs of the nearby capital.

The borough's elected representatives having been identified (plus some officers such as MOHs, town clerk, and surveyor) the next step was to seek clues as to the way they went about governing Kingston. The starting point for information about how Kingston Council worked is the series of minute books from 1834 to 1890. The council minutes are mostly just that: a record of decisions taken, committees appointed and instructions for letters to be written. They record little of the atmosphere of debate or controversy, such as reported in the *Surrey Comet.* Read in conjunction with verbatim newspaper reports, the minutes prove sufficient to follow the continuity of debate within the council. Without the newspaper reports, it would be difficult to acquire any sense of the tensions and spirit within the council chamber. This begs the question as to the impartiality of the reporting, which has to be acknowledged and addressed. The *Surrey Comet* editors were prominent members of the community and as such are included in the original database which, in addition to councillors includes employees and prominent men of the town. The minutes are the official record, however, and are the authoritative source. In the first years of the reconstituted council, that is post 1835, meetings were frequent, but were sometimes abandoned as there was not a quorum. This suggests the lack of a proper administrative structure, an ad hoc nature of arrangement and the absence of any committee team to coordinate the council diary

and distribute agenda in due time. There is also some evidence, as already recorded from an editorial in the *Surrey Comet,* to support a possible alternative reason, namely that certain council members did not take their civic responsibilities too seriously.

The annual meeting in November was always well attended, this being the occasion for appointing the Mayor for the following year. Hennock has a note on his methodology used to analyse the composition of Leeds Town Council over thirty years.[21] He suggests taking council data from the annual meeting at decennial intervals. This proves to be unsatisfactory for a detailed analysis of Kingston; even looking at five year intervals is not sufficient to discern trends or shifts of power, and therefore each annual meeting requires study, although even this leaves out much of the month by month decisions on committee reports. As the borough expanded and the council's responsibilities grew, it became necessary to appoint committees to manage specific aspects of local needs. By 1890 these were numerous and the expansion of the committee structure will be addressed in a later chapter. As there were few staff at the Town Hall to assist the councillors (other than the Town Clerk, Treasurer, Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances) and no departments filled with professional and administrative workers, the councillors themselves had the responsibility of overseeing almost every complaint or request, that came the council's way.

A source of additional data, already referred to, is the comprehensive database at the Centre for Local History Studies at Kingston University. Access to this database, derived from the CEBs of 1851 to 1891, parish and burial records, and the Life Cycle Programme means it is possible to answer some of the questions raised earlier about duplicate names and family relationships. Use of this comprehensive record of the people of Kingston which covers the greater part of the time scale of the thesis is invaluable in building up councillor profiles in conjunction with the sources mentioned earlier- such as local directories. Not only can it help to confirm conclusions about an individual's identity, it can of course prove that an initial conclusion was misguided.

However, the use of Census Enumerators' Books (CEB) needs to take into account several research problems attached to them. Firstly, the 1841 CEBs were completed in pencil and cheap ink was often used to complete the CEBs in later censuses, making the CEBs difficult to decipher. Secondly, Victorian censuses were undertaken at a time when a significant percentage of the adult population were illiterate or semi-literate. Many householders would, therefore, have found it difficult to read and interpret the instructions, which would have led them to give inaccurate and incomplete information. It is likely that, because of poor spelling and poor presentation, misunderstanding and errors occurred. Although enumerators were supposed to be persons of: 'intelligence and authority ...must read and write well' and were supposed to assist those who had difficulty with the forms Higgs says that 'there is considerable evidence that this was not done uniformly.'[22] This, in turn, would have led to transcription errors. Thirdly, identifying individual addresses is often a problem. In towns, few houses were numbered until the end of the nineteenth century, and in some places street names and house numbers were subject to periodic revision.

John Seed notes the difficulties in using census material to define occupations. 'Underlying the difficulties of using any of these sources to analyse social structure is the limited value of occupation as an index of social position.'[23] It must be recognised that although the thesis puts much emphasis on analysing the occupations of Kingston councillors to see what justification there is in saying that 'a little baker and a little beershop keeper and that class of men' were typical members of the Corporation of Kingston for much of the nineteenth century, there are other social elements to be taken into consideration. As will be shown in Chapter 8, such a pejorative statement was not an accurate description of many councillors. Several had considerable property holdings, as can be seen in the Poor Rate Valuation Book of 1859. Further evidence of some measure of capital is in the wills which have been researched. Given this addition dimension many Kingston councillors are more likely to fit the definition Seed gives for the middle class of men:

> Its constituent elements were distinguished from the landed aristocracy and gentry by their need to generate an income from some kind of active occupation. And they were distinguished from the labouring majority by their

possession of property – whether mobile capital, stock in trade or professional credentials – and by their exemption from manual labour. [24]

Notwithstanding these difficulties it is possible to use the CEBs to build up the life profile of thousands of Kingstonians in the nineteenth century. For the thesis this means, in particular, that names on the thesis database can be checked against the CFLHS database and information sought on family connections. Any evidence of upward mobility can be traced by change of address and style of household over the years. Two examples of individual profiles of councillors, taken from records in the CFLHS database, are Frederick Gridley who rose from being the son of a labourer to owning a timber business and Frederick Gould. Both of these men played prominent roles on the council :

Frederick Gridley:

1851 age 3, scholar son of a labourer living at Fairfield West
1861 age 13, scholar son of a labourer living at Ham Road
1871 age 23, newsagent living in London Road
1881 age 33, timber merchant living in Water Lane with a household including 1 resident general servant.
1891 age 44, timber merchant living at a more salubrious address, Sudbrook Lodge in Richmond Road, with a cook and a housemaid

Frederick Gould :

1851 age 32, residing at the same address as his dental practice in the Market Place, with two live-in servants
1861 age 44, still residing in the Market Place but with three servants, including a governess
1871 age 53, now described as a landowner and magistrate, living away from his practice address, which was still in the Market Place, in the new St James Road supported by three live-in domestic staff
1881 age 62, in Grove Road but again with three domestic staff (one of whom was a ladies' maid) to look after himself, wife and three daughters
1891 age 73, back in St James Road but, as his family now reduced to himself, wife and daughter, only one resident domestic servant was needed

3. Design of the database

The database uses Microsoft Access 2000 and is a simple design of 1 record for each name and a series of fields in which information regarding the person in the record may be stored. Some fields include basic information such as addresses (there are address fields for each year of the census used and therefore show any upward/downward residential and social mobility) and occupation (also allowing for any change over the period). As well as a personal identification notation, specific to this database, as far as possible the person's ID from the database compiled at Kingston University has also been included so that the thesis database may be used in conjunction with other available computer programmes. Fields to note references found in various local directories are included in the design. Other fields allow for the person's membership of political party, freemasonry, ratepayers association and other local institutions or organisations. The remainder of the database fields are allotted to the years 1834-1900 in which council membership is noted. A further field of some importance is that of 'comments', which records incidental information regarding the person named. Examples of this are the fact that Frederick Gridley, whose profile is given above, was associated with Kingston's Workingmens' Club and that Frederick Gould was responsible, with Samuel Ranyard (councillor 1840-1864), for having the Coronation Stone moved from beneath the Town Hall to a railed enclosure at the north of the Market Place. It is the use of the database programme analysing tools, as applied to the information in the fields, which allows for the presentation of the analysis in Chapters 7 and 8. It is in these chapters that the idea of Kingston being governed by men from a narrow, predominantly trade background, will be appraised.

4. Conclusion

The primary sources identified have supplied the material for transcription onto the database, which in turn has been the engine used for analysis to produce the statistical evidence used in Chapters 7 and 8. They also provide the contemporary contextual framework needed to inform such analysis, in order to achieve as rounded a picture as possible of the research arena. The methodology used has been relatively simple in design but can be extended for use in a wider field of research into the borough. It is important to remember that a database such as that used in this research is simply a method to record information acquired from pri-

mary source material. It is a mechanised notebook, with the advantage of being organized so that records can be expanded, manipulated, and retrieved for various uses. Any analytical results must be considered within the context of the primary sources used to obtain evidence, such as the historical period, prevailing culture and subjectivity. The database is an adjunct to research not a definitive problem solver.

[1] Charles Harvey and Jon Press, *Databases in Historical Research* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), p.102.

[2] In practice no differential has been made between councillors and aldermen, as most councillors had a period of office as aldermen at some time during their time as councillor.

[3] Some of the difficulties here are of course common to most researchers of primary sources

[4] North Kingston Local History Room(NK) : KB1/5-9

[5] Peter Tilley and Christopher French, ' "From local history towards total history": recreating local communities in the 19th century', *Family and Community History*, vol. 4 (2001), pp.139-150.

[6] *Annual Report of the Medical of Health* for 1899, p11.

[7] Michael Williams, *Researching Local History* (London: Longman, 1996), p.99.

[8] Census Enumerator Book (CEB) for Kingston 1851: Benjamin Locker [sic] ID 8895.

[9] CEB for Kingston 1851: James H. Fricker ID 5825.

[10] Kingston1.mdb is the database constructed as part of the thesis. The councillors recorded are coded down to the occupation level, but analysis has, thus far, been restricted to the sector level codes.

[11] W. A. Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation', in E. A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth- Century Society, Essays in the use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp.191-309.

[12] Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation', p.197.

[13] For a detailed discussion of the methods and difficulties of stratifying communities in terms of social class see Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation', pp.191-310.

[14] www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU9. Accessed April 2005.

[15] Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation', p.206.

[16] Edward Higgs, *Making Sense of the Census - Revisited, Census Records for England and Wales 1801-1901* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2005), pp.138-40.

[17] Dealing, in this instance, covers retailers, shopkeepers, tradesmen and vendors.

[18] With reference to the proposal for a short list mentioned earlier, this reduction from 300 initial entries includes those for whom no corroborating evidence could be found, or who only served for 1 year. The main database of 240 does not therefore constitute a short list.

[19] A complete list of fields in the database, Kingston1.mdb, is given in Appendix 3.1.

[20] Stephen Royle, 'The development of small towns in Britain' in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol.III, p.169.

[21] E.P.Hennock,. Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth-century *Urban Government* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), pp.360-64.

[22] Higgs, *Making Sense of the Census – Revisited,* p.13-14.

[23] John Seed, ' From 'middling sort' to middle class in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century England' in M.L. Bush (ed.) *Social Orders and Social Classes in Europe since 1500: Studies in Social Stratification* (Longman: London, 1992), p.119.

[24] Seed, ' From 'middling sort' to middle class in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century England', p.115.

Chapter 4

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT (1)

> What was recognised as resistance to progress was often bewilderment and frustration with technical and legal complexities and fear of taking a wrong step.[1]

1. Introduction

Christopher Hamlin's apology for the failure of some authorities to take advantage of nineteenth century reforms suggests that the reasons why one authority might be progressive while another resistant to change, cannot be defined in simple positive or negative concepts or ideals held by the bodies concerned. Gradually, local authorities were being brought into a centralised system but at the same time were being encouraged to support private and voluntary initiatives. In Kingston, private companies provided the community with gas and water; a medical dispensary, to serve the poor, was funded by voluntary subscriptions.[2] John Davis puts it thus: 'it is clear that though bound by statute, Victorian local authorities enjoyed considerable freedom to indulge in municipal experiments...much was achieved by local private acts...but central government also actively encouraged local enterprise by promoting permissive acts.'[3] With much of the early nineteenth century legislation designed to allow communities to improve their threatened infrastructure being permissive, there was variation between local authorities in the timing of adoption of such measures.

Local authorities empowered in this way depended on the ability, vision and competence of the individual men who made up an authority, and therein seems to lie a possible reason for the differences in performance. These men were faced with the consequences of urban growth, which many of them had possibly not foreseen when they first volunteered for public service. If the 'little baker and little beershop keeper and that class of men' referred to in Chapter 1 were typical of Kingston councillors they may very well have become bewildered by the pace of change, and nervous about their liability to deal with the consequences. Such doubts would not of course be expressed publicly. Prior to the application of the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835, the town governors of Kingston were engaged in managing the borough's corporate assets (which were not extensive), maintaining law and order and administering various charities and trusts.[4] Their

main preoccupation however, according to pre-1835 minutes, appears to have been in protecting the trading rights of the four guilds, mentioned in Chapter 1, any infringement of which merited a fine.[5]

One of the dominant themes of the literature relating to nineteenth century local government is public health, particularly relating to drainage and sewerage. It is no surprise to find that it became a key issue for the managers of Kingston's affairs. In the review of secondary literature there are many references to writers whose research of the nineteenth century includes studies relating to the twin growth industries of supplying clean water and disposing of the subsequent effluent. Bill Luckin points out that: 'full realisation of real and social costs, as well as the bewildering technicalities, associated with the building of a comprehensive [sewage] system might later lead to a cooling of [any] activist ardour.'[6] Millward and Bell highlight the amateur nature of local councils and the problems this posed in implementing schemes requiring technical and engineering competence; such schemes 'involved recognition of the need for invasive regulation of the public and private behaviour and property of citizens.'[7] This was a novel concept in the first half of the nineteenth century and the rate of acceptance of the necessity of such action varied between authorities.

Therefore from Hennock to Hamblin, one of the chief areas of research has been how the Victorian community managed the growing task of disposing of the waste products of progress. By the early 1850s Kingston was among many towns facing the need to address a literally rising tide of man-made pollution. Analysing the response of the Kingston local authorities to the opportunities, as well as the pressures, for improvement should provide evidence as to whether Kingston's reputation for unnecessary delay in bringing modern benefits to the borough is justified.

How far can it be said that responsibility lies with the local brewers and bootmakers who were typical members of the Corporation of Kingston for much of the nineteenth century, or with the social and economic networks and self-interest for any perceived lack of enterprise in response to the need for improvement? It is also possible that as the provision of local services, for the greater part of the nineteenth century, was a matter for local initiative the problem was inertia. For example, Alan Alexander quotes the 1862 Mayor elect of Reading: 'It takes three

centuries to carry anything out in Reading: one to think about it, another to talk about it, and another to carry it out.'[8] There are various possible reasons why Kingston kept putting off what were necessary health-related improvements - including a hope that central government might eventually provide the funds, a lack of awareness of the problems, an unwillingness to employ professional assistance and a degree of incompetence.

Although lack of adequate drainage has come to symbolise Kingston's fumbling progress towards modernity this was not the only social disadvantage for the inhabitants of Kingston during the second half of the nineteenth century. Pressure on cheap working class housing had led to an increase in unsanitary overcrowded housing, especially in the Back Lanes area of the borough near the river, as indicated on Figure 5.1 at p.159. There were other benefits for which citizens were eligible, such as a public lending library, museum, swimming baths and recreation areas. It can be argued that lack of these latter facilities did not pose a threat to the town's health but the benefits were there for any go-ahead municipal authority which chose to grasp the opportunity. By the middle of the nineteenth century Acts of Parliament were being passed which encouraged local authorities to provide, from local rates, not just necessary public health initiatives but also recreational and educational amenities. R. J. Morris has written that:

> By the end of the nineteenth century in Britain, the word 'municipal' was closely associated with notions of local pride, of improvement and achievement. This was physically embodied in town halls, gas works, clean water, improved housing, libraries and museums – it was closely allied with their school buildings and hospitals.9

All these improvements lay ahead for Kingston, a relatively small market town at the time of the Municipal Reform Act when this study begins, but by the end of the century all of Morris's quoted criteria had been achieved and can be studied, in relation to these criteria, as a typical example of an emerging municipality. However, there were other towns which had achieved these advantages considerably before the end of the century, not just by 1900. This, and the following, chapter therefore aim to assess how Kingston fared at the hands of its councillors in this 'age of improvement', putting some of the various strands into the wider context of the times and comparing Kingston's achievements with the experience in other towns. A brief look at Morris's criteria of town halls, gas works, clean water, improved housing, libraries and museums and hospitals, as applied to

Kingston, identifies the areas which will be explored. [10] A new town hall, a worthy status symbol of the town had been built in the Market Place by 1840. The first gasworks (a private enterprise, as was the norm at this date) was established in 1833, enabling conversion of street lights from oil to gas. In view of the serious and lengthy complications which marked delivery of some other benefits of progress this might be seen as uncharacteristically forward thinking of the council. It is worth noting however, that when it came to extending this benefit to light the new streets of nearby Surbiton (which Kingston councillors were later to insist was an integral part of Kingston) Kingston was reluctant and did not agree to it until 1855, thereby adding to the list of grievances between Kingston and Surbiton.[11] As will be seen later, civic relations between the two localities were ill tempered from the start of Surbiton's growth as a desirable residential area. But even this was behind the times compared with some towns. Colchester Gasworks were earlier, being built in 1817.[12] In Maidstone gas lighting had been introduced by 1822. 'In 1834', one writer claimed that: 'it would be difficult to find a country town [Maidstone] more brilliantly lighted than this.'[13] Kingston was perhaps not so forward after all. But the point is that it was early progress, for Kingston, in the light of their public ventures in other areas. Conversely, Enfield lagged behind Kingston and, with a gas company formed in 1850, had few street lamps 'and they were poorly lighted' even after 1860.[14]

Clean drinking water was available in Kingston from the 1850s – to those who could afford to pay for a supply from either the Lambeth or the Chelsea Water Company with both of these companies having treatment works at the Seething Wells area of Kingston. The works were established to supply cleaner River Thames water to the people of London, purifying it by passing it through filter beds, but those residents of Kingston who could afford to pay also benefited from these local water works.[15] To a certain extent Kingston, or at least its more affluent residents, benefited from efforts to relieve the threat of cholera in London. However, it was not until the 1870s, that legislation required landlords to supply mains water to enable poorer families to have access to clean water, even if only from a communal standpipe.[16] Not unconnected with these water companies, and what proved to be more problematic, was the disposal of dirty water, and sewage. The provision of improved housing for the working class, and hospitals also became subjects for municipal governance but attracted scant practical attention by

Kingston council until the need became critical. Free library provision was given higher priority and was at least functioning in its initial stage before either a slum clearance scheme or isolation hospital was approved.

A facility not included in Morris's list was the public bath. As the burghers of Kingston exercised considerable time and debate on the subject, scrutiny of the sequence of events leading to municipal involvement in providing public baths has been included along with libraries, drainage, housing and hospitals as a means 'to look inside that black box of local government', as explained in Chapter 1.[17] The rest of this chapter will consider the provision of a public library and a public bathing facility with the following chapter considering Kingston's engagement with the provision of adequate town drainage, acceptable working class housing and a mandatory isolation hospital.

2. Kingston Public Library

The public library movement was part of the ethos of the times. Provision of recreational facilities, deemed acceptable to a middle class legislature by nature of an improving element, followed on from public health and revised provision for the poor. Edward Edwards, instigator of the 1850 Public Library Act asserted that 'the want of some provision, from the public resources, of amusements of a rational and improving character, has led to the introduction, to a large extent in our towns, of brutalising and demoralising amusements.'[18] This philanthropic desire to provide working class people with suitable recreation was allied to the general feeling of unease about the growing centres of working class populations in industrial towns and cities. The idea of providing some safety valves for the latent energy, which might otherwise be directed into political unrest, suited the government's agenda.

In Kingston, the idea of a library, funded by the council and free at the point of access, did not find sympathy with councillors until their hand was forced by a vote of ratepayers in favour. As will be seen, the cost of such an amenity was a major consideration. It needed both a push from the voters and financial philanthropy to achieve the first free library. This was originally in a temporary home in an adapted room above a hall in St. James Road, opening in 1882, shortly before the opening of the first Carnegie library, in Dunfermline, in 1883.[19] It was the suc-

cess of this venture in his home town which no doubt encouraged the multi-millionaire to finance almost 3000 public libraries throughout the English speaking world, including that in Kingston. As will be seen, although the Public Library Act 1850 enabled this provision, it required a helping hand from the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to establish the existing purpose built library in the Fairfield in 1903.[20] The concept of the Public Library Act financed from the public resources, appears to have been the sticking point with Kingston councillors in the previous thirty years. The main objection put forward against adopting the Act was that the local rate was already too high. This reluctance to initiate any improvement which would be reflected in an increase in local taxation is a theme common to most of the Council's deliberations.

There were libraries in Kingston before 1882, but not in a public lending sense. The Kingston Literary and Scientific Institution opened in 1841, in Clarence Street with the objects of : 'The promotion and diffusion of useful knowledge in Literature, Science and the Arts; by means of a Reading Room - Library of Reference - Circulating Library'.[21] Although this was originally intended to include provision of educational opportunities for working people, alongside a forum for the comfortably off founders, it gradually became more of a gentlemen's club. The secretary and many of the leading members of the Institution were town councillors, or future councillors - amongst them those who later had to wrestle with the problems of the expanding borough. At least part of the original remit of the Institution was intended to benefit the young working men of the town but this was thwarted by the prevailing long working hours. Poor attendance at some of the lectures was blamed on the reluctance of local tradesmen to let employees leave work until 8pm, thus being too late to attend the improving lectures. The secretary, Benton Seeley, reproached his fellow townsmen as being short sighted: 'You gain gold, Mr Seeley told the shopkeepers, they lose what rubies cannot buy.'[22] The lecture room doubled as a reading room, open to members and subscribers from 10am. to 5pm. These hours were not very helpful to employees still accustomed to a 9 hour (minimum) working day.[23] Legislation, which was to regulate the working day of most shop employees, came too late for the philanthropic hopes of the Kingston Literary and Scientific Institution's promoters. The Wren-style Institution building was being referred to as the Mechanic's Institute by 1852.[24] One can imagine that the Kingston Institution was considered by its foun-

der members to be something akin to the literary and philosophical societies of the eighteenth century.[25] It was to be a centre for the sharing of intellectual thought and knowledge, even providing facilities to experiment in the chemical classroom in the basement, with equipment such as an air pump and the construction of an 'oxy-hydrogen microscope.'[26]

Although no list of members has survived, those mentioned in Councillor Benton Seeley's *Kingston Miscellany* provide a roll call of the great and the good in Kingston in 1841-42.[27] Following Seeley (a bookseller) as secretary was W. D. Biden, soon to write *The History and Antiquities of the Ancient and Royal Town of Kingston upon Thames*.[28] Making his mark as president of the new Institution was a 22-year-old newcomer to Kingston, Frederick Gould, later to have a career as town councillor spanning three decades. Other members included Samuel Ranyard, a councillor by 1845 and Edward Phillips, a chemist from Thames Street, also a future councillor. A former councillor, John Dawson, auctioneer and estate agent, was another leading member. The Institution seems to have been instrumental in the 1840s in bringing together a group of forward-looking men, many of whom would help to shape Kingston's future. However, this early promise of a proving ground for progressive minds was short lived. An 1877 list of local libraries and reading rooms does not include the Institution.[29] It would appear that the Literary and Scientific Institute was no longer the place for gentlemen.

However there were other initiatives. In 1854 the *Surrey Comet* warmly responded to an announcement of a new reading room to be opened in Church Street 'for the accommodation of the gentry in the town and the neighbourhood.'[30] There was another reading room in Brick Lane (now Union Street) at least as early as 1869 and still open in 1877 for young men engaged in business. A further reading room was also available at the YMCA. The association secretary in 1869 was William Carn, another some time councillor. Like Seeley, he regretted the late closing of local businesses and was in favour of the early closing movement so that young men could 'spend extra leisure at the Reading Room.'[31] However these well intentioned efforts to promote self help for working (men) through the medium of books and lectures, selected by the founders, did not achieve popular success. The life style of the middle-class members of the Institute had little in

common with workmen's more limited time for leisure or self-improvement. An opportunity for reaching out into the community was lost.

Perhaps the founders of the Kingston Institution seem to have expected too much, both of their fellow employers and of the townsfolk. The censorious attitude reflected in a letter to the local paper in 1855, indicates that as some newcomers to the Institution did not receive an encouraging welcome, membership might very well dwindle:

> Sir,—Seeing that your valuable Paper has, upon several occasions, afforded a medium for, making known some very useful and timely remarks upon the affairs and management of the Mechanics' Institution of Kingston, I trust I shall not be trespassing, in asking you kindly to give insertion to this letter. I have been a member of the Institution for two years and upwards, the greater part of which I have been among its most constant attendants: and while I have been a participator of its inestimable advantages, I trust I have appreciated the unceasing labours of the Committee, for the good management and welfare of the Institution. There is an irregularity, however (which I am persuaded must have escaped the Committees' notice). I, with many others, when quietly engaged in the Reading Room, have observed for some time past, and by which I do not hesitate to say, most of the members have been continually annoyed and interrupted — I allude to the improper and unbecoming practice adopted at the Reading Room among the juvenile members of the Institution particularly when engaged at Chess or Draughts of talking, laughing and whispering aloud.. This is an impropriety which in my opinion, should at once be put an end to; and as I am convinced it is only to be prevented by the interference of the Managers of the Institution, and it must moreover be admitted by all, that perfect quietness is an indispensable element to readers desirous of paying attention to their subject. I would with urgency beg of the Committee, to take prompt and decisive measures to prohibit the irregularity, and in future, to consider it (as is done in all other Literary Institutions) an inviolable rule, that uninterrupted silence should, at all times, be strictly observed during the time devoted to reading.[32]

Both Gould and Ranyard also became prominent members, from its inception, of the Surrey Archaeological Society, which held its first Annual General Meeting in the Town Hall in 1854 (when Frederick Gould was now Mayor).Perhaps their growing civic responsibilities, as well as success in business, led the former promoters of the now failing Institution to seek recognition in a wider arena. Other sources of reading in the early part of the century, for the growing number of readers in the nation at large, emanated principally from religious publishing or commercial circulating libraries.[33] In Kingston two commercial libraries were run by Henry J. Fricker in the Market Place and Thomas Phillpot in the Brighton

Road.[34] The rapid increase in literacy rates plus an increasing urban population was leading to a huge market for cheap books, newspapers and magazines:

> The Victorian period encapsulates the rise and decline of the penny dreadful. Developing from chapbooks and broadsides, and given added impetus by the successful part publication of Dickens's novels, the early penny bloods provided cheap, entertaining reading for the rapidly growing urban working classes.[35]

These along with 'Yellowbacks' supplied the material for less intellectual appetites. Given the circulating libraries, reading rooms at institutes and the 'penny dreadfuls' what need was there of a lending library, free at point of service to anyone living in the borough? [36] One clue to this may be that announcement in 1854, referred to previously, of a new reading room soon to be opened 'for the accommodation of gentry.' This event was to be welcomed 'as the town is singularly destitute of any room where the daily papers, reviews and periodicals may be read.'[37] There was access to books and newspapers - but not to all - only to subscribers, those already bent on self improvement and those with the spare cash to buy cheap and cheerful publications.

It was against this background that discussion over establishing a free public library took place. Application of the 1850 Public Library Act applied only to boroughs with more than 10,000 inhabitants, and required the consent of two-thirds of the ratepayers at a special meeting for the purpose. The legislation did not distinguish towns by type of population but by size of population. As a qualifying borough Kingston, neither an industrial centre nor a hotbed of civic unrest decided, eventually, (as was admitted at the time in contemporary press reports) to take advantage of the Act as a matter of civic pride and municipal benevolence rather than political manipulation or social engineering. At the meeting of burgesses, held at the Assize Courts on 1 March 1881, to consider the adoption of the Public Libraries Act, the Mayor admitted that, although the request for such a meeting had been presented to him some time ago, he had nevertheless chosen the earliest favourable opportunity. He felt that there was some element of reproach because some of the neighbouring boroughs had adopted the act some years previously, citing Richmond upon Thames in 1879. The Vicar of All Saints Parish church, in proposing that the Act be adopted, drew attention to the fact that it had taken Kingston 25 years to get round to accepting the idea of a free library. He continued:

> Sometimes complaint was made that Kingston people were somewhat slow at catching at great and beneficial ideas He did not say that twenty-five years was a very long time for Kingston to come to think of this...but he did say that it was a stigma resting upon them if now the subject had been brought before them, and they had had their attention drawn to it, the meeting that night were to negative the resolution.[38]

The Act did stipulate of course that it was for 'the instruction and recreation of the people', with the accent on instruction.[39] The tone of the leader in the Surrey Comet a week earlier, and more generally, had emphasised the social benefits to be derived from a free library, and, more pragmatically, 'it is positively suicidal to the material interests of the borough that we should neglect those social institutions, the adoption of which are lending attractions to our neighbours.'[40] The proposal for Kingston council to adopt the Public Library Act was carried by 81 votes to 7.

The first meeting of the Library Committee was held in May 1881. Its initial actions were to request the secretary to obtain copies of the 1850 and 1866 Library Acts and to appoint a sub committee to search for a suitable building.[41] The first building considered was the old town gaol. The estimate for adaptation and installing adequate heating and lighting was £1200. However, it was then found that an upper room at St James's Hall could be brought into use for only £50, and incur an annual rent of only £40 (inclusive of rates and taxes). To the prudent members of the committee there was no contest and the first public library provision was duly opened in St James's Hall.[42] Fortunately a local resident subscribed a substantial sum to help with acquiring book stock. This was typical of the style of progress in Kingston; a slow step-by-step handling of an initiative, nothing to suggest unseemly enthusiasm for a cause.

Prior to the public meeting in 1881 which mandated the local authority to establish a public library, the people of Kingston appear to have been content with the service provided by the private circulating libraries and the doubtless improving literature made available at the Young Man's Christian Association and Baptist Church reading rooms. Although the authority had had the instrument to progress free library provision since mid century, without any demand from the people of the borough it had not seen any need to do so. In many towns and cities, by the 1880s a public library was becoming a visible symbol of a successful municipality, associated with local pride, improvement and achievement as quoted from

Morris earlier in this chapter. Kingston's free library came into being only when the ratepayers' acceptance of their rates being used for the good of the whole populace, coincided with councillors desire to promote the borough's importance. Merryweather, was able to write in 1887 that the Free Library, still at that date housed in a room above a hall in St. James' Road: 'is the most valuable of the modern institutions in Kingston...the humblest ratepayer of the borough can now enjoy access to a library richer [sic] in English literature.'[43] But is was not until 1903 that a purpose built library was provided when Kingston Council managed to raise a loan of £6000 from Huddersfield Corporation, which together with a gift of £2000 from the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, was to make up almost the total funding required for a purpose built library in the Fairfield, opened in May 1903.[44] The Mayor and Corporation, who created him a Burgess of the town, thanked Carnegie in some style. During Carnegie's visit to Kingston the Mayor, Thomas Lyne, intimated (we can only imagine with what diffidence or guile) that if the library had been free from debt, the borough would have put this gift toward providing a Museum of Science and Art, or something of that character. A few days later Carnegie wrote to the Mayor:

> I was deeply impressed with the progressive character of Kingston. I understood you to remark that a Museum of Science and Art was greatly needed and desired, and that ground for this has been reserved adjoining the library. I also understood you to say that if the Library had been free from debt, Kingston could have erected the Museum.
>
> If I am correct in this it would give me pleasure as the youngest Burgess to increase my gift from £2000 to £8400 which I understand was the total cost of the Library, thus leaving you free to use the £6000 loan proposed to be borrowed, for the Museum.'[45]

It is not so much the generosity which is evident by this letter but the apparent perception of the 'progressive nature of Kingston' by an outsider which is surprising. It had taken 25 years from the passing of the original Public Library Act of 1850 for Kingston burgesses to ask for the requisite public meeting (and, as noted earlier, the Mayor publicly admitted that he had not pursued the matter with much alacrity) and a further 20 years to accept the need for the financial investment to provide an institution of which the borough could be proud.

Other towns in southern England were equally as slow as Kingston in free library provision. Colchester was only considering a public library in the mid 1880's, 'twice blocked by rate-payer resistance, it was finally justified by a £1000 bequest from a former resident.'[46] Maidstone's purpose-built Victoria Free Library did not open until 1897 (to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee), although there had been piecemeal provision starting with a reading room in 1858. In 1853 public assent for a rate-supported library and a museum was at first withheld. A second public meeting in 1855 did give the corporation authority to proceed, but it was the museum which prospered, largely as a result of gifts of private collections. It was hugely popular and became an object of civic pride. The library was the poor relation for many years and it was not until 1890 that a substantial bequest from a prominent brewing family enabled a borough library to be opened. Murfin and Clark quote the head curator as lamenting the lack of public enthusiasm for the library and comment that 'it was evidently a fairly exclusive club.'[47] Although rate funded, both the library and museum benefited extensively from private donations, either in cash or kind.[48]

Reading Corporation opened its first public library in 1882, not without hard campaigning from a 'Committee of Gentlemen' in the face of councillors' sensitivity in committing ratepayers to capital expense. Reading, in common with Kingston, had heavy drainage and sewerage commitments. An appeal for public subscription for the library states: 'It has not been thought right (in view of the heavy taxation which has been imposed...for a complete system of sewerage and drainage...) to resort to the local rates for the funds.'[49] Reading Borough Council had set about its plans for providing a library (and museum) with a degree of political shrewdness in 1877. By including provision for a library in a scheme which would also have rooms for schools of arts and science, the project would attract government funding from the Education Department. The council was committed only to buying the required land, the remainder of the cost being met by government grant and public subscription. However, the cost of the project proved more expensive than expected and the council did have to contribute £10,000 from public funds, and with the backing of a convincing vote at a public meeting. Savings had to be made somewhere however, and when the new buildings were finally officially opened in 1882 the council agreed that the expense of any opening ceremonial should not be paid out of the rates of the Borough.[50]

In Romford there is a much earlier recording of a 'lending' library. In August 1839, the London Diocesan Board of Education issued a questionnaire concerning the provision of schools. In the survey was a section on adult education and in response it was noted that the:

> only supplementary education in Romford was the lending library which keeps up the connection with scholars after they leave school...it is interesting to note that its books could be borrowed, and that it seems to have been for general use although it may particularly have served old pupils of the school.[51]

Chelmsford Free Library opened in purpose built premises in 1905, as part of a further education initiative. This comparative delay can be explained by the fact that the population of Chelmsford did not meet the criteria of 10,000, laid down by the Act, until 1901. In Saffron Walden, an institute similar to Kingston's Literary and Scientific Institution was established as a voluntary initiative, somewhat earlier, in 1832; it had the same aim, to disseminate useful knowledge.[52] Bristol had a public library before 1889, presumably established some years earlier as, at that date, the council was debating the difference in holiday entitlement between the staff of the Baths Committee and staff of the Libraries Committee.[53] It must have been sufficiently adequate, despite being housed in part of the seventy year old main municipal buildings, for the Library Association to hold its Annual Meeting there in 1900.[54] Funding for the library was a joint commitment by the council and local benefactors.[55]

Enfield was fortunate to have libraries in two mechanics institutes and it was not until 1892 that those attending the requisite public meeting voted in favour of adopting the Public Library Act. The Local Board which governed the town, now mandated by that vote to collect a library rate, and doing so, were not about to be over generous in actually providing this new facility, and only reluctantly decided to convert the scullery in the court house for the purpose. A purpose built library opened in 1912, thanks to a significant grant from Andrew Carnegie.[56]

Those towns which qualified for the application of the 1850 Act, required the consent of two-thirds of the ratepayers at a special meeting called for the purpose. It was for the Mayor, on request from the council, to advertise the public meeting. Only those on the burgess roll could vote for or against. Admission was to be free. The Act stipulated that although a borough was permitted to levy a separate rate to

support the library if necessary such a rate was limited initially to 1/2d soon increased to 1d and could not be used to buy books.

As can be seen from the history of other towns, the local authorities usually had to depend to a greater or lesser degree on some voluntary funding, whether it was from a charity, private benefactor or public subscription. This reflects the prevailing opinion of ratepayers that: 'funding the leisure or improvement of the poor was not their business' although it was government policy that municipal authorities be responsible for providing improving leisure time facilities for the poor.[57] This attitude pervades some of the debates in Kingston concerning public provision of 'leisure' facilities, mainly on the grounds that the rates were already too high and that once a new responsibility was incurred there was no 'telling where it might run.' There was no clear pattern as to which town did or did not welcome the opportunity to fund, by whatever means, free library provision but it was often an initiative which came from the ratepayers rather than the governors. Larger communities such as Manchester and Liverpool (both adopting the Act in 1850) took an early lead, presumably not just because they had larger civic exchequers but also a more pro-active electorate. It took time for the concept of municipal provision to trickle down to the more parochial towns and boroughs. Kingston in this instance was reacting to the wishes of the electorate who in turn were reflecting a ground swell of national opinion.

3. Public Baths

Perhaps in the twenty-first century we have forgotten how controversial the idea of rate-funded public baths was in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, provision of baths for swimming is taken for granted as a municipal provision. Swimming baths are seen as serving recreational, safety and social needs, with a subliminal agenda for a healthy life style. That life style agenda in the 1850s meant:

> the earnest desire manifested on all hands to ameliorate the condition of the children of poverty and toil, by means of institutions for the relief of humanity in every stage of suffering and want. The gradual extension of public baths and laundries throughout the kingdom, and the increasing interest which is shown in the subject, are practical illustration of this desire.[58]

In 1850 a Parliamentary Committee was convened for promoting the establishment of baths and wash houses for the labouring classes.[59] Although the object: 'of these Establishments is to encourage habits of cleanliness among the In-

dustrious Classes' the committee advocated that this object could only be achieved by meticulous project management (reflecting the prevailing preoccupation with value for money).[60] Rigid attention to operating costs could provide direct profit, with the addition of an indirect profit from the resulting improved health of the working classes which cleanliness would foster. In the climate of the times of course this was allied to improved morality following a general increase of habits of cleanliness. This was a selling point for parishes or municipal corporations which were thinking about adopting the 1846 Baths and Washhouses Act, emphasising the possibility of lessening the cost of maintaining the poor and sick. The Act was: 'for encouraging the establishment of public baths and wash-houses and open bathing places, in all parishes and incorporated boroughs throughout England and Wales.'[61] The Act stipulated that the expenses of adopting its provision were chargeable to the Borough Fund; the council might levy a separate rate if desired. Councils were also empowered to borrow at interest on the security of a mortgage of the Borough Fund or of the rates for the relief of the Poor of the Parish. A council was required to take action if ten or more ratepayers made a request in writing. Schedules laying down the byelaws to be observed at bathing places, plus the charges which should be made for use were detailed. The borrowing incentive did not tempt Kingston councillors, who did not provide any permanent bathing facility until the 1880s and initially only very half-heartedly.

There were baths in Kingston, but not on the rates. A letter to the *Surrey Comet* on 30 September 1854 in praise of Kingston Baths regretted that more people did not use them. Baths were opened near the Assize Courts in 1852. They were not well supported, and after languishing a few years were closed. Although the council would not use municipal funds to provide these baths, in the 1850s three townsmen did risk a private venture by converting a former debtors' prison into a bath house.[62] The three men were Frederick Gould, councillor and Mayor, Samuel Baker later to be Borough Treasurer and William Walter, also a future Borough Treasurer. The comments above suggest that Kingston was not ready for such modernity because the baths failed for lack of custom: 'We could not get people to come and have a bath even if we gave them tickets for nothing.'[63] In the matter of providing public baths in Kingston it looks less like reluctance on the part of the council than financial prudence in refusing to fund what seemed likely to become a costly white elephant. This experience no doubt influenced the coun-

cil's response to a later private initiative which was promoted in 1875 when a Memorandum of Association of Kingston upon Thames Swimming Baths Association Limited was lodged at the Companies Register Office These baths were under consideration in Kingston, not by the council, but again, by a private company formed for building and constructing swimming baths.[64] The company was established with the objects of building and constructing swimming baths at Kingston 'or elsewhere and for such other purposes in relation thereto as the share holders in general, meeting from time to time, determine.'[65] This venture never materialised, as evidenced by a notice in the London Gazette dated 8 September 1885. This followed a letter dated 18 December 1884 from James Bell, Registrar of Kingston County Court to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Inland Revenue, to the effect that the Swimming Baths Association Limited never traded: 'they could not get consent of the Corporation of Kingston to erect the Bath so they returned all the money to the shareholders within 2 or 3 months after the formation of the company - since that time nothing whatever has been done - nor will be.'[66]

It is possible that the council were well advised not to support this scheme as at the date of registration, even by a generous computation, not even a quarter of the 1000 shares had been taken up. What is not known is exactly how the council jeopardised the scheme, although it seems likely that they were not co-operative in the matter of a suitable site. Most successful organisations in the town enjoyed patronage by several councillors or council-related men but for the swimming baths company only one serving councillor, William Clay, was among the directors or shareholders. The earlier experience of Gould, Baker and Walter no doubt, understandably, carried some weight. The fact remains that the company never fulfilled its objectives and it was not until July 1896 that the council formally adopted the Baths and Washhouses Act of 1846. Permanent purpose- built baths were opened in Wood Street in the following year. June Sampson argues that: 'the only concession Kingston Corporation had ever made to swimming was in 1872 when...they took a lease on Steven's Ait, put up a canvas screen, and called it 'the bathing place.' [67]

At the time Merryweather was writing his memories of Kingston (1887) there was some sort of bathing facility in the shape of a large pontoon made of tin

which was floated on the Thames, with a movable section in the bottom allowing river water to enter to a safe level. Kingston council had approved £1000 towards this contraption. This became known as the 'floating bath.' The floating bath on the Thames was opened by the Mayor in 1882 and lasted for 12 years during which time the council came under pressure to replace it with something permanent.[68] It was discussed in council in 1887, when the Joint General Purposes and Improvement Committee, in a report on proposed new municipal buildings, said: 'they did not advise public baths for Kingston, as the baths in adjoining towns had been a loss to the ratepayers.'[69] This report was adopted and financial concerns won the day.

Between 1893 and 1897 the Special Baths Committee of the council did try to find a suitable site on which to build permanent swimming baths but it was not until 1896 that the necessary public meeting was convened. Various sites were considered but dismissed for legal or financial reasons.[70] There was even an idea to acquire the old Cleopatra bath from the Victoria embankment, which by simply replacing the old floating bath with a later model would be a cheap option.[71] The Thames Conservators were to be asked if they would allow it to be moored on the site of the old one. This rather ludicrous idea was dropped and in June 1895 the Baths Special Committee decided to adopt a site in Wood Street for the baths and to advertise for tenders for the building of the baths. With uncharacteristic speed, four tenders were received and opened the following month. Mr W. Cunliffe's tender of £5714.4s was accepted and the Local Government Board was formally advised that the council intended adopting the Baths and Washhouses Acts of 1846, 1878 and 1882 subject to the Board's sanction to borrow £6000.[72] While Cunliffe's basic tender for the building, engineering work and gallery was accepted, the additional work in the tender document – use of white glazed bricks, using concrete instead of Portland cement and a movable floor and staging of a platform was deemed not necessary. This work would have cost an additional £1314 but the council was obviously looking to keep costs as low as possible.[73] However, when fifty members of the Ratepayers' Association prevailed upon the town council to call the public meeting necessary to consider the question of the baths and to pass resolutions, the council was forced to accept that, as household baths were still not the norm, even in many of the new houses being built in the town, there was still a need for a bathing facility.[74] Not without some opposition

however. One speaker at the public meeting in January 1896 was greeted with applause when he said that swimming baths were unnecessary as all his eight sons had been taught to swim in the River Thames: 'the rates now are enormous and...in the *Surrey Comet* last week they were recommended by a Corporation official to make a laundry, provide baths and washhouses, build a crèche and God knew what else...Considering the way in which the rates had increased it is time to stop.'[75] Councillor Allard pointed out that in the last local elections those candidates who were known to support the provision of public baths had soundly beaten candidates who were known to oppose the idea. Despite some opposition the meeting accepted, by a large majority, a resolution to provide the baths. Public opinion had prevailed. After many rows and setbacks, the new purpose built baths in Wood Street, with a 90 foot pool, were finally opened 50 years after the original enabling Act. To pay for the baths the council borrowed £6000 at 3¼% under Section 24 of the 1846 Act. Three years later the weekly receipts were in the order of £48.[76]

As with other areas of contemporary improvement there seems to have been no national consensus in the matter of baths. The Westminster Baths and Washhouses Committee in 1850 quoted the projected cost for a bathing and wash house establishment, exclusive of the ground, at St Margaret and St John, Westminster to be £9000. This was for a very grand affair providing plunge baths and washing, drying and ironing facilities as well as baths – all with hot water as appropriate. Even allowing for the greater opportunity for income in Westminster, and the superior concept, Kingston's floating swimming baths using river water seem paltry in comparison.

While Kingston councillors were still unconvinced by the arguments in favour of municipal provision,the raison d'etre for providing public baths was changing as the century progressed. In 1846, the date of the permissive Act, the motives were to improve personal hygiene and health of the 'labouring classes.' As other public health reforms and improvements to the nation's sanitary infrastructure, especially a clean water supply to more dwellings, lessened the need for public baths for the sole purpose of having a good personal wash, the emphasis shifted from cleanliness to healthy recreation. Looking at Kingston councils' record on this subject, it seems that along with the failure to take advantage of the 1848 Pub-

lic Health Act (they did not choose to set up a local board of health) and the piecemeal progress towards a solution of the borough's drainage and sewerage progress, public health was not seen as a priority.

What must be realised when looking at the response to the Baths and Washhouses Act by various towns is that even towards to end of the century, few of them had an adequate or even constant water supply and that the majority of homes had no washing facilities. Waller cites Kingston as one of these:

> Most places suffered some restriction in supply: either turned off during certain times or fed through a common standpipe instead of directly into the home. Not until the late 1890s and after did urban domestic water supply become practically universal. In 1879, however, 241 urban districts were without any piped supply. Generally, these were not towns of enormous size...but the most conspicuously negligent were older established towns. There was Chester in the north; otherwise the offenders were all in the south: Exeter, St Albans, Hitchin, Guildford, Salisbury, Ashford, Beckenham, Chatham, and Gravesend. Several extra-metropolitan growth areas featured too, Kingston upon Thames, Epsom, Barnet, Ealing, and Hornsey.[77]

The town of Guildford was apparently no more enthusiastic than Kingston. In 1866 the Guildford Urban Sanitary Authority discussed the question whether: 'they would decide to commence the public baths or do as had been done for twenty years – talk the matter over and let it drop.'[78] The municipal baths in Colchester were provided, a little earlier than in Kingston, in the mid 1880s, with generous help from the business community.[79] Maidstone, like Kingston, did not take advantage of the 1848 Health Act to establish a local board of health but did have a swimming club very much earlier, in 1852. With a loan from the Public Works Loan Board the council built public baths and washhouses, with a swimming bath in addition. In keeping with the spirit of the mid 1800s 'the baths were intended more as a measure to promote public health than as a recreational amenity' but while the recreational baths thrived, the wash houses were little used and closed in1858.[80] Maidstone and Kingston both experienced reluctance by their residents to use baths as a means to hygiene but Maidstone seem to have been more prepared to take a risk.

In Bristol, although the corporation did not have a Baths and Washhouses Committee until 1876, they did provide a simple baths and washhouse building in 1849. Bristol had adopted the 1848 Public Health Act as early as 1851 and so created a Local Board of Health charged with all its associated duties and powers. As

an adjunct to the work required to clean up the 'truly appalling sanitary condition of Bristol' the council there had already adopted the 1846 Baths Act and opened public baths in 1847 following a cholera epidemic.[81] This was just the first of several epidemics and, although they ran at a loss, the Local Board argued that the: 'annual loss of £200 was small price to pay [and] that they were of immense benefit to a class for whom it was their duty to care'[82] Whilst such an expression of philanthropy on the part of the council is not evident in Kingston it does seem that they were not alone in being cautious about risking rate income on loans for public baths, even on public health grounds. By the 1870s, the idea that caring for the health of the community meant caring for the physical health of the individual became politically fashionable. This meant not only helping all citizens to be clean, but also providing facilities for physical exercise and recreation and had certainly taken hold in Bristol.[83] The corporation provided ground and when the new baths opened in 1884 no expense had been spared in the pursuit of a monument to municipal pride. No laundry facilities were provided, marking the progress of improvement of water supplies to domestic dwellings.

From these few examples of how the elected officials of different towns went about applying the two selected acts designed for the benefit of their citizens, relating to public libraries and public baths, funded by local rates, it can be seen that they varied in their timing and financing. The permissive acts for libraries and baths did not include model schemes; the local authorities were working in unfamiliar territory. In both cases authorities could initiate schemes once they had received the necessary vote of confidence from their ratepayers, but raising the necessary funds could be more problematic. For Kingston, the council waited over thirty years before taking advantage of the Public Library Act, and there was no pressure from the burgesses during that time either. Neither councillors nor electors appeared to be very motivated to supply a free library service. Similarly, there was no enthusiasm to implement the Public Baths and Wash Houses Act of 1846. The Act was not formally adopted in Kingston until fifty years later. Neither the council nor the voters were in any hurry to enter the age of publicly-financed services for the whole of the borough population.

[1] Christopher Hamlin, 'Muddling in Bumbledon: on the enormity of large sanitary improvements in four British towns, 1855-1885', *Victorian Studies*, vol.32 (1), 1988, p.60.

[2] Although, as Butters relates, this charity was only available to responsible poor families who had to have a recommendation from a subscriber.

[3] John Davis, 'Central government and the towns', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* vol. III, p.264. Permissive Acts are those which merely allow, but do not compel, certain activities to take place. In the nineteenth century, such Acts were very common. The Public Health Act of 1848, for example, allowed local authorities to establish local boards of health and the Public Libraries Act of 1850 allowed local authorities to create library services, but did not compel them to do so.

[4] Including one for the maintenance of the bridge over the River Thames and one for the Grammar School.

[5] A large proportion of these minutes is taken up with cases against men who had traded in the town, without being Freemen. The Wardens of the various companies concerned were ordered to demand of the accused various fines such as John Chapman Baker in Thames St who sold a quatern loaf to William Wheeler and a two Pound loaf (31/2d) to Joseph Walter and Joseph Spraggon, a fishmonger in Thames St who sold a pair of soles to William Wheeler & a piece of codfish (8d) to Joseph Walter.

[6] Bill Luckin, 'Pollution in the city', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. III, pp.215-16.

[7] Robert Millward and Frances Bell, 'Choices for town councillors', in Sally Sheard and Helen Power (eds.), *Body and City* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.143-5.

[8] Alan Alexander, *Borough Government and Politics: Reading 1835-1985* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. 11.

[9] R. J. Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', in *The Cambridge Urban History,* vol. III, p.412.

[10] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 1-2, for a discussion of the use of the word 'improvement' in historical context.

[11] Shaan Butters, *The Book of Kingston* (Frome: Baron, 1995), p,127.

[12] A. Phillips, *Ten Men and Colchester* (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 1995), p.58.

[13] Peter Clark and Lyn Murfin, *The History of Maidstone* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1995), p.105.

[14] David Pam, *A History of Enfield Volume Two 1837-1914* (Enfield: Enfield Preservation Society, 1992), p.128

[15] In 1855 John Snow wrote: 'London was without cholera from the latter part of 1849 to August 1853. During this interval an important change had taken place in the water supply of several of the south districts of London. The Lambeth Company removed their water works, in 1852, from opposite Hungerford Market to Thames Ditton* ; thus obtaining a supply of water quite free from the sewage of London,'*On the Mode of Communication of Cholera* p.41.www.deltaomega.org/snowfin. Accessed:12December2000. * Seething Wells on the western boundary of Kingston.

[16] The Public Health Act 1875 required local authorities to ensure the existence of adequate water supplies.

[17] Hamlin, 'Muddling in Bumbledon', p.59.

[18] Public Library Act, 1850, An Act for enabling Town Councils to establish Public Libraries and Museums: 13 & 14 Vict. Ch. 65.

[19] Andrew Carnegie, multi millionaire and philanthropist.

[20] As an example of Carnegie's persistent generosity in funding library provision, the citizens of Scotland's capital were not so easily persuaded .In 1864 the citizens of Edinburgh had rejected a proposal to adopt the Libraries Act by 1106 votes to 71 as it would have caused extra taxation. Opinions were to change however after Carnegie wrote to the Lord Provost, Sir Thomas Clark, on 27th April 1886 offering £25,000 to build a central library for the city. To make the adoption of the Act practically certain he cabled an amendment to this letter few days later, increasing this sum to £50,000. The public meeting which followed approved the adoption of the Act almost unanimously, with only 4 objections.

[21] Joan Wakeford, *Kingston's Past Rediscovered* (Chichester: Phillimore for Kingston Upon Thames Archaeological Society, 1990), p.85. There were also Lecture Meetings at which essays and original papers were to be read and discussed, the formation of classes for study and the collection of apparatus and a museum.

[22] Wakeford, Kingston's *Past Rediscovered*, p.88.

[23] Throughout the last quarter of the century numerous trade unions were pressing for a shorter working day, with varying degrees of success, but it was not until 1886 that the Shop Hours Regulation Act attempted to regulate the hours of work of children and young people in shops; the hours of work were not to exceed 74 per week, including meal times. The 1892 Shop Hours Act strengthened the 1886 Act and ordered that women and males

under 18 were not to work more than a 58 hour week, with a compulsory half-day holiday.

[24] Wakeford, Kingston's *Past Rediscovered*, p.88.

[25] Perhaps emulating a similar institution established in nearby Croydon three years earlier.

[26] This was an early magic lantern, illuminated by a combination of oxygen and hydrogen.

[27] A monthly magazine which lasted for only 2/3 issues in 1841-42.

[28] W. D. Biden, *The History and Antiquities of the Ancient and Royal Town of Kingston upon Thames* (Kingston, 1852), p. vi.

[29] W. Chapman, *A Handbook of Kingston* (Kingston upon Thames: W.C. Chapman, 1877).

[30] *Surrey Comet,* 7 October 1854.

[31] *Surrey Comet*, 2 October 1869.

[32] Letter to *Surrey Comet,* 3 March 1855.

[33] In the valuation book of James Nightingale and his son James Thrupp Nightingale, estate agents of Kingston 1864 – 1887, any itemised books in a valuation list are almost always of a religious nature.

[34] Henry J. Fricker was a member of the ubiquitous Fricker family whose enterprises in Kingston will be discussed later. Thomas Phillpot was the first editor of the *Surrey Comet* in 1854.

[35] Helen R. Smith, *Aspects of the Victorian Book*, British Library website http://blpc.bl.uk/, accessed 17 August 2004.

[36] Yellowbacks are a distinctive category of cheap books which began to appear in the middle of the nineteenth century, at about the same time as W. H. Smith's first railway bookstalls. Their low price of one or two shillings, were deliberately designed to appeal to the growing reading and travelling public.

[37] *Surrey Comet*, 7 October 1854.

[38] *Surrey Comet,* 5 March 1881.

[39] Surrey History Service (SHS): C/ES/34. Kingston Infant School (later Richmond Road) Log book, 8 May 1882 'A free library having been opened in Kingston...give the Teachers 1 hour each week for general reading...I shall guide them in their choice of subject and request account of each hour thus spent.'

[40] *Surrey Comet,* 28 February 1881.

[41] North Kingston Local History Room (NK): KB 5/17/1 Minutes of Committees of the Borough Council, *Library Committee Minutes 1881-98.*

[42] The *Library Committee Minutes* report much useful evidence, such as a list of books donated and bought, the number of readers and issues per month et cetera.

[43] F. S. Merryweather, *Half a Century of Kingston History* (London: Oasis Books, 1976), p.90.

[44] Which is today the town's Central Library.

[45] NK: KB5/17.

[46] Phillips, *Ten Men and Colchester*, p.125.

[47] Clark and Murfin, *The History of Maidstone,* p.171.

[48] Kingston also benefited from donations, such as that of £100 to purchase books, from Sarah Shrubsole in memory of her late husband and brother in law, who were both former councillors.

[49] Alexander, *Borough Government and Politics: Reading 1835-1985*, p.82.

[50] Alexander, *Borough Government and Politics: Reading 1835-1985*, p. 82.

[51] Philip Heath-Coleman, 'The Earliest Libraries in Romford & Neighbourhood', *Romford Record No. 10* (Romford: Romford and District Historical Association, 1978).

[52] The Institute is still in operation, under the Trusteeship of Essex County Council. A purpose built public museum was opened in 1835 and is the second oldest purpose-built public museum in the country.

[53] Bristol's first Free Library opened in 1876.

[54] David Large, *The Municipal Government of Bristol 1851-1901* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1999), p.28.

[55] Martin Daunton, 'Introduction' to *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol.III, p.37.

[56] Pam, *A History of Enfield Volume Two 1837-1914,* pp.313-16.

[57] Barry Doyle, 'The changing functions of urban government', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. III 1840-1950, p.292.

[58] E. T. Bellhouse, *On Baths and Wash-houses for the People* (1854) London School of Economics (LSE) : Ref. HD4/89.

[59] The movement had started in 1844 with the first metropolitan baths opening in 1845.

[60] LSE: HD4/118. Public Baths and Wash-houses, 1850.

[61] Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846 9 &10 Vict.cap.74 and 10 &11 Vict. cap. 61.

[62] In what is now known as Bath Passage

[63] Sampson, *Kingston Past,* p.117.

[64] The National Archives (TNA) : BT31/2150/9958.

[65] TNA:. BT31/2150/9958.

[66] TNA: BT31/2150/9958.

[67] Sampson, *Kingston Past*, p.120.

[68] In fairness to the council, the floating baths do seem to have been popular among Kingstonians, as evidenced by the numerous press reports of club swimming races and even a swimming fete held in 1886, attended by the Mayoress, Miss Nuthall. But they did not cost much to run of course – no water rates or taxes. The Thames Conservators, who were no strangers to controversy with Kingston Council, thought otherwise and did try to impose restrictions. They lost the battle on this occasion but not without an unseemly pitched battle on the Thames between the conservators and councillors.

[69] *Surrey Comet,* 5 February 1887.

[70] NK: KB5/24.

[71] The cost would be £1500, or £2000 if delivered to Kingston.

[72] NK: KB5/24.Minute of the Special Baths Committee, 6 July 1896.

[73] Presumably the contract for the fixtures and fittings went to other suppliers.

[74] As required by the 1846 Baths and Washhouses Act, and the Borough Funds Act of 1872.

[75] *Surrey Comet,* 1 February1896.

[76] The takings went down dramatically from mid July to the end of August 1900. No doubt, if it was a warm summer, people were saving money by bathing in the Thames.

[77] P. J. Waller, *Town, City and Nation, England 1850-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp.301-2.

[78] *Surrey Advertiser,* 12 June 1866.

[79] Phillips, *Ten Men and Colchester,* p.125.

[80] Clark and Murfin, *The History of Maidstone,* p.152.

[81] Large, *The Municipal Government of Bristol 1851-1901*, p.114.

[82] Large, *The Municipal Government of Bristol 1851-1901*, p.114.

[83] H. E Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), p.115.

Chapter 5

THE ROAD TO IMPROVEMENT (2)

> Councillor Collings said Kingston was not London, or a part of London, and there was no necessity for dealing with these matters precisely in the same way as they did in the City of London. It was perfectly clear that they had not done their duty in the past but that could never be made a reason for their not doing their duty now.[1]

1. Introduction

'Kingston was a particularly unhealthy place in which to live, during the nineteenth century: 'Serious epidemics were frequent in the district, and the death rate exceptionally high.'[2] In October 1860 the working-class cottages of the town earned this description in the pages of the *Surrey Comet*:

> They possess no outlet whatever at the back, not even a window, so that the air cannot pass freely through them and the ceiling of the rooms are so low that a man of ordinary height cannot stand upright in them. They are destitute of the most common necessaries for decency, one water closet being made to serve several dwellings. Some are without a sink of any kind and the dirty water is brought out and emptied into the uneven gutters in the centre of the lane, and may be seen standing in fetid pools...The disposal of the town's sewage was a constant source of anxiety to the local authority at that time.[3]

More serious than the lack of books and baths, because of the threat to the health of the people of Kingston, were the blocked ditches, overflowing cesspools, leaky privies and the accumulation of refuse, which were believed to be the cause of epidemic diseases. Public health provision for the borough as a whole presented a dilemma for the council, partly of its own making. Adopting the 1848 Public Health Act would have enabled finance to be raised from the rates to pay for improvements, but Kingston did not do this until 1855, no doubt unwilling to cause resentment from the borough ratepayers. No professional assistance was employed until 1856, when an Inspector of Nuisances was appointed. No surveyor or engineer was seen as necessary until the 1860s. Although a temporary Medical Officer of Health (MOH) was appointed in 1866 this was prompted by an outbreak of cholera in the borough, and his services were dispensed with once the emergency was over. Kingston did not deem it necessary to have a permanent MOH until 1872. As the town prospered so the task of providing a comprehensive drainage system became increasingly complex. After 1866 use of the River Thames as an outlet became unlawful and alternative schemes were obstructed by objections from local grandees. Progress was a stop/go affair for almost 30 years.

As this is a major element in Kingston's nineteenth century history it will be looked at in some depth. It is true that villas and terraces for more fortunate workers were being developed around the edges of the town; a fair proportion of this new housing was being developed by several of the very councillors to whom the editor addressed his remarks. Several of these men were also receiving rents from the properties referred to in the *Surrey Comet*.

Another provision which was delayed, much to the frustration of succeeding MOHs, and the Local Government Board (LGB), was the provision of an isolation hospital.[4] When any of the town's people, whether slum dwellers or not, succumbed to an acute contagious disease, such as smallpox, there was no isolation hospital to which they could be referred, despite pressure from the borough Medical Officers of Health. As late as 1890 the LGB accused the authority of: 'persistently delaying to exercise the powers in this respect which the legislature has given them for the benefit of their district.'[5]

Why was a relatively prosperous community so lacking in perception regarding the well being of the less fortunate of its members? As regards libraries and swimming baths one can accept that as much of the permissive legislation enabling local improvement was dependent upon a majority vote of ratepayers, it was those very people who might take the view, that with access to voluntary or private funded facilities, there was no necessity to accept that: 'provision of cheap, improving leisure time facilities should be a public municipal affair.'[6] It was the ratepayers in some instances who were reluctant, as already seen. It will be shown that Kingston was not the only town to take this view. But housing, drainage, sewerage, a clean water supply and hospitals were in a different category with everyone benefiting, from ratepayers to occupants of the slums and the workhouse. The reasons why Kingston councillors were so resistant to investing in the infrastructure of what was, following the mid century, already becoming an suburban community, are not likely to be clear cut or easily disentangled into discrete strands, but judging by the council's minutes they often seem to be cocooned in endless committee meetings deliberating on the minutiae of parochial matters. As late as 1893, when a carpet and desk for the Town Clerk's office were deemed necessary, the purchase was delegated to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillor Carn (of the Improvement, Property and Sanitary Committee); other

minor matters considered in full committee were a purchase of a clock for the committee room, shrub planting and infringements of the byelaws, such as the incorrect siting of a greenhouse.[7] Was it that the decision making process was hampered by a lack of understanding of the issues, as theorised in the third hypothesis, and a financial commitment beyond their experience, competence or indeed a simple unwillingness to spend money?

Kingston was not alone in its inability to react to urban development with an appropriate response. In reference to investment in the infrastructure of London, Rodger and Colls state: 'Urban administrative structures and jurisdictions were unsuited to changing circumstances, and their officers were often paralysed by fear should they transgress their legitimate authority.'[8] Kingston certainly seems to have been slow to understand the demands that suburban, if not strictly urban, change would make. The Victorian commitment to the principles of laissez-faire, that is the principle of self-interest and self-help, was a barrier to government intervention. Yet such was the scale of social problems, especially in the area of public health, that solutions could not be left solely in the hands of local authorities and Kingston council was slow to grasp the necessity for a structured, central administration. In the 1840s as those in central government became anxious about the consequences of doing nothing to address the: 'inadequacies of Britain's infrastructure, the advocates of reform were at last beginning to make the ideological case for intervention.'[9] After the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act and the setting up of the Kingston Poor Law Union in 1836 the next legislative milestone, in local terms, was the Kingston upon Thames 1855 Improvement Act.[10] This time the corporation itself was the promoter of a local act. Fraser says that the preference for local acts can be accounted for in terms of local pride, local knowledge and local incentive, presumably also because of local control.[11]

2. The Drainage Question

The Kingston Improvement Bill of 1855 was intended to allow the council to extend the limits of the borough, give the corporation power to provide for the better paving, lighting and drainage as well as other improvement of the borough; crucially it would also empower the council to extend borrowing. No advantage had been taken of the 1847 Town Improvement Clauses Act, which had already given borrowing powers on the Special and General Sewage rate. It cannot be

doubted that an improved and extended sewerage was necessary. The criticisms of their stewardship, which had upset the councillors in 1835, had not been any kind of a reveille. Twenty years on there was, for instance, no effective comprehensive drainage system in the borough; open sewers carried effluent through the town's streets to the Latchmere ditch and the Thames. 'A black, stinking and hideous deformity...has rolled down Coombe Lane, untouched and unisolated [sic] for 18 years.'[12] Throughout the late 1830s the borough council minutes show little evidence of concern by the members about this state of affairs. Alerted by a cholera outbreak in 1841 it was agreed that the Mayor and five other councillors should 'ascertain the present state of the sewerage of the Borough and devise some remedy for the defective condition of the same.'[13] Apart from general discussion on the working party's report, notably about certain landowners being advised to clean their ditches, nothing positive was done and the matter was dropped. It was no surprise therefore, that in 1849 there was another outbreak of cholera. Stung into action, the council did hope to be included in the remit of the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers but the request was refused.[14]

When the cholera abated so did any impetus for action. However, local feeling was aroused and in August 1852 George Phillipson of the Market Place, Kingston wrote to the General Board of Health: 'Being desirous of obtaining information on the subject of sanitary improvement has induced me to write to you on the subject with respect to this town. In the first place the drainage is altogether bad.'[15] The Board's response was that, according to the reports of the Registrar General, mortality in Kingston did not exceed: 'in proportion of 23 to 1000 on an average over seven years'(suggesting an average age at death of 43-44) and there were no grounds for an enquiry under the Public Health Act of 1848.'[16] Phillipson was advised however, that on petition for an enquiry the Board was empowered to send down a superintending Inspector to examine and report on the matters referred to in the petition. By September 1852 Phillipson had gathered 133 people including two medical doctors, a surgeon and the vicar of the Parish Church to sign a petition for the Public Health Act of 1848 to be applied to Kingston.[17] The petition produced no more positive result than the original request. The government's response was to the effect that: 'as a bill is at present under consideration which is intended to give larger powers for sanitary improvements to local authorities it is felt that it is inappropriate at present to proceed with an enquiry.'[18] The bill is not

named, but it could be that the Board already had notice of the council's intent to promote an Improvement Bill to Parliament to define Kingston's boundaries and obtain powers for improvement of paving, drains et cetera. More likely, the reference is to the intention of Parliament to instigate acts which passed responsibility to local boards of health and extended their powers to include drainage and sanitation, such as the Sanitary Act in 1868, which forced local authorities to appoint sanitary inspectors, or to the eventual Public Health Act of 1875, 23 years later than the Kingston petition. This Act stipulated that:

> Every area to have a Medical Officer of Health and a sanitary inspector Councils were given powers to build sewers, drains, and public toilets
>
> Councils had to make sure that refuse was collected, and the water supply was controlled
>
> Local authorities could disinfect houses if someone had caught an infectious disease.

By mid century, however, at the time of Phillipson's letter, several particular features of nineteenth-century urban life had combined to present Kingston councillors with tests of their ability: lack of efficient drainage, the arrival of a railway line and extensive housing development. The drainage deficiencies had been evident for some time but the development of the London to Southampton railway and the consequent development of residential property around the station at Surbiton gave Kingston council an unexpected territorial problem which was to be the start of squabbling between the leaders of the neighbouring communities for decades to come. This ongoing feud, to a certain extent, diverted attention away from the real problem and contributed to the lack of focus by the Kingston councillors.

At a council meeting in 1841 when the drainage of the Latchmere River was considered, possibly higher on the corporate mind was a discussion of sending a petition to the Houses of Parliament in opposition to an application for the grant of a market in the 'New Town.' The 'New Town' was Surbiton which, thanks to its railway station opening in 1838, was well on the way to becoming a rival to Kingston. By 1841 *The Times* reported: 'this new town exceeds the site of the old town of Kingston nearly fourfold ... and [there] now stand rows of handsome houses.' While Surbiton was thriving, Kingston was starting to suffer the effects of the loss of river and coaching trade to the railway. The malt trade was particu-

larly badly affected and Merryweather recalls that in 1840 'there were seventeen large malt houses vacant in the town.'[19]

The railway station at Surbiton was also a factor in dealers trying to persuade Kingston to hold a cattle market in Surbiton. This would obviously have been easier for the stock handling, but Kingston vigorously objected. Instead, Kingston decided to establish its own weekly cattle market, the first being held in Kingston Market Place on 8 April 1855. With a population which had grown from 387 in 1841 to 2800 by 1852, Surbiton was beginning to have a sense of its own importance, even possibly as a separate identity to Kingston.[20] However, in 1854 a petition from the borough of Kingston to the Privy Council makes it clear that Surbiton was still regarded as an integral part of the administrative Parish of Kingston, in spite of a new ecclesiastical parish in Surbiton with the building of St Marks Church: 'and as such [Surbiton] contributes with other parts of the Parish in the payment of all rates and taxes levied within the said Parish and is in no respect divided there from except as an Ecclesiastical District as connected with a church lately erected there.'[21] Kingston was objecting to the promotion by a group of Surbiton residents of a Surbiton Improvement Bill. The growing community of property owners who had taken advantage of the commuting possibilities of the rail route to London from Surbiton felt neglected by Kingston council. Although they contributed to the highway rates levied by Kingston council they complained that they received no benefit in their locality from this tax. Roads, which had previously been country byways, had become well used highways rapidly falling into disrepair. Such was the state of the road leading from the station into Kingston town, that failing to attract funding from the Kingston rates, residents had made repairs at their own expense.[22]

Written within memory of these events, is a report of a meeting at which the Mayor of Kingston met with the promoters of the Surbiton Bill in an endeavour to persuade them to join the borough.[23] He did not succeed. Kingston council being used to governing a mainly trading community (and as will be seen in Chapter 7 chiefly representative of that trading community) was outflanked by a lobby of men who were mainly professional by occupation and valued their surroundings as an exclusive residential suburb rather than a market place. The Kingston Town Clerk had already written to the Privy Council in 1853 asking that no provisional

order for the introduction of the Board of Health into Surbiton be considered until there was a decision of parliament on the subject of the Kingston Improvement Bill, which was for the local improvement of the whole district, including Surbiton. Kingston councillors argued that the interests of the inhabitants of Surbiton would be: 'much better protected if placed under the care and management of the constituted authorities of the Parish than under the provisions of the superintendence of the Board of Health'[24] and that the expenses of a unified authority would be less and that anyway they [the objectors], : 'will be much better able to manage and conduct the same to the general interests of the Inhabitants thereof than having the same placed under a Board completely independent of the feelings and ignorant of the wants and requirements of the Parish.'[25]

What Kingston was really worried about was the loss of part of its rate income to the Improvement Commissioners who would govern Surbiton following the passing of the Surbiton Improvement Act. Earlier, Kingston council considered itself within the purlieus of Metropolitan Commissioners of Sewers. It is also clear that Kingston was guilty of a 'dog in the manger' attitude, given that they had not chosen to set up a local board of health themselves until now. Also Kingston Town had neither wanted nor had, a railway station. Ironically their negative response to the route of the railway, which had been seen as a threat to the coaching sector of the borough's economy, was the very reason why the town's businessmen were missing out (to Surbiton) on the opportunity for expansion. Kingston council had shown poor judgement in only thinking about the short term issues and was about to show further evidence of naivety in the matter of the Kingston Improvement Bill. This naivety is an example of the general problem of managing change and assessing how to deal with unprecedented development.

Press coverage suggests that what was in effect a move towards self-government for Kingston and for Surbiton, each promoting its own Improvement Bill, was hotly debated within the town. Those in favour of greater local responsibility argued that the necessary reforms should be under the supervision of those most interested in value for money projects, that is: 'Men who have to share in the payment of the expenses...are better adapted than any centralised authority, however able and powerful they may be.'[26] There were doubts though about the ability of all on the council to cope efficiently with the legislation involved, resting as it

would 'solely with the most respectable tradesmen who may be chosen Mayors and Magistrates, under the guidance only of their clerk, though a most able and intelligent solicitor.'[27] Also there was concern that the 'rewards' of an Improvement Act might benefit Kingston town alone and not be applied to the outlying roads, lanes and footpaths. That Kingston council might be free to levy rates and taxes to be used purely for the central trading area of the town was a real threat to people living in Surbiton, Norbiton and other adjoining areas:

> Self-government...is prized also by the suburbans among whom most assuredly may be found various professionals, bankers, merchants, gentlemen and tradesmen of intelligence and capacity, as fully equal to the Magisterial or Town Council, or Corporation duties as any to be found in Kingston; and no disparagement whatever to them in the assertion.[28]

Condescending though this might be, the truth was that those serving on Kingston council were in reverse order to the list above. There was one banker, one architect, an auctioneer, two chemists and a dentist among a crowd of local dealers and tradesmen. There were few true professionals or city merchants. As for the competence of the Kingston council, Parliament had already taken steps to remedy the long and expensive procedure for procuring local improvement acts. The 1847 Towns Improvement Clauses Act, referred to earlier, provided something of a pro forma which included all the clauses likely to be needed, and could be adopted by most authorities. This simplified matters for all local authorities, and Parliament.

Not all Surbiton residents were in favour of the proposed Surbiton Improvement Bill and there were local complaints as to the way the whole matter was organised. Eventually dissenters were persuaded by changes to the Bill to allow it to proceed.[29] The Committee of the Ratepayers (Surbiton residents organised a non-party organisation much earlier than Kingston) responsible for the Surbiton Bill: 'had forwarded a deputation to Kingston for the purpose of promoting good feeling, but were unsuccessful in their endeavours.'[30] The opening shots in the feuding between Kingston's old and new towns had been fired. The 1855 Kingston Improvement Bill also had objectors, perhaps from an unexpected quarter. The Lambeth Water Works Company (LWW) had created a new water intake, from the River Thames, at Seething Wells, a district on the western fringe of Kingston. This site had been chosen as it was above the tidal reach of the river and James Simpson, the company engineer, recommended the move away from the heavily

polluted stretches of the river further down stream.[31] The new works were opened in 1853, with all the consequent pipe and drain laying, just two years before the drafting of the Kingston Bill. Under the provisions of the Bill the Council would be responsible for all the pipes, sewers and drains within the new boundaries - including those of the LWW. To the water company's annoyance, Kingston was to be permitted to alter the levels, course or construction of any of these within the borough, without any consultation. The final blow was the proposed rateable values. To quote the LWW Petition to the House of Commons against the Bill:

> that while rates upon certain lands used (amongst other purposes) as a Railway are only to be assessed at one fourth of the net annual value of such lands, the lands and property of your Petitioners and other companies are to be assessed on the net annual value of their property. That the said Bill seeks power to exempt the property of the Corporation from all rates made from time to time...for any of the purposes of the said Bill.[32]

The water company argued that such exemption would result in higher rates for everyone else. The council would doubtless wish to maintain the level of revenue income to maintain their own property, therefore any shortfall caused by the exempt property would need to be met from higher rate elsewhere.

Kingston was not the first authority to run into trouble with the new utility companies. James Simpson writing in 1854, with reference to the Kingston Bill complained:

> water & gas companies are occasionally put to serious expense from a deficiency in the existing law. The authorities in various places having charge of roads and pavements lower the surfaces and call on the companies to incur the expense of their pipes. In other cases they lower the roads and leave the pipes nearly bare which leads to great inconvenience as their pipes are liable to be broken by the traffic and in severe winters the Companies' pipes as well as the tenants' leaden services frequently become frozen. The Metropolitan Paving Act contains provisions to meet cases of the kind the intervention of the legislation being that Water and Gas companies should be reimbursed the cost of altering their pipes but Commissioners and Surveyors of roads and pavements evade the act by declining to give orders for works of this description and leave these Companies without a remedy.[33]

Kingston had previously caused expense because of the borough lowering some roads, with the consequence that the LWW pipes also had to be lowered. Simpson was so ill disposed to the Kingston Bill that he wrote to the LWW solicitors suggesting: 'we must keep all out of Kingston we can, the rates are extremely heavy...I believe that under the Municipal Reform Bill females and corporations have not votes...the object of the Authorities is to get a larger district within their

rating.' In the event, both Kingston and Surbiton were successful in obtaining their Improvement Acts. Surbiton had the advantage of a more professional group of men to steer the Improvement Bill through Parliament and out- manoeuvred the Kingston council of shopkeepers. It seems from these disputes that in the matter of the Improvement Bill Kingston councillors had to learn the art of negotiation. Dependent as they were on the services of part time officials, councillors did not have the professional expertise which was becoming necessary to deal with metropolitan institutions which had the advantage of specialist staff. These staff had built up experience in dealing with argumentative local authorities across the region. The opaque manoeuvres of Kingston would present no difficulty to their legal departments. The only solicitor available to Kingston was their part-time Town Clerk, as there were no representatives of the legal profession serving on the council at this time. This lack of experts to advise the council, especially in a field like public health, where knowledge of medicine and engineering were necessary to solve problems and manage projects efficiently, would prove to be even more of a disadvantage in the future. The draft Improvement bill was amended to include clauses (recommended by the Lambeth Water Works) obliging Kingston to give due notice of any work affecting the company's constructions and to accept the supervision of a superintendent of the company in any such work. The matter of rates was resolved by making it unlawful for the council to levy any sewer rate on the company's (and that of the Chelsea Water Company) property. In January 1856 the council resolved that the Highways Committee (established in 1855) take charge of and jurisdiction over all existing and future sewers. They also agreed to levy a rate of 1s. in the pound to pay the expenses of procuring the Improvement Act.[34]

3. Drains, Sewers and Clean Water

The need for, and construction of, drains and sewers was a common problem for growing towns in mid century, not just the large industrial centres such as Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds but even for middling size market towns and boroughs. Kingston was not alone in having to face the challenge of installing adequate means of drainage. Guildford, for example, 19 miles south of Kingston on the Portsmouth Road, had similar problems to those in Kingston. The *Surrey Advertiser* on July 2 1864 carried the following leader:

> Guildford is one of the best inland towns of its size in the kingdom, large, clean and well built ... Guildford is fortunate in its situation and may well

> bear comparison with any inland town of similar size... It is as clean as many other towns; it is as well supplied with water as many other towns; but considering its natural advantages, it ought to be cleaner and better supplied with water than many towns with which it is now only on a level... It has plenty of good water in its vicinity, but its inhabitants (we must confess) are badly supplied. It has excellent natural facilities for drainage, but as yet it is anything but well drained. We do not mean drainage to the river; on the contrary we strongly object to changing healthy streams to filthy sewers. We advocate drains to certain low lying portions of the town and suburbs, where the sewage could collect, and after being thoroughly deodorised (deprived of its offensive smell)... be sold to farmers in the neighbourhood for manure.[35]

Another southern town having drainage problems was Chelmsford, despite being described by Grieve as 'increasingly progressive, intellectually active, and socially aware' in the 1840s:

> Chelmsford, like other comparable towns, had no infrastructure of mains water and sewerage to service its growth. Indeed, no authority in the parish, neither the parish vestry nor the town commissioners, had the legal powers or financial means to embark on such provision. Edwin Chadwick's great Victorian Public Health Act of 1848 was passed just in time to drag Chelmsford out of the Middle Ages into the modern era of public water supplies and main drainage.[36]

Chelmsford, at this date, was only marginally larger in population than Kingston but had a more cosmopolitan outlook. Certainly the authority here was quicker off the mark in taking advantage of legislation, so much so that it petitioned Parliament for wider statutory powers shortly after the arrival of gas lighting in the town (1819), the town commissioners having been spurred on by the need to increase their inadequate funding. Grieve's comment that the 1848 Public Health Act was 'passed just in time', seeing Chelmsford as slow to initiate progress shows the relative nature of ideas of progress.

In Bromley, Kent, the governance of the town was in the hands of the vestry, until the Poor Law Reform Act of 1834, which had control over the Poor Law administration and areas such as roads, often acting within a framework of permissive central legislation: 'The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 removed from a vestry the most significant part of its secular work, and in subsequent years other important functions were handed over to new statutory committees, the timing of which was in part determined by national legislation.'[37] The vestry still dealt with extension of gas lighting, roads and drainage however. Like Kingston, Bromley was expanding by mid century and the drainage problem came to a head

in the 1860s when complaints began to appear in the *Bromley Record* about the state of the roads, drainage and ratepayers not getting value for money. By September that year a letter asked: 'how Bromley stood from a sanitary point of view and whether it would not be wise to put our house in order' because drainage from cesspools was getting into the water supply which was from wells.[38] The writer suggested using pipes from the Kent Water Company. Drainage was too big a problem for the vestry, which set up a Drainage Committee in 1866, commissioning a detailed report, a similar response to that in Kingston.

There was to be a Drainage Committee in Kingston, in due course. As outlined above, the 1855 Kingston Improvement Act gave the council control of drainage, lighting, paving and other improvements with the power to raise rates to fund sewage, amongst other improvements. An Improvement Committee had been inaugurated but its main preoccupation was with reports from the Fire Engine Committee, although it was decided that it was desirable to appoint an Inspector of Nuisances for the borough. Minutes reporting tenders for drainage works show these to be relatively small projects such as draining the Latchmere and Canbury ditches. The council's Improvement Committee Minutes for 1856 record tenders received for one of these piece-meal remedial attempts. On the list are two men who subsequently became town councillors in 1858, and one who had previously been a councillor. In a relatively small borough it is perhaps no surprise to note this level of coincidental association but the facts do serve to underline the narrow world which influenced the running of council business.

Local householders are recorded as doing nothing to cooperate with the council's requests, neglecting the cleansing of cesspits and privies. This resulted in cleared areas soon reverting to their offensive state. At the meeting of the Improvement Committee on 21 July 1856 there was talk of using the threat of procuring a Medical Certificate conformable to the Act, in order to proceed against a Mr. Wenman for one such offence. Wenman must have decided it was in his better interest to be on the side of the council (he became a master baker) because he became a councillor later that year and remained so for thirty years. These sporadic attempts at draining parts of the borough continued until June 1861, when after extensive debate progress was again delayed by referring the matter to the

Highways and Improvement Committee. As the *Surrey Comet* observed at the time:

> To say that the drainage of Kingston is imperfect is to use the mildest of milk-and- water expressions. Let us say that throughout the town it is utterly insufficient and that in very many places it is shamefully and disgustingly bad, and in some of the poorer hovels in the town altogether wanting. There is no division of opinion as to the necessity of at once taking the subject in hand. Yet there seemed to be lack of earnestness in the way in which the Council dealt with this subject at their meeting of the 19th inst. They approached it with reluctance, and were evidently afraid of the consequence of once taking action in it. They seemed to connect drainage of the town with drainage of their pockets.[39]

A dedicated Drainage Committee was finally set up later in 1861 and eventually the balance of opinion shifted in favour of professional help. In 1862 the council arranged a competition to find a drainage scheme. The winner was a Mr. Despard and his plan was duly adopted. By 1863 an engineer, Mr. Radcliffe, had been appointed and instructed to draw up plans for a borough drainage scheme. Sadly for the councillors his efforts still did not bring about the desired result. As Merryweather wrote in 1887, 'During the last twenty years, the subject of sewage disposal has been the most difficult social problem which Kingston authorities have been called upon to solve. It has perplexed the wisest, and worried men almost into their graves.'[40] Well it might, because the construction of the scheme, agreed in 1864 at a cost of £16,000, was dogged by 'gross neglect'.

With the project underway, Radcliffe, as the engineer in charge, reported in November 1864 that he had noticed certain materials being moved from the site and had served notice on the drainage contractor 'not to move any materials without the consent of the Council.'[41] The contractor, S. Shrubsole, was also reported as removing articles of the equipment from the site.[42] He was dismissed and the contract assigned elsewhere. After Shrubsole had gone, it was found that many of the workmen had not been paid their wages in full for two weeks and that work was at a standstill for lack of materials. The project continued to be dogged by unreliable suppliers. The new contractor was threatened with notice because of attempting to use substandard cement. The brick supplier overcharged by 8s per thousand.[43]

The council was fortunate that at least Radcliffe, the engineer in charge seems to have been honest. Despite all the set backs caused both by shady sub-

contractors and negotiations with private landowners over the route of the pipeline, the project was almost finished in mid-1865. It seemed that Kingston had at last overcome technical and management pitfalls and achieved a satisfactory drainage improvement. Frustratingly for the council this was not so. Like many towns in mid-century, the Kingston scheme relied on a river as the sewage outlet, the river in this case being the Thames. The Thames Conservators tried to block the scheme on the grounds that it would create a damaging nuisance but were over-ruled after a long court battle.[44] Unfortunately for Kingston, shortly after this success the concern about pollution of the Thames in London resulted in a ban on Kingston, and other towns, from discharging sewerage into the river. The Thames Purification Act 1866 was an: 'Act for the Purification of the River Thames by the diversion therefrom of the sewage of Oxford, Abingdon, Reading, Kingston, Richmond, Twickenham, Isleworth and Brentford and for the Collection and Utilization of that Sewage.'[45]

The Act empowered the several corporations and other governing bodies to enter into contracts and agreements for the disposal of their sewage. The Thames Purification Company was formed to fund and undertake the work. Kingston, feeling understandably aggrieved at having their achievement trumped in this way had to start all over again. This was not entirely a case of bad luck. If the council had not dismissed the warning of one of its councillors, almost ten years earlier, to the effect that allowing sewage to drain into the river might be unlawful, and if they had listened to another councillor (Benjamin Looker) who advised appointing a Borough Surveyor in 1859 they might have avoided both waste of money and the staining of Kingston's reputation.[46] It seems unlikely that Radcliffe, the engineer in charge of the project, would have had no professional knowledge of the contemporary debate on draining sewage into rivers. Kingston had chosen the cheap option in appointing him and paid a heavy loss for doing so. The *Surrey Comet*, with some prescience, had suggested this possibility when reporting his appointment. While heralding the progress made by the council in appointing an engineer, the editor commented:

> It is not for us to object if a man charges too little provided he can do and does what he undertakes, but the remuneration certainly seems much lower than a professional man of standing ought to command.[47]

The meeting at which Radcliffe was selected took place on 29 July 1863. He was one of six engineers who were short listed from the 29 applicants. His terms were the lowest, at either £200 per annum or 2% of the contract price, and he would be his own clerk of works. Also in Radcliffe's favour was that he considered Despard's plan good enough not to need supervision by more than a resident engineer.[48] He was presently living in Wandsworth but offered to move to Kingston if appointed. He had good testimonials, but so did the others, including two who had worked for Bazalgette.[49] In fact the resumés of others marked them as higher fliers than Radcliffe. Kingston seemed not to want an ambitious high flyer but a: 'straightforward plodding man...who would not hesitate to put his foot down in a sewer, who was not too thin skinned, nor need he be if he comes here.'[50] The council decided that, although some of the other applicants were almost as good, Radcliffe approved the chosen plan and hence was already on the councillors' side. They thought he was the man to surmount any difficulties which might arise - and he was the least expensive. Perhaps more than any other attribute Radcliffe was a man not frightened to get his boots dirty, an ordinary chap like most of the councillors. He had neither a Westminster address nor connections to the establishment. The council had chosen the man with whom they were most likely to feel comfortable.

This was not an unusual scenario. In Bolton in 1869 a dispute arose as to the merits of two proposed drainage schemes. One was provided by the borough engineer and the other, significantly cheaper, by one of the councillors. After much wrangling the two plans were submitted to a local engineer and then: 'under government pressure, to an eminent London consulting engineer.'[51] According to local press reports this provoked charges that outsiders were taking over council responsibilities and that the council was lacking commonsense in not being able to take its own decision in the matter. As Garrard says: 'this episode tells us much about increasingly tense relationship between council members and professional experts of all kinds, from at least the 1850s ...resentment many councillors felt against the officials, and the not unrealistic sense that their traditional functions were being usurped.'[52] The London engineer decided in favour of the borough engineer's plan and that was proceeded with.

After Radcliffe's departure, and in the years immediately following the collapse of the Despard drainage scheme, Kingston's sewage was still discharging into the Thames, pending the drawing up of an alternative plan. In August 1869 the council was entreating the Thames Conservators to allow yet more time to continue the discharge of sewage into the River Thames: 'as the Corporation are utterly unable at present to dispose of their sewage it becomes necessary that the Corporation should apply to the Conservators for an extension.'[53] The reason for the council's obvious distress at their inability to find a solution to the drainage problem was the failure of yet another scheme.

This second failed attempt at solving the problem, in 1869, was the result of an ill thought out scheme to use land at Ham to provide a sewage disposal scheme away from the River Thames. This was in response to continued pressure from the Thames Conservators. Because of the large number of objections to the scheme, a public enquiry was held before Commissioner Robert Rawlinson. The objectors were mainly those landowners who would be affected by such a scheme and included Gilbert Scott, the architect, writing on behalf of Lord Dysart and His Royal Highness the Duc de Chartres and other members of his family. Also amongst the objectors were the Duke of Cambridge, Earl Russell, General Peel and Arthur Otway MP. The complete list of objectors is at Appendix 5.3. Among the objectors was the appearance of 107 burgesses and ratepayers of Kingston: the list of interested parties who were served with compulsory purchase orders on the 23 December 1868 included twelve town councillors in the list of the Second Schedule of the Compulsory Purchase Order, which comprises: 'the names of the owners, lessees and occupiers of the said land who have absented, dissented or are neuter.' In fact those listed are marked individually either as 'absent' or 'no answer.' It would seem that many of Kingston's own governors were not themselves wholly in approval, but absolved themselves from seeming obstructive by being non-committal. Rawlinson closed the enquiry almost immediately, simply informing the Home Office that the price of the work and the legal costs of compulsory purchasing the land would be more than the entire rateable value of the borough. Faced with this overwhelming vote of no confidence, the council had to concede that such a determined opposition to the scheme would not have been made unless the reasons for objection were well founded and they were forced to acknowledge that the scheme would prove ruinous to a large number of valuable residential

properties. Yet again, Kingston council had been unable to grasp the realities of dealing with forces outside its own immediate sphere of influence. The Council had not thought the scheme through properly. They were naïve, unsophisticated and punching above their weight. The scheme was not technically viable anyway and Kingston continued to pump sewage into the Thames for another twenty five years.

In November 1870 the Borough was again trying appease the Thames Conservators, with a letter, showing that they were still smarting from the Ham Fields fiasco. This was to the effect that the corporation would use every means to comply with their requirements, but in the present imperfect state of the law relating to the acquiring of land and the undecided state of scientific opinion on the method of dealing with town sewage, the Council would not feel justified in entering into the required guarantee.[54]

Kingston was not alone with this problem of looking for an alternative to draining into the Thames. In his *Dictionary of London*, Charles Dickens, Jnr. stated in 1879:

> The whole valley still drains into the Thames; and as the House of Commons has just (March 7) refused by a majority of 22 in a house of 314 to allow the discussion in committee of the elaborately-prepared scheme of the Lower Thames Valley Main Sewerage Board, there does not seem to be any very immediate prospect of any amendment.[55]

By the late 1870s a joint board was set up, representing several nearby communities who had the same problems as Kingston in disposing of sewage. It was hoped to solve the drainage problem once and for all for those communities still draining into the river. Kingston, apparently against the better judgement of some of its governors, sent representatives to this Board. A sub committee of the Special Drainage Committee comprising Frederick Gould, Joseph Marsh, J. East and James Thrupp Nightingale plus the town clerk, spent considerable time and attention on the proposals. In 1880 a proposal to compulsory purchase land for a sewage farm and pumping stations received a flat refusal from the Local LGB.[56] After several similar failed attempts to reach a solution the Joint Board was acknowledged as a failure and dissolved. Joseph Marsh (Chairman) of the Special Drainage Committee did little to hide his satisfaction at the outcome. In the opening remarks of his report to the town council he observed:

> the action of the Town Council in promoting and prosecuting the Bill evoked much opposition in the House of Commons from Surbiton, Hampton Wick, Ham, Kingston Rural and Richmond Rural Authorities...whilst the entire weight and influence of the Lower Thames Main Sewerage Board, and of the local press were brought to bear against the Corporation.[57]

In the manner of a David having defeated Goliath, Marsh drew attention to a sentence from the Inquiry that preceded the dissolution: 'Kingston, if separated, could dispose of their own sewage, and that as cheaply as if they remained in connection with the joint board.'[58] This was just what Kingston council wanted to hear – a justification that they could manage their own affairs without outside interference. Feeling vindicated in their initial distrust of the Joint Board, Kingston used the occasion to criticise their neighbouring rebel district, Surbiton (and also Hampton Wick, opposite the main area of Kingston, on the north bank of the Thames), 'who have never taken a single step to help themselves except to hang on to their neighbours, and to profit by their rateable assessments, in which they have certainly been singularly consistent.'[59] There were several more abortive attempts to find a solution but it was not until 1888 that Kingston and Surbiton finally realised that the only way forward was to join forces. Using the resources of a firm called the Native Guano Company, whose chemical processing plant was built at Downhall Meadow, the town's effluence was transformed into horticultural fertiliser, leaving a non-polluting residue which could be discharged into the Thames without fear of prosecution.[60]

The growing concern about pollution of rivers by using them for the discharge of sewage was not confined to the Thames. A community 12 miles to the north of London was experiencing similar problems to those faced by the councillors in Kingston. Enfield's population was growing at the same rate as that of Kingston and was making the transition from a rural community to that of a suburb of the metropolis. The River Lea Conservancy Act, passed in 1868, created a similar crisis for the Enfield Local Board of Health as the Thames Purification Act 1866 had for Kingston. Up until then, the Enfield Local Board of Health (which had been established in 1850, following the 1848 cholera epidemic) had, like Kingston, been dealing with the problem of how to discharge an increasing amount of sewage in piecemeal fashion. The Board's policy was to avoid inflicting rate increases on its electors:

> Therefore the Board sought to meet each problem in the cheapest rather than the best way possible. It sanctioned large expenditure only when driven to do so by the threat of an injunction or by the imminent collapse of a service.[61]

In their efforts to find acceptable means of disposing of its sewage Enfield's governors conceived alternative schemes which all ended in failure and even when Enfield Urban District Council came into being in 1894 there was no comprehensive scheme in place. It was not until well into the twentieth century that negotiations with neighbouring authorities enabled a satisfactory outcome to the problem.

The history of the management of Kingston's sewage disposal problem displays many of the shortcomings which characterised the council's actions, including an initial lack of appreciation of the authority's responsibility to the whole of the town. Even after the passing of the 1855 Improvement Act for Kingston, which allowed the council to raise a specific sewage rate, members were obtaining tenders for small drainage 'patching' jobs such as one for which two future councillors estimated for in 1856.[62] The Inspector of Nuisances, who had been appointed in 1856, reported individual offences of failure to keep ditches clear. Requests to the offending landowners only resulted in temporary improvement and the overall problem of foul water remained.

The council persistently refused to seek professional help. Although an Inspector of Nuisances was appointed in 1856, no borough surveyor was appointed until 1867, twelve years after the passing of the Improvement Act. The cursory dismissal of a damning report on the state of the borough's public health which was written by Dr. Kent, the Medical Officer to the Board of Guardians in 1866 is a further example. They were always looking for short term solutions rather than the future needs as shown in the attitude to town drainage. An example of this is the appointment of Dr Price Jones as MOH in 1866, in response to an outbreak of cholera. As soon as the emergency was over his services were dispensed with and a permanent MOH was not appointed for a further six years- by which time the appointment was mandatory. The over-riding problem was a parochial attitude to governance combined with an inability to accept change and a shopkeeper's attitude to finance, thinking on too small a scale.

At least one of the hypotheses of the dissertation is reflected in these examples, namely that the decision-making process was hampered by lack of understanding of the issues. In later chapters, analysis of the database introduced in Chapter 3 will show to what extent 'a little baker and a little beershop keeper and that class of men' being typical members of the council may have inhibited progress and whether social and economic networks and self-interest engendered an amateur (in the sense of unskilled) response to the need for improvement.

4. Housing Improvement

> To be a possessor of landed property, we consider the greatest worldly privilege which any man can enjoy.... we would suggest that increasing the comforts of the labourer's home is the most effectual means that can be taken, not only for rendering him a better member of society, but a better labourer; and there is also no doubt that he will be more likely to bring up his family in moral and industrious habits. It used to be alleged by some that increasing the comforts of cottagers would only increase their numbers, and ultimately added to the mass of misery within this class; but this opinion has more recently been found to be erroneous, for thinking parents who possess a strong sense of comfort and enjoyment will not risk the diminution of the source of happiness by burdening themselves with large families.[63]

The quotation comes from an article written in 1843 reflecting the views of the Select Committee on the Health of Towns (1840). The Select Committee recommended the passing of a building act to address the growing problem of slum housing. The recommendations were progressive; in fact they proved too progressive for the time, and were ignored.[64] The economic argument against raising housing standards (for the labouring poor) was, that without any government subsidy, rents would have to be raised, leading to increased wage demands which in turn would mean a drop in business profits, increased costs of exports and so on. The arguments for and against government intervention continued almost to the end of the century. For example, an organisation entitled the Liberty and Property Defence League, whose motto was 'self-help versus state-help', argued against what its members perceived as the socialist ideology driving the provision of improved housing for the poor. The League published a pamphlet in 1884 making a case:

> From the point of view of the genuine working-man, overcrowding is not such a very great nuisance as it is alleged by the philanthropists to be... overcrowding often simply means warmth. A thinly inhabited and highly ventilated room is apt to be a cold room, and underfed people are sensitive to cold. Those who are underfed are apt also to be ill clad, and are pretty certain not to have the means of purchasing much fuel. Hence, independ-

ently of the low rents of crowded lodgings, the mere warmth of them is a temptation to the very poor. Thus we have two causes which make it a doubtful boon for the poor to be offered cheap, spacious, and well-ventilated dwellings. The cheapness would probably react on their wages; the space and the ventilation would only be a change in their discomfort. Foul air and evil smells they are used to; cold, kept away by the very things that bring the foul air and the smells, they escape in their homes. They have enough and to spare of it out of doors, and naturally they do not care to be pursued by it farther than they must.

The first effort to contend with will probably take the shape of stopping up ventilators, unless, indeed, these are so cunningly hidden that the occupants of the house cannot get at them. But it will not be very long before people begin to find out that a dozen persons in a room twelve feet square are much more "snug" than three or four, and that the kind of coarse comfort which comes from mere heat is not inconsistent with almost any amount of what fine ladies and gentlemen call 'stuffiness'.[65]

Twenty years earlier, a leader in the *Surrey Comet* of 15 January 1861, the same year in which the drainage debates began in earnest, referred to a talk given in Romsey by a Mr William Cowper about the need to improve working class housing in general, and drew attention to the need for improvement of the worst housing in Kingston. In doing so the paper's editor echoed the condescending philosophy of many nineteenth century philanthropists, that those who dwelt in slums did so because of their own ignorance:[66]

> Many of our readers must be well aware how forcibly these remarks may be applied to some of the cottages in our lanes and alleys which are ill lighted, have scarcely any ventilation, and which possess no water supply and the inmates of which fetch what they use for all purposes direct from the Thames.[67]

Four years on, in 1865, Russell Knapp, the editor of the *Surrey Comet* was still pressing for action:

> There is nothing more agreeable to owners of land and houses, and all engaged in business in the neighbourhood of Kingston, than to notice the numerous beautiful and commodious residences rapidly covering the ground and inhabited as soon as finished. To the first it tells of increased value of land and high rents. To the second it indicates the influx of numerous families of good means, the supply of whose wants must greatly stimulate the trade of the town...but there is a reverse side of the medal which is not so pleasant to look at. To the numbers who live in humble habitations, the almost exclusive building of high-rated houses in Kingston is attended by serious ills...the influx of well-to-do families, living in a state of refined comfort, if not of positive luxury, has caused a corresponding increase of the class engaged in ministering to their wants in various industrial occupations and as they must live near their employment, a great increased demand for cottages has arisen... Sometimes as many as seven or eight lodgers share a tiny house with a family.[68]

Whilst the *Surrey Comet* was drawing attention to the plight of Kingston's slum dwellers, those who had the authority and opportunity to improve housing conditions in Kingston were engaged in providing dwellings for a different layer of society. The' well-to-do families' referred to in the *Surrey Comet* were being catered for by builder/developers, several of whom had high profile careers on the council. Three of these developments were (1) Spring Grove, to the south west of the town, (2) on Kingston Hill to the north. and (3) along the Portsmouth Road to the west. The relevance of these particular estates, to the history of the council, is the number of councillors who had a hand in their making.

In 1865 William Ranyard, former councillor and father of Samuel Ranyard (councillor 1840-1864) sold eleven acres of land situated between Kingston and Surbiton to the music publisher William Chappell. Chappel's interest in the area can be explained by his son in law being a local solicitor, Walter Meacock Wilkinson. Wilkinson, who was to become Town Clerk by 1881, handled the conveyance of the sale. The plan for the estate was drawn up by magistrate, and land agent, James Nightingale (councillor 1834-1864). The developer was Palmer Porter, a well known local builder and current councillor (1865-1870). A further two councillors who had a financial interest in the Spring Grove estate were James Wenman, master baker and to become a long term councillor (1856-1886) and James Macrostie, a future town councillor (1876-1888). Wenman used a building society loan to build three cottages and a bakery on the estate and Macrostie built three larger houses for rent. Macrostie was a successful plumber, painter, glazier and house decorator who no doubt also benefited from the establishment of the new properties in the area.[69] His spread of businesses also cushioned him from any shortfall in property income. The houses were not built to one design by one owner/builder; land was sold in plots to individual builders or developers who then paid for the properties to be built, chiefly to be a source of rent income: 'Working class housing in most cities was a favoured investment for members of the lower middle-class, who treated it as a sort of pension fund to provide for old age, widows and children.'[70] To date, no comprehensive research has been made into the matter of the number of residents who were owner/occupiers as opposed to renters or lease holders, which might indicate something about the social status of the new estate. However, even without detailed analysis, a look at the census

returns for the new roads for the three census years 1871–1891 does give an idea of the type of people living in Spring Grove.

In Alexandra Road and Springfield Road the majority of the heads of households were in professional or city occupations, with their wives having no occupation listed and with a minimum of one living in domestic staff (in most cases there were two or more). In Portland Road and Bloomfield Road the majority of men were in artisan, retail or transport occupations with many wives and other female relatives employed as dressmakers, milliners and even laundresses. The impression is of an overall mixed community, including neither those in the upper income bracket nor those in the lowest. Nevertheless within this embryo middle class enclave residents were segregated by the nature of their employment.[71]

A few years earlier the sale of land, part of the Duke of Cambridge's estate, at Kingston Hill to the National Freehold Land Society had set in motion housing development on the other side of Kingston, about a mile from the Market Place.[72] Although this took place in 1853 and the land was sold to shareholders in 1854 and 1856 actual building was slow, with only twenty two detached and four semi-detached houses completed by 1867. As with Spring Grove most of the shareholders looked on the development as an investment opportunity. No more than eight of the original investors ever lived on the estate.[73] Also in common with Spring Grove, several of the investors in the first stage of the project were prominent on the council during the period of the estate's construction. They included Samuel Mason (councillor 1853-1854), Joseph Marsh (councillor 1858-1898), James Goulter (councillor 1868-1877) and Benjamin Looker (councillor 1858-1889).

Residential development of Kingston Hill continued spasmodically into the twentieth century, with building styles changing to reflect the taste and aspirations of successive generations of occupiers. Because of its location, a mile to the northeast of the Market Place it was unlikely to appeal to those needing more immediate access to the economic centre of the borough and the designs of the original houses confirm this. Houses were detached or semi-detached, no terraces as in parts of Spring Grove: 'no building is to be erected as a shop, warehouse, or factory and no operative machinery is to be fixed or placed.'74 In addition the rate-

able values were high enough to put the houses out of the reach of most working men.75 The census returns for the first roads which were laid out, Crescent Road, Liverpool Road, Queens Road and Tudor Road gives a picture of the status of the nineteenth century residents, as shown in the table in Appendix 5.4. The predominance of middle class occupiers reflects the intentions of the developers.

A third area of residential development, along the Portsmouth Road west of the borough and either overlooking or near to the River Thames, was by William Woods. As referred to in Chapter 1, Woods had been generous in subscribing to the development of Queens Parade, formerly known as Towns End, when the council was reluctant to invest funding from local taxation. The riverside promenade led to Portsmouth Road where Woods was building 300 villas and several roads leading away from the river. Woods was not a councillor, but he did have an interest, in that he leased land along the riverside from the council, hence his willingness to make investment in the approach to his development from the centre of town. The villas built by Woods were definitely designed for the upper echelon of the borough population, as is evident from the census returns for the roads developed by him. Simply using the number of resident staff per household as a yardstick of prosperity, the presence of five, six or even more staff shows that this part of Kingston was not for the working class nor even the more successful tradesmen.

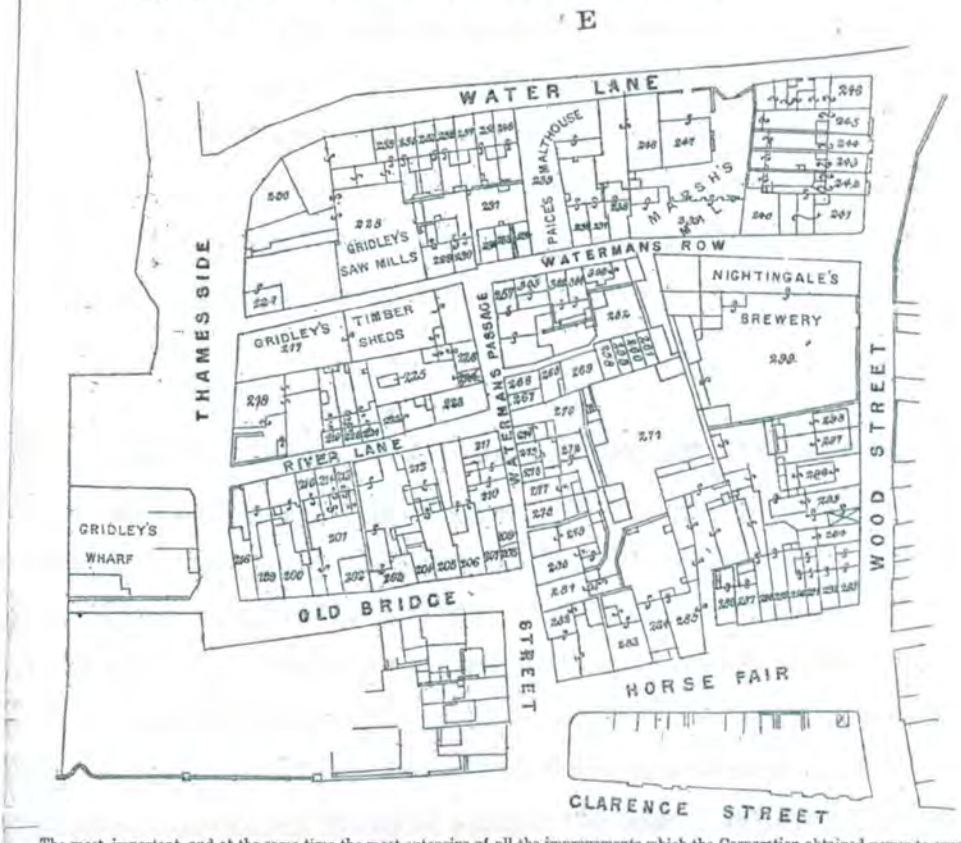
These three areas of development provided affordable housing for artisans and shopkeepers in Spring Grove, initially predominantly middle class accommodation at Kingston Hill (with some successful retailers also achieving a foothold) and impressive villas for the upper class along part of the Portsmouth Road. The population growth of the borough illustrated by these examples alone has the corollary that there was another sector of the community who had to be accommodated but who could never aspire to even some of the more modest homes in Spring Grove. These were the men and women who worked in the town's breweries, were the labourers who helped to build the new houses and roads, swept the chimneys, hoed the gardens, washed the clothes of the families in the new houses and served in the shops and public houses. Many of these working-class families lived in an area called the Back Lanes, shaded in Figure 5.1(page 124).

Figure 5.2 (page 122) is a plan of the Back Lanes area, taken from the Parliamentary plan of 1889. The numbers relate to 105 properties which are itemised in the text adjoining the plan, as published in the Surrey Comet of February 1890. This plan also shows the location of some of the councillor owned busi-nesses of the town. It can be seen that Frederick Gridley has extensive timber yards and a wharf, Nightingale's brewery is also in this area as well as one of Marsh's mills. It is likely that many of the workers employed in this area also lived nearby.

In 1851 the number of dwellings recorded in the street known as Back Lane was fifty five. Of these, 29% included at least one lodger, or lodger family, and most had considerably more. Kingston, like most expanding areas, was not prepared for the great increase in people. People crowded into already crowded houses. Rooms were rented to whole families or perhaps several families. If there were no rooms to rent, people stayed in lodging houses, confirming the report in the *Surrey Comet* in 1865, quoted earlier. Several households were totally composed of lodgers and can be assumed to be some of the town's common lodging houses. These were not the kind of model lodging houses established by some philanthropic organisations, described in Dickens's *Dictionary of London* 1888, but crowded, insanitary refuges for the poorest workers.[76] Only two households recorded a resident servant; one was in the home of Richard Turk, from a prominent boat building family, and the other in that of Richard Galley, lighterman.[77]Adjacent roads, such as Beer Lane and Waterman's Passage, show a similar profile as regards lodgers, as well as a significant number of women with occupations in contrast to the suburban districts of Spring Grove and Kingston Hill. Back Lanes was the squalid side of prosperous Kingston.

Source: Ordnance Survey, County Series 1:2500. Surrey sheet vi 16. Survey 1863.

Figure 5.2 THE BACK LANES.



The most important, and at the same time the most extensive of all the improvements which the Corporation obtained power to execute in the town, under the powers of the Kingston Improvement Act, 1868, is the demolition of the old and dilapidated dwellings situate in the district known as the Back Lanes, of which we give a plan this morning. That district is bounded on the north by Water-lane, on the east by Wood-street, on the south by the Horsefair and Old Bridge-street, and on the West by Thames-side. It comprises an area of a little over three acres. Our plan is taken from the Parliamentary plan deposited in the House of Commons, and the numbers correspond to those in the book of reference prepared at the same time. It includes in all 105 different properties. Amongst them are—the large property known as Nightingale's Brewery (299), fronting to Wood-street and Waterman's-row; Messrs. J. and B. Marsh's mill and corn stores (239 and 245) with house and garden attached (247), fronting on Water-lane and Watermen's-row; Mr. Paice's malthouse (235), fronting on the same roads; Messrs. Gridley's timber sheds (217), and saw mills (228), fronting on Thames-side and Waterman's-row respectively. The large space, marked 271, is garden ground occupied by John Othen. Nearly the whole of the remaining area is covered by very old buildings, sheds, stables converted into lodgings and so on. Deducting from the whole number the properties mentioned, we may say there are rather fewer than 100 buildings which remain to be dealt with. Of these no less than 13 (Nos. 203, 204, 207, 209, 212, 219, 229, 230, 257, 272, 275, 276, and 280), are lodging houses where single men and women, or married couples, can get a night's lodging. A feature of them is of course the common kitchen, where all the lodgers repair to cook their meals (if any) and which is also the common sitting room. The largest of these lodging houses is in Watermen's-passage, No. 257, which comprises the three buildings just beneath the word "Passage" on the plan. This is owned by Charles Day, who has a similar establishment at Croydon. Of the others, John Othen holds two, Stefano Capaldi six, Henry Seavers two, and Mary Ann Williams two. These at any rate are the names of the nominal occupiers given in the book of reference, though, where more than one is held by the same person, a "deputy," as he or she (for they are male and female) is called, is appointed. Then there are eight houses, or sheds, let out in single room tenements, the rent usually obtained being 4s. per week per room, furnished in the scantiest fashion. Such are numbers 232, 233, 234, 237, 238, 294, and 295; while 225 is no other than an old gipsy van, standing upon wheels in the middle of a small yard, which is let at about the same price as the rooms. This van has been used for this purpose and has stood in the same position for years. The temperance reformer will not be amazed to learn that in the midst of all the insanitary conditions and overcrowding of the Back-lanes, there are in the area to be dealt with as many as nine houses licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors; and about as many more situate within a stone's throw in neighbouring streets. At all, or nearly all, of these nine lodgings are let, and one at least has low, ill-lighted sheds, converted into lodging houses at the rear. The numbers and names of these houses are 200, Lord Nelson (Messrs. East, brewers), and 206, the Black Lion (Hodgson's Brewery Co.), both in Old Bridge-street; 211, the New Three Tuns (Gurney and Co.), and 279, the Barley Mow (Richard Ashby and Co.), both in Watermen's-passage; 241, the Royal Oak (Young and Co.), 246, the Two Brewers, and 294 and 295, the Running Horse, all in Wood-street; 283, the Old Ship (Isleworth Brewery Co.), in the Horsefair; and 256, the Outrigger (Gurney and Co.), on the Waterside. Plans for laying out the property are understood to be in preparation.

Source: *Surrey Comet,* 13 February 1890.

Slum clearance was limited generally in the expanding urban areas in the second half of the nineteenth century, principally because of opposition to such an innovation. For example, the Labouring Classes Dwelling Act of 1866 enabled local authorities to raise money towards the building of houses for the working class. Because of severe opposition, the powers were permissive rather than compulsory and not many authorities took up the idea. The Artisans and Labourers Dwelling Act of 1868 went further and empowered local authorities to compel owners to demolish or repair insanitary dwellings, and to keep their properties in a habitable state. However, councils were still slow to adopt such measures as ac-

tion was limited by legal procedures and the high compensation involved. The 1875 Artisans and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act extended local authorities' powers of compulsory purchase of areas unfit for human habitation, so that they could be rebuilt and the houses let by the authorities. Little was actually achieved because of the compensation that had to be paid. Progress was very slow due to two main problems: Where was the money to come from? Where were the new houses to be built? As towns continued to grow, the housing problem got worse.

Despite repeated criticism in the local press and from the MOH concerning the housing situation, it was not until 1888 that Kingston Council submitted to the LGB a housing improvement scheme for this worst housing area of the borough. The area was near the Thames squashed in, by this date, between the bridge and the railway line. This is the first time that the council became involved as the promoter of residential property. Initially the scheme was to purchase or acquire certain houses in the Back Lanes area and for the LGB to determine what provision should be made for the displaced tenants. The council thought it could improve the whole area in one scheme. However when informed that they must provide substitute accommodation for 150 persons 'belonging to the labouring class' they demurred and eventually reduced the scheme of improvement so as to displace 108 persons only. By May 1891 a plan for redeveloping the area was accepted by the council and sent to the LGB for approval. Council minutes of that date record few of the compulsory purchase orders in connection with this scheme and the only surviving property rate book (for the year 1859) does identify three owners of property in the Back Lanes area, who served on the council, namely James Boxall, Richard Galley and Thomas Long, all of these had left the council by the late 1880s. The LGB reluctantly accepted the scheme for sixty persons in twelve new houses and assented to the demolition of certain of the houses before the new dwellings were complete. This pragmatic decision was no doubt taken in order to make some headway in the scheme:

> It will be a great pity if the improvement is not carried through and a glance at the plan ... will show the importance of the acquisition of the few houses to which this application relates.. ...it seems clear that if the building of more new houses is insisted upon the TC will not proceed with their scheme so far as the houses to which this application relates are concerned.[78]

At this point the scheme was delayed by bureaucratic procedure, beyond the control of the local authority, because 'the houses which it is now proposed to take down are outside the area covered by the existing scheme and its modifications. The proposal is therefore a new one... and...would be subject to the effect that the Local Authority must erect some houses.'[79] As appears typical of Kingston's dealings with a higher authority, negotiations were prolonged and it was not until 1894 that significant progress was made. In addition to providing substitute accommodation before starting demolition of the condemned buildings, after the two months notice to the occupiers which was mandatory, the council was required to pay to each occupier reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the removal of furniture and effects to another place of residence. The amount of the expenses was to be mutually agreed upon by any such occupier and the Corporation or, failing such agreement, to be determined by the Local Government Board.

Although central government was reluctant to interfere with private property rights, which were regarded as politically untouchable, in the case of Kingston it appears that such was the evidence from the MOH reports of insanitary conditions and the graphic revelations in the press, the officers of the LGB felt obliged to continue assisting the council in its faltering attempts at housing improvement. Beale Collins, the MOH during this period must have felt some relief that his 'constant pegging away' was having some effect although he admitted that it still remains a very tedious business when it is necessary to deal with an obstructive and litigious owner.' [80] How the councillors dealt with the matter in debate in the council chamber will be analysed in Chapter 7.

5. The Isolation Hospital

The provision of an isolation hospital proved to be another prolonged chapter of mismanagement. Health reforms were fuelled by the fear of infectious disease spreading rapidly within overcrowded towns and cities. The Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act of 1889 made it compulsory to notify local MOHs of any cases of specified infectious diseases (such as typhus, smallpox and scarlet fever) and to compel sufferers to be sent to an isolation hospital. The state saw itself as being responsible - as a public good - for containing the spread of infectious disease, but

individual health care was still seen largely as a matter for the individual concerned.

Kingston had no isolation hospital and by 1891 the council was being pressed by the LGB as to their intentions in the siting of an isolation hospital. The council, in the role of the Kingston Urban Sanitary Authority had no intention at all in the matter, leaving it to others such as the Kingston Rural Sanitary Authority. The Urban authority covered the area of Kingston parish, whereas the Rural authority covered the adjoining parishes of Esher, the Dittons, Molesey and North Kingston. The MOH reported at meeting after meeting the number of cases of scarlet fever, diphtheria and even typhoid, but the matter of the hospital was repeatedly deferred to another meeting. In February 1891 the MOH for the adjoining borough of Richmond, along with the Chairman of Richmond Health Committee, met with representatives from Kingston to ask if a joint isolation hospital might be arranged. The council, when informed of this, replied that the idea was not one that the Kingston Council could possibly entertain. Undeterred, Richmond made a second approach, as by this time they had found a house at Ham which might be suitable. Kingston still would not consider such a proposal, objecting to the property being right on the edge of the Kingston boundary. In the meantime Kingston was paying for nurses for individual infectious disease cases, and also paying for the disinfecting of rooms, bedding and clothing where the unfortunate family could not afford to do so, if the MOH submitted a case.

In May 1891 the Improvement, Property and Sanitary Committee authorised the MOH to rent a cottage for the temporary use of a family where the mother refused to let her children go to hospital.[81] The cottage was to house the rest of the family who were not affected. However, there was now at least a Hospital Site Sub Committee. Pressure was growing for action, not least from the LGB which was sending repeated requests for the council's intention in the matter. The council, for its part, was sending repeated replies that the matter of an isolation hospital was still under consideration, and no final decision had yet been taken.

In the meantime Kingston was still trying to make use of other bodies' facilities rather than provide their own. They tried to use the hospital ward at the workhouse – the responsibility of the Board of Guardians. The Board of Guardians

soon objected to the use of the Union hospital for such cases and informed the council that it would do so no longer. On the 13 December 1892 the Town Clerk read a letter to the members of the Improvement, Property and Sanitary Committee from the Kingston Guardians urging the necessity for the immediate provision of an isolation hospital and advising that the recent admission to the infectious ward of the Workhouse, which was done simply in the cause of humanity, must not be taken as a precedent for the future.[82] And the MOH continued to report deaths from measles, deaths from influenza and occasionally typhoid. In his Annual Report of 1892 he stated that the absence of an isolation hospital seriously handicapped his efforts to deal with such cases. This state of affairs continued throughout the period 1891 –1893. A year later the MOH reported 'I must urge upon you the importance of providing isolation accommodation, and I do this in view of the great loss and inconvenience caused to the poorer classes from the presence of infections in houses without the necessary space for isolation.'[83] The LGB commented: 'the new MOH repeats the advice of his predecessor as to need for a hospital.'[84]

Matters came to a head in 1893 when the MOH tried to get a patient with smallpox from Asylum Road admitted to either the Workhouse or the Tolworth Infectious Diseases Hospital but neither would accept the case. Not only was a nurse authorised but a police constable was assigned to ensure that no unauthorised persons had access to the house in Asylum Rd. The hospital at Tolworth was an isolation hospital built in 1889 by the Kingston Rural Sanitary Authority (and supported by the Poor Law Guardians) a different body from the KUSA (which was responsible for infectious diseases in Kingston parish).[85] An attempt had been made by the KRSA to liaise with the KUSA in 1882, at a meeting attended by Dr. Thorne from the LGB, but the proposal for joint action met with little favour and the Tolworth hospital materialised only seven years later.[86] The hospital was in Tolworth and the KRSA had arranged terms with the Surbiton Improvement Commissioners to admit infectious diseases cases from the Surbiton area. No such arrangement had been sought by Kingston council at the time. Now, with no project in sight for an isolation hospital of its own, Kingston tried to find out from the clerk to the Surbiton Improvement Commissioners whether he could revise the terms of the arrangement between the Commissioners and the Rural Sanitary Authority. He replied that he was not authorised to do so. The Kingston Town Clerk

was instructed to write to the Rural Sanitary Authority inquiring as to such terms and whether they would be willing to take Kingston cases into the Isolation Hospital on the same terms as those on which they may have arranged with Surbiton. This approach was turned down, firmly. The Surbiton Commissioners, being aware of Kingston's difficulty, and having a history of non-cooperation from Kingston, were not likely to be party to a favourable response by the Rural Sanitary Authority. The reply received from the Rural Sanitary Authority indicated that they were not prepared to entertain any proposal to receive infectious cases from the Borough of Kingston in to their hospital. Kingston's past history of arrogant and uncooperative handling of relations with Surbiton had not been forgotten, nor forgiven. The MOH for Surbiton also continued to include criticism of the Urban Sanitary Authority (Kingston Council) in his Annual Reports. Kingston was now also being pressured by the relatively new Surrey County Council who had made representations to the LGB about there being no hospital accommodation for cases of infectious diseases in Kingston. In the previous year the borough Improvement Committee had taken the decision that the fortnightly reports of the MOH reports were not to be printed and circulated with the Minutes.[87] With what has already been related about Kingston's attitude to outside interference, it seems likely that this was simply to avoid giving further ammunition to any critics.

In October 1893, reluctantly, Kingston went back to Richmond to see if a joint project was possible. It was too late. A letter from Richmond reveals that not only had Kingston turned down one offer from Richmond, but several sites which had been made available had been 'rejected or dropped...mainly out of consideration for the wishes of the Kingston people.'[88] The letter sets out the sequence of discussions between Kingston and Richmond and plainly shows exasperation on Richmond's part over the attitude of the Kingston Committee 'your Committee's friendly assistance has extended only to the proposal of our purchasing the Greycourt property in Ham Street and selling to Kingston, for a hospital that part of the land...which we are ourselves pledged not to use for hospital purpose.'[89] In addition Kingston was reminded that their delay in reaching a decision had resulted in a perfectly suitable property, which was under consideration by Richmond, being sold elsewhere. Nevertheless Richmond made one more attempt to make a joint application to acquire a property in Ham, on the Richmond/Kingston boundary. Kingston's response was to accuse Richmond of trying to introduce infectious

disease patients to the neighbourhood of Kingston and cannot: 'otherwise be characterised than as unneighbourly [sic] and unfair to her sister Borough.'

This dog in the manger attitude by Kingston council was prompted by factors not connected to the plight of its sick and needy in any way. For once, the council was taking a long view in relation to future development. Technically, the site was outside the borough but was regarded as part of Kingston. The site Richmond was acquiring, by means of compulsory purchase, was part of the Dysart estate and of agricultural value only. However, it was known that the Dysart estate (just beyond the Kingston boundary at that date) was shortly to be released for development. Kingston was hoping to succeed in a boundary revision, to include this area towards Ham, and benefit from the consequent increase in rateable value. The *Surrey Comet* for once was not impartial in its comment on the affair:

> The Fern Hill site is so called because it lies some twenty feet higher than much of the surrounding land, so that a hospital erected upon it would stand out as a land mark and eyesore to all of the northern part of Kingston and frequenters of the river. The erection would command the only road by which the people of Ham can come and go from Kingston; while the effect upon property in Ham would be simply disastrous.[90]

A crowded public protest meeting, convened by the Borough Ratepayers Association, was held on 18 October 1893, at which a motion of 'thanks to the Corporation of Kingston for its action in respect of the objectionable proposal of the borough of Richmond to erect an isolation hospital near her boundary, and cordially approves of the same. This meeting urges the Kingston Town Council to continue its vigorous opposition to every similar proposal to the interests and development of the town' was passed unanimously.[91]

The LGB meanwhile was starting to lose patience with the council over its inability to settle on a site for the hospital. The way in which the council handled its relations with the LGB will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7; suffice it to note here the comment in the LGB file in August 1893, 'it seems quite hopeless to carry on this correspondence. The MOH seriously handicapped in his efforts by lack of support.'[92] Although Kingston did identify a site and did apply for a loan towards providing a hospital, in fact it never carried the matter through. Kingston's delaying tactics in supplying plans, requisite forms et cetera - whether deliberate action or simply inefficiency – took so long, that improvements in treating

infectious diseases meant there was no longer any pressing need for such an establishment. The reasons for opposition to Richmond's plans for an isolation hospital, even with the chance for joint benefit, although partially protective of Kingston's image, were in fact purely opportunist.

6. Conclusion

What do the management of drainage projects, housing improvement and provision of an isolation hospital reveal about the attitudes and indeed aptitude of the members of Kingston council? The major reason for their lack of commitment (although they would not have recognised this as a negative attitude) was their inability to recognise any connection to, or responsibility for, circumstances outside the borough boundaries. They were in fact pursuing an isolationist policy in relation to neighbouring authorities – such as Surbiton and Richmond. There was neither recognition nor understanding of the changing role of central government – as seen in the late appointment of a MOH and lack of action on housing improvement. And yet Kingston was only twelve miles from Westminster and by 1863 had a railway link to the capital.[93] The jealous opposition to Surbiton's Improvement Bill in 1855 and Surbiton's proposal to have its own market signalled Kingston's desire to retain power in its own hands and retain the status quo.

The appointment of Radcliffe to manage the drainage project in 1863 proved to be lacking in judgement. Radcliffe cost the borough exchequer less than other more qualified applicants and, as seen earlier, even the editor of the *Surrey Comet* had his doubts about his professional status. What mattered most to the councillors was that he spoke their language and, what is more, he so approved of their chosen plan that he claimed to require no other engineering assistance. An alert professional engineer, specialising in drainage schemes (and having his home near to London, in Wandsworth) would have heard discussion of the proposals for the Act for the Purification of the River Thames which so frustrated Kingston's hopes. Radcliffe was appointed five years after 'The Great Stink' of 1858 when the River Thames, and many of its tributaries, became so polluted that its smell affected the work of the House of Commons. During these years Joseph Bazalgette, chief engineer of the Metropolitan Board of Works was creating a modern sewerage system for London. It seems inconceivable that any drainage engineer

working within commuting distance of the capital was unaware of current drainage practice and likely future legislation.

Like Kingston, nearby Croydon was also discovering that a growing population was creating problems both in the need for adequate drainage and in the supply of clean water. Unlike Kingston however, Croydon had a Local Board of Health appointed as early as 1849. This appears somewhat surprising in view of the report on Croydon in the Health of Towns Association Report in the previous year:

> The town is not prepared, at present, to entrust any local board with the carrying out, and there is at present no local board prepared to carry out, a full sanitary arrangement. There is not yet sufficient information disseminated, or sufficient interest excited, and the importance of such a measure is not therefore, at present appreciated.[94]

The reason for this change of attitude was the result of a growing dissatisfaction with the Town Commissioners who were the governing body for Croydon. Whilst they had carried out their limited responsibilities regarding lighting, policing and accommodating judges, they were ill equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly increasing population allied with rising land values. The ratepayers of Croydon, unlike those of Kingston, sought their own solution to change matters:

> New measures required new men. The choice was between the Town Commissioners and men untainted with 'rigid economy'. The ratepayers of Croydon voted for new men and a new board to carry out expensive improvement bearing the stamp of public health.[95]

There were many difficulties still to be faced in Croydon, but by 1852 the Croydon Board had completed the first stage of a comprehensive house drainage and water supply. Unlike the ratepayers of Kingston, whose method of trying to improve the drainage situation was to send a petition to the Government, those in Croydon had used their voting influence to bring about a change of direction.[96] It was not only the councillors in Kingston who were apathetic.

In many parts of southern England local authorities were faced with the same problems. In Maidstone for example, the council's improvement schemes in the 1850s were hampered by conflicting advantages of private or public provision of water and also by a lack of enthusiasm by ratepayers in wealthier districts to bear the cost of improvement in poorer area. Sanitary improvement was addressed during the 1850s and 60s but various schemes were vetoed on cost grounds and it

was not until 1866 that, with the establishment of a Local Board of Health, some progress was made, especially in industrial sites and a comprehensive sewerage scheme was planned – but by the time an application was made to raise the necessary funds, the LGB had been formed (1871) and that body turned the application down. Although by no means a complete resolution of the town's sewerage problems, an arterial drainage system was completed in 1875. Croydon, Kingston and Maidstone had all made significant drainage improvements by 1888, though in each case many years after the passing of the first Public Health Act in 1848. Croydon, and to a lesser extent, Maidstone appear to have benefited from the stimulus of ratepayer activity in local affairs whereas Kingston councillors seem to have had little political pressure from their constituents, though much from the press.

Kingston had been too concerned, whether wilfully or not, with keeping their status as the governors of the borough and unwilling to admit that the old ways of management would no longer be adequate to deal with the changing nature of the borough from market town to expanding suburb. In Chapters 7 and 8 the backgrounds of the men responsible for stifling progress will be explored.

[1] *Surrey Comet*, 8 February 1890.

[2] G. R. Williams, *London in the Country: the Growth of Suburbia* (London: Hamilton, 1975), p.166.

[3] *Surrey Comet*, 19 January 1861.

[4] The Local Government Board was a government department, formed in 1871, which possessed its own status and its own Minister. Matters such as sewerage and drainage, nuisances, offensive trades, unsound food, infectious diseases, hospitals, prevention of epidemics, highways, markets and slaughterhouses were all now dealt with by one body. But the most important factor was that each local authority had to appoint a Medical Officer of Health, who was to be adviser and executive officer of his local authority.

[5] The National Archives (TNA): MH12/12447, Local Government Board Internal Memorandum.

[6] Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* vol. III (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.24.

[7] North Kingston Local History Room (NK): KB5/15/5: Minutes of committees of the Borough Council, *Minutes of the Improvement, Property and Sanitary Committee,* 31 October 1893.

[8] Robert Colls and Richard Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.2.

[9] Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem, the Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p.299.

[10] Kingston upon Thames Improvement Act, 1855 c.xlv 18 & 19 Vict.

[11] Derek Fraser, *Power and authority in the Victorian City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979. In the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries private acts of parliament, known as Improvement Acts, were promoted by embryo local authorities (such as Kingston) or Improvement Commissioners (such as in Surbiton) to gain powers of administration to carry out what would later be tasks undertaken by municipal authorities.

[12] *Surrey Comet*, 18 August 1855.

[13] NK: KB 1/6 1 January 1841.

[14] Evelyn Lord. 'Conflicting interests: public health, lammas lands and pressure groups in nineteenth century Kingston', *Southern History,* vol. 13 (1991), pp.21-31. Lord says that Kingston's application to be included in the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers was refused, but an internal note on correspondence in 1852 between Kingston and the General Board of Health sug-

gests that Kingston did fall within the limits of the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers. This matter requires further research to resolve.

[15] TNA: MH13/105.

[16] Under the 1848 Public Health Act, local Boards of Health had to be set up in places where the death rate was above 23 per 1,000.

[17] TNA: MH. 13/105.

[18] TNA: MH. 13/105, Letter dated 13 August 1852.

[19] F. S. Merryweather, *Half a century of Kingston History* (London: Oasis Books, 1976),p. 61.

[20] Shaan Butters, *The Book of Kingston* (Frome: Baron, 1995 p.105.

[21] TNA: PC1/2532 *The Memorial of the Mayor, Alderman and Burgesses of the Borough of Kingston upon Thames*, signed by Charles Jemmett, Town Clerk.

[22] Rowley W. C. Richardson, *Surbiton, 32 years of Self Government 1835 –1887* (1888), p.18.

[23] Richardson, Surbiton, 32 years of Self Government 1835 –1888, p.20.

[24] TNA: PC1/2532.

[25] TNA: PC1/2532.

[26] Letter to *Surrey Comet*, 25 November 1854, in Appendix 1.2.

[27] Letter to *Surrey Comet*, 2 December 1854, in Appendix 1.2.

[28] Letter to *Surrey Comet*, 2 December 1854, in Appendix 1.2.

[29] For example, the number of Commissioners to be reduced from 18 to 15 and possibly an election of same.

[30] *Surrey Comet*, 10 March 1855.

[31] London Metropolitan Archives (LMA): ACC2558/LA/1/739.

[32] LMA: ACC2558/LA/1/739.

[33] LMA: ACC2558/LA/1/739.

[34] NK: KB5/15/1.

[35] *Surrey Advertiser*, July 2 1864

[36] Hilda Grieve, *The Sleepers and the Shadows. Chelmsford: A Town, Its People and its Past* (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 1994), p.274.

[37] J. M. Rawcliffe, 'The Social and Economic Development of Bromley 1841-1881', M.A. University of Kent, 1976.

[38] *Bromley Record,* 25 September 1866, as quoted by Rawcliffe. This was the case in some parts of Kingston as late as 1894. In 1894, MOH Beale Collins' first report to the council he states that the 'wells which supplied houses near the Hogs Mill stream with drinking water...receive the drainage of Old Malden and various villages, practically untreated', *Annual report of the Medical Officer of Health,* 20 February 1894, p.11.

[39] *Surrey Comet,* 29 June 1861.

[40] Merryweather, *Half a Century of Kingston History*, p. 30.

[41] NK: KB5/6, Minutes of committees of the Borough Council, *Drainage Committee Minutes.*

[42] Shrubsole was, and is, a much respected name in Kingston. Most male members of the family traced on the Kingston database are professional men and there is no trace of either an S. Shrubsole nor any Shrubsole in building or contracting industry. This one was obviously a bit of a rogue.

[43] NK: KB5/6. *Drainage Committee Minutes,* 3 February 1865.

[44] The judgement of the Attorney General in favour of Kingston was based on the fact that no evidence of *immediate* nuisance to had been presented. 'The Court would have full power to deal with the matter when any actual case of nuisance arose', *The Times,* 14 June 1865.

[45] Thames Purification Act 1866, c.cccxix.

[46] This is what Butters says, but it seems odd because the councillor she quotes was T. T. Walker who was chairing the Drainage Committee in mid 1860s.

[47] *Surrey Comet,* 12 August 1863.

[48] Despard being the man who had won a competition for a drainage system, organised by Kingston Council.

[49] Joseph Bazalgette, Chief Engineer to the Metropolitan Commission for Sewers who believed that the drainage of the low-lying land in London was more important than cleansing the Thames.

[50] *Surrey Comet,* 1 August 1863, quoting Councillor White in council.

[51] John Garrard, *Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns 1830-1880* (Manchester: Manchester University Press,1983), p.74.

[52] Garrard, *Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns*, p.74.

[53] NK: KB/7-25 *Council Minutes,* 11 August 1869.

[54] NK: KB/7-25 *Council Minutes,* 24 November 1870.

[55] http://www.victorianlondon.org/health/dickens-drainage.html. Accessed 22 April 2003.

[56] 916 acres in the neighbouring parishes of Walton, Esher, Thames Ditton and East Molesey for the sewage farm and land in Ham and Mortlake for pumping stations.

[57] NK: KB6 *Report of the Special Drainage Committee* to the Town Council. 4 July 1885.

[58] NK: KB6 Report of the Special Drainage Committee, 4 July 1885.

[59] NK: KB6 Report of the Special Drainage Committee, 4 July 1885.

[60] For an exposition of the development of this system see P. L. Cottrell, 'Resolving the sewage question: Metropolis Sewage and Essex Reclamation Company, 1865-1881', Rodger and Colls (eds.), *Cities of Ideas,* pp.67-95.

[61] David Pam, *A History of Enfield Volume Two 1837-1914* (Enfield: Enfield Preservation Society, 1992) p.184.

[62] The two future councillors were James Burgess Boxall (councillor 1858 - 1886) and James Goulter (councillor 1871-1886). Goulter won the contract.

[63] *The Builder*, vol. 1, 1843, pp. 43-44.

[64] The proposed Building Act would have banned back-to-backs and cellar dwellings and legislated for proper lavatories and rubbish disposal.

[65] London School of Economics (LSE): HD7/331, Nineteenth Century Pamphlet Collection *The State of the Slums,* pp.4 -5.

[66] The subject of the address was 'for considering the best means of improving the dwellings of the labouring poor ...The wretched character of many of the inhabitations in which the labouring poor cannot choose but dwell is a fruitful source of evil, and next to the suffering produced by absolute want, is the great impediment in the way of all attempts at improvement among the poor themselves.'

[67] *Surrey Comet*, 15 January 1861.

[68] *Surrey Comet*, 27 May 1865.

[69] For most of this information I am indebted to Isobel Robinson's book on Spring Grove: I. Robinson, *Spring Grove 1865-1880* (no publisher or date).

[70] Daunton, M. J. *Housing the Workers, 1850-1914: a Comparative Perspective* (London: Leicester University Press, 1990), p.11.

[71] Research will no doubt reveal that this is allied to the size and type of house in the various roads. Additionally, it is possible to make a distinction between the residents of Spring Grove and the slum property in the Back Lanes on the basis of the Victorian concept of 'the poor' being made up of the undeserving as well as the deserving, or respectable, poor. To quote Alfred Doolittle in Act 2 of Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, 'I'm one of the undeserving poor: that's what I am. Think of what that means to a man. It means that he's up agen middle class morality all the time. If there's anything going, and I put in for a bit of it, it's always the same story: "Your undeserving; so you can't have it".'

[72] The National Freehold Land Society was the more common name of the National Permanent Mutual Benefit Society. It was founded in 1849 by, among others Richard Cobden, Samuel Morley and John Bright. Its purpose was to enable men of small means to acquire freehold property, thereby gaining the vote. Freehold land societies came into existence in the 1840s as part of a politically inspired movement, organised by Liberal radicals to effect Parliamentary reform. These societies were initiated and encouraged as a means by which the supporters of reform could become enfranchised within the existing system, thereby changing the balance of political power, and ultimately the system itself. The original political objectives gradually faded, with the National Freehold Land Society becoming purely a building society (the origins of the Abbey National).

[73] G. N. Gandy, 'The life of a Victorian suburb', *Surrey Archaeological Collections,* vol. 63, 1966, pp. 157-166.

[74] Gandy, 'The life of a Victorian suburb', p.159.

[75] The conveyancing deeds show the shareholder's trade or profession; distinction is made between manual workers, employers' class and professional, retired or upper class. Gandy says that twenty seven working men were represented among the original seventy eight shareholders.

[76] Every establishment of this kind throughout the metropolis is now under direct and continual police supervision; every room being inspected and measured before occupation, a placard being hung up in each stating the number of beds for which it is licensed, calculated upon the basis of a minimum allowance of space for each person. Every bed, moreover, has to be furnished weekly with a complete supply of fresh linen, whilst careful provision is made for the ventilation of the rooms, the windows of which are also thrown open throughout the house at 10 a.m. http://www.victorianlondon.org/health/dickens-drainage.html. Accessed 22 April 2003.

[77] A Richard Galley, lighterman, was a town councillor from 1834-1855. If it was this same man he would have entered the council at 29 years old, so no assumption can be made without further evidence.

[78] TNA: M12/12449 89286.

[79] TNA: M12/12449 89286.

[80] *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health*, 1895, p.5.

[81] NK: KB5/15/5, Minutes of committees of the Borough Council, *Improvement Committee Minutes*, 1885-91.

[82] NK: KB/5/15, *Improvement, Property and Sanitary Committee Minutes*, 13 December 1892.

[83] *Report of the Medical Officer of Health*, July 1893.

[84] TNA: MH12/12447, 28 August 1893.

[85] Patricia J. Ward, *From Talworth Hamlet to Tolworth Tower* (Surbiton: The author, 1975).

[86] *Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for Surbiton*, 1882, as quoted in Richardson, Surbiton: thirty two years of self government, p124.

[87] This is confirmed in the subsequent manuscript minutes. The words 'Not to be printed' are written in the margin against the MOH reports.

[88] NK: KB5/15/5, *Improvement Committee Minutes*, October 21 1893.

[89] NK: KB5/15/5, *Improvement Committee Minutes*, October 21 1893.

[90] *Surrey Comet*, 14 October 1893.

[91] *Surrey Comet*, 21 October 1893.

[92] TNA: MH12/12447, 28 August 1893.

[93] Although, initially, even this was a half-hearted affair as far as quick access to London was concerned. It was only by changing at Wimbledon station that the journey was reduced to 37 minutes. See Butters, *The Book of Kingston*, p.104-5 for details.

[94] Lancaster, B. *The 'Croydon Case': Dirty Old Town to Model Town. The Making of the Croydon Board of Health and the Croydon Typhoid Epidemic of 1852–3* (Croydon: Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society, 2001), p.74.

[95] Lancaster, *The 'Croydon Case': Dirty Old Town to Model Town*, p.174.

[96] Croydon was the first place to install an integrated water supply/sewage disposal system. Opened in 1851 by the Archbishop of Canterbury it was, according to Professor Nick Goddard of Anglia Ruskin University, hailed as a pioneering sanitary system with water pumped from a chalk aquifer to an enclosed reservoir. However, the death rate in the town actually increased and there was a typhoid outbreak in 1853 - possibly because the new drainage/sewage system allowed the disease to spread more quickly. Professor Nick Goddard believes that Croydon had problems because it was a 'pioneer'. The authorities made mistakes with the infrastructure - the sewage pipes were too small and often got blocked - and there were problems with the water supply. But it did set precedents and provided an Example for other towns and cities to work with. http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/making_history/making_history_20051129.html. Accessed 30 July 2006.

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Chapter 6

POLITICS, PROFESSIONALS AND ADMINISTRATION

> Local government growth was accompanied by the expansion and consolidation of an elite of municipal officials, many with the status and power of their political masters. Very few positions in this municipal bureaucracy were compulsory, though by the 1870s urban authorities were obliged to appoint a medical officer of health, surveyor, inspector of nuisances, town clerk and treasurer. Beyond this, they had considerable discretion over whom to appoint, under what conditions and qualifications and salary.[1]

1. Introduction

In the preceding chapters examples have been given of actions taken by Kingston council, highlighting the course of progress, frequently delayed by a lack of direction, in implementing municipal services such as access to free libraries, adequate drainage and housing. Generally speaking, the pace of advance depended on whether councillors were willing to accept the concept of providing services for the ratepayers as a legitimate role for a local authority. However progress on public health related issues that begged improvement, such as the continuous drainage problems, the need for decent working class housing and for an isolation hospital, was governed as much by central government pressure as by local demand.

Having examined the efforts of Kingston council in shaping the development of the borough in broad terms, that is the actual 'hands on' involvement with the town's growth, rather than just as a rate collecting coterie (as it was before the reforms of 1835), it is analysis of the database of councillors and officers, together with primary sources such as press reports, council minutes and local comment, which will be used to get further inside Christopher Hamlin's 'black box of local government.' The following two chapters will examine the councillors in relation to the community they represented. Firstly, this will mean the representatives as a group, with detailed analysis of their occupations, social and economic status and secondly as individuals. This current chapter is designed to provide the background, within which they were operating, considering such factors as politics and religion. The major part of this chapter will be concerned with the

contemporary political context within which Kingston Council operated and to what degree this did or did not, influence their decision making. It would be a mistake however, to exclude reference to that other powerful influence on nineteenth-century thinking, that is, religion.

2. Religion

Butters contends that in the nineteenth century:

> respectable Kingstonians shared a moral consensus, firmly based on a Christian frame work, on self help, hard work, temperate habits, individual responsibility and education...It was the duty of Kingston's citizens to improve the morals and education of the poor.[2]

To promote this, the Kingston Association for Bettering the Condition and Morals of the Poor was formed in 1817. The object of the Association was:

> to better by every eligible means the conditions and morals of the poor, and for that purpose to enquire as minutely into their wants, employments, and habits – into the causes which produce bad and good effects upon them and into the means of preventing one and promoting the other and to recommend from time to time to the public such measures as it may think conducive to the purposes of the Association.[3]

Many founder members of the Association were councillors or officers of the Council, post 1835, as will be detailed in Chapter 8. The objects and aims of this Kingston society reflect the declared objective of the national Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor, set up in 1796 by William Wilberforce and others, that is: 'to collect information respecting the circumstances and situation of the poor, and the most effective means of meliorating their condition.'[4] For once, it seems that Kingston was in touch with metropolitan thought.

The advent of the Poor Law Reform Act of 1834 superseded much of the raison d'être of the Association, with the establishment of the Board of Guardians and the formalising of parish relief. Local voluntary charity dispensed by borough worthies, or the control of poor relief by locally elected Guardians was one thing; an outsider promoting social improvement via the gospel of utopian socialism was a step too far. In July 1840, William Mercer, Mayor of Kingston, wrote to the Lord Chancellor :

> Holding the office of Mayor of this Borough, and finding the enclosed Bill circulated in the town for the purpose of inviting persons to attend lectures on Sunday next at Ham Common within a mile of the Borough (from Mr Owen & others) and whose doctrines I believe to be at variance with the laws of both God and man, and which will tend to disturb the peace and good order of the Sabbath in the neighbourhood I therefore feel it my duty to forward the same to your Lordship, that such notice maybe taken of the meeting as in your Lordship's judgement may seem right.[5]

The offending poster advertised a meeting to be held at Allcott House School - a socialist school at Ham Common.[6] The meeting was to be addressed by Robert Owen, the philanthropist and pioneer of socialism in Britain.[7] Being held on a Sunday compounded the offence of disseminating radical views. Mercer's letter displayed an attitude of entrenched religious and social conservatism, which was likely to be shared by many of his fellow councillors at that time.

The established church was not the only religious congregation in Kingston, and had not been so for some time. There was both a Presbyterian and Quaker presence in the town dating from the seventeenth century, both communities suffering persecution at times. A directory of 1832-3-4 notes that 'The places of worship are the parish church and chapels for Baptists, independents and the society of friends [sic]'.[8] These included the Baptist Chapel in Brick Lane dated from 1790, a Congregational church established in 1775, the Meeting House of the Society of Friends in Heathen Street (later to be renamed Eden Street) built at about the same time, certainly before 1800, and the Zoar Chapel (Protestant dissenters, called Independent) also erected before 1800. These were followed shortly by the Independent Chapel, in 1803. Methodism was represented by the Wesleyan Chapel in Canbury Passage (1834). A local trade directory for 1839 lists places of worship for Baptists, Independents, Wesleyan Methodists and the Society of Friends.[9] As the town continued to expand and the population grew, the Parish church of All Saints became inadequate. To meet this need a new ecclesiastical district of St. Peter was formed in 1842, with the consecration of Norbiton St. Peter in 1842 and of St. John the Baptist, Kingston Vale, consecrated in 1847. Surbiton, the 'rival' community, whose development had benefited by the opening of the railway station in 1838, had its own church, St, Mark's, consecrated in 1845. This church also soon became inadequate for the growing population in Surbiton and was expanded in 1855 and again in 1870.

In 1851, as part of the national decennial census, two additional sections were included- an educational census of all schools asking about the number of students, teachers and running costs, and a census of 'Accommodation and Attendance at Worship', generally referred to as the Religious Census:

> The Census showed that the Church which claimed to be the state church could physically only seat less than 1/3 of the population. Of the 10,212,563 total number of sittings, 4,894,648 people chose to attend other denominations instead of the Church of England. Perhaps just as alarming to Church officials was the fact that over five million people who were not too old, not too young, not too sick, and physically capable of attending church did not participate in any form of public religious service at all. This behaviour was unfathomable in a society that historically and traditionally expected all of its citizens to be Christians at least once-a-week. [10]

The figures used in this chapter are based on the population of Kingston in 1851, as shown in Figure 1.6 (p.18), not the figure of 26783 given in *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey.*[11] The population figure for Kingston in Table H is significantly higher than that shown in Chapter 1, therefore must include registration districts not considered in the main thesis analysis. The attendance figures are those for the churches and chapels listed for Kingston alone, not those in other areas of the parish such as Esher and Molesey, in *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey,* not including Sunday scholars.[12] Using the attendance figures shown in Appendix 6.1, the percentage of Kingston population participating in Sunday worship on census day was 39%. Even allowing for the comment made by the curate of Norbiton St. Peter that 'attendance of the congregation was much affected by the heavy shower that fell on this day' this seems an unexpectedly low figure in Victorian England. If one accepts that many people attended both morning and evening or afternoon services it is even less. 39% was however not far from the national picture:

> Depending on interpretation, suggests that between 40 and 50% of the British population were in church on census Sunday. Today this would be remarkable, but most agreed with the census commissioner Horace Mann that it signified an 'alarming' and sadly formidable' proportion of the population were 'habitual neglecters, of public worship.[13]

The returns for Kingston, broken down into Church of England and Nonconformist establishments indicate that 27% of churchgoers were attending an Anglican church and 12%, half that of churchgoers were attending the various non conformist chapels. The list at Appendix 6.1 list shows an almost equal number of

nonconformist chapels as there were Churches of England meaning either there must have been enough support for the former, or their theological differences resulted in provision for each individual faction.

It is noticeable however that those churches further from the centre of the borough, such as St. Andrew's at Ham and St. John's at Kingston Vale must have been the most crowded in relation to seating available. St. Peter's Norbiton, while only being ½ mile from the parish church of All Saints was equally popular. The Norbiton and Kingston Vale churches are the only two established churches shown to be over subscribed, whereas attendance at both Methodist chapels, the Independent chapel and the two Providence chapels outstripped the accommodation. Whether this reflects more commitment on the part of nonconformists is difficult to quantify. In Maidstone, on census day in 1851, 42% of the population went to church. Not many more than in Kingston. More people in Saffron Walden went to church or chapel that day, roughly 50%. As in Kingston, both of these towns had plenty of spare religious accommodation – according to the census returns. The census return figures have to be seen as approximate, given the number of people who might have been inclined to attend worship but for whatever reason did not. Illness, bad weather or distance from a church of choice might all have been deterrents.

In the years after the 1851 census there was a large enough Roman Catholic community to warrant the building of a second church, St. Agatha's. The development of Spring Grove, related in Chapter 5, led to the building of a new church to serve that area of the borough, St. John the Evangelist, in 1894. In the same area a new Presbyterian church was built in Grove Crescent in 1883. New churches continued to follow the residential developments that began to encircle the borough and by 1891 there were twenty-eight places of worship, nineteen of them non- conformist.[14] By then Kingston was no longer a semi-rural society but almost a metropolitan suburb with a large working class population who saw their natural place of worship in the Methodist chapels and the Salvation Army citadel rather than the ancient parish church.

Nationally, especially in industrial towns in the Midlands and north of England, there were many 'nonconformist chapels taking souls across the social classes.'[15] Nonconformists were to become a significant influence in politics, more particularly in those towns whose population had grown as a result of workers migrating to employment in industry. Methodism, for example, was comparatively slow to take hold in rural areas such as Surrey, and Kingston was still rural in character for the first half of the nineteenth century.[16] Nonconformists applied their principle of freedom to worship outside the ethos of the established church to secular matters, including governance. Prior to 1829 there were no nonconformists, or dissenters, represented on the council – in accordance with the Test Act of 1673 which excluded from specific public offices all those who refused to receive communion according to the rites of the Church of England, or who refused to renounce belief in the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Although directed primarily against Roman Catholics, the Act also excluded Protestant nonconformists. The Toleration Act of 1689 relieved the situation for nonconformists to some degree (but not for Catholics who were not allowed to worship freely until the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829) by allowing them the right to their own places of worship. According to Butters, 'for many years anti-Catholic prejudice, fanned by two and a half centuries of propaganda, was a feature of local life.'[17] The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 gave Roman Catholics the same civil rights as Protestants, except for a few restrictions, most of which were later removed. In Kingston the first Roman Catholic Church was consecrated in 1850.

Prior to 1835, Kingston can be seen to have a religious community encompassing various branches of Christian faith. This was not reflected in council membership in the first half of the century. None of the councillors came from nonconformist ranks until the mid 1850s. Thereafter they did become more numerous, several rising to the role of mayor. Dissenting families in Kingston, such as the Easts and Marshes became prominent members of the council. Joseph East, councillor 1851-82, became Kingston's first nonconformist mayor. A member of the Baptist church, he did not achieve mayoral office until 1865, having been defeated in a ballot for the office the previous year, on a vote of fifteen to ten. A ballot for mayor was not very common, suggesting that East's

nonconformity may have proved too ground-breaking for some councillors. Joseph and Bedford Marsh both served two years as mayor.[18] Later there would be three members of a Quaker family who all served terms as Mayor. Despite these successful elections there is little evidence from the current research to suggest that Kingston council had a particularly strong nonconformist presence despite the obvious number of nonconformists in the borough, judging by the number of chapels. It seems likely that in the nineteenth century in a historic market borough there was no tradition amongst the artisans and workers who made up the majority of nonconformist congregations of standing for public office. A perception of financial liability would also be a deterrent. In the second half of the century it was true, in broad terms, 'that you were more likely to be a Whig, or a Liberal, as they were increasingly called, if you were a townsman, a nonconformist and generally in favour of change; you were more likely to be a Tory or Conservative, if you were a countryman, a strong churchman and a believer in tradition.'[19]

Whether the influence of nonconformist ideas on municipal thought in Kingston increased after 1851 is an interesting area for future research and while, on the evidence available, any idea that this group of nonconformists had any radical effect on the political behaviour of the council is purely speculative, the possibility should be recognised.

3. Politics

In discussing the political context it is necessary to consider the relationship between national and local politics. In Kingston, political power, political, in the understanding of the two party system, as it functioned in the nineteenth century and as reported locally, seemed not to have a very high profile.[20] Although party political identity did become more of a factor following the formation of Surrey County Council in 1888, its role was secondary for most of the nineteenth century.[21] Nationally, although factions often overlapped, the differences between the Whig (Liberal) and Tory (Conservative) parties gradually sharpened over the century. In the first half of the century party management and discipline were not seriously developed and politicians changed allegiance regularly. Following the 1867 Reform Act, which widened the franchise and led to the opportunity for mass party politics, the party machines had to become properly organised in order

to build local allegiances. Both major parties formed national associations: the Conservative National Union in 1867 and the National Liberal Federation in 1877. In Kingston, the first overt references to party organisation occurred shortly after the 1867 Act. In the larger towns and cities the growth of political power bases was a major development in mid century.

Any assessment of political activity in Kingston during the nineteenth century also has to bear in mind the history of the borough's active non-involvement with national politics. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, having returned members to Parliament only four times during the previous hundred years, the Freemen of the town petitioned to be excused from doing so and this was granted. They were also successful in claiming exemption from contributing to the expenses of the knights of the shire.[22]

Kingston may have pursued an almost isolationist policy up to 1835, but with the advent of the Municipal Corporation Act (MCA) and the acceleration of reforming measures emanating from Westminster it might be thought that this would diminish. Although, as seen later, there were branches of the two national political parties in Kingston by the late 1860s, primary sources are not very revealing about any local fervour in the council chamber, or indeed in the town itself. However, if national politics did not play much of an overt part in debates in Kingston the decisions taken in Westminster were to have an increasing influence on such decisions although Kingston council did not always choose to acknowledge that fact. James Vernon in *Politics and the People* (1993) argues that the development of local party organisations in the mid-nineteenth century, rather than providing a platform for a power struggle between middle class social groups, was an opportunity for reformers to mobilise previously excluded townsmen. The formalising of parties therefore had the potential to widen the public political sphere.[23]

The lack of a party political agenda in Kingston was not the case in all small towns. It is evident that there were considerable differences between towns in their political responses to the MCA and the extent to which party politics played a role in local affairs varied considerably. These variations were not necessarily

related to the size of the electorate. Using the number of electors registered to vote in municipal elections, in the towns or cities to which Kingston is being compared, some loose correlation can be made between the size of the electorate and the party in overall power but the differences are more likely to depend on local economic and social influences. Research into local and regional voting patterns at this period would no doubt clarify the relationship between number of electors and the level of party political activity.[24]

In Maidstone there was an initial change of political direction with a Liberal landslide in 1835. The local paper, the *Maidstone Journal*: 'predicted that scenes of riot and turbulence, animosity and ill feeling would become annual occurrences,' but although the first post 1835 elections were hard fought with animosity and ill feeling the predicted rioting did not happen.[25] However: 'this predominance was short lived, and in 1837 the Tories regained control, retaining it for the next twenty years.'[26] In Colchester, as referred to in more detail later, party politics had a much higher profile over the whole of the nineteenth century. The newly elected council in Reading celebrated reform, with an address of thanks to the King for his assent to the MCA. Reform candidates had a resounding victory, winning fifteen out of eighteen seats. Alexander says party competition in Reading existed thereafter, to a greater or lesser degree, 'casting doubt upon the existence...of a golden age when the calibre of the individual rather than the party label determined whether candidates would be elected.'[27]

There was indeed an upsurge of party political fervour in certain towns and cities immediately following the MCA in 1835. Doyle suggests that corporation reform had the effect of promoting party politics in local elections, citing those initial elections, post 1835, where there were dramatic Liberal successes such as in Colchester, Exeter and Leeds. However: 'by the later 1840s, municipal politics in most places had settled back into inactive one party rule, and as party conflict eased, the number of contested elections declined so that by the 1850s party battles were rare.'[28] According to an 1840 report in *The Times*, Kingston was also caught up in the excitement, having a brief brush with political change following the MCA, but soon reverting to the status quo:

> This Borough on the outset of Municipal Corporation Reform, ranked high in the squad of Radical Improvements, but after the first year has been gradually dying a natural death. There is now a large Conservative majority. They have this year elected a gentleman respected for his manly and straightforward principles. And had it not been for him and some three or four others this corporation would have merged into a very hot bed of Radicalism. 29

This solitary reference to such a deviation from routine conservatism prompts a closer examination of the councillors serving in the years immediately after 1835. Charles Schofield, elected Mayor in November 1836, is a possible radical candidate. He had fought an election for Mayor against William Shrubsole Snr, who had been a member of the assembly as early as 1829. An election for Mayor was a rare event; the Shrubsole family became one of the most admired and respected families of the town, so it may be that the election of Schofield, who was not noted in the council minutes prior to 1836, represented a new radical force within the council.[30] It must be admitted that the evidence for such an assumption is fragile. The 'very hotbed of Radicalism' referred to in *The Times* remains undiscovered for the present.

In accordance with the terms of the Municipal Corporations Act a special council election was held on 26 December 1835. The usual date for the annual meeting, previously and for much of the century, was in the first week of November, with the Mayor for the following year being appointed at that meeting.[31] Six councillors from each of the three wards were elected to serve in the new Corporation of Kingston for a period of three years. Ten men can be identified, with a reasonable degree of certainty, as being elected for the first time in 1836, as in Table 6.1. Eight of these had vanished from the council chamber by 1837, either leaving the council before the end of their term or only serving for one full term. Although there is no substantive evidence to suggest that they were of a radical frame of mind, their short-lived council career may be indicative of some incompatibility with the 'old guard'. Table 6.1 lists the men elected for the first time in 1835, and their length of tenure.

Table 6.1 Kingston Councillors elected for the first time in 1836

George Bye	maltster	1836-1844
Francis Garner	farmer	1836-1837
Thomas Jackson	fruiterer/ seedsman	1836-1855
John Muggeridge	coal/corn merchant	1836
Edward Penner	butcher	1836
Charles Thomas Phillips	brewer	1836
Charles Schofield	timber merchant	1836-1837
James Thompson Jnr.		1836
John Walker	farmer	1836-1837
James Wyard Thompson		1836

Source: Kingston Council Minutes[32]

Looking at political behaviour in Kingston there is scant evidence that the principles which generated division of opinion in the council chamber in Kingston reached anywhere near the level of political sophistication of those which motivated councillors in cities such as Birmingham and Manchester. In 1835 it was reported: 'the town [Kingston] not being represented in Parliament, the corporation is not divided into political parties. It is composed of persons of opposite political opinions and some of its members are dissenters from the Established Church.'[33] The notion of an absence of party politics at a local level may not be an entirely correct assumption. In September 1838 a Conservative dinner was held in Kingston.[34] The following year *The Times* reported that Kingston had returned to power five Conservatives out of a total of six who had been standing for re-election.[35] In 1840 *The Times* again reported Kingston's local election, highlighting its retreat from any radical tendency.[36]

This would appear to be confirmed by the fact that many of those who were new councillors attending the first meeting of the reformed Council did not stay on the council for long. A third of these served only two or three years. Without evidence to support *The Times* comment about Kingston ranking 'high in the squad of Radical Improvements' following the elections held in November 1840, it cannot be assumed that this reflected disillusion with council policies.[37] The only indication in the Council minutes of dissent on a matter of principle in the years 1836-1840 was over the matter of building a new Town Hall. Two petitions, one from 74 Burgesses and one from 41 Burgesses were presented, firstly against the new site for the Town Hall, secondly complaining that the costs would fall on rates and taxes. Councillor Charles White Taylor, a grocer and former bailiff, on

the council from 1835-37, declined to act in the matter of the Town Hall, refusing even to serve on the committee appointed to look at the plans. It is hard to see any politically radical reason for his objection and it has to be recognised that with no convincing radical voice represented in council meetings of this period, that the 'old guard' of civic elite continued to govern and that any change from the status quo was short lived.

Kingston was not a Parliamentary seat in its own right until 1918 and therefore election to the council was not readily seen as a stepping stone to a political career. Any man with ambition would look towards the nearby capital. The 1832 Reform Act divided the county of Surrey, with a population of 500,000, into the parliamentary constituencies of East and West Surrey. Kingston was in East Surrey with the election court at Croydon and additional polling places at Reigate, Camberwell and Kingston.[38] In the run up to a parliamentary election the hustings were beneath the Guildhall in Kingston Market Place: 'The Tory headquarters were at the Griffin Inn, in the Market Place, decked out with what were then the Conservative colours of orange and purple. Their Liberal opponents used the Sun Inn, heavily embellished with the distinctive Liberal blue.'[39]

The only poll record for a Kingston parliamentary election to survive from the nineteenth century is that for 1865.[40] In that 1865 poll book, 105 names are listed, with a mark against each of the candidates for whom they cast their two votes.[41] There were two Liberal candidates and two Conservatives and no voter split his votes. Of the 105 voters listed, 53 are on the thesis database; of these 18 voted for the Liberal candidates and 35 for the Conservative. These councillors and the way they voted can be seen at Appendix 6.1 Where local poll books have survived in greater number they can be used to correlate an individual's vote with social, cultural and economic data drawn from census returns, local directories, probate and religious records. It is difficult to justify any conclusions about political factions from the single polling record for Kingston. Some poll book analysts have concluded that occupation or trade is a better indicator of an individual's politics than class, and that certain trades tended to vote the same way over decades; for example, publicans voting Conservative, butchers also voting Conservative, with shoemakers voting Liberal. On Kingston council, there were

30 known Conservatives and 18 known Liberals over the whole period 1835-1900. The first Labour councillor was not elected until 1892. The political affiliation of the majority of councillors, even if they had one, is unknown.

An example of voting intentions being influenced by occupation which might have been expected in Kingston, judging by the national picture, is the case of the Intoxicating Liquor (Licensing) Bill of 1872. This introduced restrictions on opening hours and was unpopular, with 800,000 people petitioning against it: 'From midsummer 1871 till the dissolution of 1874 nearly every public house in the United Kingdom was an active committee room for the conservative party.'[42] One of the major industries of Kingston at this time was brewing. Many of Kingston's brewing families were non-conformist and non-conformists were likely to be Liberal. Until 1870 parliamentary voting for the East Surrey constituency, of which Kingston was only a part, had been more Liberal than the national results indicate, but by the early 1870s it was following the national Conservative trend.

By 1865, the East and West Surrey constituencies had electorates of 9,913 and 4,081 respectively, the East having grown, due to suburban growth in south London, particularly in Croydon, Kingston and Richmond. Because of this imbalance, there was a redistribution of boundaries in 1865, dividing East Surrey into the new constituencies of East Surrey and Mid Surrey. Kingston borough remained in East Surrey. However, the inaugural meeting for a Kingston branch of the Conservative party in 1869 was for Mid-Surrey. There were further boundary revisions in 1868, 1885 and 1918. A branch of the Conservative Association was established in 1869,[43] although the Surrey Advertiser was appealing for Conservative voters to register three years earlier.[44] The notice of 1869 lists 43 members and subscribers, eight of whom were town councillors. The secretary of the association, Walter Wilkinson, later became town clerk and clerk to the borough magistrates. The list also includes 5 local vicars, confirming in some degree the idea that Conservatives were likely to come from an establishment background. There is also evidence of a Liberal presence in 1870. Frederick Gould (councillor 1851-86), dentist and chemist in the Market Place, was secretary of the Liberal Association. He took a newspaper advertisement that

year to remind Liberal voters to check that they were on the registers which were then on show on church and chapel doors.[45]

There seems not to have been the level of agitation and public display that often attended elections, either local or Parliamentary, in other towns. In the 1865 Parliamentary election those Kingston notables, that is current, past or future local councillors, whose two votes each are registered, voted marginally in favour of the Conservatives, a Mr. Peek and Mr. William Broderick.[46] The elected member was however Charles Buxton an 'independent liberal.'[47] This reflected the national trend, with a Whig, forerunner of the Liberal party, majority elected. The votes of only two of the known Liberals on Kingston Council are recorded as being for Buxton; four of the known Conservatives are listed, and they voted for Broderick and Peek. From the evidence of the poll record, with the majority of the councillors not recorded as being affiliated to any political party, voting to retain the status quo the rulers of Kingston did not follow the national trend.

The Liberal cause evidently seems not to have flourished. A local paper reported in 1886 : 'Liberalism in this part of the county is measured as dead.'[48] John Whittaker Ellis the Conservative MP for Kingston & Richmond was returned unopposed in 1886. Charles D Hodgson is quoted as saying that the Liberals had not opposed because the electoral register was 'scandalously defective.' [49] Charles Hodgson had refused the invitation to stand as a Liberal for Kingston in 1886, presumably because he saw it as a lost cause.[50] He did stand in the Mid-Buckinghamshire constituency however. It may also be that he chose not to stand in Kingston because his brother, William Sanford Hodgson, was Chairman of the local Conservative Party.[51] What *is* known, is that Whittaker Ellis's candidature was seconded by C. E. Nuthall of the famed local confectionery business and George Wade, local boot maker and long serving councillor. As for local elections, the *Surrey Comet*, a politically neutral paper, noted in 1870:

> The result of the Municipal elections last Tuesday shows that the progress of time has brought with it an improvement in the tide of affairs in this borough. In 1867 not more than 6 burgesses attended to vote, and one new comer into the town, who was waiting about to witness the excitement, went away disgusted.... This year however a great change came over the scene,

> and from 9 o'clock till 4, the Town Hall presented an animated and lively spectacle.[52]

The local elections of 1867 seem to have been an exception to the usual lack of interest however. Detailed research into Kingston municipal elections in the years 1886-1914 confirms the general apathy of the voters: 'Reports on the municipal elections throughout the period clearly revealed the extent of this apathy. Although the election results were almost invariably reported in the local press, the reporters found very little to comment on...This indifference was clearly reflected in the number of contested elections. Of the total of 108 ward elections which could have taken place between 1888 and 1911 only 38 were actually contested.' [53] This apathy appears to have been prevalent for much of the nineteenth century. In 1864: 'The annual election of the Town Council passed of with the customary amount of indifference from the majority of the burgesses...some trifling interest was manifested by a few.'[54] In 1873, when one would have supposed the extension of the franchise by the 1867 Reform Act to have created more voter interest, in Kingston:

> The election of members of the corporation for the Norbiton and Canbury wards took place last Saturday, with as little excitement as the most ardent lover of the ballot could desire. As before there was no contest in Town and West by Thames wards ...Mr Nuthall had no knowledge of his nomination till too late to cancel it...The proceedings interested none but the candidates and those who were bound to attend the polling booths.[55]

Even some of the candidates were paying scant attention to the proceedings.

With the formation of a Ratepayers Association towards the end of the century, municipal elections might be expected to be more closely contested. However, in 1893: 'The Town Clerk reported that the recent elections passed off without a contest, all the retiring members being re-elected, except for Samuel Gray who was replaced by Alfred Homersham. The Mayor thought that the fact that there was no contest showed that the burgesses were thoroughly satisfied with the work of the council.'[56] It was more likely that the apathy shown on the part of many of the council members was a reflection of the general lack of interest on the part of the potential voters, and so long as the voters did not press for action nor would their representatives.

Lack of enthusiasm in participating in local elections was not unique. After the first surge of overt political activity in certain of the new corporations, party enthusiasm appears to have taken root in some towns but not in others. In Colchester for instance: 'partisan behaviour was extreme...nothing of a public nature took place in nineteenth century Colchester without there being political overtones.'[57] Phillips identifies the reasons for this as firstly, the small business elite in the town and secondly, the Anglican/Nonconformist divide which translated in political terms as Conservative/Liberal and permeated the public and social life of the town. The effect of this party strife on political representation on the Colchester Borough Council was particularly marked in the years immediately following the 1835 Municipal Reform Act. Liberals initially won control, but, rather as *The Times* reported about Kingston, 'within two years they were overthrown and all the jobs and perquisites changed hands.'[58] Tories remained in overall control for the next 42 years.[59]

In Bristol, where Liberals had success in parliamentary elections, they had more difficulty when they contested municipal seats. This might suggest ongoing political excitement but, as in Kingston, local contests were infrequent : 'Between 1852 and 1865 there were only 2.7 contests per year in the ten wards...all told, of the 583 possible contests in the half century 1851 to 1900, 68% resulted in unopposed returns.'[60] In Reading too, contested municipal elections were 'the exception rather than the rule.'[61] Liberals and Conservatives only rallied their organisations when a particularly contentious issue was at stake and it was often the Reading Ratepayer's Association, which was the motive force when an election was contested.[62] Ratepayers associations were becoming a new force in local politics in many towns as local property owners ratepayers were faced with the costs of compulsory improvements. Evidence of a Ratepayers' Association in Kingston however has been elusive, with the date at which the Kingston Ratepayers' Association was formed uncertain. It was certainly active towards the end of the century, fielding candidates in the municipal elections of 1888 and succeeding in Norbiton ward in 1891.[63] There was also a Ratepayers Association in Surbiton. The organisation was much mocked in *The Surbiton Review* 1888-89, with words, scornful and patronising in turn, of the social and educational background of those seeking to be town councillors:

> The very large majority of them are drawn from those who should be the humblest because the least educated portion of the Ratepayers, and yet forsooth they hold solemn conclave and issue their edicts to their superiors with all the pomposity of the three tailors of Tooley Street...we understand that their latest effort is to seek to control the elections to the Town Council, by the selection of their own nominees as candidates, who if elected will become mere delegates of the Association, instead of independent representatives of the educated public opinion. It is at all times difficult to induce the best men to come forward to fill public positions like the office of Town Councillor, but it is made increasingly so when gentleman of position are asked to compete with men in every way their inferiors. For these reasons, whilst by no means wishing to deny the Ratepayers' Association all legitimate influence, we must hold that the effect of their attempt to nominate all the candidates for the Town Council is calculated to be seriously prejudicial to the best interests of the Town.[64]

Both the *Surrey Reformer*, which was a self-proclaimed Liberal journal for the Kingston and Richmond Division (short lived, running only from April to November 1886), and the *Kingston and Surbiton News* reported the Ratepayers meetings. The latter gave the Ratepayers Association some prominence by reporting its meetings at length. Although it appears that, at first, the Ratepayers Association was not much more than a local residents' group, the number of councillors who were members suggests that the lobbying position of the association must have had some credibility.[65] At a Ratepayers Association meeting in early 1886 amongst the matters discussed was the reply from the Highways Committee in response to a complaint about repair and maintenance of various footpaths. The reply was positive, and said to be courteous, but the secretary commented that: 'it did not say when they might have been repaired had not attention been drawn to them.'[66] Other, minor, grievances were aired such as the state of the Fairfield (Councillor Carn was asked what the council intentions were for improvement) and the delay in clearing streets following recent snow falls. Councillor Carn raised this and held the chairman of the Highways Committee personally responsible, suggesting that as he no longer resided in the town he was too busy with other matters to instruct the surveyor 'who appeared unable to do anything without instructions from headquarters.'[67] At this stage it would appear that there was little concept of delegated powers. Although this particular ratepayers' group seems on the surface to have been not much more than a forum for airing grouses about the behaviour of the council, matters were raised which provide serious interest for the historian. One such was the imbalance of ward

representation on both the council and proportionally on its various committees. At a meeting of the Ratepayers Association in 1886 Charles Baker presented the case for Canbury Ward (as an example, for he admitted it could apply equally to certain other wards) which had expanded in relation to Town Ward. Expansion in this ward was: 'the result of the natural expansion of three of the wards, whereas the Town ward had been hemmed in and could not possibly increase.'[68]Baker presented the results of his research showing the results of Canbury's expansion with a population now accounting for just under half of the borough total population, as opposed to Town Ward's mustering only about one fourteenth of the total.

Table 6.2 Comparison of rates in Canbury and Town Wards

Rate	Canbury Ward	Town Ward
Highway	2701.13.	620. 0. 0
Improvement	900.11.0	206.13.4
General	1350.16.6	310. 0. 0
Special	675. 8.3	155. 0. 0
Lighting rate	1125 .3.9	258. 6. 8
Totals	**6753. 12.6**	**1550.0 0**

Source : *Kingston and Surbiton News,* 30 January 1886

The significance of these figures for their *relative* local rate contributions, based on current rateable values, was indeed notable, with Canbury ward's contribution to the borough income being four times that of Town ward. Baker, who was a newly elected councillor in 1886, based a large part of his case on the fact that the population of Canbury ward was growing and had continuing potential for growth, whereas Town ward, with the historic Market Place at its centre, was not changing except for the occasional pulling down and replacing of old buildings. On the basis of representation of the population, each of the Town wards three councillors represented 348 people whilst each Canbury councillor had to represent 3,441 citizens. Laughter greeted the response from Councillor Carn to the effect that the matter was under consideration in council, but pressure of business had prevented discussion as yet – although it had not been forgotten and would be brought forward in due course! A typical council response to any problem arising from the need for change. Councillor Carn appears to have been

more concerned with snow clearing than weightier matters of representation of the people.

As has been shown in previous chapters, for much of the century the council seemed unable to grasp the import of its wider responsibilities. The main question addressed by this thesis is who managed Kingston after 1835, and how. The evidence about political activity suggests that overt party politics did not have much impact on council behaviour for much of the century. According to the prominence given to reporting its meetings, the Ratepayers Association, with councillors amongst its membership, was the party that came to command most attention. Doyle charts the increasing influence of ratepayers associations :'which flourished in the period of substantial local government expansion between 1890 and 1935' (often making common cause with other business and property based organisations).[69] By the 1890s, Kingston Ratepayers Association candidates were standing for election to the council and occasionally winning. Hunt suggests that the rise of Ratepayers Associations in the 1840s and 1850s was a reaction by: 'local shopkeepers, innkeepers and small property owners' to the increase of municipal spending on public health works.[70] In Kingston it seems more likely, that as it was the local shopkeepers who made up the majority of council members and who were responsible for any increased expenditure, ratepayers had banded together originally to monitor council activity in general. As Kingston council started spending, on any significant scale, on public health reform in the 1860s and the Ratepayers Association did not come into being until the 1880s, Hunt's concept of a protest party does not apply to Kingston. Gradually however it did became a political force in its own right.

4. Administration

Kingston's attitude towards the appointment of professional officers to advise the council has already been referred to, in particular in relation to the borough's drainage schemes. Doyle in his reference to the 'municipal officer' makes the point: 'there was no general system of appointment ...specific qualifications were rare, with leadership skills acquired on the job.'[71] He also believes that some of these officials took on the same status and power as their political masters. That

may have been so in larger towns and cities but there is no evidence of that in Kingston.

Although Clifton, in relation to the Metropolitan Board of Works, says that there was an expanding area of employment of clerks, administrators and professionals in local government in the course of the growth of local services, unfortunately there is no record between the 1830s and the 1890s of the clerical staff who, must of necessity, have manned offices.[72] The council was certainly reluctant to appoint professional officers. The town clerk was the one officer who acted for the council from its inception in 1835 (C. E. Jemmett who had carried on this office from the foregoing Assembly) at a salary of £100 per annum. In 1859 there was a proposal to advance his salary to £200 per annum, which was put on notice for the next meeting. At the next meeting the motion was lost, as well as two amendments – one: 'that a committee...be appointed to enquire into the duties of the town clerk...as to the propriety of raising his salary or of adopting measures to relieve him of some of such duties' and another that the salary be increased to £150.[73] Obviously councillors sought value for money from their legal advisor. However, like many later professional appointees, he was a part-time official maintaining a legal practice in the borough.

By 1870 there was already an Inspector of Nuisances but the need was felt for a Borough Surveyor, who would however combine duties with that of Inspector of Nuisances, to devote his whole time to the business of the Corporation and not be allowed to carry out business privately on his own account, the salary offered to be £150 a year. At the meeting on 1 Dec 1870 it was resolved that the salary be £160 with the privilege of practicing on his own account, so long as his duties to the Corporation were properly fulfilled. An appointment was made, fourteen years after it had first been considered at a council meeting in 1856.

What also indicates a total lack of understanding of the responsibility of a 'modern' authority is the report of a meeting on 24 November 1870. Prior to this a Treasurer (William Walter) had been elected in 1836, but in 1870 the Special Drainage Committee resolved to recommend the council to keep their accounts at one of the banks in the town and that the manager of such bank should be

appointed the Treasurer of the borough, he giving security by bond to the amount of £1000. The town clerk was instructed to write to the manager of Shrubsole's and the London & County Bank asking the terms on which they would be prepared to accept the office. There appears to have been no thought of a conflict of interest in the fact that members of the Shrubsole banking family were sitting members of the council.

A special committee reported to the council in April 1871. On investigating the state of the Borough Fund they had found that no rent roll or sufficient books had been kept by the late Treasurer and deeming this an unsatisfactory state of affairs they resolved that a Rent Roll should be provided and posted up for the past three years. Further, a ledger and collectors cash book was to be provided and it was suggested that by this system of books the Borough Fund would be in future be more intelligently and properly kept. A bald sentence says that, 'Mr Baker resigned as Treasurer in September 1870.' Unfortunately the possible drama behind this revelation is not recorded.

Reference has already been made to the mixed attitudes surrounding the appointment of Medical Officers of Health. Kingston Council had no permanent borough MOH until 1873. A temporary MOH, William Price Jones, was employed in 1866 in response to an outbreak of cholera and the Board of Guardians had an assiduous Medical Officer in Jackson G. Kent but the first borough MOH was Edward Matthew Shirtliff, selected at a council meeting on 3 April 1873. His entry in *The Medical Directory* of 1883 is impressive:[74]

Edward Matthew Shirtliff b. 1837 MOH Kingston upon Thames Borough
MRCSE England 1858; M& LSA 1858 (London Hospital);
Certificate of Surgery, Education Act; Certificate Factory Act
Medical Officer Ham District Kingston Union; surgeon to Kingston Provident Dispensary, Oddfellows, Foresters and other friendly societies. Medical Referee to Standard, British Provident and Colonial Assurance Societies.[75]
He also contributed articles to *The Lancet.*

Had it not been for the statutory requirements of the 1872 Public Health Act Kingston might have waited still longer before accepting what was, for some, an unnecessary innovation. For example, prior to Shirtliff's appointment, at the council meeting on 3 August 1871, the Town Clerk advised that there was a bill

before Parliament called the Public Health and Local Government Bill, which if passed was likely to affect the government of the town. He suggested that as it was: 'very voluminous and would require a good deal of consideration he did not know whether the Council would think it necessary to take any action respecting it.'[76] There was some discussion as to who might look at the bill, but it was learned that in fact the bill had been withdrawn and so the matter was dropped. The Council then proceeded to spend the rest of a lengthy meeting in heated discussion about a procedural matter. Some indication of the relative importance which the council attached to these two matters are the one inch of print required to record the attention given to the impending Public Health Bill, against almost sixty column inches to record the internal wrangling about the alleged ineligibility of a James Bussell's candidature for election to the council. Once again, Kingston councillors were wearing blinkers which prevented them from seeing how national legislation would eventually affect their own deliberations.

Shirtliff's first report, six months after his appointment, was determinedly positive stating that the public health of Kingston, as evidenced by the death rate, was extremely good. Shirtliff was able to say that there had been no epidemic 'although measles have been rather prevalent of late in the direction of the Wanderings.'[77] Shirtliff made his last annual report in January 1893 having served Kingston for 20 years. It is rather less enthusiastic in tone. It takes little imagination to see the personal feeling in his complaint about the absence of an isolation hospital which: 'handicaps seriously all our efforts. We are rather like an individual starting a pugilistic combat with his right hand tied behind him.'[78] He makes no reference to the suppression of his fortnightly disease statistics by the Improvement Committee at a meeting on 13 December 1892, which 'resolved that the Council be recommended to authorise that the fortnightly reports of the MOH respecting infectious diseases be not in future printed in the minutes.'[79]

When his successor, Dr H. Beale Collins, was appointed as borough MOH in 1893, the council had found a forward-looking medical man who kept himself up to date with the latest news and research in his profession. His annual reports frequently refer to published evidence and commendable practice in other authorities in support of his advice to the council. His entry in the Medical

Directory of 1891 indicates that his experience was perhaps wider than Shirtliff's and enabled him to negotiate more successfully with his municipal employers:

Henry Beale Collins. 16 Little Grosvenor Street
MRCS Eng, and LSA 1873 (Kings College)
Resident MO St George's Hanover Square Provident Dispensary
Public Vaccinator for Mayfair District
Retired Surgeon RN. Formerly Assistant Instructor in Naval Hygiene
at Hanslar

Collins remained at the London address throughout his employment at Kingston, although providing an address at Clattern House (not in practice) in the 1896 Directory. He also published work in the *British Medical Journal*.[80]

By 1897 he was advocating sight and hearing tests for young school children recommending: 'The cost of working out such a scheme in Kingston would be infinitesimal, while the benefit would be incalculable.'[81] He was careful always, when drawing attention to a need such as schools providing light and air for growing children, to acknowledge the cost but also to appeal to the councillors' better instincts to encourage them to accede to public health improvements. He was an early advocate for clean air, suggesting that as electricity was now taking over from gas as the favoured medium for lighting, a less pure gas (thus cheaper) might be supplied for cooking and heating to replace solid fuel thus 'avoiding a great deal of dirt in our houses and murkiness in our atmosphere.'[82] He continued to exert pressure for the provision of an isolation hospital for the borough, all the while pointing out to the council the long term economic benefits from such an investment.

Although he lost the battle for an isolation hospital within the borough he did succeed in using the authority of the various Working Class Housing Acts to bring about much improvement in substandard property. Beale Collins was obviously quietly tenacious.[83] He reports:

> it still remains a very tedious business when it is necessary to deal with an obstructive and litigious owner. However, I hope, by constantly pegging away I hope in the course of time to get all this class of property either renovated past recognition, or pulled down to make way for healthier homes.[84]

5. Committees

In 1836 there were only three committees :- Watch, Finance and Byelaw. By the 1890s there was, in addition to the principle committees such as Improvent, and Highways, a proliferation of sub committees each devoted to a particular aspect of the town's daily life including examples such as the Bath and Queens Parade, the Fairfield, Canbury Gardens, Canbury Gardens Band Stand, Street Numbering, the Cookery Class Sub Committee of the Technical Instruction sub committee and the Elm Road Playground. Some were set up to deal with the major issues affecting the town, although it will become clear that priorities were not as might be expected. A particularly special committee was the one appointed to confer with Mr Harrison on the subject of electric call communication between certain members of the Fire Brigade and the Fire Station. [85]

The development of the committees of the borough council provides a snapshot view of the changing conception of its responsibilities. As statutory requirements were extended over the century and the complexity of the tasks it had to undertake grew, so the council members had to adapt their approach to governance. Prior to 1835, the responsibilities of the borough were primarily confined to appointing trustees to manage the numerous trusts by which much of the town's environment was maintained, including Kingston Bridge and the Grammar School. By the terms of an Act for the better lighting and watching of the town, passed in 1768, the assembly was able to levy a rate for providing street lights (using oil), paying town constables (inclusive of uniform and equipment), night watchmen and for fining townspeople who polluted the streets with their rubbish.[86] The Assembly also appointed the High Steward (for life) and the Recorder.

In 1835 the borough income was limited, with an average revenue of £719 10s 2d, average expenditure of the same amount, and a debt of £1,850. With no powers to raise rates for any purpose other than that given by the 1768 Act there was no surplus to spend on any improvement. There was just enough money to maintain the status quo of the town. There was no distinct committee structure, nor any need for one. The affairs of the borough could be managed in much the same fashion as most of the members managed their own small businesses. After

1835, the annual election of a mayor was followed by the appointment of the various committees by which the day to day work of the council was done. These committees reported to the monthly meeting of the full council. At the first meeting of the Borough Council, elected under the rules of the Municipal Corporations Act 1835 three committees were appointed: a watch committee, finance committee (these first two being a requirement of the MCA) and a byelaw committee. Apart from the mayor who was ex officio a member of all committees, no member served on more than two of these committees, indicating an even handedness in the appointments. Council minutes also refer to a Fire Brigade Committee in 1840 and a Market Committee in 1841. A Highways Committee was formed in 1855 in accordance with the Improvement Act of 1855. Another new committee began work in 1855, also as a result of the Kingston Improvement Act of 1855.[87] As with a number of the committees this 'Improvement' Committee changed its title and remit over the years. Functions of the Improvement, Sanitary and Property Committee were reassigned variously to the Drainage Committee (1864), then the Sanitary and Drainage Committee (1893).[88]

By 1864 the committee structure had expanded to include Property, Lighting, Market and Fairs, as well as Drainage and Improvement. A Special Drainage Committee was appointed in 1867, reflecting the growing urgency of the problem. In the 1870s General Purpose and School Attendance Committees appear, the latter as a consequence of the Elementary Education Act of 1876. Likewise, the Technical Instruction Committee (1892) followed the Technical Instruction Acts of 1889 and 1891. Most of these committees had either permanent or occasional sub committees reporting. For example, in 1865 a committee was specially appointed to consider the question of dividing the salaries and expenses now paid by the Borough Fund among the several committees levying rates in accordance with the resolutions passed by the Council. There was a tradition of ad hoc committees including one to consider the presentation to Charles Jemmett of some more lasting memorial of their regard: 'for the essential services he has rendered to the Town and Corporation of Kingston and for the ability and judgment (sic) which he has ever shewn in the execution of his office and this Corporation' on the occasion of the imminent change from assembly to council 1835/36.'[89]

Occasional committees were set up to consider the duties of officers serving the council, such as the town clerk and medical officer of health.

At one period, early in the council's history, it did appear that any matter likely to be time consuming was assigned to a temporary single topic committee. Gradually however, the council can be seen to be coming to terms with the new ethos of local government and local public expenditure. Over time, a sensible committee structure evolved, as the council members gained confidence and experience at managing the increasingly complex areas of responsibility. As the borough grew more comfortable with the idea of providing civic amenities, committees to manage the public library, public baths and electric lighting were established. Most of these committees had either permanent or occasional sub committees reporting to them. Committee minutes as such do not exist before those of the Improvement Committee, starting in 1855. Before that date, the existence and work of any existing committees is shown in the form of reports received by the council.

6. Conclusion

It is difficult to draw any hard conclusions about the religious life of Kingston, from the figures reported in *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey.* They simply provide an indication of church activity – on one day only, and that rather a wet one, as observed earlier. The expansion of some churches and the establishing of new ones, as well as chapels, would seem more to meet the needs of a growing population than the outward signs of an increase in religious fervour. The growth of chapels, mainly of Methodist and Baptist persuasion, reflects the growth of an artisan and working class sector of the population.

Apathy and parochialism can best describe the attitude of Kingston council for the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, this reluctance to accept the need for change manifestly continued for the greater part of the century. Judging by the lack of interest in municipal elections for much of these years, the same can be said of the electorate. However, gradually, the council was forced to take action to deal with the growing health risks to the borough.

The MCA, which was designed to break the hold of the self-perpetuating oligarchies which dominated many municipal boroughs, did have an initial effect on the make up of councils, as a result of the stipulation of annual elections, and as seen in Colchester, Exeter and Leeds. However in many places this new enthusiasm for local governance was short lived. Following the municipal elections of November 1837, only two years after the application of the MCA, the *Times* reported of the results in Coventry 'The burgesses are already tired of these annual contests. The election this year has not excited any interest'[90] Of St. Albans it was reported: 'Every exertion was made by the radicals and influence of every description brought to bear, but with no success. The old members of the council were returned.'[91] In Shrewsbury: 'the annual nuisance of annual elections took place in this town' although here it should be noted that each ward was 'sharply contested.'[92] Kingston was not alone in reverting to representation from the 'first families' of the borough.

[1] Barry Doyle, 'The changing function of urban government' in Daunton, M. J. (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.295.

[2] Shaan Butters, *The Book of Kingston* (Frome: Baron, 1995), p.134.

[3] Surrey History Service (SHS): P33/5: Kingston Association for Bettering the Conditions and Morals of the Poor, *Minute Book.*

[4] For a study of people seeking moral reform in the nineteenth century, and their motives see M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1786-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[5] The National Archives (TNA): HO44/38.

[6] A vegetarian community and school was established was in the late 1830's at Alcott House, Ham Common, near Richmond.

[7] Robert Owen (1771-1858) a social reformer and one of the founders of socialism and the cooperative movement.

[8] Pigot and Co., *National, London and Provincial Commercial Directory for 1832-3-4* (London & Manchester: Pigot, 1834.)

[9] Pigot and Co. *Royal National & Commercial Directory & Topography.* Facsimile edition of 1839. (1993).

[10] http://www.gober.net/victorian/reports/religion.html. Accessed16 January 2006.

[11] Cliff Webb (trans.) and David Robinson (ed.), *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey,* (Guildford: Surrey Record Office, 1997) p.lxix.

[12] Webb and Robinson, *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey,* pp.132-136.

[13] Douglas A. Reid, 'Playing and praying' in Daunton, M. J. (ed.), *The Cambridge* Urban History of Britain, vol. III p.788.

[14] Kelly's *Directory of Kent, Surrey and Sussex, 1891* [Part3: Surrey] p.1341.

[15] Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem, the Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p.86.

[16] Joyce Banks, 'Some notes on early Methodism in Surrey', *Surrey History,* Vol.6 (4), 2002,pp.194-205.

[17] Butters, *The Book of Kingston,* p.133.

[18] Curiously for a nonconformist family, the Marshes ran one of Kingston's several breweries.

[19] David Robinson, 'Surrey elections and M. P.s from the Reform Act to the present day', *Surrey History*, vol. 5. (5), 1998, p.261.

[20] Nationally, Kingston's politics were occasionally reported. Before the *Surrey Comet* was established in 1854, *The Times* also occasionally reported annual council elections, as will be seen later in this chapter.

[21] For a discussion of the problems for historians writing about the political systems of the nineteenth century, at both parliamentary and local level, see the Introduction to Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor (eds.), Party, State and Society, *Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1870* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997).

[22] Surrey County Council, The Records and Ancient Monuments Committee. *Inventory of the Borough Records* vol.III (Kingston: Surrey County Council, 1929), p. 34.

[23] James Vernon, *Politics and the People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[24] Other factors such as economic status of a locality and its influence on occupational and social differences would also need to be taken into account.

[25] Peter Clark and Lyn Murfin, *The History of Maidstone* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1995), p.178.

[26] Clark and Murfin, *The History of Maidstone,* p.178.

[27] Alan Alexander, *Borough Government and Politics:Reading 1835-1985* (London: Allen & Unwin,1985), p. 6.

[28] Doyle, 'The changing functions of urban government' in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain,* vol. III p.301.

[29] *The Times,* 10 November 1840.

[30] As will be seen later, the other notable contests for Mayor were in 1858 and 1864 when a nonconformist was a candidate.

[31] By the nineteenth century, a Mayor could be the centre of all political activity with the terms of office lasting often two to four years. By attending a large number of committees, the Mayor could hold the whole Council together and co-ordinate and integrate its activities.

[32] North Kingston Local History Room (NK) : KB1/6, Borough Council *Minutes Book 1834-1859,* 1 January1836.

[33] Municipal Corporations Act (MCA) 1835, 5 & 6 Wm. IV., c.76, p. 3906.

[34] *The Times,* 3 September 1838.

[35] *The Times,* 2 November 1839.

[36] *The Times,* 10 November 1840.

[37] There was no local paper reporting the events, at this date.

[38] Prior to this date, Kingston appears not to have returned members of parliament on any regular basis for some 200 years. For West Surrey, the election court was at Guildford with additional polling places at Dorking and Chertsey.

[39] June Sampson, *Surrey Comet* 22April 2005.

[40] *East Surrey Election 1865, Poll Book.* A list of freeholders who voted at this election for the county of Surrey survive from the check books for the hundred of Kingston, kept on behalf of one of the candidates, William Joseph Denison.

[41] Each voter had two votes to cast.

[42] R. C. K Ensor, *England 1870-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 21.

[43] *Surrey Comet,* 20 February 1869: Mid Surrey Local Conservative Association, list of members & subscribers enrolled at the preliminary meeting.

[44] *Surrey Advertiser,* 14 June 1866 Public notice: Kingston Division Conservative Association: Conservatives holding Freehold leasehold or Copyhold property; householders, Occupiers of Land or tenements value £10 a year and upwards; and lodgers, in the parish of Kingston ... who are not already upon the Register of Voters, are requested to communicate with the undersigned, who will render them every assistance in placing their names upon the register free of cost.

[45] *Surrey Comet,* 25 June 1870.

[46] *East Surrey Election 1865, Poll Book.* There is some confusion about either which member of the Peek family this was or which Surrey seat: the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) says that Cuthbert (1855-1901) was MP for East Surrey from 1868 to 1884, but he would only have been 13 years old! A second source says Cuthbert's father, Henry William Peek was MP for Mid Surrey 1868-1884.

[47] The Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) says that Buxton had previously been elected as member for Maidstone in 1859. Clark says, 'the Liberals reverted to the use of bribery. They took both seats at the 1859 election, weathering a petition against them for corruption'.

[48] *Surrey Advertiser,* 19 June 1886.

[49] *Surrey Reformer,* 9 July 1886.

[50] Charles Durant Hodgson, a brewing maltster, managed the family brewing business together with his brother but political differences led to an uneasy partnership.

[51] Although William Sanford Hodgson had, by 1881, moved from Kingston to a prestigious property in nearby Esher.

[52] *Surrey Comet,* 5 November 1870.

[53] Roy Andrews, 'An Age of Transition in Local Politics? The Kingston upon Thames Experience 1886-1914, unpublished MA dissertation, Kingston University (2004), p.24.

[54] *Surrey Comet,* 12 November 1864.

[55] *Surrey Comet,* 8 November 1873.

[56] *Surrey Comet,* 21 October 1893.

[47] A. Phillips, *Ten Men and Colchester* (Chelmsford: Essex Record Office, 1995),p.25

[58] Phillips, *Ten Men and Colchester,* p.94.

[59] Colchester had of course a much larger population than Kingston.

[60] David Large, *The Municipal Government of Bristol 1851-1901* (Bristol: Bris tol Record Society, 1999), p.7.

[61] Alexander, *Borough Government and Politics: Reading 1835-1985,* p.169.

[62] For a full account of borough politics in Reading, see Chapter 6 of Alexander's *Borough Government and Politics Reading 1835-1985.*.

[63] *Surrey Comet,* 2 January 1892.

[64] *Surbiton Review,* 1888/89.

[65] The secretary in early 1886 was Charles Baker, soon to become a councillor, the president was councillor William Woolnough and amongst the members were sitting councillors Carn and Wenman.

[66] *Kingston and Surbiton News,* 30 January 1886.

[67] *Kingston and Surbiton News,* 30 January 1886.

[68] *Kingston and Surbiton News,* 30 January 1886.

[69] Doyle, 'The changing functions of urban government', p.308.

[70] Hunt, *Building Jerusalem,* p.294.

[71] Doyle, 'The changing functions of urban government', p. 295.

[72] Gloria Clifton, *Professionalism, Patronage and Public Service in Victorian London* (London: Athlone Press, 1992), p. 2.

[73] NK : KB1/6 Minute of meeting 1 December 1859.

[74] The son of former councillor Edward D. Shirtliff who served 1863-1864.

[75] *The Medical Directory*, (London: Churchill,1883).

[76] *Surrey Comet,* August 5 1871.

[77] For the six months ending 30 June 1873 the deaths averaged 11 per 1000 an average equal to the healthiest parts of England but foreshadows the measles epidemics which feature in the medical reports of the 1890s, no doubt as a consequence of the growth of the school population in the borough. In 1894 Shirtliff's successor, Beale Collins, was complaining that all the schools were too full and in the early summer of 1895 he recorded 50 cases of measles in one school alone.

[78] NK: SI(614) KIN *Annual Report* of the Medical Officer of Health, 2 February 1893.

[79] NK: KB5/15/5, *Council Minutes* ,

[80] *The Medical Directory*, (London: Churchill, 1891).

[81] NK: SI(614) KIN Annual *Report of the Medical Officer of Health*, 16 March 1897, p.7.

[73] NK: SI(614) KIN *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health*, 21 January 1896, p.10.

[83] Labouring Classes Dwelling Houses Act, 1866 29 and 30 Vict. c28, Artisans and Labourers Dwelling Act, 1868 31 and 31 Vict. c.130. Artisans and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act 1875 and 39 Vict.c. 36.
Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890 53 and 54 Vict. c. 70.

[84] NK: SI(614) KIN *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health*, 21 January 1896, p.5.

[85] With the development of telephonic communications being in its infancy, this would indeed have a high priority.

[86] An Act for the better lighting and watching the Town of Kingston-upon-Thames...and for removing and preventing all Obstructions, Encroachments and Nuisances therein (8 Geo3, Sess.1768).

[87] One of the more time consuming duties of this committee was the management of the affairs of the fire brigade so any fire brigade committee must have become a sub committee.

[88] To become the Public Health Committee in 1923, thus signifying its terms of reference more correctly.

[89] NK: KB 1/5-9, An adjourned Court of Assembly (Jemmett was not present) on 24 December 1835.

[90] *The Times*, 4 November 1837.

[91] *The Times*, 4 November 1837.

[92] *The Times*, 4 November 1837.

Chapter 7

THE GOVERNORS OF THE BOROUGH IN COUNCIL

> As early as the 1850s, only two decades after municipal reform, observers lamented the social standing and the calibre of councillors. By 1869 a parliamentary select committee highlighted the reluctance of well-off men to participate in local government.[1]

1. Introduction

With the insight gained into the work of Kingston council since its restructuring in 1835, it is now possible, in conjunction with the database of councillors and officers, to attempt to access Christopher Hamlin's 'black box of local government', an analogy used to seek answers about the actual processes of local administration - as explained in Chapter 1.[2] The manner in which improvements, to a greater or lesser degree, were made to certain aspects of public health, housing and civic amenities in Kingston in the nineteenth century has been detailed in Chapters 4 and 5. This research has highlighted examples of areas in which the council was unable to promote its arguments or proposals successfully, providing evidence to test the argument as to whether the epithet 'reluctant' is justified.[3] Adding further grounds to the argument, this chapter will consider the first of the hypotheses as set out at Chapter 1: that 'a little baker and a little beershop keeper and that class of men' were typical members of the Corporation of Kingston for much of the nineteenth century.

In essence, this chapter puts the decisions taken by the council, as described in previous chapters, into the context of the councillors' occupation and class. The personal attitudes of councillors, as far as can be judged from their conduct in council, will also be used to see if the epithet in the hypothesis, that is their being small shopkeepers, is fair comment. The concept of circumstance used here embraces as much information, as is available from contemporary sources, about the economic and social status of councillors within the community, both as a working group and as individuals in pursuit of their public duties. The social and economic backgrounds of these local politicians overlap, but in order to test the hypotheses it is necessary to try to see these as separate influences. Four areas of

council activity have been selected to seek evidence to achieve this. This chapter therefore concentrates firstly on the occupations of the councillors, which will give data about the economic activity and status using the database as explained in Chapter 3. Secondly reports of council meetings, give a picture of the level of aptitude and inter-personal skills of councillors. Third are encounters with other authorities and institutions. Members increasingly found themselves required to negotiate with organisations, both national and local, outside their control. These encounters were sometimes frustrating and even occasionally hostile in tone. Last are aspects of the council's attitude to finance.

To pursue the first of these objectives, analysis of the database, using the methodology as explained in Chapter 3, enables councillors' occupations from 1835 to 1900 to be charted, providing evidence against which to test the perception that Kingston was represented at local level by a majority of shopkeepers for most of the nineteenth century. A further chapter will consider a number of individual councillors and their place within the community. Secondly, as the database cannot answer questions about the decision making process or of council and committee debates, language used in the council chamber (in the drainage debates for example) and the relative importance attached to matters on the agenda will be considered as indicative of prevailing attitudes. Thirdly, examples such as relations with the fledgling district of Surbiton, refusal to consider cooperation with Richmond Council in the matter of the isolation hospital, the high handed manner in liaising with public utility companies and lack of understanding of their relationship to the Local Government Board (LGB) are further aspects of council performance and attitude and will show how Kingston council behaved when required to liaise or communicate with other organisations. To decide whether social as well as economic networks (and self-interest) engendered an amateur or clumsy response to the need for improvement requires the building of a composite structure, putting together database analysis with primary source material from press reports, company minutes, directories et alia. This will be addressed in Chapter 8.

2. Councillor occupations 1835-1900

John Garrard addresses the topic of occupations, one of the main interests of the thesis, in his work on the economic and social networks upon which the authority of local power rested. His article 'Urban Elites, 1850-1914,' explores the utility of the squirearchical model to understanding the character and power of urban elites in the period up to around 1880 when local leadership in many industrial towns seemed most generously endowed with attributes to which the model might apply.[4] This model of a British squirearchy is based on the power of a landowning class that expected, indeed demanded, deference in order to survive as a ruling group and to exercise government. To use deference as a means of exercising authority argues that those expressing deference must be dependent in some way upon the object of their obeisance. In nineteenth century rural society this was a common relationship between land owner and tenant. In the new industrial towns, such as Birmingham, Bolton, Liverpool and Salford, to which Garrard applies his model, allegiance was owed to the mill master and the factory owner. Such towns had a significantly greater scale of manufacturing industry, providing larger units of dependent employment than could be found in Kingston. The industrialists, commanding deference, accumulating wealth and spreading bounty through their charity committees and voluntary bodies can be seen as the new urban squirearchy. This is the model that Garrard discusses. To this evolution in the nineteenth century from a rural squirearchy to an urban elite must be added the new responsibilities and pressures which came with urban growth. While accepting the smaller sphere for investigation, this model of the new squirearchy can be applied to the local hierarchy of a market borough such as Kingston. To adapt this model requires a distinctive definition of 'elite' to meet the social and economic structure of such a relatively small community.

The model will not be about an aristocratic elite nor wealthy industrialists. It will not include information as to number of residences or estates owned by the civic leaders but will look at their social backgrounds within an essentially suburban milieu. Evidence for this must come from the minimal surviving information on rating valuations for Kingston, tax assessments, and the status of addresses and commercial activity (the latter relates to whether an individual was

an employer or employee, manager or owner). Thus it is possible to replace Garrard's 'substantial landed estates, visibly displayed opulence, long family lineage' with successful businesses, long family association with the town and high profiles in local affairs. Garrard's study is comparative, looking at what constituted the governing power in four northern towns. Like Hamlin he is concerned with how this particular level, or local manifestation of power, was used in the decision making process within the council chamber. As Kingston cannot be compared on equal terms with the industrial towns of Birmingham, Bolton, Rochdale or Salford (Garrard's comparative towns) perhaps power is too weighty a concept for its councillors and a more fitting word is influence. Given the shopocracy (government by shopkeepers) bias of Kingston's rulers, as evidenced from the high percentage of 'dealers' (which category includes the drapers, coal and timber merchants, butchers and grocers) a state of mutual dependence must have existed between the retailers and the consumers. Thus the retailers needed the consumers in order to stay in business and the consumers relied on the retailers for the necessities of everyday living. The difference between this and a squirearchy, is that the consumer (or tenant of the squire) could choose to buy elsewhere. Except in cases of additional dependence such as debt, or the retailer also renting property, the consumer need not show deference.[5] Elevation of the retailer to a councillor, made the consumer a voter with the balance of mutuality becoming weighted in favour of the consumer. But as the community expanded to meet the needs of an increasing population, the consumer became dependent upon the councillor for sanitary improvement, slum clearance and the safety and order of the town, just as a medieval peasant was dependent on his lord for protection.

What brings the situation back to a medieval squirearchy model is that the majority of the consumers were not eligible to vote for much of the nineteenth century, until the 1867 Second Reform Act. Therefore the people most likely to suffer from the inaction or incompetence of a local authority, the poorest section of society, were just as dependent upon their council as a rural tenant had been on his squire. Garrard's analogy of squirearchy can be seen therefore to have relevance to a nineteenth century community such as Kingston. The nineteenth

century saw the birth and growth of modern municipal government and, particularly from the 1860's, as has been noted by Morris, Trainor and Szreter, and others. At the same time as there was a move towards public provision of local welfare and facilities, taking the place of voluntarism, there was an increase in the numbers of middle class and prosperous men seeking public office.[6] The opportunity for participation in local democracy increased after 1867, with the extension of the franchise to every male adult householder living in a borough constituency, including male lodgers paying £10 for unfurnished rooms.

Before 1835, a Court of Assembly composed of the bailiffs and freemen of the town governed Kingston. According to the Royal Commission of Enquiry into Municipal Corporations of England and Wales, First Report, the 57 members, including bailiffs, high stewards and gownsmen, met only when occasion required.[7] The last meeting of the Court of Assembly was held on 24 December 1835. The first meeting of the new Court of the Council under the rules of the Municipal Corporations Act (MCA), held on 1 January 1836, marked the start of the transition from what was essentially a body of magistrates to a multi-tasked instrument of local government by 1900. During these years, it has been posited by some historians, such as F. M. L Thompson and John Garrard, that there was a decline in the representation of wealthy, upper class businessmen and professionals on municipal bodies, especially from the 1870s onwards. Analysis of the thesis database over the long term will show that this did not happen in Kingston, as there never was any tradition of upper class representation. Nor are the reasons for this clear. Local trade directories list sufficient numbers, under the heading of nobility, gentry and clergy, to provide a pool from which to draw candidates with civic motivation, accepting that, with the limits of their reliability as outlined in Chapter 3, directories can provide only a generalised overview of a community.[8] The number of names on the 'gentry' lists in the directories who also emerge as councillors on the database is minimal. Many are listed in the 'tradesmen' lists however. The most elementary reason may be that as stated above, there simply never had been any such tradition.[9] There seems to have been a layer of social prominence (as defined in contemporary Victorian mores) missing in Kingston, a layer between what can be thought of as parochial gentry

and true 'nobility', members of which, had they existed, might have taken part in local government. Butters quotes Daniel Defoe's comments on the few big houses near Kingston as 'houses of retreat...gentlemen's mere summer houses ... whither they retire from the hurries of business, and from getting money, to draw their breath in clear air and to direct themselves and their families in the hot weather.'[10]

'Mere summer houses' would appear to indicate that there was not much society of an appropriate level in the Kingston area with which to engage. One local member of a higher class was Lord Liverpool who owned a large estate on Kingston Hill. He was a national politician, far above local politics.[11] Other local landowners were similarly engaged in higher levels of politics.[12] Prior to 1835 the exception to the rule of apathy by Kingston's wealthier residents was the sugar magnate Charles Pallmer of Norbiton Place. A member of the Court of Assembly, at least between 1828-1830, and also a Member of Parliament for Surrey, he left local office, not because of any reform of electoral procedure, but due to financial ruin. However, twenty seven of his fellow citizens who served the council before 1835 carried on doing so. Of these, nine continued in office for periods between ten and twenty seven years – indicating that there was no major shift of power after 1835, despite reports to the contrary which will be considered later.

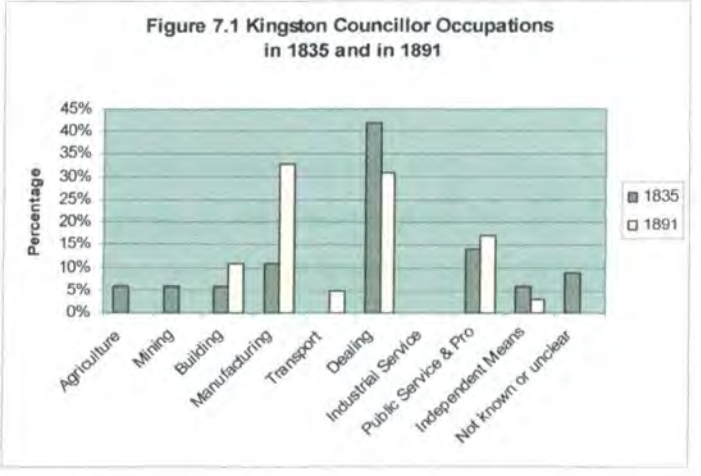
The economy of the town was not dependent therefore upon the patronage or custom of the aristocracy.[13] Wealthy business men were, at least in the first half of the century, more London-oriented and those who did live in some of Kingston's larger houses, did not move in the same social circles as, and certainly would see no advantage in making common cause with, the drapers, innkeepers and grocers of the town. William Hardman records in his diary in March 1868 that:

> On Monday night we went to the Public Volunteers Ball where Cochrane was supported by seventy of his personal friends and ninety of the smaller tradesfolks: all the upper trades-people were too proud to come, as they thought themselves aggrieved by not having been invited to the Fancy Ball. Oh! The conflicting elements in a small town, where people are struggling to get a footing amongst what they most unwillingly admit to be the upper classes.[14]

Comparison of the councillors' means of living at the start of the research period with that towards the end, circa 1891, shows a markedly similar pattern in

one particular sector of the local economy and that is dealing. In this context 'dealing' reflects the sector of the Booth-Armstrong coding used in the thesis database, as described in Chapter 3. This sector includes a wide range of trading, retailing and selling of goods, as can be seen at Appendix 7.1.

3. Analysis of occupations

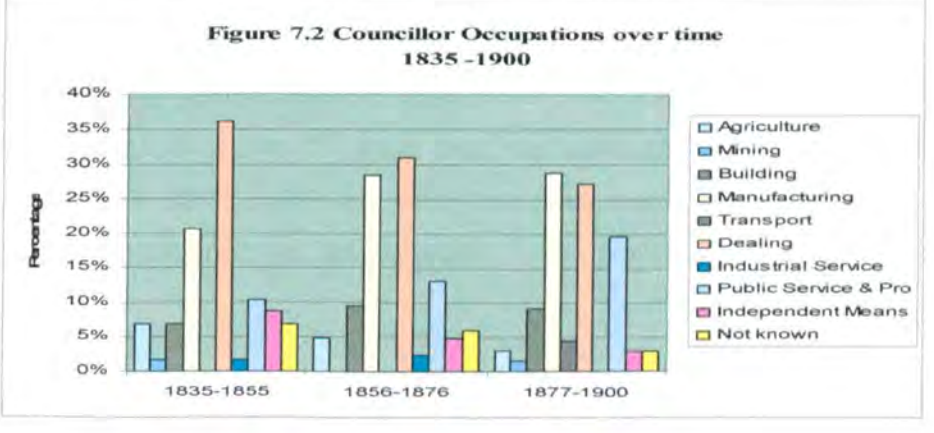


Source: database Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

As no data from census returns is available pre-1835, the evidence of councillor occupations in Figure 7.1 is based on, firstly, the Kingston census enumerators' books for 1851, where if the names of 1835 assembly members names appear they can rationally be expected to be the same person, by reason of age and, secondly, inclusion in local directories and local histories of the period.15 However, the number of records of the two years is compatible, except for the presence of three 1835 councillors for whom no occupation has been established. The fields of agriculture and mining, never a significant number, have no representation in 1891. It should be remembered that agriculture, as practiced in Kingston, was mainly market gardening and that mining was accounted for by the local brick making industry. As might be expected at the end of the century, the users of the bricks, that is builders, had increased their representation but only by 5%. Whilst the percentage representation from professional men has risen by only 3%, manufacturers have tripled their representation over time, whilst the dealers have decreased by 10%.

By 1891 there are few unknown occupations (records being more reliable by this date) compared to the number in 1835. The comparative results for this must therefore be accepted as approximate. Nevertheless, even if the numbers on which the analysis is based are not strictly equal, this chart shows the predominance, at dates over 60 years apart, of the dealing and manufacturing sectors within the council. As many of the manufacturers, such as bakers and bootmakers, also sold their goods direct to the public, they also constituted part of the prevailing presence of members of a local shopocracy.

The whole area of occupational analysis over time is beset with complex problems, such as the change in occupations given for an individual in different census years. The CEBs used in this research cover 1851-1891. The analysis presented here is an aggregate of three periods, not for individual census years. The various published schemes which have been devised to analyse information from census enumerators' books are designed to be applied to large amounts of data, such as the population of a town, county or region. There are limitations when applying such schemes to a small group of individuals, especially when personal information is in short supply. Figure 7.2 gives a basic comparison of the various sectors of occupation represented on the council from 1835 to 1900, broken down into three periods.



Source: Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

Dealing and manufacturing remained the most common backgrounds for the councillors, with agriculture declining and representation from the public service

and professional sector showing a steady rise over the period. Surprisingly, those with a transport background do not appear at all until the later years; surprising, as there were many successful barge masters in Kingston in the earlier years. Professional representation came from the ranks of the medical profession and the legal community, but the highest ranking councillor, in social and professional terms, over the whole period, was William Hardman, who was elected to the council in 1870. Hardman was a barrister who arrived in Kingston in 1864 and rose swiftly up the local government ladder, being made a Justice of the Peace in 1865 and elected Mayor in 1870. His appointment to the bench seems to have rested at least partly on his having a university education and he had his own thoughts on his social advantages over other men of the town:

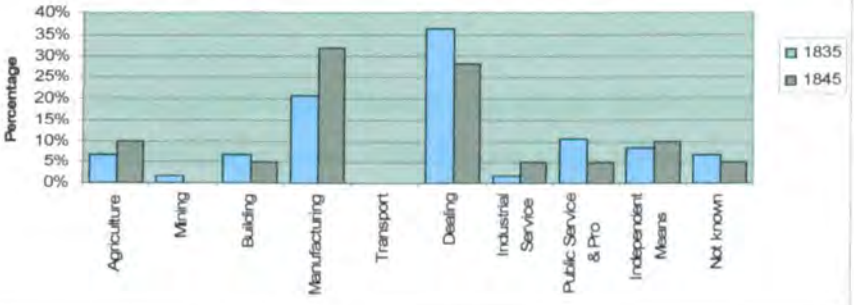
> I am told by a very good authority that my elevation to the bench has flabbergasted several in the neighbourhood who are fully qualified and have been moving heaven and earth to get made magistrates...but the Lord Lieutenant would not consent, regarding their education and manners scarcely those of gentlemen.[16]

Although Kingston Corporation was criticised by the Municipal Corporations Act Commissioners as being ineffectual, it was not judged to be actively corrupt. The faults were of omission rather than commission. If that is an appropriate verdict, then the fact that there were only marginal changes in the occupations of councillors, except for an decrease of 10% in the shopkeeper category, following the inception of the new council in January 1836, should present no surprise but simply reflect the general lack of engagement with public affairs within the borough.[17] Although written 50 years later, the criticism by the editor of the *Surrey Comet* in 1881 could very well have been made earlier: 'Kingston is constitutionally inclined to somnalencey ...its public men are tediously cautious.'[18]

As with much reforming legislation from 1832 onwards, the move to conform to a new ordinance was not dramatically obvious. Of the thirty-three members who are recorded as attending the last Assembly meeting in 1835, just over half became members of the newly constituted council in January 1836 (Appendix 7.2). A third of these men were still sitting councillors ten years later in 1845 (Appendix 7.3). It might be that this was simply a normal turnover of members

over such a period. Analysis of occupations, as shown in Figure 7.3, suggests no radical change in relative terms. Appendix 7.3 shows in a single table the names and occupations of the group of men who attended the last Assembly meeting in December 1835, which of those attended the first meeting of the new Council and, of this group, those who were still on the council in 1845. In 1845 the public service and professional representation fell by half, with a slight rise in the independent means classification, which covers landowners, but conversely it seems that the dealing sector, which will be seen as such a major factor in the long term analysis, had (temporarily) given ground to manufacturing.

Figure 7.3 Councillor Occupations 1835 and 1845



Source: database Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading[19]

Manufacturing was now becoming more important to Kingston. Although never a great centre of manufacturing activity, the borough was none the less home to a variety of small industries which were flourishing in mid century, principally in malting and brewing. The town's location on the Portsmouth Road sustained profitable inn and coaching businesses which were a market for the output of the breweries. Being on a navigable river provided the opportunity for importing raw materials used in the corn and oil mills and the very successful tannery, as well as exporting goods to the capital. The market gardens and the stock and produce markets, which had sold produce from a wide area of north Surrey and had been so important to the town's economy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, became less influential as the whole of the Kingston area became more residential in character during the second half of the century.

Gradually, housing development, as described in Chapter 5, as well as the demands of the railway companies, made inroads into the large estates and agricultural land. With a railway station opening in Kingston in 1863, daily

commuting to London became more practicable. The pattern of the economy was altering towards supplying a largely residential and suburban consumer. The barge traffic on the river declined in favour of rail and the burgeoning domestic and household market fuelled the growth of retail trade - that is the dealing sector – such as the grocers, the drapers and the bootmakers. In 1845 however, these changes were still to come and manufacturing was enjoying something of a boom. There were many small factories such as Councillor Ranyard's tallow factory and several breweries. Thus is reflected in the composition of the council at that date, as seen above, with the manufacturers equalling the retailers. The occupational structure of the council at this time does support the hypothesis of a leadership drawn chiefly from the retail businessmen of the borough.

It should be noted that differences in analysis are shown if using secondary occupations, or other occupations listed for the same person in different census years. Also the occupation attributes prescribed by the census classification are not always as precise a description of the economic status of a councillor as expected. For instance, a 'gentleman respected for his manly and straightforward principles', as reported by *The Times* in November 1840 as elected Mayor, was John King, a draper, who had survived the MCA restructuring and continued as a councillor until 1859. In the property valuation record of that year he is shown as owning a house, shop, two cottages and a malthouse in Thames Street. The shop was his drapery business while his home, at this date, was Norbiton Lodge in London Road. What is known of King's business activities is consistent with a conservative philosophy. He was astute enough to recognize the financial opportunities afforded by the extension of the rail network and the subsequent need for increased housing and services. As early as 1835 he was buying up land, to sell on, at considerable profit, to the London and South Western Railway Company as well as to the National Freehold Land Society and the Lambeth Waterworks.[20] This suggests that at least one Kingston councillor had a shrewd business sense. The database occupation is based on that in the Census Enumerators' Books, in which King's occupation is listed as 'Magistrate Drapery' in 1851 and 'Magistrate Linen Draper' in 1861. The census also reveals that he was living at a prestigious address with two house servants, a cook, housemaid

and a ladies' maid for his daughter. If more Kingston councillors prove to have a wider role in the local economy than the initial classification has suggested then the bare definitions of 'a little baker...and that class of men' of the hypothesis may be more of a derogatory turn of phrase than accurate. The classification used to describe occupations in census returns seldom gives any idea of how successful a man may be in business, except when providing details of employees.

Database analysis has confirmed that a significant number of Kingston councillors were from the retail sector of the borough economy. However, as with John King, this does not necessarily mean that they all merit the description of small shopkeepers. Several of the councillor dealers and merchants began to expand beyond the borough. These included James Boxall who added a business in Surbiton to that in Kingston and Joseph and Bedford Marsh who expanded their corn and seed business into Esher and Wimbledon. Amongst the examples of men for whom an initial census occupation does not indicate wealth, are James Boxall Richard Cartwright, John W. Davidson, John Collings and George Wade.

Boxall (councillor 1858-1886) was listed as a carpenter in the 1851 census employing 7 men. By 1861 he was builder. He moved home three times between 1851-82, each time to a superior road. When he died in 1882 he was buried in a private vault.[21] Not knowing whether he was a carpenter or enjoying more success as a builder at the time of his election to the council in 1858 limits the accuracy of analysis. (Of course it could be that success came after his election, but that is unfounded conjecture). John J. Collings, who followed in his father's footsteps on the council (1878-1900) was a carpenter in 1861 but a master builder in 1881, employing twenty men and boys. John W. Davidson was also buried in a private vault, after a long career on the council (1857-95), and a successful dyeing business to judge from his moves up the property ladder. Cartwright, admittedly only councillor for brief time (1863-1865), is designated as an upholsterer, an artisan of the time. However, he employed six men and five women. George Wade (councillor 1870-1886), bootmaker, was employing ten men and a boy in 1861. On that evidence this was quite a substantial business. As with Boxall, some of these men did become more successful after their elevation to the council, but

more detailed research is necessary before any conclusions should be drawn about the cause and effect of these facts. In order to provide a level base for the analysis of occupations, it is the first nominated occupation for an individual in the census return form. With a small number of records this is unlikely to distort results. [22]

One of the basic flaws in the Booth-Armstrong coding scheme is that it does not distinguish a group of people who could span the sectors, usually because they provide a level of professional service. There is allowance for 'management' in the building sector and at an unspecified listing in the dealing sector - allied with manufacturers and superintendents. Management, as a professional concept capable of application to many fields of employment, is perhaps too modern a workplace development to warrant coding of nineteenth century records. However, given that many of the councillors listed as retailers were managers of their own businesses, this lack of definition again leads to a possible distortion of the analysis.

Other schemes for looking at socio-economic grouping have different strengths, as discussed in Higgs, *Making Sense of the Census Revisited* (2005).[23] Booth-Armstrong is used here because it provides for comprehensive cover of the dealing sector and is sufficiently manageable for the number of records in the database. For analysis of a larger database it would be expedient to adapt such a code to provide an increased depth of definition to take into account any particular local industries or circumstance which impacted on the area. Or it might be appropriate to use a scheme based on the classification allocation for the 1911 census, or later. Given a small database of just over 200 records such an adaptation would be unlikely to provide significantly more detail.

As argued earlier, the occupation used for analysis is that first listed for an individual in a census return, however in the matter of status, it seems more appropriate to use the peak of an individual's working profile. Armstrong himself says that although 'indications of standing may sometimes be obtained from census data, such as the numbers employed, in the case of an employer, or the number of domestic servants, ...these do enable us to make distinctions among

that great majority of individuals who were not employers, and did not maintain domestic servants.'[24] Some other criteria are therefore needed, in addition to the basic occupation term, if occupation is to be used as a guide to distinguishing business or social standing. An additional qualification is required for evidence of both. In the first instance however, as the thesis is designed to determine or refute the predominance of retailers elected to the council, evidence of business status will be addressed. As there is no general classification scheme, contemporary with the nineteenth century CEBs, it is reasonable to make use of a twentieth century scheme (as opposed to creating a customised version). Although the Registrar General's social classification of 1911 has been criticised as lacking detailed refinement, it has the merit of being closer to the nineteenth century ethos and terminology than later schemes and is adequate to fit the present purpose.

As a means of identifying more accurately the business status of the councillors in the dealing sector, the 1911 social class coding has been applied to 60 'dealers' included in the database and for whom sufficient evidence of employment is available. Using this tool for analysis suggests the idea that the majority of the councillor retailers were indeed only in business in a small way. However, notwithstanding the limitations of evidence to be gained from applying a local status coding to the same records, such an exercise has been tried and produces a different picture. Thus, creating a level marker system defining dealers by the categories of employment (that is manager/owners, self employed or employed) to distinguish between their employment status, regarding the manager/owner definition as Class 1, the self employed as Class 2 and employee as Class 3 and using this as a class indicator, the results are markedly different. The results of application of the 1911 scheme and of a custom made level marker classification are as follows:-

Analysis of Dealing Sector, using the 1911 class coding:		**Analysis of the Dealing Sector using local level markers**	
Class 1	1[25]	Class 1 (Manager/owners)	46
Class 2	15	Class 2 (Self employed)	12
Class 3	44	Class 3 (Employee)	2

It is evident that applying different classification systems can produce contrary results. Using the 1911 social status coding reveals the majority of Kingston councillors, based on their occupation alone, as being in Class 3 - what Armstrong defines as including 'those occupations mainly consisting of skilled work-people.'[26] The level marker status coding applied to the councillors, based on their work role, produces the opposite. As a result, councillor occupations as shown in analysis to date may not be the best indicators of social class. In order to analyse the social status over time (and therefore any changes) it would be necessary to look at the date of election of the councillors more closely.

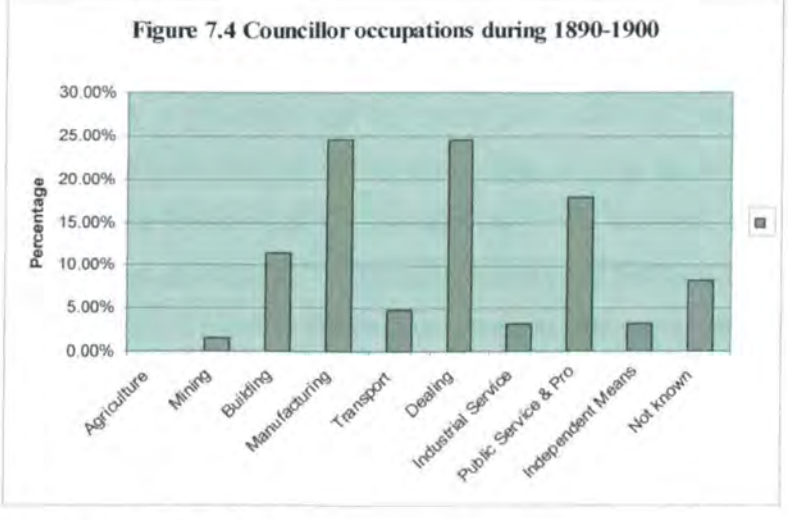
Taking as an example, councillor John James Collings who was a carpenter in 1861 (Class 3), a builder employing thirty men and four boys in 1871 (Class1), a master builder employing twenty men and boys and a nurseryman employing three men in 1881 (Class1) and simply a builder and nurseryman in 1891, *not* a master builder (Class3) poses the question as to the classification of Collings' place in the social strata. Should it be Class 1 or 3? If identified as a magistrate he would automatically be elevated to Class1, which overrides any occupation code. This is indeed the case, as he became an alderman (and therefore also a magistrate) in 1898. Given these variations over time it would seem justified, either to accept some measure of flexibility in choosing which class to attribute, or to adapt a published scheme to fit specific research needs.

The justification, in this instance, for choosing a local level marker scheme to assess the class profile of the council, in preference to the 1911 classification allocation, is the fact that an overwhelming majority of council members came from within a narrow layer of local society. There is no evidence of an upper class at one end and no blue collared workers at the other. Given the narrower parameters of the social class range than those identified in national classification schemes it is therefore more appropriate to assess the class of these councillors in the context of their peers in office. However there was an elite of a local kind amongst the councillors, with 46 out of 60 (that is 76%) retailers of one sort or another being in Class 1.

The analysis to date, especially the data in Figures 7.1 to 7.3, gives a basic view of the occupational structure of Kingston councillors through the nineteenth century. From these charts it might be concluded that Kingston council was indeed dominated by the type of shopkeepers being tested in the hypothesis. This is confirmed in Figure 7.2 which gives a comparison of the various sectors of occupation represented on the council from 1835 to 1900, broken down further into three periods, confirming the domination of retailers in the middle years of the century but also showing the gradual growth in representation from the manufacturing and public service and professional sectors.[27]

In the last decade of the research period, although there was a sustained growth in the election of professional men, and the numbers of shopkeepers were still considerable, representation from the manufacturing sector of the borough equalled that of the dealing sector as seen in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4 Councillor occupations during 1890-1900



Source: Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

The increase in the manufacturing sector might be thought to reflect a rise of industrial activity in Kingston. This would be a false assumption if any analogy were made to the type of industry common in the towns and cities described by Hennock, Fraser and Garrard. Closer inspection of the councillors defined as being in manufacturing sector of Booth-Armstrong in the period 1890 to 1900 reveals that they were mainly brewers, distillers and millers with an occasional

dyer and printer. It is in this particular area of occupation that the weakness of Booth- Armstrong coding becomes apparent. This point is addressed in *The Westminster Historical Database* (1998), where the difficulty of coding individuals who cross the boundaries between categories is discussed.[28] For example, it was quite common in the nineteenth century for shopkeepers to manufacture their own wares. A distiller might also be a wine merchant and a boot maker use a shop to sell the boots and shoes he manufactured. Are they then to be analysed as belonging to the local shopocracy or to the manufacturing sector? The philosophy that 'Wherever possible, concepts and classification should be fitting and adapted to the societies which they purport to illuminate' is a justification, in the case of a very specific small target group for the use of the admittedly general coding of the Booth-Armstrong schema.[29]

This pattern of occupational representation on the council was not unique to Kingston. In Reading, where the Municipal Corporations Committee of 1835 had made a highly critical assessment, the *Reading Mercury* reported the first post MCA election results.[30] As in Kingston, the economy of Reading was based more on trade than industry at this date, and the councillors reflected that power base. The 24 members included four manufacturers, eight men in trade (including a miller, three grocers, a brewer and a wine merchant) two builders, a solicitor, a land surveyor and four gentlemen.[31] Alexander reports the political affiliation of the candidates, as either Tories or Reformers. More details are known about the first post MCA local election in the Essex town of Saffron Walden. Saffron Walden was similar to Kingston in many ways, although smaller in population. The economy was based on malting and the numerous trades were regulated by a guild system. Walden's market and shops drew customers from the rural surroundings. Where Kingston and Walden differed is that the latter lacked the transport and trade opportunities of being situated on a major river. In a council election soon after the MCA the voters in Saffron Walden were represented 'by a cross-section of the middle class and many of its commercial interests.'[32]

Throughout the period 1835-1900 the greatest influence in the Kingston council chamber was from shopkeepers. It was their experience and abilities

which shaped the decision making process. They exercised authority in the governance of the borough, giving them power over the people of the borough for good or bad. Although the councillors held authority by way of election by their peers, they had a similar relationship to their electors as a medieval lord of the manor. Shopkeepers and brewers were the new elite in Kingston.

4. Council Behaviour

As set out in the introduction, one of the aims of this chapter is to create a picture of how Kingston councillors conducted themselves in debate, by looking at reports of council meetings, and to learn if this reveals anything about their aptitude and attitudes towards their responsibilities to the borough. As well as an examination of internal communication skills, this chapter will also consider further relations with external institutions, both local and national.

a) The Great Drainage Debate

The chronology of the council's debates and deliberations on the matter of the drainage of the borough has been discussed at Chapter 5. A detailed examination of the reports of Town Council meetings dealing with the drainage issue, as presented in the *Surrey Comet*, helps shed some light on the interplay between the councillors whom the thesis seeks to understand, in relation to their civic behaviour, and on the reasons why progress was so slow.

At a council meeting in June 1861, Mayor Samuel Gray (maltster) introduced the main business of the evening 'to take into consideration the proper drainage of the borough, and to take such steps as may be considered necessary.'[33] While observing the issue was important, the Mayor's wording is cautious, in no way indicating any urgency or pressure for action, even though the Improvement Act of 1855 included a clause to the effect that sewers should be provided to drain the lowest part of every house in the borough. Six years on, only some parts of the borough, and not the densest area, had been dealt with. It is worth relating the main aspects of the ensuing debate in some detail as it does reflect both the attitudes of the council and also the involvement of other institutions.

Councillor John Collings (estate agent) opened the discussion declaring that

he did not believe such a clause existed![34] The meeting then got to grips with the practicalities of the problem. A map showing water levels was required (asked for by a linen draper). A decision had to be made as to the drainage outlet (point made by a nurseryman) as there was no sense in draining into the Thames if the government might ban this at a later date. The Mayor warned that the Thames Conservators already had such a regulation but this was passed over as the Town Clerk (Charles Edward Jemmett, a local solicitor) advised that the council possessed exemption from a ban. So the council had heard about the coming legislation all the time that they were planning the 1866 drainage project, as described in Chapter 5! The only reason that Kingston was exempt was because of representations to the Thames Conservators - who were very grudging in agreeing to such a concession and could withdraw it on the least excuse. The Town Clerk was guilty of omission in giving his advice, but as he was a qualified 'professional' man who had been town clerk for thirty years, the mainly unprofessional councillors accepted his word. As Sampson explains, 'the Jemmetts were virtually hereditary Town Clerks of Kingston, three succeeding generations holding the office for about a century from 1747.'[35] Councillors relied on his experience and professional status without question and he was of course 'one of them.' Had they listened to the advice of the nurseryman, Councillor J. G Bruce, they could have saved much abortive expenditure.

An added complication at this time was the London and Southhampton Railway Company negotiation for a drainage outlet at Ham. The Chairman of the Improvement Committee (Alderman Walker, a builder) confessed that although the borough drainage was important, no move could be made until the railway company's plans were confirmed. He suggested a meeting be arranged between the railway's engineer and the Highway and Improvement Committees. The matter was moved forward by the Mayor's proposal that a surveyor be employed to provide a drainage plan and to liaise with the railway engineer. He thought the expense would not be exorbitant if spread over thirty years and anyway the employment of a surveyor would not bind the council to any plan but would 'show the ratepayers that the council really took an interest in the matter.'[36] Rather a negative approach, but it seems to have worked with his fellow councillors as he

cautiously manoeuvred them towards a decision. He referred repeatedly to bad drainage examples such as 'cellars filled with water' or 'overflowing cesspits', thereby emphasising the need for some action.

The debate on the proposal became quite heated. It was suggested that if an outlet could be secured there should be no need for a surveyor, 'some great man who would be sure to want a gigantic plan, regardless of cost.' Collings said that the Chairman of the Improvement Committee (who was a builder) knew the drainage of Kingston better than any surveyor, and he warned the council of the examples of 'Epsom and Croydon and other towns who had employed surveyors; they would find it would not be a matter of a few shillings.'[37] He favoured the appointment of a drainage committee but later refused to withdraw his earlier amendment (to the Mayor's surveyor proposal) to refer the matter to the Improvement Committee. As shown in Chapter 5, in the matter of the appointment of a drainage engineer, there was a perception that everything could be managed 'in house'. There was definite reluctance, ostensibly on the grounds of cost to employ an expert. There is the impression, however, that just as unacceptable was the idea of allowing an outsider to tell them what to do.

At one point, Councillors Wenman and Jones (a baker and a gentleman respectively) held up proceedings with a quarrel about points of order. Wenman was against doing anything until the railway company's plans were known but Jones was all for a full enquiry into the necessity for draining the borough, with plan and costs. Alderman Walker asked to have the pertinent clause of the Improvement Act read, as he thought applications for drainage should come from property owners (thereby saving public money). Councillor John Marsh (corn chandler) was against employing a surveyor as he felt there were competent men in the town and any way it was not possible to compel people to use the drains once made. The Town Clerk corrected this latter point, saying if their property was within 100 feet they could be compelled to comply. Here was more reluctance, both to accept that drainage was a charge on the borough funds and to acknowledge the need for outside help. Meanwhile, Councillor Pamphilon (cheesemonger) appeared sceptical about the Mayor's examples of bad drainage

and asked why, if true, they had not been reported to the Improvement Committee. There were further references to the typhoid epidemic in Croydon. This occurred in 1852, not long after the completion of a major drainage and water supply scheme carried out by the Croydon Board of Health - not without some stout resistance in that town.[38] This shows more reluctance, this time to the idea that there really was much of a problem at all.

This council meeting exemplifies several of the obstacles to progress in Kingston. There was the difficulty of persuading small town businessmen to tackle large projects with their sole professional advisor being the Town Clerk. Many councillors were resistant to the idea of importing outside expertise, either because of cost, or maybe fear of exposing some inferiority in their management to outsiders. On their own, the majority of the council was ill equipped to make judgements upon project management of a complex engineering proposal. In addition there was the complication involved in 'modern' town management by the necessity to integrate planning with the new land owning utilities. Underlying all these new ideas was a naivety in understanding the gravity of the situation and the necessity for long term planning and investment.

The situation confronting these men is summed up by Shaan Butters in *The Book of Kingston* : 'Even after 1855, when Kingston Council set up an Improvement Committee, it found it hard to take an overall view of the problem, while civil engineering had not yet developed proper drainage techniques. There was no immediate scheme for a borough wide system.... Instead drainage was dealt with piecemeal.'[39]

The meeting of June 1861 had three options before it, each with supporters: appoint a surveyor, appoint a drainage committee or refer the drainage problem to the Improvement Committee. Parochialism won and the problem of the drainage of the borough was referred to the Highways and Improvement Committee. In addition to the councillors who spoke in the debate, other councillors present included a dyer, two boot and shoemakers, a second builder, a dentist and a second maltster and coal merchant. Thus the 'baker and the beershop keeper' put off positive action for a while longer. As the leader of the next issue of the *Surrey*

Comet commented: 'there seemed... a lack of earnestness in the way in which the Council dealt with the subject at their meeting on the 19th. They approached it with reluctance, and were evidently afraid of the consequence of one taking action in it.'[40] Yet, although never going to admit it, these men were faced with a challenge more complicated both on legal as well as technical aspects, than they had ever encountered before, either in their public lives or most likely in their private lives. Hamlin suggests, in reference to the actions of officials of central government, 'what was recognised as resistance to progress was often bewilderment and frustration with technical and legal complexities and fear of taking the wrong step.'[41] How much more this must have been the case for an insular local authority.

Five months later the new Mayor, W. F Hodgson (brewer), drew the attention of the Council to the 'effectual drainage of the borough' yet again.[42] At this meeting the appointment of five councillors to a drainage committee was approved, though not without some argument as to how many should serve on it. The five appointed were: Councillors F. Gould, T.T. Walker, J. Goulter, J. C. White and S. Gray Jnr, with Walker as Chairman.

Table 7.1 Drainage Committee appointed 18 November 1861

Surname	Forenames	Occupation	Occupation 2	Class	Period on council
Gould	Frederick	chemist	dentist	1	1851-1886
Goulter	James	builder		3	1858-1877
Gray	Samuel Jnr.	maltster	coal merchant	1	1837- 1879
Walker	Thomas Tindall	builder		2	1884-1898
White	James C.	proprietor of		1	1860-1862

Source: Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

At this meeting, Councillor Benjamin Looker (brick and tile maker) moved that advertisements for plans be inserted in *The Builder*, with a prize of £75, but this was lost on a vote of 19/2 against. By the time of the council meeting of January 1863 the duly appointed drainage committee, having sat for three months, produced their report. The majority of the committee recommended the adoption of one of the three plans submitted to them. Cllr. Gould, expressing a minority view, in a speech lasting two hours in which he accused Cllr. James C. White of presumption of authority in recommending one plan above the others, said they were all worthless and should be returned to their authors for revision. Cllr.

Collings pointed out that this was the first time such a serious suggestion had been mooted – and at the very end of Gould's lengthy speech and after almost two years the council was back at the stage of advertising for further drainage plans. Gould was accused of seeking to help one of the competitors (not named) to take advantage of the situation and improve his plan by taking the best parts of the others and thus win the £100 prize.

Many similar disparaging remarks punctuated the progress of the debate. Collings belittled the comments on Despard's plan from several councillors by questioning their ability to read a working plan.[43] Throughout what was a long debate about engineering details, there were jibes at various councillors' lack of technical competence and ability to judge between the three plans before them. There were arguments about the necessity for measurements to be to decimal place accuracy, made by Benjamin Looker, 'these decimals were all important. In draining such a place as Kingston, two or three feet made all the difference, losing by a few inches here and a few there, feet could soon be made up.'[44] As an example of the complexity of the task set for any engineer, let alone laymen, a short excerpt from the debate should suffice: Councillor Looker, addressing the meeting:

> As to the flooding of cellars: at Phillipsons in the Market Place the ground was 19ft above datum [sic]; winter flood rose to 11 feet, or 8 feet below the surface...the basement was only 7 feet deep and thus 1 foot higher than winter level. The council were told that in Richmond Road, where the cellars were 6 feet deep, they would be flooded in spring and winter...in London Road the cellars were to be flooded when the Thames rose 6 feet 6 above summer level. [45]

A further four places were cited as examples where cellars did not conform to a standard depth. This list was followed by a detailed explanation of the proposed pumping system, again with only the plans to look at and no expert in attendance. No doubt many of the men present had sufficient intelligence and practical experience to understand both the plans and the arguments but equally it seems that many did not.

The general impression given by the conduct of this pivotal debate is one of small mindedness. Much time was taken up arguing about points of order, and

personal insults. It was not until August 1863 that the editor of the *Surrey Comet* felt confident to say, 'the drainage of Kingston may now fairly be considered to be in a state of progression... About a month ago the Town Council extricated themselves from their entanglement by making a clean sweep of the contrary resolutions they had passed, and determining to obtain the services of a competent engineer. '[46] A positive decision had been achieved at last, but as seen earlier far from resolving the drainage problem. Councillor (also one time alderman and Mayor) Frederick Gould, who featured in the above debate, was one of the longest serving council members during the nineteenth century. In 1900 he was referred to as 'a grand old man of Kingston.'[47] He was also one of the most prominent debaters in the chamber, frequently being the catalyst, whether intentional or not, of heated and lengthy arguments. One such took place in August 1871, ostensibly about the eligibility of a council member for election.

b) Councillor Frederick Gould's Special Enquiry

The councillor in question, elected in 1870, had been convicted of embezzlement some years before and Gould, having become aware of this, set up a Special Enquiry into the matter, in August 1871.[48] The relevance of the debate is not whether Bussell, the councillor in question, was eligible for election or not, but the manner in which the debate was conducted. A report was read by the Town Clerk, reciting Bussell's acceptance of wrongdoing in his youth, but rejecting that error as any reason for not standing for election now. Bussell wondered what Gould's reason was for making enquiries, suggesting the motive was to remove him from the council. Reading the report of the debate in the *Surrey Comet* it soon becomes apparent that there was considerable animosity between Gould and Bussell.[49] Gould protested that he only raised the issue of Bussell's conviction because it was the subject of common gossip in the town and he was justified in his course of action to purge the honour of the council (these latter words being met with oh, oh and hisses). Gould continued, in blustering vein, that many people in the town had thanked him for raising the issue in Council and the matter affected not only the honour of the Council but that of the town (greeted with laughter). The level of discussion then deteriorated with Councillor Drewett accusing Gould of behaving in an unchristian manner.[50] Worse

followed, with Bussell preferring a charge against Gould to the effect that, within the last year, in order to prevent publicity, he had paid to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue a high penalty. Councillor Phillips pointed out that Gould had been cashiered from the army and if he was not fit for the army was he fit for the corporation? No councillor was willing to second Gould's resolution, 'that Bussell's presence must affect the honour of the council, impair its influence and degrade the office to which the burgesses had elected him.'[51] One by one, Gould's fellow councillors rose to express their disagreement with Gould's behaviour saying it lacked both discretion and charity. A second resolution, put forward by councillor Kent: 'that this council deprecates the action taken in regard to Mr. Bussell, one of its members, and desires to express its sense of his valuable services during the time he had held office' was carried by fifteen votes to four.' After some further angry altercations the matter was dropped. As the *Surrey Comet* reported: 'The subject then dropped, the Council Chamber having been the arena of an almost indescribable scene for two hours.'[52] During the debate, several of the men who rejected Gould's objections to Bussell's presence on the council made the point that they were not friends of Bussell and in fact did not know him well at all.

This whole episode gives the impression that it was used by many of those who had been on the receiving end of Gould's hectoring tones in the past to settle old scores. Bussell survived to serve a further seven years on the council but Gould was still there in 1899, out-living many of those who condemned him in 1871. This episode was not the only example of personal in-fighting in the council chamber. It highlights the parochial nature of some of the proceedings, to the detriment of engagement with wider issues affecting the borough.

5. External Relations

During the course of the nineteenth century local authorities were increasingly encouraged by central government to promote improvement schemes within their boundaries. This did not mean that they became autonomous. Any local scheme, especially if it involved raising a financial loan, required permission from a higher authority. After 1871 when the Local Government Board (LGB) which

represented central government, was constituted, this was the body to which Kingston had to apply for approval of improvement schemes. The LGB also required all local authorities to submit income and expenditure accounts.

Examples of Kingston council's inability to negotiate or even correspond in a professional manner with other organisations have already been mentioned elsewhere. Richmond council were driven to sarcasm in their reference to Kingston's 'friendly assistance', Lambeth Water Works were unhappy with their negotiations with Kingston, and Surbiton resorted to promoting its own Improvement Bill in defiance of Kingston's desire to include Surbiton in the Kingston Improvement Bill. Relations with the LGB proved to be no better. In the matter of the provision of an isolation hospital, as described in Chapter 5, a statutory requirement by 1890, correspondence between the two authorities (pretty much one sided, in effect) is revealing. During 1893 Beale Collins, the Kingston Medical Officer of Health (MOH, wrote to the LGB several times advising them of smallpox cases in the borough. The council in its role of Urban Sanitary Authority, was at the same time prevaricating in finding an appropriate site for the hospital. In response to an enquiry from the LGB about progress the Town Clerk replied on 21 February 1893 that the council would consider it in due course. On the back of this letter are various notes written at intervals by a civil servant at the LGB, when obviously nothing else was forthcoming, including, 'Please press the SA* [sic] as much as you can. They have done nothing and are likely to do nothing.'[53] In March 1893 the LGB was pressing for action on the housing improvement scheme, as well as for news about the hospital. The Assistant Secretary to the LGB wrote to Kingston in July 1892, requesting 'an account of the proceedings of the Kingston upon Thames Urban Sanitary Authority during the year ended 25 March 1892, under Part 11 of the Housing of Working Classes Act 1890.' No reply being received from Kingston, further applications were sent on 31 October, 15 December, and 26 December, requesting an immediate response. There was still no reaction. As nothing was heard by 27 March 1893 a telegram was sent. Despite urgent pleas from the MOH in his reports to the council, still nothing moved in the matter of the isolation hospital. By August 1893 the Local Government Board (LGB) noted:

> it seems quite hopeless to carry on this correspondence. The MOH seriously handicapped in his efforts by lack of support. The authority advised in 1890 that they were incurring a grave responsibility by persistently delaying to exercise their powers conferred upon them by the Public Health Act 1875.

The correspondence did carry on but only haltingly, throughout Kingston's efforts to find a site. Having found a site they delayed in sending the details needed by the LGB in order to authorise the borrowing of £1,500. The last letter from the LGB to Kingston in January 1894, on the matter of the hospital, says, 'The Board has not received further particulars as promised. Particulars requested as in enclosed form.' In the event Kingston delayed so long that improved public health conditions meant that a designated infectious diseases hospital was no longer needed. It could be said that in this instance Kingston councillors won the day, whether by deliberate prevarication or not, but at what cost to some of its citizens and certainly with a loss of good will at government level.

Another body, nearer home was the Kingston Board of Poor Law Guardians. Relations between the council and the guardians were generally uneasy and occasionally actively hostile. In 1866 the Guardians had a Medical Officer, Jackson G. Kent, at a time when the council itself had not yet appointed a Medical Officer of Health (MOH). At a meeting on 10 June 1866, J. G. Kent presented a report to the Board 'on the parts of his district where nuisances prevail.'[54] In it he itemised 15 areas of 'passing urgency' consisting variously of poor drainage, full privies, abominable stench from overflowing sewage, cottages unfit for human habitation and many other similar cause of nuisances. On 26 June 1866, Samuel Gray put a motion to the Board to the effect that steps should be taken to compel the Corporation of Kingston to put in force the sanitary laws obtained by them in 1855.[55] Gray said it was an unreasonable time since the Act to have no action taken, and quoted from it in support of his motion. He also said that he had stood alone in endeavouring to 'get the town sweeter' but had no seconder until 1861. In a passionate speech he accused three of his fellow guardians of owning cottages in which the wells or drains were in a shocking state. This brought a response 'foul lie' from one of the accused. A Mr Kent (no relation to the Medical Officer) seconded Gray's motion, adding further vituperation against the council by calling

them 'criminals in the matter and of course pleaded not guilty but when one of that very body got up and spoke from his own personal knowledge it showed that something was wrong.'[56] This is what makes the episode illuminating. Not only was Samuel Gray a Kingston councillor but four other councillors were also on the Board of Guardians and present at the meeting. One of these joked to the effect that if all was as bad in Kingston as Gray stated then 'it would be reeking with disease' and that Mr Gray looked well and hearty enough. This was a meeting of Guardians, but councillors on that board were at odds with each other. The official council response to Kent's report was to point out that he had not dated his visits to the offending properties, some of it was old news and matters had been put right and because of this there was no clear evidence. On hearing the council's response the language of some of the members of the board, ones who were also councillors, became even more intemperate, provoking an appeal to the chairman against such language. Kingston councillors, not having appointed a permanent MOH for the borough, were not going to be coerced into action by the guardians' MOH, and were seen to be squabbling between themselves and had resorted to petty excuses and pedantic quibbling to justify inaction.

6. Finance

Amongst the correspondence between the council and the LGB on the matter of the isolation hospital is a note by an official of the LGB, in December 1893, which suggests that the sanitary authority (in fact the council) is systematically ignoring the Board. In addition, this note comments 'So far as correspondence is concerned Mr Windser is a most unsatisfactory Town Clerk.'[57] In view of this alleged neglect of duty by the council, any future applications for the approval of loans for whatever purpose, be it electric lighting or any other improvements to the town were to be treated with hesitation. It was decided to place a note to this effect in all departments.

Approval for taking out loans was a necessary factor for Kingston to carry out some of the schemes for new or improved services, such as housing, sewage works and street improvements. An official return, dated 4 February 1893, from Kingston to the LGB for the financial year ending March 1892 is at Table 7.2.

Table 7.2

LOCAL ACTS AND PROVISIONAL ORDERS

Returns as to Sinking Funds and Instalments

For year ending 25 March 1892

This is a Statutory declaration signed by Edward Shill*** Phillips Treasurer of Kingston upon Thames

In connection with Kingston upon Thames Improvement Act 1888, £250 realised by sale of surplus property and applied towards the purchase of other properties. Any sum raised by sale of properties is to be deducted from the borrowing powers sanctioned by the local act.

Purpose of loan	Amount	Interest rate	Date of loan	No of years	Yearly or ½ yearly	1st instalment	Total paid
Sewage works	22859	3 3/4	16 May 1889	23 1/2	½ yearly	25 Sept 1889	1596
Street Improvements	10000	3 1/2	3 July 1891	40	yearly	3 July 1892	-
Street Improvements	5000	3 1/2	2 Sept. 1891	40	yearly	22 Sept. 1892	-
Cost of Local Act	2000	3 1/2	2 Sept. 1891	10	yearly	22 Sept. 1892	-
Annuity *	404	3 3/4	5 Nov. 1891	21	½ yearly	25 March 1892	-
Drainage works	600	3 3/4	5 Nov. 1891	10	½ yearly	5 July 1892	-

* This sum was settled on the Annuity Bond being [lately] set up by the Friends [Provident] Institution who apportioned the principal and interest

Source : TNA; Ref MH12/12447.

It appears that this return was in order, but the next return, for the year ending March 1893 produced the following reply from the LGB :

> It does not appear that any of the loans in the present return (for year ending March 1893) have been sanctioned by the Dept. and it appears desirable to enquire under what authority loans 6, 8, 9 & 10 have been contracted. The Board do not understand under what enactments some of the loans included in the return have been obtained.'[58]

The reply also commented on the number of clerical errors in the return. Even towards the end of the century Kingston was not showing a very credible or professional attitude.

Unfortunately, the records of information regarding income, expenditure and tax returns for local authorities, as required to be submitted to the LGB in the second half of the nineteenth century are incomplete. To date, although much correspondence between the LGB and various other authorities is accessible at The National Archives, there is no reference to any return from Kingston.[59] As many authorities were threatened with a £20 fine for not returning the requisite information, maybe Kingston was one of these but no record has been found. However, there are other examples of Kingston's attitude to finance on record, such as the reluctance to appoint a permanent MOH until forced to comply with the 1872 Public Health Act and the procrastination on the matter of providing an isolation hospital (whilst seeking to make use of the facilities built by other authorities). It was not on cost grounds alone that these may have been deferred, but on resistance to acceptance of perceived interference from central government.

The arguments with Surbiton about the improvement bill and the market proposal were as much about a possible loss of rate income as about loss of prestige. For most of the nineteenth century Kingston council had been in sole control of local governance and any expenditure had to be met from an increase in rates. Those who paid rates were the voters and in order to keep control councillors had to consider their constituents reaction to any increase in local taxation above any other motive. According to Hunt:

> The nature of Victorian local authority finance meant that a quite disproportionate amount of political power was vested amongst the petty bourgeois shopkeeper class who practised a unique form of irresponsible

economy. Until the extension of the franchise enjoined in the 1867 Second Reform Act, local authorities were dominated by the rate-paying small property owner. They were the constituents who regularly voted and elected themselves on to the Council.'[60]

But, as seen in Chapter 6, nothing much changed as far as interest in voting for the council in Kingston even after 1867.

7. Conclusion

The results of the analysis of the occupations of Kingston councillors between 1835 and 1900, as seen in Figures 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 show that the overall majority did indeed come from the shop keeping class. This overall majority did decrease, from 35% in 1835 to 25% in 1900, but it was a very gradual reduction and hardly significant over a period of 65 years. Retailers (or dealers) still controlled many of the council seats but as local businessmen they were, by 1890, having to compete with the attraction of London shops, a short train ride away. The brewers and distillers however were benefiting from an increase in local consumers and a widening pool of labour.

Analysis of the class status of the Kingston councillors who were dealers, the largest group on the council, using a level marker scheme devised to meet the need of analysing a very specific group of men who shared a common occupation, reveals that, within that particular group, the majority were in Class 1 (as shown on p 236).

This was a period of great change in local government or certainly the opportunity for change, and yet the residents of Kingston seem to have been reluctant to take their part in influencing events. More than a quarter of councillors served for ten years or more and as seen in Chapter 6, between 1888 and 1900 almost a third of local elections were not contested. Either voters were reluctant to make changes or else they were satisfied with the work of the incumbents of the council chamber. This would seem to suggest that there was little difference in viewpoint between the electors and the electorate. The apparent absence of any radical tendency in Kingston may be accounted for by the lack of

any political stimulus. It was not a great industrial centre, coping with an influx of factory workers, but a growing middle class suburb of London, whose new residents were more interested in furnishing their new villas than taking part in local politics. It was not until well into the twentieth century that any significant change in local representation occurred.

Certain councillors appear to have had a detached attitude to the principal Acts of Parliament related to the borough, such as the 1855 Improvement Act. As related in the drainage debate of 1861, councillor Collings questioned its contents. The likelihood of an Act to ban using the Thames as a drainage outlet was brushed aside, despite a warning from the Thames Conservators. In their efforts to keep expenditure low, and thereby the rates levied on their constituents, they incurred wasted costs on abortive projects, such as the Despard drainage scheme. The conduct of councillors in the council chamber appeared sometimes to be motivated by personalities than policies. They resented any criticism of their actions, as evidenced as early as 1835 by their response to the MCA report on the state of the borough (as detailed in Chapter1). Any suggestion of incompetence was met with bluster and jocularity, as in the case of the Board of Guardian's MOH report of 1866. This incident is also an example of the council's gaucheness in exchanges with other formal bodies. As already seen in Chapter 5, not even relations with the LGB, which should have been straightforward given the formulaic nature of such correspondence, were free from ignorance and lack of attention to the rules governing municipal financial dealings. It can be said that there was a fair degree of bumbling at the Town Hall.

[1] Robert Morris and Richard Trainor (eds.), *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.29.

[2] Christopher Hamlin uses the idea to identify the complex interactive factors that motivated and influenced the decisions of local government. 'By studying the various inputs into a particular local authority, for instance the level of competence, local circumstances, reaction to change, professionalism and financial management, to name but a few, it should be possible to determine why it functioned as it did.' Christopher Hamlin, 'Muddling in Bumbledon: on the enormity of large sanitary improvements in four British towns, 1855-1885', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 32 (1), 1988, p.59.

[3] This apparent reluctance is addressed earlier, in Chapter 1.

[4] John Garrard, 'Uban elites, 1850-1914: The rule and decline of a new squirearchy', *Albion*, 27, (4), 1995, pp. 583-621.

[5] In fact, as the 1859 *Poor Rate Evaluation Book* for Kingston shows, there was indeed some of this dependency between councillors.

[6] R. J. Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', in M. Daunton (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. III, pp. 395-426, Richard Trainor, 'The Middle Class' in *Cambridge Urban History of Britain* vol. III pp. 673-713 and Simon Szreter,. 'A Central role for local government? The example of late Victorian Britain', *History and Policy Papers*, May 2002. From the History and Policy website: http://www.historyandpolicy.org. Accessed 4 June 2005.

[7] Gownsmen were those freemen who had filled the office of bailiff. They were elected from four nominees on the Sunday before Michaelmas. For a detailed account of the government of Kingston pre 1835 see the *Victoria County History for Surrey* 1911, p.496 and Chapter 1.

[8] A high proportion of gentry classification were women and therefore ineligible for most of the century. In an 1845 directory for Kingston, there are 144 names in the 'gentry, clergy and nobility' list (none of these with any title above 'honourable). 15 of these are on the thesis database. In the 'traders' list 60 of the names are on the database. 7 men are on both lists, 6 of these being noted as magistrates, which accounted for translation from trader to gentry.

[9] Continuity of recording councillor data, pre 1835, is not complete as the Minutes for 1819-1827 and 1832-1834 are missing.

[10] Shaan Butters, *The Book of Kingston* (Frome: Baron, 1995), p.89.

[11] He was successively Master of the Royal Mint, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary and Secretary for War; he was dead by 1828, although his widow retained their residence at Norbiton Hall for some years afterwards.

[12] Ironically a peer who did have a significant effect on the development of Kingston was Lord Cottenham, whose estate at nearby Wimbledon being under threat from the original railway line from London to Southhampton via Kingston town, used his influence to divert the line so that initially it went through Surbiton.

[13] Two of the exceptions being the firm of Nutthals and Sons who catered for local social events such as garden parties and whose family.provided several councillors, and George Moatt caterer of high class amusement and concerts.

[14] William Hardman, *The Hardman Papers: a Further Selection (1865-1868) from the Letters and Memoirs of Sir William Hardman* (London: Constable, 1930), p 319.

[15] The term 'councillor' is used throughout, although pre 1835 the terms used would be alderman, burgess, common council man.

[16] Hardman, *The Hardman Papers: a Further Selection (1865-1868).*

[17] Unfortunately there is a higher number of Not Known occupations in the list of 1836 councillors which makes any meaningful deduction unreliable.

[18] *Surrey Comet,* 22 January 1881.

[19] As has been discussed in Chapter 3, the broad occupation headings of the Booth-Armstrong coding system, can lead to alternative results if allied with dual occupations listed on a census return; in the case of Figure 7.6, if secondary occupations are used for input data, instead of the first listed, the manufacturing and dealing sectors remain at the same level in 1845 as in 1835.

[20] Both Shaan Butters in *The Book of Kingston* and June Sampson in *All Change: Kingston, Surbiton and New Malden in the 19th Century,* revised ed. (Kingston upon Thames: News Origin Ltd., 1991) refer to King's land dealings.

[21] As a social footnote, in 1851 the family employed a general servant but in 1861, by which time the eldest daughter was 16 and no longer a scholar, no live-in servant is recorded. It seems possible that this daughter was assisting with the household and dispensing the need for live-in domestic.

[22] All of the information in this paragraph is based on data in Kingston1.mdb.

[23] Edward Higgs, *Making Sense of the Census - Revisited* (London: IHR, 2005), pp. 154-7.

[24] E. W Wrigley, (ed), *Nineteenth- Century Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p.201.

[25] Any dealer who was also a Magistrate automatically moves up to status Class 1, a further distortion which has not been applied here.

[26] Wrigley, *Nineteenth Century Society*, p.203.

[27] The 3 periods were selected to show almost equal periods of time and conveniently cover approximate quartiles of the century.

[28] Charles Harvey, Edmund M. Green and Penelope J. Corfield (eds.), *The Westminster Historical Database; Voters, Social Structure and Electoral Behaviour* (Bristol: Bristol Academic Press,1998), pp. 71-117.

[29] Harvey, Green and Corfield (eds.), The Westminster Historical Database; Voters, *Social Structure and Electoral Behaviour,* p.73.

[30] *Reading Mercury,* 6 January1836.

[31] Alan Alexander, *Borough Government and Politics: Reading 1835-1985* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p.10.

[32] Jacqueline Cooper, *The Well-Ordered Town; a Story of Saffron Walden, Essex 1792-1862* (Saffron Walden: Cooper Publications, 2000). p 58.

[33] *Surrey Comet,* 22 June 1861.

[34] Collings' son, John James, was to follow his father on to the council and serve on the drainage committee in the 1880s.

[35] Sampson, *All Change*, p.74.

[36] *Surrey Comet*, 22 June 1861.

[37] *Surrey Comet*, 22 June 1861.

[38] For the full story of Croydon's drainage history see Brian Lancaster, *The 'Croydon Case': Dirty Old Town to Model Town. The Making of the Croydon Board of Health and the Croydon Typhoid Epidemic of 1852–3* (Croydon: Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society, 2001).

[39] Butters, *The Book of Kingston*, p.123.

[40] *Surrey Comet,* 29 June 1861.

[41] Christopher Hamlin, 'Muddling in Bumbledon,'p.60.

[42] North Kingston Local History Room (NK): KB1/6., *Kingston Council Minutes,* 18 November 1861.

[43] Winner of the first competition for the best drainage scheme.

[42] *Surrey Comet*, 17 January 1863.

[45] *Surrey Comet*, 17 January 1863.

[46] *Surrey Comet*, 1 August 1863.

[47] *Surrey Comet*, 28 July 1900, following Gould's death earlier that month.

[48] James Bussell, solicitor, councillor 1870-1877.

[49] *Surrey Comet*, 5 August 1871.

[50] John Drewett, schoolmaster, councillor 1869-1875.

[51] *Surrey Comet*, 5 August 1871.

[52] *Surrey Comet*, 5 August 1871.

[53] All Local Government Board (LGB) correspondence is at The National Archives(TNA): MH12/12447.

[54] *Surrey Comet*, 23 June 1866.

[55] A reference to the Kingston Improvement Act of 1855.

[56] *Surrey Comet*, 14 July 1866.

[57] TNA: MH12/12447.

[58] TNA: MH12/12447.

[59] TNA: HO 92.

[60] Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem, the Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p.294.

Chapter 8

THE GOVERNORS AS CITIZENS

> At the risk of producing a caricature, let us begin by looking at nineteenth century local politics in Britain. The one thing they were is local, with penetrations by the centre often bitterly resisted.[1]

1. Introduction

This chapter is designed to shed light on the networks that connected Kingston councillors, and to test the hypothesis stated in Chapter 1 that social and economic networks and self-interest help engendered an amateur (in the sense of unskilled or inexperienced) response to the need for improvement. Garrard contends that 'the occupational background of those serving on the main governing bodies in Bolton, Rochdale and Salford, shows that they constituted an economic elite.'[2] The occupational profile of Kingston councillors over most of the nineteenth century can now be seen as an example of a typical shopocracy. Without access to personal financial papers it cannot be said with authority that this group constituted an economic elite but some evidence can be gleaned, from Census Enumerators' Books (CEBs) about the lifestyle of these shopkeepers. Social networks in this context refer in particular to family relationships, both contemporaneous and between generations, which linked councillors. Other networks, or associations, which are likely to have fostered common cause were the various voluntary organisations active in the borough. Some councillors were also connected in business. Using the thesis database it is possible to create a table showing those councillors who were related either by family or business. It is also possible to identify councillors engaged with voluntary organizations and the burgeoning institutions, such as building societies, to identify whether a core of men existed who accepted offices such as secretary, trustee or committee member.

Overt political connections are not easy to discern. The only firm evidence of an individual's association (at this period) coming from occasional press reports of a political party meeting which include those present, or the names of officers and committee. Such detailed reports are infrequent however. The evidence of the 1865 election poll book is the only primary source linking individual councillors with political intent and hardly constitutes any permanent political attachment. It is of course possible that this circumstance can be applied to other towns.

2. Family and Business

The closest social connection is surely that of family, either by birth or marriage. There are a number of Kingston families with a tradition of service on the council who were indeed related, as shown in Table 8.2 (p.212). This reveals that several, almost dynastic, families were prominent in council affairs. For example, three Frickers are listed, with Arthur Edward being both son and nephew of councillors. Five members of the Fricker family were councillors between 1834 and 1890. Thomas Hunter Fricker first entered the council in 1842 to be followed by his younger brother Edmund Hunter Fricker in 1853. They served together from then onward until 1865. Their father Thomas served from 1834 until 1852. With the other Fricker councillors, James (1835-1849), and later, Arthur Edward, son of Thomas Hunter, carrying on the family tradition by becoming a councillor in 1879, for over fifty years there were always at least two family members on the council.[3] The council members of the family came from two of the principal industries in Kingston in the nineteenth century – brewing and timber. They were very much establishment figures with Thomas being a Bailiff of the town before the Municipal Corporations Act (MCA) of 1835 and thereafter being Mayor twice. James was a churchwarden in 1820/21 and Mayor of the old Assembly in 1826.

Table 8.1 **Fricker family councillors**

Surna	Forename	Occupation	On council	Comments
Frick	James Hunter	auctioneer	1835-1849	Died 07/03/1888,
Frick	Thomas Hunter	brewer	1842-1865	Died 01/12/1873
Frick	Edmund	timber	1853-1890	Died 10/06/1894
Frick	Arthur Edward	brewer	1879- 1881	Died 09/01/1886
Frick	Thomas	cooper	1834-1852	

Source: database Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

Table 8.2 Family and business connections of Kingston councillors in 19th century

Surname	Forenames	Relationship	Surname	Forenames
Bond	George	By marriage	Frayling	Henry W.
Collings	John James	Son of	Collings	John
Douglas	Edmund	Business	Lowe	Edmund
East	Walter	Son of	East	Joseph
Fricker	Thomas Hunter	Brother of	Fricker	Edmund
Fricker	Arthur Edward	Son of	Fricker	Thomas Hunter
Fricker	Edmund Hunter	Brother of	Fricker	Thomas Hunter
Gray	Samuel Jnr.	Son of	Gray	Samuel Snr.
Hodgson	William	Father of	Hodgson	Charles Durant
Hodgson	William Sanford	Brother of	Hodgson	Charles Durant
Looker	Benjamin Jnr.	Son of	Looker	Benjamin Snr.
Lowe	Edmund	By marriage	Fricker	Thomas
Marsh	Bedford	Nephew of	Marsh	John
Mercer	William	By marriage	Ranyard	William
Nightingale	James Thrupp	Son of	Nightingale	James
Nightingale	Stephen	Nephew of	Nightingale	George
Nuthall	William Henry	Nephew of	Nuthall	Charles
Nuthall	George	Father of	Nuthall	Charles
Priest	Alfred	Business	Woolnough	William
Ranyard	Samuel	By marriage	Shrubsole	John
Ranyard	Samuel	By marriage	Shrubsole	William Jnr.
Ranyard	Samuel	By marriage	Shrubsole	Henry
Ranyard	William	Father of	Ranyard	Samuel
Shirtliff	Edward M.	Son of	Shirtliff	Edward D.
Shrubsole	John	Son of	Shrubsole	William Snr.
Shrubsole	William Jnr.	Son of	Shrubsole	William Snr.
Shrubsole	Henry	Son of	Shrubsole	William Snr.
Shrubsole	William Snr.	By marriage	Phillips	Charles Thomas

Source: database Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

None of the three Frickers mentioned in this table were listed in the nobility and gentry list in trade directories, they were confined to trade lists but their continuity of service on the council is shown in Table 8.1

Several other members of the Fricker family served the town in different ways. At the inaugural meeting of the Kingston Gas, Light and Coke Company on 6 September 1854 William Augustus Fricker, who never actually became a councillor but was brother to councillor James Hunter Fricker, was appointed secretary to the company. In the 1851 census he is recorded as superintendent of the gasworks. Like so many of the Kingston notables he seems to have had at least two strings to his bow. In 1861 he was an auctioneer (possibly the family business

in which both his father and grandfather had engaged). A search of the database compiled by the Centre for Local History Studies for other auctioneers in 1861, shows that of the ten listed auctioneers, three were existing councillors, one had been and one was to be a councillor. Add William Augustus Fricker as a councillor relative and there is a 60% representation of the auction business at the seat of borough power at that date. From looking at this one family one can begin to see connections between council and business. William Augustus continued with his two sources of income, being secretary to the Gas, Light and Coke Company in 1871, and appraiser and house agent at the time of his death in 1889. Apart from his relatives on the council, he came into contact with many other councillors through his work for the gas company. Although there were no Frickers amongst the company proprietors in 1854, there were ten past, present or future councillors on the board. In addition, Abram Cox the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) for the Kingston Union for several years during the 1860 was one of the original proprietors.

The company banker was John Shrubsole, a member of a well known Kingston family which was represented on the council. Another very high profile figure who was both a director of, and solicitor to, the company was Charles Edward Jemmett, town clerk, clerk to the magistrates and Commissioner of Land and Taxes. Through his association with the company, until his death in 1858, he must have contributed valuable knowledge and experience to the venture. From advertisements in the local press there is evidence that Jemmett acted as solicitor to James Fricker in his auction business.[4] It was only later in the century that officials of the authority, in common with most other authorities, were expected to relinquish private practice - thus burdening the council with a salary appropriate for a full time professional employee. Several of the Gas Company directors or proprietors had other connections. Gray, Jones, Phillips and Ranyard were also members of the Board of Guardians. Phillips, Ranyard, Shrubsole and Williams were co-trustees of various charities.

Another Fricker, Henry John, had a stationer's business in the Market Place in the 1850's. When the council wanted to print copies of the new byelaws in 1857

they quite properly put the job out to tender. Three local printers responded with tenders for printing the byelaws as follows:

	£ s d
W. Lindsay	2. 10. 00
Phillipson	2. 10. 00
H. J. Fricker	1. 15. 00 [5]

Needless to say, Henry John Fricker won the contract with the lowest bid. Henry John also served briefly on the council in 1859 to 1860. It is not possible to confirm that insider knowledge was involved.

Other families who had a tradition of council service were the Nightingales, Nuthalls, Marshs and Shrubsoles. As can be seen from the abstract from the thesis database, the Nightingales were represented on the council from 1834 to 1886, with only two short gaps.

Table 8.3 **Nightingale family councillors**

Surname	Forenames	Occupation	On Council	Comments
Nightingale	James	auctioneer	1834-1864	Magistrate, Mayor in 1836, died 1875
Nightingale	George	brewer	1845-1852	Maltster, uncle of Stephen
Nightingale	Stephen	brewer	1871-1886	Nephew of George Nightingale
Nightingale	James Thrupp	auctioneer	1869-1882	Son of James. Commanding Officer 5th SRV, styled as 'Captain' in some reports. Member of the Lower Thames Valley Main Sewerage Board

Source: database Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

The Nuthall family, another first family of Kingston, tea dealers and confectioners, provided catering for the most sought after social events in town. When William Hardman allowed the annual Kingston and Surbiton Horticultural Society's Exhibition to be held in the garden of his home, Norbiton Hall in June 1869, the firm of Nuthall was there:

> The Horticultural Exhibition came off in my garden...Nuthall and Sons had a tent for ices and refreshments. [6]

Although only three Nuthalls appear on the database of councillors, the Nuthall family was influential in Kingston society in that they provided the premier catering and restaurant facilities in the town. All three Nuthall councillors, though no longer serving members of the council, were active in the family business in the late 1890s. After serving two terms as Mayor in 1884 and 1885 Charles E. Nuthall became Chairman, Alfred was deputy Chairman, with the elderly Edward still one of the partners.

Table 8.4 **Nuthall family councillors**

Surname	Forenames	Occupation	on council	Comments
Nuthall	Alfred	tea dealer	1874-1898	Cousin of Charles Edward
Nuthall	William H.	confectioner	Not a councillor	
Nuthall	George	confectioner	1848	Father of Charles Edward
Nuthall	Edward	tea dealer	1857-1875	
Nuthall	Charles Edward	confectioner, employing 21 men, 8 boys and 5 women	1889	Cousin of Alfred

Source: database Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

The Nuthalls' status in the town is shown by the report of the Annual Meeting of Nuthalls Ltd in 1899. Amongst the shareholders were Dr E. M. Shirtliff, the former MOH for the borough, former councillor Samuel Gray J.P. and William Drewett (editor of the *Surrey Comet,* 1870-1875), indicating a level of association

with important members of the community. George Clifton Sherrard, former councillor (and Mayor in 1895) was the solicitor to the company. One line of connections from Hardman to Nuthall to Samuel Gray leads to the Gas Company records which, as well as Gray, record other prominent Kingston councillors, such as Jones, Mercer, Ranyard and Shrubsole.

Another of the town's councillor tradesmen who was known to Hardman was James Macrostie (councillor 1876-1888), 'the man who puts up my boilers.' Macrostie ran a successful business in house decorating, glazing and general property maintenance, enhanced by involvement in property development. Macrostie and Nuthall are only two of the councillors who no doubt made the most of their business opportunities.

Three generations of the Gray family served on the council, covering almost the whole of the century. Father, son and grandson, all named Samuel and all maltsters and all involved in numerous borough activities. Samuel Gray senior, on the council from 1837 to 1879 (confusingly referred to initially in the council minutes as 'junior' in 1838) was one of the elite band who promoted the Scientific and Literary Institute, being its secretary in 1842. Also in this band were Samuel Ranyard, on the council 1840-1864 (another co-director on the Gas Company Board) and Frederick Gould, an energetic presence on the council 1851-1886. These three were therefore co-councillors for many years and Gray and Ranyard were following in their fathers' local government footsteps. Socially, there were also connections between these men. Samuel Ranyard's first wife died in 1856 and two years later he married Sarah, daughter of William Shrubsole, the banker for the Gas Company. William, Samuel's father had married the daughter of fellow councilor William Mercer.

From the table of relationships (Table 8.1) it is clear that not only councillors and senior officers had a tradition of service. The dynastic tendency of certain Kingston families toward council service was not confined to councillors. The Parslow family contributed to the running of the council for many years. Joseph Parslow was the hall keeper and mace bearer from 1852 until 1874, at which time

his son William was appointed to succeed him. Joseph's wife Harriet was the hall cleaner and is a rarity at this date in being one of the few women mentioned in the council minutes, certainly the only one to appear regularly in the annual accounts.[7] On retirement Joseph was granted a pension through the support of Henry Peek M.P. William was still the mace bearer at the turn of the century and his son, Thomas, was the corporation tipstaff. They were both in the civic procession attending Frederick Gould's funeral in 1900.[8] It is evident that the council regarded the Parslows as part of the civic family, a relic of the old squirearchy relationship of patronage.

Another connection, not between councillors, but between a councillor and an officer is that between Edward D. and Edward M. Shirtliff. Edward senior was a councillor for a very short period (1863-1864) with Edward junior being appointed the borough's first MOH in April 1873. No improper use of insider influence perhaps, but no doubt Edward senior had retained some useful connections from his time as councillor. The Shirtliff connection is probably the only one where some collusion or influence may have occurred, by Shirtliff senior lobbying former colleagues on behalf of his son. There is no overt evidence for this however.

Looking at the dates of council service of the men listed in Table 8.1, it is clear that it is only in a few instances that those related by family or business were in the council chamber in the same years. Only members of the Fricker, Marsh, Looker and Shrubsole families might have formed any sort of power block. Scanning of council minutes and press reports of town council meetings reveals no family alliances in debate. The idea that family connections could have influenced decision making is of course possible but, with no evidence to substantiate this, it cannot be seen as a factor which influenced the running of the town. In Chapter 7 it was posited that Garrard's model of a modern squirearchy might be applied to the leaders of the borough in nineteenth century Kingston. From the evidence of Tables 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 it is clear that there were a number of families who can be considered as dynasties by virtue of their continued representation on the council and by their kinship and business connections.

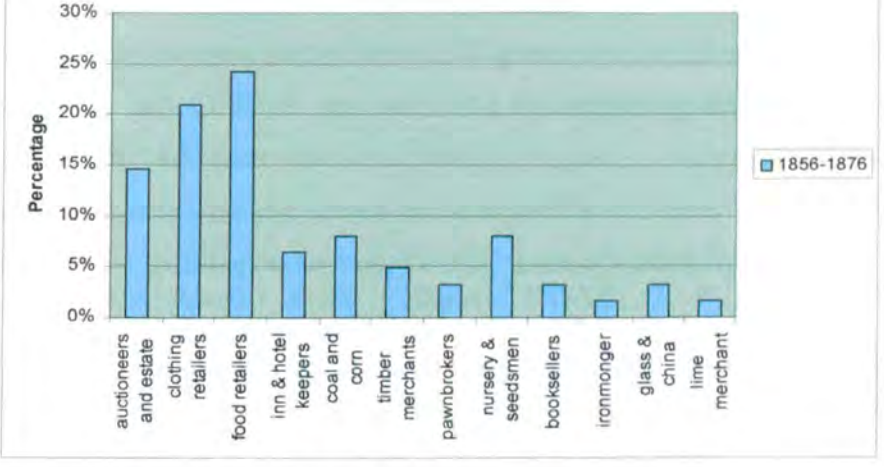
3. Business and voluntarism connections

Freemasonry is not included in Garrard's quest for an urban squirearchy in the nineteenth century. Research into lodges which met in Kingston reveals the brethren to be predominantly self-made men; perhaps at this time freemasonry was inherently an urban attraction. Then as now, borough lodges held attraction for ambitious men. The three local lodges listing Kingston names drew upon a large area of north Surrey for their membership and that may be a significant factor, in that the proportion of Kingston names is small. Perhaps Kingston men preferred to be big fish in a small pond. These lodges initiated, or raised, at least 40 Kingston men between 1835-1897, with 28 of these being councillors at one time or another. There are no Frickers nor Nightingales recorded; the only prominent names included are one Nuthall and one Shrubsole. Several of the longer serving councillors such as Philip Jones, John Holland, George Wade and George Sherrard were Dobie Lodge brethren. Although they were fellow councillors over many years, three of them entering the council in the same year, their disparate occupational backgrounds may have led to freemasonry being the only other association between them.[9]

The analysis in Chapter 7 of the occupations of Kingston councillors between 1835 and 1900, indicates that the dealing sector was the most consistently prominent. This included coal and corn merchants, butchers, bakers and cheesemongers as well as booksellers and auctioneers, quite a diverse grouping. Using the database to break down the individual occupations within this dealing classification one can see that there was a high number of shopkeepers in the years 1835-1876. Figure 8.1 highlights, once again, the predominance of food, clothing and auctioneering (auctioneers usually also acted as estate agents) businesses in mid-century. These men were the providers of goods and services essential to the life of the borough. They were no doubt rivals for custom in some instances, but they had a common philosophy of commerce and a need to balance their books. This might be thought an advantageous background to take into the council chamber. But it is evident from reports of council debates that many of these shopkeepers were unable, or unwilling, to apply their financial expertise to the wider arena of council responsibilities. In most cases they ran their own

businesses successfully but seemed to have been hampered by small town, parochial attitudes when it came to managing the borough's finances. The larger scale economy involved in running a town of a rapidly rising population was of a far greater complexity than running a shop or small business.

Figure 8.1 Councillors employed in the Dealing Sector 1856 to 1876



Source: Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading [10]

Looking at the next largest representation, the manufacturing sector, it was the brewers, distillers and maltsters who were the most numerous, with seven brewers, three maltsters and two distillers on the council in the period 1856-76. Other local industries were represented by two brick-makers, two tallow chandlers and a tanner. There was no heavy industry in the town at this time. Among the public service and professional occupations there were nine solicitors and perhaps surprisingly five surgeons. One is tempted from this figure, to see a tenuous connection with the drainage problem over the nineteenth century but there is no particular evidence in Kingston that this is what motivated medical men to stand for public office. In the overall picture the shopkeepers and beershop keepers (or related trades) appear most prominent.

Many of the councillors contributed to the organisation of the various building societies which were established in the town in the 1860s, when new areas were being developed. Councillor John Collings, chairing a meeting, in 1865, to consider the proposal for one such society thought it was a thing much required, especially by the mechanics. However, not everyone was in favour:

> A gentleman present thought that such a society...would be successful if it were carried out strictly on just principles, Kingston is not a place to be taken by storm, and he was sorry to say, after more than 40 years observation, that the working men of the town were totally indifferent, and seldom appreciated anything formed for their benefit. They were fast enough in kicking foot balls about through the streets, and appreciated the favour too, in being allowed to do so, but those sort of actions and employments would not raise them in the social scale, nor improve their circumstances in life.[11]

Fortunately this pessimistic view of Kingston working men did not influence the meeting, and Collings was not alone in supporting the building society movement. By 1872 there were three building societies in Kingston. Many of the Trustees were men who also served on the council at one time:

> *Kingston Building Society* : B. Looker, James Goulter, E. H. Fricker
> *94th Starr-Bowkett Building Society*: F.Gould, J. W. Davidson, E. H. Fricker, S. Herrick, H. W. Linton.
> *108th Starr-Bowkett Building Society*: H. French, T. Long, B. Marsh, S. Herrick, with the secretary being yet another Fricker, although never a councillor.

Another organisation to which a councillor belonged was his church. The greatest number, whose church affiliation has been identified, belonged to All Saints, the parish church. The first nonconformist was elected to the council in 1851 and, following the election of the first nonconformist Mayor in 1865, several other nonconformists followed in the role. Further research is required to find if there was an increase in the election of nonconformist councillors, and whether such an increase can be related to a change in attitude to local legislation.

A feature of many communities in the nineteenth century was the volunteer military brigade. During the late 1850's there was growing apprehension as to the prospects of a French invasion of Great Britain, hence the formation of local volunteer forces for home defence. During the 1850s and 60s, eight councillors were officers of the 5th Surrey Rifle Brigade, based in Kingston. Magnus George Moatt (councillor 1882-1897) served as colour sergeant, while James Thrupp Nightingale (councillor 1869-1882) was the commanding officer for a time. The latter was sometimes referred to as 'Captain' Nightingale in press reports. Many councillors acted as trustees for the borough's many charities. This was a duty taken on in compliance with the 1835 MCA. One of the changes required by that

act was that administration of charities, which had hitherto been in the management of the council, should be transferred to trustees. The intention was to separate the administration of charities from that of municipal property. In Kingston, this separation was made no doubt, in principal, but the trustees were appointed by the council and in an account of *The Municipal Charities of Kingston* compiled in 1864, eight of the seventeen current trustees were sitting councillors and a further four were former councillors.[12] With four of the remainder being local vicars this would be a group with the acquired knowledge of the borough to administer charities. Nevertheless it was another circle of familiar names and faces. Earlier in the century, in 1817, the founder members of the Kingston Association for the Bettering the Conditions and Morals of the Poor (referred to in Chapter 6) included eight men of the borough who were, or became, councillors between 1834-1854. One of these was the President, two were association secretaries and the treasurer was William Shrubsole Snr., banker and councillor 1834-1836.[13]

In a comparatively small town, evidence of the same group of men being active in the municipal business and social affairs of that town is not surprising. What is important about the connections is the degree to which this interdependence of the same set of 'activists' may have impacted upon debate in the council chamber. In order to test the idea that perhaps connections through organisations outside the activities of the council could have created some common cause, other than party political, the database has been analysed to reveal just how many councillors shared areas of voluntary work. Of the 250 councillors recorded, 70 are definitely known to have given their services to the Poor Law Union, served as trustees to any of the borough's charities, served with the volunteer rifles, acted for building societies et cetera. Of these however, only three are known to have had involvement with more than two organisations over the same period.[14] This would seem an unlikely state of affairs, in a relatively small town. Although the results of the analysis indicate that a shared voluntary involvement appears unlikely to have played much part in creating a recognisable association of fellow councillors, and would therefore have little influence upon their actions in council, there is room for reasonable speculation that if evidence was available from personal histories a greater degree of association might be

found[15]. On the evidence available however it is difficult to identify any network or association of councillors within the town's institutions. However there were other aspects of borough life which gave councillors a common interest. For example the development of Spring Grove, addressed in Chapter 5, benefited from the work and investment of many names, P. W. Porter, William Ranyard and his father-in-law William Mercer, Walter Wilkinson, James Nightingale, James Macrostie and Alfred Nuthall., as explained in Chapter 5.[16]

4. Neighbours

In a small borough it is inevitable that there will be certain areas of the town where those of a like financial or social status will congregate. In 1851 in Kingston, a period before the major expansion of private domestic development, the Market Place was the centre of business activity and the majority of shop owners also lived on part of the premises. It was not until a few years later that those with shops or businesses in the Market Place separated their domestic life from that of commerce. It is not surprising therefore to find that in 1851 there were seventen past, present or future councillors living there, as seen below:

Table 8.5 Councillors dwelling in the Market Place in 1851

Surname	Forename	Address 1851	Period on council
Bartlett	Henry	Market Place	1858
Bond	George	Market Place	1842-1845
Frayling	Henry W.	Market Place	1882-1887
Fricker	Thomas	Market place	1834-1852
Gould	Frederick	Market Place	1851-1886
Hollingdale	Joseph	Market Place	1849-1852
Jones	William Beale	Market Place	1835-1854
Marsh	John	Market Place	1858-1879
Mitchell	Samuel	Market Place	1828-1852
Pamphilon	William	Market Place	1834-1861
Ranyard	Samuel	Market Place	1840-1864
Reed	John	Market Place	1834-1851
Saunders	John	Market Place	1857-1858
Shrubsole	William Snr.	Market Place	1834-1836
Shrubsole	John	Market Place	1859-1873
Shrubsole	William Jnr.	Market place	
Williams	John	Market Place	1855-1871

Source: Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

Of those seventeen, eight were sitting councillors at the time of the 1851 census. In 1861 eight sitting councillors were residing near to each other in the

High Street, with five other past or future councillors also nearby. It is most unlikely that they did not meet socially and therefore sometimes mix business with pleasure. In contrast, the councillors sitting in 1891 had homes in diverse parts of the borough.

Table 8.6 Councillors' dwellings in 1891

Surname	Forename	Address 1891	On Council
Allard	William	Crescent Road,	1891-1898
Baker	Charles	Gibbon Road 5	1886-1899
Boucher	John B.	St..Andrews Square	1891-1896
Carn	William	Fairfield South	1882-1899
Collings	John James	Victoria Road, Ivy	1878-1900
Copping	Alfred	Eden Street, 59	1885-1898
Coppinger	Edward Thos	High Street	1885-1898
Davidson	John William	Fairfield South	1857-1895
Davison	Thomas	Surbiton Park Terrace	1887-1896
East	Walter	Avenue Elmers	1874-1891
Gould	Frederick	St James Road, 1	1851-1899
Goulden	William	Acre Road, 98-100	1890-1899
Gray	Samuel	Gibbon Road, 2	1884-1895
Gridley	Frederick	Richmond Road,	1883-1898
Hart	William	Thames Street, 27	1873-1899
Hide	Joseph	Market Place	1876-1892
Homersha	Alfred Wyeth	Richmond Park, 18	1896-1897
Huckle	George	Birkenhead Avenue	1891-1899
Jones	Philip	Fairfield South, 13	1859-1894
Marsh	Bedford	Cadogan Road	1864-1898
Moatt	Magnus George	Oil Mill Lane,	1882-1897
Nuthall	Alfred	Thames Street, 5	1874-1898
Salmon	Gifford Thos.	St James Road, 6	1886-1898
Scotter	Charles	Surbiton Hill Park,	1889-1896

Source Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

Although some of these addresses are still near to the Market place, others range to north, east and west of the borough.

Can any conclusions be made to support the idea that the actions of this local authority were influenced by a number of common causes or association, as considered above? Certainly the evidence of family connections as in Table 8.2, taken together with the civic role played by certain Kingston names, such as Fricker, Nuthall, East, Marsh and Nightingale suggests a level of continuity which borders on self perpetuating. As well as a history of being part of the governance of the borough these particular families represented a significant part of the dealing and manufacturing economy of the town. Dealing and manufacturing

together in this instance could be said to part of the town's service industry. Therefore taking the two sectors together they may well have had an influential role.

Another area of Kingston life which was shared by many councillors, was property ownership. Unfortunately, only one *Poor Rate Valuation Book* has survived, that for 1859.[17] On its own, this list of property owned or leased by Kingstonians can only provide a glimpse into the structure of land and building ownership within the borough. It has sufficient detail however to indicate the pattern of ownership. There are 612 entries covering, houses, shops, cottage, stables and workshops as well as some land. Of these 612 entries, 214 have the names of 46 past, present or future councillor as owner. This meant that, in 1859, almost a third of the land and buildings, in an area approximating to the central area of the town, was owned by 46 men with some council connection. Admittedly there was variation in the extent of ownership, but it is notable that many of the properties were owned by one councillor and occupied by another. This would seem to at least some evidence of association.

Further evidence of both association and property ownership is found in councillors' wills. The last will and testament of Thomas Fricker (councillor 1834-1852) was signed and witnessed on 24 February 1849, by Charles Edward Jemmett (Town Clerk) and William Shrubsole, banker to the Corporation. A codicil of 21 July 1852 was witnessed by R. F. Lambert (Kingston banker and future councillor) and J. Bushell, clerk to Mr. Jemmett above.[18] A second codicil signed on 10 October 1857, was witnessed by William Wayland Kershaw (Medical Practitioner) and Henry John Fricker, one time councillor. The first codicil referred to 'several freehold messauages or tenements, lands and herediments situate at Kingston upon Thames' purchased with his son Thomas Hunter Fricker. In addition to his property in Kingston Fricker left bequests of land and property in the nearby villages of Weston Green and Thames Ditton. The evidence of the census record in 1851 of Thomas Fricker as 'Magistrate, cooper employing 4 men' rather understates his substance.

5. Conclusion

The parochial attitude of Kingston to the consequences of urban (and suburban) growth was difficult to maintain in the face of the development of an urban infrastructure. The need for electricity, water and transport systems, for example impacted on ratepayers and councillors alike, both from the need for financial investment and town planning issues:

It is important to recognise that in the early years of the century, the owners of the private companies - gas only at that stage - were often major local ratepayers. Together with bankers, lawyers and other professionals, they would form the local body of improvement commissioners or councillors. By the late nineteenth century they were a much more dispersed group as capital came from various sources and the local ratepayers were as likely to be dominated by shopkeepers.[19]

This is not something which can be applied to Kingston. It is true that the private gas company was owned by major local ratepayers but they did not number many bankers or lawyers among them. The same group of men were prominent on the local council but far from being dominated by shopkeepers only in the late nineteenth century, the local ratepayers had been ruled by shopkeepers for most of the century.

The hypothesis that social and economic networks and self interest were responsible for the hesitancy which marked the council's actions at this time is difficult to prove. Certainly there were family connections and some business partnerships but there is no overt evidence of influence arising from these. Some councillors would meet on manoeuvres with the volunteer rifles, some would meet on the square of their masonic lodge and most would pray together with fellow councillors in the church of their choice. But any charge of collusion or actual factionalism arising from these or other associations would be invidious. The common factor of property ownership which did connect many of these men (some to quite a substantial degree) might have been expected to militate towards a better understanding of town governance than appears from their handling of such issues as the town drainage.

It is not only with the advantage of hindsight that the lack of understanding of their responsibilities has become evident. The editor of the *Surrey Comet* expressed his thoughts bluntly in October 1865 on the subject of the election for Mayor:

> Not having slightest idea as to who is likely to be the next Mayor of Kingston, in offering some remarks upon the qualifications for that office we cannot be accused of making them with the intention of any personal application. It is especially with reference to the Mayor's duties as President of the Town Council that we would offer the result of our observation of the Council during the last five or six years. During the whole of that time it has not been our good fortune to see in the civic chair a gentleman who could be said really to understand its duties, and to know how the proper discharge of them would conduce to the expedition of business and improve the tone and character of the assembly he presides over. Few men possess all the knowledge and qualifications necessary to make a thoroughly efficient chairman... A man is wanted who can be dignified without being pompous, who can unite firmness with urbanity, who will give patient and untiring attention to what is going forward without taking a partisan part in the discussion, which he must keep from overflowing its proper channel ensuring each speaker a fair hearing, while compelling all to conform to the rules of debate. To effect this last named most desirable object it is most important that the chairman should make himself master of those rules.[20]

The Mayors of the previous 6 years had been:

Table 8.7 **Mayors 1858-1864**

Mayor	Surname	Forename	Occupation	On Council
1858-59	Williams	John	kept the Griffin	1855-1871
1860	Gray	Samuel	maltster	1837-1879
1861	Hodgson	William	brewer	1860-1862
1862	Walker	Thomas	builder	1848-1867
1863	Weston.	John C.	linen draper	1853-1864
1864	Williams	John	kept the Griffin	1855-1871

Source: Kingston1.mdb. P.F. Reading

The councillor who was elected Mayor in November 1865 was the towns's first non-conformist mayor, Joseph East.

There did however exist a group of councillors whose influence must have had some power in the town. Members of a small group of families such as the Frickers, Nuthalls, the Marsh's, Grays and Nightingales presided over the affairs of the borough for most of the century. They were willing to stand for election and it seems to have become a family tradition. Was the reason for this altruism or civic duty or was it a desire to be at the heart of council deliberations for self

interest? Whichever it was, the result was a town elite of half a dozen families who dominated the life and development of the town.

[1] Mike Goldsmith and John Garrard, 'Urban governance: some reflections' in Robert J. Morris, and Richard H. Trainor, (eds.), Urban Governance: Britain *and Beyond since* 1750 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p.17.

[2] John Garrard *Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns 1830-1880* (Manchester: Manchester University Press,1983), p. 13.

[3] Served 1879-1881.

[4] *Surrey Standard*, May 16 1835 et alia.

[5] North Kingston Local History Room (NK): KB 5/15. Kingston Council *Minutes.*

[6] William Hardman. *The Hardman Papers: a further selection (1865-1868) from the Letters and Memoirs of Sir William Hardman,* p.252. For Hardman's full description of this event, which reveals much about his view of his position in Kingston, as well as the atmosphere of a typical summer garden affair, see Appendix 8.1. Hardman was not typical of those elected to Kingston council, as has been explained in Chapter 7.

[7] 'That Mrs. Parslow be paid in future £6 pa as a commuted sum for flannels wood and sundries for cleaning the hall.' NK Ref KB1/6. *Kingston Council Minutes*, 8 November 1872.

[8] *Surrey Comet,* 28 July 1900.

[9] See Appendix 8.2 for a list of councillors who were freemasons.

[10] It is worth noting here that the property market appears to have been particularly buoyant at this time.

[11] *Surrey Comet,* 3 November 1865.

[12] G. Rastrick, *The Municipal Charities of Kingston upon Thames, Surrey. The Account of Some Compiled for Use by the Trustees.*1864. Reprints Series No.31.

[13] SHS: Ref P33/5: *Kingston Association for Bettering the Conditions and Morals of the Poor,* minute book.

[14] Predictably, one of these is Frederick Gould, with the others being Edward Phillips and Samuel Ranyard.

[15] If for instance any other of the councillors were found to have left diaries, such as that of William Hardman, there would be more enlightenment about local friendships, et cetera.

[16] Isobel Robinson. *Spring Grove, Spring Grove 1865-1880* (no publisher or date), pp. 2-4.

[17] NK: KG3/1/49, *Poor Rate Valuation Book for Kingston upon Thames, 1859.*

[18] The National Archives (TNA): PROB 11/12261.

[19] Robert Millward, 'The political economy of urban utilities', in M. Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol.III, p. 333.

20 *Surrey Comet*, 28 October 1865.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

A powerful municipal culture, the integration of local, political, economic and social elites and the local identity and ownership of capital were key features of late nineteenth and early twentieth century towns in Britain.[1]

1. Introduction

This chapter will bring together the various arguments relating to the concept of reluctance in the governance of Kingston in the nineteenth century, briefly consider the hypotheses in the light of the evidence presented and assess Kingston's position in the early years of the twentieth century.

There is no simple answer to the original premise that Kingston councillors were reluctant to exercise their powers for the improvement of the borough. The supposition underlying research into the governance of Kingston in the nineteenth century has been that there was little dynamic or motive force impelling the authority forward to meet the challenges of a changing society. Little had changed following the verdict of the 1835 Royal Commission of Enquiry into Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, to the effect that: 'The Corporation as a body is extremely inactive.'[2] The main body of research has been directed at the question of how much truth there is in the concept of a reluctance to recognise the need for change and the reasons why. Was it was the behaviour and attitudes of the town council which limited progress, or external factors influencing their decisions or indeed can the title 'reluctant reformers' be justified. The most likely influences on the formation of these attitudes were the political and social backgrounds within which the authority operated. Politics and society provide the most likely context within which decision making was debated.

The arguments outlined in Chapter 1 were that: 'a little baker and a little beer-shop keeper and that class of men' were typical members of the Corporation of Kingston for much of the nineteenth century, that social and economic networks and self-interest engendered an amateur response to the need for improvement and that the decision-making process was hampered by lack of understanding of the

issues. Christopher Hamlin suggests that [in local government]: 'what was recognised as resistance to progress was often bewilderment and frustration with technical and legal complexities and fear of taking a wrong step'.[3] It also seemed possible that compared to other boroughs in southern England, Kingston failed to grasp opportunities for progress.

These arguments are no longer merely propositions as to the direction of research, but now have to be weighed in balance against the evidence. These hypotheses however, have served merely as the framework for research and should not exclude other factors which can now be seen to contribute to a lack of initiative on the part of Kingston council. Evidence suggests a historic unwillingness to relate to national interests, an exaggerated belief, based on earlier royal status, in the historic importance of the town and a sense of detachment from the nearby metropolis and central government, as shown in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. A lack of experience beyond the parish, a lack of understanding of the issues and simply a lack of awareness of the council's responsibilities as the pace of change accelerated can be seen to have influenced matters. These additional factors are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and in some cases are either consequential or overlapping. However, as the major impetus has been from the hypotheses, these will be addressed first.

2. 'a little baker and a little beershop keeper and that class of men 'were typical members of the Corporation of Kingston for much of the nineteenth century

The analysis of councillor occupations in Chapter 7 has shown the predominance of the dealing sector within the council, over all other areas of employment, for the greater part of the period 1835-1900, as seen at Figure 7.2 (p181). There was a waning agricultural representation after mid century. Mining, which covers brick-makers, the only representatives of this sector on the council, was still minimal, by the 1870s. The loss of an agricultural voice on the council is to be expected given the changing nature of the local economy. Five councillors were connected with agriculture between 1836 and 1886, four of these being farmers or

nursery owners and one an agricultural engineer, perhaps an indication of the modernisation of the industry. This reflected the shift of the national economy away from being predominantly agricultural which had begun in the mid--eighteenth century. It is perhaps surprising, given the housing expansion referred to in Chapter 5, that there was as only a 3% change in the number of builders offering their services as councillors. Manufacturers however were starting to gain on the dealers by 1856 and thereafter. Representation from the transport sector appeared for the first time by 1877. As seen by this excerpt from the database, this does not reflect the shift of traffic from river to rail.

Table 9.1 Councillors connected with transport

Surname	Forename	Occupation	On Council
Castle	Sidney Nash	barge master	1877-1889
Scotter	Charles	railway manager	1889 -1896
Smith	Thomas Charles	lighterman	1884-1898

Source: database Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

What was to have a major impact on local transport was the introduction of an electric tramway system in 1906, after many years of the typical wrangling by the council about the proposed route.

The occupation definition of 'railway manager' in Table 9.1 for Charles Scotter belies the prominent status of the only railway employee in the whole of the database. Scotter joined the London and South Western Railway in 1858. As manager he was knighted in 1895, whilst living in Surbiton and serving on Kingston council. In 1907 he was created Baron of Walford. Gentlemen of independent income remained a static group throughout, with public service and professional representation rising sharply in the last quartile of the century. The bankers, accountants and clerks of the industrial services had disappeared by 1877. Throughout the century, evidence shows that until the mid 1870s the dealing sector had the largest representation with 36% in the first third of the research period, falling to 31% in the second and losing ground towards the end 27%. As far as the specific trades mentioned in the first hypothesis (taking a literal view of the opinion) only five bakers appear on the council database covering 1835-1900, none of whom

had a very high profile in council affairs. The millers, brewers, distillers and shoemakers of the town had begun to exercise their influence by mid century with sixteen men connected with brewing or malting appear on the database, together with six inn keepers. Of this number, several became Mayor and it is true that the Easts, Frickers, Grays and Moatt, all of whom were connected to brewing or distilling, did contribute significantly to the running of the borough.

Table 9.2 Councillors connected with brewing industry

Surname	Forenames	Occupation	On council
Bye	George	maltster	1836-1844
Clements	Thomas	brewer	1870-1886
Coppinger	Edward Thomas	distiller	1885-1898
East	Walter	brewer	1874-1880
East	Joseph	brewer	1851-1882
Fricker	Arthur Edward	brewer	1879- 1881
Fricker	Thomas Hunter	Eagle Brewery	1842-1865
Gray	Samuel Snr.	maltster	1837-1841
Gray	Samuel Jnr.	maltster	1884-1895
Hodgson	William Frederick	brewer	1860-1862
Horne	Robert	distiller	1848-1849
Moatt	Magnus George	brewer's manager-	1882-1899
Nightingale	Stephen	brewer	1871-1886
Nightingale	George	brewer	1845-1852
Phillips	Charles Thomas	brewer	1836
Wells	Michael	maltster	1856-1886

Source: database Kingston1.mdb P. F. Reading

Joseph East was the first non-conformist Mayor of Kingston in 1865 and 1866. His son Walter East was also elected Mayor for two years (1886 and 1887). Magnus Moatt was Mayor in 1899. Michael Wells, despite thirty years as a councillor was never elected Mayor. His business obviously thrived, as by 1881 he was living in a villa in the fashionable area of Knights Park, having started out in Eden Street. His name does not appear in connection with any of the organisations or activities in the borough and this, apparently unengaged lifestyle, may account for the fact that the highest status he achieved in the council was that of alderman. The Fricker and Gray families are detailed in Chapter 8. Although there is no firm evidence to support the idea, it is possible that this group of brewers and maltsters

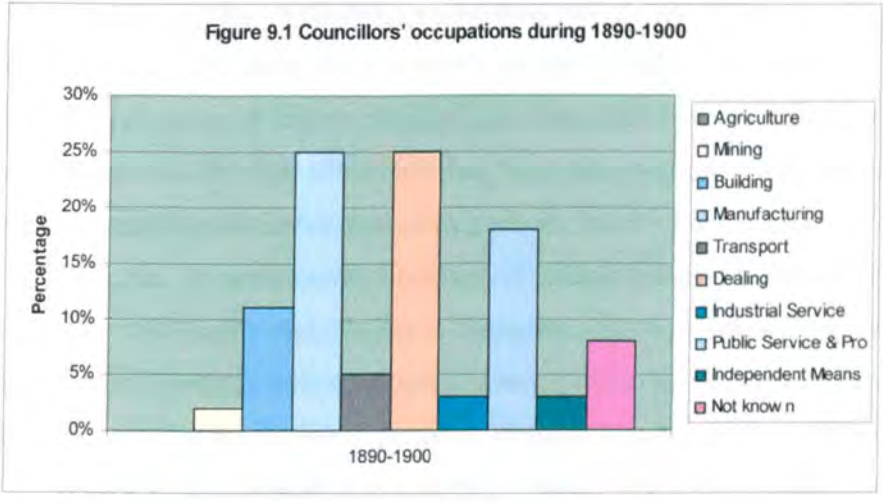
had some political influence on the council in 1872 when the Intoxicating Liquor (Licensing) Bill of 1872 first introduced restrictions on opening hours, as referred to in Chapter 6.

Taking a wider view of the dealing sector, as at Appendix 7.1, the number of grocers, butchers, drapers and other suppliers of domestic necessities, the 'little baker and a little beershop keeper' epithet can appear justified. However, when the level marker classification is applied, the limitations of the Booth-Armstrong sector classification become apparent. Far from being 'little' bakers and shopkeepers, 76% of 'dealers' were either owners or managers of businesses, 20% were self employed and only 3% of dealer councillors were employees.

In one sense therefore, the idea that typical members of the Corporation of Kingston were shopkeepers and beersellers would seem to be appropriate. But looking at the actual employment status of the same men, they were in fact not such small players – in their own community. In their community they were the well known and important men. As the residential area of the borough spread out from the centre, they moved their domestic life away from the businesses in the Market Place to the new villas on Kingston Hill and in Spring Grove. In a larger or more sophisticated environment they might have been overshadowed by the business magnates and land owners, but there were few of those in Kingston at the time and those that were there had no desire to serve on a local management committee which was the council. Such men of ambition did appear when the Surrey County Council came into being in 1888. The first members of Surrey County Council included three Lords and three Knights of the realm, two Members of Parliament as well as several high ranking military gentlemen.[4] As has been shown, what might be an upper social class or borough aristocracy, did not get involved with the business of the borough's governance. This was left to those closer to the day to day life of the community. Such men were of course the retailers, solicitors, bankers, dentists and doctors. In Kingston, these were the men who were well known to those on the burgess roll and who were prepared to stand for election. Having entered the council chamber and become part of what can be

called the town's 'establishment' they were in effect, if not the social elite of the community certainly the visible elite. The only councillors with much prestige in the life of the nation beyond the borough were William Hardman and Charles Scotter.

By the 1890s the dealing and manufacturing sectors were on an equal footing was as is shown in Figure 9.1



Source: database Kingston1. mdb P. F. Reading

It should be remembered that the manufacturing sector includes all the brewing industry, millers, grocers, bootmakers, bakers, confectioners and similar makers of commodities to be sold to consumers, in the same way as the coal merchants, butchers, cheesemakers and drapers who are defined as being in the dealing sector. Thus Figure 9.1 indicates that 50% (25% manufacturing plus 25% dealing) of the occupations, represented on the council at this time, were concerned with the provision of goods in one way or another.

A further indication of the place of elected councillors in the community can be seen in the only extant *Poor Rate Evaluation Book* of the period, dated 1859.[5] This lists 612 items of property covering cottages, houses and shops, workshops, yards and gardens. Of these 612 locations, 214 are listed in the ownership of 46 past, current or future councillors who are listed in Appendix 9.1. The rate book shows that council members were a significant property owning sector of the

community. The epithet 'little' in the hypothesis does not appear to be justified. 'Little' in this instance is a relative term, relative in the context of a small parochial community albeit on the fringe of the largest conurbation in the country. With a reference back to Garrard's concept of a modern 'squirearchy', Trainor defined urban elites as 'those individuals, from whatever class or stratum, who held leadership posts in the major institutions of the district or one of its towns'.[6]

The evidence of the continued involvement with local affairs, from council to building societies and from the expansion of the suburban character of the borough to the provision of leisure facilities confirms that this definition can be applied to Kingston. As with titled families, who had pedigrees and traditions, so Kingston councillors included dynasties such as the Frickers, Nuthalls, Marshes and Nightingales. As seen earlier, members of several families had been representatives of the community and Charles E. Jemmett, who was Town Clerk for much of the period of research, was the third generation of his family to hold that office. In 1852 the recorder for the borough was a William Thomas Jemmett although the likelihood that he was related to family line of town clerks has not been verified. Prior to 1835 a list of the churchwardens (starting in 1700) for All Saints, the parish church for Kingston, includes many family names also recorded in the 1835-1900 database of councillors.[7] Several of the councillors in the database are listed as churchwardens between 1820 and 1835: Thomas Jackson, Richard Galley, William Pamphilon, Edmund Douglas and others. Similarly, a list of the bailiffs of Kingston for the years 1805 to 1835 contains several familiar names. In Chapter 8 it has been proven that there were a number of local families, such as the Frickers, Nuthalls, Grays and Nightingales who had established ongoing representation on the council over generations. Appendix 8.1, in addition to showing this handing on of the council baton, also shows some inter-marriage relationships between the families, such as that connection between Samuel Ranyard and the Shrubsoles, and the business relationships.[8] Kingston councillors can now be seen as an elite group of the borough.

3. That social and economic networks and self-interest engendered an amateur response to the need for improvement.

It is difficult to find evidence that the social and economic connections, which have been shown to exist to a degree, were responsible for the way decisions were taken in the council chamber. It would require a detailed analysis of voting records (where they exist) to establish any pattern of family or business influence and given the limited evidence of party political affiliation, no firm conclusion can be made. Self-interest, in the sense of keeping control of the borough (also no doubt in relation to personal financial implications) can be seen in the basic tenet of the council to keep local taxation rates as low as possible and retain the status quo in as many areas as possible. Spending rate income on anything other than a crisis, such as the temporary appointment of an Medical Officer of Health (MOH) in 1866 to deal with a cholera epidemic, or seeking a solution to the chronic problem of the drainage of the borough was considered wasteful. The other factor which inhibited any deemed non essential expenditure was the undoubted resentment which consequent rate increases would provoke among voters. The borough did have a tradition of parsimony dating back to the fourteenth century, when it opted out of parliamentary representation, presumably because of the expense involved. The borough also sought, and obtained, exemption from the expense of supporting knights of the shire. This attitude of detachment from any higher level of governmental responsibility is a theme which is echoed in the unwillingness of the nineteenth century council to cooperate with the Local Government Board in the matter of the isolation hospital and the Back Lanes housing improvement plans. Kingston councillors appear to have much in common with other contemporary local authorities, which David Eastwood says 'construed their public responsibilities narrowly and did not attempt to widen regulatory or policy making powers.'[9]

This attitude, on its own, is unlikely to have been responsible for promoting an amateur response to dealing with the challenges of a growing community, although it can certainly be seen as the reason for the lack of engagement with other institutions which was becoming a political necessity, and which caused delay in

progressing 'modernisation'. The irritation of the Local Government Board, Lambeth Water Company, Richmond Council and the Board of Guardians with the authority is evident in the correspondence in their respective files.

4. That the decision-making process was hampered by lack of understanding of the issues.

The behaviour on the part of the majority of council members relating to the inadequacy of the town drainage systems, as detailed in Chapter 5, shows a curiously detached attitude to the seriousness of the problem, and to the consequences of failing to take decisions to make any long term improvement. Two examples of this, from 1866, when the need to tackle the drainage problem was becoming crucial, are the temporary appointment only, of an MOH in response to an outbreak of cholera and the disdainful reaction to the Board of Guardians MOH report on the state of the borough's public health. Examples such as the delay in appointing qualified officials such as an MOH and a drainage expert, and the lack of technical understanding in relation to their dealings with the water companies suggest there was little technical knowledge available within the town hall for much of the nineteenth century.

The hypothesis that Garrard's proposition of a squirearchical model can be used to understand the power of an urban elite, as outlined in Chapter 7, has been tested in relation to Kingston. It was proposed that in the case of Kingston, a relatively small market borough, the criteria for an elite class could mean successful businesses, long family association with the town, high profiles in local affairs. Evidence does show that Kingston was governed by a group of men who were, in the main, successful in their business life, many of whose families had a history of public service in one form or another and who were connected by kinship. Furthermore, judging by their interest in property ownership, these men exercised a considerable influence on the local housing economy. In fact, together with the monopoly of the brewing industry and the retail business of the town, they controlled a large sector of the borough capital.

Given the individual success of the majority of councillors in managing their respective businesses, why should they have appeared to be so inept in their corporate management role? Again, one has to look at the predominant types of businesses in which they were successful- retailing, certainly, and manufacturing. The retailers and dealers have been looked at in some depth but more attention must now be paid to the manufacturing representatives on the council. 1835-1900 were years of industrial expansion, the Great Exhibition, the expansion of railways and the achievements of the Metropolitan Board of Works in London. The activities of the latter were only 12 miles away from Kingston but seem to have been as irrelevant to Kingston council as the rise of the mighty industries in northern cities. Most of the manufacturers on the council were engaged in supplying goods for the retail sector and, as suggested earlier, can be allied with the dealing sector. Other local manufacturers, according to the Booth-Armstrong occupation coding which has been applied throughout, who have not been singled out but who were represented on the council elsewhere, were dyers, watchmakers, tallow chandlers, corn millers and printers. In addition to the agricultural engineer who served from 1857-1888, the only modern technical representative of the borough's manufacturing sector was a gas engineer who served from 1871-1885.

5. The twentieth century

This small business management control of borough finance was beginning to change with the turn of the century. In January 1901 councillors were asked to look at the 'emoluments and salaries of Corporation and the nature of the work done by those officials'.[10] Initiating the debate, Councillor Cawley, a solicitor's clerk by profession, said:

> When he entered the Council he was under the impression that he should be put in possession of information as to all the business of the Council, not only the ordinary work but the most important of all, which was financial. But beyond what appeared on the minutes, he knew no more of the financial affairs of the Corporation than an outsider...Time after time they were asked to increase the salaries of officials without having the slightest knowledge of the reason why.[11]

This provoked a bad tempered exchange with Alderman Baker who, in response to Cawley's suggestion of a small committee to look at the question of salaries, said, if this committee were to consist of Councillor Cawley and two or three other councillors, it would be 'self-appointed clique'. Another councillor said that he would feel free to criticise whatever committee had the matter in hand and he was sure that such a committee would be of no value. This was certainly not consensus politics and the insults were flying as much as fifty years ago. At the end of this particular debate, the Town Clerk pointed out that it was a matter for the General Purposes and Finance Committee anyway. A long meeting then adjourned. The council seemed no better informed on standing orders than their predecessors..

The composition of the council by 1910 was greatly changed, with only one or two of the familiar nineteenth century names. A noticeable absence however is any female member. In 1869 Parliament passed the Municipal Franchise Act. This legislation extended the vote to women rate-payers in local elections. This act also enabled women to serve as Poor Law Guardians. The Qualification of Women Act 1907 allowed women to be elected on to borough and county councils for the first time, but no woman appears listed for Kingston until 1926. A leader in The *Surrey Comet*, which reported this election, gives an idea of the struggle which women had in Kingston to achieve council emancipation:

> The municipal contests in Kingston have resulted in more than one surprise – we had nearly written the word "shock" - and that is something of an achievement in these days of notorious laxity on the part of the electors. In the Hill ward the Mayor (councillor Denham) was an easy first, as everyone hoped and expected he would be, but his fellow candidate, Mr. Wells, had a hard fight against Mrs. Frazer Nash, a nominee of the Women Citizens' Association, and a newcomer to the town....The Women Citizens' Association worked hard for all the women candidates and are to be congratulated on having at last secured a footing among a body of men some of whom lived in mortal dread of women being admitted into their municipal deliberations. For our own part we fail to see what there is to fear from these changes. It is worthy of note that the candidates who did best in the contests are those who are not afraid of the light of publicity.[12]

The following year three women councillors were elected.

6. Conclusion

Manufacturing in nineteenth century Kingston was confined to the familiar industries of earlier centuries, with much of it, such as milling, brewing, and tanning, carrying on the traditional skills from the borough's self contained, and self satisfied, past. It would be unjust to think that these local industries did not benefit from modern innovations as the century progressed, and a technical college was founded in the borough in 1899. However the basis of Kingston's economy did start to change quite rapidly in the early twentieth century with the introduction of new manufacturing companies, such as the Sopwith Aviation Company and KLG Sparking Plugs. During World War 1 these were two firms which :

> were forced to expand because because of government demand. ..Sopwith's grew dramatically; it put up new buildings in Canbury Park Road, and leased a large new factory in Richmond Road, Ham...In 1917 it employed about 3500. Of these 1000 were women.[13]

It would appear that by 1900 Kingston's leaders had only responded slowly and reluctantly to the pressures of economic and social change experienced during the period covered by this research. This thesis has considered in detail the councillors themselves and their decision making processes. Other factors (in themselves potential areas of future research) may have been the lack of a large scale working class movement which negated the need for investment into local amenities and reduced the need for social control. The absence of the liberal tendencies which existed in many of the larger towns of the nineteenth century and the reluctance by most of the local population to challenge the established order, as evidenced by the lack of enthusiasm in electing the council no doubt contributed to the absence of any dynamism or sense of urgency. An apathetic electorate may have produced an apathetic response from the self-perpetuating group of councillors who dominated the local authority.

A charitable excuse for this reactive rather than proactive attitude might be thought a result of what Hamlin says 'was often bewilderment and frustration with technical and legal complexities and fear of taking a wrong step', but reading reports of the council debates as referred to in Chapters 4 and 5 the impression is more of arrogance and 'we know best'. There was little fear of taking the wrong step, more fear of raising local rates.

In comparison to other boroughs in the region, Kingston was governed no better and no worse. Bromley, Chelmsford, Croydon and Guildford, amongst others, had similar drainage problems to tackle but whilst Croydon and Chelmsford were alert to the need to deal with the problem in the 1850s, the editorials in the local papers of Bromley and Guildford were echoing those of the *Surrey Comet* in criticising their councils.

Provision of adequate drains and sewers was a public health issue and the legal responsibility of councillors. Unlike the adoption of permissive acts of parliament such as those enabling provision of public libraries, washhouses and baths, public health issues were not dependent on a majority vote at a public meeting. The responsible councillors were however dependent on a majority vote at local elections. The number of non contested elections in the borough suggests that the electorate were satisfied with the way their representative managed the town's affairs on their behalf. When it was a matter for ratepayers acceptance of a permissive act at a public meeting, the same ratepayers who were happy with the status quo in the council chamber were unwilling to take the responsibility for action and an inevitable rise in taxes. The necessary approval for a public library or baths was not forthcoming until late in the century when the people of Kingston realised that they were falling behind neighbouring authorities in civic pride.

Kingston councillors were reluctant reformers, but they governed with the approval of their electors who were perhaps equally reluctant to accept change, especially when it meant higher rates.

[1] R.J. Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* vol. lll, p.417.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers,* Volume xxiii 1835 (116) 1835 Royal Commission of Enquiry into Municipal Corporations of England and Wales. First Report.

[3] Christopher Hamlin, 'Muddling in Bumbledon: on the enormity of large sanitary improvements in four British towns, 1855-1885', *Victorian Studies,* vol.32 (1), 1988, pp.55-83.

[4] There were two captains, four colonels and three generals.

[5] North Kingston Local History Room (NK): KG3/1/49, *Poor Rate Valuation Book for Kingston, 1859.*

[6] R.H. Trainor, *Black Country Elites: The Exercise of Authority in an Industrialised Area* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p.377.

[7] Phillipson, *Directory of Kingston,* 1852.

[8] Councillors Edmund Douglas & Edmund Lowe ran a linen drapers in the 840s known as the Beehive. In addition Lowe was married to Louisa Ann Fricker, daughter of councillor Thomas Fricker.

[9] David Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700-1870* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), p.58.

[10] *Surrey Comet* 19 January 1901

[11] *Surrey Comet* 19 January 1901.

[12] *Surrey Comet,* 3 November 1926.

[13] Shaan Butters, *The Book of Kingston* ((Frome: Baron, 1995), p.162.

MISSING

Map of Surrey 1803

Source : Thomas Chubb, *The Printed Maps in the Atlases of Great Britain and Ireland 1579-1870,* 5th edition, 1803. (Dawson: 1977).

Letters to the *Surrey Comet*

(1) *Surrey Comet* 25 November 1854:

MUNICIPAL AND PAROCHIAL BOUNDARIES

Sir,- Force of circumstances, arising from the facilities afforded by railway communication, and the large increase of population, have created in nearly all parts of the kingdom, a paramount necessity for a proportionable extension of former boundaries, both municipal and parochial. In some cases, this want has been met by increasing the area of existing corporations and parishes, by bringing in the outlying adjacent districts; in others by the formation of new and independent jurisdictions All who rightly prize the principle of self-government and regard it as the conservator and safeguard of our liberties agree, upon the importance of meeting these requirements to the largest practical extent. In our own immediate locality, perhaps, there has been a greater and still increasing influx of population than in many others. Where cattle formerly pastured, or the corn waved its golden sheaves, now may be seen rows of habitations displaying the most perfect architecture and admirably adapted to suit the various wants they are intended to meet. The buzz of human voices and the busy sound of industry, are now heard, where once was perfect solitude or barren dreariness. If those who have a been absent from our neighbourhood for a few years were now to return, they could not fail being amazed at the wonderous alterations effected. These altered circumstances, induced the Corporation of Kingston, during the last Parliamentary Session, to make application to the Legislature for powers of extending the present municipal boundaries, and additional powers for promoting more especially better sanitary arrangements. Much opposition to this effort was made, doubtless arising from misunderstandings both on the part of the promoters and the opponents of the measure, which resulted in its being defeated on the first reading, a somewhat unusual course in a private bill. Nothing daunted by this temporary failure, another application will be made at the next meeting of the Legislature for this purpose. With what success depends greatly under the circumstances which will characterize the movement. A salutary lesson may be learnt from the past, and one, if carried out with purity of intention, aiming only at the general good, and not desiring merely the attainment of party victory, will

produce much general advantage. That an improved and extended sewerage is necessary - that the present dark and dangerous thoroughfares require the aid of a more general extension of the use of gas - that many of the highways are, in their present state, a positive nuisance and disgrace, none will deny. And as these are matters which more especially come within the duties belonging to the Town Council of Corporations, it is evident that an extension which would include most, if not all, of the places which stand in need of these practical improvements within such municipal boundaries, would be of an incalculable local good. The present disgraceful position of many portions of our large parish cannot continue, and we think the reforms needed, will be more beneficial if carried out under the supervision of those most interested in seeing these alterations effectively and economically performed. Men who have to share in the payment of the expenses and to participate in the advantages resulting from the performance of such improvements, are better adapted for such purposes, than any centralized authority, however able or powerful they may be. It is therefore desirable that this movement meet with that result which will conduce to the general advantage; and that all will view this question with unprejudiced impartiality, ceasing to cumber their memories with bygone and painful reminiscences, but animated with an earnest and united desire to accomplish that which is so greatly needed, will readily assist in aiding the carrying out of such measures as will tend to extend our business operations, and improve the health, and comfort of our neighbours and ourselves. I am, Sir, yours, &c., CIVIS

(2) *Surrey Comet* 2 December 1854

MUNICIPAL EXPANSION OF KINGSTON

SIR,—I take up the topic which "Civis" advocates, because I agree with him in some measure in the general principle of the great advantages of "self-government," local as well as personal, and because I think that the present position of the Town and Corporation of Kingston is anomalous in its relation to what may be termed "the suburbs," over which the Corporation can exercise no jurisdiction or authority. It has occurred to me, since reading the letter of "Civis," that considering the extension of habitations and concurrent increase of

population, the Corporation ought commensurately to enlarge with it, and from the diminution of the frog, assume the portly dimensions of the ox, and thus appropriately remedy the enlargement without bursting with the dignity. On occasion of Lord St. Leonard becoming Lord Chancellor, and a Peer of the Realm, and when his Lordship soon afterward honoured the Corporation by accepting the office of "High Bailiff" (as I think), I then thought—' Now, if the Corporation knows its opportune time, is the moment to stir, under his Lordship's patronage and high official sanction, for the enlargement of its Corporate functions and jurisdiction.' Then was the tide in full flow, but whether it was "taken at its full" is unknown to me. However, the ebb-tide soon came, and the Corporation Bill of the last Session being met by a vortex of opposition, would not float through Westminster on the reflux of the tide. Under what more auspicious circumstances it is to be again launched on the uncertain tide of legislation next Session, or what its fate will be I know not, but I am apprehensive it will again encounter the *Thessiger* storm of opposition in its fluency, scarcasms [sic] and sophistry. But, Sir, whilst I am favourable to the views of the Corporation, and think the object founded in propriety-and common sense, I must say that I am not content that all legal adjudications should rest solely with the most respectable tradesmen who may be chosen Mayors and Magistrates, under the guidance only of their clerk, though a most able and intelligent solicitor.

If the jurisdiction of the Corporation should be extended, provision ought to he made for the appointment of "a Recorder," or some legal resident Magistrate, to whom daily recourse, if necessary, might be had; and it should also be provided that the County Magistrates should *ex officio* be associated with the Corporate Magistrates, so that immediate and satisfactory adjudication should be available, in furtherance of that constitutional right of Englishmen—" speedy justice." Such is the highest and most important consideration, as I view it, of any proposed extension; but in a secondary point of view stand the conservative and sanitary considerations adverted to by "Civis," and which, he says, "are matters which more especially come within the duties belonging to the Town Council of Corporations." Being so, as I admit, how comes it, I would ask, that, looking to the antiquity of the Kingston Corporate Body, "Civis's' description of the present state of the town under such administration should be veritably correct? Why have " improved and extended sewerage" been neglected? Why "dark and dangerous

thoroughfares" permitted? Why are "many- of the highways a positive nuisance and disgrace? "Does such a state of things speak commendation - or rather condemnation - in regard to those matters which "Civis" says are "especially within the duties belonging to the Town Councils of Corporations?"- Now these incontrovertible facts in relation to Kingston bring me, in the consideration of them as verities, to the objections which have been raised by the suburbans — Norbitonians, Surbitonians, Seething. Wellsingtons, and others, viz.: that they object to be taxed and rated by Town Council authorities for eligibilities or fancied improvements for the chief benefit of the town and its trading object in disregard of the "perfect solitude" or "barren dreariness" of those suburban outlying roads, lanes, and footpaths which stand most in need of the cheering gas-light, the scavangers besom, the cleanly footpath, and the watchful police. That "self-government" which "Civis" advocates is prized also by the suburbans, among whom most assuredly may be found various professionals, bankers, merchants, gentlemen, and tradesmen of intelligence and capacity, as fully equal to the Magisterial, or Town Council, or Corporation duties as any to be found in the town of Kingston; and no disparagement whatever to them in the assertion. But, Sir, in conclusion, I agree with-" Civis" in the propriety, as a general proposition, of union among all who would "have to share in the payment of expenses," if assured of full participation of advantages felt by many of the suburbans to be "greatly needed ;" but needed by them not "to extend their business operations," but to improve the health and comfort of localities, and render visible, cheering, clean, and safe, the thoroughfares of, and to their homes.

I am, Sir, respectfully, yours, &c., DITTONIAN

(3) *Surrey Comet* 3 March 1855

KINGSTON UNION

Sir, In your last week's number you gave us an account of the, proceedings at the Kingston vestry of the 22nd of February, in which you state that the Overseers were censured for not attending to their duties in a proper way. Now, as I was at the vestry, I think I can throw a little more light upon the subject. In order to test the accuracy of the ex parte statements made by those who were desirous of passing the vote of censure, I went up to the Union, and if the stalwart frame, and

ready handling of the spade and shovel, be a true criterion of the labourer, I should say that nearly all, if not every individual employed at the Union, were men used to hard work, and who would get better employment as soon as the frost broke up. I went up to one, and enquired the reason he was there; he said, "The severe frost had knocked him out of a job but he did not mean to stay here long." I next enquired, how much relief he had received; he said, 'Three days last week, and two this, and please God, this day should be the last.' It was so, as upon inquiry, I learnt that he left the Union employ next day, having had bestowed upon him during a month's severe frost, 7s. 6d. cash, and five quartern loaves. Now this is a fair sample of the men relieved; and the bulk of these men have, upon the cessation of the frost left the Union, and have obtained better pay and employment elsewhere. I believe the overseers also did right in not attempting thc removal of 200 poor persons, because they asked for temporary relief. If their removal had been effected, the parish would have been put to an expense of at least £2OO,and this is not all, for before the expiration of the term at which removal could have been effected, these poor fellows would all have got work, and relieved the parish in natural way. I hope and trust, as a rate-payer, that our officers, while strictly attentive to the duties of their office, will never refuse the helping hand in the time of need to those heroes of the spade and shovel who build our houses and construct our roads and railways, We are all mutually dependent upon each other, and 1 feel pleasure in thinking that these sons of toil have been preserved in health by our assistance, during the late severe frost, so as to enable them to devote giant energies to our future service. Your Insertion of the above will oblige, yours truly, Timothy Truefit

Design view of Database Source Kingston mdb.1

Autonumber	Autonumber	Used as Database ID
Kingston ID	Number	ID in CFLHS database
Surname	Text	
Forenames	Text	
Pigot 31	Text	Pigot Directory1831
Pigot 39	Text	Pigot Directory1839
Lindsey 45	Text	Directory 1845 – no title
Lindsey 55	Text	Directory 1855 – no title
Lindsey 65	Text	Lindsey Directory1865
Phillipson 68	Text	Phillipson Directory 1858
Phillipson 78	Text	Phillipson Directory 1878
Ayliffe Index	Text	Names in Old Kingston by G. W. Ayliffe (1914)
F M	Text	Freemason Lodge listed
Address 1851	Text	As in Census Enumerator Book (CEB)
Address 1861	Text	ditto
Address 1871	Text	ditto
Address 1881	Text	ditto
Address 1891	Text	ditto
Address 1901	Text	Not used in current analysis, but looking to future research
Sex	Text	Mostly irrelevant, but gender may need to be specified if the database is continued post 1900
Occupation 1	Text	As in CEB or directory
Occupation	Number	Using Booth/Armstrong Code
Level marker	Number	As referred to in Chapter 3
Occupation 2	Text	As in CEB
Occupation 3	Text	ditto
Years on Council	Number	Gives first to last recorded year of service, based on years 1834 to1900, as noted below
Council	Text	y if councillor
Politics	Text	Con, Lib or Lab
Union	Text	y if connected with Kingston Union
G L& C Company	Text	y if connected with Kingston Gas, Light and Coke Company
Charities	Text	y if connected to any charity
Volunteer Rifles	Text	y if evidence as member
Ratepayers Association	Text	y if evidence as member
Related	Text	y if related to any other name
Poll book	Text	Text
Rate Book	Text	Text
Comments	Text	Notes from various sources
Individual Years 34 -90	Text	x if councillor in years 1834 - 1900

APPENDIX 5.1

SURBITON

The adjourned Public Meeting of the Rate-payers of this District took place last night at the Southampton Hotel the large room of which was crowded with persons who took a deep interest in the proceedings. Shortly after 7 o'clock, Charles Walpole Esq. took the chair, and commenced the business of the evening by observing, he did not see present any portion of the fair Rate-payers who had been addressed in one of the Circulars; and then adverted to the resolution carried at the former meeting, appointing a Committee, which I had met and duly considered the Bill. He would not dwell on their labors, [sic] they had spared neither time or trouble, gone through and weighed carefully clause after clause, and made such improvements as are best calculated to the wants of the district. The clauses have been narrowly scanned. An opinion seemed to prevail that Surbiton was of too small an area to require such a measure; but the same objection would apply to the Kingston Bill, or to the application of Sir B. Hall's Act, and the latter would prove very expensive and transfer the power of governing into other hands. His opinion was the present measure was far more preferable than either of these. He offered a caution to the Rate-payers not to push it forward with undue haste; .the great powers vested in the Commissioners as to drainage would be costly, and without due circumspection we should not be able to complete the works for want of funds; there should therefore be great forbearance and caution exercised. He then read the Report of the Committee, which announced the following alterations in the Bill :—lst. The number of Commissioners had been reduced from 18 to 15; five to go out every year; and with respect to the names, they recognised the right to elect those who were most eligible to fill this office, and it would be left to the meeting to determine whether the names should remain as they now stand, or an election take place. It is not probable that more than from £150O to £2000 would be required to defray the expenses of the application to Parliament, with the present amount of opposition There was no alteration recommended in the clauses affecting the Improvement Rate, and it will be impossible to raise any further amount, without the consent' of two-thirds of the Rate-payers. The clauses called Coutts' clauses, had been modified to a considerable extent, and the Messrs. Coutts had met their views in a

most liberal manner. Several other minor alterations had been effected, and the Committee trusted if the measure passed, it would work well for the district. With regard to the opposition. there was, 1st. The Railway, 2ndly, the two Water Companies, and a few of the Rate payers. Mr. Walter had also presented a petition, on the understanding if certain modifications should be adopted, which had been done, he would withdraw the. Same; also two from. Kingston. After the opinion of the district had been so unmistakably expressed, it was surprising they should have taken the present course. They had forwarded a deputation to Kingston for the' purpose of promoting a good feeling but were unsuccessful in their endeavours. They disclaimed any desire of interfering with them why should they be anxious to interfere with us?

Mr. Guy then moved the adoption of the report, and stated, he felt it his duty, inasmuch as he had taken part in the proceedings of the former meeting, to come forward and move this resolution. It. Was proper to discuss the question of whether the measure was prejudicial or not to this locality, in good temper. Within the last few weeks he had become possessed of property in this district, to the extent of some thousands of pounds, and he should take care to watch over his own interests, and he believed he was best promoting them by supporting this Bill. He then called their attention to the ?(check for this word) as to the alterations proposed; and then expressed his conviction that the measure in its amended form, was as obnoxious and detrimental to the interests of the Rate-papers as ever, and that he felt it his duty to oppose it to the utmost. of his power; and considered that the adoption of Sir B. Hall's proposed enactment would be obtained at a cheaper rate. He was about proposing an amendment but ultimately withdrew it.

Mr. Ranyard, as a member the Corporation of Kingston thought they had used it as, a bugbear to frighten the people, and that while they did not mind sneering at their municipal institutions, they were extremely sensitive to any remarks on their ecclesiastical ones. Mr. Guy had introduced much irrelevant matters into his speech, and justified the overseers in making the 1s. Lighting rate instead of the 9d. proposed by the inspectors, as they would have been personally responsible for any deficiency. He would not however oppose the resolution, as he thought if Surbiton was to have an Improvement Bill, this measure was the best that could be devised.

Mr. Durnford then reviewed the nature of the opposition, as embodied in the petitions against the Bill, and expressed his opinion, that notwithstanding this opposition, the Parliamentary expenses would not exceed £800. He acknowledged himself as the author of the circular, and was prepared to abide by the statements therein made. He gave a full statement of the history of' Coutts' clause ,which he said was inserted by himself, and the promoters of the measure were not aware of its existence till after the Bill had been printed. The whole of the expenses would be met with a 2s. 6d. rate, while under the Kingston Bill a 4s rate would be demanded.

Mr. F. Sanford having been instrumental in calling the first meeting, felt it his duty to offer a few words as a sequel to the observations he made on the previous occasion. He had come forward in vindication of a public principle, that of the right of the Rate-payers to elect their own Commissioners, and to have a voice in the adoption of a measure affecting their own interests, and this having been now conceded, he felt it his duty to express his opinion in favour of the measure now before them.

Mr. E. Phillips said he would not detain them long. He congratulated the meeting on the large attendance, he thought the promoters were honorable men, but had gone the wrong way to work. Why was this expensive Bill sought for? not for paving, draining, cleansing, lighting, or improvement, which were already. amply provided for. He believed Messrs. Coutts had already received considerable compensation from owners of property, for the use of their sewers. He thought municipal government was better adapted to provide any facility for improvement that may be needed, and should oppose the Bill. The resolution was then put and carried, almost unanimously.

Mr. Walter moved that the fifteen gentlemen, whose names are inserted in the Bill, should be elected as Commissioners. They had the opportunity of avoiding the trouble of a contest, by adopting these gentlemen, who possessed the entire confidence of the Rate-payers; if a poll was demanded, he was sure a better selection could not be made; which, having been seconded by Mr. Coleman, was unanimously carried.

Mr Gray suggested the continuance of the Committee during the progress of the Bill before Parliament, and that four members be added, viz. Messrs. B. Lennard,

Straight, Walton; and Coleman. This motion having been seconded, was also unanimously agreed to. Mr. Hyde then moved, and Mr. Ranyard seconded, that the thanks of the meeting be given to W.Walter and F. Sanford, Esqrs. for bringing this subject before the attention of the Rate-payers; whereupon an amendment was moved by Mr. Sumner that the thanks of this meeting be given to the Committee for their zealous attention given to the matter; and on a division, the amendment was carried by a large majority. After the usual vote of thanks to the Chairman, the meeting, at nearly midnight, terminated.

Surrey Comet 10 March 1855

APPENDIX 5.2

KINGSTON IMPROVEMENT AND SURIBITON IMPROVEMENT BILLS

These Bills came before the House of Commons on Tuesday the 17th inst. The Kingston Bill was taken first.

There was no opposition, except in behalf of the Surbiton District, for the purpose of preventing the corporation from including within the borough limits the properties of Mr Wheeler, Col. Eyres, and the Waggon and Horses. The Corporation contended for these properties as part of the Borough because they were rated under the Town Lighting Act and because the residing Barristers who set out the wards after the passing of the Boundaries Act in 1836 had treated them as within the Borough. The Petitioners by the cross examinations of the Town Clerk wanted to show that the Hoggs Mill stream was the southern boundary of Kingston and they contended that the old charters in which the Ville of Surbiton is spoken of as distinct from the Ville of Kingston showed that the latter was not part of the former. The case of the Petitioners was not opened, but the committee intimated that they must have better evidence of the properties being within the Borough before they could include them against the wish of the District of which they clearly formed part. The committee recommended the parties to arrange ander after a little discussion the corporation consented to these properties being retained its the Surbiton District. The consideration of the remainder of the Bill was then adjourned to give time for an application to the House for some clauses relative to the Cattle Market. The Surbiton Bill was then called on. Mr. Hope Scott and Mr Tindal Atkinson were counsel. There was no appearance on any of the Petitions, except that of the Railway Company who had some objections to the clauses. The Bill being thus unopposed, ought, in accordance with the established usage of committees, to have been passed in half an hour, but one honorable member thought differently, and the promoters had to produce evidence, the same as for an opposed Bill, and have been subjected to the expense of two days appearance in committee.

The Rev. Edw. Phillips, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Durnford Mr. Simpson, and the Water Company's Inspectors were the witnesses called, and there were others to call, but the committee, on the second day, stopped the evidence and after some deliberation declared the preamble proved. The evidence clearly established the want of a governing body, the defective state of the roads, the total want of drainage on the hill, the inconvenience of the present system of levying the lighting rate, the objections entertained to any union with the Borough of Kingston, the great majority both of owners of property and rate payers of the District who were in favor [sic] of the Bill, the absence of all opposition from either owners or rate payers or from the board of health. These things being proved, it remained to satisfy the committee that the objects of the Bill could not be effected without the authority of Parliament. It was contended for the promoters that the board-of-health having decided that the public health act of 1848 could not be applied to our ecclesiastical district, settled that point, because Sir B. Hall's present Bill was not and might not become law, that the committee must decide on the law as it exists at that moment, and not as it might exist at the end of the session and therefore there was not not that moment any sufficient remedy for the evils complained of and that a separate body of commissioners could not be established without an Act of Parliament. The preamble being passed the clauses were gone through and the Bill was ordered to be reported. was reported on Friday. The clauses added to protect the Roads, the Railway and the Water Companies have greatly increased the length of time Bill. We are informed that unless there are any delays from adjournments of the House or other unforeseen causes the Bill will become law about the end of May. The decision arrived at by the committee of the House of Commons may be considered as tantamount to the actual passing of this measure. During its discussion we purposely abstained from offering any opinion either for or against it, contenting ourselves with giving the amplest information that could be obtained. As the bill is now all but part and parcel of the law of the land, we trust all former differences will vanish and as a conciliatory spirit has been already manifested we trust that one of the benefits that will result from this enactment, will be, that the bonds of union and good fellowship will be more firmly cemented; that all past differences will be forgotten and that the only rivalry that may in future exist will be that laudable kind that seeks to outwit one another in furnishing means and opportunities for the promotion of the welfare and general good of all who reside within this large and populous parish. *Surrey Comet* 21 April1855.

List of objections to the Ham Fields Sewage Disposal Scheme

27 October 1868	George Gilbert Scott on behalf of Lord Dysart. Gilbert Scott included a drawing in his letter.
16 December 1868	His Royal Highness the Duc de Chartres and other members of his family
14 February 1868	Teddington Local Board **against** 15 signatures
23 February 1868	Ham Common Local Board **against** 88 signatures
24 February 1868	Ham Parish **against**
3 March 1868	Twickenham Local Board **against** 91 signatures
3 March 1868	Teddington Inhabitants **against** 65 signatures
6 March 1868	Burgesses & ratepayers of Kingston **against** 107 signatures

Others who voiced opposition to the scheme were the Duke of Cambridge, Earl Russell, General Peel and Arthur Otway MP.

There were 8 petitions against and only 1 in favour.

Source: TNA: MH13/105

APPENDIX 5.4

Kingston Hill residents 1861-1891

CEB	Road	Majority status	Resident staff	Comment
1861	Crescent Road	Artisans	No resident staff	
1861	Liverpool Road	Nil		
1861	Queens Road	Mixed professional/ tradesmen	Some resident staff	Some wives with occupation
1861	Tudor Road	Nil		
1871	Crescent Road	Professional	All with minimum 1 resident domestic	1 pork butcher
1871	Liverpool road	Professional	ditto	
1871	Tudor Road	Mixed clerical/ / artisan	Some resident staff	
1871	Queens Road	Private income, civil servants and retired army officers	All with minimum 1 resident domestic	
1881	Crescent Road	Professional	All with minimum 1 resident domestic	
1881	Liverpool Road	Professional	All with minimum 1 resident domestic	
1881	Queens Road	Mainly independent means or retired army officers and civil servants	All with minimum 1 resident domestic	
1881	Tudor Road	Mixed artisan /professional	Professionals only all with resident staff	
1891	Crescent Road	Mixed professional/clerical*	All Professionals and some clerical with resident staff	Larger households, than previous (not staff but children)
1891	Liverpool Road	Mainly independent means or retired army officers	All with minimum 1 resident domestic	
1891	Queens Road	Mainly independent means/military /professional	Increase in domestic staff per household	More maids than general domestics
1891	Tudor Road	Clerical*/trade/artisan	Some resident staff	

Source : Census Enumerators' Books 1881 and 1891

*clerical = clerks

BACK LANES PLAN 1890

The most important, and at the same time the most extensive of all the improvements which the Corporation obtained power to execute in the town, under the powers of the Kingston Improvement Act, 1888, is the demolition of the old and dilapidated dwellings situate in the district known as the Back Lanes, of which we give a plan this morning. That district is bounded on the north by Water-lane, on the east by Wood-street, on the south by the Horsefair and Old Bridge-street, and on the West by Thames-side. It comprises an area of a little over three acres. Our plan is taken from the Parliamentary plan deposited in the House of Commons, and the numbers correspond to those in the book of reference prepared at the same time. It includes in all 103 different properties. Amongst them are—the large property known as Nightingale's Brewery (299), fronting to Wood-street and Waterman's-row; Messrs. J. and B. Marsh's mill and corn stores (239 and 248) with house and garden attached (247), fronting on Water-lane and Waterman's-row; Mr. Paice's malthouse (236), fronting on the same roads; Messrs. Gridley's timber sheds (217), and saw mills (228), fronting on Thames-side and Waterman's-row respectively. The large space, marked 271, is garden ground occupied by John Othen. Nearly the whole of the remaining area is covered by very old buildings, sheds, stables converted into lodgings and so on. Deducting from the whole number the properties mentioned, we may say there are rather fewer than 100 buildings which remain to be dealt with. Of these no less than 13 (Nos. 203, 204, 207, 209, 212, 219, 229, 230, 257, 272, 275, 276, and 280), are lodging houses where single men and women, or married couples, can get a night's lodging. A feature of them is of course the common kitchen, where all the lodgers repair to cook their meals (if any) and which is also the common sitting room. The largest of these lodging houses is in Waterman's-passage, No. 257, which comprises the three buildings just beneath the word "Passage" on the plan. This is owned by Charles Day, who has a similar establishment at Croydon. Of the others, John Othen holds two, Stefano Capaldi six, Henry Barnes two, and Mary Ann Williams two. These at any rate are the names of the nominal occupiers given in the book of reference, though, where more than one is held by the same person, a "deputy," as he or she (for they are male and female) is called, is appointed. Then there are eight houses, or sheds, let out in single room tenements, the rent usually obtained being 4s. per week per room, furnished in the scantiest fashion. Such are numbers 232, 233, 234, 237, 238, 284, and 285; while 227 is no other than an old gipsy van, standing upon wheels in the middle of a small yard, which is let at about the same price as the rooms. This van has been used for this purpose and has stood in the same position for years. The temperance reformer will not be amazed to learn that in the midst of all the insanitary conditions and overcrowding of the Back-lanes, there are in the area to be dealt with as many as nine houses licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors; and about as many more situate within a stone's throw in neighbouring streets. At all, or nearly all, of these nine lodgings are let, and one at least has low, ill-lighted sheds, converted into lodging houses at the rear. The numbers and names of these houses are 200, Lord Nelson (Messrs. East, brewers), and 208, the Black Lion (Hodgson's Brewery Co.), both in Old Bridge-street; 211, the New Three Tuns (Gurney and Co.), and 270, the Barley Mow (Richard Ashby and Co.), both in Waterman's-passage; 241, the Royal Oak (Young and Co.), 246, the Two Brewers, and 294 and 295, the Running Horse, all in Wood-street; 283, the Old Ship (Ilsworth Brewery Co.), in the Horsefair; and 256, the Outrigger (Gurney and Co.), on the Waterside. Plans for laying out the property are understood to be in preparation.

Source: *Surrey Comet*, 13 February 1890.

HOW KINGSTON COUNCILLORS VOTED IN THE EAST SURREY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 1865

1865 election Query					
Surname	Forenames	Occupation 1	Period on council	Politics	1865 Poll Book
Abrahams	Henry	auctioneer	1864-65		Lib
Ayres	Thomas	corn dealer	1856-1858		Lib
Beard	John	baker	1857		Cons
Boxall	James Burgess	carpenter	1858-1886		Cons
Bruce	Joseph Golding	market gardener	1856-1859		Lib
Cock	Edward	surgeon	1881-1889		Cons
Collings Jnr	John James	carpenter	1878-1900		Lib
Constable	George	grocer	1859-1864		Lib
Davidson	John William	dyer	1857-1895		Cons
Earl	John	coal merchant	1834-1841		Cons
East	Joseph	brewer	1851-1882		Lib
Ensom	Richard	victualler	1871-1886		Cons
Fox	Robert Charles	lime merchant	1863-1864		Cons
French	Henry	baker	1834-1835		Cons
Fricker	Thomas Hunter	Eagle Brewery	1842-1865	Con	Cons
Fricker	Edmund Hunter	timber merchant	1853-1890	Con	Cons
Fricker	James Hunter	auctioneer	1835-1849		Cons
Goulter	James	builder	1858-1877		Cons
Goulter	George	boot & shoe maker	1870-1886		Cons
Gray	Samuel Snr	malster	1837-1841		Lib
Gray	Samuel Jnr	maltster	1889		Lib
Heskett	John	proprietor of houses	1860-1861		Lib
Hodgson	William Frederick	brewer	1860-1862		Cons
Hollingdale	Joseph	linen draper	1849-1852		Cons
Horne	Robert	distiller	1848-1849		Lib
Jones	William Beale	chemist, druggist	1835-1854		Cons
Jones	Philip	gentleman	1859-1894		Cons
King	John	draper	1834-1859		Lib
Leonard	Thomas	miller	1850-1864		Cons
Looker	Benjamin Jnr	brick & tile maker	1858-1889	Lib	Lib
Lowe	Edmund	draper & clothier employ 5 men	1851-1864		Cons
MacIntyre	Thomas	slater	1868-1870		Lib
Macrostie,	James	glazier	1876-1888		Cons
Marsh	Joseph	miller	1858-1898	Lib	Lib
Marsh	Bedford	corn dealer	1864-1898		Lib
Mason	Samuel Jnr	builder employ 30 men	1842-1864		Cons
Mercer	William	miller	1835-1845		Cons
Nightingale	Stephen	brewer	1871-1886		Cons
Nightingale	James Thrupp	auctioneer	1869-1882		Cons

HOW KINGSTON COUNCILLORS VOTED IN THE EAST SURREY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 1865

1865 election Query					
Surname	Forenames	Occupation 1	Period on council	Politics	1865 Poll Book
Nightingale	James	auctioneer	1834-1864		Cons
Page	James	farmer	1864-1882		Lib
Penner	Edward	butcher	1836		Cons
Phillips	Edward	chemist,	1852-1874		Lib
Porter	Palmer William	builder	1865-1870		Cons
Ranyard	William	landowner	1834-1835		Cons
Roots	(William)Sudlow	surgeon	1835-1852	Con	Cons
Shirtliff	Edward D	chemist	1863-1864		Cons
Shrubsole	John	banker		Con	Cons
Shrubsole	Henry	banker		Con	Cons
Shrubsole	William Snr	banker	1834-1836		Cons
Wade	George	bootmaker	1871-1886	Con	Cons
Walker	Thomas Tindall	builder	1884-1898		Cons
Wenman	James	baker	1856-1886		Lib
Wild	Charles	tanner	1878-1879		Lib

Source : 1865 *Poll Book* for East Surrey.

The 'politics' column shows the known political persuasion of the councillor from local sources.

Sector 6 of the Booth Armstrong occupation classification scheme: Dealing

Sector Code	SubSectorCode	Occup Code	Code Cat	Occupation
06	00	00	0	DEALING SECTOR
06	01	00	1	1. Coals
06	01	01	2	Coal merchants and dealers
06	01	02	2	Coal heavers and labourers
06	02	00	1	2. Raw materials
06	02	01	2	Timber merchants, wood dealers
06	02	02	2	Hop merchants, dealers
06	02	03	2	Hay, straw and chaff dealers
06	02	04	2	Corn, flour and seed merchants, dealers
06	02	05	2	Woolstaplers
06	03	00	1	3. Clothing materials
06	03	01	2	Cotton and calico warehousemen, dealers
06	03	02	2	Manchester warehousemen
06	03	03	2	Cloth, worsted and stuff merchants, dealers
06	03	04	2	Silk merchants, dealers
06	04	00	1	4. Dress
06	04	01	2	Drapers, linen drapers, mercers
06	04	02	2	Hosiers, haberdashers
06	04	03	2	Hatters
06	04	04	2	Clothes dealers
06	05	00	1	5. Food
06	05	01	2	Butchers, meat salesmen
06	05	02	2	Poulterers, game dealers
06	05	03	2	Fishmongers
06	05	04	2	Milksellers, cowkeepers
06	05	05	2	Cheesemongers, buttermen
06	05	06	2	Provision curers, dealers
06	05	07	2	Grocers, tea dealers
06	05	08	2	Greengrocers, fruiterers, potato dealers
06	05	09	2	Others dealing in food
06	05	10	2	Oil and colourmen
06	06	00	1	6. Tobacco
06	06	01	2	Tobacconists
06	07	00	1	7. Wines, Spirits and Hotels
06	07	01	2	Wine and spirit merchants
06	07	02	2	Inn and hotel keepers, publicans
06	07	03	2	Beersellers

Sector 6 of the Booth Armstrong occupation classification scheme: Dealing

06	07	04	2	Cellarmen
06	08	00	1	8. Lodging and Coffee Houses
06	08	01	2	Lodging and boarding house keepers
06	08	02	2	Coffee and eating house keepers
06	09	00	1	9. Furniture
06	09	01	2	Furniture brokers, dealers
06	09	02	2	Dealers in pictures and works of art
06	09	03	2	Pawnbrokers
06	10	00	1	10. Stationery and Publications
06	10	01	2	Stationers, law stationers
06	10	02	2	Publishers, booksellers, librarians
06	10	03	2	Newsagents
06	10	04	2	Music publishers, sellers
06	10	05	2	Ticketwriters, billstickers
06	11	00	1	11. Household Utensils and Ornaments
06	11	01	2	Earthenware, china and glass dealers
06	11	02	2	Ironmongers, hardwaremen
06	11	03	2	Gold and silversmiths, jewellers
06	12	00	1	12. General Dealers
06	12	01	2	General shopkeepers, dealers
06	12	02	2	Hawkers, hucksters, costers
06	12	03	2	Marine store and rag dealers
06	13	00	1	13. Unspecified
06	13	01	2	Merchants
06	13	02	2	Brokers, agents, factors
06	13	03	2	Auctioneers, appraisers, valuers, house agents
06	13	04	2	Salesmen and buyers
06	13	05	2	Commercial travellers

Table 1: Kingston Councillors recorded present at meeting on 24 December 1835

Surname	Forenames	Occupation 1	1835
Attfield	James	landowner	x
Carter	James	draper	x
Carter	Richard	not known	x
Chandler	George	grocer	x
Dawson	John	auctioneer	x
Douglas	Edmund	draper	x
Earl	John	coal merchant	x
French	John	baker	x
Fricker	Thomas	cooper	x
Fricker	James Hunter	auctioneer	x
Galley	Richard	coal merchant	x
Jones	William Beale	chemist, druggist	x
King	John	draper	x
Looker	Benjamin Snr	farmer	x
Mercer	William	proprietor of houses	x
Muggeridge	Richard	corn merchant	x
Nightingale	James	auctioneer	x
Pamphilon	William	cheesemonger	x
Papps	Henry Spencer	attorney	x
Penner	Edward	butcher	x
Pepper	William	architect	x
Phillips	Cleaveland T	clerk	x
Ranyard	William	landowner	x
Reed	John	glass, china dealer	x
Roots	(William \Sudlow	surgeon	x
Row	William	gentleman	x
Selfe	Harry	painter	x
Shrubsole	William Snr	banker	x
Taylor	Charles White	grocer	x
Taylor	George		x
Walton	William Snr	brick,& tile maker	x
White	Michael	butcher	x
Wood	Peter		x

Table 2: Kingston Councillors recorded present at meeting on 1 January 1836

Surname	Forenames	Occupation 1	1836
Attfield	James	landowner	x
Bye	George		x
Dawson	John	auctioneer	x
Flinn	John		x
Fricker	Thomas	cooper	x
Garner	Francis	farmer	x
Jackson	Thomas	fruiterer & gardener	x
Jones	William Beale	chemist, druggist	x
King	John	draper	x
Mercer	William	proprietor of houses	x
Muggeridge	John	coal & corn merchant	x
Nightingale	James	auctioneer	x
Phillips	Charles Thomas		x
Phillips	Cleaveland T	clerk	x
Roots	(William \Sudlow	surgeon	x
Schofield	Charles	timber merchant	x
Scott	William George		x
Selfe	Harry	painter	x
Shrubsole	William Snr	banker	x
Taylor	George		x
Thompson	James Jnr		x
Thompson	James Snr	brewer and hotel keeper	x
Walker	John Boucher		x
Woods	Edward G		x
Wyard	James		x

Source NK: KB5 Borough Council *Minute books.*

Kingston Councillors in 1835 who were still councillors in 1836 and 1845

Surname	Forenames	Occupation 1	1835	1836	1845
Attfield	James	landowner	x	x	
Carter	James	draper	x		
Carter	Richard	not known	x		
Chandler	George	grocer	x		
Dawson	John	auctioneer	x	x	
Douglas	Edmund	draper	x		
Earl	John	coal merchant	x		
French	John	baker	x		
Fricker	Thomas	cooper	x	x	x
Fricker	James	auctioneer	x		x
Galley	Richard	coal merchant	x		x
Jones	William	chemist, druggist	x	x	x
King	John	draper	x	x	x
Looker	Benjamin	farmer	x		x
Mercer	William	miller	x	x	x
Muggeridge	Richard	corn merchant	x		
Nightingale	James	auctioneer	x	x	x
Pamphilon	William	cheesemonger	x		x
Papps	Henry	attorney	x		
Penner	Edward	butcher	x		
Pepper	William	architect	x		
Phillips	Cleaveland	clerk	x	x	
Ranyard	William	landowner	x		
Reed	John	glass, china dealer	x		x
Roots	(William	surgeon	x	x	
Row	William	gentleman	x		x
Selfe	Harry	painter	x	x	
Shrubsole	William Snr	banker	x	x	
Taylor	Charles	gentleman	x		
Taylor	George		x	x	
Walton	William Snr	brick,& tile maker	x		
White	Michael	butcher	x		
Wood	Peter		x		

Source : NK: KB/5 Borough council *Minute books.*

The Horticultural Exhibition came off in my garden. The principal tent was 180 feet in length, and it was filled with a grand collection of flowers and plants, to which my garden contributed some of the finest specimens. There was another tent 50 feet long for the ladies table decorations, and a smaller one for fruit and vegetables. Nuthall and Sons had a tent for ices and refreshments. This mass of canvas made me feel like an Ishmaelite, a regular dweller in tents. The band of the 3rd Hussars played admirably in spite of the rain. There were forty-two performers. When the shilling visitors came the weather was very fine, and we had about 1,000 persons during the day. They wandered all over the place, it was quite strange to see people I had never beheld before peering about in every direction. I have not far short of two miles of gravel walks, besides at least and acre and a half of lawn, so there was plenty of room for them. I number amongst my friends certain hot radicals of the kind called philosophical, and these were loud and vigorous in their croakings about the injury I should sustain by thus throwing my place open. It is always so with your radical, he fears the people at heart. It is your Conservative who trusts them. It is unnecessary for me to say that nothing was injured – the public respected what was intended for their enjoyment. The grass of the lawn was slightly worn by many feet, but the rain and cool weather since have entirely made the damage good. Everybody was delighted, especially the shilling folks; and my praises and laudations of my grounds and liberality are in every body's mouth.'

Excerpt from: William Hardman. *The Hardman Papers: a further selection (1865-1868)* from the *Letters and Memoirs of Sir William Hardman*. Edited and annotated by S M Ellis. (Constable, London: 1930), p 252.

Kingston councillors who were also freemasons

	Forenames	FM	Occupation 1	Period on council
Abrahams	Henry	Dobie	auctioneer	1864-1865
Baker	Charles	Oddfellows	printer	1886-1897
Buckland	Francis	Dobie	solicitor	1877-1883
Cartwright	Richard	Dobie	upholsterer	1863-1864
Chapman	William	Dobie	outfitter	1875-1885
Clements	Thomas	Dobie	brewer	1871-1886
Constable	George	Dobie	grocer	1859-1864
Coppinger	Edward Thomas	Dobie	distiller	1885-1898
Drewett	John	Dobie	master of blue coat	1869-1875
Ensom	Richard	Brownrigg	victualler	1871-1886
Fox	Robert Charles	Dobie	lime merchant	1863-1865
Goulter	James	Dobie	builder	1871-1886
Havell	David	Grove	plumber	1840-1849
Holland	John	Dobie	draper	1871-1892
Jones	Philip	Dobie	gentleman	1859-1894
Linton	H William	Brownrigg	pork butcher	1881-1884
Long	Thomas	Dobie	tailor	1858-1865
May	William David	Brownrigg	artist	1874-1876
Muggeridge	John	Grove	coal & corn	1836
Nuthall	Alfred	Dobie	tea dealer	1874-1898
Oldridge	Charles Edward	Brownrigg	builder	1874-1898
Pearman	James	Dobie	gas engineer	1871-1885
Phillips	Cleaveland T	Brownrigg	clerk	1835-1836
Sherrard	George Clifton	Dobie	solicitor	1872-1895
Shrubsole	John	Dobie	draper	1859-1873
Vanderpant	Francis John E	Dobie	dentist	1878-1879
Wade	George	Dobie	bootmaker	1871-1886
Williams	John	Dobie	kept the Griffin	1855-1871

Source: Kingston1.mdb, P F Reading

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