

# The Brunswick Clubs: Rise, Contradictions and Abyss

**T**he Brunswick Clubs or Brunswick 'constitutional' Clubs formed the nucleus of an ultimately doomed campaign to deny Catholics the right to enter both houses of the British parliament. Numbering roughly 200 clubs and claiming 150,000 members, the Brunswicks had a short lifespan. Born in September 1828 when the Catholic legislation was proposed, they theoretically continued until December 1829. However, once the bill was passed with a large majority in March 1829, they were in effect dead. The Clubs sought to unite Protestants as a pressure group, were ambiguous towards physical force and hoped to somehow force parliament or King George IV to abort the constitutional amendments. The Clubs, though certainly a major feature on the political landscape, never became the populist Protestant movement which they sought to be. However, it is unlikely, even with Protestant unity, that the Brunswicks would have had any real prospects. There was a clear majority in both houses in favour and, with no election until 1830, it is likely that their cause was beyond hope. The 'Brunswick Tree' had many leafy branches; it even made a lot of noise during the storm but ultimately bore no fruit.<sup>1</sup>

Ireland had been relatively tranquil during first decade after the Act of Union.<sup>2</sup> However, stability and Ireland are not natural friends and they inevitably began a slow farewell during the next ten years. Economic conditions began to decline due to a succession of poor harvests. Also, ironically, the actual end of the Napoleonic Wars led to a diminished market for both agricultural and non-agricultural output. Hardship grew and thus also did unrest. Peasant vigilante organisations such as the Rockites began a campaign of intimidation and violence against landowners, causing considerable fear and disruption. The British government was weary of Ireland. The blood of the 1798 rebellion was still fresh in their minds and the war with France from 1793 to 1815 had been a long one. Catholics were disproportionately at the lower end of the economic scale and they suffered most. A political and even a military vacuum existed. Catholicism needed a strong political movement which could fight for an improvement of its social and economic

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plight. Daniel O'Connell and the Catholic Association, founded in 1823, filled this chasm.<sup>3</sup> Its mission was to agitate for an expansion of civic rights for Catholics, both social and political, which would eventually result in an improved economic position for the bulk of the population.

The right for Catholics to sit as MPs and enter the House of Lords was a pivotal first step, giving them a role in the running of their country, from which at imperial level they were totally excluded, despite forming a clear majority of its population.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that Catholics already possessed the theoretical right to sit as MPs, but that's all it was, theoretical. A Catholic was entitled to stand for election, and even be elected, but in order to physically walk through the doors of either House one had to take the Oath of Supremacy. This oath required one to swear to almighty God that the Imperial Monarch, in this case King George IV, was the head of the Church. Perhaps in today's largely secular Ireland individuals may be prepared to swallow such words, whether they believe in them or not. However, 19th century Ireland was a pious, God fearing place and Catholics believed that eternal damnation would be their only reward if they perjured themselves in this manner. Some Catholics could vote, however. Electoral franchise was not universal amongst any denomination, Anglican, Dissenter or Catholic.



Medallion portrait of the Duke of Wellington c.1814. Carrol Collection (Limerick Museum)

Eligibility depended on, if rules were adhered to, (and in Limerick they were not!) holding property to the value of at least 40 shillings. In May 1828 Daniel O'Connell defeated the pro-emancipation, Protestant landlord, Vesey Fitzgerald, in a Clare by-election, but was unable to take his seat due to the oath.<sup>5</sup>

The Duke of Wellington's Tory government was pragmatic regarding the growing distress in Ireland. On a pragmatic level Britain was tired of an eternally troublesome Ireland. British army troops were already stationed in Ireland and further coercion would have been an increased drain of both manpower and money.<sup>6</sup> On a human level the Irish-born Prime Minister realised that the suffering amongst Catholics was real. "There can be no doubt that evils arising from misgovernment do exist in that country, to a degree unparalleled in the history of any civilised country and I know of no remedy but that extremity which I adverted to on a former occasion, or to the measure we are now about to carry."<sup>7</sup> The measure to which the Duke alluded was that which popularly became known as Catholic Emancipation. The Oath of Supremacy was to be repealed and Catholics were to be admitted to both houses. Wellington was optimistic that it could bring "tranquillity." "It was essential however that the government respond to this distressing state of affairs; and the remedy could only be to concede Emancipation, since there was now a dangerous agitation in Ireland on its behalf and a majority in the British parliament in its favour."<sup>8</sup> The Emancipation Bill was proposed in autumn 1828 and brought before parliament in March 1829.<sup>9</sup> J.C. Beckett doubts whether Wellington was truly compassionate, believing he was unsympathetic to the Catholic cause, yielding only because the alternative was anarchy. However, the *Limerick Evening Post and Clare Sentinel* (LEPCS) at the time depicted him in divine colour as one who was driven by a genuine empathy with the Catholic plight,

A 'large portion' of Ireland's Protestants was now extremely worried. The Protestant cum Anglican Ascendancy governed Ireland, which was then only a province of the United Kingdom. They saw themselves as the Nation, a Protestant nation.<sup>10</sup> There were no Catholic MPs, (in fact, Protestant Dissenters were also excluded from parliament until 1828). Few

Catholics had any significant role in local government.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the Church of Ireland was the established Church and benefited from the Tithe, which Catholics indignantly paid for its maintenance.<sup>12</sup> Being a clear numerical minority, it was only possible for the Anglican Ascendancy to maintain its position by excluding Catholics politically.

Thus Catholic Emancipation had the potential to completely dismantle their position of dominance, though only in the long term and not immediately, as feared. If Catholics could sit as MPs they then had the potential to form a power block within parliament and influence, if not participate in, government itself. If electoral franchise was at some point extended, then, due to weight of numbers, Catholics would eventually dominate the Irish political landscape and perhaps also impact upon the British one. A chain reaction was about to be set in motion and the old ascendancy could not survive. This legislation was believed to be the beginning of the end.

This analysis was correct, though it took a great deal longer to reach fruition than contemporary scare mongering predicted. Ireland, at least the greater part of it, did indeed depart from the Union, but not until more than a century later. However, nearly two hundred years later there is still no sign of a Catholic revolution or takeover of mainland Britain! The Church of England still exists and the monarchy remains an exclusively Anglican entity! It is very important to remember that many Irish Protestants did not wish to politically subordinate their Catholic countrymen. A great many were in fact actively opposed to it, even from within the ranks of the ascendancy.

The line between pragmatism and succumbing to pressure is a blurred one and never more so than in this case. Perhaps Catholic emancipation was conceived out of fear or pressure; there was a bubbling agitation on its behalf. Many feel that Wellington and Robert Peel, his Home Secretary, genuinely believed that emancipation was the correct measure. Wellington's speeches in the House of Lords suggest this. However, those opposed to the legislation maligned his perceived cowardice. They thought that government had been coerced by Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Association and its disorderly allies.

As Wellington was perceived as a weak man acting against his conscience for the sake of peace, Protestant opponents felt that he needed their help, help to stand up to Daniel O'Connell. A strong Protestant body was necessary which could unite Irish Protestants and fight for the Prime Minister and King George IV against the Catholic pressure groups. The Prime Minister must be forced by whatever means possible to abandon his proposed constitutional amendment. If the legislation was conceived out of agitation then it too could be aborted through agitation. However, there is a fundamental contradiction in the above objectives. On the one

hand, they sought to force the government to abandon its own legislation through force, on the other hand they saw themselves as helping it! The struggle was uphill and very steep. It is likely that they must have realised this. However, in order to have any chance, an organisation was needed that could unite all Irish Protestants. The Orange Order had been censored in 1825 and lacked respectability.<sup>13</sup> A new association was conceived which could achieve the forementioned objective. Its name was the Brunswick Constitutional Club. The Brunswick Club of Ireland first met in Morrisson's rooms, Dublin, on 15 August 1828, with the Earl of Longford as its President.<sup>14</sup>

The term Brunswick derives from the title 'Duke of Brunswick' which was held by George Ludwig, Elector of Hanover. Hanover is situated north of Brunswick in modern-day Germany. He ascended the British throne in 1714 under the name of George I. Thus, although the British royal family held the family name 'Hanover,' they were often referred to as the 'House of Brunswick'.<sup>15</sup> The object of the Brunswick Clubs was to defend the principles which the House of Brunswick symbolised. This was an Anglican state, safeguarded by an Anglican constitution, which would preserve the ascendancy of Anglicans forever. The Brunswick Clubs themselves used the term 'Protestant' in order to broaden their appeal, but Anglican is the more correct term. Until 1828, Dissenters too were excluded from parliament by the Corporation and Test Oaths and in Limerick, at least, their presence in local administration was negligible. The Limerick City Brunswick Club was formed on 7 October 1828.<sup>16</sup> There was an annual subscription and aspiring members were admitted only on the recommendation of its committee.<sup>17</sup>

The mission of the Brunswicks was simple. In order to maintain the so-called 'Protestant' Constitution of the House of Brunswick, the repeal of the Oath of Supremacy had to be aborted. This was their sole objective, to be achieved officially by legal means, though foul methods were also countenanced. Frequently individual Clubs also opposed Catholic relief legislation and a furthering of Catholic educational opportunities.<sup>18</sup> They attempted to cloak their method as religious - Catholicism was "Against the word of God" and it was thus God's will that Catholics should remain in perpetual bondage. Hon. James King considered "the Catholic religion inconsistent with the word of God and calculated to prevent the salvation of men's souls. The religion of Catholics led them into errors and the Constitution which it was now attempting to overturn prevented these errors from injuring the community."<sup>19</sup> The Evangelical movement was a growing one in the 1820s, so a small percentage of the Brunswick membership really did believe this. However, their motives were in reality almost entirely selfish, demonstrated in their openly proclaimed fears of a diminution of their own status. "The object

of the proposed association was to maintain Protestant Ascendancy in church and state."<sup>20</sup> "The attainment of political power by Roman Catholics is inconsistent with the maintenance of the constitution and the welfare of the church." According to the Rev. Josiah Crampton: "In consequence of the profession he followed he would not thus publicly come forward, whatever his private opinions, if his Roman Catholic friends had confined themselves to seeking their political freedom alone, but when he found them openly attack the Protestant Constitution and religion of the state, he came forward as everyone was bound to."<sup>21</sup>

According to the *Ennis Chronicle and Clare Advertiser*, by November 1828 there were 147 'Local' Brunswick Clubs, 27 'County' Brunswick Clubs, the Ulster Provincial Club, the University Club and most importantly, the Club to which all others sent delegates, namely the Brunswick Constitutional Club of Ireland. There was also 36 English Brunswick Clubs. The above figures are, however, a definite underestimation. 'Local' Clubs existed in Pallaskenry, Kilfinnan and Rathkeale, which do not appear in the list. Reports also appeared of meetings in Norwich, England, although Norwich is also not listed. (See Appendix 1). Although broadly similar in terms of their aims and activities, there is little evidence of coordination between the various branches. The same newspaper claimed a total membership of 150,000, but the accuracy of this figure is again open to question. Its membership in Limerick, and, it appears, beyond, was predominantly the Anglican upper classes and clergy. Little reference ever appears to lower order Protestants except for the Palatines, who were a major factor in County Limerick. That does not mean that lower rank Protestants were not present, but it is definite that the upper ranks were the leaders. However, many of the Protestant nobility were also firmly against this troublesome sect. (See Appendix 2) The Clubs only tactic appears to have been gathering as many signatures as possible opposing Catholic Emancipation, which a sitting MP or Peer would present to parliament. It was hoped the government would be overwhelmed by this display of public opinion. The Duke of Cumberland presented the largest of these to the Lords, the "General Petition of the Protestants of Ireland," which allegedly contained 160,000 signatures.<sup>22</sup> Wellington estimated that over 1000 petitions in total had been received between both houses.<sup>23</sup>

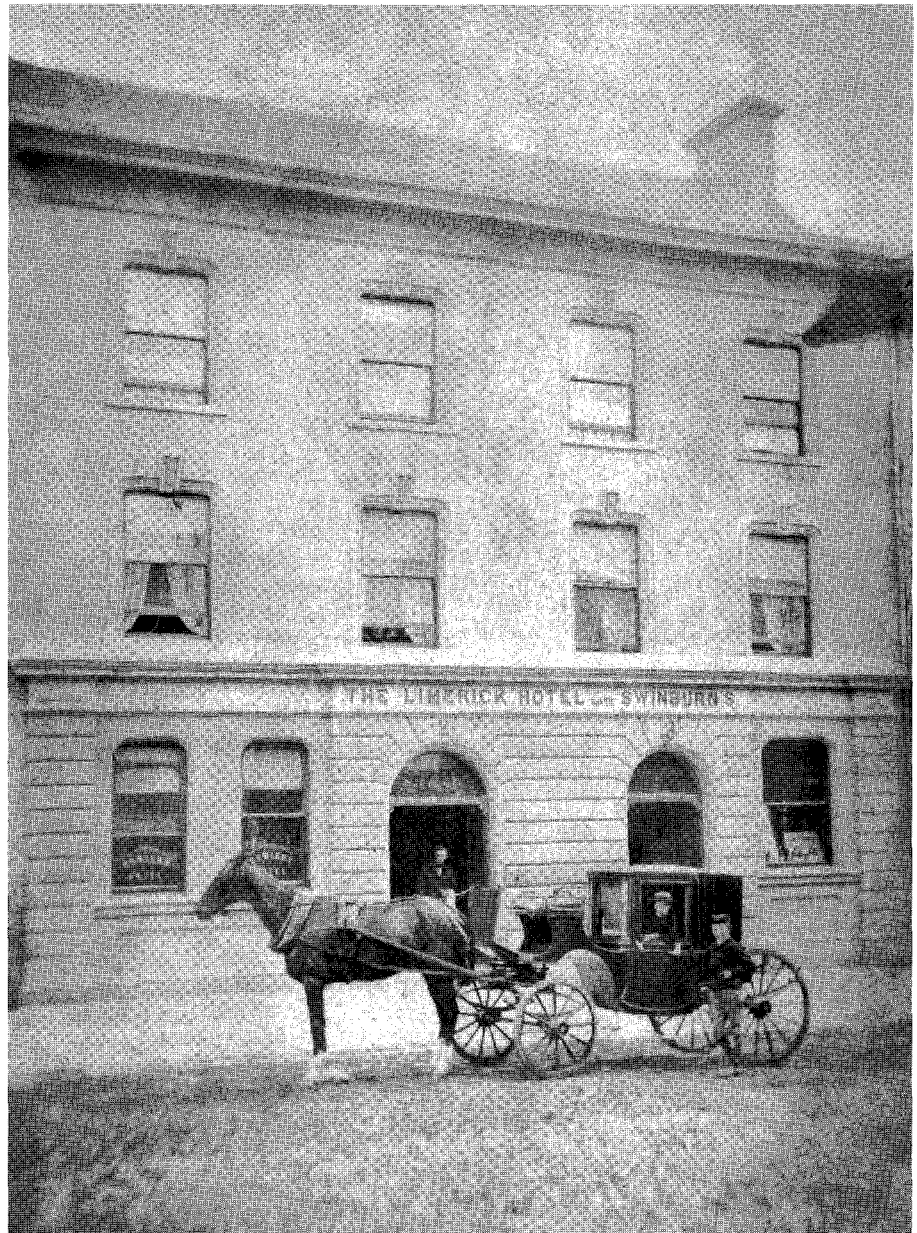
This paper is chiefly concerned with the Brunswick Clubs in Limerick. Nearly fifty names were published as having attended the Brunswick Constitutional Club gatherings in Limerick City, but there was probably many more. (See Appendix 3) Lord Gort - Colonel Charles Vereker, former MP and Chamberlain of Limerick Corporation - became the President. It met in the Swinburn Hotel on Brunswick St., now Sarsfield Street.

However, unity amongst Limerick City

Protestants was at this time an impossible task. Limerick City was in the middle of a period of prolonged political conflict, which pitched Protestant against Protestant as well as Catholic against Protestant. Protestants themselves were so bitterly divided that many had forged alliances with Catholics against their co-religionists. A pan-Protestant alliance was simply unthinkable. Limerick Corporation, the 'corrupt Corporation,' the most powerful organ of local government, was monopolised by the Vereker block, a group of Anglican families related through blood and through marriage, led by Lord Gort, President of the Limerick Brunswick Club. They also had a substantial number of allies with whom they shared privileges, including the Massys, Lloyds, Westropp, Maunsells, Gabbetts, Crokers, Watsons and Crips. Most held property in the George's Street, now O'Connell Street, area. These families formed the core membership of the Brunswick Clubs. The parish of St. Michaels/Newtown Pery enjoyed autonomy from the Corporation with its own local government authority, namely 'The Commissioners of the Parish of St. Michaels.' However, the Corporation alone held the power of determining voting rights for all residents of Limerick City at parliamentary elections. It systematically disenfranchised large numbers of leading Anglican as well as Catholic families, mainly from the Newtown Pery area, the most prominent of whom were the Perys, Barringtons, Bourkes and Roches. Freemanship and the accompanying electoral franchise was granted illegally to many non-residents of Limerick, whose only entitlement was friendship with the Vereker block. (See Appendix 4) These would vote for a Vereker block candidate at parliamentary elections, which were themselves a sham.

John Tuthill and Thomas Spring Rice, (related to the Pery family), were both barristers and were two of the chief opponents of the Corporation at both a parliamentary and judicial level. Eventually the reforming interests did prevail, but not until 1840 when the 'old' Corporation was abolished. Normalisation even then was a slow and bitter process.

Thus the corrupt Limerick Corporation formed the core of the Constitutional Club in the City. The movement got off to a bad start. The delegates it sent to the parent body in Dublin (The Brunswick Constitutional Club of Ireland meeting at Rotunda in Dublin<sup>24</sup>) were Alderman Andrew Watson - part owner of the Limerick Chronicle, a powerful propaganda tool - Captain Garnett, G. Hugh Fitzgerald and Michael Bevan. Not surprisingly, I failed to uncover any St. Michaels Parish Commissioners who joined the Brunswicks. (See Appendix 5) This is not to say that St. Michaels Parish Commissioners were unanimously pro-Catholic - many definitely were, though some were probably not. However due to the political situation at the time, they could not side with their enemies, regardless of their private opinions.



The Limerick Hotel, formerly Swinburn's, Sarsfield Street, c.1880

(Limerick Museum)

### Contradiction of term 'Protestant'

The glue with which all Brunswick Clubs sought to unite their diverse membership was the Protestant religion. According to Colonel Connolly (Chairman of Kildare Place Society) in Dublin "It would be inconsistent to have Catholics possessed of power in a Protestant state - light and darkness, fire and water, could never co-exist together"<sup>25</sup> In Limerick, Michael Bevan addressed his flock with the words: "Protestants, Brunswickers and Countrymen - the Star of Brunswick shall not be set."<sup>26</sup> Catholic doctrine on transubstantiation and the invocation of Saints were their most frequently cited heretical practices. They believed that Protestantism was the only truth and essential for salvation. However, the contradiction here is fundamental. Protestantism is not uniform in doctrine. It is an umbrella term covering a wide variety of sects. The largest in Ireland was Anglicanism, but there were also Methodists and Presbyter-

ians, which themselves contain several branches.<sup>27</sup> All Protestant Churches are in some way different from each other. Thus, how can each be the one true religion when all are so different? In some cases the theological differences between the Protestant Churches is greater than between Anglicanism and Catholicism. Protestantism is not a single entity, as the Brunswicks conveniently assert, and to speak of it as such makes no sense ideologically or theologically. Protestantism was an umbrella term of convenience, a means of broadening their appeal regardless of how little the term actually meant.

### Hatred of Catholic Clergy and Pope

A further badge of unity worn was a savage hatred of the malign Catholic priesthood and the Pope. The priest was blamed for deliberately keeping his people uncivilised and ignorant. The priest himself allegedly knew better, but for his

own selfish interest preferred a subservient flock whom he could control for his own self-fattening. This is illustrated by an extract from the *Star of Brunswick* newspaper - the Brunswicks own newly-formed propaganda tool. "When we contrast the cleanliness, decency and good habits of the English with the sloth, grossness and bad habits of the Irish we cannot omit observing that the fault lies with the Priest who are or ought to be the moral police of the country. The Irish funeral is a scene of drunkenness and riot, an English one a scene of decorum, decency and piety. Who is to blame for this? The Priest who mingles in the unholy revel and chooses that moment of unnatural exultation for the collection of his tribute money. Why does the Priest not reform these savage customs? Because his interest is bound up in their continuance because he subsists by the utter deprivation of his species and because he knows not enough of virtue to sacrifice his own views to the good of his fellow creatures."<sup>28</sup>

The Catholic clergy were also frequently accused of weakening the affectionate bond between landlord and tenant, if such a bond ever existed. A so-called "Friend to the Peace" articulates a typical Brunswick viewpoint: "The Catholic clergy in several parts of this country are using their influence to procure the votes of their parishioners as are Freeholders for one of their candidates at the approaching election (1830) and what this influence is attempted to be exercised, proven in cases where its success would inevitably tend to break the intimate and friendly connection which should at all times exist between Landlord and tenant."<sup>29</sup>

The Pope, the alleged leader of the Catholic Association, was arguably enemy number one, vilified in colourful terms. Between 1641 and 1643 Irish 'Romanists' are alleged to have massacred between 300,000 and 400,000 Protestants "For which Te Deum was performed in Saint Peters at Rome by the then Pope and which there is at this moment, a triumphant picture on the side wall of the present Popes private chapel (the Sistine) in the Vatican."<sup>30</sup> This is powerful language of indoctrination. Only a very strong mind could fail to be moved by such propaganda. Future generations had to be alerted to the dangers of Popery, thus: "An obelisk, pyramid, tower, temple, statue, mausoleum, pillar, caenotaph or column of infamy must be constructed to instruct and warn future generations against those blind slaves of the apostate Bishop of Rome."<sup>31</sup> Lord Vesey Fitzgerald of Clare summed it up when he posed the question that "If Catholics are loyal to the Pope, how then could they be loyal to a Protestant Constitution?"<sup>32</sup>

### Ambiguity towards Violence

Did the Brunswicks advocate violence as a means of achieving their goals? The answer is that there was much ambiguity.

Certainly the Brunswicks had no official paramilitary wing. However, many individual members did make direct reference to the use of arms if required. According to Robert Saunders at a Baltinglass Constitutional Club gathering: "The Protestants have got an ascendancy which was purchased by the blood of our ancestors and which if necessary must be preserved by the blood of their descendants." Henry Westby stated at the same meeting that "the Protestant blood of Ireland is ready to be shed in defence of the laws which they respect and the religion which they rever".<sup>33</sup> Certainly militant language, at least, was widespread.

There is also some evidence of actual physical force at meetings of the Limerick Club. Thomas Steele, a native of Derry-moore, Co. Clare, was a Protestant, a landlord and a held a Masters degree in Engineering from Cambridge University. Ironically this man was also Vice President of the Catholic Association and President of the Order of the Liberators. Frequently the Catholic Association sent delegates to observe the Brunswicks. One night in October 1828, Mr. Steele was their delegate at the Swinburn Hotel. Once he was spotted, however, the Brunswick response was swift. The Mayor of Limerick "with violent pressure, pushed him from the table among the crowd - where he was seized upon, and by brute force violently thrown down stairs." He was verbally ostracised, dubbed "a popish agitator" and a "ruffian".<sup>34</sup> Steele himself alleges he heard "cut the rebels breast out of him" and "murder him". Also, a policeman's bayonet was supposedly drawn and the Mayor failed in an attempt to arrest him outside.<sup>35</sup> Soon after Mr. Steele was honoured by the "Masters and Wardens of the Congregated Trades of Limerick" by bestowal upon him of "freedom of their several guilds" for his "manly, independent and talented advocacy of the great cause of civil and religious liberty".<sup>36</sup>

Such episodes did the Brunswick cause much harm. Rev. O'Grady, a Brunswicker at the forementioned meeting, expressed his outrage at the incident.<sup>37</sup> It also did much to dissuade potential recruits. The organisation was seeming to lack respectability, just as the Orange Order had previously. The *Limerick Evening Post and Clare Sentinel* lists a number of Protestants who felt that they could not co-operate with the Ennis Brunswick Club.<sup>38</sup> Robert Ottway Cave, a landlord, refused to sanction his tenants to attend.<sup>39</sup>

### Scaremongering - Fear of Catholic Ascendancy

The lifeblood of many political organisations is fear, the fear of an impending apocalypse. The Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and "Ulster says no!" were political screams of fear by latter day Irish Protestants. The Brunswicks, their ancestors, were born out of sheer terror. The apocalypse in all cases was an

eventual Catholic State and Rome Rule. These fears were plausible. No clear minority grouping could hope to monopolise privilege indefinitely. However, realism was disgraced by sensationalism and blatant scaremongering. It was alleged that Catholic MPs would eventually lead to Catholic cabinet ministers - realistic in the long term. The 'Catholic rent' would purchase all English boroughs - an absolute fantasy, while the Catholic cabinet ministers would in turn infiltrate the monarchy! Nearly 200 years later, the monarchy remains staunchly Anglican! There has certainly been no Catholic takeover of Britain! However, Catholic Emancipation did apply to British Catholics also and the Brunswicks attempted to spread their movement there. Judging by the number of Clubs and bearing in mind the sheer size of mainland Britain, they appear to have been relatively weak.<sup>40</sup> There was to be a Catholic takeover of what became the Republic of Ireland, though it was nearly one hundred years later when it happened and it was certainly no immediate danger.

### County Limerick

Brunswick Clubs were also formed in County Limerick, in Rathkeale, Pallas-kenry and Kilfinane. The bulk of the membership in all three was provided by the Palatine community. The surnames of those who attended (if the *LEPCS* is accurate) clearly illustrates this: James Corneille, John Switzer, Peter Hyphel, Valentine Brithair and Moses Sparling.<sup>41</sup> The Palatines were in effect the most recent planters. Over 3000 arrived in Ireland in 1709 from the Palatine area of Germany.<sup>42</sup> They were Protestants fleeing persecution and were imported to strengthen the Protestant interest in County Limerick. The majority of the 3000 settled in Rathkeale and the surrounding area. In 1712 Sir Thomas Southwell granted land to 130 Palatine families at half the normal rent.<sup>43</sup> Their coming was almost within living memory and must have intensified the already malign feeling towards any 'foreign occupier.' Gradually they adopted the Methodist faith, as their own church was not represented in Ireland. They were to suffer greatly at the hands of the Rockite movement during the depression of 1815. 'Foreigners' were always the scapegoats when harvest was poor and it was poor again in 1823.<sup>44</sup>

This group were the subject of particularly savage newspaper coverage and appear to have been hated even more than the Protestant Ascendancy. A Rathkeale priest dubbed them "a low set." The *LEPCS* further reinforced this view dubbing them "swines" (akin to the German word 'Schwein,' meaning pig) whom their landlord would chase to the ballot box like cattle to vote according to his will. "A set of men who merely breathe on the will of every Lording, trading their votes and driving to the hustling like Swine to his self fattening trough, would he call them a high set?"<sup>45</sup> Perhaps it was this



negative relationship with their neighbours which led them to seek protection under the umbrella of the Protestant Brunswicks; perhaps they were coerced by their landlords as the LEPCS alleges. However, it is ironic that as Methodists, Palatines suffered under much the same political disabilities as Catholics until 1828 and were excluded in practice for many years afterwards. A group which, on the surface, should have had empathy with the Catholic cause now actively sought their subordination. Colonel Rochfort of Westmeath presented the anti-Emancipation petition of the Palatines of Pallaskenry to the House of Lords. Those in Kilfinane also sent their own anti-Catholic petition.<sup>46</sup> In February of 1829, the LEPCS also published sparse details of a 'Grand Petition' of the Protestants of the City and County of Limerick combined. Lord Gort was to be 'postman' to the House of Lords, while George Ogle Moore would deliver to the House of Commons and "sing their lullaby!"<sup>47</sup> The fore-mentioned publication attempted to downplay its significance by claiming that "the Protestants of rank and property of this county are Emancipators." This is a highly dubious assertion.

### Disunity & Contradiction

The Brunswicks failed to unite Irish Protestants. In fact they were even divided amongst themselves, sabotaging their cause even further. Lord Gort, President of the Limerick City Brunswick Club, stated that he did not oppose concessions to Catholics, as they too were loyal to the House of Brunswick and the constitution. He felt that "concession would strengthen, not weaken, the Protestant interest." He even insisted, before accepting the position of President, that he maintained the right to support the legislation in the House of Lords if required by the government to do so! Colleagues (Hon William Massy and Rev Josiah Crampton) even reluctantly supported his right to "freedom of opinion" and "political conduct." He later wrote of his dismay at being named a vice-president of the Brunswick Club of Ireland without his assent.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps he was embarrassed by them. Lord Gort was evidently chosen only for his name, although he did co-operate as their postman, delivering their petitions. Allegations also emerged that many signatures which appeared on their petitions were both forged and of entirely fictional names. This was according to a Brunswick administrator, angry at not having received his wages. He threatened to reveal further malpractice if he was not paid soon.<sup>49</sup>

A constant feature at Brunswick meetings was the contradiction between being in favour of concessions to Papists and wishing them well, but only so long as the Protestant position was not eroded as a result. Major Croker of Limerick stated that "if a bill for emancipation could be satisfactorily carried so as to secure the Protestant establishment he would have

no objection to it."<sup>50</sup> Lord Dunlo in Dublin "declared that he was not decidedly opposed to some measure of emancipation, but he would not like to grant it now because it would look like their being intimidated."<sup>51</sup> Sir John Ripton "endeavoured to cultivate friendship of Roman Catholic Bretheren" "but must now stop this encroachment and defend the Constitution."<sup>52</sup> The Co. Clare Brunswick Club also admitted Protestants who favoured "a well regulated bill for what is called Emancipation" for the sake of unity.<sup>53</sup> Many Protestants agreed with Wellington that Emancipation could bring stability and national unity.

### Liberal Protestants

Many Protestants were actively in favour of the proposed constitutional reform and the Brunswicks by no means represented the entire spectrum of Protestant opinion. Though a minority, 'Liberal Protestants' were significant both on a national and local level. Pivotal in illustrating Liberal Protestant opinion was 'The Protestant Declaration', signed in December 1828, by "their Graces and Dukes of Leinster and Devonshire, 7 Marquises, 26 Earls, 11 Viscounts 22 Barons, Counts, 22 Baronets, 52 Members of the House of Commons and upwards of 2000 Gentlemen of other classes."<sup>54</sup> They pledged Protestant support for a removal of Catholic political disabilities on pan-Christian grounds. Catholics and Protestants are both Christian and both sons of Adam, both followers of the common truth of the compassionate saviour, Jesus Christ. Emancipation would actually strengthen the empire, stabilising its institutions and promoting "National tranquillity." Catholics too supported the House of Brunswick and the constitution and were capable of virtue.<sup>55</sup>

According to Samuel Ward, the chief architect of the declaration, "liberty is the birth-right of every man" and Catholic bondage was "revolting to every maxim of justice, every principle of humanity," altogether an embarrassment. "Romanists" were responsible for "trial by jury, for Magna Carta and very many of the best principles of our civil institutions." He accuses the Brunswicks of perverting the Protestant religion for their own selfish ends. If the franchise depended on virtue, they would be as restricted as the 'Papists.' "If therefore these be referred to Protestants at large we shall find the principle body even of them intellectually and morally unfitted, and consequently, although eligible by law, virtually excluded from their benefit, fully as much as any Roman Catholic." The true follower of Christ is not he who merely attends his house, but he who lives according to his word. The Brunswicks were an absolute distortion of Christianity, bordering on Fascism. "The Protestant religion is abhorrent, altogether abhorrent, from anything illiberal or cruel, influenced by the Holy Spirit." "Observance of outward ceremonial is insufficient; the affections of

the heart must display themselves in the sincerity of accordant works!" Brunswicks "attribute senseless fanatical and wicked acts" to "religious doctrine." They are mere "anti-Catholic societies, the true designation of either orange or black Brunswicks."

"It is assumed to be in the name of Religion - yes, of the Christian religion, which enjoins us to 'love our enemies' and 'do good unto all men'" "Are they to dictate what their narrow views, guided alone by headstrong passions, reckless of any interest but their own?" "Ultra loyalty is nothing more than conditional loyalty and selfishness in the extreme." If the Clubs succeeded there could only be "yet further division - further animosities, further and more deadly reactions." Catholics support the House of Brunswick, as do Protestants who signed the Declaration. He also quoted examples of inter-Christian harmony in Prussia, France, the U.S.A. and Saxony, although with the benefit of history, these examples are unfortunately questionable. These views typify those of the 'Liberal Protestant' and there were regular meetings, especially in Dublin.<sup>56</sup> The man who deserves particular praise is the Duke of Leinster. Whenever reports appear regarding Liberal Protestants, his name is almost always mentioned.

The *Star of Brunswick* questioned the motivation of those who signed this Protestant Declaration, accusing its signatories of selfishness or bowing to intimidation. "This thing so called - a fabrication - to which signatures have been voluntarily affixed for the worst and most selfish motives or have been superinduced by threats the most unworthy and intimidation the most barefaced." It could not accept that fellow Protestants could simply have an unselfishly different view to their own. There had to be something more sinister. It alleges that a ten shilling subscription was required from signatories to defray expenses and it vowed to dissect the occupations of those who signed.<sup>57</sup>

### Limerick's Liberal Protestants

The creature called the Liberal Protestant inhabited Limerick also. Thomas Spring Rice MP was their leading figure. Others included Richard Fitzgibbon, The Earl of Limerick and the Barrington family. Some, such as Mr Spring Rice, had Catholic branches in their family tree. However, this does not appear to be their primary motivation.<sup>58</sup>

There were two important factors. Firstly, there appears to have been a genuine belief that, in order for the Protestant elite to survive, it needed to open its doors to new members. If political or social advancement could be achieved on the basis of merit, rather than merely on Protestant birth, then the nation could find peace. Secondly, a large section of Limerick Protestants, namely those outside the Corporation, were dependent on Catholic political support in their quest

for reform. This movement became popularly known as 'The Independence Movement.' Thomas Spring Rice petitioned parliament demanding that the proposed removal of Catholic disabilities must become law. He also supported proposed interdenominational education, as it could promote inter-Christian understanding and lessen the influence of the clergy from all sides, who were all equally divisive. Many liberal Protestants, although pro-Catholic, were not pro-priest or pro-Catholic Association, due mainly to its overbearing clerical influence. He also supported the Catholic relief bill of 1829 and voted against the suppression of the Catholic Association in the same year.

The Catholic Clergy do appear to have possessed an unhealthy level of influence on their flock at elections throughout 19th century Ireland. Catholics, in particular their lower socio-economic ranks, were largely devoid of education, their minds underdeveloped and incapable of thinking for themselves on broader issues. The priest was one of the few educated persons in the community. Also, he conveniently had a hotline to God. It was thus natural for the priest to influence a peasant, poverty-prone society, largely devoid of alternative leaders. Clerical assent was necessary to any aspiring political campaign. Education brings intellectual and emotional independence. Without this, however, a 'Priest State' was inevitable.

### Government

Ultimately, despite many MPs, Lords and influential figures sympathising with the Brunswick cause, and approximately 1000 petitions, Wellington simply did not need their support. He had clear majority support in parliament and the approval of the 'House of Brunswick' in King George IV himself. In fact the Marquis of Anglesey, Lord Lieutenant since 1828 and chief architect of the 'Catholic Bill,' actively disliked the Brunswicks, deeply resenting their attempts to coerce him. In the House of Lords he made his feelings clear, deeming the Clubs 'an additional nuisance' and pouring scorn on their self proclaimed efforts to 'help the government.' "I could not give them thanks for their efforts for I felt that I had ample power and no occasion whatever for their assistance." Once emancipation became law, the Clubs would have no cause and perish. Wellington was optimistic that the legislation could bring Ireland stability. "The higher and richer order of the people will have an interest in tranquillity; they will therefore aid in preserving it and set an example to the lower and poorer order of harmony and satisfaction. This is all we desire. If they set the example, the country will be quiet."<sup>59</sup> This quietness which he hoped for was a quietness also minus the Catholic Association, which he saw as just as big an annoyance as the 'Constitutional Fundamentalists.' "Repeal the grievous penal enactments and the association is annihilated."<sup>60</sup>

Wellington's one concession to the Protestant extremists, though I'm unconvinced that it was a result of the Brunswicks exertions, was the disenfranchisement of all forty shilling Freeholders, whether they be Catholic or Protestant. However, a clear majority were Catholic, thus the number of Catholic voters would be reduced.<sup>61</sup> Catholics were also to be ineligible for the offices of Lord Chancellor or Lord Lieutenant of either Kingdom. In addition, proposals also existed to exclude members of Catholic religious orders from the House of Lords. However, this latter measure was dropped. The Duke stated, prior to the vote, that repeal of this oath would only result in 5 or 6 Catholics entry to the House of Lords and an "unspecified number" to the Commons. Protestantism in either house, or outside either house, was under no threat. It existed before the Oath of Supremacy was even a sparkle in its creator's eye, when there was just the Oath of Allegiance, which there would still be now. Acts 25 and 30 of Charles II "were not established from any fear of Popish members but from a just fear of what might be done by a Popish sovereign and a Popish successor. Is there any danger of a Popish successor now?" Catholics were also to remain excluded from the Monarchy.

Lord Redesdale was one of the most vocal pro-Brunswick speakers prior to the vote in the Lords, favouring simple suppression of the Catholic Association. The Earl of Eldon felt that Catholics would take over parliament, destroy the Church of Ireland and the Church of England would survive it "not by an hour." Others who spoke against the bill were Lord Abington, the Duke of Newcastle, Bishop Lichfield, the Duke of Cumberland and the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Those who spoke in favour included Marquis Camden, Lord Granville, the Earl of Harrowby, the Bishop of Harrowby, the Duke of Athol, Lord Middleton, the Duke of Sussex, Marquis Lansdowne, Lord Holland and the Bishop of Norwich (one of the regions in England where the Brunswicks made most noise). The Lords eventually passed the bill by an overwhelming majority of 213 to 109. King George IV, head of the House of Brunswick, gave his assent and it became law.<sup>62</sup>

### Aftermath

The Brunswick cause had been defeated, its members were demoralised and there were demands for them to disband. Thomas Spring Rice called on them to follow the example of the Limerick Independent Club, which dissolved itself as its goals had now been achieved and to demonstrate its peace making spirit."<sup>63</sup> Had the Brunswick Clubs achieved their goals, then their future would probably have been assured. However, they were a failure of history and belief in their usefulness was low. The Orange Order was reconstituted and assumed leadership

of the Protestant 'self-interest movement' in Ireland. The *Star of Brunswick* continued publication until December 1829. Dissolution was vehemently denied as late as 12 December. "Much it is true has been lost, but much still remains worth contending for. Look to the efforts making to subvert the Church established in these islands." "The abominable threats of the leader of the Roman Catholic Party, remember the vindictive nature of their church and the sanguinary of her code and conduct to heretics." "Give up not idly."<sup>64</sup> No official notice was given of their eventual cessation in *Star of Brunswick* or any other newspaper. No reports appear of any meetings in local newspapers beyond March of 1829. It is thus safe to assume that they ceased operation long before their newspaper. Catholic emancipation was law and most unlikely to be repealed. The Brunswick Clubs would have needed to change, to broaden their terms of reference, for survival. However, they suffered from the stigma of abject failure and the will did not exist to save them. The Clubs died depressed and few attended their funeral. Henceforth the Brunswicks were destined, at best, to be a tiny and insignificant footnote of history.

One interesting report which appeared in *Star of Brunswick* in October 1829 was that of the proposed Protestant Colonisation Society, initiated in the Grand Orange Lodge. Plans were formulated to establish Protestant colonies throughout Ireland to ensure an Orange influence everywhere, thus strengthening Protestant interest as a whole. This was to be done by purchasing uncultivated land, paid for by the annual subscription of 6 shillings from every Orangeman. It was estimated that £60,000 per year could be raised and 1000 Protestant families could be resettled every 12 months. The primary beneficiaries were to be lower class Protestants, "families of helpless indigent peasants."<sup>65</sup> Protestants had a duty to help their fellow Protestants in need. However, it was never stated where they were to be transplanted from, Ireland? Scotland? Perhaps even the Netherlands or Germany? "The committee are of opinion will increase the moral and physical emigration and give the Orange institution a prepondering influence in every county in Ireland." Holland was seen as the role model. The Protestant Colonisation Society was formally constituted in late November 1829 in Morrisson's Great Rooms.<sup>66</sup>

### Newspaper Coverage

The primary newspapers used for the research of this article were *Star of Brunswick* - published by the Brunswick Club of Ireland itself from November 1828 to December 1829; the *Limerick Chronicle* - part owned by Andrew Watson, himself a member of the Limerick City Brunswick Club; the *Limerick Evening Post and Clare Sentinel* (LEPCS), which was fiercely pro-emancipation and fundamentally anti-Brunswick and the *Ennis Chronicle and Clare Advertiser*. Unfortunately the

## LIMERICK INDEPENDENT CLUB.

*At a Meeting of the Club, held this Day, at the Canal Hotel, pursuant to adjournment,*

### Thomas Steele, Esq. in the Chair,

The following Resolutions were entered into, as forming the fundamental Rules of the Club.—

1st.—That the first object of the Club be to promote mutual kindness and reciprocal benevolence amongst all classes and persuasions of his Majesty's subjects.

2d.—That the object of the Club be also to assist in superintending the Education of the Poor, in this City and Liberties.

3d.—That the Club be also bound to discountenance and prevent the existence, in this district, of all Secret and Illegal Societies whatever.

4th.—That the next object be to put an end to Feuds and Factions amongst the People, and to prevent Riots or breaches of the Peace.

5th.—Next, to ascertain the number of Persons possessed of Freeholds in this City and Liberties, and to take care that all Freeholds be duly registered, and the owners ready to exercise their Elective Franchise, and to assist every Claimant to Freedom in obtaining the enjoyment of their Chartered Rights.

6th.—That it be the object of this Club to promote public and private charities, of every description, sanctioned by law.

7th.—That all the proceedings of the Club be public, and open to the inspection of all the members, and of all Public Officers, Magistrates, and any other persons having any kind of authority whatsoever from or under Government.

8th.—That there be no Oath whatsoever required or admissible from any Member, and that secrecy be utterly banished from any of the Rules, Regulations, Proceedings or Meetings of the Club, or any portion thereof; but that it be a fundamental rule of the Institution, that every Gentleman seeking to be admitted a Member, do make a distinct and positive pledge, to act upon every important political crisis according to the decision of the majority, without regard to any private or personal interests or feelings whatsoever.

9th.—That any person wishing to become a Member, shall be proposed by one Member and seconded by another, a week's notice of same being given to the Secretary, and that One black bean to every Five white ones, excludes the person so proposed, and that no less than Twenty Members form a Ballot.

10th.—That the terms of admission be One Pound Yearly.

11th.—That the following Gentlemen be appointed Officers of the Club for the next Three Months :—  
Edmond Ryan, Esq. President; William Hackett, Esq. Vice-President; William Ryan, Esq. Treasurer; and Thomas Molony, Esq. Secretary.

THOMAS STEELE, Chairman,

THOMAS MOLONY, Secretary.

August 18, 1828.

Printed at CANTER'S Commission Paper and Account-Book Ware-house, 12, Francis-street, Limerick,

Leaflet of Limerick Independent Club, August 1828,  
printed by R.P. Canter, 12 Francis Street

(Limerick Museum)

*Limerick Chronicle* for most of the years 1828/29 is missing from all local collections. Thus a valuable perspective is lost, apart from occasional extracts which were reprinted in other papers. However, what was most striking was the extent of the hostility to the Constitutional Clubs by the *LEPCS*.

The *LEPCS* did its utmost to ridicule and dehumanise the Clubs through poetry and probably blatant slander. "Blood-hounds" it dubbed them, a phrase later used by Daniel O'Connell, and it made frequent reference to their "Kennels."<sup>68</sup> In another issue they were "Cannibals" and on another day still, a Brunswick Protestant minister fathered a bastard child and deserted its mother.<sup>69</sup> Members are also referred to as "the Council of War" who talk to horses, being "Parsons and tithe pig eaters", "Tax eaters and Grinders" who don't pay full taxes on their property. It also stated that the Limerick Brunswick Clubs donated £100 to help defray the costs of former Mayor Thomas Jervis's legal action against the paper.<sup>70</sup>

In conclusion the Brunswick 'Fundamentalist' Clubs were a short lived and

abysmally unsuccessful phenomenon. They closely resembled the Orange Order which rose and became a populist movement in opposition to Home Rule half a century later. The Orange Order, in conjunction with other Protestant pressure groups, did achieve a modicum of success, forcing the creation of a separate Northern Ireland and Protestant state. However, its power was derived from the fact that it did represent popular Protestant opinion. The Clubs never did so and this was their Achilles heel. They were not helped by the lack of a general election, which may or may not have enabled them to gain some political credibility. The time-scale from formation to legislation was also extremely short. The 200 plus Clubs were largely autonomous and appear to have lacked a co-ordinated leadership. Despite some significant sympathisers, the government simply did not need to listen. Thus in this incarnation the Brunswicks were doomed from conception. Bigots the Brunswicks certainly were, but was their apocalyptic vision accurate? For the most part the answer is undoubtedly 'yes'. Catholic Emancipation was the first step towards a

Catholic, priest-dominated nation. However, this did take a great deal longer than they anticipated and there was certainly no Catholic takeover of mainland Britain. The Brunswicks were eventually succeeded by the Orange Order as the leader of patriotic Protestantism in Ireland. However, their place in history is deserved despite their short life span. They were a force for only one year, but it was one critical year in the evolution of the future Irish nation.<sup>71</sup> The Brunswicks played a prominent role in the screenplay of 1828/29, although ultimately their role wasn't to finish with glory. However, as an ancestor of the living Orange movement they do hold historical interest and contemporary relevance. Love them or loathe them, I believe that the Brunswick should not be forgotten.

### Appendix 1

1. The following is the complete list of Brunswick Clubs formed throughout Ireland and England, from the *Ennis Chronicle and Clare Advertiser*, 29 November 1828:

Brunswick Club of Ireland  
Ulster Provincial Club  
University Club

### The following counties established County Clubs:

Antrim	Armagh
Cavan	Clare
Cork	Donegal
Down	Dublin
Fermanagh	Galway
Kilkenny	Leitrim
Limerick	Londonderry
Longford	Louth
Meath	Monaghan
Queen's County	Roscommon
Sligo	Tyrone
Tipperary	Westmeath
Wexford	Wicklow

### The following established local clubs:

Armagh city	Aughrim
Ardstraw	Athlone
Augher	Arva
Arklow	Aughnacloy
Aglish	Ballinasloe
Borris-in-Ossory	Ballyhobey
Ballymacarrett	Ballymahon
Boyle	Ballyshannon
Bandon	Ballygawley
Ballyconnell	Bangor
Ballynode	Ballykeel
Ballintra	Buttevant
Belturbert	Ballymena
Borrisokeane	Brookeborough
Ballybay	Ballinmonty
Ballinamore	Belleek
Benburb	Ballnaleek
Cork City	Cavan Town
Clones	Carnew
Collon	Cooterhill
Conroy	Connelloe, Upper
Connelloe, Lower	Carrigallin
Castleconnor	Coolaney
Carrick-on-Shannon	Charlemont
Carlingford	Carrickfergus
Castlecaulfield	Clogher
Clonfeacle	Cookestown
Charleville	Derry City

Drogheda	Dundalk
Dromine	Drumane
Dungannon	Dunkerrin
Derriaghy	Drumcliffe
Downpatrick	Drumquin
Derrygortney	Downshire
Duleek	Enniskillen
Edenduffcarrig	Enniscorthy
Frutona	Galway Town
Gorey	Glasalough
Irvinestown	Iveragh
Killala	Killiman
Killglas	Kinsale
Killeshandra	Killashee
Kinawley	Louth Town
Limerick City	Letterkenney
Lifford	Loughgall
Lisnakea	Lisburn
Leck	Longford Town
Leskanard	Loughary
Loughgilly	Mullingar
Mo**stown	Manor Cunningham
Magherafelt	Mountnorris
Manorhamilton	Mountshannon
Moy	M*bill
Mountkennedy	Malin
Mountmelick	Mountnorris
Muff	Maguire's-bridge
Mones	Muskerry
Newtownlimavady	Newtownstewart
Newtownhamilton	Newtownbarry
Newcastle	Newmills
Newtownmountkennedy	
Omagh	Ormond, Lower
Ossory, Upper	Portadown
Parsonstown	Portarlinton
Rathdowne	Roscommon Town
Rossory	Randalstown
Sligo Town	Strabane
Slievardagh	Stranorlar
Stewartstown	Shinrone
Tinahely	Tyrhugh
Tanderagee	Tyrawley
Tyrrelspass	Templemore
Typollan	Tallow
Tyrone	Wicklow
Wexford	

Total membership was estimated at 150,000

#### English Brunswick Clubs:

London - The Imperial Parent Club, of which the Duke of Gordon is President and the Marquis of Chandos Secretary

Kent	Buckinghamshire
Stockport	Leeds
Pewdly	Leicester
Oswestry	
Colyton Hundven of Devonshire	
Derby, Clergy of the Archdeaconry	
Rochestrar Clergy of the Diocese	
Manchester	
Nottingham, Clergy of the Archdeaconry	
Newborough	Bolton-le-Moore
Wallingford	Exeter
Northampton	Suffolk
Shropshire	Worcester
Bridgenorth	Bacup
Cheshire	Anglesey
Merioneth	Llanguinenn
Colchester	Shrewsbury
Caernarvon Co.	Essex
Llangaif	Chelmsford
Caernarvon Town	Macclesfield
Newtown Abbot, Devon	Northumberland
Norwich	

No record exists of any Orange Societies in Limerick either before or after this period. Outside of Ulster, the Orange Order was strongest in Dublin and Cork.

2. Population of Limerick City - 1821: 59,045 (28,117 Male, 30,928 Female) -1831: 66,554

In 1871, the first year in which religious denominations were included in the census, the population of Limerick City was said to be 88.5% Catholic.

Population of Limerick County - 1821: 218,432 (108,799 Male, 109,633 Female).

(*Census of Ireland 1821, 1831*; Judith Hill: *The Building of Limerick*, Mercier Press, 1991, p.149)

3. General Elections in Limerick City 1810-1830 (1 M.P. elected)  
1812 General Election: Rt. Hon. Col. Charles Vereker: 139  
Lord Glentworth (Henry Hartstonage Pery): 27  
1817 By-election: Hon. John Prendergast Vereker: 412  
John Tuthill 268  
1818 General Election: Hon. John Prendergast Vereker 601  
Thomas Spring Rice 306  
1820 General Election: Hon. John Prendergast Vereker 796  
Thomas Spring Rice 560  
(On petition Vereker unseated and Spring Rice was later declared elected)  
1826 General Election: Thomas Spring Rice: elected unopposed.  
1830 General Election Thomas Spring Rice: 796  
Samuel Dickson 485  
(Walker, B.M. (ed): *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland 1801-1922*, Royal Irish Academy, 1978)

It is important to note that, according to the Constitution, Catholics were allowed to vote and theoretically allowed to participate fully in most areas of local and national politics, even to sit as MPs. However, a combination of the corrupt nature of the Corporation and the Oath of Supremacy kept them out. The Oath of Supremacy, which had to be taken before entry to Parliament, required one to acknowledge the Monarch as head of the Church. In a pious world, where religion occupied such a pre-eminent position, no Catholic could in his conscience take this Oath. It also affected Protestant dissenters until 1828, when it was modified for their benefit. Also, at this stage and for some years after, MPs received no salaries. This combined with the enormous costs of commuting to London meant that few Catholics were likely to be in a position to sit as MPs.

#### Appendix 2

Irish Protestant nobility or nobility with Irish connections who supported Catholic Emancipation:  
Duke of Leinster  
Duke of Devonshire  
Earl of Glengall  
Earl of Granard  
Earl of Damley

Earl of Fitzwilliam  
Earl of Besborough  
Earl of Wicklow  
Earl of Blessington  
Earl of Bective  
Earl of Portarlinton  
Earl of Gosford  
Lord Plunkett  
Lord Bangham  
Lord Dunally  
Lord Riversdale  
Lord A.M.W. Hill, MP (Down County)  
Lord W.C. Fitzgerald, MP (Kildare County)  
Marquess of Lansdowne  
Marquess of Downshire  
Marquess of Hastings  
Marquess of Clanricarde  
Rt. Hon. Maurice Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry  
Hon. Agar Ellis  
Hon. R. Fitzgibbon, MP

The above figures met at Rotunda Dublin and the Union Hotel, Cockspur St., London, among other locations. They planned to raise money for a statue in honour of the Duke of Wellington.  
(*LEPCS 24 & 29 April 1829*)

Other Protestants who openly favoured Catholic Emancipation were:

Marquess Camden  
Lord Granville  
Earl of Harrowby  
Duke of Atholl  
Lord Middleton  
Duke of Sussex  
Marquis of Lansdowne  
Lord Holland  
(*Ennis Chronicle 29 April 1829*)

#### Appendix 3

List of persons who are reported as having attended Limerick City Brunswick Constitutional Club meetings. Undoubtedly other figures did attend, but these were the leaders.

Lord Gort: President, who stated that he may vote for Catholic Emancipation Bill in House of Lords!  
Charles Fitzgerald, Treasurer, resident in 5 Upper George's St.  
Captain Garrett Hugh Fitzgerald, Secretary  
Alderman Andrew Watson, part owner of Limerick Chronicle, Delegate at Brunswick Club of Ireland in Dublin  
Captain Garnett, not listed as a Freeman of Limerick, Delegate at Brunswick Club of Ireland meeting in Dublin  
G. Hugh Fitzgerald, not listed as a Freeman, Delegate at Brunswick Club of Ireland meeting, Dublin  
Michael Bevan, Limerick Delegate at Brunswick Club of Ireland Meeting, Dublin  
Edward Croker, Freeman since 1795, resident in Ballynagarde  
John B. Langford, not listed as a Freeman  
Major Croker  
Right Hon. Lord Massy, resident in Ballyclough, Freeman since 1817  
Rev. O'Grady: not listed as a Freeman  
Lord Clare  
Lord Dunraven  
Sir Aubrey de Vere Hunt



Mr Waller, Castletown resident  
 Hon. William Massy  
 Vere D. Hunt: Mayor  
 Hon. George Massy, resident in Ballyclough, Freeman since 1792  
 Hon John Massy, Freeman since 1816  
 Hon William Massy, resident in Belmont, Cork  
 Henry A. O'Donnell  
 C.A. Rev. William Waller  
 Colonel Monsell  
 Robert Maunsell Esq.  
 Godfrey Massy, resident in Ballycane, Freeman since 1793.  
 Alderman Wilson  
 Alderman Gabbett  
 Alderman D. V. O'Mahony  
 Alderman N. Mahon  
 George Tuthill, resident in Faha, Freeman since 1801.  
 Thomas M. Wilson  
 Rev. Josiah Crampton, resident in Mulcair, Freeman since 1817  
 Joseph Gubbins Esq.  
 Capt. Thomas Ross  
 John Waller O'Grady esq.  
 John Hunt Esq., Surgeon & Freeman since 1813  
 John Blennerhasset, resident in Riddlestown, Freeman since 1817  
 Thomas Jervis, late Mayor

List of Persons who opposed the Act of Union in 1800 who were themselves or their descendants later to join the Brunswick Constitutional Clubs, an organisation whose cornerstone was loyalty to the Union. Published in The Limerick Chronicle, 11 January 1800.

Andrew Watson  
 Edward Croker  
 Godfrey Massy  
 Robert Maunsell  
 George Tuthill  
 Hon. John Massy  
 Vere Hunt  
 Thomas Vereker  
 John Prendergast Smyth

#### Appendix 4

Four official criteria for receipt of Freedom of Limerick:

One could:

1. Be the eldest son of a Freeman and resident in the city.
2. Be married to the daughter of a Freeman and resident in the city.
3. Have served an apprenticeship of at least seven years to a tradesman or merchant who was himself a Freeman.
4. Or, most controversially, one could simply be a 'distinguished non-citizen.'

This was a loose ambiguous term and it was under this heading that the greatest abuses occurred. Under the Verekers the only criterion was that one be a political ally of theirs.

#### Appendix 5

Commissioners for the Parish of St. Michael, 1831

**For Life:**

Lord Glentworth  
 John Kelly

John Tuthill, barrister, Catherine St.  
 John Mark  
 William Roche  
 William Howley  
 Rev. John Pinkerton, Glentworth St.  
 William White  
 Francis Philip Russell  
 George William Russell  
 Michael Gavin  
 James Anglin  
 Hewey Watson

**For two years:**

Michael Quin  
 Thomas Quinlavan  
 Hewey O'Sullivan  
 Cornelius O'Brien  
 Joseph Jones  
 Ralph Wilson  
 Daniel Barrington

I found no evidence of any involvement by this body with the Brunswick movement.

#### Appendix 6 - A Brunswick Song by a Supporter

**Brunswickers**  
**A Song by a Clare Man**  
 Air - "Protestant Boys"

The Protestant spirit of Erin is rous'd,  
 That long had lain dormant; when  
 needless, unknown,  
 While all who love freedom it's cause have  
 espous'd,  
 Resolv'd to support Constitution and  
 Throne  
 Rebellion that lurk'd, and underhand  
 work'd,  
 (The Wolf in Sheep's clothing, of late  
 plainly shewn.)  
 Disheart'n'd, doth tremble, since  
 Brunswicks assemble!  
 Sing Billy bo lero, we'll keep the bone

They who the war whoop of party have  
 rais'd,  
 Appear quite astonish'd to find it is up to.  
 They hop'd that their masters would take,  
 and be pleased,  
 Whatever they choose to pour into their  
 cup.  
 Their masters are men! They'll show them  
 again,  
 Disdaining the yelp of each priest-ridden  
 pup  
 With bluster or blarney, from Clare or  
 Killarney;  
 Sing Billy bo lero, this let them sup

These who the Blood-hounds by Blood-  
 hounds styl'd.  
 Too long look'd for peace where no peace  
 could be found.  
 But, now they resolv'd they'll no more be  
 beguil'd  
 To security's sleep, by a mere empty  
 sound.  
 Delusion is done; it's tell race is run;  
 It's victim's fist ready for slaughter were  
 bound,  
 Till the war wisdom of Treason; just  
 sounded in season,  
 And Billy bo lero sinking hope crown'd!

Contempt on George Dawson, though he  
 op'd men's eyes

By Craven! - deserting the Protestant  
 cause!  
 He said the Great Captain should give up  
 the prize,  
 And Rome's rebel minions to Britons give  
 laws,  
 But now, one and all, on Britons we call,  
 To rescue their rights from Dragon's fell  
 jaws.  
 As loyal they'd blazon, the black depths of  
 treason  
 Singing Billy bo lero with their applause.

Those renegade Protestants whose  
 breasts, disgrac'd,  
 Rebellion and Faction's foul badges  
 display,  
 Contempt hath from social life's  
 sanctuaries chas'd,  
 Since Protestant principles walked into  
 play;  
 Those madmen or fools, those blind Cat's-  
 paw-tools,  
 Devoid of discretion, or judgment to away,  
 Like rats shall run routed, from social life  
 scouted -  
 Sing Billy bo lero, - since Brunswick's day!

The mob, priests and demagogues, tag,  
 rag, and bols,  
 Have called forth the Lion of Liberty's  
 might:  
 And, now that those blockheads have  
 done their own job,  
 They may fling, with their schemes, all  
 their hopes out of sight  
 No longer thick scull'd, no more to be  
 gull'd,  
 The Protestants see how things stand by  
 truth's light,  
 And conciliation, their own ruination,  
 Sing Billy bo lero, - hence scare to flight!

Rejoic'd would the Protestants grant all  
 their claims,  
 And place them, as friends, with  
 themselves on par,  
 Ere they found their pretensions mere  
 cloaks to their schemes,  
 To rule, and or fam'd Constitution to mar,  
 Even then too inert, their rights to assert,  
 Till destruction they saw from threshold  
 not far;  
 When the act that concession, provok'd  
 aggression,  
 (Sing Billy bo lero) rais'd Brunswicks star!

And now that the fiend's cloven foot has  
 been shown,  
 While faction's foul ferment works up in  
 the land,  
 Beth' gauntlet of loyalty fearlessly thrown  
 To those who dare venture to take it in  
 hand:  
 Resolv'd to oppose, true liberty's foes,  
 And still by our try'd Constitution to stand;  
 Through all wind and weather, united  
 together,  
 Sing Billy bo lero, our ship is mann'd!  
 (Ennis Chronicle and Clare Advertiser, 29  
 October 1828)

#### Appendix 7: Anti-Brunswick Poem

**Brunswick Echoes**

Hue eocamus, alt; nullique libentius  
 unquam  
 Responsurs sono, Cocamus, retulit Echo.

48169

There are echoes, we know of all sorts,  
From the Echoe, that "dies in the dale,"  
To the "airy-tongued babbler," that sports  
Up the tide of the torrent her "tale."

There are echoes that bore us, like Blues,  
With the latest smart met they have heard;  
There are echoes, extremely like shrews,  
Letting nobody have the last word.

In the bogs of old Paddy-land, too,  
Certain "talented," Echoes there dwell  
Who, on being ask'd, "How do you do?"  
Politely reply, "Pretty well."

But why should I talk any more  
Of such old-fashioned echoes as these,  
When Britain has new ones in store,  
That transcend them by many degrees?

For, of all repercussions of sound,  
Concernings what bards make a pother.  
There's none like a happy rebound,  
When one blockhead echoes another.

When K\_nyon commences the bray.  
And the Borough Duke follows his track;  
While loudly, from Dublins sweet hay,  
R\_thd\_ne brays, with interest back!

And while of most echoes the sound  
On our ear by reflection doth fall.  
These Brunswickers pass the bray round  
Without any reflection at all.

Oh Scott, were I gifted like you,  
Who can name all the echoes there are,  
From Ben-voirloch to bold Ben-venue,  
From Ben-ledi to wild Uam-var;

I might track, shrough each hard Irish  
name,  
The rebounds of his axinine strain,  
Till, from Neddy to Neddy, it came  
To the chief Eeddy, K\_nyon, again;

Might tell how it roar'd in R\_thd\_ne,  
How from D\_ws\_n it died off genteelly,  
How hollow it rung from the crown,  
Of the fat pated Marquis of E\_y;

How, on hearing my Lord of GI\_nd\_ne,  
Thistle-eaters, the stoutest gave way,  
Outdone, in their own special line,  
By the forty-ass power of his bray.

But no - for so humble a bard  
'Tis a subject too trying to touch on;  
Such a noblemen's names are too hard,  
And there needeles too soft to dwell  
much on

Oh Echo, sweet nymph of the hill,  
Of the dell, and the deep-sounding shelves,  
If in spite of Narcissus, you still  
Take to folls who are charmed with  
themselves.

Who knows but, some morning, retiring  
To walk by the Trent's wooded side,  
You may meet with N\_w\_astle admiring  
His own lengthen'd ears in the tide!

Or on into Cambria straying,  
Find K\_nyon, that double-tongued elf,  
In his love of ass-cendancy, braying  
A Brunswick duet with himself!

Written by a person named only as S  
(*Limerick Evening Post*, 24 October 1828)

#### Footnotes

1. The 'Brunswick Tree of Liberty' was a symbol which members often used.
2. The Act of Union became law in 1800, ironically opposed by many latter-day Brunswick Club members. Loyalty to the Union was a cornerstone of the Brunswick ethos.
3. Beckett, J.C.: *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923*, Faber & Faber, 1972, p.299
4. Total population of Ireland in 1831 was 7,700,000. (Beckett, *op. cit.*, p.292). In 1821, 11.65% of the total population was Church of Ireland. (Connolly, Sean: *Religion and Society in 19th Century Ireland*, Dundalgan Press, p.63). I estimate that in 1831, 75% of the total population was Catholic.
5. Beckett, *op. cit.*, p.302
6. *Limerick Chronicle* (LC), 1817
7. *Ennis Chronicle & Clare Advertiser*, (ECCA) 29 April 1829
8. Boyce, David George: *19th Century Ireland, the Search for Stability*, Rowman & Atfield, 1990, p.53
9. Beckett, *op. cit.*, p.303
10. ECCA, 4 October 1828
11. Protestant Dissenters were also excluded from parliament until the March 1828 repeal of the Test and Corporation Oaths. They were now required only to make "A simple declaration not to disturb the establishment" which "is conditioned to restore every Dissenter in the Empire to the full and free enjoyment of his civil rights." The acts "shall no longer disgrace the character of our free Constitution." (*LEPCS*, March 1828)
12. The Tithe was a tax paid by Catholics and Dissenters for the maintenance of the Church of Ireland, the established church. "The amount was small but the system of collection was often vexatious; and since it was paid to the Protestant church it might well seem to the Roman Catholic majority a badge of slavery." Beckett, *op. cit.*, p.292
13. The Orange Order and the Catholic Association were both censored in 1825 under the Unlawful Societies Act. The primary target of this legislation was the Catholic Association. However, the government did not wish to appear partisan. It had, in any event, little affinity for the boisterous and potentially recalcitrant Orange movement. Its demise was a not unwelcome bonus prize.
14. ECCA, 3 Sept. 1828 & *Star of Brunswick*, (SOB) 3 Jan. 1829
15. A dictionary of British History, p.323
16. *LEPCS*, October 1828
17. The Donegal Brunswick Club admitted new members only on the recommendation of three members of its committee (ECCA, 4 October 1828). The County of Clare Brunswick Club, formed on 20 October 1828 under the Presidency of Sir Augustine Fitzgerald, required that its members contribute an annual subscription of a maximum of £2 and a minimum of 2s 6d. All aspiring members, as in Donegal, required the recommendation of three committee members. (ECCA, 20 October 1828).
18. ECCA, October 1828
19. *LEPCS*, 24 Feb 1829. This meeting was in Dublin.
20. ECCA, 17 October 1828
21. ECCA, 11 & 18 Feb 1829
22. *LEPCS*, February 1829
23. ECCA, 29 April 1829
24. SOB, 21 Feb 1829
25. *LEPCS*, 24 Feb 1829
26. *LEPCS*, February 1829
27. Presbyterianism, though derived from Calvinism, has since split into traditional Calvinism, Congregationalism and other small sects, such as the Free Presbyterian Church of Dr. Ian Paisley.
28. SOB, 14 Nov 1829
29. LC, Jan 1830
30. SOB, 18 Feb 1829
31. SOB, 28 Feb 1829
32. SOB, 29 Nov 1828
33. *LEPCS*, Sep 1828
34. ECCA, 11 Oct 1828
35. *LEPCS*, Oct 1828
36. *LEPCS*, 8 Oct 1828
37. ECCA, 11 Oct 1828
38. Those listed included: Right Hon. John Ormsby Vandeleur, the members of the House of Dromoland, Mr. John Scott Vandeleur, Mr. Andrew Stackpoole, Mr. Cornelius O'Brien, John Westropp of Fort-Anne, John & Hugh Singleton, Rev. Fitzgerald of Ennis, Giles Davon and George Armstrong. (*LEPCS*, 14 Oct 1828)
39. *LEPCS*, 19 Dec 1828
40. "There was not enough Orangeism in Britain to provide a firm basis for the Brunswick movement." Hereward, Senior: *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain 1795-1836*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1966, p.231
41. *LEPCS*, 9 Jan 1829 & Spellissy, Sean: *Limerick the Rich Land*, Spellissy/O'Brien Publishers, Ennis, 1989, p.252-260
42. <http://www.users.bigpond.com>, *Palatines in Ireland*, lecture p.1
43. O'Connor, Patrick: *People Make Places*, Oidhreacht na Mumhan Books, 1989, p.32
44. *LEPCS*, 6 Feb 1829
45. *LEPCS*, 20 Feb, 3 Mar 1829
46. *LEPCS*, Feb 1829
47. *LEPCS*, 14 Oct 1828
48. *LEPCS*, 27 Jan 1829
49. *LEPCS*, 1829
50. *LEPCS*, Feb 1829
51. *LEPCS*, 24 Feb 1829
52. SOB, 18 Nov 1829
53. ECCA, Oct 1828
54. *LEPCS*, 9 Jan 1829
55. *LEPCS*, 5 Dec 1828. These are largely the words of Samuel Ward
56. *LEPCS*, 24 Jan 1829
57. SOB, 6 Dec 1828
58. Thomas Spring Rice was of Catholic and Quaker as well as Anglican blood
59. ECCA, 29 Apr 1829
60. *LEPCS*, 3 Mar 1829
61. Beckett, *op. cit.*, p.301
62. ECCA, 29 Apr 1829
63. *LEPCS*, Feb 1829
64. SOB, 12 Dec 1829
65. SOB, 17 Oct 1829
66. SOB, 29 Nov 1829
67. "The people already have changed the name of the Brunswick Clubs to the more appropriate one of the Bloodhounds Clubs, and wherever a Bloodhound Club shall be established we shall endeavour to watch over the people with double vigilance" - Daniel O'Connell, (*LEPCS*, 13 Sep 1828)
68. *LEPCS*, 7 Oct 1828
69. *LEPCS*, October 1828
70. *LEPCS*, Feb 1829
71. Ireland 1800 - 1921 was a province of the United Kingdom in the same way as Wales and Scotland. It sent representatives to the British parliament, which legislated for Ireland. It was thus not a nation in the political sense.