



The Dukes of Portland and Newcastle

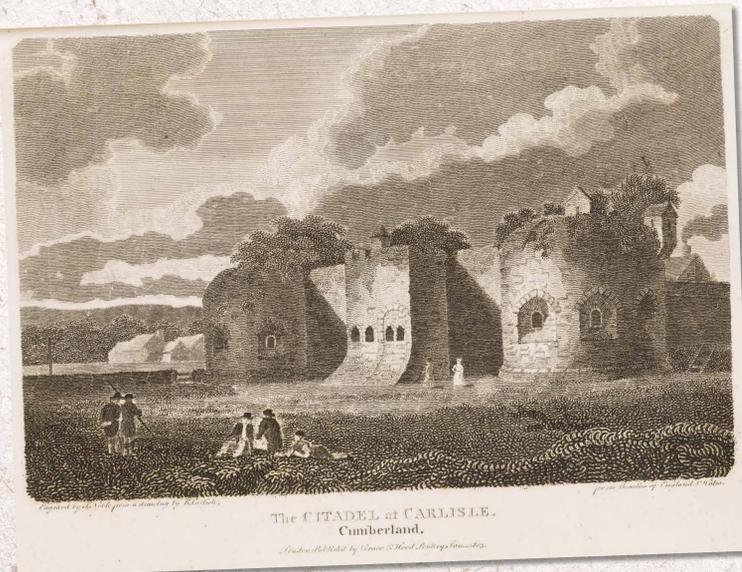


William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, 1792
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Elections in the 18th and early 19th-century were often dominated by rich and powerful landowners. The Dukes of Portland and Newcastle influenced politics far beyond the boundaries of their Nottinghamshire estates.

William H Cavendish-Bentinck (1738-1809), third Duke of Portland, is well known for his part in the notorious 1768 election in Cumberland. The two parliamentary seats had been held for many years by Sir James Lowther and his associates. Portland, as another major landowner in the region, wanted to exercise his political influence. At a meeting in August 1767 Portland's friends proposed that Lowther should take one seat, and one of their group, Henry Curwen, should take the other, avoiding an election contest. But Lowther refused, triggering a bitter election campaign between the two sides.

Engraving of Carlisle Castle, from John Britton and Edward Wedlake Brayley, *The Beauties of England*, volume 3 (London, 1803)
Special Collection DA667.B4



Nottingham Castle on Fire, 1831, British (English) School
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One of the ways in which Lowther fought against Portland was to dispute his right to estates in Inglewood Forest and to the manor of the socage of Carlisle Castle. As tenants were expected to vote according to the wishes of their landlord, this could have affected 300-400 votes for Portland's candidates. However, there was strong opposition to Lowther in that part of Cumberland, and the freeholders voted against his candidates in force.

Henry Pelham-Clinton (1785-1851), fourth Duke of Newcastle, was vehemently opposed to electoral reform. His views made him an object of popular hostility and abuse by those who did not share them. The defeat of the Whig government's Reform

Henry Pelham-Clinton, 4th Duke of Newcastle under Lyne, engraved by Charles Turner and printed by Colnaghi, Son and Company, 1830
Newcastle Collection, Ne 4 1/39



Bill in the House of Lords on 8 October 1831 led to attacks on his property.

Nottingham Castle was burnt to the ground and his residences at Clumber, Nottinghamshire and Portman Square, London, also had to be fortified against the mob.

However, the duke's opinions were not altered. He complained bitterly that the Great Reform Act, finally passed in 1832, lost him the patronage and influence of six boroughs at a cost of around £200,000.