

Mathew Carey and Anti-Military Sentiment
in the *Volunteers Journal* and the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*

Martyn J. Powell
Aberystwyth University

A Paper Submitted to
“Ireland, America, and the Worlds of Mathew Carey”

Co-Sponsored by:
The McNeil Center for Early American Studies
The Program in Early American Economy and Society
The Library Company of Philadelphia,
The University of Pennsylvania Libraries

Philadelphia, PA
October 27-29, 2011

*Please do not cite without permission of the author

1. Introduction

The role of the military in Ireland in the eighteenth century has perhaps not enjoyed as much critical attention from historians as one might expect. Although definitions of Ireland as a ‘garrison state’ have been overturned, or at least nuanced – barracks turning from ‘a potent symbol of military oppression’ to ‘residential buildings’¹ - it is difficult to point to recent, detailed work on the army in Ireland. Kenneth Ferguson’s thesis, which remains unpublished, and the eighteenth-century contributions to Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery’s *A Military History of Ireland* are the stand out contributions, and there is also work on counter-insurgency during the revolutionary period.² Understandably it has been paramilitary groups, republican and loyalist, that have received the most coverage. This does not seem set to change as Neal Garnham’s publication of a major new study of another paramilitary organisation, the Irish militia, is due next year.³

My own recent work has touched upon both professional and amateur soldiery, looking at Volunteers and soldiers, most recently in the context of the variant of popular protest known as houghing.⁴ The slicing of tendons at the back of the calf or hamstring was usually practiced on cattle. But from the 1760s onwards there were human cases, usually soldiers, and the culprits usually butchers. In a tense settler society with an extremely large standing army such practices might not appear to be out of the ordinary. Indeed Sean Connolly suggests that ‘[r]elations between civilians and soldiers after the 1790s appear to

¹ A.J. Guy, ‘The Irish military establishment, 1660-1776’, in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds.), *A Military History of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 219.

² K.P. Ferguson, ‘The Army in Ireland From the Restoration to the Act of Union’ (PhD, TCD, 1980; (Cambridge, 1996).

³ Thomas Bartlett, ‘Defence, counter-insurgency and rebellion, 1793-1803’, in Bartlett and Jeffery, *A Military History*, pp. 247-93; Tony Gaynor, ‘The Abercromby affair’, in Thomas Bartlett, David Dickson, Dáire Keogh, and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective* (Dublin, 2003), pp. 394-405.

⁴ M.J. Powell, Ireland’s Urban Houghers: Moral Economy and Popular Protest in the Late Eighteenth Century’, in Michael Brown and Sean Donlan (eds.), *Boundaries of the State: The Laws and Other Legalities of Ireland* (Farnham, 2011).

have been relatively uncontentious'.⁵ There were plenty of outrages between citizens and soldiers in England in the same period, especially if recruitment was a live issue – which it was during the American war. What was peculiar about the Irish case perhaps was the position of the press, and its willingness to excuse protestors, or if you like, criminals, who were usually Catholics, and who were taking amateur lessons in tenotomy; using the British army, the safeguard of Protestant liberty, for surgical practice.

As far as public opinion is concerned, although it is tempting to track a view of the army in Ireland as an invaluable bulwark against the Catholic threat before 1750 and then a threat to personal and financial liberty afterwards, this is a little too convenient. It is worth noting that although in economic terms the army was the most sizeable element of public expenditure in eighteenth-century Ireland,⁶ MPs were almost always happy to vote such expenditure through. From the perspective of the soldiery there is a consistency – throughout the century - in testimonials which reveals that the Dublin garrison knew that their personal safety was in danger if they were performing certain tasks, such as guarding Newgate prison, or escorting recruits.⁷ Meanwhile, Toby Barnard astutely notes the key role that the military played in society throughout Ireland. Army officers were a vital component of club-life, and any connection with an intrusive overseas military did not seem to bar them from memberships of dining clubs, hunt clubs or the freemasons.⁸

The part-time apothecary and full-time demagogue Charles Lucas was one of the first Irish Protestants to use public opinion against the army. More particularly he utilised newspapers as well as pamphlets⁹ to vent his spleen after the military riots of the summer of 1765, and a controversial court martial. Lucas's co-founded newspaper the *Freeman's*

⁵ S. J. Connolly, 'The defence of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760', in Bartlett and Jeffery (ed.), *A Military History*, pp. 245.

⁶ K.P. Ferguson, 'The Army in Ireland From the Restoration to the Act of Union', TCD PhD, 1980, p. 62.

⁷ Ferguson, 'The Army in Ireland', pp. 90-1

⁸ See James Kelly and M.J. Powell (eds.), *Clubs and Societies in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2010).

⁹ For example [Charles Lucas], *An address to the right honourable the lord mayor* (Dublin, 1768)

Journal published toasts made by a group of citizens, ‘That the military may never be able to prevail over civil power’, and lauding a putative Irish militia over the army.¹⁰ Another Dublin MP, Sir Edward Newenham, followed in his footsteps. Both used concerns over the military to argue against army augmentation, and both saw the newspaper as a key weapon in the propaganda war.¹¹ This study will focus upon anti-military sentiment in newspapers, but in this case the two that were run by the printer Mathew Carey in Dublin and Philadelphia, namely the *Volunteers Journal* and the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*. They had relatively short lives, which makes a detailed, and indeed complete, examination possible. Carey also had a connection with the *Freeman’s Journal* – possibly an influential one as its ‘conductor’ - beginning at the end of 1780, but this seems a little more nebulous – although, as has been noted, it was a newspaper with a tradition of anti-military sentiment; indeed it was very much apparent in October 1780 when it published a lengthy piece attacking the military after soldiers had rioted following the acquittal of a man accused of houghing.¹²

Eighteenth-century newspapers were by their nature composite affairs, cutting and pasting from other organs being spliced with the views of the printer, comments from readers and whatever news had found its way from the latest packet to the print shop. Nevertheless the content must be suggestive, of firstly, Carey’s views on the military, and secondly, that of wider public opinion in Ireland and America. After all Carey needed individuals to purchase his organ, and a sense that such views appealed, and even reflected, those of readers is backed up by the inclusion of letters and articles from that same public. Obviously the relocation to America is a complicating factor here. In Dublin the *Volunteers Journal* can be regarded as the most radical of the anti-government, reformist newspapers of the 1780s, and

¹⁰ *Freeman’s Journal*, 19 Oct. 1765.

¹¹ Also see Charles Lucas, *A mirror for courts-martial: in which the complaints, trial, sentence and punishment of David Blakeney, are represented and examined with candour* (Dublin 1768).

¹² Edward C. Carter II, ‘Mathew Carey in Ireland, 1760-1784’, *Catholic Historical Review*, 51:4 (1966), pp. 514-5; *Freeman’s Journal*, 31 Oct. 1780.

must have appealed to Protestants and Catholics. Once Carey had fled to America, arriving in Philadelphia in November 1784, and starting up his own newspaper in 1785, the views on the military expressed in the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald* were designed for a new domestic audience. Nevertheless, as we shall see, it is striking how frequently commentary on the Irish military continues to be published in his new paper; particularly when compared with American military matters. One might have imagined that Carey would be reporting upon a military situation in America that was no less controversial than the one in Ireland. Although Washington's army had garnered the laurels of victory in the American war there was uncertainty as to the nature of the new republic and the way forward in terms of marshalling and financing a permanent standing army. However although the short life of the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald* coincided with the Constitutional Convention that took place in Philadelphia over the nature of the republic, by this point Carey had sold the newspaper, and, as we shall see, military matters are predominantly Ireland-focused even before that point. Nevertheless, with these points in mind, this paper will, I hope, address a number of issues, including, the nature of anti-military feeling in Dublin; the coverage of the houghing issue in the same, and particularly in the *Volunteers Journal*; views on military matters published in the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, and, finally, the progress of Carey's own views on the military.

2. Anti-Military Feeling in Dublin

At least since the days of Charles Lucas the presence of a sizeable military garrison in Dublin had been a bone of contention for Ireland's Protestants, and doubtless for Catholics such feelings were longer-standing. Vincent Morley has referred to the 'chronic hostility' between elements of the Irish populace and the military, and Neal Garnham agrees, arguing that this

made the army ‘a relatively imperfect answer to civil disorder’.¹³ Even though soldiers required orders from the civil government, and more particularly a magistrate, before they could act, their unlicensed activities were certainly as controversial as those sanctioned by law.¹⁴ Thus it was not surprising that at key points of military controversy the press would inveigh against the army – including the army riots of 1765, the augmentation act, the mutiny act of 1780 and recruitment for and the disbanding of regiments during the American war.¹⁵

That said, it should be stressed at the outset that the relationship between the military and the Dublin, and wider Irish, populace, was a complicated one. Toby Barnard notes that officers ‘channelled novel notions, commodities and habits into the Irish hinterlands’; a double-edged sword perhaps, as were interventions in political affairs.¹⁶ More obviously welcome, perhaps, was the important role that officers played in the social life of Dublin and other towns. Ferguson notes that officers were in demand at the soirees held by the eighteenth-century gentry;¹⁷ though perhaps not in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, after an assembly was disrupted by the drunken soldiery.¹⁸ One mid-century pamphleteer commended army officers for introducing, ‘politeness in behaviour, regularity of conduct, affability of manners’.¹⁹ Participation in associational life was not limited to rural areas that were in need of civility and Protestants. In Dublin the Knights of Tara, an anti-duelling body that put on displays of swordsmanship, had close links with the military, having a number of high ranking officers amongst their membership. General Henry Lawes Luttrell, a government-supporting MP and *bête noir* of the *Volunteers Journal*, was a member and Luttrell and his

¹³ Vincent Morley, *Irish opinion and the American Revolution, 1760-1783* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 90-4; Neal Garnham, ‘Riot Acts, Popular Protest and Protestant Mentalities in Eighteenth-Century Ireland’, *Historical Journal*, 49:2 (2006), p. 421.

¹⁴ Connolly, ‘The defence of Protestant Ireland’, pp. 242-3.

¹⁵ *Freeman’s Journal*, 7 Aug. 1780

¹⁶ Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (New Haven, 2003), p. 188.

¹⁷ Ferguson, *The Army in Ireland*, p. 85.

¹⁸ *Volunteers Journal*, 18 Aug. 1784.

¹⁹ [H. Brooke], *An Essay on the antient and present state of Ireland* (Dublin, 1759), p. 88.

wife were also welcome at the Funny Street Club in Kildare Street. It is also clear that soldiers read newspapers as they began to run advertisements by soldiers wishing to find new regiments, switch from half-pay commissions to full posts, sell commissions, and swap commissions in British regiments for Irish equivalents. The *Freeman's Journal*, government funded from around 1782 became a favourite, but these notices also appeared in the patriotic *Dublin Evening Post*, and even more surprising, the *Volunteers Journal*.²⁰ In the world of advertising moral scruples counted for little; or perhaps the soldiery had a broader reading appetite than one might expect. Even the officers' charges should not be dismissed as merely the wretched and the riotous. There were plenty of well-behaved soldiers in the Dublin garrison, and indeed some whose experience there had made them 'regular, obedient and well-disposed in general'. John Wesley spend a good deal of time among Ireland's garrisons and he did not force his attentions on them; that said, the possibility of defending Wesley against Catholic crowds offered an unexpected bonus to those enjoying the physical nature of the profession.

It is to be expected, therefore, that many soldiers would have had a tense relationship with the host community. Indeed by the late eighteenth century the Dublin garrison had become so integrated into the roughhouse life of Dublin's streets that they acted as much like one of its gangs as an instrument of peace keeping. In 1776 there was a skirmish between recruits of the Green Regiment and the Liberty Boys at the Queen's Bridge. After many cut heads on both sides it seems that the Liberty Boys were the conquerors and they 'remained in Possession of the Liberty'. The *Hibernian Journal* was astounded that 'this scandalous Rioting is permitted'.²¹ Yet it was not restricted to the troops, as Ferguson refers to

²⁰ *Dublin Evening Post*, 26 June 1786; *Volunteers Journal*, 9 June 1784.

²¹ *Hibernian Journal*, 12-14 Aug. 1776.

commander in chief Michael O'Brien Dilkes's 'personal feud' with Dublin's Liberty Boys.²² One description in the *Freeman's Journal* in 1778 referred to 'the state of warfare in which the soldiery and the inhabitants of this kingdom (but more particularly those of the city of Dublin) have for some years lived'.²³ Military involvement in faction fighting, 'the interaction of robust plebeian males, conditioned by a culture of aggressive masculinity linked to strong group loyalties',²⁴ should not, however, lead us to conclude that there was any degree of acceptance of their presence – that this was somehow carnivalesque entertainment. The practice of houghing singled out the soldiery, and Luttrell hinted that when Dublin's more famous gangs finally buried the hatchet it was in the leg of the nearest military man to hand: 'The Ormond and Liberty boys commemorated their reconciliation and greasy embraces in the blood of the unoffending soldier'.²⁵

Some violent affrays involving the soldiery were very much spontaneous affairs. March 1784 saw a soldier severely wound a drunken brushmaker with a hanger.²⁶ In August of the same year bloodshed followed the arrest of the indebted Captain Palliser of the 9th dragoons. His soldiers were apparently exhorted by his mistress to mount a rescue bid, which they did, the resulting gun-play leaving one dead, three mortally wounded and five seriously injured.²⁷ Other incidents involved petty criminal activity, which explains why the Irish populace were so quick to welcome the Volunteers as a new mode of policing. In December 1776 a stand-off occurred between the regiment of 4th horse, with drawn swords, and 'some riotous Fellows of the city'. The soldiers had come to the aid of two of their fellow recruits over a dispute 'relative to a strumpet of this city'.²⁸ In April 1778 soldiers attacked several

²² Ferguson, *The Army in Ireland*, p. 67.

²³ Morley, *Irish opinion*, p. 129.

²⁴ Connolly, 'The defence of Protestant Ireland', p. 246.

²⁵ *Parliamentary Register*, ii, p. 420, 8 March 1784.

²⁶ *Volunteers Journal*, 5 March 1784.

²⁷ *Belfast News-Letter*, 20-24 Aug. 1784.

²⁸ *Hibernian Journal*, 27-30 Dec. 1776.

Dublin bagnios ‘and plundered them of the Furniture.’²⁹ That soldiers frequented Dublin’s brothels and bagnios was to be expected. But the press saw the army’s contribution to Dublin’s oldest service industry as another opportunity to allege mistreatment of the local populace. In 1784 the *Volunteers Journal* exhorted Colonel Lumsdale to investigate a notorious brothel at 12 Barrack Street, ‘where may be met, at very unlawful hours, many of the military in the company of the vilest prostitutes.’ It alleged that ‘these sons of Mars, to retain the smiles of Venus, when the scanty pay is exhausted, must, and actually do, attack their supporters, the public, and plunder those, whom they are destined to defend.’³⁰

Ultimately the army’s sexual misconduct - as evidenced in its relationship with Dublin’s prostitutes - was another valuable weapon in a propaganda war. In a highly sexualized image that commented on both the exploitation of the Irish populace and the effeminacy of the British soldier, one writer noted that Irish gold would be ‘expended in procuring English *geldings* to *mount* Irishmen.’³¹ Failures in the American war had done much to unman the crown’s soldiers – in the eyes of both British and Irish commentators. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Mary Wollstonecraft and the *Dublin Evening Post* all cocked a snook at the military camp at Coxheath and the effeminate luxury of the royal marquee.³² In the American context it is worth noting that some of the seventeenth-century sumptuary laws against luxury actually gave soldiers special permission to wear such items.³³ Once in America Carey would promote a national boycott of specific luxury products, though he regarded protective tariffs as the more preferable prophylactic.³⁴

²⁹ *Hibernian Journal*, 8-10 April 1778.

³⁰ *Volunteers Journal*, 19 March 1784.

³¹ *Volunteers Journal*, 29 March 1784.

³² *Dublin Evening Post*, 12 Sept. 1778.

³³ Linzy Brekke, ‘The “Scourge of Fashion”: Political Economy and the Politics of Consumption in the Early Republic’, *Early American Studies*, 3:1 (2005), p. 114.

³⁴ Brekke, *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 133.

An inactive or disbanded, or even disrobed, military was clearly dangerous to the local populace. But the relentless push for troops that accompanied the American war brought its own difficulties. Soldiers involved in conscription drives and press gangs were often at the sharp end of the populace's wrath, and there were frequent violent disturbances on the quaysides of Dublin.³⁵ In 1780 a party of carmen attacked soldiers delivering deserters to Dublin port, provoking the soldiers into opening fire.³⁶ Deserters, it seems, were regarded in a similar fashion to fugitives from the press gang. In August 1781 a soldier was killed after an attack by a mob seeking to free a weaver apprehended on suspicion of deserting.³⁷ The issue of recruitment offered the Irish press an opportunity for scattergun criticism directed at the army and government, and points of contention might include failure to satisfy creditors before departure and broken promises that these regiments would not be sent abroad, as well as the need to use 'irons' upon, and confine in holds, these so-called 'volunteers'.³⁸

The rise of Ireland's own Volunteers only exacerbated the contempt displayed in some quarters of the press for conscripted armies. To the *Freeman's Journal* the Volunteers were a 'phalanx of Irishmen, influenced by no other principle than such as honour and freedom inspire'.³⁹ In contrast, the *Hibernian Journal* referred to 'our present monstrous Peace Establishment',⁴⁰ and England's 'Standing Army, composed mostly of the Dregs of the People'.⁴¹ The press were clearly provocative, and it is difficult to assess the seriousness of any antipathy on the ground. In January 1779 there was a dispute in Kilkenny between privates of the 66th regiment and two men from the Kilkenny Rangers, which left the

³⁵ Morley, *Irish opinion and the American Revolution*, p. 183.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

³⁸ *Hibernian Journal*, 7-9 Oct. 1776; *Hibernian Journal*, 9-11 Oct. 1776.

³⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 25-28 May 1782.

⁴⁰ *Hibernian Journal*, 2-4 Feb. 1784.

⁴¹ *Hibernian Journal*, 16-19 Jan. 1784.

Volunteers ‘desperately wounded with a bayonet’.⁴² Less seriously in May 1784 Volunteers were accused of deliberately insulting the Castle guard with ‘hootings’.⁴³ And yet, we can also see that the Volunteers co-operated with the army on mundane rural and urban security work. Indeed in some cases the willingness of Volunteers to act as sentries might have made soldiers less vulnerable to attacks from houghers. In July 1784 the regular military guard posted outside the Tholsel was replaced by a detachment from the Liberty Rangers under the command of Alderman Horan.⁴⁴

In 1781 Ireland’s soldiery became unwittingly entangled in one of the most controversial political issues of the day, the passing of an Irish mutiny bill, which the British government had made perpetual, in order to curb the Irish parliament’s growing strength. The divided Irish response to this decision was shown in the first serious fractures in the Volunteers movement. More radical Volunteers began to secede and form new regiments, and MPs who voted for the bill were castigated by their constituents and by the patriot press. Pamphlets hostile to the perpetual bill tapped into the prevailing anti-military sentiment in both Britain and Ireland. One suggested that through the perpetual bill ‘a British Minister will make this country a great barrack, or a seminary for troops, ready to enslave them, or encroach on their freedom as opportunity may offer.’ The lack of a specific reference to troop numbers in the bill’s preamble led to an accusation that ‘it is at the will of the Minister to increase the number of troops at his fancy, for any wicked purpose he may have in contemplation.’⁴⁵ It was the legal implications of the bill that led to attacks on soldiers being raised in this debate. An anti-perpetual bill commentator argued that the bill provided a legal code outside of civil jurisdiction, hinting at soldiers’ future ability to flout non-military

⁴² *Freeman’s Journal*, 9 Jan. 1779.

⁴³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 4-6 May 1784.

⁴⁴ *Freeman’s Journal*, 20 July 1784.

⁴⁵ *Freeman’s Journal*, 8-10 Feb. 1781.

justice. A writer in the *Freeman's Journal*, however, which despite being solidly patriotic in 1781, remained one of the few newspapers to show any sympathy towards houghed soldiers, claimed that it was ridiculous to suggest that the military would not be bound by civil laws. Moreover this observer, presumably not Carey in his 'conductor' role, complained: 'why are they to be branded always as the aggressors, and every tumult in which a soldier happens to be engaged, magnified with the terms *military outrage and depredation*?'⁴⁶ This was doubtless a reflection upon the fact that Irish newspapers were quick to condemn any breaches of discipline by the garrison. A tendency that to this writer was all the more galling given that:

They have their private grievances, and recriminations sufficient to provoke retaliation, (were they not restrained by the excellence and regularity of that discipline, which the writer so much objects against) when to the disgrace of a civilized country, and the feelings of humanity, there are numbers of the soldiers treacherously houghed, and rendered useless to their profession and society.⁴⁷

The attempt to convert Volunteers into 'fencible' regiments in 1782 only made matters worse. It was viewed as an underhand scheme to undermine the Irish patriotic cause and render the Volunteers toothless. The *Freeman's Journal* warned Volunteers that they would be lured into enlisting in the fencibles by 'the bottle and glass'.⁴⁸ Referring to the Leinster fencibles, it sneered: 'Their shabby appearance is not to be described, being perfectly in character with the shabbiness of their institution.'⁴⁹ Those Volunteers who did

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Aug.- 3 Sept. 1782.

⁴⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 13 March 1783.

cooperate – either joining fencible regiments, or assisting in raising them - were treated to the scorn of their peers and populace. Indeed there were many attacks on fencibles. Three were killed in Drogheda in October 1782, adding more to the tally of individuals killed in popular protests against the military. Again, this was an incident that involved hunting down deserters. Although able to restore order on this occasion, the widespread antipathy to the fencible scheme and the issue of recruitment meant that even Ireland's formerly beloved Volunteers were forced to choose sides. In co. Sligo the Independent Tyreril Volunteers were attacked by a crowd as they sought to raise recruits for the navy.⁵⁰ But their comrades in Kilkenny and Mayo took a different stance. Both the Kilkenny Rangers and the Killmain Volunteers were involved in attacks on fencibles, the latter killing between two and four soldiers while coming to the aid of the local populace.⁵¹

If the *Volunteers Journal's* interpretation of an anti-hougher riot in February 1784 has any veracity, then houghing also seemed to pit Volunteer against soldier. On approaching one house near Thomas Street during the riot, a party of soldiers 'were heard to say that they ought to spare that place, as being at home, but immediately recollecting that a young man, who does business for an eminent brewer, lived there, they attacked and broke his windows, because he was a *volunteer*.'⁵² The *Volunteers Journal's* hard-line radical patriotism made any rapprochement between soldiery and Volunteers unpalatable. Yet, as we have seen, there was much co-operation in recruitment and police work. Dublin Volunteers played a key role in apprehending a hougher running from the scene of the crime on 29 July 1784.⁵³ Even so, the Thomas Street incident hints at a public sphere in which the political affiliations even of artisans were well known. Obviously there is no proof that houghers read Dublin's patriot

⁵⁰ Morley, *Irish opinion and the American Revolution*, p. 315-6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁵² *Volunteers Journal*, 27 Feb. 1784.

⁵³ *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Aug. 1784.

newspapers, but it is clear that labouring class Dubliners had become politicised and would take to the streets in explicitly political riots. Such accounts could not do otherwise but imbue the Dublin populace with anti-military sentiment, and this must be a consideration when viewing the actions of the houghers.

3. Houghing in the *Volunteers Journal*

If we can turn more specifically to houghing in terms of the relationship between military and public opinion, it should be emphasised that reports of houghing in patriot newspapers during the course of the American war were almost unanimous in their condemnation of the perpetrators. Houghers were referred to as ‘ruffians’, ‘desperate villains’ and ‘merciless miscreants’.⁵⁴ They were ‘the horrid perpetrators’ of ‘wanton cruelty’ and offences ‘so highly atrocious’.⁵⁵ The government-supporting *Volunteer Evening Post* was always most florid in its terminology, referring in one case, to ‘the disabled wretch condemned to drag about a useless limb for life, through the savage brutality of a monster, which should be exterminated [from] all society.’⁵⁶ In the early years of houghing even the soldiery were worthy of sympathy. The *Belfast News-Letter* pointed out, in August 1775, that one ‘unfortunate soldier bears a most remarkable good character’, and that ‘he has a wife and two children’. An emotive writer asked: ‘Good God, can such brutality exist in the breast of a christian!’⁵⁷ Newspapers frequently informed their readers that houghed soldiers had not provoked their attackers; perhaps a reflection on the fact that in other circumstances soldiers were guilty of doing precisely that. However, this standpoint would change following the end of the war and the failure of the Irish parliamentary reform movement in 1783-4.

⁵⁴ *Belfast News-Letter*, 18-22 Aug. 1775; *Belfast News-Letter*, 31 March-4 April 1775; *Belfast News-Letter*, 10-14 Feb. 1775.

⁵⁵ *Belfast News-Letter*, 20-24 Aug. 1784.

⁵⁶ *Volunteer Evening Post*, 19-21 Aug. 1784.

⁵⁷ *Belfast News-Letter*, 20-24 Oct. 1775.

Trouble with the military during the lifetime of the *Volunteers Journal*, did not, however, begin with houghing, but rather with a minor robbery, that quickly spiralled out of control. As we have seen, there were certainly criminal elements within the Irish garrison. The problem in terms of law and order was not that these men would commit minor crimes, but more that if apprehended they could quickly call sizeable bodies of belligerent soldiery to their aid. According to the *Volunteers Journal*, the arrest of a soldier for a robbery at Island Bridge, Dublin, in February 1784 prompted 500 men to come to his assistance. The soldiers rescued their comrade and then proceeded to wreak havoc in this part of the city. A number of the local inhabitants were severely wounded and fourteen houses were pulled down.⁵⁸ The *Volunteers Journal* described ‘a picture truly dreadful: - broken doors and windows, shattered furniture, and inhabitants in hourly fears of personal destruction!’⁵⁹ Testimonies given at the trial of three soldiers for affray at Island Bridge qualified this story somewhat. Two of the victims, Richard Jones, a justice of the peace, and his son Richard Jones Jnr. put the number of rioters at between forty and sixty, and the number of houses ‘torn to pieces’ was given as ‘several’. The accused men, John Sheehan, William Alliburton and Alexander Dunn were sentenced to six months in prison, and Sheehan was given a shilling fine.⁶⁰ The willingness of the *Volunteers Journal* to exaggerate the crimes of the military was to be expected, and is perhaps less interesting than the fact that so many column inches were devoted to proceedings at the court of oyer and terminer on this day. Few other crimes received this amount of coverage, and must testify to the determination of the *Volunteers Journal* to blacken the reputation of the military, although obviously in this case there was more than a kernel of truth in the reportage.

⁵⁸ *Volunteers Journal*, 23 Feb. 1784.

⁵⁹ *Volunteers Journal*, 25 Feb. 1784.

⁶⁰ *Volunteers Journal*, 8 March 1784.

Taking advantage of the fervid political situation, the *Volunteers Journal* turned this fairly routine thuggish behaviour into a much wider issue, discussing, firstly, the means of preventing such behaviour. One method, according to a correspondent, would be to levy a fine upon the garrison, in ascending sums according to rank, the monies from which would be used to repair any damage done by the military.⁶¹ This community sanction was very much in the style of the mode of reparations that would eventually be offered to hougher victims. The second topic broached was the behaviour of the parliamentary patriots, and the obvious gulf between MPs and peers and public opinion. Henry Grattan was attacked because he had ‘voted for the continuation of an unnecessary army.’ ‘One of the purposes of that measure’, the *Volunteers Journal* complained, was ‘that of knocking Irishmen on the head, if they dare but murmur of their wrongs’; the violence at Island Bridge was apparently evidence of this.⁶²

Popular revulsion at the behaviour of the army at Island Bridge coloured the manner in which news of four houghings on Dublin’s streets was received. The incidents occurred in Barrack Street, Gravel Walk and Hendrick Street, and the soldiers injured were Evan Cadwallader and Joseph Francis, privates in the second battalion of the first regiment of foot, and Thomas Sibbit and John Watt, privates in the twenty-first regiment of foot. According to a government proclamation, these soldiers were

severally attacked by different Men whose Names are not known, who came behind the said several Soldiers, and with Knives, or with some other offensive sharp weapons, cut the said several Soldiers on the Back of their Legs, and thereby houghed them without any Manner of Provocation, by Means whereby the said soldiers are in Danger of losing their Legs.

⁶¹ *Volunteers Journal*, 23 Feb. 1784. The *Morning Post* claimed that the military had paid fines of £1,000 to avoid prosecution after a riot near Essex Bridge in 1784, *Morning Post*, 19 Oct 1784.

⁶² *Volunteers Journal*, 23 Feb. 1784.

The Castle offered £100 reward for those who might ensure the conviction of the first three houghers, and fifty pounds for any further offenders.⁶³ Informants were not forthcoming as the government-supporting *Freeman's Journal* was still running this advertisement in July and August, perhaps indicating the close-knit communities housing the culprits, but possibly also because of the newspaper's shortage of material, or even a fixed length of advertising contract.⁶⁴

The lack of immediate justice led soldiers to take matters into their own hands and they rioted in support of their comrades. The *Volunteers Journal* reported that 'they dealt their vengeance on all around, without distinction of age, sex or dignity.' The newspaper speculated that this might have been deliberate policy by the Fox-North coalition, and that the rioters were targeting Volunteers. Furthermore it was asserted that this riot was not due to houghing – as this practice was most likely self-inflicted – but due to the desire to take further revenge for the insult to the military at Island Bridge.⁶⁵

In response to the houghing attacks General Henry Lawes Luttrell introduced a houghing bill in the Irish Commons, and in the accompanying speech he 'mentioned the story of the commanding officer of a regiment of dragoons, who declared ... that if a man of them was houghed in Dublin, and they did not the next morning bring him a butcher's head, he would flog them all'.⁶⁶ The following 'Card' placed in the *Volunteers Journal* was typical of the ironic comments that followed his speech: 'A number of gentlemen, who set a proper value on the army, present their respects to the *worthy* General Luttrell, for suggesting to the *harmless, inoffensive* soldiery, a proper mode of *chastising* the ruffianly butchers, in cutting *their heads off*, to place at this gentleman's toilette in the morning.' There was much fun to

⁶³ *Hibernian Journal*, 3-5 March 1784.

⁶⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 3, 6, 8, 10 July, 5, 7, 10 Aug. 1784; *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Aug. 1784.

⁶⁵ *Volunteers Journal*, 27 Feb. 1784.

⁶⁶ Parliamentary Register, ii, p. 421, 8 March 1784.

be had with this aristocratic officer's bizarre juxtaposition of his complaints at the 'inhumanity and impoliteness of the city of Dublin', and his threatening exemplar.⁶⁷

The reaction from Dublin's press to the houghing bill was in stark contrast to the response in the Commons and Lords, which ranged between enthusiastic and apathetic; an indication of the ever widening gap between parliament and public opinion. The *Volunteers Journal* 'hoped every independent member of our house of commons will exert his influence against the worthy general Luttrell's bill'.⁶⁸ But it was to be disappointed as the bill passed without any serious trouble, although at least one MP was said to have raised the spectre of soldiers houghing themselves in order to secure the £20 per annum pension.⁶⁹ The extraordinarily critical newspaper response from the patriot press says much about attitudes, firstly, towards violent crime on the streets of Dublin, and secondly, views on the military garrison. A correspondent in the *Volunteers Journal* commented:

Should it once unhappily pass into a law, we may expect to hear of houghing, and houghers without end; as the miscreants of the army (with due respect to the better sort be it said) to avoid the hardships and misery of their state, will hough themselves, and then without remorse swear away the devoted lives of unfortunate men, whom misfortune may throw in their power, without the incentive of a pension of £20 we have had too many instances of such sacrifices made to perjury.⁷⁰

During the progress of the houghing bill Luttrell was hounded by the *Volunteers Journal* over his earlier career. Carey and his newspaper simply picked up where the famous

⁶⁷ *Volunteers Journal*, 10 March 1784.

⁶⁸ *Volunteers Journal*, 15 March 1784.

⁶⁹ *Volunteers Journal*, 23 Aug. 1784.

⁷⁰ *Volunteers Journal*, 17 March 1784.

Junius had left off, and in this sense it demonstrated both the fact that Carey was in tune with an earlier variant of whiggish radical politics, and the influence that his printer friend and assistant the Wilkite William Bingley had on the paper. The *Volunteers Journal* revisited many of the themes of Junius's attacks on Luttrell after his decision to act as the government's pawn and stand against John Wilkes for the Middlesex seat in the 1760s. Luttrell was 'a certain *gentleman*, notorious in Middlesex'.⁷¹ He was described as 'that *exemplary* character, the *renowned* general Luttrell, so highly revered in both kingdoms, for his *patriotic* exertions at the election of Brentford'.⁷² The *Volunteers Journal* also exposed the sexual scandals that surrounded Luttrell and his family. Mileage could be made of father's reputation as a libertine and his sister Anne's clandestine marriage to the duke of Cumberland, but the *Volunteers Journal* made particular use of the Wilkite propaganda on Luttrell's alleged seduction of Arabella Bolton, and the ruin of her family.⁷³ In general terms Luttrell was accused of looking

to deprive some male or female of their property, virginity or reputation, being notoriously an enemy to every virtue, a practiser of every vice, a scorner of every sect of religion, as well as a contemner of its moral mandates; a man whose vices by constant repetition have so choaked up his conscience.⁷⁴

The Wilkite dimension here is perhaps worth emphasising as it guards against any suggestion that Carey was making common cause with his co-religionists (Catholic butchers) against the soldiery. In any case there were Protestant printers publishing very similar comments.

⁷¹ *Volunteers Journal*, 19 March 1784.

⁷² *Volunteers Journal*, 10 March 1784.

⁷³ *The memoirs of Miss Arabella Bolton. Containing a genuine account of her seduction, and the barbarous treatment she afterwards received from the Honourable Colonel L-l, the present supposed M-r for the county of Middlesex* (London, 1770); *Volunteers Journal*, 19 March 1784.

⁷⁴ *Volunteers Journal*, 19 March 1784.

After the riot at Island Bridge and the brutal response to the four houghings in January and February, the policies of the Fox-North coalition were dragged into public debate on the activities of the Dublin garrison. A number of writers sniffed a conspiracy, namely that Fox intended to pursue such policies as would provoke a revolt in Ireland. This would require brutal pacification – hence the continued need for a sizeable military force in Dublin. Some patriots seemed convinced that the soldiery were trying to accelerate this process. According to a writer in the *Volunteers Journal*, ‘many thinking men’ feared that ‘he, who has the impudence to stile himself the man of the people, had formed a settled plan of kindling the flames of civil war in Ireland, and that the officers and soldiers having gotten the hint, thought insolence and tumult the surest recommendations to preferment and favour.’⁷⁵ The *Volunteers Journal* found it difficult to abandon this conspiracy theory. When the Fox-North coalition fell it applied the same misgivings to Pitt’s plans for Ireland. For the radicalised patriot press, any reluctance to back parliamentary reform in Ireland was sufficient to rouse suspicious of nefarious intentions, or rather, was deserving of a response that relied equally upon scaremongering stories. Of course the very nature of Irish government, and its parties fixed in government or opposition, meant that for Irish public opinion nothing really changed with the arrival of a new viceroy. Thus the *Volunteers Journal* found it easy to peddle scurrilous stories about the British ministry, despite the change in personnel. After an anti-hougher riot in August 1784 it cynically noted that ‘the outrage will be found to take its rise from the machinations of that infamous junto who are so strenuously solicitous to create an insurrection in the kingdom.’⁷⁶

Military rioting was also tied into the popular cause of economic protectionism – a lifetime concern for Carey. This period was one of heightened resentment against the

⁷⁵ *Volunteers Journal*, 27 Feb. 1784.

⁷⁶ *Volunteers Journal*, 20 Aug. 1784.

economic power of Britain relative to that of Ireland, hence the reintroduction of non-importation societies later in 1784. A writer in the *Volunteers Journal* argued that Ireland's military establishment had no purpose, 'except to swell the debt of the nation, lest it should be able to rival Great Britain in trade.'⁷⁷ Similarly another commentator in an open letter to Northington argued that 'the only use of continuing an unnecessary army, was to encrease the national debt, so as to prevent any possibility of our rivaling England in trade, or to cut our throats if we dare murmur at our wrongs.'⁷⁸ There was a general sense of resentment over a military force funded by Irish taxation: 'A number of men, to support whom his majesty's subjects are severely tax'd, instead of being a defence to the community, become the public terror and the public plunderers.'⁷⁹ When it became known that Ireland would be equipping the 17th regiment of light cavalry, a writer in the *Volunteers Journal* asked: 'will Irishmen believe, because the lieutenant-colonel commandant happens to be an Englishman, not a single Irish bred horse is to be purchased, not a six-pence is to be expended here, that possibly can be avoided?'⁸⁰ It also seems that when considering the needs of the military compared to the humble Irish tax payer, the former would win out, and the houghing bill appeared to be another case in point. Luttrell was challenged in the press to 'explain on what Principle of Justice innocent Housekeepers are to be taxed to provide for a maimed Military?'⁸¹

Another leitmotiv favoured by the *Volunteers Journal* was to see the British army's depredations in Ireland in the light of the military action in America that drove Massachusetts to revolt. In the immediate aftermath of the anti-hougher riot of February 1784 the *Volunteers Journal* saw the

⁷⁷ *Volunteers Journal*, 27 Feb. 1784.

⁷⁸ *Volunteers Journal*, 8 March 1784.

⁷⁹ *Volunteers Journal*, 27 Feb. 1784.

⁸⁰ *Volunteers Journal*, 29 March 1784.

⁸¹ *Hibernian Journal*, 26-29 March 1784.

same kind of military discipline in this kingdom, which severed America from the empire. A kind of camp has been erected, in open violation of the law, and defiance of the magistrate, in the suburbs of the metropolis, whence foraging parties have been, as it were, detached, to live on free quarters, and to exercise on his majesty's subjects, every severity, that the law of war allows in an enemy's country.⁸²

Luttrell's houghing act did not allay fears, and, indeed, another provocative piece claimed that the bill and its proposer would excite the military to greater misdeeds:

L[uttrell], is engaged to afford us an Irish specimen of Lexington prowess – And the senate is prophaned by the encouragement held out to a licentious soldiery, to let loose those dogs of war, flushed in the carnage of the brave Americans, on the unsuspecting nation, that, roused with our wrongs, we may afford a pretence to those dreadful scenes they meditate!⁸³

A few months later the same newspaper saw the military in Ireland 'Goaded by that evil genius which drenched America with human gore, and whitened her plains with the bones of martyrs to freedom'.⁸⁴ The most seditious articles invariably came from the *Volunteers Journal*, although a similar tone can be found in other newspapers. Though these articles and letters were hyperbolic, it is worth reflecting on the fact that the violence in America leading up to war was comparable to that in Ireland between the mid-1770s and 1784 – with both seeing beatings, tarring-and-featherings and fatalities. Jim Smyth has termed the events of the summer of 1784 – with tarring and feathering bands roaming the city – as a 'break-down of

⁸² *Volunteers Journal*, 27 Feb. 1784.

⁸³ *Volunteers Journal*, 26 March 1784.

⁸⁴ *Volunteers Journal*, 20 Aug. 1784.

public order’; Dublin’s image was of ‘a city subject to mob-rule’.⁸⁵ The government’s attempt to tackle one of the sources of this disruption was a press bill. Following a riot on College Green in April after the failure of a protectionist bill, a number of newspapers were targeted, including the *Volunteers Journal*, and printers and publishers were summoned to appear before the House of Commons.

Even so, the *Volunteers Journal* was not dissuaded from continuing with its censorious line on the military. A fatal houghing outside the gates of the Black Dog prison in August and another military riot led it to return to the subject of military-civilian relations. On this occasion the *Volunteers Journal* began by emphasising the likelihood that this was a case of self-harm. It was a refrain that allowed patriots to regard houghing in a much more sanguine fashion; assuaging their guilt through transference to a much more acceptable culprit - the military. The *Volunteers Journal* stated that ‘it is a notorious fact, that it has been a practice to maim themselves; they have absolutely been detected in the very act, prior to the operation of the bill which the Middlesex hero introduced into the house of commons.’⁸⁶ It claimed that every man in the kingdom was asking the question: ‘How comes it, that persons supposed guilty of the shocking act of houghing, are seldom or never detected?’ A correspondent provided the answer: ‘that the soldiers hough themselves; which accounts very fully for the non-discovery of such assassins – and, indeed, when it is considered, with what facility every other lesser villainy is discovered, and how long this business is going on, it is but reasonable to impute the act to the unhappy victims themselves’.

One might speculate here that the real answer lay in a combination of stealthy knife-wielding, community sanction and a lack of policing. However, although there is little evidence to suggest that self-mutilation was particularly widespread, there were a number of

⁸⁵ Jim Smyth, *The Men of No Property: Irish Radicals and Popular Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1992), p. 137.

⁸⁶ *Volunteers Journal*, 20 Aug. 1784.

isolated incidents that were allegedly the result of self-houghing. The *Volunteers Journal* cited two cases two years previously, one in Oxmanstown and another near the barrack-gate. Both of these incidents apparently saw soldiers caught in the act of houghing themselves. A more recent case was also cited, this being a private of the 66th regiment who was convicted by a court martial of houghing himself and sentenced to 500 lashes. Returning to the debate on Luttrell's bill, a writer in the *Volunteers Journal*, not realising that a chalking⁸⁷ bill passed a decade earlier already allowed the award of pensions to houghed soldiers, contended that the passing of the houghing act made such behaviour more likely: 'If they could be guilty of so atrocious a crime, merely to procure liberation from the dangers of war, who will entertain a shadow of a doubt, that they would not hesitate, when stimulated by the prospect of a comfortable provision? – a certain maintenance?'⁸⁸ Another writer noted that 'the eagerness with which most of the privates of all regiments would embrace an opportunity of being discharged, joined to the alluring circumstance of getting a comfortable annuity for the remainder of their lives, must be supposed no small inducement to men of their class and disposition.' And these views had apparently been voiced by an MP at the time of the passing of Luttrell's Act.⁸⁹

Printers took determinedly different tacks in reporting the retaliatory activities of the soldiery following the news of the death at Black Dog prison. As the most radical of the patriot newspapers the *Volunteer Journal*'s response was predictably emotive. Its headline was 'Bella! horrida Bella!', a phrase taken from Virgil's *Aeneid*. As far as the two days of rioting were concerned, enormities 'more atrocious and flagrant, never stained the annals of a civilized country.' Much of its very detailed account – which included the bayoneting of a civilian and the kidnapping of a merchant - seems likely to have been correct, as similar

⁸⁷ Chalking referred to the cutting of the face or hands.

⁸⁸ *Volunteers Journal*, 20 Aug. 1784.

⁸⁹ *Volunteers Journal*, 23 Aug. 1784.

reports appeared in more moderate newspapers. Government-funded newspapers like the *Volunteer Evening Post* were forced to focus upon the extent of officer participation and culpability. The *Volunteers Journal* had portrayed an officer as rousing his troops towards greater acts of violence.⁹⁰ And in doing so it was returning to an earlier refrain – the same newspaper had claimed six months earlier that ‘their officers have been known to connive at their disorders, or sometimes to be guilty of outrages themselves.’⁹¹ In contrast the *Volunteer Evening Post* focused upon the themes of restraint under provocation and the uncommon abilities of the men in command.

The military outrages at the Corn Market revived the more general anti-army sentiment that had been festering since the invasion of the Commons during the April riot and the passing of the press bill. Being hauled in front of the Commons had failed to cow the editors of the *Volunteers Journal*, and the anti-hougher rioting was seen as part of the wider conspiracy to provoke a popular insurrection, thus allowing the introduction of martial law. Indeed the classical republican strains within Irish patriotism were certainly evident in the reaction to military activity throughout 1784. The *Volunteers Journal* proclaimed that ‘standing armies in all ages and all times have been eversive of freedom – have ever been viewed with an eye of terror and disgust.’ It asked: ‘In what nation have they had being, in which they were not the bane – in which they did not, ultimately exterminate every vestige of civil liberty?’⁹² The soldier, it said, ‘should glory in his purple trappings and golden chains.’ But perhaps most revealing is the clear sense that this newspaper was, in an unabashed fashion, encouraging confrontation between not only populace and military, but also populace and government. There is no doubt that the *Volunteers Journal* was calling for a type of assertive action amongst its readership: ‘If ever the exertions of a people were

⁹⁰ *Volunteers Journal*, 20 Aug. 1784.

⁹¹ *Volunteer Journal*, 27 Feb. 1784.

⁹² *Volunteers Journal*, 20 Aug. 1784.

necessary to save them from the ruthless grasp of despotism, the present is the moment'.⁹³ Its ability to do so, notwithstanding the April riot, the press bill and threats of prosecution, testifies to the intensity of radical feeling in the summer of 1784 and the government's powerlessness.

Perhaps the *Volunteers Journal's* most direct – and also peculiar - exhortation for direct action against the military came with its publication of a letter from the Dublin lawyer, and civic worthy, Handy Pemberton. In a wide-ranging, and to some degree, rambling, piece, Pemberton expressed support for the constitution of the American colonists, Louis XVI and France, and most significantly in the context of this study, the houghing of the military. As he put it: 'the most meritorious action an Irishman can do, is to hough the soldiers'.⁹⁴ As a result Pemberton was called before the court of the King's Bench - in the process angering the court by turning up to plead in his Volunteer uniform. He was soon joined by both the printers of the *Volunteers Journal* and the *Hibernian Journal*. The defence put about that Pemberton was actually insane was dismissed by the *Freeman's Journal*, and it questioned whether 'this can be an exculpation of those who seditiously and traitorously admit such publications into their papers?' It had a point. Whatever the idiosyncrasies of Pemberton's character, Mathew Carey was certainly not insane and he, or another collaborator at the paper, deemed Pemberton's letter suitable for the front page.

The Pemberton episode raises another question, which is the position of the invalid soldiers in Kilmainham Hospital, and its role in Dublin's social geography. Although Pemberton had little sympathy for houghed soldiers, he did attempt to attend a hougher benefit. One of his complaints against the military was that he had been unceremoniously turned away at the theatre doors. Lest one be tempted to extrapolate from the leading patriot

⁹³ *Volunteers Journal*, 20 Aug. 1784.

⁹⁴ *Volunteers Journal*, 21 June 1784.

newspapers that Dublin had become anti-military in sentiment, it is worth noting that although the press was not awash with associational adverts seeking to support houghed soldiers and capture the culprits, as in Kilkenny, there was one major event designed to aid their plight and this was the performance of George Farquar's *The Beaux Stratagem*, as a benefit for houghed members of the military. A similar scheme had been planned in the mid-1770s and a Major George Riddlesdale had written a prologue.⁹⁵ In 1784 members of the garrison had agreed to play the leading roles, and it was successful enough for a repeat performance, and then again for the benefit of military wives and children.⁹⁶ This theatrical event was advertised in leading government newspapers, but it was also noticed in the *Volunteers Journal* and the *Hibernian Journal*.⁹⁷ Kilmainham obviously treated a wider body of ill soldiers, but that did not make its position in the geography of Dublin political life any less difficult, particularly after the Commander-in-Chief began to reside there. In the years up to 1790 around two thirds of the out-pensioners were either English or Scottish born. Charles Lucas had, at a very early stage, expressed some resentment at the money spent on Kilmainham (though soldiers themselves contributed through their pay to its funding). The hospital even had its own printer – Thomas Todd Faulkner of the government-leaning *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*.⁹⁸ The attack on the hospital by the Liberty Boys, with musket shots exchanged, was therefore as political as it was factional.

5. The Military in the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*

It is difficult to trace the continuation of Carey's views on the military into his American newspaper, because, as with much newspaper publishing in the eighteenth century, it is

⁹⁵ JRL B3/16, Riddlesdale to Sir James Caldwell, 12 Nov. 1774.

⁹⁶ *Hibernian Journal*, 24 May 1784.

⁹⁷ *Volunteers Journal*, 7 May 1784; *Hibernian Journal*, 12 May 1784.

⁹⁸ NAI, RHK1/1/6, committee meeting, 29 April 1784.

almost impossible to disentangle the views of the printer from the broad base of material present in the newspaper, much of which may have been cut and pasted simply because it was at hand. Carey had, however, from a very early stage seen the importance of securing relationships with foreign newspapers, so as to insure up-to-date coverage. In Ireland he had forged exchange agreements with *Rivington's New York Gazette*, the *Pennsylvania Journal* and the *Pennsylvania Packet*, although it is clear that other Dublin newspapers also used these sources.⁹⁹

Perhaps unsurprisingly most of the Irish news stories in the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald* are radical tone. The same is true of the *Pennsylvania Packet*, which regularly used the *Hibernian Journal*, and, less frequently, the *Belfast Mercury*. Significantly, when tensions ratcheted up in Dublin in the summer of 1784 the *Pennsylvania Packet* switched sources to the more militant *Volunteers Journal*.¹⁰⁰ Although the *Pennsylvania Packet* included many column inches hostile to the British military in Ireland, it did on occasion include a report from a government paper, as was the case in the coverage of a fracas between a group of officers and the owners of a public house on Ormond Quay (albeit dwarfed by the pages offering the *Hibernian Journal's* partisan view).¹⁰¹ In later issues it would specify when reportage was 'From the Court Papers' – meaning the *Volunteer Evening Post*.¹⁰² Similarly there were some pieces in Carey's paper that hinted at origins other than the *Volunteers Journal*. A piece on the arrest and punishment of 'the unhappy soldier' found guilty of houghing himself, was sensitive in tone as well as condemnatory. He received 500 of an 800 lashes sentence, 'and was carried away with scarcely any symptoms of life, and it is thought

⁹⁹ Edward C. Carter II, 'The Political Activities of Mathew Carey, Nationalist 1760-1814', PhD Bryn Mawr College, 1962, p. 26. The Dublin *Morning Post* sourced stories from the 'Philadelphia Journal' and the *Pennsylvania Packet*. See *Morning Post*, 28 Sept., 23 Oct. 1784.

¹⁰⁰ *Pennsylvania Packet*, 21 Aug. 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 22 Oct. 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 17 Nov. 1784; *Volunteers Journal*, 20 Aug. 1784.

¹⁰¹ *Pennsylvania Packet*, 30 Sept. 1784.

¹⁰² *Pennsylvania Packet*, 23, 24 Dec. 1784.

he cannot possibly recover.’ The report continued: ‘It is hoped that this instance of justice, in a court-martial, will deter all other of the military from committing the like unnatural offence, which falls but little short of suicide.’¹⁰³

Usually, however, stories were reported that were taken from the leading patriotic newspapers. For example in a report that allowed Carey to pit the military against the Volunteers, a group he clearly idolised – ‘Oh! For the glorious spirit of 1780 & 1781’ he once wrote¹⁰⁴ - Mr Crawley a housekeeper of Bride’s alley, who had purchased a firelock, was attacked by five soldiers, assuming him to be a Volunteer, after he refused to give it up. They knocked him down and cut him in the head, and several part of his body, ‘with their swords, so as to render him a more mangled spectre of barbarity than has yet shocked the eye of humanity.’ The soldiers were then said to have rampaged down an adjoining street, cutting every person they met.¹⁰⁵ Of course there was no great need for the source newspaper to exaggerate such incidents – a very similar affair is described in John Wesley’s journal in the same year – though the quarrel in this case was over a stick and resulted in two fatalities.¹⁰⁶

Carey also took anti-military material from London sources. The following commentary on the erection of a new barracks in London had an Irish angle, and indeed appeared only ten days after the alleged attack on Mr Crawley.

The gross and repeated enormities committed in Dublin, by the military, both officers and privates, are proofs beyond all argument, to convince the people of this country, how dangerous it would be to allow the erection of barracks. – In Dublin the citizens have been taught by experience, that the garrison consider their situation in that city for the purpose of

¹⁰³ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 8 Feb. 1785.

¹⁰⁴ HSP, Carey letterbooks, Vol. 1, ff100-1, Carey to Rev. James Carey, 15 Nov. 1788.

¹⁰⁵ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 2 Nov. 1785

¹⁰⁶ Ferguson, *The Army in Ireland*, p. 95.

overawing them. He was right, therefore, who said, that barracks and arbitrary powers, were ideas as naturally connected as darkness and the devil.¹⁰⁷

In contrast to the *Pennsylvania Packet*, Mathew Carey seemed to have been trawling newspapers from various countries on the lookout for Irish news that fitted his political needs. The following New York source may also be commenting on the Crawley incident: ‘Several of the peaceable inhabitants of the city of Dublin, have been shockingly wounded, by a number of British officers, as they were passing the streets, merely because they supposed them to belong to corps of volunteers.’ The writer lamented ‘O Britain! When shall thy insatiate thirst for blood be at an end!’ A letter from Edinburgh described an affray involving officers of the garrison in Dublin. Those present were disarmed by the watch, and the garrison were said to have been close to marching upon the prison where they were held.¹⁰⁸

Given the nature of the New York report it is also worth noting that these newspapers, in commenting critically on the British military in Ireland, were simply delivering what their readers wanted. The *Pennsylvania Packet* delivered the same sort of thing tenfold. In June 1784 it printed a piece from the *Hibernian Journal* attacking the military response to the riot on College Green in April; the ‘military heroes’ were ‘crowned with laurels, drenched in the blood of America’.¹⁰⁹ A week later it followed up with another commentary from the *Hibernian Journal* warning that ‘nothing is now wanting completely to establish the happiness and security of Dublin but the proclamation of martial law.’¹¹⁰ In August 1784 it included a Dublin incident ‘during relief of Castle guard’, in which ‘one of the mercenaries

¹⁰⁷ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 12 Nov. 1785.

¹⁰⁸ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 21 Oct. 1786.

¹⁰⁹ *Pennsylvania Packet*, 1 June 1784.

¹¹⁰ *Pennsylvania Packet*, 8 June 1784.

filled with wine and ale from the libation of his majesty's birthday, stabbed an infant in the face (not more than three years old)'.¹¹¹

In May and June 1786, Carey covered a number of attacks on the Irish military, most likely taken directly from Ireland's opposition papers. In general terms it was asserted that 'the tumultuous and sanguinary proceedings of the military are without parallel in any European state'. Here Carey was also continuing a furrow that he had ploughed in 1784 – and one that had obviously appealed to the *Pennsylvania Packet* - the threat that martial law posed to Ireland's political system. What were the 'barracks springing up like mushrooms in a night' intended for? 'For nothing save the corruption of the city, and the complete mancipation of the nation, to prevent all opposition, as well without as within doors.'¹¹²

Offering evidence that 'every succeeding week adds to the catalogue of bloodshed!', there was a summary of recently military violence from different parts of Ireland:

From one extremity of the kingdom to the other, from Bandon to Ballyshannon, nothing is visible but one unvaried scene of bloodshed and carnage: peaceable subjects slaughtered in cool blood! For the sanguinary amusement of the military! Whose licentiousness becomes every day, and in every place, more and more insufferable. Perhaps the human imagination is not susceptible of a more horrid idea than the life and property of the peaceable subjects being left exposed to the mercy of every ruffian who may wear a red coat. The late flagitious murders at Ballyshannon, in the metropolis, in Johnstown, near Strabane, in Cork, in Bandon, in Drogheda.

¹¹¹ *Pennsylvania Packet*, 21 Aug. 1784.

¹¹² *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 27 May 1786.

The Ballyshannon incident involved the military, led by an officer, opening fire on civilians and killing three, and injuring over 30, following a dispute over seizing illicit stills.¹¹³

One question worth asking is whether it is possible to see a decline in the number of pieces antithetical to the Irish military in the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald* in its latter issues – in other words when Carey had left the helm in early 1787. In numerical terms the answer would certainly be yes, but by the summer of 1787 the issues dominating Irish (and indeed American) politics were rather different to those pertaining in 1784. The source of Irish news must also be taken into account, so it is possible that there had been a switch to a less rancorous critic of government policy. Nevertheless it is worth noting that an Irish Commons report detailing the ‘horrid cruelties’ of the Rightboys was printed without recourse to commentary;¹¹⁴ as is the inclusion of a piece on the same topic praising Henry Lawes Luttrell. In combating the Rightboys the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*’s source noted his ‘distinguished humanity and prudent conduct, when he commanded the King’s army employed to reduce those deluded insurgents to obedience.’ It added that ‘it is infinitely to the honour of his Lordship, that he appeased the dangerous tumults, which degraded his country without bloodshed.’¹¹⁵

That said, only a week later the newspaper published a summary of some of the worst excesses of Irish government which included Carey’s arrest and that of William Bingley, along with the accusation that several persons had been ‘wantonly shot in the streets for the pastime of the military,’ as well as the story that a number of aides de camps to the viceroy had assaulted a Dublin publican and his wife.¹¹⁶ It was a list that perhaps points to the reason why the *Pennsylvania Event Herald*, though trenchant in its views on the military in Ireland,

¹¹³ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 7 June 1786.

¹¹⁴ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 28 April 1787.

¹¹⁵ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 11 Aug. 1787.

¹¹⁶ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 18 Aug. 1787.

could not compare with the anti-military coverage present in the *Pennsylvania Packet* throughout 1784: this was timing. The news arriving in Carey's office in Philadelphia was of a more quiescent Dublin (if not Munster), and so he was reduced to offering highlights from the previous year. Thus it was not Carey's paper, but the *Pennsylvania Packet* that was able to insinuate that one of the officers involved in the scrape with the publican, John Hayes St Leger was the 'spark of the embers of an hellfire club'. His father had reportedly founded a Hellfire Club at his residence in co. Kildare, and his son, an intimate of the prince regent, was no less rakish by reputation.¹¹⁷

As for revelations about the role of the military in American society, these are relatively few and far between in the *Pennsylvanian Evening Herald*. During Shay's rebellion Carey seemed more interested in a decision by senior figures in Massachusetts to resolve not to import foreign luxuries and defend domestic manufactures than the conflict itself – a measure which of course was perfectly attuned to his Irish patriotic self. At the same time he retained his links with, perhaps even affection for, less formal modes of military collectivisation, as the officers of Philadelphia's battalions of militia advertised in his newspaper.¹¹⁸ More generally he had made his commitment to non-state variants of associational life clear in the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, which was full of club-related notices, and his own personal life, in which he was both an organiser and a joiner of associational bodies.¹¹⁹

5. Conclusions: Mathew Carey and the Military

¹¹⁷ *Pennsylvania Packet*, 19 Nov. 1784; ODNB, 'John Hayes St Leger'; David Ryan, 'The Dublin Hellfire Club', in Kelly and Powell (eds.), *Clubs and Societies*, p. 351.

¹¹⁸ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 21 April, 1787.

¹¹⁹ Margaret H. McAleer, 'In Defense of Civil Society: Irish Radicals in Philadelphia during the 1790s', *Early American Studies*, 1:1 (2003), p. 184.

Mathew Carey had very good personal reasons for continuing his print-warfare with the British military in America. After his arrest a Dublin MP had complained at the way Carey was treated and, moreover that the Commons should declare ‘that any magistrate who unadvisedly, unnecessarily, or wantonly calls in a military force to execute the laws, for the purpose of intimidating the people, is an enemy to his country.’¹²⁰ If it was not intimidation, then the fact that a military guard was thought necessary – in the same way as convicted Whiteboys – to prevent Carey’s rescue from the populace is revealing. William Bingley’s arrest was treated in a similar fashion in the *Volunteers Journal* – it was described as a ‘wanton use of the military, instead of the civil power’.¹²¹

Country party ideology had always been a core element of Irish patriotism. But the one problematic strand had been this issue of a standing army. The presence of a restive Catholic majority meant that Irish Protestants were always glad of its protective, if expensive, embrace. Even if this difficulty had been ‘solved’ thanks to Lucas, the American war and Volunteering, it does not help us place Carey, as though a patriot in politics and commerce, he could not fulfil its religious requirement. The alternative is to look forward to a different kind of political creed - and use Carey’s views on the military to add further weight to notions of the printer as a radical republican, with connections amongst the United Irishmen. The danger in this approach, however, is to reduce the impact and agenda of the 1780s radicals – political and print – into an hors d’oeuvre before the main United Irish feast. Carey was part of a radical and vibrant circle in Irish print culture that included Michael Mills and Thomas McDonnell who published the *Hibernian Journal*; he was apprenticed to the latter.¹²² Bingley, his sometime editorial assistant at the *Volunteers Journal*, had taken over from

¹²⁰ *Parliamentary Register*, iii, p. 176, 19 April 1784.

¹²¹ *Volunteers Journal*, 5 May 1785.

¹²² Edward C. Carter II, ‘The Political Activities of Mathew Carey, Nationalist 1760-1814’, PhD Bryn Mawr College, 1962, pp. 7-8; Carter, ‘Mathew Carey in Ireland’, p. 509.

Wilkes as the editor of the *North Briton* after issue 45, and had been arrested himself after issue 50.¹²³ Through Bingley Carey would have been aware of the Society of Constitutional Information and leading activists like Bingley's friend John Jebb.¹²⁴ Another friend, John Chambers published William Drennan's *Letters of Orellana, an Irish Helot*.¹²⁵ Mathew Dowling was named as the *Volunteers Journal*'s editor to provide Carey with a necessary degree of anonymity, and like McDonnell and Chambers he became a United Irishmen.

These United Irish connections aside, it is essential that historians examine these radical print men within the parliamentary reform milieu of the 1780s. The 1780s and the 1790s were very different. Though still an admirer of Richard Price in 1791, the violent events in Paris led Carey to remark that 'Price has had his napping hours'.¹²⁶ During the American Revolution and its immediate aftermath, Carey's views were not always an easy fit with Protestant Irish patriotism. For example, his views on Junius were inconsistent. The *Volunteers Journal* had described Junius – in the context of the attacks on Luttrell – as an 'excellent writer', and the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald* described the author – or at least his hand – as 'elegant'. But Carey also received a certain amount of opprobrium after traducing Junius's name during his literary squabble with Eleazer Oswald the editor of the *Independent Gazeteer*.¹²⁷ This, again, can perhaps be traced back to the Catholic question – the difficulty that Carey would have had with Junius, Wilkes and other radicals of the 1770s and 1780s was the anti-Catholicism so fundamental to their whiggery.

As for Carey's American phase in the light of this study, to say that 'the *Pennsylvania Herald* was strongly anti-British and pro-Irish', as Edward Carter puts it, is unarguable;

¹²³ Carter, 'The Political Activities', p. 21.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹²⁶ HSP, Carey Letterbooks, Vol. 1, ff261-2, Carey to Rev. John Carroll, 7 Nov. 1791.

¹²⁷ *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, 9 May 1787.

although the case of the *Pennsylvania Packet* is even more obvious.¹²⁸ But the selection of sources for Irish material is worth examining carefully. They might suggest the leanings of a printer, but could, more prosaically, simply tell us what was readily available. In this sense the reporting in the *Pennsylvania Packet* is particularly interesting – and clear. In 1784 it began with the *Hibernian Journal*, switched to the *Volunteers Journal* and then ended with the loyalist *Volunteers Evening Post*, though it initially felt a duty to acknowledge that this was ‘court news’.¹²⁹ Carey kept the copy of the *Pennsylvania Packet* which covered his arrest ‘under a strong military guard’; it was an issue that had his stamp upon it in more ways than one: namely that its Irish news covered himself, the fact that it came from the *Volunteers Journal*, and that it exercised concerns over the threat posed by military to civic power, ‘a matter not known in these countries since the days of Oliver Cromwell.’¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Carter, ‘The Political Activities’, p. 58.

¹²⁹ *Pennsylvania Packet*, 28 Dec. 1784.

¹³⁰ HSP, Edward Carey Gardiner, 227A, 27/12, Carey’s personal copy of the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 10 June 1784.