



NUI MAYNOOTH
Ollscoil na hÉireann Mhá Nuad

'THE VOLUNTEERS 1778-1793: ICONOGRAPHY AND IDENTITY'

by

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- 5.16 This white Carrara marble chimneypiece was decorated with white and green jasperware inlays and was made for the Irish Master of the Mint in 1785 (Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.106).
- 5.17 A selection of jasperware items (Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston).
- 5.18 'The Apotheosis of Homer', modelled by John Flaxman junior, 1778 (Wedgwood museum, Barlaston).
- 5.19 The bottom of a Wedgwood mug, c.1780 (Ballymoney Museum, County Antrim).
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- 5.21 A Wedgwood tea-pot enamelled by David Rhodes, c.1760s (Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston).

- 5.22 A David Rhodes teapot from the 1760s, decorated with an oriental scene (Wills, *Wedgwood*, p.32).
- 5.23 A transfer printed coffee pot, by Sadler and Green of Liverpool, c.1775 (Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston).
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- 5.26 Frederick "the great" of Prussia printed on a Wedgwood teapot c.1763 (Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.189).
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- 5.28 Admiral Augustus Keppel, a great hero of the British navy from the mid to late eighteenth century printed on a Wedgwood teapot of the late 1770s (Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, p.154).
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- 5.30 'The tythe pig', Sadler and Green, Liverpool, early 1760s (E.N. Stretton collection).
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- 5.35 A Masonic jug presented by Henry Munro to Irish lodge number 193 in 1794 (Maguire, *Up in arms*, p.243).
- 5.36 A porcelain Masonic mug bearing the arms of the Masons, c.1760 (E.N. Stretton collection).
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- 5.39 The mounted Volunteer, printed by Guy Green for Wedgwood's Irish Volunteer wares (Ulster Museum, Belfast).
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- 5.41 A grenadier of the 1st (Royal) Regiment of foot of the British Army, standing at attention. This plate was reproduced in a set of regulations published in the late 1780s (Reid and Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, p.138).
- 5.42 A British Volunteer of the early 1790s in the act of priming the pan of his musket (Ian V. Hogg, *The Encyclopedia of weaponry* (London, 1992), p.58).
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Chapter six

- 6.1 'The death of General Wolfe', engraved by William Woollett, 1777 (British Museum).
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- 6.6 'A picturesque view of the state of the nation for February 1778', *Westminster Magazine*, February 1778 (BMC 5472).
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- 6.26 'Irish na gebraugh', Owen Rowe Oneil (pseudonym), 21 December 1779 (British Museum, BMC 5572).
- 6.27 'Paddy on horse-back', published by W. Humphrey, 4 March 1779 (British Museum, BMC 5605).
- 6.28 'The retreat, from Concord to Lexington of the army of wild Irish asses defeated by the brave American militia' (Michael Wynn-Jones, *A cartoon history of the American Revolution*, pp 68-69).
- 6.29 'Cinncinatus in retirement falsely supposed to represent Jesuit Pad' driven back to his native potatoes', James Gillray, 1782 (Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.61).
- 6.30 A mid-nineteenth century view of Henry Grattan (Richard Robert Madden, *The United Irishmen, their lives and times* (London, 1843).
- 6.31 'Colonel Thomas Conolly of the Londonderry Militia', 1796 (National Gallery of Ireland).
- 6.32 'Volunteer demonstration in the old High Street of Belfast, 1793, in honour of the destruction of the Bastille', John Carey, 1907 (National Library of Ireland).
- 6.33 'The Lisburn and Lambeg Volunteers firing a feu de joie in the market square at Lisburn, in honour of the convention of 1782', John Carey, 1943 (National Library of Ireland).
- 6.34 'Henry Grattan, Esq' (C.H. Wilson, *A compleat collection of the resolutions of the Volunteers, Grand Juries, &c. of Ireland, which followed the celebrated resolves of the first Dungannon diet, to which is prefixed, a train of historical facts relative to the kingdom, from the invasion of Henry II down, with the history of volunteering &c.* (Dublin, 1782, printed by Joseph Hill).
- 6.35 'AMYAS GRIFFITH, Esqr.', Joseph Wilson, 1785 (Amyas Griffith, *Miscellaneous Tracts* (Dublin, 1788)).
- 6.36 'James Napper Tandy Esqr. Captain of the Liberty Artillery &c. &c.', unknown artist, 1780-1781 (National Library of Ireland, NGIP 10,648).
- 6.37 George Washington (Kevin Whelan, *Fellowship of freedom, the United Irishmen and 1798* (Cork University Press, 1998), p.6).
- 6.38 'An engraving of General Richard Montgomery from an original drawing of Enoch Stapleton, Philadelphia', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, August 1777.
- 6.39 'Henry Grattan', Francis Wheatley, 1780, oil on canvas (National Portrait Gallery, London).
- 6.40 'Henry Grattan', engraved by Valentine Green, September 1782 (National Gallery of Ireland).
- 6.41 'James Caulfeild, 1st Earl of Charlemont, art patron, Commander-in-chief of the Irish Volunteers', unknown artist, c.1780 (National Gallery of Ireland).

- 6.42 'Earl of Charlemont', after Horace Hone, engraved by Thomas Nugent, 1 February 1790 (National Library of Ireland).
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- 6.44 'The Dublin Volunteers on College Green, 4th November, commemorating the birthday of King William III', unknown artist, London, 6 December 1784 (National Gallery of Ireland, NGIP 11,626).
- 6.45 'Leinster House Lawn, Dublin with a military parade', John James Barralet (1747-1815), published by Thomas Milton (1743-1827), early 1780s (National Gallery of Ireland, NGIP 11,615).
- 6.46 'An elegant figure of an Irish Volunteer', *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, February 1781 (National Library of Ireland).
- 6.47 A Volunteer from the cover of *Magee's miniature almanac* taken from *The Lady of the House*, Christmas 1907.
- 6.48 A Volunteer from the cover of *Magee's miniature almanac* taken from *The Lady of the House*, Christmas 1907.
- 6.49 The first Volunteer from the Volunteer binding (*De Burca rare books catalogue*, no.79 (Winter, 2006), p.48).
- 6.50 The second Volunteer from the Volunteer binding (*De Burca rare books catalogue*, no.79 (Winter, 2006), p.48).
- 6.51 An Irish state lottery ticket printed by John Magee, 1787 (National Gallery of Ireland, NGIP 11,613).
- 6.52 'Bethnal-green company of Irish impresst Volunteers', designed by Richard Simpson, engraved by Robert Wilson, late 1770s (British Museum, London).
- 6.53 'An exact representation of the Manchester recruits (alias poor distress'd weavers) before their equipment a la militaire', 14 February 1778 (British Museum, BMC 5471).
- 6.54 'He wou'd be a soldier, &c.', R. Dighton, 1 August 1780 (British Museum, BMC 5783).
- 6.55 'A visit to the camp', Henry Bunbury, late 1770s, (British Museum, BMC 5620).
- 6.56 'The recruiting cuckold. a song' W. Humphrey, London, 4 February 1780 (British Museum, BMC 5779).
- 6.57 'Capt. Jessamy learning the proper discipline of the couch', printed for Carrington Bowles, London, early 1780s (British Museum, BMC 6156).
- 6.58 'Prerogatives defeat or liberties triumph', 20 April 1780 (British Museum, BMC 5659).
- 6.59 'The Hibernian attempt', March 1785 (British Museum, BMC 6787).
- 6.60 'Argus', 13 March 1780 (British Museum, BMC 5667).
- 6.61 'An Irish Volunteer taking Liberty under his protection', hand-coloured mezzotint by Jean Delatre after a drawing by Stothard, published by Thomas Macklin in London, 1786 (National Gallery of Ireland).
- 6.62 'The rescue', April 1782 (British Museum, BMC 6002).
- 6.63 'Saint Patrick for Ireland', printed for Carrington Bowles, London, 1 January 1781 (British Museum, BMC 5945).
- 6.64 'The Irish patriots', printed for M. Smith of Fleet Street, London, 23 November 1783 (British Museum, BMC 6272).
- 6.65 'The church militant', December 1779 (British Museum, BMC 6610).
- 6.66 'Spectatum admisi, risum teneatis, amici?', late 1770s (British Museum, BMC 5343).
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- 6.68 'Hibernia in the character of charity', 21 March 1784 (British Museum, BMC 6785).
- 6.69 'The right Rev. Volunteer Bp. Of D---y', printed and sold by R. Paye of Broad Street, London, 30 August 1784 (British Museum, BMC 6653).
- 6.70 'The right Rev. Volunteer B. of D---', published 30 August (1784) (British Museum, BMC 6654).
- 6.71. A further copy of the Derry prints above, 5 November 1784 (British Museum, BMC 6662).
- 6.72 'Paddy's resource', Dublin, 1780 (National Library of Ireland).
- 6.73 'Inish na gebraugh', by Owen Roe Oneele (pseudonym), London, 21 December 1779 (British Museum, BMC 5572).
- 6.74 'Capt. Paul Jones, from an original drawing taken from the life on board the -----', October 1779 (British Museum, BMC 5559).

6.75 'The critical moment or the last effort to Save a Sinking Bark', early 1780s (British Museum, BMC 6806).

Abbreviations

- *B.N.L.* Belfast Newsletter.
- *D.E.P.* Dublin Evening Post.
- *F.J.* Freeman's Journal .
- *I.H.S.* Irish Historical Studies.
- *N.A.M.* National Army Museum, Chelsea.
- *N.G.I.* National Gallery of Ireland.
- *N.L.I* National Library of Ireland.
- *N.M.I.* National Museum of Ireland.
- *R.I.A.* Royal Irish Academy.
- *U.J.A.* Ulster Journal of Archaeology.
- *U.M.B.* Ulster Museum, Belfast.

Glossary

Battalion: In this period the size of a battalion varied from country to country, but generally this meant a military unit of 800 to 1,000 men. Volunteer battalions were certainly smaller than this, usually numbering only a few hundred men.

Belt-plate: A small plate, of any shape that was attached to the belt. Such plates usually bore the name and badge of the owner's company. In the regular army, these plates bore the regimental number and initials of the monarch.

Colour: The most common name for a flag carried by an infantry unit in this period.

Company: A small infantry formation, varying in size from country to country. Companies were usually between eighty and 100 men in strength. Although many Volunteer companies called themselves companies, most were probably not quite the same size as a full strength company in the regular army.

Conversation piece: This name was given to eighteenth century paintings that featured a group of people engaged in an activity (often conversing in a domestic setting). Such paintings were especially popular with the middling classes, but their proliferation in Ireland in this period remains unclear.

Copperplate: Copperplate was a word commonly used in the eighteenth century to describe a printed item decorated through the process of transfer printing.

Cornet: A cornet was the most junior rank of commissioned officer in a British regiment of cavalry.

Creamware: An affordable fine ceramic produced in great quantities in the late eighteenth century, characterised by its creamy colour. Josiah Wedgwood I was the most famous creamware manufacturer in this period.

Cross-plate: Similar to a belt-plate. This plate was usually attached to a set of cross-belts, which carried a cartridge box for a musket.

Dragoon: Dragoons were the most common cavalrymen in this period and many regiments of cavalry in the British service were dragoons in name only. Although dragoons were mounted soldiers, they also traditionally fought on foot.

Ensign: An ensign was the most junior rank of commissioned officer in a British regiment of infantry. On occasion, it also referred to a naval flag.

Epaulettes: Decorative items attached to the shoulder as part of a dress uniform. Epaulettes increasingly became part of dress uniforms in the eighteenth century. They were not worn on a daily basis, but were reserved for special occasions.

Facings: Generally, this term refers to the upturned lapels of a military coat. Facings were usually of a different colour to the main part of the coat.

Guidon: A frequently used term for the most common type of cavalry flag in this era. A guidon is distinguished by the 'swallow tail' decoration on the end of the fabric. By the late eighteenth century, other types of cavalry flag were quite uncommon and most regiments in European armies carried guidons.

Gorget: A crafted and decorated metal plate worn around the neck of an officer. Gorgets were a reminder of the armour worn by the soldiering classes in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. The gorget symbolised the martial pedigree of its bearer. Gorgets could be made from (or plated with) many precious metals and were decorated with fitting iconography.

Grenadier: Grenadiers were the cream of infantrymen in this period, picked for their imposing physical stature and martial bearing. Each regiment in the British service had a grenadier and a light infantry company, which were elite units within a battalion. The officers of these companies were also seen as being superior to those of the centre companies.

Regiment: Despite the common misuse of this term, a regiment in this period was composed of two battalions. Many Volunteer units may have called themselves regiments, but they were nowhere near the size of a full strength regiment in the regular army.

Spontoon: A spontoon was a ceremonial half-pike, usually of seven to nine feet in length. It was carried in the British service (in theory) by both officers and non-commissioned officers. In the late eighteenth century British army however, spontoons were rarely seen, even on the parade ground. The Prussian army still required officers to be proficient in their use, both on and off the parade ground, in this period.

Stand of arms: A stand of arms comprised of a musket with an accompanying bayonet.

Squadron: A squadron was a unit composed of two troops of cavalry.

Troop: A troop was the smallest unit of cavalry in this period. In most regular European armies, a troop was usually composed of about forty cavalrymen. Most Volunteer cavalry troops did not refer to themselves in such a way, but were inclined to name themselves as a company, in the same manner as an infantry formation.

Introduction

The Volunteers of 1778 to 1793 represent one of the most widely studied political and military movements of eighteenth century Ireland. The Volunteers were undoubtedly of central importance to the political life of this period, but were also of great significance to the tradition of amateur military service in Ireland, social customs and networking, political empowerment and the consumption of material goods. The focus of this work is centred on certain facets of volunteering, many of which have previously been overshadowed by political aspects of the movement, which have traditionally received most attention. This study approaches the subject primarily through the medium of artefacts relating to Irish Volunteer companies. This work, therefore, hopes to utilise previously untapped sources in an attempt to gain fresh insights into a well explored area of Irish history.

Volunteer companies were not a new phenomenon in late eighteenth century Ireland. Despite the progressive nature of many Volunteer companies, in their democratic election of officers, as a place where identity (in terms of social, community and national identities) was re-imagined and its effects in levelling social barriers, the establishment of such corps was a distinctly traditional approach to a situation where Britain was at war with continental rivals (in this case, arising from the revolt of the American colonies and from 1778 involving France, Spain and the Netherlands). Irish Protestants had a long and proud tradition of military service in the conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, culminating with the Glorious Revolution and the war that followed in Ireland (1688-1691), which saw the establishment of a Protestant hegemony in Ireland for the duration of the eighteenth century. During Britain's continental wars (such as the Seven Years War, 1756-1763), a militia was usually established in Ireland. This institution demanded the services of Irish Protestant men between the ages of sixteen and sixty for military service. Members of the middling and upper classes generally served as officers in the militia, while men of the lower classes served in the ranks. The militia was paid for in theory by the government, which provided arms, a monetary allowance for uniforms and wages in exchange for military service. With the outbreak of war in the American

colonies, a militia bill was prepared in the usual manner, to embody companies of horse and foot throughout the kingdom of Ireland for its defence. However, the militia bill of 1778 was not passed owing to an acute lack of funds required to embody such a force.

Volunteer companies had been founded in eighteenth century Ireland before, either in areas that lacked their own regiment of the army or company of the militia, both in times of war and peace, for the preservation of law and order. Faced with the entry of France into the American war and the failure of the government to embody a militia in 1778, loyal Irishmen all over the country took the traditional Protestant Irish approach and associated in Volunteer companies. Company formations before 1778 were not frequent or concentrated, but did take place nonetheless, numbering in dozens rather than hundreds.¹ This was mainly due to the fact that most Protestant Irish residents of an eligible military age still expected the imminent embodiment of a militia along traditional lines, in which they would serve en masse. However, the expected militia never materialized, chiefly because the £17,000 per annum required to create such a force could not be found by a near-bankrupt Irish government.²

Volunteer companies were founded in isolated instances from the early 1770s onwards, especially in rural areas, where the reach of the authorities could be limited and bouts of agrarian unrest caused considerable problems. The outbreak of conflict in the colonies in 1775 prompted further foundations throughout the island, but it was not until 1778, with the entry of France, Spain and Holland into the war, that volunteering really took off and the number of companies exploded in the course of that year. 1778 was a watershed for the association of Volunteer companies, as units began to associate at the same time for broadly similar reasons (and for the first time in response to the threat of possible invasion should any of the continental powers declare war on Britain). From 1778, rhetoric and nomenclature that became especially associated with the Irish Volunteer movement (which is traditionally supposed to have existed from 1778 to 1793)

¹ The Kilkenny Rangers were founded in January 1770 and were commanded by Colonel Eland Mossom, M.P. for the city of Kilkenny. This unit remained in existence throughout the period under discussion. A number of units were founded in Cork before 1778; the Mithcelstown Independent Light Dragoons (July 1774) Youghal Cavalry (1776) and the Cork Union (March 1776). In Limerick, the largest corps, the Limerick Union were embodied in 1776. There are many other examples of units founded before 1776, those provided here are only a fraction of the total number.

² David Dickson, *New foundations, Ireland 1660-1800* (Dublin, 2002), p.164. Hereafter referred to as Dickson, *New foundations*.

also began to emerge. Although the focus of this study is firmly on the Volunteer companies of 1778-1793 and the artefacts they created and owned, there will be some reference to companies founded from 1770, where relevant artefacts are extant.

Volunteer companies were founded by Irish residents with a greater sense of urgency from early 1778 onwards. Indeed 1778, 1779 and 1780 saw the greatest number of foundations of Volunteer companies by some way, although companies were founded until 1784, and perhaps even later in isolated instances. Following the political involvement of the Volunteers in the great political victories of the Irish patriots in the late 1770s and early 1780s (principally the free trade dispute of 1779 and the granting of legislative independence in 1782) and the end of the American war in 1783, the movement fragmented and went into rapid decline. Numbers of Volunteers dwindled and many companies put up their arms altogether in 1784 and 1785. Following 1785, Volunteer numbers had declined significantly and those companies that did remain 'had become something of a veterans' club subsisting on the memory of past glories, and with little hope of future ones'³.

In the early 1790s, conflict began to brew yet again between Britain and revolutionary France. As a result, some Volunteer companies began to re-form, for the traditional task of defending their communities in this new time of conflict. The reformation of Volunteer companies was centred firmly in Ulster, but most urban centres in Ireland registered some renewed interest in volunteering, especially in Dublin. Some of these Volunteer companies were marked by their low social membership, embracing many members from the lower middling classes, such as artisans and a large number of Roman Catholics,⁴ who were often precluded from volunteering in earlier companies on religious, social or economic grounds. Such national Volunteer companies were highly political in nature, often supporting the political ideals of the revolution in France. In the sweeping and often repressive measures implemented in the 1790s by Britain's first minister, William Pitt the younger, Irish Volunteer companies were repressed by act of parliament as possible centres for sedition and treason. In place of the Volunteer

³ Peter Smyth, *The Volunteers 1778-1793* (PRONI, 1974), p.xvi.

⁴ The social composition of Volunteer companies had always been an issue of contention within Volunteer culture, especially in urban settings. From the mid 1780s onwards however, the number of artisans and men from the lower classes joining Volunteer companies seems to have increased drastically and became significant enough to be widely commented on.

companies, a militia was finally established in 1793, in time for the long haul of the French Wars (1792-1815). This militia, along with the yeomanry of 1796, was designed to bring amateur military service in Ireland within the bounds of a regulated institution and therefore the full control of the government.

Most scholarly work on the Irish Volunteers was written in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, there was great enthusiasm for the Volunteers and the cult of 1782 from the 1840s onwards. Most of the literature written in this vein was quite typical of much nineteenth century history, in that it was written with an agenda for the political present, with hagiographical portraits of leading Irish patriots, such as Grattan, Flood and the earl of Charlemont. The focus of such works was often political in nature, effectively seeing the Volunteers as an armed attachment of the patriot alliance and also as a political movement, with an agenda of its own, that it was willing to force at the point of a bayonet. Nineteenth-century historians generally accepted the disparate Irish Volunteer companies as a fully fledged political movement, headed by the earl of Charlemont. A typical work in this vein was Thomas MacNevin's *History of the Volunteers of 1782* (Centenary edition, Dublin, 1845). MacNevin wrote from the jaded perspective of Ireland after the Act of Union and longed for a time when an Irish polity asserted its own rights through pen and sword (in the model of the Roman senator, which was typically taken as the ideal form of the Irish patriot), as the men of 1782 had done in their time. Volunteer leaders were feted and review days were talked of in nostalgic tones in such works. This kind of scholarship led to the Volunteers being seen as mainly a political movement, with little other purpose than advancing the rights of the Irish polity (with very little appreciation of the complexity of political ideology within the densely layered Irish political classes) in the late eighteenth century.

In the twentieth century, there was considerable interest in the Volunteers outside academic circles. The *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* was particularly active in this regard. From the start of the century until the 1940s, there was a constant flow of articles about local companies and Volunteer artefacts in the journal, written by a handful of

regular enthusiasts, such as C.J. Robb,⁵ Robert Day,⁶ Francis Joseph Biggar⁷ and T.G.F. Paterson.⁸ Articles were also frequently contributed by the descendants of Volunteers, illustrated with line drawings of artefacts still in the possession of the family. These articles were not very substantial in an academic sense, but certainly contained a great amount of oral information and local tradition about Volunteer companies, that would otherwise have gone unrecorded. Most of the journal's content on volunteering was, however, centred firmly on Ulster Volunteer companies. This balance has been redressed somewhat by Pádraig Ó Snodaigh,⁹ late of the National Museum of Ireland, who completed many articles in the course of his career on Volunteer companies throughout Ireland at a county level. Ó Snodaigh's work on the Volunteers has mostly consisted of lists of Volunteer units, but articles on other aspects of volunteering were also written by this author.¹⁰

Taken as a whole, writing on the Volunteers in the first half of the twentieth century was generally piecemeal, with little real direction or unity, and crucially very little input from professional historians. In the new Irish Free State, the Volunteers, a movement composed mostly of Irish Protestants involved in the campaign for a more self-sufficient kingdom of Ireland, was not as convenient an episode in the history of Irish independence as the rebellions of 1798 and 1803. As a result, the era of Grattan's Parliament was sidelined, in favour of episodes that could be more easily tailored to the identity of the new state and especially to its selective syllabus of Irish history.

⁵ C.J. Robb, 'The Ulster Volunteers of '82: their medals, badges, etc.' in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 3rd series, i (1938), p.118. This article was an extended series of pieces in which Volunteer artefacts were reproduced and discussed by several enthusiastic collectors. The series ran from the late 1890s until 1906. Robb, Day and Biggar all contributed to this series on multiple occasions, but only one instance has been cited in each case here for the sake of brevity.

⁶ Robert Day wrote many articles on the Volunteers, mainly in the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* and the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*. The sale of his estate involved a large auction spanning several days at Sotheby's of London: *Catalogue of the highly important and valuable collection of naval and military medals and decorations, the property of Robert Day, Esq., J. P., F. S. A., M. R. I. A., &c., of Myrtle Hill House, Cork* (London, 1913).

⁷ Francis Joseph Biggar, 'The Ulster Volunteers of '82: their medals, badges, etc.' in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 2nd series, v (1899), p.22; Biggar, 'The national Volunteers of Ireland, 1782' in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 2nd series, xv (February 1909), pp 105-118.

⁸ A complete list of Paterson's key articles is provided in the bibliography of this study.

⁹ A complete list of Ó Snodaigh's lists of Volunteer units is provided in the bibliography of this study.

¹⁰ 'The Volunteers of '82': a citizen army or armed citizens – a bicentennial retrospect' in *Irish Sword*, xv (1983), pp 177-88; 'Some police and military aspects of the Irish Volunteers' in *Irish Sword*, xiii (1978), pp 217-29.

Modern studies of the Volunteers have been relatively scant, despite repeated recognition of just how important the Volunteers have been in the study of many different aspects of eighteenth century Ireland. The most important work of recent decades was a Ph.D. thesis written by Peter Smyth at Queen's University, Belfast; 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster: background and development 1745-85' (1974). This important work focused primarily on volunteering in Ulster, with little relevant information on volunteering outside this province. However, Smyth's endeavours have firmly established the background of the amateur military tradition in Ireland, while also laying out how the politicisation of the movement occurred in Ulster in the late 1770s and early 1780s. Further research on the Protestant military tradition (and a good general section on the Irish Volunteers) later featured in Allan Blackstock, *An ascendancy army, the Irish yeomanry 1796-1834* (Dublin, 1998). In general, Ulster scholars have been more enthusiastic to engage in research on Irish Volunteer companies, perhaps because of the key place that the movement occupies in the history of the province and especially in the wider tradition of amateur military service amongst Protestants.

In the last three decades, research on the Volunteer movement in the Republic of Ireland has mostly been in the form of individual articles, particularly by James Kelly¹¹ and Pádraig Ó Snodaigh. Kelly's focus has mainly been on political aspects of volunteering, especially in relation to the role of the Volunteer leadership in Dublin's political life. Several contributions involving the Volunteers also featured in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds.), *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996). David Miller's essay 'Non-professional soldiery, c.1600-1800', pays particular attention to the formation of Volunteer companies and the politically empowering effect they had on many of their members. Miller has also highlighted the place of the Volunteers in a wider tradition of armed Protestant culture in Ireland and the role of the Volunteers as an ad hoc police force in his seminal work, *Queen's rebels: Ulster loyalism in historical perspective* (Dublin and New York, 1978). An essay about the effect of Volunteer

¹¹ Kelly's most significant article to date on the Volunteers remains: 'A secret return of the Volunteers of Ireland in 1784' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxvi, no.103 (May 1989), pp 268-92. However, many of his works on Dublin politics in the late eighteenth century contain many useful references to Volunteers and volunteering in Ireland at this time: *Sir Edward Newenham MP, 1734-1814, defender of the Protestant constitution* (Dublin, 2004); *Henry Flood, patriots and politics in eighteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 1998).

companies on feelings of Irish national identity has also appeared in a recent volume by Brendan MacSuibhne.¹² The political ideology of Irish Volunteer companies and those who served in them was explored in some detail in Stephen Small, *Political thought in Ireland, 1776-1798, republicanism, patriotism and radicalism* (Oxford, 2002). Although the Volunteers make appearances in more general works on Irish history or material culture, there has not been very much new to say on them since Miller and an accepted orthodoxy on the movement has begun to emerge, which is routinely repeated in scholarly books and journal articles. This orthodoxy states that Volunteer companies were founded from 1778 to protect Ireland from the threat of French invasion and that these disparate companies soon became politically involved and were a key pressure group and mouthpiece of patriot politics and the drive for reform. Such a view fails to appreciate the military antecedents of the Volunteers, the highly militarised society from which they emerged, the complex nature of how Volunteer companies were founded and of what classes and professions they were composed, while also not fully exploring just how diverse the Volunteer movement was in all of its aspects. This view also places too great an emphasis on political aspects of volunteering. Innovative scholarship on the Volunteer movement, excluding political aspects, has been very sparse in recent decades.

In general, there has been quite a narrow focus in the study of the Irish Volunteers. Scholarly works have tended to focus on political aspects of volunteering, with very little reference to the myriad of other aspects that might have been studied. In particular, there has been great neglect of more mundane aspects of volunteering, from the running of Volunteer companies on a day-to-day basis, to how the Volunteer calendar was organized and how Volunteer companies interacted at a local, county and provincial level. Except in very general terms, little is also known about the composition of Volunteer companies, in terms of class, profession, wealth or religion. The chronological formation of companies, the regional development of volunteering and depth of political opinion within the movement at the lowest level (that of an individual Volunteer company) are also yet to be thoroughly explored in scholarly works. Despite being mentioned in several studies to date, there is still a general impression in the popular

¹² Brendan Mac Suibhne, 'Whiskey, potatoes and true-born patriot paddies: volunteering and the construction of the Irish nation in northwest Ulster, 1770-1789' in Peter Jupp and Eoin Magennis (eds.), *Crowds in Ireland, c.1720-1920* (Basingstoke, 2000).

perception of the Volunteers of a unified movement, with agreed political ideals and a leadership firmly in charge of a movement with tens of thousands of members.

This study seeks to make a number of contributions to the debate on the Irish Volunteer movement. Firstly, it explores the Volunteers through many groups of primary sources that have not previously been utilised in the study of such companies. Each chapter of this work is thematic in nature and is a self contained work, which contributes to the historiography and academic dialogue of its relevant area in its own right. This work as a whole, however, seeks to address many different areas of volunteering studies. Political aspects of volunteering have been deliberately sidelined and more peripheral aspects have been closely examined for the purposes of this study. These issues include more mundane aspects of volunteering, such as the foundation and day-to-day running of a Volunteer company, the individual and collective identities of such corps, their membership, the manner in which companies interacted at a local, county and provincial level and contemporary perceptions of the Volunteers from members, supporters and opponents. In particular, this study seeks to address the subject of volunteering from the viewpoint of the individual company, in terms of how they carved out their own identity and how they related to other companies around them. Such issues are studied through the medium of artefacts belonging to Volunteer companies and therefore provide a very direct link with the identity of the individual Volunteer unit. This study will affect many different areas of volunteering studies and in many cases is also a pioneering work.

The primary sources used in the research of this thesis are quite unusual in the academic study of Irish history and require some explanation as a result. Traditionally, the writing of Irish history (encouraged in the last century by the *Irish Historical Studies* school), has looked almost exclusively to documents for its primary sources. This group includes printed books, manuscripts, newspapers and official publications. This bias in source selection has led to a necessarily lopsided view of Irish history in the eighteenth century, with a tendency to overemphasise the role of politics and politicians in the period, at the cost of other areas, such as social history. The present work utilises sources more usually employed in fields such as the history of art, to shed light on the nature of

volunteering. Such primary sources for this work fall into the following categories; clothing, accessories, buttons, belt and cross-plates, arms (including both side-arms and edged weapons), flags and banners, decorative and applied arts, portraits in oil, pastel and chalk, ceramics and copperplate prints.

Such sources are difficult to collate and are found in a multitude of museums and private collections. One of the greatest challenges which faces the scholar with such sources is the ongoing search for relevant artefacts in far-flung collections. As a group, these sources are diverse and sometimes have little in common in terms of historical method. As a result, in each chapter of this study, the working methodology has usually been that most closely associated with the group of artefacts in question. In the case of portraits, for example, the relevant discipline is that of art history and more specifically the study of late eighteenth century portraits within this discipline. In the opening section of each chapter, the collation of sources and working methods associated with the chapter are discussed in full.

The use of such sources in the study of Irish history is not entirely new and does have some precedent. Both the curators of Ireland's national institutions and the antique dealers and collectors of Ireland have amassed a deposit of very useful literature on some specific groups of sources. Such works will be discussed in greater detail in their relevant chapter. Academic historians have also begun to turn their attention to such sources. Irish art history has begun to grow significantly in the last twenty years, through the work of scholars such as Anne Crookshank, the Knight of Glin and Fintan Cullen.¹³ The emergence of Irish art history is explored in some detail in chapter four of this study. The most important work produced to date on the subject of material culture in eighteenth century Ireland is Toby Barnard's *Making the grand figure, lives and possessions in Ireland, 1641-1770* (Yale, 2004). This work explores the lives of Irish residents in the eighteenth century through the medium of many different groups of sources. The present study has drawn many ideas and methodological points from Barnard's seminal work.

¹³ Anne Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600 to the present day* (Dublin, 1979); Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's Painters, 1600-1940* (Yale, 2002); Fintan Cullen, *Visual politics, the representation of Ireland, 1750-1930* (Cork, 1997).

Many stimulating works on material culture in Britain, continental Europe and the American colonies were also key to the composition of this study.¹⁴

In the case of some groups of sources however, no relevant academic discipline exists and scholarship on the subject can be scattered, inconsistent, or even non-existent in some cases. This is especially true in the case of artefacts that do not fall neatly under the remit of an academic discipline (this includes a sizeable portion of the sources consulted for this study). Many of these sources are only written about by those in the antique trade, which is a profession motivated firstly by monetary concerns and only secondly by academic interest in the artefacts themselves. While many valuable works were consulted in the course of this study from within this group, there still exists a considerable gap between the standards expected by academic historians and those in the antique business. In this case, both sides can benefit from the knowledge of the other and attempts to bridge such gaps with well placed and sensible interdisciplinary study can result in a very beneficial outcome for both groups. At present, however, this gap remains one of the greatest challenges for a scholar who intends to consult such sources for the purposes of historical research.

The nature of the sources and the blending of many different disciplines in this thesis make this work a wholly interdisciplinary study. In practical terms, this means that the working methods and terminology of many different disciplines have been used and consulted in the course of this work. In general, the use of several disciplines allows many different kinds of sources to be connected and to blend their contents into a wider view of the Volunteer movement. The discipline of history is most obviously present within these pages, but art history (of which there are many sub-genres) also had an overriding influence on the research and writing of this work. Aspects of classics, heraldry, sociology and anthropology were also consulted in relevant places.

There are six chapters in this work, which cover the following themes. Chapter one is a study of Volunteer uniforms, an essential item for service in Volunteer companies. This chapter will begin the task of examining material artefacts dealing with

¹⁴ Many works of this nature are noted in the bibliography, but of particular interest to the student of material culture is T.H. Breen, *The marketplace of revolution, how consumer politics shaped American independence* (Oxford, 2005).

the Volunteer movement and will set the tone for remainder of this work. Chapter two is concerned with Volunteer flags, a focal point for the pride and identity of the individual company. This chapter develops the idea of the individual identity of Volunteer companies and introduces several key concepts of how Volunteer companies used iconography and symbolism on their equipment. The third chapter of this study focuses on the collected iconography and symbolism of the Volunteer movement as a whole. The study of symbols and their meaning further develops our concept of the identity of Volunteer companies as individual units, but also in terms of a conceptual larger movement of Volunteers. This chapter also informs us as to the class of many Volunteers, their level of education and the aspirations of their service in such companies. Chapter four comprises a study of Volunteer art, in the forms of portraits of Volunteers commissioned in this period. This chapter delves more deeply into the reasons why an individual served as a Volunteer at this time, especially in terms of the social reasons for becoming a Volunteer and the prestige it conveyed amongst one's peers and community. However, Volunteer portraits were artefacts centred very much on the individual and as such provide us with a unique window into how the individual Volunteer saw himself as an amateur military serviceman. Chapter five is a study of Volunteer ceramics. These artefacts were distinctly civilian in nature and afford historians a useful opportunity to analyse the relationship between Volunteer companies, material culture and emerging consumerism in the late eighteenth century. The final chapter of this work is concerned with copperplate prints and other printed materials related to the Irish Volunteers in this period. This group of sources is unique in allowing to us see how those outside the Volunteer movement (both supporters and opponents) viewed these amateur military companies. Of particular interest to this section of the study is how Volunteers were depicted visually at this time and in the case of satirical prints, how they came to embody the stereotype of the Irishman in this period.

Chapter One: Volunteer Uniforms

The most appropriate starting point for a study of material artefacts dealing with the Irish Volunteers of 1778 to 1793 is the uniforms they wore. The single most important item possessed by a Volunteer in these years was a uniform coat. Uniforms were indispensable to the volunteering experience and held a key place in the wider culture of the Volunteer movement. Uniforms were a key element in the identity of the individual company, while they also allowed each separate unit to feel part of a wider movement simultaneously.

Before any discussion of Volunteer garments however, it is necessary to briefly consider the role of clothes more generally in late eighteenth century Ireland, to provide an appropriate context. A discussion of the primary sources used in this part of the study will follow this. The main section of this chapter will consider the artefacts, beginning with how uniforms were created by a company on its formation, where Volunteers sought materials to manufacture the uniforms, how all of their accoutrements such as buttons, lace and epaulettes were acquired, before moving on to consider the question of just how 'uniform' a Volunteer company actually looked when it was fully attired. This final aspect will be explored with the aid of several case studies. These case studies shed light on how Volunteer uniforms were put together, modified and changed over time within the framework of a single company. Broader trends are considered in the following section, which tackles the question of the colours used in Volunteer coats. This section provides a wider view of how the uniforms related to each other on a national scale, in an attempt to see if any broad trends can be observed in the colours of Volunteer uniforms in this period. Finally, the role of uniforms as a political tool in public gatherings will be considered.

I

The dense stratification of late eighteenth century Irish society has been asserted in much previous secondary literature,¹ but one of the chief ways in which the ordering of society manifested itself was in the clothing of the era. Clothes in the late eighteenth century were not just a necessity, but were the very essence of how society was divided and stratified, albeit in a visual manner. Clothes were used as a means of visual communication to convey prestige, rank, status, class and wealth. As Roy Porter has observed, 'Clothes had their own language.'² Clothes fit for everyday wear were often rich in fabric, design and decoration. Those in the upper tiers of society used clothing as a means of displaying their wealth (or indeed the appearance of wealth they did not in reality possess, in the case of many penniless aristocrats). Late eighteenth century male residents of Ireland wore what amounted to a societal uniform (coat, shirt, waistcoat, stock or cravat, breeches, stockings, shoes and sometimes wigs), which was worn by all who aspired to respectable status. Dressing to impress was a major preoccupation for men as well as women, and being fashion conscious was a prerequisite for membership in the higher tiers of society. Consumers largely mimicked the aristocracy in their consumption habits, in terms of the cut and design of clothes and also in their use of fabrics, especially in the limited use of velvet (especially on collars, lapels and cuffs)³ and silk.⁴ Wearing the right clothing was the first hurdle to respectable pretensions and was a cause of considerable obsession for many people, both male and female.⁵ Consumers at the time were preoccupied by concerns of dressing fashionably and making good choices in terms of material consumption, as first impressions were largely conjured up by one's attire and manners in late eighteenth century Ireland. Many of the issues at stake here applied

¹ Most recently, the Protestant section of society, which is largely the focus of this work have been analysed in some detail in Toby Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland, the Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (Yale, 2003). Hereafter referred to as Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*.

² Roy Porter, *English society in the eighteenth century* (London, 1982), p.151.

³ Mairead Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland, a history* (2nd edition, Cork, 1999), pp 123-24. Hereafter referred to as Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*.

⁴ Madeleine Delpierre, *Dress in France in the eighteenth century* (Yale, 1997), pp 1-3. Hereafter referred to as Delpierre, *Dress in France*.

⁵ Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, p.92. Dress interested men and women almost equally in this period. However, around the turn of the nineteenth century, men dressed more conservatively, while women became more flamboyant dressers.

mainly to the upper and broad middling classes who could afford, in both financial and ideological terms, to devote time and effort to their appearance.

One of the considerable effects of the 'consumer revolution' of the mid to late eighteenth century was to make fashionable dress cheaper and available to a greater number of those who wished to aspire to membership of the middling and upper classes.⁶ This was achieved through greater choice for consumers, as a result of competitiveness on the part of the producers of raw materials and craftsmen, the weakening of craft guilds and greater efforts and innovation in the marketing of wares to the public. This phenomenon had become apparent and peaked in Britain in the 1760s (plate 1.1).⁷ The proliferation of arrivistes and nouveau riches in society was clearly marked in graphic satire and social commentaries at the time, with equal measures of jocularly, mockery and gloomy disgust. A new market had been created in helping aspiring gentlemen to dress up (beyond their station), as it were. This could be achieved through the production and purchase of cheaper alternatives to what was in fashion at the time. In some fields, such as wig making, it was difficult to create a cheap, but affordable product, due to the complexity of the craft and the extreme difficulty of obtaining convincing materials for the product (the use of horse hair or ill matched human hair from several subjects was the hallmark of a cheap wig).⁸ However, clever and resourceful tailors, hosiers and cobblers could produce convincing, though often cheap and shoddy wares, which could pass off a young man as a gentleman in society, provided he could complete the illusion with the requisite manners and polished social graces.⁹

Dressing up became the object of many in the middling classes (especially the lower middling classes). Greater choice and cheap, but convincing wares, allowed those who were not born gentlemen to take on the appearance of one, for the purposes of professional advancement and social climbing. Indeed, anecdotes from the period abound of young men attempting to rise to the status of a gentleman through dress. Wolfe Tone, the son of a coach maker, mentioned in his diaries in America his wearing of velvet

⁶ Toby Barnard, *Making the grand figure, lives and possessions in Ireland, 1641-1770* (London, 2004), p.253. Hereafter referred to as Barnard, *Making the grand figure*.

⁷ Mary Dorothy George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank, social change in graphic satire* (1st edition London, 1967, edition used, 1987), p.57. Hereafter referred to as George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank*.

⁸ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.276.

⁹ Barnard, *A new anatomy*, pp 43-4.

collars on his coats,¹⁰ a true hallmark of those who attempted to dress up in society by using fabric normally associated with the aristocracy and court pageantry. Thomas Digges, an associate of Tone's in the early 1790s, was forced to leave Glasgow in quite a hurry in 1791 after he was caught stealing a wig in a wig shop.¹¹ Another interesting piece of evidence in this vein is provided by the advice of Letizia Buonaparte to her son Napoleone when he was growing up in Corsica, 'It is more important to have a beautiful salon, a beautiful uniform, a horse to give an impression of wealth, even if one must eat dry bread at home.'¹² The eighteenth century obsession with appearance and cutting a dashing figure in society certainly extended to Ireland during the 1770s to 1790s and was as much a cause for concern as it was in the rest of Europe.

The ordering of society by dress was a practice of maintaining the status quo that was jealously guarded by those in the upper reaches of society. This stemmed from many factors including their pride and preening over their fashionable appearance, their keen sense of a proper, natural social order and their overriding desire to see this preserved in a visual, material manner. A good pictorial example of how a European society could be ordered by its dress at this time is provided in a great work of late eighteenth century history painting, 'The Estates General' by Louis Charles Auguste Couder (plate 1.2). Because this painting depicted a highly ceremonial occasion, it gives us a good view of the contrasting dress of each order in society, which was set by royal decree.¹³ The clergy, nobility and household of the king are all dressed in costumes steeped in tradition and ceremony, not to mention huge expense. The clothes they wore were a mark of their rank, status and place within the government and high society of France. The third estate, in the left foreground, wore the traditional garb of their order in such a gathering; black clothing with powdered wigs.¹⁴ These uniforms not only marked the divisions along class lines, but also by sheer expense made sure that only those with a certain disposable income (and as a result, a prominent and privileged place in their community) who had

¹⁰ Henry Boylan, *Wolfe Tone* (Dublin, 1981), pp 57-8.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.16. Interestingly, by this stage in the French Revolution, wigs were regarded as the preserve of the aristocracy and their use was shunned by the great majority of gentlemen in France.

¹² Jill Hamilton, *Marengo, the myth of Napoleon's horse* (London, 2000), p.12.

¹³ A good account of the minute details and significance of the uniforms is given in: Delpierre, *Dress in France*, pp 101-2.

¹⁴ Phillip Mansel, 'Monarchy, uniform and the rise of the frac 1760-1830' in *Past and Present*, xcvi (1982), p.103. Hereafter referred to as Mansel, 'Monarchy, uniform and the rise of the frac'.

been chosen by their community could attend such a gathering.¹⁵ This will be a recurring theme of this chapter, as this is what clothing was so often aimed at in this period: social exclusion. This painting is certainly a very ceremonial example of how a society was ordered by clothing, but provides a good visual indicator of how clearly societal boundaries were marked.

Sir Joshua Reynolds' painting of the earl of Bellamont, produced in 1773 to 1774, provides a more Hibernian example of this kind of dress (plate 1.3). The earl is depicted in the full regalia of the Order of the Bath (the only member to have been depicted in this way at the time),¹⁶ with his long hair loosely tied and falling onto his shoulders. This painting was a very flamboyant work of art and was purposefully constructed in such a way by the artist. Irishmen in the late eighteenth century were seen, in Britain, as being overly flamboyant in both dress and manner to the point of absurdity and Reynolds has exploited this point here,¹⁷ probably to the delight of Bellamont, by reputation a rake whose nickname was the 'Hibernian seducer', in reference to his constant womanizing. Although dress consistently became more comfortable and a little less decorous as the eighteenth century wore on in Ireland,¹⁸ the aristocracy were very keen to see complexity and the social order preserved in a code of dress that was increasingly difficult to maintain.¹⁹ In the highest tiers of social interaction, dress was safely protected by tradition, but distinctions were very difficult to enforce at events not dominated by the aristocracy.

An exemplification of this is provided by Francis Wheatley's painting, 'The Irish House of Commons' (1780). The painting, plate 1.4, shows not only many Volunteers in uniform (which will be discussed later), but also Speaker Foster in his ceremonial garb as well as several councillors, in the traditional gowns and wigs of their profession, in the left foreground. Everyone on the parliament floor is in the prescribed societal uniform, to varying extents of decorousness, some are wearing elaborately decorated suits and powdered wigs, while many are more comfortably, but by no means cheaply attired. In

¹⁵ Ibid, 103-16.

¹⁶ Fintan Cullen, *Visual politics, the representation of Ireland, 1750-1930* (Cork, 1997), p.87. Hereafter referred to as Cullen, *Visual politics*.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp 86-7.

¹⁸ Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, p.120.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.96.

parliament in London and Dublin there was often a code of colours to show how one was aligned politically and ideologically. For example, the wearing of blue and buff indicated sympathy for the American patriots during the revolution.²⁰ This painting is a good indicator of the level of fashion in Dublin, and consequently, Irish high society. It clearly shows the stratified nature of dress at the time, as some members clung to older, more formal and even ceremonial dress in several cases, while others were more fashionably or comfortably attired. Despite the abandonment of more formal codes of dress, cost was still an overriding factor with clothing, to make sure that the wealthiest members of society were also its leading members in political and societal spheres.

Fine and decorous clothes were seen by the upper tiers of society as a necessity, more so than an unwanted expense. Fine clothes were an absolute prerequisite for participation in the public arena, as we have seen in plate 1.4 above. Indeed, those who dressed too frugally, either through desire or fiscal necessity often drew the scorn and ridicule of their peers.²¹ For figures of power and authority, it was therefore imperative to be seen to come up to the standards of dress expected by one's position and (supposed) wealth. Failure to appear in the right clothing could result in disaster in the political or societal sphere, especially for figures in the very highest positions of the society.

These points should always be kept in mind when discussing Volunteer uniforms. These articles of clothing must be appreciated in the context of clothing in general in the late eighteenth century, especially in terms of how the 'language' of clothing worked. Bearing these points in mind, let us proceed to a brief discussion of the sources for Volunteer uniforms.

²⁰ Stella Tillyard, *Citizen lord, the life and times of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Irish revolutionary* (paperback ed., New York, 1999), pp 140-1.

²¹ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 251-3.

II

The sources for the study of Volunteers uniforms are numerous and diverse, but can be divided into several basic groupings. Firstly, there are surviving garments themselves, though these are few in number. Surviving examples exist in the National Museum of Ireland, the Ulster Museum, the National Army Museum, London and various county museums in Ireland. Garments are easy to study because of their tangible nature and most of the surviving garments are of a very high standard of tailoring, which helped to ensure their survival. However, there are unfortunately too few of these sources to confine our study to these artefacts.

Contemporary portraits are also a valuable source, as are depictions of reviews, such as the paintings of Francis Wheatley. The nature of these sources will be explored in great detail in the fourth chapter of this study. In terms of uniforms, the greatest efforts should be made to cross reference the painting with contemporary print media accounts of the company uniform, if they exist. However, portraits of individual sitters are rarely inaccurate, due to the highly personal nature of the work and the close correspondence between artist and sitter. Wheatley's paintings are quite reliable as a source for uniforms for the most part, but caution should be advised in the construction of history paintings at the time as artistic compositions.²²

Contemporaneous printed lists of uniforms do exist, but account for a fairly small number of the total number of uniforms worn at the time.²³ Later works on the Volunteers also contained attempts to catalogue uniforms, such as Thomas MacNevin's *A history of the Volunteers of 1782* (Centenary ed., Dublin, 1845),²⁴ and Robert Day,²⁵ down to more

²² Stephen O'Connor, 'Francis Wheatley's Dublin Volunteers, a historical analysis'.

²³ The best example remains: A Volunteer of C.R.L.D., *The Munster Volunteer registry* (Dublin, 1782). This book was an attempt to register the many Volunteer companies of the province of Munster in the form of a directory detailing the officers, members, uniform, date of foundation and other sundry details of each corps.

²⁴ Hereafter referred to as MacNevin, *History of the Volunteers*. In this edition the author published several appendices detailing this information. MacNevin also transcribed the *Munster Volunteer Registry* for his readers. Henry Joy of Belfast also wrote two contemporary accounts of Volunteer companies in 1779 and 1783. These lists are kept among the Joy papers in the Linen Hall Library in Belfast.

²⁵ Day published a slew of articles, mainly concerned with artefacts such as medals in the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* and the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. Day seems to have been a very

modern work by Pádraig Ó'Snodaigh.²⁶ Contemporary printed sources, such as newspapers, provide some of the best material of this nature, being contemporaneous and often very detailed. However, printed sources are quite limited in the study of uniforms due to their inherently textual attempts to describe a once tangible garment.

The actual garment is by far the most reliable source, being almost impossible to forge after the event and being tangible and easy to examine. Portraits and depictions of Volunteer reviews are next in reliability, because of the amount of control the sitter had over what was depicted. Printed sources, however, vary greatly in their reliability. Newspapers tend to be quite accurate in uniform details, as a result of the great enthusiasm which reviews and military uniforms generated, especially in peculiar additions on festive days, like the wearing of orange cockades on 4 November each year, the date of the birthday of William III.²⁷ However, newspapers should be cross-referenced to filter out inaccuracies.

The work of later historians can be useful, but in general, their information was derived from printed sources, oral tradition²⁸ and increasingly over time from each other.²⁹ Changes in dress over time and confusion with similarly named corps can cause incorrect uniform details to be cited. Lastly, pictorial depictions warrant the most caution from the historian. Even contemporary artists can get details wrong, even though they may have been eye-witnesses to a review. Later art is almost completely useless, as the artists often lack the necessary knowledge about uniforms of the period in general, to say

enthusiastic scholar, but was not very discriminating in his digestion and publication of information. Any secondary sources written by him should be treated with great caution.

²⁶ Pádraig Ó'Snodaigh (also called Oliver Snoddy) had a long career at the National Museum of Ireland and produced many articles about Volunteer companies, which are noted in the bibliography of this study.

²⁷ *Finn's Leinster Journal*, 10 November 1779. *Freeman's Journal*, 6 November 1779. Hereafter referred to as *F.J.*

²⁸ *The Ulster Journal of Archaeology* is a good example of this kind of information. In the early part of the twentieth century information on uniforms, flags and anecdotes of Ulster Volunteer companies was regularly published in this journal. Much of this information came directly from the memories of previous generations and from first and second generation descendants of men who had been part of Irish Volunteer companies.

²⁹ MacNevin provides the best example of this as many later historians who have studied Volunteer uniforms have consulted his work. MacNevin is not a very reliable source however, having cobbled together his list from a variety of disparate sources, often with a fair share of human errors in transcription. However, he has been consulted by a great number of historians without much (if any) question as a good authority on Volunteer uniforms. MacNevin compiled his appendices nearly sixty years after the era of the Volunteers and his contribution is of very limited value. Much of his information also came from the *Munster Volunteer Registry*, which he transcribed verbatim.

nothing of the peculiarities of the uniforms of individual Volunteer corps. These are the sources which will be used for the following discussion.

III

Now that we have established both the rudiments of the role of clothing in late eighteenth century Ireland and the sources which are available to us for studying Volunteer uniforms in particular, let us move on to the study of Volunteer uniforms themselves. This section will focus on the material realities of Volunteer uniforms, from the fabric they were made of, down to how much customers could expect to pay for such garments. Following this, we will consider the nature of the many other items that adorned a Volunteer uniform and discuss how they came into being, their marketing, sales and price. The following section will move on to consider the wearing of uniforms in public by Volunteers.

Volunteer uniforms varied greatly in the manner of their raw materials, quality of production and cost. Because the Volunteers were not a centralised national organisation, with a higher body prescribing a pattern to be used for uniforms, there were great differences in uniforms from region to region, between rural and urban corps, and especially at local level between individual companies. This is an important point to bear in mind in this discussion, as generalisations are very difficult to make about Volunteer uniforms as a result.

One of the first questions that confronted every Volunteer unit on its foundation was that of the composition of its uniform. In this point alone, there was great variation. Many corps were required to clothe themselves. At one of the first meetings of the company, a uniform would be chosen and the details published in newspapers in the days following the meeting. A typical example was the foundation of the Glinsk Loyalists of Galway:

COUNTY of GALWAY. At a meeting of the Gentlemen of the Ballymoe Club, at the Club-Room at Ballymoe in the County of Galway, on Wednesday the 22nd of September, 1779, Sir JOHN BURKE, Bart. in the Chair, Resolved, That those men who have already frequently assembled at Glinsk, and voluntarily offered their Service for the protection of their King and Country, be forthwith

embodied, under the title of the GLINSK LOYALISTS; and be formed into Eight Companies, of Thirty privates each, with one troop of light horse. Resolved, That the Uniform of this Corps, be Scarlet faced with black, buff waistcoats and breeches; Gold epaulets, with Metal buttons, having Glinsk Loyalists engraved thereon: the Cloth to be of Irish manufacture, not exceeding Thirteen shillings a yard. Resolved, that Sir John Burke, Bart. be Colonel, John Lloyd Bagot, Esq; Lieutenant-Colonel. Christopher Chevers, Esq; Major. William Burke, Esq; Captain of the Cavalry. John Burke, William Kelly, Thomas O'Connor, Hyacinth Chevers, and Thomas O'Connor junior Esqrs, Captains of Infantry...SIR JOHN BURKE, BART. Chairman.³⁰

After such a decision, it was then the business of each member to acquire a uniform from his own pocket, which could prove quite expensive, as we will see below. In other cases, however, special arrangements were made. The Arran Phalanx of County Wexford, were completely raised, clothed, armed and accoutred by their commanding officer:

On Easter Monday was celebrated at Merriville, in the county of Wexford, the anniversary of the Battle of Culloden, by the Arran Phalanx, commanded by the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Sudley.-This corps consisted of 40 very comely, spirited young men, raised and completely accoutred by the sole liberality of the patriotic Earl of Arran.³¹

This was not an unusual practice and certainly runs contrary to the popular image of the Volunteers as self-financed amateur soldiers. At Lurgan, County Armagh, in August 1780, a company of a very different nature to that traditionally proposed was raised 'Mr. Crooks, a gentleman of that town has generously proposed, to arm and uniform (in Irish manufacture) such of the mechanics as choose to unite, for the purpose of learning military discipline, &c.'³² Not only were men of the lower classes being encouraged in some circumstances to do their duty as Volunteers, but they were being clothed, armed and accoutered by those who would traditionally have taken on such a role in the militia

³⁰ *Dublin Evening Post*, 19 October 1779. Hereafter referred to as *D.E.P.*.

³¹ *F.J.*, 21 April 1781.

³² *D.E.P.*, 10 August 1779.

(principally landowners). It seems that it was more usual for Volunteers to clothe themselves on the whole, but many cases do exist where serving Volunteers were clothed by local grandees (this practice also seems to have been more prevalent in rural areas, where there were fewer Protestants and therefore fewer recruits for a Volunteer company) and in one case men were even paid to stand in the ranks of a Volunteer company during a period of decline in 1784.³³ Once colours were chosen, cloth would be bought either by Volunteers who commissioned their uniforms separately, or in bulk for a company as happened in some cases:

The gentlemen and principal inhabitants of the town of Belfast, having formed themselves into an independent company of volunteers, have come to a resolution and given orders to a gentleman in Dublin, to purchase at the Irish Woollen Warehouse their uniform, which is to be scarlet faced with black, and white waistcoat and breeches, all of Irish manufacture. It is hoped this truly laudable and patriotic example may be followed by such other independent companies as may be formed or forming in other parts of the kingdom.³⁴

A much repeated point about Volunteer uniforms is that they were made from Irish materials as a show of support for Irish industry, especially during the American Revolution and the free trade dispute of the late 1770s. An important point to remember about such gestures is that they were part of a well established patriotic tradition in eighteenth century Ireland for the wearing and promotion of Irish cloth. Indeed, the wearing of Irish made clothing was a somewhat hackneyed patriotic exercise by the time of the Volunteers. Even very transient visitors like the viceroy and vicereine could gain some popularity by promoting and buying Irish cloth, as could patriots such as William Conolly, speaker of the commons, and his wife Katherine.³⁵ Patriots throughout the eighteenth century constantly extolled the virtues of supporting domestic manufactures, as a show of their solidarity with Irish economic interests. Indeed, even the government occasionally took up this practice, by promising that all troops quartered in Ireland should

³³ James Kelly, 'A secret return of the Volunteers of Ireland in 1784' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxvi, no.103 (May 1989), p.287.

³⁴ *Dublin Evening Journal*, 12 May 1778.

³⁵ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 254-6.

be dressed in uniforms of Irish manufacture.³⁶ So, what many Volunteer companies proposed in the early days of the movement was certainly nothing new, although it was a traditional and welcome response to the war in America and the inevitable restrictions on trade and cash flow that resulted. Somewhat remarkable, however, was the sheer scale on which the cloth would be used. Prospectively, tens of thousands of Volunteers would buy Irish cloth for their uniforms, which would help immensely to soothe the anxiety of Irish weavers, drapers and tailors in a time of economic uncertainty. Also, the fact that a significant section of the population, with a disposable income, were seen to be (quite literally) buying into the principles of non-importation, provided a huge boost to the campaign for free trade, in terms of a significant propaganda victory and in very practical monetary terms as well. As time went by, there was more and more talk about the use of Irish cloth in uniforms, extending even to the early 1790s and the rejuvenation of many Volunteer companies, especially in the north of Ireland.

Not all uniforms can be said to have been made of Irish cloth, despite much of the rhetoric at the time. There is certainly no method to confirm that the uniforms were indeed of genuine Irish cloth. Although many press reports often claimed that uniforms were indeed of Irish cloth, this was really more a point of rhetoric than a statement based on any firm knowledge that the uniforms were actually made from Irish cloth. On this point, we unfortunately have to take the press reports at the time with a pinch of salt as the patriotic rhetoric that it undoubtedly was, but more importantly, we must recognise the tradition that this kind of rhetoric wished to invoke in the promotion of Irish manufactures.

Whatever the origins of the cloth, however, the raw materials for uniform coats were sought from drapers and cloth warehouses. In the late eighteenth century the customer was responsible for buying the cloth and bringing it to the tailor to be made up into a pattern of the customer's choosing.³⁷ Drapers actively sought the business of the Volunteers and cloth was sold with an eye to such customers:

³⁶ Ibid, p.274.

³⁷ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.260; Delpierre, *Dress in France*, p.137.

Irish Woollen Warehouse, No.35, CASTLE-STREET, DUBLIN; The Manufacturers who have goods in said House, return their sincere thanks to the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public, who have hitherto given them such patriotic encouragement, by which they have been enabled to extend and improve their manufacture to a degree of perfection equal to any imported. The House is at present asserted with a great variety of Superfines, particularly Scarlets, Blues, and Whites, for Gentlemens' Uniforms...they are determined to sell at the most reduced prices, by wholesale and retail. Dublin, 28th March, 1781.³⁸

Wool was usually used for most of the coat, with more luxurious materials being used for the facings, cuffs, collar, pockets and other highly visible areas of the garment. It should be mentioned at this point that the coat was the main part of the uniform. The clothes worn underneath it would typically be a shirt, cravat or stock,³⁹ breeches, stockings and shoes. The name given to such undergarments in the military at this time were 'small clothes'. Shirts were mostly made from linen, which was a very widely used fabric at the time. Gentlemen would be expected to own quite a lot of linen at any given time. In this regard as well, linen drapers (many of whom also had customers in the regular army) saw an inviting gap in the market with the emergence of Volunteer companies 'SHIRT and STOCK WAREHOUSE, No. 66, DAME-STREET...They Contract to serve Regiments and Companies with Shirts, &c. on such low Terms, as they presume will give entire satisfaction.'⁴⁰ The nature of linen made it a fairly disposable and frequently renewed product for consumers, so new linen may not necessarily have been bought for Volunteer duties. If new linen was bought, however, many Volunteers would have opted to buy from suppliers who also did business with the regular army because they sold at reasonable prices and in bulk.⁴¹ Breeches, stockings and shoes would have been secured through the usual civilian channels. Once cloth was acquired, it was sent to a tailor with precise instructions as to how it should be measured, cut and decorated.

³⁸ *F.J.*, 2 June 1781.

³⁹ A stock was an unfitted square piece of linen that was wrapped around the neck, while a cravat was a fitted product, with a correspondingly higher cost.

⁴⁰ *Dublin Evening Journal*, 2 June 1778.

⁴¹ Many retailers who supplied to the army openly courted the business of Irish Volunteer companies, which was a natural extension of their business. In Dublin, for example, saddlers, smiths and other tradesmen advertised to perform the same tasks for Volunteer companies that they did for regiments of the regular army.

Tailoring, by the end of the eighteenth century, had long been recognised as a very skilled craft, with a corresponding cost.⁴² Tailors were present in significant numbers in all the larger towns of the island to produce custom made clothes. In the large towns and cities, like Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Belfast, the tailors were organised into guilds, ostensibly for quality control, to make sure the customer got what they had paid for. In Dublin, for example, the tailors guild had been in existence by royal charter since 1418.⁴³ Guilds may well have been in decline during the eighteenth century,⁴⁴ but they still exerted considerable influence and produced excellent products in their respective area. In rural areas many gentry families, and especially their servants, may have used jobbing tailors or low-skilled local tailors, but the best wares were still to be had from a trained professional in one of the larger towns (preferably Dublin), or indeed Paris and London in the case of the upper classes.

Volunteers accoutred by their landlords could not expect to be much better attired than the rank and file of the regular army. Clothing soldiers was an expensive business and uniforms needed to be replaced every year in the army, for which colonels received a considerable stipend.⁴⁵ There is no reason to suspect that such Volunteer units were any different and uniforms would have to be replaced, though admittedly less often than in the regular army.⁴⁶ Volunteers who clothed themselves had much greater choice available to them in terms of how much they would spend and how fine the finished product would be.

The officers, and in particular the senior Volunteer officers, wore uniforms that would gain the envy of many a regular officer, in terms of the level of craftsmanship

⁴² Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.260.

⁴³ Jacqueline R. Hill, *From patriots to unionists, Dublin civic politics and Irish Protestant patriotism, 1660-1840* (Oxford, 1997), appendix A.

⁴⁴ Sheilagh Ogilvie, 'The European economy in the eighteenth century', in T.C.W. Blanning (ed.) *The eighteenth century* (Oxford University Press, 2000), p.111.

⁴⁵ It is difficult to estimate how much money a colonel was given to outfit his regiment, but the annual figure certainly numbered in thousand of pounds. Colonels were expected to cream off some of this allowance into their own pocket, usually to the amount of hundreds of pounds on an annual basis. However, it was up to the individual commanding officer if he skimmed money from this allowance at all, but the practice seems to have been very common and acceptable within the culture of the army (Richard Holmes, *Redcoat, the British soldier in the age of horse and musket* (London, 2002), pp 109-11. Hereafter referred to as Holmes, *Redcoat*.)

⁴⁶ Clothing and equipping 100 men must have been very expensive and replacement uniforms must have been put off for as long as possible to avoid cost, especially if enthusiasm for volunteering began to flag in the region after 1782 or 1783.

employed in their production and the quality of the raw materials. In the case of a regular army officer, he would have to have his uniform made by a skilled and qualified tailor in a large urban centre. Officers' uniforms were not simply available off the peg, as it were. Toby Barnard asserts that in Ireland officers' uniforms were only to be had from specialists in Dublin.⁴⁷ However, the geographical location of many corps ensured that this was not the case for many officers in Irish Volunteer companies, who would not have had easy access to Dublin for this purpose.

Between April 1779 and early summer 1780, it has been estimated that the number of Irish Volunteers rose from 15,000 to 60,000.⁴⁸ The sheer size of the Volunteer movement meant that many Volunteers would have had their uniforms made by tailors outside of Dublin. The large towns of Ireland (Cork, Limerick, Kilkenny, Galway, Waterford and Belfast) undoubtedly catered for the needs of their urban Volunteers and those of the surrounding area. Although these tailors may not have been up to the standard of their best Dublin counterparts, demand for uniforms would have made them a sensible and convenient alternative. Many Volunteer officers, such as M.P.s, peers and state officials posted in Dublin or gentlemen with a residence in the capital, would in all probability have had their uniform made by Dublin tailors, but Volunteers throughout the country would have had to settle for a local tailor (or indeed, have an old existing militia uniform altered and updated in a few cases). In the case of Volunteers who did not clothe themselves, local skills were certainly used. Militia uniforms in 1793 were tailored locally, as yeomanry uniforms would also be in the late 1790s.⁴⁹ Contemporary press accounts of reviews may often have praised the dashing appearance of the Volunteers, but in many of the rural corps, their uniforms cannot have been much more glamorous than those of the regulars, through a lack of highly skilled labour outside of Dublin.

Most corps would have had splendidly turned out individuals, both officers and private soldiers, but in many cases the appearance of the company as a unit may have been very uneven in the quality of uniforms their members wore. Some companies made

⁴⁷ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.252.

⁴⁸ P.D.H. Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster: background and development 1745-85' (PhD thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1974), p.70. Hereafter referred to as Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster'.

⁴⁹ Allan Blackstock, *An ascendancy army: the Irish yeomanry, 1796-1834* (Dublin, 1998), pp 107-9. Hereafter referred to as Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*.

an attempt to produce a pattern uniform for their members, who were encouraged to buy their items from certain craftsmen. The duke of Leinster's Dublin Volunteers were encouraged to buy their pattern hat from:

ALEXANDER TATE, Hat-maker, Resolving to carry on Business in the most extensive Manner, had, for greater Convenience, removed from No.15 to No.46, Essex-street, nearly opposite the Custom House...Said TATE has very neat Hats for Gentlemen of the DUBLIN VOLUNTEERS, where the Pattern Hat may be seen by any Gentleman belonging to said Corps.⁵⁰

In companies which had to buy their own clothes, there was bound to be some degree of disco-ordination as members cobbled together uniforms from different craftsmen, with very few guidelines. Even in the regular army, officers uniforms were often slightly different, despite clear regulations on most items of dress. It was not unusual for officers to have slightly different hues in cloth colour, or for more fashionable cuts or lace patterns to be used by young officers eager to cut a dash in their regiment.⁵¹

Francis Wheatley's painting, 'The Dublin Volunteers on College Green, 4 November 1779' (1779-1780), provides several useful case studies as to how a Volunteer unit may have looked on review days (plate 1.5). The Dublin Volunteers are the clearest and most visible unit, we can see a good selection of their members and their uniforms were authentically recorded by Wheatley.⁵² There are many small variations in uniform to be seen. Some men wear knee high boots instead of shoes, their sashes are worn in a variety of ways (around the waist and from shoulder to hip) and several private soldiers are wearing epaulettes, a decoration usually reserved for officers.⁵³ This kind of appearance was perhaps the inevitable result of cobbling together equipment for several hundred men from different retailers, but their appearance is still impressive and soldierly nonetheless.

⁵⁰ *D.E.P.*, 19 November 1778.

⁵¹ Stuart Reid and Marko Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war* (Osprey, 2002), pp 155-7. Hereafter referred to as Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*.

⁵² Stephen O'Connor, 'Francis Wheatley's Dublin Volunteers, a historical analysis'.

⁵³ In the regular army junior ranks such as ensign, cornet, lieutenant and captain wore one epaulette on the right shoulder, while senior officers from major upwards were required to wear two.

Hats were a key part of military uniforms in the eighteenth century and were almost always worn on duty, in distinct contrast to civilians, who mostly carried the hat as a prop in their hands.⁵⁴ Volunteers who did not clothe themselves were equipped with the same black felt tri-corner hat as the regulars,⁵⁵ with little decoration. In corps that clothed themselves, however, there was a wondrous variety of headgear. Grenadier hats were very popular for men of that service in the Volunteers. The grenadiers of the Dublin Volunteers can be seen wearing such hats with an embroidered imperial crowned Maid of Erin harp on the front, flanked by the swirling letters 'D' and 'V' in Wheatley's College Green painting. Light infantry companies frequently adopted leather headgear that had been popular amongst light troops in America since the close of the Seven Years War. These helmets usually bore a badge on the front and a small horsehair crest on the top.

Hats worn in the British service were also emulated. The Tarleton hat, so-called after its inventor Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton,⁵⁶ proved popular with Volunteers in mounted and infantry companies (plate 1.6). This helmet was of black leather and had a large black fur plume that ran from front to back. The Tarleton hat was the height of military fashion during the American war and remained a popular part of some British regimental uniforms for several decades. More unusual infantry hats were also manufactured for some Volunteer companies. The Kilkenny Rangers wore a showy round felt hat surmounted by tall black feathers, which must have drawn attention to this company on review days (plate 1.7). Cavalrymen often wore leather helmets very similar to the light infantry, but other types were used (plate 1.8). Brass and iron helmets were certainly worn by several Irish Volunteer troops and were usually embossed or engraved with the name of the company. The Castleknock light dragoons wore iron helmets with a leopard skin band wrapped around them and a shaggy black plume at the back. Their close associates, the Rathdown light horse wore a helmet more like that used in the regular army, with a tall, showy red and white plume (plates 1.9 and 1.10). Artillerymen tended to adopt the headgear worn by the Royal Irish Regiment of Artillery, a black felt hat, trimmed with gold.

⁵⁴ Iris Brooke and James Laver, *English costume of the eighteenth century* (London, 1945), p.66.

⁵⁵ Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, pp 145-7.

⁵⁶ John Mollo and Malcolm MacGregor, *Uniforms of the American Revolution* (London, 1975), p.211. Hereafter referred to as Mollo & MacGregor, *Uniforms of the American Revolution*.

Hats were also frequently decorated with other items as well. Small engraved plates were sometimes pinned to them, like those described below. More frequently, hats were decorated with coloured cockades and pom-poms. Cockades were especially popular, being a cheap and attractive method of adornment. These items were a common form of decoration for hats and coats on election days or anniversary dates, such as 4 November, the birthday of William III. Cockades for all occasions were available from,

D. GRAISBERRY, Printer, No.10, BACK-LANE,
DUBLIN. Gentlemen will find it much to their advantage
to get their Volunteer, Association, and Election
COCKADES from him, as he makes them up fuller, and
prints them in a more elegant manner than any heretofore
done...⁵⁷

The emblematic nature of colours was an important point about cockades, as devotional anniversaries⁵⁸ and political ideology were often represented in such ways. Wheatley's College Green painting depicts the wearing of orange cockades on 4 November, the birthday of William III. More organic forms of decoration were sometimes used, such as the wearing of oak-leaves on the hats of the Liberty Volunteers on 4 November 1779.⁵⁹

In relation to many items of uniform worn by Volunteers, it has often been assumed that most items were imported. For example, Peter Smyth argues that, 'while they supported Irish manufacture as regards buying the material for their uniforms, needed a steady supply of muskets, buttons, swords, gold wire and epaulettes, and also presumably their gunpowder and field pieces, to be imported from Britain.'⁶⁰ However, many of these items were produced in Ireland, to an extent greater than previously supposed. Irish consumers did not have to rely wholly on imports for such items. Many of the industries that produced the wares listed by Smyth have simply not been researched in scholarly works to date and as such the domestic production of such items

⁵⁷ *D.E.P.*, 10 July 1779.

⁵⁸ Devotion is a term often used in the modern study of eighteenth century Ireland. Toby Barnard in particular utilises it often to represent the place of celebrating past events and personalities in the psyche of Irish Protestants. A typical example can be found in *Making the grand figure*, pp 178-180.

⁵⁹ *F.J.*, 6 November 1779. The symbolic nature of oak in Volunteer iconography will be discussed in detail below in chapters two and three.

⁶⁰ Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster', p.94.

in this period remains beyond our knowledge. Many Volunteer wares from these categories were indeed produced and sold in Ireland.

To finish a coat, buttons were required. Many corps opted to have buttons personalised for their unit (plate 1.11). Buttons were made from several different materials, the most popular being brass and iron, for their shiny appearance when polished. Some buttons appear to have been struck, using a die and hammer, while others were blank before being engraved with details particular to the customer's unit. Cheaper alternatives were available in the form of mass produced buttons. Many of these were advertised at the time, especially in the pages of the *Dublin Evening Post*.⁶¹ The first of these was a button with an Irish harp, with the words 'Irish' above and 'Associations' below (plate 1.12). Another button somewhat cheaply produced on a large scale saw an Irish Volunteer aiding Hibernia to her feet, simultaneously preventing a British lion from damaging a nearby Irish harp.⁶² Button manufacturers, like many other tradesmen noted in this chapter, saw the opportunity presented by the Volunteers and expanded their interests to accommodate Ireland's amateur military companies,

Dublin Plated, Gilt Metal, and Fancy Buttons, at No. 13, Christ-Church-yard. Orders from Gentlemen, Volunteers, Army and Naval Officers, &c. for uniforms and numbered Buttons, executed in the best manner, and disposed of upon reasonable terms, by LEWIS WALSH, Manufacturing Button-seller, who makes for Hunts, Clubs, Societies, and in the Fancy way, with any ornament, motto, or device, agreeable to instructions...⁶³

Many of the buttons advertised in this manner were produced and sold in Ireland and this aspect of the product was used as a selling point, especially in the climate of the late 1770s free trade campaign. Thrifty members simply left their buttons blank, which saved

⁶¹ John Magee seems to have been especially enthusiastic about advertising Volunteer wares in his newspaper, where he afforded considerable space to tradesmen interested in selling their wares to Volunteer companies. This was most likely because of his close links with the Volunteer movement. More information about John Magee's printed Volunteer products can be found in chapter six of this study.

⁶² *D.E.P.* 3 July 1779.

⁶³ *F.J.*, 30 September 1780.

money on kitting oneself out as a Volunteer.⁶⁴ Buttons were one of the areas where the varying nature of uniforms, even within a single company, would become apparent. In relation to the advertisement and sale of buttons an interesting point can be observed in primary sources. Volunteer wares presented a considerable marketing opportunity to many different artificers throughout the country. An explosion of such items occurred (which can be observed in the frequency of newspaper advertisements for Volunteer wares) when volunteering began to take off in late 1778 in Dublin. From this date a wide variety of manufacturers and craftsmen began to advertise their produce in newspapers and periodicals. John Magee's *Dublin Evening Post* was a particular hotspot for such advertising. The explosion of such adverts also coincided directly with the establishment of Volunteer companies in Dublin specifically from late 1778 onwards.

Metallic lace and braid was another form of adornment for a uniform coat. This kind of decoration was generally used in areas of the coat that were highly visible, such as the front of the coat, around the neck and the pockets, to which the eyes of the viewer would normally be drawn.⁶⁵ Because only the colour of the lace (either gold or silver) was prescribed by the company, it was often at the member's discretion as to how much would be used to decorate the coat. For this reason, there could be considerable variation, as showy individuals looked to cut a dash in their local company. This variation became accentuated at officer level, when even greater decoration of the uniform coat was required as a mark of rank. Lace and metallic thread were expensive, and several extant Volunteer coats have little decoration in this regard. This is perhaps a comment on the means of the original owner and the money they could spare for their Volunteer attire.

Belts came in several different forms and were mostly for utilitarian purposes. An infantryman wore two belts which overlapped across his chest, called cross-belts (plate 1.13). At the left hip, these were attached to a cartridge box to hold ammunition and also a bayonet scabbard, called a frog. On active service, a waist-belt was also usually worn in the regular army, which had several smaller pouches attached to it. Cross-belts were usually white in the regular army, but black or buff leather was also used in civilian

⁶⁴ A coat in the National Museum of Ireland, part of the 'Soldiers and chiefs' exhibition 2007, displays such plain buttons. The coat is of scarlet cloth with black velvet facings and is of a very simple design and cut.

⁶⁵ Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, p.96.

versions. White cross-belts had to be cleaned meticulously with pipe-clay, as soldiers from the regular army would attest to.⁶⁶ Cross-belts were time consuming to clean and were an expensive item when the price of a cartridge box was added:

To the Volunteers of Ireland. The general attention of the Gentlemen composing the different Volunteer Corps, being to encourage as much as possible the Manufactures of this kingdom, William Whitehead, No.193, Abbey-Street, Beggins leave to offer to public Inspection Accoutrements, made of Irish leather, which he has after great labour and considerable Expence (sic.) brought to Perfection, so as to equal, if not superior in quality to Buff (a foreign production) which he flatters himself from the very material Difference in price, Independent of other considerations, will merit the approbation of the generous Public. He sells these Accoutrements, consisting of Cross-belts, and Cartridge-Box, at Nine British Shillings, the usual price of the Buff is sixteen shillings and three-pence. Being determined to have at all Times a large Supply on Hands, he engages to execute Country Commissions with Care, Fidelity, and Dispatch.⁶⁷

Officers wore a single belt from shoulder to hip, which held their sword and scabbard in place. Cavalrymen wore a similar rig to the infantrymen. Many Volunteers decorated their belts and cartridge boxes with plates, a great many of which are still extant.

Belt and cross-plates came in different shapes and sizes, but were rarely larger than three or four inches in diameter.⁶⁸ They were usually oval in shape, but circular and rectangular examples were made as well. Most of them were engraved, but some had moulded or struck detail and in some cases the decorative motif of a crowned harp was a separate piece, riveted on to the main plate (plates 1.14 and 1.15). Plates were one of the chief ways in which a Volunteer company could proudly display its name and preferred iconography on its uniform. Volunteer units were immensely proud of their service, their

⁶⁶ Holmes, *Redcoat*, pp 184-90.

⁶⁷ *D.E.P.*, 9 November 1779.

⁶⁸ Large collections of these plates are kept in the Ulster Museum and the National Museum of Ireland. However, the authenticity of many of these items is very dubious and extreme caution should be exercised in their study as historical sources. Many such sources are certainly late-nineteenth or early twentieth century copies.

locality and especially of their own individual units, who went to great pains to generate an identity for themselves in visual terms that marked them out from other companies.

Plates were made by a variety of skilled personnel, who successfully identified the consumer demand for such items from Volunteer companies. Nicholas Butler, a jeweller, advertised his business, which made and engraved Volunteer belt plates.⁶⁹ In the provincial city of Limerick, Thomas Bennis, a hardware merchant and iron monger, made plates and informed consumers that he had an engraver who would undertake commissions as well.⁷⁰ In Dublin, William Healy, a silver-plater, was also able to turn his hand to the production of plates, as well as a great number of other products for the Volunteers.⁷¹ The fabrication of plates was undertaken by a wide variety of practitioners, with no dominant professional profile. Plates were made from a variety of materials, most commonly brass and iron, but some isolated examples were made in silver and gold.

Some accoutrements were worn only by officers, such as gorgets and epaulettes. A gorget was a shaped metal plate, derived directly from a piece of plate armour worn around the neck, and was a symbol of rank for an officer, reminiscent of a time when aristocrats had also been armoured professional soldiers. Gorgets were worn in the regular army with a dress uniform, but seldom on active service (plate 1.16).⁷² Interestingly, during the American Revolution, British officers were discouraged from wearing gorgets in engagements because they served as a mark of identification for American sharpshooters. In the Volunteer movement, however, they were proudly worn as attractive marks of rank (plates 1.17 and 1.18). Gorgets were traditionally made to be very solid and chunky, but many Volunteer gorgets were made cheaply from thin and light materials. The most popular material was brass, some examples of white metals are also extant, and gilt (essentially gold or silver plating over a base metal) was also frequently used. Some extant gorgets were clearly hammered lightly into shape, while others were more artfully crafted, with corresponding cost. Gorgets were an essential piece of kit for officers in cavalry, infantry and artillery units and were also used to proudly display the name and iconography of the individual Volunteer unit.

⁶⁹ *Hibernian Journal*, 21 February 1780.

⁷⁰ *Limerick Chronicle*, 28 September 1780.

⁷¹ *D.E.P.*, 22 November 1779.

⁷² Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, p.146.

Epaulettes were also a very popular form of ornamentation on Volunteer uniforms. Epaulettes were made separately and attached to a finished coat when the need arose via several light hooks on the coat and epaulette. There are very few surviving examples of epaulettes, so any commentary on Volunteer epaulettes is very difficult. However, we do know from artistic sources that they were worn by both officers and private soldiers in Volunteer companies. In the regular army, epaulettes were only worn by the commissioned ranks. This point is fundamental to the understanding of how Volunteer uniforms were constructed and what we know about the men who wore them. The wearing of epaulettes by all ranks shows the spending power of men in the ranks and also the lack of strict codes of dress within many companies. In some senses, many Volunteer companies were yet another chance to display one's wealth through material culture and many Volunteers from the ranks exploited the use of such flamboyant accoutrements to their uniforms.

Not directly relevant to uniforms, but a very important question in this vein, is where Volunteers acquired their arms. There have been many sweeping assertions on this subject, often based on very little evidence. Some Volunteer companies did not have to arm themselves because they were invited to help themselves to arms set aside for the militia, which in the event was never embodied. In many instances therefore, we see hundreds of stands of arms being sent to the governor of a county for distribution to Volunteer companies in the area,

Waterford, Sept. 10. Wednesday morning a detachment from Captain Paul's and Captain Dobbyn's Independent Companies marched hence for Leighlinbridge, in order to escort 500 stand of arms, to be delivered by order of Government to the Right Hon. the Earl of Tyrone, Governor of this county and city.⁷³

Yesterday, 700 stand of arms were sent from our arsenal in the Castle, to be delivered to the Right Hon. Lord Carlow, for the use of the gentlemen volunteers of Queen's county.⁷⁴

⁷³ *D.E.P.*, 14 September 1779. A single stand of arms constituted a musket complete with a bayonet.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 23 September 1779.

Other companies, such as those clothed at the expense of a local grandee, often received their arms in a similar manner. Lord Glerawly armed the Rathfriland Volunteers of County Down at his own expense, but later demanded that the arms be returned after a falling out with the company over political matters.⁷⁵ Other companies bought their arms individually if the members were wealthy enough. Poorer companies were even known to buy arms for their members and to let them repay the money for the weapon over time. Gunpowder and shot were supplied to the Volunteers through vendors of the product,⁷⁶ but this was a fairly expensive commodity, sold by the barrel at a cost of about £20 and was used sparingly by most companies on review days. In many instances, gunpowder was gifted to a company by the barrellful by a commanding officer or benevolent outsider.

Edged weapons were worn by Volunteer officers and cavalrymen. Consumers were well provided for in relation to swords in Ireland, with several very talented cutlers in Dublin. The most famous was Thomas Read of Parliament Street, who also catered for Volunteers,

THOMAS READ, CUTLER, No.4, PARLIAMENT-STREET, Takes the Liberty of acquainting such Gentlemen as belong to different Associations, who are not yet furnished with Regimental Swords, plated and Steel bit, Spurs, and Swivels for Carbines, that he can supply them with each article, entirely of his own manufacture, and executed by Irish artists.⁷⁷

Read was certainly at the upper end of the market producing very fine wares, but there were retailers of a lesser quality as well, such as 'JAMES COCHRAN, WORKING SWORD-CUTLER...No.11 Smock Alley...Gentlemen belonging to Associations will find their advantage in dealing with him.'⁷⁸ Swords were by this stage increasingly becoming decorative items and marks of rank, rather than the tools of the trade they once

⁷⁵ Andrew Morrow, 'The Rev. Samuel Barber, a.m., and the Rathfriland Volunteers' in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, xiv (February 1908), p.109.

⁷⁶ *D.E.P.*, 14 August 1779.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 30 September 1779. Read was a very famous cutler, producing wares of the highest quality and had frequent customers from Britain and the continent. Many examples of his work are preserved in the National Army Museum in London.

⁷⁸ *D.E.P.*, 28 August 1779.

were.⁷⁹ Surviving Volunteer swords tend to be very light, dress swords, bought for their aesthetic qualities, rather than their combat effectiveness. One sword in the Ulster Museum is a perfect example. Traditionally, it is said to have been presented to James Napper Tandy on his taking up the command of the Liberty Artillery (plate 1.19, this chain of events is thoroughly explored in the sixth chapter of this study). It is a light sword with a straight blade and would be more useful for decoration than as a weapon.⁸⁰

Spontoons were also used by some Volunteer officers (plate 1.20). A spontoon was a seven-foot half pike traditionally carried by junior officers in the British service and were still carried in the Prussian army.⁸¹ The spontoon was outdated by the time of the American war and was not used on active service by officers.⁸² However, they were sustained as part of the pomp and pageantry of soldiering in parades and in portraits. Spontoons were available from many cutlers, such as

JOHN HUNT, CUTLER, No.2, SKINNER-ROW,
DUBLIN, Respectfully acquaints the Gentlemen
VOLUNTEERS of this City, and the Kingdom in general,
that he makes Powder-Horns, Swivels, Gun Worms, Turn-
Screws, Belt-Plates, Spurs, Swords, Spontoons, and
Halberts, in the neatest and best Manner; with every other
article in the CUTLERY business-all which he will sell for
the smallest profit.⁸³

Cannons were large, unwieldy and expensive, but there were nonetheless many Volunteer artillery companies. Companies usually bought their cannons from foundries in Britain and had them shipped to Ireland. The Aldborough Legion of County Kildare bought their cannons in Bristol,⁸⁴ while the Belfast Artillery's field pieces were from Liverpool.⁸⁵ Cannons were sometimes gifted to a company by a noble commanding officer, but were more usually paid for by subscription by the men of the company. For a

⁷⁹ Holmes, *Redcoat*, pp 206-7.

⁸⁰ W. A. Maguire (ed.), *Up in arms, the 1798 rebellion in Ireland, a bicentenary exhibition* (Belfast, 1998), p.57. Hereafter referred to as Maguire, *Up in arms*.

⁸¹ Phillip Haythornwaite and Brian Fosten, *Frederick the Great's army, 2, infantry* (Osprey, 1991), p.18.

⁸² Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, p.157.

⁸³ *D.E.P.*, 21 October 1779.

⁸⁴ Ronald Lightbown has produced an untitled manuscript about the life of the earl of Aldborough who established the Aldborough Legion. As of yet, it is untitled and there are no imminent plans for publication.

⁸⁵ *F.J.*, 24 April 1779.

short time in the early 1780s, there was even a cannon foundry in Dublin devoted to the fabrication of Volunteer field pieces. The foundry initially made cannons for the earl of Charlemont's Armagh Volunteers, but soon produced orders for several other companies.⁸⁶

This is how Volunteers could be outfitted for their role as amateur soldiers, but how much did uniforms and their associated paraphernalia cost? The cost of outfitting oneself as a Volunteer ranged in price as much as the quality and decorousness of the uniforms themselves. However, some estimates are possible which will give a general sense of how much it cost to buy the necessaries of being part of Ireland's amateur military movement.

The cost of Volunteer uniforms may be difficult to assess, but there are a number of points of comparison, such as the regular army, the militia of 1793 and the yeomanry of the late 1790s. Inflation in the eighteenth century was very low indeed, ensuring that prices paid in the 1770s were very similar to those in the 1790s, or indeed of the 1750s. For this reason, many comparable sources which are not immediately relevant to the Volunteers have been used in this assessment of the cost of Volunteer uniforms and equipment.

In the regular army, the uniforms of private soldiers were quite expensive because they had to be bought in bulk and the uniforms of the commissioned ranks were far from cheap. In 1729, Colonel Samuel Bagshawe estimated that if he changed his regimentals once a year, his clothing bill would be in the region of £42, with an additional £6 10s for washing and repairs.⁸⁷ A junior officer in a regiment of foot could expect to pay in the region of £46 for the very bare essentials of military service at the close of the century.⁸⁸ This comprised a dress coat for reviews, two other coats for day-to-day wear,⁸⁹ as well as all of his small clothes, epaulettes, shoes, hat and sabre. Significantly, a figure in the region of £40 covered several coats needed for active service, so many Volunteers would have fared a little more lightly, only requiring one coat at a time, because they did not

⁸⁶ There are two extant pieces of evidence about this foundry in *F.J.*, 26 June 1781 and 5 July 1781.

⁸⁷ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.264.

⁸⁸ Michael Glover, *Wellington as a military commander* (London, 1968), pp 23-4.

⁸⁹ Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, p.155.

have to dress in a uniform every day. Alarming, a cornet (the lowest commissioned rank and the mounted equivalent of an ensign in the infantry) of light dragoons could expect to pay £169 10s for his uniform and a further £151 19s for his horse and equipment from the saddler, not to mention the price of his commission.⁹⁰ These figures indicate how the military profession was one which was still very much in the hands of the upper tiers of society, often by sheer fiscal necessity. Volunteers were fortunately free of the expense of purchasing commissions, but uniforms had still to be purchased.

It is reasonable to assume that most Volunteers would only have possessed one uniform at any given time, not having to wear the garment for more than a day at a time in usual circumstances. In the regular army officers wore more comfortable and relatively plain frock coats on a day to day basis, only wearing the full dress regalia for review days and special occasions within their regiment. Volunteers didn't have to wear uniforms as often and their coats would therefore last a little longer, but uniforms would probably have to be changed after two or three years nonetheless.⁹¹

Companies clothed by local grandees are a little easier to assess. In the regular army of the late 1770s an allowance was made for each soldier and there is no reason to think that companies fitted out by local grandees would be any cheaper in this regard. In 1796, the government made the woefully inadequate allowance of two guineas for each yeoman to purchase a uniform coat.⁹² This was intended to pay only for a coat, the other appendages being provided by the individual concerned. In January 1797, the young Daniel O'Connell wrote that he had opted to join the Lawyers Artillery, whose uniform coat cost £4. He chose this in preference to the uniform of the Lawyers Infantry, whose uniform coat cost £9, on account of it being, 'all bedaubed with lace'.⁹³ This example serves to further illustrate that the cost of uniforms was on something of a sliding scale, depending on the standards of the company and the decorousness of the individual.

If a Volunteer already owned many of the required accessories (such as shirts, waistcoats and breeches of the correct colour, gloves, shoes, hats and so on), the cost

⁹⁰ Michael Glover, *Wellington as a military commander* (London, 1968), p.24. The price of a commission in a regiment of cavalry would be in the region of £1,100.

⁹¹ Indeed it is remarkable that uniform coats of any description survive to the present day, considering the very short lifespan they were expected to have by their original owners.

⁹² Blackstock, *An ascendancy army*, pp 107-8.

⁹³ D. O'Connell to M. O'Connell, 3 January 1797, M. R. O'Connell (ed.), *The correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, (Dublin, 1972), i, pp 26-8.

would be reduced, but would still be high enough to create a significant benchmark for membership. In the case of cavalrymen, they would certainly have to own much of their equipment, such as a horse and all the relevant equipment from a saddler, prior to membership of a Volunteer corps, as a result of the sheer expense of these items.

Even if a uniform coat could be had for less than £10, there were still many other items to be acquired, as we have seen above. Muskets cost £1 15s,⁹⁴ while swords could range in price up to £15 for a good weapon.⁹⁵ The latter would also require payment, as would the relevant vendor for buttons, plates, linen and any new breeches, stockings, stocks, cravats and gloves. All in all, the price of kitting out as a Volunteer could be considerable, not least because of the sheer amount of items the members were expected to buy. Prices were driven up by extravagance in showy companies by having buttons, gorgets and plates engraved or struck to a company pattern. Ultimately, price depended on the company itself and how much the members could afford to spend on their equipment. While some Volunteers would have struggled to cobble together the necessary items, we must remember that some Volunteers never paid a penny for their uniforms, as they were kitted out by a local magnate who was willing and able to bankroll an entire company.

Some companies undoubtedly used uniforms as a benchmark for membership, in a manner that actively sought to make membership an exclusive privilege. The County Dublin Light Horse were a good example of this. This corps comprised the Rathdown Light Horse and the Castleknock Light Horse. This cavalry corps was one of the most fashionable in Dublin, its membership being made up of wealthy businessmen, with a member of parliament as the company commander.⁹⁶ The Castleknock uniform was elaborate and also required appropriate equipment for the member's horse. Membership of such a company would certainly have cost several hundred pounds, with a substantial income required to maintain the equipment. Other companies were run on much less money. The Rathfriland Volunteers of County Down, for example, paid for their muskets

⁹⁴ Peter Smyth, *The Volunteers 1778-1793* (PRONI, 1979), facsimile no.142.

⁹⁵ Holmes, *Redcoat*, pp 206-7.

⁹⁶ Cullen, *Visual politics*, p.60.

in small instalments of shillings and pence.⁹⁷ Their minute book even evinces that many members of the company were illiterate and signed for their weapons with a mark rather than a signature. Cost was therefore relative to the company, but volunteering was an expensive business in general and required a disposable income of some size. In general, it may be estimated that a Volunteer in a very modest company might accoutre himself for £10, while members of more opulent companies certainly paid much more.

⁹⁷ Significantly many members of this company also seem to have been illiterate, signing off their muskets with an X, rather than a signature. Andrew Morrow, 'The Rev. Samuel Barber, a.m., and the Rathfriland Volunteers' in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, xiv (1908), pp 111-2.

IV

Volunteer uniforms were highly emblematic and their colour and style were chosen for very specific reasons by their creators. This section of the chapter will explore this aspect of Volunteer uniforms in some detail. Firstly, we will consider several case studies to acquire a better understanding of how the individual company created its uniform, before moving on to consider the wider issue of the colours used in uniforms on a larger, national scale. Before our case studies, however, it is pertinent to consider the influence of contemporary fashion and especially of military clothing upon Volunteer uniforms in this period.

The Volunteers lived in a society where the military held a very visible presence on a day-to-day basis. In Ireland during peacetime, it is reckoned that there were some 12,000 troops quartered in the country.⁹⁸ As observed by historians, Ireland provided both a useful and convenient place to quarter the troops of the numerous British army in peacetime.⁹⁹ Not only were the regular army often needed in Ireland for policing and garrison duties, but it was undesirable to keep large numbers of soldiers in England, as the standing army remained a key tenet of whig philosophy as a danger to the liberties of the polity (as they had been regarded since the reign of James II).

For the duration of the eighteenth century there was also usually a militia in Ireland, whose membership comprised the adult Protestant population, aged between sixteen and sixty, and who could also bear the expense of this pursuit.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the idealized image of the Irish Protestant gentleman in the eighteenth century was of one who could bear arms in the interests of king and country (although this often manifested itself in the custom of duelling).¹⁰¹ Protestant Ireland was a highly militarised society, which thought of itself as a militaristic population of citizen soldiers in the mould of an

⁹⁸ Mollo & McGregor, *Uniforms of the American Revolution*, p.11.

⁹⁹ Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, pp 99-100.

¹⁰⁰ Information on the Irish militia throughout the eighteenth century is a little scarce. The standard work on this subject is still Henry McAnally, *The Irish militia 1793-1816, a social and military study* (Dublin, 1949).

¹⁰¹ James Kelly, *'That damn'd thing called honour', duelling in Ireland 1570-1860* (Cork, 1995).

ancient city state.¹⁰² Protestant Irish men were expected to bear arms and to engage in posturing around arms, violence and duelling as signs of their masculinity and therefore of their membership of a male peer group and the society as a whole. This gender role was not embraced by all the upper and middling classes by any means, but did become a stereotypical image of the Irish gentleman (to which young gentlemen in particular felt they should embody). There was also a long tradition of military service in regular armies and the militia of Ireland for the previous two centuries that families of the Protestant elite could proudly recall, especially if their family had served in Ireland from 1688 to 1691.¹⁰³ In theory, the bearing of arms in Ireland in this period was restricted to those of the reformed religion by act of parliament. This should have meant that followers of the Church of Ireland and Presbyterians would have been eligible to bear arms in the defence of their community. Roman Catholics and more peripheral brands of Protestantism were disbarred from the practice.¹⁰⁴

The Irish Protestant elite also had a very keen sense of its contribution to the army and navy of the British empire¹⁰⁵ and of the role Protestant Irishmen played in this collective endeavour. However, in realistic terms most Irish Protestants eligible to become Volunteers had never served in any military capacity at all, save for short spells in the militia. The inspiration for their uniforms came mostly from the regular army, with whom they would have interacted on a daily basis.

The regular army had a presence in all the large urban centres and its men, especially commissioned officers, mixed with the civilian population quite freely.¹⁰⁶ Newspapers covered military reviews in great detail and also the American war in an avid

¹⁰² Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, *A military history of Ireland* (Cambridge, 1996), chapters 10, 11, 14. Hereafter referred to as Bartlett & Jeffery, *A military history of Ireland*; Stephen Small, *Political thought in Ireland, 1776-1798: republicanism, patriotism, and radicalism* (Oxford, 2002), pp 83-112. Hereafter referred to as Small, *Political thought in Ireland*.

¹⁰³ Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster', pp 24-44.

¹⁰⁴ Dickson, *New foundations*, p.57; D. W. Miller, 'Non-professional soldiery, c.1600-1800' in Bartlett & Jeffery, *A military history of Ireland*, p.322. Hereafter referred to as Miller, 'Non-professional soldiery'.

¹⁰⁵ Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*, pp 177-207.

¹⁰⁶ A very useful visual breakdown of the garrison towns of Ireland in 1797, with the number of soldiers in each can be found in Kevin Whelan, *Fellowship of freedom, the United Irishmen and 1798* (Cork University Press, 1998), p.56. A study elucidating the garrisons of Ireland in the 1770s or 1780s has yet to be undertaken in a scholarly work.

fashion.¹⁰⁷ There was considerable enthusiasm and glorying in the uniforms of the regulars (although this did not really extend to the soldiers themselves, who were not beloved by the population at large, especially the lower classes).¹⁰⁸ Reviews routinely took place in large towns and dates of significance such as 4 November (the birthday of William III) were marked by military parades every year. Large reviews in Dublin took place in the Phoenix Park and were always well attended by the populace. The Phoenix Park was unique in the British empire because it was the largest green space available to the army close to an urban centre and frequently played host to large army exercises, where regiments were grouped together for the purpose of learning how to move and act as a regiment and later as a brigade.¹⁰⁹ The regular army influenced the Volunteers by providing the basic framework for what an army should look like, while also setting standards in professional appearance and military fashion. The other regular armies of Europe and America did have an input into the appearance of some Volunteer units, but the influence of the British service was overwhelming in this respect. The British regulars had a large formative influence on the appearance of the Volunteers and this will be a recurring theme in the following section of this chapter.

The militia was an institution which the Protestants of Ireland were quite familiar with, as a large section of adult males at different times in the eighteenth century were encouraged to serve in its ranks. Indeed, the militia provided many Protestants with direct experience of some of the minutiae of military matters, dress and customs, which they would not gain elsewhere. However, the real impact of the militia, in relation to the Volunteers, was on the manner in which the troops were clothed. In the mid to late eighteenth century, there were considerable attempts by the crown and parliament to bring the army under closer control and accountability to a central body. In the area of uniforms, a set of clothing regulations came into effect in 1768, which standardised dress within the army (plates 1.21 and 1.22).¹¹⁰ What the militia promoted, however, was in direct opposition to this thrust for centralisation. The militia advanced a necessarily

¹⁰⁷ All of the newspapers in print during the American War avidly followed the conflict, as did the periodicals such as *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* and John Exshaw's *Gentleman's and London Magazine*.

¹⁰⁸ Altercations between the lower classes and members of the regular army do not seem to have been unusual at this time. One such incident in Limerick city

¹⁰⁹ Alan J. Guy, 'The Irish military establishment, 1660-1776', in Bartlett & Jeffery, *A military history of Ireland*, p.222.

¹¹⁰ Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, pp 146-7.

parochial and localised attitude to military matters. There were conventions as to how militia troops should be dressed, but these were treated more as suggestions than rules to be obeyed to the letter. Local commanders frequently dressed their militiamen in uniforms that reflected their personal coat of arms or the local heraldry of the region, where the unit was raised. Decorous uniforms were the order of the day for those militia officers who could afford it. Significantly, in the militia, local grandees were expected to clothe and equip their soldiers, as a show of support and loyalty to the crown. We have already seen how such a system also prevailed in some Volunteer companies, especially in rural areas.

The absence of a government-sanctioned and funded militia in Ireland during the 1760 and 1770s meant that the clothing regulations of 1768 were never enforced in a local defence environment in Ireland. The repercussions of this were felt in the Volunteer movement. Company commanders in the militia were prone to dressing their men in whatever way they saw fit, which led over time to them seeing this practice as something of a prerogative. The Volunteers, therefore, were in a significant way the successors of the militia and took much of their thinking on military dress from this institution. As such, the militia of the eighteenth century were a central influence on how Volunteer units were clothed and accoutred.

Civilian clothing and fashions also played a key role in the creation of Volunteer uniforms. In the late eighteenth century, the cut and style of military coats were essentially dictated by civilian fashion. The military uniforms of the infantry and cavalry were derived directly from civilian long coats and riding jackets. Not only were the uniforms of the armed forces very derivative of their civilian counterparts, but the uniforms were open to being changed in small ways by civilian fashions and vice versa. This was especially evident in the use of fabrics and choice of colours, both of which could have political significance. As the cut and length of civilian coats changed, so too did military uniforms. By 1778, uniform coats were similar to civilian models. The coat had become a lot shorter and lighter over the course of the century, with a significant lapse in the decoration of the coats with lace and embroidery in favour of greater choice

in the range of fabrics used.¹¹¹ The military coat differed from a civilian frock coat in that it had wide lapels or facings, through which buttons were looped, which usually displayed a contrasting colour from the main body of the coat. The tails of the military coat were also generally a little longer than civilian coats. The standard hat in the British infantry was the tricorne, which had firstly come into use as a popular civilian hat.¹¹² These examples serve to show how the relationship between civilian and military fashions worked, and this is an important point to bear in mind when considering the influences which shaped Volunteer uniforms, as many Volunteers and their tailors were far more familiar with civilian clothing than they would have been with military uniforms.

The first case study we will discuss, to gain a greater understanding of how an individual Volunteer company created its uniform, is that of the County Dublin Light Dragoons. The membership of this corps was very selective, drawing its members mainly from the wealthy upper class and the highest tiers of the middling class. Most of its members were involved in high profile business, such as building and property speculation, or had significant land holdings that drew considerable rental prices. This squadron (the military name for several troops grouped together) was composed of two separate cavalry troops; the Castleknock Light Horse and the Rathdown Light Horse. Soon after their formation, in the summer of 1779,¹¹³ the two troops became very closely associated and began to be referred to in print as the County Dublin Light Dragoons or the County Dublin Light Horse. Initially, the squadron was envisioned as being dressed in a white coat, with green facings, silver lace and epaulettes.¹¹⁴ However, for reasons unknown, this uniform was never adopted and both corps instead wore a scarlet coat,

¹¹¹ Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*, p.96.

¹¹² The tricorne was a popular civilian hat from the early eighteenth century on and remained the model for military hats until the early 1790s, when the bulk of British line infantry (with the exception of commissioned officers) began to wear the shako, a black felt cylindrical hat, with a small plume and a metal plate attached to the front; F. Glenn Thompson, *The uniforms of 1798-1803* (Dublin, 1998), p.26. Hereafter referred to as Thompson, *Uniforms of 1798-1803*.

¹¹³ The Rathdown troop are traditionally said to have been founded in June 1779. By the time MacNevin wrote his history of the movement, this date was certainly the accepted one. The Castleknock troop were probably founded in August 1779, when the infantry company were raised in the locality (*F.J.*, 5 August 1779).

¹¹⁴ *D.E.P.*, 13 July 1779 and 22 July 1779.

faced with black velvet and decorated with gold lace. The separate identities of both corps becomes apparent when their headgear is considered (plate 1.23). The Rathdown troopers wore a black leather light cavalry helmet with a large, ostentatious red and white plume. The Castleknock cavalymen sported a white metal helmet, decorated with a leopard-skin band and a long, shaggy black plume. These helmets also seem to have had lettering on the front to identify the name of the corps. In Wheatley's painting of the Volunteers on College Green, the dragoon closest to the viewer on the end of the front rank wears a helmet which clearly bears a large "D" which was probably complemented by a "C", an "L" and a "D", in the fashion of other known examples. Both helmets are rendered in very fine detail in Francis Wheatley's painting of the College Green review of 4 November 1779. We also know that the cut of the coat worn by the Castleknock troop was very unusual for an Irish Volunteer troop. The cuff of the coat was very narrow, perhaps two or three inches up the forearm and there were three brass buttons arranged vertically above the black velvet cuff. This style of cut was not used in the British service, but was very fashionable amongst French light dragoons. The helmet worn by the Castleknock troop was worn by French light dragoons and was also used by light dragoons of the Continental Army in America. This uniform was unusual in the choice of cut and accessories and evinces that some Volunteer uniforms were not simply copies of those worn in the British service and indeed embraced military fashions from continental Europe.

The second case study we will consider is that of the duke of Leinster's Dublin Volunteers, also called the Crom-a-boo Volunteers¹¹⁵ and the duke's Raps. This unit was raised on 10 October 1778 and was probably the first Volunteer unit in Dublin in this period.¹¹⁶ On its formation, the assembled company offered command to William Robert Fitzgerald, 2nd duke of Leinster, the premier peer of Ireland, who had also been an M.P. for the city of Dublin before the death of his father and his elevation to the nobility (plate 1.24). This was a relatively high profile corps, although its membership was not as restrictive as the County Dublin Light Dragoons. The membership included lofty nobility

¹¹⁵ Crom-a-boo was the motto of the dukes of Leinster and was part of their coat of arms.

¹¹⁶

such as the duke, but also men who followed trades, like the land agent James Napper Tandy or the bookseller, stationer and printseller William Porter.¹¹⁷ Membership was tightly controlled, with hopeful candidates requiring a recommendation from an existing member and review by a membership committee.¹¹⁸ The uniform of the corps was decided upon shortly after its formation in October 1778.¹¹⁹ Originally the uniform was to be 'scarlet lined with buff, gold epaulettes, and plain hats, with a cockade and feather'.¹²⁰ Three weeks after its formation, the company adopted a dark blue coat, blue facings piped with scarlet, white small clothes, gold epaulettes and a black felt tricorne hat. The grenadiers wore tall fur hats, which had a front embroidered in gold with an imperial crowned Maid of Erin harp flanked by the letters "D" and "V" as described above. A crimson sash and gold epaulettes were also worn by many members, regardless of rank. The drummers of the company had a unique uniform quite different to the other members (plate 1.25). It was customary in the regular army for musicians to have an easily recognisable uniform, as their instruments were often used to convey orders and the musician had to be readily identifiable to the officers of the company or regiment (plate 1.26).¹²¹ The Dublin Volunteers' musicians wore a white coat decorated with scarlet wings and chevrons. They also wore a black felt hat with a wide band of scarlet tape around the rim. Two such musicians can be seen in Wheatley's College Green painting. The uniform of the Dublin Volunteers was copied by several other Dublin corps, so they could act in tandem and their uniforms would match on large review days. These companies were the Liberty Volunteers, the Linen-hall Volunteers and the Goldsmiths Company.¹²² The Dublin Volunteers uniform was one designed so that the unit would be readily identifiable and would contrast quite clearly with the regular army in the city. The Dublin Volunteers were also one of the first units founded in the city, so they were

¹¹⁷ Mary Pollard, *A dictionary of members of the Dublin book trade, 1550-1800, based on the records of the guild of St. Luke the Evangelist* (London, 2000), pp 462-3.

¹¹⁸ *F.J.*, 22 October 1779.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31 October 1778.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10 October 1778.

¹²¹ F. Glenn Thompson, 'The flags and uniforms of the Irish Volunteers and yeomanry', in *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, xxxiii (1990), pp 27-8.

¹²² The commanding officer of the Liberty Volunteers (often called the Liberty Rangers), Sir Edward Newenham, can be seen beside the duke in Wheatley's painting. The Linen-hall Volunteers differed only in their wearing of a plain blue facing (*F.J.*, 31 July 1779). The Goldsmiths Company were very closely aligned with the Dublin Volunteers until mid-1780 and correspondingly wore a very similar uniform (*D.E.P.*, 13 July 1779).

largely free from the concern of having a very similar uniform to any other corps in the locality. Units which followed the foundation of the Dublin Volunteers would, however, have to design their uniform so as to contrast with that of the duke of Leinster's amateur soldiers.

The two examples above are both from Dublin and are of fairly selective companies in terms of membership. The Belfast First Volunteer Company provides a useful comparative case study of a corps from a provincial setting. Belfast's first Volunteer company was established on 17 March 1778.¹²³ It was dominated at officer level by local merchants, businessmen and prominent civic figures. Its membership, however, was very diverse and could not afford to be as restrictive as the Dublin companies discussed above.¹²⁴ Many of its members were merchants or followed an artisan trade, but there were also private gentlemen and even an artist who used his connections in the company to paint many Volunteer portraits of Belfast and county Antrim residents. The uniform of this company has been preserved in a well painted likeness of a prominent member, Waddell Cunningham, by the fashionable Dublin painter Robert Home (plate 1.27). The sitter wears a scarlet coat with black velvet facings, brass buttons and gold epaulettes. The use of black velvet facings in Volunteer companies was very common and most of the extant examples in museums have this decoration. Velvet was a fabric with luxurious and aristocratic connotations in the late eighteenth century and was not worn by soldiers in the regular army. Once again, this company was the first to be founded in the city and did not have to worry that its uniform would be too similar to the other local corps. This concern, however, did apply to Belfast's other Volunteer infantry companies, the Belfast Second "Blue" Volunteer Company and the Belfast Third "Union" Volunteer Company.

The second company adopted a uniform of dark blue cloth, faced blue with sparing gold lace and laced hats.¹²⁵ This uniform was created in deliberate contrast to that of the first company in its colour. The third company also chose a uniform which was

¹²³ MacNevin, *History of the Volunteers*, p.224.

¹²⁴ A complete list of members, divided into companies with notes on each Volunteer's attendance were published for public consumption in March 1781 and were reproduced in George Benn, *A history of Belfast from the earliest times to the close of the eighteenth century* (London, 1877), pp 754-5.

¹²⁵ Jean Agnew (ed.), *The Drennan-McTier letters, 1776-1793* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1998), p.48. Hereafter referred to as Agnew, *Drennan-McTier letters*.

somewhat distinct; a scarlet coat, faced with dark blue, piped in white, gold lace, brass buttons and white small clothes, which were also piped in blue (plate 1.28). The Belfast uniforms show how each company in a small urban centre carved out a very distinct identity for themselves, which they would proudly display at large review days.

A final interesting point about these Volunteer uniforms is that in the case of the first and second company, alterations to the uniforms can be noted over time. The first Belfast company changed its uniform in 1791 to green with yellow or gold decoration in the form of facings and frilly shoulder wings.¹²⁶ The change was prompted by the resurgence of Volunteer companies in the early 1790s amidst enthusiasm for the French Revolution. The new uniform's colour reflected a more explicit and separatist sense of Irishness and marked a new beginning for the company and the wider ideals of volunteering its members professed. Many companies changed their uniform in this manner, to reflect new loyalties or to make a statement about the company's political ideology, especially in the early 1790s. The second company (who altered their uniform in December 1782) changed not the colour of their uniform, but rather the quality of material and the number of accoutrements and decoration, so that membership was open to a much wider swathe of Belfast residents.¹²⁷ This form of social levelling to allow a greater number of men to serve certainly runs quite contrary to the received view of the Volunteers as prosperous middling class soldiers representing the armed property of Ireland.

This kind of qualitative change was also very common in Volunteer companies. Average membership of Volunteer companies is very difficult to assess, but many companies were often very sparsely served and had to make ends meet in regard to membership. This might take the form of admitting Roman Catholics, men of the lower classes or in some way subsidising men from the lower middling classes who were disbarred from volunteering because of its cost. Cheap cloth was the easiest way to drive down the cost of a uniform. Uniforms were not to be decorated, and equipment was kept to a bare minimum. Such companies were often gifted equipment by local grandees or aid was offered from a neighbouring company in a better financial position. Especially after

¹²⁶ *Belfast Newsletter*, 4 July 1791. Hereafter referred to as *B.N.L.*; *Northern Star*, 4 July 1791.

¹²⁷ Henry Joy, *Historical collections relative to the town of Belfast: from the earliest period to the union with Great Britain* (Belfast, 1817), p.391.

1783, companies which were cheaply clothed and armed became a common sight. By 1784, when many more respectable members were putting up their arms, their places were taken by men lower in the social order. To paraphrase one contemporary observer, the armed property of the country had become the armed beggary of the country (plates 1.29 and 1.30).

Fortunately, a coat of one such company has survived and is currently kept in the collection of the Ulster American Folk Park in County Tyrone. It is a very plain garment, made from simple wool and cut in the fashion of a civilian frock coat.¹²⁸ The buttons bear the name 'Northern Rangers'. Such coats must have been very common, especially after membership expectations were significantly lowered in many companies. A portrait of the Rev William Bruce of Lisburn is also worth looking at in this regard (plate 1.31). The portrait (which is discussed in greater detail in the chapter concerned with portraits) depicts Dr Bruce in a fairly plain green coat with gold decoration. The cut is once again very much of a civilian garment, with little decoration. This portrait is probably from the mid to late 1780s, when it may be conjectured that his company in Lisburn had changed their uniform in a similar manner to the Belfast First Volunteer Company. Uniforms were also sometimes changed when one or more companies merged or entered into a regimental association. In October 1779, the Merchants Company and Linen-hall Volunteers of Dublin joined forces, with the Merchants changing their uniform to the dark blue of the more senior company.¹²⁹

The final case study we will consider is that of the Aldbrough Legion of Belan, County Kildare. This company was raised and commanded by the earl of Aldborough and was very much a familial affair. The officers were mostly close relatives or employees of the earl, with his two nephews being captains, his surgeon assuming medical responsibilities, his steward as second in command and so on. The unit had been envisioned originally as an infantry corps, but over time the company evolved like many

¹²⁸ http://www.folkpark.com/collections/ireland/Military/A_scarlet_volunteer_tunic_of_the_1780s/?q=Volunteers (29 January 2008).

¹²⁹ *D.E.P.*, 29 October 1779.

others to become a legion, with foot, horse and artillery. The uniforms of the various parts of the Aldborough Legion were based very closely on uniforms worn in the regular army. The infantry wore a scarlet coat with dark blue facings, gold lace and black felt hats (plate 1.32). The cavalry wore a similar uniform with the addition of leather cavalry helmets, adorned with red and white plumes (plate 1.33). The artillery wore a dark blue coat, faced with scarlet and gold lace in the style of the Royal Irish Regiment of Artillery (plate 1.34).¹³⁰ The uniform of several of the infantry officers differed a little in the wearing of felt hats with large black feathers for decoration, such as that worn by the earl, who was depicted mounted on his horse Pomposo in the foreground. All of these uniforms show a desire for the corps to appear as much like the regular army as possible in an attempt to confirm their professionalism and soldierly appearance. Many corps attempted to dress in this manner, in emulation of the regular army, especially artillerymen. Another fine example of such dress is the uniform of the Royal Glin Artillery of County Limerick, whose uniform is preserved in a painting of its commanding officer (the painting is discussed in great detail in the chapter concerned with portraits). Emulation of the regular armed forces by Volunteers was very common and was a significant factor in the creation of uniforms for many corps.

Many different influences contributed to the make up of a company uniform and the examples proffered here barely scratch the surface of this topic. Volunteer uniforms were first and foremost articles of significance to the individual company and it is in this context that they should first be considered. However, trends within the wider movement should also be considered as these also played a significant role in how a Volunteer company composed its uniform, as many companies sought to align themselves with the colours used by other units.

Colours had great significance in the public arena of late eighteenth century Ireland. Although the wearing of colours for political reasons in Europe reached its zenith during the French Revolution,¹³¹ it had great importance during the period 1778 to 1793.

¹³⁰ Thompson, *Uniforms of 1798-1803*, pp 38-9.

¹³¹ Delpierre, *Dress in France*, chapter 11.

The army of each country was closely associated with its own colours,¹³² which were determined for a variety of reasons, often including the traditional heraldry of the country or the family of the reigning monarch. Indeed, one of the chief reasons why the French adopted white uniforms in the eighteenth century (plate 1.35), was to distinguish themselves from the stronger colours of the northern European, Protestant countries¹³³ (dark blue of Prussia and Sweden, plate 1.36). The military heraldry of a country was quite slow to change, especially when power over it was concentrated in the hands of a central government or monarchy. Colours were an easily identifiable indicator of political attitudes or official state iconography, and were easily accessible even to those in the ranks of regular armies, who could not read and write (which would apply to the majority of private soldiers in this period). Irish Volunteer companies possessed colours which held significance for their corps and for larger concepts of Irish identity. The overriding influence of the British army on the uniforms of the Volunteers, however, makes consideration of their colours necessary. The starting point for Volunteer companies as to how a military company should look was after all the regular army.

The regular army, at the outbreak of war with the American colonies in 1775, had seventy infantry regiments numbered one to seventy, in order of seniority (plate 1.37). There were also some twenty three regiments of cavalry (household regiments, horse, dragoons and light dragoons).¹³⁴ All of the infantry regiments wore red coats (under the regulations of 1768), as did the cavalry, except for the regiments of light dragoons and the blue regiment of Horse Guards. A dark blue coat was worn by the artillerymen of the Board of Ordnance, the Royal Regiment of Artillery and the Royal Irish Regiment of Artillery.¹³⁵ Red coats had become standardised under the 1768 regulations and variations from this, like the Blue Horse Guards were a matter of tradition or military fashion, as in the case of light dragoon regiments. The facing colour of a regimental coat was chosen for a variety of reasons, such as being a traditional colour associated with the area the regiment was from or from a royal association the regiment possessed. The facing colours of red-coated regiments of foot are illustrated in figure 1.1. Three colours dominated the

¹³² Christopher Duffy, *The military experience in the age of reason* (London, 1987), p.105. Hereafter referred to as Duffy, *The military experience*.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p.105.

¹³⁴ Mollo & McGregor, *Uniforms of the American Revolution*, p.11.

¹³⁵ Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, pp 229-31, 234-5.

facings of British infantry; green, yellow and blue. Together these account for 67 per cent of the total sample at the outbreak of the American war. Buff and white were also somewhat common, but black, red, orange and purple were very unusual. Several colours dominated the decoration of uniforms and show that there was certainly an expected orthodoxy in designing uniforms for the British service. In the cavalry very similar trends emerge (figure 1.2), with some slight differences. Green, yellow and blue accounted for 62 per cent, while white was a little more popular in cavalry regiments, appearing in 19 percent of the 34 uniforms. Black, buff and orange were as infrequent in as in the infantry, while red and purple facings were not used at all.

The sample used for the analysis of the colour of Volunteer coats for this study, was constructed in the following manner. The sample consists of 325 examples of Volunteer coats taken from a variety of sources. Most of the uniforms come from the *Munster Volunteer registry*¹³⁶ and the appendices of Thomas MacNevin's *A history of the Volunteers of 1782* (Centenary ed., Dublin, 1845), with occasional use of the *Volunteer's companion*.¹³⁷ Individual uniforms were also gathered from a selection of print media sources including the *Freeman's Journal*, *Dublin Evening Post*, *Belfast Newsletter* and *Northern Star*. The sample is random and no method was used in selecting uniforms for inclusion, save the authenticity of the sources from which such information was acquired. There is no bias towards particular areas of the country or towards a particular arm of service. Originally, there would have been in the region of 1,400 Volunteer companies, so this sample of 325 uniforms represents approximately a quarter of the number that existed in the period 1778 to 1793. The main colour of coats will be assessed first, with subdivisions of the facing colour of each main colour taking place in turn.

Table 1.1. The primary colours of Volunteer coats.

¹³⁶ A Volunteer of C.R.L.D., *The Munster Volunteer registry* (Dublin, 1782). This is probably the most extensive list of Volunteer units complete with uniforms, officers and muster strengths, itemised by company.

¹³⁷ *The Volunteer's companion* (Dublin, 1784).

Colour	Number
Scarlet	229
Blue	65
Green	18
White	1
Grey	1
Buff	1
Total	325

Source:¹³⁸

The main colours of Volunteer coats are presented in table 1.1. The high proportion of scarlet coats is predictable and displays an attempt by Volunteer companies at large to identify with the familiar military colour of the British service. We must also remember that early on in the development of Volunteer units, many companies expected to be subsumed into a properly established militia and no doubt rigged themselves out in suitable uniforms for that purpose. This explanation is also the key to understanding many of the trends in facing colours explored below. We will first explore the use of scarlet coats by Volunteer companies, before moving on to discuss the other colours in order of frequency. Scarlet coats were the most obvious choice of colour for a group of men in Ireland wishing to associate as an independent infantry or cavalry company. The vast majority of scarlet coated Volunteers were of these two arms of service, with few examples of artillerymen in this colour. Scarlet was readily available from draper's warehouses in various shades, making it a sensible choice for a burgeoning amateur military company.

In the case of facing colours, however, there was considerable divergence from the traditional colours of the British army. The results are quite different from that of the regular army. The most popular colour by some way was black. This can be explained in several ways. Velvet was readily available in black at this time and was often used to decorate the collar and cuffs of otherwise very ordinary coats. Velvet was used to enhance garments in this manner for gentlemen eager to dress up in society, through

¹³⁸ The composition of the sample for this table, collated from a number of sources, has been discussed above in the preceding pages.

sparing use of a luxurious fabric. Black velvet must have been one way of decorating the Volunteer's uniform coat in a fairly affordable manner. Velvet was also the preferred fabric used for facings in the Prussian service at the time.¹³⁹

The Prussian army was idolized by many in Europe at this time as the paragon of military discipline and martial appearance. The name commonly given to this fascination with the Prussian army is Prussomania.¹⁴⁰ Officers in other European states frequently adopted Prussian forms of drill, formation and indeed Spartan discipline to emulate Europe's most successful militaristic state. In Ireland, many Volunteer companies may have taken on velvet facings in imitation of this Prussian military fashion.

There was also the fact that black was a colour used very sparingly in the facings of the regular army and would therefore quite clearly mark out Volunteer units in public as being distinct from the British army. Black facings may not all have been velvet, but there is strong evidence in the form of extant artefacts to support that this was a very popular form of adornment for Volunteer coats. Three extant coats in the National Museum¹⁴¹ and a coat of the Independent Enniskilleners in the collection of the Enniskillen Museum were decorated in such a manner.

Blue was a popular facing colour that ran parallel to tradition in the British army and the traditional heraldry of the kingdom of Ireland. Blue was a dominant colour in the regular army for facings and may have been chosen for this reason by some companies. More importantly, it was traditionally the colour associated with the kingdom of Ireland in an armorial context as far as the monarchy and the College of Arms in London were concerned.¹⁴² The use of blue on a Volunteer coat's facings would therefore be a proud statement of the unit's Irish identity, but within the iconographical boundaries of the established orthodoxy of colours. Blue could be a statement of loyalty to the monarchy and to the kingdom of Ireland more specifically and would have been desirable for many companies.

The use of green on facings certainly had significance for several reasons. Firstly, there is the fact that it was commonly seen in the facings of the regular army and once

¹³⁹ Phillip Haythornwaite and Brian Fosten, *Frederick the Great's army 2, infantry* (Osprey, 1991), p.18.

¹⁴⁰ Duffy, *The military experience*, pp 24-5.

¹⁴¹ Two are of the Gort Light Dragoons of County Galway and the other is a very plain coat, the identity of whose corps is not known.

¹⁴² Cullen, *Visual politics*, p.68.

again held an attraction in making a similar appearance in one's Volunteer company. However, the nature of significance for the colour green was changing in the late eighteenth century as part of a process whereby some sections of the Irish polity were re-defining their sense of national identities, in which the colour green had a significant place for some groups. Green had begun to be used by some groups with increasing regularity as a national colour for new, emerging senses of Irishness, mainly amongst those under the very broad umbrella of the patriot alliance.¹⁴³ A scarlet coat, faced with green was also particularly popular with Volunteer cavalry companies who wore scarlet coats.

The use of white on Volunteer coat facings also appeared in some numbers. The colour was used quite often in the British service, but also had a peculiarly Irish element. It has sometimes been claimed that white was a colour particularly associated with those of the wide grouping of Irish patriots. This may be a satisfactory explanation for its use amongst some Volunteer companies. However, in Europe at large white was a colour used in a military sense by Catholic countries, like France and Spain, so Volunteer companies may have shied away from its use because of this connotation, as the British army did. White was not a colour as thoroughly ingrained in feelings of identity as the traditional blue and the emerging green however, and its use in relation to the patriot party is a little tenuous and probably applied to few enough Volunteer companies.

Scarlet, yellow and buff account for very few facings on scarlet coats amongst Irish Volunteer corps. Companies which did adopt these colours probably did so out preference by the company, an association with the heraldry of the region or indeed of the local grandee.

Blue coats account for sixty-five of the sample of 325 coat colours noted in table 1.1. Blue coats were the traditional colour of the artillery regiments of the British service, under the control of the Board of Ordnance.¹⁴⁴ Irish residents would have come into contact with blue coats through the Royal Irish Regiment of Artillery, which had been established in 1760. This explanation would reasonably extend to ten of the companies

¹⁴³ G.A. Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags from earliest times* (Dublin, 1979), pp 109-121. Hereafter referred to as Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*.

¹⁴⁴ Thompson, *Uniforms of 1798-1803*, pp 38-9.

included in this sample, so there were also a significant number of blue coated Volunteers serving in infantry and cavalry companies. Artillery companies subscribed to this uniform from the familiar desire to appear professional, or to eliminate confusion as to which arm of service they belonged. Other blue coated Volunteers are more difficult to account for. Some corps, like the Dublin Volunteers, under the command of the second duke of Leinster, were undoubtedly very loyal in character. Their wearing of blue may be a simple reflection of Ireland's national colour at the time (as discussed above), and could thus be construed as an indication of loyalist sentiment. Indeed, blue was a national colour of such importance in an official context that it was also used as the colour of robes for the Knights of St. Patrick.¹⁴⁵

This was no doubt the case for several of the corps which wore blue, especially those with known loyalist principles and commanding officers. A small number of cavalry companies wore blue coats, most likely in imitation of the coats worn by some regiments of light dragoons in the British army. As we have seen above in the case of the Belfast Second "Blue" Volunteer Company, their uniform was chosen to contrast directly with that of the first company already established in the town, whose members wore a scarlet coat, faced with black velvet. This effort in distinguishing themselves obviously worked as the appearance of the second company of Belfast were recorded in a popular contemporary song,

Have you seen the Volunteers
 Marching down the Mall?
 Their coats were blue,
 Their hearts were true,
 An every man was six feet two
 Without a shoe,
 Marching down the Mall.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Peter Galloway, *The most illustrious Order of St. Patrick, 1783-1983*, (Southampton, 1983), pp 36-7. Hereafter referred to as Galloway, *The Order of Saint Patrick*. The uniform of this order was very carefully constructed preceding its foundation in 1783 and the choice of blue by Earl Temple as certainly deliberate and loaded with symbolic meaning.

¹⁴⁶ Andrew Morrow, 'The Rev. Samuel Barber, a.m., and the Rathfriland Volunteers' in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, xiv (February 1908), p.109.

The desire to have a distinct appearance should never be underestimated in the study of Irish Volunteer companies, as Volunteers were very proud of the individual identity of their unit. Once again with blue coats, they were undoubtedly used to provide a very striking contrast with the regular army, whose cavalrymen and infantrymen were mostly wearing scarlet coats. A similarity with the coats of the Prussian service may also have been desirable for some companies, especially in light of what we have discussed about the use of velvet facings on many Volunteer coats above. Most blue Volunteer coats had scarlet facings, or the facings were left blank altogether. In the case of several Dublin companies, as observed in the case study of the Dublin Volunteers, we have seen that a fashion was started by the duke of Leinster's company for having plain blue facings, adorned only with scarlet piping. The force of fashion was another significant factor in the creation of a Volunteer uniform and a desire to appear generally similar to other companies was desirable for many companies. It was in the small details of uniform and accoutrements that most companies would carve out their individual flair.

The final coat colour of significance was green. This was not a frequently used colour, accounting for only 5.5 per cent of the total sample above, but could be seen occasionally in Volunteer uniforms. The main cause to use a green uniform during the first part of the period (1778 to 1783) was to attire the corps in the style of rangers and light dragoons in the style then popular in America. In America during the French-Indian war (1754-1763) and the American Revolution (1775-1783) green was used in uniforms as a basic form of camouflage. In terms of terrain, much of America was still heavily wooded, especially in New England and Canada, and conventional European tactics fell into disuse on campaign.¹⁴⁷ Much active service in America took the form of guerrilla style warfare, undertaken by rangers, light infantry and light dragoons, who could make more headway in such terrain than a conventional European army laden with artillery and baggage.

Rangers were particularly popular in America. Rangers imitated (and indeed had learned from) the fighting style of American Indians in how they traversed terrain, chose

¹⁴⁷ Daniel Marston, *The French-Indian War, 1754-1760* (Osprey, 2002), pp 16-7.

locations for engagements and also in how they fought (plate 1.38).¹⁴⁸ American colonial rangers were noted for their use of rifles instead of muskets. A rifle had a much longer barrel than a musket with grooves cut into the interior, which gripped the bullet, imparting spin and ensuring much greater accuracy.¹⁴⁹ This weapon was popular in America for hunting and found a ready use in warfare, especially in heavily wooded terrain where accuracy and concealment were key advantages. Several units of rangers were raised in America during the war of 1775 to 1783, mostly as temporary units of loyalists attached to the regular army. Good examples are the 60th (Royal American) regiment of foot, the Queen's Rangers (plate 1.39) and the British Legion.¹⁵⁰

Rangers, light infantry and light dragoons were perceived in the British and Irish press as very glamorous figures and officers such as Banastre Tarleton captured the public imagination with their exploits.¹⁵¹ In Ireland, a number of Volunteer companies clearly modelled themselves on such units. A visual record of the uniform of the Kilkenny Rangers has been preserved in Francis Wheatley's painting of the Irish House of Commons (plate 1.40). The Kilkenny Rangers wore a green jacket, with white small clothes and silver lace, which can be seen on the commander of the unit, Colonel Eland Mossom, M.P. for Kilkenny. This uniform was very similar to that worn by units of rangers in America, but was certainly a lot smarter and more decorous than that worn by men on active service in the gruelling North American terrain. This uniform is also a particularly good example of how Volunteer uniforms could very often be a civilian's idea of what a military uniform was like and some Volunteer uniforms were more like dress uniforms than any garments actually worn on campaign. Green uniforms modelled on those from America were very smart, allowing Volunteers wearing them to cut a dash, while also being significantly different from their counterparts in scarlet and blue coats.

By the early 1790s, the wearing of green coats had a very different connotation. National Volunteer companies wore green as part of many different concepts of communal and national identities which were evolving in this period. We have already seen how a National Volunteer company evolved out of the old Belfast First Volunteer

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p.16.

¹⁴⁹ Ian V. Hogg, *The encyclopaedia of weaponry* (London, 1992), pp 72-3.

¹⁵⁰ Hugh Bicheno, *Rebels and redcoats, the American revolutionary war* (London, 2004), p.169.

¹⁵¹ Tarleton's dispatches to both his commanding officer, Lieutenant-General Cornwallis and to the War Office in London were often printed in newspapers in Britain and subsequently copied for Irish readers.

Company and changed their uniform in the case study above. Fortunately, a surviving example of this coat is still extant in the collection of the Ulster Museum, Belfast. The coat is illustrated in plate 1.41 and is traditionally said to have belonged to Henry Joy McCracken, who later played a very prominent role in the United Irishmen.¹⁵² In Lisburn, one of the Volunteer companies of the town re-embodied in the summer of 1789 and changed their uniform to a green coat with white facings, a leather hat adorned with green and white feathers, a black stock and black gaiters.¹⁵³ The company was commanded by Captain Robert Bell, the commanding officer of the old corps. The changing of uniforms in this way could also work in reverse as some units sought to put their loyalty to king and country beyond question. In December 1792, as the National Volunteers gathered pace and the French Revolution continue ever onwards, the Roscommon Independent Forresters changed their uniform from a scarlet coat with green facings to a scarlet coat with yellow facings, as a show of loyalty and support to the monarchy and the regular army.¹⁵⁴

The wearing of uniforms at public gatherings has become a key part of the popular image of the Volunteer movement and uniforms were certainly a very potent tool in the political and civic arena. Volunteers who were prominent politicians or civic figures often wore uniforms in such a way to underline their commitment to the movement and the wider ideals it was said to profess. However, uniforms were used in a great variety of ways by Volunteers with different purposes in mind. It is important to bear in mind the sheer range of political opinion within the Volunteer movement and that political opinions held to be representative of the movement as a whole rested upon very unsteady foundations, considering the size and structure of the movement.

Volunteers whose political ideology fell under the broad umbrella of patriotism used reviews as a tool to express their political opinions, pay homage to existing devotions and carve out the newly emerging and re-defined identities of the Irish polity. In terms of the use of uniforms in public more generally, these garments were being used

¹⁵² Maguire, *Up in arms*, p.57.

¹⁵³ *B.N.L.*, 25 August 1789.

¹⁵⁴ Oliver Snoddy, 'Notes on the Volunteers, militia, Orangemen and Yeomanry of Co. Roscommon' in *The Irish sword*, xxii (1975), p.29.

as displays of social rank, mainly entailed by the cost of outfitting a Volunteer, as outlined above. In the use of fabrics, we have seen the strategic application of velvet, metallic lace and other decorations to some uniforms to raise their social value in a public setting in a very similar way to civilian clothes. Volunteer companies, no matter how progressive they have been portrayed in political terms¹⁵⁵ emerged, in terms of dress, from a very restrictive context. The use of Volunteer uniforms in public bought wholeheartedly into the maintenance of the social status quo through a hierarchy enforced by dress and its related cost.

Reviews were a place where shows of strength were enacted (plate 1.42). Put simply, large reviews (like the annual Leinster provincial review in the Phoenix Park) were the time for Irish Volunteers of a patriotic persuasion to stand up and be counted. One of the key rituals of the Volunteer review was to show off the company uniform in a larger gathering. The effect of this was twofold; it carved out the individual identity of the Volunteer unit and secondly it validated the choice of colour and symbolic aspects of the uniform by being distinctive from the uniform of other companies. It is worth repeating here that as a general rule, Volunteer uniforms usually looked fairly similar at a distance, but on close inspection there were many small differences which separated the companies from each other and confirmed their individual identity.

The most significant use of uniforms in public in this vein was their use by patriot politicians in parliament. This seems to have happened on a number of occasions, most famously in Grattan's call for legislative independence in April 1780. An impression of this historic moment was preserved by Francis Wheatley in his painting of the Irish House of Commons. Several prominent patriots have been painted attired in their uniforms, most prominently Henry Grattan, who is addressing the house. The wearing of uniforms in such a setting was certainly calculated to be aggressive and threatening to the ministerial supporters, as a reminder of the subversive potential of the Volunteer companies, whether real or imagined. Uniforms in parliament were also a show of support for the Volunteers and especially for wider ideals that were glossed over and said

¹⁵⁵ The Volunteers have traditionally been seen as quite a liberating force socially and politically, especially in their election of officers and democratic structure. While such generalisations have credibility, the extent of these trends has been overestimated. A re-evaluation of such aspects and indeed Volunteer culture more generally is required to address the popular image of the Volunteers.

to represent large sections (or indeed the whole) of the movement. In this manner Grattan and the patriot alliance could enhance their image in parliament, with the pageantry of decorous uniforms of the image of the gilded citizen soldier along classical lines.

However, such tactics in parliament were just that; parliamentary tactics. Many Volunteers declined to appear in such a manner in any public gatherings apart from strictly Volunteer events. In Wheatley's painting of the Irish House of Commons, several very prominent and influential members of the broad patriot alliance did not adopt Volunteer uniform and appeared in civilian clothes. In the left foreground on the front bench Luke Gardiner and John Beresford are seated. Both were leading members of the patriot interest, but neither have followed Grattan's lead in terms of dress. This instance of wearing uniforms in parliament has become deeply ingrained in the popular image of the Volunteers, but in Wheatley's record of the event, very few members actually wore a Volunteer coat on the day in question. It should be remembered that the use of uniforms in parliament and in public events of great importance was somewhat limited to the late 1770s and early 1780s. By 1783, with the contention of the renunciation crisis and greater questioning of the legitimacy of Volunteer involvement in politics, political volunteering went into a rapid decline from which it would never recover.¹⁵⁶ This resulted in the disappearance of Volunteer uniforms from the political tactics of many patriot leaders and M.P.s.

However, this use of dress in the public sphere was very potent imagery and was replicated frequently in more local civic bodies on many occasions in these years. Many companies often demanded that members appear at company meetings in full uniform. Elections were a further instance of when some companies used uniforms as a show of strength and solidarity. However, the wearing of uniforms in such a way was actually discouraged by some units. In 1783, the Monaghan Rangers prohibited the wearing of uniforms at elections because it jaundiced the nature of voting and infringed the liberties of the voter.¹⁵⁷ The use of uniforms in political gatherings was common in general amongst patriots and proved a considerable weapon in their arsenal during this period.

¹⁵⁶ Peter Smyth, *The Volunteers 1778-1793* (PRONI, 1974), pp xii-xviii; Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster', pp 126-208.

¹⁵⁷ *B.N.L.*, 8 April 1783.

Conversely, reviews could also be arenas for the voicing of vehement loyalist opinions. Many corps did not fall into the popular view of the Volunteers, that these amateur military companies were hotbeds of patriotic or seditious political opinion. In reality, many companies served in an identical capacity to the preceding militia companies and their only political involvement encompassed professions of loyalty to king and country in times of crisis and occasional denunciation of the political opinions of more subversive Volunteer companies. Loyalist companies generally subscribed to colours which aligned very closely with that of the regular army, or in some cases that were clearly emblematic of existing devotions invoked through the company uniform. A good example of this sort of uniform would be the blue battalion of the Down First Regiment of Volunteers.¹⁵⁸ This battalion wore a uniform of blue, faced with orange. This garment thus combined a field colour traditionally associated with the British monarchy in Ireland and of a devotional nod to William of Orange, a key figure in the pantheon of Irish Protestants. This corps was commanded by Robert Stewart, M.P. for County Down. He was a close political ally of Charlemont and shared the Volunteer earl's cautious political stance, holding loyalty forward as the key value of the Irish Volunteers.¹⁵⁹ Uniforms were used in a very similar manner to that outlined above by patriots, with the difference that loyalty was being expressed, rather than patriotism or any desire for reform.

However, in a review with any political connections at all, the message sent by the wearing of uniforms was clear. Uniforms provided an authoritative and militaristic appearance (which was thoroughly in tune with ideals of Irish Protestant masculinity), communicating a serious statement of intent on the part of the Volunteers, whether this was in support of patriot ideals, loyalist sentiment or simply in favour of the protection of hearths and homes. Volunteer uniforms helped to copper fasten political opinion by supporting the words of political leaders in parliament with armed men of their political persuasion throughout the country.

¹⁵⁸ MacNevin, *A history of the Volunteers*, p.226.

¹⁵⁹ William S. Childe-Pemberton, *The earl bishop, the life Frederick Hervey, bishop of Derry, earl of Bristol* (London, 1924), p.301. Hereafter referred to as Childe-Pemberton, *The earl bishop*.

Conclusion

Volunteer uniforms are a crucial point of contact with the Irish Volunteer movement. Uniforms were indispensable to the organization and were the first and most important artefact required to serve in one of its companies. These uniforms firstly introduce a key underlying concept of the movement; that money was required to equip oneself and serve as a Volunteer (or in the case of some local grandees, vast sums of money were required to outfit a whole company at one's own expense). This simple fact provided a certain threshold in most Volunteer companies that made them of a necessarily exclusive nature. Volunteer companies were a centre for the promotion of the rituals of material culture, from the selection of fashionable goods by the consumer to the crucial concept of the ordering of society via material culture. In many ways, Volunteer companies were very supportive of the societal status quo, especially in its maintenance through material consumption.

However, it is in the study of the individual company that the importance of uniforms really becomes apparent. The Volunteer movement was composed of many small self-contained companies, each with a proud individual identity. Uniforms highlighted the particular identity of the corps within a larger framework of similar units. It is worth stating again that while at a distance most companies looked broadly the same, it was in the sum of small details that many units forged an individual identity for themselves. This point is fundamental to any understanding of the Irish Volunteer movement and should always be borne in mind during this study.

However, despite the individualistic tendencies of many companies, there was a broad framework of orthodoxy, through which most uniforms were filtered to give them a somewhat typical martial appearance. The uniforms of the regular armies of Britain and continental Europe played a part in the formulation of some Volunteer uniforms. However, once volunteering became established, there was clearly some effort made to emulate other Volunteer companies, so that units could look broadly similar, while being clearly different from the regiments of the regular army. In this respect, a wider Volunteer movement could be said to exist in a visual manner through the colours that Volunteer companies around the country chose. There were, as we have seen, colours and

combinations that were favoured by the Volunteers, but that had little basis in the uniforms of any European regular army.

Finally, the Volunteer uniform was central to the wider culture of volunteering, for members of all shades of political opinion. The Volunteer uniform was a key artefact in celebrating the solidarity of the movement at reviews, especially for particular political groupings or ideals. For many Volunteers, the wearing of a uniform equated to some share in the political life of the country and was for some their first inclusion in the polity of Ireland, if only in a very marginal way. However, this political awakening of sections of society that were previously on the fringes of the polity unlocked great political potential, especially for Catholics, Presbyterians and other religious groups previously left outside the polity.

Chapter Two: Volunteer flags

Flags in the late eighteenth century had a special significance for the soldiers who served under them. They embodied the history, tradition and pride of a regiment, as well as providing the soldier with strong feelings of brotherhood with his comrades and of belonging to his unit. The art, heraldry, symbolism and significance of flags were already well advanced by the 1770s within the regular armies and militias of Europe and by this time most European states had attempted to exert some control over the composition and iconographical content of such artefacts. Flags were an effective means for the communication of concepts of ideology and identity in an age before the majority of Europeans (this was indeed the case for the vast majority of those serving under such flags) were literate.

The structure of this chapter will take the following form. Firstly we will discuss flags as historical sources, followed by a consideration of flags in the British regular army, with an eye to how much inspiration these artefacts bequeathed to the flags and banners of the Irish Volunteers. The study of Volunteer flags is subject to a basic division between infantry and cavalry flags. Volunteer colours will be discussed first, with special attention paid to their production, cost and raw materials. The place of flags within the culture of volunteering will also be explored, with particular reference to the ceremonial use of flags as significant artefacts in the formation of company identity. The decoration of these sources is set out in an itemised fashion, detailing the frequency of motifs on extant artefacts and explaining their significance as a form of decoration. Finally, cavalry flags will be explored under the same headings.

I

Our first concern will be to identify relevant extant sources for this study.

Volunteer flags are to be found in a wide and varied assortment of museums, heritage sites, private collections and contemporary print media sources. The largest collections of Volunteer flags are to be found in the National Museum of Ireland, the Ulster Museum in Belfast and Armagh Church of Ireland Cathedral. Several county museums throughout Ireland also possess some Volunteer flags from this era.¹ Flags are also to be found in heritage sites throughout Ireland, such as Westport House in County Mayo, Birr Castle in County Offaly and Damer House, County Tipperary. Some items have also remained in private hands since the late eighteenth century,² or have been part of private collections assembled through auction houses. Aside from surviving flags and photographs, line drawings of many flags have been reproduced in journals, especially in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*.³ There are certainly many extant Volunteer flags that have yet to be seen by scholars and museum curators, mostly in private collections.

The other source we have for the study of Volunteer flags is that of print media and extant manuscripts detailing the artefacts at the time. These are the least reliable of our sources, those mentioned above being tangible visual sources, whose authenticity is easily verified. Written sources provide us only with textual descriptions of the flags, which are often difficult to interpret and visualise correctly. Many such descriptions are wholly inadequate, or may only describe the colour or the centrepiece of the flag. On other occasions there may be conflicting accounts of the same flag, or descriptions that can be proved to be incorrect, through comparison with other sources. Print media may yield a large number of sources, but these should be treated with caution and must be compared with other primary sources where possible. However, such textual sources are still important, even though they may be unreliable or inadequate on some occasions.

¹ Flags and guidons are held in the county museums of Armagh and Sligo. Artefacts of this kind are also often found in town museums, or in regimental museums, such as in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh.

² Two such artefacts would be the guidon of the Royal Glin Hussars, kept in Glin Castle, County Limerick and the colour of the Adare Volunteers, also of County Limerick. Both of these flags have remained in the family of the commanding officer of the original Volunteer company in the intervening time period.

³ The only known photograph of the colour of the Knappagh Volunteers, for example, was reproduced in T. G. F. Paterson, 'The County Armagh Volunteers, 1778-1793' in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 3rd series, vi (1943), p.77.

Surviving Volunteer colours are relatively numerous. We have at least twenty-nine surviving examples on which to base our analysis (most of these are complete, or nearly complete artefacts, with few examples of flags where little of the original fabric is still intact). Six extant Volunteer guidons were also consulted for this study. These thirty-five examples represent a very small fraction of what once existed in the heyday of the Volunteers, but considerable commentary on these artefacts is still possible from such a sample.

Before we begin our analysis of the sources, it is of the utmost importance to define some of the terms that will be used in our discussion. There are several different types of flags which we will examine. The most basic division is between those used by cavalry and infantry. An infantry flag was universally known as a colour in this period. There were two types of cavalry flag in this era. The standard was a large, roughly square flag, rarely used by this period, but was still carried by regiments of horse (heavy cavalry, as opposed to dragoons, who were light cavalry) and household cavalry in Britain. The more common cavalry flag in this era was called a guidon. The guidon was a small, but long and narrow rectangular flag, with a 'swallow tail' at the back. The structure of our analysis will be this: firstly, we will deal with Volunteer colours and then with the standards and guidons of the cavalrymen.

II

The first and most obvious place for an Irish Volunteer company to draw inspiration for its colour or guidon was the flags of the British regular army. Indeed, there are a great number of similarities, but also disparities between these two groups of sources. However, the flags of the regular army were undoubtedly the first point of inspiration which Irish Volunteers had for their flags and indeed were one of their only points of reference as to what a military flag should or could look like.

The first regulations on the colours of the British regular army were decreed in 1747.⁴ It is no coincidence that they were released after the failed Jacobite rebellion of 1745 to 1746, as there was seen to be an increasing need for an army that was uniform in its dress, drill, flags and appearance following this conflict.⁵ The reforms instigated by the duke of Cumberland were, of course, part of a wider centralising process within the British state in the eighteenth century, but one of the understated wider themes of eighteenth century Europe was the reformation of European military establishments, which took place in most states to varying extents (plate 2.1).⁶ In Britain, the military reformation began with the regulations of 1747 and continued well into the nineteenth century. Indeed, a willingness to occasionally reform its military establishment in dress, drill and campaigning practice is one significant factor in explaining the success of the British army in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The 1747 regulations on flags were aimed at producing a uniform set of two colours to be carried by each regiment of foot in the regular army. A key point was that no personal coat of arms or other marks of patronage (by the colonel or private individuals) could be borne on the colours of a regiment.⁷ This was a radical move, which dissociated the colonel from the private ownership of his regiment, which was very much

⁴ The text of the regulations of 1747, 1751 and 1768 are reprinted in full in: T.J. Edwards, *Standards, guidons and colours of the Commonwealth forces* (Aldershot, 1953).

⁵ Ian Sumner and Richard Hook, *British colours and standards, 1747-1881, (1) cavalry*, (Osprey, 2001) p.3. This two volume study of flags in the British army during this period is the most concise and accessible work produced on the subject, as well as being the most recent work on this area. Hereafter referred to as Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards (1), cavalry*.

⁶ Duffy, *The military experience*, pp 14-8.

⁷ Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards (1), cavalry*, p. 3.

the case up to this point. No mottoes or emblems specific to the regiment could be borne on the colours either, except those that were granted at a later date by Whitehall in successive regulations. The main thrust of the reforms was to assert the authority of the monarch (and therefore the state) over the army.⁸ The design, iconography and peculiarities of each colour were placed securely in the hands of the state. The army would no longer be a motley assortment of quasi-feudal regiments, but a unified body with complete allegiance to the state (essentially to parliament and the monarch in London) and with a uniform sense of dress, equipment, drill and identity.⁹

The two colours to be carried were almost identical for each infantry regiment. The first colour was called the king's colour (plate 2.2). The king's colour was perhaps the most readily identifiable of the two. It consisted of the union flag (the iconographical and heraldic culmination of the union of England and Scotland in 1707, catered for in the acts of parliament passed by both countries),¹⁰ which occupied the entire field, with the regimental number encased in a cartouche in roman numerals in gold in the centre, surrounded by a wreath of roses and thistles growing from the same branch, called a union wreath.¹¹ This colour was carried by every regiment of foot and sought to establish a uniform appearance in regiments, no matter where they were from in Britain. This was mirrored in the uniforms worn by the soldiers (which we have already seen in chapter one), thus solidifying the hold of the centralised state on the soldiers of the regular army.

The second colour carried by an infantry regiment was known as the regimental colour (plate 2.3). This colour was more specific to the regiment and less generic than the first colour. The field of the colour was the same colour as the regimental coat facings. In most cases, the field would be entirely the facing colour of the regiment, but in the case of regiments with red or white facings, a red cross on a white field (the heraldic arms of

⁸ Ibid, p.3.

⁹The minutiae of the regulations are dealt with in Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards (1), cavalry*, pp 5-14 and also in Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, pp 80-3.

¹⁰ The changing of flags and ensigns was catered for in article one of the treaty of union between England and Scotland 'That the two kingdoms of Scotland and England shall, upon the 1st day of May next ensuing the date hereof, and for ever after, be united into one kingdom by the name of Great Britain, and that the ensigns armorial of the said United Kingdom be such as Her Majesty shall appoint, and the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George be conjoined in such manner as Her Majesty shall think fit, and used in all flags, banners, standards and ensigns, both at sea and land.' The Act of Union (1707) is widely available online and can be found at <http://personal.pitnet.net/primarysources/act.html> (18 April 2008).

¹¹ Sumner and Hook, *British colours and standards, 1747-1881, (2) Infantry*, (Osprey, 2001) p.3. Hereafter referred to as Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards, (2) Infantry*.

St. George) was used instead. A regiment with black facings adopted a red cross on a black field. This eliminated possible confusion, in that the colours might have been mistaken for a flag of surrender, a flag of truce or a flag of no quarter. A small union flag was placed in the upper left corner of every regimental colour to convey the national identity of the regiment. The regimental number was again to be displayed in the centre of the colour surrounded by a union wreath.¹² The regimental colour allowed the regiment to have a flag that was less generic and allowed the unit to have its facing colour displayed on one of its flags as a mark of identity.

After the regulations of 1747, further regulations were issued in 1751 and again in 1768, but these were little more than appendices to the original regulations and were largely concerned with clarifying specific clauses within the original document.¹³ They also dealt with several specific cases, including the granting of some badges and distinctive emblems to particular regiments. The 1768 regulations also set out the correct size for both the silk colour itself and the staff to which it was attached. Changes after 1768 were mostly of a stylistic nature in dealing with the shape of the central cartouche and the design and shape of the union wreath.¹⁴

The flags of the British militia regiments contain several key pieces of evidence when compared to Irish Volunteer flags and should also be considered. The militia in Britain had very close links to the regular army, but was less closely regulated in relation to its uniforms and flags. During peacetime the militia were under the control of the Home Office. When the state was at war, however, control passed to the War Office.¹⁵ This meant that the militia spent a large part of their existence outside of the control of the proper authorities, in relation to the maintenance of their uniforms and colours. This created a tendency to follow the general sense of, rather than the letter of, the regulations among militia regiments in regard to their flags.

Militia regiments should, in theory, have borne iconographical motifs relevant to their location on their flags due to the highly localised nature of the regiments. In a

¹² Ibid, p.3.

¹³ Ibid, pp 5-7.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp 7-10.

¹⁵ Ibid, pp 32, 44.

survey of the colours of forty-three county regiments by John Lawson,¹⁶ only five bore a coat of arms that was symbolic of the county it served on its regimental colour (often called the “county colour” in the militia). The other thirty-eight bore a coat of arms that belonged to the lord-lieutenant of the county, the nominal commander of the regiment. Of the previous five, three of the county coats of arms were also derived from the arms of a private individual. This practice amongst militia regiments in Britain was at its zenith in Britain in the late eighteenth century. An example of a county colour with the arms of a lord-lieutenant is provided in plate 2.4. This flag bears the arms of Thomas Brudenell, Baron Bruce and lord lieutenant of Wiltshire. The coat of arms was granted in 1747 and the flag is from about 1760.¹⁷ This kind of practice was rife in militia regiments and ran in direct contrast to what had been decreed by the country’s legislative body in an attempt to exert greater control over the regular army and militia. Other aspects of county colours were essentially the same as regimental colours from the regular army. In all extant examples, there is a union flag in the upper left corner for example. However, the colour of the field was not always that of the coat facings (this is certainly the case in plate 2.4, the Wiltshire militia’s coat facings being navy in colour).¹⁸ There was also no numbering of regiments in gold numerals and there was rarely a union wreath in the centre of such flags. The preferred centrepiece was the abovementioned coat of arms occupying the centre of the composition, but some colours also had a wreath of laurel or oak leaves surrounding the coat of arms. The name of the unit was usually supplied on a scroll above or below the centrepiece.

These trends in the militia, in their lack of attention to regulations on colours, were continued by independent volunteer companies in Britain. Such companies were very similar to those raised in Ireland in the late 1770s, being raised in a time of crisis to aid the regular army. Their approach to colour design was usually even less systematic than that of the militia regiments. Volunteer colours in Britain were characterised by their unique nature in many cases.¹⁹ Although some bore similarities with the first and second colours of the regular army, their designs were ultimately specific to each corps. Their

¹⁶ John Lawson, *A history of the uniforms of the British army* (London, 1962), 5 vols., vol.2, pp 60-4.

¹⁷ Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards, (2) infantry*, p.62.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.62.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp 48-50.

unique nature is present in the centrepieces used, the mottoes, heraldic symbols and coats of arms of the town which they defended, or of private individuals or patrons with a special relationship or attachment to the company. This is something that we shall return to and see echoed in many of the Irish Volunteer colours discussed below.

III

The colours of the Irish Volunteers undoubtedly owed much of their inspiration to the regular army and amateur soldiery (militia and volunteers) of Britain, but they also had special characteristics of their own. One of the primary reasons for the unique nature of these artefacts was the organisational structure of the movement itself. The Irish Volunteers were, at first, a very ad hoc local defence force, consisting only of parochial companies raised for the defence of small towns and rural areas. Despite their reputation in modern historiography, the Irish Volunteers were not raised as a political organisation in any way from the outset, but were rather a traditional response to the draining of regular soldiers from the country in a time of war.²⁰ Until 1779 and 1780, national, provincial or county organisation was non-existent in most areas of the country. As the movement became more popular, respectable and organized (especially in Ulster), battalions, regiments and brigades were formed, bringing together the essentially local companies into a larger framework.²¹ This larger organisational framework made its presence felt in many aspects of volunteering. Flags, however, are one area where these changes are quite recognisable and these sources provide a crucial visual manifestation of these developments in the movement, as well as evidence about the attitudes of individual corps and feelings of identity amongst their members.

In the study of Volunteer colours there is a basic distinction to be made between a colour which belonged to an individual company, which we will call a company colour and a colour which represented a larger organisation which several companies would subscribe to, which we will call a battalion colour. There are twenty-eight Volunteer infantry colours which are either extant artefacts, reliable textual descriptions or depicted in artwork, which we can comment upon with some confidence. This study has unearthed twenty-four company colours that are extant artefacts, visual representations of flags or

²⁰ In 1786, the earl of Charlemont recollected on the foundation of the movement as a response to the threat of invasion and the removal of troops from Ireland: Peter Smyth (ed.), *The Volunteers 1778-1793* (PRONI, 1974), facsimile 141. Hereafter referred to as Smyth, *The Volunteers*.

²¹ This evolution of the organisation of the movement is yet to be documented satisfactorily in a scholarly study. However, a good example of how such efforts at large scale organisation took place (in the case of Ulster) can be found in a series of articles: T.G.F. Paterson, 'The Volunteer companies of Ulster, 1778-1793' in *Irish Sword*, xxvii to xxxii.

very reliable textual descriptions of such items. In addition, there are also four battalion colours. We will firstly discuss the company colours.

It is unknown how many Volunteer infantry companies possessed their own colours. G. A. Hayes-McCoy suggested that not every corps necessarily had a colour or colours of its own.²² In this assertion, he is probably correct. Colours were quite expensive, even for the regiments of the regular army. In the British army, it was the duty of the commanding officer to pay for the colours of his regiment, but he received no allowance for these decorations from the War Office.²³ Colours were therefore of widely varying quality and cost. Such variations began with the raw materials used and later concerned the quality of skilled labour utilised in the decoration of these items. Colours that were embroidered were more expensive than painted items. However, embroidered flags did last a lot longer, as the paint would inevitably flake off over time and damaged the silk, having a corrosive effect upon it. The raw silk for a flag had to be supplied by the customer and there were additional costs for the staff itself, tassels, a belt for the ensign to carry it, leather storage cases, the cost of embroidery or painting and their delivery.²⁴ Figures are difficult to obtain, but some estimate is possible as to how much a flag or a pair of flags cost in the late eighteenth century.

In 1800, the 72nd Highlanders paid a Mr. Robert Horne of London £26 14s 4d for a pair of painted colours. In 1825, the same regiment purchased another set from Mr. Horne's son, Frederick, for the sum of £44 10s. The second set was embroidered and sported tassels, which cost £4 a pair.²⁵ The object of these figures is to show what the approximate price for a set of colours was. Volunteer colours were usually the gift of the commanding officer, or a societal dignitary, and were probably in the region of £10 to £15 for a single colour and certainly over £20 for a set of two. As with the price of uniforms discussed above, there was certainly great variation within a countrywide movement like the Volunteers. Colours were usually commissioned soon after the

²² Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, pp 84-5.

²³ Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards*, (2) *Infantry*, p.16.

²⁴ Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards*, (1) *cavalry*, pp 20-2.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p.16. This is a late example, but the prices would not be wildly dissimilar to those paid by a regiment in the British service during the American war.

foundation of the company and their presentation to the assembled unit was an important event for a Volunteer corps.

It has sometimes been asserted that colours were usually made by the female relatives of the officers and men of a company for their Volunteer corps. However, this custom has been somewhat over-emphasised in modern writing on the subject. Although female relatives did make flags for Volunteer companies, they were not the only artificers of such items. There are several examples from print media sources of Volunteer companies who commissioned their flags from a professional tailor. As with many other items for communal use, flags were also sometimes bought by subscription, the money raised being used to have colours manufactured by a skilled craftsman.²⁶ Although women certainly played a crucial role in manufacturing Volunteer flags,²⁷ the other sources of these items must also be acknowledged.

The presentation of a colour was an important occasion for a Volunteer company. Women were often a focal point of this activity,²⁸

At a meeting of the TRUE BLUE HORSE, August 1st, 1782.
RESOLVED, That our thanks of this Corps, be given to Mrs.
Monsell for the very elegant STANDARD presented by her
to them this Day.
Signed by Order, RICHARD WILSON, Sec.²⁹

Print media sources confirm that many flags were presented by upper class women to the company of their husband, or a local company with some attachment to the family. Noblemen, members of parliament and other lofty socialites were also frequently cited for presenting flags to Volunteer companies,

²⁶ The Dublin Volunteers had their flag made by Thomas Collins of Parliament street, who was also the ensign of the company (*F.J.*, 11 September 1779). The Liberty Volunteers also publicly praised their tailor 'Mr. Baitier's taste and elegance in the embroidery and execution is truly admirable' (*F.J.*, 9 November 1780).

²⁷ Women were often very skilled at embroidery and a woman talented at needlework could expect to be equal of many tailors at this time. The fabrication of flags by women was a solid tradition in the manufacturing of such flags. For example, the flags of the Household regiments in London were usually decorated by the royal princesses.

²⁸ To return to the colour of the Liberty Volunteers, it was presented to the company by Lady Newenham (*F.J.*, 9 November 1779).

²⁹ *Limerick Chronicle*, 1 August 1782.

County of Dublin Light Dragoons. At a meeting of the County of Dublin Light Dragoons, April 22, 1780, [JOHN PRENDERGAST; Esq, in the chair]. Resolved, that the thanks of this corps be given to Luke Gardiner, Esq; Captain-Commandant, for his uniform care in the conduct and discipline of the corps, and for his polite and unremitting attention, particularly instanced by presenting it with a very elegant standard.³⁰

The presentation of a flag was a key event in the wider culture of volunteering. It was a show of strength and unity for the individual company, as well as a chance to cement its individual identity and political ideals in iconography that now had visual form and would be displayed frequently in public.

As with their uniforms, Volunteer colours were not designed to be a cohesive body of artefacts, with a prescribed size, colour or iconographical content. They were usually designed to reflect the ideology and identity of the individual corps first and foremost. This was due in no small part to the origins of the movement as a disconnected, parochial string of companies, which would only solidify into a political tool and a military movement in the early 1780s. However, when compared as a group and with the regulations of the regular army, distinct trends emerge which were not coincidental and provide vital evidence about the feelings of identity of individual companies and broader trends relating to many companies.

The first important and noteworthy point to be observed is that many Volunteer colours were different on either side of the flag. In the regular army, each colour was identical on both sides. The use of two sides (which were embroidered or painted separately and sewn together at the edge) provided greater scope for visual statements. One side was often a more generic statement of Irish identity, while the other was more specific to the identity of the corps in question. Therefore, although there are twenty-four extant company colours, there are actually thirty-six individual sides, each with a unique iconographical composition. In our analysis, especially of the centrepieces, we shall base our findings on the thirty-six individual sides, rather than the twenty-four colours.

³⁰ *F.J.*, 29 April 1780.

Consideration of the sheet size of the company colours also yields interesting results. The 1768 regulations had set out a correct size for both the sheet of the colour itself and the staff to which it was attached. The sheet was to be six foot (seventy two inches) in the hoist and six foot, six inches (seventy eight inches) long.³¹ The staff on which it was carried was to be 118 inches or nine feet and ten inches long. These measurements were derived from the dimensions of the colours carried by the Foot Guards since 1747.³² Of the complete Volunteer colours still extant (some have only a centrepiece remaining or are otherwise incomplete), we have precise measurements for thirteen. Not one of the Volunteer colours is in line with the regulations on size. The closest is the colour of the Caledon Volunteers, which measures some six-foot, by five foot six inches. All the other colours are too small, to varying degrees. The smallest is that of the Gill Hall Volunteers, measuring four foot seven inches, by five foot ten inches. The reasons for discrepancies in size were no doubt varied and we can only speculate on this divergence from the regulations of 1768. As with uniforms, the absence of a militia in Ireland in the 1760s and 1770s meant that the finer points of military regulations were lost on Irish Volunteers, or were simply ignored. An ignorant tailor could also be an explanation for an incorrect size. Colours were also notoriously difficult to wield on the parade ground or in action. In 1806, an Ensign Cooke of the 43rd Light Infantry was blown to the ground in a heap when a gust of wind suddenly caught the sheet of the colour he was carrying and bowled him over.³³ The fact that a smaller flag was more manageable for an amateur soldier in windy conditions could also, therefore, be said to contribute to this peculiarity in Volunteer colours.

The sheet colour of the company flags is another area we must investigate. In the regular army, the sheet of the regimental colour was the same colour as the unit's coat facings. In the case of Volunteer corps colours, however, this does not seem to have been the case very often. Volunteer colours rarely align with the coat facings of the unit and when they do, this can often seem to be no more than a coincidence. As with uniforms, those who chose the colour of the sheet seem to have been more interested in the colour for symbolic and aesthetic reasons, than for its alignment with the regulations of the

³¹ Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards, (2) Infantry*, p.6.

³² *Ibid.*, p.4.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.19.

regular army. Red sheets were the most popular, probably because they associated with the traditional martial colour of the British Isles.

The focal point of any flag is undoubtedly its centrepiece. This is where the real ideological statement is made in the composition. Although each corps had an acute sense of individuality, they all drew upon a fairly standard pool of motifs for their centrepieces. It should be mentioned at this stage that most Volunteer company colours were embroidered, rather than painted. The tabulation of centrepieces is provided in table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Breakdown of the decoration of Volunteer colour centrepieces.

Motif	Number
Irish harp	18
Hibernia	6
Volunteer	4
Coat of arms	4
Total	32

Source: ³⁴

The object of this discussion is merely to tabulate the centrepieces. The analysis of their iconographical significance will take place in the following chapter. However, some trends can be observed in the frequency of motifs used. The Irish harp was clearly the most popular motif for a centrepiece, because it proclaimed the unit's identity as an Irish Volunteer company. The significance of its two most common crowning motifs, the imperial and Milesian crowns (plates 2.5 and 2.6), will be explored in detail in the following chapter. Depictions of Hibernia were also quite frequent (plate 2.7). It should be noted, however, that Hibernia was a complex and diverse figure in the iconography of this period and her implications and meaning will be thoroughly analysed in the following chapter.

Some corps chose to depict a member of the company, usually a fairly generic sample of a member displaying the uniform of the corps, on their colour (something

³⁴ The sample for this table is composed of the centrepieces of twenty-three Volunteer company colours, which have been collated from the collections set out in section I of this chapter.

which was repeated in cavalry guidons), probably to emphasise their individuality and to give another visual airing to the company uniform (plate 2.8). Coats of arms also figure quite prominently (plate 2.9). This is of interest because this had been strictly and specifically prohibited in the successive regulations of flags for the regular army. The coats of arms include private coats of arms, like the earl of Inchiquin's on the colour of the Ennis Volunteers (plate 2.10),³⁵ or town arms, such as those that appear on the colours of the Limerick Volunteers (plate 2.11) and the Kilkenny Rangers. The colour of the Springhill Union Volunteers was unique in containing the royal arms of George III. Unusual decoration was also found on the colour of the Killeavy Volunteers, which featured an embroidered portrait of William III as its centrepiece (plate 2.12).

Surrounding the centrepiece in nearly every case was a supporting wreath. Wreaths were highly symbolic and required thought on the designer's part to invoke the correct botanical virtues in his choice. There were very distinct trends and recurring designs, which are simply not coincidental and seem to have been shared in common by many Volunteer corps as representing certain ideals and symbolic meanings. The wreath was placed in a position surrounding, either partially or completely, the centrepiece. In the regulations for the regular army, there was only one wreath used: the union wreath. From 1707 to 1801, this was a wreath which featured roses and thistles growing from the same branch, usually joined by a ribbon in the middle below the centrepiece. It symbolised the union of Scotland and England in a visual manner and was present on the flags of the regular army from 1748 onwards.³⁶ The militia and volunteer companies of Britain were known to use wreaths of many different kinds and in this, the Irish Volunteers were similar.

³⁵ *F.J.*, 30 May 1780.

³⁶ Sumner & Hook, *British Colours and Standards, (2) Infantry*, p.3.

Table 2.2. Wreath composition of Volunteer company colours.

Wreath composition	Number
Shamrock and laurel	10
Shamrock	8
Laurel	6
Union	1
Shamrock and oak	1
Lilies	1
Total	27

Source: ³⁷

From the extant colours we have, there are twenty-seven wreaths on which to base our analysis. Volunteer wreaths were quite varied in their composition and obviously drew on many sources for inspiration. The tabulation of wreath composition can be observed in table 2.2.

The most popular individual heraldic plant for such wreaths was the shamrock (plate 2.13). The use of the shamrock in Irish heraldry and indeed, as a symbol of Ireland has been a subject of considerable debate. The shamrock should not, in heraldic terms, be confused with the trefoil. The shamrock has heart-shaped leaves and a wavy stalk as its distinguishing features, while the trefoil has lobe-shaped leaves and a straight stalk.³⁸ The shamrock is a difficult heraldic motif to write about, as it is somewhat unclear as to when it began to assume a national, symbolic connotation. Jeanne Sheehy asserts that it was being used in a singularly Irish sense by the late seventeenth century on St. Patrick's

³⁷ The composition of this sample is the same as that set out in table 2.1 above.

³⁸ Guy Cadogan Rothery, *Concise encyclopaedia of heraldry*, (1st ed., London, 1915, edition used, London, 1994) pp 126-7. The exact heraldic form of the shamrock does not seem to have been the primary concern of Volunteer companies using this motif. The general appearance of a three-leafed plant was the desired effect for most. Importantly for many Volunteer companies, this plant was a quintessentially Irish motif, recalling its patron saint and his use of the shamrock to teach the mystery of the Holy Trinity to the Gaelic Irish. Hereafter referred to as Cadogan-Rothery, *Concise encyclopaedia of heraldry*.

Day.³⁹ There are some examples of its use on private coats of arms from various locations in the British Isles and beyond as well. In 1783, with the foundation of the Knights of St. Patrick, the order adopted the shamrock (along with the saltire of St. Patrick)⁴⁰ as their chief emblem.⁴¹ It has been claimed that those who used the shamrock in the late eighteenth century knew little of Irish iconography and cared even less for its finer points.⁴² However, its use on some sixteen extant Volunteer colours does much to allay these rumblings. Even if Volunteer companies, with many members drawn from the Protestant middling classes did not fully understand the ancient significance of the shamrock in indigenous Irish culture, they used it copiously on their flags and other equipment. The shamrock, by the late eighteenth century, was being used in the same national sense as the rose in England, the leek in Wales, or the thistle in Scotland. The shamrock can, therefore be seen as communicating some idea of national unity or feeling of community in the Volunteer colours, even if such a definition was restricted along religious, social or political lines.

Laurel was not a surprising choice for the Irish Volunteers to use in their wreaths (plate 2.14). Laurel has been used symbolically for thousands of years, with very little change to its basic meaning and implications.⁴³ Both the Greeks and the Romans used it as a symbol of martial success at land and sea. The most famous use was for crowning the victor at the extravagant Roman triumph. In the eighteenth century, it was used for the same heraldic purposes and indeed experienced a boost as a result of the wide proliferation of neo-classical culture. Its use conveyed a martial air, which was very important to amateur soldiers, like the Volunteers, in their attempts to appear as serious part-time soldiers. The use of laurel reflected the influence that the classical era continued to exert in this period, knowledge of which was essential to the appearance of gentility and respectability in the eighteenth century gentleman.⁴⁴

³⁹ Jeanne Sheehy, *The rediscovery of Ireland's past: the Celtic revival 1830-1930*, (London, 1980) pp 9-12. Hereafter referred to as Sheehy, *The rediscovery of Ireland's past*.

⁴⁰ This motif was also used in the upper left canton of the colour of the Kile corps, which is preserved in Damer House, Roscrea, County Tipperary.

⁴¹ Galloway, *The Order of St. Patrick*, plates 1-14.

⁴² Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, pp 36-41.

⁴³ Guy Cadogan Rothery, *Concise encyclopaedia of heraldry* (1st ed., London, 1915, edition used, London, 1994), p.125.

⁴⁴ David Irwin, *Neoclassicism* (London, 1997), p.15. Hereafter referred to as Irwin, *Neoclassicism*.

There was only one union wreath (signifying the union of Scotland and England in 1717) to be observed amongst the extant Volunteer colours. Its use was no doubt intended to invoke a spirit of professionalism in tune with its use on flags in the regular army and as a statement of loyalty towards the monarch and the state.

The combination of shamrock and laurel is fairly self-explanatory, combining the attributes of both plants in a single wreath. The combination of oak-leaves and shamrock, however, needs a little explanation. Oak has been revered by many cultures since antiquity. It was again associated with Roman military honours, but was also sacred to the pagan Gaelic inhabitants of Ireland. Trees were sacred to the Celtic peoples whose calendar, religion and mysterious druidic rites centred on trees.⁴⁵ Pagan iconography persists right through to the present day in Irish heraldry and is a possible explanation for the use of this plant (this will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapter). The fact that oak has also been very much associated with English martial prowess cannot be discounted as an explanation for its use in Volunteer wreaths.

It should be mentioned in closing that there were many examples of the use of trophies of arms and flags as wreath-like decorations, surrounding a centrepiece on Volunteer company colours. The use of trophies of arms and flags was reminiscent of earlier military heraldry, not being used by this period in the iconography of the regular army. Once again, it points to the precedents of the Volunteers in the quasi-feudal regiments of the militia, but also perhaps to their failure in keeping up with the regulations of the army in relation to the botanical composition of decorative wreaths. A good depiction of trophies of arms can be found in plate 2.8.

So, company colours may have represented each corps and its particular identity, but there does seem to have been a fairly standard pool of motifs from which inspiration was drawn. There were also certainly identifiable motifs, which Irish residents of many different groups were associating with their particular feelings of identity in the late eighteenth century. Good examples of these include their depictions of the Irish harp, Hibernia, the Milesian crown and the wreaths they used. Although the early days of volunteering saw little co-operation between scattered local companies, a group of

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.121.

common motifs is nonetheless identifiable, alongside the expressions of individuality of each corps.

But what of the colours that represented the developing Volunteer movement; the battalion colours? There are only four extant examples of what could be called a battalion or regimental colour of the Volunteers. These are the colours of the Killymoon Battalion, an unidentified battalion colour, an illustration of a battalion colour on the Volunteer fabric, sometimes called the Charlemont toile.⁴⁶ What is interesting about these flags is that they reflect the evolution in the organization of the Volunteer movement in a manner completely lacking in the company colours discussed above. The formation of battalions and regiments was most common and has been best documented in Ulster,⁴⁷ but was a process by no means exclusive to this province. Volunteer battalions were essentially a group of companies who agreed to serve together if called upon to do so. As Ireland remained relatively untouched by active campaigning in the war, Volunteer battalions usually served as larger gatherings for reviews and the accompanying convivial rituals. Most battalions only met on a handful of occasions each year and in the majority of cases there was only one review per annum. Political elements of volunteering were especially pronounced at battalion level, as many members would use these large gatherings to find support for the political issues of the day.

The battalion structure often grated with their constituent elements, the small local companies. There are many examples of companies disagreeing with resolutions of the battalion at large and even seceding from the battalion over various disagreements. Command of a Volunteer battalion was a great honour to any individual chosen for the task, but this post was often very troublesome for the bearer. The Union Regiment of Volunteers, County Down, initially chose a hero of the American war to command them; Colonel Francis Rawdon, second earl of Moira. However, in March 1784, Colonel Rawdon was cashiered in the midst of a political dispute⁴⁸ and his immediate subordinate,

⁴⁶ The Killymoon battalion colours and the unidentified battalion colour are preserved in Armagh Church of Ireland Cathedral. Samples of the Volunteer fabric can be found in the National Museum of Ireland, the Ulster Museum, the Freemason's Hall in Dublin and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

⁴⁷ Well documented by T.G.F. Paterson, 'The Volunteer companies of Ulster, 1778-1793', *Irish Sword*, xxvii to xxxiii. Also dealt with in Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster'.

⁴⁸ *Belfast Mercury*, 16 March 1784.

Colonel William Sharman was put in his place as commanding officer. Not every Volunteer company necessarily wanted to be in a battalion at all and some companies remained permanently aloof from larger formations. Volunteer battalions usually had a prescribed uniform that seems to have been worn by the senior officers, as well as their own colours that were proudly displayed on review days.

Of the five examples we have of Volunteer battalion colours, two are almost exact matches for the regulation regimental colours (the Volunteer fabric flag and the unidentified battalion colour in Armagh Cathedral). They have a union canton, a small square containing the union flag of 1707, in the upper left corner of the sheet and bear an imperial crowned harp surrounded by laurel in the fabric flag and a union wreath in the unidentified flag. The Volunteer fabric flag is crude in its execution (probably being embroidered by someone with little understanding of the minutiae of military regulations), but is basically correct in its imitation of a regulation regimental colour (plate 2.15). The unidentified flag is essentially a regimental colour except for the mottoes above and below the centrepieces. These two colours suggest that the evolution of the Volunteer movement is evident in their colours. As the local corps concentrated into battalions, regiments and brigades, they took their inspiration straight from the regulars in the design of colours for larger bodies, perhaps for the ready identification of larger formations, but also for the professional appearance that could be gleaned from such a design.⁴⁹

We are very fortunate indeed to possess both of the colours of the Killymoon Battalion of County Tyrone. These not only provide crucial evidence about this battalion, but also about battalion colours in general and of the companies which comprised this formation. The first flag has a strange, but not unprecedented sheet composition. The flag has what is called a fimbriated (a red cross on a blue field, separated by a thin border of white) St. George's cross on a blue field.⁵⁰ This is illustrated in plate 2.16 with the colour of the Independent Tyreril and Loyal Liney Volunteers (County Sligo), whose sheet design is nearly identical to the Killymoon colour. This design was probably intended to

⁴⁹ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, p.84.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp 97-98.

be very similar to the union flag of the era. The centrepiece of the first flag is a harp within a wreath of shamrocks, with trophies of arms beneath and two flags on either side, one bearing the monogram 'G R' and another being a miniature of the first Killymoon colour. In each corner is a sword entwined with a sprig of laurel, a very martial statement indeed that recurs on several Volunteer flags.⁵¹ The reverse of the flag is the same. The second flag has a completely blue field and has the same centrepiece and corner decorations as the first. The wreath is floral and the reverse of the flag is the same.

What the Killymoon flags make evident is that while the battalion colours attempted to follow the regulations, there was obviously still a large amount of individuality in battalion colours. Indeed, the two other colours mentioned above had their own specific mottoes and three of the battalion colours also had the name of the corps in writing upon scrolls. While the greater organisation led to a fairly standard design for battalion colours, individuality remained characteristic of the Volunteers. However, such sources are very scarce and such speculation is only tentative at best.

⁵¹ This motif was included on the following colours; Loyal Ballyshannon Volunteers, Limerick Volunteers, both colours of the Killymoon Battalion, the Kilkenny Rangers and also on the guidon of the Royal Glin Hussars.

IV

Extant standards and guidons of Volunteer cavalry units are far less numerous, but just as interesting as the colours, and it is to this topic that we shall now direct our attention. There are only six extant Volunteer guidons that are in the possession of the various museums and heritage sites of the British Isles (no Volunteer standards have yet been discovered), but all six are in a very impressive state of preservation. The structure of our analysis here will mirror our analysis of the colours above. Firstly, we will consider the regulations for guidons and the flags of the amateur soldiery of Britain in this area. Secondly, we shall analyse all of the above areas including size, colour, centrepieces and so on, in order to gauge where the Volunteer guidons drew their inspiration from and what kind of statements they were trying to make in their design and composition. There never seems to have been a Volunteer cavalry formation bigger than a troop (about forty men) or squadron (two troops combined), so there are no battalion guidons to analyse.

The regulations of 1747, 1751 and 1768 mentioned above also dealt with cavalry standards and guidons. The 1747 regulations outlined clearly the design and composition of standards and guidons which were expected in each regiment. The 1751 regulations were little more than a reprint of the earlier document, with attempts to clear up ambiguities, individual badges and regimental peculiarities. The 1768 regulations set out most clearly the size, design, regimental badges and so on, required of each regiment, and these regulations lasted until 1822, when a new set were introduced.⁵² The regulations for cavalry guidons by 1768 were as follows. The first guidon, or king's guidon, was to be of crimson silk, with a union badge in the centre (plate 2.17). There was to be a scroll beneath bearing the royal motto 'Dieu et Mon Droit.' In each corner there was a gold edged cartouche. The compartments were numbered one to four. The first was in the top left, the second in the top right corner, the third in the bottom left and the fourth in the bottom right. The first and fourth cartouches were to contain a depiction of a white horse running across a green mound, the badge of the house of Hanover. The second and third

⁵² Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards, (1) cavalry*, pp 3-11.

cartouches were to contain the regimental number in gold roman numerals on a background the same colour as that of the regimental coat facings. The second and third guidon of a cavalry regiment was designed in the following manner (plate 2.18). The sheet was the same colour as the regimental coat facings. The first and fourth corners were to bear the white horse of Hanover within cartouches. The second and third were to have a union badge on a crimson background if the regiment did not have its own badge, or the regimental number in gold or silver numerals surrounded by a union wreath if it had. If the regiment had its own badge, this would be displayed in the centre of the guidon, surrounded by a union wreath. If the regiment did not possess a badge, the centrepiece would be the regimental number within a crimson cartouche. If the regiment had a motto, this would be displayed below the wreath.⁵³ The third guidon would also be distinguished by a small circular cartouche beneath the motto, bearing the figure 3. Both sides of every guidon were to be identical. Guidons are much rarer artefacts than colours and a comparable body of items from the British militia or Volunteer cavalry units does not exist, as it had in the case of the colours above. In the case of Irish Volunteer guidons, our only comparable set of artefacts is therefore those of the British regular army.

All of the surviving Irish Volunteer guidons are double sided, in direct contradiction of the regular army regulations. This means that instead of six artefacts to use in our analysis below, there were actually twelve and most of the analysis below will deal with twelve sides rather than six as their total sample. The use of a double-sided flag once again afforded greater space in which to make iconographical statements about the corps, its individuality, feelings of community in Protestant Ireland, political ideals and so on.

The production and cost of guidons at this time was much the same as infantry colours. The cost of a guidon would very much depend on the level of skill of the craftsman, the cost of the raw materials and the amount of and complexity of the work required. In the case of the British 1st Dragoons in 1778, a sum of £23 15s 10d was paid for a new guidon. This included £1 for the silk, £13 4s for embroidery, £5 7s 10d for the lace, fringe, cord and tassels, 19s for the addition of the fringe, £2 18s for a staff and 7s

⁵³ Ibid, pp 5-7.

for the case.⁵⁴ Most regular regiments could expect to pay slightly less (the silk used was of very high quality indeed), but a guidon could not be had for much less than £20. Once again, Volunteer guidons were certainly homemade in some cases (by female relatives),⁵⁵ but others were certainly bought from craftsmen. Guidons were not cheap, and not every cavalry corps necessarily possessed one of its own. Volunteer cavalymen, it seems, were by and large wealthier than the infantrymen, by virtue of the fact that they could afford the cost of maintaining a horse and its peripheral equipment, as well as a uniform and other essential equipment to partake in membership of such a company.

The size of Volunteer guidons are similar to that of the colours above in that not a single one is the correct size as laid out quite explicitly by the regulations of 1768. A guidon was meant to be forty-one inches long and twenty-seven inches on the staff. The staff itself was to be exactly nine feet (or 108 inches) long including the finial (the spearhead at the top) and ferrule (the sharp end at the bottom of the staff).⁵⁶ Once again, all of the extant guidons were too small, the smallest being that of the Tullamore True Blue Rangers, at two foot eight inches long and one foot ten inches on the staff. The closest the Volunteer guidons come to the correct size was that of the Mayo Legion, which measures some three feet and four inches long and two foot on the staff. Mounted exercises were very difficult, requiring good horsemanship, balance and co-ordination. Any Volunteer granted the honour of carrying the company guidon would have to add this unwieldy item to already exacting conditions. Indeed in the regular army it was the task of experienced NCOs to carry the unwieldy and awkward guidons into action. Until the early nineteenth century, the most junior officer, a cornet was given this honour, but this practice was discontinued because of the physical inadequacies of such young men, who lacked the years of experience required to carry out such a duty.⁵⁷ Most Volunteer companies must have had to overcome such a problem through trial and error, but the fact

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp 20-1.

⁵⁵ F.G. Thompson, 'The flags and uniforms of the Irish Volunteers and Yeomanry' in *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, xxxiii (1990), p.5. Hereafter referred to as Thompson, 'The flags and uniforms of the Irish Volunteers'.

⁵⁶ Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards, (1) cavalry*, pp 9-10.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp 19-21.

that both Volunteer colours and guidons were almost universally smaller than those used in the regular army was no doubt in some respect attributable to such difficulties.

The sheet colours of Volunteer guidons generally bear little relation to the facing colours of the company uniform. Only one of the guidons, that of the Costello Volunteers,⁵⁸ matches the coat and facing colours of the corps with the sheet colours of the guidon. The guidon is black on one side and scarlet on the other, which matches the corps uniform of a scarlet coat, faced black. The other five do not bear any resemblance to their known uniforms, especially the Tullamore True Blue Rangers, whose guidon was purple on one side and white on the other, despite their uniform of scarlet, faced blue with silver lace (plates 2.19 and 2.20).⁵⁹ Most sheet colours seem to have been used for symbolic and aesthetic purposes, which have been highlighted above in chapter one of this study.

Table 2.3. Breakdown of Volunteer guidon centrepieces.

Centrepiece motif	Number
Irish harp	6
Company member	3
Hibernia	2
Sunburst	1
Other	1
Total	13

Source: ⁶⁰

⁵⁸ The whereabouts of this guidon are unknown, as it was sold privately some years ago. It appears with full details, but only black and white photography in Thompson, 'The flags and uniforms of the Irish Volunteers', pp 16, 26.

⁵⁹ MacNevin, *History of the Volunteers*, p.235.

⁶⁰ This sample was composed of six Volunteer guidons, collated from the collections of museums outlined in section I of this chapter.

The tabulation of centrepieces follows in table 2.3. As with the infantry colours above, the harp was very popular, appearing on all of the extant guidons. Hibernia was found again on two occasions, echoing her recurring use on the colours (plate 2.21). Depictions of company members was also prominent, which provides us with vital details of uniforms we may otherwise have lost (plate 2.22). The depiction of the corps member once again emphasises the individuality of Volunteer companies and their pride in the company uniform.

The sunburst is an interesting centrepiece indeed and is one that will occupy our attention for some time in the following chapter.⁶¹ The sunburst is found on the reverse of the guidon of the County Sligo Light Horse, illustrated in plate 2.23. The motto *post nubila phoebus* is Latin for ‘after clouds, the sunshine.’⁶² It is tempting to speculate upon the meaning of this motto, but such a statement is open to any number of speculative interpretations. This could be said to have patriotic or separatist content, but could just as well be an allusion to the eventual end of the war with the colonies, France and Spain. It could also have distinct religious meaning, as outlined in the following chapter. Once again with guidons, a set of standard motifs can be observed. At least one side of each guidon bears a harp, a figure of Hibernia or a depiction of a member of the corps. These can therefore be said to be stock motifs for the decoration of these artefacts.

Table 2.4. The breakdown of Volunteer guidon wreath compositions.

Wreath composition	Number
Shamrock	7
Laurel	1
Floral	1
Total	9

Source: ⁶³

⁶¹ This motif is discussed in great detail in the following chapter on iconography and symbolism.

⁶² Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, p.91.

⁶³ The sample for this table is the same as that outlined in table 2.3.

The breakdown of the composition of wreaths is provided in table 2.4. Nine sides of Volunteer guidons were decorated with wreaths in total. Shamrocks were once again the most popular, with one example each of laurel and floral wreaths. The significance of all of these wreath compositions has been explained above. There are also several floral decorations on the guidons apart from the wreaths. The Mayo Legion flag features additional sprigs of laurel on both sides, while the guidon of the Royal Glin Hussars features a sword entwined with a slip of laurel and a cannon and grenade with the same adornment, featured on both sides as well. The motif of a sword or cannon entwined with laurel occurs on five colours and guidons in total.

One conspicuous absence from the Volunteer guidons are the aforementioned cartouches that featured so prominently on the guidons of the regulars. Not a single cartouche appears on the Volunteer guidons. This was quite a radical departure from the standard contemporary design of military guidons. Nor does the absence of a militia in Ireland during the 1760s and 1770s explain this, as cartouches were commonplace before this. On this issue, the Volunteers seem to have forfeited the cartouches for larger wreaths and centrepieces, to better express the individuality of their corps through much larger centrepieces and wreaths. Volunteer guidons in general are marked by their individuality, even more so than the colours discussed above.

Conclusion

In conclusion, what can we add to our picture of the Irish Volunteers as a result of our study of their colours and guidons? Firstly, we can see that the Volunteers were, as with their uniforms, still very much amateur soldiers. The same passion for frivolity, fashion and aesthetic value in their uniforms prevailed in the area of flags as well. Official regulations were flouted in all aspects, from size, colour and iconographical content, right down to fringes and tassels. The fierce independence of each corps was also very evident in these artefacts, especially in their use of double sided flags and the composition of centrepieces and wreaths, as well as the fact that nearly every corps had its name above or below the centrepiece (many also had unique mottoes which summed up the identity or purpose of the company).

The battalion colours also shed light on the consolidation of Volunteer companies into larger battalions, a subject which has yet to be fully explored in a scholarly work. These artefacts do show however, that amongst some Volunteer companies, there was a desire to be part of a larger Volunteer movement (at least on a regional scale), rather than a collection of disparate companies scattered across the country. For all their individuality, the flags do reflect the elements of a proto-nationalist movement composed mostly of Protestant Irish members. Heraldic motifs, such as the Irish harp, the imperial and Milesian crowns and Hibernia all tell us about the identity of individual corps, the movement in general and its collective feelings of community within Ireland and the British empire. However, to really appreciate these artefacts in their full iconographical richness, we will have to embark on a study of eighteenth century Irish symbolism to glean what these symbols were perceived to mean at the time. This will be the concern of the next chapter.

Chapter three: Iconography and symbolism

Heraldry, iconography and visual symbolism held a very important place in the expression of concepts of identity in late eighteenth century Europe. The proliferation and dissemination of heraldic and iconographical symbols in Ireland in this era was, however, quite unique and complex in many ways. Symbolism and iconography in the public domain of late eighteenth century Ireland was influenced by several different heraldic, artistic and iconographical traditions and was by no means a homogenous imitation of British or European trends. The purpose of this chapter will be, firstly, to assess the state of heraldry and iconography in Ireland at the time of the Volunteers, in order to accurately assess the context in which the sources for this study were produced. Following this, we will discuss Volunteer iconography in general, before moving on to several detailed case studies of particularly frequent and prominent motifs used on artefacts associated with Irish Volunteer companies. This study will enable us to see, through the use of iconography, the individual and collective identity of such companies, manifested in artistic decoration upon their equipment and associated artefacts.

Firstly, let us briefly discuss the background and antiquity of European heraldry and symbology, before refining this picture to incorporate the unique case and conditions of late eighteenth century Ireland.

I

The sources that were consulted for this area of the study are probably the most varied in nature, encompassing many different primary sources from a broad number of museums and private collections. Relevant iconographical symbols are to be found in the very general groups of flags, medals, ceramics, buttons, gorgets, belt and crossplates, pictorial depictions (found in newspapers and other printed material), architecture, applied arts and official decorations (like stars of knighthood and ceremonial jewels, maces and other peripherals). Iconography and symbolism were prolific within the public domain of late eighteenth century Ireland and can be found on all sorts of extant artefacts. Symbolism was everywhere in public spaces, whether it represented Ireland within the British empire, the kingdom of Ireland, private clubs, political organisations or philanthropic societies. Although this study is primarily concerned with the Volunteer movement, many examples of iconography and symbolism from outside the movement have been consulted in order to provide a relevant context in terms of primary sources and contemporary evidence.

The authenticity of sources used within this chapter has been checked to the greatest extent possible. There exist in the world today, hundreds, if not thousands of artefacts which have been bought and sold as Volunteer items, which are in fact later copies, or are the result of poor work on the part of auctioneers and museum curators. Any artefact that appears in the illustrations of this chapter can be said to be genuine with a high degree of certainty.¹

The next concern before we begin this chapter, is the language and terminology which we will use in our discussion. The terms and definitions described below are

¹ There are later copies of Volunteer artefacts in most primary source groupings consulted for this study, but the greatest number occur in the areas of medals, belt and cross-plates and glass. Most copies date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when interest in the Volunteers grew to a significant level. This rise in interest was mirrored by a great availability in Volunteer artefacts from a number of antique dealers in Britain and Ireland, some of whom were certainly selling artefacts they commissioned to resemble authentic articles for resale to clients. Other dealers no doubt sold items as Volunteer wares without the knowledge that the artefacts in question were recent copies. Any artefact with questionable credentials has simply been omitted from this study. Peter Francis has discovered that many items of Volunteer glass were later copies (Peter Francis, 'Franz Tieze (1842-1932) and the re-invention of history on glass' in *Burlington Magazine*, no. 136 (1994), pp 291-302). His findings caused great controversy, both among museum curators and private collectors. Similar discoveries could no doubt be made with sustained study of other groups of primary sources relating to the Volunteers.

deemed to be the ones which will be used most often, have the potential to create confusion, or have very clearly defined and specific meanings already, within the profession or field of study with which they are associated.

Heraldry and armoury are two very closely associated terms, but each has a very specific and deliberate meaning of its own. The two terms are not synonymous and one cannot be substituted for the other despite the frequent occurrence of this in everyday language. Armoury is the blazoning of armorial charges upon a shield, and also the placing of supporters, helm, mantling and crest around the shield to create a coat of arms or achievement of arms, as it is often called.² Heraldry is an older term, which although it includes the duty of armoury, is a wider umbrella word for the collective duties of a herald. In the Middle Ages, a herald was also a diplomat and deliverer of messages, counted the dead after a battle, organised and worked at tournaments and recorded and regulated the use of coats of arms by knights and nobles.³ Heraldry refers to these duties and the occupation of being a herald, rather than just armoury on its own, or the production, granting and recording of armorial compositions and coats of arms. This distinction is very important to those involved in the field of genealogy and heraldry and should be respected as such.

Coat of arms is a term that can only be used for a shield bearing armorial charges and its supporters.⁴ This is not called a crest or any other alternative term, which are often commonly substituted for the correct name in everyday language. Any artistic composition which is not borne upon a shield is not a coat of arms, even if it includes common armorial motifs or design conventions.⁵

Symbolism, as used in this chapter, in relation to heraldic symbols and motifs is best summed up, 'a symbol is defined as something which conveys one thing to the eye and another thing to the mind.'⁶ This duality of purpose is the essential and intentional

² Michael O'Comáin, *The poolbeg book of Irish heraldry* (Dublin, 1991), p.3. Hereafter referred to as O'Comáin, *poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*. There has been very little secondary literature produced on Irish heraldry and symbolism to date and the books noted here are the best of the small number produced thus far.

³ Carl-Alexander von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and styles* (Hertfordshire, 1983), p.1. Hereafter referred to as Von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and styles*.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.11.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.11.

⁶ Heraldic Artists Ltd., *The symbols of heraldry explained* (Dublin, 1980), p.75. Hereafter referred to as *The symbols of heraldry explained*.

purpose of iconographical and heraldic symbols. Symbolism is, therefore, the method of attaching implicit meaning, free of any supplementary explanation, to a specific motif or arrangement of associated motifs. Iconography is similar in definition to symbolism, but the term iconography can often refer to a symbol or group of symbols which are closely associated with a particular group or ideology. In this study, visual symbols will be referred to, by and large, with the term iconographical symbols. This term is preferred because the symbols under discussion are mostly not heraldic in nature and were used in an iconographical sense, without any required supplementary explanation for the contemporary viewer.

II

In the late eighteenth century, a modern notion of iconography, so keenly felt today, was still in a very embryonic state. Heraldry, and to a lesser extent emblematic art, were still the dominant influences over symbolic displays intended for public exhibition and some discussion of their place in the culture of eighteenth-century Europe is therefore necessary. The origins of the art and science of heraldry, as practiced by state heralds or heraldic offices, are still very much disputed in modern historiography. Undoubtedly there have been expressions of symbolism since very early times indeed,⁷ but the science and craft of heraldry that enveloped European society in the Middle Ages has no fixed date for its origins. Most sources assert that heraldry had its roots firmly in the period and geographical location of the crusades of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁸ However, during which crusade recognised and unique heraldic motifs associated with an individual were adopted and used is a major source of contention, with several different viewpoints.⁹ Despite these disagreements, the fact that heraldry emerged as a result of military necessity, in terms of identification, is an incontrovertible fact. Heraldry was originally confined to the nobility and knightly classes of European society, by virtue of its martial nature and uses.

The purpose of possessing a coat of arms from one's feudal lord was that one might be recognised by the presence of a pictorial arrangement alone. Indeed, the root of the word noble is to be found in the Latin word *nobilis*, which means to be known,¹⁰ once again highlighting the main use of heraldry as being one of identification. The association of nobility with chivalric, honorific and philanthropic qualities was a meaning later tacked on to the word during the romanticisation of the middle ages in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The ability to be known and symbolised by a coat of arms was something which appealed to those outside the martial sphere as well. In due course, the desire and right to possess a coat of arms was extended to the papacy and clergy,

⁷ Cadogan-Rothery, *Concise encyclopaedia of heraldry*, p.vii.

⁸ Claude Wenzler, *L'Heraldique* (Rennes, 1997), pp 4-8.

⁹ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, pp 4-5.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.19.

merchants, corporations, guilds and so on.¹¹ Initially, arms were also a mark of ownership in relation to landed property. Families and coats of arms became synonymous with certain regions and groups of properties (plate 3.1). However, a coat of arms, which is the private property of the bearer, cannot pass through the inheritance or acquisition of land. Hereditary coats of arms were to pass only through blood, as decreed by a specially called parlement in Paris in 1385.¹² However, this distinction proved difficult to maintain and right up to the eighteenth century, coats of arms and landed property retained a close association, especially in a local context. Thus, heraldry became a pervasive form of art and identification within the societies of Europe, which were largely illiterate (from the twelfth century right through to the eighteenth century) and therein was found one of the great advantages of a visual form of communication and identification.

By the final quarter of the eighteenth century, an extremely complex system of heraldry, which varied from country to country and that segregated rank and status with its trends and conventions had emerged. The nobility, aristocracy and royalty of Europe, as well as the corporations, clergy, merchants, private clubs and societies, military establishments and state bodies had all received grants of arms or were using symbolic depictions directly descended from heraldic tradition to mark their existence, prestige and importance within their respective society.

By the late eighteenth century, however, conventional heraldry had changed vastly from that used by the crusaders of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Heraldry had evolved to become a complex combination of art and science which varied considerably from region to region and country to country.¹³ Conventions and the rules with which coats of arms could be designed, granted, inherited and altered were vastly different in each state.¹⁴ Indeed, by the late eighteenth century, each state in Europe, with its requisite authority on heraldry, was often very different from its neighbours in terms of the rules which governed armorial compositions within the state. For example, in Britain, a set of rules emerged for the use of mantlings, helmets and crests which was unique to that

¹¹ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, pp 114-5; Von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and style*, p.96.

¹² O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.16.

¹³ As evinced by Von Volborth's entire study, whose aim is to show the differences between the armorial traditions of various countries in their use of heraldry and also international conventions and trends held in common.

¹⁴ Von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and style*, p.i.

country, not even being used universally in Ireland, its dependent kingdom and nearest neighbour, which should have been the case theoretically.¹⁵

In the view of most modern heralds, from the sixteenth century onwards, there was a marked decline in the quality, tradition and strictness of the rules governing heraldic grants. Once the shield became obsolete as a piece of military technology, heraldry entered a phase generally known as 'paper heraldry'.¹⁶ That is to say, that armorial grants were no longer borne upon an actual shield but appeared only on papers, seals, personal belongings and so on. This new phase of heraldry gave vent to the aesthetic whim of artists in a way that was previously restrained. The supporters, helm, mantling, wreath and crest all became the object of artistic flourishes, exaggeration and capricious fashion. These additions to the central arms of a composition are abhorred by many modern heralds as not having any ancient or traditional foundation and therefore, not adding to the basic function of heraldry as a means of identification and genealogy.

In Britain, the establishment of new orders of knighthood (such as the knights of St Patrick in 1783)¹⁷ and orders of nobility (like the Order of Baronets established in 1625 by James I),¹⁸ in addition to a deluge of new peerages and knighthoods created by the Stuart monarchs in particular,¹⁹ was seen to cheapen and pollute the very roots of heraldry (to say nothing of the implications of this for the quality and pedigree of the peerage) as an ancient and strictly governed art. Ultimately, simplicity was lost from Tudor times onwards in European heraldry (as evinced in plate 3.2). The emphasis in paper heraldry was on an attractive artistic composition, rather than on a design that could be painted on a shield, or a crest which could be fitted on top of a jousting helmet. The practice of recording marriages by the processes of quartering and impaling, honours from the monarch or state (augmentations) and orders of knighthood all took their toll on the layout of armorial achievements.²⁰ The result of these complications was to make armorial compositions almost unreadable to all but heralds themselves by the late eighteenth century. Examples of typical eighteenth century arms can be observed in

¹⁵ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, pp 99-103.

¹⁶ Von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and style*, p.14.

¹⁷ Galloway, *The Order of Saint Patrick*.

¹⁸ Von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and style*, p.139.

¹⁹ Toby Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*, pp 22-5.

²⁰ Von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and style*, pp 73-95.

plates 3.3 to 3.6. The primary purpose of armorial grants was, therefore, somewhat defeated. However, the possession of a coat of arms was still seen as one of the defining marks of a gentleman in eighteenth century Europe,²¹ even after the emergence of more egalitarian societies in America and France.

So what of Ireland in the late eighteenth century and its relationship with the heraldic customs of Britain and Europe? Was Ireland a special case in any regard, or did it fall directly in line with the dominant conventions of the European states and Britain in particular?

The first assumption to be overcome in the study of Irish heraldry, iconography and symbolism is that Ireland will turn out to be a miniature version of Britain, owing to the close social and political relationship of both states, the ties of government and the upheavals and settlements of the seventeenth century. This is, however, clearly not the case for any scholar who has studied the subject.²² Ireland has been a unique and often peculiar place in its symbolic traditions, history and conventions and ought to be treated as such, if it is to be truly understood. The following section will deal with Ireland's heraldic past in an attempt to re-construct the heraldic and iconographical climate of the eighteenth century in which the Volunteer movement was established.

To fully understand the iconography of eighteenth century Ireland, we must look for the very unique roots of Irish symbolism, as far back as the first century BC. Following the Gallic War (58BC to 52BC), Ireland experienced the last of four great waves of settlement which all took place before the first century AD. The final migration to Ireland was by the Feni tribe, owing directly to their conflict with Julius Caesar and the Romans in Gaul. Because of their language, they were called Gael.²³ The Gael first settled in Munster and continued to expand at the cost of their neighbours for three centuries, branches of the tribe being established in Munster, Connaught and Leinster. Their culture (now commonly called Gaelic culture), including their way of life, gods and

²¹ In Voltaire's satirical novel *Candide*, the title character's coat of arms are outlined in the opening page of the work.

²² O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.13.

²³ John Grenham, *Clans and families of Ireland, the heritage and heraldry of Irish clans and families* (Dublin, 1993), pp 15-8.

druidic religion, became dominant throughout the island until the arrival of the Normans in the late twelfth century.²⁴

Gaelic iconography was quite unique, in accordance with their secluded state in Ireland, but also reflected their continental origins.²⁵ While the rest of Europe devised a system of heraldry which was common to nearly all Europe, the Gaelic Irish remained isolated, while their iconographical traditions took deeper root. The iconography of the Irish clans revolved very much around their druidic religion and gods, but also included the ideals of warlike masculinity, wisdom to rule and origin myths.²⁶ Especially revered were depictions of trees, stags, snakes, salmon, boar, dexter hands and weapons of war (plates 3.7 to 3.10).²⁷

The prevailing trend in Gaelic symbolism was the use of a single motif upon a coloured field, to represent the tuath (kingship) concerned.²⁸ Symbols were a lot less likely to change over time because they usually concerned a group, not an individual, and compositions were thus not susceptible to the complications of marriage, alliance and augmentations, which complicated orthodox heraldry.²⁹ The manner in which Gaelic symbols were arrayed was thus quite different to those in conventional heraldry. The fact that shields were not used (banners were the most frequent medium of display for Gaelic symbols) also made a difference as compositions did not change in accordance with changing size and design in shields, which was very much the case in orthodox heraldry.³⁰ The idea that Gaelic motifs were highly symbolic is beyond question. For example, the strength and ferocity of the boar was invoked by many warriors by its blazoning on banners and the presence of boar-like tusks borne on helmets, shields and other trinkets.³¹ Each symbol had obvious military connotations, but also usually had mystical allusions as well, often alluding to the tuath's origin myth.³² The motif chosen did not represent an individual, as in European heraldry, but more usually the tuath itself

²⁴ Ibid, pp 15-18.

²⁵ *The symbols of heraldry explained*, p.73.

²⁶ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.39.

²⁷ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.40; *The symbols of heraldry explained*, chapter eight.

²⁸ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.35.

²⁹ *The symbols of heraldry explained*, pp 73-4.

³⁰ Von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and style*, pp 11-21.

³¹ *The symbols of heraldry explained*, pp 81-2; O'Comain, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, pp 40-50, explains the connotations of the six most common motifs, including the boar.

³² O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, pp 35, 39.

as a land holding group, which shared out land amongst family members for temporary periods, known as gavelkind. The system of tanistry, that is choosing an heir by choice from amongst the clan, was also conducive to the adoption of a symbol associated with the tuath instead of the individual. Gaelic symbology was well advanced by the twelfth century due to its considerable antiquity and frequent use in the incessant conflicts of Ireland's Gaelic clans.³³

The Norman invasion in the late twelfth century was the first period of sustained contact which Ireland had with orthodox European heraldry. While it may be presumed that Norman heraldry became dominant, this was simply not the case. Gaelic symbolism was thoroughly entrenched in the indigenous culture, its motifs having already survived the impact of Christianity.³⁴ As with so much else concerning the Old English settlers in Ireland, their heraldry soon became inextricably mixed with its Gaelic counterpart, most often through alliance, marriage or the adoption of Irish customs. Plate 3.11 is a typical Anglo-Irish coat of arms, combining a simple red chevron on a field of white, with three serpents (a typical motif surviving from pagan times, here arranged in an orthodox heraldic style) and the later addition of the inestucheon of the Order of Baronets. This coat of arms combines orthodox heraldry with pagan iconography, that of snake worship,³⁵ to produce a composition that does homage to both the Gaelic and Norman pedigree of the bearer. This coat of arms is typical of the kind of integration which took place after the twelfth century between Gaelic and orthodox heraldic symbols in Ireland.

The appointment of the first Ulster King of Arms in 1552³⁶ did much to regulate the use of armorial compositions in Ireland, but could not control their content and the motifs included. Ireland had for too long been outside the control of any kind of heraldic regulation to be abruptly brought into line with the conventions of heraldry, which would now command a monetary price to bear a coat of arms. The fact that Gaelic motifs, now thoroughly mixed with orthodox heraldry in Ireland, had always been outside any regulation also posed a considerable problem. Gaelic motifs were certainly used in

³³ *The symbols of heraldry explained*, p.74.

³⁴ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.55.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp 46-8

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.24.

significant numbers by the Anglo-Irish, even if they were arranged in a manner more in keeping with orthodox heraldry when they were adopted (as evinced by plate 3.11).

The upheavals of 1607 and 1688-1691 did little to alter the basic ingredients of most compositions. Gaelic symbolism was now a mainstay of Irish heraldic compositions despite the collapse of Gaelic culture and the symbols' survival was safely ensured by their inclusion in the arms of so many Anglo-Irish and New English families. The arms of Jacobites and dispossessed Catholic families were simply recorded in exile by the herald of the court at St Germain, who was in constant correspondence with the College of Arms and the Ulster King of Arms on the subjects of the confirmation of existing grants and indeed of new grants on a frequent basis.³⁷ Indeed, Catholics who fled to Europe to pursue their fortunes there were likely to tenaciously defend their coat of arms, as a reminder of better times and also as a means of support for future petitions of reinstatement to the monarch, bearing in mind that land and armorial achievements were still very closely linked.

Following the establishment of the Protestant ruling elite in Ireland, via the corpus of land laws and monopoly of public offices,³⁸ there was an explosion of interest in heraldic grants in Ireland. There were a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the dispossessed wanted to retain some sort of social rank and influence in society.³⁹ The new minority ruling class simultaneously had to find ways of legitimising their new hegemony. This process had many components, one of which was the possession of a coat of arms which proved the bearer's pedigree and especially their Irish connections, if indeed they had any. The newly ennobled and nouveau riche of the revolution (William Conolly being a perfect example of this group) also had to stake their claim to hold their land and position in Ireland.⁴⁰ Thus, coats of arms were not only the symbolic embodiment of gentility and admittance to the upper stratas of society, but were also the legitimisation of the revolution in a visual medium, connecting new landowners to their newly acquired powers and property. In Britain and continental Europe, the link between land and coats of arms had never been fully dissolved and this example shows how this

³⁷ Ibid, pp 51-3.

³⁸ David Dickson, *New foundations, Ireland 1660-1800* (2nd ed., Dublin, 2000), chapter two. Hereafter referred to as Dickson, *New foundations*.

³⁹ Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*, p.45.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.45.

was very much the case in eighteenth century Ireland.⁴¹ Long tenure was linked to legitimisation and coats of arms were a significant aid to the bearer in this process.

As the century wore on, several generations of Irish Protestants inherited landed estates and the Irish connection of these families grew more solid. Credibility and the right to possess land was tied directly to the length of occupation in the view of society at large. Not only was this reflected in coats of arms, but the demand for heraldic compositions remained buoyant right up to the end of the century. The range of services was accordingly varied. The Ulster King of Arms offered legally binding and authoritative grants of arms, but these were rejected by many aspiring gentlemen as too expensive, or not to their aesthetic expectations.⁴² Illegal coats of arms abounded, provided by freelance heraldic painters whose main object was to satisfy the aesthetic whim of the customer, regardless of the duplicity of the coat of arms or of the genealogical pedigree of the customer, which was often questionable indeed.⁴³ However, this market did exist, with no shortage of customers and proved that while interest in heraldry may have waned in many European states in the eighteenth century, in Ireland the exact opposite was true, heraldry was undergoing a glorious resurgence. Ireland continued to support a buoyant and consistent market for heraldic painters, often described as a typical colonial mindset and concern for identity and legitimacy (this was also the case in Wales in the previous century).⁴⁴

This analysis leaves us with a picture of eighteenth century Ireland as a society with a tradition of heraldry and symbolism which was as varied and complex as its ethnic composition and history. Irish heraldry has always been peculiar and unique (due in no small part to its isolation), although this had become more subtle over time due to its exposure to orthodox heraldry. The symbolic context of the Irish Volunteers can thus be set against a proper background: one that had a rich and complex past and definitely had peculiarities and themes with considerable antiquity.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.46.

⁴² Ibid, p.44.

⁴³ Ibid, p.44.

⁴⁴ J.G. Jones, *Concepts of order and gentility in Wales, 1540-1640* (Llandysul, 1992), pp 69-71.

A note on the nature of emblems and iconography outside of heraldry in the late eighteenth century more generally would also be appropriate at this juncture. Visual emblems in Britain had generally declined in use throughout the eighteenth century in certain circles. In the minds of art connoisseurs, the use of emblems and iconographical motifs was a popular form of art, suited to decorating popular broadsides and copperplate prints.⁴⁵ Emblematic decoration was constantly derided in the eighteenth century by serious artists and art critics, but this did not mean that its presence in the public sphere declined per se. In Ireland, it seems that emblems and the forms of art associated with it were consistently popular with the broad middling classes. Much scholarly attention has been devoted to the deriding of emblems by serious art critics throughout the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ In several chapters of this study we shall see that emblematic decoration was very buoyant in this period and held great fascination for Irish Volunteer companies, their members and those with enough education to decipher such symbolism.

Discounting emblematic sources and their study in modern scholarship is a key weakness in methodology engendered by an over-reliance on high art criticism of the eighteenth century. Contemporary works which damned emblematic art, such as the 3rd earl of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of men, manners, opinions, times* (1711), worked from a very specific agenda.⁴⁷ Aristocratic art patrons and critics wanted to keep art as their exclusive preserve, to be appreciated and enjoyed on their terms. Artistically minded aristocrats of the seventeenth century had praised emblematic art as one of the highest forms.⁴⁸ Therefore, the widespread condemnation of emblematic art in the eighteenth century was also a matter of fashion and taste, as well as serious academic discourse. Emblematic art was viewed and understood by a far greater number of people than the high art enjoyed by the upper tiers of late eighteenth century society, yet it has claimed a very small amount of academic study.

⁴⁵ Diana Donald, *The age of caricature, satirical prints in the reign of George III* (Yale University press, 1996), pp 44-45. Hereafter referred to as Donald, *The age of caricature*.

⁴⁶ David Solkin, *Painting for money, the visual arts and the public sphere in eighteenth century England* (Yale University press, 1992), chapter one. In this chapter, Solkin sets out the artistic discourse of Britain from the early eighteenth century, including the rejection of emblematic art. Hereafter referred to as Solkin, *Painting for money*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pp 3-13.

⁴⁸ Donald, *The age of caricature*, pp 44-6.

Emblematic art had a high visual profile in public spaces and in affordable printed matter in the late eighteenth century. There was essentially a corpus of emblems that had preordained meanings in a visual sense. The meaning of emblems could be found in books on the subject, such as Cesare Ripa's *Iconology: or, moral emblems* (London, 1709). These books set out to define iconographical motifs, from the ancient to the modern, to educate those who were literate and could afford the volume. This kind of iconography used in public spaces in the late eighteenth century had a significant influence on the motifs used by the Volunteers. Their simple meanings required a much lower level of education than heraldic arrangements and were therefore ideal for many Volunteer companies, whose social composition could be very broad indeed.

Most importantly, as the eighteenth century came to a close, European societies in general began to move away from orthodox heraldry and towards iconographical compositions that reflected ideals and concepts rather than the patriarchal hegemony of those in the upper tiers almost exclusively. Iconography was another force for social levelling (mostly for those in the middling classes) at a time when the availability of consumer goods and the widening of the polity were empowering the broad middling classes. The emergence and importance of this form of expression is therefore of great significance in the study of late eighteenth century Ireland.

III

The Volunteer movement, as we have seen in previous chapters, was a loose organisation composed of nearly 1,500 individual corps,⁴⁹ all raised more or less independently of each other. Despite this undoubtedly local character, there was certainly some cohesion in the iconography used by the disparate Volunteer companies of Ireland. However, there was also a significant amount of individualism in such iconography (as with uniforms and flags), with most corps boldly asserting their own ideals and identity through visual mediums. The structure of this section will be to deal with each recurring motif separately in some detail, so as to divine its antiquity and its perceived meaning for the Volunteers and Irish society at large. The order of motifs will be as follows: the Irish harp and its crowning motifs, anthropomorphic figures of Hibernia, the cap of liberty and heraldic plants.

Before any analysis of motifs descending from heraldic traditions, an obvious question to ask is whether the Volunteers used coats of arms themselves in their equipment. There does seem to have been some use of existing coats of arms on Volunteer equipment. In some cases this took the form of the personal coat of arms, usually that of a lofty patron or commanding officer, in a similar manner to that observed in the case of British militia flags above in chapter two. The Ennis Volunteers of County Clare possessed two colours, one of which bore the arms of the town and the other the arms of the unit's commanding officer, the earl of Inchiquin (plate 3.12).⁵⁰ However, this use of arms does not seem to have been very widespread, as far as we can tell from extant sources, although it was more likely to occur in a unit commanded by a peer, noble or knight, than a corps commanded by an officer of more mundane social standing.

The use of arms associated with towns, corporations and guilds was also in evidence in such sources. This was not unusual for a local militia force, who sometimes used the arms of their town or region upon their equipment. On local defence company equipment, however, such armorial arrangements were sometimes modified, as in the

⁴⁹ As accounted for in Pádraig Ó'Snodaigh, *The Irish Volunteers: 1715-1793, a list of the units* (Dublin 1995). Hereafter referred to as Ó'Snodaigh, *The Irish Volunteers: a list of the units*.

⁵⁰ Brián Ó Dálaigh, 'Flags and emblems of the Ennis Volunteers' in *The Other Clare*, xviii (1994), pp 40-1.

case of the Kilkenny Volunteers (plate 3.13).⁵¹ The coat of arms of the city, a castle with a lion sejant in the foreground, were modified to have a Volunteer guarding the gate of the castle, a visual statement about the role of the Volunteers as protectors of the city (plate 3.13). We have already seen in chapter two how the Limerick Volunteers used the arms of the city upon their colour. This composition was also repeated upon medals of the corps, now in the collection of Limerick City Museum (plate 3.14). We have no way of knowing how common this kind of modification was, but the point remains that the Volunteers did indeed use existing grants of arms in their iconographical compositions. This could be done in homage to an individual or a larger communal organisation, but this was quite a logical move for the Volunteer corps who chose to do so. The use of existing armorial compositions indicated complicity with the societal status quo and a desire by the Volunteer company to be seen as a responsible force by society at large.

One may well ask whether or not each Volunteer unit had its own distinct coat of arms. This is a difficult question to answer because of the nature of extant sources, but some comment is possible. It is certain that nearly every corps had some form of identification borne on its equipment, but this could take many forms. Most corps did indeed have a unique badge which was akin to a coat of arms (no official grants of arms were made to Volunteer corps in this period) and was displayed proudly upon the equipment of members of the company. A good example of a unique company badge is provided in plate 3.15. The vast majority of companies seem to have manufactured some type of company badge along these lines, but most were very similar. A typical company badge usually took the form of the unit's initials printed on scrolls surrounding a central composition, typically a crowned harp and a wreath (plate 3.16). Most companies had a badge of this kind, but remaining examples show that such badges were fairly generic affairs, with only the company name usually distinguishing one from another. This kind of basic identification was also used in the regular army, where regimental equipment often bore the regimental number on buttons, belt plates and gorgets. Although the Volunteers did not use heraldic compositions per se on their equipment, the

⁵¹ This colour is preserved in the collection of the National Museum of Ireland and has been reproduced only once, Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, p.94.

iconographical motifs and their arrangement were heavily dependent on orthodox heraldic tradition for their inspiration and motifs.

The most common motif used by Irish Volunteer companies was the Irish harp, in its various forms. The harp has a long and varied history as an Irish heraldic motif and its adoption by late eighteenth century Volunteer companies was no surprise. The harp was, of course, an instrument long used by the Gaelic inhabitants of Ireland (and indeed Wales)⁵² and it may have been utilised as a visual motif by them, in addition to being a musical instrument used by the revered bards and poets of Gaelic society.⁵³ However, the first known use of the harp in a heraldic context in relation to Ireland was in a book called the *Armorial Wijnbergen*, written in French, traditionally cited as being produced in 1275 and currently preserved in the Netherlands.⁵⁴ The book presents a gold harp, with silver strings, on a blue field, attributing the arms to the king of England (plate 3.17). This reference and subsequent uses of the harp as a royal badge for Ireland, were contrary to the official arms of the lordship of Ireland, which since 1171 had been three gold crowns arrayed on a blue field.⁵⁵ This coat of arms is reproduced in plate 3.18. These were the official arms of the lordship until 1541, when Henry VIII became king of Ireland.⁵⁶ Henry VIII had been using the harp for some time as a royal badge in relation to Ireland before the assumption of his new title, so it is not strictly true to say that the harp was adopted as a result of his titular change.⁵⁷ The three crowns had some antiquity as the reputed arms of St Edmund and had particular significance for the English monarchs.⁵⁸ The crowns were undoubtedly the dominant symbol of the lordship of Ireland until the sixteenth century (plate 3.19), when the harp replaced them wholesale on coinage and seals (plate 3.20). After the sixteenth century, the crowns fell into disuse as the harp became almost universally adopted as the new symbolic motif to represent the kingdom

⁵² Cadogan-Rothery, *Concise encyclopaedia of heraldry*, p.191.

⁵³ A great deal of information on the harp in Gaelic society was compiled in S.S Millin, *The Irish harp* (Belfast, 1898).

⁵⁴ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.190. The contents of the book can be found in their entirety online at the following address: <http://perso.numericable.fr/~briantimms/wijnbergen/introduction.html> (14 November 2007).

⁵⁵ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, p.20.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.22.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp 20-1.

of Ireland. Henry VIII probably replaced the crowns because of their close similarities with the arms of the pope (which included a tiara representing the three wise men), with whom he was in political and religious opposition by this stage of his reign.⁵⁹

The use of the harp continued under Mary I, Elizabeth I and James I in seals, coinage and architecture. During the reign of the later Tudor monarchs and the early Stuarts, the convention of crowning the harp became more frequent (plate 3.21). Crowning had the effect of presenting Ireland as a kingdom in constitutional terms, but one that was subordinate to the monarch of England and later Britain. Crowns were varied at first, but especially during the Stuart period, the imperial crown became almost universally used. The imperial crown was, of course, loaded with implicit meanings after the union of 1707 (between England and Scotland) and during debates on the constitutional status of Ireland throughout the eighteenth century. The imperial crowned harp represented Ireland as seen within the British empire: as a kingdom, but one under the rule of the British monarch. The use of the imperial crowned harp in Ireland was nearly universal from the early eighteenth century onwards, the new elite in Ireland seeing their support of the new monarch and his succession as crucial to their early survival.

The harp also evolved in shape and design while it was being used for official purposes. This process is well attested in existing secondary sources,⁶⁰ but suffice to say that the harp evolved from having many different fore pillars (including the heads of beasts and mythical creatures, plate 3.22) and dimensions to one that was universally accepted. The Maid of Erin fore pillar depicted a mermaid, naked to the waist, whose scaly tail formed the bottom portion of the fore pillar (plate 3.23). By the early eighteenth century, her use as the fore pillar decoration was almost universal and had replaced all other variants. This dominance owed much to her consistent appearance in successive royal arms (plate 3.24), and on official seals, coinage and court regalia. The Hanoverian monarchs did not modify the crowned harp motif at all during their reigns, even after the union of 1801. The Irish quarter of the royal arms remained unchanged (despite changes to the rest of the royal arms in 1714, and minor changes in subsequent grants) and there

⁵⁹ O'Comain, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.110.

⁶⁰ Cadogan-Rothery, *Concise encyclopaedia of heraldry*, pp 191-7; Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, pp 46-7.

were no new iconographical departures in the public sphere. By the late eighteenth century, the maid was the dominant decoration on the harp in conjunction with the imperial crown.⁶¹ Indeed the dominance of the motif was such that other fore pillars in this era were very rare indeed.

The harp was also used by those outside Ireland as a more general symbol of Irishness. After the surrender at Limerick in 1691, with the mass emigration of the Wild Geese to Europe, these men continued to use the harp as a mark of their identity in foreign service. They, and their descendants, served under colours which usually bore an uncrowned harp as a symbol of their ethnic origin and identity (plate 3.25). Their case shows that in the early eighteenth century, the harp was being used as a symbol of Ireland by more than just the new Protestant ruling elite and in an uncrowned form.⁶² A pertinent question to ask at this juncture is how was the harp being used in the public sphere in the late eighteenth century?

The harp was widely used in its abovementioned form, and its pervasive presence in eighteenth century Ireland is best attested by pictorial evidence, provided in plates 3.26 to 3.30. These sources are varied, consisting of military equipment, public statues, official regalia, ceremonial jewellery and architectural decoration. The harp had a very visible presence on public buildings, featuring in at least three of James Malton's views of Dublin.⁶³ Newspapers were also stamped daily with the stamp duty charged on such items and the stamp can usually be found in the upper corner of the front page of most extant copies. These artefacts show the prolific presence of the crowned harp in this period and its use on many different types of artefacts.

The harp was certainly a motif widely used by many different groups in the Volunteer era, but what did the Volunteers themselves contribute to its development? The Volunteers were certainly some of the most active proponents of the harp in this era.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, p.47.

⁶² *Ibid*, pp 59-73.

⁶³ The Customs House, St. Catherine's Church and the Tholsel. The harp was very popular as a tavern and shop sign throughout the country. In Belfast an uncrowned harp hung outside a shop several doors down from the Donegall Arms tavern. In Dublin an uncrowned harp also hung outside the lottery office on Capel street, which can be seen in Malton's view looking from Capel street, up Parliament street to the Royal Exchange.

⁶⁴ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, pp 89-91.

The harp and its supporters evolved significantly in their tenure, and also in a way that was to profoundly influence future generations in its iconographical and symbolic use. Volunteer companies made radical changes in the crowning of the harp, but also in the type of forepillar used, the field colour the harp was placed on and the heraldic plants the harp was surrounded by. Each of these changes will be discussed in the following section.

For the purposes of studying the harp, its crowning motifs and forepillars, a sample of eighty-five artefacts have been collated, in order for trends to be noted and commented upon. This sample is composed of seventy-four Volunteer items and eleven other relevant contemporary examples of the harp as an iconographical motif. This sample provides a wide range of examples of where and how this iconographical motif was used in this period, both on artefacts relating directly to Irish Volunteer companies and contemporary artefacts that provide an appropriate context. The results of this sample will be supplied when each relevant category comes under discussion.

The changes which took place in relation to the crowning of the harp in the late eighteenth century by the Volunteers were quite significant in an iconographical sense. The harp received several new mounts (the breakdown of mounts for the harp is provided in table 3.1) and in some rare cases, had no crowning motif at all. The imperial crown remained very popular throughout the period and was used by a large number of Volunteer units in their company's iconography. It was also used universally by persons and organizations with strong links to the monarch and the state. The reasons for this were clear and the evolution of this motif has already been outlined above. It should always be borne in mind that many Volunteer companies had no ambitions outside of serving the crown in the capacity of amateur soldiers. Their endorsement of this well-known motif asserted their loyalty to the establishment, as well as laying a claim on some appearance of professionalism and resemblance to the iconography of the regular army. However, although the imperial crown was certainly iconographically dominant, it was not used in a third of the artefacts consulted for the sample used here. These examples are of greater interest because they indicate processes of re-definition of notions of Irishness

that are central to issues of Irish identity in this era. The first recurring crowning motif we will discuss was a symbol most usually referred to as the Milesian crown.

Table 3.1. Breakdown of crowning motifs for a Maid of Erin harp from the sample.

Crowning motif	Number
Imperial crown	58
Milesian crown	15
Heraldic crown	2
Sunburst	3
Uncrowned	7
Total	85

Source: ⁶⁵

The Milesian crown appears in all nearly all the groups of sources consulted for this study, being especially prevalent on flags (plate 3.31). The Milesian crown is an elusive symbol in terms of its antiquity, but its use in the late eighteenth century is fairly clear. Its name seems at first to allude to its origins with the mythical settlers of Ireland, the Milesians. However, any Gaelic or pre-Christian use of the symbol has not been recorded. Indeed, there is no strong evidence to even support the existence and use of crowns by Gaelic kings as symbols of their status,⁶⁶ despite the tendency of artists in the nineteenth century to crown the Gaelic kings of old, as in plate 3.32.

One piece of evidence in this respect was the use of this sort of crown in northern Europe, during the first centuries AD, as a symbol of authority, as opposed to kingship (which was very much the nature of the Gaelic high kingship of Ireland).⁶⁷ However, this

⁶⁵ This sample was composed of eighty-five contemporary examples of Irish harps, seventy five Volunteer examples and ten other contemporary examples (many of which are illustrated in the plates of this chapter). These examples were chosen from throughout the period, from a diverse geographical range and from many different kinds of primary sources. However, this sample is not exhaustive and a much larger sample could provide an interesting historical study.

⁶⁶ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.107.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.108.

may only point to a common feature of Gallic/Germanic kingship as opposed to any ceremonial use of crowns by early Irish kings. As a more modern heraldic symbol, the Milesian crown was rarely to be found used as a coronet by Irish peers and lesser nobility in armorial achievements, as might be expected in this period.⁶⁸ So, where did this symbol derive its lineage as an iconographical motif?

Other names for this crown include the antique and eastern crown.⁶⁹ In these names, the historians and antiquaries of the eighteenth century found a ready-made answer for their questions about the origins of this symbol. Theories on the origins of the Irish race were a subject of lively debate,⁷⁰ but one of the dominant trends in the mid to late eighteenth century was to view the Irish race as having travelled from Scythia, via Phoenicia, Egypt, Carthage (something of a variable on the route, included by some scholars, but omitted by others) and Spain, to arrive in Ireland. This tale ended when the sons of Míl (from whom the name of his people was derived) did battle with the people of the Tuath de Dannan, defeated them and became the dominant tribe in the south of the country.⁷¹ This origin myth had been promoted by historians such as Geoffrey Keating, Charles O'Connor and Roderic O'Flaherty in their attempts to popularise the idea of a flourishing pre-Christian Gaelic civilisation, as a marker of the Irish character and a reminder of past glory. The Milesian crown was an antique of this great period of Irish history and the 'revival' of this symbol coincided directly with the more ambitious and optimistic political climate of the late eighteenth century (before the extremities and polarity of the 1790s).

The Milesian crown is thus quite difficult to place in a wider context of Irish iconography and symbolism. It does not seem to owe its design to orthodox heraldic coronets used by peers and nobility, which were standardised in the reign of Charles II.⁷² Nor does it owe its appearance to the earlier crowns of the lordship of Ireland mentioned above, which always appeared in triplicate and were more rounded and orthodox (in

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.107.

⁶⁹ Glenn Thompson, 'The flags and uniforms of the Irish Volunteers and Yeomanry' in *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, xxxiii (1990), p.29.

⁷⁰ Dealt with throughout in Clare O'Halloran's work, *Golden ages and barbarous nations, antiquarian debate and cultural politics in Ireland, c.1750-1800* (Cork, 2004). Hereafter referred to as O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations*.

⁷¹ J. A. McCulloch, *Celtic mythology* (1st edition, London, 1918, edition used, London, 1992), pp 42-8.

⁷² O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.106.

terms of conventional European heraldry) in shape. The Milesian crown of the late eighteenth century was not a completely original iconographical symbol, but was certainly promoted and used by Volunteer companies on a nationwide scale, making it a key symbol of reforming impulses and the patriot alliance throughout the era of Grattan's parliament (plates 3.33 and 3.34). There are very few extant examples of the Milesian crown before the 1770s. One important and perhaps crucial example, however, appeared on the frontispiece of Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Eireann*, reproduced in plate 3.35.⁷³

A discerning scholar will certainly recognise the Milesian crown as one of the pervasive symbols of various Irish nationalist movements in the nineteenth century,⁷⁴ but its origins were not with these groups. The widespread use of the Milesian crown was firmly rooted in the mid to late eighteenth century, its most active proponents being Irish Volunteer companies. Nineteenth century groups were following something of a patriotic and commemorative agenda through its use, evoking the spirit of 1782, although the crown did of course evolve under these new groups in their own right.

But whatever its antiquity and origins actually were, what was the Milesian crown perceived to mean by the Volunteers themselves? The popularity of this crown during the 1760s and 1770s coincided directly with the resurgence of a strong patriot presence in parliament, led chiefly by Henry Flood in the Irish House of Commons.⁷⁵ The new patriots re-asserted the arguments of earlier patriots like Dr Charles Lucas, Dean Swift and William Molyneux.⁷⁶ The key issues of the day were questions of sovereignty regarding the Irish establishment and its right to govern itself without reference to parliament in London, via concepts of natural law (influenced by the ideas of Rousseau, Voltaire and Locke) and the ancient constitution. This new patriot resurgence was accompanied by increased antiquarian debate over Ireland's past, growing feelings of

⁷³ The 1723 edition of this book was the one on which this frontispiece appeared. This edition, entitled *The history of Ireland from the earliest period to the English invasion*, was in English. It was a very widely read work in the early to mid eighteenth century and contributed a great amount to the heritage and feelings of identity of many different groups in Ireland. It was also a seminal work in the attempt to write a common, more inclusive history of Ireland.

⁷⁴ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, p.89.

⁷⁵ Dickson, *New foundations*, p.144.

⁷⁶ The disparity of political philosophy between these various groups did not prevent their influence over each other, as cited in Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, pp 26-33.

identity and community in the upper and middling classes of Protestant Ireland, increasing discussion of the status of Catholics and Presbyterians and indeed of possible repeal of the Penal Laws. The Milesian crown was probably not the product of any one of these trends, but a composite of them all.

The immediate visual impact of the Milesian crown was that it was used as a crowning device in place of the traditional imperial crown of the British monarch.⁷⁷ The implications of this would be obvious to the late eighteenth century viewer. The Milesian crown was a symbol, not only of Ireland's constitutional status as a kingdom the equal of Britain with a right to rule itself within a union of kingdoms, but also of the growing confidence and unique identity of the Protestant Irish (reinforced by antiquarian study and the attempts to write a common history)⁷⁸ as a polity within Ireland and also of other groups, such as Roman Catholics, being admitted to this polity via their wealth and status in society.⁷⁹ Much of the Milesian crown's meaning was invested in its subversion of a conventional symbol, which had a very specific symbolic meaning in the late eighteenth century.

The only point upon which existing scholarship sheds any light in relation to the Milesian crown is its constitutional implications.⁸⁰ The crown seemed to suggest the Irish polity's right to govern itself, rather than being on a leash held by parliament in Westminster. This is no surprise, considering the patriot tradition in Ireland, but what is interesting here is that the Milesian crown emerged (perhaps as a result of) during a new bout of patriotic endeavour and really came to symbolise this new drive for unity and reform. The new patriot 'party' and its allies were of course quite disparate and mixed in membership, but the Milesian crown was an umbrella symbol for this new endeavour as a whole. Interestingly, when the Volunteers were suppressed in 1793, the Milesian crown

⁷⁷ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, p.89.

⁷⁸ Attempts to write a common history in the late eighteenth century are dealt with in Jacqueline R. Hill, 'Popery and Protestantism, civil and religious liberty: the disputed lessons of Irish history 1690-1812' in *Past and Present*, cxviii (February 1988). This topic is also dealt with in greater detail in the first three chapters of O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations*.

⁷⁹ The admission of Catholics into the polity, often via the bearing of arms in Volunteer companies, was never officially sanctioned. Conversely, Presbyterians were admitted to the polity as a result of the repeal of the Test Act in 1780. Following 1780, they were effectively full members of the polity, but the status of Catholics in relation to the polity remained murky and was never confirmed by an act, or series of acts of parliament.

⁸⁰ Sumner & Hook, *British colours and standards 1747-1881, (1) Cavalry*, p.62.

fell quickly into disuse as a symbol of collective endeavour for Irish rights. This is reasonably consistent with the break-up of the old patriot alliances into many splinter groups and the subsequent polarisation of Irish politics in the 1790s. The Milesian crown was not usually found in the iconography of later groups such as the United Irishmen, Emmet's Rebellion of 1803, the 1793 militia, the 1796 yeomanry⁸¹ or any other groups in which ex-Volunteers found themselves. The Milesian crown was thus a topical motif,⁸² symbolizing a very temporary political and societal rapport amongst the patriots, the Volunteers and their sympathizers. The Milesian crown was a considerable evolution of the conventional imperial crowned harp as a symbol of the feelings of identity (and specifically of a more distinct Irish identity) felt by some groups in Irish society. A corps which bore the Milesian crown upon its equipment was likely to be patriotic in character, in favour of reform and an advocate of Irish rights. It was not likely to be used by a company who were conservative in outlook and wished little more than to serve the monarch and the state in the role of amateur soldiers in a time of war. The Milesian crown was thus a peculiarly Irish motif, used mostly by those of a wide patriotic persuasion and for a period of time roughly of two decades duration. Its widespread use reflected certain attitudes and feelings of identity in different societal and political groupings, and the symbol became defunct when the ideals of the patriot alliance began to break down.

A second new crowning device, but one which was also a stand-alone motif in its own right, was that of a sun, commonly called a sunburst. The sunburst appeared both as a crowning motif for harps, but also as a singular motif, but due to its association with the harp, it will be included here.

The Gaelic settlers who travelled to Ireland in the first century BC were quite devoted worshippers of the sun and its associated deities. Sun worship was probably

⁸¹ Only one known artefact from the Irish yeomanry bears the Milesian crown. This is a belt plate in the National Army Museum, London. On previous occasions it has been stated that there are no such examples, but the point remains that the Milesian crown was a very rare symbol in relation to the yeomanry of 1796.

⁸² The Milesian crown underwent its most frequent use in the mid 1770s to the early 1790s. In the early 1790s there was a sharp drop in its use as an iconographical symbol. After the 1790s, its use was very rare (excepting occasional use by some yeomanry companies in the late 1790s) until its revival by nationalist organizations later in the nineteenth century.

brought by the Gael from Europe, where sun worship was very well developed.⁸³ In Gaelic Ireland, the sun held a central place (comparable in importance to trees) in druidic religion and the ceremonial practices of the people. When a high king wished to make a tour of the island, he did so carefully following the course of the sun. The myths of Cuchulainn and other Irish heroes are full of references to the sun,⁸⁴ as are the Gaelic manuscripts containing the myths and legends of Ireland, such as the *Leabhar Gabhála Eirin*.⁸⁵ This worship of the sun made it a prominent symbol in the Gaelic world, and this allowed it to survive in the medium of symbolism and heraldry, via the mixing of the Gaelic and Anglo-Irish armorial traditions (despite its inherently pagan nature, plate 3.36).

By the late eighteenth century, the sun was no longer a prominent heraldic or iconographical symbol by any means, but the Volunteers seem to have somewhat revived its use as a symbolic motif late in the eighteenth century. Why did some companies choose the sun as one of their more common iconographical symbols?

The sunburst was a badge of the Prince of Wales, along with the red dragon and three white feathers bound together and linked to a scroll (plate 3.37).⁸⁶ This must have been common knowledge, considering its presence upon royal regalia and the colours and guidons of most regiments associated with the prince.⁸⁷ This is a reasonable explanation for some occurrences of this motif in a volunteering context, but many corps would not wish to associate themselves with this kind of iconographical symbol. In British copperplate prints, the sun was associated with the value of liberty and the constitution, with the two being closely linked (plate 3.38). Images of the sun with the word liberty inscribed upon it were quite common in such sources and figures who became associated with the protection of liberty would also be depicted in tandem with sun imagery.⁸⁸

The use of the image and allegory of the sunburst within the Protestant

⁸³ Miranda J. Green, *Dictionary of Celtic myth and legend* (London, 1992), pp 202-3.

⁸⁴ *The symbols of heraldry explained*, pp 86-7.

⁸⁵ O'Halloran, *Golden ages and barbarous nations*, pp 14-5.

⁸⁶ Mollo & McGregor, *Uniforms of the American Revolution*, p.145.

⁸⁷ Sumner & Richard Hook, *British colours and standards 1747-1881, (2) Infantry*, p.6.

⁸⁸ Sun imagery became resurgent in the early 1790s as the liberty and constitution of Britain were challenged by the revolution in France. A sharp increase of sun images can be observed in these years. Donald, *The age of caricature*, pp 164, 176-7.

religion is another possible explanation for the presence of the celestial body in the iconography of the Volunteers. There was always a place for the light of the gospel and the light of God amongst the reverend's sermon in the late eighteenth century. Indeed, sunbursts were sometimes used in the architecture of Church of Ireland churches in Britain and Ireland, such as in St Werburgh's parish church in Dublin.⁸⁹ Thus, the religion of a great number of the Volunteers probably also played a part in its iconography through this symbol.

Any scholar of Irish nationalist organisations in the nineteenth century will be familiar with the sunburst motif, which became so common in their iconography (especially in that of the Fenians).⁹⁰ However, as with the Milesian crown, the sunburst seems to have had its roots firmly in the late eighteenth century, despite nineteenth century assertions on the Gaelic antiquity of this motif.⁹¹ The idea cannot be discounted that some sunbursts may have been inspired by the political and societal climate of the late eighteenth century. The optimism of the dawn of a new day for Ireland was especially prominent following the granting of legislative independence in April 1782 and with increased emphasis on repeal of the penal laws and the Catholic question. This may have been the reason for some sunburst motifs on Volunteer artefacts. The early 1780s were certainly a very optimistic time in Ireland politically and socially, in direct contrast to the 1790s, which saw a general hardening and polarisation of political and social attitudes. The optimism and hope of the sunburst motif was therefore quite apt for the era of Grattan's parliament.

Not all of the sun motifs used on Volunteer artefacts were the same in their meaning and implications. Some compositions depicted a sun rising in the morning, while others portrayed an image of the sun emerging from behind clouds. This difference is slight, but does change the meaning of the motif intended by the Volunteer company concerned. Plate 3.39 is an example of the former. This gorget belonged to an officer of the Rathfriland Volunteers of County Down. The commanding officer of this unit was a famous Volunteer; Rev. Samuel Barber. Barber was a firm patriot in terms of political

⁸⁹ Several sunbursts are noted and can be found in the plates of H.A. Wheeler and Maurice Craig, *The Dublin city churches of the Church of Ireland, an illustrated handbook* (Dublin, 1948).

⁹⁰ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, pp 155-7.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p.156.

ideology and no doubt used the motif for the religious reasons outlined above,⁹² while also making reference to the sun as an image of liberty and of hope for the polity of Ireland. A good example of the latter sun motif is provided in plate 3.40. The decoration of this guidon had a slightly different message than the gorget above. Here the sun appears from behind the clouds with the Latin motto *Post Nubila Phoebus*, which translates as 'After clouds the sunshine'. The sunshine clearly refers to a new age for Ireland heralded by the patriots, the Volunteers and the spirit of 1782. Although there are only a few examples of the sun as a new crowning motif for the harp,⁹³ it once again shows the processes of re-definition that Irish national identities were undergoing for several groups within and on the fringe of the polity at this time and the fact that they were willing to conjure up new iconographical motifs, and use older ones in new ways as well, to represent their feelings of identity and political ideology.

Uncrowned harps can also be found in isolated cases. The implications of the uncrowned harp were undoubtedly very patriotic, if not radical. The omission of the imperial crown, leaving the Maid of Erin harp alone in a composition, had obvious implications on the nature of the constitutional relationship between Great Britain and the kingdom of Ireland. The message of such compositions was probably not usually one of separatism, but was certainly very assertive about the rights and privileges of the kingdom of Ireland and the nature of the Anglo-Irish relationship (plates 3.41 and 3.42). Uncrowned harps were a firm statement about the sovereignty of Ireland at a time when the push for Irish rights were at a new high, especially after the agreement of 1782.

Heraldic crowns were also sometimes found as crowning motifs for the harp, but their existence is difficult to account for. Some look very much like misshapen Milesian crowns, but others are clearly based upon orthodox heraldic coronets (plate 3.43). There

⁹² Rev. Barber was a prominent Volunteer in the local area and was also a Presbyterian minister. Due to his political leanings however, it is most likely that the use of this motif as the company badge reflected both his religious and political concerns simultaneously. A good account of the life of Barber can be found in W.D. Bailie, 'The Reverend Samuel Barber, 1738-1811: national Volunteer and United Irishman' in *Challenge and conflict: essays in Irish Presbyterian history and doctrine* (Antrim, 1981), pp 72-95.

⁹³ Two other extant gorgets feature a sunrise motif, a gorget of the Clare Volunteers, County Armagh in the National Museum of Ireland and a piece of the same unit illustrated in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 3rd series, v (1942), p.56.

are no obvious reasons for their use. New crowning motifs are a good yardstick by which to measure how different groups in Irish society were re-defining their sense of Irishness. Many companies were content to toe the line for the status quo in using the imperial crown, primarily as a show of loyalty in a time when such professions were key to participation in the polity. However, the new crowning motifs clearly show that several different groups were actively re-defining their sense of Irishness in this period and this manifested itself in the iconography of their Volunteer companies.

The design of the harp itself was also to change in some respects in the charge of the Volunteers. It has already been noted that by the late eighteenth century the Maid of Erin was almost universally used as the fore pillar decoration for the harp.⁹⁴ From the 1770s to the 1790s, however, this situation began to change. Some Volunteer sources depicted harps with plain fore pillars (plate 3.44). Out of the eighty-five sampled harps, only three bore a plain fore pillar. The plain fore pillared harp was quite a radical departure from the more conventional maid of Erin decoration. It subverted a well established motif, in favour of one which challenged the iconographical, and therefore the political, social and economic status quo. The plain fore pillared harp was a symbol in the same vein as the Milesian crown. It seemed to emerge as an iconographical motif from the new political climate of the 1770s to 1780s⁹⁵ and represented a broader view of Irish rights and indeed of the Irish polity.⁹⁶ The plain fore pillared harp was certainly a patriotic symbol, but probably one to which more moderate patriots like Charlemont and Flood would probably not have subscribed. The plain harp was a significant visual symbol in the process of re-defining a sense of identity for many groups. It was almost always uncrowned and implied a much wider view of the polity and a more inclusive and independent view of Irish rights than was usual amongst most patriots. Even after the suppression of volunteering in 1793, the plain harp remained one of their most enduring symbols to represent a wider view of the Irish polity and Irish rights, with a longer lifespan and appeal to later groups than the Milesian crown or the sunburst possessed.

⁹⁴ Cadogan-Rothery, *Concise encyclopaedia of heraldry*, p.195.

⁹⁵ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, p.91.

⁹⁶ *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* used a composition including a plain fore pillared harp resting against a tree as its frontispiece during the late 1770s. Examples of plain fore pillared harps are somewhat rare before the 1790s, but were certainly of key significance to the evolution of this motif.

The plain fore pillared harp endured the more extreme 1790s, becoming a principal symbol of the United Irishmen and of the rebellion of 1803.⁹⁷ The plain forepillar, therefore, represented a significant break with the past and was a visual symbol (first used by Volunteers and their supporters in numbers) that would eventually outlast the Maid of Erin fore pillar as a visual manifestation of Ireland.

However, the future importance of the plain fore pillared harp is not wholly relevant here. Its appearance in the 1770s and 1780s was undoubtedly important in terms of precedent set for later times, but on a nationwide scale, this was a relatively uncommon symbol, being too radical in its implications for many Volunteer companies. However, it must be noted that this innovation in the presentation of the harp was prompted by the Volunteers and that they were its chief proponents until the 1790s.

The traditional colour for the harp to be placed upon was of course blue, the official colour of Ireland in heraldic tradition.⁹⁸ However, there were several examples during this era in which the harp was placed on a green shield. This occurs on four of the flags already discussed above in the second chapter of this study (plate 3.45).⁹⁹ The use of green is interesting indeed, its implications having been discussed earlier in chapters one and two.¹⁰⁰ The use of a green shield was once again a significant choice on the part of the Volunteer units who used it, marking them out as having a patriotic and indeed perhaps radical agenda in their choice of iconography. In plate 3.45, the harp is also uncrowned, which has obvious implications for the ideology of the corps in question. This is yet another innovation that would be carried on long after the disappearance of volunteering in 1793, but the appearance of the harp upon a green field certainly seemed to make its debut in artefacts belonging to late eighteenth century Volunteer companies.

Interestingly, naval ensigns with a green field were also used by some ships of Irish origin at this time. Officially, every ship at sea had to fly an ensign denoting its nationality to aid identification and prevent privateering. In the late eighteenth century many Irish ships began to fly naval ensigns with a green field featuring an imperial

⁹⁷ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, pp 111-21.

⁹⁸ Von Volborth, *Heraldry, customs, rules and styles*, p.11.

⁹⁹ This motif can be found on both of the colours of the Killymoon Battalion (Armagh Church of Ireland Cathedral), the colour of the Independent Tyreril and Loyal Liney Volunteers (Sligo County Museum) and the colour of the Ballinahinch Volunteers (NMI).

¹⁰⁰ O'Comáin, *Poolbeg book of Irish heraldry*, p.111.

crowned Maid of Erin harp. Such flags do not seem to have been sanctioned officially and were flown on the initiative of patriotic Irish captains. Several incidents of such ensigns have been recorded and a visual example of one such flag is preserved in the guidon of the Mayo Legion (plate 3.54). This example shows that innovation and re-definition of iconography in Ireland was also taking place outside the confines of Irish Volunteer companies at this time.

The harp was the most prolific motif used by the Volunteers in their iconography, but it was by no means generic or homogenous. The imperial crowned Maid of Erin harp was the central symbol of the Irish establishment, but this iconographical composition was adapted to suit all shades of political and social opinion within the Volunteer movement, which catered for a diverse range of political opinions within its 1,500 individual companies. This can be observed in the crowning motifs used (or the lack of any crown at all), the design of harp used and the field colour it was placed upon. The harp is a good exemplification of how diverse the Volunteer movement was, of how it evolved over time and of how diverse and complex the nature of the redefinition of senses of Irishness was for many different groups in Irish society at this time.

Anthropomorphic figures of Hibernia also featured very frequently in the iconography and symbolism of Volunteer artefacts and it to this figure that we will now direct our attention. Depictions of Hibernia abound within visual sources dealing with the Volunteer movement. She seems to have been something of a fascination for many Volunteers, but was a diverse and varied figure, who was every bit as complex in her various guises as the Irish harp and its accompanying motifs. This section will firstly attempt to place her within a late eighteenth century iconographical context, before moving on to consider her significance to Irish Volunteer companies and the many variations that accompanied depictions of Hibernia in these years.

The anthropomorphic figure of Hibernia can be defined simply as an attempt to manifest in visual form the polity of Ireland. This was the basic aim of any anthropomorphic depiction of a national figure and in the late eighteenth century many

nations¹⁰¹ had their own figure in this mould, such as the British Britannia (plate 3.46) or the French Marianne (born in the French Revolution, most famously depicted in Delacroix's painting, *Liberty leading the people*, plate 3.47). Such anthropomorphic figures underwent intense reworking over the course of the nineteenth century, due to the extremes of nationalism and constant satirical or romantic representations in magazines and newspapers, such as *Punch*. In the eighteenth century, these figures were no less complex, but were certainly not depicted in visual form as often as in the nineteenth century. This resulted essentially from the greater proliferation of plates and illustrations in nineteenth century newspapers and periodicals, which were lacking in many eighteenth-century publications.¹⁰²

The basic template of Hibernia underwent very few radical changes in this period, but she had many different appearances and motifs which made appearances in specific situations, making her a complex figure to dissect and extract meaning from. Hibernia, as she appeared in most Volunteer sources, emerged in the early eighteenth century, as a particularly Protestant Irish figure.

Previous incarnations of such a figure had certainly existed throughout the seventeenth century and were used in the official iconography of seals and coinage. For example, Patrick Sarsfield had coinage struck in Limerick during the campaigns of 1688 to 1691 depicting a figure of Hibernia (plate 3.48). During his grand tour of 1687 to 1689, Samuel Waring of County Down, saw an image of Hibernia representing Ireland in the Jesuit College in Rome.¹⁰³ Although such a figure did certainly exist in the previous century, the Protestant Irish Hibernia was a significantly different figure.

This new variation seemed to owe her birth solely to the hegemony of the Protestant Irish ruling class from the early eighteenth century onwards. The early eighteenth century Hibernia was very similar to Britannia in many ways and seems to have been largely inspired by typical depictions of the British anthropomorphic figure

¹⁰¹ The definition of the term "nation" here is that espoused by Joep Leerssen in *Mere Irish and fíor-ghael, studies in the idea of Irish nationality, its development and literary expression prior to the nineteenth century* (paperback ed., Cork, 1996), pp 15-31. Hereafter referred to as Leerssen, *Mere Irish and fíor-ghael*.

¹⁰² Peter D.G. Thomas, *The American Revolution* (Cambridge, 1986), pp 12-4. Hereafter referred to as Thomas, *The American Revolution*.

¹⁰³ Toby Barnard, 'Protestantism, ethnicity and Irish identities 1660-1760' in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (eds) *Protestantism and national identity, Britain and Ireland, c.1650-1850* (Cambridge University press, 1998), p.219.

(plates 3.49 and 3.50). This would be quite logical considering the origins of many of the new ruling class, their political allegiance and ethnic origins as Englishmen in Ireland. With the succession of new generations of the ruling caste, however, their sense of Irishness grew significantly and this was reflected in the depictions of their anthropomorphic embodiment. The typical Britannia, upon whom the early eighteenth century Hibernia was closely based, was usually depicted as a young woman in a seated position, with one hand resting upon a shield bearing a union design and the other grasping a spear or trident. She also usually wore a breastplate and a Greek hoplite helmet pushed back on her head (plates 3.51 and 3.52).

During the course of the eighteenth century Hibernia underwent subtle changes, making her less similar to Britannia and asserting a more unique character and appearance as feelings of a separate Irish identity grew within the minority ruling class. By the late eighteenth century, Hibernia was typically depicted as a young woman in a seated position, her hair tied back in a circular pattern, in classical garb bearing a sprig of foliage in one hand, with the other resting limply upon a harp, sometimes wearing a wreath upon her head (plate 3.53). This was a typical appearance and one, like the Maid of Erin harp, which could be used by many different groups in society to convey a general sense of Irishness and of association with the Irish polity and Irish interests.

It should be mentioned at this stage that although motifs like Hibernia and the Irish harp are often described as national symbols and motifs representing a national identity, they actually had quite a limited audience in terms of the society as a whole. These motifs represented only the polity and groups resting on the periphery of the polity. Those who found themselves outside these social groupings, including much of the lower middling classes and the lower classes had little stake in these symbols. In fact, the lower classes, many of whom must have been illiterate and Gaelic speaking (especially in rural areas), had their own symbols and anthropomorphic figures, although there has been little attempt to study this subject by scholars to date. For example, the Whiteboys of the 1780s chose the fairy queen Sadhbh as their figure to represent their particular feelings of identity.¹⁰⁴ The iconography that is presented in this chapter is therefore quite narrow in

¹⁰⁴ Vincent Morley, *Irish opinion and the American Revolution, 1760-1783* (Cambridge, 2002), pp 49-50. Hereafter referred to as Morley, *Irish opinion and the American Revolution*.

character, dealing primarily with sources that represent the upper and broad middling classes in their attempts to visually represent their feelings of identity.

Depictions of Hibernia on festive occasions and in public places were very common in late eighteenth century Ireland. Volunteer parades were often a perfect opportunity to display images of Hibernia,

On Sunday afternoon, the 3rd inst. Arrived in Tarbert Road, the Enterprize privateer, Captain Eden, from a cruise; and on Monday morning, Captain Eden having fired a round of twenty-one guns, in honour of the day, came on shore in order to celebrate the same with Edward Leslie, Esq; the proprietor of the place. In the evening there was another discharge from the cannon, which was answered by a party of the Royal Tarbert Volunteers. The house was then illuminated in the most magnificent manner, and a number of transparent designs were exhibited by an artist of known abilities, who had been some time on the spot in order to take a drawing of Tarbert. In the centre, his present Majesty, with trophies and decorations suitable to the same. On each side Britannia and Hibernia holding out wreaths of laurel. One piece represented the grand fleet lying at anchor,- another the Enterprize, and the two vessels she had lately captured; and though the time for them had been very limited, they were done in a most masterly manner...¹⁰⁵

One enterprising jeweller in Dublin even cashed in on the free trade dispute professionally by manufacturing a seal commemorating the occasion which was advertised extensively at the time,

An emblematical Seal. WILLIAM D. MORE, Jeweller, No.1, Capel street, Dublin, willing, as far as he can contribute, to keep alive in the Minds of Posterity, the glorious Struggle made for Liberty and Extension of Trade in November, 1779, has engraved a seal, in a masterly Manner, with the following Figures, viz. Hibernia leaning on a Harp rested on a packet of Linen, a Wool pack at her Feet, in the Front Ground, on the Wool Pack, Nov. 1779; near which is a lion, who has hold of the Wool Pack with his Paw, as if drawing it slily to him; in the Centre is a Volunteer fully accoutred, with his bayonet fixed, who while he gently raises Hibernia with the one Hand, rests the Butt of his Musket across the Paw of the lion, so as effectually to prevent his taking the Wool; Hibernia, in a Manner of

¹⁰⁵ *F.J.*, 16 June 1781.

Surprise, raises her Head off her Hand, and looks at the Deliverer. Motto, "Armed for your Defence."-He humbly hopes it may meet the approbation of all Lovers of this Country, particularly the Volunteers, for whom, and to whose Honour it was principally designed. Price, elegantly set in Gold, 11 14s 1d in fine Pinchbeck, 5s 5d.¹⁰⁶

Hibernia was also a common decoration on tavern signs¹⁰⁷ and was a very visible iconographical motif in public spaces in late eighteenth century Ireland. Volunteer companies who chose to depict Hibernia on their equipment worked from the basic template outlined above, but there were considerable variations.

Although Volunteers all over the country shared the figure of Hibernia as a common motif, there was considerable divergence and individual peculiarities to be observed in each individual depiction of this figure. The typical Volunteer Hibernia was depicted in a seated position, one hand resting on a harp, the other grasping a spear topped with a cap of liberty. The individual corps, however, often changed the basic template significantly to suit their own political ideology or feelings of identity.

A good example of a Volunteer company altering the template of Hibernia to suit their own purposes can be found in the guidon of the Mayo Legion (plate 3.54). This source provides us with one of the most fascinating examples of Hibernia still in existence. This Hibernia was very similar to Britannia, wearing both a breastplate and a helmet, but she also bore a Phrygian cap upon a spear, in keeping with common Volunteer practice. The package she rested upon and the ship bearing an Irish ensign are a direct signal that this particular corps were concerned about issues of trade. The rod in her right hand is the caduceus, the rod of the Roman god Mercury,¹⁰⁸ giving further credence to this company's concern over issues of trade, as well as showing us their knowledge of classical culture, a definitive mark of a gentleman of quality in the late eighteenth century.¹⁰⁹ This source shows us that depictions of Hibernia were by no means

¹⁰⁶ *F.J.*, 16 March 1780.

¹⁰⁷ Morley, *Irish opinion and the American Revolution*, pp 55-6.

¹⁰⁸ Mercury was a Roman deity associated closely with trade and material prosperity. The caduceus, one of the chief symbols associated with the deity, was also a sign of peace. The choice of these motifs by the Mayo Legion would have been quite intentional and reflects a considerable level of classical education in both a textual and artistic sense.

¹⁰⁹ Irwin, *Neoclassicism*, p.15.

homogenous at the time and inspiration was being drawn from a very wide range of sources by each Volunteer company.

Another source that alluded to trade through breaking with conventional Volunteer depictions of Hibernia, was the colour of the Caledon Volunteers (plates 3.55 and 3.56).¹¹⁰ In the centrepiece of this colour, Hibernia is shown holding a palm branch in her right arm. The palm branch was another common symbol of peace and plenty drawn from classical sources. The reverse of this flag displayed a Milesian crowned harp, reinforcing the patriotic ideology of this corps on its flag. Another motif in this vein often associated with Hibernia was the cornucopia, or horn of plenty. The cornucopia was traditionally used as a symbol of prosperity and plenty in times of peace, in relation to deities associated with agriculture, such as Demeter and Ceres.¹¹¹ The cornucopia was also a symbol associated with golden ages in classical texts¹¹² and this once again shows us the classical knowledge of some Volunteer corps and also of the optimism of some Volunteers and of the volunteering period in general.

Indeed, the links between the late eighteenth century Irish Hibernia and classical goddesses of peace and plenty are closer than may at first appear. Typical Hibernias of the late eighteenth century have a great deal in common with Roman deities such as the Magna Mater, particularly in the Augustan age (roughly 43 BC to 18 AD). The optimistic atmosphere of late eighteenth century Ireland was very similar in its literary and artistic motifs to the Augustan age of the early first century AD. The Magna Mater, or great mother deity, seems to have been a significant influence on the development of the Irish Hibernia in the mid to late eighteenth century. This was most apparent in visual depictions and the stock motifs associated with this deity. Essentially the Magna Mater was a deity who had a bank of stock motifs that she was associated with, representing her role as a bringer of peace, prosperity and correct moral values (plate 3.57). Hibernia was very similar to this figure in the manner of her depiction, associated motifs and development over time. The alignment of golden age literature and artwork in Ireland at a time of great optimism and hope was not a coincidence, but the result of widespread

¹¹⁰ This colour is kept in the Armagh County Museum (no. 4-1955), only the centrepiece is still extant.

¹¹¹ Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (eds), *The Oxford classical dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1996), pp 313, 447-8. Hereafter referred to as Hornblower & Spawforth, *The Oxford classical dictionary*.

¹¹² Such as *Theogonis* by Hesiod, or *The Eclogues* of Virgil.

neoclassical education and appreciation of classical art in the middling and upper classes.¹¹³ This education found an outlet for expression both in print and in applied artwork, such as the many extant Volunteer artefacts consulted for this study. The language of the era of Grattan's parliament in Ireland was drawn directly from that of the Augustan golden age and such sentiment also found expression in artwork of the time, especially in artistic compositions borne on Volunteer equipment.¹¹⁴

Depictions of Volunteers interacting with Hibernia are very common in such sources. There are several stock poses that this arrangement could take. The most common was that of the Volunteer in a pose of submission before Hibernia (plate 3.58), attempting to show that the Volunteers serve Hibernia, meaning the interests of the Irish polity, before all others. This arrangement needs little explanation, but is an interesting variation in depictions of Hibernia and indeed highlights a key value of Irish Volunteer companies of all political creeds, by indicating that Ireland and her rights should be their first concern. Such depictions of Hibernia were not specific to any particular political orientation and could be used in much the same way as the Irish harp noted above.

On the colour of the Loyal Ballyshannon Volunteers,¹¹⁵ another interesting variation was chosen. The centrepiece on one side depicts a member of the corps helping Hibernia to her feet, as if she has fallen and requires aid to regain her footing. This is a significant source as it shows us how this corps perceived themselves as aiding Ireland back to former glory through their activity as Volunteers. This arrangement portrays the Volunteers as protectors and saviours of Ireland, as they were indeed perceived by themselves and many other people at the time. Sentiment of this sort was particularly evident in printed material at the time.¹¹⁶ This colour also bore on its reverse an Irish harp, with a Milesian crown, further indicating the patriotic disposition of this corps.

¹¹³ Irwin, *Neoclassicism*, chapter one.

¹¹⁴ A particularly detailed and thorough treatment of the art, architecture and literature of this age can be found in Karl Galinsky, *Augustan culture, an interpretive introduction* (Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹¹⁵ This colour is preserved in the collection National Museum of Ireland.

¹¹⁶ A number of newspapers at this time were especially prominent in publishing articles and letters that were highly supportive of Volunteer companies. The owners and editors of such publications were usually Volunteers themselves or were closely associated with their local Volunteer companies. In Dublin, *The Freeman's Journal*, the *Dublin Evening Post*, the *Volunteer Journal* and *Volunteer Evening Post* were particularly prominent in this regard. In provincial towns, local newspapers also adopted this approach. Good examples of this would be the *Northern Star* and *Belfast Newsletter* and the *Limerick Chronicle* to name but a few.

The final interaction between a Volunteer and Hibernia was a very common one and depicted a Volunteer standing or mounted before Hibernia. This is a more ambiguous and vague arrangement, but once again shows that the Volunteers saw their role as being very close to protecting and supporting Hibernia, and in this way protecting and supporting Ireland itself. The Liberty Volunteers of Dublin had Hibernia depicted on their company colour in the following manner,

Hibernia is represented sitting upon her throne dressed in the colour of the uniform of the corps, expressing her love for her faithful guardians, the Volunteers of Ireland; on one side is represented a Liberty Grenadier, and on the other a Light Infantry Man, with the words 'Free trade, or else', fixed upon the point of the bayonet; on the top is wrote 'Liberty' and under it, 'thou sovereign boon of Heaven'.¹¹⁷

This is the only known description of this colour and certainly sheds more light on the patriotic nature of this company and the perception of their role as amateur soldiers in defence of their country. This kind of sentiment was very common in Volunteer literature and contemporary print media, but it is interesting to see that this was also borne out in visual sources.

Hibernia was, therefore, a very important iconographical figure for Irish Volunteer companies. She could be depicted as the bringer of peace and prosperity in the mould of a classical goddess, the embodiment of an increasingly confident polity or the object of submissive obedience and servitude for the Volunteers. Hibernia, like the Irish harp, underwent considerable and significant evolution in this period, reflecting the changing social and political attitudes of many different groups in Irish society. Her various guises show us, once again, that within the nationwide group of Volunteer companies there were many different shades of political opinion and this is borne out by the various appearances Hibernia could take, from a fallen deity requiring protection to a goddess of peace and plenty, and the guiding force of volunteering, in whose service Ireland would realise the patriotic ideal of a kingdom the equal of England.

¹¹⁷ *F.J.*, 9 November 1780.

A pervasive symbol in relation to Hibernia was the Phrygian cap, usually borne upon a spear. The Phrygian cap was a very ancient symbol and the question of how it came to be used by the Irish Volunteers is a crucial one to our study. It was frequently depicted in tandem with an anthropomorphic figure of liberty, but could also appear as a stand alone motif in its own right.

The Phrygian cap was originally associated as a visual motif with the ancient Persian deity Mithras (plate 3.60).¹¹⁸ As the cult of Mithras travelled further west as a result of Hellenism and later the expansion of the Roman empire, the cap became a more generic symbol of the east in western visual sources.¹¹⁹ However, in the Roman empire (such as in Aquileia in northern Italy, where Mithras was a very popular deity) the cap was also associated with the female anthropomorphic figure of liberty. Phrygian caps were used in the Roman ceremony of liberating slaves from one's service¹²⁰ and it was this meaning which became most closely attached to the cap over time. By the eighteenth century, the cap was a fairly generic symbol of liberty in northern Europe. Although this motif later became one of the chief symbols of the revolution in France, this was neither its place of invention, nor its greatest area of promotion. The cap was a pervasive symbol of British liberty and later of the revolution in America, usually atop a 'liberty pole' and featured especially in the coinage and state flags of the new American state (plates 3.61 and 3.62).¹²¹

Indeed, it should be noted that the term Phrygian cap was a name not entirely applicable to its use in the eighteenth century. The Phrygian cap, as it is now usually called, covers the neck and ears and was really an evolution effected by artists during the French Revolution. The cap of liberty before this was generally a cap with a straight rim, running along the forehead and behind the ears. Before the French Revolution, this motif was usually called a cap of liberty and it was under this name that it was used by the Irish Volunteers.

We have already seen the presence of the cap in conjunction with the anthropomorphic figure of Hibernia above, but the cap was synonymous in its own right

¹¹⁸ Hornblower & Spawforth, *The Oxford classical dictionary*, pp 991-2.

¹¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrygian_cap (12 May 2008).

¹²⁰ Hornblower & Spawforth, *The Oxford classical dictionary*, pp 1415-7.

¹²¹ The cap appeared on the flag of West Virginia and New York state as well as being an emblem of the Senate and the US army.

with one of the greatest concerns of the British polity; liberty. The cap of liberty often appeared in prints of those deemed to be defenders of British liberty in politics (plate 3.63). The symbol's adoption by the Volunteers was, therefore, quite a logical move, considering the values embraced by most Irish Volunteer companies. The frequency of the cap in Volunteer sources is difficult to assess, but it was certainly present in the majority of depictions of Hibernia and was also a stand-alone symbol in its own right, even used in a few rare cases as a crowning motif for the Irish harp.¹²²

There also seem to have been some depictions of the anthropomorphic figure of liberty in Volunteer sources, always featuring the Phrygian cap as a mark of her identity (plate 3.64). The figure of liberty had become a mainstay of poetic verse and copperplate prints in the British Isles and the American colonies by the late eighteenth century because of the key value that she represented. The importance of liberty was frequently propounded in textual sources at the time as central to the Irish character and the prosperity of the Irish state. In reference to a provincial review of the Volunteers in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, in the summer of 1781, it was said 'Their meeting is not the wanton parade of vanity-it is the maintenance of a necessary discipline, and a model of emulation to keep alive the sacred fire of Liberty.'¹²³ This kind of sentiment was very common amongst supporters of Irish Volunteer companies at this time.

The use of the cap was discussed in detail in *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* of December 1784 in a piece entitled 'A humorous chapter on hats' by J.S. Dodd. This article discussed the symbolism and history of many different hats, including the cap of liberty. The writer affirmed the ancient origins of this hat, mentioning that it had become a mainstay of British emblematic art during the civil wars of the seventeenth century. The cap was perceived to be a symbol of liberty because it was supposed to be the preferred headgear of ancient goatherds. It was simple in its production, cost and appearance, representing the inherent value of simplicity. The author of this tract also felt that the cap was particularly suited to the Irish race,

O! may every Hibernian thus wear this sacred cap...to which few
but themselves have any pretensions! Let them preserve it by them

¹²² As seen on a medal of the Frankfort and Ballibog Volunteers held in the NMI.

¹²³ *F.J.*, 29 May 1781.

undefiled! And though the may not display it every day, yet whenever necessity may call for it, let them not sell it even for coronets, pledge it or gold, or barter it for titles; but wear it nobly in the face of the world, with its top erect, that it may hang like a portentous meteor over the heads of its revilers, and terrify the slaves of despotism! Then lay it by, bound round with loyalty, and leave it as the most precious legacy to your children!¹²⁴

The cap, as used by the Volunteers, seemed only to reinforce its traditional symbolic ramifications, but in light of its use in the revolution in America, it was in some cases probably more a symbol used by patriots and American sympathizers, as compared with more iconographically conservative units. The cap had the antiquity and pedigree to imbue dignity and tradition in its use, while in the volunteering period, it would not have been construed as too volatile or subversive a symbol for use by Volunteer corps in Ireland. The strong claim which Volunteers had on liberty, in the sense of classical republicanism,¹²⁵ also made the adoption of the cap quite logical. Especially in print, more outspoken Volunteers liked to set themselves up as a natural army, composed of citizens, for the defence of the community and therefore protecting the liberty of all from the tyranny of absolute monarchy. When setting themselves up as guardians of liberty in such a way, the cap of liberty was a perfect iconographical motif to support such claims.

Foliage, slips and wreaths were another area where distinct iconographical meaning and trends could be observed in Volunteer compositions. Botanical decoration of iconographical compositions was descended directly from the tradition of heraldry and the meaning of such decoration is therefore quite easy to define. Wreaths and foliage may seem peripheral and marginal, but the plants that were chosen were of key significance to the composition as a whole and to the message that the Volunteer company wished to convey about its values and goals as a unit.

By far the most popular heraldic plant used in such Volunteer sources was the shamrock. The shamrock can be a confusing plant in its visual depictions, because it is very similar to several other heraldic plants. The shamrock is most often confused with the trefoil. The differences between the two are highlighted in plate 3.65. This plate

¹²⁴ J.S. Dodd, 'A humorous chapter on hats' in *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, December 1784.

¹²⁵ Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, pp 18-25.

highlights the difference between the two most common heraldic trefoils. Shamrocks are also difficult to define botanically,¹²⁶ but for our purposes the traits of their counterparts in heraldic and iconographical compositions need only concern us. In orthodox heraldry, the shamrock has always been depicted as a three leafed plant, or trefoil, with heart shaped leaves and a wavy stalk. The more common trefoil should not be mistaken for the shamrock, which also has three leaves, but these are pear shaped. The shamrock has been a symbol associated with Ireland since at least the seventeenth century, being especially used on celebrations of St Patrick's day.¹²⁷

Apart from any allusions to the story of St Patrick, the shamrock was thoroughly ensconced in Irish heraldry and iconography by the late eighteenth century. Although originally worn mainly by Catholic tenants and tradesmen, some sources seem to suggest that the wearing of the shamrock (and participation in the festivities of the day) on 17 March by many in the middling and upper classes was not uncommon by the late eighteenth century, especially after the initiation of the Order of the Knights of Saint Patrick.¹²⁸ The climax of this trend could be seen in an unsubstantiated, but oft repeated story, that in 1781, George III wore a Volunteer uniform with a large clump of shamrock in his hat to celebrate the contribution of the Volunteers to public safety and the patron saint's festive day simultaneously.¹²⁹ The shamrock was regularly used as a royal badge, a symbol for the kingdom of Ireland and as a motif for private clubs and societies. A good example of its use in an official capacity can be seen in the ceremonial jewels of the Most Illustrious Order of the Knights of Saint Patrick, established in 1783¹³⁰ and therefore exact contemporaries of the Volunteer movement (plate 3.66). After the union of 1801, the shamrock continued to be used as a badge for Ireland, being incorporated into the

¹²⁶ In 1892 and 1893, Nathaniel Colgan conducted botanical research in *The Irish Naturalist* that involved samples of shamrocks be sent to him from all over the country in an attempt to define exactly what a shamrock was. The results proved that the shamrock is a botanical non-entity. References to shamrocks are usually made to a variety of clovers, none of which are specifically shamrocks. The shamrock as a marker of national identity is therefore an iconographical invention.

¹²⁷ Sheehy, *The discovery of Ireland's past*, pp 9-12.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p.10. By the late eighteenth century the shamrock was regularly used along with other stock motifs to represent Ireland in satirical copperplate prints. Several examples of this practice can be seen in chapter six of this study.

¹²⁹ *B.N.L.*, 27 March 1781.

¹³⁰ Galloway, *The Order of St. Patrick, 1783-1983*, p.1.

union wreath on the colours and guidons of the regular army (as mentioned above in chapter two).

The use of the shamrock in Volunteer compositions was widespread indeed. The shamrock had a large amount of official approval, via the royal badge, the official iconography of the Irish establishment and the armed forces, and it thus imparted a certain amount of respectability, similar to the use of the imperial crowned harp and the anthropomorphic figure of Hibernia. The symbolic use of the shamrock by Volunteer companies once again placed them within a wider iconographical context as identifying with the state and regular army in some cases and also with more traditional notions of Irish identity. The shamrock was one of the most neutral motifs used by the Volunteers and did not evolve in significant ways during their use of this motif. The shamrock was not closely associated with any particular political ideology, but was rather a static symbol associated with Ireland in general and, therefore, one which was not really open to the evolution which other motifs were in this period.

The shamrock was usually depicted in the form of a wreath, surrounding a central arrangement, but could also be observed in the form of a single leaf on its own or indeed as part of a bunch of shamrocks (plate 3.67). Its inclusion in wreaths has already been discussed above in chapter two. The shamrock was a very common iconographical motif in eighteenth century Ireland and was one used by many different social and political groups. It has been suggested by some scholars that the use of the shamrock in the late eighteenth century (especially by the Knights of St Patrick) was made by those who had little understanding of Irish heraldry and iconography.¹³¹ This may well be true, but the copious use of the shamrock by Irish Volunteer companies suggests that they had imbued it with their own meaning, one of a general sense of representing the Irish polity and a distinctive Irish identity.

Although it was a symbol which may have been very frequently used in a patriotic context, this did not reflect the cohesion of the collated Irish Volunteer companies on a nationwide scale or of a concentrated Protestant interest in Ireland. The unity which the use of the shamrock alluded to was non-existent, yet it remained one of the most important motifs which attempted to convey some sense of patriotism and community

¹³¹ Hayes-McCoy, *A history of Irish flags*, pp 36-41.

amongst the Irish Protestant minority and other groups, such as Catholics and Presbyterians, who increasingly played a growing role in the Irish polity. The shamrock, as with many other iconographical symbols and arrangements, was to become very popular with the radical movements of the 1790s and nationalist groups in the nineteenth century, but the relevance of this motif to late eighteenth century Volunteer companies was often very different. In the case of the Irish Volunteers, the shamrock was a more neutral motif than its later reputation would lead us to believe. For Volunteer companies, it was usually a very generic indication of Irish patriotism, its main use being in wreaths which fitted easily into the aesthetic conventions of orthodox heraldry, while conveying a general sense of Irish identity.

Laurel (often called bay) was another interesting, if not surprising, choice for the Irish Volunteers to use in such compositions. Laurel has been used symbolically for thousands of years, with very little change to its basic meaning and implications.¹³² Both the Romans and the Greeks used it as a symbol of martial success, at sea and on land. Its most famous use was for crowning the victor at the extravagant Roman triumph. In the eighteenth century, it was used for the same heraldic and iconographical purposes. Its use conveyed a martial air, which would have been very important to the amateur soldiers of a Volunteer company in their attempts to appear as professional and earnest part-time soldiers. The use of laurel also showed an awareness of the classics, which was essential to the appearance of gentility and respectability in the eighteenth century gentleman. A good example of laurel can be seen in plate 3.68.

The distinctive oak leaf also made some appearances in Volunteer wreaths and slips. Oak has been revered by many cultures since antiquity. It was again associated with Roman military honours, but was also sacred to the Gael. Trees were sacred to the Celtic peoples whose calendar, religion and mysterious druidic rites centred on trees.¹³³ Pagan iconography, of course, penetrates right through to the present day in Irish heraldry and is a possible explanation for the use of this plant. The presence and significance of the plant in classical sources, however, is the most plausible explanation for the use of the plant in

¹³² Cadogan-Rothery, *Concise encyclopaedia of heraldry*, p.125.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p.121.

Volunteer iconography. The fact that oak was also very much associated with English martial prowess cannot be discounted either as an explanation for its use in Volunteer wreaths.

Union wreaths (representing the union of 1707) could be observed occasionally amongst Volunteer sources. Their use was, of course, very common amongst the official iconography of the British state, especially the armed forces. Their use by the Volunteers points once again to an attempt by some companies to appear as professional as possible, by mimicking the iconography of the regular army, or as a statement of fervent loyalty to the monarch. Union wreaths were, however, quite unusual in Volunteer compositions, with shamrock and laurel being much more frequently used. The best example we have of a union wreath on a Volunteer artefact is on an unidentified battalion colour kept in Armagh Church of Ireland Cathedral (plate 3.69).

A recurring motif in Volunteer sources is that of combining several different plants in the same wreath, or slips of different plants arrayed in the same composition (this practice has already been outlined above in chapter two). One of the most frequent was the combination of shamrock and laurel. The intertwining of shamrock and oak was also reasonably common. The combination of plants in wreaths showed the fusing of the attributes of both in a single composition. This combination of plants was typical of paper heraldry and the appetite of some Volunteer corps for compositions with artistic flair and imagination. An example of this practice can be seen in plate 3.70.

Heraldic plants generally do not seem to have carried any particular political implications, with the exception of the union wreath. Plants were not preferred by patriotic or conservative corps for the attributes they were supposed to have possessed. The overriding message of heraldic plants in Irish Volunteer companies seemed to be concerned with two things. Firstly, there was the use of plants in their usual context and in accordance with the fashion and aesthetic whims of paper heraldry. This was something which many Volunteer corps seemed to have subscribed to quite readily, for reasons that had little to do with symbolism, but more to do with artistic and aesthetic whim. Secondly, for corps that had some knowledge of heraldry, there were the connections with both the classics and orthodox heraldry. Classical texts were integral to

the education of a gentleman and this is a plausible explanation for the appearance of at least some plants in Volunteer sources.

Conclusion

In conclusion, what does our analysis of these iconographical motifs and figures tell us about the Volunteer movement, its membership and ideals?

Firstly, the presence of orthodox heraldry amongst the sources was very prevalent indeed. This is not surprising considering the buoyant use of heraldry amongst the Protestant elite in their search for the legitimacy of their hegemony and the prominence of heraldry as a tool of identification and social segregation in Europe at the time (albeit on a less frequent basis than in previous centuries). The use of orthodox heraldry by the Volunteers dictated much of their iconographical influences and as such the motifs and arrangements to be expected in their compositions. The use of wreaths and heraldic plants in particular was directly descended from heraldic tradition, as was the use of existing armorial arrangements on Volunteer artefacts. The badges of individual corps also bear the hallmarks of heraldic tradition, even if they did not adhere strictly to the rules and conventions of heraldry.

The iconographical motifs which Volunteer corps adopted with the greatest enthusiasm were also descended directly from orthodox heraldry, such as the Irish harp, the imperial crown, the Phrygian cap, the shamrock and so on. In these symbols there was much tradition and precedent and their use was made with these aspects in mind. The Volunteers, despite their reputation as great progressive innovators (in their democratic election of officers, political attitudes and so on) could also be some of the greatest supporters of tradition and the status quo in their society. This is readily seen in some units' promotion of conventional and traditional iconography associated with the authority of the monarch and the political and social status quo. The chief visual symbols of the British monarch's authority in Ireland found many willing proponents amongst the Volunteers, many of whom, it must be remembered, had no ambitions outside serving the crown in the traditional capacity of a local militia. Ultimately, this study of iconographical motifs once again suggests the inherently local and highly individualistic nature of most Volunteer companies, through their alteration of the traditional templates for several common motifs and figures.

However, the evolutionary nature of many Volunteer companies in becoming grounds for the re-definition of notions of identity and Irishness should be highlighted. New symbols did emerge, especially in relation to the Irish harp (the Milesian crown, uncrowned harps and the placing of the harp on a green field), as a result of the Volunteers which depict visually how notions of identity in Ireland were evolving in the tenure of many different groups at this time. The symbols discussed above once again point to the intense individualism felt by most corps, who were eager to protect and promote their own identity, in this case through the alteration of existing iconographical templates and in the manufacturing of unique company badges that allowed individual companies to feel simultaneously both as an individual unit and as part of a larger nationwide endeavour.

New symbols could be the expression of traditional ideologies, like patriotism, or of new mindsets reflecting emerging trends of thought and the widening of the polity in late eighteenth century Ireland. Once again, here in the field of symbolism and iconography, we find that the Volunteers were a disparate organisation, composed of many different strains of political thought and feelings of social and national identities. This diversity was reflected in the iconography and motifs explored above. Even though motifs were often held in common and reflected some notion of collective identity, there was always room for a corps to adapt a conventional motif to its own ends and to reflect their particular feelings of identity and purpose.

A significant result of this study is the reinforcement it provides in our developing notion of the social composition of Irish Volunteer companies. Time and again we have seen here the classical learning of some corps put on display in quite an obvious fashion. This points to the possession of knowledge of the classics which was specific to certain classes at this time. This knowledge of classics is especially noticeable in relation to Hibernia and the cap of liberty. The fact that some corps obviously had knowledge of heraldry and armoury furthers this point and leaves us with a picture of a movement in which at least some members were educated and refined with an appreciation of visual sources which they brought into the design of iconographical arrangements for their requisite Volunteer corps. However, many Volunteer compositions were equally drawn from lower spheres of artistic influence and obviously borrowed from traditions of

emblematic art for much of their inspiration. Thus, a great range of artistic and iconographical influences were drawn upon by various Volunteer companies from around the country for their iconographical compositions and this accurately reflects the level of education and financial means of their members.

Chapter Four: Portraits

Portraits and the culture of portraiture in late eighteenth century Europe are central to any understanding of material culture and its workings as a social and economic custom in this period. That portraits were commissioned by members of Irish Volunteer companies should come as no surprise, considering their widespread indulgence in material culture as a manner of displaying wealth, status and pride in their Volunteer company. The purpose of this chapter will be to determine what the nature of Volunteer portraits was, how they fitted into the established genres and fashions of portraiture and what can they tell us about the Volunteer as an individual, his company and the wider Volunteer movement on a regional and national scale.

We will begin our analysis of these artefacts with a brief overview of late eighteenth portraiture in Britain and Europe to contextualise the specific case of Irish Volunteer portraits. This will be followed by further particular discussion of art in Ireland in the eighteenth century, in order to better contextualise our analysis of Volunteer portraits in relation to both the late eighteenth century Irish art scene and also that of Britain and continental Europe.

Our analysis of Volunteer portraits will centre around several basic questions. Firstly and most importantly, how do Volunteer portraits fit into the model of eighteenth century portraiture which will be outlined in the first section? These artefacts were produced within a particular artistic and social context and it will be one of our key aims to accurately place these sources within the world in which they were produced in as appropriate a manner as possible. Volunteer works will be analysed in areas such as size, background, surroundings, props, pose and dress to draw out as much of their original meaning as possible for our purposes. There will be comparison of the sources both internally as a group and with relevant pieces outside of this group of sources to further contextualise these works of art. This study of Volunteer portraits will also include discussion of what the paintings tell us about the sitter and his Volunteer company in terms of class and social status, in addition to fundamental points about the sitter's

perception of himself and his desire to be depicted in a painting as part of a wider social custom and material culture at large.

There will also be discussion of Francis Wheatley's three great Volunteer canvases. We will consider where these artefacts fit into our discussion of Volunteer portraits and what they tell us about the Volunteer movement which Wheatley so enthusiastically depicted during his sojourn in Ireland from 1779 to 1783. These paintings are crucial sources for the study of many different areas of Volunteer culture, but we will consider specifically the impact they had upon Volunteer artwork in this chapter.

Finally, an important but difficult question to answer is whether there is any cohesion within these primary sources as a group, or indeed if these works of art can be considered as a wider, coherent group of primary sources at all. This will be answered in the conclusion of this study.

I

The custom and art of portraiture in late eighteenth century Europe was quite complex and has generated a very large and varied amount of secondary sources in modern scholarship.¹ Before we begin our discussion of Volunteer portraits in detail, it is important to establish some context of the world of portraiture (in Ireland, Britain and Europe) in terms of the conventions, trends and fashions of the trade, so that we may better assess the social customs and business practices surrounding this pervasive form of eighteenth century art in our specific example of Volunteer portraits.

By the late eighteenth century, the British world of portraiture (from which Ireland drew its chief inspirations, but was not simply a miniature version of, as we shall see) was vibrant and complex. London and Bath, two centres of high society, teemed with artists on the make, as did other urban centres with significant concentrations of the middling and upper classes.² London, however, was the centre of British art. It was the home of the Society of Artists and later the Royal Academy and was undoubtedly the place to secure the most lucrative commissions in the British Isles.³

Portraiture had evolved significantly since Van Dyck and Lely had begun a tradition of British painting in the mid to late seventeenth century.⁴ By the mid eighteenth century, portraiture had become not only the dominant artistic genre in terms of being the most frequently executed and exhibited genre of art,⁵ but also the most complex in the accumulation and repetition of trends, conventions and traditions which dictated how

¹ Portraiture in the eighteenth century has generated a considerable amount of scholarship in countries participating in a wider European material culture at the time. Scholarship breaks down along national and chronological lines, as well as being divided between individual artists and perceived collective schools of artists and their styles. The topic has been studied in great detail in countries like Britain and France, but scholarship in this kind of depth does not exist for Ireland.

² Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the head, portraiture and social formation in eighteenth century England* (Yale, 1993), pp 39-41. Hereafter referred to as Pointon, *Hanging the head*.

³ *Ibid*, pp 36-51.

⁴ A good overview of the tradition of British portraiture can be obtained in Ellis Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain, 1530-1790* (1st ed. 1953, 5th ed. 1994), chapters 5-14. Hereafter referred to as Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*.

⁵ The breakdown of exhibits to the RA from the 1781-1785 can be found in Pointon, *Hanging the head*, pp 38-9.

works were composed stylistically and in the diversity and breadth of the consumer base for such products.⁶

A group of trends and conventions within British and continental portraiture were well established by the late 1770s.⁷ Although a portrait was essentially the same in each execution, being simply a likeness of an individual, there were a myriad of accepted airs, poses and settings in which patrons qualified or chose to be depicted. One of the most basic distinctions was that of class. High society patrons often opted for the so-called society portrait, which depicted them in a pose of somewhat formal confidence, arrayed usually in high fashions of the day (plates 4.1 and 4.2). This portrait was to be hung in a prominent position in the family home to impress upon visitors the rank and standing of the individual and the family in question.⁸ The middling classes opted in greater numbers, especially from the mid eighteenth century, for the conversation piece (plate 4.3), a group portrait usually depicting the immediate family.⁹ Several factors, not least of which were monetary concerns, prompted the fashionable status of the conversation piece, but it was recognised as the preserve of the middling classes in this period.¹⁰

Amongst men of the upper reaches of society there were quite clear boundaries and restrictions as to how they could be depicted (women were generally depicted a little less frequently).¹¹ One of the main dividing factors in male portraits was profession. There were, and indeed had been since the Renaissance, standard conventions for depicting various professions in portraiture.¹² The most obvious indicator was the garb of the sitter, which was of some importance in identifying their profession, but also their

⁶ Ibid, p.79.

⁷ Anne Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600 to the present day* (Dublin, 1979), p.19. Hereafter referred to as Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600*. The author acknowledges here that painting in Europe was always a composite business in which central trends and conventions existed (usually dictated by Italian and later French art), but which could be diversified by regional taste and fashions.

⁸ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, pp 13-4, 20.

⁹ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.188. Waterhouse notes that the rise of the conversation piece was in direct alignment with the rise of the middling classes as an economic force in the world of art and material culture more generally.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.188.

¹¹ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.158. In the Irish case, Barnard notes that women were less likely to be depicted in the grandest scales and prices and that there was also a tendency for them to appear in cheaper mediums like chalk and pastel.

¹² Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.218.

social standing. Soldiers and sailors were depicted in uniform (plate 4.4),¹³ while clerics wore their robes (plate 4.5) and judges wore the traditional garb of their profession, a scarlet gown and a long periwig (plate 4.6).¹⁴ However, beyond the sitter's physical appearance and clothing, the profession of the sitter was usually indicated in other ways. Objects and props in the background and surroundings of the painting had been one of the most conventional and accepted ways to indicate professional affiliation since the Renaissance.¹⁵

For example, sailors were usually depicted surrounded by maps, globes and nautical instruments (plate 4.7).¹⁶ Men of letters, statesmen and diplomats were depicted at work amongst their papers (plate 4.8), either deep in study or as if they had just been disturbed by the artist (clerics were usually depicted in a similar manner, often holding a religious text). Holders of high public office, like the speaker of the house of commons, lord chancellor and so on, usually had a portrait of themselves commissioned in the full regalia of their office, in the houses of parliament, or a similarly lofty setting (plate 4.9).

Poses were another area where convention and stock appearances were expected and indeed promoted by both artists and patrons. This did not spring from any lack of imagination or a lacklustre attitude on the part of patrons, but usually it seems, from one of the key concepts in understanding material culture. This was the basic concern of those participating in material culture to keep up with that which was most fashionable at a given time. This is to say that material culture has always been essentially a cycle of fashions dictated usually by those at the top (those with the most money, or who wish to appear to have the most money) and that percolated downwards in a society. Genuine taste and aesthetic beauty did have a part to play in consumer's choices, but this was usually quite subservient to cost and spending power so that one could participate in a

¹³ This was a point of some importance to the sitter, great detail was usually put into the specific uniform of a regiment and of the rank of the sitter. Uniforms, weapons and other accoutrements of the profession, like sashes and gorgets, were often left with the artist so that a faithful depiction could be achieved, Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.41.

¹⁴ Lawyers and judges were usually depicted in the robes of office and the long periwig of their profession. Further examples in the National Portrait Gallery in London include: NPG 172, 388, 459.

¹⁵ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 218-9.

¹⁶ There are a plethora of examples of this practice found in the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich and the National Portrait Gallery in London. Some of the best examples of naval portraits in the NPG are as follows: NPG 140, NPG 1084, NPG 1462, NPG 1496, NPG 1641, NPG 1835, NPG 2026.

fashionable level of material culture and consumption in the first place.¹⁷ This is the kind of culture which those indulging in portraiture found themselves engaged in. Portraits were less often appreciated for genuine artistic merit than for the name and reputation of the artist who had created them and the sum of money which had been paid to commission them. Joshua Reynolds was the most popular artist of his day in Britain apparently for his style of depicting sitters, but whatever his artistic merits, owning a Reynolds portrait, or sitting for Reynolds was a considerable boast in late eighteenth century London. Reynolds may have been appreciated at the time for his artistic innovation and skill, but this was certainly not the reason why most sitters commissioned him. This was the reality of the role of portraiture in society and material culture more generally in late eighteenth century Europe.

This is a basic outline of the custom of portraiture in which Volunteer portraits were produced. Portraits dealing with the Volunteers, like the movement itself¹⁸ sprang from a specific context and precedents. Whatever artistic boundaries these artefacts pushed or stretched, we should remember the contextual background in which they were produced. The world of portraiture described above had only been really well established in Ireland for some decades by the early 1780s. However, the trends of British and European portraiture had asserted themselves well in this time, chiefly through the desire of much of the new Protestant elite to appear cosmopolitan in their fashions and possessions.¹⁹ Some domestic Irish artistic developments did begin to appear in the 1780s, but in no great obvious style or numbers to prompt discussion of a specific Irish style of art in any genre in this period.²⁰ Fintan Cullen ultimately cites this as being symptomatic of colonial identity,

Colonialism engenders interdependence. Cultural certainty may indeed be stressed by those... who aspire to the more dominant

¹⁷ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.14.

¹⁸ Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster', chapter 2.

¹⁹ Cullen, *Visual Politics*, pp 86-90.

²⁰ Crooshank, *Irish art from 1600*, p.19, states that an Irish style emerged from the late eighteenth century, especially in applied arts, but in painting such an emergence is not explicitly evident. Cullen, *Visual politics*, pp 50-80, notes that the ambition and spirit of the Volunteer era found expressions in art and material culture at the time, but these were not long-lived and really more topical in nature.

culture, but an underlying confusion will invariably make its presence felt.²¹

Distinctly Irish patterns of consumption which were deliberate were certainly evident in other areas, such as clothing and fashion,²² but to speak of an Irish tradition of painting or an Irish manner of being depicted in portraiture at this time rests on very unsteady foundations. Britain was certainly the dominant force in Ireland's artistic development,

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Ireland followed England in terms of the dominance of portraiture over all other forms of exhibited art. Portraits made up the largest percentage in any exhibition in Dublin prior to the founding of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1824.²³

Essentially, those who commissioned Volunteer portraits did so within the constraints of a reasonably rigid system, bound by rules of fashion and convention dictated by Britain and to a lesser extent the continental countries. However, what of Irish art more specifically and how did it fit into this model of the world of portraiture in eighteenth century Europe?

Art in eighteenth century Ireland and Irish art in the eighteenth century have been the subject of a considerable historiographical lacuna until recent decades. To speak of an Irish school, Irish artists or even Irish art in the eighteenth century has been difficult because of the nature of extant sources and the paucity of scholarly endeavour in the field. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, there was a tendency to view Ireland as artistically deficient in relation to its neighbours. Concerning Irish art and artists in the eighteenth century, William Carey noted in 1826 'Ireland had some native artists, and was occasionally visited by straggling adventurers of the brush from London'.²⁴ This remained very much the case until the late 1960s, when a small but discernible movement of scholars wishing to fill this lacuna began to emerge. Key works

²¹ Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600*, p.90.

²² Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 254-6.

²³ Fintan Cullen, *The Irish face, redefining the Irish portrait* (National Portrait Gallery, London, 2004), p.12. Hereafter referred to as Cullen, *The Irish face*.

²⁴ William Carey, *Some memoirs of the fine arts in England and Ireland* (London, 1826), p.179.

in the rediscovery of eighteenth century Irish art were completed by Bruce Arnold,²⁵ Mary Webster,²⁶ Anne Crookshank²⁷ and Desmond Fitzgerald, Knight of Glin.²⁸ In recent years, further study of an Irish artistic tradition has continued in several multi-authorship works,²⁹ but the cause of writing up an Irish artistic tradition has been taken up most vigorously in the last decade by Fintan Cullen in particular. His works, *Visual politics : the representation of Ireland, 1750-1930* (Cork, 1997) and *The Irish face: redefining the Irish portrait* (National Portrait Gallery, 2004), have begun to redefine our concepts of what makes Irish art unique and different from its neighbours in the eighteenth century, while also noting the overwhelming influence of British art on Ireland in the eighteenth century. These works have collectively begun to ameliorate the situation, but as Cullen reminds us in his *Apollo* article of September 1992, there is still a long way to go.³⁰

However, as a result of this work, what do we know in general about the Irish art world into which Volunteer portraits were introduced in the late eighteenth century?

The world of Irish art and art in Ireland in the late eighteenth century was not one of cosmopolitan taste, widespread high patronage, or towering artistic personalities like Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough in Britain. The Irish art scene had only really begun to take off with the cushion of several decades without violent conflict in the early to mid-eighteenth century.³¹ Those who bought art or pontificated on the subject in public at this time were the victims of constant lampooning in satirical writings, such as

²⁵ Bruce Arnold, *A concise history of Irish art* (2nd ed., Norwich, 1977). Hereafter referred to as Arnold, *Concise history of Irish art*.

²⁶ Mary Webster, *Francis Wheatley* (London, 1970). This account of Wheatley's Irish sojourn is the most comprehensive yet compiled. Webster has also written several articles about Wheatley's Irish paintings which have been acquired by the National Gallery of Ireland in *Irish arts review*.

²⁷ Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600*.

²⁸ Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin collaborated on a number of works including: *Irish Portraits 1660-1860* (Paul Mellon Foundation for British Art, 1969), *Ireland's painters, 1660-1920* (London, 1978), *Ireland's Painters, 1600-1940* (Yale University Press, 2002), a new edition of the above title.

²⁹ Such as Raymond Gillespie and Brian Kennedy (eds.), *Ireland: art into history* (Dublin, 1994) and Adele Dalsimer (ed.), *Visualizing Ireland, national identity and the pictorial tradition* (Boston and London, 1993).

³⁰ Fintan Cullen, 'Still a long way to go: recent Irish art history' in *Art history*, xv, no.3 (September 1992), pp 378-383.

³¹ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.152.

Brenan Beaumont's *The painter's breakfast* (Dublin, 1756).³² Toby Barnard asserts that one of the main reasons the Irish art scene was constantly a source of ridicule was its relative newness at the time in relation to the rest of Europe.³³ Those who bought art in Ireland in the late eighteenth century were an incredibly mixed group (in social, economic and professional terms), and with the widespread expansion of art markets (in response to cheaper products, especially prints and the growing middling classes who increasingly became artistically active in terms of patronage) in the mid-late century this became more intensified and apparent. A good starting point for this overview of art in late eighteenth century Ireland is with the artists themselves. Since they were the artificers of the primary sources for this chapter, it is therefore pertinent to briefly consider such questions as who the artists were, where they were working, for whom did they work, what training and encouragement they received and so on in order to gauge the state of Irish art in the late eighteenth century.

One of the recurring themes of the revival of interest in eighteenth century Irish art has been the sheer number of artists and skilled craftsmen who were trained and working in Ireland in this period.³⁴ Artists came from a wide range of social, economic and geographical backgrounds. They were generally from the middling classes, which Toby Barnard sketches as a wide section of society in terms of professions, incomes, social mobility and influence,³⁵ whose members were often wont to encourage artistic merit and ability in a child, although usually as a pastime rather than as a potential career. Art was generally recognised as a viable profession, but one which was rightly viewed as very narrow, closed and difficult to succeed in.³⁶ The calling of art was often followed in a family line and seemed to progress naturally in such an arrangement. An excellent example of this kind of familial connection was the Hone family. Nathaniel Hone (1718-1784) and his brother, Samuel Hone (b.1726) were both portrait painters, as were

³² Anne Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters 1600-1940* (Yale, 2002), pp 53-4. Hereafter referred to as Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*.

³³ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.152.

³⁴ This is a recurring theme in all of the major works mentioned below and in the case of Bruce Arnold, one of the stated aims of the book (p.7) is to map out and reclaim many Irish artists who have mistakenly fallen or been placed into foreign schools because of a lack of knowledge concerning Irish art in this period.

³⁵ Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*, chapters 4-9.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.156.

Nathaniel's sons, Horace (1756-1825), who painted miniatures and John Camillus (1759-1836), who painted portraits and miniatures.³⁷ Robert West (d.1770), a famous Dublin drawing master and his son Francis Robert West (c.1749-1809) formed another familial painting link in mid to late eighteenth century Dublin. However, some artists were not from an artistic lineage, but first generation artists seem to have been a little more unusual than those who had some familial connection to the craft.

Although Dublin certainly proffered the greatest number of artists in national terms, craftsmen were to be found all over the country (although work would usually force them to uproot at quite a young age, for training or to actively seek artistic commissions). James Barry (1741-1806), an artist of international fame and notoriety in his own lifetime,³⁸ was from Cork, while Robert Hunter³⁹ and Joseph Wilson⁴⁰ both hailed from the north of Ireland. The best artistic training in Ireland was to be had in Dublin, so artists of talent were usually sent to Dublin or even London to receive the appropriate training.

In mid to late eighteenth century Ireland, the focal point for the training of artists were the Dublin Society schools. The Dublin Society itself was established in 1731,⁴¹ while the schools were established circa 1744, when several boys were sent to Robert West to be trained at the society's expense. West had run his own art school in George's Lane since the late 1730s, and at first the boys appear to have been part of this school, but paid for by the Dublin Society.⁴² The association became more formal in 1750, as West was paid a salary by the society, and the school moved to its own building in Shaw's Court, Dame Street. The school catered for the training of artists in many different fields, but there was a big emphasis on being able to draw in chalk, of which craft West was an

³⁷ Details of the Hone family can be found in W.G. Strickland, *A dictionary of Irish artists* (2 vols, 1st edition 1913, 2nd edition, Irish University Press Shannon, 1968), vol. 1, pp 508-24. Hereafter referred to as Strickland, *A dictionary of Irish artists*.

³⁸ Arnold, *Concise history of Irish art*, p.73.

³⁹ John Hewitt and Theo Snoddy, *Art in Ulster: 1, paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture for the last 400 years to 1957* (Belfast, 1977), p.163.

⁴⁰ Eileen Black, *A catalogue of the permanent collection 3, Irish oil paintings, 1572-1830* (Ulster Museum Belfast, 1994), p.99. Hereafter referred to as Black, *Catalogue of the permanent collection*.

⁴¹ Crookshank and the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, p.86. The most significant study to date on the Dublin Society schools is in this volume, which dedicates a chapter, pp 83-92, to the subject.

⁴² *Ibid*, pp 83-5.

acknowledged European master in his lifetime.⁴³ The school advertised in 1764 its desire to teach those in the fields of,

Figures and ornament drawing...all Painters, Carvers, Chasers, Goldsmiths, Carpet-Weavers, Linen and Paper Stainers, Damask and Diaper Weavers, their Journeymen and Apprentices, and others whose Profession depends upon design...⁴⁴

Students were admitted and taught for free and also had some of their expenses and even trips abroad to study in rare cases, paid for by the society. A school of design was added in the early 1750s and a school of architecture in 1765.⁴⁵ From 1746, yearly exhibitions took place and premiums were also awarded for artistic merit.⁴⁶ The Dublin Society schools educated a significant number of notable artists from the 1740s onwards, although by no means did every successful Irish artist of the period study at the school.

One of the results of the Dublin Society schools was to produce a flowering pool of labour in the fine and applied arts in late eighteenth century Ireland.⁴⁷ Because so many different professions and skilled crafts were catered for by the school, Ireland produced and possessed a very skilled and talented pool of artistic labour by the late eighteenth century, in both fine and applied fields of art. Although some artists would leave the country for work, many would remain in Ireland to cater for the increasing consumer markets which required skilled artistic labour (especially in the areas of interior design like stucco work, but also in the decoration of ceramics, glass, silver, sculpture and so on).⁴⁸ When Irish artists went abroad they were subject to the same professional obstacles as others. Irish artists could succeed at the highest levels of fine art, as evinced by the careers of James Barry⁴⁹ and Nathaniel Hone,⁵⁰ who were both members of the Royal Academy. Irish artists were especially noted for their accomplishment in the area

⁴³ Ibid, p.84.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.86.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.86.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.86.

⁴⁷ Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600*, p.18.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.18.

⁴⁹ Arnold, *Concise history of Irish art*, pp 71-3; Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 266-7.

⁵⁰ Arnold, *Concise history of Irish art*, p.80; Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 266-7.

of landscapes,⁵¹ as in the case of George Barret⁵² (1732-1784) and pastels (which many of them owed to their instruction by Robert West), at which Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1739-1808) in particular excelled.⁵³ Printing and engraving was also an area of expertise in which many Irish artists owed their skills to West and his school.⁵⁴ As the eighteenth century wore on, there was a greater tendency for Irish artists of talent to stay in Ireland. Robert Hunter, an artist of acknowledged great talent, spent his career in Ireland,⁵⁵ as did Joseph Wilson,⁵⁶ proof that Ireland had a viable and buoyant art market for home-grown talent.

However, some artists who worked in this period were visitors to Ireland. Some, like Francis Wheatley (who visited Ireland from 1779-1783) and Gilbert Stuart (in Ireland 1779-1789)⁵⁷ came to work, in the hope of acquiring major commissions in high society circles,⁵⁸ while others like the itinerant Strickland Lowry, worked much lower on the social scale but with the same objective in mind.⁵⁹ These artists introduced foreign elements into the Irish art scene, which quite often clearly had a formative effect on native artists.⁶⁰ The artistic produce of foreigners was usually viewed as more desirable by the higher tiers of the art-consuming public, having a touch of the exotic about it (this was undoubtedly a major reason for the early success of American artists such as John Singleton Copley, Benjamin West and Gilbert Stuart in Britain).⁶¹

The quality of art available in Ireland at the time, and consequently the level of artistic talent on offer, is a complex subject to address and one which cannot be answered in its entirety here. However, this question is of great importance to the study of Volunteer portraits and some answer should be attempted.

⁵¹ Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600*, p.19.

⁵² Arnold, *Concise history of Irish art*, pp 68-71.

⁵³ Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, pp 104-7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p.84.

⁵⁵ Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, pp 94-7.

⁵⁶ Arnold, *Concise history of Irish art*, p.84; Strickland, *A dictionary of Irish artists*, p.458.

⁵⁷ Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, p.96.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp 161-180.

⁵⁹ Maguire, *Up in arms*, pp 53-4; Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, pp 169-71.

⁶⁰ Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600*, p.36.

⁶¹ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.276.

The quality of art available and produced in Ireland at the time varied greatly. The highest tiers of the art-consuming public expected and indeed indulged in the best that Ireland's resident artists, dealers and auctioneers had to offer.⁶² The best domestic works, produced by artists such as Robert Hunter, were intended for the highest level of artistic patron, and especially in his case, were the equal of much that was available in Britain or Europe at the time.⁶³ However, one of the acknowledged reasons for Hunter's lack of renown, at the time and in later scholarship, was the fact that he chose to spend his working career in Ireland.⁶⁴ Especially among the upper classes, there was often still a stigma attached to the consumption of domestic Irish art.⁶⁵ In the seventeenth century, Ireland's small art market had been based almost entirely on imported works⁶⁶ (and personnel) and the legacy of this situation certainly lasted until at least the mid-eighteenth century. The Irish artist Robert Carver commented as late as the 1770s that Irish art in general was often as good as that produced in Britain and on the continent, but that artistic taste still gave undue credit, attention and monetary support to foreign art in Ireland.⁶⁷ Certainly amongst those who could afford it, foreign art, including works commissioned abroad and existing works purchased overseas, remained a very popular choice.⁶⁸ Even amongst families who were usually great supporters of Irish manufactures, there was a distinct trend towards the consumption of foreign artistic wares. The Fitzgeralds of County Kildare were great patriots and supporters of the consumption of domestic produce, but this did not extend to their family portraits, which were almost exclusively by foreign artists, usually from London. From the mid to late eighteenth

⁶² Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 170-1.

⁶³ Hunter's most celebrated work 'Lord Newbottle' (1762, Private collection) shows the standard which Irish art could reach in terms of composition and accomplishment by the late eighteenth century.

⁶⁴ Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, p.96.

⁶⁵ Even in Britain, where concerted attempts had been made for a great part of the century to forge a British school and tradition that would appeal to British consumers, many upper class consumers still preferred foreign produce, Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.49.

⁶⁶ Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600*, p.10; Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.153.

⁶⁷ Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, p.54.

⁶⁸ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 156-7, 170-1. The purchase and ownership of foreign art was linked to a greater sense of taste and refinement and therefore, gentility and respectability in the patron. This whole practice of owning and buying foreign art is essential to any understanding of material culture, in that the artistic ability and merit on display was not the key point for the great majority of those participating in the social custom. The key observation to be made is that one was participating in the social custom along the prescribed lines and could therefore partake of the benefits membership of material culture was thought to bestow.

century, members of the family sat for the most popular artists of the moment, including Allan Ramsay, Francis Cotes and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Amongst lower tiers of the art-consuming public, relative products were available in terms of size, accomplishment and price. One of the most prominent themes of eighteenth century art history has been the expansion of traditional art markets, in direct correspondence with the rise of the middling classes, the wider distribution of disposable incomes and the meteoric ascent of material culture and popular taste as markers of social standing and rank.⁶⁹ Ireland and its residents in the middling classes were no different from their British and continental neighbours in their taking up of material culture⁷⁰ and its trappings by the late eighteenth century, and a discernible expansion of art markets to the middling classes in late eighteenth century Ireland is identifiable. We can see this through a number of factors, including the greater number of artists being trained and working in Ireland and their wider customer base, as Irish residents of the burgeoning middling classes became more artistically active. The expansion of art markets increased the number of artists opting to stay in Ireland for work⁷¹ and indeed the number and stature of artists visiting Ireland in a professional capacity.⁷² For those patrons who were lower in the social order (including a great number of the Volunteer patrons), the deciding factors in their artistic consumption habits were opportunity and price.⁷³ Opportunity was governed by the available artistic skills and their capacity to work (in terms of output) and price was dictated by the amount of money the patron had to spend, or wished to appear they had to spend, on this social custom. So, although upper class patrons may have favoured expensive foreign commissions and purchases, they were no longer the majority of artistic customers, as they had been for several centuries. By the late eighteenth century, a great number of consumers were from the middling classes, attempting to buy their way into gentility and the social hierarchy through this most

⁶⁹ This is a theme explored quite thoroughly by Matthew Craske, *Art in Europe 1700-1830, a history of the visual arts in an era of unprecedented urban economic growth* (Oxford, 1997).

⁷⁰ This is borne out in general by Barnard's seminal work, *Making the Grand Figure*, throughout the volume.

⁷¹ Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, chapter six 'The Dublin Society schools and their influence'. This chapter (and also chapters seven and ten as well) lists a great number of artists who trained and worked in Ireland in the late eighteenth century, which lends support to the argument that some artists increasingly considered a career in Ireland as a viable option.

⁷² Crookshank, *Irish art from 1600*, p.36.

⁷³ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.157.

genteel of pursuits and social customs. Most of the extant sources which we are concerned with came from this social stratum, and Ireland's artistic capabilities, markets and general artistic disposition are therefore central to this discussion because most customers in this area were content to use domestic artistic resources. This is a very general overview of Ireland's artistic state in the eighteenth century and will aid us in establishing an appropriate context for our commentary on Volunteer portraits below.

II

How do we define a Volunteer portrait and what qualifies a work of art for membership of this group of primary sources?

A Volunteer portrait can be reasonably defined in the following manner. A Volunteer portrait is a work in which a Volunteer is depicted in the uniform of his⁷⁴ corps between the years 1778 and 1793 (several works, like that of Colonel William Sharman by Thomas Robinson were commissioned after the period of volunteering was over, but they qualify for membership of this group because of their subject matter and the method and manner of their composition). A contemporary portrait of an active Volunteer in civilian dress does not qualify for this group, although it is still of interest to us for various other reasons. The surroundings and background of the painting can be of any type, the focus of the Volunteer portrait being the sitter in his uniform. Backgrounds and surroundings are of great interest, as we shall see later, but they are irrelevant in terms of definition. This group of sources is defined irrespective of size, as Volunteer portraits can be any size from miniatures to full length portraits. Volunteer portraits can be in the form of different genres of art, such as the various forms of portraiture, conversation pieces and history paintings, but the genre is also irrelevant to the identification of a Volunteer portrait, as the focus is on the appearance of the sitter. This is a basic definition of what kind of paintings should be included in this kind of analysis, but what Volunteer portraits possess in common or what defines the Volunteer portraits as a group of sources will be the subject of analysis later in this chapter.

How many Volunteer portraits, as so defined, are still extant and where are they to be found? Volunteer portraits can be found in many galleries, collections and institutions in the British Isles. The main concentrations are in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, the National Gallery and National Museum of Ireland, but some works are also located in the National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery in London, as well as some isolated

⁷⁴ Or in the case of two pictures, her uniform. In Wheatley's review at Belan Park and his picture of the Irish House of Commons there are women depicted in Volunteer inspired uniforms modelled on riding habits. Because the clothing is associated with a particular corps, they qualify as Volunteer portraits. There is also a separate conversation piece of Lord and Lady Aldborough from 1786 in a private collection in which Lady Aldborough was depicted wearing a Volunteer uniform.

examples in municipal galleries and heritage sites in Britain and Ireland. All of these sources are easy to locate, identify and study, with reproductions being easily available and frequently published to date.

However, there are many Volunteer works in the care of private collectors. These can include works which have been passed down through families, such as the collection of the Knight of Glin, but also collections which have been assembled in more recent years by private collectors through auction houses. Works which are not maintained in state affiliated institutions pose difficulties for scholars. The chief problem is their lack of accessibility. Private collections are by their very nature not always available to the public for viewing or study, and therefore the scholar is placed at a disadvantage in several ways. Reproductions of the sources and subsequent study are at the discretion of the owner. A larger problem exists with collections which are closed or about which very little is known, namely that their contents are often not recorded anywhere in the public domain. This creates a situation where Volunteer portraits may exist in private hands completely beyond our knowledge. However, many collectors have had the contents of their artistic portfolio published on a frequent basis in high profile publications and completely closed collections are not very common. In general, the owners of private collections are quite happy to allow scholars to view works of art in their possession for the purposes of academic research.

In all however, there are certainly at least twenty-eight authentic Volunteer portraits in total, and dozens of others works which are concerned with Volunteer sitters or are related to Irish Volunteer companies in some way. However, judging by the number of active Volunteer companies at the time (between 1,400 and 1,500),⁷⁵ the level of dedication of active Volunteers and especially the quality, quantity and level of thought which went into other artefacts issuing from Volunteer corps at this time, there were certainly many times this number of portraits commissioned in this period, although any precise estimate is impossible. The twenty-eight portraits which comprise the basis for this study must therefore be considered at all times as only a small fraction of the many Volunteer artworks that must have existed in the closing decades of the eighteenth century.

⁷⁵ Ó Snodaigh, *The Irish Volunteers: a list of the units*.

A discussion of how Volunteer works were produced should begin with a consideration of how such art was commissioned and how Volunteer portraits impacted upon existing art markets in Ireland. Did Volunteer works simply replace an existing demand for conventional portraiture, with a temporary fashionable preference for Volunteer works, or was the market for Volunteer portraits supplementary to existing art markets, creating more business for artists within highly competitive existing markets? Analysis reveals that there is evidence of both trends happening simultaneously. In some cases, Volunteers commissioned works of themselves which were in addition to portraits of them in civilian garb as well (often painted by the same artist at the same time and in very similar poses, as we shall see). Good examples of this practice are the cases of Waddell Cunningham of Belfast and Randall-William, marquess of Antrim. Cunningham commissioned portraits of himself as captain of Belfast First Volunteer Company⁷⁶ (plate 4.10) and as a civilian merchant (plate 4.11) in 1786 by Robert Home in Dublin. The marquess of Antrim had himself painted by Joseph Wilson in Volunteer garb (plate 4.12) and in Windsor court uniform as well in 1784 (plate 4.13),⁷⁷ in addition to a conversation piece of himself and the marchioness painted by Francis Wheatley in 1782 (plate 4.14).⁷⁸ There appears to have been quite a market for likenesses in having both a Volunteer and a civilian portrait painted at this time (not to mention further works of the sitter, like family conversation pieces), which was to the benefit of artists because it created further opportunities for work within a reasonably limited and highly competitive domestic art market.

However, some patrons seem to have preferred only to have one or the other type of portrait produced. Due to the nature of extant artworks, any attempt to draw up a list of works that separates individuals who had either a civilian or Volunteer work done would be highly speculative and unsound in terms of historical method. However, some patrons clearly seemed to have preferred one over the other. Captain William Dawson of Belfast First Volunteer Company's grenadier division seems to have had only one portrait painted

⁷⁶ Maguire, *Up in arms*, pp 54-5.

⁷⁷ Phillip Mansel, 'Monarchy, uniform and the rise of the frac 1760-1830' in *Past and Present*, xcvi (1982), p.116.

⁷⁸ Both paintings are in a private collection at Glenarm Castle, Co.Antrim and the conversation piece is kept in the NGI (NGI 4339).

by Joseph Wilson⁷⁹ and opted for a civilian portrait (plate 4.15), despite his being closely ensconced in Volunteer circles in Belfast. Viscount John O'Neill of Shane's Castle, County Antrim was another Volunteer sitter who appears not to have had a Volunteer portrait painted, despite being a very prominent northern Volunteer leader.⁸⁰ However, a portrait of the viscount in civilian clothes by Francis Wheatley is kept in the Ulster Museum, Belfast (plate 4.16).⁸¹

An unidentified Volunteer of the Clanwilliam Union Volunteers of Tipperary (plate 4.17), by an unknown artist, provides an interesting case study of how Volunteer portraits interacted with existing Irish art markets. The portrait was begun as a likeness of the gentleman in question in civilian attire, but was never completed in this manner. In the period between having the portrait started, probably in 1779 and its eventual completion in 1780 by a different artist, the sitter had evidently become a Volunteer in the Clanwilliam Union Volunteers. The sitter had the civilian clothes painted over with the uniform of his corps by a different artist.⁸² This is a very illuminating example of how Volunteer portraits were commissioned, in that they obviously became quite fashionable to own as volunteering grew more respectable and was embraced by many of the upper and middling classes in Ireland.⁸³ This is a very extreme, but interesting example of how the market for Volunteer portraits opened up as volunteering became a highly fashionable activity in the years of 1778 to 1782.

Despite the nature of the primary sources in this area, it is obvious from the extant sources that Volunteer portraits were a significant boon to Irish artists and artists residing in Ireland. Several artists obviously recognised the potential income to be had from the Volunteer movement (we have seen in other chapters how many different craftsmen cashed in on the phenomenon of volunteering in these years) and produced a significant number of these pictures during the late 1770s and 1780s. Joseph Wilson, who worked in

⁷⁹ Black, *Catalogue of the permanent collection*, p.101; John Hewitt and Theo Snoddy, *Art in Ulster: 1, paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture for the last 400 years to 1957* (Belfast, 1977), p.8.

⁸⁰ O'Neill was captain of the Edenduffcarrick (Shane's Castle) Horse, colonel of Antrim's First Royal Regiment and was also a frequent delegate to larger Volunteer meetings. Details of his Volunteer activities can be found in T.G.F. Paterson, 'The Volunteer companies of Ulster, 1778-1793' in *The Irish Sword*, vii (1966), 105-6, 114.

⁸¹ Black, *Catalogue of the permanent collection*, pp 97-8.

⁸² 'The Clanwilliam Union Volunteers' in *The Irish Sword*, ii no.8 (Summer 1965), pp 264-5.

⁸³ P.D.H. Smyth, 'The Volunteers and parliament, 1779-1784' in Thomas Bartlett and David Hayton (eds.), *Penal era and golden age, essays in Irish history, 1690-1800* (Antrim, 1979), pp 115-6.

Belfast and Dublin, produced a substantial number of Volunteer works in these years. He had connections to the Volunteers, freemasons and other local power structures in Belfast, becoming a member of Belfast First Volunteer Company and masonic lodge number 257 by 1783.⁸⁴ A lot of his business was probably gleaned through these connections. This highlights a very basic point about artists in the eighteenth century, in that they needed not only to be skilled at their craft, but also to have a mastery of polite manners and gentility to succeed.⁸⁵ This was obviously something which Wilson had, as his clients ranged from hereditary nobles, like the marquess of Antrim, through to lesser members of the upper classes, such as the knight of Glin, local power brokers in Belfast, like John Brown,⁸⁶ Waddell Cunningham or Robert Hugh Hyndman, and at the lowest in social standing, the Reverend William Bruce, a Presbyterian cleric from Lisburn.

Francis Wheatley made no bones about his intention to launch his Irish business through the Irish Volunteers, this intention being demonstrated and noted in several secondary works on Wheatley.⁸⁷ In terms of the artistic pecking order of late eighteenth century Ireland, Volunteer portraits are an excellent measure of the number of artists working in the country, where they were working and who they were working for. At the upper end of the scale, very successful artists like Robert Home, who somewhat monopolized the Dublin scene for the best part of the 1780s,⁸⁸ produced Volunteer works, as did less prominent artists like John Trotter who seemed to find a convenient and lucrative market for their skills in the Irish Volunteers and military portraiture in general⁸⁹ and even visiting itinerant painters like Strickland Lowry took to painting Volunteer likenesses. So, Volunteer portraits provided a significant supplementary market to existing commissions and one which opened up greater spending and consumption of fine art in Ireland.

⁸⁴ Black, *Catalogue of the permanent collection*, p.99.

⁸⁵ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, pp 36-7, 49.

⁸⁶ S.S. Millin, *Sidelights on Belfast history* (London, 1932), pp 91-2.

⁸⁷ James Kelly, 'Francis Wheatley: his Irish paintings, 1779-1783' in Adele Dalsimer (ed.), *Visualizing Ireland, national identity and the pictorial tradition* (1993), p.149; Cullen, *Visual politics*, p.54.

⁸⁸ Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, p.164.

⁸⁹ Trotter produced at least three Volunteer portraits in addition to two further significant and no doubt lucrative military works, both of which are discussed below.

Further questions as to why Volunteer works were commissioned, what purposes they would serve and what consumers generally wanted from a Volunteer work can best be answered in relation to individual works and accordingly will take place later.

Volunteers were faced with something of a conundrum when commissioning their portraits. There was a great amount of choice available already in the world of portraiture in regard to how classes, professions and gender were depicted, but how should an amateur soldier from Ireland have himself painted? This seems to have been a serious concern for sitters judging by the extant results. The problem which faced the Irish Volunteer was as follows; in which of the numerous guises available to him should he be depicted? A Volunteer could be painted in one of the conventional military poses of the day, as the presence of the uniform might dictate, or should he be painted in the traditional pose and surroundings of his everyday profession? Added to this there were concerns of class, status and the size of the picture and the many conventions which were fashionable, popular and current at a given time. Theoretically, there were a multiplicity of different ways in which Volunteers could have themselves depicted and this is very much borne out by the nature of the extant sources.

The size of Volunteer portraits ran the gamut from miniatures to large full-length pictures. The size of a picture is very important for several reasons and informs us on some basic points about the sitter and the desire they had to be depicted in a portrait. Firstly, there was the basic consideration of cost. In the 1760s, a full length by Sir Joshua Reynolds in London cost £150, while in Bath Thomas Gainsborough offered the same length for sixty-four guineas. Allan Ramsay charged £84 in Edinburgh, while in Rome, Pompeo Batoni could expect £24 from such a work.⁹⁰ By the early 1780s when Volunteer works were being produced, these prices had not increased significantly, but Reynolds did demand as much as two hundred guineas by this stage, while Gainsborough was known to charge a little in excess of one hundred guineas for full length pieces.⁹¹ In

⁹⁰ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.50.

⁹¹ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.158.

Ireland prices were certainly a little lower (this was also the case in America),⁹² but portraiture was still a costly business by any reckoning.

The size of a portrait, in conjunction with other points, is one of the key factors in our analysis of why a portrait was painted, how the sitter desired to appear and was ultimately trying to achieve by having the work commissioned. In high society and the upper classes, the largest and most ostentatious works were preferred. Society portraits, or works of men and women which wished to capture what Reynolds called “the grand style”,⁹³ were most often done on very large canvases at full length to achieve a sense of majesty and grandeur. Amongst the middling classes, several different sizes were popular, but the most frequent seemed to be half or three quarter length portraits (and indeed conversation pieces, often considered to be the preserve of the middling classes). In such pictures the focus was undoubtedly on the likeness of the sitter first and foremost (this tended to indicate that the picture was intended for a domestic setting and was probably commissioned for sentimental reasons). Although clothing was still a factor, the likeness was the real *raison d’être* for the painting and this was the focus of the piece. This was in marked contrast to society and more upper class works, which drew great attention to the clothing and grand apparel and accoutrements of the sitter⁹⁴ (we have only to look at the works of artists like Reynolds, Zoffany and Wheatley for good proof of this).⁹⁵

Volunteer works in miniature are very interesting indeed considering the reasons for which miniatures were commissioned in this period. Miniatures were very intimate reminders of close friends and loved ones, not usually seen by more than the sitter and the individual who would come to own it.⁹⁶ Thus, it is interesting to see that the Volunteers found their way into this medium, which was very specialised and could be very expensive, especially if the picture were set in a frame of precious metals and possibly precious stones.⁹⁷ Three interesting examples of miniatures are provided by Richard D’Arcy of the Gort Light Dragoons, County Galway (plate 4.18), William

⁹² Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.50. John Singleton Copley claimed that the 300 guineas a year he made in America would be roughly equivalent to 900 guineas per annum if he were in London.

⁹³ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.221.

⁹⁴ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.47; Breen, *The marketplace of revolution*, pp 160-1.

⁹⁵ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 163-79, 315-21.

⁹⁶ Paul Caffrey, *John Comerford and the portrait miniature in Ireland 1620-1850* (Kilkenny, 1997), p.9.

⁹⁷ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 160-1.

Robert Fitzgerald, 2nd duke of Leinster by Hugh Douglas Hamilton (plate 4.19) and a miniature of Sir Lawrence Parsons by an unknown artist (plate 4.20).

D'Arcy was an officer of the Gort Light Dragoons and the intended owner of the miniature is not known, but judging by the status of the miniature in the eighteenth century in general, it was intended for a loved one or immediate family member. Once again, this source provides us with evidence of just how pervasive the Volunteers were in material culture at the time. This miniature was a typical example of the character of the eighteenth century Protestant Irish gentleman who saw himself as a man of martial character,⁹⁸ but who often lost out to professional soldiers in the affections of women.⁹⁹

The chalk miniature of the duke of Leinster is an example of a different kind of artwork in this genre, a slightly larger work that would be hung in a very private setting.¹⁰⁰ Once again with this work, we see an artist of great stature engaging in the production of Volunteer portraits, attesting to the prolific nature of the movement, but also to the individual pride and warmth associated with one's Volunteer unit. It is significant to see that a likeness of the duke in his Volunteer uniform was thought worthy of replication amongst the many likenesses of the Fitzgeralds, produced by Hamilton in the period before he left for Italy in late 1781 or early 1782.¹⁰¹ The duke was an enthusiastic Volunteer and until the discovery of this miniature there were no known likenesses of the duke in uniform produced for his own private consumption. A very similar work also exists of Sir Lawrence Parsons, commander of the Parsonstown (Birr) Volunteers of County Offaly. This work is approximately twenty four inches in length and depicted the sitter at half length, in Volunteer uniform with a felt hat in his left hand. These two small works were probably intended for very private display and once again serve to illustrate the sentimental attachment that many Volunteers had to their company

⁹⁸ James Kelly addresses this subject in some detail from the onset in, *'That damn'd thing called honour', duelling in Ireland 1570-1860* (Cork University Press, 1995).

⁹⁹ The amorous success of military men (or at least their perceived advantages) at the time is well attested in literary works of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Two prime examples would be in William Makepeace Thackeray's *Barry Lyndon*, where the longstanding affections of Redmond Barry are rejected by Nora Brady when Gayle's Regiment of foot visit Brady's Town. A slightly later example would be in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* where the younger Bennett sisters in particular are very much swept off their feet by the officers (George Wickham most notably) of Colonel Forster's regiment of militia. The militia first feature in chapter six and are rarely out of the story past this point.

¹⁰⁰ William Laffan (ed.), *The art of a nation, three centuries of Irish painting* (London, 2002), pp 17-20. Hereafter referred to as Laffan, *The art of a nation*.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp 19-20.

and its ideals. A recurring theme of many Volunteer works was indeed that of nostalgia and sentimentality and this can especially be seen in these small works intended for very private display.

In Birr Castle, County Offaly, a devotional miniature of Henry Flood is also preserved (plate 4.21). This miniature differs from the two examples above in that it was probably not commissioned by a friend or relation of Flood, but rather seems to have been painted as a devotional artefact, created to represent the owner's admiration and respect for this leading figure within Ireland's patriot alliance. This miniature is very small and is set in a simple gold frame, depicting Flood leaning upon a table, with a document commemorating one of his parliamentary achievements. This is one of the only devotional items of this kind still in existence and highlights an uncommon, but significant aspect of Volunteer art in this period (devotional prints of leading Volunteers were also produced in the area of copperplate prints, which are explored in chapter six).

A further work along similar lines is provided in plate 4.22. This small chalk drawing was produced by Francis Robert West, son of the famous Dublin drawing master, Robert West. This work does not seem to have been a work of art commissioned by a customer in search of a Volunteer likeness, but instead was part of a set of chalk works depicting scenes from everyday life in the upper tiers of society.¹⁰² It is interesting to see that a Volunteer scene warranted depiction in such a set of pictures and that it was considered as an important social custom for Irish men in this manner.

We have observed above how background and settings were crucial to the composition and overall appearance of conventional portraiture and the same is true of Volunteer works. Volunteer portraits bought into all the usual trends and conventions of late eighteenth century portraiture in regard to the typical backgrounds and settings used. There is evidence that Volunteers opted for a wide range of backgrounds and surroundings which were well grounded in the artistic conventions of the day, but there were certainly fashions of being depicted as a Volunteer, in terms of the background and surroundings commonly used.

¹⁰² The remainder of the set are reproduced in Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, pp 90-1.

Lieutenant Robert Hugh Hyndman of Belfast (plate 4.23) provides a fairly standard example of the background and surroundings of a prosperous middling class sitter. The subject was placed amongst several props indicating his profession; a packet of tobacco on the table stamped with the name of his company and a long clay pipe in his hand (Hyndman and his brothers were merchants from Belfast who dealt in many products, but tobacco seems to have been a significant part of their business).¹⁰³ The background features a table covered in green baize and a column and curtain arrangement, typical of British portraiture since Van Dyck and Lely.¹⁰⁴ Despite his military apparel, Hyndman was placed in a setting that was typical of his profession, that of a merchant and of the middling classes, while also paying some attention to the standard practice of fashionable portraiture at this time.¹⁰⁵ Hyndman's portrait was a hybrid of many different conventions and expectations. He paid homage to his profession, class and Volunteer connections, while also choosing a somewhat typical setting for his portrait.

Quite a few examples survive of plain backgrounds in Volunteer works.¹⁰⁶ Such backgrounds were usually composed of dark shades of brown and have little real aesthetic bearing on the painting as a work of art. These backgrounds are most evident in works of half and three quarter length and usually depict members of the middling classes. There are over a dozen examples of this background in extant works, most of which depict the sitter in half-length, inclined slightly to one side. These sitters came from different strata of the middling classes, with the exception of Henry Grattan. This work of Grattan (plate 4.24) was not commissioned by the sitter, but was rather part of a study for a larger work, so its value in our analysis here is very limited, since the composition was not dictated by the sitter and was probably never displayed in his home or even owned by him. However, the plain brown background at half and three quarter

¹⁰³ Black, *Catalogue of the permanent collection*, p.99; Eileen Black, 'Volunteer portraits in the Ulster Museum, Belfast' in *The Irish sword*, xiii (1979), p.181. Hereafter referred to as Black, 'Volunteer portraits'.

¹⁰⁴ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 92-4.

¹⁰⁵ Black, 'Volunteer portraits', pp181-2.

¹⁰⁶ These are evident in the portraits of Major John Brown, Colonel Henry Grattan, the Lurgan Volunteer, the Clanwilliam Volunteer, Captain Waddell Cunningham and Reverend William Bruce. This kind of background is also evident in the miniatures, but this is really more of a convention of this genre of art.

length was the hallmark of a middling class sitter and was chosen by those from greatly varying strata of this class grouping.

A prominent middling class sitter who chose this background was Captain Waddell Cunningham of the Belfast First Volunteer Company (plate 4.10). Cunningham was a leading Belfast citizen in terms of the economic growth of the town and its local power structures.¹⁰⁷ He was president of Belfast Chamber of Commerce and Belfast Harbour Corporation, in addition to being a leading merchant with close connections to America.¹⁰⁸ Cunningham was a good example of the wealth, power and social mobility of the middling classes in this period and indeed provides us with an example of a Volunteer portrait painted at half length and featuring a plain background from the upper end of the middling classes. The reason for choosing such a plain background was probably in relation to the size of the picture, its intended location for display and the cost of the work. Such works, as noted above, seem to have been commissioned for display in intimate domestic settings and were not commissioned to awe visitors in grand reception rooms, as many upper class portraits were. These middling class portraits were produced for very private display and for sentimental value; hence their plain appearance and lack of pretension. The focal point of such pictures was the sitter in his uniform, suggesting that these works were commissioned by many sitters to remind them of their Volunteer days in a nostalgic manner.

The portrait of the Lurgan Volunteer by Strickland Lowry (plate 4.25) provides an interesting example of this background's use at three quarter length. The identity of the Lurgan Volunteer is not known, but has often been asserted to be a Lieutenant Godfrey or Lieutenant Druitt, who were officers in the Lurgan Volunteers.¹⁰⁹ However, this is not very likely considering the uniform of the sitter. Although the sitter is wearing epaulettes, a symbol of rank for officers at the time,¹¹⁰ it has been demonstrated in a previous chapter how epaulettes were often worn indifferently by all ranks in Irish Volunteer companies,

¹⁰⁷ General notes on Cunningham can be found in: Maguire, *Up in arms*, pp 54-5; Bill Rolston, ' "A lying old scoundrel" Waddell Cunningham and Belfast's role in the slave trade' in *History Ireland*, xi no.1 (Spring 2003), pp 24-7.

¹⁰⁸ Detailed information of Cunningham's dealings with the Chamber of Commerce, Harbour Corporation and his role in founding one of Belfast's banks can be found in: S.S. Millin, *Sidelights on Belfast history* (London, 1932), pp 88-9.

¹⁰⁹ Black, *Catalogue of the permanent collection*, p.44; Maguire, *Up in arms*, pp 53-4.

¹¹⁰ Stuart Reid & Marco Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, pp 155-6.

so they are a poor marker or indication of rank. He is also wearing two black cross belts, which bear the badge of his company, one of which would have a cartridge box attached to it, which carried ammunition for the private soldier's musket. The absence of a gorget (a small decorative plate of metal worn around the neck denoting rank), another key marker of the officer's rank,¹¹¹ further compounds doubt about the Lurgan Volunteer's status as an officer of the company and therefore of the previously asserted possible identities of the sitter. The spending power of Volunteer company members also puts into question the identity of the sitter. There exists an assumption amongst scholars that to be a sitter for a Volunteer portrait, the sitter must have been an officer. Amongst the extant Volunteer portraits there are several examples of private soldiers being depicted in portraits. The spending power of the member was not really in direct correlation to his rank in the unit and the Lurgan Volunteer could therefore quite easily have been a private soldier. This point aside however, the Lurgan Volunteer was probably of the middling classes, judging by Lowry's usual Irish clientele. Lowry painted for quite a well-to-do section of the middling classes, mostly in the north of Ireland. Lowry's sitters were perhaps not as wealthy or influential as Captain Cunningham of Belfast, but were generally of reasonable wealth and influence in a provincial, rural setting.¹¹² The Lurgan Volunteer provides, therefore, an example of the nondescript brown background from a relatively prosperous section of the middling classes.

The Reverend William Bruce (plate 4.26) provides an example of such a background from the lower reaches of the social scale of the middling classes. Presbyterian clergymen in the late eighteenth century were by no means wealthy,¹¹³ but Rev Bruce still saw fit to have himself painted in his Volunteer uniform. Bruce came from the lower reaches of the middling classes, but has been depicted in the same manner as Cunningham, and indeed the Lurgan Volunteer, who certainly outrank him in societal terms. This provides some proof that this kind of nondescript, brown background was popular with a great variety of members of the Irish middling classes.

¹¹¹ During the American Revolution a gorget might be the only visual marker of an officer's rank, especially in the light infantry when epaulettes were often not worn to camouflage the officer amongst the private soldiers. Examples of the great variance of uniforms worn by British light infantry officers can be found in Mollo & MacGregor, *Uniforms of the American Revolution*.

¹¹² Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, pp 169-71.

¹¹³ Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*, chapter 4.

Grander backgrounds, however, were also used by some Volunteers. The Belfast artist Joseph Wilson was particularly fond of landscape backgrounds for his Volunteer works. In his portraits of John Bateman Fitzgerald (plate 4.27), the marquess of Antrim and the Burgh Volunteer of County Kildare, he used landscape backgrounds of one type or another.¹¹⁴ Landscape backgrounds were not at all unusual in eighteenth century portraiture, but they do indicate a different kind of clientele, desire in the sitter and indeed purpose in having the portrait painted. Landscapes were often typically used, in preference to more conventional column and curtain arrangements, or indeed plain brown backdrops, in much grander works at full or three quarter length. Landscapes seem to have been typical of portraits which were intended to be hung as grand statements about the sitter in a family home in which important visitors were a regular feature.¹¹⁵

To take an example, the portrait of Randall-William MacDonnell, marquess of Antrim and Knight of the Bath (plate 4.13), has a typical example of a landscape used on a portrait obviously commissioned for display in a house frequented by visitors and supporters of the marquess. This kind of arrangement is in stark contrast to Wilson's portrait of Rev. Bruce which was intended for a more domestic and intimate setting and, therefore, need not have airs and graces that would awe visitors.¹¹⁶

Wilson's portrait of Colonel John Bateman Fitzgerald bears this point out further. Fitzgerald was depicted in the full regalia of his rank as colonel of the Royal Glin Artillery of County Limerick, backed by a dusky sky, a fragment of the horizon and some foliage (plate 4.27). Considering the place of the picture, then as now in Glin Castle in west County Limerick, it was meant to impress visitors to the house of the identity, appearance and power of the sitter within local and regional society. To have oneself depicted in so grand a setting did, however, assert considerable confidence in the Volunteer movement and in particular, in the pride and identity of the individual Volunteer corps. Giving the uniform of the Volunteers such a prominent place in one's home (whether in a grand landscaped portrait or a small intimate half length) is

¹¹⁴ A landscape background was also used by John Trotter in all three of his Volunteer works, as well as the two others illustrated here, plates 4.35 and 4.36.

¹¹⁵ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, pp 13-4.

¹¹⁶ Indeed, most of Wilson's portraits feature plain brown backgrounds, as opposed to grander settings. The only portraits to feature grand backgrounds were much larger canvases, usually at full length.

significant in itself, in that it gives us a window into the place that the Volunteers held in the eyes of many of the middling and upper classes at this time (volunteering was obviously a source of great pride to its members, for many different reasons, from the celebration of martial airs familiar to Irish Protestant men, to constitutional issues and the emergence and re-definition of concepts of Irishness that were often so central in Volunteer discourse).

A fascinating background is provided for us in a portrait by the Irish artist John Trotter of a Volunteer of Lyons, County Kildare (plate 4.28).¹¹⁷ The Volunteer is depicted mounted on a brown horse, in the uniform of his corps in the centre of the picture. On the left amidst a parkland, are a troop of cavalry dressed in the uniform of the corps, who were presumably the Volunteer troop of the sitter (plate 4.29). On the right is a large Palladian style house, which we may presume was a residence associated with the sitter (plate 4.30). This is a very interesting background to be set against, as it links the sitter, his corps, his residence and a rolling landscape in a single composition. The vast expanse of land and the large residence are key visual reminders of the values of Irish Protestants and the upper classes of Europe more generally in this period. Such a background features in several Volunteer works and indicates to the viewer the landed status of the sitter. The composition is quite original, especially in comparison to other works by the artist (and indeed against conventional eighteenth century portraiture as a whole) and provides another example of how Volunteer works could be fresh and original in a genre of painting steeped in well established conventions and tradition.

Tied very closely to the subject of backgrounds was the issue of surroundings and props in relation to the sitter. It has already been outlined above how conventions were in place and operated in the world of portraiture in relation to the class, profession and standing of the sitter and how this manifested itself in the finished portrait in terms of backgrounds and surroundings.

Customers who commissioned Volunteer portraits seem to have sought both very fashionable motifs and settings and also well established props and surroundings in the

¹¹⁷ These details are recorded on a copy of the picture in the Crookshank/Glin Archive in Trinity College Dublin.

world of portraiture by the late eighteenth century. For example, artillerymen were usually accompanied by a field piece. This was a common feature of portraits for this arm of service, and this prop was included in several extant Volunteer works. We have already seen how R.H. Hyndman of Belfast was depicted, where his profession as a merchant is explicitly alluded to by the packet of tobacco stamped with his name, a bowl of tobacco on the table, and the long clay pipe in his hand. Hyndman also wore a medal and ribbon of the Masonic order. Hyndman was a member of lodge number 257¹¹⁸ and this Masonic connection has been inserted visually into his portrait. These props have been chosen to effectively represent the sitter's civilian profession and connections in this case.

Colonel William Sharman (plate 4.31), chose a very conventional setting and use of props for a sitter who had been involved in politics and had been a very influential member of his community. On the table on the right of the painting are several papers relating to the Volunteers. These are representative of four sets of resolutions offering thanks to the Volunteers, which were passed in the Irish house of commons on 13 October 1779, 9 October 1781, 14 October 1783 and 18 February 1785.¹¹⁹ Sharman was a very enthusiastic Volunteer and had this portrait painted in 1798, long after the heyday of volunteering had passed. The house in the background is Moira Castle, County Down, seat of the Rawdon family (who in the mid -eighteenth century became ennobled as the earls of Moira). The Union Regiment, of which Sharman was colonel,¹²⁰ included a company from Moira and many Volunteer reviews took place here.¹²¹ The mood of the portrait and its sitter were nostalgic, hence the inclusion of the votes of thanks, Moira Castle with a parade in progress and a detailed rendering of Sharman's old Volunteer uniform. Once again, a sum of small details were included in this work to inform us about the sitter and his identity.

The portrait of James Caulfeild, earl of Charlemont by Richard Livesay (plate 4.32) provides additional interesting use of props and surroundings. Charlemont's status

¹¹⁸ A list of members of lodge number 257 can be found in *Ahiman Rezon* (5th ed., Belfast, 1783). There are copies of this in the British Museum and the Linen Hall Library in Belfast.

¹¹⁹ Black, 'Volunteer portraits', pp 182-3.

¹²⁰ Sharman replaced the earl of Moira as colonel after Lord Rawdon was expelled for political views, *Belfast Mercury*, 16 March 1784, 20 April 1784.

¹²¹ Black, *Catalogue of the permanent collection*, pp 59-62; Black, 'Volunteer portraits', pp 181-3.

as a man of letters and a parliamentarian¹²² are alluded to by the papers he is studying on the table and his pose. He wears the star of the Order of the Knights of Saint Patrick on his chest.¹²³ His senior position amongst the Volunteers is indicated by his uniform, a hat and a colour placed casually in the right foreground, and also by the soldiers parading outside behind the curtain (this kind of background has been mentioned above as well and will be explained a little later). Three classical friezes on the wall indicate his status as a collector and patron of the arts.¹²⁴ This painting, as with that of Colonel Sharman, was quite dense in terms of its imagery, but the complexity of the surroundings and the props was intentional on the part of both the artist and the client, so as to communicate various messages about the sitter to the viewer. Both of these works were the kind of portraits that were intended to be seen by visitors to the sitter's home to greatly impress them and to conjure up a grand image of the sitter. In this way, their use of props, settings, background and size was in complete contrast to the plain background pictures in half and three quarter length discussed above. These paintings were obviously intended for more domestic settings and didn't require any content to overawe the relatively few viewers it might have. The difference between these two sets of paintings contains the essence of late eighteenth century portraiture and the different roles that its conventions and the social custom as a whole had for patrons and viewers of such works.

The portraits of Hyndman, Sharman, Charlemont and the two artillerymen are good examples of how background, surroundings and props were utilised in Volunteer portraits to confer ideas of the class, profession, connections and achievements of the sitter. This aspect of portraiture was well established and entirely deliberate, even if it varied little from work to work and there were clearly accepted conventions at work.

One of the key issues to be addressed in relation to the background and settings of Volunteer portraits is the pose of the sitter. This is significant in itself, but finds its real

¹²² The standard biography of Charlemont is still the rather dated, *Maurice Craig, The Volunteer earl, being the life and times of James Caulfeild, first earl of Charlemont* (London, 1948).

¹²³ Charlemont was a founding member of the order: Galloway, *The Order of St. Patrick, 1783-1983*, pp 11-8.

¹²⁴ Michael McCarthy (ed.), *Lord Charlemont and his circle, essays in honour of Michael Wynne* (Four Courts press, 2001). Most of the essays in this volume allude in some way to his patronage of the arts and especially neo-classical art.

importance when combined with the above trends and conventions in taking the work as a whole.

Poses were subject to the same kind of conventions that we have mentioned above in relation to other aspects of late eighteenth century portraiture. Different poses were used for different kinds of paintings and sitters in relation to mood, the desired appearance of the sitter and the messages the portrait was intended to convey. There were, as with other conventions, accepted and indeed expected poses in which a sitter would be depicted that would indicate class, social standing and profession. By the late eighteenth century, poses in the tradition of British painting had evolved significantly since a distinct British school had emerged from Van Dyck onwards. Especially in the reigns of George I and George II, painting had stagnated into an unvarying affair in Britain, the same poses and compositions being repeated endlessly by artists from top to bottom of the profession.¹²⁵ From the mid to late eighteenth century however, a revolution in British painting was brought about, which found its chief, but by no means only proponent in the future president of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds.¹²⁶

In brief, Reynolds wished that England would have a tradition, school and style of painting that would be a rival to that of Italy and France. His main device to enact this sea-change was what he called the 'grand style'.¹²⁷ This was essentially the taking of the style of portraiture pursued in France and Italy, where sitters was imbued with great confidence and majesty, and to apply it to a British clientele, who we already noted above, often preferred foreign art to domestic produce. Reynolds placed great emphasis on classical art (especially before the 1770s) because of its sound working methods and vast collection of poses and airs, brought to perfection over several centuries of repetition. To study classical art, Reynolds undertook two trips to Italy during his career (1742 to 1747 and 1750 to 1753). His use of classical allegory, garb and airs was not immediately popular (indeed it has often been questioned why he undertook so many classical works in these early years when there was no immediate demand for them),¹²⁸ but was a key method for Reynolds' development of grand style in Britain. He conceived

¹²⁵ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.163.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, pp 213-6.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, pp 217-31.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, pp 225-7.

that British sitters in this kind of painting could be instilled with a majestic air based on classical art, which would become popular in Britain and make domestic art as popular as foreign and imported works, while also establishing Britain as a major centre for art in Europe. The majesty and confidence of Reynolds' sitters was quite often wholly fanciful,¹²⁹ but this kind of painting had enormous appeal to the art-buying public in the upper classes of European societies, and by the time Reynolds returned from his second trip from Italy in 1753, his skills were in great demand.¹³⁰

One of the best examples of Reynolds' revolution in painting can be found in his portrait of Commodore Augustus Keppel (plate 4.33).¹³¹ This bears a fruitful comparison to the Scottish artist, Allan Ramsay's portrait of the twenty second chief of MacLeod (plate 4.34). MacLeod is calm and inviting in his expression and pose, with a soft sky and tranquil surroundings. Keppel, who is based on the same pose (that of the classical sculpture 'Apollo Belvedere'),¹³² is a more confident and majestic figure. He was depicted striding up the beach, backed by a stormy sea, pointing in an authoritative manner, as befits a man of his martial reputation. In these two paintings we can see how this reputed revolution in painting during the reign of George III effectively worked through the modification of backgrounds, airs and props. Through a sum of small details, Reynolds' work was quite different from that of Ramsay in its tone, implications and overall feel. Marcia Pointon outlines some of the reasons why the portrait of Commodore Keppel was such a success:

the way in which it mobilizes the theory of imitation that Reynolds himself had so forcefully promoted in the 'Discourses' to offer a novel solution to the problem of rendering the full-length figure with verve whilst endowing it with the dignity of classical allusion.¹³³

Reynolds's clientele in his early years (1750s to 1760s) was very wide indeed, in terms of gender, class and profession, but in terms of poses and conventions that were copied

¹²⁹ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.47.

¹³⁰ This is attested to by his busy diaries at the time and his need to constantly raise his prices in the 1750s, Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.48; Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.221.

¹³¹ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 221-2.

¹³² Irwin, *Neoclassicism*, pp 24-9.

¹³³ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.79.

by other artists,¹³⁴ he could often be at his most influential when depicting military men, which has significant implications for our study of Irish Volunteer portraits.

In the early eighteenth century, military men were usually depicted in conventional poses, settings and lengths often used for their civilian peers, especially politicians (who were often soldiers as well, especially in the tumultuous seventeenth century).¹³⁵ The stock poses associated with military men in the eighteenth century were essentially descended from the conventions set down by artists like Van Dyck, Lely and Godfrey Kneller. The section of the public able to buy art in the seventeenth century was very narrow indeed and there was no real demand for innovative and new ways of being depicted amongst consumers. However, Reynolds pioneered an extensive range of poses and airs for soldiers and sailors (Reynolds had an advantage in this; that he was disinclined to repeat poses in very similar manners in subsequent works)¹³⁶ that proved a huge success with sitters and were taken on wholesale by other portrait artists at the time as the most fashionable ways to depict men of these professions.

The main preoccupation of depicting a soldier or sailor seems to have been the appearance of confidence and a grand majestic air (as we have seen with Commodore Keppel above). One of Reynolds' most accomplished works in this vein was Lord Heathfield as governor of Gibraltar (plate 4.35), which alludes to his stoic defence of the island from 1779 to 1783 against the Spanish during the American Revolution.¹³⁷ The tone of the painting was one of majesty and confidence. The pose of the sitter and his expression of demure confidence generate tone in tandem with the dark cloudy sky, smoking artillery pieces and the key which is held authoritatively in the sitter's hands.

¹³⁴ Reynolds was the greatest artist of his day. Other popular portrait artists such as Thomas Gainsborough, George Romney, Nathaniel Hone and Francis Cotes offered a slightly different kind of artwork, but Reynolds was arguably the foremost artist of the day in terms of the volume of work he produced, his prices, clientele and the inevitable social boasting which the purchase of a Reynolds had attached to it.

¹³⁵ This was especially the case during the reigns of George I and George II. The most prominent painters, Godfrey Kneller, Michael Dahl and Charles Jervas could be very repetitive in their approach to painting and very little innovation ever occurred (Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 135-50). This was a result of a lack of demand in the marketplace for innovation, and the increasing workload of artists which necessitated a factory-like studio approach, which often gave portraiture a "cut and paste" feel.

¹³⁶ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.217. In the early to mid eighteenth century poses in the most fashionable portraiture studios were generally chosen from books of stock poses based on previous works and classical art. This 'copy and paste' element of the portraiture business was necessitated by the volume a studio had to produce and was facilitated by the desire for consumers to own paintings that were in keeping with current fashions.

¹³⁷ *The National Gallery, complete illustrated catalogue on CD-ROM* (London, 2001), entry 111.

The kind of poses which Reynolds concocted and especially the ones he repeated and made variants of, appealed to the stereotypical character of the military man and it seems particularly to that of the military celebrity.

Two works which emphasise the point of playing up to the stereotypical character and expectations of the military man hang in the same room in the National Gallery in London; Captain Robert Orme (plate 4.36) and Lt Col Banastre Tarleton (plate 4.37). Both works are by Reynolds and date from 1756 and 1782 respectively. Orme was an earlier portrait, but displays some key indicators of this particular style by Reynolds. He was depicted in his habitat, as it were, in the thick of the action on a campaign (he was on active service with Robert Clive throughout the 1750s in India).¹³⁸ His pose is kinetic, indicating movement to the viewer, looking as if he has just been distracted by the viewer's attention (this is unusual, as military poses at the time were usually static). The dispatch in his hand and the restless horse lends the picture the required sense of urgency and action desirable in a military portrait, as we saw earlier with Commodore Keppel. In this picture, Orme was a consummate military man, defined by a sense of confidence, urgency and action. In reality, Orme was not an exceptional soldier, but a very average one and was more interested in the intrigues and cloak and dagger affairs of the British interest in India (and especially of his close friend Robert Clive) than the actual business of soldiering.¹³⁹ These details are largely irrelevant however for the purposes of such a portrait, which sought to show the sitter in an ideal view of himself, as an energetic soldier who had seen active service in the expansion of the British empire. This portrait evinces not only the essence of Reynolds's military and more general style of portraiture, but also the very essence of late eighteenth century grand portraiture, in that it served to mythicize the owner in the eyes of the viewer, regardless of the material realities of the sitter's personality, appearance and so on.¹⁴⁰

For the portrait of Banastre Tarleton, Reynolds took a different approach, but one that was still in keeping with many of his methods and conventions on military portraits. The surroundings of the picture are full of action, a boy in the uniform of the British

¹³⁸ Robert Harvey, *Clive, the life and death of a British emperor* (New York, 1998), chapters 4-17.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, pp 49, 58-9, 77, 113-5, 125, 135, 240, 329.

¹⁴⁰ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.13.

Legion¹⁴¹ struggles to control two restless horses, while the flag of the legion flies tempestuously overhead. A colour, perhaps meant to be that of the enemy, lies prone and draped across a cannon. Tarleton himself rests one foot on a second cannon (the pose is based on that of a classical sculpture of the Greek god Hermes, casts of which had been widely circulated in the years preceding 1782).¹⁴² Tarleton is demure, but full of confidence and purpose, impeccably dressed in the finest extant visual example of the uniform of the British Legion.¹⁴³ The portrait is made all the more interesting by the fact that it was commissioned not by Tarleton himself, but by his brother, on the colonel's return to England after the defeat at Yorktown in 1781.¹⁴⁴ What Reynolds seemed therefore to want to capture is the mystique and reputation of the colonel, who was arguably the celebrity poster boy of the British army for much of the war. Tarleton was famous, and indeed for the rebel colonists infamous, for his conduct and exploits during the war,¹⁴⁵ which had a prominent place in the press on a regular basis, even in Ireland where newspapers and periodicals re-circulated his exploits from the British press. These are just two examples of the military style which Reynolds had begun to use in late eighteenth century Britain.

Reynolds military style penetrated through to Ireland and we can see his influence and the conventions he made fashionable repeated in Irish military portraits during this period. A prime example of an Irish military work of the 1760s, as Reynolds's style began to circulate and gain momentum, is Robert Hunter's portrait of Lord Newbottle (plate 4.38). The influence of Reynolds is obvious here in Newbottle's pose and air of relaxed confidence and has been pointed out before in secondary sources.¹⁴⁶ The relatively high number of officers in Ireland in the late eighteenth century (compared to

¹⁴¹ The British Legion were a mixed unit of dragoons and infantry raised mostly amongst the loyalist population of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey in 1778. Tarleton and the legion were hugely famous at the time in America and Europe.

¹⁴² *The National Gallery, complete illustrated catalogue on CD-ROM* (London, 2001), entry 5985.

¹⁴³ This was a new uniform he had made on his return from America in 1782, Robert D. Bass, *The green dragoon, the lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson* (South Carolina, 1973), p.9.

¹⁴⁴ David Mannings (ed.), *Sir Joshua Reynolds, a complete catalogue of his paintings* (2 vols, Yale, 2000), vol.ii, pp 439-40.

¹⁴⁵ Tarleton's exploits in America can be found in: Hugh Bicheno, *Rebels and redcoats, the American Revolutionary war* (London, 2003), chapters 8-11.

Robert D. Bass, *The green dragoon, the lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson* (South Carolina, 1973), chapters 1, 2, 6, 8-12, 14-8.

¹⁴⁶ Crookshank & the Knight of Glin, *Ireland's painters*, pp 94-7.

other areas in the British Isles) and the presence of the military in everyday life, combined with the Irish Protestant love of military pomp and élan and a rich military heritage made certain the success of Reynold's innovative style of military portraiture in Ireland by the late eighteenth century and the era of the Volunteers. Such a style can be observed in many different aspects of Volunteer art, but especially in the poses used in such works.

The poses which Volunteers adopted in their portraits were as varied and interesting as the other motifs and devices already discussed above. The poses used in the pictures reflect the various economic and social backgrounds of the sitters as well as their pretensions to projected perceptions of their character, influence, social standing and especially their military posturing.

Despite the existence of many military poses and arrangements clearly taken from contemporary works of art intended for public display of one type or another, poses often used by civilian patrons were much in evidence in Volunteer works. Many of the paintings noted above in our discussion of plain brown backgrounds evinced a very common pose used by sitters from across the spectrum of artistic patrons. This was the half length, which was usually set on the brown background which has been discussed above. The sitter was depicted at half length, inclined to the left or right so that the front of the body was quite visible (the angle and visibility of the front of the sitter mark one of the only major differences between one piece and another with these kinds of works). This pose, combined inextricably with the half-length size and the plain background seems to be symptomatic of the reasons the portrait was commissioned, which have already been outlined above.¹⁴⁷

Poses did not have to be of a military character, as evinced by Wilson's portrait of Lieutenant Hyndman. Hyndman was depicted in a pose and setting very popular with the middling classes. Both his profession and class were evinced by the composition. The middling classes had a general penchant for full lengths on small canvases and indeed for

¹⁴⁷ Captain Waddell Cunningham by Robert Home, the Lurgan Volunteer by Strickland Lowry, Reverend William Bruce by Joseph Wilson, Colonel Henry Grattan by Francis Wheatley, the Clanwilliam Union Volunteer by an unknown artist and an unidentified Volunteer officer by John Trotter.

conversation pieces because both were economically expedient.¹⁴⁸ Hyndman's pose was one of relaxation in a familiar setting, indicated by his posture, leaning back into his chair with crossed legs and also with the presence of a clay pipe. The Volunteer uniform in this piece was a relatively incidental detail, as Hyndman at any other time in his life could easily have been depicted in an identical pose and setting in civilian clothes. This is a very interesting piece because of this fact, which perhaps shows once again the propensity of Volunteer customers to commission these kinds of works as a result of the fashionable status of volunteering from 1778 to 1784.

Poses found in Volunteer works of a non-military nature were also influenced by loftier forms of portraiture as well. The typical pose of the man of letters (and also aspects of the politician) was used in two Volunteer portraits; the earl of Charlemont by Richard Livesay and Colonel William Sharman by Thomas Robinson. Both figures were depicted in a pose which is somewhat typical of the man of letters of the eighteenth century (members of the legal profession, writers, patrons of the arts and clerics could also be depicted in a somewhat similar manner).¹⁴⁹ This pose placed the sitter in a study seated at a table amongst their papers. Variation was added by having the sitter portrayed as if he had just been distracted from study, or in the course of reading or writing. In Charlemont's case he has just been distracted from study, one hand resting in his lap and another on a paper he has been studying. Charlemont is accompanied by a column and curtain background, which opens to reveal a landscape beyond with a parade of Volunteers in progress. This is a hallmark of society or even regal portraiture and its choice once again shows how Ireland's Protestant elite often imitated their British neighbours in terms of taste and fashion, in a concerted attempt to appear cosmopolitan and sophisticated on a European scale.¹⁵⁰ Colonel Sharman was depicted in a similar pose, reflecting his involvement in politics in the 1780s, but the inclusion of the papers on the table and Moira Castle beyond have a commemorative agenda, which has been

¹⁴⁸ Conversation pieces especially were fiscally efficient as the portraits of a whole family could be captured on one canvas of a reasonable size. This would have been a major consideration for members of the middling classes who wished to partake in the social custom of portraiture without overextending themselves financially. The preference of the middling classes for conversation pieces was common enough to be sent up satirically in Oliver Goldsmith, *The vicar of Wakefield*, chapter xvi.

¹⁴⁹ Further interesting examples of these kind of paintings and variants on certain aspects of them can be found in the NPG, London: NPG 1597, NPG 6180, NPG 4868, NPG 5868, NPG 3084.

¹⁵⁰ Cullen, *Visual politics*, pp 86-90.

discussed above. Once again, however, Volunteer works show great flexibility and an ability to blend many different influences in the manner of their composition.

Military poses were of course widely used by Volunteers, owing much to the new tradition of military portraits which Reynolds had begun to set down from the 1760s onwards and indeed to existing traditions of military portraiture. One of the most recognisable and frequently repeated poses used in Volunteer portraits is that of the artilleryman. This was a commonly used pose by members of that military service in the eighteenth century and artillerymen in Ireland favoured its use as well. This pose consisted of a background, usually some sort of landscape or outdoor setting, with the key motif of the sitter's surroundings being a piece of unlimbered artillery in the foreground, with which the sitter interacted. The sitter himself was, in the vast majority of cases, depicted leaning on the cannon with one arm, in a state of relaxation. The other arm could hang by the figure's side, or in many cases was shown pointing in an authoritative manner. One hand frequently held a hat or other prop, but this was not an inevitable motif.

There are two Volunteer portraits which depict artillerymen and both were obviously designed on this template. The first is Joseph Wilson's portrait of Colonel John Bateman Fitzgerald and the second is a portrait of an unidentified Volunteer of Burt, County Kildare (plate 4.39). Both of these portraits bear interesting comparisons to two further works, the earl of Kildare (later the first duke of Leinster) as Master of the Ordnance by Allan Ramsay (plate 4.40) and 'Captain William Congreve and his son William' by Phillip Reinagle (plate 4.41).¹⁵¹ Colonel Fitzgerald was depicted in a classic repetition of the artilleryman's pose. The position of the cannon and his body are in line with what was expected of a portrait of an artilleryman. This is a typical martial pose of the era and we see here its repetition in a portrait of an Irish military official. An especially rewarding comparison is found when considering the duke of Leinster (plate 4.40) and Colonel Fitzgerald (plate 4.27). The compositions are very similar, especially in the pose used, despite their dates of production being some thirty years apart and being

¹⁵¹ Despite the fact that this painting is a conversation piece the expected pose has still been used to a reasonable extent. Instead of looking off into space with the usual position of the hands, Congreve has one arm leaning on the cannon in the usual fashion, but his head is inclined downwards and to the left to look at the figure of his son. This painting is currently on display as part of the primary collection of the NGI.

produced by very different artists. Ramsay was a very popular painter from the 1730s to 1750s,¹⁵² servicing a high profile clientele, while Wilson, as we have seen, was a native Irish painter with a very wide and varied clientele,¹⁵³ but was never anywhere near the league of Ramsay, who at one stage in the mid eighteenth century was considered a serious rival to Reynolds.¹⁵⁴ This is another good example of how the accepted trends and conventions of the British tradition of painting manifested themselves in Ireland.

The second Volunteer work portraying an artilleryman, of a member of the Burgh family of Burt, County Kildare (plate 4.39), evinces many of the same characteristics. Wilson again used many of the conventions associated with painting a member of an artillery company, but there are some key differences here. The mood of the painting was lighter and more relaxed, an atmosphere created by the smile on the sitter's face, the left hand thrust in his pocket and the manner in which the legs have been crossed. However, the key motifs and structure of the pose are all present. The sitter rests one arm on the artillery piece and his body is leaning on and supported by the weapon. The hat is upon his head, as in the Congreve painting, but in his right hand is a key indicator of his service; a telescope. The use of this prop to indicate his service is all perfectly in keeping with the use of trends and conventions of this sort at the time. This is a very interesting painting as it shows that even in an Irish provincial setting, an artist and sitter could compose a work which embraced wider accepted artistic traditions, while also possessing quirky individualism which made it a unique work of art.

These examples also provide proof of the kind of phenomenon discussed in Ellen G. Miles (ed.), *The portrait in eighteenth century America* (1993), and also by Fintan Cullen¹⁵⁵ where sitters in a colonial setting clearly tried to imitate the material culture of the mother country. Through this imitation they were often trying to establish a connection with the culture of the colonial power, but this often inadvertently became a colonial style of portraiture, very reliant on the customs of the mother country. Interestingly, Ellen Miles notes that one of the areas where such a style becomes apparent

¹⁵² Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.202.

¹⁵³ Arnold, *A concise history of Irish art*, p.84; Laffan, *The art of a nation*, pp 29-37; Strickland, *A dictionary of Irish artists*, vol.ii, p.548.

¹⁵⁴ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.202.

¹⁵⁵ Cullen, *Visual politics*, pp 86-90.

is that the poses, clothing and props of individual paintings by popular artists were frequently repeated in a colonial setting.

The Volunteer works of John Trotter (all of which are in private collections) are good examples of how the military style of Reynolds and other British artists had penetrated through to Ireland by the late eighteenth century. Trotter used a number of basic models for his military portraits, which seem to have been heavily influenced by the British style of military portraits from the mid eighteenth century onwards. His military men were quite stiff in their poses and seem to seek the combination of confidence, majesty and martial spirit which was so prevalent in British military portraiture of this period.

One of the most frequent poses in this vein and one which had solid precedent in the past was the half or three quarter length pose in which the soldier was depicted leaning on a sword or a cane, either in a pose of relaxation or alternately in a pose of stiff formality, usually inclined to one side or the other. This pose was frequently repeated in the eighteenth century and is found in several Volunteer works. A background commonly associated with this pose was that of a battle or a military encampment (several examples of which we have already seen above). Such a combination was very old indeed and had been used in Britain since at least the time of Van Dyck.¹⁵⁶ Despite the antiquated nature of such poses and backgrounds, Reynolds successfully re-packaged such motifs in the course of his career, making him a preferred artist for military men in this era.

John Trotter's first unidentified officer (plate 4.42) evinces a good example of a conventional military pose of this period, which also drew on conventions of civilian portraiture. This officer leans on a cane (a very popular prop for civilian portraits, especially the rural gentry), with his hat in his right hand which is drawn across his body. This picture drew on more than just military conventions and this pose could well have been used in a civilian portrait just as easily. However, what this picture serves to illustrate is that military portraits could draw on specifically military and more general

¹⁵⁶ Many royal commissions of the seventeenth century utilise these kind of poses and backgrounds (especially if the sitter was involved in the civil wars of the mid-century). Under the Hanoverian monarchs, the use of soldiers on review as a background, usually revealed by a drawn curtain was very common indeed. The National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery in London and the National Gallery in Dublin all hold dozens of such examples of seventeenth to early eighteenth century military portraits.

artistic conventions at the same time, which was by no means unusual or unexpected in the case of the amateur soldier, who could be expected to draw on different artistic influences as a result of his multiple roles. Both of these portraits, but especially the second one, compare favourably with Reynolds's portrait of Sir Richard Worsley (plate 4.43) in terms of the pose, props and overall feel of the composition, and further the case that Irish customers and artists were clearly being influenced in their artistic consumption by British art and by Reynolds in particular.

Trotter's second unidentified officer (plate 4.44) provides another good example of Volunteers being depicted in a typical style of military portraiture. The officer was depicted with his body angled towards the viewer, one hand resting in an authoritative manner upon his hip, the other holding a spontoon (a ceremonial half-like popular as part of military pomp on the parade ground, but quite an antiquated marker of rank by the late eighteenth century).¹⁵⁷ This portrait drew very heavily on conventional military portraiture of the mid to late eighteenth century and is in no way a remarkable or original work of art in terms of composition. In particular, these two portraits by Trotter seem to draw significantly on Reynolds-esque military poses and backgrounds.

Two other military portraits by Trotter, which have sometimes been cited as Volunteer works, but are not, are also relevant in this vein. The first is a portrait of Captain John Alston of the Cambridgeshire militia (plate 4.45). Alston was an officer of a light infantry company and was depicted leaning upon a musket, with an army encampment behind him. This was another widely used pose in this era, especially for officers of light infantry, and was repeated in a very similar manner by Trotter in a portrait he painted of the Hon. John Theophilus Rawdon Hastings (plate 4.46), second son of the first earl of Moira. Rawdon was depicted in a very similar manner to Alston, with the body inclined in the opposite direction, but a similar pose of leaning on a musket and staring off past the viewer. The background here was different in several ways, and Rawdon has been depicted as if he is out hunting, but the point fundamentally remains that the same kind of motifs were being used over and over again by artists in the late eighteenth century and at that especially in relation to military portraits in this period.

¹⁵⁷ Reid & Zlatich, *Soldiers of the revolutionary war*, p.157.

A further example of a re-cycled military pose in a Volunteer portrait is provided by the portrait of the mounted Volunteer of Lyons, County Kildare. The mounted equestrian pose was a little unusual in late eighteenth century portraits, but some artists took such commissions as a speciality of sorts. A very similar military portrait to the Lyons Volunteer can be found in a portrait of Cornet Thomas Boothby-Parkyn (plate 4.47). The pose of the sitter in both paintings is very similar and this was obviously an accepted, though uncommon, genre of portraiture in this period.

Another example of how Volunteer works clearly drew on military works and also imitated British artistic taste and conventions is Joseph Wilson's portrait of the earl of Antrim in Volunteer uniform (plate 4.12). We have seen earlier how typical it was in terms of background and surroundings, but this painting also draws on a pose with obvious allusions both to a typical pose used by the landed upper classes of England and military portraits of the time as well. The use of a cane or sword as a prop for the sitter has already been explored earlier, but this pose draws quite clearly on conventional poses for the British upper classes as well, and in this way the portrait is interesting in that it provides us with yet more evidence of the desire of a provincial elite to be depicted in a manner that is very similar to that of the mother country, to which the Irish elite looked for their sense of taste, fashion and often their identity.

III

The three great Volunteer canvases of Francis Wheatley add much to our view of the Volunteers and the world of art in late eighteenth century Ireland. A brief discussion of the significance of these paintings is pertinent for our discussion of Volunteer portraits more generally.

Wheatley's paintings have been explored in depth as individual works of art and especially in terms of the artist's development, complete works and career.¹⁵⁸ More recently, the accuracy of Wheatley's reportage and his reasoning for idiosyncrasies within the paintings have also been discussed.¹⁵⁹ For the purposes of our discussion, however, we will explore more peripheral themes of the paintings in relation to late eighteenth century Irish art and especially in regard to Volunteer portraits.

Francis Wheatley produced three great canvases during his sojourn in Ireland from 1779 to 1783. The first is a depiction of the so-called free trade demonstration on 4 November 1779 outside parliament in College Green. This painting currently hangs in the National Gallery of Ireland and is entitled 'A view of College Green with a meeting of the Dublin Volunteers, 4 November 1779' (plate 4.48). The second is a depiction of the Irish house of commons in 1780. This picture is kept in Leeds City Art Gallery and is entitled 'The Irish house of commons' (plate 4.49). The third is a visual record of a great review at Belan Park, County Kildare of the Aldborough Legion. This can be found in the Rothschild Collection at Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire and is traditionally called 'Lord Aldborough on Pomposo reviewing Volunteers at Belan House, County Kildare' (plate 4.50).

These paintings have amassed a considerable amount of secondary literature in relation to many different aspects of these works. The purpose here will be to place these sources in relation to Volunteer portraits and consider what these artworks can do to

¹⁵⁸ Most thoroughly in Mary Webster, *Francis Wheatley* (London, 1970).

¹⁵⁹ Cullen, *Visual politics*, pp 61-5; James Kelly, 'Francis Wheatley: his Irish paintings, 1779-1783' in Adele Dalsimer (ed.), *Visualizing Ireland, national identity and the pictorial tradition* (1993), pp145-63. Hereafter referred to as Kelly, 'Francis Wheatley: his Irish paintings'.

further our understanding of the Volunteers and the world of art in late eighteenth century Ireland.

Wheatley's great Volunteer canvases have a curious relationship to the Volunteer portraits discussed above. Firstly, they are not portraits at all, but can more accurately be described as history paintings.¹⁶⁰ History painting formed one of the most important, and the most critically acclaimed genres of painting in late eighteenth century Europe.¹⁶¹ History painting was the highest form of art for artists and critics alike, although it was practised far less often than portraiture,¹⁶² which was the dominant genre of art in late eighteenth century Europe by some way. History painting had really taken off in Britain in the 1760s and was a fashionable form of art by the 1780s, advanced initially by the artists Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley, both of whom were from the American colonies.¹⁶³ Exhibitions of history paintings were red letter days for high society art connoisseurs, and popular works were widely disseminated to the art consuming classes in the form of copperplate prints. However, this genre of art had still not been properly assimilated into the mainstream of Irish art by the early 1780s, by which time Wheatley had arrived in the country.

Wheatley's purpose in composing his first two great canvases was purely the pursuit of money and the hope of procuring portrait commissions from Ireland's artistically active classes.¹⁶⁴ There was nothing unusual in any of this, as it was fairly standard practice for aspiring artists in this period.¹⁶⁵ This kind of public display to procure future work was the *raison d'être*, for many artists and patrons, of the annual exhibits by institutions such as the Royal Academy, the Society of Artists and the Dublin Society in Ireland. Wheatley's pursuit of wealth and artistic fame in this manner has

¹⁶⁰ Even this doesn't fully encapsulate the genres the paintings fit into. As a result of Wheatley's artistic training, these paintings were a combination of several genres including portraiture, conversation pieces, landscapes and history painting.

¹⁶¹ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 271-2.

¹⁶² A sample of RA exhibits in Britain from 1781-1785 show that history painting usually accounted for about 15% of the total exhibits, compared to portraits which usually accounted for 35-50% of the exhibits, Pointon, *Hanging the head*, p.38.

¹⁶³ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 275-80.

¹⁶⁴ Kelly, 'Francis Wheatley: his Irish paintings', p.149.

¹⁶⁵ Matthew Craske, *Art in Europe 1700-1830, a history of the visual arts in an era of unprecedented urban economic growth* (Oxford, 1997), p.31.

already been documented in secondary sources, especially in relation to his College Green painting.¹⁶⁶

Wheatley's choice to paint the Volunteers has been discussed before and was by no means a random choice. Wheatley knew quite well that volunteering was growing in popularity and especially respectability (which ensured that his painting/s would catch the eye of a wealthy clientele) by late 1779. Thus, a history painting of the Volunteers would be a gimmick or hook with which Wheatley could exhibit his artistic talents and solicit the custom of a wide range of politically and artistically active members of Ireland's middling and upper classes. Unfortunately for Wheatley, history painting had yet to become popular in Ireland and two of his great canvases were never sold.¹⁶⁷ However, Wheatley did succeed in his other goals in finding commissions among the wealthy for his talents.¹⁶⁸

One of the most important points to be borne in mind about Wheatley's paintings is the level of detail recorded in them in relation to likenesses and uniforms, which has already been mentioned above in chapter one of this study. Wheatley is traditionally said to have learned his intense level of detail from Johann Zoffany.¹⁶⁹ In this respect, there was really no rival to Wheatley in Ireland at the time. Wheatley's level of detail in relation to uniforms was very minute, if not always completely accurate. His attention to likenesses was similarly very minute and often very accomplished, considering his artistic background. These two assets are reasons why Wheatley's canvases are very important for our purposes.

Wheatley's attention to detail in relation to uniforms is often impressive, but can also occasionally be disappointing, as a case study of the uniforms in the College Green painting shows.¹⁷⁰ The uniforms of prominent sitters can be very detailed and provide some of the best examples of Volunteer uniforms still extant in a visual source. This is

¹⁶⁶ Kelly, 'Francis Wheatley: his Irish paintings', p.152.

¹⁶⁷ The College Green painting and the depiction of the Irish House of Commons were apparently never sold, but there is some confusion in the case of the second painting as to how it was disposed of after Wheatley had completed it.

¹⁶⁸ He was to go on to work in the next three years for the marquess and marchioness of Antrim, Viscount O'Neill of Shane's Castle County Antrim, the earl of Aldborough, the earl and countess of Carlisle, Captain Edward O'Brien and Captain Charles Churchill to name but a few.

¹⁶⁹ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 319-21.

¹⁷⁰ Stephen O'Connor, 'Francis Wheatley's Dublin Volunteers: an historical analysis'.

especially true of the uniforms of the Dublin Volunteers and County Dublin Light Horse in the College Green canvas, some of the uniforms in the painting of parliament¹⁷¹ and the majority of the uniforms in the depiction of the review at Belan Park.¹⁷² There was a close correlation for Wheatley between the accuracy of the uniform depicted and amount of money spent on a commission (or that he hoped to gain from future commissions in the case of the first two canvases). A case study has already been made of the uniforms of the Dublin Volunteers and County Dublin Light Horse and has shown Wheatley's representation to be very accurate indeed. However, the level of detail in many other uniforms of those who were marginal to the main action or who were unlikely to buy the piece can be very poor or demonstrably inaccurate.¹⁷³ To provide a further point, let us take the example of the Aldborough Legion as depicted by Wheatley.

This painting was commissioned by the earl of Aldborough, no doubt for a handsome price, and the level of detail is set to a corresponding level. The uniform of the legion itself, a scarlet coat faced with black velvet and silver lace is worn by the earl, who is mounted to the left of the carriages. The earl, and several other officers are also wearing hats with tall black feathers, which were purely for ostentatious decoration. Several other officers close to the earl are wearing a very similar uniform, which we can assume was the prescribed uniform of the unit (as much as one could be imposed on fashion conscious Volunteers). The cavalymen engaged in exercises on the right of the picture are wearing a similar uniform coat, but they are also wearing light cavalry helmets not dissimilar to those used by light dragoons in the regular army. A musician dressed in white beside the second carriage wears the reverse of the company uniform, a common practice in both the regular army and amateur units at the time.¹⁷⁴ An artilleryman in the extreme left wears a very popular uniform with the Volunteers, navy faced scarlet with gold lace (the uniform of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and Royal Irish Regiment of Artillery).¹⁷⁵ The depiction of all of these uniforms is very accurate and

¹⁷¹ Some of which are not recorded visually elsewhere and therefore provide our only contemporary representation.

¹⁷² As noted above in chapter one, Ronald Lightbown plans to publish a work soon concerned with the earl of Aldborough. An extensive and substantial art history dissection of the painting will be offered in this volume upon its publication.

¹⁷³ Stephen O'Connor, 'Francis Wheatley's Dublin Volunteers: an historical analysis'.

¹⁷⁴ Thompson, 'The flags and uniforms of the Irish Volunteers', pp 27-8.

¹⁷⁵ Mollo & MacGregor, *Uniforms of the American Revolution*, p.160.

minute and was obviously the result of some close study of the garments, a luxury which Wheatley perhaps did not have in relation to his Volunteers of College Green. Thus, the scarcity of surviving garments firstly, and secondly his generally demonstrably accurate depictions of Volunteer uniforms make Wheatley's attention to detail crucial for our knowledge of Volunteer uniforms, which as we have noted was the defining feature of a Volunteer portrait.

The same is true of the likenesses preserved in Wheatley's paintings. In at least one case, that of Counsellor Pethard,¹⁷⁶ Wheatley's rendering may be the only extant likeness of the man, with the result that the painting is made all the more valuable as an artistic source. However, many likenesses are contained in the paintings which are common elsewhere or in many cases provide one of a scant few known extant likenesses. Testament to Wheatley's detail in the area of likenesses is provided in research by art historian Ronald Lightbown. Lightbown has been able to positively identify nearly every person in the foreground of the Belan Park painting, which is good proof of Wheatley's accuracy in depicting likenesses. This was not true for every likeness in his paintings, but as with the uniforms, the depiction of those who were more prominent in the pictures is much more accurate and in the Belan Park painting the level of detail is very high indeed, a factor which can be explained by the fact that the painting was commissioned by a customer with high expectations of the finished product. Thus likenesses, the second important detail which make a Volunteer portrait, are also a great strength of Wheatley's paintings. The combination of these two details make his paintings an invaluable source for contemporary representations of Volunteers and their activities. However, because two of these works were not commissioned by patrons, the artist/sitter relationship is more complex than the previous works we have seen, where the agenda of the patron is usually fairly obvious from the finished product. In Wheatley's two uncommissioned history paintings, his depiction of the Volunteers is somewhat sycophantic, because of his desire to sell the finished product. The number of sitters in each also makes these works unsuitable for analysis along the same lines as those considered above.

¹⁷⁶ Pethard was captain of the Lawyer's Corps and is dressed in a scarlet coat with blue facings behind the cannons on the right of the painting.

One of the greatest points to be observed about these paintings is their depiction of the spirit of volunteering at the time, the atmosphere of the great reviews and the manner in which they have been depicted by Wheatley. There has in past scholarship been some appraisal of the accuracy of his reportage in relation to the spirit and atmosphere of the events being depicted, but this has mainly centred around the College Green painting (although James Kelly has discussed the depiction of parliament as well). The omission of the cannons, placards and any air of political aggression or dissent in the College Green painting was intended by Wheatley to portray a spectacle instead of a politically charged demonstration, making the painting and the event it depicted more palatable to prospective patrons worried about the image of volunteering.¹⁷⁷ The first two paintings were depictions of exciting events in the centre of Dublin and the mood was one of festivity in the first and of great oratory and exciting times in the second. The third painting is one of unbridled festivity, undoubtedly at the request of the patron, who seemed to want a reminder of volunteering days at Belan Park. Indeed, it might be said that the review at Belan Park is the best surviving depiction of a Volunteer review in terms of capturing the excitement and festivity of the occasion, in tandem with a large group portrait and an architectural painting of a prominent Kildare country residence. This is a further reason for the seminal place of Wheatley's works in the study of Volunteer portraits.

Wheatley was clearly not interested in the espousal of the patriot cause in any emphatic way in the paintings, because of his focus on more immediate fiscal concerns, but rather in the encapsulation of a more general spirit of the era. Fintan Cullen in particular has highlighted the confident and confrontational nature of the paintings as part of the visualisation of the ambition and re-definition of concepts of Irish nationality in this period.¹⁷⁸ In the first picture the duke of Leinster, and in the second, Colonel Henry Grattan, are both shown in very confident and assertive poses, which are symbolic of the wider confidence of the middling and upper classes in Ireland at the time.¹⁷⁹ Wheatley probably intended to tap into this confidence and pride in his history paintings to some extent, if only to coax a prominent sitter into purchasing a large canvas (along the lines

¹⁷⁷ Kelly, 'Francis Wheatley: his Irish paintings', p.152.

¹⁷⁸ Cullen, *Visual politics*, p.54.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.63.

we have seen above) or to tempt additional patrons to be depicted in a similar manner. However, Wheatley also clearly wanted to present a festive spectacle instead of an in-depth and minutely accurate study of the political issues which gave rise to the demonstration, so the depiction of the Irish polity and the process of re-defining their identity is secondary to this, although it is still of interest.

So, as with the artistic style used in them, these pictures are composite works, combining many different messages within the composition. The aspects of history painting used were too advanced for the Irish art market and were one of the prime reasons why the first two paintings failed to find a buyer.¹⁸⁰ However, they did successfully launch Wheatley's Irish career, which turned out to be quite successful, although he would be forced to leave Ireland to escape his debtors. These paintings are not Volunteer portraits in the conventional sense. They were not, with the exception of *Belan Park*, commissioned by a patron who was interested in owning such a work and as such the artist/sitter relationship was quite different. In Wheatley's first two works, the sitters had no input into how they would be depicted in the finished painting. In a painting that was commissioned by the patron however, the customer had overriding control over how he would be depicted, down to the smallest details. It was also in the best interests of the artist to pander to these desires and demands. If he did not, there could be a very lengthy alteration process, or in many cases the painting would not be sold at all at the customer's refusal to pay for an unsatisfactory end product.¹⁸¹ So, although many key uniforms, likenesses and occasions are preserved in Wheatley's paintings, these are not conventional sources for the study of Volunteer portraits. They add to the debate by showing just how pervasive volunteering was at the time, by depicting Volunteers in one of the most fashionable, sophisticated and critically praised genres of art at the time. However, ultimately, these works are best studied in isolation from the Volunteer portraits at large because of the differences in the artist/sitter relationship and the different genres of art at work.

¹⁸⁰ Kelly, 'Francis Wheatley: his Irish paintings', p.153.

¹⁸¹ Pointon, *Hanging the head*, pp 48-50.

Conclusion

Volunteer portraits present a fascinating, but complex and diverse group of primary sources. They add much to our view of the Volunteer movement, especially in terms of what we know about the individual members, their perception of themselves and their role within their community in late eighteenth century Ireland. At the conclusion of this study several questions must be considered in relation to the sources as a group. Firstly, can these artworks be grouped into a category of primary sources and be referred to by the collective name of Volunteer portraits at all? What defines the Volunteer portrait as an individual work or as a part of a group? Is there a definitive Volunteer portrait? Finally, in terms of the bigger picture, what do these artworks add to our view of the Volunteers?

We have seen the world of portraiture into which Volunteer portraits were set in some detail, and some key points emerge as a result. For some sitters it is clear that Volunteer works were just another way, amongst a myriad of others, of being depicted in a work of art at the time. If the sitter had not been a Volunteer in this period, he would have opted for some other type of portrait which suited his wish to be depicted in a work of art. Volunteer works fit into our knowledge of eighteenth century portraiture and also to some extent our knowledge of art in eighteenth century Ireland reasonably well. We can see how Irish customers were using motifs, trends and conventions that were well established, fashionable or popular in Britain and Europe at the time in their portraits. Volunteer works provide good examples of just how diverse, prolific, sophisticated, sought after and indeed mass produced the business of art and more specifically portraiture, was in Ireland at the time.

Volunteer works may not break down along easily observable lines of class, profession, region and price (because this is at best a very incomplete set of data), but they do provide us with some important examples of how the business of portraiture was being taken up in these categories. Although there are no easily defined class lines, we have seen that full lengths were more popular with loftier patrons, while works from the middling classes were more likely to be at half length and were especially associated with

nondescript backgrounds which placed the viewer's attention squarely on the viewer and his uniform. The use of motifs such as props, surroundings, backgrounds and poses also allow us to read more deeply into the reasons why the portrait was commissioned, the manner in which the sitter wished to appear, where the portrait might be hung and what messages it was meant to convey to the intended viewer. Regional styles do not emerge (owing to a lack of extant works), but in the urban centre of Dublin, we can glimpse something of the cosmopolitan city in an artistic sense. Dublin was the probable origin of at least ten extant Volunteer works. Among this group we have a miniature and a conversation piece in chalk, two history paintings on a grand scale in oil, several portraits at full length and some at half length in the fashion typical of the middling classes. This view of works produced in Dublin gives us a view of a reasonably sophisticated artistic centre in which many genres of art and fashionable artistic practices were in progress.

This does not change the fact, as Barnard notes, that the portraiture scene was usually dominated in Dublin by one artist of talent,¹⁸² but what we can see through the study of Volunteer portraits at a national level, is that Ireland was quite vibrant and energetic as an artistic market, in terms of both supply and demand. Volunteer portraits and other works cited in this study throw up examples of several artists who were working in Ireland at this time. Volunteer works were obviously recognised as a lucrative market for artists like Joseph Wilson and John Trotter and were one in which some profit was to be made. Especially in Wilson's case, we can see that he serviced a very wide clientele. Through his works we can see the social flexibility of a native Irish artist, and his list of customers illuminates many key points about who was commissioning and buying art in late eighteenth century Ireland. Volunteer portraits illuminate who was buying art and why they were doing it, albeit on a very small scale, but the results are interesting nonetheless. Barnard has rightly noted that the Irish art scene has been underrated in these ways until quite recently and the study of Volunteer works bears this out.

In conclusion, there is really no definitive Volunteer portrait, although many motifs are typical of these kind of works and there was obviously a vogue surroundings them at the time (as with so many other artefacts dealing with the Volunteer movement).

¹⁸² Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.154.

What Volunteer works are most typical for, in general, is successfully melding many different artistic influences into a single work of art. We have seen how aspects of class, profession, military airs and politics could be incorporated into a single work to produce very dense imagery that was both specific to the sitter and unique to their portrait, yet also a part of a greater whole picture of portraiture in Europe in the eighteenth century. Volunteer works fit very well into what we know of portraiture in Europe at the time and this is perhaps their greatest quality; their ability to blend so many influences to produce a depiction of an Irish sitter in military uniform that expressed their pride and dedication in the Volunteers while also partaking in the social custom of portraiture at large, telling us about their perception of themselves, socially, professionally and the image they wished to project of themselves to others.

Volunteer artworks form a group firstly by virtue of their subject matter, through the depiction of a sitter in Volunteer uniform and through a select range of props, backgrounds, surroundings and poses that some portraits clearly shared. However, all of these sources were individual works of art, some of which clearly had complex artist-sitter relationships attached to them and should, first and foremost, be studied individually. The individual work of art is the smallest unit in this study and although many Volunteer works are very unoriginal and unremarkable, this is very useful to us as it tells us a lot about the artistic conventions that went into the composition of the work and therefore, about the aspirations and thoughts of the sitter and indeed the artist.

Chapter five: Ceramics

Ceramics which depict individual Volunteers, the Volunteer movement in general, or a specific Volunteer unit are extant in some numbers. The emergence of volunteering in the mid 1770s coincided roughly with the crest of a broad wave of fine ceramics consumption in Europe, which had begun to rise in the early eighteenth century. By the 1740s, ceramics had taken up a key role in the lives of the European upper and middling classes. By the 1770s, ceramics were an expansive and hugely profitable industry, in terms of the sheer breadth of products available, the time, effort and capital expended on research and innovation within the trade and the global dissemination of fine ceramics that made names like Sevres, Meissen and Wedgwood bywords for all that was fashionable and chic in late eighteenth century material consumption. The purpose of this chapter is to place ceramics associated with Irish Volunteer companies in an appropriate context and to elucidate what these primary sources add to our view of Irish Volunteer companies through the study of material artefacts.

To establish an appropriate context, we will discuss the history and context of fine ceramics in late eighteenth century Ireland, with reference to how Ireland fitted into wider European trends of ceramics production and consumption. The fact that the majority of extant Volunteer ceramics were produced by the Staffordshire-based Wedgwood and Co. necessitates some discussion of the history of Wedgwood products in Ireland. The established genre of associational ceramics is also key to understanding Irish Volunteer items and these will be discussed in due course. The main section of this chapter will discuss the extant Irish Volunteer ceramics themselves in detailed groupings in relation to shape and decoration, in order to broaden our view of the Volunteer movement through the study of these artefacts.

I

Before considering the artefacts in a wider world of European ceramics and analysis of the ceramics themselves as a group and as individual pieces, let us first look to fundamental questions of these artefacts as primary sources. Where are they to be found, how many are still extant and what basic divisions can we make to be as precise as possible about what is under scrutiny and discussion?

In all, there are at least thirty-eight known pieces of ceramics concerned with the Irish Volunteers of 1778 to 1793. There are also a significant number of contemporary pieces which are very closely related, dealing with issues of free trade and Irish sovereignty. However, if we take a very strict definition of a Volunteer ceramic piece, there are thirty known extant examples. What may we define as a Volunteer ceramic piece?

A Volunteer ceramic piece can be defined as an item of late eighteenth century manufacture, which was related through its decoration to the Irish Volunteer movement of 1778 to 1793. Shape, size and the kind of pottery are irrelevant in terms of defining and attributing an artefact in this sense. Therefore, the only attribute required of a ceramic item is that its decoration connected it somehow to the Volunteer movement. Analysis further below will closely examine the nature of this decoration, but in terms of definition, Volunteer subject matter alone admits a ceramic item to this group of primary sources.

Volunteer ceramics are found in a very wide array of national institutions and collections, this group of sources being the most widely spread geographically of those considered in this study. Volunteer ceramics can be found in the National Museum of Ireland, the Ulster Museum, the Willett collection of popular pottery in Brighton and Hove Museum, more local institutions including Ballymoney Museum in County Antrim, Irish heritage sites such as Birr Castle in County Offaly, the Buten collection of Wedgwood wares in Hempstead House in upstate New York and of course in many private collections in both Britain and Ireland. As with many other artefacts, those which are in public institutions and state-run sites are easy to access, but items in private

collections are far more difficult for the scholar to view and obtain reproductions. This is inherent in the nature of private collections, in that their contents are not usually reproduced or catalogued in an itemized form. This is a common trend involved in the study of material artefacts noted in this thesis, but in the specific case of ceramics, the problem is a little more acute than usual. Most Volunteer pieces were manufactured by Josiah Wedgwood's Etruria factory in Staffordshire. These items are very collectable and can fetch large sums of money at auction. The great demand for Wedgwood products in general creates difficulties for academic historians, since auction houses are not research institutions and most bear little responsibility for cataloguing the traffic of artefacts which pass through their auction room.

An example of a Wedgwood Volunteer piece going under the hammer recently occurred in Adam's of St Stephen's Green, Dublin, on 1 September 1999, when the William Kearney collection was sold (a large collection of Irish militaria, mostly from the late eighteenth century). One ceramic lot was sold, a generic Volunteer jug with prints declaring support for the Irish Volunteer movement (plate 5.1). The auction house estimate for the item was IR£350, but the lot was actually sold for IR£3,000. Bonham's of Knightsbridge sold a Volunteer tea-pot for Stg£3,400 in February 2000,¹ while a Wedgwood Volunteer mug of a much smaller size was sold by Phillips Auctioneers in London for Stg£1,050 in 2001.² These are good examples of the appetite for Wedgwood wares on the open market and the problems which it creates for the study of the artefacts for historians, because there are undoubtedly many extant items of interest beyond our knowledge, which we may never see.

In terms of studying such sources in an appropriate context, there is also a distinct lack of secondary sources dealing with the subjects of ceramics in late eighteenth century Ireland and late eighteenth century Irish ceramics. The standard text to begin studying the subject is still M.S.D. Westropp, *General guide to the art collections, pottery and porcelain, Irish pottery and porcelain* (Dublin, 1935). This book still provides the basis

¹ John May (ed.), *The Richardson collection of Irish political and British royal commemoratives* (Bonham's, Knightsbridge, 2000), p.6. Hereafter referred to as May, *The Richardson collection*.

² Fergus Gambon, Susan Newell and John Sandon (eds.), *The Norman Stretton collection of transfer printed ceramics* (Phillips Auctioneers, London, 2001), p.105.

for most of our knowledge about ceramics in eighteenth century Ireland, as it drew heavily on documentary, manuscript and print media sources for most of its information. However, there have been several noteworthy attempts to redress this imbalance in secondary sources in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. The Rosc Teoranta Irish delftware exhibition in 1970 at Castletown House in north County Kildare, generated considerable interest in discovering information and artefacts in relation to Irish delftware specifically, but interest in other related areas was also encouraged. One of the driving forces behind this effort was Michael Archer, who has written several key works on Irish ceramics to date.³

Peter Francis, better known for his research on Volunteer glass, has also been instrumental in recent study of ceramics in eighteenth century Ireland. His seminal work, *Irish delftware, an illustrated history* (London, 2000) is the most comprehensive work on such an area of Irish ceramics to date. His other major work on Belfast creamware⁴ sheds great light on a previously sketchy subject about which little was known. Important work on Irish ceramics has also been contributed by Mairead Dunlevy (née Reynolds), formerly of the National Museum of Ireland and Hunt Museum of Limerick.⁵ Despite these scholarly efforts, there is still a vast amount we do not know about the production, marketing and consumption of fine ceramics in late eighteenth century Ireland. This deficit in academic knowledge makes a study such as the present one all the harder to research because of a basic lack of boundaries and knowledge relating to the period and subject matter. Ireland has sometimes registered in studies of Wedgwood⁶ and other more general studies centred on ceramics in eighteenth century Europe,⁷ but these studies cannot possibly go into enough detail about Ireland in the short space it devotes to them.

³ Michael Archer, *The Irish delftware potteries, an exhibition of eighteenth century Irish delftware at Castletown House, County Kildare* (Dublin, 1970).

⁴ Peter Francis, *A pottery by the Lagan, Irish creamware from the Downshire pottery, Belfast 1787-c.1806* (Queen's University Belfast, 2001). Hereafter referred to as Francis, *A pottery by the Lagan*.

⁵ Mairead Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland* (National Museum of Ireland, 1988). Hereafter referred to as Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*. Dunlevy is the married name of this author and it is under this name that most of her works appear; Mairead Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramic potteries, 1769-1796' in *Post Medieval Archaeology*, no.18 (1984), pp 251-261. Hereafter referred to as Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramic potteries'.

⁶ Mairead Reynolds, 'Wedgwood in Dublin, 1772-1777' in *Irish Arts Review*, i, no.2 (Summer 1984), pp 36-9. Hereafter referred to as Reynolds, 'Wedgwood in Dublin'.

⁷ A good example of this would be Sarah Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics, products for a civilised society* (Manchester University Press, 1999). Hereafter referred to as Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*.

These are some of the relevant issues and problems confronting this study of Volunteer ceramics in late eighteenth-century Ireland, but there is nonetheless a great amount that can be gleaned from remaining evidence. Before analysis of the artefacts, however, it is imperative to consider the background and context in which the Volunteer items were produced and consumed.

II

The cultural and social story of the European relationship with ceramics is a long and interesting one. For our purposes however, we need only begin to look at it in any detail from the sixteenth century onwards. From the sixteenth century on, oriental pottery called porcelain began to make its way back to Europe through European merchants trading in China and Japan (plates 5.2 and 5.3).⁸ Porcelain exploded as a consumer phenomenon on the European upper classes in a rapid and pervasive manner. By the early seventeenth century, porcelain had become an essential trapping of the European courts and noble houses. Porcelain cabinets became a regular feature of stately interior decoration, proudly displaying distinguished collections of fine ceramic wares.⁹ Most importantly, porcelain fundamentally changed the manner in which Europeans consumed ceramics. Ceramics became a key focus of fashionable consumption, genteel customs,¹⁰ etiquette and were yet another means by which the social hierarchy could be observed. Most significant for our discussion is not porcelain itself, but the many imitations and substitutes of it that were manufactured in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹¹ Ceramics became central to everyday life for initially the upper classes, and eventually more and more of the middling classes over the course of this period. The result of this process was that by the late eighteenth century, even many in the lower classes ate their meals from ceramic dishes and even enjoyed tea or coffee from ceramic tea and coffee pots.¹²

The rise of ceramics in Europe and the sheer scale of their production, marketing and consumption has been studied in great detail in most European countries, but never thoroughly in Ireland. Although every country was different and had its own cultural and social experiences with ceramics,¹³ some general remarks can be made about the role of fine ceramics in mid to late eighteenth century Europe. Ceramics played a manifold role

⁸ Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, pp 14-6; Geoffrey Wills, *Wedgwood* (London, 1980), p.20. Hereafter referred to as Wills, *Wedgwood*.

⁹ Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, pp 11-2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 97-8.

¹¹ Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, pp 16-7.

¹² Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, p.3.

¹³ *Ibid.* Richards' whole work centres on differences in many parts of Europe and the fact that from region to region there was no definitive or typical experience in relation to ceramics for Europeans.

in eighteenth century Europe. At a basic level they were utilitarian items, more hygienic than the usual implements made of wood or plate metal, like pewter and silver. However, it is clear from the study of eighteenth-century ceramics that these items meant much more to their owners than merely tools for eating and drinking. Ceramic wares opened up, or were created by, whole new social customs, such as the drinking of tea, coffee and chocolate. Coffee houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the preferred place to transact matters of business amongst men. Lloyd's of London was indeed originally a coffee house.¹⁴ Josiah Wedgwood usually met business associates in a Liverpool coffee house to run his affairs in that town.¹⁵ The importance of hot beverages in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe was considerable, replacing alcohol in many situations as a social lubricant that would not create confrontation, but ensured smooth social relations and the upholding of the correct etiquette.¹⁶ Hot beverages also became the subject of gender roles. Tea-time was a daily opportunity for women to discuss scandals and gossip (usually free from the presence of men) and this custom was frequently commented upon and lampooned from the male perspective, to the extent that taking tea at home with women was usually viewed as a rather effeminate practice.¹⁷

Occasions on which food was consumed were also transformed by the use of fine ceramics. Ceramic services for dinner, dessert, tea, coffee and chocolate became more ostentatious and grand as the century wore on.¹⁸ The dinner table, as with so much else in eighteenth century society, became a place to make statements about one's influence, social standing, aspirations and even political ideals.¹⁹ Josiah Wedgwood's famous 'frog' service for Catherine II of Russia eventually cost the patron 16,406 roubles (equivalent to about £2,700 at the time) and contained over 950 individual items. The service cost Wedgwood between £2,000 to £3,000 to produce, mostly spent on the hand-painted landscapes and views from around Britain for which Wedgwood had to employ a team of

¹⁴ Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, pp 104-5, 143.

¹⁵ Brian Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood, entrepreneur to the Enlightenment* (Paperback edition, London, 2005), pp 95-6. Hereafter referred to as Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*.

¹⁶ Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, p.132.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp 100-2.

¹⁸ This is borne out by nearly every study of eighteenth century ceramics and is especially true in relation to regal and aristocratic clienteles.

¹⁹ Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, pp 15-6.

talented artists to complete, which on average cost £2 per plate (plate 5.4).²⁰ The same was true of armorial services, which were very popular throughout Europe with those wealthy and ostentatious enough to possess their own coat of arms.²¹ Chinese porcelain houses were very eager to produce armorial services because there was a buoyant market for them in Europe and great profit to be made because of their highly specialized nature (plate 5.5). In Ireland between 1720 and 1820, there were over 100 armorial services ordered from China by Irish customers.²² Toby Barnard has made clear that Irish consumers were very enthusiastic about heraldry, whether it was the genuine article or not and this probably extended to armorial dinner services as well.²³ Armorial wares and services were made by domestic Irish producers as well, such as the Delamain pothouse in Dublin (plate 5.6)²⁴ and for a brief time in Limerick by John Stritch and Christopher Bridson (plate 5.7).²⁵

In terms of what Toby Barnard has written about creating the 'grand figure' in the eighteenth century,²⁶ ceramics were a central tenet of this process of ostentation and pageantry. Ceramics in late eighteenth-century Europe were key to the visual creation of an individual's aspirations and public persona. In this respect, Ireland was really not radically different from its European neighbours in this period.

Ireland in the late eighteenth century had a very buoyant market for ceramics.²⁷ Ceramics were produced in Ireland in reasonable numbers, with much more being imported from abroad and by all accounts ceramic products were being consumed in

²⁰ Ann Finer and George Savage (eds.), *The selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood* (London, 1965), pp 15, 144, 152, 154, 156, 159, 160-1. Hereafter referred to as Finer and Savage (eds.), *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*; Robin Reilly, *Wedgwood, the new illustrated dictionary* (Suffolk, 1995), pp 164, 191-3. Hereafter referred to as Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*; Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, p.55; Wills, *Wedgwood*, pp 56-7. Some figures about the size of the service, the cost of production and the final price payed by Catherine II vary a little from those cited here, but ultimately there is agreement that this was a very grand and opulent service, being one of the largest and most expensive of its time.

²¹ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.127.

²² Peter Francis, *Irish delftware, an illustrated history* (London, 2000), p.89. Hereafter referred to as Francis, *Irish delftware*.

²³ Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*, pp 43-5, 49.

²⁴ Francis, *Irish delftware*, pp 100-4.

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp 158-62.

²⁶ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*. In this work Barnard builds up a complex picture of material culture in late seventeenth and eighteenth century Ireland, of which ceramics were a key feature, but only as part of a much wider culture of taste, refinement, material possessions, consumption and status projection.

²⁷ Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, p.21.

considerable numbers and with great appetite by Irish residents. Before we go any further, it is pertinent to briefly define the kinds of pottery that were consumed in late eighteenth-century Ireland. There were essentially four types.

Coarse pottery was produced in great numbers and was used mostly by the lower classes in the eighteenth century. Coarse pottery was functional in its design, execution and eventual uses. Coarse pottery usually had little or no decoration.²⁸ None of the items in this chapter fit into this category.

Porcelain has already been mentioned above. Porcelain was originally an oriental ceramic from China and Japan.²⁹ Its body was a brilliant white colour and porcelain was usually decorated in blue and white, or multi-coloured paint. Porcelain owes its brilliant white appearance to the clay it is composed of; kaolin or Chinese clay. This clay turns white when fired because of a lack of iron in its geological composition.³⁰ Porcelain could be made into products of all shapes and sizes, from tea-cups to figurines. The composition and art of making porcelain was a closely guarded oriental secret, which craftsmen refused to share with Europeans. Its mystery was not cracked in Europe until 1709, when Johann Freidrich Bottger discovered the secret in the course of several years of scientific experiments at Meissen in Germany (plate 5.8).³¹ Several European countries had porcelain factories in the eighteenth century, some of which were capable of producing very high quality products, including those at Meissen,³² Sevres,³³ Limoges and the English Bow porcelain works and Chelsea porcelain factory.³⁴ Ireland had no porcelain factories in the eighteenth century, but Irish residents were enthusiastic

²⁸ Michael Archer, *Irish pottery and porcelain* (Dublin, 1979), p.1.

²⁹ Japanese porcelain was much rarer than Chinese wares because after the end of the Sengoku Jidai (period of warring states, c.1450 to c.1600), as of 1641, Japan underwent a period self-imposed isolation at the order of the shogun (this was in no small way a measure to remove Europeans living in the country, who had now outlived their usefulness as providers of firearms). This seclusion was not a total blackout of all things western, but it did mean that only a single ship's worth of Japanese porcelain was sold to western merchants every year.

³⁰ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.248.

³¹ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 336-7; Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, pp 24-5.

³² Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, pp 23-9.

³³ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 383-4.

³⁴ *Ibid*, pp 75, 103.

consumers of products from the orient³⁵ and the English porcelain works, especially Bow.³⁶

Delftware (plate 5.9) was probably the most popular form of pottery produced and consumed in mid to late eighteenth century Ireland. Delftware was essentially an imitation of porcelain, invented in Antwerp at the beginning of the sixteenth century.³⁷ It was invented precisely to be a cheaply produced local alternative to oriental porcelain, for those who could not afford the more expensive imported wares. Delftware was very popular in Ireland right up to the 1760s.³⁸ Delftware was a tin-glazed earthenware, using different clay ingredients from porcelain. Its composition and production rendered it a reasonably robust, clean and affordable type of pottery, but nowhere near porcelain in terms of quality and aesthetic beauty. Crucially in the Irish case, it was the only real viable alternative for consumers to exorbitantly expensive porcelain wares, which were difficult to obtain in Ireland in any case.³⁹ Most Irish collections of oriental porcelain were piecemeal affairs, with items being bought piece by piece over a long period of time. Complete services were probably very rare in Ireland. Delftware had a big advantage in Ireland in this sense, in that it could offer the consumer a complete matching service that would impress visitors at the dinner table, which was a key function of owning such ceramics.⁴⁰

A key point to note about delftware was that it was produced and consumed for a long time in Ireland (in Dublin it was manufactured for nearly thirty years at the pothouse on the strand, where modern day Busáras stands), sometimes in several potteries simultaneously.⁴¹ Domestic delftware production met with great encouragement from parliament and the Dublin Society, which partly subsidized several ventures into its

³⁵ A good account of Chinese armorial porcelain imported into Ireland in the eighteenth century can be found in David S. Howard, 'Chinese armorial porcelain for Ireland' in *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, xxix nos. 3-4 (July to December 1986), pp 3-24.

³⁶ Francis, *Irish delftware*, p.57.

³⁷ Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, p.16; Francis, *Irish delftware*, p.7.

³⁸ Francis, *A pottery by the Lagan*, p.2.

³⁹ Francis, *Irish delftware*, p.7.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.89.

⁴¹ At one stage in the early 1760s, delftware was produced simultaneously at potteries in Belfast, Limerick, Youghal and two in Dublin. All of these are recorded in Francis, *Irish delftware*.

production.⁴² Delftware did have a good long run in Ireland however, being the ceramic of choice for many consumers for the best part of thirty years. Its decline was primarily subject to the rise of a newer and better product; creamware.⁴³

Creamware was invented in Staffordshire in the 1730s⁴⁴ and gained great popularity in a relatively short time. Creamware was a great advance in the history of fine ceramics. As a product it was cleaner, cheaper and lighter than delftware. Delftware went into a very sharp decline following the rise of creamware and by the early 1770s fine ceramics production in Ireland was centred on trying to produce creamware instead of delftware.⁴⁵ In terms of consumption, delftware became very unfashionable in a rapid manner, relative to the rise of creamware pottery.⁴⁶

Creamware was made from a different kind of clay than delftware and also included a high proportion of flint in its composition, which enhanced its pale colour.⁴⁷ Although Josiah Wedgwood is often spuriously cited as its inventor, he was not the original creator of creamware pottery (plate 5.10). However, he did make significant innovations and contributions to its research and development during his career (to say nothing of his many other inventions and innovations in other kinds of pottery), for which he has been feted ever since.⁴⁸ Wedgwood improved the product significantly by making the body colour whiter, the glaze cleaner and helping to introduce innovations in decoration, such as transfer printing. However, his real achievement in this field was not really in terms of ceramic products themselves, but rather in how he marketed his wares and created one of the first real brand names in the history of industry and consumerism.⁴⁹ From the late 1760s, and especially after May 1770, when Wedgwood opened a shop in Dublin,⁵⁰ creamware was far and away the most popular type of fine

⁴² Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, pp 19-20; Francis, *Irish delftware*, pp 52, 56, 63; Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramic potteries'.

⁴³ Francis, *A pottery by the Lagan*, p.2.

⁴⁴ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 122-3.

⁴⁵ Francis, *A pottery by the Lagan*, pp 2-3; Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramics potteries', pp 251-5; Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, p.44.

⁴⁶ Francis, *A pottery by the Lagan*, pp 2-3; Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramic potteries', p.258.

⁴⁷ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 122-3, 184, 358.

⁴⁸ David Buten, *Eighteenth century Wedgwood, a guide for collectors and connoisseurs* (New York, 1980), pp 17-21. Hereafter referred to as Buten, *Eighteenth century Wedgwood*.

⁴⁹ Buten, *Eighteenth century Wedgwood*, p.19; Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 387-9.

⁵⁰ The exact date on which Wedgwood began trading in Dublin through his College Green outlet is contested. This will be discussed in greater detail below in the section dealing with Wedgwood in Dublin.

ceramic on the Irish consumer market.⁵¹ This category is also the most relevant to the study of Volunteer ceramics.

The Irish ceramics market in the late eighteenth century was very buoyant, perhaps more so than has been traditionally recognized.⁵² A very wide range of people in late eighteenth century Ireland bought ceramics of one type or another. This extended far beyond the aristocracy and indeed beyond the religious grouping of Irish Protestants. In short, ceramics seem to have been found throughout Irish society, geographically and in terms of class and economics. Fine ceramics were such commonplace items by the mid to late eighteenth century that they are recorded in a wide variety of manuscript and printed sources and were spoken and written about in a parlance that bespoke everyday familiarity with them.⁵³ References to ceramics are found in a great many written sources including auction house catalogues, advertisements,⁵⁴ probates,⁵⁵ personal correspondence, account books and inventories.⁵⁶ This kind of evidence shows us that ceramics were a significant part of everyday life for the upper and middling classes and was one to which some consumers devoted considerable time and thought.⁵⁷

All kinds of pottery were owned in late eighteenth century Ireland, from the finest oriental porcelains, to cheaply produced coarse pottery. Probates are especially fruitful in this regard as they show us the material results of a life of consumption, rather than a snapshot of goods owned at any one stage in life.⁵⁸ Some consumers established large inventories of pottery over the course of their life, of varying quality and quantity, reflecting affluence, modesty or penury at various stages of a lifetime of consumption.

⁵¹ Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, p.21; Francis, *A pottery by the Lagan*, pp 2-3.

⁵² Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, p.21. Recent works discussed above in section I demonstrate this point and further research into Irish ceramics will undoubtedly evince a lively market for ceramics in late eighteenth century Ireland.

⁵³ Toby Barnard discusses this in some detail in *Making the grand figure*, especially in chapter four. However, there is still no monograph which would elucidate in clear terms how and by whom fine ceramics were used in late eighteenth century Ireland.

⁵⁴ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 81, 96-102; Breen, *The marketplace of revolution*, pp 53-7. Breen's work is about American colonial consumption habits, but it provides an interesting comparison to the Irish case and also its methodology should be considered as a guide for future research on similar Irish topics.

⁵⁵ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 109-10; Breen, *The marketplace of revolution*, pp 51-2.

⁵⁶ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 116-21, 128.

⁵⁷ In Dublin specifically, ceramics retailers advertised their particular wares in stock through the local press (*D.E.P.*, 8 June 1779). Sale of special shipments of goods that were new or that were otherwise difficult to obtain were advertised in a similar manner (*D.E.P.*, 1 December 1778).

⁵⁸ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 109-10; Breen, *The marketplace of revolution*, p.51.

What emerges fairly clearly from the use of such sources, however, is that there was a very wide range of fine ceramics being consumed in late eighteenth century Ireland and that the Irish consumer market was a discerning customer base, who were well in tune with fashionable consumption elsewhere in Europe.⁵⁹ Ireland was not simply a miniature version of Britain in this regard and although secondary works have begun to reflect this, there has still not been enough scholarly research of Irish ceramics to make more concrete statements on this subject.⁶⁰

In monetary terms, we have some figures which help to sketch the purchase, sale and consumption of ceramics in late eighteenth century Ireland. Consumption of ceramics, as with other goods, grew very rapidly from the 1750s onwards and was at something of a peak in the late 1770s and early 1780s. This is borne out by the statistics for imports of earthenware pottery from Britain and Europe. From 1744 to 1747, average ceramics imports were worth £3,367 per annum.⁶¹ Between 1753 and 1759, there was a high of £10,318 and a low of £6,677 per annum.⁶² Consumption of ceramics in Ireland continued to grow very steadily in the 1770s and 1780s. From March 1770 to March 1773, the annual average was £12,085.⁶³ March 1780 to March 1783 yielded a phenomenal £17,401.⁶⁴ These figures were in addition to domestically produced and retailed pottery, but collated figures for this do not exist. Ireland's domestic potteries usually produced enough to satisfy the terms of Dublin Society premiums, so that subsidies could be claimed based on the market value of the factory's production.⁶⁵ Production levels are difficult to generalise, but for most of the 1750s and the early 1760s, the Delamain pottery (which operated at the present site of Busáras in Dublin) produced somewhere in the region of £1,000 worth per annum of wares.⁶⁶ Later, in the early 1770s, the creamware manufactory of Stacey and Co. (the name of the new management of the Delamain pottery) produced £1,334 4s 3d worth of creamware from

⁵⁹ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, pp 20, 131-2.

⁶⁰ Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.20; Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramic potteries', p.258.

⁶¹ M.S.D. Westropp, *General guide to the art collections, pottery and porcelain, Irish pottery and porcelain* (Dublin, 1935), p.33. Hereafter referred to as Westropp, *Irish pottery and porcelain*.

⁶² *Ibid*, p.33.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p.33.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p.33.

⁶⁵ Francis, *Irish delftware*, pp 51, 56, 63, 157; Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramic potteries', pp 252-4.

⁶⁶ Francis, *Irish delftware*, p.63.

March 1772 to March 1773.⁶⁷ This rapidly fell off in later years, but there was still some consumption of domestic Irish wares.

At the height of volunteering in the early 1780s, fine ceramics were being imported to the value of over £17,000 worth per annum.⁶⁸ There was little or no domestic production of fine ceramics at this time,⁶⁹ but the import statistic directly above still indicates that there was a considerable and growing appetite for fine ceramics in Ireland during the Volunteer period. Most Volunteer pieces were creamware pottery, produced by Josiah Wedgwood's Etruria factory in Staffordshire. The story of Wedgwood's involvement with Ireland is central to our understanding of how Volunteer ceramics were created and marketed and it is to this subject that we will now direct our attention.

⁶⁷ Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramic potteries', p.252.

⁶⁸ Westropp, *Irish pottery and porcelain*, p.33.

⁶⁹ Francis, *A pottery by the Lagan*, p.3; Reynolds, 'Irish fine ceramic potteries', pp 251-4. There was some production of creamware in Ireland during the Volunteer era (several short-lived Dublin potteries in 1777, 1781 and 1784), but never on the scale of the Delamain delftware pottery in terms of scope or continuity.

III

Josiah Wedgwood I's (plate 5.11) interaction with Ireland falls roughly into two broad periods, the 1770s (1770 to 1777) and the years after 1777 (1777 to 1790s). During the early to mid 1770s, Wedgwood had a retail outlet in Dublin and this had a very profound effect on the manner in which fine ceramics were produced and consumed in Ireland for several decades. The decade after 1777 was still very much dominated by Wedgwood wares and the influence of the College Green retail outlet was considerable for some time on the consumption habits of Irish residents. In 1785, there were complications involving Wedgwood's reaction against potential Irish fine ceramic potteries and the competition they would create for English manufacturers, which had considerable implications for how Wedgwood wares were consumed in Ireland after this date.

Wedgwood products were first sold in Ireland some time in the 1760s. There is no precise date for this event, but Irish customers probably first heard of Wedgwood at the beginning of the Wedgwood vogue, after he became 'Potter to Her Majesty' in 1766, on the completion of his famed tea service for Queen Charlotte.⁷⁰ Wedgwood was certainly exporting products to the American colonies by 1761 to 1762, so a similar date for the opening of Irish markets does not seem unreasonable.⁷¹ In terms of personal correspondence and documentary evidence, the first real interest we can see Wedgwood expressing in an Irish trade was in May 1770, when he wrote to his business partner Thomas Bentley (plate 5.12) expressing an interest in having Wedgwood wares sold by several traders in Dublin.⁷² Irish customers were certainly introduced to Wedgwood products before this date, but there seems to have been a surge of interest in Wedgwood products by the upper and middling classes from 1769 onwards. Evidence for this exists in a letter from Josiah Wedgwood to his business partner Thomas Bentley in August 1770. The letter states that an Irish interest in Wedgwood was really beginning to take

⁷⁰ Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*, pp 158-9; Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.358; Wills, *Wedgwood*, pp 38-9, 42.

⁷¹ Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*, pp 92-6.

⁷² Ann Finer and George Savage (eds.), *The selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood* (London, 1965), p.93. Hereafter referred to as Finer and Savage (eds.), *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*.

off, especially in vases, and that this should be harnessed somehow by selling the product more directly in Ireland,

We had a Sir Charles Bingham from Ireland here on Tuesday last with his Lady and Daughter. They came from Namptwich hither on purpose to see the works they had heard so much talk about in Ireland...some others had seen our Vases and there seemed to be a violent Vase madness breaking out amongst them, and they were sure if we had a room in Dublin, a large quantity might be sold.⁷³

The difficulties which Irish customers faced in obtaining Wedgwood products and the considerable profits that easing this problem would produce were described in another letter pertaining to Ireland written to Bentley on 20 August 1770,

For if you consider how many difficultys, risques, and disagreeable circumstances a Gentleman in Dublin must submit to in procuring a sett of our Vases, you'l say a very strong stimulus is necessary to carry him thro' them. He must trouble some friend in London to buy them and does not know at what expence, whether at 5 pounds or 20 pounds which circumstances alone, as he wo.d not limit his friend in the price, may prevent his ordering any. Then he must unavoidably trust to the taste and choice of another Person, which I am certain you will think a very disagreeable circumstance where so much depends upon it, & after all this is submitted to, there is the risque of carriage, and of their being forfeited at the Custom House by a wrong entry as they will scarcely know how to specify them. So that upon the whole I do not think we shall sell many Vases to Ireland under these discouraging circumstances, notwithstanding all our noble and honourable friends do for us there.⁷⁴

Although the difficulties were perhaps a little exaggerated by Wedgwood as he was trying to convince Bentley that an Irish showroom was a plausible venture, it's fairly clear from these pieces of correspondence that Wedgwood was very enthusiastic about the Irish venture and saw great potential in it (the kind of vases which Wedgwood spoke of in his correspondence to Bentley are illustrated in plates 5.13 and 5.14).

⁷³ Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley, 2 August 1770, *Ibid*, p.93.

⁷⁴ Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley, 20 August 1770, quoted in Katherine E. Farrer (ed.), *Letters of Josiah Wedgwood, 1762-1770* (Manchester, 1903), pp 362-3.

Wedgwood began to create a vogue around his wares in Ireland by soliciting the custom and favour of the upper classes. He had done the same in Britain⁷⁵ and was also sending goods to Lord and Lady Cathcart in Russia, where Lord Cathcart was British ambassador to Catherine II.⁷⁶ For Wedgwood the upper classes, especially the peerage, were the key group to target initially in terms of marketing his products. As with portraiture (as we have seen in a previous chapter) the key to selling the material product to the large middling classes was first to attract the attention of the upper classes to make a product fashionable (no matter how superfluous in nature or expensive in monetary terms) and then to lower the prices and costs of the product to bring it within reach of more and more consumers. This is a fairly simple model of material culture and consumption, but it was effectively the one used by Wedgwood,

The Great People have had their Vases in their Palaces long enough for them to be seen and admir'd, by the Middling Class of People, which class we know are vastly, I had almost said infinitely, superior in number, to the Great, & though a great price was I believe at first necessary to make the Vases esteemed Ornaments for Palaces that reason no longer exists. Their character is established, & the middling People would probably buy quantities of them at a reduced price.⁷⁷

Wedgwood was very eager to cultivate an aristocratic clientele to sell his products and he stated in a letter to Bentley that this should be their approach,

We have many Irish friends who are both willing and able to recommend us, but they must be applied to that purpose...Lord Bessborough you know can do a great deal for us with his friends on the other side of the Water by a letter of recommendation or otherwise as he may think proper...the Duke of Richmond had many and virtuous friends in Ireland. We are looking over the English Peerage to find out lines, channels and connections-will you look over the Irish Peerage with the same view? I need not

⁷⁵ Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*, pp 163-4.

⁷⁶ Finer and Savage, *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, pp 79-80; Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 97-8; Wills, *Wedgwood*, pp 56-7.

⁷⁷ Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley, 23 August 1772, quoted in Wills, *Wedgwood*, p.68.

tell you how much will depend upon a proper and noble introduction.⁷⁸

In correspondence, it was noted that John Ponsonby, Lord Bessborough and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons had paid a visit to Wedgwood's Etruria pottery works and also that William Robert Fitzgerald, 2nd duke of Leinster 'a gentleman of the first Virtue in Ireland',⁷⁹ had expressed great interest in Wedgwood wares on receipt of a set of vases. It is worth noting that Wedgwood also had a close friendship with Richard Lovell Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown, County Longford from the late 1770s onwards.⁸⁰ What emerges from Wedgwood's correspondence is that he knew many influential people in Ireland and he made it his business to ingratiate himself with them. Wedgwood himself usually declined to write to members of the peerage and upper classes and left that task to his business partner and closest friend; Thomas Bentley. Bentley was from a solid middling class background⁸¹ and was more comfortable in the world of such figures than Wedgwood who frequently complained 'I have had so much business upon my hands, and hate writing to great folks'.⁸² Wedgwood had come from a very lower middling class background and was thus uncomfortable with such figures.⁸³ The decision to open a retail outlet in Dublin, rather than simply have a more traditional one-off auction was certainly significant in showing just how buoyant the Irish ceramics market was by the early 1770s.⁸⁴ We must also consider that Dublin was chosen over other locations, notably Bath⁸⁵ as the best place to open a retail outlet. This fact speaks well for the buoyancy of the Irish ceramics market in terms of the volume of consumption, as Wedgwood was

⁷⁸ Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley, 2 August 1770. Finer and Savage, *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, p.93.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.93.

⁸⁰ Ibid, pp 215-6, 229, 250, 261, 265, 273, 281, 285, 301, 306. Wedgwood's relationship with Richard Edgeworth is set out, complete with a set of letters in: Francis Doherty, 'A eighteenth century intellectual friendship: letters of Richard Lovell Edgeworth and the Wedgwoods' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, section C, lxxxvi:6 (1986), pp 231-69.

⁸¹ Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*, pp 106-11; Richard Tames, *Josiah Wedgwood, an illustrated life of Josiah Wedgwood, 1730-1795* (Buckinghamshire, 2001), p.9.

⁸² Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley, 20 September 1769, in Finer and Savage, *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, p.93.

⁸³ Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*, chapters 1 to 5; Wills, *Wedgwood*, pp 18-20; Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 62-3.

⁸⁴ Dunlevy, 'Wedgwood in Dublin', pp 37-8.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p.37; Finer and Savage (eds.), *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, pp 122-3; Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 387-9; Wills, *Wedgwood*, p.68.

usually a shrewd investor and businessman. Wedgwood's Irish venture is sometimes seen as an affair that Wedgwood was quite apprehensive about (it was shelved for over a year at one stage),⁸⁶ but the investment of capital, huge amounts of stock and one of Wedgwood's senior showroom foremen indicates otherwise.

Wedgwood seems at first to have settled on a large auction in Dublin, for which purpose he would build up stock in warehouses for a grand sale spanning several days 'I am for an auction or Warehouse in Dublin.- to open a warehouse for a Month or two, and then to conclude with an Auction would be the best plan'.⁸⁷ However, as outlined in articles in the *Royal Society of Arts Journal*⁸⁸ and by Mairead Dunlevy,⁸⁹ Wedgwood seems to have quickly realised the potential behind a long-term retail outlet in Dublin and the buoyancy of the Irish market in fine ceramics. In the eighteenth century, fine ceramics auctions took place regularly in cities and towns that were somehow disconnected from the major fine ceramics manufactories, or the trade routes which would bring such items within the town's economic orbit.⁹⁰ In Dublin, sales and auctions were very popular and there were certainly favourite manufacturers, such as the Bow porcelain works, whose sales in Ireland were always well attended. Although auctions were common practice within the marketing of fine ceramics in the late eighteenth century, Wedgwood saw great potential in an Irish retail outlet.⁹¹ As a result, plans were set in motion to open a fully fledged retail outlet for the foreseeable future.

Early in 1772, William Brock, formerly in charge of the Chelsea decorating studio,⁹² and John Wood opened the Wedgwood retail outlet in College Green (plate 5.15). The shop was quick to take off. The groundwork for the sale of Wedgwood wares

⁸⁶ Finer and Savage, *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, p.93.

⁸⁷ Josiah Wedgwood to Thomas Bentley, 28 November 1771, quoted in Dunlevy, 'Wedgwood in Dublin', p.39.

⁸⁸ 'Wedgwood's Dublin Showroom', in *Royal Society of Arts Journal*, cxxxviii, no.5412 (November 1990), pp 840-843.

⁸⁹ Dunlevy, 'Wedgwood in Dublin', p.37.

⁹⁰ Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, pp 63-4.

⁹¹ There was almost a lineal progression in that Wedgwood first wished only to sell goods through Irish dealer, before settling on a grand auction, the idea of a retail outlet, before such a showroom was actually opened in College Green in 1772. One source actually claims an opening date in 1773 for the retail outlet (Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.389).

⁹² Finer and Savage, *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, p.93.

had been very effective in preparing the marketplace by hyping up Wedgwood wares⁹³ and consumer's desire for them. At first orders were sent over on request from Etruria (where "ornamental" wares were made) and Burslem (where more run of the mill, or 'useful' wares were produced), but before long stock was being sent over to Ireland without specific demand for it, effectively for over the counter sales.⁹⁴ Complete services for dinner, dessert, tea and so on were particularly popular, as were ciphers for sealing letters, chimney pieces (plate 5.16) and reliefs in jasper (plates 5.17 and 5.18). Jasperware was probably available to Irish customers soon after its release in Britain in 1774.⁹⁵ The outlet was by all accounts very successful, turning over £1,200 in a single year.⁹⁶ However, as business picked up in Britain, Wedgwood had no real need for the Irish store any longer. He attempted to pass it on as an investment to William Brock, who was unwilling to invest his own capital in such a venture.⁹⁷ Eventually two other Dublin retailers were persuaded to sell Wedgwood wares for a commission. Esau Clarke was a brass instrument maker by trade, but agreed to sell some Wedgwood wares, while a J. Brownhills agreed to sell ciphers and inkpots of Wedgwood manufacture.⁹⁸ Wedgwood seems to have been satisfied with this conclusion and accordingly closed the College Green retail outlet in 1777.

The Wedgwood retail outlet is absolutely central to our understanding of how Volunteer ceramics were produced, consumed and also how they were marketed to consumers. The Irish appetite for Wedgwood wares was considerable and did not go into any sort of recession following the closure of the Dublin showroom in 1777. The products were still eagerly sought through the Wedgwood dealers present in Dublin and as Volunteer companies emerged in the late 1770s, the marketplace was already well conditioned to demand fine ceramic products in support and celebration of Ireland's amateur Volunteer companies.

⁹³ By the 1770s, Wedgwood was able to sell his products at two or three times their actual value in comparison to similar products marketed by his rivals. This was the effect of Wedgwood's successful branding of his products (Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*, p.235).

⁹⁴ Dunlevy, 'Wedgwood in Dublin', p.37.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.37; Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 239-45.

⁹⁶ Dunlevy, 'Wedgwood in Dublin', p.37.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p.38.

⁹⁸ Finer and Savage, *Selected letters of Josiah Wedgwood*, p.274.

IV

Volunteer ceramics are very interesting artefacts which have survived in such numbers as to allow reasonably detailed discussion of their significance to the wider Volunteer movement. In this section of the chapter, we will firstly make some very basic but important distinctions between the many types of ceramics under discussion. These distinctions will be under the headings of their manufacturers, marks and distinguishing features, the shape and type of wares and finally the decoration of such items. The latter part of the chapter will enter into detailed discussion of different types of decoration on Volunteer ceramics and their significance to the individual Volunteer unit and the wider movement as a whole.

The most basic distinction we can make in the study of Volunteer ceramics concerns their manufacturers. By far the most common manufacturer was Wedgwood, but there are clearly also several other manufacturers who warrant some comment. Of the thirty-eight extant pieces of Volunteer ceramics, eleven were certainly produced by Wedgwood and a further twenty-two were probably produced at Etruria judging by their shape, decoration and quality. However, this leaves us with five pieces, none of which were produced by Wedgwood, but still belong to the primary source grouping of Volunteer ceramics. All thirty-eight pieces are creamware pottery, none belong to the other types of fine ceramics already discussed above.

These manufacturing attributions are based on the following evidence. The ten pieces which are certainly Wedgwood are marked on the base with the Wedgwood mark, which became a standard procedure at Etruria from at least 1772 onwards.⁹⁹ Marking was a matter of some importance for Wedgwood as his wares had to be visibly connected to his brand name and such marks provided indisputable assurance to the consumer that that were indeed purchasing an authentic Wedgwood product. However, marking was by no means universal in late eighteenth century Wedgwood wares, so we cannot necessarily expect all pieces to be marked.¹⁰⁰ Pieces could be unmarked for a variety of reasons.

⁹⁹ Buten, *Eighteenth century Wedgwood*, p.12.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p.13.

Because it was a new practice¹⁰¹ many potters seem to have simply forgotten to mark every piece in the busy production line like atmosphere of Etruria.¹⁰² On some occasions Wedgwood seems to have had products smuggled out of the country or did not want his products to be recognized for other reasons and such wares were thus unmarked.¹⁰³ Wedgwood used two main markings in this period, both spelling out his name. The first was all in block capitals WEDGWOOD (plate 5.19), while the second had a capital letter only at the start, with the rest of the letters in lower case Wedgwood.¹⁰⁴ Alternative markings in this period included a wedge shaped mark (also seen in plate 5.19) and a small impressed circle, both of which denoted Wedgwood wares to retailers (the reasons for the use of these two symbols is explained in footnote 103). Of the extant thirty-eight pieces, eleven are impressed with markings which positively identify them as Wedgwood pieces. When a piece is not marked there are several other ways to attribute it with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

Shape is an important factor in attributing Wedgwood wares. Wedgwood produced a creamware pattern book in 1774 containing the form and shape of all his major creamware products (plate 5.20).¹⁰⁵ Added to this is the issue of decoration. Transfer prints were used and repeated in great quantities by Wedgwood and these are also a useful guide in terms of attribution. However, there are several pieces amongst our group of Volunteer ceramics which clearly do not fit into any known Wedgwood patterns, in terms of either shape or decoration. One of them may have been produced by

¹⁰¹ And indeed a somewhat unusual practice as well. Marking was used by the likes of Meissen and Sevres, but was quite unusual amongst more regional and small scale ceramics manufacturers in the late eighteenth century.

¹⁰² Buten, *Eighteenth century Wedgwood*, pp 12-3.

¹⁰³ During the American Revolution Wedgwood naturally wished to continue selling his wares in America, but a widespread boycott of imported British goods was upheld in the colonies at this time. Producing unmarked wares was one way in which Wedgwood was able to continue selling his products in America during the war, albeit at a reduced scale. Similarly, during the dispute about William Pitt's economic reforms in 1785, Wedgwood became very unpopular in Ireland as a result of his comments about restricting Irish industry. To continue selling his products in Ireland to many potential customers, he had to remove the Wedgwood mark from his wares. To satisfy retailers, alternative marks were often used, which would appear innocuous to the untrained eye, but would inform retailers that a given piece was a Wedgwood product.

¹⁰⁴ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.503.

¹⁰⁵ The first catalogue of 1774 is reproduced in full in Wolf Mankovitz, *Wedgwood* (London, 1980).

the Downshire pottery of Belfast in the 1780s,¹⁰⁶ while two others seem to have been produced in Liverpool.¹⁰⁷ Because of the lopsided nature of the sources in favour of Wedgwood products, the following discussion will necessarily centre on Wedgwood wares, but other manufacturers will be mentioned when their pieces arise in discussion.

The second clear distinction we can make in this group of sources is between different types of wares. Most of the Volunteer ceramics are jugs, but there are also tea-pots, mugs, punch bowls and a small ceramic plate as well. Of our thirty-eight artefacts there are twenty-five jugs, six tea-pots, four mugs, two punch-bowls and a small ceramic plate which was mounted in a serving tray. Our analysis will therefore be focused mostly on jugs, but this will not lead to any distortion as the focus of our discussion will be the decoration of the items rather than the shape of the item it appears on.

Volunteer ceramics were decorated in one of two ways. They could be transfer printed, decorated freehand in enamel paint, or in several cases included a combination of both. Enamelling was the rarer of the two, transfer printing having taken up a larger share of the decoration of creamware pottery by the late eighteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Enamel painting had to be performed by an artist who could consistently execute designs that lived up to the manufacturer's standards. Enamelling was generally done in multiple colours and involved either free-hand artistic patterns or sections of colour painted within pre-marked printed boundaries. At the very top end of the ceramics market in porcelains there were more easily recognizable artistic compositions such as armory (coats of arms) or landscapes. In creamware, the designs of David Rhodes (plates 5.21 and 5.22) were what might be expected in everyday wares.¹⁰⁹ Enamelling was necessarily an expensive process (relative to transfer printing) because the artist's skills had had to be paid for per

¹⁰⁶ This attribution has been suggested by the foremost expert on the Downshire pottery, Peter Francis, but due to the piece's recent discovery this attribution or any other details of the piece, including reproduction in a publication, are yet to be published.

¹⁰⁷ The first of these (plates 5.52 and 5.53) is kept in the National Museum of Ireland, catalogue number NMI 1995.582. The second (plate 5.54) was put up for auction in February 2000 in Bonham's of Knightsbridge, but remained unsold under an estimate of £1,500 to £1,800 (May, *The Richardson collection*, p.5).

¹⁰⁸ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 427-8; Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, p.54; Wills, *Wedgwood*, pp 30-4.

¹⁰⁹ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 102-3, 367-8.

piece, which made such decoration expensive in bulk.¹¹⁰ Transfer printing (plate 5.23) on the other hand was a much cheaper, but also neater and more attractive process used to decorate wares. Its invention is currently disputed between two parties, but they may have arrived at the same conclusion independently. The first man to claim its invention was an Irishman; John Brooks. He claimed to have invented the process and brought it to the Battersea enamel works in 1752 and also subsequently to the Bow porcelain works and the Worcester porcelain factory.¹¹¹ The second claimants for transfer printing's invention seem to have arrived at the same conclusion independently and were two men from Liverpool; John Sadler and Guy Green.¹¹² Sadler and Green were business partners who originally decorated delftware tiles made in Liverpool by the pottery of Zaccariah Barnes (plate 5.24).¹¹³ They claimed to have researched the process for seven years and the defining moment was when they printed 1,200 delftware tiles in six hours in 1756, which is considered by many to be one of the first acts of the industrial revolution.¹¹⁴ The adoption of the transfer printing process was a key moment in the history of European ceramics. After decades of representing a distinctly lower standard of product than porcelain, creamware could finally be decorated in a manner that would allow it to appeal to a broader share of the market and compete more effectively with porcelain.¹¹⁵

Transfer printing added great precision to creamware decoration (plate 5.25). Prints could be reproduced with minute accuracy in different sizes and colours¹¹⁶ to produce wares that held much greater attraction for consumers. Transfers were much neater and more detailed than the painter's brush and the same patterns could be replicated innumerable times at a fraction of the cost of enamelling. The benefits of transfer-printing over enamelling were manifold and affected a sea-change in the manner in which ceramics were conceived in the minds of manufacturers, produced, marketed

¹¹⁰ Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, p.54.

¹¹¹ Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, p.20; Francis, *Irish delftware*, p.48; Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.378.

¹¹² Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.378; Wills, *Wedgwood*, p.32.

¹¹³ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.427.

¹¹⁴ Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*, pp 83-4; David Drakard, *Printed English pottery, history and humour in the reign of George III* (London, 1992), p.45. Hereafter referred to as Drakard, *Printed English pottery*; Wills, *Wedgwood*, p.32.

¹¹⁵ Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, p.21; Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, pp 53-4; Wills, *Wedgwood*, pp 30-2.

¹¹⁶ Certainly in the case of Wedgwood, jet black prints were the most popular, although prints were also produced in green, purple and red (Wills, *Wedgwood*, pp 32-4).

and consumed. One area of particular interest to our study is that of likenesses¹¹⁷ and popular prints which were reproduced endlessly, with minute accuracy. The burgeoning Georgian print market¹¹⁸ found another outlet in ceramics which was both highly desirable and attractive to consumers and very profitable and efficient for manufacturers.

Printed ceramics were almost instantly popular in Britain and Ireland. Works that were reproduced in great quantities ran the gamut from well known likenesses (plates 5.26 to 5.29) to popular satirical prints (plate 5.30) and individual pieces for clubs, associations or for one-off presentations to local notables such as MPs, as well as landscapes and floral decoration.¹¹⁹ The rise of transfer printed ceramics bearing satirical prints and likenesses coincided very closely with an explosion of the production and consumption of prints on paper from the 1730s onwards.¹²⁰ Volunteer prints (both on paper and on ceramics) came reasonably late in terms of the history of eighteenth century prints and printed ceramics, but they were certainly a part of this phenomenon. With the advent of transfer printing, the decoration of ceramics took a giant step towards mass production and marketing that would increasingly characterise late eighteenth century ceramics markets. The implications of this for volunteering were that within a very popular area of consumer culture there was now a medium through which a nationwide movement like the Volunteers could be supported in a mass produced consumer product. The production of Wedgwood's (and others) Volunteer wares clearly reflect this on the part of both ceramics manufacturers and consumers.

To further subdivide our study of transfer printed ceramics, there were as we have seen above, wares that were only transfer printed and those which included both transfer printed decoration and enamelled detail as well. Essentially there are two kinds of Volunteer ceramics that emerge once this distinction is made, namely those with what was essentially generic stock decoration and those whose decoration was personalized to reflect the intensely individual nature of the single Volunteer unit. We will deal with each in turn, starting with wares that had stock decoration. A tabulation of the stock motifs and

¹¹⁷ Printing allowed very faithful and accurate reproduction of likenesses, which became an important medium for conveying to the public the physical appearance of their political and military leaders. Wedgwood became interested in printing likenesses as early as 1767 when he decided to produce a range of wares displaying a half-length likeness of Pitt the elder (Dolan, *Josiah Wedgwood*, pp182-184).

¹¹⁸ Donald, *The age of caricature*, pp 1-21; Richards, *Eighteenth century ceramics*, p.53.

¹¹⁹ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.428.

¹²⁰ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.1.

arrangements used on Volunteer wares can be found in table 5.1. Each entry will be explored in order below.

Table 5.1. Stock decoration on Volunteer ceramics.

Decoration	Number
Success to the...	17
Death of Wolfe	16
Floral piece/s	15
Three Volunteer infantrymen	6
Mounted Volunteer	4
Social scene	4
Rural scene/landscape	3
Popular prints	2
Naval scene	2
Fall of the Bastille	1
Total	70

Source: ¹²¹

Stock decoration of Volunteer wares was generally a generic business, but these wares were produced and consumed in great numbers in this period. There seemed to have been a very buoyant market for products that supported the Volunteer movement in a very general fashion.¹²² An especially interesting point about generic transfer printed wares is that they were nearly all produced in Britain, and began to appear close to the establishment of Irish non-importation societies in the late 1770s.¹²³ Despite the existence

¹²¹ This sample was drawn together from the thirty-eight extant pieces of Volunteer ceramics outlined above in section IV of this chapter.

¹²² David Drakard's work focuses in chapters four to eight on how various gaps in the market were exploited by ceramics manufacturers. For example, the American Revolution provided a great opportunity to celebrate the nation's military heroes in both the army and the navy. One of the mediums through which this was achieved was through transfer printed ceramics.

¹²³ Dickson, *New foundations*, pp 165-71.

of such societies to safeguard against the consumption of foreign wares, Volunteer ceramics (and many other products from Britain and Europe) were still enthusiastically consumed by Volunteer companies and members of the public who wished to express their support for the movement and its collective ideals. The consumption of such wares took place even as Volunteers and their supporters extolled the virtues of consuming Irish products and actively repressing the consumption of goods and produce from abroad.¹²⁴ Similar trends emerge in many other groups of artefacts consulted in this study, but ceramics stand out especially as a foreign product with a buoyant and eager consumer base in Ireland,¹²⁵ which goes directly against the grain of our received knowledge about such artefacts used by the Volunteers. This variance between the rhetoric of non-importation and the practice of consuming fashionable goods from abroad is certainly worthy of further study.

There were several generic transfer prints used on Irish Volunteer wares. The first is bland, but does give a sense of how such wares supported volunteering in a very general way, without identifying too closely with any specific values of the wider Volunteer movement (plate 5.31). This print bears in a central cartouche the motto 'Success to the/ INDEPENDENT VOLUNTEER/ SOCIETIES/ of the Kingdom of IRELAND'. Below this was usually, though not always printed 'FOR MY COUNTRY'. At the top of the composition was a lady playing a Maid of Erin harp, wearing an imperial crown and resting upon a shield bearing the royal coat of arms. This was a very unusual figure of Hibernia, obviously produced by an artist unversed in the many recent

¹²⁴ Kieran A. Kennedy, 'Limerick Volunteers 1776-1793' in *Old Limerick Journal*, xxxvi (1999), pp 21-2; Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster', p.94; Much has been made of non-importation to date in scholarly works. This mostly rests on a lack of understanding (and a paucity of scholarship) of the workings of the consumer marketplace in the late eighteenth century; that is to say what Irish people were consuming and why they did so in distinct patterns. This misconception has been built largely upon propaganda written at the time. Although many people claimed adamant support for non-importation and using only Irish goods, the fact is that Ireland was not self-sufficient in terms of consumer goods and many luxuries had to be imported. Artefacts dealing with the Volunteer movement are a key illustration of this point, as many must have been imported and purchased during the free trade campaign. Therefore, the image of the Volunteers as a force built upon Irish-produced goods (especially in relation to the free trade campaign), serving Irish economic interests needs re-evaluation. Undoubtedly, non-importation was much stronger in the south of Ireland than in Ulster and many ceramic wares could have been purchased after such societies disbanded, but ceramics remain an anomaly to the problem of just how effective non-importation societies were during the free trade campaign.

¹²⁵ Although a small number of Volunteer ceramics may have been manufactured in Ireland, the vast majority were made in Britain and Volunteer ceramics can therefore be referred to in general as a foreign product, compared to other sources consulted for this study.

developments in visual depictions of this figure. Hibernia has been depicted in a bodice and a hairstyle concurrent with those of late eighteenth century Europe and not the classical garb that had become the norm in Irish depictions of this figure. She also bears two symbols of a very British monarchical kind, the imperial crown and the British coats of arms upon a shield. Such motifs appeared very rarely in Irish images of Hibernia and reflect the fact that this figure of Hibernia was probably produced by an artist who had little experience of such developments in Irish popular art.

On the left of the central cartouche is a soldier of a centre company (a run of the mill company in a regular battalion) standing to attention (plate 5.33). On the right of the cartouche is a soldier of a light infantry company wearing several plumes in his hat, standing in a charge bayonets stance (plate 5.34). This composition is by far the most common in ceramic Volunteer wares, with seventeen extant examples known, nearly half of the total extant Volunteer ceramics. It was almost certainly designed by an artist in the employ of Guy Green of Liverpool, who since at least September 1761 had been contracted to carry out Wedgwood's transfer printing on blank ceramic wares.¹²⁶ The decoration of the wares by a printer in such cases entailed Green employing an artist to make copper plate engravings from which the prints for the ceramic wares could be reproduced and transferred via the industrial process of bat-printing.¹²⁷ Although the brief for such a print would be strict, it was ultimately up to the artist to invent the composition if it was an original work. The whole point of this print was to be as generic as possible, supporting the Volunteers in a very general manner, in order to sell as many units of stock as possible in Ireland. Bearing this in mind, it was a very cleverly composed piece. It supported the Volunteers, included the allegorical figure of Hibernia, yet also (through the imperial crown and coat of arms) asserted the connection between the kingdom of Great Britain and the kingdom of Ireland, which would have been agreeable to the majority of consumers.

¹²⁶ Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.427; Wills, *Wedgwood*, p.34.

¹²⁷ In Green's case, he employed several artists at a time in both London and Liverpool to make copper plates for bat printing (the most common technique used to transfer a print onto a blank ceramic vessel). The prints were usually bought in London and Green would then decide what he, or Wedgwood, wanted to reproduce on the wares (Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, pp 6-7).

Associational memorabilia was already a well-ploughed marketplace by the 1770s. Transfer-printing had allowed patterns to be reproduced repeatedly with minute accuracy, which was exactly what was required by associations such as the Freemasons, the Society of Bucks and indeed amateur Volunteer companies. Ceramics manufacturers had begun to cash in on this market long before the Volunteers emerged in the late 1770s,¹²⁸ so when Irish Volunteer companies did emerge, it was a very natural move for potters to produce associated wares to sell to Volunteer companies and their supporters in Ireland. The Freemasons, however, had long been a draw for ceramics manufacturers,¹²⁹ who sold wares that were personalized for an individual lodge (plate 5.35) or that bore the arms of the grand lodge (plates 5.36 and 5.37). Other associations also had wares produced that would be used in their meetings or proudly displayed in the homes of their members, such as the quintessentially English Honourable Society of Bucks (plate 5.38). So, there was a reasonable context for the appearance of Volunteer wares in such a rapid, varied and numerous fashion.

Another common piece of stock decoration on Volunteer wares was not a single print like that described above, but rather two prints which almost always occur together on ceramic pieces. The first print depicted a mounted Volunteer (plate 5.39). The Volunteer's horse rears up and the Volunteer on his back, in the regulation uniform of a British light dragoon, wields a sword. The decoration of the piece is a mix in this item. The outline of the picture was transfer printed, but the detail of the horse and uniform was hand painted in enamel. A number of different colours were used to decorate the facings and other details of the uniform, but the coat was always scarlet. The companion print to this was a depiction of three Volunteer infantrymen (plate 5.40). From left to right these figures were; an infantryman of a centre company in a position of making ready to fire, a grenadier standing at attention and a light infantryman in a charge bayonets stance. Once again, the outline of these figures was transfer printed, but the detail of the background and their uniforms was enamelled. The use of several different

¹²⁸ Production in these areas had followed quickly on the heels of the invention and widespread use of transfer printing. Masonic wares had been produced as early as 1761 (plate 5.35).

¹²⁹ Sadler and Green, as well as several other manufacturers, had sold Masonic wares as an enduring and lucrative part of their business since their commencement of the use of transfer printing (Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, p.428). Wedgwood wares had featured Masonic decoration from as early as 1763 (Reilly, *Wedgwood illustrated dictionary*, pp 275-6).

colours for the uniforms further subdivides this group in terms of decoration, so that as a result of the enamelling process each piece is unique, albeit in a very small way.

As with the soldiers in the first print discussed in this section, the stances of the three soldiers were taken directly from contemporary military manuals.¹³⁰ Military manuals were printed frequently in Britain in this period, usually authored by senior army officers. Such manuals were very similar to each other, being highly derivative and having very little original content. The poses of the soldiers in these prints (plates 5.41 and 5.42) were essentially copied from such military manuals. Two similar poses from Volunteer manuals can be seen in plates 5.43 and 5.44. Volunteer units in general were very enthusiastic about drill (albeit in a very amateurish fashion in comparison to the regular army) and the disciplined manoeuvres of the parade ground and several Volunteer books of drill were produced during this period to target such a market.¹³¹ The fact that such works were largely duplicates of official military depictions was not a disadvantage, as Volunteer units wanted to resemble professional soldiers as closely as possible. Therefore, it is interesting, although not very surprising that the ideal form of stances and drill made their way onto Volunteer ceramics in the form of transfer printed decoration.

These two prints (plates 5.39 and 5.40) are almost always found together, but one example in the Willett collection of popular pottery at Brighton and Hove Museum¹³² shows that they may also have been combined with other prints as well on occasion. This jug has on one side an engraving of Benjamin West's 'Death of Wolfe' (which will be discussed following this passage) and on the other the more familiar example of three Volunteer infantrymen. The fact that this artefact was ordered or produced for Colonel Conyngham and the Springhill Union may indicate that this combination was at the request of the customer. This combination was interesting, but it provides our only example where the mounted Volunteer and the three infantrymen are not reproduced in

¹³⁰ Military manuals used in Ireland were usually duplicates of those printed in Britain. From the mid century onwards, the uniform nature of drill had become a cause of great concern in the British army and units in the Irish establishment were therefore required to practice the same drill as those in Britain.

¹³¹ The most popular of these seems to have been *The Volunteer's companion* (Dublin, 1784). However, many other books of drill and military manoeuvres were also produced at the time, such as *A concise compendium of military manoeuvres, represented by accurate engravings..., particularly addressed to the Irish Volunteers* (Dublin, 1781).

¹³² Brighton and Hove Museum internal reference: DA 328255.

tandem on the same artefact. However, this highlights a very basic point; transfer printed decoration lent itself very well to this kind of mixing and matching of decoration.

The third item of common stock decoration we should discuss is a print of Benjamin West's 'Death of Wolfe' (plate 5.45). This was repeated as an item of decoration on a significant number of Volunteer ceramic pieces. West painted this work for George III, who commissioned several history paintings from West in the course of the 1760s and 1770s.¹³³ The painting depicts the battle at Quebec in 1759, where Major-General James Wolfe was killed in action and the French commander, Louis Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm was mortally wounded, dying as a result several days later. The British victory at Quebec heralded the fall of New France and a new era of dominance for Britain in Canada and the American colonies. West's painting was very stylistic and romanticised as a composition, reflecting a view of heroic sacrifice rather than a photographic account of Wolfe's last moments.¹³⁴ Wolfe became a national hero of epic proportions as a result of his victory and ultimate sacrifice for Britain and was depicted in the pose of a dying Christ by the artist. West's painting was completed and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1771.¹³⁵

Although an agreement was made for an engraving was made with William Woollett as early as 1773, a finished copper plate for printing did not materialise until January 1776 (plate 5.46).¹³⁶ Woollett's print was a triumph of copper plate engraving and became very popular in a short space of time with the print-buying public. For the painting itself and the royalties from the print, West personally profited over several years to the amount of £15,000.¹³⁷ The print was sold throughout the British Isles and the colonies and became an iconic image for Britons in the late eighteenth century.¹³⁸ There was also clearly great demand for transfer printed reproductions of the print on ceramic vessels (plates 5.47 and 5.48).¹³⁹ The 'Death of Wolfe' appeared on all sorts of ceramic

¹³³ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, pp 267-9.

¹³⁴ This is all very much in keeping with what eighteenth century history painting was all about. These paintings were not meant or expected to be photographic in their depictions of the events or the people in them.

¹³⁵ Solkin, *Painting for money*, p.207.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, pp 207-13.

¹³⁷ Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p.276.

¹³⁸ Linda Colley, *Britons, forging the nation 1707-1837* (Yale University press, paperback edition, 2005), pp 178-9.

¹³⁹ Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, pp 150-1.

wares and judging by extant examples proliferated very widely at the time in this medium. The appetite of the public for images of one of Britain's greatest heroes in living memory and his sacrifice in the French and Indian War (1754-1761) was considerable. This seemed to be the case in Ireland as well.¹⁴⁰ Irish consumers seem to have bought prints and ceramic items decorated with this image in great quantities and it is no surprise that it appeared alongside more Volunteer-specific decoration on such items.

The success of West's image in printed form and as a piece of decoration on ceramics was ensured by a number of factors in the Irish case. The image became available to the public in the opening stages of the American Revolution when many values and ideological concepts were being tested. First among these was the commitment of Irishmen to the idea of serving the larger endeavour of empire. Ireland was home to many soldiers and sailors in the British forces, of both commissioned and non-commissioned ranks. The commitment of society in general also had to be galvanised in favour of the idea of service to the wider idea of empire in such a time. Ideas of membership and service to empire grew in importance as the eighteenth century wore on, with Ireland and Irishmen having a key role in such an endeavour. West's image of heroic sacrifice underlined the value of selflessness and courage in service of empire, in an attempt to instil such values in the army who fought and the society supported the conflict with the colonists in America.

Secondly, the image appealed to the Irish sense of masculinity and especially to the perception of Irish Protestant men as inherently martial beings. The value of military posturing and martial lineages in late eighteenth century Ireland should not be underestimated and was a key masculine value in this period. The descendants of Protestant Irish settlers were encouraged to view themselves as having considerable martial qualities. The image of Wolfe's heroic demise served to reinforce such concepts as a traditional gender role for Irish males of the middling and upper classes at this time.

¹⁴⁰ There are sixteen extant examples of this print amongst Volunteer wares and many more on non-Volunteer wares in the other collections consulted for this study. Interestingly, there was also a tavern in Belfast called 'The General Wolfe' in the late eighteenth century, which seems to suggest that the cult of personality that arose after his death did extend in some manner to Ireland.

West's image remained popular throughout the period under examination, alongside emerging ideas of Irish identity (of all religious denominations and political creeds), which became more complex as they developed in tandem with contemporary politics. In the early 1790s as the old patriot alliances faded away and republicanism began to assert its ideological weight,¹⁴¹ Wolfe remained a popular printed image on both paper and ceramics. Amongst Volunteer ceramics, the death of Wolfe appears on pieces from the beginning of our period in the late 1770s, through the early 1780s,¹⁴² the mid 1780s¹⁴³ and finally on a jug from Comber, County Down in 1791.¹⁴⁴ By 1791, the implications of the print may even have changed as this piece bears a depiction of the fall of the Bastille on its reverse.

Many of the events of the French Revolution, military victories of the French armies and other dates of significance were celebrated by Irish sympathizers in the early 1790s. The most famous of these was the celebration of Bastille day in Belfast in 1792.¹⁴⁵ It should come as no surprise to us therefore, that printed depictions of the storming of the Bastille found their way onto ceramic items associated with the national Volunteer companies of the early 1790s (many of these companies harboured sympathy for the French Revolution and its wider ideals). Poorly copied editions of the fall of the Bastille were also used to decorate some creamware items that were manufactured at the Downshire pottery in Belfast.¹⁴⁶ In Ireland and Britain, there were certainly multiple prints of this scene being used to decorate ceramic items and indeed being sold on paper as well to commemorate this monumental event.¹⁴⁷ In terms of ceramics, two items in the Ulster Museum bear prints of the Bastille, but they are clearly different works, by two different artists (plate 5.49).¹⁴⁸ The multiplicity of prints depicting this scene was probably a result of the fact that many different prints were produced on paper at the time

¹⁴¹ Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, chapters four to six.

¹⁴² Ulster Museum internal references: UMB no.V1475, UMB no.V1487.

¹⁴³ UMB no. 1947 254.

¹⁴⁴ UMB no. V1483 (plate 5.65 shows the reverse of this item).

¹⁴⁵ This celebration is most readily remembered in the late nineteenth century print by Thomas Carey. Theobald Wolfe Tone wrote a famous account of the celebrations which can be found in Thomas Bartlett (ed.), *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone, memoirs, journals and political writings, compiled and arranged by William Theobald Wolfe Tone, 1826* (Dublin, 1998), p.59.

¹⁴⁶ Peter Francis, 'Recent discoveries in Irish ceramics' in *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, xiii (1997), p.98.

¹⁴⁷ One such print can be found in the August 1789 edition of *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*.

¹⁴⁸ UMB no. V1483 (plate 5.49) and UMB no. 1910 581 both illustrate the storming of the Bastille, though they are clearly two different prints.

and also that multiple ceramics manufacturers commissioned artists to copy the image for transfer printing. Ultimately, however, the combination of the death of Wolfe and the fall of the Bastille was probably a very loyal statement on the part of manufacturers and consumers. Both events were perceived by some as two great victories over the excesses of the absolute Bourbon monarchy and were therefore worthy of simultaneous celebration on household items. In such artefacts there is also a crucial joining of evidence found in contemporary print media with a visual counterpart. As the French Revolution wore on, the use of visual propaganda became more intense and printed visual material was a key tool in the government's arsenal to copper-fasten loyalist sentiment.¹⁴⁹

Other common popular prints were also used in the stock decoration of Volunteer ceramics for a variety of reasons. There were many of these, most of which are easily identifiable from other extant artefacts of the same type. The most typical are prints such as 'The smoking party' (plate 5.50) or 'The tea party' (plate 5.51). These prints are indicative of the very essence of transfer printed decoration, in that different images could be mixed and matched to make them more appealing to consumers in various combinations, usually by making use of images (and indeed social customs as evinced by plates 5.50 and 5.51) that consumers would already be familiar with.

Popular prints of this nature were attractive to consumers for a number of reasons. One of the most important was previous knowledge of the artwork through prints on paper, periodicals that had begun to run illustrations and so on. The attraction of familiar artwork on household utensils in an age before visual decorations were widely available or consumed was also a considerable draw to consumers. A good example of this kind of print being used on a Volunteer piece is a punch-bowl in the National Museum of Ireland.¹⁵⁰ On the exterior of the bowl are four scenes, two of them pictures of gentlemen drinking (very similar to plate 5.50) and two rural scenes (plate 5.52).¹⁵¹ The interior of the bowl displays another fairly common print; that of two ships engaged

¹⁴⁹ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.142.

¹⁵⁰ NMI 1995.582.

¹⁵¹ These landscapes were one of the staples of transfer-printed pottery producers, like Sadler and Green, and appear in considerable numbers amongst extant wares.

in combat, one flying a red British ensign. The motto beneath the composition is “Success to the/ DUNDALK VOLUNTEERS” (plate 5.53). This naval print is to be found in several collections in the British Isles¹⁵² and once again highlights the mix and match nature of transfer printed decoration.

Naval imagery also appears on another Volunteer punch bowl (plate 5.54).¹⁵³ This punch bowl has many comparable examples and was a common naval print in this period.¹⁵⁴ Usually, this print of a ship was used to wish success to an individual merchant ship (the item obviously being purchased at the request of the owner/s), a military ship and its captain, or the British fleets in general.¹⁵⁵ Neither of the Volunteer punch bowls were produced by Wedgwood, but were both probably manufactured in Liverpool.¹⁵⁶ Once again, the form of the artefact is significant, a punch bowl having a very practical used in the culture of volunteering, bearing in mind the considerable convivial side of Volunteer meetings and reviews. It is also worth noting that this artefact, intended for the very male dominated world of taverns and coffee houses was also used in the intensely masculine atmosphere of amateur military volunteering.

Stock decoration could also be of a purely aesthetic, floral nature. Ten of the items under discussion were decorated with stock floral slips or wreaths, which were very common indeed on ceramics wares at the time.¹⁵⁷ Four of the items are teapots, which had a circular floral wreath around the lid. This decoration was transfer printed and is found on all the Volunteer teapots, which are all nearly identical in their shape and decoration.¹⁵⁸ Most of the other six are floral decorations that are very similar in appearance, coming from Guy Green’s in Liverpool (plates 5.55 to 5.58). The purpose of this decoration was simple; to make the product more attractive to the consumer, by including more decoration on the item to fill out the creamy expanses of blank glazed

¹⁵² Another good example of this print can be found in a very similar punch bowl in the Willett collection in Brighton and Hove Museum (internal reference: DA 328286). A considerable collection of naval punch bowls are also preserved in the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

¹⁵³ May, *The Richardson collection*, p.5.

¹⁵⁴ Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, pp 112-5.

¹⁵⁵ In much the same way as very general success was wished for the Volunteers in the most common print discussed above (plate 31).

¹⁵⁶ May, *The Richardson collection*, p.5.

¹⁵⁷ Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, pp 52-3.

¹⁵⁸ The Parsonstown Volunteers teapot is slightly different in having enamelled decoration on one side.

pottery. Some customers clearly preferred pottery that had less blank space on it than others. This is one reason why prints were produced in different sizes. A good example from our sources is provided by plates 5.59 and 5.60. The familiar print is comparatively small in plate 5.60, but fills the entire face (and indeed is quite ill fitting) of the mug in plate 5.59. The practice of producing several print sizes was not at all unusual and can be seen in several of the stock decoration prints discussed here.¹⁵⁹

Stock decoration on ceramics items may appear at first to be generic and uninteresting, but they are definitely both significant and noteworthy for our purposes. With the advent of transfer printing on ceramic items, such decoration took a significant step forward. As noted earlier, this worked in tandem with the explosion of paper prints of a political, satirical and decorative nature. As visual sources were consumed more widely and enthusiastically on paper, the appetite for consumers' favourite visual images on ceramic grew in tandem.¹⁶⁰ The decoration of Volunteer wares on their reverse with popular prints such as the death of Wolfe, reveals that such images were probably well known and popular in Ireland and that they were desirable as decoration on both decorative and useful items. A key reason for using popular images in combination with the Volunteer prints described above was marketability. Support for the general idea of volunteering (quite separate from the later associated political aims, which were never by any means universal) ensured that ceramics manufacturers were assured of a market for Volunteer wares in Ireland.

Although local Volunteer companies (and later a much larger, but vague Volunteer political movement) had their opponents and detractors, from their inception a large portion of the politically aware population were in support of the general idea of volunteering.¹⁶¹ This section of the consumer population was one of those being targeted by the stock decoration of Volunteer wares. Thus, the decoration of the reverse of Volunteer wares with already popular prints made the product even more marketable to the average consumer in Ireland, and this seems to have been the *modus operandi* of ceramics manufacturers like Wedgwood who understood the importance of tailoring a

¹⁵⁹ Especially on jugs with several of the larger stock prints, which were re-sized to fill different amounts of the face of the item.

¹⁶⁰ Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, p.2.

¹⁶¹ Dickson, *New foundations*, pp164-71; Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, chapter three.

product so as to make it more desirable to a local market. While many of the wares discussed here may seem generic and repetitious, they were in actual fact quite thoughtfully and purposefully designed for an Irish marketplace, with the desires of Irish consumers in mind. The fact that the same designs were replicated constantly does not detract from the thought and research of the manufacturers in trying to design a successfully tailored product for the Irish marketplace that would ultimately increase their profits and expand their business.

Stock decoration is also integral to our understanding of material culture and consumption in more general ways. Generic designs that were owned by many other consumers were very desirable. Fashionable consumption in the late eighteenth century, it must always be remembered, was a zero sum game to those who participated in it. If one was not purchasing and consuming in recognisable patterns very similar to those of comparable social standing, one was left behind in terms of gentility and participation in accepted social customs that equated to social value and influence amongst peer groups and larger communities. Thus, consumption of stock decorated wares was part of a much broader picture of how society was ordered through the consumption of goods, the associated social customs and accompanying perceptions of gentility and social status.

The second broad grouping of decoration encountered in Volunteer ceramic wares is that which was specific to a particular Volunteer unit. This kind of decoration appears on seventeen extant ceramic pieces. Personalized decoration is therefore almost as common as generic decoration on the number of extant pieces it appears upon, but not in print for print terms, where there is a clear majority of generic stock decorated prints.¹⁶² However, personalized decoration of this nature is absolutely fundamental to any understanding of how the Volunteer movement originated, was organized and operated on a day-to-day basis. We have already observed the intensely local and personalized nature of Volunteer uniforms, flags, iconography, symbolism and portraits in previous chapters. The local and independently autonomous nature of individual Volunteer units

¹⁶² In total therefore, there are some 113 separate pieces of decoration on the extant artefacts under discussion. Seventy of these can be classed as stock decoration (as noted earlier in table 5.1), while twenty two are specific to an individual Volunteer company. Within these twenty two there are further division of the kind of personalized decoration that each contains, which is displayed in table 5.2.

has often been glossed over in historiography (in favour of a wider, more generalising view of a Volunteer movement with agreed political ideals, aims and goals), but this point is crucial to any understanding of the Volunteers, and the personalized decoration of ceramic Volunteer wares is a key illustration of this point. Personalized decoration of Volunteer items was yet another assertion of the very individualistic tendencies of most Volunteer companies.

Table 5.2. Personalized decoration on extant Volunteer ceramics.

Decoration	Number
Name of unit	16
Name of commanding officer or other officer/s	13
Date/s of significance to the unit	6
Depiction of a member of the unit	4
Initials	2
Mottoes or slogans	1
Coat of arms	1
Total	43

Source: ¹⁶³

Personalized pieces were not unusual in the world of commemorative and associational ceramics, so there was a reasonable context for the emergence of such wares in relation to Irish Volunteer companies. Personalized decoration on Volunteer wares can be divided into several basic types. These were the names of Volunteer units, the names of officers (usually, though not always, the commanding officer), a depiction of a member of the unit in the company uniform, a date which held some significance for the corps, personal coats of arms, mottoes or slogans and initials. The breakdown of these pieces of decoration can be seen in table 5.2.

¹⁶³ This sample is drawn together from the original thirty-eight pieces of Volunteer ceramics outlined above, of which seventeen display personalized detail.

As evinced by table 5.2, the most popular form of decoration was having the name of the unit blazoned on a ceramic vessel. Extant examples of the name of the commanding officer or other officers from the unit were also very popular. Dates of significance to the company, usually dates of foundation, were also somewhat in evidence.¹⁶⁴ There are also some examples of having a member of the company depicted on ceramic wares. Mottoes were strangely absent from ceramic pieces, although they had been very popular on flags and the various accoutrements of uniforms explored in chapter one. There is only one example of a coat of arms, which can be identified as belonging to the captain of the company, but this is interesting in relation to what we already know about flags and unit-specific iconography and symbolism.

Blazoning the name of the company on an associational ceramic artefact had fairly simple implications (plates 5.61 and 5.62). The proud identity of the individual Volunteer unit was once again asserted in such artefacts, in the same manner as they were on flags, medals, buttons, gorgets and so on. The intensely local and individualistic nature of most Volunteer companies found a tangible expression in such representation on ceramic pieces.

The decoration of items with the names of company officers was also a common practice, but had different implications (plates 5.63 and 5.64). The individualistic nature of the company once again had a part to play, but in this case there were more personal overtones. These inscriptions were undertaken for several purposes. Some were a good reflection of the patriarchal societal structure at work in late eighteenth century Ireland in social and political terms.¹⁶⁵ The naming of the commanding officer on artefacts is a good reflection of the kind of lip service paid to the civic and governmental titles of local notables in late eighteenth century Ireland, as part of the strict hierarchical ordering of the society. In other cases, the naming of officers on the artefacts was clearly a more affectionate practice, which was common in the culture of presenting associational

¹⁶⁴ This is also true in the case of flags and account of Volunteer reviews in printed sources. Having a long existence was a point of great pride for a Volunteer company and was thus blazoned upon artefacts related to the company. At Volunteer reviews in the summer months, the order of march and other military honours were often decided by the date of foundation of the companies involved.

¹⁶⁵ M.S. Anderson, *Europe in the eighteenth century* (fourth edition, Essex, 2000), pp 21-2, 24; Olwen Hufton, *Europe: privilege and protest, 1730-1789* (London, 1994), chapter two.

ceramics to prominent masons in Masonic lodges,¹⁶⁶ officers in the regular army,¹⁶⁷ notable civic leaders, members of parliament and so on.

Some of the ceramics in question certainly seem to have been presented out of genuine warmth and gratitude to the named officers and especially in the case of lower auxiliary ranks, such as a surgeon or chaplain, in recognition and gratitude for professional and clerical services rendered to the company (plates 5.65 and 5.66).¹⁶⁸ This appears to be the case especially in instances when the name of the officer was not that of the nominal commander, but a more junior officer, who in reality ran the day-to-day business of the company and perhaps had a higher place in the affections of the rank and file members of the company as a result. However, as might be expected in the strictly hierarchical world of late eighteenth-century Ireland, most of the officers named were really the nominal commanding officers of their units. In Belfast, for example, the earl of Donegall was nominally the commanding officer of the Belfast Battalion, a larger body incorporating all the Volunteer companies of Belfast. However, the affairs of the company were really run by Major Stewart Banks and the other officers of the battalion. The earl of Donegall was largely an absentee and had little time for volunteering when he was in County Antrim. However, attaching the name of local notables who were often significant landowners or members of parliament was still a statement of pride for the company (in being associated with a high profile social or political personality), but it was certainly quite different from the more individualistic pride embodied by the blazoning of the company name or that of their officers on a ceramic artefact.

Pride in commanders and local notables could spring from a desire for prestige, attained through the reflected glory of the notable figure in question. A good example of

¹⁶⁶ Several such Masonic jugs from different times in the eighteenth century are still preserved and kept on display in the Freemasons Hall in Molesworth street, Dublin.

¹⁶⁷ Institutions such as the National Museum of Ireland, the Ulster Museum and the National Army Museum in London possess many commemorative items presented to officers by their peers, the men of their company, regiment or from a much higher authority. These items are sometimes closely associated with events such as a specific battle in which the officers participated, but could also be used to mark much larger achievements, such as a long period of service with a particular regiment. Dress swords were particularly popular for this purpose with military men (Read's of Parliament street in Dublin seem to have made a significant part of their trade in such items for much of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century), as were ceramics and engraved items of gold or silver.

¹⁶⁸ Within wider volunteering culture, it was a great honour to be elected or appointed an officer of a company. It was certainly a mark of esteem for clergy, surgeons and secretaries to be elected to such posts by their peers. Extant ceramics illustrate the warmth felt for these figures within the individual company.

this kind of practice emerges in the case of the Ballymoney Volunteers. The commanding officer of this unit was James Leslie of Leslie Hill, County Antrim. However, the real running of the company was actually performed by Captain John Caldwell. Caldwell seems to have run the company on a day-to-day basis,¹⁶⁹ while Leslie only made appearances at very public events, when he was also in residence at Leslie Hill.¹⁷⁰ However, on the Ballymoney jug, it was Leslie's coat of arms and initials that were blazoned upon the artefact.

While commanding officers may often not have had as active a role in their company as other officers, their patronage and leadership was acknowledged quite conspicuously in this group of artefacts. Furthermore, while some ceramic pieces were presented by the company to an officer as part of an existing custom as outlined above, other extant artefacts seem to have been commissioned by individuals to commemorate their role in a local Volunteer company for their own private consumption (in much the same way as portraits were). Such orders could be placed with travelling salesmen¹⁷¹ or with ceramics retailers who dealt directly with major producers, such as Wedgwood.

The depiction of the member of a unit on a ceramic vessel (plates 5.67 and 5.68) is reminiscent of a similar practice on flags observed in chapter two. Once again, depicting a Volunteer in the uniform of the company was a statement of pride in the individual Volunteer unit, which was bolstered by the fact that a cash investment had been made in an artefact that would be displayed in a domestic setting, or in the meeting place of the company.¹⁷² The implications of depicting a company member on a ceramic item are obvious. They provide a statement of pride by the men of the company who commissioned the ceramic piece in their distinctive uniform and appearance¹⁷³ and are

¹⁶⁹ This impression is given in Caldwell's biography, written by his son, Caldwell papers (PRONI T/3541).

¹⁷⁰ Leslie took the credit and prestige due to the company at more public events such as the summer reviews. Two good examples would be his leadership at a review of the Ballymoney companies by the earl of Antrim (*B.N.L.*, 22 January 1779) and an appearance at a very large review hosted by the Ballymoney companies in the summer of 1782 (*B.N.L.*, 12 August 1782). However, at regular company meetings, Caldwell was clearly left in charge (*Northern Star*, 30 December 1792).

¹⁷¹ Dunlevy, *Ceramics in Ireland*, p.23.

¹⁷² Many Volunteer companies met in taverns and coffeehouses regularly to hold their meetings. Volunteering was often a social and convivial activity, like freemasonry, as much as an amateur military unit.

¹⁷³ In terms of the distinctiveness of uniforms, it should be borne in mind (from chapter one) just how important it was to Volunteer units that their company uniform made them stand out from other local

also a useful reference for the study of Volunteer uniforms. This detail serves to heighten the local and individual nature of the artefacts. The depiction of a member of the company was usually paired with the name of the corps and the commanding officer as a very firm assertion of the distinct identity of the unit in question.

Dates of significance were abundant within the culture of volunteering. This included both dates that had significance for individual companies, dates with wider meaning for volunteering at a regional and national level¹⁷⁴ and occasional dates of international significance. Many examples of these dates were recorded on Volunteer ceramics. The most common date recorded was individual to each piece and recorded the date of its production (plates 5.69 and 5.70). The date of foundation for the unit was also popular (plate 5.71). Volunteer companies prided themselves on the length of time their company had existed¹⁷⁵ and in some cases they were also eager to assert their identity as one of the first Volunteer companies in the country. These dates of foundation can usually be cross-checked in print media or contemporary lists of Volunteer units¹⁷⁶ for their authenticity. In some cases an event of wider significance was also indicated with a date. In some later pieces, the date of the fall of the Bastille was recorded. The significance of this print has already been noted above.

There is only one extant example of a personal coat of arms used as an item of decoration in this group of artefacts (plate 5.72). This is on a jug of the Ballymoney Volunteers and the arms are those of James Leslie, the captain and commanding officer of the company for the duration of its existence. This touch may infer that Captain Leslie had the piece made for himself, as it also bears his initials in swirling script. However, this is an isolated example of this sort of decoration, but it once again shows the strictly hierarchical nature of society in late eighteenth century Ireland and especially the penchant of the landowning classes for armorial arrangements as visual symbols of their

companies in terms of how professional it made them appear and also how dashing and gallant it could make the company look at reviews and exercises.

¹⁷⁴ This included grand reviews which passed into Volunteer folklore and wider dates of significance like the triumph of legislative independence in 1782 or of the Volunteer convention of 1783.

¹⁷⁵ In plate 5.63, the Kilkenny Rangers jug proudly proclaims that the corps was the first Volunteer company in Ireland. In fact, the company does seem to have been formed very early. A date of 2 January 1770 is often cited for the company's formation (MacNevin, *History of the Volunteers*, p.230).

¹⁷⁶ Some of the most useful are the *Munster Volunteer registry* (Dublin, 1782) and the several lists of Henry Joy, which can be found in PRONI.

societal status.¹⁷⁷ Mottoes and slogans were very popular on other artefacts associated with the Volunteers, such as flags and the many metal accoutrements attached to uniforms. However, there were very few blazoned on Volunteer ceramics.

The extant examples that we do know of bore all the usual Volunteer slogans, espousing loyalty to the crown, the protection of local interests, the unity brought about by volunteering and so on. A good example of this kind of decoration is provided by the jug of the Wexford Volunteers (plate 5.73).¹⁷⁸ The obverse of this item was decorated with the mounted Volunteer print discussed above and accompanied on its reverse by the familiar arrangement of three Volunteer infantrymen. The front of this item bears two printed pieces of decoration that were specific to the Wexford Volunteers. Under the snip is printed 'May they and their commanders/ Live happy many Years/ Their king their Country's best support/ the Wexford Volunteers' and below this within a cartouche the word 'UNANIMITY'. Both of these are typical Volunteer sentiments that are found in other sources. Another example is provided by a jug of the Bangor Volunteers¹⁷⁹ on which the printed words 'May they and their Commanders/ Live happy many Years;/Their _____ their Country's best Support,/ The Bangor Volunteers/ Major Crawford' (plate 5.74). The fact that the same inscription appears on both suggests that this slogan was another example of popular stock decoration for Volunteer companies on the part of the printers, but it was still a well researched choice of words in light of the other Volunteer slogans we know of that invoked loyalty to king and country as well as the pride and welfare of the local Volunteer company. However, the extant number of slogans or mottoes on ceramics is very small compared to other groups of sources. In most cases the printers opted for a bland, yet supportive slogan, usually 'Success to...(either a named Volunteer company or the Irish Volunteers more generally)',¹⁸⁰ which fits comfortably into our knowledge of how fine ceramics of this type were produced in a production-line like manner (plate 5.75 and 5.76).

¹⁷⁷ Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland*, pp 43-5, 49.

¹⁷⁸ The current whereabouts of this piece are not known, but an illustration can be found in Buten, *Eighteenth century Wedgwood*, p.31.

¹⁷⁹ This piece is kept in the Ulster Museum, internal reference: E 51 1971.

¹⁸⁰ Nine items bear this slogan as part of its decoration. It should also be borne in mind that "Success to..." was the root of the most common Volunteer print of all, illustrated in plate 5.31.

Personalized details certainly made for more unique ceramic pieces and correlate with what we know about the very local character of Volunteer companies. It is not surprising to find such details on ceramic artefacts, as they turn up in nearly every other group of sources. What they add to our study of ceramics is the point that manufacturers were very sensitive and well attuned to the demands of the marketplace and that associational memorabilia which bore personalized detail was popular with consumers and lucrative for fine ceramic producers.

Conclusion

What conclusions can we draw as a result of our study of Volunteer ceramic wares? Ceramics add a great deal to our view of the Volunteers on many levels. Once again, we see another area of late eighteenth century material culture where the Irish Volunteers can be found. In this context, they are certainly found in one which was often very domestic (and associational), where many other artefacts consulted for this study were decidedly militaristic in nature. Ceramics were an area of material culture dominated by civilians (in terms of their production and consumption), which sets them apart from the other groups of sources encompassed by this study. The other sources under scrutiny have been, by and large, militaristic in nature.

Many of the items in this chapter were quite clearly designed with a civilian audience in mind and the military overtones so prevalent in other groups of sources are downplayed as a result. Although consumer and material culture have been mentioned many times in this study, it is only through the study of ceramics that we can truly begin to understand its manifold implications. Ceramics were the consumer item par excellence of late eighteenth century Britain and Ireland for large burgeoning middling classes in town and country and presented a great opportunity for them to express their aspiring taste, refinement and gentility in a product (especially Wedgwood ceramics) which had already been thoroughly endorsed by the upper classes of both Britain and Ireland. Finding support for the Volunteers amongst such products is not surprising, considering the tradition of associational ceramics in Britain and the keen, opportunistically business mindedness of ceramics manufacturers who wished to cash in on whatever subject occupied the public consciousness at a given time.

However, the most revealing findings of this study are in relation to the individualistic nature of such artefacts, which has been duly noted in the other chapters of this study. What continues to be noted is just how important the identity of the individual Volunteer company was to its members. Each unit had a very distinctive identity constructed through their uniforms, the flags they carried, the social standing of its members, the political stances and resolutions of the company and so on. The importance of identity, in social, local, national, cultural and political senses should not be

underestimated in any study of the Irish Volunteers. This sense of individualism was the very essence of how the Volunteers came into being in the late 1770s and how most companies continued to conduct themselves right up to the early 1790s, although this trend is not always fully appreciated. The individual company was the most basic unit within a wider culture of volunteering and should be the first aspect of this phenomenon we should look to in any study of this movement. In terms of ceramics, these items proudly espouse the names of Volunteer companies, their officers, dates of significance and sentiments that were important to them, which are frequently echoed in other groups of sources consulted in this study.

Chapter six: Prints

This chapter is concerned with how Irish Volunteers were portrayed through the medium of copperplate engravings. The primary sources discussed below are mostly political and personal satires, but depictions of reviews and printed portraits of Volunteer personalities will also be discussed. Copperplate prints and engravings were undoubtedly a considerable milestone in the delivery of art to a wider public and the exposure of a select public to art throughout the eighteenth century. The British print industry reached its zenith in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, as a result of the fortuitous meeting of the successful introduction of many kinds of art in public spaces (such as at Vauxhall gardens, the exhibitions of the Royal Academy, Society of Artists and so on),¹ subsequent demand for printed visual material in the public sphere, advances in technology that made high quality products relatively widely available, the resultant affordability of printed material to a wider cross section of the population, and a wide range of political and social issues which fuelled artists' creativity throughout the period.

Firstly, we will look at the nature of the print as a primary source and the challenges that confront the historian in their use as historical sources. There will be comment on where the sources for this chapter were acquired and how many there are in existence. This will be followed by a brief description of prints, in terms of how they were produced, who manufactured them and who the intended consumers were. The print industry in Britain and Ireland will be outlined, with references to how the industry worked to produce the primary sources discussed later in the chapter. Following this will be a piece on the prints of the American War of Independence to the French Revolution; 1775-1793. This section will cover the direct context in which Volunteer prints were made and sold in terms of what stock motifs and conventions were being used at the time in prints and the range within which artists worked.

Analysis will then take place of the presence of Ireland and Irish affairs in the extant prints of this period, before moving on to consider the place of the Volunteers in copperplate engravings of this period and what these sources add to our view of the

¹ This topic is explored in great detail in Solkin, *Painting for money*.

Volunteer movement in light of what of we already know about Ireland's amateur military companies.

I

The use of copperplate prints as a historical primary source poses many difficulties and problems to the modern Irish historian. They were produced as quite topical sources,² were very ephemeral in nature and their place within a wider culture (and indeed material culture specifically) is still somewhat unclear. They can seem deceptively accessible as simple visual images (often now used as a light accompaniment for illustration of heavier, politically orientated secondary sources),³ but are in fact very complex and enigmatic when explored thoroughly with appropriate working methods. These sources and the industry that produced and imported them have been much neglected in the study of late eighteenth-century Ireland. There exists no monograph study of the Irish print industry in the eighteenth century, which outlines who the artists and publishers were, who was consuming prints at the time, or a survey of what they were buying and in what quantities (or indeed how much the industry was worth in monetary terms). We are similarly bereft of information on the volume of material imported from Britain and the details of how print industries in the two islands interacted. An Irish historian wishing to study such sources must go to secondary works on the British print industry as a poor substitute for the lack of sources dealing with the subject from an Irish perspective. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to redress this situation in any significant way, but some tentative statements will be made in such a direction. Before we begin to discuss the print industry in Britain and Ireland in the late-eighteenth century, let us first consider the nature of the print as a historical primary source.

Prints had existed long before the late-eighteenth century in various forms, and the copperplate engraving, which became so popular in the years of the American Revolution, was something of a variation on an existing form of artistic expression and a consumer product of quite limited public demand. The process by which prints were produced in the late eighteenth century was as follows. Some prints were copies of popular artworks or architectural curiosities. Copies of famous artworks seen on the

² The lifespan of many prints was very short indeed, especially in the case of those that depicted society scandals or fashionable fads: George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank*, p.133.

³ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.44.

grand tour or in public exhibitions later in the eighteenth century are good examples of this (plate 6.1).⁴ Engravings of political and societal personalities were usually based on original portraits (plates 6.2 and 6.3). However, many of the prints we will be discussing below were more commonly original works, which were produced with an engraving in mind. There were many different methods for engraving prints, with fashions for particular types rising and falling in chronological and regional patterns throughout the eighteenth century.⁵ No matter which method was used, details were gouged, scraped and engraved on to a copper plate which was designed with lines and recesses to produce light, shadow and shapes as the artist desired. This plate was then used to transfer its design of lines and recesses in ink onto a sheet of paper, producing the printed image sold in print shops.

The artistic ideas for prints were born in the mind of the artist, but the engraver was the key figure in this business. His unique skills produced copper plates, which were very valuable commodities within the industry, as they could be used to print editions of a work over and over again.⁶ Artists and engravers were very often the same figure. The publisher owned a printing press which would be used to produce the work. He would also usually own the plates, in case future reproductions were required or in demand. In some cases, a single multi-talented individual designed, engraved, printed, published and sold prints under one roof, such as Matthew Darly of London.⁷ Prints were disseminated mainly through printsellers and booksellers at the time.⁸ Prints tended to be produced in quantities that ensured supply did not exceed demand, therefore, prints were generally produced in editions of dozens or hundreds, rather than thousands.⁹ If a print was still in high demand after an edition sold out, a new edition was easily produced, as the publisher usually owned the plates and could repeat the process.

Sketching the typical consumer of prints in the late eighteenth century is a very difficult task. Prints were cheap and widely available enough to draw in a very wide cross section of consumers. There was no typical consumer of these products as the sheer range

⁴ Irwin, *Neoclassicism*, pp 59-61.

⁵ E. McSherry Fowble, *To please every taste, eighteenth century prints from the Winterthur Museum* (Virginia, 1991), pp 12-21.

⁶ Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, pp 23-36.

⁷ George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank*, p.57.

⁸ Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, pp 2-7.

⁹ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.1.

of prints available meant that there was something available in print shops to please most tastes. The cultural place of prints is also quite problematic. What did consumers think of visual prints, what place did they occupy in domestic or public settings and what place did they have in the thoughts and affections of their owners? Were these articles to be treasured and preserved, or were prints essentially a very ephemeral and disposable product? The survival rate of prints into the present day is very low indeed, owing mostly to the medium they were printed on, the quality of the ink used and the manner in which they were used and displayed. The price of prints also suggests that these were not especially treasured possessions for their owners. The price of prints varied greatly, but generally the satirical prints and engraved portraits discussed below cost approximately 6d to 1s. Coloured prints were more expensive and larger, more detailed wares could cost up to 10s in some cases.¹⁰ However, for most of the material discussed here a price between one and two shillings would have been typical.

When compared to fine art, ceramics or silverware for instance commissioned at the time, this was a relatively cheap consumer product. Prints were collected by some individuals, often being bound in portfolio volumes,¹¹ but most consumers of prints probably had few long term plans for their conservation, or even for keeping them at all once they began to wilt and decline in appearance. Interestingly, Toby Barnard points out that most prints were not seen as being valuable at the time.¹² In fact, prints were likely to decrease in value over time. In eighteenth-century Ireland, one of the chief uses of some prints was as an affordable, but agreeable form of interior decoration. Prints were also used symbolically in domestic and public settings, to affirm political loyalties and devotions.¹³ Prints found in journals and periodicals were frequently used for the custom of illuminations, especially when the country was at war. A famous victory was often celebrated in Britain and Ireland by the illumination of urban centres. As part of this ritual, printed likenesses of the general or admiral responsible for success (or indeed a likeness of the battle itself, if one had been printed) were placed in windows, illuminated by a candle beside it. The effect of the direct heat and light of the candle would have

¹⁰ George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank*, p.17.

¹¹ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.4.

¹² Barnard, *Making the grand figure*, p.185.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp 177-8.

made the print wilt and crinkle, irreparably damaging it (certainly rendering it unfit to be kept for any useful purpose), but this was another frequent use of prints which serves to highlight its ephemeral and disposable nature to the majority of consumers at the time.

Political, personal and social satires are especially relevant to this chapter. Exactly what place these artefacts occupied in a cultural sense is still very unclear, despite significant progress in other questions surrounding these artefacts. How much were consumers influenced at the time in their politics, opinions or social attitudes by prints on these subjects? Generally, it has been asserted by scholars that prints occupied at best a very ephemeral place. Serious commentary on any of these sorts of issues was generally conducted in printed sources, such as pamphlets, newspapers or books. In comparison to such sources, satirical prints were a 'soft sell', a light comedic interlude to serious debate on the issues of the day.¹⁴ They were a humorous depiction of current affairs and fashions, and although they may sometimes have had serious subject matters, especially in the case of politics or military affairs, they were generally a form of light entertainment, rather a serious in-depth discussion of their chosen subject.¹⁵ For this kind of fare, the consumer would have consulted printed textual material.

Therefore, the importance of prints in late eighteenth-century society should not be overstated. These sources are not necessarily a key with which to read the evolution of ideas, social attitudes or politics at the time. They are a very selective cross section of images and ideas, taken from the minds of artists (sometimes producing prints as party hacks, or vitriolic social commentators, sometimes not) and should not be taken to be a political or social narrative of the period in question.¹⁶ A good example of just how selective print artists could be is provided by the Declaration of Independence on 4 July 1776. Although the event featured in the press in Britain, not a single print has yet been discovered sending up the event satirically.¹⁷ This is just how selective print artists could be. Events depicted in their work often had no particular correlation to the perceived importance of events in the political sphere. The ravages of time must also be considered, as we are not dealing with a complete set of evidence (i.e. one extant copy of every print

¹⁴ Thomas, *The American Revolution*, p.30.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.30.

¹⁶ Michael Wynn-Jones, *The cartoon history of the American Revolution* (New York, 1975), p.9. Hereafter referred to as Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.87.

produced at the time), and are therefore not in possession of all the facts. The audience for prints is another necessary consideration. Prints were intended for a very specific, politically and socially aware, group of consumers from the upper and broad middling classes.¹⁸ Even within these very broad social groups there is plenty of evidence to suggest that many people of these classes had little or no interest in prints and were therefore immune to the comic jibes of the artists. For example, women were not generally expected to consume visual satires at all,¹⁹ and were broadly discouraged from reading political material in journals and periodicals in which much of the other material for this chapter appeared. Many readers kept up to date with newspapers and would therefore have no need to buy periodicals and be exposed to visual material at all. In the simplest circumstances, some people who could afford to buy prints would have had no interest in doing so, and most of the lower classes were automatically disbarred from such material for want of money and education. An appreciation of just who was consuming such material is necessary before any analysis of the content of such primary sources begins.

The study of prints (especially by those from outside the disciplines of art and design) is fraught with difficulties and potential pitfalls. The late eighteenth century copperplate engraving was not necessarily a complex artistic composition at the time of its production, but the lapse of over two centuries often renders it an enigmatic and complex visual source. This is due largely to the historian's limited ability to read a visual source. Reading prints requires a very broad knowledge of the politics and society being depicted in the print, with an ability to home in on very minute artistic detail and motifs to deconstruct the imagery on display, and ultimately to grasp the original meaning, implications and humour of the print. The historian must be able to understand both stock imagery that was used over and over again in late eighteenth century prints,

¹⁸ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.2.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp 15-19. Although it was asserted at the time that visual satires should not be used to decorate domestic spaces which women would occupy, it is difficult to really know how much of this material women of any class saw. There were several female print artists and print sellers in London, but in general, it was certainly discouraged for upper and middling class women to engage in the consumption of satirical and printed political material. Accordingly, prints of a satirical or burlesque nature were used to decorate male dominated spaces such as smoking rooms.

but also up to date artistic flourishes, which really begin to elucidate the meaning behind a print.

An example of the process is provided in plate 6.4. This print is from the *London Magazine* of April 1774. As a result of being published in a periodical it would have had a fairly wide circulation in Britain, and there are several extant copies today. The image is a political satire and requires fairly specific knowledge to read it. Firstly there are the characters. America is represented by a female Indian being restrained on the ground, while Britannia, representing Britain, can be seen behind weeping and looking away behind her. Two more stock characters are provided by the Spanish don and the French monsieur on the left. Several real politicians stand around America; Lord North is cruelly pouring tea down her throat, while Lord Mansfield pinions her arms and Lord Sandwich attempts to look up her skirts. Lord Bute can also be seen on the right, dressed in highland attire. The political issues at stake are the Tea Act, the Boston Port Act, the naval blockade of Boston, the Boston petition and the use of the regular army in the city. The tone of the piece is decidedly anti-ministerial, which can be seen in their activities here, the sneeringly caricatured facial expressions and the disapproval of Britannia (the anthropomorphic representation and embodiment of the British nation),²⁰ and the parodying of American prints depicting tea being poured down the throats of British officials. Success in reading this image depends on a number of factors. Can the historian identify the allegorical figures, the caricatured politicians, the political issues at stake and the satirical background to the imagery, if indeed the print draws on other contemporary prints at all? This print is a reasonably straightforward example, but this is the kind of interrogative method that should be used when studying such a source.

Aside from simple readings of the print the bottom margin usually also provides a lot of crucial evidence about the print. In the bottom margin is sometimes displayed the name of the artist, the printer, publisher, address of the printing house and date of publication. This information is very important in identifying more than just imagery, in that we can group the work or artists and publishers into wider trends, such as an artist who almost always takes an anti-ministerial stance or is generally pro-American in his work. This is the next step in the study of prints, but because of the manner in which

²⁰ Thomas, *The American Revolution*, pp 82-3; Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, pp 46-7.

prints were produced, bias is not quite as important as it would be in the case of documentary sources. Artists and publishers were not necessarily expressing their personal views in prints, but often rather that of the patron or publisher (or simply creating compositions which they found amusing, diverting or above all marketable).²¹ The reality of the print industry at the time is that artists during the 1770s and 1780s did not have to be consistent in their political views or allegiances. An artist might find himself supporting the ministry on one occasion, but sending it up in a different work, within a very short time.²² Most works were produced in a manner that would render them desirable in the marketplace. In the case of artists and publishers, one must be careful of stereotyping the political views or attitudes of the individual and of misunderstanding the workings of the industry in a broader sense.

²¹ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.25.

²² *Ibid*, p.26.

II

The print industry in Britain has had considerable scholarship devoted to it in recent decades and some clear points are beginning to emerge. It was a very large luxury goods industry, reputedly worth £400,000 per annum in 1786.²³ This included a very broad range of products, but this was still a very large cumulative sum of money for such an industry, pointing to considerable consumption of printed material of its kind in Britain at the time. There was no stereotypical artist, publisher or printseller, the industry being closely knitted with printing, bookselling and the ceramics industry.²⁴ Different sellers kept fairly diverse shops,²⁵ but several areas of London such as St Paul's Churchyard and the Strand had many print shops.²⁶ London was really the centre of such printed material in the British Isles. It dictated artistic fashion, it supported by far the greatest number of industrial personnel, the largest and best stocked print retailers and was the centre of a very large and profitable export market to provincial Britain, Ireland and continental Europe.²⁷ London was in essence the nerve centre of the culture of visual prints in the British Isles.

A good deal less is known about the Irish print industry in the late eighteenth century. A monograph study of the subject needs to be undertaken to shed light on this area, but some statements can nonetheless be made. In contemporary print media sources²⁸ and in secondary sources,²⁹ a good deal of industrial personnel can be observed. There were many printsellers in Dublin during this period, but this term requires definition. Retailers who sold visual prints exclusively in Dublin seem to have been very few in number. However, prints were usually sold as part of more varied retail concerns by many different individuals in the book selling and printing trades, as an addition to a

²³ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.2.

²⁴ Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, pp 2-21.

²⁵ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.2.

²⁶ Drakard, *Printed English pottery*, pp 11-21.

²⁷ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.20.

²⁸ Most newspapers at the time ran commercial advertisements, but John Magee's *Dublin Evening Post* was especially active in this regard and frequently advertised prints for sale from a great number of retailers in the city.

²⁹ Mary Pollard, *A dictionary of the Dublin book trade, 1550-1800, based on the records of the Guild of St. Luke the Evangelist, Dublin* (London, 2000). Hereafter referred to as Pollard, *Dictionary of the Dublin book trade*.

professional trade and other retail interests. A good example is provided by John Magee, whose advertisements were regularly published in the newspaper he owned and printed, the *Dublin Evening Post*.³⁰ What becomes clear from Magee's commercial listings (plate 6.5) is that men of his trade sold a great deal besides books and visual prints, branching out into paper, stationery and in Magee's case brewing as well. Mary Pollard, in her work, *A dictionary of the Dublin book trade, 1550-1800, based on the records of the Guild of St. Luke the Evangelist, Dublin*, lists some seventeen individuals as printsellers from 1775 to 1793. This figure is a considerable underestimation of the number of vendors selling prints in Dublin at the time and stems from the definition of printseller in Pollard's work. The definition of printseller used seems to have been applied only to those who described themselves as such in sources consulted for the study. One notable omission is that John Magee is not marked as a printseller by Pollard,³¹ when he was clearly dealing in such products. It would require a detailed study to see how many more individuals have been omitted, but in late-eighteenth century Dublin, the majority of booksellers seem to have sold prints as a supplementary source of income.

Retailers who sold prints as a cornerstone of their business were more likely to advertise when they had new products in stock, rather than advertising their more mundane wares under the name and address of the business in printed sources. This makes it a little more difficult to gauge what their regular stock and trade was, because it was so rarely elaborated upon in print media sources. A good example of a commercial advertisement by a print vendor can be seen in an advertisement of June 1779,

POLITICAL PRINTS. Just published by G. COWEN, GRAFTON-STREET, and J. MAGEE, COLLEGE GREEN, PRICE 6 ½d. PLAIN,- COLOURED 1s 1d. FIRST, THE LONDON GAZETTE Manufactory; Where may be had news, either good, bad, or indifferent, as best agrees with the humours of the times. SECOND, The STATE of the NATION.³²

'The state of the nation' was probably an Irish copy of an existing London print (plate 6.6) of the same name (the fact that G. Cowen had just published it may suggest he was

³⁰ Until July 1778 the newspaper was called the *Dublin Evening Journal*.

³¹ Pollard, *Dictionary of the Dublin book trade*, p.390.

³² *D.E.P.*, 26 June 1779.

manufacturing them, but there is always the possibility that they were imported from London). Interestingly, the price of the products in Dublin was concurrent with that of London, evincing that Irish customers were paying the same for such products as consumers in London. At any rate, retailers in Dublin who sold prints were more likely to list themselves in newspapers when they had something new to advertise, rather than simply advertising the name and address of their business for its own sake. General listings letting customers know what was sold generally at a shop were more unusual (Dublin retailers in the print trade probably relied more on regular custom from enthusiasts, collectors and fashionable consumers, rather than passing casual trade), but do exist in print media sources.

Although prints were imported, they were certainly manufactured in Ireland as well and this aspect of the industry is the subject of a particular lacuna in scholarship to date. Mary Pollard lists nineteen individuals identified as copperplate engravers from 1775 to 1793. A further seventeen individuals are also listed as printsellers, but the elastic nature of such a description has been mentioned above. However, this preliminary work on the print industry in Ireland by Mary Pollard does establish that the skills needed to design, manufacture and market copperplate engravings were indeed present in late eighteenth century Ireland, although we lack the specific details and mechanics of the industry at this time. Indeed, some evidence seems to point to the fact that prints were being produced, either as original works, or as copies of prints from Britain, in Dublin at the time. A commercial advertisement from December 1778 offered,

A HUMOUROUS PRINT. Just published, Price 6d plain-coloured, 1s 1d. By WILLIAM ALLEN, No.88, Dame-Street, A New Burlesque PRINT of the Engagement Between D'Orvilliers and Admiral Keppel. The above print may be had at most of the Book-sellers and Print-Shops in Dublin.³³

This advertisement may suggest that William Allen was the artist responsible for designing the print, having it published and that it was being sold by many retailers of prints in Dublin, including his own shop in Dame Street. This print may therefore have been a strictly Hibernian affair, although the subject matter was treated separately in

³³ *D.E.P.*, 22 December 1778.

British prints at the time. The implications of such evidence are significant, as it means that a print industry in Ireland existed at the time, capable of conceiving, designing, engraving, marketing and selling its own prints. Some domestic Irish prints have survived and there are enough to make some tentative suggestions about an Irish print trade as a result. Beyond this however, little can be said on the subject, as there is no body of prints produced in Ireland still extant in the collection of any national institutions.

Further evidence in this direction is offered by the Irish periodical, *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*. Throughout the period 1775 to 1793, copperplate engravings were produced in every edition of the journal.³⁴ During the American war, most of the plates were preoccupied with illustrating the conflict, but civilian concerns were also represented. *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* provides a fascinating case study of what was being viewed by a cross section of Irish residents during this period. A perusal of the list of plates for the publication reveals what was being viewed by the readers of the periodical on a monthly basis.³⁵

The periodical generally had two or three plates in each edition, although the number of plates declined later in the 1780s and in the early 1790s. The most prominent was the frontispiece that was placed on the cover of the journal. There was sometimes also an additional plate in the main body of the text. In every edition of the periodical, there was also a small plate called the 'tete a tete', which accompanied a thinly disguised romantic story about society figures every month. This plate featured two small oval likenesses with a pseudonym that each of the individuals had been given in the story. The effect was like that of two miniatures, which were very personal works of art, reserved for one's most private moments. There were also more unusual plates on occasion, such as patterns for lace, which were intended to be cut out and used by female readers of the periodical. However, the frontispiece was undoubtedly the most eye-catching and important of the illustrations each month, as far as the editor would have been concerned.

³⁴ The prints from the journal were also available separately as printed wares and were advertised regularly in the *D.E.P.*.

³⁵ It should be noted that in most bound collections of the magazine the plates are no longer present in the original binding. The prints in many instances would have been clipped out and pasted into a large folio volume, much like a modern scrapbook, as part of a larger collection. However, the prints that were removed at the time do still exist in the collections of the National Library of Ireland, the National Gallery of Ireland and Trinity College, Dublin.

Several points can be made about the frontispiece plates in the period under examination. During the American war, there was a magnetic attraction to plates related to the colonial conflict. From January 1776 to January 1777, eleven of the frontispieces were directly related to the war in America. In 1778, 1779 and 1780, there were also many plates devoted to the conflict, but very few indeed from 1782 onwards. Early in the war, in 1776 and 1777, there was a great effort made to acquaint readers with the likenesses of the leaders of the various armed forces involved, especially those on the American side. From January to October 1776, all but two of the frontispieces were concerned with illustrating American military and political leaders.³⁶ As new commanders were installed, or distinguished themselves on active service, they were often duly illustrated in the journal. In March 1780 there was a print of Admiral Rodney and the following month to mark his victory at Cape St. Vincent, the journal ran a plate entitled 'The defeat of the Spanish fleet under Don Juan de Langara, by Sir George Brydges Rodney, Decr. 16th 1779 off Cape St Vincent'. Occasions for outpourings of grief were also marked in the publication, as in December 1780 when a plate of Major John Andre appeared, who had been hung as a spy for his involvement in the West Point affair earlier that year. The amount of visual material the consumers of the journal were exposed to (not counting any supplementary material they might see in the form of prints outside the periodical) was considerable. Although the pictures displayed were still subservient to the text of the journal, this was one of the first wars in which a concerted attempt was made by publishers of printed material to provide visual depictions of the heroes on both sides, the battles fought and the politicians working behind the scenes, as well as comedic material sending up the leaders and their conduct of the war.

Following the end of the war and the negotiations for peace in 1784, the plates turned to other subjects, such as depictions of personalities from Irish politics and society, as well as from Britain. Personal and political satires were also published, often copied from prints or periodicals from London. In January 1784, for example, 'Carlo

³⁶ Frontispieces from *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, 1776: January 'John Hancock, Esq; President of the American Congress', February 'A good likeness of Samuel Adams, Esq; Member of the Continental Congress', April 'An elegant figure of a real American Rifle-man', June 'David Wooster, Esq; Major-General in the Provincial Army', July 'A fine likeness of Major-General Arnold in the Provincial service', August 'A good likeness of Robert Esec Hopkins, Esq; Commodore in the Provincial service', September 'An elegant likeness of Major Robert Rogers, in treaty with an Indian chief', October 'His Excellency George Washington, Esq; Captain-General of all the American forces'.

Khan's triumphant Entry into Leadenhall Street' (plate 6.7) was published in *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, a print which had originally been published in London as a comic jibe at Charles James Fox's attempts to dominate the running of the East India Company with his 1783 India bill.³⁷ The Westminster parliamentary election of 1784 also provided comic fodder for the magazine, as it ran a satire entitled, 'The Duchess canvassing for her favourite member', which referred quite clearly to a popular story at the time that the duchess had kissed a butcher to win his vote for Fox in the election.³⁸ Georgiana, duchess of Devonshire, a significant society hostess and rallying point for Whigs in London,³⁹ also later had a portrait printed in Walker's periodical in June 1787.

The number of plates declined towards the end of the period and not as many appeared in the pages of the magazine. At the end of the period in the early 1790s, there was some coverage of the French Revolution, but it was not on the same scale as the coverage of the American conflict over a decade earlier. The destruction of the Bastille was reproduced in August 1789 and in October 1792 an engraving of General Dumorier appeared, followed in December of that year by a depiction of General Custine. In general, however, the readers of the journal were not exposed to as much visual material on the revolution in France as they had been during the American war.

In general therefore, *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* offers some view of what literate Irish residents could see if they wished during this period. The plates offered them visual material on contemporary events, satire on current affairs, likenesses of their leaders, national heroes and society beauties in a somewhat novel way. Although prints had existed for a long time, their regular publication in a periodical was certainly a recent development⁴⁰ and this short passage on an Irish periodical evinces that residents in Ireland during this period were keeping up with their British and continental neighbours in this regard.

³⁷ Donald, *The age of caricature*, pp 63-4.

³⁸ *Ibid*, pp 124-8.

³⁹ The most widely read and detailed biography of Georgiana is presently, Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (London, 1998).

⁴⁰ Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, p.11. Prints had increasingly become a regular part of periodicals since the middle of the eighteenth century. The Seven Years War was followed in some detail in prints and illustrated periodicals, but the American Revolution as the first conflict to receive a more complete treatment in the sense that people could ostensibly see what their heroes looked like, what form the battles took and so on. In one sense, this was one of the first conflicts to be followed in pictures as it happened.

Although some domestic Irish material was used in the research for this study, the primary sources were overwhelmingly British and specifically London based. Although this leads to a lopsided view of the Volunteers in visual prints, there is enough domestic visual material to somewhat counterbalance it with a more Irish-centred view of Ireland's amateur soldiery in the late eighteenth century.

Prints of the American Revolution prove a very mixed group of primary sources in collective study. They were designed, drawn, published and marketed by a very diverse group of people and this disparity is very much in evidence in the sources, when studied as a group. Although each print was an original composition and should be treated as such, some patterns do emerge as to stock characters, motifs, political stances and attitudes that artists and publishers took regularly, which are required to read the prints correctly. Images of Ireland, Hibernia, the generic Irish Paddy and Irish affairs can be read more effectively when compared with the stock manner in which other nations and issues were portrayed by the artist's pen at the time. This section will prepare the reader for the treatment of the Volunteers in print by first examining the overriding concerns of visual prints and specifically how Ireland and Irish affairs were depicted in this medium.

In some respects, the British print industry had been reinvigorated by the American Revolution. Satirical prints had become somewhat stagnant by the early 1770s, largely for want of suitable topics to lampoon.⁴¹ However, the revolution opened the floodgates of creativity for print artists in London and the industry received a boost in the amount of prints produced, sold and crucially in the demand for such material on the part of consumers.⁴² Throughout the 1780s, the tradition of political and personal satires was forged into an important element of cultural life for people of fashion in London.⁴³ The French Revolution saw the culmination of this process, begun in the early 1770s, as prints

⁴¹ Thomas, *The American Revolution*, p.13.

⁴² Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.3.

⁴³ Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, p.11.

were a key component of the culture of political commentary, party hacks and propaganda during the 1790s and beyond.⁴⁴

Prints can and have been defined and grouped by period in previous scholarship, but this approach is of fairly limited use. For example, prints during the American Revolution were generally anti-government, but not explicitly pro-American.⁴⁵ The conduct of the war, the performance of the generals, admirals, politicians and even the king were all fit to be used as comic material. The government rarely received a good press, nor did foreigners, who were almost always viciously caricatured as national stereotypes or symbolic animals. During the early stages of the revolution in France, there were similar trends. Charles James Fox was usually depicted in the garb of a French peasant, with his republican cockade and Phrygian cap in tow (plate 6.8). Pitt could be depicted in several forms, but usually as a miserly tax collector, or as a repressor of traditional liberties (plate 6.9). Irish subjects were somewhat unusual, but a number of issues and individuals attracted the attention of artists and publishers in this period. As a whole, however, considering the broad range of satires still extant, Ireland and Irish affairs account for only a very small number of prints in the British collections examined for this study. In the British Museum's extensive collection of personal and political satires from 1775 to 1792, there are seventy-seven prints that depict Irish affairs or Irish characters from a total of 3,002 prints.⁴⁶ Ireland and Irish affairs therefore accounted for very few prints produced at this time, but the prints that do exist are valuable primary sources nonetheless.

A body of stock devices and motifs existed for artists at the time which they constantly drew upon for use in prints. These stock devices often marked the boundaries that artists were able, and indeed expected, to work within and defined many of the

⁴⁴ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.142.

⁴⁵ Thomas, *The American Revolution*, p.28.

⁴⁶ The satirical print collection of the British Museum was organized in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century by Frederick Stephens and this work was later taken up in the 1930s by M. Dorothy George. The resulting catalogues contain tens of thousands of entries. From 1775 to 1792, there are 3,002 catalogued satires in the collection of the British Museum. Ireland and Irish related subjects account for seventy-seven prints, approximately 2.5 per cent of the total number. In the captions and footnotes of this chapter, the standard pagination for these prints has been adopted, British Museum catalogue (BMC) followed by a number.

national stereotypes, political caricatures, and emblematic representations that consumers of these products were familiar with.

A good example of this was in the most frequently repeated satirical motif: the caricature. A caricature was a hyperbolic representation of an individual from public life, with a varying degree of exaggeration in their physical appearance, dress, body language, actions and speech. The caricature is traditionally said to trace its roots to the grotesque heads of Leonardo da Vinci, which featured misformed and misshapen busts for the entertainment and consideration of the viewer.⁴⁷ Caricatures ranged widely from very soft depictions of figures not much different from life, to the grotesque characters of artists such as James Gillray. Caricatures built on previous printed works very closely, so that over time, a stock manner of depicting a public figure would emerge, emphasizing the same traits in appearance or manner over and over again. For example, Lord North usually appeared with a portly figure, a large round face, a monocle and fine dress (plate 6.10).⁴⁸ John Wilkes had the stock characteristics of being cross-eyed, having a depraved smile upon his face and also wearing his robes of office as lord mayor of London after 1774 (plate 6.11).⁴⁹ In a very advanced state, a public figure could even be represented by a satirical motif, as Lord Bute was for much of his political life.⁵⁰ Henry Fox, first Lord Holland, and later his second son, Charles James Fox, were frequently represented by the figure of a fox, or a human male with the head of a fox (an apt choice considering the political reputation of both men, plate 6.12). Caricatures were necessarily a barbed and vicious form of representation, designed to tease, mock and sometimes humiliate its subject. It was central to the humour of the prints discussed here in terms of its comic appeal to consumers and its stock aspects, in which a standard depiction of a character was repeated and built up over time.

Symbolic and emblematic animals were one of the most common stock aspects of prints and had been used in the British tradition of prints for several centuries. Animals had been used as visual symbols and embodiments of ideals and characteristics from time immemorial, but in the sense that they were used in prints probably traced such a

⁴⁷ Donald, *The age of caricature*, pp 9-10.

⁴⁸ Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, pp 54-5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pp 54-5.

⁵⁰ Donald, *The age of caricature*, pp 51-6.

provenance to heraldry. It has been claimed that emblematic animals were declining in use in this period,⁵¹ but they were certainly still used in considerable numbers during the American war. Each nation possessed an emblematic representative from the animal kingdom. England had the lion or the bull, France had the Gallic cockerel, America was represented by a rattlesnake or occasionally a zebra and Ireland was depicted in the guise of an ass. The use of such emblematic animals opened up new avenues of comic opportunity for the artist, as a greater range of compositions could be concocted featuring these national representations. A good example is provided by plate 6.13, entitled 'John Bull triumphant'. This print was inspired by the British victory over Spain at Omoa on 16 October 1779. Britain is represented by a rampaging bull, which Lords Bute, North and Mansfield are attempting to restrain. In this instance the qualities of raw strength and foul temper which the bull possesses are appropriate to represent visually the nature of the recent British victory and the military prowess of the British more generally.⁵² In a more passive example (plate 6.14), a Gallic cockerel perched on the shoulder of an American rebel symbolizes the alliance of the two countries early in 1778. The American rattlesnake was just as deadly as the English bull, but in a more passive manner. A print entitled 'The American rattle snake' from April 1782 (plate 6.15) shows the rattlesnake coiling itself around two British armies (the captured armies of General John Burgoyne and General Cornwallis), with room for another.⁵³ In this print the manner in which some snakes kill their prey as well as the topography of America are combined to provide commentary on how the war had been won by the colonists. Animals were useful as they provided some punctuation to the cavalcade of caricatures used so often in the prints. The qualities associated with an animal were easily projected onto political and ethnic nations to provide a welcome break from other stock motifs, or a more visually interesting, accomplished or amusing composition.

Classical anthropomorphic figures were also frequently included in prints. Their purpose was the same as their use elsewhere, as physical embodiments of prized ideals, concepts and values, for use in artistic compositions. Figures of liberty and peace were especially common (plate 6.16), but classically inspired female beings representing

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.44.

⁵² Thomas, *The American Revolution*, pp 204-5.

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp 234-5.

nations were also conjured up on a regular basis (especially in the case of Britannia). The use of such figures was once again inspired by the artistic obsession with classical sources (we have seen in detail in chapter three of this study the uses of the figure of Hibernia in Ireland at this time) and was a standard method of representing such things in a visual manner for the purposes of a satirical print.

National stereotypes were very common when the need arose to depict a foreign country in printed material. Every country had a particular caricature that could be recycled repeatedly, with little alteration.⁵⁴ These national stereotypes were especially in evidence during the American war and were vicious and scathing in nature (not to say being quite representative of the xenophobic nature of British society at the time). France was most regularly represented as a flamboyant fop or 'macaroni'. Macaroni was the common nickname given to young men who returned from touring the continent sporting the latest fashions in dress and manners (plate 6.17).⁵⁵ They were regularly caricatured in the 1760s and early 1770s until 1773 (at this stage macaronis ceased to be caricatured in visual prints), usually ridiculously attired, with frenchified clothing, hair and mannerisms. The typical Frenchman in visual sources was very similar. He had sharp features, an outrageously long powdered queue of hair, lavish clothes, accentuated body language and a somewhat undernourished physical figure. He was also typically called such names as Monsieur Frog or Louis Baboon to complete the effect. A particular example from the American war lampooned the French General D'Estaing (plate 6.18). The general is quite ridiculous in appearance from the traditional macaroni hair and clothes, to his grotesque facial expression and exaggerated body language.

Spain was usually depicted as a male figure, dressed in a pseudo-Spanish costume, consisting of a doublet, breeches and stockings, with an oversized ruffle about the neck and a traditional feathered hat. He was moustachioed and also frequently had a decrepit appearance, in reference to the state of Spain's waning empire (plate 6.19). The Dutch were depicted in the typical garb of lower class merchants and frequently appeared alongside merchantile goods of some nature, like rum or tobacco (plate 6.20).⁵⁶ America appeared in several different forms. Most often this took the form of an American Indian.

⁵⁴ Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, p.13.

⁵⁵ George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank*, p.59.

⁵⁶ Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, p.13.

If America was depicted in a subservient or helpless position, the female model was used (plate 6.21). If America was taking the initiative, such as attacking a figure of Britannia, the male version was generally preferred (plate 6.22).⁵⁷ New England in particular was also represented sometimes by the figure of Jonathon, the stereotypical satirical resident of the region.⁵⁸ The generic figure of the American yankee also appeared at this time as a representation of America. Stereotypical national and regional figures were very limited in how they were depicted and there are few differences between various artists use of them, but they are some of the most frequently repeated motifs within this group of sources.

References to dates and events of significance were also quite common in such prints. These motifs were of both recent and very ancient types. Very old examples included the likes of Magna Carta or the Bill of Rights, but more recent events including acts of parliament were also invoked to give credence to the argument of the print. A good example of this was the use of publications as props in prints, much like their use in portraiture. John Wilkes usually appeared with a copy of his journal, *The North Briton* (usually number 45, which had prompted his flight to the continent), as evinced by plate 6.23.⁵⁹ Authors appeared with works of their creation, or politicians with new bills they were proposing. These kind of motifs were simple, yet effective, but presumed a knowledge of both current affairs and historical events that were limited to very specific parts of the population.

Ireland had several anthropomorphic and allegorical guises in the culture of visual prints, all of which are immediately relevant and often overlap with the depiction of Irish Volunteers in such sources. In the wider view of printed sources at the time, however, Ireland played a very small part in the culture of British prints, from which many of the sources for this study are drawn. Domestic Irish prints provide a revealing counterbalance to such inadequacies, but the Irish-made sources are very few in number and any conclusions must therefore be very tentative in nature. It also seems that much of the printed material produced and marketed in Ireland were copies of British prints, or

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.13.

⁵⁸ Ibid p.78.

⁵⁹ Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.50.

commentaries on British high politics, Ireland does not seem to have possessed an industry at the time which successfully designed, produced and marketed visual printed material that was mainly centred on Ireland and Irish affairs.⁶⁰ From the sources that can be consulted, however, some clear trends emerge as to how Ireland was portrayed in the medium of copperplate engravings at the time.

Ireland, like the other nations observed above, had several anthropomorphic embodiments that were used as stock motifs to represent Ireland and Irish interests in visual form. First among these was Hibernia, who has been discussed in detail above in chapter three. In British prints of the late eighteenth century, she was a rather different figure from that so widely depicted on the flags and banners of Irish Volunteer companies. Like other foreign anthropomorphic visualizations, she usually wore a costume assumed to be the traditional dress of her people (either mythologically, historically or contemporaneously). Hibernia was most often depicted by British print artists as wearing very loose fitting classical garb, that usually exposed the upper body. A good example is provided by plate 6.24. This print shows Hibernia floating on a cloud, wearing a Milesian crown, strumming a harp, naked to the waist and with long flowing hair, in a supposed Irish manner of dress. In a few examples, her dress is quite different, as evinced by plate 25. In this print, which depicts Ireland in a position of economic strength, Hibernia is unusually covered up by both a dress and a cloak, with her hair tied neatly back, with a crown of laurel upon her head. This garb is probably due to the presence of her suitors and her position of strength in the print as being able to choose her economic ventures as a result of free trade. Similarly, her position atop a cloud in plate 6.24 reflects the great optimism felt by many in Ireland as a result of the granting of legislative independence in 1782. Ireland's strong position following the war is obviously contrasted with the European political amputees below, and reinforced by her deistic residence in the clouds. However, Hibernia could be just as helpless as other anthropomorphic figures when the artist desired, as evinced by a 1782 print entitled 'The rescue', which we will consider again later in this chapter. Hibernia, therefore, had many

⁶⁰ The case study on *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* above is further proof of the focus of domestic artists and publishers, especially during the American Revolution, on subjects outside Ireland and Irish affairs.

different guises, and her bearing, appearance and attire depended upon the events depicted in the print and the creative impulses of the individual artist.

Of great relevance to the depiction of Volunteers was the male national stereotype of Ireland: Paddy. Paddy was the satirical counterpart of the Spanish don, French monsieur and the impoverished Dutch merchant described above. The late eighteenth century depiction of Paddy was very different from those of the following centuries. Paddy in the late eighteenth century was not usually quite as ragged, uncouth, unrefined or depraved. He was markedly more presentable, but still possessed an Irish brogue and dress assumed to be typical of a rural Irish resident (plate 6.26). However, references to potatoes and strong drink were regular features of Paddy's visual appearances, as were his interaction with farmyard animals (plate 6.27). As with all of the national stereotypes, his appearance and actions depended very much on the circumstances of the print, but British print artists were generally a little easier on Paddy than they were on his continental counterparts. Paddy was lampooned on many occasions, but the virulent xenophobia that is so clear in depictions of France, Spain and Holland, is somewhat lacking in depictions of Paddy. He was generally a mischievous character, usually up to no good, but in a somewhat playful manner. The slightly softer depiction of Paddy by British print artists may owe much to the relationship between Britain and Ireland at the time. Throughout the eighteenth century, with no significant upheavals in Ireland, despite the Jacobite rebellions, a greater basis for trust was being laid in the collective consciousness of the British polity. This softening of attitude is not that unusual, as Joep Leerssen's work makes clear.⁶¹ Leerssen claims that during periods of peace, attitudes to Irishmen in Britain became noticeably more tolerant, while conflict dented the relationship and led to vicious national stereotyping on stage and in print.⁶² During the American Revolution, there were more pressing problems than Ireland and Irish affairs, so more virulent anti-Irish sentiment may have been displaced, in favour of more scathing treatment of the American rebels and their continental allies.

Thirdly, there was the Irish national animal in British prints: the ass. This choice was less than flattering and was deliberately chosen to reflect Ireland's agrarian character

⁶¹ Leerssen, *Mere Irish and fíor-ghael*, p.77-81.

⁶² *Ibid*, pp 102-4, 106, 113-27.

and also the less desirable characteristics of the animal, including its stubbornness. The ass appears several times in satirical sources representing Ireland or Irish affairs. Paddy often appears interacting with the animal and in one case a whole regiment of the army in America are turned into soldiers in uniform with the heads of asses in an American print entitled 'The retreat' (plate 6.28).⁶³

Irish politicians, whether they identified with Irish interests or not, were also subject to the same caricaturing as their British counterparts. As with British politicians, they evolved over time, having their own peculiar stock appearance and motifs. Images of rural links, the Roman Catholic Church and penury were often invoked as particularly amusing Irish traits. A good example is provided by the case of Edmund Burke in a print entitled 'CINNCINATUS in Retirement, falsely supposed to represent Jesuit Pad' driven back to his native Potatoes' (plate 6.29). Here Burke was depicted in the character of Cincinnatus, a Roman politician, who after saving the infant state laid down his powers and retired to private life on a country estate. This is parodied here in Burke's retirement from parliament in 1782. For Burke there is little glory in retirement. He subsists on potatoes and whiskey (further stock motifs representing Ireland), wearing a Jesuit's robes and surrounded by bogus relics of Roman Catholic saints. Burke's personal appearance was also caricatured in the usual fashion, with prominent spectacles and a gaunt and awkward physical appearance.

⁶³ Wynn-Jones, *The age of caricature*, pp 69-70.

III

Volunteers appear in several different kinds of prints. Most of the examples consulted for this study are personal and political satirical prints, but there are also engraved portraits of famous Volunteers, depictions of reviews and images of Volunteers engaged in their duties to be considered. What most of these sources offer is a contemporary outside perspective on the Volunteers in visual form, produced in both Ireland and Britain, from supporters and opponents of the movement.

Depictions of Volunteers fall into several simple categories. Firstly, there are engraved likenesses of public figures in Volunteer uniform, next are depictions of Volunteer reviews and finally the appearance of Volunteers in personal and political satirical prints (accounting for the largest number of sources). Firstly, we will discuss engraved Volunteer likenesses.

Likenesses of Volunteers did appear as prints in their own right, but more usually as plates in periodicals, or as frontispieces for books with Volunteer related content. The aim of such prints was the same as similar examples discussed above, to illustrate the appearance of social and political personalities, or in this case, the leaders of an amateur military movement in Ireland. The likenesses vary widely in quality and accuracy, but very few were produced. A good many later likenesses were produced, in which nineteenth century books dealing with this period sought to illustrate the personalities who played a leading part. A good example is provided by plate 6.30. Henry Grattan was depicted here in his hey-day as many Irish residents liked to remember him, as one of the chief proponents of Irish rights, which he often spoke about dressed in his Volunteer uniform on the floor of the Irish House of Commons. To the untrained eye, likenesses such as this may be mistaken as contemporaneous artefacts. In this print, Grattan's coat is in the style of the early nineteenth century, double breasted, with a row of buttons down either side of the front, very slim lapels and large epaulettes. This particular example seems to have first been used as an illustration in Richard Robert Madden's work on the United Irishmen (plate 6.30).⁶⁴ However, this source has been sufficiently disseminated

⁶⁴ Richard Robert Madden, *The United Irishmen, their lives and times* (London, 1843).

to be mistaken for a contemporary Volunteer print on occasion. A similar case emerges in a print of Thomas Conolly (plate 6.31). This print is often assumed to be a Volunteer illustration and has been used as such in publications in the recent past.⁶⁵ However, the uniform belongs to the 1790s, when Conolly was commander of the Londonderry Militia. The illustrations of John Carey (1861-1943) also fall partially into this category, being later examples of Volunteers in uniform, frequently of poor artistic accuracy. Despite this, they are often used as illustrations or book covers in secondary sources in the present day, sometimes without the knowledge that they were produced late in the nineteenth century and were largely imaginary compositions on the part of Carey (plates 6.32 and 6.33).⁶⁶

Bookplates were a common place to find Volunteer likenesses. Henry Grattan was depicted on the frontispiece of the printed Dungannon resolutions of 1782 (plate 6.34).⁶⁷ This likeness does not appear to have been based on any solid physical knowledge of Grattan's appearance, but was probably cobbled together from existing visual material, especially visual satires, judging by the slightly accentuated facial structure so common in such sources. The depiction of Grattan is crude, but is nonetheless functional, in that it provides a uniformed likeness of one of the patriot leaders to accompany the volume and increase its marketability.

A more accomplished engraving along the same lines was provided by the frontispiece (plate 6.35) of Amyas Griffith's *Miscellaneous tracts* (Dublin, 1788). This likeness was based on a small painted oval panel by the Belfast artist Joseph Wilson. Wilson painted such panels as a more economically expedient option to larger portraits in

⁶⁵ This print of Conolly was used as a Volunteer print in Bartlett and Jeffrey, *A military history of Ireland*, p.246.

⁶⁶ The two most commonly used prints by Carey are: *The Lisburn and Lambeg Volunteers firing a feu de joie in the market square at Lisburn, in honour of the convention of 1782* (National Library of Ireland, 1943) and *Volunteer demonstration in the old High Street of Belfast, 1793, in honour of the destruction of the Bastille* (*The lady of the house*, Christmas 1907). *The lady of the house* was an early twentieth century periodical, aimed primarily at women, but read by a wide range of consumers. It typically contained articles on household organization, fashion and etiquette, in addition to supplements on a variety of issues. In the Christmas 1907 edition, a special supplement on the Irish Volunteers appeared, which contained visual depictions of Volunteers and a history of the movement.

⁶⁷ C.H. Wilson, *A compleat collection of the resolutions of the Volunteers, Grand Juries, &c. of Ireland, which followed the celebrated resolves of the first Dungannon diet, to which is prefixed, a train of historical facts relative to the kingdom, from the invasion of Henry II down, with the history of volunteering &c.* (Dublin, 1782, printed by Joseph Hill).

late eighteenth century Belfast. Wilson and Griffith had fairly close personal links and the engraving for the book was also executed by Wilson, using the original painting as its source of inspiration.⁶⁸ The fact that the engraving was signed and made for an acquaintance provided for a higher quality product and thus a more desirable bookplate. Griffith's likeness is much more accomplished than Grattan's, and serves well to illustrate the range of quality in such illustrations for books. However, Volunteer likenesses were being produced in such a way because there was a market for them, which engravers, printsellers and booksellers were all willing to profit by. Importantly, these were also prints that were designed, executed and sold in Ireland; further proof that a substantial Irish print industry existed and was actively responding to demand for visual consumer products.

Volunteer personalities also appeared in prints in their own right on occasion, separate from involvement with printed books. The inspiration for how Volunteers were depicted was drawn from a wide range of artistic influences. Among the most frequent were images which drew on the depiction of heroes from the American Revolution, especially on the American side. Images of British soldiers and sailors were eagerly consumed in Ireland throughout the war, but the image of the American citizen soldier, along classical republican lines, held more attraction and inherent parallels for Volunteers and their depiction in visual form.⁶⁹ A good example of this trend is provided by a print of the Irish patriot, James Napper Tandy (plate 6.36).⁷⁰ Tandy was depicted in this image as the captain of the Liberty Artillery, a constituent part of Sir Edward Newenham's Liberty Volunteers. This print quite clearly drew on American influences for the pose, props and air of the sitter. The inspiration for this image was a widely circulated print of General George Washington, then commander-in-chief of the Continental army (plate 6.37).⁷¹ In this print Washington has an air of relaxed confidence in his pose and is the very epitome of the republican citizen soldier. Tandy, a great supporter of the American colonists during the war, may have had a hand in the construction of his print as the

⁶⁸ Stephen O'Connor, 'Joseph Wilson and the business of portraiture in late eighteenth-century Belfast'.

⁶⁹ Cullen, *Visual politics*, pp 63-5.

⁷⁰ Adrien de Harivel (ed.), *Illustrated summary catalogue of prints and sculpture* (Dublin, 1988), p.282. Hereafter referred to as De Harivel, *Illustrated summary catalogue*.

⁷¹ Prints of Washington had been available since 1775, but the print which had been the inspiration for Tandy's likeness had been available in Ireland since 1777.

visual connection with Washington would have been desirable, in the context of volunteering and his support for reforms in Ireland. Tandy's claims to be a true citizen soldier in the American mould were reinforced by his volunteering experiences.

Tandy was originally a member of the duke of Leinster's Dublin Volunteers.⁷² As the Volunteers became more politicized following the 1779 to 1780 free trade dispute, Tandy called for greater action from the Dublin Volunteers in the causes of reform and Irish liberty. The duke was a cautious and politically unimaginative man and when pressed by Tandy on the political potential of the Volunteer movement, claimed that 'he had no idea of constitutional questions being forced with the bayonet'.⁷³ Tandy brazenly called for the expulsion of the duke from his own company, but in a reversal of fortune, it was Tandy who was expelled on 24 April 1780.⁷⁴ A short time after this incident, the Liberty Volunteers offered Tandy the honour of leading their newly formed artillery company.⁷⁵ Tandy accepted, and was given the further honour of an engraved dress sword from the men of the corps, which is still extant in the collection of the Ulster Museum.⁷⁶ As a result of this chain of events, Tandy obviously felt that he had a much greater claim to the title and attributes of the citizen soldier than many other Volunteers, hence the inspiration for this print. In comparison, the influence of the Washington print is obvious in terms of the pose and air of the sitter, the use of the cannon as a prop and the paper held in the hand. Borrowing stock devices in this manner was not unusual in contemporary art, but did not always carry an inherent agenda, as Tandy's use of these devices clearly did, to invoke the attributes of the most celebrated citizen soldier of the age. A similar use of imagery siphoned from prints of revolutionary heroes has been explored by Fintan Cullen in the case of a print from the August 1777 edition of *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, which depicted the Donegal-born Richard Montgomery (plate 6.38), who died during the Quebec campaign of 1775 and subsequently became the

⁷² He seems to have been a member from an early date and was a very senior member by late 1779, when he was part of the membership committee (*F.J.*, 22 October 1779) and elected lieutenant of the third company (*D.E.P.*, 11 December 1779).

⁷³ W.E.H. Lecky, *History of England in the eighteenth century* (London, 1882), vol. iv, pp 503-504.

⁷⁴ *D.E.P.*, 25 April 1780.

⁷⁵ James Kelly, *Sir Edward Newenham MP, 1734-1814, defender of the Protestant constitution* (Dublin, 2004), p.160.

⁷⁶ Maguire, *Up in arms*, p.57.

subject of a small cult of heroism in his native Donegal, in Ireland and also in the folklore of the revolution.⁷⁷

Likenesses of Henry Grattan, one of the most famous Irish Volunteers, were also available in print form. The original work that provided the inspiration in this case was a painting by Francis Wheatley (plate 6.39). This small work is currently part of the primary collection of the National Portrait Gallery in London and was engraved by Valentine Green in 1782.⁷⁸ The painting itself was only a study for Wheatley's much larger work of the Irish House of Commons. The print of Grattan (plate 6.40) was a very close copy of the original study. In this product, consumers could own a half-length picture of one of Ireland's Volunteer heroes for the decoration of a private space in the usual manner, most likely as a devotion to Grattan and the political ideals of volunteering he represented.

James Caulfeild, earl of Charlemont, had several engravings executed during this period. One of them, entitled 'James Caulfeild, 1st earl of Charlemont, art patron, commander-in-chief of the Irish Volunteers' (plate 6.41), depicted the Volunteer earl on horseback, a very imaginative depiction of a man reputedly of very frail physical stature for much of his life.⁷⁹ As a leader of Ireland's vibrant amateur military movement, however, it was only fitting for both the image and its marketability that Charlemont was depicted in such a manner. This print once again shows how gaps in the Irish print market were spotted by those in the business and exploited for profit. Another engraving of Charlemont in his role as a Volunteer was also produced by J. Dean, after an original painting by Robert Livesay.⁸⁰

A second print of Charlemont, often assumed to be another Volunteer print, is probably not a Volunteer image (plate 6.42). There are several extant copies of the print,⁸¹ which was based on a miniature by Horace Hone and engraved by Thomas Nugent. The print was first issued in February 1790.⁸² Although the earl is wearing

⁷⁷ Cullen, *Visual politics*, p.63.

⁷⁸ De Harivel, *Illustrated summary catalogue*, p.539.

⁷⁹ Craig, *The Volunteer earl*.

⁸⁰ There are two copies of this painting, one in the National Gallery of Ireland and one in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

⁸¹ The best extant copy is probably that kept in the National Library of Ireland, Prints and drawings department.

⁸² De Harivel, *Illustrated summary catalogue*, p.236.

epaulettes and a coat with scarlet facings in a military style, this is probably a court coat. This is further reinforced by the presence of the star of the Order of St. Patrick and the light blue sash, as part of his court regalia. Prints of the earl seem to have been in some demand for the same reasons as those outlined above.

There are very few contemporaneous depictions of Volunteer reviews. There were certainly three executed at the time, which are still extant. The first is a straightforward copy of an artwork: Francis Wheatley's depiction of the Dublin Volunteers parade on 4 November 1779 on College Green (plate 6.43). This product was made available for the usual reasons, so that consumers could own a printed copy, either of the painting they had seen at one of its public exhibitions, or of the review they may have seen in person. The engraving was made by Joseph Collyer and published by R. Lane of London in May 1784.⁸³ Wheatley had probably always had an engraved printed version in mind for this work, so this progression was a very natural step. The second print in this category was heavily influenced by Wheatley and depicted a review in the same location on 4 November (the birthday of King William III), but was not published until December 1784 (plate 6.44).⁸⁴ It was less well conceived and executed by both the artist and engraver, being a generally inferior work to the print of Wheatley's painting. However, this was an Irish print of such an event, published by William Allen of number 88 Dame Street⁸⁵ and is therefore a significant work in terms of the development of the Irish print industry.

The third image of a Volunteer review was a wholly more original composition. This print was designed and executed by John James Barralet and published by Thomas Milton, probably in the early 1780s (plate 6.45).⁸⁶ Leinster House was one of the most frequently used Volunteer review grounds in the late 1770s and early 1780s and would have been a familiar sight to many Dublin residents. The Dublin Volunteers used the lawn of the duke of Leinster's palatial townhouse frequently for their exercises and reviews, as did some of the corps who were closely linked to them, such as the

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.539.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.271.

⁸⁵ Pollard, *Dictionary of the Dublin book trade*, pp 6-7.

⁸⁶ De Harivel, *Illustrated summary catalogue*, p.13.

Goldsmiths Company and the Liberty Volunteers.⁸⁷ This print is a very valuable source, as it is one of the only extant contemporaneous views of a Volunteer parade, complete with musketry, flags and eager spectators. The print was dedicated to the duke of Leinster by the artist, in compliance with the long-standing tradition of such dedications.

Volunteer reviews do not seem to have made much of an impact on visual print culture at the time and there are very few still extant. There was no real precedent for the depiction of such events in visual form in a mass produced product, they were more commonly described in print media sources at the time in textual form, or seen in person, as they were a very common event in Dublin at this time.

Portrayals of individual Volunteers in graphic satire or in other printed material make up the majority of sources for this study and there is a good mix of British and domestic Irish material in this area, allowing for close comparison. The purpose of this section is to establish how Volunteers in general were portrayed visually, mostly by artists who were outside the movement and were often not supporters of it either.

Over time, a typical Volunteer emerged in printed visual material, mainly of a satirical nature, that came to embody the Volunteers and aspects of Irishness in a similar manner that the national stereotypes and anthropomorphic animals discussed above had previously. During the American Revolution, the Volunteer became a common visual representation of Ireland, alongside Hibernia, especially in visual sources produced in Britain. The generic Volunteer was generally a young, fit, smartly dressed and confidently assured young man, bolt upright in his uniform in a pose of military suaveness. The Irish Volunteer was the very embodiment of what had made Ireland more confident, cohesive and economically buoyant during the American Revolution. In Irish sources, he was a more desirable figure than Paddy, while in British sources he represented the new-found independence and assertiveness of the Irish polity from the late 1770s through to the early 1780s. A typical figure of such a Volunteer is provided in plate 6.46.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ *F.J.*, 3 July 1779, 10 March 1781. *D.E.P.*, 12 August 1779, 23 October 1779. These are just four of many reviews that took place on the lawn of Leinster House.

⁸⁸ *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, February 1781.

The Irish Volunteer is seen here as the members of the movement itself would like to have been portrayed. The Volunteer is well dressed and accoutred, well groomed, has good posture, a confident bearing and possesses military competence, as if he had just stepped out from the pages of a contemporary military manual. Depictions of this sort were common at the time and represent one of the most popular views of the Irish Volunteer. However, the positive light in which the citizen soldier has been depicted here also has much to do with the fact that this was an Irish engraving, produced at the height of volunteering in the early 1780s and is therefore a visual celebration of the Volunteer movement, through the idealized representation of one of its members. A similar figure was produced by William Allen of Dame Street in early 1780. The product was a print in which large areas of the figure of the Volunteer were left blank, to be filled in watercolour or pastel by consumers in emulation of the various city companies.⁸⁹ The emergence of Volunteer companies was an economic opportunity exploited by many different trades and in this way, printsellers were very similar to the tailors, cutlers, hatters, saddlers and other tradesmen we encountered in chapter one of this study.

Two further coloured engravings along similar lines featured on the front and back cover of a small Volunteer almanac printed by John Magee of Dublin in 1781 (plates 6.47 and 6.48).⁹⁰ Once again, the figures bear all the same characteristics as the Volunteers above, but these amateur soldiers are accompanied by the fitting mottoes 'FOR OUR COUNTRY' and 'FREE TRADE AND THE RIGHTS OF IRELAND'. Such mottoes were, as we have seen, also popular on flags, ceramics and many accoutrements to uniform as well. These figures see the linking together of stock visual depictions of Volunteers with appropriate textual accompaniment, of the kind that was very common in printed textual sources at the time. A further source of this kind, but of much later production, was the recently rediscovered Volunteer binding of 1789 (plates 6.49 and 6.50).⁹¹ The binding once again features similar figures accompanied by Volunteer mottoes, but this time on the binding of a book produced by George Grierson of Dublin for the chief secretary of Ireland. This sort of depiction of the Irish Volunteer was very

⁸⁹ *D.E.P.*, 3 February 1780.

⁹⁰ These figures were reproduced in black and white in *The lady of the house* (Christmas 1907). This issue featured a lot of Volunteer prints and textual material on the subject as well.

⁹¹ *De Burca rare books*, Catalogue 79 (Winter 2006) (Dublin, 2006), pp 46-9.

popular in Ireland at the time and a good accompaniment to the kind of textual material printed in newspapers at the time lauding the selfless and principled qualities of Ireland's amateur soldiers.

John Magee in particular was fond of such images of Volunteers and had them printed on lottery tickets as late as 1787 (plate 6.51).⁹² The lottery ticket Volunteer goes several steps further than the other sources of its kind. In this very imaginative and well conceived print, an Irish Volunteer strokes a wolf-hound, on one of the first occasions that this animal was used as a beast inherently associated with Ireland in visual printed form. The hound wears a Milesian crown fashioned into a collar on which is written the word 'QUIS', probably in reference to the royal motto 'Quis separabit'. The long scroll that works its way down the composition reads 'GENTLE WHEN STROKED, FIERCE WHEN PROVOKED'. Such a statement was no doubt intended as a commentary on Volunteer companies' intention to defend their homes, but may also be read as a very provocative and assertive image of the Irish Volunteer in relation to Britain. However, all of the above sources are Irish and provide a somewhat one-sided view of the Volunteer in printed visual sources.

The British sources consulted for this study are all of a satirical nature, stemming from the fact that this was the only visual medium in which Irish Volunteers were depicted visually in Britain at the time.⁹³ A particularly vitriolic example of how Irish Volunteers were depicted is provided by a print from the late 1770s or early 1780s entitled, 'Bethnal-green company of Irish impresst Volunteers' (plate 6.52).⁹⁴ The imagery of this print is quite complex and has apparently not been discussed in printed catalogues or secondary literature. The scene is of a Volunteer company from London. The captain of the company is Sir John Eardley Wilmot, Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas (viciously caricatured as Just Ass Wilmot), notorious for his investigation into the Spitalfield riots of 1771, who had his house burnt to the ground in the Gordon

⁹² De Harivel, *Illustrated summary catalogue*, p.275.

⁹³ Two works were consulted for this study, *Catalogue of political and personal satires, preserved in the department of prints and drawings in the British Museum*, vol. v, 1771-1783 (London, 1935) and *Catalogue of political and personal satires, preserved in the department of prints and drawings in the British Museum*, vol. vi, 1784-1792 (London, 1938). This collection has also recently been scanned and made available online through the website of the British Museum.

⁹⁴ This print has no BMC catalogue number, having been bought very recently for the museum collection.

riots a decade later.⁹⁵ He is depicted here at the head of a very motley group of Volunteers. The first company of amateur soldiers are very poorly attired, some without coats, shoes, hats or even bayonets for their muskets. Instead of a flag, they have a pole to which weavers' shuttles have been attached. The shuttles are most likely an allusion to the Spitalfield area, where silk was manufactured, mostly by Irish labourers (this would also remind the viewer of Wilmot's investigation in Spitalfield a decade earlier).⁹⁶ The Volunteers themselves are cruelly caricatured with grotesque faces, one with an outlandish beard and even a peg-legged Volunteer at the rear of the formation. The second group of soldiers are sent up in the same manner. This company features a sooty-faced chimney sweep, still bearing the tools of his trade and an amputee without a left leg, probably representing a maimed sailor (the long trousers also point to such an identity), a common motif at the time to represent how the servants of king and country were dishonoured after they had outlived their usefulness.⁹⁷ Their standard is a shop sign attached to a pole. The flag in the upper left reveals how the Volunteers may have been viewed in some circles in Britain. The Volunteer is split with a figure of justice, but is sacrilegiously trampling Magna Carta underfoot, as a weeping figure of Britannia looks away. A compliant American rattle-snake is also included in the upper right corner of the flag, to indicate some measure of collaboration between the American rebels and the Irish Volunteers. The main thrust of this print is the sending up of the appearance and composition of Irish Volunteer companies,⁹⁸ albeit in a British context, but with some comment on the political ideals of volunteering. The Volunteers are utterly ridiculous as a soldierly body and are certainly not in step with wider British ideals, as evinced by the flag. The clothing and armament of Volunteer companies, as well as their martial bearing are homed in on in this print as particularly worthy of ridicule.

⁹⁵ H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford, 2004), vol. 59, pp 466-8.

⁹⁶ Silk produced in this area of London was often sold in Ireland, despite the existence of an Irish silk industry in Dublin. One such trader was a Mr. Keeling, who sold imported British silk from a shop in College Green, *D.E.P.*, 5 January 1779.

⁹⁷ George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank*, pp 41, 103.

⁹⁸ It is not immediately obvious who was being sent up in the print, Irish Volunteer companies, or companies composed of the London Irish in Britain. Whichever is the case, the print was certainly a visual caricaturing of Irishmen in general, even if the print was not intended to lampoon Volunteer companies in Ireland per se.

The sending up of the Irish Volunteers in such a manner had an eminently well-worked set of satirical precedents within British prints. During the American War, there were many anti-recruiting prints produced, designed to ridicule recruiting parties and the composition of the army serving in America.⁹⁹ One such print from 1778 was entitled 'An exact representation of the Manchester recruits (alias poor distress'd weavers) before their equipment a la militaire' (plate 6.53). This source portrays army recruits as poorly attired, armed only with sticks and of very unsuitable physical stature for service. The recruits have been driven to the army for want of work as weavers in a bid for the sympathy of the viewer, which was a common profession for new recruits in times of economic decline or uncertainty. However, the overall impression of the print is one of scorn and ridicule for the British service and its methods of acquiring recruits.

Aside from the anti-recruiting print, Irish Volunteers were also ridiculed in British prints through other stock motifs, that would have been familiar to consumers of satirical prints. The image of the urban Volunteer who served as an amateur soldier in his free time was a popular comedic image in London at this time. The stereotypical middle class Londoner was known as a cit.¹⁰⁰ Cits were generally arrivistes attempting to set their lives in a framework of fashionable consumption and congenial social events, that befitted their social elevation. The cit's amateur military service was cruelly caricatured on a regular basis in these years. A good example of this kind of satirical work is provided by a print of August 1780 entitled 'He wou'd be a soldier, &c.' (plate 6.54). The urban Volunteer was viciously caricatured here as utterly unsuitable for military service in any capacity. His stature is portly and round, while his mind is far from gripped by military service as he absent mindedly sniffs a bouquet of flowers. Volunteers were also something of a sideshow for civilians in London, who frequently made day-trips to regular army and Volunteer camps to gawp at soldiers engaged in their duties.¹⁰¹ This common form of entertainment for Londoners was endlessly sent up in prints of the American war and later of the French Revolution. A typical example is provided by 'A VISIT to the CAMP' (plate 6.55). The soldiers in this print are surrounded by grotesquely caricatured cits of different shapes and sizes. The scene was designed to elicit ridicule

⁹⁹ Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, pp76-7.

¹⁰⁰ George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank*, p.77.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p.104.

about the popular camp visits, cits and military men stationed at home during the American War. The most famous military camp where British Volunteer companies served and trained was at Coxheath, near London.¹⁰² The duchess of Devonshire was particularly involved with this camp, drawing significant satirical attention (plate 6.56). The duchess had a company of female Volunteers, called the Amazons, who intended to serve in medical and auxiliary roles in the event of an invasion.¹⁰³ The duchess drew much satirical scorn for her participation in such a role. The role of commissioned officers stationed at home was another popular source of satirical amusement as the idleness of soldiers stationed at home was frequently sent up.¹⁰⁴ Junior officers especially were caricatured as idle, vapid and sybaritic creatures, more used to the pleasures of the salon than the military realities of the review ground or active service (plate 6.57). Representations of Irish Volunteers drew on all of these satirical precedents and contemporary influences and a good appreciation of this is necessary to understand exactly what was being ridiculed in satirical prints of Irish Volunteers from Britain. The ridicule of military subjects had a very rich background and in satirical prints such stock motifs and concepts were drawn on to be used in the depiction of Irish Volunteers.

The political ideology of Irish Volunteers could also be the subject of satirical jibes from British artists. The Irish Volunteer was part of a wider trend in British visual satire which saw Ireland as increasingly assertive and hungry for independence. A print entitled 'Prerogatives defeat or liberties triumph' (plate 6.58) depicted a Volunteer in such a manner. Ireland in this print was represented by an Irish Volunteer. The Irish Volunteer in this print has significantly been left without a trace of caricature and conversely has been depicted in a stance and appearance of confidence and respect. The Volunteer says in his speech bubble 'We are Loyal but we will be Free'. Significantly, he has been placed beside an American Indian who says 'Now we will treat with them'. This comment is in reference to the fall of Lord North and his replacement with Charles James

¹⁰² Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, p.110.

¹⁰³ Holmes, *Redcoat*, p.15.

¹⁰⁴ Several prints of this nature were produced by Carington Bowles of St. Paul's Churchyard in London. The BMC numbers of these prints are 5950, 6156 and 6157.

Fox predicted in this print.¹⁰⁵ The print is anti-ministerial and sees the change of ministry as being beneficial to both Ireland and America. Ireland is seen here as being very closely connected to America, in the Volunteer's standing to one side with the American Indian. This occurs on several occasions in such sources. A print entitled 'The Hibernian attempt' from March 1785 depicted a similar situation from a British perspective (plate 6.59). A mischievous Paddy mounted on a bull (once again an allusion to Ireland's agrarian nature, through Paddy's interaction with a farmyard animals) is best for Ireland, a recurring theme amongst British satirical prints of this era. We have already seen this sentiment above in relation to the Hibernia amongst the clouds in plate 24, who claimed that now she was free she would 'roast her own potatoes'. This kind of sentiment was also used in a depiction of Paddy in a print entitled *ARGUS* (plate 6.60). In this print we see the stealing of a slumbering George III's crown by America and conspiring British ministers, while a Dutch merchant pilfers honey from a royal beehive. Britannia weeps to one side accompanied by a slumbering British lion, who is chained up and cannot help his master. In all three of these sources Ireland is depicted as somewhat distant from Britain, ready to pursue a new course of her own choosing, following the granting of legislative independence in 1782. Significantly, in such sources, the Volunteer has never been caricatured, but has rather been depicted in a confident and dignified manner. Paddy, Hibernia and the Irish Volunteer are quite vocal about their intention to take care of Irish interests above all others. This is a very revealing insight into how Ireland and its visual representations were viewed by some in Britain towards the close of the war in the early 1780s.

A very popular manner of depicting the Irish Volunteer in prints was as the dashing saviour of Irish rights and liberty. This kind of figure appears in both Irish and British sources. The Volunteer is very similar to the figures in the Irish sources discussed above, but in his dashing air, the Volunteer is far more animated. A good example is provided by plate 6.61. This mezzotint is from 1786 and depicts a heroic Irish Volunteer taking the figure of liberty under his protection. This image sees the Volunteer playing a role in a highly symbolic and allegorical scene. The Irish Volunteer is depicted in much

¹⁰⁵ Cullen, *Visual politics*, p.65.

the same mould as those discussed above, but in this piece he is in a pose of vigorous action. He reaches out to take liberty's hand, while he simultaneously restrains his tempestuous horse. His countenance is one of determination and stern dutifulness. Liberty seems pleased by his attention and prepares to move towards him, encouraged by her ladies-in-waiting. The purpose of this image was to act as an accompaniment to printed Volunteer rhetoric about their protection of Irish rights and liberty.¹⁰⁶

A British image along similar lines was printed in April 1782; 'The rescue. A Volunteer delivering Hibernia from the claws of the lion' (plate 6.62). This image sees a figure of Hibernia flying to the arms of an Irish Volunteer to escape the grasp of a British lion brandishing a paper on which is written 'POYNING'S LAW S'. The thrust of this piece is fairly self explanatory, being a celebration of the Volunteers' role in the granting of legislative independence in 1782. The Volunteer is seen in both of these examples as the protector of Ireland and her liberties, albeit in a very emblematic and allegorical manner. Such sentiment was very common in printed textual sources at the time and is mirrored in these images in visual form. The exploration of the virtues of the Irish Volunteer lent itself particularly well to a visual medium and printed images were able to convey to consumers of periodicals and prints the qualities of civic republicanism that many in the movement wished to associate with.

As the 1780s progressed the Irish Volunteer became a more frequently used image to represent Ireland, replacing Paddy and on some occasions the figure of Hibernia. The significance of this shift in visual motifs is summed up well in a British print of January 1781, entitled 'Saint Patrick for Ireland' (plate 6.63). This print is essentially a collage of stock motifs associated with Ireland, accompanied by an amusing song about Saint Patrick's day and the stereotypical fondness of the Irish for strong drink. The figure of Paddy who may have been expected in such an image has been replaced by an Irish Volunteer mounted on a horse, branded on its hind quarters with an Irish harp. The Volunteer brandishes in one hand a glass, probably filled with whiskey and in the

¹⁰⁶ Material lauding the virtues of the Irish Volunteers abounded at the time, particularly in newspapers and periodicals. An impassioned view of the subject was propounded in Francis Dobbs, *Thoughts on Volunteers* (Dublin, 1780). Lots of anonymous material was also published including *A Volunteer's Queries, in Spring, 1780; humbly offered to the consideration of all descriptions of men in Ireland* (Dublin, 1780) and *Thoughts on the conduct and continuation of the Volunteers of Ireland* (Dublin, 1783).

other a sword which has several potatoes impaled upon it. He also has two scythes attached to the saddle of his mount. The border of the print was decorated with agrarian tools, agricultural produce, bottles and glasses. The song at the bottom of the page is a celebration of rising early to drown the shamrock on St. Patrick's Day. This print was undoubtedly very amusing to a British audience, combining so many stereotypical motifs associated with Ireland and the Irish into one composition. Aside from the other stereotypes, of particular significance to this study is the fact that the Irish Volunteer at this stage was sufficient in British visual sources to stand in for Ireland in satirical compositions. This is a reinforcement of just how important the Volunteers were in a political and social sense to merit such prominent visual placement as a motif eligible to represent Ireland in British satirical sources.

Political figures who were closely associated with the Volunteers were often caricatured in their role as Volunteer leaders. Henry Grattan and Henry Flood were portrayed in such a manner in a British print entitled 'The Irish patriots' (plate 6.64). This work depicts an argument inside the Irish House of Commons between Grattan and Flood, both of whom are dressed as Irish Volunteers. Grattan is exaggeratedly caricatured as rakishly thin, with the exaggerated, sharp facial features usually utilized in his satirical depictions. Contemporaries often noted Grattan's physical structure as rakish and awkward, one lady commenting venomously that he was 'the most truly ridiculous figure I ever saw...a little figure as stiff as a poker'.¹⁰⁷ Print artists drew on his appearance regularly as one of the chief comedic elements of Grattan in visual satire. His body language in this print is aggressive, as is his facial expression, but these are quite out of step with his stature, which is in deliberate contrast for comedic effect. Flood is caricatured with brooding, heavy facial features and defensive body language, turned away from Grattan's offensive stance. The text below is typical of such satirical prints and details the imaginary confrontation between the two figures. Grattan accuses Flood of taking government office and of being mercenary in nature,

¹⁰⁷ James Kelly, 'Francis Wheatley: his Irish paintings, 1779-1783' in Adele M. Dalsimer (ed.), *Visualizing Ireland, national identity and the pictorial tradition* (New York, 1993), pp 154-5.

SIR, your Talents are not so great as your Life is infamous.-You might be seen hovering about the Dome, like an ill-omened Bird of Night, with sepulchral Notes, a cadaverous Aspect, and broken Beak, ready to stoop and pounce upon your Prey.- The People cannot trust you; the Ministry cannot trust you: You deal with the most impartial treachery to both.- I therefore tell you in the Face of your Country, before all the World;- nay, to your Beard, you are not an honest Man!

Flood's retort, which is complemented by his stance, is one of incredulity. In the feigned gormlessness of a good politician, he claims to be taken aback by any such false claims about his character and political actions,

I HAVE heard a very extraordinary Harangue indeed; and I challenge any Man to say that any Thing, half so unwarrantable, was ever uttered in this House.-The Right Honourable Gentlemen set out with declaring, he did not wish to use Personality; and no sooner has he opened his Mouth, than forth issues all the Venom that Ingenuity and disappointed Vanity, for Two years brooding over Corruption, have produced; BUT IT CANNOT TAINT MY PUBLIC CHARACTER!- As for me, I took as great a Part with the first Office of the State at my Back, as ever the Right Honourable Gentleman did, with Mendicency (sic) behind him.¹⁰⁸

The subject of the print was the widening gulf between various patriot factions, encapsulated in the dispute between Grattan and Flood, two of the most prominent patriots who by late 1783 were increasingly at odds over various political issues, including the political direction of the Volunteer movement. Grattan had been forced to resign from his colonelcy of the Dublin Independent Volunteers as a result of the renunciation dispute of 1782 to 1783.¹⁰⁹ Flood had taken over command of the corps, being left as something of a de facto leader of what remained of a disintegrating

¹⁰⁸ The phrase 'I took as great a Part with the first Office of the State at my Back, as ever the Right Honourable Gentleman did', refers to Flood's taking of office in the early 1770s (James Kelly, *Henry Flood, patriots and politics in eighteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 1998), pp 200-77.

¹⁰⁹ Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, pp 113-5.

Volunteer movement.¹¹⁰ The print no doubt takes much of its inspiration from this particular chain of events, but also draws on the kind of political mudslinging found in written sources that took place as the Grattan-Flood rift widened over the course of the 1780s, in tandem with the wider breakdown of the old patriot alliance that had helped to secure free trade and legislative independence for Ireland in the heyday of the Volunteers.¹¹¹ The comedic thrust of this print is very similar to that which British politicians were so often subjected to in satirical prints. This source is an unusual, but valuable example of the ridicule of Irish high politics, along British satirical lines, through the caricature and speech of two prominent political personalities. Interestingly, this is a London print, printed by M. Smith of Fleet Street and would have been sold in London print shops, while it was also probably exported to Ireland as well. Grattan and Flood made several other appearances in British satirical material of this period, but usually in civilian garb and is thus beyond the scope of this study.¹¹²

Lord Frederick Hervey, earl of Bristol and bishop of Derry was also caricatured on a number of occasions in connection with volunteering activities. Lord Bristol became a very famous proponent of volunteering, particularly its political and reforming aspects, but was actually quite a late addition to the pantheon of Volunteer leaders.¹¹³ He had certainly admired the Volunteers from an early date, but seems to have done so from outside the movement. When he returned to Ireland in 1783, however, he was admitted to a senior position in a Londonderry company.¹¹⁴ From 1783 to 1785, the earl-bishop was a very active proponent of reform through the Volunteer movement and it was for his role in the Dungannon convention of 1783 and the Grand National Convention of the same year that he achieved his fame in this sphere.¹¹⁵ Hervey's likeness appeared in three satirical images in this period, in which the earl-bishop and his politics were sent up. The

¹¹⁰ Smyth, 'The Volunteer movement in Ulster', chapter seven.

¹¹¹ Dickson, *New foundations*, pp 171-86; Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, pp 113-89.

¹¹² The gift of £50,000 to Grattan in 1783 was sent up in a print entitled *IRISH Gratitude*, kept in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, London. Many Irish politicians, including Grattan were also caricatured in a very detailed print, *ENGLISH POLICY. DIVIDE AND CONQUER. or the Present State of Parties*, a recent acquisition at the British Museum.

¹¹³ Childe-Pemberton, *The earl bishop*, pp 256-7.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.298.

¹¹⁵ Craig, *The Volunteer earl*, pp 183-90.

first was a print entitled 'The church militant', printed in December 1779 (plate 6.65). The print depicts the bishop as a split figure, half clergyman and half soldier. Such split figures were common at the time in satirical prints to convey the Jekyll and Hyde nature of a political figure or more abstract artistic figures.

The clergy were frequently targeted because of their position in close alignment with the establishment. They were seen by many as being servants of the government and the army. Their literate and educated status meant that they held a position of responsibility towards their flock, which satirical prints claimed they used to propagandize for the government and help to find recruits for the army and garner support for the war. The clergy were supposedly complicit in this process because they relied on political influence for their promotion within the Anglican church.¹¹⁶ During the American war clergymen, especially in the middling ranks of bishops and archbishops, were frequently attacked in vitriolic prints that held a little more seriousness for its audience than was usual for a satirical print.¹¹⁷ Clergymen were mostly depicted as leading men in arms in reference to their supposed role as recruiters (plate 6.66) for the regular army or as split figures wielding the Bible in one hand and a sword in the other (plate 6.67). In split pictures they usually wore religious robes on one half of their body and a military uniform on the other. Although it had been claimed on previous occasions that the first print of the earl-bishop is a reference to his volunteering activities, this was not the case. Hervey only became openly associated with the Volunteers early in 1783. This print is most probably a reference to the bishop in the familiar satirical role of a government recruiter and clergyman four years before he entered an Irish Volunteer company in Londonderry. It is interesting to see that the same stock motifs could be applied to the holder of an Irish bishopric in the same manner as they were to those in Britain.

The second depiction of the earl-bishop that appeared was not in a Volunteer print, but in a work entitled 'Hibernia in the character of charity', printed in March 1784 (plate 6.68). In this print the recently deposed Lord North and Charles James Fox are suckled by Hibernia, in reference to their ill fated attempt to form a government

¹¹⁶ Wynn-Jones, *Cartoon history*, pp 122-3.

¹¹⁷ Quite a few can be found in the collection of the British Museum, BMC 4227, 5228, 5343, 5400, 5492, 5553, 5631, 6610.

following peace negotiations with America in early 1784.¹¹⁸ Britannia is depicted cast down beside her spear and shield by the course of events and begs Hibernia to aid her with reference to the equality of the two kingdoms. A small cherub kneels at the bottom of the picture, in the guise of Edmund Burke, who strums a harp with a rod labelled Faction. The harp, which would usually have a maiden on the forepillar has been replaced by the head of the earl-bishop of Derry and the harp has the word Seditio inscribed upon it. The main comic jibe of this print is in seeing these various politicians in alliance, which was true in the case of Lord North, Fox and Burke, but the linking of Lord Hervey to these figures is more tenuous. This print is more the imaginative thinking of political opponents, dreaming up an unholy political alliance centred around Irish issues and projected into a satirical print, than commentary on any real events or political realities.

The final and most interesting satirical work depicting Hervey sees him back in his role as the Volunteer clergyman. By late 1784 Lord Bristol had become a focal point for Volunteers in support of reforming measures.¹¹⁹ As a result of this, he drew a great deal of political flak, mostly in newspapers and other textual sources. In particular, his support for Catholic rights and reform of the political system were homed in on as particularly despicable aspects of Bristol's politics. Late 1784 saw the crest of the wave of Bristol's popularity with his own supporters and the venomous criticism of his opponents. To accompany textual material which ridiculed him,¹²⁰ satirical prints were also produced. There are several extant examples of these prints from the closing months of 1784. The first of these is shown in plate 6.69. The earl-bishop is shown facing towards the left of the print, dressed in clerical black robes with his right arm raised and his face in a countenance of argument. The caricaturing of the Lord Bristol is fairly mild and certainly by no means as exaggerated as the depiction of Grattan seen above in plate 6.64. The title of this first print was 'The Right Rev. Volunteer Bp. Of D---y'. However, as is so often the case with political caricatures, its popularity led to several more editions, the original being printed and sold by R. Paye of Broad Street, London.

¹¹⁸ William Hague, *William Pitt the younger* (Kent, 2004), pp 73-95.

¹¹⁹ Childe-Pemberton, *The earl-bishop*, pp 300-6, 327, 338, 354, 359.

¹²⁰ A good example is a poem about the earl-bishop published in *Volunteer Evening Post*, 27 November 1784.

The second edition of the print is shown in plate 6.70. In this print Lord Bristol has been turned into a Guy Fawkes character, brandishing a flaming torch, with a leering satanic imp on his shoulder bearing a paper on which is written 'An Arch-Bishoprick' in reference to a new position that Hervey was looking for at the time.¹²¹ The final edition of this print still extant made several more additions to the composition (plate 6.71). A pedestal appears before the earl-bishop with the inscription 'THE IRISH PATRIOT'. A troop of cavalymen approach him from the background, riding away from a burning city. There was also a poem at the base of the page which read,

Of base Ingratitude possest, With rank Rebellion in his
Breast, Tho' rich yet poor tho' proud yet mean, Tho' rob'd
in purest Lann, Unclean. With such Hypocrisy of Heart, As
makes astonished Virtue start. When such a Soul the Devil
shall fish up, Depend upon't tis' D----'s B----p.

The poem is very similar to the kind of verses printed at the time about Lord Bristol in printed sources. In his opposition to Charlemont within the Volunteer movement and the government on a range of reforming issues, Bristol drew this kind of scorn as a result of his political opinions, in the same manner as we have seen other politicians in Ireland and Britain represented in satirical prints. This attack on Bristol is nothing out of the common way in terms of its accusations and caricaturing of the earl-bishop. For an equivalent politician of his political stature in Britain, such caricaturing and outlandish accusations were par for the course in London politics. Politicians in London usually ignored such satirical material for the humour it was. Attempting to prosecute an artist or printseller brought unwanted negative publicity and politicians in any event frequently had to endure such comic roasts periodically when they were in the glow of the political spotlight.¹²²

A key point with this print is the fact that there were several different editions. This points to its popularity with consumers. All three may have been produced in London by R. Paye, but the two subsequent prints with additions could just as easily have been produced by enterprising artists and printsellers in Ireland. The fact that it was an exclusively Irish subject matter would make this scenario a little more likely. The

¹²¹ Childe-Pemberton, *The earl-bishop*, p.359.

¹²² Donald, *The age of caricature*, p.15.

copying and altering of prints was quite common and happened with another example we have already seen above in plate 6.26. Two prints of this composition which vary significantly are still extant. The first was a British print entitled 'Inish na gebraugh' (plate 6.72). The existence of this print can be traced back to early November 1779 when the *Dublin Evening Post* declared 'A gentleman just returned from England, assures us, that in the print shops in London, and in all the other towns he passed through, he saw affixed to the windows the ludicrous figure of a poor Teague, with brogues without soals, and tattered cloaths, with the label of-'Arrah, sure Paddy wants a FREE TRADE'.¹²³ The print still extant in the British Museum illustrated in plate 6.73 was dated 21 December 1779. The extract cited above attests to the print's popularity in Britain and the dates would suggest that multiple editions were produced. It is not possible to ascertain whether the correspondent in the *Dublin Evening Post* had plate 6.73 or a different edition of the print in mind when he wrote his piece however. Whatever the case, a copy of the print that was probably designed and produced in Dublin appeared in late 1779, entitled PADDY'S RESOURCE (plate 6.73).

A date of December 1779 can firmly be proposed because an advertisement appeared in the *DEP* for prints sold by John Exshaw, including PADDY'S RESOURCE,

The celebrated PAUL JONES'S Picture. Just published by J. Exshaw, price a British six-pence, illustrated with the following beautiful Copper plates:- A strong resemblance of the celebrated and well-known PAUL JONES-A very humourous Print of PADDY'S RESOURCE to get a FREE TRADE (which alone, is sold in the British print shops at a British shilling...¹²⁴

The privateering raids of Jones posed a significant threat to shipping against Ireland and was felt particularly keenly in Ulster.¹²⁵ The sale of Jones' picture (plate 6.74) is no surprise considering the popularity of the likenesses of American military and political leaders observed in the case study of *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* above. Exshaw seems to have had many British prints copied and re-sold in Dublin. He advertised on a

¹²³ *D.E.P.*, 11 December 1779.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 14 December 1779.

¹²⁵ Peter Vansittart, *John Paul Jones, a restless spirit* (London, 2004), pp 125-7.

constant basis throughout the years of the American war whenever new products appeared, especially in the pages of the *Dublin Evening Post*. PADDY'S RESOURCE was clearly a copy of 'Inish na gebraugh', but was produced by a much less accomplished engraver. The British print has a detailed foreground and background with parcels and a ship symbolizing the economic aspects of the free trade dispute. The Irish print has some details along these lines, but they have been scaled back considerably. Both prints bear the same slogans upon the cannons 'A Short Money Bill A Free Trade or else' and on the muskets 'O Lord open thou our Lips & our Mouth Shall Shew forth Thy Praise'. In the British print the slogans are inscribed on the weapons, while the Irish print had them in speech bubbles nearby. The words which Paddy speaks are also very similar in both prints. In the Irish version he says 'sure they won't give us a Free Trade Nabocklesh'. In the British print he says 'Arrah, Sure they Won't Give us a Free Trade, Nabocklesh-'. The pose is also the same in both, with Paddy pointing to the cannons and muskets in a threatening manner. The flag flying beside Paddy has the motto 'Crom a Boo' in the British print. This was the armorial motto of the duke of Leinster and ties him into the Volunteers, the free trade dispute and threat of violence from Ireland posed in this print. In the Irish version this allusion to the duke was absent.

The political and comedic thrust of this print is fairly simple. It is a British commentary upon the means that Ireland, symbolized by a disheveled Paddy, intended to use in the campaign for free trade. This was perceived in the British print as the threat of Volunteer cannons and muskets under the command of the duke of Leinster. This print was thus directly related to the Irish Volunteer movement, but at a time where the satirical Irish Volunteer had not yet emerged and Ireland was therefore represented by Paddy, an altogether more familiar embodiment of Ireland for a British audience. Several of Paddy's usual characteristics have been invoked for comedic effect including tatty clothes, an Irish brogue and his use of the Irish language. As with most satirical prints, this print attempts to fuse the traditional stereotypical national figure with a particular political situation through active use of pose, surroundings and props. In this case the political issue at stake is the free trade dispute and has been alluded to through the ship in

the background and in the British print to the parcels in the foreground.¹²⁶ The parcels are inscribed 'For Exportation' and 'Success to the Trade of Ireland', in reference to the grievances of Irish merchants and manufacturers. The forceful nature of the Irish challenge is represented not only in the weapons, but also in the title of the print 'Inish na gebraugh'. This is most likely a garbled phonetic spelling of the Gaelic 'Anois no go brach', roughly translating as now or never. The use of the Gaelic language and Irish brogues in satirical material was quite common in sending up Paddy, but was also used for Irish Volunteers. In both plates 6.72 and 6.73 there is also another garbled Irish spelling 'Nabocklesh', which translates as 'never mind'. This was probably a reference to the empty nature of the threat (as perceived by some parties in Britain) posed by the demands for free trade and the debate over the free trade dispute. An Irish Volunteer is also seen to speak Gaelic Irish in a print entitled, 'The critical moment or, the last effort to save a sinking bark' (plate 6.75). In this print one of the Volunteers on board an Irish ship says 'Nish Na Gaugh Braugh'. This appears to be another garbled anglicized phonetic spelling of the phrase already translated above. This print also evinces the use of Irish Volunteers as the primary figures associated with Ireland, linking them with economic grievances and the campaign for free trade.

'Inish na gebraugh' and 'Paddy's resource' are very rich sources, containing a lot of information about the relationship between the British print industry and how it interacted with those who plied the trade in Ireland. With this example and the case study of *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* above, it is obvious that London prints were being copied and re-sold in Ireland regularly. In some cases, prints could be sold with little alteration to an Irish audience, for a similar price to the original. These observations only begin to scratch the surface of this topic, however, and a more complete study would undoubtedly yield more on this subject.

¹²⁶ Such visual allusions to Irish goods and trade are also echoed in BMC 5653, illustrated above in plate 6.25.

Conclusion

In closing, the study of prints significantly enhances our knowledge of the Irish Volunteer movement. Copperplate engravings are a very different source from those of the preceding chapters. Many primary sources for this chapter were not produced by or for Irish Volunteers, and this group of artefacts provides a very revealing view of how the movement was viewed from people outside its membership, by both supporters and opponents, domestic and foreign. In every other chapter of this work, the vast majority of artefacts consulted were manufactured to represent the identity of individuals and their particular Volunteer company. Prints enable us to see how the Volunteers as a movement were perceived from outside its membership.

Irish sources of this kind were generally of a very positive nature, bathing Ireland's amateur soldiers in the light of civic admiration. This is to be expected and aligns very closely with contemporaneous textual material printed in books, pamphlets and newspapers. More revealing, however, are the British sources. In these prints we see some criticism of the Volunteers. The development of the Irish Volunteer as a visual motif in satirical prints is fascinating. At first the Volunteer was fused with the generic Paddy of previous decades, but in the fullness of time the Volunteer became sufficient to represent Ireland in its own right. The emergence of a new national stereotype in visual satire is very rare and the early 1780s thus mark a watershed in outside perceptions of Ireland in Britain. Of particular interest here is the respectful and dignified manner in which Irish Volunteers were usually depicted, which is certainly in great contrast to how perceptions of Irishmen in Britain would change in the course of the nineteenth century (especially in the satirical magazine *Punch*). The process of the redefinition of national identity by the Irish polity and the reactions of Britain to this process have also been noted by Fintan Cullen.¹²⁷ In terms of the Irish sources and their perception, the model for the republican citizen-soldier embodied by the Volunteer was a concept of very wide appeal throughout Britain, Ireland and the American colonies, having almost universal relevance and appeal. Although the feelings of identity of many in Ireland were

¹²⁷ This process is noted in two of his major works: *Visual politics, the representation of Ireland, 1750-1930* (Cork, 1997) and *The Irish face: redefining the Irish portrait* (London, 2004).

fundamentally changing in this period, the template for their new identity was still drawn from a template of common political ideals (such as that of more universal values of whiggery, emanating from Britain, but also followed in Ireland and the American colonies). It should also always be borne in mind the small percentage of the population that were involved in this process of redefinition, or to whom the new feelings of national identity would be applied. However, the politically active classes usually have the strongest voice in traditional historical sources. The study of prints does little to alter this tendency, with Ireland usually being represented by generic figures, altered in their surroundings and situation to fit a particular political issue.

The variety of Volunteer prints available, from reviews and portraits to political satires highlights how well attuned those in the print industry were to economic opportunities in their trade. The Volunteer niche seems to have been well exploited in the range and number of products produced. However, only a more complete study of the Irish print industry will reveal more of the background and context from which these sources emerged.

Of especial interest are the results which elucidate details of the interaction between the Irish and British print industries. The links between the two were obviously very close, as were many aspects of politics and life in the late eighteenth century. Ireland was a major market for the export of prints, while a significant part of the print business in Ireland seemed to revolve around the duplication of London products, with varying degrees of success. However, an Irish print industry with its own interests and peculiarities certainly existed, explored in the case study of *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*. This is a very different and interesting medium through which we can study the Irish Volunteers, yielding very diverse results and adding considerably to our understanding of Ireland's amateur military companies through the study of artefacts from beyond written sources.

Conclusion

The Irish Volunteers were a crucial movement in the political, military and social history of eighteenth century Ireland. Their impact on Irish society in this period was enormous, in many different areas. Traditionally, political aspects of the movement have been given the greatest attention by historians. This study, however, has shown that the Volunteers were a very complex and multi-faceted movement, which catered for much more than the expression of political opinion through membership of amateur military companies. In general, this work has been concerned particularly with extant material artefacts of the Volunteers and certain military aspects of volunteering, which mark a partial break with the previous focus of volunteering studies. The Volunteers were a reflection of the complex stratification of society itself and the expression of the myriad concepts of identity and social order that existed in Ireland at this time. This study has shown just how complex the society from which the Volunteers drew their membership was, as reflected in their feelings of identity in geographical, social, national, political and religious terms. The Volunteer movement was far more complex in each of these categories than has previously been revealed in scholarship on the subject.

The intensely local character of the Volunteer movement is a point that is worth repeating. This character was essentially a result of the world from which such companies emerged, which was still very local in character. Most people, excluding the very highest tiers of society in this period, still normally lived for the duration of their lives in the same locality and community, with little practical experience and knowledge of life outside their own county, let alone outside Ireland. M. S. Anderson claims that Europe was still a remarkably local and regional place in the eighteenth century,

The traditional character of society is the extent to which it continued to be an amalgam of small, well-defined and closely-knit geographical and occupational groups – parishes, manors, guilds, municipalities, at the most provinces – each with an outlook, interests and traditions of its own...the ordinary man lived his life within narrow geographical boundaries: at any moment in the eighteenth century a high proportion of Europeans could have said with certainty in which churchyard they would be buried. The importance therefore, so far as most people were concerned, of

local rivalries, local grievances and local ambitions can scarcely be over-stated.¹²⁸

This local character fundamentally shaped the development of the Irish Volunteer movement. This local focus is evident in many different groups of artefacts, but was neatly summed up by the common Volunteer motto borne on many pieces of equipment, 'For hearths and homes'.¹²⁹ Although such parochial aspects of volunteering have been highlighted by David Miller,¹³⁰ in future academic study of the Volunteers, it should be recognised that such companies were founded to protect the local community first and foremost, and that later foundations of larger battalions and attempts to organise Volunteer political opinion on a regional and national scale were secondary to the primary purpose of these amateur military companies.

Many points of note have emerged in the course of this study on the membership of Volunteer companies, in terms of profession, class, wealth and religion. The Volunteer movement has traditionally been said to have been composed of the armed property of the country. This study has shown, in several different instances, that the matter was more complex than Grattan's famous phrase would lead us to believe. Volunteer companies were drawn from across the community. Usually, Volunteers were men who could afford the expense of purchasing their own equipment and the loss of earnings incurred by service. However, there are several cases in this study which show that Volunteer companies were often subsidized by local grandees and that in at least one case that Volunteers were paid wages for their service in the summer months. Companies could also be composed of men from the lower classes, which certainly runs contrary to the traditional view of the Volunteers as a movement served exclusively by the middling and upper classes. The breadth of professions that engaged in volunteering was also very wide and is attested to in this study. Although men of the lower classes may have engaged in volunteering, this was an activity which usually required considerable sums of money. The breadth of the movement can be seen in the sliding scale of goods that

¹²⁸ M. S. Anderson, *Europe in the eighteenth century, 1713-1789* (fourth edition, Essex, 2000), p.26.

¹²⁹ The phrase 'pro aris et focus' is found on a great many Volunteer artefacts. The literal translation of this phrase from latin is 'for altars and firesides', but this can be more colloquially phrased as 'for hearths and homes'.

¹³⁰ David Miller, *Queen's rebels: Ulster loyalism in historical perspective* (paperback edition, London, 2007), pp 33-6, 38-41.

Volunteers commissioned. While some companies were splendidly turned out in the finest uniforms and accoutrements, others were clearly cobbled together with very little money. This was most evident in the case of the Rathfriland Volunteers of County Down, who paid for their muskets in instalments of shillings and pence, many members signing their name with an X, which probably indicated that they were not literate.

One of the most important points to emerge from this study is the importance of the individual Volunteer company. In several chapters of this study, the pride and identity of the individual company is very apparent. Volunteer corps were raised to protect their community and as such took great pride in both their locality and the association that vowed to protect it. This pride can be seen in the personalized equipment and other peripheral artefacts of Irish Volunteer companies. This trend is especially prominent in the study of uniforms, flags, iconography and ceramics. The composition and duplication of a company badge, along with the name of the company, a unique motto or the date of foundation upon volunteering equipment, tells us a lot about the importance of the local Volunteer company to its members. Indeed, this avenue of research has proved so fruitful that a nationwide appraisal of Volunteer companies on an individual basis, where primary sources will allow, would seem to be an appropriate manner in which to continue research on the Irish Volunteers. Primary sources, such as minute books, resolutions, newspaper articles and relevant private correspondence exist for many companies, which could be used to piece together a picture of how Volunteer companies existed at this time. Although we seem to know a great deal about the Volunteers as a large movement, there is certainly a significant deficit in our understanding of how individual companies operated at this time.

Significant steps forward have also been made in our understanding of the volunteering ethos and the reasons why men chose to serve as Volunteers in this period. Although many previous writers have often seen the reasons to serve as very political in nature, this study reveals that there were a great many reasons why volunteering was a common activity for those who could afford it. Volunteering was a traditional and indeed expected response for Irish males of military age when Britain was at war. There was also an element of peer pressure to join a Volunteer company, when it became popular in a given area. This trend can especially be observed in urban environments, when

companies were formed along professional lines, such as the Lawyers or Goldsmiths companies in Dublin. Attached to this pressure was the fact that Volunteers were closely associated with other civic and governmental posts, such as being a Justice of the Peace, member of a chamber of commerce or a leading Freemason in one's community. Being a Volunteer was seen by many as a civic duty at this time. However, membership was also motivated by more tangible concerns. Volunteer companies were often used to protect economic interests, thwart agrarian unrest and as Miller has shown, act as a de facto police force. In Belfast, for example, the local Volunteer companies were often used as a coast guard, to guide merchant ships to ports via beacons and to police the scene of shipwrecks.¹³¹ Many Belfast Volunteers, especially the leading members (Waddell Cunningham was probably the most prominent merchant in Belfast and was also captain of the Belfast First Volunteer Company from 1781) were heavily involved in trade, and the goods carried by merchant shipping along the coast were often associated with them. It was therefore of very immediate concern to use the local Volunteer company to protect their shipping and goods. In rural settings, Volunteers were more frequently obliged to serve in a Volunteer company raised at the behest of a local landed magnate. Service in such units was all but obligatory and provides another example of the diverse and manifold reasons for serving in an Irish Volunteer company. Such motivation to serve was usually dependent on local circumstances and once again highlights the very local character of the movement.

However, broader trends within the movement have also been observed. The study of uniforms, flags and symbolism show that a wider movement did indeed exist beyond the world of the individual company. Colours (of both uniform coats and flags), iconographical motifs and anthropomorphic figures were one way in which the disparate Irish Volunteer companies could share in a wider sense of identity. Motifs such as the maid of Erin harp and the figure of Hibernia helped Volunteer companies to relate to each other on a larger scale than that of their locality and to give the scattered companies some sense of belonging to larger collective endeavour. Perceptions emanating from outside the Volunteer ranks could also portray how a wider Volunteer movement was perceived at the time. The section of chapter six which analyses how the generic Irishman

¹³¹ *F.J.*, 29 February 1780.

was transformed on some occasions into a Volunteer (and indeed how this figure was treated with great respect by British and Irish artists) is suggestive of how some contemporaries felt about Ireland's amateur soldiers. Other sources, created by Volunteer sympathizers, suggest to us the admiration felt for Volunteers by their many diverse supporters at this time. Such sources are crucial in constructing a picture of the movement precisely because they were not created by Volunteers themselves, but by people outside the movement.

The question of how the Volunteer movement changed in its membership (both social and religious), political organisation and aims, can only be answered by a long and detailed historical enquiry. However, this study does provide some basic waypoints for such a work. The analysis of uniforms, flags and iconography and symbolism reflect distinct changes in the Volunteer movement over the period 1778 to 1793. In general, we can see that volunteering became an activity available to a greater number of those in the lower middling classes as time went by. This is reflected in the fact that uniforms were often changed to accommodate more parsimonious budgets in the mid 1780s. In general volunteering became an activity with less pomp and élan as the period wore on. Many companies of the late 1780s and early 1790s lacked the silk colours, plated buttons and gorgets of their predecessors. The very exemplification of this change were the companies of the early 1790s, who resembled the sans-culottes of Paris more than the gentlemen Volunteers of the late 1770s. However, changing political and social attitudes can also be observed in the iconographical third chapter of this study. We have seen how the Milesian crowned maid of Erin harp was very much a symbol of the patriot alliance and that when this political union began to unravel, the Milesian crown appeared less frequently. The emergence of more radical political and social attitudes can also be observed in the appearance of uncrowned harps (or indeed re-crowned with the sunburst motif or the Phrygian cap) and the emergence of newly designed harps, featuring plain fore pillars.

In general, material artefacts of all kinds related to Irish Volunteer companies become much less numerous as this period approaches its close. Although items from all categories do exist into the early 1790s, they are not nearly as abundant as those extant

for the late 1770s and early 1780s. Although this study does suggest many possible avenues of future research into the study of changes over time in the Volunteers movement, this has not been our main concern here.

The study of flags (and to a lesser extent ceramics) has shown, however, that individual companies were in some cases part of larger battalions or regiments. The reasons why battalions and regiments existed are not clear from such artefacts, but they do provide a visual indication of a key future area of volunteering studies. The organisation of Volunteers into battalions indicated that Volunteers were found in great numbers in some areas and that they were willing to form larger battalions and regiments for military or other reasons.

Questions of identity have always loomed large in the study of Irish Volunteer companies. This study has not answered such questions comprehensively and indeed only scratches the surface of this complex subject. Volunteers expressed many different identities in their activities, from a local and regional identity, to concepts of national, political and religious identity. Such concepts are very difficult to pin down successfully and it is best to treat such issues as very complex and without a single answer. Many Irish people in the late eighteenth century experienced a variety of identities, in many of the categories outlined above. This is a complex subject, that would prove very fruitful for further research.

Although many key points have emerged about the study of Irish national identity in the course of this study, we have also observed how Ireland was linked very closely to Britain in this period. These links are apparent in many areas, but are especially prevalent in the sharing of political ideals (most evident in tenets of universal whig political philosophy, the value of liberty and documents such as Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights), many facets of the consumption of material goods, the sharing of a historical and iconographical past and especially in loyalty to the monarch; George III. Symbolic motifs in particular highlight just how close Britain and Ireland were in this period. Many motifs used in the Irish establishment, including parliament, public service and the armed forces used iconography that claimed an Irish identity, but also spoke of their close connection with Britain. The celebration of British military triumphs was seen in chapter five, in the

cult of the hero surrounding Major-General James Wolfe. Ireland, it should always be remembered, played a significant part in the expansion and service of the empire, especially in the number of both enlisted men and commissioned officers it contributed to the army and navy. The historical reconstruction of such links is of the utmost importance to the accurate study of late eighteenth century Ireland.

The study of material artefacts in eighteenth century Ireland through the primary sources consulted for this work also reveals significant findings. Firstly, we can begin to challenge the idea of the Irish Volunteers as a movement armed, clothed and equipped in Irish manufactures, which originated in the support of the Volunteers and their sympathizers for the non-importation movement of the 1770s. This concept has from its inception rested on shaky foundations. This picture was largely invented during the heyday of the free trade dispute of the late 1770s and was devised to create solidarity in the ideals of non-importation. In many cases, Irish wares were certainly used by Volunteer companies, either through local convenience or a desire to support the free trade campaign. The purchasing of equipment, however, was usually motivated by more mundane concerns of local supply and demand and the available capital which could be invested by the individual Volunteer. However, this subject warrants further examination.

A key point in this vein is the level of craftsmanship that was present in Irish urban centres in this period. Irish Volunteer artefacts do vary greatly in quality, but many were of a very high standard of craftsmanship and we have seen in chapter one that many craftsmen of great repute, such as Thomas Read of Parliament Street, were engaged in the production of items for Volunteer companies. The production of consumer goods in Ireland in this period is another area of research that will bear great fruit if studied in the future. This study has also marked the fact that Irish people (especially those in urban centres) were as enthusiastic consumers as their British and continental neighbours. A material culture, which denoted class aspirations and social hierarchies, was very much at work in late eighteenth century Ireland. This extended to the consumption of many different sorts of goods. In addition, this work also elucidates in several cases (especially that of portraiture in chapter four) the cosmopolitan nature of Irish material culture in this period. Irish residents were keen to keep up with the fashions of London and Paris and

were quite cosmopolitan and refined in their choices as consumers. Some study of Irish material culture has emerged to date, but this is an area which requires research in much greater depth.

Material artefacts in general prove to be very interesting primary sources. They are quite unlike textual sources in many ways, possessing many advantages that documents do not. However, such sources also have their limitations and require knowledge of several different disciplines to draw out their full potential as historical sources. Such an approach is labour intensive for the scholar, requiring considerable time to be spent delving into different disciplines other than history. However, the results of interdisciplinary study are intriguing and certainly warrant further investigation in future.

Further study of the Irish Volunteer movement can look forward to a very bright future. Multiple gaps already exist in Volunteer historiography, including those revealed by this study. Future studies might dwell on the local character of Volunteer companies, perhaps in the style and methodology of local history studies. Such work could be followed up by research into the nature of volunteering on a county, provincial and eventually national level. The key to such an approach would be the collation of minute data on individual companies, before building to a wider view of a geographical area. This approach would also do well to distinguish between volunteering in urban and rural settings, as different characteristics clearly existed in both.

Religion has long been recognised as a key facet in the study of eighteenth century Ireland and the study of the Volunteer movement is in tune with this. Despite at least two attempts at the beginning of the twentieth century, the question of religion in relation to volunteering has been largely neglected in recent times. The issue of the religious composition of Volunteer companies is one that has raised many questions, but has received very few answers. This aspect of volunteering also deserves attention because of its central importance to politics and society in this period. Similarly, the social composition of Volunteer companies is deserving of study, for a variety of reasons. The social composition of Ireland, and not just of the Protestant Irish, is a topic that has been little studied to date. The Volunteers would provide an ideal viewing point to observe social hierarchies, in both rural and urban settings. Such companies are also a

good example of how Irish men of certain classes interacted in this period. Study of this subject could also tell us a great deal about ideas of masculinity in this period, male peer groups and the expectations placed on Irish males in late eighteenth century Ireland.

More mundane aspects of volunteering culture also require scholarly attention. We are currently bereft of much knowledge on how the Volunteer movement functioned in basic terms. This includes how Volunteer meetings were run, how often they occurred, how reviews were organised, how battalions formed themselves and conducted their business, what training Volunteers undertook to improve their military efficiency and so on. The sources for such study do exist and can be found in minute books, resolutions, newspaper articles and private correspondence. Generally, we do possess knowledge of how the Volunteer movement functioned from the top down, but our understanding of the most minute details of how a Volunteer company or battalion functioned are usually found wanting. The best method of approaching such research would be to study Volunteer units at the lowest possible level, studying companies one at a time in great detail, where primary sources will allow. Certain areas, such as Leinster and Ulster at a provincial level and urban centres within these will be easier to study, with an abundance of primary sources, but an uneven distribution of sources can of course be overcome. The future of volunteering studies should therefore be focused on the collation and study of very minute detail at the level of an individual company. In short, there is abundant research still to be conducted on the Irish Volunteer movement.

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Note: The bulk of primary sources consulted for this study were artefacts preserved in museums and private collections. Below is a list of the collections consulted in the course of research. In the case of individual artefacts, their location and archival details are provided when they appear in the illustrations volume of this study. Many collections in museums and galleries are now available online, which eases the task of the scholar. In the case of specific items not in a primary collection, the easiest way to obtain details and reproductions is to contact the relevant curator at the institution.

Collections visited:

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- Armagh County Museum.
- Ballymoney Museum, County Antrim.
- Bell Gallery, Belfast.
- Birr Castle, County Offaly.
- Brighton and Hove Museum.
- British Library, London.
- British Museum, London.
- Carton House, County Kildare.
- Castletown House, County Kildare.
- Damer House, Roscrea, County Tipperary.
- Freemasons Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin.
- Glenarm Castle, County Antrim.
- Glin Castle, County Limerick.
- Leeds City Art Gallery.

- Limerick City Museum.
- Linen Hall Library, Belfast.
- Liverpool Museum.
- National Army Museum, London.
- National Library of Ireland.
- National Gallery of Ireland.
- National Gallery, London.
- National Maritime Museum, London.
- National Museum of Ireland.
- National Portrait Gallery, London.
- Royal Dublin Society.
- Sligo County Museum.
- Springhill House, County Londonderry.
- Trinity College, Dublin.
- Ulster Museum, Belfast.
- Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom.
- Westport House, County Mayo.
- Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston, Staffordshire.

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- Anne S.K. Brown collection, Brown University.
- Boston Museum of Fine Art.
- Buten collection, Hempstead House, New York.
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- Frick collection, New York.
- The collection of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.
- Library of Congress, Washington.

- Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Musee de Louvre, Paris.
- National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
- National Gallery of Scotland.
- Norwich Castle Museum, Norfolk.
- United Services Museum, Edinburgh.
- Winterthur Museum, Delaware.

Private collections:

Many private collections were also consulted, at the permission of the owner. Private collectors often wish to remain anonymous, but usually grant permission for their artefacts to be reproduced anonymously for the purposes of scholarly research.

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