



John Agnew in the press — a selection

Belfast News Letter, 22 January 1830

A charity sermon was preached in Ballylesson church, parish of Drumbo, on the 20th ult. By the Rev. W. H. Brett, in aid of the funds for clothing the poor; on which occasion the following gentlemen kindly acted as collectors: — Sir Robert Bateson, Bart. N. Batt and Robert Batt, Esqrs. and John Russell, Esq. Newforge. The sum received amounted to £24, 17s; including donations from the following individuals: — The Marquis of Downshire, £5; Archdeacon Mant, £2; John McCance, Esq. £1; John Agnew, Esq. £1; a lady in Malone, 7s. 6d; a Gentleman, 5s. The Committee have since been enabled to distribute amongst 86 paupers, residing in the parish, the following articles: — 29 pair of blankets, 25 pair of stockings, 5 coverlets, 13 cloaks, 2 great coats, 31 yards of flannel, 70 yards of calico, and 12 pair of shoes.

Belfast News Letter, 7 September 1830

The newspaper carries a report on the Belfast Horticultural Society:

On Thursday last, the second show of Flowers, Fruit, &c., took place in the Assembly-rooms ... The Judges of flowers were, the Marchioness of Donegall, Mrs. May, and Mrs. Rowan, Merville. The Judges of fruit, vegetables, &c. were, the Marquis of Donegall, John Agnew, Esq., William Sinclair, Mr. Farrell, and Mr. Scott.

Belfast News Letter, 14 September 1832

Belfast Horticultural Society

... Among the numerous fashionable parties who honoured the meeting with their presence, we noticed the following: Marquis and Marchioness of Donegall, Miss May, &c. Lord Charles Lennox Ker, Lord Algernon Chichester, T.A. Curtis, Esq. (London,) Sir Arthur Chichester, Bart. Sir Robert Bateson, Bart. John Agnew, Esq. Major and Mrs. Rowan, G. Macartney, Esq. Major Mackay, and the Officers of the 90th Light Infantry, John Thomson, Esq. and Mrs. Thomson, and most of the distinguished families in the neighbourhood.

The Prizes were awarded as follows [a list follows, and then the judges are named – including

for Fruit: John Agnew, Esq. Bloomfield was one of six judges who also included T.A. Curtis, Esq. London. The judges for Flowers were headed by John Montgomery, Esq. Beer's Bridge.]

Belfast News Letter, 17 June 1834

Sovereign of Belfast

Two notices have been posted on the Exchange of this town, one announcing the resignation of Sir Stephen May, as Sovereign of Belfast, and the other stating, that an election would take place on the 24th instant, of a person to fill the situation now about to be vacated. We understand John Agnew, Esq. is likely to be elected to fill the vacancy, until the 29th September, the usual day of swearing into office.

Belfast News Letter, 4 and 11 July 1834

PROCESSIONS.

DUBLIN CASTLE.

23d June, 1834.

Although the Lord Lieutenant has every reason to entertain a confident expectation that no violation of the law will be attempted on the approaching 1st and 12th of July, by a recurrence of those Party Processions which have been so destructive to the peace of the country, and of the harmony which should exist between all classes of his Majesty's subjects — yet, his Excellency feels it his duty, upon a subject so intimately connected with the welfare of the country, to convey the expression of his ardent hope, and earnest desire, that there will be, not only on those days, but on all others, a total cessation of all party and illegal assemblies.

Should any indication lead to the belief, that Processions are contemplated in your District, his Excellency feels assured that you, and the other Authorities, will use all the influence you possess to dissuade the people from a proceeding so improper, and so dangerous to themselves.

If, notwithstanding your endeavours, such assemblies take place, it will be your duty, promptly, to cause their dispersion, and to mark the offenders in order that they may be brought to justice; for it his Excellency's firm determination to suppress all such manifestations by the enforcement of the law. I have the honour to be,
Your very obedient and humble servant,
(Signed) WM. GOSSET.

*To Lieutenants and Deputy
Lieutenants of Counties in
Ireland.*

(CIRCULAR.)

In consequence of the above circular notice, issued by order of his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to the Lieutenants and Deputy Lieutenants of Counties, and other Authorities, calling upon them to use their best endeavours to prevent a recurrence of Party Processions on the 12th instant, we, the undersigned Magistrates, feel it to be our duty to apprise the public thereof, and to desire that no such illegal Processions shall take place on that or any other day. We further hereby warn all persons to abstain from such manifestations of party feeling at their peril, as we are determined to use all the means which the law affords to prevent any Processions contrary thereto from taking place; and we confidently hope that it is only necessary to make the law known to have it duly respected and obeyed.

Belfast, 2d July, 1834.

JOHN AGNEW, Sovereign of Belfast.
C. M. SKINNER, J.P.
WILLIAM CLARKE, J.P.
HENDERSON BLACK, J.P.
FORTESCUE GREGG, J.P.
WILLIAM BOYD, J.P.
R. GRIMSHAW, J.P.
JOHN H. HOUSTON, J.P. County of Down.
RICHARD B. BLAKISTON, J.P. County of Down.
A. M. SKINNER, J.P.
JOHN McCANCE, J.P.

Belfast News Letter, 26 September 1834

THEATRE, BELFAST

BY PERMISSION OF JOHN AGNEW, ESQ. SOVEREIGN.

MR. W. BURROUGHS has the honour of announcing to the Nobility, Gentry, and Public of BELFAST, that he proposes opening the Theatre on MONDAY, the 29th instant. The interior has been repaired and decorated by Mr. DONALDSON; and among other NEW SCENERY, a splendid DROPSCENE, (*Lago Maggiore*) painted by Mr. Adams, will be exhibited. The Company will consist of some former favourites, with the addition of many performers of established talent. Mr. B. most respectfully trusts, that he will experience a renewal of the kind and flattering patronage of the inhabitants of this town. Further particulars in a future advertisement.
Belfast, Sept. 22, 1834

Belfast News Letter, 31 October 1834

VENTRILOQUISM

By Permission of JOHN AGNEW, Esq. Sovereign

GREAT SUCCESS!

BY PARTICULAR DESIRE.

FOR SIX NIGHTS LONGER!

In the Assembly Rooms, Commercial Buildings.

THIS EVENING, (FRIDAY,) OCT.31.

Tomorrow (Saturday), Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday Evenings.

...

Belfast News Letter, 9 December 1834

The newspaper records that John Agnew, Sovereign, chaired a meeting at the Commercial News-Room to elect a new committee for the year. [Names include James Steen, jun., William Boyd, etc]

Belfast News Letter, 24 March 1835

BELFAST ELECTION PETITIONS.

The following extract from the official proceedings of the House of Commons, dated the 12th of March, contains the substance of the petition which has been sent forward against the return of Mr. Emerson Tennent, and will be read with some degree of curiosity by the public of Belfast: —

“A Petition of Owen McAleer, in the Borough of Belfast, in the county of Antrim, butcher, and of the other persons whose names are thereunto subscribed, electors of the Borough of Belfast, in the county of Antrim, on behalf of themselves and others claiming a right to vote for Burgesses to vote in Parliament for said Borough of Belfast, was delivered in, and read; setting forth, That all the Petitioners were at, and during the last election for Burgesses to serve in Parliament for the said Borough, electors of said Borough; that at the last election for the said Borough, James Emerson Tennant, esquire, Lord Arthur Chichester, and John McCance, esquire, were candidates to represent said Borough in Parliament: that John Agnew, esquire, is the Sovereign and Returning Officer for the said Borough ; that the polling commenced upon Tuesday the thirteenth day of January last, and was adjourned for five days successively; that the said James Emerson Tennent, by himself and his respective agents and managers, and by persons employed by him and them, and in his behalf, before and during the time of the said Election, was guilty of open and extensive corrupt practices, in order to procure persons having a right to vote at the said election to vote for the same James Emerson Tennent, in order to procure the said James Emerson Tennent to be returned to Parliament, and that the said corrupt practices of the said James Emerson Tennent, and of his agents, friends and managers, were open and notorious in the said Borough; that the said

James Emerson Tennent, by himself and his agents or managers, and by persons employed on his behalf, did, after the teste of said writ for the said Election, and at, and during the Election, and before the Election of the said James Emerson Tennent, as one of the Burgesses to serve in this present Parliament for said Borough, give, present and allow to various persons having or claiming to have, a right to vote at said Election, bread, meat, drink, entertainments, presents and rewards, to and for such persons, in order to be elected and for being elected as a Member to serve in this present Parliament for said Borough of Belfast; that by reason of the said corrupt and illegal practices, the said James Emerson Tennent, was and is wholly disqualified and incapacitated and ineligible to serve in Parliament for the said Borough, and the return of the said James Emerson Tennent was and is wholly null and void; that the Petitioners most humbly pray the House to take the premises into consideration, and declare the Election of the said James Emerson Tennent wholly null and void, and that the House will order a new writ to issue for the return of a Burgess to serve in Parliament in said Borough in the room and stead of said James Emerson Tennent, or that the House will be pleased to grant such other relief in the premises as to the House shall seem meet.”

The following is also the substance of the petition against the return of Mr. McCance. After a long preamble detailing the elective history of the borough, and the circumstances of the late election, the petitioners first complain of the conduct of the returning officer — they say —

“That the said Returning Officer [John Agnew] and his deputies in taking the said poll did, in various instances, commit great irregularities, and did not take the same in manner required by Law, and particularly did not require the electors of the Roman Catholic persuasion, who tendered their votes for the said John McCance, to take the oath required by Law to be taken by electors professing the Roman Catholic religion previous to voting; but on the contrary, received the votes of all such electors, notwithstanding they had not taken such oath; that the said Returning Officer, upon the close of the said poll, declared that the said James Emerson Tennent and John McCance were duly elected, and that the candidates were, the said James Emerson Tennent, who had seven hundred and seventy-three votes, the said John McCance, who had seven hundred and nineteen votes, the said Lord Arthur Chichester, who had seven hundred and thirteen votes, and the said John French, who had three votes; that the said John McCance by himself, his agents, friends, committees, canvassers, and managers respectively, and by others on his behalf, before, and at, and during the time of the said Election, was guilty of open bribery and corrupt practices, and attempts to bribe and corrupt the voters, in order to influence and procure persons having or claiming to have a right to vote at the said Election, to vote for the said John McCance at the said Election, and to refuse and forbear to give their votes the said Lord Arthur Chichester and James Emerson Tennent, or one of them, and that the said bribery and corrupt practices of the said John McCance and of his agents, friends, committee, canvassers, and managers, and other persons on his behalf, were open and notorious, in the said Borough, and well known to the electors there; and that the said John McCance, by himself and his agents, friends, committees, canvassers and managers, and other persons on his behalf, before and at, and during the time of the said Election, were guilty of various corrupt acts, and employed undue influence, and other illegal and improper means, and gave and offered, and caused to be given and offered, divers sums of money, and gave and offered, and entered into, and caused to be given and offered, and entered into, divers gifts, rewards, agreements, promises, and engagements, to persons having or claiming to have a right to vote, in order to procure them to vote at the said Election for the said Borough, for the said John McCance, and also to forbear to vote for the said Lord Arthur Chichester, and James Emerson Tennent, as one of them, and in order to procure the said John McCance to be retained in this present Parliament for the said Borough; by means of

which said bribery and corrupt practices and acts, and undue influence, and illegal and improper means, and the said money, gifts, rewards, agreements, promises, engagements, and offers of the same, the said John McCance did obtain and procure many persons to vote for him at the said Election, and many persons were induced to forbear to give their votes for the said Lord Arthur Chichester, and James Emerson Tennent, or one of them; that the votes of many persons who were not registered, and of many persons who had been improperly registered, having no qualification to entitle them to be registered, and of many persons whose qualifications were improperly described in the certificates and affidavits of their registry, and of many persons whose qualifications as registered voters did not continue from the time of their registry as electors, up to and exist at the time of their voting at the said Election, and of many persons who had become disqualified to vote at the said Election and of many persons who refused to take the oath by the said first-mentioned Act required to be taken by voters at polling before the Returning Officer, if required, on behalf of any candidate, although required on behalf of the said Lord Arthur Chichester, to take such oath, and of many persons who falsely personated electors duly registered, and of many persons who were the paid agents of the said John McCance, and of many persons who were Insolvent Debtors and Bankrupts, and of many persons by whom more than one half years Grand Jury and Municipal Cesses, Rates and Taxes were then due and payable in respect of the premises for which they registered, and of many persons who were in other respects not duly qualified to vote, and of many persons who, before and at, and during the time of the said Election, received bribes and sums of money, gifts, rewards, agreements, promises, and engagements as aforesaid, from the said John McCance, and his agents, friends, committees, canvassers, and managers respectively, and from persons on his behalf, as aforesaid — were unduly and illegally received and allowed upon the poll at the said Election, by the said Returning Officer or his deputies; that the said Lord Arthur Chichester had a majority of legal votes at the said Election, over and above the legal votes then and there tendered and given for the said John McCance, and the said Lord Arthur Chichester, ought to have been returned as duly elected at the said Election, to be a Member for the said Borough; yet by reason of the said Returning Officer having at the said Election received and allowed on the poll such illegal votes as aforesaid, in favour of the said John McCance, a colourable but untrue majority of votes appears on he said poll for the said John McCance, and the said Returning Officer at the said Election illegally returned the said John McCance as duly elected, whereas if the votes of the said persons who were not entitled to vote, and of the said persons who had been so obtained and procured to vote for the said John McCance, by the said bribery and undue practices and influence, had not been received by the said Returning Officer, or his deputies, in favour of the said John McCance, and if the several legal votes so tendered in favour of the said Lord Arthur Chichester, had not been rejected, the said Lord Arthur Chichester would have had a majority of legal votes, and therefore ought to have been elected and returned by the said Returning Officer, as one of the Members to sit in this present Parliament for the said Borough; that the said John McCance did after the test of the writ, and after the vacancy had happened, to supply which the Election was held, by himself, his friends, committees, canvassers, and agents, or by some person or persons employed on his behalf, directly and indirectly give, present, and allow to persons having votes in such Election, money, meat, drink, entertainment, and provision, presents, gifts and entertainments, and did make promises, agreements, obligations, and engagements, to give and allow money, meat, drink, and provisions, presents, entertainments, and rewards, to and for such persons having votes in such Election, and to and for the use, advantage, benefit, employment, profit, and preferment of such persons, in order to be elected to serve in Parliament for the said Borough of Belfast; and that the said John McCance, by the bribery and corrupt and illegal practices aforesaid, was and is wholly disabled and incapacitated and

ineligible to serve in this present Parliament for the said Borough, and the return of the said John McCance was and is wholly null and void; the Petitioners who voted for the said Lord Arthur Chichester therefore humbly pray that the House will take the premises into consideration, and declare the Election of the said John McCance wholly null and void; and that the said Lord Arthur Chichester was duly elected, and ought to have been returned, to serve in Parliament for the said Borough of Belfast, and to substitute the name of the said Lord Arthur Chichester in the return for the said Borough, in the place of the said John McCance, or that the House will afford the Petitioners such further and other relief in the premises as to the House shall seem fit.”

Belfast News Letter, 16 June 1835

There is at present a large field of wheat in full ear, belonging to J. Agnew, Esq. Sovereign, at Bloomfield, near town.

Belfast News Letter, Tuesday 30 June 1835

Know all men by these presents, that I, JOHN AGNEW, Esq. Sovereign and Chief Magistrate of the Town and Borough of BELFAST, in the County of Antrim, have, and by these presents do, under this my Warrant, in virtue of my Office as Sovereign and Chief Magistrate of said Borough, pursuant to the provisions of the Act of fourth and fifth William the Fourth, chapter forty-nine, nominate, constitute and appoint HENRY FERGUSON, of Belfast, aforesaid, Gentleman, to be INSPECTOR of WEIGHTS and MEASURES in and for the Borough of Belfast aforesaid.

Given under my hand this Twenty-third day of March,

One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-five.

JOHN AGNEW,
Sovereign of Belfast.

Belfast News Letter, 21 August 1835

John Agnew as Sovereign and Chief Magistrate places an advertisement in the newspaper giving notice of an election meeting to be held in the County Court-House, Belfast, on Tuesday 25 August 1835 to fill the M.P. vacancy following the death of John McCance Esq.

Belfast News Letter, 8 September 1835

ULSTER HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

The first Autumnal Show of this Society was held on Friday last, in the Assembly Room of the Exchange, and attracted a most numerable and attractive assemblage. The room was decorated with flowers and evergreens ... John Agnew, Esq. (Sovereign), Adam J. Macrory, Esq. Mr. John Campbell, (Botanic Garden,) Mr. Hutchinson, and Edward Walkington, Esq. officiated as Judges; their decisions gave universal satisfaction. ...

Belfast News Letter, 2 October 1835

Tuesday being St. Michael's day, John Agnew, Esq. was again sworn into office, as Sovereign of Belfast, for the ensuing year.

Belfast News Letter, 26 January 1836

EXHIBITION AND LECTURE ON AEROSTATION, ON PERFECTLY NEW PRINCIPLES.

JOHN AGNEW, Esq. SOVEREIGN, IN THE CHAIR.

MR. GREGG'S expected LECTURES and EXHIBITION on AEROSTATION, will take place, D.V. on WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY next, the 27th and 28th inst. at ONE o'clock, in the COMMON-HALL LECTURE-ROOM of the ROYAL BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION, by permission of the Joint Boards of Managers and Visitors.

The simple and ingenious plan will be exhibited and explained, by a clear delineation on canvas, twelve feet by eight, which is now completed; and, at the close of the Lecture, an opportunity will be afforded, of objection and reply, to any intelligent person disposed to accept of Mr. G.'s liberal challenge, on the negative of "the entire safety and practicability of crossing the Channel in two hours, by the safety terraquat, or life-equatic Balloon."

Admission by tickets only, of which a limited number will be issued, to the accommodation of the Lecture-Room.

Gentlemens' tickets, 2s. 6d; Ladies' 2s. Five minutes will be afforded for objection, and the same for reply, on each point; at the expiration of which periods, the sense of the meeting may be demanded by the Chairman, at the suggestion of either the Lecturer or objector. Objectors to be heard according to the priority of their statements. Tickets to be had at the Lecture Room of the Institution.

Belfast News Letter, 12 April 1836

Belfast Fever Hospital and Dispensary

The annual meeting of this benevolent and highly useful charity took place on Thursday last, in the large room of the Police Buildings — John Agnew, Esq. Sovereign, in the chair. ...

Belfast News Letter, 20 May 1836

This edition of the paper contains an extensive list, street by street, of donations given in 1835 by Belfast people to three charities: (a) the House of Industry, (b) the Poor House, and (c) the Fever Hospital.

The final section of the listing is for Country residents. These included:

John Agnew, Esq. Sovereign, Bloomfield, who gave a guinea (£1 1s 0d) each to (b) and (c).
Sir Robert Bateson, bart. Belvoir Park, gave 5 guineas to each of (a) and (c);
John Holmes Houston, Esq. Orangefield, gave (a) 2 guineas, (b) 7 guineas,
and (c) one guinea;
John McCance, Esq. Suffolk, gave (b) 5 guineas and (c) 2 guineas;
John Turnley, Esq. Rockport, gave (b) 6 guineas and (c) one guinea;
John Russell, Esq. Newforge gave one guinea to (c).

Belfast News Letter, 7 June 1836

BLEACH-GREEN ROBBERY. — Early on Sunday morning, William Bailey was detected in attempting to steal linen cloth from the bleach-green of William McCance, Esq. — He was brought before John Agnew, Sovereign of Belfast and by him committed to prison.

Belfast News Letter, 20 December 1836

The newspaper reports that John Agnew, Esq. Sovereign officiated as one of the collectors at the Charity Sermon at Christ Church in aid of the funds of the schools connected with Christ Church. Others were J.W. Maxwell, Esq. Finnebrogue; James E. Tennent, Esq. M.P.; George Dunbar, Esq. M.P.; Rev. Dean Stannus; Alexander McNeile, Esq. Major Crossley, of Glenburne; and Thomas Batt, Esq.

Belfast News Letter, 30 December 1836

Sovereign's Office, Belfast

On Monday last, John Agnew, Esq. Sovereign of Belfast, and W. Moloney, Esq. J.P. sat at the Sovereign's office to hear three cases which involved a breach of the Customs' laws. The first case was – The Customs v. William Smellie ...

Belfast News Letter, 7 February 1837

A notice in the newspaper states that John Agnew, Sovereign of Belfast calls a public meeting of merchants, ship-owners and traders of the town at the Town Hall in the Police Buildings on behalf of the Ballast Corporation. The meeting is “for the purpose of laying before the Meeting the proceedings now pending in Parliament respecting the Port and Harbour, and consulting with them as to the steps to be taken in resisting an attempt to vest the powers of the Ballast Corporation in other hands.”

Belfast News Letter, 30 June 1837

To the Sovereign of Belfast

We, the Undersigned Householders, being informed that a CONTAGIOUS FEVER is known to exist among the Poor Inhabitants of the Town and neighbourhood, request that you will CONVENE a MEETING of the resident Magistrates, Householders, and Medical Practitioners, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of authorising Two or more Magistrates to join in an Application to the Lord Lieutenant, to appoint a Board of Health for this Town and its vicinity, with power to take the necessary measures for preventing the increase of such Fever. — Dated this 28th day of June, 1837.

JAMES McDONNELL, M.D.
THOMAS HINCKS, Curate of Belfast,
F. COULSON
C.M. SKINNER, J.P.
ANDREW MARSHALL, M.D.
ROBERT J. TENNENT, J.P.
JAMES CRAWFORD

In consequence of the above Requisition, I hereby CONVENE a MEETING of the Magistrates, Householders, and Medical Practitioners, to be held at the TOWN-HALL, on FRIDAY next, the 30th inst. at TWELVE o'clock at Noon, for the purpose named in the said Requisition. JOHN AGNEW, Sovereign of Belfast.

Belfast, 28th June, 1837.

Belfast News Letter, 9 July 1837

The newspaper publishes a notice in which John Agnew calls a meeting in response to a request “In consequence of the rapidly increasing spread of FEVER in this Town and Neighbourhood, and with a view to adopt measures to check its progress ... an immediate application to his Excellency the Lord LIEUTENANT, to authorise the re-appointment of the Board of Health, and, also, to adopt such other measures as may appear desirable.” Agnew specifies that the meeting is “for the purpose therein specified; and also to take into consideration the present distressed state of the working classes.”

Belfast News Letter, 28 July 1837

The newspaper publishes John Agnew’s official notification of an election on 31 July at 11am for two MPs.

Belfast News Letter, 19 September 1837

The newspaper carries a report on the Northern Horticultural Society’s Autumn Show, “one of the richest treats to the lover of the farm, the field, or the garden, perhaps ever witnessed in Belfast.”

There’s an impressive list of flowers (including stove plants, green-house plants, tender heaths, pelargoniums, fuchsias, calceolarias, china roses, dahlias, etc.) and fruit (pines, grapes, vines, peaches, nectarines, oranges, lemons, melons, apricots, apples, pears, plums, gooseberries, currants, walnuts and filberts).

In the vegetable class, John Agnew, Esq. Bloomfield – gardener James Hamilton – won First Prize for the best dish of peas.

“In the evening, the Members of the Society and their friends, to the number of about sixty, dined together in the Exchange-Rooms. ... The room was tastefully decorated ... The dinner was a very excellent one – much better indeed than is usual on such occasions – and the wines capital. The dessert, which was furnished from the plenteous board of the morning’s exhibition, was truly superb, consisting of the very choicest specimens of fruit that the province could afford – pines, melons, peaches, nectarines, grapes (muscatel and black Hamburg), currants, plums, pears, &c. &c. ...”

Belfast News Letter, 13 October 1837

Ulster Female Penitentiary

The meeting of the subscribers and other friends of the Ulster Female Penitentiary, was held in the Rev. James Morgan's Meeting-house, Fisherwick-place, on Tuesday evening – John Agnew, Esq. the Sovereign, presided with his usual urbanity. ...

Belfast News Letter, 6 February 1838

Following a request of a Deputation (a) and another from the Inhabitants (b), John Agnew calls two Town Meetings at the Police Buildings, Town-Hall. (a) is “to confer with the Marquis of Donegall and Lord Belfast, with a view to obtain an amicable arrangement for procuring an Act of Parliament for supplying the Town with Water”; (b) is “to take into consideration the propriety of Petitioning Parliament against certain provisions of the Bill recently introduced for providing for the Poor of Ireland.”

NB: The Water Bill featured often in the newspaper. On 5 January there was a request that John Agnew should convene a meeting about it. On 9 January the paper reported that John Agnew had chaired a meeting about the Belfast Water Works and the Carnmoney River.

Then on 9 February there was an extensive report about the London deputation and its arguments there with Lord Belfast about Belfast's water supply. A separate advertisement recorded the resolutions agreed.

See also 6 April and 11 May below.

The Freeman's Journal, 9 March 1838

COUNTY OF DOWN ASSIZES

Crown Court – Tuesday

ORANGE PROCESSIONS — RIOT IN BALLYMACARRETT.

David Patterson, Henry Magee, and William Valentine, were indicted for a riot at Ballymacarrett, on the 12th of July, 1837.

John Agnew, Esq., Sovereign of Belfast, sworn and examined by Sir John Staples, Q.C. –

Is sovereign of Belfast; remembers being at Ballymacarrett on the 12th July last; there were a great number of persons assembled there, who had arches erected across the road, and the entries inhabited by the people of different religious persuasions; advised the crowd to have them removed; he got some of them removed; on former occasions he had got them removed; they were taken down about seven o'clock in the morning; saw them up again about one or

two o'clock; he took Mr. Giveen, with a party of constabulary; he thought it would be more satisfactory to the people to pull them down, than that they would take them down themselves; he removed one; took the party to another; was requested by the chief constable to have a stronger force; there were about two thousand assembled altogether; they were in parties of about twenty, thirty, and fifty; there was a good deal of noise and shouting, but saw no breach of the peace.

[others examined ...]

The case here closed.

Patterson said he had been kept in gaol from July till Christmas, before bail would be taken for his appearance at the assizes; and Valentine and Magee said they had been confined four months before bail was taken for them although they said it had been tendered.

The Chief Baron [Joy] recapitulated the evidence, and in his charge to the jury dwelt upon the length of time the prisoners had been already confined, which must be taken into account if found guilty.

Guilty. — To be imprisoned eight months from the day of their committal.

Belfast News Letter, 6 April 1838

The newspaper reports the resolutions moved at a Town Meeting about the Belfast Water Works Bill. A deputation was appointed to travel to London “to take all necessary measures to promote the success of the Bill already before Parliament, and also with full powers, should they deem it expedient, to re-open the negotiation with Lord Belfast on this subject.”

“The Sovereign having left the Chair, Professor [John] Stevelly [President of Faculty, Royal Belfast Academical Institution and (?) Chairman, Belfast Charitable Society] was called thereto, when the following resolution was unanimously carried: — That the best thanks of this Meeting are justly due and are hereby returned to John Agnew, Esq. the Sovereign of Belfast, for his conduct not only on the present but on former occasions in which the interests of the town have been specially concerned.”

Belfast News Letter, 24 April 1838

The Northern Horticultural Society's Spring Show

In the class for Vegetables, First Prize for the best quart of new potatoes was won by John Agnew, Esq. Bloomfield – Gardener, James Hamilton.

Belfast News Letter, Friday 4 May 1838

I beg to return my best thanks to JOHN AGNEW, Esq. Sovereign, WALTER G. MOLONY, and A. M. SKINNER, Esqrs. Magistrates, Colonel G. G. FALKNER, Captain SMITH, and the other Officers and non-commissioned Officers and Privates, of the 22d regiment, Captain WILSON, Royal Engineers, Captain GIVEEN and the Police, Mr. Armstrong, and the Night Watch, together with my kind neighbours and fellow-townsmen (too numerous to mention individually,) who, by their prompt and energetic exertions, succeeded in checking the progress of the flames on the occasion of the Fire in my extensive premises on Friday night, the 27th ult. thereby preventing a total destruction of the entire concern.

ROBERT BAILEY.

Belfast, 1st May, 1838

Belfast News Letter, Friday 11 May 1838

The newspaper carries a notice from John Agnew confirming a meeting requested by the Belfast Charitable Society “for the Inhabitants of this Town ... that there may be laid before said Meeting, a statement of the position and prospects of the Bill now before the House of Commons, relative to an additional supply of Water for this Town.”

NB: The newspaper carried a notice on 15 May that a meeting about water had been postponed by request.

Belfast News Letter, 26 June 1838 i

PROCLAMATION.

It having been publicly suggested that a General Illumination on the night of the 28th Instant would be a suitable mode of celebrating her Majesty’s Coronation; the Magistrate are unanimously of opinion, after the fullest consideration, that serious inconvenience might result from such a proceeding. They, therefore, hereby prohibit it, and beg leave to recommend that the sum which would be expended on such an occasion by each householder, should be paid over to the public charities.

JOHN AGNEW, Sovereign of Belfast,
and Chairman of the Board of Magistrates.

Belfast News Letter, 26 June 1838 ii

The newspaper carried two notices from John Agnew, one for a meeting at 12 noon that day at the Town-Hall, Police Buildings to receive and consider a report from the committee appointed at a public meeting on 16 April 1838. The report looked at “the practicability of fixing the Site of the proposed NEW BRIDGE at the foot of High street ...”

The second notice was for a meeting “to be held immediately after the conclusion of the Public Meeting relative to the Bridge Site ...”. The meeting would “consider what steps should be taken, in relation to the Earl of Belfast’s recent application to Parliament for a Water Bill.”

Belfast News Letter, 6 November 1838

John Agnew, Sovereign of Belfast calls a meeting following this request, printed in the advertisement:

Sir — We, the undersigned Commissioners of Police, request you will call a Joint Meeting of the Commissioners and Committee of Police of this Town within their Board-Room, Police Place, on Wednesday, the 14th day of November inst. at Twelve o’clock noon, for the purpose of repealing the Police Bye Laws now in force, and making other Bye Laws, Rules, and Orders, for the better regulation of Jaunting Cars, Luggage Porters, Carts. Cars, Drays, the Coal Trade, Butchers, Slaughtereres, Fishmongers, Chimney-Sweepers, Chairmen, &c. &c. within said Town and the precincts thereof. ...

Belfast News Letter, Friday 16 November 1838

A CARD

I beg leave to return my warmest acknowledgments for the exertions used at the Fire which took place at my Mill, on Monday morning last, by JOHN AGNEW, Esq. Sovereign, who, by his early arrival and judicious arrangements in keeping order, contributed most materially to save a large portion of the property, in which he was aided by JOHN MONTGOMERY, Esq. of Beers’-Bridge [sic] Cottage; J. MONTGOMERY, Esq. Elm-Grove; and Dr. McKIBBIN, who stopped their Mills, and turned out their hands to assist. My best thanks are also due to Mr MURRAY, of the Lagan Foundry, who, at great personal risk, succeeded in arresting the progress of the flames in the most valuable part of the premises, until the arrival of the Major, Surgeon, and other Officers of the 22d Regiment, accompanied by a detachment, and their powerful Engine, who eventually, succeeded in confining the fire to one room; as also to F. GIVEEN, Esq. of the Constabulary, who used every exertion in his power to keep order, and protect from plunder the property exposed by the unfortunate occurrence.

W. RADCLIFF.

Beers’-Bridge [sic] Mills, 14th Nov. 1838.

Belfast News Letter, 14 December 1838

The newspaper reports that John Agnew, Esq. Sovereign of Belfast, chaired a meeting (“Belfast Railway Meeting”) which passed resolutions including those approving the appointment of the Irish Railway Commission; agreeing that it was the duty of the Government to provide leading lines of railway, particularly in “continuing and completing, with all particular despatch, the line between Dublin and Belfast”; “endeavouring to promote the formation of lines of Railway to the North and North West of Ireland”; and appointing a committee to oversee the achievement of these resolutions.

Belfast News Letter, 18 December 1838

DOWN AND CONNOR EDUCATION SOCIETY

At a meeting of a committee of the Society held on Thursday many members were present; together with the Bishop and Clergy were the Marquis of Donegall, John Agnew, Esq. Sovereign of Belfast, S. G. Fenton, Esq. Geo. Dunbar, Esq. M.P. — The Secretary, the Rev. G.W. Tyrrell, who had been in London visiting the model schools of the Established Church National Society, read an interesting report of his visits to a number of schools; the master of the parochial school of Belfast is still in London, in order to be placed in charge of the Down and Connor model school in Belfast on his return. The St. Ann’s, school has been selected for that purpose, and will be shortly arranged under the management of the Rev. G. W. Tyrrell. A deputation from the society, the Rev. Thomas Drew, and the secretary, have received instructions from the general committee to visit various districts for the purpose of forming sub-committees.

The Rev. Thomas Drew is appointed to preach on Scriptural Education, at the places of meeting, with the permission of the Incumbents. ...

The Freeman’s Journal, 29 December 1838

HOUSE OF INDUSTRY, BELFAST.

In consequence of the exhausted state of the funds of this institution, a special meeting was held on Wednesday, at the Court-house, Belfast, “in order to devise what measures should be taken for relieving the poor, until the poor law act comes into operation.” The Marquis of Donegal presided.

It was resolved —“That the Committee of the House of Industry be authorised and requested to commence collecting, the subscriptions for the ensuing year on 1st February next, to enable them to dispense the usual relief to the poor.”

After some conversation, John Agnew, Esq., Sovereign, said, that he had received two circulars from the Poor Law Commissioners’ office, stating that on the 4th of January a meeting of magistrates would be requested, to elect seven to act as *ex-officio* guardians; and

that on the 10th another meeting would be called, from which the guardians for the union would be chosen; but that they would not be required to take immediate charge of the poor.

Some further conversation followed, regarding the internal affairs of the institution; thanks were voted to the Marquis of Donegal for his kindness and attention in presiding, and the meeting then separated. — *Northern Whig*.

Belfast News Letter, 9 July 1839

THEATRE, BELFAST.

By Permission of JOHN AGNEW, Esq. Sovereign.

MR. POWER, the celebrated Irish Comedian, for four nights only ...

Belfast News Letter, 7 February 1840

The newspaper prints a request to John Agnew for a meeting about “the present alarming state of fever in the Town” and asks that a Board of Health be appointed.

Belfast News Letter, 27 March 1840

An advertisement re-schedules a requested meeting:

“TO JOHN AGNEW, ESQ. Sovereign of Belfast.

Sir, The Grand Jury of the County of Antrim having limited the expenditure of the Grant made by them to the Dispensary and Patients labouring under Fever we have to request that you will call a TOWN MEETING, at an early day, to take into consideration the best method of procuring Funds for the support of the SURGICAL HOSPITAL of this town. ...”

Belfast News Letter, 16 June 1843 (also in *Freeman’s Journal*, same date)

New Hay, belonging to John Agnew, Esq. Bloomfield, was sold in our market on Wednesday, to Mr. John Gillespie, West street. It was well winnowed, considering the wet season.

Belfast News Letter, 19 December 1843

The newspaper lists John Agnew as one of the trustees of the Merchant Seamen's Fund for "the relief of sick, hurt and worn out mariners, and the widows and children of masters and mariners killed, &c. in the merchant service."
