

## **Constitutional crisis 1782-1784**

1782-1784 were years of constitutional crisis after the collapse of Lord North's ministry following the loss of the American colonies. In 1783 the government was replaced by a coalition of supporters of Charles James Fox (Whig) and Lord North (Tory), headed by the Duke of Portland. This was not to the liking of George III, who detested Fox, but the Fox-North Coalition dominated the House of Commons. In December 1783, in a controversial move, the King engineered the dismissal of the Portland ministry, and appointed William Pitt the Younger as Prime Minister, despite his lack of a Parliamentary majority. Although Fox procured the passage of a motion of no confidence in Pitt in February 1784, Pitt declined to resign, and his supporters encouraged boroughs and other local groups to present petitions and resolutions to Parliament seeking to persuade members to back Pitt. At the end of March 1784, Pitt advised the King to dissolve Parliament. In the resultant general election, Pitt achieved an overall majority of around 120.

Pitt's Tory supporters in Oxfordshire organised a meeting at Oxford Town Hall in March 1784, chaired by the High Sheriff, to subscribe to a loyal address endorsing the King's actions. 11 places in Oxfordshire were designated where members of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders who were not present at the meeting could add their signatures, including at "Mr. Churchill's, Deddington". It is not known whether this was a reference to Samuel Churchill, attorney, or Henry Churchill, grocer.

### **20 March 1784**

**Report on meeting at Oxford Town Hall, chaired by the High Sheriff, which resolved to send an address to the King supporting his stand against "the late daring and unconstitutional attempts to shake the Throne". List of 11 places in Oxfordshire where address open for signature, including "Mr. Churchill's, Deddington".**

#### OXFORD COUNTY MEETING.

AT a very respectable and numerous Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Oxford, held at the Town-Hall in Oxford, on Saturday the 13th of March, 1784,

ARTHUR ANNESLEY, Esq. Sheriff, in the Chair,

*It was resolved, That an Address be presented to his Majesty from the Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of the County of Oxford, thanking his Majesty for the Diffusion of his late Ministers, and for his Firmness and Wisdom in maintaining his just and undoubted Prerogatives*

againft the late daring and unconftitutional Attempts to fhake  
the Throne, and endanger the Liberties of this Kingdom. And  
that the fame be prefented to his Majefty by the Sheriff and  
Members of the County.

.....  
.....

Duplicates of the Addrefs are left at the following Places,  
where the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, in the  
refpective Neighbourhood, who approve of it, and have not  
already figned the fame, are requefted to fign it, viz. at  
[list of places, including Mr. Churchill's, Deddington].

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000073/17840320/002/0001>