Countdown to the Charter

Cyfri'n ôl i'r Siarter

Wrexham's response to the Board of Health report was quick.

There were broadly three groups:

- The reactionaries opponents of any change
- The Improvement Committee they were keen to improve the town, but felt a Local Board of Health would cost too much and be an arm of the central government in London.
- The Sanitary Committee they supported the creation of a Local Board of Health to solve the town's social problems.

Apublic meeting at the Town Hall on 31st May 1850 backed the status quo. The meeting called on the Surveyors of Highways to levy an annual rate to improve sanitation in the town. The Surveyors levied the rate, only to discover they had no power to spend the money on sewerage and water supplies.

The Improvement Committee then took the initiative. In 1851 they presented a bill in parliament to establish the Wrexham Improvement Commission. This bill was opposed by both the Sanitary Committee and the reactionaries. Petitions were sent to Parliament appealing to MPs and peers to vote down the bill. The bill was defeated.



David Higgins, the first Sergeant at Mace. David Higgins, Rhingyll y Byrllysg cyntaf.

In 1856, the Improvement Committee and the Sanitary Committee, by now reconciled, decided to petition the Privy Council for a Charter of Incorporation for Wrexham.

At the Inquiry in the Town Hall in early 1857, Thomas Edgworth, local solicitor and leading reformer, listed the many reasons Wrexham needed its own government: to improve the low moral and sanitary conditions in the town, to improve the roads, and maintain law and order. The local gentry sent their lawyers to ensure that their estates would remain outside the boundaries of the new borough.

In May 1857 news reached the town that Wrexham would have its own borough council with 12 councillors and 4 aldermen. There was huge excitement surrounding the first elections in November 1857. A list was drawn up, and posted outside the Town Hall, of all those entitled to vote. Thomas Edgworth topped the poll and was chosen to be Wrexham's first mayor.

The Councillors appointed John James as Town Clerk, John Jones as Town Crier, and David Higgins as Sergeant at Mace and Inspector of Nuisances & Common Lodging Houses. There was much work for them to do.

TO THE

PEOPLE OF WREXHAM.

FELLOW TOWNSMEN, MR. R. W. Johnson having issued a Circular respecting our conduct in obtaining signatures to a Petition against the Wrexham Improvement Bill, we beg to offer a reply. He says-"MR. MEREDITH JONES assisted by MESSRS. GUMMOW, JOSEPH JONES, and "others, are now engaged in procuring signatures to a Petition against our Local "Bill. They tell you that by its defeat you also rid yourselves of the Board of "Health." In reply we beg to state distinctly that we never said so to any person whatever. Many persons on whom we waited put the question to us, "Which Bill are you for?" We answered "We are for neither." We repeatedly said that we thought the Town could do without either, and we hoped that neither the Bill nor the Act would be put in force in Wrexham; and some of us went so far as to say, that if we should be threatened with the Public Health Act, we should be happy to add our names to a Petition against it. This answer appears to have been misunderstood by some who thought that they were signing a Petition against the Bill and the Act. Yesterday a Deputation from the Improvement Committee, consisting of Mr. James OLLERHEAD and Mr. George Bayley waited on Mr. Meredith Jones, to whom he gave the answer contained in this paper. We can only excuse Mr. R. W. Johnson's statements on the supposition that he was not informed of the reply to that Deputation. We found that many were much confused between all the statements and counterstatements sent to them; and we consider it scarcely fair for the Promoters of the Bill to take advantage of that confusion to persuade the petitioners that they had been misled. Mr. R. W. Johnson accuses us of selfishness, and yet he says, "Being in conjunction with my father I believe the largest Rate-payer in Wrexham I am of course deeply interested in the matter;"-of course this is not selfishness. Not only for the sake of our own Property, but also for the sake of the Town generally, which bears sufficient burdens already, we sincerely hope that the Improvement Bill, in its present form, may not pass. JOSEPH JONES, MEREDITH JONES, MICHAEL GUMMOW, JAMES DAVENPORT, JUN.

Posters and petitions from the campaigns for and against the Improvement Bill. © Wrexham Archives.

Posteri a deisebau o'r ymgyrchoedd o blaid ac yn erbyn y Mesur Gwella. © Gwasanaeth Archifau Wrecsam.

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Wrexham, June 26th, 1851.

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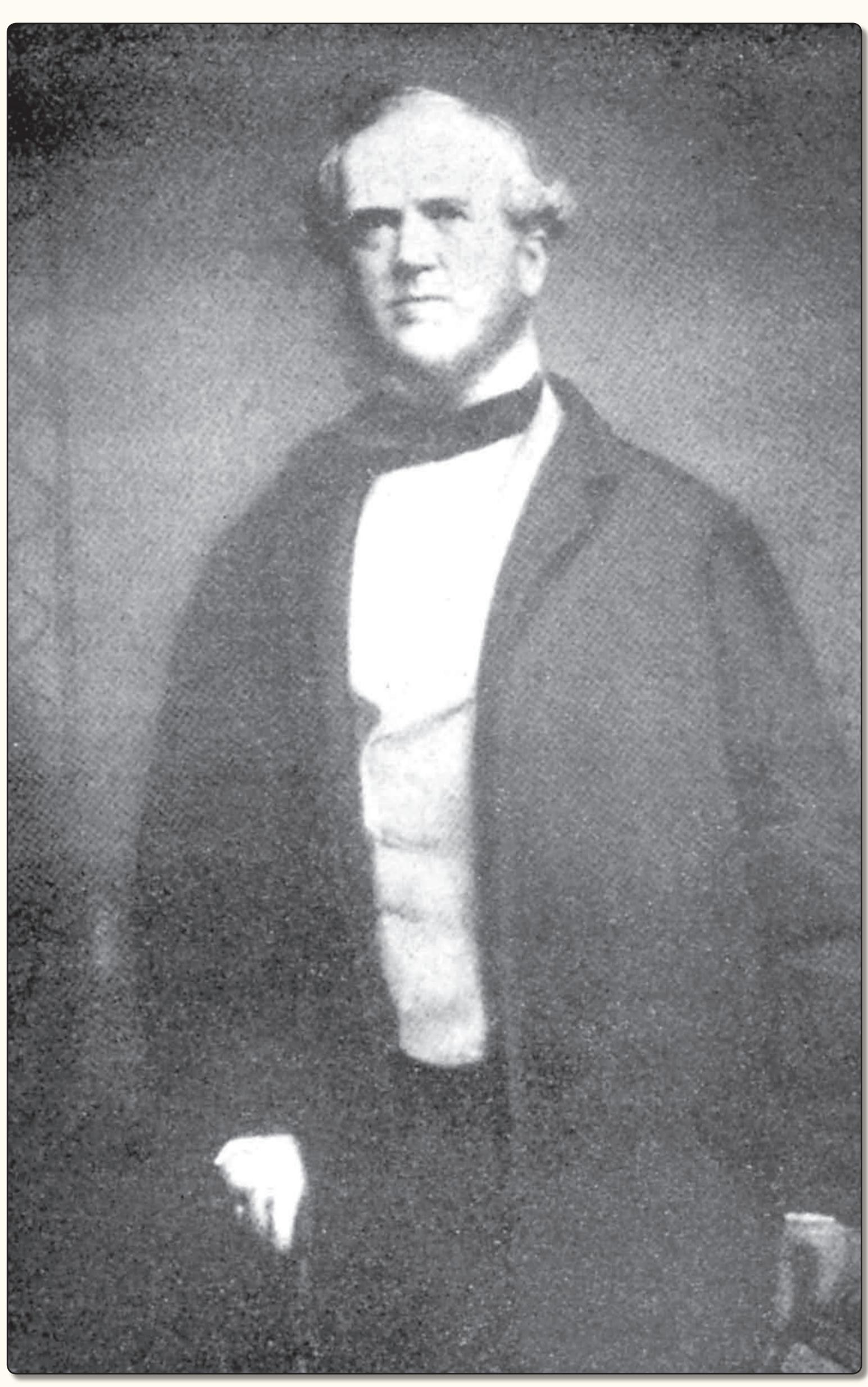
Roedd ymateb Wrecsam i adroddiad y Bwrdd Iechyd yn gyflym.

Roedd tair carfan yn fras:

- Yr adweithwyr gwrthwynebwyr unrhyw newid
- Y Pwyllgor Gwella roeddent yn awyddus i wella'r dref, ond yn teimlo y byddai Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol yn costio gormod ac yn fraich llywodraeth ganolog yn Llundain.
- Y Pwyllgor Glanweithdra roeddent yn cefnogi creu Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol i ddatrys problemau cymdeithasol y dref.

Cefnogodd cyfarfod cyhoeddus yn Neuadd y Dref ar 31ain Mai 1850 y sefyllfa Obresennol. Galwodd y cyfarfod ar y Syrfewyr Priffyrdd i godi treth flynyddol i wella carthffosiaeth yn y dref. Cododd y Syrfewyr dreth, ond i ddarganfod nad oedd ganddynt unrhyw bŵer i wario'r arian ar garthffosiaeth a chyflenwadau dŵr.

Yna cymrodd y Pwyllgor Gwella'r cam cyntaf. Yn 1851 cyflwynwyd mesur yn y Senedd i sefydlu Comisiwn Gwella Wrecsam. Gwrthwynebwyd y mesur hwn gan y Pwyllgor Glanweithdra a'r adweithwyr. Anfonwyd deisebau i'r Senedd yn erfyn ar AS ac arglwyddi i drechu'r mesur. Trechwyd y mesur. Yn y cyfamser gwaethygodd problemau Wrecsam.



Thomas Edgworth, the first mayor of Wrexham.
Thomas Edgworth, maer cyntaf Wrecsam.

Yn 1856, penderfynodd y Pwyllgor Gwella a'r Pwyllgor Glanweithdra, erbyn hyn wedi cymodi, ddeisebu'r Cyfrin Gyngor am Siarter Corffori ar gyfer Wrecsam.

Yn yr ymchwiliad yn Neuadd y Dref yn gynnar yn 1857, rhestrodd Thomas Edgworth, cyfreithiwr lleol a diwygiwr blaenllaw, y lliaws rhesymau pam fod ar Wrecsam angen ei llywodraeth ei hun: i wella'r amgylchiadau moesol a glanweithdra gwael yn y dref, i wella'r ffyrdd, a chynnal cyfraith a threfn. Anfonodd y bonedd lleol eu cyfreithwyr i sicrhau bod eu hystadau'n aros oddi allan i ffiniau'r fwrdeistref newydd.

Ym mis Mai 1857 cyrhaeddodd newyddion y dref y byddai Wrecsam yn cael cyngor bwrdeistref ei hun gyda 12 o gynghorwyr a 4 henadur. Roedd cyffro mawr ynghylch yr etholiadau cyntaf ym mis Tachwedd 1857. Lluniwyd rhestr, a'i gosod tu allan i Neuadd y Dref, o bawb a hawl i bleidleisio. Thomas Edgworth ddaeth uchaf yn yr etholiad a dewiswyd ef i fod yn faer cyntaf Wrecsam.

Penododd y Cynghorwyr John James fel Clerc y Dref, John Jones fel Crïwr Tref, a David Higgins fel Rhingyll y Byrllysg ac Arolygydd Niwsans a Thai Llety Cyffredin. Roedd llawer o waith iddynt ei wneud.

