The Early Parties and Politics in Britain, 1688–1832

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Brian Hill

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Preface

This book offers a short account of British politics in the era before the parties began to adapt themselves to the mass electorate of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Political change occurred more slowly in the less volatile society of that time, but it would be unwise to assume that the century and a half from the revolution of 1688 to the Reform Act of 1832 was uniform in character. Chapters 2–6 deal with the era in five successive periods, each with its own features. These chapters can be read separately if required, though some reference to the Introduction, Chapter 1, would be advisable for readers who are not familiar with the post-Revolution political scene. Suggestions on further reading are given throughout the book, for subjects which the reader may wish to pursue in greater detail, and full titles are given in the Select Bibliography.

I began writing about the early parties over twenty-five years ago and the work expanded into two volumes, both of which are now out of print. The present book offers a shortened treatment of the subject and has the advantage of being able to draw on much recently published research, especially on constituency politics. Where use is made of the newer studies I have given indications in the text. Material used in my two earlier volumes was given full references there, and these are not usually repeated in the present book.

BRIAN HILL

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The book is dedicated to its readers, in the hope that it will help to make an important period of the past better known.