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**Popular Religion, Culture and Politics in the  
Midlands, c. 1638-1646**

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## **Summary**

This thesis is a study of popular allegiance in five midland counties during the English Civil War, 1642-1646. It considers the relationship between allegiance and popular religion and culture. It aims to provide a regional case study of popular reactions to the war, with particular reference to recent theories of allegiance, which have emphasised the role played by religion and culture.

Although the approach is broadly chronological, religion and culture are discussed mainly in the first half of the thesis, and popular allegiance in the second.

Chapter One surveys popular religion and culture in the region from c. 1603 to 1638. Chapter Two characterises popular politics on the eve of the Civil War. Chapter Three deals with popular religion and culture in the late 1630s and during the war. In particular, it considers whether or not distinct cultural regions had evolved by this time, and the nature and extent of popular puritanism and 'Anglicanism'.

Chapter Four provides a narrative of military events in the region during the war, and discusses the impact of the conflict on civilian communities. Chapter Five describes the geographical pattern of allegiance, through an analysis of military recruitment and civilian reactions. Chapter Six considers what factors may have motivated popular responses to the war.

It is argued that there was often a positive response to the war, and that we must seek a multi-causal explanation of this phenomenon. In particular, religio-cultural factors were a major influence. But it is argued that religio-cultural and societal factors only partly explain the complex pattern of allegiance that emerged. Emphasis is placed on the role of local, contingent factors such as the distribution and influence of propaganda, and the impact of plunder, extortion and other products of a war which intruded into most communities in the region.

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## Preface

Seventeenth century spelling and punctuation have been modernized. The year is taken as beginning on 1 January.

All contemporary newsbooks and pamphlets cited are from the Thomason Tracts in the British Library. The place of publication of all printed works cited is London, unless otherwise stated.

Kevin Sharpe, The Personal Rule of Charles I, (1992), was published too late for consideration in this thesis.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to a number people who aided research for this thesis. In particular, I would like to thank Crispin Powell at the Northamptonshire Record Office, the chief archivist at Coventry City Record Office, and the librarian of New College, Oxford, all of whom allowed me access to manuscripts that otherwise might not have been available.

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I could not have written this thesis without the support of family and friends. Several people provided me with accommodation during visits to archives and libraries. I would like to thank Ian Doran, Ruth Kocher, Kathryn Gleadle and David Rogerson. Kevin Passmore provided invaluable help with word processing, and I am grateful to him and his wife Kathy for their hospitality. For his unfailing generosity and friendship, I am particularly indebted to Stuart Hay. My family have been especially supportive. Lorna Buse

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## Abbreviations

Bodl.	Bodleian Library
B.L.	British Library
<u>C.C.A.M.</u>	<u>Calendar of the Committee</u> <u>for the Advance of Money</u>
<u>C.C.C.</u>	<u>Calendar of the Committee</u> <u>for Compounding</u>
<u>C.J.</u>	<u>Journals of the House of Commons</u>
Clarendon, <u>History</u>	Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, <u>The History of the Rebellion and</u> <u>Civil Wars in England</u> , ed. W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols., (Oxford 1888)
Cov.C.R.O.	Coventry City Record Office
<u>C.S.P.D.</u>	<u>Calendar of State Papers,</u> <u>Domestic</u>
<u>E.H.R.</u>	<u>English Historical Review</u>
<u>H.J.</u>	<u>Historical Journal</u>
H.L.R.O.	House of Lords Record Office
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
H.W.R.O.	Hereford and Worcester Record Office
<u>L.J.</u>	<u>Journals of the House of Lords</u>
L.R.O.	Leicestershire Record Office

N.R.O.	Northamptonshire Record Office
P&P	<u>Past and Present</u>
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
R.B.	Richard Baxter, <u>Reliquiae Baxterianae</u> , ed. Matthew Sylvester, (1696)
Townshend, <u>Diary</u>	J.W. Willis Bund (ed.), <u>The Diary of Henry Townshend of Elmley Lovett 1640-1663</u> , 3 volumes, Worcestershire Historical Society, (1915-20)
<u>Trans.Leics.Arch.&amp; Hist.Soc.</u>	<u>Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society</u>
<u>Trans.Worcs.Arch. Soc.</u>	<u>Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society</u>
<u>T.R.H.S.</u>	<u>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</u>
V.C.H.	Victoria County History
<u>W.C.R.</u>	<u>Warwick County Records</u> , volumes ii-vii, ed. S.C. Ratcliffe and H.C. Johnson, (Warwick, 1934-1946)
W.C.R.O.	Warwick County Record Office

## Introduction

This thesis is a study of popular allegiance in five midland counties in the civil war, 1642-1646. Recent work, especially by Morrill and by Underdown, has suggested (albeit in different ways) the importance of religio-cultural influences in the formation of allegiance.<sup>1</sup> This study will also consider popular religion and culture and the nature of their relationship to popular allegiance. The closeness of politics to religion and culture makes a consideration of popular politics necessary too. The intention is not to provide a comprehensive account of popular religion, culture and politics in this period. Rather, the aspects emphasised by Morrill, Underdown and others will be considered, partly in order to provide a case study.

Thus the definition of popular "culture" adopted here is, for purely thematic reasons, narrower than the

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<sup>1</sup> J.S. Morrill, 'The Religious Context of the English Civil War', T.R.H.S., 5th. ser., 34, (1984); David Underdown, Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660, (Oxford, 1987 p.b.). See also William Hunt, The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1983), and, more generally, Ann Hughes, The Causes of the English Civil War, (1991).

wide definitions used by Burke, Reay, et al.<sup>2</sup>. The religio-cultural elements considered here are the nature and popularity of puritanism and Anglicanism, anti-Catholicism and anti-Laudianism; popular attitudes to 'festive' and 'reformed' culture, and the geographical distribution of these cultures.

Throughout, I take "popular" to mean the non-elite, the vast bulk of the population below noble or gentry status, ranging from prosperous 'middling sorts' down to wage labourers, cottagers and paupers. The distinction between middling sorts and those below them in the social scale is an important one. Although contemporaries were wrong in regarding the groups below the middling sort as an undifferentiated mass,<sup>3</sup> it remains the case that prosperous yeomen, husbandmen, craftsmen and urban tradesmen differed markedly from other, poorer non elites. Numerous studies have shown middling sorts to have been not only wealthier but more literate and more directly involved in local and national politics, especially as the century wore on. They formed the vanguard of the puritan movement in the

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, (1988 p.b.), Prologue; Barry Reay (ed.), Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England, (1988 p.b.), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Wrightson, English Society 1580-1680, (1982), pp. 36-7.

localities, and as such were closely involved in the attack on festive popular culture in the first half of the century.<sup>4</sup> If it is possible to discern an evolving middling sort culture before the outbreak of the civil war, some, notably Manning, have also argued that there was a characteristic middling sort response to the war itself: that is, a popular parliamentarianism based upon an incipient class consciousness.<sup>5</sup> Social as well as cultural change must therefore also be considered when attempting to explain popular allegiance.

This implies an essentially long-term approach. Indeed, Underdown's study of the west country spends much time in discussing the period from 1603-1642. Reasons of time and space have precluded attempting such a broad chronological sweep here. Instead, a survey has been made of developments between c. 1603 and 1638, using mainly secondary and some printed

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<sup>4</sup> See for example ibid., ch. 7; Reay (ed.), Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England, p. 1 and passim; Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, chs. 8, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Manning, The English People and the English Revolution, (2nd. edn, 1991). This thesis receives some support from Hunt, Puritan Moment, who identifies popular parliamentarianism in Essex not only with puritanism, but also with middling sorts.

sources. More detailed research on popular religion and culture in the years after 1638 is included. The intention is to provide a reasonably accurate picture of the situation on the eve of the war, this being most relevant to a consideration of the alleged relationship between religio-cultural developments and popular allegiance. Popular allegiance in the war is then examined in detail.

The geographical basis of this study is an area comprising five midland counties, namely Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. These were chosen because of the opportunities they provide for a comparative study, both in terms of geography and political complexion. Landscape and land use ranged from the flat, enclosed arable of the east midlands (Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire) through the proto-industrial parts of northern Warwickshire and north-east Worcestershire to the upland pasture areas of south and west Worcestershire. The war came quickly to these counties. Major garrisons were soon established at Leicester, Northampton, Coventry, Warwick and Worcester, and major battles were fought at Edgehill and Naseby, as well as many local skirmishes. The midlands were probably the most bitterly contested part of the country during the war, and both sides won varying degrees of popular support in the counties

under consideration here. Thus they provide an excellent opportunity to compare popular royalism and parliamentarianism. In addition, Worcestershire in 1645 was the scene of an outbreak of Clubman activity, allowing us to glimpse an elusive phenomenon, popular neutralism.

The civil war in the midlands has received considerable attention from historians. Earlier works tended to concentrate on narratives of military affairs. Herefordshire and the neighbouring counties - including Worcestershire - were the subject of one of the best Victorian county histories of the war, produced by the Webbs.<sup>6</sup> In the early part of this century, the war in Worcestershire was well described in the works of J.W. Willis Bund.<sup>7</sup> More recently, there has been an interest in wartime administration and regional war efforts, with a consequent emphasis on elites. Local government in Worcestershire during the

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<sup>6</sup> J. and T.W. Webb, Memorials of the Civil War between King Charles I and the Parliament of England as it affected Herefordshire and the Adjacent Counties, 2 vols., (1879).

<sup>7</sup> J.W. Willis Bund, The Civil War in Worcestershire 1642-1646 (Birmingham and London, 1905); idem, 'Worcestershire during the Civil War', in Francis. B. Andrews (ed.), Memorials of Old Worcestershire, (1911).

war was part of a thesis by Silcock,<sup>8</sup> and the county formed part of Hutton's excellent study of the royalist war effort.<sup>9</sup> The royalist war effort in Leicestershire similarly formed part of Bennett's valuable work on the north midlands.<sup>10</sup> The gentry's reaction in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire has been described by Everitt.<sup>11</sup> The reactions of the gentry, and county government by the dominant parliamentarians, are also a central theme of Hughes's important study of the war and society in Warwickshire.<sup>12</sup> Some generalist works have attempted to summarise the main military events and their impact upon midland communities. The most notable of these are by Guttery, Sherwood and

<sup>8</sup> R.H. Silcock, 'County Government in Worcestershire 1603-1660', University of London Ph.D., (1974). See also Philip Styles, 'The Royalist Government of Worcestershire During the Civil War 1642-6', Trans.Worcs.Arch.Soc., 3rd. ser., vol 5, (1976).

<sup>9</sup> Ronald Hutton, The Royalist War Effort, (1982).

<sup>10</sup> Martyn Bennett, 'The Royalist War Effort in the North Midlands 1642-1646', University of Loughborough Ph.D., (1986).

<sup>11</sup> A.M. Everitt, The Local Community and the Great Rebellion, (1969).

<sup>12</sup> Ann Hughes, Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1660, (Cambridge, 1987).

Tennant.<sup>13</sup> Despite this widespread coverage of the war, popular culture and allegiance have received scant attention. The fullest treatment of these themes is given by Hughes in her account of Warwickshire, and to a somewhat lesser extent by Hutton on Worcestershire. But neither claims to be comprehensive. Hutton predates Underdown's work on popular allegiance, and Hughes makes only brief reference to it, although she has recently related Underdown's ideas to her work on Warwickshire, in general discussions of the causes of the war.<sup>14</sup> North Warwickshire, and especially Birmingham, is one of the areas cited by Manning. Popular culture and allegiance in the region in general however have remained untouched.

Sources and methodology are problematic for the

<sup>13</sup> D.R. Guttery, The Great Civil War in Midland Parishes, (Birmingham, 1951); Roy Sherwood, Civil Strife in the Midlands, (London and Chichester, 1974); Philip Tenant, Edgehill and Beyond: The People's War in the South Midlands 1642-1645, (Far Thrupp, Stroud, 1992). The latter is especially well documented and argued.

<sup>14</sup> Ann Hughes, 'Local History and the Origins of the Civil War', in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds.), Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-42, (Harlow, 1989); idem, The Causes of the English Civil War, (1991), ch. 3.

study of both popular culture and popular allegiance. The problems stem from two main deficiencies in the available evidence: the paucity of reliable statistical material, and the complete lack of first-hand literary sources. This necessitates a reliance upon accounts written by members of the elite - gentry, clergy, etc. - and therefore filtered through an additional network of preconceptions and biases. Even "official" sources, such as state papers and Quarter Sessions records, present problems. The ordinary people that appear in them are often only those unusual or unlucky enough to fall foul of the authorities, and it is difficult to establish their typicality. Hill has argued convincingly that official documents actually represent the consensus of the ruling class rather than objective representations.<sup>15</sup> Such problems have been fully acknowledged by historians.<sup>16</sup> More recently,

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<sup>15</sup> Christopher Hill, 'Political Discourse in Early Seventeenth Century England', in Colin Jones, Malyn Newitt and Stephen Roberts (eds.), Politics and People in Revolutionary England, (1986); *idem*, 'Literature and the English Revolution', in Christopher Hill, A Nation of Change and Novelty: Radical Politics, Religion and Literature in Seventeenth Century England, (1990).

<sup>16</sup> See for example Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, ch. 3, *passim*. The implications for the study of popular allegiance are discussed in Underdown,

historians have become acutely conscious of culture as process, that is as a phenomenon in a constant state of change. Thus popular culture is seen not as static and independent, but organic and shaped by a variety of factors, including the attempts by elites - eg. clergy, newsbooks - to influence it. The very concept of a "popular" culture which can be isolated in time and in society is therefore problematic in itself.<sup>17</sup>

The problems of biased and impressionistic sources also affect the study of popular allegiance. Most obviously, this includes the huge collection of newsbooks and pamphlets in the Thomason Tracts, whose propagandist role renders many of the claims unreliable. Some are known to be utterly fictitious.<sup>18</sup> Other sources, such as diaries, memoirs, correspondence, contemporary accounts of the war and the records of various wartime committees, all suffer

Revel, preface, and David Underdown, 'The Problem of Popular Allegiance in the English Civil War, T.R.H.S., 5th ser., 31, (1981).

<sup>17</sup> Robert Scribner, 'Is a history of popular culture possible?', History of European Ideas, vol. 10, (1989).

<sup>18</sup> Examples of reporting of fictitious events in the midlands are given in J. and T.W. Webb, Memorials of the Civil War, i, pp. 164-5, and in Ann Hughes, 'Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire 1620-1650', University of Liverpool Ph.D., (1979), p. 243n.

from the familiar problems of subjectivity and factual inaccuracy.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, they are elite sources, with the accompanying biases and preoccupations. In such records, the behaviour of the common people rarely merits a mention, and even when it does it is usually just a few sentences or even just a phrase. Given this, the lack of first hand, non-elite accounts is especially difficult to compensate for.

Recently, Underdown has attempted to underpin his account of popular allegiance in the west country with statistical evidence.<sup>20</sup> This has been taken from lists of maimed soldiers in receipt of pensions, and lists of royalist suspects during the rule of the Major-Generals. Using these, and population estimates, Underdown is able to compare the density of pensioners in various geographical/cultural regions. There are however a number of problems in using the evidence in this way, and Underdown's approach has attracted criticism.<sup>21</sup> Firstly, pension records only represent

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, the political and personal biases in Clarendon's History highlighted by Hutton: Ronald Hutton, 'Clarendon's History of the Rebellion', E.H.R., 97, (1982).

<sup>20</sup> Underdown, Revel, ch. 7.

<sup>21</sup> See especially John Morrill, 'The Ecology of Allegiance in the English Revolution', Journal of British Studies, 26, (1987).

military recruitment. They say nothing about civilian attitudes, and indeed very little about the attitudes of soldiers, who may well have been impressed or joined up for non-ideological reasons. Suspect lists from the mid 1650s record only male heads of households, and thus exclude disaffected females and male servants. In addition, they may well represent people disaffected to the Commonwealth rather than civil war royalists. It has been suggested that pension records are a better source for the history of poor relief than popular allegiance, as soldiers might change their place of residence after the war.<sup>22</sup>

In replying to these criticisms, Underdown has made a convincing case for circumspect use of this material, if not in quite the way he argues.<sup>23</sup> He points out that the geographical pattern of recruitment provided by pension records is reliable, as the pensions were to be paid in the pensioners' pre-war place of residence. In addition, pension and suspect lists often corroborate each other. The pension lists therefore probably do reflect wartime royalism, at least for the counties studied by Underdown. But this material provides at best a partial picture of military recruitment. It is too exclusive to provide statistical evidence of

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> David Underdown, 'A Reply to John Morrill', Journal of British Studies, 26, (1987).

popular allegiance. Popular allegiance is comprised not only of military service, but of a range of civilian attitudes to the protagonists and to the war itself. Any complete account of it is inevitably impressionistic, even though it may include corroborative statistical material. No single source is without its drawbacks with regard to its use for a study of popular culture or allegiance. In addition, no single source is plentiful for popular allegiance. Consequently, the evidence is scattered in relatively small fragments among a wide variety of sources.

Thus a reasonably eclectic approach has been adopted here. Where possible, the statistical sources used by Underdown have been utilised, bearing in mind the criticisms given above. A further statistical source, used for example by Hughes in her discussion of allegiance in Warwickshire,<sup>24</sup> are muster rolls, and these too have been used here. A variety of other non-statistical sources have also been utilised, including the usual parliamentary records, diaries and memoirs, Quarter Session and borough records, churchwardens' and constables' accounts, and contemporary or near contemporary accounts of the war. There is no methodological technique for overcoming the problems these sources present. The only way to treat them, as

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<sup>24</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 150, 197, 199-202.

Underdown says,<sup>25</sup> is with a critical common-sense, a willingness to read between the lines, and an awareness of bias. Where it has been possible and worthwhile to corroborate one source with another, hostile source, this has been done. Use of the Thomason Tracts has proved a mixed blessing in the study of popular allegiance. The wealth of material on the war contained within them makes them an essential source, but their high propaganda content makes heavy reliance upon them unsound.<sup>26</sup> I have tried to follow the general rule observed by Hutton<sup>27</sup> of accepting only those claims

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<sup>25</sup> Underdown, Revel, p. ix.

<sup>26</sup> See the criticisms made by Morrill of Manning's use of this material in J.S. Morrill, 'Provincial Squires and Middling Sorts in the Great Rebellion', H.J., xx, (1977); and the similar criticisms made of Malcolm's use of it, in M.D.G. Wanklyn and Brigadier P. Young, 'A King in Search of Soldiers: Charles I in 1642. A Rejoinder.', H.J., xxiv, (1981). Manning, in the introduction to the recent second edition of his English People, has recently defended his use of this source material: Manning, English People, p. 10. This defence however consists of an assertion that his method must be judged by the extent to which his work has been supported by subsequent authorities, and fails to address Morrill's criticisms of his sources.

<sup>27</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 252.

which can be corroborated by a hostile source, or those which are of no propagandistic value. Where this has not been possible, but the material is nevertheless relevant, I have stressed it is a claim, and attempted to contextualize. Additionally, I have tried to treat this material as not merely a reflection of the war, but as a formative influence on popular allegiance: this was of course one of its main purposes.

## Chapter One

### **Popular Religion, Culture and Politics, c. 1603-38: A Survey**

The main aim of this chapter is to survey certain developments in popular politics, religion and culture in these years, and so provide a background to the themes and arguments of later chapters. As such, it is based essentially upon secondary works, though some primary material is included. A second aim is to introduce debates and theories germane to this thesis that concern the pre-war period.

Politics is treated separately from religion and culture both here and in later chapters. This is not to imply that they were clearly separated. The close relationship of the two, especially in the phenomenon of popular anti-Catholicism, has recently been emphasised, along with a warning that to distinguish rigidly between them is arbitrary and misleading.<sup>1</sup> Their separate treatment here is essentially for clarity of discussion.

#### **Popular Religion and Culture**

Developments in this field are seen by many as crucial

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes, Causes, pp. 96-8, 105-16.

to the pattern of popular allegiance, or allegiance per se, that emerged during the civil war. Thus Morrill has argued that religious divisions were the most important ideological divide between the nascent warring parties in 1642, and has suggested - although not as yet demonstrated - that popular Anglicanism may have informed popular royalism. The notion of popular puritanism is central to the theories of Manning and of Hunt; for Manning, as an ideological component in an incipient class consciousness of the middling sort, for Hunt, as a cultural identity for middling sort parliamentarians. Underdown has posited a still closer relationship, arguing that regional variations in popular allegiance can be explained by reference to regional variations in popular culture.<sup>2</sup> The theories themselves are discussed in detail in a later chapter. But they all to some extent refer to religio-cultural developments in the 1603-1638 period, which may be surveyed here. The main issues are the nature and distribution of popular puritanism, the evolution of puritan communities and consequent cultural conflict with traditional popular culture, continuing popular

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<sup>2</sup> Morrill, 'Religious Context'; idem, 'The Church in England, 1642-9', in J.S. Morrill (ed.), Reactions to the English Civil War, (1982); idem, 'Ecology of Allegiance'; Manning, English People; Hunt, Puritan Moment; Underdown, Revel.

support for this culture and Anglican forms of worship, and the geographical distribution of cultural conflict. In recent years, there has been some debate about the alleged theological rift between the puritans and the Church of England, and the extent to which the Laudian/Arminian doctrines of the 1630s were discontinuities with a Calvinist tradition that stretched back into the 1560s.<sup>3</sup> This debate however is largely one about theological and doctrinal rather than cultural conflict, and relates to the disputes of divines rather than grassroots issues.

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<sup>3</sup> For the Calvinist consensus, disrupted by Laudianism, see Nicholas Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and counter-revolution', in Conrad Russell (ed.), The Origins of the English Civil War, (1973), and idem, Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640, (Oxford, 1987). For the opposing view, that there was in fact a spectrum of Protestant opinion, and that Laudianism was hardly novel, see P. White, 'The rise of Arminianism reconsidered', P&P 101, (1983), Kevin Sharpe, 'Archbishop Laud', History Today 33, (1987), and G.W. Bernard, 'The Church of England c. 1529-c. 1642', History, 75, (1990). Recent summaries are in Hughes, Causes, pp. 96-98, and Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, Princes, Pastors and People: The Church and Religion in England 1529-1689, (1991), pp. 26-28.

### Puritanism

In order to discuss the nature and extent of puritanism, the meaning of the term must first be established. Here, the definition used by Underdown has been used, where 'puritanism' is used "loosely to mean the set of beliefs held by people who wished to emphasize more strongly the Calvinist heritage of the Church of England; to elevate preaching and scripture above sacraments and rituals, the notions of the calling, the elect, the 'saint', the distinctive virtue of the divinely predestined minority, above the equal worth of all sinful Christians."<sup>4</sup> The emphasis on preaching over ritual, and a particular emphasis on anti-papery, meant that puritans were especially hostile to the Laudian reforms. In this and other chapters therefore, strong popular resistance to Laudianism is taken to represent a broadly puritan outlook.

Puritanism attained a significant level of popular support in many parts of the region well before the late 1630s. It was especially strong in the north and the east - i.e. in north Warwickshire and in Northamptonshire - and to a lesser degree in Leicestershire and Rutland. It was least popular in the south and west - in south Warwickshire and in

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<sup>4</sup> Underdown, Revel, p. 41.

Worcestershire. Northamptonshire has been described as the most puritanical county in England by the early seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> One third of the parishes in the diocese of Peterborough (comprising Northamptonshire and Rutland) had had direct experience of puritan evangelism by 1610, and popular support for it in the diocese was to prove intense and sometimes difficult for elites to control.<sup>6</sup> There were several lectureships established in Northamptonshire, though not all were puritan in character. Combination lectures existed at Brackley, Daventry, Kettering, Oundle and Peterborough itself, as well as at Oakham in Rutland.<sup>7</sup> Fielding discovered another such lecture at Northampton, where All Saints church was an especially important preaching centre.<sup>8</sup> There were other lectureships at Towcester, Wellingborough, Warmington and Rothwell, plus Uppingham in Rutland.<sup>9</sup> The Peterborough and Brackley lectureships

<sup>5</sup> V.C.H. Northamptonshire, ii, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> W.J. Sheils, The Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough, 1558-1610, Northamptonshire Records Society, xxx, (Northampton, 1979), pp. 140, 145.

<sup>7</sup> Patrick Collinson, Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism, (1983), pp. 467, 483-4.

<sup>8</sup> John Fielding, 'Conformists, Puritans and the Church Courts: The Diocese of Peterborough, 1603-1642', University of Birmingham Ph.D., (1989), pp. 146, 147.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., map 2, following p. 147.

were both non-puritan in character, although others, such as Oakham, Daventry, Kettering and especially Northampton were certainly puritan.<sup>10</sup> Thus Northamptonshire was especially strong in puritan preaching, with lectureships well distributed throughout the county. 'Gadding' to sermons - a typically puritan activity - was similarly widely distributed in the county during this period, whilst many Rutland people gadded to sermons at Burley, Seaton, Stretton and Cottesmore.<sup>11</sup>

In neighbouring Leicestershire, unauthorized fasts and sermons were popular in the 1620s, and meetings for the discussion of scripture, sometimes conducted by laymen, were said to have taken place at Broughton Astley, Easton, Burrough-in-the-Hill, Croft, Thornton, Wigston and Leicester. People went gadding to sermons at Burrough-in-the-Hill, Buckminster and Shepshed. There were said to be many puritans at Ashby de la Zouch in the 1630s.<sup>12</sup> Leicester provided strong support for preaching. It had a week-day lecture in the 1630s, and the parishioners of St. Martin's gave voluntary contributions to sustain a preacher.<sup>13</sup> This may have

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 149-157.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., map 2, following p. 147.

<sup>12</sup> V.C.H. Leicestershire, i, p. 376.

<sup>13</sup> C.H. Billson, Leicester Memoirs, (Leicester, 1924), p. 36; Helen Stocks (ed.), Records of the Borough of

been John Angel, the town preacher, who was suspended in 1634 for preaching without a licence, but whose popularity helped ensure his later restoration to the post.<sup>14</sup>

Further west, puritan lectures and preaching were popular in Warwickshire and parts of Worcestershire, notably the north-east. Warwick castle served as a home to ministers ousted by the Laudians, and the town had three sermons every Sunday.<sup>15</sup> There were puritan lectures at Nuneaton and Kings Norton,<sup>16</sup> and at Worcester, Dudley, Kidderminster and Evesham.<sup>17</sup> The two main Warwickshire towns, Coventry and Birmingham, both had strong puritan communities. James I said that he would make the puritans in Coventry receive the communion on their knees in 1607, and Prynne was enthusiastically received there in 1635.<sup>18</sup> When the godly Samuel Clarke began giving lectures in the city, they proved so popular that Dr. Buggs, vicar of the two

Leicester, 1603-88, (1923), pp. 295-6.

<sup>14</sup> Billson, Leicester Memoirs, pp. 54-5; Christopher Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England, (1986 edn.), p. 100.

<sup>15</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 72, 73.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 9; V.C.H. Warwickshire, vii, p. 411.

<sup>17</sup> V.C.H. Worcestershire, ii, p. 56ff.

<sup>18</sup> V.C.H. Warwickshire, ii, p. 40; Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 80, 82.

Coventry parishes, complained that Clarke was drawing off large numbers of his congregation.<sup>19</sup> In the 1630s, lectures in Birmingham attracted people from the surrounding countryside, and Dugdale described its citizens in 1642 as 'sectaries and schismatics'.<sup>20</sup> Towns like Rugby and Sutton Coldfield in north Warwickshire had well-known puritan preachers.<sup>21</sup> Clarke wrote that there were also some 'godly' ministers in south Warwickshire parishes in the 1630s. But puritanism had less of a hold here. The inhabitants of Clarke's own living of Alcester for example were said to be 'much given to swearing, drunkenness and profaning the Sabbath'.<sup>22</sup>

In Worcestershire, puritanism seems to have had a relatively weaker footing, apparently restricted to the towns.<sup>23</sup> Worcester itself however had a well

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Clarke, The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in this Later Age, (1683), p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> William Hamper (ed.), The Life, Diary and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale, (1827), p. 17.

In fact the first certain account of a separatist congregation in Birmingham is of a Quaker meeting in 1655-see V.C.H. Warwickshire, ii, p. 411.

<sup>21</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Clarke, Lives, pp. 6-7.

<sup>23</sup> Silcock, 'County Government in Worcestershire', p. 215.

established puritan community. The inhabitants were first taxed to fund a city lecturer in 1591, and in 1636 John Halciter, the puritan rector of St. Nicholas's church, was appointed to the post.<sup>24</sup> The following year a dispute arose between some of the citizens and the dean and chapter of the cathedral when seats used for listening to lectures in the west end of the nave were removed. It dragged on into 1639, by which time the citizens concerned were openly displaying their opposition to the dean's promotion of church music. Such sentiment was by no means unopposed, but it had been making headway among the citizens since the early years of the century.<sup>25</sup> Puritan lecturers and preachers were therefore well supported over much of the region, but especially towards the north and east.

Preference for puritan religious forms is also evident in the opposition to many of the Laudian

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<sup>24</sup> Rev. W.R. Buchan-Dunlop, 'Seventeenth Century Puritans in Worcester', Trans.Worcs.Arch.Soc., 23, (1946), pp. 28, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Alan D. Dyer, The City of Worcester in the Sixteenth Century, (1973), pp. 223, 237-9. For the dispute over the seats in the cathedral, see Philip Styles, 'Worcester Cathedral and the Dean and Chapter in the Seventeenth Century', xerox copy of an unpublished paper read to the Worcestershire Historical Society in 1967, H.W.R.O., B.A. 8081/705:877.

innovations of the 1630s. This opposition became especially intense in the late 1630s, and is described in Chapter Three. But it was also manifest in earlier years. In describing such opposition, the importance of elite action must be acknowledged. Puritanism was far from being an exclusively popular phenomenon, and there were a number of prominent puritan clergy, gentry and nobles in the region. This is especially so of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, where Hughes and Fielding respectively have demonstrated closely integrated networks of such people.<sup>26</sup> Elites sometimes played a leading role in opposition to Laudianism at the parochial level. Thus in Northamptonshire the prominent Laudian, Robert Sibthorpe, complained of the difficulty of implementing the reforms, due to the obstruction he met from puritan lords and gentry.<sup>27</sup> Individual clergy sometimes defied Laudian decrees, perhaps irrespective of the wishes of their parishioners. The vicar of Brigstock in Northamptonshire for example refused to bow at the name

<sup>26</sup> Ann Hughes, 'Thomas Dugard and His Circle in the 1630s - a 'Parliamentary-Puritan' Connexion?', H.J., xxix, (1986); John Fielding, 'Opposition to the Personal Rule of Charles I: The Diary of Robert Woodford, 1637-1641', H.J., xxxi, (1988).

<sup>27</sup> Esther S. Cope, Politics Without Parliaments, 1629-1640, (1987), p. 75.

of Jesus, or require his congregation to do so. He publicly criticised the 'Book of Sports', and on at least one occasion he 'locked the door upon his congregation and kept them in church to hear him preach till dark', thus guaranteeing himself a literally captive audience.<sup>28</sup> Other ministers, such as those at Oundle and Scaldwell, followed the one at Brigstock in refusing to bow at the name of Jesus, or to read out the Book of Sports.<sup>29</sup> But it should not be assumed that Laudian reform failed completely. Although Fielding has shown the tremendous opposition to Laudianism in Northamptonshire, and the disruption to parish life this caused,<sup>30</sup> churchwardens' accounts from the county suggest that, in the mid-1630s at least, many parishes were obeying the orders to rail in communion tables.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> C.S.P.D. 1634-5, pp. 414-5; also in R.M. Serjeantson, A History of the Church of All Saints, Northampton, (Northampton, 1901), p. 124.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 125; Cope, Politics without Parliaments, p. 59.

<sup>30</sup> Fielding, 'Conformists', ch. 3.

<sup>31</sup> N.R.O. 223P/107, (Northampton St. Giles churchwardens' accounts), 1634/5 accounts (no pagination); N.R.O. 241P/42, (Northampton St. Sepulchre churchwardens' accounts), 1635/6 accounts (no pagination); N.R.O. 55P/58, (Burton Latimer churchwardens' accounts), pp. 14, 15; N.R.O.

This is so even in some churches in puritan Northampton, as well as the less austere Burton Latimer in the east, which in 1636 railed in the chancel, gilded the table, and painted the altar rails 'oily green'.<sup>32</sup>

Of course this does not mean the changes were popular. Indeed, there is plenty of evidence to the contrary, and that lay people had their own religious values, independent of any leads provided by elites. Parishioners might openly defy the Laudian injunctions. Thus in 1634 a Leicestershire man, Thomas Coltman of Newton, was presented before the Court of Instance because he refused to kneel to receive the communion. Richard Plummer of Evington refused to stand during divine service, because 'he would not observe every

199P/77/22, (Lowick churchwardens' accounts), 1634 accounts, (no pagination); N.R.O. 169P/22, (Hinton churchwardens' accounts), 1635 accounts, (no pagination); N.R.O. 175P/28, (Great Houghton churchwardens' accounts), 1637 and 1638 accounts, (no pagination). The latter record not altar rails, but a mat to kneel on at communion, and the purchase of 'carpet and cloth' for the new communion table.

<sup>32</sup> See the references for Northampton St. Giles, Northampton St. Sepulchre and Burton Latimer in n. 31 above.

order brought in by every fantastical fellow'.<sup>33</sup> In 1635, there was widespread refusal to bow at the name of Jesus during services in Northampton.<sup>34</sup> The parishioners of Marston St. Lawrence, again in Northamptonshire, colluded with the churchwardens in misleading the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that the communion table was railed in and set in the chancel. The Commissioners found that the rail was in fact scarcely bigger than the table, and the result was 'like a sheep pen or cage'. Parishioners were continuing to receive communion in their seats, and the parson, Charles Chauncey, neglected to wear the surplice and hood, and to bow at the name of Jesus. Preachers on Sunday afternoons and monthly on Fridays encouraged people to come 'gadding' from other parishes.<sup>35</sup> Whilst he was vicar in Brackley, Sibthorpe might have expected to inculcate respect for the Laudian emphasis on ritual rather than preaching. But

<sup>33</sup> A. Tindal Hart, The County Clergy in Elizabethan and Stuart Times, 1558-1660, (1958), pp. 100-1.

<sup>34</sup> R.M. Serjeantson, A History of the Church of St. Giles, Northampton, (Northampton, 1911), pp. 48-9. Laud's vicar-general, Nathaniel Brent, blamed the widespread refusal to bow at the name of Jesus in Northampton churches on the influences of the puritan minister of All Saints, Thomas Ball: ibid.

<sup>35</sup> C.S.P.D. 1635, pp. 489-90.

not until he had held the post for six years did he find out that a number of people there were neglecting to attend the parish church of St. James when he was not present in person. Some ~~were~~ going to a chapel in the mornings, before he preached in the afternoon.<sup>36</sup> Such behaviour indicates a genuinely autonomous popular religious culture.

#### Catholicism and Anglicanism

If puritanism achieved popular support in many parts of the region, it failed in others. Recent work has argued that first Protestantism itself, then puritanism, were slow to establish themselves in many parts of the country during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Scarisbrick has posited a widespread popular adherence to Catholicism well into the seventeenth century.<sup>37</sup> Others have argued that Protestantism established itself only in quasi-Catholic form. Popular attachment to the rituals and sacraments of the Anglican church, and the various religious holidays and festivities that punctuated the year, remained strong, according to this argument.<sup>38</sup> Collinson has called this

<sup>36</sup> Serjeantson, St. Giles, pp. 99-100.

<sup>37</sup> J.J. Scarisbrick, The English Reformation and the English People, (Oxford, 1985 p.b.), esp. pp. 156-9.

<sup>38</sup> Patrick Collinson, The Religion of Protestants: the

"prayer book Anglicanism",<sup>39</sup> and it relates to the "popular Anglicanism"<sup>40</sup> which Morrill and others have suggested informed opposition to the puritan and parliamentary cause in the 1640s. Certainly, Catholicism retained a significant degree of support, notably in the west of the region, well into this period. Warwickshire was one of the main centres of recusancy in the country. There were sizeable Catholic communities in the west of the county, from Henley-in-Arden to the Worcestershire border.<sup>41</sup> In Worcestershire, recusancy remained high in the 1620s, though as the century progressed it apparently became an increasingly rural phenomenon.<sup>42</sup> To the east,

Church in English Society 1559-1625, (Oxford, 1982 p.b.), ch. 5; Christopher Haigh, 'The Church of England, the Catholics and the People', in idem (ed.), The Reign of Elizabeth I, (1984). For a similar argument for a slightly later period, see J.S. Morrill, 'The Church in England, 1642-9', in idem (ed.), Reactions to the English Civil War, (1982).

<sup>39</sup> Collinson, Religion of Protestants, pp. 190-1.

<sup>40</sup> Morrill, 'Church in England', and 'Ecology of Allegiance'; Chris Durston, 'Lords of Misrule: The Puritan War on Christmas 1642-60', History Today, 35, (1985); Underdown, Revel, ch. 9.

<sup>41</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 63.

<sup>42</sup> V.C.H. Worcestershire, ii, p. 60; Dyer, City of

recusancy was only a slight problem to the authorities in the diocese of Peterborough, where it was confined to small areas, mainly in Rutland and in rural deaneries of eastern Northamptonshire.<sup>43</sup> Socially, most recent work has suggested that Catholicism was dependent upon the support provided by elites, and that Catholic communities tended to be centred on gentry houses. It has therefore been characterised as a "seignurial religion".<sup>44</sup> A recent analysis of plebeian Catholicism in the 1640s and 1650s supported this, finding little part being played by independent middling sorts, except in some south-eastern

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Worcester, p. 238.

<sup>43</sup> M.D.W. Jones, 'The Ecclesiastical Courts before and after the Civil War: The Office Jurisdiction in the Dioceses of Oxford and Peterborough, 1630-1675', University of Oxford B.Litt., (1977), pp. 23, 149; Fielding, 'Conformists', p. 172.

<sup>44</sup> John Bossy, The English Catholic Community, (1975), p. 175; David F. Mosler, 'Warwickshire Catholics in the Civil War', Recusant History, 15, (1979-81); B.G. Blackwood, Plebeian Catholics in the 1640s and 1650s, Recusant History, 18, (1986-7); Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 62-3; Barry Reay, 'Popular Religion', in idem (ed.), Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England, p. 109.

counties.<sup>45</sup>

It is difficult to identify an authentic popular Anglicanism in this period. Puritans and recusants frequently found themselves in trouble with the ecclesiastical or county courts, but not people who observed the orthodox religion. Not until the 1640s, when Anglicanism itself came under attack, did popular support for it become obvious. For the earlier period, it is sometimes suggested in the unpopularity of some godly ministers. In the south Northamptonshire parishes of Preston Capes and Woodford Halse for example, there were disputes in 1604 when ministers who would only administer communion to parishioners who would stand came into conflict with those who insisted on kneeling.<sup>46</sup> Fielding found that religious conservatism lay behind the obstruction encountered by godly ministers in Rutland: at Oakham and at Teigh for example they were heckled by the congregation for preaching too long. Elsewhere in the diocese however, he believes "godly" ministers were opposed not out positive Anglicanism, but out of differences among the godly over the issue of conformity.<sup>47</sup> Thus even criticism of a puritan minister did not necessarily indicate the presence of 'parish Anglicans'.

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<sup>45</sup> Blackwood, 'Plebeian Catholics', passim.

<sup>46</sup> Cited in Haigh, 'The Church of England', pp. 215-7.

<sup>47</sup> Fielding, 'Conformists', p. 163 and ch. 6, passim.

The persistence of Catholicism in this period supports the impression that puritanism made most advances in Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and parts of Leicestershire. It was least successful where older religious forms remained popular, in Worcestershire (excepting parts of the north east), parts of south Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, and in the far east of the region, especially Rutland.

#### Culture and Society

Puritanism had wider connotations than the strictly religious. Recent work has stressed its close association with social change: that is, the association of puritanism with a middling sort who, armed with predestinarian theology and in the face of economic change bringing hardship to many and prosperity to a few, increasingly regarded themselves as an elite.<sup>48</sup> Concurrent with this was an increased concern for discipline in the name of social order and of piety. Consequently, hostility to festive popular culture - maypoles, church ales, wakes, dancing,

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<sup>48</sup> See especially Hill, Society and Puritanism, ch. iv; Keith Wrightson and David Levine, Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700, (New York and London, 1979), pp. 155-72; Wrightson, English Society, pp. 166-70, 220.

alehouses, etc. - developed among this group. This cleaving of popular culture into two, that of the respectable and the vulgar, is an essential precondition of the middling sort class consciousness posited by Manning, and is also drawn on by Underdown and Hunt. Underdown in particular develops the association between the puritan culture and the communities with scattered settlements, typical of upland and wood-pasture areas, that tended to produce more individualistic cultures. Unwooded lowland areas, with mixed and arable farming - the 'fielden' - had nucleated settlements and tighter manorial control, and tended to produce more deferential, communal societies.<sup>49</sup> Underdown argues that the greater survival of festive culture in the latter meant that by 1642 culturally distinct regions had evolved.

The validity of this for the present region will be tested fully in Chapter Three. Here however, the geography and land-use patterns used by Underdown to typify cultural regions will be given for the counties under consideration, and a preliminary assessment made of the survival - or otherwise - of festive culture

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<sup>49</sup> The different settlement and land-use patterns are typified in Joan Thirsk, 'The Farming Regions of England', in idem (ed.), The Agrarian History of England and Wales, vol. iv, 1500-1640, (Cambridge, 1967), esp. pp. 1-15.

within them.<sup>50</sup>

In the east midlands, much of the land was fielden, with the exception of the forest areas of Rockingham, Whittlewood and Salcey forests in Northamptonshire, and Leicester and Charnwood forests in Leicestershire. There were small areas of fen in northern Northamptonshire. Richard Symonds's description of Leicestershire in 1645 evokes a typically fielden region; 'The county of Leicester is generally champaine pastures and arable, little or no waste, and small wood; some quick hedges, and the parishes stand less than one mile distant'.<sup>51</sup> The forest areas of Northamptonshire were located in the south-east and north-east. Rockingham was the most extensive, laying between the Nene and the Welland, as far west as East Carlton and as far east as Nassington. It stretched to

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<sup>50</sup> Much of the following information on settlement patterns and land use is drawn from ibid., pp. 89-99, 'The East Midlands', and pp. 99-109, 'The West Midlands'. Also, for the Northamptonshire forests, P.A.J. Pettit, The Royal Forests of Northamptonshire, 1558-1714, Northamptonshire Record Society, xxiii, (Northampton, 1968). For Leicester Forest, L. Fox and P. Russell, Leicester Forest, (Leicester, 1948).

<sup>51</sup> C.E. Long (ed.), 'The Diary of the Marches of the Royal Army During the Great Civil War Kept By Richard Symonds', Camden Society, (1859), p. 186.

Duddington in the north-east, and down to the Geddington area. The Whittlewood and Salcey forests lay just south and just north-east of Towcester respectively, Whittlewood extending towards Brackley, Salcey towards Piddington. In Leicestershire, they lay immediately west of Leicester itself, towards Peckleton, and in the Coalville - Loughborough area of the north-west (Leicester and Charnwood forests respectively). Rockingham forest was not typical in that many villages within it were nucleated. Villages such as Apethorpe, East Carlton, Great and Little Oakley, Rockingham and Southwick had resident squires.<sup>52</sup> Thus the largest forest in Northamptonshire resembled in some respects a fielden region, although Whittlewood and Salcey forests may have been closer to the norm.<sup>53</sup>

The forest of north Warwickshire, known as the Arden, comprised much of the land north of the Avon valley, except in the west, where the fielden extended as far north as the river Arrow. The eastern Avon valley, rising to the Rugby area in the north, was also much enclosed, although settlements here were more typical of forest communities.<sup>54</sup> However, the Arden

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<sup>52</sup> Pettit, Royal Forests of Northamptonshire, pp. 142, 149.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 15, 149.

<sup>54</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 1-6.

also had a number of common-field hamlets that had developed independent manorial structures. There was also a gradual shift there from pasture to more mixed farming from the start of the century.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the Arden was a typical forest in that gentry control in it was weak, settlements tended to be scattered, the area attracted a high number of vagrants and was home to a high proportion of poor.<sup>56</sup> Worcestershire had two small forests; Wyre, on the Shropshire border near Bewdley, and Feckenham in the east, near the border with south Warwickshire. There were also wooded areas around the north-east of the county, on the borders with Staffordshire and Warwickshire. Baxter described the Dudley area, 'where the woods and the commons are planted with nailers, scythe smiths, and other iron labourers, like a continual village'.<sup>57</sup> This early industrial area stretched to include Birmingham and Stourbridge, the site of the Foley family ironworks. Nail and scythe-making extended across north east Worcestershire from Dudley to Bromsgrove.<sup>58</sup> The fielden

<sup>55</sup> V.H.T. Skipp, 'Economic and Social Change in the Forest of Arden, 1530-1649', in Joan Thirsk (ed.), Land, Church and People: Essays presented to Professor H.P.R. Finberg, (Reading, 1970), p. 85.

<sup>56</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 4-5, and ch. 4 passim.

<sup>57</sup> R.B., p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> J.W. Willis Bund (ed.), Worcester County Records:

areas of the region, other than the east midlands, comprised Warwickshire south of the Avon, and parts of Worcestershire, notably the light soils of the north, the vale of Evesham, and the Severn valley. The rest of Worcestershire was high ground devoted to pasture.

Puritans attempted to reform festive popular culture on a wide front: Sunday sports, alehouses, maypoles, church ales and a range of other recreations came under attack. Evidence suggests that, as Underdown claimed for the west country, the reform was more successful in some parts than in others. However, evidence also suggests that this difference in the degree of success was not sufficient to have produced clearly delineated cultural regions and sub-regions: festive culture lingered even in the most markedly puritan regions.

Puritan hostility to the old culture can be discerned everywhere. In 1628 for example, some inhabitants of Ashby de la Zouch in north Leicestershire signed an agreement concerning bell ringing, whereby 'none shall be allowed to ring for pleasure and recreation above twice in the week, and that not above the space of one hour at a time'. There were to be no peals at all on the Sabbath.<sup>59</sup> A group of puritans from Rothwell in east Northamptonshire were in

Calendar of the Quarter Sessions Papers, vol. I, 1591-1643, (Worcester, 1900), p. xxxvi.

<sup>59</sup> H.M.C. Hastings, I, pp. 384-5.

trouble in 1634 for holding that 'ringing a peal or two, dancing, playing at foot-ball, barley-break, and other recreations on the Sunday after evening prayer...was unlawful'.<sup>60</sup> In 1632, the churchwardens of the north Warwickshire parish of Nether Whitacre spent money on a warrant 'to suppress the wake'.<sup>61</sup> Alehouses were especially disliked by the respectable, except where absolutely necessary. In 1633, a number of complaints were made about them from villages near Worcester. The 'inhabitants' of Broughton Hackett complained that George Dale kept a 'disorderly alehouse' that had been the scene of a murder during Easter week: the town was poor and therefore had no need of an alehouse. Three alehouses in Crowle were 'two too many for one little village', and some people in Holt acknowledged that their number was 'too great and many fit to be suppressed', although they requested Holt's to be continued 'for the benefit and conveniency of poor labourers'.<sup>62</sup> In 1630, there was a request from the Northamptonshire Quarter Sessions jurors to suppress half the alehouses in market towns, and all those in other towns not on a main road.<sup>63</sup> Warwickshire

<sup>60</sup> C.S.P.D. 1634-5, p. 410.

<sup>61</sup> W.C.R.O. DRB 27/9, Nether Whitacre constables' accounts, 1632-88, 1632 accounts (no pagination).

<sup>62</sup> Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, pp. 527, 529-30.

<sup>63</sup> Joan Wake (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records,

J.Ps. wrote in 1631 that alehouses were 'the true nurseries of almost all the disorders pointed at in the Book of Orders'.<sup>64</sup> Cultural conflict, therefore, was widespread.

This conflict provoked sometimes violent resistance. This is markedly so of fielden communities in the south and west of the region, where festive culture undoubtedly endured best. In the south Warwickshire fielden, there was a riot at Stratford upon Avon in 1619 when the puritan Thomas Wilson was appointed minister. There was another riot when Wilson removed the maypole, and yet more trouble when he tried to enforce sabbatarianism. This was despite the presence of a puritan Corporation and schoolmaster.<sup>65</sup> The dispute was still simmering in 1636, when 'divers of quality' in Stratford reported that Wilson was 'conformable in nothing'. The Bishop of Worcester commented that Wilson had behaved 'as if he had been

Northamptonshire, 1630, 1657, 1657-8, Northamptonshire Record Society, vol. i, (Northampton, 1924), p. 64.

<sup>64</sup> C.S.P.D. 1631-33, pp. 133-4.

<sup>65</sup> Nicholas Fogg, Stratford-upon-Avon: Portrait of a Town, (Chichester, 1986), pp. 49-50. By 1630, the town was run by a puritan clique: J.M. Martin, 'A Warwickshire Market Town in Adversity: Stratford-upon-Avon in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', Midland History, vii, (1982), p. 35.

another Calvin'.<sup>66</sup> In Worcestershire, the village of Longdon, in the Severn valley, was the scene of violent opposition to attempts to suppress May-day revelry there between 1615 and 1617. 'Rude ruffians and drunken companions' were attracted to the May games and morris dancing that took place on Sundays during the summer, and there was frequent violence between men from different villages.<sup>67</sup> In one of the villages associated with this violence, Eldersfield, the vicar was prosecuted by his parishioners for praying that the King's head be turned from popery, during a sermon against dancing on the Sabbath. Their action seems in part to have been in retaliation against the vicar for having prosecuted them for drunkenness.<sup>68</sup> In Worcestershire generally there were increasing prosecutions for Sabbath-breaking in the early 1600's, but the practice was continuing unabated in the 1620s.<sup>69</sup> 'Unlawful' games in the county during this period included games of bowls in the churchyard at Birlingham on May-day in 1627, and football played by

<sup>66</sup> C.S.P.D. 1635-6, pp. 512, 390.

<sup>67</sup> Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, pp. 254-5. See also Underdown, Revel, p. 59.

<sup>68</sup> Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, pp. 281, pp. xliv-xlvi; V.C.H. Worcestershire, ii, p. 60.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

husbandmen and labourers at Croftorhne.<sup>70</sup> Both were fielden communities, in the Vale of Evesham. The Stratford upon Avon area proved congenial to the survival of a range of traditional entertainments. Several inhabitants of Shottery were caught morris dancing during evening prayer time in May 1622.<sup>71</sup> A few years earlier, another Shottery man had been presented 'for being the Maid Marion' in a Robin Hood play. Several Stratford inhabitants found themselves in trouble for playing cards, drinking and fighting on the Sabbath, and some Bishopston people for playing the tabor and pipes during evening prayer time.<sup>72</sup> Similar activities survived in the neighbouring south Northamptonshire fielden. There, five men from the villages of Hayford, Grimsote and Pattishall were presented to the Quarter Sessions in 1630 for playing 'sadgell', in contempt of an order 'for suppressing of unlawful assemblies at wakes'. That year, a Cambridgeshire man came into the county and held bear-baitings in several places, drawing crowds sizeable enough to worry the court.<sup>73</sup> In 1635, two people from Stony Stratford were presented for sawing down a

<sup>70</sup> Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, pp. 429, 497-8.

<sup>71</sup> Wrightson, English Society, p. 210.

<sup>72</sup> Fogg, Stratford, pp. 53-4.

<sup>73</sup> Wake (ed.) Quarter Sessions Records, Northamptonshire, pp. 64, 95, 88.

maypole - a case which probably refers to timber cutting rather than a puritanical attack on a pre-existing maypole.<sup>74</sup>

Puritan campaigns in the fielden communities of the region seem therefore to have met with only limited success. The violent resistance they met in some places were apparently not paralleled in forest and pasture communities. Therefore it would seem that there is substance in Underdown's characterisation of this period as one which saw the beginnings of divergent regional cultures.<sup>75</sup> This is not to say however that the process was anywhere near complete by the 1630s. There is evidence to suggest that the old culture retained a significant following in non-fielden/puritan areas. This is so even at the 'official', legally tolerated level. Towns in puritan areas retained a wealth of civic ritual. Celebrations for the acceptance of the Petition of Right in Coventry for example included a fencing display, bell-ringing, a 'dancing horse', and quantities of alcohol. Probably, it was the same celebration that prompted the ringing of bells and lighting of candles in St. Giles, Northampton in 1628.<sup>76</sup> Underdown ascribes this to the desire of urban oligarchies to display authority, and to a ritual

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<sup>74</sup> C.S.P.D. 1635, p. 343.

<sup>75</sup> Underdown, Revel, ch. 4.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 71; Serjeantson, St. Giles, p. 247.

element in puritanism.<sup>77</sup> But there is also evidence of continuing adherence to practices ostensibly more distasteful to puritans. Perambulations for example took place in at least two of Northampton's parishes during the 1630s, as well as in nearby Great Houghton, where the churchwardens also spent money 'drinking with the apparator' at Christmas in 1635.<sup>78</sup> Proscribed activities also continued in puritan/forest regions. People from forest villages in Northamptonshire were in trouble with the swanimote court for cutting timber for maypoles in 1635. Pettit says this was a frequent occurrence. It was noted by Robert Woodford, the puritan steward of Northampton, in 1637.<sup>79</sup> Wakes continued to concern puritans in north Warwickshire into the late 1630s: despite being suppressed in 1632, the churchwardens in Nether Whitacre were still having to spend money 'for putting by the wake' in 1636-7.<sup>80</sup> Alehouses remained a source of universal concern. The popular attachment to them was certainly not abandoned

<sup>77</sup> Underdown, Revel, p. 68.

<sup>78</sup> N.R.O. 241P/42, 1634/5 accounts; N.R.O. 223P/107, 1634/5 accounts; N.R.O. 175P/28, 1634 and 1635 accounts.

<sup>79</sup> Pettit, Royal Forests, pp. 86, 125, 125n; H.M.C. Ninth Report, App., Pyne and Woodford MSS, 'The Diary of Robert Woodford, Steward of Northampton', p. 496.

<sup>80</sup> W.C.R.O. DRB 27/9, 1636-1637 accounts.

in the Arden. There, six out of 15 people indicted for alehouse disorders or breaking the Sabbath in an alehouse in 1632-37 came from the Birmingham - Solihull area alone.<sup>81</sup> Six out of seven people indicted for keeping an unlicensed alehouse in Warwickshire in 1637 came from the Arden parish of Tanworth, and the seventh came from nearby Lapworth.<sup>82</sup> Jones shows that drinking at an inn was the most common single reason given for not attending church or communion in the diocese of Peterborough during the 1630s.<sup>83</sup>

If "cultural differentiation"<sup>84</sup> had not given rise to culturally distinct regions by the late 1630s, pace Underdown, it remains possible that it may have produced distinct cultural groups within communities - a minority puritan middling sort, and an unregenerate 'rabble' still addicted to alehouses and maypoles. This, however, is also problematic. It is clear that the catalysts of cultural change were minorities: just nine inhabitants signed the agreement on bell ringing in Ashby de la Zouch for example, and the group of Rothwell puritans accused in 1634 of opposing Sunday

<sup>81</sup> W.C.R. vol. vi, pp. 8-36.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>83</sup> Jones, 'Ecclesiastical Courts', p. 143, (Table 5.10).

<sup>84</sup> The phrase is used by Wrightson, English Society, p. 220.

sports and holding religious meetings in each other's' houses numbered five.<sup>85</sup> Baxter described Kidderminster people in 1641 as 'an ignorant, rude and revelling people for the greater part', and was nominated lecturer by just 14 of the godly.<sup>86</sup> Yet the packed congregations of the puritan lecturers and the widespread opposition to Laudianism suggest a wider appeal. Evidence from Quarter Sessions records shows that puritanism did not have universal appeal for middling sorts. A constable joined in the game of bowls in the Birlingham churchyard in 1627, and the Northamptonshire 'sadgell' players in 1630 included a yeoman, a tailor and a miller.<sup>87</sup> The 38 individuals indicted for running unlicensed alehouses in Worcestershire in 1633-37 included seven yeomen, a miller, a shoemaker and 10 husbandmen.<sup>88</sup> That middling sorts participated in festive and alehouse culture in Worcestershire and the Northamptonshire fielden is less surprising than the fact that some also did in north Warwickshire. There, the six Tanworth parishioners indicted for unlicensed alehouses in 1637 comprised a butcher, four husbandmen, and a widow. Edward Goose, a

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<sup>85</sup> H.M.C. Hastings, I, p. 384; C.S.P.D. 1634-5, p. 410.

<sup>86</sup> R.B., pp. 19-20.

<sup>87</sup> Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, p. 429; Wake (ed.) Quarter Sessions Records, Northamptonshire, p. 64.

<sup>88</sup> Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, pp. 508-637.

yeoman from Middleton, near Solihull, was to be described by the Quarter Sessions in 1641 as 'a common alehouse haunter, a breaker of the King's peace, a brawler'.<sup>89</sup> Such evidence is far from conclusive. It does not invalidate the link between puritanism and middling sorts per se. It does however question puritanism's role as an ideology in the alleged class consciousness of that group. If puritanism was helping to define incipient class identity, we should expect middling sorts across the region to have displayed a more consistent attitude towards 'unlawful' elements of popular culture.

### **Popular Politics**

Fewer claims have been made for a specific relationship between popular allegiance and more narrowly political events in the 1603-38 period. Much work has characterised popular politics in this period as essentially parochial, legalistic and conservative.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> W.C.R. vol. vi, pp. 37, 64.

<sup>90</sup> See especially Buchanan Sharp, In Contempt of All Authority: Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England 1586-1660, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980), chs. ii, iv; idem, 'Popular Protest in Seventeenth Century England', in Reay (ed.), Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England; Underdown, Revel, ch. 5.

When people did engage in some form of political expression, their motivations were centred on local and material concerns, rather than national and ideological ones. Thus even the most violent and widespread popular disturbances of the first half of the century - such as grain riots and anti-improvement riots against disafforestation and drainage schemes - have been seen as manifestations of a popular desire for the maintenance of custom and preservation of the local community.<sup>91</sup> Popular participation in political affairs has been characterised as small scale, the popular role in electoral politics as that of deferential voting fodder for elites.<sup>92</sup> Such a characterisation infers that popular allegiance would have been rooted in similarly local concerns.

Recently, however, such interpretations have been challenged, especially with regard to electoral politics. Cust has argued convincingly that middling

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On the localist nature of political protest more generally in this period, see John Morrill, The Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War 1630-1650, (Oxford, 1976), *passim*.

<sup>91</sup> Sharp, In Contempt, chs. ii, iv; Underdown, Revel, pp. 107-119.

<sup>92</sup> Mark Kishlansky, Parliamentary Selection: Social and Political Choice in Early Modern England, (Cambridge, 1986).

sort participation in political matters increased significantly from the 1620s. This involved consumption of political news and rumour, and the growth of a popular electorate possessed of something like a genuinely national perspective.<sup>93</sup> Of prime importance in this was anti-popery, which as Clifton showed was deeply rooted in the popular culture, and sensitive to political crises.<sup>94</sup> More recently, Lake has shown how it informed hostility to the court and government, via a manichean conception of politics, in which the King and his advisers were perceived as giving succour to an anti-religion.<sup>95</sup> More generally, it has been pointed out that the parish was a more political place than has been assumed: middling sorts served in local administration, whilst sermons, ballads and gossip could all refer to contemporary events.<sup>96</sup> This model

<sup>93</sup> Richard Cust, 'News and Politics in Early Seventeenth Century England', P&P, 112, (1986); idem, 'Politics and the Electorate in the 1620s', in Cust and Hughes (eds.), Conflict.

<sup>94</sup> Robin Clifton, 'The Popular Fear of Catholics during the English Revolution', P&P, 52, (1971); idem, 'Fear of Popery', in C. Russell (ed.), Origins of the English Civil War, (1973).

<sup>95</sup> Peter Lake, 'Anti-popery: The Structure of a Prejudice', in Cust and Hughes (eds), Conflict.

<sup>96</sup> Hughes, Causes, pp. 69-72.

therefore allows for a explanation of popular allegiance based on ideological motivation.

Evidence suggests that much political protest in the region in this period was indeed marked by localism and materialism. There is little indication that violent conflict led to politicisation in any national or ideological sense. However, national political issues clearly were woven into the fabric of parochial life, and this occasionally translated into a popular consciousness of the national context. This is especially so of anti-popery, which ensured that popular politics was not merely parochial.

The region saw considerable violent protest early in the period. In 1603, there were riots in Brigstock Park in Rockingham Forest, when Robert Cecil attempted to sell off 900 acres of woods.<sup>97</sup> More serious was the 'Midland Revolt' of 1607.<sup>98</sup> This was a series of anti-enclosure riots that began in Northamptonshire and spread into Leicestershire and Warwickshire. Contemporaries numbered the rioters at five thousand. Both plebeians and middling sorts took part: a list of

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<sup>97</sup> Pettit, Royal Forests, p. 171.

<sup>98</sup> Much of the information on the Midland Revolt has been taken from Sharp, 'Popular Protest', pp. 289-96. See also E.F. Gay, 'The Midland Revolt and the Inquisitions of Depopulation of 1607', T.R.H.S., 18, (1904).

143 rebels from Northamptonshire includes 62 labourers, artisans and tradesman, 21 husbandmen and five shepherds. The second major pulse of popular unrest that affected the region was that of the 'Western Rising', another series of anti-enclosure riots, this time aimed at disafforestation schemes.<sup>99</sup> Between 1626 and 1632, these disturbances affected Gillingham Forest, Braydon Forest (Wiltshire) and the Forest of Dean as well as Worcestershire's Feckenham Forest, and Leicester Forest. Little evidence survives of the disturbances in Leicester Forest. The first riot in Feckenham Forest occurred on March 28, 1631, with another a year later. Up to 300 rioters were involved on each occasion. These were the most severe instances of disorder in the region. There had been popular opposition to the Great Level drainage scheme, which affected north-east Northamptonshire, in 1619, though this was apparently not violent in that county.<sup>100</sup> Even the violent outbursts were limited in aims to reversing the proposed "improvements". The Midland Rebels claimed official sanction for their actions, with the leader in Northamptonshire claiming he carried permission from

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<sup>99</sup> The information on the Western Rising is from Sharp, In Contempt, esp. pp. 82, 89-90, 93-4, 114, 126-9, 134-145, 149-50, 220-1.

<sup>100</sup> Keith Lindley, Fenland Riots and the English Revolution, (1982), pp. 33, 39.

the King to destroy enclosures. The rioters of the Western Rising directed their violence against the enclosures of 'outsiders', perceived as threatening the integrity of the community. Sharp notes that Charles's disafforestation policies do not appear to have cost him popular support in the war.<sup>101</sup>

Nonetheless such events alarmed social and political elites. The events described above were regarded as rebellions, and suppressed accordingly. The late 1620s and early 1630s were a time of especial concern that dearth and poverty in the region were alienating the poor from the state. John Wildbore, minister of Tinwell in Rutland, wrote to a friend in 1631 of 'the present want and misery sustained by the poorer sort in these parts through the dearth of corn and the want of work'. He had heard speeches by an Uppingham shoemaker 'tending to the stirring up of the poor thereabouts to a mutiny and insurrection'. The Privy Council were not 'easily credulous of light speeches', but nevertheless ordered the local authorities to ensure good supply of reasonably priced corn to the market, and that the poor were found work.<sup>102</sup> In Northamptonshire in 1630, a labourer, Thomas James, was in trouble with Quarter Sessions for attempting to distribute gorse to the

<sup>101</sup> Sharp, In Contempt, pp. 263-4.

<sup>102</sup> Acts of the Privy Council of England 1630 June - 1631 June, (1964), pp. 227-8.

poor. He had been warned not to gather large crowds 'in this time of scarcity when so many people were discontent', but insisted that 'the poor must take a course to right themselves'.<sup>103</sup> These cases represent local rumours and small scale unrest. But they nevertheless also show attempts to politicise local communities on economic grounds.

Greater politicisation was achieved by puritanism and the associated anti-popery. It was this that introduced an element of ideological conflict into some electoral contests in this period. In these cases, candidates were unable merely to pose as natural leaders of the community, and instead had to appeal to 'country' ideals and attitudes.<sup>104</sup> In Northamptonshire, Sir Edward Montague was doing this from early in the century - defending godly ministers in 1605, for example. Anti-popery and the concerns of the godly apparently lay behind disputes in Rutland in 1601 and Worcestershire in 1604.<sup>105</sup> In the 1628 elections, the candidates' attitudes to the Forced Loan were an issue in many boroughs nationally. Lord Montague's paying of the loan in Northamptonshire was considered by his biographer to have 'lost him the love of the

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<sup>103</sup> Wake (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records

Northamptonshire, pp. 49-50.

<sup>104</sup> Hughes, Causes, pp. 74-5.

<sup>105</sup> Cust, 'Politics and the Electorate', pp. 151-55.

country'.<sup>106</sup> Payment of the loan was also an issue in the election at Coventry, where two refusers of the loan were chosen, thanks to the support they received from 600 freemen. Opposition was particularly pronounced in eastern Warwickshire and western Northamptonshire.<sup>107</sup> Cust argues that 'country' concerns amongst freeholders about the response to the Forced Loan over-rode localist sentiment.<sup>108</sup> The absence of parliamentary elections in the 1630s makes it difficult to demonstrate political opposition in the latter part of the period under review here, especially at the popular level. The Laudian reforms however ensured that questions of conformity and obedience sometimes bubbled to the surface in the parishes. In fact, parochial religion had long possessed an explicitly political context. Cressy has recently demonstrated the popular commemoration of political events such as the defeat of the Armada, the Gunpowder Plot, and the return of Prince Charles in 1623 in a range of festivities such as bell-ringing, feasts and bonfires which frequently centred around the church.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 156; Hughes, Causes, p. 76.

<sup>107</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 93, 95n.

<sup>108</sup> Cust, 'Politics and the Electorate', p. 158.

<sup>109</sup> David Cressy, Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England, (Berkeley and London, 1989), passim.

As we have seen, bell-ringing greeted the Petition of Right in Coventry and Northampton. Bells continued to be rung on important dates throughout the 1630s, some, like November 5th, with a political significance.<sup>110</sup>

But the changes of the 1630s created new political contexts for religion in the localities. The parochial clergy were vital in this, as points of contact between officialdom and the public. In Alcester, Samuel Clarke was repeatedly ordered to read out the Book of Sports to his congregation, but he refused.<sup>111</sup> In Northamptonshire, the lectures at Northampton and Kettering became known for their opposition to the government; Thomas Hill for example preached at Kettering in 1635 that these were days of persecution, and people must rise up against it.<sup>112</sup> Some of this propaganda sank in. John Lewes of King's Cliffe reportedly said that 'the King was no better than the beggar (as he heard preachers say out of the bible, or as it was written in his bible)'. Sibthorpe regarded him as 'crack brained...somewhat crazed by factious leaders'.<sup>113</sup> In his analysis of Woodford's diary,

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<sup>110</sup> See for example Serjeantson, St. Giles, p. 247; N.R.O. 241P/42, 1634-5 and 1637-8 accounts; N.R.O. 55P/58, pp. 13, 14, 33, 34.

<sup>111</sup> Clarke, Lives, p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> Fielding, 'Conformists', p. 215.

<sup>113</sup> C.S.P.D. 1635-6, p. 321.

Fielding has shown how fears of the popish menace had become well established among the godly community in Northamptonshire by the late 1630s.<sup>114</sup> Religion, culture and politics were by then tightly intertwined.

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<sup>114</sup> Fielding, 'Opposition to the Personal Rule', esp. pp. 778-783, 787.

## Chapter Two

### **Popular Politics, c. 1638-42.**

The main purpose of this chapter is to characterise popular politics on the eve of the civil war. Attention will be given to the impact of the major political issues of the period. These shed more light on questions touched upon in Chapter One; the degree of popular participation in local politics, and the nature of this participation - whether it was localist/materialist or national/ideological.

Popular politics may be examined through a consideration of the major controversies of the late 1630s and early 1640s: Ship Money, the Bishops' Wars, the 1640 elections, the Irish Rebellion and associated anti-Catholicism. The intention here is not to provide exhaustive accounts of these issues, but to examine them for what they reveal about popular politics. What this examination shows is a political culture of considerable vitality and assertiveness, though dominantly localist and conservative in nature. The single truly ideological element in this culture, anti-Catholicism, attained a heightened importance which proved the prime de-localising influence on popular concerns.

### **Popular Disturbances**

There was no recurrence of the seismic popular unrest of 1607 or 1628-32 in this period. Serious enclosure or disafforestation riots seem by then to have died out in the counties of the present study. There is no evidence of heightened class tensions or conflict. But popular discontent had not disappeared entirely, and concern about the poor was a constant throughout the 1640s. The freemen of Coventry complained to the parliament in 1640 about the ploughing up of common land, which had been the cause of 'riots and tumults' for the past twelve years. It was now of particular importance, as trade in the city was 'so decayed'.<sup>1</sup> In 1641, the corporation of Leicester attempted to have the enclosure of Leicester Forest declared illegal, and as late as 1649, six local men met to plan a riot in the forest, 'hearing there was leave granted by the parliament for the throwing down of the forest of Leicester'.<sup>2</sup> In Northamptonshire, there was concern that the 'distressed state' of the poor in 1642 might prove 'of dangerous consequence' unless steps were

<sup>1</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640-41, p. 371. For the popular discontent in Coventry concerning the loss of common land, see also Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup> Stocks (ed.), Records of the Borough of Leicester, pp. 302, 307.

taken to remedy it. In Northampton itself, the potential violence of the discontented was again a matter for concern in 1647 and 1649, and the borough Assembly decided on a road repair scheme to provide work, and took steps to provide the poor with cheap charcoal.<sup>3</sup> Economic distress therefore continued to cause concern to the authorities. But there is no sign of the politicisation of the discontented that Manning describes among the London crowds.<sup>4</sup>

### **Ship Money**

This tax, introduced in coastal counties in 1634 to pay for the expansion of the fleet, had been extended to all English and Welsh counties in 1635. Nationally, it was levied with reasonable success between 1634 and 1638, but ran into serious trouble in 1638-40, because of widespread refusal to pay.<sup>5</sup> Table One confirms this

<sup>3</sup> L.J. v, p. 575; J.C. Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough of Northampton, 2 vols., (Northampton, 1898), ii, p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Manning, English People, ch. 5, esp. pp. 166-171. See also Keith Lindley, 'London and Popular Freedom in the 1640s', in R.C. Richardson and G.M. Ridden (eds.), Freedom and the English Revolution, (1986).

<sup>5</sup> On Ship Money generally, see M.D. Gordon, 'The Collection of Ship Money in the Reign of Charles I',

trend. Refusal to pay became widespread in 1638, and the levies made in the 1639 writs went largely uncollected. Not until 1639 was there a shortfall in all the counties under consideration here. Northamptonshire was the scene of greatest resistance right from 1635; in fact it was one of the most refractory counties in the country in this respect.<sup>6</sup> Rutland, Leicestershire and Worcestershire were the counties in the region where the levy was collected most successfully, with Rutland managing to collect all the money in 1635-8. Even here though, the process was in disarray by 1639-40.

These figures do not distinguish between refusal to pay by the elite, and by those below them in the social hierarchy. But many people among the middling sorts were liable to pay and, crucially, were vital cogs in the wheel of Ship Money administration. As constables and bailiffs, middling sorts were required to collect the levy and execute distraints on their recalcitrant neighbours. When they refused to perform this duty, sheriffs were effectively hamstrung, and the collection of the money was made all but impossible.<sup>7</sup> In this

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T.R.H.S., 3rd. ser., vol. iv, (1910); Morrill, Revolt, pp. 24-9; Cope, Politics Without Parliaments, pp. 106-122.

<sup>6</sup> Gordon, 'Collection of Ship Money', p. 142.

<sup>7</sup> Cope, Politics Without Parliaments, p. 110. For

Table 1. The Collection of Ship  
Money, 1635-9.

	1635	1636	1637	1638	1639
	w u	w u	w u	w u	w u
RUTLAND	1000 —	800 —	800 —	350 —	800 800
LEICS	4500 —	4500 —	4500 360-0-0	1650 78-0-0	4500 3330-00
NORTHANTS	6000 308-5-0	6000 610-0-0	6000 1193-1-6	2150 83813-3	6000 59611-8
WARKS	4000 2294-0-3	4000 484-0-0	4000 780-0-0	14-5D 660-0-0	4000 3893-0-0
WORCS	4000 —	3500 191-16-0	3500 1018-0-0	1250 480-0-0	3500 2644-5-0

w = amount levied in writ (£-s-d)                    u = amount of levy uncollected

source: M.D. Gordon, 'The Collection of Ship Money in the Reign of Charles I',  
T.R.H.S., 3rd. series, iv, (1910), "Table B", pp. 159-61.

respect, Ship Money deeply politicised local communities.

In fact, sheriffs were reporting the refusal of service by constables as early as 1636. In May of that year, the sheriff of Warwickshire, Sir Grevil Verney, wrote to secretary Nicholas of the 'averseness of the high and petty constables' to the service, and said that some were trying to hinder rather than help him.<sup>8</sup> Some constables in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Worcestershire were also refusing to serve.<sup>9</sup> This was part of a wider problem which saw people in some parts of the region refusing to co-operate in the making of assessments for the tax, and complaining about unjustly high levies. Verney encountered all this in Warwickshire, where by October 1636 the then deficit of £700 was being collected entirely by distress.<sup>10</sup> Local administrations sometimes proved equally obstructive. Coventry city council was so sensitive about the city's

constables, see Joan Kent, 'The English Village Constable, 1580-1642: The Nature and Dilemmas of the Office', Journal of British Studies, xx, 2, (1981), esp. p. 40, and idem, The English Village Constable 1580-1642: a Social and Administrative Study, (Oxford, 1986), passim.

<sup>8</sup> C.S.P.D. 1635-6, pp. 452, 446.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 471, 543, 113.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 25, 157, 446.

assessment that the clerk, Humphrey Burton, kept a book in which he recorded the wranglings with the sheriff. Stratford upon Avon borough council decided in June 1637 to petition 'for to lessen of shipmoney', and did so again in December 1638.<sup>11</sup> But resistance was genuinely popular, and included more than just constables. In Northamptonshire, the sheriff Sir Robert Bannister reported that 'divers' hundreds had not made their assessments in February 1637. When his men came to distrain in the hundred of Fawsley, many people locked their doors and refused to answer them, and two wives threatened them with violence.<sup>12</sup> Russell wrote from Worcestershire in 1636 that some people there also hid to avoid payment, and that distresses were yielding very little. Bewdley, assessed at £70, had paid around £50, and claimed that was all it was able to afford. Even in Rutland, where the sheriff Edward Harrington was able to collect all the money for 1637, there were daily complaints about the levy, and the service was 'a great trouble'. Harrington had been required to collect

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<sup>11</sup> Cov.C.R.O. A35, Ship Money Book; Shakespeare Centre R.O. BRV2/3, Stratford Borough Corporation Book, 1628-57, pp. 145, 167. Unfortunately, neither of these sources reveal much about the popular reaction. I am grateful to the chief archivist at Coventry for allowing me access to the Ship Money Book.

<sup>12</sup> C.S.P.D. 1636-7, pp. 434, 526.

a comparatively meagre £800.<sup>13</sup>

Between 1638 and 1640, the boycotting of the Ship Money service by constables and bailiffs became a general and crippling phenomenon. In August 1640, the sheriff of Warwickshire said that he was unable to find special bailiffs to collect the money, 'the service being so generally distasteful'. A later report from the county confirmed that many bailiffs and constables were boycotting their duties, and that now even the sheriff's own servants were refusing to take part.<sup>14</sup> John Winford, sheriff of Worcestershire in 1640, wrote in June in a state of abject desperation; 'the whole country so averse and backward in the payment of it [i.e. Ship Money], that the petty constables and other officers are wholly opposing the service, wherein I conceive myself utterly unable to proceed of myself'. In September, the deputy escheator of the county blamed the collapse of the levy almost entirely on the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 113, 445, 531, 555-6. In Rutland, Uppingham was the scene of early squabbles concerning Ship Money . Complaints were made there as early as 1636 about the 'partiality' of the constables and churchwardens who had made the assessments. The high constable deputed to deal with the problem was warned to present 'any that are fractious and rebellious': L.R.O. Barker MSS, DE 730/3.

<sup>14</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 102.

constables. He wrote that 'in many places' they had not even made the assessments, still less demanded payment. Winford himself wished 'that I could relate how many devices I have found in the constables to decline it', and named six especially refractory individuals.<sup>15</sup> There were similar problems in the east. The former sheriff of Leicestershire, attempting to clear himself of blame, said that he had been unable to find officers to help him, except 'poor fellows' who could not be trusted.<sup>16</sup> In Northamptonshire, Sir Christopher Yelverton reported in February 1640 that when he held a meeting of the high constables in Northampton regarding the rates in the rural hundreds, only 14 out of 40 turned up, and of those only two had made assessments. Those that had not told Yelverton that this was because 'their neighbours would not join with them'. Some constables, such as Francis Freeman of Wilby, were prepared to go to prison rather than assist in the collection of Ship Money.<sup>17</sup> In May 1640 alone, 13 Northamptonshire constables, and 6 each from Leicestershire and Worcestershire, were sent for by warrant.<sup>18</sup> Although only the Worcestershire order

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 300, 643; C.S.P.D. 1640-41, pp. 41, 59.

<sup>16</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 255.

<sup>17</sup> P.R.O. SP 16/445/54; H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, p. 30.

<sup>18</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 192.

specifically mentions Ship Money, it is likely that most if not all of these men were in trouble over it. Of course, not all constables behaved like this. Compliance with the Ship Money service, like so much orthodox behaviour, is largely absent from the historical record. A detailed geographical picture of popular resistance to Ship Money, even among middling sorts, is therefore impossible to construct. Co-operative local officials can occasionally be glimpsed in constables' or churchwardens' accounts. Even here it is usually when they are distraining other local people, who have refused to pay.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that the opposition of middling sorts was widespread and serious enough to play a major role in the collapse of the levy in 1640.

Opposition undoubtedly existed lower down the social scale, and refusal to pay undermined the efforts of those local officials who did try to execute their duty. The tax certainly fell upon even some of the poorer parishioners. Verney wrote in 1636 of how in Warwickshire 'the burden is made to lie principally upon the poorer sort, contrary to the intention of the service, to the great grief of the poor'. Hughes has shown how in parishes such as Lea Marston and Packwood,

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<sup>19</sup> See for example W.C.R.O. DR 404/85 (Fillongley constables' accounts), 1638-40 (no pagination); L.R.O. DE 720/30 (Branston constables' accounts), f. 45.

poorer inhabitants were levied for the first time.<sup>20</sup> In Brigstock, Northamptonshire, in 1637, a second assessment had increased the burden on 'many poor men'. The Privy Council wrote to the corporation in Leicester in 1639 that 'there have been assessed towards this service poor cottagers, and others who have nothing to live on, but their daily labour'.<sup>21</sup> In the tiny Worcestershire parish of Eastham, there were 32 individual assessments for Ship Money, although it was apparently 'peaceably assessed and gathered'.<sup>22</sup> In September 1640 the mayor of Worcester, Sir Daniel Tyas, reported that only £80 of the £233 due from the city had been collected. A list of 87 of those 'most refractory and obstinate' in the city includes only seven labelled as gentlemen, and one esquire. The others include a baker, a clothier and an innholder, but most are of indeterminate status.<sup>23</sup> A few months

<sup>20</sup> C.S.P.D. 1635-6, p. 452; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> C.S.P.D. 1636-7, p. 408; Stocks (ed.), Records of the Borough of Leicester, p. 297.

<sup>22</sup> H.W.R.O. BA 850/4924, Eastham Parish Book (no pagination). This includes a 'true copy' of an assessment for Ship Money, totalling £6-6s-1d a quarter. There is no date, but the copy seems to be late 17th. or early 18th. century.

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O. SP 16/467/133. On 26 March 1638, warrants

earlier, Yelverton had reported that in Northamptonshire the people 'daily increase in their resolution to oppose this service' (i.e. the third Ship Money writ) and that the county was 'a great body charged with humours apt to be inflamed'.<sup>24</sup> By August, people in Leicestershire were largely refusing to pay, except by distresses.<sup>25</sup> Plebeian opposition is also suggested by reports of violence against those attempting to collect Ship Money. In 1638, Robert Woodford noted the opposition encountered by bailiffs who arrived in one Northamptonshire town - probably Wilby - to distrain for Ship Money: 'the women assembled and some men affrighted them, there was much running with forks and cowl staves, etc.'.<sup>26</sup> In 1640, the sheriff of Worcestershire reported a number of

were issued for distresses against 31 people in Leicester for non-payment of Ship Money, including Henry Watts, shoemaker: Stocks (ed.), Records of the Borough of Leicester, p. 292.

<sup>24</sup> P.R.O. SP 16/445/54. The latter quotation is also in M.F. Keeler, The Long Parliament, 1640-1641: A Biographical Study of its Members, American Philosophical Society Memoirs, xxxvi, (Philadelphia, 1954), p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, pp. 643-4.

<sup>26</sup> H.M.C. Ninth Report, App., 'Diary of Robert Woodford', p. 497.

similar incidents. John Fownes of Dadford recovered his horse, taken as distress, with the aid of 'divers of his servants and others'. Henry Dison of Hanbury was also aided by his servants, as well as 13 or 14 other men and women armed with halberds and other weapons. In Borfield, a dozen or more people came together to recover sheep belonging to one Thomas Shaw, and threatened to kill the sheriff's servants.<sup>27</sup> Forcible recovery of possessions taken as distress for non payment was also reported from Warwickshire that year.<sup>28</sup>

Popular opposition to Ship Money therefore was widespread. Characterising it is a difficult task. Morrill has described the opposition nationally as rooted in material and local concerns such as the amount of the levy, and the method of collection. However, it has been pointed out that before the recall of parliament there was no forum for expression of more ideological opposition, and many people probably felt that they had no choice but to oppose Ship Money on essentially localist grounds.<sup>29</sup> Wider, national

<sup>27</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 300.

<sup>28</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640-41. p. 102.

<sup>29</sup> Morrill, Revolt, pp. 24-9; Peter Lake, 'The Collection of Ship Money in Cheshire during the Sixteen-thirties: A Case Study in Relations Between Central and Local Government', Northern History, 17,

perspectives were inextricably linked with local ones. Certainly, this sort of relationship is evident in Northamptonshire. In April 1640, a freeholders' petition from the county included Ship Money among a list of grievances also including religious innovation, monopolies, the persecution of godly ministers, and extension of the forest bounds. It ends with a call for annual parliaments, 'as by law we ought'. In the same year, there were seditious words in Kilsby about Ship Money and the Bishops' War, including words against 'God, the King and the Church'.<sup>30</sup> Yelverton's warning of 'the radical humour of this county',<sup>31</sup> and its precarious position, thus acquire a distinctly national connotation. These are cracks in the localist mould. But the pattern remained essentially intact. Many of the problems concerning assessments were founded in what certain communities perceived to be an unfair and weighty financial burden laid upon them, contrary to custom in similar levies. Yelverton complained that borough corporations in Northamptonshire refused to

(1981) p. 70. The latter view is endorsed by Hughes in her consideration of Warwickshire politics between 1629 and 1640: Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 99-113.

<sup>30</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 7; C.S.P.D. 1639-40, pp. 211-12.

The MSS do not give names or numbers of those involved in either instance.

<sup>31</sup> P.R.O. SP 16/445/54.

make assessments, because they said the levy was simply too high.<sup>32</sup> The incidents of violent opposition to Ship Money officials have a strong localist air about them. This is especially so of the Worcestershire examples, which represent groupings of servants and labourers around local individuals for the recovery of personal property. There are connotations of deferential loyalty and parochial hostility to outsiders. Writing from Rutland in 1637, Sir Edward Harrington said that he was confident of collecting most of the money for that year, as he had drawn much upon wealthy tradesmen in order to 'ease the poor'. This 'gives great content to the people and very much advances the service'. Later he was able to partially compensate some of the 'poorer sort' who had been levied.<sup>33</sup> Thus it seems that in Rutland, mitigation of the material impact at grassroots level resulted in a more successful levy.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> C.S.P.D. 1636-7, pp. 445, 530-1.

<sup>34</sup> We should note, however, that both Rutland and Worcestershire were among the counties that presented petitions to the Long Parliament complaining of the burdens of recent years, and especially of Ship Money: John Rushworth, Historical Collections, 7 vols., (1659-1701), Part III, vol. 1, p. 44. This suggests political discontent, but we know nothing of the circulation of these petitions.

It supports Baxter's sweeping denial of any genuinely political plebeian concern over Ship Money: 'The poor ploughmen understood but little of these matters; but a little would stir up their discontent when money was demanded.'<sup>35</sup> We need not accept such reductionism wholesale. But what evidence there is suggests popular opposition to Ship Money only rarely translated into a principled, national perspective.

### **The Bishops' Wars**

The advent of war in Scotland and northern England in 1639 and 1640 severely aggravated the problems concerning Ship Money. In an attempt to force the new prayer book on his mostly reluctant Scottish subjects, who had crystalised their anti-episcopalian views in the National Covenant, Charles raised armies against them in 1639 and 1640. The first was drawn largely from northern England, but the second involved impressment of men in midland and southern counties. 'Coat and Conduct' money was levied in order to clothe, equip and maintain the soldiers. These new fiscal demands were highly unpopular, and did much to fuel discontent at all levels of society. There were additional concerns

<sup>35</sup> R.B., p. 17. Baxter contrasted this with the constitutionalist opposition of the nobility and gentry: ibid., p. 16.

about the creation of a standing army maintained by extra-parliamentary taxation.<sup>36</sup>

The wars further intruded political issues into parochial life. Prayers for the King against the Scots were ordered to be read in parish churches,<sup>37</sup> and in Burton Latimer, St. Nicholas, Warwick and St. Martin's, Leicester at least bells were rung in 1639 when Charles returned from Scotland, in what was to prove only a temporary break in the hostilities.<sup>38</sup> But some activity was distinctly pro-Scottish. Northamptonshire was again the scene of most dissent. As early as June 1639, Sibthorpe wrote to Lambe expressing his concern at the strength of opposition in the county to Ship Money,

<sup>36</sup> Cope, Politics Without Parliaments, ch. 5; John Kenyon, The Civil Wars of England, (1988), pp. 15-19.

<sup>37</sup> See for example the following Northamptonshire examples: N.R.O. 55P/58, (Burton Latimer churchwardens' accounts), p. 64; N.R.O. 199P/77/274, (Lowick churchwardens' accounts), 1640; N.R.O. 175P/28, (Great Houghton churchwardens' accounts), 1638 accounts.

<sup>38</sup> N.R.O. 55P/58, f. 16v; W.C.R.O. DR 87/2, p. 143; L.R.O. DE 1564/1354, p. 725. Bells were rung again in the latter church on the actual close of the Bishops' Wars: ibid., p. 745. Bells were also rung in London on Charles's return from Scotland in 1639, and generally were often rung to mark important political events: Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, p. 77 and ch. 5 passim.

episcopacy and the war against the Scots. This opposition was lead by a cohesive county group that included gentry and nobility, deputy lieutenants and J.P.s. He was concerned that they were stoking up popular discontent, and at their ability to 'overbear mean men'.<sup>39</sup> In August 1640, some 28 or 30 ministers (including a few from Leicestershire and Rutland) gathered for a meeting in Kettering. The host of the Red Lion inn reported that, in a rival establishment (the Swan), the parson of Brockenhall said that the Scots had invaded England, but their intention was 'only to have the heads of two men, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland'. In his report of the incident to Laud, Lambe mentioned a book entitled 'The Intentions of the Scots', which was swarming about the county.<sup>40</sup> In Northampton's All Saints church, officials refused to accept the prayers supporting Charles against the Scots. Congregations elsewhere in the region were made aware of the religio-political issues involved. The minister of Clipsham, in Rutland, was in trouble in 1639 because 'he did not use the prayer for the King [his] Majesty in his northern expedition...and that he did pray for the brethren in Scotland or the like...and that sometimes he omitted to

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<sup>39</sup> Cited by Cope, Politics Without Parliaments, pp. 175-6.

<sup>40</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, pp. 644, 638.

pray for the King in the time of divine service'. In Warwick, Lord Brooke arranged for a Scot to deliver a sermon on 29 December 1639.<sup>41</sup> Churches were thus a forum for political comment.

There were material reminders of the war too. Impressment was considerable: over 2000 soldiers were raised in the region. In March 1639 Lord Hastings was ordered to levy 230 foot soldiers in Leicestershire, and 30 in Rutland.<sup>42</sup> By July 1640, 400 men had been raised in Leicestershire, 600 in Worcestershire and 550 in Northamptonshire. The Warwickshire total was 30 short of the 500 required, because of Coventry's

<sup>41</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640-41, p. 109; N.R.O. P.D.R., 70, Correction Book, f. 28; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 116. In All Saints, the non co-operation involved one of the churchwardens and the curate. On 24 March 1639, a 'Mr. Johnson' read out a proclamation against the Scots. The minister, Thomas Ball, preached that morning and probably refused to read it personally, as in August 1640 he refused to read out prayers against the Scots: New College, Oxford, MS The Diary of Robert Woodford, Steward of Northampton, 1637-41, entry for 24 March 1639 (no pagination); Serjeantson, All Saints, pp. 136-7. I am grateful to the librarian of New College for allowing me access to the MS of Woodford's diary.

<sup>42</sup> H.M.C. Hastings, iv, p. 217.

refusal to co-operate with the lord lieutenant.<sup>43</sup> Northampton also proved obstructive in this context.<sup>44</sup> In September however, the Coventry trained bands were ordered to a general muster, and 'all persons of quality' in the city were ordered to be armed and ready.<sup>45</sup> That month, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Warwickshire and Leicestershire were reportedly 'full of soldiers commanded to be at their places of rendezvous'.<sup>46</sup>

There were problems in the collection of Coat and Conduct money, although they do not seem to have been as great as those that afflicted Ship Money. Constables and bailiffs were again the point of contact for the levy in the local community, and their co-operation was equally vital: the sheriff of Worcestershire was

<sup>43</sup> C.S.P.D. 1639-40, p. 344; C.S.P.D. 1640, pp. 195, 204; Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 114-5, 117-18.

<sup>44</sup> N.R.O. 3/2, Northampton Borough Records, Second Assembly Book 1629-1714, pp. 53, 57, 59, 62. This included refusals to pass Coat and Conduct money and send soldiers to musters, as well as a complaint about the conduct of the deputy lieutenants. See also Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough of Northampton, ii, pp. 434-38.

<sup>45</sup> Cov.C.R.O. Corporation Administrative Records, Artificial Collections, A79/198.

<sup>46</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640-41, p. 66.

obliged to release constables whom he had imprisoned for refusing to levy Ship Money.<sup>47</sup> But sheriffs were not reduced to the same state of desperation as they were by refusal to serve and pay over Ship Money. Resistance to Coat and Conduct money seems to have been more localised and less extensive. Early in the wars, the Northampton Borough Assembly refused to sanction Coat and Conduct money, and the 'greater part' of the townspeople refused to pay it.<sup>48</sup> In May 1640 it was reported from Northamptonshire that most people in the eastern division were compliant, but there was widespread opposition in the west. In Leicestershire, there was a significant but not calamitous shortfall in contribution money for the war in 1639. By November, £239-lls had been paid, with arrears of £78-18s-11.5d. In May of the following year, all the money had been successfully levied in both Leicestershire and Rutland.<sup>49</sup> Northamptonshire and Warwickshire were the scenes of the greatest resistance. In June 1640, six Northamptonshire constables, from parishes just south of Northampton, were reported for refusing to collect Coat and Conduct money.<sup>50</sup> There were similar problems

<sup>47</sup> Morrill, Revolt, pp. 28-9.

<sup>48</sup> N.R.O. 3/2, Second Assembly Book, p. 53.

<sup>49</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 195; C.S.P.D. 1639-40, p. 137; C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 205.

<sup>50</sup> P.R.O. SP 16/458/32. The parishes concerned are:

in a number of Warwickshire parishes.<sup>51</sup> The put-upon constables sometimes claimed that parishioners had frustrated their best efforts. The constables of Norton in Northamptonshire for example claimed that they had indeed tried to collect the money, but the inhabitants had told them they were unable to pay. When the constable of Harpole charged some of his neighbours with refusal to pay, they retaliated by petitioning against him to the House of Lords.<sup>52</sup>

The very presence of soldiers was a source of discontent. Many of the soldiers were unenthusiastic about the war, and there were attendant problems of desertion, plunder and general ill-discipline. In Worcestershire, soldiers were billeted on civilians between 25 April and 20 May 1640 in Worcester, Droitwich, Evesham, Pershore and Bewdley. Noting the gathering of the 600 pressed men from his county at Worcester in July, Henry Townshend commented dryly, 'They have put the county to a great charge'.<sup>53</sup> In that

'Aberton' (? Abthorpe, Alderton), Brafield on the Green, Little Houghton, Collingtree, Milton Malsur, Courteenhall.

<sup>51</sup> See for example C.S.P.D. 1640, pp. 202, 242; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 118.

<sup>52</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 240; H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, pp. 38-9.

<sup>53</sup> Townshend, Diary, i, p. 4, ii, p. 13.

month, there were serious disorders among the soldiery in the east. Sir Thomas Culpepper wrote from Loughborough of 'great disorders done by the soldiers', and requested trained bandsmen from Nottinghamshire to accompany his 350 men to Stamford, 'that hereby the country may be preserved'.<sup>54</sup> More serious still, there was a mass mutiny from Sir Jacob Astley's regiment at Daventry, Northamptonshire. Originally, some 500 or 600 men were involved, 'some alleging they would not fight against the Gospel, and others that they were to be shipped and commanded by Papists'. When some other regiments arrived in the town, the rebellion spread and about 1000 disbanded themselves.<sup>55</sup> A report had already been made in May that 275 soldiers of the western division of the county 'utterly refuse either to be disciplined or go with any other commanders than those of the trained bands there'.<sup>56</sup> Astley's men were in fact from Berkshire and Oxfordshire, but desertions by

<sup>54</sup> H.M.C. Various Collections, VII, Additional Manuscripts of Sir Hervey Juckes Lloyd Bruce, p. 424.

<sup>55</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 237. It may well have been this incident which prompted Woodford to write in his diary, 'Many soldiers are gone and daily go into the north but are vehemently bent against the papists and will scarce be ruled by their captains': H.M.C. Ninth Report, 'Diary of Robert Woodford', p. 499.

<sup>56</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 195.

soldiers with complaints about papists and fighting against the gospel would have done little to popularise the war locally.

Soldiers found themselves under attack from locals on at least one occasion. On 22 June 1640, Colonel Thomas Lunsford wrote from Warwick that 'I find my regiment in the greatest disorder, divers of them in troops returned home; all are forward to disband and the countries rather inclined to foment their dislikes than assist in punishments or persuasions...[we] are daily assaulted by sometimes 500 of them together, have hurt and killed some in our defence, and are driven to keep on our guard'.<sup>57</sup> The large numbers involved in these attacks, and their evident frequency, suggests the soldiers were highly unpopular in Warwickshire. Evidence given above suggests that they were no more popular elsewhere.

Thus the wars attracted little popular support. Why this was so is again a complex issue. The unpopularity of fiscal and other material demands, the opposition to the presence of soldiers all suggest the same sort of materialist and parochial objections that characterised much of the opposition to Ship Money. The refusal of men in western Northamptonshire to march under anyone except local men is a clear expression of this perspective. We cannot be sure of the motivation for

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 327.

the attacks on the soldiery in Warwickshire: but there is at least the strong possibility that it was in response to the sort of misconduct that occurred in Leicestershire. However, there was a religio-political element to the opposition to war. Nationally, the Scots gained some sympathy as anti-episcopalians. We have seen that in Northamptonshire, words against both Laud and Strafford, as well as anti-popery among the soldiers, informed discontent. The collection of Coat and Conduct money here became an explicitly political issue, with constitutionalist overtones, at the election of the knights to the shire in March 1640. Then, the conduct of the deputy lieutenants in collecting the levy inspired cries of 'We'll have no deputy lieutenants'.<sup>58</sup> A number of individuals, including Thomas Ball of All Saints in Northampton, engaged in propagandistic activity in support of Sir Gilbert Pickering, the future parliamentarian, against Thomas Elmes, one of the deputy lieutenants. Their tactics included at least 3 men (Peter Whaley, John Gifford and John Spicer) going 'up and down the multitude' at the election, leading the cries against deputy lieutenants.<sup>59</sup> By April, the common people of Northamptonshire were 'generally possessed' of the idea

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<sup>58</sup> Bodl. MS Bankes 44/13; C.S.P.D. 1640, pp. 25, 587.

<sup>59</sup> Bodl. MS Bankes 44/13, 44/55. See also C.S.P.D. 1640-41, p. 299.

that the collection of Coat and Conduct money was 'utterly unlawful', and the office of deputy lieutenant was in general disrepute.<sup>60</sup> There were speeches against the payment of Coat and Conduct money in Leicestershire, and complaints about the conduct of deputy lieutenants in this county and in Worcestershire.<sup>61</sup> But nowhere else does it seem to have entered the popular consciousness as an ideological issue as it did in Northamptonshire. This county was again an exception to the rule.

### **The 1640 Elections**

The parliamentary elections of 1640 provided another forum for the expression of regional political feeling. Hirst has shown that, nationally, both the county and urban electorates could by 1640 include a popular element. Cust has argued that middling sorts became increasingly well informed politically between 1620 and 1640. Indeed, popular participation was high: in county elections all over the county in 1640, freemen came in

<sup>60</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, pp. 25, 587. See also Derek Hirst, The Representative of the People? Voters and Voting in England under the Early Stuarts, (Cambridge, 1975), p. 151.

<sup>61</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640, p. 377; Anthony Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, (1981), p. 67.

to vote in their thousands.<sup>62</sup>

The political issues in these elections were not always clear cut. Local issues sometimes dominated. Many elections threw up disputes over franchise extension, harking back to purely local power struggles which cut across lines of national political dispute. The resulting picture was a complex fusion of the local and the national, the venal and the ideological. Neither was the power of social ties and obligations completely broken. Patronage and local influence remained important in the election tactics of both sides in contested elections.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that ideological issues did influence the popular vote in some of the contests. The suggestion, again, is that pre-war ideological disputes did have a small place in popular political culture.

Table Two shows that there was considerable electoral activity in the region in 1640, with contested elections occurring in all but one of the counties under consideration. Northamptonshire, once again, was host to the greatest political contention. There was a maximum of 17 contested elections in the region as a whole in 1640. As can also be seen from Table Two however, the turnout at these elections -

<sup>62</sup> Hirst, Representative, esp. chs. 2-6; Cust, 'News and Politics', passim; Keeler, Long Parliament, p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-11.

Table 2. Contested ParliamentaryElections, 1640.

	SP	LP
LEICS		
County		?*
Leicester		*
NORTHANTS		
County	*	
Brackley		
Higham Ferrers	*(35)	?*
Northampton	*	*
Peterborough		*
RUTLAND		
County		
WARKS		
County	?*	**(c. 1750 at by-election)
Coventry		*
Warwick		*
WORCS		
County		*(c. 750+)
Bewdley	*	*
Droitwich		
Evesham		*
Worcester		

\* contested election

SP Short Parliament                    LP Long Parliament

Figures in brackets refer to numbers of voters.

Elections took place in all the locations cited at some stage, but only those asterisked were contested.

source: Derek Hirst, The Representative of the People?, (1976), Appendices iv and v, pp. 216-22, 223-26.

where known - was not high. The highest by far was at the Long Parliament by-election for Warwickshire, when 1750 people were recorded. The average turnout for the three contested elections where the turnout is known is just 845. The figures included all voters, so even in those elections with a popular franchise, the number of non-elite voters was probably low.

An immediately striking feature of the elections, as shown by Hirst, is the number of borough contests which saw popular involvement in a franchise dispute, commonly over its extension to include more than a small ruling elite. Such disputes occurred in Coventry, Warwick, Northampton, Peterborough, Higham Ferrers, Tamworth and Bewdley.<sup>64</sup> Usually the dispute revolved around pressure from freemen for the vote. They were predominantly localist in nature, devoid of political content in anything other than parochial terms. In both Coventry and Northampton the disputes were essentially continuations of local struggles between ambitious freemen and town oligarchs who had dominated local affairs. Such conflicts cut across the lines of national political divisions. In Northampton for example, popular opposition to the borough council took a pro-government stance. Despite the town's well deserved reputation for godliness and dissent (see

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<sup>64</sup> Hirst, Representative, pp. 213, 52, 57, 59, 196, 214.

Chapters One and Three), some 200 freemen there tried to have the future civil war neutralist John Barnard elected against the puritan Richard Knightley.<sup>65</sup> There were similarly parochial disputes in Warwick, Higham Ferrers and Bewdley. The 'commonalty' made the challenge in Tamworth. There are no details on the dispute in Peterborough.<sup>66</sup> Local influence and deference remained important in attracting the popular vote. Keeler has suggested that both Lord Brooke and his opponent the Earl of Northampton drew on the latter in Warwickshire. In Bewdley, the courtier Sir Henry Herbert used his local influence, as did Sir Ralph Clare in winning the support of the disgruntled freeholders, who were attempting to break the corporation franchise. In Leicester, the franchise was restricted to the governing body. Family influence prevailed, as Thomas, Lord Grey of Groby was chosen on the strength of his father's recommendation to the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 135, 261n; Keeler, Long Parliament, p. 58.

<sup>66</sup> Hirst, Representative, pp. 52, 57, 62, 195, 196. We do know that the Peterborough election returned William Fitzwilliam and Dr. Robert Napier, both supporters of the parliament: Keeler, Long Parliament, p. 58, and D. Brunton and D.H. Pennington, Members of the Long Parliament, (1968 edn.), Appendix v, p. 209.

borough.<sup>67</sup>

But local issues and deferential support did not always predominate. County elections of knights of the shire, where freeholders often had the franchise, were sometimes fought on more ideological grounds. This is especially true of elections in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire. Despite Brooke's influence in Warwick, some inhabitants there attempted to join in local opposition to him, albeit partly on localist grounds. In the Short Parliament election in Higham Ferrers, ten tenants of the Queen voted against her candidate, and in favour of the future parliamentarian, Sir Edward Harby.<sup>68</sup> We have already noted how discontent over Coat and Conduct money informed electioneering tactics at the election of the knights of the shire for Northamptonshire. Another populist device, again illustrating the importance of church and clergy in political activity, was a letter composed by Thomas Ball 'to persuade the people', which was read out in Spratton church after evening service. The intention

<sup>67</sup> Keeler, Long Parliament, pp. 68, 73, 54, 195.

<sup>68</sup> Hirst, Representative, pp. 210-12; 130-1. In Warwick, Brooke had the support of the magistrates and the 'better sort'. The inhabitants' grievance against him seems to have concerned local financial affairs. The lack of deference in voting behaviour generally is discussed in ibid., pp. 126-31.

was to attract popular support for Sir Gilbert Pickering. Woodford's diary for 19 March 1640 shows Pickering did indeed attract such support at the Short Parliament election, and that attempts of the court party to use the influence of local elites fell on stony ground; 'Went to the castle where after the writ was read the Earl of Northampton, Earl of Westmoreland, Earl of Peterborough, with others, mounted their horses and rode between the companies, calling men to Mr. Elwes [sic] his company, but the company of Mr. Crew and Sir Gilbert, who stood near together, was the greatest'.<sup>69</sup> Hughes has pointed out that the county elections for the Long Parliament in Warwickshire, although involving powerful local figures, involved ideological conflict. This arose from the candidates sponsored by Brooke, an open supporter of the Scots in 1639-40 and vociferous puritan, and Northampton, a staunchly loyal supporter of the government and its policies. At the first election of knights of the shire, Lord Compton, Northampton's candidate, was elected along with William Combe, an opponent of the court. But a freeholders' petition complained that the sheriff, George Warner, had committed numerous irregularities, not least the declaration of Compton and Combe as elected despite one of Brooke's

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<sup>69</sup> Bodl MS Bankes 44/13; H.M.C. Ninth Report, 'Diary of Robert Woodford', p. 498.

candidates, William Purefoy, apparently having more votes. A new election was held, in which the anti-court candidates attempted to smear Compton with charges of recusancy. This apparently backfired, as Compton was re-elected and both Combe and the author of the papist smears, Sir Francis Nethersole, were defeated.<sup>70</sup> The popular element to these elections, and their close association with attitudes to the court, is notable. We have seen above that Brooke was opposed by some in Warwick; but his biographer asserted in 1644 that his strong support among the 'commons' was 'plainly seen' at the election of the knights of the shire.<sup>71</sup>

Elections elsewhere were not so suffused with ideology, but it was by no means wholly absent. Constitutional issues surfaced in Worcestershire in the campaign for the Long Parliament elections. There, a

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<sup>70</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 119-129. For the freeholders' petition against Warner, see C.J. ii, p. 23, and Rushworth, Historical Collections, Part III, vol. 1, p. 38.

<sup>71</sup> 'The Genealogy, Life and Death of the Right Honourable Robert Lord Brooke of Beauchamps Court', ed. Philip Styles, in Miscellany One, ed. Robert Bearman, Dugdale Society, xxi, (1977), p. 178, also cited by Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 126n. Styles identifies Brooke's biographer as probably Thomas Spencer, vicar of Budbrooke.

deputy lieutenant criticised a royalist candidate before the trained bands, calling him 'fitter to break Parliaments than to serve in Parliament'.<sup>72</sup> In Leicestershire, the lack of contested elections for the Short Parliament did not preclude straightforwardly political activity at the popular level. In April 1640, Samuel Plumley, a 'servant', reportedly said that if the Short Parliament was dissolved, then he had heard that some people would set fire to the Archbishop of Canterbury's house. In May, a yeoman from neighbouring Northamptonshire, Daniel Brinckley, made 'very dangerous speeches' in Lutterworth. These included lamenting the imprisonment of 'the best men of the kingdom' - including Brooke and Lord Saye - and warning that the King was planning to march on London. Brinckley was said to 'affect popularity', and to have 'sent messengers to divers towns in coun. Leicester to request the freeholders to choose Sir Arthur Haslerick [sic] a knight of the shire.'<sup>73</sup> Nothing is known of the true extent of, or the response to Brinckley's efforts. But there were clearly politically inspired rumours circulating in Leicestershire in 1640, which depended for their impact on anti-government sentiment. Haselrigg, a puritan and future civil war activist, was duly elected.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Hirst, Representative, pp. 146-8.

<sup>73</sup> P.R.O. SP 16/458/110, reports of seditious words.

Indeed, it is worth noting the success of parliamentarian candidates over much of the region. Northamptonshire is, once again, outstanding. There, eight out of nine members returned at the Long Parliament elections were parliament men. In Leicestershire, three out of four members chosen at the county elections were such. In October 1640, the members chosen for Worcestershire were John Wilde and Humphrey Salway, both of whom were active on the parliamentarian side in 1642. Worcester itself, which probably had a freeman franchise, also returned men who were to become parliamentary supporters, John Cowcher and John Nash. With its freeman franchise, Coventry returned John Barker and, on the death of Simon Norton, William Jesson, both men similarly enthusiastic for the parliamentarian cause.<sup>74</sup> However, we do not know the basis of the popular appeal of all of these men. It may well be that, given the prominence of local issues in borough disputes, it was founded on non-ideological factors. This was certainly the case, as noted above, in Coventry, and to some extent in Northampton.

The 1640 elections, then, reveal the increasing political activism and assertiveness of middling sorts, and the way in which a still dominantly localist

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<sup>74</sup> Keeler, Long Parliament, pp. 11, 54, 72-3, 69; Brunton and Pennington, Members of the Long Parliament, Appendix v, pp. 200-224.

political culture was shot through with national and ideological awareness. There appears to be a geographical element to this, although patchy survival of sources must counsel caution. Northamptonshire does seem to have been the scene of the most vigorous and ideological activity: there was clearly a snowballing of popular discontent through the Laudian reforms, Ship Money and Bishops' Wars, which was further stimulated by propagandistic activity in the 1640 elections. In Warwickshire, the elections were given an ideological dimension by the rivalry of Brooke and Northampton. In both counties, anti-Catholic rumours were employed as vote catching tactics.<sup>75</sup> But even elsewhere, national issues were important. There would have been little point in the criticisms of being fit to break parliaments made against one Worcestershire candidate if the trained bands were ignorant of or uninterested in a constitutional view of parliaments: the slur was clearly expected to mean something to the soldiers. Leicestershire freeholders were evidently expected to respond to rumours about the intentions of the King. The examples are too few to extrapolate very much from

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<sup>75</sup> Hirst, Representative, pp. 146, 151. Hirst notes that similar rumours were deployed in 1640 in elections in various parts of the country, but especially in areas of marked recusancy, in an arc from Kent through the west midlands into Yorkshire: ibid., pp. 145-6.

them. But the 1640 elections certainly ensured a wider, more popular platform for national issues.

### **Anti-popery**

The manipulation of anti-popery in the 1640 elections reminds us of the importance of this phenomenon in popular political culture.<sup>76</sup> Indeed it was nothing new in 1640. The popular hatred and fear of Catholics in the first half of the century is well documented.<sup>77</sup> But in November 1641 and the following months, these sentiments were whipped up to fever pitch by the outbreak of the Irish Rebellion. The popular press highlighted and sensationalised atrocities committed by the rebels on Protestants in Ireland. These stories were given greater impact by the influx of English and Irish Protestant refugees fleeing from the bloodshed.<sup>78</sup>

As shown by Clifton, fear of a Catholic invasion or

<sup>76</sup> Hirst has called it "the one genuine religio-political conviction of ordinary people in the early seventeenth century": ibid., p. 146.

<sup>77</sup> See ibid., pp. 145-50; Clifton, 'Popular Fear of Catholics' and 'Fear of Popery', passim; Lake, 'Anti-popery', passim; Underdown, Revel, pp. 129-30.

<sup>78</sup> Keith Lindley, 'The Impact of the 1641 Rebellion upon England and Wales, 1641-5', Irish Historical Studies, vol. xviii, (1972).

rising pervaded the immediate pre-war years in the region.<sup>79</sup> It was present even before the Irish Rebellion. In Northamptonshire, there was a panic in 1640 when a rumour was spread that Catholics were assembling at 'Gayhurst', a house owned by the mother of Sir Kenneth Digby, and which had associations with the Gunpowder Plot. In Lichfield late in the same year, rumour was rife of a Catholic arsenal in the town, whilst in Leicestershire in the summer of 1641 the Catholic owner of Belton House alarmed his neighbours when he refused to pay taxes, fortified his house, and sheltered recusants.<sup>80</sup> The news from Ireland in November greatly exacerbated such fears. Leicester and Ashby de la Zouch were the scenes of major scares that month.<sup>81</sup> Warwickshire and Worcestershire were also affected at an early stage. On 18 November, news arrived in Warwick that the papists were about to rise up in the county. Both counties were cited by the

<sup>79</sup> Much information on local panics about Catholics is from Robin Clifton, 'The Fear of Catholics in England, 1637 to 1645', University of Oxford D.Phil., (1967). (Henceforth 'Fear of Catholics in England'.) I am grateful to Dr. Clifton for the loan of his copy of this thesis.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. pp. 85, 85n, 109, 132.

<sup>81</sup> Clifton, 'Fear of Popery', passim; Stocks (ed.), Records of the Borough of Leicester, p. 322.

London tailor Thomas Beale in his story of a popish plot to over-run the capital and a number of counties. In the aftermath of the Beale testimony, the Lord Lieutenants of Warwickshire, Worcestershire and bordering Staffordshire were warned to prepare for a popish uprising. There were panics in Kidderminster and Bewdley shortly afterwards.<sup>82</sup> The nervousness in the former two counties is suggested by the pattern of indictments for recusancy in these years, as shown in Graphs One and Two. In Warwickshire, indictments rose steeply in 1640-42, and especially so from Michaelmas 1641 to Michaelmas 1642 (i.e. the period of the anti-Catholic panics.) Nearly half - 40.35% - of all recusancy indictments in 1638-42 occurred in this period. The Worcestershire pattern is even more dramatic, with the indictments and presentments in 1642 comprising 79.7% of the total for 1638-42. (This is slightly misleading however, as only a few indictments from 1639 are extant, and none at all from 1640. However, the overall trend is still consistently and sharply upwards.) Clearly, late 1641 and early 1642 was a period of enormous anxiety in the region about the activities of Catholics.

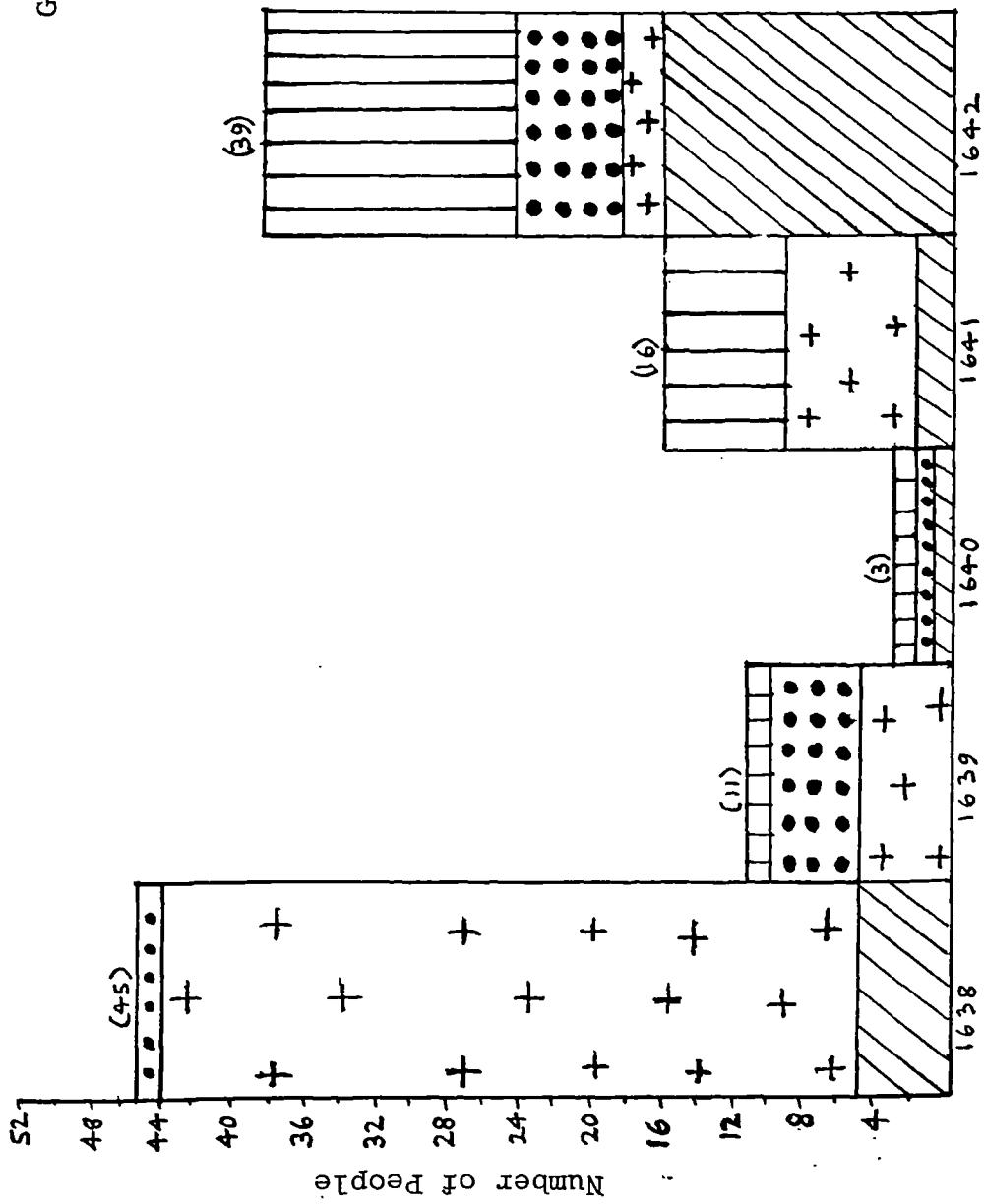
This anxiety prompted a good deal of petitioning.

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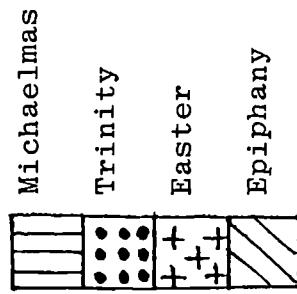
<sup>82</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 134; Clifton, 'Fear of Catholics in England', pp. 144-50; Manning, English People, p. 79.

Graph 1. Indictments for

Recusancy, not  
attending church,  
etc., Warwickshire,  
1638-42



Source: W.C.R. vol. vi.

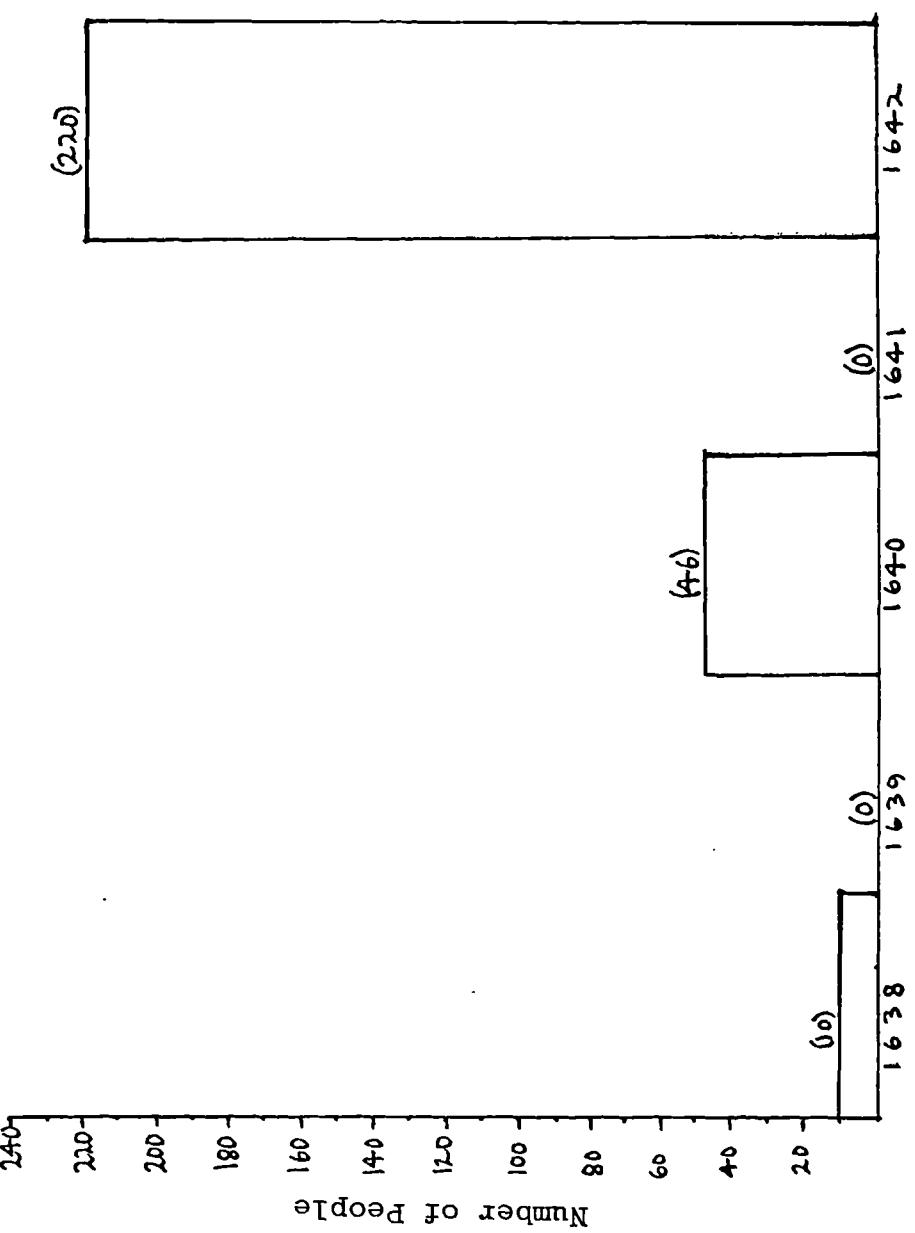


activity, in which parliament was looked to as a guardian against popish subversion. If the petitions themselves may not have involved many ordinary people, those living in urban areas cannot have missed the civil defence measures that were another response. In Northampton, it was ordered in January 1642 that a watch of 20 men be set every night. In Coventry, in addition to setting a night watch, it was ordered that 500 muskets should be in readiness at any given time.<sup>83</sup> In Warwickshire as a whole popular anxiety prompted further action: the night watch was doubled in early 1642, 'upon the motion of divers of the inhabitants of this county'. The militia in Worcestershire was ordered to be ready at one hour's notice. J.P.s in Leicestershire met with constables to discuss the state of the county militia.<sup>84</sup> Similar measures followed in some towns in the summer. It is unclear whether these are further manifestations of fear of popery, or responses to the worsening political situation, or both. It is clear that civil defence measures associated with the descent into civil war followed hard on the heels of panics about popish uprisings.

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<sup>83</sup> N.R.O. 3/2, Second Assembly Book, p. 66; Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough of Northampton, ii, p. 434; Cov.C.R.O. A14(b), p. 23. See also Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 225.

<sup>84</sup> W.C.R. vol. ii, p. 116; Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 215.



Source: J.W. Willis Bund (ed.)  
Worcestershire County Records:  
Calendar of the Quarter Sessions Papers, vol. I,  
1591-1643, (1900)

Graph 2. Presentments &

Indictments for

Recusancy, not

attending church,

etc., Worcestershire,

1638-1642

Thus in June 1642 Worcester spent £60 'for the public use and defence of this city', and in August purchased more gunpowder, shot and match. Fear of popery was still running high here, as some citizens and soldiers petitioned parliament about influxes of strangers and papists as late as September.<sup>85</sup> In Northampton, chains were purchased to block the bridges, whilst in Coventry it was ordered in July that all persons 'of ability' were to arm themselves 'for the better defence of this city'.<sup>86</sup>

Anti-papery is therefore important not only in that it translated easily into political activity, but in that it informed much of the sense of fear and conflict that pervaded the region before the outbreak of war. A deep rooted religio-political sentiment was given a sharp contemporary relevance in 1641-2. Thus ideological and national issues were freshly intruded into popular politics on the eve of civil war. By this time, Ship Money and the Bishops' Wars were moribund as popular issues: there is no evidence of serious popular discontent concerning them after 1640. But anti-papery proved a mutable phenomenon, appearing in a variety of

<sup>85</sup> S. Bond (ed.), The Chamber Order Book of Worcester, 1602-1650, (1974), pp. 353, 355; Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 87-8.

<sup>86</sup> Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough of Northampton, ii, p. 434; Cov.C.R.O. A14(b), p. 29.

different contexts: mutiny, election smears, panics. It was therefore the most profound of the genuinely politicising influences on pre-war popular politics.

### Conclusion

Any characterisation of popular politics in this period as dominantly localist must be qualified by two outstanding features: the serious popular discontent which built up against government policy *per se* in Northamptonshire, and the widespread arousal of religio-political anxiety by anti-Catholic sentiment in general and the Irish Rebellion in particular. Another salient feature is the importance of propaganda and rumour in popular political culture. Political gossip was common: for example, a Northamptonshire high constable was heard chatting about Ship Money in an alehouse in 1636, whilst the rumours about Catholics at 'Gayhurst' in 1640 were started by a mole catcher's son.<sup>87</sup> There was political agitation, such as that in Leicestershire by Daniel Brinckley. Clergy were important in the communication of news and propaganda. Charles found that his attempt to manipulate them in 1639-40 was a double edged sword: clergy in Warwick, Northampton and Clipsham (at least) encouraged dissent

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<sup>87</sup> C.S.P.D. 1636-7, p. 285; Clifton, 'Fear of Catholics in England', p. 85, 85n.

among their parishioners. Richard Baxter may have spread rumours about popish risings from Kidderminster to Bewdley, as he preached in a number of villages in the area.<sup>88</sup> The importance of such activity, and the privileged role of the clergy in it, was to be underlined in the civil war.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

### Chapter Three

#### **Popular Religion and Culture, c. 1638-46.**

The purpose of this chapter is to develop the themes introduced in Chapter One, so to provide a more detailed characterisation of popular religion and culture in this period. Specifically, it will consider to what degree it is legitimate to speak of two religio-cultural phenomena central to any consideration of popular allegiance; (1) the establishment by 1642 of distinct cultural regions, the reformed and festive cultures allegedly typical of wood-pasture and fielden communities respectively, and (2) the emergence of 'popular Anglicanism' in the early 1640s, and especially in the face of the puritan attack on the Anglican church and its associated traditional culture. The geographical and social distribution of puritanism is important to both these questions, and is also considered here.

#### **Two Cultures?**

Underdown characterised popular culture in the west country as riven into two distinct forms by 1642; one where the puritan attack on festive culture had established itself to create a new, more individualistic culture, and the other where it had

failed, and a more traditional, communal culture endured. In Chapter One, it was suggested that this process was underway but far from complete in the midlands by the late 1630s. Evidence from the 1638-1646 period confirms this. Distinct regional cultures had not evolved by 1642. Some communities were undoubtedly more reformed or traditionalist than others - puritanism certainly met with varying degrees of success. But the result was not a bipolar division of popular culture. Rather, regions had developed by 1642 a variegated pattern, with puritan and festive cultures existing close by and sometimes cheek by jowl. This juxtaposition of the new with the old suggests not only that cultural conflict was indecisive, but that puritanism, at least at the popular level, was not as hostile to festivity as has sometimes been assumed.

### Puritanism

In the years 1638-1640, conflict between Laudian and puritan forms of worship came to a head. Laudian injunctions continued to be disobeyed on a widespread scale, and the Short Parliament brought a flurry of petitioning activity, much of it critical of the Laudian innovations. Many parishes abandoned changes in the internal organization of the church. The most plentiful evidence of the boycotting of Laudian ceremony in this period comes from the northern and

eastern parts of the region (excepting Rutland), again suggesting that puritanism was strongest here. These include parishes in fielden areas. In some cases, more than mere anti-Laudianism was involved. The rector of Saddington, Leicestershire, claimed that one of his parishioners had seized on a copy of the Book of Common Prayer, carried it away, and cried that it should be used for lighting tobacco pipes. Similar disdain for the prayer book was voiced in Warwickshire, where a Birmingham saddler called it 'mere popery', and those that used it 'no better than mere papists'.<sup>1</sup> 'Divers' of the parishioners of Market Harborough in Leicestershire were refusing to receive communion at the altar rails in 1641.<sup>2</sup> The strongest evidence of the unpopularity of Laudianism again comes from Northamptonshire. There, a Pattishall man in 1638 rubbedish Laudian sermons, calling the 'divine sermons porridge and the long puritan sermons roast meat'. Some parishioners there refused to receive communion at the altar rails, and at some stage in the early 1640s the communion table was moved back into the body of the chancel.<sup>3</sup> At the other end of the county, in the north,

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<sup>1</sup> A.G. Matthews, Walker Revised: being a Revision of John Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion, (1948), p. 235; W.C.R. vol. vi.,, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640-41, p. 525.

<sup>3</sup> Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough, ii, p. 64;

men from Stoke Albany were in trouble in the late 1630s for puritanical activity; one for not going to his parish church, and 'going to Carlton in the afternoons', and another for 'not doing reverence at the blessed name of Jesus when it is read in the time of divine service'.<sup>4</sup>

All Saints church in Northampton was a particular thorn in the flesh of the Laudian authorities. The minister, Thomas Ball, and his churchwardens were staunch opponents of the innovations, and had strong support from the congregation. In December 1637, the churchwardens (Peter Farren and Francis Risworth or Riskworth) were in trouble with the commissioners conducting Laud's visitation, Samuel Clarke and Robert Sibthorpe. They reported that 'it does not appear that either the minister or people reverently bow at the name of the Lord Jesus in time of divine service...the parishioners have not received communion at the rails'. Farren and Risworth were warned to ensure the altar table was railed in and moved to the east end of the chancel, but they failed to comply. By January 1638 the required changes had still not been made, and the pair were excommunicated.<sup>5</sup> Ball however survived, and

C.S.P.D. 1641-3, p. 533.

<sup>4</sup> N.R.O., Peterborough Diocesan Records (henceforth P.D.R.) 69, Correction Book 1638/9-1640, fos. 17, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough, ii, pp. 394-5;

worship in All Saints continued to be distinctly non-Laudian. In June, Sibthorpe wrote expressing his continuing concern: 'Northampton men continue still inveighing against idolatry', he reported, and neither Ball nor the congregation used 'any of the reverend gestures or rites and ceremonies enjoined'.<sup>6</sup> That same year there was a plague in the town, and Clarke wrote in desperation to Sir John Lambe that the disruption had allowed Ball and his supporters a virtual free rein: 'they do now what they list in the church at All Saints in Northampton'. The altar rails, only erected on 17 March,<sup>7</sup> were cut in pieces, and the altar brought out into the chancel. Ball was supported by the town council, who objected when Clarke suggested abolishing the Thursday lecture and Sunday afternoon sermon.<sup>8</sup> He was obviously also popular with his congregation. They continued to follow him behind the altar rails to receive communion in 1640, lectures were very well attended, and Laudians were 'laughed out of church by

H.M.C. Ninth Report, App., 'Diary of Robert Woodford, Steward of Northampton', p. 496; V.C.H. Northamptonshire, ii, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough, ii, pp. 396-7.

<sup>7</sup> H.M.C. Ninth Report, App., 'Diary of Robert Woodford', p. 497.

<sup>8</sup> Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough, ii, pp. 238-9.

the vulgar'.<sup>9</sup>

In the same year, churchwardens also failed to co-operate in the setting up of altar rails in nearby Upton.<sup>10</sup> To the south, Towcester was another Northamptonshire town which provided popular opposition to Laudian reform. Sibthorpe noted in 1638 that the people there were 'infected' with a puritan lecturer, and there were continual problems in getting the parishioners to receive communion at the altar rails. Northampton and Daventry were also mentioned in this context. That year, the Towcester churchwardens failed to present 80-100 of the parishioners who refused to take the sacrament at the chancel.<sup>11</sup> This is a strikingly high proportion: in 1646 the town had just 1200 communicants.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, puritanism in Towcester was prominent enough to be noticed by the popular press. In 1642 a pamphlet featured a Towcester churchwarden in a story that combined an anti-puritan polemic with a gruesome moral

<sup>9</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640-1, p. 351.

<sup>10</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, p. 34. See also R.M. Serjeantson, A History of the Church of St. Peter, Northampton, (Northampton, 1904), pp. 37-8.

<sup>11</sup> Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough, ii, pp. 391-2, 238-9.

<sup>12</sup> P.R.O. SP 22/1, p. 5.

fable.<sup>13</sup> The churchwarden is alleged to have smashed the stained glass window in the church, and his sister to have abused and then tore up the Book of Common Prayer. Divine retribution awaits them both; the churchwarden and his wife die in mental and physical agony, the sister watches the flesh on her hands rot and fall off. The polemical nature of the story may cast doubt on the alleged iconoclasm, and there is no other evidence of it. There is however a specificity about names and places which does lend credence - unfortunately the parish accounts, which would allow the names to be checked, are not extant for this period. A similar pamphlet from the same year suggested that there was a puritan community in the eastern Northamptonshire parish of Mears Ashby, where a pregnant woman who derided baptism and did 'too much confiding in the conventcling sectaries' was allegedly delivered of a headless child.<sup>14</sup> Clearly, Northamptonshire in 1642 was fertile ground for pamphleteers bent on scandalising religious extremism.

<sup>13</sup> Wonderful News, (1642), E150(11).

<sup>14</sup> A Strange and Lamentable Accident that happened at Mears Ashby in Northamptonshire, (29 August 1642), E113(15). This story, and other prodigy and marvel stories of the war period, is discussed in Chris Durston, 'Signs and Wonders and the English Civil War', History Today, 37, x, (1987).

The vigorously assertive popular religious culture evident in the opposition to Laudian reform sometimes led to conflict between lay people and the parochial clergy. With the recall of parliament in 1640, these conflicts became heightened and politicised, with some parishes petitioning against their minister. Further opportunities were provided by the passing of an ordinance in July 1643 which enabled county committees to consider complaints against allegedly 'scandalous' ministers, sequester them, and appoint a suitable replacement.

Thus conflict between minister and congregation is most visible in two distinct bursts, the first in 1640-41, the second in about 1644-46. In the earlier period, Northamptonshire was again the site of the most activity. At least six Northamptonshire parishes petitioned the House of Lords against their minister in 1640-41.<sup>15</sup> These were from locations in most parts of the county, including Duddington on the north-east edge of Rockingham Forest, and Grafton Regis in the southern

<sup>15</sup> Duddington, Hardingshaw, Pattishall, Grafton Regis, Kislingbury, Wootton and Quinton. The first five are calendared in H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, pp. 32, 41, 42, 78, 111. The Wootton and Quinton petition is mentioned in L.J. iv, p. 306, and is in H.L.R.O., House of Lords Main Papers, June 1641, fos. 117ff.

fielden. Two were from parishes near Northampton, underlining the strong puritanism of that area. Further petitions, from Rothwell, Northampton and Pattishall, complained of persecution at the hands of Lambe and Sibthorpe.<sup>16</sup> Most contained a doctrinal element, but some also illustrate the way such complaints were suffused with local concerns. The Grafton Regis petition of 24 June 1641 for example complained of the irreverence and profanity of the parson, Thomas Austin, and requested his replacement by 'some godly and religious person'. The complaints though reveal more a discontent with Austin's idiosyncratic behaviour than a conflict with Laudianism as such. On one occasion for example he told communicants that the wine was to prevent them from choking on the bread.<sup>17</sup> When the 'inhabitants' of Rothwell, another fielden community, complained to the Lords about the activities of Sir John Lambe on 5 January, six out of the seven grievances related to local matters such as Lambe's alleged appropriation of common land, and his forcing inhabitants to use his mill. One however related to Lambe's installation of his nephew as minister, who had 'superstitiously introduced into the church innovations

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<sup>16</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, pp. 30, 33, 34, 38, 41.

<sup>17</sup> H.L.R.O., House of Lords Main Papers, 24 June 1641, Petition of parishioners of Grafton Regis.

never used before', and refused to administer the sacrament unless the petitioners knelt at the altar.<sup>18</sup> But in the Duddington petition all the complaints were doctrinal; that the curate denied the sacrament to 'divers' who refuse to receive it at the altar rails, that he preached only once a month, refused to license another preacher and prosecuted parishioners for going elsewhere to hear sermons.<sup>19</sup> At Pattishall, the two vicars illustrate well the changing patterns of parochial religious conflict. Miles Burkitt was in trouble with the Laudian authorities in 1639 for, amongst other things, going to a conventicle in Northampton, exhorting his parishioners to give contributions for Burton and Prynne, and preaching without the Book of Common Prayer. Yet by 1641 he was able to complain about his persecution to the Lords. That year the other minister, Richard Powell, was petitioned against by some of his congregation, who had originally lost out in a dispute about the payment of Ship Money. Now however Powell was found to be 'popish and superstitious', and his supporters Clarke and Sibthorpe were ordered to pay back the petitioners' fines and damages.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 5 January 1641, Petition of inhabitants of Rowell (sic).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 15 December 1640, Duddington petition.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 18 January 1641, Petition of Miles Burkitt;

Evidence of similar activity in the other counties of the region is more sparse. Parishioners of Market Harborough petitioned in 1641 regretting the loss of their former 'godly and conformable' minister.<sup>21</sup> Hughes notes the petition against the vicar of Beaudesert in Warwickshire, alleged by his parishioners to have associated with papists: this is the only such petition from the county we know about, although Hughes has also noted that the Warwickshire Quarter Sessions records contain more incidents between parishioners and ministers in the 1640-42 period than for the whole of the preceding decade.<sup>22</sup> There also seems to have been comparatively little petitioning activity in Worcestershire. There are two examples, both from the north-east. These are an accusation of immorality and popish sympathies made by the constable of Alvechurch, and perhaps the best known, that at Kidderminster.<sup>23</sup> Here, some of the inhabitants considered the vicar to be both ignorant and a drunkard, and petitioned against him in 1640. In March 1641 Richard Baxter was appointed lecturer.

L.J. iv, pp. 136-7.

<sup>21</sup> C.S.P.D. 1640-1, p. 525.

<sup>22</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 133, 133n.

<sup>23</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, p. 385; H.M.C. Various Collections, I, The Records of the County of Worcester, pp. 320-1; R.B., pp. 19-20.

The strength of puritan feeling in the region is further attested by petitions sent to London in early 1642. These had been drawn up following the wave of popish scares in the wake of the Irish Rebellion in November 1641, and in the growing sense of political crisis of the final months before the outbreak of civil war. But they do also reflect a more general disquiet at longer term religious innovations, and support for parliament to reform them. Thus a Northamptonshire petition of February 1642, claiming to represent freeholders as well as knights and gentry, stated an expectation of 'a perfect reformation' in religion.<sup>24</sup> One of two petitions from Warwickshire in the same month called for the parliament to 'go on reforming the church thoroughly', and Leicestershire petitions pledged support for the parliament in the wake of the rebellion in Ireland.<sup>25</sup> Typically puritan, anti-Catholic paranoia was evident even in Rutland, which produced a petition, printed in March, 'humbly craving a sudden course to be taken with the Papists inhabiting

<sup>24</sup> Petition of the Knights, Gentlemen and Freeholders of the County of Northampton, (1642), E135(36); C.S.P.D. 1641-3, p. 279.

<sup>25</sup> Two Petitions...of the County of Warwick and Coventry, (12 February 1642), E135(27); Two Petitions of the County of Leicester, (15 February 1642), E135(13).

there, of whom they were very much afraid, both in respect of their number, and also by reason of threatening words...'. This petition, with blatant exaggeration given Rutland's tiny size, was claimed to have been signed by 'ten thousand housekeepers hands'.<sup>26</sup> One of the Warwickshire petitions claimed to represent 'the inhabitants' of the county. One of the Leicestershire petitions was reportedly brought to London by nearly a thousand people.<sup>27</sup>

But how justified such claims are is impossible to say. Virtually nothing is known of their circulation, and they may have been restricted to the well off and literate, although they could have been at least read out in church. The Northamptonshire petition was signed by 18 men at the Swan in Northampton, on 21 January 1642. The signatories include men such as Richard Samwell, Edward Harby and Thomas Pentlow, who went on to serve in the parliamentarian administration during the war. Another is William Waters, probably the William Waters who petitioned against Richard Powell, and who therefore may well have sought the support of

<sup>26</sup> Printed in A Continuation of the True Diurnal, (14-21 March 1642), E201(30), p. 73.

<sup>27</sup> Nehemiah Wallington, Historical Notices of Events Occurring Chiefly in the Reign of Charles I, 2 vols., (1869), 2, pp. 11, 12 and 15, cited in Manning, English People, p. 171.

the puritan community in Pattishall.<sup>28</sup> But too little is known about the circulation of this and the other similar petitions to admit them as anything more than evidence of a generalized religious discontent.

The later complaints against ministers are also problematic for use in this context. As Green has shown, they do not represent simple puritan versus Anglican (or Laudian) conflict.<sup>29</sup> Many sequestrations of clergy were made on political grounds, such as supporting the enemy or frequenting an enemy garrison. Thus of the 114 cases given by Matthews for Leicestershire, some 51 include an accusation of associating with the royalists in some way, by far the biggest single category.<sup>30</sup> The situation is complicated

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<sup>28</sup> The list of signatories is given in Petition of...the County of Northampton, E135(36). For the presence of Samwell, Harby and Pentlow on the Northamptonshire Committee during the war, see for example their signatures on various Committee papers in P.R.O. SP 28/238 and 239, passim. Pentlow may also have served as a captain in a company of foot: SP 28/238/425, 559, 602.

<sup>29</sup> I.M. Green, 'The Persecution of "scandalous" and "malignant" parish clergy during the English Civil War', E.H.R., 94, (1979).

<sup>30</sup> These and the following figures are taken from the cases in Matthews, Walker Revised. As Green points out,

further by the lack of material on the accusations levelled at the ministers, and exactly who gave evidence against them. Leicestershire is the only county studied here where books of the local committee are extant. Thus of the 117 Northamptonshire cases in Walker Revised, only 43 include accusations and/or reasons for sequestration. Twenty-eight of these include charges of royalism of some kind. Of the 41 Warwickshire cases, only 13 contain this information, 11 of which include royalism. Elsewhere, the numbers are too small to be significant. The relative paucity of cases from Worcestershire and Rutland is explained by the fact that they were largely in royalist control for much of the war. In addition, as we have seen, these were the parts of the region where puritanism had made the least impact before the war. Green notes the high geographical variation in actual sequestrations of clergy. In the west midlands, according to Green, some 14-23% of clergy were sequestered, but in the east midlands the proportion was significantly higher.<sup>31</sup> It has been estimated that nearly a third of the parochial clergy of Leicestershire were deprived of their

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Matthews is a preferable source to Walker himself, as the former had access to a wider range of sources: Green, 'Persecution', p. 507.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 522.

livings between 1640 and 1655.<sup>32</sup>

Political considerations, and the geography of military control, undoubtedly played a major role in accusations against the clergy after 1642. It remains true however that religio-cultural complaints were important in the accusations made against the clergy in this period. Green notes the low number of Leicestershire cases which involve charges of 'erroneous' doctrine (less than 20%).<sup>33</sup> But the records of the Leicestershire Committee for Sequestrations contain detailed accusations by parishioners of clergy allowing 'profane' sports in at least seven parishes,<sup>34</sup> and 24 of the Leicestershire cases in Walker Revised involve accusations of Sabbath breaking by this or other means. Twenty-five involve non-use of the Directory, or continued use of the Book of Common Prayer. These represent the next largest categories to the political accusations. In Northamptonshire, Michael Westfield, the rector of Islip, was sequestered in July 1647 not only for attending the Commission of Array, but for reading from the Book of Sports, profaning the Sabbath and observing ceremonies. Similarly the rector

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<sup>32</sup> V.C.H. Leicestershire, i, p. 380.

<sup>33</sup> Green, 'Persecution', p. 511.

<sup>34</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C11. The parishes are: Claybrooke, Higham on the Hill, Congerstone, Nailstone, Shackerstone, Kegworth and Queniborough.

of East Farndon in the north-west of the county was sequestered in 1646 for prosecuting those of his congregation that went to other churches, as well as saying in a sermon that the war was not worth the paring of his nails.<sup>35</sup> None of the Northamptonshire cases involved unlawful sports, but six out of the 43 with details include accusations of observing ceremonies, and five involve alehouse frequenting, drunkenness or swearing. The only categories more common are royalism and 'delinquency'. Similarly in Warwickshire, the only identifiable category apart from royalism that occurs with any regularity is alehouse frequenting/drunkenness/swearing.

However, the evidence from Leicestershire allows us to see that accusations made on religious grounds were sometimes merely a smoke-screen for the continuation of less ideological disputes, and sometimes a case may have reflected little more than a personal feud. Thomas Pestell of Packington for example was accused of having spoken 'against the parliament and those affected to it and jeered and scoffed at them that were well affected and religious'. But Pestell claimed that this was alleged by just one man, and that there was 'no other man in the parish did hear or can testify any such thing'. Richard Gem, the parson of Husbands Bosworth, said that the scandalous words he was alleged to have

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<sup>35</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, pp. 286, 276.

said to a woman parishioner were concocted by her, and one Mrs. Hall, 'my old adversary'. The rector of Kimcote, charged with excommunicating a churchwarden for 'godliness' in 1638, countered that in fact the churchwarden had charged him with preaching twice on a Sunday, and with not wearing the surplice.<sup>36</sup> These disputes generally involved very small numbers of parishioners, which supports the claims of Pestell and of Gem that they were being persecuted by unrepresentative individuals or tiny groups. The Leicestershire Order Book contains depositions against 34 clergy, with evidence from just 80 parishioners,<sup>37</sup> including the 10 who gave evidence in support of Thomas Pestell. The largest group of hostile deponents is the nine who gave evidence against William Richardson, vicar of Garthorpe. The usual number is fewer than five.

Therefore the evidence is not full or clear enough to allow us to conclude, as Sharpe is able to do so for Essex,<sup>38</sup> that the accusations of this later period represent the heightened demands made of parish clergy by grassroots puritanism. Local and political issues

<sup>36</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C11, fos. 9-10v, 23-23v, 49-50.

<sup>37</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, fos. 67v-78v.

<sup>38</sup> Jim Sharpe, 'Scandalous and Malignant Priests in Essex: the Impact of Grassroots Puritanism', in Jones, Newitt and Roberts (eds.), Politics and People.

complicated the accusations made in Leicestershire, and the evidence to posit a different situation for the other counties considered here does not exist. This evidence, considered with that for earlier years given above, does however corroborate the picture of the geographical distribution of puritanism in the region. Again, it appears that it was strongest in the north and east, with Northamptonshire a particular stronghold, though a degree of popular puritanism is evident over much of the region.

Towards the end of the wars, the popular response to the activities of religious radicals further suggested the extent of nonconformist religion. A detailed consideration of radicalism is beyond the scope of this thesis; it was essentially a minority, post-1646 phenomenon, and the purpose of this study is to consider the influence of popular religion and culture on allegiance in 1642-46. Popular enthusiasm for puritan forms of religion - notably radical preaching - is however discernible in the response to the activities of religious radicals, some of whom were active in the New Model Army in 1645-6. Recently, the authenticity of radical religion in the rank and file of this army has been reasserted by both Laurence and Gentles.<sup>39</sup> It saw action over much of the region,

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<sup>39</sup> Anne Laurence, Parliamentary Army Chaplains, 1642-1651, (Woodbridge, 1990), chs. 4 and 6; Ian Gentles,

marching on Leicester after the battle of Naseby, and finally at Worcester. With it came radical chaplains as well as lay preachers in the ranks. After the end of the war, soldiers harassed ministers in many parts of the south and midlands.

In parts of the region, notably Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, there was a popular interest in such activity sufficient to alarm the authorities, although not constituting a mass endorsement of radicalism. Baxter claimed success for orthodox godliness over radicalism in both Warwickshire and Worcestershire, but it is clear from his own account that some people had shown interest in the latter. At Coventry, Baxter preached against the 'Anabaptists' in order to keep the citizens from 'all infection of sectaries and dividers'. He held a public disputation with the radical minister, Benjamin Cox. Another disputation was held between the Coventry ministers Obadiah Grew and John Bryan and leaders of

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The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653, (Oxford, 1992), ch. 4. These support the earlier assertion of the army's radicalism by Hill in Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution, (1975), ch. 4, disputed by Mark Kishlansky, The Rise of the New Model Army, (Cambridge, 1979).

the London Baptists.<sup>40</sup> Baxter claims that only a dozen or so poor townsmen and women in Coventry were lost to his cause, but his experiences as a chaplain in Colonel Whalley's regiment (which he joined after Naseby) gave him a different perspective: 'And in all places where we went, the sectarian soldiers much infected the countries, by their pamphlets and converse, and the people admiring the conquering army, were ready to receive whatsoever they commanded to them'.<sup>41</sup> The royalist press alleged that there was a conventicle near Warwick in November 1643 in which a grocer turned parliamentarian soldier preached to large crowds. At Leamington Hastings, parliamentarian troops dissuaded people from attending church, and at Rugby in October 1645 soldiers preached against ministers and baptized women.<sup>42</sup>

Whalley's troop were in eastern Northamptonshire in February 1646. Then, six or seven of them came to

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<sup>40</sup> R.B., pp. 45-6; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 311. Public debates such as this are discussed in Ann Hughes, 'Public Disputations, Pamphlets and Polemic', History Today, 41, (1991). Hughes argues, ibid., p. 32, that the large turnout at these debates indicates a greater popular interest in radicalism than much recent work suggests.

<sup>41</sup> R.B., pp. 46, 56.

<sup>42</sup> Tenant, Edgehill and Beyond, pp. 227-8.

Wellingborough and 'preached to the people' in private houses. The soldiers were told that the minister of the town 'preached much against the Scots', and they twice attempted to kill him, also wounding a constable who remonstrated with them.<sup>43</sup> The following year, Fairfax had to order soldiers in Northamptonshire to keep out of pulpits, and stop interrupting ministers whilst they were preaching.<sup>44</sup> Samuel Clarke claimed that young people from Alcester who sought shelter in Warwick during the wars fell into 'the company of anabaptists and other sectaries'.<sup>45</sup>

In royalist Worcester there seems to have been no such danger. Puritanism, at least in any public sense, was crushed underfoot during the war. A letter from the city in the spring of 1643, printed in the parliamentary press, said 'the well affected and most religious amongst us are either confined or imprisoned, and do daily expect worse usage...religion itself is scorned and mocked at'.<sup>46</sup> The following year the corporation decided it could no longer afford to

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, (1646), I, pp. 215-6. See also Gentles, New Model Army, p. 101, and Hill, World Turned, p. 124.

<sup>44</sup> Gentles, New Model Army, p. 101.

<sup>45</sup> Clarke, Lives, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Mercurius Civicus, (11-18 May 1643), E102(8), sigs. Bl-2.

support a lecturer, who would now have to subsist on voluntary contributions.<sup>47</sup> Apart from the brief parliamentary rule in the late autumn of 1642, neither puritanism or radical religion was to have a platform in the city until the royalist surrender in 1646 allowed a purge of royalist clergy; pulpits were then occupied once again by chaplains from the parliamentarian army.<sup>48</sup>

In the east, the activities of the radical weaver and General Baptist Samuel Oates were to cause considerable concern to the authorities. Shortly after the end of the war, Oates began a preaching tour through east midland counties. It was said of him that he 'preacheth constantly' in Rutland, and by October 1647 there was a warrant for his arrest for 'dispersing of unsound doctrine unto the people'. In December, clergy in Rutland petitioned the Lords that Oates had been baptizing 'very many, and drawing a concourse of people after him'. He had caused people to desert their parish churches, and had been stirring up discontent, distributing copies of the Agreement of the People. Oates had also been active in neighbouring parts of

<sup>47</sup> Bond (ed.), Chamber Order Book of Worcester, p. 381.

'Dr. Lawrence' was appointed lecturer in 1645: ibid., p. 400.

<sup>48</sup> Buchan-Dunlop, 'Seventeenth Century Puritans in Worcester' pp. 31-2.

Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.<sup>49</sup> The tone is deliberately alarmist, but Oates had evidently attracted enough attention from the people to create anxiety. In the late 1640s, Digger colonies were to appear at Wellingborough, and at Bosworth in Leicestershire.<sup>50</sup> Although we cannot, pace Hill, characterize Wellingborough as a straightforwardly radical community,<sup>51</sup> it is clear that, by the latter

<sup>49</sup> H.M.C. Fifth Report, App., Field MSS, p. 390; L.R.O. DE730/3, Barker MSS, p. 67; L.J. ix, pp. 571-3. Oates was in Warwickshire in 1650 to dispute with Thomas Hall in Henley in Arden: Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 318n. On Oates generally, see Richard L. Greaves and Robert Zaller (eds.), Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century, 3 vols, (Brighton, 1982-84).

<sup>50</sup> Hill, World Turned, p. 124.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-5. Hill notes a "long standing Puritan tradition" in Wellingborough, and a subsequent Digger, Quaker and possibly Ranter presence there. Thomas Jones, the vicar, was forced during the war to ride to Northampton on the back of a bear by some of the inhabitants: Matthews, Walker Revised, p. 281. But the plebeian disorders Hill notes in 1642-3 are contrary to, not part of this pattern: as shown below (Chapter Five and Appendix I) they were royalist riots, that included violence against puritans and

stages of the war at least, there was significant radical support in the east midland fielden.

The popular response to religious radicalism in the latter part of this period may therefore have been more positive than Baxter claimed. Radicalism as such was not a mass movement. But the interest in radical preaching indicates that popular puritanism was broad enough to allow radicals to position themselves at the margins of popular religious culture. That they were able to do this even in a fielden and apparently highly conservative county like Rutland suggests that patterns of popular religion and culture were more complex than has commonly been supposed.

#### Puritanism and the Survival of Traditional Culture

The complexity of these patterns is further suggested by the widespread survival of traditional cultural forms in the region. The patchy survival of Quarter Sessions records and churchwardens' accounts for the counties of this study makes a comparative study difficult, and anything other than impressionistic

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parliamentarians, and royalists recruited there in the war. (The parish churchwardens' accounts are extant, but unfortunately are very brief and shed little light on the tremendous struggle that evidently took place in Wellingborough in the 1640s.)

conclusions dangerous. Other sources can be useful, but none allow a satisfactory comparison.

The old culture remained important up to and after the civil war in the fielden areas of the extreme south and east, and apparently everywhere in the extreme west of the region. 'Unlawful' games were evidently still enduring in the eastern parts of the diocese of Peterborough in the immediate pre-war years. In 1637 Richard Wilson of Belmesthorpe in Rutland was punished for being a 'continual player at scalebones and such like unlawful games upon Sundays and holy days at prayer time'. Two years later a man from Lutton, in the east Northamptonshire fielden, was in trouble for 'dancing of morris on a Sunday about the country all evening prayer time'.<sup>52</sup> This culture survived the attempted reforms of the civil war and Commonwealth periods. Northamptonshire constables' presentments from 1657 reveal card playing at Easton-on-the-Hill, a bull baiting, popular enough to draw crowds away from the petty sessions, at Pytchley, and 'profanities' on the Sabbath in Higham Ferrers.<sup>53</sup> All of these are in

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<sup>52</sup> N.R.O., P.D.R. 68, Correction Book 1636/7-1638/9, f. 14; 70, Correction Book 1639-1641, f. 31.

<sup>53</sup> Wake (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records, Northamptonshire, pp. 124-131 (Easter 1657 presentments), 172-178 (Michaelmas 1657 presentments), 167 (Pytchley), 223 (Higham Ferrers).

the east. In 1657-8, there were further profanities on the Sabbath in Wollaston, again in the east, and wakes near Wappenham in the south.<sup>54</sup> Tradition also survived in north-east Leicestershire. The constables of Branston spent money in 1648-9 'amongst the neighbours at Robinson's when the football play should have been with Eaton'.<sup>55</sup> Although this may represent a puritan inspired attempt to suppress the game, it is clear that football was still a part of the popular culture here in the 1640s.

Warwickshire Quarter Sessions records suggest such activity had also continued in the fielden in the south of that county. In 1653 men from Cherington, Wolford and Long Compton were involved in riotous assembly and cudgel playing on the Sabbath in Barton.<sup>56</sup> The Easter 1655 sessions attempted to suppress maypoles, maybushes and morris dancing, which had been regular in Henley in Arden.<sup>57</sup> Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, as Essex's army moved through the county towards Worcester, the puritan sergeant Nehemiah Wharton noted that his creed had made little ground in Southam: 'a very malignant town, both minister and people', he

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 223, 206.

<sup>55</sup> L.R.O. DE 720/30, f. 78.

<sup>56</sup> W.C.R. vol. vi, p. 109.

<sup>57</sup> W.C.R. vol. iii, pp. 271-2. Also in Underdown, Revel, p. 262, and Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 324.

complained. The minister, Francis Holyoake, was a prominent Arminian who would almost certainly have encouraged the survival of festive culture.<sup>58</sup> Baxter considered most of the inhabitants of Kidderminster 'an ignorant, rude and revelling people'. Every year there was a procession of painted giants, 'and such like foolery', which became an occasion to ridicule and attack Baxter himself.<sup>59</sup> When Wharton arrived in Worcestershire in the autumn of 1642, he was able to detect no godly culture whatsoever. Writing from Worcester in September, he declared, 'the city is so vile and the county so base, so papistical, and atheistical, and abominable, that it resembles Sodom and Gomorrah'. Neither here nor elsewhere is there evidence that puritanism was any stronger in the upland pasture areas of south-west Worcestershire than in the fielden. After seeing Hereford, Wharton described the inhabitants as ignorant and 'much addicted to drunkenness and other vices'.<sup>60</sup> In 1646, Hugh Peter

<sup>58</sup> Sir H. Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer of the Earl of Essex's Army', Archaeologia, vol. 35, (1853), p. 316. For Holyoake, see Matthews, Walker Revised, p. 363, and Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 67.

<sup>59</sup> R.B., pp. 20, 24.

<sup>60</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', pp. 329-30, 332. After returning from Hereford to

noted that Herefordshire and Worcestershire were 'ripe for the gospel'.<sup>61</sup> The parliamentarian press claimed that Worcester was indeed host to the depraved festivity that Wharton hinted at. In July 1644 the Weekly Account condemned 'their open profaneness in a day set apart for morris dancing and drunkenness, instead of a Thanksgiving'.<sup>62</sup> There is no other, less hostile evidence of this, and the memorandum book of Sir Daniel Tyas, mayor of Worcester in 1643, includes some strict laws relating to alehouses and drinking hours in the city.<sup>63</sup> However there is in general no reason to doubt the survival of traditional culture here and in other parts of the region where, as has been shown above, puritanism had achieved only limited success.

But festive culture and puritanism were not

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Worcester, Wharton joined an excursion into the Malvern Hills. He makes no mention of any godly communities there, remarking only that 'Malvern Church' (probably that at Great Malvern) is 'the stateliest parish church in England, adorned with varieties of rarities': ibid., p. 333.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Hill, World Turned, p. 74.

<sup>62</sup> The Weekly Account, (12-19 July 1644), E51(14), sig. A2v.

<sup>63</sup> B.L. Add. MS 29873 (Memorandum Book of Sir Daniel Tyas), fos. 61-2.

necessarily exclusive. Evidence suggests that the cultural pattern of the east midland fielden was more complex than one of mere traditionalist survival. There was puritanism here too. Easton, in the extreme north-east, is close to Rockingham Forest and, moreover, just a few miles from the puritan parish of Duddington. Pytchley is not far from both Rothwell and Mears Ashby, both of which, as we have seen, had puritan communities. Characterising the popular culture of this area therefore is not straightforward: traditional culture was juxtaposed with puritanism. That this could be so within as well as *between parishes* is shown by the parish of Lowick, another eastern parish, near Islip. In some senses, Lowick was a model of puritan orthodoxy during the war. There is no evidence of perambulations during the 1640s, and in 1644 and 1646 changes were made to the church suggesting adherence to the puritan reforms; the rood loft was taken down, the 'crucifixes and scandalous pictures' were removed, and payment was made to workmen for 'levelling and taking away the altar'. Yet in 1646 another payment was made, to one Robert Brandlie, 'for making the maypole'.<sup>64</sup> Whether the north-east of Leicestershire was actually anti-puritan is unclear: Waltham on the Wolds, just to the south of football playing Branston and Eaton,

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<sup>64</sup> N.R.O. 199P/77/28 (single sheet); 199P/77/31 (single sheet).

purchased a Directory in 1645/6, and removed the King's arms from the church in 1650/1. In another example of what we might call cultural dimorphism, this parish nevertheless held perambulations throughout the 1640s, and rang its bells in 1646 'in hope of peace'.<sup>65</sup> Garthorpe, where the unusually large number of nine deponents gave evidence against the vicar William Richardson, is only a few miles away. Here too, however, the situation is complex: the sequestered Richardson illegally returned to the church in 1647 and read from the Book of Common Prayer to 'some few' of the parish.<sup>66</sup>

In eastern parts of the region therefore, traditional culture had endured alongside, not instead of, puritanism. Lack of churchwardens' accounts for the south Northamptonshire and Warwickshire fielden make it more difficult to illustrate a similar cultural complexity here. But Hughes's analysis of the diary of Thomas Dugard reveals a tightly knit puritan community in south Warwickshire, with a wealth of godly preaching in southern parishes, although Dugard has apparently little to say about non-elites.<sup>67</sup> Even Southam, the parish so repellent to Wharton, had a puritan

<sup>65</sup> L.R.O. DE 625/15, fos. 61, 65v, and fos. 56-65v passim.

<sup>66</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, f. 76v.

<sup>67</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 71-80.

tradition.<sup>68</sup> In south Northamptonshire, Pattishall, Towcester and Grafton Regis all displayed signs of godly communities in this period. Estimating their proportional importance is difficult, although we have seen that large numbers of people rejected Laudian worship in Towcester. Nevertheless it is clear that, as for the east, the southern fielden of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire was not culturally distinct. Certainly, traditional culture was more prominent in these parts. But puritanism was too important for a consistently communal/festive culture to be said to have dominated.

The reverse is true of the apparently puritan areas further west, including the Arden. Puritanism may have been well established in this area, but it was far from dominant. In September 1653, a bear baiting on the Northamptonshire-Warwickshire border was banned, which was reportedly expected to draw 10,000 people.<sup>69</sup> In Marston Trussell, a parish in the extreme north-west of Northamptonshire, the churchwardens in 1638 tried to prevent a presentment 'of the church yard' for 'the playing at kit cat and disorderly ringing and such like

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 65; D.F. Mosler, 'A Social and Religious History of the Civil War in the County of Warwick', Stanford University Ph.D., (1974), p. 105.

<sup>69</sup> V.C.H. Warwickshire, ii, p. 457; C.S.P.D. 1653-4, p. 171.

which was complained of'.<sup>70</sup> The Committee for Sequestrations in Leicestershire heard evidence of a variety of traditional sports in south-west Leicestershire. In Claybrooke, near the north Warwickshire border, there had been 'games of football and scales' on the Sabbath day: the vicar did not deny this, and asserted that his accusers had themselves joined in on occasion.<sup>71</sup> The parson of Higham on the Hill, near Hinckley, was alleged to have permitted parishioners to 'play at any manner of sport or plays on the Lord's days'. A little further north, the vicar of Congerstone was said to have allowed football and stool-ball on a Sunday, and been a sometime spectator; in Nailstone, the rector was accused of having bought a football and joined in the game himself, as well as in games of quoits and shovelboard. He denied playing the games, but not (by implication) their existence in the parish.<sup>72</sup> Bowling and other ball games were alleged to have been played in Queniborough, near Leicester, and the rector of Kegworth, on the Nottinghamshire border, was accused of playing 'headball' and other sports constantly.<sup>73</sup> These are all fielden communities, and as

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<sup>70</sup> N.R.O. 206P/64, 1638 accounts (no pagination).

<sup>71</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C11, fos. 57, 59.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., fos. 28 (Higham), 32 (Congerstone), 63 (Nailstone).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., unfoliated sheet between fos. 69 and 70

such support identification of such areas with cultural conservatism. But they are situated well away from the areas of Worcestershire, south Warwickshire and Rutland that provided most resistance to puritanism. Geographically, these areas are much closer to Coventry, Leicester and Northampton than to the less puritan communities of the west and east. The complaints made about the bell ringing in Marston Trussell and about the clergy in western Leicestershire suggest puritan as well as traditional culture. Both football and stoolball, sports typified by Underdown as characteristic of communal and individualistic communities respectively,<sup>74</sup> were played in Congerstone.

Moreover, the neighbouring forest region of the Arden also displayed signs of a cultural identity more complex than mere individualism. The popularity of wakes in Nether Whitacre has been noted above; this also applies to Fillongley, as the constables there were still incurring extra expense preventing them in

(Queniborough), f. 21 (Kegworth).

<sup>74</sup> Underdown, Revel, pp. 75-7. But both sports were also played in Oxford in 1633. The distinction between the two here was gender based: the women played stoolball, the men football - Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, p. 19. It is not known if there was any such distinction in Congerstone.

1655.<sup>75</sup> Traditional culture also endured in puritan towns like Rugby, Nuneaton and Coventry. In 1638, Robert Woodford visited Rugby, where the puritan James Nalton was minister. But what he found there suggests that Nalton had by no means wholly reformed the popular culture of the town; 'there was in the town a bear-baiting, which I was grieved at, and the more because I feared it was done in opposition to the good man'.<sup>76</sup> Nuneaton was the site in the 1630s of a fortnightly lecture by the puritan Richard Vines, to which, according to Clarke, 'multitudes resorted...from places divers miles off'.<sup>77</sup> Yet nearby Attleborough was the site of a disorderly alehouse in 1638, and the following year a maypole was at the centre of disorder in the Nuneaton area, when some Chilverscoton people came 'in a tumultuous manner' to steal one.<sup>78</sup> Vines left to join Baxter and a number of other godly ministers in Coventry following the outbreak of war.<sup>79</sup> But alehouses remained a problem to the puritans there. In January 1647, 16 out of a total of 26 presentments in the city's Little Park Street, Spon Street and

<sup>75</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 323-4.

<sup>76</sup> New College, Oxford, MS Woodford's Diary, entry for 20 February 1638 (no pagination).

<sup>77</sup> Clarke, Lives, p. 48.

<sup>78</sup> W.C.R. vol. vi., pp. 49, 53.

<sup>79</sup> Clarke, Lives, p. 48.

Jordan Well wards concerned selling beer contrary to statute or without licence.<sup>80</sup> Sabbath breaking was still frequent in the city in 1655-6.<sup>81</sup> In the county generally, five out of the 11 indictments made at Quarter Sessions in 1638-42 involving alehouse disorders or Sabbath breaking concerned people from parishes in the north.<sup>82</sup> The minster, churchwardens and other substantial inhabitants of Brinklow, near Coventry, petitioned in 1645 for the suppression of as many as seven alehouses there.<sup>83</sup>

Alehouse culture remained important in the east

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<sup>80</sup> Levi Fox (ed.), Coventry Constables' Presentments 1629-1742, Dugdale Society, xxxiv, (1986), p. 4. These offences were still common in 1657: ibid., pp. 5-9.

<sup>81</sup> Levi Fox (ed.), 'The Diary of Robert Beake, Mayor of Coventry, 1655-1656', in Miscellany I, ed. Robert Bearman, Dugdale Society, xxi, (1977), passim, eg. pp. 119, 127, 129, 132, 134-5. See also Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 283-4, which notes that out of 140 individual offences or conflicts in the diary, 38 concern alehouses or drunkenness, and 25 Sabbath breaking.

<sup>82</sup> W.C.R. vol. vi, pp. 43-66. The five northern parishes are: Attleborough, Solihull, Lapworth, Middleton and Stretton upon Dunsmore.

<sup>83</sup> W.C.R. vol. ii, p. 136. Also in Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 286.

midlands too. In Leicester, there was a move by the corporation in 1646 to monitor alehouses more closely, 'by reason of the multitude of those which sell ale and beer without license, and by the disorder of those that have licenses'.<sup>84</sup> Twelve out of the 39 parishes that submitted constables' presentments to the Northamptonshire Quarter Sessions in 1657 presented people for unlicensed alehouses or alehouse disorders.<sup>85</sup> Clearly, even the most puritan areas of the region were still host to a popular culture that caused disquiet to the godly.

Underdown notes the persistence of "less formal" traditions such as alehouses in the puritan areas of the west country, in contrast to the success of the campaigns against official traditions such as church ales, revels and perambulations.<sup>86</sup> Even so, he undervalues the importance of 'informal', plebeian

<sup>84</sup> L.R.O. BRII/I, vol. 3, Leicester Borough Corporation Records, Hall Book 3, 1587/8-1708, p. 619. Note also the prevalence of alehouse and ale assize offences in the bundle of constables' presentments from 1639: L.R.O. BR IV/1/6, Quarter Sessions Roll, April 1639. One set has 11 such presentments out of 13, another four out of five.

<sup>85</sup> Wake (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records, Northamptonshire, pp. 124-31, 172-8.

<sup>86</sup> Underdown, Revel, ch. 4, esp. pp. 84-8.

culture when characterising his regional cultures: the puritan clothing and pasture districts are apparently characterised on the basis of middling sort culture alone. Ultimately, this results in a thesis similar to the class-based theories of Manning and Hunt. In any case, it ignores senses in which puritanism was much closer to tradition and festivity than much of the above would suggest.

This particularly applies to civic and parochial ritual. Fairs, Saint's Days, festival days and perambulations endured even in the most markedly puritan communities. In Northampton, Woodford noted in 1638 fairs held in celebration of St. George's Day and St. Hugh's Day. The town had a tradition of such fairs, inaugurated in 1599 and confirmed in charters of 1618 and 1683.<sup>87</sup> Woodford complained in 1638 that a preacher in Northampton, probably at All Saints, had 'turned somewhat canonical and gave thanks for saint's days etc.'<sup>88</sup> In Coventry, the town council in 1640 reminded councillors, the mayor and the sheriff of their duty to wear scarlet gowns on festival days, of which there

<sup>87</sup> H.M.C. Ninth Report, App., 'Diary of Robert Woodford', p. 497; Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough, ii, pp. 186-7. See also Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, pp. 13, 15, 30.

<sup>88</sup> H.M.C. Ninth Report, App., 'Diary of Robert Woodford', p. 496.

were several: All Saints Day, Gun-Powder Day, Easter Day, Whitsun Day, Trinity Sunday and Coventry Fair Day.<sup>89</sup> Perambulations were the only surviving ceremonies in this period of the various medieval rituals for ensuring a bountiful and healthy crop. They were the subject of considerable puritan hostility in the 1630s, when the ceremonial and festive elements of the custom drew their fire.<sup>90</sup> But evidence suggests that they survived in most parts of the region until at least the late 1630s. Churchwardens' accounts indicate their survival until then or later in at least 13 parishes; five in Leicestershire, four in Northamptonshire, two in Warwickshire and one in both Rutland and Worcestershire.<sup>91</sup> This is not a reliable

<sup>89</sup> Cov.C.R.O. A14(b), p. 6.

<sup>90</sup> Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, (Harmondsworth, 1973 p.b.), pp. 71-4; Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, pp. 23-4. Underdown, Revel, pp. 80-82, cites the more rapid disappearance of perambulations in wood-pasture parishes in the west country as symptomatic of their increasing individualism. Examples are given of their disappearance as early as 1613. Somewhat confusingly however, he also admits that "the bounds were still being perambulated in many places right down to the civil war": ibid., p. 82n.

<sup>91</sup> Leicestershire: L.R.O. DE 384/36 (Wigston Magna), DE 667/2 (Loughborough), DE 1605/34 (Stathern), DE

guide to their numerical importance, as the survival of the accounts themselves is generally poor, and not all can relied upon to have recorded perambulations.<sup>92</sup>

Extant accounts do however reveal important evidence about the geographical distribution of perambulations. In puritan Northampton, they were held as late as 1638 and 1639 in the churches of St. Sepulchre and St. Giles. At Great Houghton, just to the south-east, they disappear from the churchwardens' accounts in 1639. But the constables' accounts record a 'perambulation about the forest' there in 1641.<sup>93</sup> In Warwick, a seat of Lord Brooke's puritan influence, the church of St. Nicholas

1564/1354 (Leicester St. Martin's), DE 625/18 (Waltham on the Wolds). Northamptonshire: N.R.O. 241P/42 (Northampton St. Sepulchre), 223P/107 (Northampton St. Giles), 175P/28 (Great Houghton), 55P/58-9 (Burton Latimer). Warwickshire: W.C.R.O. DR 87/2 (Warwick St. Nicholas), DRB 27/5 (Nether Whitacre). Rutland: L.R.O. DE 1784/17 (Uppingham). Worcestershire: H.W.R.O. BA 850/2335/16b.(v). (St. Michael in Bedwardine).

<sup>92</sup> For the variable nature of churchwardens' accounts for this period, see below.

<sup>93</sup> N.R.O. 241P/42, 1638 and 1639 accounts (no pagination); N.R.O. 223P/107, 1638 and 1639 accounts (no pagination); N.R.O. 175P/28, 1639 accounts, (no pagination); N.R.O. 175P/38, (Great Houghton constables' accounts), 1641 accounts (no pagination).

held perambulations in 1638, 1639 and 1640, although their occurrence thereafter is uncertain. Festivity had remained important here, as the churchwardens continued to buy bread and beer for the occasion. The north Warwickshire parish of Nether Whitacre held a perambulation as late as 1639, although there is no evidence of their survival in nearby Fillongley.<sup>94</sup> In St. Martins, Leicester, they survived until at least 1641, and they appear to have endured throughout the 1640s at nearby Wigston Magna, although disruption to the accounts makes this uncertain. Communal festivity was under some attack in this parish however, as in 1644 money was paid to the churchwardens for the purchase of malt and wheat, 'formerly given in bunbread and drink'.<sup>95</sup>

The occurrence of perambulations in distinctly Anglican parishes such as Loughborough, Uppingham in Rutland and St. Michael in Bedwardine in Worcester is

<sup>94</sup> W.C.R.O. DR 87/2, pp. 137, 138, 148; W.C.R.O. DRB 27/5, f. 18; W.C.R.O. DR 404/49, 1630s accounts, passim.

<sup>95</sup> L.R.O. DE 1564/1354, p. 745; L.R.O. DE 384/36, fos. 41, 44v. Save for 1644, there are no accounts for Wigston Magna in the 1640s. The survival of perambulations may however be inferred from their occurrence in 1638 and 1650.

less noteworthy.<sup>96</sup> It is also true that perambulations appear to have been dying out by the early 1640s in the puritan communities mentioned above. However, this is far too belated a success for the godly to have truly reformed the popular culture in these parishes by the time of the civil war. Communality was, at the least, a very recent memory for many of the parishioners, and sometimes puritan reform was only partial. A good example of this is Burton Latimer, a community in the east Northamptonshire fielden which provides another instance of the cultural complexity described above. Despite its location in an area where traditional culture had remained important, and despite the parish's commitment to ornamentation, with its altar rails decorated with green paint and gold leaf, perambulations came under attack by the godly in 1639. In that year, a resolution was taken to restrict the

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<sup>96</sup> It is strange however that in so conservative a parish as Loughborough perambulations appear to have disappeared as early as 1640-41: DE 667/62, f. 180 and passim. The absence of accounts for Uppingham from 1640-1652 makes their survival difficult to prove, but it is strongly suggested by the evidently festive perambulations of 1639 and 1654, when (respectively) wine and cakes, and then bread and beer, were consumed: L.R.O. DE 1784/17, fos. 36v, 40v. For the Anglican character of these parishes, see below.

money spent on the custom. No more than 10s was to be spent on the 'common sort' on perambulation, and not more than 2 or 3s on the minister, churchwardens, clerk and their aides. There must have been considerable festivity associated with the custom before 1639: although other Northamptonshire parishes tended to spend between 3 and 5s on their perambulations, Burton Latimer lashed out an astonishing £2-10s-4d on theirs in 1638. But even after 1638, there was a still goodly 13s 4d for the perambulation, which was held until at least 1641.<sup>97</sup> The suggestion that parish puritans were unable, and possibly unwilling, to erase communal culture is also made by the survival of perambulations throughout the 1640s in Waltham on the Wolds, which as we have noted above was by no means hostile to the puritan reforms of that period.<sup>98</sup> It seems that there was the possibility of compromise, as well as conflict, between supporters of the reformed and traditional popular cultures.

Thus there was an overlap of the old and the reformed popular cultures on the eve of the civil war. Even in puritan towns such as Coventry, Warwick, Northampton and Leicester, elements of the traditional

<sup>97</sup> N.R.O. 55P/58, pp. 52-3, 71, 81. For the decoration of the altar rails, and the purchase of a silk cloth for the table, see ibid., pp. 15, 75-6.

<sup>98</sup> L.R.O. DE 625/18, pp. 60, 61, 63, 67.

culture lingered down to 1642 and beyond. We might still call these towns 'puritan': but we must be more cautious about characterising the popular culture of areas like the Warwickshire Arden and the neighbouring parts of Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. In these areas, civic and parochial ritual, traditional sports and alehouses persisted alongside hostility to Laudianism and the popularity of puritan preachers. But was there a social as well as a geographical coincidence? Or were there mutually exclusive cultures, represented in the communities by hostile camps, a dichotomy of puritan 'middling sorts' and the profane 'rabble'? The latter model, as described by Wrightson and Levine in the Essex village of Terling, is the basis for Manning and Hunt, and to some degree for Underdown, who ascribes a key role to middling sorts in the regionally variable decline of festive culture in the west country.<sup>99</sup>

The evidence suggests that the vanguard of puritanism in the communities was indeed formed by small minorities drawn from the middling sort. The 1640-41 petitions in Northamptonshire attracted only small numbers of signatories, not above 16, the number that subscribed in Grafton Regis. The Duddington

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<sup>99</sup> Wrightson and Levine, Poverty and Piety, passim; Manning, English People, passim; Hunt, Puritan Moment, passim; Underdown, Revel, pp. 81-2.

petition contained just one signature, the Rothwell petition four, the Pattishall petition against Richard Powell five.<sup>100</sup> The equally small numbers of deponents against Leicestershire ministers in the 1640s have been noted above. Baxter said he was initially supported by just a small 'company of converts' in Kidderminster. Gilbert has shown that Baxter was elected by a godly minority of prominent local men, including small clothiers and yeomen as well as gentry.<sup>101</sup> A similar social mix made up the Leicestershire deponents. Of the 52 whose social status is given in an order book of the Sequestrations Committee, the largest category is formed by husbandmen with 13 deponents, then 11 yeomen, 10 gentry, and small numbers, two or less, of butchers, carpenters, blacksmiths etc. There are four 'servants'. Of the deponents, one husbandman, one yeoman, a butcher, nailer, milliner and three of the gentry were included in the 10 that supported Thomas Pestell.<sup>102</sup> The core of the Rothwell puritan community seems also to have been formed of gentry and middling sorts. John Ponder turns up again in a petition from Rothwell of

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<sup>100</sup> See the references given in n. 17-20 above.

<sup>101</sup> R.B., pp. 19-20; C.D. Gilbert, 'Kidderminster at the outbreak of the English Civil War', Trans.Worcs.Arch.Soc., 3rd series, vol. 11, (1988), pp. 41-2.

<sup>102</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, fos. 67-78v.

1657, where he is described as a 'gent'. Another of the four signatories of the petition of January 1641 however was Thomas Wells, a carpenter. William Dodson, prosecuted for puritan activity along with Ponder and Wells in 1634, was a mercer.<sup>103</sup> The opponents of the perambulation in Burton Latimer implied their superior social status by specifying the amount of money to be spent on the 'common sort'.

Middling sorts thus formed the backbone of parish puritanism. But it could have a wider social appeal than that. Baxter noted that the godly in Kidderminster were 'not much hated' by the rest. At All Saints in Northampton, Thomas Ball was popular with the 'vulgar', including a tradesman's maid. Servants from Bilton in Warwickshire went to hear a puritan sermon in Rugby in 1639.<sup>104</sup> Of the 16 petitioners from Grafton Regis, 13 made a mark, suggesting the support of illiterate, plebeian members of the community. The refusal to

<sup>103</sup> Wake (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records Northamptonshire, p. 192; H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, p. 33; C.S.P.D. 1634-5, pp. 22-3, 410.

<sup>104</sup> R.B., p. 20; C.S.P.D. 1640-41, p. 351; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 81. For the potentially broad social appeal of puritanism, see Margaret Spufford, Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, (Cambridge, 1974).

receive communion at the altar by up to 100 people in nearby Towcester also suggests puritan sentiment was not restricted to the middling sort and above.

The potential of puritanism for wide social appeal, and its juxtaposition with traditional culture over much of the region, indicates that, at the parochial level, it could have a closer relationship to festivity and ritual than a bipolar model of popular culture, whether geographical or social, would have it. A number of recent studies have also suggested this. Barry has shown that popular culture in seventeenth century Bristol was a spectrum of practices ranging from unlawful sports and alehouses at one pole to pious austerity at the other, with many people somewhere in between.<sup>105</sup> Recent work has shown that a similar gradation of belief pertained in Worcestershire. In 1658 Baxter classified his parishioners into not two or three, but twelve categories according to religious beliefs, ranging from Anabaptists to papists. Attitudes in Evesham in the 1650s embraced a spectrum of belief

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<sup>105</sup> Bernard Capp, 'Popular Culture and the English Civil War', History of European Ideas, vol. 10, 1, (1989); Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, esp. chs. 2-10; Jonathan Barry, 'Popular Culture in Seventeenth - Century Bristol', in Reay (ed.), Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England, esp. p. 76.

from Anglicanism through to Quakerism.<sup>106</sup> The evidence of civic and parish ritual in puritan areas given above suggests that this applies to much of the region.

It is clear that popular puritanism was by no means universally hostile to communality and festivity. However, there is little evidence of middling sort puritans participating in 'profane' or 'unlawful' culture. But, in part, this may be because of the paucity of suitable source material for such activity, such as diaries or memoirs. The main example of such material from the region is that of the puritan divine Richard Baxter, whose theological interests distanced him from the every day culture of many of his parishioners. In his analysis of the diary of a lay puritan, Robert Woodford of Northampton, Fielding noted that parish puritans were certainly not outside the popular alehouse culture. This, for one of Woodford's companions, meant 'keeping company some time with those that fear not god in drinking wine and taking

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<sup>106</sup> Baxter's 1658 classification of his parishioners is in F.J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter 1615-1691, (1924), Appendix vi, pp. 303-5. It is discussed in Eamonn Duffy, 'The Godly and the Multitude in Stuart England', The Seventeenth Century, I, i, (1986). For Evesham, see Stephen Roberts, 'The Quakers in Evesham 1655-1660: A Study in Religion, Politics and Culture', Midland History, xvi, (1991).

tobacco'.<sup>107</sup> Wharton records his fellow officers drinking 'a barrel of strong beer, called Old Hum' in Coventry, and also distributing it to the rank and file. He also records a good deal of iconoclastic violence committed by the soldiers, sometimes smacking more of revelry than of pious reformation.<sup>108</sup> Essex acknowledged the less than pious tendencies of his troops when, before entering Worcester in September 1642, he gave a speech which included orders against various revelries, including drinking and the playing of 'unlawful' games. The vicar of Claybrooke in Leicestershire claimed that his (puritan) accusers had ignored such games, and sometimes even played them themselves.<sup>109</sup> The implication is that puritanism was a

<sup>107</sup> New College, MS Woodford's Diary, quoted in Fielding, 'Opposition to the Personal Rule', p. 773.

<sup>108</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 319. Examples of ritualistic expressions of puritanism by soldiers in Coventry and Northamptonshire are found in *ibid.*, pp. 317-8, 320. See also Underdown, Revel, pp. 177-8, and Capp, 'Popular Culture', p. 35. When troops wrecked Peterborough Cathedral in April 1643, they carried off an effigy of Sir Humphrey Orme in mock procession: for this and other examples, see Margaret Aston, England's Iconoclasts, vol. I, (Oxford, 1988), p. 65 and passim, esp. pp. 63-74.

<sup>109</sup> A Worthy Speech spoken by his Excellency the Lord

still more complex culture than has been supposed.

### **Popular Anglicanism?**

It is a now familiar argument that, far from being won over to puritanism or radical religion in the 1640s, the majority of people remained loyal to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England.<sup>110</sup> Morrill has described how this loyalty became most apparent in the face of the puritan religious reforms of the 1640s, especially the post 1643 period. This saw legislation ordering the removal of images from churches, the abolition of Christmas, Easter, Whit, Holy Days and Saints Days and the associated pattern of communion, the outlawing of the Book of Common Prayer, and the introduction of Thanksgiving Days and the Directory. Non-compliance with this legislation, as well as resistance to intruded godly ministers and continuing support for ejected ministers, therefore provides reasonably reliable evidence for popular Anglicanism.

The evidence suggests that there was indeed a

of Essex, (29 September 1642), E200(64), passim; Bodl MS J. Walker Cll, fos. 57, 59.

<sup>110</sup> See especially Morrill, 'The Church in England'; Chris Durston, 'Lords of Misrule: The Puritan War on Christmas 1642-60', History Today, 35, (1985); Duffy, 'The Godly and the Multitude'.

widespread popular adherence to Anglican traditions during the 1640s. But this did not equate to a wholesale absorption of orthodox Anglicanism per se. Traditions such as perambulations and Easter communions formed part of a diverse and autonomous popular religious culture, which also embraced elements of puritanism, and a range of irreligious and profane beliefs.

There are difficulties with the source material upon which many of the claims for popular Anglicanism are founded, namely churchwardens' accounts. Firstly, they tell us about religious provision within the parish, not, as such, its popularity. Given the assertiveness of many parishioners, it may be argued that ministers and churchwardens were obliged to reflect some sort of parochial consensus. But there are more serious problems with using them for statistical analysis. Morrill based his argument on an analysis of 150 accounts, drawn from 10 counties in western and eastern England, including Worcestershire.<sup>111</sup> What follows here is based upon accounts from 29 parishes that contain material from the 1638-1652 period: 11 from Leicestershire, nine from Northamptonshire, five from Worcestershire, three from Warwickshire and one from Rutland.<sup>112</sup> But the variable nature of these accounts

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<sup>111</sup> Morrill, 'The Church in England'.

<sup>112</sup> Leicestershire: Belton, Hallaton, Hinckley,

renders a statistical analysis of their contents of dubious value. Some, such as those for St. Martin's, Leicester and St. Michael in Bedwardine, Worcester are very full, and could reasonably be expected to include information on matters like purchase of the Directory or survival of Anglican patterns of communion. Others however are far too brief or incomplete to allow fruitful comparison. The accounts for Peckleton in Leicestershire for example consist of short inventories of the church for each year, whilst the accounts of Wigston Magna for the 1640s survive only for 1644. The

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Leicester St. Martin's, Loughborough, Peckleton, Queniborough, Shawell, Stathern, Waltham on the Wolds, Wigston Magna. Northamptonshire: Burton Latimer, Cottingham, Great Houghton, Hinton, Lowick, Marston Trussell, Northampton St. Giles, Northampton St. Sepulchre, Wellingborough. Worcestershire: Badsey, Bransford, Elmley Castle, St. Michael in Bedwardine, South Littleton. Warwickshire: Fillongley, Nether Whitacre, Warwick St. Nicholas. Rutland: Uppingham. Further accounts, for Broughton in Northamptonshire and for Preston in Rutland are extant, but at time of writing were in too fragile a condition to be inspected. It is believed the above represent all the parishes with some accounts extant for the period under discussion here.

Shawell accounts are very sparse.<sup>113</sup> Those for Cottingham in Northamptonshire consist of totals and sub-totals. The Great Houghton accounts are badly disrupted after 1644, and the Lowick accounts for 1645-6 are just receipts.<sup>114</sup> The accounts from Uppingham in 1640-52 are absent, except for a short inventory of December 1647. There are no accounts for Nether Whitacre in Warwickshire in 1640-48.<sup>115</sup> The churchwardens at Elmley Castle in Worcestershire recorded almost exclusively money spent on routine work about the church - for nails, timber, plumbing, etc. South Littleton has a set of very short accounts for 1645, then nothing until a set with no disbursements, for 1650.<sup>116</sup> We should not expect to find out much about parochial religion in such material. Reading from the silence in these accounts, and conflating it with evidence from fuller accounts, would be misleading.

Despite their deficiencies, churchwardens' accounts nevertheless indicate an attachment to Anglican traditions over much of the region. The widespread survival of perambulations has been noted above. Traditional communion patterns also endured widely:

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<sup>113</sup> L.R.O. DE 19033/4; L.R.O. DE 384/6; L.R.O. DE 734/6.

<sup>114</sup> N.R.O. 85P/26; N.R.O. 175P/28; N.R.O. 199P/77/29.

<sup>115</sup> L.R.O. DE 1784/17; W.C.R.O. DRB 27/5.

<sup>116</sup> H.W.R.O. BA 850/8883; H.W.R.O. BA 850/1284.

Easter remained especially important. Communion persisted at this time even in puritan parishes such as St. Martin's in Leicester and St. Nicholas in Warwick, although it did disappear in the latter parish in 1646, returning the next year.<sup>117</sup> The ban on the old communions does seem to have taken root in the Warwickshire Arden. Neither Fillongley nor Nether Whitacre observed Easter, Christmas etc. after 1646, and Fillongley rang its bells on a Thanksgiving Day in 1648.<sup>118</sup> In Leicestershire, Queniborough, Loughborough, Waltham on the Wolds and Stathern, as well as St. Martins, all retained their old communion pattern in 1646 or after.<sup>119</sup> The Northamptonshire and Rutland

<sup>117</sup> L.R.O. DE 1564/1384, pp. 32, 47, 70; W.C.R.O. DR87/2, pp. 183, 187, 191, 194, 201, 208.

<sup>118</sup> W.C.R.O. DRB 27/5, f. 28ff; W.C.R.O. DR 404/49, f. 21v.ff. The Thanksgiving Day bells are recorded on f. 22v. Both parishes, however, observed a very traditional pattern of communion before 1646, Fillongley holding seven communions in the late 1630s, and Nether Whitacre in 1640 holding 'Palm Sunday', 'Share Thursday' and 'Black Monday' communions.

<sup>119</sup> L.R.O. DE 97/11, fos. 1-8; L.R.O. DE 667/62, fos. 189v, 191v, 195v, 200; L.R.O. DE 625/15, fos. 61-65v; L.R.O. 1605/34, f. 25; L.R.O. DE 1605/35, fos. 10-11. The last two references are both for Stathern, where Easter and Michaelmas communions appear to have

accounts are not full or reliable enough to comment on the survival of traditional communions. However, we may note their survival in the two Worcestershire parishes with reasonably full accounts, St. Michael in Bedwardine and Bransford, as well (probably) as at Badsey in the Vale of Evesham, where a communion was held on Whit Sunday in 1651.<sup>120</sup>

Extant accounts also suggest a poor uptake of the Directory. In fact, only two sets of churchwardens' accounts - St. Martin's and Waltham on the Wolds - record it. But this is unreliable evidence. Nether Whitacre for example has no such accounts for the period in which the Directory would have been purchased. But we know that one was, because it is recorded in the constables' accounts.<sup>121</sup> Additionally, only one parish, St. Michael in Bedwardine, actually records the Book of Common Prayer after the

survived in 1646, then died out in 1647-9, before reappearing in 1650, the year the King's arms were removed from the church. Christmas communion however does seem to have been completely abandoned here.

<sup>120</sup> H.W.R.O. BA 850/2335/16b.(v), f. 78v.ff; H.W.R.O. BA 850/3900, 1646-53 accounts (no pagination); H.W.R.O. BA 850/1895, sheet A7 (1651 accounts).

<sup>121</sup> L.R.O. DE 1564/1384, p. 33; L.R.O. DE 625/15, f. 61; W.C.R.O. DRB 27/9, 1645-46 accounts (no pagination).

introduction of the Directory.<sup>122</sup> Again, this may simply be because of poor recording and survival: St. Michael is one of very few parishes in the region to have kept regular and full inventories. Other evidence confirms that the prayer book had wider adherence than this. Baxter noted its popularity with 'a great part of the parish' in Kidderminster. The clerk at Maxstoke, near Fillongley, was in trouble with the Warwickshire Quarter Sessions in 1648 for using it.<sup>123</sup> There is evidence for widespread use of the Book of Common Prayer in Leicestershire, even when it was outlawed. Twenty-five Leicestershire clergy were accused of either using the old prayer book, or not using the Directory.<sup>124</sup> The Book of Common Prayer was certainly in use in Garthorpe, Newbold Verdon, 'Dalby in the Wolds' (probably present day Old Dalby) and probably in Belton and in Congerstone, where the minister publicly rejected the Directory. Four other Leicestershire clergy claimed that they had not used the Directory because they had not received a copy.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>122</sup> H.W.R.O. BA 850/2335/16b.(v), fos. 75, 89, 106, 117.

<sup>123</sup> R.B., p. 94; W.C.R. vol. vi, p. 87.

<sup>124</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised (Leicestershire cases). However, similar accusations were made against only a very few clergy elsewhere in the region: ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, fos. 76v, 67 (Garthorpe and

The records are also silent on the dismantling of internal church decoration in the mid-1640s. The removal of crucifixes and 'scandalous pictures' in Lowick has been noted above. In St. Martin's in 1644-5, the steps leading to the communion table, and the font, were taken down. The royalist newsbook Mercurius Aulicus claimed in April 1644 that, not only had a 'blacksmith' been intruded as minister in the Northamptonshire parish of Boughton, but that the leads had been stripped off the church: the parliamentarian press observed in reply merely that the old, sequestered minister had been 'a chip off the old block of Canterbury'.<sup>126</sup> The only other suggestion of official destruction in churches is the report that the churchwarden at Towcester smashed the stained glass windows in the church. In Alcester, where Clarke claimed to have reformed the parish, it seems that traditional religion survived longer than that claim would suggest: as late as 1657, the inhabitants agreed on a levy to allow the 'beautifying and painting' of the church. Religious conservatism in Alcester was such that the rood loft survived in the parish church into

Dalby in the Wolds); Bodl. MS J. Walker C11, fos. 15, 25, 32-32v, 36v, 50, 56-56v, 59-59v.

<sup>126</sup> L.R.O. DE 1564/1386, p. 17; Mercurius Aulicus, (21-27 April 1644), E47(14), pp. 951-2; The Spy, (1-8 May 1644), E46(6), pp. 114-5.

the 1650s, as it did at Aston, near Birmingham.<sup>127</sup>

Parliamentarian soldiers effected their own, violent reforms in churches and cathedrals all over the country. But the response to this and other iconoclasm shows that decoration and ornamentation were popular in many churches, especially in Worcestershire and Leicestershire. Baxter recorded the angry defence of images in Kidderminster, after he ordered a churchwarden to take down a crucifix in the churchyard. Before the order could be carried out, 'a crew of the drunken riotous party of the town (poor journeymen and servants) took the alarm, and ran altogether with weapons to defend the crucifix and the church images (of which there were divers left since the time of popery).' Ornamentation survived in St. Michael in Bedwardine, where the church was hung with rosemary bays at Christmas, and the altar table remained richly ornamented with silver and pewter cups, flagons and plates, silken cloth and velvet cushions, until the church was plundered by Cromwell's men after the battle of Worcester in 1651.<sup>128</sup> After entering Worcester in

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<sup>127</sup> Alcester: W.C.R. vol. iv, p. 6. For Clarke's claim to have reformed the parish, see Clarke, Lives, p. 7. Aston: W.C.R. vol. iii, p. 111. Cf. the failure of other puritan clergy to eradicate traditional culture in Rugby, Nuneaton and Coventry, above.

<sup>128</sup> R.B., p. 40; H.W.R.O. BA 850/2335/16b.(v), passim.

September 1642, Essex proclaimed the death penalty for any soldier plundering churches or private property. This failed to prevent a brutal assault on the cathedral, which is commonly supposed to have alienated Worcester citizens against the parliamentarians.<sup>129</sup> Certainly, the violence of Essex's soldiers caused general revulsion in the county. A petition of early 1643, which claimed the support of freeholders, complained of the soldiers conduct: 'the true Protestant religion by them abused, the book of Common prayer slighted, our churches profaned...[the King's] subjects plundered at the will and pleasure of the soldiers'.<sup>130</sup> Aulicus claimed that Sir William Waller's army wreaked iconoclastic havoc in Buckinghamshire churches, and that in Worcestershire in the summer of 1644 it was followed by 'none but broken and Brownistical tradesmen'. Waller's soldiers were hostile to the Anglican decoration that had survived in Fladbury, where they broke the 'pictures' in the east

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The plunder is recorded on f. 117v.

<sup>129</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 327; J.W. Willis Bund, 'Worcestershire during the Civil War', p. 203; Philip Styles, 'The City of Worcester during the Civil Wars, 1640-1660', in idem., Studies in Seventeenth Century West Midlands History, (1978), esp. pp. 223-4.

<sup>130</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 94-5.

window of the chancel.<sup>131</sup>

In Leicestershire, Loughborough remained similarly committed to ornamentation, even in the face of military iconoclasm. In 1644-5, it spent money 'to dress the church after the soldiers and for frankincense to sweeten it'. Bells were rung on Candlemas Day in 1645-7. Soldiers demolished the font in the church at Shawell, and the churchwardens spent money repairing it in 1648.<sup>132</sup> An unpublished royalist account said that in a raid on the royalist garrison at Ashby de la Zouch in January 1643, the parliamentarians had smashed all the windows in the church. Although this was not admitted by the parliamentarian press, it did claim that in June another raid left the town cross 'three steps lower'.<sup>133</sup> Pre-war iconoclasm

<sup>131</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (16-22 June 1644), E54(5), pp. 1037-8, 1043-4; Symonds, Diary, p. 25.

<sup>132</sup> L.R.O. DE 667/62, fos. 187, 189v, 191v; L.R.O. DE 734/6, f. 11.

<sup>133</sup> The royalist account of the January raid is in Bodl. MS Add. 132, f. 38v. This is part of a manuscript, fos. 38-78v, with the propagandist tone of a newsbook, called 'Mensalia, or monthly passages'. This is a journal of largely military affairs in the east and north midlands, from January to September 1643. It is handwritten throughout, and includes what are evidently rough drafts as well as finished copies.

aroused anger in Isham, east Northamptonshire when puritans destroyed Isham Cross in June 1642. Iconoclasm was accompanied by riot, and a number of villagers complained to the local squire and J.P., Thomas Jenyson. Although the county justices were split on the culpability of those responsible, 12 were found guilty of riot.<sup>134</sup> Peterborough cathedral was wrecked by soldiers in April 1643.<sup>135</sup> In June, reports were made in the press of both sides of the destruction of the market cross, and in the Beauchamp Chapel in St. Mary's church, in Warwick.<sup>136</sup> There is however no indication of the response of the townspeople. In June 1644,

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It appears to have been written at Ashby de la Zouch. It is listed in the catalogue to the Western MSS, under "Civil War", but appears not to have been used before. The parliamentarian account of the raid is in Certain Informations, (30 January-6 February 1643), E88(17), p. 17. For the June raid, see The Weekly Account, (5-12 June 1644), sig. A2v.

<sup>134</sup> Patrick King and Joan Wake, 'The Matter of Isham Cross', Northamptonshire Past and Present, vol. i, (1957); Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 370-1.

<sup>135</sup> Aston, England's Iconoclasts, I, pp. 64-68.

<sup>136</sup> Certain Informations, (19-26 June 1643), E56(2), p. 184; royalist accounts are in Mercurius Aulicus, (11-17 June 1643), E56(11), p. 320, and Mercurius Rusticus (24 June 1643), E62 (13), pp. 47-8.

Dugdale recorded that when a parliamentarian force captured Compton House in south Warwickshire it 'defaced all the monuments in the church'.<sup>137</sup> This again hints at an Anglican community.

Hostility to intruded ministers also suggests popular Anglicanism, or at least anti-puritanism. There are at least three examples from Northamptonshire, two from Leicestershire and one from each of Warwickshire and Rutland. Again, there is a suggestion of conservatism in the eastern and southern fielden. Most striking is the opposition presented to the replacement for Jeremy Taylor, minister of Uppingham, who was ejected from his living in 1644. This was picked up by Aulicus, which said that his replacement had scandalised the parishioners, by ridiculing Easter communion and saying that the town loved popery. The parliamentarian press did not bother to deny Taylor's popularity in Uppingham. He had 'almost undone the souls of the parish', and there were 'too many of these Uppingshams in England, and the dominion of Wales'.<sup>138</sup> Also in 1644, Thomas Ford, the replacement for the

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<sup>137</sup> Hamper (ed.), Dugdale, p. 68.

<sup>138</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (5-11 May 1644), E49(23), pp. 972-3; Mercurius Britannicus, (20-27 May 1644), E49(24), pp. 287-9. The Spy, (15-22 May 1644), E49(10), pp. 132-3, called Taylor 'at least a bishop in Arminianism and Popery'.

sequestered minister of Aldwincle in east Northamptonshire, found hostility among the parishioners. After being plundered by royalist soldiers, he was forced to become chaplain to Sir Samuel Luke's garrison at Newport Pagnell, and Luke wrote that Aldwincle inhabitants were 'not only malignants but most, if not all, delinquents' who had helped force Ford to leave. That same year the churchwardens in Castle Ashby were ordered to stop hindering the recently installed minister, William Huett.<sup>139</sup> Some women in Henley in Arden harassed the intruded minister in 1653, the year that other parishioners disturbed the preacher James Cooke there.<sup>140</sup> In Leicestershire we have already seen how

<sup>139</sup> H.G. Tibbutt (ed.), The Letter Books, 1644-5, of Sir Samuel Luke, H.M.C. JP4, (1963), pp. 135-6; V.C.H. Northamptonshire, ii, p. 56. For the third Northamptonshire example, failure to recognize the new minister of Overstone, see ibid., p. 58. In 1657, William Ireland, a labourer from Wellingborough, attacked a preacher whilst preaching in Finedon: Wake (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records, Northamptonshire, p. 184.

<sup>140</sup> P.R.O. SP 24/46 (Fawkes & Kirby v. Biggs), cited by Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 324; W.C.R. vol. vi, p. 107. See also Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 324. However, Hughes, ibid., pp. 325-6, notes there is little other evidence

the sequestered vicar of Garthorpe returned to the parish to read from Book of Common Prayer in 1647: he also refused to allow the new minister in to preach, occupied the church until afternoon, and had the support of the constable, who refused to deliver the warrant summoning him to Leicester, because the King's name was not on it.<sup>141</sup> Two years later, there was a riot when a Dr. Harding came to preach a sermon to qualify himself for the living at Knighton, near Leicester. Information given to Walker long after the wars suggests that the sequestered ministers of at least three Leicestershire parishes - Wanlip, Beeby and Bringhurst - were all popular with the vast majority of their parishioners.<sup>142</sup> Money given 'by consent of the parish' continued to be paid to Nathaniel Marston, vicar of St. Michael in Bedwardine, even after 1646.<sup>143</sup>

For some communities, this sort of activity

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of popular support for royalist or Anglican clergy in Warwickshire.

<sup>141</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, f. 76v.

<sup>142</sup> V.C.H. Leicestershire, i, p. 384; Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, fos. 50, 65, 66. Although these may well be heavily biased testimonies, it has been noted above that the numbers of hostile deponents were very small, and the minister of Packington certainly had strong support in the parish.

<sup>143</sup> H.W.R.O. BA 850/2335/16b.(v), fos. 83, 99v, 110v.

undoubtedly reflects a religious culture that may safely be called Anglican. Where this is so, it reinforces the impression that the peripheral areas of the region tended to be the most culturally conservative. St. Michael in Bedwardine, Uppingham and Loughborough were all consistently Anglican in their loyalties. The Anglican conservatism of the far west and east is also suggested by the petitions sent from Worcestershire and Rutland in 1641-2, in support of episcopacy and the liturgy. The Worcestershire petition is especially interesting, as it was widely distributed in the north-east of the county and attracted a lot of support, although this area was also the location of puritan communities such as that at Kidderminster. In fact, the petition may have been stimulated by the popish scare of November 1641: Willis Bund claimed it illustrates "a strong anti-Laudian party in Worcestershire". But the wording of the petition employs the rhetoric of anti-sectarianism, complaining that 'of late there have sprung up diverse sects and schisms and many dangerous doctrines are publicly vented'. The petition supports 'the true Protestant religion and doctrine of the Church of England'. It was signed by 835 people from 16 parishes in north-east Worcestershire, i.e. an average of 52 in every parish.<sup>144</sup> However, it is significant that the petition

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<sup>144</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 44-6. See also Fletcher,

was apparently not circulated in towns like Kidderminster and Bromsgrove where puritan and/or parliamentarian clergymen such as Baxter exercised a direct influence.<sup>145</sup> Once again, the intensely local nature of popular religion is apparent. Less is known about the circulation of the Rutland petition, although it was allegedly circulated among freeholders, and may have had up to 800 signatures in total.<sup>146</sup>

Other activity represents not so much popular Anglicanism as selective adherence to certain Anglican traditions. In Leicestershire for example, both St. Martin's and Waltham on the Wolds held perambulations until at least the early 1640s, and retained Easter communion. Yet both purchased the Directory, and in Waltham's case we can be sure the Book of Common Prayer went out of use because the churchwardens took it to

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Outbreak, p. 285.

<sup>145</sup> For Kidderminster and Baxter, see above. For Bromsgrove, see Matthews, Walker Revised, p. 278. For more on parliamentarian clergy in Worcestershire and the region as a whole, see Chapter Six below.

<sup>146</sup> For the Rutland petition, see B.L. Egerton MS 2986, fos. 253-7. The claim of 800 signatures is in John Nalson, An Impartial Collection of the Great Affairs of State from the beginning of the Scottish Rebellion to the Murder of Kings Charles I, (2 vols, 1682), ii, p. 660. The number is at least plausible.

Leicester.<sup>147</sup> However, the old prayer book retained some popularity in nearby Garthorpe. It also remained in use in at least one north Warwickshire parish (Maxstoke): but this was an area where the old communions apparently failed to survive, and at least one parish there (Nether Whitacre) purchased a Directory. Thomas Ford may have been unpopular with the 'malignants' of Aldwincle, but this was near another parish, Lowick, in which Anglican ornamentation had been dutifully removed. In one of the larger east Northamptonshire towns, Kettering, some parishioners petitioned in 1644 in support of their minister, 'a faithful, industrious, godly man'.<sup>148</sup> In these areas, and even in some individual parishes, Anglicanism was merged with a more puritan culture.

### Irreligion

Anglicanism also co-existed (as did puritanism) with an irreligious popular culture. Some of the very poorest members of society rarely attended church, and remained ignorant of the basic tenets of Christianity all their

<sup>147</sup> L.R.O. DE 625/15, f. 61.

<sup>148</sup> H.M.C. Sixth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, p. 26. The minister's income was being restricted by the 'delinquent' Sir Lewis Watson, and the parishioners requested redress. See also L.J. vi., p. 699.

lives. Recent work has referred to a "folklorized Christianity", a result of the popular synthesis of magic and elements of orthodox religion.<sup>149</sup> This culture, as shown by Thomas,<sup>150</sup> was widespread. It undermines the notion of popular Anglicanism, if this is taken to mean wholesale subscription to a set of orthodox beliefs and standards.<sup>151</sup> It existed before, during and after the civil wars. Popular ignorance of, and occasionally hostility to orthodoxy was common in pre-war years. Thus a man from Ribsford-with-Bewdley said in 1616 that 'stage plays were made by the Holy Ghost and the word of God was but man's invention'. Again in north-east Worcestershire, a Bromsgrove butcher was in trouble for mocking religious ceremony in 1623, after he offered a crooked pin to an acquaintance and said, 'take thee this in remembrance that Parkins of Wedgebury died for thee and be thankful'. In Rutland, Richard Sharpe got in trouble in 1633 for saying that 'there is no God and that he hath

<sup>149</sup> The phrase is that of J. Delumeau, Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire, (1977), pp. 166ff., cited by Barry Reay, 'Popular Religion', in idem. (ed.), Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England, pp. 92, 111, and 111-119, passim.

<sup>150</sup> Thomas, Religion and Decline, pp. 189-206.

<sup>151</sup> The point is well made by Reay, 'Popular Religion', p. 94.

no soul to save'.<sup>152</sup> A woman from the Stratford area in Warwickshire was presented before the consistory court in 1624 for saying, amongst other things, that 'God knew not what he did', whilst a man from the same area was presented for 'singing profane and filthy songs, scoffing and deriding on ministers and the profession of religion'.<sup>153</sup> In adjoining east Worcestershire, a different sort of profanity had endured. There, Anne Bellett of Stacy Morton (? Abbots Morton) was accused by two men from Inkberrow in 1633 of 'the juggling trick with the sieve and shears to find out goods lost and using the names of Peter and Paul therein in profane manner being said to be the founder of that sleight and cunning trick'.<sup>154</sup>

Popular irreligion continued to cause concern in the 1640s and after. Although Baxter found the Anglican Sir Ralph Clare had a popular following in Kidderminster,

<sup>152</sup> All quoted in Thomas, Religion and Decline, pp. 202, 192. The Bromsgrove case is in Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, p. 360.

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Fogg, Stratford, p. 54.

<sup>154</sup> Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, p. 492. Willis Bund quotes the MS as 'sire and sheves'. But this is actually the sieve and shears, which were commonly used to locate lost property. The process is described in Thomas, Religion and Decline, pp. 253-4. I am grateful to Dr. Bernard Capp for pointing this out.

he clearly did not believe the majority of the parish to be orthodox Anglicans; 'when I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name'. Neither were they totally ignorant, but his description of plebeian religious knowledge in the town clearly hints at its limitations; 'Yet many ignorant and ungodly persons there were still amongst us...some of the poor men did competently understand the Body of Divinity, and were able to judge in difficult controversies...abundance of them were able to pray very laudably with their families'.<sup>155</sup> In 1658, out of 800 families in the parish, there were only 500 individuals who were 'serious professors of religion', and some who 'seem to be ignorant of the very essentials of Christianity'. One old man 'thought Christ was the sun that shineth in the firmament, and the Holy Ghost the moon'.<sup>156</sup> The godly minister of Kings Norton, Thomas Hall, was said to have found 'a rude and ignorant people, amongst drunkards, papists, atheists, Sabbath-profaners, etc.'.<sup>157</sup> Ignorance was a problem even in godly Northamptonshire. In 1641, a pamphlet claimed that in Piddington, not far from Northampton, there was 'neither a child nor servant in

<sup>155</sup> R.B., pp. 84-5. Of those who Baxter could not reach, 'many were grossly ignorant': ibid., p. 91.

<sup>156</sup> Quoted in Powicke, Baxter, Appendix vi, pp. 303-4.

<sup>157</sup> Quoted in Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 309.

the parish that can say the Lord's prayer'. In June 1645, some Northamptonshire clergy petitioned the Lords that the rectory of Old had been without an incumbent for two years. This was partly because of the absence of the patron, the royalist Sir Christopher Hatton, 'and partly by reason of the disaffection of the people': not a single person in Old seemed concerned by the vacancy, and there was no-one with the inclination to find 'such a one as will carefully break unto them the bread of life'. In 1657, Frances Ellington, a widow from Wellingborough, allegedly told a labourer 'confounded be thee...and thy God'.<sup>158</sup>

In church, the behaviour of the lower orders sometimes offended their social superiors. Anglicans and Laudians were as likely to take umbrage as were puritans. Ecclesiastical records reveal the variety of forms such behaviour took even in an apparently conservative, "Anglican" area like the east midland fielden. The Peterborough diocesan court punished a number of people for unseemly behaviour in church in the late 1630s and early 1640s. Thus in 1638 a Morcott

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<sup>158</sup> A Certificate from Northamptonshire, (1641), El63(13), quoted in V.C.H. Northamptonshire, ii, p. 54; L.J. vii., p. 407; Wake (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records, Northamptonshire, p. 184. Hill however notes that Ellington was probably a Quaker, and possibly a Ranter: Hill World Turned, p. 125.

(Rutland) man was punished for 'departing always away in a contemptuous and irreligious manner when God's word is begun to be preached and before divine service be fully ended.' Isabel Dolton from (Great or Little) Oakley was in trouble in 1639 for 'misbehaving herself in time of divine service'. That year, a couple from Oakham in Rutland were found to be 'continually sleeping in prayer time, and at other times talking in prayer time'.<sup>159</sup> Sleeping was so routine in church at Lowick that in 1646 the churchwardens paid Thomas Euster 2s 'for waking sleepers'.<sup>160</sup> John Ellis of (Church) Brampton, just north of Northampton, got in trouble for 'laughing or at least smiling in the church at divine service time'. Other people were in trouble for failing to come to church at all, and thus profaning the Sabbath: for example by spinning during divine service at Oakham in 1637, or 'gathering peas in evening prayer' at Barrowden, or selling wine during time of divine service in Peterborough.<sup>161</sup>

Popular religious culture thus embraced the

<sup>159</sup> N.R.O., P.D.R. 69, Correction Book 1638/9-1640, fos. 37, 36; P.D.R. 70, Correction Book 1639-1641, f. 35.

<sup>160</sup> N.R.O. 199P/77/30 (single sheet).

<sup>161</sup> N.R.O., P.D.R. 70, Correction Book 1639-1641, fos. 44, 56; P.D.R. 68, Correction Book 1636/7-1638/9, f. 26; P.D.R. 69, Correction Book 1638-1640, f. 105.

irreligious and profane. Combined with the selectivity of much popular adherence to Anglican practice, it is often difficult to isolate a genuinely orthodox popular Anglicanism. The impression is of an autonomous popular culture, influenced but not dominated by the values and standards of the elite.

### **Conclusion**

The complexity of popular culture in this period resists straightforward characterisation. Austere puritanism and traditional, orthodox Anglicanism were certainly present, but formed part of a religio-cultural spectrum rather than poles around which cultural life was tightly clustered. This means that the geographical pattern of popular culture was variegated and not neatly delineated. Areas of greater or lesser puritan success may be discerned, but this does not amount to a clear pattern of regional cultures. Puritanism achieved significant success in the southern and eastern fielden, yet failed to do so in the upland pasture areas of Worcestershire. Anglican areas were also areas of puritanism and irreligion. In short, patterns of popular culture are much more local than either Underdown or Morrill suggest. This is certainly so at the level of the parish, where some

communities combined elements of the old and reformed cultures. It may even be true at an individual level. There is evidence, albeit impressionistic, to suggest that some people subscribed to some degree to both cultures. It certainly seems that the old conception of unmitigated puritan hostility to ritual and communalitv must be refined. Cultural conflict may have been well defined in the writings of the puritan and Anglican divines. But these were elite models. In the conflict between tradition and reform, there was a third force: the syncretic nature of popular culture itself.

## Chapter Four

### Civil War, 1642-46

This chapter is intended primarily as background to the discussion of popular allegiance in Chapters Five and Six. It will begin with a narrative of the main military affairs in the region. This will be followed by a short assessment of the physical impact of the war which, it will be argued later, was vital in the shaping of popular allegiance.

#### War

The region was quickly established as a major arena of armed conflict.<sup>1</sup> The first rumblings of war were

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<sup>1</sup> The following narrative of military events is drawn from some of the many good narratives that are available, and the sources cited here are not meant to be comprehensive. The main ones used are: S.R. Gardiner, History of the Great Civil War 1642-1649, 3 vols., (1886-91), and two excellent recent works, P.R. Newman, Atlas of the English Civil War, (1985), and Kenyon, Civil Wars of England. More local detail is in the Webbs' Memorials of the Civil War; Willis Bund, Civil War in Worcestershire; Sherwood, Civil Strife; Hutton, War Effort; Bennett, 'War Effort in the North

apparent in Leicestershire as early as June 1642, when there was a scuffle in Leicester over control of the county magazine. On the 21st, Henry, Lord Hastings arrived in Loughborough with 100 of his father's colliers out of Derbyshire. From there they marched with colours flying and drums beating to the Horse-Fair Leas, just outside the walls of Leicester, where Hastings read out the Commission of Array. Some parliament men tried to stop him, and there was more scuffling before Hastings and his supporters stormed into the town and barricaded themselves inside an inn. He escaped Leicester that night as townsmen helped flush out the royalists.<sup>2</sup> The town had another taste of the proximity of war in July. Charles was engaged on a recruiting campaign in the midlands by then, and on the 22nd he arrived in Leicester. He got a warm welcome, tempered by two petitions giving unequivocal support to

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Midlands', and Hughes, Warwickshire. Some printed and manuscript primary material has also been used, as cited below.

<sup>2</sup> Horrible News from Leicester, (6 June 1642), E150(9); Eliot Warburton, Memoirs of Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers, 3 vols., (1849), i, pp. 294-8; John Nichols, The History and Antiquities of Leicester, 7 vols., (1795-1815), iii, pt. ii, App. iv, pp. 24-6; C.J. ii, pp. 646, 649, 654.

the parliament.<sup>3</sup> A month later Charles met with an even more humiliating rebuttal at Coventry, where he was refused entry unless with only a small retinue. Charles withdrew to Stoneleigh and tried battering the city walls with artillery, before retreating to Nottingham to raise his standard.<sup>4</sup> Parliament ordered a force led by Brooke, John Hampden and Nathaniel Fiennes into Warwickshire on 15 August.<sup>5</sup> Tension had already been heightened in Warwickshire in late June, when the Earl of Northampton attempted to seize the county magazine in Coventry. He failed, and it was secured by Lord Brooke, who on 1 July transferred it to Warwick Castle. Forces raised by the two rivals squared up to each other on the 30th when cannon intended for the defence

<sup>3</sup> Clarendon, History, ii, pp. 241-4; Stocks (ed.), Records of the Borough of Leicester, p. 316; The Declaration and Resolution of the County of Leicester, (22 July 1642), E108(11); A Petition from the Town and County of Leicester unto the King, (22 July 1642), E108(20).

<sup>4</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 20; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 147-8. Contemporary press accounts are in, for example, A True Relation of His Majesties Coming to Coventry, (22 August 1642), E114(1), and The True Proceedings of the Several Counties of York, Coventry, Portsmouth, Cornwall, (22 August 1642), E114(6).

<sup>5</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 148.

of the castle was threatened by Northampton. An agreement to leave them inactive at Banbury was reneged on by Northampton, who used them in an unsuccessful siege of Warwick Castle which lasted into August.<sup>6</sup>

The first notable skirmish of the war took place on 22 August, shortly after Charles's unsuccessful bid to enter Coventry, when the parliamentarian army arrived in south Warwickshire and clashed briefly with a royalist force near Southam.<sup>7</sup> A month later, Rupert's horse joined up in Worcestershire with Sir John Byron's regiment from Oxford, and entered Worcester. An alarmed parliament sent its main field army under the Earl of Essex, then in Northampton, to advance on Worcester. An advance guard reached the city walls, but withdrew to Pershore. On 23 September, a detachment attempted an entry on the southern side, across Powick Bridge, but as they emerged from a narrow lane into a field they were confronted by Rupert, his brother Prince Maurice

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<sup>6</sup> Hutton, War Effort, pp. 19-20. For contemporary press accounts, see for example A Famous Victory, (3 August 1642) E109(19) and The Proceedings at Banbury, (13 August 1642), E111(11).

<sup>7</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 148; mentioned by Clarendon, History, ii, p. 290; reported in (for example) A True and Perfect Relation of the first and victorious Skirmish...at Southam Field, (27 August 1642), E114(25).

and a body of horse who quickly routed the terror-stricken parliamentarians.<sup>8</sup> However, Worcester's defences were in a poor state of repair, and soon after Powick Bridge the royalists quitted the city, and headed for Shropshire to reinforce the King, now based in Shrewsbury. Essex took his army into Worcester, inaugurating a brief period of parliamentarian rule there, which lasted until about 5 November.<sup>9</sup> On 12 October Charles began his march towards London, culminating in the first major battle of the war at Edgehill. He passed through Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Kenilworth. In the meantime, the parliamentarian army set off after him from Worcester. The two armies shadowed each other, in the words of Ronald Hutton, "like two great blind moles", often unsure of the exact whereabouts of the other, until they finally clashed at Edgehill on 23 October. The inconclusive battle left Essex to retire and lick his wounds at Warwick; Charles abandoned his march on London, and established himself in Oxford, his main base for the rest of the war.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Kenyon, Civil Wars of England, pp. 49-50.

<sup>9</sup> Gardiner, History of the Great Civil War, i, pp. 30, 66; Hutton, War Effort, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> For the pre-Edgehill marches, see Peter Young, Edgehill 1642: The Campaign and Battle, (Kineton, 1967), ch. x; Hutton, War Effort, p. 32; Newman, Atlas, p. 20; Kenyon, Civil Wars of England, pp. 50-1. Modern

Following Edgehill, the royalists recaptured Worcester in early November, and parliament secured Leicester during the winter. With the setting up of a royalist garrison in Banbury (north Oxfordshire), and major parliamentarian ones in Warwick, Coventry and Northampton, clear spheres of influence were established. The royalist sphere was in the south and west of the region, the parliamentarian in the north and east. The King held most of Worcestershire, and from here and the garrison at Banbury was able to raid and harry in south Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. The royalists also had a foothold in north Leicestershire, where Hastings had returned to Ashby de la Zouch after Edgehill with the remnants of his troop of horse. There he established a garrison from which he began a long series of raids in the north and east midlands, and periodically formed a sizeable 'flying army' with men in this area allotted to his command. At the end of January 1643, the King acquired another base in north Leicestershire, this time to the north-west, when Sir Gervase Lucas captured Belvoir Castle. The garrison he set up there also mounted troublesome guerilla style raids on parliamentarian convoys.<sup>11</sup>

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accounts of the battle itself are in Young, Edgehill, ch. xiii; Newman, Atlas, p. 23; Kenyon, Civil Wars of England, pp. 53-9.

<sup>11</sup> The military situation in the midlands in April 1643

Through its possession of Leicester, Northampton, Coventry and Warwick, parliament controlled part of Leicestershire, most of Warwickshire and all of Northamptonshire by early 1643. But all this territory remained subject to raids and skirmishes as royalist forces slipped in and out of enemy territory and back into their garrison strongholds. The obverse applied to royalist Oxfordshire and Worcestershire. These areas were of vital strategic importance to Charles as a corridor between his base in Oxford and centres of support in the west, with Worcestershire also important as a source of raw materials for the army. They were however constantly harried by parliamentarian forces from Warwick, and Edward Massey's garrison at Gloucester, the latter proving especially destructive in south-west Worcestershire.<sup>12</sup> From an early stage

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is briefly sketched by Clarendon, History, ii, pp. 472-3. For the establishment of the royalist garrisons at Ashby and Belvoir, and Hastings's army, see ibid., p. 473; Warburton, Memoirs of Prince Rupert, ii, pp. 97-8n; Everitt, Local Community, p. 12; Bennett, 'War Effort in the North Midlands', ch. 4. Everitt, Local Community, p. 11 points out the prevalence of raiding and plundering in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire during the war.

<sup>12</sup> South Warwickshire was also a strategically important area, and consequently was afflicted with

therefore, military activity in the region was intense. The close positioning of rival garrisons ensured that, outside of the major centres, neither side had total dominance.

This pattern remained basically unchanged for much of the war. Locally, there was some ebb and flow of fortune. In Leicestershire, Hastings increased his influence in 1643 and 1644. The Belvoir cavalry comprehensively routed a parliamentarian force at Melton Mowbray on 27 November 1643, with the capture of 300 soldiers and several officers. It was not until the royalist defeat at Marston Moor on 2 July 1644 that parliamentary forces were able to loosen his grip. This was despite the capture of royalist petty garrisons at Holt and in Rutland in January and February 1643

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heavy military activity: Philip Tennant, 'Parish and People: South Warwickshire in the Civil War', Warwickshire History, vii, 6, (1989/90), pp. 141-2, and idem, Edgehill and Beyond, Introduction. For the importance of Worcestershire to the royalists, see Willis Bund, Civil War in Worcestershire, pp. 3-13. The ironworks along the upper Severn were especially important in the royalist war effort, and by 1643 there was a regular traffic of military hardware between Worcester and Oxford: Ian Roy (ed.), The Royalist Ordnance Papers 1642-1646, 2 parts, Oxfordshire Record Society, (1963/4 and 1975), i, p. 35.

respectively, and the setting up of a parliamentarian garrison under Colonel Thomas Waite at Burley House in Rutland in November.<sup>13</sup> By May 1645 the parliament had small garrisons in the north at Bagworth House, Coleorton and Kirkby Bellars, as well as Leicester.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Bennett, 'War Effort in the North Midlands', pp. 128, 185, 195-8, and ch. 5 passim. Waite first mustered his company of foot and troop of harquebusiers at Burley on 6 December 1643: P.R.O. SP 28/121A/373, Musters of Colonel Thomas Waite. For the capture of Henry Nevill's garrison at Holt, see Certain Informations, (16-23 January 1643) E85(45), p. 2; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 82. The location of the Rutland petty garrison is unclear. Established by Lord Camden, the press implied it was at Langham, near Oakham, but Grey's report and a later petition from Camden's son, Henry Noel, suggest it was at North Luffenham: Certain Informations, (20 February-6 March 1643), E92(3), p. 51; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 99; H.M.C. Fifth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, p. 76.

<sup>14</sup> Symonds, Diary, p. 178. The Bagworth House garrison appears to have been captured from the royalists in June 1643. The Coleorton garrison was established in late November 1644 in an attempt to choke off supply to Ashby de la Zouch: Mercurius Aulicus, (25 June-1 July 1643), E59(24), p. 337; The Scottish Dove, (22-29

In November 1643 a small royalist garrison was established at Towcester in south Northamptonshire. This was a thorn in the parliamentarian flesh, but the garrison soon ran into serious problems of supply and provision, and had to be abandoned in late January 1644. An earlier, smaller support garrison at Brackley had been abandoned in December.<sup>15</sup> Royalist parties from Belvoir and the garrison at Newark (Nottinghamshire) harried east Northamptonshire in April to late July 1643, before being stopped by Oliver Cromwell's cavalry.<sup>16</sup> The parliamentarian capture of the small garrison at Grafton House in December merely underlined the failure of the royalists to establish a lasting

November 1644), E19(8), pp. 450-1; The True Informer (23-30 November 1644), E19(9), p. 423.

<sup>15</sup> For local reports of the Towcester garrison, see Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, fos. 93v-96v. For the poor supply and the scattering of the garrison into Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, see B.L. Add. MS 18980, f. 168; Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 112; The True Informer, (13-20 January 1644), E29(18), p. 138; Mercurius Civicus, (18-25 January 1644), E30(7), p. 379. For Brackley, see Bodl. Firth MS C6, f. 193; B.L. Add. MS 18980, f. 144; Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. fos. 107-107v.

<sup>16</sup> Clive Holmes, The Eastern Association in the English Civil War, (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 72, 86, 91.

base in Northamptonshire.<sup>17</sup> The parliamentarians, however, garrisoned not only Northampton, but also Rockingham Castle,<sup>18</sup> which served as a base for raids into royalist territory in Leicestershire and Rutland. An attempt to set up a garrison at Canons Ashby in April 1644 however was apparently thwarted by a royalist force from Banbury: south Northamptonshire remained something of a no-mans land.<sup>19</sup>

Further west, Worcestershire was put under increasing pressure by the establishment of small parliamentarian garrisons in north-east and south

<sup>17</sup> C.S.P.D. 1641-3, pp. 508-9. For press accounts, see for example Mercurius Civicus, (21-28 December 1643), E79(18), pp. 344-5; A True Relation of the taking of Grafton House, (1643), E79(24). The garrison had been set up by Sir John Digby.

<sup>18</sup> There was probably a garrison at Rockingham Castle in December 1642, as it was the home of the Rutland Committee at that date. There was certainly one there by May 1643: Bodl. MS Tanner 62, f. 438; Mercurius Aulicus, (7-13 May 1643), E103(10), p. 237. See also Symonds, Diary, p. 186.

<sup>19</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644, pp. 132-3. Sir William Dugdale noted work in progress to create a parliamentarian garrison at Castle Ashby, further east, in February. It is possible he confused it with Canons Ashby: Hamper (ed.), Dugdale, p. 61.

Warwickshire: Edgbaston Hall, garrisoned by John Fox in December 1643, and the capture of the royalist garrison at Compton House, in June 1644. This followed on the creation of a number of small garrisons in the north: Kenilworth Castle, Astley, Tamworth and Maxstoke Castle. Fox also established an outpost at Stourton Castle (Staffordshire).<sup>20</sup> Another set-back was the capture of Tewkesbury (north Gloucestershire) on 12 April 1643, which further exposed south Worcestershire to Massey.<sup>21</sup> The north-east did receive some protection from the garrison which was established at Dudley Castle (then technically part of Worcestershire) under Thomas Leveson in March 1643. Worcestershire proper held firm. Evesham was garrisoned to counter Massey. Other royalist garrisons were established at Bewdley in early 1643, and (later) at Hartlebury Castle, Madresfield, and at Strensham, the home of the leading

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<sup>20</sup> V.C.H. Warwickshire, iv, p. 271; Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 195, 208. For Fox's (short lived) garrison at Stourton Castle, see Willis Bund, Civil War in Worcestershire, p. 30-1. The capture of Compton House received widespread coverage in the parliamentarian press; see for example Mercurius Civicus, (6-13 June 1644), E50(34), p. 538; The Parliament Scout, (6-13 June 1644), E50(35), pp. 410-11.

<sup>21</sup> Newman, Atlas, p. 31; Hutton, War Effort, p. 147.

county royalist, Sir William Russell.<sup>22</sup> On 24 March 1644 Sir Gilbert Gerrard defeated Fox at Stourbridge Heath, capturing Stourton Castle and securing the north of the county.<sup>23</sup> Massey's capture of Evesham on 26 May 1645 was a serious reversal,<sup>24</sup> although Worcester itself was one of the last royal garrisons to surrender, in July 1646.

These local events were framed by major campaigns which involved the passing of field armies across the region.<sup>25</sup> Brooke, appointed commander of the army of the associated counties of Warwickshire and Staffordshire,<sup>26</sup> removed a royalist force from

<sup>22</sup> For Worcestershire garrisons, see Willis Bund, Civil War in Worcestershire, pp. 16-17, 112, 146, 178. Also Symonds, Diary, p. 167. For Dudley, and the proliferation of garrisons in the area generally, see Hutton, War Effort, pp. 100-104.

<sup>23</sup> Willis Bund, Civil War in Worcestershire, pp. 119-21; Hutton, War Effort, p. 134.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 178; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 225. Parliament appointed Colonel (Edward) Rous governor of Evesham: C.J. iv, p. 179.

<sup>25</sup> Much in this section is drawn from Newman, Atlas, and Kenyon, Civil Wars of England.

<sup>26</sup> Brooke was appointed commander on 31 December 1642, 16 days after Lord Grey of Groby, Hastings's great rival in Leicestershire, had been given command of a

Stratford upon Avon in January 1643, before moving north to attack the garrison at Lichfield Cathedral (Staffordshire). Brooke was killed, but Sir John Gell, the dominant parliamentarian in Derbyshire, ensured the capture of the town on 4 March. Rupert was sent with part of the royal field army to retake Lichfield, which he did in April, following the notorious storming, plunder and burning of Birmingham.<sup>27</sup> Sir William Waller, who had been appointed commander of the Western

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Midland Association comprised of north and east midland counties: Gardiner, History of the Great Civil War, i, p. 77. Brooke's successor, the Earl of Denbigh, was made commander of the West Midland Association in June 1643, with Grey commander of an East Midland Association army that never functioned as a unit. For the West Midland Association, see Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 220-1; for the East Midland Association, see Lynne Beats, 'The East Midland Association, 1642-1644', Midland History, iv, (1978).

<sup>27</sup> Rupert's treatment of Birmingham was written up in lurid detail in Prince Rupert's Burning Love to England Discovered in Birmingham's Flames, (1643), E100(8), and A True Relation of Prince Rupert's Barbarous Cruelty Against the Town of Birmingham, (12 April 1643), E96(9). It was defended in A Letter Written from Walsall, (14 April 1643), E96(22), which tones down the severity of the incident.

Association in February, had been active in the west and in south Wales, with some success. However, his attempt on Worcester in late May was easily repulsed, and his disastrous defeat at Roundway Down (Wiltshire) left the Severn Valley in royalist hands, apart from the now exposed Bristol and Gloucester. Indeed, Gloucester was besieged in August, but was relieved by Essex's army in September, leaving Massey free to continue his raids into south Worcestershire.

In February 1644, Rupert was sent to relieve the siege of Newark. He requested Hastings, now Lord Loughborough, to raise men in Leicestershire, and picked them up on 18 March at Ashby de la Zouch, before moving on to successfully relieve Newark. In early May Charles, threatened at Oxford by the approach of both Essex and Waller, made a lightning dash and was in Worcester by 6 June. Basil Fielding, second Earl of Denbigh and Brooke's successor as commander of the West Midland Association, was at Alcester in late August, threatening Worcester.<sup>28</sup> But Charles again evaded the parliamentarians, moving back through south-east Worcestershire into Oxfordshire and meeting up with the rest of his army. Parliament, alarmed at the possible threat to the precious Eastern Association, assigned men from the garrisons at Warwick, Kenilworth and

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<sup>28</sup> Bodl. Firth MS C7, fos. 142, 145; B.L. Add. MS 18981, fos. 222, 223.

Northampton (as well as Newport Pagnell and Cambridge) to Waller's army, which finally engaged the royal army at Cropredy Bridge (Oxfordshire) on 29 June. The focus of campaigning activity then switched first to the north, and then to the west, and encompassed the royalist defeat at Marston Moor, the entrapment of Essex at Lostwithiel, and the second battle of Newbury.

On 23 February 1645 Sir Marmaduke Langdale was despatched from Banbury to relieve the siege of Pontefract. His route via Newark took him through Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, and included a fierce conflict with parliamentarian cavalry at Market Harborough.<sup>29</sup> The campaign which culminated in the decisive battle of the civil war, fought near Naseby in north-west Northamptonshire on 14 June, began when Charles left Oxford on 7 May. Menaced by the newly formed New Model Army, Charles left Oxford westwards and joined up with Rupert and Maurice at Stow on the Wold on the 8th. Moving into Worcestershire, the royalist forces were increased by men stationed in the county, as they passed through Inkberrow, Droitwich and Bromsgrove.<sup>30</sup> A recently established parliamentarian garrison in the north-east, Hawkesley

<sup>29</sup> Tibbutt (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, pp. 204, 217.

<sup>30</sup> Bodl. Firth MS C8, f. 27.

House, was captured by Rupert and burned.<sup>31</sup> The army then marched through Shropshire and Staffordshire before heading eastwards into Leicestershire. It passed through Ashby and Loughborough before capturing Leicester, after bitter street fighting, on 31 May. The town was garrisoned, and then royal forces moved south-east, to Market Harborough. Fairfax meanwhile moved the New Model into Northamptonshire. By 6 June, Charles was marching into Northamptonshire from the opposite direction, towards Daventry. On 12 June they were spotted on Burrow Hill, near Daventry, and retreated back towards Market Harborough, with Fairfax in pursuit. Charles decided to fight, and so followed the effective death of the royalist cause at Naseby. Following this, the King fled back towards the Welsh borders and the Principality itself, whilst Fairfax quickly recaptured Leicester.

Further disasters awaited Charles that summer: on 10 July, Fairfax delivered a fatal blow to George Goring's army at Langport (Somerset), and in early September Rupert surrendered Bristol. In an attempt to revive his fortunes, Charles commissioned Sir Jacob, now Lord Astley to strengthen the royal garrisons in the Marches, and to raise 2000 foot and take them to Oxford by the spring. In fact by March 1646 he had raised 3000 men in Wales, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and he

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<sup>31</sup> Symonds, Diary, p. 167.

set off for Oxford. However, Astley was pursued by detachments from Gloucester and Hereford, as well as cavalry under the Cheshire parliamentarian Sir William Brereton. On 21 March they caught and defeated him at Stow in the Wold.<sup>32</sup> Oxford surrendered in late June 1646. In August, Sydenham Poyntz, commander of the parliamentarian Northern Association, was given command of the forces of Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Rutland, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. Poyntz was ordered to aid the Scots army that had entered the war in January 1644, and was now in pursuit of the King.<sup>33</sup> The Scots passed through Birmingham, and were in Alcester on 8 July 1645, before entering Worcestershire.<sup>34</sup> In September, Poyntz marched through Uppingham and Wellingborough on his way to Banbury and then Tewkesbury.<sup>35</sup> However, the Scots switched direction at Droitwich, away from Worcester to besiege Hereford, and in fact it was a detachment of the New Model that received the surrender of Worcester on 22 July 1646. Some Welsh castles held out for a while longer, but the civil war of 1642-46 was over. The region had been a battleground from beginning to end.

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<sup>32</sup> Hutton, War Effort, pp. 191-6.

<sup>33</sup> C.S.P.D. 1645-7, pp. 68-9.

<sup>34</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, pp. 233-4.

<sup>35</sup> C.S.P.D. 1645-7, pp. 102-4, 109, 122.

### The Impact of War

Much recent work has stressed the destructive impact of the civil war.<sup>36</sup> Financial exactions, free quarter, plundering, assaults on civilians and destruction of

<sup>36</sup> Ian Roy, 'The English Civil War and English Society', in Brian Bond and Ian Roy (eds.) War and Society: A Year Book of Military History, (henceforth War and Society) (1976); idem, 'England Turned Germany? The Aftermath of the Civil War in its European Context', T.R.H.S., 5th ser., 28, (1978); Donald Pennington, 'The War and the People', in Morrill (ed.), Reactions; Stephen Porter, 'The Fire Raid in the English Civil War', War and Society, 2, (1984); idem, 'Property Destruction in the English Civil Wars', History Today, 36, (1986). Emphasis on the brutality of the war from the soldiers' point of view is made by Charles Carlton, Going to the Wars: The Experience of the British Civil Wars, 1638-1651, (1992). On the cultural, political and physical impact of the war generally, see John Morrill (ed.), The Impact of the English Civil War, (1991). This includes essays by Carlton on 'The Impact of the Fighting', and Ian Gentles on 'The Impact of the New Model Army'. For a convincing argument that the war affected most communities in the south midlands, see Tennant, Edgehill and Beyond, passim.

property brought misery to many parts of the country. Space does not permit a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the war here. Instead, what follows is an account of the essential nature of the war and its impact, in order to provide a proper context for an analysis of popular allegiance. Suffering was universal. But important distinctions can be made in the geography of the war's impact on civilian communities.

#### Taxation

The financial demands of the protagonists were in themselves a heavy burden. Both sides imposed weekly or monthly assessments on local communities to finance the county forces. These were levied concurrently with a number of other taxes: those levied on designated parishes for the maintenance of garrisons and individual troops and companies, and an excise tax on essential goods. Field armies made levies on the communities through which they passed. Parliament levied taxes for the army in Ireland, the Scots army and the New Model Army.

The weekly/monthly assessments began in the winter of 1642-3. In Worcestershire, the £3000 monthly assessment soon proved unpopular. As early as March 1643, it became necessary to use dragoons to collect

arrears.<sup>37</sup> The parliamentarians imposed a relatively modest weekly assessment of £62-10s in Rutland. But the military instability of the county created problems. When combined with the damages caused by royalist raiding, and other financial demands, it was too much.<sup>38</sup> Although royalists never gained a real foothold in Northamptonshire, incursions from Banbury and Oxford were making collection of taxes difficult by June 1644. Money due from the county to the Scots was in arrears by February 1645.<sup>39</sup> The sources do not allow us to say exactly how far down the social scale taxation and other levies were made. But significant numbers were affected. The royalist monthly contribution for Elmley Lovett in Worcestershire went up from £10-8s-3d to £14-7s-4d in February 1644, and was levied on 44 parishioners.<sup>40</sup> In Great Houghton (Northamptonshire), parliamentarian levies for providing horses and carts involved between 21 and 34 parishioners, whilst in Samborne, Warwickshire, about 40 householders contributed to the £378 paid in taxes to the parliament in 1643-6, including at least one yeoman and one

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<sup>37</sup> Bodl. Rawlinson MS D924, f. 152. See also Hutton, War Effort, pp. 76-81, and passim. Problems of supply in royalist territory are a central theme of this book.

<sup>38</sup> Bodl. MS Tanner 62, f. 438.

<sup>39</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644, p. 208; C.J. iv, p. 41.

<sup>40</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 163-4.

husbandman.<sup>41</sup>

Garrisons also made heavy financial demands. Northamptonshire parishes were commonly required to pay a weekly sum to Northampton and Rockingham, as well as contributions to others outside the county, including Lynn, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Stamford, Newport Pagnell and Bedford.<sup>42</sup> Major George Purefoy, parliamentarian governor of Compton House, was authorised to collect weekly contributions from 13 parishes in south Warwickshire and 12 in Oxfordshire. Wroxhall paid £130 in taxes to the Kenilworth Castle garrison in 1643-4, Brinklow paid £312 to Coventry in 1643-6.<sup>43</sup> Even in

<sup>41</sup> N.R.O. 175P/38 (Great Houghton Constables' Accounts), 1644 and 1645 accounts (no pagination); P.R.O. SP 28/182, Contributions of the Inhabitants of Samborne, cited by Pennington, 'War and the People', p. 130.

<sup>42</sup> See for example P.R.O. SP 28/173, Sutton Bassett Accounts; P.R.O. SP 28/172, Harringworth Accounts; P.R.O. SP 28/172, Harrington Accounts; P.R.O. SP 28/173, Stoke Doyle Accounts; H.M.C. Salisbury (Cecil), XXII, p. 380 (payments made by Nicholas Jackson, bailiff of Brigstock).

<sup>43</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/136/37, Accounts of Major George Purefoy at Compton House garrison, June 1644-February 1645; P.R.O. SP 16/510/28, Presentments of the town of Wroxhall; P.R.O. SP 28/182, Brinklow Accounts.

relatively secure north Warwickshire, it was not possible to collect all the money: taxes for the Maxstoke Castle garrison were over £35 in arrears after 18 months. The total weekly tax for the Tamworth garrison in December 1645 was £24-17-3s, but a note on the garrison accounts records that it was not wholly collectable, 'by reason that it is taxed upon so poor men, and upon such lands where there is not distress to be had'.<sup>44</sup> But it was worse for communities in the most disputed areas. The Leicestershire Committee complained in November 1643 that the strength of royalist garrisons in the county hampered the collection of taxes for the Leicester garrison, and the soldiers there had recently refused to serve through lack of pay. Royalists claimed that Grey's soldiers had mutinied as early as August.<sup>45</sup> The constables of both Waltham on the Wolds and Branston recorded regular taxes to both sides.<sup>46</sup> Troops from Northampton

<sup>44</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/182, Accounts of Henry Kendall, Governor of Maxstoke Castle; P.R.O. SP 28/122, Tamworth garrison musters.

<sup>45</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 160; Bodl. MS Add. 132, f. 54v.

<sup>46</sup> Transcribed T.G. Daniels, Waltham on the Wolds Constables' Accounts 1608-1706, (1984, no other publication details: copy consulted in L.R.O.) p. 188; L.R.O. DE 720/30, fos. 53-54v, 63.

collected taxes as far south as the countryside near Banbury.<sup>47</sup> The capture of Tewkesbury allowed parliamentarian horse to levy over a wide area in south Worcestershire in 1644.<sup>48</sup> Captain William Gouge was assigned 13 villages in the Vale of Evesham in July 1645.<sup>49</sup> Thus the inhabitants of disputed regions were exposed to the possibility of double taxation. Whatever their discomforts, the same could not be said of those in the major garrisons.

Military instability, and the heavy passage of troops in counties like Worcestershire, gave rise to irregular taxes. Thus Kidderminster inhabitants were taxed £28-8-2d in January 1643 in order to support a

<sup>47</sup> The Parliament Scout, (26 April-3 May 1644), E44(23), p. 374; Mercurius Civicus, (25 April-2 May 1644), E45(1), pp. 485-6.

<sup>48</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/138, Accounts of Captain John Gyles, 1644-1645. Gyles received payments from constables as far west as Bransford, near the Malverns, and as far east as Cleeve Prior, near Evesham. He made payments to his troop at Norton, Longdon, and at Bishops Cleeve in Gloucestershire.

<sup>49</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/138, Accounts of William Gouge, governor of Hawkesley Hall. However, Gouge did claim that he took no more than 5 days free quarter in Worcestershire: ibid.

stay by troops under Sir Thomas Aston.<sup>50</sup> In the wake of Naseby, Worcester inhabitants were requested to pay the £96 subscribed to Maurice for improving the city fortifications.<sup>51</sup> In May 1644, Lord Newcastle's horse, sent out of the north to join Goring at Newark, were out collecting money in supposedly parliamentarian areas of Staffordshire and Leicestershire.<sup>52</sup> As late as November 1645, the absence of the Northamptonshire horse with Poyntz was allowing the royalists to plunder 'to the very walls' of Northampton.<sup>53</sup> Following the recapture of Leicester, Fairfax ordered that a garrison of 1500 be maintained there. But the town and countryside were so exhausted, and Newark still so strong, that it was feared it could not be done.<sup>54</sup> Although Worcestershire is the most marked example, it is clear that civilians in disputed country everywhere were subject to especially severe financial demands.

<sup>50</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 102-3. For these sort of problems in Worcestershire generally, see Hutton, War Effort, ch. 9, esp. pp. 95-99.

<sup>51</sup> Bond (ed.) Chamber Order Book of Worcester, p. 397.

<sup>52</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644, p. 171.

<sup>53</sup> C.S.P.D. 1645-7, p. 219.

<sup>54</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 253.

### Conduct

Armies and garrisons needed food, horses, raw materials and manual labour. They also required accommodation and sustenance for troops on the move. This was often taken by 'free quarter', a promise of payment at a later date, rarely kept. As the war dragged on, soldiers' pay became more infrequent whilst civilians became less willing to supply them. Soldiers became hungry and alienated. The result was a blurring of the distinction between sanctioned free quarter and mere foraging and plunder. This was in addition to the ravages of the fighting itself. Consequently, the war was a brutal experience for many, especially in a factious region like the midlands.<sup>55</sup>

Civilian conflict with the soldiery was widespread: Gentles's analysis of indemnity cases in 1647 to 1655 shows the midlands had the highest number of such cases. Hughes found that of the 92 Warwickshire cases the largest single category (30) was that involving soldiers.<sup>56</sup> Some respite came with the relatively well

<sup>55</sup> For recent work on military conduct, see the works cited in n. 36 above. More specifically, see Barbara Donagan, 'Codes and Conduct in the English Civil War', *P&P*, 118, (1989), esp. pp. 83-95, and *idem*, 'Prisoners in the English Civil War', *History Today*, 41, (1991).

<sup>56</sup> Gentles, *New Model Army*, p. 124, Table 5.1, and ch.

disciplined New Model Army,<sup>57</sup> but that still left the Scots and the increasingly desperate royalists. Virtually nowhere was safe. In the relative security of Coventry, 38 inhabitants of the Spon Street ward alone drew up accounts of their losses in 1646, claiming from £1-16-4s to £128-7-0s. The Kenilworth Castle garrison confiscated 21 horses between May 1643 and April 1644.<sup>58</sup> In Northampton, householders were regularly compelled to help repair the town walls, and in May 1644 they were required to man the defences.<sup>59</sup> In the north Warwickshire countryside, sheltered by the proximity of Coventry, Northampton and Leicester, 40 inhabitants of Stoneleigh drew up accounts of losses,

<sup>5</sup> passim; Ann Hughes, 'Parliamentary Tyranny ? Indemnity Proceedings and the Impact of the Civil War: a case study from Warwickshire', Midland History, xi, (1986), p. 58.

<sup>57</sup> Gentles, New Model Army, p. 129. Gentles ascribes the relatively good relations between the New Model and civilians to the prevalence of religion and good morale in that army: ibid., ch. 4 passim.

<sup>58</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/182, Accounts of the inhabitants of Spon Street Ward, Coventry; P.R.O. SP 28/136/4, Accounts of Kenilworth Castle garrison, May 1643-April 1644.

<sup>59</sup> Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough of Northampton, ii, pp. 438-9; C.S.P.D. 1644-5, p. 453.

of which a number include sections for 'losses by the Scot'. The Scots' shopping list suggests more than mere foraging for essentials: they took horses, sheep, cattle, cheeses, bread, bacon, hay, linen, pewter and petticoats. In Brinklow, a troop of Brereton's men took a similar variety of goods, including horses, sheep, beer, tobacco and a hawk.<sup>60</sup> In April 1643, parishes in northern Northamptonshire were ordered to bring in foodstuffs as provision for the Eastern Association army: Holmes concluded that parishes in the county generally rarely received payment for free quarter given to that army.<sup>61</sup>

But communities distant from the protection of a major garrison, or in areas which became destabilised anyway, had the worst of it. Worcestershire, which saw the gradual erosion of royalist control, is the prime example. Charles was concerned as early as December 1642 that lack of pay would result in 'some violence upon the country' in Worcestershire. There was indeed

<sup>60</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/182, Stoneleigh Accounts; P.R.O. 28/182, Brinklow Accounts.

<sup>61</sup> Holmes, Eastern Association, pp. 154-5. Free quarter could be devastating: in Thrapston, 24 inhabitants drew up bills for free quarter, including one for £78. This was on top a total of £310-0-13s in monthly taxes: P.R.O. SP 28/172, Accounts of the Inhabitants of Thrapston.

'great spoil and robbery' by June. In February 1644, Rupert made great efforts to stabilize the situation, temporarily increasing the monthly assessments and outlawing free quarter, but there were more complaints about soldiers' conduct at the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions.<sup>62</sup> The constable of Elmley Lovett received a demand for the parish's arrears, 'at your perils of pillaging and your houses fired and your persons imprisoned'. Sir Thomas Aston's soldiers committed 'plundering and abuses' in north-east Worcestershire and south Warwickshire.<sup>63</sup> By 1646 the soldiery were truly out of control. Colonel Samuel Sandys, Governor of the Hartlebury Castle garrison in 1646, was said by Townshend to have 'so sharked the county thereabouts, that for beef, malt, hay and bacon he lived in free cost'.<sup>64</sup> During the siege of Worcester, the defending soldiers sallied out into the countryside to seize cattle. In the city itself, in addition to the destruction of buildings for defences, soldiers pulled down citizens' property and sold the materials for drink. Porter estimates that overall perhaps a fifth of

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<sup>62</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 90, 125, 160, 174-5. See also Hutton, War Effort, chs. 9 and 13 passim, esp. pp. 131-2.

<sup>63</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 238-9; B.L. Harleian MS 6804, fos. 139, 140.

<sup>64</sup> Townshend, Diary, i, p. 106.

Worcester's buildings were burnt or destroyed.<sup>65</sup> By then, parliamentarian soldiers from garrisons and field armies were inflicting similar misery in the county. The north and east suffered especially. Parliamentarian soldiers from Hawkesley plundered linen, bedding and pewter in Hartlebury, and at least 34 people there also suffered at the hands of soldiers under Essex, Poyntz and the Scots. In Flyford Flavell, 16 inhabitants submitted claims detailing losses incurred providing labourers and quartering soldiers during the siege of Worcester, as well as providing horses for the battle of Edgehill. In Fladbury, at least 16 villagers were plundered by soldiers from the Warwick garrison, or by

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, i, p. 128; Porter, 'Property Destruction', p. 37. This compares unfavourably with Northampton and Coventry, where less than a tenth of the houses were destroyed for defence purposes: ibid. The distinction in the experiences of communities in militarily secure and insecure areas is obvious here. Leicester, subject to a violent storming in 1645, may well fit this pattern too. Houses, buildings and walls on the south side of the town were demolished before the royalist capture, when at least six of the largest royal field guns were used: L.R.O. Borough Records, Hall Papers 1640-1645, fos. 326, 334; Roy (ed.), Royalist Ordnance Papers, i, p. 57.

troops in Waller's army.<sup>66</sup>

Erosion of royalist power, plus the sustained presence of garrisons and troops of both sides, also occurred in Leicestershire and Rutland. Bennett has argued that this area did not see widespread abuse of civilian communities.<sup>67</sup> The absence of royalist committee papers and parishioners' accounts of their losses makes an assessment difficult, and we cannot rely on the accusations of plundering made in the parliamentarian press. But Bennett's argument is largely founded upon a consideration of Hastings's policy, and under-rates the role of other forces in the region, especially those of Gervase Lucas and Thomas Waite. Hastings did offer in January 1643 to prevent plunder of parliamentary supporters, if Grey would reciprocate, and in Ashby de la Zouch he had a proclamation posted on the market cross forbidding

<sup>66</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/187, Accounts of Hartlebury; P.R.O. SP 28/188, Flyford Flavell Accounts; P.R.O. SP 28/187, Fladbury Accounts.

<sup>67</sup> Bennett's argument is that the royalists in Leicestershire had sound tactical reasons for not plundering the county: Martyn Bennett, 'Leicestershire's Royalist Officers and the War Effort in the County, 1642-1646', Trans. Leics. Arch. & Hist. Soc., lix, (1984-5), pp. 47ff.

plunder and robbery by soldiers, on pain of death.<sup>68</sup> With the exception of 1645, this area rarely hosted field armies.

But other evidence suggests that communities suffered just as much from the absence of military authority in the east as they did elsewhere. As early as 1643, 'Mensalia' commented that plunder, pillage, and the seizing of horses were so common, 'that we take them for no instances of wonder or speciality of recording'.<sup>69</sup> The payment of taxes to both sides in parishes like Waltham on the Wolds may be interpreted not as tacit co-operation, but as the result of military impasse. Indeed, on at least one occasion - in late December 1643 - Waite attacked a party of royalists quartered in Waltham, seizing prisoners. Waite wrote that in response, a party of Belvoir horse rode into Rutland, 'swearing that unless I would be gone from Burleigh they would not leave one town in Rutland worth a penny'. A skirmish ensued on Sproxton Heath.<sup>70</sup> Early in the following summer, with the

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<sup>68</sup> H.M.C. Hastings, II, pp. 87-8; Bodl. MS Add. 132, f. 39v.

<sup>69</sup> Bodl. Add. MS C132, f. 46.

<sup>70</sup> Bodl. MS Tanner 89, f. 27. Waite's report was communicated to the Speaker by Lord Grey: H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 165. This questions Carlton's assertion that there were no

Eastern Association horse bogged down by mud and rain, the Earl of Newcastle's horse plundered villages near Leicester, before moving north.<sup>71</sup> A little later, a party of royalist horse under Colonel William Nevill plundered several towns and villages between Belvoir and Leicester.<sup>72</sup> Prior to their attack on Belvoir Castle, parliamentarian forces 'burned all the town down'.<sup>73</sup> Constables in both Waltham and Branston had to spend money on soldiers to persuade them not to take horses.<sup>74</sup>

Both the Leicestershire gentry and Hastings complained about the conduct of Lucas, imposing oppressive taxes in the north of the county, and threatening plunder. Waite added to their misery by taking oxen and 200 sheep from near Belvoir in March

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military "incidents" in Rutland during the war: Carlton, Going to the Wars, p. 206. The royalist press reported another skirmish between the Belvoir and Burley horse, at Woolsthorpe, in August 1644: Mercurius Aulicus, (25-31 August 1644), E10(19), pp. 1138-39.

<sup>71</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644, pp. 190-1.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p. 304.

<sup>73</sup> Tibbutt (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, pp. 68-9.

<sup>74</sup> Transcribed T.G. Daniels, Waltham on the Wolds Constable's Accounts, p. 118; L.R.O. DE 720/30, fos. 53, 54.

1644.<sup>75</sup> Hastings himself used force to collect taxes: in June 1643, 'Mensalia' reported that when a troop of horse went to Bagworth and other villages in west Leicestershire to collect the levy for Ashby, and found it not ready, they seized the constables, 'other men of sufficiency', and some horses, and took them back to Ashby.<sup>76</sup> In March 1644, a successful skirmish with some of Hastings's men at Hinckley resulted in the release of some 30 country men taken prisoner from the south-western villages of Cosby and Leire.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> B.L. Add. MS 18982, fos. 42-3; Bodl. Firth MS C8, f. 374. The plunder near Belvoir is reported in The Scottish Dove, (8-15 March 1644), E37(24), p. 172, and The True Informer, (9-16 March 1644), E37(25), p. 179.

<sup>76</sup> Bodl. MS Add. 132, f.50v.

<sup>77</sup> A Letter to the Lord Grey of Groby, (6 March 1644), E37(9); see also H.J. Francis, A History of Hinckley, (Hinckley, 1930), pp. 90-1. Another parliamentarian account, The Military Scribe, (5-12 March 1644), E37(4), p. 22, puts the number of prisoners at 26 'honest countrymen', plus a minister, a Mr. Warner, who the royalists threatened to hang. Some corroboration is provided by the royalist Sir William Dugdale, who noted in his diary that 400 of Hastings's horse had been in the area to 'gather up assessments', and had been attacked by a force from Leicester. He notes that the royalists had 'taken prisoners and horses of the

Hastings's early attempt to mitigate the suffering of Leicestershire people was therefore a failure. By late 1643, plunder was accepted as a commonplace by both sides. This is evident not only in the decision by 'Mensalia' to give up reporting such conduct, but in the complaint of the Leicestershire Committee in November 1643 that the need for Grey's horse to escort convoys left the county disastrously exposed to royalist raids. The following June, Grey told the Committee of Both Kingdoms that if he was commanded out of Leicestershire, 'it would endanger the plundering of that part of the county that is yet protected'.<sup>78</sup>

The strain on communities and individuals was immense. Between October 1643 and October 1644, the constables in Waltham on the Wolds recorded 150 individual disbursements of money. Twenty-seven (18%) of these recorded supplies for soldiers quartered in the town. The supplies included oats, peas, ale, cheese, tobacco, mutton, bread and even a pack of cards. Soldiers were quartered in the town on 17 separate occasions in that period, including 320 men on

'rebels', but it is not clear if these are soldiers or civilians. The absence of a parliamentarian garrison in this area suggests they were indeed countrymen: Hamper (ed.), Dugdale, pp. 62-3.

<sup>78</sup> H.M.C Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 160; C.S.P.D. 1644, p. 200.

19 October 1643. This was in addition to sending supplies to Belvoir, providing horses, and paying contribution money.<sup>79</sup> From Rutland, the gentleman Abel Barker wrote that he dared not keep money about him, as every day he expected to be arrested, his house plundered, 'and my goods exposed to the mercy of the furious soldiers'. Because of the disruption, Barker did not expect to receive one half of the rents due to him.<sup>80</sup> Hastings testified to the exhaustion of Leicestershire when explaining his surrender of Leicester in 1645; he was desperately short of supply and horse, and 'the country people being all prisoners or pillaged there came in not a days pay while I was in the town'. The Leicestershire Committee echoed this in a letter to Fairfax of March 1646: 'This country is so extraordinarily plundered and impoverished that they cannot continue the ordinary taxes'.<sup>81</sup>

Similar problems affected the other heavily disputed parts of the region. Lacking a secure base in the area, royalist forces were dependent on plunder for provision in south Northamptonshire. Byron told Rupert that he used 450 horse and dragoons to 'drive the country of

<sup>79</sup> Transcribed T.G. Daniels, Waltham on the Wolds Constables' Accounts, pp. 118-23.

<sup>80</sup> H.M.C. Fifth Report, App., Field MSS, p. 388.

<sup>81</sup> Bodl. Firth MS C8, fos. 5-6; Bodl. MS Tanner 60, f.

such horses and cattle as can be found near the town' whilst he was quartered in Brackley in July 1643.<sup>82</sup> In December John Cochrane, governor of the recently created royalist garrison at Towcester, complained that hundreds originally assigned to him had now been given to the Banbury garrison, and those he did have were exhausted by the presence of horse regiments. By the 30th, with parliamentarian forces all around, he was unable to collect a farthing. With this degree of confusion, it is unsurprising that the press of both sides accused each other of plundering the area, no doubt with justification.<sup>83</sup> In neighbouring south Warwickshire, 'well affected' tenants of the Earl of Northampton in Brailes and the surrounding area were heavily taxed and threatened with plunder by their own side, in the person of Colonel Croker.<sup>84</sup> People in the same area were also threatened by parliamentarian

<sup>82</sup> B.L. Add. MS 18980, f. 80.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., f. 159, also in Warburton, Memoirs of Prince Rupert, ii, pp. 355-6; B.L. Add. MS 18980, f. 168. For accusations of plunder in the area, see for example Mercurius Aulicus, (10-16 September 1643), E68(4), p. 504; The Parliament Scout, (17-24 November 1643), E76(27), p. 191.

<sup>84</sup> B.L. Add. MS 18980, f. 58. Also in Warburton, Memoirs of Prince Rupert, ii, pp. 187-8.

forces.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, other south Warwickshire people suffered plunder by parliamentarian troops, and even the parliamentarian press admitted there were problems: Denbigh's soldiers were badly in arrears, 'therefore they must have free quarter or starve'.<sup>86</sup> Foot soldiers at Warwick Castle kept horses stabled in the town so they might go out on their own plundering missions. The garrison was not strong enough to prevent royalist attacks on Alcester, already heavily burdened with taxes. From the Compton House garrison, George Purefoy habitually threatened nearby communities with plunder.<sup>87</sup>

Plunder was not only committed out of necessity; it was also punitive, an instrument of policy against

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<sup>85</sup> For example the people of Tysoe, mainly tenants of the Earl of Northampton, were bullied by George Purefoy at Compton House; Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 202-3.

<sup>86</sup> See for example P.R.O. SP 28/136/51, Stratford Book of Accounts; P.R.O. SP 28/136/48, Bishopston Accounts. See also the petitions in H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, p. 272, which includes one from destitute officers and soldiers under Denbigh. The remark about these soldiers is in The Scottish Dove, (13-20 December 1644), E21(36), p. 479.

<sup>87</sup> P.R.O. SP 16/511/57; H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, p. 266; Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 202-3.

communities considered ill affected. Again, there was a qualitative difference in the experience of communities associated with the major garrisons, and those in the peripheral areas of the region. The east may serve as a case study. Here, parliamentary forces plundered a number of allegedly royalist communities early in the war, who evidently could not expect protection from Ashby, Belvoir, Banbury or Oxford. Thus when a royalist rising was quashed in Wellingborough in December 1642, it was then plundered. Nearby Oundle was plundered by the parliamentarian forces early in 1643, for its 'infidelity to King and parliament'.<sup>88</sup> Grey plundered in the Vale of Belvoir and in Rutland, although he claimed he was unable to prevent his soldiers from plundering the house of Henry Noel.<sup>89</sup> Rutland people

<sup>88</sup> Special Passages, (27 December 1642 - 3 January 1643), E84(6), pp. 171-2; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, (23-30 May 1643), E104(10), p. 16.

<sup>89</sup> Early in 1643, Grey plundered Bottesford in north-east Leicestershire, and Oakham in Rutland: Hamper (ed.), Dugdale, p. 47. Bottesford was plundered again in June; ibid., p. 51. The attack on Oakham was admitted in The Kingdom's Weekly Post, (10 January 1644), E81(17), p. 69. For Grey's account of the attack on Noel's house, see H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 99; L.J. v, p. 361; V.C.H. Rutland, i, p. 190.

were of course subject to royalist plundering as well.<sup>90</sup> Plunder was brutal. When parliamentarian forces captured Grafton House in December 1643, their own press admitted it was burned. Samuel Luke, governor of the parliamentarian garrison at Newport Pagnell, was told the house had proved 'extraordinarily rich in booty to the soldiery'. The chaplain there was stripped nearly naked by the soldiers: the royalist press claimed women in the house were treated with equal barbarity.<sup>91</sup>

Royalist forces displayed a similar attitude to hostile but vulnerable communities. Rupert plundered in parts of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire that were, according to the royalist press, 'places very ill affected to his Majesty'. It also reported psychological warfare by the Earl of Northampton, who loaded up wounded parliamentarians in carts and left them in 'ill affected parts and villages' of

<sup>90</sup> For example by the Belvoir horse: Bodl. MS Tanner 89, f. 27; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 165; and by the Earl of Newcastle's horse: The Scottish Dove, (29 December-5 January 1644), E81(3), p. 95.

<sup>91</sup> The Parliament Scout, (29 December 1643-5 January 1644), E81(1), p. 238; Bodl. MS Tanner 62, f. 462; Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, f. 58; Mercurius Aulicus, (24-30 December 1643), E81(19), pp. 740-1.

Northamptonshire in the spring of 1643.<sup>92</sup> When he went pillaging in Northamptonshire, Hastings distinguished between the Northampton to Wellingborough area and the Wellingborough to Kettering area, as the latter area had been 'loyal to his Majesty'.<sup>93</sup> Royalist conduct was markedly brutal. When in south Leicestershire in July 1643, Rupert hanged one parliamentarian activist in Shawell and burned the village for the resistance he encountered, and also pillaged villages nearby; Richard Symonds recorded that royalist soldiers in Leicester 'fell to plunder, so that ere day fully open scarce a cottage [was] unplundered. There were many Scots in this town, and no quarter was given to any in the heat'.<sup>94</sup>

Both Leicester and Worcester suffered this way, eventually. But for most of the war people in and around the large garrisons at least had some protection from the ravages of the enemy. People from the surrounding countryside frequently took shelter in them

<sup>92</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (29 January-4 February 1643), E246(16), pp. 5-6; Mercurius Aulicus, (7-13 May 1643), E103(10), p. 241.

<sup>93</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (14-20 May 1643), E104(21), pp. 261-2.

<sup>94</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, fos. 54-55; Symonds, Diary, pp. 180-1. See also Certain Informations, (22-29 January 1644), E30(13), pp. 419-20.

on the approach of enemy forces.<sup>95</sup> This was a mutually beneficial relationship, as villagers were required to serve in the garrison forces in emergencies. Thus in November 1642, the constables of several villages just north of Northampton, including Kingsthorpe, Boughton, Pitsford and Brixworth were ordered to 'speedily warn and summon' all inhabitants fit to bear arms to go to Northampton, as royalist forces were engaged on a march in that direction.<sup>96</sup> Many inhabitants of north Warwickshire towns came to Coventry in the war.<sup>97</sup> People from north Gloucestershire, south-east Worcestershire and south Warwickshire fled to Warwick to escape the depredations of the royalist garrison at Camden House.<sup>98</sup>

The protection provided by the garrisons was by no

<sup>95</sup> For examples of Leicester and Northampton offering this sort of protection, see The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, (21-28 May 1644), E49(26), p. 491; Tibbutt, Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, pp. 646-7. A relatively distant community like Lutterworth could not count on protection: forces despatched from Leicester arrived simply too late to prevent the plunder in 1644: Certain Informations, E30(13), p. 419.

<sup>96</sup> N.R.O. Isham Correspondence, IC 3423.

<sup>97</sup> R.B., p. 45.

<sup>98</sup> Mercurius Civicus, (27 February-6 March 1645), E271(16), p. 841; Clarke, Lives, p. 48.

means total, and at times the major garrisons were little more than islands in a sea of plunder. In the summer of 1644 it was said of Leicestershire that nowhere were the inhabitants secure from royalist plundering. Even Northamptonshire was at one time 'much infested' by royalist forces, and the Committee were 'not able to defend their own county'. In November 1645, the royalists reached the walls of Northampton. The Warwickshire Committee summed up the problem: 'when there are garrisons on all sides it is impossible to protect every village'.<sup>99</sup> But it was the outlying rural communities that were most exposed. Although enemy forces were sometimes able to approach close to the large garrisons, they were frequently beaten back, and their booty occasionally recaptured.<sup>100</sup> Aulicus reported that parliamentarian forces from the Compton House garrison plundered 'in all small villages' in Worcestershire - i.e. away from the royalist garrisons.

<sup>99</sup> L.J. vi, pp. 627-8; C.S.P.D. 1644, p. 208; C.S.P.D. 1645-7, p. 219; H.M.C. Sixth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, pp. 27-8.

<sup>100</sup> For an example of the recapture of plunder by forces from Warwick, see Tibbutt (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, pp. 521-2. From the Burley House garrison, Waite was said to have recaptured cattle stolen by royalists in January 1644: Certain Informations, (15-22 January 1644), E29(20), p. 417.

But at least one raiding party was routed by a force sent out from Worcester.<sup>101</sup> In August 1643, Banbury forces raiding south Northamptonshire were routed by a troop of horse sent out from Northampton, whose forces also repulsed Rupert in November.<sup>102</sup> The further from a major garrison, the greater the danger.

The targeting of enemies for plunder degenerated into persecution of civilians everywhere by the second half of the war. But there are indications that earlier on, parliamentarian forces were more careful to plunder only their enemies than the royalists. The deficiencies of the evidence make this difficult to prove. But there is little evidence of indiscriminate parliamentarian plundering before late 1643. Early on, parliament forces tended to concentrate either on "royalist" towns such as Wellingborough, or on the homes of known 'papists' or 'malignants'. Hughes has noted that accounts of goods taken by parliamentarian troops in Warwickshire in 1642-3 reveal plunder was restricted to such people.<sup>103</sup> Of the 14 instances of parliamentarian

<sup>101</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (10-17 August 1645), E298(23), p. 1699.

<sup>102</sup> A Continuation of Certain Special and Remarkable Passages, (10-18 August 1643), E65(21), p. 7; The Kingdom's Weekly Post, (22 November 1643), E76(22), p. 18.

<sup>103</sup> Hughes, 'Warwickshire' (thesis), pp. 265-6.

plunder and pillage in the region that Wharton recorded in his letters, four were against ministers, three against 'malignants', three against Commissioners of Array, three against royalist nobles, and one against unspecified 'hell hounds' in Worcestershire.<sup>104</sup> When Coventry dragoons went out raiding in April 1643, they directed their attack on the property of the royalist Lord Dunsmore.<sup>105</sup> In Worcestershire however, the royalist soldiery quickly fell into disrepute with the inhabitants. Townshend referred to 'the oppressive insolency and plundering of the soldiers here', and contrasted it with the better discipline of parliamentarian troops.<sup>106</sup> Townshend was not unbiased, but Charles was concerned about conduct in December 1642, and royalist troops were stealing sheep and 'all the horses they come across' in the county in

<sup>104</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', pp. 316-333. Lord Dunsmore in Warwickshire, and Sir William Russell in Worcestershire, were both plundered twice. A recent study has suggested that Catholics were an especial target for parliamentarian soldiers in Worcestershire: C.D. Gilbert, 'The Catholics in Worcestershire, 1642-1651', Recusant History, 20, 3, (1991), p. 342.

<sup>105</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 33.

<sup>106</sup> Townshend, Diary, i, pp. 138-9.

September, if not before.<sup>107</sup> Such problems were rooted in lack of money. But Rupert's attempt to extort £200 from Leicester in September 1642 gave succour to the attempts of the parliamentarian press to demonize him. An embarrassed Charles had to revoke the demand, apologize to the Mayor, and rebuke his nephew two days later.<sup>108</sup> Hastings was called 'Rob-Carrier' in the parliamentarian press, which claimed the name was coined by country people.<sup>109</sup> Whatever the true extent

<sup>107</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 71, also cited by Hutton, War Effort, p. 79.

<sup>108</sup> Stocks (ed.), Records of the Borough of Leicester, pp. 317-9; H.M.C. Eighth Report, App., Corporation of Leicester MSS, p. 437.

<sup>109</sup> An early appearance of the name is in Certain Informations, (1-8 May 1643), E101 (2), p. 121, which says that Hastings's plundering in the Tamworth - Ashby de la Zouch area 'hath made the people thereabouts dignify him with the title of Rob Carrier'. Bennett considers Hastings's reputation as a plunderer largely the creation of the parliamentarian press: Bennett, 'Leicestershire's Royalist Officers', pp. 47ff. But it has been shown above that Leicestershire did suffer in the war, and there was a significant degree of royalist plunder, extortion etc., especially in the south and west of the county. It may be therefore that Hastings's reputation and soubriquet were both actual and

of his plundering, it remains that the Belvoir forces made little distinction between friend and foe, and in the west Hastings himself was reduced to collecting taxes for Ashby by force. Disputed territory was inimical to selective plundering.

Thus communities in militarily disputed or unstable areas, such as north and east Worcestershire, south Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, east Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Rutland were especially prone to the miseries of double taxation, foraging and punitive plunder raids. The major garrison towns were able to offer a measure of protection to communities associated with them, although this undoubtedly brought its own problems. The differing experiences of the peripheral and central areas of the region were mirrored in the pattern of popular allegiance that emerged there.

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deserved.

## Chapter Five

### The Pattern of Allegiance

This chapter will describe the geographical pattern of allegiance in the civil war, 1642-1646. It is divided into two main sections. The first deals with military recruitment. It utilises, as far as is practicable, statistical as well as more impressionistic evidence. The second section deals with expressions of civilian allegiance, and is based on more impressionistic evidence. It will be argued that it is legitimate and essential to use both types of evidence: they can be shown to corroborate each other, and each by itself is unsatisfactory.<sup>1</sup>

#### Recruitment

Patterns of military recruitment have an obvious relevance to the geographical distribution for popular allegiance. Inability to attract volunteers would certainly indicate a lack of popular support. But military service per se is not proof of ideological attachment: the appeal of a regular wage, and the eventual introduction by both sides of impressment

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<sup>1</sup> On the use of statistical and impressionistic evidence for popular allegiance, see the Introduction.

complicate the relationship, and in some cases invalidate it entirely. These problems will be dealt with below. First, the evidence itself, and its (possible) relevance to patterns of allegiance will be presented.

#### Statistical Evidence

Pension records, for maimed and veteran soldiers and the widows of deceased soldiers, provide excellent evidence of recruitment.<sup>2</sup> For Warwickshire, a number of related records, including allowances and weekly payments made by Quarter Sessions or the Committee to wounded parliamentarian soldiers and the families of deceased soldiers, as well as interim payments made pending the award of a pension, are also extant.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> These records include pensions paid to maimed soldiers, elderly veterans and war widows, petitions applying for such pensions, and certificates from commanding officers supporting these petitions. For the sake of brevity, here, and in Maps One and Two and Appendices I and II below, all the wounded soldiers, veterans and widows named in such material are referred to as "pensioners".

<sup>3</sup> Because of the obvious relationship of these payments to pensions, the recipients are included with actual pensioners here. The records of the Warwickshire

Although similar payments probably were made elsewhere, there are no extant examples from the other counties of the region.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the overall survival of pension records for the present region is poor, and the numbers are unimpressive. Quarter Sessions records give just 45 parliamentarian pensioners and recipients of similar aid for Warwickshire, 41 parliamentarian pensioners for Worcestershire, and three for Northamptonshire, whilst

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Committee regarding such payments are in the form of petitions from wounded soldiers requesting aid. These are in P.R.O. SP 28/247/1, 74, 478, and P.R.O. SP 28/248 (unfoliated Committee papers).

<sup>4</sup> There are no examples (other than for Warwickshire) of such payments in either Quarter Sessions or Committee papers. For Quarter Sessions records, see n. 5 and n. 7 below. Committee records for parliamentarian administrations are in P.R.O. SP 28/247 and SP 28/248 (Warwickshire), P.R.O. SP 28/249 (Worcestershire) and P.R.O. SP 28/238 and SP 28/239 (Northamptonshire). At the time of writing, the Leicestershire and Rutland Committee papers, P.R.O. SP 28/236, were unfit for production. The voluminous Committee papers for Warwickshire and Northamptonshire contain records of payment of arrears to hundreds more parliamentarian soldiers. But, like many of the pension records, these do not record the place of habitation or the occupation of the individual concerned.

there are no such records for Leicestershire or Rutland.<sup>5</sup> Warwickshire Committee papers provide the names of another nine parliamentarian applicants for pensions or similar aid, giving a total of 54 for that county.<sup>6</sup> Royalist pensioners are not much more numerous: Quarter Sessions records give 125 for Leicestershire, 83 for Northamptonshire, seven (including recipients of similar aid) for Warwickshire and six for Worcestershire. There are no records of royalist pensioners in Rutland.<sup>7</sup> The full names of only

<sup>5</sup> Warwickshire : W.C.R. vols. ii-iv. Worcestershire: H.W.R.O. 110:90/23. Northamptonshire: Wake (ed.) Quarter Sessions Records, Northamptonshire, p. 189.

<sup>6</sup> See the references given in n. 3 above. There are in fact twelve petitions for aid to the Worcestershire Committee, but three of the applicants are also mentioned in the Quarter Sessions records.

<sup>7</sup> Warwickshire: W.C.R. vols. iv, v, vii. Worcestershire: H.W.R.O. 110:128/103, 139/32, 139/33, 139/35, 139/36, 153/1. Northamptonshire: N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/65-82. Leicestershire: L.R.O. Q.S. 6/1/2/1, Order Book 1678-1700; Q.S. 6/1/3, Order Book 1700-1722. The latter contains an index, identifying pensioners but giving names only, to the Order Book for 1665-1678, which unfortunately is now missing. The royalist pension records for Northamptonshire are among the Quarter Sessions rolls. Whilst this thesis was being

24 Leicestershire royalist pensioners are known. These are from the 1678-1700 period. Of the remaining 101 pensioners, from 1665-1678, only the surnames are known.<sup>8</sup> Seven surnames appear in both groups, so it is possible the actual number of extant royalist pensioners from Leicestershire is 118.

These figures are statistically insignificant, and the patchy survival of Quarter Sessions records across the region precludes comparison of the records of one county with another. The low numbers also make collation with population figures, as made by Underdown,<sup>9</sup> unviable here. If the statistics cannot be used positively, neither can they be used negatively: the low numbers of pensioners cannot be taken as evidence of a general reluctance to serve. This is partly because the records themselves are incomplete, and partly because, as shown below, recruitment in

completed, the rolls were undergoing preservation, and those for the post Trinity 1676 period were unavailable. I am very grateful to Crispin Powell at the N.R.O. for allowing me to see as many of the rolls as was possible. For the royalist pensioners from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, and the parliamentarian pensioners and recipients of similar aid from Warwickshire, see Appendices I and II.

<sup>8</sup> See the Leicestershire sources in n. 7 above.

<sup>9</sup> Underdown, Revel, pp. 193-8.

itself was not much of a problem in the war. That there were many more wounded soldiers, war widows, etc., than we know about is evident from comments in Quarter Sessions. In Warwickshire, the Trinity 1652 Sessions noted the 'pitiful complaint', constantly made to the court, 'that there are very many soldiers of this county who having served the Parliament in the late [wars] are so maimed and wounded that they are not able to follow any profession or employment'. In 1663, when pensions to royalist veterans were payable, the court noted 'the great increase of persons fit to become pensioners in this county'.<sup>10</sup> In Northamptonshire, the Epiphany 1666 Sessions made a 'general suspension' of all pensions, 'upon consideration of the multitude of pensioners in this county not qualified to receive such pensions and of the great charge of taxes and other contributions'.<sup>11</sup>

Where we know the place of residence of a pensioner

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<sup>10</sup> W.C.R. vol. iii, p. 128; vol. iv, p. 225.

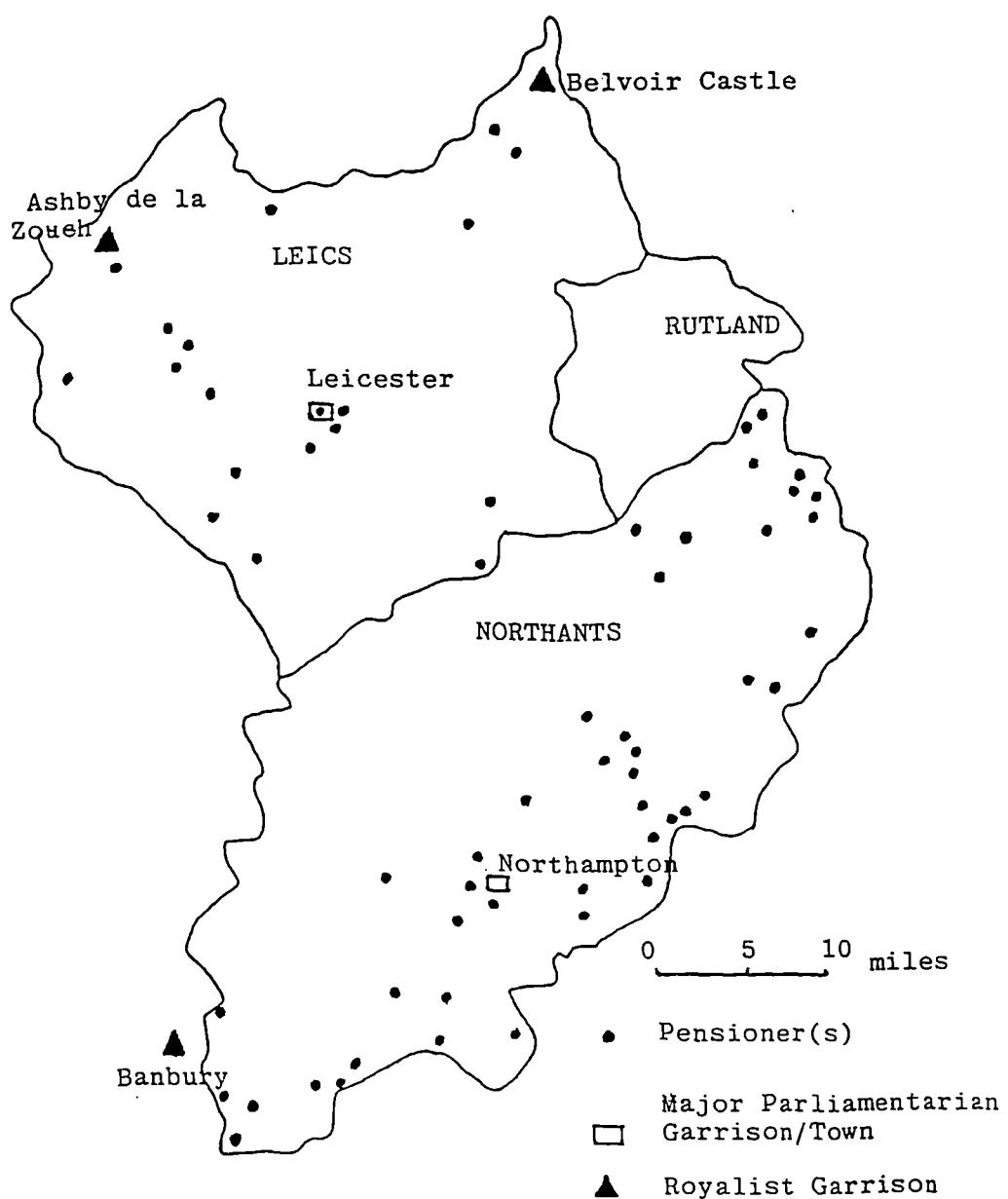
<sup>11</sup> N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/50/146; see also Q.S.R. 1/74/48.

Although reference was made to the number of people 'not qualified' to receive war pensions, it is clear that the sheer number of royalist veterans in Northamptonshire was causing problems to the county administration. The names - though no other details - of many more parliamentarian soldiers are contained in records of arrears of pay: see n. 4 above.

the records may be used to suggest the geography of recruitment. This must be tentative, and single figure numbers are meaningless even in this context. From Quarter Sessions records, we know the locations of 19 royalist pensioners from Leicestershire, and 73 from Northamptonshire. The locations of 29 parliamentarian pensioners and recipients of similar aid from Warwickshire are known. (The 41 Worcestershire pensioners cannot be used, because we know only their names.) The locations are plotted in Maps One and Two. A pattern is evident. Most of the royalist pensioners in Northamptonshire came from the south and east, especially the Banbury and Wellingborough areas. In Leicestershire, many pensioners came from northern and western parts of the county, near Ashby de la Zouch, but there were a few in the south and near Leicester. The Warwickshire pattern suggests a fairly even distribution of parliamentarian support, but with perhaps the greatest strength in the north. Overall, there is a suggestion of royalism in the outermost parts of the region, especially those associated with royalist garrisons.

Lists of suspected royalists, drawn up during the rule of the Major Generals, may corroborate pension records. This is not possible here. Apart from the poor survival of pensions, the suspect lists from the present counties are not very full. They reveal just 41

Map 1. Locations of Royalist Pensioners  
in Leicestershire and  
Northamptonshire



Source: L.R.O. Q.S. 6/1/2/1

N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/65-82.

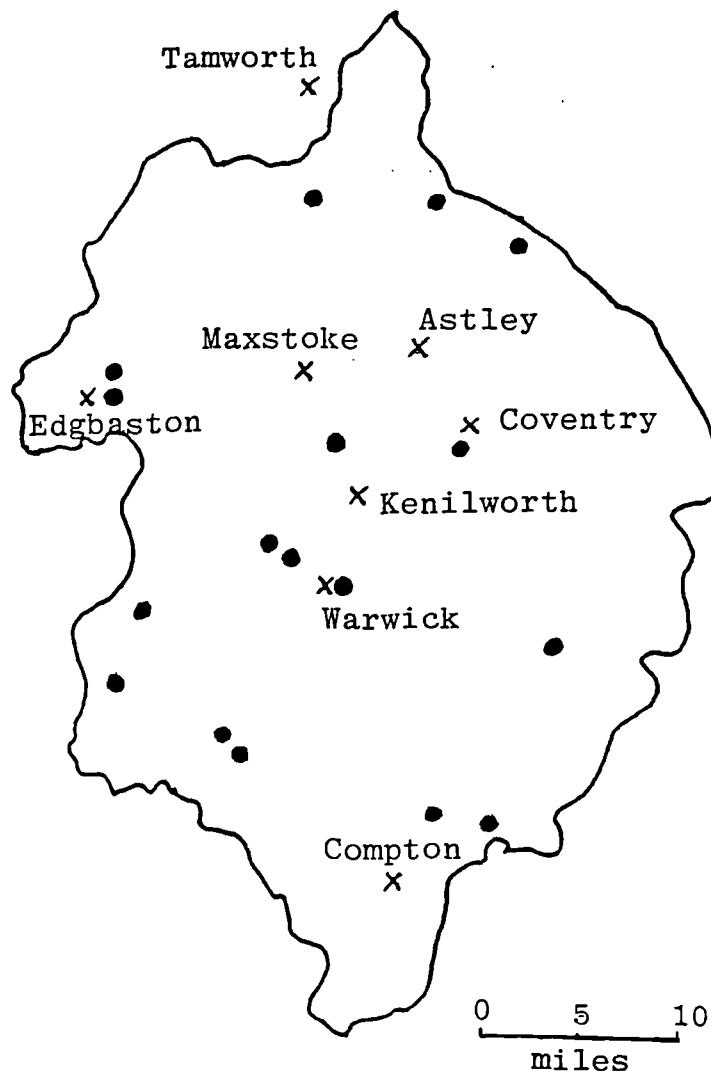
suspects from Northamptonshire, 39 from Rutland, 11 from Worcestershire, 10 from Warwickshire and four from Leicestershire.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, most of the suspects were from the elite: this applies to all the suspects in Warwickshire and Leicestershire. The only non-elite suspects in Northamptonshire were a husbandman from Easton in Stamford and a grocer from Northampton, whilst the Worcestershire suspects included just one middling sort/plebeian, a pewterer from Worcester. Ironically, the only county to return a significant number of non-elite suspects was tiny Rutland. There, 54% (21 out of 39) suspects were yeomen, husbandmen, tradesmen or labourers. Whilst the absence of Rutland pension records makes it impossible to confirm these people as civil war royalists, the Rutland lists do suggest an authentically popular royalism, and further suggest its strength in peripheral parts of the region.

Very little is known about the social background of pensioners, or of soldiers generally. The evident poverty of most pensioners suggests humble status. Among the Northamptonshire royalist pensioners are eight labourers, two weavers, one miller, one slater, and one farrier.<sup>13</sup> Just three are described as

<sup>12</sup> B.L. Add. MS 34013.

<sup>13</sup> Labourers: N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/49/80 and 90, 1/50/75, 1/62/73, 1/74/47, 1/78/20, 1/79/53, 1/82/27. Weavers: N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/50/75, 1/60/84v. Miller: N.R.O. Q.S.R.

Map 2. Locations of Parliamentarian  
Pensioners and Recipients  
of similar Aid in  
Warwickshire



● Pensioner/Recipient(s)

× Parliamentarian Garrison

Source: W.C.R. vols. ii-iv.

gentlemen. The Leicestershire pension records say even less about social origin, but they do reveal a Leicester butcher.<sup>14</sup> The Warwickshire royalist pensioners/recipients of aid include a Birmingham 'tradesman'.<sup>15</sup> In Worcestershire, a labourer and a tailor were among those who claimed pensions for service in the royalist forces.<sup>16</sup> The only Warwickshire parliamentarian pensioners/recipients of aid whose occupations are given are two tailors, a blacksmith, a butcher (a pressed man), an apprentice fellmonger, a 'whitesmith', and a comb-maker.<sup>17</sup> Hughes found that, where it is possible to discover the social origins of parliamentarian officers in Warwickshire, many came from the middling sort, such as Thomas Hobson, the Coventry butcher and captain of foot, and Thomas Wells, goldsmith and captain of horse in the same city. Mercurius Aulicus alleged there was a cobbler and a chandler among the parliamentarian officers in Alcester

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1/82/29. Farrier: N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/63/60. Slater: N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/82/25.

<sup>14</sup> Roger Reynolds, a trooper in Colonel William Bale's horse; L.R.O. Q.S. 6/1/2/1, f. 64v.

<sup>15</sup> W.C.R. vol. iv, pp. 192-3.

<sup>16</sup> H.W.R.O. 110:136/32; 139/33.

<sup>17</sup> W.C.R. vol. ii, pp. 242, 218; vol. iii, pp. 3-4, 27-8, 134-5, 161-2, 252-3; P.R.O. SP 28/248 (unfoliated Committee papers), petition of Abraham Pole.

in 1644.<sup>18</sup> Much has been made of the social mobility of the royalist officer corps, but it remains that the vast majority were at least obscure gentry.<sup>19</sup> The only middling sort/plebeian senior officer in royalist forces in the region appears to have been Thomas Jennings, the Warwickshire cowgelder who became a major of horse.<sup>20</sup> Bennett identified a butcher, a yeoman, a

<sup>18</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 196-7; Mercurius Aulicus, (29 September-5 October 1644), E14(12), p. 1187.

<sup>19</sup> See especially Ronald Hutton, 'The Structure of the Royalist party 1642-6', H.J., xxiv, (1981), and P.R. Newman, 'The Royalist Officer Corps 1642-1660: Army Command as a Reflection of the Social Structure', H.J., xxvi, (1983). Newman's figures highlight the difficulty of identifying middling sorts among royalist officers, and elsewhere he has stated that "it was from the gentry that the bulk of royalist officers was drawn": P.R. Newman, Royalist Officers in England and Wales 1642-1660: A Biographical Dictionary, (New York, 1981), 'Introduction', p. vii. The debate appears now to revolve around the relative roles of the peerage and obscure gentry: P.R. Newman, 'The Royalist Party in Arms: the Peerage and Army Command, 1642-1646', in Jones, Newitt and Roberts (eds.), Politics and People.

<sup>20</sup> Based on the information in Newman, Royalist Officers, *passim*. We might add Sigismund Beeton, the son of a shoemaker, who served not in senior rank, but

shoemaker and a servant among lower ranking royalist officers from Leicestershire.<sup>21</sup> Even less is known about the rank and file. Most recent work shows that, generally speaking, cavalry men were drawn from the middling sort and above, whilst the infantry were plebeians.<sup>22</sup> But it is rarely possible to make accurate social distinctions. The Coventry foot were apparently half townsmen and half 'countrymen'. In July 1645, the Tamworth garrison included 37 soldiers in the 'Tamworth Town Company'. In Northamptonshire, Captain Will Carrick's 100 men included nine 'townsmen'.<sup>23</sup> The evidence is scanty, but it seems that many ordinary people served in the regiments of both sides, if not in the officer corps.

Further statistical evidence of recruitment is provided by military muster rolls and bills of pay. There are no royalist muster rolls available for the present region, but there are some parliamentarian

as a captain of foot in Hastings's regiment: ibid., p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Bennett, 'Leicestershire's Royalist Officers', p. 45.

<sup>22</sup> Holmes, Eastern Association, pp. 164-7, 172-3; Newman, Atlas, p. 12; Gentles, New Model Army, pp. 38-40.

<sup>23</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 197; P.R.O. SP 28/122/473-4; P.R.O. SP 28/121A/17.

ones, and they are numerous for Warwickshire and Northamptonshire forces. Warwickshire muster rolls have been analysed by Hughes, who has used them to illustrate the greater popular appeal of parliament in the north of the county. In the Warwick Castle garrison, for example, there were only 22 soldiers in pay in August 1642, and only 83 in September. In contrast, Captain Thomas Willoughby, commissioned in June 1642 to raise men in the Sutton Coldfield and Tamworth areas, had 105 men in pay by August; Colonel John Barker, commissioned on 27 June, had 207 men in Coventry in August.<sup>24</sup> This is convincing evidence of a faster popular reaction in the north. But there is evidence of parliamentarian support in the south thereafter. At Warwick, for example, Major John Bridges numbered 71 men in his company of foot alone by December 1643; this rose to 112 by December 1644, and in April 1645 the total number of foot soldiers in the garrison, including the companies of Captain John Halford and Captain Matthew Bridges, was 238.<sup>25</sup> Following his appointment as Colonel of the Warwick foot in early 1645, Bridges reckoned he raised about 500 'townsmen', all of whom were 'very diligent in

<sup>24</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 150.

<sup>25</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/121A/452, 263-5; P.R.O. SP 28/122/574-6.

their duty'.<sup>26</sup>

The Northamptonshire musters do not specify garrisons or towns, and apparently there are no extant commissions. They do indicate that troop levels remained steady, or increased, throughout the war. Captain James Clarke's troop mustered 42 men (excluding officers) in November 1643, 51 in January 1644, and 65 in February 1645. Captain Redman's troop contained 86 men in February 1644, and 88 in March. It declined a little thereafter, but there were still 80 troops in pay in July 1645. Captain Combes mustered 66 men in December 1643, which dropped to 50 in August 1644, before rising to 67 men in January 1645. He had 59 men in the following March. Captain John Stirk had 66 troops in late August 1645, and still had the same number in January 1646. Hughes notes that troop levels were also maintained in Warwickshire.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> L.J. viii, p. 47. For Bridges's appointment as Colonel, see Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 195. These men had been raised in less than a year: Bridges took over the command of the Warwick foot following the disqualification of Colonel Godfrey Bosville under the Self Denying Ordinance, and recruited them between then and mid December 1645.

<sup>27</sup> Clarke: P.R.O. SP 28/121A/582-3, 301, 306, 371; SP 28/238/371. Redman: P.R.O. SP 28/238/163-164; SP 28/239 (unfoliated Committee papers), Captain Redman's bill,

Muster records for elsewhere in the region are more scarce, but tell a similar story. Those for Colonel Thomas Waite at Burley House suggest parliament did have some popular support in Rutland. He raised a troop of harquebusiers there in December 1643. As shown by Graph Three, Waite's troop levels remained fairly constant. The first muster numbered 72 men, which had risen to 100 by 15 January 1644. It fell to 67 on 3 November 1645, but by 6 December was up to 71 men. Waite was also captain of a company of foot at Burley which mustered 40 men on 9 July 1644, but was up to 112 by 3 November 1645.<sup>28</sup> In Worcestershire, parliament did not establish a real presence until the capture of Evesham. It is difficult to tell where parliamentarian troops active in the county were actually recruited. Some could have been transferred there from other

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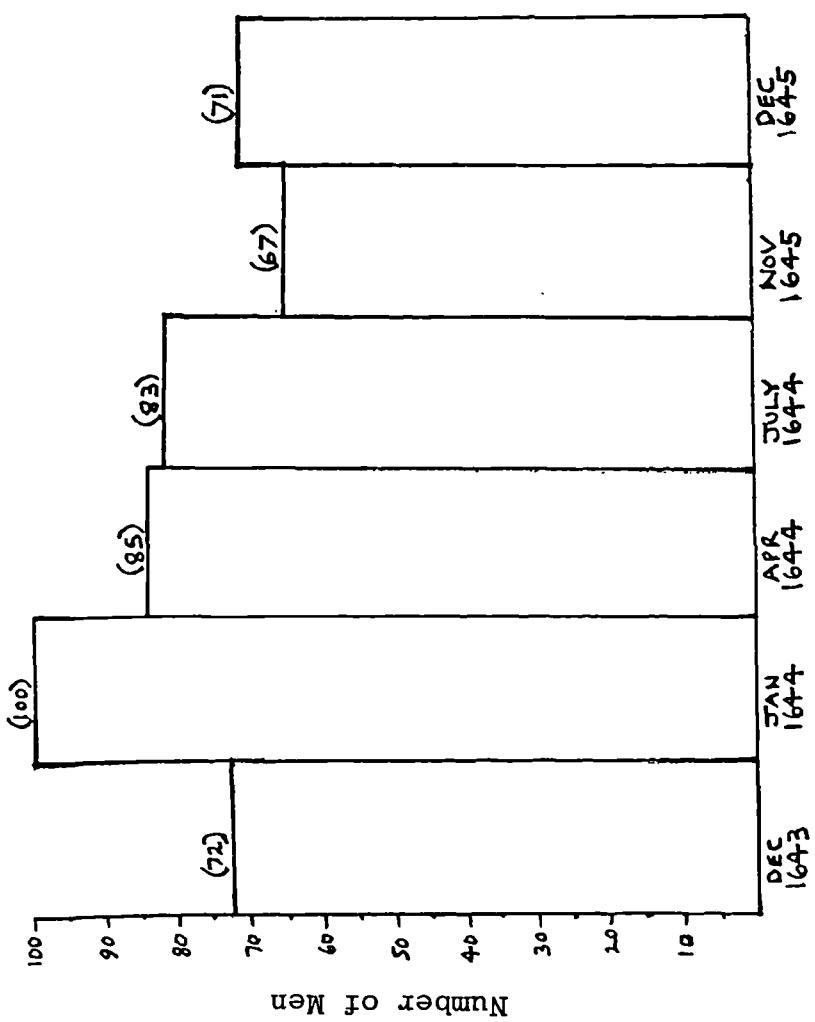
26 June-11 July 1645. Combes: P.R.O. SP 28/238/46, 92-3, 152-3; SP 28/239, Captain Combes's bill, 6-21 March 1645. Stirk: P.R.O. SP 28/122/92-3, 229-30. Warwickshire troop levels and wastage are in Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 199-202.

<sup>28</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/121A/373-387. These muster figures are supported by those in Waite's accounts: P.R.O. SP 28/133/13-14. Harquebusiers were light cavalry, and were common on both sides. By the time of the civil war, the harquebus had been replaced as a firearm by the carbine.

Graph 3. Troop Levels in Colonel

Thomas Waite's troop of  
Harguebusiers, 1643-5

Source: P.R.O. SP28/121A,  
Musters of Colonel  
Thomas Waite his troop  
and company of foot.



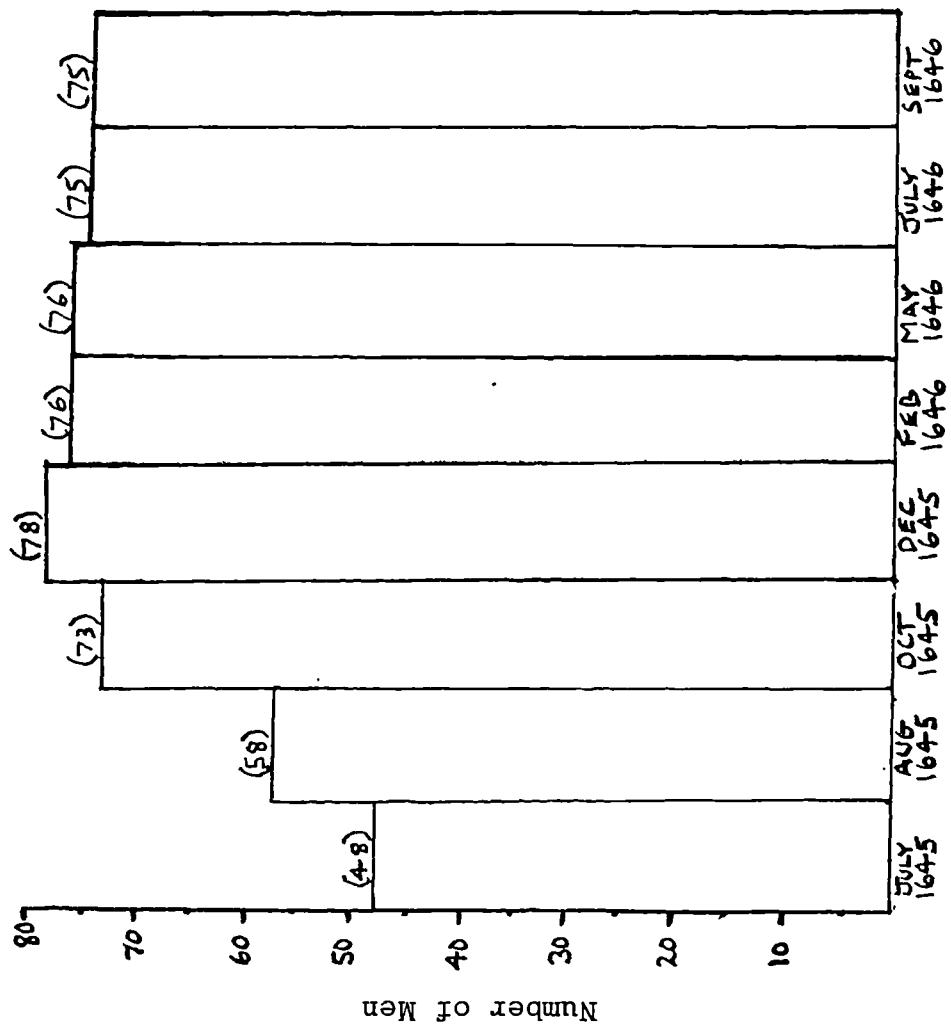
counties. Certainly however, some troops were recruited in the north and east of the county. Andrew Yarranton for example, lieutenant to a troop of horse commanded by Captain John Gyles, came from Astley. Gyles had 43 soldiers (excluding officers) in his troop on 29 November 1644, and 44 in February 1645. Gyles's troop however was active in south Worcestershire (probably operating out of Tewkesbury): it is possible that it was recruited in the north-east before-hand.<sup>29</sup> Parliamentarian forces in Worcestershire, such as those at the Evesham garrison, remained numerically strong. Commissioned as a captain of foot under Colonel Edward Rous, William Gouge, formerly governor of the Hawkesley House garrison, inherited his company from one Captain Millerd on 26 July 1645. Graph Four shows that Gouge's troop levels rose swiftly and then remained strikingly consistent. On 26 July the company numbered 48 soldiers, but there were 58 on 9 August, 73 on 4 October and a high of 78 between 13 and 27 December. It never fell below 75 soldiers between then and its disbandment in September 1646.<sup>30</sup> Captain Euseby Dormer, commissioned as a captain of foot in Rous's regiment on

<sup>29</sup> Yarranton's certificate of service: P.R.O. SP 28/188/246. For Gyles's troop see P.R.O. SP 28/138/2-4.

<sup>30</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/138/2-10, which includes Gouge's commission as captain of foot under Rous, as well as reference to his time as governor of Hawkesley.

Graph 4. Troop Levels in  
Captain William  
Gouge's company  
of Foot, 1645-6

Source: P.R.O. SP28/138,  
Accounts of  
Captain William  
Gouge.



7 October 1644, had 68 soldiers in pay on 15 April 1645. This rose to 82 by 2 September, and stabilized at 72 or 73 in the winter. By 3 March 1646 it was up to 84, only declining significantly towards the end of the war. Captain Richard Snett commanded 70 common soldiers in August 1645, rising to 92 in January 1646. His company still numbered 85 in June.<sup>31</sup>

The successful maintenance of parliamentarian troop levels across the region does not mean that their personnel remained consistent. Hughes notes that wastage in Warwickshire regiments was high: for example, in Captain Anthony Ottway's troop of horse, only 24 of the 42 men mustered in January 1644 were still serving in September, whilst Major James Castle lost over half the men from his Warwick foot company between November 1643 and May 1644.<sup>32</sup> The Northamptonshire forces also suffered high wastage. In Captain Clarke's troop, of the men in pay in November 1643, only 45% (19 out of 42) were still there in July 1644. Only 26% (11) were present in February 1645. In Captain Combes's company, only 38% (25 out of 66) of those

<sup>31</sup> Dormer: P.R.O. SP 28/188/301, 308-10. Snett: P.R.O. SP 28/187/137-154.

<sup>32</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 199-200. There was also high wastage in regiments of the Eastern Association army: Holmes, Eastern Association, p. 162, and Appendix.

in pay in December 1643 were still there in February 1645.<sup>33</sup>

The significance of this for popular allegiance in these counties is difficult to gauge. There is usually no way of telling whether these men were lost by desertion, dismissal, illness or injury/death in action. Occasional remarks in the records however suggest that no single factor was prominent, but that together they amounted to a regular bleeding away of personnel. In the musters of Walgrave Willington's company at Tamworth, the total of 85 men for 11 July 1645 included seven who were 'disbanded' in July, and four who were 'listed' (i.e. recruited). Of the 56 men in the company on 21 January 1646, two 'went away' on 14 December 1645, and one is described as 'disbanded'.<sup>34</sup> In Warwick, four men 'went away' from Colonel Bridges's company between 31 January and 2 March 1646.<sup>35</sup> Captain Will Carrick had two of his 100 men absent with the 'pox' on 1 May 1643, and he had had to recruit nine men since the last muster. On 12 December 1644, Captain Vincent Potter's company in Northamptonshire comprised 39 men, one of whom was

<sup>33</sup> Combes's company: P.R.O. SP 28/238/46, 152; Captain Clarke's: P.R.O. SP 28/121A/582-3, SP 28/238/99-100, 371.

<sup>34</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/122/469-472; P.R.O. SP 28/123/74.

<sup>35</sup> P.R.O. SP28/123/104-7.

described as 'sick'. There was also a list of nine members of the troop who had been taken prisoner by royalists at Banbury, Oxford or Worcester. A further six men had been cashiered.<sup>36</sup> Captain Clarke presented a list of 16 men who 'came home before their colours' between 22 July and 6 August 1644. These were not all deserters, as four of them were in pay in February 1645; another four of the 16 however were described as 'gone'.<sup>37</sup> It seems that in Northamptonshire troops were often employed on a limited basis. A note of 8 February 1645 for example ordered the payment of arrears to six of Clarke's men before their 'dismissal' from the troop. This included a payment to John Thomas, one of the stalwarts of the troop, who had been present since November 1643 at least.<sup>38</sup> In this case, leaving the service had little to do with disaffection.

Muster records and bills of pay therefore suggest that parliamentarian forces had little trouble maintaining troop levels throughout the region, even in the latter stages of war. Ad hoc local recruitment seems to have been regular, partly in response to high

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<sup>36</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/121A/17 (Carrick); P.R.O. SP 28/121A/676 (Potter).

<sup>37</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/238/99-100. For the February 1645 bill, see P.R.O. SP 28/238/371.

<sup>38</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/238/45. For the November 1643 bill, see P.R.O. SP 28/121A/582-3.

levels of wastage, in which desertion and dismissal do not appear to have been especially significant.

#### Impressionistic Evidence

The absence of muster rolls makes it difficult to assess royalist recruitment. Non-statistical evidence has to be used. The King began recruiting in June, when he issued the first Commissions of Array to the provinces. The commissioners, leading figures in their respective counties, were to summon the county militia, and call for volunteers and money. This was allied to private recruiting by some well affected nobility and gentry, and Charles's own attempt to raise an army in the midlands and the north in July and August. The parliamentarian counterpart to the Commission of Array was the Militia Ordinance, which authorised newly appointed lord and deputy lieutenants to take command of the militia, and recruit volunteers.

Malcolm argued that Charles's personal recruitment campaign in the summer of 1642 was a failure which left him chronically short of foot soldiers, and necessitated a subsequent reliance on Welsh and Irish infantrymen. This failure included his visit to Leicester in July, where despite being 'gladsomely received by above 10,000 of the gentry and better sort of inhabitants of that county', the promised recruits failed to materialise, and his rebuttal at Coventry in

August.<sup>39</sup> Wanklyn and Young argued convincingly that Malcolm severely underestimated the strength of the royalist infantry before Edgehill, through over reliance on parliamentarian sources. In fact, by the time Charles left Nottingham for Shrewsbury on 13 September, he had at least 4000 infantry, including recruits from the north-east midlands. This probably included a significant number of Leicestershire men: Nicholas wrote from Nottingham that the army had been much increased by men from 'this [i.e. Nottinghamshire] and adjacent counties'.<sup>40</sup>

In Warwickshire, Northampton proclaimed the Commission of Array between 28 July and 1 August at Southam, Stratford, Warwick and Coleshill. He also held a private muster in the Winderton and Tysoe meadows, at the heart of his estates in south

<sup>39</sup> Joyce L. Malcolm, 'A King in Search of Soldiers: Charles I in 1642', H.J., xxi, (1978), passim; C.S.P.D. 1641-3, p. 362, also cited in Malcom, 'A King in Search', pp. 261-2. See also Joyce L. Malcolm, Caesar's Due: Loyalty and King Charles 1642 - 1646, (1983), esp. chs. 2 and 3.

<sup>40</sup> M.D.G. Wanklyn and Brigadier P. Young, 'A King in Search of Soldiers: Charles I in 1642. A Rejoinder', H.J., xxiv, (1981), passim, esp. pp. 147-51; C.S.P.D. 1641-3, p. 389, also cited by Wanklyn and Young, 'A Rejoinder', p. 150.

Warwickshire.<sup>41</sup> There is no evidence of the popular response, but the southern locations suggest royalist support was strongest there. His attempt to win support in Coventry, and seize the county magazine on about 25 June was however a complete failure.<sup>42</sup> Northampton did not receive his commission to raise a foot regiment until 8 August. It was raised in north Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, with probably some from Buckinghamshire.<sup>43</sup> Northamptonshire pension records indicate that either he or his son and successor as Earl, James Compton, also recruited in south and east Northamptonshire, as did James's brother William.<sup>44</sup> The Comptons had some popular support in the south

<sup>41</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 141. The meeting in the Winderton and Tysoe meadows is identified in Tenant, 'Parish and People', p. 144, and idem, Edgehill and Beyond, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 139.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 149-50, n. 24; Young, Edgehill, pp. 230-1.

<sup>44</sup> N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/65-82. These contain pensioners who served either under the Earl of Northampton and/or at Banbury, from the following parishes: Wellingborough, Kings Sutton, Grendon, Yardley Hastings, Thorpe Malsur, Charlton, Treywell, Collingtree, Nether Heyford and Church Brampton. Men from Aynho, Syresham, Brackley and Weekley served under William Compton.

midlands, but estimating it is difficult. Northampton had some 800 horse and 300 foot with him at the Southam skirmish on 23 August.<sup>45</sup> His own troop at Edgehill was 100 strong, although they were apparently 'gentlemen of quality'.<sup>46</sup> Hughes however suggests that Malcolm's posited unpopularity of the royalist cause in 1642 holds true for Warwickshire.<sup>47</sup> This is supported by the second Earl's need to press soldiers for Banbury from an early stage. An undated proposition requests the impressment of 134 men in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, with the addition of a larger sum of men 'from some other place'. This probably pre-dates May 1643, when Northampton was given permission to press by Charles.<sup>48</sup> To the north of the county, Lord Dunsmore was commissioned to raise 500 horse in Warwickshire on 10 February 1643. But there is no indication of his success, apart from the capture of some of his tenants in royalist forces at Brackley in

<sup>45</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 316; Young, Edgehill, p. 231.

<sup>46</sup> Sir Richard Bulstrode, Memoirs and Reflections Upon the Reign and Government of Charles I and II, (1721), p. 75, quoted in Young, Edgehill, p. 205.

<sup>47</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 152, n. 141.

<sup>48</sup> B.L. Harleian MS 6804, fos. 176-7, 'Propositions for the Garrison and Castle of Banbury'; Hutton, War Effort, p. 92.

September.<sup>49</sup>

Further west, the Commission of Array in Worcestershire met with a good response, after a poor start. The first attempt to muster the trained bands, at Worcester, was frustrated by a parliamentarian deputation, who also managed to get the midsummer Quarter Sessions to refuse to support the Commission.<sup>50</sup> But on 3 August a new Grand Jury came out strongly in favour of the King, and effectively Worcestershire became a lost cause for the parliament.<sup>51</sup> A hostile witness reported that on 12 August 1642 a meeting outside Worcester was attended by 'a great quantity of men - of mean and base quality as they seemed to me'. The Commissioners wrote enthusiastically to their Warwickshire counterparts that 'the appearance of the gentry and commons was very great and the acclamation very high for his Majesties service'.<sup>52</sup> There was some

<sup>49</sup> B.L. Harleian MS 6852, f. 2v; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 59. The date of Dunsmore's commission is given by Newman, Royalist Officers, pp. 228-9.

<sup>50</sup> Styles, 'Royalist Government of Worcestershire', pp. 23-4; Hutton, War Effort, pp. 10-11.

<sup>51</sup> The Declaration and Protestation agreed upon by the Grand Jury at Worcester, (1642), 669.f.5(65); see also Townshend, Diary, ii, p. 68.

<sup>52</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 53;

private recruitment by sympathetic gentry. Edward Broade of Stone, near Kidderminster, for example raised a troop of horse 'about the time of the beginning' of the war.<sup>53</sup> But enthusiasm soon waned. The royalists, as Hutton has shown, soon found themselves short of cavalry, and on 23 August the commissioners wrote that the 'commons' were cowed by the approach of Essex's army, and that their own efforts were failing. The refusal of Worcester citizens to allow them to recruit there confirmed this.<sup>54</sup> By the time of the royalist attack on Stourton Castle in March 1644, Edward Broade was apparently having to threaten the 'country people' around Kidderminster that they would be hanged if they did not assist.<sup>55</sup>

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Townshend, Diary, ii, p. 73.

<sup>53</sup> H.W.R.O. 110:85/54.

<sup>54</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 11; Townshend, Diary, ii, p. 75.

<sup>55</sup> H.W.R.O. 110:85/54. This information must be treated cautiously. It was supplied to the Worcestershire Quarter Sessions of Easter 1651 by one man, Edward Raynells of Kidderminster. The date, and the presence of a parliamentarian faction in Kidderminster during the war, suggest a deliberate underestimation of the popularity of the royalists. Raynells does admit that 'many of the country people' came in to Broade.

Nevertheless, the spring and summer of 1643 saw a renewed and successful recruiting effort in the county. About May, Sir James Hamilton raised one regiment each of horse, foot and dragoons, the horse numbering about 400 and the foot 1000. These were ordered into the field army, and so Sir William Russell raised new regiments of horse and foot (the horse about 300, the foot 700). The slight deficit on Hamilton's numbers was partially compensated for by the raising by Colonel Samuel Sandys of Ombersley of horse, foot and dragoons, of which the horse actually outnumbered Hamilton's, comprising some 600-700. The Worcester citizens were not completely disaffected, as Colonel Martin Sandys was able to raise a part-time regiment of foot among the townsmen, which numbered around 800 on 3 June 1644.<sup>56</sup> That summer, it was decided to fix the number of troops in the county to one foot regiment of 1000 under Sir Gilbert Gerrard, and one horse regiment of 400 under Samuel Sandys. The royalist press reported in October that the 'yeomanry' had raised 100 new dragoons, and 150 more foot had been recruited.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Symonds, Diary, pp. 11-13; Hutton, War Effort, pp. 78-9. It has been suggested that as many as 7000 troops were raised in Worcestershire for the King in the first year of the war: Styles, 'Royalist Government of Worcestershire', p. 25.

<sup>57</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 167; Mercurius Aulicus, (6-12

However, Sandys's Worcester foot apart, it is not known exactly where or how these men were recruited. Hutton dates piecemeal impressment in royalist forces generally from the summer of 1643. By 1645, attempts to recruit in Worcestershire were inevitably accompanied by warrants for impressment. On 15 February, for example, Charles sanctioned the Western Association, and it quickly set about impressing 600 men for the field army. The Worcestershire Commissioners sent out warrants to every village.<sup>58</sup>

We cannot regard the success even of the 1643 recruitment campaign as evidence of wholly enthusiastic popular royalism. Wastage, due to lack of pay and localist sentiment, could be dramatic. Russell's foot regiment shrank from 700 to 300 in about a year, 'the rest gone for want of pay'. When Gerrard arrived in Worcester in September 1643, he found soldiers refusing to serve for lack of pay. By December, he 'could not get a townsman to serve'. When they were taken out of Worcestershire in July 1643, some of Sir James Hamilton's horse regiment deserted, and attempted to re-enlist in other Worcestershire regiments.<sup>59</sup> But not all wastage was due to disaffection. Losses in battle

October 1644), E16(3), p. 1202.

<sup>58</sup> Hutton, War Effort, pp. 92, 159.

<sup>59</sup> Symonds, Diary, p. 12; B.L. Add. MS 18980, fos. 165, 170; B.L. Harleian MS 6852, f. 106.

and the loss of territory were also important. After the second battle of Newbury on 27 October 1644, Gerrard had 157 soldiers and 31 officers either slain, wounded, or too sick to march. This amounted to over 10% of the paper strength of his regiment, and no doubt a higher proportion of the actual strength. Sandys's horse regiment escaped relatively lightly, with just 26 hurt or slain.<sup>60</sup> Parliamentarian encroachment badly disrupted recruitment. When the Worcester garrison attempted to press recruits in the north-east, Fox issued warnings to the inhabitants to stay at home. Denbigh's advance to Alcester in August 1644 put an end to recruitment for a while.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, royalist forces in Worcestershire were still numerically strong in early 1645. When Charles embarked on the Naseby campaign in early May he was supplemented by 150 horse from Samuel Sandys's regiment, and a similar number from Leveson at Dudley

<sup>60</sup> B.L. Harleian MS 6804, fos. 162-3. The MS is marked 'hurt soldiers of Newberry' on f. 163v. The reference to Gerrard's 'tertia' and Sandys's regiment dates it after the reorganization of royalist forces in Worcestershire in the summer of 1644: it therefore relates to losses at the second battle of Newbury.

<sup>61</sup> Bodl. Firth MS C6, f. 137; B.L. Add. MS 18981, fos.

Castle.<sup>62</sup> Despite the removal of most of the Evesham garrison to Charles's pre-Naseby field army, Massey captured some 545 men there in late May.<sup>63</sup> There were 1507 soldiers, excluding the trained bands, in Worcester at the beginning of the siege in 1646.<sup>64</sup>

In the east, what few accounts we have of royalist recruitment again suggest that it was most successful in the south and east of Northamptonshire, and the extreme east and north of Leicestershire and Rutland. The early appeals by the Commissioners Array to men in Northamptonshire fell on stony ground. There was a proposed muster in the east, at Oundle, but the Commissioners complained that the Commission itself was 'distasted and murmured against'.<sup>65</sup> They do appear to have held a meeting in Kettering however: the eastern location is again notable.<sup>66</sup> Sir John Wake, of Salcey

<sup>62</sup> Symonds, Diary, p. 182. The King also received 300 foot from Sir Henry Bard's garrison at Camden House in north Gloucestershire, the late Sir Gilbert Gerrard's foot regiment, and most of the Evesham garrison: Hutton, War Effort, pp. 173-4.

<sup>63</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 225.

<sup>64</sup> Townshend, Diary, i, p. 112.

<sup>65</sup> H.M.C. Montagu of Beaulieu, p. 158.

<sup>66</sup> The Northamptonshire commissioners wrote from Kettering denying having executed the Commission of

Forest, raised a regiment of horse in the county, and helped fortify Grafton House in November 1643. But it is not known exactly where or how the men were recruited, and like most royalist gentry in Northamptonshire, Wake soon left the county, appearing in Somerset in July 1644.<sup>67</sup> The short-lived garrisons at Brackley and Towcester apparently did not attempt to recruit. Further north, in more solidly parliamentarian territory, recruitment proved hazardous. When a royalist party attempted to recruit in Crick, north-west Northamptonshire, in early June 1643, they were caught by parliamentarian forces, and a number of officers were taken prisoner to Northampton.<sup>68</sup> The absence of permanent royalist forces makes estimates of

Array. But Sir Anthony Haselwood admitted to the Northamptonshire Committee in April 1645 that he had been at Kettering with some of his men when the Commission was read there: N.R.O. Isham Correspondence, IC 244; N.R.O. Finch Hatton collection, FH 3972.

<sup>67</sup> For Wake's recruitment in Northamptonshire, see P.R.O. SP 29/13/43, cited by M.D.G. Wanklyn, 'The King's Armies in the West of England', University of Manchester M.A., (1966), p. 10. For other details, see Newman, Royalist Officers, p. 395, and Everitt, Local Community, p. 17.

<sup>68</sup> The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, (30 May-6 June 1643), E105(24), p. 182.

royalist numbers in the county rare, but a couple of examples suggest significant numbers in the periphery: the garrison at Grafton House contained 300 common soldiers on its surrender, whilst the Wellingborough rising involved a royalist force of over 500 soldiers and civilians.<sup>69</sup>

In Leicestershire, the Commission of Array fared better. The parliamentarian press admitted that Hastings picked up recruits daily in the Loughborough - Leicester area in late June.<sup>70</sup> By the time he arrived outside Leicester, he had about 300 men with him, including 100 horse.<sup>71</sup> After Edgehill, Hastings built a sizeable army in the north midlands. It is difficult to estimate the size of the Leicestershire forces alone (Hastings recruited some of his horse in Worcestershire and Shropshire during December 1642), but Bennett puts Hastings's own horse regiment at 300-400 at one time,

<sup>69</sup> Bodl. MS Tanner 62, f. 462; Special Passages, (27 December 1642 - 3 January 1643), E84(6), pp. 171-2; Mercurius Rusticus, (24 June 1643), E62(13), p. 43.

<sup>70</sup> A Perfect Diurnal, (4-11 July 1642), E202(15), pp. 1-2.

<sup>71</sup> Some Special Passages, (20-28 June 1642), E202(9), sig. E4; Warburton, Memoirs of Prince Rupert, i, pp. 294-8; John Nichols, Leicester, iii, pt. ii, App. iv, pp. 24-5; L.J. v, p. 191.

with as many in his foot regiment.<sup>72</sup> Hastings was able to contribute 100 horse to the royal field army before Naseby, and in the Indian summer heralded by the capture of Leicester raised another 1000 men in the county.<sup>73</sup> In the north-east, John Pate of Sysonby raised regiments of horse and foot in early 1643, which served at Belvoir.<sup>74</sup> In the extreme south-east, and in Rutland, attempts to establish petty garrisons in late 1642 by Henry Nevill and Henry Noel, Lord Camden were successful. Nevill was able to garrison his home at Nevill Holt in three weeks, and Grey found about 200 men at Noel's.<sup>75</sup> But, as in Worcestershire, royalist

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<sup>72</sup> Bennett, 'Leicestershire's Royalist Officers', p. 45. Hastings's horse was present at Powick Bridge, and he was still recruiting in Worcestershire and at Shrewsbury in December 1642: idem, 'War Effort in the North Midlands', pp. 178-9.

<sup>73</sup> Symonds, Diary, p. 181; Bennett, 'War Effort in the North Midlands', pp. 238 - 240.

<sup>74</sup> Bennett, 'Leicestershire's Royalist Officers', p. 46.

<sup>75</sup> Nevill had 20 horses plus arms and ammunition at his house: see Certain Informations, (6-23 January 1643), E85(45), p. 2. At North Luffenham, Noel's 200 men included 120 armed with guns, the rest armed with pikes and clubs, suggesting plebeian support: H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 99. The

troops in the east were affected badly by military reversal and loss of supply. Isolated in Leicester after the disaster at Naseby, Hastings was plagued by desertion among his remaining horse. Many of his men were wounded, and he had no money for pay.<sup>76</sup> Popular royalism withered under parliamentarian success in the field.

Descriptive accounts of parliamentarian recruitment support the patterns described above. Parliamentarian recruiters fared least well in the extreme west and east. In Worcestershire, early attempts to recruit under the Militia Ordinance were unsuccessful. A letter from the county, printed in the parliamentarian press in August 1642, described 'what great opposition they have of late met withal, in executing the Militia, by such as endeavour for the Commission of Array, of which there is a great party in that county'.<sup>77</sup> Later, however, they clearly achieved some support in the north-east. In 1647, Baxter received a letter signed by 45 'soldiers' from Kidderminster. In 1658, he recalled that 'I had many score of my neighbours with me in the

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attack on Noel's house was reported in Certain Informations, (20 February-6 March 1643), E92(3), p. 51.

<sup>76</sup> Bodl. Firth MS C8, fos. 5-5v.

<sup>77</sup> A Perfect Diurnal, (8-15 September 1642), E202(37), p. 3.

wars...some went with me in a troop into the field'. Some of his parishioners went to the parliamentarian garrison at Wem (Shropshire), and 'about thirty or forty' joined Colonel Mackworth's troop.<sup>78</sup> John Bellingham, a Stourbridge clothworker, served in the parliamentarian forces at Lichfield in March 1643, and was a corporal in a troop of dragoons when he was captured at Birmingham in April.<sup>79</sup> Daniel Roberts of Bayton also served in the parliamentarian forces.<sup>80</sup> The presence of a man from Astley in John Gyles's troop has been noted above.

In Rutland, attempts to recruit for the army of the Eastern Association in 1644 were not successful. The Earl of Manchester and Cromwell met with a poor response in the Stamford area in April, and were forced to press. Just as hostile forces hampered royalist recruitment in east Worcestershire and north-west

<sup>78</sup> Material quoted by Gilbert, 'Kidderminster at the outbreak of Civil War', pp. 35, 39. Gilbert speculates, reasonably, that Baxter's reference to those who went with him 'in a troop in the field' may mean that they served in Colonel Whalley's troop in the New Model, to whom Baxter was chaplain: ibid., p. 40.

<sup>79</sup> Bodl. Rawlinson MS D924, f. 154v.

<sup>80</sup> H.W.R.O. 110:108/91. Twenty three people in Bayton signed this petition of 1666, describing Roberts as a former parliamentarian soldier against the King.

Northamptonshire, so did they hamper parliamentarian forces in Rutland. In October, attempts to recruit for Manchester in Uppingham were disrupted by the arrival of a party of horse from Belvoir.<sup>81</sup> However, recruitment for local forces was more successful. In addition to Waite's forces, a further two troops of horse was raised by Evers Ardyn, a member of the Rutland Committee, around Michaelmas 1644. By the summer of 1645, the Burley garrison consisted of 'three troops of horse in good condition', under Major Layfield, and Captains Clarke and Collins, Waite having been suspended following a dispute with the Committee.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> B.L. Add. MS 18981, f. 147 (Hastings to Rupert, 8 April 1644); Mercurius Aulicus, (29 September-5 October 1644), El4(12), p. 1189. However, we should note that these are both royalist sources.

<sup>82</sup> C.C.C., p. 559; V.C.H. Rutland, i, pp. 192-4. In December 1643, the Committee complained of the expense of the war effort in the county. In turn, Waite complained to Grey of the obstructions he had received, and Grey had one of the Committee, Captain Robert Horseman, arrested: Bodl. MS Tanner 62, fos. 440, 458, 619-20; C.J. iii, pp. 351, 429-30. Waite appears to have been replaced by Layfield in the summer of 1644. But, as we have seen, Waite was still mustering his own troops in November 1645. Thus either Waite returned to

Parliamentarian recruitment in Leicestershire was patchy. Even where successful, there are indications of relative decline after an initial burst of enthusiasm. In June 1642, the Militia Ordinance was prosecuted with some success, especially in the south. A hundred volunteers and 'private men' turned out at Broughton Astley on the 14th, and there was a good showing at Kibworth the next day. On the 18th, the Earl of Stamford and Sir Arthur Haselrigg reported 108 volunteers at the Leicester muster. Even at Queniborough, in the north, the turn out was considered very good, 'considering how many great papists and ill-affected people live there about'. Further musters were held at Copt Oak and Melton Mowbray.<sup>83</sup> Stamford was pleased with the general response, writing on 16 June that 'many volunteers came in'.<sup>84</sup> But the musters were hampered by attempts by local royalists, especially in the north-west, to dissuade inhabitants from going. Once again, the importance of military control is underlined. For example, in Ibstock, the parson, John Lufton, attempted to pressurise the constable into withdrawing his order to the trained bands to attend

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Burley at some stage, or Layfield raised his own troop afresh.

<sup>83</sup> V.C.H. Leicestershire, ii, pp. 111-12; L.J. v, p. 147.

<sup>84</sup> L.J. v, p. 139.

the Leicester muster. Unsurprisingly, the trained bands from the towns of the Commissioners of Array Sir Richard Halford, Sir John Bale and John Pate failed to turn up.<sup>85</sup>

Grey recruited a troop of horse to serve at Edgehill, and later recruited more horse, and a foot regiment. The foot were eventually based in Leicester; at least some of the horse were too, although some accompanied Grey on those occasions when he left the county.<sup>86</sup> Early on, his horse were very strong. On 14 August 1643 he wrote that three new troops were raised, and put his regiment at 'already six hundred horse'.<sup>87</sup> But wastage was high, and parliamentarian forces never

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., pp. 132-3, 147; V.C.H. Leicestershire, ii, pp. 111-12.

<sup>86</sup> For the raising of the horse, and the stationing of the foot regiment in Leicester, see J. Richards, 'The Greys of Bradgate Park in the English Civil War: A Study of Henry Grey, First Earl of Stamford, and his Son and Heir Thomas, Lord Grey of Groby', Trans.Leics.Arch.& Hist.Soc., lxi, (1988), p. 41. For Grey's periodic absence from the county, see for example H.M.C. Twelfth Report, App. II, Cowper ii, Coke MSS, p. 339; C.J. iii, p. 618. In 1644, 200 of Grey's horse were ordered into Denbigh's army of the West Midland Association: C.S.P.D. 1644, p. 247.

<sup>87</sup> Bodl. MS Tanner 62, f. 247.

regained their early strength. In November, the soldiers at Leicester were badly in arrears, and there was only 'a small strength of horse'.<sup>88</sup> In June 1644, Grey himself put his 'regiment', probably the horse, at only 250, most of the others having gone through lack of pay. By July, there were less than 200 horse, and about 450 foot.<sup>89</sup> Things stabilised thereafter. There were approximately 600 men in the Leicester garrison on the eve of the royalist capture, plus about 550 townsmen and countrymen in arms.<sup>90</sup> But lack of pay had

<sup>88</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 160.

<sup>89</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644, pp. 247, 304. In the June letter, Grey warned that if the 200 horse ordered into Denbigh's army left the county, it would be extremely vulnerable. If the horse had numbered only 250, then he would have been left with only 50, which would certainly suit the alarmist tone of his letter, and also the presence of only 200 in July. It is possible though that Grey's 600 horse had dropped to around 400 by June 1643, and so the departure of 200 to Denbigh would have left the 200 Grey writes of in July. This would mean his foot, not his horse regiment, numbered 250 in June, and that therefore he raised 200 in a month, to have 450 in July.

<sup>90</sup> Symonds, Diary, p. 178; A Perfect Relation of the Taking of Leicester, (12 June 1645), E288(4), p. 1.

caused continual friction between the garrison soldiers and the Committee, and the locals were discontented too: another account of the royalist capture of Leicester said the country was 'very malignant in most parts of it', and only 150 were willing to fight.<sup>91</sup> Clearly, there were divided sympathies. Luke heard that 'countrymen' fiercely defended the town, but 'some malignant butchers' had aided the cavaliers.<sup>92</sup> There is little information on exactly where Grey recruited his men. A recent study states his first troop of horse was recruited "locally".<sup>93</sup> Evidently, he was recruiting in

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Nichols, Leicester, iii, pt. ii, App. iv, p. 47. Pay was causing friction between the soldiery and the Committee as early as November 1643, when there were serious arrears, despite an order that Grey's men be used to collect the weekly assessment in Leicestershire and Rutland: C.J. iii, p. 300. By the following May, the soldiery had been indulging in illicit levying of money and horses: ibid., p. 508. But in 1645 report was made that the soldiers in Leicester were still ill disciplined, and that the townsmen were disaffected by the Committee's failure to fortify the whole town properly: Nichols, Leicester, iii, pt. ii, App. iv, pp. 41-2.

<sup>92</sup> Tibbutt (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, p. 296.

<sup>93</sup> Richards, 'The Greys of Bradgate', p. 41.

south-west Leicestershire in the summer of 1643, as it was then that Rupert found his warrants on a man in Shawell.<sup>94</sup> The 50 men in each of the tiny parliamentarian garrisons established in the north, and the rapid disappearance of these garrisons in the wake of the capture of Leicester, do not suggest strong parliamentarian support there.<sup>95</sup> There is no evidence of the manner of recruitment. The wastage among Grey's men suggest a serious, though not catastrophic, decline of volunteers.

Impressionistic evidence supports the idea that parliamentarian recruitment was strongest in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. However, such evidence also suggests that, by 1644, a decline in popular enthusiasm for service had necessitated the introduction of piecemeal impressment. Musters for the Militia Ordinance in Warwickshire were held in four locations throughout the county, between 30 June and 5 July 1642. A total of 2850 'volunteers' were reported, including 400 at Stratford, 650 at Warwick, 800 at Coleshill and 800 at Coventry. Most of the county militia (550 out of 600) turned up.<sup>96</sup> Hughes believes the figures are slightly exaggerated, and has pointed

<sup>94</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 55.

<sup>95</sup> Symonds, Diary, p. 178; Tibbutt (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, p. 298.

<sup>96</sup> L.J. v, p. 195; W.C.R. vol. ii, App. i, p. xxxii.

out the failure to hold a muster at a traditional location, Southam, suggesting this was because of lack of support there.<sup>97</sup> Certainly, the breakdown figures do not tally with the total. The Coleshill and Stratford figures may be compared, and do suggest a stronger reaction in the north. In August 1642, volunteers from Birmingham went to the defence of Warwick Castle, and 400 more went to help defend Coventry when it was attacked by Charles.<sup>98</sup> Clarendon commented that the town was as disaffected as any in England, and that townspeople had attacked royalists even before Edgehill.<sup>99</sup> Baxter wrote that the Coventry garrison 'consisted half of citizens, and half of country-men', from Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth, Nuneaton, Hinckley and Rugby.<sup>100</sup> Even in Coventry however, allegiance was not monolithic, at least in the earliest stages of the war. Although Brooke had more support there among the citizens than did the Earl of Northampton, royalists in Coventry were wearing coloured ribbons in their hats in the early summer of 1642. Royalism in the city was only really extinguished

<sup>97</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 139-40.

<sup>98</sup> For the involvement of Birmingham men in the defence of Warwick Castle and Coventry, see Manning, English People, pp. 285-6; B.L. Add. MS 11364, f. 17.

<sup>99</sup> Clarendon, History, iii, pp. 19-21; ii, p. 359.

<sup>100</sup> R.B., p. 45.

by the arrival of Brooke's regiment in August.<sup>101</sup> Misconduct contributed to a decline in enthusiasm. Denbigh wrote from Coventry in April 1644 to complain that Commissary General Hans Behr's soldiers had so plundered some Warwickshire towns that the people were 'disaffected', and Denbigh was unable to recruit to his foot company even among his own tenants.<sup>102</sup>

In Northamptonshire, the Militia Ordinance was also successful. Musters were held over three days in mid June, at Northampton, Kettering and Oundle.<sup>103</sup> The siting of two musters in the east suggests that, although royalists recruited successfully here, parliamentarians expected to as well. On 14 June Lord Spencer reported a very full turnout of the trained bands and an estimated 550 'volunteers' at the Northampton muster. Later, Sir Gilbert Pickering estimated there had been 900 volunteers overall.<sup>104</sup> This suggests 350 volunteers at Kettering and Oundle: significantly less than the muster further west, but still notable. The Commissioners of Array admitted that the Militia Ordinance was 'applauded and much stood for'.<sup>105</sup> Early in the war, Northampton was a

<sup>101</sup> B.L. Add. MS 11364, fos. 16v-17.

<sup>102</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644, pp. 97-8.

<sup>103</sup> Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 349-50.

<sup>104</sup> L.J. v, p. 139; C.J. ii, p. 633.

<sup>105</sup> H.M.C. Montagu of Beaulieu, p. 158.

particularly rich source of support. Wharton wrote that the townspeople frustrated the Commission of Array, and even managed to arrest one of the Commissioners, Lord Montagu.<sup>106</sup> Another report claimed that Essex was indeed given a tremendous reception when he arrived there at the end of September, with the trained bands and 300 volunteers coming forward. In January 1643, it was claimed that about 1000 volunteers came forward at a muster in the town.<sup>107</sup> This is probably an exaggeration, but popular support was evidently high. By November, 150 apprentice shoemakers there had volunteered for the parliament forces.<sup>108</sup>

There is no overall estimate of the size of the Northamptonshire forces. Clearly, they were soon built up to considerable strength: in May 1643, the county was able to spare 300 horse and 700 foot for a move against Banbury.<sup>109</sup> The Committee was authorised to raise more cavalry in July 1643.<sup>110</sup> It is not known how

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<sup>106</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 320.

<sup>107</sup> The True Relation of the Entertainment of my Lord of Essex at Northampton, (21 September 1642), E118(20); H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 89.

<sup>108</sup> Informator Rusticus, (27 October-3 November 1643), E74(15), p. 6.

<sup>109</sup> H.M.C. Hastings, II, p. 101.

<sup>110</sup> Mercurius Civicus, (13-20 July 1643), E61(11), p.

these men were raised, but it appears that they were short of volunteers by the summer of 1644. In July of that year, the parliamentarians attempted to raise men in Northampton by beating drums in the streets; but few townsmen responded.<sup>111</sup> However, there is no subsequent evidence of large-scale impressment to the county forces. As late as June 1644, Luke was informed that people around Aynho were 'well affected and ready to take up arms for King and Parliament'.<sup>112</sup> The Northamptonshire Committee were allowing horse thieves and murderers into their forces in December 1644, although this may have had more to do with over-full prisons than a shortage of more respectable volunteers.<sup>113</sup> They do appear to have been short of

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<sup>111</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644, p. 384.

<sup>112</sup> Tibbott (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, p. 668.

<sup>113</sup> L.J. vii, p. 78. The two murderers, Robert Linacre and Edward Warde, had drowned a woman 'for witchcraft'. This may have mitigated the crime in the minds of the Committee. They requested that the two men, plus the horse thieves Thomas Cleaver and John Appleyard, be pardoned and allowed to fight for the parliament, as 'we find it very prejudicial in these times to have our gaol full of prisoners'. Presumably, they needed the space for captured royalists.

dragoons by December 1645.<sup>114</sup> But the Northamptonshire forces remained strong. As late as 29 May 1646, there were regiments of horse and foot - that is, a paper strength of 500 horse and 1300 foot. At the very least, the horse numbered over 200, and the foot over 300, as these were the numbers that the Committee requested the county forces be reduced to.<sup>115</sup> However, service in field armies certainly did become unpopular. Northamptonshire men drafted into Essex's army were deserting in the summer of 1644.<sup>116</sup> In April 1646, Colonel John Venn, in the midlands to pick up 2400 recruits for the New Model, wrote from Northampton that 'most countries press the scum of their inhabitants, the King's soldiers, men taken out of prison, tinkers, pedlars, and vagrants...it is no marvel if such men run away'.<sup>117</sup>

All this begs the question of what motivated military service. It has been remarked that widespread

<sup>114</sup> C.J. iv, p. 378, an order allowing the Northamptonshire Committee to raise 200 dragoons at their own charge.

<sup>115</sup> Bodl. MS Tanner 59, f. 255. Optimum regimental strengths for civil war armies are given in Newman, Atlas, pp. 12-13.

<sup>116</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644, p. 337.

<sup>117</sup> L.J. viii, p. 268. See also Gentles, New Model Army, p. 33.

impressment by both sides after the autumn of 1643 "makes nonsense of any theory of popular involvement in the cause, on either side, certainly among the lower classes".<sup>118</sup> Hutton believes that the pay offered by Brooke and Northampton to recruits in the midlands in the summer of 1642 ushered in an era of the mercenary soldier, "acting only at the will of his paymaster".<sup>119</sup>

As shown above, there is precious little evidence of recruiting methods in the present region. There is no reason to believe that impressment was important before the early summer of 1643. The example of Staffordshire royalists, beating drums in villages to attract volunteers in August 1642, may well be typical.<sup>120</sup> In October, the Earl of Essex had drums beaten in the streets of Worcester, in the hope of attracting volunteers in to the parliamentarian forces.<sup>121</sup> In Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, even piecemeal parliamentarian impressment may not have occurred until

<sup>118</sup> Kenyon, Civil Wars of England, p. 125.

<sup>119</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 19.

<sup>120</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 63. See also Hutton, War Effort, pp. 22-3. As we have seen, parliamentarians beat drums in Northampton in 1644.

<sup>121</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/249 (unfoliated Worcestershire Committee papers), orders of the Earl of Essex regarding the occupation of Worcester.

1644.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, the only evidence of large scale impressment for county forces at any time is from Worcestershire (by the royalists). The Banbury garrison undertook some impressment in the south midlands, although extant pension records contain just two pressed royalist pensioners from Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. Bennett found no evidence of similar activity by royalists in Leicestershire.<sup>123</sup> There are no pressed men among the known Leicestershire pensioners. The probability is of piecemeal impressment after 1643, to maintain troop levels. The same applies to parliamentarian forces. Hughes found no evidence of

<sup>122</sup> In the Eastern Association, however, parliamentarian impressment began in August 1643, and most of the infantry of the field army were conscripts: Holmes, Eastern Association, pp. 164-5.

<sup>123</sup> Bennett, 'War Effort in the North Midlands', pp. 138-9. He found little evidence of royalist impressment anywhere in the north midlands, except for an attempt by Leveson to levy conscripts in Staffordshire. Appointed sheriff in January 1644, Leveson had the right to call in all able bodied men: the posse comitatus. In fact, he noted that the 'country' came in 'very willingly and freely'. Hastings however saw this as an affront to his authority, and discharged the recruits: Bodl. Firth MS C6, f. 69; H.M.C. Hastings, II, p. 119.

parliamentarian impressment in Warwickshire, and suggests that all those who served in the county forces were volunteers.<sup>124</sup> The presence of two pressed men among the 54 known parliamentarian pensioners/recipients of aid from Warwickshire suggests rather that there was some low level impressment there.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, there is no evidence of impressment by ordinance in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire or Rutland: ad hoc impressment to help combat high wastage rates probably also took place here. Overall, the suggestion is of small numbers of pressed men in local forces of both sides, all over the region, by 1644, with significantly more men being pressed by the royalists in Worcestershire.

Estimating the role of pay in recruitment is more difficult. Material inducements were very important. At the Militia Ordinance musters in Warwickshire, Brooke provided 'wine and strong drink' for all the trained bands and volunteers.<sup>126</sup> Waite spent £150 on 'entertainment' for his harquebusiers at their first

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<sup>124</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 197.

<sup>125</sup> The pressed men were Richard Hancocks, a butcher from Knowle, and one Astley, from Shottery: W.C.R. vol. ii, p. 242; vol. iii, p. 123.

<sup>126</sup> A True Relation of the Lord Brooke's Settling of the Militia in Warwickshire, (1642), 669.f.6(50), p. 105.

muster, 'in lieu of their raising and having no advance and they being then in actual service'.<sup>127</sup> Examples of soldiers refusing to serve through lack of pay, like those given above from Worcester and Leicester, are many. Arrears did not have to be serious before trouble arose. Gouge's troop in Worcestershire were only a week in arrears when they 'mutinously refused to serve unless they might immediately receive what they were behind'.<sup>128</sup> By 1644, Fox's men were deserting in large numbers from Edgbaston because of poor pay, and Denbigh's men, desperately ill-supplied, were threatening the same, and acquiring a reputation for plunder.<sup>129</sup> Even in Northamptonshire, a relatively secure county where the parliamentarian Committee made great efforts to ensure payment, arrears soon built up. Captain Lawson's company were a total of £53-15-0 in arrears by 21 June 1643. Not until 6 October were the Committee able to order payment of the arrears, and even then it was 15s less than Lawson claimed for.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>127</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/133, Accounts of Colonel Thomas Waite, Governor of Burley.

<sup>128</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/138, Accounts of Captain William Gouge.

<sup>129</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, pp. 264-5; H.M.C. Sixth Report, App., House of Lords MSS, pp. 27-8; L.J. vii, p. 23.

<sup>130</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/121A/7.

Pay was reasonable if variable: Northamptonshire troops were paid 14s a week, but cannoneers at Northampton got as little as 5 or 6s a week.<sup>131</sup>

Moderate, irregular pay, even at a time of economic dislocation, is unlikely to have attracted 'mere mercenary' soldiers en masse. Hughes notes this, and suggests that the greater popularity of the parliamentary cause in Warwickshire also indicates ideological commitment.<sup>132</sup> The failure of royalist recruitment in much of Northamptonshire, and the early failure of parliamentarian recruitment in Worcestershire, supports this view. Applications for pensions sometimes suggest loyal service. In Northamptonshire, William Wallington of Nether Heyford was supported by 16 people who certified that he served 'faithfully and loyally' under the Earl of Northampton. William Aystkew of Grendon served at Banbury 'from the beginning of [the] wars'. Richard Blunkett claimed to have served 'from the beginning to the ending' and was supported by two officers. Francis Pratt of Weldon

<sup>131</sup> Bills of pay for a number of Northamptonshire units, presumably horse troops by the relatively high wages, are in P.R.O. SP 28/121A, SP 28/122, SP 28/123, SP 28/133, SP 28/238, SP 28/239, passim. The pay of the Northampton cannoneers is in P.R.O. SP 28/133/38-46, Accounts of John Selby, master gunner at Northampton.

<sup>132</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 150-1.

claimed to have been among the first to sign up, and (later) was 'much persecuted by the Major General'.<sup>133</sup> Pensioners were unlikely to admit to mercenary motives. But their claims corroborate the implication of the recruitment patterns given above; that recruits, early on at least, actively distinguished between the two sides. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that military recruitment does to some extent reflect popular allegiance.

#### Civilian Allegiance

Military service was not the only way in which popular allegiance was expressed. There was a range of behaviour, from the reception given to soldiers, to help on siege works, to taking up arms against the enemy in irregular civilian forces, which also manifested popular sympathy. We can only know about most of this behaviour from impressionistic sources, be they reports in newsbooks, first hand accounts, or in military despatches. Any account of popular allegiance which does not make reference to this material is therefore incomplete. Furthermore, accounts of civilian allegiance support the pattern suggested by those of military recruitment.

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<sup>133</sup> N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/77/9; 1/49/74; 1/49/93; 1/50/69.

### Popular Royalism

Much of Worcestershire was perceived as hostile by parliamentarian commentators. Wharton saw it first hand and believed most of the people, especially those of Worcester itself, to be royalist. The 'treacherous inhabitants' had given information to Rupert at the time of Powick Bridge, and the countryside, despite the landscape and the cider, so disgusted Wharton that he compared it to Sodom and Gomorrah. He is supported by Baxter, who believed that on the outbreak of the war the 'country' in Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire were 'wholly for the King'.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, a Worcestershire petition dating probably from early 1643, which claimed the support of the county freeholders, referred to the parliamentarians as the 'malignant party', who had abused the Protestant religion and made war against the King.<sup>135</sup> The parliamentarian press described Evesham people as 'most of them cavaliers'.<sup>136</sup> In the north-east, one Roger Lowe of Bromsgrove had the bells rung at some point in the war, 'to raise the town against the parliament',

<sup>134</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', pp. 328-30; R.B., p. 41.

<sup>135</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 94-5.

<sup>136</sup> Mercurius Civicus, (28 November-5 December 1644), E21(2), p. 741.

and himself helped raise horses and money for the King.<sup>137</sup> When Waller threatened Worcester at the end of June 1643, some 400 women in the city marched out 'in warlike manner like soldiers', and destroyed outworks constructed by Essex, to deny Waller cover.<sup>138</sup> The city was viewed suspiciously in 1648, a suspicion justified by the events of 1651.<sup>139</sup>

But the county, and especially Worcester, was not wholly royalist. Some Worcester citizens petitioned in September 1642 against the Commissioners of Array, and

<sup>137</sup> C.C.C., p. 2725.

<sup>138</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 123-4. See also Clarendon, History, iii, p. 18. The behaviour of the women was noted in both the royalist and parliamentarian press: Mercurius Aulicus, (28 May-3 June 1643), E106(2), pp. 187-8, and the 16-22 June edition, E54(5), p. 1044. For the parliamentarian account, see Special Passages, (2 August 1643), E63(4), p. 28.

<sup>139</sup> In 1648, there were concerns about a possible rising in the city. In 1651, of course, Worcester formed Charles's base for the decisive battle, and was ruthlessly plundered by the victorious parliamentarians: Philip Styles, 'The City of Worcester during the Civil Wars, 1640-60', in idem (ed.), Studies in Seventeenth Century West Midlands History, (1978), pp. 247, 249-51.

asked for permission to recruit for the parliament.<sup>140</sup> In May 1644 Gerrard wrote that 'there are many of this town very base', and that he needed a strong garrison in order to keep them quiet.<sup>141</sup> By June 1646, with weariness and defeat permeating the garrison, Townshend noted with disgust that some soldiers and citizens were fraternising with the besieging parliamentarians, and that the 'disaffected' were supplying the enemy with intelligence.<sup>142</sup> In September 1643, people in the Vale of Evesham, struggling under the demands of the encamped royal field army, were reportedly appealing to Essex for help.<sup>143</sup> People in Evesham itself were fined £200 by Charles in June 1644, 'for their alacrity in the reception of Waller'.<sup>144</sup> Baxter's description of a small, well affected party among the royalist rabble in Kidderminster is supported by a night raid on the town by 120 royalist horse in June 1644, in which the inhabitants were threatened with ruination if they sent

<sup>140</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 87-8. See also C.J. ii, pp. 761, 764; L.J. v, pp. 361-2.

<sup>141</sup> B.L. Add. MS 18981, f. 166.

<sup>142</sup> Townshend, Diary, i, p. 149.

<sup>143</sup> John Webb reported to Luke that 'the country people hereabouts say that except his Excellency [ie. Essex] help them they shall be all undone': Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 72v.

<sup>144</sup> Clarendon, History, iii, p. 359.

any provision to Denbigh.<sup>145</sup> By November 1645, the Committee of Both Kingdoms understood there to be 'considerable numbers of people' declaring for the parliament in Worcestershire.<sup>146</sup>

There are further indications of popular royalism in south Warwickshire. Wharton thought Southam 'a very malignant town, both minister and people'.<sup>147</sup> In the winter of 1642-3, Stratford upon Avon formed a temporary base for royalist forces. The royalist press claimed their forces there had been supported by locals. Certainly, the inhabitants of Stratford upon Avon were plundered by parliamentarian soldiers on numerous occasions during the war.<sup>148</sup> A collar-maker there was later said to have 'several times raised the

<sup>145</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, p. 267.

<sup>146</sup> C.S.P.D. 1645-7, p. 231.

<sup>147</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 316.

<sup>148</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (26 February-4 March 1643), E86(41), pp. 107-8; for the plundering, see P.R.O. SP 28/136/51, Stratford Book of Accounts. At Newport Pagnell, Luke received a report that the royalists 'charged' Stratford people for aid and assistance: Bodl. MS Eng Hist. C53, f. 15. This sounds like a demand rather than an appeal, but they seem to have responded readily enough.

rabble of the said town against the parliament soldiers'. Bells were rung in Stratford when the Queen arrived in July 1643.<sup>149</sup> In May, Northampton had written that both Brailes and Long Compton were 'well affected' to the King.<sup>150</sup> In June 1643, a parliamentarian newsbook commented that Brailes 'hath been a constant den to harbour the cavaliers, and to furnish them with supplies'.<sup>151</sup> Major George Purefoy addressed Tysoe, another of Northampton's towns, as 'base malignant'.<sup>152</sup>

Here too, however, there is evidence of divided allegiances. Despite Southam's alleged malignancy to the parliament, 'country' people in the area attacked retreating royalists after the skirmish there in August 1642.<sup>153</sup> Clarendon believed that such attacks occurred following the battle of Edgehill. Printed royalist

<sup>149</sup> P.R.O. SP 24/75, (*Thomas Sharpe v. William Greene*), cited by Sherwood, Civil Strife, p. 225; Fogg, Stratford, p. 68.

<sup>150</sup> B.L. Add. MS 18980, f. 58.

<sup>151</sup> Mercurius Civicus, (8-16 June 1643), E106(13), p. 47.

<sup>152</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/184, parish accounts of Tysoe, cited by Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 202, and Tennant, 'Parish and People', p. 163.

<sup>153</sup> John Vicars, Jehovah Jireh, God in the Mount or England's Remembrancer, (1644), pp. 142-3.

accounts of the battle alleged that only the parliamentarian 'defeat' dissuaded local people from attacking royalist soldiers.<sup>154</sup> Stephen Charlton wrote to Sir Richard Leveson in Staffordshire that 'they say the country came in pell-mell to help the Earl of Essex'.<sup>155</sup> In 1642, money to buy dragoon horses for the Warwick garrison was 'bought in by the country' from a

<sup>154</sup> Clarendon, History, ii, pp. 364, 375; A Relation of the Battle lately fought between Kineton and Edgehill, (1642), E126(24); His Majesties Declaration...together with a relation of the battle lately fought between Kineton and Edgehill, (1642), E242(8). The latter account largely reproduces that given in the first. Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 149-50, notes the problems in using both Clarendon and the press as sources (which are noted here in the Introduction), and prefers to rely on muster rolls and garrison accounts as evidence for popular allegiance. However, the lack of equivalent royalist sources makes her evidence heavily biased towards parliamentarian support in north Warwickshire. It is the contention of this section that impressionistic accounts must be used to redress the balance, and that there are enough of them to suggest significant popular support for both sides in south Warwickshire.

<sup>155</sup> H.M.C. Fifth Report, App., Duke of Sutherland MSS, p. 161.

number of south Warwickshire communities, including Southam, Sherbourne, Pillerton Priors and even Brailes and Tysoe.<sup>156</sup> With Brooke a strong influence,<sup>157</sup> Alcester was firmly parliamentarian. Clarke wrote of how some inhabitants went to Warwick during the wars, and the royalist newsbook Mercurius Aulicus readily admitted a raid by Sandys's horse on the town in October 1644.<sup>158</sup>

Civilians in parts of east Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Rutland also displayed strong royalist sympathies. Most striking of all was their participation in a royalist rising at Wellingborough in late December 1642. The trouble began when, on the 26th, a party of dragoons from Northampton arrived to arrest Francis Gray, a prominent royalist in Wellingborough, and a clerk of the peace. The parliamentarian press reported that a shot was fired,

<sup>156</sup> P.R.O. SP 28/136/10, Accounts of John Bryan. Judging by the treatment subsequently meted out to places like Tysoe by George Purefoy and other parliamentarians, they were not well affected after 1642. But it seems clear they were not wholly royalist.

<sup>157</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 122n. Brooke owned the manor, and many of his estate officials came from Alcester.

<sup>158</sup> Clarke, Lives, p. 9; Mercurius Aulicus, (29 September-5 October 1644), E14(12), p. 1187.

and 'the town being full of malignants took distaste thereat, and betook themselves to their arms'. Bells were rung, 'which brought in the country, who beset the town around', and attacked the dragoons as they left. Before they could get back to Northampton, the dragoons were attacked again, this time by a force numbering over 500. Unable to secure Gray's release, the country people then plundered 'puritans' in the nearby village of Wilby. The following day, more dragoons were sent to suppress the rising. The troops were again attacked by the inhabitants, some armed only with knives, bodkins and shears. The insurgents were finally defeated, and Wellingborough was plundered by the parliamentarian troops.<sup>159</sup> Members of the Northamptonshire Committee, reporting the incident to the authorities in London, also reported the attempt by Henry Nevill to use it to whip up royalist support in villages near Uppingham in

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<sup>159</sup> A Continuation of Certain Special and Remarkable Passages, (26-30 December 1642), E244(8), p. 6; Special Passages, (27 December 1642 - 3 January 1643), E84(6), pp. 171-2. A largely corroborative royalist account is in Mercurius Rusticus, (24 June 1643), E62(13), pp. 42-4. Interestingly, however, this admits parliamentarian support in Wellingborough, and that the royalist townsmen received 'very little help of the country', although some townswomen did help beat up a parliamentarian captain: ibid., pp. 43-4.

Rutland.<sup>160</sup> Hastings spared both Wellingborough and Kettering from plunder, because of their royalism, and used the latter town as a rendezvous. Further east still, Oundle was in a desperate condition by May 1643, having been plundered by both sides. The parliamentarian plunder was punishment for the town's 'infidelity to King and Parliament'.<sup>161</sup>

Nevill's appeal to popular royalism in Rutland was well founded. Early in 1643, Grey remarked on the strength of the enemy there; 'had I not suddenly quenched them the whole county would have been on a flame. The malignants flocked so fast, that had I not entered Rutlandshire at that nick of time, I am confident that in one week the whole county would have been drawn into a body against the parliament'.<sup>162</sup> Grey plundered Oakham on 21 January.<sup>163</sup> However, there was some popular parliamentarianism among Rutland people,

<sup>160</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 82.

<sup>161</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (14-20 May 1643), E104(21), p. 261-2; The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, (23-30 May 1643), E104(10), p. 16.

<sup>162</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 99. Also in L.J. v, p. 631; V.C.H. Rutland, i, p. 190. In August 1643, Grey again referred to Rutland as a 'malignant' county: Bodl. MS Tanner 62, f. 247.

<sup>163</sup> Hamper (ed.), Dugdale, p. 47.

at least among the middling sort. In October 1644, some freeholders and yeomen petitioned the Lords in support of Thomas Waite in his dispute with the Rutland Committee.<sup>164</sup> In Leicestershire itself, the areas around the garrisons at Belvoir and Ashby de la Zouch were also centres of popular royalism. In the far north-east, Sir Francis Fane assured Hastings that the people of the Vale of Belvoir were well affected.<sup>165</sup> This is supported by the plunder of Bottesford, including the killing of two townsmen, by Grey, and by a letter from Major Henry Markham to Fairfax of 16 May 1648. Markham wrote that 'since my securing of Belvoir Castle, according to your Excellency's commands, I find the country thereabouts, who were formerly very malignant, to be much more exasperated, and give out daily threatenings to dispossess me'<sup>166</sup> (my emphasis). At the end of January 1643, a joint parliamentarian force under Grey and Sir John Gell attacked Ashby de la Zouch. The parliamentarian report of the attack described the inhabitants as 'malevolents'.<sup>167</sup> Parliamentarian forces plundered on the Leicestershire - Nottinghamshire border, which again suggests that

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<sup>164</sup> L.J. vii, pp. 26-7; V.C.H. Rutland, i, p. 192.

<sup>165</sup> H.M.C. Hastings, II, p. 89.

<sup>166</sup> Hamper (ed.), Dugdale, p. 47; L.J. x, pp. 267-8.

<sup>167</sup> Certain Informations, (30 January-6 February 1643), E88(17), p. 17.

many people in north Leicestershire had royalist sympathies.<sup>168</sup>

There is little evidence of popular royalism further south, except for the evidently parlous town of Leicester, and its environs. Despite its seizure for the parliament, Hastings was sure in January 1643 that the town was ill-defended, 'and most of the inhabitants well affected to the King'.<sup>169</sup> For sure, many of them were. Just before the storming of the town in May 1645, royalist gunners were given information about the town's defences by former inhabitants. After Leicester's recapture for the parliament, the authorities there admitted the brief royalist dominance 'caused great number of the common people to follow them, and had not Sir Thomas Fairfax put a sudden stop to those beginnings they had drawn the whole county from the Parliament'. Some of the 'best tradesmen' in the town had continued to trade with Ashby de la Zouch throughout the war.<sup>170</sup> Yet townspeople, including women, had helped reinforce the walls with wool packs when the royal army threatened. People from the surrounding countryside had willingly helped on the

<sup>168</sup> Bodl. Add. MS C132, f. 46.

<sup>169</sup> Bodl. Firth MS C6, f. 4.

<sup>170</sup> A Perfect Relation, E288(4), p. 1; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 253; C.C.C., p. 270.

fortifications in April 1643, and in 1644 some 'country-men' captured a royalist soldier and brought him prisoner into the town.<sup>171</sup>

#### Popular Parliamentarianism

In south and south-west Leicestershire, popular sympathy lay largely with the parliament. As shown above, this area was ruthlessly plundered by Rupert in 1643. Some time that year, the unpublished royalist journal 'Mensalia' recorded that in Market Harborough 'the townsmen betrayed some of our men and sent them prisoners to Leicester'. In May 1644, 'the country' in that area reportedly assisted parliamentarian forces engaging some of Goring's men, 'so sore were they afflicted by the enemy'.<sup>172</sup> In Lutterworth, where Rupert had plundered, there were fears in September 1644 about another raid, this time by Hastings. These anxieties reportedly sparked off the creation of an irregular force by the 'country', which assisted horse from Warwickshire in chasing the royalists off. The minister, Nathaniel Tovey, was later accused of trying

<sup>171</sup> A Perfect Relation, E288(4), p. 1; Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 29v; The Military Scribe, (27 February - 5 March 1644), E35(21), p. 14.

<sup>172</sup> Bodl. Add. MS 132, f. 60v; The Parliament Scout, (23-30 May 1644), E49(33), p. 390.

'to hinder some of his parish in assisting the parliament against the King's forces'.<sup>173</sup> Parliament even had some support in the north-west, Hastings's power base in Leicestershire. In January 1643, 'Mensalia' described Loughborough as a 'contrary' place. The parliamentarian press claimed that on Sunday 22 September 1644 a party of Hastings's horse came to the town, and attempted to drag the minister from the pulpit, but he was rescued by women in the congregation, who acted with 'incredible courage and equanimity'.<sup>174</sup>

But the strongest popular parliamentarian support came from the central parts of the region, namely Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, and especially the northern parts of these counties. A letter of July 1642 claimed that, in Warwickshire, 'the yeomen of our county stands out very well [for the parliament], but the malignants draw abundance of the rascality of the county after them'.<sup>175</sup> Later, women in Coventry 'went by companies' to fill up nearby quarries in order to

<sup>173</sup> Mercurius Civicus, (11-19 September 1644), E9(7), p. 651; Bodl. MS J. Walker C11, f. 81.

<sup>174</sup> Bodl. MS Add 132, f. 38v; The London Post, (8 October 1644), E12(5), p. 7.

<sup>175</sup> 'The Copy of a Letter out of Warwickshire', printed in The Proceedings at Banbury, (13 August 1642), E111(11). See also Manning, English People, p. 331.

deprive besieging royalists of cover. When Wharton arrived in Coventry in late August he noted 'the country met us in arms and welcomed us, and gave us good quarter both for horse and foot'. By September, some citizens were petitioning parliament to secure the payment of Brooke's regiment, and for permission to buy ordnance 'for the defence and safety of that place'.<sup>176</sup> The townsmen of Birmingham supplied the Earl of Essex with 1500 swords, but refused to supply Charles, instead seizing some of his wagons and taking the booty to Warwick Castle.<sup>177</sup> In keeping with the royalist penchant for raiding civilians along the Warwickshire - Leicestershire border, Hastings pillaged Nuneaton in May 1643.<sup>178</sup>

On 1 September 1642, Essex's army left Warwickshire and marched into north-west Northamptonshire, heading towards Northampton. Wharton noted the 'country' in Barby supplied the soldiers as well as they could, although the parson was pillaged. In Long Buckby, there was 'very hard quarter', but only because the royalists had already thoroughly plundered the inhabitants. When they later marched back into east Warwickshire towards

<sup>176</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 316; B.L. Add. MS 11364, f. 18; C.J. ii, p. 777.

<sup>177</sup> A Letter Written from Walsall, (14 April 1643), E96(22), pp. 2-3.

<sup>178</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 36v.

Worcester, Wharton noted 'very good quarter' in Rugby, and that the royalists had recently disarmed the town.<sup>179</sup> Long Buckby eventually tired of royalist pillage. In March 1643, two troops of horse from Banbury came to plunder, but the inhabitants rose up and resisted their entry, finally driving them back to Banbury.<sup>180</sup> Nearby Kilsby was described by Aulicus as a 'busy rebellious town', which had risen up against Sir John Smith in August 1642, and ever since had 'maintained scouts and parties to seize all honest passengers, and carry them to Northampton'. As punishment, Sir William Compton attacked Kilsby with 400 horse in January 1645, taking 24 townspeople prisoner, and seizing 200 cattle, 60 horses, arms and booty.<sup>181</sup> Parliament received similar aid from some

<sup>179</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', pp. 319-20, 324.

<sup>180</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 23.

<sup>181</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (12-19 January 1645), E269(5), p. 1348. The attack on Kilsby was also reported in the parliamentarian press. One account hints at royalism even in so apparently partisan town as this. Perfect Passages, (22-28 January 1645), E26(9), pp. 106-7, said the townsmen deserved to suffer, as they 'foolishly broke their Association', and the constable informed the cavaliers that the town was vulnerable. But another newsbook described Kilsby as 'well affected': The

people in the south. In late August 1642, a number of the inhabitants of Brackley attacked a small group of Byron's men on their way to Oxford. The attack was spontaneous, and the arms, horses and goods seized from the cavaliers were passed to the Committee at Northampton.<sup>182</sup> However, there were royalists in Brackley: some were preparing to accommodate cavaliers, probably those fleeing the defunct garrison at Towcester, in January 1643.<sup>183</sup> As noted above, popular parliamentarianism extended as far south as Aynho.

The pattern of civilian allegiance, therefore, reinforces that suggested by military recruitment. Where their allegiances are discernible, ordinary people in the far west and far east of the region tended to be royalist, those in the centre to be parliamentarian. Away from these areas, there was a much more mixed reaction.

Parliament Scout, (23-30 January 1645), E26(12), p. 671.

<sup>182</sup> L.J. v, p. 352; C.J. ii, p. 747. The Commons had a declaration printed praising the the people involved in the attack: ibid., p. 756.

<sup>183</sup> Special Passages, (24-31 January 1643), E86(39), p. 203.

### Popular Neutralism

Thus far, a generally positive popular response to the war has been described. But several recent studies have insisted that the war was an unwelcome intrusion into local life, and that most people simply wanted to avoid it.<sup>184</sup> Hutton has argued that the civilian community in Worcestershire undermined the royalist war effort there by boycotting the war.<sup>185</sup> Bennett however argues that there was no equivalent reaction in Leicestershire. Hughes has shown that, whilst the majority of gentry in Warwickshire probably were neutrals, there was no organised, 'county community' neutralist movement there.<sup>186</sup> There is no evidence of such a movement in

<sup>184</sup> See especially Morrill, Revolt, and Fletcher, Outbreak, *passim*; Roger Howell, 'The Structure of Urban Politics in the English Civil War', Albion, ii, (1979), and idem, 'Neutralism, Conservatism and Political Alignment in the English Revolution: The Case of the Towns, 1642-9', in Morrill (ed.), Reactions. An earlier work, stressing adherence to the "county community" above partisan attitudes, and focussing on Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, is Everitt, Local Community.

<sup>185</sup> Hutton, War Effort, *passim*.

<sup>186</sup> Bennett, 'War Effort in the North Midlands', esp. pp. 78-9, 'Conclusion'; Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 161-

Northamptonshire. Whilst some neutralist gentry are well documented, there is very little evidence of active popular neutralism. Attacks on royalist soldiers, in places like Brackley and Lutterworth, or on parliamentarian soldiers, as at Wellingborough, involved cooperation with regular forces, and must be regarded as partisan rather than militantly neutralist. Socially-obscure abstainers from the war are largely absent from the historical record, almost by definition. Although popular motivations will be discussed in the following chapter, it is consequently very difficult to say very much even about the geography of popular neutralism.

Certainly, in many areas the initial wave of popular enthusiasm for the war had subsided by 1644. Even in Northampton, volunteers were proving hard to find by the summer. In November, a petition emerged in Leicestershire claiming to represent freeholders and the 'best affected' of Leicestershire. The title page of the printed petition, and accompanying speech to the Commons by Thomas Beaumont, claims the support of over 2000 people. There are strong localist, although not neutralist, overtones: the petition bemoans the damage inflicted on the county, and claims that the 'common people' only trust those 'whose residence with them

hath begot affection'.<sup>187</sup> We have seen how misconduct retarded recruitment in Warwickshire. By April 1645, the Warwickshire Committee had written of the likelihood of a 'third party' in the county,<sup>188</sup> but this never materialised. Indeed, Denbigh noted as late as August 1644 that the 'affection and zeal' of Warwickshire people had brought him in 400 horses in less than three weeks earlier that year.<sup>189</sup> Local parliamentarian forces never reverted to systematic impressment. In short, popular support for the parliament declined, but never collapsed.

Worcestershire is the one county in the present study which produced an organised, armed popular neutralist movement, the Clubmen. This movement, and its equivalents elsewhere in the country, have been well documented.<sup>190</sup> The Worcestershire Clubmen first

<sup>187</sup> A Speech delivered in the House of Commons by...Thomas Beaumont, esquire, (9 November 1644), E16(19), pp. 1-6. Also in Nichols, Leicestershire, iii, pt. ii, App. iv, p. 39.

<sup>188</sup> C.S.P.D. 1644-5, pp. 380, 382.

<sup>189</sup> L.J. vi, pp. 652-54.

<sup>190</sup> G.J. Lynch, 'The Risings Of The Clubmen During the English Civil War', University of Manchester M.A., (1973); Morrill, Revolt, pp. 98-104; David Underdown, 'The Chalk and the Cheese: Contrasts Among the English Clubmen', P&P, 85, (1979); R. Hutton, 'The

became active in early 1645, and produced their first declaration on 5 March. The men are described as from 'north-west Worcestershire'. The centre was the Woodbury area, bounded, Hutton suggests, by the county boundary and the rivers Severn and Teme.<sup>191</sup> But there was also a meeting, possibly by a different group, at Pershore in the south.<sup>192</sup> A second, undated declaration was produced by Clubmen in the south-west, at Malvern Link. Inhabitants from Great Malvern, Mathon, Cradley, Leigh Sinford, Suckley and Powick were involved.<sup>193</sup> There was a second spasm of Clubman activity in December, when the men of north-west Worcestershire

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'Worcestershire Clubmen in the English Civil War', Midland History, v, (1979-80); idem, War Effort, pp. 160-5; Paul Gladwish, 'The Herefordshire Clubmen: A Reassessment', Midland History, x, (1985).

<sup>191</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 160. The Declaration of this group, drawn up on Woodbury Hill on 5 March, is in The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, (11-18 March 1645), E247(2), pp. 727-29, and in Townshend, Diary, iii, pp. 222-3.

<sup>192</sup> Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, E247(2), p. 729. This describes a meeting at 'Parshur, a market town in Worcestershire'. Although much further south than Woodbury, this must be Pershore.

<sup>193</sup> The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, (18-25 March 1645), E274(24), pp. 735-7.

became active again.<sup>194</sup> The north-west Clubman league numbered about 1000-3000 men.<sup>195</sup> There is dispute as to whether a meeting in November of some 3000 men at Bredon Hill, south-east Worcestershire, and their subsequent activity against the royalists, was actually Clubman, rather than partisan activity.<sup>196</sup> Clubmen were

<sup>194</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 193.

<sup>195</sup> Lynch, 'Clubmen', pp. 66, 67-8. There were said to be 3000 at the Pershore meeting: Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, E247(2), p. 729.

<sup>196</sup> Lynch, 'Clubmen', pp. 192ff, treats the Bredon Hill movement as Clubman, as does Styles, 'Royalist Government of Worcestershire', p. 35. This is disputed by Hutton, War Effort, p. 189, who points out important differences in the Bredon Hill group: it had powerful gentry leadership, it occurred in an area (i.e. south Worcestershire) which had been quiet during the early Clubman activity, and it was partisan, acting against royalist soldiers, instead of soldiers per se. This ignores the presence of Clubmen as far south as Pershore in March, and the possibility, pointed out by both Morrill and Underdown, that Clubmen chose sides late in the war as a tactical device, in order to end the fighting via the triumph of one side. However, Hutton is surely right to maintain that the choosing of sides represents partisanship. We may say that an originally neutralist sentiment in south

also active in neighbouring Herefordshire and Shropshire. Exactly what motivated the Clubmen will be discussed in the next chapter. But their very existence is proof that, in the far west of the region, popular sympathy for either side had run out by 1645.

### Conclusion

A number of salient points emerge from a consideration of the pattern of popular allegiance. Broadly speaking, popular royalism was strongest in the extreme west and east of the region, i.e. in Worcestershire, north-east and north-west Leicestershire, and Rutland. It was also significant in southern parts of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, and east Northamptonshire, thus forming an arc from Worcestershire into Rutland and north Leicestershire. Popular parliamentarianism was strongest in the central parts of the region, i.e. north and east Warwickshire, north and west Northamptonshire, and south and south-west Leicestershire. Significant parliamentarian support in parts of southern Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, east Northamptonshire, and to a lesser degree in

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Worcestershire, as manifested at Pershore, had mutated into de facto partisanship by November 1645, because of the increasing dominance of parliamentarian forces in the south and east of the county.

Rutland meant that these areas were deeply divided in allegiance.

There is therefore a contrast between the relatively solid patterns of allegiance in the parliamentarian centre, the royalist strongholds in the far west and east, and the more variegated patterns in the countryside elsewhere. Inherent in this is a contrast between the areas associated with major garrison towns, and peripheral rural areas. Thus the parliamentarian centre was bound by Northampton, Warwick, Coventry and Leicester. Popular support was especially strong in Northampton and Coventry. The clearest popular royalism was associated with Worcestershire, dominated by royalist garrisons; with Belvoir and Ashby de la Zouch in Leicestershire, and to a lesser extent Banbury. Rural areas between, or distant from these garrisons, are more difficult to characterise politically.

It is also apparent however that very few, if any, communities were universally for one side or the other. Locally as well as regionally, one must speak of the balance of popular support. Even apparently partisan towns contained significant numbers of dissidents.<sup>197</sup> For example, royalists were active in Coventry until the arrival of parliamentarian forces, as were

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<sup>197</sup> This phenomenon has been noted in towns outside the region by Howell: 'Structure of Urban Politics', and 'Neutralism', passim.

parliamentarian supporters in Worcester until the establishment of the royalist garrison there. Places like Leicester, Kidderminster, Evesham, Southam, Brackley, even Loughborough and Kilsby contained rival factions. In the peripheral rural areas such communities were juxtaposed, and consequently the pattern of allegiance in these areas was exceedingly complex, shifting from village to village, and changing in time as local fortunes fluctuated. In and around the large garrison towns, however, it was easier to maintain control over dissenting inhabitants. Thus the natural parliamentarian majority in Coventry was further empowered by their own troops, as were the royalists in Worcester, and in Leicestershire generally, following the loss of the parliamentarian garrisons in the spring of 1645.

Much of the pattern remained intact during the war, but there was a general decline in the popular enthusiasm for both sides after the summer of 1643, and especially in 1644 and after. Although the figures are far from conclusive, it seems that people in the region volunteered in their thousands for service during the early stages of the war. Pay was a consistently important inducement, and many soldiers deserted when in arrears. But there is enough evidence to indicate that a substantial proportion of volunteers were not

motivated by purely material considerations. Despite high wastage, only the Worcestershire royalists were obliged to impress men en masse. Forces elsewhere were probably mixtures of volunteers and small numbers of pressed men. That a significant degree of popular support for the war persisted even after 1643 is suggested by the absence of popular neutralist movements in the region, except in Worcestershire. In that county, the royalists were hampered by an increasingly alienated populace. There are indications that parliamentarian forces were able to pick up support because of this, especially in the north-east and east. In the far west however, the war per se came to be positively and aggressively rejected in 1645.

## Chapter Six

### Popular Allegiance: Motivations

This chapter will attempt to account for the geographical pattern of allegiance described in the previous chapter. Reference will be made to current theories concerning popular allegiance, and their validity for the present region. It will be suggested that we need to supplement these theories, which are essentially structural, with a consideration of shorter term, contingent factors.

The difficulties inherent in attempting to explain patterns of popular allegiance are, if anything, greater than in describing it. There are subtle nuances of commitment, ranging from neutralism right through to voluntary armed service. There is therefore a wide spectrum of possible attitudes, none of which are quantifiable. The paucity of diaries, memoirs and other personal sources means that there is very little direct evidence of exactly why ordinary people reacted as they did.

Most current theories observe certain cultural or societal phenomena, and relate these to what is known about the geography of popular allegiance. The main theories are: indifference, in which the common people actually do not care about the war at all, and fight

only out of a mixture of ignorance and venality; localism/neutralism, in which the major objective of the people is seen as protection of family, property and community, irrespective of the issues dividing the protagonists; deference, in which the common people are heavily influenced in their allegiance by the actions of their social superiors; class motivations, in which a puritanical middling sort, with incipient class consciousness, takes up arms for parliament against a royal army composed of elites and a deferential 'rabble'; religion, in which royalism is informed by loyalty to Anglicanism and by anti-iconoclasm, and parliamentarianism by puritan zeal for religious reform; and, most recently, Underdown's argument that the roots of popular allegiance lay in regional variations in popular culture, in relation to the differential degrees of success of puritan reformers in forest/pasture and arable/lowland areas. It will be shown here that all of these theories have some application to the present region. It will be argued however, that contingent factors, namely the local impact of propaganda, and of the war itself, played a major role in shaping popular responses, and therefore are vital in explaining the pattern of allegiance.

### **Indifference**

Contemporaries frequently remarked that the common

people, especially those below the middling sort, had a completely ignorant or venal attitude to the war. Haselrigg said 'the people care not what government they live under, so as they may plough and go to market'.<sup>1</sup> Baxter wrote that the 'generality' were 'not wise enough to understand the truth about the cause of the King and parliament'.<sup>2</sup> In addition to contemporaries like Baxter, some recent work has also argued that many soldiers, particularly those in the infantry, were ignorant of and indifferent to the issues of the war. The middling sorts who often belonged to the cavalry are said to have been more ideologically motivated.<sup>3</sup> Actually, there is very little evidence of the political and religious knowledge and opinions of the soldiery. Assertions of ignorance and indifference among infantrymen (i.e. among plebeians) are usually based on the high numbers of pressed men in the ranks, and their propensity either to desert, or willingly take up arms for the other side. However, such evidence does not exist for the present region. The previous chapter showed that

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<sup>1</sup> J.T. Rutt (ed.), The Diary of Thomas Burton, (1828), iii, p. 257, quoted in Underdown, 'The Problem of Popular Allegiance', p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> R.B., p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Kenyon, Civil Wars of England, pp. 124-5; Gentles, New Model Army, pp. 33, 38-40.

impressment in general was not particularly high, and desertion from county forces not particularly serious, for much of the war. Yet plebeians did play a prominent role. Of the 16 Northamptonshire royalist pensioners with identifiable social status, eight were labourers, the largest single category.<sup>4</sup> Five of the 39 royalist suspects in Rutland were labourers, the largest of the non-elite categories, and a high proportion given that suspects were normally men of independent status.<sup>5</sup> In a speech to crowds gathered at Warwick Castle for the election of officers to his regiment in February 1643, Brooke made it clear he did not want men who were indifferent to the issues of the war. Mercenaries, like those that had fought in Germany, were not required: 'We must rather employ men who would fight merely for the cause sake'.<sup>6</sup> At a skirmish near Loughborough in March 1644, it appears it was the parliamentarian rank and file that was most committed: a newsbook reported that 'the common soldiers were earnest to pursue the advantage, but the Commander in Chief refused to let them go on'.<sup>7</sup> The evidence is inconclusive, but the

<sup>4</sup> N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/49/80, 90; 1/50/75; 1/62/73; 1/74/47; 1/78/20; 1/79/53; 1/82/27.

<sup>5</sup> B.L. Add. MS 34013.

<sup>6</sup> A Worthy Speech by the Right Honourable the Lord Brooke, (26 February 1643), E90(27), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Britain's Remembrancer, (19-26 March 1644), E39(10),

suggestion is that such men were less venal than some contemporary commentators would have us believe.

There certainly was a good deal of popular ignorance about constitutional matters: it has been argued above that much popular opposition to Ship Money, the Bishops' Wars, and so on, was essentially materialist and localist. But this is not the same as saying that ordinary people were uninterested in the civil war. Popular allegiance need not have been derived from political sophistication to have been principled and self motivated. It has also been shown above that there was a vigorous popular response to the outbreak of war, and much of it indicates a degree of genuine commitment. Clearly, the nature of pre-war political culture did not preclude such a response. Indeed, it will be argued that localist perspectives were central in the formation of partisan allegiances.

#### **Localism/Neutralism**

Rather than postulating widespread indifference, some recent work has suggested that neutralism was rooted in an assertive and principled outlook, i.e. that a ubiquitous localist sentiment in the provinces

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p. 15. However, it is possible that these soldiers were more motivated by the opportunity for plunder than by ideology.

translated into neutralism on the outbreak of the war.<sup>8</sup> According to this view, an acute sense of community, and the local over the national, informed a widespread hostility to soldiers of any kind. Communities were only dragged into the war when a minority of idealists seized power and made resistance impossible. But this view has been challenged. It has been pointed out that many elites combined an interest in both local and national/ideological matters. Hughes demonstrated that, in Warwickshire, localism translated not into neutralism but into partisan radicalism, as the parliamentarian Committee depended on the soldiery for its own safety and continuing influence.<sup>9</sup>

That there was no axiomatic relationship between localism and neutralism also applies to popular sentiment. Popular localism is identifiable, but it is not associated with neutralism. Thus when Thomas Beaumont warned that the common people of Leicestershire would only trust local men, it was to prevent the parliamentarian forces from losing popular

<sup>8</sup> See especially Morrill, Revolt, passim, and Hutton, War Effort, passim.

<sup>9</sup> Ann Hughes, 'Militancy and Localism: Warwickshire Politics and Westminster Politics 1643-1647', T.R.H.S., 5th ser., 31, (1981); idem, 'Local History and the Origins of the Civil War', in Cust and Hughes (eds.), Conflict.

support, 'of which our strength most consists'.<sup>10</sup> Beaumont feared popular disillusion, not an innate neutralism. We have seen that men in Northamptonshire refused to serve under any but their own, local captains in the Bishops' Wars; but there was a strong popular response there for the parliament in 1642-3. When Hamilton's troops deserted from the royal field army after being taken out of Worcestershire, they nevertheless attempted to serve again in local forces. In general, desertion from field armies seems to have been much more serious than in local forces. It is possible that this is because the latter were perceived as protecting the community, rather than threatening it.

It has been noted in the previous chapter that organised popular neutralism in the region failed to appear until 1645, and even then only in parts of west and south Worcestershire. This does not suggest a spontaneous popular hostility to the soldiery in 1642. Neither do the partisan attitudes displayed by civilians who attacked soldiers in places like Wellingborough. It has been suggested that the refusal of Worcester citizens to allow the royalists to recruit there in September 1642 was a manifestation of popular hostility to the war.<sup>11</sup> But the evidence suggests that

<sup>10</sup> A Speech by...Thomas Beaumont, E16(19), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 11.

this was in fact a partisan response, and that Worcester, like many other communities, was riven into rival factions. Thus when the 'trained soldiers and commons' of Worcester petitioned the mayor in September, they referred to 'cavaliers', and 'divers strangers, gentlemen and others whereof some of them are voted by the parliament to be delinquents and some other papists or popishly affected'.<sup>12</sup> This smacks more of parliamentarianism than neutralism. Baxter testified to the ideologically-informed hostility to the parliament of other inhabitants when he noted the cries of 'down with the Roundheads' in the Worcester suburbs. Clearly, localist sentiment did not produce a widespread popular neutralism in 1642. Instead, as will be argued below, it contributed to partisan attitudes early in the war. The popular neutralism of the Clubmen, like the general waning of popular enthusiasm after 1643-4, was a product of the war, not a deep rooted cultural aversion to the very idea of it.

#### Deference

It is a tacit assumption of numerous works, which often have little or nothing to say about the role of ordinary people in the war, that such people were largely incapable of independent side-taking, and that

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<sup>12</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 87-8.

the civil war armies were raised essentially by quasi-feudal methods. Such a view pervades Clarendon's History, and a host of subsequent works written by historians culturally and politically incredulous of autonomous popular allegiances. Even some modern authorities assert that many people, especially those in the royal armies, and tenants of powerful landowners of both sides, were simply ordered into battle.<sup>13</sup> We must be wary however, of employing deference as a kind of deus ex machina, called on to explain popular motivations when there is simply nothing to say about them. This is a particular danger when attempting to analyse popular royalism, as royalists themselves rarely mentioned their support among the lower orders, and parliamentarians were naturally reluctant to admit such a phenomenon. When they did, deference was a conveniently non-ideological explanation. Evidence of genuinely deferential popular support is actually very scarce, and suggests it was rarely enough, by itself, to be very important.

There were certainly a number of powerful landowners in the region, who might be expected to have called on their tenants to fight. Both Brooke and Northampton were powerful in Warwickshire, with the latter of some influence in Northamptonshire too. Denbigh was also an

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<sup>13</sup> This is the explanation of popular royalism given in Manning, English People, and Malcolm, Caesar's Due.

important Warwickshire landowner. Leicestershire was divided between the two most powerful families, the Hastings' and the Greys. But the seigneurial influence of even such magnates as these was limited, when it came to the war. Brooke drew most of his popular support not from his estates in south Warwickshire, but from the north, where royalist gentry predominated and seigneurial influence generally was weak. Hughes concludes, reasonably, that Brooke's popular support was more ideological than deferential.<sup>14</sup> We have seen that misdemeanours by the soldiery in Warwickshire deprived Denbigh of support even among his own tenants. Northampton took a very proprietorial attitude towards both Brailes and Long Compton, where he attempted to protect his 'well affected' tenants from plunder; but he had to promise his tenants that if they died in service at Banbury he would not exploit their estates.<sup>15</sup> Hastings was said by Clarendon to have recruited in Leicestershire 'by his interest'.<sup>16</sup> But even in Ashby de la Zouch itself his popular support was conditional. When in January 1643 some of Hastings's horse left the town, there was 'some discontent and murmur in the town, fearing they had

<sup>14</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, ch. 4, esp. pp. 150ff.

<sup>15</sup> B.L. Add. MS 18980, f. 58; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 152.

<sup>16</sup> Clarendon, History, ii, p. 473.

been deserted', a discontent not abated by a subsequent rumour that he was to draw out his foot regiment. Hastings had to make an appearance with his infantry, and feast the townsmen.<sup>17</sup> Support, in other words, was more dependent on military protection and good public relations than on social ties.

Leading county gentry also had large numbers of tenants to call upon. The broad patterns of gentry allegiance do bear some resemblance to the patterns of popular allegiance described above, albeit not strikingly close.<sup>18</sup> Deference may partly explain the

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<sup>17</sup> Bodl. Add. MS 132, f. 38v.

<sup>18</sup> Information on gentry allegiance from the following sources: Worcestershire: Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 356-9; Hutton, War Effort, pp. 10-11; V.C.H. Worcestershire, ii, p. 219. Warwickshire: Ann Hughes, 'Warwickshire on the eve of civil war: a County Community?', Midland History, vii, (1982); idem, Warwickshire, ch. 4. Leicestershire: Everitt, Local Community, pp. 10-13; Morrill, Revolt, p. 42; V.C.H. Leicestershire, ii, pp. 109-10; David Fleming, 'Faction and Civil War in Leicestershire', Trans.Leics.Arch.& Hist.Soc., lvii, (1981-82). Northamptonshire: B.L. Add. MS 34217, f. 69; Everitt, Local Community, pp. 17-18; idem, 'Social Mobility in Early Modern England', P&P, 33, (1966), pp. 63-6. Some information on the Rutland gentry is in V.C.H. Rutland, i, pp. 188-9.

resemblance. Despite early neutralism among Worcestershire and Leicestershire gentry, there was a clear pattern by the time of Edgehill. Worcestershire was as emphatically royalist as Northamptonshire was parliamentarian - although in the latter county the royalist gentry had largely fled. Most of the Warwickshire gentry showed little sign of partisan loyalties, but the majority of the committed gentry were royalist. This was especially so of north Warwickshire, although this was also the site of the most solid popular parliamentarianism in the county. In Leicestershire, the situation was more complex. It was formerly believed that there was a geographical divide roughly along the Fosse Way, with royalist gentry to the north and west, parliamentarian gentry to the south and east. More recent work by Fleming<sup>19</sup> has suggested there was in fact no clear pattern, apart from a wide distribution of royalists with parliamentarian gentry interspersed. There was however a slight concentration of parliamentarians in the south and centre. There is at present no study of the Rutland gentry.

We know too little about the recruiting activity of most gentry to describe accurately the distribution of deferential support. Some clues may be provided by the places of residence of royalist field officers, who were predominantly gentry, and who would have been

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<sup>19</sup> Fleming, 'Faction and Civil War', esp. p. 32.

involved in military recruitment. Where known, the places of residence of such gentry are plotted in Map Three. But this is a poor guide to the likely geographical distribution of deferential popular royalism. By no means all places of residence are known, and some are traceable only to a particular county. Of necessity, these are excluded here. Moreover, we know virtually nothing of the locations and methods these officers used when recruiting. The same applies to parliamentarian field officers, who in any case have not been the subject of a similar study to that made of royalist officers by Newman. Nevertheless there is some coincidence of the distribution of royalist field officers with the distribution of popular royalism.

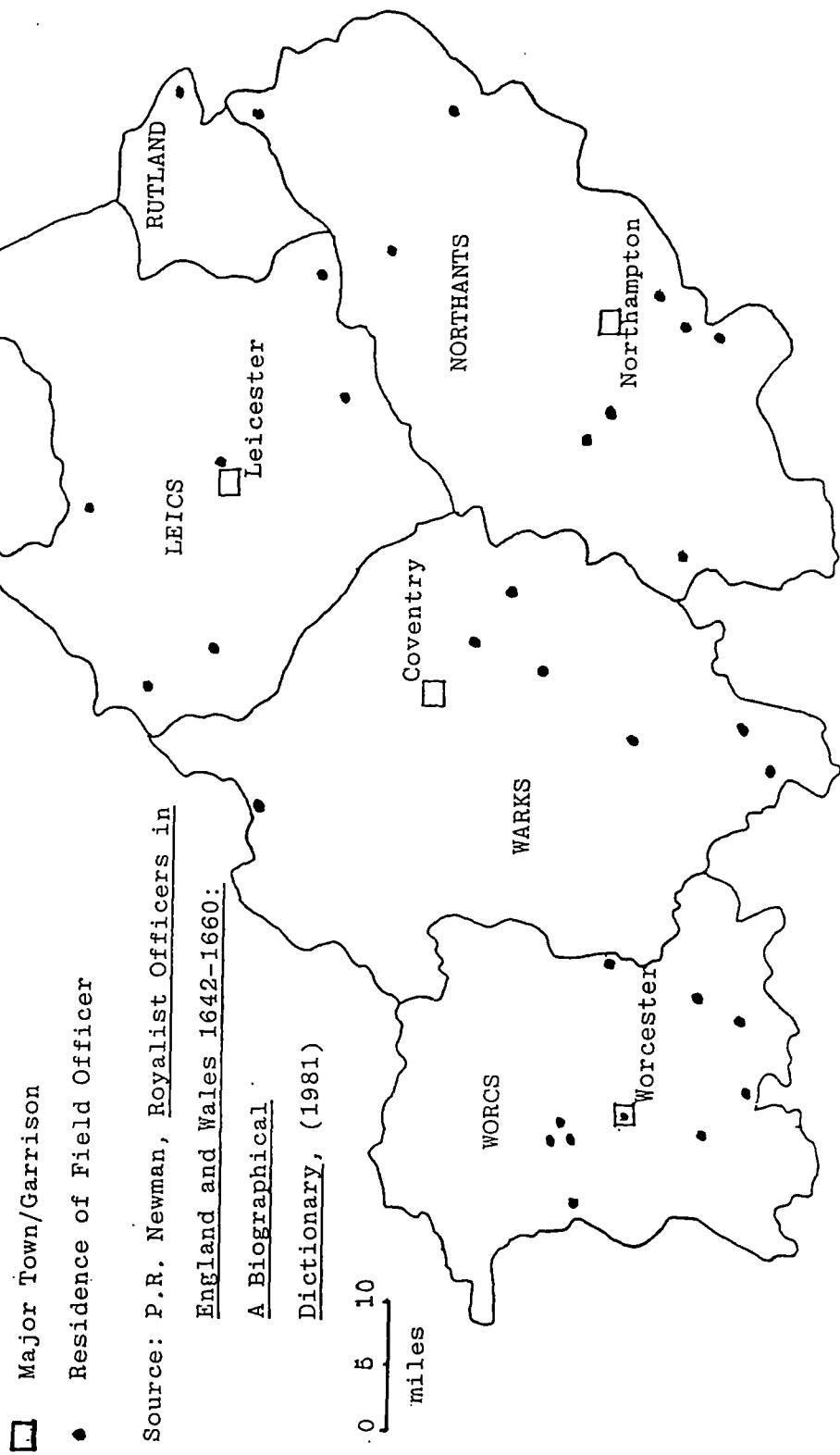
Some anecdotal evidence suggests deference was a factor in popular royalism. Baxter wrote that tenants of royalist nobility and gentry, 'and also most of the poorest of the people, who the other called the rabble, did follow the gentry, and were for the King'.<sup>20</sup> When the royalist press reported the Wellingborough rising, it noted that some of the country people who resisted the arrest of Francis Gray included 'some of his poor neighbours, who in him were robbed of the relief which they received from his charity'.<sup>21</sup> The records of the

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<sup>20</sup> R.B., p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Mercurius Rusticus, E62(13), p. 43.

Map 3. Residences of Royalist Field Officers



Committee for the Advance of Money suggest that royalist gentry were able to command very small numbers of men into service. Thus in Wellingborough, Gray had been supported by his 'servants', one of whom he had previously sent into the King's army.<sup>22</sup> William Dudley, a Commissioner of Array from in Northamptonshire, sent a man and a horse to the King in Oxford, and 'raised his tenants and neighbours, and rode armed with them to the rendezvous of the King's party'.<sup>23</sup> Walter Faunt of Kingsthorpe sent two men and four horses to the garrison at Newark.<sup>24</sup> Richard Chamberlain of Astley in Warwickshire sent in a man, horse and arms for five months service.<sup>25</sup> Edward Dorsey, probably of north Warwickshire as he rode to Loughborough in 1642, 'compelled' his tenants to contribute money to the King in 1642.<sup>26</sup>

But seigneurial influence frequently failed. This was especially so in Northamptonshire. In Dingley, at least two of the royalist Sir Edward Griffin's tenants joined up in the parliamentarian forces.<sup>27</sup> Walter Faunt

<sup>22</sup> C.C.A.M., p. 554.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 795.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 1320.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 1285.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 1408.

<sup>27</sup> C.C.C., p. 1206.

had to send one of his tenants prisoner to Newark.<sup>28</sup> John Tarran of Moulton, bailiff to the royalist Simon Norton, was pillaged on Norton's orders 'because he would not engage on that side against parliament'.<sup>29</sup> The Northamptonshire Commissioners complained that they were met with a poor response, despite the fact that they comprised about 40 of the leading men in the county.<sup>30</sup> In any case, as Everitt has argued, there were few powerful peers in the county before the war, and most of the leading gentry went to live either in Oxford or Northampton, thus removing themselves from their communities.<sup>31</sup> The presence of influential Worcestershire men such as Lord Coventry and Sir William Russell did not win the Commission of Array a warm reception in Worcester when it was bought there in September 1642.<sup>32</sup> The Earl of Northampton got a

<sup>28</sup> C.C.A.M., p. 1320.

<sup>29</sup> C.C.C., pp. 2683-4.

<sup>30</sup> H.M.C. Montagu of Beaulieu, p. 158. The Northamptonshire Commissioners included Lord Montagu, the Earl of Northampton, Sir John Lambe and prominent local gentry such as Sir Christopher Hatton and Sir John Isham. A full list of all 40 men is given in ibid., p. 156.

<sup>31</sup> Everitt, 'Social Mobility', pp. 65-6.

<sup>32</sup> Special Passages, (6-13 September 1642), E239(22), pp. 3-4; England's Memorable Accidents, (12-19

similarly cold reception in Coventry.<sup>33</sup> It is clear that royalist seigneurial influence in Worcestershire was not strong enough to negate the need for conscription after 1643. Conversely, William Wheate was warned by his tenants in Warwickshire that, unless he paid contribution to the Dudley garrison, they would 'throw up' his land.<sup>34</sup> Less spectacularly, royalists in north-east Leicestershire were not influential enough to command the services of some carpenters in Waltham on the Wolds, who at some time in 1642-3 'refused to go' to work at Belvoir Castle.<sup>35</sup>

It seems therefore, that the seigneurial influence of the nobility and gentry was highly variable. Certain individuals probably were able to influence the allegiance of large numbers of tenants. Northampton and Hastings are the two most likely examples, although there is evidence that even they had to do more than simply order their tenants and neighbours into service. Royalist seigneurial influence was especially weak in

September 1642), E240(2), p. 12; Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 87-8.

<sup>33</sup> C.J. ii, p. 641; L.J. iv, pp. 164-5; H.M.C. Buckleuch, I, p. 306.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Underdown, 'The Problem of Popular Allegiance', p. 85.

<sup>35</sup> Transcribed T.G. Daniels, Waltham on the Wolds Constables' Accounts, p. 119.

Northamptonshire and north Warwickshire. Elsewhere, it is probable that the parochial gentry were able to command the support only of very small numbers of people. Neither were the parochial clergy able simply to demand support. Although it will be argued below that they were central in the propaganda war, there are very few examples of clergy actually demanding that their parishioners fight for one side or the other: they attempted to cajole rather than command. Overall, deference may be described as one of the lesser influences on popular allegiance in this region.

### Class

Manning has argued that there was a class element to popular allegiance in the war.<sup>36</sup> This lay in the support given to parliament by middling sorts (in which Manning includes better-off yeomen, husbandmen tradesmen and craftsmen) given a measure of economic independence by their relative prosperity, and a

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<sup>36</sup> An argument re-iterated in the Introduction to the second edition (1991) of his English People. Mannings's qualification that class consciousness was restricted to "some" of the middling sort, and that class conflict was "localised" shows that his theory is intended only to explain the allegiance of certain areas: ibid., pp. 39, 41.

cultural identity by puritanism. This phenomenon applied especially to manufacturing districts, where opportunities to combine peasant farming with manufacture, as well as the popularity of puritanism, may have given the parliament an even broader appeal. Such people were free of the seigneurial pressures that drove many of the lower orders into the royal armies. Pre-war popular disorders - riots against enclosure and disafforestation, anti-Laudian riots - had deepened the sense of class consciousness and conflict of the prosperous middling sorts, and pre-disposed them to support the parliament.

The parliamentarian press implied that middling sort parliamentarianism was an important phenomenon, even in the rural areas of Northamptonshire and Warwickshire. In August 1642 it was said that in Northamptonshire there were 'many yeomen coming in with £10 and a horse, and £20 and a horse',<sup>37</sup> whilst it was reported from Warwickshire that 'the yeomen of our county stand out very well'.<sup>38</sup> From Warwick, it was reported that many 'able yeomen's sons' had volunteered.<sup>39</sup> There are also

<sup>37</sup> News from the City of Norwich, (26 August 1642), E114(15), quoted in Manning, English People, p. 331.

<sup>38</sup> 'The Copy of a Letter out of Warwickshire', in The Proceedings at Banbury, (1642), E111(11), p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> The English Intelligencer, (12-18 November 1642), E127(26), p. 5.

reports of middling sort support in the towns, namely Birmingham, Worcester, and Northampton. Accounts of the royalist storm of Birmingham describe the divergent attitudes of the 'better sort', who wanted to flee, and the 'middle sort' who wanted to stay and fight. Among the fourteen inhabitants killed by the royalists were three cutlers, two cobblers, an ostler and a glazier. Robert Porter, a blademill owner and a prominent supporter of the parliament, described three of the fourteen as 'my honest workmen'.<sup>40</sup> John Vicars characterised the defenders as 'for the most part smiths, whose profession or trade it was to make nails, scythes and such like iron-commodities'.<sup>41</sup> These men were not all prosperous proto-capitalists like Porter: many were peasant farmers whose industrial work gave

<sup>40</sup> Prince Rupert's Burning Love to England Discovered in Birmingham's Flames, (1643), pp. 3-4; A True Relation of Prince Rupert's Barbarous Cruelty Against the Town of Birmingham, (1643), E96(9), *passim*. For Birmingham, see also Manning, English People, pp. 288-91.

<sup>41</sup> John Vicars, Magnalia Dei Anglicana, Or, England's Parliamentary Chronicle, Parts I and II, (1644), p. 296, quoted in Sherwood, Civil Strife, p. 61. For an almost identical contemporary description of the Birmingham men, see The Kingdom's Weekly Intelligencer, (4-11 April 1643), E96(4), p. 118.

them a measure of independence. Manning is therefore justified in arguing that the nucleus of the resistance in Birmingham was composed of middling sorts.<sup>42</sup> A report of the rejection of the Commission of Array in Worcester in September 1642 said that those who opposed it there were 'but of the middle rank of people, and none of any great power or eminence there to take their parts'.<sup>43</sup> In Northampton, 150 apprentice shoemakers were reported to have volunteered by October 1643.<sup>44</sup>

Corroborating these reports and claims is extremely difficult. The lack of evidence for the social status of most parliamentarian soldiers precludes a definitive analysis. Some circumstantial support may be gained from comparing the areas of popular parliamentarianism with those areas most likely, under Manning's thesis, to produce large numbers of middling sort parliamentarians: i.e. areas of weak gentry control, with large numbers of independent middling sorts, especially those who could combine farming with manufacturing work. Forest and upland pasture areas, commonly characterised by scattered settlement patterns, diffuse manorial control and - along with some urban areas - proto-industrialism, are the most

<sup>42</sup> Manning, English People, pp. 288-92.

<sup>43</sup> Special Passages, (6-13 September 1642), pp. 3-4.

<sup>44</sup> Informator Rusticus, (27 October-3 November 1643), E74(15), p. 6.

likely environments. The parliamentarianism of such areas is also important to Underdown's thesis that these areas were parliamentarian not because of middling sort class consciousness, but because of an allegedly more individualistic, puritan popular culture.

Manning identified the Warwickshire Arden, and especially Birmingham, as illustrative of his argument, and is endorsed by Hughes. Similarly, Dias found that in Derbyshire parliament found most support among independent middling sorts engaged in lead-mining and sheep-rearing.<sup>45</sup> The middling sort parliamentarianism of north Warwickshire is actually unverifiable. It largely rests on the case of Birmingham, the observation that the Arden had many independent or semi-independent small farmers and craftsmen, and that this was an indisputably parliamentarian region. The scarcity of pension records for the county makes an analysis of the status of the majority of north Warwickshire soldiers impossible. Most of the parliamentarian pensioners/recipients of aid from the county are of unknown social status or occupation. They do include a Birmingham blacksmith and a 'whitesmith'

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<sup>45</sup> Manning, English People, pp. 33-4; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 151; Jill R. Dias, 'Lead, Society and Politics in Derbyshire before the Civil War', Midland History, vi, (1981), passim.

from Aston, as well as a tailor from Hurley, near Atherstone.<sup>46</sup> In addition, Hughes has shown that a number of parliamentarian officers from north Warwickshire were of middling sort origin.<sup>47</sup> It is therefore reasonable to suppose that middling sorts in north Warwickshire did give strong support to the parliament. But this is not conclusive proof of class-based allegiance: it may well be that many in this area from below the middling sort also volunteered for the parliamentarian forces.<sup>48</sup>

The possibility of class-based parliamentarianism in other forest areas must be considered. However, in the present region, such areas do not appear to have been particularly associated with parliamentarianism. The Northamptonshire forests were located to the north-east and south-east, areas of mixed allegiance and pockets of strong popular royalism. Seven of the 61 Northamptonshire royalist pensioners whose location is known came from communities either in or close to

<sup>46</sup> W.C.R. vol. ii, p. 218; vol. iii, pp. 3-4, 27-8.

<sup>47</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 196-7.

<sup>48</sup> See for example the petition to the Warwickshire Committee of George Harthill, a labourer from Atherstone, who had three sons killed in the parliamentarian forces: P.R.O. SP 28/248 (unfoliated), petition of George Harthill, and W.C.R. vol. iii, p. 11.

Rockingham Forest.<sup>49</sup> Captain Thomas Barton, who commanded at least one Northamptonshire man in a troop of horse at Belvoir Castle, was a gentleman from Brigstock, also in Rockingham Forest.<sup>50</sup> Sir John Wake, who recruited a horse regiment for the King in Northamptonshire, was from Salcey Forest.<sup>51</sup> Parliamentarian troops committed 'great spoil' there during the war.<sup>52</sup> Although nothing is known of the allegiance of the majority of people in Whittlewood Forest, at least one royalist officer, lieutenant Thomas Baile, came from this area.<sup>53</sup> There is no

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<sup>49</sup> Weldon, Yarwell, Gretton, Southwick, Bullwick, King's Cliffe. However, Rockingham Forest was somewhat atypical in that many of its villages were nucleated, with resident squires: see Pettit, Royal Forests of Northamptonshire, pp. 142, 149.

<sup>50</sup> N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/63/60. The man formerly under Barton's command was John Bearsly, farrier, of Alwincle.

<sup>51</sup> Wanklyn, 'The King's Armies in the West', p. 10; Newman, Royalist Officers, p. 395.

<sup>52</sup> Tibbutt (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, p. 380.

<sup>53</sup> C.C.A.M., p. 1162. This gives the location as 'Whittlebury Forest' (i.e. Whittlebury). This is Whittlewood Forest, and is consistent with the concentration of royalism in Northamptonshire in the

evidence of allegiance in Leicester Forest or Charnwood Forest, although the latter was located to the north-west, an area of royalist dominance. Royalists did plunder at least one house in Leicester Forest.<sup>54</sup> There is little evidence of allegiance in the Worcestershire forests. Willis Bund asserted that the Feckenham district "had always been a parliamentary stronghold".<sup>55</sup> But this seems to be based upon its proximity to parliamentarian Warwickshire: in fact one of the six Worcestershire royalist pensioners was from Feckenham itself.<sup>56</sup>

Theoretically, class-based allegiance is also more likely in upland pasture areas. Underdown, for example, ascribes some influence to class feeling in the parliamentarianism of the 'cheese country' and cloth manufacturing districts of the west country. However, he gives greater emphasis to the role of a more individualistic, puritan popular culture in those areas.<sup>57</sup> But the main upland pasture area of the present region does not conform to either model. The

south and east, irrespective of fielden or forest communities.

<sup>54</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, p. 234. (Entry for John Dixon, rector of Glenfield.)

<sup>55</sup> Townshend, Diary, i, Introduction, p. lxvii.

<sup>56</sup> H.W.R.O. 110:139/33.

<sup>57</sup> Underdown, Revel, pp. 169-70 and ch. 6 passim.

hills of west Worcestershire were associated neither with puritanism or parliamentarianism, but with the Clubman movement. The absence of manufacturing in west Worcestershire may partly explain the apparent absence of a class-based allegiance there. But it is clear that popular parliamentarianism was not always associated with forest, pasture or manufacturing. Given the marked parliamentarianism of north-west Northamptonshire, it seems that many of the yeomanry who supported parliament in that county were from rural, fielden communities. The same probably applies to parliamentarian middling sorts in Leicestershire, as the south and west was largely fielden. It is certainly so of Rutland, a predominantly fielden county, with no important manufacturing centre. The petition in support of Waite from the freeholders and yeomanry does suggest middling sort parliamentarianism. But it is not possible to say whether this was class-based: plebeians may have been excluded from the petition not for their politics, but for their illiteracy.

The economies of some towns and cities in the region do suggest the likelihood of class-based popular parliamentarianism. Baxter, with first-hand experience of the popular response in Kidderminster, Worcester and Coventry, wrote that the parliamentarian side included 'the greatest part of the tradesmen, and free-holders, and the middle sort of men; especially in those

corporations and countries which depended upon clothing and such manufactures'.<sup>58</sup> Manufacturing was important in a number of towns. Birmingham is a familiar example. By the civil war, the town was heavily involved in metal-working trades. The major activities were nail making, cutlery and sword making. Capitalist modes of production were making headway, and small middling sort masters, employing small numbers of workers and journeymen, were important. Such men may well have provided the backbone of Birmingham's demonstrably strong parliamentarianism, in which puritanism was also clearly important: Dugdale described the inhabitants as 'sectaries and schismatics'.<sup>59</sup> Worcester and Coventry were centres of the wool and cloth-working industries, which were also important in Kidderminster, Evesham, Leicester and Northampton, although in the latter two towns the leather-working trades were paramount.<sup>60</sup> Coventry was the largest manufacturing centre in Warwickshire. Leading figures in the city, such as the M.P. John Barker, and the mayors John Rogerson, Samuel

<sup>58</sup> R.B., p. 30.

<sup>59</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 8-9; Hamper (ed.), Dugdale, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 12-15; V.C.H. Worcestershire, ii, pp. 282, 293; V.C.H. Leicestershire, iv, pp. 77-8, 83-7, 104; Cox (ed.), Records of the Borough of Northampton, ii, p. 275.

Hopkins and Christopher Davenport, were all connected with the cloth industry, and were parliamentarians.<sup>61</sup>

In Worcester, many of the leading tradesmen, especially clothiers, were puritans and parliamentarians. These included Edward Elvins, who did much to oppose the Commission of Array in the city, and left when it fell under royalist occupation.<sup>62</sup> Manufacturing was important in several towns in north-east Worcestershire. Dudley and Stourbridge were centres of the metal-working trade, and Bewdley

<sup>61</sup> Manning, English People, pp. 284-5. For Rogerson, Hopkins and Davenport, see B.L. Add. MS 11364, fos. 16, 16v.

<sup>62</sup> Buchan Dunlop, 'Seventeenth Century Puritans in Worcester', passim; Styles, 'The City of Worcester during the Civil Wars', pp. 241-2. Of course, many clothiers remained in the city during the wars. For them, a major concern was not living in a royalist garrison as such, but the effect on their trade. Rupert had forbidden them to trade with the 'rebels' in Stratford upon Avon, London or elsewhere. In late June 1644, the Worcester clothiers petitioned for a lifting of the ban. This was granted, but apparently their wagons were plundered anyway: B.L. Add. MS 29873, fos. 72-3, 94; The Weekly Account, (26 June-3 July 1643, E53(11), sig. A-Av.

specialized in cap-making.<sup>63</sup> Kidderminster had a significant number of middling sorts involved in cloth working, some of whom went on to fight for the parliament. The population of the parish in mid-century was approximately 4000. In 1677, there were 417 looms in Kidderminster, and 157 master weavers, 187 journeymen and 115 apprentices.<sup>64</sup> Baxter wrote that 'My people were not rich...the generality of the master workmen lived but a little better than their journeymen'.<sup>65</sup> Gilbert has shown that many of the leading parliamentarians in Kidderminster were also involved in the cloth industry. Seven of the Kidderminster people who elected Baxter as lecturer in 1641 were among the 45 soldiers who added their signatures to a letter to Baxter of 1647, requesting his return to the parish. All seven were connected with the cloth trade. As many as 16 of the 45 probably had similar connections.<sup>66</sup> The clothier Robert Willmott, treasurer to the Staffordshire Committee, had mills in

<sup>63</sup> Willis Bund (ed.), Calendar, pp. xxxvi, xxxix.

<sup>64</sup> Powicke, Baxter, pp. 40, 43.

<sup>65</sup> R.B., p. 94.

<sup>66</sup> Gilbert, 'Kidderminster at the outbreak of the English Civil War', pp. 40-42. This excellent article cites much of the material from Baxter's correspondence given in Powicke, Baxter.

both Kidderminster and Hartlebury.<sup>67</sup> In 1658, Baxter wrote that he had 'many score of my neighbours with me in the wars', and put the number at 'some hundreds'.<sup>68</sup> This would appear to be consistent with the likely numbers of master and journeymen weavers in the town, and the total of 238 people who signed the 1647 letter. However, as Gilbert points out,<sup>69</sup> we cannot be sure that other middling sorts in Kidderminster did not support the King. Four royalist Kidderminster gentry appear in the records of either the Committee for Compounding, or the Committee for the Advance of Money.<sup>70</sup> These include Humphrey Burton, who became a cornet in Sandys's horse, and might well have taken some of the better off townsmen to serve in the ranks of that regiment. Nevertheless, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it seems more likely that Baxter's eye witness testimony is largely reliable.

To the east, however, the relationship between middling sorts, manufacturing and parliamentarianism is less clear, despite evidence of independent middling sorts in the main towns. Small tradesmen and craftsmen

<sup>67</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, p. 267.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Powicke, Baxter, pp. 84-5.

<sup>69</sup> Gilbert, 'Kidderminster at the outbreak of the English Civil War', p. 43.

<sup>70</sup> C.C.A.M., pp. 1395, 1416; C.C.C., pp. 2605, 3211.

were important in Northampton and Leicester. In Leicester, some 25% of the freemen in 1600-39 were involved in the leather working trades, although this declined dramatically to seven per cent in 1640-79. Most shoemakers were poor, although some tanners and most glovers were small masters. In the cloth trade, some weavers were also small employers, owning up to six looms. Small masters dominated industrial production, although large masters, employing wage labour, were coming to the fore. It has been estimated that by the middle of the seventeenth century, 50% of the male adults in Leicester were wage workers.<sup>71</sup> Manufacturing was sufficiently advanced in Northampton to enable the production of 4000 pairs of shoes and 600 pairs of boots for soldiers bound for Ireland in 1642.<sup>72</sup> As shown above, the town was also a centre of puritanism, and there was marked parliamentarianism among the apprentices. However, there is insufficient evidence of the social status of parliamentarians in these towns to confirm the posited relationship between middling sorts and parliamentarianism. Leicester in particular seems to have had a large number of middling sort manufacturers. But popular parliamentarianism was not as marked here as in Birmingham, Coventry or

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<sup>71</sup> V.C.H. Leicestershire, iv, pp. 77-8, 83-7, 104.

<sup>72</sup> Cox, Records of the Borough of Northampton, ii, p. 294; V.C.H. Northamptonshire, ii, pp. 318-9.

Northampton.

It is clear that the relationship between urban manufacturing and popular parliamentarianism was far from axiomatic. In contrast to the allegiance of Birmingham, it has been pointed out that in Black Country towns such as Cannock and Walsall, local colliers and nailers actively supported the royalist forces.<sup>73</sup> This would also appear to apply to the manufacturing districts of north-east Worcestershire, which provided only partial support for the parliament, many inhabitants supporting the King. The ironworks along the upper Severn were important to the royalist war effort, and at Stourbridge Richard Foley provided ammunition, pikeheads, iron guns, bar-iron and timber for the King's forces. Leveson ordered 1900 pikeheads from Stourbridge in February 1645.<sup>74</sup> As we have seen, bells were rung in Bromsgrove 'to raise the town against the parliament', and near Kidderminster a troop

<sup>73</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 20. See also Morrill, 'Provincial Squires and Middling Sorts'. More recently, Hughes has also drawn attention to the fact that in many areas, including Lancashire as well as the Black Country, patterns of allegiance were more complex than either Manning or Underdown would allow: Hughes, Causes of the English Civil War, pp. 142-5.

<sup>74</sup> Roy, Royalist Ordnance Papers, i, pp. 35-6; ii, pp. 428 and 521. See also Hutton, War Effort, p. 76.

of horse was recruited for the King early in the war. As a horse troop, this would probably have included a number of prosperous middling sorts. Indeed, from Dudley Castle, Leveson claimed to have successfully recruited both people of a 'mean condition', and 'the better sort of men'.<sup>75</sup> Rupert raised a 'great number' of colliers for his attack on Lichfield.<sup>76</sup> Clothiers in Worcestershire were not all parliamentarians. Following the battle of Worcester in 1651, the Middlesex Committee examined some 200 witnesses, and seized the estates of 80 clothiers in Worcestershire and Worcester itself.<sup>77</sup> As noted above, some tradesmen in Leicester maintained firm links with the royalist garrison at Ashby de la Zouch. The Leicestershire coalfield, sited in the north-west,<sup>78</sup> was in royalist territory. This is in contrast to the Warwickshire coalfield, which lay in

<sup>75</sup> Bodl. Firth MS C6, f. 69. Leveson had been recruiting in the 'country' from Dudley Castle, so his recruits may well have included some north east Worcestershire men. Most however would probably have been from Staffordshire, as Leveson was in fact using his powers as sheriff of that county to call in the posse comitatus.

<sup>76</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 33.

<sup>77</sup> C.C.C., p. 500. However, an unknown number of these were later discharged.

<sup>78</sup> V.C.H. Leicestershire, iv, pp. 30, 34.

the parliamentarian north-east of the county.<sup>79</sup>

There are other problems. It has been shown that there was actually very little serious popular unrest in the region after the early 1630s. This area did not see the sort of violent conflict that occurred in areas like London, or the Stour Valley in Essex. Consequently, there was little heightening of class consciousness or tension in the immediate pre-war years. Political disputes remained essentially localised and materialist. It is true that Northamptonshire, the most parliamentarian county in the region, was also host to the most politicised and consistent popular discontent with Charles's policies of the late 1630s and early 1640s. Probably, some middling sorts here did develop a coherent anti-government stance, that was partially defined by their economic and social status. Elsewhere, however, there is little evidence of a correlation between pre-war popular unrest and parliamentarianism.

Evidence also suggests that, as both Wanklyn and Underdown showed for the west country,<sup>80</sup> middling sort royalism was an important phenomenon. The few royalist pensioners from the region whose status we know include a variety of occupations which would confer a degree of

<sup>79</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> Wanklyn, 'The King's Armies in the West', p. 33; Underdown, Revel, ch. 7, esp. pp. 199-201.

economic and social independence: weaver, miller, slater, farrier, butcher, tailor.<sup>81</sup> It may be significant that there are no yeomen among the pensioners. Among the 31 royalist suspects from Rutland in 1655 however, there were four yeomen, plus two shepherds, and one each of husbandman, blacksmith, saddler, victualler, carpenter, shoemaker, mason, tailor and tanner.<sup>82</sup> From the records of parliamentarian committees, we may add an innholder from Northamptonshire, a yeoman and a grazier from Warwickshire, and a butcher and a millwright from Leicestershire.<sup>83</sup> The impression is that royalist forces included middling sorts from most parts of the region. Manning asserts that it was the "more deferential and less independent" of the middling sort that fought for the King.<sup>84</sup> But it is unclear why, say,

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<sup>81</sup> N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/50/75, 1/82/29, 1/82/25, 1/63/60; L.R.O. Q.S. 6/1/2/1, f. 64v; H.W.R.O. 110:139/33.

<sup>82</sup> B.L. Add. MS 34013.

<sup>83</sup> C.C.A.M., pp. 1338, 1100, 1423; Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, fos. 70, 78.

<sup>84</sup> Manning, English People, p. 28. In support of his thesis, Manning cites work on royalism in Lancashire: B.G. Blackwood, 'Parties and issues in the civil war in Lancashire', Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, vol. 132, (1983). Blackwood argues that in Lancashire the royalists received little

a royalist weaver must be classified as more deferential than a parliamentarian one. The distinction is especially dubious given that, as shown above, even the most powerful royalist magnates could not rely on seigneurial influence alone. Manning has recently conceded that he may have "underestimated the autonomy and ideological content of popular royalism",<sup>85</sup> but has not fully explored the consequences of this for his thesis. These consequences must include the probability that, in many areas, allegiance was dictated by a more complex set of factors than just economic and social status.

Thus class motivations in themselves played a limited role in popular allegiance in the region. They informed some popular parliamentarianism in some urban centres, notably Birmingham, Worcester, Northampton, and probably Kidderminster and Coventry. In the countryside, a middling sort class-consciousness probably informed support for the parliament in north Warwickshire, and possibly in north-east Worcestershire. Even in these areas however, other factors were involved. In Worcestershire, some middling

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support from yeomen and husbandmen. But his own figures show that such men accounted for about 50% of the Lancashire suspects in 1655: this is surely a strikingly high proportion.

<sup>85</sup> Manning, English People, p. 29.

sorts, including clothiers and probably some in the forest and metal working districts, supported the King. Indeed, middling sorts supported the King in many parts of the region. In addition, parliament drew popular support in fielden areas of the east, unlikely to have fostered the sense of individualism and independence that pertained in the forests and manufacturing towns. Emphasis on class motivations does not satisfactorily explain either plebeian parliamentarianism or middling sort royalism.

### **Religion**

For many years, religion has occupied a central place in numerous accounts of the civil war. Although theories of allegiance based on notions of class or culture invoke more secular, societal influences, they still include religious attitudes as constituent parts of those influences. Thus Manning cites puritanism as a defining characteristic of middling sort class identity, and Underdown includes attitudes to religious change among wider cultural beliefs. Other recent authorities, however, have once again emphasised the primary role of purely religious factors. The conflict between Anglican conservatism and puritan reformism has been identified as the essence of the English civil

war, the last of the European "Wars of Religion".<sup>86</sup> The war is seen as predicated on a "mutual distrust" between the protagonists, formed by the "competing myths" of a royalist-backed popish conspiracy to destroy English Protestantism, and a self-interested, radical, sectarian conspiracy against God's anointed King.<sup>87</sup>

These recent theories however have so far largely been applied to elite allegiance. For such people, diaries, memoirs and personal letters allow the sort of careful dissection of individual motivations that is impossible for those of humble origin. Nevertheless, the possibility that phenomena such as popular Anglicanism and popular puritanism motivated ordinary people in the war must be considered.

Much of the language and iconography of the war was overtly religious. Everywhere, parliament was associated with reform and anti-popery, the King with conservatism, Anglicanism and anti-sectarianism. Propaganda was important in this. Thus, the royalism of the people of Brailes was explained in the parliamentarian press with the remark, 'most of that town being papists'. Allegedly, parliamentarian warrants calling country people to a muster on Dunsmore Heath in July 1643 asked them 'to oppose that accursed

<sup>86</sup> Morrill, 'Religious Context', p. 178.

<sup>87</sup> Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 415.

popish army of the Queens'.<sup>88</sup> Royalist forces active near Rockingham in Northamptonshire in April 1643 were described as being part of the 'popish armies'.<sup>89</sup> The royalist press frequently commented on the lowly social origin, and the sectarian destructiveness of the parliamentarian soldiery. Thus, as we have seen, Waller's army in Worcestershire was said to be followed by 'none but broken and Brownistical tradesmen', and parliamentarian forces at Alcester, who used the church as a stable, allegedly included a cobbler and a chandler as officers.

The religious propaganda was sometimes vocal or visual. Brooke told the crowds at Warwick Castle that the royalists were either 'notorious papists or popishly affected persons'.<sup>90</sup> Royalist clergy commonly described the parliament forces as sectarian: for example, George Rogers, vicar of Blaby in Leicestershire, told his congregation that the parliamentarian armies were full of Brownists and Anabaptists, as did Edward Arundel, the rector of Stoke

<sup>88</sup> Mercurius Civicus, (8-16 June 1643), E106(13), p. 47; Mercurius Aulicus, (16-22 June 1643), E63(2), p. 386.

<sup>89</sup> Certain Informations, (3-10 April 1643), E95(12), p. 93.

<sup>90</sup> A Worthy Speech, E90(27), p. 6.

Bruern in Northamptonshire.<sup>91</sup> Among Henry Townshend's papers is a prayer for the King, calling on God to defend Charles, and 'Confound the designs of those that rise up against him / And let not their rebellious wickedness approacheth to hurt him'.<sup>92</sup> Malcolm has noted how parliamentarian battle flags and banners utilised Protestant slogans and banners. The Earl of Stamford's banner, for example, was inscribed 'For Religion' and 'By My Power', as well as 'King and Country'.<sup>93</sup> Parliamentarian soldiers on the march - including those at the skirmish near Loughborough in March 1644 - sang psalms.<sup>94</sup> The exhortations of the clergy were especially important in maintaining the morale of the New Model Army.<sup>95</sup> Iconoclastic destruction of Anglican monuments in many churches and cathedrals underlined the religious themes of the war in dramatic fashion. Terms of religio-political abuse entered the popular vocabulary. 'Roundhead' was heard in Worcester as early as September 1642, and in the

<sup>91</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, pp. 244, 276.

<sup>92</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, p. 92.

<sup>93</sup> Malcolm, Caesar's Due, ch. 6 passim; James Thompson, The History of Leicester, (1824), p. 378.

<sup>94</sup> C.H. Firth, Cromwell's Army, (1962 edn.), pp. 330-1; Britain's Remembrancer, E39(10), p. 15.

<sup>95</sup> Laurence, Parliamentary Army Chaplains, p. 85; Gentles, New Model Army, ch. 4 passim.

siege of 1646 the parliamentarian soldiers called the inhabitants 'papist dogs'. The defenders answered with shouts of 'the sons of a puritan bitch', and 'bid you go preach in a crab tree'.<sup>96</sup>

Isolating the importance of religious values in the minds of ordinary people, however, is difficult. Baxter was in little doubt that they were paramount. But his own account reveals subtle nuances behind the apparently simple dichotomy into Anglican and puritan. It was, he wrote, 'principally the differences about religious matters that filled up the parliament's armies'. The 'main body' of puritans became parliamentarians. The royalist armies were composed of gentry, ministers, and those of the common people who 'were for the King's book, for dancing and recreations on the Lord's Days, and those that made not so great a matter of every sin'.<sup>97</sup> Parliament though did pick up support from 'abundance of the ignorant sort of the country...merely because they heard men swear for the Common Prayer and Bishops, and heard others pray that

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<sup>96</sup> R.B., pp. 40-1; Townshend, Diary, i, p. 125.

'Roundhead' was in common use in Herefordshire by the summer of 1642: Underdown, Revel, p. 143n. On anti-puritanism in Herefordshire, see also below. For use of the Roundhead and Cavalier stereotypes in general, see ibid., pp. 142-3.

<sup>97</sup> R.B., p. 31.

were against them; and because they heard the King's soldiers with horrid oaths, abuse the name of God, and saw them live in debauchery, and the parliament's soldiers flock to the sermons, and talking of religion, and praying and singing psalms together on their guards'.<sup>98</sup> Thus although popular Anglicanism informed popular royalism, this was only as part of a wider, traditionalist popular culture. Moreover, the allegedly more pious behaviour of parliamentarian troops won over many of the 'ignorant sort', merely because of the contrast with the debauched conduct of their royalist counterparts. A similar mix of religious principle and secular concern about order and physical safety informed the petition of Worcestershire royalists, including some freeholders, to the parliament in 1643. They mentioned not only the abuse of churches and the Book of Common Prayer by the soldiery, but the plundering of the county's inhabitants.<sup>99</sup> Thus religious values were intertwined with cultural ones, and popular concern about military conduct. These themes will be returned to below.

The broad patterns of allegiance, religion and culture given in preceding chapters do suggest that religious motivations were important. The most parliamentarian parts of the region - Northamptonshire

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>99</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 94-5.

and Warwickshire - were also the most puritan. The most royalist parts - Worcestershire, eastern Northamptonshire, Rutland, east and north Leicestershire - were the most conservative and Anglican. It was Worcestershire and Rutland that produced petitions in favour of the Anglican liturgy and episcopacy. But, the testimony of Baxter and the Worcestershire petition apart, there is little to indicate that purely religious loyalties were indeed responsible for this broad similarity. One problem is that the patterns are too complex to be matched easily. Rural areas like south Warwickshire or east Northamptonshire were host to a very complex religious and political culture, and we do not know enough about the history of individual parishes to match religious and political attitudes closely.

Some clearly do conform to an Anglican-royalist, puritan-parliamentarian model. Northampton, Coventry and Warwick were all strongly puritan and parliamentarian towns, and there can be little doubt that religious values lay behind the allegiance of many citizens. Other towns in parliamentarian north Warwickshire had well known puritan ministers. Strong Anglican sympathies probably did inform the royalism of places like Stratford upon Avon, Uppingham and Loughborough. Religious divisions within communities may even account for the divided popular allegiance of

many communities, especially ones like Worcester and Kidderminster, where clearly puritan and Anglican communities are demonstrable. However, there are difficulties here, especially if we try to characterise a parish on the basis of the minister. Lutterworth for example had an evidently royalist minister in Nathaniel Tovey, but the inhabitants seem to have been largely parliamentarian. In nearby Hinckley, the minister Thomas Cleveland was accused of collecting money for the King: yet some inhabitants joined the parliamentarian garrison at Coventry.<sup>100</sup> Although Wharton thought the people of Southam as 'malignant' as the Arminian minister, Francis Holyoake, the probability is that at least some in the parish supported the parliament. Ashby de la Zouch, despite its tradition of puritanism, provided a base and popular support for Hastings during the war.<sup>101</sup> Alcester, according to Clarke, was marked by popery and drunkenness when he arrived there in 1633: yet the town appears to have been largely parliamentarian.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>100</sup> For Cleaveland and Tovey, see Walker Revised, pp. 233, 246, and C.C.C., p. 2726. For popular allegiance in Lutterworth and Hinckley, see Chapter Five above.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Clarke, Lives, p. 6. Clarke's claim to have reformed the parish by the time of the civil war may not have been entirely justified: see Chapter Three

Clearly, the parochial religious leadership was not always successful in shaping political responses.

In any case, formal religion, either Anglican or puritan, probably had less political potential at the popular level than it did at elite level. Minorities of zealous puritans and committed Anglicans no doubt responded to the war on ideological terms. But most ordinary people were motivated not so much by doctrine as by negative, visceral concerns, such as fear of popery, sectaries and/or of soldiers. It has been shown above that popular religion was far more complex than divines like Baxter implied. Within parishes, Anglicanism and puritanism frequently co-existed, and the divisions between them were far from clear. Some communities displayed a Janus-like observance of both cultures, and many parishioners practiced a "folk religion" that eluded the orthodoxies of both Anglican and puritan. This applies even to towns like Coventry and Rugby, as well as less obviously puritan rural parishes. It is difficult to estimate the political response of parishioners in places like Waltham on the Wolds, that bought the Directory and returned the Book of Common Prayer, yet retained the old Anglican communion pattern. Similarly, the making of a maypole in Lowick, just two years after the dismantling of decorations in the church, suggests neither classical

puritanism nor Anglicanism was dominant.<sup>103</sup> In short, propagandists may have been able to appeal on purely religious grounds only to an orthodox minority in the parishes.

It is likely that motivations lay not in a coherent religious ideology, but in elements of such an ideology. Thus defence of the Book of Common Prayer and religious icons catalysed royalism in Kidderminster. In Stratford upon Avon, the popular resistance to the attempted banning of maypoles and morris dancing no doubt made any political activity by the subsequent minister, the royalist Henry Twitchet, much easier.<sup>104</sup> Brooke drew on fear of popery in Warwick in an attempt to stir up the people for the parliament.<sup>105</sup> A letter in the Earl of Denbigh's papers suggests parliamentarians regarded anti-popery as a vital factor

<sup>103</sup> On patterns of popular religion and culture, see Chapter Three above. For Waltham and Lowick, see L.R.O. DE 625/18; N.R.O. 199P/77/28, fos. 30-31.

<sup>104</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 151-2 suggests that the presence of Twitchet, and the history of religio-cultural struggle in Stratford, indicates religion lay at the root of the town's royalism. Twitchet was removed to royal quarters in 1644, though there is no evidence of his political activity within the parish: ibid.; Matthews, Walker Revised, p. 366.

<sup>105</sup> A Worthy Speech, E90(27), passim.

in their support. The 'statement', made some time before the harvest in 1643, declared that 'the people are now willing to rise both in respect of the rebels landing in Wales as also the confluence of papists hither, both which the people taking notice of, as in Cheshire and Staffordshire, will for the present offer themselves willingly, but if the opportunity be not taken the people will return to their former coldness'.<sup>106</sup> Again, such examples illustrate that religious concerns were bound up with other issues, like the safety of property, family and community. The withering of popular royalism in Worcestershire indicates that, whatever the role of popular Anglicanism, it was secondary to the alienation of the inhabitants by the conduct of the soldiery, and the war in general.

Religion, then, played an important role in popular allegiance over much of the region. The war had strong religious connotations, communicated to the people in printed propaganda, sermons, speeches, banners, flags, and the language and actions of the soldiery. In certain staunchly Anglican or puritan communities, notably urban centres, its influence may have been paramount. But the complexity of popular religious culture, and the popular reaction to the war, makes it

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<sup>106</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, p. 262.

invidious to isolate religion as an influence amid a tissue of related concerns. These included not only aspects of Anglican and puritan orthodoxy, but also the conservation or reform of popular cultural traditions, and the physical threat posed to civilian communities by the soldiery.

### Cultural Variation

Underdown has argued that regional differences in popular allegiance can be explained by corresponding differences in popular culture.<sup>107</sup> Although he is vague about the culture of those below the middling sort, his essential thesis is that areas in which the puritan reform of traditional culture were successful became parliamentarian, and areas in which it failed became royalist. The key to allegiance is presented not merely as economic status or religious preference, but as the broad cultural characteristics of a given region. Middling sorts, for example, fought for either side, depending on whether they subscribed to a reformed, individualistic popular culture, or a traditional, festive one. Underdown thus provides a model for an autonomous popular royalism, and more generally for a popular allegiance motivated by a broad range of cultural influences, based on attitudes towards communalism and festivity.

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<sup>107</sup> See especially Underdown, Revel, passim.

Applying this theory to the present region, we should expect to see the royalist areas as ones in which nucleated parishes, with some degree of paternalistic manorial control, had retained an essentially traditional culture, marked by communal activities such as football, maypoles, and Anglican forms of worship. In the parliamentarian areas, we should expect to find more independent parishes with scattered settlements, in which traditional culture had been replaced by a more individualistic one, characterised by strong puritanism. In general, forest and pasture regions should be parliamentarian, whilst lowland fielden regions should be royalist.

There are possible applications of this theory. Some royalist communities were in markedly conservative, fielden regions. Parts of Worcestershire, notably the Severn Valley and the Vale of Evesham, were fielden and, although the evidence is partial, Anglican forms of worship appear to have remained popular throughout much of the county. South Warwickshire, Rutland, east and north Leicestershire, and parts of south and east Northamptonshire were all fielden. Dominantly royalist communities such as Stratford upon Avon, Uppingham and Loughborough retained a traditional culture. Parliament was well supported in the Forest of Arden, and in towns like Coventry and Northampton where puritanism and manufacturing had made headway.

But, as for religion, the complexity of patterns of culture and allegiance in some areas creates problems. Some areas showed popular support for both sides. It has been shown above that this applies especially to peripheral rural areas such as south Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, and parts of east Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. These areas also displayed a complex pattern of popular culture. Puritans, Anglicans and the profane, parliamentarians and royalists, were all tightly juxtaposed in such areas, sometimes within one community. In short, the pattern in the rural areas between the major garrisons is too fragmented to be explained by theories of broad cultural differentiation. Patterns here are not so much patchwork-quilt as kaleidoscopic, and we therefore need an explanation that can deal with local variations in allegiance on a very small scale. Even in towns like Coventry and Northampton, vestiges of the old culture survived into and beyond the civil war. It is questionable therefore whether cultural attitudes, even non-doctrinal ones, can have motivated many citizens outside of the minority of committed puritans in the middling sort and above.

Further problems are posed by the lack of parliamentarianism in forest and pasture regions, and its dominance in some fielden regions. It has been shown above that, with the exception of the

Warwickshire Arden, there is no clear relationship between forests and popular parliamentarianism. This is especially true of the Northamptonshire forests. The one upland pasture area of the region, the hills of west Worcestershire, failed to show significant popular parliamentarianism. Underdown argues that the siding of the Clubmen of this area with parliamentarian forces is proof of the tendency of upland pasture regions to be parliamentarian.<sup>108</sup> But this is to forget the absence of parliamentarianism here before 1645, and the likelihood that the Clubmen aided parliamentarian forces only to bring the war to a swift conclusion. If there was genuine parliamentarian sympathy, we should expect some indication of it before 1645. In fact, there is none. Wharton failed to notice any when he was in the Malverns in September 1642, a time when popular parliamentarianism was running high in other areas. Conversely, parliament did well in much of north and west Northamptonshire, and south-west Leicestershire. These were fielden areas, not marked by proto-industrialism and where puritans had achieved only limited success in reforming the popular culture.

There is therefore no general, direct relationship between regional variations in popular culture and patterns of allegiance during the war. Differing cultures may well have informed allegiance in certain

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<sup>108</sup> Underdown, 'The Chalk and the Cheese', pp. 46-7.

communities. But it is unlikely to have operated on a regional level, especially in areas where popular culture and allegiance shifted in pattern over very small areas. It is possible, however, that the theory holds true on a much smaller, local scale than Underdown suggested. That is, cultural variation may well have played a part in shaping popular responses, but on a parochial rather than a regional basis. Thus, for example, many people in Stratford upon Avon clearly adhered to a traditionalist culture, and this may have caused them to support the King. However, the partial success of puritan reformers - such as Samuel Clarke in Alcester - may have played a role in the parliamentarianism of many people in nearby communities. Even this though is problematic. Many communities were themselves divided in allegiance. Such reactions suggest either the presence of divergent cultures within these communities, or that popular culture was not primary in forming allegiance. If we accept the former, then we are thrown back to the existence, as in Kidderminster, of godly and Anglican factions, and possibly to class differences between parish parliamentarians and royalists. If we accept the latter, then we must look for some other explanation, with greater reference to the local rather than the societal or cultural. In either case, we have travelled a long way from regional variations in popular culture.

### Wartime Influences

It has been shown that, although all current theories of popular allegiance have some application to the present region, they all have their limitations. The obvious implication is that, in seeking to explain the pattern of popular allegiance, a multi-causal approach is necessary. Even taken together, however, the current theories fail to explain fully the pattern that emerged in 1642 and after.

This is because of a conceptual failing common to all of them. They are essentially deterministic, explaining allegiance in terms of societal relationships (deference, class) or broad cultural characteristics (indifference, localism/neutralism, religion, cultural variation). Thus there is an inevitable tendency to imply that popular allegiance was largely pre-determined. This is in spite of the fact that virtually all recent work has placed emphasis on short-term factors such as the impact of the Irish Rebellion, fear of popery generally in 1640-42, and the politicisation and popular disorders that followed the elections to the Long Parliament.<sup>109</sup> Yet none of this work attempts to interpret local variations in popular allegiance in the light of short-term developments.

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<sup>109</sup> See for example Manning, English People, chs. 1-5; Fletcher, Outbreak, passim.

It will be argued here that such developments are essential to any full explanation of popular allegiance. Foremost among them were the local impact of rumour and associated propaganda, and factors associated with the fighting: primarily, the conduct of soldiers towards civilians, and the degree of protection afforded to civilian communities by local forces.<sup>110</sup> It is not suggested that these influences

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<sup>110</sup> A number of historians have referred to the importance of propaganda in forming popular allegiance, but not in any local detail: see for example Manning, English People, p. 260; Hutton, War Effort, pp. 13-14; Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 144; Underdown, Revel, p. 138. Hutton does make reference to the importance of royalist propaganda in Herefordshire. More detailed consideration of the failure of printed royalist propaganda and the impact of royalist brutalities, in national rather than regional terms, is in Malcolm, Caesar's Due, esp. chs. 4-7. However, Malcolm denies the existence of virtually any autonomous popular royalism. The local impact of the soldiery on popular allegiance in Gloucestershire was the subject of a case study by Ian Roy: 'The English Civil War and English Society', War and Society, (1976). This pioneering article argued that the war had a strong social context, via the inter-action of the common soldier with civilian society, and showed how military conduct

operated in a temporal vacuum. Wartime propaganda deliberately played on popular anxieties that were well established in popular culture by 1642. It is therefore a mistake to distinguish rigidly between long-term and short-term factors. It will be argued that rumour and propaganda, and thereafter the wartime experience of civilian communities, critically affected the impact of more structural, longer-term influences.

### Propaganda

As we have seen, differing forms of wartime propaganda were common. The impact of this propaganda on the popular consciousness helps to explain the regionally variable pattern of popular allegiance. Inherent in this is the local dissemination of propaganda, and the degree of control the rival authorities had over it.

In discussing the local dissemination of propaganda, we must distinguish between the printed propaganda produced mainly in Oxford and London, and other, non literal forms. We know little of the circulation and

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could alter dramatically the local pattern of popular allegiance. But subsequent studies have paid relatively little attention to this phenomenon, except in the case of the Clubmen. An exception is Malcolm, Caesar's Due, ch. 4, but once again the emphasis is on the alleged lack of popular royalism.

readership of printed propaganda. A recent study of the "official" printed propaganda of the war concluded that very little could be said about its likely impact, because of the scarcity of the evidence.<sup>111</sup> Parliament produced a wide range of newsbooks, pamphlets and diatribes from the earliest stages of the war. The royalists were slower to establish their news titles, the first one, Mercurius Aulicus, not appearing until January 1643. Neither was their range as great: the only other important regular royalist title to appear was Mercurius Rusticus. Newsbooks in general ran to an average of about 500 copies per week, although some, such as the parliamentarian Mercurius Brittanicus, numbered up to 1000.<sup>112</sup>

Printed material might be carried away from the

<sup>111</sup> P.J. Trenaman, "'Paper Wars': Propaganda in Official Publications During the English Civil War 1642-1646', University of Bristol M. Litt., (1988), pp. 50, 134.

<sup>112</sup> J. Frank, The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, 1620-1660, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961), p. 57. Trenaman however estimates the weekly number of Aulicus at 1500-2000: 'Paper Wars', p. 133. A study of Aulicus, including its likely distribution, is in P.W. Thomas, Sir John Berkenhead 1617-1679: A Royalist Career in Politics and Polemics, (Oxford, 1969), esp. pp. 48-62. See also Trenaman, 'Paper Wars', pp. 131ff.

printing centres by the post, special messengers, watermen or carriers.<sup>113</sup> It was sold in specialist booksellers, read aloud in alehouses and market places, and of course in church. Some material was nailed or pasted to the market cross.<sup>114</sup> Oral culture was still predominant, and no doubt the actual audience of printed material was far larger than the 30% of males and 10% of females who were able to read and write their names.<sup>115</sup> Apart from Oxford, there was a royalist press in Shrewsbury until about August 1643, and from there it moved to Bristol until the city's fall in 1645.<sup>116</sup> In 1644, Aulicus was said to be distributed through 'the greatest part of England'.<sup>117</sup>

But there is insufficient evidence to analyse local distribution in any detail. There were booksellers in Northampton, Leicester, Coventry and Worcester (at least).<sup>118</sup> Large towns such as these, the centres of

<sup>113</sup> Thomas, Berkenhead, pp. 52-5.

<sup>114</sup> Burke, Popular Culture, ch. 4.

<sup>115</sup> Reay, 'Introduction' to idem (ed.), Popular Culture in Seventeenth Century England, p. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Thomas, Berkenhead, pp. 50-1.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in ibid., p. 59.

<sup>118</sup> R.B. McKerrow (gen. ed.), Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640, (1910), pp. 7, 287; Henry R. Plomer, Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers, 1641-1667, (1907), p. 7.

local trade and administration, and at the hubs of the local road networks, were usually well served with printed propaganda. Thus the Worcester citizens' petition against the Commission of Array in September 1642 referred to 'several letters and sundry printed papers' that had come into their hands.<sup>119</sup> Parliamentarian pamphlets were apparently available even in royalist Hereford, although rarely in the surrounding countryside.<sup>120</sup> Aulicus had some circulation in north Leicestershire during the war, copies being sent from Oxford to Ashby de la Zouch on a regular basis.<sup>121</sup> Certainly, it was known to the

<sup>119</sup> Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 87-8.

<sup>120</sup> J. and T.W. Webb, Memorials of the Civil War, i, p. 14.

<sup>121</sup> H.M.C. Hastings, II, pp. 104, 107, 108, 109, 114, 121, 136. It is probable also that Aulicus was seen by parliamentarian commanders in the midlands. Luke regularly received copies of it, as well as parliamentarian newsbooks: Tibbutt (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, pp. 23, 57-8, 97, 239, 240, 254, 255, 259, 310, 322, 330 for Aulicus, pp. 36, 260, 423 for parliamentarian titles. Luke often passed such material on to his correspondents, one of whom included Major John Bridges at Warwick Castle. But there is no indication that Luke actually sent Aulicus to him.

anonymous author of 'Mensalia'.<sup>122</sup> Following Marston Moor, royalists from Oxford dispersed printed propaganda along various main roads in the midlands. Some was found on the Northampton to Warwick road.<sup>123</sup>

But propaganda was also distributed in many other ways. Clergy played a primary role. In addition to sermons, news reports, warrants and proclamations were read out in church. Clergy frequently made their own, unprompted remarks on the war to their congregation. As noted above, clergy were rarely able simply to command allegiance. But they were a prime source of news and comment for many parishioners. Royalist declarations were customarily read out in church.<sup>124</sup> Parliament did not always require this, but was aware of the propaganda value of such a policy. Thus when an ordinance was passed for a collection to aid the inhabitants of Leicester impoverished by the royalist storm of 1645, it described ruthless pillaging and torture by the enemy. The ordinance was ordered to be read out in churches in several counties, including Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Bodl. MS Add. C132, f. 45v.

<sup>123</sup> A Continuation of Certain Special and Remarkable Passages, (10-17 July 1644), E2(13), pp. 1-2.

<sup>124</sup> Trenaman, 'Paper Wars', p. 82.

<sup>125</sup> L.J. vii, p. 665.

Locally, considerable efforts were made to exploit the clergy, or prevent them from promoting the enemy cause. The extent of such efforts highlights the importance of the propagandist role accorded to them. In March 1644, the Earl of Denbigh instructed the bailiff of Warwick 'to deliver the inclosed papers to both the ministers that preacheth this afternoon for them to publish in their several churches, thereby the better to stir up the people to express their affections for the parliament'.<sup>126</sup> In 1643, Charles ordered the authorities in Worcestershire to arrest 'all seditious preachers, and other such turbulent persons, whose stubbornness and perverseness may in your opinion have an ill effect upon the county'.<sup>127</sup> In Worcester itself, the parsons of St. Nicholas's and St. Helen's churches (John Halciter and Henry Hacket) had proved to be 'very schismatical and seditious preachers', and by late December 1642 had fled to join the 'rebels'.<sup>128</sup> One Sunday in September 1644, John

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<sup>126</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, p. 264.

<sup>127</sup> B.L. Harleian MS 6851, f. 130v; Townshend, Diary, ii, p. 105. In February 1645, Charles ordered Goring to seek out any ministers 'who either by their doctrine or by their behaviour countenance rebellion': H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 212.

<sup>128</sup> H.M.C. Fourteenth Report, App. VIII, The Dean and

Trapp, rector of Welford on Avon in south Warwickshire, was about to preach in the parish church. Before he could begin, a party of horse arrived from Worcester, and the royalist soldiers dragged Trapp from the pulpit and took him prisoner. The royalist account of the incident was explicit about why it was worth sending troops into dangerous country to seize one minister: 'As long as such as Traps [sic] may read orders against the King, that is against the peace, no wonder if country people plead still they are seduced'.<sup>129</sup> James Nalton, the minister of Rugby, fled to London after being assaulted by armed men who wanted him to read royalist propaganda.<sup>130</sup> William Losse, the royalist vicar of Weedon Lois in Northamptonshire, was attacked and wounded by parliamentarian troopers whilst preaching on 2 July 1643.<sup>131</sup>

Complaints made to local Committees for Sequestrations often included accusations of royalist activity by the clergy. There was a broad range of such

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Chapter of Worcester, p. 203.

<sup>129</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (15-21 September 1644), E13(9), p. 1169. For confirmatory parliamentarian accounts, see The Scottish Dove, (27 September-4 October 1644), E11(1), pp. 391-2, and Mercurius Civicus, (26 September- 3 October 1642), E10(30), p. 669.

<sup>130</sup> Hughes, Warwickshire, p. 144.

<sup>131</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, p. 282.

activity. Richard Laytenhouse, rector of Desford in Leicestershire, was sequestered for preaching sermons hostile to the parliament. William Parks, vicar of Belton, said all those taking up arms for the parliament were damned, and from the Ashby de la Zouch garrison threatened some of them with plunder. Francis Standish, rector of Sweptsone, went 'scouting in the night with the King's forces'. Thomas Mason, rector of Ashwell in Rutland, commanded a company at Belvoir.<sup>132</sup> Some were simply accused of 'malignancy', or of going to a royalist garrison. Accusations and/or punishments relating to royalist clergy were made in 51 Leicestershire parishes, 28 in Northamptonshire, 11 in Warwickshire, nine in Worcestershire and six in Rutland.<sup>133</sup> More will be said about the geographical distribution of these clergy below. The numbers

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., pp. 239, 241, 245, 302.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., passim. The criteria adopted in the identification of royalist clergy is any activity which might reasonably suggest royalist sympathies, and possible activism. This is taken to include charges of malignancy and spending time at a royalist garrison, as well as the more overt signs of royalism. Excluded are those clergy who were accused only of moral laxity, popish or ceremonial doctrine and related doctrinal offences, or when the reason for persecution is not clear.

themselves are not a true reflection of royalist clergy, as parliamentarian forces were too weak in Worcestershire and Rutland for the Committees to be active for much of the war. They also include accusations rather than actual proof. Some of the clergy may have indulged in little or no public display of royalism, or left their parishes for a royal garrison very early in the war. Nevertheless, the numbers are impressive enough to further suggest the political role played by the clergy during the war.

Clergy, however, were not the only local sources of propaganda and news. Military commanders sometimes employed more direct methods. Thus in 1642, the royalist Marquis of Hertford sent in word to Hereford that the approaching parliamentarian army would lay waste to inhabitants and their homes.<sup>134</sup> During the brief siege of Worcester in 1643, Waller had printed propaganda smuggled inside the city walls.<sup>135</sup> We have already noted Brooke's reference to the royalists as papists in his speech to the crowds at Warwick Castle.

In addition, news and comment filtered down to local

<sup>134</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 331.

<sup>135</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (28 May-3 June 1643), E106(2), pp. 187-8. An example of the propaganda itself, in the form of a short handbill, is printed in Willis Bund, Civil War in Worcestershire, pp. 92-3.

communities through a variety of informal channels: gossip, reports from scouts, itinerant figures like tradesmen, and the soldiery themselves. Thus in 1643, a man who stopped to buy newsbooks in an Oxford stationers overheard a royalist officer saying that Rupert had recently been beaten away from the walls of Northampton.<sup>136</sup> In September 1644, some butchers who came to Northampton put about stories of terrible parliamentarian losses in the west, causing locals in Northampton market to panic and sell off their livestock at rock bottom prices.<sup>137</sup> Indeed news and rumour about the war quickly became part of the popular culture. The corporation of Bridgnorth (Shropshire) in August 1642 paid a scout to go to Coventry 'to hearken out how near the soldiers were coming which were feared would come against this town'.<sup>138</sup> Townsmen in Alcester sent a man to Stratford upon Avon to find out exactly what had happened at the battle of Edgehill, after Baxter's sermon was interrupted by the roar of the guns, and in the evening troops had fled through the town, saying that 'all was lost in the parliament

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<sup>136</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 83v.

<sup>137</sup> Mercurius Civicus, (11-19 September 1644), E9(7), p. 651.

<sup>138</sup> H.M.C. Tenth Report, Appendix IV, Corporation of Bridgnorth MSS, p. 434.

side'.<sup>139</sup> In Coventry, Baxter found a wealth of wartime gossip: 'so did we daily hear the news of one fight or the other, or one garrison or other how won or lost...so that hearing such sad news on one side or the other, was our daily work..."do you hear the news" was commonly the first word I heard'.<sup>140</sup> That Baxter was himself a preacher again suggests the clergy's role in disseminating such material. Through their work, and other means, local people were subjected to a vigorous propaganda effort by both sides, and local communities were alive with news and comment about the war.

As we have seen, much propaganda attempted to exploit deeply held religio-cultural concerns. The parliamentarian emphasis on anti-popery had particular resonance, appealing as it did to prejudices built up since the Reformation. It is doubtful that the royalist stigmatization of sectaries had quite the same populist impact, and it has been pointed out that much royalist propaganda, with its emphasis on the social order and obedience, was directed at an elite audience.<sup>141</sup> This was certainly true of Aulicus, which was also much more

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<sup>139</sup> R.B., p. 43.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>141</sup> Hughes, 'Warwickshire' (thesis), pp. 261-3.

Middling sorts would also have been concerned at any alleged threat to the social order: but many clearly believed popery to be a greater menace.

expensive than most of its competitors.<sup>142</sup> It is therefore probable that the parliamentarian newsbooks were more effective at the popular level.

But even royalist propaganda was able to exploit a popular anxiety with a sharply contemporary significance: the fear of soldiers. Both sides manipulated the dread of soldiers appearing in villages and towns to kill, rape and plunder. The threat the soldiery posed was not merely ideological, but intimately physical. In his speech to the crowds at Warwick Castle, Brooke characterised the parliamentarian cause in the starker of terms: 'I need not remonstrate what cause it is you are to fight for...it is for your wives, your children, and your substance, your lives and liberties'. Royalist forces had committed 'unheard of barbarousness in every place where their fury has had licence'.<sup>143</sup> In October 1642, Lord Saye sent in a letter to the Warwickshire Quarter Sessions, 'to advise the country to be ready in arms...for it is their [ie the royalists'] constant

<sup>142</sup> Thomas, Berkenhead, pp. 50, 57.

<sup>143</sup> A Worthy Speech, E90(27), p. 4. Brooke did emphasize that the war was fought for a 'cause', against enemies who were either 'notorious Papists or Popishly affected' - ibid., pp. 6-7, and above - but the threat was to life and limb, not to doctrine or culture.

cause every night, to ride out by two or three hundreds, and to pillage and plunder towns and villages'.<sup>144</sup> The warning sent in to Hereford about the parliamentary army approaching from Worcestershire said that they would 'plunder their houses, murder their children, burn their Bibles, and utterly ruinate all'.<sup>145</sup>

The press of both sides was full of atrocity stories in which, for example, royalist troops were said to have murdered townspeople in Kilsby and Leicester, and attacked tradesmen in Daventry,<sup>146</sup> whilst parliamentarians were said to have committed outrages in Peterborough cathedral, pillaged 'all the chief

<sup>144</sup> The Copy of a Letter written from his Excellency to the County of Warwick, (13 October 1642), 669.f.5.(85), (single sheet).

<sup>145</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 331.

<sup>146</sup> A True Relation of the Barbarous Cruelty of the Bloody Cavaliers, (9 August 1642), E110(6), *passim*; An Exact and True Relation of a most Horrible Murder Committed by one of the Cavaliers on a Woman in Leicester, (17 September 1642), E117(20), *passim*; Certain Informations, (29 May-5 June 1643), E105(2), sig. Vi-Vi.v. For the Kilsby incident in a less propagandist context, see C.J. ii, p. 713; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 48.

'gentry' in Northamptonshire, and plundered civilians on the Derbyshire - Staffordshire border.<sup>147</sup> Aulicus took care to note such incidents as the parliamentarian burning of Milcote House in Warwickshire, and the alleged firing of Banbury steeple.<sup>148</sup> Sensitive as they were to the popular impact of such reports, parochial clergy sometimes interpreted news for their congregation. Thus Richard Gem, the parson of Husbands Bosworth, attempted to put a favourable gloss on the news that Rupert had burned Birmingham in April 1643. He told his congregation that two or three of Rupert's men had subsequently been hanged for it, thus proving that the royalist army was better disciplined than the parliamentarian.<sup>149</sup> Following the royalist victory at the first siege of Newark, the minister of Newbold

<sup>147</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (23-29 April 1643), E101(10), p. 218; Mercurius Aulicus, (7-13 May 1643), E103(10), p. 237; Mercurius Aulicus, (5-11 February 1643), E246(26), sig. L3v.

<sup>148</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (29 December 1644 - 5 January 1645), E26(5), p. 1322. The parliamentarian press replied that it was the royalists who had burned Banbury steeple, when they 'made a bonfire' out of it to greet Charles on his return from the West country: Mercurius Britannicus, (20-27 January 1645), E26(6), p. 530.

<sup>149</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C11, fos. 23-24.

Verdon 'did then in his sermon exhort the people in the church to glorify God to continue the work on, now it was begun'.<sup>150</sup>

Estimating the effect of such activity is difficult. Although propaganda clearly did have a wide distribution, it is possible that it did not so much create allegiance as reinforce pre-existing attitudes. This is the conclusion of Trenaman's study of the impact of printed propaganda on elite attitudes.<sup>151</sup> At the popular level, it is clear that the shaping of allegiance by propaganda was part of a process. That is, no single message - such as the crude stereotypes of the printed propaganda - was swallowed whole. Instead, propaganda was absorbed, modified or rejected, to varying degrees, by the popular audience to whom it was directed. People reacted in different ways. When, for example, Richard Gem tried to talk up the royalist cause after the burning of Birmingham, some of his congregation stood up and publicly took issue with him.<sup>152</sup> Waller's attempt to influence the Worcester citizens in 1643 was a failure: 'all these tricks would not draw the honest and loyal citizens of Worcester from their allegiance, for they continued very resolute, resolving to die before they would betray

<sup>150</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C5, f. 170v.

<sup>151</sup> Trenaman, 'Paper Wars', esp. pp. 254-64.

<sup>152</sup> Bodl. MS J. Walker C11, fos. 23-4.

their wives, children and themselves to the rebels' - or so claimed Aulicus. The citizens certainly played a key role in defying Waller.<sup>153</sup> Thomas Cleaveland, the vicar of Hinckley, was active for the Commission of Array,<sup>154</sup> yet as we have seen, a number of his parishioners displayed clear parliamentarian sympathies, joining the garrison at Coventry. Baxter's account of the reaction in Kidderminster suggests the complex way in which differing sources of propaganda, from parish and pulpit, competed for hearts and minds. Returning to the parish after leaving for a short time in the earliest stages of the war, Baxter found 'the beggarly drunken rout in a very tumultuating disposition, and the superiors that were for the King did animate them, and the people of the place that were accounted religious were called Roundheads and openly reviled as the King's enemies...yet, after the Lords Day when they heard the sermon they would a while be calmed, till they came to the alehouse again, or heard any of their leaders hiss them on'.<sup>155</sup>

But there are indications that propaganda struck home. As shown above, Baxter heard popular references to 'Roundheads' in both Worcester and Kidderminster;

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<sup>153</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (28 May-6 June 1643), E106(2), pp. 187-8; Townshend, Diary, ii, pp. 123-4.

<sup>154</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, p. 233.

<sup>155</sup> R.B., p. 42.

other people in Worcester had clearly been exposed to parliamentarian propaganda. The parliamentarian press implied that its own propaganda, and associated rumour, lay behind the parliamentarianism of people in Coventry and Leicester. One newsbook said that when Charles was refused entry into Coventry in August 1642, the inhabitants had 'taken into consideration the great outrage and spoil' that the royalists had allegedly committed elsewhere, and feared they would commit 'the like cruelty against them'. Another said that reports of royalist brutalities led the townsmen to declare that 'any acts of mercy to those blood sucking villains would be cruelty, that they had as good give up their lives and estates as let them come in'.<sup>156</sup> Lord Holland confirmed to the Commons that the royalists had been refused entrance because Coventry was 'sensible of the rapine and pillage of the cavaliers'.<sup>157</sup> Early in 1643, people in Leicester were reportedly 'perplexed with fears' about a possible attack by the royalists, 'at whose hands they expect no better usage than the

<sup>156</sup> Certain Special and Remarkable Passages, (16-23 August 1642), E239(10), p. 14; Special Passages, (16-23 August 1642), E113(18), p. 14.

<sup>157</sup> C.J. ii, p. 731. Perhaps this was what Clarendon had in mind when he wrote that the Coventry people were 'alienated from any reverence to the government': History, ii, p. 290.

Gloucestershire men at Cirencester lately had'.<sup>158</sup> The royalists themselves believed parliamentarian propaganda had damaged their cause: two days before Edgehill, Charles warned his soldiers that their enemies 'had endeavoured to make us and our army odious' with accusations of plunder.<sup>159</sup> Clarendon explained the attacks on royalist soldiers after the battle by reference to 'the reports and infusions which the other very diligent party had wrought into the people's belief, that the cavaliers were of a fierce, bloody and licentious disposition, and that they committed all manner of cruelty upon the inhabitants of those places where they came'.<sup>160</sup> Clergy were commonly identified as the agents of such rumour. The Warwickshire royalist Sir William Dugdale believed that parliament derived much of its support from them.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Certain Informations, (20 February-6 March 1643), E92(3), p. 50. The parliamentarian press had carried a number of lurid stories about the royalist storm of Cirencester on 2 February. For examples, see Warburton, Memoirs of Prince Rupert, ii, pp. 107-8. Clarendon admitted that there was 'much plunder' of both 'friend and foe' in Cirencester: History, ii, p. 447.

<sup>159</sup> His Majesties Declaration and Manifestation to all his Soldiers, (21 October 1642), El24(19), p. 5.

<sup>160</sup> Clarendon, History, ii, p. 358.

<sup>161</sup> Sir William Dugdale, A Short View of the Late

The Committee for Compounding noted that in Derby 'the labours of the ministers have been the chief means of upholding the people's affections'.<sup>162</sup> In Rutland, however, Sir Edward Harrington reported that the parliament was likely to lose out, because the local clergy were 'very forward to publish the books that come from his Majesty and not those from the Parliament'.<sup>163</sup>

Propaganda was effective not merely because it touched upon traditional cultural anxieties. Despite the hyperbole and occasional fabrication of the propaganda, it also reflected the popular experience of the war. It has been shown in Chapter Four that plunder, assault, robbery and financial ruin were not mere propagandist inventions: they were what the civil war meant for many people. The claims of wartime propaganda thus reflected, and were corroborated by, experience. The close interaction of propaganda and experience is illustrated by the royalist rising in Wellingborough in December 1642. Anti-parliamentarian propaganda was instrumental in the rising itself. Francis Gray had referred to parliamentarians as

Troubles in England, (Oxford, 1688), esp. pp. 95, 106, 121.

<sup>162</sup> C.C.C., p. 22.

<sup>163</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 43; V.C.H. Rutland, i, pp. 188-9.

'round-headed rogues' before the war, when encouraging his servants to begin storing ammunition against them.<sup>164</sup> He 'animated and encouraged' local officials in Wellingborough when the Commission of Array was published. In the rising itself, Edmund Neale of Wollaston, a royalist captain, used political invective, urging his soldiers 'to beat back the Parliament rogues'.<sup>165</sup> Following the plunder of Wellingborough, the Leicestershire royalist Henry Nevill wrote to the inhabitants of the Rutland villages of Liddington, Stoke and Bisbrooke. He invoked notions of parliamentarian rapacity, and appealed to a sense of local solidarity in the face of such menace. The soldiers from Northampton had plundered 'all they could carry away...and have declared themselves that they are for these parts before they return'. Addressing himself as 'your neighbour', Nevill advised the villagers to defend themselves - he was no doubt hoping to attract support for his own garrison at Holt.<sup>166</sup> Indeed, Oakham, North Luffenham and Holt were plundered in the New Year. By this time, Grey considered Rutland dangerously malignant.

<sup>164</sup> Wake (ed.), Quarter Sessions Records, Northamptonshire, Appendix I, p. 246.

<sup>165</sup> C.C.A.M., pp. 544, 119.

<sup>166</sup> H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I, Portland I, p. 82.

A similar process occurred in the west where, as we have seen, the Marquis of Hertford was able to use parliamentarian misconduct in Worcestershire to stir up people in Hereford. Wharton noted that by the time he arrived there, the inhabitants were resolved 'to oppose us unto the death'.<sup>167</sup> Thus propaganda played upon localism and the fear of soldiers, notions that have sometimes been characterised as leading to neutralism. But, in the early part of the war at least, propaganda frequently converted such notions into partisan allegiance.

Propaganda thus played an important role in forming popular allegiance, particularly in 1642-3. But can it help explain the pattern of popular allegiance that emerged? There is a theoretical role, if we consider the degree of control that each side had over the distribution of propaganda. There was a geographical basis to this that does match the pattern of popular allegiance. Outlying rural areas, which had the most complex pattern of allegiance, were the most distant from the major garrisons, and were difficult to control militarily. It was also more difficult to control the dissemination of news and propaganda in these regions, and consequently there would have been a high incidence of competition between rival propaganda: i.e. royalist

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<sup>167</sup> Ellis (ed.), 'Letters from a Subaltern Officer', p. 331.

material might have circulated in one village, but parliamentarian in another, just a few miles away. In the absence of military authority, the local prevalence of one or the other was heavily dependent on the disposition of parochial officials like constables, churchwardens and, especially given his senior position, the minister. It was these very regions that, because of the anarchic military situation that pertained in them, were plundered and taxed by both sides. So not only propaganda but its essential co-factor, experience, varied over very small distances. The obverse applies to the urban and central parts, associated with the large garrisons. In Worcester, Coventry, Northampton and Leicester it was obviously more difficult for enemy propaganda to circulate, once the garrisons had been established. Filled with soldiers, the garrisons effected a much tighter control over not just the clergy, but the very streets and roads. Though military relations were often strained, and security was not absolute, such places were not nearly as prone to plunder by the enemy as the peripheral rural areas. Thus the popular experience of the war was also more consistent.

A similar, though less decisive, set of conditions obtained in the central rural areas of the region, that gave strong support to the parliament. Much of this area lies in a triangle bounded by Leicester in the

north, Birmingham in the west and Northampton in the south east, not forgetting Coventry on the Birmingham to Northampton axis. This area was therefore guarded on most points of the compass by large parliamentarian garrisons. Although royalist forces were able to carry out many raids, it was more difficult for them to mount a sustained campaign in this area, and impossible to establish a permanent presence. Their control over propaganda was therefore less. Parliamentarian forces controlled the roads for much of the time, and were much better able to police local clergy and other activists. They rarely plundered their own supporters in this area, at least before late 1643. Before everyone became ground down by the war, it was therefore royalist forces, obliged to wage guerilla war, who most frequently appeared as the villains. It is significant that the areas of rural popular royalism lie outside this central area. In Worcestershire, Rutland and east and north Leicestershire, parliamentarian military influence was much weaker, and so therefore was their ability to control the flow of propaganda and rumour. It was the parliamentarian forces who carried out raids in these parts. Such areas, especially Worcestershire, held by Worcester itself and its array of satellite garrisons, were much more amenable to the spread of royalist propaganda.

Some of these points can be illustrated with local

examples. As early as 6 June 1642, the Leicester borough Corporation decided to suppress the King's outlawing of the Militia Ordinance. The royal proclamation was not to be read out in 'town or country' before Stamford had mustered the trained bands.<sup>168</sup> We have already seen how the arrival of parliamentarian troops in Coventry in August 1642 resulted in the arrest of royalist activists who had advertised their cause on the streets. Similarly in Worcester, one of Essex's first actions when he entered the city in September 1642 was to replace most of the clergy, who were royalist, with parliamentarian clergy. Later, of course, Charles was able to order the arrest of 'seditious preachers' throughout Worcestershire. The importance of military control, and the role of the garrisons, is very evident here. The difficulty of asserting similar control in rural areas was made plain by Sir Edward Nicholas in a letter to Hastings of November 1643. Nicholas regularly sent copies of Mercurius Aulicus from Oxford to Ashby de la Zouch, but it had to run the gauntlet of the parliamentarian garrisons in between, and by now it was becoming difficult: 'If I knew any means how to settle a way betwixt this and Ashby, I would do it, but we cannot get any men to undertake to be postmasters, for that

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<sup>168</sup> L.R.O. Borough Records, Hall Papers Bound, vol. 22, 1640-1645, f. 170.

the horses are so frequently rid away, as well by some of the King's forces as by the rebels'.<sup>169</sup> Parliamentarians in Warwickshire experienced similar problems. On 16 October 1643, the Committee wrote to Denbigh of the difficulty of sending him guns, 'the ways being so endangered by the spreading of the King's forces up and down them'.<sup>170</sup>

Given the leading role of the clergy in disseminating propaganda, the geographical distribution of royalist and parliamentarian ministers is of obvious importance. Necessarily, the clergy of the garrison towns were acceptable to the garrison authorities. As dissidents were arrested and imprisoned in these places, there is a sense in which allegiance was enforced. It is therefore more difficult to extricate the role played by the clergy here. In rural areas, where they were less restricted by the military, their influence was greater. The clergy accused of or punished for royalism are plotted in Map Four. The greater number of royalist clergy in the east of the region is a distortion produced by the fact that parliamentarian committees were able to operate longer and more efficiently here than in the royalist west. The pattern neither conclusively proves nor refutes the

<sup>169</sup> H.M.C. Hastings, II, p. 109.

<sup>170</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, p.

Map 4. Locations of Royalist

Clergy, c. 1642-6

0    5    10 miles

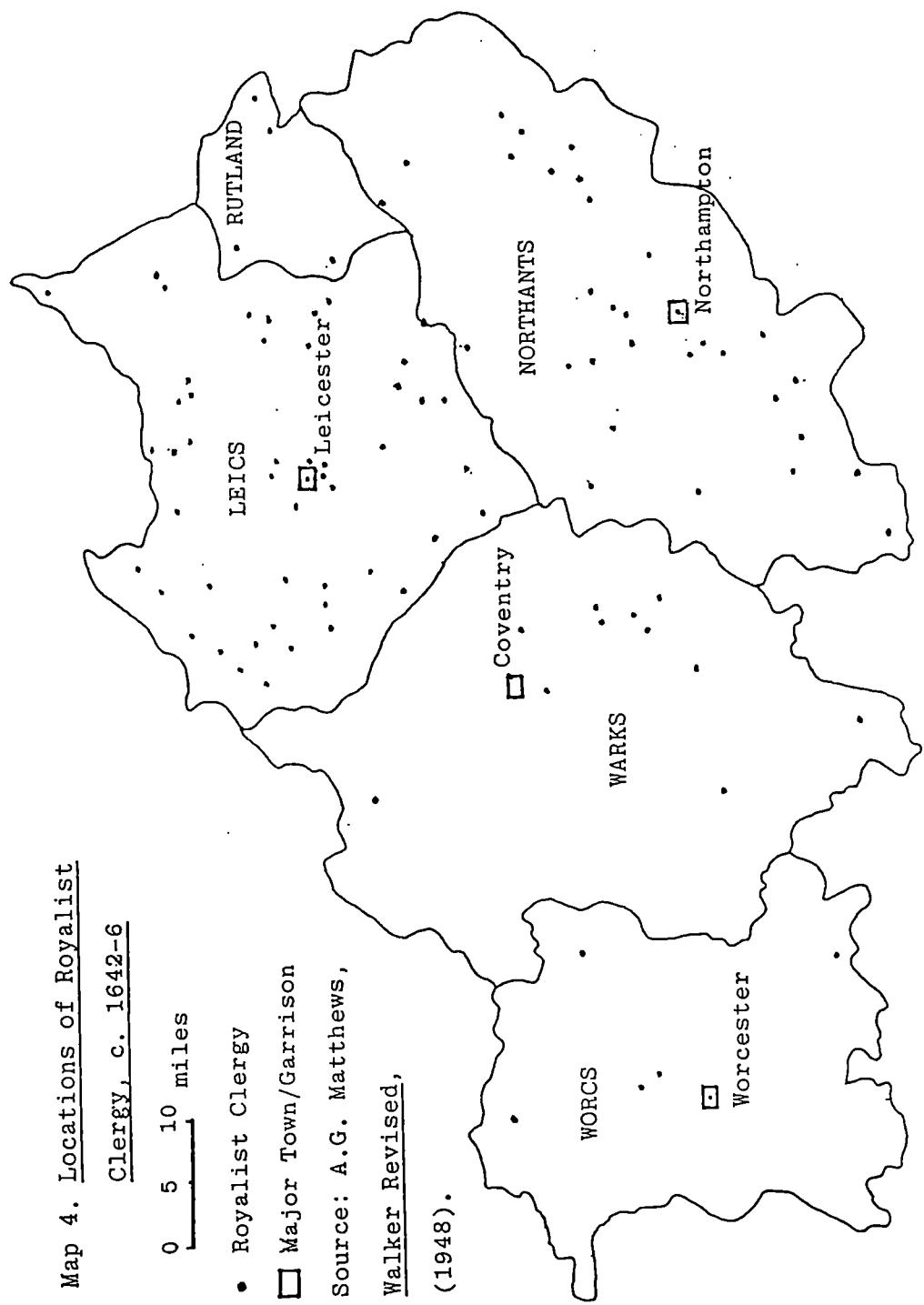
• Royalist Clergy

□ Major Town/Garrison

Source: A.G. Matthews,

Walker Revised,

(1948).



suggested relationship between the distribution of propaganda and popular allegiance. There is some coincidence of the two patterns. Many royalist clergy came from north and west Leicestershire, and south and east Northamptonshire. Royalist clergy in south Warwickshire included Francis Holyoake at Southam and Henry Twitchet at Stratford upon Avon.<sup>171</sup> But significant numbers came from parliamentarian areas, such as East Farndon and Yelvertoft in north-west Northamptonshire, Hinckley and Claybrooke Magna in south-west Leicestershire, and Brinklow and Stoneleigh in north Warwickshire.<sup>172</sup>

Because of the absence of royalist committees equivalent to the Committees for Sequestrations, clergy who were, or probably were, parliamentarian activists are harder to identify. North Warwickshire certainly had a number of activist clergy. Between September 1642 and March 1643 a total of nine Warwickshire preachers donated money and plate to the parliamentarian forces. These included Anthony Burgess of Sutton Coldfield, Simon King of Coventry, William Craddock of Nuneaton, and Richard Vines of Atherstone, as well as a 'Mr. Roberts' of Birmingham, and Timothy Aspinall, John Payne, Thomas Dassett and a 'Mr. Stephens'.<sup>173</sup> We may

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<sup>171</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, pp. 363-4, 366.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., pp. 276, 279, 233, 239, 362, 365.

<sup>173</sup> B.L. Add. MS 35209, fos. 12-18v.

add Obadiah Grew, the master of Atherstone grammar school, who became a regimental chaplain in or after November 1645; James Nalton, the minister forced to flee from Rugby, who became chaplain to a foot regiment in Essex's army in August 1642, and William Cook, the vicar of Wroxhall who may have been chaplain to Cromwell's horse in 1644.<sup>174</sup>

There were also parliamentarian clergy in less well affected areas. In south Warwickshire they included John Bryan, rector of Barford, who served as treasurer, chaplain and vicar at Warwick Castle, and John Trapp, the persecuted rector of Welford on Avon. Richard Wootton, minister of Warmington, became a captain in the parliamentarian forces, as did Benjamin Lovell of Preston Bagot.<sup>175</sup> In south Northamptonshire, Francis Cheynell, some time chaplain in Essex's army, was vicar at Marston St. Lawrence in 1637, although he was not

<sup>174</sup> Laurence, Parliamentarian Army Chaplains, pp. 131, 155, 115. As with royalist clergy, parliamentarian clergy have been identified on the basis of definite or likely political activity. Clergy who were persecuted merely for puritanism or nonconformity after the Restoration are excluded from this. This undoubtedly results in an under representation of parliamentarian clergy, but it has been decided to err on the side of caution.

<sup>175</sup> Tennant, Edgehill and Beyond, p. 234.

there during the war. In the east, Thomas Ford was rector of both Aldwincle All Saints and, following the sequestration of the royalist John Webster, Aldwincle St. Peter, until November 1644 when he became chaplain at Newport Pagnell. In Rutland, John Rowell, the rector of Little Casterton, became chaplain to Waite at Burley House.<sup>176</sup> In Worcestershire, there were parliamentarian clergy in Worcester and some towns in the north-east, but they were generally forced to flee early on in the war. In addition to Baxter, this was the action taken by the 'schismatical and seditious' Worcester ministers John Halciter and Henry Hacket, plus Humfrey Hardwick, rector of Droitwich, and J. Hall of Bromsgrove, described by Charles as 'a great promoter of this unnatural rebellion'.<sup>177</sup> George Hopkins, the vicar of All Saints, Evesham, may have had parliamentarian sympathies.<sup>178</sup> Unfortunately, nothing is known of the

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<sup>176</sup> Laurence, Parliamentarian Army Chaplains, pp. 104, 111-2, 127, 169-70, 180.

<sup>177</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, pp. 385, 278.

<sup>178</sup> Laurence, Parliamentary Army Chaplains, p. 137. This cites Baxter saying that Hopkins was the only member of the Worcestershire Association in the army. But Hopkins appears to have been in Evesham for most of the war, and not to have been ousted by the royalist administration. It is possible that his presence in the army dates from post 1646.

nature or extent of the activity of these men in their parishes. Like Baxter, the north Warwickshire clergy named above came to Coventry soon after the war began.

It seems therefore that activist clergy of both sides were widely distributed. Even so, it would appear that royalist clergy were predominant in Worcestershire, where the authorities were empowered to arrest dissident clergy and parliamentarian clergy soon fled. The clergy in neighbouring Herefordshire were particularly important in creating a strong popular royalist movement there as early as the summer of 1642. In June, the common people at Croft shot at images 'in derision of Roundheads', and others stopped a 'Roundhead sermon' in Hereford cathedral. One parliamentarian there wrote that the activities of the clergy had put him in fear of his life, as 'these men have wrought such hatred in the hearts of the people against me'.<sup>179</sup> In Rutland, by parliamentarian admission most clergy were 'very forward' to read out

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<sup>179</sup> Quoted in Hutton, War Effort, pp. 4, 13. Hutton believes the propagandist activities of the clergy to have been crucial to popular royalism in Herefordshire: ibid., pp. 13-14. He rightly points out that there is much less evidence about similar activity in Worcestershire. But the evidently close watch which the authorities kept over the clergy there suggests that it did take place.

royalist, but not parliamentarian material. These clergy would have included men like John Allington, rector of Wardley, who expressed malignancy against the parliament, and Valentine Jackson, the curate of Casterton who was known as an incendiary, and eventually went to the royalist garrison at Crowland (Lincolnshire) to stir up the people there.<sup>180</sup>

Conversely, many north Warwickshire towns had clergy firmly committed to the parliamentarian cause. Coventry became a refuge for such men.<sup>181</sup> In Northampton, the puritan minister of All Saints, Thomas Ball, had been active on behalf of the parliamentarian Sir Gilbert Pickering in 1640, and no doubt continued in a similar vein during the war.<sup>182</sup> John Goodman, minister of St. Giles in 1641-48, was a puritan and evidently acceptable to the garrison authorities.<sup>183</sup> John Angel, the Leicester town preacher, was a committed parliamentarian. In 1646, he was described by the Committee for Plundered Ministers as 'a godly, learned and orthodox divine', and was among a number of Leicester clergy awarded money by the Committee.<sup>184</sup> The

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<sup>180</sup> Matthews, Walker Revised, pp. 301, 253.

<sup>181</sup> R.B., p. 44; Clarke, Lives, p. 48.

<sup>182</sup> See Chapter Two above.

<sup>183</sup> Serjeantson, History of the Church of St. Giles, pp. 55, 97.

<sup>184</sup> Hill, Society and Puritanism, p. 100; P.R.O. SP

early activity of parliamentarian clergy in towns in north-east Worcestershire and in Worcester itself may well have influenced the parliamentarianism that became evident in those places.

The pattern is less clear elsewhere. In some cases however, this is consistent with a relationship between propaganda and allegiance. In militarily disputed areas like south Warwickshire and south and east Northamptonshire for example, we should expect to find parliamentarian and royalist clergy juxtaposed. Thus parliamentarian clergy in places like Welford on Avon, Barford, and Aldwincle competed with royalist clergy in places like Southam, Sutton under Brailes, Stoke Bruern and Mears Ashby. There were royalist clergy in the more parliamentarian central areas, but it must not be forgotten that these men were competing against forces exerting the opposite pull on popular allegiance. For example, William Clarke, the royalist rector of Brinklow, was situated between Coventry and Rugby, where men like Baxter, Burgess, Vines, Craddock and Nalton had all been active for the parliament. Clarke was ejected in March 1643 for supplying intelligence to royalist forces, but the proximity of so many parliamentarian troops probably hindered him from undertaking more vigorous activity. His counterparts in Worcestershire and Rutland operated with much greater

freedom.

Propaganda can therefore be loosely related to the pattern of popular allegiance that emerged in 1642-3. Where one side had a secure military grip - as in the garrison towns - it was able to control the dissemination of propaganda by arresting activists and controlling the pulpits. In rural areas where there was less military control, but the clergy were partisan - as in north Warwickshire, Rutland and probably Worcestershire - there was still some control over it, and these areas did display a fairly partisan popular response. But in rural areas with little military control, and with rival clergy juxtaposed - as in south Warwickshire and south and east Northamptonshire - propaganda was in unfettered competition. It is indeed such areas that displayed the most complex pattern of allegiance. Not all parishioners were taken in by propaganda, and there is insufficient evidence to match patterns of allegiance with those of the distribution of propaganda very closely. But the propaganda efforts made by both sides, and the importance they attached to the activities of the clergy, suggest that propaganda was crucial. Military developments impinged critically on the effectiveness on the propaganda, through the degree of control over it they allowed, and the way the conduct of the soldiery frequently legitimatized the claims it made.

### Plunder and Protection

Propaganda drew on the popular experience of the war. But as the war dragged on, so did this experience begin to supplant propaganda as a formative influence on allegiance. In the latter part of the war, propaganda was effective only if substantiated by reality: people reacted according to what they actually experienced at the hands of the soldiery. The nature of this reaction turned on the ability of each side to offer civilian communities a measure of protection from the depredations of both the enemy and their own soldiers.

In fact, the need for protection had informed popular behaviour even from the earliest stages of the war, and this did not always stem from the fear induced by propaganda and rumour. Baxter provides eloquent testimony to this. In Kidderminster, even the godly were driven into the parliamentarian armies not so much by religious conviction - despite Baxter's claims elsewhere that they were - as by their suffering at the hands of royalist soldiers. Baxter wrote, 'Thousands had no mind to meddle with the wars, but greatly desired to live peaceably at home, when the rage of soldiers and drunkards would not suffer them...most [godly civilians] were afraid of their lives; and so they sought refuge in the parliament's garrisons. Thus when I was at Coventry the religious part of my neighbours at Kidderminster that would fain have lived

quietly at home, were forced (the chiefest of them) to be gone; and some of them that had any estate of their own lived there at their own charge, and the rest were fain to take up arms, and be garrison soldiers to get them bread.<sup>185</sup> (my emphases). Baxter also wrote that the north Warwickshire countrymen that came to Coventry 'were such as had been forced from their own dwellings'.<sup>186</sup> Thus, although many of the godly in Kidderminster were probably sympathetic to the parliament from the outset, the decision to join up was precipitated by fear and impoverishment. This is echoed in Clarke's testimony that many of the 'younger sort' in Alcester went to the Warwick garrison 'for safety'.<sup>187</sup>

Thus plunder, pillage and other ill treatment of civilians was very likely to result in alienation. Roy has described how this cost the royalists popular support in Gloucestershire. Hughes notes the damage caused to their cause by royalist misconduct by the disarming of towns and harassment of ministers in east Warwickshire.<sup>188</sup> In south-west Leicestershire too, the brutality of Rupert's men probably did much for

<sup>185</sup> R.B., p. 44.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>187</sup> Clarke, Lives, p. 9.

<sup>188</sup> Roy, 'The English Civil War and English Society', passim; Hughes, Warwickshire, pp. 143-4.

parliamentarian recruitment. William Sherwood, one of Luke's spies, reported that the treatment of Shawell (which included the burning of buildings, one villager being hanged, and the arrest of other villagers) had created deep resentment among the 'country'.<sup>189</sup> We have seen how royalist plundering provoked armed resistance in Northamptonshire towns like Long Buckby; before Naseby, the New Model were, according to the chaplain Joshua Sprigge, well received in the north-west of the county, 'the country much rejoicing at our coming, having been miserably plundered by the enemy'.<sup>190</sup> Townshend believed the unrestrained activity of the royalist garrisons in Worcestershire had 'tended much to the grievance of the said inhabitants...and disservice of his Majesty'. By 1645, the people were 'disaffected and disheartened', and 'do not stick to say that they can find more justice and more money in the enemy's quarters than in the King's'.<sup>191</sup> This supports claims in the parliamentarian press that

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<sup>189</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 55.

<sup>190</sup> Joshua Sprigge, Anglia Rediviva, (1647), p. 32. In the days before Naseby, Luke received reports of royalist plundering and atrocities in Towcester and Daventry: Tibbutt (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, pp. 315, 567-70.

<sup>191</sup> Townshend, Diary, iii, pp. 237, 240. See also ibid., i, Introduction, p. lxxii.

royalist misdemeanours in Worcestershire were converting royalists into parliamentarians.<sup>192</sup>

We have already seen how parliamentarian depredation in Worcestershire caused resentment against them. In Oxfordshire, another of Luke's spies reported in March 1643 that 'the country generally cry out against the parliament, because they plunder and take away horses and men's goods, and will not agree to a peace, when the King desires it'.<sup>193</sup> In Warwickshire, the prevalence of free quarter, high taxation and plunder lay behind the loss of popular enthusiasm for the parliament by 1644: a petition claimed there was 'a general discontent upon the whole people', in which they were either 'disabled' or 'discouraged' from supporting the parliament. The depredations of the poorly supplied Scottish soldiers in the summer of 1645 provoked more discontent. The Scots Commissioners themselves wrote that 'the soldier is discontented, the country people disaffected, the public service disappointed'.<sup>194</sup> On their return from Hereford in

<sup>192</sup> See for example The Parliament Scout, (29 August-5 September 1644), E8(11), p. 503; The London Post, (3 September 1644), E8(5), p. 3. For a similar claim about Derbyshire, see Remarkable Passages, (9 December 1643), E78(10), sig. C2.

<sup>193</sup> Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C53, f. 21.

<sup>194</sup> The Humble Petition of the Knights, Esquires,

1646, the Scots were refused entry into Coventry.<sup>195</sup> The parallel with the refusal to admit Charles in 1642 is striking.

It was widely perceived that sustained popular support depended on the ability to provide protection. It was the fear of being 'deserted' that reportedly lay behind the 'discontent and murmur' in Ashby de la Zouch when Hastings appeared to be withdrawing much of his garrison. Related concerns lay behind the change in the mood of the Worcester inhabitants, who helped defend the city against Waller in 1643, but were 'extreme cool' in supporting the garrison against the New Model in the siege of 1646. By then, the garrison troops were all but out of control, and the royalist cause had collapsed. Ideology was less important than the preservation of property and person, and the resumption of trade. In June, a number of women lobbied the Governor, Henry Washington, 'to protect them and know what they should do for their safety, their houses being beaten down in the streets'. When Washington asked what he would have them do, they called upon him to surrender the city. In July, some citizens were

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Gentlemen (some of the Committee) with Divines,  
Freeholders and Inhabitants in the County of Warwick,  
(1644), E7(20), p. 3; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report, App. I,  
Portland I, p. 233.

<sup>195</sup> B.L. Add. MS 11364, f. 18v.

prepared to throw the royalist troops over the city walls if a surrender was not forthcoming.<sup>196</sup> As early as August 1644, Denbigh had been told by Colonel Archer that recent parliamentarian gains in Worcestershire had shown the country people 'how unable, or at least how slow, their Worcester friends are in protecting them', and they were now coming in to the parliamentarian forces.<sup>197</sup>

Popular parliamentarianism was equally conditional, even in partisan Northamptonshire. In February 1643 a letter from there, subsequently printed, warned of the growing disaffection of ordinary people, because of the seeming inability to protect the county from the royalists. A recent spate of raids in the Daventry area had not been resisted, and 'country fellows' in the parliamentarian forces were on the verge of mutiny, as they saw 'nothing done to ease them, or relieve them'.<sup>198</sup> A few months later, the royalist press claimed that 'divers in the country rail against the forces at Northampton', because the garrison forces had failed to prevent Hastings plundering a number of towns

<sup>196</sup> Townshend, Diary, i, pp. 128, 187, 190.

<sup>197</sup> H.M.C. Fourth Report, App., Earl of Denbigh MSS, p. 270.

<sup>198</sup> The Latest Intelligence of Prince Rupert's Proceedings in Northamptonshire, (2 February 1643), E18(3), pp. 2-3.

on his way back to Ashby from Oxford.<sup>199</sup> In July 1644, it was noted in the Lords that in Leicestershire 'neither the persons nor the goods of the inhabitants and well-affected to the parliament are secure in any part of the county', and a Committee for the Militia was set up in attempt to co-ordinate defences.<sup>200</sup> But prior to the royalist storm in 1645 Grey was informed that the Committee had fortified only the Newark area in Leicester itself, in which they were living, and that the townspeople believed they had been abandoned to the whims of the enemy. Consequently, discontent was spreading rapidly.<sup>201</sup> The fall of Leicester so terrified people in Northampton that many fled to Newport Pagnell in search of greater security. Fairfax was informed that 'those parts are much discouraged'.<sup>202</sup> But Luke's own soldiers suspected that, such had been the suffering they themselves had inflicted on the surrounding countryside, country people would rise up against them, 'if an enemy

<sup>199</sup> Mercurius Aulicus, (14-20 May 1643), El04(21), p. 262.

<sup>200</sup> L.J. vi, pp. 627-8.

<sup>201</sup> Nichols, Leicester, iii, pt. ii, App. iv, pp. 41-2, (letter from G. Booth to Lord Grey).

<sup>202</sup> Tibbutt, (ed.), Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, p. 292; C.S.P.D. 1644-5, p. 554.

approach from whom they may expect some relief'.<sup>203</sup>

In their protracted dispute over command of the Warwickshire forces, both the Warwickshire Committee and Denbigh referred to the deleterious effects the argument was having on popular support, because of the feelings of insecurity it generated. Disputing Denbigh's right to remove garrison forces out of the county, the Committee wrote of its fear of a mutiny in the Coventry garrison, and of 'fear in the well-affected citizens, who have long enjoyed more than usual security and happiness'. Denbigh maintained that it was the Committee that had 'hazarded the safety and welfare of these parts'.<sup>204</sup> Coventry 'inhabitants' petitioned parliament in October 1643, complaining of the suffering of the county at the hands of the cavaliers. Aulicus quoted what it claimed was the petition, citing 'the want of due protection...to the great disadvantage and disheartening of many, and daily falling off of others, who have contributed to the parliament for their future safety'.<sup>205</sup> Even if fictitious, its use as propaganda reveals much about

<sup>203</sup> Tibbutt, Letter Books of Sir Samuel Luke, pp. 514-5.

<sup>204</sup> L.J. vi, pp. 321, 325.

<sup>205</sup> The True Informer, (28 October-4 November 1643), E74(21), p. 55; Mercurius Aulicus, (22-28 October 1643), E75(13), pp. 602-3.

what was commonly expected of the military by civilians.

The presence of strong, well-ordered garrisons was therefore crucial to the maintenance of popular support. The development by all forces of a parasitic relationship to civilian communities explains the general waning in popular enthusiasm for the war. But it is clear that, over and above this, the loss of military authority had disastrous consequences for popular support. This is because such a loss created both an increased reliance on plundering to maintain supply, and a decreased ability to protect well affected communities. This process lay behind the erosion of royalist support in Worcestershire and especially Worcester itself. It also clearly affected parliamentarian support in Leicestershire, and to a lesser extent in Warwickshire and Northamptonshire. But the strength of the parliamentarian garrisons in the latter two counties ensured that the inhabitants, especially those in or near the garrisons themselves, retained some faith in the ability of the military to protect them.

These considerations may also help to explain two apparent anomalies about popular allegiance in the region, both relating to the Clubman movement. The Clubmen have usually been seen as a product of war weariness: that is, as a response to the increasing

resort made by both sides to high taxation, free quarter, plunder and impressment.<sup>206</sup> It has been shown that much of this applies to the midlands. By 1644, all these factors, excluding widespread impressment, were operative, and there was indeed a decline in popular enthusiasm relative to 1642-3. Yet the only Clubman activity was in west and south Worcestershire. Bennett has suggested that the lack of large-scale impressment in the north midlands explains the lack of a Clubman movement there.<sup>207</sup> The argument could be extended to include Northamptonshire and Warwickshire. This is a valuable point, as Worcestershire was indeed the only county to see impressment en masse. But this was not the Clubmen's only concern, and we still need to explain the restriction of the Clubmen to west and south Worcestershire.

Hutton has observed, in contrast to all other works on the Clubmen, that the Worcestershire outbreaks were in areas of the county that in fact were the least affected by the war: they saw least fighting, and were not associated with the permanent royalist garrisons. The outbreaks occurred at a time of relative

<sup>206</sup> See Lynch, 'Risings of the Clubmen', Underdown, 'The Chalk and the Cheese', passim, and Underdown, Revel, pp. 156-9.

<sup>207</sup> Bennett, 'War Effort in the North Midlands', pp. 138-9.

tranquillity. Hutton suggests that the Worcestershire Clubmen were reacting not to military depredation, but to the threat posed by the newly formed Western Association to involve fully the west of the county in the war effort for the first time. The Clubmen were especially incensed by the presence of the Catholic Earl of Shrewsbury among the signatories. In the Clubman areas, there were no prominent gentry to mediate between the countrymen and the royalist administration: therefore, a popular neutralist movement was formed.<sup>208</sup>

The restriction of the Clubmen to the remote hilly districts is indeed significant, but they probably were reacting to their experiences at the hands of the soldiery. The Woodbury Hill declaration made this clear: 'We having long groaned under many illegal taxations and unjust pressures...we, our wives and our children, have been exposed to utter ruin by the outrages and violence of the soldier; threatening to fire our houses; endeavouring to ravish our wives and daughters, and menacing our persons'.<sup>209</sup> Townshend wrote in 1645 that 'All the country between Severn and Teme and on the banks of the Severn (which are his Majesty's only secure quarters)...are by free quarter

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<sup>208</sup> Hutton, 'Worcestershire Clubmen', passim; idem, War Effort, pp. 159-65.

<sup>209</sup> Townshend, Diary, iii, pp. 222-3.

of the horse eaten up, undone, and destroyed'. The horse had extorted money, and threatened to fire houses, murder and pillage.<sup>210</sup> Although this entry appears in Townshend's papers after the Clubman material, the misconduct it describes does bear a striking resemblance to that in the Woodbury Hill declaration. It therefore seems that the Clubman communities had witnessed a significant degree of military misconduct. Some misconduct, at least in south-west Worcestershire, would have been parliamentarian. We have seen above that Essex's army, notorious for plundering, passed through this part of Worcestershire in 1642, and John Gyles's troop of horse were levying contributions in the south by late 1644. Massey had constantly raided south Worcestershire. Indeed, the origin of the Western Association itself lay in a desire to stop 'the intolerable grievances' of the county, due to the 'daily incursions, plunders, rapines and murders' committed by parliamentarian forces.<sup>211</sup>

But it did not matter which side was responsible. The loss of faith in the ability of the royalist forces to provide protection did. What distinguished these people from others in the region was not so much a

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., iii, pp. 239-40, also quoted in i, Introduction, p. lxxii.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., ii, pp. 181-2.

different experience of the war as their distance from any source of authority or order: it may be the very absence of garrisons in the Clubman areas that resulted in the growth of popular neutralism. Elsewhere, garrisons negated such a phenomenon in two ways. Firstly, by providing the hope (sometimes illusory) of a degree of protection and order; secondly, by providing a deterrent to rebellious activity, through the proximity of soldiers and prisons. In the remote parts of Worcestershire however, these deterrents were not in place. Far removed from the garrisons, the Clubman communities had no prospect either of protection or of immediate suppression. In the Worcestershire Clubmen, the importance of the popular experience of the war therefore reached its fullest expression. It was not a naturally neutralist movement: like other forms of war weariness, it was a product of the war, not a response to it. But the absence of military authority in the remote parts of Worcestershire both made possible and encouraged the growth of an outright rejection of the war.

### Conclusion

Popular allegiance is a highly complex phenomenon. Like cultural belief, it was shaped by a range of factors,

sometimes inter-relating, sometimes supplanting each other. The relative importance of the formative influences was subject to change both in space and in time. Any satisfactory explanation must reflect this complexity.

A multi-causal explanation is therefore essential. All current theories have a role to play in explaining the pattern of popular allegiance that emerged during the civil war. The diversity of the popular response can only be explained in terms of an approach that eschews theoretical dogma and massive generalisation. The allegiance of each region, sub-region, perhaps each parish, needs to be considered as subject to a possibly different set of influences than pertained in the last. The quality of the evidence does not always allow for such a detailed approach, but the locally variable nature of popular allegiance is nevertheless apparent.

This complexity need not preclude an estimation of the overall relative importance of the various motivations. In the present region, it seems that societal influences - deference, class, certain forms of localism - were in general the least important. In certain communities though, they were very important, and sometimes decisive. This is especially so of the class-based parliamentarianism of some middling sorts, notably in some manufacturing centres: Worcester, Birmingham, Coventry, Northampton. The evident

importance of middling sort royalism and plebeian parliamentarianism does however question the overall role of class. Much the same can be said of the importance of deference, which seems if anything to have been of even more limited influence. It may well have been important to the recruiting campaigns of certain royalist commanders, notably Hastings and the Comptons, but elsewhere seigneurial influence brought in only small numbers of soldiers, and it was commonly defied. Localist sentiment was central to the popular response to the war, but not in the sense that it immediately bred neutralism. Instead, it lay behind many partisan responses to threats posed by one side or the other to civilian communities.

Religio-cultural motivations were of greater importance. The language and iconography of the war were obviously religious. The pattern of popular allegiance does approximate to the distribution of Anglicanism and puritanism, and of traditional and reformed popular cultures. Puritan communities were more likely to be parliamentarian, and Anglican communities to be royalist. Religious motivations were undoubtedly important everywhere, especially in the stereotypes of the papist cavalier and the zealous roundhead. These frequently appeared in the populist propaganda. But such images did not only play on religious fears: they also depended on fear of plunder

and rape. These fears were probably more important at the lowest levels of society, where doctrinal orthodoxy had never been widespread. Indeed, the cultural life of many communities was too diverse for the allegiance of the inhabitants to be safely ascribed to cultural influences. Probably only minorities reacted according to the individualist or traditionalist mentalities described by Underdown. There is no consistent relationship between geography, land-use and popular allegiance.

Moreover, the importance of religio-cultural motivations often depended on the local conditions that pertained during the war. In particular, the dissemination of religious propaganda was dependent on the ability of the military to control the pulpits, the press and the roads. As the war progressed, ideological motivations in general declined in importance, as allegiance came to depend increasingly on the level of protection offered to communities. This coincided with a fall in enthusiasm for the war, checked only by the variable degrees of confidence and restraint imposed on communities by the presence of garrisons. Allegiance thus came to be heavily dependent on the strength and conduct of the military.

Long term influences on popular allegiance were therefore cut across by wartime influences. The distinction between the two is sometimes artificial,

especially as the propaganda of the war related cultural stereotypes to the experience of the war. Long term religio-cultural developments played a key role in the formation of popular allegiance. But popular allegiance developed and changed in the course of the war. Propaganda, clergy and the soldiery all impinged upon popular attitudes after 1642. Allegiance was, in short, a process. In many respects, the pattern of civil war allegiance owed as much to what happened after 1642 as what had gone before.

### Conclusion

The civil war was, in a number of senses, a war of the people. Tradesmen, artisans, yeomen and labourers played a crucial role in it. When the war broke out, they joined up in their thousands, and thereafter formed a substantial part of the rank and file, and to a lesser degree of the officer corps, of the forces of both King and parliament. Those not in military service were subject to requests and demands for shelter, money, food, goods and manual labour. In the midlands, the proliferation of garrisons, concentration of soldiers, and consequent demands on local communities ensured that the war affected most communities, from the large garrison towns of the centre to the remote villages of the periphery. There can have been very few people in the region who were not in some way affected by the civil war. Hardly any can have been unaware of it. "Total war" probably is a reasonable description of the conflict over much of the region.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Everitt argued that the impact of the civil war in the midlands had been exaggerated, and that "The Great Rebellion was far from being a total war as we understand that term": Local Community, pp. 24-5. He rightly pointed out (ibid., p. 29, n. 37) that the newsbooks were prone to highlight only the discontinuities to everyday life. But we do not need to

To some degree, it was also a genuinely popular war: that is, not only were many ordinary people involved in or affected by it, but many wanted to be. At the popular level, there is insufficient evidence to support the argument that the war was merely "an artificial insemination of violence into the community".<sup>2</sup> The often enthusiastic response to the recruitment drives of 1642-3 suggest that this was not the case. Popular enthusiasm certainly declined after 1643, but this should not be equated with an innate hostility to the idea of war in 1642. In fact, even after 1643, there is little evidence of systematic, large scale conscription into the armies of either side. Only in Worcestershire did this take place, and this was a county in which the ravages of the war itself played a central role in alienating popular support. In that county, the Clubman risings of 1645 bore a more direct relationship to the depredations of the soldiery than to a natural indifference to the

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rely on newsbooks to demonstrate the disruptive impact of the war. It is also evident in letters, diaries, memoirs, and especially in the bills for losses due to taxation, plunder and property destruction, preserved in the 'Commonwealth Exchequer Papers' (P.R.O. SP 28, passim): cf. Tennant, Edgehill and Beyond, Preface, p. xii, passim.

<sup>2</sup> Hutton, War Effort, p. 201.

events of 1642. Indeed, militant neutralism is noticeable by its absence in Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire and Rutland. The indications are that in these counties, the war efforts of both sides stumbled but did not fall. This is not because the war was easier for people there than in Worcestershire. Taxation, plunder and pillage lay as heavy in these parts as anywhere.<sup>3</sup> But partisan attitudes persisted. In short, many ordinary people reacted positively to the war. Although this did not last, there was still sufficient popular enthusiasm to enable the protagonists to fight on.

What motivated this positive response is a complex question. Although there was no sea-change in the nature of popular allegiance from enthusiasm to

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<sup>3</sup> Bennett, 'War Effort in the North Midlands', p. 260 notes that the royalist war effort in this region was not undermined by the non-cooperation of civilian communities. Collapse was finally brought on only by military defeat. However, Bennett's view is that many civilians continued to support the royalists because the burdens of war were lighter in the north midlands than further west. The contention of this thesis is that this was not the case. Rather, support continued because the royalist soldiery continued to be viewed as protectors against parliamentarian depredations, and vice versa with popular parliamentarianism.

militant neutralism, there were important shifts, both temporal and spatial. A variety of influences, long and short term, contributed to these responses. Among these, deference, especially among the tenants of some powerful royalist landowners, and class factors, especially among some parliamentarian middling sorts in manufacturing towns, were locally important. But defiance of landlords and social superiors was too common for deference to have had general significance. There was a marked absence of visible class conflict in the region in the pre-war period, and it is probable that many middling sorts fought for the King: class-based allegiance was limited to certain communities.

Popular allegiance undoubtedly had deep roots in the pre-war controversies between puritan and Anglican. Anti-popery, Laudian innovation, and puritan reform of Anglican tradition fractured local communities before the war, and in many places the divisions widened in the late 1630s and 1640s. Propaganda explicitly related these themes to the war. People were motivated by fear of a soldiery depicted either as papist or zealously sectarian. Iconoclasm, and the targeting of local Anglicans, Catholics or puritans for plunder by the soldiery went some way to substantiating these fears. In a number of communities, puritanism is clearly associated with parliamentarianism, and Anglicanism with royalism.

However, any attempt to relate patterns of religion and culture to allegiance must be on a local, rather than regional basis. The complexity of both patterns resists a broad-based approach. Although it is possible to identify areas that were more conservative or more puritan than others, there is a point at which attempts to identify regional cultures break down. Religious radicalism is identifiable even in some apparently conservative fielden areas, whilst puritan towns were still host to a popular culture and degree of civic ritual that strict puritans cannot have approved of. Individual communities might observe elements of both traditional and reformed culture. It is doubtful whether many ordinary people were motivated solely by doctrinal or orthodox belief. Certainly, zealous puritans or orthodox Anglicans fought on such terms, and may well have formed an activist vanguard in their communities. But many other people were motivated not by positive religious conviction, but by fear and suspicion.

Patterns of popular allegiance are similarly complex. A number of towns, especially those with garrisons, can be assigned clear allegiances. But many rural areas were host to divided communities and changes in allegiance over just a few miles. Even the garrison towns may have had their apparently united allegiance imposed by the military. This complexity

means that it is difficult to identify regional patterns. Neither is it possible to identify allegiance with land use or natural geography. There is no consistent relationship between either forest and upland pasture areas and parliamentarianism, or lowland fielden areas and royalism. Metal and coal working districts in different parts also provided support for both sides.

Contingent factors, primarily the war itself, helped produce such complexity. Patterns of allegiance bear a closer resemblance to patterns of military occupation than to those of religion, culture or land use. The concept of centre and periphery is important here. The relatively solid allegiance of areas associated with large garrisons of one side or the other can be distinguished from the areas of mixed allegiance which lay out of the control of these garrisons. This is partly a reflection of the differing degrees of control the armed forces had over the population in these areas: dissidents were more easily arrested, recruitment easier to carry out, near garrisons.

Control over the distribution of propaganda, and the ability to protect communities, also varied between centre and periphery. Where the garrisons had control, they could police local communities, and censor local clergy, who were targeted by both sides as vital in the

propaganda war. The popular experience of extortion, plunder and pillage disrupted the pattern that emerged in 1642-3, but military control was again vital in varying the impact of this. In general, the large garrisons were able to mitigate the worst excesses by offering shelter to local people and repulsing the enemy. The peripheral areas were denied this, and consequently were more likely to suffer the depredations of both sides. It was the remotest part of the region, without either the policing or protective presence of a garrison, that produced the Clubmen.

Clergy and soldiers, propaganda and experience, therefore shaped popular allegiance during and after 1642. Undoubtedly, allegiance also related to the cultural divisions of the pre-war years. But for many people the threat of plunder was a more pressing concern than the banning of maypoles or removal of images from the parish church. Such cultural concerns were central to popular attitudes before the war. During the conflict however, fear of soldiers, and the need for protection assumed a growing importance. A soldiery that was burdensome, rapacious, or unable to protect local communities was likely to lose popular support, irrespective of ideological affiliation. By the latter stages of the civil war, the conflict itself was the prime factor in popular allegiance.

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**Appendix I: Royalist Pensioners in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire**

<b>A. LEICESTERSHIRE</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Status/Service</b>
Bugg, William	Melton Mowbray	-
Collman, John	Claybrooke	Probably in William Bale's troop of horse
Durant, John	?	Quartermaster in Lord Loughborough's troop
Gill, Ralph	Packington	Soldier under Lord Loughborough in Colonel Wolsey's troop of dragoons
Grimes, John	Bagworth	-

<b>Heyford, Thomas</b>	Countesthorpe	-
<b>Holland, Richard</b>	Twycross	-
<b>King, Thomas</b>	Cranoe	-
<b>Knight, William</b>	Goadby Marwood	-
<b>Kimberley, Thomas</b>	?	-
<b>Marritt, Thomas</b>	Hose	Deceased (1679-80)
<b>Norton, Abraham</b>	Loughborough	Soldier at Newark garrison.
		Wounded at Pontefract
<b>Orton, Katherine</b>	?	Widow of Captain Orton
<b>Ounds, Thomas</b>	Thurneby	Soldier under Captain Archer
<b>Reynolds, Roger</b>	Leicester	Butcher. In William Bale's troop of horse.
<b>Ridgway, Thomas</b>	Ibstock	-
<b>Rigley, John</b>	Ashton Flamville	Soldier under Lord Loughborough

Roberts, Nathaniel	Oadby	-
Roberts, Woolston	Earl Shilton	Gent.
Rotse, Richard	Melton Mowbray	-
Stretton, John	?	Deceased by March 1689
Thornebrough, Henry	Desford	-
Walker, Edward	?	-
Wood, Thomas	Barlestorne	-

Source: L.R.O. Q.S. 6/1/2/1

## B. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Name	Parish	Status/Service
Aldridge, Elizabeth	Castle Ashby	Widow of John Aldridge
Ashley, Elizabeth	King's Cliffe	Widow of Francis Ashley
Aystkew, William	Grendon	Labourer. Served at Banbury under Earl of Northampton
Barnes, John	Weekly	Trooper in Sir William Compton's troop
Bearsly, Jane	, Alwincle	Widow of John Bearsly, farrier, trooper under Sir Gervase Lucas at Belvoir Castle
Bellhouse, John	?	Trooper in Colonel [William] Bale's regiment, under Lord

Blackwell, Richard	Brackley	Loughborough	Soldier under Captain James in Sir William Compton's regiment of foot
Blunkett, Richard	?	Probably served under Captain James Claughton	
Browne, Ellen	? Haversham	Widow. Husband died whilst serving under Major Legg	
Bozeat, John	Irchester	-	
Buller, John	Yarwell	Labourer	
Chiar, John	Wellingborough	-	
Collings, Richard	King's Sutton	Served at Banbury Castle as a Corporal under Captain Thomas	

	Willoughby	
Crane, Richard	Thorpe Malsur	Served at Banbury Castle under command of Major Colborne
Day, John	Little Bowden	-
Densley, John	?	-
Edinburgh, Thomas	Aynho	Soldier under William Compton
Eline, Richard	Bradden	-
Emerson, Francis	?	-
Gibson, William	Chacombe	Gent.
Gilby, William	Rothwell	Labourer. Soldier under Captain Ward at Naseby and elsewhere.
Giles, Hugh	King's Sutton	Lost an eye Soldier at Banbury under Earl

		of Northampton	
Gilloway, Susanna	Yardley Hastings	Widow	
Gulford, William	Wellingborough	Soldier under Earl of	
		Northampton	
Hall, Laurence	Apethorpe	Labourer	
Horne, Thomas	Great Harrowden	-	
Ireland, William	Southwick	-	
Johnson, Rachell	Bullwick	Widow of Humphrey Johnson, Quartermaster-General in Prince Charles's lifeguard, under command of Colonel Traver	
Johnson, John	Easton	Weaver	
Johnson, William	Gretton	-	

Jolley, Edward	Church Brampton	Served under Captain Harvey in the regiment of the Earl of Northampton
Jones, William	King's Cliffe	Labourer. Foot soldier under Captain Thomas Sheffield in Lord Camden's regiment. Served at Edgehill under Colonel Griffin. Later, a Sergeant in the King's life guard, under Captain John Beeton
Keming, Mary	?	? 'Halcot' Widow
Knight, ?	Syresham	Widow of Henry Knight, soldier under William Compton

Langton, Richard	Wollaston	-
Lapworth, Richard	Wellingborough	Soldier under Earl of Northampton at Banbury
Lawson, Richard	Wollaston	-
Lepper, William	Towcester	-
Lepper, ?	Towcester	Son of above
Lucas, Robert	King's Sutton	Served under Colonel Gerrard
Mabbut, Joan	Wellingborough	Widow
Mariott, Henry	Treywell	Soldier in Sir Charles Compton's troop, in Earl of Northampton's regiment
Mercer, Alice	Hemington	Widow of Edward Mercer
Neale, Thomas	Rusden	Labourer

New, Thomas	Scaldwell	-
Nicholls, Richard	Wellingborough	-
Owen, Elizabeth	Weldon	Widow of Aristotle Owen, served for three years, killed in wars
Palmer, Alice	Warkton	Widow of John Palmer, soldier in Lord Camden's regiment, captured at Burley House
Pangtran, Susanna	Whittlebury	Widow
Parker, Richard	Brackley	Soldier under command of Captain Franke in Colonel Washington's regiment of dragoons
Partridge, Mark	Bozeat	-

<b>Peedle, Richard</b>	King's Sutton	Served under Captain Polton
<b>Pickering, Christopher</b>	Titchmarsh	Esq. Estate sequestered
<b>Pilgrim, John</b>	Bugbrooke	Deceased by 1668
<b>Pratt, Francis</b>	Weldon	Served under Colonel Griffin.
		'Much persecuted' by the Major
		General
<b>Rafford, James</b>	?	-
<b>Robinson, Thomas</b>	King's Sutton	Served in Earl of Northampton's company
<b>Rooden, Thomas</b>	Weldon	-
<b>Russell, Robert</b>	Whitfield	-
<b>Salford, William</b>	Wellingborough	Soldier under Earl of Northampton

<b>Sanders, John</b>	King's Sutton	Soldier at Banbury Castle
<b>Shearcroft, Thomas</b>	Nassington	Slater
<b>Sides, George</b>	Collyweston	Labourer
<b>Smith, John</b>	Carlton	Scout
<b>Smith, Thomas</b>	Thindon	-
<b>Spitsworth, William</b>	Blaxely	-
<b>Streames, John</b>	Higham Ferrers	Gent.
<b>Suckley, Edward</b>	?	Gent.
<b>Sudbury, William</b>	Woodnewton	Labourer. Pressed at Stamford
		Baron for service in the north
<b>Sutton, John</b>	Charlton	Served at Banbury
<b>Thorpe, ?</b>	?	Widow. Husband died whilst serving under George Fane

Tresham, ?	?	Father of family
Tresham, ?	?	Son of above
Wakefield, William	Wollaston	-
Wallington, William	Nether Heyford	Trooper under Earl of Northampton
	-	
Warden, Lewis	?	
Warner, John	Wellingborough	Served under Earl of Northampton, Rupert, and in the train of artillery
	Flore	Served under Colonel Morgan, then under 'Colonel Leviston'
Warwick, John		[? Leveson]
Watts, Jane or June	Yardley Hastings	Widow. Husband a labourer

West, John	Cosgrave	Sometime victualler
Wheelowes, Humphrey	collintree	Served under (? Captain) Matthew Bayley at Banbury.
		Later wounded in the
		Netherlands
		-
Wisdome, William	Towcester	
Wrench, Mary	Duston	Widow of Thomas Wrench. Husband served under Captain Simon Luke, and was killed 'in the north'

Source: N.R.O. Q.S.R. 1/65-82

**Appendix II: Parliamentarian Pensioners and Recipients of similar Aid in Warwickshire**

Name	Parish	Status/Service
Aris, ?	?	Widow. Husband a lieutenant, deceased by 1651. Awarded allowance
Arme, or Orme, Thomas	?	Sergeant. Served at Warwick Castle for four years. Twice wounded in the face, almost blind, petitioned Committee for aid. Later awarded pension by Quarter

	Sessions		
Arnold, John	Aston	Whitesmith	
Astley, ?	Shottery	Pressed	
Bartlett, Daniel	?	Served under Captain Thomas Hunt. Wounded, petitioned Committee for aid	
Bates, Edward	Warwick	Pension in arrears in 1650	
Bearsly, George	?	Formerly under command of Captain Brownell. Severely burned when ammunition blew up.	

Browne, ( family )	Over Pillerton	Unable to work, petitioned Committee for aid
		Father, Thomas, a corporal under Colonel [James] Castle. Killed at siege of Banbury.
		Family awarded relief
Clarke, Thomas	?	Trooper under Lieutenant Hunt.
Clerke, William	Balsall	Awarded 40s relief in 1647 Paid 18d until a

	pension granted	
Clough, Richard	Arrow	-
Curtis, Roger	Wroxhall	-
Davis, Humphrey	Birmingham	Deceased by 1658. Widow to have pension
Day, Ambrose	Birmingham	Blacksmith. Soldier. Awarded 14d weekly for his wife and children in 1649
Dewes, John	Studley	-
Diderch, John	?	Soldier under Captain Richard Walford.
		Wounded, petitioned

		Committee for aid
Doster, William	Southam	-
Drayton, Alice	?	Widow. Husband deceased by 1651. Awarded allowance
Ebrall, Barnaby	?	Wounded at siege of Banbury. Disbanded, petitioned Committee for aid
Ebrall, William	?	Soldier under Captain Richard Walford. Wounded, petitioned Committee for aid.

Awarded pension by Quarter Sessions. But apparently lost it when he left the county

Sow  
Fairfax, John  
Feild, Richard  
?

Greenhill, John	?	Trooper under Captain Attway [? sic. Anthony Ottway]. Awarded 40s relief in 1647
Griffin, (family)	Birmingham	Father, Robert, deceased by 1647.
Guy, Robert	?	Served under Captain Melvill at Northampton garrison, where killed. Wife and children awarded 20s relief in 1647 Served 'the state' and

		'this county'
Hall, John	Ratley	Served at Northampton garrison for four years. Awarded habitation and an allowance
Hancocks, Richard	Knowle	Butcher. Pressed
Harding, Robert	?	Served in Warwickshire and Scotland
Hargrave, John	?	Corporal under Captain Flower. Awarded 40s relief in 1647
Harthill, George	Atherstone	Father of John

Harthill, described in  
Quarter Sessions as  
'slain in the state's  
service'. Also  
petitioned the  
Committee for arrears  
of pay of Nicholas  
Harthill

-

-

Father, Robert, served  
under Colonel Bridges.  
Killed at siege of

Hawkesford, Thomas	?
Hawton, Thomas	?
Hemyng, (family)	Hatton

Higgins, ( family )	Warwick	Worcester. Wife and children awarded 14d weekly
	Father, William,	soldier under Colonel John Bridges. Killed in the war. Family awarded relief
Hopkins, Joseph	?	Pension discontinued after becoming an apprentice
Hurst, Thomas	?	Pensioner, reported dead by 1651

Jones, Abigail	?	Widow of Robert Jones, deceased by 1651. To have pension of Thomas Hurst
Lee, William	Baginton	-
Lord, Richard	Stratford upon Avon	Apprentice fellmonger. To be taken up again by former employer
March, Richard	Atherstone	'A lame soldier'
Muston, or Musson, William	Atherstone	Served under Colonel [William] Purefoy and Walgrave Willington.
		Wounded at capture of

Tamworth Castle,  
petitioned Committee  
for aid, awarded  
pension by Quarter  
Sessions

Parker, Christopher      Knightlow  
Parker, ?      Nuneaton

Patchett, Thomas      Hurley  
Pole, Abraham,      ?

Deceased by 1650. Widow  
to receive remainder of  
pension

Taylor  
Comb-maker. Served  
under Captain Matthew

Bridges [i.e. at Warwick] for two years.		
Wounded, unable to continue trade,		
petitioned Committee for aid	Trooper under Captain Samuel Hill. Awarded 40s relief in 1647	
Pratt, John Knowle		
Smith, Elizabeth ?	Widow. Husband deceased by 1651. Awarded allowance	
Souldier, Andrew ?	Fought at siege of	

- Banbury • Wounded,  
taken to hospital in  
London. Sent home, poor  
and in debt, petitioned  
Committee for aid
- Foot soldier under  
Colonel Bridges.
- Petitioned for a  
pension, and petitioned  
Committee for aid
- 
- Spooner, Paul ?
- Tayler, Richard Warwick
- Toms, Thomas Warwick
- Deceased by 1658. Widow  
to have pension

Tyler, Stephen	Warwick	Tailor
Whitehead, William	?	Soldier under Captain
		Richard Walford.
		Petitioned Committee
		for aid
Wisdom, Edward	?	Foot soldier under
		Major Hawford. Awarded
		40s relief in 1647,
		Pending award of a
		pension

Source: W.C.R. vols. ii, iii, & iv;

P.R.O. SP 28/247/1, 74, 478;

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