

PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS : THE HARLEYS OF BRAMPTON BRYAN
AND THE ORIGINS AND OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST CIVIL WAR.

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Arts, London University.

Jacqueline Susan Levy.

Bedford College, 1983.

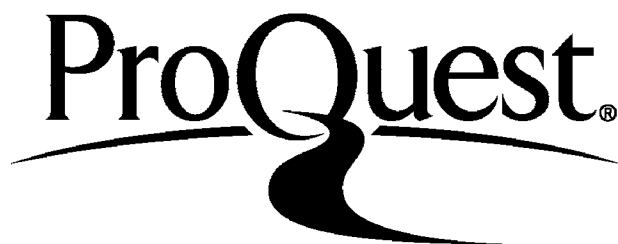
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ABSTRACT

The Harleys were the only major Herefordshire gentry family to give their committed support to Parliament in 1642. The personal papers of both Sir Robert Harley and his wife, Lady Brilliana, allow a detailed study of the modes of thought which led the Harleys to oppose the King. The Harleys were guided primarily by their religious beliefs. They were puritans, who hoped that the Long Parliament would undertake sweeping Church reforms, and they perceived the war as a struggle by the godly for true religion.

The Harleys' stand in the 1640s was directly linked to their antipathy towards Arminianism. Sir Robert's fear that the Arminians would subvert the State and Church to Catholicism is evident in his speeches in the 1628 Parliament. By 1641 the Harleys believed that only the abolition of episcopacy could rid the Church of Arminian and Catholic influences.

Before 1640 the Harleys' puritanism had not entailed overt political opposition to the Crown, as is illustrated by Sir Robert's parliamentary career in the 1620s and by his achievement of court office in 1626. The Harleys were also accepted within the official and social networks of the Herefordshire "gentry community". Thus in 1640 Sir Robert was returned as senior knight of the shire to both the Short and the Long Parliaments.

After 1640 the Harleys became increasingly isolated from the most influential Herefordshire gentry, many of whom would be either committed Royalists or moderates in 1642. The Harley papers illustrate how differing long-term perceptions and beliefs combined with immediate issues to split the county "gentry community" in 1642. Although the Harleys were genuinely concerned by county interests, their puritanism involved them in an alternative set of loyalties, which were stronger than their loyalties either to the local "gentry community" or to the county community.

CONTENTS

	page
Abstract	2
Contents and List of Text Figures	3
Acknowledgments	4
Preface	5
Documentary Note : the Harley Documents	11
Introduction	16
Part One	
The Harleys, Society and Religion before the Long Parliament	
1. The Harleys and the World beyond the County Boundary	36
2. The Harleys and the County	88
3. The Harleys and the Godly Community	133
Part Two	
The Harleys, the Long Parliament and the County, November 1640- October 1643	
Introduction	174
4. November 1640-December 1641	185
5. January 1642-July 1642	232
6. July 1642-October 1643	278
Conclusion	321
Appendix I - Herefordshire M.P.s 1604-1640	327
Appendix 2 - Sir Robert Harley's Losses 1642-1646	328
Bibliography	329
List of Text Figures	
1. Map of the Welsh Border: Southern Counties	35
2. Map of Herefordshire	89
3. The Ruins of Brampton Bryan Castle	308

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Mr. C.C. Harley, Lady Anne Bentinck and the Marquess of Bath for permission to quote from privately owned manuscripts and the Yale Center for Parliamentary History for permission to quote from material in their possession. I should like to thank the archivists and staff of the following establishments for their help: The British Library, the Public Record Office, the House of Lords Record Office, Dr. Williams' Library, the Folger Library (Washington D.C.), the Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library, Nottingham University Library, Nottingham County Record Office, Hereford and Worcester County Record Office, Hereford City Library, and Hereford Cathedral.

Further thanks to Dr. Ann Hughes, Dr. Ronald Hutton and Dr. Geoffrey McParlin for allowing me to consult copies of their unpublished Ph.D. theses and Raymond and Annette Keene for help with the typescript. I should particularly like to thank Margaret Fitzjames for typing the final version, Dr. Peter Lake and Mr. Richard Cust for their advice and David Levy for constant encouragement. My final thanks to my two supervisors, Professor Conrad Russell, now of Yale University and Dr. Penelope Corfield of Bedford College, London University.

PREFACE

All quotations from manuscripts and from contemporary published works have been modernised in respect to both spelling and punctuation. Contractions have normally been extended. Dates are given in Old Style, with the year regarded as beginning on 1 January in the text; in the footnotes the form 1641/2 has generally been adopted in citing original sources. In consulting unbound manuscripts from the B.L., Loan 29 collection, readers should be aware that the location of documents within individual packets has not been finalised and may be altered by archivists in the future.

The maps of the Welsh Marches and of Herefordshire are reproduced by kind permission of B.T. Batsford Ltd. Figure 3 - the ruins of Brampton Bryan Castle - is reproduced from C.J. Robinson, A History of the Castles of Herefordshire and their Lords (1869).

Abbreviations

Place of publication is London, unless otherwise stated.

- Add. MSS. Additional Manuscripts.
- B.L. British Library.
- B.I.H.R. Bulletin of the Institute of
Historical Research.
- Bodl. Bodleian Library.
- Commonplace book. The Commonplace book of Brilliana Conway,
1622, University of Nottingham Library MSS.
Department, Portland MSS., London Collection.
- C.C.A.M. M.A.E. Green (ed.), Calendar of the Committee
for Advance of Money, 1643-1656,
3 Vols. (1888).
- C.C.C. M.A.E. Green (ed.), Calendar of the Committee
for Compounding with Delinquents ,
5 Vols. (1888-1892).
- C.J. Journals of the House of Commons.
- C.S.P.D. Calendar of State Papers Domestic.
- 1628 Debates. R.C. Johnson, M.F. Keeler, M.J. Cole and
W.B. Bidwell (eds.), Commons Debates, 1628,
4 Vols. (New Haven, 1977-1978).
- D'Ewes (C). W.H. Coates (ed.), The Journal of Sir
Simonds D'Ewes from the First Recess of the
Long Parliament to the Withdrawal of King
Charles from London (New Haven, 1942).

- D'Ewes (N). W. Notestein (ed.), The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes from the Beginning of the Long Parliament to the Opening of the Trial of the Earl of Strafford (New Haven, 1923).
- D.N.B. Dictionary of National Biography.
- Fletcher, Outbreak. A.J. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War (1981).
- Fletcher, Sussex. A.J. Fletcher, A County Community in Peace and War; Sussex; 1600-1660 (1975).
- Foster, Alumni. J. Foster, Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714, 4 Vols. (Oxford, 1891-2).
- Gardiner, Documents. S.R. Gardiner (ed.), The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660 (Third Edition Revised, Oxford, 1968).
- Gardiner, History. S.R. Gardiner, History of England, 1603-1642, 10 Vols. (1883-4).
- G.E.C. Complete Baronetage G.E. Cockayne, The Complete Baronetage, 5 Vols. (Exeter, 1900-1906).
- G.E.C. Complete Peerage. G.E. Cockayne, Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom. Extant, Extinct or Dormant, 13 Vols. (New Edition, 1910-1940).
- Grosvenor Diary. Parliamentary Diary of Sir Richard Grosvenor, Trinity College, Dublin MS. E.5.17. Transcript, Yale Center for Parliamentary History.

- Harl. MSS. Harleian Manuscripts, British Library.
- Harley MSS. Harley Manuscripts at Brampton Bryan.
- H.L.R.O. House of Lords Record Office.
- H.M.C. Historical Manuscripts Commission.
- H.M.C., Bath Historical Manuscripts Commission, Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Bath preserved at Longleat, Wiltshire, 4 Vols. (1904-1968). All citations are from volume 1, unless otherwise stated.
- H.M.C. Portland. Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of his Grace the Duke of Portland preserved at Welbeck Abbey, 10 Vols. (1891-1931). All citations are from volume 3, unless otherwise stated.
- Husbands, Collection. Edward Husbands (ed.), An Exact Collection of all Remonstrances, Declarations, Votes, Orders, Ordinances, Proclamations, Petitions, Messages, Answers and other Remarkable Passages (1642/3).
- J.B.S. Journal of British Studies.
- J.M.H. Journal of Modern History.
- Lewis, Letters. T.T. Lewis (ed.), Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, Camden Society, First Series, LVIII (1854).
- L.J. Journals of the House of Lords.
- M. of P. Return of the names of every member returned to serve in each Parliament, 4 Vols. (1878-1891). All citations are from volume 1.

- Nicholas Diary. Parliamentary Diary of Edward Nicholas, P.R.O., S.P., 14/166, Transcript, Yale Center for Parliamentary History.
- P.R.O. Public Record Office.
- Puritan Survey. Puritan Survey of the Herefordshire Ministry 1640/1, Transcript by F.C. Morgan, Hereford Cathedral Muniments Room 6A. vi. The original survey is in the Bodleian Library, MS. 206, Corpus Christi. I have referred to Mr. Morgan's transcript throughout.
- R.O. Record Office.
- Russell, Origins. C. Russell (ed.), The Origins of the English Civil War (1973).
- Russell, Parliaments. C. Russell, Parliaments and English Politics (Oxford, 1979).
- S.P. State Papers.
- Spring Diary. Parliamentary Diary of Sir William Spring, Harvard University Houghton Library MS. Eng. 980, Transcript, Yale Center for Parliamentary History.
- S.R. Statutes of the Realm.
- T.R.H.S. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.
- T.S.A.N.H.S. Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.
- T.W.N.F.C. Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club.
- Underdown, Purge. D. Underdown, Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution (Oxford, 1971).

- Venn, Alumni. J. and J.A. Venn (eds.), Alumni Cantabrigienses part I from the earliest times to 1751 4 Vols. (1922-1927).
- Visitations of Essex. W.C. Metcalfe (ed.), The Visitations of Essex, Harleian Society, Vols. XIII, XIV (1878, 1879).
- Visitation of Shropshire. G. Grazebrook and J.P. Rylands (eds.), The Visitation of Shropshire , Harleian Society, Vols. XXVIII, XXIX (1889).
- Webb, Memorials. 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).
- Whitelocke, Diary. Parliamentary Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke, Cambridge University Library MSS., Dd. 12-20, 12-21, and 12-22, Transcript , Yale Center for Parliamentary History.

DOCUMENTARY NOTE : THE HARLEY DOCUMENTS

This thesis is based primarily on the personal papers of Sir Robert Harley (1579-1656) and of his third wife, Lady Brilliana Harley (c. 1600-1643) of Brampton Bryan, Herefordshire. Sir Robert Harley was careful to preserve both his private papers and the public papers which came into his possession through his position as a local governor and as a member of Parliament. Although some of these documents were probably destroyed during the Civil Wars, a large number survived and passed at Sir Robert's death into the hands of his eldest son, Sir Edward Harley.

Following Sir Edward's death, the family papers came into the possession of his son, Robert Harley, first Earl of Oxford. The first Earl was a prodigious collector of books and manuscripts, as was his son, Edward Harley, the second Earl of Oxford. At the death of the second Earl, his wife, Henrietta and their daughter, Margaret, sold the manuscripts collected by the two Earls of Oxford to the nation in 1753.¹ This collection of manuscripts is known as the Harleian Collection and is now in the Manuscripts Department of the British Library. It is quite separate from the extensive range of private Harley papers, which have been used for this study.

At the time of the sale, Lady Harley and her daughter had retained the personal papers of the Harley family and these papers have subsequently been divided into several distinct holdings. Many of the private papers came into the possession of the Dukes of Portland as a consequence of the marriage of Margaret Harley to William Bentinck, second Duke of Portland, in 1734.² During the course of the present century most of these papers, along with other manuscripts belonging to the Dukes of Portland, have been deposited in three separate repositories - these being the Nottingham County Record Office, the

1. D.N.B., VIII, 1289, 1279-1280.

2. Ibid., 1280.

Manuscripts Department at Nottingham University and the Manuscripts
 Department at the British Library.³

Firstly, therefore, the Portland papers at Nottingham County Record Office have been fully catalogued by the county archivists and a copy of the catalogue is available at the National Register of Archives. The Harley material within the Portland collection at the Record Office consists mainly of estate papers, although there are some documents relating to Edward Harley's regiment of foot, raised for Parliament in 1643.

Secondly, the Portland papers at Nottingham University fall into two sections. The Portland Welbeck Collection has been catalogued by the university archivists, again a copy of the catalogue is available at the National Register of Archives. The Portland London Collection has not been catalogued by the university. A handwritten general listing of these manuscripts is, however, available at the university.

The papers at Nottingham University which relate to Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana Harley are very diverse and contain material from the Long Parliament, material concerning the work of the Parliamentary county committee in Herefordshire and much estate material. Most importantly for this present study, the papers at Nottingham University also include Lady Brilliana Harley's commonplace book.⁴

The commonplace book is noted in S. Arthur Strong's A Catalogue of Letters and Other Historical Documents exhibited in the Library at Welbeck (1903), pp. 103-104, where it is described as "a book of devout meditations" in the handwriting of Lady Brilliana Harley.⁵

3. These deposits are described below, see Bibliography.
4. University of Nottingham Library, Manuscripts Department, Portland MSS., London Collection,
5. S.A. Strong attributes the date of the commonplace book to 1628, but the date on this book is 1622. It is possible that there are two volumes, but I have not located a second.

Thirdly, the Portland papers at the British Library also fall into two sections, a set of chronologically arranged bound volumes and numerous, unbound packets of manuscripts. The bound volumes have been calendared by The Historical Manuscripts Commission.⁶ The unbound material has not been calendared, although there is a very general hand-list of the entire collection in the Students' Room of the Manuscripts Department of the British Library.

The bound volumes contain many letters to Sir Robert Harley, there are also papers relating to Harley's work as a local administrator and as a member of Parliament. One problem which arises from the use of these bound volumes is the erratic foliation, which sometimes makes it difficult to locate a document using a folio number alone. In general, therefore, footnote references to these volumes in this study consist of a brief description of the document, the full date of the document, as well as any folio number.

The original bound volumes have been used in this study in preference to the H.M.C. calendar, since the calendar is incorrect in places. Where I have been able to identify mistakes, this has been indicated.

Amongst the unbound Harley papers at the British Library are a series of letters to Sir Robert from Lady Brilliana. There are also three boxes of letters written to Sir Robert by various correspondents and much miscellaneous material, including draft letters from Sir Robert, material concerning Herefordshire and papers relating to the Short and the Long Parliaments.⁷ A fuller description of these unbound papers is given in the Bibliography, below.

Apart from the Harley papers owned by the Dukes of Portland, described above, there are more deposits of Harley material, which have also been

6. H.M.C., Portland, II-VIII, X.

7. B.L., Loan 29/72, 119-124.

used in this study. Some Harley papers were detached from the Portland holdings following the marriage in 1759 of Lady Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the second Duke of Portland, to Thomas Thynne, third Viscount Weymouth, who inherited the title Marquess of Bath in 1789.⁸ The Harley papers which thus found their way to Longleat, the family home of the Marquesses of Bath, were calendared by the H.M.C. at the beginning of this century.⁹

Amongst the Harley papers at Longleat are eighteenth century copies of two contemporary accounts of the sieges of Brampton Bryan Castle, which took place in 1643 and 1644. There are also copies of the correspondence between Lady Brilliana and the Royalist commanders in the county before and during the first siege.¹⁰ The H.M.C. calendar of this material is very reliable and most footnotes are to the calendar, rather than to the less accessible documents at Longleat.

Finally, many papers are still privately owned by the Harley family. This includes a great number of estate documents, which were in the process of being individually indexed by the archivists at the Hereford and Worcester County Record Office, where I was able to consult the originals. These papers are divided into numbered bundles and following Professor Aylmer's use, these are referred to throughout as "Harley MSS.",¹¹ with the relevant bundle number.

Also in private ownership are the letters written by Lady Brilliana Harley and transcribed by the Reverend T.T. Lewis for publication by the

8. H.M.C., Bath, p.v.

9. H.M.C., Bath, I, II.

10. H.M.C., Bath, pp. 1-33.

11. G.E. Aylmer, The King's Servants: The Civil Service of Charles I, 1625-1642 (Revised edition, 1974), p. 373, Hereinafter referred to as Aylmer, King's Servants.

Camden Society in 1854. The majority of these letters were addressed to Lady Brilliana's eldest son, Edward Harley, between October 1638, when he matriculated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, until a few weeks before Lady Brilliana's death in October 1643. The Camden edition also contains some letters to Sir Robert Harley and much other relevant information. The published edition of these letters has been used throughout this study.

INTRODUCTION

At the start of the First Civil War, in August 1642, the Harleys were the only major gentry family in Herefordshire to give their whole-hearted support to Parliament. Sir Robert Harley had been returned to the Long Parliament as senior knight for the shire and retained his seat until his expulsion from the House of Commons during Pride's Purge of December 1648.¹ Sir Robert's third wife, Lady Brilliana Harley, was as staunch as her husband in her support for Parliament. Lady Brilliana remained at the family home, Brampton Bryan Castle, throughout the early stages of the war, despite the ascendancy of Royalism in the county. In the summer of 1643 she commanded the defence of the castle against the first of the two Royalist sieges. The rigours of the siege may well have precipitated the illness which led to Lady Brilliana's death in October 1643.²

Herefordshire has been recognised as a county where there is early evidence of the polarisation which stimulated the growth of civil war parties in the localities.³ Most of the surviving information about the development of the two opposing sides in Herefordshire is contained in the papers of Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana Harley. As committed Parliamentarians, the Harleys were acutely aware of the issues which

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1. M. of P., 489; Underdown, Purge, p. 147.
 2. Two separate contemporary accounts of the sieges are printed in H.M.C., Bath. pp. 1-7, 22-33, the second of these also contains an eye-witness account of Lady Brilliana's death by Priam Davies.
 3. Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 302; R. Hutton, The Royalist War Effort, 1642-1646 (1982) pp. 3-4. It should be noted that the word "party" is not used in this study with its modern connotations of a political party, but merely to indicate a group of people holding a distinct set of opinions.

divided them from the supporters of the King. The papers collected by the Harleys during the course of 1642 and 1643 naturally reflected that awareness. In particular, the letters written by Lady Brilliana during those two years provide the most detailed single source of information about the emergence of the civil war parties inside Herefordshire. Her death in the autumn of 1643 thus removed a major observer from the scene.

The survival of so many of the papers belonging to the Harleys therefore allows a detailed analysis of the family's response to the outbreak and early stages of the First Civil War. At the same time, the lives of Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana are sufficiently well documented to permit a consideration of the major long-term influences which dictated their perceptions of the crisis of the imminent civil war. The lives of the Harleys thus illuminate many of the central debates about the Civil Wars.

A great amount of material exists relating to Sir Robert Harley's role as a leading local magnate in the forty years preceding the start of the war. Sir Robert served in six of the early Stuart Parliaments; in 1604, 1624, 1626, 1628 and the Short and Long Parliaments of 1640.⁴ When Sir Robert sat in these Parliaments he did so as an experienced local governor, well aware of the possible strains which could arise between central policies and the expectations of the localities which were affected by those policies.⁵

Like many gentlemen of his rank, Sir Robert Harley also aspired to holding court office, as well as maintaining his position as a leading candidate for local office.⁶ In 1626 Harley was appointed Master of the Mint, through the influence of his father-in-law and Secretary

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4. M. of P., 448, 458, 469, 479, 481, 489. The D.N.B. omits Harley's service in 1626 and 1628 and states that Harley served in 1614, although I have found no evidence to support this.
 5. See T.G. Barnes, Somerset 1625-1640: A County's Government during the "Personal Rule" (Cambridge, Mass., 1961).
 6. Russell, Parliaments. pp. 32-34.

of State, Lord Edward Conway. Harley was relieved of this post in 1633, ostensibly because the previous Master still had a legal interest in the position. Conway's death in 1631 and Harley's puritanism were, however, elements which also contributed to Harley's loss of office.⁷

Sir Robert's career as a gentry magnate thus raises a number of interesting questions - for example, could his opposition to the Crown in the 1640s be traced to any signs of opposition to the Crown in earlier Parliaments? How was his support for Parliament during the Civil Wars linked to his puritanism, if at all? Was the loss of office in the 1630s a factor in determining his Parliamentarianism in the 1640s? These are all questions which require a long term analysis of Sir Robert's life and career.

Similarly, a large number of the personal papers of Lady Brilliana Harley have survived, which also allow an extended consideration of her life before the outbreak of the war. Lady Brilliana's commonplace book, for example, which she started to keep in 1622, demonstrates aspects of her puritanism, which will be discussed at length in a later chapter.⁸ Furthermore, nearly 400 letters written by Lady Brilliana between 1625 and her death in 1643 have survived. These letters were mainly addressed to her husband and to her eldest son, Edward, and contain a wealth of detail about the Harleys both before and during the outbreak of the war.

Unfortunately, none of the letters written to Lady Brilliana by either Sir Robert or Edward Harley appear to have survived. It is probable that their letters were lost in the early years of the war.

7. Harley's career as Master of the Mint is discussed in Aylmer, King's Servants pp. 372-379. Harley was reinstated as Master in 1643 by order of Parliament, C.J., III, 69, 72, 73.

8. See below, Chapter 3.

Lady Brilliana may herself have destroyed them at the start of the first siege of Brampton Bryan in July 1643, since she would not have wanted the letters to fall into the hands of the Royalists. Alternatively, the letters may have been damaged as a consequence of the second, successful siege of Easter 1644.

Nevertheless, a great amount of information about the entire family can be extracted from Lady Brilliana's letters alone. Her letters to Sir Robert and Edward Harley informed them of personal matters, about their family and the estate, as well as keeping them abreast of local affairs and attitudes. Lady Brilliana's letters also contain an unrivalled portrayal of provincial interest in, and local reactions to, events beyond the county borders. The early 1640s witnessed an apparent explosion in the availability of news about national affairs.⁹ Yet, interest in newsworthy events clearly pre-dated the Long Parliament, and is evident in Lady Brilliana's letters written in the 1620s and 1630s as well. There is nothing to suggest that the Harleys were unusual in this respect, indeed Lady Brilliana's letters show that contact with the world outside the county was a constant and natural feature of county life. Servants, other gentry families, tradesmen, were all involved in frequent travel to London and other towns. They carried with them news of the provinces and they returned with news of national interest.

Such a pattern of county life is at odds with the notion of the inward-looking "county community", which has been the major theme of so many of the county studies of this period. The concept of the "county community" relies heavily upon tracing the links between the county gentry as evidence of the close-knit, localist nature of county

9. P. Zagorin, The Court and the Country: The Beginning of the English Revolution (Reprint 1977), pp. 203-206.

life in the early Stuart age.

The loyalties which were created by the personal and official bonds of the gentry were clearly influential factors in the life of the English counties before the onset of the Civil Wars, and also played some part in the course of the Wars. Yet it is also the case that the role of localism has been overstated by some historians, who have concentrated on the evidence of insularity to the exclusion of other aspects of county life. A number of studies have thus questioned the assumption that loyalty to the "county community" was the most potent element in the lives of seventeenth century Englishmen.

Despite these criticisms, the structure of gentry relationships which underpins the concept of the "county community" does have validity as an analytical tool. Bonds of friendship and kinship certainly existed among the county gentry and could be strengthened by the role of the leading gentry as governors in their counties. At the same time, it should not be overlooked that such associations as developed between the gentry were also under numerous pressures. Local society was characterised by rifts and feuds as much as by harmonious social relationships.

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10. For example A.M. Everitt, Suffolk and the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660 (Suffolk Records Society III, 1960); idem, The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion (Leicester, 1966), hereinafter referred to as Everitt, Kent; idem, Change in the Provinces: The Seventeenth Century (Leicester, 1969); idem, The Local Community and the Great Rebellion (Historical Association, 1969), hereinafter referred to as Everitt, Local Community; J.S. Morrill, Cheshire 1630-1660: County Government and Society during the English Revolution (Oxford, 1974), hereinafter referred to as Morrill, Cheshire; idem, The Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War, 1630-1650 (1976), hereinafter referred to as Morrill, Provinces; Fletcher, Sussex.
 11. See full discussion below, Chapters 5 and 6, passim.
 12. A. Hughes, 'Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1625-1650' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Liverpool, 1979); C. Holmes, Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire (Lincoln, 1980), hereinafter referred to as Holmes, Lincolnshire.

Furthermore, the links between the gentry were not the sole constructs of local society. Within the counties loyalties could be based on other relationships, such as those which developed between local magnates and their dependents, or on relationships based on religious sympathies. A major feature of this study will thus be the investigation of the strength of county gentry loyalties for the Harleys and how they interacted or conflicted with other loyalties.

As a family which had been established in Herefordshire for over three hundred years, the Harleys were well integrated into the social networks within the county. As a major landowner in Herefordshire, Sir Robert Harley was also accepted into the higher echelons of county government.¹³ The Harleys were originally a Shropshire family who had married into Herefordshire. In 1309 Brampton Bryan had become the property of an earlier Sir Robert Harley through the inheritance of his wife. By 1603 the bulk of the Harley estates lay in Herefordshire, although Thomas Harley, Sir Robert's father, also owned lands in the two adjacent counties of Shropshire and Radnorshire.¹⁴

The ties which had developed between the Harleys and other Herefordshire gentry families resulted in what might be termed a feeling of "gentry community" amongst the leading county gentry, rather than a feeling of "county community". The loyalties to the county "gentry community" were based on the gentry's shared perceptions of their roles as county spokesmen, strengthened by the social bonds of the

13. See below, Chapter 2.

14. Visitation of Shropshire, I, 213-215; Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Herefordshire, an Inventory of the Historical Monuments (1934-37), III, 20; Marriage Settlement, 12 February 1603, Harley MSS., Bundle 30a.

gentry. Such loyalties were not, however, strong enough to avoid the consequences of civil strife in the 1640s, yet neither did they collapse at the very start of the Civil Wars. Thus Lady Brilliana's fortitude in staying in a county which was so hostile to supporters of Parliament was recognised by both parties involved in the conflict.

In August 1642 Lady Brilliana was visited by Sir William Croft, one of the most active Royalist Commissioners of Array in the county, who declared her to be "my Lord Conway's daughter, my Lord Conway's sister and Sir Robert Harley's wife, and a woman of a great spirit"¹⁵. In an account of the siege, Lady Brilliana was later described with a similar admiration for her strength of spirit, by Priam Davies, a Parliamentary captain, who helped to defend the castle during the siege:-

"her gallant resolution, her admirable wisdom in government, her earnest zeal in religion, her care of all our preservations, her encouragement in greatest difficulties, had so drawn all our hearts to the admiration and honour of her perfections, that her commands carried us into the cannon's mouth"¹⁶.

That Lady Brilliana Harley was capable of drawing the admiration of both of these men is not necessarily surprising. Croft and Davies were

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15. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 11 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 305r-304v.
 16. H.M.C., Bath, p. 28. Two other women who remained in command of their homes under siege were Lady Mary Bankes, who helped to defend Corfe Castle, Dorset, against the Parliamentarians between 1643 and 1646; and the Countess of Derby, who defended Lathom House throughout a three month siege in 1644, see G. Bankes, The Story of Corfe Castle....(1853), pp. 180-193, 210-219 and E. Halsall, A Journal of the Siege of Lathom House, in Lancashire, Defended by Charlotte de la Tremouille, Countess of Derby against Sir Thomas Fairfax Knight, and other Parliamentarian Officers, 1644 bound with J. Hutchinson (ed.). Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson.... (1902), pp. 491-516. Fairfax, it should be noted, had married Anne Vere, Lady Brilliana's first cousin, Lewis, Letters. p.xiii.

both linked to the Harleys through ties of kinship and both men knew the Harleys well. Sir William Croft, as a member of the major gentry of the county, had also served on the Herefordshire bench of justices with Sir Robert Harley and had supported Sir Robert's election to the Short Parliament.¹⁷

Yet, however strong the feelings of friendship and sympathy between the gentry may have been before 1642, they by no means excluded loyalties to groups of relatives or friends beyond the county borders. Before the Civil Wars the lives of many of the major county gentry consisted in large measure of contact with, and interaction between, both the county and the outside world. The lives of the Harleys provide a well documented example of how a family could be part of a local "gentry community", while simultaneously maintaining interests and ties which cut across county boundaries.

Both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana Harley had experienced life outside Herefordshire. Sir Robert had matriculated at Oxford University in 1597 and had completed his studies at the Middle Temple. In 1623 he became a member of the Welsh Council and in 1626 attained court office as Master of the Mint.¹⁸ Sir Robert's experience as a "parliament man" also gave him the opportunity to meet people away from the confines of the county.

17. For the relations between the three families see below, Chapter 2, pp. 110, 111-112. Croft first served as a J.P. c. 1626, see G. McParlin, 'The Herefordshire Gentry in County Government, 1625-1661' (Ph. D. Thesis, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1981), p. 249; for Croft's support of Harley in the Short Parliament elections see Hereford and Worcester County R.O., Croft MSS., S33/8.

18. Foster, Alumni, 651; H.A.C. Sturgess (ed.), Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple (1949), I, 75; H.M.C. Thirteenth Report Appendix, pt., IV (1892), p. 270; C.S.P.D., 1625-1626, p. 469.

At the time of her marriage to Sir Robert in 1623, Lady Brilliana Harley was an outsider in Herefordshire. She was the second daughter of Sir Edward Conway of Ragley Hall, in Warwickshire, and had been born on the continent in 1600 or 1601, when her father had been Lieutenant-Governor of the cautionary town of Brill - hence Brilliana's unusual christian name. Brilliana spent her earliest years in the Netherlands and was naturalised by private Act of Parliament in 1606, which may have been the date of her first residence in England. Thereafter she doubtless spent some time at Ragley before her marriage to Harley.

Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana Harley both had a wide circle of relatives living outside Herefordshire. Sir Robert had strong connections with gentry families in Shropshire and Kent and, after her marriage, Lady Brilliana retained contact with her relatives in Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Lincolnshire and London, amongst other places.

Such links provided a system of communication and influence which was separate from the county, but which could also affect county life. In 1639, for example, Sir Robert Harley was able to avoid the onerous office of the shrievalty of Herefordshire, through the outside influence of one of Lady Brilliana's brothers. Yet the Harleys were not interested in the outside world in terms of their personal contacts alone. Both Sir Robert and his wife were deeply interested in national and international affairs and were eager to receive information both from private letters and from the printed sources which were becoming increasingly available during the 1620s.

In these experiences of the world beyond the confines of their county, the Harleys were in no respect atypical of the leading gentry in Herefordshire. Some of the major Herefordshire gentlemen had attended

19. Lewis, Letters, p. xiii; H.L.R.O., Bill for Naturalising the Children of Sir Edward Conway, 3 Jac. I. no. 50.

20. See below, Chapter 1 passim.

21. Lewis, Letters, p. 73; Harley was a candidate for the shrievalty that year, see P.R.O., C227/29.

seats of learning outside the county and many of them had wives or
 22
 mothers from outside the county. Many of them also served as M.P.s,
 either for their own county or for other constituencies, and many
 23
 pursued court or other outside offices. Before the Civil Wars the
 Harleys were accepted as members of the governing class in the county,
 not only at an official level, which is reflected in Sir Robert Harley's
 role as a county governor, but also on a personal level. The Harleys
 were on friendly terms with many of the leading gentry, including men
 who would later support the King such as Sir William Croft, Viscount
 24
 Scudamore and Sir Walter Pye the younger.

In one respect however, the Harleys did differ markedly from their
 fellow gentry in Herefordshire. The Harleys were alone amongst the
 major gentry in the county in espousing puritanism. It is this, more
 than anything else, which separated the Harleys from other leading gentry
 families in the county. It is also an important element in the
 Harleys' decision to oppose the King during the Civil Wars. The
 Harleys' puritanism thus raises a number of questions about the relation-
 ship between their religious attitudes and their support for Parliament.

The importance of religious feeling in creating the conditions for
 Civil War in England has been recognised in many works. S.R. Gardiner's
 unequalled history of England between 1603 and the Interregnum, was a

22. No systematic study of the entire county gentry of Herefordshire has been undertaken, but an analysis of the J.P.s in 1636 shows that just over half attended the Universities or Inns of Court, while just under three-quarters of them married women from outside Herefordshire, McParlin, 'Thesis', pp. 252, 266. These figures are based on a group of nineteen men.
23. See below, Chapter 1, n. 7.
24. See below, Chapter 2, passim; see also, Sir Walter Pye the younger to Harley, 10 February 1639/40, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 254r.

massive monument to his vision of the Civil Wars as a "Puritan Revolution", which liberalised the English Constitution. Gardiner's concept of puritanism bearing fruit in constitutional liberty has had a lasting influence on the work of successive historians.

In the conclusion to his work on Elizabethan Parliaments, J.E. Neale noted that "from the constitutional point of view, the most important theme in our story is the relationship of the Puritan Movement to parliamentary development". In a seminal lecture, Wallace Notestein observed that, following the Reformation, "the individual was bound to be less a part of a Commons' mob that shouted 'yea' or 'nay' to what was proposed, he was bound to find ways of expressing his particular opinion in more orderly fashion and with method and precision. He was likely to be more eager to do so, as he grew Puritan". More recently P. Zagorin has written "like most of the Country leaders of Charles I's time, the Elizabethan oppositionists were Puritan sympathisers, critical of the church establishment and bent on further reformation".

This seeming orthodoxy has been challenged by Professor Russell, who has boldly asserted that "this ideological gulf between 'government' and 'opposition' is impossible to find in Parliament before 1640" and "it is remarkable how hard it is to discover a 'puritan opposition' in the 1620s". Professor Russell's masterly study of the Parliaments

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25. Gardiner, History; idem, History of the Great Civil War, 1642-1649, 4 Vols. (1893), hereinafter referred to as Gardiner Civil War; idem, History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1660 4 Vols. (1903).
26. J.E. Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 1584-1601 (1957) p. 436
27. W. Notestein, The winning of the Initiative by the House of Commons The Raleigh Lecture on History, 1924 (Reprint, 1971) p. 48.
28. P. Zagorin, op. cit., p. 76.
29. C. Russell, 'Parliamentary History in Perspective, 1604-1629' History LXI (1976), 18; Russell, Parliaments, p. 26.

of the 1620s has undoubtedly increased our understanding of the politics of the period. The writings of Professor Russell and other "revisionist" historians have generated a debate which has served to clarify the concept of "opposition" in the early Stuart Parliaments.

In a critique of revisionism, Professor Rabb has written "cannot the term 'opposition' be descriptive without necessarily implying a resounding Whig view of English history?" Professor Rabb goes on to demonstrate the significance of the "persistent and rising expression of opposition to official policies from 1604 onward".³⁰ Whilst the importance of the roles of Parliament and of principled opposition to the history of early Stuart England have thus been usefully reassessed, the precise links between puritanism and parliamentary opposition during the period 1604-1640 have still to be re-examined.

Some of the associations between puritanism and Parliamentarianism are, however, well established. Several major works have confirmed the connection. In his study of the Yorkshire gentry Dr. Cliffe notes that "on the parliamentarian side it was the Puritans who represented by far the most important element". The more general studies produced by Drs. Morrill and Fletcher concur in their findings that many of the Parliamentarians were "puritan activists".³¹

Yet Dr. Cliffe also insists that "the idea that the Civil War was pre-eminently a conflict over religion is no longer seriously entertained". Furthermore, in Kent Professor Everitt has found that "few

30. T.K. Rabb, 'Revisionism Revised: The Role of the Commons', Past and Present XCII (1981), 66.

31. J.T. Cliffe, The Yorkshire Gentry: From the Reformation to the Civil War (1969), p. 361; Morrill, Provinces p. 50; Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 405. In his study of the Lancashire gentry Dr. Blackwood suggests that three-quarters of the Parliamentarian families were puritan, but his definition of puritan has been criticised by Dr. Morrill as inadequate, see B.G. Blackwood, The Lancashire Gentry and the Great Rebellion, 1640-1660 (Manchester, 1978), pp. 63-66; J.S. Morrill, 'The Northern Gentry and the Great Rebellion', Northern History, XV (1979), 76-77.

of these parliamentarians seem to have had strong religious convictions".³² The Harleys thus provide an interesting case study in the light of this debate.

Just as puritanism has been seen by many political historians as having a central role in the formation of opposition to the Crown in the 1640s, so also have socio-economic historians acknowledged the crucial role of puritanism as a motive force behind the outbreak of the Civil Wars.

The Marxist analysis, which presented the wars as a bourgeois revolution, has had a major influence on the work of many historians, who have widened the debate concerning the relationship between religious and economic forces. This debate found academic refinement most notably in the works of M. Weber and R.H. Tawney, who traced the links between the rise of Protestantism, and in particular the spread of puritanism, and the growth of capitalism.³³

The complex influence of puritanism on the socio-economic history of "Pre-Revolutionary England" has been further developed in the extensive works of Christopher Hill, who regards puritanism as "perhaps the most important complex of ideas that prepared men's minds for revolution", with the caveat that "it was not the only one".³⁴

The importance accorded to puritanism by these writers masks the fact that puritanism is by no means an easily definable constant. Thus the definition of the term has become one of the most vexatious problems

32. Cliffe, op. cit., p. 343; Everitt, Kent, p. 117.

33. M. Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1930); R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (1926).

34. C. Hill, Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution (Panther paperback edition 1972), p.6; see also idem, Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century (1958); idem, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England (Panther paperback edition 1969), hereinafter referred to as Hill, Society and Puritanism.

of modern historiography. The difficulties encountered in defining "puritan" stem largely from the contemporary confusion which surrounded the word. Contemporaries did not apply the term consistently and there was thus no definitive meaning of "puritan" in the early Stuart period. In general it was a term that carried the stigma of abuse.

Christopher Hill has charted the many meanings which the word carried - it could denote a Separatist, or someone who wished to reform the Church from within. The term translated readily from the religious to the secular sphere and was used to label those who advocated an anti-Spanish foreign policy, and was also used of the political opponents of the Crown's domestic policies. Dr. Hill concludes that "there was a core of doctrine about religion and Church government, aiming at purifying the Church from inside".³⁶

Modern usage of the term has become as complex as that of contemporaries: some historians include Separatists under the term "puritan", others exclude the Separatist tradition.³⁷ Some historians stress the reforming nature of puritanism, arguing that puritans saw the Elizabethan Settlement as incomplete. Others deny that puritanism centred on church reforms and argue instead that puritanism can only be defined as "a certain style of evangelical protestantism".³⁸

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35. B. Hall, 'Puritanism: the problem of Definition' in G.J. Cuming (ed.), Studies in Church History, II (1965), 283-296 and P. Christianson, 'Reformers and the Church of England under Elizabeth I and the early Stuarts', Journal of Ecclesiastical History, XXXI (1980), 463-482.
36. Hill, Society and Puritanism, pp. 15-30.
37. H.C. Porter, Puritanism in Tudor England (1970), p. 9; Hall, loc. cit., 290-4.
38. H. Davies, The Worship of the English Puritans (Glasgow, 1948) p. 11; P. Lake, 'Matthew Hutton - A Puritan Bishop?', History, LXIV (1979), 202.

The profuse lack of agreement amongst historians lies in the problems outlined above, the abusive context in which the word was frequently used and the lack of any formal definition of an abrasive nickname by contemporaries. The essence of puritanism is thus not easily definable, indeed it may not even be desirable to formulate a rigid definition of the term. Puritanism contained an array of perceptions, beliefs and responses, which were not necessarily common to all puritans and which were not solely the property of puritan thought. Thus any hard and fast definition will either prove too exclusive or too inclusive.

The difficulties involved in describing puritanism have been recognised by Professor Collinson, who believes that "with the Puritans we are still in the full flush of the Reformation At no point is it possible to distinguish absolutely between Puritanism and, so to speak, mere Protestantism.³⁹ Thus our own understanding of the word "puritan" will have to remain flexible as that of contemporaries, if we are to avoid creating groups and categories which simply did not exist.

The difficulties associated with using the term "puritan" are such that it is possible to make a case for abandoning the word altogether.⁴⁰ Yet both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana recognised that some of their contemporaries regarded them as puritans in the late 1630s and early 1640s, and for this reason the term has been retained in the present study.⁴¹ It is taken here to exclude the Separatists, since the Harleys and their circle saw clear divisions between themselves and the Separatists, which will be considered in Chapter 3, below.

39. P. Collinson, 'Towards a Broader Understanding of the early dissenting Tradition' in C.R. Cole, and M.E. Moody (eds.), The Dissenting Tradition: Essays for Leland H. Carlson (Athens, Ohio, 1975), p. 11.

40. R.T. Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649 (Oxford 1979) pp. 5-6.

41. P.R.O., S.P., 16/320/13, 334/41; Lewis Letters, p. 40.

That the Harleys were puritans does not, however, mean that they were therefore members of a subversive movement, whose machinations were bound to culminate in the overthrow of the Stuart monarchy. Prior to the 1620s, the established Church was sufficiently broad based to accommodate puritans such as the Harleys.⁴² This was partly because the puritanism of the Harleys did not necessarily centre on the need to press for Church reforms. Lady Brilliana's commonplace book makes no mention of Church reforms, and there is no evidence that either Sir Robert or Lady Brilliana favoured the abolition of episcopacy until several months after the opening of the Long Parliament.

Furthermore, some of the reforms advocated by the Harleys, such as due observance of the sabbath, the abolition of pluralism and the restoration of impropriated income to the Church, would also have been welcomed by some of the Elizabethan and Stuart Bishops.⁴³ Nor did the Harley's puritanism entail any opposition to the Crown before the rise of Arminianism, as is reflected in Sir Robert Harley's close working relationship with his father-in-law, Secretary Conway, in Parliaments in the mid-1620s, and in Sir Robert's support for Buckingham in the Parliaments of 1626 and 1628.⁴⁴

The growth of Arminianism marked the turning point, however, in the

42. N. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, Arminianism and Counter-Revolution', in Russell, Origins pp. 119-143.
43. Lewis, Letters, p. 14; C.J., II, 431, 438, 555; paper headed "notes 29 September 1632" in Harley's hand B.L., Loan 29/27 part I; Russell, Parliaments, p. 26; C. Hill, Economic Problems of the Church (1956), pp. 225, 264, hereinafter referred to as Hill, Economic Problems.
44. Harley's relationship with Conway is discussed below, Chapter I pp. 54-59, 80-81, 83-84. For Harley's support of the Duke in 1626 and 1628 see Russell, Parliaments, pp. 281-2, 290, 294, 303-304; 1628 Debates, IV, pp. 248, 266.

Harleys' position within the Church. The Harleys regarded the sacerdotalism and stress on Church ornamentation of Arminianism as heralding the re-introduction of Catholicism into England.⁴⁵ Their experience of the Church under Laudian control, persuaded the Harleys that only a restraint on the power of the Bishops could safeguard the Church against future corruption.

By the beginning of 1641 both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana favoured restriction of episcopal powers or, alternatively, abolition of the episcopal office. The Harleys were convinced that the powers of the Bishops should not remain intact.⁴⁶ Although the leading non-puritan gentry in Herefordshire agreed with the Harleys in their belief that the excesses of the Laudian Bishops should be checked, they believed that the removal of Laudian Church innovations would constitute sufficient reform. The fate of episcopacy was to become a divisive issue between Parliamentarians and Royalists in Herefordshire, as it was throughout the country.⁴⁷

Even before the 1640s, however, the Harley's puritanism had been a distinctive feature of their lives. Their religious attitudes moulded the ways in which the Harleys perceived all the events in their lives at personal, local and national levels. The Harleys actively sought the company of other godly folk and ultimately the sense of community which they shared with other puritans was stronger than their loyalty to their county, it persuaded the Harleys to defy the King in spite of the ensuing rift within local society.

The Harleys were joined in their support of Parliament by other puritans in Herefordshire and Brampton Bryan became a focus for Parliamentarian aspirations in the county until the garrison there fell to

45. 1628 Debates, II, 86.

46. See Below, Chapter 4, pp. 203-206.

47. Webb, Memorials, II, 337-338; nine Herefordshire J.P.s to Harley, 5 March 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 228v-229r; Fletcher, Outbreak. pp. 283-286.

the Royalists at Easter 1644. Thereafter, Parliamentary influence in the county was almost completely extinguished until the capture of Hereford in December 1645 by Colonel John Birch. The county then remained
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under permanent Parliamentary control.

This study ends with the fall of the garrison at Brampton Bryan. The problems facing the Parliamentarians in the county after they gained control there were very different from the problems facing the small group of Parliamentarians at the start of the war, when the prompt action of the Commissioners of Array ensured the initial Royalist supremacy in Herefordshire. This work divides naturally into two parts. The first half concerns the lives of the Harleys before the calling of the Long Parliament, the second half is devoted to the events from the start of the Long Parliament, until the death of Lady Brilliana Harley. The issues which concerned the Harleys at the start of the Long Parliament were a similar mixture of localism and outside influences, concern for gentry unity and the pull of religious affinities, which had characterised their perceptions and beliefs in previous years.

48. For the fall of the garrison, see H.M.C., Bath, pp. 28-33; for the history of the county thereafter, see G.E. Aylmer, 'Who was Ruling in Herefordshire from 1645-1661?', T.W.N.F.C., XL (1970-1972); E. Heath-Agnew, Roundhead to Royalist: A Biography of Colonel John Birch, 1615-1691 (Hereford, 1977); McParlin, "Thesis", pp. 86-227.

PART I

THE HARLEYS, SOCIETY AND RELIGION BEFORE THE LONG PARLIAMENT

THE WELSH BORDER SOUTHERN COUNTIES



CHAPTER I

THE HARLEYS AND THE WORLD BEYOND THE COUNTY BOUNDARY

The concept of gentry loyalty to the "county community" has been a dominant theme in the historiography of seventeenth century England for the past two decades. The proponents of the "county" school of history have argued that the national community and the local community formed two distinct and often conflicting organisms; when the demands of central and local government clashed, the localism of the gentry proved¹ to be a stronger force than their loyalty to a national identity.

This approach has been questioned by Dr. Ann Hughes in her thesis on Warwickshire, where she has detected a lack of "county-mindedness" amongst the Warwickshire gentry both before and during the years of civil war. Similar conclusions have been reached by Professor Clive Holmes in his study of Lincolnshire, in which he demonstrates that Lincolnshire was "tied in by a complex series of interactions to the 'nation', and national consciousness was strong."²

Professor Holmes has taken this argument further in an article, which re-examined the idea of the "county community" finding that "seventeenth century England was more than a union of partially independent county-states. Many of its inhabitants, particularly the gentry, were well informed and deeply concerned about national religious and constitutional issues. They participated in a national political culture."³

The work of Dr. Hughes and Professor Holmes has served as a salutary reminder to historians that there was more than one aspect to people's lives in the early seventeenth century. Yet their findings cannot be

1. Everitt, Local Community, p. 5.

2. Hughes, 'Thesis', passim; Holmes, Lincolnshire, p. 263.

3. C. Holmes, "The County Community in Stuart Historiography", J.B.S. XIX (1979-1980), 73.

regarded as a total invalidation of the research of the "county historians". There were undoubtedly times when the gentry did think in terms of their allegiance to their county, just as there were times when they thought in terms of national allegiance. Perhaps the most important point to be made is, however, that the early Stuart period should not be viewed solely in terms of the competing strengths of local and national loyalties.

A sense of loyalty or community could also be based on the immediate family; on the extended family of relatives and friends; on religious affinities; on the level of the estate, the parish, the county, or the wider area of the diocese; as well as on a national level. All of these groupings co-existed for the most part without clashing. It was at moments of conflict that the patterns of allegiances were seen at their clearest, because it was precisely then that people appealed to their loyalties as a justification for their actions or as a means of gaining support.⁴

This chapter will examine the nature of the links which the Harleys had with areas other than their home county, including their manifest interest in national and international events. Particular attention will be given to the ways in which religious affinities moulded the Harleys' relationships with other people, as well as influencing their perceptions of national and international affairs. In some respects the Harleys will emerge from this study as atypical, but the Harleys also had much in common with the other leading gentry families in

4. Some of the clearest statements of localism were made in response to demands for extra-parliamentary taxation, see below. Ch. 2, pp. 121-125. Similarly, appeals to gentry unity become particularly obvious in Herefordshire during the critical months of June - December 1642, just when the gentry were dividing in their allegiance to either King or Parliament, see below, Ch. 6 pp. 291-292, 296-297.

Herefordshire, as the course of this chapter will indicate.

The position of the Harley family home, Brampton Bryan, in the north-west of Herefordshire, gave the Harleys the opportunity for contacts with the two neighbouring shires of Shropshire and Radnorshire, (Fig. 1). Sir Robert owned land in both of these counties and around 1641 he was described as "a man largely estated in Radnorshire".⁵

The Harleys were not, of course, the only Herefordshire gentry who owned land outside the county. Viscount Scudamore of Holme Lacy, (who was returned with Sir Robert Harley to Parliament in 1624 to represent the shire), owned property in Gloucestershire and a town house in Petty France in London. Fitzwilliam Coningsby of Hampton Court, (who, with Sir Robert Harley, represented the shire in the Long Parliament), owned land in Shropshire, Worcestershire and Leicestershire.⁶

Sir Robert Harley's three marriages to women from outside Herefordshire also provided him with an unusually high number of family links with other counties, although exogamous marriage was not uncommon amongst the greater gentry in the county. The eight men, excluding Sir Robert, who represented Herefordshire as knights of the shire from 1604 until the beginning of the Long Parliament, between them contracted a total of eleven marriages, only two of which were to women native to Herefordshire. The eight were Sir Herbert Croft, Sir James Scudamore, Viscount Scudamore, Fitzwilliam Coningsby, John Rudhall, Sir Giles Bridges, (later Baronet Bridges), Sir Walter Pye, (Attorney - General of the

5. Petition of Robert Bidwell and Robert Howle, undated, circa 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 137v-138r.

6. M. of P., 458; Viscount Scudamore to Harley, 13 January 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/121; Folger Library, Scudamore MSS., Vb 2 (2,6); M.F. Keeler, The Long Parliament, 1640-1641: A Biographical Study of its Members (Philadelphia, 1954), p. 139. Coningsby was expelled from the Commons on 30 October 1641, for his connection with the soap monopoly. His eldest son was elected in his place, ibid., pp. 139-140.

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Court of Wards), and his son, also named Sir Walter Pye.

Thus the pattern of the Harleys' contacts beyond their own county should be compared with those of the other local major gentry families. Most of the greater gentry in Herefordshire had connections beyond the confines of their home county, which were peculiar to themselves and which argue against the insularity of the leading inhabitants of the county. Sir Walter Pye, the elder, was Attorney-General of the Court of Wards from 1621 until his death in 1636.⁸ Sir William Croft attended the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Buckingham on their trip to Madrid in 1623 and was a gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Prince Charles.⁹ Viscount

7. M. of P., 443, 451, 458, 464, 469, 475, 481, 489; T.L. Moir, The Addled Parliament of 1614 (Oxford, 1958), pp. 32, 33; C.J. Robinson, A History of the Mansions and Manors of Herefordshire (1873), pp. 35, 82, 87, 88, 142, 143, 148, hereinafter referred to as Robinson, Mansions; G.E.C., Complete Baronetage, II, 151. That the influence of these men spread beyond Herefordshire is also instanced by the occasions on which they were elected to Parliament for constituencies outside Herefordshire; Sir Herbert Croft sat for Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire in 1589 and Launceston, Cornwall in 1597. Sir Walter Pye the elder sat for Brecon, Breconshire, in 1621, 1624 and 1625; he was returned to both Brecon and Herefordshire in 1626 and 1628 and preferred Herefordshire both times. Pye's son, then Walter Pye, served for Brecon in 1628. He was returned for both Wendover, Buckinghamshire and for Herefordshire in the Short Parliament and preferred Herefordshire. Sir Giles Bridges sat for Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire in 1621. John Rudhall was returned for West Looe, Cornwall in 1626, M. of P. 426, 432, 455, 462, 467, 469, 473; C.J., I, 818; M. of P., 479, 480, 481; C.J., II, 6; M. of P., 451, 468; see also below, Appendix I.
8. D.N.B., XVI, 514.
9. P.R.O., S.P., 14/146/86, 103, 148/62; S.P. 94/26/106, 27/67, 28/40; O.G.S. Croft, The House of Croft of Croft Castle (Hereford, 1949), p.88. I am grateful to Mr. Roger Lockyer for the references to State Papers Foreign.

Scudamore was a friend of William Laud, who visited Holme Lacy in 1625 and the two men maintained a regular correspondence thereafter.

Scudamore undertook to write to Laud about "anything which should occur concerning the Church" during his service as English Ambassador to France in the 1630s.¹⁰

Scudamore served as Ambassador in Paris between 1635 and 1639; his brother Barnabus travelled to France in 1636 and his brother-in-law, John Scudamore of Ballingham, travelled to France and Italy in 1638.¹¹

Robert Kyrle of Walford fought for the Swedes and the Dutch as a mercenary and returned to England in 1642.¹²

Furthermore, the major gentry of every county were commonly involved in the educational experience of the Universities and the Inns of Court.¹³ Harley himself entered Oriel College, Oxford on 9 April 1597, he graduated B.A. on 12 July 1599 and was admitted to the Middle Temple in October 1599, where he remained until at least January 1601.¹⁴ During his time at these two institutions Harley met many men who would forge prominent careers for themselves in later life. Some forty years after his matriculation at Oxford, Sir Robert Harley thus recalled one of his former colleagues at Oriel, who had become a chief official in the Welsh Council:-

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10. H.R. Trevor-Roper, Archbishop Laud, 1573-1643 (1940), pp. 62-63, 76, 437-456; B.L., Add., MSS., 11,044 f. 92v.
 11. D.N.B., XVII, 1093; C.S.P.D., 1635-36, p. 354; Lewis, Letters p. 21.
 12. Webb, Memorials, II, 349.
 13. Holmes, 'The County Community etc.', J.B.S., XIX (1979-1980), 58-60.
 14. Foster, Alumni, 651; Sturgess (ed.), op. cit., 1, 75; C.H. Hopwood (ed.), Middle Temple Records (1904), I, pp. 392, 396, 410.

"Sir Marmaduke Lloyd was a pupil of our most excellent tutor, contemporary with me in Oriel College, who is now vice-president of the Council in the principality of Wales".¹⁵

Sir Robert Harley's own service in Parliaments also introduced him to men from other counties. It was probably in Parliament that Harley made the acquaintance of men such as the poet Christopher Brooke and Admiral Sir Robert Mansell. In July 1624 Brooke wrote to Harley on behalf of one of the men of Harley's trained band and father to one of Brooke's servants. Brooke observed that "the chain of friendship has many links". Both Harley and Brooke had served in the Parliament of 1624 and both had first sat in Parliament in 1604. In his letter Brooke made reference to the fact that the meeting of another Parliament would provide the opportunity for him to thank Harley:-

"I will not fail to give you thanks for it at our next meeting in parliament".¹⁶

Mansell had served in all of the Parliaments in which Sir Robert had served. In 1632 he wrote to Harley requesting his support in an impending case between himself and Sir Sackville Crowe at the Hereford Assizes.¹⁷

Not only did Harley have many contacts outside Herefordshire, but there is also some evidence to suggest that his early experience of life in Oxford and London had gone some way towards disillusioning Sir Robert with the idea of returning to his home county. In February 1604 Harley was in London, where he informed Charles Stuteville that, although he would have to return to his own "country" for a while, "he did not mind to stay there of all places, but only to go to perform his duty to his father, who had sent so often for him".

15. Draft letter from Harley to Owen, undated, B.L., Loan 29/121.

16. Brooke to Harley, 20 July 1624, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 132r; D.N.B., II, 1327.

17. Mansell to Harley, 7 March 1631/2, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 54r; D.N.B., XII, 974.

Sir Robert added that he regarded his "own country" as "the most clownish country of England". In desperation Thomas Harley had sent up no less than four men to accompany Sir Robert on his way home. If Sir Robert did return to Brampton Bryan, he was soon back in London attending the Parliament of 1604 as burgess for Radnor borough.¹⁸

The contacts with life outside the county outlined above were not confined to the gentry alone. Yet the "county" historians have concentrated their research on the gentry and have thus produced a distorted view of county life. The clergy in Herefordshire represent yet another section of the county community who had widespread contacts outside the county and who were sometimes responsible for introducing their patrons to these contacts. Furthermore, the men who held Herefordshire livings were not necessarily local men, yet the ministry is one class of society which has largely been ignored in county studies.

Sir Robert Harley presented three men to the living of Brampton Bryan and none of them were Herefordshire men; all three were puritans. The first, Thomas Peacock, was a native of Cheshire. Peacock was a fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, where James Harley, Sir Robert's half-brother, had been educated. Peacock approached James Harley when he heard that the living was vacant and was instituted in 1611, but died¹⁹ later the same year.

His replacement was Thomas Pierson, a fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, also from Cheshire. Pierson had already served as a lecturer both at Northwich and at Weaverham in Cheshire and had a wide circle of

18. B.L., Egerton MSS., 2,714 f. 363r-v; M. of P., 448.
19. Foster, Alumni, 1131; James Harley was admitted to Brasenose in 1607, he died 7 July 1618, ibid., 651; Peacock to James Harley, 13 June 1611, Peacock to Harley, 5 August and 4 October 1611, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 120r-124r; Bodl. Oxford University Archives, Chancellor's Court Wills, Vol. O-P, Hyp./B/31, will of Thomas Peacock. See also R. Bolton, A Narration of the Grievous Visitation and Dreadful Desertion of Mr. Peacock in his last Sickness (1641).

friends in that county. He had married Helen Harvey, the widow of Christopher Harvey the elder, the puritan minister of Bunbury in Cheshire. Pierson was highly regarded in academic circles and the executors of the noted puritan divine, William Perkins, invited him to edit some of Perkins' works for posthumous publication. Pierson also edited Thomas Brightman's Revelation of the Apocalypse.²⁰

Pierson's academic interests are also reflected in the very large library of books which he possessed at his death in 1633, and which contained well in excess of 400 volumes. Pierson's will stipulated that the books should be given to Sir Robert Harley, Christopher Harvey the younger, Humphrey Walcot and Richard More, for the use of thirteen²¹ ministers of the diocese.

Pierson was probably responsible for introducing Sir Robert Harley to John Bruen of Stapleford in Cheshire, a noted puritan iconoclast, who conducted a warm correspondence with Harley. Bruen had been present when Pierson and the elder Harvey had prayed and fasted for a Northwich boy believed to be "really possessed with a devil". Bruen greatly

20. Venn, Alumni, III, 332; MS. Life of Pierson, B.L., Harl., MSS., 7,517 (a second copy B.L., Lansdowne MSS., 721), the "life" is undated, but internal evidence indicates a date of c. 1699; T. Pierson, The Cure of Hurtful Cares and Fears (1636), epistle dedicatory by Pierson's step-son, Christopher Harvey, the younger. Amongst the works of Perkins, which were edited by Pierson were A Godly and Learned Exposition up on the first three chapters of Revelation (1606); The Combat Between Christ and the Devil Displayed (1606); Commentary on the 11 Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews (1607); A Godly and Learned Exposition of Christ's Sermon on the Mount (1608); P. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625 (Oxford, 1982), p. 165.
21. P.R.O., PROB. 11/164, f. 358r-v; Gower to Harley, 17 January 1634/5, B.L., Loan 29/119. Amongst Harley's papers there is a catalogue listing nearly six hundred books. Unfortunately there is no evidence to indicate the owner of this collection. Harley himself may have been the owner. It is also possible that the books were originally owned by Pierson, although the inclusion of some volumes published after Pierson's death casts some doubt on this supposition, catalogue, 12 July 1637, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 230 and 231.

respected Pierson and Harvey, and described them as "two godly preachers".²²

After Pierson's death in 1633 Stanley Gower was instituted to Brampton Bryan. He was probably from Lancashire, which is where he first met and became the protege of the famous puritan preacher, Richard Rothwell.²³ In 1621 Gower was admitted to Trinity College, Dublin, and in 1627 he became chaplain to James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh. After several years with Ussher, Gower spent some time as a minister in Sheffield, before moving to Brampton Bryan in 1634.²⁴ Gower had no intrinsic loyalty to Herefordshire and he was contemplating leaving the county in September 1642. He in fact waited until July 1643 before going to London, where he had been appointed to the Westminster Assembly. Gower did not return to his cure in Herefordshire. In 1648 he was transferred to the living of Holy Trinity in Dorchester.²⁵

22. Three letters from Bruen to Harley, one undated, 17 August 1621 and 9 February 1621/2, B.L., Loan 29/119; three letters from Bruen to Harley, 4 May 1619, 2 January 1622/3 and 10 September 1624, B.L., Loan 29/202, ff. 1r, 93r, 138r; W. Hinde, A Faithful Remonstrance of the Holy Life and Happy Death of John Bruen of Bruen Stapleford in the County of Chester, Esquire (1641) pp. 148-152.
23. Stanley Gower, 'The Life of Master Richard Rothwell, who died anno 1627', in S. Clarke (ed.), A General Martyrology (1651), p. 455.
24. G.D. Burtchaell and T.U. Sadleir (eds.), Alumni Dublinienses: A Register of the Students, Graduates, Professors and Provosts of Trinity College in the University of Dublin; 1593-1860 (Dublin, 1935), p. 337; Stanley Gower (ed.), Eighteen Sermons Preached in Oxford, 1640, by James Ussher, Lord Primate of Ireland (1659), A2; W.D.G. Fletcher, 'Institutions of Shropshire Incumbents', T.S.A.N.H.S., Series 3, V (1905), 359.
25. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 16 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 315v; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 3 July 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72 (this letter appears to be dated 1642, but the contents clearly relate to 1643); L.J., X, 638.

By ignoring the actions of the clergy, the "county" historians have overlooked a very mobile group within society. The clergy were attuned to the need to move from county to county in search of preferment and, when war commenced in 1642, the clergy felt less responsible to the county than did their gentry patrons. Having no large estates, and few servants or tenants to tie them to a particular place, a number of Herefordshire clergy were eager to uproot their families and travel to safe garrisons once danger threatened.²⁶

Other sections of the county community were also brought into contact with the world beyond their own county, because of the influence of the gentry. The Harleys sent their servants to London, Oxford and Worcester, amongst other places, and the effects of travel were not lost on this class.²⁷ In 1639 Lady Brilliana reported that their gardener "likes all well at Oxford It seems it has put him in love with travelling, for he would fain be sent again".²⁸

When Edward Harley went to Oxford University in 1638, he took with him an attendant called George Griffiths from Montgomeryshire, who matriculated at Magdalen Hall as a "servitor" on the same day as Edward Harley. After two years George began to tire of service and his father informed Lady Brilliana that George "would study divinity." George took a B.A. at Magdalen in June 1642, then proceeded to take an M.A. at Cambridge in 1645. He was to become "a notorious Independent" preacher at the Charterhouse and was later silenced for non-conformity.²⁹

The lives of local people were thus affected by influences outside the county in many different ways and the Harleys should not be regarded as abnormal, but as illustrating one of the many facets of normal county

26. See below, Chapter 6, pp. 302-303.

27. Lewis, Letters, pp. 14, 27.

28. Ibid., p. 26.

29. Foster, Alumni, 609; Lewis, Letters, pp. 112, 137.

life. The contacts which the Harleys developed outside Herefordshire will now be considered in greater detail.

The lands which the Harleys owned in Radnorshire and Shropshire made further links with these shires almost inevitable. In 1604 Sir Robert was returned to his first Parliament as burgess for Radnor and in 1606 he was pricked as Sheriff of Radnorshire. Thomas Harley had served as Sheriff of Herefordshire twice, but Sir Robert never held that office in his home county.³⁰

Just as Radnorshire provided the first stages of Sir Robert's career as a local governor, Shropshire provided the Harleys with close social ties. Thomas Harley's first wife, Sir Robert's mother, was Margaret Corbet of Moreton Corbet, Shropshire. The Corbets may well have been responsible for the earliest puritan influences in Sir Robert's life. Margaret's father, Sir Andrew Corbet, had delegated his rights as patron to the parishioners of Moreton Corbet and in 1573 the puritan non-conformist, William Axton, was inducted to the living by the parish. The religious milieu at Moreton Corbet could not have contrasted more strongly with the behaviour of Sir Robert's paternal grandfather. John Harley was a recusant, who in 1577 was described as reading loudly from a "latin, popish primer" during divine service.³¹

Sir Robert Harley was born circa 1579 and his mother had died by 1589, since in that year Thomas Harley remarried. Nevertheless, the Harleys maintained their contacts with the Corbet family long after Margaret's death. As members of the leading county gentry in Herefordshire, the Harleys were part of the group which was most likely to have

30. M. of P., 448; List of Sheriffs for England and Wales, P.R.O., Lists and Indexes, IX (1898), pp. 269, 61.

31. Lewis, Letters, p. vi; P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement (1967), p. 139, hereinafter referred to as Collinson, Puritan Movement; P.R.O., S.P., 12/118/7.I. I am grateful to Janet Hammond for this last reference.

family ties with other counties. The extensive kinship of the Harleys covered numerous English counties and provided a source of help and patronage that affected every level of the Harley's lives. The strength and the nature of the links of kinship are amply demonstrated in the relationship which persisted between the Harleys and the Corbets long after the death of Sir Robert Harley's mother.

Between 1589 and 1623 a number of the members of the Corbet family stood as trustees in Harley family estate settlements. Evidence from the mid-1620s and from 1633 has survived which shows that the Harleys' prayers in those years included their Corbet cousins. In 1626 Sir Robert's cousin, Sir Andrew Corbet, and one of Sir Robert's Corbet Aunts, stood as godparents to the Harleys' second son, Robert Harley. In 1639 and 1640 Lady Brilliana made a number of references to the Corbets in her letters to Edward Harley, including the news that "my cousin Andrew Corbet and Sir John Corbet and Mr. Pierpoint contend, who shall be knights for Shropshire" in the elections to the Short Parliament. Sir Andrew Corbet himself wrote to Harley to inform him that his candidature had failed and commenting on the "contentions" in his county.

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32. Lewis, Letters, p. vi; Marriage Settlement, 16 September 1589, Harley MSS., Bundle 67; Professor Everitt has noted for Kent that two thirds of the gentry married within the county, but amongst the minor gentry the figure was as high as four fifths, Everitt, Kent, pp. 42-43, 328.
33. Marriage Settlement, 16 September 1589, Harley MSS., Bundle 67; Marriage Settlement, 12 February 1603, Harley MSS., Bundle 30a; Settlement, 25 October 1603, Pardon for Alienation, 30 May 1606, Settlement, 1 January 1620, Marriage Settlement, 19 July 1623, Harley MSS., Bundle 83.
34. List of prayers, 17 December 1624, 8 June 1625, B.L., Loan 29/52/93; list of prayers 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, B.L., Loan 29/27 part I; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 21 April 1626, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 204r; Lewis, Letters, pp. 34, 35, 55, 86; Sir Andrew Corbet to Harley, 20 January (1640), B.L., Loan 29/172 between ff. 252 and 253.

Sir Robert Harley's connections with the Corbets also brought him into contact with other families, who had married into the Corbet family. Sir Robert was thus first cousin to Sir Richard Leveson of Lilleshall, Shropshire, and was one of the executors of Sir Richard's will. Sir Richard was one of the trustees to the marriage settlement between Sir Robert Harley and his first wife; while Sir Robert was one of the trustees to the settlement of Sir Richard's own marriage in 1605.³⁵

Sir Robert Harley was also a first cousin of Elizabeth Corbet, who married the Hampshire gentleman, Sir Henry Wallop. In 1622 Sir Robert was in correspondence with the Wallops about their son's marriage. In 1626 Harley's father-in-law, Secretary Conway, who was Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, was concerned that Wallop might show his opposition to the Forced Loan by refusing to appear at the meeting of the loan commissioners at Winchester. Conway wrote to Harley and asked him to warn Wallop to attend the meeting. Conway stated that he was unwilling for any "discontentment" to befall Wallop, because he and Harley were "near in blood"; as an inducement Conway added that he intended to make Wallop a Deputy Lieutenant and Wallop's absence would frustrate this plan.

Harley responded swiftly. He informed Conway that Wallop had left town, but was confident that "my letters will pursue him so fast, as I hope they will overtake him tomorrow and he will present your Lordship with this on Thursday at Winchester".³⁶

35. Sir Richard Leveson's father, Sir Walter, had married Anne Corbet, sister to Sir Robert Harley's mother, D.N.B., XI, 1024; Sir Richard Leveson's will, 25 March 1605, Harley MSS., Bundle 65; Marriage Settlement, 12 February 1603, Harley MSS., Bundle 30a; Marriage Settlement, 23 March 1605, Harley MSS., Bundle 35.

36. Visitation of Shropshire, I, pp. 136-137; Wallop to Harley, 29 April 1622, B.L., Loan 29/202f. 74r; Conway to Harley, 5 December 1626, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 210r-v; P.R.O., S.P., 16/41/25.

Sir Robert also had a wide circle of relatives outside Herefordshire as a consequence of his own marriages. He married three times and none of his wives was native to Herefordshire. Sir Robert's first wife was Ann Barrett of Belhouse, Essex, whom he married in 1603. Her mother was Christian Mildmay, daughter of the famous puritan Sir Walter Mildmay, the founder of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Christian Mildmay had married Charles Barrett and after his death had married Sir John Leveson of Halling in Kent. Charles Barrett had died before his daughter's marriage and Ann's dowry was thus paid by her step-father.³⁷

Although Ann Harley was to die within months of her marriage, Sir Robert remained on friendly terms with his mother-in-law, Lady Leveson. After the death of her daughter, Lady Leveson took an active interest in Sir Robert's plans to remarry. When Sir John Leveson died in 1613, Sir Robert immediately drafted a letter of consolation to his widow. During the 1620s Sir Robert was probably a guest at Lady Leveson's town house in Blackfriars on a number of occasions and was at Halling in July 1620.³⁸

Ann Harley was herself a first cousin of Mary Mildmay, wife to Francis Fane, First Earl of Westmorland. Once again the friendship between Harley and his first wife's relatives continued long after Ann Harley's death. The relationship between the two families was strengthened in 1638 when the Second Earl of Westmorland married a cousin of Lady Brilliana Harley. The Harleys' eldest son, Edward,

37. Marriage Settlement 12 February 1603, Harley MSS., Bundle 30a, D.N.B., XIII, 376.

38. B.L., Egerton MSS., 2,714 f. 363r; draft letter from Harley to Lady Leveson, 1 December 1613, B.L., Loan 29/123/39f; in the 1620s Harley received letters directed to him at Lady Leveson's house in Blackfriars, Lewis, Letters, p.1; Thomas Gataker to Harley, 25 June 1621 and Jeremy Whitaker to Harley, 12 February 1623/4, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 50v, 119v. In 1620 Harley was at Halling, see draft letter from Harley, dated at Halling 19 July 1620, B.L., Loan 29/27 part I.

maintained the amity between the Harleys and the Fanes in the 1640s. 39 50

Sir Robert Harley's second wife was Mary Newport, daughter of Sir Francis Newport of High Ercall in Shropshire. Mary was a first cousin to the Herbert family of Montgomeryshire and through the Herberts Harley was acquainted with John Donne. Sir Robert was also friendly with both George Herbert, the cleric, and his brother Sir Edward Herbert, who was later to become Lord Herbert of Cherbury in 1629. 40

Harley's friendship with Sir Edward Herbert was initially particularly close, but relations between the two men were strained by their radically differing religious outlooks. The depth of Herbert's regard for Harley is reflected in Herbert's decision in 1610 to nominate Harley as the guardian of his children in the event of his own death. 41

The feeling between the two men is further illustrated by an incident which occurred in 1617 and which Herbert later described in his memoirs in an account which indicates that the closeness between the two men was in the past:-

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39. D.N.B., XIII, 376; Mary Fane to Harley, 9 July 1623, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 101r; Sir Francis Fane to Harley, 13 September 1638, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 191r; G.E.C., Complete Peerage, XII, pt. 2, 569; Lewis, Letters, pp. 76, 105, 214, 215.
40. Lewis, Letters, p. xii; D.N.B., ix, 624; Visitation of Shropshire II, 374; John Donne to Harley, 7 April 1613, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 131r; George Herbert to Harley, 26 December 1618, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 171r-v; for Edward Herbert see D.N.B., IX, 624-631.
41. H.M.C., Salisbury (Cecil) MSS., at Hatfield, Herts. (1970), XXI, 192.

"It happened during this sickness, that I walked abroad one day towards Whitehall, where meeting one Emerson, who spoke very disgraceful words of Sir Robert Harley, being then my dear friend, my weakness could not hinder me to be sensible of my friend's dishonour; shaking him therefore by a long beard he wore, I stepped a little aside and drew my sword in the street, captain Thomas Scriven a friend of mine being not far off on one side, and divers friends of his on the other side; all that saw me wondered how I could go, being so weak and consumed as I was, but much more that I would offer to fight; howsoever, Emerson, instead of drawing his sword, ran away into Suffolk House, and afterwards informed the Lords of the Council of what I had done; who not long after sending for me, did not so much reprehend my taking part with my friend, as that I would adventure to fight being in such a bad condition of health." 42

Between 1617 and 1619 Harley and Herbert conducted a lengthy correspondence in which Harley attempted to persuade his friend that his religious rationalism was misguided. Herbert would not accept Harley's arguments and their religious differences appear to have caused a breach in their friendship.

In July 1617 Herbert wrote to Harley and advised him to "take heed of new and particular opinions, nor let the name of Church in any country or time deceive you. God's Church is all mankind, though some are his more beloved, neither does he make any, whom he denies the means to come to him"⁴³.

After many months Harley replied to Herbert in January 1618. He had clearly been taken aback by Herbert's letter and he dwelt on each point in detail. In particular he noted "you tell me God does not make any whom he denies the means to come to him, if by the means you understand Christ I think all men have it not, if you mean any other means, I deny it".

Herbert's reply and his subsequent letters to Harley indicate that

42. Edward Herbert, The Life of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Written by Himself (1827), pp. 110-111. In another incident Herbert persuaded Harley to carry a message challenging Sir John Ayres to a duel, ibid., p. 84.

43. Herbert to Harley, 17 July 1617, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 162r-v.

Herbert was in the midst of working out his own thoughts. Much of what he wrote appears ambiguous or contradictory. Harley himself noted this in his letter of January 1618, in which he wrote "of those positions which I received from you, some are so general and others so ambiguous that, till they admit some restraint and explanation, they will produce but small comfort to me".⁴⁴

In his reply to this letter, Herbert instructed Harley to read his original letter once again. He accepted that Harley opposed the notion that "God makes no man whom he gives not means to come to him". Herbert then reiterated his own views:- "for my part, I believe whosoever loves God with all his heart, which is his will, with all his mind, which is his understanding, with all his strength, which is his faith, and loves his neighbour as himself, is capable of eternal happiness, and thus far in all religions one may go".⁴⁵

Harley took this to indicate Herbert's belief that "all religions are capable of salvation" and vigorously stated his objections to this idea:-

"if I found nothing to deny in your former, sure I do in this; for if other religions can save, the Christian religion cannot, it teaching salvation only by faith in Christ Jesus according to the written word".⁴⁶

In a reply dated 8 June 1618 Herbert denied this construction of his words, but then continued "yet I think there is in every religion and ever was and ever will be enough taught to bring a man to happiness eternal, if he follows it". Herbert was well aware that these thoughts were unorthodox and in a postscript asked Harley to "keep these things to yourself, till the world be better prepared to hear them".⁴⁷

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44. Draft letter from Harley to Herbert, 12 January 1617/18, B.L., Loan 29/119.
45. Herbert to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 164 and 165.
46. Draft letter from Harley to Herbert, 6 April 1618, B.L., Loan 29/119.
47. Herbert to Harley, 8 June 1618, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 164 and 165. Herbert developed these ideas in his later printed works, see D.N.B., IX, 629-30.

The gulf between the religious beliefs of the two men was clearly placing a strain on their friendship. In 1619 Harley drafted a letter in which he noted "my dear friend, the ruin of our friendship would be a most grievous thing to me, which nothing on my part can produce, but the apparent danger of wounding a good conscience, which to prevent let us on with our conference". There are no further letters between the two men amongst Sir Robert Harley's papers until late in 1624. A draft letter from Harley to Herbert in that year confirms that they had met in London at Whitehall, but the meeting had been a sad occasion for Harley, who later informed Herbert that his love for him had been almost completely swallowed in grief:-

"for you that did then magnify the goodness of God the creator, denied his wisdom and love in the redemption of mankind only by Christ Jesus; and when I read unto you the 12th verse of the 4th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles you told me you did not believe. A boldness unsociable and to yourself without doubt most uncomfortable The God of all mercies persuade you to the belief of that truth". 48

This draft is the last extant letter between the two men amongst Sir Robert's papers, although in 1631 Sir Robert recommended a puritan cleric to Herbert, when the living of Montgomery fell vacant. Herbert did not heed Harley's advice and instead chose a man with apparent
49
Arminian leanings.

Sir Robert's friendships with other of his second wife's relatives were less tempestuous. Although Mary Harley died in 1622, Sir Robert retained his ties with some of her kin. Lady Brilliana's letters to Edward Harley contain references to the Newport family, including the news that Sir Robert's nephew, young Francis Newport, had been returned

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48. Draft letter from Harley to Herbert, 26 March 1619, B.L., Loan 29/119; draft letter from Harley to Herbert, 27 December 1624, B.L., Loan 29/27 part 1.
49. Draft letter from Harley to John Brinsley, 8 December 1631, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 42r-v; P.R.O., 30/53/7 no. 13; statement by Nathaniel Harrison, curate of Montgomery, 9 April 1637, B.L., Loan 29/172 f 138r.

as burgess of Shrewsbury to the Short Parliament. In 1641 Sir Richard Newport, Sir Robert's former brother-in-law, enlisted Sir Robert's aid in the marriage negotiations between his son, Francis, and Lady Diana
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Russell.

In July 1623 Sir Robert married for the third time and his wife, Brilliana Conway, introduced Sir Robert to a new set of family ties. Sir Robert developed a very close relationship with his new father-in-law, Sir Edward Conway, which was based on mutual affection, but which also involved the two men in the traditional relationship of client and patron.

Sir Edward Conway had made his career as a soldier and later as a diplomat. In June 1622 he had been admitted to the Privy Council through the influence of the Duke of Buckingham; this was followed by Conway's appointment as Secretary of State in January 1623, again through the influence of his patron the Duke of Buckingham. During the middle and the later years of the 1620s Conway was actively advancing his career at court. In 1625 he was created Baron Conway of Ragley, in 1627 he was created Viscount Killultagh and in the same year he was created Viscount Conway. Conway was appointed Governor of the Isle of Wight in 1624 and was appointed as Lord Lieutenant and Vice-Admiral of Hampshire in May 1625. On 14 December 1628 he was appointed Lord President
51
of the Privy Council.

50. Lewis, Letters, pp. xii, 39, 68, 69, 86, 155; Sir Richard Newport to Harley 1 November 1641 and 28 January 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 167r, 201r; draft letter from Harley to Newport, 21 January 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 199r-v, another draft of this letter bearing the same date is extant in B.L., Loan 29/27, part 1.

51. D.N.B., IV, 975-976; S.L. Adams, 'The Protestant Cause; Religious Alliance with the European Calvinist Communities as a Political Issue in England, 1558-1630' (Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1979), pp. 333, 334; G.E.C. Complete Peerage, III, 400.

Conway himself acknowledged that he owed his success at court to the offices of the Duke of Buckingham. In a letter to the Duke dated 12 April 1623 Conway wrote "I confess I owe you all that I am". Conway's normal form of address to the Duke in his letters from June 1623 onwards was "gracious patron". In turn, Buckingham relied on Conway as one of his principal advisors and during the mid-1620s' Conway was closely involved in the development of both home and foreign policies.⁵²

Conway's standing at court and his relationship with the favourite, Buckingham, had a beneficial effect on Harley's career. Not only was Harley's position in Herefordshire enhanced by his new found contact at court, but in September 1626 Conway procured the Mastership of the Mint for his son-in-law. Harley exercised authority as Master until 1633, when he was relieved of the post, officially because the previous Master still had a legal claim to the office.⁵³

In 1628 Harley was returned to Parliament, with Conway's help, as burgess for Evesham in Worcestershire. Conway secured the return of several members of his family to Parliaments in the 1620s, and had himself sat for Evesham in 1621 and 1624. In 1628 Conway wrote to the borough requesting that they return Harley as their burgess.

In the Parliaments of the 1620s Harley undoubtedly acted as Conway's agent in the Commons, although he should not be regarded as a mere cipher. His speeches concerning religion and his commitment to the war against

52. B.L., Harl. MSS., 1,580, ff. 293r, 305 et seq.; R. Lockyer, Buckingham, The Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592-1628 (1981), pp. 209, 235, 255, 268.

53. For Conway's influence on Harley's local standing see below, Ch. 2, pp. 102, 103, 115; Conway to Harley, 31 August 1626, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 208r-v, this letter made it clear to Harley that the Mastership was no sinecure. Conway advised Harley to come to town in order to satisfy "your real duty in a place of honour and trust". The history of the rival claims to the office are discussed in Aylmer, King's Servants, pp. 372-379.

Spain give ample evidence of Harley's freedom of action in the House. A further example of Harley's independence is provided by the debates which followed the imprisonment of Sir Dudley Digges and Sir John Eliot for their speeches against Buckingham in 1626. Harley was one of the most adamant in insisting that the incident touched the "liberties" of the House and he demanded that the King should inform the House of the reasons for the arrests.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, his relationship with Conway was reflected in Harley's active support for policies which had Conway's approval, particularly the attempt to prevent Buckingham's impeachment in 1626 and the grant of taxation in the Parliaments of 1626 and 1628. During the 1626 impeachment debates Harley repeatedly tried to divert the members of the House from pursuing their attacks on Buckingham. In 1628 Harley spoke against naming the Duke in the Remonstrance of grievances being prepared for presentation to the King. In his speeches in defence of the Duke, Harley did not try to exonerate Buckingham, but only to divert the House from taking extreme action against him. In 1628 Harley openly declared to the House "I stand not up to acquit him, but only that we do not name his name. Let us make him an instrument of good to the common-wealth".⁵⁵

In trying to protect Buckingham, Harley was not acting as his direct client, but rather on Conway's behalf. The complex nature of such patronage relationships is revealed in the course of the supply debates during the 1624 Parliament. In 1624 Conway urged the Commons to abandon their suggestion that the King should first declare war on Spain before the grant of subsidies could be made. In pursuing this argument Conway

54. M. of P., 479; R.E. Ruigh, The Parliament of 1624 (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 85, 135-136; M. of P., 454, 461; P.R.O., S.P., 16/93/32; Grosvenor Diary, 12 May, 17 May 1626.

55. L.J., III, 676-677; Whitelocke Diary, 24 February, 28 February, 16 March, 27 March, 2 May, 1626; Grosvenor Diary, 2 May, 4 May 1626; 1628 Debates, IV, 248.

was acting as a mouthpiece for the King, who was opposed to the Commons making the grant of subsidies conditional on a declaration of war.

It would come as no surprise if Harley had supported Conway in the House of Commons, but Harley in fact was one of the most vociferous advocates of the contrary policy, that the King should declare war before the subsidies could be granted; a policy which was also favoured by Buckingham and Prince Charles.⁵⁶ In supporting the policy adopted by Buckingham, Harley was undoubtedly acting on Conway's behalf, since the Secretary was in no position to be able to support his own patron directly. Harley's own support for war against Spain should not, however, be overlooked in this instance.

In subsequent Parliaments Harley adopted a line which was much more helpful to the Crown over the subject of grants of taxation, which was probably a further reflection of his relationship with Conway. As a principal servant of the Crown, one of Conway's chief concerns in Parliaments was the need to expedite the grant of subsidies, which in 1624 he referred to as "the wheel (which) must move all".⁵⁷ Thus in 1626 Harley spoke against making the grant of subsidies conditional on redress of grievances and advocated passing the subsidy bill simultaneously with the presentation of the Commons' grievances to the King. On 28 April 1628 Harley called for the report of the subsidy bill from committee in order to "endear his Majesty to us."

Harley returned to the matter of the subsidies on 3 June 1628. Speaking to Sir John Eliot's proposal that a Remonstrance, a list of grievances, should be drawn up by the House and presented to the King, Harley declared that the King would accept the Remonstrance if it was framed in the right way and he proposed that the preamble should be

56. Russell, *Parliaments*, pp. 177-178; Spring Diary, 11 March, 19 March 1624; *C.J.*, I, 733, 742.

57. Nicholas Diary, 1 May 1624.

"Sir we will supply you". In the session of 1629 Harley called for the reading of the Tonnage and Poundage bill, which had been opposed by Sir John Eliot and John Selden; Harley specifically called for the reading of the bill "because the King has sent for it".⁵⁸

Apart from Harley's attempts to speed up the grant of taxation in the Parliaments of 1626 and 1628, there is also evidence that Harley acted to keep Conway informed of developments in the House. On 29 April 1624, when Conway was attending the King at Windsor, he wrote to Harley asking for information about debates in the House:-

"I pray you, if you be upon any Royal points in Parliaments, or have passed any, either concerning the subsidies or otherwise, to give me an accompt thereof, that I may labour to dispose humours, and make such answers as shall be most requisite."

Harley noted three such points on the reverse of Conway's letter. These were firstly, the insertion of the names of the Council of war in the subsidy Act; secondly, that the session of Parliament should not end before the passage of "our good bills" nor should it be delayed, because then the levy of the subsidies might suffer; and finally, the House desired the expedition of the proclamation banishing Jesuits.⁵⁹

The close nature of Harley's relationship with Conway was also recognised by other people, who used Harley as an avenue of approach to Conway. In 1624 the Solicitor General, Sir Robert Heath, twice wrote to Harley asking him to secure Secretary Conway's approval firstly, for a Bill to ban the import of Spanish tobacco and secondly, for a letter to the Eastland merchants concerning the import of foreign ashes for the manufacture of soap.

In 1627 Sir Henry Marten wrote to Sir Robert Harley and asked him to

58. Whitelocke Diary, 27 March 1626; 1628 Debates, III, 130, 139, IV, 65; W. Notestein and F.H. Relf (eds.), Commons Debates for 1629 (Minneapolis, 1921), p. 108.

59. Conway to Harley, 29 April 1624, B.L., Loan 29/202, ff. 122r, 123v.

procure permission for a minister, Stephen Dennison, to dedicate a book to the King, using either his own influence or that of Lord Conway.⁶⁰

Sir Robert Harley's marriage to Conway's daughter also brought him into contact with a wide circle of Conway's relatives.

Both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana were very friendly with her uncle and aunt, Sir Horace and Lady Mary Vere. Sir Robert's acquaintance with Sir Horace pre-dated his marriage to Brilliana and was based on religious affinity, as well as the later family links between the two men. In the Parliament of 1624 Sir Robert introduced a bill for the naturalisation of Elizabeth and Mary, the daughters of the Veres, born in the Hague. Lady Brilliana's letters to Edward Harley contain a number of warm references to Lady Vere and her daughters.⁶¹

During the Parliament of 1626 Sir Robert was probably staying at the Veres' house, in the parish of Great St. Bartholomew's, since he received a number of letters from Lady Brilliana addressed to him there. In 1642 the Harleys' eldest daughter, young Brilliana, was sent to live in the household of Lady Vere in London. It was quite common for

60. P.R.O., S.P., 14/165/5, 167/46; Marten to Harley, 11 April 1627, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 211 and 223. Dennison did dedicate a printed sermon, preached in 1628, to the King - S. Dennison, The White Wolf, or a Sermon Preached at Pauls Cross, Feb. 11, being the last Sunday in Hillary Term, Anno 1627 (1627).

61. Draft letter from Harley to Vere, 14 February 1620/1, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 47r-48v. See also Vere to Harley, 30 December 1623, 25 January 1623/4, one undated letter, 6 August 1626, 25 August 1626, 11 June 1628, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 116r, between ff. 119 and 121, between ff. 121 and 122, 206r, 207r, 240r; Spring Diary, 5 March 1624; Lewis, Letters, pp. 6, 76, 105, 114, 119, 126, 132, 157, 158, 160, 168, 172.

children to be sent to live with relatives in order to complete their education for their future roles in life.⁶²

The Veres were both puritans. Like his brother-in-law, Sir Edward Conway, Sir Horace was a professional soldier, who had been Governor of the Brill from 1609-1616. Sir Horace had been able to employ a number of puritan ministers as his army chaplains and Lady Mary Vere later promoted puritan clerics through her influence with her brother-in-law,⁶³ Secretary Conway.

The Harleys were also on friendly terms with Lady Brilliana's brother, Sir Edward Conway, and with two of her sisters, Frances and Hellweigh. Frances married Sir William Pelham of Brocklesby in Lincolnshire. There were frequent communications between the Harleys and the Pelhams. The news which the Harleys received from Brocklesby ranged from the education of young Edward Pelham, (a contemporary of Edward Harley at Magdalen Hall), to the choice of a new minister for Brocklesby and Sir William Pelham's refusal to stand for election as Knight of the Shire for the Short Parliament. In 1639 and 1640 the Pelhams' letters contained news of the military preparations for the Scottish war in Lincolnshire.⁶⁴ During the Long Parliament Lady Brilliana also corresponded with Henry Pelham, who represented Grantham in that Parliament.⁶⁵

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62. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 28 February 1625/6, 13 March 1625/6, 11 May 1626, 16 June 1626, B.L., Loan 29/72; Lewis, Letters, pp. 160, 161, 168, 172; Fletcher, Sussex, p. 38.
63. D.N.B., XX, 235-239; Adams, 'Thesis' pp. 316-319, 441-443.
64. For the Harleys' correspondence with Sir Edward, later Second Viscount Conway, see below p. 81; Sir Bernard Burke, A Genealogical History of the Dormant, Abeyant, Forfeited and Extinct Peerages of the British Empire (New Edition, 1883), p. 133; Lewis, Letters, pp. 9, 27, 30, 32, 38, 59, 60, 68, 81, 87, 96, 101, 102, 104, 106, 107, 111, 114, 130, 161, 201.
65. Lewis, Letters, p. 114; Keeler, op. cit., pp. 299-300.

Hellweigh Conway married Sir Edward Smith of Theydon Mount, Essex, in 1627; Sir Robert Harley was one of the trustees to the marriage settlement. The Smiths both died within five years of their marriage and the wardship of their son Edward was granted to his uncle, Sir Edward Conway. Conway arranged for the boy to be looked after by the Harleys at Brampton Bryan, for which Sir Robert Harley received £40 per annum for Edward's maintenance and Lady Brilliana raised him with her own children.⁶⁶

Lady Brilliana was also in contact with her half-brother, Sir Giles Bray of Barrington, Oxfordshire, one of the trustees to Lady Brilliana's marriage settlement. Bray remained a friend of the Harleys until his death in 1641. Edward Harley was a visitor to Barrington several times during his stay at Oxford University and in 1639 Sir Giles requested Sir Robert Harley's advice on the possible marriage between his daughter and the son of Ambrose Elton of Herefordshire.⁶⁷

The pattern of friendships which Lady Brilliana and Sir Robert Harley developed amongst their relatives illustrate how religious precepts governed their social circle outside Herefordshire. The Harleys were thus very friendly with puritan relatives such as the Veres; in 1642 Lady Brilliana, in a letter to young Brilliana Harley, wrote of Lady Vere - "believe it there is not a wiser and better woman".⁶⁸ The Harleys also remained on very friendly terms with those of their relatives who were obviously Protestants, but Sir Robert quarrelled with Sir Edward Herbert over their religious differences and the Harleys completely ignored a number of their relatives who were Catholic recusants.

66. Marriage Settlement, 9 April 1627, Harley MSS., Bundle 27; C.S.P.D., 1631-1633, p. 378; for example, see Lewis, Letters, pp. 7, 18, 22, 28. Edward Smith later joined the King's army during the First Civil War, C.A.M. 1395.

67. Marriage Settlement, 19 July 1623, Harley MSS., Bundle 83; for example, see Lewis Letters, pp. 3, 8, 11, 17, 36, 105; Bray to Harley, 29 July 1639, B.L., Loan 29/119.

68. Lady Brilliana to Brilliana Harley, 25 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 260r.

Sir Robert Harley's aunt, Jane Mynors, who was described in 1609 as one of the principal women recusants in Herefordshire, does not figure amongst Sir Robert's social circle in the county. She was the sister of Thomas Harley and had married the Catholic Roger Mynors of Treago, Herefordshire; their son Roland was also a noted recusant. The Harleys apparently ignored the existence of the Mynors in the county. In a society in which family relationships were remembered through three or four subsequent generations, this is a notable and pointed exclusion.

The Harleys' lack of contact with the Mynors also highlights Sir Robert Harley's anti-Catholicism, which is evident both in his private and in his public pronouncements in Parliament. Anti-Catholicism was, of course, a common emotion amongst the English Protestants and Harley's fear of the Catholics provides a useful starting point for the examination of the ways in which the Harley's religious perceptions linked them to, or divided them from, groups of other people beyond the county borders.

During the 1620s and 1630s Sir Robert regularly drew up lists of "Matter of Request to God", accompanied by lists of "Matter of Thanksgiving". These lists frequently contained the request that God would "rid popery out of the land". In 1627 the desire for the conversion of the Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria was included in the list. In the 1630s the list of matter of thanksgiving included delivery from the Armada in 1588, from the Gunpowder plot in 1605 and "the downfall of papists at Blackfriars" - a reference to an incident in 1623, in which ninety one people had been killed, when a garret at the French Embassy

69. P.R.O., S.P., 14/48/138; will of Maud Harley, 21 January 1589/90, Harley MSS., Bundle 67; T.S. Smith, "Herefordshire Catholics and the Rites of Passage: 1560-1640", T.W.N.F.C., XLII (1978), 237.

70. For example, Sir William Croft called himself Sir Robert Harley's "kinsman", although the connections between the two families went back to Croft's great-grandmother, Croft to Harley, 1 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173, f. 7v.

had collapsed during a sermon delivered by a Jesuit priest.

During the 1624 Parliament Harley had supported Sir John Jephson's demand for a "guard for our persons", to be supplied by the Mayor of London, to deter any Catholic plot against the members of the two Houses and the King. Harley also drew attention to the dangers from English Catholics, when war was being planned against Catholic powers on the continent. Later in the session, on 2 April 1624, during a debate in the Committee of the Whole House, Sir Robert called for strict measures to be taken against the Catholics:-

"that the recusants may be disarmed and confined, that Jesuits and all seminaries to be banished, and the receivers of them to be had under the law. For such as resort to ambassadors, that the law may be inflicted upon them, not only in this, but that their revenues be employed for the wars". 72

At the beginning of the 1626 Parliament Harley attempted to draw the Commons' attention away from the Duke of Buckingham by stressing that the danger from the native Catholic population was a more pressing issue:-

"To fight with two kinds of enemies, within the kingdom and without. Not to dispute at the errors past".

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71. List of prayers, 17 December 1624, 8 June 1635, B.L., Loan 29/52/93; list of prayers, 30 March 1627, 29 February 1627/8, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 237 and 239; List of prayers, 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, 24 January 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/27 part I; for the incident at Blackfriars see Gardiner, History, v, 142-3.
72. Nicholas Diary, 26 February 1624; Spring Diary, 1 March 1624, 2 April 1624. Most of the points raised in Harley's speech were incorporated into a petition from the Houses to the King on 23 April 1624; in his reply the King agreed to issue a Proclamation against Jesuits and seminary priests, and promised to execute all laws against recusants and to confer about suitable action against Catholics attending Mass at ambassadors' houses, P.R.O., S.P., 14/159/32, 34. A proclamation was issued on 6 May 1624 banishing Jesuits and seminary priests J.F. Larkin and P.L. Hughes (eds.), Stuart Royal Proclamations, Volume I, Royal Proclamation of King James I, 1603-1625 (Oxford, 1973), pp. 591-3.

In the same session Harley moved that "the growth in popery may be put in for one of the evils" in the kingdom. In the ensuing Parliament of 1628 Harley was one of the small, but vociferous group of MPs who linked Arminianism with Catholicism in debates in the House. Fears that the Arminians would alter the established religion were quickly linked to fears of arbitrary government in debates in the House. Harley was certainly aware of the links between these fears; on 6 June 1628 he called for the Remonstrance to proceed and itemised the heads of the grievances, which had been hammered out in debate on the previous day:-

"Yesterday we collected divers heads and named a subcommittee. Moved to have those heads read, and, where we like not, we may alter.

The heads: fear of

1. Innovation of religion.
2. Innovation of government.
3. Disasters in all our designs abroad.
4. Causes of all these."

In 1628 Harley was one of a small group of MPs who identified Arminianism as a central issue in their speeches to the House of Commons. Just as Harley's religious sympathies guided him to speak out against Arminianism in Parliament, his religious outlook also affected many other areas of his life. In particular, his sympathy for his fellow puritans dictated the pattern of the majority of Sir Robert Harley's social contacts outside Herefordshire. Sir Robert's frequent visits to London to visit relatives, to attend Parliaments or to oversee business at the Mint, allowed him contact with a large number of puritan laity and clergy. The members of Sir Robert's circle of puritan contacts were connected through friendship, kinship and patronage and in effect formed a "community" of godly people. This "godly community" was

73. Whitelocke Diary, 24 February 1626, 27 February 1626.

74. For Harley's anti-Arminian speeches to the House see below, Ch. 3, pp. 163-165, 169; Russell, Parliaments, pp. 379-380.

75. 1628 Debates, IV, 155; Russell, Parliaments, p. 345.

composed of people whose religious aspirations linked them with like-minded people in London and the localities, but at the same time their religious outlook cannot be seen as part of a national culture.

Sir Robert's friendship with the Veres has already been noted. Among his other lay contacts were the puritan peers Lord Saye and the second Lord Brooke, who was distantly related to Lady Brilliana Harley.⁷⁶ Saye and Brooke were both founder members of the Providence Island Company, which was set up in November 1630 with the intention of colonising the islands of Providence and Henrietta Maria in the Caribbean. The original membership of the company was almost exclusively puritan and Saye and Brooke were both very active members, Lord Brooke's London home, Brooke House being the usual meeting place of the company. Both of these Lords were later to be staunch Parliamentarians.⁷⁷

Harley was also acquainted with Lord Saye's son, Nathaniel Fiennes, the future Middle-Group Independent in the Long Parliament. In February 1637 Fiennes wrote to Harley from Brooke House in Holborn, thanking him for the loan of a book and inquiring "if you are to go out of the town, whereby I shall be deprived of the opportunity of waiting upon you and

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76. In 1624 and 1625 the Harleys prayed for Lord Saye, and in 1633 the Harleys prayed for "The families of the Lord Saye and Lord Brooke", List of Prayers, 17 December 1624, 8 June 1625, B.L., Loan 29/52/93; lists of prayers, 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, B.L., Loan 29/27, part I; see also Lewis, Letters, pp. 49, 129, 170. For Saye see D.N.B., VI, 1297-1300. Robert Greville, second Lord Brooke, had been adopted by his cousin Fulke Greville, first Lord Brooke, who was a cousin of Sir Edward Conway, see D.N.B., VIII, 606; G.E.C., Complete Peerage, II, 331; III, 400.
77. A.P. Newton, The Colonising Activities of the English Puritans: The Last Phase of the Elizabethan Struggle with Spain (New Haven and London, 1914), pp. 58-67; for Saye in the Long Parliament see Underdown, Purge, pp. 63, 68, 71, 84-6, 89, 90, 95-7, 102, 104, 111, 113, 133, 147, 198, 343, 352; for Brooke's support for Parliament, see Hughes, 'Thesis', pp. 204-270.

enjoying your good company, which upon divers occasions you have so freely imparted unto me and with such expressions of love and affection as have improved the relation of kindred and put upon me the quality of your most humble servant and kinsman."⁷⁸

Other of Sir Robert's lay contacts included Sir Thomas Wrothe, the Somerset puritan who would side with the radical Independents during the Long Parliament. During the Parliament of 1628-9 Wrothe represented

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Bridgwater in Somerset. On March 28 1629 he invited Harley to a "Lenten dinner", referring to his "extraordinary affection of" Sir Robert's company. Wrothe also suggested that the two men should "go together to Mr. Dampont's in the morning, where I will provide a seat for you". This presumably being an invitation to hear the preaching of Lady Vere's protege, John Davenport, vicar of St. Stephen's Coleman ⁸⁰ Street.

His visits to London also gave Harley the opportunity both to hear puritan preachers and to cultivate their friendship. In 1611 and 1612 he had lodgings in Blackfriars, at the house of a Mr. Archer, a clock-⁸¹ maker. Blackfriars was one of the most puritan parishes in London and

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78. Fiennes to Harley, 23 February 1636/7, B.L., Loan 29/119; Underdown, Purge, pp. 9, 17, 18, 22, 58, 59, 62-63, 65, 75, 84-85, 88-89, 95, 103, 104, 113-114, 133-134, 147, 211, 233-235, 337, 341-342, 348.
79. Barnes, op. cit., p. 16; Underdown, Purge, pp. 32, 37, 88, 137, 187, 214n., 313, 351; 1628 Debates, I, 63.
80. Wrothe to Harley, 28 March 1629, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 248r; for Lady Vere's patronage of Davenport see Adams, 'Thesis', p. 254.
81. Draft letter from Harley to Thomas Peacock, 18 November 1611 (addressed from Blackfriars), Pierson to Harley, 30 March 1612 (addressed to Harley's lodgings in Blackfriars), B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 124 and 126, f. 129v.

Harley swiftly became friendly with William Gouge the puritan lecturer at St. Anne's Church, Blackfriars. In June 1613 Gouge wrote to Harley asking him to mediate in a dispute between a Mr. Emerson and Lady Savile, his letter referred to "our little state in the Blackfriars". Harley's friendship with Gouge was of long duration. In 1622 Gouge wrote to inform Harley of the death of Stephen Egerton, the minister at St. Anne's; in 1639 Gouge and John Stoughton, the puritan lecturer of St. Mary's Aldermanbury, wrote to Harley asking him for assistance for
82
James Barber, an upholsterer.

In 1621 Harley approached Thomas Gataker, the puritan rector of Rotherhithe and asked him to consider some of the points of contention between the English Church and Rome for the benefit of a "gentleman" of Harley's acquaintance. Gataker drew up some arguments for Harley and indicated his willingness to help further with the matter. In 1623 Gataker was chosen to preach the sermon at Sir Robert's wedding with
83
Brilliana Conway.

It was probably in London that Harley became acquainted with a number of other puritan ministers, including Nathaniel Ward and the
84
London lecturer John Brinsley and his son John. During the mid-1620s

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82. For Gouge and the puritan activities in Blackfriars see P. Seaver, The Puritan Lectureships: the Politics of Religious Dissent (Stanford, 1970), passim; Gouge to Harley, 24 June 1613 and 11 May 1622, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 131 and 135, f. 78r; Gouge and Stoughton to Harley, 4 March 1638/9, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 223r.
83. Gataker to Harley, 18 June 1621, B.L., Loan 29/119; Gataker to Harley, 22 and 35 June 1621, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 49r, 50r; T.Gataker, A good Wife God's Gift: and a Wife Indeed (1623); D.N.B., VII, 939-941.
84. Ward to Harley, 6 August 1621, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 52r; Ward to Harley, 25 February 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/121; draft letter from Harley to John Brinsley, the younger, 8 December 1631, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 42r-v. Ward's brother, Samuel, was imprisoned in 1621 for publishing a caricature of the Spanish ambassador. Nathaniel's letter of 1621 to Harley indicates that Harley was concerned to see Samuel released. For the Wards and the younger Brinsley see K.W. Shipps, 'Lay Patronage of East Anglian Clerics in Pre-Revolutionary England' (Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University, 1971), passim.

the younger John Brinsley was accused before the High Commission of "inconformity and factiousness". Yet this did not deter Harley from recommending him to Lord Herbert of Cherbury for the living of Montgomery in 1631.⁸⁵

It may also have been in London that Harley first made the acquaintance of James Ussher, the staunchly Calvinist Irish cleric, who became Archbishop of Armagh in 1624, through the influence of Lady Vere and Sir Edward Conway. Ussher had preached the sermon at St. Margaret's to the members of Parliament at the start of the Parliament of 1621. Later in the same year he had written a letter of salutation to Sir Robert Harley from Dublin. In January 1635 Harley wrote to Ussher and informed him that he had chosen Stanley Gower, a former chaplain to Ussher, as his rector at Brampton Bryan. Harley wrote that Gower's relationship with Ussher had been an important factor in his decision to appoint Gower:-

"whose relation to your Grace invited me to a diligent inquiry of him and his own worth persuaded me to give him a full and cheerful call".⁸⁶

Between December 1626 and February 1634 Sir Robert had lodgings at Aldermanbury. This was another strongly puritan parish, where Harley was well known to the two lecturers at St Mary's church, Thomas Taylor and John Stoughton.⁸⁷

Taylor dedicated one of his printed sermons to Sir Robert in 1630 and Stoughton, who replaced Taylor in 1632, described Sir Robert at the

85. Shippis, 'Thesis', p. 221; draft letter from Harley to Brinsley the younger, 8 December 1631, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 42r-v.
86. Adams, 'Thesis', p. 254; Gardiner, History, IV, 29; Ussher to Harley, 9 July (1621), B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 51r; draft letter from Harley to Ussher, 29 January 1634/5, B.L., Loan 29/123/39k.
87. Between those dates Harley wrote a number of letters from Aldermanbury and received letters there, see C.S.P.D., 1625-1626, p. 488; C.S.P.D., 1627-1628, p. 242; Pierson to Harley, 24 March 1626/7, B.L., Loan 29/121; see also B.L., Loan 2/202, 172, *passim*. It is not clear from these references whether Sir Robert rented a house or had bought a house of his own. For Taylor and Stoughton see Seaver, op. cit., *passim*.

start of their acquaintance as "worthy, religious and loving." In 1635 Stoughton was in trouble with the High Commission and was thought to have been involved in collecting money for the exiled puritan ministers in New England. As the case against Stoughton progressed, a paper was discovered in his possession which set out "the duty of all God's people to separate themselves from the Church or Churches of England, as they now are"⁸⁸. Sir Robert Harley accompanied Stoughton on his appearance before the High Commission and at the same time visited John Workman, the puritan lecturer of Gloucester, in the Gatehouse prison.⁸⁹

Workman had been called before the High Commission on an array of charges, which included preaching against dancing and images, and preaching in favour of the election of ministers by their congregation.⁹⁰

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88. T. Taylor, The Progress of Saints into Full Holiness (1630); John Stoughton to Peter Thatcher, 13 February 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/172, f. 79r; J.C. Whitebrook, 'Dr. John Stoughton the Elder', Congregational Historical Society Transactions, VI, (1913-1915); P.R.O., S.P., 16/280/65.
89. "The State of Sir Robert Harley's case concerning his office of Master and Worker of his Majesty's Monies, and his Present Condition", undated (internal evidence suggests a date of 1645) B.L., Loan 29/122/5 (Three copies). A further copy is extant in Loan 29/124/65. I have not been able to find any contemporary evidence for Harley's support for Stoughton and Workman, but there is no reason to doubt that Harley did support these two men in the way in which is described in the paper.
90. P.R.O., S.P., 16/261, ff. 206v, 207r; see also J.N. Langston, 'John Workman, Puritan Lecturer in Gloucester', Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Transactions, LXVI (1945).

He was suspended from the ministry in April 1635 and subsequently presided over a seminary of scholars at his home in Tewkesbury. In 1636 Workman wrote to Harley and suggested a match between one of Sir Robert's daughters and a Mr. Thomas Estcourt, who was anxious to find a good wife and "chiefly to prefer religion in his choice". In 1638 Workman offered Harley advice about possible tutors for Edward Harley at Oxford.⁹¹

Harley may also have had contact with even more extreme critics of the State and Church in the 1630s. A testimony given in Star Chamber by some of the people dwelling within the Tower of London describes visits which William Prynne received whilst imprisoned in the Tower. Among his visitors were both Henry Burton and Sir Robert Harley:-

"Mr. Burton met with Mr. Prynne almost every day in the Tower, and they sat in consultation half days together, sometimes alone, and sometimes with company, naming Sir Robert Harlowe for one of the company".⁹²

Prynne was a puritan polemicist who had already published a pamphlet directed at halting the spread of Arminianism. In 1633 he had been prosecuted and imprisoned for the contents of his work Histriomastix: A Scourge of Stage Players, which had been deemed to reflect directly upon the Queen herself. Burton had also spoken out against the Arminians in his pulpit at St Matthew's, Friday Street.⁹³

The testimony of the inhabitants of the Tower is highly plausible. As Master of the Mint, Harley would have certainly had the opportunity

91. Gardiner, History, X, 225; Workman to Harley, 13 February 1635/6, B.L., Loan 29/172, f. 101r; Workman to Harley, 23 August 1638, B.L., Loan 29/121, amongst Workman's suggested tutors was Mr. Perkins, who later that year became Edward Harley's tutor, see Lewis, Letters, p. 253.

92. B.L., M 874/13 - Microfilm of the MSS. of the Marquess of Bath at Longleat, Coventry MSS., Cases in Star Chamber 1616-1637, f. 209r-v, I am grateful to Frances Condict for this reference.

93. Gardiner, History, VII, 14, 328-330; ibid., 12.

to visit prisoners within the walls of the Tower. Prynne was committed to the Tower on 1st February 1633, when Harley still had possession of the office of Master.

Burton, Prynne and Bastwicke were all sentenced in 1637 by Star Chamber to be mutilated, fined and imprisoned for life for their various writings. Harley was sympathetic to the plight of these men, who had been so harshly treated under Laud. At the start of the Long Parliament Harley moved that Burton and Bastwicke should be allowed to come to the House of Commons and present their cases to Parliament.⁹⁴

Harley's sympathy for the critics of the Laudian Church was undoubtedly the major reason for his loss of office in the 1630s. Harley himself was well aware of this and a document written in or about 1645 amongst Sir Robert's papers describes his loss of the Mint in the following terms:-

"In the Xth year of the King, Sir Robert Harley, falling under disfavour of those who were then powerful at court, especially the late Bishop of Canterbury, and as Sir Robert Harley conceives, for that he did appear in the High Commission Court at Lambeth with Doctor Stoughton, preacher at Aldermanbury London and for entertaining Mr. Workman, preacher at Gloucester into his house, and visiting him in the Gatehouse where he was imprisoned by sentence of the said High Commission Court, a Scire Facias was brought against Sir Robert Harley's patent by Mr Noy then Attorney-General".⁹⁵

The Harleys' interest in and friendship with other puritans cut across county boundaries within England and involved them in religious sympathy with like-minded people in other countries. In 1634 the Harleys prayed at Brampton Bryan for "those that are gone out of the land". Their puritanism also engaged the Harleys' sympathy for the Calvinist Church in Scotland and the reformed Churches on the Continent. Sir Robert Harley's sympathy for the Scottish Calvinists

94. D.N.B., XVI, 432; Gardiner, History, VIII, 226-234; D'Ewes (N), p. 5, n. 13.

95. The State of Sir Robert Harley's case", see above n. 89.

is reflected in the interest which he took in the debates on the proposed union between England and Scotland in Parliament in 1607 and in his own speech to the House on 9 May 1628, when he referred to the Scots as "our brethren of Scotland".⁹⁶ Lady Brilliana Harley's letters, written in 1638 and 1639 show a similar sympathy for the Scots and a desire for peace between the two nations. Following the conclusion of the Treaty of Berwick in June 1639, Lady Brilliana sent details of the treaty in a letter to Edward Harley. She was clearly delighted to be able to send her son word about "so good news of peace".⁹⁷

Lady Brilliana was careful not to be too open about her distaste for war against the Scots in her letters, but her sympathy for the Scots is evident in her letters.⁹⁸ War with a Calvinist nation was a

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96. List of prayers, 24 January 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/27, part I; Harley had copies of the major parliamentary speeches concerning the union in 1607 - Speech by Fuller against the Union and Sir Francis Bacon's reply, 14 February 1606/7 (two copies), B.L., Loan 29/202, ff. 93r-107r; there is a further copy of Fuller's speech, with some variation in Loan 29/123/51; see also notes of debates April and May 1607, B.L., Loan 29/202, ff. 49r-73r, these are printed in D.H. Willson (ed.), The Parliamentary Diary of Robert Bowyer, 1606-1607 (Minneapolis, 1931), pp. 378-386. I am not convinced that these notes for April and May 1607 are actually in Harley's hand, although Professor Willson believed that they were, *ibid.*, p. xvi. I have similar reservations about the notes of debates in the House for 5 and 6 November 1610, B.L., Loan 29/202, ff. 75r-83v, printed in E. Foster, Proceedings in Parliament, 1610 (New Haven and London, 1966), II, pp. 392-400, these are in the same hand as the notes for April and May 1607 and Mrs. Foster also identifies the hand as Harley's, *ibid.*, I, p. xlix. I feel that the hand does not exactly match Harley's, but I am unable to suggest an alternative scribe. For Harley's 1628 speech, see 1628 Debates, III, 349.
97. Lewis, Letters, pp. 58-59.
98. Ibid., pp. 10, 12, 40, 45, 51, 57, 58, 72, 75, 99, 117, 118.

complete contradiction of the foreign policies supported by the Harleys throughout the 1620s and 1630s. Sir Robert Harley consistently advocated English foreign policies which were directed at aid for the continental Calvinist States.⁹⁹ This was a long-standing puritan aspiration, which had originated in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and which has recently been termed "political puritanism".¹⁰⁰ Sir Robert had therefore been an active collector of the loan for the King and Queen of Bohemia, which was raised in 1620 by the Elector Frederick's agent, Baron Achatius Dohna. The money was to be used to raise a volunteer force of English troops to defend the Palatinate against attack from the forces of the Emperor.¹⁰¹

Sir Robert's industry in raising money in Herefordshire was regarded there as an expression of his religious outlook. Sir Thomas Coningsby, the J.P., wrote to Harley commending "your religious forwardness to further a business so well beseeming Sir Robert Harley".¹⁰² Harley himself regarded the war for the Palatinate as a religious war, which heralded the apocalyptic upheavals prophecied in Revelations. In February 1621 Harley drafted a letter to Sir Horace Vere, who was to command the English forces in the Palatinate, declaring "your enemy is God's also" and enclosing a tract on Revelations by Parker, with the following recommendation:-

"I have had it by me many years though these times begat it not, yet it may now be best produced, wherein God doth seem to fulfil that which it foretells".¹⁰³

99. See below, pp. 74-75.

100. Adams, 'Thesis', p. 24.

101. For the loan, see *ibid.*, pp. 294-303; for Harley's activities as a collector of the loan from June to November 1620, see B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 3r-46v, *passim*; also lists of contributions and Baron Dohna to "the county of Hereford", 4 June 1620, B.L., Loan 29/123/36.

102. Coningsby to Harley, 19 August 1620, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 16r.

103. Draft letter from Harley to Vere, 14 February 1620/1, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 47r-48v.

In the Parliament of 1624 Sir Robert strongly advocated English involvement in the war against Spain, in order to recover the Palatinate. When a Joint Committee of the two Houses drew up a list of reasons for terminating the treaties with Spain, on 5 March 1624, Harley brusquely declared that the principal reason for the breach with Spain had been left out:-

"The main thing left out: The maintenance of our religion at home". 104

Harley continued to regard the events of the continental war in a totally religious context. In December 1624 he and his household at Brampton Bryan prayed for

"the good estate of God's Church everywhere
The defeating of the plots of all the enemies of it
The distressed churches of Bohemia, France, the
Palatinate, Low Countries.
In the King's dominions".

These prayers were repeated during the ensuing decade with some minor variations. In 1627 the prayers included La Rochelle, Denmark and Germany. In 1633 the Harleys prayed for "a worthy general to succeed the King of Sweden" and for the conversion of the Catholic King of France.
105

Sir Robert Harley's commitment to the war against Spain in the mid-1620s was based on his religious affinities for the Protestant Churches of Europe. His religious approach to the war was shared by a small group of puritan laymen and clerics, which included the Veres and the four Cambridge educated divines William Gouge, Richard Sibbes, Thomas Gataker and Thomas Taylor, all of whom were acquainted with Harley.
106

104. Spring Diary, 1 March 1624; C.J., I, 729.

105. List of prayers, 17 December 1624, 8 June 1625, B.L., Loan 29/52/93; list of prayers, 30 March 1627, 29 February 1627/8, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 237 and 239; list of prayers, 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, B.L., Loan 29/27 part 1.

106. Sir Nathaniel Rich and the Earl of Holland held similar views, Adams, 'Thesis', pp. 316-317; for Harley's acquaintance with these four divines, see Sibbes to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/121 and above pp. 67-68.

Sir Robert's support for the war also drew him into the circle of pro-war advocates in Parliament, which was headed by Buckingham in 107
1624. The motivations of this wider group were varied and were not based solely on religious sympathies. Amongst this group was Secretary Conway, whose approach to the war was more consciously guided by *raison d'etat*, and who was uneasy at the strategical implications of the spread 108
of Spanish influence in Europe.

During the 1624 Parliament Harley was also in contact with Sir Robert Phelips, who was amongst those members of the Commons who advocated war with Spain. On 23 March 1624 Harley was a member of the parliamentary committee which delivered the address of the Commons calling for the King to dissolve the treaties with Spain. 109
On the same day Harley penned a hastily composed note to his "Honorable Friend Sir Robert Phelips". Harley wrote "I am glad to have an opportunity to do you service, and I pray you, take this in pawn of your further power to command your affectionate friend and servant". Harley may well have been sending Phelips a copy of the King's speech in response to the Commons' address, since a fair copy of that speech is bound with Harley's letter amongst Sir 110
Robert Phelip's papers.

Sir Robert's interest in the fate of the Protestant churches abroad

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107. Russell, Parliaments, pp. 145-203. Harley's membership of the Virginia Company, which he joined with the holding of one share in February 1623, probably brought him into contact with men in favour of war with Spain. The members of the company might, however, have been guided as much by economic reasons, as by religious factors. S.M. Kingsbury (ed.), The Records of the Virginia Company of London (1906), II, 243; Adams, "Thesis", pp. 180-182.
108. T. Birch, The Life of Prince Henry of Wales (Dublin, 1760), pp. 389-390.
109. C.J., I, 734, 746.
110. Somerset R.O., Phelips MSS., DD/PH 216/32. I am grateful to Professor Russell for this reference, although our interpretations of this letter differ.

was shared by Lady Brilliana, who like her husband, viewed developments in Europe in apocalyptic terms. In November 1638, commenting on the news of the capture of Prince Rupert and Lord Craven at the battle of Lingen in Westphalia, Brilliana wrote:-

"in all these things we must remember the warning, which our Saviour has given us, when he had told his disciples that there must be wars and rumours of wars."

Lady Brilliana also regarded the war with Scotland as part of God's will. In May 1639 Brilliana reported the journey of the Marquis of Hamilton into Scotland with 7,000 soldiers and reflected that "these things are of the Lord, and as none thought of such a business as this is, so we are as ignorant what the issue will be: the Lord gave us hearts of depentances (sic) upon him." ¹¹¹ That Brilliana's concern for news of foreign events matched that of her husband was recognised by her father. In a letter written in July 1629 Conway apologised to them both for not relaying any news. In his typically grandiloquent style Conway wrote:-

"I know that you my son Harley, having been so long versed in Parliament affairs, cannot but long after the contingent things to it, and you, my daughter, born in a strange land, the daughter of an ambassador and a counsellor, will be out of countenance, if you be not able to know what the neighbour princes do, and what we think to do." ¹¹²

Viscount Conway's letter might be considered as indicative of the unusual background to Lady Brilliana's interest in foreign events, yet links with the Continent were not exceptional amongst the men and women of Lady Brilliana's rank. Furthermore certain members of the Harleys' social circle had similar links with, and interest in, continental affairs.

Sir Edward Herbert was the English Ambassador in France between

111. Lewis, Letters, pp. 10, 51-52.

112. Conway to Harley, 28 July 1629, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 254r.

1619 and 1624, with a brief period of recall in 1621. Viscount Scudamore held the same post between 1635 and 1639, and his personal papers attest to the deep interest which he took in foreign affairs.¹¹³ Lady Brilliana's own Aunt, Lady Vere had spent some time on the continent with her husband Sir Horace, and her two eldest daughters were born abroad. Lady Vere took an interest in events on the Continent that was similar to that of her niece. For example, Sir Horace Vere ensured that in 1621, when Lady Vere remained in England she received news of the Palatinate campaign. The news which was despatched to Lady Vere was also circulated amongst other members of her family. A newsletter amongst Sir Robert Harley's papers describing the "proceedings of the Princes of the Union since 2 October 1620", is endorsed in Sir Robert Harley's own hand as being "from my Lord General Vere to his Lady, News".¹¹⁴

The Harleys were able to obtain foreign and home news in a number of ways. One source of news was the written newsletter, a commercial product, which first appeared in the late sixteenth century, and which was becoming increasingly common by the 1620s.¹¹⁵ A few such newsletters from the early 1620s have survived amongst the Harley papers¹¹⁶ and these relate mainly to events in the Palatinate.

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113. D.N.B., IX, 626-627, XVII, 1093; for Scudamore's papers, see for example B.L., Add., MSS., 11,044 ff. 57-169 passim.
114. C.J., I, 677; H.M.C., Portland, II, 110-117; "Proceedings of the Princes of the Union since 2 October 1620", B.L., Loan 29/46/39.
115. Ex inf. Richard Cust. During the 1626 Parliament Sir John, later Viscount, Scudamore, received newsletters and copies of speeches produced by Ralph Starkey of Bloomsbury, P.R.O., C115/N.4/7165. I am grateful to Mr. Cust for this reference.
116. Newsletters, October 1621 and July 1622, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 56r-59r; "proceedings of the Princes of the Union since 2 October 1620", B.L., Loan 29/46/39; information about the "States Army", 1631, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 46r-48v.

Another source of news used by the Harleys was the printed news-sheets called corantoes, which dealt only with foreign news, and which also first appeared in England in the early 1620s. The dissemination of news was however, subject to government control. In December 1620 a Royal Proclamation was issued against "excess of lavish and licentious speech of matters of state", which warned "our loving subjects, of this excess and presumption; and straitly to command them and every of them, from the highest to the lowest, to take heed, how they intermeddle by pen, or speech, with causes of State and secrets of empire".

117

A second proclamation on the same subject was issued in July 1621. The proclamations were part of a government campaign to restrict discussions concerning the Palatinate and these efforts appear to have had some success. In August 1621 Nathaniel Ward, the puritan minister, wrote to Sir Robert Harley and commented "other news we hear little, and so much the less, because of a late proclamation against telling or writing of matters of that nature."

118

The corantoes were also tightly controlled by the government and on 17th October 1632 they were suppressed by order of the Privy Council and were not re-licensed until December 1638. As soon as Brilliana heard the news that corantoes were on sale again, she wrote to Edward Harley and told him that "now the Curantes are licensed again, you will weekly see their relations." During the ensuing months she regularly sent Edward the corantoes which she received, as well as a number of newsbooks.

119

Separates were another way in which the Harleys received news of

117. F.S. Siebert, Freedom of the Press in England, 1476-1776 (Paperback edition, Urbana, 1965), p. 148; Hughes and Larkin (eds.), op. cit., pp. 495-496, 519-521.

118. Ward to Harley, 6 August 1621, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 52r.

119. Siebert, op. cit., pp. 155-156, 159; Lewis, Letters, pp. 19, 27, 32, 36, 51, 62, 66.

speeches in Parliament or other items of domestic news. These were produced both commercially and privately by M.P.s for circulation amongst a circle of friends and relatives. A number of separates have survived amongst the Harley papers and these include a petition from William Prynne to the Star Chamber in 1632: a letter from the Council of Scotland to King Charles concerning their inability to establish the Prayer Book in Scotland in 1637: a description of the Scottish Assembly held in Glasgow in November 1638 and the speeches of the King and the Lord Keeper from the opening of the Short Parliament. ¹²⁰

During the Short Parliament, Edward Harley sent a number of separates home to Lady Brilliana, who was delighted, since it was difficult for her to obtain exact reports of speeches in Parliament:-

"I have heard of many bold speeches that have passed there; and that passage between the archbishop and my lord Saye is diversly reported; but I believe that which I received from you." ¹²¹

Personal letters also formed another source of news for the Harleys, but the quality of news received in this form was variable. In 1626, at the start of the new Parliament, Brilliana wrote to Sir Robert and thanked him for the copy of the Speaker's speech, which he had sent her, "it has been the entertainment of this house, so that all the difference ¹²² between London and the country is but that you are first served."

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120. Notestein and Relf (Eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. xxx, xxxi; B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 57r-v, 157r-158v, 195r-198v, 275r-278v.
121. Lewis, *Letters*, pp. 90-91; during the Short Parliament Lady Brilliana received some separates from her "cousin Goowdine (sic)" - possible Ralph Goodwin, Burgess of Ludlow and a protegee of Brilliana's father - Lady Brilliana had the separates copied and sent the copies to Edward Harley, Lewis, *Letters*, p. 93; for Goodwin, see Keeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.
122. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 24 February 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/72.

Yet Brilliana was impatient for further reports of the Parliament and, a week later, wrote to Harley in order to chide him for not sending more information, "for news you care not how ignorant we country people be, for you will not spare time to inform us."¹²³

Either of these letters, taken on their own, would give a totally false impression. People in the localities were neither always well informed, nor were they always in a state of ignorance. The true picture reflects the fluctuations that occurred in the context and dissemination of news. Thus on occasion Lady Brilliana chided Sir Robert for writing such brief letters; on 13 March 1626 she complained that "I had hope(d) before this you would have borrowed so much time as to have writ more at large than always to be in haste"¹²⁴. On 25 March 1626 Lady Brilliana wrote "I could wish you would not be altogether so short in your letters". On 5 May 1626 Lady Brilliana had to remind Harley to write "every week by the carrier, this week you did not". Harley responded by sending three letters to his wife during the ensuing week and he appears to have attempted to write more frequently thereafter.¹²⁵

Sir Robert's work as an M.P. meant that he did not always have the time to write to his wife. Thus, during the Short Parliament, Lady Brilliana also requested reports from Edward Harley, and in 1641 she instructed one of Sir Robert's servants to send weekly reports about Parliament to her.¹²⁶

Secretary Conway also provided news items in his letters to the

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123. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 3 March 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/72.
124. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 13 March 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/72.
125. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 25 March 1625/6, 5 May 1626, 12 May 1626, 3 June 1626, 10 June 1626, B.L., Loan 29/72.
126. Lewis, Letters, p. 89; Lady Brilliana to Richard Sankey, 28 March 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173, f. 87r.

Harleys, but he rarely referred to home news, other than court news, or developments which were of a personal interest to the Harleys. Conway did include information about the fighting on the continent, but it was presented factually without any political analysis. Brilliana's eldest brother, Edward Conway, was also a frequent correspondent with his relatives at Brampton Bryan, and his letters were more informative than those of his father. He confined himself to home news of an uncontroversial nature and to reports of the situation in Europe, and later to developments in the war against Scotland.¹²⁷

Once Edward Harley went to Oxford in 1638 he also relayed news to his home. In April 1639 Edward sent a copy of the "Large Declaration" to Brampton Bryan; this was a book which set out the dispute with the Scots from the King's point of view. A little later he sent his mother a copy of the military oath, which King Charles wanted the English nobility to take and which bound them to the King's cause against the Scots. Lord Saye and Lord Brooke had both refused to take the oath, even in a modified form, and had been committed to the custody of the Mayor of York, Brilliana commented:-

"I doubt whether my lord Saye and my lord Brooke be set at liberty, but I wish it be true." 128

The course of the war in Scotland was clearly of great interest to the Harley family; even ten year old Brilliana wrote at length in 1639 of the developments in the war to her brother Edward Harley at Magdalen Hall.¹²⁹ Lady Brilliana's own letters reflect her interest in certain topics. She was, for example, well informed about the activities of

127. A number of Secretary Conway's letters to the Harleys are extant in B.L., Loan 29/202 and 172; letters from the second Viscount are extant in Loan 29/172 and 173, these are all noticed in H.M.C., Portland.

128. Lewis, Letters, pp. 46, 49; see also Gardiner, History, IX, 11 for Saye and Brooke.

129. Brilliana Harley to Edward Harley, 27 March 1639, April 1639, 29 April 1639, 24 May 1639, 9 November 1639, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 227r, 229r, 230r, 234r, 244r.

puritan clergy in other counties. In 1626 she asked Sir Robert whether it was true that John Dod had been given licence to preach
130
again. In 1639 Brilliana informed Edward Harley that a number of ministers had taken refuge in the Low Countries and in the same letter passed on the news of the last illness of both John Stoughton and William Whatley, the celebrated puritan minister of Banbury, Oxford-
131
shire.

Her letters to Edward Harley also touched on such matters as the local results of the elections to the Short Parliament, both in Hereford-
132
shire and in the neighbouring counties of Montgomeryshire and Shropshire. As we have seen, Lady Brilliana was also deeply concerned about the state of English relations with Scotland and was eager for peace between the
133
two countries. Her letters also contained reports about the continental
134
war, which she philisophically accepted as the will of God.

130. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 25 March 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/72; Dod had been presented to the Northamptonshire living of Fawsley in 1624 and he was himself acquainted with Sir Robert Harley, in 1639 Dod wrote to Harley about the contents of the will of his patron, Richard Knightley, Dod to Harley, undated, received on 21 December 1639, B.L., Loan 29/119; for Dod see D.N.B., V, 1050-1051. Harley had a circle of friends and acquaintances in Northamptonshire, which included the Fanes and Robert Bolton the puritan preacher, for the Fanes see above, pp. 49-50; for Bolton see D.N.B., II, 792-793 and Bolton to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/119.
131. Lewis, Letters, p. 49.
132. Ibid., pp. 86, 87.
133. Ibid., pp. 12, 51, 52, 56, 57, 58 -59, 72, 73, 75, 99.
134. Ibid., pp. 10, 22, 41.

Lady Brilliana hoped to pass her own concern over these events to her son Edward. She kept him fully informed about public events in Herefordshire, such as the appointment of two Provost-Marshalls for the county in 1639, by order of the Privy Council, and the press of men in 1639 and 1640.¹³⁵ Brilliana explained to Edward that she sent him news from Herefordshire "that you may not be ignorant of what is done in your own country". Similarly, Brilliana kept Edward informed of foreign news, as she would "willingly have your mind keep awake in the knowledge of things abroad."¹³⁶

Although Lady Brilliana and her immediate family were intensely interested in local, national and international events, their letters presented the news as bare statements of fact, with no political or constitutional analysis. Dr Morrill has suggested that "the letters sent home to friends and relations treated great affairs of state in a surprisingly trivial manner" and attributes this to the gentry's lack of knowledge and understanding of "the real constitutional issues".¹³⁷

Dr Morrill has, however, completely overlooked the dangers involved in committing constitutional arguments to paper. Contemporaries, were obviously well aware of the problems associated with freely expressing one's political and religious thoughts in letters. On certain subjects people preferred to pass on their thoughts in person,¹³⁸ rather than trust to a letter. In September 1628 Viscount Conway, who was expecting Parliament to reconvene in October, wrote to Sir Robert Harley about the impending session. His letter makes it quite clear that Harley would arrive in London before the session opened and that

135. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 38, 39, 44, 45, 90, 91.

136. *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 32.

137. Morrill, *Provinces*, p. 22-23.

138. Ex inf. Richard Cust.

the two men would use the time to discuss parliamentary affairs:-

"I doubt not, but you will be some days here before the parliament that we may confer our observations together, and then join in prayer". 139

Obviously a face to face conference was more satisfactory than attempting to discuss such important matters by the post.

Similarly, in 1639, Lady Brilliana Harley informed her son Edward of the levy of two hundred Herefordshire men to serve against the Scots and added in her letter "if you were with me, I could tell you more of my mind". Lady Brilliana was well aware of the dangers of writing anything too revealing in her letters. At the very start of Edward Harley's time in Oxford, his mother warned him "when you write by the carrier, write nothing but what any may see, for many times the letters miscarry". In May 1639 Lady Brilliana sent Edward a copy of a sermon preached in Scotland with the admonition "you must take care who sees
140
it; you never read such a piece".

Just as the government had attempted to restrict information about the crisis concerning Bohemia and the Palatinate in 1621, measures were also taken to censor information from Scotland during the Bishops' wars in the late 1630s. Christopher Hill has noted that "when the Scottish war came, the government's monopoly control over pulpit and press was used to the fullest extent. All Scottish manifestoes were suppressed; but the royal proclamation against the Scots was ordered to be read in all
141
the churches of England". Despite these moves by the Crown, inform-
142
ation about the Scottish wars did circulate in England. The Harleys

139. Conway to Harley, 25 September 1628, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 241v.

140. Lewis, Letters, pp. 37, 11, 55.

141. Hughes and Larkin (eds.), op. cit., pp. 495-496, 519-521; Hill, Society and Puritanism, pp. 43-44.

142. Edward, Lord Montagu, had copies of the "principal acts of the Parliament of the Scots the 11 June 1640" and of the interchanges between the King and the Scots later that summer, E.S. Cope, The Life of a Public Man, Edward, First Baron Montagu of Boughton, 1562-1644 (Philadelphia, 1981), p.175.

were clearly able to obtain items to which the Crown would have taken exception. Indeed, Sir Robert Harley secured a copy of one of the Scottish manifestoes which the King had wanted to suppress.

Amongst Sir Robert Harley's papers, and endorsed in his own hand, is a copy of "An Information to all good Christians within the Kingdom of England from the Noblemen, Barons, Burroughs, Ministers and the Kingdom of Scotland for Understanding their Intentions and Actions from the unjust Calumnies of their Enemies".¹⁴³

The "Information" dwelt in detail on the Arminian innovations in religion, which had already taken place in England, and accused the Arminian churchmen of subverting government in England:-

"we regret, together with our dear Christian Brethren of our neighbour nation, that we should have so evident and sensible experience of the dangerous plots set a foot and entertained by the churchmen of greatest power in England for introducing innovations in religion, by corrupting the doctrine, changing the discipline, daily innovating the eternal worship of God, pressing publicly and maintaining points of Arminianism and heads of popery, defending and advancing preachers and professors of that judgement and allowing books stuffed with that doctrine; fining, confining and banishing all such as in conscience of their duty to God labour to oppose the doctrine, discipline or worship of the Church of Rome, by their encroaching and usurping upon his Majesty's prerogative, tyrannising over the consciences, goods and estates of persons of all qualities within that kingdom".

This paper is endorsed in Harley's hand with the words "Information from Scotland 4 Feb. 1639". It bears no annotations and we do not know exactly how the Harleys would have reacted on reading this document. Yet the accusations that the Arminian church leaders were responsible for introducing popery and tyrannical government to England must have struck a fearful note for Harley, who had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Remonstrance in the 1628 Parliament. In 1628 the

143. "An information etc.", B.L., Loan 29/46/30. This is handwritten, although the "Information" was also published in Edinburgh, H.G. Aldis, A List of Books printed in Scotland before 1700. (Reprint, Edinburgh, 1970), p. 138.

Remonstrance had emphasised the Commons' fears of "the undermining of religion and these things tending to an apparent change of government". Harley could not have failed to understand the connection between the two documents.¹⁴⁴

All too often, people did not commit their personal beliefs and opinions to paper, yet the absence of extended political analysis in letters, and other documents, does not necessarily indicate a total lack of interest in, or understanding of, political matters. For contemporaries a bare statement of fact often did not need any further comment. In February 1640 Sir Walter Pye, the younger, who was standing with Sir Robert Harley for election to the county seats in Herefordshire, wrote to inform Harley that John Hampden and Arthur Goodwin had been returned as the county members for Buckinghamshire to the Short Parliament.¹⁴⁵ Pye's letter contained no comment on this result, but by 1640 Hampden's stand against Ship Money was well known.¹⁴⁶ The fact that Pye bothered to mention this news to Harley at all indicates that he thought Harley would be interested and would not need to be told what implications this held for the course of the coming Parliament.

The Harleys' obvious interest in national and international events, and their widespread contacts outside Herefordshire, argue against any totally localist analysis of their understanding of events prior to the Long Parliament. Yet this does not mean that the Harleys automatically

144. 1628 Debates, IV, 65, 155, 311-317.

145. Sir Walter Pye, the younger, to Harley, 10 February 1639/40, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 254r. Pye was uncle to Hampden's daughter-in-law and was himself returned to the Short Parliament for both Herefordshire and Wendover, Buckinghamshire, the latter being "virtually a pocket borough of the Hampdens", Keeler, op. cit., pp. 201-202. Pye preferred Herefordshire, C.J., II, 6.

146. Barnes, op. cit., p. 225; Keeler, op. cit., p. 201.

held a perception of religion or politics which was universal to the gentry as a whole. Their puritan sympathies cut across both local and international boundaries and engendered political and religious perceptions, which were neither completely localist, nor common to all of the gentry. Yet the Harleys' puritanism did not isolate them from their fellow gentry in Herefordshire; Sir Robert was regarded as a legitimate county leader and his candidature for the Short Parliament was supported by Sir William Croft and endorsed by the Earl of Essex.¹⁴⁷

Within their county the Harleys were part of a complex social system, which was influenced both by localism and by other considerations. The Harleys' role within that social system in the county will form the subject of the following chapter.

147. Hereford and Worcester R.O., Croft MSS., S33/8.

CHAPTER 2

THE HARLEYS AND THE COUNTY

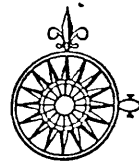
The previous chapter was devoted to an examination of the Harleys' interests in the world beyond the borders of their home county. It has been argued that in many respects the Harleys were not atypical of the major gentry of Herefordshire. As a further illustration of their typicality, this chapter will demonstrate that the Harleys were fully integrated into the "gentry community" within the county. The basis of the Harleys' status and the numerous ties between the Harleys and other local people will be examined. Sir Robert Harley's role as a local governor will also be considered. The discussion here will centre upon factors which modified county insularity, as well as on factors which furthered local loyalties.

The county historians have frequently emphasised the isolation and cohesion of local life in this period. County life, however, was subject both to various outside influences, as well as to specific internal divisions. These were elements which could reduce the effects of so called "county-mindedness" and which therefore require further examination before the Harleys can be considered within the context of the county.

Geographically, Herefordshire was possibly less insular than say Kent, which is bounded to the east and south by the sea, or Sussex, which is bounded by the sea along the length of its southern border. The geography of a county could have a distinct influence on the social patterns of the inhabitants. It is notable that in east Kent 85% of the local gentry married into Kentish families, whereas in the environs of London the figure was as low as one-sixth.

1. Everitt, Kent, p. 43.

HEREFORDSHIRE



- 1 RADNOR
- 2 SHROPSHIRE
- 3 WORCESTER
- 4 GLOUCESTER
- 5 MONMOUTH
- 6 BRECKNOCK

Herefordshire is completely landlocked and, in the seventeenth century, was encircled by the English counties of Shropshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, and by the Welsh counties of Monmouthshire, Brecknockshire and Radnorshire, (Fig. 2). As a marcher county on the border with Wales, Herefordshire was open to considerable Welsh influence. Hereford lay on the main Aberystwyth to London road, and the county experienced a seasonal influx of Welsh labour seeking employment during the harvest. On entering Hereford in October 1642, as a foot soldier in Stamford's Parliamentary force, Nehemiah Wharton noted that² "many here speak Welsh."

The position of Brampton Bryan, on the borders of Radnorshire, meant that the occupants of Brampton were acutely aware of the problems associated with education and religion in Wales. The puritan survey of Herefordshire, drawn up by Stanley Gower in January 1641, suggested that two Welsh cathedrals should be turned into "a school of Arts for the instruction and education of natives in Wales, for the ministry and plantation of that country. The want whereof amongst themselves, and their great distance from our universities in England, together with the charge of living here out of their own country, I suppose has been one cause of the scarcity of good and able ministers in that country." Sir Robert also sympathised with the problems of the Welsh and during the Long Parliament he presented petitions to the Commons from Welsh ministers, including the Separatist Walter Cradock.³

Herefordshire was further linked to Wales by the jurisdiction of the Council of the Marches, which covered Wales and the four English

2. J. Ogilby, Britannia, Volume the First: or an Illustration of the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales (Reprint, 1939), plates 1-3; J.N. Jackson, 'Some Observations upon the Herefordshire Environment of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', T.W.N.F.C., XXXVI (1958-1960), 37; P.R.O., S.P., 16/492/32.
3. Puritan Survey, p. 32; B.L., Harl., MSS., 163 ff. 740v, 746v.

marcher counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire⁴ and Shropshire. The principal seat of the Council was at Ludlow,⁵ which Sir Robert calculated lay seven miles from Brampton Bryan.

Dr. Penry Williams has rightly emphasised that the Council was not an organ of devolution, but a factor in the spread of Royal power to the localities, which had taken place under the Tudors. The authority of the Council was further extended by the fact that the Lord President of the Council generally acted as Lord Lieutenant in most of the Welsh⁶ counties and in the four English border counties.

Between 1604 and 1614 many of the prominent gentry in the four English counties, led by Sir Herbert Croft of Herefordshire, attempted to have the powers of the Council restricted to Wales alone. The opposition of the "gentlemen opposers", as they came to be known, has been seen by historians as being based largely on the threat which the Council posed to the prestige of the local gentry. In particular, Sir Herbert Croft's leading role has been interpreted as an attempt to "establish his local pre-eminence more firmly than ever before". The objections of the gentry were not, however, expressed in terms of local power struggles, but concerned the interpretation of the word "marches", the powers of the King and the excessive fees and unjust decisions of⁷ the Council.

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4. For the history of the Welsh Council, see C.A.J. Skeel, The Council in the Marches of Wales (1904) and P. Williams, The Council in the Marches of Wales under Elizabeth I (Cardiff, 1958).
 5. Draft letter from Harley to Owen, undated, B.L., Loan 29/121.
 6. P. Williams, 'The Attack on the Council in the Marches, 1603-1642', Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion (1961), 22; J.C. Sainty, 'Lieutenants of Counties, 1585-1642', B.I.H.R. (Special Supplement 8, 1970), 37-38.
 7. Williams, loc. cit., 12; R. Ham. 'The Four Shire Controversy', Welsh History Review, VIII (1976-1977), 385; Williams, loc. cit., 9-10.

The Harleys were not involved in the attacks on the jurisdiction of the Council in these years and in 1623 Sir Robert became a member of the Welsh Council. Sir Robert was, however, drawn into the more muted opposition of the 1620s. During the Parliament of 1624 Sir Robert was an active member of the committee which drew up a bill to release the English marcher counties from the authority of the Council. Neither this bill, nor a later bill prepared in 1628, received the Royal assent. Harley spoke in favour of the 1628 bill, declaring "when the King desired the assistance of these shires, it was to help to the civilising of the Welshmen, not to enthrall them"⁸. During the Long Parliament Harley was also very active in the work of the committee designed to examine both the foundation and the jurisdiction of the Welsh Council.⁹

Despite the intermittent opposition to the Welsh Council, the marcher gentry continued to represent Royal authority in their own counties. Within Herefordshire the gentry executed court policies at local level and often relied on court support and influence to maintain their own standing in the localities. In his study of Somerset, Dr. Barnes has noted that the status of the county magnates was based both upon their power in the county and upon the influence which they could wield at court.¹⁰

The importance of a court contact is exemplified by Sir Robert's relationship with his third father-in-law, Secretary Conway. Harley's standing, both inside the county and with the court, increased after his marriage to Brilliana Conway. Furthermore, Harley was able to use Conway's influence with the King to sway at least one local dispute in his own favour. Conway's death in 1631, coupled with the increasing

8. Ham, loc. cit., 386; H.M.C., Thirteenth Report, Appendix. part IV (1892), p. 270; C.J., I, 684; 1628 Debates.III, 473-474.

9. See below, Chapter 4, p. 191.

10. Barnes, op. cit., p. 9.

Arminianism of the court, meant that Harley was gradually forced out of his position at the Mint. After Harley had been deprived of the Mastership, he was forced back onto his own resources as a local magnate, a fact which he himself recognised. In 1636 Harley wrote to the second Viscount Conway's steward, his letter ends with the following plea for news of the court:-

"if you will make me partake of your news at court, you know how much it will make a country gentleman beholding to you".

There is also a strong sense of reduced status in Lady Brilliana's letter to Edward Harley of February 1639:-

"I was confident that my Lady Cope would use you courteously, and I believe she keeps her state, as all noblemen's daughters do, though I do not." 11

Despite Harley's failure to maintain his contact with the court, he nevertheless continued to function as a local governor in the 1630s, simply because the Crown could not afford to dispense with the services of experienced men.

Just as Herefordshire was open to numerous external influences, there were also various sub-divisions within the social and official life of the county. Religion was one such factor which could divide local society. Herefordshire had one of the highest proportional concentrations of Catholic inhabitants of any English county at this time. Within the county Catholics were a separate group, isolated by the stigma of recusancy and the concomitant statutory ban on Catholic recusants taking part in county administration.¹²

In Herefordshire the local Catholic population had been involved in a series of riots in 1605. Thereafter, there had been no similar disturbances in the county; nevertheless, the Catholics did present

11. P.R.O., S.P., 16/319/48; Lewis, Letters, p. 25.

12. J. Bossy, The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850 (1975), pp. 404-405; S.R., IV, 1077-1082.

problems for the local authorities. In 1609 and 1610 Bishop Bennet of Hereford asked the Earl of Salisbury for a commission to deal with the numerous recusants in the county. Similar complaints were voiced by Ralph, Lord Eure, Lord President of the Welsh Council, who wrote in November 1609 to Salisbury and complained of the increase in numbers
13
of recusants in the diocese of Hereford.

There was also a smaller puritan population in Herefordshire and, although they were not barred from taking part in the administration of the county, the puritans did form a distinct group within county society. Under the protection of Sir Robert Harley, Brampton Bryan became a centre for puritan worship, not just in Herefordshire, but in the diocese as well. Sir Robert was able to patronise non-conformist rectors at Brampton and by 1641 the group of laity and clergy, who met at Brampton to worship, were separate from the social circle which
14
Harley also cultivated amongst the leading county gentry.

There were similarly divisions within the life of the county at administrative levels. The city of Hereford was completely separate from the county for most administrative purposes and was governed at local level by the Mayor and City Council, who jealously guarded the
15
rights and "liberties" of the city. Such independent jurisdiction

13. R. Mathias, Whitsun Riot (1963); P.R.O., S.P., 14/44/29, 53/98, 49/26.

14. The Harleys' puritanism is discussed more fully below, Chapter 3.

15. The city's charter was confirmed by James I in 1620 and is summarised in J. Duncomb, Collections Towards the History and Antiquities of the County of Hereford (Hereford, 1804), I, 355-359. The city Quarter Sessions records are now at the county Record Office, they cover the whole of the seventeenth century with a gap between 1641 and 1651 - I am grateful to Susan Hubbard of the Hereford and Worcester County Record Office for this information. For the city's separate return of extra-parliamentary taxation, see for example P.R.O., S.P., 16/73/29, 78/46, 408/174, 427/91, 432/30.

could cause problems for the county governors, some of which will be examined in the course of this chapter.

The county historians have stressed the importance of the complex series of bonds which existed between the gentry as evidence of the self-contained nature of local life in this period.¹⁶ To a certain extent the county did form both an administrative and a social focus for the major gentry, but it is also the case that the links thus forged between the gentry were not necessarily county-wide, nor were the relationships of the gentry exempt from outside influence. The gentry were certainly linked by their shared roles as county governors, as Justices of the Peace, Deputy-Lieutenants and Sheriffs, all of whom had been chosen by county and held county-wide authority.¹⁷ Yet a great amount of administration was undertaken in units which were smaller than the county, in particular, the bulk of work undertaken by J.P.s was completed in their own divisions and not at the quarter Sessions, which only occupied the Justices for a few days of the year.¹⁸

Within the county Sir Robert Harley's position as a leading local governor was strengthened by some of the intricate social relationships which were forged between the local gentry families. Sir Robert was clearly on friendly terms with many of his fellow magnates in the county. In 1623 John Rudhall, the M.P. for the county in 1625, acted as a trustee to the marriage settlement between Sir Robert and Brilliana Conway. In 1626 Sir Robert successfully requested that Sir John Scudamore should propose him as one of the candidates for the county seats in the coming parliamentary elections. In the following year Scudamore acted as a trustee when Sir Robert purchased the manor of Kingsland. In 1639 Lady Brilliana Harley described how Sir Robert had

16. For a succinct account of such relationships, see Fletcher, Sussex, pp. 47-57.

17. One of the best accounts of county administration in this period is contained in Barnes, op. cit.

18. Ibid., p. 58; L.M. Hill, 'County Government in Caroline England, 1625-1640' in Russell, Origins, p. 70.

attended the Lord President of the Welsh Council at Ludlow with the other Deputy Lieutenants of the county. After the meeting Harley brought all three of his colleagues, Sir John Kyrle, Roger Vaughan and Mr. John Scudamore, home with him to Brampton Bryan.¹⁹

The Harleys' social links with their fellow gentry in the county were also based on complex family relationships. The Harleys maintained cordial friendships with even quite distant kin within Herefordshire, in particular with the Crofts of Croft Castle. The links between the Harleys and the Crofts illustrate the nature of family ties amongst the county gentry, as well as the ways in which kinfolk could be called upon for support and advice, and will be considered in detail in this chapter.

The administrative and social bonds of the gentry were thus elements which could link the local gentry into a group with a specific sense of loyalty or of community. Yet the county "gentry community" was by no means a completely united social grouping. Elements which drew the local gentry together were always counterbalanced by factors which could generate local squabbles and rivalries. Thus local society was frequently disturbed by gentry disputes, indeed some English counties were completely divided into gentry factions long before the outbreak of the Civil Wars.²⁰ Although Herefordshire was not so deeply affected, the county did have its share of such incidents. The Harleys, for example, completely ignored their recusant cousins in Herefordshire, as has been noted in the previous chapter. Often family antagonisms could go further. Thomas Harley complained to the Bishop of Hereford about the non-conformity of Sir Robert's rector at Brampton Bryan, much to

19. Marriage Settlement, 19 July 1623, Harley MSS., Bundle 83; draft letter from Harley to Sir John Scudamore, 9 January 1625/6, draft letter from Harley to Sir Walter Pye, 12 January 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/123/391; Assignment of land, 19 June 1627, Harley MSS., Bundle 73; Lewis, Letters, p. 64.

20. Everitt, Local Community, pp. 15-16; Morrill, Provinces, pp. 43-45.

Sir Robert's discomfort. At least two Herefordshire gentlemen were involved in disputes over property with their own mothers in the 1630s.²² Sir Robert was, himself, involved in a number of disputes with local gentlemen, which will be examined in greater detail in the course of this chapter.

Despite the many divisions within the gentry community, the local magnates in Herefordshire did attempt to secure the peaceful administration of the county. This was no simple task, not only were they faced with potential rifts between the gentry, but all too often the magnates found themselves in a position where they could not satisfy both the Crown and the population which they controlled. In particular, the collection of taxes was an onerous duty.

Dr. Barnes has referred to "the general resistance to all forms of taxation in this period".²³ The 1620s and 1630s saw a sharp increase in the levy of extra-parliamentary taxation - the Benevolence of 1622; the Free Gift of 1625/6; the Forced Loan of 1626/7; the collection of Coat and Conduct money to maintain troops in the late 1620s and again in the late 1630s; and of course, the levy of Ship Money in the second half of the 1630s. As the levies increased in number, the willingness of people to pay began to decrease. In Herefordshire, as in other counties, the proportion of Ship Money collected fell dramatically between the issue of the first and the last writs.²⁴ By 1640 the local magnates had discovered that they were being called upon by the Crown to administer increasingly unenforceable policies.

21. Pierson to Harley, 8 September 1615, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 145 and 147.

22. Sir William Croft was involved in a Chancery suit against his mother in the early 1630s, see below, n. 75; Henry Lingen was involved in a dispute with his mother in 1638, C.S.P.D., 1637-38, pp. 188, 405.

23. Barnes, op. cit., p. 73.

24. M.D. Gordon, 'The Collection of Ship Money in the Reign of Charles I', T.R.H.S., 3rd Series, IV (1910).

As a local governor, Sir Robert was well aware of the problems facing the county administrators. He was a signatory to many of the statements which the Herefordshire gentry addressed to the Privy Council, or to their Lord Lieutenant, during the 1620s and 1630s. The frustrations which the Herefordshire magnates experienced in their attempts to enforce Crown policies in 1639 and 1640 are evident both in the private papers collected by the Harleys and in the State papers of those years. The documentation which has survived concerning the Harleys' and the county thus reveals how loyalties inside local society could be constructed and simultaneously they illustrate the divisions and tensions which could arise within that society. The lives of the Harleys within the county will now, therefore, be considered in greater detail.

In 1603 the Harleys were well established in Herefordshire. By that date Thomas Harley was a Justice of the Peace, a Deputy-Lieutenant and had served as Sheriff for the county in 1596, a post which he held again in 1603.²⁵ Thomas Harley's status in the county was firmly based on his landed possessions, which in 1603 included the estate of Brampton Bryan, the estate of Wigmore, (which was then leased to Robert Harley), the manors of Bucton and Aylton, as well as the advowsons of Brampton Bryan,²⁶ Wigmore, Leintwardine and Clun.

Throughout the early seventeenth century the Harleys probably derived the bulk of their income from rent. In 1646 Sir Robert's stewards estimated that he had lost £4,500 in rents from his Herefordshire estates during the first three years of the Civil War.²⁷ This suggests that

25. P.R.O., C66/1594; Folger Library MSS., X.d. 140; List of Sheriffs for England and Wales, P.R.O., Lists and Indexes, IX (1898), p. 61.

26. Marriage Settlement, 12 February 1603, Harley MSS., Bundle 30a.

27. See below, Appendix 2.

immediately before the War he had been receiving an average of £1,500²⁸ p.a. in rents from these lands. Livestock also provided a proportion of the Harleys' income. In 1606 Thomas Harley leased the right to pasture and feed 1,000 sheep in Clun Forest. In 1608 he assigned these rights to Sir Robert.²⁹ Cattle were also kept for the needs of the household and for sale, while the Park at Brampton was well stocked with deer - in 1646 the stewards estimated that Harley had lost 500 deer during the previous three years.³⁰ The park also provided timber, which the Harleys sold. In 1646 Harley's estimated loss of timber was set at £300.³¹ Sir Robert also received income from tithes; in 1640 he leased out the tithes of Walford, Leintwardine, Leinthall Starkes, Wigmore, Adforton and Bucton.³²

The status of the Harleys was improved in 1602, when Thomas Harley had purchased the manor and borough of Wigmore from Sir Henry Lyndley for £2,600. The purchase included the advowsons of both Brampton and Wigmore. The money for this transaction was obtained in the form of

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28. Details of rents are scattered throughout the Harley MSS. Professor Aylmer's conclusions after having studied these papers is that "the evidence does not enable the history of his (Sir Robert Harley's) finances to be told at all fully, but some of the outlines are reasonably clear", Aylmer, King's Servants, p. 373. My own research has led me to the same conclusion.
29. Assignment of lease, 10 October 1608, Harley MSS., Bundle 101. In 1623, when Thomas Harley transferred most of his estate to Sir Robert, the flock at Clun consisted of 807 sheep and 199 lambs, Indentures, 6 May 1623, Harley MSS., Bundle 83.
30. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 8 April 1626, B.L., Loan 29/72; see below, Appendix 2.
31. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 17 February 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/72; see below, Appendix 2.
32. List of rents 1640, Harley MSS., Bundle 22 - this list was probably drawn up in 1646 in order to aid the stewards in their assessment of Harley's losses, see below, Appendix 2.

the dowry of Robert's first wife, Ann Barrett, which amounted to £2,300. As part of the marriage settlement, Thomas Harley conveyed the entire estate of Wigmore, including the two advowsons, to the use of Robert
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for life.

Between the dissolution of the monasteries and the outbreak of the First Civil War the land market was sufficiently buoyant to allow many gentry families to build up their estates, either by purchasing neighbouring properties to their own, or by buying more distant holdings in the hope of later exchanging the land for property nearer their major
34
estates. The acquisition of Wigmore, which was former monastic land, was of particular value to the Harleys, not only because it was a substantial manor, but also because of its proximity to Brampton Bryan (Fig. 2).

Wigmore had come onto the market following the attainder of Sir Gelly Meyricke, who had been implicated in Essex's rebellion of 1601. Meyricke and Lyndley were stewards to the Earl of Essex and they
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received the grant of Wigmore in 1595 at the Earl's request. The judicious use of Ann Barrett's dowry to purchase Wigmore allowed the Harleys both to extend their estates and to consolidate their power base in the north-west of the county. Robert Harley's increased financial status was also recognised by the Crown; at the coronation of James I, in July 1603, he was created a Knight of the Bath. In July 1604 he received a grant from the Crown of the keepership of the forests of Bringwood and Prestwood, Herefordshire. At about the same time, Sir Robert was appointed a Justice of the Peace in Herefordshire for the

33. Indentures, 22 January 1602, Harley MSS., Bundle 77; Marriage Settlement, 12 February 1603, Harley MSS., Bundle 30a. Ann's dowry was regarded as a "fair portion" at the time, B.L., Egerton MSS., 2,714 f. 363r.

34. G.E. Mingay, The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class (1976), pp. 10, 44-45.

35. C.J. Robinson, A History of the Castles of Herefordshire and Their Lords (1869), p. 141.

first time. In 1606 Sir Robert was appointed itinerant justiciar in the Royal forests, chases, parks and warrens in Herefordshire, as the deputy of Charles, Earl of Nottingham.³⁷

Despite the income of Wigmore and the revenue from these minor offices, Sir Robert Harley's income was not very large. In 1623 he estimated that Wigmore was worth £300 per annum, while the annual income paid out of Chancery for the keepership of Bringwood and Prestwood were nothing more than nominal fees.³⁸ By 1611 there is evidence that Sir Robert was falling into debt and in 1615 Thomas Harley had to take measures to relieve his son's financial position. In June 1615 Sir Francis Newport, Sir Robert Harley's father-in-law, wrote to his nephew Sir Edward Herbert and informed him that Sir Robert was "to be delivered of his debts, by selling £400 a year of his inheritance in reversion." Thomas Harley sold his life interest in the Rectory of Clun, which included the tithes and advowson and was worth £300 per annum, in order to clear Sir Robert's debts.³⁹ By 1617 Sir Robert Harley was still in debt for the sum of £2,217 and his father undertook to pay all of his son's debts.⁴⁰ In 1619 Sir Robert was in a position to purchase the rectory and advowson of Presteign for £1,020.⁴¹ Yet in 1623, when he

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36. D.N.B., VIII, 1282; P.R.O., C66/1662
37. Letters of Appointment, 9 May 1606, Harley MSS., Bundle 28.
38. P.R.O., S.P., 14/146/82; Letters Close, 16 July 1604, Harley MSS., Bundle 88, which ordered the payment of £6-2s-6d p.a. to Harley as Forester and Warden of Bringwood, 30s-5d p.a. for the office of the pokership and 18s p.a. as Warden of Prestwood Forest.
39. P.R.O., L.C. 4/197 f. 220r; H.M.C., 10th Report, Appendix, part IV (1885), p. 379; Lease, 8 July 1615, Harley MSS., Bundle 83.
40. Lease, 1 March 1617, Harley MSS., Bundle 83.
41. For Presteign, see W.H. Howse, 'Contest for a Radnorshire Rectory in the Seventeenth Century', Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales, VII (1957), p. 70.

married Brilliana Conway, Sir Robert's estates were encumbered for the sum of £1,000. Just before the marriage, Sir Robert estimated his annual income as £300 for Wigmore, which was charged with outgoings of £100 per annum, £140 for Eyton, which was fully encumbered for one life, and £140 for Presteign.⁴²

Evidence of debt is not, however, always indicative of severe financial strain. In an age when there was no formal banking system, friends, relatives and associates would often lend money on bond and a certain amount of indebtedness was a normal state of affairs. The Harleys do not appear to have been unduly pressured by their debts. In 1623 Sir Robert's financial position was greatly enhanced when Thomas Harley leased the estate of Brampton Bryan and the demesne lands of Bucton to his son, two months before Sir Robert's marriage to Brilliana Conway. Thomas Harley reserved diet and lodging for himself at Brampton; he hoped thereby to speed up the payment of Brilliana's marriage portion, for Sir Robert was in debt at that time.⁴³ Once again Sir Robert Harley's increase in landed wealth resulted in a growth of his status within the county, which was probably also linked with his relationship to his new father-in-law, Secretary Conway. In 1624 Sir Robert was returned to Parliament as knight of the shire for Herefordshire, the first occasion on which he represented a Herefordshire constituency.⁴⁴

During the course of the 1624 Parliament, Harley not only spoke in the Commons about national problems, he also took up matters of local importance to his county, including the problems of weirs on the river

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42. P.R.O., L.C., 4/199 part II f. 449r; P.R.O., S.P., 14/146/82. Eyton had been purchased from Thomas Coningsby by Thomas Harley in 1611 for the sum of £2,400, Hereford and Worcester County R.O., Miscellaneous Deeds, F49/1.
43. Lease, 6 May 1623, Harley MSS., Bundle 83; P.R.O., S.P., 14/147/78.
44. M. of P. 458.

Wye, which were said to reduce the salmon catch in the river and to impede the import of corn into the county and the export of wool from the county. Sir Robert also spoke in favour of raising the price of rye in proportion to the increase in the cost of wheat, in order to encourage Herefordshire farmers to sow ⁴⁵ rye. In 1626 Sir Robert was again returned to Parliament as knight of the shire for Herefordshire. On this occasion he was sufficiently sure of his standing in the county to insist on being returned as senior knight, threatening to stand down if Sir Walter Pye took that honour. ⁴⁶

Sir Robert Harley's relationship with Secretary Conway also resulted in a growth of status outside the county, which in turn affected his standing within Herefordshire. On 30 June 1623 Harley was appointed to the Council of Wales and in September 1626 he received the Mastership ⁴⁷ of the Mint. Harley received revenue from the Mastership until 1633. Previous Masters had been allowed to farm the profits of the Mint, but Sir Robert was tied to an annual fee of £500, although his actual receipts fell short of that sum. Harley did attempt to persuade the King ⁴⁸ to allow him to farm the profits of the Mint, but he failed to do so. In 1627 Harley was granted a monopoly for discovering abuses in the manufacture of gold and silver thread, which not only added policing powers to his position at the Mint, but also provided him with an ⁴⁹ income from whatever fines he was able to impose.

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45. Mayor and Aldermen of Hereford to Harley, 5 April 1624, B.L., Loan 29/50/71, an identical letter was sent to Sir John Scudamore, the other knight of the shire, see P.R.O., CII5/M.21/7636; C.J., I, 704, 711; Nicholas Diary, 12 April 1624.
46. M. of P., 469; draft letter from Harley to Sir Walter Pye, 12 January 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/123/391.
47. H.M.C., Thirteenth Report, Appendix, part IV (1892), p. 270; C.S.P.D., 1625-26, p. 573; Aylmer, King's Servants, p. 375.
48. P.R.O., S.P., 16/246/102, 95/52.
49. Birmingham Reference Library, Coventry MSS., Grants and Patents No. 23 - I am grateful to Professor Russell and Richard Cust for this reference.

Despite this increase in his income Sir Robert appears to have been in debt throughout the period in which he held the Mastership of the Mint. Between December 1624 and January 1634 he prayed on a number of occasions for delivery from debt.⁵⁰ Whatever the extent of Harley's debts during the late 1620s and early 1630s, it is clear that they were not disastrous. Harley was able to purchase the lease of Crown land in Kingsland in Herefordshire in 1627; in the same year he sold the advowson and tithes of Presteign for £1,400. In 1638 Harley leased the manor of Burrington from the Earl of Lindsey.⁵¹

Sir Robert's debts were also insufficient to damage his status within the county. As a major landowner he was a member of the group who were regarded as the natural governors of local society. Sir Robert not only acted as Deputy-Lieutenant and a Justice of the Peace in the county, he also held other secondary posts. During the 1620s Harley acted as a subsidy commissioner and in 1626 he was named as a commissioner for the Forced Loan, although he does not appear to have taken an active part in its collection. He was in London during part of 1627, when the loan was being collected in Herefordshire and business at the Mint may have kept him occupied at this time.⁵² Sir Robert was also a Captain of a band

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50. List of prayers, 17 December 1624, 8 June 1625, B.L., Loan 29/52/93; list of prayers, 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633 and 24 January 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/27 part 1.
51. Indentures, 19 June 1627, Harley MSS., Bundle 73; Howse, loc. cit., 70; Acquittance, 13 June 1638, Harley MSS., Bundle 26.
52. For Harley's work as a subsidy commissioner, see for example, P.R.O., E. 179/119/438, 455, 465, 467 and B.L., Add., Mss., 11,051 ff. 19r, 14lr; for the Herefordshire loan commissioners see P.R.O., C. 193/12/2, ff. 21v-22r, for the history of this document see R. Cust, 'A List of Commissioners for the Forced Loan of 1626-7', B.I.H.R., LI (1978); for a further discussion of the loan in Herefordshire, and Harley's absence, see below, pp. 124-125.

of foot in the county militia, consisting of one hundred men. Sir Robert held this command in April 1619 at the general muster of the county. He retained his captaincy until the Royalist Commissioners of Array removed him in July 1642, when he was replaced by Fitzwilliam Coningsby, one of the most active Herefordshire Royalists.⁵³

The allegiance of the trained men to their captain was reinforced by the fact that the men were often the servants or the tenants of their commander. In 1627 Sir John Scudamore drew up a list of "the names of mine own company of trained men"; he noted that twenty-four of them were his household servants and a further twenty were his retainers. The full number of his band of horse was one hundred.⁵⁴ That the men of the trained bands felt a certain measure of loyalty to their Captain is reflected in the fact that at execution of the Commission of Array in July 1642, at Hereford, all of the foot bands put in a good appearance, except for Sir Robert's company, which had between forty and fifty defaulters.⁵⁵

The gentry could use the allegiance of their servants and tenants to their own ends. During the course of the Coningsby-Croft feud, Herbert Croft rode to the Hereford Quarter Sessions, in April 1590, accompanied by a mob of 50-80 armed men, composed of his grandfather's tenants, his own liveried servants and the retainers of his friends. Coningsby insisted that these men had assembled to assault him, while Croft insisted they were for his own self-defence.⁵⁶ In 1610 Thomas Harley

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53. Draft certificate of muster, 8 April 1619, B.L., Loan 29/50/fragile folios 6; anonymous account of the execution of the Commission of Array at Hereford, 14 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 278r.
54. Folger Library, Scudamore MSS., Vb 3 (2); Draft certificate of muster, 30 October 1640, B.L., Loan 29/124/63.
55. Anonymous account of the execution of the Commission of Array at Hereford, 14 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 278r.
56. P. Williams, 'The Welsh Borderland under Queen Elizabeth', Welsh History Review, I, (1960-1963), 25.

was involved in a dispute over the ownership of tithes in Shropshire. A Star Chamber petition accused Thomas of intimidating "the inferior sort of harmless men near adjoining to him" and using crowds of servants and retainers to this end.⁵⁷ It was also common for gentlemen to expect to be able to direct the votes of their tenants at elections. Prior to the 1626 elections in Herefordshire, Sir Robert Harley, who hoped to stand for election to the county seats with Sir Walter Pye, promised to "reserve my voices" to be at Pye's command.⁵⁸ The "voices" in question were doubtless those of Harley's own tenants.

The ties which bound servants and tenants to their masters and landlords were strengthened in the case of the Harleys because Lady Brilliana and Sir Robert Harley attempted to choose both servants and tenants who were of a godly disposition. In 1633 Lady Brilliana informed her husband that she had heard of a gentlewoman who would make a suitable servant "she, they say, is religious and discreet". In 1641 Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley and expressed her hope that "God send you a religious and a good natured servant".⁵⁹ In 1628, when Sir Robert Harley had been seeking a tenant for a house and orchards on the estate, the Rector of Brampton Bryan, Thomas Pierson, had argued the case of Edward Pinner. Pierson wrote to Harley and noted "I would fain have him, or some honest man to be your tenant to it. Mere worldlings will give the most, but such will not further the gospel among us".⁶⁰ Edward Pinner duly received a lease for the house and the twenty acres.

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57. P.R.O., STAC., 8/200/4, part of this document is damaged, a full copy is extant in the Harley MSS., Bundle 65.
58. D. Hirst, The Representative of the People (Cambridge, 1975), p. 113, hereinafter referred to as Hirst, Representative; draft letter from Harley to Sir Walter Pye, 6 January 1626/6, B.L., Loan 29/123/391.
59. Lewis, Letters, pp. 6, 131.
60. Pierson to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/121; Lease, 20 August 1629, Harley MSS., Bundle 70.

To some extent the Harleys' puritanism did set them apart from other people in the county. Sir Robert was regarded as a leading godly gentleman, not just within the county, but also within the larger area of the diocese of Hereford. The ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the diocese of Hereford was much wider than the county boundary. The diocese contained most of the parishes of southern Shropshire and included parishes in Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Radnorshire and Worcestershire. Thus, on occasion, Sir Robert Harley was approached by members of the diocesan clergy, who regarded him as having a legitimate interest in religious matters inside the diocese.

In 1626 John Hammond, Vicar of Bewdley in Worcestershire, asked Sir Robert to speak to his patron Sir Henry Mildmay. Hammond accused Mildmay's bailiff of withholding his tithes, despite the fact that both Harley and his former brother-in-law, Sir Richard Newport, had already informed Mildmay of the matter. In 1640, when a group of diocesan ministers petitioned against both the Etc. oath and the irregular election of their representatives to Convocation, they entrusted their petitions to Sir Robert Harley for presentation to the Long Parliament. One of the signatories to these petitions, William Voyle, the curate of a Shropshire parish, simultaneously drew up a comprehensive plan of civil and ecclesiastical reforms, which he sent to Sir Robert for his consideration.

Moreover, some of the Harleys' closest social circles centred on their puritan contacts within the diocese. One of the most frequent visitors at Brampton in the late 1630s and early 1640s was the Herefordshire puritan, Edward Broughton. During the same period the Harleys

61. Hammond to Harley, 16 June 1626, B.L., Loan 29/119.

62. Two petitions from ministers of the diocese of Hereford, undated (1640), B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 348r, 349r; anonymous reforms in the hand of Voyle, undated (1640), B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 363r-367v, for a further discussion of these documents, see below, Chapter 4, pp. 195-197.

were very friendly with the puritan Walcot family of south Shropshire. Mrs. Walcot visited Lady Brilliana on several occasions and Lady Brilliana took a close interest in Humphrey Walcot's patronage of the Separatist minister, Walter Cradock.⁶³ Puritan ministers of the diocese were also probable visitors to Brampton in these years. In 1641, John Yates, Vicar of Leintwardine; William Stevenson, Vicar of Wigmore; John Tombes, Vicar of Leominster; and William Voyle, curate of Llanfair Waterdine all attended religious observances at Brampton Bryan.⁶⁴

Although Brampton was a puritan enclave for the diocese, the Harleys also maintained good relationships with the Bishops of Hereford. In 1619 Bishop Godwin invited Sir Robert to his home at Whitborn. Godwin's letter praised Harley for his "respect unto scholars and good zeal to religion". In 1637 Harley supported Bishop Coke in a dispute with some of the bishopric's tenants. Coke claimed that "were it not for Sir Robert Harley, and one Mr. Scudamore, and one or two more, I should have scarce any to speak for me". In 1642, when Coke was in the Tower of London he appealed to Sir Robert by commending his "noble disposition, and goodness, which I have ever known, and by good experience found in you".⁶⁵

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63. For references to Broughton see Lewis, Letters, pp. 47, 49, 57, 63, 69, 70, 71, 109, 116, 152, 153, 159, 161, 168; for reference to the Walcots, see ibid., pp. 6, 31, 38, 91, 105, 144, 184; for reference to Cradock, see ibid., pp. 26, 31, 74, 78.
64. Lewis, Letters, pp. 106, 108.
65. Godwin to Harley, 5 February 1618/19, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 173 and 175; H.M.C., Twelfth Report, Appendix, part II, (1888), p. 173; Coke to Harley, 27 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 224r.

Nevertheless, Sir Robert's religious attitudes did antagonise some people in the county. For example, the Harleys were strict sabbatarians and Sir Robert exercised his authority as a magistrate to fine a man for carrying a load by horse on a Sunday. The man sought revenge by putting up a bill of indictment against Sir Robert at the Quarter Sessions in July 1639 for spoiling the King's highway "by the water that he draws over his grounds"⁶⁶. Sir Robert also made enemies amongst his own neighbours. In 1638 charges of non-conformity were drawn up against Harley, Stanley Gower and Richard Symonds, the schoolmaster at Brampton. The anonymous informant declared that the "honest men" of the parish and neighbourhood would confirm the accusations.⁶⁷

Although some people were affronted by the Harleys' religious practices, in general their puritanism was no bar to the Harleys' acceptance into the social networks within the county. The Harleys were linked to other local gentry families, both through ties of kinship and through their shared roles as local administrators. The nature and function of family links were of major importance to the gentry in this period. The county study of Sussex has thus revealed kinship to be "the dominant principle of Sussex society"⁶⁸.

Kinship was certainly a strong bond, which could persist through many subsequent generations. In the late 1630s, for example, the Harleys were friendly with the Hackluits of Eyton and one of the female members of the Hackluit family was a member of the Harley household, possibly as a maid or companion to the Harley children. The Hackluits were

66. Lewis, Letters, p. 62; for evidence of the Harleys' sabbatarianism see ibid., pp. 8, 14; 1628 Debates, II, 383. Harley read and made copious notes from John Ley's sabbatarian treatise Sunday A Sabbath published in 1641, see notes in Harley's hand endorsed "Sunday a sabbath", B.L., Loan 29/27 part I.

67. P.R.O., S.P., 16/381/92.

68. Fletcher, Sussex, p. 48.

regarded as kin by Lady Brilliana, despite the fact that the two families were linked by a marriage which had been contracted in the late
⁶⁹ fifteenth century. A similar relationship existed between the Harleys and the Davies families of Coxhall and Wigmore. The Davies were descendants of Edward Harley, the brother of John Harley, the younger. Edward had died in 1586, but the Davies's were still visitors to Brampton
⁷⁰ in the late 1630s and were welcomed there as cousins by Lady Brilliana.

It has been suggested of Sussex that "in a community where many of the men who moved on the same social plane were related by marriage in one previous generation or another, stress on cousinage became a mere
⁷¹ mark of courtesy". This comment glosses over the very real sense of kinship which family ties engendered. By the 1630s the Hackluit and the Davies Families were certainly not the social equals of the Harleys. Neither the Hackluits nor the Davies's was of the magisterial class by the succession of Charles I. The links between the Harleys and these two families appear to have been based solely on what would be regarded today as very distant family connections.

This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that Lady Brilliana did not extend the term "cousin" to all of the members of her social circle. The local gentleman, Edward Broughton, was never referred to as a cousin in Lady Brilliana's letters, presumably because there were no blood ties
⁷² between the two families. Intricate bonds of kinship were thus remembered by later generations, largely because they could have more than

69. Lewis, Letters, pp. 41, 42, 61, 84, 118, 154, 155, 167, 189; Visitation of Shropshire, I, 214.

70. Wills of Edward Harley of Wigmore gent., 16 June 1586, and Anne Harley of Wigmore, 19 February 1613/14, Hereford and Worcester County R.O., AA.20; Lewis, Letters, pp. 65, 68, 80, 97, 110, 116, 117, 127, 135, 136, 150, 171, 181, 206.

71. Fletcher, Sussex, p. 48.

72. For Lady Brilliana's references to Broughton, see above n. 63.

just a social significance. Kinship could provide patronage and influence at every level of local life. The intricacy of such links is well illustrated by the relationship between the Harleys and the Crofts of Croft Castle in Herefordshire.

The two families were related through the marriage of John Harley, the elder, to Ann Croft, sister of Sir James Croft, who was Comptroller of the Household and a Privy Councillor in Elizabeth's reign. The family relationship was reinforced when Sir James Croft and his nephew John Harley, the younger, married two sisters, Alice and Maud Warncombe of Hereford.⁷³ In 1582 Sir James Croft was able to persuade the Privy Council to allow a church burial for John Harley, the younger, a Catholic recusant. During the first part of the reign of King James I, Sir Herbert Croft was a trustee to a number of Harley family estate settlements. When Sir Herbert and his son William were forced to sell land in 1610 to cover their debts it was the Harleys who bought up the land.

In 1616 Sir Herbert was again contemplating selling more land and Sir Robert Harley provided him with information from Maud Harley's will, in order to prove that the land was not entailed. Croft wrote to Harley to express his gratitude for his help:-

"in the due of a kinsman, so by the tie of so frank courtesy, I profess myself bound to remain ever your faithful friend and cousin". 74

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73. Robinson, Mansions, p. 82; Settlement, 26 August 1545, Harley MSS., Bundle 83; Visitation of Shropshire, I, 214.
74. Sir James Croft to Thomas Harley, 9 April 1582, B.L., Loan 29/202 before f. 38; Marriage Settlement, 12 February 1603, Settlement, 24 August 1613, and Covenant, 10 November 1615, Harley MSS., Bundle 83; Bargain and sale, 3 February 1610, Harley MSS., Bundle 88; Sir Herbert Croft to Harley, 27 October 1616, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 151 and 155.

Although Sir Herbert Croft had Catholic sympathies, he was not open about his religious leanings until 1617, when John Chamberlain noted "we hear that Sir Herbert Croft is turned popish, which seems strange to many". Croft's previous discretion concerning his Catholicism probably explains why Sir Robert Harley befriended him, whilst failing to maintain relations with the recusant Mynors family. After this Croft left England for the continent, but Harley continued to remain friendly with his son, Sir William Croft. In 1623, when Sir William was planning to travel to Spain, he decided to transfer his estates to a group of trustees, including Sir Robert. In 1632, when Sir Sampson Eure was buying Gatley Park from Sir William Croft, Sir Robert was chosen to settle the selling price, because the two parties could not agree among themselves.⁷⁵ In 1640 Sir William was one of Harley's supporters⁷⁶ in the Short Parliament elections.

Family links could thus have beneficial repercussions through the course of several generations and were therefore carefully sustained by repeated references to cousinage. Sir Robert Harley and Viscount Scudamore regarded each other as kinsmen, although they were related solely by mutual connections to the Croft family. Nevertheless, both⁷⁷ men referred to their kinship in their correspondence.

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75. P.R.O., S.P., 14/93/129; B.L., Add., MSS., 37,999 f. 57r; Harley to Eure, 9 November 1632, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 61r. The H.M.C., Calendar is wrong in stating that this letter concerns "a suit between Lady Harley and Sir William Croft", H.M.C., Portland, 31, the original letter refers to "the cause depending in Chancery between my Lady and Sir William Croft". The suit was in fact between Croft and his own mother, see P.R.O., C. 2/CHAS. I. C48/64. The errors in the calendar have misled other historians, see Aylmer, King's Servants, p. 378.
76. Hereford and Worcester County R.O., Croft MSS., S33/8; Sir Walter Pye to Harley, 10 February 1639/40, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 254r.
77. Pedigree of Croft of Croft Castle and Lugwardine Court, in Robertson, Mansions; B.L., Add., MSS., 11,044 ff. 5r, 7r.

Harmonious social and family relationships amongst the gentry could help to lessen the effects which gentry feuds could have on local politics. There was a degree of stability in Herefordshire gentry society throughout the first half of the seventeenth century; yet county society had not always been united. In 1582 a fierce feud had started when Sir James Croft and Humphrey Coningsby had competed for the recorder-ship of Leominster. Local pre-eminence was at stake here and it was not to be relinquished lightly. The feud disturbed the county for eight years and involved many local families, who took one side or the other. By the 1640s the feuding was over, but not necessarily forgotten. On 15 July 1642 Lady Brilliana wrote to her husband "Sir William Croft, who once did not love Mr. Coningsby nor Mr. Scudamore, is now their
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mighty friend". The Herefordshire gentry were by no means as divided in the early Stuart period as were the gentry in Leicestershire or Wiltshire, for example, nevertheless, there were minor disputes and litigation. Sir Robert Harley himself was involved in a number of incidents with other gentlemen, both inside the county and in the marcher areas surrounding Brampton.

In 1604 Harley and Sir Thomas Coningsby were at loggerheads over negotiations for a proposed marriage between Sir Robert and Coningsby's daughter, Ann. The match failed over the question of the dowry and both Harley and Coningsby eagerly accused the other of breaching the marriage plans. Coningsby was in fact offering an adequate dowry of £2,000 and he reminded Harley that it was "a portion unusual in these countries in our age there are not 3 examples of the like in the

78. Williams, 'The Welsh Borderland etc.', *Welsh History Review*, I, (1960-1963), 24-25; R. Ham, 'The Career of Sir Herbert Croft (1564?-1629): a study in Local Government and Society', (Ph. D. Thesis, University of California, Irvine, 1974), Chapter 2, passim; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 15 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 208r.

3 adjoining countries". The negotiations broke down, however, because Coningsby was unwilling to pay the dowry in one sum, but wished to pay "from day to day to the uttermost best of my poor fortunes, to my life's end". The episode caused extreme ill will on both sides as the negotiations dragged on for several months.⁷⁹

Harley was also involved in more serious disputes. In 1623 Edward Vaughan filed a suit in the Exchequer Court complaining that some of the tenants of Wigmore had torn down his enclosures in Darvold Forest. Vaughan accused Sir Robert of encouraging his tenants. In 1630 Harley clashed with Sir Sampson Eure, an official of the Welsh Council, after one of Eure's servants was found poaching in Bringwood Forest, where Harley was keeper. The quarrel was short-lived, since in 1632 Eure allowed the question of the selling price of Gatley Park to be referred to Harley for settlement.⁸⁰

Such local disputes were the occasions when the gentry could usefully enlist the help of influential friends or relatives. When Harley heard about Vaughan's suit, he wrote to Sir John Walter, an acquaintance, who was also representing Vaughan in the Exchequer case. Walter assured Harley that he had not "commenced" the suit, but was acting "by order and direction of the table". He added that "there was a desire to have a suit also in the Star Chamber, but that I stayed". On receiving Harley's letter, Walter had approached "Lord Hubbard" - Sir Henry Hobart, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas - who said that "the course of the suit could not be altered". Hobart had, however, suggested a compromise, if Harley undertook to pay Vaughan's charges and to prevent further "outrages", then the tenants would be spared appearing before the Court.

79. Morrill, Provinces, pp. 42-44; Sir Thomas Coningsby to Harley, 14 September (1604?), and Sir Thomas Coningsby to Thomas Cornwall, 26 November 1604, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 45 and 51, between ff. 59 and 61. I am grateful to Robyn Priestley for allowing me to make use of her transcripts of the correspondence concerning this proposed marriage.

80. Sir John Walter to Harley, 28 October 1623, B.L., Loan 29/121; P.R.O., S.P., 16/175/61; Nottingham County R.O., DD. 4P. 76/4; Hereford and Worcester county R.O., Gatley Park MSS., F76/IV/ 11, 12.

During his dispute with Eure, Sir Robert appealed to his father-in-law, Viscount Conway, who was then Lord President of the Privy Council. Conway was himself too sick to petition the King on Harley's behalf, but he placed the matter in the hands of Secretary Dorchester. Within days the King had written to the Welsh Council, demanding the release of Harley's deputy, Adams, who had been imprisoned at Ludlow, and the punishment of Eure's servant.

Such incidents were common enough. The Sussex gentry have been described as "addicted to quarrelling and feuds". In general, the tensions created by these rifts were counterbalanced in Herefordshire in this period by the gentry's desire for stability within the county, and their tacit assumption that they were the spokesmen for the entire population of the county. The perceptions which the greater gentry had of their roles as local county governors are well illustrated in Herefordshire by the activities surrounding parliamentary elections in this period.

Prior to the elections for the 1621 Parliament, Sir Robert Harley drew up draft letters to a number of the leading gentry in Herefordshire, including Sir Thomas Coningsby, Sir Richard Hopton, Sir John Scudamore and James Tompkins. Harley asked them to delay giving their support to any candidates for the county seats "till we shall meet to deliberate and resolve of the fittest for that service, wherein I desire that neither faction nor affection, but discretion and true understanding may point us out the men".

Accordingly, Harley and eighteen other leading county gentlemen met

81. Sir John Walter to Harley, 28 October 1623, B.L., Loan 29/121; P.R.O., S.P., 16/175/61, 176/25, (I, II).

82. Fletcher, Sussex, p. 54.

83. Lewis, Letters, pp. xliii-xliv. These letters are undated, but internal evidence indicates that they relate to the 1621 Parliament.

at Hereford on 8 December 1620 and signed an agreement that "having consultation what was fit to be done as well for that election of knights to serve at the next approaching Parliament, as for future time weighing and considering the great inconveniences which have heretofore happened by faction and opposition in the said elections, as well to the county in general, as to particular great houses, have thought fit to determine with one consent, that whensoever notice shall be given of a Parliament, they, together with such other as shall think good of this determinate resolution, shall meet to consult and to point out two fit men to be proposed to the freeholders of the same county, to elect if they please to approve of them".

This agreement seems to have remained in force until at least the elections to the Long Parliament. In 1626 Harley persuaded Sir John Scudamore to recommend Harley and Sir Walter Pye, the elder, to the county gentry, before the election, as the candidates for the county seats. In October 1640 Harley wrote to the Earl of Essex to tell him that he and Fitzwilliam Coningsby had "been invited by divers gentlemen of the best quality in this county to stand to be knights for this shire at the next Parliament" and asked Essex for his support. Such manipulation of elections by the gentry magnates was not uncommon throughout the country and stemmed from their dislike of an election contest, which might create disorders, and from the magnates' shared perceptions of their roles as the natural governors of local society. The social tensions which could develop during election campaigns are well illustrated by Sir Robert Harley's threat to withdraw from the 1626 election, if his claim to the first county seat was not honoured. In

84. Folger Library, Scudamore MSS., Vb 2 (21); draft letter from Harley to Sir John Scudamore, 9 January 1625/6, draft letter from Harley to Sir Walter Pye, the elder, 12 January 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/123/39i; draft letter from Harley and Fitzwilliam Coningsby to the Earl of Essex, 9 October 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 300r.

85. Hirst, Representative, pp. 13, 15.

this instance the dispute was settled rapidly, without any disruption to local life.

Sir Robert Harley based his claim to seniority on the fact that his status as a Knight of the Bath was superior to that of Sir Walter Pye -

"I spoke to the hearing of they that were present, that I being a Knight of the Bath and Sir Walter Pye a Knight Bachelor, I understood it would point at my dishonour in this service to have the second place". 86

Sir Robert had of course served for the county in 1624, while Sir Walter Pye had not served for the county in previous Parliaments. Pye, however, had a longer record as a Member of Parliament. Whereas Sir Robert had first been returned to Parliament in 1604, Pye had first served for Scarborough in 1597. Neither Sir Robert Harley nor Sir Walter Pye made reference to length of service in their letters. Pye in fact acquiesced at once to Harley's demand, but insisted that he did so "for the love I bear to Sir Robert Harley and his house but that it is his right, I acknowledge it not". Harley replied "I hope you do not suspect me to be of so left handed a judgement as to think that it is either your, or my, right to be knight for the Parliament, or to have precedency in that troublesome honour, both depending on the public suffrages of our country". 88

The gentry's desire for stability in the county was the counterpart of their desire for harmony in relations between the gentry in Parliament and the Crown, which has aptly been described by one historian as "consensus politics". The gentry's hopes for harmony, consensus and stability were, however, pressed hard by the political realities of

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86. Draft letter from Harley to Sir Walter Pye, 12 January 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/123/39i.
87. M. of P., 448, 436.
88. Sir Walter Pye to Harley, 14 January 1625/6 and draft letter from Harley to Sir Walter Pye, 28 January 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/123/39i.
89. M. Kishlansky, 'The Emergence of Adversary Politics in the Long Parliament', J.M.H., XLIX (1977), 623; see also Russell, Parliaments, pp. 5-7.

government at both national and local levels. The county governors, who represented their localities in Parliament and who attempted to oversee the smooth running of local government, were frequently caught between the expectations of the Crown and the expectations of their neighbours. Sir Robert Harley's status as one of the leading county governors meant that he was well aware of the problems facing the gentry in this respect, as an examination of his experiences as a Deputy-Lieutenant and a Justice of the Peace will reveal.

Harley's duties as a Deputy-Lieutenant involved him in the administration of various government policies. The Deputies were responsible for organising the county militia, which included training, overseeing arms and munitions, levying men for service outside the county and collecting money to maintain both the militia and the pressed men.⁹⁰ Harley appears to have first acted as a Deputy-Lieutenant in 1619; in April of that year he signed a draft of the certificate of muster, which the Deputies prepared for their Lord Lieutenant.⁹¹ The surviving documentation concerning the Herefordshire militia is sparse for the early Stuart period and it is, therefore, difficult to assess Sir Robert's activities as a Deputy. There is, however, evidence to show that he was an active Deputy in 1619 and 1620. There is further evidence indicating that Harley was an active Deputy from November 1624 until January 1626.⁹² There is then a gap in the records until Lady Brilliana's

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90. For the history of the militia see L. Boynton, The Elizabethan Militia, 1558-1638 (1967).
91. Draft certificate of muster, 8 April 1619, B.L., Loan 29/50/fragile folios 6.
92. James Tomkins to Harley, 24 October 1619, B.L., Loan 29/121; B.L., Add., MSS., 11,044 f. 3r; Sir Thomas Coningsby to Harley, 17 September 1620, and William Earl of Northampton to his Deputy Lieutenants, 8 November 1624, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 29r, 30v, 148r, 149v; B.L. Add., MSS., 11, 051 f. 17r, 11,050 ff. 139r, 141r, 143r, 148v-149r, 11, 044 ff. 5r, 7r,v.

letters to her son Edward reveal Harley's involvement with the militia in 1639. In January 1639 Sir Robert attended a muster at Hereford, and in April of that year he and his fellow Deputies met at Hereford, in order to choose men from the trained bands to join the King's forces in the North.

Although the county did form an administrative unit for the work of the Deputy-Lieutenants and the Justices, it was not a homogeneous unit. Jurisdictional disputes were endemic to seventeenth century society and such disputes illustrate how acrimonious conflicts could break out within county society. For example, the city of Hereford acted as a separate administrative unit, under the authority of the Mayor and City Council. Hereford had its own Commission of the Peace, its own members of Parliament, as well as the right to make a separate return of extra-parliamentary taxation such as the Forced Loan of 1626-7 and Ship Money.

The autonomy of Hereford in administrative matters caused the county governors some problems. In 1619 Sir Robert Harley, in his capacity as Deputy-Lieutenant, noted that some of the citizens of Hereford, who owned land in the county, defaulted at the county muster at the command of the mayor, "it being, as he pretends, an infringing of their liberties, to furnish horse with the county". A similar dispute occurred in 1635 when some of the inhabitants of Hereford, who owned lands in the parishes of Hampton and Holmer, just outside the city limits, refused to pay Ship Money with these parishes and insisted on paying with the city. This matter was referred to the Assizes, the Privy Council and

93. Lewis, Letters, pp. 18, 48, 49.

94. A.M. Johnson, 'Politics in Chester during the Civil Wars and the Interregnum, 1640-1662', in P. Clark and P. Slack, (eds.), Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700: Essays in Urban History (1972), p. 204; Hill, Economic Problems, p. 9.

95. See above, n. 15.

96. Draft Certificate of muster, 8 April 1619, B.L., Loan 29/50/fragile folios 6.

the Welsh Council, but as late as January 1639 the Sheriff for 1636 informed the Privy Council that most of the arrears of Ship Money for which he was responsible related to this dispute.⁹⁷

In May 1639 the Mayor and City Council complained to Viscount Scudamore, the High Steward of Hereford, about the actions of the Deputy-Lieutenants, who at the time included Sir Robert Harley. The Deputies were accused of assuming "to themselves the sole power and authority within the city of Hereford, as well to appoint soldiers and to lay impositions of great sums of money upon us for Coat and Conduct money, as also to select out of our trained band such of them and so many as they think fit for the present service, without the consent of the Mayor the same being very repugnant to our ancient liberties, privileges and customs".⁹⁸

Sir Robert Harley was also closely involved in local administration in his capacity as a Justice of the Peace. The Commission of the Peace was a most important body in local government, not only because of the criminal jurisdiction of the Bench, but also because of its function as administrator of government policies at local level.⁹⁹ The lack of any surviving Quarter Sessions or Assize records for Herefordshire before the Restoration means that it is impossible to obtain a complete picture of the activities of the Herefordshire magistracy in the period before 1660. Fortunately, some documents relating to the Herefordshire Justices have survived, both in the State Papers and in Sir Robert Harley's own papers.

In Herefordshire the local divisions followed the Hundred boundaries and locally the Harleys exercised their authority as Justices within

97. M.A. Faraday, 'Ship Money in Herefordshire', T.W.N.F.C., XLI (1974), 222-223.

98. P.R.O., C115/M.21/7638.

99. J.H. Gleason, The Justices of the Peace, 1558-1640 (Cambridge, 1969); Barnes, op. cit., pp. 41-97; Hill, 'County Government etc.' in Russell, Origins.

the Hundred of Wigmore. There are a number of papers relating to Sir Robert's out-of-Sessions work as a J.P., these include the case of an unlicensed preacher, who was also an adulterer, two murders, and an outbreak of plague in the border parish of Presteign in 1636 and 1637.¹⁰¹ The Justices were also responsible for the execution of the Poor Laws, the collection of local taxes and the regulation of wages in the county.¹⁰²

During the early Stuart period one of the principal areas of tension in local government was the collection of extra-parliamentary taxation. Sir Robert Harley was a signatory to most of the statements made by the Herefordshire county governors to the Privy Council concerning the difficulties which they faced in raising extra-parliamentary levies in the 1620s and 1630s. These statements were diplomatically worded explanations designed to appease the Crown and its closest advisers. As such, they reveal that the county governors often had to tread a very careful line, in order neither to anger their sovereign nor to antagonise the inhabitants of the county.

In 1622, when the King asked for a Benevolence for the aid of the Palatinate, the Herefordshire Justices, including Sir Robert Harley, warned the Privy Council that "the course directed in the said letters

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100. For example, see P.R.O., S.P., 14/140/25, 144/33, 16/193/12, 53, 194/41, 64.
101. Draft letter from Harley, 23 May 1622, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 76v; Thomas Harley to Harley, 6 November 1627 and information concerning the murder of Rogers, 2 November 1629, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 231r, 257r; papers relating to Presteign, 13 September 1636 to 22 May 1637, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 123r-126v, 128r-133v, 136r, 141r; John Cooke to Harley, 19 November 1636, B.L., Loan 29/119; Nottingham County R.O., DD. 4P. 68/102-104.
102. Hill, 'County Government etc.', in Russell, *Origins*, pp. 70, 74; amongst Harley's papers is copy of the scale of wages set out by the county J.P.s in April 1632, Sir Robert was a signatory to this paper, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 56r.

may prove so unsuccessful in this county, as we hold ourselves bound in duty to make known to your Lordships for most of us before our assembly here, were particularly solicited by many of our neighbours to be excused from this service, wherein they discovered unto us both their disability, and too much unwillingness, to answer your Lordships expectation in this way".¹⁰³ Sir Robert's reluctance to promote the Benevolence, as voiced in this letter, contrasts strongly with his earlier enthusiasm to collect money for the voluntary contribution to the Palatinate in 1620.

In their letter the J.P.s clearly stated that the reservations of the inhabitants of the county were based both on their inability to pay and their dislike of the form of the tax. There is evidence in other areas that people preferred parliamentary taxation to other forms of contribution. In Oxfordshire Lord Saye's objections to the Benevolence were based on his doubts about its legality and his own preference "to give in a parliamentary course". In Northamptonshire Sir Edward Montagu noted in January 1622 that his neighbours were alarmed "lest some unusual courses should be taken for supply of present necessity and want for money, and England not liking levies but by Parliament, as former ages show".¹⁰⁴

Similar preference for parliamentary taxation was expressed by the Herefordshire Justices, including Sir Robert Harley, in a second letter to the Privy Council of 13 July 1622:-

"being not a little grieved to understand from your Lordships that his Majesty's great and important occasions found not supply more answerable to his Majesty's expectation in Parliament, the way of our desires, wherein we shall be always ready to supply his Majesty to the uttermost of our abilities, as any of our ancestors ever were his Majesty's most Royal progenitors".

103. P.R.O., S.P., 14/130/34.

104. For Sir Robert's efforts in 1620, see above Chapter I, p. 73; M.L. Schwarz, 'Lord Saye and Sele's Objections to the Palatinate Benevolence of 1622: Some new Evidence and its Significance', *Albion*, IV (1972), 16; Cope, *op.cit.*, p. 93.

In the same letter the Justices tactfully refused to supply the Council with the names of those who had refused to contribute to the Benevolence:-

"we forbear to brand any with the disloyal mark of obstinacy or disaffection, until we receive your Lordships' further commands for trial of their contumacy, having given this testimony in general of his Majesty's truly well affected subjects of this county". 105

The Herefordshire Justices' response to the Council's initial request for such a list was to delay, probably in the hopes that the Council would simply accept their contribution without forcing them into the unpleasant task of singling out those of their neighbours who had not been forthcoming.

The leading Herefordshire gentry employed similar delaying tactics in 1625. In October 1625 the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Northampton, wrote to his Deputies and to the county Justices, asking them to comply with the King's instructions and supply him with a list of people in the county able to loan money to the Crown and the amounts which they would be able to lend. Northampton's letter was dated 3 October 1625. On 24 November John Rudhall, one of the Deputy-Lieutenants, wrote to his colleague Sir John Scudamore and informed him that "In the business of the Privy Seals we have done nothing, but left every man to make his own
106
excuse". Following a second letter from Northampton, a number of Deputies and Justices, including Sir Robert Harley, wrote to their Lord Lieutenant in January 1626 and argued that the King's original instructions to the Earl only gave him the authority to collect names from Wales. The Herefordshire magnates noted that "forasmuch as this county is none of the counties of the principality of Wales we have
107
therefore thought fit to make remonstrances of the same".

105. P.R.O., S.P., 14/132/40, this letter was also signed by Harley. In Oxfordshire Lord Saye thought "the requiring of the names of those that would not give might be taken for a kind of pressing", Schwarz, loc. cit., 15-16.

106. B.L., Add., MSS., 11,051 f. 31r; P.R.O., C115/N.2/8523.

107. B.L., Add., MSS., 11, 051, f. 21r; P.R.O., S.P., 16/18/72, (I), there is a copy of this letter amongst Harley's papers, "Copy of the answer of Herefordshire to the Lord Lieutenant concerning the privy seals", 7 January 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 197r, v.

On this occasion dilatory tactics removed the immediate problem. With the Privy Council breathing down Northampton's neck for information from the many Welsh and border counties where he held the post of Lord Lieutenant, the Earl simply returned the Justices' letter directly to the Privy Council, accompanied by a list of names for the county
108
which he had himself compiled. Later in 1626 the King again tried to raise money, this time by means of the Forced Loan. This time the organisation was much more efficient than in the case of the Free Gift. Commissioners for the loan were appointed in each county by letters
109
patent under the great seal. The Earl of Northampton appointed the meeting of the Herefordshire commissioners for 13 February 1627 and he himself attended with Sir John Bridgeman, the Chief Justice of Chester.

All eleven of the Herefordshire gentlemen who had signed the letter of January 1626 to Northampton were chosen as loan commissioners, but only five of the eleven attended the meeting at Hereford on 13 February 1627. Sir Robert Harley was amongst those commissioners who did not attend the meeting; he was in London by 2nd March 1627, where he was concerned with matters relating to the Mint. Sir Robert did not take an active part in the collection of the loan, which continued throughout
110
1627. There were a number of defaulters in Herefordshire who refused to pay the Loan. Most of them claimed poverty, although others said that they had paid elsewhere or should be exempt because they had already

108. P.R.O., S.P., 16/18/72, Northampton had to take a similar course for Radnorshire and Worcestershire. The amounts which were finally brought in for Herefordshire are set out in E. 401/2586, Harley is recorded as having paid £30.

109. Cust, loc. cit., 199.

110. B.L., Add., MSS., 11,051 f. 32r; P.R.O., S.P., 16/54/2, (I,)28. Strangely, Harley's absence was not noted in Northampton's letter to the Council, which indicated those commissioners who were present or absent. Harley wrote to Conway on 2 March 1627 from London, P.R.O., S.P., 16/56/10.

responded to loans under the privy seal. There is nothing amongst the official returns for Herefordshire in the State Papers to suggest that there was any explicit opposition to the Loan based on constitutional principle, although there is evidence of constitutional opposition in
 111
 other counties.

Arguments of poverty were also made by defaulters of Ship Money in the 1630s in Herefordshire. Poverty was also offered as a reason for lowering the amount levied on the county in a Grand Jury petition of 1638 and in two petitions from the Herefordshire Justices to the Privy Council in 1637 and 1638. The second of the petitions to the Privy Council, which was signed by seventeen J.P.s, including Sir Robert Harley, asked that "the present taxation upon this county of Ship Money may be forborne". The petition referred to the prolonged outbreaks of plague in the county during the past two years, which had necessitated "great taxations" within the county for the relief of the inhabitants, and which had affected the wool trade with Worcester, "stopping wholly our commerce there this year". The petition also noted that "the Lent corn and fruit this year generally failing in this county, whereby famine
 112
 creaped upon us". These economic arguments would be far more palatable to the Privy Council than any constitutional arguments about the Ship Money levies and it was not until September 1640 that there is evidence that anyone in Herefordshire openly questioned the legality of Ship
 113
 Money.

However, behind the arguments that the county lacked the money to pay

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111. For Herefordshire defaulters see P.R.O., S.P., 16/73/29, 78/46, (I,)79/81, 80/18,(I, II); Lord Saye opposed the loan on constitutional grounds, Schwarz, loc. cit., 18.
112. For Ship Money defaulters in Herefordshire, see P.R.O., S.P., 16/341/45, 365/70-85, 370/71, (I,II), 371/87, (I), 427/68, 91; For the Grand Jury petition see Nottingham County R.O., DD. 4P 68/12; for the J.P.s petitions, see P.R.O., S.P., 16/376/133, 407/42, there is a copy of the second petition at Nottingham County R.O., DD. 4P. 68/13.
113. P.R.O., S.P., 16/466/77.

the Ship Money levies, was the realisation of the Herefordshire gentry that they were being called upon to administer increasingly unenforceable Crown policies. Herefordshire Sheriffs encountered increasing problems in collecting Ship Money as each writ went out. Even the money that was collected was amassed under duress. William Scudamore, Sheriff from 1634-1635, complained to the Privy Council that it had taken him ten months to assess the amounts due before he could even begin the levy. Henry Lingen, Sheriff in 1638, reported that he had met opposition from the leading J.P.s and named Sir Richard Hopton as the ring-leader, without specifying the nature of the Justices' opposition. Lingen later complained that the petition sent to the Council from the Justices had made people backward in paying the tax, as they were waiting
114
for a reply.

A letter written by Lady Brilliana to Edward Harley in November 1639 fully illustrates the relief that she felt when Sir Robert Harley managed to avoid the office of Sheriff in that year:-

"My brother got your father off from being Sheriff,
for which I thank God". 115

Thomas Aldern was the man who filled the post of Sheriff in 1639. In September 1640 he wrote a letter to Secretary Nicholas, which reveals how difficult the task of collecting Ship Money had become. Aldern reported that most of the gentry were refusing to pay that year's assessment. The under-Sheriff had refused to have anything to do with that year's writ, and the constables and collectors were refusing to distrain the goods of defaulters. Aldern was reduced to using his own servants to execute the writ and wrote to the clerk of the Privy Council saying that he was weary

114. P.R.O., S.P., 16/407/49, 392/56, 410/23.

115. Lewis, Letters, p. 73; Lady Brilliana's brother, probably the second Viscount Conway, was able to use his influence with Earl of Strafford to help Harley, ibid., p. 75.

of imprisoning his own constables.

The collection of Ship Money was not the only problem facing the local governors in the county immediately before the assembly of the Long Parliament. In 1639 the raising of troops, and the need for Coat and Conduct money to provide forces for King Charles' Scottish campaign, also led to disorders in the county. In March 1639 the Herefordshire Deputy-Lieutenants were ordered to press two hundred men to rendezvous at Ashby on 1 April, but at the beginning of that month Lady Brilliana informed Edward Harley that "all the lusty men are afraid and hide themselves". In their desperation to avoid the draft some of the pressed men killed one of their conductors on the road to Ludlow and escaped.¹¹⁷ Violence against men in authority continued throughout the following year. In October 1639 one of the Bishop's secretaries was murdered, whilst serving a process on a man who opposed the Bishop's attempt to grant what was believed to be common land to the secretary. In January 1640 the under-Sheriff was murdered while executing a suit of outlawry, which served to make other local officials all the more reluctant to collect¹¹⁸ Ship Money.

In April 1640 there was renewed pressing of men to serve in the Scottish war. Early in May the pressed men from Herefordshire rioted at Presteign and almost killed their Captain, who was saved by the men of the trained band. On this occasion, in keeping with a spate of similar incidents in other counties, it was rumoured that the men had refused to¹¹⁹ serve under the Captain because he was a Catholic. Once the pressed men

116. P.R.O., S.P., 16/466/77.

117. Lewis, Letters, pp. 37, 38, 44; P.R.O., S.P., 16/418/95.

118. Lewis, Letters, p. 67; P.R.O., S.P., 16/454/10.

119. Lewis, Letters, p. 95, see also R. Clifton, 'Fear of Popery', in Russell, Origins, p. 158.

were assembled the Council twice put off the date on which they were to march north. This caused numerous problems for the Deputy-Lieutenants, who took the decision to disband the men rather than to continue paying for their maintenance at the expense of the county. In July the soldiers finally set off, but when they reached Leominster, to the north of Hereford, they attempted to stay there and caused a minor riot in the town when the townsfolk decided that a few injuries were preferable to the prospect of billeting unruly soldiers in their homes. Lady Brilliana sent a vivid report of the incident to Edward Harley:-

"The soldiers from Hereford were at Lemster last Thursday on their march to their rendezvous; the captain not paying them all their pay, they would have returned into the town again, but all the town rose, and those that were come out of church, and with those arms they had, beat them back, but there being a great heap of stones out of town, the soldiers made use of them as long as they lasted, in which time the townsmen did but little good, till that powder was spent, and then the townsmen were too hard; many were hurt on both sides. The Captain would have come into the town, but he was kept out". 121

The difficulties facing the Deputy-Lieutenants in providing and maintaining troops for the war were catalogued by the Deputies in their letters to the Lord Lieutenant. A few days after the rioting at Leominster three Deputies - Sir John Kyrle, Roger Vaughan and John Scudamore wrote to the Earl of Bridgewater, the Lord Lieutenant and informed him that "we passed through great and eminent dangers both of our lives and fortunes, in regard of the mutinous disobedience and insolent behaviour of the soldiers never before known or heard of in this county in our times". 122 Amongst Sir Robert Harley's papers is a copy of a letter from

120. P.R.O., S.P., 16/456/69.

121. Lewis, Letters, p. 98.

122. P.R.O., S.P., 16/459/86; similar disorders were experienced amongst the pressed men in other counties, Barnes, op. cit., pp. 276-277. In their letter to the Lord Lieutenant, the Herefordshire Deputies blamed the "news of the great misdemeanours committed in other counties" for making the Herefordshire men "most dangerously insolent, and mutinous".

the same three Deputies to Bridgewater, written in November 1640, which again refers to the physical dangers of their posts, as well as the pressures that the Deputies faced from their superiors:-

"whereas most officers have some recompense for public services, we your Lordships' Deputy Lieutenants do the best service we can upon our own expense and not at all times without danger and calumny and threats of being questioned". 123

The difficult position of the Deputies is also evident in a letter written by Sir Robert Harley in August 1640 to his brother-in-law, Viscount Conway, who was commander of the horse in the army in the north:-

"I am sorry your Lordship blames the Deputy Lieutenants for the wicked disorders of the soldiers, when they chose not the pravity of their dispositions, but the ability of their persons, and that providence which is always to be adored, in this is to be admired, that men of so low condition should attempt so far above their own spirits, The Lord in mercy produce his wise counsels out of our distempers". 124

One remedy to "our distempers" in which the Harleys placed their faith was a Parliament. There is evidence that even in the early 1630s the Harleys were hoping for a Parliament to be called, the lists of prayers which Sir Robert Harley drew up in 1633 and 1634 contain the desire for
125
"a happy meeting in Parliament". The news that a Parliament would be

123. Herefordshire Deputy-Lieutenants to the Earl of Bridgewater, 11 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/123/42.

124. P.R.O., S.P., 16/465/7.

125. Lists of prayers, 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, 24 January 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/27 Part I. The Harleys were not alone in hoping for a Parliament in the 1630s, Professor Barnes notes of Sir Robert Phelps and Lord Poulett that "in common with most of their contemporaries, both men believed that another Parliament was just around the corner", Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 284. Similarly Edward Lord Montagu complained of the absence of Parliament in 1639, when he was preparing for the war against the Scots; his biographer writes "there is no reason to think that Montagu believed that so many years would pass before a new Parliament met", Cope, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

called in the Spring of 1640 was met by Lady Brilliana Harley with her customary enthusiasm for details of the event. Lady Brilliana sent Edward Harley information about the elections in Hereford, where Sir Robert Harley and Sir Walter Pye "were chosen with a unanimous consent to be knights of this country". She also sent Edward the results of the elections in surrounding counties and wrote "I much rejoice that in all places they are so careful to choose worthy men for so great a business, as the Parliament".¹²⁶

Lady Brilliana's letters to Edward Harley continued to express her hopes for "a happy issue of this Parliament". On 4 May, the day before the Short Parliament was dissolved by the King, Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley:-

"I pray God give a happy success to this Parliament; if not we may fear worse effects than has been yet

I believe this week will show what they will do, as all our expectations are upon the Parliament, so I desire all our prayers may be for it".

On 9 May Lady Brilliana had still not received news about the dissolution of the Parliament. On that date she wrote Edward Harley and told him "I pray God give the two Houses a happy union together; for the effects of this Parliament will not be indifferent, neither good nor evil, but either very good or else the contrary". The very next day Lady Brilliana received a letter from Sir Robert Harley "by which I found the news of the dissolution of the Parliament to be true".¹²⁷

The brief assembly of the Short Parliament had done nothing to ease the problems which the local governors faced, not just in Herefordshire, but in every English county. The need to supply money and men for King Charles' Scottish war continued to present problems for the greater

126. Lewis, Letters, pp. 85, 86, 87. Professor Hirst appears to be mistaken in his assertion that there was a contest for the county seats in Herefordshire at the Short Parliament elections, Hirst, Representative, p. 219.

127. Lewis, Letters, pp. 90, 92, 94, 95.

gentry in the form of local people's refusal to pay Ship Money and the unruly behaviour of the pressed men in the localities. Nevertheless, the local governors carried out court policies to the best of their abilities. In Herefordshire the leading gentry had achieved a measure of stability in the county following the violent feuding of the Crofts and the Coningsbys in the late sixteenth century and the outbreak of Catholic rioting in 1605. That stability was based on the gentry's experience of "faction and opposition" referred to in their 1620 election agreement and on the gentry's desire that "whilst we do our country service we may also intend the peace of it", as Sir Robert Harley wrote¹²⁸ in 1626.

Although the roles of the leading Herefordshire gentry as spokesmen and governors of the county did engender a sense of the county as a community, within that community there were many inherent divisions. There is strong evidence in the forty years before the Civil Wars that allegiances within the county were based on a myriad of loyalties, including those based on jurisdictional authority, on religious affinity and on kinship; loyalties which were not county-wide and which at times could set local society at odds. The bonds which united county society were finely balanced at the best of times and unity could only persist during periods of relative stability. During the years 1639 and 1640 the demands of the Scottish war put a strain upon the authority of the local gentry to such an extent that the local magnates could no longer be sure that they could enforce Crown policies.

The Harleys were keenly aware of the problems facing the gentry in their roles as county governors. Lady Brilliana's letters in 1639 and 1640 carefully recorded the efforts of local men to avoid the press and

128. Folger Library, Scudamore MSS., Vb 2 (21); draft letter from Harley to Sir Walter Pye, 12 January 1625/6, B.L., Loan 29/123/39i.

the subsequent undisciplined behaviour of those men unlucky enough to have been pressed. Sir Robert Harley managed to avoid the office of Sheriff in 1639, but as a Deputy-Lieutenant he could not avoid the task of overseeing the press of men for the war.

The Harleys, however, were also alienated by the religious policies pursued by the Church and Court under King Charles. As Puritans the Harleys could not remain untouched by the growing Arminianism of the Church. For many of their fellow gentry in the county, the religious changes at court were of little consequence; while some local gentry may have welcomed Laudian innovations in the Church, the majority were probably unmoved by such alterations in religious worship. For the Harleys, the religious changes during the reign of King Charles were of enormous importance. The puritanism of the Harley family and their reaction to the spread of Arminianism amongst the Church hierarchy thus form the subjects of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE HARLEYS AND THE GODLY COMMUNITY

The preceding chapters have stressed the significance of the puritanism of Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana Harley. This chapter will consider the nature and the implications of their religious attitudes in greater detail. By the late 1630s the Harleys were aware that some of their contemporaries regarded them as puritans. In 1636 Sir Robert Harley ended a letter to the second Viscount Conway with the wry comment "if this be not exactly according to the litany, yet it may pass for a plain puritan compliment from your Lordship's most affectionate brother"¹. Later in the same year Harley wrote another letter to Conway containing a very similar comment:-

"my praises are to the Lord of Heaven for your safe return, and such puritan compliment may pass now, when it is resolved by wiser than the college of physicians that prayer is the best antidote against the plague".²

Lady Brilliana was equally conscious of the implications of the Harleys' religious attitudes. In 1639, in a letter to her son Edward at Oxford University, she warned him that "as they do at Oxford, so they do in all places, take liberty to inveigh against puritans"³.

The Harleys certainly regarded themselves as part of a group which was distinguished from the rest of society by its religious outlook. In her commonplace book Lady Brilliana wrote "God has his privy seal to distinguish us from the World and that is his secret knowledge, by which he knows whom are his"⁴. The Harleys did not themselves use the term puritan to

1. P.R.O., S.P., 16/320/13.

2. P.R.O., S.P., 16/334/41.

3. Lewis Letters, p. 40.

4. Commonplace book f. 42r.

refer to the members of this group, instead they used "the elect", "God's saints", "the godly", or "God's children", all terms which stemmed from their steadfast belief in the doctrine of predestination. However, rather than attempt to formulate a precise definition of puritanism, which would accommodate the wide-ranging religious perceptions of the Harleys, this chapter will investigate their religious attitudes in detail, in order to illustrate fully the nature of the Harleys' puritanism. This investigation is greatly aided by the survival amongst Sir Robert's papers of an undated holograph document, which contains a lengthy description of a puritan, which Harley denoted throughout with the abbreviation "p"⁵.

The notes almost certainly date to 1621 when, in a draft letter to Sir Horace Vere, Sir Robert observed that he did not think that the House of Commons would define a puritan, and in that case "I take the boldness to present your Lordship with his character"⁶. This is therefore an exceptional paper, not only containing a very extended description of what puritanism meant to Sir Robert, but also being a sympathetic account, written at a time when most examples of the word are to be found in a hostile context. The description is also an accurate survey of Sir Robert's own religious attitudes. There is no one cohesive theme to this description, since Sir Robert dwelt on several aspects of puritanism.

The paper thus emphasises the characteristic puritan stress on a scrupulous conscience:-

"A p. is he that desires to practise what others profess, is one that dares do nothing in the worship of God or course of his life, but what God's word warrants him his sins are more than other men's, because he sees them, and greater because he feels them".

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5. Notes endorsed "P", B.L., Loan 29/27 part I. I am grateful to Dr. Penelope Corfield for her help in dating this paper. I hope to publish a full transcript of this document elsewhere.
 6. Draft letter from Harley to Sir Horace Vere, 14 February 1620/21, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 47v.

The paper also touches on the question of the reform of symbolism in Church worship:-

"To things indifferent he thinks himself not born a bold man and wonders why he is styled a man of disorder when he is so willing to obey all law (and) commands He thinks the making of the cross between the holy sacrament of baptism and the humble thanksgiving of the congregation, is like the placing of the Apocrypha between the Old and the New Testaments, which, being a shew without a fountain, is unworthy to be joined with the living water of life".

Much of the non-conformity in the Church between 1559 and 1640 hinged on the argument that the surplice, the sign of the cross, kneeling during divine service, and other symbolic practices or images, had no warrant in scripture and were, therefore, inherently superstitious. Harley was himself keen to remove what puritans regarded as superstitious Catholic symbolism from the English Church. In the Parliaments of 1626 and 1628 he spoke out against the practice of idolatry, while in 1639 there is the first evidence of Harley's iconoclasm, when he personally destroyed a picture of "the great God of Heaven (and) Earth", which had been discovered beneath a stable floor by one of his tenants.

Sir Robert's description of a puritan also dwells on the role of the ministry:-

"he says a dumb minister is a man not sent by God, for He gives his messenger the tongue of the learned, neither can he be that witness of his truth when he cannot speak it a non-resident is a profane witch".

This passage reveals the importance which puritans placed on the preaching function of the ministry, which contrasted with the Catholic and Arminian stress on the priestly function of the ministry. The Notes also dwelt very briefly on the role of the Bishops. Harley wrote

7. Collinson, Puritan Movement, pp. 66-79; R.C. Richardson, Puritanism in north-west England: A regional study of the diocese of Chester to 1642 (Manchester, 1972), pp. 23-40; Grosvenor Diary, 9 May 1626; 1628 Debates, IV 338, 342; young Brilliana Harley to Edward Harley, 14 January and 8 February 1638/9, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 207r, 213r. This incident is discussed below, Chapter 4, p.216.

"a L: (ord) B:(ishop) is a fallacy, a bene divisir(?) ad male coniuncta B.". This rather nebulous statement should not necessarily be construed as evidence of Harley's Presbyterianism. Nevertheless, it is an early indication that Harley disapproved in some measure of the powers of the English Bishops ; a disapproval which is also evident in Harley's further description of a puritan desiring "discipline in the Church according to God's word". Discipline could, of course, just mean the correction of faults, but for puritans and other critics of the established Church it also had a much wider meaning. There was also the implication that powers of correction had in biblical times belonged with the congregation⁸ and had been usurped by the Bishops and other Church officials.

Sir Robert's description of a puritan thus incorporates the stress on the conscience of the individual, with a desire for further reformation within the Church. The puritanism of the Harleys was firmly centred upon the religious responses and duties of the individual, but at the same time the Harleys were in favour of changes within the wider context of the established Church. There is evidence that both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana were dissatisfied with certain aspects of the Elizabethan Settlement. Sir Robert patronised ministers who were unable to conform to the Church authorities' regulations concerning clerical dress and who questioned the use of symbolic gestures, such as the use of the sign of the cross in baptism, referred to by Sir Robert himself in his description of a puritan. Lady Brilliana had reservations about the Prayer Book, and services held in the parish church at Brampton in the late 1630s did not conform to the usage set out in the Prayer Book. These points will

8. Hill, Society and Puritanism, pp. 31-77; Collinson, Puritan Movement, pp. 39-40, 346; the implication that the Bishops had usurped powers, which in biblical times lay with the congregation, is also implicit in the list of prayers drawn up by Harley in the late 1620s, which include the plea "that God would in great mercy establish his gospel and restore our liberty unto us", list of prayers, 30 March 1627 and 29 February 1627/8, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 237 and 239.

all be considered during the course of this chapter.

Although the Harleys were critical of the established Church, they did not carry their criticism to the extreme of separation. During the reign of Charles I however, the Arminian Church establishment moved away from the religious position of the Harleys, thus the differences between the Church leaders and the puritans were to become greater during the reign of Charles I than they had ever been before. Dr. Tyacke's research has helpfully emphasised the fact that under the aegis of Archbishop Laud "the English Arminians redefined Puritanism so as to include doctrinal Calvinism". Arminian hostility towards the doctrine of predestination was a matter of central concern to the Harleys, who were further alarmed by the introduction of Laudian Church ceremonies and ornamentation, which were redolent of Catholic usage. The Harleys, therefore, regarded the Arminians as dangerous innovators, who wished to re-establish links with Rome.⁹

This chapter will discuss the importance which the Harleys placed on the religious response of the individual, as well as the emphasis which they gave to further reforms in the Church. It will also illustrate the feeling of community which the Harleys shared with like-minded puritans and the effects which the rise of Arminianism had on the Harleys' perceptions of their religious world. The theological beliefs of the Harleys were overwhelmingly influenced by Calvin's interpretation of predestination, which held, in Lady Brilliana's own paraphrase of Calvin, that "God, by his eternal and unchangeable counsel has once appointed whom in time to come he will take to salvation, and on the other side whom he would condemn to destruction. This cause touching

9. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, etc', in Russell, Origins, p. 139; 1628 Debates, II, 86.

the elect was grounded upon his free mercy, without respect of the
 10
 worthiness of Man".

The Harleys believed that those whom God had chosen for salvation, the elect, were part of a definable and living community on earth. The existence of what might be termed a "godly community" was thus tangible reality to the Harleys, and the correct religious behaviour displayed by the elect was a constant guiding principle to both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana. The chief sign of election to salvation was complete faith in God, which was revealed by a religious and sober life. In her commonplace book Lady Brilliana recorded "he that is the adopted son of God shall be saved and we are known to be his sons if we believe in
 11
 Christ and this faith shows itself by obedience". It was thus possible for the godly to recognise the signs of salvation both in themselves and in other people. Thus when Sir Robert Harley drafted a letter to Lady Mary Vere, following an outbreak of smallpox among her children, he comforted her with the assurance that she numbered amongst God's chosen as she herself knew:-

"nothing befalls God's children without his special providence, of which number you likewise know yourself one because you love him, which is the reflection of his love first upon you; and all things shall work together for good to those that love him, for they are his chosen". 12

Similarly, the cleric Robert Horn, in writing to Sir Robert in 1626 and again in 1627, referred to Lady Brilliana as "that elect Lady". In 1640 when John Ley, the puritan vicar of Great Budworth in Cheshire, dedicated a book to Lady Brilliana Harley and to Lady Alice Lucy of

10. Commonplace book f. 65r. This is almost a direct quotation from the English edition of the Institutes, see J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (1611), III, 454, hereinafter referred to as Calvin, Institutes.

11. Commonplace book f. 116v.

12. Draft letter from Harley to Lady Mary Vere, 14 May 1621(?), B.L., loan 29/123/39,1.

Warwickshire, he referred to them as "elect Ladies".¹³

The central importance of predestination theology in puritan thought has been noted in other studies. William Haller aptly described the doctrine of predestination as "the central dogma of puritanism".¹⁴

Professor Haller's assertion has been challenged by Dr. Tyacke, who has rightly drawn our attention to the fact that "Calvinist predestinarian teaching was a crucial common assumption, shared by a majority of the hierarchy and virtually all of its nonconformist opponents, during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods".¹⁵ At first sight these two schools of thought appear to be irreconcilable. Yet, in accepting that there was a consensus of predestinarian theology in the church before the mid-1620s, it is necessary to understand that there were variations within that consensus.

These variations have been explored in a recent monograph by Dr. R.T. Kendall, who rejects the use of "puritan" and replaces it with the descriptive "experimental predestinarians", who "not only believed but vigorously stressed that one's election may be known by experimental knowledge; indeed it must be known lest one deceive himself and in the end, be damned".¹⁶ Dr. Kendall uses "experimental" in the way in which contemporaries would have used the word, denoting experience of, the modern equivalent being experiential. Dr. Kendall's work illustrates the need to recognise a specifically puritan approach to the doctrine of predestination, despite his own rejection of the term "puritan".

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13. Robert Horn to Harley, 7 November 1626, 31 March 1627, B.L., loan 29/119; John Ley, A Pattern of Piety (1640), Epistle Dedicatory.
 14. W. Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (Pennsylvania, Paperback edition, Philadelphia, 1972), p. 83.
 15. Tyacke, 'Puritanism, etc', in Russell, Origins, p. 128.
 16. Kendall, op. cit., pp. 5-9, 80.

The emphasis which the Harleys placed on recognising the signs of election is amply illustrated by the contents of Lady Brilliana's commonplace book, which bears the date 1622, the year before her marriage. The commonplace book probably went with Lady Brilliana to Brampton Bryan, but she may not have added to its contents after her marriage.¹⁷ The commonplace book is highly derivative and is primarily based on Lady Brilliana's reading of the Bible, Calvin's Institutes, William Perkin's Cases of Conscience and his Exposition of the Lord's Prayer. The book is arranged in sections, the first relating to God, the second to Christ, followed by two short sections, one concerning the Angels, the other the Holy Ghost. This is followed by a section on the subject of God's laws, which includes essays on the decalogue, predestination, the sacraments and the Lord's Supper.

The final and longest section relates to Man and contains essays on the subject of the soul, the body, Man's nature, forgiveness, repentance, marriage, and election to predestination amongst many other topics. There are also notes taken from the sermons of Thomas Case, Vicar of Arrow in Warwickshire, the Conways' home parish, where Brilliana's father was¹⁸ patron. The commonplace book runs to over two hundred folios; it contains no reference to any Church reforms and gives no indication of

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17. The supposition that Lady Brilliana did not add to the commonplace book after marriage is based on the fact that although the book contains notes from the sermons of Thomas Case, vicar of Brilliana's home parish in Warwickshire, it does not contain notes from the sermons of the rectors at Brampton Bryan. For Case, see below, n. 18.
18. For Case's institution at Arrow in 1620, see P.R.O., Bishops' Institution Books, Series A, 1556-1660, IV, Com. Warr., p. 150 (Round Room Press Mark, 19/62).

Brilliana's later anti-episcopal stance, which is only first apparent
¹⁹
 in her letters in January 1641.

Although the commonplace book consists largely of quotations and paraphrases of theological works, it should not be regarded merely as an educational exercise. The subject matter is almost entirely devoted to the religious behaviour displayed by the elect, the group who were predestined to salvation. Lady Brilliana meticulously recorded passages from her reading which would help the individual to recognise whether he was himself a member of this group. This was a problem which deeply concerned Lady Brilliana and her letters to Edward Harley reflect the same concern for the correct religious behaviour, which was the hallmark of election. In her letters Lady Brilliana reveals the same view of Man's relationship with God and his condition on Earth as she does in the commonplace book, with the crucial difference that in the letters these attitudes are shown as a religious code applied daily to the problems which Lady Brilliana encountered in her own life. The central concern of the commonplace book was the religion of the individual, which is also a dominant concern of Lady Brilliana's letters.

The pivot of Lady Brilliana's religious beliefs was clearly her belief in the doctrine of predestination. Lady Brilliana and Sir Robert believed, with other Calvinists, that God chose who would be saved and who damned before he created the world; his choice was immutable and Man was powerless to influence his own ultimate fate. This supralapsarian stand is referred to in a draft letter from Sir Robert Harley to Sir Edward Herbert, written in 1618, "God saw me both in the state of integrity and corruption, for though all mankind had not then their being in time, yet we were all then present before God which, if it were well

19. For Lady Brilliana's later anti-episcopal letters, see below, Chapter 4, pp. 203, 205.

considered, would save labour of many fruitless disputes of the propa-
 20
 gation of sin in us."

Since Man had no freewill; faith, good works and religious obedience to God's laws were not, as was maintained by Catholicism, the means of salvation: rather they were the external signs of membership of the select body of the elect, whom God had chosen for salvation. Believing and obedience were not the free actions of Man, who could only believe if God had chosen him for salvation. Brilliana believed that there was no element of free will in the process of acquiring faith and obeying God's laws. In her commonplace book she wrote:-

"Man since his fall, has his will so detained with such bondage to sin that he can not once move it to goodness, for moving is the beginning of turning to God, which the Scripture does wholly give to God. Man, since his fall, sins willingly by his own lusts and by foreign constraint. It is God that first turns our will to that which is good and we are converted by the power of God only, it is God that works all in us."

A denial of free will is also contained in one of the series of letters which Sir Robert Harley wrote during the course of his religious debates with Sir Edward Herbert. In 1619, in one of his draft letters, Sir Robert wrote "the position of the papists, that everyone has free will to good, is insipid, for with what face can they beg mercy for that,
 21
 which was in their power not to have committed".

Their belief in predestination led puritans to an intense religious introspection on the subject of whether they were themselves destined for salvation. In turn this led to a characteristic view of Man, his relationship with God and his life on earth, which the Harleys shared
 22
 with other puritans. The belief of the individual that he was a member

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20. Draft letter from Harley to Sir Edward Herbert, 12 January 1617/18, B.L., Loan 29/119.
21. Commonplace book f. 207r; draft letter from Harley to Sir Edward Herbert, 26 March 1619, B.L., Loan 29/119.
22. For a thorough exposition of this, see P. Lake, Moderate Puritans in the Elizabethan Church (Cambridge, 1982).

of the saved was not, however, lightly achieved. The puritan was intensely concerned with searching for signs that he was indeed a member of the elect. In her commonplace book Lady Brilliana recommended that "(we should) examine and try ourselves, whether we are of this number"²³.

Discovering the signs of election could bring peace of mind to the individual, conversely it could have the opposite effect, since ascertaining whether one had a "true faith" was no easy task. The ungodly, those who were not elect, could mirror the signs of faith without having a sincere belief in God. Quoting from Calvin, Lady Brilliana noted in her commonplace book that "those that make a profession of religion and having of faith and fall away, they have some signs of calling, as the elect have, but they did never cleave to Christ with that assuredness of heart with which the assurance of our election is established, they depart from the Church, because they are not of the Church"²⁴.

Brilliana believed that "the elect and chosen of God can never finally fall away from God"²⁵. Thus the process of self-introspection by which the individual could discern signs of salvation had to be a daily, almost a continual process, in order to ensure that the individual believer did not have an imperfect faith in God. Citing Nathanael Cole's A Godly Man's Assurance or a Christian's Certain Resolution of his own Salvation, Lady Brilliana noted in her commonplace book:-

"We must examine ourselves whether we have only a general faith or the special faith, which is called a saving faith".

The times of examination set out by Cole were recorded by Lady Brilliana in her own commonplace book:-

23. Commonplace book f. 66r.

24. Ibid., unfoliated section at the end; see also Calvin, Institutes, III, 476.

25. Commonplace book f. 6r.

- " 1 every night and morning.
 2 in the time of judgement.
 3 Upon our death bed.
 4 Before the Sacrament." 26

In practical terms this led Lady Brilliana to a constant self-examination, which she also recommended to her son Edward when he left Brampton Bryan for Magdalen Hall in Oxford. Her letters to Edward repeatedly advise him not to "neglect that constant service you owe to your God".²⁷ One letter in particular, written on 1 November 1639, gave the most detailed instructions on the method of examination which Edward was to use:-

"My dear Ned, keep always a watch over your precious soul; tie yourself to a daily self examination; think over the company you have been in, and what your discourse was, and how you found yourself affected, how in the discourses of religion; observe what knowledge you were able to express, and with what affection to it, and where you find yourself to come short, labour to repair that want; if it be in knowledge of any point, read something that may inform you in what you find you know not; if the fault be in affections, that you find a weariness in that discourse of religion, go to God, beg of Him new affections to love those things, which by nature we cannot love. After discourse, call to mind whether you have been apt to take exceptions, or whether any have provoked you, and examine yourself how you took it this is the rule I take with myself and I think it is the best way to be acquainted with our own hearts". 28

The need to examine one's faith so minutely led puritans to emphasise the importance of their own experience of the signs of true faith.

Citing Calvin, Lady Brilliana noted in her commonplace book that "inward calling is a pledge of election that cannot deceive us, for we know that we are the children of God by his spirit, which he has given us".²⁹ Lady Brilliana thus valued experience of faith above a mere

26. Ibid., f. 80r, see N. Cole, The Godly Man's Assurance, or a Christian's Certain Resolution of his own Salvation (Fourth edition, 1633), pp. 392-393, 403. This is probably a later edition than that used by Lady Brilliana.

27. Lewis, Letters, p. 7, also pp. 15, 28, 65.

28. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

29. Commonplace book, f. 132v (in the final section of the book); see also Calvin, Institutes, III, 472-473.

intellectual appreciation of faith. Again in her commonplace book,

Lady Brilliana noted:-

"the difference between speculative knowledge and saving knowledge, is that by speculative knowledge we know God, what he is in himself, but by saving knowledge we know what God is to us and to know Christ in himself the devil do so much, but to know Christ is saviour, never any devil did". 30

The desire to see the signs of salvation in oneself thus led puritans to a highly experiential view of religion. Lady Brilliana's letters to her son Edward repeatedly stress the value which she placed upon her own experience:-

"there is no sweetness in any thing in this life to be compared to the sweetness in the service of our God, and this I thank God, I can say, not only to agree with those that say so, but experimentally". 31

This did not lead either Lady Brilliana or Sir Robert Harley to a denigration of the value of knowledge and of education. For both of the Harleys education had nothing but religious ends. In December 1629, when Edward Harley was just five years old, Lady Brilliana asked her husband to send Ned "a little Bible He begins now to delight in reading and that is the book I would have him place his delight in". When Edward left Brampton Bryan to attend university, Sir Robert Harley wrote to him and advised his son that his university education was the means "to get enlargement of knowledge in the understanding chiefly of God in Christ, which is life eternal which will not only enrich the mind, but set off your conversation amongst men".³²

Lady Brilliana also put her own education to religious use, not only in her constant reading, but also in spending her time, during one of her illnesses, in translating part of Calvin's life of Luther, in order to assess for herself Luther's character:-

30. Commonplace book, unfoliated section at the beginning.

31. Lewis, Letters, p. 34.

32. Ibid., pp. 5, xlix-l.

"he is generally branded with ambition, which caused him to do what he did, and that the papists do so generally upbraid us that we cannot tell where our religion was before Luther; and some have taxed him of an intemperate life. These reasons made me desire to read his life, to see upon what ground these opinions were built; and finding such satisfaction to myself, how falsely these were raised, I put it into English".

Lady Brilliana translated just that part of the "Life" which was not in
 the Book of Martyrs and sent it to Edward Harley.³³

For Lady Brilliana the final result of her religious introspection, her emphasis on self-examination, prayer, reading and meditation, was the certain knowledge of salvation. Despite the difficulties encountered in attaining that knowledge, Lady Brilliana believed that "the children of God may know that they have true faith, notwithstanding³⁴ that there are many that think they have faith when they have none".

Her confidence in the knowledge of her own salvation is reflected in the commonplace book, where she wrote as if she was undoubtedly a member of the elect. Thus phrases such as "He (God) elected us" and "by grace we were elected" are typical of the quotations recorded by Lady
³⁵
 Brilliana.

Although the puritanism of the Harleys revolved around their stress on the individual's conscience and his godly behaviour, both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana were also interested in seeing further reforms within the Church, and the religious life of the nation. During the 1628 Parliament Sir Robert Harley lent his energetic support to a number of bills, which would have effected reforms of both public morals and of the Church. These bills included a bill for reformation of abuses of the sabbath; a bill to prevent drunkenness and adultery amongst the clergy; a bill which would have provided increased stipends for parish

33. Ibid., p. 52

34. Commonplace book f. 191v.

35. Ibid., ff. 13r, 2r.

clergy and a subscription bill, which would have released the clergy from subscription to those of the 39 articles which concerned Church polity and which would have secured the application of the Act of Subscription, passed as long ago as 1571.³⁶ Support for these bills was not limited to puritans alone, but this does not alter the fact that Harley's involvement in the bills in debates and at committee stage stemmed from his desire to see further reformation of the Church.³⁷ In a Commons debate concerning the bill against scandalous ministers, Harley declared, "if we go about to reform the Church it is the honour of our Church. All the scandal is that now we have drunken ministers".³⁸

Yet just how far-reaching were the reforms desired by the Harleys? Both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana Harley have been described as Presbyterians.³⁹ In the case of Lady Brilliana, however, there is no clear evidence of her espousal of Presbyterianism, while Sir Robert's adherence to Presbyterianism appears to date from after the calling of the Long Parliament. Sir Robert's support for the abolition of the episcopal office was probably born out of the particular circumstances after November 1640. After the calling of the Long Parliament a

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36. 1628 Debates, II, 374, 383, III, 431, 557, 586, 185; for the Act of 1571 see J.E. Neale, 'Parliament and the Articles of Religion, 1571', English Historical Review, LXVII (1952).
37. Conrad Russell has pointed out that support for these bills was not necessarily puritan in intent, but this does not mean that puritans did not support these bills for religious reasons, Russell, Parliaments, p. 28 n I.
38. 1628 Debates, III, 431.
39. Notestein wrote that Lady Brilliana "shared without reservations the presbyterian faith of her husband", but seems to have confused presbyterianism with a belief in predestination and he makes no attempt to analyse the Harleys' attitude to Church government, W. Notestein, English Folk : A Book of Characters (1938), p. 276. Professor Underdown is more accurate in limiting his discussion of Sir Robert's presbyterianism to post-1640, Underdown, Purge, p. 17.

Presbyterian settlement was seen as a distinct possibility by many English puritans, and, as the Civil War progressed, it also became a prerequisite for the continuance of Scottish military support for the English Parliament.

Sir Robert's notes describing a puritan indicate that in 1621 he was probably dissatisfied with the powers of the English Bishops, but not that he was in favour of full-scale abolition of the Episcopacy. His support for the 1628 Subscription bill also shows that he was in favour of a greater latitude for ministers who opposed the present Church polity. It was, however, only after the assembly of the Long Parliament that a change in that polity seemed to be imminent. It was only then that Sir Robert, and other puritans in his circle, began to make concrete proposals for an alternative Church government. In January 1641 Sir Robert was probably in favour of a system including Bishops with greatly curtailed powers. During the course of 1641 his opinions may well have developed to the point where he preferred a system without Bishops at all.

Although there is no evidence to suggest that the Harleys were convinced Presbyterians before the Long Parliament, nevertheless, there were certain aspects of the established Church which the Harleys wished to see changed. The alterations which the Harleys supported are probably best illustrated by a consideration of the ways in which the Harleys organised religious observance in their home parish at Brampton Bryan. Sir Robert Harley consistently supported the non-conformity of his rectors at Brampton Bryan; Thomas Pierson was summoned to appear before the Bishop of Hereford twice for not "conforming to some ceremonies", while extensive charges of non-conformity were drawn up against Pierson's

40. The details of the Harleys' attitudes towards episcopacy in 1641 are discussed below, Chapter 4, pp. 203-205.

successor, Stanley Gower in 1638.

The first meeting between Pierson and Bishop Bennett took place at the beginning of 1614. According to Pierson's own account of his interview with the Bishop his treatment had not been harsh. Pierson was delighted to be "returned without suspension or censure, only his (the Bishop's) fatherly, reverend advice to consider seriously what will be the issue of my course, having my promise to come unto him and give him reasons of my refusal to conform when he sends for me"⁴². Pierson was called before the Bishop again in September 1615. At this second meeting Pierson explained his scruples against using the surplice and asked for more time, but was told by the irate Bishop that he had had three years already. Bishop Bennett explained that "he was so urged that he must needs proceed, for he would not lose his bishopric for my (Pierson's) sake". Bennett granted Pierson a further two months to conform.⁴³

Harley took an active role in trying to placate the Bishop. He drafted several letters to the Bishop on Pierson's behalf, which stressed Pierson's willingness not to disrupt the peace of the Church:-

"what he cannot comfortably submit to he is willingly silent of".⁴⁴

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41. Draft letter from Harley to Bishop Bennett of Hereford, 1 September 1615, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 145r; P.R.O., S.P., 16/381/92, Mrs. Keeler suggests that this was a High Commission Paper, Keeler, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
 42. Pierson to Harley, 29 January 1613/14, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 138r.
 43. Pierson to Harley, 8 September 1615, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 145 and 147.
 44. Draft letter from Harley to Bishop Bennett of Hereford, 25 January 1613/14, B.L., Loan 29/123/39b; draft letters from Harley to Bennett, 1 September and 3 November 1615, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 145r and between ff. 147 and 149. Harley's letters reveal his sympathy for Pierson's position in regard to the use of the surplice. In 1643 Harley was ordered by the House of Commons to prepare an order "to inhibit the wearing of surplices in all cathedral, collegiate, and parish churches and for the better observing the Lord's day". C.J., III, 259. See also undated paper of arguments against the symbolism of the cross and the use of the surplice, endorsed in Harley's hand "cross and surplice", Nottingham University Library, MSS., Department, Portland Welbeck MSS., Pw2/Hy/132.

The issue was complicated by the fact that the only person complaining about Pierson appears to have been Sir Robert's own father, Thomas Harley, who was resident at Brampton Bryan, Sir Robert being resident at this time at nearby Stanage Lodge. Pierson complained to Harley about "your father's violent prosecution" and explained that Thomas Harley was "implacable".⁴⁵ Sir Robert Harley's solution was to suggest a conference to settle the matter, to be attended by Pierson, Mr. Bright, the lecturer of Shrewsbury, Sir Francis Newport, (Sir Robert's then father-in-law) and Mr. Humfrey Lee, both of Shropshire. By February 1616 Pierson appears to have been on good terms with the Bishop and reported to Harley that he had dined with Bennett, who had been very kind to him. Thereafter the entire matter appears to have been forgotten.⁴⁶

Sir Robert Harley was in general able to organise the religious life at Brampton Bryan to his own liking without interference from the Bishops of Hereford. This may have been partly because of the situation of Brampton Bryan, away from the religious centre of the diocese, and partly because of Sir Robert Harley's status in the county. Sir Robert's ability to protect non-conformist ministers in the county was clearly spelt out in a letter from the London lecturer John Stoughton, when he urged Peter Thatcher to accept the living at Brampton following Pierson's death in 1633:-

"you shall find a worthy, religious and loving patron and friend of Sir Robert, and such as I have not found many like in all these respects, and beside potent in his country for your countenance and protection". 47

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45. Pierson to Harley, 8 September 1615, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 145 and 147.
46. Draft letters from Harley to Bishop Bennett of Hereford, 1 September and 3 November 1615, Pierson to Harley, 3 February 1615/16, B.L., Loan 29/202 ff. 145r, between ff. 147 and 149, 151r.
47. Stoughton to Thatcher, 13 February 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 79r.

Pierson was in fact succeeded by Stanley Gower, whose non-conformity was even more extensive than that of Pierson. A document in the State Papers lists Gower's religious misdemeanours. The charges included omitting parts of the Prayer Book service; not allowing his parishioners to stand during the readings from the gospels or to bow at the name of Jesus; using his sermons to exhort his parishioners not to kneel in prayer on first entering the church and to persuade them to wear hats throughout the lessons and sermon. Gower was further accused of not wearing the surplice, omitting the sign of the cross in baptism and catechising the 14 and 15 year-olds about the sermon.

These were all long-standing practices, which reflected the puritan desire to strip their worship of Catholic ceremonies and religious garb, which the puritans regarded as superstitious pre-Reformation relics. Failure to kneel at the correct time in church was a common expression of lay puritanism. Refusing to wear the surplice, or to use the sign of the cross, and curtailing the Prayer Book service were signs of clerical non-conformity which can be traced back to the earliest years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, or even before.

48. P.R.O., S.P., 16/381/92.

49. The 18th canon of 1604 forbade men to wear hats "in the church or chapel in the time of divine service, except he have some infirmity", Sermons or Homilies . . . to which are added the Articles of Religion and the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical (1840), p. 641, hereinafter referred to as Sermons and Homilies. Dr. Richardson draws attention to this canon and states that the practice of wearing hats in church did not originate with the Quakers, Richardson, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

50. Gower's survey of the Herefordshire ministry of 1641 complained that Bishops would not allow "ministers to catechise their people, or schoolmasters their scholars, otherwise than of communion catechism, without any exposition", Puritan Survey, p. 29.

51. Richardson, op. cit., p. 76.

52. Collinson, Puritan Movement, pp. 71-83; Richardson, op. cit., pp. 26-28; Davies, op. cit., pp. 67-69, 263-267.

There was thus a certain amount of continuity between the puritanism of the Harley circle and the earliest expressions of puritanism in Elizabethan England. Gower was however, guilty of what was a new religious offence, which had been instigated by the Laudians. The charges stated that "the communion table is not railed in there (and) is brought down out of the chancel into the body of the Church" on Communion days. Gower's practice was in accordance with the Elizabethan Injunctions of 1559, which stipulated that the communion table should be kept at the east end of the church and carried into the body of the church for the service. Archbishop Laud had attempted to eradicate the Elizabethan practice by his campaign to have the altar railed in at the east end of the church.⁵³

The charges against Gower were accompanied by charges against Sir Robert Harley for allowing Gower's offences and for maintaining Richard Symonds, a suspended minister, as his schoolmaster. Harley was further accused of dominating the parish to such an extent that "every year his own servants or tenants at the least" were always chosen as churchwardens. The final charge was that "they do often appoint fasts of their own creating". Private fasts have been described by one eminent historian of puritanism as "invariably indicative of advanced, radical, puritanism".⁵⁴ Fasting not only provided the occasion for an expression of religious zeal, it also provided an excellent opportunity for puritans to gather together, whilst excluding the ungodly from their midst.

Private fasts were, however, circumscribed by the canons of 1604,⁵⁵ which reserved the appointing of fasts to the Bishops. Moreover,

53. C. Russell, The Crisis of Parliaments (Oxford, 1971), pp. 216, 314-315, hereinafter referred to as Russell, Crisis.

54. P. Collinson, 'Lectures by Combination; Structures and Characteristics of Church Life in Seventeenth Century England', B.I.H.R. XLVIII (1975), 190.

55. The 72nd canon of 1604 forbade ministers to "appoint public or private fasts or prophecies, or to exorcise, but by authority", Sermons or Homilies, pp. 671-672.

there is some indication of Royal disapproval of fasts in general, even authorised fasts, during the reign of Charles I. In January 1629, in reply to the Commons' petition for a fast, the King warned "this custom of fasts every session is but lately begun, and I confess I am not fully satisfied with the necessity of it at this time I do willingly grant your requests herein; but with this note, that I expect that this shall not hereafter be brought into precedent for frequent fasts, except upon great occasions".⁵⁶

Sir Robert Harley was one of those members of Parliament who were eager to hold public fasts. At the start of the 1628 Parliament Harley was amongst those who spoke in favour of holding a public fast:-

"I joy to see the sense of this House to join to humble ourselves to God; if the King grant it, the House and this city, may have a set day and the kingdom another day afterward".⁵⁷

In 1629 Harley was a member of the committee which framed the petition to the King for the fast and during the Short Parliament he was a member of the committee which was to meet with members of the Lords to organise a fast.⁵⁸ Sir Robert Harley was also involved with private fasts both in London as well as at Brampton Bryan. In 1626 George Montaigne, the Bishop of London, was alerted by a rumour that a private fast had been held on St. Andrew's day. His conclusion was that the fast had only been kept by "the meaner sort of people", but he was worried that the "richer sort", such as the Earl of Warwick, were involved. Montaigne reported to the Duke of Buckingham that "Sir Robert Harley (Master) of the Mint (said) that there were divers who would take the opportunity of the many sermons preached that day to humble themselves to Almighty God in a holy fast".⁵⁹

56. Notestein and Relf, (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

57. *1628 Debates*, II, 35, 36.

58. *C.J.*, I, 922, II, 4.

59. *C.S.P.D.*, Addenda, 1625-1649, p. 175.

Sir Robert was probably amongst those who did fast on that occasion. Days of prayer and fasting formed a regular part of the religious life at Brampton Bryan during the incumbencies of both Pierson and Gower. The Harleys rigorously observed a day of prayer and fasting during the quarterly Ember weeks, and in January 1629 the day appointed for a public fast by Parliament was also observed by Thomas Pierson at Leintwardine in Herefordshire, where Sir Robert was also the patron of the living.

As well as observing these authorised days of abstinence, the Harleys also kept private days of prayer. Several lists of the topics of the prayers at these meetings have survived for the 1620s and early 1630s. The lists, mainly in Sir Robert's own hand, set out firstly "matter of request to God" and secondly "matter of thanksgiving". The prayer meetings at which these lists were used were probably what Harley meant when he referred in these lists to "our exercises". Harley recorded that such "exercises" not only took place in Herefordshire and in London, but in Shropshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire as well. The lists illuminate the types of religious problems which most concerned Sir Robert and have been used throughout the first half of this study.

Lady Brilliana's letters also reveal that such days of prayer were held at Brampton in the late 1630s and early 1640s. Lady Brilliana wrote of a "private day" observed at Brampton in February 1639 and Sir Robert kept a "private day" after he had been elected to the Short Parliament. In January 1641 Lady Brilliana recorded a "private day" at Brampton attended by Gower, John Yates, (vicar of Leintwardine), William Stephenson, (vicar of Wigmore), William Voyle and a Mr. More, probably Richard More of

60. Ember days are quarterly groups of three days, the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after Ash Wednesday, Whitsunday, Holy Cross Day (14 September) and St. Lucy (13 December), F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (eds.), Oxford Dictionary of the English Church (2nd edition, reprinted, 1977), p. 455; for reference to the observation of the Ember days at Brampton, see Lewis, Letters, pp. 15, 16, 38, 43, 82. In 1629 the public fast was observed at Leintwardine and the Ember week prayers were held the following week at Brampton, Pierson to Harley, 14 January 1628/9, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 247r.

Although the puritanism of the Harleys was very introspective, involving great emphasis on the conscience and behaviour of the individual, yet their puritanism prompted the Harleys' desire for the company of other puritans. The godly not only sought to associate with other godly folk, they also made a conscious effort to avoid the corrupting influence of the ungodly. In her commonplace book Lady Brilliana noted "we must abstain from such company as will drive us to sin and from such sports as
62
make us sin". Although the elect were a recognisable group on earth, that group was not very large when compared to the rest of society. Writing in her commonplace book, Lady Brilliana noted "God's elect must be considered two ways, simply of themselves and comparatively with others. Simply of themselves they are a great number not to be numbered, but
63
comparatively with the wicked, in respect of them they are but few".

In practical terms this meant that the wicked outnumbered the elect on earth and the only safe refuge was to consort with the godly and shun the sinners. When Edward Harley left Brampton Bryan to go to Oxford University in 1638, at the age of almost fourteen, Lady Brilliana prepared a paper of advice for him which warned him of the dangers he would face away from the sheltered religious life at Brampton:-

"there are those who are born of God and they are the smallest number, let them be your companions. You have hitherto but heard what evils men give themselves to, but now, I fear, you will both see and hear men of nobility and of excellent parts of nature abandon themselves to swearing and that odious sin of drunkenness, and to scorn all religion, and as they like not the ways of God, so they endeavour all they can to make all that keep company with them like themselves. My dear son, take heed of their temptations and subtlety". 64

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61. List of prayers, 17 December 1624, 8 June 1625, B.L., Loan 29/52/93; list of prayers, 30 March 1627, 29 February 1627/8, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 237 and 239; Lists of prayers, 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, 24 January 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/27 part I; Lewis, Letters, pp. 28, 29, 87, 108.
62. Commonplace book, f. 203r.
63. *Ibid.*, f. 66r.
64. This paper is undated, but the contents indicate that Edward Harley was leaving home to go into the outside world for the first time, B.L., Loan 29/78.

Sir Robert Harley added his own warnings to those of his wife. In his letter to Edward Harley, written soon after Edward's arrival at Oxford, Sir Robert explained that the love of God "will give you an elevation above the base ways wherein many young men wallow; and I fear the universities do too much abound with such pigs, from which the preservative must be daily prayer for God's blessing".⁶⁵

Religious affinity in human relationships was thus of paramount importance to the Harleys. Lady Brilliana defined friends in her commonplace book as "those that are of the same religion, affection and disposition". Sir Robert Harley also regarded religion as the touchstone of friendship; in a draft letter to Sir Edward Herbert, Harley wrote "religion makes friends at first sight".⁶⁶ Religious sympathy was all the more important in choosing a spouse. In her commonplace book Lady Brilliana noted "when a man is to marry he must as near as he can choose him such a wife as may further him in religion and serving of God purely". Thus the most important factor in human relationships was recognising the community of the elect. In her commonplace book Lady Brilliana noted "we must be careful of our families, of our parents, of our kindred, if they be of the household of faith, strangers if they be righteous, but our dearest love must only be to the saints on the Earth".⁶⁷

The Harleys carried these precepts into the practical affairs of their daily lives. Lady Brilliana looked for a godly nature in her servants, while Sir Robert Harley allowed Thomas Pierson to persuade him to lease land to a godly tenant, even though the man could not afford to give the

65. Lewis, Letters, pp. xlix-l.

66. Commonplace Book, f. 105r; draft letter from Harley to Sir Edward Herbert, 12 January 1617/18, B.L., Loan 29/119.

67. Commonplace Book, ff. 176r, 62r.

highest price for the rent. Amongst their own kindred the Harleys applied the same religious criteria. As we have seen, Sir Robert ignored his relatives, the Mynors, possibly because they were Catholic recusants. In contrast, the Harleys maintained very close friendships with their puritan relatives the Veres, despite the distance between the homes of the two families. The value which the Harleys placed on the community of the godly was reflected in the very wide circle of puritan relatives, friends and dependents who were connected with the Harleys.

Sir Robert's widespread puritan contacts have been interpreted in one study as allowing him to function as "a kind of clearing house for puritans seeking livings and patrons seeking preachers".⁷⁰ This suggestion is supported only by evidence taken from the H.M.C. Calendar of the Portland Manuscripts. Unfortunately, the Calendar is very unreliable in places and therefore the evidence on which this statement is based will be given further investigation here.

The assertion that Harley helped puritan ministers seeking preferment is based on the contents of four letters. Two of these letters, addressed to Harley by Peter Warburton and Thomas Hill, recommended a total of six ministers to Harley. Sir Robert was not, however, attempting to find livings for all of these men. In November 1633, when these two letters were written, Harley was specifically looking for a replacement for Thomas Pierson, the rector of Brampton Bryan, who had died in the previous month.⁷¹ A third letter, from John Stoughton to Peter Thatcher, rector of St. Edmund, Salisbury, is cited as evidence that

68. See above, Ch. 2, p. 106.

69. See above Ch. I, pp. 62-72.

70. Seaver, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

71. Warburton to Harley, 13 November 1633, Hill to Harley, endorsed "21.9.1633" in Harley's hand, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 67r, 69r-v.

Harley had "secured the offer of a benefice" for Thatcher. In fact Harley had decided upon Thatcher as Pierson's successor at Brampton and had asked Stoughton to persuade Thatcher to take the living. In the case of all three letters the original manuscript text is much more informative than the H.M.C. Calendar.⁷²

The fourth letter concerns Harley's attempt in 1631 to persuade Edward, Lord Herbert of Cheshire, to nominate the puritan John Brinsley, the younger, to the living of Montgomery.⁷³ In fact this was a failure, and most of Harley's other attempts at influencing patrons also ended in failure. On a number of occasions Harley did bring candidates to the attention of patrons, but in general his nominees met with little success. Thus in 1624 Harley tried to persuade the Vicar of Wigmore, a non-preaching minister, to resign in favour of Jeremiah Whitaker, the lecturer of Oakham, Rutland. Harley's efforts were unsuccessful and the Bishop preferred William Stevenson to the living.⁷⁴ In 1638 Harley was in correspondence with Sir Sampson Eure of Gatley Park, Herefordshire, concerning the local living of Burrington. Eure told Harley that he had already recommended someone for the living, which was in the gift of the King.⁷⁵

Although Harley's efforts at placing these ministers do not seem to have been successful, there was at least one occasion when Harley probably did help a man to preferment. In 1627 Harley wrote to Secretary Conway on behalf of William Cradock, a former chaplain with

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72. Seaver, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Stoughton to Thatcher, 13 February 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 79r.
73. Draft letter from Harley to Brinsley, 8 December 1631, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 42r-v.
74. Whitaker to Harley, 12 February 1623/4, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 118r. For Whitaker, see Collinson, 'Lectures by Combination etc', *B.I.H.R.*, XLVIII (1975), 199; P.R.O., Bishops' Institution Books, Series A, 1556-1660, I, Com. Hereford, p. 36, (Round Room Press Mark 19/59).
75. Sir Sampson Eure to Harley, 5 January 1637/8, B.L., Loan 29/119; Puritan Survey, p. 23.

the Cadiz expedition, for a "benefice void, which is in his Majesty's gift". Within weeks Cradock had been instituted as vicar of Nuneaton, which was in the gift of the King. There is no positive proof, however, that Harley was solely responsible for Cradock's preferment, since Cradock had already approached the Duke of Buckingham asking for the grant of a benefice.⁷⁶

Finally, the assertion that Harley helped patrons seeking preachers is supported by just one letter from his brother-in-law, Sir Edward Conway, who asked Harley to send him a "good preacher".⁷⁷ Asking for such help from a relative is to do no more than to consult a traditional source of practical aid and there is nothing among Sir Robert's papers to indicate whether he acted upon this request or not.

Ultimately the evidence for stating that Harley acted as a puritan "clearinghouse" is negligible. There are several letters in Harley's correspondence relating to the main living in his gift, Brampton Bryan.⁷⁸ There is also, as we have seen, evidence to show that Harley did try to influence other patrons. There is, however, no conclusive evidence to prove that patrons acted on his advice and in some of the cases noted above it is clear that his advice was ignored. It is in fact quite misleading to regard Harley's interest in godly ministers as being unusual or uniquely influential. Other puritans within Sir Robert's social circle were equally enthusiastic in the recommendation and patronage of godly ministers.

Lady Brilliana, herself, recommended William Voyle to her brother-in-law, Sir William Pelham, in 1641, when she heard that the Lincolnshire

76. P.R.O., S.P., 16/70/22; P.R.O., Bishops' Institution Books, Series A, 1556-1660, IV, Com. Warr., p. 143, (Round Room Press Mark 19/62); C.S.P.D., 1625-1626, p. 338.

77. Sir Edward Conway to Harley, 16 June 1627, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 229r.

78. Harley presented to at least three Herefordshire livings Brampton Bryan, Leintwardine and Aylton, P.R.O., Bishops' Institution Books, Series A, 1556-1660, IV Com. Salop, pp. 89, 91, (Round Room Press Mark 19/62); A.T. Bannister, Diocese of Hereford; Institutions, A.D., 1539-1900 (Hereford, 1923), p. 29.

living of Brocklesby was vacant. She noted in a letter to Edward Harley that she desired to have "a good man there", but she and Voyle were dismayed to hear that the living was worth only £30 per annum and Voyle did not pursue the matter.⁷⁹ Lady Mary Vere was more successful in helping one of her nominees. In 1624 James Ussher was elevated to the Archbishopric of Armagh with Lady Vere's help and with the influence of her brother-in-law, Secretary Conway. Ussher wrote to Lady Vere thanking her for the "effectual means" which she had used in helping to obtain his preferment, and he asked her to convey his thanks to "Mr. Secretary",⁸⁰ for his "extraordinary kindness."

When Harley was looking for a successor to Thomas Pierson, he was offered a minister by Lord Brooke, who wrote to the second Viscount Conway stating "I did propound one to Sir Robert Harley, very honest and able, but I am content that he be balked so as a sufficient man⁸¹ be put in". It was probably in such circumstances, and with similar sentiments, that the majority of recommendations of puritan ministers were made. Although Harley was thus not engaged in promoting puritan clerics in quite the way envisaged by Dr. Seaver, it is clear that Harley, and other godly laymen, were in favour of a more evangelical approach to religious observance than that provided by the established Church. The puritan laity were able to promote and support puritan⁸² ministers using private sources of patronage and influence. They exercised their patronage in a piecemeal fashion, along traditional

79. Lewis, Letters, p. 107.

80. B.L., Add., Mss., 4,274 f. 32r. Lady Vere had a very wide circle of clerical correspondents. Besides Davenport and Ussher, she also received letters from William Ames, Laurence Chaderton, John Dod, Dr. Preston, and Obadiah Sedgewick, B.L., Add., MSS., 4,275 ff. 8r, 97r, 182r-191r, Add., MSS., 4,276, ff. 88r, 137r.

81. P.R.O., S.P., 16/196/84.

82. R. O'Day, The English Clergy : The Emergence and Consolidation of a Profession, 1558-1642 (Leicester, 1979), p. 103.

lines of social contact and it was only rarely that they abandoned these familiar areas of influence and organised themselves on a more energetic level.⁸³

One of the few puritan organisations set up before the Long Parliament was the London Feoffees for Improvements, founded in 1626 by four ministers and eight laymen.⁸⁴ The Feoffees intended to buy impropriated tithes and use the revenue to support preaching ministers and lecturers. The group was dissolved in 1633, after Attorney-General Noy filed an information against them in the Court of the Exchequer. During their short-lived activities the Feoffees raised over £6,000 and bought up thirteen impropriations.⁸⁵

Although not an immediate member of this group, Sir Robert Harley did support their intentions. He was an old acquaintance of William Gouge, lecturer of St. Anne's, Blackfriars, who replaced one of the original founders of the organisation, Richard Stock, who died in 1626.⁸⁶ Harley also knew one of the four original ministers in this group, Richard Sibbes.⁸⁷ It was possibly because of these personal contacts that Harley sold the tithes of Presteign to the Feoffees in December 1627.⁸⁸

83. Ibid., p. 86.

84. I.M. Calder, Activities of the Puritan Faction of the Church of England, 1625-1633 (1957), passim. Lewis incorrectly states that Pierson was one of the Feoffees, a mistake which Christopher Hill has corrected, Lewis, Letters, p. xvii; Hill, Economic Problems p. 257.

85. Zagorin, op. cit., p. 180.

86. Calder, op. cit., pp. xi-xii; Harley's friendship with Gouge is noted above, Chapter I, p. 67.

87. Sibbes to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/121. Sibbes was a lecturer at Gray's Inn, he dedicated his work The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax to the Veres, see also D.N.B., XVIII, 182-184.

88. Howse, loc. cit., p. 70.

Harley did make a profit on the sale of the tithes, but his interest in the Feoffees was more than just commercial. In the Parliament of 1628 he actively supported a bill for the better maintenance of the ministry and in 1632 was himself considering a plan to assign the tithes of Leinthall Starkes to Thomas Pierson. In 1633, when the Feoffees were under scrutiny in the Exchequer Court, Harley's prayers extended to "the case for the Feoffees"⁸⁹. The Feoffees remained a model for puritan reform, even after they were disbanded. In November 1640 Stanley Gower wrote to Harley with a plan of Church reformation, which included the suggestion that "the Feoffees plot" should "go forward"⁹⁰.

The suppression of the Feoffees also illustrates the divide which had been created within the Church by the spread of Arminianism during the reign of King Charles I. For the Harleys, the belief that the godly were an embattled minority was heightened by the antipathy which they felt for Arminianism. The Harleys' belief that the Arminians wished to introduce Catholicism into England was also a central element in their hostility to the Crown in the 1640s and will thus be examined in detail here.

Complaints about the Arminian clergy were first heard in Parliament in 1624, when a number of East Anglian ministers presented a petition to Parliament against the publication of the New Gag by the Arminian cleric Richard Montagu, in which he asserted that the articles contained no teaching of predestination⁹¹. The Arminian rejection of predestination, and their belief that salvation was dependent upon a man's behaviour

89. 1628 Debates, III, 557, 586; paper dated 29 September 1632, in Harley's hand, B.L., Loan 29/27 part I; list of prayers, 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, 24 January 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/27 Part I.

90. Gower to Harley, 28 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/119.

91. Shipps, 'Thesis', pp. 276-277; Tyacke, 'Puritanism etc', in Russell, Origins, p. 131.

during his life on earth, was an absolute denial of the assumptions which lay at the heart of the religious beliefs of the Harleys and other predestinarians. Furthermore, the Arminian theory of salvation was regarded by ardent Calvinists as an espousal of Catholicism and as such it drew a most explosive reaction from puritans.

Thomas Pierson, in his Exposition of the 87th psalm, referred to "the uncomfortable doctrine of Papists and Arminians, that teach the true Saints of God may fall from grace". Stanley Gower's survey of 1641 complained about the Bishop's "impositions upon lectures and lecturers, restraining them from preaching many edifying points against Arminianism, of predestination etc., whilst they licensed sermons and treatises to be preached, and printed, and otherwise vented and countenanced, which tend to gross popery"⁹².

In Parliament Sir Robert Harley was amongst those M.P.s who were adamant that Arminianism was the equivalent of Catholicism. Members of the House of Commons became increasingly aware of the dangers of Arminianism in each Parliament held in the late 1620s.⁹³ By 1628 some of the most heated debates in Parliament concerned Arminianism and Sir Robert was amongst those M.P.s who clearly stated their fears that Arminianism would re-introduce Catholicism into England:-

"I will add another to Montagu, no less dangerous 'Tis one Dr. Jackson, They would introduce popery. They pretend they are the reformed religion and Church of England. They do introduce a supremacy. They are possessed of churches amongst us. This new way is to bring in popery. Let there be a committee named to consider of the books of Cosin, Sibthorp and Mainwaring".⁹⁴

Harley had been preparing his attack on the Arminians even before Parliament opened on 17 March 1628. During the previous month Harley

92. T. Pierson, Exposition on the 87th Psalm, in Excellent Encouragements against Afflictions (1647), p. 125; Puritan Survey, p. 28.

93. Russell, Parliaments, pp. 29-32.

94. 1628 Debates, II, 86.

had been in correspondence with Thomas Pierson on the subject of Jackson's book. On 29 February 1628, at his lodging in Aldermanbury, Harley had held a prayer meeting at which he prayed against Arminianism and "popery" in the same breath, as he continued to do throughout the early 1630s.⁹⁵

The Commons' attack on Arminianism was, however, ignored by the Crown. In July 1628 Richard Montagu was appointed Bishop of Chichester. At the start of the second session of this Parliament, held in January 1629, the assault on the Arminians was thus renewed with vehemence in the Commons. On 29 January Harley called for a public declaration by the Commons of their religion and a Remonstrance to the King and Parliament asking for the punishment of Arminian writers. During the course of this debate Sir Robert outlined the basis of what he called "our religion" in the following terms:-

"the Articles made in 1562 in Queen Elizabeth's time, the Articles made at Lambeth, the Articles in Ireland; King James also by his wisdom and pen in the synod of Dort being solely guided by our example." 96

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95. Pierson to Harley, 16 February 1627/8, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 237r. Unfortunately Pierson had not had time to read Thomas Jackson's Commentaries on the Apostles' Creed and we do not know what he thought of it:-
- "Good Sir, I have not yet read Dr. Jackson, but only here and there cast mine eyes on some passages".
- For Harley's prayers for "the suppression of popery and Arminianism" see list of prayers 30 March 1627, 29 February 1627/8, B.L., Loan 29/202 between ff. 237 and 239; lists of prayers 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, 24 January 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/27 part I.
96. Notestein and Relf (eds.), op. cit., p. 116; Dr. Tyacke has identified Harley as one of a group of 31 "anti-Arminian activists", who spoke in the Commons on doctrinal subjects between 1624 and 1629. Dr. Tyacke concludes that it was "largely those with a late Elizabethan university experience who defended a Calvinist interpretation of the thirty-nine articles", N. Tyacke, 'Arminianism in England, in Religion and Politics, 1604-1640' (Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford University, 1968) pp. 168-169.

Archbishop Whitgift's Lambeth Articles of 1595 (which were never officially adopted by the Church), the Articles of the Irish Church promulgated in 1615 and the declaration of the Synod of Dort, which King James had approved in 1619, all supported the puritan position on predestination much more clearly than did the 39 articles. ⁹⁷ Harley's insistence that "our" religion was based not only on the 39 Articles, but also on these subsequent definitions, was incorporated into the resolutions on religion drawn up by a sub-committee on religion on 24 February 1629. These resolutions have been described by one historian as "the most extreme pronouncement on religion made by the Commons during this ⁹⁸ period".

Sir Robert Harley's opposition to the Arminians was based not only on his staunch belief in the immutability of predestination, but also on his hostility to Catholicism. His fears concerning the Catholics had been voiced in the 1624 Parliament, when he had declared that the dangers from the native Catholic population were greater than the dangers from Spain:-

"Sir Robert Harley moves consideration of our foreign enemies to be great, but those at home much more, who lie in our bosoms and are not distinguished or known of us, but are familiar and conversant in all companies and all councils". ⁹⁹

The fears that the native Catholics would support a foreign Catholic invasion have been described as "a long-standing habit among those who remembered Elizabeth's reign." ¹⁰⁰ Sir Robert was not only old enough to remember the Spanish Armada, but he had also been a member of Parliament in November 1605, when the Gunpowder Plot was discovered. During the late 1620s and the early 1630s Harley regularly gave thanks to God for

97. Russell, Crisis, pp. 211-212.

98. J.P. Kenyon, The Stuart Constitution, 1603-1688, Documents and Commentary (Cambridge, Reprint, 1973), p. 149; the resolutions of the sub-committee are printed in W. Cobbett, (ed.), The Parliamentary History of England (1806-1820), II, 483-487.

99. Spring Diary, 1 March 1624; for Sir Robert's anti-Catholicism, see also above, Chapter I, pp. 62-64.

100. Russell, Parliaments, p. 82.

deliverance from both the Armada and the "powder plot". Sir Robert was also convinced during this period that Catholicism was spreading in England; in Parliament in 1626 he complained of the "growth of popery", a subject to which he returned in Parliament in December 1640.¹⁰¹

Lady Brilliana was also hostile to Catholicism. In her commonplace book, she quoted William Perkins in describing Catholics as "public foe", who are "enemies to our religion as Turks, Papists, Infidels, Atheists".

In the commonplace book there is also an essay describing the Pope and all Catholics as Antichrist.¹⁰² The identification of the Pope with Antichrist was a notion that "won very general support in the Church of England" during the period 1530-1640.¹⁰³

Lady Brilliana did not dwell at great length on the subject of Catholicism in her commonplace book. This is in marked contrast to the contents of her later letters, which after November 1640 were increasingly concerned with the danger to the English Protestants posed by the native Catholic population.¹⁰⁴ In 1622, when Lady Brilliana was compiling

101. List of prayers, 17 December 1624, 8 June 1625, B.L., Loan 29/52/93; lists of prayers 22 February 1632/3, 12 April 1633, 24 January 1633/4, B.L., Loan 29/27 part I; Whitelocke Diary, 27 February 1626; D'Ewes (N), p. 91.

102. Commonplace book f. 126r - this is a direct quotation of W. Perkins, Exposition of the Lord's Prayer (1592), p. 46; Commonplace book ff. 185r-v.

103. C. Hill, Antichrist in Seventeenth Century England (Oxford, 1971), p. 40, hereinafter referred to as Hill, Antichrist. Dr. Hill notes that under the aegis of Arminianism there was a reaction against this conceit, ibid., pp. 33-40; see also P. Lake, 'The Significance of the Elizabethan Identification of the Pope as Antichrist', Journal of Ecclesiastical History XXXI (1980).

104. Lady Brilliana's fears about the Catholics after the assembly of the Long Parliament are described below, Chapter 4, pp. 227, 229-230. Before then her letters contain some derogatory remarks about Catholics, but nothing more, Lewis, Letters, pp. 52, 61.

her commonplace book, the threat from Catholicism appeared as a possible, but distant menace. After the King's marriage to a Catholic in 1625 and the elevation of Arminians to the highest ranks in the Church, in the later 1620s and the 1630s, the threat from Catholicism took on a very different perspective.¹⁰⁵

The links between Catholicism and Arminianism were heightened for the puritans by the Arminian stress on the priestly function of the clergy, which was achieved through an emphasis on ceremony and ornamentation in Church worship.¹⁰⁶ As we have seen from Sir Robert Harley's description of a puritan, the puritans stressed the evangelical, preaching role of the clergy. Puritans believed that understanding the gospels, which they regarded as the word of God, was a vital step in the process to salvation.¹⁰⁷ Thus for puritans, preaching was one of the main functions of the ministry. Preaching was, however, only one aspect of the minister's role as a teacher. Other aspects included catechising and holding exercises, both for the training of ministers and for the edification of the laity.¹⁰⁸

Not only was a preaching ministry important for the salvation of the individual, it was also seen as an important antidote to Catholicism. Sir Robert Harley was therefore careful to choose well-educated, preaching ministers for the livings in his gift, particularly since Herefordshire was part of what has been characterised as "the dark corners of the land" in regard to both preaching and religious teaching.¹⁰⁹ This was a view that was also held by contemporaries in the county. At the beginning of King James' reign, Rowland Vaughan, a Herefordshire Justice

105. Fletcher, Outbreak, p. xxii.

106. Tyacke, 'Puritanism etc', in Russell, Origins, p. 139.

107. Richardson, op. cit., p. 41.

108. Ibid., pp. 38-39; Collinson, Puritan Movement, pp. 168-176.

109. C. Hill, Continuity and Change in Seventeenth Century England (1974), pp. 10, 3-47.

living in the Golden Valley in the Hundred of Webtree, complained that of the twenty-four parishes in the Hundred not one contained a preaching minister.¹¹⁰ Stanley Gower's Survey of 1641 revealed only three or four "constant and conscionable preachers" in the Hundred of Webtree and only twenty such preachers in the whole county "yet it is to be feared that there are more in this county than are to be found in all the 13 shires of Wales upon which it borders"¹¹¹.

Under the guidance of Sir Robert Harley Brampton Bryan had become a centre of zealous puritan worship. In one of his draft letters to Bishop Bennet, written on behalf of Thomas Pierson, Sir Robert explained that those in Pierson's charge "never had any such settled preaching ministry here before". Harley described his Rector's "diligent and faithful course of preaching Christ crucified, his desire to instruct the youth in the true grounds of religion by catechism and his painful endurance before a communion by going sometimes from house to house to prepare them that should come to the Lord's table"¹¹².

The 1638 charges of non-conformity against Stanley Gower complained that Gower "does catechise the youth that are about 14 or 15 years of age, but it is upon the last day's sermons made into question and answer". The charges also revealed that Gower showed formidable endurance in his preaching on fast days; "upon such a day Mr. Gower will go into the pulpit between 8 and nine of clock in the morning and there pray and preach ex tempore, till past one of the clock following: they then sing a psalm, but Mr. Gower cometh not forth the pulpit till it be past five of the clock following, if daylight continue so long"¹¹³.

110. E.B. Wood (ed.), Rowland Vaughan, His Book (1897), pp. 43-44.

111. Puritan Survey, pp. 11, 23.

112. Draft letter from Harley to Bishop Bennett of Hereford, 25 January 1613/4, B.L., Loan 29/123/39, b.

113. P.R.O., S.P., 16/381/92; Davies, op. cit., pp. 98-107.

When Edward Harley went to Oxford University, in 1638, the religious atmosphere in Oxford where the Laudians were in the ascendancy was very different from the religious life at Brampton Bryan. So different in fact, that within three months of his arrival there he complained to his eldest sister, Brilliana, that he had "not the word of God preached
114
in a right manner". Of course there was no lack of preaching at the university, but the preachers there did not have the liberty to pray *ex tempore* and at length as did Stanley Gower at Brampton Bryan .

The Harleys were also alarmed by the Laudian innovations in Church worship, such as the railed altar and bowing to the altar. In January 1639 Lady Brilliana expressed her opposition to the adoption of these practices at the university in a letter to Edward Harley:-

"I hope there will be no such things imposed upon your house, as in some others; and I hope, if it should be, you will keep to the truth in every thing; and in my opinion, he who stands for the truth in a small thing (as we think, for none of God's truths in his service is small) is of a more courageous spirit, than one that will only show themself in great matters".

In June 1640, on hearing that her nephew Edward Pelham had arrived to study at Oxford, Lady Brilliana warned her son "I believe he thinks all well done that is new to him and that he sees gentlemen to do with a good grace, which he thinks they do when they bow to the altar; but I
115
pray God teach him another lesson".

Sir Robert Harley shared his wife's opinion about Laudian alterations in religion and during the Short Parliament he supported John Pym in his
116
call to have such innovations denounced as "crimes". The Harleys

114. Brilliana Harley to Edward Harley, 25 January and 15 February 1638/9, 7 May 1639, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 211r, 216r, 232r.

115. Lewis, Letters, pp. 18, 96-97.

116. E.S. Cope and W.H. Coates (eds.), Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640, Camden Society, Fourth Series, XIX (1977), p. 181.

regarded the Arminian clergy as the innovators, who were forcing the Church towards an accommodation with Rome in matters both of theology and of Church worship. That the Harleys regarded themselves as being within the mainstream of the Church, is reflected by the fact that their puritanism never led them into full separation.

117

Indeed Lady Brilliana regarded the Separatists with some disdain.

In her commonplace book she referred to the Brownists disparagingly as a group who "will the Church nowhere, but in their parlour at Amsterdam".

118

In 1639 Lady Brilliana followed the establishment of a Separatist group under the leadership of Walter Cradock, at nearby Llanfairwaterdine, with great interest. She regarded Cradock as "a worthy man, but sometimes

119

he does not judge clearly of things". In November 1639 the Harleys'

117. The thin line between puritan practice and full separation is discussed in Collinson, 'Towards a Broader Understanding etc', in Cole and Moody (eds.), op. cit.

118. Commonplace book f. 66r.

119. Lewis, Letters, pp. 26, 31, 74, 78, In his The Welsh Saints, 1640-1660 (Cardiff, 1957), pp. 3-4, Professor Geoffrey Nuttall describes Harley as "protector and host to Walter Cradock, Morgan Llwyd, Vavasour Powell", the Welsh Separatist ministers. My own research has revealed no evidence that Harley patronised these ministers. The assertion that he did is an example of the way in which information becomes distorted in its passage through several secondary sources. Professor Nuttall's description is a direct quotation, in translation, from T. Richards, Piwrutaniaeth a Pholitics, 1689-1719 (Wreccsam, 1927), p. 65, which in turn refers the reader to J.H. Davies, 'Gweithiau Morgan Llwyd', in T.E. Ellis (ed.), Reprints of Welsh Prose Works (University of Wales, Guild of Graduates, Bangor 1899), II, pp. xxiii-xxiv. This work makes no connection between the Harleys and Powell, but asserts that Cradock was "under the patronage of Sir Robert Harley". Davies gives no source for this, but it is probably based on T.T. Lewis's edition of Lady Brilliana's Letters, yet there is nothing in the Letters to indicate that Cradock, Powell or Llwyd ever visited Brampton or were patronised by the Harleys. Davies does attempt to prove that Llwyd was at Brampton using quotations from the Letters, but Lady Brilliana refers to a Mr. Lloyd and the incidence of this name on the Welsh borders must have been quite high. Furthermore, there is nothing to indicate that Lady Brilliana's "Mr. Lloyd" was a minister, see Lewis, Letters, p. 168. Sir Robert did present a petition from Cradock to the Commons in 1641, see above Chapter 2, p. 90, but this link is hardly sufficient to suggest that Harley was his patron. I am grateful to Mr. D.L.L. Jones for supplying me with a translation of the relevant passages from J.H. Davies, 'Gweithiau etc'.

schoolmaster, Richard Symonds, became increasingly involved with this group, which resulted in his refusal to join in a public fast with the Harleys and his departure from Brampton Bryan. In relating these events to Edward Harley, Lady Brilliana mentioned the Separatists' attitude to the Prayer Book; her comments indicate that she herself had some reservations about the Book:-

"I fear we shall be so earnest in beating down their too much villifying of the Common Prayer Book, that we say more of it than ever we intended". 121

It is not clear exactly what Lady Brilliana objected to in the Prayer Book, but the 1638 charges against Gower had accused him of omitting the Absolution and the Litany, and only rarely reading the Lord's Prayer and the Commandments during the Sunday service at Brampton Bryan. These omissions were presumably based on the puritan dislike of set forms of prayer and their preference for ex tempore prayer. At the beginning of the Long Parliament, when religious changes seemed to the puritans to be inevitable, men such as Gower were at pains to disassociate themselves from the more extreme ideas of the Separatists. Gower went as far as comparing them to Catholics:-

"On the one side papists that erect their Babel amongst us; on the other side Brownists that discourage your reformation of our Zion, whilst they contend for their independent government". 123

Prior to the calling of the Long Parliament the Harleys' puritanism revolved around an emphasis on the faith and godly life of the individual, linked with attempts to eradicate what they perceived as any surviving Catholic influences from the Church. The Harleys shared these attitudes with other puritans and they made a conscious effort to seek out the friendship and company of like minded puritan laity and

120. Lewis, Letters, pp. 74, 76, 77, 84.

121. Ibid., p. 69.

122. P.R.O., S.P., 16/381/92.

123. Gower to Harley, 9 August 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 157r.

ministers. This approach to religion certainly pre-dated the rise of Arminianism in the English Church. Sir Robert's support for non-conformist ministers dates back to at least 1612, when he presented Thomas Pierson to the living of Brampton Bryan. Similarly, Lady Brilliana's commonplace book, which reveals so much about the puritan understanding of godly behaviour, was started in 1622, well before the complaints against the Arminian clergy were first raised in Parliament in 1624.

The Harleys' puritanism should not, therefore, be regarded simply as a reaction to the growth of Arminianism. The Harleys' perceptions of the "godly community" as a beleaguered minority were, however, heightened by their belief that the Arminians were intending to re-introduce Catholicism and thus overthrow the existing Church and State. Their experience of the growth of Arminianism in the 1620s and 1630s was undoubtedly the stimulus which led the Harleys to press openly for reform of the Church hierarchy in the 1640s. The Harleys' desires for a range of reforms, which would finally purge the Church of Catholic usage and influence, were also central to their opposition to the Crown in the 1640s, as the second half of this study will demonstrate.

PART II

THE HARLEYS, THE LONG PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNTY:-

NOVEMBER 1640 - OCTOBER 1643

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this study has been concerned with the thematic examination of the lives of the Harleys before November 1640. This half will be devoted to a closer chronological analysis of the Harleys' responses to the exceptional events surrounding the outbreak of the First Civil War. A number of recent studies have depicted the war as primarily a conflict of the centre, which was imposed on the counties against the will of the local communities. Some historians have thus emphasised the extent of moderate opinion in 1642, and have queried the degree to which the ideological divisions evident in the Long Parliament are to be found in the counties.¹

This suggested model of the county elite uniting in the face of outside pressures is not, however, reflected in the papers collected by the Harleys between 1640 and 1643. These papers reveal that the leading gentry in Herefordshire, as well as some of the clergy, were ideologically divided before the declaration of war in August 1642. Other sections of the population were also highly partisan.² In particular, the religious divisions, which had been apparent in Herefordshire before 1640, were to play a prominent role in the polarisation which took place in the county during this later period.

The Harleys' decision to oppose the King during the Civil War was, of course, a direct result of events which took place between 1640 and 1642. Nevertheless, the Harleys' adherence to the cause of the Parliament was also dictated by deeply held religious convictions, particularly their hostility towards both Catholicism and the spread of Arminianism, which has already been examined in the 1620s and 1630s in preceding chapters.³

1. Everitt, Kent, pp. 116-124; Morrill, Cheshire, pp. 42-69; Morrill, Provinces, p. 34; Hutton, op. cit., p. 201.

2. The question of whether Herefordshire was, therefore, an exception is discussed below, Chapter 5, note 8.

3. See above, Chapter I, pp. 61-64, Chapter 3, pp. 162-170.

The following chapters will, therefore, examine the relationship between the immediate issues, which led to war, and some of the long-term influences governing the Harleys' perceptions of those issues. The chronological analysis adopted here will also illustrate the interplay between national developments and local responses, which further helped to polarise opinions in Herefordshire in advance of the outbreak of war.

As the divisions between the supporters of Parliament and the supporters of the King became more apparent by 1642, so the tensions between their differing perceptions of the crisis also began to intensify. The Harleys viewed the Civil War primarily as a war to establish true religion, in defiance of a Catholic inspired plot against Church and State. This belief was largely rejected in Herefordshire, where many of the most prominent gentry supported the King with varying degrees of commitment. The war thus brought the Harleys' loyalties to the "godly community" into sharp conflict with their loyalties to the local "gentry community".

To a certain degree the Harleys' reactions to the events of 1640-1643 were founded upon their ideas and beliefs, which had already been established long before 1640. Yet the assembly of the Long Parliament also marked the beginning of a period in which the Harleys were rapidly forced to develop or to adapt some of their major perceptions and beliefs about religion and society. The Harleys' loyalty to the King, for example, was increasingly strained as they became more and more convinced that King Charles was enmeshed at the centre of a "Popish Plot". Anti-Catholicism had been a common emotion amongst English Protestants since the time of the Reformation. Yet, in certain circles, this emotion had undoubtedly been strengthened by the King's marriage to the Catholic Henrietta Maria in 1625 and the simultaneous favour shown by the King to the English Arminians.

In the Parliaments of the 1620s, Sir Robert Harley had repeatedly spoken against the dangers from Arminianism and from the growth of "popery" within the nation.⁴ He and his fellow M.P.s were, however, careful not to accuse their monarch of countenancing those dangers. Thus, when John Pym outlined the details of the supposed Catholic plot in the House of Commons on 7 November 1640, he did not attach blame to the King, but to "them that he entrusted". By May 1642, however, the Parliament was sufficiently distrustful of King Charles to accuse him publicly of "intending to make war against the Parliament", adding the caveat that the King was "seduced by wicked counsel".⁵ In supporting the cause of the Parliament, the Harleys accepted both the existence of a long-standing Catholic plot and the fact that the King intended to wage war on his own subjects. It was an alarming realisation for a family who had served the King and who prized their roles as public servants.⁶

Similarly, the opportunity which the Long Parliament presented for the pursuit of reformation in Church and State allowed the Harleys to formulate their ideas for change, perhaps for the first time. By the beginning of 1641 both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana were in favour of an alteration in the powers of the Bishops. During the course of that year their opinions developed to the point where both Sir Robert and Lady Brilliana were enthusiastic supporters of "Root and Branch" reforms, which would have abolished the office of Bishop altogether. Their anti-episcopalian views were of long duration, evident in Sir Robert's case as far back as the early 1620s, but there had never previously been an

4. See above, Chapter I, pp. 63-64 and Chapter 3, pp. 163-166.
5. D'Ewes (N), pp. 7-11; see also Pym's speech to the Short Parliament, Cope and Coates (Eds.), op. cit., p. 149; Husbands, Collection, p. 259.
6. See below, Conclusion, pp. 323-325.

occasion when these ideas could be discussed and developed in public.⁷

The Harleys' attitudes towards the Bishops were also crucial in forming their support for the Parliament and will, therefore, be considered in greater detail in the next chapter.

As the Harleys' ideas concerning Church reformation evolved during 1641 they became increasingly isolated from the opinion of the majority of people in Herefordshire. There was little enough support for Arminianism in the county, but nor was there much support for the Harleys anti-episcopal stance. The major part of the local gentry and clergy believed that the influence of the Arminians could be eradicated by the removal of the Laudian Bishops, but that the office of Bishop should be retained. The pro-episcopacy petition, subscribed by the greater part of the Herefordshire J.P.s at the January 1642 Quarter Sessions, declared that all "excesses, exorbitances and encroachments" in the Church could be traced to the "infirmity and corruption" of individual Bishops and not to any "poison in the nature of the discipline". Support for the Bishops was to become a central element in the formation of Royalist thought in Herefordshire, as it was in other counties.⁸

Since there was little enthusiasm in Herefordshire for Laudianism, the county's puritans were, as Professor Aylmer has written, "a distinct minority. They did not, as elsewhere, coalesce with the broad mass of anti-Catholic Protestants against the Laudians and the Arminians in the 1630s and early 1640s".⁹ In other counties local puritans did join with the broader population in presenting petitions against the Bishops to

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7. See above, Chapter 3, pp.135-136; no evidence for Lady Brilliana's views on the episcopate has been discovered before 1641, but her opinions in 1641 were so vehement that it is impossible to believe that they were only newly formed, see below, Chapter 4, pp.203-205.
 8. Webb, Memorials, II, 337-338. The Royalists' attitudes towards the Bishops are discussed in greater detail below, Chapter 5, pp. 241-243.
 9. Aylmer, loc. cit., 375-376.

Parliament, but this primarily occurred in counties such as Kent, which had experienced the rule of the Laudian Bishops at first hand.¹⁰

The relative isolation of the puritans in Herefordshire thus allows the history of the group, who formed the core of committed support for Parliament in the county, to be traced with some ease. As an M.P., Sir Robert Harley was at the very centre of the exchange of information and ideas between the localities and the Parliament. He received letters and other material from puritans in Herefordshire and elsewhere, which reveal the nature of the reforms which his correspondents desired and which they also believed Sir Robert would support. These documents illustrate exactly why the puritans in Herefordshire were isolated in their support for Parliament by 1642.

During the early years of the Long Parliament, Sir Robert's most frequent correspondent was Lady Brilliana Harley. Her letters contain an unparalleled description of the local response to central politics during these years. In conjunction with other information received by Sir Robert from the county, Lady Brilliana's letters demonstrate the inter-action of national and local events, which combined to produce distinct Parliamentary and Royalist parties in Herefordshire by the summer of 1642.¹¹

The formation of these two ideologically opposed groups was a phenomenon which both confused and alarmed contemporaries, who were ill-equipped to accept the notion of competing political groups.¹² In an age in which harmony and balance were the desired political ideals,¹³ principled opposition was not always seen in terms of legitimate political expression, but could readily be interpreted as evidence of faction, treason or rebellion. Contemporaries thus attempted to ignore the

10. Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 92-96; Everitt, Kent, pp. 84-90.

11. See full discussion below, Chapters 4 and 5.

12. Kishlansky, op. cit., 617-624.

13. M.A. Judson, The Crisis of the Constitution (New York, 1976) pp.57-67.

growth of ideologically opposed parties for as long as possible.

Following the passionate disagreements in the House of Commons over the Grand Remonstrance, the cleric, William Chillingworth, was committed to the Tower on 4 December 1641, for "reporting we had sides and parts in the house, which was but one body, so to set a division amongst us; and in daring to put instances in the house of deposing Kings by Parliament".¹⁴

Taking their cue from the contemporary aversion to opposition politics, the "revisionist" historians have argued that the emergence of the Civil War parties was a short-term occurrence, which had no concrete link with the political opposition voiced in Parliaments in the period before the "Personal Rule" of King Charles I. Professor Russell has persuasively argued that before 1640 "Parliament was not powerful, and it did not contain an 'opposition'". Dr. Morrill has insisted that "in 1640 Charles I had no party" and has emphasised that the development of parties in the localities was the reluctant response to the arrival of commissions from the King or the Parliament during the course of 1642.¹⁵

It is undeniable that opposition to the policies of the Crown was widespread in November 1640, when the Long Parliament assembled for the first time.¹⁶ This was as true in Herefordshire as it was in other counties. Thus Sir Robert Harley's support for the reforms advocated by John Pym in the House of Commons was initially endorsed in Herefordshire.¹⁷ Yet, this does not imply that there was total support for such reforms. There is, in fact, early evidence in the localities that some people were distrustful of the intentions of the Parliament. Both Stanley Gower and young

14. D'Ewes (C), p. 234.

15. Russell, loc. cit., 3; Morrill, Provinces, pp. 30, 39-40.

16. Everitt, Kent, pp. 56-69; Cliffe, op. cit., pp. 309-325; Morrill, Provinces, pp. 14-31.

17. Croft to Harley, 1 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 7r-v; Webb, Memorials, II, 335-336; Aston and others to Harley, 1 February 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 63r; see also below, Chapter 4, pp. 187-188.

Thomas Harley noticed local complaints against the Parliament in January 1641, which Gower linked with vigorous support for the Bishops.¹⁸ The fate of the episcopate was, of course, a key issue in forming support for Parliament or for the King in 1642 and pre-existing religious polarisation was clearly a central element in the establishment of the Civil War parties. Thus in focusing primarily on the short-term influences, which created the Parliamentary and the Royalist parties, the "revisionist" historians have unduly compressed what was a complex and long drawn out process.

At the beginning of 1642 the long-term religious divisions, which fostered the growth of the Civil War parties in Herefordshire, were combined with constitutional arguments which centred specifically on the role and power of Parliament. Following the King's flight from London on 10 January 1642, the Herefordshire gentry had to consider whether they would execute parliamentary orders which did not carry the consent of the King. Nine J.P.s refused to accept such orders and they explained their refusal in two letters of March and April 1642 addressed to the county M.P.s, Sir Robert Harley and Humphrey Coningsby. The letters touched upon issues, which were later incorporated into the "Declaration or Resolution of the County of Hereford", the major statement by the county's Royalists, which was circulated in Herefordshire in July 1642. Furthermore, seven at least of the nine J.P.s were later to become active Royalist Commissioners of Array. Royalist opinion was thus already developing some months before the Commission of Array arrived in the county in July 1642.¹⁹

The delay in executing the Militia Ordinance and the swift execution of the Commission of Array in Herefordshire in the summer of 1642

18. Gower to Harley, 2 January 1640/1, Thomas Harley to Edward Harley, 29 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 9r, 62r.

19. Webb, Memorials, II, 343-344. The emergence of Royalist opinion in Herefordshire is discussed below, Chapter 5.

give the false impression that Herefordshire was almost entirely Royalist. As in other counties, there were varying degrees of support both for the Royalists and the Parliamentarians. The problems associated with classifying Civil War allegiances are admirably described by Dr. Wanklyn in his Ph.D. thesis. Dr. Wanklyn outlines the dangers of trying to categorise allegiance either by treating all men as equally committed or by using evidence from a later date. In particular, he warns against placing too much credence in the evidence contained in composition papers, unless it is corroborated with additional information. Some Royalists did indeed try to conceal the extent of their support for the King in an attempt to reduce the size of their composition fine, which has misled some historians into categorising such men as neutrals. In order to avoid some of the pitfalls described by Dr. Wanklyn, assessments of allegiance in this study have been made using evidence from the period 1642-1644 wherever possible.

Four categories of allegiance have been used here. Firstly, committed or active Parliamentarians or Royalists are those who actively supported one side only, by joining the armies, by exercising civilian administrative authority or by actively defying one side in support of the other. Secondly, moderate Parliamentarians or Royalists are those who gave limited support to one side, while clearly trying to avoid giving support to the other side. Thirdly, neutrals are those who either tried to avoid giving their support to either side or those who supported both sides equally. This of course, includes men who were neutral on principle and those who regarded neutrality as a form of self-insurance, since in many cases it is impossible to distinguish between the two. Fourthly, there were those few who changed sides specifically on matters of principle.

20. See full discussion below, Chapter 6.

21. M.D.G. Wanklyn, 'Landed Society and Allegiance in Cheshire and Shropshire in the First Civil War', (Ph.D. Thesis, Manchester University, 1976), pp. 165-224. See also Morrill, Loc. cit., pp. 66-87 in response to Wanklyn's Thesis.

It is very difficult to distinguish between those who changed allegiance on principle and those who did so for opportunist reasons, who should be regarded as neutrals. Yet it is an important distinction and where possible it should be made. Finally, of course, there were the unknowns, who for lack of information cannot be categorised.

Despite the establishment of the Civil War parties during 1642, traditional modes of social behaviour were not immediately eclipsed in Herefordshire. Quite simply, neither committed Parliamentarians nor committed Royalists were intent on war. At both extremes people were hoping for accommodation and for peace. Yet pleas for unity are not necessarily evidence of a lack of commitment. In a letter of 23 April 1642 to Edward Harley, Lady Brilliana wrote "I see the distance is still kept between the King and Parliament. The lord in mercy make them one and in His good time incline the King to be fully assured in the faithful counsel of the Parliament". In a letter of 20 August 1642, Sir William Croft, a staunch Royalist, suggested a peace formula to Sir Robert Harley. Croft advised Harley that "the forces already raised for a civil war might presently be diverted for the relief of the Protestants and King's good subjects in Ireland".²²

It would be difficult to find a more committed supporter of Parliament than Lady Brilliana, or a more committed Royalist than Sir William Croft in 1642. Calls for unity cannot, therefore, be interpreted solely as evidence of moderate opinion. The same can be said of the appeals to the unity of the county gentry. Such appeals tended to be made in times of tension. Thus in his letter to Sir Robert Harley, noted above, Sir William Croft emphasised the loss of trust between himself and Lady Brilliana, in the hope of persuading Harley to return his allegiance to the Crown. In December 1642, Lady Brilliana herself wrote of the ties

22. Lewis, Letters, p. 154; Croft to Harley, 29 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 33r-34r.

between the Herefordshire gentry in a letter addressed to Viscount Scudamore. She had written to Scudamore in the hope that he could obtain the release of some of her dependents, who had been imprisoned²³ by the Royalists.

These letters should not be seen out of context; they do not illustrate the unity of the "gentry community", rather they indicate that the ties of the gentry were under considerable strain. Taken in isolation these letters can be interpreted as evidence that the bonds uniting the Harleys and the local gentry had remained intact. Within context they are revealed as desperate attempts to avert the effects of war, and it should be stressed that in this they failed. Traditional loyalties were insufficient to halt the course of the war in the county and the restraints which governed peaceful society were gradually worn down. The situation was similar throughout the counties of England. In her biography of her husband, Lucy Hutchinson describes the outbreak of the war in Nottinghamshire, which in many respects was similar to Herefordshire, since the Royalists held the ascendancy in both counties:-

"before the flame of the war broke out in the top of the chimneys, the smoke ascended in every country; the king had sent forth commissions or array, and the parliament had given out commissions for their militia, and sent off their members into all counties to put them in execution. Between these, in many places, there were fierce contests and disputes, almost to blood, even at the first; for in the progress every county had the civil war, more or less, within itself. Some counties were in the beginning so wholly for parliament, that the king's interest appeared not in them; some so wholly for the king, that the godly, for those generally were the parliament's friends, were forced to forsake their habitations, and seek other shelters: of this sort was Nottinghamshire". 24

Thus, far from being able to rely on the members of the "gentry community" for protection, Lady Brilliana fully expected that the local Royalists would attack Brampton from the very earliest stages of the Civil War. It was not, however, until July 1643 that Brampton was

23. These letters are both discussed in greater detail below, Chapter 6, pp. 291-293, 296-297.

24. Hutchinson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 116.

finally besieged. Throughout the earliest months of the War and during the siege, Lady Brilliana was sustained by her belief that she was suffering in the cause of her religion. Writing of the local Royalists in August 1642, Lady Brilliana informed her husband that "they say they maintain the true religion, but they shamefully use all that profess it". In a letter written to Edward Harley in February 1643 Lady Brilliana lamented that "none will look towards Brampton, but such as truly fears ²⁵ God". Ultimately, the Harleys' loyalties to the "godly community" were to prove stronger than their loyalties to the "gentry community".

The following chapters record the processes which led to the creation of Civil War parties and the early effects of the War in Herefordshire, in order to illustrate the connections between local and national events and the effects of those events on the private and public loyalties of the Harleys.

25. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 4 September and 3 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 309r, 301r; Lewis, Letters, p. 188.

CHAPTER 4

NOVEMBER 1640 - DECEMBER 1641

In October 1640 Sir Robert Harley was elected as senior knight for Herefordshire in the forthcoming Parliament.¹ Once he had taken his seat at Westminster Harley became an active supporter of the aims of the "reform network", led in the Commons largely by John Pym.² At the start of the Long Parliament, the "network" set about a systematic programme of reforms, which included calling the Crown's advisors to account, examining the jurisdiction and powers of the High Commission and of the prerogative courts, and investigating the accumulated grievances of the 1630s.

During the final months of 1640 and the opening months of 1641 there was enthusiastic support in Herefordshire for the reforms, which were being pursued at Westminster.³ By the spring of 1642, however, Harley's continued support for the policies of the "network" was no longer widely endorsed within the county. The months between the assembly of the Long Parliament in November 1640 and the Attempt on the Five Members in January 1642 constituted a period of increasing tensions and divisions, both at Westminster and in the localities. As some people continued to press for far-reaching reforms in 1641, moderates and conservatives grew increasingly hostile and alarmed. This chapter will trace the development

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1. The Herefordshire gentry specifically avoided competition for the county seats in the Autumn elections of 1640 by adhering to the 1621 agreement, whereby they selected two candidates in advance of the election. Well before 24 October 1640, the day of the county election, the leading gentry had already agreed that Sir Robert Harley and Fitzwilliam Coningsby should be the two candidates, draft letter from Harley and Coningsby to the Earl of Essex, 9 October 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 300r. For the 1621 agreement, see above Chapter 2, pp. 115-116. Coningsby, it will be remembered, was expelled from the House in October 1640 for his part in the soap monopoly and was replaced by his son, Humphrey, then nineteen years of age, Keeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140.
 2. P. Christianson, 'The Peers, the People, and Parliamentary Management in the First Six Months of the Long Parliament', *J.M.H.*, XLIX, (1977), 575-599.
 3. See below, pp. 187-188, 195-200, 206-212.

of the tensions which were building up within Herefordshire before 1642, by considering Sir Robert's work as an M.P. in 1640 and 1641, and by examining the various communications which he received from the localities in those years. In particular the letters, which local puritans wrote to Harley, illustrate the intensity of their hopes for religious change and the ways in which those hopes created tensions in the localities.

This chapter will also consider the contents of Lady Brilliana's letters written before January 1642, since they contain much information about the circulation of news between Parliament and the county during this period. As the wife of an M.P., Lady Brilliana's desires for information about Parliament was doubtless intensified, yet her interest in such news was shared by many gentry families, both in Herefordshire and in other parts of the country. ⁴ Some people were well informed about events at Westminster and Lady Brilliana's letters indicate the type of information they might receive, the speed with which news could be transmitted and the sources of news which were available. Her letters also reveal the response which greeted central news in the localities. Most interestingly, her letters are very informative about local reactions to one of the central themes of John Pym's reform programme - the accusation that the nation was in the grips of a Catholic backed plot to force England into subservience to Rome. This was an accusation which recalled the fears that had been voiced in Parliament ⁵ during the debates over the Remonstrance in 1628.

4. Between 12 March 1639 and 19 May 1640, and again between 29 September and 24 December 1640, Viscount Scudamore was in regular receipt of the newsletters provided by Edward Rossingham's weekly news service. Three surviving newsletters for 1641 also suggest that Scudamore subscribed to the service in that year also, B.L., Add. MSS., 11,045; for news in other counties, see Morrill, Cheshire, pp. 39-40; Fletcher, Sussex, p. 251; Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. xxvii-xxix.

5. See above, Chapter I, pp. 64, 85-86.

John Pym declared that there was a "design to alter the kingdom both in religion and government" in the House of Commons on 7 November 1640.⁶ Thereafter, the extent to which people were prepared to believe, in 1640 and 1641, that their King had fallen victim to a Catholic plot, foreshadowed the willingness with which they would support Parliament against the King once war was imminent in 1642. The accusation that there was such a plot was repeated in Parliament throughout 1641 and was matched by rumours of Catholic uprising in the localities, including Herefordshire. In November 1641 the public pronouncements in Parliament fused with local information, particularly the news of the Irish Rebellion, to produce a widely held belief that there would be a Catholic revolt in England.⁷ The interaction between information from Westminster and the local response to that information is clearly revealed in Lady Brilliana's letters. The Harleys were among those who shared the belief that there was a Catholic plot. This was a central issue in determining their allegiance to Parliament in 1642 and will thus be examined in detail later in this chapter.

Despite the divisions which would later arise in Herefordshire concerning the Parliament, there is evidence that initially some influential people in the county were in agreement with the reforms in progress at Westminster. Furthermore, such support was not confined to the Harleys' puritan circle in the county. Sir William Croft thus wrote to Harley on 1 January 1641; his letter indicates that he was in broad support of the political aims of the "reform network" in Parliament. Croft had just returned from London to Herefordshire and his letter is also conspicuous

6. D'Ewes (N), pp. 7-11.

7. R. Clifton, 'Fear of Popery', in Russell, Origins, pp. 159-160; Gardiner, History, X, 72-73.

evidence of his clear understanding of the constitutional implications of the issues then being debated by the Parliament:-

"it is like the long arguments about Ship Money. It is plain we are injured by authority and when that may be persuaded to do us right we shall be restored to our liberty, which I doubt we are not so near as we deserve, since his Majesty is desirous to have power to show mercy to the worst of malefactors. He has done that long enough and if he be not gotten from that, he is not come home to us.

If the firebrands be not put out, all our houses will be set on fire, it is not well those little sparks Windebanke and Finch are but hid in embers, they may be raked out to make a new fire". 8

The reforms promoted in the Long Parliament were also more widely supported in the county. At the January 1641 Quarter Sessions at Hereford, the Grand Jury made a presentement, which condemned the jurisdiction of the Welsh Council in Herefordshire. The Grand Jury also found Ship Money to be "a burden and a grievance" and described the levy of Goat and Conduct Money as "unlawful". The work of the Parliament was also explicitly endorsed a few weeks later by a letter from the Mayor and City Council of Hereford, in which they commended Harley for his "approved endeavours for the good of Church and Commonwealth".⁹

Harley's work as an M.P., in 1640 and 1641, was primarily concerned with the reforms of both Church and State promoted by the group led by Pym in the Commons, and by the Earls of Bedford and Warwick, and Lord Saye, among others, in the Lords. The Earl of Bedford's plan that the King would appoint members of this group to the Privy Council was described¹⁰ in December 1640 as "the news of the town" in London. At least one of

8. Croft's letter was in response to a letter from Harley, Croft to Harley, 1 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 7r-v. Croft had been in London in December 1640, he returned to the county at the end of that month and was in London again on 7 February 1641, H.M.C., Report on the Manuscripts of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley preserved at Penshurst Place (1925-1966), VI, pp. 340, 347, 349, 372.
9. Webb, Memorials, II, 335-336; Aston and others to Harley, 1 February 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 63r, this letter also asked for Harley's help in getting weirs removed from the Wye, a long-standing local problem, which Harley had raised in Parliament in 1624, see above, Chapter 2, pp. 102-103.
10. C. Roberts, 'The Earl of Bedford and the Coming of the English Revolution', J.M.H., XLIX (1977), 600.

Sir Robert Harley's correspondents in Shropshire knew of this plan in the previous month and had expressed the hope that Harley would be amongst those to gain office.¹¹ It is, however, doubtful that Harley was ever included in Bedford's plans. Although Harley had personal connections with some of the members of the "network", he was not a central member of the group. Harley's relationship to Lord Brooke and his friendship with Nathaniel Fiennes, son of Lord Saye, have already been noted.¹² Harley also had some links with the Earl of Warwick. Although Harley did have personal ties with these men, he was, nevertheless, an independent M.P., who had no obvious patronage links with any of the Peers in this group.¹³ Harley's standing in the House was, therefore, based on his own long experience as a member of Parliament and his active support for the "reform network".

When Harley took his seat in the Long Parliament he was one of a handful of men whose parliamentary experience stretched back to the first Parliament of James I or beyond.¹⁴ His experience as a long-serving M.P. ensured Harley a place on the Committee for Parliamentary

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11. William Voyle's paper headed "General Things", B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 363v, for the identification of this document, see below n. 33.
 12. See above, Chapter I, pp. 65-66. During the Short Parliament and in November 1640, Harley sponsored a Warwick protege, Stephen Marshall, as a preacher at parliamentary fasts. In 1641 and 1642 Warwick approached Harley with requests for aid in the House of Commons. On both occasions Warwick asked for help over a personal matter, rather than on an issue of national importance. See C.J., II, 9, 24; Shipps, 'Thesis', p. 209; Marshall to Harley, undated, B.L. Loan 29/120; Warwick to Harley, 3 February 1640/1 and 26 March 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 67r, 233r.
 13. Although Harley did solicit the support of the Earl of Essex for the Long Parliament elections, it is stretching the available evidence to infer from this alone, as Christianson does, that Harley was "a friend of Essex" in either a social or a political sense, see Christianson, 'The Peers etc', J.M.H., XLIX (1977), 585.
 14. Keeler, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

15

Privileges, appointed on 6 November 1640. He was also named to many of the committees set up to investigate the accumulated grievances against the Royal government and the Church. Amongst these were the Select Committee of Twenty Four, named on 10 November 1640 to report on the state of the kingdom; the committee which considered the powers of the High Commission and Star Chamber; the committee which considered the Church canons of 1640, which later drew up charges of impeachment against Laud, and the committee which considered the state of the King's
16
army.

The Committee of Twenty Four is of particular interest, since it contained a high proportion of the men actively involved in managing attacks on Crown policies in the Commons, including Pym, Hampden and Clotworthy. The members of this committee also considered the London "Root and Branch" Petition and the more moderate Ministers' Petition and Remonstrance, in order to prepare heads of debate for the House in
17
February 1641.

Although Harley was not initially one of the most prominent members of the "network" led by Pym in the Commons, nevertheless, he was indispensable to the aims of this group. Harley was broadly in support of the policies proposed by Pym in the House, the removal of the King's principal advisors, Strafford and Laud, and the passage of reform legislation. Harley was amongst those back-bench members who undertook much of the routine work in the Commons in order to secure those policies. D'Ewes' parliamentary diaries and the Commons Journals show Harley to have been a conscientious and hardworking M.P.,

15. C.J., II, 20.

16. Ibid., 25, 44, 52, 34.

17. Christianson, 'The Peers etc', J.M.H., XLIX (1977), 584-585; six members were added to the Committee of Twenty Four in order to prepare the heads of debate, C.J., II, 81.

raising points of order in debates, reporting from committees, or going
 to the Lords with messages or bills.¹⁸ Harley also acted as chairman
 both for the committee considering abuses in the civil and religious
 government of the universities, and for the Grand Committee for Trade.¹⁹

Sir Robert was also active on the committee set up on 23 December
 1640 to consider the jurisdictions of the Councils of the North and of
 Wales. On 28 December 1640 Harley wrote to Sir William Croft and
 asked him to forward his father's papers concerning the objections
 raised against the Welsh Council by the marcher gentry in the reign of
 King James. The authority of the Welsh Council was a long-standing
 grievance in the four English border counties. Harley had himself
 spoken against the Council in the Parliament of 1628 in terms of it
 being a constitutional grievance. Croft willingly despatched what
 papers he could find and in his letter to Harley Croft explored the
 constitutional aspects of this grievance, which he linked to the wider
 arguments currently being debated in Parliament concerning the mis-use
 of Royal authority.²⁰ On 19 July 1641 Harley was chosen by the Commons
 to carry up the bill to exempt the four English counties from the
 jurisdiction of the Welsh Council. Harley's active involvement in the
 attempt to restrict the Council's authority led one Council official to
 believe that Harley also wished to "suppress the court".²¹

As the work of the Parliament progressed, Harley's stature within
 the "reform network" increased. Subsequently, in January 1642, he

18. B.L., Harl., MSS., 163 f. 605r; C.J., II, 32, 57, 85, 216.
19. C.J., II, 92, 126; D'Ewes (N), p. 82, n. 34; B.L., Harl., MSS.,
 163 ff. 731r, 747v; D'Ewes (C), p. 161. For Harley's activity
 as chairman of the Committee for trade, see Order, dated 8
 December 1640, B.L., Loan 29/122/18; Report, 16 February 1640/1,
 B.L., Loan 29/46/36; C.J., II, 154, 179; D'Ewes (N), pp. 96, 526;
 B.L., Harl., MSS., 163 ff. 606r, 788v; D'Ewes (C), p. 126.
20. C.J., II, 57; Croft to Harley, 1 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173
 f. 7r; for earlier objections to the Council, see above Chapter 2, pp.
 91-92.
21. C.J., II, 216; Martyn to Bridgewater, 22 November 1641, Shropshire
 R.O., Bridgewater MSS., 212/364.

temporarily replaced Pym as chairman for the standing committee for
 22
 Irish affairs, following the Attempt on the Five Members. In February
 1642 Harley was chosen as one of the commissioners responsible for
 organising the defence of Ireland, along with Pym, Cromwell, the younger
 Vane, and others. When Pym died in December 1643 his place on the
 23
 Committee for the Assembly of Divines was taken by Harley.

Sir Robert's status as senior knight of the shire, and his position
 as an experienced and active M.P., meant that he was approached by many
 people with grievances and petitions. During the first year of the Long
 Parliament Harley received numerous demands for religious and constitut-
 ional changes, both from Herefordshire and from elsewhere. It was, of
 course, not at all unusual for M.P.s to receive such communications, but
 there is sufficient evidence that this Parliament witnessed an increase
 in these contacts for Professor Hirst to write of "this new relation-
 ship, of the Long Parliament man with his politically aroused constit-
 24
 uents". Harley, however, was in contact not only with Herefordshire
 people, but with people throughout the Welsh marcher areas and elsewhere.
 The desire for godly reformation of Church and State was not constrained
 by county boundaries.

The atmosphere of expectation engendered by the debates in Parliament
 is fully evident in a letter which Harley received from John Hall, the
 rector of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, who wrote to Harley in June 1641.
 Hall annotated his letter with the words "anno renovationis" and his
 words demonstrate the exhilaration felt by those who approved of the
 course taken by the Parliament:-

22. W.H. Coates, A.S. Young, V.F. Snow (eds.), The Private Journals of the
 The Long Parliament, 3 January to 5 March 1642 (New Haven and
 London, 1982), p. 14 n. 3.

23. C.J., II, 453, III, 341.

24. Hirst, Representative, p. 184.

"how is the glory of God sufficiently to be admired, in the wisdom, righteousness and integrity of that honourable, house; the Lord add to your lustre more and more, to the daunting of the enemy, and raising up of feeble spirits to give thanks. How many mouths have you opened, that were sealed up, yea many spirits have you enlarged that were straitened, yea many congregations give abundant thanks to God on your behalf". 25

The letters and petitions which Harley received were not solely concerned with religious issues, they were often an amalgam of the religious and the secular, of personal, local and national grievances. The ways in which these various issues interlocked is well illustrated in Sir Robert's uneasy relationship with Captain Charles Price, the county member for Radnorshire, who would be a committed Royalist in 1642. The antagonism between the two men also demonstrates some of the divisions which were increasingly evident in 1641.

At the beginning of 1641 Harley presented a petition from two Radnorshire men, Bidwell and Howle, to the Committee for Lord Lieutenants and Deputy-Lieutenants. The petition, which is not preserved amongst Sir Robert Harley's papers, probably called for the more efficient organisation of the county's militia and tighter controls over the expenditure of money raised within the county. Bidwell and Howle later complained in a petition to the House of Commons that both their county member, Charles Price, and the member for Radnor Borough, Mr. Warwick, had refused to present their first petition. After seven weeks spent waiting in London, Bidwell and Howle persuaded Harley to present the petition, because he was "a man largely estated in Radnor-
26
shire".

Yet there was also a complicated background to Harley's presentation of the petition. Harley had been involved in a private quarrel with

25. Hall to Harley, 21 June 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 116r. For Hall see Foster, Alumni, 632.

26. Petition of Bidwell and Howle, and "Propositions", both undated, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 137v-138r, 141r-v.

Price for some time over the execution of the will of John Price.

Harley was an executor of the will, which had been proved in 1639.²⁷

In July 1641 Harley presented a petition to the House of Commons on behalf of himself and another executor, Thomas Smith, a London apothecary. The Petition linked what had started as a local quarrel to the wider constitutional debates in Parliament by accusing Price of obstructing the execution of the will in "procuring letters to the Lord President of Wales from the Earl of Strafford, wherein his Majesty's name was boldly made use of to obstruct the course of justice towards your petitioners".²⁸

Since Price had voted against Strafford's attainder on 21 April 1641, this accusation must have appeared all the more damning to the House. The animosity between Harley and Price was doubtless intensified by Price's staunch support for the Bishops: on 27 May Price acted as the teller for the noes in a Commons' vote on whether to abolish episcopacy. The religious differences between the two men are further revealed in an incident which occurred in the House on 26 June 1641, when Harley presented a petition to the House from two Welsh Separatist ministers, Henry Walter and Walter Cradock. After the two ministers had avowed their petition, Charles Price and another M.P., immediately challenged the petition by accusing Cradock of preaching "strange doctrines, one of which was that Christ died like a slave". Cradock denied the charges and the petition was referred to the Committee for Scandalous Ministers.²⁹

Contemporaries did not necessarily see the issues which concerned them as primarily personal, local or national problems, but often as an

27. P.R.O., S.P., 16/408/79; P.R.O., PROB 11/179 f. 416v.

28. C.J., II, 198; University of Nottingham MSS., Department, Portland Welbeck MSS., PW2/Hy/54. The will also involved Harley in a Chancery suit, see P.R.O., C2/CHAS. I/H97/6, C3/404/63.

29. Keeler, op. cit., p. 314; B.L., Harl., MSS., 163 f. 740v.

inseparable combination of the three. Once the Long Parliament had assembled, puritan clergy throughout the diocese of Hereford turned to Harley with demands for reforms at both local and national levels. Personal and local problems were often presented to Harley as evidence for the need for national reformation, which would prevent local disorders in the future. The papers which Harley received from the diocesan clergy reveal the intensity of their desires for reforms, both of long-standing religious grievances and of the more recent Arminian innovations.

On 20 November 1640 Stanley Gower wrote to Sir Robert Harley and told him that a number of the ministers of the diocese had received no notification of the elections to convocation. The aggrieved ministers had drawn up two petitions, one against the irregular conduct of the elections and the other against the canons of 1603 and 1640. They had also sought legal advice from Mr. William Littleton and Justice Littleton "who both liked exceeding well what we have done, assuring us (what we hope) that Parliament will both take due notice of us and that it will be a goodremonstrance against the corruption of that hierarchy, whose downfall we expect daily".³⁰

This is the first reference to the "downfall" of the Bishops in Gower's surviving correspondence with Harley. His letter indicates that people in the localities were discussing reforms of the episcopacy well in advance of the presentation of the London "Root and Branch" Petition which was delivered to Parliament on 11 December 1640.³¹ Changes in Church polity were regarded by many of Harley's puritan correspondents as an essential part of any Church reforms. This was a deeply held belief, born of their experience of the Church under Laudian rule, and

30. Gower to Harley, 20 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 309r. Justice Littleton was probably Adam Littleton of Stoke Milburgh, Shropshire, Chief Justice of the Anglesea circuit from 1637-1647, W.R. Williams, The History of the Great Sessions in Wales, 1542-1830 (Brecknock, 1899), pp. 95-96.

31. Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 91-92.

it was not the result of the spread of radical demands from London to the localities. Thus, although a petitioning campaign had been started by some London ministers against the canons of 1640, the Hereford petitions mentioned in Gower's letter were not a direct part of that campaign. There is nothing to suggest that the action of the Hereford ministers was not spontaneous, and their petition against the canons does not use arguments put forward by the London ministers.³² The fact that the Herefordshire petitioners were acting autonomously of the London based pressure groups is also reflected in the personal letters, which Harley received from three of the ministers who signed the diocesan petitions; William Voyle, the curate of Llanfairwaterdine; John Tombes, vicar of Leominster; and Stanley Gower, Sir Robert's rector at Brampton.

Voyle drafted a lengthy paper concerning State and Church reformation, which he probably sent to Harley at the end of November 1640. In his plan Voyle suggested that it should be considered whether it might be better to "yield (in part) to the Bishops", but he envisaged a very reduced role for the episcopate and advised that all "canons, orders, ordinances etc. concerning ecclesiastical matters" should be approved either by Parliament or by a national synod chosen by the "constant preachers of either Province". Voyle also wished to see Parliament playing a greater role within the government of the State and Church. He demanded that Parliament should "sit according to the laws and our ancient customs of the realm once in three years". Furthermore, all "ecclesiastical laws, constitutions, rules etc." should be voided "excepting such as shall be established by his Majesty with the advice of his Parliament".

The plan also contained numerous long-standing puritan demands, many of which dated back to the early years of Elizabeth's reign,

32. H.M.C., Portland I, 4-6; C.S.P.D., 1640, p. 636, (I am grateful to Professor Russell for this reference); petitions from the diocesan clergy, undated, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 346r-350r.

including the abolition of surplices, the removal of the signing of the cross during baptism, and kneeling at communion, as well as the destruction of "monuments of idolatory" such as altars, holy water, crucifixes, images, pictures and stained glass. In his accompanying letter, Voyle explained that reforms had been held back by moderate voices in Queen Elizabeth's reign, but now the Parliament might have an extraordinary opportunity:-

"human wisdom will say; in the business of reformation, content yourselves at this time to go so far. This voice did prevail in the beginning of Q. Eliz. (sic).

But the present way (says Duns Scotus) is, Not a horse left in Egypt. Exod. 10:v:26 and we know not, what invitations and encouragements, and opportunities you may have beyond the common expectation", 33

On 12 December 1640 John Tombes wrote to Sir Robert Harley complaining about the low stipends which he and his curate received. Tombes linked the low levels of pay of the local clergy with the lack of preaching in "this country". He had been engaged in an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Bishop of Hereford to give up some of the impropriated tithes of Leominster for some time. Tombes now confessed to Harley that he could no longer support himself "unless this Parliament take some course for providing for the ministry". Tombes' letter also referred to a dispute which had started in 1635 when a local J.P., Wallop Brabazon, had used his office of churchwarden to turn the communion table at Leominster "altar-wise". Tombes now accused Brabazon of numerous other misdemeanours, including setting up an alehouse and bowling alley in the town and keeping company with an excommunicated "papist". Tombes explained that he informed Harley of these matters "for the good of this county. Craving your advice when and how to address myself to the Parliament that so I may have maintenance

33. Paper headed "General Things", undated, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 363r-367v. The paper is anonymous, but is in Voyle's hand, see also Voyle to Harley, 23 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 315r.

and power settled, without which I shall be enforced to desert my
³⁴
 ministry in this place".

Sir Robert's most frequent clerical correspondent during the early months of the Long Parliament was his own rector at Brampton Bryan. Gower offered Harley a steady flow of advice about Church reforms, which included tighter controls on the native Catholics, the pulling "down" of the Bishops and the removal of Church ceremonies and subscription "two great clogs, which must be removed". In a letter of 28 November 1640 Gower explained to his patron that "the foundation is to be well-laid, and I think that will consist in either the utter overthrowing, or much alteration at least, of the government by Bishops". Gower stipulated that there were three things of moment which would establish a "faithful ministry". His plan included the revival of the aims of the Feoffees for Improvements, the puritan group which had been founded in the 1620s with the intention of restoring improvements to ecclesiastical uses. Sir Robert had been a supporter of the intentions of the original group, which has been suppressed under Laud in the mid-1630s. Gower thus itemised his plans as follows:-

1. the Feoffees plot to go forward
2. the power of the hierarchy and their courts to go backward
3. The persecution of God's dear servants and the complaints of the land to be considered, and redressed".

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34. Tombes to Harley, 12 December 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 344r; P.R.O., C 115/D.13/1723. For the dispute with Brabazon, see also Petition of the Borough of Leominster, undated, B.L., Loan 29/50/73.
35. Gower to Harley, 9 November and 20 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 308r, 309r-v; Gower to Harley, 28 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/119. For Harley's support for the Feoffees in the 1630s, see above Chapter 3, pp. 161-162. The desire to restore improvements was not confined to puritans, Laud proposed such a scheme and Viscount Scudamore restored improvements to Herefordshire churches, Hill, *Economic Problems*, pp. 264, 271-272. Dr. Hill says that Scudamore restored improvements worth £50,000. This figure is derived from secondary sources and sounds rather high.

Gower's letters also reveal that he was as interested in constitutional issues as he was in religious issues. Gower was also well informed about proceedings in Parliament, particularly Harley's committee work. Six days after the opening of Parliament, Gower wrote to Harley and informed him that "it joys us much to hear that the King has referred the full trial of offences and offenders to you". Gower's letter illustrates his long-term view of the constitutional ills of the kingdom, he drew an analogy between the arguments put forward in recent Scottish propaganda and the arguments used by King James in a speech to his first Parliament:-

"I have read a testimony from King James in his speech at Whitehall 1609, which is a stronger testimony than any other, in propria causa, his distinction there of kingdoms is the same with the Scots; into absolute as the turks; and pactional kingdoms, as ours and his words are better than theirs (viz.)

The King of England doth by pact or covenant, and that by oath, enter upon the kingdom to govern it according to the laws thereof, which if he cease to do, he is perjured and ceases to be a King, and degenerates into a tyrant, whosoever counsels him to that course they are vipers and pests". 36

In a letter of 2 January 1641, Gower made passing reference to the Grand Committee for Trade, where Harley held the chair. Gower then considered two of the religious committees, on which Harley served. Of the committee considering abuses in the government of the universities, where Harley also held the chair, Gower wrote "I am sure the fountain of all impiety lies in the universities. I hope you will
37
cleanse and purge them thoroughly". Gower was not alone in this

36. Gower to Harley, 9 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 308r.

37. Gower to Harley, 2 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 9r. For Harley's role as chairman of these two committees, see above, note 19.

criticism, his words were part of a wider discussion on the defects of the universities taken up in the 1640s and 1650s by, amongst others, William Dell, John Milton and Thomas Hobbes.³⁸ Gower's letter then considered the Committee for Scandalous Ministers, stating that he feared the work of this committee could not proceed until "Bishops and Bishoprics go down, for they are the cause of all - non-preaching ministers, non-resident ministers and scandalous ministers".³⁹

Harley was also contacted by ministers from outside the diocese of Hereford.⁴⁰ Their letters reveal both the extent of Sir Robert's reputation as a patron of the godly, as well as their heart-felt desires for Church reformation. At the beginning of 1641 Harley received a letter from William Bourne, a fellow of the collegiate church of Manchester. Bourne confessed himself to be "very glad that God has called you to that honourable assembly". He explained that there were "divers things amiss" at the collegiate church "as organs, altars, gestures, vestures, crosses etc.", which Bourne hoped Parliament would remove. He was also confident that Parliament would pursue "Root and Branch" reforms of this episcopacy:-

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38. C. Hill, The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution (1972), pp. 241-246; idem, Milton and the English Revolution (1977), p. 37; T. Hobbes, Behemoth (1969), pp. 40-44, (I am grateful to Dr. Corfield for the latter reference).
39. The Committee for Scandalous Ministers, also known as the Committee for Preaching Ministers, was set up as a sub-committee of the Grand Committee for Religion and was re-constituted on 19 December 1640 as a committee of the House, when Harley and others were added, C.J., II, 54.
40. Harley's contacts with ministers outside the diocese have been noted above, Chapter I, pp. 66-71.

"I doubt not but you are resolved to remove whatsoever savours of Antichrist from amongst us; but because there will be some difference betwixt the conformists and others what discipline shall be raised, I think you may do well to conform the same to the Apostles' times, whereof we have precedents in France, Geneva and Scotland, and other reformed Churches. The which if you do, you shall make a most comfortable and perpetual accord betwixt the kingdoms, but if it so fall out that Christ and Antichrist be comixt together, it will breed a perpetual dissension". 41

In June 1641 John Hall, the Worcestershire cleric, wrote to Harley on behalf of the parishioners of Doderhill, who wished to have "means and liberty of choice of a godly preacher". Hall's letter refers to Harley's renown as a godly patron:-

"your countenance has refreshed many, your kindness invited many to seek your favour and your zeal for the cause of religion has ministered strength to them that droop". 42

At the start of July 1641, Harley was also approached by Oliver Thomas, a north Shropshire cleric, who wished to expedite the cause of a group of Welsh ministers, who had "long waited upon parliamentary leisure". Thomas complained "if the care and provosion for us be committed to our Welsh parliamentary knights and burgesses, our hopes are gone". He also offered Harley advice about who should be chosen as commissioners for Wales under the terms of the "Root and Branch" Bill, which had already received two readings and was still being hammered out by a sub-committee of the House. This letter is fascinating evidence that in the localities people were aware of the clauses of a bill, which had received its first reading to the House of Commons only a few weeks previously, on 27 May 1641.

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41. Bourne to Harley, 8 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/119. For the identification of the Bishops with Antichrist, see Hill, Antichrist, pp. 41-77. Bourne wrote to Harley in 1643 concerning the forthcoming Westminster Assembly, Bourne to Harley, 19 February 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 10r.
42. Hall to Harley, 21 June 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 116r.
43. Thomas to Harley, 5 July 1641, B.L., Loan 29/121; W.A. Shaw, A History of the English Church 1640-1660 (1900), I, 77-100. For Harley's support for this bill, see below, p. 204. The Welsh ministers mentioned in Thomas's letter may have been Walter and Cradock; Harley had presented their petition to the House on 26 June 1641, see above p.194.

Although there is proof amongst Sir Robert's papers that there was local enthusiasm for the prospect of reforms, there is, however, evidence that some people were opposed to the reforming work of the Parliament at a very early stage. During the opening months of the Long Parliament some of Sir Robert's correspondents informed him of the criticisms of the Parliament, which were circulating in the localities around Brampton. In a letter of 18 December 1640, Samuel Fisher, a Shropshire curate, told Harley that a "seminary priest" in Shropshire had reputedly slandered the Peers who had petitioned the King for a Parliament:-

"the words were these 'that those Lords who had put up the petition to his Majesty were a company of puritan rascals, base fellows and base scabs'". 44

In his letter of 2 January 1641, Gower wrote that Sir Paul Harris of Shropshire "says' the Parliament has not the King as fast as they think'. The vulgar comfort themselves with assured confidence that Bishops will get up again. I tell you but the language of Babel's bricklayers". Sir Paul Harris, it should be noted, was an active Commissioner of Array in the summer of 1642. In a letter of 29 January 1641 to his brother, Edward, young Thomas Harley recorded that "some men jeer and cast forth reproachful words against the Parliament, and others that might forward the proceedings of the Parliament are very backward". 45 46

One of the major divides in opinion about the Parliament lay in the question of episcopacy, even at this early date. At the start of 1641 there were obvious tensions between those who wished to retain the Bishops with wide powers and those who wanted a drastic reduction, or a total abolition of their powers. Contemporaries were well aware that what

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44. Fisher to Harley, 18 December 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 352r-353v. This case was later reported to Lords Saye and Brook, H.M.C., Fourth Report, Appendix (1874), pt. I, 56; L.J., IV 188.
45. Gower to Harley, 2 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 9r; Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 359-360.
46. Thomas Harley to Edward Harley, 29 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 62r.

they termed "parties" were forming around the issue of the Church hierarchy in the early months of 1641. In a letter written on 25 January 1641, John Pyne, M.P. for Poole, referred to "episcopacy, which has so many advocates and so strong a party in our House"⁴⁷. At the end of February 1641 objections were raised in London against a statement from the Scottish commissioners in London, which affirmed that they wished to see episcopacy abolished in England.⁴⁸ On hearing about this Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley of her fears that "the Scots' declaration would give the contrary party occasion to show themselves"⁴⁹.

Lady Brilliana's letters also reveal the strength of her own feeling against the Bishops. On 28 January 1641 she wrote to Edward Harley "I believe that hierarchy must down and I hope now". On 19 March 1641 she wrote "I am glad that the Bishops begin to fall, and I hope that it will be with them as it was with Haman; when he began to fall, he fell indeed"⁵⁰. It is probably incorrect to interpret these statements as evidence of Lady Brilliana's unqualified support for complete abolition of episcopacy. During the early months of the Long Parliament the Harleys, and many others in their puritan circle in Herefordshire and Shropshire, would probably have accepted either an episcopate with curtailed powers or the abolition of the episcopal office.

Although Gower clearly preferred total abolition, his letter of 28 November 1640 to Harley clearly demonstrates that he would accept an episcopate, provided there was "much alteration at least, of the government by Bishops"⁵¹. Similarly, Voyle's plans suggested that it might be

47. Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 97.

48. V. Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: City Government and National Politics, 1625-1643 (Oxford, 1972), pp. 202-203.

49. Lewis, Letters, p. 118.

50. Ibid., pp. 111, 119.

51. Gower to Harley, 28 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/119.

better to yield (in part) to the Bishops". Sir Robert probably shared the views of these ministers in early 1641. The Ministers' Petition and Remonstrance, which Harley presented to the Commons in January 1641, were not "Root and Branch" documents, although they did call for "reformation in matters of religion and the government of the Church".⁵³ Lady Brilliana was probably of the same mind as her husband in the opening months of 1641. By the summer of that year the attitudes of the Harleys may have hardened, when the "root and Branch" bill was under consideration by the House of Commons.

The Harleys both supported the aims of this measure. Sir Robert called for the debate of the bill on 11 June 1641 and Lady Brilliana followed its progress with approval. As the debates proceeded it became apparent that the M.P.s were seeking a system of Church government which was very far from the clerically dominated Scottish model of Presbyterianism. The bill would have replaced the episcopal office by a commission of nine laymen in each county.⁵⁴

On 5 June 1641, having heard that the bill had received two readings in the Commons, Lady Brilliana expressed her elation in a letter to

52. Paper headed "General Things", undated, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 363v, see above note 33.
53. There are apparently no extant copies of either of these documents, Falkland's speech of 8 February 1641 infers that they were not demands for "Root and Branch", see D'Ewes (N), pp. 335-336, 277.
54. B.L., Harl., MSS., 478 f. 647r. A draft of the bill has survived amongst Harley's papers, ff. 15 and 16 bear minor amendments in his hand, University of Nottingham Library, MSS., Department, Portland Welbeck MSS., PW2/Hy/31. In his Journal D'Ewes gives a fascinating account of the background to the debate of 11 June 1641 - "Sir Robert Harley, as I gathered, Mr. Pym, Mr. Hampden, and others, with Mr. Stephen Marshall, parson of Finchingfield, in the county of Essex, and some others, had met yesternight and appointed that this bill should be proceeded with this morning, and the said Sir Robert Harley moved it first in this House", B.L., Harl., MSS., 163 f. 691v. Gardiner, however, drew attention to the fact that D'Ewes' account goes on to include events from 1643 and thus "has no weight as contemporary evidence", Gardiner, *History*, X, 77, note 3. Even if the precise details of D'Ewes' account cannot therefore be trusted, his assertion that such meetings took place is undoubtedly correct.

Edward Harley:-

"I much rejoice that the Lord has shewed Himself so mightily for His people, in hearing their prayers; that it is come so far as that the Bishops and all their train is voted against. I trust in God they will be enacted against, which I long to hear; and I pray God take away all those things, which have so long offended". 55

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Lady Brilliana continued to enquire about the bill during that summer.

In their desires for far-reaching Church reformation the Harleys were part of a wide-spread trend within English society. The London "Root and Branch" Petition, presented to the Commons on 11 December 1640, called for the abolition of episcopacy and was variously said to carry 10,000 or 15,000 signatures. The Ministers' Petition and Remonstrance, presented to the Commons by Harley, were described as having nearly 1,000 signatures. During 1641 nineteen counties sent "Root and Branch" petitions to Parliament, Dr. Fletcher concludes from this that "it is appropriate to speak of a national petitioning campaign". 57

Within Herefordshire there was a small group of clergy and laity who looked to Parliament to reform the Church hierarchy. Some members of this group later formed the nucleus of support for Parliament in Herefordshire during the First Civil War. A great amount about the composition of this group, and about their demands for Church reforms can be traced from their involvement in drawing up a survey of the

55. Lewis, Letters, pp. 132-133.

56. Ibid., pp. 135, 138, 140, 141, 143. After the debates in the summer of 1641 the "Root and Branch" bill rested in committee and was dropped after the recess. Shaw suggests that this "is explicable only on the ground that the Parliament perceived the necessity of the advice of an assembly of divines for so momentous a measure", Shaw, op. cit., I, 99, 117. The Commons did pursue the bill to exclude the Bishops from the Upper House. On 7 February 1642 Sir Robert Harley carried the Bishops' Exclusion Bill to the Lords and on 11 February Lady Brilliana wrote to Harley "I thank God that you were employed in that great work", C.J., II, 415; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 11 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 between ff. 211 and 212.

57. D'Ewes (N), pp. 138, 277, 313; Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 92.

parish clergy of Herefordshire in December 1640 and January 1641.

The **Survey** was drawn up in response to an order of the House of Commons of 19 December 1640, which called for all M.P.s to inform the House of the state of the ministry in their counties within six weeks.⁵⁸ The Herefordshire Survey has been known to scholars since at least 1697, when it was noticed as part of the Library of Corpus Christi College in Edward Bernard's Librorum mannscriptorum Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae⁵⁹ (1697).

Although the Survey was also quoted extensively by Reverend H.W. Phillott in his diocesan history of Hereford, published in 1888, it has not previously been examined in conjunction with the very informative description of its preparation which has survived amongst Sir Robert Harley's papers.⁶⁰ Stanley Gower wrote to Sir Robert Harley on 23 January 1641 and forwarded the Survey with his letter. Gower's letter contains invaluable details of the framing of the Survey. After receiving a copy of the Commons' order from Sir Robert, Lady Brilliana had written to the clerics John Tombes and Matthew Clark, the rector of Bitterly in Shropshire, and had sent for the puritan Herefordshire gentleman, Edward Broughton. In his letter Gower noted that Lady Brilliana "has been very active in so great a business".

On Broughton's advice the survey was conducted hundred by hundred:-

"his notes (for your happy damned Ship Money) directed us to go by the hundred and take every parish in the hundred, the names of the men, their means, manners, labours and patrons, that we might give you the more exact information. We sent diverse copies of your order to men well effected to this service of God, King, Church, Kingdom and Country, inhabiting the hundreds, entreating them to bring unto the quarter sessions at Hereford a true and their best intelligence, such as might rightly inform the Parliament by you, the mouth of this country".

58. C.J., II, 54.

59. E. Bernard, Librorum mannscriptorum Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae index (1697), I, pt. II, p. 56. I am grateful to Dr. Molly Barrat of the Bodleian for this reference.

60. H.W Phillott, Diocesan Histories, Hereford (1888), pp. 207-214.

In this manner the Survey was completed in less than five weeks, which surprised Gower, who confessed in his letter to his patron that initially the task had seemed "difficult , if not altogether impossible
61
.... which dulled the edge of my intention".

All of the five ministers who helped to compile the survey: Gower, Tombes, Clark, John Green of Pencomb and William Lowe of Aston, would
62
later give their support to Parliament once the Civil War had started. Of the laity involved in compiling the survey, four - Lady Brilliana Harley, James Kyrle, Edward Broughton and Henry Jones of Mainstone -
63
supported Parliament from the earliest stages of the war. The remaining laity pose a slight problem, since Gower mentions only their surnames, these being Flacket, Rawlins, Vaughan and Blayney. Men with the same names later supported Parliament, either from the start of the war, or after December 1645, when a Parliamentary bureaucracy was set up in
64
the county. No information about later allegiance has been found for Robin Davies, who was also involved.

The Survey covered 193 livings, giving the name of the living and in general the name of the patron, the value of the living and a short description of the incumbent. The Survey was also accompanied by an analysis of the reasons for the scarcity of "good ministers" in the county
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and a number of cures which would remedy the problem. In his letter to

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61. Gower to Harley, 23 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/119.
62. For Gower, Tombes and Green, see below Chapter 6, pp. 302-303; Clark travelled to London at the start of the First Civil War and received the sequestered living of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch from Parliament on 17 March 1643, Shaw, *op. cit.*, II, 309; Lowe had reached London by 1645, if not before, and was serving at St. Mary's Islington in that year, *L.J.*, VII, 559.
63. For Kyrle and Broughton, see below, Chapter 6, pp. 303-304 ; for Jones see McParlin, 'Thesis', p. 106.
64. McParlin, 'Thesis', pp. 107-108.
65. For the sake of brevity the Survey and the appended "Causes and Cures" have been referred to solely as the Survey throughout this study.

Sir Robert Harley, Gower stated that he had added the "causes and cures" at the request of those who helped to compile the Survey. "They brought in the substance of what is now sent you, the title, composure, causes and cures, at their request I have added and sent you the Survey un-⁶⁶subscribed". Although Gower writes in the first person in the Survey throughout, he clearly thought that he was accurately conveying the ideas of the group who had helped to compile the Survey. The additional material can thus be regarded as representative of the desires of the most active clerical and lay puritans in the county. It was also designed to appeal to Harley, who would present their plans to Parliament. The contents of the "causes and cures" were a combination of complaints about the Church, which had been voiced repeatedly since the very earliest stages of the Reformation in England, mixed with more recent grievances, which dated from the rise of Arminianism.

Among the reasons annexed to the Survey for the lack of "good ministers", were the want of interest amongst the laity, as well as recusant patrons; patrons who were simply careless about the sort of man they chose; patrons who impropriated the income of a living and left a "miserable incompetency" for the minister; and patrons who persecuted⁶⁷ any "conscionable" minister. The Survey also revealed that the puritans were very hostile towards the clergy of Hereford Cathedral, partly because the Bishop and the dean and chapter held so many impropriations and had the gift of some of the best livings in the county, and partly because the cathedral clergy countenanced elaborate ceremonial during divine service. Services in the cathedral were thus condemned as "the⁶⁸ fountain of superstition throughout the whole county".

66. Gower to Harley, 23 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/119.

67. Puritan Survey, pp. 24-25.

68. Idem., pp. 1-23, 26.

The central arguments of the Survey ran against the authority of the Bishops, who were singled out as being the greatest cause of the lack of able ministers:-

"prelates are the main atlases which uphold the babel of confusion both in Church and Commonwealth and amongst the rest, they are the greatest causes of the scarcity of a painful, constant and conscionable ministry themselves being none such". 69

The Bishops were accused of ordaining "unconscionable men"; insisting on subscription and an oath of canonical obedience from newly ordained clerics; they admitted non-residents and pluralists to livings; imposed endless fees on ministers; restrained lecturers from preaching "many edifying points against Arminianism" and countenanced sermons which tended towards "gross popery". At the same time, the Bishops burdened the ministry with "old antiquated ceremonies and new dangerous and offensive rites given out as the King's instructions". Bishops were also accused of holding great livings, while withholding income from other ministers by impropriations.⁷⁰

According to the Survey, the cure for these problems lay in the foundation by Parliament of a Presbyterian Church system, with the election of ministers by the parish and the purchase of impropriations from the laity, in order to ensure that every minister had an annual stipend of £100. The Church was to be purged of "the trash and trumpery

69. Idem., p. 33.

70. Idem., pp. 27-28. The problems caused by impropriations which the Survey raised, were evident in other counties. A Certificate from Northamptonshire printed in 1641 alleged that half of the county's 326 benefices were suffering from impropriations; a petition from Nottinghamshire of the same year, complained that impropriated livings provided the worst ministry, Hill, Economic Problems, pp. 142, 153. The Certificate from Northamptonshire also appears to have been written in response to the Commons' order of 19 December 1640 asking for M.P.s to inform the House of the State of the Ministry in their counties, the Certificate is anonymous and deals with only a few parishes and is nowhere near as informative as the Survey for Herefordshire, A Certificate from Northamptonshire As there is an Order lately printed and published concerning Ministers, by a Committee of the high Court of Parliament (1641).

of massing ceremonies, altars, images, crucifixes, copes, surplices, organs etc. instead of which, to make God's worship as plain and decent as may be"⁷¹.

Although the Survey was clearly in favour of Presbyterianism, Gower and presumably, other Herefordshire puritans, could still envisage a Presbyterian system which included Bishops. The Survey advises that Bishops should either be abolished altogether or the episcopacy reduced to its "first order"⁷². This decision should rest with Parliament, but if Bishops were retained, then the clergy should choose their Bishops by presenting two men to the King, who would then choose between the two. Once chosen the Bishops would have no temporal powers, and the ultimate authority in the Church should be shared with the "presbyters"⁷³.

The Survey suggested that if Parliament chose to abolish "the order and name of Bishops", then a synod of "the best and learnedest divines both domestic and foreign in all reformed Churches" should "treat and agree upon a settled platform of Church Government, to be ratified by Parliament". A number of eminent divines were suggested as members of this synod, including Archbishop Ussher of Armagh, whom Gower had served as chaplain for eight years during the 1620s and early 1630s.⁷⁴ The idea

71. Puritan Survey, pp. 30-31.

72. Idem., p. 33. The ambiguity surrounding this phrase is illustrated in a letter from Sir John Temple to the Earl of Leicester, of 21 January 1641, in which Temple states that Laud wished to see the episcopate "moulded into the ancient primitive way, and to see them reduced into the same state wherein they continued many hundred years after Christ which he says has been very little understood of late by any of our divines", H.M.C., De Lisle and Dudley MSS., VI, 368.

73. Puritan Survey, pp. 33-34.

74. Idem., pp. 34-35; for Gower's relationship with Ussher, see above, Chapter I, p. 44.

of such a synod had been mooted in certain circles for some time, Ussher himself had obliquely suggested such a synod in a sermon of 1626.⁷⁵ The idea was adopted by the House of Commons in 1641 and the call for a consultative synod formed one of the clauses of the Grand Remonstrance of December 1641.⁷⁶ Divines were chosen by the House of Commons to represent the localities during 1642 and the resulting assembly, the Westminster Assembly, first sat on 1 July 1643.⁷⁷ Gower and Green of Pencomb were chosen by Parliament as the Herefordshire representatives to the Assembly, probably on Harley's recommendation.⁷⁸

In his letter to Harley, which accompanied the Survey, Gower stated his conviction that the contents of the Survey would persuade the House of Commons to abolish episcopacy:-

"I am persuaded the very reading of this unto the House would give the casting voice, if it should come to that, whether Bishops should be certified or removed. I have to my meanness proposed some considerations either way me thinks if the Bishops heard this read it would convince them, or at least evince others, that a schism was intended to be drawn over the face of this kingdom by them, and so to make it a blank, upon which for policy sake, they might write what religion might most conduce to their base ends". 79

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75. Ex. Inf. Anne Witham, from research in progress for her doctorate at London University, on the subject of the Westminster Assembly.
76. Gardiner, Documents, p. 229.
77. C.J., II, 427, (Harley was a member of the Committee to consider the readiest way to execute the resolutions of the House in consulting with the divines, ibid., 541); Shaw, op. cit., I, 145. In a speech to the House on 23 October 1641 Sir Edward Dering called for "a free, learned, grave religious Synod" and noted that "there is in some hand of this House, and long hath been, a Bill for a National Synod ready drawn", in the margin of the printed version of this speech are the initials Sir R.H. it is tempting to think that Harley was the author of the Bill, although other possibilities were Sir Robert Hatton, Sir Ralph Hopton and Sir Robert Howard, E. Dering, A Collection of Speeches (1642), p. 43.
78. B. Brook, The Lives of the Puritans, (1813), I, 90-91.
79. Gower to Harley, 23 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/119.

Although there was strong support in the House of Commons for radical reform of the episcopacy, as well as widespread popular support in London and some of the localities for such measures, in Herefordshire demands for such sweeping religious change appealed to a minority. While the local puritans were collecting information for their Survey at the Quarter Sessions in January 1641, they also attempted to circulate an anti-episcopal petition. The petition met with little success. James Kyrle, the J.P., informed Harley that "I came to our Sessions with a petition of our grievances in matters of religion, but could not procure the subscription of any one of our Justices. Yet, I have sent it abroad the shire". Kyrle wrote that he would send the petition to Harley, if he could get enough hands. Although one local gentleman persuaded seventy people to sign the petition, it does not appear to have
80
been delivered to Parliament.

That there was only limited support in Herefordshire for the reforms advocated by the local puritans was a fact which eluded Stanley Gower. He complained to Harley that he was "ashamed to see the causeless timidity of the Justices of our country to subscribe the petition against episcopacy, though they had Gloucestershire and other countries
81
for their precedent".

The activities of the Herefordshire puritans were also unpopular amongst the cathedral clergy. In May 1641 John Tombes informed Harley that "I am very odious to the cathedral, non-preaching, scandalous ministers of this county for my endeavours to certify you of the estate
82
of the ministry in this county". Members of Parliament were themselves aware that in some regions there was hostility or indifference towards

80. James Kyrle to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/120; Lewis, Letters pp. 111, 113-114.

81. Gower to Harley, 23 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/119.

82. Tombes to Harley, 3 May 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 99r.

measures being pursued in Parliament. It was in the attempt at overcoming such reactions that the House of Commons increasingly ordered its members to promote parliamentary orders in their constituencies.

On 5 May 1641 the House thus ordered that the Protestation should be printed and M.P.s should send copies to the Sheriffs, county Justices and borough officials in order to encourage them to take the attached oath and tender it to the rest of the population. Harley was one of those M.P.s who actively promoted such orders in his home county. He had been a member of the committee which had drawn up the Protestation and oath on 3 May 1641, in response to the news of the First Army Plot. The initial information about the plot was enough to indicate that the King had intended to raise an armed force in London. The Protestation was designed to counter the danger of such a force being used to subdue the Parliament and the oath bound all who took it to the defence of "the true reformed Protestant religion his Majesty's Royal person and estate, as also the power and privilege of Parliaments, the lawful rights and liberties of subjects".

Harley and his fellow knight of the shire, Fitzwilliam Coningsby, drafted a letter to the county on 8 May 1641, in which they declared that the Protestation demonstrated the care of the House of Commons to assert "the truth of our holy religion from popish innovations, and our fundamental laws and liberties from such pernicious counsels and conspiracies, as threatened their subversion". Lady Brilliana subsequently

83. C.J., II, 135.

84. Ibid., 132; Gardiner, History, IX, 351; Gardiner, Documents, pp. 155-156.

85. Draft letter from Harley and Fitzwilliam Coningsby to the Sheriff and Justices of Herefordshire, 8 May 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 101r. Derek Hirst describes similar letters from Cromwell, Colpepper, D'Ewes and other M.P.s as the efforts of "individual members taking steps to arouse their constituencies", he is apparently unaware that they and Harley were acting on the direct order of the House, see Hirst, Representative, pp. 186-187 and C.J., II, 135.

confirmed that, in the areas where the Harleys were influential -
 Brampton, Wigmore and Leintwardine, the oath was taken on 16 May 1641
 "with much willingness". Some of the county J.P.s later attested that
 at this time the oath was also taken in Hereford, Weobley and Leominster
 86
 "and in other parts of this county".

Later in the summer Sir Robert was himself instrumental in having
 another parliamentary order circulated to the counties. On 28 August
 1641, Harley moved in the House that "some course might be taken" to
 disperse printed copies of the order concerning a public thanksgiving,
 to be held for the concluded peace with the Scots. On the same day the
 House ordered its members to "take the best care they can for the
 87
 dispersing" of the printed copies of the order.

On 9 September 1641 Parliament recessed until 20 October and Harley
 returned to Brampton intent on ensuring that the recent Commons' resolu-
 tions about religion were obeyed in his home county. The resolutions
 called for the churchwardens of every parish to remove the altar from
 the east end of their church and to remove any altar rails. They were
 further to remove all images and crucifixes from their church. The
 resolutions also demanded the omission of bowing in church, due observ-
 ance of the Lord's day and the abolition of sports or dancing on Sunday,
 88
 to be replaced by an afternoon sermon.

Sir Robert had been a member of the committee which had drawn up the
 resolutions and they were all measures which Sir Robert had supported,
 either in the Long Parliament or in the Parliaments of the 1620s. Harley
 had spoken out against the decoration of church crosses in Parliament in
 1626 and had supported a bill to reform abuses of the sabbath in 1628.
 At the very start of the Long Parliament, Sir Robert had moved that the

86. Lewis, Letters, p. 130; nine Justices to Harley, 5 March 1641/2,
 B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 228r.

87. B.L., Harl., MSS., 164 f. 880r; C.J., II, 275.

88. C.J., II, 279

communion table should be placed in the middle of the church when M.P.s took communion at St. Margaret's, Westminster. In June 1641 Harley had introduced a motion in the House, which called for the abolition of bowing towards the altar or the communion table in the universities.⁸⁹ He was doubtless pleased to see this order now extended to all parish churches.

During the parliamentary recess Sir Robert set about a public display of support for these resolutions. On his return to Herefordshire he instituted a campaign against images and crucifixes in churches in the north of the county. Harley's earlier iconoclastic activities, described in her letter to Edward Harley by young Brilliana, had been a private affair. Now, however, Harley was determined to root out idolatrous images from local churches and he was acting with the full authority of the Commons' orders. He was also concerned to make his campaign as conspicuous as possible. Henry Ecclestone, an official of the Welsh Council, described how Sir Robert had pulled down a cross at Wigmore on 27 September 1641:-

"(he) caused it to be beaten in pieces, even to dust, with a sledge; and then laid it in the footpath to be trodden on in the churchyard upon the 30th day, being Thursday, he pulled down the cross at Leintwardine, and broke the windows in the church and chancell and beat the glass small with a hammer and threw it into (the) Teme, in imitation of King Asa, 2 Chronicles, 15: 16, who threw the images into the brook Kidron, and because he could not come at Kidron, he threw it into (the) Teme, as Mr. Yates, one of his chaplains said. He was also at Aymestry, to have done the like, but the parish and Mr. Lake, the minister, withstood him, and so he departed for that time". 90

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89. C.J., II, 278-279; for Harley's 1626 speech, see above, Chapter 3, p. 135; for his sabbatarianism, see above, Chapter 2, p. 109, note 66; for his support for Church reforms at the start of the Long Parliament, see D'Ewes (N), p. 46; B.L., Harl., MSS., 163 f. 747v.
90. Huntington Library (California), Ellesmere MSS., 7350, (Microfilm supplied by Manchester University Library).

Ecclestone's account is very similar to the earlier eye-witness description given by young Brilliana in 1639, when her father had destroyed a painting depicting the "Great God of Heaven (and) Earth". On that occasion young Brilliana had "flung the dust of it upon the water", after Sir Robert had broken it into pieces. In 1641 Harley obviously believed that the order of the House of Commons was a sufficient warrant for his extended campaign against images in local churches, as the following letter from Harley to the churchwardens of Leominster reveals. On 8 October 1641 Harley drafted a letter to the churchwardens and complained that two days previously "I beheld in your churchyard of Lempster, one crucifix upon the great stone cross there, and another crucifix of stone over the church porch, and in the great window in the west end of the church two crucifixes painted, and other scandalous pictures of the persons of the Trinity, and in the great window in the east end of the church one other crucifix painted. All

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91. Brilliana Harley to Edward Harley, 14 January and 8 February 1638/9, B.L., Loan 29/172 ff. 207r, 213r. Harley's iconoclasm was institutionalised by the House of Commons in April 1643, when he became a member of the committee empowered to demolish superstitious monuments in public places, churches and chapels in or about London and Westminster, C.J., III, 57, 63. In 1645 he was a member of the committee chosen to view the paintings, which had formerly belonged to the Duke of Buckingham, and which still remained at York House, to consider whether the paintings could be sold in order to raise revenue for the Scottish troops in Ireland. During the initial debate one member objected to the sale, because "most of those pictures were either superstitious or lascivious and that it was not fit for us to make benefit of those superstitious ones, but rather have them burnt", B.L., Add. MSS., 31,116 f. 206v. Harley may have been the member who spoke, since, when the committee was subsequently named to view the pictures, it was specifically stated that "the care of it is especially referred to Sir Robert Harley", C.J., IV, 121. Harley saw the paintings the same day. Confronted by what must have been a most magnificent collection, including examples by Rubens and Titian, Harley noted only that he had seen "one picture of the babe and virgin", or "over the door, a picture of Christ and Lazarus", or "Christ whipping them out of the temple", notes in Harley's hand, endorsed "April 23 1645 at York House", Harley MSS., Bundle 10.

which I require you to abolish, according to the order of the House of Commons, which I send you herewith, as also to see carefully performed the further directions of the said order".⁹²

The brief parliamentary recess had given Harley the chance to make a dramatic public avowal of his desires for Church reforms. In general, however, Harley was restricted in his attempts to influence local opinion by the sheer physical distance between Westminster and his home. During parliamentary sessions Harley was restricted to keeping local people informed about the proceedings and orders of Parliament by means of his own personal letters. In May 1641 Edward Martyn, an official of the Welsh Council in Ludlow had complained to the Lord President of the Council that "there has some packets been brought of late (one last week) by posts to this town, directed to Mr. John Aston, a mercer, and were sent from Sir Robert Harley the business therein being only (as I hear) advertisements of the proceedings in Parliament, to the puritan party in these parts".⁹³

Throughout the later months of 1640 and the whole of 1641, Harley was also writing to Stanley Gower and to Lady Brilliana. Although Sir Robert's letters are apparently lost, nevertheless, Lady Brilliana's letters to both her husband and to her eldest son reveal much about the dissemination of news. Her letters also indicate some of the contents of the letters which were written by Sir Robert to his wife. Lady Brilliana was in complete support of Parliament's actions, both constitutional and religious. She was pleased to hear that the "reform network" peer - Lord Saye and Sele - had been appointed Master of the Wards in May 1641. She was similarly pleased to hear news about the

92. Draft letter from Harley to the churchwardens of Leominster, 8 October 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 165r.

93. Martyn to Bridgewater, 17 May 1641, Shropshire R.O., Bridgewater MSS., 212/364.

progress of Strafford's trial and the news of his execution. After learning of Strafford's death, Lady Brilliana mused on his execution at length. Although he had died bravely he was clearly not a member of the godly brotherhood:-

"I am glad that justice is executed on my Lord Strafford, who, I think, died like a Seneca, but not like one that had tasted the mystery of godliness. My dear Ned, let these examples make you experimentally wise in God's word, which has set forth the prosperity of the wicked to be but for a time; he flourishes but for a time in his life, nor in his death has peace; but the godly has that continual feast, the peace of a good conscience, and his end is peace, and his memory shall not rot". 95

Like other puritans in the county, Lady Brilliana looked to Parliament to reform the Church by removing, in her words, "all these things and persons, that have been such a hinderance to the free passage of His glorious gospel ". She was delighted with the news of the bill to abolish the court of High Commission, which received the King's assent on 5 July 1641. Lady Brilliana eagerly followed the progress of the "Root and Branch" bill in the summer of 1641, and in December of that year was pleased that the King had received the Grand Remonstrance.⁹⁶

Lady Brilliana believed that these momentous events were not the results of human endeavours, but were all part of the will of God. Since she believed that Man was devoid of free will, Lady Brilliana was convinced that the reforms of the Long Parliament were all elements of an immutable divine plan. In a letter of 1641 to Edward Harley, Lady Brilliana announced "I very much desire to hear how the affairs go. For I think there was never a more doubtful crisis, but it is the Lord who holds the bridle upon all men, so that they cannot do what they desire,

94. Lewis, Letters, pp. 129, 104, 105, 114, 117, 125, 126, 127, 131.

95. Ibid., p. 131.

96. Ibid., pp. 115, 140; for her interest in the "Root and Branch" bill, see above, notes 55, 56; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 11 December 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 18lv.

but in advancing at their own ends, they still bring to pass the Lord's
 97
 work".

Lady Brilliana's immense interest in parliamentary proceedings meant that both Edward and his father made an effort to send her items of news. Edward had accompanied Sir Robert to the opening of the Parliament. He subsequently abandoned his studies at Oxford and remained in London, where he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn on 18 May 1641. Lady Brilliana and her aunt, Lady Vere, were both pleased with his decision to stay in London. Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward and told him "I hope you will not repent your being at London with your father, which I guess will be more advantage to you, than if you had been at Oxford".
 98

Lady Brilliana doubtless believed that the experience of knowing about parliamentary affairs would be very valuable for her son, who she believed was destined to hold local office in Herefordshire, as his father had done before him. Edward was clearly as interested in the Parliament as were his parents. In November he sent Lady Brilliana a copy of the King's speech at the opening of the session. Lady Brilliana then asked him to send the Speaker's speech as well and to let her know "what good men are of the Parliament".
 99
 Edward Harley continued to send his mother reports throughout the first session. In March he sent a paper from the Scottish commissioners to the House of Lords; in April Edward sent a copy of the charges made against Strafford at his trial, with a copy of a speech by Nathaniel Fiennes; in July he sent copies of three acts of Parliament which had just received the Royal assent, including the bills which abolished the Star Chamber and the High Commission; at the end of July
 100
 he sent a copy of the King's manifesto concerning the Palatinate.

97. Lewis, Letters, p. 133.

98. Ibid., p. 101; The Records of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn: Admissions from A.D. 1420 to A.D. 1799 (1896), I, 246; Lewis, Letters, pp. 114, 116.

99. Lewis Letters, pp. 105, 100-101.

100. Ibid., pp. 118, 125, 140, 142.

Sir Robert Harley's commitments as an M.P. meant that he was unable to write to Lady Brilliana with the same detail and frequency as did Edward Harley. Lady Brilliana's letters to Edward Harley refer to the weight of business undertaken by Sir Robert at Westminster. Nevertheless, Sir Robert did find time to write to his wife. In December 1640 he sent Lady Brilliana the seven articles against Strafford, which had been read to the House of Commons on 24 November. Harley also informed his wife of Secretary Windebanke's flight to France of 10 December 1641. In the Autumn of 1641 Sir Robert informed Lady Brilliana about the day of public thanksgiving planned by the Commons for 7 September, to mark the recent peace treaty between England and
101
Scotland.

The speed with which Lady Brilliana received news from her husband and son could vary considerably. Some of the Harleys' letters were sent by carrier to either Hereford or Shrewsbury, and Lady Brilliana then had to arrange for the letters to be collected by her servants,
102
or others. In April 1641 a new post was set up at Ludlow and Lady Brilliana asked Sir Robert and Edward Harley to send their letters there, "for it will be easier than to send to Shrewsbury". News contained in letters sent by the carrier could be two weeks old by the time it reached Brampton Bryan, but the Harleys continued to use the carrier because it was at least a reliable system. In a letter written to Edward Harley on 21 May 1641 Lady Brilliana noted that "the sureness of the carrier, though he is slow, makes me write by him, though I purpose and please God to write by the mercer, who goes towards London
103
on Monday".

101. *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 105; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 2 September 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 159r.

102. Lewis, *Letters*, pp. 100, 106, 111, 113, 118, 125, 126, 130, 132, 141.

103. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 1 April 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 91r; Lewis, *Letters*, p. 123, 130-131.

The Harleys made use of local people who were travelling to or from London to carry letters privately whenever they could. Lady Brilliana's letters to her son and husband make frequent reference to individuals who conveyed letters between Brampton Bryan and Westminster. Local people continued their normal habits of travelling or sending to London for a variety of reasons and letters were delivered for the Harleys by local gentry, including the Sheriff of Shropshire on one occasion, the servants of gentry and other messengers such as the mercer.

104

Letters which were hand-carried could arrive within hours of the events which they described. In December 1640 Sir Robert Harley entrusted his letter concerning Windebanke's flight to an apothecary called Morgan. This letter was given to Lady Brilliana on the night of 11 December, the day after Windebanke had fled. The surprising speed with which Lady Brilliana received the news of Windebanke's flight indicate that people in the localities could be very well informed about events in Westminster and could react to them almost as quickly as M.P.s did themselves.

105

The excitement generated by the receipt of topical news was heightened by the verbal accounts which some local people were able to offer of events which they themselves had witnessed. Morgan the apothecary had been an eye-witness to the triumphal entry of Prynne and Burton into London at the end of November 1640 and was able to give Lady Brilliana an account of that event. Stanley Gower was himself in London between mid-February 1641 and mid-April of the same year. He was clearly impressed with events in Parliament, particularly with the progress of the trial of Strafford. After Gower's return to Brampton Bryan Lady Brilliana reported to her son Edward that "Mr. Gower has not yet made an

104. Lewis, Letters, pp. 103, 104, 105, 106, 111, 116, 124, 125, 130, 131, 134, 141, 143; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 20 November 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 176v.

105. Lewis, Letters, p. 105.

end of the relation of my Lord Strafford's charge; he is as much taken
with the relation, as I think he was with hearing it".¹⁰⁶

Lady Brilliana was not only informed about past events at Westminster, but she also received information about forthcoming debates in the House of Commons, which also intensified her interest in the events of the Parliament. In January 1641 for example she was informed both by Edward Harley and "others" that 25th January had been chosen by the Commons as the day for debate about episcopacy. Accordingly that date was observed as a day of prayer at Brampton Bryan "to sue to our God for His direction of the Parliament".¹⁰⁷ Lady Brilliana placed a further importance in the letters she received from her husband and son, because she believed that their news was accurate. During the period from the assembly of the Long Parliament until the outbreak of the First Civil War, and of course beyond, there was a great amount of inaccurate news in circulation, both in print and conveyed by letters and word of mouth.¹⁰⁸

The problems involved in obtaining exact reports is well illustrated by Lady Brilliana's letters. At the beginning of February 1641 she thanked Edward Harley for sending the copy of the King's speech of the previous month, in which he upheld the power of the Bishops. She stated that she had seen the speech before she received the copy from her son, but "it was various from yours".¹⁰⁹ At the start of April 1641 Lady Brilliana wrote to Harley with the words "I much long to hear from you, for the intelligence of this country is very various". Similarly, in June 1641 she asked Edward to write about the outburst of Herbert Price, the M.P., against the Scots. She complained that there were such

106. Ibid., pp. 104, 113, 115, 118, 126.

107. Ibid., p. 111.

108. Ibid., pp. 136-137; Fletcher, Outbreak, p. xxviii.

109. Lewis, Letters, p. 112.

"various reports" of the incident.

The problems of procuring accurate news were compounded by the ease with which rumours spread throughout the country, which has been noted in other studies. On 30 November 1640 Lady Brilliana reported to Edward Harley that she had heard that the Parliament had adjourned for ten days, but that she deferred her belief. On 12 March 1641, she reported that there were many rumours in the country and at the end of April she informed Edward that, "in the country they had broken the Parliament and beheaded my Lord Strafford, which would not hang well together". A few weeks later she similarly recorded that in the
111
"country they have in report hanged the Archbishop". On 8 May 1641, the day on which the attainder bill against Strafford was passed by the House of Lords, which coincided with the panic at Westminster over the First Army Plot, Lady Brilliana wrote "we hear of great matters that has been done at London this week, but I believe nothing till I hear it
112
from a sure hand".

Lady Brilliana retained her scepticism about such rumours, waiting for sure confirmation from Sir Robert or Edward Harley, but there were rumours which she was unable to ignore and which alarmed and frightened many people in the county and at Westminster. These were rumours about the native Catholic population of England and Wales. Stories of Catholic plotting proliferated in the counties in late 1640 and throughout 1641, and were seemingly verified by the pronouncements of M.P.s at Westminster.

110. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 2 April 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 93r; Lewis, Letters, p. 135.

111. Lewis, Letters, pp. 103, 118, 126, 129-130.

112. Ibid., p. 129; B. Manning, The English People and the English Revolution, (Paperback edition, 1978), pp. 22-32; Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 15-16.

John Pym had alleged in the opening debates of the Long Parliament that there was a long-standing plot to subvert the English to Catholicism. Thereafter, the notion that the kingdom was at the mercy of such a plot was to become a constant theme in the debates and public declarations of the Parliament. One of the seven charges against Strafford, of 24 November 1640, accused him of having encouraged the Irish Catholics "to make them of his party. To promote his tyrannical designs and settle mutual dependence". The Protestation of 3 May 1641 declared that "the designs of the priests and Jesuits, and other adherents to the see of Rome, have of late been more boldly and frequently put in practice than formerly, to the undermining and danger of the ruin of the true reformed religion in his Majesty's dominions established". The Grand Remonstrance, presented to the King on 1 December 1641, declared that "those evils under which we have now many years suffered, are fomented by a corrupt and ill-affected party whose proceedings evidently appear to be mainly for the advantage and increase of popery". During 1642 the propaganda issued by Parliament continued to stress the existence of the "popish plot".

Belief in the "plot" was a fundamental tenet of Parliamentaryism in 1642 and some of the aspects of that belief will thus be examined in detail here. Although the parliamentary propaganda greatly magnified the power of the Catholics in England, nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the King did show favour to Catholics at court. Not only was the Queen a Catholic, but during the 1630s catholicism had been increasingly openly practised at court. Furthermore, to puritans such as the Harleys, who regarded catholicism and Arminianism as synonymous, the spread of Arminianism in the 1630s was further evidence of the

113. D'Ewes (N), pp. 7-11, 61; Gardiner, Documents, pp. 155-156, 202-232; for the statements of 1642, see for example, Husbands, Collection, pp. 39, 81, 88, 97-103, 112, 195-214, 271.

strength of the popish plot. The Grand Remonstrance, which catalogued the ills which had beset the nation since the accession of King Charles "without the least intention to lay any blemish" upon the King's "royal person", thus insisted that "the Jesuits and other engineers and factors for Rome have so far prevailed as to corrupt divers of your Bishops and others in prime places of the Church, and also to bring divers of these instruments to be of your Privy Council, and other employments of trust and nearness about your Majesty, the Prince and the rest of your royal children".

114

Public allegations of a plot would have made little impact if there was not a large body of opinion in the country willing to believe them. The M.P.s, who were busy tracing the extent of the plot, were quite convinced of the veracity of their allegations and it would be incorrect to regard them as manipulating anti-Catholic information solely in order to gain support outside Parliament. Pym and his supporters did use fears of a plot in order to sway opinions in the House, but this could only work because so many members were genuinely concerned about the possibility of Catholic subversion. As the representatives of Protestant opinion in England and Wales, the M.P.s were regarded as an attractive target for a Catholic attack and rumours of planned assaults on Westminster were rife throughout the final months of 1640 and the

115

course of 1641.

Thus numerous committees designed to discover the extent of the Catholic plot were set up during the first few weeks of the Long Parliament. As might be expected from the evidence of his fervent anti-Catholicism in the 1620s and 1630s, Harley was active both on some

114. Clifton, 'Fear of Popery', in Russell, Origins, pp. 144-167; Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 26, 139; Gardiner, Documents, pp. 203-204.

115. Clifton, 'Fear of Popery', in Russell, Origins, pp. 159-162.

of these committees and in the debates about Catholicism. In the opening weeks of the Parliament he was named to the committee intended to detect Catholic M.P.s and he reported from this committee, on 20 November, that only M.P.s who received the sacrament should be allowed
116
to continue sitting in the House. Three days later Harley was amongst those M.P.s who favoured accepting Alderman Pennington's offer of a guard of 300 London citizens for Parliament to guard against Catholic
117
attack. On 1 December 1640, during a debate on Catholic recusancy, Harley followed Pym and Sir Ralph Hopton in demanding that the growth of "popery" be suppressed. On the same day Harley was amongst a group of M.P.s added to the committee for recusants, which had the power to investigate the number of recusants in London and surrounding areas,
118
and to consider whether they were armed or not.

The rumours which spread in London and the provinces, in 1640 and 1641, provide examples of the ways in which news, even inaccurate news, was conveyed between the capital and the localities. Rumours of a Catholic plot did not originate solely in London, they were matched by purely local alarms, news of which travelled to London and increased the fears voiced by M.P.s. In turn local alarms were seen by some members of Parliament as evidence of the existence of a national plot involving the highest authorities in the land.

Sir Robert Harley's concern about Catholics and possible plots was thus mirrored at his home. On 9 November 1640 Gower wrote to Harley and informed him that they had heard that the city of London feared an attack from the Tower of London and Lambeth Palace, which were being

116. See above, Chapter I, pp. 62-64 and Chapter 3, pp. 135, 165-166; C.J., II, 24, 32.

117. D'Ewes (N), p. 56. Harley had supported a similar demand for a guard for Parliament in 1624, see above, Chapter I, p. 63.

118. D'Ewes (N), p. 91; C.J., II, 42.

fortified. He added that in Herefordshire there were similar fears, "Papists' houses are to ready for to execute whatsoever plots are hatching". In order to foil the Catholics he advised that their houses should be searched and any arms seized. His letter contained the ominous news that at Sir Basil Brook's house (at Madley, Shropshire, some 35 miles north east of Brampton), three cooks were preparing as much meat as they could, although it was not known who would eat it. Gower added that Brook had said "that he wonders that my Lord of Canterbury should dissemble so long, since it is well enough known he is a papist". The news about Brook must have been all the more alarming, since he was known to be a Catholic confidant of the Queen.

Less than a fortnight later Gower informed Harley that it was rumoured that Catholics were moving munitions by night "to the red castle" - Powis Castle in Montgomeryshire - the home of the Catholic Lord Powis. Lady Brilliana reported similar news. On 11 December 1640 she wrote to Edward Harley and told him that Mrs. Walcot, whose home in Shropshire was situated three miles from the home of the Catholic Plowdens, had said that Dr. Toby Matthews, the Jesuit, was at Plowden Hall. Lady Brilliana continued "where there was a great resort of papists, which makes some fear they have some plots". The very next day Gower wrote to Sir Robert with the same news, presumably also derived from Mrs. Walcot. Gower complained of Matthews and Plowden on 2 January 1641, but thereafter rumours of Catholic plots seemingly died down in Herefordshire until the news of the Irish Rebellion broke in November 1641. The Rebellion prompted a fresh wave of alarms in England and Wales, which spread throughout the counties.

119. Gower to Harley, 9 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 308r; D'Ewes (N), pp. 291-292.

120. Gower to Harley, 20 November 1640, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 309v; Lewis, Letters, p. 105; Gower to Harley, 12 December 1640 B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 346r; Gower to Harley, 2 January 1640/1, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 9r; Clifton, 'Fear of Popery' in Russell, Origins p. 159.

Even before news of the Rebellion had reached Westminster, there were fears that the King and Queen were intriguing with Catholics to use force against the Parliament. These fears had been raised by news of the Incident in Scotland and, a few days later, by the revelation of the Second Army Plot. Once again it appeared that the King had been involved in a plan to subdue Parliament through the use of armed force. No sooner had this information been given to the House by Pym on 30 October, than news of the Irish Rebellion and the massacre of hundreds of Protestants at the hands of Irish Catholics also reached the
121
Parliament.

Initial information about the Rebellion was heard in the Parliament on 1 November. The next day a committee of 56 was chosen to confer with members of the House of Lords about Ireland, of which committee Sir Robert was a member. Alarms that the Rebellion would spread to England were not confined to M.P.s. Rumours were spreading through England and Wales, but were commonest in those counties with coastlines facing Ireland. These counties were believed to be in danger of a direct assault from Ireland and they were also the landing points for Protestants fleeing the revolt. The stories of murder and pillage told
122
by the refugees spread through the localities to London.

Fears of a Catholic revolt in England were seemingly confirmed on 15 November when the House of Lords questioned a tailor named Beale, who claimed to have overheard a plot to kill 108 members of Parliament. Beale asserted that a general Catholic uprising was planned for the
123
18 November. Sir Robert Harley immediately took steps to warn both his family at Brampton Bryan and other puritans in the locality. On

121. Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 135.

122. Gardiner, History, X, 43; C.J., II, 302; K.J. Lindley, 'The Impact of the 1641 Rebellion upon England and Wales', Irish Historical Studies XVIII (1972).

123. Gardiner, History, X, 73.

22 November 1641 Henry Ecclestone, an official of the Welsh Council, wrote to the Earl of Bridgewater from Ludlow, describing the efforts which Sir Robert had made to inform local puritans of the plot:-

"here hath been some stir this last week by means of a letter; sent by Post Wednesday at night last, the 17 of this instant; directed for his Majesty's special service to Mr John Aston at Ludlow that came from Sir Robert Harlow. The effect was in these words - look well to your town, for the Papists are discovered to have bloody design, in general, as well against this kingdom, as elsewhere and the same news it seems came to Bewdley; and caused them all in the town to be up in arms with watch all night in very great fear; and here the town has kept watch ever since; and at Brampton Bryan they were all in arms upon the top of Sir Robert's castle and took up provisions there with them and in great fear. All which puts the country in a great amaze". 124

Harley also advised Lady Brilliana to have a large provision of bullets made and to keep guns charged against a possible assault. On 20 November Lady Brilliana wrote to her husband and told him that she had followed his instructions, but she was alarmed, because she believed that Brampton could not withstand a siege. She asked Harley whether it would not be safer for her to take the children to the safety of a town, possibly Shrewsbury. This was the first occasion on which Lady Brilliana had raised the suggestion that she should leave Brampton. At this time she believed that such a move would be temporary and that she would return to her home once the threat of an uprising was over. During the next two years, however, Lady Brilliana would return to this plan again and again, as the dangers from Royalist forces became ever more apparent.

In 1641 Sir Robert rejected this course of action, as he was to do on later occasions. Although Lady Brilliana complied with Harley's wishes, she remained apprehensive for some weeks. On 11 December 1641 she informed Harley that she hoped "as you do, that the papists will not attempt anything", but that if need be she was prepared to suffer for her faith:-

"I thank you that you give me warning not to be afraid, I hope I am not. I desire to place my security in the safe protection of my God and if I suffer anything in professing His name, I hope I shall never be sorry for it, but rather rejoice that I am counted worthy so to do". 125

Lady Brilliana little realised that within a year she would be taking similar precautions against a possible attack on Brampton by the Protestant gentry of her own county. Yet, even before 1642, some of the general issues over which the Civil War would be fought had already become matters of debate in Herefordshire. The divides between the future Royalist and Parliamentary parties, which would split county opinion in July 1642, were already apparent in Herefordshire long before war was imminent.

One of the major divisions between Herefordshire Royalists and Parliamentarians in the summer of 1642 would be the question of whether to retain or to abolish Bishops. This division was manifest in the county in January 1641, when James Kyrle could not persuade any of his fellow J.P.s to subscribe to his anti-episcopal petition. The fact that religious issues lay at the heart of divided opinion both locally and nationally was obvious to contemporaries, who were writing of "parties" in connection with episcopacy as early as January 1641. 126

To outsiders, the Harleys and their circle in the county and in Shropshire did appear to be members of a party or faction. Sir Robert was in correspondence with Lady Brilliana, with Gower and with John Aston, the Ludlow mercer, keeping them informed of events at Westminster. The local puritans urged Harley to support national reforms and in January 1641 were able to organise themselves swiftly in order to provide him with information about the county, which might further their demands.

125. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 20 November, 4 December and 11 December 1641, B.L. Loan 29/173 ff. 175r-182r; see also, below Chapter 5, pp. 261-262, 274, 275-276, and Chapter 6, pp. 301, 312.

126. James Kyrle to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/120; Lewis, Letters, p. 118.

Some of the Herefordshire puritans, who supported reforms in 1640 and 1641, were also committed Parliamentarians once the war was declared in 1642.

Another central division between supporters of the King and supporters of Parliament in 1642 would be the extent to which they were prepared to trust the King to rule according to the laws. The belief that there was a widespread Catholic plot, which the King had been unable or unwilling to counter, persuaded the Harleys and many others, that the King was not trustworthy. The Royalist propaganda of 1642 discounted the existence of a plot and insisted that the King was to be trusted.

Thus during the course of the first year of the Long Parliament some of the crucial differences between the future Civil War parties had become apparent. The crisis of December 1641 and January 1642, when the Commons impeached twelve Bishops and the King failed in his attempted coup against Parliament, would serve to clarify the precise issues which led to the establishment of the Civil War parties in Herefordshire. The formation of those parties in the county, during the months from January 1642 to July 1642 will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

JANUARY 1642 - JULY 1642

From January to July 1642 the differences between the Parliamentarians and the Royalists were being clearly formulated. This was the period of the so-called "paper war", in which both the Parliament and the Crown printed and circulated propaganda containing their own explanation of the rift between King Charles and his Parliament. The "paper war" was conducted not only in public, but also in private correspondence. The Herefordshire Justices who supported the King were in the difficult position of having, in Sir Robert Harley, an M.P. who was completely committed to the cause of Parliament. The letters which passed between Harley and these Justices in March and April 1642 thus set out their differing opinions in the clearest manner.

The months of 1642 which preceded the outbreak of the Civil War will be carefully considered in the course of this chapter, in order to demonstrate that some influential gentlemen in Herefordshire were deeply committed to either the King or the Parliament well before the actual declaration of war. In these months the relationships of the county "gentry community" were thus placed under increasing strain as the local gentry came to realise that war was a distinct possibility.

For the most perceptive observers, the Attempt on the Five Members was a crisis point, which further polarised opinions in the country. On 15 January 1642 Lady Brilliana wrote to her husband and lamented the news of the King's attempt to impeach some members of the Parliament - "the accusation of my Lord Mandefeeld (sic) and the 5 of the House of Commons made all good hearts sad, and the other side to rejoice, but the Lord¹ has shewed himself to be on the side of those that take part with him".

1. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 15 January 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 195r.

Lady Brilliana was already aware that "sides" were forming in response to the national crisis at Westminster and she had clearly identified the cause of Parliament with the cause of God.

The attempt to impeach the M.P.s served to strengthen the convictions both of people who supported the Parliament and also of people who believed that sufficient reformation had been achieved. Contemporaries were clearly aware of the intensification of the ideological split between these two groups. It is as a result of that awareness that so much detailed information about the growth of what came to be seen as Parliamentary and Royalist thought in the county in early 1642 has survived. Contemporaries did not, of course, regard the crisis in terms of "Parliamentarians" opposing "Royalists", which in any case are anachronistic terms. Nevertheless these are highly serviceable terms, which have been retained in this study.

Lady Brilliana perceived the impending split within the political nation in terms of support for, or opposition to, the policies of the present Parliament, and in particular opposition to the religious reforms, which she still hoped Parliament would complete. On 26 February 1642 Lady Brilliana wrote to Harley and informed him that "Mr. Broughton will tell you what they think at Hereford of the Parliament, but I trust the Lord will still keep your hearts upright in seeking His glory first".²

Lady Brilliana's perceptions of the conflict were shared by other supporters of Parliament in Herefordshire, who did not regard themselves as opponents of the King, but specifically as supporters of Parliament. Lady Brilliana's emphasis on the Royalists' opposition to Parliament and her belief that Parliament was furthering the cause of God were reiterated

2. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 26 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/72.

by Stanley Gower, who wrote to Harley on 8 May 1642 with information about the "schism" in the county:-

"Your worthy endeavours for the public, have in our county public opposers. The pulpit is made a stage, whereon to act their parts against the Parliament. Dr. Rogers and Mr. Mason of Hereford and Mr. Sherburn of Pembridge are the Agonethai and leaders of the schism. I know not whether they have taught some of our gentry, or these them, but they strive who shall outvie other in their railing rhetoric". 3

On 20 June 1642 Gower sent his patron a letter in which he analysed the issues between, as he wrote, "both sides" involved in the conflict at a national level:-

"The wonders of God in this Parliament will never be forgotten. You are his most famous witnesses I am the more confident of your safety and in you of the Church, because both sides have appealed to God for judgement, whether you or they intend religion, law, liberty of subject". 4

The Royalists in Herefordshire certainly did not oppose the institution of Parliament, but they believed that pressing constitutional issues had been raised following the King's flight from London on 10 January 1642. These issues were confronted as early as March 1642 by nine county Justices who questioned the legitimacy of parliamentary orders which did not bear the authority of the King. The majority of these Justices would become active Royalists once war had been declared.⁵

The establishment of the Civil War parties has been seen as the reluctant response of the localities to central events and it has been suggested that "generally the parties formed behind, or were restrained by a barrier of fear and indecision. The moment of decision was delayed for most men, until they received commissions from either (or both) King or Parliament".⁶ This statement ignores the complexity of the events

3. Gower to Harley, 8 May 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 243r.

4. Gower to Harley, 20 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 256r.

5. See below, pp. 243-244.

6. Morrill, Provinces, p. 39.

which took place between the time of the King's flight from London and the outbreak of the war in the summer of 1642. The Royalist and Parliamentary parties were not, of course, fully formed before the arrival of the Commission of Array in Herefordshire, but nor did that event mark the first formation of the two parties. In Herefordshire some of the most influential gentry and clergy had already begun to debate the national issues in the early months of 1642 and had already clearly expressed their allegiances.

The Royalist Commission of Array did not arrive in the county until early in July 1642, while the Parliamentary Militia Ordinance was not executed for Herefordshire until the end of September 1642.⁷ It is, of course, true that the Civil War did not start until rival military organisations had been called into existence, yet in Herefordshire the arrival of the two commissions were not the critical events which created Royalist and Parliamentary parties in the county. In Herefordshire the formation of these two groupings was a longer and more complex process. On both sides, people in Herefordshire were committed in their allegiance long before the two parties were put on a war footing.⁸

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7. The history of the rival commissions in the county is fully discussed in Chapter 6, below.
 8. Herefordshire has been described as an exception, because "local Royalism does not seem to have existed before the actual declaration of war except in Herefordshire", Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 4. This assessment ignores the evidence of local Royalism in counties such as Cornwall and Yorkshire, where opinion in favour of the King was being mobilised by local petitions in the spring or early summer of 1642, D. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum* (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp. 28-30; E. Green, 'On the Civil War in Somerset', *Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society's Proceedings*, XIV (1867), 51-52; Cobbett, *op. cit.*, II 1366-1367; Cliffe, *op. cit.*, pp. 331-335. Furthermore, Lady Brilliana noted outbreaks of popular violence against supposed Parliamentarians in Ludlow during June 1642, which strongly suggest that Shropshire was experiencing the same sort of local tensions between supporters of Parliament and the opponents of Parliament, which were evident in Herefordshire at the same time. These incidents require further investigation, since they may well be evidence of popular Royalism, see Lewis, *Letters*, pp. 167, 172 and below pp. 269-272.

The arrival of the Commission of Array in July 1642 thus gave military leadership to a number of Royalist gentry who had already identified themselves as the leading supporters of the King in Herefordshire. The Declaration or Resolution of the County of Hereford, the major statement of Royalist thought in the county, which was in circulation in July 1642, contained sentiments which the most active Commissioners of Array had already expressed in two letters to their county M.P.s, written in March and April of that year.⁹

The tardy execution of the Militia Ordinance in Herefordshire meant that the Parliamentarians had no military organisation in the county at all in the summer of 1642. It was not military preparations which identified the Parliamentarians as a party in the localities, however, it was their support for Parliament. As early as the beginning of June 1642 Lady Brilliana thus recorded outbreaks of popular violence directed at the local "Roundheads", the supporters of Parliament, which occurred in Shropshire and Herefordshire.¹⁰

Outspoken supporters of Parliament were in a minority in Herefordshire in 1642, and Lady Brilliana's sense of isolation, in an increasingly Royalist county, focussed her attention on the growing divisions in the county, which she recorded with her typical acuity. Lady Brilliana was well aware of the key issues which divided committed supporters of Parliament from committed supporters of the King and she sent detailed information about those issues to both Edward and Sir Robert Harley. Her letters provide the most informative single source about the growth of Parliamentarian and Royalist thought and groupings in the county in 1642. Lady Brilliana was attempting to keep her husband informed about events

9. Webb, Memorials, II, 343-344; nine Justices to Harley and Humphrey Coningsby, 5 March 1641/2 and 18 April 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 228r-229v, 239r-240r. It should be noted that these are copies, the original letters do not appear to have survived.

10. See below, pp. 269-272.

in the county and, where it is possible to compare her letters with other sources, it is clear that she was providing them with accurate information.

Lady Brilliana was not alone in her desire to keep Sir Robert aware of developments in the county. The most committed protagonists on both sides of the conflict in Herefordshire communicated with Harley, their senior representative at Westminster, during 1642. Harley also received highly informative letters from Isaac Seward, the county Sheriff, who decided on a neutral course as early as February 1642 and who maintained his neutrality throughout his tenure of the shrievalty.¹¹ The letters which Harley received from Herefordshire during the first half of 1642 demonstrate that there was no distinct event or date which marked the birth of Parliamentary and Royalist parties in the county. Moreover, the divisions between the committed Parliamentarians and the committed Royalists were based not only on the political events of 1642, but also had their origins in the recent past.

The issue of whether the episcopate should be altered in any way had, for example, divided opinions in the county in 1641 and continued to be a divisive subject between the most active Parliamentarians and the most active Royalists in 1642. The Harleys had been identified as members of the "Puritan Party in these parts" by Edward Martyn at Ludlow in May 1641, yet exactly when the puritan party became the Parliamentary party would be very difficult to say.¹² The date when opinions began to coalesce to form "sides" or parties differed from area to area. Each grouping grew at its own pace, in accordance with local conditions. Yet, at the same time, it was the public breakdown of trust between King and Parliament which galvanised local opinions. Party groupings were by

11. Seward to Harley, 7 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 207r;
Lady Brilliana to Harley, 17 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 282v.

12. See above, Chapter 4, p. 217.

no means totally local phenomena, they were shaped primarily by public events. The crisis which culminated in the King's attempt to break the power of his Parliament by impeaching Lord Mandeville and the Five Members played a major part in further polarising the attitudes of both sides. For example, this period marked the first organised support in Herefordshire for episcopacy, in the form of a petition promoted at the January Quarter Sessions.¹³ The crisis at Westminster thus served to clarify the issues which would gain support for the King in Herefordshire.

The committed supporters of Parliament were equally aware of the importance of the events which had taken place at Westminster. Sir Robert Harley sent news of the attempted impeachment to Brampton Bryan immediately after the event. He sent his letter via the post of Worcester and did not use his normal carriers. Lady Brilliana heard on the evening of 8 January that "many of the House of Commons were accused of treason" and had feared that her husband would be among the accused. She was relieved to hear that he was not. Nevertheless, Lady Brilliana was not oblivious to the implications of the news contained in Harley's letter and she replied "I fear great troubles are approaching".¹⁴

Stanley Gower also wrote to Harley about the incident, declaring that God "will give you and the rest of our collected and represented body that wisdom and courage, as you will both foresee and prevent the mischief of those delays, which by that charge seems more to be aimed at than the evincing of their guiltiness".¹⁵

Other people in Herefordshire were also receiving information about the events in the capital and in other counties. Such news came not

13. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 15 January 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 195v.

14. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 10 January 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 191r.

15. Gower to Harley, 10 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 210r.

only from personal correspondents, but also from the propaganda put out by both the Parliament and the King. Following the King's attempt on the Five Members, the House of Commons circulated its own interpretation of the King's actions in the counties, via the Sheriffs. At the same time, the House instructed local officials to organise the re-¹⁶ subscription of the protestation oath in the localities. The King also sent his own messages to the counties, to be distributed by the Sheriffs. In a letter of 7 February 1642 to Harley, the Sheriff of Herefordshire acknowledged his receipt of the papers from the Commons, sent to him by Harley. He also informed Harley that he had received some items from the King:-

"I did receive some books from the Lord Falkland, with his letter to acquaint me that his Majesty commanded him to send them to me and I should disperse them abroad".

Seward explained that he would obey both sets of instructions and that he desired "to be found as ready to serve his Majesty and Parliament,¹⁷ as any other man". The Sheriff's response to the clear-cut split in political authority was the classic reaction of the neutral, assiduously carrying out the orders of both sides. Later in the month of February 1642 the Sheriff also received printed copies of a message from the King to Parliament, with instructions to circulate the copies in the county. The Sheriff wrote again to Harley, professing to be troubled by the message from the King, because it had no seal upon it, but he again warned Harley that he would do as he was commanded and would send the¹⁸ papers into the county.

It has been suggested that "in general the content of the propaganda¹⁹ would serve to confuse. Both sides were aiming at the middle ground".

16. C.J., II, 389.

17. Seward to Harley, 7 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 207r.

18. Seward to Harley, 19 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 222r-v.

19. Morrill, Provinces, p. 35.

In Herefordshire this does not seem to have been the case at all. The issues behind the propaganda were well understood by the leading Herefordshire gentry and the most committed amongst them reacted critically and with discrimination to the propaganda and the news which they received in the county. Admittedly, nine Herefordshire Justices wrote to their county M.P.s on 18 April 1642, confessing "we are much amazed to see King, Lords and Commons all agree for necessary reformation and governing us hereafter to the laws and yet, never so great distractions among all three". Yet these men understood the nature of those distractions and in the same letter they explained that they refused to obey the Commons' instructions of January 1642 concerning the re-taking of the protestation oath, because they would not "yield obedience to any authority, which is not derived from his Majesty".²⁰

In Herefordshire the active supporters of Parliament and the active supporters of the King responded with deep-felt principle to the propaganda they received. The information which was received from outside the county served not to confuse, but to polarise opinions amongst the most committed Herefordshire gentry and clergy. Thus the news of Sir John Hotham's refusal to hand the magazine at Hull to the King elicited some very different responses in Herefordshire. On 4 June 1642 Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley "I think we must all acknowledge God's great mercy that the plot for the taking of Hull was discovered". In contrast, on 1 July 1642, one of the Royalist prebends of Hereford cathedral, Dr. Rogers, preached a sermon comparing the "taking away of the magazine at Hull to a man robbing by the highway, pretending he did it to give the poor and he said that Sir John Hotham for keeping the King out of Hull was a traitor".²¹

20. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 18 April 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 239v, r.

21. Lewis, Letters, p. 166; Wanklen to Harley, 1 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 265r.

Propaganda and other information received in the county thus served to exacerbate the growth of committed opinion in Herefordshire, as well as prompting some people to take a neutral or moderate course. Between the Attempt on the Five Members and the arrival of the Commission of Array in the summer of 1642 national politics and local conditions would combine to establish distinct opposing parties in Herefordshire.

Although incipient divisions had been apparent in the county before 1642, the public crisis of authority, which ensued after the King had fled the capital on 10 January 1642, brought those divisions into the public arena in Herefordshire. The pro-episcopacy petition of January 1642 marked the first publicly organised opposition in Herefordshire to the policies pursued by Parliament. The House of Commons had been blocking the presentation of pro-episcopal petitions for some weeks by setting up a committee in November 1641 to investigate the authenticity²² of signatures attached to such petitions. Contemporaries understood that the House was simply aiming at silencing support for the Bishops. On 17 December 1641 Lady Brilliana had asked Sir Robert Harley to send word "whether petitions for Bishops will be now received, I think they will not"²³.

Nevertheless, following the impeachment of Bishop Coke of Hereford and eleven other Bishops by the House of Commons in December 1641 two local clerics, Mr. Sherburn and Mr. Mason, presented the pro-episcopacy petition to the Justices at the January 1642 Quarter Sessions in Hereford. Lady Brilliana informed her husband of the petition in her letter of 15 January. She noted that Viscount Scudamore had been the first of the Justices to sign the petition; he was followed by all of the Justices at the Sessions, except for "Mr Kirle and Mr Braughton (sic)".

22. D'Ewes (C), pp. 166, 290 n. 3.

23. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 17 December 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 184r; see also H.M.C., Twelfth Report, Appendix. pt. II (1888) 295.

Lady Brilliana also noted that Sir William Croft "spoke much for it". The petition was subsequently sent by two of the Justices, Wallop Brabazon and Fitzwilliam Coningsby, the former M.P., to the Sheriff for circulation amongst the borough corporation of Leominster.²⁴

Although the petition was addressed to the Parliament there is no record in the printed Journals of its presentation to either House. The petition was printed in May 1642 by command of the King in a collection of petitions on behalf of "episcopacy, liturgies, and supportation of Church revenues, and suppression of schismatics". The original signatures do not appear to have survived. The printed version claimed that it was subscribed by 68 gentry, 8 Doctors, 150 ministers and 3,600 freeholders and inhabitants of Herefordshire.²⁵

In keeping with pro-episcopacy petitions from other counties the Herefordshire petition supported the Prayer Book as well as episcopacy, but showed no word of sympathy for Arminianism. The general lack of support in the county for Laudian Church ceremonies and ornamentation was reflected in a letter from Lady Brilliana to Edward Harley written on 17 February 1642, in which she reported that "in Hereford they have turned the table in the cathedral and taken away the copes and basins and all such things".²⁶

The pro-episcopacy petition itself voiced apprehensions that a change in Church government would result in "disturbances and disorders", thus it called for the retention of the established communion and episcopacy "for the glory of God, preservation of order, peace and unity the reformation and suppression of wickedness, and vice, and the mature prevention of schisms, factions and seditions". Support for the

24. Manning, op. cit., pp. 100-101; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 15 January 1641/2, and Isaac Seward to Harley, 7 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 195v, 207r.

25. Webb, Memorials, II, 337-338.

26. Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 288; Lewis, Letters, p. 148.

established Church and the fear that the Parliament was in league with religious radicals, who would destroy the "peace and unity" of the Church completely, were two powerful elements in the growth of support for the King in Herefordshire during the first half of 1642. The identification of the supporters of Parliament with religious radicalism and mob rule was also a recurring theme in the statements prepared for the Crown during the months May to July 1642.²⁷

At the beginning of March 1642 nine prominent Herefordshire Justices penned a letter to their county M.P.s, Sir Robert Harley and Humphrey Coningsby, son of Fitzwilliam. The Justices wrote to explain their principled objections to the re-circulation of the Protestation oath in the county. In the same letter the Justices confirmed their support for episcopacy and the Prayer Book. They further reminded Harley and the younger Coningsby of their duty to present the county's pro-episcopacy petition to the House of Commons.²⁸

The nine signatories to this letter were Sir William Croft, Fitzwilliam Coningsby, Wallop Brabazon, Henry Lingen, Thomas Price, William Rudhall, William Smallman, John Scudamore and Thomas Wigmore. All of the Justices who signed this letter were subsequently named as Commissioners of Array in July 1642.²⁹ Seven of them at the least, were

27. Webb, Memorials, II, 337-338; Husbands, Collection, pp. 173, 249, 251-252, 254, 283, 285-286, 316-317, 322, 325-326, 366, 378-379, 442.

28. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 5 March 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 229r.

29. Northamptonshire R.O., Finch-Hatton MSS., 133, unfoliated. I am grateful to Richard Cust for this reference. It is important to note that John Scudamore was not necessarily Viscount Scudamore, as is suggested by Dr. Fletcher. There were two other Justices of the same name - John Scudamore of Ballingham and John Scudamore of Kenchurch, all three Scudamores were named as Commissioners of Array in July 1642. Scudamore of Ballingham was an active Royalist and was involved in the negotiations with Lady Brilliana during the siege of Brampton in 1643. According to Lady Brilliana, John Scudamore of Kenchurch was not an active Commissioner, an assessment which is supported by his subsequent nomination as one of the Earl of Essex's Deputy-Lieutenants in the county, although he does not appear to have been active in that capacity either and was probably a neutral, see Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 302; Lewis, Letters, p. 253;

active Royalists in the early stages of the war covered by this study³⁰ and none of them were committed Parliamentarians. Their letter and a second letter from the same men to the M.P.s, dated 18 April 1642, contained clear statements of the issues which gained support for the King and which prompted these nine Justices to oppose the Parliament in the early months of 1642.

The beliefs of these J.P.s were developed at greater length in the Royalist Resolution of the County of Hereford, an anonymous document, which was circulated in the county in July 1642 after the arrival of the Commission of Array. The Resolution was also printed and sold in London and on 8 July 1642 the House of Commons described it as "the foulest and most scandalous pamphlet that ever was raised or published against the Parliament". Lady Brilliana also regarded the Resolution as a most extreme document, in a letter to Edward Harley of 19 July she wrote "my cousin Tomkins is as violent as ever, and many think that her very

see below, Chapter 6, pp. 285, 286 ; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 27 July 1642, Commission from Essex to his Deputies, 30 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 293v, 326r. Viscount Scudamore was a moderate Royalist, see below, Chapter 6, pp. 287-288.

30. Croft, Fitzwilliam Coningsby, Lingen, Rudhall, Brabazon, Price and Smallman were all active Commissioners. For Croft, Coningsby, Lingen and Brabazon, see below Chapter 6, passim. For Rudhall, see C.J., II, 775; C.C.C., 1996; P.R.O., S.P., 23/157 ff. 336, 346. For Price, see C.J., II, 775; C.C.C., 1980; P.R.O., S.P., 23/157 ff. 336, 346. For Smallman, see C.C.C., 1784; H.M.C., Bath, pp. 1, 8, 22; Lewis, Letters, p. 205; Priam Davies to Edward Harley, 3 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 33r. Wigmore does not appear to have been an active Commissioner, but was probably a moderate Royalist, see Lewis, Letters, pp. 185, 186, 187, 205. For Scudamore, see above note 29.

words is in the Hereford resolutions". The Resolution complained that "the Protestant Religion" had been "assaulted in the in-works and skirts of it, the liturgy and decent ceremonies established by law; yea in the very body of it the 39 Articles. In what danger this Church of England has been, to be over-run with Brownism and Anabaptism let all the world judge". The close relationship between support for the established Church and the development of Royalism in the counties has been recognised in one recent study, which suggests, however, that "Royalism emerged in many counties through conservative petitioning campaigns about the issues of episcopacy and liturgy Royalism as a coherent viewpoint, based consciously on dislike of and opposition to the parliament's political policies and methods, took longer to crystallize".

In Herefordshire the time-scale between the development of these two elements in Royalist thought was quite short, as far as the leading Justices and clergy were concerned. At the beginning of February 1642 most of the county Justices either ignored or openly resisted an order from the House of Commons to supervise a second circulation of the Protestation oath in the localities. Following the King's flight from London on 10 January 1642 the exact nature of the authority of Parliament

31. Webb, Memorials, II, 343-344; C.J., II, 661; Lewis, Letters, p. 182. Professor Ashton has suggested that the Resolution "so clearly reflects the ideas associated with Hyde and Falkland that it is difficult not to discern the influence of at least one of them in its composition", R. Ashton, The English Civil War: Conservatism and Revolution, 1603-1649 (Paperback, 1978), p. 162. There is in fact no concrete evidence that this document was either a purely local paper, or that it was penned by one of the King's advisors. What is important however, is that the Resolution was openly endorsed by the Herefordshire Royalists; it was read out at the muster held by the Commissioners of Array at Hereford on 14 July 1642; at the Quarter Sessions in the same month, the Grand Jury attested the Resolutions, see anonymous report of the muster at Hereford, 14 July 1642, Lady Brilliana to Harley, 15 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 278v, 280r.

32. Webb, Memorials, II, 344; Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 283.

had become a very real issue for the gentry in the localities, who were now being called upon to execute orders from Parliament which clearly did not bear the sanction of the King. Men who had carried out Parliament's orders to administer the Protestation oath in the summer of 1641 now realised that political events had developed to the point where Parliament was arrogating the executive powers of the King. In Herefordshire the problem of whether to acquiesce in this process and execute orders from the Parliament alone was to prove as divisive an issue amongst the gentry as the arrival of the Commission of Array some six months later.

In January 1642 the House of Commons had directed its members to send the Protestation into all English and Welsh counties, accompanied by a letter from the Speaker and a declaration of the House against the King's impeachment of the Five Members at the start of the month.³³ Sir Robert Harley sent all of these documents to the county Sheriff. Although the oath had been accepted in the county the previous summer, Seward was sceptical of its current reception amongst the Justices. Seward understood that the Justices might now resist an order which bore only the authority of the House of Commons and he informed Sir Robert Harley of this possibility:-

"(I) will do my best endeavour but I found the Justices so cold in assisting me in performance of an order for securing the county and magazines, which came from both Houses, that I fear I shall not give you so good an account of this which comes only from the House of Commons". 34

Seward's apprehensions were justified. He arranged to meet the Justices at Hereford, but only a few attended and some of them half-heartedly asserted that they would take the oath when all the Justices assembled again when the Act for the Irish loan came into the county.

33. C.J., II, 389.

34. Seward to Harley, 7 February 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 207r.

There were signs, however, of an ideological split amongst the Justices. James Kyrle and Edward Broughton, who had both earlier refused to sign the pro-episcopacy petition, took the oath in front of the Sheriff, while Sir William Croft, who had spoken for the pro-episcopacy petition at the Quarter Sessions, openly opposed taking the oath. He declared that he had already taken the oath, but that the Justices should neither re-³⁵ subscribe, nor should they administer it to anyone else.

Following this meeting nine of the county Justices openly rejected parliamentary orders which had no authority from the King. These men set out their objections to obeying such orders in their two letters to their county M.P.s. These objections were elemental in the establishment of a Royalist party both in Herefordshire and elsewhere. The Kentish petition of 25 March, which so enraged the House of Commons, that they ordered all copies to be burnt, similarly demanded "that no order, in either or both Houses, not grounded on the Laws of the Land, may be enforced on the subject, until it be fully enacted by Parliament"³⁶. Similar objections were raised in the statements made by the Crown throughout the period of the "paper war" in early 1642, and in July 1642 the Resolution of the County of Hereford expressed the same sentiments in unequivocal terms:-

"we hope we shall not be terrified or compelled to yield any active obedience to any disjoined part of Parliament without the consent of the whole, (which we heartily desire may be united), or to any uncertain debates, votes or ordinances that are not digested into laws; nay, which seem to contradict former laws, and are yet tendered to us with so much earnestness, as some dare hardly deny them with safety or obey with conscience.

35. Seward to Harley, 19 February 1641/2, John Tombes to Harley, 5 March 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 222v, 226r.

36. T.P.S. Woods, Prelude to Civil War, 1642: Mr. Justice Malet and the Kentish Petitions (Salisbury, 1980), pp. 141, 143.

Nor shall we ever yield ourselves such slaves, or so to betray the liberty purchased by our forefathers' blood, and bequeathed unto us, as to suffer ourselves to be swayed by an arbitrary government whatsoever, nor stand with too much contention of spirit to cast off the yoke of one tyranny to endure many worse". 37

The most active Commissioners of Array, who endorsed this statement in July 1642, had already formulated their fears that Parliament was usurping the traditional powers of the King in their two letters addressed to the county M.P.s earlier in the year. In the first of these two letters, written on 5 March 1642, the Justices had explained their refusal to obey the order from the House of Commons concerning the re-subscription of the Protestation oath. The Justices stated that they had all taken the oath the previous summer, when they had also encouraged others to take it. Now they objected to the Speaker's letter, which directed them to administer the oath to the county at the behest of the House of Commons alone, "which we know not how to do, but by our warrants to the inferior officers, and for that we we have no authority, and as little to tender the said protestation to any".

The letter was imbued with the spirit of conciliation. The Justices did not enter into any constitutional argument, but insisted in their own ignorance concerning the "power and privilege of Parliament", which had of late "raised questions between his Majesty and both Houses, and between the Houses themselves". The Justices insisted, however, that those differences "are happily composed or laid aside by his Majesty's most gracious messages and answers to both Houses, which he has also out of his great goodness been pleased to communicate unto us, as well as other counties"³⁸. Their desire for conciliation does not, however, imply that these men were not committed in their support for the King.

37. Husbands, Collection, pp. 91, 106, 113-114, 126, 139, 163-164, 175-176, 178, 181, 243, 250, 251, 254, 283, 297, 301, 302, 311, 345, 363, 365, 373, 378, 379, 402, 443, 451; Webb, Memorials, II, 344.

38. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 5 March 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 228v.

Sir Robert Harley and Humphrey Coningsby responded swiftly to this letter, although how much influence the youthful Coningsby had in framing the reply is doubtful. The M.P.s started their reply by declaring that the letter from the J.P.s was so open to exception that they had not seen fit to deliver it to the House, since it might be considered as a sign of "disaffection" to Parliament.

The knights then went straight to the constitutional points raised by the Justices' refusal to carry out an order which came solely from the House of Commons. The knights explained that "the constitution of this kingdom is resolved into the prudential power of Parliament, composed of the three estates, King, Lords, Commons". Having identified Parliament as the power of the constitution Harley and Coningsby had reduced the status of the King to just one element within Parliament, with a burden of responsibility equal to that of the Lords and Commons:-

"if either neglect his office or withhold his influence, symptoms of ruin will quickly appear and the crisis of this great body will extremely be endangered, if any such prognostics now show themselves, it will be all our wisdoms to study the means of cure". 39

The two knights made no reference in their letter to the King's powers outside Parliament, a constitutional issue which was a central argument in the Royalist programme. In his Answer to the Nineteen Propositions given on 18 June 1642, King Charles emphasised the important distinction between the role of the King in Parliament and the role of the King alone:-

"In this kingdom the laws are jointly made by a King, by a House of Peers, and by a House of Commons chosen by the people The government, according to these laws, is trusted to the King". 40

This was a distinction which the Royalists in Herefordshire also

39. Harley and Coningsby to the nine Justices, 28 March 1642, B.L., Loan 29/124/63.

40. Husbands, Collection, p. 320.

emphasised. In a second letter to their county M.P.s, written on 18 April, the nine Justices threw aside their pretended ignorance of the powers of Parliament and carefully analysed the arguments of the knights' letter. The Justices declared that they were so "cautious to preserve the liberty of the subject", that neither the fear of being sent for as delinquents, nor the threat that they would be put out of the commission of the peace would persuade them to "yield obedience to any authority which is not derived from his Majesty". The Justices accepted that the constitution was composed of the three estates as outlined in the knights' letter, but warned of the dangers inherent in leaving out one of the three estates:-

41

"you tell us truly that the constitution of this kingdom is composed of three estates, King, Lords and Commons. It is a triple cord, and it would be dangerous to untwist it, If we leave out either, it will not be so strong. We do not yield to any active obedience to his Majesty's commands, but such as are warranted by laws made by his authority and consent of both Houses Every one or the three has a negative voice and if any should have the power of binding it should rather be thought the King, than the Commons, for we find in the statute books those charters and other acts (which story tells us, cost our ancestors much blood) are yet there entered as proceeding from the free grace and favour of the Prince". 41

In order to stress the authority of the King, the Justices added the following telling point "He summons you to Parliament, and had always the power to dismiss you". The Justices then specifically denied that Parliament had the power to govern and insisted that it was purely a law-making body:-

41. The theory of the three estates was medieval in origin and was generally supposed to represent the estates of the Lords spiritual, the Lords temporal and the Commons. 1642 marks a turning point at which the inclusion of the King as one of the three estates became the more common interpretation of this theory. Both Parliament and the Crown included the King as an estate in their respective propaganda in 1642 and thereafter, C.C. Weston, 'The Theory of Mixed Monarchy under Charles I and after' E.H.R., LXXV (1960); M.J. Mendle, 'Politics and Political Thought, 1640-1642', in Russell, Origins, pp. 222-223, 227-231.

"we send you, not with authority to govern us or others,
(for who can give that to another that is not in himself),
but with our consent for making or altering laws as to
his Majesty, the Lords and Commons shall seem good".

The Justices then turned to the Irish Rebellion and blamed the slowness of the "great counsellors" of Parliament for prolonging the war. The King, they believed, would be able to take the swift decisions necessary to prosecute a war, but was prevented from acting because of his lack of revenue. The Justices explained that the Crown would have sufficient credit to borrow money "were his Majesty's Revenue well settled" and suggested that Tonnage and Poundage should be granted to the King for life.

Their letter ended by repeating the conciliatory sentiments of their earlier letter, that the King's confessions of his past errors and his resolution to govern "by law for the future" should reconcile the King and his people. The Justices insisted that although they were writing as private individuals, their letter was grounded on "information of our
42
own and what we find to be the general desire of this shire".

The Justices, as the traditional spokesmen for their county, were anxious that the two knights should convey their opinions to the House of Commons, but they were well aware that they had no control over whether the knights would do so or not. In their first letter the nine Justices had reminded the knights of their duty to present the pro-episcopacy petition to the House, which they had apparently failed to do. That letter also demanded that there should be a bill which would secure the diligence of M.P.s "in discharge of the great trust reposed in them". In their second letter the nine Justices reproved the knights for not presenting the letter of 5 March to the House of Commons, but the
43
Justices were powerless in the face of Harley's refusal to act.

42. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 18 April 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 239r-240r.

43. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 5 March 1641/2, 18 April 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 229r, 239r.

The difficulty which supporters of the King faced in gaining a hearing in the House of Commons was another cause which galvanised Royalism in Herefordshire. The Resolution of the County of Hereford lamented the breakdown in communication between the counties and the Parliament. The authors of the Resolution were influenced not only by the experience of the Herefordshire Justices, but also by the fate of the moderate statement of support for the King from Kent, the Kentish petition of 25 March 1642, which they referred to as "that most excellent, orthodox Petition". The Resolution thus complained of the "denying information by the humble way of petitions from the county, as that most excellent petition of our brethren of Kent and of rejecting information of letters to our knights and burgesses". The contents and the fate of the Kentish petition were known in Herefordshire some months before this. Lady Brilliana had received news of the presentation of the petition by the first week of May 1642.

The supporters of the King in Herefordshire were not only eager to press their own opinions on the House of Commons, they also attempted to discredit contrary opinions from the county. In their second letter the nine Justices had thrown doubt on the validity of a pro-parliamentary petition which had been framed in the county and warned the two knights not to present it to the House of Commons:-

"if any should come from a corner of this county, which shall have none of our hands and few of those you know, it should not have credit enough with you to tender it to the House. There is one, or rather many, (the copies varying) offered and recommended as by direction from Sir Robert Harley, which the relation of some of the solicitors to you sir, would make us believe and considering the composure and what kind of subscribers (we hear) it is tendered unto, to fill paper with names, we presume you are not acquainted with it". 45

44. Webb, Memorials, II, 343; Lewis, Letters, p. 158.

45. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 18 April 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 239r.

Harley was in fact well informed about the framing of this petition, although there is no evidence that he was the "ringleader" as Dr. Fletcher has suggested. On the contrary, Harley clearly did not know what the contents of the petition were. He mistakenly believed that the petition would support the Protestation and had formed this erroneous impression from the letter sent to him by John Tombes, which described the provenance of the petition in conjunction with Tombes' efforts to tender the Protestation oath to his parish. On 5 March 1642 Tombes had written to Harley to explain that, in spite of the opposition of some of the county J.P.s, he had decided to administer the Protestation oath to his parishioners. Tombes also wrote of a petition, which had been "conceived" at a meeting in his home, held on the previous day. Apart from Tombes, those present had been Stanley Gower, John Green, rector of Pencomb and several laity, including the Sheriff, and John Flacket, the elder, and Thomas Eaton. Tombes added that they hoped to "get some considerable number of hands to be brought up speedily to the House of Commons". The petition was quite clearly privately conceived and promoted, despite the J.P.s' accusation that Harley was directing its circulation.⁴⁶

Lady Brilliana also wrote of the pro-parliamentary petition to Edward Harley. In her letters Lady Brilliana astutely identified the retaking of the Protestation oath and the pro-parliamentary petition as two flash-points, which divided opinions in the county. Her letters also reveal the emergence of Sir William Croft as one of the most influential opponents of the Parliament in the county. During the month of March Croft attempted to force the supporters of Parliament to abandon their petition, but his opposition was to prove futile.

46. Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 193; Harley and Coningsby to the nine Justices, B.L., Loan 29/124/63; Tombes to Harley, 5 March 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 226r.

On 19 March 1642 Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley and told him "I hear the Justices have sent up their answer, why they would not take the Protestation. Sir William Croft governs all of them

I hope shortly you will have the petition for this county, but Sir William Croft dissuaded it, as a thing unlawful to petition".⁴⁷

On 25 March Lady Brilliana returned to these two issues in another letter to Edward Harley:-

"I much desire to hear how the Parliament took the answer of the Justices of this country, that sent word they knew not by what authority the Parliament did require the taking of the Protestation. Sir William Croft is much against the Parliament and utters his mind freely. He was much displeased that they would petition the Parliament; he told Mr. Gower that he was a murtherer of sedition and my cosen Tomkins was very hot with him. They say the Parliament does their own business, and not the country's on Monday before Easter Mr. Kyrle and some other gentlemen intend to set forward with the petition, which I hope will be well taken".⁴⁸

Despite the attempts of Croft and his sister, Tomkins, to prevent the presentation of the petition it was delivered to the House of Commons by a group of "divers gentlemen of the county of Hereford" on 4 May 1642 and was read at once.⁴⁹ The petition contained a catalogue of praise for the policies pursued by the Parliament, although it was written in the conventional language of support for both King and Parliament, even when considering issues on which the two were totally opposed:-

"we acknowledge your prudent care in disposing the militia, the navy and places of importance to this kingdom, to such persons of trust, as may give assurance of safety to the King's Royal person and good subjects of all his Majesty's dominions".⁵⁰

The petition also dwelt at large on religious matters, thanking the

47. Lewis, Letters, p. 152.

48. Ibid., p. 121, see also p. xiv, where Lewis explains that this letter was mis-dated by Lady Brilliana to 1641.

49. C.J., II, 556.

50. Webb, Memorials, II, 338-339; for this mode of thought, see Ashton, op. cit., pp. 182-184.

Commons for their "zealous furthering of bleeding Ireland's relief; earnest desire of disarming papists and securing of their persons your zeal to provide a preaching ministry throughout the kingdom, whereof this county stands in great need, it now abounding with insufficient, idle and scandalous ministers, whereby the people generally are continued in ignorance, superstition and profaneness and are ready to become a prey to popish seducers, which idolatrous profession has of late years, with much boldness appeared in this county".

The petition also complained that the excessive importation of Spanish wool had caused a decline in the price of the wool produced in the county, which was "one of our chief commodities". This petition was part of what has been described as a "flood" of petitions in support of the House of Commons, which were delivered in the period following the attempt on the Five Members and preceding the outbreak of war. The petitions had much in common, one historian has written that "their main and most insistent theme was the decay of trade and industry"; another has written that "fear of popery was the most prominent theme running through the petitions".⁵¹

The Herefordshire petition contained both economic and religious demands, with prominence given to religious concerns. The Herefordshire petitioners clearly shared their fears with people in practically every other English county, since no less than 38 counties sent petitions of support to the House of Commons between December 1641 and August 1642.⁵² After this petition had been read to the House of Commons, the delegation of Herefordshire gentlemen who had delivered it were called in to the Commons' chamber and were told by the Speaker "that this House finds their petition full of great expressions of duty to his Majesty,

51. Manning, op. cit., p. 118; Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 200.

52. Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 192.

and of love and respects to this House and the commonwealth (for which they give you thanks), and full of great concernment to the commonwealth".⁵³ Despite the approval of the House of Commons, the pro-Parliamentary petition was greeted with derision in Herefordshire. On 7 May 1642 in a letter to Edward Harley, Lady Brilliana wrote "they have so mocked at our Herefordshire petition, that I long to hear what they say to it at London".⁵⁴

Although a clear ideological split existed in Herefordshire, which centered on the pro-episcopacy petition of January 1642, the re-taking of the Protestation oath and the pro-parliamentary petition, yet both sides were searching for accommodation, for the restoration of unity between the Parliament and the King. The two letters from the Herefordshire Justices to their county M.P.s were full of their hopes for reconciliation. Similarly, Lady Brilliana anxiously charted the relations between King and Parliament, expressing her hopes for unity and viewing discord with regret. Such hopes cannot, however, be interpreted as evidence of moderation or of a lack of ideological commitment.

On 12 March Lady Brilliana reported to Edward Harley that "many fears did arise in the country because the King gave such a refusal to the request of both houses". Presumably this was in response to the King's refusal to place the militia into the hands of the Lord Lieutenants nominated by Parliament. On 19 March she again wrote to Edward and thanked him for sending her the "Declaration" to the King from the Parliament, which had been delivered at Newmarket on 9 March. She noted "I did much long to receive the Declaration to the King. I thank you for it; I am sorry the King is pleased yet, not to conceive any better thoughts of this Parliament".⁵⁵

53. C.J., II, 556.

54. Lewis, Letters, p. 159

55. Ibid., pp. 150, 152.

The "Declaration" is a most interesting document. It embodied all of the central arguments, which had persuaded John Pym and his supporters in the Long Parliament that King Charles was not to be trusted. Most notable amongst these arguments was the belief that the kingdom was in the grips of a Catholic inspired plot to alter both Church and State. Fears of a Catholic plot had been growing throughout the reign of King Charles. The King's marriage to a Catholic princess, and the favour shown to the Arminian clergy in the late 1620s had engendered very similar fears in the 1628 Parliament. The existence of the plot had also become a principal theme in the debates and declarations of the Long Parliament in 1640 and 1641. The "Declaration" added a new dimension to those fears, however, by explicitly stating that the King intended to wage a civil war:-

"the labouring to infuse into your Majesty's subjects an evil opinion of the Parliament through the whole kingdom, and other symptoms of a disposition of raising arms and dividing your people by a civil war". 56

The declaration and messages published by both the King and by the Parliament during the early months of 1642 made constant reference to the "fears and jealousies" felt by both sides. Underlying those fears were two very different perceptions of the nature of the crisis facing the nation. Despite the gentry's manifest desire for accommodation, their differing beliefs concerning the crisis led them into further conflict and placed increasing strains upon the unity of the local "gentry community". Supporters of Parliament were convinced that the King intended to convert the nation to Catholicism, by force if necessary, and that he would not baulk at destroying the institution of Parliament in the process. The "Declaration" to the King from Parliament referred to the "manifold advertisements, which we have had from Rome, Venice,

56. See above Chapter I, pp. 64, 85-86, Chapter 4, pp. 224-230. Husbands, Collection, pp. 99.

Paris and other parts, that they still expect that your Majesty has some great design in hand, for the altering of religion, the breaking the neck of your Parliament".⁵⁷ The pro-parliamentary petition from Herefordshire had similarly insisted that Catholicism had been increasing in recent years in the county.⁵⁸ Yet, in their first letter to the county M.P.s of 5 March 1642, the nine Herefordshire Justices had dismissed the number of recusants of both kinds in the county as being "inconsiderable".⁵⁹

The question of whether Catholicism, and the native Catholics, presented a threat to the Protestant nation was an issue which provided a clear divide between the responses of Parliamentary sympathisers and the responses of Royalist sympathisers in the county. A spate of rumours about the local Catholics had been initiated in the county after the outbreak of the Irish Rebellion in October 1641.⁶⁰ In 1642 these rumours were still persisting. On 15 January 1642 Lady Brilliana had written to Sir Robert Harley to inform him that she had heard that local Catholics were arming themselves.⁶¹ Isaac Seward, the Sheriff, received similar information in the same month, which he also relayed to Harley.⁶²

Fears that the local Catholics would attack their Protestant neighbours were closely entwined with the fear that the King intended to

57. Ibid., p. 100.

58. Webb, Memorials, II, 338.

59. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 5 March 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 229r.

60. See above, Chapter 4, pp. 228-230.

61. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 15 January 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 196r. It is quite possible that local Catholics were afraid of reprisal attacks from their Protestant neighbours and that they were arming in self-defence.

62. Seward to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 209r.

employ foreign troops in order to subjugate his own people. This belief had some substance since both the King and the Queen entertained hopes of obtaining aid from abroad. This possibility was raised repeatedly by Parliament in the Spring of 1642. In the "Declaration to the King" of 9 March both Houses informed the King that that they had heard that the Pope had asked the Kings of France and of Spain to supply 4,000 soldiers each "to help maintain your royalty against the Parliament". On 19 March news reached Parliament that an army of between 30,000 and 40,000 Danes would soon be landing at Hull. On the same day Pym received an anonymous letter stating that French troops were to be sent to Ireland.

On 25 March 1642, less than a week after she had received the "Declaration to the King", Lady Brilliana wrote to her husband about these rumours:-

"I was never less satisfied in a week's intelligence than in this. Many rumours there are in the country and the King's going to York and they speak of foreign enemies, which made me exceedingly long to hear the truth send me word how you think things stand, for if there should be any stirs, Brampton, in respect of wordly help, is very weak". 65

Lady Brilliana's response to the rumours that the King would bring in foreign troops against Parliament was to increase the reserve of arms and ammunition which she held at Brampton. On 23 April 1642 she informed Edward Harley that she had received a small consignment of arms:-

"I have received a box with match and 2 bandoliers; but the box was open, before it came to me".

In the same letter Lady Brilliana also directed Edward to purchase arms for the family doctor, Nathaniel Wright, which were not to be sent direct, but which should go first to Brampton:-

63. Gardiner, History, X, 55, note 2, 177.

64. Husbands, Collection, p. 100; Gardiner, History, X, 177.

65. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 25 March 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 85r-86r, Lady Brilliana dated this letter 25 March 1641 and it has been bound with material from that year, internal evidence clearly demonstrates that it was written in 1642.

"He desires you would do him the favour to buy him two muskets and rests and bandoliers, and 15 or 16 pound of powder in a barrel and he desires you would send them by Lemster carrier, and so directed them to Brampton and he will give order to have them sent to Hereford and will send you what they cost". 66

Lady Brilliana Harley was openly alarmed by the rumours that were circulating and she took active measures to protect her home and family. There was, however, an enormous gulf between Lady Brilliana's reactions to these rumours and the response of the nine Justices, who were at pains to stress in both of their letters to the county M.P.s that they placed no credence in the stories about Catholics and foreign armies. In the second of their letters of 18 April 1642, the Justices wrote:-

"we at distance only hear of foreign force, but God be thanked, nothing appears (as yet) from France or Denmark, and for plots of Papists at home, they are still underground as formerly and with us they are so quiet as we have had no cause hitherunto to apprehend any danger from them. If it please God to protect the Protestants in Ireland from the fury of Papists there, we shall little doubt anything here at home". 67

Disbelief in either the rumours of the King employing foreign troops or in the possibility of a Catholic rising was evident in Royalist opinion elsewhere. A set of Royalist instructions framed in Kent in July 1642 for the M.P. Augustine Skinner roundly declared "we are persuaded your fears and jealousies of foreign forces, of French, or Danes, or of Papists at home (an inconsiderable party, especially being
68
disarmed) are long since vanished". The way in which people responded to alarmist rumours was clearly linked to their perceptions of the impending crisis. What people believed was happening, erroneous or not, was a crucial element in determining allegiance long before the war had started.

66. Lewis, Letters, pp. 153-154.

67. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 18 April 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 239v.

68. Woods, op. cit., p. 154.

On 20 May 1642 the Parliament reasserted the belief that the King intended to start a civil war. On that date the Houses resolved that "the King, (seduced by wicked counsel) intends to make war against Parliament, who (in all their consultations and actions) have proposed no other end unto themselves, but the care of his kingdoms, and the performance of all duty and loyalty to his person".⁶⁹ Yet, even before this resolution had been made, some people in the localities had been deciding whether their chief loyalty lay with the King or the Parliament and had acted accordingly. Family and local loyalties were insufficient to restrain the preparations which both sides were making for war. On May 17 1642 Lady Brilliana received news from her brother-in-law, Sir William Pelham, who had decided to join the King at York. She wrote at once to Edward Harley and informed him of Pelham's decision:-

"This day I heard out of Lincolnshire I see my brother Pelham is not of my mind
 Sir William Pelham writes me word he has given up his lieutenancy and is going to York, to the King, being his servant, as he writes me word, and so bound by his oath
 dear Ned, let me hear the truth of things, though it be bad. We hear that the King will summon all that will be for him, to come to him".⁷⁰

On the same day Lady Brilliana also wrote to her husband and conveyed the same news about Pelham, but her letter included a plan which she had not mentioned in her letter to Edward. Lady Brilliana revived her⁷¹ suggestion that she should leave Brampton Bryan. Her letter to Harley indicates that she intended that her absence from the family home should be of some duration and not a temporary remove. She asked Harley to consider whether it would not be best if he could settle his estates in order to enable her to join him in London and send their two younger sons to university:-

69. Husbands, Collection, p. 259.

70. Lewis, Letters, p. 161.

71. Lady Brilliana had first suggested that she should leave Brampton following the news of the Irish Rebellion in 1641, see above Chapter 4, pp. 229-230.

"I should be glad if you thought it might best stand with your estate that you would dispose of your estate so in the country, that it might be to your best advantage, and that I might come to London to you, I think Robin and Tom are now fit for Oxford". 72

Although Harley's reply to this letter is unknown, he undoubtedly advised his wife to stay at Brampton, as he had done in the final months of 1641 and he was to do again in the course of the months to come. At this stage Harley probably thought that Lady Brilliana would be quite safe at Brampton. Harley was also surely reluctant to advise Lady Brilliana to leave their home, since this would result both in a loss of Harley influence in the county, as well as laying his estates open to the possibility of the plundering of war.

Just as the gentry were being forced to make preparations for the coming of war, other sections of the populace were also well aware of the split between King and Parliament. On 8 May 1642 Stanley Gower sent Sir Robert Harley some notes taken at a sermon delivered on 27 April by Dr. Rogers, a prebend of Hereford Cathedral. The notes had been sent to Gower by John Tombes and one of his churchwardens, Edward Dalley, who was also a Harley tenant. In his accompanying letter to Harley, Gower identified the clerics, Rogers, Mr. Mason of Hereford and Mr. Sherburn of Pembridge as the "leaders of the schism", who were whipping up opposition to the Parliament. Mason and Sherburn had, of course, already identified themselves as supporters of the Bishops when they presented the pro-episcopacy petition to the county Justices at the January 1642 Quarter Sessions. Now Gower wryly noted that "Hereford was wont to be scarce of preaching, now they have set up a pasquill in opposition to some few that were endeavouring to bring an edifying lecture into the city".⁷³

72. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 17 May 1642, B.L., Loan 29/72.

73. Gower to Harley, 8 May 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 243r. Dalley was a clothier, in 1638 he had leased a meadow for nine years from the Harleys, lease 20 January 1638, Harley MSS., Bundle 91. For Mason and Sherburn, see above pp. 234, 241.

The notes from Rogers' sermon reveal the wide gulf which had grown between the active supporters of the King and the active supporters of the Parliament. The sermon characterised those who supported Parliament as a combination of religious radicals and the lowest levels of society, who would overthrow the Church and the State. This was very different from the perceptions of the Harleys and other local puritans, who regarded Parliament as the legitimate medium for well considered reformation.

Rogers took as his text 2 Samuel 15:23, which describes King David's flight from Jerusalem into the wilderness. Rogers compared King David with King Charles and stated that the people of London had "grown insolent against authority and irreverent in their carriage towards their sovereign". Rogers complained that there were radical religious sects in the capital and that the rabble held undue influence with the Parliament:-

"there are sects of Anabaptists, Separatists and others. There are rents also in government. The base rabble rout assemble themselves and they will prescribe a way of government to the Parliament and make laws of their own. These are the causes of our King's flight".

Rogers then dwelt on a number of historical instances of rebellions against Royal authority. Amongst other examples he compared the present state of the country with "the low countries, where every man rules and does what he list". He railed bitterly against the revival of what he termed "old heresies":-

"the Arians against Bishops, the Anabaptists and the old Priscillianists, who maintained lying and perjury are sprung up again, and the Millianares (sic), and I would there were not some such preachers too as John Drew and Wall, one of which chose this text - when Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman? And so he would have no man above another, but all men alike and to throw down all government, learning and religion".

The sermon ended with a brief allusion to the question of authority in government and again Rogers drew on historical example by stating

that "the senate was never above the Emperor, but subordinate to
⁷⁴
 him".

This sermon also illustrates the deep divide in the religious perceptions of the most committed on both sides. The supporters of Parliament saw the Catholics as the greatest threat to religious and social stability and were alarmed by any attempt in the Church or State to accommodate the native Catholic population. In contrast Royalist sympathisers were alarmed by the social implications of religious radicalism. The pro-episcopacy petition of January 1642 had professed "that strange fears do possess our hearts that the sudden mutation of (Church) government cannot recompense the disturbances and disorders which it may work by novelty"⁷⁵. The first letter from the nine Justices to the county M.P.s had echoed these fears of disorder in the Church.⁷⁶

Rogers' sermon took the issue further by dwelling on the social consequences of religious radicalism, which would result in the "rabble rout" dictating to Parliament. The supposed relationship between members of Parliament and the London mob was bitterly complained of in the Herefordshire Resolution, which instanced "the private if not public mutinous rabble, which ill spirit was ready at all times to be raised by a whisper from any of those worthy members". The Resolution insisted that the troops raised by the King were not intended to wage "war against his Parliament", but to "secure himself and servants from prodigious tumults and disorders"⁷⁷.

74. Sermon notes, 27 April 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 237r-238r. "when Adam delved etc" was the text commonly supposed to have been used by John Ball at the outbreak of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381; proclamations and other propaganda put out by the Crown from May to August 1642 identified Pym and his supporters with celebrated rebels such as Wat Tyler, Jack Cade and Robert Kett, D.N.B., I, 994; Fletcher, Outbreak p. 296.

75. Webb, Memorials, II, 338.

76. Nine Justices to Harley and Coningsby, 5 March 1641/2, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 229r.

77. Webb, Memorials, II, 343, 344.

The accusation that religious changes would lead to radical social changes did not unduly alarm the supporters of Parliament, who clearly believed that the excesses of the religious groups which they called "Separatists", or "Brownists", could be contained by Parliament. Both Lady Brilliana and Gower were enraged by Rogers' sermons. Lady Brilliana repeatedly advised Edward Harley and Sir Robert that Rogers should be restrained or censured in some way. ⁷⁸ While Gower in his letter to Harley of 8 May noted that he had been informed by a "worthy gentleman" at the last Assizes that "Dr. Rogers ordinarily preaches such stuff, that were any informers he would soon be hanged". On June 20 Gower sent Harley two more of Rogers' sermons and noted in his letter that "they are the devil's orators that so profanely abuse God's name, and seduce the country". ⁷⁹ On June 27 Lady Brilliana sent Harley yet another of Rogers' sermons and advised Harley that if Rogers continued he should be sent for by the Parliament; "I think that it is a most intolerable thing that a man should so scandalise such an assembly as the Parliament". ⁸⁰

Two days later, on 29 June, the dean of the cathedral preached what was described by a local man, John Wanklen, as "a very pestilent sermon against London and the Parliament". In his letter to Sir Robert, Wanklen also described a sermon of Dr. Rogers' delivered on 1 July at the cathedral, in which he had accused Sir John Hotham of being a traitor for defending Hull against the King. In the same sermon Rogers had likened the Parliament to a body without a head:-

78. Lewis, *Letters*, pp. 159, 171, 174; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 4 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 253v.

79. Gower to Harley, 8 May, 20 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 ff. 243r, 256r.

80. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 27 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 261r.

"that as the limb of a man is not a man, or a body without a head, no more is the Parliament a Parliament without a King".

Wanklen explained to Harley that the cathedral clergy had set up their lecture in opposition to a lecture which he and others had hoped to set up in the cathedral. The cathedral clergy had refused to allow this, and the chancellor had specifically told Wanklen that if John Tombes, the rector of Leominster, tried to preach in the cathedral "he would keep him out of the pulpit". Wanklen complained that at the cathedral lectures "all the drift of their teachings, for aught I know, is to work a hatred in the hearts of the people against the Parliament and all good ministers and people, calling them Schismatic and other reprehensible nicknames".⁸¹

Despite the increasing antagonism between Parliamentarians and Royalists in the county, there were still areas of local life where the traditional loyalties of the "gentry community" were still functioning. At the April Quarter Sessions Justices who were at odds over the issues which divided the committed supporters of Parliament from the committed supporters of the King, had been able to join in sending a letter to Sir Robert Harley and Humphrey Coningsby. The letter demanded that the two knights should procure a reduction in the amount which the county had been asked to pay as its contribution to the sum of £400,000 being raised for the prosecution of the Irish war. As had been the case in the past, the question of taxation was an issue on which the county gentry could unite in an attempt to delay payments or to reduce the assessments of the county. Thus men who were divided on national questions could still find common ground within the administration of the county and Edward Broughton and James Kyrle placed their signatures on the letter along with Sir William Croft, Wallop Brabazon and Fitzwilliam Coningsby and others.

81. Wanklen to Harley, 1 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 265r.

Harley was well aware of the issues which were important to the local gentry and he drafted a hurried reply, without consulting his fellow knight, in which he tartly assured the J.P.s that he had already pressed in the House for a reduction for the county, to no avail:-

"I hope you do not think I was asleep when it was proposed, for I assure you I pressed earnestly to have our county eased". Harley reminded the J.P.s of the "cloudy and barbarous rebellion of the Papists in Ireland, which is like to endanger the peace of England". 82

In some respects Lady Brilliana also expected the concerns of the county gentry to remain unchanged. Despite this expectation, there is evidence of a subtle alteration in the relationships between the Harleys and other families within the local "gentry community". In mid-May 1642 Lady Brilliana suggested that Sir Robert should solicit Sir William Croft's aid in promoting Edward Harley as a candidate in the Hereford by-election, following the death of the M.P. Richard Weaver on 16 May.⁸³ Lady Brilliana was extremely eager that Edward should perform his "first service for the commonwealth". She had enthusiastically supported an earlier plan in 1641 for Wigmore to be recognised as a parliamentary borough in the hope that Edward would be returned for the new constituency.⁸⁴ This earlier plan had been dropped, but in May 1642 Lady Brilliana actively sounded out the local gentry about the possibility of them giving their votes to Edward Harley.

The splits which had appeared in the county concerning national politics and the national religious settlement were ignored by Lady Brilliana as she set out her plans for utilising traditional gentry loyalties to gain Edward's election. In a letter to Edward his mother explained that she had written to "my cousin Elton", Ambrose Elton the Elder, "for his daughter has married Mr. Weaver's son, and young Weaver has power over many voices. Doctor Wright persuaded me to write

82. Herefordshire Justices to Harley and Coningsby, April 1642 and Harley's draft reply, 3 May 1642, B.L., Loan 29/50/74.

83. Lewis, Letters, p. 162; Keeler, op. cit., pp. 381-382.

84. Lewis, Letters, pp. 105-107.

to my cousin Vaughan, who has interest in some of the aldermen".

Lady Brilliana was encouraged in her efforts by Sir William Croft's reluctance to combine his stand on national politics with the election campaign. A messenger from Lady Brilliana spoke to Croft and made it known that Edward Harley was to stand for election and that the Harleys wanted Croft's "assistance to it". Croft replied that "he would not meddle in it; he would leave all men to themselves".

Lady Brilliana's efforts were curtailed, not by any opposition based on the polarisation of the county on national events, but because she heard word that Viscount Scudamore's son was to stand in the election. The Scudamores had close links with Hereford, where Viscount Scudamore had been Chief Steward since 1631. Lady Brilliana, doubtless realising the importance of the Scudamores' ties with the city, gracefully halted her own campaign:-

"Dear Ned I sent to Hereford to let them know that I heard that my Lord Scudamore's son would stand for the burgesship, and then I did not further desire it for you; but gave them many thanks for their good will to you, and desired if my Lord's son did not stand, that then they would give you their voices, which they then promised they would ". 85

Sir William Croft's refusal to involve himself in the election campaign contrasts sharply with his support for Sir Robert Harley in the Short Parliament elections. Nevertheless, Lady Brilliana was still confident of the friendship between the two families and she thus attempted to increase the stock of arms at Brampton by buying more from Sir William Croft's mother. Sir William, however, tactfully blocked the sale by telling Lady Brilliana that his mother had no authority to sell the arms at Croft Castle. At the beginning of June, when she wrote to Sir Robert of this incident, Lady Brilliana did not see anything incongruous in her attempt to buy arms from one of the most Royalist families in the county. At this date Lady Brilliana almost

certainly believed that she had little to fear from Croft, despite his opposition to the Parliament. Croft was after all, not only a kinsman of the Harleys, but he was also a Justice of the Peace and Lady Brilliana must have thought that it was quite unlikely that he would be involved in any physical attack on Brampton.

It would, however, be mistaken to regard Lady Brilliana's requests for Croft's aid in the election campaign and in buying arms as evidence that the relationships between the major gentry had not been affected by the course of national politics. It should not be overlooked that on both occasions Croft refused to help Lady Brilliana. Although Croft was politely reserved in his refusals to Lady Brilliana, many people were not so restrained in showing their dislike of the local Parliamentarians. In the same letter in which she informed Harley that she had been unable to purchase arms from the Crofts, Lady Brilliana wrote "the country grows very insolent and if there should be any rising I think I am in a very unsafe place in my opinion it were much better for me to be at London, there is nobody in the country that loves you or me".⁸⁶ At the beginning of June 1642 Lady Brilliana was most concerned with the prospect of a popular rising in the county; by the start of the subsequent month, however, she would become fully aware that she was in some danger from the local Royalist gentry as well.

On the same day that she wrote to Harley of her fears concerning a local rising, 4 June 1642, Lady Brilliana also wrote to her son, Edward. In this letter she recorded for the first time the existence of violent popular hatred for Parliament and its supporters in the area around Brampton:-

"At Ludlow they set up a Maypole, and a thing like a head upon it, and so they did at Croft, and gathered a great many about it, and shot at it in derision of Roundheads. At Ludlow they abused Mr. Bauges (sic) son very much,

86. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 4 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 252r. For Croft's long-standing friendship with the Harleys and his support for Sir Robert in the Short Parliament elections, see above Chapter 2, pp. 111-112.

and are so insolent that they durst not leave their house to come to the fast. I acknowledge I do not think myself safe where I am". 87

This is the earliest reference to the term "Roundhead" amongst the Harleys' surviving papers. The term had originated in the last days of December 1641, when the army officers who supported the King had been nicknamed "Cavaliers" and the crowds calling for the Bishops and Catholic Peers to be kept out of the House of Lords were called "Roundheads". In his History of the Rebellion, Clarendon described the conflicts between the two groups and the first use of these terms:-

"And from these officers, warm with indignation at the insolence of that vile rabble which every day passed by the court, first words of great contempt, and then blows, were fastened upon some of the most pragmatical of the crew and from those contestations the two terms of 'Roundhead' and 'Cavalier' grew to be received in discourse, and were afterwards continued, for the most succinct distinction of affections throughout the quarrel; they who were looked upon as servants to the King being then called 'Cavaliers' and the other of the rabble contemned and despised under the names of 'Roundheads' ". 88

From January 1642 onwards a number of pamphlets were published in London which satirised the supporters of Parliament as Roundheads. There was obviously a gap between the adoption of these terms in London and their acceptance as party labels in the localities. Lady Brilliana's letters reveal that by the beginning of June 1642 the term Roundhead was commonly used in Ludlow and in certain areas of Herefordshire to describe the Parliamentarians in these localities. There is however, no evidence amongst the Harleys' papers that the term Cavalier was in use in the summer of 1642 in the area around Brampton
89
Bryan.

Lady Brilliana continued to record incidences of abuse against

87. Lewis, Letters, p. 167.

88. W. Dunn Macray (ed.), The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England begun in the year 1641, by Edward, Earl of Clarendon (Oxford, reprint, 1969), I, 456.

89. The accounts of the siege of Brampton do use the term Cavalier, but these accounts were written after the events they describe and are not contemporary documents, H.M.C., Bath, pp. 6, 7, 22.

herself and other supporters of Parliament throughout June 1642. In a letter written in mid-June to Sir Robert Harley, she dramatically detailed evidence of the type of abuse which she had experienced in close proximity to the family home:-

"they are grown exceeding rude in these parts. Every Thursday some of Ludlow as they go through the town wish all the puritans of Brampton hanged and as I was walking one day in the garden, Mr. Longly and one of the maids being with me, they looked upon me and wished all the puritans and Roundheads at Brampton hanged and when they were gone a little further they cursed you and all your children and thus they say they do every week, as they go through the town".

In the same letter Lady Brilliana described an incident which had taken place at the annual fair held at Brampton on 11 June 1642, when Edward Broughton had been present in his capacity of Justice in order to maintain the peace:-

"an unruly fellow was brought before Mr. Braughton (sic) and he abused Mr. Braughton exceedingly; he sent him to the stocks, but he so resisted that they were fain to take the halberds and to watch the stocks a long time and the next morning he ran away. All night he swore against the Roundheads and one came to and bid him be quiet for there would come a day would pay for all and then they would say remember this". 90

Whether the two men involved in this incident would support the King once the war had started is open to question, but this episode vividly illustrates an aspect of the tensions which were apparent in Herefordshire some two months before the declaration of the war. Later in the same month, on 20 June 1642, Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley and informed him of the near riot which had occurred when John Yates, Harley's rector at Leintwardine, had attempted to preach in one of the city churches in Hereford. Before Yates could begin the sermon he was challenged by two men who demanded to know why he had not prayed for the King. Yates explained that he was at liberty to pray for the King and

90. Lady Brilliana to Harley, undated, B.L., Loan 29/72. Internal evidence indicates that this letter was written after 11 June 1642 and before 24 June 1642, see Lewis, Letters, pp. 168-169, 172.

Church after the sermon. The two men then went and rang the church bells and many of the congregation went into the churchyard where they "cried 'Roundheads' and some said 'let us cast stones at him'". In the afternoon Yates again tried to preach, but the churchwardens refused to allow him into the pulpit, because Yates could not produce his licence to preach. In a letter to Sir Robert Lady Brilliana wrote that all the time he was in Hereford, Yates "could not look out, but he was called Roundhead".

The incident served to reinforce Lady Brilliana's poor opinion of the episcopacy:-

"in my opinion this reflects upon the Bishop that they refused a minister in this manner that he had licensed and I think a more barbarous thing in a civil commonwealth is not done. The godly there were extremely grieved".

The basic events outlined by Lady Brilliana of the incident involving Yates were also confirmed by John Wanklen's letter to Sir Robert Harley of 1 July although Wanklen did not record the use of the word Roundhead.⁹¹ Lady Brilliana's repeated descriptions of the local use of the term Roundhead in June 1642 was, however, substantiated by a letter from John Tombes to Stanley Gower written on 24 June 1642. Tombes wrote that he had heard "that there are a number of persons that do quarrell with Lemster headsmen under the appellation of Roundheads, that they can scarce safely walk the streets or be in houses in Hereford".⁹²

91. Lewis, Letters, pp. 170-171, this letter describes the incident as involving a Mr. Davies and not Yates, but this is surely an error in transcription or in printing, since two other letters from Brilliana and John Wanklen both state that Yates was involved, see Lady Brilliana to Harley, 24 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 3v-4v (this letter is bound with material from January 1643, but was probably written in June when the incident occurred, rather than seven months later), Wanklen to Harley, 1 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 265r.

92. Tombes to Gower, 24 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/121.

Even before the arrival of the Commission of Array in the county, opinions were deeply polarised in Herefordshire between support for Parliament and support for the King amongst both some of the gentry and some of the clergy, as well as amongst the wider population of the county. The Commission of Array reached the county at the beginning of July 1642. On 5 July, Lady Brilliana sent her husband a report of the names of ten Justices who had been summoned to call out the militia.⁹³ In all, some twenty local gentlemen were named to the Commission.⁹⁴ Although the Commission contained men who were neutral, such as the Sheriff, Seward, and moderates such as Viscount Scudamore, it also contained a core of committed Royalists, including Sir William Croft, Fitzwilliam Coningsby, Henry Lingen and Wallop Brabazon, who had already identified themselves as opponents of the course taken by the Parliament.⁹⁵

Dr. Hutton's study of the Royalist war effort has found that in the Counties of Wales and of the West Midlands the Commissioners of Array "were on the whole accurately chosen". Although up to a third of the Commissioners in each county proved either hostile or indifferent, "the remainder always included men who became the Royalist leaders of their counties".⁹⁶

This suggests that the King and his advisors were well informed about the loyalties of the gentry in these localities. This was certainly the case in Herefordshire. There were various ways in which the King could have learnt who were his most committed supporters in the county.

93. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 5 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 269r.

94. Northamptonshire R.O., Finch Hatton MSS., 133 unfoliated. The Commission of Array was reissued for Herefordshire on 7 January 1643, P.R.O., C 115/1.26/6511.

95. For Scudamore, see below, Chapter 6, pp. 287-288.

96. Hutton, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

The contents of the two letters from the nine Herefordshire J.P.s, for example, were probably known outside the county, along with the names of the signatories.⁹⁷ Moreover, in June 1642 a group of Herefordshire gentry had sent a letter to the King at York, which according to Lady Brilliana "let him know that they would serve him with their lives and estates".⁹⁸ The signatures on this letter may also have been used to draw up the Commission of Array for Herefordshire.

Lady Brilliana was greatly alarmed by the news of the arrival of the Commission, because she knew she could no longer rely on the Royalist gentry for protection. In her letter of 5 July 1642 to her husband, in which she described the preparations for the execution of the Commission, she wrote "this does much appall the godly in this country". Three days later Lady Brilliana again reminded Sir Robert that it would be safer for her to leave the county "for I account myself among my enemies".⁹⁹

At the beginning of July 1642 Lady Brilliana was acutely aware that civil war was imminent and that her safety in the county was in question because of her husband's commitment to the cause of Parliament. On 3 June 1642 Harley had been named to a committee of the House of Commons to treat with anyone willing to lend money to the Parliament. On 10 June 1642 the Houses of Parliament had drawn up propositions for the raising of money, plate and horses for the "defence of the King and both Houses of Parliament". The propositions repeated the statement of 20 May 1642, that the King "intends to make war against his Parliament". On the 10 June Harley, and other M.P.s, rose in the House of Commons,¹⁰⁰ to pledge support for the Parliamentary war effort.

97. Fletcher, Outbreak, p. 306.

98. Lewis, Letters, p. 170.

99. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 5 July, 8 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 268v, 271r.

100. C.J., II, 589, Husbands, Collection, pp. 339-342; B.L., Harl., MSS., 163 f. 545r.

Subsequently, Sir Robert wrote to Lady Brilliana and asked her to despatch horses and the family plate to London. Lady Brilliana arranged for the horses to be sent up to London, but she was reluctant to part with the plate. On 17 June she wrote to Edward Harley:-

"I purpose, and please God, to send Martin with the horses your father sent for, on Monday next. I doubt not but that your father will give to his utmost for the raising these horses, and in my opinion it were better to borrow money if your father will give any, than to give his plate; for we do not know what straits we may be put to, and therefore I think it is better to borrow whilst one may and keep the plate for a time of need".

Lady Brilliana asked Edward to convey her message to Sir Robert, who remained adamant that the plate should be sent up to London.

On 9 July Lady Brilliana forwarded a voider, knife, 18 plates and a salt by the carrier of Leominster. She intended to send up a second assortment of plate a week later and had earlier explained that she would not send everything at once, lest the weight of the hamper should betray its contents.

The value of the plate which the Harleys gave to Parliament was considerable. On 19 September 1642 Sir Robert informed the House of Commons that he had already brought in plate worth £350 and that he would bring in a further £150 of plate and two horses.

The active preparations for war being undertaken by both sides prompted Lady Brilliana to remind Harley of the dangers which she would face from Royalist troops. On 13 July she made a final appeal to her husband to allow his family to leave Brampton before it was too late:-

"Dear Sir, let me earnestly desire you to consider well whether it is safe for me and my children to be at Brampton. I hear the King will have army to cut off all that are for the Parliament. Many in this country say within this 6 weeks all the puritans shall be rid out of the country". 103

101. Lewis, Letters, p. 169.

102. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 9 July, 8 July, 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 272r, 270r-v; C.J., II, 772.

103. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 13 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 277r.

For whatever reasons Sir Robert remained confident that Brampton was safe for his family and he again advised his wife to remain in the family home. At this time Harley may well have believed that the journey to London would have been more perilous for his family than remaining in their home. In order to join her husband, Lady Brilliana would have had to pass through areas where she was unknown and where there might be considerable dangers from troops raised by either side. In July 1642 Harley could hardly have predicted the length of the coming conflict or the course that hostilities would take in his home county.

Lady Brilliana was, however, aware of the depth of hostility in Herefordshire for the Parliamentarians and in the event her fears for her safety would prove to be justified. Nevertheless, on 15 July 1642 Lady Brilliana resolved to obey her husband's wishes and she replied to him:-

"Since you think Brampton a safe place for me, I will think so too and I would not for anything do that which might make the world believe our hope did begin to fail in our God". 104

Thus Lady Brilliana staunchly agreed to place her trust in God and to remain at Brampton, despite her great fears for her safety and the welfare of her children. In the ensuing months Lady Brilliana witnessed the initial effects of the war, which she continued to record in her letters until the final weeks of her life.

The letters which Lady Brilliana had written to her husband and son in the first half of 1642, along with the other letters which Harley had received from Herefordshire during this period, demonstrate that the growth of Royalist and Parliamentarian parties in the county was a drawn out process, which was already underway before the first Commission arrived in the county from the King. Within the county existing religious divisions had widened as the leading puritans continued their

tenacious support of Parliament in an increasingly Royalist locality. By the summer of 1642 the Harleys were openly stigmatised in the county as both puritans and Roundheads and the isolation which Lady Brilliana felt during the summer months of 1642 served to reinforce her belief that the supporters of Parliament were suffering for the cause of God and true religion. A few days after the Commissioners of Array had mustered the trained bands at Hereford Lady Brilliana wrote to her son Edward:-

"My dear Ned, I thank God I am not afraid. It is the Lord's cause that we have stood for, and I trust, though our iniquities testify against us, yet the Lord will work for His own name sake, and that He will now show the men of this world that it is hard fighting against heaven. And for our comforts, I think never any laid plots to rout out all God's children at once, but that the Lord did shew Himself mighty in saving his servants, as He did Pharaoh, when he thought to have destroyed all Israel, and so Haman. Now the intention is to rout out all that fear God and surely the Lord will arise to help us; and in your God let your confidence be and I am assured it is so". 105

Lady Brilliana's belief in the strength of the "godly community" would prove to be a sustaining force throughout the harrowing outbreak and early months of the civil war.

CHAPTER 6

JULY 1642 - OCTOBER 1643

The letters which Lady Brilliana wrote between July 1642 and her death in October 1643 reveal a gradual collapse of many of the traditional loyalties of local society. In this period the Harleys' ties with the local Royalist gentry were to become increasingly strained by the demands of civil war. Moreover, the relationships between the Harleys and other social ranks were also disrupted. Lady Brilliana thus discovered that the influence which the family had customarily exercised in the county was becoming increasingly worthless.

Even in Lady Brilliana's own household there were men who supported the Royalists. In July 1642 Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley and explained that she wished "my cousin Adams were out of the house, for I am persuaded he will give the other side what assistance he can".¹ In his account of the sieges of Brampton Bryan, Priam Davies complained that "none (were) more forward and false" than some of Lady Brilliana's own tenants and servants. After the first siege was raised "many that had not paid their rents of some years before refused; yea they would not let us have provisions, nor any of the conveniences of life which they could hinder us from". Although Lady Brilliana had initially insisted that she would protect the people who lived near the castle, and that her soldiers would take no plunder, she was thus forced to send out daily raiding parties, in order to provide for the garrison at
²
Brampton.

As the war progressed, the local effects of the conflict served to

1. Lewis, Letters, p. 180.
2. H.M.C., Bath, pp. 26-27; Lady Brilliana had noted that some tenants refused to pay rents as early as April 1641. Rent strikes were to become increasingly common throughout the country in 1642, caused initially by economic conditions and encouraged later by the political situation, see Lady Brilliana to Harley, 2 April 1641, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 93r; Manning, op. cit., pp. 212-215.

heighten enmities within the county. Private houses were searched; private property was seized or destroyed; local people were imprisoned and even civilians were killed in the fighting. These actions violated the conventions of peaceful society and led people into increasingly hostile behaviour. Lady Brilliana was, however, determined to face the breakdown of familiar social ties, and the associated threats of Royalist violence, with her characteristic deference to the judgement of her husband allied with her faith in God. Even the eventual ordeal of the siege of Brampton did not weaken Lady Brilliana's resolve to preserve the Harley estates in the county, nor did it lessen her trust in God and her profound belief that she was furthering the cause of true religion.

As the loyalties of the local "gentry community" deteriorated, the loyalties of the supporters of Parliament were simultaneously strengthened by their perceptions of the war as a religious struggle. In a letter of 28 January 1643 Lady Brilliana urged Edward Harley to "desire the prayers of the godly for us at Brampton". A month later, in a letter to her husband, she explained that only the truly religious would now associate themselves with the inhabitants of the castle:-

"my God being so merciful to me, in that he has offered me and mine his word, to be shut up with us and many of his dear servants, so that we take company of those that fear him, for indeed not anyone else will come near us". 3

Inside the garrison at Brampton the Parliamentarians were firmly united in their belief that they were fighting to maintain the Protestant religion against the twin evils of Antichrist and popery.⁴ The papers collected by the Harleys during the onset of hostilities provide us with a very personal testament of the course of the war in one

3. Lewis, Letters, pp. 187-188; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 26 February 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 13r.

4. E. Symmons, Scripture Vindicated (Oxford, 1644), Preface to the Readers, cited in Hill, Antichrist, pp. 79-80. For a full discussion, see below pp. 317-318.

locality and they will be examined in detail in this chapter.

The letters which Lady Brilliana wrote concerning the developments of the Civil War were undoubtedly an important source of information for Sir Robert Harley at Westminster. In this period Harley was involved in numerous administrative committees in Parliament, some of which were directly concerned with events in Herefordshire. On 29 August 1642, for example, Sir Robert and three other M.P.s were appointed to receive papers and letters concerning Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Lancashire, Chester, Monmouth and North Wales, in order to "solicit the affairs of these counties for their defence".⁵

Lady Brilliana not only wrote about Herefordshire, she also sent Harley news about surrounding counties as well and her letters would have been of great value to Sir Robert in his work on such a committee.⁶

The origins of the information which Lady Brilliana passed to Harley were quite various. Whilst some of the contents of her letters were based on hearsay, a good deal of her comments were based on personal observation, either by herself, by members of her household, or by local gentry. Lady Brilliana also organised an efficient intelligence service, which operated even at the height of the first Royalist siege. Priam Davies recorded a number of occasions when the beleaguered garrison at Brampton received news through the enemy lines. On 23 August 1643 Davies noted "this night we had secret intelligence by letters from London of an insurrection of the malignants there, into

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5. C.J., II, 743. Harley was later a member of the Committees for the Garrison of Gloucester, and for the Security of the Western Counties, C.J., III, 254, 291.
 6. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 3 August 1642, 14 February 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 30lv, 8r-v; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 3 July 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72 (this letter appears to bear the date 1642, but internal evidence clearly indicates that it was written in 1643); see also Lewis, Letters, pp. 189, 205, 207.

what a low condition the Parliament party were throughout the kingdom". Later he wrote "we had secret intelligence through all their courts of guard again, that Gloucester still held out gallantly, although the greatest of our enemies with divers oaths affirmed that it was delivered⁷ up".

Although Sir Robert Harley benefited from the receipt of the news sent to him by Lady Brilliana, there was in practice little that he could do to influence events inside Herefordshire from Westminster. The county changed from Royalist to Parliamentary administration and back again,⁸ according to the movements of the main field armies. The county administration thus remained in the hands of the Royalist gentry from July 1642 until the arrival of Parliamentary troops, commanded by the Earl of Stamford, who entered Hereford unopposed on 1 October 1642.⁹

There were no military disturbances in Herefordshire before this incursion by Stamford, largely because of the lengthy delay in putting the Militia Ordinance into operation for the county. The House of Commons had named Lord Dacres as Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire on 10 February 1642, ignoring Harley's suggestion that Lord Saye should supply the place. Dacres proved to be a neutral and on 8 August was replaced by the Earl of Essex, the Commander-in-Chief of the Parliamentary army. Essex named a number of Herefordshire gentry as his Deputies on 30 September at Worcester and, on the same day, despatched¹⁰ Stamford and his troops to take Hereford.

7. H.M.C., Bath, pp. 25, 26.

8. Aylmer, loc. cit., 376.

9. P.R.O., S.P., 16/492/32.

10. C.J., II, 424; Coates, Young, Snow (eds.), op. cit., p. 342, (Essex had originally been named as the Lieutenant for Herefordshire in February 1642, but the House had rejected him on the grounds that he was serving as Lieutenant in a number of other counties, *idem*); Fletcher, Sussex, p. 285; C.J., II, 709; list of Deputy-Lieutenants for Herefordshire, 30 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 326r.

Stamford, however, was able to occupy Hereford for only two months. He was in a very weak position, caught between the King's forces at Oxford and Royalist troops in Wales. In November 1642 his position was further weakened when the Parliamentary garrison at Worcester withdrew and was replaced by a local Royalist administration. Stamford was almost completely surrounded by opposing forces and in December 1642 he withdrew to Gloucester. As at Worcester, the local Royalists re-
¹¹established their control of Hereford instantly. On 25 April 1643 Sir William Waller took Hereford for Parliament, but his occupation was even briefer than Stamford's. Waller left Herefordshire after less than a month, in order to oppose Sir Ralph Hopton's advances in the west. Thereafter, the county remained under Royalist administration until
¹²Hereford was again taken by Parliamentary forces in December 1645.

The permanence of Parliamentary influence in Herefordshire after December 1645 raises some questions about the real strength of Royalist feeling in the county during the earlier stages of the war. Clearly the disintegration of the King's forces in 1645 and 1646 explains why
¹³Parliament retained military control in the county. Yet, at the same time, civilians were found who replaced the Royalist administration in the county and it is hard to believe that these men could have carried out their task if the county had been totally Royalist. The prompt execution of the Commission of Array and the lack of any Parliamentary initiative in the county in July 1642, in fact give the false impression that Herefordshire was completely Royalist. There were doubtless many people in the county who were happy to support the status quo; there were also moderate Parliamentarians, who under different circumstances might have been persuaded to give more positive support to Parliament.

11. Hutton, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35; see also below, p. 296.

12. Gardiner, *Civil War*, I, 130, 139; Webb, *Memorials*, II, 250-255.

13. Aylmer, *loc. cit.*, 376.

Lady Brilliana was well aware that the delay in executing the Militia Ordinance in the county was a tactical mistake and on at least two occasions in July 1642 she suggested that some Members of Parliament should be sent down to oversee the Ordinance. During the previous month M.P.s had been sent by the House of Commons into a number of counties, including Warwickshire, Lancashire and Northamptonshire, in order to execute the Ordinance. This process continued in July and August 1642, but Herefordshire was not one of the counties where such action was taken and the Militia Ordinance was not executed in the county until the end of September. The quick response of the Commissioners of Array in July 1642 obscures the fact that some men offered varying degrees of resistance to the Commissioners, which could have been exploited if Parliament had replaced the neutral Lord Dacres at an earlier date.

The Commission of Array had arrived in Herefordshire in the first week of July 1642. On 14 July 1642 the Commissioners, including Fitzwilliam Coningsby, John Scudamore of Ballingham and Sir William Croft, mustered the trained bands at Hereford. Sir Robert Harley, who was of course absent in London, was removed from his captaincy of a band of foot on the spot and was replaced by Fitzwilliam Coningsby, one of the most committed of the county's Royalists. Lady Brilliana had sent one of her servants to observe the muster and he reported that "when the soldiers were all gathered together and your (Harley's) company was called, your name was first called and then a great many cried out and wished you were there that they might tear you in pieces he heard

14. Lewis, Letters, pp. 176, 179; Fletcher, Outbreak, pp. 351-353; C.J., II, 685, 686, 719.

15. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 5 July and 15 July 1642, anonymous report of the muster, 14 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 269r, 279v-280r, 278r-v.

everyone rail at you and the Parliament. He dared not take upon him
¹⁶
 whose man he was and the people were so rude".

Although the county was controlled by the Royalist gentry, Lady Brilliana did note pockets of dissent, other than the opposition of her immediate circle. On 8 July, writing about the imminent muster, Lady Brilliana commented "many are troubled what they shall do, if they be
¹⁷
 required to find arms, for they are resolved not to do it". This reluctance to obey the Commissioners may account for the low turnout of Sir Robert Harley's band of foot at the muster, nearly half of whom defaulted. Harley's trained band doubtless contained a fair proportion of men who were his dependents, but given the Harleys' propensity for choosing servants and tenants of a godly disposition, the defaulters in Harley's band were probably motivated by a combination of loyalty to their absent captain and a desire to oppose the Royalist Commissioners based on religious and political convictions.

In contrast, the remaining three bands of foot appeared in almost full strength at the muster. It is interesting to note, however, that the greatest number of defaults were to be found in the troop of horse commanded by Viscount Scudamore, only a third of whom appeared in the field. Scudamore was a moderate Royalist and he may have been absent from the muster himself. The large number of defaults in his troop suggest that some at least of Scudamore's men shared his reserv-
¹⁸
 ations about the Royalist cause. There was also some resistance to the Commissioners among the major gentry. Some of the men named as

16. H.M.C., Portland, p. 92, (unfortunately the original folio in B.L., Loan 174 is too damaged to read).

17. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 8 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 27lv.

18. Anonymous report of the muster, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 278r-v. For the personal ties between the captains of the trained bands and their men, see above, Chapter 2, p. 105; for the Harleys' choice of godly servants and tenants, see above Chapter 2, p. 106. For Scudamore, see below, pp. 287-288.

Commissioners of Array were clearly reluctant to carry out their duties, On 23 July 1642 Lady Brilliana noted that neither Sir Richard Hopton nor Sir John Kyrle would join with the Commissioners. A few days later she commented that John Scudamore of Kenchurch did not appear with the other Commissioners.¹⁹ These three men were subsequently named as Deputy-Lieutenants by the Earl of Essex, which illustrates the dangers of using the bare data of the names of Commissioners or of committee men as a guide to allegiance during the war.²⁰ When the King re-issued the Commission of Array for Herefordshire, on 7 January 1643, Hopton, Kyrle and Scudamore of Kenchurch were all left out of the Commission. Sir Richard Hopton and Sir John Kyrle probably had moderate leanings towards Parliament, but they were insufficiently committed to attempt to raise any organised opposition to the Royalists in the county.

Sir Richard Hopton was at the Parliamentary stronghold of Worcester on 8 October 1642. On that day he signed an agreement, along with a number of other local gentlemen, for a Parliamentary association of the counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Shropshire.²¹ In May 1643, however, Hopton obtained a pardon from the Crown for himself and his sons for "all treasons, rebellions, insurrections, conspiracies and other offences" since 23 January 1636. Nonetheless, in June 1643 Hopton was removed from the Herefordshire Commission of the Peace by the King.²²

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19. Lewis, *Letters*, p. 182; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 27 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 293v.
 20. List of Deputy-Lieutenants, 30 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 326r.
 21. P.R.O., C 115/I.26/6511; agreement of association, 8 October 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 327r.
 22. W.H. Black (ed.), *Docquets of Letters Patent 1642-1646*, (1837), pp. 37, 46. Hopton was so lukewarm in his support of Parliament that in the late 1640s he was under suspicion of having been a Royalist and was questioned by the Parliamentary county committee in Herefordshire. Eventually he managed to convince the Parliamentary administration that he had not given the King any support, see B.L., Add., MSS., 16, 178 ff. 117r, 122r, 172r; List of the names of persons charged with delinquency, 30 January 1746/7, B.L., Loan 29/15; *C.C.A.M.*, 1487.

Sir John Kyrle also attempted to placate the Crown, rather than openly to oppose the Royalists. At the beginning of 1643 he too received a pardon, for "assisting the army now in rebellion against his Majesty, so far as consociating himself with his neighbouring Justices in sitting upon an illegal Commission". Yet Kyrle does not appear to have offered any active support for the Crown and on 14 June 1643 he, along with Sir Richard Hopton and Ambrose Elton, was removed from the Commission of the Peace by the Crown.²³ John Scudamore of Kenchurch appears to have been neutral during the early stages of the war and does not seem to have offered either side any active support. The actions of these three Commissioners of Array illustrate some of the many shades of allegiance which existed and which were modified by the prevailing local conditions.

In a county such as Herefordshire, where the Royalists had taken control, the committed Parliamentarians are relatively easy to find. Yet, on the other side, it is not so easy to distinguish between committed Royalists and those who went along with the ruling party either through fear or inertia. Furthermore, some Royalists later attempted to conceal their true involvement in the war in order to save their lands from sequestration. One of the most zealous Commissioners of Array in the summer of 1642, Wallop Brabazon, later told the Parliamentarian Committee for Compounding that he had not been an active Commissioner.²⁴ The Harley papers reveal a very different story.

Not only was Brabazon present at the muster of the trained bands at Hereford on 14 July 1642, but he was also one of the Commissioners who issued a warrant to arrest Priam Davies, a kinsman of the Harleys and a supporter of the Parliament. Brabazon also used his powers as a

23. Black, *op. cit.*, pp. 5, 46. Kyrle was also charged with delinquency by the Parliamentarian administration in the late 1640s, see list of the names of persons charged with delinquency, 30 January 1646/7, B.L., Loan 29/15. The charges do not appear to have resulted in any sequestration.

24. C.C.C., 1478.

Commissioner in an attempt to assert his influence over his old enemy, John Tombes, the vicar of Leominster. On 31 July 1642 Brabazon entered the parish church at Leominster accompanied by some of the county's Royalist volunteers. Brabazon carried with him a pamphlet from the King, which he doubtless hoped to force Tombes to read from the pulpit. Tombes, however, was not present and Matthew Clark, rector of Bitterly, was conducting the service. Clark refused to read the pamphlet and his path to the pulpit was blocked by some thirteen volunteers armed with staves and swords, who accused him of being a Roundhead. After some altercation Brabazon regained control of the armed men and allowed Clark to preach without interruption. Although Brabazon had undoubtedly organised this incident with the intention of provoking Tombes, it should not be forgotten that the antagonism between the two men was firmly based on religious differences, which had been heightened by the events of 1640-1642.²⁵

Brabazon provides a typical example of a man who was an active Royalist, who later tried to hide the fact. In contrast, Viscount Scudamore was a moderate Royalist, whose actions were misinterpreted both by contemporaries and by later historians, as evidence that he was a committed supporter of the King.²⁶ Lady Brilliana's letters in fact make very little reference to Scudamore as a Commissioner and he appears to have been very lukewarm in his commitment to King Charles.

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25. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 25 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 291r; C.J., II, 775; relation of Matthew Clark, 31 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/121. For the history of the enmity between Brabazon and Tombes, see above Chapter 4, p. 197 and Seward to Harley, 7 February 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 207r. The pamphlet which Brabazon wanted read out was probably "His Majesty's answer to the petition of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament" of July 1642, printed in Husbands, Collection, pp. 466-473, which the King wished to "be read in all churches and chapels". There was a similar incident in Rugby, when a group of armed men tried to force James Nalton to read the pamphlet, Hughes, 'Thesis', p. 243.
26. Webb, Memorials, I, 1; W. Page (ed.), The Victoria County History of the County of Hereford (1908), I, 387.

Scudamore's moderation was revealed after the Royalists had suffered defeat in their defence of Hereford against Sir William Waller's forces in April 1643. Scudamore was taken prisoner at Hereford and was sent to London, where he appealed to the Parliamentarian M.P. Sir Robert Pye for leniency:-

"for this action of Hereford, wherein I was but a volunteer, and had no command, and being here casually and a sworn citizen and steward of the town. I knew not in honour how to run away from it, just when a force appeared before it". 27

This might have been a deliberate attempt to appear less committed than he actually was, but Scudamore's lack of activity as a Commissioner of Array is confirmed by an account of the siege, written by the Royalist governor of Hereford, Fitzwilliam Coningsby. In his account, Coningsby complained of Scudamore's "coldness and slow appearance", which had "damped the country's seal".

Lady Brilliana was fully aware that there were degrees of commitment on the Royalist side. In August 1642 she had advised Harley to have some of the moderate Royalists named as Deputy Lieutenants:-

"if you do not take some of the other side, you will mightily incense them and some are much more moderate than others. I am persuaded a letter from you to my cousin Rudhall would do much with him". 30

Lady Brilliana also recorded an early example of a man who had decided to switch allegiance. On 16 September 1642 she wrote to Harley that "my cousin Nanfan came to Brampton, he was of the Commission of Array, but now declines it and here enclosed has sent you the relation how far he went in it and desires your advice". This was undoubtedly John Nanfan

27. Folger Library, Scudamore MSS., Vb2 (2), also printed in Webb, Memorials, I, 265.

28. For Coningsby see Webb, Memorials, I, 209-211.

29. Bodl., Tanner MSS., 303 f. 113r.

30. Lady Brilliana to Harley, undated, received by Harley in mid-August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 307r.

of Worcestershire, who had been named to the Commission of Array in his county. He subsequently sent a letter to the House of Commons expressing his "good affections to the commonwealth" and thereafter supported the Parliament.³¹

A small number of gentry, who had not been named as Commissioners, were also in disagreement with the active Royalists. The Justice, Ambrose Elton senior, did not want to attend the Assizes held at the end of July 1642 in Hereford, because as Lady Brilliana noted, he thought the Commission of Array was "unlawful".³² Elton was subsequently named as one of the Earl of Essex's Deputy Lieutenants and he may have been a moderate Parliamentarian.³³ Four gentlemen who did attend the July Assizes found that the Commissioners were influential enough to pack the Grand Jury and were so disheartened that they left:-

"when the Jury was presented to the judge, Sir William Croft and Mr. Brabazon whispered the judge in the ear and then Mr. James of Trippleton was taken off, he was returned, and then at Hereford, Mr. Kyrle and Mr. Husband and Mr. Crowder (sic) were and Mr. Broughton, they saw they could do no good and so went home".

In July and August 1642 both Parliamentarians and Royalists in the neighbouring counties of Worcestershire and Shropshire instigated similar attempts to pack the Grand Juries in their counties.³⁴

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31. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 16 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 315r; C.J., II, 791; agreement of association, 8 October 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 327r; R.H. Silcock, 'County Government in Worcestershire, 1603-1660' (Ph. D. Thesis, University of London, 1974), p. 234. It should be noted that the H.M.C., Calendar suggests that a "cousin Vaughan" visited Lady Brilliana, rather than as the original letter clearly states "cousin Nanfan", see H.M.C., Portland, 98. For the family relationship between Nanfan and the Harleys, see A.T. Butler (ed.), The Visitation of Worcestershire, 1634 (Harleian Society, Vol., XC, 1938), p. 73.
32. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 27 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 293v.
33. List of Deputy Lieutenants, 30 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 326r.
34. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 30 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 300r. "Crowder" was probably William Crowther, see B.L., Harl., MSS., 7,189 f. 24lv; Hutton, op. cit., pp. 10-12.

The isolated expressions of dissent noted in Herefordshire by Lady Brilliana did not, of course, add up to full scale resistance to the Commissioners of Array. In effect there were too few committed Parliamentarians amongst the leading Herefordshire gentry to challenge the activities of the Commissioners. Thus, throughout the months of July, August and September 1642, Lady Brilliana was convinced that Brampton would come under attack, either by Royalist forces from outside the county, or by the county Commissioners on the pretext of searching for
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 arms.

Lady Brilliana's solution to her fears was to take both more arms and some hired men into the house for protection. On 15 July 1642 she reported that she had received twenty bandoliers and that she was still awaiting a delivery of muskets and rests. On 19 July she wrote that she had asked the plumber to send to Worcester for "50 weight of shot"; three days later she received a consignment of powder and match. In August Lady Brilliana took a number of men into the house and paid them 3d a day plus meat and drink and on 4 August Edward Harley returned home
 36
 to strengthen the numbers at Brampton.

Despite Lady Brilliana's precautions, no force was brought against Brampton in these months. Lower down the social scale those with Parliamentary sympathies were not so lucky. In July a Mr. Herring was driven from his home. In August Edward Dalley's house was searched and his arms were seized. In September a messenger carrying a letter for Lady Brilliana, from the Parliamentary garrison at Gloucester, was imprisoned at Hereford for taking a letter to the home of a traitor.

35. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 13 July, 6 August, 4 September and 16 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 277r, between ff. 303 and 304, 309r, 315v.

36. Lewis, *Letters*, pp. 178, 181-182, 183; Lady Brilliana to Harley, undated, (received by Harley in Mid-August 1642), and 5 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 306v, 303r. Lady Brilliana's payment to the hired men was in accordance with the rates for day labourers in the county, which had been set down by Sir Robert and other J.P.s in 1632, see rates for wages for servants and labourers, 10 April 1632, B.L., Loan 29/172 f. 56r.

In the same month, Lady Brilliana's gardener was arrested in Royalist Ludlow on suspicion of being a spy. He had apparently offended town officials by publicly declaring in the town that Ludlow was "so bad it would shortly be as bad as Sodom".³⁷

During the early months of the war Lady Brilliana remained unharmed, probably because the local Royalist gentry were unwilling to transgress traditional modes of social behaviour. On 8 August 1642 Sir William Croft, one of the most active of the Commissioners of Array, visited Lady Brilliana at Brampton. He took the opportunity to reconfirm his personal attachment to his Harley cousins, but warned Lady Brilliana that he could show them no favour in executing his public duty:-

"in his private affection he was to you (Sir Robert Harley) as he has been, but in the way of the public he would favour none".³⁸

Croft thus made an explicit distinction between his private and his public affections, with the clear assertion that his public duty would prevail.

Croft was eager, however, to heal the breach between himself and the Harleys. On 20 August 1642 he wrote directly to Sir Robert urging him to return his allegiance to the King. Croft used the amity between the two families and Sir Robert's loss of prestige, at both local and national levels, as grounds for conciliation:-

37. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 17 July 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 28lv; extracts from Lady Brilliana to Harley, 29 August 1642, in Harley's own hand (the original of this letter does not seem to have survived), B.L., Loan 29/27 pt. I; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 22 September 1642, Gower to Harley 23 September 1642, the examination of John Aston, 3 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 322r, 323r, 312v.
38. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 11 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 305r. Croft fought for the King at Edgehill and died in a skirmish at Stokesay Castle in 1645, Webb, Memorials, I, 166-168, II, 193-196. For the history of the friendship between the Crofts and the Harleys, see above, Chapter 2, pp. 111-112.

"we are grown so jealous of one another as your Lady cannot be confident of me while we are thus divided in our ways. I wish this happy accommodation might move from you and that you would earnestly profess it to the regaining that esteem I wish you might have in your country and the whole kingdom".

Croft's letter is a further illustration of his clear understanding of the constitutional implications of the conflict between the King and Parliament. His letter presents the King and his adherents as moderates, striving to maintain the status quo in the face of the encroachment of Parliament, but he warned Harley that in time of war the King could legally deviate from a moderate course:-

"we are for the old way, our forefathers finding Parliaments useful, though subject to Kings and never attempted the gaining a power above them

study moderation and comply with the King and greatest part of the kingdom, since the King has done and promises so much for our satisfaction and with such protestations and execrations, as he is better to be believed than those that tell you he is not to be trusted in his promises of governing us according to law. The instance of the Commission of Array is no contradiction of that for, I know what the opinions of that have been in former Parliaments and of the King's power for the Militia, but grant it may not stand with other laws in time of peace, that now, for the defence of himself and all his subjects that adhere to him, he may better justify more than that commission requires, than you, what you have done by virtue of your ordinances".

Finally Croft explained that should the King lose the war, then his supporters would continue in passive obedience to the monarch and would not give their active obedience to any new regime. Croft ended his letter with the offer to petition the King "for an act of oblivion and setting you right in his Majesty's opinion" if Harley so wished.

Croft's appeal to his kinsman to "lay aside our unnatural quarrell" could be interpreted as the plea of a moderate, concerned to see the continued unity of the local community. Croft's call for peace was genuine enough, but his letter cannot be regarded as a moderate statement, or as evidence of uncommitted opinion. He wanted peace on the King's terms and he had made his opposition to the Parliament known in the county since the early months of 1642. A few days before he wrote his letter, Croft had drilled fifty volunteers at Croft Castle and had

arranged that they should return weekly for military training. Before taking down the volunteers' names he had asked each man "if they would go with him, if there should be occasion, for the King's service any way". Croft also realised that his letter would have little effect on a man who was as committed to Parliament as was Sir Robert Harley. Croft prefaced his letter with the words "I think the much I have written to you is of little purpose".³⁹

Nevertheless, before the effects of warfare were felt in the county, the local gentry had not completely abandoned their assumptions about the ways in which local society should function. Lady Brilliana was herself aware that the traditional social habits of the county "gentry community" were still not completely in eclipse. In the letter in which she had advised her husband to choose some of the moderate Royalists as Deputy-Lieutenants, she had also advised that "if you choose men of little estates and those that are of little value it will make them odious to the country, as it did Mr. Broughton in making him a Justice of Peace. Dear Sir, I beseech the Lord to direct you in this great business, for if it be not so carried that they may see there is a respect paid to the gentry it will extremely inflame them".⁴⁰ This letter also reflects the fact that few of the leading gentry in the county openly supported the Parliament.⁴¹

39. Croft to Harley, 20 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 ff. 33r-34r; J. Coulburne to Richard Sankey, 15 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/119.

40. Lady Brilliana to Harley, undated, received by Harley in mid-August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 307r.

41. That the social composition of the Parliamentarians was lower than that of the Royalists has been noted in other counties, see Cliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 358; Wanklyn, 'Thesis', abstract; in Warwickshire the Parliamentarian county committee was composed of "relatively obscure men", Hughes, 'Thesis', p. 288. These judgements are at odds with Professor Everitt's findings in Kent, where he concludes that the Kentish gentry did not divide along lines of class or wealth. Kent seems to be exceptional, since the gentry were not divided along the lines of religion or abstract political principle either, Everitt, *Kent*, p. 116. Two older studies of the
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Yet, despite the apparent ascendancy of the Royalists in Herefordshire, the Parliamentarians did not give up hope of reversing the balance of power. At the end of September 1642 the presence of the Earl of Essex at Worcester gave a group of Herefordshire Parliamentarians the opportunity to ask for military aid from outside their county. Nehemiah Wharton, a soldier under the command of Stamford, noted that on 30 September "a company of knights, gentlemen and yeomen of the county of Hereford came to his Excellency (Essex), petitioners for strength to be sent speedily to Hereford".⁴²

Amongst the company were probably Sir Richard Hopton, Henry Vaughan, Edward Broughton, James Kyrle and John Flackett, all of whom signed the agreement for the military association of the four marcher counties at Worcester on 8 October 1642. Essex responded by despatching 900 foot soldiers and three troops of horse, commanded by the Earl of Stamford, who took Hereford on 1 October. Stamford remained in Hereford until 14 December 1642, when he was forced to withdraw to Gloucester through lack of money ammunition and provisions.⁴³

During Stamford's occupation of Hereford Sir Robert Harley had returned to his home county. On 3 October the House of Commons had resolved that Harley should attend the Earl of Essex with instructions from the Parliament.⁴⁴ Five days later Harley had reached Worcester, where he

members of the Long Parliament similarly suggest that there was no distinction between Royalist and Parliamentarian M.P.s in terms of economic or social status, see Keeler, *op. cit.*, p. 27, note 134 and D. Brunton and D.H. Pennington, Members of the Long Parliament (1954), p. 4. What was true of M.P.s would not necessarily hold for the population in the counties, however. Furthermore, the methodology of Brunton and Pennington has rightly been criticised by Christopher Hill, see C. Hill, 'Recent Interpretations of the Civil War', History, XLI (1956), 75-80.

42. P.R.O., S.P., 16/492/32.

43. Agreement of Association, 8 October 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 327r. See also Stamford's despatches from Hereford, L.J., V, 271-511 *passim*.

44. C.J., II, 791.

joined with a number of local Parliamentary gentry in signing the agreement of association for the four border counties.⁴⁵ By early November he had arrived in Herefordshire and was able to use his knowledge of the area to help Stamford. During November Harley probably also returned to Brampton Bryan. There is no direct mention of Harley visiting his home at this time in Lady Brilliana's letters, but this is not surprising, since she had stopped writing to Edward Harley when he had returned home in August 1642. There is a similar gap in her letters to her husband during his absence from Westminster in these months. Furthermore, it would surely have been unlikely that Harley had not taken the opportunity to return to see his family after such an extended separation.

Harley was also very active in executing parliamentary business while he was in the county. On 22 November 1642 he and Sir Robert Cooke, M.P. for Tewkesbury, wrote from Hereford to the parliamentary Committee for the Safety of the Kingdom. They recommended that Stamford's powers should be enlarged to give him overall command in the four marcher counties. The letter was referred to the committee by the House of Commons on 26 November and on 13 December this advice was put into operation.⁴⁶

From Herefordshire Harley travelled to Gloucester, which he left on 5 December 1642; from there he probably travelled directly to London. On his return to Parliament Sir Robert was increasingly involved in administrative and committee work. In May 1643 he was restored as Master and Worker of the Mint and in December 1643 he replaced Pym on the Committee for the Westminster Assembly. Edward Harley also left

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45. Agreement of association, 8 October 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 327r.
46. L.J., V, 444; Harley and Cooke to the Committee for the Safety of the Kingdom, 22 November 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 334r; C.J., II, 865, 886.

Brampton in December 1642. He had been actively involved in fighting on the side of Parliament and he probably left for his own protection.⁴⁷

After Stamford's withdrawal from Hereford the Royalists reasserted their power in the county instantly. Hereford was occupied by Royalist troops under Colonel Lawdey, who was joined by the Marquess of Hertford and a force of 2,000 Welsh recruits en route to join the King at Oxford. Hertford appointed the Sheriff, Fitzwilliam Coningsby, as Governor of Hereford,⁴⁸ before continuing his march.

The arrival of the King's troops in the county and the resumption of power by the Royalist gentry meant a renewal of Lady Brilliana's fears. On 25 December 1642 Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley to tell him that the Royalists "revenge all that was done upon me, so that I shall fear any more Parliament forces coming into this country." Within days of Stamford's withdrawal two of her servants had been carried off to Hereford whilst attempting to collect rents, and one of her tenants had been taken to Hereford on the grounds that he was her bullet maker, which Lady Brilliana denied.

In an attempt to free her dependents Lady Brilliana appealed to Viscount Scudamore for his help. Her letter disingenuously claimed that she could not understand why the gentlemen in the county should break the bonds which existed between themselves and the Harleys:-

"my thoughts are in a labyrinth to find out the reason why they should be thus to me. When I look upon myself I can see nothing but love and respect arising out of my heart to them, and when I look upon the many bonds by which most of the gentlemen in this country are tied to Sir Robert Harley, that of blood and some with alliance and all with his long professed and real friendship, and for myself that of common courtesy, as to a stranger brought into their

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47. Harley to Viscount Scudamore, draft, 2 February 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/121; C.J., III, 69, 72, 73, 341; L.J., V, 426; Lewis, Letters, p. 186.
48. Webb, Memorials, I, 206-211; B.L. Harl. MSS., 6,851 f. 243r.

country, I know not how all those who I believe to be so good should break all these obligations". 49

The sentiments expressed in this letter were probably more than genuine, which suggests that Lady Brilliana was quite simply being very naive. Such an explanation, however, runs contrary to what is known of Lady Brilliana's character. She was an observant and spirited woman, and far from being naive, she was shrewd enough to know that Scudamore was a moderate, who might be more sympathetic to her plight than the more committed Royalist gentry of the county. Her letter also indicates that the desire for local unity and a deep commitment to the cause of Parliament could exist side by side. Such appeals to the traditional bonds of the "gentry community" were heartfelt, but this letter indicates that they cannot be construed simply as evidence of moderation.

Scudamore was himself feeling the effects of the war by this date and he did not respond in a conciliatory vein. On the contrary, in the middle of January 1643 he wrote to Sir Robert Harley, James Kyrle and Henry Vaughan, accusing them of making his own wife "a prisoner and hostage for the security of Sir Robert Harley's lady". Scudamore complained of "the felonies and barbarous plundering acted upon Llanthony", his Gloucestershire estate. Scudamore threatened that if trees were cut down at Llanthony, then "axes should be laid to the roots of the trees which stand about Brampton Castle" and that Kyrle's estate at Walford and Vaughan's estate at Moccas would suffer the same fate.

49. Lewis, Letters, p. 186; P.R.O., C 115/N.2/8521. Lady Brilliana also wrote to Fitzwilliam Coningsby and Sir Walter Pye, but I have not been able to locate these letters, if they survive. It would indeed be interesting to compare her letters to the three men and to see how they compared or differed. At some point Lady Brilliana drafted a letter to Sir William Croft concerning her right to keep arms at Brampton. The letter to Croft makes a more muted reference to county loyalties than her letter to Scudamore cited above, see Lady Brilliana to Harley, 17 January 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. lv; and Lady Brilliana to Croft, Draft, undated, B.L., Loan 29/72.

Kyrle forwarded this letter to Sir Robert and commented "by these you may perceive the continuance of the malice of our kindred in Herefordshire towards your family". Harley drafted a reply to Scudamore in which he declared "my Lord, this is such a charge as I should despise myself were I guilty of any part of it". He professed that he would rather that all the trees and his home at Brampton should be laid waste, than that he should have been guilty of the offences committed against Scudamore. James Kyrle also wrote to Scudamore and protested that no matter how he was treated he would offer violence to none:-

"assure yourself that it shall be far from me to offer the least violence unto any of yours or any other bodies, however I am dealt withal". 50

Lady Scudamore, however, subsequently insisted in a letter to Colonel Massey, the Parliamentarian Governor of Gloucester, that Kyrle had seized rents due from her Gloucestershire estates in retaliation for the sequestration of his own estate:-

"his estate being seized on by the Governor of Hereford and others, for supposed delinquency, he professes to do the same to my tenants, as he has already begun on James Collins and Richard Meek". 51

Despite his restrained support for the King, Viscount Scudamore still suffered considerable losses at the hands of the Parliamentarians. On his estates at Holme Lacy and at Llanthony rents were seized, the furnishings of his houses were destroyed, buildings were gutted and trees were felled. Following his arrival in London as a prisoner in 1643, the goods in his home in Petty France, Westminster, were confiscated and sold. Scudamore himself was to be allowed to treat with a parliamentary committee, composed of Sir Robert Harley, John Pym, Sir Henry Vane and Oliver St. John. Although Harley reported as late as December 1645 that Scudamore had offered "a considerable sum for his fine for his delinquency", the House of Commons had taken no action to release Scudamore

50. Scudamore to Harley, Kyrle and Vaughan, 13 January 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/121; Kyrle to Harley, 24 January 1642/3 B.L., Loan 29/120; P.R.O., C 115/1.2/5614.

51. Folger Library, Scudamore MSS., Vb2 (13).

from custody. These incidents illustrate the personal ways in which people were affected by the course of the war. The bitterness which such private losses incurred was considerable.

After the withdrawal of Stamford from Hereford in December 1642, Lady Brilliana had not only suffered from the desire of the local Royalists to exact revenge on the major Parliamentarian stronghold in the county, but Brampton had also attracted the attention of the King. In January 1643 King Charles took the decision to have Brampton attacked and he ordered Fitzwilliam Coningsby to prepare for an assault on the castle. The King hoped thereby to make an example of what probably appeared to be a soft target.

In February 1643 the Royalist commander, Lord Herbert, was at Hereford and he planned to take Brampton with the help of the Radnorshire trained bands. The plan collapsed, partly because the trained bands refused to cross into Herefordshire, and partly because Herbert suffered a defeat at the hands of the Parliamentarian forces at the battle of Highnam on 25 February 1643. Coningsby, however, despatched a letter to Brampton at the beginning of March demanding the delivery of the castle, to which Lady Brilliana sent a spirited reply, using the Crown's own propaganda as a reason for her refusal to comply:-

"to the demand of my house and arms, (which are no more than to defend my house), this is my answer. Our gracious King, having many times promised that he will maintain the laws and liberties of the kingdom, by which I have as good right to what is mine as anyone, maintains me these, and I know not upon what ground the refusal of giving you what is mine, (by the laws of the land), will prove me, or any that is with me, traitors".

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52. Folger Library, Scudamore MSS., Vb2 (2), (6); Webb, Memorials I, 263-268.
53. King Charles to Coningsby, copy, 26 January 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/122/3.
54. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 14 February 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 8r-v; Hutton, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

Lady Brilliana was to use very similar arguments later in the year when Sir William Vavasour laid siege to her home.⁵⁵ Lady Brilliana received a reply to her letter from the Marquess of Hertford, who assured the safety of Lady Brilliana and her family, if she would surrender.⁵⁶ Despite these initial moves, the Royalists were unable to spare the force to attack Brampton. The threatened assault on Brampton was thus postponed; nevertheless, Lady Brilliana's situation was becoming increasingly unpleasant. The restraint, which the local Royalist gentry had exercised in relation to Lady Brilliana in the summer of 1642 had clearly been weakened by their experience of Parliamentary rule in the county and the surrounding areas. The King's decision of January 1643, that Brampton should be reduced, also encouraged the local Royalists in their increasing hostility towards the enclave at Brampton.

Throughout the period from Stamford's withdrawal from Hereford in December 1642 until 26 July 1643, when the siege of Brampton Bryan finally commenced, Lady Brilliana suffered increasing harassment at the hands of the local Royalists. The Parliamentarians at Brampton were isolated in an area that remained largely under Royalist hegemony during those months. The nearest Parliamentary stronghold was the garrison at Gloucester commanded by Massey, and, although Lady Brilliana had contact with the garrison, it was simply too far away to offer practical protection to the inhabitants of Brampton.

Parliamentarian troops under the command of Sir William Waller moved from Gloucester in early April 1642 through the southern marches and into Herefordshire, where they successfully besieged Hereford and entered the city on 25 April 1643. Waller's occupation lasted less than a month and he left the county without securing the city with a garrison. Following

55. Coningsby to Lady Brilliana and her reply, 4 March 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 15; see also below, p. 309.

56. Hertford to Lady Brilliana, undated, B.L., Loan 29/174 between ff. 18 and 19.

the fall of Hereford to Waller some of the leading Royalists in the county were taken prisoner, Viscount Scudamore was sent to London and the Coningsbys, Sir Walter Pye and Sir William Croft were all sent to the Parliamentary garrison at Bristol. After Waller's withdrawal from Hereford the Royalist administration in the county was restructured and the position of the local Royalists was strengthened by the fall of the Parliamentary garrison at Bristol to Prince Rupert on 25 July 1643. Royalist forces were now free to turn their attention to Massey at Gloucester. The King himself headed the forces which besieged Gloucester on 10 August 1643.⁵⁷

The isolation of the garrison at Brampton Bryan during this period resulted in a very real fear amongst the inhabitants that there would be an attack on the castle. In March 1643 Lady Brilliana had again asked Sir Robert if she should leave her home and go to a place of safety. Lady Brilliana informed her husband that she had heard that Lord Herbert had appointed six hundred men and two cannon to be sent to reduce Brampton. Without the texts of Harley's replies it is impossible to gauge his response to this and to the other news which Lady Brilliana sent to him during these months. It would seem that Harley once again⁵⁸ counselled Lady Brilliana to stay at Brampton.

Although Herbert's planned attack on Brampton was abandoned, the local Royalists did their best to intimidate Lady Brilliana into submission. In February 1642 Fitzwilliam Coningsby had informed all of the Harleys' tenants that they should pay their rents directly to him. Her inability to collect rents meant that Lady Brilliana found it difficult to maintain the payments she was making to the men she had hired to protect the house.

57. Webb, Memorials, I, 249-313.

58. Lewis, Letters, pp. 187, 188, 191, 195; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 8 March 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 17r.

If these men left she was convinced that Brampton would be defenceless. Lady Brilliana believed that "their aim is to enforce me to let those men I have go, that then they might seize upon my house and cut our throats by a few rogues, and then say, they knew not who did it". In May 1643 Lady Brilliana in fact dismissed these men, because they had plundered the house of the Sheriff of Radnorshire and were reputed to have killed a man.⁵⁹

Even when the hired men were at Brampton, Lady Brilliana was quite powerless to protect her dependents beyond the confines of the castle. In January 1643 a messenger from Sir Robert Harley was arrested by the local Royalists and after March 1643 Lady Brilliana occasionally adopted a code when writing to Edward Harley. Ten of her horses were taken and in April 1643 a group of Royalist soldiers took four oxen and beat some workmen in Brampton Park. Lady Brilliana sent out some of her men to stop the soldiers and two troopers shot and killed one of her men,⁶⁰ Edward Morgan.

Under these conditions the inhabitants of Brampton Bryan were afraid to venture far from the castle. In January 1643 Lady Brilliana had written to Harley and told him "none that belongs to me dare go to Hereford, nor dare they go far from my house".⁶¹ The hostile atmosphere in the county meant that a number of Parliamentarians decided to leave and either go to places of safety outside the county or join the Parliamentarian forces.

John Tombes, the vicar of Leominster, had already fled the county for his home county of Worcester in August 1642. At the end of February

59. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 14 February 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 8v; Lewis, Letters, pp. 188-189, 190, 191; H.M.C., Bath, pp. 9-10.

60. Lewis, Letters, p. 187; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 28 January 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/72; Lewis, Letters, pp. 187, 191, 192, 193, 194, 196, 197, 199; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 8 March 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 18r; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 23 April 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72.

61. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 28 January 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/72.

1643 two more Parliamentary clergy, William Lowe and John Yates, decided to quit Herefordshire and go to London. Stanley Gower left Brampton Bryan for London in July 1643, in order to attend the Assembly of Divines. John Green, rector of Pencomb, had also left the county by late September 1643 in order to attend the Assembly. Tombes and Lowe were not native to Herefordshire, while the origins of the remaining three clerics are obscure. None of these ministers seem to have been bound by the considerations of estate and family ties, which affected the gentry in the county.

Despite the more complex nature of gentry ties within the county, a number of Parliamentary gentry also left Herefordshire. James Kyrle of Walford was at Worcester on 8 October 1642 and by January 1643 had settled at the Parliamentary garrison at Gloucester. His son Robert had joined the Parliamentary army in 1642 and had served under Stamford during his occupation of Hereford at the end of that year. Edward Broughton was also at Worcester on 8 October 1642. At some time in the following months he was taken prisoner by the Royalists. On 17 June 1643 Lady Brilliana informed Harley that "Mr Broughton is close prisoner, but very well and cheerful, and much rejoices that I yet hold out". By February 1644 Broughton had been released and was an active

62. Tombes to Harley, 5 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/121; Lewis, Letters, p. 190; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 3 July 1643 (this letter appears to bear the date 1642, but see above, note 6), B.L., Loan 29/72; C.J., III, 251; Brook, op. cit., I, 90-91.

63. Tombes was born in Bewdley, Worcestershire and Lowe matriculated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, as of Warwickshire, A.G. Matthews, Calamy Revised: being a revision of Edmund Calamy's account of the ministers and others ejected and silenced, 1660-1662 (Oxford, 1932), pp. 487, 329. Gower probably came from Lancashire, see above, Ch. I, p. 44.

64. Agreement of association, 8 October 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 327r; Kyrle to Harley, 24 January 1642/3, B.L., Loan 29/120; Robert Kyrle to Harley, 17 September 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 317r; L.J., V, 425; Robert Kyrle apparently changed sides twice during the course of the First Civil War, Webb, Memorials, I, 230, II, 98-99, 349-353.

member of the Parliamentarian "grand Committee" at Gloucester.

Lady Brilliana's two eldest sons, Edward and Robert, joined Sir William Waller's forces in June 1643.⁶⁶ For the most committed Parliamentarian gentry a successful prosecution of the war was more important than the peace of the county. The gradual reduction in the numbers of active Parliamentarians in Herefordshire was, however, to leave Brampton in an increasingly isolated position. Nor was Lady Brilliana's situation aided by Waller's occupation of Hereford in April 1643. While Waller was in the county Lady Brilliana collected £22 in rent from her tenants in Kingsland.⁶⁷ After Waller had left the county, however, it became clear that the traditional Harley influence in the north of the county was almost extinct.

On 9th May 1643 Lady Brilliana reported that she had tried to lend the parsonage house at Leintwardine, where Sir Robert Harley was patron, to the vicar of Stokesay, Francis Boughey. She had been unable to do so,⁶⁸ because "some of the parish would not let him be there". In September 1643 Lady Brilliana noted that since John Yates had left the living at Leintwardine "a popish minister crowded in here". She appealed to Harley to send a parliamentary commission to Boughey, in order to reinforce her own attempts to install him in the living.⁶⁹

65. Agreement of association, 8 October 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 327r; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 17 June 1642, B.L., Loan 29/72; P.R.O., S.P. 28/228 part 3, no. 545, part 4, nos. 771, 773, part 5, nos. 854, 865, 921.

66. Lewis, Letters, pp. 204-205.

67. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 28 May 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72.

68. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 9 May 1643, (this letter is dated 1642, but was clearly written in 1643, since it recounts Waller's capture of Hereford), B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 247v.

69. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 24 September 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72.

Lady Brilliana encountered similar difficulties in asserting her traditional authority over her tenants. In May 1643 she told Harley that their steward at Kingsland, John Wall, had turned his own cattle into the tenants' land at Kingsland and had taken the land as his own. The tenants at Kingsland refused to pay their rent to the Harleys on the grounds that Harley had not paid the chief rent to the Crown for the past two years. It appears that the Harleys were in arrears with the rents to the Crown, since Lady Brilliana asked Harley whether he would pay the money, or whether she should do so. In the following month Lady Brilliana reminded Harley to ensure that the chief rent was paid.⁷⁰

The refusal of the tenants of Kingsland to pay their rents to the Harleys was not an exception and in fact Lady Brilliana complained that she could collect nothing from any of the tenants on the Harleys' estates. Some tenants may have paid their rents to the Royalist administration, as instructed by Fitzwilliam Coningsby. Others probably took advantage of the confusion to pay nothing and others were more honest and turned the lands back to the Harleys, since they could no longer afford to farm the land themselves. In April 1643 Lady Brilliana informed Harley that some local landowners abated rent at the rate of 4 shillings in the pound and she suggested he should take a similar course. Even if Harley did follow this advice, it had little effect. In June and July 1643 Lady Brilliana wrote again to Edward Harley and to Sir Robert and told them that she was still unable to collect rents.⁷¹

70. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 28 May 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 11 June 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 28r. In April 1642 Wall's accounts for Kingsland had been £180 in arrears Nathaniel Tomkins to Harley, 8 April 1642, B.L., Loan 29/173 f. 235r. Harley did pay the rents for 1642 and 1643, but the receivers were probably acting on behalf of the Parliament. A parliamentary ordinance of September 1643 ordered the incomes from Crown lands to be seized and to be administered by a committee of Parliament, see Lewis, Letters, p. 231; C.S.P.D., 1645-1647, p. 466; C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (eds.), Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum 1642-1660 (1911), I, 299-302.

71. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 1 April 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72; Lewis, cont.

Lady Brilliana was able to survive financially only by borrowing money
72
locally.

The problems faced by Lady Brilliana had not been eased by Waller's occupation of Hereford, which had been too brief to have much effect. Although Waller had captured a number of leading Herefordshire Royalists, once he had left the county the Royalist administration was re-organised. Henry Lingen replaced the imprisoned Fitzwilliam Coningsby as Sheriff, and a new governor was appointed for the county. At the end of June 1643 Lady Brilliana wrote to Edward Harley and told him of the renewed efforts of the Royalists:-

"in this country they begin to raise new troops, and they have set the country at £1,200 a month. My Lord Herbert and Colonel Vavasour, who is to be governor of Hereford, is gone up into Montgomeryshire to raise soldiers. All of them are returned into Herefordshire; Sir Walter Pye, Mr. Brabazon, Mr. Smallman, Mr. Wigmore, Mr. Lingen, and Mr. Stiles and Gardnas, who has quartered soldiers in Kingsland". 73

In spite of her fears that Brampton would be attacked, Lady Brilliana resolutely refused to maintain a neutral stance and she had allowed Brampton to become a centre of refuge for Parliamentarians. She sent some of these men to join her son's troop, furnishing one with a horse, which cost her £8. Lady Brilliana also promised Edward Harley that she would "see whether any will contribute to buy a horse" and she sent money
74
to Edward as her own contribution for a horse in his troop.

Lady Brilliana also kept herself well informed about the movements and the intentions of the local Royalists, in the hope of countering them. On 2 July 1643 she thus despatched Priam Davies to Colonel Massey, the Parliamentarian governor of Gloucester. Davies was to ask for two troops

Letters, p. 205; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 11 June 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 28r; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 14 July 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72.

72. Lewis, Letters, pp. 184-185; receipts dated 27 June 1643, 23 October 1643, 23 January 1644/5, B.L., Loan 29/24 pt. 2.

73. Webb, Memorials, I, 299-300; Lewis, Letters, p. 205.

74. Lewis, Letters, pp. 196, 199, 201, 206, 207.

of horse to attack Lord Molyneux, who had camped with two hundred horse soldiers outside Leominster.⁷⁵

In the light of these activities it is not surprising that the Royalist plans for the siege of Brampton were revived in July 1643. The newly appointed governor of Hereford, Sir William Vavasour, was acutely aware that the continued existence of a haven for Parliament's supporters in the midst of territory under Royalist control could only reflect badly on his own command. Vavasour was the son of a gentleman from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire; he had been appointed as Colonel-General under Lord Herbert in June 1643 and had set about the task of restoring confidence to Herbert's demoralised command.⁷⁶ A successful assault on Brampton would have been of considerable value to Vavasour at this time. Thus on 26 July 1643 Vavasour's forces surrounded Brampton and on the same day he wrote to Prince Rupert with the following justification:-

"I found that I had been lost in the opinion of these counties, neither should I get half the contribution promised me, unless I made an attempt upon Brampton Castle, Sir Robert Harley's house, which I ventured upon, it is a strong place, but I am lodged very near it, three pikes length from the ports".⁷⁷

The approach to the castle was protected by the gatehouse, an early fourteenth century structure, defended on either side by a low circular tower topped by battlements (Fig. 3). The gatehouse was further protected by a fully working double portcullis. From the gatehouse a passage of some 45 feet in length led into the inner courtyard, where the hall lay on the north side of the court.

The inmates of the castle reckoned that they were surrounded by two or three troops of horse, plus two or three hundred foot soldiers, in all about 700 men. Inside the castle there were one hundred people,

75. Priam Davies, to Edward Harley, 3 July 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 33r.

76. Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

77. Webb, *Memorials*, I, 318.



BRAMPTON BRYAN CASTLE

THE GATEHOUSE RUINS

half of whom were musketeers according to Priam Davies, who was present. Lady Brilliana was accompanied by her children, Thomas, Dorothy and Margaret, and by a number of friends, including Dorothy, Lady Coleburn, Nathaniel Wright (the family doctor), his wife, and his apothecary, Petter. Also present was Samuel More, son of the M.P. for Richard's Castle in Shropshire.⁷⁸

Inside the castle conditions for the Parliamentarians were extremely uncomfortable and dangerous, but Lady Brilliana's own fortitude strengthened the resolve of her supporters. Priam Davies later recalled "all our bread was ground with a hand mill, our provisions very scarce, the roof of the castle so battered that there was not one dry room in it; our substance without plundered and all our friends fled, yet this noble lady bore all with admirable patience".⁷⁹

The Royalists' first move was to send Lady Brilliana a summons from Henry Lingen, Sir Walter Pye and William Smallman, to surrender to Vavasour's forces. Once again Lady Brilliana referred to the Crown's own propaganda in framing her reply. She wrote that since the King had promised to maintain the laws and liberties of the kingdom, she could not believe that the King "would give a command to take away anything from his loyal subjects, and much less to take away my house. If Sir William Vavasour will do so I must endeavour to keep what is mine as well as I can, in which I have the law of nature, of reason, and of the land on my side, and you none to take it from me".⁸⁰

The siege lasted for just over six weeks. During that time the Royalist forces plundered Brampton's cattle, sheep and horses; burnt down the mills, the houses in the town and the barns, and continually bombarded

78. Robinson, Castles, p. 14; H.M.C., Bath, pp. 23, 1, 3, 22, 33; Lewis, Letters, p. 208; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 6 August 1642, B.L., Loan 29/174 between ff. 303 and 304; D.N.B., XIII, 874-875.

79. H.M.C., Bath, p. 26.

80. Ibid., pp. 1, 8.

the castle with cannon and small shot. Apart from damaging the castle extensively, the Royalists killed the cook and wounded both Mrs. Wright and Dorothy, Lady Coleburn, who lost an eye. The inhabitants of the castle accepted these losses with great courage. They placed their trust in God's providence for a safe delivery and they refused to surrender. In his account of the siege, Priam Davies declared with great bravado that he and his fellows were most disturbed by the swearing of the Royalists, rather than by their military endeavours:-

"the enemy continued this battery, cursing the Roundheads, calling us Essex's bastards, Waller's bastards, Harley's bastards, rogues, thieves, traitors, and all to reduce us to the obedience of the King and Protestant religion

Upon the 22nd day the enemy made their approaches nearer to us, cast up breast works in our gardens and walks, where their rotten and poisoned language annoyed us more than their poisoned bullets". 81

Throughout the siege Lady Brilliana was in continual negotiation with either Vavasour, or later with Sir John Scudamore of Ballingham, who had been sent by the King from the court at Matson, near Gloucester, to treat with Lady Brilliana. Initially Lady Brilliana maintained that she and her family were "the King's most faithful subjects" and that Vavasour should withdraw his troops. She explained to Vavasour that if she allowed his troops into Brampton "I would become a prisoner in my own house". She could only dispose of the house according to Sir Robert's wishes and since she did not know whether he wished to have soldiers in the house she could not take the decision alone, because "I never will voluntarily betray the trust my husband reposes in me." Lady Brilliana's belief that she was involved in a religious struggle is evident in her letters to Vavasour. She informed the Governor that

81. Ibid., pp. 1-33; see also the copies of the correspondence between Lady Brilliana and Sir John Scudamore of Ballingham, 24, 25 August 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 49r-v. Scudamore of Ballingham had been knighted at Oxford at the beginning of 1643, W.A. Shaw, The Knights of England (1906), II, 215.

"if it has pleased the Lord to appoint that your cruelties and wrongs to me and mine, and some of the inhabitants of this town, must help fill up the measure of all the cruelties now used against those that desire to keep faith in a good conscience, I shall not be displeased; for when the measure of cruelties is full, the day of deliverance will soon appear to the Church of God, which is now afflicted".⁸² She also requested that one of her servants should be allowed to take a message to her brother-in-law, Sir William Pelham, who was, she believed, with the King. On 23rd August Scudamore arrived with a letter from the King offering Brilliana a full pardon if she would surrender Brampton to Vavasour. Scudamore allowed Lady Brilliana to address a petition to the King in which she wrote that she "did never offend your Majesty, or ever take up arms against your Majesty, or any man of mine, or any by my appointment was in actual rebellion against your sacred Majesty".⁸³

Lady Brilliana's protests were not strictly true. She had certainly harboured Parliamentarians and had helped volunteers to go to the Parliamentarian army by providing horse and some money.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in response to her petition, Lady Brilliana was sent a letter from Falkland, which assured her of a full pardon and licence to go where she would, if she would surrender the castle.⁸⁵

Despite such assurances Lady Brilliana had no wish to turn her estates over to men whom she regarded as "spoilers". Furthermore, the inhabitants of the castle were convinced that they would be harmed if they did surrender. They thus placed their hopes in receiving outside help and refused to submit. On 4th September they received the news that.

82. H.M.C., Bath, pp. 10, 12-13

83. Ibid., pp. 12, 14, 17.

84. See above p.306.

85. H.M.C., Bath, pp. 17-18.

"Sir William Bruerton would send a party to our release," although
86
this help did not materialise.

Ultimately, however, outside events did raise the siege at Brampton. On 9th September Vavasour's forces were called away to counter Essex's success in raising the siege of Gloucester. Inside the castle the news was received with jubilation:-

"This night we had secret intelligence that the Lord General was with a very great army near Gloucester, that the Cavaliers had raised their siege to give him battle, and that all the King's forces were called together for that purpose from Exeter, from Shrewsbury etc; that Sir William Waller came out of London upon Monday last and that the Cavaliers about us would be gone. This indeed, was the day of our deliverance, a day to be remembered and never to be forgotten throughout our generations." 87

After the siege had been lifted, Sir Robert Harley at last wrote to Lady Brilliana and advised her to leave Brampton Bryan. In her reply to this letter Lady Brilliana bravely replied that she was not afraid to lose her life in the preservation of the Harley estates and the continuance of true religion in the county. She asked Harley to send Edward Harley home in order to "do his country service and himself good in helping to keep what I hope shall be his, and in maintaining the gospel in this place".

In a letter written to Edward Harley at the same time, Lady Brilliana repeated her desire to have him with her at Brampton and asked his advice "whether I had best stay or remove". At the beginning of October Lady Brilliana wrote to young Brilliana and told her that she longed to leave Brampton, but added realistically that she could not stir without a convoy. In her last extant letter written to Sir Robert Harley, dated 16 October, Lady Brilliana wrote "I very much long to hear from you and whether you would have me come from Brampton and how I should come". Before Harley could arrange for his wife's departure, Lady Brilliana

86. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 24 September 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72
H.M.C., Bath, pp. 25, 26.

87. Ibid., p. 7.

had fallen ill and she died on 29 October 1643.

Although Lady Brilliana had decided to leave Brampton, she was also convinced that the siege would be renewed, she had therefore taken measures to secure the castle against further attack. The castle had thus been stocked with provisions, which were plundered from Lady Brilliana's opponents in the locality. Priam Davies recorded:-

"we then daily sent our parties against those that had been most active against us, whereby our necessities were in a short time supplied". 89

Despite Lady Brilliana's earlier appeal to the law of the land in her letter to Lingen, Pye and Smallman, and despite her own reluctance to take plunder, necessity had thus forced her to contribute to the general collapse of the laws.

Lady Brilliana also issued orders for an attack on Royalist troops quartered just over the border in Radnorshire. Davies' account emphasises that Lady Brilliana was their commander in every sense of the word:-

"this noble lady, who commanded in chief, I may truly say with such a masculine bravery, both for religion, resolution wisdom and warlike policy, that her equal I never yet saw, commanded that a party of about forty should go and beat up their quarters in Knighton, a market town in Radnorshire, four miles off, where Colonel Lingen's troop, her late antagonist, was quartered. This was so performed that we brought some prisoners, arms and horses without the loss of one man".

The garrison was then reinforced by the arrival of one barrel of powder,⁹⁰ some men and some arms sent by Colonel Massey from Gloucester.

Despite the hostile actions performed by the garrison, Lady Brilliana continued to insist that she was doing no more than protecting her own property, for which she claimed the laws of the land gave her sufficient warrant. In a letter written to her brother Viscount Conway, in

88. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 24 September 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72; Lewis, Letters, p. 208; Lady Brilliana to Brilliana Harley, 7 October 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 between ff. 55 and 59; Lady Brilliana to Harley, 16 October 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 61r.

89. H.M.C., Bath, p. 27.

90. Ibid., pp. 26-27.

mid-October 1643, Lady Brilliana declared "I never desired any more than to live upon my own, in my own house and never anything that in the least kind might provoke or occasion an army to come against me".

Lady Brilliana maintained that she had kept muskets in readiness "to keep me from the plundering of soldiers" and that she had resisted Vavasour's demands because "I thought it was a poor thing to give away my own, with my own will, and I thought it was worse to be contented to receive a guard into my house by which I become a prisoner and so speak myself guilty". She again repeated her fears that she would be badly treated if she fell into the hands of the Royalists:-

"what you mean by resisting with all extremity I know not I believe if I fall into their hands I should suffer much".

In the summer of 1642 Lady Brilliana could have accounted herself innocent of any action against the Royalists, other than sending up her family plate for the Parliamentary war effort, but in the intervening months Lady Brilliana had become increasingly involved in the actions of the war. By mid-October her protestations of innocence no longer ring true. Lady Brilliana, of course, was doubtless convinced that all of her actions had been undertaken in a spirit of self-defence and that the increasingly hostile activities of the Royalists had forced her to take greater measures for her own safety.

At the same time that Lady Brilliana had received the letter from her brother, she had also received a letter from Vavasour threatening to renew the siege. ⁹¹ Before Vavasour could take any further action, however, Lady Brilliana fell fatally ill. Her final sickness and her death were both sudden and unexpected. On 29 October 1643 Samuel More wrote a letter to Sir Robert Harley's servant, Sankey, in London, in which he described Lady Brilliana's grave condition. A week previously

91. P.R.O., S.P., 16/498/9, this letter is undated, although the C.S.P.D. suggests a date of 19 September 1643, this would appear to be mistaken, since Lady Brilliana did not receive her brother's letter until mid-October, see C.S.P.D., 1641-1643, pp. 486-487, and Lady Brilliana to Harley, 16 October 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 61r.

Lady Brilliana had suffered a fit of stone. She had recovered, but then she developed a cough which hindered her sleep. The next day "she fell into a fit" and was seized with apoplexy, lethargy and convulsions. More knew that Lady Brilliana was near death. He advised that "if the Lord take this sweet Lady", it was necessary that there should be a head of the family. He suggested that Edward Harley⁹² "had best come".

The final days of Lady Brilliana's life were fortified by her deep religious faith. In his account of her death Priam Davies described the strength which Lady Brilliana derived from her religious beliefs:-

"this honourable lady, of whom the world was not worthy, as she was a setting forward the work of God, suddenly and unexpectedly fell sick of an apoplexy, with a defluxion of the lungs. Three days she continued in great extremity with admirable patience. Never was a holy life consummated and concluded with a more heavenly and happy end. Myself and many others of quality being both ear and eye witnesses, to our great admiration. The last period of her mortal abode in this vale of tears drawing on apace, she with an undaunted faith and resolution looked death in the face without dread, and the Lord Jesus with joy and comfort, to whom she resigned her soul. From whom she has received an immortal, an incorruptible, inheritance and crown, which none of her enemies can reach to rob or despoil her of". 93

Whilst this account owes much to the genre of the "godly life", which formed a popular part of puritan literature during the seventeenth century and which generally stressed the peaceful and fulfilled deaths of the godly, it should be remembered that Davies was not writing a "life" of Lady Brilliana. His account was primarily concerned with the events of the siege of Brampton. Despite following the conventions of puritan literature about the godly, Davies's account was also a sincere tribute to the woman who had bravely refused to surrender to the Royalist forces.

On learning of his wife's death, Sir Robert Harley wrote at once to Samuel More and Nathaniel Wright at Brampton Bryan, asking them to care

92. More to Sankey, 29 October 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 two copies, between ff. 63 and 64.

93. H.M.C., Bath, p. 27.

both for his estate and for his children. The surviving draft of his letter reveals the importance which Sir Robert placed in protecting Brampton against Royalist attack:-

"having received the sad news that the Lord has taken from me my dear wife, to whose wise hand of providence I desire with a heart of resignation humbly to submit. Beseeching him in mercy to sanctify it unto me and my poor children, and that he will be pleased to make up this breach with consolations of his holy spirit

Entreating you both to manage the affairs of my poor estate, to receive my rents etc. keep my house for the King and Parliament against all opposers and the Lord in mercy be the bulwark with you. I would have my children and my nephew Smith guided by your counsels". 94

Dr. Wright subsequently received a commission from Parliament appointing him commander of the castle. Wright then raised a troop of horse and victualled the castle with sufficient food for a year, "all which was gained by the sword", according to Priam Davies. The Royalists did not, however, resume the siege until Easter 1644. The second siege lasted three weeks and ended with the surrender of the garrison to Sir Michael Woodhouse, Sir William Vavasour and the Harleys' friend and kinsman, Sir William Croft. A second garrison, which had been set up by Samuel More at Hopton Castle, in Shropshire, surrendered at the same time. More was taken prisoner and according to the accounts of both More and Priam Davies, twenty five of More's men were slaughtered after they had surrendered.

Amongst the prisoners from Brampton Bryan were Sir Robert Harley's younger children Thomas, Dorothy and Margaret and his ward, Edward Smith, as well as Nathaniel Wright, the governor of the garrison and two of his captains Priam Davies and John Hackluit. There were also two ministers, William Stevenson, vicar of Wigmore and Francis Boughy, vicar of Stokesay in Shropshire. The bulk of the prisoners were inhabitants of the

94. Draft letter from Harley to Wright and More, 4 November 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 f. 64r.

95. H.M.C. Bath, pp. 28, 29-33, 36-40. More was not present when his men were killed, he was told of their deaths by a Royalist soldier.

town of Brampton Bryan and servants or tenants from the estate.

The prisoners were all taken to Ludlow where, wrote Davies the inhabitants "baited us like bears and demanded where our God was". Then the prisoners were taken to Shrewsbury and some were sent on to Chester Castle. ⁹⁷ During their incarceration at Shrewsbury the prisoners from Brampton were visited by Edward Symmons, Sir Michael Woodhouse's chaplain, who debated their disloyalty with them. Symmons later incorporated their replies into the introduction of a tract aimed at refuting a sermon preached by Stephen Marshall before the House of Commons on 23 February 1642.

The prisoners told Symmons "that they took up arms against Antichrist, and Popery". They gave Symmons a fully detailed account of the religious nature of the war, which reveals both the motivations and the beliefs of the people inside Brampton Bryan, who had supported Lady Brilliana's attempts to repulse the Royalist siege. Like Lady Brilliana, the other people who had resisted the siege of Brampton Bryan saw the war as a religious conflict. They also believed that their stand against the Royalists was legally warranted by the command of Parliament, as they explained to Symmons. In speaking with Symmons, the prisoners from Brampton were justifying their actions to an opponent. Their arguments are thus a very clear statement of their beliefs, in particular the conviction that the supporters of episcopacy were sympathetic to Catholicism and the profound belief that all godly people would be moved to act together against the threat posed by popery:-

96. Longleat MSS., Portland Papers, Vol. 23 ff. 199r-203r. The list of prisoners is noted in the H.M.C. calendar, but is not given in full, H.M.C. Bath, p. 33.

97. H.M.C. Bath, p. 33.

"all the true godly divines in England (amongst whom they named in special M. Marshall) were of their opinion, that Antichrist was here in England as well as in Rome, and that the Bishops were Antichrist, and all that did endeavour to support them were popishly affected, Babilonish and Antichristian too, yea many professed Papists were in our armies, who (they said) did fight against Christ and Protestant religion, and therefore they thought, they were bound in conscience to fight against them, and us that took part with them, and in so doing they did but help God against his enemies. I (Symmons) urged them to shew what call or warrant they had so to do, being not authorised by the King, they seemed to infer a three-fold call or warrant. 1. The command of the Parliament 2. The example of all godly and powerful ministers, leading, encouraging, and stirring them up thereunto. And 3. The motion of God's spirit in all God's people, provoking them all with one mind, to undertake the same business." 98

Lady Brilliana had been similarly convinced that her enemies were popishly inclined. After the first siege had been lifted, she wrote to her eldest daughter, Brilliana in London and told her that "all the papists from many parts were gathered against me when I was besieged." 99

The strength of religious motivations and beliefs should not be underestimated. For Lady Brilliana and her supporters in Herefordshire, their religious beliefs provided both a motivating and a sustaining force in their resistance to the Crown. For Sir Robert Harley, religious beliefs also played a key role in persuading him to support the side of the Parliament. In 1650 in a letter to Colonel Mackworth, Governor of Shrewsbury, Harley stated that when he first gave his support to Parliament he believed he was supporting the cause of God:-

98. Symmons, op. cit., Preface to the Readers. For the Bishops as Antichrist, see above, Ch. 4, p. 201.

99. Lady Brilliana to Brilliana Harley, 7 October 1643, B.L., Loan 29/174 between ff. 55 and 59. Although Dr. Lindley's work suggested that the majority of Catholics attempted to remain neutral during the Civil War, a number of more recent studies have argued that Catholic participation was quite considerable, see K.J. Lindley, 'The Part Played by Catholics' in B.S. Manning (ed.), Politics, Religion and the English Civil War (1973); Blackwood, op. cit., pp. 63-64; P.R. Newman, 'Catholic Royalists of Northern England, 1642-1645', Northern History, XV (1979); see also Cliffe, op. cit., p. 344.

"I found the Lord's good providence in my sufferings in my estate to have been very great, which may be computed to little less than £20,000 for the cause of the Parliament, into which when I first engaged in Parliament, I understood it on conscientious deliberation to be the cause of God". 100

Although Lady Brilliana's letters to the Marquess of Hertford and Sir William Vavasour show that she was capable of discussing her situation in terms of allegiance to the Crown and her faith in the laws of the land, her private letters to her family reveal the depth of her perception of the civil war as a struggle by the godly for true religion. Despite Lady Brilliana's obvious concern for the unity of the local gentry, which was expressed in her letter to Viscount Scudamore, it was not a concept of county community or of gentry unity, which claimed her final loyalties, but her belief in the community of the godly. As prominent members of the Herefordshire "gentry community", the Harleys were not unaware of, or unmoved by, the interests of the county. Yet they perceived those interests as governed primarily by religious precepts. The welfare of the county and the welfare of the "godly community" were thus inextricably interwoven.

Thus when Harley finally agreed that Lady Brilliana should leave Brampton, after the first siege had been raised in September 1643, she had bravely assured Harley that she was prepared to accept the providence of God. Lady Brilliana's reply to Sir Robert's letter illustrates her desire to preserve both her home and the community of the godly in the county. The extent to which Lady Brilliana perceived her duty to her family and to the county in religious terms, rather than purely in terms of the welfare of the local community, is strikingly apparent. She wrote:-

100. Harley to Mackworth, 29 April 1650, B.L., Loan 29/176 f. 177r.

"Dear Sir, hitherto God has made me (though an unworthy one), an instrument to keep possession of your house, that it has not fallen into the hands of spoilers, and to keep together a handful of such as feared the Lord so that His word has still an abiding in these parts, which if the Lord remove, Herefordshire is miserable. In this work I have not thought my life dear, neither shall I". 101

CONCLUSION

Sir Robert Harley survived Lady Brilliana by some thirteen years. He continued as an active M.P. until he and his two eldest sons were excluded from the House of Commons by Pride's Purge in December 1648.¹ The Purge was designed to remove moderate members from the Parliament and opened the way for the trial and execution of King Charles.

Following the Parliamentary capture of Hereford in 1645 the Harleys had reasserted their authority in Herefordshire. In 1646 and 1647 Edward Harley was involved in county affairs both as a J.P. and as a member of the county committee at Hereford.² At the end of 1646 Edward was returned to Parliament as junior knight for Herefordshire. His younger brother, Robert, was returned as burgess for New Radnor in the 1647 election. Yet this recovery of local power was short-lived. The political careers of Sir Robert and his two elder sons were abruptly halted by the events subsequent to Pride's Purge. The Harleys refused to recognise the Commonwealth: Sir Robert was removed once again from the Mastership of the Mint and all three of his sons were briefly imprisoned. The family were simultaneously removed from local office until August 1654, when Sir Robert and Edward Harley were named to the Committee for the Ejection of Scandalous Ministers. This paved the way for Edward's return to local major office and in 1655 he regained his place on the Herefordshire Bench of Justices.³ Sir Robert did not gain

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1. Underdown, Purge, pp. 147, 211-212.
 2. Letter from the Herefordshire J.P.s, 6 October 1646, B.L., Loan 29/175 f. 55r; letter from the committee at Hereford, 10 August 1646, B.L., Loan 29/15; letters from the committee at Hereford, 21 September 1646, 3 January 1646/7, 3 February 1646/7, 19 April 1647, B.L., Loan 29/175 ff. 46r, 3r-v, 16r, between ff. 74 and 44; Edward Harley to William Lenthall, 22 September 1646, B.L., Loan 29/175 f. 49r.
 3. Underdown, Purge, pp. 375, 252, 332; Thomas Harley to Harley, 7 February 1649/50, Colonel Mackworth to Harley, 8 May 1650, B.L., Loan 29/176 ff. 137r, 179r; McParlin, 'Thesis', Appendices VIII, XVII; Firth and Rait (eds.), op. cit., II, 971.

further local appointments and he never returned to the national political arena.

Sir Robert died on 6 November 1656 and was buried at Brampton Bryan on 10 December 1656, when his funeral sermon was preached by a local minister, Thomas Froyssell of Clun. Froyssell eulogised Sir Robert as a most godly and religious individual:-

"he was the first that brought the gospel into these parts. This country lay under a veil of darkness till he began to shine.... His planting of godly ministers, and then backing them with his authority, made religion famous in this little corner of the world. Oh! What comfortable times we had before the wars! How did our public meetings shine with his exemplary presence in the midst of them! He was a man of fixed principles; religion and solid reformation were all the white he shot at". 4

The religious outlook of the Harleys has been emphasised throughout this study as a guiding principle in moulding their actions and beliefs. The Harleys' position in the 1640s has thus been linked here primarily to the favour shown by King Charles to both Catholics and Arminians in the 1620s and 1630s, which gradually forced the Harleys into an oppositionist stand. The Harleys' puritanism certainly antedated the reign of King Charles, but their criticisms of the established Church did not automatically involve the Harleys in overt political opposition to the Crown. This is emphasised by Sir Robert's working relationship with Conway in Parliaments in the 1620s and by his tenure of court office as Master of the Mint. The rise of Arminianism in the English Church served to widen the gap between puritans such as the Harleys and the Church authorities. Simultaneously the influence of the Arminians persuaded the Harleys that only far-reaching Church reforms could hope to eradicate Arminian and Catholic corruption from

4. Lewis, Letters, pp. xi-xii, xxxii-xxxiii. The sermon was later published, see T. Froyssell, The Beloved Disciple (1658).

the Church.

There was, of course, another factor, which may have contributed to the stance taken by the Harleys in the 1640s. This was Sir Robert's loss of office in the early 1630s. It has been argued here, however, that Harley lost the Mint as a direct result of his own staunch puritanism and because Conway's death in 1631 had left Harley without a court contact.⁵ Harley's loss of the Mint was assuredly a consequence of his alienation from the court, which had already taken place by 1633. This conclusion is reinforced by Harley's failure to gain recompence for his loss.

If Harley had not been out of favour at court, he could surely have traded the Mint for some alternative office. It was precisely because Harley was isolated from the court by religious factors that he was forced from the Mastership without compensation. In 1643, when Lady Brilliana heard that her husband had resumed office as Master of the Mint, she wrote to him "I acknowledge God's mercy in restoring you to the place of the Mint, which I pray God bless to you".⁶ This was a very muted response, and not what one would expect had either Lady Brilliana, or Sir Robert, based their opposition to Charles I on the earlier loss of place.

Although their religious attitudes are of prime importance in understanding the Harleys' support for Parliament in the 1640s, it should be remembered that the Harleys were also guided by a strong sense of public duty, and not solely by religious zeal. Both Lady Brilliana and Sir Robert came from families who had traditionally taken office as local governors, or as court officials. Although court office could bring rich rewards, the county governors were

5. See above, Chapter 1, p. 71, Chapter 2, pp. 92-93.

6. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 14 July 1643, B.L., Loan 29/72.

unpaid and were burdened with hours of work with little obvious compensation, other than social prestige. The men who occupied county office were using these positions as staging posts in their own careers, but many were also, like the Harleys, motivated by a real sense of duty to both their communities and the country.

The Harleys were certainly integrated into the official and social life of the county "gentry community" in Herefordshire before the wars. Lady Brilliana's letters to her family were thus strongly imbued with her belief that the Harleys had a natural role as leaders of local society. There is, moreover, nothing in her letters written before⁷ 1640 to suggest that the Harleys' puritanism excluded them from that role. Even after the assembly of the Long Parliament, when the Harleys gradually became isolated from the opinions of the most influential county gentry in Herefordshire, Lady Brilliana continued to believe that her family would sustain their influence in local affairs. This belief is particularly clear in her letters to Edward Harley, which were partly intended to prepare him for his future assumption of office. Thus in 1642, when Lady Brilliana was organising the campaign for Edward's election as burgess of Hereford, she wrote to him "I should be very glad that you might act your first service for the commonwealth".

Lady Brilliana also understood that public duty necessarily entailed personal sacrifice, which she was fully prepared to undertake. In 1626, when Sir Robert was attending Parliament, Lady Brilliana gave birth to their second son, Robert. She wrote to tell her husband how much she longed to see him, but she acknowledged that the affairs of Parliament

7. Lewis, Letters, p. 163.

took precedence over personal desires:-

"in this I must yield to the will of the Lord; and as the public good is to be preferred before private ends, so at this time I must show that indeed I love that better than my own good and I pray God enable you for that work you are now called to". 8

In this letter Lady Brilliana linked Harley's public duty to the will of God. The Harleys related every aspect of their lives to religion and to the correct religious behaviour expected of the elect. The religiosity of the Harleys was not in itself exceptional and intense religious belief was not the sole preserve of puritans such as the Harleys. Thus, during the siege of Lathom House by Parliamentary forces in 1644, the Countess of Derby was careful to maintain religious observance within the garrison. An account of the siege described her "first care" as "the service of God, which, in sermons and solemn prayers, she saw duly performed. Four times a day she was commonly present at public prayer".⁹

The Harleys' puritanism did, however, involve them in a distinct set of religious perceptions, which were not necessarily shared by non-puritans. It certainly cannot be argued that these differing religious perceptions led irrevocably to war in 1642. The Harleys were not involved in any concerted secular opposition to the Crown before 1640. Similarly, within Herefordshire, the Harleys were accepted into the county "gentry community", despite their puritanism. Nevertheless, religious differences were largely responsible for the polarisation which occurred in Herefordshire after 1640. Although the Civil War broke over immediate issues, such as the control of the militia and the King's refusal to allow Parliament a voice in the choice of

8. Lady Brilliana to Harley, 21 April 1626, B.L., Loan 29/202 f. 204r.

9. Halsall, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

officers of State, long-term religious differences also played a significant part in dividing the local community in Herefordshire in 1642.

Both Lady Brilliana and Sir Robert believed that the war was a war of religion.¹⁰ Their belief that they were members of the elect, who were a definable group on earth, provided the Harleys with a ready formed set of loyalties, which were quite separate from their loyalties to the local community, and which proved, in 1642, to be stronger than their allegiance to the county. The importance of differing perceptions and beliefs in the formation of Civil War parties in Herefordshire is revealed in the papers collected by the Harleys between 1640 and 1643. These papers, and the documentation of the lives of the Harleys before 1640, provide a unique insight into the modes of thought which led the Harleys to support the Parliament in 1642.

10. See above, Chapter 6, pp. 279, 310-311, 318-320.

APPENDIX I

Herefordshire knights of the shire 1604 - 1640.

1604

Sir James Scudamore of Holme Lacy.

Sir Herbert Croft of Croft.

1614

Sir James Scudamore of Holme Lacy.

Sir Herbert Croft of Croft.

1621

Sir John Scudamore, Baronet, of Holme Lacy (son of above).

Fitzwilliam Coningsby of Hampton Court.

1624

Sir John Scudamore, Baronet, of Holme Lacy.

Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Bryan.

1625

John Rudhall of Rudhall.

Giles Bridges of Wilton Castle.

1626

Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Bryan.

Sir Walter Pye, the elder, of the Mynde.

1628

Sir Walter Pye, the elder, of the Mynde.

Sir Giles Bridges, Baronet, of Wilton Castle.

1640 (Short Parliament)

Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Bryan.

Sir Walter Pye, the younger, of the Mynde (son of above).

1640 (Long Parliament)

Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Bryan.

Fitzwilliam Coningsby of Hampton Court.

Information derived from M. of P.,

pp. 443, 451, 458, 464, 469, 475, 481, 489.

APPENDIX 2

Particulars of losses sustained by Sir Robert Harley since the wars.

A particular of what loss my master, Sir Robert Harley, has sustained by the enemy in the county of Hereford since these wars.

	£	s.	d.
Imp. - The stock of cattle of all sorts at	940	0	0
The loss of £1,500, per annum for 3 years	4,500	0	0
The castle itself, being utterly ruined	3,000	0	0
All the rich furniture and household goods belonging to the castle	2,500	0	0
Two mills, with brew houses and stalls and other out-houses, together with corn and hay valued at	950	0	0
A study of books, valued at	200	0	0
Two parks wholly laid open and destroyed	500	0	0
Timber and other wood cut down and destroyed valued at	300	0	0
Destroyed at least 500 deer			
Destroyed more in corn at least	100	0	0
	<hr/>		
	12,990	0	0
	<hr/>		

Saml. Shelton.

This was brought to Westminster by Wm. Bayley

the 23rd July 1646.

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a. Vb2, Vb3

Scudamore MSS.

b. X.d. 140

Letter from the Deputy-
Lieutenants of Hereford-
shire to the Lord Treasurer,
2 March 1599 /60.

Huntington Library, California

a. Ellesmere MSS.,

7350, 7352

Letters from Henry Ecclestone
to the Earl of Bridgwater,
October, November 1641.

Yale Center for Parliamentary History

- a. Transcript of the parliamentary diary of Sir Richard Grosvenor, 1626. The original diary is at Trinity College, Dublin-MS. E.5.17.
- b. Transcript of the parliamentary diary of Edward Nicholas, 1624. The original diary is at the Public Record Office - S.P., 14/166.
- c. Transcript of the parliamentary diary of Sir William Spring, 1624. The original diary is at the Harvard University Houghton Library - MS. Eng. 980.
- d. Transcript of the parliamentary diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke, 1626. The original diary is at Cambridge University Library - Dd. 12-20, 21,22.

C. Privately Owned Manuscripts

- a. Papers in the possession of Mr. C. Harley. An extensive range of Harley family papers, especially estate papers arranged in numbered bundles.
- b. Papers in the possession of the Marquess of Bath at Longleat.
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