THE ROYALIST RISING AND PARLIAMENTARY MUTINIES OF 1645 IN WEST KENT

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The accounts of a royalist rising and the associated parliamentary mutinies in west Kent in April/May 1645 in general histories of the Civil Wars are almost invariably brief and sometimes inaccurate.[1] A problem is posed by the apparent unreliability of parts of the principal source material, the *Thomason Tracts*, a collection of contemporary newspapers, political pamphlets, etc., which were deposited at the British Museum (now the British Library) in 1908. The references to the Thomason Tracts in the footnotes of this paper, E260, E278 and E279, correspond to those of the relevant Tracts as catalogued at the British Library. Another important source is the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series 1644–45*, also at the British Library; references are abbreviated in the footnotes to C.S.P.D.

Kent remained throughout the Civil Wars under the firm control of Parliament operating through its County Committee, which was chaired by the dictatorial and unpopular Sir Anthony Weldon of Swanscombe. The Committee's autocratic rule and the punitive taxation which it levied in support of the war were much resented, while the royalist cause continued to command widespread sympathy. These factors had been responsible in the summer of 1643 for a rebellion in west Kent led by many of the landed gentry. After the revolt was suppressed its most important leaders were imprisoned,

[1] The shortest account, C.V. Wedgwood, *The King's War*, London, 1958, 438, devotes a single line to the disturbances, while the contemporaneous, Lord Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, Oxford 1843 edn., has nothing to say about them. The most complete and best documented account is in Alan Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, 1640–60*, Leicester, 1973, 215 ff., to which the writer is much indebted. Professor A.M. Everitt, whom the writer has consulted, has not been able to comment constructively on an abridged version of this paper as his own notes have been destroyed; he has, however, observed that someone working locally may well be able to correct statements made many years ago in a more general work.

their estates were sequestered by a committee set up for the purpose, and many fines were levied.[2]

By the end of 1644 the war had reached a stalemate which would be broken by the side that succeeded in raising a field army capable of operating effectively as a strategic force anywhere in Britain. Hitherto, both sides had depended largely on volunteers whose supply was now exhausted. Parliament was experiencing difficulty in getting the trained bands to serve outside their counties, and the king's commissions of array were ineffective even in areas under his control. The Committee of Both Kingdoms sitting at Derby House, London, therefore, recommended in January 1645 the formation of a new field army, which came to be known as 'The New Model Army', under the command of Sir Thomas Fairfax, who set up his headquarters at Windsor. The required number of men, 22,000, was to be provided by the three existing parliamentary armies, augmented by 8,640 conscripts drawn from the City of London, the Eastern Association and the counties of Surrey, Sussex and Kent.[3]

The contingent of Kentish conscripts was probably mustered as a regiment at Maidstone, whence it was escorted towards Windsor. It did not get far; some time on or before 12 April the force reached Wrotham Heath about ten miles from Maidstone, where the roads to Blackheath and London, and to Sevenoaks and Windsor, diverge. The conscripts, who then realised their destination, mutinied and seized a manor house, the identity of which will be discussed.[4]

A royalist rising broke out at about the same time as the mutiny. Its centre was in the Darent valley, the places named in a contemporary report being Harrington (Horton Kirby), Ainsford (Eynsford), Lullingstone and Chelsfield, although it would appear that the affected area was more extensive. The rebels also seized a manor house, named 'Levingstoke', and variously described as 'the house of Master Hart', 'Captaine Hart's house who is a brother of Sir Percival Hart' and 'Sir Percival Hart's house'. They demanded that the local people should declare for the king or else be plundered as the king's enemies. They took prisoners, and 150 horse and some arms as loot, but failed to surprise the County Committee at Aylesford and capture

[2] F.D. Johns, 'The Royalist Rebellion of 1643, Fines on Kentish Rebels', *Journal of Kent History* (hereafter *J.K.H.*), 34, March 1992, 3–6.

[3] D. Smurthwaite, *The Battlefields of Britain*, London, 1984, 136–8; S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War 1642– 49*, London, 1886, ii, 148.

[4] E278 (8) (13).

the magazine there. Sir Percival Hart and Master Hart were both said to command them.[5]

The reports that members of the Hart family led the rebels appear to be unfounded. Sir Percival Hart died in March 1641/2 so he could not have been their leader. It is most unlikely that his son William Hart would have led them because his daughter was married to Sir Anthony Weldon, the most influential parliamentarian in Kent.[6] There were, of course, a number of families with divided loyalties.[7] It is, however, improbable that the head of the Hart family would have actively supported the king. The family clearly kept a low profile throughout the conflict, its estates were not sequestered and its fortunes even seem to have prospered, so that early in the following century William Hart's successors were able to rebuild the Tudor manor house to create Lullingstone Castle (only the gate-house survived the rebuilding) and restore the manorial church of St. Botolph.[8]

It is apparent from reports in contemporary newspapers of the situation of the houses seized by the mutineers and the rebels, respectively, and of members of the Hart family possessing both, that their authors confused the two events. One report places the house seized by the *mutineers* as 'neere Farningham', i.e., at Lullingstone, and others state that the house seized by the *rebels* was 'adjacent to a Towne called Rootham' and 'adjacent to a Towne called Rollington' (Wrotham).[9] Such reports display an ignorance of the local topography, for Lullingstone is over seven miles from Wrotham Heath, the undoubted scene of the mutiny, and is certainly not adjacent to Wrotham, the two places being six miles apart. Fortunately, the location of the house seized by the mutineers becomes clear from other reports which state that the place where they 'fell on their convoy' was seven miles from Sevenoaks, i.e., Wrotham Heath, and 'the mutinous rout of men to avoid pressing were gotten together at a house at Rootham'.[10] The house seized by the rebels, on the other hand, was 'within eight miles of Sir Henry Vane's house' (the present 'Fairlawne' at Plaxtol) and was certainly the manor house at

[5] E260 (15) (17); E278 (18) (30). The Kingfisher bridge over the river Darent was formerly known as Leventhorpe bridge (S. Pittman, *Lullingstone Park*, Meresworth Books, 1983, 47).

[6] S. Robertson, 'Peche of Lullingstone', *Arch. Cant.*, xvi (1886), 239.

[7] Professor A.M. Everitt, personal communication.

[8] S. Pittman, *op. cit.*, 42–3.

[9] E260 (15); E278 (13) (15). It is apparent from the similar wording of the two reports that Rollington is Wrotham, not Lullingstone as in Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 216, n. 1.

[10] E278 (8) (12).

Lullingstone.[11] The evident confusion appears to have led to the assumption that members of the Hart family possessed *both* houses.

There can be little doubt that the house seized and fortified by the mutineers was Ford Place (N.G.R. TQ 637587), situated in Nepicar Borough in the parish of Wrotham; in 1645, it was on the direct line of march from Maidstone.[12] Only one wing of the original U-shaped medieval and Tudor building still stands. A local tradition that at least one of the other two wings was destroyed by Cromwellian (*sic*) soldiers has received support from the discovery in the 1960s of a seventeenth-century three pound cannon-ball embedded in the masonry of the surviving wing.[13]

Ford Place was owned in 1645 by Lady Jane Clark, the widow of Sir William Clark, who raised a troop of horse, joined the king and was killed at the battle of Cropredy Bridge on 29 June, 1644.[14] His estate was sequestered in 1643, but Lady Cecilia Swan, sister of Lady Jane Clark, successfully petitioned the County Committee for Sequestrations in November 1645 to compound for a fine of £600, later reduced to £445; the reduction may have been compensation for the damage to Ford Place.[15] The churchwardens' accounts for the parish of Wrotham from Easter 1644 to Easter 1647 show 'The Lady Clarke' as the owner.[16]

Was the mutiny organised by the royalists part of a grand strategy in the winter and spring of 1644–45, involving a plot to seize Dover Castle (there was an abortive attempt) and the advance of a royalist army led by Lord Goring through Surrey into Kent, or was it unpremeditated?[17] In the writer's opinion the latter is more likely. Impressment was very unpopular, especially as the conscripts were

[11] E260 (17). S.R. Gardiner, *op. cit.*, 148–9, and J. Kenyon, *The Civil Wars of England*, 1988, 140, correctly locate the house as near Wrotham.

[12] In Philip Symonson's Map of Kent, 1594/6, the route from Maidstone to Wrotham/Sevenoaks goes through Trottiscliffe and past Ford Place. The present A20 road, which by-passes Ryarsh, Addington and Trottiscliffe, follows a turnpike road constructed in 1760 (33 Geo. 11 c. 40).

[13] The ball, which weighs 3 lb. 3 oz. (1.446 kg.), was found by Mr D. Fawcey, when carrying out building work in the 1960s, and is in the possession of Mr K. Denham, the present owner of the house. According to the Secretary, Royal Artillery Institute, Woolwich, it was not fired from a cannon of English manufacture; the cannon was probably an import from the Netherlands.

[14] E. Hasted, *History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, 1798, 2nd ed., 1973, v, 19–20.

[15] (Ed.) M.A.E. Green, *Proceedings of the Committee (in Kent) for Compounding 1642–60*, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1967 ed., 1013.

[16] Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone (hereafter C.K.S.), P.406/5/27.

[17] See Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 212–5.

required to serve outside their native counties, and produced disturbances in Hertfordshire and the City of London, where, according to the Venetian ambassador, conscripts had forcibly to be removed by boat to Windsor.[18] The mutiny occurred at the road junction at Wrotham Heath where it first became apparent to the conscripts that they were to be marched out of Kent to join the New Model Army. So far from royalist complicity in the mutiny, it seems that the mutiny may have inspired a premature royalist rising.

The conscripts' escort probably consisted of contingents from Sir Michael Livesey's regiment of Kentish horse and Colonel Ralph Weldon's regiment of foot. Both regiments were required to recruit conscripts on their way to join the New Model Army and were themselves soon to be in a state of open mutiny (see below). The number of mutineers was 300 or 400 in one report, and 500 in another.[19] The regiments providing the escort were below strength but they were armed, whereas the conscripts would have mostly lacked arms. The conscripts are, therefore, unlikely to have escaped from their escort unless it connived at the mutiny, or even encouraged it, before moving to Sevenoaks.

The mutineers rioted at nearby Wrotham; they 'seized on a godly minister and comitted some other outrages there'.[20] The epithet 'godly' and the hostility of the mutineers, who were probably supported by many of the townsfolk, strongly suggest that the minister was a Puritan.

Three clergymen had associations with Wrotham in 1645 and two may have been present in April. The lawfully instituted rector was still the Rev. Edward Layfield, D.D., who had been instituted on 8 November, 1638. He had also been vicar of All Hallows, Barking, until his impeachment as a High Laudian by the Long Parliament on 25 November, 1640; one charge was that he placed the communion table at the east end of the church, not in the middle as prescribed by the Puritans. His living was sequestered on 2 February, 1642/3 by which time he had joined the king's army, presumably as a chaplain.

His vicar was the Rev. Charles Hutchinson, M.A., who had been inducted as long ago as 1595. He was a graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, which he attended from 1585 to 1588/9; the college was not noted for Puritanism. His son, Charles Hutchinson junior,

[18] E260(26); S.R. Gardiner, *op. cit.*, 148; *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English Affairs existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice 1643–47*, xxvii.

[19] E278 (12) (13).

[20] E278 (12).

graduated from the same college in 1614/5 and performed before James I in the play *Ignoramus* in 1614. Play-acting was frowned on by the Puritans so it is unlikely that the Hutchinsons were Puritans and the father was the 'godly minister'. (The evidence for the parentage of Charles Hutchinson junior, the play-actor, is circumstantial as he was not one of the nine children born at Wrotham after Charles Hutchinson senior became vicar in 1595; he matriculated at Michaelmas 1611, so it is probable that he was born *c.* 1594. The facts that both Hutchinsons bore the same Christian name, attended the same college and a son of Charles Hutchinson junior was baptised at Wrotham church in September 1626 leave little doubt that they were indeed father and son.)

The third clergyman to be considered is the Rev. William Parker. He had been chaplain to Lord Willoughby of Parham before being driven from his living by the king's army. (As a captain in the parliamentary army, Willoughby had led a party of one hundred 'well affected and stout youngsters', who secured Woolwich dockyard and captured a quantity of ordnance in 1642.) Parker applied to parliament to be instituted 'to the small rectorie of Wrotham' and his application was granted on 12 June, 1645. Dr Edward Layfield was deprived of the rectory, and the Rev. William Parker was appointed in his place, by a decree of 29 August, 1645. Parker was not formally inducted as vicar until 15 January, 1647/8; it is possible, however, that he began to act *de facto* as his own vicar, ordering the ritual in the services of the church, before his induction. He claimed that he did not take possession of the vicarage and allowed Hutchinson to remain at the vicarage house until his death (he was buried at Wrotham on 23 August, 1646). This would have been a humanitarian gesture by Parker, but there was no rector to gainsay him and, if he was indeed present in Wrotham in April 1645, he may have already ousted the elderly Hutchinson from his church and, by introducing Puritan practices, have earned the reputation of 'godly minister'.[21]

[21] Rev. T.S. Frampton, *St. George's Wrotham: Names of Rectors and Vicars A.D. 1239–1927*, 10, n. 18; Sir Thomas Colyer-Fergusson, *Transcription of the Registers of the Parish of St. George's Wrotham 1558–1812*, 1932, C.K.S., TR 1303/15; William A. Shaw, *A History of the English Churches during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth*, Longmans, 1900; (i) 190, 195: (ii) Appendix 11, 295, 307, 322, 350, 353; Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 110. The history of the rectory and vicarage of Wrotham from 1640–62 is illuminated by evidence in two cases of libel heard in the Court of Arches in 1662–63, viz:- Edward Layfield and William Parker, Lambeth Library, 5549, B5, Ee176, 297, 363, 364; John Williams (vicar) and William Parker, Lambeth Library, 10039, Ee226, 227, 297, 298. The petitioners, who succeeded, claimed that Parker had libelled them by asserting that he had been wrongfully dispossessed of his appointments on 25 April, 1660 (apparently by actions at common law). The writer

News of the rebellion and mutiny reached the Committee of Both Kingdoms on Sunday, 13 April, and was reported to the House of Commons on the following day. Because of Kent's strategic importance, any disturbance there was certain to set the alarm bells ringing at Derby House. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Committee of Both Kingdoms acted promptly and decisively. It ordered Colonel Ludlow's regiment of horse in the West Country to go immediately to the assistance of the Kent County Committee, Sir Thomas Fairfax was told to send two troops of horse and 100 dragoons from the army at Windsor to Croydon, where they were to liaise with Colonel Ludlow's regiment and protect the Surrey/Kent border from any royalist incursion from the west, those Kentish trained bands operating in Surrey were recalled and more trained bands were mustered in Kent.[22]

On Sunday, 13 April, the Committee ordered Colonel Blunt to march at once with his own regiment against insurgents. Colonel Thomas Blount (or Blunt), born *c.* 1604, was the second son of Edward Blount of the Middle Temple and Wricklemarsh, Charlton. After supporting the Kentish Petition of March 1643 he changed sides, becoming an active member of the parliamentary County Committee. He made his peace with the royalists on the restoration of the monarchy and joined the Royal Society in February 1664/5. He was responsible for some ingenious inventions, including the application of the 'way-wiser' or hodometer.[23]

Colonel Blount set out from his home at Wricklemarsh, Charlton, early on the morning of Monday, 14 April, with 400 foot and two pieces of ordnance (another report states he had 500 foot and two troops of horse); their number was quickly reinforced by trained bands to 2,000 horse and foot, and four cannon.[24] Contact was soon made with the rebels in the Darent valley. Estimates of the number of rebels vary greatly, viz:- 300, including 150 horse; 500; and between 4,000 and 5,000.[25] The last estimate is doubtless a gross exaggeration, being propaganda intended to enhance Blount's achievement in putting the rebels to flight; it is probable that the

gratefully acknowledges the help of Mrs. Mary Lewis in drawing his attention to this litigation and also to the Dalison Documents (see n. 36 below), and of Dr A.S. Bendall, Archivist of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, for an extract relating to the two Charles Hutchinsons from J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Cambridge, 1954.

[22] C.S.P.D., 407: E278(15). A party of Fairfax's horse was not despatched into Kent and the Kentish regiments in Surrey did not mutiny, as in Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 216.

[23] D.N.B.

[24] E278(8) (21) (30).

[25] E260(15) (17); E278(15) (18) (30).

parliamentary force was superior both in numbers and armament. The rebels fled into the woods, evacuating the manor house at Lullingstone without a fight.[26]

The mutineers at Wrotham Heath put up some resistance to the parliamentarians, but were routed after the capture of their stronghold, Ford Place, which was partly destroyed. A running fight followed in the surrounding countryside which was heavily wooded, the Hurst and Mereworth Woods being modern survivals, and Blount appears to have been largely successful in preventing many of the rebels from joining the mutineers. A one pound cannon-ball, fired from a falconet and found close to Offham, is a relic of the skirmishing.[27] On 17 April, Colonel Blount reported to the House of Commons that 'the late insurrection was well appeased, about fifty of them taken, but many of the rest stole out of the woods by night and so escaped'. The alleged discovery in the woods of 'divers packs of Linnen and other goods which they had taken away from the country people, amongst which were women shiftes and store of apparell' was again probably propaganda.[28] As will be seen, Blount's claim to have suppressed the insurgency so easily proved to be premature.

The names of thirteen of the prisoners taken by Blount are known, viz:- 'Paine, the commander in chiefe, Captaine Wood, a notable Agent, Captaine Burrows of 200l per annum, Captaine Gifford, one of the brothers, Captaine Buller and Lieutenants Cox, Hubbert, Miller, Gifford and Grey'.[29] 'The chief among this rebellious rout are two of Mr Miller's sons, two of Dr Gifford's sons, and M. Payne, Grey and Barton, most of them being of indifferent estates'.[30] 'The chief of qualitie were one Griffith, who they made a Captaine, he is a Scholler, and hath been a soldier, he is son to Doctor Griffith of Kent, and one Burrowes, a Yeoman of a fair estate [who] had in his pocket fortie pieces of gold and seven good horses taken from him'.[31] George Paine (or Payne) of Farningham, who had been fined £5 for

[26] E278(18). The writer has seen no evidence that 'some fled on horseback towards Maidstone', as in H.F. Abell, *Kent and the Great Rebellion*, 1901, 152, and Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 215.

[27] The falconet was the smallest piece of ordnance used in the Civil Wars and was light enough to be man-handled; one can be seen at the Rotunda Museum, Woolwich. The shot, which was found by Mrs. E.M. Johns, wife of the writer, weighs 1 lb. 5 oz. (0.595 kg.) and is in his possession.

[28] E278(19).

[29] E260(17). It is possible that Lieutenant Hubbert was the same man as 'Monsieur Hubbard', whose estate was sequestered in 1643 (see Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London (hereafter P.R.O.), SP28/210.)

[30] E278(19).

[31] E278(31).

his part in the 1643 rebellion, is the *only* man known to have joined both rebellions.[32] It is remarkable that of the remaining 12 named prisoners all but two, Barton and one of Mr Miller's sons, held military rank. A reasonable assumption is that nine were officers in the regiment of conscripts which mutinied and their offence was dereliction of duty. Some mystery surrounds Captain Griffith, the other prisoner of military rank. He may have been a son of Dr Griffith, 'an expelled clergyman', who was present at Basing House in Hampshire when that royalist stronghold was stormed on 14 October, 1645, and whose daughter, 'a maiden of extraordinary beauty', was killed by a parliamentary soldier because she protested when he reviled her father.[33] Captain Griffith could have been commissioned in the royalist army and may have been in Kent as an emissary from the royalists at Oxford.

The only member of the landed gentry who has been recorded as having given encouragement to the rebels of 1645 was Sir John Culpeper of Hollingbourne, who said 'they (the rebels) should be seconded by a partie from the King'.[34] He was a moderate royalist whom the king had appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1640; his estate was sequestered, but the rents for the years 1646–54 were abated as he was unable to recover them from his tenants.[35] Thomas Stanley of Hamptons, West Peckham, may also have played some part in the rebellion. He was also a moderate royalist and had acted as mediator between the two sides in the 1643 rebellion. He wrote on 1 December, 1645, to his friend Lady Sedley, wife of Sir John Sedley of St. Clere, Ightham, about a payment of £30 which the treasurer of the County Committee had demanded.[36] He hoped that Lady Sedley would persuade her husband, who was a member of the Committee, to have the payment waived. Could it have been a fine levied for his support of the rebels?

Miller is a name recorded in connection with both the 1643 and 1645 rebellions. A certain John Miller was fined £10 after the former and two sons of Mr Miller, one a lieutenant, were taken prisoner in the latter.[37] There were several families with the name Miller in the Wrotham area; they were farmers or small-holders and included only one large landowner, Sir Nicholas Miller of Horsenayles,

[32] See n. 2 above.
[33] S.R. Gardiner, *op. cit.*, 345.
[34] E278(18).
[35] Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 76 *passim*; P.R.O., SP28/210.
[36] Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 98 *passim*; (Ed.) S. Robertson, 'Dalison Documents', *Arch. Cant.*, xvii (1887), 368.
[37] See n. 2 above.

Crouch.[38] This man was a parliamentarian and a member of the County Committee in June 1645.[39] Whereas many important landowners in west Kent supported the rebellion of 1643 and were duly punished, none appear to have supported the rebellion in April 1645, apart from Sir John Culpeper and, possibly, Thomas Stanley. The failure of the landed interest to lead the rebels was surely a principal reason for the collapse of the rebellion.[40]

Colonel Blount's claim to have suppressed the insurgency by 17 April, only three days after he had set out from Charlton, encouraged the Committee of Both Houses to order the recently mustered trained bands to be disbanded, while Blount was responsible for standing down the horse.[41] These actions were premature as a number of the insurgents 'having gotten fowling pieces and other weapons' succeeded in reforming. After plundering arms and horses, including 16 from Sir Anthony Weldon and other members of the County Committee, and 'perpetrating other outrages', they tried to march on Rochester, doubtless with the intention of capturing parliamentary ships in the river Medway.[42] It is not known how they were eventually dispersed.[43]

The County Committee, which was determined on the exemplary punishment of the insurgents, lost no time in petitioning parliament to proclaim a state of martial law; the petition was granted by the House of Lords on 23 April, enabling the Committee to mete out the death penalty.[44] Judgement of death was given against 32 of the 50 prisoners taken by Colonel Blount. The condemned men were ordered to draw lots to decide which four should be executed. In the event, only two were hanged; the victims, whose names are unknown, were those who 'refused to throw the dice'.[45]

[38] Personal communication, Mrs. J.L. Semple, whose unpublished Local History Diploma thesis, *The Manor of Wrotham in the Early Sixteenth Century, some aspects of landholding and population*, 1982, University of Kent, traces acquisitions of land by the various Miller families.

[39] P.R.O. SP28/235.

[40] This opinion differs from Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 216, where it is stated that the rebellion 'was led by the Harts, Giffords and Millers, who were supported by many of the delinquent families who had supported the earlier rebellion'.

[41] E278(30).

[42] E279(12).

[43] According to Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 216, they were surprised and defeated by the trained bands of east Kent under Colonels Newman and Kenwricke. These regiments, however, were marched from Faversham by the County Committee to suppress the mutiny of Sir Michael Livesey's regiment of horse at Sevenoaks (E260(26)).

[44] E260(23).

[45] Bulstrode Whitlock, *Memorials of the English Affairs*, 1682, Oxford 1853 ed., 471.

Other punishments would have probably included sequestrations and fines.[46] If a comprehensive list of fines similar to that made after the 1643 rebellion was prepared, it has not survived.[47] Thomas Stanley, as already noted, may have been fined as a rebel in 1645 as well as three inhabitants of Hale Borough (now Plaxtol) in the parish of Wrotham, Thomas Sexten (£50), John Gillet (£10) and Henry Kebell (£5). Henry Kebell (or Keeble) was doubtless related to widow Kebell who had been fined £10 for her part in the earlier rebellion; his son, George Keeble, was a papist recusant in the Compton Census of 1676.[48]

There were also mutinies by serving parliamentary forces, viz:- Sir Michael Livesey's regiment of Kentish horse and Colonel Ralph Weldon's regiment of foot, which, as has been seen, appear to have provided the escort to the regiment of conscripts who mutinied at Wrotham Heath. Both of these regiments were under orders to join the New Model Army at Windsor, but towards the end of April they were still in the vicinity of Sevenoaks, where the Kentish horse were joined by 'a party of the tumultuous Rabell in Kent', increasing its number to 300. Both regiments were 'plundering the country and taking money and cloathes and Armes from the inhabitants'.[49] Evidence of this looting, which was authorised by the regiments' officers, who were required to recruit and equip conscripts taken on the march, has survived in the records of the County Committee.[50] Three victims of the looting resided in Offham eight miles from Sevenoaks. 'Captain Gibbons took from Charles Clerke one horse priced at £5. Two muskets with bandoliers and rests, and two swords, all worth £3, and a fowling piece worth twenty shillings, were taken by Captain Withers from John Austin. John Addison lost a corslet and twenty shillings in money'. At Hale Borough (Plaxtol) in Wrotham parish, four and a half miles from Sevenoaks, 'Thomas Sexten had two horses taken by Captain Gibbons and one fowling piece taken by Lieutenant May, all valued at £17, and Thomas Eversfield the elder had a horse, value £4, taken by Colonel Welden'. (As already noted, Thomas Sexten appears to have been fined £50 in 1645.) The looting would have happened before recruiting lapsed; the Committee of

[46] Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 218. Complete sequestration records have survived for only three lathes, St. Augustine, Sutton-at-Hone and Aylesford, North Division. It is unfortunate that none exist for the South Division of Aylesford, where most of the rebels would have lived (P.R.O., SP28/210).

[47] See n. 2 above.

[48] *Ibid.*; P.R.O., SP28/158; M. Lewis, *Plaxtol in the Seventeenth Century*, 1990, 94.

[49] E260(26).

[50] P.R.O., SP28/158.

Both Kingdoms complained on 29 April that 'the work of recruiting is at a stand'.[51]

Charles Clerke (1583–1649) was lord of the manor of Godwell (N.G.R. TQ 662581) in Offham and Ryarsh, which an ancestor, Richard Nortop (alias Clerke), Clerk of Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire, had acquired *c.* 1535. It appears that in 1645 Charles Clerke was the lessee of Court Lodge Farm (N.G.R. TQ 660581), of *c.* 150 acres, the demesne of the manor of Offham which was owned by John Tufton, second earl of Thanet, who supported the king (he fought at Edgehill) and whose estates were sequestered. Charles Clerke moved later to Comp Farm a mile and a half away in a detached part of Leybourne parish, where he built a new farmhouse (N.G.R. TQ 644572) in 1648. (This paper has been written in the cottage which probably served as the predecessor of Charles Clerke's farmhouse.) He was the father of seven daughters of whom the eldest, Frances, married Thomas Dowell (or Dowle); their son, also named Thomas, sold the manor of Godwell in 1675 to Henry Streatfeild of Chiddingstone after the death of 1674 of Mary Clerke, his mother-in-law. According to Thomas Philipott, *Villare Cantium*, 1659, 259, Charles Clerke was 'the last of the family'. The demesne of Godwell, *c.* 160 acres, was leased by Charles Clerke to John Austin (1609–73), who himself owned land, including hop gardens, in Offham, Ryarsh, Leybourne and Addington. John Addison (1616–94) farmed 16 acres in Offham. His descendants, some of whom were prosperous tanners in Ryarsh and Maidstone, became substantial landowners, including the manor of Godwell which was acquired through marriage into an Offham family, one of whom, John Smith, purchased it from Henry Streatfeild in 1781.[52]

Captain Gibbons was doubtless Robert Gibbon, ancestor of the great historian. He was promoted colonel by May 1648 and Charles II lodged at his house in Rochester, on returning from exile in 1660, and there received the loyal address of the Kentish regiments. Captain Withers was the poet George Withers, or Wither, (1588–1667). He raised a troop of horse on the parliamentary side in 1642 and was commissioned by the County Committee 'to seize all the horses of

[51] C.S.P.D., 443.

[52] Sir Thomas Colyer-Fergusson, *Transcription of the Offham Parish Registers 1558–1812*, 1928, Offham Parochial Church Council; F. Hull, *Tufton Sequestration Papers 1644–47*, K.A.S., 1960, 35; E. Hasted, *op. cit.*, iv, 539–40 (the statement at p. 540 that Frances Clerke and her six sisters were the daughters of George Clerke is incorrect); Offham Church and Poor Books, C.K.S., P274/5/1 & P274/4/1; C.K.S., U908/T234/1; C.K.S., U455/T103; Probates, P.R.O., 11/208/112, 11/1134/481, 11/1339/213, 11/1839/664, C.K.S., DRa/PWi, DR6/PW40; Inventory, C.K.S., DRb/Pi/8(1).

malignants and ill-affected persons between Tonbridge and Maidstone, in particular those of Sir William Boteler of Teston and Robert Hodges of Farleigh'.[53]

The colonel who looted in Plaxtol was Ralph Weldon, a son of Sir Anthony Weldon, Chairman of the County Committee. The officers of his regiment 'were to be cashiered if they failed to repair to their charge by [a certain] day and would then be replaced by others chosen by Sir Thomas Fairfax', the commander of the army.[54] The disaffection of this regiment seems to have been short-lived as it was sent in May to the force relieving Taunton, under siege by the royalists.

Sir Michael Livesey's regiment of horse had mutinied at Abingdon in June 1644, when he quarrelled with Sir William Waller, his commanding officer, withdrew the regiment from Waller's army and returned to Kent. He was summoned to appear before the Committee of Both Kingdoms in July 1644, but his social and political influence was so great that no action was taken against him.[55] The regiment's second mutiny came to the attention of the Committee on 22 April, when it wrote to Sir Thomas Fairfax that the regiment was 'in a mutinous distemper, which the County is endeavouring to suppress. They have raised their forces for that purpose, apprehending that in their discontent the soldiers may endeavour to go over to the enemy'. Fairfax was ordered to send a regiment from his army at Windsor 'to lie in such parts of Surrey as may be fittest to intercept the Kentish men if they should attempt it or to suppress them if they continue in mutiny'.[56] The Committee wrote to Fairfax again on 26 April noting that 'the regiment was still at Sevenoaks and had been ordered to join the Army; the Committee of Kent would inform him of the chief incendiaries of the mutiny who were to be punished as he [Fairfax] should find cause'. The 'chief incendiary' was clearly its colonel, who first showed cowardice in withdrawing the regiment from Abingdon in June 1644 and again in not leading it to Windsor in April 1645. The Committee wrote to Livesey on the same day, 26 April, desiring that 'by no means should he stay in Surrey, to be a burden to that county, but forthwith march up to Sir Thomas Fairfax's army', an order which was repeated on 29 April.[57] The patience of the Committee was finally exhausted and it ordered

[53] Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 163, 260, 318; D.N.B.; 'Papers relating to Proceedings in the County of Kent 1642–46', (Ed.) Richard Almack, *Camden Miscellany*, iii, 1855, 35.
[54] Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 147; Bulstrode Whitlock, *op. cit.*, 420.
[55] D.N.B.
[56] C.S.P.D., 426; see n. 43 above.
[57] *Ibid.*, 437.

Fairfax personally to suppress the mutiny. His orders are not recorded, but the Committee wrote to the Kent Committee on 3 May approving 'the course taken by Sir Thomas Fairfax', whom it had thanked.[58] The decisive action of Fairfax was to sack Livesey and replace him by Colonel Henry Ireton, a strict disciplinarian, who would later be appointed Lieutenant-General of Horse and marry Bridget, eldest daughter of Oliver Cromwell.[59] The Committee of Both Kingdoms directed the Kent Committee 'to send Sir Michael up if he comes to Kent, that he may be examined and punished if there shall be cause'.[60] As will be seen, so far from receiving his deserts, he prospered! After losing deserters, the regiment eventually joined the New Model Army (which had set out from Windsor on 30 April) somewhere beyond Andover on 2 May. On the following day Fairfax hanged 'on a tree at Wallop in Hampshire a renego [deserter] and a mutineer'.[61]

The royalist rising and the mutinies were quickly suppressed, but it is apparent that in the longer term their outcome was less favourable to parliament. The Kentish horse, depleted by a failure to recruit and desertions, formed part of the left wing of the parliamentary army at the battle of Naseby on 12 June, 1645.[62] This wing was routed by the charge of Prince Rupert's cavalry; it is probable that the weakness and poor morale of the Kentish horse contributed to the parliamentary reverse, which did not, as it happened, affect the result of the battle. There can be no doubt that the great majority of the rebels and conscripts made their escape and ignored an ordinance of 24 April condemning to death 'common soldiers who deserted and failed to report for duty within six days', while a direction of the Committee of Both Kingdoms on 6 May to the County Committee to punish deserters from the Kentish regiment of horse who 'shall show their mutinous humours' also probably went unheeded.[63] There can

[58] *Ibid.*, 452.
[59] Peter Young, *Naseby 1645*, London, 1985, 158.
[60] C.S.P.D., 453.
[61] Peter Young, *op. cit.*, 160.
[62] *Ibid.*; D. Smurthwaite, *op. cit.*, front and end papers 'A representation of the Armies of King Charles I and Sir Thomas Fairfax, a contemporary engraving'; it appeared first in Spriggs *Anglia Redivia*, 1647 (see G.M. Trevelyan, *History of England*, London, 1926, 409).
[63] Bulstrode Whitlock, *op. cit.*, 428; C.S.P.D., 461. The writer has seen no evidence to support the statement in J. Kenyon, *op. cit.*, 140, that 'the conscripts, after being wrinkled out of their mansion near Wrotham, were escorted to Windsor by the trained bands'. This paper has demonstrated the difficulty of getting trained bands in Kent to go to Windsor, even when unencumbered by conscripts.

be little doubt that the ranks of the royalists in the later and more serious rebellion of 1648 included many of those who had rebelled, mutinied or deserted in 1645.

This paper ends with a note about the fate of Sir Michael Livesey.[64] He was not arrested by Fairfax and returned to his safe haven of Kent, where he was a member of the County Committee and exercised such considerable influence that the Committee took no action against him. On the contrary, he became Member of Parliament for Queenborough on 15 September, 1645, and was even allowed to reorganise the regiment of Kentish horse. When a popular rising broke out in Canterbury at Christmas 1647, he led the soldiers who suppressed it and damaged the cathedral. He was one of three Kentish regicides who signed the king's death warrant on 16 January, 1649. He was notorious for his corruption and was described by his enemies as 'plunder-master general of Kent', while a colleague, Colonel Springate, accused him of feathering his nest. The accusation is credible as the County Committee paid £22,950 for the expenses of the regiment (which he commanded until the beginning of May 1645) for the period January 1644 to June 1645; this was a vast sum in the currency of the time.[65] His dishonesty became more blatant after he was appointed Commissioner of the Admiralty in 1658. He was summoned to appear before the House of Commons to answer charges but, in a grovelling letter of apology, on 12 May, 1659, to Speaker Lenthall he pleaded the need to recover from a fever as his excuse for non-attendance.[66] He fled the country at the Restoration in 1660 and may have been killed by a mob at The Hague in the Netherlands. Another account is that he returned incognito to England and died here in 1663. His considerable wealth passed by an Act of Attainder to James, Duke of York.

[64] There are short biographies in the D.N.B. and L. Tyler, 'Sir Michael Livesey of Eastchurch, Sheppey', *K.L.H.*, 27, Sept. 1988, 9–10.

[65] Alan Everitt, *op. cit.*, 148, 163.

[66] *Tanner MlS*, Bodleian Library, Oxford, vol. 51, fo. 50.