

# Austrey in the Great Civil War (Part 2)

## The Kendalls' declaration for Parliament

Compared to their cautious neighbours, the Austrey Kendalls were staunch in their allegiance to Parliament. They were undoubtedly aware of the strong support for parliament in north Warwickshire, as revealed during the puritan gentry's campaign for the Warwickshire county elections in 1640. The process of political polarization can also be observed in recruitments to the musters and militias. Soldiers who came forward in response to the king's instruction to the train bands to supply 600 men by July 1640 were savagely mistreated by their fellow countrymen. Parliament, on the other hand, had no difficulty raising 2,000 volunteers from the hundred meetings at Coleshill, Warwick and Coventry, and in furnishing them with armour and weapons produced by the rabidly pro-parliamentarian inhabitants of Birmingham. The Kendalls probably felt more secure after the surrender of the royalist garrison at Tamworth in June, 1643. Accounts for quartering, and levies for Parliamentary troops in Austrey from June 1644 to November 1646, suggest that the parish was firmly in the Parliamentary camp after the fall of Tamworth. This was, perhaps, as opportune a time as any for Henry Kendall and his son to be put in charge of a small parliamentary garrison at Maxstoke castle, 12 miles to the south.

The accounts of the musters at Maxstoke castle from July 1644 to April 1645 make interesting reading, providing a list of those loyal to the Parliament. Besides Henry Kendall sen., the governor of the castle were two of his sons and a nephew from Austrey, William Smart, the son of a joiner from Austrey, is listed among the soldiers in the Maxstoke garrison together with Joseph Orton, Henry Spencer and John Crispe, all of whom appear to have links with the parish.

## Losses from Quartering and Plunder

The accounts of losses from quartering and plunder provide graphic illustration of the costs and hardships imposed by the war upon the rural inhabitants. Both sides exacted tolls and levies to maintain their garrisons. The distinction between hostile and friendly forces was sometimes difficult when both levied taxes and went foraging for supplies. A list of claims for 'free quartering' submitted by 38 West Leicestershire villages to the Warwickshire county committee in June, 1646, gives some idea of the extent of Parliamentary impositions on the region. The account reveals that squadrons of cavalry and footsoldiers from the Warwickshire garrisons at Coventry, Astley House, Warwick, Edgbaston and Tamworth engaged forces from Hastings' East Midlands Army in a series of local skirmishes and raids. In the Summer of 1646 a party of Parliamentary soldiers from Tamworth under the command of Captain Smith and Lieutenant Layfield were charged with taking ten horses from the householders at Appleby Parva including two belonging to Charles Moore, the lord of the manor, and a mare owned by Richard Wathew, the blacksmith. Losses on this scale were comparatively rare it seems and it is perhaps significant that Appleby Magna does not record any horses taken away on this occasion. Although there are occasional complaints of plundering in surrounding villages, as for example at Sibson where Colonel Purefoy is accused of forcibly taking "money lent to the state's use" the bulk of the exactions were of agricultural produce. Typical perhaps is the twenty strikes of 'provinder' Captain Flower ordered to be sent from Burbage to Stony Stanton to supply his troop billeted there.

By 1646 parishes in the region were being charged a regular monthly levy 'towards the maintenance of the forces of Sir Thomas Fairfax' in addition to their levies in support of the garrisons. Austrey paid a weekly levy of £6 for the support of the garrison at Tamworth. This appears to have been based upon a fixed rate which was collected by officers of the parish for forwarding to the county committee.

Austrey, which came under the control of the notoriously undisciplined troops of Captain Anthony Ottway, was particularly afflicted by parliamentary quartering and plundering, and the resentment of the local inhabitants can be seen in their "aspersions" delivered to the Warwickshire county committee. The exactions strained already delicate relations between the army commanders and members of the county committee. Exchequer accounts of contributions and losses between 3rd April 1641 and June 1644 reveal that the Austrey's inhabitants paid £77.1.6 in subsidies or forced loans to Parliament. Payments to the committee of the militia and the Treasury amounted to a further £931.8.0 for the period up to 12th June, 1646. In addition to the standard levy of £6 a week paid to Captain Ottway and his deputies for maintenance of the garrison at Tamworth, the inhabitants paid over £80 through a 'Proposition tax' on the principal landholders. The highest assessments were for Mrs. Elizabeth Leving, widow of Thomas Leving the escheator (£14) and John Prior, the vicar (£12). Austrey also suffered heavy losses from the forced billeting of some 544 men and 352 horses for two days in June 1644 which resulted in a claim for losses amounting to £163.15.8, at least half of which was for requisitioned property and pasturage.

At least 46 Austrey households claimed for quartering Parliamentary troops.

Recriminations in the wake of the royalist defeat posed further threats to parochial stability. Although no record was found of any Austrey inhabitant compounding for his estate, the ordinances of the Rump Parliament for sale of crown lands and fee farm rents in 1649-50 brought about the sale of several houses and parcels of land in Austrey's main street which had once belonged to the king. The operation was supervised by courts of surveyors set up to inquire into the extent and value of these lands, and to assess claims upon them. The dislocations caused by these forced sales were diminished by the fact that the holdings at risk were those usually farmed by absentee landlords, but the vicar, faced eviction from his tenements and lands leased from the crown because he had failed to substantiate his claim that the lands had been granted by 'presentation, institucon and induccion' to the vicarage for his lifetime. This caused the Austrey rectory and fee farm rents to fall into the possession of the Marchioness of Hereford.

### **Sources and Notes**

WCR Quarter Sessions Order Book, II, xxxiv; For an account of the election campaign see 'National and local awareness in the county community', in H. Tomlinson (ed.), *Before the Civil War* (London, 1983), 16 & 17.

VCH Warws. II, 447-8. Muster rolls and accounts show Henry Kendall and his son had joined the Maxstoke garrison by November 1643, five months after the fall of Tamworth. P.R.O. Musters SP 28/121A, SP 28/122; Misc. Accounts SP 28/186

P.R.O. 'Account of Free Quarter and Horses'. SP 28/161 (loose); this list is probably incomplete as the clerk claims 'Much more will be charged so soone as the Country Booke of Accounts come in'. The inhabitants of Grendon and Wishaw in Hemlingford Hundred claimed to have contributed to the royalist garrisons at Ashby, Dudley and Lichfield as well as to Parliament. The Dilkes of Maxstoke paid levies to the royalist garrison at Lichfield even while their own home at Maxstoke was a

parliamentary garrison: Hughes thesis, 340-1; For other examples of double taxing see R.E. Sherwood, *Civil Strife in the Midlands* (London, 1974), 60.

See in particular the Warwickshire committee's reply to 'aspersions' raised by county petitioners, HMC 5th Series, Sixth Report, Part 1 (House of Lords), 27.

Claims amounted to £85.10.8 (1645) and £128.3.10 (1646): P.R.O. SP28/186.

Walker, *Sufferings of the Clergy*, 309; Nichols IV, 436; CCC 1643-60, Part 1, 104, 110.

P.R.O. E 121/5/1; E 320/T12; E 317/44; acts were passed for the sale of manors and honours belonging to the king in 1649, and for the sale of fee farm rents in 1650. see *Calendar of Treasury Books I*, 18-26.

*Diary of John Rouse ... from 1625 to 1642*, ed. M.A.E. Green, Camden Society, lxxvi London, 1856), 44 (the justice was 'Mr Taylor').

CSPD 1634-5, 311.

© Alan Roberts, November 2000