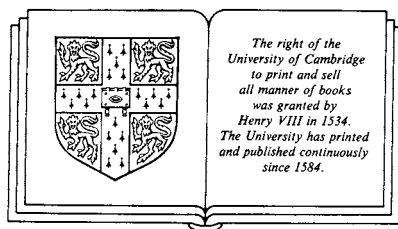


CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE LOCALITIES: HAMPSHIRE 1649–1689

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INTRODUCTION AND PROLOGUE

Historians of early modern England no longer need to apologize for devoting considerable attention to the localities. In recent decades, local studies have provided vital insights into the origins and course of the Reformation of the sixteenth century and the Civil Wars of the seventeenth. However, for some obscure reason, until recently this approach has not been extended to the decades of the seventeenth century after the restoration of Charles II in 1660. Historians already established in the field of Restoration politics have acknowledged the significance of the local dimension, but have done little to follow this up with local research.¹ Other scholars have not been so coy and the last few years have seen the appearance of several important local studies which extend beyond the previously hallowed watershed of 1660.²

However, this is the first such study to make centre–local relations rather than local administration and society its principal theme. Central involvement in the localities after the mid-century and especially after the Restoration has been widely ignored and underestimated by historians, with a resultant distortion in current views of the Restoration regime. Local reactions to central government and its policies have fared little better for the same period. The intention of this present study is to go some way towards redressing the historiographical balance.

But even while shifting to a slightly later period, it is difficult to throw off the influence of the local historians of the early Stuart period. When the research on which this book is based was begun, the debate over the concept

¹ J. Miller, *James II, a Study in Kingship* (Hove, 1977), chapter 3, pp. 28–30; Dr Miller's article, 'The Crown and the Borough Charters in the reign of Charles II', *E.H.R.*, c (1985), 53–84, as he freely admits, is not based on detailed local research; Professor J. R. Jones called for research to be undertaken on the boroughs in his *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (London, first published 1972, reprint 1984), pp. 142–3.

² P. Jenkins, *The Making of a Ruling Class: The Glamorgan Gentry 1640–1790* (Cambridge, 1982); S. K. Roberts, *Recovery and Restoration in an English County: Devon Local Administration 1646–1670* (Exeter, 1985).

of 'county communities' in the pre-Civil-War period was in full swing.³ Scholars like Dr Clive Holmes and Dr Ann Hughes questioned the utility of the 'county community' model for understanding early Stuart England, outside exceptional counties such as Kent or Cheshire.⁴ The concept is widely seen to have obscured more than it clarified about English politics in the 1640s and beyond. Some scholars have simply abandoned it, but even its original proponents have since moved on to embrace a more sophisticated view of local identities and of centre–local relationships in the early modern period as a whole.⁵ So a fresh assault on the old misconceptions associated with the 'county community', now so widely abandoned, would be totally redundant. It would also divert attention from the immense debt which historians of the seventeenth century owe the scholars who first focused attention on the localities. They were absolutely right to put centre–local relations in the forefront of discussion about seventeenth-century politics and government. My own research would never have been begun without their pioneering efforts.

It is admittedly somewhat artificial to talk of 'central government' in this period. As Dr Stephen Roberts has pointed out, there was no clear distinction in the minds of contemporaries between central and local government.⁶ Dr Colin Brooks has aptly written of the localities 'merging with the central government of the nation' after 1688.⁷ The forty years before 1688 saw numerous and rapid changes in the structure and role of central institutions of government, as well as in the personnel who manned them. However, despite these qualifications, there was throughout the period a national government residing principally at Whitehall, where policies were formulated, which then had to be enforced at local level. There was a relationship between those who wielded power at the centre and those who governed the

³ A. M. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion* (Leicester, 1966); J. S. Morrill, *Cheshire 1630–1660: County Government and Society during the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1974); *The Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War, 1630–1650* (London, 1976); A. J. Fletcher, *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex 1600–1660* (London and New York, 1975).

⁴ C. Holmes, 'The county community in Stuart historiography', *Journal of British Studies*, xix, no. 2 (1980), 54–73; A. L. Hughes, 'Warwickshire on the eve of the Civil War: a county community?', *Midland History*, 7 (1982), 42–72.

⁵ E.g. A. M. Everitt, 'Country, county and town: patterns of regional evolution in England', *T.R.H.S. Fifth Series*, 29 (1979), 79–106; A. Fletcher, 'National and local awareness in the county communities', *Before the English Civil War*, ed. H. C. Tomlinson (London, 1983), pp. 151–74.

⁶ S. K. Roberts, 'Local government reform in England and Wales during the Interregnum: a survey', *Into Another Mould: Aspects of the Interregnum*, ed. I. Roots (Exeter, 1981), p. 26.

⁷ C. Brooks, 'Public finance and political stability: the administration of the Land Tax 1688–1720', *H.J.*, 17 (1974), 300.

localities on their behalf, and through them with the wider local community. This present study is an attempt to examine that relationship and to explore centre–local interaction at various levels, in the context of one particular county.

Before proceeding, something should be said about the structure of this book. For the structure is very much part of the argument. The main concerns of central government in the localities are dealt with in each chronological section under the heading of ‘The Enforcement of Policy’. It is not possible to cover everything that central authorities attempted to do, but I would suggest that in each case I have presented a representative picture of the concerns and activity of central government, and have attempted to account for changes in these priorities, when they took place. However, it should rapidly become clear, indeed it is one of the main themes of this book, that there was a considerable degree of continuity in central involvement in the localities running through the whole period.

Hampshire of course was not a typical county; which is? It contained the strategically vital Solent area and the naval base at Portsmouth, which no government could afford to ignore, and yet for this very reason Hampshire is an ideal testing ground for the effectiveness of successive regimes, and their relationship with people in the provinces. If governments failed here and were despised here, it boded ill for their performance and popularity elsewhere. And the general policies of government had to be enforced in Hampshire as they were in any other county.

Seventeenth-century Hampshire contained within its boundaries several different regions and innumerable neighbourhoods. As Professor Everitt has observed ‘contrasting types of countryside are rarely delimited by county boundaries’.⁸ So in Hampshire, the chalk downlands of the north, with their large sheep flocks had more in common with the comparable terrain over the Wiltshire border than with the still wooded areas in the south of the county. Social structures were different. The downland farmers of Hampshire had for some time been involved in large-scale farming, which could only be undertaken with the aid of a large number of wage-labourers.⁹ Manorial control remained strong and, according to John Aubrey, the old festive customs were more resilient in this region than elsewhere.¹⁰ But in the New Forest, which dominated the south-western corner of the county, there emerged a rural

⁸ Everitt, ‘Country, county and town’, p. 82.

⁹ *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*: vol. 4: 1500–1640, ed. J. Thirsk (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 65, 70.

¹⁰ Cited in D. Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603–1660* (Oxford, 1985), p. 88.

economy characterized by a large number of independent or semi-independent small-holders, relying on stock-keeping for their livelihood.¹¹

Urban Hampshire also presents a varied picture in the early modern period. On the one hand there were the large long-established urban centres of Winchester and Southampton, which were in a state of economic decline before 1640.¹² On the other hand, there were the numerous small market towns, which prospered by catering for the neighbouring rural communities or the travellers on the trunk routes, notably the Great West Road, which crossed the county. They, along with the naval towns of Portsmouth and Gosport, provided the really dynamic element in Hampshire's demography in the early modern period.¹³

Socially and economically, the county consisted of a patchwork of communities, localities and neighbourhoods, often very different from each other. The Isle of Wight, to take an extreme example, though technically part of the county, was a distinct community on its own. Here there was a clearly defined group of gentry families, closely intermarried and enjoying a very individual, not to say insular, social life, based on festive gatherings and the rites of passage of members of the community. Nevertheless, this situation should not be sentimentalized. Gentry society in the Isle of Wight was riven by feuds and disputes over precedence, and Sir John Oglandet detected a lack of genuine friendship amongst his neighbours.¹⁴

But however diverse its social and economic components may have been, Hampshire did represent a single administrative unit. Compared with many other shires, it was administratively centralized and unified. Almost the whole county was subject to the assizes held at Winchester twice a year, and to the quarter sessions, which in contrast to neighbouring Sussex and Wiltshire, virtually never moved from the county capital. Ecclesiastically the whole county was contained within the same diocese and archdeaconry of Winchester.

But the administrative dominance of county institutions was by no means total or unchallenged. The county contained a maze of municipal privileges. Southampton was a county in its own right, with sheriff, justices and its own quarter sessions, exempt from the jurisdiction of county assizes. Apart from

¹¹ C. R. Tubbs, 'The development of the small-holding and cottage stock-keeping economy of the New Forest', *Agricultural History Review*, xiii (1965), 23–39.

¹² A. Rosen, 'Winchester in transition 1580–1700', *Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England*, ed. P. Clark (Leicester, 1981), pp. 148–62.

¹³ J. R. Taylor, 'Population, disease and family structure in early modern Hampshire, with special reference to the towns' (Southampton Univ., Ph.D. thesis, 1980), pp. iii, 55–68, 222–31.

¹⁴ J. D. Jones, 'The Isle of Wight, 1558–1642' (Southampton Univ., Ph.D. thesis, 1978), pp. 66–8, 87–8, 108–13.

this, Portsmouth, Winchester, Basingstoke, Andover, Romsey and Newport in the Isle of Wight had their own justices and sessions, and enjoyed a lesser degree of independence. There were serious disputes between the county and the boroughs of Portsmouth and Andover during the reign of Charles I. The county justices looked for external support, notably from the assize judges, to win their case, though as the successive endorsement of Andover's privileges in 1637 and 1652 showed, the judges did not necessarily side with the county.¹⁵ No central government thought to deal with such anomalies until the Tory reaction of the 1680s.

There was also a degree of decentralization in the administrative structure of the rest of the county. Back in 1561, the people of the Isle of Wight had obtained a warrant from Queen Elizabeth exempting them from jury service and attendance at mainland assizes and quarter sessions, except in such matters as concerned the island.¹⁶ The Isle of Wight had its own house of correction, and did not contribute to the county one; it collected its own rates for maimed soldiers and had its own treasurer for that fund, and was only once rated for the repair of a mainland bridge during the early Stuart period.¹⁷ But justices from the island did attend and participate in the decisions of the county quarter sessions. The island had its own military structure, subject to a Crown appointed captain or governor, with two regiments of militia foot and parochial artillery.¹⁸ Since the reign of Elizabeth, mainland Hampshire had also been divided into seven divisions.¹⁹ But despite its internal complexity, Hampshire for the purposes of this study will be treated as an administrative unit.

THE COUNTY AND THE CIVIL WARS 1640–8

Hampshire's gentry were well placed to air their county's grievances against the royal government when Charles I at last resorted to Parliament in 1640. With twenty-four borough seats as well as two county ones, Hampshire was in fact somewhat over-represented.²⁰ Despite a tradition of court and aristocratic influence in several of the boroughs, the majority of seats usually went to native gentry or their close relatives, a tendency which was enhanced in

¹⁵ B. J. Richmond, 'The work of the justices of the peace in Hampshire, 1603–1642' (Southampton Univ., M.Phil. thesis, 1969), pp. 16–24; J. S. Furley, *Quarter Sessions Government in Hampshire in the Seventeenth Century* (Winchester, 1937), pp. 53–5; H.C.R.O., QO 3, p. 145.

¹⁶ Furley, *Quarter Sessions Government in Hampshire*, p. 17.

¹⁷ Richmond, 'The work of the justices of the peace in Hampshire', pp. 42–4.

¹⁸ Jones, 'The Isle of Wight', pp. 46, 241–2.

¹⁹ Alton, Andover, Basingstoke, Kingsclere, New Forest, Fawley, Portsdown, see map 1.

²⁰ Under the Instrument of Government the county's representation was nearly halved to fourteen MPs.

1640 by a reduction in external influence. Most of those elected to the Long Parliament were also associated with opposition to the royal government.²¹

John Pym's rhetoric about a Catholic conspiracy to subvert both church and state made sense to Hampshire's native MPs as the county contained a comparatively large and apparently growing Roman Catholic community.²² The county's leading Catholic layman, John Paulet, fifth marquis of Winchester, had been prominent in his support for the king in the first Bishops' War, in contrast with several of the parliamentary gentry.²³ Their fears were exacerbated in the summer of 1641 by the discovery of a huge stock of arms at Winchester's formidable mansion of Basing House. By the autumn of 1641, Pym was using the supposed movements of Catholics in Hampshire to arouse concern at Westminster. In the following spring, the framers of an assize petition from Hampshire, endorsing Pym's programme, drew attention to an alarming influx of Catholics into the county. It called for all Catholics to be secured and for Catholic peers to be excluded from the House of Lords.²⁴

In the ensuing crisis, a substantial majority of Hampshire's MPs sided with Parliament against the king and local government was brought into line behind them.²⁵ Already by the spring of 1642, the sheriff and assize grand jury were clearly on their side.²⁶ The Militia Ordinance enabled Hampshire's parliamentarians to take over the lieutenancy. By 21 June, the parliamentary deputy-lieutenants were able to muster the county's militia numbering 5,000 men along with several contingents of volunteers, who all subscribed a declaration in support of the Militia Ordinance, despite the attempts of the 'Malignant Party' to invalidate it with a royal proclamation.²⁷ The king's counter strategy of purging sixteen avowed parliamentarians including seven of the county's MPs from the commission of the peace was less effective than

²¹ J. K. Gruenfelder, *Influence in Early Stuart Elections 1604–1640* (Columbus, 1981), pp. 194, 207–8, n. 24, appendix 6, 232; M. F. Keeler, *The Long Parliament, 1640–1* (Philadelphia, 1954), pp. 48–50.

²² W. H. Mildon, 'Puritanism in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight from the reign of Elizabeth to the Restoration' (London Univ., Ph.D. thesis, 1934), p. 56.

²³ C. Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (Chapel Hill, 1983), p. 101; Keeler, *The Long Parliament*, pp. 234, 237, 377, 400; *C.J.*, ii. 263.

²⁴ *The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes*, ed. W. H. Coate (New Haven, 1942), pp. 58, 68, 102, 172; *The Petition of the County of Southampton* (that the votes of the popish lords may be taken away, and all papists confined) (London, 1642).

²⁵ Out of twenty-six sitting MPs in 1642, sixteen sided with Parliament, two others who had shown signs of supporting Parliament died on the eve of war, Keeler, *The Long Parliament*, *passim*.

²⁶ John Fielder of Borough Court, a future Rumper, had been made sheriff for 1641–2.

²⁷ Seven MPs and Richard Norton of Southwick reported the progress which had been made to the earl of Pembroke, who had been appointed lord lieutenant of the county under the Militia Ordinance, *L.J.*, v. 156, 172.

it might have been, as quarter sessions had already ceased to sit, and would not meet again until Easter 1646.²⁸

The parliamentarians used their control of the militia and the shrievalty in 1642 to crush opposition within the shire, making Hampshire appear more parliamentary than it actually was. Bands of royalists seeking to execute the Commission of Array within the county were treated as common criminals, their endeavours nipped in the bud and their would-be local accomplices deterred.²⁹ When George Goring declared for the king at Portsmouth in August, he was rapidly blockaded by local forces with naval support and a garrison which might otherwise have been a focus for the undeclared royalists of west Sussex, and eastern Hampshire was surrendered early in September.³⁰

Hampshire's parliamentarians were able to manipulate the understandable local dread of civil war to their own advantage. They promoted an assize grand jury petition in July 1642, which purported to call for an accommodation. But it was far from being a neutralist document: it protested at the recent purge of the commission of the peace and called upon the king to be reconciled to Parliament.³¹ The desire to keep the war out of their locality turned the largely neutral gentry of the Isle of Wight, with a few exceptions, into moderate parliamentarians, who proved surprisingly generous in providing the mainland war effort with provisions and reinforcements.³² On the mainland, true neutralism failed to find a county focus in the summer of 1642. County solidarity was not apparent. However, when Parliament's hold on the county gave way in the face of the royalist advance of 1643, several borough oligarchies were quick to come to terms with the ascendant party.³³

The turning of the military tide in 1643 also enabled some of Hampshire's latent royalism to become apparent. By November of that year, the royalists were convening meetings of gentry at Winchester to approve a contribution to support Basing House, which the marquis of Winchester had garrisoned for the king the year before. By that time, it was possible to appoint a council of war of fifty-two members, consisting mostly of native peers and gentry of

²⁸ P.R.O., Crown Office Docquet Book, C231/5.fol. 528.

²⁹ *A Letter sent from one Mr Parker a Gentleman, dwelling at Upper Wallop in Hampshire, to his friend a Gentleman in London, wherein is related some remarkable passages there, as of a Battell fought between the Inhabitants of the County, and of the Cavaliers about the settlement of the Militia and Commission of Array* (London, 1642).

³⁰ J. Webb, *The Siege of Portsmouth in the Civil War* (The Portsmouth Papers, 1967, revised 1977); Fletcher, *Sussex*, p. 261.

³¹ *Cal.S.P.Dom.*, 1641–3, pp. 356–7.

³² Jones, 'Isle of Wight', pp. 255–71; A. Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London, 1981), p. 385.

³³ Rosen, 'Winchester in transition', in Clark, *Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England*, p. 163; H.C.R.O. Lymington borough records, 27M74A DBC/2, fol. 41; Christchurch Civic Offices, borough archives, council minute book 1615–1857, fol. 567.

whom thirty-one would later be sequestered for active royalism. Hampshire produced at least twenty royalist field officers during the course of the Civil Wars and Interregnum, the same as neighbouring Wiltshire.³⁴

Yet in terms of actual fighting men, popular royalism in Hampshire seems to have been a comparatively insignificant phenomenon. The sources are problematical and retrospective, but for what the figures are worth, 185 individuals were listed as suspects in 1655 and 140 indigent royalist soldiers or their dependents were dealt with by the county quarter sessions between the Restoration and 1672, a much lower number than for neighbouring Wiltshire or Dorset.³⁵

But the royalists too learnt how to manipulate local dislike of the war in their favour. In April 1644, a petition which claimed to speak for 8,677 of the county's inhabitants was promoted which called upon Parliament to respond to the king's gracious promises in order to end the war. If Parliament did not make peace they were ready to rise 'all as one man' to save 'our deare Country'. Defeated at Cheriton a few weeks before, local royalists were now waging the war by other means. The royalist press gleefully took up the petition, and the king adopted the 'all as one man' formula in a subsequent propaganda campaign.³⁶ However, at this stage, Parliament was sufficiently strong locally to stamp out this 'peace' movement.

The clubmen risings of 1645 were rather more formidable, though in most of Hampshire no less royalist in motivation. There was a high degree of collusion between the clubmen in neighbouring shires, and royalist clergy were prominent amongst them.³⁷ One local parliamentarian observer saw these crypto-royalists for what they were and attributed this to their origins

³⁴ Brit. Lib., Addit. MS 26781 (Hampshire correspondence of the lord lieutenant, militia affairs, etc. 1630–43), fol. 115; *Calendar of the Committee for the Advance of Money, 1642–1656*, ed. M. A. E. Green (3 vols., London, 1888) and *Calendar of the Committee for Compounding, 1643–1660*, ed. M. A. E. Green (5 vols., London, 1889), *passim*; P. R. Newman, 'The Royalist Officer Corps 1642–1660: Army command as a reflection of social structure', *H.J.*, 26 (1983), 952.

³⁵ For a discussion of the sources and the problems with them, see Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, pp. 192–207; Professor Underdown found 327 individual indigent royalists from identifiable places in Wiltshire in the county records and 815 from Dorset, and there were 384 and 1,507 suspects respectively listed in 1655; the disparity between the latter figures and that for Hampshire is only partly explained by the fact that Major-General Goffe did not take bonds for good behaviour from royalists on whom he was levying the decimation tax; see n. 11, p. 34 below; H.C.R.O., QO4 *passim*.

³⁶ The petition was not a narrowly localist document, but began by reminding the Commons that they had been elected to represent the petitioners 'and other our Countrymen of this Kingdome'. *Mercurius Aulicus*, sixteenth week, 20 April 1644, pp. 940–2; R. Hutton, 'The royalist war effort', *Reactions to the English Civil War 1642–9*, ed. J. S. Morrill (London, 1982), pp. 60–1.

³⁷ D. Underdown, 'The chalk and the cheese: contrasts among the English clubmen', *Past and Present*, 85 (1979), 41.

in the east of the county where Papists and episcopal tenants were concentrated.³⁸ Far from desiring an end to hostilities on any terms, the bulk of Hampshire's clubmen actually impeded peace by obstructing the forces which were besieging Winchester in September 1645. They had to be militarily crushed at Petersfield and Bishops Waltham (a former royalist garrison).³⁹ Finally, in October 1645, Winchester surrendered and Basing House with its exclusively Catholic garrison was bloodily stormed by forces under Cromwell's command, completing the military defeat of royalism in the shire.⁴⁰

Victory in the Civil War at last enabled Hampshire's parliamentarians to establish a proper administrative infrastructure in the county, which had been lacking since 1642. For much of the war, the county committee had not had a settled existence or place of residence, fluctuating between Portsmouth and Basingstoke with the fortunes of war, and liable to be overthrown by a sudden royalist incursion. Now with the war virtually over, it was given a fixed membership of fifty and full powers except over the Isle of Wight.⁴¹ It contained fifteen of the living MPs who had remained loyal to Parliament, and four of the nine men shortly to be 'recruited' to the Long Parliament in by-elections, but apart from these notables, only two had been in the commission of the peace by 1642. The rest were mostly minor gentry who had worked their way up through parliamentary administration during the war.⁴² In this way it reflected very clearly the uneven support for Parliament among the gentry in different parts of the county. The New Forest division accounted for ten members of the county committee whilst the north-western Kingsclere division was represented by only one member. This imbalance would later be incorporated into Interregnum commissions of the peace, which were to a large extent composed of the committeemen of the 1640s.⁴³

The county committee in Hampshire did not become the preserve of a faction and posed no serious threat to the normal institutions of county government, such as quarter sessions, which were revived at Easter 1646. The latter were soon dealing not only with problems such as bridge repair and unlicensed alehouses, but also with such matters as invigorating local tax collection and adjudicating rating disputes. By April 1648, according to John Woodman, a local sequestration official, the county committee was seldom

³⁸ Brit. Lib., Addit. MS 24860 (Maijor papers), fol. 137.

³⁹ G. N. Godwin, *The Civil War in Hampshire* (2nd edn), (Southampton and London, 1904), pp. 321–2.

⁴⁰ Godwin, *The Civil War in Hampshire*, pp. 335–48.

⁴¹ P.R.O., Papers of the Committee of Compounding with Delinquents, S.P.23/257/75; *F. & R.*, i. 694–6.

⁴² *F. & R.*, i. 696; H.C.R.O., 5M53, no. 964; P.R.O., C231/5, fol. 528.

⁴³ See below, p. 20.

sitting, despite a backlog of sequestration business which had not been dealt with.⁴⁴

In the wake of the Civil War, the parliamentarians pushed through the religious changes which had been held up by the fighting. They had long perceived that a majority of the county's clergy were unsympathetic to their cause. The assize petition of March 1642 had complained that less than one fifth of the county's parishes were 'furnished with conscionable, constant Preaching Ministers'. An earlier draft of that petition had accused hostile clergy of trying 'to exasperate the people against Parliament's proceedings'.⁴⁵ Since then the royalism of many of the clergy had become overt, and several of them had been involved in organizing the clubmen. These clergy were now at the mercy of the parliamentarians, and the bulk of the ejections of 'scandalous ministers' in Hampshire took place in 1645 and 1646. Altogether, taking the 1640s and 1650s as a whole, more than ninety parochial clergy may have been affected and at least seventy-two livings (28 per cent of the county's total of 253) were sequestered.⁴⁶ In 1646-7, there was also a campaign against Catholic recusancy which resulted in 625 presentments to quarter sessions.⁴⁷

As M. G. Finlayson has stressed, the religious views of many MPs in the 1640s are obscure.⁴⁸ However, this does not imply that the views they had were not strongly held. Of Hampshire's sitting MPs in 1648, Professor Underdown was able to classify only seven unambiguously, with four Presbyterians and three Independents. Of these, their views varied from the intolerant Presbyterianism of Sir William Lewis (MP for Petersfield) to the tolerant Independency of Richard Norton ('recruiter' MP for the county). The views of the majority of the other MPs were probably ranged somewhere between these two extremes. Their religious differences did not spill over into open conflict at local level, but they may explain why, after a few initial

⁴⁴ H.C.R.O., QO2, fols. 216-77; P.R.O., S.P.23/118, pp. 1013, 1015; in the relative ineffectiveness of its county committee, Hampshire resembles Devon, but differs markedly from Somerset and other counties, Roberts, *Recovery and Restoration in an English County*, pp. 13-14; D. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum* (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp. 121-37.

⁴⁵ *The Petition of the County of Southampton* [that the votes of the popish lords may be taken away, and all papists confined] (London, 1642); Brit. Lib. Addit. MS 29975 (Pitt papers), fol. 129.

⁴⁶ A. G. Matthews, *Walker Revised* (Oxford, 1948), p. xiv; I. M. Green, 'The persecution of "scandalous" and "malignant" parish clergy during the English Civil War', *E.H.R.*, xciv (1979), 523; the earliest estimate of the number of clergy ejected in Hampshire dates from 1662 and occurs in *A List of the Clergy of Hampshire* by T.C., which is reproduced in W. Kennett, *A Register and Chronicle Ecclesiastical and Civil* (London, 1728), pp. 821-2, the figure there given is ninety-five; I am grateful to Dr I. M. Green for advice about the number of sequestered livings as a proportion of the total number of livings in the county.

⁴⁷ H.C.R.O., Q1, fols. 9-26, 27-36, 38.

⁴⁸ M. G. Finlayson, *Historians, Puritanism and the English Revolution: the Religious Factor in English Politics before and after the Interregnum* (Toronto, 1983), p. 6.

consultations, the county committee seems to have failed to establish the full Presbyterian system locally.⁴⁹

The 'recruiter' elections brought to light some differences between the local parliamentarians, but they were hardly ideological in nature. Most of Hampshire's nine 'recruiter' MPs were resident gentlemen, and most seem to have been elected without contests. But at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, William Stephens resorted to sharp practice to secure his return in a bitter contest.⁵⁰ John Lisle obtained the writ of the Christchurch 'recruiter' election and tried to use the opportunity to keep John Kemp, a former mayor of the borough, from being elected for one of the seats there. Kemp wrote an indignant letter to the mayor against this manoeuvre, in which he unashamedly described Lisle as 'my professed ennimy' and harked back to slights received from him at the beginning of the Civil War.⁵¹ Kemp was duly elected. There appears to have been no significant ideological difference between Lisle and Kemp, and although both Lisle and Sir William Lewis were involved in partisan electioneering elsewhere, they do not seem to have indulged in it in Hampshire.⁵² Several of the newly elected MPs were soon being called upon by their constituents to secure mitigations of the excise and other favours to their localities.⁵³

However, the crisis of 1647 seriously disrupted Hampshire's representation at Westminster. Two MPs, Sir William Lewis and Sir William Waller (MP for Andover) were amongst the eleven members against whom the army brought charges during the summer, and were forced to withdraw from the Commons. William Jephson (MP for Stockbridge) seems to have supported the excluded members. But four or five others sided with the army early in August.⁵⁴ However, the response of the majority was simply to keep their heads down and hope that the crisis would blow over, and their absenteeism

⁴⁹ D. Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 369, 378, 379, 381, 385, 388, 389; G. Yule, *Puritans in Politics: Religious Legislation of the Long Parliament 1640–1647* (Sutton Courtenay Press, 1981), appendix 1, pp. 260–2; Brit. Lib., Addit. MS 24860, fols. 145, 149.

⁵⁰ E. B. James, *Letters Archaeological and Historical Relating to the Isle of Wight* (2 vols., London, 1896), ii. 187.

⁵¹ Christchurch Civic Offices, borough archives, volume of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century correspondence relating to elections, p. 46: John Kemp to the mayor and corporation, 6 Dec. 1645.

⁵² D. Underdown, 'Party management in the recruiter elections 1645–8', *E.H.R.* lxxxiii (1968), 254, 256, 258–60.

⁵³ E.g. Nicholas Love, MP for Winchester, who was approached by his old college at Winchester to obtain concessions over the excise, *Winchester College Muniments: a descriptive list* compiled by S. Himsworth (3 vols., Chichester, 1976–84), i. 40; John Kemp and Richard Edwards, MPs for Christchurch were contacted by the mayor and corporation with a similar end in view, Christchurch Civic Offices, volume of correspondence relating to elections, p. 40; John Kemp to the Mayor, 29 Jan. 1645/6.

⁵⁴ Underdown, *Pride's Purge*, pp. 377, 378, 379, 385, 386, 388.

continued into the autumn. When the House was called on 9 October, nine of Hampshire's MPs were absent without excuse apart from the two excluded members.⁵⁵ In the case of Richard Whitehead (knight of the shire) and John Bulkeley ('recruiter' MP for Newtown) this simply reflected their failure to hurry back to London after the Michaelmas quarter sessions which began on 5 October. But in the case of at least three others their absence seems to have represented a withdrawal from active politics which would subsequently be confirmed by their abstention at the time of Pride's Purge.⁵⁶

But if Hampshire's parliamentary MPs and gentry wished to stay clear of national issues, they were in for a nasty shock in the winter of 1647–8. The flight of Charles I to the Isle of Wight in November 1647 brought the central political crisis straight into that locality. The bungled attempt by Captain Burley (a former fort commander on the island) to raise the island on the king's behalf, to secure his release from custody, further confronted the local community with the issue of his detention. It also gave hardline opponents of the king a chance to use Burley's subsequent trial for propaganda purposes. There were several MPs amongst the commissioners of oyer and terminer appointed to try him at Winchester. Ironically, Burley was condemned for treason, and a carefully chosen Hampshire grand jury issued a declaration in support of Parliament's recent vote of no addresses, urging Parliament to settle the kingdom unilaterally, which was part of a wider campaign to obtain provincial endorsement for this policy.⁵⁷ In Hampshire, some of the same grand jurymen would serve again later in the year as an assize jury at the trial of Major Rolfe for allegedly plotting to kill the king at Carisbrooke. After a character reference for Rolfe from the recently victorious Oliver Cromwell, he was rapidly acquitted.⁵⁸

With both the king and the mouthpiece of county opinion in the hands of hardline parliamentarians, local royalists had good reason to feel frustrated. The growing unpopularity of Parliament's rule with local people was very clear. The county committee had tried to shield the local community from free quarter, but an attempt by some people near Alton to enforce the committee's ban against some of Ireton's horse in August 1646 resulted in fighting between them and the soldiery.⁵⁹ High and novel taxation was also unpopular. Rioters who attacked excisemen at Chippenham at the end of 1647 were

⁵⁵ C.J., v. 330; for a similar rate of absenteeism in the case of Devon, see Roberts, *Recovery and Restoration in an English County*, pp. 9–10.

⁵⁶ H.C.R.O., QO 2, fol. 250; Underdown, *Pride's Purge*, pp. 373, 377, 390.

⁵⁷ C.J., v. 429, 441–2; *The Humble and Thankful Acknowledgement and Declaration of the County of Southampton* (London, 1648); the seventeen-man grand jury contained two members of the county committee and two others who would obtain local office under the Commonwealth; for the wider campaign see Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, p. 230.

⁵⁸ G. F. T. Jones, *Saw-Pit Wharton* (Sydney, 1967), pp. 126, 282.

⁵⁹ *The Moderate Intelligencer*, no. 76, 14 Aug. 1646, pp. 601–2.