



The Falstone Day Book By Jay Waylen 1894

The object of this paper is to exhibit some of the various methods of raising money put in practice in Wiltshire during the Civil War by such of the resident gentry as were favourable to the Parliament's cause.¹ The first standing Committee for the county was organised at the close of the year 1642, in pursuance of a Parliamentary Ordinance applicable to the whole of England, and levying a weekly assessment of so much in the pound; though this by no means represents the various forms of appeal made from time to time as the struggle went on. On the other hand, the King also had his Committee. At least he occasionally nominated local groups of his friends for a variety of objects in his own behalf; but their action was spasmodic and their existence very brief. The poor people, meanwhile, whenever this double action was put in force, found themselves ground between two millstones. If the Royalist visitations were sweeping and desolating, those of the Committees were systematic and perennial.

The first Wilts. Committee acting for the Parliament comprised only the fifteen following names:-²

Surname	Given Names	Title	Residence
Ashe	John		Heytesbury
Baynton	Edward		Bromham
Baynton	Edward	Sir	Bromham
Evelyn	John	Sir	West Dean
Goddard	Edward		Marlborough
Hollis	Denzil		Haughton
Hungerford	Edward	Sir	Farley
Jennour	Robert		Marston Meysey
Moore	Thomas		Heytesbury
Poole	Edward		Wootton Bassett?
Poole	Nevill	Sir	Oaksey
Thistlethwayte	Alexander, Jnr.		Winterslow
Tooker	Edward		Maddington
Wheeler	William		Westbury
White	John		Grittleton?

¹ The source from which the matter printed here is derived is the original manuscript, contained in two small vellum-covered folios which were copied by myself some forty years ago, when they were in the possession of a professional gentleman at Salisbury whose name I do not accurately remember - nor do I know what subsequently became of them.

² OPC Note - the tables in this transcription replace lists of text of names involved. The names have also been listed alphabetically rather than as in the originally documents.

The town of Malmesbury, as the spot in the county the most susceptible of fortification, became at first the most attractive place of meeting; but in the course of a few months the Committee greatly reinforced, in order to secure the combined object of maintaining a garrison at Malmesbury and securing the county generally. The names constituting this enlarged Committee are all set forth at page 637 of the sixth vol. of the Lords' Journals, and are as follows:-

Surname	Given Names	Title	Residence
	Charles	Lord Cranbourne	
	Philip	Earl of Pembroke & Montgomery	
	Philip	Lord Herbert	
	William	Earl of Salisbury	
Ashe	Edward	Esq.	
Ashe	John	Esq.	
Bailey	Thomas	Gentleman	
Baynton	Edward	Esq.	
Baynton	Edward	Sir	
Bennet	Thomas	Esq.	Norton
Brown	Robert	Gentleman	
Danvers	John	Sir	
Ditton	Humphrey	Gentleman	
Gifford	Richard	Gentleman	
Goddard	Edward	Esq.	
Goddard	John	Gentleman	
Goddard	Thomas	Gentleman	
Good	Robert	Gentleman	
Hippisley	Robert	Esq.	
Hodges	Thomas	Esq.	
Hollis	Denzil	Esq.	
Hungerford	Edward	Sir	
Jennour	Robert	Esq.	
Jesse	William	Gentleman	
Long	Robert	Gentleman	Whaddon
Long	Walter	Esq.	
Ludlow	Edmund, Jnr.	Esq.	
Ludlow	Edmund, Snr.	Esq.	
Martin	Edward	Gentleman	
Martin	Gabriel	Gentleman	
Moore	Thomas	Esq.	
Nicholas	Robert	Esq.	
Poole	Edward	Esq.	
Poole	Neville	Sir	
Popham	Alexander	Esq.	
Popham	Francis	Sir	
Sadler	William	Esq.	
Smith	Philip	Esq.	
Stokes	Edward	Gentleman	
Talboys	Richard	Gentleman	
Thistlethwayte	Alexander	Esq.	
Warneford	Edmund	Esq.	
Wheeler	William	Esq.	
Whitehead	Richard	Esq.	

Of this body three of more might at any time constitute a quorum, thus enabling them to act in sections in different parts of the county, as the exigencies of the war might require. Eventually they seem to have thought they would be more out of harm's way in a fortified house than in a town; and accordingly made choice of Falstone House, a little south of Wilton (the property of Sir George Vaughan). In this they were undoubtedly right; for in fact Malmesbury, as well as Marlborough and Devizes, was taken and re-taken half-a-dozen times in the course of the war. This

establishment was made in the spring of 1645. In the autumn of the same year Longford Castle, having been reduced by Cromwell, was occupied in a similar manner.

While this Falstone conclave dealt principally with the southern half of the county, other portions of the Committee were occasionally sitting and acting in Marlborough, Malmesbury, Devizes, and Salisbury; but I am inclined to think that this was the central place of business; for the Falstone, treasurers' accounts deal also with financial matters in the north of the county, though to a less extent; and further, because the county troops received their pay at Falstone; and, after the occupation of Longford Castle, William Ludlow, who commanded the horse, took up his station in and around the fortalice.

The names of some of the Falstone treasurers in succession were:-

Surname	Given Names
Cox	Thomas
Poulton	Thomas
Ditton	Humphrey
Good	Robert
Hill	Richard

- Salisbury men apparently; nomination to office by the month. The Committee's clerk was Mr. John Strange at a salary of £8 a month.³ In 1649 Mr. Strange was succeeded by Jonathan Hill.

When gathering for private use the memoranda here bearing the general name of The Falstone Day-Book, I had no expectation of their ever coming under the notice of your archaeological experts. A few miscellaneous entries have in consequence found place, which could not now be detached; but, as all the matters are homogeneous, it is hoped no objection will be taken. The verbiage is of course in numberless cases abbreviated; but no names are omitted; and the whole may form a sort of prelude to the narrative of the final settlements effected at Goldsmiths' Hall, already set forth in our Magazine, under the title of Wiltshire Compounders. (See vol. xxiii., 314; xxiv., 58, 308). To include a transcript of the various treasurers' accounts would have made the affair far too bulky. Neither have the charges been recited which were brought against some of the resident clergy, by which so many of them were displaced from their livings - those charges being creditable to neither party.

These County Committees had no authority to compound with Royalists by levies on real property; but they could deal with personals in the form of stock or rent, and re-let sequestered estates. A few more explanatory notes must close this introductory chapter.

"Delinquency" meant adherence to the King's party. A "Recusant" was a Romanist. The word "parsonage" must be taken in the modern sense of rectory. "A rowless thing," an expression often occurring in the terriers, otherwise spelt a "rowlist thing" and a "rowlass thing," seems to indicate wasted or unregistered land [?]. Money advanced "upon the propositions" was understood to rely on the public faith for re-payment - to what extent ever realized it were hard to say. "The twenty-fifth part," so called, was a direct levy on a man's personal property, if not under £200. "Illegal Assizes," another term of frequent occurrence refers to an action on the King's part, which the Parliament never forgave, namely, that of opening a commission at Salisbury to arraign for high treason the Earls of Salisbury, Pembroke, and Northumberland, and divers other friends of the Parliament. The "Negative Oath" was a promise not to take up arms against the Parliament. The "Covenant" embraced polemical issues of a far wider sweep.

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During this winter of 1645-6, while the people of Wiltshire were nursing the fond belief that the war was at an end, they were suddenly undeceived by the irruption of a body of about eight hundred horse from Oxford, under the command of Sir John Cansfield, and Sir James Long. This was about the 20th of January; and it so happened that a portion of the Wilts Committee was just then sitting in the conclave at Marlborough, protected by Colonel Eyre, the Governor of Devizes, with three troops of horse and a hundred foot soldiers. These were all captured; and by the aid of the newspapers we can then track the further advance of the invaders through the south of the county, gathering as they went along horses, money, and prisoners. Skippon, then at Bristol, strove hard but in vain to come in contact with them; till at last they were intercepted and scattered by Mr. Sheriff Thistlethwayte at the heads of the posse comitatus, probably near Salisbury.

³ OPC Note £8 in 1642 would equate to more than £1500 in 2015

"The mischievous horse from Oxford," writes one of the newspaper correspondents, "that took the Committee and gentlemen at Marlborough, of whom I told you last week, have since been beaten by the High Sheriff of the County, gallant Master Thistlethwayte. Would that we had more such sheriffs and fewer committees, for they make divisions in most counties." - *Scottish Dove*, 4th Feb.

The "gallant" sheriff here memorialised, namely Alexander Thistlethwayte, Jnr., of Winterslow, was not, it need hardly be said, the nominee of the King, though, like many other of the great families at that crisis, the Thistlethwaytes were a divided house. Besides the two Alexanders, father and son, Peregrine and Henry are conspicuous on the Parliament's side as early as November, 1642. In February, 1646, Mrs. Thomasine petitions the House for arrears due to her deceased husband. See also under 1st May, 1647, for the case of Bridget, the widow of Captain Francis Thistlethwayte. On the other hand, John Thistlethwayte, Esq., belonging, like the Alexanders, to Winterslow, was witnessed against before Falstone House Committee by Henry Thistlethwayte and Timothy King. The charges, it is true, were of a very slight nature, just sufficient to indicate his Royalist tendencies; for though he donned a buff coat and pistols, he does not appear to have gone into action. The witnesses told how he had been seen associating with King's officers at the White Bear, in Salisbury, and that his man carried a "snaphance-piece⁴." And they add a graphic touch to their narrative which may as well be recited for its singularity. Lord Clarendon tells us that when Sir Ralph Hopton's musket-match was running short during his occupancy of Devizes, he replenished that article by collecting all the bed-cords and bedding throughout the town and converting the material into regulation-fusees. So it came to be said that Sir Ralph had "held out Devizes with bedcords"; and a piece of hempen cord worn as a hat-band continued for some brief period among the Royalists to be an emblem of triumph. Mr. Thistlethwayte, it was shown, had been guilty of indulging in this species of decoration, and his delinquency was therefore unchallenged. This examination at Falstone House took place on 13th October 1646; but no fine is recorded.

Alexander's successor in the shrievalty was his friend Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury. Leave was given him by Parliament to reside out of Wiltshire during his shrievalty; he nevertheless spent much time here, and accordingly rented Mr. Hyde's house in the Close next to the Deanery. When he revolted from the King, the Goldsmith's Hall Committee proposed the moderate composition of £500, which the house confirmed; but it does not appear to have been ever levied. There is a note among the Shaftesbury papers, says Mr. Christie, his biographer, stating that this fine was discharged by Cromwell in 1657. On 16th December, 1646, soon after his nomination as sheriff, he was, by ordinance, added to our Wilts and Dorset Committee for contribution to Sir Thomas Fairfax's army. See Sir Anthony's private journal, an interesting record of events in Wiltshire, during the period now under review.

⁴ A snaphance or snaphaunce is a type of lock for firing a gun or is a gun using that mechanism
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