

Cromwelliana



The Cromwell Association

1980-81

The Cromwell Association

President: Professor IVAN ROOTS M.A., F.S.A.

Vice-Presidents: THE LORD CARADON OF ST CLEER
Mr MAURICE ASHLEY, C.B.E., B.A., D.Phil.
LADY (DINGLE) FOOT

Chairman: Mr TREWIN COPPLESTONE

Council

Major R. D. BATTOCK, Mr ESMOND S. DE BEER, M.A. D.Litt., F.S.A.
The Rev. D. A. GREEVES, M.A., Miss J. S. HENDERSON,
Mr F. E. LEESE, M.A.B.Litt.,
Mr G. G. LILBURN, B.A., Mr H. MACKENZIE,
Mrs K. A. ROBINSON, The Rev. R. S. PAUL, M.A., D.Phil.,
Mr A. W. SMITH, Mr R. C. SMAIL, M.B.E. Ph.D.,
Miss J. SOLOMON M.B.E., Mr S. J. P. THOMAS, B.A.

Hon. Secretary: Miss H. PLATT, B.A.
Combe Lodge, Ringley Park Avenue, Reigate, Surrey.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr G. WOOLLARD,
Chalk Farm, Botolph Claydon, Cambridge.

Hon. Editor of Cromwelliana
Mr A. A. W. SMITH, 26 Grange Crescent,
Chigwell, Essex.

THE CROMWELL ASSOCIATION WAS founded in 1935 by the late Rt. Hon. Issac Foot and others to commemorate Oliver Cromwell, the great Puritan statesman, and to encourage the study of the history of his times, his achievements and influence. It is neither political nor sectarian, its aims being essentially historical.

The Association seeks to advance its aims in a variety of ways which have included:

- (a) the erection of commemorative tablets (e.g. at Naseby, Dunbar, Worcester, Preston etc.). (From time to time appeals are made for funds to pay for projects of this sort);
- (b) helping to establish the Cromwell Museum in the Old Grammar School at Huntingdon;
- (c) holding two annual meetings, one the now traditional Memorial Service by the Statue outside the Houses of Parliament; the other a business meeting at which the Council presents a report on its year's work for discussion by members. At both meetings an Address is given by a distinguished Cromwellian;
- (d) producing an annual publication *Cromwelliana* which is free to members;
- (e) awarding an annual prize for an essay on a Cromwellian theme;
- (f) maintaining a small reference library for the use of members;
- (g) supporting the formation of local groups of paid-up members of the Association meeting for study or social purposes;
- (h) acting as a 'lobby' at both national and local levels whenever aspects or items of our Cromwellian heritage appear to be endangered.

All enquires about the Library should be addressed to Cromwell Association (Library), c/o Trewin Copplestone (Books) Ltd., 101 - 109, Ladbrooke Grove, London W.11.

Printed in Great Britain by
The Printing Unit of the University of Exeter

CROMWELL'S DAY

The Address delivered by John Wroughton, M.A., at the Annual Commemoration Service, 3 September 1979.

By the August of 1658 Cromwell, suffering physically from a type of malaria and mentally from the death of his daughter, was rapidly deteriorating in health. 'I met him riding into Hampton Court Park,' wrote George Fox, 'and I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him that he looked like a dead man.' As he lay on his deathbed in Whitehall Palace wild storms ravaged the country. He died on 3 September — the anniversary of his two great victories at Worcester and Dunbar — with these words on his lips: 'My work is done. Yet God will be with His people.'

I count it a great honour to be invited 321 years later to join fellow members of the Cromwell Association in paying a personal tribute to the memory of this outstanding soldier, statesman and Christian leader. My original interest in Cromwell was first awakened in those unregenerate days as a young teenager when I was still reading *The Daily Express*. My eye caught an intriguing headline — 'What colour were Oliver Cromwell's eyes?' Fascinated by the controversy raised in the article, I have made Cromwell the centre of my historical interest ever since. I soon found out of course, that there were more searching questions to be asked of this man. Doubts about his religious sincerity, his inner ambition, his personal loyalty, his political consistency seemed to weigh more heavily with contemporaries and later historians than any lingering doubts about the colour of his eyes. Thus Army extremists complained:

'You shall scarce speak to Cromwell about anything but he will lay his hand on his breast, elevate his eyes and call God to record. He will weep, howl and repent even while he doth smite you under the fifth rib.'

The Royalists, who at the Restoration in 1660 dug up the Protector's corpse and subjected it to the vile ceremony of hanging, drawing and quartering, were accusing him not only of treason but also of more wickedness and hypocrisy than had ever previously been experienced in a single human being.

The more I have studied his life, the more I have resolved these doubts for myself, but the more I have also been struck by the complexity of his character. It is always reassuring to discover human weakness in great historical figures — and Cromwell was certainly human. But for all that — or perhaps because of it — I would certainly

have fought in his regiment at Marston Moor and at Nunnly. As a longstanding and convinced Cromwellian, therefore, it came as a distinct relief, when earlier in the year, I discovered for the first time that one of my ancestors, Sir Gyles Wroughton had actually done so!

The third of September, Cromwell's Day, is, as we shall see, a date of lasting significance in the career of Oliver Cromwell. But the words uttered on his death bed — 'My work is done. Yet God will be with His people' — point to an even more important date in his life. This heartfelt concert for God's purposes and God's people derived, not from the third of September, but from an unknown date in 1627 — the date of his spiritual conversion at the age of 28. The joyous realisation that he was in fact one of God's chosen people gave him a sense of calling and a firm belief that God would guide in every aspect of daily business. 'Be listening what returns He makes to you;' he wrote to his daughter-in-law, 'for He will be speaking in your ear and in your heart, if you attend thereunto'. Above the noise of battle Cromwell *did* listen; his victories seemed to indicate that God approved of his actions and was leading him on to greater responsibilities. Just before the decision to try the King, Cromwell wrote to Fairfax: 'I find in the officers of the regiment . . . a very great zeal to have impartial justice done upon offenders; and I must confess I do in all from my heart concur with them; and I verily think and am persuaded they are things which God puts into our hearts.' Cromwell's religion gave him the purpose, the motivation and the consistency which run through his whole career. He was, above all, a man of faith. Without that mysterious day in 1627, there would have been no September the third.

But September the third *does* provide us with five crucial dates to remember in any tribute to the memory of this great man. Each contributes in its own way to the significance of Cromwell's place in history. For he was not only a man of faith but also a man of justice and liberty. *3 September 1650* — his remarkable victory over the Scots at Dunbar — heralded more to him than just the arrival of peace to a strife-torn land. His letter to the Speaker immediately after the battle, strange in tone for that of a military commander, emphasised his conviction that victory was not meant as an end in itself, but rather as a God-sent opportunity to introduce much needed reform:

'It is easy to say the Lord hath done this. . . . We that serve you beg of you not to own us but God alone; we pray you own His people more and more for they are the chariots and horsemen of Israel. . . . Curb the proud and insolent . . . relieve the

oppressed, hear the groans of poor prisoners in England; be pleased to reform the abuses of all professions; and if there be any one that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a Commonwealth.'

When, some years later, Cromwell became Lord Protector, he seized the chance to reform the law and to improve education. Then, urging his intolerant parliament of 1656 to avoid putting 'their fingers upon their brethren's conscience to pinch them there', he insisted on adopting a remarkably tolerant attitude towards most religious and political opponents.

But the man of justice and liberty was also the symbol of order and discipline. *3 September 1654* — the meeting of his first Protectorate Parliament. In his opening Speech Cromwell reminded members of the near state of anarchy which he had inherited as Protector: 'What a heap of confusions there were upon these poor nations!', (and later) 'I saw we were running headlong into confusion and disorder and would necessarily run into blood.' So Oliver Cromwell became, in his own words, 'a good constable to keep the peace of the parish'. And peace *was* kept for five years until his death — peace which enable agriculture to recover, trade to prosper, tolerance to grow, reforms to mature. After the turmoil and suffering of civil war, stability was a priceless gift, coveted by roundhead and royalist alike, which only Cromwell had the strength to provide.

This strength, tested throughout by an ever-increasing net of political opponents, was based firmly on his supreme quality of human leadership. *3 September 1651* — Cromwell's victory at Worcester, which brought to an end civil war in England — not only confirmed his military genius but also his lasting place in the affections of the army. The Cambridgeshire farmer who had turned 40 before he had first held a sword in battle, had worked hard at leadership. His emphasis was always on the importance and quality of human beings:

'If you choose godly, honest men to be captains of horse,' he wrote, 'honest men will follow them. . . . I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and and is nothing else!'

Spirit, compassion and loyalty were his personal offerings to the troops. They rewarded him in full with spirit, compassion and loyalty, which did not waver until his death.

3 September 1658 — the death of Oliver Cromwell, this leader

of men. Within months it seemed as though his life's work had perished with him. His apparent legacy to the nation was an incapable successor, a national debt and lasting bitterness in Ireland. The year 1660 marked the restoration of the monarchy which he had destroyed and the destruction of religious liberty for which he had fought. His career in retrospect seemed to present a remarkable double paradox — a sincere parliamentarian who had driven out all his parliaments and a genuine monarchist who had succeeded in killing the King. Small wonder that many people regarded him as a hypocrite. But Cromwell's life and work had not been in vain. Indeed the foundations he had laid were to become vital parts of Britain's heritage in the years to come. Her Army and Navy, her internal administration, her empire and her prestige in the councils of the world owed much of their future success to the traditions started by Cromwell. His tolerant spirit was to reappear shortly afterwards in the great Nonconformist movement. Even 1660 itself was misleading — Charles II returned to England with monarchical powers considerably reduced. Constitutional monarchy was close at hand.

3 September 1979. — as we meet here today to honour his memory, I recall the words of a short, crisp letter written to *The Times* a year or two ago during a period of economic, industrial and political turmoil. It read quite simply 'Come back Oliver Cromwell, all is forgiven.' In our troubled times should we not echo his words: 'What a heap of confusions there are upon these poor nations'? As we witness civil disobedience, murder and the breakdown of moral standards, do we not need more than ever a symbol of order and discipline? At a moment when our country totters somewhat uncertainly in the modern world, do we not need above all a man of faith who 'knows what he fights for and loves what he knows' — a man whose leadership will not ignore the needs of the plain russet-coated captain? We have still a lot to learn from the life and work of Oliver Cromwell.

OLIVER CROMWELL

Byron Rogers

There is one irony that seems to have escaped historians. At the top of Whitehall is London's oldest statue, that of Charles I on horseback. At the bottom, to compound the irony within the precincts of the Parliament he dismissed, is the statue of Oliver Cromwell.

Between them is the seat of that executive power they struggled over in life. The statues are book-ends to the government offices that

line Whitehall.

One thing more: half-way down Whitehall is the Banqueting Hall out of which Charles I came that cold January morning to the scaffold. In the wall his head (a macabre touch) indicates the window — bricked up now — out of which he stepped. So one London street indexes not only the forces that faced each other, but the tragedy that resulted.

When I worked on *The Times* there were two annual events down on the news diary. One was the ceremony held at the foot of Charles's statue on the anniversary of his death, January 30. There was also, the same day, a much smaller religious ceremony held within the Banqueting Hall. There it was the Martyr and not the King who was mourned.

The other event was the anniversary of Cromwell's death, September 3. They were the kind of historical anniversaries in which the paper delighted. The strange thing was that they were far more than that. When you attended them you felt as though the 17th century had not yet ended.

You could still see it in the kind of people who turned up. At the foot of Charles's statue were exotic men, some heavily moustached, many with foreign orders in their lapels. One I remember, wore a strange, bright green three-piece suite: with lace and feathers added, he could have been at Naseby. They laid romantic little wreaths in memory of the King and in honour of current Stuart pretenders, obscure German princelings who probably had no idea at all of what they meant to such men.

Under Cromwell there were always Members of Parliament, lawyers, and Free Church ministers. Sternly, and without music, they sang a hymn under the massive bronze features. However much you tried to dismiss it as fancy, you really did feel that for them the Good Old Cause was still in being.

And in a sense it still is. Nobody has forgotten a time when Englishmen were a nation in arms, not for country or economics or rival dynasties, but for political ideas. The Civil Wars were the last time and the first time that English politics were about ideas. During the Wars and the Commonwealth something like 30,000 pamphlets were written. The nation was in a ferment.

We grow up, even today, totally prejudiced about the Civil Wars. I cannot think of a children's book or a comic series or a film intended for the young that has ever been in any way fair to the Good Old Cause. The Royalists are all romance, long curls and velvet and lace. They stand for chivalry and tolerance and right.

The Roundheads are not even human but, rather, crop-headed fanatics hidden inside armour, whose iron hands blot out all light and all joy. More lies have been told to more people at the most impressionable point of their lives about the Civil Wars than about any other event in English history. The frail, noble King stepped out of the window in Whitehall and straight into legend. If there had existed a school of Royalist propagandists over the centuries directed by Doctor Goebbels it could not have done a better job for Charles's reputation than those who write for the young.

For passions have not died down, especially when they swirl about the only commoner to be Head of State in Britain. There was a storm in the 1890s when it was proposed to raise his statue at Westminster. It prompted Swinburne to these ringing lines:

'How should Cromwell stand
With kings and queenlings hewn in stone?'

A decade later the Royal Family objected when the Navy proposed naming a battleship 'Cromwell'. Even in the 1950s there was opposition when it was suggested that a college be named after him in the university he had created at Durham.

But the oddest touch of all came on March 25, 1960, when the head of Cromwell, that had been knocking about England ever since it had been cut off at his disinterment, was buried by his old college, Sydney Sussex at Cambridge. It had been left to the college by a Canon Wilkinson.

The head was buried secretly, and its location is not indicated by the plaque near the Chapel entrance. Like some family tragedy, the secret is guarded by a small group of fellows who will pass it on to their successors. This burial took place three centuries after the man's death, and yet it was still thought such measures were necessary.

So what do men accuse him of? In his own century it was written, 'No (mere) man was better or worse spoken of than he; according as Men's Interests lead their judgements.' The radical Godwin thought he had betrayed the Revolution, while Tories saw him as a regicide and tyrant. He has been accused of hypocrisy, megalomania and genocide. Even in this century a writer in the *Occult Review* repeated, with some feeling, the old Royalist charges that Cromwell had been in league with the Devil. Perhaps most damning, Stalin found him a man after his own heart.

The one thing nobody has ever quarrelled about is that Oliver

Cromwell, Lord General and Lord Protector, was a product of extraordinary times. If they had not been, his epitaph would probably have been his own description of his background: 'I was by birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height nor yet in obscurity.'

His family name was Williams, and his paternal background was Welsh. Again, this is one of the areas of history that English scholars tend to gloss over (as when H. G. Wells told Lloyd George on being told the story, 'You'll be talking about Williams the Conqueror next.'). The name had been changed by his great-grandfather, yet Cromwell himself took the connection seriously enough to incorporate the arms of the Welsh Princes of Powys into his own bearings as Lord Protector.

On the eve of the Civil Wars he was an East Anglian squire living on his lands. But there were certain features that justified his claim that it was not a life lived in obscurity. He had served in the 1628 Parliament. He had organised the commoners' opposition over the drainage of the Fens.

There was a darker private side. In 1628, a London doctor whom he had consulted had found him 'extremely melancholy'. He was in the habit of summoning his own family doctor at midnight with fancies that he was about to die. Another of his fancies he confided was that he felt he should be 'the greatest man in the kingdom'. Both were treated, in so far as a doctor of the 17th century could treat such things, as symptoms of mental illness. In the 1630s he underwent a religious conversion ('He giveth me to see light in His light.'). From that time on the Almighty was to bulk large in Cromwell's letters and in his speech.

Even so it would have been a private life had not Charles I in 1640 summoned his first Parliament for eleven years. He needed it to vote him money to fight the Scots who were defying his religious authoritarianism.

In 1640 Cromwell made a speech in Parliament and men asked his kinsman John Hampden who this newcomer was. Hampden replied: 'This slovenly fellow which you see before us, who hath no ornament in his speech; I say that sloven if we should come to have a breach with the King (which God forbid) in such case will be one of the greatest men in England.'

Cromwell was 41 years old. He was never again to enjoy private life.

The times in which Cromwell lived were the great cross-roads of English political history. The Tudors had wielded more personal

power than any kings of England before them, but even a terrifying figure like Henry VIII had known which way the wind blew and had bent before it. In Charles I, that small, very dignified bigot, England had a king who did not know.

Like the Reformation, the English Revolution was about cash to begin with — great English events have a habit of being so. The King wanted the right to tax his subjects at will without the approval of Parliament. Through taxation he would be able to afford a standing army, and down that road lay royal absolutism. The irony is that during the Commonwealth Cromwell would wield a power of which the Stuart kings had only been able to dream.

Charles underwrote this claim with another, that the Crown was above the law, that the law had its source in the will of the King. He also sought to impose an authoritarian orthodoxy on religious belief through his bishops. This was the tinder that produced the explosion.

To a non-conformist like Cromwell it was a denial of religious toleration. The King's policy was also a denial of the Common Law, and a denial of the rights of the House of Commons in which he sat. These were the extraordinary times that made a middle-aged squire into the finest cavalry leader of his age.

That small cavalry troop he raised at Huntingdon became the terror of Europe as it swelled into an army. He knew what he was after in recruitment. After the inconclusive battle of Edgehill he wrote to his cousin John Hampden: 'Your troopers are most of them decayed old serving men and tapsters and such kind of fellows; and their troopers are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, persons of quality.

'Do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will be ever able to encounter gentlemen that have humour, courage and resolution in them? You must get men of a spirit. . . .'

The charge that was levelled against him later even by men of his own side was that his officers were 'such as have filled dung carts both before they were captains and since'. He answered this with the force and dignity that are there in all his utterances. 'I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows than what you call a gentleman and is nothing else.' A century and a half later, Napoleon did the same. He opened military careers to talent. No man was to be disbarred because of social position and, even more revolutionary, because of his religious unorthodoxy: 'The State, in choosing men, takes no notice of their opinions.'

His cavalry became an elite. 'I have a lovely company.' Unlike the

Royalist cavalry, who at first had swept all before them, they were disciplined (the historical Rupert, unlike the Rupert of legend, was despised and feared for the terror his men inspired in the people. The population of Bristol called out 'No quarter' as he surrendered to Parliament. They had had experience of his methods, and nicknamed him Prince Robber).

There was something else about Cromwell that marked him out from the onset. Men went to war troubled by constitutional embarrassments. 'If we beat the King 99 times, yet he is King still,' said the Earl of Manchester. 'But if the King beat us once, we shall all be hanged.' Cromwell replied to this: 'My Lord, if this be so, why did we take up arms at first?'

This was the man who was later to reply to arguments about the legality of the court that sat in judgement on the King: 'I tell you, we will cut off his head with the crown upon it.'

One of the greatest ironies that has persisted is the portrayal of Cromwell as a man moved by religious intolerance, a fanatic. Judged by 20th century standards he does seem a fanatic, with all those letters ending 'in the bowels of Christ'. He himself declared in 1650, 'Truly, I think he that prays best will fight best,' but he then went on, 'I had rather that Mahometanism were permitted amongst us than that one of God's children should be persecuted.' It is forgotten that when his statue was unveiled in Westminster there were three prominent Jews on the platform, Lord Rothschild among them, there to honour what Cromwell had done.

In such matters he was revolutionary. But there was one group to which he did not extend this tolerance — Irish Catholics.

There is another charge against him, the side that recommended itself to Stalin, that his career always had an end in view, which was military dictatorship and personal power. Cromwell dismissed Parliaments. He imposed direct military rule on a country and gave it a distaste forever for soldier statesmen. Some of the men who had so enthusiastically followed him felt he had betrayed them.

But Cromwell took over at a time when the ship of state had lost sight of all its traditional landmarks. The men of the 1650s were in waters that no English politician had encountered before or would since. 'If these are the times, then this must be the man,' wrote Andrew Marvell. There was confusion, recrimination, despair. His Parliaments were vindictive. His own army was made up of religious fanatics and radicals who wished to sail into even stranger seas. The traditional props of authority, the Royalist landowners in the shires,

were irreconcilable.

It left one man. That strange note struck in his comment on the resignation of the Barebones Parliament which he had welcomed with such enthusiasm is not that of a military dictator. 'My power . . .', he brooded, 'was as boundless and unlimited as before.'

You feel his loneliness as he searches for something that will restore the rule of law. 'What if a man should take upon himself to be king?' he asked aloud, but there could be no answer acceptable to the forces that had raised him up, and the energies he himself had unleashed.

It is a tribute to his stature that he was able to keep his state going until his death. Two things might have made it a lasting achievement. Had he lived longer, with his vigour, there is no telling what he might have worked out. But had there been, as there might well have been, a great religious war in Europe, the sort of man he was and the military machine he had created could have raised him to a position unique in English history. That position would have proved unassailable.

When I wrote scholarship essays at school I was taught to come elegantly to no conclusions whatsoever. There is something about Cromwell that prompts inelegant conclusions: he was, quite simply, the greatest Head of State this country has ever known.

One interesting thing about the events of the mid 17th century is that so much of their settings remain. Apart from the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, out of which Charles stepped on to the scaffold, there are

The Cromwell Museum, in the High Street, Huntingdon, opened 1962, but looking much the same as when it was the Grammar School, and Cromwell a pupil. A later pupil here was Samuel Pepys.

Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where Cromwell was an undergraduate and had rooms on the first floor on the north side of Hall court. In the chapel, his head came to the end of its travels in 1960. (Despite this, agile antique dealers still claim occasionally to have the head for sale. The most agile of all, when confronted by medical evidence to the contrary, said that the skull in his possession was that of Cromwell as a boy.)

Cromwell's House, near the Cathedral in Ely (described grimly by Carlyle as being 'two gunshots away from the Cathedral'). A pub in Carlyle's time, it is now the vicarage of the Church of St Mary.

The battlefields on which Cromwell established his reputation are of interest only to romantics and military strategists, so completely has agriculture crept back when the killing had to stop. *Edgehill* is off the Warwick to Stratford road, and is now the site of a military base. *Marston Moor* is a few miles to the west of York, off the A59. *Naseby* is in Northamptonshire, to the west of the A508 between Northampton and Market Harborough.

There are some more dramatic memorials:

The Hodder Bridge, three miles outside Clitheroe, in Lancashire, where, in 1648, Cromwell took the decision to attack the Scots from the north and cut off their route home. The battle of Preston was his greatest victory.

Burford Church, Oxfordshire, just off the A40 road, the most poignant memorial of all. It was here that Cromwell turned against the radicals in his own army and shot three of them while the others watched from the Church roof. On the font you can still see carved: 'Anthony Bedley, 1649. Prisner'. (sic).

Whitehall, where at the top there is an equestrian statue of Charles made in his lifetime, and at the bottom, outside the Commons, Cromwell. In the middle, almost exactly, is the Banqueting Hall.

The Cromwell Museum has many private mementoes, including the Protector's Hat and his private seal. But almost every old church has some footnote to those times, an interregnum in the list of vicars, or the tomb of some young man, as in the church at Radway under Edgehill.

The location of Cromwell's corpse would have been a matter of indifference to him (his last prayer contained the line: 'Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are thy people too.') It may be the common pit under Tyburn, the junction of Connaught Place and Connaught Square. His sons, however, Richard and Henry, together with many of the grandees of the Commonwealth, are in Bunhill Fields, in Finsbury, together with Bunyan and Defoe. That is perhaps the most neglected tourist site in London.

(Reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of *In Britain*, published by the British Tourist Authority, from the issue of January 1980.)

THE CIVIL WAR AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Richard Milward

The influence of the local community on the English Civil Wars is hardly a new topic. Most counties now have their own histories dealing with the period and some are notable additions to our understanding of the whole English Revolution.¹ Even A-Level examiners have felt justified in asking their candidates to 'discuss the importance of local loyalties during the Revolution', though whether they received any answers has not been revealed.

One aspect of the topic, however, that does not seem to have been given much attention is the impact of the Civil Wars on individual communities, on villages or small towns. One sign of this is an excellent new guide to the period for local historians by Professor Aylmer and Dr. Morrill, where not a single recent study of a parish in the 1640s and '50s is listed.² County records are certainly more plentiful and so answer more questions. But the parish chest is by no means bare for the period and to it can be added one source of inestimable value: the Commonwealth Exchequer Papers, or S.P.28 at the Public Record Office.³

Among these Papers are preserved the accounts of parishes in many parts of England for the period of the first Civil War. They record in great detail matters such as the sums paid in tax by individual villagers and the damage inflicted on them by soldiers. They thus bring home in a way few other documents can the effect war had on the lives of ordinary people, even far from the battlefield. County histories can make us aware of the fortunes of the gentry, but only a truly local study using these papers can show the full community at war.

A new perspective on the English Revolution thus emerges if we look at the records of villages, for example, to the South-West of the City of London.⁴ This area was of some importance in the war. It contained one of the few bridges over the Thames (at Kingston), the royal Saltpetre House (vital for making gunpowder, also at Kingston) and three royal palaces or houses (at Richmond, Nonsuch and Wimbledon). But it saw virtually no fighting. Instead it had to support large numbers of Parliamentary soldiers, above all in 1647 when it was the scene of the famous Putney Debates. It also witnessed many changes, in effect primarily the actions of the New Model Army. So its story is of some interest, especially as it records throw a little light on three major issues.

The first is the difficult problem of local attitudes to the war. Surrey is usually rated as one of the main Parliamentary counties, but it is far from easy to find any evidence for this in the villages round Kingston. Only on the other side of Richmond Park, at Mortlake, is there any clear sign of active opposition to the King, and that was unquestioned compulsory purchase of half their fields in 1636 so that he could create his New Park.⁵ Instead, we hear more of Royalist sympathisers, whether 'delinquent' landowners like Sir Thomas Dawes of Roehampton, or 'malignant' parsons such as Richard Avery at St. Mary's, Putney, or even the 200 volunteers, 'scabbed and cowardly fellows' according to a Parliamentary pamphleteer, who marched away with the royal army from Kingston in November, 1642.⁶

In the main, however, the impression gained from local records is that there were a vast number of 'Don't Knows', or even 'Don't Cares'. A typical fence-sitter was the Keeper of Her Majesty's Manor at Wimbledon, Sir Richard Wynn. An M.P. for the Court borough of Liverpool and one of the few members who had the courage to vote against Strafford's attainder, he was yet a friend of Pym and a contributor to Parliament's war chest. Throughout the 1640s he remained at Wimbledon, defending the Queen's house, deer and even fish ponds against marauding soldiers. The strain so undermined his health that he died in 1649, shortly before the Army took over the property.⁷

The most poignant example of this almost private attitude to the war comes in a letter found among the effects of a Surrey militiaman killed during the siege of Basing House in 1643. It was from his young wife, Susan:

'Most dear and loving husband, my kind love. I remember me unto you, hoping that you are in good health, as I am at the writing hereof. My little Willie have been sick this fortnight. I pray you to come home, if you can come safely. . . . You do not consider I am a lone woman; I thought you would never leave me thus long together.'⁸

If the records only give such occasional hints at the deep personal feelings aroused in the 1640s, they provide overwhelming evidence of a second problem which is often overlooked in more general books on the War: its crushing financial cost. Dr. Morrill has claimed that the weekly assessment Parliament levied from 1643 was equivalent to paying one of their old subsidies every fortnight.⁹ There are certainly plenty of signs in the documents that the burden of this assessment fell very heavily on ordinary people. Those living at Merton, a small village of less than forty houses to the West of Kingston, had to pay

over £1,200 to Parliament between 1642 and 1644. This meant that each householder had had to find an average £10 a year to meet the village constable's regular demands for the 'weekly pay', the soldiers' constant need for 'free quarters',¹⁰ and their Quartermasters' frequent orders for food and bedding to be sent to the army at Farnham, with the reminder: 'Fail not as you will answer the contrary at your uttermost peril.' On top of all that, they had to pay the hated 'excise of beer' or 'excise of flesh', a new sales tax introduced in 1643. Naturally, the richer landowners and farmers paid the most. Over at Mortlake, Sir Thomas Dawes had to find £2 a week, while William Penn, a carpenter with three children, was let off with 2d. (and he did not always manage to pay even that). But almost every villager seems to have had to contribute something. Their ability to pay was established at a local meeting, like the one held at the Red Lion, Croydon, in 1643 where 'expenses' of seven shillings are noted, presumably for drink to drown complaints.¹¹

Everyone too was affected by the Army's presence in other ways. The people of Richmond compared the soldiers to 'so many Egyptian locusts, who feed upon us at free cost'. Nearby at Kingston, the townsmen even dared to complain to Parliament after having an entire regiment quartered on them through the winter of 1642-43. They claimed that the troops not merely cost them 'many thousand pounds by losses, charges and damages,' but brought the plague with them.¹² Not long afterwards the army also commandeered their horses for 'the train of artillery now in Kingston Churchyard', which needed 'thirty teams with their drivers.' And the horses had a habit of not returning to their owners. Richard Ferrand of Mitcham complained that his 'team had been pressed by the constable for Waller's service in the time of the bean season upon pretence they were to return again next day,' but they had still not returned six weeks later.¹³

Even after the fighting stopped, the cost and damage continued. At Wimbledon, Sir Richard Wynn had to pay ten shillings in February 1648 'for a protection from Sir Thomas Fairfax for the preservation of the park and house.' Yet only a few months later he had to issue writs 'against those that digged pits to draw away the water from the conduit and caused other annoyances in the park.' Soon after he found that his 'genny (Guinea) hens' had had their necks wrung and so had to spend two shillings 'apprehending the soldiers that killed them'.¹⁴

Such continuing trouble leads to a third problem where the documents can help: the long-term effect of the wars on the local

community. One thing they certainly did was to teach many ordinary people to keep accounts. The most striking feature of the Exchequer Papers is the great care taken in many villages to ensure that even tiny payments were systematically recorded. At Barnes, the accounts were kept in a thin parchment-covered book with the title, especially the letter B, beautifully written on the front. Those at Mitcham were so clearly presented that the Commons Committee for Taking the Accounts sent them to Esher as a 'precedent'.¹⁵

Not all the changes produced by the war, however, were quite so welcome. Army officers came to play a major part in local government and society. Major-General Lambert bought the Queen's manor house and park at Wimbledon for £17,000, while Colonel Pride took over part of another royal estate, Nonsuch Park. Both men soon became members of the County Committee, while Lambert used his new estate to entertain important people, including the Lord Protector, and to develop his favourite flower, the tulip. Ordinary ex-servicemen are not quite so conspicuous. At Wimbledon, only the disappearance of the blacksmith for four years suggests that one of the villagers might have been away at the war. Certainly none of the three soldiers they had to find and equip in November 1643 for the defence of Surrey were local men.¹⁶

The Church also saw changes. A number of Royalist or Laudian parsons were turned out of their parishes, among them the Vicar of Ewell. He was charged with abusing Parliament, drunkenness and jeering at 'preaching and praying by the Spirit'. Schoolmasters were equally affected. One at Richmond was forbidden to teach because he read the Book of Common Prayer. He remained unemployed for six years, yet somehow managed to support his wife and their six children. Even the church buildings did not go untouched. The Churchwardens at St. Mary's Mortlake, paid 2s. 6d. in 1646 'for blotting out the cherubins in the church' and 3s. 'for the covenant and a frame to set it in'.¹⁷

Yet not all the changes were destructive. In 1656 the parishioners of Putney asked the Protector for permission to pave 'our High Street which being long and broad cannot be made by gravelling': it was granted. The next year, the minister of Long Ditton, a learned Puritan, Richard Byfield, petitioned for help to secure 'the speedy building' of his church which 'fell down seven years ago,' it too was granted. At about the same time, Wimbledon saw its first butcher's shop, opened by an ex-apprentice from Kingston, Phannel Maybank. He was soon prospering, perhaps by providing meat for the soldiers

billeted in the village.¹⁸

Still, it is not easy to tell how much difference all this made to the lives of poor villagers. Professor Everitt has argued that harvest failure, disease and fire had a far greater effect than any civil war.¹⁹ Unfortunately for the ordinary people, the late 1640s saw both harvest failures and disease. The harvests of 1647, 1648 and 1649 were poor, and by 1650 food prices were fifty per cent above normal. Moreover the Parish Register of Kingston records a further outbreak of plague in the spring and late summer of 1646. And yet somehow life managed to carry on in the traditional way. One tiny glimpse of this comes surprisingly in one of the Exchequer Papers. At the end of a bare list of money due to Parliament from the 'Manner of Wimbledon' in 1645, there is a note: 'An allowance for a dinner for the tenants.' So even at the height of the Civil war, old customs were somehow maintained.²⁰

NOTES AND SOURCES

1. Among the best recent county surveys are A. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion*, 1966; A. Fletcher, *A County Community in Peace and War: Sussex, 1600 - 1660*, 1975; J. Morrill, *Cheshire 1630 - 1660*, 1974; and D. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum*, 1973.
2. G. Aylmer and J. Morrill, *The Civil War and Interregnum: Sources for Local Historians*, 1979.
3. Their value for local histories can be seen from Aylmer and Morrill, pp. 7 - 8, 31, 44 - 45.
4. For purposes of this article the limited area dealt with is one bounded on the North and West by the Thames, on the East by the river Wandle and on the South by a line linking Croydon, Ewell and Thames Ditton.
5. On Mortlake and the New Park, see P. Fletcher Jones, *Richmond Park*, 1972, p. 8.
6. On Dawes, see *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 37, 1926. On Avery, see A. G. Matthews, *Walker Revised*, 1948. On Kingston in 1642, see J. Sampson, *The Story of Kingston*, 1972, p. 31.
7. On Wynn, see F. M. Keeler, *The Long Parliament 1640 - 41*, Philadelphia, 1954.
8. Printed in J. Adair, *Roundhead General*, 1969, p. 121.
9. J. Morrill, *Revolt of the Provinces*, 1976, p. 85.
10. About two-thirds of the Merton Households had to quarter troops. The chief sufferer was 'Rowland Wilson esq.', the owner of Merton Grange and a member of the County Committee. He claimed £278. 12s. 0d. for putting up 'divers commanders and other officers of the lifeguards of the Earl of Essex.'
11. On Merton, see S.P.28/245; on Croydon, 28/177; on Mortlake, 28/200. The papers also show that the Parliamentary army was paying £7. 10s. 0d. for a horse, 16s. for £1 for a musket and 6s. for a sword.
12. One example of this can be found in the Barnes accounts (SP 28/177) where an inn-keeper, Richard Edwards, claimed he lost £20 because of 'a food-soldier that died in my house of the plague' (sic).
13. On Richmond, see SP 28/178; on Kingston, 28/244 and Sampson pp. 31 - 32; on Mitcham, 28/179.
14. On Wynn's troubles, see Wynnstay Papers (at the National Library of Wales) 172.
15. On Barnes, see SP 28/177; on Mitcham, 28/254.
16. On Lambert, see W. H. Dawson, *Cromwell's Understudy*, 1938; on Wimbledon, SP 28/177.
17. On the Vicar of Ewell, Robert Hilliard, see Matthews, op.cit.; on the Richmond School-master, Robert Mossom, see K. Courlander, *Richmond*, 1953; on Mortlake church, see J. Anderson, *History of the Parish of Mortlake*, 1886.
18. On the Putney and Long Ditton petitions, see *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1655 - 56 and 1656 - 57.
19. A. Everitt, *The Local Community and the Great Rebellion*, 1969, p. 26.
20. On Kingston, see typed copy of Parish Register in Kingston Public Library; on Wimbledon, SP 28/245.

CROMWELL, IRETON AND THE END OF THE LEVELLERS

Kevin Holmwood

The debate at Putney on 28th October 1647 indicates, *inter alia*, the superiority of Ireton as a debater over Rainsborough or Wildman. By taking a firm line, by emphasis on the fixed local interest, the weakness of the radical stance is made manifest. It is characteristic of the left to be at odds with itself, and this has ever been responsible for their democratic failures. The right consistently aligns, frank self-interest dictating its response. Where Ireton presents a succinct

summary of hard-headed, practical conservatism, the policy that was to shape events, the radicals lack a coherent notion as to what the New Jerusalem will look like. This is of course the inevitable result of reforming thought, but it is tactically damaging.

The document they met to consider, *The Agreement of the People*, is characteristically vague.¹ The vagueness consists in the use of a word like 'people', attached to apparently clear verbs like 'choose'. The first declaration calls for a manner of proportional representation, but of whom, it is not stated. Detail there is, but of a needless kind — 'That the people do of course choose themselves a Parliament once in two years, viz., upon the first Thursday in every second March.' It is not a platform that has been presented but a list of aspirations, at least one of which hardly needs iteration: 'That as the laws ought to be equal, so they must be good, and not evidently destructive to the safety and well-being of the people.' This must have sounded like a joke to the clear-headed Ireton, with its hint that a law could be destructive so long as it was not seen to be so, provided, that is, that Parliament were somewhat subtle. The difficulty of putting into effect the wistful hope 'that the power of this, and all future Representatives of this nation is inferior only to theirs who choose them' is not faced and incidentally seems to be a strong hint that universal suffrage is not entertained; for if the power is 'inferior only to theirs who choose them' it is clearly supposed to be superior to the power of some others.

What Ireton does is to flush out the real radical element. He does this by taking the document seriously, and interpreting the radical views at their most extreme. 'And this doth make me think,' he says 'that if the meaning is, that every man that is an inhabitant is to be equally considered, and to have an equal voice in the election of those representers.'² This is clearly worrisome to his opponents, who fall back on the myth of the pre-Norman Conquest Golden Age. The appeal of this to a litigious age should not be slighted. It gave precedent to a platform of radical reform. Even Winstanley makes use of the metaphor, though his conscious attempt is to look forward to a new society, not simply to receive freedoms lost immemorially. Petty distinctly plays for time in his response: 'We judge that all inhabitants that have not lost their birthright should have an equal voice in elections.' As to how a man may lose his birthright he is silent. Rainborough stands his ground, 'that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he.' Ireton's impressive perorations leave him unshaken: 'Truly, sir, I am of the same opinion

I was and am resolved to keep it till I know why I should not.' Perceiving his immovability, Ireton suggests the danger to property: 'by the same right of nature (whatever it be) that you pretend . . . one man hath an equal right with another to the choosing of him that shall govern him — by the same right of nature, he hath the same right in any goods he sees. . . . He hath a freedom to the land.' This is less an argument than a challenge to Rainborough to define the extent of this right of nature and to negotiate on a basis firmer than that which *The Agreement* provides. Rainborough reacts, as Ireton must have wanted, by protesting 'I wish you would not make the world believe we are for anarchy.' Anarchy, cries Cromwell, who mentioned anarchy? Rainborough is reduced to playing 'straight man' to the more conservative elements.³ (He is marked moreover, to be promoted beyond his competence — 'a plausible, but onely a Tittular command at sea'⁴ — as if in anticipation of modern capitalist managements.)

The idea of party was novel to Parliament, and, as Chillingworth discovered to his cost, complete anathema. There seems to have been a distrust of allegiance, perhaps a legacy of the Elizabethan insistence on degree, and necessary if the status quo were to be maintained. Hence the insistence by Parliament that it was not the King but his advisers against whom it waged war. After all, it was the Royalist who behaved like rebels, Charles raising his standard at Nottingham, as Wyatt had at Maidstone⁵; parliament had held back the floodgates of papistical innovation and royal interference in trade. That certain men, 'a despicable and contemptible generation' in Cromwell's words⁶, attached themselves more readily to the cause of Parliament than to the cause of the Royalists, and that the war might not have been won without their help, are no surer indications that Parliament deceived its supporters with false promises than that radical leaders in the army misrepresented the interests of the ordinary soldier who wanted back pay for and indemnity against activity in the war. Thus, in denying that every man should have an interest in the kingdom, Ireton may also have been denying that every man wanted this interest, asserting by implication what he had asserted explicitly that a man might prefer to 'sit down in quiet under our vines, under the glorious administration of Justice, and righteousness.'⁷ Ireton's position can be fully understood only in regard to this Declaration, his account of the army's wants and needs. At Putney, therefore, he is denying the applicability of the document under discussion to those whose views it was supposed to represent. Considering

the debate, then, in dramatic terms, it is not all radical passion and conservative calm; a note of bitterness is betrayed by Ireton: 'I hope our persons, and our hearts and judgments are not pinned to papers.'⁸

However, pin them is just what Ireton does, by endowing them with a party consciousness. Thus the Leveller movement is a convenient fiction, named by Charles, defined by Ireton, and maintained by attacks from such as Price, the 'True Levellerism' of Winstanley serving later as a reproach, either on the falsity, or failure to level, of Lilburne and company. There seems, though, little enough to justify these Levellers as a proto-political party, as a self-conscious body.

A major difficulty in looking at this 'heterogenous body of men' is their very geniality. They really are such splendid fellows that historians can scarcely wait to dispense with the formality of surnames and to throw an affectionate arm about their shoulders. What one responds to, among other things, is that their ideas are really very like our own, that their hearts were in the right place. We set too much store by our own convenience. In much the same way we speak of Puritans, choosing not to enquire how happy they would have been with the name. There is, of course, much to be said for such simplifications. Thanks to Hexter's analysis of Parliament under Pym, after all, we can move a great deal more confidently. Similarly, Hill's postulate of a radical underground enables us to take seriously men and ideas otherwise dismissed as a 'lunatic fringe'. But if such hypotheses are to be useful they must be available to question until they can be discarded.

If we trouble to question the existence of the Levellers we find the clear assertion by Pease⁹ that the organization of the party depended on the appointment of 'ten or twelve Commissioners' whose duty it was to advance the petition ('of many Freeborn People of this Nation') by agents throughout the kingdom. Certainly, in *A Declaration of some proceedings*, Lilburne is said to have affirmed as much to Lieutenant Levet, but typically some evasion is evident. Lilburne claimed that 'the People of London' had appointed him as one of the Commissioners, but the other nine or eleven are not named. Further, he confesses that the word 'Commissioners' was not liked by the 'honest Blades of Southwark'. It is tempting to suggest that the people of London and the honest blades of Southwark are synonymous¹⁰. Quite apart from that, this is all the testimony of Masterson, 'the lying Shephard of Shoreditch,' who was Parliament's agent. Had this

been accepted as a true account by Parliament the charge would not have had to be in terms so general as to provide the accused with the means of 'preaching law and justice out of Sir Edward Cooke's institutes' and converting the guard to his cause so that it refused to arrest him.

Otherwise, the firmest evidence for a party of Levellers is the existence of *Agreements of the People* written by those to whom the name is applied. It is generally agreed that the document of 1 May 1649 is by its stated authors, Lilburne, Walwyn and Overton. The irony of '*An Agreement of the Free People of England . . . by . . . Prisoners in the Tower*'¹¹ may qualify our attitude to the clauses contained in it. It expressly states that 'all men of the age of one and twenty years and upwards (not being servants, or receiving alms, or having served the late King in Arms or voluntary Contributions) shall have their voices' in the choice of a 'Representative of the people consisting of four hundred persons, but no more'. This certainly is an extension of the franchise as agreed by Lilburne. This would seem sharply to qualify Schenk's assertion that Lilburne did not want to level rank¹², for one measurement of rank is the power one may hold, and the Agreement makes clear in the same clause that any who may vote may be voted for. Further qualification is provided in Clause XIII, 'That all priviledges . . . by virtue of . . . Degree, or Birth . . . shall be henceforth void and null; and the like not to be made nor revived again'. Other clauses provide for the reform of the law — no case to remain undetermined for longer than six months, proceedings to be conducted in English, the right to plead one's own cause, 'or of making use of whom they please to plead for them' — which would certainly have levelled lawyers pretty swiftly. The last clause, however, declares, 'That it shall not be in the power of any Representative, in any wise, to render up, or give, or take away any part of this agreement, nor level mens Estates, destroy Propriety, or make all things common'. Given the levelling tendencies of other clauses, and allowing that social and political levelling may be different, the main thrust of this last is surely to dissociate themselves from the unfortunate label their enemies had attached to them. This *Agreement*, after all, had two functions to perform; to get them out of the Tower and to appeal to as broad a spectrum of the middling sort as possible. For all its appearance, it is a pamphlet, not a platform, advertising their level-headedness and 'causeless captivity'.

Lilburne's own ideas are swiftly summarized. He saw the King's authority and the authority of the Lords as derived from the Con-

queror. Political authority should rest only on consent. 'Every particular man and woman . . . are by nature all equall and alike in power, dignity, authority and majesty, none of them having (by nature) any authority, dominion, or magesteriall power one over or above the other'. He did not look kindly on 'the erroneous tennents of the poor Diggers at Georgehill in Surrey' and expressed his disapproval of common ownership thus: 'For who will take paines for that which when he hath gotten it is not to be his owne, but must equally be shared in by every lazy, simple, dronish sot?' He was proud of being 'the sonne of a gentleman, and my Friendes are of rancke and quality'. Schenk decides that Lilburne's conception of equality 'was limited by being purely political,' and we may add, unworkable.¹³ It is at this point that Winstanley is useful in reminding us that 'the eternal inseparability of political liberty and economic equality'¹⁴ is no merely contemporary obsession. Winstanley's true radicalism, Ireton's conservatism, see the situation squarely. Lilburne lacks such thoroughness.

Walwyn had little truck with the Norman Yoke myth. His thinking was more scriptural than Lilburne's. For him, the Millenium was the rule of Christianity, not Christ, a Christianity that had some form of common ownership and thus less government. He disliked the prevalence of 'superfluous subtilties and artificial things', and when he turned his attention to politics it seemed to him grossly unfair that the meaner sort of men, having done so much for Parliament, were slighted by the 'most active, prosperous and successful persons of the Nation' but by way of practical redress he suggests only that a Commonwealth ought to use 'all friendliness' towards them. Rooted equally in Christian primitivism and classical and Renaissance thinkers such as Seneca, Lucan, and Montaigne, he had slight grasp of politics, simply looking to Parliament to 'provide some powerful means to keep men, women and children from begging and wickedness.'

Overton, though, does show signs of a more thorough-going attitude. He troubles, for example, to give his attention to schools and hospitals, even if this attention (in his *Certain Articles for the good of the Commonwealth*¹⁵) is a good deal less than that accorded to prisons and law reform. Bernstein¹⁶ marks him out as a 'representative of advanced rationalism' and suggests that Milton may have derived his soul-sleeping heresy from him. His most valuable contribution is perhaps his readability: *The Arraignment of Mr Persecution* apart from its influence on Bunyan is a work of literature.

What the three have in common is not easy to determine. Overton and Walwyn were passionate for religious toleration, but Lilburne distinctly less so. Walwyn is for a simplistic communism, Lilburne for rank and private property, Overton uninterested or uncommitted. Yet we refer to this triumvirate as the Leveller leadership. Since Macpherson, debate about the Levellers has had to take account of that historian's overemphasis on a central distinguishing policy, whose spokesman was the undistinguished Petty.¹⁷ Now sane as the view is, that 'complete consistency as between different Leveller spokesman'¹⁸ should not be expected, it is nonetheless reasonable to look for a centrality of design, and to look for this beyond the vague *Agreements*, written for the specific purpose of commending their authors to the public. The most clearly discernible design is a dissatisfaction with the status quo. Lilburne emerges as a demagogue ('one of those vain, pestilient, ill-conditioned persons thrown to the surface by political convulsions, who are invariably to be found at the tail of every popular movement,' as one Victorian lawyer has it¹⁹), Walwyn as a pliable intellectual, and Overton as a high-spirited word-spinner. I think this makes a good deal of difference to our view of Cromwell whose early sympathy with Lilburne encourages us to take the view that once in power he was guilty of an about-face in regard to him, and that Cromwell is in some way a failed radical.

Of course, Cromwell never was a radical. He may have seemed so to Clarendon in his defence of the commoners of Somersham; 'his whole carriage was so tempestuous, and his behaviour so insolent, that the Chairman found himself obliged to reprehend him.' The Commoners had behaved in radical enough fashion; they had torn down enclosures erected by Manchester's son, Lord Mandeville. Opposition to one of the Manchester clan would have appealed to Cromwell, who as a JP had been accused of 'disgraceful speeches' against a colleague. The Earl of Manchester, as Lord Privy Seal, had found against Cromwell, who moved from Huntingdon to St Ives where the Earl's influence was still strong, and, we may imagine, the more irksome. Determined, principled opposition to aristocratic arrogance does not constitute radicalism; equally it might be grounded in a benevolent conservatism. It is perfectly consistent with Ireton's 'humane considerations'.²⁰

Cromwell's justly famous statement, that 'I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows than what you call a gentleman and is nothing more' might have given the plain russet-coated captains some grounds to

hope for a measure of social reform in the event of Parliament's success. Frankly, it is not implicit. Cromwell in military matters resembled Pym in parliamentary matters; the idea was to get the war won, and to do this as speedily as possible. Just as Pym was able to play off the 'War Party' against the 'Peace Party', so Cromwell thought in terms of the troops' morale. No more than Pym was of a War or Peace Party did Cromwell's notion of the satisfaction of faithful service imply support of what might be called Leveller designs. Hotham perceived the dangers — 'the necessitous people of the whole kingdom will presently rise in mighty numbers . . . to the utter ruin of the nobility and gentry'.²¹ Cromwell, though, was at this stage in no position to pick and choose his supporters. (Pym, no Presbyterian, would be willing to ally with the Scots at any price trusting to the rigours of governmental machinery to provide the means to compromise.) Cromwell's attitude implies no political naivety. The war had broken down the old allegiances. War did such things. Peace would put them right. Peace and Cromwell did.

True, Cromwell's religious toleration was seen as dangerously radical by his enemies, but for supporters to see it thus is less understandable. In the matter of form he was again, as Hill reminds us, like Pym, who advised the Governor of Providence Island, 'God makes no difference between them that do faithfully and heartily seek him, though there be in the appearance of some men difference between them in opinion and practice concerning outward things'.²² No one supposes Pym to be a radical, even though he used mobs — the people — for political ends. If we are to believe Lamont²³, England under Cromwell enjoyed Godless Rule; what Cromwell intended for his Israel, though, was surely a government so steeped in godliness that the outward show was needless, except as a rallying point for a people, surely the reason for the alteration in rhetorical style after Putney. The national task on its way to accomplishment, the reminder of England's role as God's elect would then only be apt in matters of foreign policy. So far from Putney marking a turning point in Cromwell's thought, the skill and assurance of Ireton makes it clear that this was less an exploratory exercise than one designed to get the radicals to confess the extent of their levelling intentions. Cromwell might equally have charged Lilburne with hypocrisy, with using military victory to smuggle in social reforms not even implicit in the call to arms. The charges 'levelled' against Cromwell, that while he assured the House of the Army's willingness to disband, made not only by Lilburne and Wildman but also by Clarendon, neglect the

fact that the real problem was never Army agitation — Cromwell could always deal with that — but Holles's leadership of 'an apostate party' in Parliament, the Presbyterians. The Presbyterians were a grave cause for concern. 'Here's like to be Inquisition after Inquisition, worse than the Spanish, after the blood of the people. . . . The bishops' courts stripped us of our clothes, but the presbyters' courts will strip us of coats, skins, lives and all,' wrote Overton. Cromwell is said to have said of the Scots, thinking them presbyters to a man, 'In the way they now carry themselves, pressing for discipline, I could as soon draw my sword against them as against any in the Kings army'.

Lilburne's relations with Cromwell provide an interesting indication of the latter's steadfastness, and the 'Leveller leader's' inconsistency. Cromwell had raised his 'sharp and untuneable voice' on behalf of Lilburne, then a 'servant of Mr Prynne's,' in November 1640. Vociferous even then Lilburne's political platform consisted in calling for the abolition of tithes. However great that institution's social significance was in fact, Lilburne was doing no more than anti-prelates had done for a generation. It was a 'levelling' notion only insofar as it might have eroded the differential between the poor husbandman who bore the burden and the 'wealthy merchants and men abounding in learning and skill (who) contribute practically nothing to the necessities of the ministry.'²⁴ Later, Lilburne kept watch on the incompetent Edward King, the future embezzler, and was one of Cromwell's witnesses against Manchester. Thereafter his attitude begins to change. Having been imprisoned with Wildman in Newgate after charging Cromwell with complicity with Charles, he provided for *Mercurius Pragmaticus*, the information 'of what a large family Mr. Lieut.-Gen. hath in the army; you could not much blame him for being so craving daily for money'. The outbreak of the second civil war brought a halt to Lilburne's smear campaign. He bombastically owned that 'if I persecuted or desired revenge for an hard and almost starving imprisonment . . . I scorn it, especially when you are low, and this assure yourself, that if ever my hand be upon you, it shall be when you are in your full glory, if then you shall decline from the righteous ways of truth and justice,'²⁵ and declared his loyalty. Only a little later, 'I saw Cromwell, and made as diligent scrutinies into things about him, as I could, . . . which savoured more of intended self-exalting' than of Lilburne's vague notions of what constituted the liberties and freedoms of the Nation.²⁶ To Lilburne's *An Impeachment of High Treason* against Cromwell and Ireton, the

Council issued a warrant for its author's arrest. Cromwell appears to have been unmoved, busy in preparations for his Irish campaigns. With Cromwell away at Drogheda, Lilburne produced *An 'Outcry of the Young Men and Apprentices of London'*. In apparent response there was a mutiny at Oxford. A trial found Lilburne innocent and he was released with Walwyn, Prince and Overton after demonstrations of support at the Guildhall. Cromwell and Lilburne met at Ware in 1650, after Lilburne had retired from the 'political' arena, and after Parliament had prevented his taking up an elected seat in the London Common Council, and, according to Lilburne, Cromwell agreed to 'put forth all his power and interest that he had in the world to make England enjoy the real fruit of all the army's promises and declarations'.²⁷ Shortly thereafter, Lilburne was banished and from the Netherlands made overtures to the Royalists to overthrow the Commonwealth for £10,000. It was not the first time such a scheme had appealed to him. This is the behaviour of a Jacobin, not a reformer. Cromwell, the last supper at Ware suggests, was prepared to tolerate him, but then he was always kind to Fox and something more to Evans.²⁸

However redundant the concept of the Levellers is in fact, it will doubtless continue to appeal to those who look to the seventeenth century for their own reflection, the reflection of an uncertain socialism, misunderstanding the nature of their sought reforms. Just such avert their eyes from the uncompromising glare of Winstanley and Ireton, the latter of whom continues to defy us: 'And I would fain have any man show me why I should destroy that liberty which the freeholders, and burghers in corporations, have in choosing knights and burgesses (that which if you take away, you leave no constitution) and this because there is a greater freedom due to me by the Law of Nature — why I should do this More than that I should take another man's goods because the Law of Nature does allow me.'²⁹

NOTES

1. *An Agreement of the People* reprinted in *Puritanism and Liberty*, ed. A. S. P. Woodhouse, 1974.
2. Woodhouse, op. cit. p. 52.

3. See Woodhouse, op. cit. p. 63 'I desire to know how this comes to be a property in some men and not in others;' and p. 71 'Sir, I see that it is impossible to have liberty but all property must be taken away.'
4. *The 2nd Part of Englands New-Chains Discovered* reprinted in *The Leveller Tracts* ed. William Haller and Godfrey Davies, New York, 1944, p. 171.
5. 'The Rebels of 1642' by D. H. Pennington in *The English Civil War and After, 1642 - 1658*, ed. R. H. Parry, London 1970, pp 22 - 40.
6. *God's Englishman*, Christopher Hill, 1970, p. 105.
7. 'A Declaration, or, Representation . . .' in 'Haller & Davies' op. cit. p. 52.
8. Woodhouse, op. cit. p. 60
9. *The Leveller Movement*, T. C. Pease, Gloucester, Mass. 1965 (first published 1916), p. 234.
10. At this point the Levellers remind one of the radical 'organization' in Dostoevsky's *The Devils*.
11. In *The Levellers in the English Revolution* ed. G. E. Aylmer, 1975, p. 159.
12. *The Concern for Social Justice in the Puritan Revolution* W. Schenk, p. 38.
13. *Ibid.*, Chapter Two.
14. Zagorin, quoted in *The Law of Freedom*, ed. Christopher Hill., 1973, p. 49.
15. Aylmer, op. cit. p. 82.
16. *Cromwell and Communism*, Eduard Bernstein, 1930, p. 90.
17. *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, C. B. Macpherson, Oxford, 1962.
18. R. Ashton, *The English Civil War, Conservatism & Revclution, 1603-1649*, 1978, p. 310.
19. *The Interregnum*, F. A. Inderwick, 1891, p. 268.
20. Haller & Davies, op. cit. p. 52.
21. Quoted in Hill, *God's Englishman*, p. 63.
22. *Ibid.* p. 273.
23. *Godly Rule* W. Lamont, 1969, p. 136.

24. *The Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws*, (1571) quoted in *Economic Problems of the Church*, Christopher Hill, Oxford, 1955, p. 77.
25. *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, W. C. Abbott, Cambridge Mass., 1937-1944, Vol. 1, p. 628.
26. *Ibid* Vol. 1, p. 695.
27. *Ibid*. VII p. 277.
28. See 'Arise Evans: Welshman in London' in *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth Century England*. Christopher Hill, 1974.
29. Woodhouse, *op. cit.* p. 79.

LUDLOW FINDS HIS 'VOICE'

Robert G. Temple

A major source for the history of the Civil War and the Interregnum has always been the *Memoirs* of Lieutenant-General Edmund Ludlow. Ludlow was the only one of the Regicides to have written autobiographical memoirs which survive. Colonel Valentine Wauton (or Walton), another Regicide and Cromwell's brother-in-law, wrote a history of the Civil War containing many original letters of Cromwell, the manuscript of which was still extant in 1733, as we are informed by C. H. Firth in his *Dictionary of National Biography* entry for Wauton. These are now lost. Imagine the sensation which would be caused if they were found. A similar sensation, though so far unduly confined to scholars, has occurred with the discovery of part of the lost manuscript of Edmund Ludlow's *Memoirs*. The reason for the excitement is that the manuscript is enormously longer than the printed version and also quite different in many ways.

The manuscript was discovered at Warwick Castle where it had been languishing in the enormous library for at least 125 years, since it bears the signature of an Earl of Warwick who died in 1853. After this manuscript was discovered, a search of the library was made, and a historian persisted in climbing to the top of a ladder to inspect a mysterious volume on a high shelf which he had been told was of no interest, simply an old family photograph album. It turned out to be another lost 17th century manuscript, though not by Ludlow. Apparently the surprises of this library are now exhausted, as I am reliably informed that they really have gone through the place with a fine tooth comb, now there are definitely no more lost manu-

scripts there. The Ludlow manuscript has been sold to the Bodleian Library at Oxford, where it is now to be consulted under the catalogue listing of *MS. Eng. hist. C. 487*.

I have personally found some important historical manuscripts in private libraries which are still unknown to historians. I have even located two hitherto unknown caches of letters of Regicides in the hands of descendants but in only one of these cases, papers held by the descendants of Miles Corbet, have I so far been able to persuade the owners to allow proper inspection or copying for historical study. I have also been told by staff at certain stately homes that the contents of the libraries are definitely not fully known. I am therefore absolutely certain that despite all the extensive efforts of the Historical Manuscripts Commission and of many individual historians and antiquaries over the past hundred years, many essential and highly important unknown manuscripts are preserved throughout Britain and Ireland in private libraries and could come to light at any moment, sometimes upon the death of an owner. The unexpectedness of the appearance of the Ludlow manuscript bears witness to this. All who are dedicated to the study of the seventeenth-century Interregnum period should be constantly alert for the possible existence of new manuscript material which can significantly alter our understanding of the period and provide valuable new insights. One agitated owner in his library once tore a fascinating manuscript from my hand and concealed it when he realized I was beginning to read it. The irrational and absurd jealousies shown by some owners of manuscripts surpass the capacities of any psychologist to describe or interpret. And as for the stately homes, they too can be hazardous. I was warned in one that if I were so incautious as to mention to the owner one of his close relations whom, it transpired, he hated, I would be thrown out and forbidden access forevermore. Another factor to be reckoned with is the violent passions still held by many of the aristocracy against Parliamentarians and Cromwellians of the seventeenth century. In my research I have encountered intemperate outbursts and vituperation and I know personally of many cases of distortion and suppression of information by such persons today, including erasures from pedigrees, denials of clear fact, invention of titles and falsifications of historical identities. Anyone who thinks the passions of the English Civil War are dead is entirely mistaken.

There are *Memoirs* of another regicide, Colonel John Hutchinson, but they are written by his wife Lucy and not by himself. Ludlow's

Memoirs are, therefore, unique. But I must confess that years ago when I first read them I was struck by something rather odd about the character and personality of Ludlow. He really seemed too good to be true. Yes, he was thoroughly admirable and upright— *but was he human?* He had the same bland goodie-goodie quality that a hero in a comic book has. I did not at the time dream for a moment that the *Memoirs* as printed had been tampered with, and so I was unable to put my uneasy feeling into the form of actually suspecting that the Ludlow of the published *Memoirs* was a fabricated projection of an image by someone else. Instead, I suspected that perhaps Ludlow was a brilliant self-publicist, or that in some blithe and somnolent way the Archangel Gabriel had come down to earth in the form of Ludlow in exile and written of a life and doings, and articulated sentiments, which were those of someone too perfect actually to have lived a normal human life and engaged in all the rough and tumble of politics and the bloody battles and pacification of Ireland which the historical Ludlow was known to have done. I did not smell a rat, I smelled frankincense. The only logical conclusion to which I could come was that Ludlow was simply amazing, a genuine hero, someone simply too perfect. I began to regard him as one of those miracles of Nature, like the rainbow.

The explanation for this is now at hand. The Ludlow of the published *Memoirs* never did exist; he was invented. The real Edmund Ludlow was a very different person. Certainly he was admirable, highly-principled, firm in his convictions, honest, and so forth. But he was also, true to his age, a religious enthusiast who quoted the Bible with every other breath, and was far more agitated, worried, dissatisfied, and downright human than the fantasy personality of the published *Memoirs*. For what happened was that Ludlow's text, to which the real Ludlow characteristically gave the devout and earnest title *A Voyce from the Watch Tower*, had been edited and *rewritten*. And how! The original manuscript in its entirety — parts of it are still missing — is known to have extended to about one million words!

A portion (covering the years of the newly-discovered manuscript) has recently been published in the Camden Series (4th series, Vol. 21) of the Royal Historical Society, under the title *A Voyce from the Watch Tower*, and superbly edited by Dr. Blair Worden of Oxford, who has written a lengthy introduction to it, displaying immense scholarship. (Obtainable through the Royal Historical Society, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.)

Dr. Worden is best known as author of *The Rump Parliament*, published in 1974. Despite the length of his introduction, he does not discuss much of the important information to be found in the manuscript of the *Memoirs*, as he has more than enough to do trying to report the history of the work, how and why it was rewritten — apparently by the late seventeenth-century publicist John Toland — and the fabrication of the phantom Ludlow to accord with the need in the 1690s for the Whigs to project him as an image of an ideal aristocratic Whig country gentleman, barely religious at all, and rather like an animated stone statue of some stoical Roman senator. It used to be said of Marcus Cato, in the days when people still discussed the Romans (who are fast becoming as extinct in conversation as the dinosaurs are in zoos), that he was 'downright upright'. The idea was to go one better for Ludlow; Toland, an ally of the 'Roman Whigs' of the stoic philosopher Lord Shaftesbury (3rd Earl), as well as a member of a strange group called the 'Calves-Head Whigs' who were somehow more radical, aimed to create a real Clark Kent for the Civil War period. He got his hands on the authentic *Voyce from the Watch Tower* from Slingsby Bethell and created the *perfect Whig*. The Ludlow who emerges was strictly for public consumption in the 1690s, part of the political propaganda war at that time. Of course, these Whigs were very much an admiration of the real Ludlow, but the real Bible-thumping Puritan would have been indigestible by readers of the time, and so he had to make way for a mythical Ludlow.

The real Ludlow is far more earthy and exciting. He immediately comes alive from the pages of his authentic work, fretting and grumbling and complaining and criticizing and generally making his presence felt. He was not just standing around with his toga on his arm. Blair Worden gives a full and extraordinary account of the whole process of the transformation of the personality and manipulation of the texts. After reading his brilliant analysis, one cannot help but wonder how often this sort of thing went on in history, and whether it went into, say, the compilation of the Gospels!

From the Ludlow manuscript certain items of fact immediately emerge, clearing up minor mysteries. For instance, from his text we are able to ascertain that the Regicide William Goffe (or Gough) really was the brother of the Rev. Stephen Goffe (see MS. p. 1288, in the unpublished section). Discoveries associating William Goffe with Haverfordwest had thrown the entire question of his parentage and family into doubt; this is now finally resolved. Moreover, the

extremely obscure and shadowy Regicide Gregory Clement (direct ancestor of Samuel Clemens, who wrote under the pseudonym of Mark Twain) is now seen from remarks made by Ludlow to have been extremely rich for his day and possessed of a fortune of about £40,000 (MS. p. 868, p. 245 Blair Worden's edition). The manuscript is full of such new material, most of it of a personal nature. In the manuscript we learn the minute details of just where Ludlow went from hour to hour, how his watch broke and made him late for an appointment, how he had a strange childhood dream, what so-and-so said to him about it, which house he slept in, how he read a newspaper and what it said and how he felt about it, etc. All of this is omitted from the published work, in the attempt to remove from Ludlow the mere dregs of humanity, and to make him into an image rather than a man. In fact, Ludlow's rather awkward but engagingly bumbling and vivid style was entirely rewritten by the editor to flow in effortless cadences and to give the impression of great detachment and literary accomplishment. The most decorous phrases are inserted in place of Ludlow's continual religious expostulations. And, basically, the meaning of the whole work is changed. As Blair Worden points out, 'The manuscript is swamped with biblical references, a high proportion of them to the Book of Revelation. The biblical texts with which Ludlow prefaces each section of his table of contents illustrate his persistent search for the pattern of providence both in his own life and in public events.' Whereas the published *Memoirs*, marked by 'stylistic ease and polish', are 'predominantly secular', and are not in the least concerned with the true Ludlow's driving obsession with 'the worke the Lord is carrying on, and will carry on, be the earth never so quiet and the confederacy and uniting of powers never so strong against it . . .'

It is possible to clarify a few points in which Dr. Worden as editor is either not complete or mistaken, but not many. One relates to a blank resulting from the manuscript being effected by damp. On p. 103 of the Worden edition, it is possible to fill in the gap between the names of Miles Corbet and of Col. Matthew Thomlinson by inserting 'Colonel John Jones'. As if there were any doubts on this score, one has only to turn to p. 104 to find the three names repeated there together. More of this kind of patching together of missing pieces is no doubt possible.

A point stressed by Dr. Blair Worden in his article in *The Times Literary Supplement* for 7 January 1977, when he first announced the Ludlow manuscript publicly, and which is repeated again in his

Introduction, relates to Miles Corbet. He maintains that the Ludlow manuscript enables us to know that Corbet only joined the High Court of Justice after spiritual doubts and meditation upon a passage in the Book of Revelation. It is perfectly true that this is not in the published *Memoirs*. What Worden was unaware of was that the information has been publicly available elsewhere since 1662. It is recorded in the book of that date entitled *The Speeches, Discourses, and Prayers of Col. John Barkstead, Col. John Okey, and Mr. Miles Corbet*. In the edition of this book which I possess, the passage may be found on p. 33 (though my edition has an error in pagination, with many pages unnumbered, and another edition may differ). But Blair Worden is not the only historian of the period who has not read this book properly; Firth was guilty of the same omission. In his entry for Corbet, Firth was unable to estimate Corbet's date of birth, but on p. 25 of my edition *The Speeches* establishes that Corbet in 1662 was 67 years old, for he is quoted there as saying, 'Christ hath been a good master to me these threescore and seven years.' It should be noted that Corbet's confessional letters justifying his life, written in the Tower before his execution (of which two survive in MSS) show the same religious fervour and are probably as peppered with biblical quotations as Ludlow's long-lost manuscript. These two men were not only friends, they were fellow-enthusiasts for Christ, and Ludlow tells us of Corbet's religious associations (p. 300, Blair Worden edition).

For those interested exclusively in the lifetime of Oliver Cromwell or the Civil War period, the discovery of Ludlow's manuscript, while containing many illuminating retrospective allusions to the pre-1660 period and of course much of general value, will be to some extent a disappointment. For the part of the manuscript dealing with events prior to 1660 is still lost. Dr. Blair Worden has made many efforts to trace it, without success. I have made a few efforts myself, and shall continue to do so, as I am at the moment writing a biographical study of Ludlow. But it is as well to be absolutely specific about just what has been found and what has not. I said earlier that the whole manuscript was known to have contained about a million words. The manuscript was at some point divided into three portions. We now possess the middle portion only (and Worden has printed only a fraction of that), dealing with the years 1660 to 1677. This includes very exciting material, of course, covering the entire process of the Restoration, the trials and executions of the Regicides, how Ludlow escaped, and so on. There are accounts of the final conversa-

tions Ludlow had with John Cook, Thomas Scott, and others. Guizot, had he been alive today, would have done somersaults for the added information he could have had for a new edition of his *History of Richard Cromwell and the Restoration of Charles II*. And historians will go on profiting from the discovery of this manuscript as long as there are historians of the period at work. As for the third and final portion of the manuscript, which is also still lost, covering the years 1677 to 1685, Worden rightly points out that its loss is not so tragic, as it is likely to have been largely gossip and secondhand information about England written by an exile (for Ludlow did not return to England until 1689, when he is thought to have brought his manuscript over and given it to Slingsby Bethell) and rather tedious accounts of continental events. Furthermore, a very good table of contents for this portion does survive in the manuscript at the Bodleian, and may be consulted by those interested, who would like to know what the missing conclusion of the work did contain.

The real tragedy is that the pre-1660 section of the *Memoirs* in its original manuscript form is still lost. It was in existence after the *Memoirs* were published, for it was later consulted by John Locke the philosopher, who copied from it certain suppressed passages which were critical of the first Earl of Shaftesbury (Firth inserted these into his 1894 edition of the published *Memoirs*). It is my own feeling that this invaluable manuscript is still in a private library somewhere in England, possibly one of the stately homes of a descendant of one of the handful of key Whig peers of the 1690s period. But trying to trace such a thing is easier said than done. Even when there is a desire to be cooperative, it is difficult to persuade the relevant people that their libraries and possibly even their attics should be rummaged through. Amongst some of the younger aristocracy it is currently fashionable to adopt a pose of 'careless ease', and earnestness in all things is to be studiously avoided. Therefore, if someone comes along who is serious about finding a lost manuscript it provides an irritating ripple in the pond, and it spoils the impression of the 'careless ease'. On the other hand, older members of the aristocracy frequently cannot take seriously a scholar who is under 60 years of age. Then there are the salaried librarians in some great houses; the older ones tend to be so testy and jealous of their prerogatives that they pose greater obstacles than the owners. And on top of it all, the monetary value of manuscripts and old books generally has soared in these difficult economic times, leading to hoards being formed and actually concealed by 'investors', including many dealers, who

seal them up, sometimes without even looking through them properly, intending to sit on them for several years until their retirement, when they will 'cash them in'. Try and find something against all these odds!

Until such time as Ludlow finds his entire *Voyce*, we shall still be in suspense. But what has so far been discovered is a major event in seventeenth-century studies. The manuscript now available affords us an incredible degree of further insight into the workings of the minds of the men who made the history of the Interregnum. We must learn to approach them on their own terms, — if they rant about religion, we must accept the fact that that was how they saw the world. Nothing can be gained from ignoring this aspect of the true seventeenth-century reality. Cromwell's religious ecstasies are as important to a full understanding of him as his success on the battlefield. And let us not forget, as we read the works of men of this period, especially of those who died for the liberty of Englishmen, that in some deeper sense their deeds speak louder than any *Memoirs*, had they all lived to write them, would have done. As Ludlow says of his friend, the Regicide John Carew who was executed in 1660: 'But his blood, like that of Abel's, though he be dead yet speaketh' (p. 226, Worden edition). The blood of those who died opposing tyranny is never silent; this, more than mere words, is the true 'voyce' of England in the seventeenth century.

THE SPEECHES OF OLIVER CROMWELL

The Address given at the Annual General Meeting at Exeter on 19 April 1980 by the President, Professor Ivan Roots.

Though Oliver Cromwell was essentially a man of action he was also very much a man of the word — whether written or spoken, formal or informal. We are fortunate that so many of his utterances, certainly since he began to come into prominence with the Civil War, survive and are reasonably accessible. There are two or three hundred of his splendid letters, long and short, every one — even the hasty ones dictated tiredly within hours of a battle — full of good things. Think for instance of that sent to Col. Valentine Walton on 5 July 1644 reporting his son's death at Marston Moor:

There is your precious child full of glory, never to know sin or sorrow any more.
He was a gallant young man, exceeding gracious. God give you his comfort.

Thomas Carlyle claimed — and who would argue against it? — that

Cromwell's letters will convince any man that the past really did exist once — and I would add comes alive for us every time we read them.

We have reports of numerous interviews and conversations. Clearly Oliver enjoyed them — and could sometimes go on for hours on end. He seems generally to have been a good listener as well as a talker. The reports of even those who opposed or did not like him reveal that. True, he always gave as good as he got and occasionally the arguments would grow a little hectic. His chaplain John Maidstone remarked that his temper was fiery, though mostly kept down. John Lilburne tells of him banging the table as he inveighed against the Levellers in 1649. The Fifth Monarchist John Rogers recounts a conversation that turned into a debate (February 1655). It is the longest report we have of a single episode of this nature. Rogers wants to paint Oliver in a distinctly unfavourable light but brings out in spite of himself evidence of the great man's courtesy and capacity to command respect. Edmund Ludlow, too, had no affection for the Protector but again and again in his *Memoirs* (as we know them) the man comes through as not without charm. Of course that quality is impugned by some as a part of an inveterate opportunism, his hypocrisy and urge to win friends by whatever means and to influence people for his own purpose, to serve his overweening ambition. George Fox, Bulstrode Whitelock and umpteen ambassadors testify — often in almost verbatim accounts — to his dignity and impressiveness on formal occasions. In these he was very apt with protocol and seems to have had a complete mastery of the art of wearing and doffing the hat, that seventeenth-century symbol of proper social relations.

A great deal of the essential Cromwell can be discerned in these conversations, even those for which we do not have his actual words. But it is above all in his speeches that the true man comes through. For many of these we have long authentic passages, though with some variants. We might have had more detail if Oliver had bothered to have official printed versions made following the so many vital occasions of his political career, particularly as Protector. The fact is that he did not — and that he did not may also tell us something about him. The speech of 22 January 1654/5 dissolving the first Protectorate parliament is the only one printed 'by order of the Council of State' by the Government printer, Henry Hills (5 February). (Hills went on to become printer to Charles II). Some speeches, e.g. those of 4 September and 12 September 1654 (also to the first Protectorate Commons) were taken down 'by one who stood very near'

while the Protector spoke and were published 'to prevent mistakes'. But even of these speeches there are variant versions.

The fact is that Oliver spoke on almost every occasion almost entirely extempore. He may have had a few notes and obviously had in his head some idea of the basic structure of an oration, but it must be clear to any reader, as it was to listeners, that with him — as I fear it often is with me — the wind blew where it listed. This man was thinking on his feet — groping for the words to express the ideas that flashed or drifted into his mind. The phrases were coming out even before they were formed. One thing led to another, sometimes, but not invariably, back again. The House of Commons asked on 26 January 1657/8 for a copy for their records of the speech he had delivered the previous day in opening the second session of the second Protectorate parliament. His reply was that he had no copy of it — 'he spoke to the House those things that did come upon his own heart and that he did acquaint them honestly and plainly how things stood in matters of fact, but of the particulars he doth not remember four lines'. (Incidentally the Venetian ambassador commented that 'it seemed absurd to expect the Protector to agree to print what he had confided to it on the assumption that it would be kept secret for proper consideration and not exposed to the view of all the world to be criticised and commented upon in accordance with personal prejudices' — a suggestion that Cromwell the parliamentarian was regular and traditional in his view of parliamentary proceedings and debates, that as matters of state they were secret and not for public consumption.)

The lack of official copies accounts for some of the difficulties in the way of study and appreciation of Cromwell's speeches as we have them — their incoherence, inconsequentiality, obscurity, even downright opacity. But there is more to be said than that. I think it is true that even if we had verbatim the undisputed text of each speech we would still have to wrestle somewhat with it. Carlyle, who brought out his idiosyncratic edition of the letters and speeches in 1845 — the first serious attempt at a comprehensive collection — claimed that before his own labours the speeches were never read, were misprinted, mispunctuated, unelucidated, unintelligible 'defaced with the dark circumstances so well known of that period', the seventeenth century. 150 years nearer than we are to the Civil Wars he makes them seem episodes utterly remote, a sort of 'dark ages'. Of existing printed versions of the speeches he wrote 'they excel human belief. Certainly no such agglomerate of opaque confu-

sions, printed and reprinted; of darkness on the back of darkness, thick and threefold' was known to him elsewhere 'in the history of things spoken or printed by human creatures'. He boasts that he has put them right by collecting, collating, elucidating — 'a good historical study' in itself. In fact he exaggerates, characteristically, both the shortcomings of what went before him and the extent of his own achievement, though certainly the latter was considerable and all students, admiring, inimical or detached, of Cromwell must be grateful for a good deal of his editorial work and at least a little of his excited comments. He tells us to come to the speeches as if they *were* intelligent, honest, not just cant, and to try to remember they were uttered by a flesh and blood man to human beings whom he was seeking to persuade. 'Oliver Cromwell always had a meaning and an honest manful meaning' — but you must be prepared to look for it. That is good advice. I would add to it: don't just *read* the speeches — try to hear them in your head — and many of the problems will begin to drop away. Many years ago I compiled for the much-to-be-lamented BBC Third Programme a tercentenary feature on Cromwell's speeches to the first Protectorate parliament. I believed that if a good actor, apprised of Oliver's career and of estimates of his character, open to the advice of a historian, delivered the speeches as if they were fresh — happenings not readings — the results would be illuminating. They were. Where Oliver breaks off in mid-sentence the mind of the modern hearer, as that of the contemporary, then manages to finish it for him, as we find so often it does in our own conversations. Take a tape-recording sometime of a chat at home and you will see what I mean. One could also catch the nuances, the word or phrase that set him off on a new tack. You could believe that here was an orator aware of his audience, looking at them, responding to some of their responses to him. It would be a major contribution to interest in and understanding of Cromwell to produce a cassette — with or without a commentary — of some of his major speeches.

But there are some difficulties remaining. Dr Blair Worden has spoken scornfully of Cromwell's 'habitual incoherence'. That is too strong but we must admit that there are times when he did not make himself clear. Here there are several possibilities. Talleyrand once remarked upon the capacity of speech not so much to convey thought as to conceal it. There were certainly occasions when Oliver was more concerned to keep things in train than to let people know just what he had in mind. The best example is in the series of speeches

he gave in April and May 1657 to the Committee sent from the House of Commons to persuade him to accept the Crown along with the Humble Petition and Advice. He needed time to make up his own mind, to gather the reactions of the army and of other factions and — he would have added — to discern the direction in which the finger of Providence was pointing. Hence the utterances described as dense, promiscuous — 'some declaring it positive, others infer room for a further address'. 'A speech so dark that none knows whether he will accept it or no; but some think he will accept it.' The point was that the situation was one that made it essential for everyone to be kept guessing. (Notice, too, Carlyle's very apt comparison with the young lady who would, but would not . . . yet would.) But once the Protector made up his mind at Providence's prodding he was clear enough in the phraseology of his rejection of the offer. (One can parallel here the moods of Cromwell the man of action — his long periods of apparent supineness followed by sudden decisive moves, such as the dissolution of 1653).

But of course sometimes oratorical incoherence could be the consequence of an inadequacy in the command of language. There is also the possibility that his hearers, being men living in a different age within a different framework of reference from our own, could catch a tone here and there and understand words in meanings now unknown to us. All students of history, as of political and social philosophy etc, should, of course, be students of language. I would stress again that more often than not Cromwell's meaning and intention are there to be found — and worth bothering about.

Christopher Hill has called him 'the most quotable of Englishmen'. There is no doubt that he was a master of words, sometimes coining new phrases, at others giving fresh life to the old: 'Queen Elizabeth of famous memory — we need not be ashamed to say so. That lady, that great queen.' Of the dissolution of the Rump: 'scarce a dog barked'. Of the major-generals: 'a little poor invention, which I hear has been much regretted . . . to have a little inspection upon the people . . .'. Of danger: 'I wish it may cause no despondency as truly I think it shall not, because we are Englishmen; that is one good account. . .'. Of God: 'I have learned too much of God, not to dally with him and to be bold with him . . . though I can be bold with men, if Christ be pleased to assist . . . it is the providence of God that does lead men in darkness . . .'. Of the army: 'A company of poor men that had ventured their lives and that had some thoughts that they had a little interest to enquire after things and the rather because really

they were invited out upon principles of honesty, conscience and religion, for spiritual liberties as many as would come. . . .’ And again: ‘a poor unpaid army, the soldiers going barefoot at this time, in this city, this weather and yet a peaceable people, seeking to service you with their lives, judging their pains and hazards and all, well bestowed in obeying you in their offices and serving you to keep the peace of these nations. Yea, he must be a man that hath a heart as hard as the weather that have not a due sense of this.’ Of ‘the other House’: ‘it is not titles, it is not lordship; it is not this or that that they have but a Christian and an English interest . . .’. Of his Protectorship: ‘I would rather keep sheep under a hedge than deal with the government of men.’

Sir Edward Walker, recalling Cromwell’s first appearance in the Long Parliament, remarked on his ‘sharp and untuneable voice’, but also his ‘fervid eloquence’. Evidently as time went by he was able to modulate his tones; at any rate no adverse comments seems to have passed upon them. Though he claimed to be no rhetorician or orator it is obvious that he enjoyed speaking in public and on many large occasions performed it well and with natural dignity, whether in the Painted Chamber, the Guildhall, the Banqueting House. ‘A king by long succession born’, said Marvell, and no ambassador, however critical of the Protector’s policies, suggests that his deportment was inadequate to his office. The Venetian envoy in 1655 reported his martial presence and profound expression, the expression of both the soldier and the statesman as skilled in persuasiveness as in action. Oliver always had the instinct to rise to the moment whether as Chairman of the Army Council as at the Putney Debates in 1647 — readers of *Cromwelliana 1979* will be aware of the interest and significance of his language here — or in welcoming, encouraging, admonishing, thanking, dissolving his parliaments; pursuing foreign policy with diplomats; upbraiding the army officers — and so on.

Much more might be said about Oliver’s speeches — their structure, for instance; or their historical reference (he was as much inclined to this as Sir Arthur Haselrig was, but he was usually far more relevant and he lacked Haselrig’s penchant for starting way back with the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy); his tendency to spiritual exhortation and the urging of moral reformation; his insistence time and again that it was not ambition but Providence and necessity that called him to his place. I have already mentioned his capacity to go on talking for a long time. That is something I must not copy

today. My talk has been rambling, allusive, obscure and inconsequential — some would say with all the faults of an Oliverian effusion and none of its virtues. Sorry. But perhaps I have done something to persuade you that the speeches are worth your consideration and that Carlyle was right when he said that in them ‘there is more of Oliver than in most of the history books written about him’.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

(Published since January 1979 and of likely interest to readers of *Cromwelliana*)

Ashley, M.P., *The House of Stuart* (1980).

Aylmer, G. E., Morrill, J. S. (eds), *The Civil War and Interregnum: Sources for Local Historians* (Standing Conference for Local History, 1979).

Brett, R. L. (ed), *Andrew Marvell: Essays on the Tercentenary of his Death* (Oxford, for University of Hull, 1979).

Brewer, J., Styles, J. (eds), *An Ungovernable People? The English and their Law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1980)

Capp, B. S., *Astrology and the Popular Press 1500 - 1800* (1979).

Crawford, Patricia, *Denzil Holles 1598 - 1680: A Study of his Political Career* (1979).

Craze, Michael, *The Life and Lyrics of Andrew Marvell* (1979).

Dow, F. D., *Cromwellian Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979).

Evans, J. T., *Seventeenth-century Norwich: Politics, Religions and Government 1620 - 90* (Oxford, 1979).

Fraser, Antonia, *King Charles II* (1979).

Hayes, T. W., *Winstanley the Digger: A Literary Analysis of Radical Ideas in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979).

Jones, J. R. (ed), *The Restored Monarchy 1660 - 1688* (1979).

Judson, M., *From Traditional to Political Reality: A Study of the Ideas in Support of the Commonwealth Government 1649 - 60* (Hamden, Conn., 1980).

Kendall, R. T., *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, 1979).

- Kishlansky, M. A., *The Rise of the New Model Army* (Cambridge, 1979).
- Lamont, W. M., *Richard Baxter and the Millenium: Protestant Imperialism and the English Revolution* (1979).
- Makey, W., *The Church of the Covenant 1637 - 51* (Edinburgh, 1979).
- Miller, A. C., *Sir Richard Grenville of the Civil War* (Chichester, 1979).
- Morrill, J. S., *Seventeenth Century Britain 1603 - 1714* ('Critical Bibliographies in Modern History', Folkestone, 1980).
- O'Day, Rosemary, *The English Clergy: The Emergence and Consolidation of a Profession 1558 - 1642* (Leicester, 1980).
- Ollard, R., *The Image of the King* (Charles I and Charles II) (1979).
- Palmer, T., *Charles II: Portrait of an Age* (1979).
- Trease, G., *Portrait of a Cavalier* (William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire) (1979).
- Webb, S. S., *The Governors-General: The English Army and the Definition of Empire 1569 - 1681* (Chapel Hill, N. Carolina, 1979).
- Woods, T. P. S., *Prelude to Civil War 1642: Mr Justice Malet and the Kentish Petitions*, (Salisbury, 1980).
- Wrightson, K., Levine, D., *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling 1525 - 1700* (New York, 1979).
- Adair, J., 'The Death of John Hampden', *History Today* xxix [October 1979] pp. 656-663.
- Broad, J., 'Gentry Finances and the Civil War: the Buckinghamshire Verneys', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., xxxii (May, 1979) pp. 183 - 200.
- Edie, Carolyn A., 'Right Rejoicing: Sermons on the Occasion of the Stuart Restoration', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* lxii (1979) pp. 61 - 86.
- Kishlansky, M. A., 'The Army and the Levellers: The Roads to Putney', *Historical Journal* xxii (1979) pp. 795 - 824.
- Morrill, J. S., 'The Northern Gentry and the Great Rebellion', *Northern History* xv (1979) pp. 66 - 87.
- Newman, P. R., 'The Catholic Royalists of Northern England 1642 - 1645', *Northern History* xv (1979) pp. 88 - 95.

- Roots, I. A., 'The Short and Troublesome Reign of Richard IV', *History Today* xxx (March 1980) pp. 11 - 15.
- Salmon, J. H. M., 'Oliver Cromwell and the Romantics', *History Today* xxx (March 1980) pp. 16 - 21.
- Taft, Barbara, 'Voting Lists of the Council of Officers, December 1648', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* lii (1979) pp. 138 - 54.
- Trevor-Roper, H. R., 'Clarendon's' 'History of the Rebellion', *History Today* xxix (February 1979) pp. 73 - 79.

Howard McKenzie
Stephen K. Roberts

Books Received

R. J. Milward, *Wimbledon in the Time of the Civil war*, 1976 165pp. and appendices. Obtainable from the Author (Senior History Master at Wimbledon College), at 159 Coombe Lane, Wimbledon, London SW20 0QX. £1.60 plus 30p (postage and packing).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1980

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held in the Queen's Building, Exeter University, by kind arrangement with our President, Professor Ivan Roots, M.A. on 19 April 1980. 25 members were present.

In welcoming those present, the Chairman (Mr Trewin Coplestone) recalled that the Association had now been in existence for 45 years. He thanked the President for making it possible for them to meet in such an attractive and suitable venue. The usual programme had been re-arranged so that the Presidential Address could be fully enjoyed at the start of the proceedings, and enough time given to the business part of the meeting. Professor Roots then addressed the meeting on 'The Speeches of Oliver Cromwell'.

After Tea, the Meeting discussed business matters as follows:—

Financial Report 1979 - 80

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr Geoffrey Woollard, reported a balance to be carried forward of £1,587.74, a gratifying amount. But it should be noted that 108 people became Life Members during the financial year under review and thus a large part of the income for this year was non-recurring. Through the efforts of Mr. D. B. Good, an amount

of £250.62 had been realised from the sale of Cromwell busts, and there was an amount of £59.20 representing interest on the deposit account. Negotiations had been opened to discover whether the Association could be legally accorded charitable status.

Concessionary rates to members on retirement pensions was discussed and it was agreed to offer them Life Membership at £15 instead of the full rate of £25.

Chairman's Report

Mr Coppleson reported that 29 new members had been enrolled during the year; but regretted to record the deaths of five members of longstanding, Mr Wilfred Barnes, Mr Cyril Leese, Mr E. Vincent Harris, Mr P. Hutton and Mr E. H. Rooksby. He was glad to report that Lady (Dingle) Foot had agreed to become a Vice-President of the Association and Mr Howard McKenzie had accepted an invitation to join the Council.

Cromwelliana

The printing of the 1979 edition had been undertaken by the Exeter University Printing Unit, piloted by Professor Roots and edited by Mr Alan Smith, who had given much time and thought to producing such a worthwhile publication, received with many appreciative comments by members. The Editor was looking for contributions to future issues, particularly those resulting from original research.

Annual Service

The Annual Service on 3 September 1979 had been well attended and an inspiring address had been given by Dr. John Wroughton. Members met after the Service for Tea and social intercourse at the Central Hall, Westminster.

Essay Prize

By agreement with Professor Robert Ashton of the University of East Anglia it had been decided to award the essay prize established for students of that university in alternate years.

Organisation of the Association

The Chairman said that the Council had given much time and thought to considering the framework within which the Association at present functions and all members had received copies of a document setting out its aims and organisation so that they might be clear as to the government of the Association, the position of officers and the relation of local groups to the centre.

Recruitment

The Council wished to stress the importance of recruitment by members in their own localities whether by correspondence in the local press or by other means. Wider publicity for the Association was a matter needing urgent discussion.

The Cromwell Statue, Warrington

Members in the North West would be interested to learn that Mr Joseph Lythgoe is keeping a close watch on the proposed arrangements for cleaning and resiting this statue.

Discussion

During the general discussion which followed the Chairman's Report, the matter of an Association tie or badge was again raised. Relatively few members had troubled to reply to the question in the Autumn news-sheet as to whether a badge or tie would be bought by members, but a few had replied in the affirmative and four design suggestions had been sent in. Mr Richard Good said the production of 50 ties might be arranged as a trial and that this would cost something of the order of £2.50 each. Mr Woollard said that saleability must first be established as the Association could not undertake the funding of an experimental production.

The present organisation of the Association was then extensively discussed, Mr Richard Good proposing that a formal constitution be adopted. It was agreed that legal advice should be taken on the sufficiency of the present arrangements and that members would again be sent the document setting out the present framework and asked about their views on its possible modification, the actual question put to members being determined by the nature of the legal advice received.