

THE ILCHESTER ELECTION, FEBRUARY 1646

BY DAVID UNDERDOWN, M.A., B.LITT. (OXON.)

The recruiting of the Long Parliament to fill the seats which had fallen vacant since the outbreak of the Civil War (in many cases through the disablement of Royalist members), led to many bitter local contests after by-elections were resumed in August 1645. As in all seventeenth century elections, local issues and personal rivalries often affected them more than national politics. Yet although evidence for many constituencies is lacking, there are unmistakable signs that in some places the growing hostility of the factions at Westminster was affecting politics at the grass-roots. What, first of all, were these factions? Historians used to call them Presbyterians and Independents, but the terms were not always used by contemporaries, and they are in any case misleading.¹ After the outbreak of the Civil War the Royalist members had withdrawn to Oxford, but the Parliamentarians who remained were still far from united. There existed from the first a "peace party" and a "war party" at the two extremes, and between them a large disorganized mass of uncommitted members; some of them, who have been called the "middle group", were temporarily led by John Pym until his death in 1643, and afterwards by Oliver St. John.²

"Peace party" men, as the name implies, were for peace with the King at almost any price, terrified that an outright victory over him would destroy monarchy, church, and social order, and open the door to dangerous experiments with religious toleration and perhaps even democracy. They clung to cautious aristocratic generals like the Earls of Essex and Manchester, and feared the militant sectarian Puritans who had found their hero in Oliver Cromwell and their organization in the New Model Army. By 1645 they were sometimes called "Presbyterians"; some of them were, though few wanted Presbyterianism on the Scottish model, even if they now looked to the Scots army as a counter to the "Independent" New Model. Against them, "war party" men were for total victory, to bring the King to unconditional surrender even at the risk of disrupting the social fabric. Some of them, but not all, were Independents in religion, working for a more tolerant, decentralized Puritanism, instead of the disciplined national church favoured by both Pres-

¹ J. H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History* (London, 1961), ch. 7. See also David Underdown, "The Independents Reconsidered," *Journal of British Studies*, 3 (1963-64), 57-84.

² J. H. Hexter, *The Reign of King Pym* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941). Lotte Glow, "Political Affiliations in the House of Commons after Pym's death," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 38 (1965), 48-70. Dr. Glow, wrongly in my opinion, minimises the role of the "middle group" after Pym's death. Some rather different conclusions, stressing St. John's leadership, are reached by Dr. Valerie Pearl, "Oliver St. John and the 'middle group' in the Long Parliament," *English Historical Review*, 81 (1966), 490-519.

byterians and Anglicans. They had engineered the Self-Denying Ordinance to get rid of Essex and Manchester, and rejoiced in the successes of the New Model. Although the first promoters of the Scots alliance, by 1645 they had turned against the Scots, viewing them as enemies of toleration and potential instruments of a "peace party" restoration of Charles I that would leave him still with effective executive power. Among other points of division between the peace and war parties, there was one which is directly relevant to this article. During the war Parliament had appointed special County Committees, charged with the duty of implementing emergency wartime ordinances: sequestering the estates of Royalists, raising assessments, organizing militia forces, weeding out Royalist clergy and office-holders, and the like. In effect the committees supplanted the J.P.s., and as many of their members came from origins less elevated than those of the substantial gentry who made up the Commissions of the Peace, they were often unpopular with the leading men of the county, even those of nominally parliamentarian persuasion.³ The moderates, peace-party men, Presbyterians (call them what you will), thus wished to curb the powers of the County Committees; the radicals, war-party men, pro-Army Independents, wished just as passionately to maintain them.

Although their leaders can be identified with tolerable certainty, these war and peace parties were of course very far from being organized parties in the modern sense, and it is arguable that they lacked the cohesion, and even more the local roots, to enable them to influence elections. Yet in the elections to recruit the House in 1645-1648 there is some fragmentary evidence to the contrary. Many more studies of individual counties and boroughs are needed before we can confidently assess the relative strength of the local and national factors in these "Recruiter" elections, and can generalize about the degree of party organization, Army influence, and all the other critical questions which they suggest.⁴ In many constituencies the evidence no longer exists. Fortunately for historians, the conscientious Sir Robert Harley was chairman of the Committee of Privileges, and the survival of his notes of the Committee's proceedings during 1646 makes it possible to study a few elections in detail. Even more fortunately for the Somerset historian, among the disputes which came within the Committee's view was the one at

³ For a study of an unusually active County Committee, see A. M. Everitt, *The County Committee of Kent in the Civil War* (Leicester, 1957).

⁴ The only study of the "Recruiter" elections is R. N. Kershaw, "The Recruiting of the Long Parliament," *History*, n.s. 8 (1923-24), 169-79, which is totally inadequate. The elections are also discussed in D. Brunton and D. H. Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament* (London, 1954), ch. ii, which although incomparably more useful than Kershaw, pays little attention to the possibility of organized election management on the national level.

the small borough of Ilchester.⁵ After a brief description of this election, it may be possible to consider its relevance to some of the broader historical questions outlined above.

Ilchester in the seventeenth century was a small, decaying town, sadly fallen from its medieval importance, but saved from extinction by a still thriving glove industry. Unhealthily situated on the edge of the marshes, its lack of adequate hostelries made it an inconvenient place for the meetings of the County Court, which from ancient tradition continued to be held there. The town's government, under the charter of 1556, rested in the hands of a self-perpetuating corporation composed of a bailiff and twelve capital burgesses. Its status as a parliamentary borough had been restored in 1621, thanks to the efforts of the redoubtable Sir Robert Phelps, who needed a safe and easily controlled borough as insurance against possible defeat in shire elections. In the event, Phelps had not needed Ilchester for himself, and before 1640 the borough usually found seats for courtiers like Sir Richard Wynn and the poet Edmund Waller, or local gentlemen like Sir Robert Gorges and Phelps's opponent Sir Henry Berkeley.⁶ The franchise rested in the inhabitant householders, but in such a poor borough it was impossible for them to display much independence. A century later its venality became notorious, the electors being described as "poor and corrupt, without honour, morals, or attachment to any man or party".⁷ Direct bribery in the 1640's was less common, but it is clear that the Ilchester burgesses were unlikely to resist the pressure of local magnates like the Phelps or, when the Montacute interest was interrupted by the Civil War, the parliamentary families that now held the field.

The members originally elected to the Long Parliament for Ilchester were Sir Henry Berkeley and Robert Hunt of Speckington. Early in 1641 Berkeley was unseated after a petition, and Edward Phelps, son of the now deceased Sir Robert, took his place. Both Hunt and Phelps, however, were disabled as Royalists in February 1644. The issue of writs for new elections at Ilchester and all the other Somerset boroughs except Minehead was ordered by the

⁵ Harley's notes of the Committee's proceedings between 20 February and 17 June 1646 are in B.M. Add. MSS. 28716, which contains about half the hearings on the Ilchester dispute. It was the author's good fortune to discover, in a portfolio of Harley papers misleadingly labelled "Herefordshire County Affairs," a further volume (also mainly in Harley's hand), containing the Committee's proceedings between 25 June 1646 and 13 January 1647: Welbeck MSS., Harley Papers, Portfolio 5 (B.M. Loan 29/50), no. 76A. I am grateful to His Grace the Duke of Portland for permission to quote from this document. I also wish to acknowledge the generous assistance of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, whose grant enabled me to complete this article.

⁶ Thomas G. Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), pp. 9, 69. J. Stevens Cox, *History of Ilchester* (Ilchester, 1958), pp. 173, 218, 223-24.

⁷ Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, *History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1754-1790* (London, 1964), I, 368.

House of Commons on 25 September 1645, writs for Minehead and for the county following a month later.⁸ Competition for places began immediately, as John Ashe, who was electioneering in the West, noted on 10 November: "I hear that they in Somerset are . . . provided 3 or 4 for one place".⁹ The county election naturally attracted the most attention, and culminated in a blazing row when, at its meeting on 1 December, the County Court was adjourned by the High Sheriff, Sir John Horner of Mells, from its customary venue at Ilchester to Queen Camel. Horner succeeded in his object of getting his son George elected (along with the more popular John Harington of Kelston), but only at the cost of intensifying the already bitter feeling between the factions in the county. Two groups in particular had good reason for anger: the County Committee under the dictatorial leadership of Colonel John Pyne, which had attempted to secure the election of one of its members, Henry Henley of Leigh, and the friends of the flamboyant William Strode of Barrington, who was at odds with both the Committee and the Horners.¹⁰ The county election was not the only one to cause excitement. There were complaints of serious electoral malpractices at Milborne Port; at Bath, after Harington had declined the seat, there was a contest between the powerful Ashe and Popham interests (James Ashe defeating Edward Popham, brother of the sitting member), while at Wells the Recorder suddenly found himself the target of a well-timed investigation by the County Committee.¹¹

The county election, inevitably, was challenged in a petition to the Commons. While the House considered the dispute, eventually referring it to the presumably neutral Committee of the North, there were further complaints that Sir John Horner had done nothing with the writs for the other boroughs in the county. On 27 January 1646 the Commons ordered him to make return of burgesses for Minehead, Taunton, Bridgwater, Wells, and Ilchester, "according to the duty of his place".¹² Exactly why Horner chose to delay these elections it is impossible to determine. Perhaps he hoped to allow his defeated enemies of the county election time to secure compensatory seats; perhaps, and more probably, in some of the boroughs the principal candidates were not yet ready to ask for the

⁸ *Commons' Journals*, 4, 286-87, 322.

⁹ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Portland MSS.*, 1, 307.

¹⁰ Strode had quarrelled with the Horners in 1643; *Commons' Journals*, 3, 351-55. For the county election see *Ibid.*, 4, 369, 394-405, 565-66; *Scottish Dove*, 119 (21-29 January 1646), B.M. Pressmark E.319, 17; H.M.C., *Portland*, 1, 318-19; and *Proc. Som. A. & N. H. S.*, 30 (1884), ii, 57-59.

¹¹ For Milborne Port: *Scottish Dove*, 115 (24 December 1645-1 January 1646), E.314, 2. For Bath: H. Harington, ed., *Nugae Antiquae* (London, 1769-75), 1, 65; A. J. King and B. H. Watts, *Cavaliers and Roundheads: a Chapter in the History of Bath* (Bath, 1887), pp. 26-27. I am indebted to Miss E. A. Russ for lending me her copy of this pamphlet. For Wells: P.R.O., S.P. 23 (Committee for Compounding) /166, pp. 10-12.

¹² *Commons' Journals*, 4, 420.

Sheriff's warrant that would precipitate an election. In the case of Ilchester all we know is that about the middle of December 1645 there had been a meeting of the capital burgesses, "to advise about the election", and that it was decided to elect Strode, whose popularity in the town had been demonstrated when he was cheated of the county seat, and Henley, no doubt to placate Strode's enemies in the County Committee. At this meeting, Bailiff John Lockyer (an ardent Strode man) admitted, "there was burnt wine provided for the Burgesses, and not paid for by them".¹³

Lockyer's assumption that the Committee would be satisfied with only one of the two places was over optimistic. Some time around Christmas the Committee was in session at Ilchester, and the burgesses were summoned before them. They were then harangued by the formidable Colonel Pyne, and urged "to choose such as the Committee should appoint". According to one sarcastic listener, Pyne advised them "to make choice of godly and able men such as they did know, and at last nominated two gentlemen whom they knew not, and then left it to them to choose whom they pleased." In spite of these rhetorical contradictions, in the end Pyne's recommendations were clear enough: Ilchester was to elect Major Thomas Harrison and Captain Alexander Pym. The latter, son of the great John Pym, was at least a Somerset man; Harrison, son of a Newcastle-under-Lyme grazier, a complete outsider. Both, however, were likely to be acceptable to Pyne's radical friends in Parliament and the Army. Pym's behaviour in the next ten years marks him out as an ally of the violent faction in the county, while Harrison was already emerging as one of the most prominent of the Army Puritans. He was soon to be the acknowledged leader of the Fifth Monarchy Men, an advocate of the rule of the Saints, a millenarian revolutionary of the most extreme kind. Pyne's speech was seconded by one from another prominent Committee-man, Dr. John Palmer, who later managed to be both M.P. for Taunton and Warden of All Souls. The Committee's determination to capture at least one Somerset borough for the Army party was thus made plain.

It may well be imagined that the Committee's demands created consternation among the burgesses. However, Bailiff Lockyer bravely replied that they had already decided to elect Strode and Henley, and the meeting broke up. A week later Pyne again called the townsmen before the Committee and repeated his demands, but could get nothing more from Lockyer than a promise to call another meeting within two or three days of the election, the date of which, in the absence of Horner's warrant, was still not settled. Pyne now altered his tactics and tried to browbeat Lockyer in private, in the sort of language familiar to many who had dealings with the Com-

¹³ The narrative of the Ilchester election which follows is based mainly on the two books of the Committee of Privileges' proceedings described in n. 5 above. It has been thought unnecessary to give detailed references except where other sources have been used.

mittee: "Mr. Bailiff, if you do not look upon us now, we shall hereafter look upon you." The terrified Lockyer this time promised that he would at least inform Pyne immediately the warrant arrived. Meanwhile canvassing for Harrison and Pym had already begun. John Wigwood and John Laver (both, according to Lockyer, former Royalist soldiers) urgently solicited votes, under the direction of William Martyn, one of the clerks to the Committee. Laver and Wigwood were said to have admitted being paid five shillings a day for canvassing, the former having confided in a barber's shop "that he cared not if he were so employed all the year long." Another Committee official, Francis Tuttill, had money available "to strengthen the Party", and he and a certain Mrs. Daw, in whose house Pyne used to lodge, tried to pay Strode's supporters to leave the town until after the election. The Strode faction promptly brought (or bought) them back again.

On 23 January 1646 Horner at last sent his warrant for the Ilchester election. Lockyer showed it to some of his allies in the Corporation, and that evening fulfilled his promise to Pyne by taking it to a session of the Committee. Dr. Palmer read the warrant to his colleagues, and Pyne then handed it back to Lockyer, who announced that the election would be held on the following Monday week, 2 February. By a remarkable coincidence, within a few hours of the Committee's discovery that Lockyer had the warrant, a midnight alarm was raised; a Royalist raiding party from Warminster had been detected near Ilchester. During the confusion which followed, Colonel Henley, who was ostensibly assembling a force to defend the bridge, came to Lockyer and suggested that the warrant should be entrusted to Pyne for safe keeping. Lockyer replied that "he believed he was able to keep it safe enough," but eventually gave way to Henley's bullying on condition that Pyne promised to return the warrant as soon as the military danger was past. Henley gleefully went off with it, and before the night was over Lockyer was told by Richard Trevillian, another of Pyne's allies, that his action had "gained the Love of the Committee." With this the alarm promptly subsided, the Royalist raiders were heard of no more, and Pyne had in his hands a very strong card for controlling the Ilchester election.

If he really wished to elect Strode, Lockyer had committed a serious blunder. On the morning after the alarm Pyne announced that he was keeping the warrant, though he still promised to return it by the following Thursday, 29 January. Doubtless to escape Strode's anger, Lockyer then left Ilchester on a convenient business trip to Bristol Fair. He returned on Friday the 30th, to find that Pyne still had the warrant, and immediately wrote to him demanding it back. However, he also informed the Committee, through Richard Trevillian, that he intended to proceed with the election as planned on the following Monday. In this he was supported by about sixteen of the burgesses at a meeting that same day. At a second

meeting the next morning he encountered greater opposition. Unimpressed by the presence of Strode and other local gentry, George Smyth, Pyne's principal supporter in the Corporation and a man who ten years earlier had been resisting Sir Robert Phelips,¹⁴ inconveniently demanded to see the original warrant, and protested that it was illegal to proceed without it. The worried Lockyer quickly hurried off to Mells to see if Horner would supply another one. Horner was away, staying at Farleigh Castle with the Hungerfords, and Lockyer was afraid of going there because there were Royalist forces in the vicinity. However, one of Horner's underlings, the attorney Benjamin Avery, agreed to supply two copies of the original warrant, and advised Lockyer that he might legally proceed under this authority. Lockyer returned to Ilchester, but all he had was a piece of paper whose validity was bound to be challenged.

On Sunday, 1 February, Lockyer gave his fellow burgesses formal notice that the election would be held next day. At the same time he received a final threatening letter from Pyne; it was delivered by Tuttill, who told the Bailiff, prophetically, "that if he did not answer the desires of the Committee in deferring the election . . . he and his should rue it." The Committee's pressure continued on the Monday, election day. Henry Minterne and another member of the Committee arrived in the town, accompanied by Tuttill and another of the Trevillian clan, Thomas, Town Clerk of Langport. They made a last effort to persuade Lockyer to call off the election, but the Bailiff replied that he could not, being "pressed by Mr. Strode." Smyth and his friends protested at the illegality of acting on a mere copy of the Sheriff's warrant, and others complained of the inadequacy of the notice given. "Right or wrong," Lockyer answered, "he would go on." As the burgesses entered the Town Hall, Minterne and his party came in too, but Strode and his allies barred the way, giving "threatening speeches," and warnings that they would be complained against "for disturbing of the election." The squabble ended only when Lockyer called on all non-voters to leave the hall. The election then proceeded, interrupted by further disturbances at the door, where Wigwood and a burgess named John Browne made a "hurly-burly . . . with their loud voices," Browne shouting that they were "a Company of Fools" if they went on with the election. Only about forty of the eighty qualified electors were present, and most of them left without voting; on the evidence of George Smyth only seventeen votes were cast.¹⁵ The candidates were Strode and Thomas Hodges of Wedmore, a relatively obscure moderate, on the one side, Alexander Pym and Henley on the other; Harrison evidently had ceased to be interested, and the Committee member Henley was

¹⁴ Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640*, p. 216. Smyth's son, curiously, was later accused of having served under Col. Edward Phelips in the Civil War: *Cal. Committee for Advance of Money*, p. 1159.

¹⁵ The indenture is signed by Lockyer and ten others. P.R.O., C 219/43/ 2, no. 140.

the stop-gap alternative. In spite of the abstention of the majority of the burgesses the Bailiff duly declared Strode and Hodges elected. After the meeting some effort was made to swell the number of votes cast, though at least one voter who was bullied by Strode obstinately cast another vote for Pym.

Two days after this election Pyne returned to Ilchester. He summoned the members of the Corporation to the Committee chamber, and again gave them some sharp language; the Bailiff, wisely, was not present. Pyne produced the missing warrant, and on the pretext that the Bailiff's absence left him no alternative, delivered it to his supporter George Smyth. The meeting endorsed this action, and also instructed the Under-bailiff to call a full meeting of the Corporation for the following day. When the burgesses duly assembled on Thursday, 5 February, Lockyer attended, but said nothing when it was agreed to hold a new election on the following Monday, on the authority of the original warrant. The Under-bailiff, William Ford, then made formal proclamation of this new election, confessing to Lockyer that he did so on Pyne's instructions. The furious Lockyer immediately dismissed the poor man from the office which he had held for twenty years. Canvassing for the new election was soon in full swing, with Laver and Wigwood again going from house to house. They must have had an easy task, as the supporters of the Strode-Hodges ticket regarded their men as already legally elected.

The most striking development in this final stage of the Ilchester election was that the Committee's candidates had been changed yet again. Pym and Harrison in December; Pym and Henley on 2 February; by the end of the week they were Pym and another outsider, Sir William Selby. Now Selby, a Yorkshireman, was brother-in-law to no less a person than Sir Thomas Fairfax, the Lord General himself. Once again the close co-operation between Pyne and the Army is apparent. Fairfax, who was engaged in the final clearing-up campaign in the West, had been trying to find Selby a seat since the end of November 1645, relying on the Army's presence and on the influence of Edmund Prideaux, who wielded great electoral patronage as a Commissioner of the Great Seal, Postmaster-General, and chairman of the Committee of the West. On 13 February 1646 the General thought he had succeeded. "I received yesterday," he told his father, "a letter from Mr. [Charles?] Pym, a member of the House, but now in Somersetshire, that he hath procured my brother Selby a burgesship at Ilchester . . . being effectively solicited by Mr. Prideaux to do it; it is come very clear to him; the other burgess is Mr. Alex. Pym."¹⁶

¹⁶ Robert Bell, ed., *Memorials of the Civil War* (London, 1849), 1, 283-84. See also *Ibid.*, pp. 258, 268. Charles Pym, Alexander's brother, was M.P. for Bere Alston. However, I know of no reason to suppose that he was involved in the Ilchester election. I am inclined to think that in this case "Pym" is an error of transcription, and that the letter Fairfax had received was from "Mr. Pyne". Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace the original of this letter.

By this time the struggle at Ilchester was over. The burgesses summoned by the Under-bailiff assembled in the Town Hall on Monday, 9 February. Bailiff Lockyer again attended, but only to interrupt the reading of the warrant with the announcement that Strode and Hodges had already been returned, and the sombre warning that the present proceedings were invalid. After this he sat silent, though according to Smyth he took careful note of how people voted. On the other side the full weight of the County Committee's power was displayed. Pyne himself was present in the Hall, and the Committee's Marshal, a fiery Anabaptist from Wells named David Barrett, was heard to "instruct some what they should say, and for whom they should give their voices." Wigwood read out a list of votes promised for Pym and Selby, and as their names were called they were checked off by William Ceely, Recorder of Bridgwater, another prominent man in the Pyne-Committee faction. Those who did not answer were sent for, and two of them later told Lockyer that they were threatened with ejection from their houses for having defaulted. Altogether about seventy burgesses were present, the voting being 46 for Pym, 36 for Selby, a few scattered votes for Hodges and Henley, apparently none at all for Strode. The Under-bailiff thereupon declared Pym and Selby elected, and an indenture was drawn up, sealed, and sent to the Sheriff. Horner, however, would have nothing to do with it, pointing out that he had already returned Strode and Hodges. The messenger thereupon took the rival indenture straight to London, and the dispute was thrown into the lap of the House of Commons. On 17 April a petition was read from Selby and Pym; it was referred to the Committee of Privileges, and hearings began on 22 May.¹⁷

The Ilchester election is interesting as a simple exercise in election tactics. It shows the importance of timing, of physical control of the Sheriff's warrant, of the ability of a local bailiff (with gentry backing) to resist even a ruthless County Committee. We can pass over the irregularities practised by both sides, because there are other, more significant questions which the contest raises. Perhaps the most obvious ones are: (1) was the election fought primarily over issues or personalities? and (2) had it any connection with the wider national struggle between the parliamentary radicals with their Army allies on the one side, and the moderate, or "Presbyterian" faction on the other? The first question cannot be answered on the evidence submitted to the Committee of Privileges alone, for none of the principal witnesses — Smyth, Browne, and Wigwood for the petitioners, Bailiff Lockyer and Giles Raymond for Strode — was required to state his political opinions. It is doubtful if most of the Ilchester voters had any, at all events any strong enough to influence their votes in the face of pressure from their social superiors. Like their miserable descendants in 1802 whose houses were pulled down by a

¹⁷ *Commons' Journals*, 4, 512; B.M. Add. MSS. 28716, fol. 31v.

callous borough patron after they were bribed into voting against him,¹⁸ they were mere pawns in the factional struggle among the county gentry. But if the election is seen in the light of the contest between the Committee and Strode, its principal critic, a different impression emerges. By the beginning of 1646 the Committee had fallen completely under the domination of John Pyne, a man of violently radical views in politics certainly, and probably in religion. Pyne's arbitrary methods had already made many enemies, especially among county gentry excluded from their normal monopoly of local power, but many of them also had good political reasons for disliking him. He was later to be accused of being "the first Incendiary . . . between the Kingdom of England and Scotland," the man who early in 1645 had indeed been among the first to observe and denounce the new understanding between the parliamentary moderates led by Stapleton and Holles and the Presbyterian Scots.¹⁹ His own theological views cannot be conclusively established, but throughout his career he was at least the open ally and protector of the local Independents and Puritan sectaries.²⁰ On the other hand stood Strode, nominally a member of the Committee, but bitterly at odds with Pyne and the dominant faction. Popular among the freeholders, blaming the Committee for everything from high taxes to the quartering of soldiers, Strode was also a convinced Presbyterian, and had been one, as he confessed after the Restoration when this was no popular thing to say, "since I knew what religion was."²¹ After taking his seat in Parliament, Strode spoke vehemently for disbanding the Army without pay and for destroying the Independents, who, he said, "were all rogues." He would, he declared, "never fight more, unless it were against this Independent army." On another occasion, according to the same witness, Strode said, "As for Pyne I make no doubt but we shall have him hanged and then what will become of the rest?"²² The hostility between Strode and the Committee was obviously not confined to local, county issues, though these were not entirely absent.

A full answer to the second question would require a wider study of the influence of the Army in the Recruiter elections, and of the

¹⁸ T. H. B. Oldfield, *Representative History of Great Britain* (London, 1816), 4, 464.

¹⁹ *Articles of Treason . . . committed by John Pine of Curry-Mallet* [2 March 1649], B.M. Pressmark 669 f. 13 (94). *Mercurius Aulicus* (23 February-2 March 1645), E. 213, 13; I am indebted to Dr. Valerie Pearl for this reference.

²⁰ I hope in a later article to discuss more fully Pyne's period of ascendancy in the county. The evidence obviously does not support the contention of S. W. Bates-Harbin, *Members of Parliament for the County of Somerset* (Taunton, 1939), p. 157, that he was a Presbyterian moderate.

²¹ H. A. Helyar, "The Arrest of Col. William Strode of Barrington in 1661," *Proc. Som. A. & N. H. S.*, 37 (1891), ii, 26. For Strode, see this article and E. Green, "Col. William Strode," *Ibid.*, 30 (1884), ii, 46-65.

²² Hist. MSS. Commission, *Portland*, 1, 447-48.

activities of Edmund Prideaux as the radicals' party manager. In the case of Ilchester two facts stand out. First, that Pyne originally advanced the candidature of Thomas Harrison, a man with no connection with the county, but as radical a Puritan as the Army contained; it may be significant that Pyne's promotion of Harrison came shortly after the county election, at which the great Army preacher Hugh Peter, often accused of being a principal election agent for the military party, had been an interested spectator.²³ Secondly, that when Harrison for reasons unknown withdrew, he was ready to drop his own Committee-man Henley, and substitute the Army candidate Selby, at the request of Fairfax and Prideaux. That this was no temporary flirtation is shown both by Pyne's later friendly correspondence with Fairfax's secretary John Rushworth, in which he freely expounded his political views,²⁴ and by the charges of Clement Walker, M.P. for Wells, that Pyne was a mere "Lord Deputy for the County of Somerset," under the direction of Prideaux, "king of the West Saxons."²⁵

Ilchester thus provides a striking example of the war party's electioneering efforts in the winter of 1645-46. What is perhaps surprising is that in this case they were resisted by local men like Lockyer. Strode and Hodges might be able to protect him for a time, but the Bailiff must have known that in the end the all-powerful Committee would implement their threats of revenge. "If you do not look upon us now, we shall hereafter look upon you," Pyne had warned, and in 1647 Lockyer was duly looked upon. On 20 August of that year a charge that he had adhered to the Royalists was presented to the County Committee. His estate was provisionally seized, and a definite order for sequestration was made on 18 March 1648, the official responsible for enforcing it being the same John Browne of Ilchester who had created the disturbance at the election. Five days later Lockyer's personal property was sold by order of the Committee, and he recovered the rest of his estate in the following September only after payment of the usual composition fine.²⁶ Such was the common fate of those who dared to brave Colonel Pyne's wrath. None of this, however, affected the result of the election. Pyne had the votes at Ilchester, but Strode (though he could not save Lockyer) had them where they mattered more, at Westminster. For

²³ Bodleian MS. Dep. C 156 (Nelson MSS. 5), fol. 101v. Hostile pamphlets abound with references to Peter's election activities: e.g. William Prynne, *A Brief Necessary Vindication of the Old and New Secluded Members* (2nd ed., 1659), p. 9.

²⁴ B.M. Sloane MSS. 1519, fol. 188. Hist. MSS. Commission, *Leybourne-Popham MSS.*, p. 51.

²⁵ Clement Walker, *History of Independency* (1648), 1, 91-92.

²⁶ P.R.O., S.P. 23 (Committee for Compounding) /100, pp. 57-85. The abstract of Lockyer's case printed in *Calendar of the Committee for Compounding*, p. 3042, is misleading, dealing with only the renewal of the sequestration in 1652.

whatever the merits of the case, they probably counted for less than the fact that the Committee of Privileges was under the control of moderates like Sir Robert Harley. This it was that determined the final outcome: the seating of Thomas Hodges and William Strode.²⁷

²⁷ There is no reference in the *Commons' Journals* to the Committee's report in favour of Strode and Hodges, or of the House's action upon it. They were allowed to take their seats pending the Committee's hearings.