

Civil War, Trade and Kinship: the Experiences of Some West Country Clothiers

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Despite opposing political affiliations, and despite general economic disruption, a small group of closely related families with significant and dependent interests in the West Country textile industry of Wiltshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire continued trade through the English Civil War. This study shows some of the means by which they maintained that trade. The study also shows how the unique features of the organisation of the Spanish cloth industry contributed to its durability in the face of war. The study also seeks to explain why that industry was well placed to expand after hostilities ceased.

Did common trade interests survive opposing political affiliations in the English Civil Wars? I will look at this question through the actions and experiences of individuals from a small group of families, all of whom had significant and dependent interests in the West Country textile industry of Wiltshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire. They identified as commercial partners in textile manufacture, and as kin and neighbours, before, during and after the wars. Key individuals from each family played local and national political roles during the Civil Wars from 1642 to 1651, with the Chivers, Lewis, Norborne and Yerbury families being mainly royalist, and the Ashe and Methuen families mainly parliamentarian.

In this study I show that despite political differences, and despite general economic disruption, some people - closely related, but with opposing political affiliations - kept their trade going through the war years. It is correct to say that the overall progress of new draperies like Spanish cloth, a coloured medley made of a combination of Spanish and English wools, were little disrupted by the wars.¹ What this study shows is the means by which some clothiers and merchants maintained that trade. Some of the unique features of the organisation of the Spanish cloth industry contributed to its durability in the face of war. The study also helps to explain why this industry was well placed to expand quickly after hostilities ceased.

Earlier civil war histories emphasised the political and religious differences within communities,² while some modern studies have focused on the efforts to return communities, particularly local ones, to a more peaceful normality.³ As A.M.

¹ G.D. Ramsay, *The Wiltshire Woollen Industry in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1965, p. 112.

² For example: Edward Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England begun in the year 1641*. vi, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1888, p. 261.

³ Examples include J. Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces. Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War 1630-1650*, Longman Group Ltd, London, 1980, p. 39; Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire A New History of the English Civil Wars*, Penguin Books, London, 2008, Preface; and John Walter, *The Impact on Society: A World Turned Upside Down?* In: John Morrill (ed.), *The Impact of the English Civil War*, Collins and Brown, London, 1991, pp. 120-122.

Everitt states, in the 1640s the sense of county identity was more powerful than national identity and 'every decision, every loyalty was shaped, not so much by a fiat of government, as by a whole network of local society; by all the pressures of personal influence, family connection, ancient amity, local pride, religious sentiment, economic necessity... all contributing to an extraordinarily dense web of provincial life'.⁴ Everitt quotes local proverbs that say all gentlemen within a county are related.⁵ Similarly, dense webs of commercial interaction also existed, and in the textile trade these webs extended beyond provinces to a national level. David Rollison emphasised the central role of the clothiers in binding the provincial and central interests of the textile industry.⁶ Actions by members of these families demonstrate the strength of these connections, even when tested by opposing political commitments.

Prominent individuals of these families were all of known political allegiance. Membership by some of the Chivers, Norbornes and Yerburys on royalist committees, and of the Ashes on parliamentary ones, would have presented opportunities to promote their political and business interests. Disadvantage was similarly possible, for example through sequestration of royalist estates and compounding fines after the wars.

To delve into the relationships of these families during the civil wars, I have drawn on contemporary public sources from the period and also more personal sources such as wills, deeds and commercial accounts. The most comprehensive commercial material relates to the Ashe family, as three of their business accounts between the years 1631 and 1655 are available. James Ashe's accounts cover 1631–1643, with an occasional later reference. John Ashe's account book covers the years from 1640–43. There are no substantial records for the Ashes' trade from late 1643 to 1645, but the ledger of Edward and Jonathon Ashe give an insight into the family's business activities from 1645 onwards.

The families studied here (Ashe, Chivers, Lewis, Methuen, Norborne, and Yerbury) are part of the broader network of people who lived and worked together linked by the West Country textile industry. Other families could be added to the study, but this small group illustrates the shifting tensions between broader concerns of political allegiance and religion with community interests.

The Ashe family rose to prominence as clothiers in Somerset in the mid-sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century James Ashe was at Batcombe and Westcombe and his son John branched out into Wiltshire, procuring land and fulling mills through marriage or purchase at Freshford, Beckington, Westbury, and other places. John married Elizabeth Davison in 1621, the daughter of Henry Davison and Anne Chivers. John Ashe was a prominent clothier and employed 1,000 people in 1637.⁷ The Ashes were early pioneers in the production of Spanish cloth from the

⁴ A.M. Everitt, *The Local Community and the Great Rebellion*, The Historical Association, London, 1969, p. 5, 23.

⁵ A.M. Everitt, *Change in the Provinces: the Seventeenth Century*, Leicester University Press, Leicester, 1969, p. 11.

⁶ David Rollison, Discourse and class struggle: the politics of industry in early modern England, *Social History*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2001, pp. 166-189.

⁷ David Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum*, David and Charles, Newton Abbott, 1973, p. 18.

early 1600s and were considered to have reversed the fortunes of the textile industry in northern Somerset as a result.⁸ By 1640 they were sending a weekly convoy of cloths to London to the family merchant house, run by Edward Ashe and two other of John's brothers.⁹ They were exporting cloth to Dublin, Antwerp and Paris.¹⁰ James (senior), John, and Edward were politically active as parliamentarians during the war. John was MP for Westbury, and Edward MP for Heytesbury in Wiltshire - they were among the major parliamentary contributors who committed to raising an army in 1642.¹¹ The family had ardent Puritan beliefs.¹²

The Methuens moved to Somerset in the sixteenth century and first became clothiers when Paul Methuen was apprenticed to John Ashe. In due course Methuen married Ashe's daughter and acquired mills and property at Bradford-on-Avon and Trowbridge in Wiltshire where he prospered, producing Spanish cloths.¹³ He was a parliamentary sympathiser.¹⁴

Edward Lewis, a member of Charles's court, married Lady Anne Beauchamp (nee Sackville), who was first married to Edward Seymour, Lord Beauchamp. Edward and Anne had five children including Edward, William, and Richard.¹⁵ The Lewis family was thus connected to the Sackvilles and Hertfords, who were amongst the leading royalist leaders in the west. In 1629 Edward Lewis leased estates and three fulling mills at Edington near Westbury in John Ashe's electorate in Wiltshire, and after his death Lady Beauchamp held them from 1630 to 1664.¹⁶ They were producing the same medley textiles as the Ashes.

The Norborne family held estates in northern Wiltshire within the clothing areas.¹⁷ Walter Norborne was a Master of the Bench at the Inns of Court in London but chose to live in Calne and was active as a justice of the peace in the county.¹⁸ He was an MP in the Short Parliament in 1640.¹⁹ He, and his brother Humphrey, were

⁸ John Wroughton, *John Ashe*, Oxford National Dictionary of Biography, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/index.html> (accessed 1 August 2014).

⁹ Wroughton, *John Ashe*; also John Wroughton, *An Unhappy War The experiences of ordinary people in Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire 1632-1646*, Lansdowne Press, Bath, 2000, p. 154.

¹⁰ *Account book ('Groot Boecke') of John Ashe 1640-1642*, C107/20, The National Archives, Kew.

¹¹ V. Snow and A. Steele Young (ed.), *The Private Journals of the Long Parliament 2 June to 17 September 1642, Appendix: Book of Names of the Members of the House of Commons That Advance Horse, Money and Plate for the Defense of the Parliament. June 10th, 11th, 1642*, Yale University Press, 1992, p. 468.

¹² Wroughton, *John Ashe*, Oxford National Dictionary of Biography. Underdown, 1973, p. 23.

¹³ A.D. Frances, *The Methuens and Portugal*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 1-2. W.H. Jones, *Bradford-on-Avon A History and Description*, The Library Press, Bradford-on-Avon, 1907, p. 54.

¹⁴ J. Waylen, *The Wiltshire Compounders*. Wiltshire Archaeology and Natural History Magazine, November 1888, Vol. XXIII, pp. 341-342.

¹⁵ M.W. Helms and John P. Ferris, *William Lewis c.1625-61*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org>.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Crittall, (ed.), *A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 8 – Warminster, Westbury and Whorwellsdown Hundreds*, Victoria County History, 1965, pp. 242-246.

¹⁷ B.D. Henning, *The House of Commons 1660-1690*, Boydell and Brewer, London, 1985, p. 146. Elizabeth Crittall, (ed.), *A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 9*, Victoria County History, 1970, pp. 49-65. G.A. Harrison, *Royalist Organization in Wiltshire 1642-1646*, PhD Thesis, University of London, 1963, p. 20.

¹⁸ Clement Barksdale, *The lives of ten excellent men*, London, 1677, Printed for Mark Pardoe, and are to be Sold at the Black-Raven near Salisbury-House in the Strand, p. 88, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com> (accessed 1 August 2014).

¹⁹ J.D. Maltby, *The Short Parliament (1640) Diary of Sir Thomas Aston*, Camden Fourth Series Volume 35, London, 1988, p. 111, 119, 168.

early and committed supporters of Charles I.²⁰ Their seventeenth century link to the textile industry was through business arrangements with the Ashes and Chivers.

The Chivers were clothiers from at least the late fifteenth century. They were part of the oligarchy of families controlling the woollen broadcloth industry in sixteenth century Wiltshire.²¹ The extended family's activities were in a small area encompassing Calne, Bromham, Melksham and surrounding towns.²² They purchased fulling mills at Calne in the 1560s.²³ Robert Chivers inherited these from his father Henry in 1643. Walter Norborne and John Ashe were trustees for the settlement of the Chivers estate by both Henry and Robert²⁴ and executors named in Henry and Robert's wills in 1643 and 1647.²⁵ Robert was a locally prominent royalist during the war.²⁶

The Yerburys were originally from Batcombe in Somerset, (as were the Ashes) but in the seventeenth century were living in Trowbridge, Bradford and also at Beckington. They were similarly part of the oligarchy controlling the western broadcloth industry.²⁷ Edward Yerbury seems to have been drawn reluctantly into the royalist party during the war, while his two sons, Edward and John, were more committed: W.H. Jones considers the family to have been 'staunch uncompromising' royalists.²⁸

These families were connected to many other clothiers and merchants, all of whom were no doubt affected by war in some way. Some clothiers, if the accounts are to be believed, suffered grievously. In one notorious incident in July 1644, royalists, at the sacking of Woodhouse manor near Warminster, hanged about a dozen 'clothiers',²⁹ supposedly for swapping sides.³⁰ Many others would have preferred to remain neutral, hoping the crises would eventually pass.³¹ G.D. Ramsay

²⁰ A.E.W. Marsh, *A History of the Borough and Town of Calne*, Castle, Lamb and Storr, London, 1903, p. 188.

²¹ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 41.

²² Based primarily on an analysis of wills from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and the Diocese of Salisbury held at The National Archives Kew and the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Chippenham.

²³ D. Crowley, *A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 17. Calne*. Victoria County History, 2002, pp. 79-94.

²⁴ (1) Chiver, Henry, of Quemerford, gentleman. (2) Norborne, Walter, of Studley, esquire. Ashe, John, of Freshford co. Somerset, gentleman. Deed to lead to the uses of a Fine of messuages and lands (field names), in Quemerford, C/212B/974, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, 1 October 1639. (1) Chiver, Robert, Esq. of Quemerford, par. Calne. (2) Hungerford, Thomas, gent. Wallis, John, citizen and merchant tailor, of London. (3) Ashe, John, Esq., of Freshford, Co. Somerset. Norborne, Walter, Esq., of Studley, par. Calne, C/212B/1003, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, 20 October 1646.

²⁵ Will of Henry Chivers of Calne 1643, PROB 11/191, and Will of Robert Chivers of Calne 20 August 1647, PROB 11/201, The National Archives, Kew.

²⁶ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 19.

²⁷ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 41.

²⁸ Jones, *Bradford-on-Avon A History*, p. 200-201.

²⁹ C.H. Firth, *The memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, lieutenant-general of the horse in the army of the commonwealth of England, 1625-1672. Edited with appendices of letters and illustrative documents. (Volume 1)*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1894, p. 461.

³⁰ Allen B. Hinds, (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Venetian 1640-1642, Vol. 25, Aug 12 1644*, Kraus Reprint, Nendeln, 1970, p. 126.

³¹ R. Howell, *Neutralism, Conservatism and Political Alignment in the English Revolution: The Case of the Towns 1642-9*. In J. Morrill, (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War 1642-1649*, The MacMillan Press Ltd, London, 1982, p. 72; and J. Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces. Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War 1630-1650*. Longman Group Ltd, London, 1980, p. 38.

thought most clothiers would be sympathetic to the Clubmen, who even before the war had petitioned the king and parliament to oppose the 'rule of violence'.³² What distinguishes the small group of families I have chosen to study from other clothiers and merchants is that their extant records present the opportunity to look in detail at how business and kin relationships fared against differing and active political allegiances.

Leading up to war, the West Country textile industry was in flux. That part of the industry which focused upon fine undyed broadcloth for the northern European market³³ was experiencing difficulties, even 'decay'.³⁴ The amount of broadcloth produced in the West Country had declined by over 60 per cent between 1606 and 1640. Only 30,300 undressed short cloths were exported in the latter year through London.³⁵ This was the product that clothiers such as the Chivers and Yerburys had traditionally produced. New products were expanding their market, including Spanish cloth, with 13,311 cloths being recorded as shipped out of England by local merchants in 1640.³⁶ The Ashes and Methuens were among its pioneers.³⁷ It is possible that the Chivers and Yerburys were also diversifying into new products, given their links with the Ashes and Methuens.

An economic depression in 1639–40 hit the cloth trade severely, although the Merchant Adventurers thought it more severely affected the trade of undyed broadcloth, compared to the unregulated trade in some of the new draperies.³⁸ By the eve of war in early 1642 both parliament and the king acknowledged the generally depressed state of the cloth trade and the unrest this was causing.³⁹ It could be anticipated that a major perturbation such as civil war would significantly worsen this unstable situation. This was certainly the belief at the time.⁴⁰

There were many impacts upon the activities of these families from the Civil Wars. Some were drawn into the war machinery of one or other side. James Ashe, and his sons Samuel, John and Edward, were involved at the (?) county, and the latter two at national, level, supporting parliament. Walter and Humphrey Norborne, Robert Chivers, and Edward Yerbury all participated on the royalist side at both at county and at national level. All were affected by the disruption of trade, with the

³² Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p.113 quoting B.M. Add. MS 24862, folio 48.

³³ P.J. Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England*, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1962, p. 46.

³⁴ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, pp. 1-3. R. Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England. Textual Constructions of a National Identity*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2008, p. 2. B.E. Supple, *Commercial Crisis and Change in England 1600-1642, A study in the instability of a mercantile economy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1970, p. 15.

³⁵ Supple, *Commercial Crisis*, p. 137.

³⁶ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 141. Ramsay notes that many exports of Spanish cloths went unrecorded.

³⁷ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 84, 106.

³⁸ Supple, *Commercial crisis*, p. 124, and G.D. Ramsay, *The Report of the Royal Commission on the Cloth Industry 1640*, *English Historical Review*, LVII, 1942, pp. 485-493.

³⁹ Rushworth, John, *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State 1642-45, Volume 5, 1721*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk> (accessed 1 August 2014), p. 509. John Pym's speech to a conference of the Houses of Lords and Commons, January 25 1642; and *Journal of the House of Lords, Volume 4*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk> (accessed 1 August 2014), p. 581, Message from Charles 1 to the House of Lords, 14 February 1642.

⁴⁰ J. Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces. Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War 1630-1650*, Longman Group Ltd, London, 1980, p. 39.

impacts depending on which side was controlling territory in the west at the time. They depended heavily upon trade to London and abroad, and lived in a part of England that was highly contested and repeatedly changed hands between royalists and parliament. What is telling is the degree to which familial and neighbourly relations were maintained and used to mitigate the damage of war.

Some of these clothiers contributed directly to the armies in the field. In March 1642 on the eve of war, John Ashe was appointed a deputy lieutenant and involved in organising the parliamentary militia ordinance in Somerset, and troops in Wiltshire.⁴¹ He participated in the local uprising of parliamentary supporters who confronted royalist forces near Wells in August 1642, and he reported to parliament on the outcome.⁴² When the royalist forces under Hertford withdrew into Dorset in September, the parliamentarians governed Somerset for eight months with James senior and John Ashe playing a role in governing committees, which included raising levees for parliament in the west.⁴³

In Wiltshire, Robert Chivers had been made sheriff in 1641, at the age of 21.⁴⁴ Charles I used the office of sheriff as an alternative source of authority to the lieutenantcy. In early 1642, Chivers received letters from the king in York declaring his intentions in the west, which he was instructed to publish in the county.⁴⁵ In June, Chivers was instructed by the Commons to present to them the letters he had received from the king, although ultimately these letters seem to have been presented by another sheriff closer to London.⁴⁶ Why the Sheriff of Wiltshire was initially identified to send the letters is a mystery; perhaps his connection to John Ashe is a clue. Chivers ceased being sheriff sometime in 1642 and faded, at least

⁴¹ Journal of the House of Lords, 20 July 1642, Volume 5, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk> (accessed 1 August 2014), p. 226. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War*, p. 29. John Wroughton, *The Civil War in Bath and North Somerset 1642-1650*, Coward and Gerrish, Bath, 1973, p. 38. Wroughton, *An unhappy war*, p. 40, 66.

⁴² John Ashe, *A perfect relation of all the passages and proceedings of the Marquesse Hartford, the Lord Paulet, and the rest of the Cavellers that were with them in Wels. With the valiant resolution and behaviour of the trained-bands and other inhabitants of those parts, for the defence of themselves, the King and Parliament. As also what helpe was sent from Bristoll to their ayd; with the manner of the Lords and Cavaleers running out of the towne. And many other things very remarkable. As it was sent in a letter from the committee in Summersetshire to both Houses of Parliament. Ordered by the Lords in Parliament, that this letter be forthwith printed and published.* J. Brown Cler. *Parliamentorum*, 12 August 1642 London, printed for Joseph Hunscoot and I. Wright. *Joyfull newes from Wells in Somerset-shire vwherein is declared how the cavaliers were beaten out of the said town by those heroick gentlemen and members of the Parliament: the names of the members of the Parl. are these: Sir Francis Popham, Sir Iohn Horner, M. Richard Cole, M. Strowd, M. Pine, Sir Edward Hungerford, Sir Edward Gainton: the names of the chiefe cavaliers are these: Marquesse of Hartford, Lord Paulet, Sir Ralph Hopton, Sir Francis Dorrington, Master Smith: likewise a true relation how they came to Bristow with an intent to have fortified themselves but were opposed by the wel-affected party of the city : with a relation of the taking of Northampton by the cavaliers on Tuesday the ninth of August, 1642 : whereunto is annexed the Parliaments resolution concerning the said cavaliers*, London : Printed for Henry Fowler, Aug. 12, 1642, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com> (accessed 12 August 2014).

⁴³ John Rushworth, *The Second Volume of the Third Part, Containing the Principal Matters Which Happened from the Meeting of Parliament, November the 3rd 1640 to the End of the Year 1644, Volume 5*, London, Printed for D. Brown et al. MDCC XXI, pp. 123-124. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War*, p. 46.

⁴⁴ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 19. Calne Parish baptism records. Held at the Wiltshire and Swindon Records Office.

⁴⁵ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 83.

⁴⁶ Journal of the House of Commons, 'Publishing King's messages &c' 25th March 1642, p. 496; and 'Not to publish proclamations' 13th June 1642, p. 622. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk> (accessed 1 August 2014).

temporarily, from view, with no obvious role in implementing the Commission of Array to muster a royalist army. Walter Norborne had been a financial contributor to Charles I's campaigns in the north in 1639⁴⁷ and he was immediately active in the Wiltshire Commission of Array once it was instituted in early 1642.⁴⁸

The Ashes contributed heavily to the local parliamentary war effort. James received payment in the form of 'armes' and '4 muskets' in early 1643 for cloths he sold.⁴⁹ John was particularly successful in Somerset and Wiltshire in recruiting troops from among the local cloth-workers, many of whom he employed.⁵⁰ A petition written in 1642 notes that John Ashe raised and armed his own troop of horses, a company of foot soldiers and a company of dragoons at a cost of 3,000 pounds.⁵¹ Entries in his 'Groote Boeck' show payments for horses and troopers between June and September 1642, although it is not possible to determine the exact worth.⁵² John made cash payments to the leaders of the parliamentary forces. Several payments appear in his business accounts in January 1643 - one for 600 pounds to Sir William Waller and one for 200 pounds to Sir Edward Hungerford, both of whom were leading parliamentary armies in the west.⁵³

The royalists similarly sold cloth to buy arms, with shipments being made out of the west and south coast ports to the Netherlands.⁵⁴ The *Mercurius Aulicus* claimed in January 1644 that 570 barrels of powder and horses were brought from Rotterdam to Exeter in one shipment and exchanged for cloth and other commodities.

From mid 1643, when parliament lost control of most of the country west of Oxford, including the main clothing districts in the west, John Ashe was in exile in London and became active in many national parliamentary committees, most notably becoming chair of the Committee for Compounding.⁵⁵ His family continued the cloth business from Freshford, although trade to London was disrupted from this time.

The royalists remained in control until May 1644. The Norbornes, Chivers' and Yerburys all played roles in the royalist administration variously as Commissioners of Array (Walter Norborne),⁵⁶ sequestration (Walter Norborne, Edward Yerbury),⁵⁷ and impressment (Walter Norborne),⁵⁸ justices of the peace

⁴⁷ Public Records Office Great Britain, *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Charles 1 Vol. DXXXVIII 1639*. Kraus Reprint, Nendeln, 1971, p. 604-605.

⁴⁸ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 171-172.

⁴⁹ *Account book of James Ashe 1631-1646, 1643*, C107/20, The National Archives, Kew, un-numbered folio. Supple, *Commercial crisis*, p. 131.

⁵⁰ Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War*, p. 35.

⁵¹ Wroughton, *An unhappy war*, 2000, p. 40; quoting Cambridge University Library, Western MSS add. 89, folio 110.

⁵² *Account book ('Groot Boecke') of John Ashe 1640-1642*, C107/20, The National Archives, Kew, folio 106 'Mony Paied out of Cash'. See entries between June and September 1642.

⁵³ *Account book ('Groot Boecke') of John Ashe 1640-1642*, C107/20, The National Archives, Kew, folio 136.

⁵⁴ *Mercurius Aulicus (1644 Oxford)* (Oxford England) Sunday January 14, 1644, <http://find.galegroup.com> (accessed 8 August 2010). (I have no evidence as to which royalists contributed however).

⁵⁵ M.A. Everett Green, *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding & c. 1643-1660*, First published by Her Majesties Stationery Office, London, 1892 and reprinted by Kraus Reprint Ltd, Nendeln, 1967. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War*, p. 68.

⁵⁶ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 173, quoting BM Harleian MSS 6084 folio 106, 256.

⁵⁷ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 238.

⁵⁸ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 252.

(Robert Chivers, Walter Norborne)⁵⁹ and receivers of press money (Robert Chivers).⁶⁰ Robert Chivers was also involved in the establishment of the disastrous Salisbury commission of oyer and terminer to bring high treason charges against all active parliamentarians in 1643.⁶¹ John and Edward Ashe were therefore in the sights of the king and his commissioners.⁶² Humphrey Norborne was observed to be a reluctant member of the jury. Despite the charges being dismissed, those complicit in the commission became marked men.⁶³

Walter Norborne and Robert Chivers, as royalist justices of the peace in Calne, were responsible from 1642 to 1644 for regulating the local cloth industry and other county business through the quarter sessions. Harrison observed that the royalist justices tried as best they could to keep the normal business of the county going and were very reluctant to use quarter session for political purposes, and tried to protect their neighbours. Norborne and Chivers may have held such views⁶⁴ although they were both probably also involved in the Wiltshire cloth districts in 1643–44 as commissioners in the unpopular activity of pressing of workers, including in their hometown.⁶⁵ Ramsay, however, has noted that local government ceased to operate effectively in some clothing regions, such that there was limited judicial recourse to resolve day-to-day issues within the cloth industry. Cloth searching virtually ceased in the west.⁶⁶

Disruption of trade occurred in a number of other ways. The parliamentarians controlled the London market, while the royalists were able to disrupt the transport routes to the city. The impact on the 'Western Clothiers' was often noted.⁶⁷ Ramsay considers the uncertainty of access for the clothiers to their market at Blackwell Hall to be the most serious effect of the war.⁶⁸ In response to a petition from clothiers in Gloucester complaining of plundering, the king issued a proclamation in December 1642 for the free passage of cloth to London.⁶⁹ He was anxious not to further disaffect cloth workers in the west, nor penalise his

⁵⁹ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 440, 451, 452, 464. Robert Chivers was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1638, and Walter Norborn was a Master of the Inns of Court.

⁶⁰ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 257; quoting Waylen, *Notes on the Civil War*, p. 22.

⁶¹ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 453-454; quoting SP 25/58, folios 86, 90, 94, 100, 101, 103, 142; SP 23/193 folio 765; SP23/84 folio 437, SP 23/196 folio 830.

⁶² John, Wroughton, *John Ashe (1597-1659)*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com> (accessed 5 November 2014).

⁶³ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 452, 456.

⁶⁴ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, pp. 466-473, referencing the Wiltshire Quarter Session Rolls Michaelmas 1643.

⁶⁵ David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion. Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985, p 189; quoting the *Guild Stewards Book of the Borough of Calne 1561-1688*, p. 61.

⁶⁶ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 111. Also see Anthony Fletcher, *Reform in the Provinces The Government of Stuart England*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1986, pp. 96-97.

⁶⁷ See *Mercurius Aulicus* in particular for the Royalist view and news books such as *Perfect Diurnall of the Passages of Parliament* for the Parliamentarian view.

⁶⁸ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 111.

⁶⁹ *A Petition presented unto His Majestie at His Court at Bristoll on the 7 day of August. 1643. by Sir Baynham Throkmorton Baronet, High Sheriffe of the County of Gloucester, on the behalfe of the Clothiers of the same County With his Majesties Answer thereunto. Oxford. Printed in the Yeare 1643*, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com> (accessed 12 August 2014).

supporters.⁷⁰ In March 1643 it was reported that the western clothiers were still being robbed of their cloth *en route* by the Reading cavaliers, despite the proclamation, which the London papers declared to be useless.⁷¹ The clothiers petitioned the king and he restored their cloth to them, on the condition they took the protestation and paid fees.

Some clothiers were beyond the king's forgiveness. 'Mr Ashe and his brother' were excepted from the king's general pardon,⁷² which prompted a letter from parliament to the king requesting that Ashe's cloth be returned.⁷³ The *Certain Informations from Severall parts of the Kingdome* reported from London that the Ashes lost their cloth for merely 'being Members in the house of Commons'.⁷⁴ The royalist *Mercurius Aulicus* presented the case differently in March 1643 stating that in many of the loads of fine broad cloth, totaling 380 cloths, there were belts, bandoleers and match and money: 'All were sent towards London by Mr Ashe, the greatest clothier in the Kingdome, as it is conceived, but of so turbulent a spirit and so pernicious a practicer in maintaining and fomenting this rebellion, that he stands excepted by His Majesty amongst some others, out of His majesties general pardon for the county of Somerset'.⁷⁵ John Ashe had organised the convoy and while not all the cloth was his,⁷⁶ the arms probably were.

A consequence of these events was that the Commons asked John Ashe to approach the Merchant Adventurers for a list of those Gloucestershire clothiers with royalist sympathies that the Adventurers had dealt with, 'contrary to the orders of the House'.⁷⁷ In July 1643 the king reversed his policy and prohibited all trade with London because the merchants there would not take goods, including cloth, from royalists. He extended the prohibition to Gloucester in October.⁷⁸

Alternatives for royalist trade were needed. In late 1643 Charles issued several proclamations allowing royalist clothiers and merchants to trade through Bristol, Exeter and other ports under royalist control.⁷⁹ This was of no great benefit,

⁷⁰ *A Proclamation for the free and safe passage of all Clothes, Goods, wares, and merchandize to our City of London*. 372. In; J.F. Larkin, (ed.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations. Volume II. Royal Proclamations of King Charles I 1625-1646*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983, pp. 825-826.

⁷¹ Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War*, p. 43. *Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament (1642:Coles)* London, England Monday March 13 1643. Issue 40, <http://find.galegroup.com> (accessed 8 August 2011).

⁷² *Mercurius Aulicus (1643: Oxford)* Oxford England, Sunday March 5, 1643, <http://find.galegroup.com> (accessed 8 August 2010).

⁷³ *Journal of the House of Lords, Letter to the Committee at Oxford, to seek Restitution of some Cloaths taken by the King's Forces at Reading, 25 March 1643*, Volume 5, p. 670, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk> (accessed 1 August 2013).

⁷⁴ *Certain Informations from Severall parts of the Kingdome* (London England), March 20, 1643-March 27, 1643, Issue 10, <http://find.galegroup.com> (accessed 8 August 2013).

⁷⁵ *Mercurius Aulicus (1643: Oxford)* Oxford England, Sunday March 5, 1643.

⁷⁶ Wroughton, *An unhappy war*, p. 154.

⁷⁷ House of Commons Journal 14 September 1643, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk> (accessed 1 August 2014).

⁷⁸ *A proclamation prohibiting from henceforth all intercourse of trade between our City of London and other parts of this Our kingdom, until other direction given by Us*. 434 In; Larkin, pp. 932-935.

⁷⁹ *A proclamation for the Venting and transporting of the Cloth and Wollen manufactures of this Kingdome*. 456. In; Larkin, pp. 972-974. *A Proclamation for the Vent of Cloth, and Woollen Manufactures of this Kingdome*. 485. In; Larkin, pp. 1023-1025. *Mercurius Aulicus (1643 Oxford)* (Oxford, England) Sunday November 19, 1643, <http://find.galegroup.com> (accessed 8 August 2013). *CSP Researches in Foreign archives Italy State papers and manuscripts relating to English affairs 1643-47*. p. 63.

for as Ramsay states, 'it was found painfully that no alternative market could be established at either Exeter or Bristol'⁸⁰ as foreign merchants could not be encouraged to visit in the absence of proclaimed mart towns.⁸¹

Through 1644 and into 1645, as royalists and parliamentary armies disputed control of the routes to London, the western clothiers continued to have loads seized *en route* by garrisons, and negotiated excises or fines, sometimes twice in one trip, reputedly worth over a third of the value of the cargo. These incidents were regularly reported in news books,⁸² with an eye to their value as propaganda.⁸³ The Ashes often appeared as *causes celebres* in news book stories, being feted by the parliamentarians and vilified by the royalists.

Raw materials were also subject to plunder. In 1644 soldiers plundered 244 bags of Spanish Segovia wool and then auctioned them for a fraction of their value at Weymouth.⁸⁴ The Bristol and London importers sought restitution of their cargo by petitioning influential people, including John Ashe, and, despite considerable losses, may have recovered some costs.⁸⁵ A small parcel of 20 bags was sold in London for 340 pounds, which is at the lower end of the prices paid by James Ashe for superfine Segovia wool in 1642–43.⁸⁶

The Ashes maintained a flow of cloth to their export markets throughout the war years, despite the general disruption in trade. In 1640, the Ashes were trading within England to Bristol, New Sarum, and London and exporting to Dublin, Paris and The Hague. They had factors in London and Calais. In 1642, at the start of the wars, the focus of their export trade seems to have narrowed to France. Their main product was listed as 'Cloth English Making' (which is later called 'Spanish cloth'), with an average turnover of 88 pieces per month; two-thirds were being sent to France and the balance was sold mainly to merchants and drapers in London. The main clothiers were John, James, and Samuel Ashe, John's brother-in-law John Curle, his mother-in-law Anne Davison (nee Chivers) and son-in-law Paul Methuen, and

⁸⁰ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 108.

⁸¹ Privy Council Register, *Minutes of a meeting between the Privy Council and some London merchants and western clothiers*, 4 May 1644, State Papers Online, Ref: PC 2/53 No: 0116, <http://go.galegroup.com> (accessed 5 December 2013).

⁸² *Mercurius Aulicus (1643: Oxford)* Oxford, England, Sunday March 5, 1643. Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament (1642: Coles) London, England, Monday March 13 1643. Issue 40. *Certain Informations from Severall parts of the Kingdome (London England)*, March 20, 1643 – March 27 1643. Issue 10. *Mercurius Aulicus (1643 Oxford)* (Oxford England) Sunday, November 19, 1643. *Weekly Account* (London, England) June 26 1644 – July 3 1644. *Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer (London England)* March 11 1645 – March 18 1645. Issue 91. *Weekly Account* (London, England) May 14, 1645–May 21, 1645. *Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer (London England)* September 9 1645 – September 16 1645. Issue 117, <http://find.galegroup.com> (accessed 8 August 2013).

⁸³ See C. John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England. Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, pp. 38-41, for the origins of some of these news books as organs of civil war propaganda. Also see Braddick, *God's Fury*, p. 173.

⁸⁴ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Charles 1 1644*, p. 263.

⁸⁵ Joseph Juxon, merchant to Benjamin Whitcombe of London, merchant, June 22 1644, SP 16/502 f. 47, and *Accounts of 244 bags of Spanish or Segovia cloth wools received by 3 several vessels from Weymouth and sold by the candle for the use of the Commonwealth, by order of Sir Walter Earle July 15 1644*, SP 16/502 f. 111, The National Archives, State Papers Online, <http://go.galegroup.com> (accessed 5 December 2013).

⁸⁶ Joseph Juxon. *Account book ('Groot Boecke') of John Ashe 1640-1642*, various accounts between January 1642 and May 1643: Jan 1642 1 bag wool @100 pounds: 6 bags superfine Segovia @ 100 pounds; April 1643 1 bag superfine @ 100 pounds; May 1643 1 bag Segovia wool @ 200 pounds.

John Barnard. Their main customers were Jaques Coulteaux, Madame Moullart and companies in Paris, with smaller parcels being sold to London merchants. Cloth made up 65 per cent of their trade, with the balance being in linens and imported silken wares, and minor trade in buckrams, frissons and bayes.⁸⁷

The Ashes assisted other clothiers to continue trading, including their neighbours and kin with royalist connections. There are several examples of this evident in the account books, with the common element being the use of bills of exchange to facilitate the transfer of money between England and the continent.

The most notable and frequent examples relate to Lady Anne Beauchamp and her sons Edward, Richard and William Lewis. Lady Beauchamp was trading cloth through the Ashe family, with regular sales to Madame Moullart in Paris (one of the Ashes' major customers) from at least January 1642 to early 1643.⁸⁸ References to Lady Beauchamp commence in Edward and Jonathon Ashe's accounts from early 1647 and continue to 1651. Many involve bills of exchange variously between Madame Moullart, Monsieur Heron, Edward, William and Richard Lewis, Lady Beauchamp, John Ashe, and Christopher Thetford.⁸⁹ According to a letter written by John Ashe on her behalf in November 1645 to the Committee for Advance of Money, who were pursuing her and her sons Edward and William for outstanding assessments, Lady Beauchamp was careful to preserve neutrality in the war, sending her eldest sons abroad and would not let them come home, 'lest their uncles, the Marquis of Hertford and the Earl of Dorset, should engage them in the war' (i.e. the royalist cause).⁹⁰ Edward, William and Richard were all at some time on the continent from 1642 onwards.⁹¹ Her sons are mentioned as being in Paris in 1642 in the *Groote Boecke*. It appears that Lady Beauchamp was producing cloth at Edington and selling it through the Ashes to customers in Paris. Bills of exchange were used and facilitated by John Ashe, to remit some of the payments to her sons who were exiled on the continent.

A second example concerns the Chivers family. In 1648, five individuals are cited in several bills of exchange. The first, from April 1648, involves Mary Chivers (the sister of Robert Chivers), her nineteen or twenty-year-old brother Seacole Chivers at 'Just Brestwicke', and Joseph Ashe in Antwerp.⁹² The other three bills from June to August 1648 involve Mary and Seacole Chivers, John Lydell, Jle Couteulx in Paris (presumably part of the Coulteaux company), and John Ashe.⁹³ It appears that what was happening was that Mary Chivers had taken on responsibility for the Chivers cloth production at Calne when her older brother Robert died in 1647 and had sent her younger brother Seacole overseas. The Ashes were selling Chivers cloth in Antwerp and Paris, and Seacole was receiving payments via bills of exchange. The

⁸⁷ *Account book ('Groot Boecke') of John Ashe 1640-1642*, folio 107.

⁸⁸ *Account book ('Groot Boecke') of John Ashe 1640-1642*, folio 122, 132.

⁸⁹ *Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe 1645-1651*, for example; folios 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 38, 41, 42, 43, 73, and 103.

⁹⁰ HMSO, *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Advance of Money 1642-1656*, Kraus Reprint, Nendelen, 1967, pp. 509-510.

⁹¹ M.W. Helms and John H. Perris, *Lewis, William c.1625-61*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org> (accessed 8 August 2013).

⁹² *Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe 1645-1651*, folio 47.

⁹³ *Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe 1645-1651*, C107/20. *Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe 1645-1651*, folios 51 and 54, The National Archives.

Chivers of Calne had added reason to protect Seacole as he was the only remaining male heir, and while there was no active conflict in the West Country, there was still considerable unrest in 1648, triggered by the second civil war.⁹⁴

The Ashes were able to maintain their business throughout the war years and, despite the newspaper reports of losses of cloth and disruption to transport from the west to London, it seems from their account books that they were operating at a similar scale (around 76 pieces per month of 'cloth English making'⁹⁵) or over four-fifths of their trade in this commodity in 1642. In February 1649 (February 1648 in the accounts), when a summary of their activities was made, 'cloth English making' remained the major trading commodity, and France and London continued to be the main geographic markets with some very limited trade through Rotterdam, Flushing and Middleburgh. The main producers were the Ashe family and kin, although James senior had died and his wife Grace had taken over production. Lady Beauchamp continued to appear in the accounts. France was still the main market, with trade via Dover to their factor Claude Hayes in Calais. Jaques Coulteaux and Madame Moullart and their companies continued to be the main customers. In London the customers were still a broad group of merchants and drapers.⁹⁶

In 1649 and 1650 the Ashes continued their voyages to Calais and Middleburg, and expanded their trade with voyages out of Bristol to France,⁹⁷ and at least three voyages to Naples.⁹⁸ The main cargo was 'Spanish Cloths' and these new voyages suggest an expansion of their trade.

Both sides targeting opposition supporters as the source of funds to maintain their war efforts, through an established bureaucracy to sequester and then compound their opponents' estates under their territorial control. Despite this, there were also efforts to protect the property of trading partners and kin.

On the parliamentary side there was a Committee for the Advance of Money⁹⁹ and the closely linked Committee for Compounding. These committees worked through county sequestration committees answering centrally to London. John Ashe was the chair, and Edward Ashe a committee member of the Committee for Compounding.¹⁰⁰ As parliament gained control over the country, compounding to release estates at a price commenced, and it was the policy generally (but not always) not to ruin the sequestered royalists.¹⁰¹

The Ashes used their influence particularly to protect their royalist trading partners and kin. In the calendared cases of the Committee for Advance of Money

⁹⁴ Wroughton, *The Civil War in Bath*, pp.113-4. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War*, pp.147-149.

⁹⁵ *Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe 1645-1651* C107/20 Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe 1645-1651, see folios 54-69 for trade from August – December 1648, The National Archives.

⁹⁶ *Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe*, folios 66-69.

⁹⁷ *Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe*, folio 74.

⁹⁸ *Account Book of Edward and Jonathon Ashe*, folios 71, 72, and 102.

⁹⁹ *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Advance of Money 1642-1656*, Preface.

¹⁰⁰ *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding. Volume 1*, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ J. Thirsk, (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales. Volume V. II 1640-1750: Agrarian Change* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, p. 149-151. H.J. Habakkuk, Landowners and the Civil War, *The Econ. Hist. Review, New Series*, Vol. 18. No. 1, pp. 130-151.

there are seven recorded cases where John or Edward Ashe intervened.¹⁰² In six of these cases the individuals appear in the Ashe accounts and are either trading partners (William Gore, Lady Beauchamp and her two sons Edward and William Lewis, and William Wallis), or kin (Edward Yerbury). It is quite possible that Edward Yerbury was also a trading partner.¹⁰³ The business relationships are never revealed in the Ashes' submissions to the Committee. Proceedings against royalists ran, often in parallel, in both the Committee for the Advance of Money and the Committee for Compounding. So while the Ashes intervened overtly with the Committee for Advance of Money, they may also have influenced the proceedings of the Committee for Compounding, on which they sat, but left no record. An obvious individual for whom the Ashes might have intervened, but didn't, was Walter Norborne.¹⁰⁴ Norborne may have been too tainted for the Ashes to openly associate with him.

Edward Yerbury was coerced into serving on the royalist sequestration Commission in Wiltshire from 1642 until November 1644, when he abandoned the role.¹⁰⁵ His reluctance to fine his neighbours led to them intervening on his behalf when he in turn had his estates sequestered and then compounded by the parliamentary committee in 1645–46.¹⁰⁶ Those who spoke on his behalf were Paul Methuen, and other prominent clothiers in the Trowbridge area.¹⁰⁷ John Ashe even offered to pay any arrears in Edward Yerbury's assessment owing to the Committee for Advance of Money as Yerbury who was his 'kinsman and very sickly' and was unable to travel to London.¹⁰⁸ This support did not provide enduring protection for Yerbury, as he was re-sequestered and was being pursued in 1650. To avoid further fines he fled from his home in Trowbridge, leaving his business to be run by other family members, and died "in exile".¹⁰⁹ Yerbury's exposure may reflect John Ashe's decline in influence at the time, as he fought less successfully to restrain his more radical Commonwealth colleagues.¹¹⁰ When, just prior to retiring in 1649–50, John Ashe restructured the County Committees to bring them more under the control of the central Committee for Compounding, he was defeated in trying to appoint three of his clients to the Somerset committee.¹¹¹ One was Latimer Sampson of Freshford, who was part of the extended Ashe family business.¹¹² David Underdown states that Ashe sought these appointments to expose the mismanagement of the County

¹⁰² *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Advance of Money 1642-1656*. The individuals are Thomas Swallow (p. 264), Anne, Lady Beauchamp (pp. 569-570), Edward and William Lewis (pp. 569-570, 728, William Gore (pp. 126-127), William Wallis (pp. 672-673) and Edward Yerbury (pp. 665-657).

¹⁰³ *Account book ('Groot Boecke') of John Ashe 1640-1643*, folio 142. 'Erburie' trading with Madame Moullart in 1642.

¹⁰⁴ *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Advance of Money*, pp. 672-673.

¹⁰⁵ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 285.

¹⁰⁶ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 374.

¹⁰⁷ Waylen, J., *The Wiltshire Compounders*, pp. 341-342.

¹⁰⁸ *Calendar of the Committee for Advance of Money*, pp. 665-666.

¹⁰⁹ Jones, *Bradford-on-Avon A History*, p. 200-201.

¹¹⁰ Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War*, p. 163-165. David Underdown, *Pride's Purge Politics in the Puritan Revolution*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, p. 302.

¹¹¹ Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War*, pp. 163-165. The three were Latimer Sampson, Thomas Shute, and Benjamin Mason.

¹¹² See E.P. Statham, *History of the Family of Maunsell (Mansell, Mansel) Volume 2 Part 1*, Kegan Paul & Trench, London, 1917, pp. 400-402, for the connection between John Ashe and Latimer Sampson.

Committee, but it would also have given Ashe an avenue to continue to shield his royalist business partners and kin.

Walter and Humphrey Norborne abandoned the royalist cause in 1645 and presented themselves to the local parliamentary sequestration committee at Falstone House in Wiltshire.¹¹³ Both had their estates sequestered in 1644. Despite sympathy from the local committee, who were unsure of his loyalties, Walter Norborne's case was still active after the war in 1651.¹¹⁴ His eventual fine was 380 pounds. He was still trustee over the Chivers estate and executor of Robert Chivers' will, along with John Ashe.

Robert Chivers was arrested by parliamentary forces raiding into Wiltshire from Gloucestershire in May 1644¹¹⁵ and imprisoned.¹¹⁶ It may not be coincidental that after reporting of his and others' capture at Calne, and the surrender of Malmesbury garrison and Beverston Castle, the correspondent immediately goes on to comment that all trade from the west to the king at Oxford is "quite taken away and the trade of clothing opened up from those parts to London".¹¹⁷ Robert Chivers was dead by 1647 at age 26. "Sick in body", he had made out his will leaving the families' fulling mills and major estates to his only surviving brother Seacole, who was a minor.¹¹⁸ His two sisters, Anne and Mary, were also to benefit. He included his 'loving kinsmen', Walter Norborne and John Ashe, as executors of his will, especially to resolve any disputes between his brother and sisters: 'And I do will appointe and desire that the sayd Seacoll shalbe ordered advised and ruled in all things concerning the educacon and the mannageing of this estate by my loving kinsmen Walter Norborne of Studly and John Ash of Freshford Esquires.' In his last months he amended his will to expand the role of John Ashe in the event that his brother Seacole died without children. His executors were thus two men with opposing partisan interests, but with common commercial and kinship interests. There are no records of Robert Chivers or his family being either sequestered or compounded. The business connection between Mary and Seacole Chivers with John Ashe in 1648 is not surprising and is consistent with Everett's observation that extended kin networks were important in seventeenth century England in times of need and trouble, often cutting across political loyalties.¹¹⁹ Turning to a prominent

¹¹³ Harrison, *Royalist Organization*, p. 287, 374.

¹¹⁴ *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Advance of Money 1642-1656*. pp. 672-673.

¹¹⁵ *A Full and exact relation of the severall remarkable and victorious proceedings of the ever renowned Colonell Massy Governour of Gloucester, from May 7 to May 25 1644 in which time he tooke these severall considerable garrisons of the enemy in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire namely Wesbury, Little Dean, Newnam, Beverston Castle, Malmsebury, and Chippenham*. June 4 1644. John White, London. Printed for T.W. and are to be sold in the Old-Bailey. *A true relation of severall happy and wonderful victories lately given unto Col. Massie, Governour of Gloucester, form May 7. 1644 untill the 25 of the same month*. In: *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis: a collection of scarce and curious tracts relating to the county and city of Gloucester, illustrative of and published during the civil war, with biographic and historical remarks*. Gloucester. Printed for the editor. John Washbourn. 1825. p. 335.

¹¹⁶ *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis: a collection of scarce and curious tracts relating to the county and city of Gloucester, illustrative of and published during the civil war, with biographic and historical remarks*. Gloucester, Printed for the editor John Washbourn, 1825, p. 355.

¹¹⁷ *Bibliotheca Gloucestrensis*, p. 355.

¹¹⁸ *Will of Robert Chiver of Calne, Wiltshire*. 28 August 1647, PROB 11/201, Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, The National Archives, Kew.

¹¹⁹ A.M. Everitt, *Change in the Provinces: the Seventeenth Century*, Leicester University Press, 1969, pp. 26-28.

parliamentarian such as John Ashe may have been a strategic move to call on extended kinship networks to preserve the Chivers' estate and trade. Robert's death may have released the political brake on the Chivers' trading activities and allowed them to use the Ashes' network.

The civil wars caused disruption to all the draperies in the west and depression continued after the conflicts.¹²⁰ During the war period, continental manufacturers had expanded their production of the traditional broadcloths at the expense of English imports.¹²¹ By 1647, the dire circumstances were evident from a petition from the broadweavers from the central industrial area from Calne, Chippenham, Bromham and Melksham, outlining their plight with many out of work.¹²² Again in 1647, John Battie, a London cloth merchant, lamented the impact of the Civil War upon trade:

Now there is no greater enemy to trade than War, be in what country it will;... Yet *forraigne* war is not so great a disturber of *Trade*, nor half as destructive as *intestine*, For as the fire within doores, and in the bed-straw, as it were, rageth more violently: so *civill* War ruines *Trade* faster than any other, and makes poverty and desolation post in one after another, wheresoever it is kindled'.¹²³

There was a further decline of the Merchant Adventurers and the old broadcloth industry and the further rise of the 'interlopers and independents' and the new draperies.¹²⁴ Robert Brenner has made the point that the independent and colonial interloper merchants were aligned to parliament through *laissez-faire* philosophy and religion, while the monopolistic merchant companies - such as the Merchant Adventurers - supported the old draperies, and unsuccessfully seeking more regulation, were not so aligned.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ J. de Lacy Mann, *The cloth industry in the west of England from 1640 to 1880*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, p. 3. Evidence of the decline in the export trade, including in the textile trade, before and during the war years can also be gauged indirectly from the decline in customs revenue. Revenue had declined prior to the outbreak of war, and between 1642 and 1644 it declined by a further 40 per cent despite increases to the book of rates, and had only marginally risen by 1647. See Scott, William Robert, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies to 1720, Volume 1*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1912, p. 236.

¹²¹ For a summary see Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, pp. 111-113.

¹²² Marsh, *Calne*, p. 121.

¹²³ *The merchants remonstrance published in the time of the late warre, revived and enlarged : wherein is set forth the inevitable miseries which may suddenly befall this kingdome by want of trade and decay of manufactures : with copy of a letter to the Kings Majestie presented unto him at Hampton Court, October 30, 1647 : shewing, 1, the want of such a due regard as was fit for the preservation of trade in the time of the late warre, 2, some of the bad effects it hath since produced, 3, the offer of the authors opinion what may best be done for remedy : also, a letter to the Right Honourable the two Houses of Parliament, to the army under the command of His Excellency Sir Tho. Fairfax, and to the rest of His Majesties subjects in generall: whereunto is annexed a discourse of the excellencie of wooll, manifested by the improvement in its manufactures, and the great good thence arising before the late warre / by John Battie*, London, Printed by Ric. Cotes for William Hope, 1648, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com> (accessed 12 September 2014).

¹²⁴ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 115, 123. Robert Brenner, *The Civil War Politics of London's Merchant Community, Past and Present*, No. 58, 1973, pp. 58-107.

¹²⁵ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 95

Of the parliamentarians, the Ashe family prospered. The medley draperies continued to expand after the war as consumer demand moved towards lighter and more fashionable textiles. As Ramsay states: 'It may, however be suspected that the economic crises of the interregnum affected the making of white broadcloth rather than the manufacture of the new fabrics and that the medley clothiers were indeed comparatively little interrupted in the progress of their industry as soon as the actual fighting was at an end.'¹²⁶ Marketing their own cloth, the Ashes were in a particularly favourable position to take advantage of the *laissez-faire* approach to trade of the Commonwealth parliament.¹²⁷ John Ashe was identified as having benefited through the purchase of seized estates to the value of 14,000 pounds while chair of the Committee for Compounding, and this activity, observed to be 'better than clothing', caused controversy after the war.¹²⁸ The Methuens were very successful in rapidly expanding the Spanish cloth drapery after the wars. Paul Methuen was considered to be the most prominent clothier of his age by the enthusiastic John Aubrey.¹²⁹ While not obviously active participants in the wars, they were well positioned to benefit from post war policy.¹³⁰ In the next generation, Paul Methuen's son married Robert Chivers' niece¹³¹ and their son inherited some of the Chivers estate.

John Ashe helped preserve the position of some of his royalist trading partners and kin through his efforts to moderate the impacts of compounding and sequestration upon them. Despite the compounding of the estates of at least three members of the Yerbury family, this cohort retained their estates and remained in the cloth industry. One of them may have been the John Yerbury who travelled to France with Paul Methuen in 1655 on business.¹³² Seacole Chivers inherited the Chivers' woollen mills at Calne in 1649, although his early death plunged the family back into uncertain times. Edward Lewis died in France and his younger brother William inherited his estates after paying fines. Others, even if not overtly protected, also managed to come out of the war relatively well. Both Walter and Humphrey Norborne paid compounding fines in order to free their estates.¹³³ Walter Norborne

¹²⁶ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry* p. 112.

¹²⁷ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry* p. 100.

¹²⁸ *An answer of the purchasers of the lands, late of Sir John Stawel, by act of Parliament, exposed to sale for his treason to a pamphlet, intituled, The humble remonstrance of Sir John Stawel: together with the answer of John Ashe Esquire, to divers scandals mentioned in that remonstrance. As also a petition and several reasons for establishment of publick sales; tendred by Wil. Lawrence Esq; one of the judges in Scotland.*, London: Printed by Thomas Newcomb, dwelling in Thamestreet, over against Baynards Castle, anno Domini 1654, and A LIST OF The Names of the Members of the House of Commons: Observing which are Officers of the Army, contrary to the Selfe-denying Ordinance; Together with such summes of Money, Offices and Lands, as they have given themselves, for service done, and to bee done, against the King and Kingdome. Note, Reader, that such as have this marke (*) coming immediately before their Names, are Recruiters; illegally elected, by colour of the New-Seale, the power of the Army, and Voices of the Souldiers, and are un-duly Returned, and serve accordingly. 1648, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com> (accessed 8 August 2011).

¹²⁹ J. Aubrey, *The Natural History of Wiltshire (written between 1656 and 1691)*, The Wiltshire Topographic Society, London, 1867, p. 113.

¹³⁰ Ramsay, *Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, p. 100

¹³¹ Mary, the daughter of Seacole Chivers, who was Robert Chivers' surviving younger brother and heir.

¹³² *Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series (Commonwealth) 1649-1660, Volume 8, Jan-Oct 1655, Pass for Paul Methwyn and John Yerbury, with servant, to Flanders, on desire of Col. Montague, July 10 1655.* SP25/76 folio 174. Edward Yerbury's son John was one of the compounders.

¹³³ The degree to which royalists suffered long term hardship is now debated. See C. O'Riordan, Popular exploitation of enemy estates in the English Revolution, *History*, Vol. 78, 1993, pp. 183-200.

married Mary Chivers (Robert Chivers' sister) after the war, and his son later entered parliament. At his funeral in 1655, in Calne, there was a riot by a crowd remembering his royalist activities.¹³⁴

With time the revolutionary passions of the civil wars subsided. John Ashe, that 'pernicious fomentor of rebellion' in the 1640s, had by 1657 recognised the stabilising influence of monarchy and appealed in parliament to Oliver Cromwell to take the crown.¹³⁵ The Ashe, Lewis, Norborne, Chivers and Methuen families were all represented in parliament during Charles II's reign. By the Restoration the radicalism had gone. In Everitt's view: 'After 1660 the great Rebellion became a sensitive and embarrassing subject in most local communities. If you were a country squire and had not supported the king, or at least been sequestered, it was usually best to keep quiet about it as possible, and leave it to your descendants to invent a loyalist grandfather.'¹³⁶

The individuals studied here were both prosecutors of the partisan interests in the wars and also trading partners, kins-men and -women, and neighbours. Their political beliefs drove their partisan behavior early in the wars. James and John Ashe were raising parliamentary troops in the west while Walter Norborne was raising royalists. Robert Chivers and Walter Norborne helped establish an assize which, if successful, would have convicted parliamentarians such as the Ashes for treason. Edward Yerbury sequestered parliamentarians, and John and Edward Ashe sequestered royalists.

While this political and military froth was bubbling away, there were deeper currents flowing. The same people were selling their cloth through the established local networks and were providing financial help to each other, filling roles for each other as executors, overseers and trustees. Ties of kinship and to locality are clearly evident in the experiences of these families. The protagonists might have been ardent royalists and parliamentarians, and vilified for being so, but were still willing and able to support their neighbours and kin regardless of loyalties. This can be seen in microcosm when, in 1647, Walter Norborne, a locally despised royalist, and John Ashe, a 'fomentor of rebellion', both were called upon by Robert Chivers on his death bed, to ensure his family's interests, and theirs, were protected.

Even in their political activities they acted to protect their neighbours and kin. Self-interest shows through, and maintenance of trade was a mutual necessity. It seems that when John Ashe and Edward Yerbury sought to mitigate the effects of assessment and sequestration, it was generally to protect their trading partners. Overall, the royalist manufacturers, such as Chivers and Yerbury, would have been disadvantaged during the war, by the discouragement from the king to trade through London and his encouragement of the unsuccessful trade through Bristol and Exeter. The parliamentarian clothiers suffered financially from being plundered *en route* to London, but if they got their cloth there it was sold. The Ashe family was reported to have lost cloth to royalist garrisons, but their account books show continuing trade through the war years. Other clothiers, including those with royalist

¹³⁴ Marsh, *Calne*, p. 188.

¹³⁵ Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, p. 238, quoting Ashe the elder's speech in Parliament on the 19th of January, 1657, originally in Burton's Diary, Volume i, pp. 362-363.

¹³⁶ Everitt, *The Local Community*, 1969, p. 3.

connections, were trading cloth through the Ashes' London and continental networks, and this expanded after 1645. John Ashe also used his power to protect his royalist clothier partners, neighbours and kin affected by sequestration of their estates. Of the families studied here, the Ashes and Methuens did well because they backed the winner, and were involved in a new industry favoured by the *laissez-faire* approach of government. The royalist families backed the loser, but were protected from financial loss to some extent by kinship and county ties with parliamentarians.

The behaviour and experiences of the individuals I have studied here fit generally into the historiography of the Civil Wars, which sees a willingness to manage the tension between religious and political differences, and the shared needs of social and economic life.¹³⁷ These families were not making a choice between local and national concerns; rather, they were paying heed to both. Their livelihoods depended on their ability to do this. Here, the generally understood collapse in trade during the wars does not seem to have hit the Ashes and their trading partners as badly. This possibly reflects the ability of the Ashes to maintain their networks from London to the continent and their production of a unique product, as the demand for Spanish cloth remained high in France. The Ashes were also able to use their powerful position in the parliamentary regime to protect their commercial interests, including the support of royalists with whom they traded. Regardless of their religious or political beliefs, there were common and enduring economic imperatives for these families. This was best achieved by preserving the mutual support and obligations inherent in the textile trade, which had long been centred upon durable alliances of related families.

¹³⁷ For example, see Anne Hughes, *The King, the Parliament and the Localities during the English Civil War*, *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1985, pp. 236-263.

Author Biography

Hugh Chevis is a PhD student at the University of Western Australia. His interest is in the economic history of early modern England. In his thesis, he is investigating the use of Spanish merino wool on English cloth production, beginning in the sixteenth century.

In Memoriam of Philippa Maddern

I was embraced by Philippa's enthusiasm the moment I met her. I had a very vague idea about some post graduate study and when I contacted the History faculty at UWA it was suggested that I come in and speak to Philippa Maddern. After a very short chat, she said I needed to enrol in the Masters in Medieval and Early Modern Studies and the best time to do this was right now. We headed off to the faculty office to do the paperwork and I left the campus, as far as Philippa was concerned, as an enrolled post graduate student.

She subsequently became one of my supervisors as a PhD candidate and I miss her guiding hand. She always had a novel interpretation on issues and questions I posed to her. Invariably I left from a meeting with her thinking quite differently than when I arrived. I have a long way to go on my thesis and there are many questions I would still like to ask.