

THE TOWN OF BROMLEY  
in Kent  
AND THE GREAT REBELLION

by  
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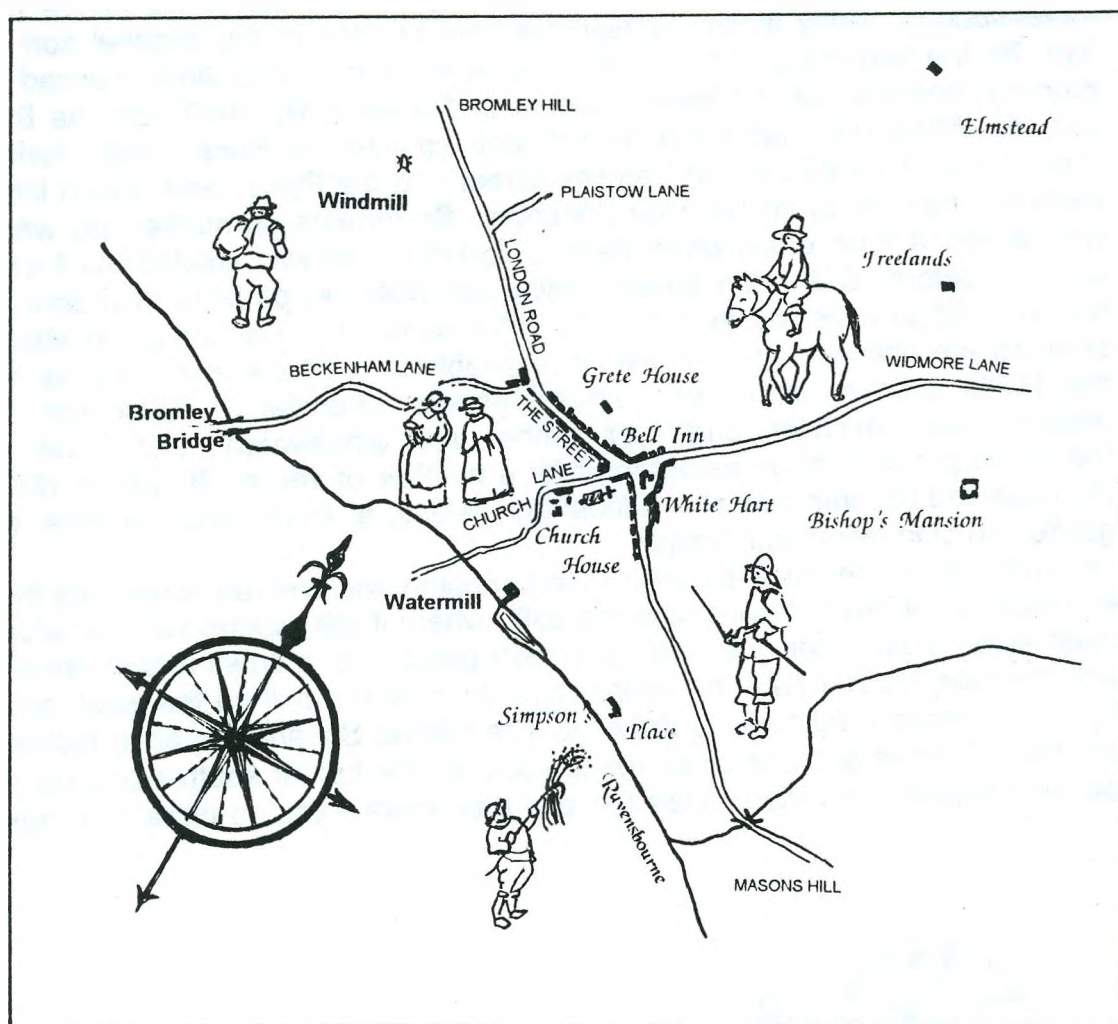
## *The Town of Bromley in Kent and the Great Rebellion.*

The ancient town of Bromley in Kent and the surrounding villages do not figure largely in the annals of the Civil War. No large armies marched across their countryside, no battles were fought here. Yet the events of the time affected everyone. Being a mere half day's ride from the seat of Government in London this area of NW Kent came early under the influence of Parliament, whatever the leanings of individuals may have been.

In spite of the distance in time, can we tell what those leanings might have been, or what happened in Bromley during the Great Rebellion of 1642 and the years of the Interregnum that followed ? Surviving evidence is sparse. However, some sort of a shadowy picture may be glimpsed of the people, the town, and what went on.

### *KENT IN 1642*

In the early 17th century Kent's few industries included the manufacture of gunpowder and, in the Weald, of the iron that was largely used in armaments by the dockyards at Chatham, Deptford, and Woolwich. Otherwise the county landowners mainly concentrated on agriculture. They, like the rest of England, felt increasing concern as to the state of the country's Government. Only a few weeks before the final breakdown of relations between King and Parliament the gentlemen of Kent submitted one of many petitions, pleading for their reconciliation in view of 'the sad condition that we and the whole land are in, if a good understanding be not renewed between His Majesty and both Houses of Parliament'. Their petition was rejected, their leaders arrested, and the brusque manner of its rejection by the extremists then in power only heightened the tension. In a pre-emptive move only days before the King was to 'raise his Standard' at Nottingham in August, a Parliamentary force went round the county seizing not only arms, ammunition and horses from many country houses, but money and plate. So, with no arms and not much money, with most Royalist lands now sequestered and their leaders in the Tower, the Kentish gentry were powerless. For the next decade or so they concentrated instead on improving and running their estates - once the large fines were paid off. The only exceptions were when there was a brief attempt by Royalist forces to raise resistance near Sevenoaks a year later, and for the period of the 'Second Civil War' in 1647-8 which was sparked off, in Canterbury, by riots over the prohibition of Christmas celebrations: the townspeople were furious when they were told to open their shops on Christmas Day, and there was to be no greenery hung up, and no plum pottage.



## *THE TOWN OF BROMLEY in the 17th CENTURY*

*(not to scale and partly conjectural)*

*A 'best match' has been made from studying Rocque's Map of 1746; that of Andrews, Drury and Herbert published in 1769; the Surveyors' drawings for the 1st Ordnance Survey from the 1790s; an estate plan made for Lord Gwydir of Langley Park in 1809; and the Tithe Map for Bromley of 1846; together with evidence from the other records consulted.*

## THE TOWN OF BROMLEY

By the time Charles 1st came to the throne in 1625 Bromley had already been a market town for over 400 years, grown up on the sandy hill above the Ravensbourne valley along the highway from London to the channel port of Rye. By the beginning of the 17th C. there were four victuallers licenced in Bromley, besides baker, brewer, butcher and a tailor. By 1640 both the Bell and the White Hart had been named, and so had the Rose, King's Arms, Cross Keys, the Red Lyon in Bromley Street and the Pye House (which later became The Crown) on Bromley Common. So farmers on market day were well served. It is uncertain when the first Market House was erected but it was certainly before 1659 when James Basley described his property next door in his Will, and perhaps before 1647. The definition of a town is as a place where services are obtainable which are not available in a village, and certainly by the 1670s Bromley also had a cheesemonger, chandler, a 'horseman', a draper, collier, maltster, bricklayer, tanner, and wheelwright, and some of these had probably been established for a number of years. By about 1650 the town had become home to at least one lawyer, a doctor, and a number of gentlemen of independant means.

'Bromley Street' began at the top of Beckenham Lane and ran south past the entrance to the 'Grete House' and the Bell - where it still widens today at what must surely have been the original market-place - to a cross-roads formed with the lane leading past the church and down to the mill on the west, and that to Wigmore (Widmore) to the east. The Market Square has been tucked into the SE angle of these cross roads. Just a little further south stood (as it did until recently) the White Hart Inn and then there were no more buildings



**Bromley Street** - the east side enlarged from a drawing by C.Burton first published by John Dunkin in his *History of Bromley*, 1815. This shows the many jettied timber-frame buildings then still surviving; the two or three later brick frontages of Georgian times have here been converted. The old Greyhound is behind the cart, and The Bell Inn stands at the end of the row. More expensive houses face up the street in the distance. See also *Timber and Brick Building in Kent* by Kenneth Gravett.



until Mason's Hill, which was one of Bromley's five hamlets, the others being Plaistow, Southborough, Elmstead, and Widmore. Down among the water-meadows was the moated Simpson's Place and the water-mill, which had probably been used for something other than grinding corn since a windmill had been built at the top of Bromley Hill in about 1600. The mansion of the Bishop of Rochester, the Lord of the Manor, who was at that time Dr. John Warner, stood in its park a decent distance back from the hurley-burley of the town. For Bromley was not a quiet place, especially on market day when lowing cattle and flocks of sheep were driven in for sale, and wagons of local produce trundled in from nearby farms and neighbouring villages, and the inns were busy as farmers exchanged the latest news over their tankards. Every day the fish carriers rumbled along the Street, adding to the noise (and aroma) and there was frequent bustle when strangers passed through, the wealthier ones on horseback or in the heavy unsprung coaches of the time and also needing the services of the inns -- unless they were bound for the hospitality of the Bishop's household.



**The Windmill** - first mention of a windmill at Bromley is in the Will of Sir Edmund Style of Langley Park in 1614, of a mill he had erected and leased for £3p.a. This stood somewhere at the top of Bromley Hill on the road to London. It features in a sketch by Amelia Long, Lady Farnborough, entitled '*The Old Mill of Bromley Hill*', of which this drawing is an adaptation. Lady Long lived at Bromley Hill Place until her death in 1837, and was an acclaimed water-colour artist. There are several of her paintings in the Bromley Museum Collection.

There would not have been a roundhouse at this time.

### *THE BISHOP AND THE MANOR.*

The manor of Bromley had belonged to the Bishops since the 10th century, but now Parliament deposed all the Bishops and confiscated their estates. Dr. John Warner was not to be ousted so easily, however, in spite of having the manor sold over his head in 1647 to Augustine Skinner, a member of the Committee of Kent, which was a sort of prototype County Council established by Parliament at the beginning of the war. In fact Warner had not lived in Bromley since 1642 because, he said 'The general opinion and carriage of the people . . . was such to Bishops, that it were not easy to pass by them without reproach, yea (often) not without danger of their persons'. The people of Bromley were clearly on the side of Parliament in its condemnation of Archbishop Laud and his 'high-church' ideas; Warner was a friend of Laud.

In early 1647 commissioners were preparing an inventory of the manorial estate in preparation for putting it on the market. After a perambulation accompanied by a Jury of some dozen of Bromley's inhabitants which included Ralph Watson, John Stevens, Daniel Giles, Martin and George French and Nicholas Gardiner, they repaired to the Bell, where Daniel Giles was the landlord, to write their report. Not yet given the title of Palace, they described the Bishop's estate as a 'Manor or Manson House containing belowe stayers one greate new Hall being builte part of Bricks, part timbre, and one Little Hall, one Wainscott parlour (i.e. panelled), two Studydes, one Buttery, Two Kitchings, One Larder and three other Roomes adjoyning being builte parte of flinte parte of Timber and Morter. Above staires seaven lodging rooms, one faire Dyning Roome with six garretts above... Washhouse with two chambers above, two stables tyled, two barns thatched, one outhouse contayninge one wainscott Chappell and one lower room, two chambers overhead. Courte yards at entry with east and west a brick wall, north and south the mansion and chapel. '

They then went on to detail the fields and woods, and a list of tenants including seven or eight owing for small houses where the quit-rent (in lieu of the medieval service-rent) was only 2d. or 3d., some of which were in the town itself. The market tolls and profits of Bromley's two fairs, which formed part of the estate, had already been sequestered and leased out for £10 p.a. (the first lessee was soon removed 'for his delinquency' and they went to someone else). The survey also mentions the tenants' right to 'commonfeed or depasture on the Wide Common called Bromley Common, so to pay one henne rent yearly on St. Andrew's Day', the value of which had the previous year amounted to £1.6.8d . . . adding that the common is sand and flinte and the Freeholders may put cattle as they please . . . the manorial 'half-year lands' could be grazed on the stubble after harvest from Michaelmas until Lady Day - a practice which also insured that the lord's fields were well manured. The whole was evaluated at £5,665.11s 11d. While this assessment was being made Bishop Warner had permission to return for five days . . . he then sat tight and refused to move until Christmas Eve in 1648, when he gave in, to spend the rest of the war and the Interregnum living with friends.

The year after leaving, Dr. Warner paid his sequestration fine of £858, on the oath that he had not assisted the King in any way with money, horses or arms. By this time he had a very poor opinion of the Parliamentary Commonwealth - - 'What Commonwealth ?' he demands scornfully in a letter to a royalist neighbour on the Isle of Wight (who was later to attempt to help King Charles to escape from Carisbrooke Castle). Sir John Oglander, who was also the father of Lady Lennard of West Wickham, had written to the Bishop for his



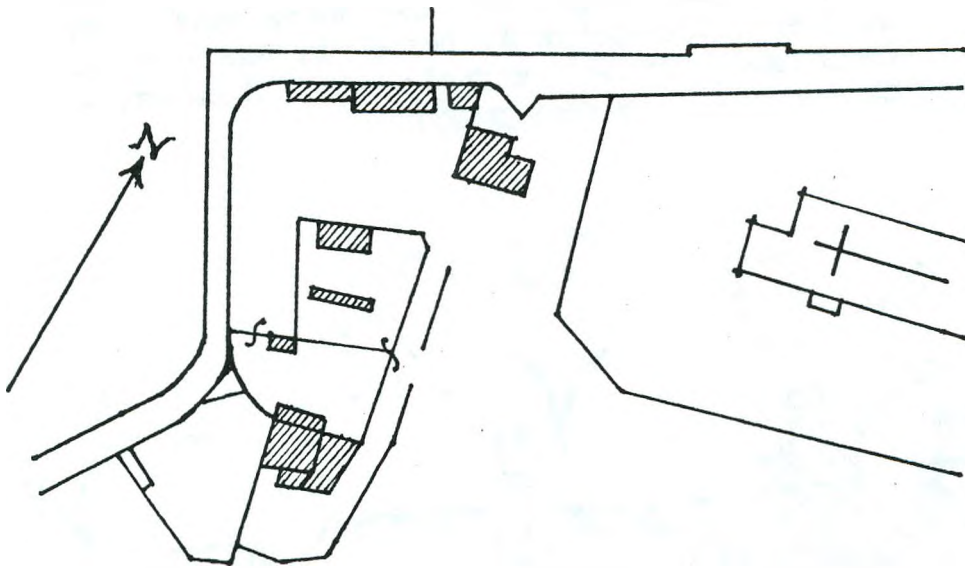
**The Bishop's Palace** - an engraving of 1756, long before it was called 'Palace,' was published in Edward Hasted's *History of Kent* in 1796. Strip away the additions erected by later Bishops and the Tudor buildings can be reconstructed, including the gatehouse which was pulled down in 1699. The Survey of the Manor made in 1647 describes 'one greate new Hall being builte parte of Bricks parte of timbre, one Little Hall, one Wainscott parlour, Two Studyes, One Buttery, Two Kitchings, One Larder, and three other Roomes adjoyninge, being builte parte of flinte parte of Timber and Morter, Above the staires seaven lodging roomes and one faire Dyning Roome with six garretts above. . . One Outhouse contayninge one wainscott Chappell, one Lower roome and two Chambers overhead . . one Courte yearde at the entry into the mansion house encompassed East and West with a Brick wall, and North and South with the Mansion House and Chappell.' In 1699 the gatehouse was 'an old piece of building' with the room used as a chapel some 24' long and 18' wide including 'a closet used for servants' on the south side. The roof of the chapel, 'by reason of the Gatehouse, is uneven, not all of a highth.' There was no chimney, even in the porter's room.



advice about signing the Solemn League and Covenant which everyone was now supposed to do; Warner's response being that it would be contrary to Sir John's Oath of Allegiance previously given to King Charles and thus would put his very soul in jeopardy. And both men were among those who steadfastly refused to sign.

### *THE TOWNSPEOPLE*

The Bishop of Rochester was Bromley's largest landowner and richest inhabitant. The second richest was then Ralph Watson, a London merchant draper, or mercer, who in fact leased the ancient Glebe lands - originally the parish priest's allocation - from the Bishop's estate. This included Church House, a small timber mansion of some ten rooms where he lived. Watson also owned several lesser properties, which he leased out to smaller husbandmen. The other 'capital messuage' in the town at that time was Grete (Great) House in its grounds to the east of Bromley Street. First mentioned in surviving records in 1532, a century later it belonged to Sir John Thornhill, although in the 1640s it was occupied by Mr. Henry Allington.



**Church House** - it seems that no one ever drew or painted the old Church House before it was demolished, but a sales plan was made in the mid 19th century which shows the layout of the farm buildings in the angle of Church Road and Glassmill Lane, where now is the entrance to Church House Gardens. The Survey of 1647 reported on 'a little house in the parsonage yard' with the barn of 11 bays and two smaller ones, a stable and two granaries. The main house contained 'below stairs one wainscott (panelled) hall, two wainscott parlours, one kitchen and scullery, one buttery' and upstairs were six lodging chambers and two garrets.



In the Ravensbourne valley below the ridge was the old moated Simpson's Place belonging to the Style family of Beckenham, which was rented to a tenant. Along the Street and around the market were the timbered and jettied houses and shops, old and new, that were home and workplace to Bromley's townsmen and their families. In his will, builder Richard Tanner described his house and shop in the town of Bromley 'where I usually lay my tyles, with well and well yard' ; and James Basley, who was a butcher, left his son his 'house in the town of Bromley abutting that of Robert Titchbourne on the north west and against the Market-house east, nine rooms, woodhouse and yard...and another tenement belonging to his son James which abutts against the Market-house, four rooms and a little yard'. In 1651 Francis Egleton, a tailor, lived in a house in Bromley Street with two rooms 'below stayers and two Roomes or Chambers above stayers, Together with a yard thereunto belonging now enclosed with a new pale (fence) about 20 feet...by 18 feet...with that Howse of Office that now openeth into the said yard'. By the time of the Hearth Tax assessment lists of 1662, soon after the Restoration, there were about 50 families living in the town - over a quarter of them too



**Market Square** - from a painting of 1795 in the Bromley Museum Collection. Buildings encroached upon the Market House, which was of uncertain age even then. In his Will written in 1659 James Basley describes his house 'against the Market-House on the east,' and abutting that of Robert Titchbourne on the north-west. No other alignment fits this description; and it must be looking south.

poor to be expected to pay the tax. But all the townspeople would have known each other, shopped and gossiped, served their turn on the parish vestry and met at manorial courts, helped each other out at need. The wills that survive show them (and not always only the men) acting as executor, witness or trustee for a neighbour. The town was not isolated from the country and connections spread out to the surrounding farms and hamlets.

Ralph Watson was part of this community, describing Martin French of Freelands as friend and neighbour, leaving him and Nicholas Gardiner, a Chandler in the town, 20s. each for acting as his overseers (trustees); James Basley witnessed his will, which was written in 1644 when he was 'stricken in years and sicklie.' Ralph's son Richard who died only about a year after his father also appointed Martin French as trustee and left him 20s. (he also bequeathed to his uncle William Barr his Great Horseman's Coat, a gilded sword to his brother-in-law, and 'a suit of clothes or 20s. to Thomas Wood, Translator of Bromley'). Martin French also acted as overseer to Simon Bedel — as Simon's son acted in due course for Martin French with John Littlegroome -- who had been the executor for Robert French in 1632 . . . .

Unfortunately the parish registers are disappointing in their record of all the family alliances that must have taken place. However, some wills, deeds and it must be admitted, the odd court case, can demonstrate connections. Mr. Henry Allington's son and daughter witnessed the will of Martin French's wife in 1656 (when she left £20 to her husband 'and to each of his five children a ring of black enamel with a verge of gold and a death's head with the motto "die daylie and live ever" ' ). John Littlegroome's daughter Grace married Richard Gratwick. Ralph Watson's son Richard married Alice Gratwick, when



**The Bell Inn** - from the rear. Late 19th century photographs show the gabled building, obviously of timbered construction behind the plaster rendering, and probably dating from the 15th century. The brick and stucco front that was added in the Georgian period to make it appear more fashionable eventually pulled away from the main frame and became dangerous, so the whole thing was rebuilt in the 1890s as we see it today.



part of her marriage portion was £200 towards the purchase of 'Elmsteede Howse at Elmsteede Greene' -- with the barn and other buildings, yards, gardens, orchards and parcels of arable land and woods, and another new house occupied by John Earldige; and Earldiges continued at Elmstead and are mentioned as tenants in the wills of both Watsons, father and son. Martha Earldige married into the French family. No doubt property and parcels of land changed hands continually as marriage portions, especially as in those days partners often died young and re-marriage was the usual thing.

In the running of town affairs, too, the townsmen must need co-operate. Unfortunately, vestry records survive only from after the Restoration, so tell nothing before this of the activities of church wardens, parish constable, way-wardens, the poor law officers and others, officials who had been established in the reign of Elizabeth. Lists of these officials approved by local J.P.s show only that the Frenches, Littlegroves, Giles', Gratwicks and Bedels were among those who were expected to play their part, generation by generation. Richard Watson was voted church warden shortly before he died in 1646. In 1645 Martin French and Richard Gratwick were appointed to be collectors of the Subsidy Tax imposed by the Commonwealth, and in December that year it was the turn of Robert Titchbourne and John Hinger to be Collectors of a Two-Month's Tax, the parish share of which amounted to £47.4s. (less 7s.10d. allowed to the collectors); the task of collecting tax was shared around, and refusing to do so brought trouble - Sir John Oglander was sent to prison for this until he had paid a fine.

#### *THE BURDEN OF TAXATION*

It was in the paying of the taxes to finance the war effort that everyone was most affected by the troubles of the country. The King's proposal to impose 'ship-money' and certain other subsidies had been a major factor in the quarrel with his Parliament. Now, ironically enough, Parliament was forced to raise revenue by levying regular, and frequent, taxes itself. Between 1643 and December 1645, for example, Bromley's assessments, spread over 13 collections, on roughly 100 taxpayers, amounted to nearly £1,150. There were also compulsory loans of money, and 'voluntary' collections of money and plate.

In May 1642, just after the Kentish Petition had been presented to Parliament, there had been a call for 'A Contribution Collected for the releife of the distressed Christyans in Ireland' (not to imply that Ireland was otherwise a non-Christian country !) Henry Allington and John Stevens gave the generous sum of £5 each; Richard Gratwick and Nicholas Warner £2 apiece, Ralph Watson and three others including Martin French £1. The village of Beckenham produced £4.10d, West Wickham only £3. That year the more affluent residents were assessed for another donation besides their regular taxes, either in plate or in money in lieu; Henry Allington for another £5; William Delver the Bishop's secretary £4; Martin French £2; Nicholas Gardiner £3, John Littlegrove £5; John Stevens £2 and Ralph Watson £1. The total sum raised in Bromley was £19.10s. But West Wickham produced only 5s. and that from a single contributor, who appears to have been a strong supporter of Parliament which his Lord of the Manor (married to the daughter of Sir John Oglander) certainly was not.



|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Robert Titchbourne & John Hinger Collectors of a 2-monthes Tax Recd  | 47 : 04 : 00  |
| Paid to Nicholas Tooke   | 46 : 16 : 02  |
| By allowance to y <sup>e</sup> Collectors  | 0 : 7 : 10    |
| James Shott Collector of y <sup>e</sup> 15 <sup>d</sup> Tax ~ Recd & P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Robert Joseph | 104 : 12 : 00 |
| George Shott & Daniell Gyles Collectors of y <sup>e</sup> second 10 <sup>d</sup> Tax made 27 Aprill 1644         |               |
| Recd ~ 65 : 06 : 10 & p <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Tooke of Dartford by two payments                            | 62 : 00 : 00  |
| and P <sup>d</sup> Alexander Till servant to Thomas Chadwell, Provost Marshall                                   | 03 : 06 : 10  |
| John Steevens & George Shott Collectors of the 1st Collecon for y <sup>e</sup> Royall Subsdies                   |               |
| Recd & paid to William Ewines  | 57 : 00 : 00  |
| Nicholas Gardner Collector of the third 20 <sup>d</sup> Tax Recd ~   | 140 : 05 : 04 |
| & p <sup>d</sup> to Robt Joseph of Dartford  | 140 : 05 : 04 |
| John Littlegroome, Simon Beadle & George Shott Collectors of y <sup>e</sup> last 30 <sup>d</sup> Tax             |               |
| Recd ~ 215 : 00 : 00 & P <sup>d</sup> Robt Joseph of Dartford by   |               |
| 7 severall Acquittants   | 210 : 08 : 00 |
| Defaulters   | 004 : 12 : 00 |
| Thomas Kinge & Richard Gratwicke Collectors of y <sup>e</sup> second 10 <sup>d</sup> Tax                         |               |
| Recd 065 : 04 : 10 and P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Tooke   | 065 : 00 : 00 |
| Allowed him by the Com <sup>tee</sup>  | 000 : 04 : 10 |
| Thomas Kinge & John Littlegroome Collectors of y <sup>e</sup> Polemoney  |               |
| Recd & P <sup>d</sup> S <sup>r</sup> Humphry Stiles & S <sup>r</sup> Thomas Walsingham                           | 092 : 04 : 06 |
| Arnold Kinge Collector of y <sup>e</sup> 20 <sup>th</sup> & 3 <sup>th</sup> part                                 |               |
| Recd and Paid M <sup>r</sup> Thomas Franklynne   | 069 : 00 : 00 |
| John Halfpenny & William Dye Collectors of y <sup>e</sup> 1st 3-Monthly made y <sup>e</sup> 1st Maye 1643        |               |
| Recd 067 : 19 : 00 & P <sup>d</sup> Richard Gratwicke  | 065 : 15 : 00 |
| P <sup>d</sup> Thomas Walker   | 002 : 04 : 00 |
| Jeremy Hinger & Simon Beadle Collector of y <sup>e</sup> 12 weekes Assessmt made 17 July 1643                    |               |
| Recd 040 : 16 : 00 & P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Tooke 26 Septemb <sup>r</sup> 1643                            | 040 : 16 : 00 |
| Martine French & Richard Gratwicke for y <sup>e</sup> second Collection of y <sup>e</sup> Royall Subsdies        |               |
| Recd 050 : 00 : 00 & P <sup>d</sup> William Ewins Treasurer  | 050 : 00 : 00 |
| Andrew Beadle & Jeremy Gyles Collectors of y <sup>e</sup> 20 <sup>d</sup> Tax made 3 Octobr 1644                 |               |
| Recd 116 : 07 : 00 & P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Jo <sup>n</sup> Twistleton by 5 acquittances                  | 116 : 07 : 00 |

### A list of assessments for Bromley from 1643 to 1645.

This is to be found among the Commonwealth Exchequer Papers at the Public Record Office, among the State Papers, in one of the boxes of loose unsorted paper sheets, stored by county. There are 3½ of these for Kent and each one takes about three hours to sort through. There is something or other for each of the LBB ancient parishes - Beckenham is unique with a poll tax list, for 1652 - but the market town's is not surprisingly the longest with about 100 names.

**Dr. John Warner, Bishop of Rochester** - when Dr. Warner made his will soon after the Restoration in 1660 he left money to establish almshouses for the widows of 'loyal and orthodox' clergymen, those who had remained true to the Established Church of England. After his death in 1666 these were built in Bromley, and became known as Bromley College.



In March 1644 the Committee of Kent addressed a warrant to the High Constable of Bromley and Beckenham Hundred - and presumably all the other Kent Hundreds - explaining that 'the late expedition to Arundel having ingulphed us in such great debts' in raising, arming, clothing and paying 1,200 foot soldiers and 400 horse, so they must needs impose another tax of 10d. on personal estate; and soon after that they had the bright idea of levelling fines for *not* taking part in the siege of Arundel - ever a Catholic, and therefore a Royalist stronghold. Returns list ten men from Cudham, six from Downe and sixteen from Chelsfield, but any other local lists seem not to have survived. In October 1644 one Treble-fifteenth Tax 'for rayseing the Monie for the forces under the Command of Sir Thomas Fairfax' (which became the New Model Army) was expected to bring in nearly £1,250 from the parishes in the Hundred of Sutton-at-Hone i.e., all the villages now in the LBB plus Knockholt and Bexley, but excepting Beckenham and Bromley which formed another Hundred by themselves.

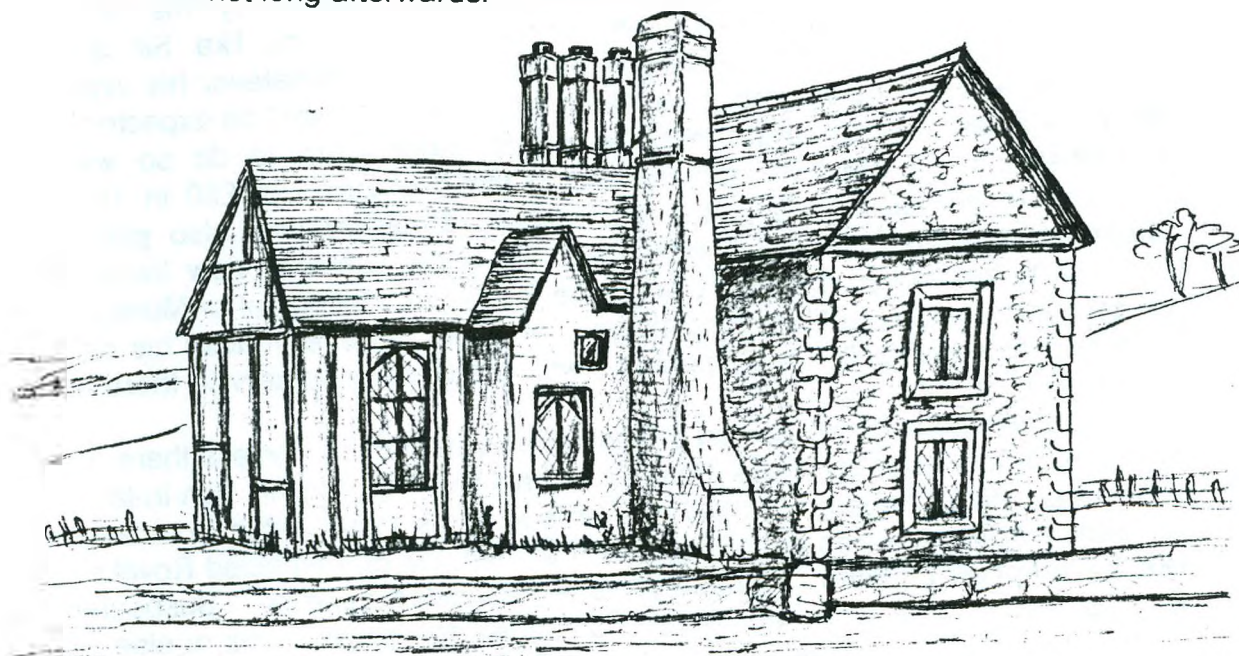
In addition, goods such as mattresses might be commandeered from villages, as they were from West Wickham for the use of 'the soldiers lying at Knole' - and although some were returned they were 'not soe good as them that weare sent' ; horses could be impounded with their 'furniture' and feed, or else with a charge of perhaps £5 for 'the buying of Sadles, Pistolls, Arms, Swords etc' and the Bishop's sequestered estate had to contribute four of them. In the autumn of 1646, perhaps with the abortive Royalist raid of 1643 in mind, soldiers were billeted along the 'frontshires' of Surrey to 'give the plough peacable passage' . There were 200 on the manor lands of West Wickham, 50 at the parsonage and others in the village, all making inroads into the recently harvested stocks of the inhabitants. To a lord of the manor with Royalist sympathies this was particularly galling. A further dread at this time was a visit by the plague; and the soldiers were accused of bringing 'the



**Sir Humphrey Style** of Langley Park in Beckenham, Knight and Baronet, cup-bearer to King Charles I. His property extended into West Wickham, Hayes and Bromley, including Simpsons Place, which had been bought from the executors of Robert Simpson about 100 years before. An ardent Royalist, he was a friend of Sir Stephen Lennard. He died in 1659 and the estate passed to his brother William.



**Simpsons Place** - apparently once a crenellated stone building in a moat, it was added to in Tudor times in brick and timber with a 'huge and handsome red-brick chimney,' and used from then on as a farmhouse. In the first half on the 18th century two sides of the moat were filled in by the then tenant, Jeremiah Ringer, and 100 years later it had become 'a moated ruin in the midst of a wild tangle of blackberry bushes,' and was demolished not long afterwards.



sickness' to Beckenham (perhaps influenza) and also the smallpox. Sir Humphrey Style and his wife took themselves elsewhere, and Lady Lennard's maid died of smallpox.

In Bromley's assessment in December 1645 Bishop Warner heads the list for the Two-Month's Tax. Not surprisingly there are considerable differences in the demands. The Bishop's was for 14s., Ralph Watson's 12s. for the Glebe lands and another 2s. for his own; Henry Allington's was one shilling but his landlord Sir John Thornhill was assessed for a further 1s.6d. (the Grete House grounds were not large). Daniel Giles at the Bell was assessed at 9d. on his own holding, 1s. 'on Widow Masyer's land' and 1s. on Mr. Young's; this at a time when 10s. paid the rent on a fair-sized farm. The majority of inhabitants across the parish (59) were expected to pay the lowest amount of 4d., mostly for a single parcel, which equalled a good proportion of the 1s.6d. day's wage of a skilled craftsman; while about 40 others had multiple holdings of their own and also rented pieces. A good number of the landlords were 'foreigners' like Sir Humphrey Style of Langley Park. Both under assessments and over (in the view of the assessed at least) must have been made: in February 1645 Richard Gratwick as Constable for the Hundred signed a certificate declaring that he had over-assessed Richard Barrat of Orpington.

Because of the poor rate of the survival of documents it is very seldom possible to discover whether the amount that was collected was the sum that it should have been. Certainly the money took time to collect. In March of

1645 Gratwick 'paid in full of his arrears for 12 weeks', £10.9s.; and on December 1st he and Martin French paid arrears of £7, just in time to begin the next collection at the end of the month.

### *TAKING SIDES ?*

That a man collected taxes for the Parliamentary Government does not say that he supported Parliament. For centuries the Parish Constable had been the one responsible for tax collection among his other many and varied duties. There were penalties for refusing office when chosen by his fellow parishioners so, unless a man held very strong opinions like Sir John Oglander, he must fulfil his obligations as best he could whatever his views. On the face of it those who gave donations to Parliament might be expected to be pro-Parliament, but the pressures on all landowners to do so were overwhelming. Sir Stephen Lennard had to make a 'loan' of £50 in 1645, although to be fair he did get it back later. Pressure was also put on Government supporters. In March 1646, Sir John Thornhill, now living at Greenwich, was ordered by the Committee for the Advancement of Money to be sent into custody until he paid 'arrears' of £700; however in May his debt was discharged since 'he had paid it in Kent, and done good service there for Parliament' to boot.

One can only be tolerably certain of someone's sympathies - unless there are surviving letters such as those from Sir John Oglander and his son-in-law - where their name turns up in official records such as those of the Committee for Sequestrations, which put a ransom on the estates of suspected Royalists like Sir Stephen Lennard, or the 'returns of suspected persons'. Suspected Royalist 'delinquents' were required to 'compound' for certain sums or else go to jail. Two such in Bromley in 1651 were Robert Grandison, for the sum of £10, and Nicholas Gardiner the Chandler for a similar sum. Gardiner was still one of those under surveillance in 1656, especially as by then the Commonwealth was worrying about possible plots to bring Charles (II) back to England. He was listed along with two of the King family and two other Bromley men - Henry Gilmore and William Phillips - and at the same time John Andrews, another local man, was actually arrested at the Crown public house in Shoe Lane in London.

Mr. Henry King had been accused of being 'an officer in arms against Parliament in the Kent Insurrection in 1648 under Lord Goring'. His cousin Arnold was said to have also been in arms under Lord Goring and 'aided the King's party with arms and assisted in plundering and imprisoning the well-affected'. This accusation was also levied at Martin French and John Stevens.

So there was indeed a group of eight or nine Bromley men who revealed their Royalist tendencies enough to be noted, however much truth there was in these *specific* accusations (Sir Stephen Lennard was also charged in much the same way, which he strongly denied and ultimately was not proceeded against), and it must be borne in mind that fines imposed on royalist delinquents were another source of Government revenue and, in fact, largely intended as such. There must have been other royalist supporters who got away with it. By their friends shall you know them - so did Martin French's friend Ralph Watson and his son Richard also belong to this group ? And then, what of Thomas Wood, left a suit of clothes in Richard's will? He had



once been a coffin bearer for Edmund Style when a sermon against papacy was preached at the funeral, with only a frugal wake 'with bread, beer and wine but without dinner or banquet' in the best Puritan manner. What of him ?

One Bromley man who must have supported Parliament was 'Mr. Auditor George Bingley.' Mr. Bingley owned the property later known as The Rookery, near Bromley Common. He was a civil servant, glimpses of whose career can be found in the State Papers from 1630 when he was 'one of the Auditors of the Imprest' and answering a query regarding the 'rates of pay of Admirals upon the coasts of Ireland from 1580 to 1620', through 1648 when he and a colleague were to inspect the accounts for victualling the ships employed during the winter of 1642 in guarding the Narrow Seas and the Irish coast, to 1650, when he 'certified of the quantity of angel and crown gold, and silver moneys coined in the Mint from 1610-15 and 1639-47, viz., angel gold yearly



**Sir John Oglander, Kt.,** of Nunwell Priory on the Isle of Wight. A committed Royalist, he visited King Charles I in prison in Carisbrook Castle and was involved in attempts to free him. He died in 1654, leaving a treatise on estate management for his son, in which he described himself as 'an aged, somewhat corpulent man of middle stature, with a white beard and somewhat big moustaches' . . . so adding something to this formal portrait.



from 4 to 69 lbs., crown gold from 1,032 to 7,900 lbs., and silver from 2,062 to 305,464 lbs.' A man charged with many responsibilities ( gold angels were originally worth 6s.8d. and the gold crowns 5s.). For all that, when the Civil War broke out Mr.Bingley, like Sir John Thornhill, was expected to contribute his share to the Government's finances. In December 1643 the Committee for the Advancement of Money assessed him to pay £200, and like Sir John he was ordered to be brought into custody the following month for not doing so. But in Mr.Bingley's case, at the end of January he was 'respited until he receive money due by the State for his services' ; and in November 1645 the demand was even cancelled, 'there being much money due to him for services in the army, and no assessment to be levied on him in any place.' There must have been many others who supported Parliament and the Puritans with enthusiasm, but there was no call to record their names, and so their names are lost to us.



**Bromley Parish Church** - 'All that can be said with certainty' says Horsbrugh, ' is that some time between 1250 and 1400, there was constructed a Gothic church, consisting of a chancel, nave, and south aisle, with an entrance porch on the south side.' This would have changed little before the 17th century, except for the windows of the tower and the large west window, all of the Tudor period, which are shown on drawings of around 1800 before extensive rebuilding took place in about 1830. The original building, like the tower which survived a land-mine in 1941, was constructed of flint.

### *LIFE GOES ON*

Most people, for all they may have backed the movement against Archbishop Laud with his high-church leanings in the early days (and the Bishops ! ), must before long have grown tired of the war and only wished things would return to normal, although life did, on the whole, go on much as usual in this quiet area near to the protection of London. Everyone was dependent on weather and harvest, even those who lived in towns. Fortunately there seem not to have been any cold wet summers during the period. There were hot summers in 1649 and 1657 however, when the corn ripened early, and summer fevers flourished. People were born and died in those years, got married - though perhaps the new lay Register may have been lax in the recording of it - loved and quarrelled, and got themselves into trouble with the law. The Kent Assize Records from 1647 tell of John Hate of Bromley, accused of stealing two ewes worth 1s.; of Lewis Harmer, labourer, indicted for stealing 17 handkerchiefs, two bands, a woman's dressing, a cap and a coif, altogether valued at 10s.; of John Sharpe a yeoman, accused of the taking away a brown gelding worth £7; and in 1646 of the case of Roger Delve, husbandman (a smallholder). Mary Delve - his sister or daughter perhaps, it does not say - had given birth to a bastard child and two local JPs, Sir Thomas Walsingham and Edward Ady, committed her to the House of Correction at Dartford. So Roger Delve promptly 'assaulted Richard Rowland alias Watson the Constable and rescued Mary' and ended up before the Bench himself.

At this time smuggling probably did not touch Bromley, but it may be of interest that goods seized in 1647 at Gravesend, bound for Amsterdam, included Sheffield knives, lengths of cloth, silver goods and gold and silver thread, fox, squirrel and swan skins, and silk stockings. 'Concerning Lawlessness in the County' declaimed the Kent JPs in 1654 'let there be sufficient watching and warding and the Constables in each Hundred are to give Weekly Accounts to the JPs.

### *EVENTFUL TIMES*

There were only two incidents in Bromley due to the war which might have occasioned some local excitement. The first was an adventure by Sir Roger Twysden, one of the gentlemen who had organised the Kentish Petition in 1642. Being imprisoned for his pains he was released on bail on the condition he was not to go into Kent nor journey more than eight or nine miles from London. However, he decided he would 'bee freer from giving offence out of the kingdom' and so set out for France among a group of French and Portuguese returning to the Continent, 'desirous not to bee knowne but to passe through that shyre as a traveler. . In the after noone of the 9 June 1643 I came to Bromeley, where the Committee for Kent then sate . . Sir Anthony Weldon, Augustine Skinner, Sir Thomas Walsingham and others . . I was desirous to have past away as one of the croude, having then, upon some weaknesse in my head, wore a cap of hayr which they had never seene me in, which having used for some tyme I left of for the troublesomenesse and not finding the good I expected . . ' Of course he was recognised, and hustled into the Bell where the Committee was meeting. At first he tried to bluff his way out of his predicament but when Sir Anthony Weldon said that if he was not

Sir Roger Twysden he was a rogue and must be whipped, he gave in and admitted who he was. So he was sent off back to London as a prisoner escorted by an armed guard of Roundhead soldiers, which must have caused quite a stir in the town.

The second incident was a month after this, when there was the attempt by a Royalist force to infiltrate into Kent at Westerham. Colonel John Browne had been sent south to intercept them but he was to rendezvous, at Bromley, with another troop of soldiers before going any further. Browne waited in Bromley for two days, before giving up and going on alone. And even a small troop of soldiers, and the need to house and provision them and their horses, must have disrupted the even tenor of normal life for the townsfolk. And it poured with rain all the time.



**Sir Roger Twysden** of Royden Hall in East Peckham, Bart. After his brush with the forces of Parliament in Bromley, he spent some years imprisoned in the sequestered Archbishop's Palace in Lambeth. In March 1645 his fine was set at £3,000, an impossible sum to raise without income from rents and with the Government felling his woods for timber. Eventually, in 1651, this was reduced to ££450 which he managed to find, and was released and returned to Kent. His fascinating journal can be read in Vols. I-IV of *Archaeologia Cantiana*.



### *GOD SAVE THE KING !*

These two incidents apart, the Civil War and Interregnum must have been a dreary time for most, with the high taxation, no playing of games, decorous behaviour, and no feast-days to relieve the long littleness of life. What Sir Stephen thought of in 1643 as distractions and Sir John Oglander later as general calamity, and his daughter as 'these sade tymes' lasted for the best part of twenty years - almost a generation. By the late 1650s people were tired of restrictions and inept government. The gentlemen of Kent gathered to compose a last petition. The Nobility, Gentry, Ministry, and Commonalty of Kent .. deplored with sadness 'the multiplied calamities wherein we are at present involved, how friendless we are abroad and how divided at home; the loud and heart-piercing cries of the poor and the disability of the better sort to relieve them; the total decay of trade' . . . and then called for the dissolution of Parliament and a full and free election. Kent was, of course, not alone in this plea. This time, petitions were listened to, and before long General Monk was on his way to bring King Charles (II) home from exile. The King landed near Dover and his triumphant progress towards London through Kent was strewn with flowers and cheered on by kerchief waving crowds.

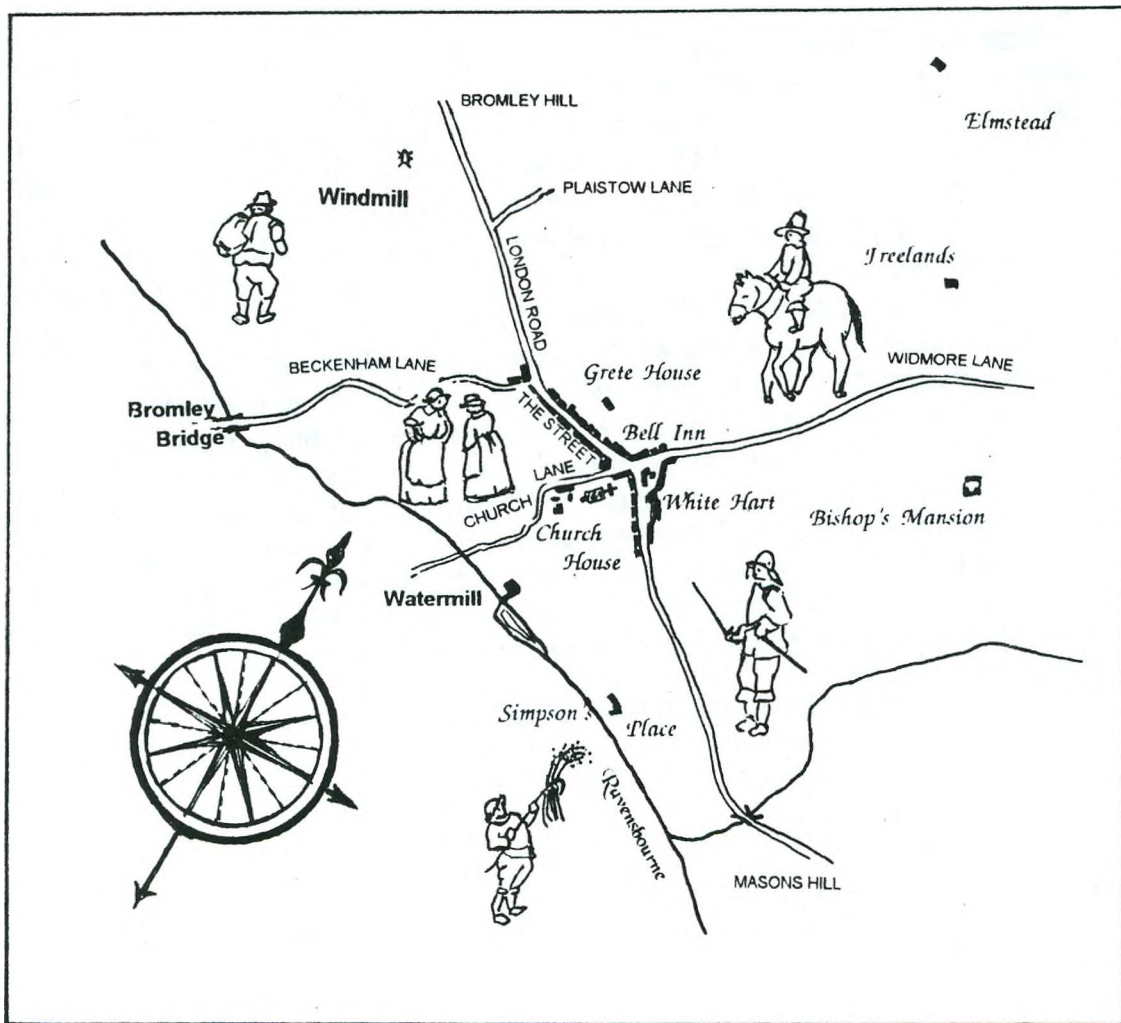
No doubt there were Bromley folk amongst them.

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### a post-script :-

*Among those rewarded for their loyalty to the Crown during the Great Rebellion and the Interregnum was :-*

**Edward King** of Bromley in the County of Kent, Gentleman, --- hath in the late unhappy times of distraction, endeavoured (as much as in him lay) the advancement of his Majesties Interest, and is at present an Officer in the Militia of that County, whereby hee may justly pretend to some marke of distinction, for the honour of himself, and his Posterity: **KNOW** yee, therefore, that I the said **Sir Edward Walker**, Knight Garter Principall King of Armes, by the power and authority annexed unto my Office of Garter and Confirmed unto mee by Letters Patents under the great Seale of England, Have given, granted and assigned, and by these presents doe give, grant and assign, unto him the said Edward King, and to the heirs and descendants of his Body forever, the Coate of Armes and Creast hereafter mentioned . . .



## *THE TOWN OF BROMLEY in the 17th CENTURY*

*(not to scale and partly conjectural)*

*A 'best match' has been made from studying Rocque's Map of 1746; that of Andrews, 'Drury and Herbert published in 1769; the Surveyors' drawings for the 1st Ordnance Survey from the 1790s; an estate plan made for Lord Gwydir of Langley Park in 1809; and the Tithe Map for Bromley of 1846; together with evidence from the other records consulted.*

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