

**The experience of war widows in
mid seventeenth-century England,
with special reference to Kent and
Sussex**

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester

by

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2017

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This thesis investigates the experience of war widows in mid seventeenth-century England by examining the county pension and sequestration schemes during the Civil Wars. It focuses on how these processes impacted the lives of women who lost their husbands in war, and how they negotiated their financial subsistence by presenting petitions. In order to demonstrate how the lives of ordinary women were changed by the wars it presents a local history of these processes, with special reference to Kent and Sussex. Additionally, the thesis considers the contemporary representations of widows in Civil-War print material and examines how this shaped the ways in which they fashioned themselves.

In doing so, it underlines the importance of county studies and local history to Civil War research. It broadens historians' understanding of the experience of women in the Civil Wars by illuminating how they lived through, and survived, the wars. Furthermore, it specifically analyses the significant role of widows in early modern society.. Finally, this thesis demonstrates the impact of the petition as a tool of the needy in early modern society. It emphasises how the presentation of supplications to higher authorities, in the form of a written petition, became an essential tool of subsistence for war widows in this period.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my superb supervisory team: to Dr Andrew Hopper for his guidance, encouragement and limitless knowledge of the Civil Wars and to Dr Katy Mair for her support, advice and persistence in seeing me through to the end. I would also like to thank the early modern team at The National Archives for their enthusiasm for the project and, in particular, Dr Adrian Ailes (recently retired) for his palaeography expertise and extraordinary depth of insight into early modern records.

Thanks go also to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding this research and for the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) programme. Throughout my PhD I have benefited from a wide range of opportunities that were only made possible by the CDP and I am enormously grateful for the experience that I have gained because of it.

I would also like to express my gratitude to friends and family for their love and understanding whilst completing this project. Finally, thank you to Oliver Wilson for marrying me in the middle of it all and for interrupting our honeymoon with a conference so that I could share some of this research.

Abbreviations and Conventions

Abbreviations

ESRO: East Sussex Record Office

JP: Justice of the Peace

KHLC: Kent History and Library Centre

PA: Parliamentary Archives

QS: Quarter Sessions

SP: State Papers

TNA: The National Archives

WSRO: West Sussex Record Office

Conventions

Monetary values will be presented in pounds (li), shillings (s), and pence (d).

Transcriptions will be presented as in the original text, with contractions expanded.

Dates will be presented in the new style, with the year beginning on the 1st of January.

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Introduction

This thesis aims to further the understanding of the Civil War experience of Parliamentarian and Royalist war widows. It will achieve this through a comprehensive overview of the records of the county pension scheme in Kent and Sussex Record Offices, and the Committees for Compounding and Sequestration at The National Archives. These records reveal how war widows of both sides engaged with, and were affected by these processes during the Civil Wars, Interregnum and Restoration. Furthermore, this thesis intends to analyse the responses of war widows to the Civil Wars through the medium of the petition. Widows of both sides, and of a variety of social statuses, relied upon supplications to higher authorities in order to access financial relief or to regain their confiscated lands. This thesis will consider how war widows crafted petitions as part of their survival strategy and wove persuasive narratives of poverty and loyalty in order to protect themselves and their children. These petitions also drew upon images of widowhood within contemporary print culture and the Bible in order to contribute to their success. Consequently, this thesis will contribute to a wider understanding of how widows engaged with the genre of petitioning in the early modern period, how society framed and understood widows, and how petitioning was used as a tool of the needy.

Widows carried a unique legal status in the early modern period. In many ways, the role of widows was largely predicated upon society's view of marriage and thus it was both their gender as well as their marital status that was significant. Technically freed from the legal restrictions of coverture, and yet still bound by society's patriarchal prescriptions, widows were legally more independent than married women but were also restricted by well-established religious and cultural fears of a woman left ungoverned. This makes them a compelling group to study in order to assess the impact of gender, marriage and social status on women's ability to act independently in this period.

According to the Protestant prescriptive writers, 'a woman's responsibilities to her dead husband extended into widowhood... a widow was merely a perpetual wife'.¹ Biblical ideals about the role of wives had come to define how it was believed women should be placed within society.² The ideal patriarchal model, in which fathers and husbands were placed as heads of the household, shaped women's experiences. Early modern women were also defined by the legal restraints of marriage. Coverture 'eclipsed the legal identity of a married woman' leaving them unable to sign a contract or obtain credit in her own name.³ In widowhood, a woman was entitled to inherit a dowry or jointure of her late husband's lands as a provision in law.⁴ Aristocratic widows, in particular, were familiar with the process of obtaining these rights and other assets that they themselves had brought to the marriage.⁵ The equity courts were a particular arena in which widows exercised legal agency and attempted to recover their inheritance.⁶ This thesis will highlight the varied roles of widows: as mothers who supported their children, as late wives who were influenced by the choices that their husbands had made, and as independent actors in public administrative and legal contexts.

This Introduction will begin by outlining the two main government processes that form the historical basis for this study: the county pension scheme and sequestration. These sections will describe in detail the nature of each scheme nationally and define the parameters, in place and in time, for this study. Secondly, this Introduction will turn to the three key areas of historiography which underlie the thesis: poverty and poor relief, women in the Civil Wars, and civilians in the Civil Wars. Thirdly, it will outline the key methodology of this thesis in relation to the specific source material found within

¹ Barbara Toss, 'The virtuous widow in Protestant England', in Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (eds.), *Widowhood in medieval and early modern Europe* (New York: Longman, 1999), p. 67.

² Ann Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 10-11.

³ Amy L. Erickson, *Women and property in early modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 3; see also Barbara J. Harris, *English aristocratic women, 1450-1550: Marriage and family, property and careers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 18; for how women could operate independently in equity courts see John H. Baker, *An introduction to English legal history* (London: Butterworths, 2002), p. 486.

⁴ Baker, *An introduction to English legal history*, pp. 269-270.

⁵ Harris, *English aristocratic women*, pp. 130-135.

⁶ Tim Stretton, 'Women, custom and equity in the court of requests', in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts in early modern England* (London: UCL Press, 1994), pp. 177-198.

local and national record offices. Finally, it will outline the structure for the thesis and present a justification for the division of material and two part structure. Throughout this thesis both Parliamentarian and Royalist war widows will be considered, often alongside one another, with the aim of providing a broad view of the lives and experiences of women who lost their husbands during these wars.

The county pension scheme

Whereas divers Persons now are or hereafter may be, in the Service of the Parliament, in the present War, undertaken for the Preservation of the King's Majesty's Person, the Defence of the Religion and Laws of the Realm, and of the just Liberties of the Subjects, who have little or nothing to maintain themselves, their Wives, and Children, but by their own Labours: The Lords and Commons, for their better Encouragement in the Service, do Order and Declare, That they, the Lords and Commons, will provide competent Maintenance and Allowance for such of them as shall be maimed...And in case any such Person shall be slain, that they will make Provision for the Livelihood of their Wives or Children.⁷

The above quotation is a section of the Parliamentary Ordinance passed on 24 October 1642, the day after the Battle of Edgehill, which promised financial relief to wounded Parliamentary soldiers as well as to their widows and children. This provision demonstrated a clear change from the preceding Elizabethan Act of 1601 which allowed relief to wounded soldiers and mariners only.⁸ The Ordinance stated that the provision was 'for their [the soldier's] better Encouragement in their Service' which suggests something about the context in which it was enacted: while Parliament was attempting to muster its armies to fight the King's forces. This Ordinance also stated that only those who, firstly, had fought in 'the Service of the Parliament' and,

⁷ 'October 1642: Ordinance for Maintenance to be given to the Wives and Children of those that are killed; and to maimed Soldiers', in C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), pp. 36-37.

⁸ John Raithby (ed.), *The statutes of the realm* (London: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), pp. 966-968: 43 Eliz. c. 3; Geoffrey Hudson, 'Disabled veterans and the state in early modern England', in David Gerber (ed.), *Disabled veterans in history* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 118-122.

secondly, who were 'maimed, and thereby disabled by their Labour to provide for themselves' would be eligible for relief. In order to access financial relief maimed soldiers and war widows had to approach their local Quarter Sessions bench with a petition and a certificate of military service from their Officer. Following a successful supplication, a petitioner would be granted financial relief in the form of a pension or one-off gratuity by the sitting Justices of the Peace. That was administered by the county's Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers on a quarterly basis.

Parliament intended only to administer relief to the widows of those soldiers who had fought and died for them. The Royalists did attempt to administer relief to their maimed soldiers but the treatment and welfare of the King's sick and wounded troops 'compared badly with Parliament's achievements' and they did not attempt a central system of relief for war widows.⁹ Consequently, Royalist war widows were not eligible to receive county pensions until after the Restoration and the passing of a new Pension Act in 1662 (although some did receive relief between 1660 and 1662).¹⁰ This Act contained similar provision for war widows and maimed soldiers as before the Restoration but, instead, only those who had always fought for the King could approach the Quarter Sessions for relief. Poverty continued to be a central requirement of entitlement to relief. The Act fell into abeyance in 1679 when Parliament did not seek to renew the provision.¹¹ Therefore, research on the county pension scheme in this thesis falls within the chronological boundaries of its provision in law: between 1642 and 1679. There were maimed soldiers who were granted pensions prior to 1642 (as a result of the pre-dating Elizabethan provision for maimed soldiers and mariners) but it was only after this date that war widows were entitled to provision.

⁹ Eric Gruber von Arni, *Justice to the maimed soldier: Nursing, medical care and welfare for sick and wounded soldiers and their families during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, 1642-1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 37.

¹⁰ 'Charles II, 1662: An Act for the releife of poore and maimed Officers and Souldiers who have faithfully served His Majesty and His Royal Father in the late Wars', in John Raithby, (ed.) *The statutes of the realm: Volume 5, 1628-8* (London: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), pp. 389-390; see Chapter 1.

¹¹ 'House of Commons Journal Volume 9: 2 April 1679', in *Journal of the House of Commons* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), p. 582; Hudson, 'Disabled veterans and the state', p. 140 (fn. 26).

This thesis will analyse the records of the county pension scheme in Kent and Sussex in order to discover how Parliamentary war widows (and Royalist war widows after the Restoration) experienced this period. While the county pension scheme was a national process, it was implemented by local government. Therefore, in order for it to be studied thoroughly, a local approach needs to be taken. Geoffrey Hudson, David Appleby and Mark Stoyale have already completed research on the county pension scheme in other areas of the country.¹² The records of the Quarter Sessions in Kent and Sussex are relatively complete and so provide sufficient evidence for a comprehensive outline of the process. While the conclusions that this thesis makes, therefore, will be limited geographically, they will be based on thorough analysis of the records. They will also be grounded within an understanding of the local, political and social conditions that the process was operating within.

Kent

Early modern Kent carried close physical and commercial ties to London but there was also 'a sense of common, county-wide concerns' shared amongst its population.¹³ There were considerable variations in landscape, agriculture, society and wealth across the county. For example, the areas of marshlands in the southernmost tip of the county suffered high levels of mortality due to disease and were less wealthy in comparison to other parts of Kent.¹⁴ Nevertheless, during this period Kent did see innovation in farming and agriculture and Joan Thirsk argued that even the marshlands 'had their share of hopeful residents and outsiders' to make the most of the opportunities.¹⁵ The diversity in landscape was reflected in diversity in population density across the county. The marshlands around New Romney were much less

¹² Geoffrey Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money: war widows and the courts in seventeenth-century England', in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts in early modern England* (London: UCL Press, 1994), pp. 146–69; David Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons? Maimed soldiers and war widows in Essex, 1642–62', *Essex Archaeology and History*, 32 (2001), pp. 209–21; Mark Stoyale, "'Memories of the maimed": The testimony of Charles I's former soldiers, 1660-1730', *History*, 88, no.290 (2003), pp. 204-226.

¹³ Michael Zell, 'Introduction', in Michael Zell (ed.), *Early modern Kent: 1540-1640* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), p. 3; See also: Christopher W. Chalklin, *Seventeenth-century Kent: A social and economic history* (London: Longmans, 1965), pp. 1-4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁵ Joan Thirsk, 'Agriculture in Kent, 1540-1640', in Michael Zell (ed.), *Early modern Kent*, p. 99, 102-103.

densely populated than the more industrialised parts of north and mid Kent.¹⁶ Kent also had an unusual number of small towns that held charters as well as three Cinque Ports (Dover, Hythe, New Romney) which, to a great extent, held their own independent jurisdiction.¹⁷

For the purposes of local government, Kent was divided into hundreds which were grouped into lathes. Many medieval structures of government and office holding, such as the High Sheriff, endured in early modern Kent although their importance was declining.¹⁸ One institution of local government which gained importance during the early modern period was the commission of the peace (later named Justices of the Peace).¹⁹ These men were selected by the Crown and had administrative as well as legal responsibilities within the county which included sitting at the Quarter Sessions courts. In Kent, the men were drawn both from the 'respectable, or well-connected, lesser gentry' as well as the 'very wealthiest, "county" families'.²⁰ In addition to these instruments of local government, the people of Kent were advocated for in Parliament by men representing Canterbury, Maidstone, Queenborough, Rochester, and the Cinque ports.²¹

During the Civil War years the people of Kent witnessed significant upheaval. Aside from the dramatic events of 1648, Kent 'experienced little or nothing of the devastation of armies during the Civil war'.²² Yet, the county 'never knew real peace'.²³ There was some military activity within its borders, including small scale rebellions in 1643 and 1645, that reflected unrest within the county.²⁴ More significantly, many of the events of the Second Civil War took place within Kent and the Royalist rebellions within the county resulted in the Battle of Maidstone in 1648. A victory for Parliament,

¹⁶ Zell, 'Introduction', p. 4.

¹⁷ Patricia Hyde and Michael Zell, 'Governing the county', in Michael Zell (ed.), *Early modern Kent*, pp. 8, 10.

¹⁸ Hyde and Zell, 'Governing the county', pp. 12-14.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

²² Alan Everitt, *The community of Kent and the great rebellion, 1640-1660* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), p. 186.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-200; F. D. Johns, 'The royalist rising and parliamentary mutinies of 1645 in west Kent', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 110, (1992), pp. 1-15.

this battle nevertheless did not conclude unrest within the south and many Kent soldiers went on to fight in the fateful siege of Colchester.²⁵ In addition to these military engagements, Kent's location made it strategically important for supply to London and coastal defences.²⁶ Parliament imposed its own form of control over the county through a County Committee which resulted in many members of the parochial gentry taking up positions of county authority.²⁷ Additionally, unrest within the county, in the form of active Royalism and anti-Parliamentarian sentiment, meant that 'the county was highly destabilised' during the wars.²⁸

Sussex

Sussex, like Kent, was geographically close to London. However, unlike Kent, it remained fairly isolated from the capital because of the bad roads and transport networks.²⁹ The length of the county also made several subdivisions necessary. It was divided into hundreds which were grouped into six rapes. These rapes were grouped into two large divisions: East and West Sussex.³⁰ The separation into East and West was reflected in the two distinct county benches which held separate Quarter Sessions. The Eastern bench usually met in Lewes and the Western bench generally met in Chichester (although they also occasionally met in Arundel or Petworth). For one session a year, in midsummer, the benches joined for a combined Session which normally took place in Lewes in East Sussex. However, generally this session was packed with Justices from the east part and proportionally fewer western Justices attended. Those who did were invariably from the Bramber rape which was the furthest west.³¹ This division had been a concern in the Elizabethan period with the Privy Council issuing a reprimand in 1584 that there was little opportunity for 'generall

²⁵ Ibid., 263-266; Ian Gentles, *The English revolution and the wars in the three kingdoms, 1638-1652* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), pp. 335-337.

²⁶ Jacqueline Eales, 'Kent and the English Civil Wars, 1640-1660', in Frederick Lansberry (ed.), *Government and politics in Kent, 1640-1914* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), p. 1.

²⁷ Chalklin, *Seventeenth-century Kent*, p. 211-212.

²⁸ Eales, 'Kent and the English Civil Wars', p. 3.

²⁹ Anthony Fletcher, *A county community in peace and war: Sussex 1600-1660* (London: Longman, 1975), p. 5.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 134-135; B. C. Redwood, 'Introduction', in B. C. Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book, 1642-1649* (Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1954), p. xx.

³¹ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 135.

conference and resolution' within the county.³² Nevertheless, JPs were unwilling to travel the full width of the county and the structure persisted. During the 1630s the 'capture of the eastern Bench by the Puritan caucus' led to the two Benches becoming even more autonomous.³³

Similarly to Kent, Sussex was dominated by a group of gentry families which led to a certain measure of social stability within the county.³⁴ However, the Civil Wars, and the years around them, brought unrest in social, religious and political spheres. The Laudian Richard Montagu was Bishop of Chichester between 1628 and 1638 and his view on matters such as predestination put him 'fundamentally at odds with many of the Sussex gentry'.³⁵ Also correspondingly to Kent, there was a significant tradition of radical puritanism within the county and during Queen Mary's reign several Lollard heretics had been burnt.³⁶ It was not just religious discontent which brought unrest to Sussex during the mid-seventeenth century, however. Parliamentary war time administration within the county meant that several members of the lesser gentry climbed to take positions of power.³⁷ The County Committee, less powerful than the Kentish equivalent, was still distrusted by many who resented their power.³⁸ Some of the antipathy against Parliamentary control was manifested in an outbreak of the clubmen movement (although short lived) in September 1645.³⁹

The county did see some military engagements at the start of the wars. In 1642 Royalists took hold of the garrison at Chichester which led to a siege by Parliamentarians Sir William Waller and Colonel Morley.⁴⁰ In December 1643 Royalists again made their move within the county by capturing and garrisoning Arundel town and castle, thus revealing the 'weakness of the parliamentary control of the western

³² Ibid., p. 135.

³³ Ibid., p. 243.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 76.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 61; Jacqueline Eales, *Community and disunity: Kent and the English Civil Wars, 1640-1649* (Faversham: Keith Dickson Books, 2001), p. 2.

³⁷ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 25.

³⁸ Fletcher, *A county community*, pp. 271-272, 325-326; Everitt, *The community of Kent*, pp. 126-185.

³⁹ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 272.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 258-263.

rapes'.⁴¹ Those civilians who lived through these engagements would have felt the impact of quartered armies, plunder, destruction and disease.⁴² By 1644 'the war was in fact won within the borders of Sussex' but the lack of sustained military activity should not detract from the importance of the political upheavals of this period to the people of Sussex.⁴³ Anthony Fletcher argued that the wars 'brought bitterness and venom to county society'.⁴⁴ Thus, Sussex shared many aspects of Civil War experience with Kent: Parliamentary rule by Committee, some military skirmishes, as well as social and religious unrest. An analysis of the county pension scheme will further illuminate the similarities and differences between the Civil War experiences of their populations.

Sequestration and composition

When Parliament governed counties, as they did in Kent and Sussex, they were able to punish the Royalists who resided within them. Therefore, this thesis will also examine the experience of Royalist war widows whose lands were sequestered during the Civil Wars and Interregnum. In March 1643 Parliament decreed that the real and personal estates of 'notorious delinquents' who had 'been the causers or Instruments of the publike calamities' should be confiscated. They ordered that the profits generated by this venture should contribute towards the ever growing financial demands of the war effort.⁴⁵ As well as the above general definition, this Ordinance described 'delinquents' as those who 'have raised or shall raise Arms against the Parliament' and those who had contributed money or aid to the King's forces. A subsequent Ordinance passed in August 1643 outlined some additions to Parliament's definition of a 'delinquent' and in doing so vastly expanded the scope for land confiscations.⁴⁶ For example, this Ordinance described all who might be 'voluntarily absenting themselves from the usual places of their abodes' and going to 'any of the Kings Armies' as liable to

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 267,

⁴² Charles Carlton, 'Civilians', in John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds.), *The Civil Wars: A military history of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 272-305.

⁴³ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 269.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 278.

⁴⁵ 'March 1643: An Ordinance for sequestering notorious Delinquents Estates', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 106-117.

⁴⁶ 'August 1643: An Ordinance for Explanation of a former Ordinance for Sequestration of Delinquents Estates with some Enlargements', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 254-260.

sequestration; explicitly linking allegiance to a person's residence in the increasingly divided country. It also included those who had been found to be 'preventing or avoiding the payment of any taxes or assessments laid upon them by any Ordinance of both Houses of Parliament'. In this way, the Ordinance allowed for those in 'arms' against the Parliament as well as those who had not been actively supporting the Parliament (for example by not paying their assessment correctly) to be labelled as in opposition to them and therefore worthy of sequestration.⁴⁷

The Committee at Haberdashers Hall, known as the Sequestration Committee, centrally controlled the process and it was made up of a mixture of MPs from the Lords and the Commons. The members were drawn from a variety of moderate Parliamentarians but the side-changer Henry Rich, Earl of Holland, had his name written and subsequently crossed out and replaced on the 1643 document: illustrating the tumultuous nature of allegiance in the early stages of war.⁴⁸ The Westminster Committee issued orders to the local committees who were actually administering the confiscation and collection of rents from Royalist estates and heard appeals from 'delinquents' wishing for their lands back. It was not long, however, before Parliament began to allow Royalists (with some exceptions, for example Catholics in arms) to pay a fine to regain their estates at a portion of their two yearly value.⁴⁹ In 1645 the rules for compounding were set out and for a while the work of the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents ran in parallel with the Committee for Sequestrations. This continued until 1650 when all cases were transferred to the 'Committee at Goldsmiths Hall', or the Committee for Compounding and seven civil administrators were appointed to do the 'managing of all and every the Estates of Delinquents and Popish Recusants, that already are, or hereafter shall be under Sequestration'.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Parliament also laid out strict rules for the confiscation of the estates of those proved to be 'popish recusants' and in particular those who fought for the King.

⁴⁸ 'The order of the Lords House for a committee to see the Ordinance for the seizing of delinquents estates put in Execution', March 1643, TNA SP 20/1, f. 3r.

⁴⁹ Mary A. E. Green (ed.), 'Introduction', *Calendar of the proceedings of the committee for compounding with delinquents, 1643-1660* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889-1893), p. x.

⁵⁰ 'April 1650: An Act empowering several Comissioners to put in Execution all and every the Powers and Authorities heretofore given to the Commissioners for compounding with Delinquents', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 382-383; Gerald Aylmer, *The state's servants: The civil service of the English republic, 1649-1660* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 210-221.

This change in attitude to the administering of sequestration and composition occurred shortly before Parliament began to free itself entirely of the management of delinquent and recusant estates. This may have been because the system was often ineffective and a source of discord between local and central government.⁵¹ The final accounts page of sequestration agents frequently recorded an overall loss of income.⁵² Therefore, three Acts of Sales during 1651 and 1652 put up for sale the estates of delinquents who had refused to, or been unable to, compound for their estates.⁵³ Potential buyers negotiated purchases through the Treason Trustees at Drury House.⁵⁴ Additionally, on 24 February 1652 the Act of Oblivion pardoned all treasons committed before 3 September 1651 and allowed all delinquents whose estates had not been seized since then to regain them without a fine.⁵⁵ With fewer and fewer estates to manage, the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents gradually began to wind up its business and in 1654 the former County Committees were also dissolved.⁵⁶ Apart from a small revival in 1659 to punish those implicated in General Booth's uprising, the business of sequestration had ceased to be so important for the regime.

This thesis will analyse the petitions submitted by Royalist war widows who wished to remove the sequestration from their estates. The chronological framework for this research will reflect the national ordering of the process. Therefore, it will consider the records from when the process was enacted, in 1643, to when it ended in 1659. Additionally, unlike the research on the county pension scheme, this work will have a broadly national focus. War widows did petition the Committees for Compounding and Sequestration in significant numbers during this period, but not in such great numbers that makes a national study unfeasible. Therefore, all of the petitions submitted by Royalist widows to the committees during the period will be analysed.

⁵¹ Everitt, *The community of Kent*, p. 161; Fletcher, *A county community*, pp. 331-333.

⁵² Account of sequestered estates in Kent, 17 July 1646, TNA, SP 28/210/3, pp. 81-82.

⁵³ 'July 1651: An Act for the sale of several Lands and Estates forfeited to the Commonwealth for Treason', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 520-545; 'August 1652: An Act for several Lands and Estates forfeited to the Commonwealth for Treason, appointed to be sold for the use of the Navy', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 591-598; 'November 1652: An Additional Act for Sale of several Lands and Estates forfeited to the Commonwealth for Treason', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 623-652.

⁵⁴ Unfortunately, most of the records for this committee no longer exist.

⁵⁵ 'February 1652: An Act of General Pardon and Oblivion', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 565-577.

⁵⁶ Green, 'Preface', *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding*, p. xxi.

There was also an important local aspect to the sequestration process because the burden of the administration fell on local committeemen and sequestration agents who were responsible for the 'discovery' of estates and managing them whilst they were under Parliament's control. These local committees kept accounts that were submitted to the central committees to indicate how much money was being collected from sequestered estates, and how much was expended on them. They reveal something about the nature of the process within each county as well as the interaction between local and central authorities during the wars.⁵⁷ Therefore, this thesis will also consider the records of the Kent and Sussex Committee for Sequestrations to add to its analysis of the process.⁵⁸

Historiography

This section will outline three main areas of historiography on which this thesis is based: women and the Civil Wars, civilians and the Civil Wars and poor relief in the early modern period. The research that has been done on these areas provides an important foundation for the methodology, research questions and intended outcomes of this thesis. There are also some specific areas of historiography that are relevant to the source material analysed in this thesis: research on the county pension scheme and the county community, and on sequestration and composition. These will be discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, respectively.

Women and the Civil War

Women, often perceived to be absent from the dramas of the battlefield and the politics of Westminster, are inconspicuous in many historical narratives of the English Civil War. An early pioneer in early modern women's history, Alice Clark, argued that there was a 'gulf' that separated the lives of women from the Restoration period from those of the Elizabethan era.⁵⁹ Clark, however, generally focused her attention on exemplars of extraordinary married females and came away with some idealistic

⁵⁷ For more on the interaction between local and central accounts committees, see Ann Hughes, "The accounts of the kingdom": Memory, community and the English Civil War', *Past & Present*, 233, no.1 (2016), pp. 311-229.

⁵⁸ These can be found: TNA, SP 28/210, 214.

⁵⁹ Alice Clark, *Working life of women in the seventeenth century* (London: Routledge, 1919), pp. 2-3.

conclusions concerning the positive influence of the period on the role of women.⁶⁰ It took a wave of feminist historians in the late twentieth century to put women back into the centre of the narrative and to ask some fundamental questions about the role and impact of the Civil War on women in the seventeenth century.⁶¹ Since then, studies have been published covering among many things: prominent aristocratic females, the collective role of some women in politics and the way that religious radicalism impacted upon the lives of women.⁶²

The field of radical religious separatism is rich with examples of women who were prominent through the works that they printed or the prophecies that they preached. The Quaker movement, in particular, contained women who were motivated by personal 'private' religious beliefs to interact and assert themselves in public spaces.⁶³ Patricia Crawford has argued that in this period women used religious arguments and were motivated by their consciences to justify their involvement in the public sphere. In doing so they stepped outside of traditional roles in ways that were perceived by many as potentially dangerous.⁶⁴ Protestantism more generally has been assessed for the way in which it attributed roles to women, particularly attitudes towards marriage, for example in the work of Anthony Fletcher.⁶⁵ Puritanism in this period also appears

⁶⁰ Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution*, pp. 2-5; Jacqueline Eales, *Women in early modern England 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1998), pp. 5-8; Elizabeth Foyster, 'Gender relations', in Barry Coward (ed.), *A companion to Stuart Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 116-117.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Foyster, 'Gender relations', p. 111; Hughes, 'Gender and politics in Leveller literature', in Susan D. Amussen and Mark Kishlansky (eds.), *Political culture and cultural politics in early modern England: Essays presented to David Underdown* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 162.

⁶² See for example: Michelle A. White, *Henrietta Maria and the English Civil Wars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Patricia Crawford, "'The poorest she": Women and citizenship in early modern England', in Michael Mendle (ed.), *The Putney debates of 1647: The army, the Levellers, and the English state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 197-218; Maria Magro, 'Spiritual autobiography and radical sectarian women's discourse: Anna Trapnel and the bad girls of the English revolution', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 34, no.2 (2004), pp. 405-437.

⁶³ Patricia Crawford, 'The challenges to patriarchalism: How did the revolution affect women?', in John S. Morrill (ed.), *Revolution and restoration: England in the 1650s* (London: Collins & Brown, 1992), p. 120.

⁶⁴ Patricia Crawford, 'Public duty, conscience and women in early modern England', in John S. Morrill, Paul Slack and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *Public duty and private conscience in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 57; see also Foyster, 'Gender relations', p. 123.

⁶⁵ Diane Willen, 'Godly women in early modern England: Puritanism and gender', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43, no.4 (1992), pp. 561-580; Anthony Fletcher, 'The Protestant idea of marriage in early modern England', in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (eds.), *Religion, culture and society in early modern Britain: Essays in honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 161-181.

to have empowered women to act outside of their prescribed private household role.⁶⁶ Finally, Maria Magro has argued that there is evidence of an emerging collective female consciousness in this period in the realm of radical religion and that this could be acted on, for example in the life of the prophetess Anna Trapnel.⁶⁷

Closely linked to the investigation of the role of women in the religious changes of the Civil War is the study of women's involvement in the political upheavals of the period. These two areas are particularly closely allied since women's political action often stemmed out of their religious beliefs. A prime example of this is women involved in the collective Leveller petitioning of the period.⁶⁸ This was not the only wave of female petitioning that occurred in the period; Andrea Button and Patricia Higgins, for example, have studied the petitions of non-radical women on a national and local scale.⁶⁹ In addition to this there is evidence of women taking the Protestation of 1642 and even attempting to vote in Parliamentary elections.⁷⁰ There is scope for historians to assess the political role of women even beyond these well documented examples. Lois Schwoerer for example, in her study of women's role in the Glorious Revolution, has argued that women could have a role in the politics of the period through patronage networks and kinship ties.⁷¹ It has also been argued that women could demonstrate a sense of duty and even an awareness of citizenship in regard to their

⁶⁶ Willen, 'Godly women in early modern England', pp. 570-578; Eales, "'An ancient mother in our Israel': Mary, Lady Vere", in Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (eds.), *The intellectual culture of puritan women, 1558-1680* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 84-95.

⁶⁷ Magro, 'Spiritual autobiography and radical sectarian women's discourse', pp. 405-437.

⁶⁸ Hughes, 'Gender and politics in Leveller literature' pp. 162-188; Crawford, "'The poorest she": women and citizenship in early modern England', pp. 197-218.

⁶⁹ Andrea Button, 'Royalist women petitioners in south-west England, 1655-62', *The Seventeenth Century*, 15, (2000), pp. 53-66; Patricia Higgins, 'The reactions of women, with special reference to women petitioners', in Brian S. Manning (ed.), *Politics, religion and the English Civil War* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), pp. 179-224.

⁷⁰ Sara H. Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in early modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 396-399; Edward Vallance, 'Protestation, vow, covenant and engagement: Swearing allegiance in the English Civil War', *Historical Research*, 75, no.190 (2002), p. 412; David Cressy, 'The protestation protested, 1641 and 1642', *The Historical Journal*, 45, no.2 (2002), pp. 251-79.

⁷¹ Lois G. Schwoerer, 'Women and the glorious revolution', *Albion*, 18, no.2 (1986), pp. 195-218.

place in the parish and local community.⁷² We can see this in the fact that many women participated in the food and enclosure riots of the century.⁷³

Despite this, tensions remained inherent in women's public roles within both religion and politics. Diane Willen discussed the 'Godly women' of Civil War society and has argued that godliness was a means by which women were able to operate outside of the private spheres of their homes.⁷⁴ However, while women may have been permitted to speak out publicly within certain religious groups their place continued to be limited by their sex.⁷⁵ This was also pertinent to the lives of the female Levellers and their interaction with politics in the late 1640s. Ann Hughes has argued that the female Levellers who intervened in public politics, most notably of course the wives of Leveller leaders, framed their actions within a desire to preserve the household and familial unity.⁷⁶ Similarly, Hudson's study has shown that war widows who petitioned for pensions grounded their petitions in language of deference and adherence to the traditional order.⁷⁷ Patriarchal modes of speech, which were embedded in the petitioner's consciousness as well as in those receiving it, continued to influence any form of public political expression.⁷⁸

This thesis will build upon this work by looking at the ways in which war widows of both sides engaged with political processes during the wars. It will assess the impact that gender had on ordinary people's involvement with local and national government in the period. Furthermore, this research will add to work on collective female petitioning in the period to consider the significance of individual widows' petitioning in the period. It will suggest that these petitions, while they did not loom as large in

⁷² Crawford, 'Public duty, conscience and women in early modern England', pp. 57-76; Bernard Capp, *When gossips meet: Women, family and neighbourhood in early modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 2-29.

⁷³ Eales, *Women in Early Modern England*, p. 56.

⁷⁴ Willen, 'Godly women in early modern England', p. 580.

⁷⁵ David R. Como, 'Women, prophecy, and authority in early Stuart puritanism', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 61, no.2 (1998), pp. 203-222.

⁷⁶ Hughes, 'Gender and politics in Leveller literature', pp. 176-181.

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Hudson, 'Arguing disability: Ex-servicemen's own stories in early modern England, 1590-1790', in Roberta Bivins and John V. Pickstone (eds.), *Medicine, madness, and social history: Essays in honour of Roy Porter* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 104-117.

⁷⁸ Alison Thorne, 'Women's petitionary letters and early seventeenth-century treason trials', *Women's Writing*, 13, no.1 (2006), pp. 23-43.

the public consciousness as collective supplications, did shape women's experience of the war and the way in which they were perceived. Petitions formed part of a survival strategy for many widows. They constructed effective narratives and fashioned themselves in ways that engaged with the language and processes of the powerful.

Civilians and the Civil War

Barbara Donagan, in her influential study *War in England 1642-1649*, argued that it is evident how 'inextricably the military and civilian experiences of war were intertwined'.⁷⁹ This was partly because both sides relied upon extracting resources from civilians in the areas they controlled.⁸⁰ During the Royalist occupation of northern England 1642-1644 the locals knew the period as the 'Great Sesse' because of the incredibly high levels of taxation that were inflicted upon them.⁸¹ For a large proportion of society the economic impact of the army went beyond taxation. The deliberate halting of trade, for example in Royalist Newcastle to starve London of coal, was used as a deliberate policy to debilitate the enemy.⁸² Additionally, as a consequence of the tactics of both sides 'the words plunder and plundered, relatively recent coinages in England, had become deeply embedded in the language of local people'.⁸³ The Parliamentarian Colonel Fox claimed that he maintained his garrison 'by such means as he from time to time drew out of the bowels of the enemy'.⁸⁴ Officers frequently complained that their soldiers were ill equipped and ill financed and, either as a calculated policy or as an unfortunate side effect, free quarter and plunder were a constant threat. However, Donagan reminds us that there were limits to the sufferings

⁷⁹ Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642-1649* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 11.

⁸⁰ Gavin Robinson, *Horses, people and parliament in the English Civil War: Extracting resources and constructing allegiance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 3-4.

⁸¹ Martyn Bennett, *The Civil Wars experienced: Britain and Ireland, 1638-1661* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 17.

⁸² Gentles, *The English revolution*, p. 441.

⁸³ Ann Hughes, "'The accounts of the kingdom'", p. 328.

⁸⁴ Andrew Hopper, "'Tinker' fox and the politics of garrison warfare in the west midlands, 1643-50", *Midland History*, 24, (1999), p. 105.

of the civilian population when an army was well ordered and the bipartisan military codes of honour were followed.⁸⁵

The types of warfare that took place during these wars also had long and short term impacts on civilian livelihoods. Garrisons formed a fundamental part of the strategies of the English Civil Wars. They aimed to prevent the revolt of local civilians, maintain lines of communication and establish control of an area that may well have been isolated from other friendly territory.⁸⁶ However, they were a 'regrettable necessity' because of the expense involved in maintaining them and because of the effect that they had on local communities.⁸⁷ One of the issues affecting civilians living in proximity to a stationed garrison was violence amongst the soldiers (Donagan observed that this appears to have been more common amongst Royalist troops).⁸⁸ Ronan Bennett has also conducted a study of the soldiery in Yorkshire and concluded that throughout the period 'there was a constant undercurrent of tension between civilians and soldiers'.⁸⁹ While civilians were not often collateral damage in large pitched battles, it was much more likely that they could become caught up in smaller skirmishes between soldiers and the assaults that followed sieges.⁹⁰

Carlton has estimated that of 645 military engagements in England, 198 (31%) were sieges and in them 20,981 people lost their lives.⁹¹ The lot of the civilian during a siege was to endure starvation, disease, and the many atrocities that could be committed during the storm at its conclusion.⁹² In theory, and usually in practice, there were codes of conduct which governed the surrender of a fortified town or city and which

⁸⁵ Donagan, 'The web of honour: Soldiers, Christians, and gentlemen in the English Civil War', *The Historical Journal*, 44, no.2 (2001), pp. 365-389; Donagan, 'Codes and conduct in the English Civil War', *Past & Present*, 118 (1988), pp. 65-95.

⁸⁶ Ronald Hutton and Wylie Reeves, 'Sieges and fortifications', in John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds.), *The Civil Wars: A military history of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 199.

⁸⁷ Hutton and Reeves, 'Sieges and fortifications', p. 200.

⁸⁸ Donagan, *War in England*, pp. 247-249.

⁸⁹ Ronan Bennett, 'War and disorder: Policing the soldiery in Civil War Yorkshire', in Mark C. Fissel (ed.), *War and government in Britain, 1598-1650* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 250.

⁹⁰ Carlton, 'Civilians', p. 273.

⁹¹ Carlton, *Going to the wars: The experience of the English Civil Wars* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 155.

⁹² Michael Braddick, *God's fury, England's fire: A new history of the English Civil Wars* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 394; Carlton, 'The impact of the fighting', in John S. Morrill (ed.), *The impact of the English Civil War* (London: Collins & Brown, 1991), p. 29.

attempted to restrict atrocities and plundering.⁹³ Nonetheless, we are left with some horrifying tales of violence committed against women and children, and examples of civilian interests and safety being subordinated to military success.⁹⁴ Sieges also left a scar on the landscape of many cities of England because of the property destruction carried out during them. Stephen Porter has estimated that during the Civil Wars 150 towns and 50 villages suffered war damage.⁹⁵ A large amount of this devastation was a consequence of the nature of siege warfare: land had to be cleared for earthworks, sconces and bastions which almost inevitably entailed the loss of turf and pasture to face the earthworks and the destruction of any houses built up against or outside the city walls.⁹⁶ Mark Stoye has surveyed the property damage in the city of Exeter. He argues that as a consequence of multiple sieges and defences 'the war's events had crippled the city, rendering between a third and half of the inhabitants homeless'.⁹⁷

Furthermore, civilians were exposed to the spread of infectious and often deadly diseases which may have killed as many, if not more, people than the combat itself.⁹⁸ Joan Dils studied the mortality rates in Berkshire and concluded that 'the connection between heavy troop concentration and high civilian mortality is very positive'.⁹⁹ The country as a whole also suffered from outbreaks of plague in the 1640s which were brought about partly by the movement of soldiers, garrisons, as well as overcrowding within cities.¹⁰⁰ Despite this, Pennington has argued that much of a civilian's experience of war depended on the area that they lived in.¹⁰¹ Some areas saw little military action for most of the First Civil War and their citizens had a starkly different

⁹³ Donagan, 'The web of honour', p. 379.

⁹⁴ Donagan, *War in England*, p. 312.

⁹⁵ Gentles, *The English revolution*, p. 439; Stephen Porter, *Destruction in the English Civil Wars* (Farrington: Alan Sutton, 1994), p. 65.

⁹⁶ Gentles, *The English revolution*, p. 442; Hutton and Reeves, 'Sieges and fortifications', p. 203; Stoye, 'Whole streets converted to ashes': Property destruction in Exeter during the English Civil War', *Southern History*, 16, (1994), pp. 67-77; Porter, *Destruction in the English Civil Wars*, pp. 64-65.

⁹⁷ Stoye, 'Whole streets converted to ashes', p. 77.

⁹⁸ Carlton, 'Civilians', p. 272.

⁹⁹ Joan A. Dils, 'Epidemics, mortality and the Civil War in Berkshire 1642-6', in Roger C. Richardson (ed.), *The English Civil Wars: Local aspects* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), p. 152.

¹⁰⁰ Ian Roy, 'England turned Germany? The aftermath of the Civil War in its European context', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 28, (1978), p. 142.

¹⁰¹ Donald Pennington, 'The war and the people', in John S. Morrill (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War, 1642-1649* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 121.

experience from those of the Severn region which, along with the Thames valley, was the biggest theatre of conflict in the midlands and the south.¹⁰²

Historians disagree on an overall estimate of the death toll of the Civil Wars. Carlton estimated that in England and Wales 84,830 people died in combat and, using the ratio of 1:1.5, battle to non-battle deaths, he suggests that 127,000 people died in non-combat deaths during the period.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, he described his figures as a 'wild, although not reckless, guess'.¹⁰⁴ Ian Gentles argued that Carlton's figures are too high and should be reduced to at least 75,000 for England and Wales (which is still a considerable percentage of the entire population at the time of about 4 million).¹⁰⁵ In addition to this he adds a figure of 105,000 for deaths due to disease and accident and 90,000 for casualties 'who for years after the war bore in their bodies tangible reminders of what they had undergone'.¹⁰⁶

Such a high percentage of deaths within the population left many hundreds of women as widows. Furthermore, Imogen Peck has underlined how the uncertainty of war time caused some women to be unsure of their husband's death in battle and to be subsequently caught out in illegal remarriages.¹⁰⁷ Ann Hughes has argued that the heavy taxation imposed on people plus the endemic demands for free-quarter and plundering, caused widespread hardship for women specifically.¹⁰⁸ Patricia Crawford has also suggested that the number of women in poverty during this period probably increased.¹⁰⁹ Thus, women, and widows may have been particularly vulnerable to the economic and social impact of these wars. Those widows who lost their lands as a result of the sequestration process described the financial and physical hardship of the wars within their petitions. Additionally, Parliamentary war widows, who may have relied upon the money that the JPs were able to award them, were often turned away. Consequently, this thesis aims to build upon historians' understanding of women's

¹⁰² Roy, 'England turned Germany?', pp. 127-144.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 277.

¹⁰⁴ Carlton, *Going to the Wars*, p. 277.

¹⁰⁵ Gentles, *The English revolution*, p. 434

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 436-437.

¹⁰⁷ Imogen Peck, 'The great unknown: The negotiation and narration of death by English war widows, 1647-60', *Northern History*, 53, no.2 (2016), pp. 220-235.

¹⁰⁸ Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution*, pp. 33-34.

¹⁰⁹ Crawford, 'The challenges to patriarchy', p. 119.

experiences of the wars by highlighting the case of widows. Some of these widows had witnessed, and even partaken in, the military events of the wars when they defended homes and castles on behalf of absent husbands.¹¹⁰ Even those who resided far away from any siege or garrison lived through the political, social, and emotional upheaval of the wars.

Poverty and the Poor Law

A series of Elizabethan statutes passed towards the end of the sixteenth-century defined parish welfare for the following centuries until the coming of a New Poor Law in 1834. The system was evolving throughout the 1500s but the poor relief Act of 1572 represented 'a significant break' with the pre-existing traditions of voluntary collections.¹¹¹ This created the office of the Overseer of the Poor and laid the foundations for the Act of 1597-8 which ordered their appointment by justices and laid out their rights and duties.¹¹² Following this, and the 'Act for the relief of the poor' (passed in 1601), systematic rate based relief was enshrined by statute.¹¹³ From the middle of the seventeenth century, Tim Wales has argued, 'rate-based relief became ubiquitous and strongly embedded in the structures of parish life'.¹¹⁴

A moralised understanding of poverty strongly influenced the basis and implementation of this system.¹¹⁵ Parish welfare was at its heart discriminatory. It divided the poor into three groups and set out the treatment for each group accordingly. The first group was the impotent poor: those who were entirely unable to contribute to their own subsistence typically either through age or sickness. This group were to be relieved in cash or kind by the overseers of the poor if it was deemed that there was no other means of support such as from their lineal kin. The second group

¹¹⁰ Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution*, p. 38.

¹¹¹ Steve Hindle, *On the parish?: The micro-politics of poor relief in rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 11.

¹¹² William E. Tate, *The parish chest: A study of the records of parochial administration in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), p. 191.

¹¹³ Raithby (ed.), *The statutes of the realm*, pp. 962-965, 43 Eliz. c. 2.

¹¹⁴ Tim Wales, 'The parish and the poor in the English revolution', in Stephen Taylor and Grant Tapsell (eds.), *The nature of the English revolution revisited: Essays in honour of John Morrill* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), p. 58.

¹¹⁵ Steve Hindle, 'Poverty and the poor laws', in Susan Doran and Norman Jones (eds.), *The Elizabethan world* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 304-305.

was the vagrant poor, or the 'undeserving' poor in moral parlance, who were to be subject to corporal punishment and labour discipline.¹¹⁶ Finally, the third group were a product of the economic circumstance of the period: the labouring poor. This group was an ever growing sector of the population and consisted of those who lived by a wage, probably at subsistence level, and were in the precarious position of relying on employment being available and dependent on seasonal work such as at harvest.¹¹⁷ For this group the system prescribed that the parish should firstly provide them with the opportunity to work in their own homes by supplying them with goods such as cloth or yarn. The parish could also attempt to remove some of the burdens on the household by taking away children and setting them into apprenticeships. Relief in cash or kind, such as fuel and clothes, was only to be administered as a final resort.¹¹⁸

Poor relief was intended to be a national system and yet it was unpaid officers in the localities who were largely tasked with its success or failure.¹¹⁹ An instinct for 'self governing and self preservation', Collinson suggested, enables us to understand the local community in this period as a type of 'republic'.¹²⁰ Those who administered poor relief, the overseers of the poor and churchwardens as well as the ratepayers and vestrymen who elected them, were 'ordinary members of their communities' and so 'subject to the strengths and weaknesses of their society'.¹²¹ It fell upon them to calculate eligibility for receiving regular relief when faced with the multitude of circumstances of the poor of their parish. The handbook *An ease for overseers* (1601) laid out some guidelines: who was fit to be an overseer, who was liable to be taxed

¹¹⁶ Hindle, 'Poverty and the poor laws', p. 304; J. A. Sharpe, *Early modern England: A social history 1550-1760* (London: Edward Arnold, 1997), pp. 225-226.

¹¹⁷ Keith Wrightson, *Earthly necessities: Economic lives in early modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 197-201; Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and piety in an English village: Terling, 1525-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 174-180.

¹¹⁸ Hindle, 'Poverty and the poor laws', pp. 304-305.

¹¹⁹ Hindle, *On the parish?*, p. 296.

¹²⁰ Patrick Collinson, 'De republica anglorum: Or, history with the politics put back', in Patrick Collinson (ed.), *Elizabethan essays* (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), p. 25, 16; Mark Goldie, 'The unacknowledged republic: Office-holding in early modern England', in Tim Harris (ed.), *The politics of the excluded, c. 1500-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 152-194.

¹²¹ Keith Wrightson, 'Two concepts of order: Justices, constables and jurymen in seventeenth-century England', in John Brewer and John Styles (eds.), *An ungovernable people: The English and their law in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), p. 25.

and who to set to work or to relieve with money.¹²² However, the process by which need was identified continues to remain almost entirely hidden to historians.¹²³

The Poor Law did not stand alone in parish welfare. Tomkins and King have argued that 'a coherent, predictable, pattern of relatively reliable relief...has not been proven to exist for the whole of England' before the introduction of the New Poor Law in 1834.¹²⁴ At times of dearth, such as harvest crises, other members of the community had to be relied upon.¹²⁵ The parish authorities and JPs could also reduce the price of grain and offer it for sale to the poor at a subsidised rate.¹²⁶ Additionally, the 1601 Act for 'Charitable Uses' laid out the wide ranging purpose of charitable provision and included within it the 'relief of aged, impotent, and poor people'.¹²⁷ Private initiatives, such as perpetual endowments, and parish doles coexisted to provide the welfare of the parish in a 'mixed economy of welfare'.¹²⁸ Another means of insulating the poor against the impact of structural poverty was access to common land and the right to glean, or gather fuel.¹²⁹ Andy Wood has argued that the 'economics of custom were intimately bound up with senses of community and self'.¹³⁰ The defence of these rights was also a means by which the poor defended against parish intervention and the removal of children.¹³¹ They can, therefore, form part of the application of Olwen

¹²² Anon., *An ease for overseers of the poore*, ([London], 1601).

¹²³ Hindle, *On the parish?*, p. 260.

¹²⁴ Alannah Tomkins and Steven King, 'Introduction', in Alannah Tomkins and Stephen King (eds.), *The poor in England 1700-1850: An economy of makeshifts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 10.

¹²⁵ John Walter and Keith Wrightson, 'Dearth and the social order in early modern England', *Past & Present*, 71 (1976), pp. 22-42.

¹²⁶ John Walter, 'The social economy of dearth in early modern England', in John Walter, Roger Schofield and Andrew B. Appleby (eds.), *Famine, disease and the social order in early modern society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 106-108; Hindle, *On the parish?*, pp. 20-21.

¹²⁷ Steve Hindle, "'Good, godly and charitable uses': Endowed charity and the relief of poverty in rural England, c. 1550-1750", in Anne Goldgar and Robert I. Frost (eds.), *Institutional culture in early modern society* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), p. 164.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ B. Sharpe, 'Rural discontents and the English revolution', in Roger C. Richardson (ed.), *Town and countryside in the English revolution* (Manchester: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 266; Walter, 'The social economy of dearth in early modern England', pp. 91-92.

¹³⁰ Andy Wood, 'The place of custom in plebeian political culture: England, 1550-1800', *Social History*, 22, no.1 (1997), p. 52.

¹³¹ Hindle, *On the parish?*, p. 58.

Hufton's 'economy of makeshifts', originally applied to the poor of eighteenth-century France, to early modern Britain.¹³²

Issues of whether class consciousness was temporary and localised, or whether it does 'reflect some deeper attitudes' of plebeian society is one to which historians continue to return.¹³³ Wood has attempted to reinstate the idea of a class consciousness into understandings of early modern society by analysing in particular the ways in which use of language can reveal to historians contemporary understandings of social relations.¹³⁴ He argued that in the case of interactions between the rulers and the ruled we can see power being constantly negotiated by both parties. By placing themselves in a position of dependence the poor were partially constructing their own social status but within these displays of deference there is evidence that 'plebeian anger interlocked with popular claims of powerlessness'.¹³⁵ Fundamentally, as Wrightson has argued, the poor relief system was not simply a reflection of paternalism and neighbourhood. It was a political achievement that stressed the otherness of the poor, sought to isolate them and acted as an instrument of discipline as well as an instrument of relief.¹³⁶

Parish relief co-existed to a large extent with the county pension scheme.¹³⁷ It is possible that many maimed soldiers and war widows who relied on parish relief, perhaps because they fought for the 'wrong side', are listed amongst the accounts of the overseers of the poor or the churchwardens. Unfortunately, these men and women are largely invisible to historians unless they are specifically identified in these accounts as soldiers (or the widows of soldiers). Nevertheless, historians' research on parish poor relief has revealed many attitudes which can also be found in the county

¹³² Olwen H. Hufton, *The poor of eighteenth-century France, 1750-1789* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974); Hindle, *On the parish?*, p. 17; Tomkins and King, 'Introduction', pp. 1-38.

¹³³ Sharpe, *Early Modern England*, p. 233.

¹³⁴ Andy Wood, 'Fear, hatred and the hidden injuries of class in early modern England', *Journal of Social History*, 39, no.3 (2006), pp. 803-826; Wood, "'Poore men woll speake one daye": Plebeian languages of deference and defiance in England, c.1520-1640', in Tim Harris (ed.), *The politics of the excluded, c. 1500-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 67-97.

¹³⁵ Wood, 'Fear, hatred and the hidden injuries of class', p. 817.

¹³⁶ Keith Wrightson, 'The politics of the parish in early modern England', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds.), *The experience of authority in early modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), p. 22; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 218, 220.

¹³⁷ Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons?', p. 212.

pension scheme. Many petitioners were unwilling to admit total dependence on the state, and took pains to ensure that the JPs understood their poverty was only the temporary result of their bad circumstances. It is also possible that applying for and relying upon a county pension formed part of the 'economy of makeshifts' for maimed soldiers and war widows. Additionally, the language of humility that was required of petitioners emphasised the unequal relationship between the two parties. In presenting their supplications, war widows drew upon the moral framework of poor relief in order to demonstrate their entitlement to temporary relief. Therefore, this thesis will consider the ways in which petitioners engaged with the county pension scheme for further evidence on how the early modern poor were viewed by society and how they achieved subsistence. It will broaden historians' understanding of poverty and welfare by underlining the role of military welfare in early modern poor relief.

Methodology and source material

The thesis will be primarily based upon archival material collected from county and national record offices, as well as some contemporary printed material. It intends to answer two main research questions: what was the nature of war widows' Civil War experience and what were the responses of widows to these experiences by petitioning? Therefore, it will take two approaches to the source material. It will quantitatively analyse material that pertains to war widows from the Quarter Sessions courts in Kent and Sussex, and the Parliamentary committees that dealt with sequestration. In order to consider the second research question, it will take a qualitative approach to the material. In particular, this will involve analysing the cultural image of the widow found in contemporary print culture and the narratives contained within the petitions of the widows themselves.

The first main source of evidence for this thesis will be the records of the Kent and Sussex Quarter Sessions courts which can be found at local record offices. These are located in Maidstone (Kent), Falmer (East Sussex) and Chichester (West Sussex). Each bench produced its own Sessions Roll and these are now deposited in their respective Record Offices for East and West Sussex (the records for the combined midsummer

session can be found in East Sussex's rolls). The Order Books are, however, one continuous record for both benches. Taken together, the Order Books and the Sessions Rolls provide the main source for the survey of the records of the county pension scheme in Kent and Sussex.¹³⁸ Kent and Sussex provide the exception to John Morrill's assertion that 'few quarter sessions were held in any of the counties under their [Parliament's] total control' because in these counties the Quarter Sessions continued relatively uninterrupted during the 1640s and 1650s.¹³⁹ That is probably why there is scant evidence of war relief routinely being handed out to war widows by the Parliamentary Committees.¹⁴⁰

The second supply of evidence will be the documents related to Royalist widows who petitioned the Parliamentary committees that dealt with sequestration. These were the Committee for Sequestrations, the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents and the Committee for Advance of Money.¹⁴¹ The Committees for Compounding and Advance of Money have been heavily referenced by historians because of the work of the Victorian calenderer and historian Mary Anne Everett Green on those documents.¹⁴² Historians have been able to access descriptions of all the documents in these series and Green also compiled cases and related documents, making it simple to follow up individuals in these large collections. The files of the Committee for Sequestration were catalogued shortly in advance of this project, having been relatively inaccessible previously. Consequently, this thesis will survey the records of all three Committees. The records of the County Sequestration Committees are also in the process of being catalogued and so this survey will take advantage of those local records to complement the national ones.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ The Order Book for East Kent starts in 1650 and does not cover the whole period.

¹³⁹ John S. Morrill, *Revolt in the provinces: The people of England and the tragedies of war 1634-1648* (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 116-117.

¹⁴⁰ Kent County Committee, TNA, SP 28/235; Sussex County Committee, TNA, SP 28/246. See Chapter 1, p. 44.

¹⁴¹ These records can be found in The National Archives: Committee for Sequestrations (SP 20), Committee for Compounding with Delinquents (SP 23), and Committee for Advance of Money (SP 19).

¹⁴² Mary A. E. Green, (ed.) *Calendar, committee for the advance of money* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1888); Mary A. E. Green, *Calendar of the proceedings of the committee for compounding with delinquents, 1643-1660* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889-1893).

¹⁴³ The full descriptions for Kent (Kent Sequestration Committee, TNA, SP 28/210) are available to be searched on The National Archives' online catalogue but the descriptions for Shropshire, Somerset,

For the purposes of this thesis, all of the above documents have been transcribed and then entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. This has involved a measure of manipulation of the data. For example, monetary values were converted into decimal for calculations such as averages to be made (and then converted back into old style for presentation within the thesis). In most cases, the data presented is based solely on the information contained within the records themselves. So, for example, the social status of war widows has been recorded using the titles that they assigned to themselves within their petitions. There are some problems with such an approach. When information is missing within the records it risks putting undue prominence on the information that is present. This silence in the archives can only be filled with a thorough analysis of adjacent records, such as parish records.¹⁴⁴ Similar issues have been found by historians seeking statistics on early modern crime. James Cockburn has contended that some historians who have amassed large amounts of data from local records 'oversimplify their possibilities as historical evidence'.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, this thesis will complement this quantitative survey with an approach that considers the Civil War experiences of widows as they themselves described it.

The primary source for this qualitative survey will be petitions. These include: petitions submitted by claimants of the county pension scheme (maimed soldiers as well as war widows, for comparison) and petitions submitted by Royalist widows seeking the removal of their sequestration. The petitions submitted for a County Pension can be found in the Quarter Sessions' Rolls amongst the recognizances, indictments and examinations. Depending on the county they generally appear either at the beginning or the end of the roll (or in the case of East and West Sussex, the file, as they have been bound flat by archivists). They are also on paper and, therefore, relatively easy to locate despite the lack of catalogue for the Sussex records. The petitions of Royalist widows can be found within the files of the Parliamentary committees and can be

Surrey, Sussex and Staffordshire (Salop-Sussex, Sequestration Committee, TNA, SP 28/214) were, at the time of submission, not yet available to the public. The author completed this cataloguing herself for The National Archives as part of the collaborative element of her PhD project.

¹⁴⁴ These are not within the scope of this thesis because of the extraordinary scope of these records.

¹⁴⁵ James S. Cockburn, 'Early-modern assize records as historical evidence', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 5, (1975), p. 215.

located using Green's calendar (the Committees for Compounding and Advance of Money) or The National Archives' catalogue (the Committee for Sequestrations).

The above petitions, without exception, were presented in manuscript form with many of the defining literary features of petitions. For example, they contained an opening description of the addressee and concluding statements that suggested how their request might be carried out.¹⁴⁶ Royalist widows occasionally signed their petitions and there is one petition that is very poorly written, and probably not completed by a professional.¹⁴⁷ In general, however, regardless of the status or gender of the petitioner they appear to have been written by a literate scribe. Additionally, while there are two examples of petitions constructed in the first person, the rest all adhered to the more formal third person.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, most of these widows would almost certainly have been given advice about the construction of their petitions. This could have been from a relative, a lawyer employed by their family, or the clerk who was penning it for them.¹⁴⁹ Almost all of the petitions that this thesis will examine were submitted by an individual claimant (with a few exceptions, mainly from widows who were related to one another).¹⁵⁰ However, women certainly did collaborate on petitions. Hudson found the practice to be prevalent amongst Cheshire war widows and Button's research on Royalist widows in the south-west emphasised how groups of women petitioned together to pressure the authorities.¹⁵¹

It could be argued that petitions do not represent the genuine intentions and stories of the war widows themselves. If they were not written by them, how can we be certain that the petitioners actually meant what was contained within their petition? Nevertheless, many of these petitions do contain a wide variety of unique and persuasive elements which suggest the influence of a distinctive authorial voice.

Natalie Zemon Davies' work on French pardon tales in the sixteenth century suggested

¹⁴⁶ James Daybell, *The material letter in early modern England: Manuscript letters and the culture and practices of letter-writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), p. 70.

¹⁴⁷ Petition of Jane Beck, 17 March 1645, TNA, SP 19/98, f. 87r.

¹⁴⁸ Petition of Richard Linsfeild & Petition of Matthew Dover, January 1652, WSRO, Q/R/W72, ff. 6r, 7r.

¹⁴⁹ Daybell, *The material letter* pp. 73-74; Appleby, 'Unnecessary Persons?', p. 211.

¹⁵⁰ For example: Petition of Mary and Margaret Wandesford, 18 December 1650, TNA, SP 23/238, p. 201; Petition of Dame Mary Clarke & Dame Cicilia Swan, 29 November 1645, TNA, SP 23/176, p. 584.

¹⁵¹ Geoffrey Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money', pp. 160,161; Button, 'Royalist women petitioners in south-west England', pp. 53-66.

that historians should do more than just seek historical truth from the archives. She argued that 'the shaping choices of language, detail, and order are needed to present an account that seems to both writer and reader true, real, meaningful, and/or explanatory'.¹⁵² Consequently, the possibly fictitious elements created in the construction of these petitions can be revealing to historians. It is possible to argue, as Tim Stretton has, that following this line of reasoning means that the issue of authorship becomes diminished. The focus then is on the story-telling rather than the story-teller 'or the factual integrity of the story'.¹⁵³

Additionally, Hudson has further argued that we must avoid 'total cynicism' with regards to the truth of petitions submitted by maimed soldiers and war widows. They were indeed constructed to persuade in a collaborative process that involved both the petitioner and scribe, but they had to 'stand up to some scrutiny' because the petitioner themselves had to confirm the story in their own words when they appeared before the Quarter Sessions.¹⁵⁴ Royalist widows petitioning against sequestration also had to appear before the committees in Westminster when they presented their supplications. Thus, both sets of petitions must have held some truth because the petitioner had to defend their case orally. When petitioners were found to have misrepresented themselves in their written documents, for example in the case of a Royalist widow who was found to have undervalued her estate, then they were investigated.¹⁵⁵

Finally, while this thesis will uphold the value of the individual narratives contained within the petitions it will also acknowledge that these documents represented a collaborative effort on behalf of petitioner, scribe and possibly others. This does not detract from their usefulness. The involvement of scribes and other community members indicates that these documents were shaped by a variety of factors, of which the intention of the petitioners was just one. This thesis will, therefore, also examine

¹⁵² Natalie Z. Davis, *Fiction in the archives: Pardon tales and their tellers in sixteenth-century France* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), pp. 2-3.

¹⁵³ Tim Stretton, *Women waging law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 18-19.

¹⁵⁴ Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money', p. 156.

¹⁵⁵ Report on the case of Dorothy Dalton, 29 July 1656, TNA, SP 19/120, pp. 109-110.

why certain themes were emphasised by those who constructed the narratives. These petitions, intended to persuade, reflected certain societal norms about gender, status and loyalty during the wars. Those whom widows looked to for advice about their petitions, and who perhaps constructed them, would have helped to shape a supplication that was intended to have influence. This layer of interpretation will mean that the lack of a distinct and clear author within the petitions becomes a strength, rather than a weakness.

The final body of evidence will be contemporary print material. This material has been consulted in order to complement the analysis of the narrative content of the petitions. The thesis will examine printed material from the Civil War period when it referred to widows (both real and imaginary) as well as some material from the wider seventeenth century. Ballads, pamphlets, newsbooks, printed sermons and printed petitions have been included in this survey. These sources have been, primarily, drawn from the online database Early English Books Online. This survey of printed material is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of all the Civil-War print that pertains to widows. Nevertheless, it will illustrate the types of ways that widows were represented in print during the period. This will aid the qualitative analysis of the petitions and contribute to the argument that a range of ideas, authors and cultural frameworks influenced the supplications of war widows.

Thesis structure

This thesis will be divided into two parts with each part broadly focused on answering one of the two key research questions. The first part will consider the experience of war widows during the Civil Wars. In order to do this it will analyse the records related to the County Pension scheme in Kent and Sussex as well as the national records related to sequestration and compounding. It will, thus, illustrate how these processes affected Royalist and Parliamentary widows both before and after the Restoration. Chapter One will look specifically at the Civil War experience of Parliamentary war widows by detailing the ways in which the county pension scheme was administered in Kent and Sussex between 1642 and 1659. It will also present data collected from the south-eastern record offices and make some conclusions based on a comparison of

the different rates of pension for war widows and maimed soldiers across the two counties. Chapter Two will turn to the experience of Royalist war widows by examining the sequestration and compounding process. It will outline the evidence gathered from the petitions of widows who asked for their lands to be returned to them between 1643 and 1659 and draw some conclusions about the ways in which they were affected by land confiscations. The final chapter of this part, Chapter Three, will examine the experience of widows after the Restoration by analysing the administration of the county pension scheme between 1660 and 1679. This chapter will provide opportunity for comparisons between the experiences of Parliamentary versus Royalist widows who petitioned for pensions.

The second part of the thesis will turn to the responses of war widows to the Civil Wars. It will consider the ways in which widows fashioned themselves in petitions, how they were represented by society, and how both of these things influenced each other. Chapter Four will begin by examining the representation of the widow in Civil-War print culture. It will outline some of the ways in which widows were viewed by early modern society and how these ideas were fashioned within the world of print. This chapter will provide the foundation for the remaining chapters in the thesis which will instead examine how widows represented themselves. Chapter Five will turn to the descriptions of poverty used in the petitions of both Royalist and Parliamentary war widows. It will consider how and why widows fashioned themselves as poor and needy in order to have the greatest success. Finally, Chapter Six will consider the language of loyalty used by war widows in their petitions. Unlike descriptions of poverty, which existed in petitions submitted by men and women before and after this period, these notions of allegiance were specific to the wars. Both Parliamentary and Royalist war widows had to negotiate new frameworks of loyalty and disloyalty when they presented their supplications to the government.

The Conclusion of the thesis will consider the wider implications of this research for understanding women's roles in the Civil Wars, the role of the petition as a survival strategy, as well as the experience and petitioning of widows in different wars and places. The Civil Wars were not the only occasions in history when thousands of women were left as widows, needing to subsist and survive. Therefore, an

understanding of Parliamentarian and Royalist war widows will also help to contribute to a wider understanding of how women survived war in different times and places. By constructing petitions in order to access financial assistance or to protect their lands, these widows protected themselves and their children through this tumultuous period of history.

Chapter One. Experiencing the Civil Wars and Interregnum: Parliamentarian war relief

Introduction

This chapter will examine the records of the county pension scheme in Kent and Sussex before the Restoration. The scheme was intended to benefit impoverished war widows and maimed soldiers with quarterly pensions, and so it provides an insight into the lives and experiences of ordinary men and women during the Civil Wars and Interregnum. The records of their interaction with the process, from their petitions to the Order Book entries issuing pensions, hint at the ways in which those who had suffered as a result of the wars attempted to subsist. The chapter will examine these records in order to illuminate the process by which potential pensioners petitioned for and received pensions, as well as the county administration that fuelled the process. Thus, it will consider what aspects of the administration of the scheme were particular to Kent and Sussex and what was dictated by central order. It will also look to the specific experience of Kent and Sussex war widows and consider how their experiences compare with those of maimed soldiers and the bereaved in other counties.

This research is indebted to other pieces of local history research and research on the county pension scheme. The methodology of Alan Everitt's seminal study of early modern Kent, *The community of Kent and the great rebellion, 1640-1660*, has made examining local records, people and processes fundamental to Civil War research.¹ Everitt argued that at the start of the Civil War, England 'resembled a union of partially independent county-states or communities'.² He went on to argue for a county that was intensely locally focused, even isolated, with strong ties of intermarriage within a cohesive gentry community. More recently, this picture has been challenged. For example, Jacqueline Eales found that 'Everitt's emphasis on the gentry led him to

¹ Alan Everitt, *The community of Kent and the great rebellion, 1640-1660* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986).

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

discount the relevance of religious non-conformity amongst other social groups', and Michael Zell argued that 'before 1640 (or 1660) the county of Kent was unified only in certain limited, political and social contexts'.³ Ann Hughes stated that she found herself 'sceptical about notions of a sharp contradiction between local and general concerns'.⁴ Additionally, Clive Holmes disputed Everitt's stress on 'the pre-eminence of local allegiance and the gentry's ignorance of and lack of concern for national issues'.⁵ This chapter will add to the assessment that it was local *and* national concerns which influenced decisions regarding military welfare.

Geoffrey Hudson initiated a research focus on the war widows 'negotiating for blood money' during the Civil Wars, Interregnum and Restoration.⁶ This work, which focused especially on the counties of Cheshire, Worcestershire, Nottinghamshire and Wiltshire, found that 'war widows successfully adopted tactics used by the men and in their actions and words demonstrated a keen awareness of entitlement to pensions'.⁷ David Appleby has also published work on war widows and maimed soldiers who petitioned in Essex. He analysed the tactics that were used by both and compared that with their relative success.⁸ He also found that 'war relief had become a political football between Parliament and the localities' as local and national government attempted to provide for the burgeoning numbers of those impoverished as a direct result of the wars.⁹ Further research, by Mark Stoye and Imogen Peck, has investigated the ways in

³ Jacqueline Eales, *Community and disunity: Kent and the English Civil Wars, 1640–1649* (Faversham: Keith Dickson Books, 2001), p. 5; Michael Zell, 'Introduction', in Michael Zell (ed.), *Early modern Kent: 1540–1640* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), p. 5; Eales, 'Alan Everitt and the community of Kent revisited', in Jacqueline Eales and Andrew Hopper (eds.), *The county community in seventeenth-century England and Wales* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2012), pp. 15–38.

⁴ Ann Hughes, *Politics, society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. xi.

⁵ Clive Holmes, 'The county community in Stuart historiography', *Journal of British Studies*, 19, no.2 (1980), p. 55.

⁶ Geoffrey Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money: war widows and the courts in seventeenth-century England', in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts in early modern England* (London: UCL Press, 1994), pp. 146–69.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁸ David Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons? Maimed soldiers and war widows in Essex, 1642–62', *Essex Archaeology and History*, 32 (2001), 209–21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

which maimed soldiers described their war-time experiences and how war widows narrated their husband's death.¹⁰

This chapter will look at particular aspects of these pieces of research when they can be compared to Kent and Sussex such as the percentage of war widows who were granted pensions (compared to maimed soldiers) and the average amounts awarded. It will begin by outlining the process by which war widows came to receive pensions. Using insights from the Quarter Sessions records of Kent and Sussex, it will look at the role of the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers and the practicalities of collecting the tax and administering it to pensioners. It will then move on to examine the process from the perspective of the petitioner by presenting what information there is about the process of constructing a petition, appearing in court before the county bench and subsequently receiving a pension. While gaps do still remain in understanding how this system worked, in particular the role of scribes and lawyers, this analysis will go some way to providing a context for the system and the experience of war widows. The final section will present data on pensions and one-off grants for Kent, East and West Sussex. It will analyse the average amounts that were awarded by each bench for both maimed soldiers and war widows, as well as how frequently a one-off grant, or gratuity, was awarded instead. Therefore, this chapter will aim to enhance historians' understanding about the ways in which women's lives were changed after their husbands fought and died in these wars.

Administering Pensions

The Ordinance of 24 October 1642 demonstrated Parliament's intent to provide for those who had suffered as a result of their military service and ordered county governments to administer relief.¹¹ Thus, Parliament directed the principles but it was local office holders who collected the tax from parishes, made the decision on who

¹⁰ Mark Stoye, "'Memories of the maimed': The testimony of Charles I's former soldiers, 1660-1730", *History*, 88, no.290 (2003), pp. 204-226; Imogen Peck, 'The great unknown: The negotiation and narration of death by English war widows, 1647-60', *Northern History*, 53, no.2 (2016), pp. 220-235.

¹¹ 'October 1642: Ordinance for Maintenance to be given to the Wives and Children of those that are killed; and to maimed Soldiers', in C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), pp. 36-37; See Introduction, pp. 3-5.

was eligible for pensions, and handed them out. This section will outline the contents of Parliament's Ordinances and consider how they were enacted in Kent and Sussex. Understanding the management of this system of Parliamentary pensions in the south east provides an insight into the ways in which central and local institutions interacted during the 1640s and 1650s. This, in turn, leads to a better understanding of how Parliamentarian war widows experienced and survived this period.

The first principle for Parliamentarian war relief was that men, or widows' late husbands, must have fought for Parliament and the second was that they were unable to labour to subsist because of injuries sustained in service. This was compatible with the Elizabethan poor relief mentality which allowed relief only to those considered 'deserving' as a result of unfortunate circumstance rather than because of a detriment in their character.¹² One printed pamphlet from 1658 included maimed soldiers when it clearly made this distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor:

there are impotent poore, and there are impudent poore: The former are so through Necessity, either by birth; as those borne Creeples, or Blind, or Fatherlesse, &c. or by casualty of losses, sicknesse, as the decayed Housholder, the maimed Souldier and the like: The latter are so through Choice, they are poore, because they are idle and lazy, and so will be poore.¹³

Subsequent Parliamentary Ordinances continued to support a moral framework which viewed maimed soldiers and war widows as deserving of relief. In October 1643, specific directions were laid out and the provisional amounts were rated on each county to contribute towards the central pot for pensions.¹⁴ It decreed that High Constables were to collect the money that was raised proportionally on parishes and rapes and that it was their responsibility to fine those who refused to contribute. In May 1647 parish ratings were laid out based upon the Elizabethan statute of 1601

¹² Steve Hindle, 'Poverty and the poor laws', in Susan Doran and Norman Jones (eds.), *The Elizabethan world* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 306-307; Hindle, *On the parish?: The micro-politics of poor relief in rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

¹³ Nehemiah Rogers, *The good samaritan* (London, 1658), p. 91.

¹⁴ 'October 1643: An Ordinance for the Reliefe and maintenance of sicke and maimed Souldiers, and of poore Widowes and children of Souldiers, slaine in the Service of the Parliament', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 328-330.

which provided relief for injured soldiers and mariners.¹⁵ It also specified that maimed soldiers had to provide a certificate of service when they petitioned their Quarter Sessions for relief in order to gain a pension. Additionally, this Ordinance made clear the link between this military relief and parish relief. War widows were to receive a pension 'over and besides such relief as they shall gain by their work and labour, and shall be allowed them by the charity and benevolence of the Parish'. Consequently, the assumption was that pensions were not intended to meet the full cost of their livelihood. Pensioners should first attempt to maintain themselves and secondly seek relief from their parish.

Therefore, the county pension scheme co-existed with the parish poor relief system. Appleby's study of Essex found that 'most relief took place in the parish, where maimed soldiers and war widows were lumped together with the indigent poor'.¹⁶ This may have particularly been the case for Royalist maimed soldiers and war widows, who were ineligible for Parliamentary pensions, and for the wives of soldiers who were away fighting at war.¹⁷ For example, the wife of an absent soldier, Joell Hebberden, was being supported by her parish of Oveing in Sussex while he was fighting. When he returned home wounded he petitioned for that support to be continued, and the JPs chose to grant him a pension.¹⁸ The records of the Quarter Sessions also show that the widows of Parliamentary soldiers were sometimes passed onto the parish.¹⁹ Anne Whitehead, for example, was awarded 2s 6d weekly by the JPs and the overseers of the poor in her parish in Gravesend were ordered to 'sett the said Ann to worke whereby shee may gayne by her labour soe much as may make upp the said two shillings and sixe pence at the least foure shillings by the weeke'.²⁰

¹⁵ 'May 1647: An Ordinance for Relief of Maimed Soldiers and Mariners, and the Widows and Orphans of such as have died in the service of the Parliament during these late Wars', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 938-940.

¹⁶ Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons?', p. 212.

¹⁷ Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money', p. 155.

¹⁸ Petition of Joell Hebberden, January 1654, WSRO Q/R/W78, f. 4r, 75r.

¹⁹ It has not been within the scope of this thesis to conduct a thorough survey of the parish records of Kent and Sussex to find evidence of maimed soldiers and war widows within the records. The overseers' accounts of three parishes in East Sussex were initially surveyed [Lewes (St Michael), 1650-1651, ESRO, PAR, 414/31/1/1; Ticehurst, 1663-1676, ESRO, PAR 492/31/1/2; Chiddingly, 1657-1673, ESRO PAR 292/31/1] and no conclusive evidence of maimed soldiers or war widows was found.

²⁰ West Kent QS Order Book, October 1652, KHLC, Q/SO/W2, f. 7v.

Additionally, Margaret Kenswick was granted a one-off sum of 20s and referred to her parish overseers of the poor for settlement and provision.²¹

From the collection of rates, to the distribution of pensions, the county pension scheme relied upon pre-existing local office holders and systems of government. In July 1645, the East Sussex JPs ordered that money for maimed soldiers 'shalbe forthw[i]th taxed & levyed according to the Statute' and that anybody who refused to pay the tax should be 'p[ro]ceeded against'.²² This order put the responsibility for the collections into the hands of the churchwardens (who may have then passed the money from the parish to the High Constables). This is confirmed with details from the churchwardens' accounts for Lewes and Chiddingly in East Sussex.²³ Firstly, these records show money being paid to specific casualties of war. For example, in 1644 the churchwardens in Lewes gave 1s to two widows who 'had lost their husbands in Thorpe fightinge'.²⁴ In 1645 the churchwardens also simply listed that they had 'Paid a souldyer' 4d.²⁵ Secondly, they show evidence of money being regularly paid from the parish coffers to the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers before and after the Restoration.²⁶

The office of Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers was integral to the running of this system of military welfare. According to the Elizabethan statute they were to be 'subsidy men, viz. of 10li in lands, or 15li in goods' (i.e. of independent means, and not likely to be corrupted by the office) and they were also to be appointed in the Easter session by the Justices of the Peace and changed every year.²⁷ This rule was adhered to in the south east with the exception of West Kent. Here, only two men fulfilled the office of Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers during the Civil War and Interregnum period.

²¹ West Kent QS Order Book, September 1651, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 212v.

²² Order of the East Sussex JPs, July 1645, ESRO, QR/68, f. 79r.

²³ Churchwardens' account for Lewes (St Thomas at Cliffe), 1642-1679, ESRO, PAR 415/9/1/1; Churchwardens' account for Chiddingly, 1662-1693, ESRO PAR 292/9/1.

²⁴ Churchwardens account for Lewes, f. 26r.

²⁵ Ibid., f. 29r.

²⁶ Churchwardens account for Lewes, f. 26r; Churchwardens' account for Chiddingly, f. 2v.

²⁷ Edmund Wingate, *An exact abridgment of all statutes in force and use from the beginning of Magna Carta until 1641* (London, 1666), pp. 58-60.

Furthermore, the man who was ejected from office at the start of the 1642 was reinstated at the Restoration.²⁸

Redwood asserted that in Sussex ‘the Treasurers seem to have been chosen indifferently either from the justices or the gentry’. The tables below identify the links between the office and other structures of local government.²⁹

Table 1.1 Treasurers for Maimed Soldiers in West Sussex, 1642-1659

Year	Status	Name	Parish	JP	County Committee?
1642	Knight	John Chapman	Westhampnett	1644-c.1650	yes
1643	Baronett	William Goring	Burton	1627-1644, 1646-1648	yes
1644	Gentleman	Richard Yates	Warnham	1651-1658	
1645	Gentleman	Thomas Vallor	Chichester		
1646	Gentleman	Thomas Barnard			
1647	Gentleman	Henry Alderton	Petworth		
1648	Gentleman	William Yalden	Lodsworth	1651-1660	
1649	Gentleman	Richard Mill	Hardham		
1650	Gentleman	John Michell	Warnham		
1651	Gentleman	Thomas Carr	Clayton		
1652	Gentleman	Humfry Gratwick			
1653	Gentleman	William Avis	Shoreham		
1654	Gentleman	William Sandham	Chichester		
1655	Gentleman	Robert Palmer	Bury		
1656	Gentleman	George Raynsford	Henfield		
1657	Esquire	Thomas Smith	Chidham		
1658	Esquire	William Grutweek	Tortington		
1659	Gentleman	Edward Covert	Edburton		

Source: Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*; West Sussex QS Order Books, 1650-1659 (WSRO, QO/1/5/2-3); Anthony Fletcher, *A county community in peace and war: Sussex 1600-1660* (London:

²⁸ East Kent QS Order Book, June 1660, Q/SO/E1, f. 44; See Chapter 3, p. 96.

²⁹ B. C. Redwood, ‘Introduction’, in B. C. Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book, 1642-1649* (Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1954), p. xvii.

Longman, 1975), pp. 349-351; 'November 1643: A Declaration of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament', Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 333-339; 'June 1644: An Ordinance for continuance of a former Ordinance for foure Moneths longer', Firth and Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 450-452.

Table 1.2 Treasurers for Maimed Soldiers in East Sussex, 1642-1659

Year	Status	Name	Parish	JP	County Committee?
1642	Esquire	Lawrence Ashburnham	Guestling	1640-1644,1645-1648	yes
1643	Esquire	Robert Spence	Balcombe	1644-1658	yes
1644	Esquire	Francis Selwyn	Friston	1641-1649	yes
1645	Esquire	Anthony Cruttenden	Burwash	1645-1650	yes
1646	Esquire	John Board	Cuckfield	1644-1648	yes
1647	Esquire	Thomas Jefferay	Chiddingly	1655-1660	yes
1648	Esquire	John Busbridge	Etchingham	1640-1642,1644-1660	yes
1649	Gentleman	Walter Burrell	Cuckfield		
1650	Esquire	Edward Payne	East Grinstead	1659-1660	
1651	Esquire	Thomas Luxford	Wartling		
1652	Gentleman	William Newton	Lewes		
1653	Gentleman	Roger Birch	Worth		
1654	Esquire	Edward May	Ticehurst		
1655	Esquire	Walter Hendley	Cuckfield		
1656	Knight	Thomas Dyke			
1657	Esquire	Robert Fowle	Salehurst		
1658	Gentleman	Henry Ward	Cuckfield		
1659	Gentleman	Robert Rochester	Selmeston		

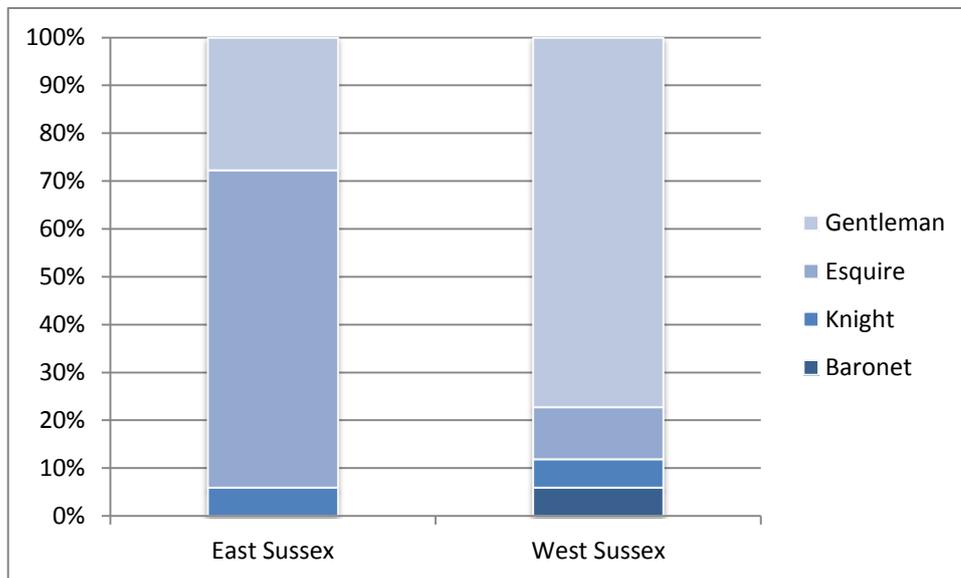
Source: Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*; West Sussex QS Order Books, 1650-1659 (WSRO, QO/1/5/2-3); Fletcher, *A county community*, pp. 352-354; 'November 1643: A Declaration of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament', Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 333-339; 'June 1644: An Ordinance for continuance of a former Ordinance for foure Moneths longer', Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 450-452.

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 show that there was considerable overlap between the men chosen to be Justices for their county and those called upon to be Treasurers in East Sussex during the 1640s (where all but one Treasurer was serving on the county bench or would be). This local office was clearly seen as prestigious enough for men such as these to be called upon. Similarly, some of the Treasurers also served on Sussex County Committee. This trend is particularly notable, again, in East Sussex during the 1640s where every man elected to the position between 1642 and 1648 was also selected by Parliament to serve on the County Committee. Fletcher noted the 'social isolation of the gentry of Chichester rape' in West Sussex and suggested that this gentry community was less well integrated within the social ties of the rest of the county.³⁰ This could be part of the reason why the West Sussex Treasurers had less involvement with other structures of county government than in the East.

Chart 1.1 illustrate the status of Treasurers in East and West Sussex in the 1640s and 1650s and show the significant percentage of those serving who were of a higher status than Gentleman, particularly in East Sussex.

³⁰ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 48.

Chart 1.1 Status of Treasurers for Maimed Soldiers in East and West Sussex, 1642-1659 (percentage)



Source: As Table 1.1.

In both counties, the status of the men selected suggests that they might have had other duties in the county. As a consequence of this, deputies were often appointed who probably did much of the day to day running of the office. For example, in the order that put Sir William Goring, baronet, into the role it was also stated: 'Mr Wallwin to receive and issue out the moneys on his behalfe and to have the ordinary allowance for his paynes'.³¹ As to the office itself, some printed material contained advice for those in office but this largely reproduced the details of the Elizabethan statute.³² The expenses of the office were covered by an allowance 'for their paines and charges in the executing of this present Ordinance'.³³ However, in April 1653 the Treasurer for East Sussex found his allowance taken from him.³⁴ It may have been a burdensome responsibility and in 1665 one Treasurer was found to be so negligent in

³¹ Redwood, (ed.), *Quarter sessions order book*, p. 37.

³² *The Complete Justice: A compendium of the particulars incident to Justices of the Peace, either in Sessions or out of Sessions* (1637).

³³ 'October 1643: An Ordinance for the Reliefe and maintenance of sicke and maimed Souldiers, and of poore Widowes and children of Souldiers, slaine in the Service of the Parliament', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 328-330.

³⁴ East Sussex QS Order Book, April 1653, ESRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 46r.

his duties that an indictment was drawn up against him at a Quarter Sessions and he was dismissed from his duties.³⁵

There were frequent issues in the administration of the county pension scheme in Kent and Sussex. One of the main problems was that the county stock often fell short of what was required and this was generally because parishes were in arrears with their payments. In April 1648 the Kent Order Books recorded that 'it is found by experience that the stocke for the said maymed souldiers falleth short and is not sufficient for their present reliefe'.³⁶ The problem persisted throughout the Interregnum years and in April 1657 it was reported in West Sussex that 'the moneys due & payable for maymed souldiers and charitable uses are very much in arrears in the three westerne Rapes of this County & it is not certeynly knowne what euey p[ar]ish ought to pay'.³⁷ This meant that occasionally pensions fell into arrears. Ann Bettsworth complained in one of her petitions to the West Sussex bench that her pension, previously granted 10li per year, was 'at present one yeare and odd moneths behind'.³⁸ In West Sussex, William Walter stated in his petition that his yearly pension of four nobles 'for these two yeares is vnpaid'.³⁹ There are also references in the Order Books to pay one-off sums to pensioners to make up for the arrears owed to them.⁴⁰

Both Parliament and Justices of the Peace tried to respond to these problems and potential abuses within the county pension scheme. Churchwardens could face investigation for the failure of their parish to pay: in the 1660s Richard Robinson, churchwarden of the parish of Shoreham in West Sussex, was investigated for such an offence.⁴¹ In 1647 Parliament passed an Ordinance which required Treasurers to present their accounts regularly to JPs and ordered that they should not retain money

³⁵ West Sussex QS Order Book, October 1665, WSRO, QO/1/5/5, f. 30v.

³⁶ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1648, KHLC, QO/SO/W1, f. 182r.

³⁷ West Sussex QS Order Book, April 1657, WSRO, QO/1/5/3, f. 31v.

³⁸ Petition of Ann Bettsworth, January 1652, WSRO, Q/R/W72, f. 8r.

³⁹ Petition of William Walter, January 1652, WSRO, Q/R/W72, f. 4.

⁴⁰ For example: West Sussex QS Order Book, January 1656, WSRO, QO/1/5/3, f. 10r; East Sussex QS Order Book, January 1652, ESRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 25v.

⁴¹ Order of the West Sussex JPs, January 1663, WSRO, Q/R/W106a, f. 1r.

after they had ceased to be in office.⁴² In response, in January 1652, the West Sussex bench asked the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers to 'deliuer to this Court a list of all pencioners and pensions granted'. They also ordered Treasurers to 'not pay to any maymed soldiers or others pencioners but such as have had them allowed in respect of their service in the late warrs and the widows & children of such as haue lost their lives in the late warrs'.⁴³

County benches were frequently concerned about pensioners receiving money fraudulently. Parliament tried to prevent this by requiring all maimed soldiers to present a certificate of service with their petition and necessitating them to repair to the place where they were 'last settled when he took up Arms' to receive their pension.⁴⁴ The Kentish Justices responded to this order when they paid John Blunder just a one-off sum of 5s 'In regard hee cannot make it appeare that hee tooke vpp armes in this County'.⁴⁵ JPs were also concerned that pensions only went to those who were 'deserving' of relief, thus reflecting the Elizabethan Poor Relief mentality. James Leech's pension was suspended for a time because of 'sundry Information against him of misdemeanours' as well as intelligence that he had been drawing pensions from several counties.⁴⁶ Matthew Rowland had his pension suspended by the JPs of East Sussex until his parish officers could be consulted with, probably to check his eligibility.⁴⁷ In 1656 the maimed soldier George Streater had his pension of 4li revoked because of reports that he was 'a Man of lewd Conversac[i]on and able to labour'.⁴⁸ In

⁴² 'December 1647: An Ordinance for the more effectual Relief of Maimed Soldiers', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 1055-1056; 'September 1651: An Act providing for Maimed Soldiers and Widows of Scotland and Ireland', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 556-559.

⁴³ West Sussex QS Order Book, January 1652, WSRO, QO/1/5/2, January 1652, f. 25v.

⁴⁴ 'May 1647: An Ordinance for Relief of Maimed Soldiers and Mariners, and the Widows and Orphans of such as have died in the service of the Parliament during these late Wars', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 938-940; In September 1651 Parliament also ordered that only war widows who could produce a valid certificate of their husband's service were to continue receiving relief: 'September 1651: An Act providing for Maimed Soldiers and Widows of Scotland and Ireland', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 556-559.

⁴⁵ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1653, KHL, Q/SO/W2, f. 14r.

⁴⁶ West Sussex QS Order Book, October 1651, WSRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 21v.

⁴⁷ East Sussex QS Order Book, July 1657, ESRO, QO/1/5/3, f. 37v.

⁴⁸ West Sussex QS Order Book, January 1656, WSRO, QO/1/5/3, f. 11r.

Kent, the Order Books state that a Mr Armstrong found his pension taken away from him 'for certaine misdemeanours'.⁴⁹

Therefore, locally sourced information on petitioners could prompt the JPs to withhold pensions from former soldiers, even if a Parliamentary Ordinance had made them eligible. It is possible to speculate, although there is no direct evidence, that some of the information against current pensioners came from petitioners hoping to apply for a vacant pension. Certain maimed soldiers did seem to be knowledgeable about the state of the pension roll. Thomas Berkhead, for example, petitioned in 1654 that there was a 'pention had by the death of James Leech who was buried the Eight of this Instant September' (the same James Leech who had had his pension suspended in 1651) and requested it be transferred to him.⁵⁰ Thomas was rewarded for his knowledge, and he was granted an extra 40s a year.

This evidence, collected from the Quarter Sessions rolls of Kent and Sussex, suggests that while administering relief was a process directed by Parliament the central influence was mitigated to a great extent by the role of local office holders and local politics. The men who collected the tax, decided upon the petitioner's fate, and administered the pensions were all part of well-established institutions that pre-dated the Civil War. War widows did not have to negotiate new Parliamentary committees and procedures because in this case power continued to be vested in familiar local authorities. However, there were some avenues to relief that originated from new Parliamentary war time Committees. Appleby found that in Essex some petitioners went to the Parliamentary Committee for money (but that the most went via the Quarter Sessions).⁵¹ In Kent and Sussex it appears to have been similar. In 1644 the Kentish Committee ordered that two war widows be allowed relief out of the county's taxes, but that is the only extant reference in the files (and there is no reference in Sussex's County Committee files to any money being paid to war widows).⁵² In Kent and Sussex the Quarter Sessions continued uninterrupted throughout the 1640s and

⁴⁹ West Kent QS Order Book, October 1649, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 193r.

⁵⁰ Petition of Thomas Berkhead, October 1654, WSRO, Q/R/W80, f. 4r.

⁵¹ Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons?', p. 212.

⁵² Kent County Committee order for payment to war widows, 30 April 1644, TNA, SP 28/235; Sussex County Committee, TNA, SP 28/246.

1650s and so pensioners relied upon this more traditional institution to access military welfare.

Petitioning for Pensions

For maimed soldiers and war widows hoping to access the relief that Parliament promised, the first stage was constructing a petition. All of the petitions for Kent and Sussex are constructed in the familiar secretary hand of government and it is very rare to find a petition signed by the petitioner themselves. There are only a few examples for Kent and Sussex. The war widow Anne Owden appears to have signed her own petition to the West Sussex bench after the Restoration and the signature on Anne Bettsworth's is in a different hand to the main petition (although this does not necessarily make it hers).⁵³ The gender of the petitioner does not seem to have affected the likelihood of the petitioner signing their own petition. Richard Fisher, who petitioned in 1653, is a rare example of a maimed soldier signing in Kent and Sussex's records.⁵⁴

Clearly, part of the reason why these petitions were not constructed or signed by the petitioner themselves was because it required the petitioner to be able to read and write.⁵⁵ One of the maimed soldiers, Bryan Twiselton from Kent, was styled 'Gentleman' in the records but he is a unique example of a petitioner being from the gentry in these counties before the Restoration.⁵⁶ Very few of the petitioners stated an occupation or social status. The six maimed soldiers that did so described themselves (or were described) as: clothier, glover, tailor, husbandman, heelmaker and farmer.⁵⁷ Soldiers from the gentry may have not wished to be seen publicly asking for financial

⁵³ Petition of Anne Owden, January 1669, WSRO, Q/R/W124, f. 62r; Petition of Anne Bettsworth, April 1646, WSRO, Q/R/W56, f. 38r.

⁵⁴ Petition of Richard Fisher, October 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W77, f. 6r.

⁵⁵ See Introduction, pp. 26-27.

⁵⁶ West Kent QS Order Book, August 1647, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 168v.

⁵⁷ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1644, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 147r; Petition of James Dawes, 1654, KHLC, Q/SB/5/60; West Kent QS Order Book, April 1646, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 157v; West Kent QS Order Book, April 1648, Q/SO/W1, f. 179v; Petition of George Robinson, July 1651, KHLC, Q/SB/2/37; West Kent QS Order Book, April 1646, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 158v.

relief or perhaps they relied upon seeking the arrears of their pay instead.⁵⁸ Additionally, most petitions in this period were constructed in the hand of a scribe fluent in secretary hand regardless of the status of the petitioner. This is partly because of the nature of the address: this was a formal request to a higher authority in which the respect of classical forms and dictated norms was required.⁵⁹

This meant that behind every petition there was not just a petitioner but also an amanuensis. Unfortunately, the manner of this relationship, how they influenced the crafting of the petition, or even who they were, is unclear. It seems likely that these war widows and soldiers were using local educated people, such as lawyers and vicars, who were knowledgeable of the process and how to construct a petition. According to Appleby, 'petitioning in early modern England was an industry in which most communities boasted skilful exponents'.⁶⁰ The records themselves hold few clues. In 1652 two men sent separate petitions which appear consecutively in the Sessions Rolls. Both of these petitions used the first person throughout (rather than the conventional third), used the same style of address at the start of the petition, and both evoked the phrase 'Keep you out the hands of your enemies' at the end.⁶¹ They were not from the same parish, nor had they fought in the same battles, but they were both pleading that they had surgeons bills to pay for their cure. Therefore, it is possible that these particular petitioners used the same scribe (the surgeon himself?) for the construction of their petitions. It also indicates that there may have been a few people in local communities who constructed several petitions and became adept at helping the petitioner construct a more persuasive narrative.

The intervention of local people with influence may have been a useful tactic when it came to presenting oneself to the county bench. Petitioners were required to submit a certificate of military service but some also included more detailed letters and

⁵⁸ For example, officers seeking arrears of pay from Parliament: 'House of Commons Journal Volume 5: 3 April 1648', in *Journal of the House of Commons* (London: His Majesty's Stationery, Office, 1802), pp. 523-525.

⁵⁹ James Daybell, *The material letter in early modern England: Manuscript letters and the culture and practices of letter-writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), pp. 69-71; see Introduction, pp. 26-28.

⁶⁰ Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons?', p. 211.

⁶¹ Petition of Richard Linsfeild & Petition of Matthew Dover, January 1652, WSRO, Q/R/W72, ff. 6r, 7r.

endorsements from neighbours or prominent local men to support their case.⁶² As Peck observed, this may have been because obtaining a certificate from a serving military officer had proven difficult.⁶³ A certificate of support from the parish of Keymer in West Sussex was submitted in support of the soldier Thomas Holcombe in 1645. This document stated that 'our poore doe lye very heavy vpo[n] us allreadye yet wee are welling to contribute to his releife'.⁶⁴ Communities may have preferred to see maimed soldiers and war widows supported by county pensions, rather than parish relief, in order to lessen the burden on themselves: something which Appleby also found in Essex.⁶⁵ Therefore, some petitions contained additional certificates from local people testifying to the good behaviour and worthiness of the petitioner. Eight inhabitants of the city of Chichester signed a note to endorse the petition of William Austin which was then submitted to the Quarter Sessions bench.⁶⁶ In Brighton, the friends of Nicholas Taylor collaborated on a petition on his behalf in which they outlined the details of his service and asked the East Sussex JPs 'to serue his friend and to be a meenes to helpe him to some yeerlie stipend or pention for his releife and maintenance (as others in the like case for their seruice haue had) and booth he and we wilbe thankefull vnto your hono[u]rs'.⁶⁷

Another aspect to building a strong petition was to include an effective endorsement from military officers. In Kent Gregory Major, who had been wounded in Scotland sometime prior to 1653 (so possibly in the Battle of Dunbar), had the advantage of his certificate being signed by Oliver Cromwell.⁶⁸ Gregory was rewarded with a pension of 40s a year and a one-off payment of 10s for his relief.⁶⁹ The soldier William Walter submitted two certificates with his petition: from his surgeon as well as from his Captain. This certificate contained more than just the details of his service. It described how 'hee hath received a Woound in his Arme, At the takeing of Stowed Howse in

⁶² 'May 1647: An Ordinance for Relief of Maimed Soldiers and Mariners, and the Widows and Orphans of such as have died in the service of the Parliament during these late Wars', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 938-940.

⁶³ Peck, 'The great unknown', pp. 225-226.

⁶⁴ Certificate of the parish of Keymer, October 1645, ESRO QR/69, f. 7r.

⁶⁵ Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons?', p. 214.

⁶⁶ Certificate on behalf of William Austin, October 1658, WSRO, Q/R/W92, f. 6(b)r.

⁶⁷ Petition on behalf of Nicholas Taylor, January 1654, ESRO, QR/102, f. 3r.

⁶⁸ Certificate on behalf of Gregory Major, 19 January, 17 March 1653, KHLC, Q/SB/4, ff. 77-79.

⁶⁹ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1653, KHLC, Q/SO/W2 f. 13v.

Summersettsheere' but also described the cost of this: 'which wilbee the vtter vndoeing of him, Besides hee haveinge a wife and Children w[i]th himselfe to mainetaine which hee is not able to subsist with all'.⁷⁰ This document reads more like a petition than a simple certificate of service and suggests that William Walter's superiors sincerely deemed him worthy of financial relief. The words do also closely mirror the phrases used in Walter's own petition and this therefore suggests that the scribe was re-using these emotive phrases for greater impact and that whoever drafted the certificate had seen the petition.⁷¹

There are also cases where direct action was taken by leading men within the county. These maimed soldiers and war widows were advantaged by the importance of patronage and personal relationships in local government. Several of the petitions contained endorsements from sitting Justices of the Peace such as Anne Bettsworth's from West Sussex and the maimed soldier John Staplee's in East Sussex.⁷² In East Sussex Herbert Morley (Member of Parliament for Lewes 1640-1653, Justice of the Peace 1644-1660 and Parliamentary Colonel), was a frequent intervener in the fates of petitioners.⁷³ In July 1656 he submitted a letter in support of the war widow Cicely Adler in which he stated that her husband, John Adler, 'was a Soldier in my Troope and was taken prisoner in the service of the parliament about the yeare 1643 and dyed in prison at Oxford, and that shee deserves to be relieved according to the orders & directions of the Act of Parliament in the behalfe'.⁷⁴ Cicely was allocated a pension of 3li and also received repeat one-off payments from the sitting JPs (which obviously included Morley himself).⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Certificate on behalf of William Walter, January 1649, WSRO, Q/R/W64, f. 7r.

⁷¹ Petition of William Walter, January 1649, WSRO, Q/R/W64, f. 9r.

⁷² Petition of Anne Bettsworth, April 1646, WSRO, Q/R/W56, f. 38r; Petition of John Staplee, October 1647, ESRO, QR/77, f. 8r; for more on the case of Anne Bettsworth see Chapter 5, pp. 170-171.

⁷³ Fletcher, *A county community*, pp. 131, 282-283, 301-303; Mary F. Keeler, *The Long Parliament, 1640-1641: A biographical study of its members* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1954), p. 280; Jason T. Peacey, 'Morley, Herbert (bap. 1616, d. 1667)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, online edn, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/view/article/19287?docPos=14> [accessed 19.04.17].

⁷⁴ Certificate on behalf of Cicely Adler, July 1656, ESRO, QR/112, f. 1r.

⁷⁵ Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*, pp. 128, 189; East Sussex QS Order Books, April 1653, July 1656, Q/1/5/2, f. 46r, QO/1/5/3, f. 19v.

Fletcher noted that Morley ‘showed responsibility and compassion towards those who were wounded’ during war time by ensuring that his regiment had a surgeon whilst on campaign as well as advocating for maimed soldiers.⁷⁶ On one occasion he sent a letter to the bench in which he apologised for his lack of attendance at the current session. He explained that it was because ‘Upon my coming home last night I found my mother much ill & her distemper still continues which occasion I abstine this day’. He requested that they look favourably upon the bearer of his letter, Robert White, ‘a soldier formerly under my comand & wounded in the service ag[ains]t Portland Castle, th[a]t he may have a pension according to the Ordinance’.⁷⁷ He signed the petition of the maimed soldier John Doyt who had served in his regiment during the siege of Basing House and endorsed the petition of another maimed soldier after fellow JP, Nathaniel Studley, requested that he would.⁷⁸ Herbert Morley was an important character in East Sussex’s political landscape during the Civil Wars and Interregnum and has been described as the ‘most powerful member’ of the Sussex County Committee.⁷⁹ His close involvement in the welfare of his former soldiers and their wives demonstrates the significance of relationships forged within county communities for the cases of maimed soldiers and war widows.

Finally, there was an expectation that pensioners should appear at the Quarter Sessions court to plead their case and to collect their pensions quarterly. This was probably an additional mechanism to prevent fraud but it could also be a financial barrier for those petitioners who had to travel a considerable distance to the Quarter Sessions.⁸⁰ Both John Phillips and John King, from West Sussex and Kent respectively, complained that they had spent most of their pensions in order to travel to the sessions to receive it.⁸¹ The maimed soldier Richard Fisher also complained in a petition that his pension had been reduced ‘in his absence and hauing no friend to

⁷⁶ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 270.

⁷⁷ Letter from Herbert Morley, October 1649, ESRO, QR/85, f. 16r.

⁷⁸ Petition of John Doyt, January 1656, ESRO, QR/110, f. 4r; Petition on behalf of William Jude, October 1649, ESRO, QR/85, f. 15r.

⁷⁹ Peacey, ‘Morley, Herbert’.

⁸⁰ Appleby, ‘Unnecessary persons?’ p. 212; for more on the location of pensioners, see Chapter 3, pp. 107-111.

⁸¹ Petition of John Phillips, October 1650, WSRO, Q/R/W69, f. 1r; Petition of John King, [1656], KHLC, Q/SB/6/67.

plead his cause' and in 1652 another maimed soldier was fined for not appearing at the sessions.⁸² Thus, some form of oral presentation seems to have been expected from maimed soldiers on first receiving their pensions. In Lewes in 1652 the JPs ordered that Jeremy Clark's pension should be suspended 'for his misbehaviour and insolent carriage and speeches toward[es] the Justices of peace at the present sessions'.⁸³ His pension was ordered to be paid with arrears at the next session so his misdemeanours were clearly forgiven (or forgotten).⁸⁴ When Thomas Berkhead submitted his petition it indicated that he himself was not going to be present but, instead, that his wife was: 'my wife hath Come purposely About this busines'.⁸⁵ An order for relief for a war widow also described the process by which she had been granted relief in unusual detail: 'Upon the reading of the petition of Jane Rusbridger with a Certifiante of Captayne Clerke and oath made in Court by Robert Hopkins'.⁸⁶ This suggests that Jane was herself silent, or perhaps not even present, at Court and that her petition was put to the court orally by somebody else on her behalf.

Many of the details about how people petitioned for pensions continue to be elusive. Particular questions remain, for example the details of the process by which individuals constructed their petitions. Nevertheless, the evidence from the Kent and Sussex Quarter Sessions does show that JPs attempted to fall in line with Parliament's Ordinances by only allowing pensions to those who were eligible to receive them. When petitioners could not prove that they took up arms within the county, or did not attend the sessions to receive their pension, then they could be struck off the roll. Additionally, if maimed soldiers and war widows could find a powerful local patron, such as Herbert Morley, then the outcome of their request clearly benefited. Some war widows and maimed soldiers also took advantage of the testimony of neighbours in order to bolster their claims. Parishes who wished to move impotent maimed soldiers and war widows off parish poor relief were willing to endorse a claim to

⁸² Petition of Richard Fisher, October 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W77, f. 6; West Sussex QS Order Book, October 1651, WSRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 21v.

⁸³ East Sussex QS Order Book, July 1653, ESRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 34r.

⁸⁴ East Sussex QS Order Book, April 1654, July 1655, April 1658, ESRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 60r, QO/1/5/3, f. 4v, f. 51r.

⁸⁵ Petition of Thomas Berkhead, October 1654, WSRO, Q/R/W80, f. 4r.

⁸⁶ West Sussex QS Order Book, October 1651, WSRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 21r.

receive money from the county stock. Thus, petitioning for pensions involved a complex series of interactions with the wider community. Firstly, with those who constructed petitions, then with neighbours, patrons and officers who might endorse their claim and, finally, public engagement with the JPs at Quarter Sessions.

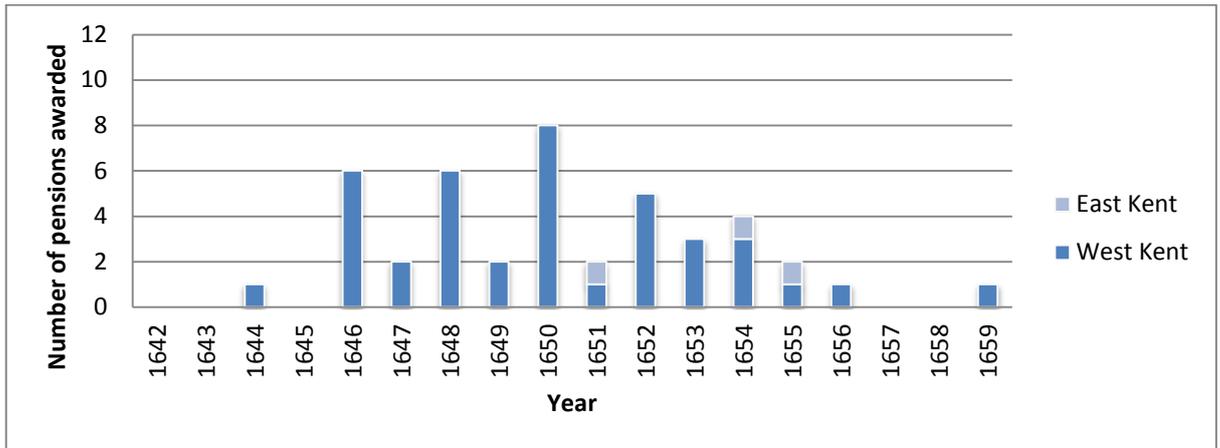
Receiving Pensions

The Order Books for Kent and Sussex provide evidence for the rate at which petitioners received pensions in both counties. Using this data, it is possible to analyse the differences in the treatment of maimed soldiers and war widows in both counties. Hudson and Appleby have conducted research on the amounts that war widows and maimed soldiers received in other counties, and so this final section will compare Kent and Sussex's data with theirs. It will consider the different ways that pensioners were treated by JPs in these counties and, therefore, illustrate how the county pension scheme benefited war widows in the south east who petitioned for relief.

The following charts illustrate the number of pensions granted in Kent, East and West Sussex over time. In each case, the year reflects when a pension was listed as awarded in either the Order Book or at the bottom of a petition in the Sessions Rolls. Therefore, it does not show the cumulative number of individuals on the pension roll per year but instead only fresh orders for relief. In order to discover the total number of pensioners receiving pensions per year we would need complete Treasurers accounts (which unfortunately do not survive for this period).⁸⁷ Kent also has incomplete Order Books for the Civil War period and this is reflected in the data. The Order Book for East Kent only starts in 1650 and therefore the graphs show no pensions being granted in this part of Kent 1642-1650 but this almost certainly does not reflect the true figure.

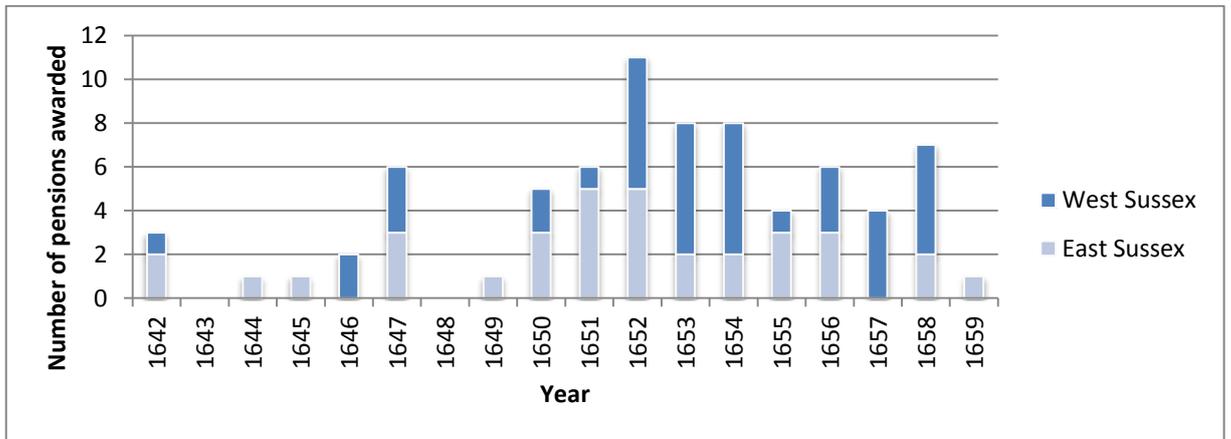
⁸⁷ They do survive in West Sussex after the Restoration, see Chapter 3, pp. 118-121.

Chart 1.2 Pensions awarded in East and West Kent, 1642-1659



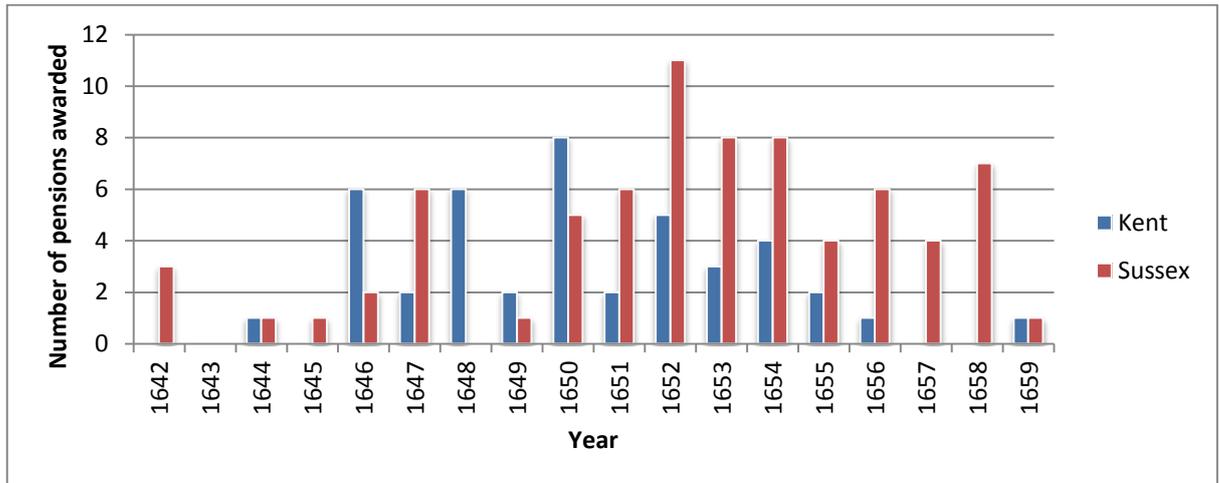
Source: KHLIC, QS Order Books (Q/SO/E1, W1) and QS Sessions Rolls (Q/SB/1-7).

Chart 1.3 Pensions awarded in East and West Sussex, 1642-1659



Source: Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter Sessions Order Book*; ESRO, QS Order Books (Q/1/5/1-3) and QS Sessions Rolls (QR/56-127); WSRO, QS Sessions Rolls (Q/R/W47-98).

Chart 1.4 Pensions awarded in Kent and Sussex, 1642-1659



Source: As Chart 1.2, 1.3.

Chart 1.4 shows that the rate at which pensions were granted in Kent has few parallels with the rate that they were granted in Sussex. In fact, when Sussex was granting its highest amounts of pensions, during the 1650s, Kent had decreased its provision. This underlines the importance of local factors, as well as national, in the administration of pensions. For example, there were no pensions awarded in Sussex during 1648, and only one was provided in 1649 to a soldier who had ‘been in the Parliament[es] forces, almost eu[er] since the warres began’.⁸⁸ It is quite likely that the dearth of pensions was as a result of the disruption caused by the Second Civil War. However, the Kentish Justices awarded 6 pensions in 1648 so they were clearly not restricted by the unrest taking place within the county during that year. Additionally, at least one pensioner’s request can be linked to the events of the wars within the county. Anthony Shekelton was a Corporall who ‘lost his left hand in the Parliaments service’ in the siege against Royalist held Deal Castle in 1648. In October of that year, he was awarded a yearly pension of 6li (a generous sum).⁸⁹

Furthermore, there were no pensions recorded in the West Kent Order Books in either 1642 or 1643 whereas there were 3 in Sussex. Francis Hill was one of these

⁸⁸ Petition on behalf of William Jude, October 1649, ESRO, QR/85, f. 15r; Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*, p. 189.

⁸⁹ West Kent QS Order Book, October 1648, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 185v.

pensioners, awarded a pension in October 1642, and he was described as a ‘maimed soldier’ of ‘great age’ with ‘weaknes of body’.⁹⁰ This might suggest that he was not a new recruit, but that instead he may have been benefiting from the pre-existing Elizabethan Act.⁹¹ In Kent, by contrast, the first pension awarded in 1644 was clearly related to the Civil Wars and tied closely to the local events within the county. In April 1644, the Order Books of the West Kent Quarter Sessions recorded a pension granted to a maimed soldier, Henry Clerke of Cowden, Kent. The record states that he: ‘w[i]th other p[er]sons well affected for the Kinge and P[ar]liament vppon command went forth against the Rebels there [Yalding] for the suppressing of that Rebellion as also for the safeguard of this Countie’.⁹² He was granted 4li a year as a pension and 20s for his present relief.

The following tables give the total number of pensions awarded as well as the average amount. In all cases the average pension has been calculated using the total number of pensioners rather than pension awards (because some individuals received multiple awards over time).

Table 1.3 Number of pensioners and average pension awarded in Kent, 1642-1659

	Total number of pensioners	Average (mean) amount pension per year
Maimed Soldiers	35 (81%)	2li 15s 17d
War Widows	8 (19%)	2li 14d 0d

Source: KHLC, QS Order Books (Q/SO/E1, W1) and QS Sessions Rolls (Q/SB/1-7).

⁹⁰ Order of the East Sussex JPs, October 1642, ESRO, QR/58, f. 133r.

⁹¹ See Introduction, p. 3.

⁹² West Kent QS Order Book, April 1644, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 147r; Everitt, *The community of Kent*, p.198.

Table 1.4 Number of pensioners and average pension awarded in West Sussex, 1642-1659

	Total number of pensioners	Average (mean) amount pension per year
Maimed Soldiers	31 (78%)	2li 17s 4d
War Widows	9 (22%)	3li 15s 2d

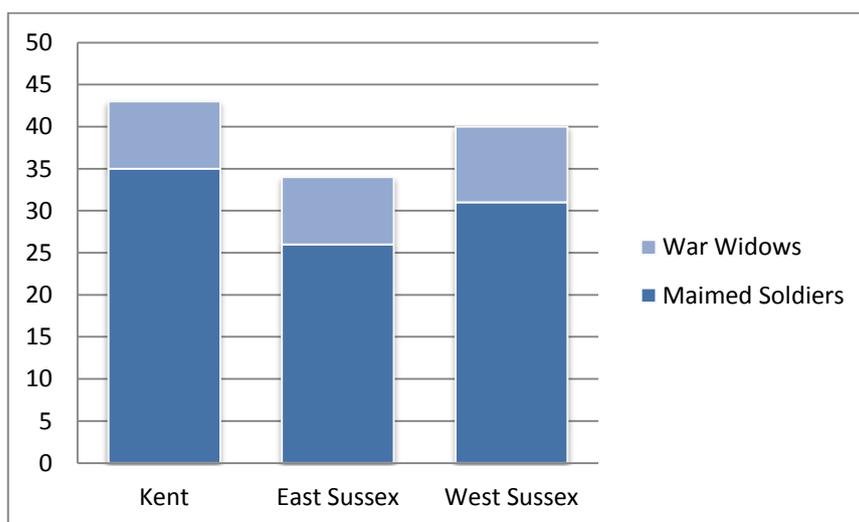
Source: Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*; WSRO, QS Order Books (Q/1/5/1-3) and QS Sessions Rolls (Q/R/W47-98).

Table 1.5 Number of pensioners and average pension awarded in East Sussex, 1642-1659

	Total number of pensioners	Average (mean) amount pension per year
Maimed Soldiers	26 (76%)	3li 6s 0d
War Widows	8 (24%)	2li 7s 8d

Source: Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*; ESRO, QS Order Books (Q/1/5/1-3) and QS Sessions Rolls (QR/56-127).

Chart 1.5 Number of pensioners in Kent, East and West Sussex, 1642-1659



Source: As Tables 1.3, 1.4, 1.5.

Chart 1.5 clearly demonstrates that more maimed soldiers than war widows were granted pensions across Sussex and Kent. This is not surprising: the Parliamentary Ordinance of May 1647 specified that widows were only to receive pensions after the needs of the county's maimed soldiers had been satisfied.⁹³ Sometimes pensions were transferred from a deceased maimed soldier to his widow, but this was not a universal practice. When the Kentish maimed soldier Bryan Twisleton died, his wife received only a one-off sum and his actual pension was transferred to another maimed soldier.⁹⁴ Additionally, across both counties fewer war widows applied to receive a pension. There are 26 petitions from maimed soldiers in the Quarter Sessions rolls and 14 (35%) from war widows. Thus, the portion of widows receiving pensions was lower than the portion of widows petitioning for pensions in Kent and Sussex. War widows received roughly a quarter of the grants of pensions in Kent (19%), East Sussex (24%) and West Sussex (22%) during the Civil Wars and Interregnum. Appleby found that in Essex war widows made up 34% of the petitioners, a similar percentage to Kent and Sussex, but that they received 38% of the pensions, higher than in these counties.⁹⁵ In Cheshire, Hudson's research discovered that war widows made up 43% of the petitioners and, in 1651, received 47% of the pensions.⁹⁶ Not all counties gave such a high percentage of pensions away to war widows, however. In Worcestershire, between 1653 and 1655, just 12% of pensions went to war widows.⁹⁷

Despite the variation in the number of awards, both Kent and Sussex awarded pensions to maimed soldiers and war widows that were worth similar amounts. In all cases the mode average pension (the amount which was awarded most frequently) was 2li and the mean average figure also reflects this bias towards awards of that amount. This corresponds with Hudson's findings for Cheshire, Worcestershire and Nottinghamshire and Appleby's findings in Essex that the mean average pension was

⁹³ 'May 1647: An Ordinance for Relief of Maimed Soldiers and Mariners, and the Widows and Orphans of such as have died in the service of the Parliament during these late Wars', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 938-940.

⁹⁴ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1652, KHLC, Q/SO/W2, f. 3v, 5r.

⁹⁵ Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons?', p. 211 (He does note that Hudson finds slightly different figures for Essex, 30% and 20% respectively).

⁹⁶ Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money', pp. 152, 162.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

around 2li, or 40s.⁹⁸ In West Sussex, however, the mean average figure for war widows is higher (3li 15s) but it is skewed by several larger amounts. Anne Bettsworth, whose husband was a Corporal, was granted 10li per annum.⁹⁹ This may have also been because she had several members of the West Sussex Justices of the Peace endorsing her petition.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, Elizabeth Dover was initially granted a pension of 3li a year after her husband died: half the amount that her husband had previously received.¹⁰¹ She was successful, however, in petitioning again to have it increased to 6li a year after asserting that her husband performed his duty faithfully.¹⁰² Thus, JPs could choose to bestow more money onto pensioners and this may have reflected the strong case that was presented to them in the petition.¹⁰³

Another area where it is clear to see the influence of JPs on the pension process is in the granting of one-off sums, or gratuities. Some petitioners were awarded a grant at the Quarter Sessions but told not to expect any more or to request a pension again. Sarah Bartlett, for example, petitioned in 1658 that her husband had ‘received many great wounds on land and at sea’ and since died.¹⁰⁴ She was only given 30s and told not to expect more.¹⁰⁵ War widows were, nevertheless, persistent in their pursuit of pensions. Hudson found that several war widows who presented themselves in court to ask for pensions, but who were denied them and only given one-off sums, repeatedly re-attended.¹⁰⁶ These people were known as ‘importuners’ and were also widespread in Essex.¹⁰⁷ In Kent Sarah Boniface, ‘whoe lost Thomas Boniface her late husband in the Parliament[es] Service’ was granted a gratuity of 40s in 1657 and told ‘not to expect heereafter any further contribution heerin from this Co[u]rt’.¹⁰⁸ She

⁹⁸ Ibid.; Appleby, ‘Unnecessary persons?’, p. 214.

⁹⁹ Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 5, pp. 170-171.

¹⁰¹ Order of the West Sussex JPs, October 1655, WSRO, Q/R/W83, f. 99r.

¹⁰² Petition of Elizabeth Dover, January 1656, WSRO, Q/R/W84, f. 4r; West Sussex QS Order Book, January 1656, WSRO, QO/1/5/3, f. 10r. For more discussion on language of loyalty in the petitions of Parliamentary war widows, see Chapter 6, pp. 179-182.

¹⁰³ For more, see Part 2, Chapters 5 and 6.

¹⁰⁴ Petition of Sarah Bartlett, January 1658, KHLC, Q/SB/7/39.

¹⁰⁵ East Sussex QS Order Book, January 1658, KHLC, Q/SO/E1, f. 29r.

¹⁰⁶ Hudson, ‘Negotiating for blood money’, p. 158.

¹⁰⁷ Appleby, ‘Unnecessary persons?’, p. 214.

¹⁰⁸ East Kent QS Order Book, January 1657, KHLC, Q/SO/E1, f. 24r.

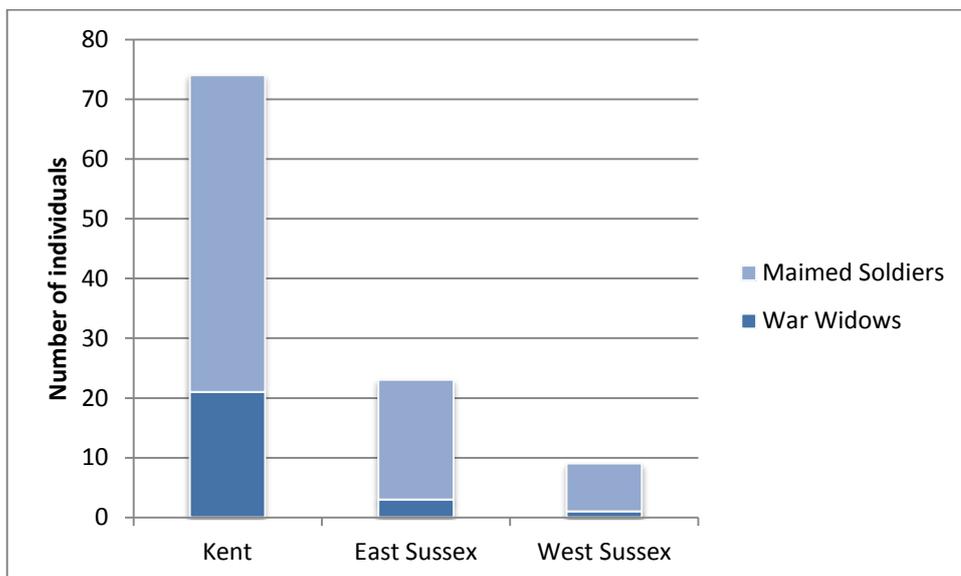
came back a year later, however, and the Treasurer was ordered to ‘once more and noe more’ pay her 30s.¹⁰⁹

Table 1.6 Number of individuals who received one-off grants in Kent and Sussex, 1642-1659

	Kent	East Sussex	West Sussex
War Widows	21 (29%)	3 (13%)	1 (12%)
Maimed Soldiers	53 (71%)	20 (87%)	8 (88%)

Source: KHLC, QS Order Books (Q/SO/E1, W1) and QS Sessions Rolls (Q/SB/1-7); Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter Sessions Order Book*; ESRO, QS Order Books (Q/1/5/1-3); ESRO, QS Sessions Rolls (QR/56-127).

Chart 1.6 Number of individuals who received one-off grants in Kent, East and West Sussex, 1642-1659



Source: As Table 1.6.

Table 1.6 and Chart 1.6 reveal that the Kentish JPs not only awarded more one-off grants to petitioners than their counterparts in Sussex, but also that they awarded a higher portion to war widows. This preference for one-off grants was continued after

¹⁰⁹ East Kent QS Order Book, January 1658, KHLC Q/SO/E1, f.30r.

the Restoration in Kent.¹¹⁰ The amount that JPs awarded could vary quite widely. The smallest was a series of grants for half a crown given by East Sussex JPs to Parliamentary maimed soldiers following the Restoration ‘for the bearing of their charges to their seu[er]all and Respective habitac[i]ons’.¹¹¹ The largest was a sum of 8li given to a maimed soldier in West Sussex in 1650.¹¹² Some individuals received multiple grants as a result of their persistence, such as Sarah Boniface, mentioned above, and Cicely Adler who received a total of 7li between 1647 and 1656.¹¹³

Therefore, whilst Kent and Sussex awarded fewer yearly pensions to war widows than to maimed soldiers, war widows still stood to benefit from the county pension scheme in these counties. They received, on average, similar amounts to their male co-petitioners and some widows were successful in receiving over and above what was generally granted. Additionally, while many widows were unsuccessful in receiving an annual grant, surely the best way to stay out of poverty, some managed to receive one-off grants from the JPs despite being initially turned away. The amounts that petitioners received must have been influenced by a wide variety of factors. Ordinances initially dictated who was and was not eligible for relief but local events, such as the Second Civil War, had an impact on the rate at which pensions were handed out. There were also ways in which a petitioner could hope to bolster their chances of success, for example, by appealing to the JPs with the endorsement of neighbours and former officers. The final aspect was of course the petition itself, and the second part of this thesis will examine that crucial element to negotiating the Parliamentary Pension process.

Conclusion

Redwood, in his published edition of the Sussex Quarter Sessions, 1642-1649, observed that ‘there is disappointingly little reference in these records to the Civil

¹¹⁰ See Chapter 3, pp. 105-106.

¹¹¹ East Sussex QS Order Book, January 1662, ESRO, QO/1/5/4, f. 30v.

¹¹² East Sussex QS Order Book, October 1650, ESRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 9r.

¹¹³ Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*, pp. 128, 189; East Sussex QS Order Book, April 1653, Q/1/5/2, f. 46r; Adler’s requests were also supported by Sussex JP Herbert Morley, see above, p. 47.

War' and therefore that it 'appears only incidentally in the text'.¹¹⁴ These local records do show that the administrative priorities of these local regimes were little changed and the routine matters of Quarter Sessions, such as road repair, alehouses and cases of bastardy, continue to dominate the pages.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, there are a few glimpses of the nature of the changes in England and the south east in particular. There are some suggestions of the political and social divides which emerged. For, example, in October 1643 the Sessions Rolls for East Sussex contain a report that certain persons in the county had 'sayd That none but rogues & rascalls would goe or serve under the Command of the Earle of Essex'.¹¹⁶ Also in East Sussex, in 1645, there is an indication of how military affairs undermined local law and order from a report that prisoners had broken gaol at Horsham and had claimed to be soldiers in order to avoid recapture.¹¹⁷ Another example, from the depositions included at the end of the Sessions Rolls, demonstrates what life could have been like for women whose husbands left their homes for war and never returned. Elizabeth Sheratt, 'late the wife of Gyles Sherrat a foote souldier of the Company of Captayne Spence' reported that a neighbour 'forced open her doore' and 'first asked her if shee would worke with him' but subsequently 'layd violent hands on her & demanded her to lye with him'.¹¹⁸ The Civil Wars undoubtedly created economic and social dislocation which put pressures onto communities and may have had an impact on local crime rates.¹¹⁹

Additionally, the records of the county pension scheme demonstrate the impact that the wars had on the people of Kent and Sussex and the ways in which Parliament attempted to combat the resultant poverty. It is apparent from local records that JPs in Kent and Sussex responded to Parliament's demands and actively pursued a system of relief which relied upon locally raised taxes, decisions made at Quarter Sessions, and Treasurers drawn from local elites to administer money. For potential claimants, constructing a petition and appearing in Court required direct engagement with

¹¹⁴ Redwood, 'Introduction', p. xxi.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. xvii-xix.

¹¹⁶ Information of Robert Boweyer the younger, October 1643, ESRO, QR/62, f. 3r.

¹¹⁷ Information of Thomas Norman, January 1654, ESRO, QR/66, f. 79r.

¹¹⁸ Information of Elizabeth Sheratt, October 1646, WSRO, Q/R/W57, f. 73r.

¹¹⁹ J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in seventeenth-century England: A county study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 201.

political and public processes. They also had to navigate the potentially devastating consequences of JPs refusing to allow annual pensions, preferring instead one-off grants, and pensions which fell into arrears. These events may have prompted further instability in the maintenance of a widow's household and possibly resulted in more widows falling upon parish relief for their survival.

Consequently, the records of war widows who received, or attempted to receive, Parliamentary pensions reveal an important aspect of their Civil War experience. The administrative records do not tell historians of the emotional cost of the wars or even the true financial implications that the loss of their husbands had produced. Nevertheless, they do demonstrate how many fought for survival and benefited from the relative generosity of Parliament at the time. When the records for maimed soldiers are compared with war widows it becomes clear that, while maimed soldiers received greater amounts of pensions, war widows were substantial benefactors of military welfare in Kent and Sussex.

Chapter Two. Experiencing the Civil Wars and Interregnum: sequestration and composition

Introduction

This chapter will consider the experience of Royalist war widows who had their lands sequestered, and who petitioned for their return, during the Civil Wars and Interregnum.¹ It will examine the impact of land confiscation on this group of women and the ways in which they responded to the challenge. Previous studies of the experience of Royalists during the Civil Wars have suggested that, in the long term, the economic level of Royalist suffering was not as great as the contemporary accounts of the 1650s suggest.² These accounts, however, do not consider the impact that the loss of lands had on the lives of Royalists who lived through these decades of uncertainty and how being cut off from their sources of income may have shaped their Civil War experience. Thus, this chapter will scrutinise the impact of sequestration on the lives of Royalist widows. It will also examine how many widows responded to the challenge of land confiscations during the Civil War by petitioning on behalf of themselves and their children.

In 1937 Sir Charles Harding Firth presented an essay called 'The Royalists under the Protectorate' which claimed that sequestration and composition was a major cause of ongoing division between the Royalists and Parliamentarians during the 1650s. He argued that it was not just the fact of sequestration which led to the 'odium' of the Royalists but also that 'the process of getting it fixed was both lengthy and complicated'.³ Other historians who have studied the sequestration process since Firth have continued to highlight its arbitrary nature. John Morrill's influential county study *Revolt of the Provinces* devoted one of its chapters to 'the development and nature of

¹ For an outline of the sequestration process see Introduction, pp. 9-12.

² Joan Thirsk, 'The sales of royalist land during the Interregnum', *The Economic History Review*, 5, no.2 (1952), pp. 188-207; H. J. Habakkuk, 'Landowners and the Civil War', *The Economic History Review*, 18, no.1 (1965), pp. 130-151; P. G. Holiday, 'Land sales and repurchases in Yorkshire after the Civil Wars, 1650-1670', *Northern History*, 5, no.1 (1970), pp. 67-92.

³ C. H. Firth, 'The royalists under the protectorate', *The English Historical Review*, 52, no.208 (1937), p. 637.

parliamentary tyranny' by examining the different administrative systems that were created in the localities to fight the war, including sequestration.⁴

Everitt's survey of Kent in the Civil Wars was particularly scathing of the sequestration process and he criticised the 'wastefulness of the administration'.⁵ For example, in Kent in April 1644 some of the officers for sequestration appeared before the central committee claiming that they could no longer live off the fees provided to them and wished to leave their employment. This was a very undesirable outcome for the members of the Committee who decided that there was 'latitude' in the Parliamentary Ordinance to pay sequestration agents extra in order to keep the process running: demonstrating that they were not just interested in profit.⁶ Additionally, in Sussex in 1647 the 'late Collector for Sequestrat[i]ons', Gilbert Duke, was investigated for wrongfully seizing and selling the goods of Gilbert Alsop (a means by which sequestration agents could boost their income).⁷ Anthony Fletcher surveyed sequestration in his local study of Sussex and demonstrated that there were persistent complaints made by agents about the recurring difficulties that they faced.⁸

Yet, while it is apparent that there were difficulties in the administration of sequestration and occasions where power was abused, Ann Hughes has argued that describing this process as part of a system of 'parliamentary tyranny' may be too simplistic a notion.⁹ She does find that there was considerable opposition to war time county administration during this period but that popular concepts of tyranny and justice were complex and argued for the need to analyse more than just a picture of general opposition. Habakkuk has also argued that 'one must not look to fines for the main cause of their [the Royalist's] sufferings, or, for the main consequences, the sale of land in that period'.¹⁰ Finally, Joan Thirsk corrected a wrong assumption made by

⁴ John S. Morrill, *Revolt in the provinces: The people of England and the tragedies of war 1634-1648* (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 75-122.

⁵ Alan Everitt, *The community of Kent and the great rebellion, 1640-1660* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), p. 161.

⁶ Order of the Committee of Kent sitting at Knowle, 9 April 1644, TNA, SP 28/210/13, p. 22.

⁷ Examination of Gilbert Duke, 25 May 1647, TNA, SP 28/246, pp. 81-84.

⁸ Anthony Fletcher, *A county community in peace and war: Sussex 1600-1660* (London: Longman, 1975), pp. 331-333.

⁹ Ann Hughes, 'Parliamentary tyranny? Indemnity proceedings and the impact of the Civil War: A case study from Warwickshire', *Midland History*, 11, no.1 (1986), p. 53.

¹⁰ H. J. Habakkuk, 'Landowners and the Civil War', *The Economic History Review*, 18, no.1 (1965), p. 148.

some historians who deduced that sequestration led to a dramatic redistribution of wealth during the Interregnum.¹¹ Consequently, she argued that in reality most Royalists did not suffer that heavily in the long term from the confiscation of their lands and it was only those who were already deeply in debt before the war that struggled.¹² Even when estates were sold on, Michael Braddick has argued that they 'were not taken up by mechanic preachers or shoeless infantrymen'.¹³

These important studies of the financial implications of sequestration for the Royalist community have not generally dwelt on the short term implications of living through the loss of land and income. Or even in fact what the cost may have been, physically as well as perhaps emotionally, of the fight that they had to undergo in order to regain those lands. Similarly, there has not been a sustained discussion about the petitioning and lobbying tactics of the Royalists themselves and how these may have helped to contribute to their eventual success. Measuring the real financial implications of land confiscations is difficult and, as Thirsk and Habakkuk have demonstrated, involves taking a longer term perspective. Nevertheless, the petitions of the women themselves often narrated the suffering caused by the loss of their lands as well as their husbands and sons. Rachel Weil's analysis of the male petitions to the Committee for Compounding established the politicisation of the narratives extracted by the Committee.¹⁴ Weil also affirmed that 'women will need to be considered separately' in order to thoroughly consider the ways in which petitioners presented themselves.¹⁵

Therefore, this chapter will examine the response of Royalist war widows to sequestration as well as the impact that the process may have had on their lives. It will, firstly, outline the evidence from the files of the Committee for Compounding, Sequestration and Advance of Money regarding those widows who petitioned against sequestration. It will consider where they came from to petition, when they

¹¹ Thirsk, 'The sales of royalist land during the Interregnum', p. 192.

¹² See also: John Broad, 'Gentry finances and the Civil War: The case of the Buckinghamshire Verneys', *The Economic History Review*, 32, no.2 (1979), pp. 183-200; Ian Gentles, 'The sales of crown lands during the English revolution', *The Economic History Review*, 26(1973), pp. 131-135; pp. 130-151.

¹³ Michael J. Braddick, *God's fury, England's fire: A new history of the English Civil Wars* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 405.

¹⁴ Rachel Weil, 'Thinking about allegiance in the English Civil War', *History Workshop Journal*, 61 (2006), pp. 183-191.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

approached the Committees, and what social status they were. Secondly, the chapter will analyse the impact of sequestration during the Civil Wars and Interregnum by looking at how land confiscations exacerbated the suffering of many widows who lived in areas affected by the military events of the wars. It will also consider wider consequences such as the breakdown in local administration and the building of divisions within families and communities. Finally, the chapter will look at the outcomes of the petitions of Royalist war widows and conclude with the case study of one particular widow who struggled to regain her lands throughout the 1640s, 1650s and beyond.

Petitioning against sequestration

Once a person's estate had been seized and placed under sequestration the landowner was unable to receive any of the profits from that estate. Instead, local sequestration agents collected the rents from their tenants for the benefit of the Parliamentary regime. In order to try to recover their lands they petitioned one of the committees at Westminster. The Committee for Sequestration initially received petitions from landowners asking for the sequestration to be lifted entirely but it was the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents, who allowed landowners to recover their lands for a fee, that received the bulk of petitions. That included Royalist war widows whose lands had been sequestered because of the actions of their husbands, sons or occasionally themselves. Many widows petitioned to ask for the portion of lands due to them in their dower, or jointure, to be returned to them. Some also petitioned on behalf of their children. For example, Mary Banks, who had held Corfe Castle for the Royalists, petitioned 'on the behalfe of her selfe' and 10 children to be allowed her estates back.¹⁶ Margaret Seaton petitioned 'on the behalfe of her Sonne Richard Seaton an Infant' for his father's lands.¹⁷ Gaining access to the portion of their husband's estates that was due to them, and their children, was a 'relatively

¹⁶ Petition of Mary Banks, 15 October 1645, TNA, SP 23/197, p. 284; Barbara Donagan, 'Bankes, Mary, Lady Bankes (d. 1661)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, online edn, Jan 2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1289> [accessed 08.03.17].

¹⁷ Petition of Margaret Seaton, 4 May 1648, TNA, SP 23/214 p. 785.

routine' part of the lives of aristocratic women.¹⁸ Accessing such lands under the restraints of sequestration, however, presented new challenges.

Royalist widows petitioned the Committees for Compounding and Sequestration in considerable numbers during the 1640s and 1650s. This survey includes 167 cases from the records of both committees (as well as the Committee for Advance of Money).¹⁹ The petitions were presented in manuscript form and were not written by the widows themselves but all appear in the hand of a literate (but not the same) scribe. There is one exception: the petition of Jane Beck contains many inaccuracies and is inconsistent with the style of other petitions found in the same files.²⁰ Thus, it is possible that she may have written it herself. Another record, an oath from a gentleman named Thomas Harrison, presented in the case of the widow Elizabeth Rutter, also gives some clues as to who actually wrote the petitions. Thomas asserted that he had previously penned a petition for Elizabeth that had been subsequently lost by the committee.²¹ Furthermore, most of these widows would almost certainly have been given advice about the construction of their petitions. This could have been from a relative, a lawyer employed by their family, or the clerk who was penning it for them.²² The documents themselves present very few clues as to the actual process behind the construction of the petition. One widow indicated that they had received advice from 'learned Councill' on the construction of their case but most remained silent on this issue, presumably to give their narrative more personal weight.²³

Despite this, women were engaging in the process of composing these petitions and presumably paying a fee for them to be written on their behalf.²⁴ 102 of the women signed their own names in some form and a further 10 put down their mark upon their petitions. This may seem surprising given that David Cressy's study on literacy found

¹⁸ Barbara J. Harris, *English aristocratic women, 1450-1550: Marriage and family, property and careers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 134.

¹⁹ The Committee for Advance of Money was initially created to deal with the administration of Parliamentary assessments but it had the same personnel as the Committee for Compounding, met in the same venue, and had some overlap in business, hence its inclusion.

²⁰ Petition of Jane Beck, 17 March 1645, TNA, SP 19/98, f. 87r.

²¹ Oath of Thomas Harrison, 25 January 1654, TNA, SP 23/114, p. 1202.

²² James Daybell, *The material letter in early modern England: Manuscript letters and the culture and practices of letter-writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012), pp. 73-74.

²³ Petition of Elizabeth Hamilton, 21 July 1653, TNA SP 19/12, pp. 398-399.

²⁴ See Introduction, pp. 26-28.

that 'women were almost universally unable to write their own names for most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries'.²⁵ Nevertheless, Margaret Spufford argued that Cressy's figures are probably an underestimate of *reading* ability (most people learnt to read before they learnt to write).²⁶ Therefore, according to Tessa Watt, Cressy's literacy statistics 'should be taken as minimum figures'.²⁷ Additionally, Cressy did not differentiate between different classes of women (he clusters them with the most illiterate group of men) but did acknowledge the connection between wealth and literacy.²⁸ Many of these women were from the gentry or aristocracy and so may have received some form of education as part of their upbringing. This was particularly important because they could be called upon to manage their estates as wives when their husbands were absent or as widows on behalf of their children.²⁹ According to Barbara Harris, widows 'were the only aristocratic women who headed their own households'.³⁰

Table 2.1 shows that, nevertheless, the widows who presented themselves to the committees were not all from the aristocracy or gentry. Certainly there was a large presence of such social groups, as is to be expected, and 64 of the widows identified themselves as such. Many left no suggestion of their status within their petition but where there is a record of their estates those had a value on average of just 96li per annum. This is far below the 200li a year 'cut off' supposedly set by Parliament below which estates were not to be seized.³¹ The records of the Committee demonstrate, therefore, that many whose estates were of nominal value still had even those small lands taken. Perhaps this is indicative of the 'parliamentary tyranny' that Morrill

²⁵ David Cressy, *Literacy and the social order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 145.

²⁶ Margaret Spufford, 'First steps in literacy: The reading and writing experiences of the humblest seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographers', *Social History*, 4, no.3 (1979), p. 409.

²⁷ Tessa Watt, *Cheap print and popular piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 7

²⁸ Cressy, *Literacy and the social order*, pp. 118-119, 137.

²⁹ Jacqueline Eales, 'To booke and pen: Women, education and literacy in Tudor and Stuart England', *The Historian*, 119, (2013), pp. 24-29.

³⁰ Harris, *English aristocratic women*, p. 127.

³¹ Mary A. E. Green (ed.), 'Introduction', *Calendar of the proceedings of the committee for compounding with delinquents, 1643-1660* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889-1893), pp. xii-xiii.

described: sequestrations were often imposed based on scant information and appeals were heard as to the specific conditions of the estate and owner later.³²

Table 2.1 Status of Royalist widows who petitioned the Committees for Sequestration, Compounding and Advance of Money, 1642-1659

Status ³³	Total
Peer	25
Baronet	2
Knight	12
Esquire	15
Gentleman	10
Merchant	3
Yeoman	1
Other	9
No indication	90
	167

Source: Petitions of Royalist war widows, 1642-1659, TNA, SP 19, 20, 23 [this is the source for all Tables and Charts within this chapter, unless stated otherwise].

Table 2.2, below, compares the status of sequestered estate owners in Kent (male and female) according to the account books of the County Sequestration Committee with the above figures for Royalist war widows.³⁴ This table, illustrated in Chart 2.1, demonstrates that the spread of status within the 167 Royalist widows who petitioned for the return of their estates was similar to the spread of landowners who lost their lands in Kent (and therefore, possibly, in the country as a whole). In both cases the largest amount of landowners listed were those with no indication of their status. For some of these the information may be missing from the records. Nevertheless, it is significant that a considerable portion of the sequestered landowners were not identified as members of the gentry or peerage. Chart 2.2 confirms this conclusion by illustrating that a high proportion of widows submitted accounts of estates that were

³² Morrill, *Revolt in the provinces*, pp. 91-92.

³³ Status has been assigned based on the information contained with each petition. This considered both how they described their husbands and how they labelled themselves.

³⁴ The records of the county sequestration committees can be found: TNA, SP 28/205-218.

worth less than 100li. In Kent, the sequestered estate of George Best had only one tenant listed and he paid rent of just 15s a year.³⁵ Nevertheless, these figures could also reflect the undervaluing or concealment of lands in order to pay a lesser fine. This practice was discovered by the Committee for Advance of Money in the case of Dorothy Dalton and her estate was subsequently investigated.³⁶ Additionally, Chart 2.2 is only based upon the information contained within the records of the Committees. Some landowners may have chosen not to indicate the value of their lands in their petitions, or accompanying documents, to gain greater sympathy from the committeemen.

Table 2.2 Status of Royalist widows and sequestered estate owners in Kent, 1642-1659 (total)

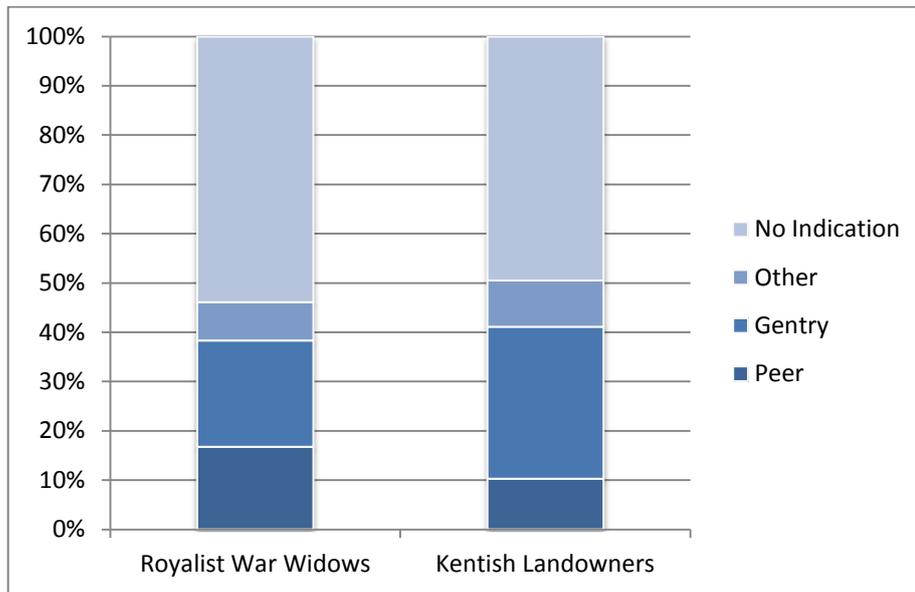
	Royalist widows	Kentish landowners
Peer	28	11
Gentry	36	33
Other	13	10
No Indication	90	53
	167	107

Source: Royalist war widows: as Table 2.1; Kentish landowners: Account books of sequestered estates in Kent, 8 November 1645- 25 March 1655, TNA, SP 28/210/1, 3-12, 14-15, 195.

³⁵ Account book of sequestered estates in Kent, 1 August 1646, TNA, SP 28/210/4, p. 36.

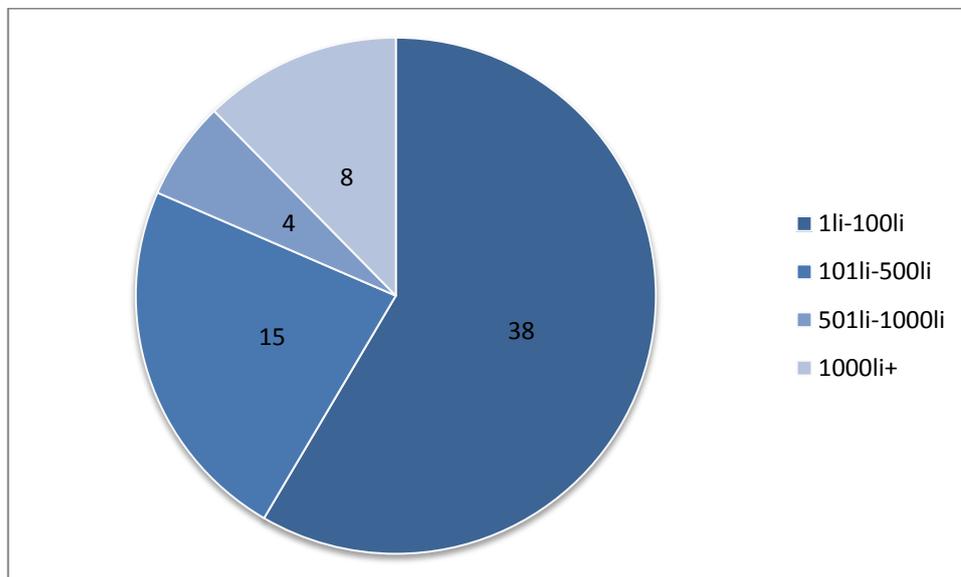
³⁶ Report on the case of Dorothy Dalton, 29 July 1656, TNA, SP 19/120, pp. 109-110.

Chart 2.1 Status of Royalist widows and sequestered estate owners in Kent, 1642-1659 (percentage)



Source: As Table 2.2.

Chart 2.2 Value of the estates of Royalist widows who petitioned the Committees for Sequestration, Compounding and Advance of Money, 1642-1659



Despite the pre-eminence of widows of a lower social status with lands that were small in value in this group of Royalist women, some did have finances and powerful personal connections at their disposal. They were also able to use these to their advantage when trying to remove the sequestration from their estates. Dame

Katherine Girlington, for example, appeared in the Court of Chancery as well as petitioning the Committee for Sequestrations during this period. Her husband, Sir John Girlington, had held Thurland Castle for the Royalists during the war. In a Chancery bill she explained that her husband had owed a debt to a man called Christopher Clapham which, as his administrator, she now had to settle.³⁷ She described how this man tried to take advantage of her weak position while her lands had been confiscated by the Parliament. Without access to the rents from her estates 'yo[u]r oratrix then had scarce any thinge to releive her wants' and then went on to explain how she 'for the obtaining her releife was enforced to repaire vnto the City of London' in order to petition the Committee for Compounding to regain her lands. At this point, she claimed, Clapham approached her 'who then p[re]tended vnto yo[u]r said Oratrix greate freindshipp and said he would helpe yo[u]r said Oratrix her said estate to be freedde from the s[ai]d sequestrac[i]on... pretendinge to yo[u]r Oratrix that he had greate interest in many parliament men would obtaine for yo[u]r Oratrix the discharge of her sequestrac[i]on'. This example underlines Peacey and Kyle's conclusions about public access to Parliament in this period. Either in person, by standing outside the doors to the Houses and Committees, or through powerful personal connections 'those outside Westminster were knowledgeable about, interested in, and prepared to try and influence' the political processes of Parliament.³⁸ Unfortunately for Katherine, however, Clapham proved not to be trustworthy and was unable (or perhaps deliberately unwilling) to remove the sequestration from her lands.

Another woman who used personal connections to further her case was Elizabeth Hammond. The files for the Kent Sequestration Committee contain a letter that looks to be in her own hand, written in 1645. The letter was again addressed to Edward Boys and it was an introduction to an enclosed letter from William Pierrepont, a Member of Parliament. She wrote that she had 'bin with Mr Peirepoynt', enclosed his letter and stated that she 'shall be bolde to entret of you w[hi]ch is if you would be pleased to

³⁷ Bill of Katherine Girlington, *Girlington v Clapham*, 1647, TNA, C 5/8/91.

³⁸ Chris R. Kyle and Jason Peacey, 'Public access to Parliament and the political process in early modern England', in Chris R. Kyle and Jason Peacey (eds.), *Parliament at work: Parliamentary committees, political power and public access in early modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), p. 23.

see equitye' in her case.³⁹ Mr Pierrepont's letter noted that Elizabeth was currently with Mr and Mrs Webb in London (who may have been some of the Webbs of Kent).⁴⁰ He also stated that she was 'a person well affected to the parliam[en]t' and had been certified thus by 'diuers members of the howse of Commons and by Mr Stephen Marshall' who was one of the Assembly of Divines and a prominent preacher in Parliament.⁴¹ Unfortunately, the files reveal no more about the outcome of her case or the reason why her lands were sequestered. Nevertheless, Elizabeth clearly had some powerful connections at her disposal and was able to use them to pressure the Committee towards leniency. She penned her own letter, thus displaying a certain level of education and status, and was clearly active in mitigating the impact of the sequestration regime on her own fortunes.

Those Royalist widows who chose to petition the Committees for Compounding and Sequestration in order to regain their lands had to travel in person to the Committee in London. The women came from far across the country to present their case, which Map 2.1 demonstrates. Elizabeth Cotton, for example, complained to the Committee of Sequestrations that she had had to travel 140 miles to London.⁴² The regional spread of petitioners also shows that there were a high proportion of widows who came from areas that had been initially largely controlled by the Royalists, for example the north of England. It is possible that the distance and financial implications of travel prevented some sequestered landowners from petitioning. Those who were successful in presenting their pleas to the committees in Westminster, therefore, were probably only a portion of the sequestered war widows in the country.

³⁹ Letter from Elizabeth Hammond, TNA, SP 28/210/108, 23 May 1645.

⁴⁰ Letter from William Pierrepont, TNA, SP 28/210/107, 23 May 1645; Everitt, *The Community of Kent*, p. 90.

⁴¹ Tom Webster, 'Marshall, Stephen (1594/5?-1655)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press: online edn, Oct 2009), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18148> [accessed 08.03.17].

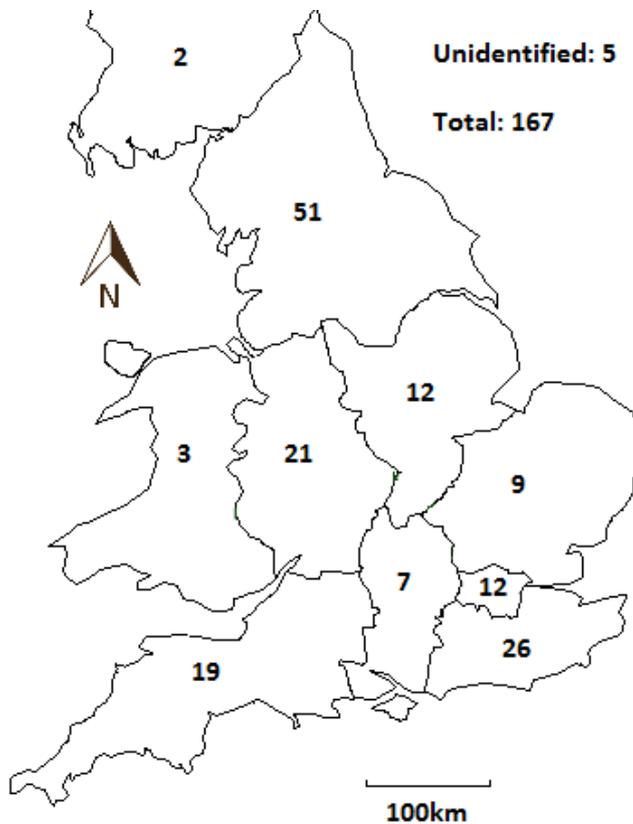
⁴² Petition of Elizabeth Cotton, 18 March 1646, TNA SP 20/12/32, p. 94.

Table 2.3 Regional spread of Royalist widows who petitioned the Committees for Sequestration, Compounding and Advance of Money, 1642-1659

Region ⁴³	Total
London	12
North	51
East Midlands	12
West Midlands	21
South West	19
East	9
South	7
South East	26
Wales	3
Scotland	2
Unidentified	5
	167

⁴³ North: Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmorland, Durham, Yorkshire, Lancashire; East Midlands: Rutland, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire; West Midlands: Cheshire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire; South-West: Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Bristol; East: Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire; South: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire; South-East: Kent, Surrey, Sussex.

Map 2.1 Regional spread of Royalist widows who petitioned the Committees for Sequestration, Compounding and Advance of Money, 1642-1659



The earliest petitions were sent in 1643 when Parliament was beginning to confiscate estates and they were still being presented as late as 1659 in response to the sequestration imposed on Royalists involved in the various uprisings of the 1650s. However, the main bulk of the petitions came in the middle of the period, as Chart 2.3 demonstrates. The first peak in activity in 1646 was probably the consequence of Royalists surrendering in the closing stages of the First Civil War. The second peak in 1651 corresponds with a series of fresh legislation passed by Parliament in the early 1650s in order to better order and centralise the process. During this time the committee was made up of civil administrators who were not also MPs and they do seem to have heard, and resolved on, a vast number of cases.⁴⁴ There is a considerable

⁴⁴ Gerald Aylmer, *The state's servants: The civil service of the English republic, 1649-1660* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 210-221.

distances. Some of the widows were also able to use powerful personal connections on their behalf in order to further their case. These cases help to illuminate the Civil-War experience of Royalist war widows because, in addition to constructing a petition and travelling to London, these landowners had to endure the impact of sequestration on the livelihoods of themselves and their children.

The impact of sequestration

Arundell Penruddock, widow of John Penruddock who was a leader of an Interregnum Royalist uprising, complained at the Restoration that ‘the late pretended Protector’ had orchestrated her husband’s execution and the disposal of their lands.⁴⁸ Another sufferer of the sequestration process, John Wenlock, published a printed pamphlet that was addressed to Charles II which narrated the alleged story of his suffering under the system of sequestration. Within his long narrative he described the distress of his wife and family who were forced to learn to spin and unable to take a maid as a result of their financial suffering.⁴⁹ The process of composition and sequestration was much maligned by many who had had it inflicted upon them during the 1650s and they used the Restoration as a chance to seek justice.

It is clear that there were some widows whose livelihoods were seriously threatened by Parliament’s sequestration policy. Ann Marshall’s husband had served the King in arms at the siege at Lyme for which the local sequestration commissioners had ‘made sale of all her good[es] & stocke and turned her out of her owne house & will not admit her to any composition’.⁵⁰ Ann’s estate was (she claimed) only worth 76li a year. Both Catherine Bolton and Mary Bufford professed to own lands worth even less: 2li a year. Catherine Bolton, whose late husband had made the mistake of renting their lands to a Roman Catholic, had her estate seized by Parliament. She described her husband as a ‘poore laboring man’ who was ‘Ignorant how to cleare the said sequestracion’ in his life time and so following his death and the continued sequestration she and her children might have to ‘goe all abeing’.⁵¹ Mary Bufford

⁴⁸ Arundell Penruddock, *To the honourable, the knights, citizens, and burgesses of the commons house, now assembled in Parliament*, ([London, 1660]).

⁴⁹ John Wenlock, *To the most illustrious, High and Mighty Majesty of Charles the II* (London, 1662), p. 91.

⁵⁰ Petition of Ann Marshall, 4 August 1646, TNA, SP 23/187, p. 205.

⁵¹ Petition of Catherine Bolton, 12 June 1655, TNA, SP 23/130, p. 623.

had been unable to pay the composition fine on her sequestered estate and she described herself as 'very aged, infirme in her eyesight, almost past all labour & inevitably like to perish through want'.⁵² It was not just women with lands worth small amounts who claimed significant suffering because of their sequestration. Lady Margaret Heath's husband, Sir Richard Heath, was the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench and had adhered to the King until the fall of Oxford in June 1646.⁵³ Her husband was in exile in Calais (and so unable to pursue composition) and in his absence she claimed that 'shee hath bin forced to subsist hitherto for the most part by borrowed moneys, which shee cannot longer doe, her credit now fayling her'.⁵⁴ These petitioners must have been partly framing their petitions in such desperate terms in order to ignite sympathy from the committee members, but they do demonstrate the very tangible impact that sequestration had on women who suffered the loss of spouses at the same time as land confiscations.⁵⁵

For some widows, sequestration added to the suffering caused by other burdens of living in war time. Sarah Cox had her estate, 'a little plott of ground without the southgate of Chichester in which there was A little messuage', seized by Parliament when she left it to go to Sherborne to be with her daughter which was part of the 'King's Quarters'.⁵⁶ However, she claimed that she fled her estate because of plundering by the Parliamentarian soldiers who pulled down her house (probably strategically, as it was close to one of the city's gate).⁵⁷ By leaving her damaged estate and going to her daughter she had left a Parliamentary controlled area to go to one of the King's and so she was labelled as 'delinquent' by Parliament. She is not the only widow to complain to one of the Committees of damage done to their estate due to military activity: one of the well documented consequences for civilians of this Civil

⁵² Petition of Mary Bufford, 19 February 1651, TNA, SP 23/71, p. 491.

⁵³ Alan Davidson and Ben Coates, 'Heath, Robert (1575-1649)', in Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (eds.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604-1629*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/heath-robert-1575-1649>, [accessed 08.03.17].

⁵⁴ Petition of Margaret Heath, 25 September 1646, TNA, SP 20/12/22, f. 66r; Mary Verney found herself in a similar position (negotiating composition on behalf of her exiled husband) see: John Broad, 'The Verneys and the sequestrators in the Civil Wars 1642-56', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 27 (1985), pp. 1-9.

⁵⁵ See Chapter 5.

⁵⁶ Account of the estate of Sarah Cox, 24 January 1646, TNA, SP 23/177, p. 670.

⁵⁷ Petition of Sarah Cox, 24 January 1646, TNA, SP 23/177, p. 665.

War was free quarter and plunder by soldiers.⁵⁸ The County Committee at Chester, for example, quartered troops in the sequestered house of Dorothy Pool and as a consequence 'thereby brought soe much out of repaire & ruin' to it.⁵⁹

Wartime also interrupted the normal pattern of local administration and legal process. This impacted on many Royalist war widows who not only had their estate seized on account of their husbands' actions but also had to prove their right to a portion of it. Elizabeth Seacomb was trying to recover her widow's portions of her late husband's lands but complained that 'in these turbulent tymes she Can haue noe legall p[ro]ceeding to obtayne her Right'.⁶⁰ Elizabeth, like many other widows, was clear in her petition of her legal right but was left to fight for it from a position of weakness as a 'delinquent' without access to her lands. There are also some suggestions within their accounts of the 'parliamentary tyranny' that John Morrill described.⁶¹ Elizabeth Cotton claimed that the county certificate which led to the sequestration of her estate was 'uncertaine & dubious' and Elizabeth Jenkins argued that the commissioners who ordered her estate to be seized in Wales were 'strangers in these p[ar]tes' and had not examined local, reliable, witnesses to prove their case.⁶² Complaints were mostly directed against local agents and not the system as a whole, or the central Committee. These sorts of comments may be evidence of small-scale opposition and 'the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups' which were common in early modern England.⁶³ Lloyd Bowen has demonstrated that Royalist seditious speech, including that which criticised the agents of local government, could form part of a 'definite, if unsophisticated strain of "constitutionalist" discourse'.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Petition of Jane Croslande, 5 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/177, p. 593; Petition of Mary Habington, 21 January 1652, TNA, SP 23/94, p. 537; Charles Carlton, 'Civilians', in John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer (eds.), *The Civil Wars: A military history of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 272-305.

⁵⁹ Petition of Dorothy Pool, June 1650, TNA, SP 23/109, p. 93.

⁶⁰ Petition of Elizabeth Seacomb, 23 November 1643, TNA, SP 23/120, p. 564.

⁶¹ Morrill, *Revolt in the provinces*, p. 76.

⁶² Petition of Elizabeth Cotton, 18 March 1646, TNA, SP 20/12/32, p. 94; Petition of Elizabeth and Reginald Jenkins, 8 December 1642, TNA, SP 19/159, p. 61.

⁶³ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (London: Yale University Press, 2008). p. xvi.

⁶⁴ Lloyd Bowen, 'Seditious speech and popular royalism, 1649-1660', in Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (eds.), *Royalists and royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 51.

Parliament's sequestration agents have been described as 'little more than minions of the Committee for Compounding in London'.⁶⁵ They were often ill-equipped, poorly paid and with little knowledge of their local area. Parliament did on occasion commission investigations into local abuses of power in order to distance itself from such accusations. The Committee in London, for example, investigated the case of sequestration agent Anthony Wither who was accused of deliberately undervaluing estates so they could be sold to his allies, a complaint that was often made of sequestration agents. He was even accused of taking the frames off the pictures found in Royalist estates so that only the pictures themselves would be sold for the benefit of the Parliament and the frames he would sell for his own profit.⁶⁶ It is difficult to doubt, therefore, that there were problems in the running of a system that endeavoured to financially punish the enemies of Parliament but that relied on the diligence and honesty of local agents.

As well as these local tensions, the Sequestration system may have been a cause for the continued animosity between Royalists and Parliamentarians during the 1650s.⁶⁷ The process created another way, besides military engagements, that members of the same community were set apart from one another. The sequestration system relied to a large extent on the information and discoveries of ordinary people regarding Royalist neighbours and those they were suspicious of concealing or undervaluing estates.⁶⁸ One woman who made the most of the opportunities for financial reward for informers was Elizabeth Alkin, known in the press as 'Parliament Joan'. Her husband had been killed in Oxford during the war after he was accused of being a Parliamentary spy. Following his death, Elizabeth continued her husband's work and gave Parliament military intelligence about the King's party in Oxford while she remained there.⁶⁹ She then moved to London and requested to be granted the right to occupy the house of

⁶⁵ Fletcher, *A County Community*, p. 331.

⁶⁶ 'A particular charge of several misdemeanours committed by Anthony Whither one of the Committee for Sequestrations in Westminster', 10 July 1644, TNA, SP 28/212.

⁶⁷ Firth, 'The royalists under the protectorate', p. 637.

⁶⁸ Order of the Committee for Compounding, October 2 1650, TNA, SP 23/253; Green (ed.), 'Introduction', *Calendar of the proceedings of the committee for compounding*, pp. v-xlii.

⁶⁹ Maureen Bell, 'Alkin, Elizabeth (c.1600–1655?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57433> [accessed 09.03.17].

the man who had ‘most cruelly caused her husband to be hanged’.⁷⁰ Elizabeth was repeatedly granted sums of money by Parliament, such as 50li in 1646, as well as regular smaller sums from the Commissioners for Sequestrations, for example in 1652 she received 1li 15s for information she passed on to them.⁷¹ Constance Stringer also benefited from the rewards granted by Parliament to the discoverers of delinquent estates. Her husband had supplied ‘Fodder and Lead’ to Parliament for their war effort, and they acknowledged a debt of 1603li 18d in return. Parliament ordered that in order to settle the debt his widow should receive money ‘out of such Discoveries as the said Constance Stringer shall make’.⁷² She informed sequestration agents in February 1651 that Francis Moore had been a commander in the King’s garrison in Worcester in 1644 and, as a reward, was granted the full debt owed to her out of his sequestered estate.⁷³

The widow Lady Anne Fane was not so fortunate. She was reported to the authorities to have married Sir John Colepepper, a Royalist, and so had her estate seized. She claimed that she was ‘much dampnified the said Informacion being altogether vntrue’ and her estate was eventually returned to her after a short struggle and evidence that she had not in fact married him.⁷⁴ It is unclear from the records who exactly informed against Lady Anne, and she herself does not indicate it within her petition, but it is clear that this piece of malicious information had a great impact on her livelihood for a short while. By contrast, Lady Judith Clarke knew exactly who had caused her misfortune when she was branded a delinquent. Her own household servant had given information to the sequestration commissioners in Kent that her son had gone to fight for the King. Within her petition she fought back and claimed that her informer was ‘a very leud fellow haueing two wiues and of noe Credit and lies now in Colchester gaole for sheep stealing’ and hoped that the Committee would instead prefer her ‘qualitie’ testimony that she never furnished her son with arms and money to fight for the

⁷⁰ Petition of Elizabeth Alkin, 30 January 1647, TNA, SP 23/62, f. 228.

⁷¹ Order of the Committee for Compounding, 12 December 1646, TNA, SP 23/3, f. 327r; Receipt of Elizabeth Alkin, 15 January 1642, TNA, SP 18/212, p. 39.

⁷² ‘House of Commons Journal Volume 6: 7 June 1650’, in *Journal of the House of Commons* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1802), pp. 420-422.

⁷³ Petition of Francis Moore, 25 February 1651, TNA, SP 23/120, p. 33; Order of Parliament for debt due to Constance Stringer, 27 March 1651, TNA, SP 23/12, p. 175.

⁷⁴ Petition of Lady Anny Fane, 18 November 1652, TNA, SP 23/94, p. 102.

King.⁷⁵ Here, Lady Clarke seems to have differentiated her own testimony, versus her servant's, on the basis of her social status. This demonstrates Shepard's conclusions that statements of worth in the period were linked to people's perception of their relative wealth.⁷⁶ Despite Lady Clarke's statement, and her attempts to discredit her informer, Parliament only lifted the sequestration following her payment of a composition fine.

The case of Lady Clarke indicates that sequestration and the Civil Wars may have caused a weakening of the traditional bonds between servant and master. It certainly led to considerable tensions between landlords and their tenants. Dame Katherine Knollys complained that her confiscated estate was 'much lessened & impaired by the Contenc[i]ons of troublesome & ill minded tenants', indicating issues with upkeep when lands were no longer in the estate owner's hands.⁷⁷ Similarly, Francis Neville petitioned that 'the Tenants for a longe tyme past haue not, nor will not adventure to bestowe any cost or paines in the reparac[i]ons of the premisses soe that all the houses are very much fallen to Ruine'.⁷⁸ Sequestration also exacerbated disputes over inheritance within families and widows were forced to defend and assert their rights as a result.⁷⁹ Lady Clarke was involved in such a dispute with her husband's 'eldest sonne by a former wife' in the Court of Chancery over her sequestered lands.⁸⁰ Thus, sequestration did not just have a financial impact on Royalist widows. It also encroached upon their ability to manage their estates and may have resulted in the lessening of their authority within their families and communities.

Not all widows suffered as a result of Parliament's approach to the confiscation of Royalist lands. Parliament did recognise some form of duty of care to widows when it allowed them to receive one fifth of the revenues of their husband's sequestered estate. Presumably this reflected the societal norm of widows receiving a certain

⁷⁵ Petition of Lady Judith Clarke, 20 October 1645, TNA, SP 23/182, p. 74.

⁷⁶ Alexandra Shepard, 'Poverty, labour and the language of social description in early modern England', *Past & Present*, 201 (2008), pp. 51-95.

⁷⁷ Petition of Dame Katherine Knollys, 24 September 1651, TNA, SP 23/97, p. 39.

⁷⁸ Petition of Francis Neville, 7 May 1651, TNA, SP 23/107, p. 816.

⁷⁹ See the cases of Mary Crompton, Chapter 6, pp. 192-197, and Elizabeth Rutter below, pp. 86-88.

⁸⁰ Report of the Committee for Compounding, 17 June 1646, TNA, SP 23/182, p. 72; *Clarke v Clarke*, 1650, TNA, C 10/8/34.

portion of their late husband's estate by jointure in the common law.⁸¹ The accounts of the County Committees demonstrate that this was routinely given and many widows are listed as receiving this money who never appear as petitioners in the papers of one of the central committees.⁸²

Despite this, some women had to enter into negotiations in order to receive it. Anne Presse, for example, petitioned to be allowed access to her fifth part 'as to others in like Cases hath bin granted, without Rules of Lymitation'.⁸³ Many of the petitions demonstrate that there was an understanding amongst Royalist widows of their right to access their fifth part and many campaigned for the right to receive it. Dorothy Dolton, for example, stated that she 'beleives it to be true, that some other widdows in her case had a third or a fifth part allowed for the liuelyhood of them and their children'.⁸⁴ It is not always clear why local sequestration agents withheld the right for widows to access a certain portion of their husband's lands. Occasionally it was due to legal wrangles over their inheritance or possibly just a reluctance to provide it. While Parliament did in principle initially allow the benefit of the fifth part they set out restrictions in September 1645 on the basis of loyalty. This Ordinance suggested that some wives and children of delinquents 'may be ready to do ill offices to the Parliament' and so it prevented any who had 'come from their own Habitation into the Parliament Quarters, with or without their Fathers or Husbands, from the Kings Quarters' from receiving that benefit.⁸⁵ This Ordinance may suggest that Parliament was more concerned with the loyalty of the country than their duty of care to vulnerable wives and children. It also explains why many petitioners stressed that they had always resided in 'Parliament's quarters' and had not come from a Royalist area in order not to fall foul of this Ordinance.⁸⁶ Widows were also debarred from accessing

⁸¹ Amy L. Erickson, *Women and property in early modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993). pp. 24-25.

⁸² See for example: Account of sequestered estates in Kent, 11 February 1646, TNA, SP 28/210/1.

⁸³ Petition of Anne Presse, 10 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/177, p. 405.

⁸⁴ Petition of Dorothy Dalton, [1651?], TNA, SP 19/120, p. 99.

⁸⁵ 'September 1645: An Ordinance for taking away the Fifth part of Delinquents Estates, formerly granted their wives & children', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), p. 769.

⁸⁶ See for example: Petition of Ellen Byrom, 9 April 1647, TNA, SP 20/13/8, f. 61r: 'she always lived in Salford'; See also Chapter 6, p. 182.

their fifth part when their late husbands' lands were entered into an Act of Sale.⁸⁷ Therefore, many widows petitioned the House of Commons in order to try to prevent such an outcome.⁸⁸

One widow, Margaret Roper, appeared to have taken advantage of Parliament's provision for widows. Her estate had been seized after her husband, Anthony, was found to be 'deceased in actual War against the Parliament' in 1643.⁸⁹ The Kent Committee for Sequestrations discovered in 1647, however, that Margaret had actually been collecting rents from the whole of her estate and not just her portion. They ordered that any money she owed should be taken from her and that the rest of the rents should be collected 'for the service of the State'.⁹⁰ As well as managing to collect the rents on her estate while it was technically under sequestration for a while, Margaret succeeded in obtaining money to repair her home. A note in her file, in which a tenant was abated some of his rents, showed that her estates were in some disrepair.⁹¹ Margaret's cousin Henry Roper wrote personally to Captain Edward Boys, the sequestrator for the Lathe of St Augustine, to ask him to intervene on Margaret's behalf and allow her 20li to repair her house.⁹² This request was successful, and the money was ordered to be paid to Margaret to restore her house.⁹³ Thus Margaret utilised her family connections, and disregarded the sequestration order for a time, in order to maintain her estates during her widowhood.

Parliamentarian war widows also could seek financial benefit from the sequestration system. The records of the Committee for Advance of Money in particular contain many petitions from the widows of Parliamentary officers for their husbands' arrears of pay.⁹⁴ These petitions are often no less pleading than the petitions of Royalist war widows and contain similar stories of suffering and loss as a result of the events of the

⁸⁷ Green (ed.), 'Introduction', *Calendar of the proceedings of the committee for compounding*, p. xxxi.

⁸⁸ 'House of Commons Journal Volume 7: 27 October 1652', in *Journal of the House of Commons*, pp. 196-198.

⁸⁹ 'House of Commons Journal Volume 3: 19 June 1643', in *Journal of the House of Commons*, pp. 134-136.

⁹⁰ Order of the Kent Committee for Sequestrations, 6 February 1647, TNA, SP 28/210/159.

⁹¹ Order of the Kent Committee for Sequestrations, 23 December 1646, TNA, SP 28/210/160.

⁹² Letter from Henry Roper, 3 July 1647, TNA, SP 28/210/16.

⁹³ Receipt of John Streatwich, 1 August 1647, TNA, SP 28/210/162.

⁹⁴ For example: Petition of Judith Richardson, December 1644, TNA, SP 19/97, f. 20r.

Civil Wars and the death of their husband. Groups of widows collaborated to petition for their husbands' arrears of pay or for a weekly pension. One such petition described the loss of their husbands through fighting for Parliament as well as the loss of 'both their estates, liues & fortunes'.⁹⁵ Jane Beck's husband had been killed fighting for Parliament at York and subsequently her home had been destroyed by fire by the Royalist army in Birmingham. She pleaded with the committeemen to allow her residence in a house in London because of her husband's service for herself, 'a miserable poore widdow', and for her 'poure childdaren'.⁹⁶ Similarly, Dorothy Browne, whose husband had sustained losses in Scotland 'by the late Bishops' and subsequently died, asked to be provided with 'a small Chamber and a little Clossett' in London regarding that she was a 'poore distressed woman and no liuelihood to subsist on but by her labor'.⁹⁷

Widows also petitioned the Parliamentary committees for financial compensation for their families' losses out of the money raised by sequestration. In Liverpool 'hundreds of widdows' sent a petition to the Committee for Compounding following the siege by Prince Rupert during which time they described how 'many of yo[u]r pet[it]ione]rs husbands were barborously massacred'.⁹⁸ They asked for recompense for their losses from the estates of sequestered delinquents and specifically from those who were 'principall in procuring of the Enemies advance in to the County of Lancaster' such as the Earl of Derby. These widows must, therefore, have been well informed of recent political events. Parliament did show a willingness to compensate the losses of Parliamentarian women and children with money taken directly from the estates of those who had somehow been instrumental in the loss of their husbands and fathers. For example, Parliament awarded the three children of Captain Turpin a pension of 100li a year. This was to be taken out of the estate of several delinquents including Chief Justice Heath who had ordered their father's execution.⁹⁹ Thus, whilst the reallocation of lands during the 1650s may not have been as widespread or as socially

⁹⁵ Petition of Anne Cluett and others, July 1649, TNA, SP 19/94, f. 117r.

⁹⁶ Petition of Jane Beck, 17 March 1645, TNA, SP 19/98, f. 87r.

⁹⁷ Petition of Dorothy Browne, 24 September 1651, TNA, SP 23/71 p. 398.

⁹⁸ Petition of the widows of Liverpool, April 1648, TNA, SP 23/188, p. 198.

⁹⁹ Order of the Committee for Compounding, 2 July 1646, TNA, SP 23/2, p. 162.

levelling as previously assumed, this evidence does suggest that some large estates were parcelled out specifically along the lines of loyalty.

The papers of the County Committee sequestration committees also provide some glimpses of local agents using sequestration money in order to help widows who had suffered as a result of the war in their community. The Somerset Sequestration Committee provided Katherine Millard of Shepton Mallet with 20li because both her husband and son were hanged during a series of atrocities committed by Sir Francis Doddington in the West Country.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps local memory of these events and sympathy for those widows whose husbands had been killed lead to their financial remuneration. The Surrey committee also gave Katherine Braybone an allowance of 10li out of the sequestration revenues because it was 'confessed by the souldyrs that they tooke soe much Money from the theeves that robbed and killed her husband'.¹⁰¹ Therefore, across the social spectrum in both the central and local arenas there was awareness amongst the administrators of the sequestration system of a duty of care towards widows and even compassion towards those whose lives had been changed by the war. It is clear, and not surprising, that this was more readily handed out to the widows of their own soldiers.

Sequestration added to the financial pressures of war time for Royalist war widows. It combined with the effects of losing one's spouse and left many widows with debts to administer whilst their lands were confiscated. There were other, less visible, impacts of sequestration too. The petitions of these widows reveal breakdowns in communities as people informed upon one another. Nevertheless, there were widows who benefitted from sequestration. As well as using the money raised from sequestration to fund the war effort, Parliament did allow some money to go towards the widows of their own soldiers. Royalist war widows could also access a portion of their estates, even if the majority of it remained confiscated for their husband's actions. Finally, many of the widows who petitioned to regain their lands *were* successful in having them returned. Thus, the impact of sequestration in the long term

¹⁰⁰ Account book of the Somerset Committee for Sequestrations, 18 November 1646, TNA, SP 28/214/6.

¹⁰¹ Order of the Committee of Surrey, 19 October 1648, TNA, SP 28/214/62.

was mitigated by their efforts to have the lands restored and by the policy of Parliament to return estates to their owners (for a fee).

Outcomes

Table 2.4 illustrates the outcomes of the cases of Royalist war widows based on information contained within the files of the Committees for Compounding, Sequestrations and Advance of Money. Unfortunately for a considerable portion of widows there are no documents which indicate the result of their suits. The evidence that does remain suggests that the Committee for Compounding generally did grant the request of the widow to pay a fee to regain their lands and would occasionally allow the sequestration to be removed entirely from the lands. In fact, only 15 had their request either to compound or for the sequestration to be removed denied.

Table 2.4 Outcome of the cases of Royalist widows who petitioned the Committees for Sequestration, Compounding and Advance of Money, 1642-1659

Result	Total
Unclear	53
Composition allowed	50
Sequestration removed	25
Jointure granted	20
Died before resolution	4
Request to compound or remove sequestration not granted	15
	167

Thus, it does appear that those administering the sequestration process had moved away from the earliest guidelines of 1643 to punish the ‘notorious delinquents’ who

were deemed responsible for the war to become largely an administrative and financial operation during the Interregnum.¹⁰² The healing and settling of the nation was now a priority if the country was to recover from the effects of Civil War. David Smith and Patrick Little have argued that the 1650s saw 'the gradual alienation of the army, and the growing alliance between the Presbyterians and the civilian court'.¹⁰³ That could be part of the reason why 95 of the 167 widows were able to access their lands again as a result of their petitions. Even Margery Morris whose husband, the notorious Colonel John Morris, was executed for his treachery in betraying Pontefract castle to the King, had her lands eventually released.¹⁰⁴ The committeemen might have also rewarded the honesty of Mary Robinson who initially claimed to be 'ignorant of the cause' of her sequestration but did admit in a later petition that she had sent her son to fight for the king furnished with a horse. She stressed that she was 'hartily sorry' for this offence and was allowed her lands back for a small fine.¹⁰⁵

Despite this, the names of certain widows linger on in the records of the Committee for Compounding as they were continually unable to regain their lands. The case of one of these widows, Elizabeth Rutter, has left a great deal of records and petitions within the contemporary archive. Her estate had been sequestered in 1646 on evidence that her husband had been in arms at the Royalist garrison at Chester. She sent at least 10 petitions between 1646 and 1654 to the Committees for Sequestration, Compounding, the Houses of Parliament and finally Oliver Cromwell himself to try to regain her lands.¹⁰⁶ On each occasion her plea was denied.¹⁰⁷ Why then did Elizabeth fail to regain her lands, when so many other Royalist women had them returned?

¹⁰² 'March 1643: An Ordinance for sequestering notorious Delinquents Estates.', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 106-117.

¹⁰³ David L. Smith and Patrick Little, *Parliaments and politics during the Cromwellian protectorate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 125.

¹⁰⁴ Order of the Committee for Compounding, 30 October 1651, TNA, SP 23/15, p. 67.

¹⁰⁵ Petitions of Mary Robinson, March 1646, TNA, SP 23/184, pp. 916, 918.

¹⁰⁶ Petitions of Elizabeth Rutter, April 1646 to March 1654: TNA, SP 23/114, pp. 1213, 1241, 1217, 1232, 1246, 1209, 1199; TNA, SP 23/236 p. 109; TNA, SP 25/75 p. 527; TNA, SP 25/92 p. 97.

¹⁰⁷ Order of the Committee for Sequestrations, 27 June 1649, TNA, SP 20/8, f. 115r; 'House of Commons Journal Volume 6: 25 March 1650', in *Journal of the House of Commons*, pp. 386-387; Order of the Committee for Compounding, 16 March 1650, TNA, SP 23/8, p. 6; Order of the Council of State, 2 January 1656, TNA, SP 25/92, p. 97.

In her own petitions Rutter simply stated that her husband was named as a delinquent 'only for his living at Chester in the time of war'.¹⁰⁸ She acknowledged that it was a garrison at that point but never stated whether her husband was actually involved in the fighting or not. It seems to have been on the evidence of neighbours and family members that the estate remained under sequestration. Those who testified against John asserted that he had lived in Chester when it was a garrison for the King and that he 'did then wear a little sword'.¹⁰⁹ The mere fact of John residing in Chester during this time, whether or not he actually fought, was enough to lead to the sequestration of the Rutter lands. The testimony taken against Elizabeth herself added to the case against them and was damning against her character and loyalty. One female neighbour was recorded to have said that Elizabeth Rutter had uttered 'many unvirtuous and railing speeches against the Parliament'. She described how, on one occasion, she 'clapped her hands for joy and thanked God' when she heard of the death of a number of Parliamentary soldiers and said that 'she hoped that would be the end of them all that fought against the King'.¹¹⁰ There is clearly potential for malicious bias within this report of Elizabeth's seditious speech and defiant gestures.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, it does demonstrate how the use of informants may have facilitated ordinary people to use the potent language of loyalty and allegiance in order to denounce their neighbours.

An additional aspect to Rutter's case was her ongoing dispute with her mother and sisters in law over her husband's lands and, in particular, the inheritance of John's grandmother Dorothy Rutter. Rutter's name also appears in the Chancery files in this period because of a dispute over her right to inherit her late husband's lands.¹¹² In addition to these legal wrangles, Elizabeth's mother and sisters in law sent their own petitions to the Committee for Compounding in which they claimed that Elizabeth did not have total claim to the lands she was trying to win back. As well as attempting to disprove Elizabeth's legal right to the lands they invoked language of loyalty in order to

¹⁰⁸ Petition of Elizabeth Rutter, 25 January 1654, TNA, SP 23/114, p. 1199.

¹⁰⁹ Examinations in the case of Elizabeth Rutter, 11 June 1646, TNA, SP 23/148, p. 98.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹¹¹ See Bowen, 'Seditious speech and popular royalism', pp. 56-58, for more on the combination of gesture and speech.

¹¹² *Rutter v Fryer*, 1651, TNA, C 5/14/116.

denounce her both in Chancery and in their petitions to the Committee. The collective petition of her sisters in law, alongside their husbands Major John Fox, Thomas Lettlemore and John Frere, described Elizabeth as ‘not only disaffected to the Parliament but of ill report and lewd conversation’.¹¹³ This may simply reflect bitter ongoing family feuds and is another example of an accusation of Elizabeth’s Royalism that came from a presumably hostile source. What is interesting here is that Elizabeth’s family were using notions of loyalty and disloyalty in order to discredit her to the authorities. That tells us something about the way in which the events of the Civil War had created a potent narrative of allegiance that ran right through society from the chambers of Westminster down to families and their property disputes.

Elizabeth Rutter had her lands consistently withheld from her and in July 1660 she once again presented her case in the form of a petition to the House of Lords.¹¹⁴ In this petition she set out the fortunes of her case through the various committees and added a new detail: that she had been a prisoner at the King’s Bench prison for debt as a result of the loss of her estate. Most interesting about this final petition is that for the first time she blamed the whole proceedings almost entirely on a Cheshire Parliamentary agent named Gilbert Gerrard. She claimed that he pursued the sequestration and took up the damning witness statements against her because he wanted the estate for himself, which happened to be next to his other lands, and continued to intervene in the case against her. This fresh twist in the tale may have been true, and as such provides us with the answer to why Elizabeth was forever unable to regain her lands, but surely Elizabeth was only able to reveal it in the context of a new Royalist regime. It demonstrates how, for some widows, the divisions and animosities created during the 1640s and 1650s lingered on after the Restoration.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that a study of the impact of the sequestration system on the lives of Royalist war widows makes an important contribution to an understanding of the sequestration system as a whole. There are some limitations to these conclusions. Most of the evidence of this chapter has been based on the petitions of the Royalist

¹¹³ Petition of Eleanor, Hannah and Mary Rutter, 17 March 1653, TNA, SP 23/114, p. 1207.

¹¹⁴ Petition of Elizabeth Rutter, 13 July 1660, PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/295.

widows themselves and these must have contained elements of rhetoric. These documents were created to persuade and so emphasising poverty, and suffering, would have advantaged the cases of these widows. Both Royalist and Parliamentary war widows used narratives of distress in their petitions to the committees irrespective of their actual situation.¹¹⁵ Also, whilst these Royalist widows did suffer the loss of lands and the difficulties of trying to regain them, it is also likely that similar conclusions would apply to many male Royalist petitioners. In Kent, for example, Herbert Perrot was the unfortunate victim of mistaken identity when his lands were sequestered ‘uppon a mistake for one Mr Perrott late of grays Inn and now in the Kings army’. The Committee found that he had actually been serving in Parliament’s army and so his lands were eventually released.¹¹⁶ Therefore, it would be important to study the wider implications of the sequestration process on the lives of men and women at local and national levels in order to fully appreciate the impact of the scheme.

Nevertheless, the petitions of Royalist war widows are a valuable source for a more thorough understanding of the lives of civilians in the military world of the 1640s. Specifically, they enlighten historians to the experience of women and the ways in which their livelihoods were profoundly altered by the events of the Civil Wars. Many Royalist widows were forced to defend their inheritance and their children’s at a time when their husband’s actions caused them to be labelled by the State as a ‘delinquent’. By marking out certain women and their families as ‘delinquent’ they created a potent narrative of loyalty and allegiance that was used by many of those who came into contact with the system and the state. When Royalist widows addressed Parliamentary Committees in person, and through petitions, in order to try to regain some of what the wars had cost them they narrated their own loyalty in terms that had been shaped by their experiences as well as the expectations of the Committee men. They participated in discourses of allegiance that had been created by the Civil War in order to survive.¹¹⁷ Many of these women did regain their lands during the Interregnum but engaging with the sequestration process would have

¹¹⁵ See Chapter 5.

¹¹⁶ Order of the Kent Committee for Sequestrations, 20 November 1644, TNA, SP 28/235.

¹¹⁷ See Chapter 6.

carried a financial burden. Additionally, there may have been a greater cost: the breakdown of traditional relationships within families, households and communities. Alongside the drastic military and political consequences of the wars, these wounds may have taken many years after the Restoration to heal.

Chapter Three. Experiencing the Restoration: Royalist war relief

Introduction

The events of May 1660 had significant consequences for the people of England and, in particular, those who had fought in the Civil Wars. After Charles II landed victoriously at Dover former Commonwealth troops were paraded in front of him for inspection at Blackheath. Despite this official reception, the future for these soldiers was now uncertain. Regiments of soldiers who had fought against Charles's late father presented both a logistical and practical problem to the new monarch. 'A whiff of radicalism still permeated its ranks' and there was pressure from the country for the disbandment of the army.¹ During the subsequent years hundreds of soldiers were sent overseas on military expeditions and many never returned home.² There were also significant numbers of wounded Parliamentary soldiers, as well as war widows and orphans, who had received military welfare during the Civil Wars and Interregnum. The counties of Kent and Sussex had been relatively generous to their military dependants during the 1640s and 1650s but they had been granted financial relief on the basis of fighting for Parliament. When the son of the man that they had fought against took the throne in 1660 their future as dependants on the State's generosity looked in doubt.

Despite this, the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 did not signal an immediate change to local administration or the fates of Parliamentary maimed soldiers and war widows. Apart from the use of Latin and the way in which sessions were dated, there was no fundamental shift in the business recorded in the Quarter Sessions' books of Kent and Sussex in 1660. The same is true of the administration of the pension scheme. The early years after the Restoration were marked by a certain level of uncertainty in these counties as to how to continue operating the scheme. The

¹ David Appleby, 'Veteran politics in Restoration England, 1660-1670', *The Seventeenth Century*, 28, no.3 (2013), p. 324.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 330-332.

expected changes were made to the Pension scheme when in 1662 Parliament passed a new Act to replace the 1647 one and to build on the earlier Elizabethan provision.³

This chapter will explore the history of the Royalist pension scheme in Kent and Sussex between 1660 and 1679. It will use the same form of Quarter Sessions records (Order Books and Sessions Rolls) that Chapter One consulted, but for the years following the Restoration. Both counties have rich records for this period and benefit from full and complete Order Books. The chapter will begin by considering the years of instability, between 1660 and 1662, before Parliament regulated the process. This section will focus on the administration of the pension scheme by examining orders relating to the process and the JPs who sat during these years. In this way it will begin to outline how Royalist and Parliamentary dependants in Kent and Sussex were affected by these years of change. Some Justices, most notably in Kent, put an abrupt end to the granting of pensions to Parliamentarians in 1661 before the passing of the Act. There were also some significant upheavals to who held positions of responsibility within the pension system and these may well have been motivated by loyalty in the changed political climate. This had a direct impact on those benefiting from systems of military care and welfare. For most Parliamentary maimed soldiers and war widows these years marked the end of their ability to rely on the State for relief. Nevertheless, in some areas JPs continued to grant pensions to certain Parliamentary soldiers. Even once pronouncements were made regarding the end of all previously held pensions, some men continued to receive money from the county into the late 1660s in both Kent and Sussex.

The second part of the chapter will analyse the experience of pensioners who received war relief between 1660 and 1679 in Kent and Sussex. It will examine the orders for pensions over time and the average amounts awarded by each county. In the discussion on Kent it will also consider where pensioners came from in order to discover something about the regional patterns of loyalty and poverty that existed as a result of the Civil Wars. This section will also benefit from the existence in the West

³ 'Charles II, 1662: An Act for the reliefe of poore and maimed Officers and Souldiers who have faithfully served His Majesty and His Royal Father in the late Wars.', in John Raithby, (ed.) *The statutes of the realm: Volume 5, 1628-8* (London: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), pp. 389-390.

Sussex records of a Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers' Account for the years 1669-1679. These accounts listed who received a pension in each year, and the amount awarded, and therefore provides additional information to the Order Books. Using this information it is possible to see if pensioners generally received their awards with regularity throughout the years. This gives a glimpse into the practicalities of the pension system that was still awarding money to a considerable number of Royalist soldiers and widows over twenty years after the Civil Wars had ended. The chapter will end its analysis in 1679 because in this year Parliament allowed the 1662 Act (and the earlier Elizabethan Act) to fall into abeyance.⁴ The West Sussex JPs did order payments to maimed soldiers after this (for example, in October 1680) and may have continued to do so beyond this date.⁵ Generally speaking, however, after 1679 the county pension scheme became a 'dead letter in practice'.⁶

Administering war relief during the Restoration years: 1660-1662

In 1662 Parliament passed an Act which provided provision to 'every Officer Souldier or Mariner maimed indigent aged or disabled in body for worke in the Service of his said late Majesty or his Majesty that now is during the late Warrs'.⁷ By implication, therefore, those who had served Parliament and who had been receiving pensions were no longer eligible to receive them. Nevertheless, the other principle of Parliamentary war relief, that the recipient had to be unable to work as a result of their injury, remained foundational to the system. The new regime was proactive in attempting to rid itself of the considerable burden of supporting wounded Parliamentary servicemen. The military hospitals of Ely House and the Savoy had been supporting wounded Parliamentary soldiers financially during the Civil Wars and Interregnum. These men were discharged in December 1660, thereby relieving the State of the considerable financial burden these institutions created (30,000li per

⁴ 'House of Commons Journal Volume 9: 2 April 1679', in *Journal of the House of Commons* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), p. 582; Geoffrey Hudson, 'Disabled veterans and the state in early modern England', in David Gerber (ed.), *Disabled veterans in history* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 140 (fn. 26).

⁵ West Sussex QS Sessions Roll, October 1680, WSRO, Q/R/W159.

⁶ Hudson, 'Disabled veterans and the state', p. 122.

⁷ 'Charles II, 1662: An Act for the releife of poore and maimed Officers and Souldiers', in John Raithby, (ed.) *The statutes of the realm*, pp. 389-390.

annum).⁸ Changing the provision allocated by Quarter Sessions in the provinces was not so straightforward, however. As Chapter One showed, the system of military welfare was outlined by central order but its implementation relied to a large extent on local factors. In the years after the Restoration the character of the county benches, and the efficiency with which local administration was brought in line with the new regime, had a significant impact on Parliamentarian and Royalist maimed soldiers and war widows. New commissions of the Peace replaced Justices of the Peace across the country but the makeup of these benches varied considerably.⁹ This section will consider the Quarter Sessions records for Kent and Sussex in the immediate aftermath of the Restoration in detail in order to outline how the politics of each county impacted the ways in which military welfare was handed out during these changeable years.

Kent

Everitt argued that on the eve of the Restoration ‘the community of Kent was now virtually united in favour of a new parliament and a restored monarchy’ with only the exception of a ‘small group of diehard Republicans’.¹⁰ He ended his seminal work *The community of Kent* with a description of harmony and peace at the Restoration. This reflected the strong themes of continuity and a united community of gentry (who were moderately Royalist but above all staunchly local) that ran throughout the book. Yet, there is much to suggest that at the Restoration there was significant upheaval and that the return to the ‘old order’ came at a significant cost to many. The records for the Commission of the Peace in 1665 show that of the 123 Justices, only 12 had appeared in the last commission in 1658.¹¹ That meant a considerable change to the local ruling elite. Appleby has also observed that ‘the demeanour of the Justices in Kent was indicative of particularly strong Royalist affiliations in the north and west of

⁸ Appleby, ‘Veteran politics in Restoration England’, p. 333.

⁹ Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration: A political and religious history of England and Wales, 1658-1667* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 129.

¹⁰ Alan Everitt, *The community of Kent and the great rebellion, 1640-1660* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), p. 312.

¹¹ Commission of the Peace, 1665, KHL, Q/J/C/10; the Kentish Order Books do not record which JPs sat at each session, therefore making a more thorough analysis of the JPs, in the same way as for Sussex (see below, pp. 98-99), impossible.

the county'.¹² The impact of this change in regime is apparent in the Order Books in the immediate years after the Restoration. For example, Lancelot Kensington, a barber surgeon of Westgate in Canterbury, petitioned successfully soon after 1660 to ask for his reinstatement as surgeon for the County Gaol. He had been displaced during the wars for his loyalty to the King.¹³

There was also an abrupt change in personnel in the administration of the pension scheme shortly after Charles II's arrival. In June 1660 John Fry was requested to attend the Justices of the Peace of the County at the White Hart in Canterbury.¹⁴ He had been appointed the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers for the Eastern part of the county in 1653 following the death of the previous incumbent and he was, unusually, re-appointed annually to the position in the coming years.¹⁵ Fry had also briefly been Treasurer for the County Committee of Kent in the early 1640s and was described as 'a p[er]son faithfull to the Com[m]onwealth interest' by members of the Kentish gentry and County Committee in the letter that recommended his appointment.¹⁶ This man, therefore, seems to have been a firm Parliamentarian in the eyes of the local establishment. However, the return of Charles II had transformed the political climate. Now the man who had been displaced as Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers during the Civil Wars because of his loyalty to the King, William Russell, was demanding his job back. An order from July 1660 confirmed that Russell was to be reinstated as Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers and also as Treasurer of the Marshalsea Prison. John Fry lost his position.¹⁷ Therefore, while there is evidence to support Everitt's claims that local gentry sentiment may have been left unchanged by the events of 1660 it is possible to show that these years did also carry some significant upheavals. Those who had worked with the Commonwealth regime, and benefited from its generosity, were some of the first to feel these effects.

¹² Appleby, 'Veteran politics in Restoration England', p. 334.

¹³ Petition of Lancelot Kensington, 1660, KHLC, Q/SB/7, f. 47r.

¹⁴ East Kent QS Order Book, June 1660, KHLC Q/SO/E1, f. 46r.

¹⁵ In Sussex and Kent before the Restoration the Treasurer for Maimed Soldier changed every year (see Chapter 1, pp. 37-41).

¹⁶ Everitt, *The community of Kent*, p. 175; Correspondence, 18 Apr 1653, KHLC Q/SB/4/72.

¹⁷ Order of the East Kent JPs, 24 July 1660, KHLC, Q/SB/7/68-9.

Rapid changes to the makeup of the county bench and its treasurers were mirrored by the speed with which Parliamentary pensions were revoked in Kent. In April 1661 there was an order in the West Kent books that all pensions awarded prior to the previous October were to be suspended.¹⁸ Notably, this preceded the Parliamentary Act and similar orders for other counties.¹⁹ This order did contain one exception: a certain William Ashdown, who was first granted an annuity of 3li in 1648 after serving Parliament in Devon, was allowed to continue to receive his pension.²⁰ In 1663 his name also appeared in an extensive list of soldiers to be granted a one-off payment of 1li which shows that this, presumably, Parliamentary maimed soldier was still receiving money from the JPs into the Restoration period.²¹ In Kent William Ashdown was the only recorded Parliamentary pensioner who continued to receive money from the bench after the Restoration (although some others were granted a one-off sum of 10s 'to return to their last abode').²² The reason for this treatment is unclear: the Order Books give no indication as to whether his wounds were especially severe, or if there might have been another reason for the JPs' compassion.

Generally, however, Parliamentary pensioners were quickly replaced by Royalist recipients and JPs in Kent dramatically increased their expenditure by rewarding those who came forward to claim that they had fought for the King. In Kent (and West Kent in particular) the fervour of the new administration's loyalty to the present and former King's cause was reflected in their generosity towards maimed soldiers and war widows.

Sussex

According to Fletcher, 'The Sussex gentry, like those of Kent, enthusiastically welcomed the Restoration'.²³ Several men who were notable for their loyalty to the King came to serve as Justices of the Peace for the first time. Sackville Graves and Thomas Woodcock had been involved in the Royalist conspiracy in Sussex in 1658 and

¹⁸ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1661, KHLC, Q/SO/W2, f. 71r.

¹⁹ Appleby, 'Veteran politics in Restoration England', p. 334.

²⁰ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1661, KHLC, Q/SO/W2, f. 71r; October 1648, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 186r.

²¹ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1663, KHLC, Q/SO/W2, f. 99r.

²² West Kent QS Order Book, April 1661, KHLC Q/SO/W2, f. 71r.

²³ Anthony Fletcher, *A county community in peace and war: Sussex 1600-1660* (London: Longman, 1975), p. 320.

were newly elected after 1660.²⁴ Another JP, John Lewknor, was knighted on the accession of Charles II and had served in the Royalist Army during the 1640s.²⁵ Royalist in arms John Covert, who was listed as an indigent Officer in the 1663 publication *A list of officers*, was also called upon to serve as a JP after the Restoration.²⁶ Some of these men had also been elected to the 1660 Convention Parliament such as Edward Blaker (elected for New Shoreham, East Sussex) and Nizel Rivers (elected for Lewes, East Sussex).²⁷ There were exclusions from the bench of former Parliamentarian sympathisers too, notably Herbert Morley who had pursued the cases of maimed soldiers during the 1650s.²⁸ Not all of the men newly called in 1660 had clear Royalist sympathies. For example, Henry Goring remained neutral during the wars and Thomas Dyke managed to avoid involvement by 'devoting himself to the improvement of his iron works'.²⁹

Table 3.1, below, examines some of the characteristics of the men who sat at Quarter Sessions between 1660 and 1662. In both parts of the county the men who sat as JPs for the first time after 1660 make up the more significant percentage. This trend was strongest in West Sussex, described by Fletcher as 'a neutralist, even an incipiently royalist, countryside' during the wars.³⁰ Yet, there was also some measure of continuity. For example, Anthony Shirely had served on the Bench continuously since 1646 and Thomas Collins had sat since 1649.³¹ Some of the men had also served in

²⁴ Fletcher, *A county community*, pp. 317, 320.

²⁵ B.M. Crook, 'Lewknor, John I (1624-69)', in B.D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1660-1690*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/lewnor-john-i-1624-69> [accessed 01.03.17].

²⁶ Anon., *A list of officers* (London, 1663), col. 32; Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 309.

²⁷ M. W. Helms and B. M. Crook, 'Blaker, Edward (1630-78)', in B.D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/blaker-edward-1630-78> [accessed 03.03.17]; M. W. Helms and B. M. Crook, 'Rivers, Nizel (1614-95)', in B.D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/rivers-nizel-1614-95> [accessed 03.03.17].

²⁸ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 321; he did remain an MP: M. W. Helms and Basil Duke Henning, 'Morley, Herbert (1616-67)', in B.D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/morley-herbert-1616-67> [accessed 03.03.17].

²⁹ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 289; M. W. Helms and Basil Duke Henning, 'Dyke, Sir Thomas (1619-69)', in B.D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/dyke-sir-thomas-1619-69> [01.03.17].

³⁰ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 267.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 352, 354.

Parliaments in the 1650s such as Nathaniel Studley who had been a member of the Barebones Assembly.³² The father of the JP John Stapley (Anthony Stapley) had been a regicide and served on the Council of State during the Interregnum.³³ Both father and son ceased to serve on the Sussex bench by the end of the 1650s (Anthony died in 1655).³⁴ John, however, participated in the Royalist Conspiracy in Sussex in 1658 and was called back in 1660.³⁵ Despite there being some measure of continuity there were 9 men who sat in 1660 and never again: demonstrating that total change to the new regime was slow to come about.

Table 3.1 JPs who sat in East and West Sussex, 1660-1662

Number of JPs who:	East Sussex (total: 37)	West Sussex (total: 27)
Served as a JP 1642-1659 ³⁶	15 (41%)	9 (33%)
Served as a JP in 1660 for the first time ³⁷	22 (59%)	18 (67%)
Served as a JP in 1660 and no longer	5 (14%)	4 (15%)
Elected MP 1642-1659 ³⁸	9 (24%)	3 (11%)
Elected MP after 1660 ³⁹	16 (43%)	11 (41%)
Elected MP 1642-1659 AND after 1660	5 (14%)	2 (7%)

Source: ESRO, QS Order Books January 1660-January 1662, QO/1/5/3-4.

³² Ibid., p. 299.

³³ M. W. Helms and B. M. Crook, 'Stapley, John (1628-1701)', in B.D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/stapley-john-1628-1701> [02.03.17].

³⁴ Alan Davidson and Ben Coates, 'Stapley, Anthony (1590-1655)', in B.D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/stapley-anthony-1590-1655> [03.03.17].

³⁵ Fletcher, *A county community*, pp. 321, 352.

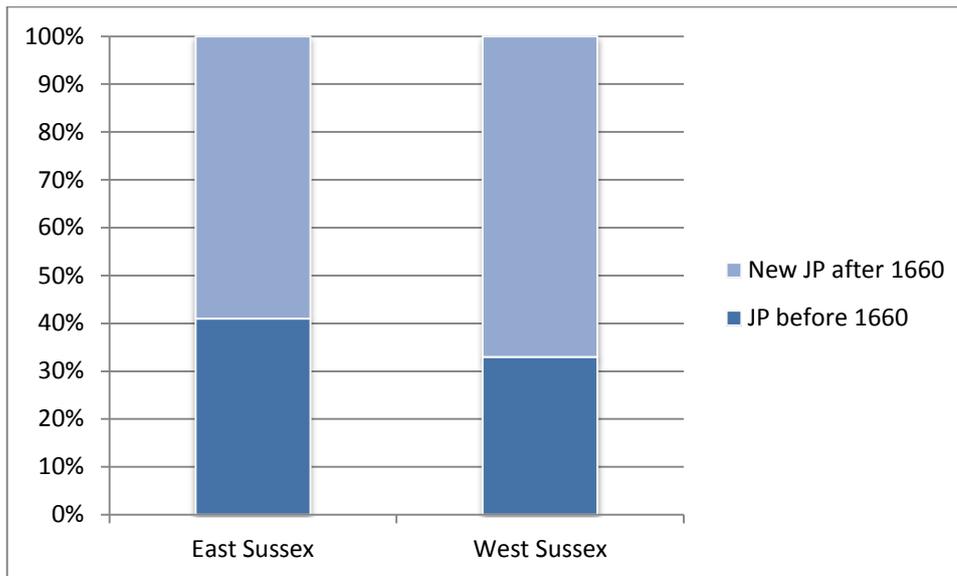
³⁶ Ibid., pp. 349-354.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ B. C. Redwood, 'Introduction', in B. C. Redwood (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book, 1642-1649* (Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1954), pp. xxvi-xxx; Mary F. Keeler, *The Long Parliament, 1640-1641: A biographical study of its members* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1954).

³⁹ B.D. Henning (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/research/members/members-1660-1690> [accessed 03.03.2017].

Chart 3.1 JPs who sat in East and West Sussex, 1660-1662 (percentage)



Source: As Table 3.1.

Hence, the county of Sussex, like Kent, saw a significant re-ordering of its Commission of the Peace at the Restoration. It was 'drastic, though not quite as drastic as in some other counties, such as Warwickshire' and in Sussex 'the gentry came into their own again'.⁴⁰ The East and West Sussex benches were less quick than Kent to cut off their Parliamentary dependants. It was not until January 1662 that the JPs at Chichester and Lewes ordered all pensions that had been previously granted by the bench to be discharged.⁴¹ The timing of these orders reflected the national re-ordering of the process much more closely than in Kent which could suggest that the Sussex benches were more sympathetic towards former Parliamentarians. This is further substantiated by the small number of Parliamentary maimed soldiers that continued to receive pensions. The East Sussex order for the discarding of former pensions contained two exceptions and also awarded a one-off provision to nine men 'for the bearing of their charges to their seu[er]all and Respective habitac[i]ons'.⁴²

One of the men awarded a one-off sum within the order that discharged Parliamentary pensions, John Evans, became a frequent attendee at the County

⁴⁰ Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 321.

⁴¹ West Sussex QS Order Book, January 1662, WSRO, QO/1/5/4, f. 28v; East Sussex QS Order Book, January 1662, ESRO, QO/1/5/4, f. 30v.

⁴² East Sussex QS Order Book, January 1662, ESRO, QO/1/5/4, f. 30v.

Bench over the next few years. He first appeared in the Quarter Sessions in July 1647 when he was awarded a pension of 40s.⁴³ This was increased to 3li and then 4li over the next few years. He was also regularly granted advances to his pension during the 1650s because he was 'destitute' and 'in respect his wife is bedrid' (demonstrating that his wife's disability had been considered, alongside his own).⁴⁴ John Evans was also one of the very few maimed soldiers to receive money during the uncertain year of 1660 when he was again given an advance on his pension.⁴⁵ After the 1662 order for his one-off relief he continued to be granted money. In a petition sent in July of that year he demonstrated his persistence in his pursuit of financial relief. He had complained 'that he hath beene w[i]th the Treas[urer] for the maymed soldiers and he refuseth to pay me this q[uar]ters pention w[i]thut yo[u]r worsh[i]pps order'.⁴⁶ This description does imply that certain members of the new administration were not willing to grant this former Parliamentarian soldier a pension. Nevertheless, the order was granted by the JPs and he received 20s that day and a pension of 40s.⁴⁷ He petitioned again in July 1668 but in this instance he made no reference to his soldiery but just that he was 'in great want & povertie by Reason of old age'.⁴⁸ The arrears of his pension were granted but John Evans's success in receiving a pension for over twenty years, across the Restoration period, ended. Finally, his pension was now discharged and he was presumably pushed onto parish relief.⁴⁹

The case of John Evans was not entirely isolated in Sussex. Another maimed soldier, Thomas Berkhead, had petitioned in 1654 to request that his pension, granted to him 7 years previously, might be increased. The petition described him as a 'poore Suffer[ing] man and Aged maymed Souldier'.⁵⁰ In 1663, 16 years after he was initially granted a pension, he was again granted an annuity. He was named in the Order Book as 'a souldier in the warrs of his late Ma[jes]tie of Blessed memory (being in the said

⁴³ Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book*, p. 127.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 200; East Sussex QS Order Book, April 1656, January 1658, April 1658, ESRO, QO/1/5/3, ff. 17r, 46v, 51r.

⁴⁵ East Sussex QS Order Book, May 1660, ESRO QO/1/5/3, f. 77v.

⁴⁶ Petition of John Evans, July 1662, ESRO, QR/135, f. 107r.

⁴⁷ East Sussex QS Order Book, July 1662, ESRO, QO/1/5/4, f. 41r.

⁴⁸ Petition of John Evans, July 1668, ESRO, QR/158, f. 49r.

⁴⁹ East Sussex QS Order Book, October 1668, ESRO, QO/1/5/5, f. 93r; for more on parish relief, see Chapter 1, p. 36.

⁵⁰ Petition of Thomas Berkhead, October 1654, WSRO, Q/R/W80, f. 4r.

service much wounded and disabled)'.⁵¹ This was a standard entry format but it does leave doubt as to whether Thomas had fought for the Royalists or the Parliamentarians during the wars. Did he misinform the Justices about his allegiances during the 1640s or during the 1660s? Or were the Justices simply being lenient to him after 1660 and so the Order Book phrasing was deliberately ambiguous? Either way, these two cases do perhaps suggest that Sussex was more generous towards particular former Parliamentarian soldiers, or less thorough in discerning allegiance, than Kent was.

Consequently, the passing of the Parliamentary Act in 1662 was not the only factor that stimulated benches to change who received military welfare and provision. In Kent the allegiances of the Justices may have had a far greater impact on the fate of Parliamentarian and Royalist maimed soldiers and war widows. In Sussex, by contrast, certain pensioners benefited from the continued generosity (or amnesia) of the bench towards former Parliamentarian soldiers. The next section will consider the experience of those who were receiving war relief by examining the rate at which pensions were awarded between 1660 and 1679. It will again consider the cases of Kent and Sussex in turn and demonstrate how Royalist maimed soldiers and war widows fared after the Restoration in these counties.

Receiving war relief after the Restoration: 1660-1679

The number of Royalists who received military welfare in Kent and Sussex after the Restoration largely depended on two main factors: the attitudes of the JPs towards these former soldiers and their dependants, and the number who resided within the county and came forward for relief. In Kent, these two factors combined powerfully to produce an extraordinary peak in pension awards during the early years after the Restoration. In Sussex the numbers were considerably smaller and there was a dearth of pensions awarded in some years. Despite this, Sussex JPs did administer pensions at a fairly steady rate throughout most of the two decades after the Restoration. The rates at which pensions were awarded, and their amounts, reveal certain things about the politics of the county during this period and also the county during the Civil Wars.

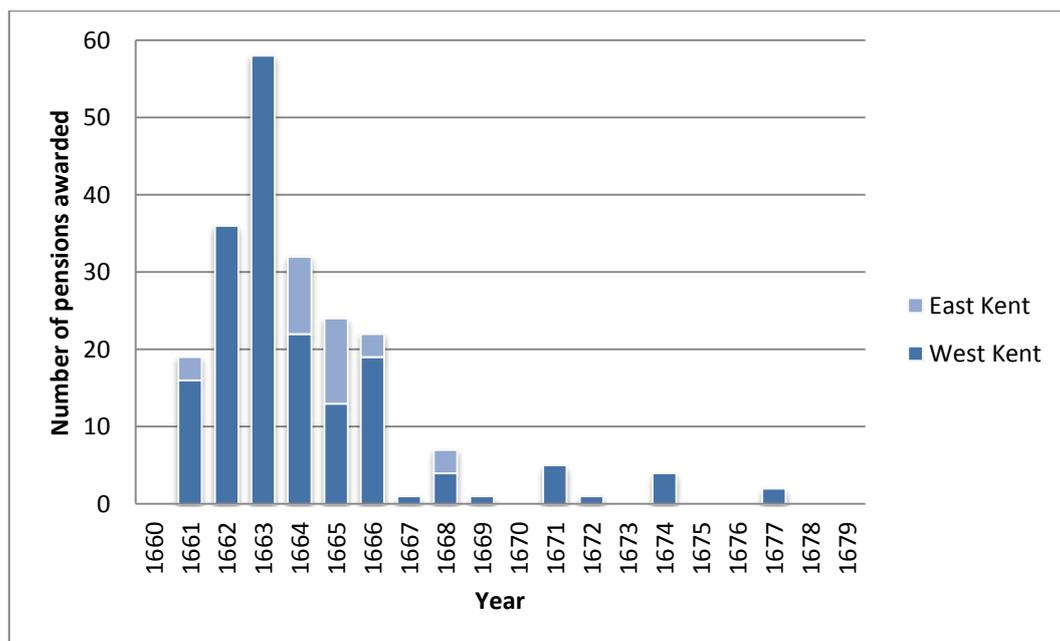
⁵¹ West Sussex QS Order Book, April 1663, WSRO, Q/1/5/4, f. 58r.

The parishes that pensioners arrived from during the 1660s and 1670s might tentatively suggest patterns of allegiance in these counties during the 1640s. Finally, the endurance of the pension system in both Kent and Sussex until late in the 1670s demonstrates that military welfare, and specifically provision towards war widows, was an important legacy of the Civil Wars.

Kent

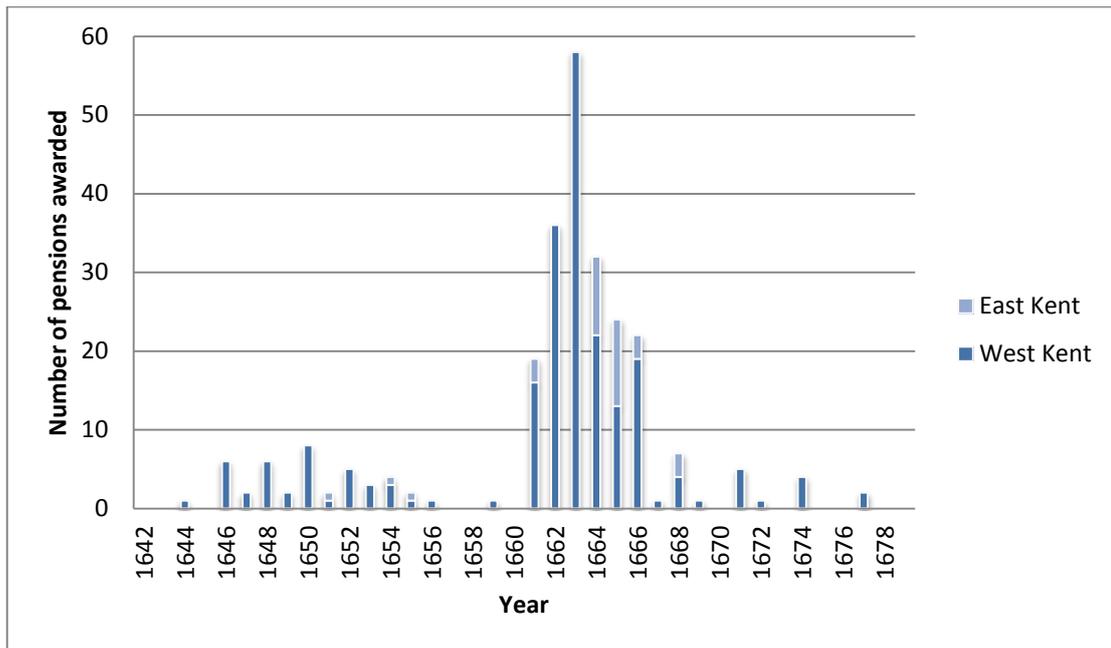
In Kent significant numbers of former Royalist maimed soldiers and war widows were granted pensions in the first few years after 1660. The following charts illustrate the amount of pensions that were awarded in East and West Kent during the Restoration period. Chart 3.2 shows the period 1660-1679 and Chart 3.3 puts those figures into the context of the Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration years (1642-1679).

Chart 3.2 Pensions awarded in East and West Kent, 1660-1679



Source: KHLC, QS Order Books 1660-1679, Q/SO/E1-E2, W2-W3 and QS Sessions Rolls 1660-1679, Q/SB/8-11.

Chart 3.3 Pensions awarded in East and West Kent, 1642-1679



Source: KHLIC, QS Order Books 1642-1679 (Q/SO/E1-2, W1-3) and QS Sessions Rolls 1642-1679 (Q/SB/1-11).

Charts 3.2 and 3.3 show that there was a clear peak in awards given to maimed soldiers and war widows in the years 1661-1663. The number of awards in this period far outstripped any other rate of awards either before or after the Restoration. 1663 saw the most amounts of pensions awarded: 58 men and women were granted money in this year. This was more than 7 times the largest amount of pensions given during any one year before the Restoration. This amounted to a high expenditure on behalf of the county stock. The pensions awarded during this year alone amounted to the value of 177li.⁵² If these were paid out consistently throughout the next few years (which is not certain) then the cost to the county would have been high. By comparison, throughout the whole of the period before the Restoration the total value of pensions listed in the existing Order Books only came to 120li 6s. The charts also demonstrate that the majority of these awards came from West Kent and that without these awards there would be no such peak. This illustrates Appleby’s point that Royalist affiliation was particularly strong amongst Kentish JPs from the north and west.⁵³ This

⁵² See Chart 3.7, below, for a comparison of the annual pension allocation in Kent and Sussex.

⁵³ Appleby, ‘Veteran politics in Restoration England’, p. 334.

also coincides with the areas where there had been resistance to Fairfax and support for Royalism in 1648.⁵⁴

It is clear that Kentish JPs, and in particular those from West Kent, were generous to Royalists in the first few years following the Restoration. Yet, the provision of pensions fell largely to maimed soldiers. Of the 212 pensions that were awarded after 1660, just 4 (2%) went to war widows.⁵⁵ This is probably because the 1662 Act (like the Ordinances of the 1640s) gave provision to war widows and orphans but only 'out of the Surplusage of such Stock of Maintenance as shall remaine in the hands of the said Treasurers after such Pensions and payment of them made'.⁵⁶ In a similar way to the 1647 Act, therefore, maimed soldiers were given the priority when it came to handing out assistance to military dependants.⁵⁷ Despite the similarity of Parliament's provision for war widows before and after the Restoration, however, Justices in Kent after 1660 were less generous than their Civil War and Interregnum predecessors who had awarded 19% of pensions to war widows.⁵⁸

The Justices in Kent may not have awarded many pensions to Royalist war widows but they did hand out considerable amounts of one-off sums, or gratuities, to them. The Order Books for West Kent contain extensive lists of names for those who were awarded financial relief (many more than petitions survive for) and this included some lists that were reserved just for women and children. They were described as 'widdowes & Orphans of men who in their life tyme did suffer many extremeties by reason of their loyaltye to his Ma[je]stie in the sa[i]d late tymes' and were rewarded well for their husbands' actions.⁵⁹ 83 (22%) of the one-off sums awarded to military dependants in Kent 1660-1679 were awarded to war widows. While this percentage is roughly similar to the pre-Restoration figure, the table below shows that there was a significant increase in the average amount that each war widow received.

⁵⁴ Everitt, *The community of Kent*, pp. 231-270.

⁵⁵ See Table 3.3, below.

⁵⁶ 'Charles II, 1662: An Act for the releife of poore and maimed Officers and Souldiers', Raithby, (ed.) *The statutes of the realm* pp. 389-390.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 56.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ West Kent QS Order Book, April 1663, KHLC, Q/SO/W2, f. 91r.

Table 3.2 Number of individuals who received one-off grants in Kent, 1642-1679

	1642-1659		1660-1679	
	Total number of grants	Average (mean) value of grant	Total number of grants	Average (mean) value of grant
Maimed Soldiers	53 (71%)	1li 10s 7d	297 (78%)	1li 5s 5d
War Widows	22 (29%)	2li 4s 2d	83 (22%)	4li 3s 12d

Source: KHLC, QS Order Books 1642-1679 (Q/SO/E1-2, W1-3) and QS Sessions Rolls 1642-1679 (Q/SB/1-11).

Table 3.2 shows that the average amount Royalist war widows received in one-off grants was considerably higher than maimed soldiers before and after the Restoration (and war widows during the Civil Wars and Interregnum). These numbers account for the amount that each maimed soldier or war widow received in total. Consequently, the striking divergence in the final column of the table reflects the fact that many widows received multiple one-off awards. For some widows, the Justices awarded one-off sums with such frequency that they could have been pensions. Rebecca St Leger and Elizabeth Ennis's names appear every year in the Order Books for West Kent between 1663 and 1671 and they were awarded sums of between 2li and 8li each time (although most frequently they were granted 5li).⁶⁰ The county stock of West Kent expended 77li upon them. This suggests that the Justices were treating them like pensioners: it was always at the Easter Session that they were granted money and they received it consistently. Hudson's research also found that war widows 'were rarely granted stipends and had to settle for gratuities' and argued that this reflected 'the attitudes of the Royalists to women and the armed forces'.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the scarcity of war widows who were granted pensions in Kent after the Restoration does not necessarily show that the Justices were ungenerous towards them. The JPs seemed to have made a special case for certain widows: their names were frequently set apart in Order Books and some received one-off sums regularly. Therefore, after

⁶⁰ West Kent QS Order Books, 1663-1672, KHLC, QO/SO/W2, ff. 91r, 103r, 113r, 120r, 125r, 131r, 135r, 141v; QO/SO/W3, ff. 6r, 13v.

⁶¹ Geoffrey Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money: War widows and the courts in seventeenth-century England', in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts in early modern England* (London: UCL Press, 1994), p. 151.

the Restoration certain war widows may have benefitted from the political persuasion of the local administration even though they were not awarded pensions to the same extent as maimed soldiers.

Finally, these records can be used to outline patterns of allegiance. Most of the Order Book entries and petitions refer to the parish of origin of the petitioner and thus, as Mark Stoye argued, 'the maimed soldiers' petitions can shed crucial light upon patterns of popular allegiance'.⁶² David Underdown also used Order Books and petitions to measure the distribution of wartime loyalty.⁶³ This approach has attracted criticism because the parish of origin stated in a petition or in an Order Book may not have been the parish that the maimed soldier originally left to take up arms. This is a particular problem with the Royalist petitioners who received relief long after the wars were over as the chances of them having moved in the intervening years are higher. John Morrill has also suggested that it may be the case that these records instead reveal something about the history of poor relief.⁶⁴ The patterns in the parishes of maimed soldiers and war widows may primarily indicate where there were areas of financial dearth rather than popular loyalty. This certainly seems to have been the case in Essex where the bulk of petitioners came from the impoverished hundreds of the county.⁶⁵ The Quarter Sessions records are also not complete records of who served either Parliament or King within the county. Consequently, this discussion will not argue that these records alone can reveal where in Kent loyalty to King or Parliament was strongest. Despite this, it will be made clear that there are strong links between where Royalist recipients of relief resided after the Restoration and areas of the county that were involved in uprisings during the Civil Wars. This therefore indicates, like Stoye's findings for Devon, that there were more factors influencing the geographical spread of petitioners than simply 'the incidence of post-war poverty'.⁶⁶

⁶² Mark Stoye, "'Memories of the maimed': The testimony of Charles I's former soldiers, 1660-1730", *History*, 88, no.290 (2003), p. 79.

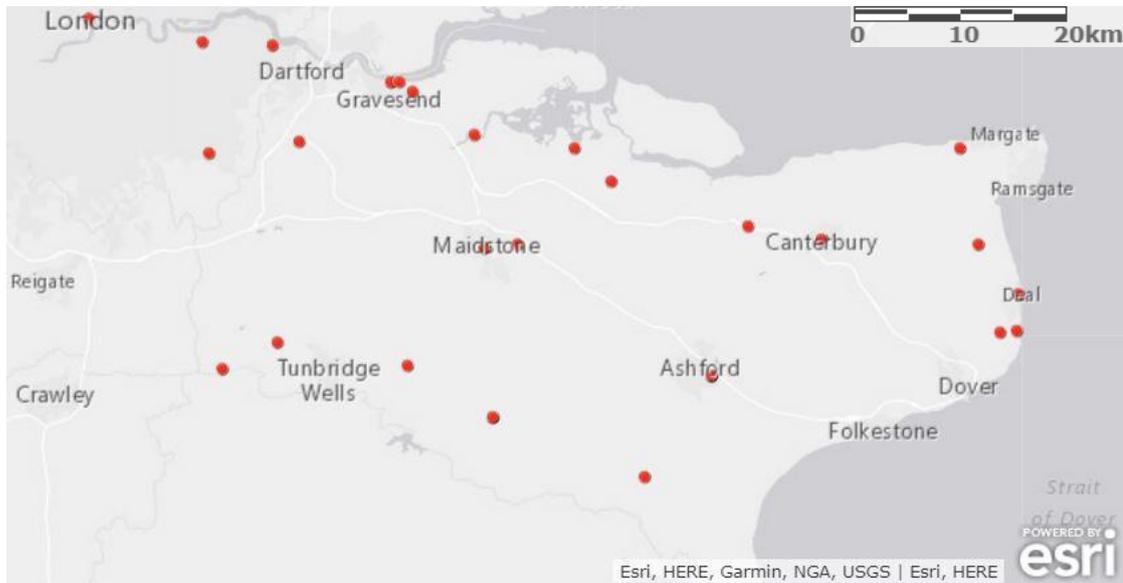
⁶³ David Underdown, *Revel, riot and rebellion: Popular politics and culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 191-98.

⁶⁴ John S. Morrill, 'The ecology of allegiance in the English revolution', *The Journal of British Studies*, 26, no.4 (1987), p. 466.

⁶⁵ Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons?', p. 212.

⁶⁶ Mark Stoye, *Loyalty and locality: Popular allegiance in Devon during the English Civil War* (Exeter, 1994), p. 89.

Map 3.1 Parish of origin of Parliamentary maimed soldiers and war widows in East and West Kent, 1642-1659

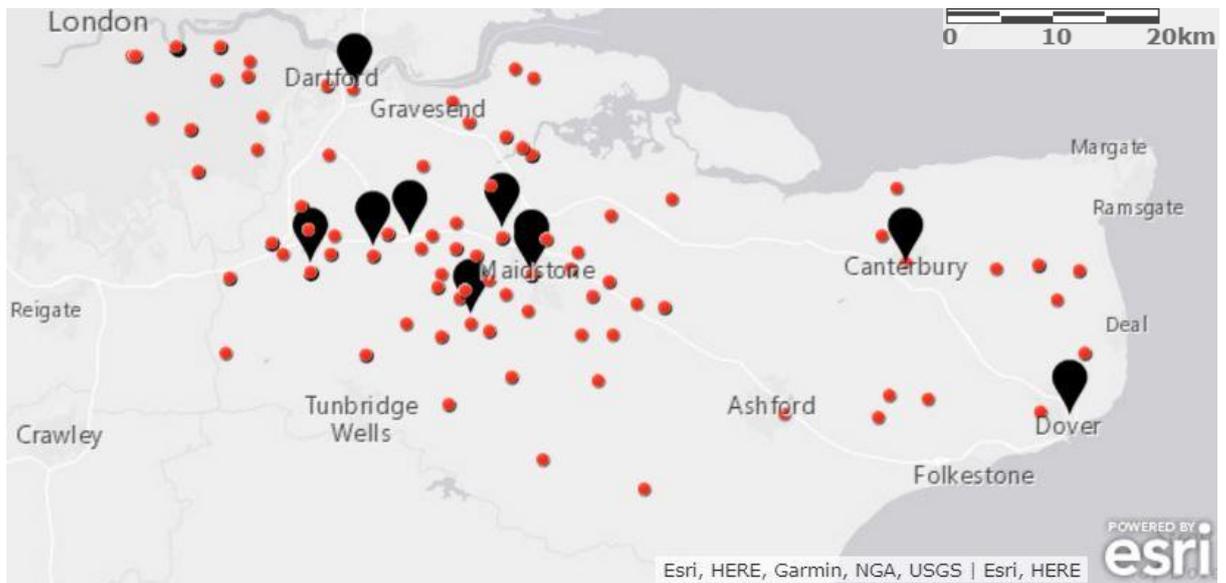


Source: KHLIC, QS Order Books 1642-1679 (Q/SO/E1-2, W1-3) and QS Sessions Rolls 1642-1679 (Q/SB/1-11).

Map 3.1 shows some clusters around coastal areas amongst those who petitioned during the Civil Wars and Interregnum but there is not enough evidence from the petitions alone to assume that these petitioners were seamen. There are gaps in central west Kent, Sevenoaks, and the areas surrounding Maidstone, where few Parliamentary maimed soldiers and war widows resided. Thus, it is possible that people from these areas were less likely to submit petitions for relief before the Restoration. Nevertheless, there are several limitations to these conclusions. The overall numbers of Parliamentary entries from Kent are too low to produce significant correlation and the missing East Kent Order Book may have contained additional entries to change the results.⁶⁷ By contrast, the numbers of Royalists who received relief after 1660 was considerable. As a result it is possible to see clearer patterns emerging from their geographical spread.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 51.

Map 3.2 Parish of origin of Royalist maimed soldiers and war widows in East and West Kent, 1660-1679

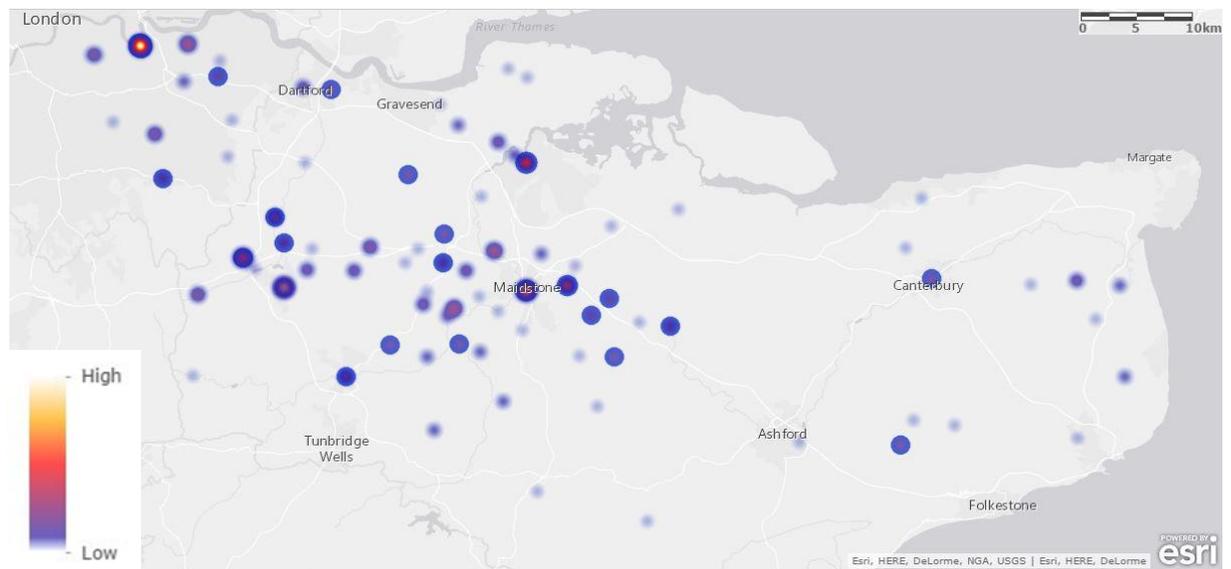


Source: KHLC, QS Order Books 1642-1679 (Q/SO/E1-2, W1-3) and QS Sessions Rolls 1642-1679 (Q/SB/1-11).

Map 3.2 shows the spaces in West Kent in Map 3.1 being filled with a substantial number of claimants. This is not just significant because many of these parishes did not have previous Parliamentary recipients of relief residing in them. They were also clustered around some of the sites of Kent's Royalist uprisings (marked with black points on the map), in Yalding, Sevenoaks and Maidstone, and areas of strong Royalist support such as Dartford and Greenwich. Map 3.3, below, takes into account the number of petitioners who came from each parish. It shows the parishes where there were high concentrations of recipients and demonstrates that some areas had particularly high numbers of Royalist recipients of relief. For example, taken as pairs the neighbouring parishes of Greenwich and Deptford, and Sevenoaks and Chevening each had 37 Royalist maimed soldiers or war widows residing there. It is possible that these soldiers were former Parliamentarians from the First Civil War who switched sides when rebellion broke out in Kent in 1648. This situation, as well as more

widespread evidence of side changing during the wars, presents further problems with using these records as accurate records of military service.⁶⁸

Map 3.3 Heat map of parish of origin of pensioners in East and West Kent, 1660-1679



Source: KHLC, QS Order Books 1642-1679 (Q/SO/E1-2, W1-3) and QS Sessions Rolls 1642-1679 (Q/SB/1-11).

The evidence for pensions awarded after the Restoration in Kent shows that there was clearly a link between local patterns of allegiance and military welfare. Nevertheless, the parishes that had higher numbers of Royalist recipients of relief residing in them may have also had a greater need for poor relief. Presumably these men and women had been compelled to rely on parish relief for their subsistence in previous decades, so it is unsurprising that there was a rush from former Royalist soldiers and war widows for financial aid at the Restoration. Additionally, these records do not just reveal information about the loyalties of those who petitioned for relief. It is important to remember that the political allegiances of the JPs who administered the system, and were willing to grant relief in such proportions, must have also been a significant factor. Despite these limitations, it is still possible to argue that the records of military welfare are a valuable resource for understanding the patterns of wartime

⁶⁸ Andrew Hopper, *Turncoats and renegades: Changing sides during the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 78–99.

loyalty in the localities. The county of Kent, with its high numbers of Royalist pensioners and interesting geographical correlation, adds to that case.

In Kent the pattern of military welfare in the Restoration reveals some notable features about the county before and after the Restoration. The extraordinary lists of names of maimed soldiers and war widows in West Kent's Order Books show that this part of the county contained considerable numbers of former Royalists, and that the JPs were more than willing to reward them. Nonetheless, the initial enthusiasm of the Quarter Sessions towards these men and women did not persist throughout the 1660s and 1670s and after 1666 the number of pensions awarded dropped noticeably. This could well have been because the numbers of Royalists who survived and had not yet received relief was diminishing. It is also possible that the surge in pension allocation in the early 1660s was created by JPs' desire to reward former Royalists within the county and to make a show of generosity towards them. The fact that pension allocations diminished after this may indicate that the other key aim of the pension scheme, to act as a system of poor relief for military dependants, was not so significant in Kent. Consequently, by the late 1660s and 1670s war widows and maimed soldiers (Royalist as well as Parliamentarian) may have had to largely rely on parish relief for their subsistence.

Sussex

The distribution of military welfare in Sussex varied from Kent in many ways. The extraordinary spike in allocations in the first few years after 1660 that occurred in Kent was not mirrored in Sussex (although there was a more modest peak). Pensions were also awarded steadily across the whole period, 1660 to 1679. A series of accounts for the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers in West Sussex show that during the 1670s pensions continued to be distributed in significant numbers. Consequently, the patterns of military welfare in Sussex suggest that the rewarding and recognition of former Royalists by JPs may have been less of a priority than it seems to have been in Kent. Nevertheless, it did function as a successful system of welfare for impoverished former soldiers and war widows many years after the final battles of the Civil Wars.

The Order Books for the Quarter Sessions of East and West Sussex show that the Justices of the Peace awarded 78 pensions to war widows and maimed soldiers after 1660 (the Kent Justices gave out 212). Like Kent, the Justices were not generous to widows when it came to pension awards and only one widow, Cicilia Sanford, was granted a regular pension during the period. She was from Surrey, adding to the uniqueness of her case, but the Order Book describes how her husband, William Sandford, fought and died at the siege of Chichester and she was granted a pension of 4li by the JPs.⁶⁹ West Sussex was the slightly more generous bench, and awarded 50 of the 78 pensions. This may have reflected a bias within the western part of the county towards former Royalists. There were probably also more Royalist claimants living in this part of the county. 11 of the West Sussex pensioners resided in Chichester: the city which Royalists had briefly held from July 1642 until Parliamentarians captured it the following December.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the second Royalist incursion into Sussex, the attempt in December 1643 to capture and garrison Arundel Castle, had also taken place in the west.⁷¹

In a similar way to Kent, the JPs in Sussex were also far more likely to award war widows one-off sums rather than pensions. 11 out of 33 of the one-off allocations in Sussex were awarded to war widows and they were granted an average of 2li in total.⁷² Therefore, with the evidence from both of these counties taken together it seems increasingly likely that JPs were willing to award relief to war widows but that they preferred that this take the form of a one-off grant, rather than a pension. It may have even been the case that petitioners preferred to receive large one-off payments given that pensions frequently ran into arrears.⁷³ Nevertheless, a stable and regular pension would probably have been preferable and the fact that Royalist widows largely had to rely on one-off sums suggests that most fared worse than their pre-Restoration Parliamentary counterparts.

⁶⁹ Order of the West Sussex JPS, January 1668, WSRO, Q/R/W121, f. 55r, (this entry also contains receipts for the payment of her pensions in 1663, 1664 and 1665).

⁷⁰ Fletcher, *A county community*, pp. 258-263.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁷² ESRO, QS Order Books 1660-1679 (Q/1/5/3-7) and QS Sessions Rolls 1660-1679 (QR/126-159); WSRO, QS Sessions Rolls 1642-1679 (Q/R/W96-203).

⁷³ See Chapter 1, p. 42.

Table 3.3, below, contains the total number of grants as well as the mean average of those awards given to maimed soldiers and war widows in Kent and Sussex in this period. It illustrates the significant disparity between maimed soldiers and widows, and also between Kent and Sussex, in terms of how many grants were awarded.

Table 3.3 Number of pensioners and average pension awarded in Kent and Sussex, 1660-1679

	Kent		Sussex	
	Total Number of Grants	Average (mean) Value of Grant	Total Number of Grants	Average (mean) Value of Grant
Maimed Soldiers	208 (98%)	2li 8s 2d	77 (99%)	3li 3s 0d
War Widows	4 (2%)	2li 14s 0d	1 (1%)	2li 0s 0d

Source: KHLC, QS Order Books 1660-1679 (Q/SO/E1-2, W2-3) and QS Sessions Rolls 1660-1679 (Q/SB/8-11); ESRO, QS Order Books 1660-1679 (Q/1/5/3-7) and QS Sessions Rolls 1660-1679 (QR/126-159); WSR0, QS Sessions Rolls 1660-1679 (Q/R/W96-203).

The figures for the average pension show that there was no significant change in the amount pensions were valued at compared with the pre-Restoration figures.⁷⁴ The Kent JPs had issued an order in 1664 that no pension should exceed 40s; this was raised in 1670 to 3li, but then again decreased back to 40s in 1672.⁷⁵ In Kent, therefore, the generosity of JPs to former Royalists was displayed by the quantity of pensions awarded instead of their value. Table 3.3 indicates that Sussex JPs were slightly more generous in their pension allocation because the mean pension was just a little over 3li. This higher average for Sussex is a reflection of the figures awarded by the East Sussex JPs. In West Sussex the average amount awarded was 2li 15s 7d and therefore more similar to the Kentish figure. In East Sussex, conversely, the mean average was 3li 15s 5d despite the most commonly awarded figure being 2li. This is because East Sussex granted over half of their maimed soldiers pensions that were worth more than 4li. 16 pensions were granted at values greater than 4li and the average for these awards was 5li. Therefore, these higher awards significantly skew

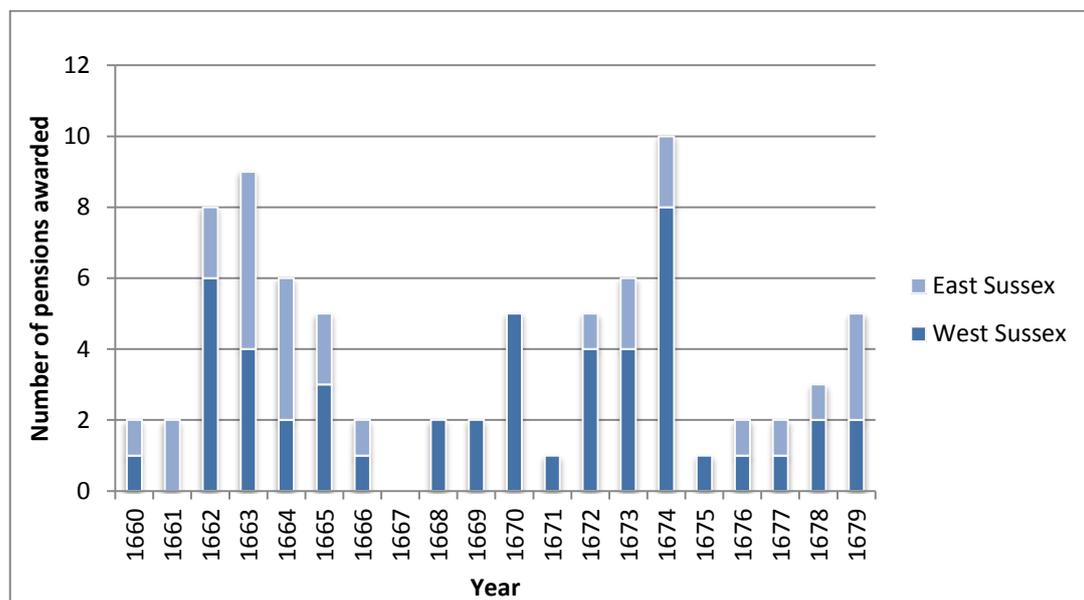
⁷⁴ See Chapter 1, pp. 54-55.

⁷⁵ West Kent QS Order Book, March 1664, April 1670, KHLC, Q/SO/W2, ff. 103v, 141v; East Kent QS Order Book, July 1672, KHLC, Q/SO/E2, f. 5r.

the average pension figure for East Sussex. One man, Captain Thomas Beck, was awarded a pension of 10li.⁷⁶ Beck's name also features in the 1663 publication *A list of officers* (a publication created by former Royalist soldiers in order to request their portion of a 60,000li royal gift to be divided between indigent officers).⁷⁷

There is also an indication of the divide between East and West Sussex in a letter submitted on behalf of a maimed soldier in West Sussex in April 1678. John Heath wrote in support of John Coward to the JPs in East Sussex asking that the man might be given money from the East even though he came from the West part of the county. He wrote that he was 'informed that the stock for mayhemd soldiors in the west of sussex is very charged w[i]th Pentioners, but that the stock of the East part hath a great deale yett yeerely uncharged'.⁷⁸ This adds to the evidence that West Sussex handed out more pensions than the East and suggests that this may have been why East Sussex JPs were willing to commit to larger amounts.

Chart 3.4 Pensions awarded in East and West Sussex, 1660-1679



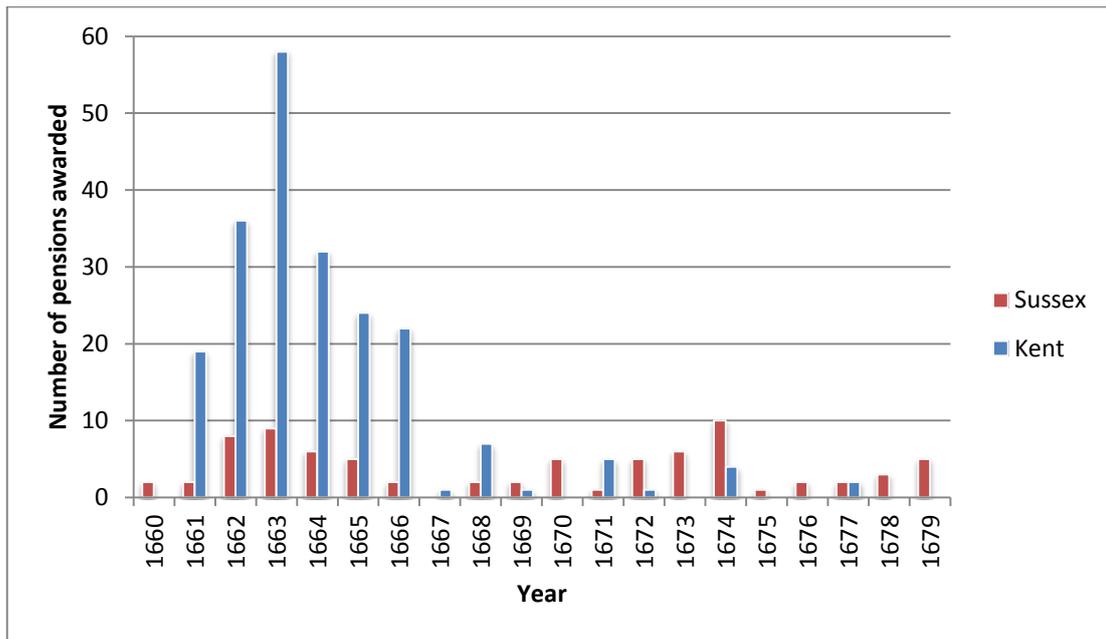
Source: As Table 3.3.

⁷⁶ East Sussex QS Order Book, July 1664, ESRO, QO/1/5/5, f. 6r.

⁷⁷ *A list of officers* (London, 1663), col. 6; Peter R. Newman, 'The 1663 list of indigent royalist officers considered as a primary source for the study of the royalist army', *Historical Journal*, 30, no.4 (1987), pp. 885-904.

⁷⁸ Letter on behalf of John Coward, April 1678, ESRO, Q/R/W152, f. 29r.

Chart 3.5 Pensions awarded in Kent and Sussex, 1660-1679



Source: As Table 3.3.

Charts 3.4 and 3.5 show that in Sussex, like in Kent, there was a peak in pensions awarded in 1663 which gradually slackened off towards the end of the decade. This peak was considerably smaller than the Kentish one and yet the trends in pension allocation were similar. Only two pensions were awarded during 1660 in either county. In May the East Sussex JPs awarded 40s a year to the maimed soldier Thomas Herriot.⁷⁹ It is difficult to ascertain whether he was a Royalist or Parliamentarian soldier (there is no indication in the text) but he may have been a Parliamentarian who skilfully petitioned for a pension when political upheaval was imminent. In October 1660 West Sussex JPs granted John Honeywood a pension but he was specifically described as a ‘souldier to his late ma[jes]tie’ in the text.⁸⁰ Consequently, the JPs in West Sussex did grant pensions to some former Royalist soldiers prior to the passing of the 1662 Pension Act.

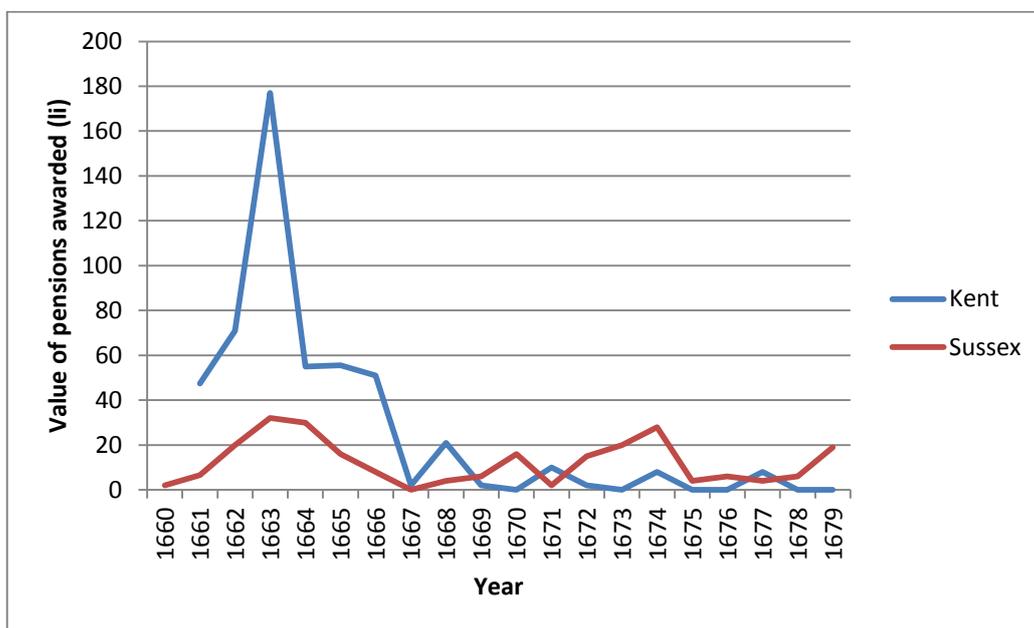
The JPs of Sussex continued to award pensions at a steady rate during the 1670s in numbers that surpassed the neighbouring county of Kent. The Order Books show that 40 pensions were awarded between 1670 and 1679 (12 were listed in Kent) and that

⁷⁹ East Sussex QS Order Book, May 1660, ESRO, QO/1/5/3, f. 77v.

⁸⁰ West Sussex QS Order Book, October 1660, WSRO, QO/1/5/3, f. 79r.

there was another peak, similar to that of 1663, in 1674. In Kent by 1674 pensions allocations were dwindling to almost nothing and the Justices never awarded so many pensions as they did in the early years after the Restoration of the King. The fact that the JPs in Sussex continued to grant pensions at a fairly steady rate after the initial 1663 surge makes the gap in pension allocations in 1667 interesting. It is quite likely that this was indicative of an outbreak of the plague in the country and in Chichester, West Sussex, in particular. Between April 1666 and April 1669 the Justices for West Sussex avoided Chichester as a meeting place for the Quarter Sessions, preferring instead Petworth and the less frequented location of Steyning.⁸¹ The reason for this becomes clear in one Order Book entry for January 1667 when a tax was ordered to be collected for the relief of the distressed persons of Chichester ‘by reason of the infec[i]on of the plague’.⁸² This outbreak of plague prevented the Justices from meeting at Chichester and, therefore, probably also prevented the travelling of people in order to claim pensions.

Chart 3.6 Annual value of pensions awarded in Kent and Sussex, 1660-1678



Source: As Table 3.3.

Chart 3.6 illustrates the value of the pensions awarded each year by the JPs in Quarter Sessions over the 1660s and 1670s. It is based on information contained within the

⁸¹ West Sussex QS Order Book, April 1666- April 1669, WSRO, QO/1/5/5, ff. 44v- 105v.

⁸² West Sussex QS Order Book, January 1667, WSRO, QO/1/5/5, f. 58r.

Order Books and therefore only represents the fresh orders for relief (and not the annual burden of pension expenditure). It shows the peak in pensions in Kent in 1662-1663, echoed to a much lesser extent in Sussex, and the sharp reduction in the amounts JPs awarded in Kent. Perhaps the JPs could not keep up with such a high annual expenditure. By contrast, in the 1670s, particularly between 1672 and 1675, the Sussex JPs committed themselves to a much higher pension bill than in Kent.

Why did Sussex distribute pensions more consistently than Kent throughout the two decades after the Restoration, despite the fact that Sussex was arguably less ravaged and war torn than Kent was? While the numbers of pensioners listed in Order Books were not as large as Kent, it is still clear that the JPs for Sussex saw value in awarding pensions to former Royalists long after memories of the Civil War may have been fading. One explanation is that former soldiers and war widows submitted more petitions to the Sussex bench. Only 3 petitions (all from maimed soldiers) survive in the Kent Quarter Sessions Rolls for the entire period 1660-1679 and these were all presented in the year 1662. It is of course possible that many petitions do not survive in the contemporary archive, but given the extraordinary number of pensions awarded in Kent it is possible that the Kent JPs awarded this relief on the basis of oral petitions submitted in front of the court.⁸³ The Order Books for this period contain long lists of names of those to be awarded a certain amount and show the vigour of the Justices to reward large amounts of people perhaps without waiting for petitions and certificates of service.

By contrast, the rolls for Sussex (and West Sussex in particular) contain more petitions and these appear in the files consistently throughout the period. In total 9 petitions were submitted between 1660 and 1669 and 12 between 1670 and 1679. Two of these were from war widows. These petitions do not account for all of the pensions awarded. Nevertheless, they do show that people in Sussex continued to actively seek pensions through petitioning right up until the Act lapsed (5 petitions were submitted between 1678 and 1679). In these petitions many former Sussex soldiers placed the emphasis on their poverty and old age, rather than their acts of loyalty for the King,

⁸³ For more on appearing in court, see Chapter 1, pp. 49-50.

when they constructed their narrative.⁸⁴ Consequently, it is possible to suppose that in Sussex the pension system became primarily a means of alleviating poverty for former Royalists, rather than rewarding loyalty to the new monarch. This argument is supported by evidence from the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers' accounts which shows that military welfare continued to be administered in significant amounts during the 1670s.

The Sessions Rolls for West Sussex contain these accounts for 1669 to 1679 (although 1673 is missing).⁸⁵ This type of document has not survived for the period 1642-1679 in Kent and East Sussex, or in West Sussex before 1669. These accounts are incredibly enlightening about the pension process because they are a working record of what money was actually distributed year on year, according to the Treasurer, and so provide more information than the Order Books. It is possible to see if pensions awarded at Sessions were actually administered regularly to recipients. Without this evidence, it was only when pensioners complained that their money was not being administered that there is any clue about the actual distribution of pensions.⁸⁶ They do have some drawbacks, nonetheless. They appear in slightly different formats year on year and they do not always indicate if the money distributed to a particular person was all, or part of, their yearly pension. Therefore, unlike Order Books they are not a good indication of how much pension individuals were awarded. It is also possible that not every name listed in these records was either a maimed soldier or war widow as other persons were occasionally ordered to be relieved out of the money raised for pensions. For example, in 1653 the JPs ordered that Edmund Witcher, a surgeon, was to be given 5li from the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers 'for the cure of' a maimed soldier.⁸⁷

For the purposes of this analysis, nevertheless, it has been assumed that every male was a maimed soldier and every female was a war widow (because it is not possible to

⁸⁴ See Chapter 5, p. 159.

⁸⁵ Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers' Accounts, 1669-1679 (excluding 1673), WSRO, Q/R/W129, f. 81r; Q/R/W132, ff. 60-63; Q/R/W135, ff. 71r, 72r; Q/R/W142, f. 92r; Q/R/W143, f. 87; Q/R/W159, ff. 34r, 36r; Q/R/W159, f. 37r.

⁸⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 42.

⁸⁷ West Sussex QS Order Book, October 1653, WSRO, QO/1/5/2, f. 50v.

find evidence to the contrary). However, the total of genuine maimed soldiers and war widows may well have been slightly lower. Many of these names appear regularly across the years. 9 people appear in either 9 or 10 (out of 10) of the years and so indicating that they received their allotted pensions with regularity. Nevertheless, Table 3.4, below, shows that a large group of people were only listed once and, therefore, presumably the beneficiary of one-off grants.

Table 3.4 Number of years that individuals are named in the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers Accounts' for West Sussex, 1669-1679 (excluding 1673)

Number of Years	Number of Individuals
10	2
9	7
8	9
7	9
6	7
5	5
4	5
3	10
2	15
1	36

Source: WSRO, Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers' Accounts, 1669-1679 (excluding 1673): Q/R/W129, f. 81r; Q/R/W132, ff. 60-63; Q/R/W135, ff. 71r, 72r; Q/R/W142, f. 92r; Q/R/W143, f. 87; Q/R/W159, ff. 34r, 36r; Q/R/W159, f. 37r.

As well as showing that many individuals did receive their pensions with regularity these accounts also demonstrate that there were many more people who received money from the Treasurer than were listed in the Order Books. Between 1660 and 1679, 50 people were named in the West Sussex Order Books as the recipients of pensions and 39 of these names appear in the Treasurer's Accounts. Some of those missing may have been granted their pensions in the early 1660s and so may well have died, or for other reasons dropped off the pension rolls. So, these accounts provide good evidence that when an individual was awarded a pension at the Quarter Sessions they could be confident of receiving it. It is also the case that 66 names within the

Treasurer's Accounts do not exist within the Order Books. So in West Sussex during the 1670s a considerable amount of people who received pensions and one-off sums from the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers were never accounted for in the Quarter Sessions' Order Books. This leads to the possibility that they never actually appeared in Court and that the Treasurer was allowed a certain amount of discretion when it came to allotting money to impoverished former soldiers and war widows within the County. This evidence points to a generous system of welfare that was distributed by an efficient Treasurer.

Finally, these Accounts can be used as evidence for the experience of war widows who received pensions. Between the years 1669 and 1679 there were 96 men (91%) and 9 widows (9%) listed in the accounts. Therefore, in concurrence with the evidence from the Order Books, the majority of pensioners were maimed soldiers. Only 1 of the 9 war widows, Cicilia Sanford, has a corresponding order in the Quarter Sessions' Order Books for a pension. Cicilia was also the only widow to be granted a pension by the Sussex JPs.⁸⁸ The fact that there are 8 without orders shows that West Sussex may have been more generous to war widows than the evidence from the Order Books illustrates. Additionally, for 4 widows (Mary Edsall, widow Lee and two different widows named Ward) it is possible to find the name of a man with a corresponding surname, presumably their husband, named in the records who had received money before them. It seems likely, therefore, that following the death of their husbands their pensions were transferred directly to them without requiring an order from the JPs at Quarter Sessions. Again, the discretion of the Treasurer may well have been at work here. There are also many family names that appear frequently (the Yeildalls, for example) which suggests that there were certain families who received money from the Treasurer and presumably fought alongside one another during the wars.

The records that exist for Sussex lead to the conclusion that this county was not as generous as Kent in the first few years after the Restoration but that it consistently distributed pensions and military welfare. The Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers was active in handing out pensions during the 1670s and its accounts were clearly being

⁸⁸ See above, p. 111

reviewed by the Justices at Quarter Sessions (hence their survival within the rolls today). There are of course limitations to these conclusions. The survival of the accounts lends to the impression of a county that took military welfare seriously as a system of poor relief. Yet, the fact that no accounts exist for Kent does not necessarily mean that they did not do the same. Additionally, the discrepancies between the Order Books and Treasurers' Accounts demonstrate that these records cannot provide historians with a definitive answer of who actually received money, when, and for how long. Nevertheless, these insights do show that many former Royalist maimed soldiers and war widows in Sussex could expect that their disability, old age, and loyalty to the King would be rewarded with financial relief.

Conclusion

'Restoration was both an event and a process after 1660', according to Matthew Neufeld, and collective healing and public remembrance was significant for Restoration society.⁸⁹ The administration of military welfare was a part of the public soothing of the wounds of the previous decades. Both Kent and Sussex continued to administer military welfare at a significant level after the Restoration. They fell in line with Parliament's recommitment to the local pension scheme in 1662, but both benches gave out some pensions to Royalist soldiers prior to this. Despite both counties being within Parliamentary territory during the Civil Wars the administration of the pension scheme demonstrates that support for the new King was strong after the Restoration. Additionally, the number of former Royalist maimed soldiers and war widows who lived in these counties alongside previous Parliamentary recipients of relief shows the divisions that must have existed within these counties during war time. These divisions frustrate the image of unity that Everitt painted for Kent and suggest that in order to understand local loyalty and allegiance historians need to look beyond the gentry. Using this data to fully understand the political breakdowns of these counties is not enough, however. There must have been soldiers and widows who did not petition for relief or were never awarded it and therefore made no mark on these particular records. Also, because

⁸⁹ Matthew Neufeld, *The Civil Wars after 1660: Public remembering in late Stuart England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013).

after the Restoration new relief was awarded to Royalist soldiers and widows, the story of Parliamentary dependants is obscured. A thorough examination of the accounts of the overseers of the poor, churchwardens and borough records would need to take place in order to understand how these people survived the Restoration period.

Additionally, the county pension system was not just used as a tool by JPs to reward those who had fought loyally for either Parliament or the King before or after the Restoration. The county pension scheme provided much needed financial subsistence to former soldiers and their dependants. Petitioners highlighted the poverty of a former soldier or widow and when increases were made to pensions it was on the basis of financial need. The JPs at Quarter Sessions were used to participating in local systems of poor relief and often heard petitions from those who had lost everything by fire or, in Sussex, from those asking to build houses on the waste land.⁹⁰ Consequently, even after the Restoration when loyalty was important the county pension scheme still functioned as part of the local structures of poor relief. As a result of this, using the records to make firm judgments about the political landscape of the county is dangerous: it must be assumed that many people who petitioned for relief were granted it on the basis of their need, rather than just their actions.

Thus, before and after the Restoration the county pension scheme in both Kent and Sussex administered financial relief to those it deemed to be worthy. In Kent, the political inclinations of those involved in the pension administration and the needs of the county combined to produce an exceptional peak in pension allocations in the first few years after the Restoration. In Sussex, a largely changed bench of JPs continued to grant some pensions to certain former Parliamentary soldiers. There were a complex series of factors involved in defining the Restoration experience of those who received war relief. War widows were impacted, in particular, by the unwillingness of JPs to award them pensions. Nevertheless, many continued to receive money in one-off grants and the Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers Accounts for West Sussex show that there may have been more war widows on the pension rolls than the Order Books

⁹⁰ For example: Petition of John Miles, April 1654, ESRO, QR/103, f. 1r.

indicate. Thus, evidence from the Record Offices of Kent and Sussex shows that the county pension scheme, bolstered by Parliament at the start of the Civil War, endured beyond the Restoration and continued to support former soldiers and their widows until, and possibly beyond, 1679.

Chapter Four. The representation of widows in Civil-War print culture

Introduction

This chapter will explore why widows were viewed by early modern society as objects of compassion and pity that the rulers in society had a duty to protect. Furthermore, it will put this framework within the specific context of the Civil Wars and examine how the plight of the widowed was invoked within printed polemic. When widows were invoked in Civil-War print it was not always with the intention to protect the needy. The suffering war widowed became symbols for the failure of Civil War society to care for their most vulnerable. Widows even became a metaphor for England as commentators reflected on the losses that the country had suffered as a result of the wars. This chapter will consider the range of ways in which widows were represented in Civil War print. Understanding contemporary representations of widows in printed material will help to frame further analysis of the ways in which widows fashioned themselves in their petitions.

It was generally accepted that widows were part of the 'deserving poor' within society who should be eligible for the compassion and charity of society's governors. Hindle's analysis of Elizabethan and Stuart Poor Relief has demonstrated that this was a highly moralised system with clear assumptions which dictated who was and was not deserving of relief.¹ Shepard's work on the descriptions used by witnesses in depositions has furthered our understanding of how people understood poverty in early modern society.² She discovered that widows were more likely than other women to describe themselves as materially poor and that this was 'related not only to their greater likelihood to resort to relief than other groups, but also to its greater social acceptability in such cases'.³ Widows were able to draw upon social stereotypes of the poor, deserving widow when they described their own need without necessarily

¹ Steve Hindle, *On the parish?: The micro-politics of poor relief in rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

² Alexandra Shepard, 'Poverty, labour and the language of social description in early modern England', *Past & Present*, 201 (2008), pp. 51-95.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

experiencing the social stigma associated with being dependent on others. Thus, in many ways widows experienced a privileged position within early modern society: they could describe themselves as poor and needy, in line with biblical frameworks and Christian teaching, in order to access financial relief.

The case of the widow was not straightforward, however. Women who had been left without husbands no longer lived under the headship of a husband and father: society's preferred household structure. Consequently, they were a cause for concern as well as compassion. It was little wonder, therefore, that widows became part of the gender anxieties that circulated in print during the Civil Wars.⁴ Mary Fissell has argued that 'gender order was one of the most fundamental ways in which early modern English men and women organized their world, and it provided a wealth of metaphors for disarray and disorder'.⁵ The turbulent nature of the Civil War created a unique environment for the representation of widows. Concerns about manliness and the proper ordering of society were realised in the burgeoning world of print and widows became part of the growing polemic that surrounded gender, war and disorder.⁶

The genre of print encompassed a wide variety of different formats: from printed books to single sheet broadside ballads, cheap news-sheets, sermons and printed petitions.⁷ Print was a vehicle for news as well as propaganda and could be exploited by 'anyone seeking the approval of the public'.⁸ During the Civil War period print came to take on an especially prominent and politicised role. A wider variety of printed genres invoked representations of widows in their printed material during this period. Authors rested their depictions of widows on the same set of assumptions about the proper place of widows within society but they used these depictions for their own ends. Thus, widows became a part of the war of words that took place alongside the fighting during the 1640s.

⁴ Ann Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 126-130.

⁵ Mary Fissell, *Vernacular bodies: The politics of reproduction in early modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 194.

⁶ Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution*, pp. 90-124.

⁷ Joad Raymond, 'Introduction', in Raymond (ed.), *Cheap print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

This chapter will explore how widows were depicted in Civil-War print by examining four different representations of widows: the poor widow, the deviant widow, the metaphorical widow and the petitioning widow. Each section will consider the biblical basis for each representation as well as the ways in which it was deployed in Civil-War print. In all cases, the ways in which widows were represented contributes to historians' understanding about how gender anxieties manifested themselves in print in this period. Additionally, this analysis contributes to the growing scholarship on printed polemic and lobbying during the wars.⁹ The very real suffering of those caught up in the wars could be used by writers to petition Parliament for peace or to denounce the actions of the other side. Finally, this discussion provides an important foundation for understanding the ways in which widows represented themselves during the period. Widows could use these models to their advantage when they fashioned themselves as vulnerable, poor widows worthy of compassion within the context of Civil War society.

Poor widows

According to Christopher Hill, 'in both Testaments there is much support for the poor against the rich' as well as 'demands for social justice and denunciations of arbitrary power'.¹⁰ Specifically, the Bible also makes it clear that God protects widows and that Christians have a duty to do the same. The command of God, recorded in the book of Exodus, set the basis for this: 'Yee shall not afflict any widow, or fatherlesse child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely heare their cry'.¹¹ The book of Deuteronomy, which also includes the Ten Commandments, lays out the laws for tithing income and sets out some specific commands intended to benefit widows. Deuteronomy Chapter 14 states: 'At the end of three yeeres thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same yeere...and the stranger, and the fatherlesse, and the widowes which are within thy gates, shall come and shall eat, and

⁹ Jason Peacey, *Print and public politics in the English revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Peacey, *Politicians and pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

¹⁰ Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the seventeenth-century revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), p. 155

¹¹ *The Holy Bible* (1611), Exodus 22: 22-23.

be satisfied'.¹² The same section also set out the laws for a practice known as gleaning: 'When thou cuttest downe thine haruest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheafe in the field, thou shalt not goe againe to fetch it' in order that the stranger, fatherless and widows may go to collect it.¹³ These laws can be seen in action in the book of Ruth. It tells the story of a young widowed woman (Ruth) living with her widowed mother in law (Naomi) who is sent to glean the fields for them both. Ruth is both a widow and a foreigner, a Moabite living in Bethlehem, but she is protected by Boaz (her 'kinsman redeemer') who subsequently marries her. The ultimate redemption of this poor widow is shown in the concluding verses of the Book which illustrate that Ruth goes on to form part of the genealogy of King David, and thus of Jesus. Richard Bernard's Biblical commentary of the book of Ruth, published in 1628, described Ruth as 'the vertuous and godly young woman and widow, a Heathen and Idolater by her countrey and birth, but by the Lords call a gracious Saint at length, a mother in Israel, and one of whom Christ came'.¹⁴

So the Old Testament makes it clear that God promises to protect widows. As the psalmist wrote: 'The Lord prereserueth the strangers, he relieueth the fatherles and widow'.¹⁵ It also outlines the social responsibilities of Jews to protect widows, and this is built upon in the teaching of the New Testament. James 1:27 affirms that 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherlesse and widowes in their affliction, and to keepe himselfe unspotted from the world'.¹⁶ The book of Acts shows that social provision for widows was still in force after the death of Christ when it was noted that in one place widows were being overlooked in the provision of food.¹⁷ Jesus also used widows in illustrations and parables, on one occasion drawing his disciples to the attention of a 'certaine poor widow' who put all that she had in to the Temple Treasury.¹⁸ The parable of the persistent widow, who came again and again to the unjust Judge for justice, also presented widows as worthy

¹² *The Holy Bible* (1611), Deuteronomy 14: 28-29.

¹³ *The Holy Bible* (1611), Deuteronomy 14: 19.

¹⁴ Richard Bernard, *Ruths recompence* (London, 1628).

¹⁵ *The Holy Bible* (1611), Psalm 146: 9.

¹⁶ *The Holy Bible* (1611), James 1:27.

¹⁷ *The Holy Bible* (1611), Acts 6:1-2.

¹⁸ *The Holy Bible* (1611), Mark 12: 42-43.

of benevolence.¹⁹ Additionally, a biblical example of a good widow was provided in Anna the Prophetess who 'departed not from the Temple, but served God with fastings & prayers night and day'.²⁰

Both Old and New Testament provided a firm foundation for early modern society's belief in the protection of widows and for their privileged position within the poor relief system. The failure to protect such vulnerable members of the community could be held up as an example of the failure of society to meet the commands that God had given. The Anglican clergyman and religious writer Arthur Dent set forth these principles in his pamphlet *The plain mans path-way to heaven* which was published, posthumously, in 1643. He wrote that oppressors 'pluck away from the fatherlesse & widowes that little which they have' but that 'the everlasting God doth looke upon them, and will be revenged. For the cries of the poore, the fatherlesse, and the widowes, have entred into the cares of the Lord of Hosts, who is an avenger of all such things'.²¹ Popular, cheap print could echo these themes. The pamphlet *The worlds wonder*, published between 1641 and 1661, told the story of 'a poor distressed widdow and her seven small fatherlesse children' who prayed to God for bread to feed 'her hungry Children small'.²² She was rewarded with a burned loaf, given to her by a baker's boy, which lasted her and her children for seven full weeks. The rhyme concludes: 'Take comfort Christians all, for never shall you see, The faithful sort forsaken quite, and left in misery'. The themes of the poor, pious, widow whom God looks upon could therefore be used in literary as well as religious writing.

During the Civil Wars, printed material drew upon the suffering of widows who had lost their husbands in the fighting. Barbara Donagan has persuasively shown 'how inextricably the military and civilian experiences of war were intertwined' in these wars.²³ During particular events, for example the siege of Colchester, the levels of

¹⁹ *The Holy Bible* (1611), Luke 18: 1-8.

²⁰ *The Holy Bible* (1611), Luke 2: 36-37.

²¹ Arthur Dent, *The plain mans path-way to heaven wherein every man may clearly see whether he shall be saved or damned* (London, 1643), pp. 207-208.

²² Anon., *The worlds wonder. Or, a strange and miraculous work of Gods providence* (London, [1641-1661]).

²³ Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642-1649* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 11.

atrocities were comparable to the wars on the continent.²⁴ Thomas Devenish submitted a printed petition to Parliament in 1642 in which he asked for some financial compensation for his losses. He described how he had ‘faithfully adhered to you from the beginning’ by sending three sons to serve Parliament, one of whom was slain.²⁵ He had also sent his son in law to war who was killed, leaving ‘behinde him your suppliants poor daughter, a widdow with four small children without relief, pittie, or help from you’. Thomas’ story was not a unique one, and yet evoking the loss of widows remained a powerful narrative tool when describing the impact of the wars. This section will explore three examples of the poor widow being represented within Civil War print: firstly, in printed Parliamentary reports on Civil War events, secondly within the Royalist press and finally, as part of the disputes over settlement with the King at the end of the 1640s.

Reporting on the events of the wars became a significant part of the print industry during war time as both sides attempted to present their own version of events.²⁶ As Joad Raymond has stated: ‘The relationship between newspapers and war hardly needs reiterating. Newsbooks needed heroes’.²⁷ Sometimes the fate of widows could become part of that narrative. For example, Parliament printed the battle reports of their officers and these could contain requests on behalf of the widows of soldiers. Thomas, Lord Fairfax, interceded on the behalf of many Parliamentary widows (these were nearly always officers’ widows). When he reported to the House of Commons the outcome of the battle of Maidstone, he wrote ‘I desire you to be pleased to move the House on the behalf of the Widow and Children of Captain Price, that some provision may be made for them’.²⁸ Cromwell’s dispatches to Parliament would also often contain within them the fate of soldiers’ widows and requests that Parliament would grant them some financial relief.²⁹ The printing of these reports

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 312-346.

²⁵ Thomas Devenish, *To the supreme authority of England, the Commons assembled in Parliament* (London, 1642).

²⁶ Joad Raymond, *The invention of the newspaper: English newsbooks, 1641-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 184-194.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 197.

²⁸ Thomas Fairfax, *The Lord General's letter to the honorable William Lenthall Esq* (London, 1648), pp. 7-8.

²⁹ Oliver Cromwell, *A full relation of the great victory obtained by the Parliaments forces* (London, 1648), p. 5; Cromwell, *Letters from Ireland* (London, 1649), p. 6.

meant that the suffering of widows, and the intervention of Parliamentary officers on their behalf, became part of Parliamentary rhetoric in print. They were an important means by which Fairfax and Cromwell sought to uphold the honour of the army in the two Houses and may have helped to recruit more soldiers to the cause.

The reports of the suffering of widows in war time could also form part of more descriptive narratives of specific events. For example, a Parliamentarian pamphlet entitled *A declaration and manifestation of the proceedings of both armies* was published in 1642 and reported on early Civil War skirmishes including the Battle of Brentford. It incorporated a description of the reaction of a group of soldiers' wives to the report of deaths within Lord Roberts' Regiment: 'one of them who was overcome with sorrow at the report of her husbands death, was wonderfully re-comforted at the sight of his return, wherein her excellence was such, that she began now to feel a neerer violence from her own joy, and fainting away in his armes, had almost made him a widdower, whose widdow she supposed she had been'.³⁰ This story powerfully evoked the fear of widowhood and, thus, the consequences of war time. It was also perhaps an exhortation to women and widows to control themselves. The weeping widow was an acceptable Biblical image, and yet in reality such outpouring of emotion and grief could be seen as dangerous.

Another Parliamentarian publication, purported to be penned by an eye witness to 'the bloody and barbarous massacre at Bolton in the moors in Lancashire, May 28 by Prince Rupert' wrote that it 'left almost threescore poore widdows husbandlesse, and hundreds of poore Children fatherlesse'.³¹ It also described the widow of the late minister of Bolton being 'stripped to her smocke' and so leaving her with 'scarce old rags to cover her nakednesse'. These stories drew on war time atrocity narratives that the print reading public may have been familiar with as a result of the stories that came from Ireland after the rebellion there in 1641. James Cranford's account described in some detail the actions committed by Irish Catholics towards women and

³⁰ Anon., *A declaration and manifestation of the proceedings of both armies* (London, 1642), p. 5.

³¹ Anon., *An exact relation of the bloody and barbarous massacre at Bolton in the moors in Lancashire* (London, 1644), pp. 4-5.

children and provoked horror from English Protestants.³² The stories it contained were accompanied by vivid woodcuts and frequently highlighted stripping as a method of abuse: 'Many Gentlewomen have they ravished before their husbands faces, stripping them first naked to the view of their wicked companions'.³³ It also called its readers to action. The pamphlet concludes with a story of violence committed against a Minister and his wife and ends with a verse from Psalm 5: 'For the oppression of the poor, and for the fighting of the needy: now I will arise'.³⁴ David Como has shown that the 'printed word' could be used to effectively 'manipulate political opinion' in the case of radical puritan print during the wars.³⁵ Thus, atrocity stories, such as those which came from Ireland and the Civil Wars, may have been a useful way of galvanising support for the Parliamentary cause.

In the Royalist press, the plight of the poor widow was also utilised but, conversely, to condemn Parliament's actions. Bruno Ryves, the Royalist print writer, included an account in his *Micro-chronicon* of 'a number of poore women and others who have lost their husbands and friends in their service, and yet are suffered to starve in the streets for want of bread' who were gathering at the gates of Westminster.³⁶ He places this event in the context of a decision in Parliament on the 18th and 19th of January 1647 to grant money to 'sufferers' such as those who had lost out in the Ship Money Case and the Trustees for the sale of Bishops Lands.³⁷ Ryves cites all of the payments that were made, up to the value of 89,000li, but he argues that a lesser sum would have stopped the 'clamour' of these poor widows. Ryves, therefore, condemned Parliament for not providing financially to the widows of those who had fought and choosing instead to reimburse their own propertied supporters.

Additionally, Lionel Gatford, a clergyman who was exiled from England by 1647 and who joined the Royalists in Jersey and acted as chaplain to Edward Hyde, evoked the

³² James Cranford, *The teares of Ireland* (London, 1642).

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁵ David R. Como, 'Secret printing, the crisis of 1640, and the origins of Civil War radicalism', *Past & Present*, 196 (2007), p. 57.

³⁶ Bruno Ryves, *Micro-chronicon* ([London], 1647), i. 40.

³⁷ 'House of Commons Journal Volume 5: 18-19 January 1647', in *Journal of the House of Commons* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1802), pp. 54-58.

fate of widows in his writing.³⁸ In his publication *Englands complaint* from 1648 he strongly warned against the execution of Charles I: 'if you shall goe on, let me tell you what further Curses and Judgements doe yet threaten and hang over you... the Cryes and Curses of the Widowes and Fatherlesse (made so by your folly and madnesse) and of the Fathers and Mothers made Child-lesse, will crie loud in the eares of God against you'.³⁹ This language was echoed in *Eikon basilike*, published a year later, which asked 'Whose innocent blood during My Reign have I shed, to satisfie My lust, anger, or covetousnes? what Widdowes or Orphans tears can witnesse against me, the just cry of which must now be avenged with My own blood?'⁴⁰ These sentiments clearly invoked the Old Testament promises of protection and justice for widows and specifically the teaching in Exodus that God will 'surely heare their cry' in order to condemn Parliament's actions.

Finally, the woeful fate of widows in war time was also used in print to lobby Parliament over specific issues. This can be seen in the late 1640s when Parliament was attempting to find a settlement that would unite its own sparring factions and the country. The case against settlement with the King was bolstered by the trauma of the Second Civil War and in 1648, when Presbyterians and Independents disagreed over peace and settlement within Parliament, the debate spilled into the world of print.⁴¹ Printed petitions submitted to Army grandees asked for their arrears of pay as well as justice against the enemies of Parliament. One such petition, *A petition from severall regiments of the army* presented to Lord Fairfax in November 1648 specifically invoked the suffering of widows and orphans. It reminded Fairfax of 'The dangers you have been preserved from, the miseries of this bleeding Nation, the bloud of the innocent, the Outcry of the Widdow, and Fatherlesse' and professed that they were 'weary of which things we challenge as ours and the Kingdoms due, twice bought with our blood'.⁴² The language in this text demonstrates Patricia Crawford's argument that the

³⁸ Jason McElligott, 'Gatford, Lionel (d. 1665)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, online edn, Jan 2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/view/article/10450> [accessed 17.03.17].

³⁹ Lionel Gatford, *Englands complaint* (London, 1648), pp. 46-47.

⁴⁰ King Charles I, *Eikon basilike* (1649), p. 49.

⁴¹ Peacey, *Politicians and pamphleteers*, pp. 308-309.

⁴² Anon., *A petition from severall regiments of the army* (London, 1648), i. 5.

Army embraced the concept of Charles I's blood guilt following the Second Civil War.⁴³ This petition also reminded Fairfax of the duty of the governors in society to protect their most vulnerable members and, furthermore, to actively seek justice on their behalf. This was made explicit in the printed letters of Francis White, a Parliamentary army officer who urged against treating with the King, which were directed towards Fairfax and Cromwell.⁴⁴ He argued that Religion is 'not a name' but 'manifest in acts of Justice and mercy, visiting the fatherlesse and the widow, and keeping unspotted from the world'.⁴⁵ This specific reference to James 1:27 reaffirmed the God given duty to advocate on behalf of widows. These pamphlets invoked the biblical framework of the poor widow in order to incite readers to continue to seek justice for those who had suffered and to not make peace with the King.

On the other hand, the fate of widows was also used in the printed rhetoric that promoted peace and settlement. John Tarlton's pamphlet, *A remedy for the warres*, listed the 'patheticall Effects...[of] this wofull War...[that] woful-hearted Widdowes have wept for their Husbands'.⁴⁶ He went on to say that the 'bloody, and mercilesse War' had been to 'the ruine of many thousands of poor Widdowes and fatherlesse Children'. Similarly, one pamphlet of James Howell, who advocated that Parliament make peace with the King, stated that 'We have made them [the army] to rifle the Monuments of the Dead, to rob the Lazaretto, to strip the Orphane and Widow, to violate and pillage all things that were dedicated to God'.⁴⁷ Here, the New Model was depicted not as the victim and a defender of widows, but instead as their tormentor. Nevertheless, Howell had attempted to maintain neutrality during the wars and so perhaps here, by pointing to the blameless victims of conflict on both sides, he was attempting to take a moral standpoint whilst avoiding accusations of partisan feelings. Pamphlets addressed to the King invoked similar themes. For

⁴³ Patricia Crawford, 'Charles Stuart, that man of blood', *Journal of British Studies*, 16, no.2 (1977), pp. 41-61; Hill, *The English Bible*, pp. 96-97, 329.

⁴⁴ Robert Zaller, 'White, Francis (d. 1657)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, online edn, Jan 2011), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/view/article/66328?docPos=2> [accessed 17.03.17].

⁴⁵ Francis White, *The copies of severall letters contrary to the opinion of the present powers* (London, 1649), pp. 10-11.

⁴⁶ John Tarlton, *A remedy for the warres* (London, 1648), pp. 11-12.

⁴⁷ John Howell, *A trance, or, newes from hell brought fresh to towne by Mercurius Acheronticus* (London, 1649), pp. 10-11.

example, Richard Farrar's, *An expedient for the king*, asked 'who regard not the cries and the Teares of those poor Innocents, which your swords make Widows and Orphans?'.⁴⁸ William Haywood, a clergyman who had fled to join the Royalists after being deprived of his living in London for Laudian superstitions, preached before the King at Newport on the Isle of Wight in 1648.⁴⁹ This sermon, later printed under the title *A sermon tending to peace*, promoted peace with the Scots and reminded the congregation that 'every good man, armed with wealth and power, may, and ought to stand up in defence of the poor widow and fatherless, against their tyrannous oppressors'.⁵⁰ So, God's command to look upon the widowed and fatherless could be used to promote vengeance or settlement by authors on both sides of the debate.

The representation of the poor widow in Civil War print was a widespread one. Both Royalist and Parliamentary writers, those who advocated peace with the King and those who did not, could use it to their advantage in the print wars of the 1640s. This depiction rested on the same set of biblical assumptions: that God Himself speaks on behalf of the widowed and the fatherless and that society has a duty to protect and financially provide for them. Despite the common foundation, writers could use this representation to their own ends. The suffering of widows in the Civil Wars could be used by Parliamentarians promoting peace, by Royalists defending Charles, or by Army agitators seeking justice. Emphasising the fate of the vulnerable during war time may have also been an effective mechanism for recruiting and retaining soldiers. Those widows who really were caught up in the violence, who lost husbands and sons, probably stood to benefit little from their plight being invoked in this way. Both sides bemoaned the fate of poor widows, but this was primarily a way of criticising the actions of their enemies rather than an attempt to advocate on the behalf of war widows who really were suffering as a result of the wars.

⁴⁸ Richard Farrar, *An expedient for the king* ([London], 1648), p. 40.

⁴⁹ Arnold Hunt, 'Haywood, William (1599/1600–1663)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12800> [24.11.16].

⁵⁰ William Haywood, *A sermon tending to peace* (London, 1648), pp. 13-14.

Deviant widows

Not all widows were considered to be poor, vulnerable, and deserving of charity. When widows fashioned themselves as suffering they were also navigating another social stereotype: that of the deviant, sexually promiscuous or even dangerous, widow. The Book of Timothy gives some clear instruction about how to 'Honour widows that are widdowes indeed' and to give financial relief only to those who need it. Those widows that are 'wandring about from house to house; and not onely idle, but tatlers also, and busibodies, speaking things which they ought not' should not be charged upon the Church. Younger widows are urged to stay at home and bring up their children, relieve the afflicted and to pursue good works. The widow who 'liueth in pleasure', Timothy argues, 'is dead while she liueth'.⁵¹ Accordingly, this section of the New Testament provides some guidelines for how to administer financial relief to widows within the community and gives a basis for discriminating against women who did not adhere to certain moral standards. Thus, 'merely making a virtue of the normal poverty of widowhood is not enough; the woman who is desolate *in spite of* worldly possessions is closest to the widow indeed'.⁵²

The biblical presentation of marriage also influenced the ways in which widows were viewed by early modern society. The book of Colossians provides a prescription for how marriages ought to be carried out: 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your Wives; and bee not bitter to them'.⁵³ Conduct literature of the early modern period drew upon this and set out guidelines for the proper ordering of the family.⁵⁴ Robert Cleaver's work, printed first in 1598, argued that 'All government of a family must be in comeliness or decency' and connected man's rule of his household with the government of the commonwealth.⁵⁵ These authors portrayed the proper and right way for a household to be governed: with the father and husband at the head, acting as master over his wife, children and

⁵¹ *The Holy Bible* (1611) 1 Timothy 5: 3-16.

⁵² Barbara Toss, 'The virtuous widow in Protestant England', in Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (eds.), *Widowhood in medieval and early modern Europe* (Essex: Longman, 1999), pp. 66-83., p. 73.

⁵³ *The Holy Bible* (1611) Colossians 3: 18-19.

⁵⁴ Anthony Fletcher, 'The Protestant idea of marriage in early modern England', in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (eds.), *Religion, culture and society in early modern Britain: Essays in honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 161-181.

⁵⁵ Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie forme of household government* (London, 1598), p. 16.

servants. A woman's place within the family and within society was thus dictated by her marital status as much as by her gender. Consequently, Laura Gowing has argued that it was marriage which 'defined women's status, their economic lives, and their social contracts' rather than just their gender.⁵⁶

As a result of this, once a marriage was brought to a close by widowhood, a woman's identity changed. While this state was accepted, it could provoke considerable anxieties within society. 'On one level, writers regarded widows as especially deserving of justice', argued Tim Stretton, but in early modern law courts there was a 'general dislike of widows, or indeed any other women, speaking out'.⁵⁷ Thus, the state of widowhood was not solely sufficient to invoke the sympathy of society. Writers drew upon the distinctions based in 1 Timothy to characterise the 'good' and the 'bad' widow.⁵⁸ Thomas Fuller, a Church of England clergyman from Northamptonshire, expanded on this theme in his printed pamphlet *The Holy State* which devoted a chapter to describing 'The good Widow'.⁵⁹ A widow, he argued was 'a woman whose head hath been quite cut off, and yet she liveth'. Fuller conceded that following her husband's death 'a widow in civill affairs is often forced to act a double part of man and woman' but 'even then she is most carefull of her credit, and tender of her modesty, not impudently thrusting into the society of men'. This outline of the 'good widow' provided a means for recognising the deviant widow who could threaten to topple the patriarchal order by taking the role of a man.

It was particularly the idea of a wealthy widow, unattached by marriage, and who lusted after younger men that created fear within early modern society. Thus, the stereotype of the sexually deviant, rich old widow was used frequently in literature, sermons and plays in which the widow was 'a figure, at best, of fun, and, at worst, ridicule, who was highly sexed'.⁶⁰ In Thomas Middleton's *The widow a comedie* the

⁵⁶ Laura Gowing, *Domestic dangers: Women, words and sex in early modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 7.

⁵⁷ Tim Stretton, 'Widows at law in Tudor and Stuart England', in Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (eds.), *Widowhood in medieval and early modern Europe* (Essex: Longman, 1999), p. 197.

⁵⁸ Toss, 'The virtuous widow in Protestant England', pp. 70-73; Stretton, 'Widows at law in Tudor and Stuart England', p. 198.

⁵⁹ Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State* (Cambridge, 1642), p. 25.

⁶⁰ Charles Carlton, 'The widow's tale: Male myths and female reality in 16th and 17th century England', *Albion*, 10, no.2 (1978), p. 119.

character Ricardo boasts: 'It is the naturalist courtesy that was ever ordained: a young gentleman being spent to have a rich widow to set him up again'.⁶¹ Ballads published in the mid-seventeenth century also drew upon this popular theme. *A potion for an apothecary* described a young man who wanted a wife and therefore plotted 'To marry with some rich Widow, or some wealthy Country Maid'.⁶² Furthermore, *A Bachelors' Resolution* contained the following verse:

But yet if I my choice may have
a Mayde [s]hould b[e] my wife,
I would not be a Widowes slave,
Ide rather loose my life:
If I should wed a Widow old,
I had better take a younger,
For Widowes will not be contrould,
Yet I can stay no longer⁶³

The way that widows were represented in popular cheap print came about as a result of the way society viewed widows, and must have in turn also influenced that framework in a reciprocal fashion. As Angela McShane has argued, broadside literature 'had a fundamental role to play in helping early modern people to develop social, cultural, religious, and political identities'.⁶⁴ Charles Carlton has analysed demographic trends in early modern society and shown that the widespread notion of rich old widows, who sought after vulnerable young men to ruin, was in reality an inaccurate one.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, it was one which pervaded cheap print because it responded to people's fears about a well ordered society. This representation became increasingly prevalent during the turbulent years of the Civil War.

Ann Hughes has argued that during the 1640s and 1650s 'political trauma unleashed profound anxieties about the stability of gender identities and hierarchies' and that

⁶¹ Thomas Middleton, *The widow a comedie* (London, 1652), quoted in Carlton, 'The widow's tale', p. 120.

⁶² Anon., *A potion for an apothecary* ([1646-1680]).

⁶³ Anon., *A batchelers resolution* (London, [1629]).

⁶⁴ Angela McShane, 'Ballads and broadsides', in Joad Raymond (ed.), *Cheap print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 341.

⁶⁵ Carlton, 'The widow's tale', pp. 121-123.

this was often played out in the world of print.⁶⁶ The execution of the monarch raised profound questions about the proper rule of families. Mary Fissell's work has also shown how gender issues became interconnected with Civil War politics in this period.⁶⁷ The producers of cheap print reacted to events such as the Adultery Act and changes to the marriage ceremony with sexual satire that depicted these events within a gendered framework. The representation of widows as deviant women became a part of that literature. For example, there sprung up a range of pamphlets around the theme of a 'Parliament of Women' (see Image 4.1).⁶⁸ In these pamphlets a mock Parliament, made up exclusively of women, set forth their 'Women's Laws'. One of these was that 'it is thought fit and convenient by us, that all rich and stale Bachelors, do forthwith marry poor widows that have no means to live on, and so become Fathers the first day'.⁶⁹ Another law proclaimed 'it is thought meet, that rich widows shall marry Gentlemens youngest sons that have no means to maintain themselves'. These pamphlets articulated the fears of society about an imagined rule of women by using some of the prevailing stereotypes of deviant widows and the dangers that they might pose.

⁶⁶ Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution*, p. 143.

⁶⁷ Fissell, *Vernacular bodies*, pp. 157-195.

⁶⁸ Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution*, p. 129.

⁶⁹ Anon., *The Parliament of women with the merry lawes by them newly enacted* (London, 1640).

Image 4.1 The Parliament of Women



Source: Anon., *The Parliament of women with the merry lawes by them newly enacted* (London, 1640), frontispiece.

Moreover, at the start of the 1640s several mock petitions circulated which purported to be from women and widows who desired peace because the war meant that they lacked suitors.⁷⁰ These petitions satirised the notion of women and widows as sexually obsessed and thus drew upon commonly held gendered concepts to articulate popular fears. One pamphlet, *The widovves lamentation*, claimed that ‘women (as we would have all the world know) desire to live and dye in the society of their husbands’.⁷¹ The printed literature that expressed fears about religious sectaries reflected similar social anxieties about widows. For example, Thomas Edwards’s *Gangraena* bemoaned the activities of religious sects and attempted to persuade its readers of their dangers. It told the story of ‘a Widow, an Anabaptist about forty yeeres of age’ who ‘intangled and inveigled a youth of about nineteene yeeres of age, and married him without his father ever knowing or imagining any such thing’.⁷² Consequently, the ‘monstrous

⁷⁰ Hughes, *Gender and the English revolution*, p. 127.

⁷¹ Anon., *The widovves lamentation for the absence of their deare children and suitors* (London, 1643), p. 8.

⁷² Thomas Edwards, *The third part of Gangraena* (London, 1646), p. 188.

attack on the natural hierarchies of gender' that Edwards articulated in this publication extended to the deviant and dangerous widow.⁷³

The framework of the deviant widow needs to be understood alongside the poor widow because both were integral to the ways in which early modern society viewed widows. It was possible, on the one hand, to bemoan the suffering of poor widows while, on the other, mock widows who lusted after younger men and who stepped beyond traditional gender roles. Civil War print embraced both representations of widows and authors may have used each when they considered it might provide the maximum impact. Widows themselves also had to negotiate these boundaries when they represented themselves. Drawing on the image of the vulnerable widow whom God intercedes for was useful but they also had to avoid accusations of improper behaviour and fashion themselves, as far as possible, in line with the 'good widow'. That widow 'putteth her especiall confidence in Gods providence' because 'Surely if he be a father to the fatherlesse, it must needs follow that he is an husband to the widow'.⁷⁴ Widows who represented themselves as pious, meek and vulnerable may have been successful in fashioning themselves as good. Yet, the Civil War, with its gendered polemic and social anxieties, made the deviant widow an especially potent stereotype.

Metaphorical widows

The lives of widows, real or imagined, were not the only source of inspiration for representing widows in print. The poor widow was portrayed as a weak woman who had been separated from her proper protector, her husband, and thus needed shelter in her vulnerable state. This framework provided ample material for comparison with other entities who had been cut off from their protector and who now were left weak and alone as a result of the wars. It was not just women who lost husbands during this period: the Church of England lost its bishops and the country lost its King. Hill noted that certain Biblical metaphors, such as the Antichrist, Babylon and Egypt, became

⁷³ Ann Hughes, *Gangraena and the struggle for the English revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 113.

⁷⁴ Fuller, *The Holy State*, p. 26.

widespread in Parliamentary polemic in this period.⁷⁵ During the wars writers of both sides also drew upon the Biblical image of the widow when commenting on recent times. The national Church, England, and other things such as the city of London and the county of Devon, were all depicted as widows. This use became part of the printed polemic surrounding debates over the church and country and shows how the representation of widows could become part of many aspects of Civil War writing.

Representing widows in a metaphorical sense had foundations within Biblical texts which compared wives to the Church and Christ to her husband. This was a theme that was dwelled upon in the New Testament letters. For example, in Ephesians 5 it is written: 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it' and 2 Corinthians 'I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ'.⁷⁶ This depiction can also be found in the Old Testament. In Isaiah it is written, 'For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel', making it a familiar one to early modern audiences.⁷⁷ Thus, in the same way that perceptions of good government were framed within the context of the father as head of the household, it was possible to frame discussions of Christ's Church within the same universal context of the relationship between husbands and wives. The King was the head and ruler of the people but ultimately Christ ruled over heaven and earth as head of the Church.

The 1630s and 1640s were marked by major changes in the national Church and in the early 1640s many of its structures were dismantled by the Long Parliament. Despite agreeing on what aspects of the Church needed further reformation, namely Episcopal rule, Parliament and the Westminster assembly of Divines were unable to agree on how to progress further with the changes. In these discussions, the Church was sometimes compared to a woman or a widow. In 1641 Cornelius Burgess preached before the Commons on November 5 after the outbreak of the Irish Rebellion. He was ominous about the state of the Church: 'Matters of Religion lie a bleeding: all

⁷⁵ Hill, *The English Bible*, p. 113.

⁷⁶ *The Holy Bible* (1611) Ephesians 5:25, 2 Corinthians 11:2.

⁷⁷ *The Holy Bible* (1611) Isaiah 54:5.

Government and Discipline of the Church is laid in *her Grave*'.⁷⁸ Stephen Marshall, the prolific preacher before the Commons, explicitly compared the Church with a widow in his discussion of Psalm 102. He said, 'behold the afflicted Church of God sitting alone like a desolate widow with her tears on her cheeks, her belly cleaving to the dust, her heart smitten and withered like grasse, eating ashes for bread, mingling her drink with weeping'.⁷⁹ This evocative description of a widow, which drew upon culturally acceptable images of the poor widow, was used to describe the state of the Church and thus to provoke Parliament to action.

Widows could be viewed as characters of desolation but they were also depicted in the Bible as figures whom God has promised to rescue and redeem. This proved a useful metaphor to thinkers of both sides. It was also deployed in the play *The Virgin Widow* which was written by Francis Quarles, a poet who remained loyal to the King, and published posthumously in 1649. Karl Hölzgen argued that in this play 'the heroine, Kettreena, clearly represents the Christian church and the Church of England as the widowed bride of Christ'.⁸⁰ He suggested that the play was originally written and performed in 1640 but that the topical allusions and a second personification of the church, in the character Lady Temple, were added in February 1641 while Parliament was negotiating with the Scots. This metaphor of the church as a widow had other implications besides pity and grief, however. Edward Boughen, clergyman and staunch defender of the Episcopacy, considered the full implications of this metaphor in a pamphlet published in 1650. He wrote that 'if she be without a Bishop, that Church is a widow' and 'And wile a widow, she can bring forth a bastard brood. Consider that'.⁸¹

During this period England was also compared directly to a grieving widow. At the start of the wars Royalist writer John Harris published the pamphlet *Englands out-cry*. This work was part of a wider genre of Royalist writing which described 1641 as 'a time of

⁷⁸ Quoted in Ethyn W. Kirby, 'Sermons before the commons, 1640-42', *The American Historical Review*, 44, no.3 (1939), p. 539.

⁷⁹ Stephen Marshall, *Gods master-piece* (London, 1645), p. 2.

⁸⁰ Karl Josef Hölzgen, 'Quarles, Francis (1592–1644)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/view/article/22945?docPos=1> [accessed 17.03.17].

⁸¹ Edward Boughen, *Master Gerees case of conscience sifted* (London, 1650), pp. 113- 114.

disaster and betrayal', according to David Cressy, and looked back wistfully upon the perceived success and prosperity of the 1630s.⁸² Harris wrote that 'miserable, distracted, almost destroyed England' was 'become as a widdow mourning for the losse of her espoused Love: instead of singing joyfull Anthems'.⁸³ The metaphor of a widow as England was of particular use to Royalists who, after the execution of Charles I, began to construct the image of the King as a martyr. Andrew Lacey has shown that in the first few years after the execution, printed sermons presented a typology of Charles I that would be perpetuated for years to come.⁸⁴ One of the ways in which Charles was fashioned was in parallel with Christ himself: the protector and 'nursing father' of the church and the nation.⁸⁵ This theme was taken up in the printed sermon *The subjects sorrow* preached shortly after Charles's execution. It was published anonymously but is attributed either to Robert Brown, vicar of Sling, or to William Juxon, Bishop of London.⁸⁶ This sermon evocatively claimed: 'now The glory is departed from (our) Israel, the Arke of God is taken, and how is England become a Widow?'.⁸⁷ Charles I used the metaphor himself in 1648 in *The Kings most gracious messages for peace* when he asked 'How is that rich and renowned City, London, become as a Widow, in the absence of her Husband, by the meanes and operation of these new usurpers'.⁸⁸ Thus, the Old Testament depictions of Israel as the wife of the Lord was directly applied to England's present situation but now, according to Royalists, that wife had become a widow.

⁸² David Cressy, *England on edge: Crisis and revolution 1640-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 14.

⁸³ John Harris, *Englands out-cry, for the sad distractions now lying upon the church and state* (London, 1644), p. 1.

⁸⁴ Andrew Lacey, *The cult of King Charles the martyr* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), p. 118.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁸⁷ [Robert Brown], *The subjects sorrow* (London, 1649), p. 89.

⁸⁸ [King Charles I], *The Kings most gracious messages for peace* ([London], 1648), p. 108.

Image 4.2 The weeping widow



Source: William Warren, *Strange, true and lamentable newes from Exceter* (London, 1643), frontispiece.

The loss, absence and separations that widows symbolised could, therefore, be used to evoke the loss and pain that Royalists and Parliamentarians felt during the 1640s. Image 4.2, above, depicts a weeping woman, perhaps a widow, lamenting the terrible losses of the war in Devon (the quotation references the Biblical story of Job: a man who lost his children and all his possessions and was left utterly desolate and destitute).⁸⁹ The breakdown in society had considerable implications for the ways in which the relationship between the King and his people was envisaged. It was a relationship that was often depicted in relation to the divinely ordained relationship between a man and his wife in the same way as Christ and the Church. These parallels broke down, however, when the King was cut off from his people and the national church was divided. Generalised gender anxieties about the role of women during the wars were made even more pertinent when patriarchal models seemed to be crumbling. Moreover, it was not just the Church or England which were described in such a way. One pamphlet wrote of the county of Devon during the war: 'let it not seem small that it sits in dust and ashes like a widow looking for some to helpe, but none appears'.⁹⁰ Thus, metaphorical widows became part of the polemic of the 1640s

⁸⁹ *The Holy Bible* (1611) Job.

⁹⁰ Anon., *A continuation of the true narration of the most observable passages in and about Plymouth* (London, 1644), p. 8.

as representative of the losses and divisions that the country and its people had suffered.

Petitioning widows

One of Jesus' parables, the parable of the persistent widow, put a petitioning widow at its centre. Luke 18: 1-8 describes a widow who came before a Judge who 'feared not God, neither regarded man' asking him to 'Avenge me of mine adversary'. The judge is described as unjust, and yet because of her persistence (or in the judge's words 'because this widow troubleth me') he is wearied by her complaints and accedes. This parable is intended to teach on the nature of God, 'shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?', and His just response to the petitions of His people. It, therefore, was not a parable that was intended to justify persistent female petitioning but to demonstrate the benevolence of God. Nevertheless, it was used by the Leveller John Lilburne in one of his pamphlets in 1648 to justify his speech. He wrote: 'My exceeding urgent necessities...presseth me above measure still to play the part of the poore importunate widdow, mentioned in the Gospel, and to resolve whatever befalls never to give over till I have attained her end, viz. Iustice'.⁹¹ The emphasis of the duty of the State to receive petitions, outlined in this parable, was also a key part of many Civil War debates.⁹²

Another important example of a petitioning woman is provided in the book of Esther. It tells the story of a woman petitioning the authorities, in this case the King, in a way that could be praised. Esther was a young Jewish girl who was elevated to the position of Queen after the previous Queen was deposed for refusing to attend one of the King's banquets. Esther was faced with a dilemma: the King had ordered the killing of her people, the Jews, but to come before the King to petition for their lives without invitation could mean death. Despite these obstacles, Esther presented herself before King Xerxes with her humble request that he may spare the Jews and she was ultimately successful. Esther was celebrated in a sermon preached before the House of Commons by Richard Heyrick in May 1646 entitled *Queen Esther Resolves or, A*

⁹¹ John Lilburn, *The peoples prerogative and priviledges, asserted and vindicated* (London, 1648), p. 62,

⁹² Derek Hirst, 'Making contact: Petitions and the English republic', *Journal of British Studies*, 45, no.1 (2006), pp. 26-50.

princely pattern of heaven-born resolution.⁹³ He commended Esther's intervention and the means by which she accomplished her aims as 'fair, direct, and Lawfull'. He also praised Esther in gendered terms arguing that her resolution to petition the King was added to by her 'Beauty', 'Majesty' and 'Sex'. He said of Esther: 'Behold strength in weaknesse, vertue in infirmity, Resolution in inconstancy; strength, virtue, resolution in a woman'.⁹⁴ The Biblical story was also used by Heyrick to explain the duty of the governors to receive petitions: 'Christian Princes who are to rule by Law and not by will, they are to have their Courts open to all, the poorest subject may have liberty to prefer his Petition'.⁹⁵

While Heyrick almost certainly did not intend for his sermon to stand as a defence of women's intervention in political affairs, this Bible story did prove useful to many female petitioners so that Queen Esther became 'virtually a patron Saint of Civil War women's petitions'.⁹⁶ For example, the *Petition of the gentlewomen and tradesmens Wives*, submitted in February 1642, described how Esther 'with the hazard of her own life, it being contrary to the law to appear before the King before she were sent for' petitioned the King nevertheless.⁹⁷ The collective petitioning of women is recognised by historians as an important part of female engagement with politics during the wars.⁹⁸ These women developed 'powerful arguments for their right to petition Parliament' based upon the idea of equal souls and their own rights as citizens.⁹⁹ In doing so, they radicalised the potential of the traditional petition.¹⁰⁰ It was, thus,

⁹³ Richard Heyrick, *Queen Esthers resolves* (London, 1646), pp. 2-3.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁹⁶ Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and virtue: Women, writing, and politics in seventeenth century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 46; See also: Alison Thorne, 'The politics of female supplication in the book of Esther', in Victoria Brownlee and Laura Gallagher (eds.), *Biblical women in early modern literary culture, 1550-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 100-109.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Hill, *The English Bible*, p. 407.

⁹⁸ Patricia Higgins, 'The reactions of women, with special reference to women petitioners', in Brian S. Manning (ed.), *Politics, religion and the English Civil War* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), pp. 179-224; Ann M. McIntee, "'The [un]civill-sisterhood of oranges and lemons": Female petitioners and demonstrators, 1642-53', *Prose Studies*, 14, (1991), pp. 92-111.

⁹⁹ Sara H. Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in early modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).pp. 405-406; Higgins, 'The reactions of women', pp. 208-213.

¹⁰⁰ Ann Hughes, 'Gender and politics in Leveller literature', in Susan D. Amussen and Mark Kishlansky (eds.), *Political culture and cultural politics in early modern England: Essays presented to David Underdown* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 162-188; Patricia Crawford, "'The poorest she": Women and citizenship in early modern England', in Michael Mendle (ed.), *The Putney debates of 1647: The army, the Levellers, and the English state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

feared by many contemporaries. In April 1649, female petitioners attended Parliament to supplicate for the freedom of the Leveller leaders. They were told by the speaker of the House that 'the matter you petition about, is of an higher concernment then you understand' and they were 'desired to goe home, and looke after your owne businesse, and meddle with your huswifery'.¹⁰¹ This sort of intervention resulted in part from the same fears that were expressed in the image of the deviant widow and the 'Parliament of Women' genre.

The representation of the petitioning widow, however, *could* be a positive one. Using Biblical examples of petitioning widows proved useful to some widows who submitted printed petitions individually in this period. Jason Peacey and Derek Hirst have described the use of printed petitions as a new lobbying tactic when addressing the government in the Civil Wars.¹⁰² Previously, petitioners to Parliament tried to get their manuscript petition into the hands of an MP by handing it to them outside the doors to Parliament or by using powerful friends and connections. Printing petitions had the advantage that many more copies could be produced and, therefore, the chance of one reaching the right hands was greatly increased. The widows who used this method tended to be aristocratic women. They must have been more able to print their supplications as a result of financial means and powerful personal connections.¹⁰³

Mary Blaithwaite, a Parliamentarian widow, put forth her petition to Parliament in print in 1654.¹⁰⁴ In a manuscript petition to Oliver Cromwell, Mary had claimed that she and her husband 'for their fidelitie and good affections to the Common wealth (and for no other cause)' had suffered under the hands of Royalists in Cumberland. She argued that certain men had dragged them through markets and imprisoned them 'upon pretence that they were spies and intelligences for the Commonwealth'.¹⁰⁵ This petition asked for some financial compensation after her husband 'lost his memorie,

2001), pp. 197-218; For wider work on the politicization of petitioning see: David Zaret, 'Petitions and the "invention" of public opinion in the English revolution', *American Journal of Sociology*, 101, no.6 (1996), pp. 1497-1555.

¹⁰¹ Robert Ibbitson, *Perfect occurrences of every dayes journall in Parliament...From Friday April the 20 to Friday April 27 1649* (London, 1649), p. 998.

¹⁰² Derek Hirst, 'Making contact', p. 40; Peacey, *Print and public politics*, pp. 268-296.

¹⁰³ For example: Katherine Stone, *The humble petition of Katherine Stone* ([London], 1654).

¹⁰⁴ Mary Blaithwaite, *The complaint of Mary Blaithwaite widdovv* ([London], 1654).

¹⁰⁵ Petition of Mary Blaithwaite, 11 May 1654, TNA, SP 18/71 f. 159r.

became senseless and soon after died' as a result of their sufferings. Her printed publication, which includes a selection of petitions submitted to Parliament, is even more evocative. She specifically referred to the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18: 'my case is more remediable than the poor Widow, who importuned the unjust Judge'.¹⁰⁶ The postscript in the pamphlet appealed directly to Cromwell and used the representation of the poor, worthy widow: 'Oh that I could come to speak with his Highness, that I might say unto him, My Lord Protector, do justice for me a distressed Widow and my fatherless Children, lest when your Wife is a Widow, and Children Fatherless, they cry and be not heard'.¹⁰⁷ It is difficult to ascertain the outcome of Mary Blaithwaite's requests. There are references in the Lords' Journals to her pleas being read and referred in 1648, but 6 years elapsed before she submitted her printed petition.¹⁰⁸ It may have been the protracted nature of the case that forced her, in her own words, 'to make my selfe a foole in Print'.¹⁰⁹

Another widow who used both print and manuscript petitions in order to further her case was a Royalist widow: Elizabeth Duchess of Hamilton who had been married to William Duke of Hamilton. He had died fighting for Charles II at the Battle of Worcester as a result of musket ball wounds that no surgeon was able to repair.¹¹⁰ Because of her husband's decision to fight for the King, Elizabeth had all of her lands taken from her, including the lands which she had brought to the marriage by her own right. She lobbied Parliament for the return of her estate by first presenting a printed petition 'to all or most of the members' of Parliament but after she 'could not so much as obtaine the reading thereof' she subsequently submitted her request in the form of a written petition to one of the central committees.¹¹¹ So, Elizabeth first petitioned in print, and then returned to the more traditional method of a manuscript supplication when that was unsuccessful (whereas Mary resorted to print only after her original pleas failed).

¹⁰⁶ Blaithwaite, *The complaint of Mary Blaithwaite*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁸ 'House of Lords Journal Volume 10: 10 March 1648', in *Journal of the House of Lords: Volume 10, 1648-1649* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1767-1830), pp. 106-110.

¹⁰⁹ Blaithwaite, *The complaint of Mary Blaithwaite*, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ John J. Scally, 'Hamilton, William, second duke of Hamilton (1616-1651)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12134> [accessed 17.03.17].

¹¹¹ Elizabeth Hamilton, *The humble petition of Elizabeth Duchess (Dowager) of Hamilton* ([London], 1651); Petition of Elizabeth Hamilton, 21 July 1653, TNA, SP 19/12, p. 399.

The two petitioners' approaches to the print and manuscript supplication were also different. In Elizabeth's case, her manuscript petition was more descriptive and evocative than her printed petition. The manuscript request pleaded that 'she and her poore Children liue upon Charity and borrowed bread' whereas the printed document just laid out her and her children's claims to the lands in legal terms.¹¹² The printed petition was also simply presented, in the same format as a manuscript petition, and was a single sheet. So, it does not seem as though her printed petition was intended to be sensationalist or sold as cheap print, but was instead a lobbying tactic directed specifically towards Parliament. By contrast, Mary Blaithwaite's petition is four folios and contains some decoration and embellishments. It also concludes with a 'word to the reader' which presents a justification for the document: 'if any man shall blame me a poor distressed Widdow for solliciting His Highness, and Petitioning the Parliament, let them know that my oppressions are so great and so insufferable, that I cannot doe lesse then crave for justice'.¹¹³ Mary's petition did acknowledge a wider readership than simply those in government and it might have been constructed in such a way in order to gather public sympathy for her case. Consequently, while these widows used printed petitions in different ways, both utilised the power of this burgeoning genre alongside more traditional methods.

Conclusion

Poor widows, deviant widows, petitioning widows and even metaphorical widows were all part of the way in which widows were represented in Civil War print. Each depiction rested on similar assumptions and Biblical teaching about the role of widows and the duty of society to protect them. Nevertheless, each representation could be used for different purposes, showing that 'the widow' was an empty vessel when used as a literary trope. Poor widows were used when writers were trying to incite readers to the horror of war and deviant widows could equally demonstrate the dangers of war time through the upheaval of society. The fact that widows were used in a metaphorical sense to describe Church and State demonstrates the potency that these representations had within Civil War society. Describing England as a weeping widow,

¹¹² Petition of Elizabeth Hamilton, 21 July 1653, TNA, SP 19/12, p. 399.

¹¹³ Blaithwaite, *The complaint of Mary Blaithwaite*, p. 8.

grieving for her lost spouse, was a powerful way for Royalists to mourn over their losses and to remind readers that God promised to redeem widows. This image perhaps looked forward to the moment when England would be reunited with her ruler, the King. Finally, petitioning widows could be used by authors to justify their actions, and to reaffirm the duty of the government to hear the cries of the needy. This image could also be used by widows themselves when they submitted their own pleas in the form of print.

That widows formed part of the printed polemic of the Civil Wars can perhaps in part be used to explain why Parliament did bestow some financial generosity towards widows in this period. Both sides acknowledged the losses that widows suffered in war time and recognised that the Bible prompted the governors in society to protect its most vulnerable members. These claims also formed part of the propaganda of both sides as each accused the other of failing in their Christian duties. Therefore, it is possible that Parliament was in part responding to this rhetoric when it continued to order that widows be provided for in their counties with financial relief. They could claim that they had heard the cries of the widowed and the fatherless, and responded to their needs. Other pressures, such as the need to recruit soldiers and keep them from deserting, were also responsible for Parliament's decision to promise relief to their wives and children if they died. Nevertheless, war widows formed a significant part of the rhetoric used by both sides to describe the events of the war and to lobby Parliament for change. Furthermore, as the next two chapters will show, widows could successfully use these ideas in representing themselves in their petitions. When they narrated their own stories of loss and loyalty, drawing on the ways that society represented widows could prove crucial to their success.

Chapter Five. Petitioning narratives: descriptions of poverty

Introduction

Descriptions of poverty feature in almost all of the petitions that have been surveyed for this study. Framing a supplication in terms of humility and desperation was not a new tactic for petitioners in this period and it was not one that was just confined to female petitioners.¹ Yet, as this chapter will argue, it remained a significant feature and one that appeared in petitions from widows of a range of social statuses.

Parliamentarian war widows who petitioned their Quarter Sessions' benches for a pension generally appear to have relied on wages earned, and occasionally some form of poor relief, for their subsistence. This was in stark contrast to the Royalist war widows who were all land holders fighting sequestration. Despite this, both sets of petitioners frequently invoked notions of poverty and the language of desperation in their petitions. Many war widows chose to narrate their Civil War experiences in vivid and emotive terms. This was not a tactic just deployed by widows, of course. Maimed soldiers evoked similar notions of loss and penury in their petitions. Using such a language was probably expected of petitioners and presumably contributed to their eventual success. Throwing yourself on the mercy of your governors was made more effective if you presented yourself as desperate and without means.

The phrase, 'the economy of makeshifts', which was coined by Olwen Hufton in 1974 in reference to welfare in France, has become popular with historians studying early modern poor relief.² It 'has become the organising concept for a number of historians of English welfare who wish to stress the disparate nature of income for poor households'.³ Steve Hindle has investigated the ways in which those living at the lower

¹ Derek Hirst, 'Making contact: Petitions and the English republic', *Journal of British Studies*, 45, no.1 (2006), pp. 45-47; Alison Thorne, 'Narratives of female suffering in the petitionary literature of Civil War period and its aftermath', *Literature Compass*, 10, no.2 (2013), pp. 134-145; Gwilym Dodd, 'Writing wrongs: The drafting of supplications to the crown in later fourteenth-century England', *Medium Aevum*, 80, no.2 (2011), pp. 217-246.

² Olwen H. Hufton, *The poor of eighteenth-century France, 1750-1789* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

³ Alannah Tomkins and Steven King, 'Introduction', in Alannah Tomkins and Stephen King (eds.), *The poor in England 1700-1850: An economy of makeshifts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 1.

levels of society in early modern England relied on a combination of informal and formal relief to survive as well as 'making shift' through work and other opportunities.⁴ It seems likely that many families in England lived on the borderline between informal and formal relief, sometimes requiring the latter in times of harvest failure or when the former failed.⁵ Being dependent on the parish and on others was also a measure of poverty. Alexandra Shepard describes this as one of the ways in which people described their relative wealth, with dependence on poor relief being the lowest category and one which many tried to separate themselves from. She found in her work on the language witnesses used to describe their wealth in court that 'several witnesses were at pains to stress that, although they had little, they did not depend on charity'.⁶ Petitioning for poor relief was one way in which those living in poverty attempted to 'make shift' while simultaneously professing their humility and dependence.

Petitioning required language of humility and supplication, irrespective of the petitioners' circumstances. Gwilym Dodd researched petitions to the Crown in England in the 1390s and found similarities in the literary style of petitions with bills submitted to Chancery and to the letter writing practice of *ars dictaminis*.⁷ In these petitions language was used 'expansively and extravagantly' to describe the plight of the pleader.⁸ From petitions to the crown, to petitions from the humble for poor relief, language of poverty and humility was utilised. Jonathan Healey has worked on the petitions for poor relief and found that petitioning 'was clearly a powerful tool of the needy'.⁹ He wrote that one petition, in which the petitioner 'claimed to be old and unable to work' was 'largely indistinguishable from other appeals' because of the

⁴ Steve Hindle, *On the parish?: The micro-politics of poor relief in rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), pp. 17-21.

⁵ John Walter, 'The social economy of dearth in early modern England', in John Walter, Roger Schofield and Andrew B. Appleby (eds.), *Famine, disease and the social order in early modern society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 75-128.

⁶ Alexandra Shepard, 'Poverty, labour and the language of social description in early modern England', *Past & Present*, 201 (2008), p. 58.

⁷ Dodd, 'Writing wrongs', pp. 217-246.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁹ Jonathan Healey, 'The development of poor relief in Lancashire, c. 1598-1680', *The Historical Journal*, 53, no.3 (2010), p. 567.

regularity with which petitioners claimed poverty.¹⁰ Tomkins and King have urged caution when relying on the narratives contained within pauper letters for research. They argue that such work ‘requires considerable caution and dexterity if historians want to attempt anything other than an analysis of the language of request’.¹¹ This does not make them meaningless as historical sources, however. Pamela Sharpe has argued for the importance of ‘reading the letters as strategic scripts’ in order to ‘gain some appreciation of, at least, contemporary perceptions of rights, obligations and duties’.¹² Using language of humility was not necessarily symbolic of weakness. In her work on female petitioners of the Civil War period Alison Thorne found that: ‘in fact the deferential tone traditionally adopted by petitioners may have been a subterfuge that masked their underlying combativeness’.¹³

This chapter will reflect on the descriptions of poverty in the petitions of Parliamentarian and Royalist war widows and the extent to which they were ‘strategic scripts’ and effective tools of the needy. The Parliamentarian war widows who petitioned for a pension before 1660 would probably have been of a low social status. If they were married to Officers, then they would have been able to go to Parliament for a pension where the rewards were much more lucrative.¹⁴ 14 petitions from war widows survive in Kent and Sussex and out of these 9 used explicit language of poverty (64%). By contrast, the Royalist widows who petitioned for the sequestration on their lands to be lifted were generally of a higher status.¹⁵ 64 of the 167 widows who petitioned identified themselves as either from the gentry or aristocracy and only 41 of the widows used language of poverty in their petitions (25%). Despite this, there is no direct correlation between those 41 widows and those who did not provide an

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 564; see also an online symposium that reflects recent research on petitions in early modern Europe: Brodie Waddell (ed.), *Addressing Authority: An Online Symposium on Petitions and Supplications in Early Modern Society* (2016) <https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/2016/11/01/addressing-authority/> [accessed 4 March 2017].

¹¹ Tomkins and King, 'Introduction', in *The Poor in England*, p. 10.

¹² Pamela Sharpe, 'Survival strategies and stories: Poor widows and widowers in early industrial England', in Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (eds.), *Widowhood in medieval and early modern Europe* (Essex: Longman, 1999), p. 230.

¹³ Thorne, 'Narratives of Female Suffering', p. 135.

¹⁴ For example, on 22 June 1650 Parliament ordered pensions of 20s a week to several Officers' Widows: 'Cases brought before the committee: June 1650', in Mary A. E. Green, (ed.) *Calendar, committee for the advance of money* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1888), pp. 1235-1245.

¹⁵ See Chapter 2, pp. 67-70.

indication of social status (suggesting that they were of low status). For example, 5 of the 25 aristocratic widows used language of poverty and thus describing themselves in this way seemed to carry no shame. Similarly, Barbara Harris has argued that sixteenth-century English aristocratic women viewed their family role as their vocation and that while widows 'often described themselves as helpless and desolate' they 'defended their rights vigorously'.¹⁶

Thus, language of loss, need and lack of subsistence seems to have been used irrespective of social status and allegiance. Consequently, this chapter will consider the main ways in which war widows made descriptions of poverty fundamental to their strategy for survival. It will analyse the petitions submitted before 1660 by Parliamentary war widows for pensions and Royalist widows to remove their sequestration. For comparison, it will also examine the petitions submitted by maimed soldiers in Kent and Sussex before and after the Restoration as these petitioners also employed language of loss and need.¹⁷ The chapter will firstly examine the ways in which the petitioners described their attempts to financially subsist. Secondly, it will consider the ways in which petitioners made a connection between a lack of subsistence and their inability to support their families. Thirdly, it will consider the ways in which evoking the obligations of families was linked to the obligation of charity, religion and pity placed upon those hearing the petitions. Finally, the chapter will turn to the outcomes of these petitions by outlining three case studies where the 'success' of the petitioner's request can be identified.

Making shift

The case of a matter of difference between two members of an East Sussex parish demonstrates Keith Wrightson's argument of the 'degree of normative consensus as to the nature of proper behaviours amongst neighbours' when it came to supporting oneself.¹⁸ Henry Snell, one party of the dispute, was described by his neighbours in a

¹⁶ Barbara J. Harris, *English aristocratic women, 1450-1550: Marriage and family, property and careers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 16, 138.

¹⁷ Only one petition survives in the Kent and Sussex Quarter Sessions archives from a Royalist widow petitioning after the Restoration, Anne Owden, and this petition simply asked for the arrears of her husband's pension: Petition of Anne Owden, January 1669, WSRO, Q/R/W124, f. 62r.

¹⁸ Keith Wrightson, 'The politics of the parish in early modern England', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds.), *The experience of authority in early modern England* (Basingstoke: 1996), p. 18.

Quarter Sessions document as ‘an idle p[er]son that followeth not his vocation nor any honest labor or means for his maintenance’. As well as previously being described as a drunk with loose morals, here he was also painted as one who was not able to support himself through ‘honest’ means. This was placed in contrast with the other man John Heath who ‘for many years of late hath ledde his life in a good honest & peacable manner endeauouring by his honest labour & industry to mainteyne himselfe & his family’.¹⁹ The ability to ‘make shift’ through honest means was very important when it came to the community’s assessment of character. These expectations must have informed the petitions of war widows and maimed soldiers. They had to outline their need for pensions whilst also carefully negotiating the ‘politics of the neighbourhood’ described by Wrightson as a ‘shifting and unstable entity, constituted by processes of inclusion and exclusion’.²⁰

Maimed soldiers and war widows had to present themselves as having ‘little or nothing to maintain themselves’ in order to receive a pension.²¹ Nevertheless, some petitioners avoided representing themselves as fully dependent on others. Matthew Dover, a maimed soldier, wrote to the West Sussex Quarter Sessions that ‘if it please god to restore me to my former strength and health againe I trust in the lord I shall liue without beholding to any man’.²² John Freeberry also told the JPs that ‘he hath beene constrayned to sell p[ar]te of that little good[es] he had to mayntaine himselfe wife and three smale children’.²³ The Kentish war widow Susan North emphasised in her petition that if she were to be granted some relief from the JPs ‘shee may by her carefull indeauour raise a liuelyhood’.²⁴ Susan’s comments remind us that it was not just men who wanted to avoid a state of dependence (or at least appearing to live in that way). It also shows how some petitioners described pensions as a way to help them on their way towards independence, rather than providing for a perpetual state

¹⁹ Petitions of the parish of Fletching, October 1644, ESRO, QR/65, f. 26r.

²⁰ Wrightson, ‘The politics of the parish’, p. 22.

²¹ ‘October 1642: Ordinance for Maintenance to be given to the Wives and Children of those that are killed; and to maimed Soldiers’, in C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911), pp. 36-37.

²² Petition of Matthew Dover, January 1652, WSRO, Q/R/W72, f. 7r.

²³ Petition of John Freeberry, January 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W75, f. 76r.

²⁴ Petition of Susan North, 1652, KHLC, Q/SB/3/26.

of dependence. War widows used various tactics in order to describe their poverty to the JPs whilst also emphasising their temporary need for assistance.

Selling goods in order to survive may have been something which women were forced to do frequently when their husbands were absent. Richard Cole wrote in his petition that his wife had 'in his absence beene Constrayned to sell all the goods and Tooles to maintaine herselfe and Children'.²⁵ Susan North also described how she and her family had 'sold & paund such things w[h]ich she had for maintenance' and Jane Rusbridger that she 'has been constrayned to sell her good[es] to releiue her selfe and children'.²⁶ While the selling of goods does not appear in every petition it seems probable that more women than described it were forced to use it as a tactic for survival. It may also have been a useful narrative to deploy within the petition because it made clear to the JPs that they had already tried to rely on their own resources and therefore were especially worthy of their compassion.

Many war widows also described how their age and ill health meant that they were not able to make a living for themselves. This sort of life cycle poverty would have been familiar to JPs who were already in the habit of awarding parish pensions to aged widows who were in need of financial assistance.²⁷ Susan North described herself in her petition as 'a lame woman and not able to take any course for her liuely hood'.²⁸ Jane Griffin stated that she was 'lame and not able to make any excusion for her selfe'.²⁹ A few of the widows connected the loss of their husbands, and the subsequent burdens that left them with, including raising children alone, with their inability to maintain themselves. Mercy Lawson talked in her petition of the death of her husband in military service, following which time she was left with three children to look after and maintain 'w[h]ich yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r] striveing to doe to the vtmost of her ability, hath found it a taske too heavy for her'.³⁰ These descriptions furthered the impression in their petitions that they were in need, and even desperate, for the

²⁵ Petition of Richard Cole, January 1658, WSRO, Q/R/W90, f. 3r.

²⁶ Petition of Susan North, 1652, KHLC, Q/SB/3/26; Petition of Jane Rusbridger, October 1651, WSRO, Q/R/W71, f. 3r.

²⁷ Hindle, *On the parish?*, pp. 273-274; Tomkins and King, 'Introduction', in *The Poor in England*, p. 5.

²⁸ Petition of Susan North, 1652, KRO, Q/SB/3/26.

²⁹ Petition of Jane Griffin, January 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W75, f. 82r.

³⁰ Petition of Mercy Lawson, January 1654, ESRO, QR/102, f. 2r.

financial support of the JPs. However, they still contained within them the suggestion that in normal times they would have been able to support themselves without being dependent upon the good will of the State.

Despite the fact that many may not have been suffering financially to the same extent as these Parliamentary widows, Royalist war widows also constructed petitions that contained emotive and pleading terms. Some widows explained how the death of their husbands had had a significant impact on their livelihoods and living with debts was a continual theme in the petitions of Royalist war widows. Historians have argued that the exchange and formation of debts was integral to society in this period and, according to Stretton, there was a 'breathtaking reliance on credit'.³¹ When women inherited estates during the Civil War, particularly if their husbands had had their lands plundered, this was a particularly common issue. Joan West described herself in her petition as 'a poore Gentlewoman' and that her husband had left her with '900li debts and nothings to pay it withall'.³² Joan was left owing a substantial amount of money, but not all of the widows were burdened with debts that large. Ann Cam professed to have inherited lands only worth 4li a year which was not sufficient to discharge her husband's debts.³³ Her husband ran an apothecary in the town of Newark and after his death she was unable to trade and gain herself a living. Alice Estcott's husband had also died in the 'King's quarters' and left to her and her child an estate 'consistinge most of personalties and the same all in debts'.³⁴ Discharging debts and administering their deceased husband's estate was a common and generally acceptable role for widows in early modern society.³⁵ Thus, describing their obligations to debtors may have been a successful tactic for Royalist widows wishing to describe themselves as worthy of compassion.

³¹ Craig Muldrew, *The economy of obligation: The culture of credit and social relations in early modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998); Tim Stretton, 'Written obligations, litigation and neighbourliness, 1580-1680', in Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard, John Walter and Keith Wrightson (eds.), *Remaking English society: Social relations and social change in early modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), p. 191.

³² Petition of Joan West, 3 December 1645, TNA, SP 23/175, p. 485.

³³ Petition of Ann Cam, 1654[?], TNA, SP 23/216, p. 188.

³⁴ Petition of Alice Estcott, 24 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/180, p. 246.

³⁵ Tim Stretton, 'Widows at law in Tudor and Stuart England', in Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (eds.), *Widowhood in medieval and early modern Europe* (Essex: Longman, 1999), pp. 199-205.

Some Royalist widows used similar narratives of ill health and old age to Parliamentary pensioners in their petitions. In doing so they placed emphasis on their poverty instead of their alignment with the Royalist party. Mary Bufford described herself in her petition as 'a distressed poore widowe, very aged, infirme in her eyesight, almost past all labo[ur] & inevitably like to p[er]ish through want w[i]thout yo[ur] hon[ours] extensiue goodnes'.³⁶ Dorothy Hide used similar language when she wrote that 'your poore Petitioner is Growne soe old that shee Cannot doe service nor any thinge to get her a subsistance'.³⁷ Margaret Saunders went further and commented that she was 'exceeding weake and sicke, so that shee is not able to stirr out of her Chamber' (and therefore also unable to attend upon the Committee).³⁸ These descriptions must have been intended to appeal to the members of the Committee for Compounding's sense of charitable obligation towards the poor and vulnerable widows in society, as well as quite possibly also being true. Emphasising age also enabled these widows to conform to society's stereotype of the poor wretched widow who was unlikely to remarry (as opposed to the sexually deviant one).³⁹

For the maimed soldiers who petitioned the Quarter Sessions before and after the Restoration it was their ability (or inability) to labour which formed the core of their descriptions of poverty. The Parliamentary Ordinance which outlined the criteria for receiving a pension ordered that it was only those who were 'disabled by their Labour to provide for themselves' were entitled.⁴⁰ Consequently, almost all of the maimed soldiers described their difficulty of getting a living in the context of the injuries they had received. George Streater, a maimed soldier from West Sussex, had his pension suspended partly on the grounds that it was discovered he was 'able to labour'.⁴¹ William Laurence wrote in his petition that 'he receaved such wound[es] that allthough he escaped with life yet his condic[i]on is so greiueous (being not able to

³⁶ Petition of Mary Bufford, 19 February 1651, TNA, SP 23/71, p. 491.

³⁷ Petition of Dorothy Hide, 1647[?], TNA, SP 20/10/34, f. 94r.

³⁸ Petition of Margaret Saunders, 4 November 1645, TNA, SP 23/115, p. 919.

³⁹ Charles Carlton, 'The widow's tale: Male myths and female reality in 16th and 17th century England', *Albion*, 10, no.2 (1978), pp. 118-129; See Chapter 4, pp. 126-134.

⁴⁰ 'October 1642: Ordinance for Maintenance' in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, pp. 36-37.

⁴¹ West Sussex QS Order Books, 14 January 1656, WSRO, QO/1/5/3 14, f. 11r.

heal himselfe)'.⁴² Richard Fisher described himself as 'altogether Shiflesse' having gone through the misfortune of a war time injury in one arm and subsequently after coming home he 'did fall and breake the other arme also'.⁴³ As most of the men who survived war wounds tended to have received wounds to their limbs, it is unsurprising that they were unable to carry out manual labour. Many maimed soldiers were also quick to emphasise that it was these war wounds which had prevented them from continuing in the military. Robert Jenman had fought for Parliament in Ireland but 'by reason of lamenes & sicknes being unfitt & unable to serve any longer in the same service' he received a pass to return home.⁴⁴ William Walter described how he 'receiued a shott into one of his armes... by reason whereof he is mahmed and not onlie disabled from being any more a souldyer, but also from useing of his trade'.⁴⁵

After the Restoration, Royalist maimed soldiers continued to submit their petitions and to plead their inability to work. William Pledger, for example, submitted a petition in 1662 that he was 'disabled to Worke for his Livinge as Formerly' because of the 'many a hurt and dangerous Wound' that he had received in service for the King.⁴⁶ Edward Faunt described his war time service and argued that as a result 'he hath bin for a long time disabled to follow his Calling at Gardening'.⁴⁷ The one clear difference between the language of these men, compared to their Parliamentary predecessors, was that many of them were now old men. Habell Stepney petitioned in 1670 and described himself firstly as 'Ancient & his wife past any worke being of 70 y[ea]rs of Age' and went on to say that he was 'Impotent in his left Arme in his Ma[jes]ties Service'.⁴⁸ In 1674 John Elmes, who had served at the Battle of Newbury in 1643, described how his 'yeares and his labour begines to fayle him'.⁴⁹ So, for post-Restoration Royalist maimed soldiers, inability to work continued to form an

⁴² Petition of William Laurence, c.1650, KHLC, Q/SB/1/21.

⁴³ Petition of Richard Fisher, October 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W77, f. 6r.

⁴⁴ Petition of Robert Jenman, January 1654, WSRO, Q/R/W78, f. 3r.

⁴⁵ Petition of William Walter, January 1649, WSRO, Q/R/W64, f. 9r.

⁴⁶ Certificate on behalf of William Pledger, April 1662, WSRO, Q/R/W103, f. 66r.

⁴⁷ Petition of Edward Faunt, [1662], KHLC, Q/SB/8/53.

⁴⁸ Petition of Habell Stepney, October 1670, ESRO, QR/167, f. 34r.

⁴⁹ Petition of John Elmes, April 1674, WSRO, Q/R/W140, f. 83r.

important part of their petitions but now their advanced years and loyal service had the greater prominence.⁵⁰

Consequently, for these male and female petitioners the theme of work and ‘making shift’ was a recurrent one. There was a fine balance that many petitioners had to strike: appearing desperate and in need of financial aid with no other recourse while at the same time affirming that their poverty was simply a product of their unfortunate circumstances. Maintaining oneself was a complex matter. Selling goods and settling debts coexisted with the more obvious functions of wage earning and land holding. This section has suggested some of the differences in the ways in which men and women described poverty in their petitions. The explicit connection between injury and work is more apparent in the petitions of maimed soldiers than war widows, for example. Nevertheless, the relationship between age and ability to labour was made clear in many of the petitions and this became especially pertinent for Royalist soldiers who were petitioning long after the wars had ended. It was not just old age which was a potentially vulnerable life stage, however. The next section will explore the ways in which petitioners evoked commitments to their children as part of their descriptions of poverty.

Caring for the family

Many petitioners, and in particular those Parliamentary petitioners of a lower social status, avoided suggesting that they were in a position of total dependence on others. Yet, there seems to have been an exception when it came to petitioners, male and female, Royalist and Parliamentary, describing the duty of care for their family. Shepard has found that ‘in contrast to the “benevolence” of charitable assistance that was only reluctantly conceded by witnesses, the obligations of parents towards their children featured prominently in witnesses’ admissions of dependence’.⁵¹ Both Parliamentary and Royalist war widows stressed the demands of parenthood and how their situational poverty had impacted on their ability to care for their children. This was not just restricted only to women as mothers. The ‘patriarchal prescriptions

⁵⁰ Chapter 6, pp. 188-191.

⁵¹ Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for oneself: Worth, status, and the social order in early modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 205.

of male self-sufficiency, economic independence, and responsibility towards others', described by Shepard, may have led many maimed soldiers to also include the demands of fatherhood in their petitions.⁵²

Despite the 'patriarchal prescriptions' of man as the provider for his family, the reality was that many women as wives and widows also contributed to their household economy.⁵³ Hence, some Parliamentary war widows went on to narrate their obligation to care for and support their children in light of the death of their husbands. Elizabeth Newson's husband 'in the service was slaine' and as a result 'leaveing behinde him yo[ur] petic[i]oner and four small children without any manner of maintenance and by reason whereof they are brought to great want and misery'.⁵⁴ In a similar way, Jane Rusbridger described how her husband 'hauing listed himselfe a foote souldier vnder the Lord Generall Cromwell was drawne forth ... in which service he died leaving your poore petic[i]oner w[i]th twoe smale Children whoe are not any waies able to helpe themselves'.⁵⁵ Both of these women emphasised how their husband's military service and subsequent death had left them unable to care for their children. Some widows did mention that they had endeavoured by themselves to support their children, for example Mercy Lawson who wrote about her husband's death and her subsequent attempts to support her family:

in defence of the Interest of his native Country, hee [Mercy's husband] lost his life, All w[hi]ch tyme hee left vnto yo[u]r Pet[it]ioner Three small Children to maynteyne out of her owne labour & Endeavor, w[hi]ch yo[u]r Pet[it]ioner striveing to doe to the vtmost of her ability, hath found it a taske too heavy for her, insomuch that if yo[u]r worships doe not relieve her shee & her Children must famish.⁵⁶

The explicit language of famine that Mercy used in the above petition was replicated in a few other petitions. For example, Elizabeth Dover pleaded for a pension 'Whereby

⁵² Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of manhood in early modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 195.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-199.

⁵⁴ Petition of Elizabeth Newson, c. 1650, KHL, Q/SB/1/24.

⁵⁵ Petition of Jane Rusbridger, October 1651, WSRO, Q/R/W71, f. 3r.

⁵⁶ Petition of Mercy Lawson, January 1654, ESRO, QR/102, f. 2r.

yo[u]r poore and humble petic[i]oner and her three small children may be kept from famishing and Ruine'.⁵⁷ This type of phrase was also used by some Royalist war widows petitioning the Committees for Compounding and Sequestration, demonstrating that it was not necessarily linked with status or allegiance. When Joan Benbowe petitioned the Committee for Compounding she wrote that 'yo[u]r petic[i]oners humblie desireth she maie be admitted to Compound for the residue she havinge noe other meanes of livelyhood to preserve herselfe & Children from perishinge'.⁵⁸ Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton wrote that 'she and her poore Children liue upon Charity and borrowed bread'.⁵⁹ This type of language of desperation appeared to have no relation to the social status of the widow petitioning despite the fact that it relied upon presenting the widow as one physically unable to feed her children. Lady Elinor Hastings, late wife of Sir Henry Hastings, wrote that she had 'not a penny to buy them breade and being altogether vnable to mayntayne' her children and begged the Committee 'to grant reliefe to her and her three small children which absolutely must starve'.⁶⁰ In the same petition Elinor claimed that her husband's sequestered estate was worth 1,400li a year. These widows were silent about reliance on wealthy relatives, or other means of subsistence that were open to women of their status. This was presumably to further emphasise their poverty and dependence.

For male petitioners, both Parliamentarian and Royalist maimed soldiers, not being able to provide for a family may have impacted their 'social credit' because they no longer conformed to the patriarchal expectations of the father as head of the household.⁶¹ Therefore, appeals to the JPs rested upon assumptions about how a well ordered society should be run and enabled them to put forward their pleas for some form of dependence on the State for their needs. Robert Jenman described how he had 'a wiffe & Fower children Twoe whereof bee small' and went on to say that he 'cannot maintaine himselfe and his familie' as he was unable to work.⁶² Richard Cole also connected his inability to work with his inability to support his family: 'hee is

⁵⁷ Petition of Elizabeth Dover, January 1656, WSRO, Q/R/W84, f. 4r.

⁵⁸ Petition of Joan Benbowe, 10 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/178, p. 392.

⁵⁹ Petition of Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton, 21 July 1653, TNA, SP 19/12, p. 398.

⁶⁰ Petition of Elinor Hastings. [1645-1647?], TNA, SP 20/10/37, f. 99r.

⁶¹ Shepard, *Meanings of manhood*, pp. 188-189.

⁶² Petition of Robert Jenman, January 1654, WSRO, Q/R/W78, f. 3r.

altogether unable to maintain himself and wife and three Children by his Labour'.⁶³ John Freeberry described his obligations to care for his 'wife and three small children'.⁶⁴ Maimed soldiers often included their wives amongst their dependents and Royalist maimed soldiers, petitioning after the Restoration, were more likely to have older wives to support. For example, one maimed soldier, Jeremy Tauntington described his wife as 'lame'.⁶⁵ Despite their presumably advanced ages by this point, given that they had served in the army in the 1640s, many did claim that they had children still to support. For example, Richard Dyer who served Charles I in Kent described in his petition from 1675 that he had a 'great Charge of Seven Children'.⁶⁶

When describing children, male and female petitioners often claimed that they were 'small' and many. Hudson has found similar claims in his work on the war widows of Cheshire and found that according to the JPs of the West Riding of Yorkshire 'small' roughly equated to a child under about the age of seven.⁶⁷ For widows and maimed soldiers, emphasising how young their children were would have directly appealed to the JPs' compassion and religious duty to care for orphans.⁶⁸ Widows, who were acting as the temporary heads of their households, could link their appeals with their duty to care and protect their families in a similar manner to the obligations of male heads of households. Not all of the maimed soldiers described family commitments, however. This may have been due to the demographic of the petitioners: those pressed into service may have been less likely to have been functioning heads of households due to the costs incurred to the parish in maintaining their dependents during their absence.

Many petitioners invoked notions of poverty and specifically their need to feed their 'small children' in their petitions. This type of narrative was not restricted to one particular gender, nor does it appear to have been dependent upon the social status of the petitioner. In fact, it may even be possible to go so far as to suggest that the Royalist widows, of a generally higher social status, were *more* likely to use this type of

⁶³ Petition of Richard Cole, January 1658, WSRO, Q/R/W90, f. 3r.

⁶⁴ Petition of John Freeberry, January 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W75, f. 76r.

⁶⁵ Petition of Jeremy Tauntington, [1662], KHLC, Q/SB/8/55.

⁶⁶ Petition of Richard Dyer, April 1675, WSRO, Q/R/W143, f. 86r.

⁶⁷ Geoffrey Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money: War widows and the courts in seventeenth-century England', in Jennifer Kermode, Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts in early modern England* (London: UCL Press, 1994), p. 153.

⁶⁸ See Chapter 4, pp. 126-128.

description in their petitions. This could be as a result of two factors: that the accusation of Royalism meant that they had to work harder to evoke sympathy or perhaps because those of a higher status needed to be more explicit in their claims of poverty in order for them to be believed. Either way, for all of the petitioners the fact that this seems to have been a recurrent tactic must partly suggest that it was deemed to be successful by the petitioners as well as by those who helped them to construct the documents. All of the descriptions of poverty discussed so far must have reflected some aspects of the reality of the lives of the petitioners as well as the assumptions of those hearing the petitions. These were documents written with the intent to persuade and not just describe the life of the petitioners. Therefore, the final section of this chapter will explore how the petitioners evoked the obligations of those hearing their petition. This type of description tended to come in the concluding sections of their petition but throughout the documents the petitioners made assumptions about the duty of care of society to care for widows and orphans.

Obligations

Ever since the Elizabethan period England had administered a highly moralised poor relief system. As argued by Hindle, it was 'fundamentally linked to developing Renaissance ideas of the "commonwealth", and of the most appropriate relationship between governors and governed in sixteenth-century society'.⁶⁹ According to this way of thinking 'vagrants were a cancer on the body politic which ought to be amputated' and 'the deserving poor were victims of a disease which the governors of society had both power and responsibility to heal'.⁷⁰ Therefore, ideas of compassion and charity were linked with the needs of the 'ruled' who the 'rulers' had an obligation to care for.⁷¹ This was reflected in the petitions of many of the war widows and maimed soldiers for pensions. In his petition, Roger Valentine specifically appealed to 'yo[u]r wors[hi]pps wonted clemency to distressed creatures'.⁷² John Freeberry asked that the JPs would be 'pleased out of your goodnes to consider the sad weake and wounded

⁶⁹ Steve Hindle, 'Poverty and the poor laws', in Susan Doran and Norman Jones (eds.), *The Elizabethan world* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 306.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ See Chapter 4, pp. 126-128.

⁷² Petition of Roger Valentine, 4 October 1653, KHLC, Q/SB/4/64.

Condic[i]on of your poore petic[i]oner'.⁷³ In an even more evocative way, Richard Fisher stated that 'he hopes that y[ou]r bowells will be touched with the sense of his misery'.⁷⁴ The metaphor appeared in the King James Bible in 1 John: 'But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'.⁷⁵

Calling specifically on the compassion, goodness and charity of the JPs hearing the petition was a tactic that war widows also employed. Most female (and male) petitioners did not make a specific request for the exact amount that they wanted their pensions to be but instead indicated that it would be left to the JPs' judgement and compassion. Elizabeth Podry concluded her petition with the statement: 'May it therefore please yo[u]r worships to bestow on her what in yo[ur] wisdomes shall seeme meete for her better subsistance'.⁷⁶ Sarah Bartlett stated in her petition that previously she had 'found some comforable relief' from the JPs and asked that they would 'be pleased yet againe to show mercy to her in this poore & desolate condic[i]on' without giving a specific amount.⁷⁷ James Leech, a maimed soldier, also asked for some 'Addicion to his said penc[i]on' or to 'give him such a competent sume of money in hand as best may seeme meet in yo[u]r hono[ur]s Iudgments'.⁷⁸ For those few petitioners who did ask for a specific amount, such as Elizabeth Dover who asked for her deceased husband's pension, there was usually a reason given for asking for that amount.⁷⁹ Therefore, it seems as though petitioners to the Quarter Sessions saw value in appealing directly to the compassion of their JPs. Asking directly for a pension set at a certain value, thereby taking the initiative away from the 'charity' of the JPs, was rarely done.

In the petitions that survive in the archives of the Kent and Sussex Quarter Sessions only four petitioners explicitly used religious notions in their narratives. This is perhaps surprising given the prominence of Biblical teaching on giving to the poor and

⁷³ Petition of John Freeberry, January 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W75, f. 76r.

⁷⁴ Petition of Richard Fisher, October 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W77, f. 6r.

⁷⁵ *The Holy Bible* (1611), 1 John 3: 17.

⁷⁶ Petition of Elizabeth Podry, [1658], KHLC, Q/SB/7/38.

⁷⁷ Petition of Sarah Bartlett, 13 January 1654, KHLC, Q/SB/7/39.

⁷⁸ Petition of James Leech, October 1651, WSRO, Q/R/W71, f. 4r.

⁷⁹ Petition of Elizabeth Dover, January 1656, WSRO, Q/R/W84, f. 4r.

caring for the widowed.⁸⁰ Appleby's study of the petitions of maimed soldiers and war widows in Essex found that 'There seems to have been a lack of religious imagery used in maimed soldiers' petitions compared to widows'.⁸¹ In Kent and Sussex, however, there is a dearth in the petitions of both sexes. Thomas Berkhead, a petitioner to the West Sussex Quarter Sessions, wrote 'I haue noe friends now Mr Pamer is absent but yo[u]r right worthy selfe and what you doe for me I hope that god w[hi]ch is Infinitt in mercy will reward it dubble a hundred fould in yo[u]r Pious Bosom'.⁸² Despite the mixed metaphors of God rewarding the JPs double *and* one hundred fold this can clearly be seen as a reference to various biblical texts.⁸³ William Walter promised that he and his family had been 'engaged to blesse god for you' following the JPs' former grant of a pension and Sarah Bartlett also stated that she was 'thankfull to god' for her previous relief.⁸⁴ In 1670 Habell Stepney's petition asked 'these things being Considered in a Xh[rist]ian manner I hope yo[u]r Wor[shi]pps wilbe pleased to grant an Order That he may haue Indifferent meanes allowed untill yt shall please God to send him some Imploym[en]t according to his Calling'. He, unusually, concluded his petition with a statement in Latin: 'Humillimus in Jehovah servulus' ('[your] most humble servant in the Lord').⁸⁵ These are the only occasions where God is specifically mentioned in the Parliamentary or Royalist petitions for Kent and Sussex. However, religious notions of the duty of the governors in society to respond to the petitions of their supplicants did inform petitions throughout.⁸⁶ This can be seen most clearly in the universal concluding sentiment that the petitioner will 'ever pray' for the person they were supplicating.

Royalist war widows also invoked the charitable obligations of their governors in their petitions and many cast themselves upon the mercy of the committeemen. Mary Clarke asked that 'this honourable Committee will be pleased to be soe charitable to

⁸⁰ See Chapter 4, pp. 126-128.

⁸¹ David Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons? Maimed soldiers and war widows in Essex, 1642-62', *Essex Archaeology and History*, 32, (2001), p. 215.

⁸² Petition of Thomas Berkhead, October 1654, WSRO, Q/R/W80, f. 4r.

⁸³ For example: 'For your shame ye shall have double', *The Holy Bible* (1611), Isaiah 61:7; 'But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time', *The Holy Bible* (1611), Mark 10:30.

⁸⁴ Petition of William Walter, October 1658, WSRO, Q/R/W92, f. 5r; Petition of Sarah Bartlett, 13 January 1654, KHLC, Q/SB/7/39.

⁸⁵ Petition of Habell Stepney, October 1670, ESRO, QR/167, f. 34r.

⁸⁶ See Chapter 4, pp. 145-147.

the Widdowed & Fatherless' thereby invoking the general notion of the needy widow and orphaned in society.⁸⁷ Using similar phrases, the widow Ann Cam ended her petition thus:

Your Petitioner therefore in all humility tendring her sad condition to your considerac[i]on, humbly prayes, that (reflecting with the eye of compassion vpon the distresse of the Fatherless and widow) your honours wilbe pleased herewith to receive the attestac[i]on of the truth of the p[re]misses, & to order that your Petitioner from henceforth for the future may be aquit from the said sequestrac[i]on.⁸⁸

Ann Cam specifically linked her 'sad condition' with an imperative on the committeemen to reflect with the 'eye of compassion' and therefore remove her sequestration. By using descriptions of poverty these widows were perhaps attempting to distance themselves from the 'delinquent' or Royalist identity that had been put upon them and emphasise their nature as distressed widows who were as worthy of compassion as any other widow in society.

Some Royalist widows were also under suspicion of being Roman Catholics and therefore did specifically invoke religious notions and allegiances within their petitions. Being papist and a delinquent was considered to be worse in the eyes of the Committee for Compounding and there were harsher rules for those suspected of both. In order to receive their 'fifth part', for example, the children of delinquents had to prove that they had been brought up Protestant.⁸⁹ Even for those not under this suspicion being clear that they were of the Reformed religion was of course an advantage. Charlotte Stanley, the Countess of Derby, described herself in her petition as 'a stranger borne and a Protestant and a widow and a Mother'.⁹⁰ Frances Norris's husband had been found to be 'in delinquency againste the Parliament' but she was keen to emphasise that as for herself, she was 'not onely free from Delinquency but

⁸⁷ Petition of Mary Clarke, 27 March 1651, TNA, SP 23/74, pp. 917-918.

⁸⁸ Petition of Ann Cam, 1654[?], TNA, SP 23/216, p. 188.

⁸⁹ 'September 1645: An Ordinance for taking away the Fifth part of Delinquents Estates, formerly granted their wives & children', in Firth and Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances*, p. 769.

⁹⁰ Petition of Charlotte Stanley, 14 July 1654, TNA, SP 23/230, p. 55.

also euer hath been a Faithfull Protestant and so educated her children'.⁹¹ Aside from stressing to the committee that they were of the Protestant religion, some widows also used religious notions in their petition to stress the duty of the committeemen to care for them. Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton ended her petition with a variety of obligations that meant she should be reinstated to her lands: 'according to hono[u]r Equity the Law of God of nations & the Law'.⁹² Including the 'law of God' in addition to 'honour' and 'equity' demonstrated an awareness of a range of justifications for the committeemen to care for the widows in society. That Royalist widows invoked religious language more frequently than Parliamentarian war widows may indicate that it was suspicions over a petitioner's allegiance which was most influential in whether or not it was used. This is further supported by the powerful eschatological language used by the widow of Parliamentary Colonel John Meldrum, Jane Meldrum, when she petitioned Cromwell at a time when she had been accused of marrying a Royalist. She asked that 'yo[u]r highnes[s] wilbee graciously pleased to Number Her amongst yo[u]r distressed widdowes whom God hath drawne forth of yo[u]r pious heart mercifully to relieve, And Christ will put it to yo[u]r Accompt on the Great day'.⁹³

This section has outlined some of the ways in which petitioners incorporated notions of charity, compassion and religion into their narrative. General assumptions about society, the rulers and the ruled, and the morality of poor relief influenced the ways in which petitioners constructed their petitions. However, even for those who did not use such language explicitly, a belief in these obligations must have still informed the ways in which they constructed their narratives. The format of the petition attests to this: it was a humble supplication addressed to a ruler which assumed the obligation of them to protect or provide redress of some form. For both the Royalist and Parliamentarian war widows these ideas shaped the ways in which they described poverty and framed their requests. This type of deferential language may also reflect the 'hidden transcript' of social relations that has been described by Andy Wood. He has argued that while 'subordinates were partially responsible for the maintenance of early modern England's profoundly unequal social system' the language of submission,

⁹¹ Petition of Frances Norris, 3 June 1651, TNA, SP 23/107, p. 429.

⁹² Petition of Elizabeth, Duchess of Hamilton, 21 July 1653, TNA, SP 19/12, pp. 398-399.

⁹³ Petition of Jane Meldrum, 29 March 1655, TNA SP 18/95, f. 180r.

found for example in petitions, may have also caused 'hidden injuries' and the hatred of the lower classes towards their superiors.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the literary strategies of these petitioners do attest to the multitude of ways in which they used the petition in order to try to gain some financial aid, or relief from sequestration, from those who were hearing them.

Outcomes

It would be interesting, if it were possible, to somehow be able to quantify the relative 'success' of these narratives of poverty for the petitioners. However, this is unrealistic for many reasons. Firstly, almost all of the petitions that survive in Quarter Sessions' rolls came from petitioners who were granted a pension or a one-off gratuity by the JPs. For only 6 out of 68 of the petitions from 1642 to 1670 (9%) there is no information about whether they were granted a pension or one-off gratuity and no specific indication that they were turned away. Therefore, there is the very strong possibility that those petitions which did not result in the granting of financial aid were discarded by the administration of the Quarter Sessions. And as a consequence it would be impossible to make a judgement on the outcomes of the petitions based on the evidence that remains as there is probably not a full record of those which did not result in the granting of a pension. Nor can historians know which petitions do not survive in our modern archives. Additionally, it is highly problematic to judge what made a petition successful. As Chapter Three has shown, most of the petitioners to the Committees for Compounding and Sequestration were eventually granted their lands back. It is difficult to assess what exactly it was that separated them from those who were not granted their lands back in some of the cases. There could have been a multitude of factors, including simply the efficiency of the administration, current political affairs and the mood of the committee members on that particular day. It is also impossible to say precisely how the construction of the petition impacted on the ways in which the hearer of the petitioner responded. For Parliamentarian war widows and maimed soldiers, it is quite possible that the response of the JPs was simply down to the state of the County purse that quarter.

⁹⁴ Andy Wood, 'Fear, hatred and the hidden injuries of class in early modern England', *Journal of Social History*, 39, no.3 (2006), p. 817.

Nevertheless, there is scope to explore a few examples where the outcome of the case is clear and to speculate how it was connected to the language contained within the petition. Therefore, this chapter will end by exploring three case studies. The first case illustrates how a petitioner's fate may have rested on factors beyond the story woven in their petition. The second case looks at how language of poverty may have had a real impact on the empathy of those hearing the petition and, therefore, contributed to a successful outcome. The final case demonstrates the limits of emotive descriptions of poverty. This sad case shows how, despite this particular petitioner using desperate pleas as well as powerfully evoking the obligations of the governors in society, there was a limit to the persuasive power of the petition.

Anne Bettsworth was from Lavant, Chichester, in West Sussex and her husband William Bettsworth died fighting for Parliament. He had first served as Corporal of the Horse in the Chichester garrison and had also given away half of the value of his estate as a contribution towards Parliament's campaign in Ireland. William went on to fight in the regiment of Sir William Waller and was killed during the relief of the siege at Taunton. During this time Anne was pregnant with twins who she delivered following his death. In her petition she described her grief following the loss of her husband and her great need for financial aid:

Nowe soe it is that your petic[i]oners husband after more then ordinary good seruice done by him in the last relieffe of Taunton, by being more then ordinary valient in pursuing the enimye so farr was there slayne, by reason whereof, & for that he had spent his other 50s not lent to Ireland before he came to Chichester in buying of horses armes &c, & in cureing his wounds from time to time receiued, your poore petitioner his wife is vtterly vndone shee being great with childe when her husband was slayne & shortly after deliuered of 2 children, euer since w[hi]ch time shee hath beene weake & sickly & full of greeffe & sorrow & soe like to contynue noe way able to gett her liueing & therefore like to perish for want.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Petition of Anne Bettsworth, April 1646, WSRO, Q/R/W56, f. 38r.

In an exception to the norm that petitioners rarely asked for a pension at a specific amount, Anne boldly asked for 10li a year from the Justices of the Peace. This was also a considerable sum compared to the pension of 2li a year many war widows were granted.⁹⁶ Despite this fairly audacious request, she was successful and the JPs awarded her the pension she asked for. Her petition was rather unusual in its explicit description of grief alongside the more common account of how her husband was 'slayne'.⁹⁷ It also encompassed many of the themes discussed in this chapter: she described her husband's service, her debt and her obligations towards her children. However, it is possible to speculate that her success may have actually been because at the end of her petition several members of the local gentry endorsed her pleas. Out of these 8 men, 6 had served as West Sussex JPs during the 1640s and 1650s: John Chapman (who had also served as a Treasurer for Maimed Soldiers), William Cawley, George Oglander, Stephen Humfrey, Richard Boughton and Richard Manning.⁹⁸ They were drawn out of the Chichester Rape and met as JPs in the city of Chichester where Anne's husband had been corporal in the garrison. Thomas Bettsworth, presumably a relation, was also listed as a collector responsible for taking in Parliamentary Assessments in Chichester in 1643 (and he went on to serve as a JP from 1657).⁹⁹ Anne clearly mobilised useful political connections when she submitted her petition and it is possible that it was these patronage links, rather than her emotive language or her husband's service, which resulted in her generous pension.

One Royalist widow, Margery Morris, faced an especially difficult challenge in her suit to the Committee for Compounding because of the actions of her husband Colonel John Morris. She successfully used narratives of poverty, including evoking her need to care for her children and their desperate plight, in her petitions. Her husband had fought first against the Irish confederates in 1642-3, returned to England to serve the

⁹⁶ See Chapter 1, pp. 54-55.

⁹⁷ For more on war widows' descriptions of their husband's death see: Imogen Peck, 'The great unknown: The negotiation and narration of death by English war widows, 1647-60', *Northern History*, 53, no.2 (2016), pp. 220-235.

⁹⁸ B. C. Redwood, (ed.) *Quarter sessions order book, 1642-1649* (Lewes: Sussex Record Society, 1954), p. 1; Anthony Fletcher, *A county community in peace and war: Sussex 1600-1660* (London: Longman, 1975), p. 349.

⁹⁹ Letter from Thomas Bettsworth and others to the Barons of the Exchequer, 21 October 1643, TNA, SP 28/246, p. 10; Fletcher, *A county community*, p. 349.

King and then changed sides after Parliament captured Liverpool in 1644. Finally, he changed sides again and betrayed Pontefract castle to the Royalists in 1648 which forced the Parliamentary forces into a lengthy and costly siege. After the Castle was taken Morris disguised himself as a beggar and evaded capture for ten days before he was betrayed and delivered to York castle. He was denied trial by council of war and instead he was 'by the Jury of this County [York] in August 1649 found guilty and had sentence by the Judge to be hanged drawne and quartered'.¹⁰⁰ This harsh sentence 'reflected that the siege lasted nine months and had proved particularly bitter'.¹⁰¹

As a consequence of her husband's activities and subsequent execution Margery lost her lands and was branded herself as a delinquent. She petitioned the Committee for Compounding at least three times between July 1650 and July 1651 asking for the sequestration on her portion of her husband's lands to be discharged.¹⁰² She wrote that her husband had been put to death 'in relac[i]on to what he had done as to the Kings service' but went no further into his motives or actions. Nevertheless, her petitions do not indicate an acceptance of her fate. She used the advice of legal counsel to assert that 'both dower and Jointure is reserved to the wife though the husband be attained of Treason'. She also used narratives of distress and poverty, with increasing persistence, in order to try to ignite sympathy for her plight amongst the Committee members. She asked that 'though shee and her Children lost a husband and father yett they may not be deprived of all maintenance and subsistance' and that she was 'very sickly and weake' and unable to travel the 160 miles to London to the Committee. In her final petition to the committee she urgently requested a hearing for her case because she had 'three smale children' and did not have 'the wherew[i]th to feede them bread'. Three months later the sequestration on her estate was ordered to be discharged by the Committee on the grounds that when the deed granting her the inheritance was made her husband was in arms for Parliament in Ireland.¹⁰³ This does seem like a fairly spurious reason to hand back the lands to the wife of a man who had actively betrayed Parliament. Therefore, her persistent petitioning and use of

¹⁰⁰ Letter from members of the County Committee of York, 13 August 1650, TNA, SP 23/101, f. 671r.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Hopper, *Turncoats and renegadoes: Changing sides during the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 194.

¹⁰² Petitions of Margery Morris, July 1650-1651, TNA, SP 23/101, pp. 665, 682, 664.

¹⁰³ Order of the Committee for Compounding, 30 October 1651, TNA, SP 23/15 p. 67.

persuasive narratives of entitlement and poverty (as well as possibly the intervention of family connections) may have been effective in bringing the case to a relatively speedy resolution and facilitated the surprising leniency of the Committee to the wife of a notorious multiple turncoat.

Finally, Lucy Collier had suffered the loss of her husband while fighting for Parliament during the First Anglo-Dutch War of 1652-4. Naval widows occasionally appeared before the Quarter Sessions courts but the navy operated a separate system of welfare to the army.¹⁰⁴ Widows, maimed sailors, as well as the 'impotent parents' of deceased children, could petition the Admiralty Commission for a one-off gratuity of up to 10li.¹⁰⁵ These documents can now be found at The National Archives amongst the papers for the Council of State during the Interregnum.¹⁰⁶ In her petition, Lucy described her husband as an 'honest diligent and an able sea man' who lost his life fighting for Parliament. Her petition went on into the following emotive description:

her poor young children are left in sad sorrow & great affliction and ready to be tumbled in goal for debt, not having bread to eat nor wherewithal to obtain the same to keep her and her fatherless babes from perishing. Your poor afflicted petitioner therefore most humbly begs of your honours to consider her and her poor children's sad condition and that by your honours Christian goodness and compassion, your Christian hearts permitting and consoling their sad conditions, you would be graciously pleased to order what pension in your honours' judgments you shall think fitting for their preservation and keeping them from starving.¹⁰⁷

Lucy's petition encompassed many of the elements that have been discussed in this chapter. It described her poverty and the impact that the loss of her husband had had on her ability to support herself and her children. It also directly appealed to the Commissioners' 'Christian goodness and compassion' and asked for them to consider a

¹⁰⁴ Mercy Lawson's husband, for example, was slain at sea: Petition of Mercy Lawson, January 1654, ESRO, QR/102, f. 2r.

¹⁰⁵ Instructions by the Admiralty Commissioners to the Navy Commissioners, 4 Jan 1653, TNA, SP 18/32, f. 27r.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, SP 18.

¹⁰⁷ Petition of Lucy Collier, 1653, TNA, SP 18/64, f. 43r.

fair pension on the basis of their duty to care for the poor and desperate in society. Sadly for Lucy on the bottom of her petition we can read the words 'Nothing can be done'. This may have been because she specifically asked for a pension whereas the Admiralty Commission only allowed one-off gratuities. In her case, for reasons that are left unclear, the Commissioners decided not to grant any financial payment and her pleas for help amounted to nothing.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the ways in which many Parliamentary and Royalist widows used descriptions of poverty in their petitions. It has discussed the use of narratives of work or 'making shift', caring for the family and obligations and made comparisons with the petitions of maimed soldiers as well as each other. It has found that there are some distinctive characteristics to the narratives of each group of petitioners. In general, the Royalists who petitioned the Committees for Compounding and Sequestration were more likely to describe total loss and starvation in order to instil the pity of the committeemen. Some also used religious notions in their petitions and these can be found more frequently than in the petitions of Parliamentary war widows to the Kent and Sussex Quarter Sessions. It is also clear that for maimed soldiers their inability to work, and therefore support their families, formed a key part of their descriptions of need and therefore (temporary) dependence upon the good will of the JPs. Women of both sides described their need to provide care for desperate children and relied primarily upon invoking notions of compassion and the obligations of the rulers in society to care for the deserving.

These are some broad conclusions but they do come with limitations. The sample of Parliamentary petitions has been small because of the nature of record survival in the Quarter Sessions of Kent and Sussex. Therefore, a fairly small number of petitions have been analysed in great detail but the wider conclusions could perhaps be strengthened once a broader geographical study has been completed. Also, as has been indicated throughout, many of the features of these petitions are not unique to the petitions of war widows and maimed soldiers. They form part of a wider genre of petitions and descriptions of poverty in which the type of language described in this chapter were common. For example, describing the desperation of the poor widow

surrounded by needy children formed an integral part of other petitions for relief. In East Sussex a group of tradesmen petitioned collaboratively following a fire on their premises in Rotherfield in 1655. They wrote that following the ‘suddaine & accidentall fire’ they had lost all of their household goods, ‘wearinge apparell’ and other items which was to ‘the utter undoinge and impouerishinge of them, their wives, Children, & distressed families’.¹⁰⁸ The petitions studied for this chapter were informed by these narratives and must have used them partly because they became part of the expected way for petitioners to form their requests of supplication. The obligations placed on the hearers of the petition, to act in compassion and charity according to their godly duty, echoed other petitions that had been presented to rulers and governors.

Despite these important caveats, a study of the descriptions of poverty has shown that widows and maimed soldiers used notions that were well known in society, such as the poor widow and the man as father and provider, which may have made their petitions more successful. The next chapter will move on to considering the language of loyalty used by petitioners alongside these descriptions. These narratives of allegiance to Parliament and descriptions of military service *were* unique to the Civil War period and demonstrate how war widows had to respond to the rhetoric of the time when framing their requests.

¹⁰⁸ Petition of Thomas Hosmer, John Aechorne, Elizabeth Aechorne and Andrew Taylor, July 1655, ESRO, QR/146, f. 65r.

Chapter Six. Petitioning narratives: language of loyalty

Introduction

This chapter will study the language of loyalty used in the petitions of Parliamentary and Royalist war widows. The fluctuating nature of allegiance, and the divisions that the country underwent, meant that both Royalist and Parliamentary widows faced new challenges when presenting their cases to the authorities. Simply describing their poverty may not have been enough to gather the sympathy of those hearing their petition. The analysis will consider the petitions submitted before 1660 by Parliamentary war widows for pensions and Royalist war widows seeking the removal of the sequestration on their lands. It will also survey the petitions submitted by Royalist maimed soldiers after the Restoration. Thus, the chapter will reflect on the implications of gender, circumstance, marital status and Civil War allegiance on the language of loyalty used by petitioners.

Historians have long been interested in trying to understand allegiance during the Civil Wars. One of the fundamental problems that historians face is trying to explain how war between King and Parliament even came to be possible in 1642. Therefore, understanding the ways in which the country divided along military and ideological grounds is an important undertaking. It has been argued, for example, that religion was the defining feature of people's allegiance as well as that it was where people lived and worked that set their patterns of loyalty.¹ More recently, historians have come to accept the 'unstable, shifting, and fluctuating' nature of allegiance in which side changing was possible and the title 'Royalist' could be used to describe numerous groups of people, ideas and beliefs.² Much of the focus has been on military turncoats, but analysing the allegiances of those not directly involved in fighting is even more

¹ John S. Morrill, 'The religious context of the English Civil War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 34, (1984), pp. 155-178, pp. 155-178; David Underdown, *Revel, riot and rebellion: Popular politics and culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 191-198; Andrew Hopper, *Turncoats and renegades: Changing sides during the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 2-4.

² Hopper, *Turncoats and Renegades*, p. 4; Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, 'Introduction', in Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (eds.), *Royalists and royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 1-4.

complex. Localism and neutrality have been highlighted by historians who want to explore how people understood the wars away from the politics of Westminster.³ Work by Clive Holmes has highlighted the significance of ‘a highly politicized and mediated discourse, originating from—not in opposition to—the centre’.⁴ Not everybody was engaged in the military aspects of the wars, despite their far reaching nature, and for many people it was mainly through their interaction with administrative processes of Parliament that they experienced the political turbulence of this period. Articulating loyalty and engaging with these formal processes must have had an impact on people’s experience of the wars. Therefore, the language of war and allegiance influenced and perhaps changed the lives of ordinary people who may never have experienced a siege, battle or garrison.

Ann Hughes has described how, for some civilians, narrating loyalty became an integral part of their engagement with Parliament.⁵ Certain ways of expressing allegiance became common when lobbying the Parliamentary Committee for Indemnity and they were shaped by the expectation of those hearing the requests. She argued that, it was ‘the whole rationale of the Indemnity Committee...to make it necessary for petitioners (and where possible defendants) to present themselves as loyal servants of a parliamentary “public interest”’.⁶ The language used in these exchanges does not necessarily represent ‘inner’ loyalty as we might understand it in the modern sense, but they formed part of the way in which ordinary people navigated the circumstances of the mid seventeenth-century. Rachel Weil has also argued that in exchanges with the Committee for Compounding men chose to use their actions, such as paying Parliamentary assessments, in order to justify their loyalty and the language of emotion and internal conviction was rarely used.⁷ Weil, in her analysis of the petitions of men to the Committee for Compounding, stated that

³ John S. Morrill, *Revolt in the provinces: The people of England and the tragedies of war 1634-1648* (London: Longman, 1999), pp. 75-122.

⁴ Clive Holmes, 'Centre and locality in Civil War England', in John Adamson (ed.), *The English Civil War: Conflict and contexts, 1640-49* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 155.

⁵ Ann Hughes, 'Parliamentary tyranny? Indemnity proceedings and the impact of the Civil War: A case study from Warwickshire', *Midland History*, 11, no.1 (1986), pp. 49-78.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁷ Rachel Weil, 'Thinking about allegiance in the English Civil War', *History Workshop Journal*, 61 (2006), pp. 183-191.

petitioners 'mostly dealt with what was visible and exterior and quantifiable rather than invisible, with performances and circumstances rather than with core beliefs'.⁸ This was presumably the case because this was the sort of evidence that the committeemen could act upon. Thus, Weil and Hughes have demonstrated the importance of framing civilians' engagement with the authorities within the context of the rhetoric that was expected of them. The fluid nature of allegiance and loyalty continued to be an important factor in engagement with the government even for those men (and women) who did not bear arms.

Historians may never fully comprehend the genuine convictions of those who encountered Civil War in this period but it is possible to analyse the ways in which they narrated their beliefs and interacted with the changing nature of the State. For women, in particular the wives of those who had fought in the wars, the issue of how they represented their actions and those of their husbands presented a particular set of challenges. Therefore, this chapter will examine how Royalist and Parliamentary widows presented themselves as worthy of the benevolence of Parliament and how these narratives were influenced by need and circumstances as well as the expectations of those hearing the petition. Consequently, it will be emphasised that they do not necessarily leave us with a clear representation of the convictions of the petitioner. They do, however, provide an opportunity to investigate how Royalist and Parliamentary war widows responded to the events of the Civil War by framing narratives that used rhetoric of loyalty, partly perpetuated by the State, in order to survive.

The chapter will firstly examine the language of loyalty used by Parliamentary and Royalist war widows during the Civil Wars and Interregnum. Many of these widows, whether they were petitioning for a pension or to request the removal of their sequestration, attempted to present themselves as loyal to the government. This case was largely based upon the observable actions of themselves, or their husbands, but some widows went on to form their own narratives, such as proclamations of inward loyalty. Complex descriptions of their own actions and convictions, which were argued

⁸ Ibid., p. 188.

to be distinct from the actions of their husbands, can be found in the petitions of many Royalist widows. Next, the chapter will turn to the narration of loyalty after the Restoration in the petitions of Royalist maimed soldiers for pensions. Unfortunately, there is only one petition from a Royalist war widow in Kent and Sussex after the Restoration (and this is a simple petition which just asks for the arrears of her husband's pension).⁹ Nevertheless, the plentiful petitions of maimed soldiers do provide a useful counterpoint to the petitions submitted before the Restoration and demonstrate some of the ways in which the content of the petitions for relief changed after the Restoration. Finally, this chapter will consider the ways in which loyalty to Parliament could be contested in the case of one Royalist war widow, Mary Crompton. In her case, family members on both sides of her inheritance dispute sought to discredit one another to the authorities using accusations of disloyalty to Parliament. This concluding section will suggest that analysing how people used narratives of loyalty within legal discourse and family disputes shows how the divisions within the country impacted on civilians throughout the Civil War period.

Narrating Loyalty during the Civil Wars and Interregnum

Parliamentarian war widows

Geoffrey Hudson has described how, in the early modern period, 'Soldiers and sailors, wounded in the service of the realm, were to be treated as members of the community of honour with hospitality extended to them in a way reminiscent of traditional noble hospitality'.¹⁰ The Ordinance for relief of maimed soldiers and war widows reflected this aspiration to care for those wounded in the service of the State.¹¹ Thus, it was military service, as well as poverty, which entitled a petitioner to a pension. For Parliamentarian war widows, who were for the first time to benefit from the state's military welfare system, assuring Parliament of their allegiance during the 1640s and 1650s was largely based upon the verifiable military endeavours of their late husbands.

⁹ Petition of Anne Owden, January 1669, WSRO, Q/R/W124, f. 62r.

¹⁰ Geoffrey Hudson, 'Disabled veterans and the state in early modern England', in David Gerber (ed.), *Disabled veterans in history* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 121.

¹¹ See Introduction, p. 3.

The Ordinance for relief required maimed soldiers to provide evidence of their endeavours as well as an endorsement from their Captain.¹² Maimed soldiers frequently gave the name of their Captain and specific dates and features of their military service. Nicholas Tayler, for example, included with his petition a certificate which gave the specific dates of his time serving Parliament at sea: 'the 15th of February 52 to the 28th of September 53'.¹³ Widows replicated this trend within their petitions and, even though theirs were not always accompanied by endorsements, a description of their husband's military service formed an integral part of their narrative.¹⁴ For some this was a very straightforward account. For example, Jane Neaves, a war widow from Kent, stated in her petition that 'y[ou]r poor petitioner's husband was a soldier in the parliaments service' and Elizabeth Podry, also of Kent, used a slight variation of this phrase and described how 'yo[u]r petitioners husband being a soldier in the parliament[es] service'.¹⁵ The similarity of the phrases suggests that this was a standard opening for Parliamentary widows' petitions and perhaps that the scribe was used to such formulas that ensured the JPs were aware these were Parliamentary, not Royalist, soldiers.¹⁶ Some widows gave more detail and supplied more specific details of their husband's service including the name of their commander and where they fought. Jane Griffin gave the name of her husband's commander, Captain Eaton, and describes how he died 'in the service of Ireland'.¹⁷ Some also described in what fight their husbands had been killed, for example when 'reducing the castles in the Downes' or, at the 'last relieffe of Taunton'.¹⁸

Some Parliamentary war widows went into the original events behind the start of their husbands' military service and their motivations for doing so. While many Civil

¹² 'May 1647: An Ordinance for Relief of Maimed Soldiers and Mariners, and the Widows and Orphans of such as have died in the service of the Parliament during these late Wars' in C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds.), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), pp. 938-940.

¹³ Certificate of the residents of Brighton, January 1654, ESRO, QR/102, f. 3r.

¹⁴ See Chapter 1, pp. 46-49.

¹⁵ Petition of Jane Neaves, 1657, KHLC, Q/SB/7/34; Petition of Elizabeth Podry, 1658, KHLC, Q/SB/7/38.

¹⁶ For more discussion on the impact of legal formulas and process on depositions in court see: Laura Gowing, *Domestic dangers: Women, words and sex in early modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 41-48.

¹⁷ Petition of Jane Griffin, January 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W75, f. 82r.

¹⁸ Petition of Elizabeth Newson, 1650, KHLC, Q/SB/1/24; Petition of Ann Bettsworth, April 1646, WSRO, Q/R/W56, f. 38r.

War soldiers were conscripted into military service, such as Susan North's husband who was 'prest for a soulder out of the p[ar]ish of Ringwoold', some wives made claims about why their husbands had chosen to serve in order to add weight to their case.¹⁹ Sarah Bartlett argued that her husband George had chosen to serve 'out of his good affection to this Commonwealth'.²⁰ Anne Bettsworth claimed that her husband had gone to the wars 'out of his extreaordinary loue & affec[i]on to the parliam[en]t'.²¹ This type of language could accord with McIntee's findings that the women who participated in mass petitioning movements in this period invoked the sense of 'Commonwealth' in order to present themselves to Parliament as fellow citizens.²² War widows also added to their descriptions of their husband's military service in order to frame it within a narrative of loyalty and allegiance. For example, Elizabeth Newson described her husband's actions as 'of approued skill & fidelitie' and Mercy Lawson stated how her husband 'did faithfully serve' Parliament.²³ There was an obvious attempt by some widows to highlight to those receiving the petition that, not only had their husband *chosen* to serve, but that he had done so successfully and out of their affections to the Parliament. This is despite the fact that the Ordinances for relief stressed that it was the poverty of a widow following the death of her husband that was most imperative for a petitioner to demonstrate.²⁴

The only petitioner to explicitly link her husband's loyal military service with her entitlement to a pension was Jane Griffin, a war widow from West Sussex. She asked the committee for '40s a yeere more for and towards the mayntenance of your poore petitioners childe whose father faithfully discharged his dutie and sealed it with his bloud'.²⁵ These words directly linked the wounds and death of her husband to his (and by consequence her) loyalty to Parliament. This is an unusual phrase, and one that is

¹⁹ Petition of Susan North, 1652, KHLC, Q/SB/3/26.

²⁰ Petition of Sarah Bartlett, 13 January 1659, KHLC, Q/SB/7/39.

²¹ Petition of Ann Bettsworth, April 1646, WSRO, Q/R/W56, f. 38r.

²² Ann M. McIntee, "'The [un]civill-sisterhood of oranges and lemons": Female petitioners and demonstrators, 1642–53', *Prose Studies*, 14, (1991), pp. 103-105.

²³ Petition of Elizabeth Newson, 1650, KHLC, Q/SB/1/24; Petition of Mercy Lawson, January 1654, ESRO, QR/102, f. 2r.

²⁴ Geoffrey Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money: War widows and the courts in seventeenth-century England', in Jennifer Kermode, Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts in early modern England* (London: UCL Press, 1994), pp. 150-151.

²⁵ Petition of Jane Griffin, April 1653, WSRO, Q/R/W76, f. 7r.

unique in the petitions discovered in this study, but it could be linked with the idea of 'Blood Guilt' and the Civil Wars that Patricia Crawford has investigated.²⁶ This notion was linked with biblical ideas that somebody who spilt innocent blood owed a debt of blood themselves and 'Innocent blood could not be left unavenged'.²⁷ Additionally, it is possible that Jane was alluding to the sacrificial blood that Christ himself was said to have shed when He gave his life for the salvation of mankind. This case demonstrates that some war widows stepped beyond simple statements of action when they asked Parliament for the relief that had been promised to them.

Royalist war widows

For Royalist war widows, unlike for their Parliamentary counterparts, there was little value in dwelling on the military escapades of their late husbands. Beatrice Purdue presented a short petition to the Committee for Compounding in which she acknowledged that 'yo[u]r petic[i]oners late husband was Sequestred for his Delinquencie for takeing vp armes against the Parliam[en]t' and that he 'is since dead'.²⁸ The wife of the Royalist William Portman, Dame Anne Portman, simply stated that her husband had been sequestered for 'disertinge his habitac[i]on and assistinge the forces raised against the Parliam[en]t'.²⁹ Her composition fine was ordered to go towards the relief of the town of Taunton, where her husband had previously been a Member of Parliament. Additionally, a few widows had appeared before the Committee because of what they themselves had been accused of doing. Elizabeth Warner, for example, was accused of 'receiving & sending Letters to Mrs Blaqu[es]wife to Colonel Blaque in the Kings quarters' but she argued that she did this 'innocently and ignorantly'.³⁰ Mary Robinson had been found out to have furnished her son with a horse and arms to go into the King's army but she insisted that she was 'hartily sorry for this her offence' and asked for her lands to be returned.³¹ Both of these women stated their actions simply but went on to embellish the narrative with a description of their intentions and emotions in order to lessen their punishment.

²⁶ Patricia Crawford, 'Charles Stuart, that man of blood', *Journal of British Studies*, 16, no.2 (1977), pp. 41-61.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²⁸ Petition of Beatrice Purdue, 30 July 1646, TNA, SP 23/202, p. 192.

²⁹ Petition of Anne Portman, 23 June 1648, TNA, SP 23/206, p. 618.

³⁰ Petition of Elizabeth Warner, July 1645, TNA, SP 23/127, p. 735.

³¹ Petition of Mary Robinson, 24 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/184, p. 916.

Royalist war widows used a variety of other narrative tactics in order to embellish their statements of actions to persuade the Committee to look favourably upon them. Some widows, for example, relied upon stating what they had demonstrably done for Parliament and this was largely based on statements regarding finances and habitation. Several stated that they had 'paid all assessments, contributions and Twentie parts' as was required by Parliament.³² Others simply argued that they had 'in all things Conformed to the Ordinances of Parliam[en]t'.³³ For many women the surest demonstration of loyalty through outward action was in the profession that they had always lived in 'Parliament's quarters' (meaning those areas of the country directly under Parliament's control).³⁴ Others took a more unambiguous approach to secure an appreciation of their allegiance. For example, Sarah Ellis claimed that she initially left Parliamentary controlled Kent with her husband to go to the King's garrison at Oxford but that she returned soon after 'disliking the corse' there.³⁵

Several women also claimed in their petitions some form of mitigating circumstance that forced them into an action that might be classed as disloyal to Parliament. Rebecca Harvey presented a woeful tale of travelling back and forwards between the King and Parliament's quarters. After the death of her husband fighting for the King she 'returned backe into the Parliam[en]ts quarters againe' but then 'afterward[es] her mother being desperately sicke at Oxford' she was forced to return to a Royalist-controlled area.³⁶ At least two other widows argued that they were forced to enter into the King's quarters to look after sick and ailing relatives: a story that while being plausible, must have also been intended to lend credibility to their actions by describing a duty that was expected of their gender.³⁷ This narrative may also have

³² Petition of Rebecca Harvey, 10 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/180, p. 585; Petition of Judith Clarke, 20 October 1645, TNA, SP 23/182, p. 74.

³³ Petition of Alice Estcott, 24 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/180, p. 246.

³⁴ Petition of Anne Denham, 25 November 1645, TNA, SP 20/10/61, f. 158r.

³⁵ Petition of Sarah Ellis, 12 December 1646, TNA, SP 23/208, p. 374.

³⁶ Petition of Rebecca Harvey, 10 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/180, p. 10.

³⁷ Petition of Sarah Cox, 24 January 1646, TNA, SP 23/177, p. 665; Petition of Elizabeth Rogers, 20 June 1646, TNA, SP 23/189, p. 27.

directly appealed to Parliament who had deliberately sought Parliamentary soldiers' widows to fill nursing vacancies in military hospitals.³⁸

Some war widows also strategically presented themselves as subservient to the will of their husbands. Charlotte Stanley, the Countess of Derby, wrote in her petition in 1654 that 'shee humbly conceives is the only woman that ever was Sequestred for acting on that side to w[hi]ch her husband adhered'.³⁹ Similarly, Dame Katherine Girlington, whose husband, Sir John Girlington, had held Thurland Castle for the Royalists during war, argued that she was 'noe delinquent, unlesse conceiued to be soe in respect of her obedience to her husbands com[m]aunds liueinge with him and her children and her children in the said Castle which he liued'.⁴⁰ She argued here that she could not be classed as a delinquent alongside her late husband because she was only following a pattern of wifely obedience during his lifetime. In another petition she specifically linked the conditions of Coverture with her innocence and argued that while married she was 'bound to obey' her husband's choices.⁴¹ The widow Frances Norris admitted that her husband had been 'in delinquency against the Parliament' (military engagement on behalf of the King would have been hard to contest) and yet in her petition she stressed that she herself was 'free from delinquency'.⁴² Another petitioner, Joan Heming, also tried to separate the loyalty of herself and her husband in her petition. She claimed that her own affections 'have always been very real to Parliament' and that she was 'very sollicitous with her said husband to bee like affected'.⁴³ While the arguments of all of these women were couched within terms of humility and supplication they also boldly went against the cultural and legal norms by arguing that they should not be judged by their husband's choices.

Wives would also seek to explain and defend their husband's actions. Some cited the threat of plunder as a reason for their husband initially going to war and one, Anne Presse, attempted to remove the stain of delinquency from her late husband's name

³⁸ Eric Gruber von Arni, *Justice to the maimed soldier: Nursing, medical care and welfare for sick and wounded soldiers and their families during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum, 1642-1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 159.

³⁹ Petition of Charlotte Stanley, 14 July 1654, TNA, SP 23/230, p. 55.

⁴⁰ Petition of Katherine Girlington, 24 February 1646, TNA SP 23/176, p. 389.

⁴¹ Petition of Katherine Girlington, 2 Jan 1647, TNA SP 23/176, p. 387.

⁴² Petition of Frances Norris, 23 June 1651, TNA, SP 23/107, p. 429.

⁴³ Petition of Joan Heming, 18 May 1649, TNA, SP 23/212, p. 182.

by claiming that it was placed there 'without anie prooffe of his taking up Armes for, or other Contribucion to the Kinges partie'.⁴⁴ These narratives directly challenged the decision of the committees to class them and their husbands as delinquent in a way that was often bolder than their male counterparts. As Weil discusses, narratives of loyalty in the petitions of men were subtle by necessity. Accusing the committees of being wrong was dangerous and so statements were often ambiguous and more likely to express allegiance through outward conformity.⁴⁵ Perhaps women were afforded more scope to defend their own and their husband's actions as their disloyalty to Parliament was unlikely to be expressed through combat.

This was reflected in the fact that women were not compelled to take the Negative Oath, and swear that they would not bear arms against Parliament, in order to complete their composition.⁴⁶ For those Royalist men who did have to take oaths of loyalty in order to compound, Edward Vallance has found a few cases of clear avoidance. One man, Sir Henry Berkley, had somebody impersonate him to take the National Covenant for him.⁴⁷ A few widows who had been accused of being Royalist made the choice to illustrate their loyalty in the form of oath taking. Several widows (at least 11 in total) chose to present a certificate that they had taken the National Covenant along with their petitions.⁴⁸ Joan Raynes, for example, had had her lands sequestered for assisting the King's forces in the form of a horse, arms and finances as well as for entertaining a Royalist Captain, her step-son, who was described as 'a greate plunderer'.⁴⁹ The certificate from the County Committee at Shropshire stated that she had chosen to take the Negative Oath before them in May 1646 but not yet the National Covenant. An additional certificate included in her file indicated that she

⁴⁴ Petition of Anne Presse, 10 March 1646, TNA, SP 23/177, p. 405.

⁴⁵ Weil, 'Thinking about allegiance', pp. 186-188.

⁴⁶ 1 November 1645, 'The Lords have joined in an Ordinance, authorizing the Committee at Goldsmiths Hall, to administer the Covenant Negative Oath to Delinquents that come in to compound with them; and, upon Refusal, to commit them': 'House of Commons Journal Volume 5: 3 February 1647', in *Journal of the House of Commons* (London: His Majesty's Stationery, Office, 1802), pp. 70-73.

⁴⁷ Edward Vallance, 'Protestation, vow, covenant and engagement: Swearing allegiance in the English Civil War', *Historical Research*, 75, no.190 (2002), pp. 420-421.

⁴⁸ For example: Certificate of National Covenant: Dorothy Shirt, 20 January 1646, TNA, SP 23/175, p. 327.

⁴⁹ Certificate of the County Committee of Somerset, [1646], TNA, SP 23/190, p. 145.

later took this oath in October of the same year.⁵⁰ Therefore, it seems that for a small selection of widows taking oaths, even if it was not required of them, was seen as the most effective way of convincing Parliament that they were loyal.

Alternatively, some widows used phrases in their petitions that explicitly claimed allegiance to Parliament. These widows used expressions that could be referred to as 'inner' expressions of loyalty (as opposed to 'outer' actions). For example, one talked of being 'a well willer to the Parliament' and another that she 'hath ever stood well affected'.⁵¹ Some combined both inward and outward convictions seamlessly such as Lucy Pope, Countess of Downe, who wrote that she had 'never as yet given any aid or Assistance to the forces raised against the Parlyament' but also that she had not in 'any waies in her desires or Affecions adheared thereunto'.⁵² This sort of language corresponded with the vocabulary of political allegiance that the Parliamentarians chose to use.⁵³ Ann Hughes found, in her research on the language used within the archives of Parliament's accounts committee, that 'frequent, if carefully calibrated recourse to the language of the state' meant that 'particular individual and local experiences were framed by more general, national constructions'.⁵⁴ Thus Lucy Pope's statement could be described as simply one of neutrality, out of political necessity. It could very well have been exaggerated, or even fiction, but it was clearly intended to persuade the committeemen who read the petition. The language the petitioners chose to use must have been partly shaped by the expectations of the committees and, indeed, it was part of the skill of the petitioner to craft a petition in such a way.

Finally, some Royalist widows were able to utilise knowledge of the various Ordinances and processes related to sequestration when they put forward their case. Dorothy Hartborne asked to be granted one third of her husband's estate for her maintenance and reminded the Committee for Compounding that she was due this 'according to the laws and statutes of this nation, the orders and acts of this present

⁵⁰ Certificate of National Covenant: Joan Raynes, 20 October 1646, TNA SP 23/190, p. 139.

⁵¹ Petition of Ellen Byrom, 9 April 1647, TNA, SP 20/13/8, f. 61r; Petition of Margaret Houghton, 10 June 1646, TNA, SP 20/12/41, f. 114r.

⁵² Petition of Lucy Pope, 3 September 1645, TNA, SP 20/11/23, f. 105r.

⁵³ Weil, 'Thinking about allegiance', p. 184.

⁵⁴ Ann Hughes, "'The accounts of the kingdom': Memory, community and the English Civil War', *Past & Present*, 233, no.1 (2016), p. 328.

Parliament and your honours [i.e. the Committee's] own rules'.⁵⁵ Another protested that she 'knoweth not any thing in law or equity, which shee could not enjoy the said Estate'.⁵⁶ Some widows went further and complained that there had been some malpractice on behalf of the County Committee who had sequestered their estates. One argued that the original certificate which had entailed her lands to be sequestered was 'uncertain and dubious', while Elizabeth Curle suggested that her estate was only sequestered on a clerk's mistake.⁵⁷ Maybe she found it easier to question an administrative error rather than the whole system: a type of small scale opposition that was common in early modern England. It is likely that some knowledge of the law came from the legal counsel that women of higher status had access to. Even those of a lower status would have been likely to have had a rudimentary knowledge of the legal system.⁵⁸ Elizabeth Hamilton, for example, based the arguments in her petition on the instruction of her 'learned Councill'.⁵⁹ However, petitioners rarely explicitly referred to advice they received in this way. This may have been because it was considered more effective if the petitioner came across as the main agent behind the petition.

There is also evidence within the petitions of certain women linking their claims of loyalty specifically with their demands for a smaller composition fine or for the removal of their sequestration. Katherine Moore had had her lands and goods confiscated because she sent 'some of her goods to the Garison of Newarke' but she explained to the committee members that she had done this to keep the goods 'from the pillage and plunder of the Com[m]on Souldier' due to her living close to a garrison. She asked the Committee for Compounding for deductions to her fine on the grounds of the 'smallnesse of the delinquency Charged vpon her'.⁶⁰ Another widow deemed to be delinquent because of her actions was Margaret Sanders. She had resided in

⁵⁵ Petition of Dorothy Hartborne, 14 May 1651, TNA, SP 23/91, p. 220.

⁵⁶ Petition of Alice Grenehalgh, 10 August 1653, TNA, SP 23/88, p. 628.

⁵⁷ Petition of Elizabeth Cotton, 18 March 1646, TNA, SP 20/12/32, f. 94r; Petition of Elizabeth Curle, 24 May 1655, TNA, SP 23/79, p. 68.

⁵⁸ Tim Stretton, 'Written obligations, litigation and neighbourliness, 1580-1680', in Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard, John Walter and Keith Wrightson (eds.), *Remaking English society: Social relations and social change in early modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), pp. 189-210.

⁵⁹ Petition of Elizabeth Hamilton, 21 July 1653, TNA, SP 19/12, pp. 398-399.

⁶⁰ Petition of Katherine Moore, 16 February 1647, TNA, SP 23/198, p. 108.

Wallingford during the wars, which was part of the 'king's quarters', but she asked for leniency from the Committee on the grounds of her 'so slender an offence'.⁶¹ Both of these widows displayed an awareness of the ways in which Parliament may have been categorising delinquency, namely based on action, and yet they were challenging that on the basis of mitigating circumstances and the scale of their offences. Based on these arguments these women were so bold as to claim that their actions were not significant enough for them to be financially punished in that way. Some of the widows who petitioned dismissed Parliament's claim that they were 'delinquent' but some, like Margaret Sanders and Katherine Moore, engaged with the process by which loyalty was assigned and tried to negotiate the terms.

For Royalist and Parliamentary widows, depicting allegiance within their petitions was a process that had been defined by the actions of their husbands, or themselves, but which could invoke notions of 'inner' convictions. Both sets of women embellished their stories with phrases and ideas that were intended to persuade the hearers of their pleas that they were worthy of relief and these terms were often couched in the notions of loyalty that had been propagated by Parliament. For some widows, these narratives of loyalty were directly linked to their knowledge of entitlement and the request that they were making. Some widows confronted the label of 'delinquent' that had been placed on them by the State within their petitions and Parliamentary war widows attempted to portray their husbands as loyal fighters. These petitions also demonstrate that the language of loyalty could be used in order to serve a purpose. Those Royalist war widows who chose to challenge their sequestration invoked notions of allegiance in order to garner sympathy from the committee members even if their statements may not have represented their genuine beliefs and actions. Parliamentary war widows invoked common tropes of faithfulness and sacrifice in order that the depictions of the loyal actions of their husbands might result in a greater sum from the Quarter Sessions.

⁶¹ Petition of Margaret Sanders, 4 November 1645, TNA, SP 23/115, p. 919.

Narrating Loyalty after the Restoration: Royalist maimed soldiers

When describing their loyalty to the regime, the petitions of male Parliamentary maimed soldiers to the Kent and Sussex Quarter Sessions relied largely on descriptions of their military service. Their petitions were also usually accompanied by a certificate from their Officer or an endorsement within the petition to prove the same.⁶² Very few of the petitioners dwelled on inner loyalty and many were clear about having been 'pressed' into service. Thomas Austie's certificate, for example, stated that he was 'pressed for a souldier to serue'.⁶³ Entries in the Kentish Order Books also indicate whether a soldier did 'voluntarily serve' or 'was pressed' (although there is no discernible difference between them in what was granted as relief).⁶⁴ Most Parliamentary infantry were conscripted by 1645 and so JPs may even have become suspicious if one claimed to be a volunteer. One exception is the maimed soldier from West Sussex, John Rolfe, who stirringly claimed that he, 'led by his good Afection to the Weale-publique did at the first voluntarily ingadge himselfe'.⁶⁵ After the Restoration, in comparison, forthright statements of allegiance were much more common. It was asserted, for example, that Robert Ward not only served in the King's army but that 'hee did voluntarily goe' there.⁶⁶ In the new conditions of the Restoration regime continued loyalty to the King's father (thereby ruling out turncoats) was valuable political currency and being able to prove military service entitled those wounded or widowed, to a pension.⁶⁷

Many Royalist maimed soldiers gave very detailed accounts of their military service when petitioning the Kent and Sussex benches for a pension. The Certificate submitted on behalf of John Champion to the West Sussex bench in October 1668 stated that he was quartermaster for the Earl of Cleveland, that he was taken prisoner at Newbury and carried to Peter House until he was exchanged in Oxford. After this time he continued in military service as a Lieutenant 'never depertinge his said Ma[jes]tie

⁶² See Chapter 1, pp. 47-49.

⁶³ Certificate of Thomas Austie, October 1645, ESRO, QR/69, f. 7r.

⁶⁴ West Kent Quarter Sessions Order Book, August 1647, KHLC, Q/SO/W1, f. 168r.

⁶⁵ Petition of John Rolfe, October 1654, WSRO, Q/R/W80, f. 14.

⁶⁶ Certificate on behalf of Robert Ward, April 1662, WSRO, Q/R/W103, f. 70r.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 3, pp. 94-95.

service till the disbanding the Army in Cornwall'.⁶⁸ A particularly long description of military service was also provided in the petition of William Nicholls in 1674.⁶⁹ His petition stated that he had been taken prisoner in service for the King at Arundell Castle, that he went on to fight at Newbury and at Naseby where he was again taken prisoner 'with 3365 more'. After this he was sold and transported to Flanders to serve the King of Spain but after a year and a half he escaped and 'gott to Paris, And from thence the Queene Mother Transported yo[u]r Petic[i]oner' to Jersey where he continued to serve for five more years. He concluded: 'yo[u]r Petic[i]oner Serued his late Ma[jes]tie as a good and Faithfull seruant and Soldier, In all, by the space of Tenn Yeares'. Both of these maimed soldiers included specific details of battles and engagements as well as highlighting the suffering that they had undergone, through imprisonment at the hands of Parliamentarians, in aid of the King's cause. They also based their requests upon their lengthy military service, rather than any injuries that they had sustained during it. Neither of these petitioners presented evidence that they had been maimed or disabled to work, but despite this, they were both granted pensions of 40s a year to reward their loyal service.⁷⁰

Some of the petitioners went beyond descriptions of action when they commended their own service to the JPs. In these petitions, unlike in the petitions of Parliamentarian maimed soldiers for relief, inner loyalty and convictions were openly shared. Jeremy Tauntington, for example, argued that it was 'out of his loyal affection' for the former King that he had fought in the Kentish rebellion in Yalden in 1643.⁷¹ Describing 'faithful' and constant service was also a common theme in the petitions of Royalist maimed soldiers. William Pledger was described as having carried out 'true and faithful service', John Coward's petition stated that he had 'behaved himself faithfully' in the King's service' and Edward Faunt's argued that he had 'ever been faithful'.⁷² The common use of this particular phrase may have reflected the authorities' own choice of language. When the Kent JPs handed out pensions, the

⁶⁸ Certificate on behalf of John Champion, October 1668, WSRO, Q/R/W123.

⁶⁹ Petition of William Nicholls, October 1674, WSRO, Q/R/W141, f. 102r.

⁷⁰ West Sussex Quarter Sessions Order Book, October 1674, WSRO, QO/1/5/7, f. 35v; West Sussex Quarter Sessions Order Book, October 1668, WSRO, QO/1/5/5 f. 89r.

⁷¹ Petition of Jeremy Tauntington, [1662], KHL, Q/SB/8/55.

⁷² Certificate on behalf of William Pledger, April 1662, WSRO, Q/R/W103, f. 66r; Letter on behalf of John Coward, April 1678, WSRO, Q/R/W152, f. 29r; Petition of Edward Faunt, [1662], KHL, Q/SB/8/53.

Order Book formulaically named them as those who had been 'active and faithful in the service of the Kings Majestie and of his Royall father'.⁷³ Thus, the frequent use of the word 'faithful' in the petitions of maimed soldiers emphasises 'the power of narratives extracted by the state' in this period.⁷⁴

Finally, when it came to justifying their rights to a pension many Royalist maimed soldiers showed themselves to be knowledgeable of their entitlement. Issake Halfepenny cited the Elizabethan statute for relief for maimed soldiers and mariners in his petition.⁷⁵ This had been superseded by the Parliamentary Ordinances in the 1640s and then again in 1662 by the new Act for relief of maimed soldiers and widows.⁷⁶ Perhaps Isaake (or the person constructing the petition) was unaware of the new post-Restoration Act. Regardless, it does show a level of knowledge amongst the Royalist maimed soldiers' community of their entitlement to pensions. This argument is furthered by evidence of entitlement demonstrated in petitions. William Nicholl's petition argued for relief 'As you haue Formerly Allowed unto other Soldiers in like Case vppon the death of Former Pensioners'.⁷⁷ Many of the petitions of Royalist maimed soldiers were also accompanied by an endorsement from a former officer and friends willing to testify to their good behaviour and service.⁷⁸ Or, in the case of John Champion, it was the brother of his former captain who was willing to testify to his service.⁷⁹

Mark Stoyles analysis of the petitions of Royalist maimed soldiers in Restoration Devon also found that petitioners would often include the names of other veterans, even when they were not required.⁸⁰ He argued that 'a network of former soldiers developed after the Restoration' who 'served as living exemplars of courage and fidelity'.⁸¹ The evidence from the Quarter Sessions of Kent and Sussex concurs with

⁷³ For example: West Kent Quarter Sessions Order Book, September 1662, KHLC, Q/SO/W2, f. 83r.

⁷⁴ Weil, 'Thinking about allegiance', p. 189.

⁷⁵ Petition of Isaake Halfepenny, October 1665, ESRO, QR/147, f. 55r.

⁷⁶ See Chapter 3, pp. 94-95.

⁷⁷ Petition of William Nicholls, October 1674, WSRO, Q/R/W141, f. 102r.

⁷⁸ For example: Certificate on behalf of William Ludbeyter, October 1673, WSRO, Q/R/W138, f. 81r; Petition of John Fletcher, [1662], KHLC, Q/SB/8/54.

⁷⁹ Certificate on behalf of John Champion, October 1668, WSRO, Q/R/W123.

⁸⁰ Mark Stoyles, "'Memories of the maimed': The testimony of Charles I's former soldiers, 1660-1730", *History*, 88, no.290 (2003), p. 219.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

Stoyle's argument. The descriptions of service included in the petitions of Royalist maimed soldiers were generally much more thorough than their Parliamentary counterparts. Many did use descriptions of poverty in their petitions, particularly citing old age preventing them from working.⁸² Nevertheless, many petitioners simply used their military service as justification for their entitlement to a pension without referring to any disability to work. Thus, former Royalists' loyal service formed the core of these petitions. They were presented as 'faithful' to the former and present King, having pursued active, and often long, military service for the cause.

Contested Loyalty

Language of loyalty could be used against petitioners, as well as by them. The Civil Wars had created divisions within the country that meant neighbours could now use ideas of allegiance to fuel dispute and discourse. 'The war divided families', said Charles Carlton 'in three main ways: through the death of a father, son, or brother, because of geographical separation, and as a result of conflicting political loyalties'.⁸³ The military implications of war may have also divided communities when certain members chose to leave to join the conflict or when one of the opposing sides moved in to occupy a region. Richard Gough's *History of Myddle* provides an insight into the local implications of a divided nation for one small community. His account described the multiple deaths of men who had gone to the wars from his village and at least one episode of violent conflict when a Parliamentary soldier caused some trouble in this largely pro-Royalist village.⁸⁴

The records of Quarter Sessions provide a few glimpses of how the Civil Wars created dispute at a local level. For example, in East Sussex shortly after the Restoration of the monarch, Nathaniell Jones petitioned the Justices of the Peace for their justice and clemency. He had been informed against by another inhabitant of his town of Westerton in Sussex for preaching that 'the King had broken the Covenant and made the people to break it' which he denied.⁸⁵ Whether or not this accusation was factual,

⁸² See Chapter 5, p. 159.

⁸³ Charles Carlton, 'Civilians', in John Kenyon, Jane Ohlmeyer (eds.), *The Civil Wars: A military history of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* (Oxford: 1998), p. 278.

⁸⁴ Richard Gough, David Hey (ed.), *The history of Myddle* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), pp. 72-74.

⁸⁵ Petition of Nathaniell Jones, January 1661, ESRO, QR-129, f. 58r.

the petition provides evidence for the ways in which the aftermath of the Civil War, and the Restoration, may have been influencing tensions at a local level. Lloyd Bowen also finds evidence of speech, determined to be seditious, that was uttered by Royalists during the Interregnum.⁸⁶ Bowen concludes that 'there were articulate non-elite Royalists' who were 'capable of articulating political ideas through their frequent discussions of the political landscape'.⁸⁷

It was not just during the Civil Wars that relationships within communities broke down. Laura Gowing has argued that 'early modern England was a society in which spoken words still wielded enormous power'.⁸⁸ Her work investigates the words of insult, specifically sexual insult, used by women in early modern London and investigates how these words, recorded within the records of church court litigation, 'articulated the implications of gendered morality'.⁸⁹ This was a society where litigation was increasingly widespread and more and more people were being drawn into its process.⁹⁰ Widows were often forced to use the law to defend their inheritance and frequently, disputes and difficult relationships with their late husband's family were at the centre of these disputes. Barbara Harris found that 'the most conflictual relationships were those between women and their stepsons, brothers-in-law, and fathers-in-law' and that this drew many widows into litigation.⁹¹ The experience of one Royalist war widow, Mary Crompton, demonstrates how contested languages of loyalty fuelled familial disputes. The language used by her family to discredit her shows how accusations of siding with 'the enemy' could be a potent and potentially successful tactic in litigation as well as in petitioning.

In November 1645 the Parliamentarian Committee for Shropshire produced a certificate to state that Mary Crompton 'did keepe a garrison ag[ainst] the

⁸⁶ Lloyd Bowen, 'Seditious speech and popular royalism, 1649-1660', in Jason McElligott and David L. Smith (eds.), *Royalists and royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 44-66.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸⁸ Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, p. 111.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁰ Stretton, 'Written obligations, litigation and neighbourliness, 1580-1680', p. 189.

⁹¹ Barbara J. Harris, *English aristocratic women, 1450-1550: Marriage and family, property and careers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 135.

Parliam[en]t' at Dawley Castle and that it had been recently taken by them.⁹² Richard Symonds had noted in his diary for the previous month that the Royalist Garrison of Dawley Castle in Shropshire was being held by 'Fouke' (presumably Fulke Crompton, Mary's husband, who died around this time).⁹³ Dawley Castle was subsequently listed amongst other garrisons that had been captured by Parliament.⁹⁴ On the 11th of July 1648 Parliament ordered for Dawley castle to be demolished and made 'untenable'.⁹⁵ No remains or ruins of the castle exist today.⁹⁶ As a result of Mary Crompton's delinquency her lands were sequestered and all the rents confiscated from her. At around this time, however, administrative inertia meant that Mary's lands were returned to her briefly and then re-sequestered by the newly formed Committee in 1652. It was because of this fresh removal of her lands that Mary petitioned the Committees for Advance of Money and Compounding during the early 1650s. Her case is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is the obvious question of her role in leading the garrison at Dawley and whether or not this is another case of a woman, such as Lady Brilliana Harley, playing a leading role in military matters during the war.⁹⁷ Secondly, her step-son, a Parliamentarian soldier, also petitioned the Committee for Compounding and claimed that the lands should have been his inheritance. This case was also disputed within the Court of Chancery almost simultaneously to the case being discussed by the Committee for Compounding. Finally, throughout these disputes Mary and her step-sons and daughters presented their own version of events and used notions of allegiance in order to reclaim the lands. Here was a case where the 'ordinary' matters of family dispute and inheritance

⁹² Certificate of the Committee for Shropshire, 7 November 1645, TNA SP 23/77, p. 587.

⁹³ Richard Symonds, C. E. Long (ed.) *Diary of the marches of the great army during the great Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 249.

⁹⁴ Anon., *Englands remembrancer: in two parts*, (London, 1646), p. 3.

⁹⁵ 'House of Commons Journal Volume 5: 11 July 1648', in *Journal of the House of Commons*, pp. 631-632.

⁹⁶ Anon., *The garrisons of Shropshire during the Civil War, 1642-1648* (Shrewsbury: Leake and Evans, 1867), p. 43.

⁹⁷ For more on the military role of Lady Brilliana Harley see: Jacqueline Eales, *Puritans and roundheads: The Harleys of Brampton Bryan and the outbreak of the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Eales, 'Patriarchy, puritanism and politics: The letters of Lady Brilliana Harley (1598-1643)', in James Daybell (ed.), *Early modern women's letter writing, 1450-1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 143-158.

had overlapped with the military events of the Civil War as well as the divisions created by it.

Eyton Crompton was the son of Fulke Crompton, Mary's deceased husband, from a previous marriage. He not only believed that he should have the right to inherit Dawley Castle and the surrounding estates but accused Mary of gaining it through illicit means and of being disloyal to Parliament. In a 1648 Bill submitted to the Court of Chancery he accused Mary and her children of having 'deceptfully & by sinister & indirect meanes gotten into their hands custody & possession aswell all and singular the said deeds' to the estate.⁹⁸ In 1651 Eyton's sisters from the same marriage told a similar tale of Mary having married their father with 'an aime to gett all the estate' and the intention of nothing being left for the children of Fulke's previous marriages.⁹⁹ This narrative of family disputes over inheritance, in particular when there had been multiple marriages making the inheritance complicated, would have been familiar territory for the Court of Chancery.¹⁰⁰ This case, however, had the added element of narratives of loyalty and accusations of allegiance to add potency to an already heated exchange.

In addition to accusing Mary of working to defraud the children of her late husband's previous marriages out of their inheritance, Eyton accused Mary of being a Royalist. He petitioned the Committee for Compounding in September 1652, after the estate had been re-sequestered, and described how following Mary's marriage to Fulke Crompton she had tried to persuade Eyton to side with the King. On his refusal she 'clapped a garrison' for the Royalists and barred him from entering the estate.¹⁰¹ He himself was fighting for Parliament as a cornet of horse and submitted with his petition a note from Major-General Thomas Harrison who asked for a speedy hearing on his behalf 'who has had some hard measure from a very wicked woman'.¹⁰² In 1653, when Harrison wrote this note, he was a powerful man who 'appeared to be at

⁹⁸ Bill of Eyton Crompton, *Crompton v Crompton*, 1648, TNA, C 6/110/23.

⁹⁹ Bill of Sarah and Elizabeth Crompton, *Crompton v Crompton*, 1651, TNA, C 6/3/45.

¹⁰⁰ John H. Baker, *An introduction to English legal history* (London: Butterworths, 2002), pp. 269-270.

¹⁰¹ Petition of Eyton Crompton, 14 September 1652, TNA, SP 23/77, p. 637.

¹⁰² Certificate of Major-General Harrison, 23 May 1653, TNA, SP 23/77, p. 641.

the height of his influence' in the words of his biographer, David Farr.¹⁰³ Harrison's successful military and Parliamentary career made him an extremely significant person for Eyton to have on his side. Eyton's description of the events, and certificate from this prominent Parliamentarian, presented his explanation for how Mary came to be accused as a commander of a Royalist garrison and showed Eyton as loyal to the government. Nonetheless, this narrative was also obviously intended to discredit Mary in the eyes of the Parliamentary authorities and he was keen to stress his own allegiance with a description of his military service. Eyton's proof was, however, considered insufficient and the case was ordered to be investigated. This gave Mary a chance to present her own protestations to the committee and assert her position of loyalty.

Mary petitioned both the Committee for Advance of Money and the Committee for Compounding to try to regain access to her sequestered lands. In these petitions she was careful to stress the validity of the inheritance that Eyton was challenging. She stated that the estate had been conveyed to her husband by Sir John Hayward on 4 December 1601 and that it was 'in considerac[i]on of his naturalloue and affection to yo[ur] Pet[i]tion[er]' that he by indenture conveyed the lands for the use of her and her children, Fulke and Frances, from the marriage.¹⁰⁴ Mary also addressed the issue of her supposed misdemeanours in her petition but in a less direct way than her estranged step-son. She claimed that her estate was sequestered in 1645 for 'Acts of Delinquency' that were 'then p[re]tended to haue bin Comitted by her against the Parliam[en]t'.¹⁰⁵ It was in her reply to the Chancery Bill submitted by Eyton's sisters that she more directly confronted the accusations and presented an alternative tale of what happened at Dawley Castle. In this document she argued that, shortly after the death of her husband, her step-daughters (one of whom had married a Royalist soldier without her permission) 'did in the night tyme lett in the Kings Forces into the said Castle where vpon shee this defend[en]t was forced out of the said Castle'.¹⁰⁶ In another Chancery bill she argued that 'Souldiers did surprise her this defendent' when

¹⁰³ David Farr, *Major-general Thomas Harrison: Millenarianism, fifth monarchism and the English revolution 1616-1660* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 169.

¹⁰⁴ Petition of Mary Crompton, 30 September 1652, TNA, SP 23/77, p. 579.

¹⁰⁵ Petition of Mary Crompton, 22 September 1652, TNA, SP 19/161, f. 615r

¹⁰⁶ Answer of Mary Crompton, *Crompton v Crompton*, 1651, TNA, C 6/3/45.

she was dwelling at Dawley and she went on to say that ‘she this defendant doth deny That she or any other to her knowledge did make or keepe a garrison at the said Castle of Dawley’.¹⁰⁷ In the same bill she also sought to discredit Eyton by claiming that ‘she heard that he was a Common foote Souldier in the late Kinges Armeys’. Eyton himself had claimed to have fought for Parliament (and he had the certificate from Major-General Harrison to support it).

What actually happened in that castle in the events leading up to it becoming a Royalist garrison may never be made clear. It does seem likely that Mary was not telling the whole truth in this account because the County Committee at Shropshire reiterated throughout the investigations that it was Mary who was found to be in command of the garrison and never pursued her step-daughters. What is obvious is that all parties in this dispute over property were embroiled in the divisions that the Civil War had created and used accusations of disloyalty in order to pursue their case. The last document in the files of the Committee for Compounding on this case suggests that even the committeemen remained unconvinced of the truth of this case. They allowed Mary’s two children from her marriage to Fulke to receive rents from the estate, and so they had clearly decided that it was theirs by right of inheritance, but ordered that 10li a year was to remain sequestered for Mary’s delinquency.¹⁰⁸

The case of Mary Crompton is just one example of how the military events of the Civil Wars, as well as the ideological divisions created by them, impacted upon the ordinary lives of women and civilians. It is quite possible that this extended to other women and indeed there are other cases where Royalist widows involved in sequestration cases were also fighting off legal challenges from families in the Court of Chancery.¹⁰⁹ The Cromptons’ Chancery disputes may have occurred even if the war had not because Fulke married three times and as a result of these marriages multiple children were able to lay claim to his estates. However, because of the events surrounding the Royalist capture of Dawley castle, Eyton’s own decision to fight for Parliament, and the type of language created by the wars, these disputes became closely connected with

¹⁰⁷ Bill of Mary Crompton, *Crompton v Piper*, 1657, TNA, C 7/432/30.

¹⁰⁸ Order of the Committee for Compounding, 2 March 1654, TNA, SP 23/23, p. 158.

¹⁰⁹ See for example the Chancery cases of Elizabeth Rutter: *Littler v Rutter*, 1651, TNA, C 7/447/63; *Rutter v Friar*, 1651, TNA, C/5/14/116.

the loyalty of each of the parties. Family disputes, which were already common in Chancery when widows were concerned, overlapped with the political disputes of the wars.¹¹⁰ Mary was accused of being a Royalist and she in turn accused her daughters and step-son of supporting the King. It is clear that Parliament's labelling of Mary as 'delinquent' in order to seize estates had become an important component of Mary's disputes with her late husband's family.

Conclusion

Parliament's committees may have focused on action in order to define allegiance but when widows articulated their position in petitions they went beyond visible actions in order to persuade. Loyalty was complex and many of the Royalist women who side-stepped the implications of their husbands' military service in reality may have been in full support of the King's cause. Nevertheless, their lands had been seized on the grounds of their allegiance and, therefore, they were required to fight back in such terms. Parliamentary war widows, while on a firmer ground when persuading Parliament of their position, nonetheless still had to convince the JPs that they were worthy candidates. Many more maimed soldiers than war widows were granted pensions and they were given preference when it came to allocating pensions.¹¹¹ Therefore, in Parliamentary controlled areas, such as the South East, emphasising adherence to Parliament's cause may have been a particularly useful device for war widows. The rhetoric in the petitions of Royalist maimed soldiers show how outward displays of loyalty, as well as professions of loyalty and faithfulness, came to the fore after the Restoration.

Much separates the Parliamentary and Royalist war widows included in this study, namely status and allegiance. Nevertheless, what unifies them is the ways in which their petitions embraced the rhetoric of poverty and allegiance in order to present themselves as worthy as well as entitled to favour. Both groups of women had to negotiate their challenging circumstances and represent themselves successfully to the authorities. They were required to fashion themselves as in great need, and struggling to subsist, irrespective of their status. Both Parliamentarians and Royalists

¹¹⁰ Harris, *English aristocratic women*, p. 135.

¹¹¹ See Chapter 1, p. 56.

benefitted from presenting themselves as loyal to the government and basing these explanations within verifiable actions. However, when the military service of one's husband condemned rather than entitled one, as in the case of Royalist war widows, then attempting to outline one's own justification of loyalty was imperative. Using loyalty could be perilous, as the final case in this chapter demonstrated, because the actions and convictions of individuals could be used against petitioners as well as by them. The political and social upheavals of the Civil War had created new challenges for war widows wishing to present themselves as humble figures, worthy of the benevolence of society. The country's divisions had had a profound impact on the ways in which widows presented their supplications to the authorities.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to contribute to historians' understanding of the lives and experiences of women whose husbands had died in the Civil Wars. It hoped to enrich understanding about the ways in which war widows navigated the events of this period within the context of the legal, social and religious status of widows in early modern England. In order to do this, it considered two main research questions: How did the Civil Wars affect the lives of war widows? And, in what ways did war widows respond to these events? It considered two main sources of evidence: the records of the county pension scheme in Kent and Sussex and the sequestration and compounding process nationally. These records were analysed quantitatively in order to present findings on how war widows experienced these government schemes. Then, the petitions which were presented and constructed by war widows themselves were examined qualitatively for their narrative content. The representation of widows within contemporary print culture was also used to provide a framework for this analysis. This chapter will consider the implications of these findings in relation to historians' understanding of the experiences of women and civilians in the Civil Wars and then turn to their wider significance beyond the Civil-War period. It will consider the implications of the conclusions of this thesis for gender history, in particular the history of widowhood, for historians' understanding of petitioning and finally for the history of women in war time throughout history. It will highlight the impact of this study on these areas as well as suggesting some areas for future research.

How did the Civil Wars affect the lives of war widows?

This thesis showed that both Royalist and Parliamentary war widows experienced loss and hardship as a result of the wars. It also demonstrated that they were affected by local and national politics and policies in addition to the military events of the war. The analysis of the county pension scheme revealed that there were considerable numbers of war widows who petitioned for relief in Kent and Sussex, despite these

counties not being as intensively fought over as other, more war torn areas.¹ Furthermore, in Kent and Sussex they received pensions of a similar value to maimed soldiers both before and after the Restoration. In both of these counties, therefore, many war widows did benefit from the intention of Parliament to support the widows of those who had fought on their side (even if that side changed after the Restoration). The number of war widows who received pensions was, nevertheless, much lower than maimed soldiers in Kent and Sussex. This concurs with the conclusions of Appleby and Hudson's research on other counties across the Civil War, Interregnum, and Restoration period.² In particular, after the Restoration war widows did not benefit from pensions as frequently as maimed soldiers (or at all). Hudson argued that this reflected 'the attitudes of the royalists to women and the armed forces': they were to be returned to the 'firm control' of parish officers.³ Nevertheless, this thesis has shown that war widows did receive considerable amounts in one-off gratuities in both Kent and Sussex. This demonstrates, perhaps, that local regimes *did* want to show generosity towards widows after the Restoration but chose instead to do it with frequent one-off gratuities rather than pensions.

Additionally, the research on the county pension scheme has demonstrated how war widows were affected by local politics and administration in Kent and Sussex during the wars. This can be most starkly observed at the Restoration in West Kent when Royalist war widows were rewarded for their husbands' loyalty to the King before Parliament had issued its orders. In this county war widows, although not the primary beneficiaries of pensions, stood to benefit from the Royalist disposition of those who were placed in positions of local authority after the return of the King. The allocation of pensions and one-off gratuities significantly lessened over the 1660s and 1670s, however. By contrast, Sussex war widows and maimed soldiers continued to receive

¹ The actual number of war widows in these counties would probably have been far higher than the numbers taken from the Quarter Sessions records, as demonstrated by population loss estimates: Ian Gentles, *The English revolution and the wars in the three kingdoms, 1638-1652* (Harlow: Longman, 2007), p. 434.

² Geoffrey Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money: war widows and the courts in seventeenth-century England', in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts in early modern England* (London: UCL Press, 1994), pp. 152, 162; David Appleby, 'Unnecessary persons? Maimed soldiers and war widows in Essex, 1642-62', *Essex Archaeology and History*, 32 (2001), p. 211.

³ Hudson, 'Negotiating for blood money', p. 151.

grants from the JPs until the Act lapsed in 1679. The effectiveness of the county pension scheme in both counties throughout the whole period analysed (1642-1679) must attest partly to the strength and continuity of local government during the turbulent war years. Both counties experienced Parliamentary rule in the form of County Committees and yet it was the Quarter Sessions which took the lead in administering war relief. War widows continued to use this traditional institution in order to access relief in Kent and Sussex. The relative lack of sustained military activity, as well as perhaps the direct intervention of Parliament in local government, may have made the county pension scheme more effective in these counties.

Where there was Parliamentary government, there was also sequestration. Landholders across the country who were suspected of aiding the King's war effort in any way (including, but not limited to, fighting) risked having their lands confiscated. This thesis has shown that this included many Royalist women whose husbands had died, leaving them to defend their inheritance on behalf of themselves and their children. These widows came from a range of social statuses and were not just drawn from the aristocracy or gentry. In fact, this thesis has shown that a significant amount of war widows who petitioned to have their lands returned to them did not denote a status within their supplications and listed lands that were worth less than 200li a year in value. Therefore, while this group of women were of a generally higher status than the widows who petitioned for county pensions, they were not universally from the top sectors of society.

The evidence has also shown that many of the widows who had their lands seized through sequestration did suffer other impacts of the Civil Wars. For example, many of the widows who had sequestered lands also complained of plunder upon their estates during the wars. Subsequently, many also experienced the decay of their lands due to poor upkeep whilst they were under the control of local sequestration agents. There was a measure of resentment against the system and the people who colluded in it, particularly against those who 'discovered' estates (who were sometimes war widows themselves). Additionally, the records of the county sequestration committees show that there were issues in the administration of the sequestration scheme with local

agents underpaid and many areas often running at a loss. Therefore, while Parliamentary war widows in Kent and Sussex stood to benefit from the county pension scheme, Royalist war widows saw the seizure of their estates and were forced to engage with an often inefficient and occasionally corrupt system. Nevertheless, this thesis has also shown that most of the Royalist widows who petitioned for their lands did have them returned, either through the removal of sequestration or the allocation of a fine. Thus, while many Royalist widows did experience land confiscation, those landholders who had been labelled as 'delinquent' by Parliament generally received the lands back prior to the Restoration.

This analysis of the records of the county pension and sequestration schemes has revealed specific information about the ways in which Parliamentarian and Royalist war widows experienced the wars. This research also leads to some broader conclusions about the lives of women and civilians during the Civil Wars. Firstly, this thesis has demonstrated that it was not just military engagements which affected the lives of civilians. Further to the research of Carlton and Donagan, it has shown that administrative war time processes, such as sequestration, had a profound impact on war widows.⁴ Furthermore, this thesis has illustrated the importance of local conditions and politics in understanding how the Civil War affected people. It has demonstrated, for example, how Royalist insurrections, and the disposition of the Justices of the Peace, had an impact on how many people were offered relief after the Restoration. Therefore, local studies such as Everitt's on Kent and Fletcher's on Sussex continue to be invaluable as does their approach and, therefore, the concept of the county community.⁵ Finally, this thesis has shown that women of all statuses shared some of the effects of military, political and social upheavals of the mid seventeenth century. Widowhood must have made women even more vulnerable to these changes. Yet, the first part of this thesis has shown that many war widows were able to

⁴ Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642-1649* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Charles Carlton, *Going to the wars: The experience of the English Civil Wars* (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁵ Alan Everitt, *The community of Kent and the great rebellion, 1640-1660* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986); Anthony Fletcher, *A county community in peace and war: Sussex 1600-1660* (London: Longman, 1975); Jacqueline Eales, 'Alan Everitt and the community of Kent revisited', in Jacqueline Eales and Andrew Hopper (eds.), *The county community in seventeenth-century England and Wales* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2012), pp. 15-38.

successfully negotiate these conditions, and engage with the government's administrative processes, in order to receive monetary relief or the return of their lands for themselves and their children.

In what ways did war widows respond to the Civil Wars?

The second part of this thesis presented evidence on how war widows responded to the events of the Civil Wars. In particular, it examined the responses of war widows to the county pension and sequestration schemes through the medium of the petition. Widows presented petitions on their own behalf but the documents themselves were crafted in collaboration with scribes and other individuals such as lawyers. Nevertheless, they contained unique stories that demonstrated an ability to weave narratives that framed their widowhood, poverty and loyalty successfully in order to persuade. The descriptions, stories and self-fashioning contained within the petitions were crafted in response to the events of the wars, the societal expectations of widows, and the literary genre of the petition itself. They show that widows could successfully navigate the prescriptions of their gender and as well as the impact of their late husband's choices in order to present themselves to the authorities as women who were worthy of aid. Additionally, widows submitted petitions in significant numbers during the Civil War period, and the subsequent decades, in order to access financial relief or the return of their lands. This research has also shown that while most widows presented their petitions in the traditional manuscript format, a handful of widows also used the genre of print to submit their supplications to Parliament. Thus, the thesis offers two important conclusions regarding the ways in which widows in particular responded to the wars using the petition. Firstly, it has shown how the genre of the petition itself was used as an effective 'weapon of the weak' by widows and secondly how they successfully constructed complex persuasive narratives within them.⁶

It has been argued that the Civil Wars saw a significant change in the ways in which petitions were used, that they became increasingly politicised, and are evidence of an

⁶ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (London: Yale University Press, 2008).

emergent 'public sphere'.⁷ This thesis has shown that petitions were an important tool of widows during the wars and that they did use them to engage in political processes. Nevertheless, this thesis has also demonstrated that most of the requests presented by widows relied upon traditional methods of petitioning. Additionally, these widows were responding to an invitation from higher authorities to present their petitions (petitioning was required from those wishing to receive a county pension, and from those wishing to regain control of their sequestered lands). Furthermore, the wishes they expressed rarely went outside of the scope of their specific request. Thus, it is difficult to use them as evidence of the intrusion into the public domain by those normally excluded from it. There were instances when widows appeared to step beyond traditional gender roles. For example, some widows claimed that their own loyalty should be considered separately from their Royalist husbands' or argued that their husbands' choices should not adversely affect their ability to gain their inheritance in widowhood. Additionally, a few widows used the medium of print in order to present their supplications to Parliament (and perhaps also a broader public). Nevertheless, this thesis has not presented conclusive evidence that the petitions of these widows should be considered proof of an expanding and emerging 'public sphere'. Rather, it has shown that some war widows operated within broader societal structures with an awareness of their rights.

This thesis has also shown that the narratives widows crafted in their petitions engaged with wider social and religious frameworks in order to make them more successful. While not exclusively authored by the widows themselves, these petitions represent the collaborative outcome of a supplication which was intended to persuade. So, they reveal something about the attitudes of society towards widows as well as how, in response to this, widows were represented within their supplications. For example, many of the widows presented themselves as poor and humble within their petitions. This was not a unique literary device or one exclusive to widows: petitioners had been presenting themselves as poor and humble for decades.⁸ Yet, the

⁷ David Zaret, 'Petitions and the "invention" of public opinion in the English revolution', *American Journal of Sociology*, 101, no.6 (1996), pp. 1497-1555.

⁸ Alison Thorne, 'Women's petitionary letters and early seventeenth-century treason trials', *Women's Writing*, 13, no.1 (2006), pp. 23-43; Gwilym Dodd, 'Writing wrongs: The drafting of supplications to the

Civil Wars had made many women widows and the authors of contemporary print were concerned with the plight of widows, whom God had dictated society had a duty to protect. Thus, presenting oneself as a poor and sorrowful widow would have had specific cultural resonance with the readers of the petition. Additionally, the politics of the wars meant that concerns over loyalty and allegiance were ubiquitous. Therefore, widows took pains to craft descriptions of action and allegiance that would present them as loyal subjects (in the eyes of whoever was reading the petition). They responded to the specific demands and challenges of the period and in doing so demonstrate how pervasive the language of loyalty had become during the period.

This thesis also surveyed the ways in which widows were represented in print during the Civil Wars. This has shown that several representations of widows, for example as poor or as deviant, were deployed by authors. The survey emphasised the use of widows within polemic and propaganda of both sides. Therefore, the findings of this study also lead to broader conclusions about the role of print within the Civil Wars and, specifically, the use of widows within printed material that was intended to influence politics. Widows, alongside orphans, were represented as blameless victims who had been needlessly suffering as a result of the actions of supporters of the King or Parliament (or whichever suited the author of the publication). They could be universally drawn upon because of the Biblical exhortations to care for the widowed and fatherless. Nevertheless, these representations of widows were not primarily intended to benefit those women who had lost husbands, sons, and livelihoods in the wars.

Finally, this survey of the petitions of widows contributes to the broader historiography of women in the Civil Wars. In defence of their homes, in the case of Royalist widows, or in the pursuit of pensions, these widows had been forced by circumstances to take action. Although a traditional method of supplication, petitioning required direct engagement with higher authorities and institutions. Practically, it meant sourcing a scribe to write the petition, perhaps seeking advice on

crown in later fourteenth-century England', *Medium Aevum*, 80, no.2 (2011), pp. 217-246; Jonathan Healey, 'The development of poor relief in Lancashire, c. 1598–1680', *The Historical Journal*, 53, no.3 (2010), pp. 551-572.

its contents, and then travelling to physically present and orally submit a request. All of these components required interactions with a variety of people and institutions. Additionally, for some widows it would have meant wielding the financial resources and patronage connections at their disposal. Therefore, these petitions should be considered as part of women's engagement with politics during the period. They were not as significant, perhaps, as the large scale collaborative petitions submitted by groups of women to Parliament. Additionally, many of these widows petitioned on behalf of their children and made traditional claims to their inheritance and need to protect their families. Nevertheless, they formed an integral part of the ways in which ordinary women responded to the events of the wars and demonstrate specifically how women who had lost their husbands survived War widows of both sides crafted petitions and presented them in order to mitigate their losses.

What is the wider significance of this research?

Several additional routes of research would broaden and emphasise the conclusions of this thesis. For example, researching the county pension scheme in other areas of the country would clearly add weight to its findings, as well as adding nuance to them by considering the differing conditions of this local scheme. The geographical scope of the research could also be expanded to consider Scotland and Ireland in order to have a 'three kingdoms' perspective. For example, the narratives of widows within the 1641 Depositions could be fruitfully compared and contrasted to those researched within this thesis.⁹ This thesis has also mainly considered military widows but there were also women who lost husbands fighting at sea during this period. Therefore, a thorough study of the experiences of naval war widows during the Civil Wars would complement this research and provide a more comprehensive overview of the lives of women. Finally, Ann Hughes' research on Parliament's accounts committee has demonstrated that the process of recording war time events, and creating an archival record, had a broader function within society for remembering the losses of war.¹⁰ She argued, furthermore, that there may have been a 'profound connection between the calamity

⁹ 1641 Depositions, Trinity College Dublin, digitised at: <http://1641.tcd.ie/>.

¹⁰ Ann Hughes, "The accounts of the kingdom": Memory, community and the English Civil War', *Past & Present*, 233, no.1 (2016), pp. 311-229.

of Civil War and the fracturing of the archival record'.¹¹ Thus it would be interesting to consider how the records considered within this thesis, many of which were also administrative documents, may have helped to shape collective remembrance of the wars. By making an account of the payments to war widows and maimed soldiers within the Quarter Sessions' archives, local authorities created a record of the wars, and way of remembering them, that would endure for as long as the archives.

This thesis does not just have implications for the history of the Civil Wars. Firstly, it has been based upon the assumption that the experiences of widows were distinct from the lives of women in general. This has been purported by other historians of gender. For example, Laura Gowing emphasised the importance of considering a woman's marital status (as well as just their gender) when analysing their lives.¹² Warner and Cavallo devoted an edited collection to different perspectives on the lives of widows in the early modern period.¹³ Harris also considered the distinct life stage of widowhood in her analysis of aristocratic women.¹⁴ The conclusions of this thesis have reaffirmed that it is important for historians to consider the lives of widows separately within the wider pursuit of the history of women. It has shown that, even following the death of their husband, this marital relationship continued to dominate the ways in which a widow was free to operate and express herself. Royalist widows, for example, had to continue to justify or distance themselves from their husband's actions in order to try to persuade Parliament that they should be able to regain their lands. The role that widows had played in choosing sides when they were wives became an important part in some widows' defence. Additionally, the thesis has shown that the responsibility that widows had to care for their children following their husband's death was crucial. This relationship was also an important part of the way in which widows represented themselves and were viewed by others.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 323.

¹² Laura Gowing, *Domestic dangers: Women, words and sex in early modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 7.

¹³ Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (eds.), *Widowhood in medieval and early modern Europe* (Essex: Longman, 1999).

¹⁴ Barbara J. Harris, *English aristocratic women, 1450-1550: Marriage and family, property and careers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 127-174.

Consequently, this thesis has reaffirmed that it is important for historians of early modern women to consider the importance of widowhood, in particular. It has shown that widowhood as a life stage was not just characterised by old age and infirmity, on the one hand, or (as society feared) sexual promiscuity and deviousness on the other. There was independence, and the loosening of the bounds of coverture, but restrictions remained. Legal historians have demonstrated that women were able to operate within a 'massively restrictive system' in order to protect their own interests.¹⁵ Tim Stretton has also shown that the independent agency of women who acted in defence of their inheritance in courts of equity was considerable.¹⁶ Widows, in particular, were regularly faced with the challenge of embroilment in legal disputes, often with step-children, to protect their own rights.¹⁷ During the Civil Wars widows faced new challenges because of the actions and choices of their husbands. Consequently, further research on how widows were involved in litigation during the Civil Wars would add to this thesis' conclusions on the role of widows in early modern society.

Secondly, this thesis has extended the application of the 'economy of makeshifts' concept to early modern English society. It has shown that petitioning was part of the ways in which ordinary women survived the turbulent years of the Civil Wars, Interregnum and Restoration. Many widows were suffering a form of temporary poverty as a result of the loss of their spouses and, often as a result, financial instability. Royalist widows also experienced the seizure of the lands, of which a portion should have been due to them and their children. The petitions of the widows in this study reveal a variety of survival strategies: from relying on friends and family, to the sale of goods, to seeking work. Whilst these widows came from a range of social statuses, many of the petitions expressed an attempt to 'make shift' on their own. The study has illustrated the efforts of both male and female petitioners for a county pension to not appear dependent on poor relief, because of the social stigma that that

¹⁵ Amy L. Erickson, *Women and property in early modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 20.

¹⁶ Tim Stretton, *Women waging law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Stretton, 'Women, custom and equity in the court of requests', in Jennifer Kermode and Garthine Walker (eds.), *Women, crime and the courts in early modern England* (London: UCL Press, 1994), pp. 177-198.

¹⁷ Harris, *English aristocratic women, 1450-1550*, pp. 127-174.

carried, but instead to describe the temporary nature of their situation. For some widows, therefore, petitioning may have actually been the last attempt to subsist, coming after a range of other attempts to maintain independence from the goodwill of the State.

Other historians have shown themselves to be interested in petitioning as part of the 'economy of makeshifts' of the early modern poor. A recent online symposium discussed the range of ways in which petitioning can contribute to our understanding of society and politics during the period.¹⁸ Through a variety of contributions from scholars who researched petitions from across Europe it found that 'petitions and supplications were a multifaceted, pervasive and powerful element in early modern society'.¹⁹ Projects which utilise new digital humanities tools have also invested in petitions. For example, the London Lives project uses thousands of transcribed petitions from the 18th century to digitally analyse patterns in the ways in which people described poverty, gender and status.²⁰ Such technology provides exciting opportunities for historians of early modern society. By analysing petitions in large numbers, and being able to look for patterns of language over time, the scope of research is greatly expanded beyond what this thesis has been able to consider. Therefore, it would be fascinating to be able to consider petitions more broadly across the early modern period. With the correct technology and skills, petitions submitted by supplicants of a range of statuses and genders could be analysed for what they tell us about how petitioning was used by ordinary men and women in early modern society.

Finally, this thesis has contributed to a broader understanding of the experience of women in war time throughout history. It has illuminated the lives of war widows during the Civil Wars of the mid seventeenth century and shown how these women experienced the wars and responded to its challenges. Civil wars had their own unique

¹⁸ Brodie Waddell (ed.), *Addressing Authority: An Online Symposium on Petitions and Supplications in Early Modern Society* (2016), <https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/2016/11/01/addressing-authority/> [accessed 28.03.17].

¹⁹ Waddell, 'Addressing Authority: some concluding thoughts', in Waddell (ed.), *Addressing Authority*, <https://manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/2016/11/30/addressing-authority-some-concluding-thoughts/> [accessed 28.03.17].

²⁰ 'London Lives, 1690 to 1800', <https://www.londonlives.org/>.

characteristics, and so living through these types of wars was, in many ways, distinct from general warfare. Some of the war widows studied in this thesis had families who chose to fight for different sides. Additionally, there was no clear 'home front' (an area where the involvement of women has been fruitfully analysed) because war itself arrived on the doorsteps of many families.²¹ It was not the only civil war in history and so it could be useful to directly compare this research with the work on the women of the American Civil Wars, for example.²² The experience of civil wars may have been unique for women. Without the clear separation between military and civilian experiences, women had a greater part to play in all aspects of the wars.

Additionally, these were not the only wars in which women submitted documents to the authorities in order to seek financial remuneration following the death of a spouse. During the American Revolution loyalist women fled to Britain and joined thousands of others in submitting their claims of property destruction and debts to the Government. These archives reveal 'extraordinary stories of wartime devastation, adventure, and personal trauma'.²³ Additionally, during the American Civil Wars the links between the military and the domestic brought about 'an unprecedented commitment by the federal government to the welfare of military dependents'.²⁴ The records of the government's pension scheme, found at the National Archives, Washington D.C., have been digitised.²⁵ The case files relating to the approved pensions of widows include pro forma printed documents which outlined the widows' claim to a pension. They also contain manuscript additions that detailed the service and death of their husband, proof of their marriage, the number of children the widow had under 16, and their loyalty to the government.²⁶ These documents reveal that for

²¹ Maggie Andrews and Janis Lomas, 'Introduction to the Forthcoming Special Issue: Home Fronts, Gender War and Conflict', *Women's History Review* (Published Online: 15 June 2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2016.1148501>.

²² Susan-Mary Grant, 'When the Fires Burned Too Close to Home: southern women and the dislocations of the home front in the American Civil War', *Women's History Review* (Published Online: 12 April 2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2016.1148505>.

²³ Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's exiles: How the loss of America made the British Empire* (London: Harper Press, 2011), pp. 130-131.

²⁴ Megan J. McClintock, 'Civil War pensions and the reconstruction of Union families', *The Journal of American History*, 83, no.2 (1996), p. 458.

²⁵ They can be found at https://go.fold3.com/civilwar_records/ [accessed 12.04.17].

²⁶ See for example: Approved pension file for Cyrena Fandish, 12 July 1866, National Archives and Records Administration, Catalogue ID: 300020, Application number: WC64841,

American Civil War widows, eligibility to a pension was judged along similar lines as the widows of the Civil Wars in mid seventeenth-century England. The main differences were that poverty was not an important factor and instead that legal, and provable, marriage was.²⁷ Finally, during the wars of the twentieth-century widows also submitted petitions for pensions. Many women struggled against a system which penalised widows if they remarried and discriminated against those whose husbands had died after the wars had ended (even if they had died of war time injuries or disease).²⁸

Therefore, this research contributes to wider work which seeks to understand more about the role of civilians, and women in particular, during war time. The struggles that the widows of this thesis faced can be compared to those endured by others across different times and places in history. Even in the modern era, the petition continued to be a powerful tool for women who lost husbands during war time and who were seeking redress. The injustices that war created, in particular for women and children, did not disappear after the Civil Wars in England had ended. Nevertheless, women continued to supplicate the authorities in order to survive. The experience of war widows during the mid-seventeenth century has a vital contribution to make to that history.

<https://www.fold3.com/image/288309776> [accessed 12.04.17]; Approved pension file for Jincy Armstrong, 26 September 1886, National Archives and Records Administration, Catalogue ID: 300020, Application number: WC84678, <https://www.fold3.com/image/295956272> [accessed 12.04.17].

²⁷ For more on what happened when a widow could not prove her marriage see the case of Cordelia May (Brown) Farrington in: Russell L. Johnson, "‘Not one jot or tittle of evidence’: The Civil War pension files", *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, 30, no.2 (2011), pp. 77-89.

²⁸ Janis Lomas, "So I married again": Letters from British widows of the first and second world wars', *History Workshop Journal*, 38, no.1 (1994), pp. 218-227.

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