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The Manor and Church of Bagendon in the Civil War and Commonwealth

By JOHN PARSLOE

The turbulence in Cirencester in the first Civil War is well documented both by contemporaneous accounts and the many subsequent studies. Its location gave it strategic importance to both sides, and it changed hands repeatedly, declaring for Parliament in August 1642. It was captured by Prince Rupert in February 1643. Lord Essex occupied it briefly in August 1643, but the Royalist Sir Jacob Astley then became governor until 1645. It changed hands again later in that year, sometime between June and November, and was occupied by Edward Massey, governor of Gloucester.¹ Generally, the townsfolk supported the Parliamentarians, but the gentry and clergy were for the old Royalist order.

The situation in the surrounding villages, which unlike Cirencester often lacked a significant Nonconformist element, differed, with owners and inhabitants often more supportive of the king. It is harder to establish the course of events in them, and reliance has to be had on snippets of information in disparate sources, many of which are now helpfully collated in the draft *Victoria County History* of Cirencester and district.² Nevertheless, when considered together, a picture does emerge. A case in point is the rural parish of Bagendon, bisected by a tributary of the River Churn some 3 miles north-east of Cirencester. It was clearly Royalist.

Sir James Thynne

At the time of the Civil War, Sir James Thynne of Longleat House (Wilts.) was lord of the manor of Bagendon and owned the associated advowson of the church of St Margaret. Sir James had inherited in 1639 from his father, Sir Thomas Thynne. Bagendon was acquired for the family, along with Longleat and much else, by Sir James's great grandfather, Sir John Thynne, in 1549 following the Dissolution. It remained in the family until 1800, when it was sold by the second marquess of Bath. There is no record of Sir James having visited Bagendon, and the estate was managed by his steward. To understand the events at Bagendon it is necessary to outline Sir James's career and sequestration.

Sir James was knighted and joined the court of Charles I in 1639, the year his father died. Lady Caroline Thynne, the second wife of Sir Thomas, tried to persuade Sir Thomas on his deathbed to disinherit Sir James in favour of her son, Henry Frederick Thynne. Although she was not successful, Sir Thomas did make a new will, greatly favouring her and her son, who inherited

1. K.J. Beecham, *History of Cirencester* (1978). In the following article, records of Bagendon estates are from the 1684 survey (Longleat Archives [LA], NMR 2119) unless another reference is given. Biographical information is generally from *Alumni Oxonienses*, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, and the *Clergy of the Church of England Database* (<https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>).
2. Online drafts at: <https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/counties-z/gloucestershire-gloucestershire-vol-xvi-cirencester-district> (accessed 26 Sept. 2025).

some of his Gloucestershire estates, not apparently including Bagendon or Kempsford. Many years of litigation followed, lasting right into the Restoration. Sir James was a Royalist but was criticised for not taking up arms although he was an experienced soldier. He appears to have been most concerned with protecting the Longleat estate and pursuing his legal struggles with his stepmother and her son.³ In November 1640, Sir James was elected to the Long Parliament as a member for Wiltshire. But on 17 August 1641 he was found (following representations by Oliver Cromwell) to have misused his privilege as a member by obtaining copies of legal papers of his half-brother, Henry Frederick Thynne, with whom he was in litigation over the family estates.⁴

Probably as a result of this setback, in the following February 1642, Sir James quit the House of Commons. He joined the Oxford parliament of the king, which sat in two sessions from January 1642 until April 1644. While there, he bound himself as security for repayment of money lent to the king. In due course he had to pay these securities to Parliament.⁵ He was expelled from the Oxford parliament on 15 February 1643,⁶ and was sequestered in the second quarter of that year by the Sequestration Committee.⁷ Longleat was raided,⁸ and he lost property in Bristol.⁹ At some point he went to Exeter and was there when, on 13 April 1646, it fell to Sir Thomas Fairfax.¹⁰ Sir James then submitted to Parliament and received a pass from Sir Thomas dated 14 April 1646 to go to London to compound or to go abroad.¹¹ On 30 April, Sir James petitioned the Committee for Compounding for Delinquency.¹² On 24 July 1646 he compounded and swore the National Covenant and the Negative Oath.¹³

The procedure was for delinquents to give (on oath) particulars of their estates and personal property and pledge not to take up arms again against Parliament. They then paid a fine and, on paying it, or a half of it, recovered their estates with the recovery backdated to the date of compounding – in Sir James's case, 24 July 1646. Sir James signed a particular of his estates dated 4 August 1646 and a revised copy on which a proposed fine was assessed on 15 August 1646.¹⁴ Sir James relied on the Articles of Exeter devised by Sir Thomas Fairfax which provided that the fine for compounding on realty was twice the annual value or a tenth of the capital value of a freehold estate; the capital value was considered to be worth 20 times its annual value. The fine was fixed by the Committee at £3,696, reduced to £3,100 if he made payments for the maintenance of two ministries.¹⁵ On 24 December 1646, Sir James was discharged.¹⁶

The process of compounding was not completed for some time because of the legal disputes with Lady Thynne and Sir Henry Frederick and the confusion between Sir James and Sir Henry's estates. Sir James was disputing Sir Henry's claim to Shropshire estates and to Buckland in

3. D. Burnett, *Longleat: The Story of an English Country House* (1978), 49–52.
4. J. Waylen, 'The Wiltshire compounders', *Wilts. Archaeol. & Nat. Hist. Soc. Mag.* 24 (1888–9), 330–5.
5. The National Archives [TNA], SP 19/21/153, 179; SP 19/125/142–3, 169, 75; SP 19/8/87.
6. *Commons Jnl*, 15 Feb. 1643.
7. TNA, SP 23/123/255.
8. Burnett, *Longleat*, 50.
9. TNA, SP 23/196/865.
10. *Ibid.* SP 23/196/847.
11. *Ibid.* SP 23/196/877.
12. *Ibid.* SP 23/196/874. The Committee was also known as the Goldsmith's Hall Committee as it met there.
13. *Ibid.* SP 23/196/847. The National Covenant was the Solemn League and Covenant to defend the nation's religion. The Negative Oath was not to take up arms against Parliament. Sir James's compounding was deemed to date from this day, so that he was entitled to all rents and profits thereafter.
14. *Ibid.* SP 23/196/843–9.
15. *Ibid.* SP 23/196/849.
16. *Ibid.* SP 23/123/255. However, in *ibid.* SP 23/196/851 it is stated he compounded on 30 Jan. 1646/7.

Gloucestershire. In addition, a third of many of his lands were claimed by Lady Thynne for dower and two thirds for arrears of dower. It was only in the 1650s with court decisions and Lady Thynne's death that he obtained control of many of his estates. Sir James's ownership of Bagendon does not appear to have been disputed, but it was still only on 15 June 1648 that the House of Commons issued an ordinance (with which the House of Lords concurred on 8 September) accepting payment of the fine of £3,100 (with the increases to the maintenance of two ministries).¹⁷ Although Sir James was only discharged in December, money from the fine was included in an order of the House of Commons of 6 October 1646 to pay for disbanding the army in Wiltshire.¹⁸ Presumably Sir James had made payment of half the fine before then. In later years, Sir James had to make further payments for other lands and for his guarantees of the loans to the king.

Although the first Civil War was over, there was still unrest. The years 1647 and 1648 were marked by disputes between Parliament and the army. Members of the latter were disaffected by arrears of pay and were either being discharged or enrolled for service in Ireland. But there was talk of mutiny, and in February there were problems with troops bound for Ireland, two captains being reprimanded for taking free quarter near Cirencester.¹⁹

The Manor

Sir James's grandfather, Sir John Thynne, as explained above, acquired the manor of Bagendon and many other lands from the Crown in 1549 following the execution of Edward Seymour, 1st duke of Somerset, for whom Sir John had been steward. The Bagendon estate had two main holdings, the chief house and demesne, otherwise known as Bagendon Farm and Moore House. A 'valor' of 1558 values the manor at £14 19s. 6d., of which £4 13s. 4d. was for the Farm and £10 6s. 2d. for customary tenants. The manor did not include the whole parish, and there was a substantial freehold acquired in 1504 by John Marshall, whose son Thomas was renting the Farm at the time of the valor.

Following the death of Sir James's father, Sir Thomas, on 1 August 1639, there was an account made for the years 26 March 1639 to 25 March 1641.²⁰ The annual rental of the manor was then £15 8s. 1d. Bagendon Farm was now rented by James Dowle, gentleman, at an unchanged rent of £4 13s. 4d. Moore House was held by Alice Eycott, the mother of the manor bailiff, Richard Eycott, in free bench, following the death of her husband, John Eycott, some ten years earlier. He had held the property by copy of court roll since 1628. The account also mentions a cottage and 8 perches of land carved from the land of Bagendon Farm. It had been held by John Cranage, a retired steward of Sir John Thynne, for 6d. annual rent, but now it had an improved rent of 3s. 4d.

Sequestration

It was Richard Eycott, ('the receiver of rents and revenues', or bailiff) who recorded the rental of Bagendon as £15 8s. 1d. This must have been convenient for the sequestrators. Pre-war values were used for sequestration fines and the fine in Sir James's case was two years rental or, as explained, one tenth of the capital value which was calculated for a freehold at 20 years purchase. For land held in tail the fine could be (but was not always) lower.

17. *Commons Jnl*, 15 June 1648; *Lords Jnl*, 8 Sept. 1648.

18. *Commons Jnl*, 6 Oct. 1646, apparently anticipating payment of the fine by Sir James.

19. J. Rushworth, *A True Relation of Disbanding the Supernumerary Forces ...* (1648), Oxford Text Archive, <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12024/A92126> (accessed 26 Sept. 2025).

20. LA, TH/Book XXXIV, f. 1.

Among the papers of the Committee for Compounding regarding Sir James is a record dated 18 June 1653 of the returns from the late sequestration committees for Gloucestershire and Somerset and the dates of sequestrations.²¹ This notes that Sir James's Gloucestershire estates were sequestrated on 4 September 1644, and a particular was returned to Parliament on 9 September showing the rents at Bagendon as £15 15s. 1d.; but no return was made of a living there which had lately fallen in. This record was probably made because of the continuing dispute between the Thynne brothers following the death of Lady Katherine Thynne in 1650.

Thus, although Sir James was sequestrated in the second quarter of 1643, the Gloucestershire Sequestration Committee only sequestrated his Gloucestershire estates on 4 September 1644. This was because Bagendon is only 3 miles from Cirencester. While, in March 1643, Sir William Waller temporarily recovered Cirencester, it is clear that the Royalists thereafter regained control at least until Sir Jacob Astley left with the garrison in the summer of 1644. By February 1645, however, Edward Massey, governor of Gloucester, could 'raise the country' around Cirencester,²² and thereafter Bagendon must have been under Parliamentary control.

The first of the two particulars of the yearly values of his estates signed by Sir James refers to old rent at Bagendon valued at £14 and a tenement at £25, so totalling £39. The second refers to old rent at Bagendon of £10 and demesnes of £20, totalling £30. These accounts are related to the reports dated 4 and 15 August 1646.²³ The latter states that Bagendon is held in fee tail. It is hard to reconcile either figure with the earlier ones, but it was common practice for delinquents to try to undervalue estates.

Administration of the Manor

At this time the main sources are a survey of 1684 describing the tenancies of the manor, a 1700 schedule of tenancies and the counterpart contracts and bailiffs' accounts.²⁴ While tenancies were traditionally copyhold and held by copy of court roll, in this period there was a change to more remunerative leases, with substantial fines for lives with a term of 99 years if the named lives lived so long. Accounts started with the traditional rents of the manor, but excluded demesne leases. They then added new or improved rents and finally subtracted allowances and rents no longer received.

The Civil War and its aftermath disrupted administration, and the next bailiff's account by John Eycott covered 12½ years from 29 March 1641 to 24 September 1653. The account records the death of the widow Alice Eycott of Moore House around Christmas 1643 (in fact she was buried on 4 December 1642). The property passed to her son Richard by copy of court roll on 25 March apparently in 1646,²⁵ but backdated to 1644 with an improved rent of £30 per annum; this rent was sequestrated in 1644 and 1645 and only paid to Sir James in 1646, after which the lease was in effect. It is possible this grant was made by the Gloucester Sequestration Committee, as explained below. The account also claims relief for £37 10s. 2d. for rent sequestrated for 2½ years. Claims were also made for a debt to the Exchequer and for Lady Katherine's dower.²⁶

21. TNA, SP 23/123/255 (transcription available on author's website: <https://parsloe.info/>).

22. J. Corbet, *An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester ...* (1645), 87, Oxford Text Archive, <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12024/A34531>.

23. TNA, SP 23/196/843–61.

24. LA, NMR 2119; TNA, C 108/182; LA, TH/Books and Vols.

25. The court baron apparently of 25 Mar. 1646 (LA, TH/Book XII, ff. 32v.–33v.) records the grant to Richard Eycott, but the 1684 survey (LA, NMR 2119) dates the grant as 25 Mar. 1644 when recording the free bench of Alice Eycott, Richard's mother.

26. LA, TH/Book XL, f. 8.

The administration of Bagendon continued despite the Civil War. It seems that even when an estate was sequestrated the steward could still hold courts and continue a manor's administration. Although this was rarely done, it was for Bagendon, if a court baron is correctly dated to 25 March 1646. Two courts baron, presided over by Henry Gould, Sir James's steward, were held in this period.²⁷ The first, probably dated 25 March 1646, includes the grant of Moore House to Richard Eycott with the high fine of £460 for his and his son Thomas's life. There were also an unusual number of presentments for repairs of estates. At this time Sir James was in Exeter and the sequestration was in force. John How or Howe is recorded as a freeholder in this first court baron. Previously, on 10 November 1644, he had granted a lease of a tenement called Beares Hey.²⁸ This confirms his acquisition of the Marshall freehold at least from that date. The freehold at this time included a number of holdings created from it by the Marshall family and leased out between 1607 and 1630. As a freeholder, How owed suit and service at the lord's court and paid a chief rent of 4*d.* How was high sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1650. He became Sir John Howe, 1st baronet, in 1660 on changing sides to support Charles II.²⁹ The second court baron, if held on 25 March 1647, was after Sir James had compounded and been discharged. In it, Thomas Harbert claimed a property called Wrights in reversion, with a rent of 13*s.* 4*d.*, following the death of Elizabeth Harbert widow, for his life and that of his brother Michael.

The woods

Compounding must have been painful for Sir James, and he was much troubled by an attempt to sell his Bagendon woods. Following his compounding on 24 July 1646, and the determination of his fine of £3,100 on 15 October 1646,³⁰ Sir James petitioned the Committee for Compounding on 24 December 1646 (being the day he was discharged)³¹ claiming that his underwoods at Bagendon had been sold to one of the sequestrators for £45, of which only £6 was paid, and asking to be allowed to buy them back as he had compounded, relying on the Articles of Exeter.³² An order dated 29 December 1646 was issued to this effect.³³ It is not surprising that Sir James wanted to stop the felling and buy the timber back.³⁴ He needed cash to pay the fine, and harvesting timber was a fairly quick way of raising it.

27. Ibid. TH/Book XII, f. 32. The first court is dated either 25 Mar. 1640 or 1646, and must be the latter, as it records Alice Eycott's death, which was in 1642. But as 25 Mar. was the first day of the new year, this means the court was held during Sir James's sequestration. This is possible but unusual. The second court is dated 26 Mar. *anno XXII Caroli* and *anno domini 1646*. Both dates cannot be right. 26 Mar. is the second day of the year, and the 22nd regnal year of Charles I ran from 27 Mar. 1646 to 26 Mar. 1647. So, the correct date was probably 26 Mar. 1647.
28. To William Coates and Mary Tomes of North Cerny spinster, obviously in view of their forthcoming marriage: LA, NMR 2119, 1684 survey; TNA, C 108/182, leases to 1700.
29. A.R. Williams, *Parliamentary History of the County of Gloucester* (1898), 57, John Howe; *Hist. Parl.* (online), s.v. John Grabham Howe. Although high sheriff in 1650 and elected MP for Glos. in both 1654 and 1656, he and his son John Grabham Howe were heavily involved in plotting for the Restoration. Howe was swiftly rewarded with a baronetcy by Charles II in Sept. 1660.
30. TNA, SP 23/196/849.
31. Ibid. SP 23/123/255, but see note 16 above.
32. Ibid. SP 23/123/238 (transcription available at <https://parsloe.info/>).
33. Ibid. SP 23/3/354; SP 23/123/238.
34. The timber was in an estate called Moor Wood. The bailiff's account (LA, TH/Book XXXIV, f. 1) records payments of 5*s.* 2*d.* for hedging there and 1*s.* for hauling a load of timber to Bagendon. In the early 18th cent. it was let to the Eycott family, but after the lease ended in 1729 it was retained 'in hand' and was still unlet at the time of the enclosure in 1792.

A letter to Sir James dated 21 September 1646 from Charles Robson, who as described below was appointed rector of Bagendon in 1644, explains the background to the petition.³⁵ He refers to Richard Eycott, Sir James's bailiff at Bagendon, going repeatedly to Gloucester to the Sequestration Committee: 'to solicit the dispatch of his newe and disloyall purchase but as yet hath had noe successe: and old Mr Rich told me is not like to have (for by his industry and Care the Committee are taken of [i.e. 'off'] from their further resolve of intermedling with your preiudice)'. This appears to relate to the woods as later in the letter Robson writes: 'ffor your wood one John Cooke a stickler in Sequestrations hath purchased it of the Committee and your friend Richard Eycot, for your good as is pretended hath instled [?installed] himselfe into a halfe with him'. Mr Rich was Thomas Rich of North Cerney, Sir James's lawyer, and clearly Robson was bad-mouthing Eycott.

On 6 October 1646, Eycott himself wrote to Sir James describing his so far unsuccessful efforts to persuade John Cook and a second purchaser called Bellinger to compromise over the wood sale. He also enclosed a notice from the Committee to himself to attend for a grant of a lease of his living, as otherwise they would grant it to another. Eycott did attend the Committee, commenting drily that: 'I applied according to their Letter, and notified them of your Composition what satisfaction they received I know not'. He then politely urged Sir James to complete urgently the discharge of the sequestration.³⁶ It seems possible from the 1641–53 account that the Committee granted Eycott his Moore House estate at a high rack rent of £30 per annum, even though he already held it as a customary tenant. Sir James did recover and harvest his timber, as appears from a second letter to him from Robson dated 2 February 1646/7: 'I can not therefore conceive it as standing with your Consent but rather the officiousnes of your Bailiffe that I am denied the tyth of your wood nowe Cutt down'.³⁷

Next Eycott wrote to Sir James's steward, as 'Henrie Gould' on 16 May 1647: 'Sir I seed Mr Rich about the payment of the mony for the Woodes due at Christmas And I have his hand that it was cleared to Sr James yet this will nothing prevaile wth Glouc Committee. Mr Rich advises if noe remedie could be had here, to write up to you that the Committee of Gold Smiths Hall might be petitioned, and he made noe doubt of Releife'.³⁸ There must have been a dispute over repayment of the money for the wood, but there is no further record other than a reference in the 1641–53 account to the wood sold by the Committee of Gloucester. It is clear Sir James sided with his bailiff, Richard Eycott, rather than his rector, Charles Robson, who were obviously at odds. Robson had left by 1649 at the latest, whereas Eycott lent Sir James £800 on mortgage and was still bailiff in the 1660s.

After sequestration

In the period after the second court baron in 1647 until the Restoration, Sir James gradually regained control and increased his holdings of the manor. On 16 February 1649, Sir James granted a lease of Bagendon farm at the traditional rent of £4 13s. 4d. to Gyles Dowle and his wife Mary,

35. LA, TH/Book IX, f. 253.

36. Ibid. f. 258.

37. Ibid. f. 262. In the letter Robson states that Mr Burton engaged not to demand tithe wood, but that his personal engagement did not bind his successors, and that Sir Thomas Thynne (Sir James's father), finding the tithe was due both by law and custom of the whole country, allowed it to Mr Hughes. Burton was Richard Burton, who became rector in 1578, following a disputed appointment by John Cranage, Sir John Thynne's former steward. Thomas Hughes was Robson's predecessor appointed in 1634 by Sir Thomas.

38. Ibid. TH/Book X, f. 294.

to commence after the death of Gyles's father James, the existing tenant. The Dowles came from Chedworth and were gentry.³⁹ This lease is followed by a deed dated 18 January 1650 catalogued as a counterpart lease, which I suspect was executed for fear that Sir James would suffer a second sequestration invalidating the Dowle lease which it recites. Sir James then undertakes to execute a fine before the next Easter Term *sur cognizance de droit comme ceo que il ad de son done* to Richard Wilkinson and Henry Gold and their heirs so that they are seized of the demised premises and will hold them to the use of Gyles Dowle and his heirs for the term of the lease and thereafter to the use of Sir James and his heirs.⁴⁰ The Marshall freehold was conveyed by John Howe to Gyles Dowle at some time between 1647, when Howe granted another lease,⁴¹ and 1650, when Gyles Dowle granted one. In a 1653 court baron, Gyles Dowle is named as freeholder.⁴² There were a number of leases on the lives of the tenants granted by Gyles Dowle in 1650, 1653, 1655, 1656, 1660 and 1661(2).⁴³ They were of parts of the Marshall freehold property which Gyles acquired from John Howe.

Besides granting the lease to Gyles Dowle in 1649, Sir James granted other tenancies in the 1650s,⁴⁴ and was clearly interested in the estate, quite apart from repeated sales of timber. On 20 January 1650/1, Edward Rich (son of Thomas)⁴⁵ wrote to Sir James supporting his plan for an inn or place for entertainment of travellers to be built at Barrows Bridge in the east of the parish, where the Welsh Way crossed the River Churn. It seems Elizabeth, wife of Leonard Ravenhill, the proposed innkeeper, informed Rich that Sir James wanted his opinion. The inn was duly built, presumably without puritan objection, on land originally leased to John Denton and occupied by his widow Alice.

1653 was the first year of the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. It was significant not only for the Committee for Compounding note of sequestrations, and for the 1641–53 bailiff's account, but also for the first court baron of Bagendon since 1647. This was held on 26 October and, in it, John Denton's widow Alice released the land on which the inn was built in return for free bench on her other property. Leonard Ravenhill and his son Thomas were then granted 3½ acres on the surrendered land called the Upper Moore on which 'a house was lately built'. This was the origin of the old Bear Inn.⁴⁶

Also in 1653 is an indenture of 31 May, which is catalogued as a mortgage, but is in fact a surrender or mortgage reconveyance. In it, James Dowle of Bagendon and Gyles Dowle of Chedworth, both gentlemen, for £1,000 each, and Richard Eycott of Bagendon, yeoman, for £800, convey all their property in Bagendon to make Sir James a tertenant with provision for a common recovery. But

39. Ibid. NMR 2015–16.

40. Ibid. 2017. This was a fine of land upon acknowledgement of the right (of the cognizee) as that which he has by the gift (of his cognizor), wherein the cognizor acknowledges his gift of the land to the plaintiff, the cognizee. Richard Wilkinson was presumably trustee for Dowle, and Henry Gold or Gould is Sir James's steward.

41. 25 Mar. 1647 (being the day before the second court baron): John Howe to Nicholas Marchant and Jane his wife and Elizabeth his daughter of Hills. Value £12. Rent 10s. Fine £164 for 3 lives. LA, NMR 2014.

42. Dowle is presented in the 1653 court as a free suitor failing to appear; (LA, TH/Book XII, f. 32v.).

43. LA, NMR 2018, 2019, 2021, 2024, 2145, 2119. For details, see <https://parsloe.info/>.

44. Ibid. 2020, 2022. For details, see <https://parsloe.info/>.

45. Edward Rich (d. 1680) was the third son of Thomas Rich of North Cerney (d. 1647). He had presumably taken over as Sir James's lawyer and was a bencher of Lincoln's Inn. See also note 51 and related text.

46. For the subsequent history of this inn, J. Parsloe, 'The Bear inn at Perrotts Brook', *Genealogists' Mag.* 33(8) (2020), also available at <https://parsloe.info/>.

it is provided that the deed is void if Sir James does not pay by the following 2 July.⁴⁷ As Sir James appears to have settled his sequestration problems at this time, he may have been repaying money borrowed to pay the fine in 1646. But it seems he failed to pay the Dowles. For, during the next ten years, Gyles Dowle granted a number of leases of the Marshall freehold, which he could not have done if the surrender had been made. It was only in 1663 that the surrender took place. It is unclear whether Richard Eycott was paid or whether Sir James came to some other arrangement, perhaps waiving the large fine of £460 for the Moore.

The first document after the Restoration is a deed of sale dated 25 November 1661 made between Gyles Dowle, his wife Mary and John (now Sir John) Howe of the first part and Sir James of the second.⁴⁸ In consideration of £140 paid to Gyles Dowle and 5s. paid to Sir John Howe, Dowle and Howe convey all their freehold property in Bagendon to Sir James subject to one lease granted by Marshall and the five leases granted by Dowle. This document is described as a purchase of leaseholds 'then fully estated'.⁴⁹ Presumably Sir John Howe joined because he had granted one of the original leases.

Finally, on 30 June 1663, Sir James and James and Gyles Dowle executed a further surrender, in similar form to the 1653 one, again with payment required of £1,000 to each Dowle by the following 10 December.⁵⁰ Thus Sir James finally redeemed the mortgage and acquired the Marshall freehold.

Connections

It was naturally not unusual for delinquents to try to avoid or mitigate the effects of sequestration and, above all, avoid the permanent loss of their property. Cases of undervaluing and disguising transactions, such as pretending a mortgage was a sale, were frequently found. In the case of Bagendon, the lack of some of the documents makes it difficult fully to understand the machinery of resistance. But it is apparent that there was a collusive arrangement between Howe, the Dowles and Sir James in the mortgage arrangement. For these were not arm's-length transactions. The amounts involved seem large for the value of the manor, but are suspiciously close to the amount of the sequestration fine.

Any doubt is resolved by the fact that Sir James was married to Lady Isabella Rich, daughter of Henry Rich, 1st earl of Holland. Sir James's lawyer, Thomas Rich, was descended from an illegitimate son of Henry's grandfather. Both John Howe and Job Dowle were Thomas's sons-in-law.⁵¹ Thomas Rich was a Master in Chancery and inherited a large estate in Lexden (Essex), but moved to North Cerney, where he is commemorated by a monument in the church. He had 15 children, among whom were Bridget, who married John Howe in 1620, Mary, who married Gyles Dowle of Chedworth, and his third son, Edward (1603–80), who was a bencher at Lincoln's Inn and succeeded his father as Sir James's lawyer. John Howe's son, John Grabham Howe, married a daughter of Henry Rich. Certainly, as will appear below, both the Dowles and Eycotts were Royalists. Gyles Dowle was James Dowle's eldest son, and he had two more sons, Clement and Job, who was described as a 'rude cavalier'.⁵²

47. LA, NMR 1984. A *tertenant* was a 'terre tenant', that is one in actual possession of land. No recovery was found in a search at TNA.

48. *Ibid.* NMR 2003.

49. *Ibid.* Book 83: 'Rentals to 1675'.

50. *Ibid.* NMR 1945.

51. F. Fitz-Roy and W.C. Metcalfe, *Visitation of the County of Gloucester 1683* (1884), 143; <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Rich-546>; <https://www.geni.com/surnames/rich> (accessed 26 Sept. 2025).

52. H. Jessey, *The Lords Loud Call to England ...* (1660), Oxford Text Archive, <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12024/A46841>.

The church

Between 1642 and 1661 Bagendon had seven rectors: Thomas Hughes, John Swayne, Charles Robson, William Mountstephens (otherwise Mounstevens or Mount Stephens), Thomas Payne, Edward Fletcher and Richard Hall. Hughes was appointed by Sir James's father and the others by Sir James with the exception of Edward Fletcher, who was appointed by Cromwell. Apart from Fletcher, all seem to have been episcopalian and on the Royalist side.

The procedure at this time for appointing a rector was for the patron owning the advowson (in this case Sir James or, before him, his father) to present a chosen candidate for the benefice to the local bishop. The candidate would normally have a degree and be ordained. Unless the bishop refused either the presentation or the admission, he or his deputy would then physically admit the candidate by formal institution at the church after the candidate had compounded the first fruits of the benefice (i.e. agreed to pay to the Crown its annual value as fixed by Henry VIII).⁵³ It was paid in four six-monthly instalments, with the first instalment six months after institution. The incumbent had to give a bond for payment with two sureties. During the Civil War and under the Commonwealth, the position was uncertain, but generally a patron could still present to a living provided he was not a delinquent or a papist.⁵⁴

The Bagendon parish register reflects the disturbed times (Fig. 1).⁵⁵ The period 1640–9 is on one page in three different hands. The first writing, with just single entries for 1640, 1642 and 1643, differs from that for 1639 on the previous page. The writing below is faded or possibly poorly erased. It covers 1644 and 1645 and is hard to read. Below, covering 1648 and 1649, is a clear hand in black, including an entry later inserted in the 1644 section, recording the marriage of the then rector Charles Robson to Margaret Maynard on 30 July. The next page starts with the baptism of Ann, daughter of the then rector, William Mountstephens, on 8 August 1650. At the bottom of this page (and the top of the next page) are other entries for 1650–2. In between, there are entries for the Dowle family, which must have been later insertions. While John Swaine may have made the entries from 1642–3, and William Mountstephens those from 1650–2, Thomas Payne and Edward Fletcher appear to have made none. The black entries are probably by Charles Robson. It was in 1653 that the Barebones Parliament enacted that church marriages should be replaced by civil ones, and that the parish register should be taken from the minister and maintained by a 'parish registrar' elected by the ratepayers. It is, therefore, not surprising that entries end after 1652 in Bagendon, but they do not resume until 1674. The reason may be given by a note at the bottom of the first page: 'I received this Register from one of the Churchwardens (in whose possession it had been for a long time) in a very imperfect state, John Chapman'. Unfortunately, John Chapman is unknown, but the Dowle entries suggest the churchwarden was Job Dowle.

The first change of rector was caused by the death of Thomas Hughes, MA. He was rector of Bagendon from 1634, and of Farmington from 1635. His death in 1642 was first recorded on 16 May. His tenure may have been fairly tranquil for, in 1603, it was recorded that there were no Popish recusants or Dissenters in the parish.⁵⁶ Interestingly, this was still the position in 1676 when the Compton Census was taken.⁵⁷

53. The first fruits were the annual value of the benefice paid to the Crown by the incumbent when a vacancy was filled under the Act of First Fruits and Tenths of 1534. A tenth of the income was paid in subsequent years.

54. A.G. Mathews, *Calamy Revised* (1934), p. lxxii.

55. Glos. Archives [GA], P33/IN/1/1.

56. A. Dyer and D.M. Palliser (eds), *Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603* (2005), 339.

57. A. Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census of 1676* (1986), 541.

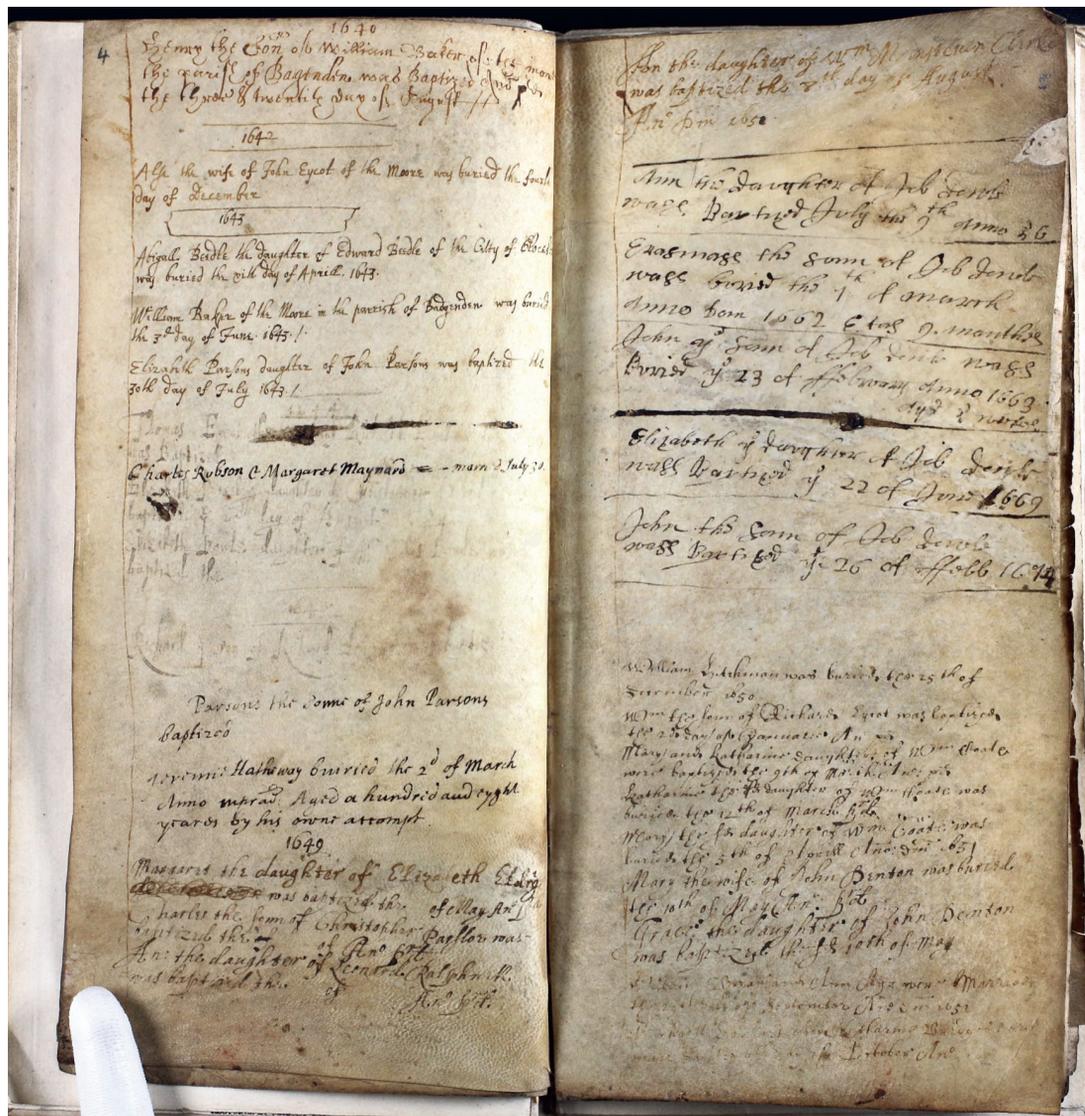


Fig. 1 Pages 4 and 5 of the first Bagendon parish register: GA, P33/IN/1/1. Reproduced by kind permission of Gloucestershire Archives.

John Swayne was the next rector instituted on 20 May 1642. He was the son of John Swayne of Tarrant Gunville (Dorset), gentleman, matriculating, aged 16, at Trinity College, Oxford in 1631 and becoming BA in 1635 and BCL in 1636 from Pembroke College, Oxford. He was ordained in 1637. Swayne was at Bagendon when Lord Chandos was chased from Cirencester and his coach destroyed, leading to the start of the Civil War on 22 August 1642. He must also have been affected in February 1643 by the dramatic Royalist capture of Cirencester and the taking of the prisoners to Oxford. After taking the town, Prince Rupert summoned the local gentry to Cirencester, where they agreed to raise £4,000 monthly as aid to the king from their own

subscriptions and compulsory payments from the people amongst whom they dwelt.⁵⁸ The cost of paying for the Royalist garrison was doubtless unpopular. Swayne did not stay long at Bagendon. William Holloway, Sir James's steward, noted: 'Bagendon rectorie: Mr Swayne desired my master to leave that church that he please to present some other person to the rectorie & this his request was read at Longleat x^o Dec 1643'.⁵⁹ The next rector was appointed in the following month, and John Swayne became rector of Codford St Peter (Wilts.) in February 1645. He remained there until his death in 1681, after being licensed to preach throughout the diocese in 1674, which indicates he was a conformist.

Charles Robson was in his fifties when Sir James presented him as rector on 28 January 1644. He was an MA of St John's College, Cambridge. From 1633–9 he was Stratford Prebendary of Salisbury cathedral, and before that, vicar first of Weare (Som.) and then of Buckland Abbas (i.e. Buckland Newton, Dorset). The Bagendon particular of 9 September 1644 states that no return is made of the living which lately fell to Sir James.⁶⁰ Although Sir James had been sequestrated in London, it was probably because the Gloucester Committee for Compounding had yet to take any action that Sir James was able to make this presentation of Robson.

It is noteworthy that the parish register records that Robson publicly subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles and 'declared his full Assent and Consent to the whole contents thereof as most agreeable to the Holy Scriptures and the word of God'.⁶¹ Puritans opposed this reading, as it had been mandated by Archbishop Laud and, like the Book of Common Prayer, was considered too close to Catholicism.⁶² It was only a year later, in January 1645, that Parliament outlawed the use of the Book of Common Prayer; not, as will appear, that it stopped Robson using it.

The register notes the reading was in the presence of and signed by Gyles Dowle, Richard Eycott, James Biddle, Humphrey Bridges and William Chandler.⁶³ Gyles Dowle's father James and Richard Eycott were, as we have seen, the tenants of the largest estates in Bagendon. Gyles and Richard both signed their names. The other three were yeoman and signed by mark. These names identify five of the 15 families noted in the church survey of Bagendon in 1650 referred to below. Other families include that of Christopher Parsloe (a yeoman renting a property in Bagendon owned by John George of Baunton), of Thomas Harbert (a tenant of a property called Wrights) and of Hathaway, Eldridge, Ravenhill, Hitchman, Coates, Denton and Age, whose names appear in the parish register at this time.

Christopher Parsloe christened his son Charles at Bagendon at some time during 1649. King Charles I was executed on 30 January in that year, and so it is reasonable to think Christopher was a Royalist. He also shopped around for the baptism of his other children. Richard was baptised at Stratton on 30 August 1642, after the death of William Hughes and probably before the appointment of John Swayne. If the faded handwriting is read correctly, Elizabeth was baptised in Bagendon on 20 August 1644, and finally John at Baunton on 24 August 1646, in which year there may have been no rector at Bagendon and there are no entries in the parish register. Of the baptism of Christopher's son William there is no record, but he was older than John.

In 1642 the Roman Catholic Sheldon family owned Stratton and were presumably Royalists.⁶⁴ In 1650 Mr John Arden was a 'preaching minister' there. He had been rector since 1625. In Baunton in 1650 was 'one Mr Topp ... that preacheth'. This was Henry Topp, a former expelled

58. Beecham, *Hist. of Cirencester*, 38, quoting *Marcus Aurelius*, 6 Feb. 1642/3, for the loans.

59. LA, TH/Vol. LXII, f. 46.

60. TNA, SP 23/123/255 (transcription available at <https://parsloe.info/>).

61. GA, P33/IN/1/1.

62. M.D. Thompson, *The Origin and Subscription of the Thirty-nine Articles* (2018), 135–50.

63. GA, P33/IN/1/1 (transcription available at <https://parsloe.info/>).

64. A.R. Warmington, *Civil War, Interregnum and Restoration* (1997), 110.

Cirencester schoolmaster, listed as a 'sufferer'.⁶⁵ The lord of Baunton manor, John George, who was Christopher Parsloe's landlord, was originally a local MP for Cirencester supporting Parliament. He was taken prisoner when Cirencester fell to the Royalists, but then obtained the king's pardon and was subsequently sequestrated and expelled from Parliament.⁶⁶

Distraint and Distress

Even though Bagendon was no longer sequestrated, these were troubled times, as appears from two letters to Sir James's steward, Henry Gould. The first letter,⁶⁷ dated 15 June 1647, from James Dowle and Richard Eycott, encloses the sheriff's charge and explains that the sheriff's bailiffs distrained at least 60 cattle and kept them 'at excessive cost and charge of ours'. They could only secure their release by paying the £20 which it seemed meant their lending to their neighbours 'each in proportion'. They then borrowed the money on security from the sheriff, but had to repay it by 24 June. Dowle and Eycott then asked Gould to secure a discharge from the sheriff before 24 June and believed it could be done by a motion in the Exchequer because the manor of Kempford had a demesne of a greater value in the hands of the lord. They believed some underhand dealing by some in Kempford with the sheriff to lay the whole on the small manor of Bagendon and free the greater manor of Kempford. They asked Gould to do his best to endeavour to free them and to acquaint their landlord who 'we are assured will be willing and forward to doe the poore tenants right and to free his owne land'.

In the second letter,⁶⁸ to Henry Gould, dated 6 February 1648, Richard Eycott referred to Gould having informed him in an earlier letter that he had discharged the seizure of Bagendon and suggested that 'the feare was more than the hurt'. Eycott then explained that Mr Gyles Dowle and he had shown the letter sent by Gould and the 'charg and discharg' to 'Mr under sheriff', who seemed to them satisfied, but that on 4 February seven or eight of his men drove 'six kine great with calfe' off Richard's land and that he had to pay £20 charges on Kempford and Bagendon plus 26s. charges for their release, this being the third time in a year that cattle had been taken away. Eycott asked Gould to take up the case with the sheriff who was in London. The story has a relatively happy ending, for Richard Eycott's account for 1641–53 records that he was allowed '£25 12s. 6d. for distresses at Bagendon for a debt forth of the Exchequer and about the busines of ye Lady Katherine's dower'.⁶⁹ Whether he received the excessive cost of keeping the distrained cattle is unclear.

Returning to Charles Robson, he probably left Bagendon in 1649. He is then found in Barbados in an account dated 18 November 1652 from Richard Higgins, a local magistrate there. The court in Barbados had ordered the surrender of the Book of Common Prayer and prohibited its use in pursuance of the 1645 Act of Parliament. There was outward compliance in all parishes except by 'Mr Charles Robson, Parson of All Saints, a canonical Creature, formerly a Prebendary of Salisbury, infamous heare also for his Zeale to corrupt and disturbe the Mindes of otherwise peaceably affected People'. Robson peremptorily refused to deliver the Book, and affirmed he would 'reade it, and dispute it, and offered a Paper. The Court answered, they sate not there to dispute, but see the Authority of Parliament obeyed, the said Robson encourageinge the People now to stand to it or never'. When the court attempted to arrest him, the 'distempered multitude'

65. A.G. Mathews, *Walker Revised* (1948), 177–8.

66. Williams, *Parl. Hist.*, 157.

67. LA, NMR 1946.1.

68. *Ibid.* TH/Book X, f. 303.

69. *Ibid.* TH/Book XL, f. 8.

rescued him, and a riot ensued. The court then adjourned. This account is contained in a letter to Henry Scobill, the clerk of parliament, seeking zealous ministers to come to the island.⁷⁰

The next rectors

The next rector, William Mountstephens, was the son of William Mounstephens of St Mabyn (Cornwall). He was a BA and matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford, on 21 June 1633, aged 20. It is not clear when Mountstephens took over from Charles Robson, but he was a defendant in a Chancery case dated 19 June 1649 in which he is referred to as 'of Bagendon',⁷¹ so he may well have been rector when King Charles I was executed on 30 January. In August 1650 he baptised his daughter at Bagendon. It was also in 1650 that the church survey recorded 'William Mount Stephens' as a preacher in Bagendon who had the profits. The survey found that there was a parsonage there worth £40 and that there were 15 families.⁷² The use of the word 'preacher' may suggest he had not been appointed rector, and he is referred to as 'clerke' in the record of his daughter's baptism. On 18 November 1652 he compounded for the first fruits of Coates, becoming rector there.⁷³ He was again involved in litigation in 1661,⁷⁴ and is then noted as subscribing to the Act of Conformity on 16 August 1662.

Mountstephens was very soon succeeded by Thomas Payne, who compounded for the first fruits on 14 February 1653.⁷⁵ His appointment was not subject to the new tests of the Triers. It was only on the following 15 December that the Protectorate was proclaimed, followed by the Instrument of Government on 1 January 1654, and the creation of the Commission for the Approbation of Public Preachers (the Triers) on 20 March. Thomas was from Gloucestershire and matriculated at St Alban Hall, Oxford, on 3 February 1608/9, aged 17, becoming BA in 1612. He was instituted and appointed simultaneously vicar of Longbridge Deverill and Monkton Deverill (Wilts.) on 30 October 1622 and is also recorded as curate of neighbouring Hill Deverill from 1625 to 1641. His will is dated 20 February 1657/8 and probate was on 1 May 1658.⁷⁶ He left a wife and two sons, both of whom were clergy. Interestingly, he made 'well beloved in Christ James Dowle gent of Badgington and Richard Eycott of the same parish gent' his overseers. They were named as present at Robson's subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles and opposed the next rector, Edward Fletcher. So it was only in 1657, after the 1654 Instrument of Government of the Cromwellian church, that a presentation was not made by Sir James.

70. Z. Grey, *An Impartial Examination of the Fourth Volume of Mr. Daniel Neal's History of the Puritans* (1739), App. pp. 24–7 (copy available at <https://parsloe.info/>).

71. TNA, C 6/155/104. The plaintiff was Sir William Poole, the son of Sir Henry. He was a Royalist and was sequestered, but died in 1651, to be succeeded by his son, another Sir Henry, who will have owned Coates when Mountstephens became rector.

72. Ibid. C 94/1, f. 32.

73. Ibid. IND 1/17027.

74. Ibid. C 6/155/69.

75. Ibid. IND 1/17027; E 334/34. The sureties for his bond were Gyles Dowle of Chedworth, gent, and Nicholl Turke of Elstone [Elkstone]. The value was £7 17s. 9d. John Turke leased land from Gyles Dowle in Long Meadow, Bagendon, for a year according to the witness deposition of William Cherrigton of Calmsden: *ibid.* E 134/3and4Jas2/Hil15.

76. TNA, PROB 10/883 is the original will. *Ibid.* PROB 11/276/168, PROB 11/280/4 and PROB 11/283/29 are slightly differing copies, of which the last appears correct. The probate on 1 May was to his son, who then died so that a new grant to the son's widow was then made.

Edward Fletcher

The next appointment was made by Oliver Cromwell, who made many presentments to the Triers. Edward Fletcher was one of them. He was a cutler from New England and a congregationalist, i.e. one believing in the complete separation of Church and State. In 1654 he sold his shop, which was probably in Boston, and came to England.⁷⁷ His appointment was on 4 May 1657.⁷⁸ He is described as 'clerke', but he perhaps had a presbyterian ordination, as Richard Eycott repeatedly said he was no minister.⁷⁹ He was not only presented by Cromwell, but had four certificates, one of which was from the noted divine James Forbes.⁸⁰ But Fletcher was not welcome in Bagendon, as his petition of November 1658 to the Council of State makes clear.⁸¹ This was after Cromwell's death on 3 September 1658.

In his petition Fletcher states that, when he came to claim possession of the church (which he calls the meeting house), he was met by James Dowle and Richard Eycott, churchwarden, together with their pretended minister, Samuel Broad, a recently ejected minister of Rendcomb, some 2 miles away. They denied his authority, Eycott saying it was a pretended thing, and would not let him in. Fletcher could get no help from the commissioners and magistrates. It seems they would not intervene because of uncertainty as to the legality of the appointment.⁸² This was because, after his death, Cromwell's appointments as 'nominator' were of uncertain legality. After three weeks Fletcher says he let himself into the church. He then describes stone-throwing and noisy interruptions to his service, with Eycott stirring up people not to pay tithes or work for him. This was followed by a farcical competition with Broad:

Accordingly the Lords day after ... the said Mr Doule, Mr Eyckett and Mr Broad with others of the parish came into the meeting place and desired Mr Broad to read service to them, threatening him that Rang the Bell to put him out of his place. Att wch tyme I came and went upp in the pulpitt and finding him reading I staid till hee had ended and then began to call upon the name of God in prayer. Att wch tyme the said Mr Broad named a psalme and Sang it with the rest of the parish, all the while I was in prayer, and when they had ended, I named a Text and as I was explaining it the said Mr Broad named a Chapter & read it aloud. Att the same time the said Richard Eyckett bidd mee come downe & said I was noe Minister, and one swore a great oath pull him downe. att which time I came downe leaving them and went to my howse ...

But Fletcher must later have had the door of the church locked, as Eycott and others broke into the church in the afternoon. For this they were sent to prison by Captain Crofts⁸³ and Mr Bates,⁸⁴

77. C.H. Pope, *Pioneers of Massachusetts* (1900), 170; E. Calamy, *Account* (1713), 330; *Continuation* (1727), 505.

78. Mathews (ed.), *Calamy Revised*, 201–2. Copy of appointment available on <https://parsloe.info/>.

79. 'For orthodox presbyterians, ordination was an essential qualification, but one that should be undertaken by elders of a classis [i.e. 'presbytery'], singled out for such work ... Religious conservatives, however, regarded even presbyterian ordination as invalid, sometimes referring scathingly to ministers as being 'not in orders' when, in fact, they meant 'not episcopally ordained': R. Warren, 'A Knowing Ministry': the Reform of the Church under Oliver Cromwell, c.1653–1660' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Univ. of Kent, 2017), 37.

80. *Oxford Dict. of National Biography*, s.v. James Forbes.

81. TNA, SP 18/183, f. 209 (transcription available at <https://parsloe.info/>).

82. *Ibid.*; Warren, 'Knowing Ministry', 247–8.

83. John Crofts raised a foot company in the second Civil War in 1648. He then became MP for Gloucester in the Barebones and in the second Protectorate Parliaments and was head of the Glos. militia in 1659. He was a JP from 1653. The disaffected continued at his house in Lower Swell until he was arrested in 1660: Warmington, *Civil War*, 93, 169; Williams, *Parl. Hist.*, 54.

84. Probably the Mr Bates appointed to impress sailors in 1636/7 (GA, GBR/H2/2, pp. 224–5) and William Bates of Cirencester, innholder, 1680 (*ibid.* GDR/R8/1680/201).

inducing them to make friends with Fletcher to secure their release. But covertly they continued opposing him and brought an action of *quare impedit*.⁸⁵ Fletcher in his petition asks for whatever relief the Council considers appropriate, but it is unclear whether he received any. His troubles continued and one can only feel sorry for him.

On 20 February 1659/60 Fletcher made his will 'as of Bagendon'. There was provision for his wife and sister, but he left to them his house in Gloucester ('neere the little Cloisters within the precincts of the College'), in succession, for life only, with a provision that Mr James Forbes⁸⁶ should have use of its great hall (at a rent of 40s. per annum during his wife's life, but rent-free during his sister's) for himself and that of other Christians he authorised. After the death of his wife and sister, it was to be held by trustees and its rent distributed to 'godly poore and needy people'.⁸⁷

It is clear public order was breaking down in the period of the Protectorship of Richard Cromwell, and particularly after the recall of the Rump Parliament and Richard's resignation on 25 May 1659. There was no assize in January 1649, and in the July assize many were hanged.⁸⁸

The Lord's Loud Call to England, published in 1660, gives a graphic picture of unrest. It was a frightening time for puritans.⁸⁹ In this book are some letters from puritans in Gloucestershire, including one from Fletcher. The first letter of 3 April 1660 paints a vivid picture:

The most eminent Cavaliers imbittered persecutors in the County, ride about armed with sword and Pistols, pretending to bee of a Troop. The last week they rid madly about to disarm the Fanaticks, and all the Pastors of Congregational Churches, and officers that had formerly served the Parliament, especially the Rump (as they call it) together with all Church Members, whether Souldiers or not, they rudely ransacked for Arms, as Captain Crofts, Mr. Palmer of Borton, Mr. Helme of Winchcombe, and many others.

It will be recalled that Captain Crofts and Mr Bates imprisoned Eycott and others for breaking into Bagendon church. The letter then describes how Mr Warren had been put into the parsonage of Rendcomb on the ejection of Samuel Broad. Broad and others broke into the parsonage house and penned Warren and his wife and family into an upper room, so distressing him, making noise night and day with 'hoboyes' [i.e. hautboys or oboes], that he died. It is true that Willam Warren made a nuncupative will on 27 February 1659/60, testified by a memorandum dated 2 February 1660/1. Probate was granted on 5 July 1661. Whether the noise of 'hoboyes' led to his death is not, however, proved.

Next the letter describes sufferings of 'Mr Fletcher a Godly man (who lately came out of New England)'. Fletcher himself then gives an account of his sufferings. On 23 February 1660 (three days after he wrote his will), Fletcher summoned Mr E. (i.e. Richard Eycott) to come and pay £3 due (presumably for tithes). Eycott came with Job Dowle, James's son, and, instead of paying the money, demanded back the tithe money already paid. Fletcher's account continues:

Upon which the said J. D. drew forth a Receipt hee had of mee for monies I had received for his Tithes, and said, Yee Rogue, pay mee my mony, otherwise I will have it out of thy hide; and thereupon took hold on a silk scarf that was about my neck, and tore it, and struck me on the face with his fist, and kickt mee on the belly with his foot, saying, Yee Rogue, yee Dogg, the times are turned, and I will have yee out; and thereupon laid hold on my Coat, and tore it, with pulling of mee to have mee forth of my house, and with saving my self, my hat fell off, and he took a stick that was in his hand, and struck

85. A common law writ for deciding a disputed right of presentation to a benefice.

86. He had supported his application to the Triers. See also note 80 above.

87. New England Historical and Genealogical Register, *Abstracts of Early Wills*, XVI (1862), 231–3.

88. Warmington, *Civil War*, 157.

89. Jersey, *Lords Loud Call* (copy of part available at <https://parsloe.info/>).

mee on the bare head; and took my Carpet off the Table, and my Coat, and carried them forth, and as I followed him out of the Parlour into the Hall, hee took a hedge-bill, and held it up, and said, Yee Rogue, I could finde in my heart to cut off thy head, saying, Hee would have my blood, and I should bee hanged within four and twenty hours, and that hee would lay all level; and thereupon went forth, and pulled up my hedge, and other wood, to the quantity of half a load, and a great Gate that was to my yard, and carried it away, and made a Bonfire of it, reviling mee as hee carried it away, and calling on mee in a blasphemous manner; Where is thy spirit now? yee Rogue, yee Jesuitical Dogg? and also abused my Maid in the street, at the same time, holding up a great stick (that hee pulled forth of the hedge) over her, calling her Whore, and commanding her to kneel down, and confess where shee had been.

Fletcher must then have gone to Gloucester, but returned two days later, on 25 February; he was again threatened by Job Dowle. Then on 1 April, which was a Sunday, Job Dowle would not allow Fletcher's maid to enter the church to ring the bell for the sermon, and the churchwarden, who must have been Richard Eycott, refused Fletcher's request for help. Although Fletcher then gave up, he did not lack courage and was persuaded to return a week later, on 8 April:

Being the Lords day after, in the morning I came, with some of another Parish, who came to hear, and going into the Belfrey, the Rope being taken away from the Bell, I desired one that was present, to go up in the Tower, and toll the Bell, to give the Parish notice; and when hee tolled the Bell, the said J.D. came into the Meeting-place, where I was, and asked who tolled the Bell? upon which I answered, that it was one that I had appointed, upon which hee called mee Rogue, and said, I had nothing to do there, and laid hands on mee, violently, thrusting mee, and punching me forth, saying, I should not stay there, and so continued thrusting mee, and punching of mee, until I was in the street; and then because one asked him, Why he abused mee so, that did him no wrong? hee struck him on the face, and fought with him: and after came to me, who prayed him to bee quiet, and struck mee three or four blows on the neck and head with his fist.

Later Fletcher tried to have the church locked, but Job Dowle and his father snatched the key from the person Fletcher sent. They also broke into his house, stopping him going in, so that he went to Gloucester 'for his safety'. Fletcher's account of these events in *The Lords Loud Call to England* is dated 28 April 1660, just days before the Restoration of King Charles II on 14 May.

It does seem that for a while Fletcher was able to act as minister, following his securing the release from imprisonment of Eycott and his associates. He certainly collected tithes but clearly had little if any support in the village as he had to bring in men from Gloucester to work his land and people from another parish to provide support on his last visit. He returned to New England, probably soon after, and died there. His will, as of Bagendon, dated 20 February 1659/60 was proved in Boston on 12 February 1666/7.⁹⁰ Whether James Forbes,⁹¹ who was the first Unitarian minister of Gloucester, made use of the great hall in Fletcher's house in Gloucester is not known, but Fletcher's will was not proved in England. Fletcher was succeeded at Bagendon by Richard Hall MA, who was instituted on 11 August 1661. He signed the Act of Conformity on 16 August 1662 and remained rector until his death in 1679.

Conclusion

The period of the Civil War and Commonwealth presented an enormous challenge to all sections of society, whichever side they supported, and brought distress and upheaval to both. The village of Bagendon suffered along with others. By examining available sources, a picture emerges of a firmly Royalist village. There was resistance and violence, although order seems just to have been

90. Pope, *Pioneers of Massachusetts*, 170; Mathews (ed.), *Calamy Revised*, 201–2.

91. In his petition, Fletcher says that one of James Dowle's sons said it was a pity Forbes and his company were not whipped out of Gloucester: TNA, SP 18/183, f. 209.

maintained. But the strength of feeling is clear from the extreme language used by each party. Sir James Thynne was able to recover from sequestration and extend his lands in Bagendon and install a rector more to the liking of the parishioners.

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