



WAR, PEACE AND PESTILENCE – PART 4

“Cavaliers (Wrong but wromantic)”
“Roundheads (Right and Repulsive)”
1066 And all that

CIVIL WARS

On Saturday 23rd April 1642 Charles I, who was staying at Beverley, was refused admission to Hull by the Governor Sir John Hotham of Scarborough (later to change sides) and although the raising of the royal standard at Nottingham is claimed to be the start of the first Civil War the act of defiance at Hull can be taken as the first sign of disobedience backed by force. Yorkshire was destined to play a very important role in the conflict which ensued with Hull and Bridlington having a continuing significance in the struggle.

Today historians reject the simple explanation of the age old struggle of King and Parliament as being the cause of the war and see the failure of James I to unite the three kingdoms under one system of civil and religious government as being a prime factor. His successor was even less likely to achieve this unity.

Charles I was a cultured man and a brave one but at the same time vain, stubborn and insensitive. He aspired to be an absolute monarch and impose his will but he was hindered by the lack of a standing army and an effective method of raising money without Parliamentary approval other than by old established customs duties and miscellaneous taxes. In 1627 three persons in Middleton were mentioned in connection with a forced loan to the king, Robert Luttmann, Ralfe Witty and John Dayles.

In 1635 Charles extended the scope of a tax known as Ship Money to inland places when it had previously only been levied in coastal towns. On the 30th March 1640 the rate for Middleton required for the building of 2 ships of 480 tons apiece was £12. (Nationally this tax had provided one of the defining moments in the struggle when in 1636 John Hampden was tried for refusing to pay).

Whilst it is possible to know the allegiance of the land owners in the county we are not able to know much about the true sympathies of the common people and as John Buchan said “most Englishmen refrained from any decision and since the issue did not move them abode in a puzzled neutrality”.

However all able bodied men aged 16-60 were liable for military service, armed with their own weapons and armour according to their income. A muster roll exists for Middleton in 1636:

William Paulin
Nicholas Pickering
Robert Gray
Thomas Jaram

John Lynal
John Dayley
William Elwald
Roger Manby

Brian Lucupp
John Starke
Philip Witty
William Wilkinson.

In the area of Middleton Sir Marmaduke Langdale (1598-1661), born at Molescroft who after his marriage settled for a time in the area of North Dalton, fought on the Royalist side while Sir Philip Stapleton JP of Warter (died 1647) MP for Boroughbridge fought for Parliament.

It is thought that Middleton, because of its remote location did not suffer the full effects of the war such as battles, sieges and occupation by marauding troops. The "Farm Books" of the Best family at Elmswell near Little Driffield indicate that farming activities carried on as normal in that locality although there appears to have been some sort of skirmish at Cowlam.

By the end of 1645 when Parliament had the upper hand it was decided to replenish the coffers in order to pay the Scottish army by exacting fines from those who had supported the Royalist cause.

Charles' wife Queen Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henri IV of France and a staunch Catholic, had been blown off course when returning from Holland with a cargo of munitions and landed at Bridlington where she lodged overnight in a house above the harbour (now demolished and the site of the Harbour Lights pub). The following day the Earl of Newcastle, the Royalist commander, arrived with 1500 horsemen and 1000 foot soldiers to supplement the 1000 horsemen who had appeared on the beach on the 22nd February 1642.

On the 24th March 1645 Phillip Wittie of Middleton, husbandman, and member of a long established family was fined £14. The East Riding had its own Sequestration Committee for what it called "Compounding" or fining "Delinquents" ie those who had supported the losing side.

The delinquent had to get leave from this committee to compound and when it was granted he had to send up his petition with the particulars of his estate which had been sequestered and certificates of his having taken the National Covenant before some approved minister and of his having signed the negative oath (ie an oath not to support the Royalist cause). The officials then prepared a report on the nature of his delinquency, of their valuation of his property and what amount they considered the fine ought to be. If he did not pay his fine his estate could be re-sequestered.

The report of his case in modern spelling reads:

Phillipp Wittie of Middleton in the County of York Husbandman.

His delinquency that he assisted the enemy when the Queen landed at Bridlington and was the cause that several goods of the Parliamentary friends were then seized upon by the Queen's forces, he hath never lived out of his own house, but hath been under the power of the Parliament and submitted to all their ordinances, and paid all assessments and contributions ever since the Rendition of York and before as he allegeth

He having taken the National Covenant in the county before the Committee of Hull, when he rendered himself, and now again at Dunstons in the west, London the 10th March 1645 and the negative oath here the same day.

That he compounds upon a particular delivered in under his hand by which he doth submit to such fine etc and by which he doth appear.

That he is seized in fee to him and his heirs in possession of and in an messuage lying in Middleton and Kiplingcotes in the county of York of the clear yearly value before these troubles £6 for which his fine is £12.

That he is possessed of goods and chattels of the value of £45. 6s. 8d for which his fine is £4.10s in all £16.10s.

He pays an annuity of 33s 9d per annum out of his said lands which taken out of his fine leaves a clear £14.16s 3d.

Jerome Alexander

D Watkins

Fined 24th March 1645 paid 24th March 1645.

Wittie's response of the 10th March 1645 had been:

That your petitioner not out of any disaffection but merely out of the pressing power of the King's Army is unhappily fallen within the notion of a delinquent and his estate sequestered by the Committee at York the particulars of his estate appearing in the schedule annexed.

Particular of Estate – One messuage in fee lying in Middleton and Kiplingcotes in the County of York of the yearly value before these troubles £6.0s 0d.

Out of which there is issuing one annuity or yearly rent charge of 33s 9d to Richard Manby. Goods valued at £45 6s 8d for which security is given by bond to the sequestrators. My debts amount to at least £120. 0. 0.

Phillipp Wittie of Middleton in the County of York, yeoman maketh oath that he standeth indebted unto several persons the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds and upwards. 7th March 1645.

11th June 1646. The Committee at Goldsmiths Hall have been informed that the Sequestrators had seized goods to the value of £22.13s 4d since the composition was paid order that that sum to be returned to Phillipp Wittie, as they are satisfied that he duly paid his fine.

Another Middleton resident a yeoman named Bryan Lukeupp was accused by William Hilton of holding intelligence with Sir Marmaduke Langdale.

Lukeupp possessed two little cottages in Middleton for the duration of his life at yearly value before the troubles of £1 10s. He also had nine and a half oxgangs of land which he held of the Lord of Wenchelsey.

It was stated in the report that he had constantly paid all taxes and assessments imposed by the Parliament and had taken the National Covenant in his home parish with the rest of his neighbours before George Atherington the minister at Middleton.

Lukeupp denied the charges and stated that he had set forth a man under the command of Sir John Hotham when he was first made governor of Hull and since then a dragoon under the command of Sir Thomas Remington one of the Commanders at York.

He was fined ten pounds on the 14th May 1646.

When the wars were over, Cromwell's rule imposed a Puritan view of life on the people or rather it did when it could be enforced. Here again opinion states that the more remote rural parts were protected to a certain extent from its full force. Similarly when the monarchy was restored in 1660 and London enjoyed the freedom to make merry with royal approval, the authorities locally were reluctant to relax what moral grip they had over the people. However any legislation enacted by the Commonwealth was declared null and void because it had lacked the Royal Assent. It was easy therefore to bring back the Bishops and the prayer book and restore the old order.

During the Commonwealth the fate of those clergymen who had supported the wrong side could be severe. Robert Faucon, Rector of Bainton, his wife and eight children were in 1643 exiled to Coxwold and York, thrice imprisoned, plundered because of his loyalty to the King and Church of England. He was restored to Bainton in 1660 but died in 1661.

In Middleton the rector from 1617-1650 George Atherington, described in Parliamentary times as the minister maintained his position to administer the National Covenant Oath (loyalty to Parliament) indicating a desertion of the Royalist cause.. He was succeeded in 1650 by George Osborne and in 1660 by Matthias Crouch.

NAPOLEONIC WARS (1793-1815)

During this period Hull was a centre of military activity. It is estimated that ten per cent of the population of the town had drifted in from the rural areas of the East Riding and North Lincolnshire. This was a time when the press gang was active in supplementing the numbers of naval personnel whilst the army consisted of regular soldiers, militia and volunteers.

The volunteers were a body of poorly trained men in army uniform with less military skill than the home guard in the second world war. The militia was similar to the regular army but did not serve abroad. It was drawn from the general population by giving each eligible male from time to time a number which if drawn in the subsequent ballot required that individual to serve in person or pay a substitute to take his place. The parish constable was responsible for compiling the list which went to the Lord Lieutenant of the County. There were many exemptions however.

It is thought that the militia lists are no longer extant.

There is a solitary reference in the Middleton Parish Register in 1812 to John Taylor, soldier. Ted Hutchinson thinks that shot found near the woods and the outline of a military road may indicate some military training activity in the area.