ASLIB ABSTRACT

Sir Arthur Hesilrige and the Development of Civil War in England (to 1645)

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The thesis provides a detailed account of Hesilrige's involvement in the local politics of Leicestershire, tactical struggles at Westminster and the conflicts between Parliament's generals. In the process it casts light on the nature of the politics of the 1630s and early 1640s and indicates the reasons for Hesilrige's successes and failures in later years.

It demonstrates the convergence of national and local grievances in Leicestershire during the 1630s and suggests that central pressure on local government had similar effects elsewhere. It argues that the combined force of these grievances together with opposition to Laudian aggression produced a strong reaction which in Leicestershire led to Hesilrige's election to the parliaments of 1640. It traces the steps by which the opposition leaders were forced, in the absence of a settlement, to adopt increasingly confrontational tactics during 1641, and the part played by Hesilrige in this process. The drift to war in 1642 was accelerated by the struggle for control of the Leicestershire militia which brought together national and local conflicts.

Hesilrige became an enthusiastic soldier and leading partisan of Sir William Waller's army in the competition between military lobbies which intensified political divisions and bitterness at Westminster during 1643 and 1644. At the same time he remained interested in securing influence and power in his own county and became involved in fresh conflicts there during 1644. Political battles at Westminster, the rivalry of the generals, and struggles in Leicestershire came to a head in late 1644 and early 1645 and propelled Hesilrige into a position of leadership amongst his allies in the Commons and of dominance in his own county. The question raised by his immersion in short-term tactical struggles during the early 1640s was whether he could make constructive use of power.

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The need for biographies of more of the politicians of the 1640s has been often stated. As the picture of groups within the Long Parliament has become more complex, and the importance of influences from outside Westminster has become obvious, so the need for more information about the activities of individual members has grown more pressing. This thesis attempts to explain what one politician did, how he did it, and what he was trying to achieve.

The close relationship between Sir Arthur Hesilrige's national and local politics and between his rôles as a soldier and as a politician casts light on two of the crucial issues of this period. His leadership of Holles' opponents in 1646/7, his rôle in relations between civilian Independents and the Army, his prominence in the Rump and in the opposition of the 1650s, and his major contribution to the events of 1659-60, make it essential to understand the development of his aims and methods in the period leading up to 1645.

Hesilrige was the subject of frequent hostile criticism and mockery during his lifetime. The loss of all but a few of his personal papers has not helped to correct the effects of this. It is nevertheless clear that a man who was a prominent and, within limits, effective politician for twenty years was more than the malicious buffoon depicted by his enemies. G.H. Brown's thesis, 'The Place of Sir Arthur Hesilrige in English Politics 1659-60', written in 1949, provides a summary of Hesilrige's career before 1659 and a detailed narrative of his actions in 1659-60. The summary of his earlier life necessarily depends heavily on the more obvious and accessible sources, while the account

of 1659-60 suffers from the author's difficulty in relating this to earlier events and his reliance on some now rather dated interpretations of the politics of the period. H.R. Engstrom jnr's 1972 thesis, 'The Public Career of Sir Arthur Hesilrige', and the articles based upon it, provide a picture of the whole of Hesilrige's career but they are largely based on printed sources, and the constraints of space prevent a detailed examination of Hesilrige's tactics, or of his rôle in Leicestershire.

This thesis examines Hesilrige's activities before 1640 in as much detail as the sources will permit, and provides a detailed account of his actions during the first five years of the Long Parliament, his relations with other politicians, his role in Leicestershire politics, and his participation in the war. It sets out to demonstrate the connections between these activities, to trace patterns of behaviour and belief, and, through an intensive study of these years, to cast light on his actions in later years. It is based upon the assumption that, while Hesilrige's politics were clearly influenced by his temperament, there were rational motives for most of his actions and that these can be discovered. His tactical effectiveness is demonstrated and it is suggested that this exceeded his capacity for wider planning. A narrative approach has been adopted in order to show the connections between his different activities, and to convey the character of a political life dominated by immediate problems and tactical decisions.

Chapter 1 describes Hesilrige's family and county background, his involvement in the politics of Leicestershire, and his contacts with the wider opposition of the 1630s. It argues that central government pressure on, and use of, local government in the 1630s created a new alignment between national and local politics in Leicestershire, that Hesilrige was able to harness the combined force of national and local grievances in his conflict

with Huntingdon and his allies, and that this brought him victory in the elections of 1640. He was able to do this, in part, because family and personal links brought him into contact with wider political views and cooperation with national opposition figures, notably in the Saybrook project. The values and experiences of his family made him react strongly against Laudianism and this exercised a major influence on the formation of his politics. As a result of these experiences he arrived in the Long Parliament with many political contacts but few political debts, strong convictions, and a belief that confrontation and aggression could be effective.

Chapter 2 traces Hesilrige's rôle in the politics of the Long Parliament down to January 1641/2. It argues that his political effectiveness was based on his willingness to work hard on committees and his readiness to risk unpopularity by blunt interventions in the House. His political interests widened as a result of this work, and his initial concentration on the grievances of Leicestershire and the effects of Laudianism became transformed into a determination to confront the system of government from which they sprang. The chapter traces his contribution to the effectiveness of the Pym group and his rôle as one of those who sought to sharpen the group's approach by free-lance interventions at key points. It shows how, in the absence of a settlement, confrontational pressures and counter-pressures mounted and the efforts of the Pym group to defend their position and survive their opponents' attacks led them into increased aggression, to the point where stability became impossible.

Chapter 3 follows the consequences of this breakdown during 1642, and Hesilrige's efforts, sometimes in cooperation with Pym, sometimes in cooperation with more radical elements in the House and the City, to prevent an unacceptable compromise with the King. It highlights his interest in Ireland, and his continued interest in religious reform and the pursuit of delinquents.

Having demonstrated that the continued elusiveness of compromise made war likely, the chapter traces Hesilrige's rôle in the struggle for control of the militia in Leicestershire, the combination of local and national pressures which shaped the struggle, and its effect in making war more likely. With the outbreak of war Hesilrige joined Essex's army, and the chapter traces his rôle in the Edgehill campaign, his continued personal and political commitment to the war in the wake of that campaign, and the early signs of radical discontent with Essex's conduct of the war.

Chapter 4 traces and assesses Hesilrige's rôle in the campaigns of Waller's army during the first half of 1643, and describes his efforts to secure resources for that army and publicise its achievements. During the course of these months the feud between Waller and Essex developed and the chapter shows how competition for scarce resources, the problems of communication between the generals and the accidents of war gave rise to bitterness and the development of military lobbies.

Chapter 5 describes the impact of these military lobbies on parliamentary politics during the second half of 1643, their interaction with groupings based on ideological, regional and personal loyalties, and the efforts of civilian politicians to master these new divisions. It shows that this situation created a new rôle for Hesilrige in linking and reconciling the interests of Waller's army with those of his political allies and that this made him a much more important figure than he had been in previous years. This was reflected in his appointment to the Committee of Safety and in the leading rôle he played in other fields such as financial negotiations. The chapter shows that Parliament's failure to resolve the crisis of the summer to the satisfaction of any of the military lobbies prepared the way for a new and more serious crisis at the end of the year which coincided with the political uncertainty

created by Pym's death.

Chapter 6 argues that the winter of 1643 saw an attempt by Essex to ensure the survival of his army and military authority and to change the trend of parliamentary politics, by attacking both military and political rivals. It argues that this forced his opponents to cooperate with one another to defeat the threat he posed to them and that the Vane - St. John group, of which Hesilrige was a key member, provided a coherent leadership for this coalition. It traces Hesilrige's rôle during this struggle for power. It shows how the group's apparent success in defeating Essex's political challenge and creating a body with formal power to order and direct him, lessened their commitment to supporting Waller's army, leaving Hesilrige to fight for its interests. It traces the campaign of the summer which demonstrated the failure of the mechanisms created earlier in the year to control Essex, and made the breach between supporters of Waller and Essex irreparable. It describes the autumn campaign and shows how bitterness developed between Waller and Hesilrige on the one hand and Manchester on the other. In parallel with this it describes and analyses the emergence of a new factional struggle for power in Leicestershire between supporters of Grey and Hesilrige, and shows how Hesilrige used his political power at Westminster to secure important advantages in that struggle.

Chapter 7 shows how Essex was in a position to attack Waller, Cromwell and Hesilrige and their political allies following these failures, and how they dealt with this, first by attacking Manchester and then by supporting Self-Denial. It traces Hesilrige's rôle in other questions during early 1645 but argues that military politics dominated his activities. He played an important part in the struggle to secure the passage of the New Model Army and Self-Denying Ordinances and, in the course of this, became increasingly

detached from Waller's army. The autumn and spring also saw an increasingly fierce counter-attack by Hesilrige's opponents in Leicestershire, and the chapter traces its progress and Hesilrige's response. His rôles as a supporter of the New Model, a member of the Committee of Both Kingdoms, and the patron of the Leicestershire radicals came together during the campaigns of May and June, and the chapter discusses the fall of Leicester and the dangers that this posed to Hesilrige's position, arguing that Naseby, and the mistakes of his opponents, enabled him to survive these threats.

The recruiter elections of autumn 1645 demonstrated the strength of Hesilrige and his supporters in Leicestershire. At Westminster the prospect of victory intensified the competition for power while the end of the old military factions made possible the emergence of coherent and consistent ideological blocs. Hesilrige's taste for confrontational politics, and skill in fighting day-to-day tactical battles, brought him to a position of leadership amongst his allies.

In the course of the struggles of the later 1640s Hesilrige and his opponents remembered the lessons of the early 1640s and, like the military factions before them, turned against one another the weapons developed by the Pym group in 1641. The link between the generals and the factions in the House reemerged in a more dangerous form and led eventually to Pride's Purge. Hesilrige's tactical ability and willingness to pursue victory without regard for conventions gave him a key rôle in these events but nothing in his experience had equipped him to use power constructively or to consolidate political strength by conciliating his opponents, and the consequences were clear in 1653 and 1660.

S I R A R T H U R H E S I L R I G E

AND THE

D E V E L O P M E N T O F C I V I L W A R

I N E N G L A N D

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1.	Before the Long Parliament	1
i.	Early Life and Background	1
ii.	The 1630s	20
Chapter 2.	Hesilrige and the Destruction of Unity: November 1640 to January 1641/2	52
i.	The New M.P.	52
ii.	Strafford, Root and Branch, and Tumults	66
iii.	Confrontation	83
Chapter 3.	The Transition to War: January to December 1642	102
i.	Work in the Commons: January to May	102
ii.	The Struggle for Leicestershire	121
iii.	A Captain of Horse under Essex: August to December 1642	138
Chapter 4.	Hesilrige and Waller: January to July 1643	149
i.	Waller's General of Horse: Spring 1643	149
ii.	Lansdown and Roundway Down	169
Chapter 5.	New Forces: Summer and Autumn 1643	183
Chapter 6.	Parliament and the Generals: December 1643 to November 1644	225
i.	The Struggle for Power: December 1643 to March 1644	225
ii.	The Struggle in Leicestershire: December 1643 to May 1644	247
iii.	Cropredy and Lostwithiel	258
iv.	Newbury and Donnington	268
Chapter 7.	Survival and Success: November 1644 to mid 1645	278
i.	After Donnington	281
ii.	Changes at Westminster: December 1644 to May 1645	291
iii.	Leicester and Naseby	310
Chapter 8.	Conclusion	324

Abbreviations

Acts and Ordinances	Acts and Ordinances of the I terregnum 1642-1660 ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (3 vols., 1911)
Bodl.	Bodleian Library.
Brit. Lib.	British Library
Bruce and Masson	The Quarrel between the Earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell, ed. T. Bruce and D. Masson (Camden Soc., 2nd ser., xii, 1875)
Cal. S.P. Dom.	Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series 1625 - 1665, ed. J. Bruce, M.A.E. Green, W.D. Hamilton (43 vols., 1858-97)
Cal. S.P. Ven.	Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English Affairs existing in the Archives of Venice, ed. A.B. Hinds, (17 vols., 1912-32)
Clarendon, History	Clarendon, Edwards Hyde Earl of, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, ed. W.D. Macray, (6 vols., Oxf. 1888)
C.J.	Journals of the House of Commons
D'Ewes, ed. Coates	The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, ed. W.H. Coates (New Haven 1942)
D'Ewes, ed. Notestein	The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, ed. W. Notestein (New Haven 1923)
Dict. Nat. Biog.	L. Stephen and S. Lee, Dictionary of National Biography (63 vols., 1885 - 1900)
Gardiner, Civil War	S.R. Gardiner, History of the Great Civil War 1642 - 1649 (4 vols., repr New York, 1965)
Gardiner, History	S.R. Gardiner, History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War 1603 - 1642 (10 vols., 1883-4)
Hist. MSS. Comm.	Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts Reports
L.J.	Journals of the House of Lords
Nichols, Leicestershire	J. Nichols, History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire (4 vols. in 8, 1795 - 1815)
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
Somers Tracts	A Collection of scarce and valuable tracts ... selected from ... public as well as private libraries, particularly that of the late Lord Somers, ed. W. Scott (13 vols. 1809-15)
Trans. Leics. Archit. and Arch. Soc.	Transactions of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society.

Chapter 1. Before the Long Parliament

(i) Early Life and Background

'I was bred a Puritan, and am for public liberty.'
(Hesilrige, 8 March 1658/9)[1]

Arthur Hesilrige was born in late 1600 or early 1601, the second son of Thomas Hesilrige and his wife Frances. His elder brother Donald had been baptised at Alderton, Northamptonshire, in January 1599/1600, and his younger brother John was baptised there in July 1602. One or more of their sisters, Anne, Mary, Frances and Jane, may have been born before Donald, and they had two younger sisters, Elizabeth and Judith. The family was completed by Thomas (a London mercer by 1634), William (who was at Cambridge in 1632), and Robert who died young.[2] The family was settled at Alderton until 1608 at least.[3] This is at first surprising in view of Sir Arthur's strong identification with Leicestershire throughout his career. The explanation lies in some aspects of the family's history which helped to shape his ideas and attitudes.

The Hesilriges came to prominence in Northumberland during the Scottish wars of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Their services brought them a string of lands in the county,[4] and Hesilriges represented it in the parliaments of 1320, 1321, 1376 and 1377.[5] The marriage of Thomas Hesilrige to Isabel Heron, the fourth successive heiress through whom Noseley and other Leicestershire properties had passed, brought him South.[6] His son Thomas was

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1. Diary of Thomas Burton, Esquire, ed. J.T. Rutt, (4 vols., 1828), iv. 77.
2. Visitation of Leicestershire 1619, Brit. Lib., Harl. MS. 1180, f. 8b; J. Nichols, History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester (4 vols. in 8, 1795 - 1815), III.ii. 743; J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses (4 vols., Camb., 1922-7), I.ii. 359.
3. J. Nichols, The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of James the First (4 vols., 1828), i. 527, ii. 203.
4. M.H. Dodds, ed., A History of Northumberland (15 vols., Newcastle, 1893 - 1940), xii. 477, xiii. 359, 368, 369, 372, 373, 432, xiv. 513-20.
5. Official Returns of Members of Parliament (1878), i. 60, 63, 194, 198.
6. Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii. 741, 756.

still consolidating his Northumberland properties in the 1440s, but by the time of his death in 1467 he was settled at Noseley, and had begun the process by which effective control of the northern lands passed to the Collingwoods.[1] His son William died in 1474, leaving his twelve-year-old heir, Thomas (1461 - 1541), to be brought up by a mother and step-father whose family ties and interests were in Leicestershire and neighbouring counties.[2]

Thomas sold parts of the medieval inheritance in Leicestershire, but developed the rest, enclosing Noseley.[3] His marriage, and those of his sisters and children, connected the Hesilriges with the county's leading gentry families,[4] while his brother Robert succeeded in establishing a healthy junior line at Castle Donnington.[5] Thomas was sheriff in 1500-1 and a justice until his death in 1541.[6] Leland included him among the 'Gentilmen of Leycestershir that be of most reputation'.[7] He and his brother Robert enjoyed what were probably purely honorary appointments at court under Henry VIII,[8] but after this the family virtually disappeared from national affairs. No head of the family, or son of one, sat in a sixteenth century parliament. A distant relative, Robert Hesilrige, crowned a series of borough appointments by representing Nottingham

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1. M.H. Dodds, ed., A History of Northumberland, xii. 477; Nichols, Leicestershire, III. ii. 741-2; W.G.D. Fletcher, 'The Early History of the Family of Hesilrige of Noseley', Trans. Leics. Archit. and Arch. Soc., vii. (1893), 287.
2. G.F. Farnham and A.H. Thompson, 'The Manor of Noseley', Trans. Leics. Archit. and Arch. Soc., xii. (1921-2), 230.
3. G.F. Farnham, Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes (6 vols., Leicester 1929-33), iv. 15, v. 382; Victoria County History of Leicestershire (5 vols., 1907-64), iv. 439, v. 215, 266; Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, nos. 239, 241, 241.
4. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 742, 756, 802; III. i. 270, 272.
5. Ibid., II. ii. 742; G.F. Farnham and A.H. Thompson, 'The Castle and Manor of Castle Donnington', Trans. Leics. Archit. and Arch. Soc., xiv. (1925-6), 65.
6. Lists of Sheriffs for England and Wales from the earliest time to 1831, P.R.O. Lists and Indexes ix., (repr. New York, 1963), 146; P.R.O., C 193/12 Pt. i., f. 22b.
7. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 742.
8. Ibid.

in 1541-2 and 1552-3,[1] and John Hesilrige, who was involved in the affairs of the Noseley branch, sat for Haslemere, Surrey, in 1588-9,[2] but Sir Arthur's father was to be the first member of the direct line to sit in Parliament since 1377.

At the dissolution of the chantries, Thomas's son Bertine took advantage of the family's right to present to the wardenship of Noseley College, which had performed the functions of the parish church since the later middle ages, to misappropriate the college or chapel, and its lands and tithes in Noseley and Ilston.[3] He presented to the 'church' in 1555 and 1557 without difficulty.[4] His descendants were left to face the consequences when this fraud was discovered.

His son Miles, following a pattern common to many Leicestershire families, began a series of Hesilrige marriages into Northamptonshire society, by marrying a daughter of Sir Thomas Griffin, whose home was at Braybrooke although he also owned land at Gumley in Leicestershire.[5] Miles' early death in 1554, and his widow's marriage to a Northamptonshire gentleman,[6] reinforced his sons' connections with that county. The younger, Edward, was usually styled 'of Arthingworth', Northamptonshire, although he later acquired three-quarters of the

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1. J. Throsby, Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire republished with large Additions (3 vols., 1790 - 1797), ii., unpaginated App.; Records of the Borough of Nottingham, iii., 1485 - 1547, ed. W.H. Stevenson (1885), 163, 177; Lists of Sheriffs for England and Wales, P.RO., Lists and Indexes ix., 218.
2. Official Returns of Members of Parliament, i. 425; Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 46.
3. G.F. Farnham and A.H. Thompson, 'The Manor of Noseley', 250-2, 260; Victoria County History of Leicestershire, ii. 267-8.
4. A.H. Thompson, 'The Rectors of Noseley', Trans. Leics. Archit. and Arch. Soc., xii. (1923), 77.
5. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 592, 742, III. i. 534.
6. Ibid., II. ii. 756n.; G.F. Farnham and A.H. Thompson, 'The Manor of Noseley', 232-4.

Leicestershire manor of Thedingworth.[1] The elder son, Thomas, returned to Leicestershire on inheriting from his grandfather, Bertine, in 1565,[2] but he married Ursula, daughter of Sir Thomas Andrewes of Charwelton, and through her acquired connections with the Cave and Knightley families.[3] His Northamptonshire background may explain his support for Hatton and bitter opposition to Cecil, as the destroyer of the nobility, in a private conversation of 1572.[4]

It is unlikely that this view owed anything to religious sympathy with the Northern rebels. The Hesilriges' conflict with the Elizabethan Church concerned property. In 1577 Thomas Hesilrige's presentee to the rectory of Noseley, John Hitches, refused to take 'his othe'. His objection is not specified, but his ordination in 1568 and willingness to subscribe the articles rule out Catholicism, and it probably arose from a personal scruple or from some degree of puritan nonconformity.[5] Whatever his motives, his refusal, and the consequent cancellation of his institution, drew attention to Bertine's fraud of 1547. The crown seized and sold Noseley College or Chapel, and its lands and rights in Noseley and Ilston and, in spite of legal action, the family lost them until they were purchased, in 1591, by Edward Hesilrige of Arthingworth and Sir Thomas Andrewes. They also leased the manors of Noseley and Goadby from the crown when, in spite of Thomas Hesilrige's success in delaying an investigation, these too were seized in compensation for the arrears of profit since 1547. This lease may have been returned to Thomas in 1592,[6] but he is said to have died owing the crown £3,601,[7] and presumably owed money to his brother and father-in-law.

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1. G.F. Farnham and A.H. Thompson, 'The Manor of Noseley', 231; G.F. Farnham, Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes, iv. 228-9.
2. G.F. Farnham and A.H. Thompson, 'The Manor of Noseley', 231.
3. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 735, 742, IV. i. 364.
4. Hist MSS. Comm., Salisbury, ii. 38.
5. Lincoln Episcopal Records in the Time of Thomas Cooper S.T.P. Bishop of Lincoln 1571 - 1584, ed. C.W. Foster, (Lincoln Rec. Soc., ii. 1912), pp. x. 39; The State of the Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I, ed. Foster, (Lincoln Rec. Soc., xxxiii, 1926), 107.
6. Victoria County History of Leicestershire, v. 268; Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, nos. 37-42, 45, 47; Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 552.
7. Victoria County History of Leicestershire, v. 268.

They had acted, in part, to facilitate the marriage, in 1592, of the younger Thomas Hesilrige (Sir Arthur's father) to Frances Gorges.[1] She was the only child of William Gorges of Alderton. Her uncles included Sir William Gorges, the notable Elizabethan soldier and sailor, and Sir Thomas, a leading courtier under Elizabeth and James, who had sat for a Wiltshire borough in the parliament of 1586, and married Helena, Marchioness of Northampton. Her cousin, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, later the rival of the puritan settlers in New England, was already active in politics as an adherent of Essex. Frances' mother, Cicely Sparcheford, had probably brought Alderton to William, who had died in 1589.[2] Edward Hesilrige and Sir Thomas Andrewes conveyed the lease of land and tithes in Noseley, in trust, to Sir Thomas and Nicholas Gorges and Richard Sparcheford, in lieu of dower.[3]

Alderton provided a refuge from the financial problems at Noseley and reinforced the Hesilriges' links with the Northamptonshire gentry. Thomas and Frances lived there for much of their married life. In spite of the death of Thomas Hesilrige senior in May 1600,[4] their sons were baptised at Alderton in 1600 and 1602.[5] There too Thomas entertained the Queen in 1605 and the King in 1608, receiving a knighthood on the latter occasion.[6] In 1609 he received a pardon for the arrears of profit owed to the crown for Noseley Chapel and its lands and rights, which meant that, although he did not regain possession of these until 1622, the major family possessions were secure from further claims and he could return to Noseley.[7] In autumn 1612 he was made sheriff of

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1. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 48.
2. 'Pedigree of the Gorges', New Eng. Hist. and Gen. Reg., xxix. (1875), 42-3; Sir Ferdinando Gorges and his Province of Maine, ed. J.P. Baxter (2 vols., Publications of the Prince Society, Boston, 1890), ii. 162ff.
3. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 48.
4. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 754.
5. J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses, I. ii. 359.
6. J. Nichols, The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of James the First, i. 527, ii. 203.
7. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, nos. 246, 53.

Leicestershire, and in 1614 he was elected as the county's junior knight, with Sir Thomas Hastings occupying the senior position.[1] His financial recovery is indicated by his ability to purchase a baronetcy for £1095 in 1622.[2]

Arthur Hesilrige grew up in a sober household. According to their epitaphs, Sir Thomas 'was prudent and of impartial justice, of good temperance and sobriety', while his wife had 'choice endowments both of mind and body; she adorn'd her family with cloth of her own spinning'.[3] If exaggerated, these descriptions at least indicate the family's ideals. Arthur was probably educated at Westminster School, though too early to have been a pupil of Lambert Osbaldeston.[4] He matriculated at Magdalene College, Cambridge, at Easter 1617, in the company of his elder and younger brothers Donald and John.[5] Donald was admitted to Gray's Inn in March 1621, and was followed by Arthur in January 1622/3.[6] Donald may have been dead by then, but if not, the decision to send Arthur may suggest that his parents intended to train him for a legal career or, given the family's record of settling second sons, to prepare him for life as a gentleman based at Alderton.

Donald was certainly dead by 1624, when Arthur married Frances, daughter of Thomas Elmes of Lilford and Greens Norton in Northamptonshire. The marriage settlement, made in April, described Arthur as Sir Thomas Hesilrige's son and heir, and his father bound himself to leave all of his property to the couple.[7] The marriage took place almost immediately, and their son Thomas was born before February 1624/5. Another son and two daughters, all of whom died young, were to follow before Frances' death in 1632.[8] In

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1. Lists of Sheriffs for England and Wales, P.R.O. Lists and Indexes, ix. 75; Official Returns of Members of Parliament, i. 449.
2. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 252.
3. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 753.
4. G.F.R. Barker and A.H. Stenning, The Record of Old Westminsters (2 vols., 1928), i. 452.
5. J. and J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses, I. ii. 359.
6. J. Foster, Gray's Inn Admission Register 1521 - 1889 (1889), 165, 169.
7. I.P.M. Sir Thomas Hesilrige (Northumberland 1632), P.R.O., C142/485/99.
8. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 748, 754.

addition to its personal significance, the marriage had implications for Arthur's political development. Thomas Elmes was to be one of the Northamptonshire 'puritans' who resisted government policies in the later 1620s. Frances's brothers- and sisters-in-law included Arthur Goodwin's sister Margaret, Richard Knightley's half-sister Grace Bevill, the future 'Presbyterian' M.P. Sir Thomas Dacres, and Hesilrige's neighbour, and ally in the 1630s, William Halford of Welham.[1] While family ties cannot be taken as proof of political sympathy, these links certainly gave Hesilrige access to a number of important opposition figures in the 1620s and 1630s. These links did not die with Frances. A William Elmes was to serve in Hesilrige's regiment of foot.[2] In 1642 Dacres can be found, far from his native Hertfordshire, joining Thomas Wayte, husband of Hesilrige's sister Anne, in the purchase of some Leicestershire properties.[3] Most durable of all was the link with Frances's cousins, Edward Apsley, the future recruiter M.P., and his sister Alice. The widowed Lady Alice Boteler was to marry Hesilrige's close associate George Fenwick in the mid-1630s, and Hesilrige was to remain closely involved in the family's affairs in the 1650s.[4]

The significance of some of these links lay in a period of Hesilrige's life distant from 1624, but the links with the Northamptonshire 'puritans', which were both demonstrated and reinforced by his marriage, were of more immediate importance. Conditions within Northamptonshire meant that opponents of the crown's policies were relaticely free to concentrate on national

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1. J. Bridges, The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire (2 vols., Oxford, 1791), ii.242s; George Lipscomb, The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham (4 vols., 1847), i.524; G. Baker, History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton (2 vols., 1822-41), i.382, 433; New England Historical and Genealogical Register, xlv. (1891), 66.
2. Hist. MSS. Comm., Var. Coll. ii., (Wombwell MSS.), 117.
3. G.F. Farnham, 'Prestwold and its hamlets in Medieval Times', Trans. Leics. Archit. and Arch. Soc. xvii. (1932-3). 84; Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii. 743.
4. J. Bridges, The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire ii.243s; W. Berry, County Genealogies: Pedigrees of the Families in the County of Sussex (1830), 150; Dict. of Nat. Biog.: George Fenwick; New Eng. Hist. and Gen. Reg., xxxviii. (1884), 418.

questions, and this must have affected Hesilrige's attitude towards the more complex situation in Leicestershire in the 1620s. There, local grievances and factions played a much greater rôle, reducing the importance of national issues, and cutting across men's attitudes towards them. Hesilrige's response to the conflicts in Leicestershire was to do more to shape his political style and attitudes than any other experience before 1640, and the nature of those conflicts needs to be examined.

Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, Leicestershire's Lord Lieutenant, was no friend of the court in the 1620s. He advised his son against the 'splendida miseria' of life at court, concluding that, 'no life for the good of the soul, of the body and estate are answerable to a country life'.[1] His actions, from support for silenced ministers in 1613 to opposition to Arminianism in the parliament of 1628,[2] demonstrated his adherence to the family's traditional puritanism. In 1621 he was prominent in the attack on Bacon, and although he was absent from the parliaments of the mid-1620s, he gave his proxy to Southampton in 1624, and to Pembroke in 1625 and 1626, and appears to have supported the attack on Buckingham in 1626.[3] In the parliament of 1628 he was active in demanding the restoration of those removed from their Lieutenancies for opposition to the Loan, and supported Essex's demand for a committee to draw up a representation of the state of the Kingdom.[4]

The concern for aristocratic rights and privileges which earned the

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1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings, ii.70-71.
2. Ibid., 55; Notes of the Debates in the House of Lords ... 1621, 1625, 1628, ed. F.H. Relf, (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., xlii. 1929), 222.
3. 'The Hastings Journal of the Parliament of 1621', ed. Lady de Villiers, Camden Misc. xx., (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., lxxxiii. 1935), p.v; S.L. Adams, 'Foreign Policy and the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624', in K. Sharpe, ed., Faction and Parliament (Oxford, 1978), 145; Bodl., Carte MS. 77, nos. 104, 107, 178.
4. Notes of the Debates ... , ed., F.H. Relf, (Camden Soc., 3rd ser., xlii. 1929), 179-80, 215n.

Southampton group the description, defenders of 'Old English Honour',[1] was a consistent feature of Huntingdon's approach to politics. At national level this led him into opposition, but in Leicestershire it strengthened the tendency to autocracy inherent in the Hastings family's long dominance. In electoral terms the borough of Leicester had been a weak point for them, as the townsmen had successfully resisted their claims to control both seats, either alone or in cooperation with the Duchy of Lancaster. But this resistance was broken in 1625 and the borough was docile until 1640.[2] In the county the Hastings family had been able since 1571 to take one or both of the seats virtually at will, and when there was a contest, as in 1601, it was between gentlemen seeking the junior seat.[3] The 1620s saw the first coherent challenge to this dominance, from a group who attempted to capitalise on gentry resentment of Huntingdon's methods. The issue which crystallised such resentment was his conduct of the county militia.

This was partly a question of patronage. Huntingdon did not go so far as the third earl who had appointed two of his brothers as his only deputy lieutenants,[4] but he tended to overlook the claims of long-established families. Of his deputy lieutenants from the mid-1620s to the mid-1630s, Sir Henry Skipwith came from a family which had first acquired land in Leicestershire in the 1560s and had since tended to marry outside the county community,[5] while Sir John Skeffington came from a branch of the family which had emigrated to Staffordshire in the early sixteenth century, and although he had acquired the Leicestershire manor of Skeffington by marriage in 1614, he sat for a

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1. A. Wilson, The Historie of Great Britain being the Life and reign of King James the First (1653), 161.
2. See the accounts of elections from 1592/3 to 1628 in J. Thompson, The History of Leicester (2 vols. 1849), i.294-354.
3. J. Neale, The Elizabethan House of Commons (Fontana edn., 1976), 36-9.
4. Ibid., 37.
5. Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii.777, III.i.354, 363, 366, 484, 504.

Staffordshire borough in the parliament of 1626, and returned there after his father's death, becoming sheriff in 1637-8.[1] While neither was a complete outsider many families had a better claim to the deputy lieutenancy. While their appointment might have provoked resentment at any time, it coincided with a sharp increase in the militia levy. There was a gradual rise between 1623 and 1625, but in July 1626 Huntingdon, over-reacting to the central government's new-found enthusiasm for the militia system, increased the levy by some five hundred per cent to £1190. Gartree, the highest rated hundred, which included Noseley, was now expected to pay more than the whole county had in the past. Naturally there was gentry resistance which led to a substantial short-fall.[2]

Assuming that the accounts subsequently presented to the Privy Council were accurate, it seems that Huntingdon used the additional income from the levy to improve the training and equipment of the militia. £141 was spent on equipment for pioneers where nothing had been spent in previous years, four professional officers who had served in the Low Countries were hired at a cost of £115, while payments to amateur officers drawn from the gentry and to constables more than doubled to £210 to reflect the work involved in regular drilling. At £86, expenditure on arms and ammunition exceeded that for the whole of the three previous years. The building and repair of roundhouses and beacons, which had appeared as a new item in the accounts of 1624 at a cost of £31, now cost £54, while an additional £30 was spent on watching beacons. The purchase, carriage, and erection of a tent bearing the royal arms, for which a partial payment of £20 had been made in 1624, cost a further £100.

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1. Nichols, Leicestershire, III.i.436, 449; J.C. Wedgewood, Staffordshire Parliamentary History, ii. (Collections for a History of Staffordshire, The William Salt Soc., Birmingham, 1922), 48-9, 52.
2. Leics. Militia Accounts, P.R.O., S.P. 16/70, ff. 157a-159b, 160b, 163a; 'Records concerning the Family of Hastings', Brit. Lib., Harl. MS. 3881, ff. 63a, 64a.

It is impossible to judge whether there was any degree of direct corruption in this expenditure: there are no supporting documents attached to the accounts presented to the Privy Council, and no means of knowing whether the physical stocks of arms, ammunition, and tools would have corresponded to the purchases listed in the accounts. More to the point, contemporaries had no way of checking on the use to which the vastly increased levy was being put. The policy was bound to be unpopular and the normal and potent reaction to an unpopular policy was to allege corruption. The best defence against the spread of such an opinion, was the involvement and support of a wide group of respected gentlemen in the implementation of the policy. The autocratic fashion in which the Hastings family ran Leicestershire, and the nature of Huntingdon's appointments to militia offices, removed this safeguard. There was, therefore, ample scope for allegations of corruption to be made and receive a hearing.

In a less clear cut way, Huntingdon's development of the militia could be perceived as enhancing his power and prestige at public expense. In 1623 the Captain of Horse received £13 6s 8d, two Captains of Foot £10 each, and other officers £16; in 1626 there were an additional three Captains of Foot at £10 each and payments to other officers, justified by the need for five months drilling, accounted for £102 10s. While such sums were not sufficient to buy the loyalty of the gentlemen involved, they were pleasant pieces of patronage likely to generate goodwill from their recipients. At a lower level the county's twenty-two head constables, who had received 10s each in 1623 and nothing in 1624, received £1 each in 1625 and 1626. The militarily inessential items included in the accounts, from the tent costing £120 to the prizes of hats, gloves and "silver litle things", served Huntingdon's prestige

at no cost to himself. In this way they reflected the overall effect of increasing the size and visibility of the militia headed by Huntingdon in a society in which display and military leadership were closely connected with prestige and political power.

Those who, from whatever motive, wished to oppose Huntingdon could, therefore, draw upon simple resentment of the increased financial demands upon the county, suspicions of direct corruption, and the sense that Huntingdon was developing the militia, at public expense, in order to increase his own prestige and authority. Each of these elements was rendered more potent by submerged gentry resentment at the way in which power in the county was concentrated in the hands of the Hastings family and a small group of subordinate associates. The conditions for protest and opposition had been created.

The effectiveness of protest was, however, undermined by the character of those who sought to exploit it in the 1620s. Sir Thomas Beaumont, whose sons were to be both royalist and Catholic in the 1640s,[1] had stood against Sir Henry and Sir George Hastings in the 1620 county election. On losing he persuaded the sheriff to substitute him for Sir George in the returns, but Hastings' challenge to this succeeded in the Commons.[2] Before the Commons considered the case, Buckingham wrote to Hastings requesting that he desist from opposing his 'cousin' Beaumont, and after his defeat Beaumont was advanced, in May 1622, to an Irish viscountcy.[3] In April 1625 Huntingdon was confident

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1. Nichols, Leicestershire, III. ii. 737, 1020.
2. C.J., i.511-12, 513, 515-8, 523, 525-6.
3. Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings, iv.204; Nichols, Leicestershire, III.ii.736, 744.

of securing the county seats for Sir George Hastings and another nominee, but in the May election Ferdinando, Lord Hastings and Sir Wolstan Dixie were elected, while Sir George was elected for the borough.[1] His continued wish to sit suggests that he was either defeated in, or forced to withdraw from, the county election. The candidacy of Dixie, who was a deputy lieutenant in the following year, but had married the daughter of Sir Henry Beaumont of Gracedieu,[2] may well have represented a compromise between Huntingdon and the Beaumonts.

The most serious challenge came from Sir Henry Shirley. He was a member of one of Leicestershire's staunchest recusant families and had been educated as a Catholic. His divorce from Essex's sister and Essex's subsequent guardianship ensured that his sons were brought up as Anglicans, but he himself was to die a Catholic. In 1625 his outward conformity was sufficient to allow his appointment as a sheriff, but that office alone kept him from being disarmed with other recusants in that year.[3] When the commissioners for the loan visited Leicester in January 1626/7, Shirley took advantage of their meeting with most of the county's leading gentry, to air the county's grievances over the militia.[4] The Privy Council immediately demanded full accounts, and made sure that these were submitted by 3 June.[5] A number of Huntingdon's political associates had lost their lieutenancies as a result of their refusal to contribute to the loan and, although he had evaded the issue by pleading poverty, he clearly saw this enquiry as a prelude to his own dismissal and twice raised the question

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1. Hist. MSS.Comm., Hastings, ii.67; Official Returns of Members of Parliament, i.464.
2. Harl. MS. 3881, f. 64a; Nichols, Leicestershire, IV. ii.497.
3. Victoria County History of Leicestershire, ii.56-7; V. Snow, Essex the Rebel (Nebraska, 1970), 189-90; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1625-6, 164.
4. Hist. MSS. Comm., Cowper, i.296; L.J., iii.822.
5. Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings, iv.209, 210; Cal.S.P. Dom. 1627-8, 68, 193.

himself in order to force the Council to affirm its confidence in him in June and July.[1]

In October 1627 Shirley was assaulted by a dependant of Huntingdon. Hoping to use this incident to obtain a Star-chamber hearing for his disputes with Huntingdon over hawking and hunting rights, Shirley put himself in the wrong by rejecting the claims of the deputy lieutenants, Skipwith and Skeffington, to mediate to preserve the peace, and cast aspersions on their impartiality and that of Huntingdon. They reported this to the Privy Council, and on 6 November Huntingdon wrote demanding that he be cleared of Shirley's original charges against him. The Council summoned Shirley and imprisoned him until 21 December, but its acceptance of Huntingdon's honesty and good intentions with regard to the militia levy was seriously qualified by the comment that 'perhaps by the direccions you had the county were put to some more charges then the occasions of the service did sence require'.[2]

Huntingdon certainly had enemies at court and Shirley, who stayed in London until mid-February, claimed, on his return, that he had been offered the lieutenancy, and that if he failed in the forthcoming county election, he would be ennobled and receive that office within a year. His claim to have had an audience with the King and Buckingham, in the course of which the King ordered his restoration to the commission of the peace, finds some confirmation from a list of justices of the late 1620s which, unlike that for 1621-2, includes his name, and he was certainly added to the commission of Oyer and Terminer in 1629.[3]

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1. V. Snow, Essex the Rebel, 163; Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings, ii.70, 71, iv.211; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1627-8, 215.
2. Harl. MS. 3881, f.63ab; Nichols, Leicestershire, III.ii.777; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1627-8, 413-4, 424; Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings, iv.212; Acts of the Privy Council, Sept. 1627 to June 1628 (1940), 134, 161, 197, 291.
3. Harl. MS. 3881, f.62-3; Nichols, Leicestershire, III.ii.777 n.2; P.R.O., C/193/12 Pt.ii., f.28b, Pt.i., f.55-6; P.R.O., C/183/4, f.26a.

Buckingham had previously supported Shirley during his divorce, and it was from a report of Shirley's conversation at the time that Archbishop Abbot first learnt that, 'the duke had a purpose to turn him out of his place'.[1] The confidence with which Shirley attacked Huntingdon during the period before the election, denying him to be a gentleman and asserting his own right to hunt and hawk on his lands, suggests that he had powerful support. But in the March election Shirley was defeated, in spite of the 'best furtherance' of the Viscountess Beaumont,[2] and in the subsequent parliament the Lords forced him to submit and apologise for his 'aspersions and scandals'.[3]

Huntingdon had broken the challenge posed by Shirley and his allies. But the strength of that challenge, and the effort required to defeat it, exposed his vulerability. His opponents' political and religious allegiances had prevented them from winning broad support in Leicestershire. A more representative spokesman for gentry grievances could look for more success. The Hesilriges' experiences in the 1620s were to produce such a figure in Sir Arthur.

Sir Thomas Hesilrige resumed his career in Leicestershire as an ally of Huntingdon. He successfully partnered Hastings candidates in the county elections of 1614 and 1624,[4] and was a deputy lieutenant in 1623-4.[5] As a puritan whose strong Leicestershire roots commanded respect in the county but whose long absence had weakened his personal links with the Leicestershire gentry, Sir Thomas bears some resemblance to Skeffington and Skipwith. He seems, however, to have become dissatisfied in the late 1620s. Before the

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1. T.B. Howell, ed., A Complete Collection of State Trials ('Cobbett's State Trials', 34 vols., 1809-28), ii.1455-6.
2. Harl. MS. 3881, f.62b; Nichols, Leicestershire, III.ii.777 n2.
3. L.J., iii.849; Harl. MS. 3881, f.63a.
4. Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii.456; Official Returns of Members of Parliament, i.458.
5. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 228; P.R.O., S.P.16/70, f.157a.

summer of 1627 he had moved back to Northamptonshire.[1]

Huntingdon could be insensitive to the feelings of his allies. In 1625 Sir George Hastings' resort to the borough of Leicester, in the face of opposition in the county, frustrated an attempt to get Arthur Hesilrige into parliament. That attempt was perfectly reasonable. Sir Thomas Hesilrige wrote to the corporation on 19 April,

> 'My sonne beinge willinge to adapte himselfe for the service of his Countrye, is desirous to become a Scholler in the best Schoole of Christendome, for knowledge and experience (the parliament howse of England) a desire that everye father is to further in his children. And therefore I am now justly pressed hereby, to present the first request that I ever yet made to you Societye, that you would doe me the favoure, and my sonne the Grace, to bestowe a burgesse place upon hime.'[2]

At this point votes were being solicited for Sir George Hastings for the county election,[3] while Sir Humphrey May, the Chancellor of the Duchy, may have been expected to stand only in Lancaster, for which he chose to sit after election by both boroughs.[4] The town's record indicated a strong preference for one independent member, and Sir Thomas could count on some local influence as the most important gentleman in neighbouring Gartree hundred and as one of four gentlemen who were members of the commission of the peace for the borough.[5] Sir George Hastings' reappearance in the borough frustrated a promising political debut.

In the same year the Hesilriges withdrew from county militia offices. In 1623-4 Sir Thomas Hesilrige was one of two deputy lieutenants, the other being Sir Henry Hastings. The prestigious post of the sole Captain of Horse was held by Arthur Hesilrige. In addition to the payment of £13 6s 8d, his later career suggests that it afforded him enjoyment and interest.[6] By

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1627-8, 432.
2. Records of the Borough of Leicester iv.1603-88, ed. H. Stocks and W.H. Stevenson, (Camb. 1923), 220.
3. Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings, ii. 67.
4. J. Thomson, The History of Leicester, i. 351.
5. P.R.O., C.193/12 Pt. II, f.86.
6. P.R.O., S.P. 16/70, f.157a.

1625-6 Sir John Skeffington had taken over as Captain of Horse, although Bertine Hesilrige, a member of the Thedingworth branch of the family, held a lesser place as one of the Captains of Foot.[1] By 1627 Sir John had taken over as a deputy lieutenant.[2] There is some evidence to suggest that the Hesilriges did not go completely willingly. In the early 1630s Sir Arthur showed personal bitterness towards Skeffington and when, in March 1640/41, Skeffington wished to appease Hesilrige, he suggested that his relative, Sir Edward Dering, should offer Hesilrige the disposal of the post of Captain of Horse.[3]

Quite apart from any personal alienation, the developments of the 1620s made a position of cooperation with Huntingdon and opposition to central government increasingly difficult to sustain. In February 1621/2 Sir Thomas Hesilrige was summoned to attend the Privy Council in connection with resistance to the loan of that year.[4] This did not preclude his continued cooperation with Huntingdon in 1623 and 1624. The failure of the 1626 parliament produced the demand for a fresh loan. The ideological character of the subsequent resistance is illustrated by Bishop Williams' comment that, since Leicestershire lent freely, 'No man of discretion can say, that that place is a place of Puritans'.[5] The obvious haunt of such 'puritans' was Northamptonshire. Arthur Hesilrige's father-in-law, Thomas Elmes, was one of eight Northamptonshire gentlemen who appeared before the Privy Council on 19 January 1626/7, and as a result he was imprisoned until the following January.[6] Sir Thomas Hesilrige was absent

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1. P.R.O., S.P. 16/70, f. 159a; Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii. 832, 756.
2. Ibid., 777.
3. Brit. Lib., Stowe MS. 744, f. 7a.
4. P.R.O., S.P. 14/125, f. 82, no. 46.
5. J. Rushworth, Historical Collections of private passages of state, weighty matters of law, remarkable proceedings in five parliaments (7 vols., 1659-1701), i. 420-1.
6. Acts of the Privy Council, January to August 1627 (1938), 25, 40, 362-3; Acts of the Privy Council, September 1627 to June 1628, 217.

from the meeting at Leicester in January 1626/7, at which many gentlemen, including Sir William Hartopp, Sir William Roberts and William Halford, agreed to lend, while Huntingdon sought to evade the issue by pleading poverty.[1] But later in the year, Sir Thomas Hesilrige, Sir Matthew Sanders, Hartopp, Roberts and Halford were in the Tower pending their appearance before the Privy Council.[2] All five had been summoned before the Council in February 1621/2, and the Council may have precipitated this resistance by forcing a confrontation on the basis of their record. It is more likely that Sanders and Hesilrige, aided by the example of Northamptonshire and Hesilrige's link with Halford through Elmes, persuaded the other three to retract their earlier promises to lend, thus contributing to the spread of resistance across the Midlands.

Resistance to forced loans played an important part in forming a national political opposition, cutting across local feuds and raising, in a very direct way, the question of parliamentary control of taxation. But the demand for a loan was an irregular, unusual event, by contrast with the chronic grievance of local payments such as those for the militia, and protest was confined to a militant minority. The force of the opposition of the 1630s stemmed from the integration of national and local grievances. The government of Charles I aided this process by its new-found enthusiasm for the militia system. In December 1628 the Council sent for nine Northamptonshire landowners, including Thomas Elmes, Sir Richard Saltonstall and Sir Thomas Hesilrige.[3] Their offence was

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1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Cowper, i. 296; Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings, ii. 70.
2. P.R.O., S.P. 16/89, no. 5.
3. Acts of the Privy Council, July 1628 to April 1629 (1958), 262-3.

failure to appear at musters. Thomas Elmes was discharged, on 28 January 1628/9, from attending the Council. Sir Thomas Hesilrige was unable to make the journey, so that it was Arthur who appeared before the Council on his behalf on 5 February. He presumably kept his temper in this first encounter with the Council, since his father was discharged five days later.[1] Arthur Hesilrige had a model and some experience with which to build upon resentment of Leicestershire's much heavier militia levies, in a far more effective manner than Sir Henry Shirley.

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1. Acts of the Privy Council, July 1628 to April 1629 (1958), 307, 318, 323.

(ii) The 1630s

'The Council Table bit like a serpent; the Star Chamber like scorpions. Two or three gentelmen could not stir out for fear of being committed for a riot. Our souls and consciences were put on the rack by the Archbishop. We might not speak of Scripture, or repeat a sermon at our tables. Many godly ministers were sent to find their bed in the wilderness.'

(Hesilrige, 7 February 1658/9)[1]

Sir Thomas Hesilrige died on 11 January 1629/30.[2] If he was not already resident at Noseley Sir Arthur soon moved back there, leaving Alderton to his mother, who was to survive until 1668.[3] In the ensuing term he mortgaged his lands in Noseley, Ilston and Goadby, the rectory of Noseley with its income, tithes in Ilston and advowson of the moiety of Hallaton, and the Northumberland manors of Dinnington, Fawden, East and West Brunton, Weetslade, Kenton and Blackden, and lands in Eslington, Whittingham, Barton and Thrunton. These constituted his entire inheritance and were bound up in the 1624 marriage settlement. In the absence of any apparent financial necessity it seems likely that his sole purpose was to provide a clear legal record of the Hesilriges' ownership, especially as one of the mortgagees was Hesilrige's 'creature', Thomas Horton.[4]

There may have been a connection with Hesilrige's attempt to regain the Northumberland properties. In 1632 a Northumberland inquest found that Sir Thomas had died seised of these properties, excluding Eslington,

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1. Diary of Thomas Burton, ed. J.T. Rutt, iii. 89.
2. Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii. 753.
3. Ibid.; see also the photograph of her tomb in G.F. Farnham and A.H. Thompson, 'The Manor of Noseley', facing p. 270.
4. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 54.

Whittingham and Barton, but including Thrunton, and that the Collingwoods had taken the issues of these properties since his death.[1] The Hesilriges had neglected these interests for more than a century, while the Collingwoods had been in effective control as managers, tenants, and, arguably, owners. Thomas Hesilrige had leased Eslington, Whittingham, Thrunton and Barton to the Collingwoods in 1455,[2] and the position does not seem to have been changed by the marriage, in Henry VII's reign, of Elizabeth Hesilrige and Robert Collingwood. In 1538 Leland described Robert Collingwood as the tenant of Eslington, with oversight of the Hesilriges' other Northumberland properties. Four years later Bertine Hesilrige sold the Collingwoods the four properties which they had previously leased,[3] but in 1596 a Collingwood will could include Thrunton amongst the family's leases, alongside the rest of the Hesilrige properties which had not been sold in 1542.[4] If the Collingwoods did not own Thrunton, their title to the other three properties which had been 'sold' to them as part of the same transaction was open to question. They appear to have offered provocation by over-running their leases on the Hesilriges' other lands. By April 1634 Hesilrige had regained control of these and was suing the Collingwoods in the Court of Wards for the return of Eslington, Whittingham, Thrunton and Barton.[5] The case's later removal into Star-chamber produced no result before that body was abolished.[6] The story that Hesilrige revived his claim only in the 1650s, when he saw a chance to exploit his power in the North-East,[7] is clearly

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1. J.C. Hodgson, 'On the Medieval and Later Owners of Eslington', Archaeologia Aeliana, 3rd ser., vi. (1910), 23.
2. W.G.D. Fletcher, 'The Early History of the Family of Hesilrige of Noseley', Trans. Leics. Archit. and Arch. Soc., vii. (1893), 287.
3. J.C. Hodgson, 'On the Medieval and Later Owners of Eslington', 20, 29; Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii. 742.
4. M.H. Dodds, ed., A History of Northumberland, xii. 748.
5. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 55.
6. Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii. 745.
7. J.C. Hodgson, 'On the Medieval and Later Owners of Eslington', 29-33.

untrue. The litigation of the 1630s demonstrates that he was always keen to pursue his claim. It may also have marked the beginning of Hesilrige's long association with the Northumberland lawyer George Fenwick, whose aunt was married to the head of the Swarland branch of the Hesilrige family.[1]

Hesilrige's immediate concerns, however, lay in Leicestershire. In 1630 he was one of those fined by the county's commissioners for knighthood, Huntingdon, Sir John Skeffington and Sir Wolstan Dixie - a particular injustice in his case since his father had paid the Stuarts well for the baronetcy while Arthur had not been the head of the family at the time of the coronation. In a wider sense Leicestershire illustrates another stage in the disastrous fusion of national and local grievances, since the commissioners for this dubious national imposition were thoroughly identified with the local grievance of militia levies.

On the other hand Hesilrige was named in the second 1630 commission of Oyer and Terminer for Leicestershire and the neighbouring counties, a place he retained in the commissions of the next four years.[3] Hesilrige's appointment to this office, never held by his father,[4] formed part of a general enlargement of the commission at this time. Nevertheless it conferred status and provided Hesilrige with a wider experience of the local administration of justice. As such it complemented his work as a Justice of the Peace. The Gartree reply to the Privy Council's detailed enquiries of 1631 (dated at Noseley 1 May) presents an image, possibly exaggerated for effect, of a hundred tightly and conscientiously regulated by Hesilrige, his brother-in-law Sir William Halford and Sir John Bale.[5]

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1. J.C. Hodgson, ed., A History of Northumberland, vii. 396.
2. Nichols, Leicestershire, III.ii. 601-2; Records of the Borough of Leicester iv. 1603-1688, ed. H. Stocks and W.H. Stevenson, 255-6.
3. P.R.O., C.181/4, ff.69-70, 100a, 110b, 118a, 146a, 166a, 183b, 195b.
4. compare P.R.O., C. 181/1-3.
5. P.R.O., S.P. 16/190, f. 10, no. 4.

Such control was useful to the government when exercised in this way, but could be dangerous when Hesilrige turned to opposition, especially as his Gartree hundred traditionally carried the highest proportion of county expenditure. In the early 1630s he resumed Sir Henry Shirley's attack on Huntingdon's highly expensive administration of the militia. Like Shirley he could rely on a strong sense of material grievance among the Leicestershire gentry but he was free from Shirley's political and religious handicaps. His Northamptonshire experience and contacts equipped him for a 'country'- rather than 'court'- based opposition to Huntingdon. He may well have had strong personal motives for opposing Huntingdon and his deputies, especially Sir John Skeffington.

Sir Arthur had an experienced ally to hand in Sir William Faunt of Foston. His family had been Catholic but, unlike the Shirleys and the Beaumonts, they had shed that liability during his minority,[1] and in the 1630s Faunt was to resist the Laudian intervention on the basis of a proprietorial erastianism reinforced by puritanism, in much the same way as Hesilrige.[2] Sir William had already made a valiant attempt at resistance in 1626 when, in the wake of a massive increase in the militia levy, he had accused Huntingdon of corruption and ruining the county, and sought to persuade his fellow justices of the peace to join him in asserting their rights as the magistrates who bore the odium of collecting these levies, by refusing to pay.[3]

Faunt's record is important to any attempt to estimate the extent to which Hesilrige's opposition should be regarded as factional or representative of a wider gentry response in the county. The fact that two very different groups opposed to Huntingdon, Shirley in the 1620s and Hesilrige and his

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1. Victoria County History of Leicestershire, ii. 56.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1634-5, 116, 117, 273, 316, 321; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1635-6, 423; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1638-9, 70, 104; P.R.O., S.P. 16/535, f. 78a.
3. Harl. MS. 3881, f. 64a; and see below, 41-2.

associates in the 1630s, chose to concentrate on the militia issue would, in itself, suggest that both recognised the wider resonance and mobilising power of the issue. But Faunt's efforts in 1626, separate from but contemporary with Shirley's attempt to exploit the question, demonstrate the breadth of opposition at that time, while his appeal to his fellow justices suggests that he believed in the existence of wider gentry dissatisfaction. Indeed his suggestion that the justices should act before "the county complayned" of them, indicates that he was concerned at the reaction of the wider community, beyond the ranks of the gentry. Such a reaction, and the potential threat to the social stability of the county, would have reinforced the gentry's dislike of the levy on their own account. The rate of refusals or failure to pay the levy in the 1620s suggests a degree of non-cooperation from many justices in 1626, or a significant degree of popular opposition, or a combination of these.

Returns as a percentage of total levy[1]

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Oct 1623	June 1624	June 1625	Feb 1625/6	July 1626	March 1627
1.16	3.97	1.38	8.04	21.86	3.11

The figure for the fifth levy must include an element of inability to pay vastly increased sums. But the increased figure for the relatively small fourth levy suggests that willingness as well as ability to pay was involved, and this is confirmed by the return to the lower earlier levels for the sixth levy which was wholly dedicated to the unimpeachable purpose of sending troops to join the army at Harwich. Given this context, it seems clear that Huntingdon's inability to collect more than a fifth

1. P.R.O., SP 16/70 ff. 157-162.

of the 1626 levy reflected substantial opposition.

Unfortunately Huntingdon was not forced to produce such detailed accounts for the militia in the 1630s, either by the Privy Council or, despite Hesilrige's efforts, the Long Parliament. 1626 demonstrates, however, the potential of the militia issue for mobilising widespread opposition. Faunt's opposition in both the 1620s and the 1630s demonstrates that the issue had a continuous life, while the emphasis placed upon it both by Hesilrige and his associates and by Huntingdon and his deputies in the 1630s (including Huntingdon's success, in 1638, in having Faunt punished for his activities of 1626) suggests that both recognised its continued significance to the county community. Typically, Hesilrige pursued the question in a blunt and uncompromising manner.

In June 1632 nine Leicestershire gentlemen were summoned to appear before the Privy Council,[1] but Hesilrige and Faunt were probably alone in holding out. On 21 November they appeared before the Council to answer Huntingdon's complaint that they were 'refractory and refused to pay the leavies made for the Muster-master his fee and the charges of the Musters'. The deputy lieutenants Skipwith and Skeffington were present to answer Faunt's and Hesilrige's counter-allegations of corruption and maladministration. The Council, having heard both sides, appointed a committee to investigate further and report.[2] The committee had to find a way of upholding Huntingdon's authority while dealing with the genuine grievances which threatened gentry confidence in the system.

Hesilrige made this easy by his remark to Sir John Skeffington

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1. Privy Council Registers, P.R.O., P.C. 2/42, p. 118/f. 506.
2. P.R.O., P.C. 2/42, p. 257/f. 119a, p. 283/f. 132a.

after the committee had been appointed. Neatly combining his social and personal objections to Skeffington with the immediate grievance, he turned to him and said, 'What, if such gentlemen as you shalbe suffered to sharke the County of their money it wilbe a very pretty thing'. On Skeffington's complaint to the Council Hesilrige made matters worse by whispering, 'I doe not say so to the Lords, but onely to you in private'. To avoid imprisonment for this contempt, Hesilrige had to beg the Council's pardon on his knees.[1] Skeffington's further complaint at the committee on 28 November brought Hesilrige another reproof and he was forced to apologise to Skeffington as well as to the councillors.[2] Placed at such a disadvantage by his own rashness, Hesilrige submitted and two days later undertook to pay the muster-master's fee without delay.[3] Faunt followed suit on 7 December.[4] But this defeat was not total. Huntingdon, writing on 28 January 1632/3, thanked the Privy Council for vindicating Skeffington 'from the undeserved reproaches of Sir Arthur Hesilrige, divers times returned for his inconformities to his Majesty's service', but sought vindication for himself. The Council, evading this attempt to conflate Hesilrige's contempt with his substantive allegations, replied on 21 February expressing full confidence in Huntingdon but pointing out that if Hesilrige's allegations were true the annual levies in Leicestershire were far greater than in other counties and urging him to consider reductions.[5]

Huntingdon's need for government support against his Leicestershire critics made him less able, and less willing, to protect the county's

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1. P.R.O., P.C. 2/42, p. 299/f. 140a.
2. Ibid., p. 299-300/f. 140ab.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1631-3, 446.
4. P.R.O., P.C. 2/42, p. 322/f. 149b.
5. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1631-3, 521; P.R.O., P.C. 2/42, p. 459-60/f. 216-7.

puritan and erastian gentlemen against the Laudians. Bishop Williams' inability to do so was demonstrated by the failure of his attempt to claim exemption for his diocese from Laud's 1634 metropolitan visitation.[1] Hesilrige suffered in advance of the visitation when, in August 1633, Sir John Lambe discovered that the last presentation to Noseley chapel had taken place thirty years earlier and appointed a blind clergyman, John Walter or Walton, granting him an allowance out of the impropriation. Hesilrige complained to Laud and told him that it was an impropriation, and thus a lay fee in law. According to Hesilrige's evidence at Laud's trial, the Archbishop replied that if he lived no man should name or stand upon his lay-fee, that is that he intended to eradicate the rights of all lay impropriators. In 1644 Laud denied this, claiming that he had told Hesilrige that he understood that the benefice was presentative and that if he lived he hoped to ensure that no man could make a presentative a lay-fee, as there were already too many.[2] Whatever Laud said, Hesilrige's account may be taken as a true representation of his reaction to Laud's dismissal of his rights. If the Hesilriges' rights in Noseley, which had cost them so much in terms of money and personal dislocation, and which were consequently well documented, were not secure, then all lay impropriations were at risk. The report of the 1634 visitation emphasised the threat by referring to the disappearance of the parish church and the fact that the college church had long been held by Sir Arthur and his predecessors without a parson or vicar, while

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1. The Earl of Strafford's Letters and Despatches, ed. W. Knowler (2 vols. in 1, 1739), i. 226.
2. A.H. Thompson, 'The Rectors of the Chapel and Parish Church of Noseley', Trans. Leics. Archit. and Arch. Soc., xiii. (1923-4), 78; The works of ... William Laud ... Archbishop of Canterbury, ed. W. Scott and J. Bliss, (7 vols. in 9, Oxf., 1847-60), iv. 84.

they kept the tithes and maintained a puritan chaplain.[1]

Hesilrige's marriage to the sister of Robert Greville, Lord Brooke, was to strengthen his links with those engaged in the wider struggle against Laudianism. Dorothy Greville, who was twenty-nine in 1634, was probably Brooke's only surviving sibling.[2] On 26 June 1634 she and Hesilrige were married at the church of Allhallows, Bread Street in London.[3] Under the terms of the marriage settlement she brought him a portion of £5,000. In return Hesilrige, whose major possessions in Leicestershire were already reserved for his son Thomas, committed his Northumberland possessions and some land in Ilston and Goadby to this marriage. Should his suit against the Collingwoods fail, he was to purchase land worth £200 per annum,[4] and the need to provide for the children of his second marriage helps to explain his determination to win back Eslington.

Little is known of their married life but it is possible to establish the approximate dates of birth of their children. Catherine was baptised at Brooke House, Holborn, in 1635.[5] She was followed, a year or two later, by Arthur who died at the age of twelve in 1649. His epitaph in Noseley church provides a, no doubt idealised, picture of the values of the Hesilrige family: 'He was one of rare endowments and incomparable learning for his age; both in Hebrew, Greek, Latine and French; of singular wit and judgement; of a very sweet nature and very pious'.[6] His brother Robert was born before May 1640,[7] and was followed by Donald.[8] Dorothy was born in

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1. P.R.O., S.P. 16/535, ff. 69b, 80a.
2. R.E.L. Strider, Robert Greville, Lord Brooke (Harvard, 1958), 5.
3. H.B. Wheatley and P. Cunningham, London Past and Present (3 vols. 1891), i. 32.
4. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 55.
5. H.B. Wheatley and P. Cunningham, London Past and Present, i. 284.
6. Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii. 754
7. G.E. Cockayne, Complete Baronetage (6 vols., Exeter, 1900-9), i. 220; compare Nichols, Leicestershire, II.ii. 750.
8. Harl. MS. 1180, f. 8b.

1642 or 1643. Three more daughters, Frances, Mary, who died young, and another Mary, were born before the death of their mother Dorothy in January 1650/51.[1] Hesilrige's rôle as the father of this growing family of young children provides an unusual sidelight on his busy public activity in the late 1630s and the 1640s.

The marriage reflected and strengthened Hesilrige's links with leading opposition figures. Through Brooke, who was the Earl of Bedford's son-in-law,[2] he would have been brought into closer contact with the 'Bedford-Western Gentry' connection. Richard Knightley, who was a party to the marriage settlement,[3] had probably come into contact with Hesilrige in the 1620s as a result of family and political connections, but he had been working closely with Brooke for at least a year and a half.[4] Hesilrige was to fill one of the two gaps, caused by death, amongst the six trustees (including Say, Pym, Hampden and John Crew) chosen by Knightley when he converted his impropriations into a trust for John Dod, vicar of Preston Capes.[5] Through Brooke, Knightley, or the Bedford circle, Hesilrige formed a friendship with Pym. The closeness of that relationship is indicated by Pym's plans, during an outbreak of plague in July 1638, to send his younger children to Noseley if the infection spread.[6] Their friendship was evident during the early months

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1. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 748.
2. R.E.L. Strider, Robert Greville, Lord Brooke (Harvard, 1958), 11.
3. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 55.
4. B. Trumbull, A Complete History of Connecticut (2 vols., Hartford, 1797), i. 525-6.
5. C. Russell, 'The Parliamentary Career of John Pym', in The English Commonwealth 1574-1660: Essays in Politics and Society presented to Joel Hurstfield, ed. P. Clark, A.G.R. Smith and N. Tyacke, (Leicester 1979), 148 n. 10 (p. 249).
6. Pym to his daughter Philippa, 12 July 1638, from a photocopy of an MS. in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, supplied by Professor Russell.

of the Long Parliament, and Clarendon described Hesilrige as having been 'brought up by Mr. Pimm'.[1] In practice, however, it was always one of many overlapping relationships, and Hesilrige was never so dependent on Pym as Clarendon's phrase might suggest.

Similarly there was never any question of political dependence in Hesilrige's relationship with Brooke. Hesilrige was to be one of the wealthier members of the Commons, and was evidently considered to be a suitable husband for the only sister of a peer, while Brooke's wealth was modest by the standards of the peerage. They shared many political views, but Brooke was the younger by seven or eight years,[2] and Wood may well have had Hesilrige in mind when he wrote of Brooke becoming 'unhappily attainted with fanatic and anti-monarchical principles, by the influence of one of his near relations and some schismatical preachers'.[3] While Hesilrige clearly benefited by the relationship, it was one of rough equality.

It is impossible to say whether Hesilrige's involvement in colonial projects preceded his marriage. Unlike many of his later associates, he does not seem to have invested in the Providence Island Company.[4] Perhaps in consequence he was not one of the original group to whom Warwick granted the Saybrook patent in March 1631/2.[5] Before attempting to colonise Connecticut, this group explored two alternatives. The first was the purchase, in 1632, of a share of the Hilton patent covering the young colony of Pascataqua, New Hampshire. Hesilrige may have been

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1. Edward, Earl of Clarendon, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, ed. W.D. Macray, (6 vols., Oxford, 1888), i. 300.
2. R.E.L. Strider, Robert Greville, Lord Brooke, 5.
3. Quoted by Strider, p. 136.
4. For those who invested 1630-6 see: Cal. S.P. Col. 1574-1660, 123, 125, 127, 159, 166, 173, 179; P.R.O., C.O. 124/2 (Colonial Entry Book iii) 70-3, 75, 154-5, 169, 245, 281.
5. B. Trumbull, A Complete History of Connecticut, i. 525-6.

involved, but the reference to his participation, alongside Say, Brooke and Sir Richard Saltonstall, may be a reflection of his later rôle in the group.[1] In the face of the hostility from the existing colonists, and from the Plymouth colony, the Pascataqua project failed. The group, most of whom had earlier been involved in the affairs of Massachusetts,[2] therefore turned their attention to the older colony. In July 1634 one of their number, John Humphrey, arrived in Massachusetts, bringing 'certain propositions from some persons of great quality and estate (and of special note for piety) whereby they discovered their intentions to join with us, if they might receive satisfaction therein'.[3] Say and Brooke's proposals for an aristocratic constitution were, however, firmly rejected.[4] In spite of this, there was still ample scope for cooperation between the Saybrook group and Massachusetts, since both had an interest in preventing piecemeal settlement of Connecticut by the Dutch, colonists from Plymouth, and dissidents escaping the control of the Massachusetts authorities.

John Winthrop junior's arrival in England in autumn 1634 brought the two sides together.[5] Hesilrige must have been involved by this time. He was probably responsible for drawing George Fenwick into the scheme. Fenwick had no obvious connection with other participants and Fenwick and Hesilrige were closely linked in the later activities of the company.

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1. W. Bradford, History of the Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647 (2 vols., Mass. Hist. Soc., 1912), ii. 175n.-176n.
2. A.P. Newton, The Colonising Activities of the English Puritans, 83-4; B. Trumbull, A Complete History of Connecticut, i. 7-8.
3. Winthrop's Journal. 'History of New England' 1630-1649, ed. J.K. Hosmer, (2 vols., New York, 1908), i. 127-8.
4. T. Hutchinson, The History of the Colony of Massachusets - Bay (2nd edn., 2 vols., 1765-8, vol. i. mispr. 1760), 41-2, 490-5.
5. A.P. Newton, The Colonising Activities of the English Puritans, 176.

On 7 July 1635 Hesilrige and Fenwick, along with Say, Saltonstall, Henry Lawrence and Henry Darley, signed the agreement with Winthrop junior under which Winthrop was to be governor for one year, and undertook to settle there as soon as possible, recruiting at least fifty men in Massachusetts to build the fort and houses at Saybrook, including some suitable 'for men of qualitie'.[1] These gentlemen, with the exception of Say, granted Winthrop his commission on 18 July.[2] Ten days later they sent him an instrument which was to be kept secret even from his fellow commissioners Sir Henry Vane junior and Hugh Peter, 'because it is the Gentlemen's desire that you might have all the advantages the business will afford for your confortable and creditfull going on in this project'.[3]

Hesilrige and George Fenwick were still enthusiastic on 18 September 1635, when they wrote to Winthrop, in terms expressive of their intention to emigrate:

> 'Our dependance on you is greate, wee neede not expresse it. Your abilitie to perform your vndertaking wee doubt not; your integritie to goe on with the woorke wee suspecte not; our only request is, that (with what speede possible may be) fitt houses be builded ... We shalbe happie to live to see you.'[4]

Henry Lawrence wrote in similar vein adding that gentlemen were likely to arrive next summer in greater numbers than Winthrop yet knew.[5] These expectations were to be disappointed. Fenwick alone, whose later efforts show his exceptional commitment to the project, made a short visit in 1636.[6] An examination of Hesilrige's other activities helps to explain this collapse.

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1. Winthrop Papers (revised edn., 5 vols., Mass. Hist. Soc., 1929-47), iii. 198-9.
2. B. Trumbull, A Complete History of Connecticut, i. 527.
3. Winthrop Papers, iii. 201.
4. Ibid., 209.
5. Ibid., 212.
6. 'Lieft. Lion Gardner His Relation of the Pequot Warres', Mass. Hist. Soc., Coll., 3rd ser., iii. (1833), 137.

He certainly had cause to dislike Laud's England in 1635. Presumably as a result of the 1634 visitation he was forced to go through a series of inconclusive proceedings in the Court of High Commission. An attachment for failure to attend having been issued on 29 January, Hesilrige appeared on 3 February and took the oath to answer articles. Two days later he was ordered to answer additionals. On 12 February he was licensed to appear by proctor. After a postponement on 23 April his petition was read on 30 April and referred to Sir John Lambe and Doctors Duck and Eden. There were further adjournments in July. A conclusion seemed near on 15 October when the referees were ordered to report by the next court day, but a week later the record ends with an order that the case continue 'in statu quo' until the next court day.[1] Hesilrige may have aided this inconclusive result by 'selling' Noseley rectory and chapel to two London lawyers on 1 October. The 'sale' is suspect, since the lawyers leased the rights to Thomas Horton for one year at a peppercorn rent in November 1636, and three months later sold them back to Hesilrige.[2] A neat circular legal manoeuvre, reducing the immediate pressure in High Commission and providing water-tight proof of ownership for the future, would be characteristic of Hesilrige.

In parallel with this case the question of the Leicestershire militia produced a second confrontation with the Privy Council. On 28 May 1635 Sir William Faunt and Sir Arthur Hesilrige answered warrants to appear before the Privy Council and were placed in the custody of the messengers. On 3 June the Council signed warrants to commit them to the Fleet.[3] A brief scrutiny of the registers for 1635 reveals no further

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1634-5, 494, 532, 534, 542; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1635, 192, 199, 207, 215, 221; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1635-6, 83, 92.
2. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, nos. 57-9.
3. P.R.O., P.C. 2/44, p. 582/f. 291b, p. 596/f. 298a.

reference to Faunt. The next entry concerning Hesilrige is, apparently, the Council's warrant of 30 December 1635 ordering the warden of the Fleet to release Sir Arthur Hesilrige, formerly committed from the board.[1]

The suggestion that this imprisonment arose from the proceedings in High Commission is untenable since they were inconclusive and there is no correspondence between the dates. The association of Faunt and Hesilrige naturally points to some further protest on the militia question. The registers contain ample evidence of a drive against those who resisted the musters or defaulted. Sir John Corbet was, for instance, imprisoned from June to November 1635 for inciting opposition to militia payemnts in Shropshire.[2] Hesilrige's offence must have been at least broadly comparable if his imprisonment was continuous. In addition he suffered loss of local office. Both his name, and that of Faunt, are crossed out in the list of Leicestershire justices for 1634-5.[3] This loss was probably temporary but his omission from the Commission of Oyer and Terminer for 1635 was repeated until the second commission of 1640.[4]

The absence of any Privy Council order for Hesilrige's release or reimprisonment between June and December 1635, suggests that his imprisonment was continuous. The Saybrook group's meetings with Winthrop would thus have taken place in the Fleet, and, even in the relaxed prison conditions of the seventeenth century, this would hardly have helped their efforts to conceal their plans. This in turn suggests that his participation was indispensable. He was capable of making a large

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1. P.R.O., P.C. 2/45, p. 314/f. 151b.
2. P.R.O., P.C., 2/44, p. 596/f. 298a; P.R.O., P.C., 2/45, p. 231-2/f.110a-b.
3. P.R.O., C. 193/13 Pt. ii., f. 37a.
4. P.R.O., C. 181/5 ff. 4b, 34b, 192a.

investment, and may, in view of his rôle in Fenwick's later attempt to revive the project, have been cast as the scheme's London organiser, or even as the leader of the gentry emigration planned for 1636. In any event, the plans had leaked out by late 1635. Some Northern gentlemen, who had been heavily involved in the project in London, returned home to find that rumours of their intentions were widespread, and ceased activity, while Brooke failed to recruit any of the twenty men he had promised to supply.[1] By 10 March 1635/6 Hesilrige was showing similar caution, refusing to proceed with the purchase of a house in Massachusetts on the grounds that its ownership was in doubt.[2] Soon after this he refused to honour the bills of Hugh Peter, one of the three commissioners sent out in 1635.[3] By the end of 1636 the first, and most promising, stage of the Saybrook venture was dead.

Events in America were partially responsible for this. The commissioners could secure the allegiance of the Connecticut towns settled from Massachusetts only by granting them virtual autonomy. Vane accepted the governorship of Massachusetts and this, together with his conduct in office, suggests a reversion to the earlier plans centred on that colony. His failure as governor cannot have improved relations between Massachusetts and the Saybrook group.[4] The patentees were discouraged by the amount of their territory which had been occupied by the settlers from Massachusetts.[5] After an exceptionally hard winter,

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1. Winthrop Papers, iii. 211.
2. Ibid., 233.
3. Ibid., 269
4. Winthrop's Journal, i. 160-1, 162; C.M. Andrews, The Colonial Period of American History (4 vols., New Haven, 1934-8), ii. (The Settlements, ii), 76-8; V. Rowe, Sir Henry Vane the Younger (1970), 4-7.
5. Winthrop Papers, iii. 268.

Fenwick's arrival at Saybrook in May 1636, without the expected reinforcements, provoked a protest from the servants there, who had not received the material and spiritual provision which they had been promised.[1] These problems were aggravated by Massachusetts' war against the Pequod Indians, which lasted from May 1636 until the following summer and placed the Saybrook settlers in the front line, with the result that parties venturing beyond the fort suffered a series of casualties.[2] Saybrook was scarcely an attractive refuge for English puritans.

On the English side, 1635 was the peak year for emigration to New England. The activities of Laud and the other Commissioners for the Colonies may have had some effect in reducing the numbers in subsequent years, but a really determined gentleman like George Fenwick could still secure a licence to go abroad in early 1636.[3] The decisive factor was the diversion of attention towards the West Indies and domestic politics. From Autumn 1635 until 1637 war with Spain was the subject of serious discussion and preparation. The Providence Island Company, which could play a crucial part in such a war, was granted letter of marque, and in 1636 and early 1637 the government considered reinforcing its fleet with royal ships.[4] From January 1636 onwards the leading members of the company, including most of the leaders of the Saybrook group, dedicated their time and money to the privateering war in the West Indies, virtually forgetting New England.[5] As Dr. Smutts shows, there

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1. B. Trumbull, A Complete History of Connecticut, 52; Winthrop Papers, iii. 281-2; 'Leift Lion Gardner His Relation of the Pequot Warres', 137.
2. Ibid., 137-9; Winthrop's Journal, i. 190-2, 208, 212, 220-30.
3. Privy Council Register 1636, P.R.O., P.C., 2/46, p. 52/f. 24b.
4. R.M. Smutts, 'The Puritan Followers of Henrietta Maria in the 1630s', Eng. Hist. Rev., xciii. (1978), 35-40.
5. A.P. Newton, The Colonising Activities of the English Puritans, 207 ff.

was an integral connection between the prospect of war and the campaign against ship-money in early 1637. Without ship-money the war could be financed only if a parliament was summoned. Hence the Providence Island group hoped to secure both their colonial and their domestic aims by maintaining the pressure for war while working to prevent the collection of ship-money.[1]

Sir Arthur Hesilrige's rôle in the opposition to ship-money was the start of the process which culminated in his election for Leicestershire in 1640. It will be convenient to conclude the story of Saybrook before returning to that process as a whole. The myth that Hesilrige, Cromwell and Hampden intended to emigrate in 1638 and were forced to disembark from their ship at the last moment is an historiographical rather than historical phenomenon. Of the seventeenth century sources Bate (1663) and Dugdale (1681) merely assert Cromwell's intention to emigrate. Lilly (writing in 1667) says that Cromwell changed his mind on receipt of a large inheritance. Rushworth, following Privy Council records, merely records an attempt to prevent the departure of some ships in April 1638, which failed within days as commercial protests brought the release of the ships and their passengers. No names are mentioned. Cotton Mather produced the classic story in 1702 although he neither dates it nor asserts that the three were emigrating together. John Oldmixon in 1708 dated the story to April 1637 (following the confused manner in which Rushworth dates his account) and added Sir Matthew Boynton and Sir William Constable in the company. In his revised second edition of 1741 he retreated to an account of the Saybrook patent and a story that action was taken on reports of the intended

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1. R.M. Smutts, 'The Puritan Followers of Henrietta Maria', 39.

emigration of Boynton, Constable, Hesilrige and Cromwell which can best be related to the events of late 1635. Neal, in 1720, was the first to make Cromwell, Hesilrige and Hampden actually board and be forced to disembark. Hutchinson, in 1764, merely gave limited support to the idea that they had intended to emigrate, on the basis of his knowledge of Saybrook. Thereafter the story fed on repetition and ingenious objections alike.[1]

Ironically the story has obscured Hesilrige's genuine involvement in the attempt to revive Saybrook. On 13 March 1637/8 Emanuel Downing assured Winthrop junior that the members of the Saybrook company would pay his past expenses on receipt of a general account and that, 'All things stand well in the eye of o^{r} State concerning y^{or} plantation, noe word or any murmuring ag^{t} y^{t},.[2] Nothing prevented George Fenwick's lonely attempt to substitute a genuine colony for the military outpost at Saybrook. He arrived with his wife and family in July 1639 and took possession of a large tract of land.[3] By October 1642 he despaired of being joined by others who had once considered emigrating. His letter of that date, and another of May 1643, show that Hesilrige was handling the affairs of Saybrook in London and paying out monies on Fenwick's behalf, while his brother Thomas was involved in supplying the colony. Thomas was also involved with Robert and Maurice Thompson in a commercial

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1. These sources are reprinted with a sharp commentary in 'The Story of the Embarkation of Cromwell and his Friends for New England' (Boston, 1866, repr. from the New Eng. Hist. and Gen. Reg.). The remainder of each of these works has been searched without finding any further evidence for the story. From further research it appears that the article covers all the available material. For Rushworth and his source, compare J. Rushworth, Historical Collections, ii. 408-10, 718, and Acts of the Privy Council of England: Colonial Series (1613-1783), ed. W.L. Grant and J. Munro (6 vols., 1908-12), i. 227-30.
2. Winthrop Papers, iv. 20.
3. Winthrop's Journal, i. 308; B. Trumbull, A Complete History of Connecticut, ii. 106.

venture in Massachusetts which had been undertaken by Fenwick and his fellow settler Robert Barrington (whose executors, Sir Thomas Barrington, Sir Gilbert Gerrard and Sir William Massom, occasioned these letters by seeking to retrieve his investment).[1] Thomas Hesilrige, who was established as a London mercer by 1634,[2] may well have played some rôle in the Saybrook venture from the start, thus strengthening Sir Arthur's interest in the project.

In 1634 Fenwick wrote to the remining investors for guidance concerning Saybrook 'which indeed hath bene a heavy burden to me'. Sir Arthur collected the views of Brooke, Sir William Constable and Sir Matthew Boynton, who with himself now formed a majority in the company, and informed Fenwick, 'that they would wholly relinquish it,' and, 'wished there were that which would answere /his/ expense'. Saybrook's fort was now physically rotting and in order to get enough men to resist the continued threat from the Indians and the Dutch Fenwick had to allow settlement without payment. Resigned to the loss of his investment, he hoped only for some recompense for his services.[3] After long negotiations Fenwick finally, in December 1644, conveyed the patentees' rights to the Connecticut towns in return for a large measure of autonomy for Saybrook itself within the new colony of Connecticut, substantial rights and property for himself and any other patentee who came to settle in person, and substantial duties for ten years on goods passing along the river. In February 1646, after the towns had refused to pay the duties in full, or at all, they were commuted for a payment of £180 each year for ten years in agricultural produce. By then Fenwick

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1. Barrington papers, Brit. Lib., Egerton MS. 2646, ff. 181-2, 240.
2. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 743.
3. Egerton MS. 2648, f. 1; Winthrop Papers, v. 143.

had returned home.[1]

Sir Arthur was clearly the key figure in this last effort to save Saybrook and it can be assumed that he was involved in planning Fenwick's voyage and was at least interested in emigrating in person. The venture brought him closer to Brooke, the Barringtons, Gerrard, Boynton and Constable. The involvement of Maurice Thompson suggests that Hesilrige's connections with London radicals pre-dated the Long Parliament, and Thompson, Hesilrige, Brooke and Hugh Peter were to be reunited in the radical Additional, or Sea, Adventure to Ireland in summer 1642.[2] The strengthening of Hesilrige's links with Fenwick and the Downing family was to bear fruit in the later 1640s.

In the short term, however, Fenwick's 1639 departure was supremely ill-timed, since the tide of political events which was to sweep Hesilrige and other opposition leaders into Parliament was clearly rising. Sir Arthur Hesilrige played his part by ensuring that change in Leicestershire.

In March 1636/7 Henry Skipwith, an old adversary of Hesilrige, now sheriff of Leicestershire, reported the refusal of constables in Gosthorpe and Guthlaxton hundreds to assess and collect ship-money and added, by way of explanation,

> 'Sir Arthur Hesilrige knt. & Barronett hath arrested Thomas Berditt and Andrew Collyns two of the head constables of Gartrey Hundred for takinge a distresse for the Shippeinge money in M^r Saunders his shrivaltye w^ch hath putt such a feare on them that none dare venter to take a distresse of him'.[3]

The natural reading is that Hesilrige had arrested the constables recently for taking a distress under Skipwith for arrears due from Saunders shrievalty (1634-5). He was certainly liable in March 1636/7 to distraint for non-payment of ship-money and it is probable that the earlier distress had been

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1. B. Trumbull, A Complete History of Connecticut, 538-42.
2. R.P. Brenner, Commercial Change and Political Conflict: The Merchant Community in Civil War London, (Ph. D. thesis, Princeton, 1970), 308-15.
3. P.R.O., S.P. 16/351/91, f. 245 (Printed Cal. S.P. Dom. 1636-7 543).

directed against him. This striking incident epitomises the mixture of influences on Hesilrige's actions. It was clearly part of the national protest including Knightley, Gerrard, Barrington and Say who tried unsuccessfully to force a test case by suing the constable who distrained on his goods for ship-money.[1] Within Leicestershire Skipwith's position as sheriff undermined the government's attempt to dissociate the machinery of ship-money collection from unpopular aspects of the militia system, upon which it was based.[2] Skipwith was inevitably connected, especially for Hesilrige, with the militia system and opposition to it. Hesilrige's own personality led him to arrest the constables where Say sued. It is a measure of the government's tentative approach prior to the Hampden decision that no action seems to have been taken against Hesilrige.

If ship-money linked local grievances over the militia to national grievances over taxation without parliamentary approval, Sir William Faunt's case identified Huntingdon's insensitive rule in Leicestershire with the arbitrary actions of the Star-chamber. Faunt's attempt to rally gentry support for resistance to militia levies in 1626 by the circulation of fierce denunciations of Huntingdon's policy and financial probity in the conduct of the militia has been mentioned. It seems to have been ineffective and to have resulted in no punishment for Faunt at the time. One of his letters was brought to light and used against Faunt in consequence of his more determined stand, in partnership with Hesilrige, against the militia levies between 1632 and 1635. Huntingdon began proceedings against him in Star-chamber in 1635 and the court gave its verdict on 19 October 1638, in spite of Faunt's undeniably correct appeal to the Statute of Limitations. By contrast with the Council's private warnings to Huntingdon about the level of militia levies in 1627 and 1633, the court now fully endorsed Huntingdon's actions in that period. They sent

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1. A.P. Newton, The Colonising Activities of the English Puritans, 241; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1636-7, 155, 252.
2. See A. Hassell Smith 'Militia Rates and Militia Statutes 1558-1663', in The English Commonwealth 1574-1640: Essays in Politics and Society presented to Joel Hurstfield, ed. P. Clark, A.G.R. Smith and N. Tyacke, 107.

Faunt to the Fleet, and ordered him to pay a fine of £5,000 to the King and £2,000 damages to Huntingdon.[1] Before his death in December 1639 Faunt was to pay the damages, and some costs, due to Huntingdon.[2] Not satisfied with this, Huntingdon petitioned for the grant of the fine[3] and this, mitigated to £4,000, was granted to him. This represented half of Faunt's personal estate of £8,000 which was itself left to his nephew charged with debts and legacies of £12,000. Huntingdon refused to accept payment by instalments and insisted that Faunt's lands be extended for the fine.[4]

Huntingdon's action may have been effective in the short term. There were only minor protests against the militia in late 1638 and these were easily crushed.[5] But the case, with its vindictive retrospection, its unsavoury financial aspect and its clear demonstration that Huntingdon and the Privy Council were at one on a basic grievance of the Leicestershire gentry, must have helped to create the climate for the election to parliament of Faunt's former partner in opposition to Huntingdon, Sir Arthur Hesilrige.

Before that election Sir Arthur received further confirmation for his dislike of Laud. In November 1638 his rights at Noseley were again ignored when the crown presented John Bassett to the rectory.[6] On 22 November 1639 Hesilrige and Bassett appeared before the Archbishop and the Lord Keeper in the inner Star Chamber. They ordered that Bassett, or his lessee, should bring his action as soon as, and wherever, he wished. Hesilrige was to appear gratis and stand only to title to the rectory without taking advantage of it.[7]

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1. Harl. MS. 3881, f. 64ab; John Moore's Journal, Brit. Lib., Harl. MS. 479, f. 216.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1637-8, 126 (misdated petition of Faunt's heir to Laud); Nichols, Leicestershire, IV. i. 175.
3. undated - printed at Cal. S.P. Dom. 1635-6, 22 and 1637-8, 54.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1637-8, 126 (misdated).
5. P.R.O., S.P. 16/404, no. 126; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1638-9, 318.
6. A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The Rectors of the Chapel and Parish Church of Noseley', 78.
7. Privy Council Registers, Preserved in the Public Record Office, Reproduced in Facsimile, VIII, 1 November 1639 - 24 January 1640 (1968), (P.C.2/51), p. 63/f. 27a.

The writs for the election of the Short Parliament arrived in Leicestershire in the midst of fresh trouble over the musters. On 11 December 1639 the Council issued a warrant for the chief constables of Gartree, Sparkenhoe and Eastgoscote hundreds, and another constable from each, to be brought up, 'for default at musters and other services of that nature.[1] Given Hesilrige's tight control over the constables as a justice, and the fact that two of the hundred's three head constables named here were those whom Hesilrige had arrested in connection with ship-money, it seems likely that Hesilrige inspired these defaults in Gartree Hundred.

The elections for the Short Parliament in Leicestershire are not well documented. The borough elected Roger Smith of Edmonton and Simon Every. On Smith's refusal to take the burgess oath, Thomas Coke, son of the secretary, was elected in his place. Huntingdon had made approaches for his son Henry Hastings but, having other plans for him, contented himself with supporting Every, receiver-general of the Duchy of Lancaster. The election reflected the borough's conservatism in choosing two members sympathetic to the government, one of whom represented the Hastings and Duchy interests.[2]

The county election was almost certainly contested. On 13 February 1640 Huntingdon informed the borough that his son Henry Hastings and Sir Henry Skipwith were to stand in the county.[3] He must have been confident to have stood two candidates so closely connected with himself and his policy on the militia. He did not anticipate the need for any insurance against defeat and withdrew the approach to the borough which he had made on his son's behalf.[4]

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1. Privy Council Registers, Preserved in the Public Record Office, Reproduced in Facsimile, VIII, 1 November 1639 - 24 January 1640, (P.C. 2/51) p. 173/f. 82a.
2. J. Thompson, History of Leicester, i. 359.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

Neither he nor Skipwith would have been prepared to allow Hesilrige into parliament without a fight. Yet in the election of 19 March Hesilrige was elected as senior knight with Lord Grey of Ruthen as his partner.[1] It is not certain that they stood as a pair but the defeat of Hastings and Skipwith makes this probable. Hesilrige brought to the election the assets of having his politically sympathetic neighbour and erstwhile brother-in-law William Halford as sheriff,[2] a strong local base in the largest Leicestershire hundred, and a record of militant opposition to Laudian interference, excessive militia rates and ship-money, which necessarily implied opposition to the Hastingses' long-resented and now weakening dominance in the county. Grey of Ruthen had few of these qualifications but, fortified by his newly acquired status as an earl's heir and the convictions shown by his later parliamentarianism, he was probably one of the few Leicestershire gentlemen willing to risk the consequences of opposing the Hastings family. The risk was justified by the electoral revolt of the Leicestershire gentry in March 1640.

The Short Parliament met on 13 April and was dissolved in an angry deadlock on 5 May. So short and tense a parliament necessarily relegated new members to a disproportionately obscure rôle. It is a measure of Hesilrige's influence with Pym and other opposition leaders that he, unlike many others later prominent in the Long Parliament, was appointed to even one committee. On Saturday 2 May he appears near the end of the list of twenty-three members appointed to consider the petition of Sir Edward Bishop and all other petitions concerning second elections.[3] This committee, presumably appointed to relieve pressure on the Privileges Committee, can have done little before the following Tuesday's dissolution, but Hesilrige had at least been identified as one eligible

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1. Official Returns of Members of Parliament, i. 482.
2. Lists of Sheriffs in England and Wales, P.R.O. Lists and Indexes ix., 75.
3. C.J., ii. 18.

for such appointments, and in an area for which he was to show great aptitude. In a speech nineteen years later Hesilrige confirmed the view that Charles I's dissolution of the Short Parliament was a decisive error. The King had asked for 'a great sum to maintain the war against Scotland. We debated it but the consequence of our debate made him fear we would not grant it. We had if he had suffered us to sit'. In 1659 Hesilrige could speak of the dissolution and 'rejoice in my soul it was so', but he made no claim to have foreseen this in May 1640.[1]

Hesilrige's reaction can be imagined but his activities and whereabouts between the dissolution and the elections to the Long Parliament can only be conjectured. Lord Nugent's passing reference to Hesilrige posting, in disguise, from Knightley's Fawsley to the Scottish border is not supported and is not found elsewhere.[2] Such a cloak-and-dagger rôle was neither likely nor necessary. As will be seen, Hesilrige's inclusion among the Five Members cannot be used as proof of active involvement with the Scots before the Long Parliament met. His associations with leading opposition figures such as Brooke and Knightley suggests that he would have known of their plans and perhaps been consulted, but this can be no more than speculation.

The elections for the Long Parliament demonstrated that the borough of Leicester had caught up with the mood of the county. Thomas Coke was re-elected but the majority rejected the advice of senior members of the corporation to re-elect Simon Every. Instead they chose Thomas, Lord Grey of Groby, son of the Earl of Stamford.[3] In view of the family's long political dormancy in Leicestershire and the fact that the candidate was less than eighteen years of age at the time,[4] this was a significant vote for change.

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1. Diary of Thomas Burton, ed. J.T. Rutt, iii. 91.
2. Lord Nugent, Memorials of John Hampden, his Party and his Times (2 vols., 1832). ii. 38.
3. J. Thompson, The History of Leicester, i. 361.
4. M.F. Keeler, The Long Parliament (Am. Phil. Soc., Philadelphia, 1954), 195.

In the county Grey of Ruthen and Hesilrige, like sixty per cent of their colleagues in the Short Parliament, were re-elected.[1] It seems likely that Hesilrige was opposed by a single member of the Hastings faction who, learning from their earlier defeat, hoped to beat him by attracting plumpers and splitting Grey of Ruthen's second choices. This is suggested by Hesilrige's failure to retain the senior place.[2] After the poll Richard Halford turned to the electors and said, 'Gents and neighbours you have chosen a noble gent, but the other is but a flassh in the pan /not?/ fit for yo^r^ turn upon any ground in England, & god send you lesse wille & more witt'.[3] Halford's bitterness and the distinction he drew between Grey of Ruthen and Hesilrige would support this interpretation of Hastings' tactics.

Richard Halford of Wistow was distantly related to Hesilrige's ally William Halford of Wellam, but he was not well-established in Leicestershire. His second wife was an Essex woman and in 1635 he was resident in that county.[4] He appears to have grown wealthy as a grazier[5] or, as Grey put it, 'a driver of hoggs'.[6] It is an indication of the narrowing of Huntingdon's base in the county that by 1640 Halford was one of his deputy lieutenants.[7] His outburst probably reflected the prevailing attitude of the Hastings faction.

The electors of Leicestershire naturally resented Halford's aspersion upon their intelligence. They petitioned the House of Commons, and on 7 November the serjeant at arms was sent to fetch him as a delinquent.[8]

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1. Official Returns of Members of Parliament, i. 490; R.N. Kershaw, 'The Elections for the Long Parliament, 1640', Eng. Hist. Rev., xxxviii. (1923), 507, n. 2.
2. Official Return of Members of Parliament, i. 490.
3. Moore, Harl. MS. 541, f. 97b.
4. Nichols, Leicestershire, II. ii. 864, 874; P.R.O., P.C. 2/44, p. 576/f. 288b.
5. Hist. MSS. Comm., Rep. xii., Cowper, ii. (Coke MS.), 263.
6. Moore, Harl. MS. 541, f. 97b.
7. Ibid., 97b - 98a.
8. C.J., ii. 21.

When he appeared on 2 December, he could not deny the words, and Grey of Ruthen led the attack on him, suggesting that his newly acquired wealth had led to excessive pride which should be curbed by imprisoning him, forcing him to apologise in the House and at Leicester assizes, and imposing a severe fine. Hesilrige adopted a conventional stance, saying that he was not responsible for the petition and that he did not expect reparation, and the House removed the fine from the sentence proposed by Grey of Ruthen.[1] Halford petitioned in humble terms for his release on 5 December and, after making a suitable acknowledgment of his offence before the House, was discharged on the tenth.[2]

Hesilrige would not have been human if he had not felt some satisfaction at the outcome, in spite of the embarrassing aspects of the affair for a relatively new member. Having spent the 1630s in a struggle against arbitrary power at the national and, especially, the local level, he had won the support of his county. As a member of the Commons he, rather than his opponents, was now defended by privilege - until or unless Charles I broke the Parliament or its privileges.

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After more than a century of dominance in Leicestershire, the Hastings family had been defeated in two crucial elections. In 1640, as Hesilrige was well aware, these setbacks were far from irreversible and victory for the King at Westminster or in the Civil War would almost certainly have led to a restoration of Hastings power in Leicestershire. Nevertheless these unprecedented defeats demonstrate that major changes had taken place.

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1. C.J., ii. 43; Moore, Harl. MS. 541, f. 97b - 98a; The Notebook of Sir John Northcote, ed. A.H.A. Hamilton (1877), 25.
2. C.J., ii. 46, 48.

The duration of the Hastingses' dominance was, in itself, bound to create a pool of generalised resentment amongst the gentry. Few leading families had not suffered some slight or disappointment over the years, whether because the Hastings family wanted a post such as a deputy lieutenancy for themselves or because they could not satisfy all competing demands for such patronage. Such generalised resentment was not dangerous to the Hastingses so long as those individuals who dared to oppose them were seen to be motivated solely by personal grievance or ambition. Potentially, however, it eroded positive support for the Hastingses and created a situation in which many gentry families might stand neutral or even join an opposition which was clearly based on more than personal or factional motives.

The Hastings family's strength lay in its ability to represent the views and interests of the county's gentry. So long as that identification persisted there was little scope for a broadly based opposition. Down to the end of the 1620s Huntingdon's puritanism, and the political stance indicated by his support for opposition groupings in parliaments, aligned him with the sentiments of most of the county's gentlemen, and provided an ideological cement which bound the county community together in spite of material grievances and quarrels over status and position. As Shirley's failure demonstrated, that cohesion could even survive actions by Huntingdon which ran contrary to the interests of the gentry - whatever reservations they had regarding his militia levies, they had to support him against a crypto-Catholic backed by the court.

In the 1630s Huntingdon lost or abandoned these advantages. The government's pressure to implement central policies effectively, and the use made of Huntingdon and his close associates in collecting unpopular national taxes such as ship-money, identified Huntingdon with a central

government whose policies damaged the interests of the gentry. The militia, which had become a local grievance in the 1620s as a result of Huntingdon's personal enthusiasm, now became a national issue as central government placed increased emphasis on it. The damage thus done to Huntingdon's ideological position was reinforced by his inability to protect the county against the effect of Laudianism, indeed his willingness on occasion to support the Laudians. The effect of opposition in the 1630s was to force Huntingdon to draw closer to the court in order to ensure its support in the face of local challenges, and this rapprochement further strengthened and stimulated opposition.

There are some indications that opposition was not wholly confined to the gentry. As has been argued above, there may well have been a popular element in resistance to the militia levies which would, as a threat to stability, have strengthened gentry doubts regarding the policy. Certainly increased national and local demands for money during the 1630s would have had at least as much effect on freeholders as on gentlemen, creating the possibility of a parallel growth of opposition amongst them. Similarly the freeholders were as susceptible as the gentry to the prevailing puritanism of the decades before the 1630s, and they too had to submit to Laudian interference in the conduct of local churches. Halford's outspoken attack on Hesilrige's supporters in 1640 may suggest that they included substantial numbers of lesser men, an implication to which Ruthen's reference to Halford's own social status would have been a natural counter. While it would be dangerous to read too much backwards from events after 1640, some of these suggest that the freeholders of 1640 cannot all have been passive recipients of gentry influence. Both critics and supporters of the Leicester Committee in the period 1643-5 were to agree that its active members included many men of lesser rank. Clearly

the war gave them a chance to act and liberated their energies, but it seems unlikely that men of this kind were wholly apolitical before the war. Similarly the efforts of Hesilrige and his opponents to canvass support from the freeholders when the county next went to the polls in 1645[1] clearly reflected changes produced by the war, but it is possible that many freeholders were capable of acting independently in 1640 and before. It is impossible, given that the evidence for attitudes at this level is even more fragmentary than that for the county's gentry, to go beyond such indications. It should also be said that if freeholder opposition to Huntingdon did develop during the 1630s it was supplementary to the rôle of the gentry.

Hesilrige emerged as a figure who could lead the 1630s opposition to Huntingdon. It is easier to describe his suitability for such a rôle than to define the precise mixture of motives which inspired him to adopt it. His personality, his aggression and dislike of subordination to others, his family's exclusion from county offices in the 1620s, and simple resentment of the militia levy and other impositions might have led him to oppose Huntingdon in any circumstances. But he was also a conscious opponent of central government policies and a fervent enemy of Laudianism. Huntingdon's increasing identification with central government made the local battles part of a wider, and perhaps more important, struggle, while Hesilrige's close contacts with national opposition leaders provided him with greater inspiration and confidence. Whatever the precise balance between these motives - and since they all led to the same practical conclusion in the circumstances which developed during the 1630s neither Hesilrige nor his supporters were forced to

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1. Bodl., Rawl. MS. D116, ff. 18, 19.

strike that balance - Hesilrige was clearly the man for the job.

His willingness to undertake the demonstrably hazardous task of opposing Huntingdon in the early 1630s, when the chances of failure were much greater than the chances of success, marked him out as a leader once the prospects of defeating Huntingdon improved. His unambiguous views placed him in the mainstream of the political and religious consensus which had prevailed in the county down to the late 1620s, the consensus which Huntingdon had largely betrayed. Where Shirley had offered the prospect of a new ruling clique sponsored and sustained by the court, Hesilrige, as a member of one of several leading gentry families, was a respectable candidate but one who could not aspire to replace Huntingdon, and therefore offered the prospect of a broadly-based oligarchy characterised by cooperation or more open political competition. The elections of 1640 thus gave many of the Leicestershire gentry the chance to express a series of resentments and disagreements with the Hastingses by voting for Hesilrige and his partner Ruthen who, unlike Beaumont and Shirley in the 1620s, could reasonably claim to represent the wider interests and values of the county community. The dismal record of previous challengers to Hastings dominance makes it clear that, whatever part personal and factional considerations may have played in motivating Hesilrige's opposition during the 1630s, he could not have won the elections of 1640 had he not represented the feelings of the wider county community.

Chapter 2. Hesilrige and the Destruction of Unity: November 1640 to January 1641/2

Hesilrige owed his place in the Long Parliament to his rôle in opposing Huntingdon's autocratic rule in Leicestershire. That experience had shaped his political outlook and ignited the anger which was never far from the surface of his subsequent political activity. He had pursued a policy of outright confrontation and, in Leicestershire, it had succeeded. At the same time, however, he had been influenced by the wider views of the many opposition leaders with whom he had come into contact during the 1630s. Unlike many of the country gentlemen in the Commons, he had a place in the inner circles of the opposition, an appetite for dogged hard work, and a capacity for ruthless calculation. Unlike many members of Pym's circle, he was not a professional lawyer or administrator, nor the client of an aristocratic patron, and had little experience of controlling his immediate reactions, and little incentive to do so. He thus shared some of the characteristics, the strengths and the weaknesses, of both the politicians and the amateurs. As compromise eluded the opposition leaders, Hesilrige's aggression and willingness to seem 'an absurd, bold man',[1] brought him to the fore and helped to create the confrontation which culminated in the King's attempt to arrest the Five Members.

(i) The New M.P.

In November 1640 Hesilrige was scarcely known to other members beyond a small, if influential, group. Three diarists were unable to remember his name correctly when they recorded the debate on the punishment

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1. Clarendon, History, i. 300.

of Halford.[1] By January 1641/2 his name was known not only to his fellow members, but also to everyone who followed the news from Westminster. This change was due in part to his prominence in a few dramatic incidents, but it also reflected a record of consistent work in the Commons.

Hesilrige was appointed by name to forty-eight committees during the first session of the Long Parliament.[2] Some of these were short-lived, most were suspended from time to time, and their importance varied widely. The crude figure does, however, suggest that his name came readily to mind when committees were appointed. Precise comparisons are difficult, but it is safe to say that most members were appointed to far fewer committees, while some leaders, notably Pym, were appointed to far more. Amongst Hesilrige's friends and rivals of later years, Cromwell was appointed to eighteen committees during the same period, while Hesilrige was a member of nine before the younger Vane received his first appointment on 12 January.[3] Appointment to a committee need not imply participation in its work, but the sheer volume of Hesilrige's appointments suggests that he was regarded as a useful, reliable member of committees. The pattern of appointments is also significant. He was appointed to groups of committees dealing with related subjects, notably in the field of religion. When he sat on a drafting committee he was likely to be appointed for the committee stage of the resultant bill, and when a new committee took over part of the work of a committee on which he sat he was likely to be appointed. Connected

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1. Sir John Holland's Journal, Bodl., Rawl. MS. c. 956, f. 2a; Diary of Henry Townshend, ed. J.W. Willis-Bund (2 vols., Worcs. Hist. Soc., 1915 - 20), i. 19; Diary of Sir T. Peyton, 6 Nov. 1640 - 17 March 1642, Bodl. MS. Film 39 (from Minnesota Univ. Lib.), p. 2.
2. C.J., ii. passim.
3. J.L. Sanford, Studies and Illustrations of the Great Rebellion (1858), 306; V.A. Rowe, Sir Henry Vane the Younger, 15.

appointments of this kind were not automatic, and the pattern suggests that Hesilrige earned his place on many new committees by his work on their predecessors.

Involvement in the Commons' dealings with the Lords provides another measure of a member's standing. When D'Ewes was first appointed to carry a message to the Lords, in December 1642, he clearly regarded this as an honour and recorded the event in detail.[1] Most of the work of managing and reporting conferences fell upon thirty-six members during the first session, while another fifty-two attended one or two.[2] Given his temperament and lack of experience, Hesilrige did well to be selected to carry a message, and to be apppointed a manager for the subsequent conference, on 11 August 1641.[3] Foreshadowing his future activities, he was much quicker to acquire the more dubious distinction of being chosen as a teller, acting in the fourth division of the parliament on 24 February.[4]

Hesilrige's career in the Long Parliament began well, with his appointment to the Committee of Privileges on 6 November.[5] This provided him with an opportunity to make a wide range of contacts and marked him out as one suitable for further appointments. It also placed him at a crucial point in the Pym group's strategy. While Clarendon exaggerated their ability to affect the composition of the House by deciding disputed elections according to 'the fitness and worthiness of the person',[6] and it would have been difficult to predict most men's responses to the divisions of late 1641, they did make intense efforts to seat some known supporters. Hesilrige,

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1. The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, Brit. Lib., Harl. MS. 164, f. 267b-68a.
2. P. Crawford, Denzil Holles 1598-1680 (1979), 54 n. 2.
3. C.J., ii. 251.
4. Moore, Harl. MS. 476, f. 2b; C.J., ii. 91.
5. C.J., ii. 21.
6. Clarendon, History, i. 228.

urging a straightforward approach in March 1659, admitted his own part in earlier manoeuvres, confessing that 'I have but troubled myself too much in this kind. I shall never do so again. I have contended to bring in honest men, and when they have been here, they have not proved as I expected'.[1]

Pym's nephew, Anthony Nichols, was an obvious example of an 'honest' man who had disappointed Hesilrige in the later 1640s. The election at Bodmin produced a double return, in which Nichols was pitted against Sir John Bramston. According to Bramston, Hesilrige and Sir Henry Mildmay were along in opposing the committee's decision to uphold his election. Somehow the committee's report was stifled, and by May 1641 Nichols was sitting in the House. Hesilrige made his approach quite clear in 1643 when, in the course of Nichols' quarrel with Stamford, Bramston was encouraged to revive his claim. He said, 'they were possessed of a good member, and why should they change for one they could not confide in?'[2]

His determination to ensure that sympathetic men were admitted, and opponents were kept out, was demonstrated on other occasions. On 7 and 8 December 1640 he took the lead, alongside the radical John Gurdon, in seeking to have the evidence concerning the Sudbury election dispute reexamined by the House, after the committee had recommended rejection of the challenge from Gurdon's father.[3] Strafford's nephew was imprisoned by the House for his actions after the Short Parliament. When the Commons agreed to release him on 29 June 1641, Hesilrige sought to prolong his exclusion from the House by arguing that he had deprived them of a member by retaining his writ, and demanded that this should be investigated by a committee.[4] When the

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1. Diary of Thomas Burton, ed. J.T. Rutt, iv. 42.
2. The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston of Skreens, ed. Lord Braybrooke, (Camd. Soc., 1st.ser., xxxii., 1845), 160-1; M.F. Keeler, The Long Parliament 1640-1, 38; C.J., ii. 133.
3. The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, ed. W. Notestein (New Haven, 1923), 119, 120.
4. Ibid., 323; Moore, Brit. Lib., Harl. MS. 479, f. 7ab; M.F. Keeler, The Long Parliament, 334.

Committee of Privileges reported in favour of Sir Edward Alford in the Arundel dispute on 12 November 1641, and he elected to sit for that borough rather than Tewkesbury, where he was involved in another dispute with Edward Stephens, Hesilrige was quick to protect Stephens' interests by moving that Alford 'could make noe election but for Arundel'.[1] In May 1642 he saw a chance to dispose of the challenge to the other Tewkesbury member, Sir Robert Cooke, by proposing that his rival Richard Spenser should not only be impeached for his part in promoting the Kent petition, but should also be voted incapable of sitting in Parliament.[2]

If these interventions in the House were representative of his approach and conduct in the Committee of Privileges, he must have played an important part in a number of other factional decisions. Moreover, he was also a member of the parallel committee, usually known as Sir Lewis Dives' committee, appointed on 31 December 1640 to deal with selected cases.[3] This committee upheld the election of Humphrey Salwey and John Wilde for Worcestershire, recommended acceptance of Sir William Waller's challenge to the Andover return, and was rumoured, at one point, to be considering a recommendation for fresh elections in Carnarvon, where the results in both county and borough elections had been challenged by John Glyn's brother Thomas.[4]

Hesilrige's rôle in election disputes provided a solid basis for his parliamentary career. It brought him into close practical cooperation with like-minded men on these committees and allowed him to meet and help interested parties including men like Waller, Nichols, Wilde and Glyn. His appointment, in March 1641, to the committee for two bills to reform elections,[5] while not without a certain irony, confirms that in this

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1. The Journal of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, ed. W.H. Coates (New Haven, 1942), 126; M.F. Keeler, The Long Parliament, 47-8.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 105b.
3. C.J., ii. 60.
4. M.F. Keeler, The Long Parliament, 72-3, 79-80, 48-9.
5. C.J., ii. 114, 129.

field at least he was regarded as an expert.

Most members saw the Long Parliament as a traditional parliament with traditional priorities. Hesilrige's membership of committees dealing with five private bills during the first session[1] probably did as much as more obviously political activities to confirm his standing in the Commons. It also gave him the chance to oblige a number of his fellow members, like Grey of Groby whose grandmother, the Countess of Exeter, was the beneficiary of one of these bills. The Commons was equally traditional in its response to the economic crisis. Hesilrige was appointed, in February 1641, to the committees for bills to prevent the export of wool and related raw materials, and concerning the conversion of tillage into pasture.[2] On 30 May he seconded a proposal to restrict leather exports until the price fell.[3]

Above all most members took a traditional view of government finance and Hesilrige, in spite of his friendship with Pym, shared their prejudices. As late as December 1641 he could respond to proposals to pay the royal family's expenses from tonnage and poundage receipts by demanding to know, 'What was become of the Kings old Crowne lands?[4] He was, however, willing to place his considerable wealth at the service of the House. On 21 November he agreed, like ninety other members, to be bound for £1,000 as security for a loan from the City. On 3 March his contribution of £500 to the loan required for the armies in the North was one of the largest.[5] He was also involved in raising money from others. On 30 April he was named to the committee to draft instructions for the subsidy commissioners,[6] and on 2 June he was added to the committee whose task was to treat for loans with anyone they thought suitable.[7] His rôle on the committee which

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1. C.J., ii. 94, 102, 129, 164, 228.
2. C.J., ii. 77, 92.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 247a.
4. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 313.
5. D'Ewes, ed. Notestein, 52, 435.
6. C.J., ii. 130-1.
7. C.J., ii. 164-5.

rushed through the bill to secure the arrears of the Brotherly Assistance in early August was recognised in his selection to carry the bill up to the Lords.[1] His interest in the details of financial administration was evident on 28 July, when he revealed that a committee chairman's unauthorised order to the customers at three Western ports had led to their stopping work.[2]

Hesilrige's first priority in the parliament was, however, to complete the victory which he had gained in the Leicestershire election by attacking the Hastings faction and the legal basis of their power. On 20 November Sir William Faunt's nephew and heir, George Faunt, presented a petition concerning his uncle's persecution by Star-chamber and Huntingdon. Hesilrige was prominent in the debate which followed, and was named to the committee appointed to consider Faunt's case and the general problem of Star-chamber.[3] On 3 December the Commons appointed a committee, including Hesilrige, to consider the petitions of Prynne and Burton and their associates, which was also directed to consider the general rôle of Star-chamber and High Commission.[4] The duplication of responsibility for the investigation of Star-chamber was partially resolved later in the day when the Commons, having heard a report on Faunt's case, ordered the earlier committee to look at complaints concerning the Leicestershire militia, thus emphasising that aspect of its work.[5]

This division of labour was confirmed on 14 December. The Commons clerk, who had failed to record the appointment of Faunt's committee on 20 November, made up for this by recording the appointment of a new

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1. C.J., ii. 246-9; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 14a.
2. Moore, Harl. MS. 479, f. 102b.
3. Moore, Harl. MS. 541, f. 67b.
4. C.J., ii. 44.
5. C.J., ii. 44.

committee to consider the misdemeanours of Lord Lieutenants and their deputies and subordinates in Leicestershire and elsewhere, and to prepare a bill to regulate their conduct.[1] In reality, as D'Ewes account shows, Sir Hugh Cholmeley and Sir Philip Stapleton were added to Faunt's committee and its instructions were changed to exclude consideration of Star-chamber.[2] D'Ewes' note that Hesilrige moved that this committee should consider the excesses of the Leicestershire deputy lieutenants makes little sense since the committee was already doing this, and the new element was the extension of its work to cover other counties. He may have intervened to ensure that Leicestershire retained its place at the centre of the committee's work or even, if D'Ewes inverted his intentions, to propose the extension of the committee's work which would set his complaints in a wider context and facilitate the passage of legislation to deal with the root of the problem.

Faunt's particular complaint was probably transferred to the committee for Star-chamber on the twentieth, and it was a member of that committee rather than the committee for Lord Lieutenants who made the report on it on 1 July 1641.[3] On 14 July the Commons voted that the sentence should be reversed and the money restored to Faunt's heirs.[4] As a member of the committee for Star-chamber, Hesilrige was well placed to promote this conclusion.

Evidence for the work of the committee for Lord Lieutenants is scarce, but it is clear that Hesilrige used it to launch a sustained attack on the Leicestershire establishment. On the evening of 15 December 1640 he persuaded the committee to send for Mr. Henry Hastings, Sir Henry Hastings of Branson,

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1. C.J., ii. 50.
2. D'Ewes, ed. Notestein, 145.
3. C.J., ii. 195, cf. 44, 50.
4. C.J., ii. 209.

Sir Thomas Hartopp, Sir John Bale, and Richard Halford of Wistow. He undertook to prove that they had 'of spleen charged divers poor men with arms, and after discharged them of the same for monies'.[1] When the Deputy Lieutenants appeared, they were given the charge and allowed until 5 March to prepare their defence. Whether for political reasons or because the evidence was more readily available, the charges related to 1639 and 1640 only. When they appeared, they admitted raising more than £3,000 during the last two years but produced accounts, and pleaded the King's command, as relayed by Huntingdon, during the two Scots wars. This defence could not be broken down by a frontal attack (hence Hesilrige's original charge of corruption), but the accounts could be picked over in detail. This process was still going on, amid much debate, at six that evening when D'Ewes left.[2]

The tedium of this session discouraged D'Ewes from taking further notes of the affair, but the pressure was not relaxed. On 8 March Widow Palmer's petition, complaining of abuse of power by four of the Leicestershire Deputy Lieutenants, was referred to the committee.[3] On the same day Sir John Skeffington wrote to his cousin Sir Edward Dering, seeking his help should the investigation be pushed back to the early 1630s and his own deputy lieutenancy. If possible, Dering was to get any such petition referred to an unbiassed sub-committee excluding Hesilrige. If this failed, and the exclusion of a local member would be difficult, Dering was to tell Hesilrige how grateful he was to have been left out of the first group summoned before the committee, and 'sweeten' him with the

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1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Cowper, ii. 269.
2. D'Ewes, ed. Notestein, 445-6.
3. C.J., ii. 99; Moore, Harl. MSS. 476, f. 36a.

promise of the disposal of the post of Captain of the Horse.[1]

In the event Hesilrige's attack petered out. The pace of the national political struggle pushed it into the background. Of Hesilrige's personal enemies, Huntingdon virtually retired from active political life while Sir John Skeffington was the cousin of Hesilrige's associate Dering. The sheer technical difficulty of proving individual malpractice in such an area must have made this route decreasingly attractive as changes in power at the national level offered a political solution. The committee similarly seems to have made little progress either on other individual complaints or on the general reform of the law entrusted to it. It did however have some intimidatory effect upon key figures in the counties who might have opposed reform. Clarendon saw its work as part of the process by which all those who had held office 'found themselves within the mercy of these grand inquisitors' and 'desired by all means to get their favour and protection'.[2]

Hesilrige's stand was noticed. The Militia Bill which he introduced in December 1641 proposed sweeping powers for generals to be appointed by Parliament. In the subsequent debate Sir John Culpepper scored a clear hit by expressing surprise that Hesilrige 'should bring in such a bill, having soe often complained of the exorbitant power of the Deputie Leiftenants in his cuntrie'.[3] Much had happened in the meantime but Culpepper's effect depended on the Commons' memory of Hesilrige's earlier position.

Ship money had been a grievance in Leicestershire, as in other counties, but it had been secondary to the quarrels over the militia. Hesilrige was not a member of the Committee for Ship-money appointed on 27 November 1640,[4] whose preliminary conclusions were reported by St. John on

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1. Brit. Lib., Stowe MS. 744, f. 7a.
2. Clarendon, History, i. 229.
3. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 244-5.
4. C.J., ii. 38.

7 December. Their proposals were designed to lay the basis for votes on the legal principle, which could be endorsed by the Lords. Instead a series of speakers, led by Falkland and Hyde, demanded immediate action against the judges and Lord Keeper Finch, and St. John's attempts to save his original plan were swept aside as the House showed a clear preference for sending members to question the judges. Holles and Hesilrige, who intervened to demand that they be impeached immediately, were as pressing as the future moderates,[1] demonstrating the implausibility of Clarendon's later claim that St. John had tried to shield Finch so that he could be used as a tool by the opposition leadership.[2]

Hesilrige's blunt intervention towards the close of the debate earned him a place amongst the sixteen members appointed to share the task of questioning the judges.[3] Next day, when members reported the judges' replies, Hesilrige dealt with Judge Crawley's unsatisfactory response, which was to lead to his impeachment in July 1641. These reports convinced the Commons of the need to act on a broad front, and the Committee for Ship-money was instructed not only to prepare the Commons' votes against Ship-money and the charges against Finch and the judges, but also to investigate the wider question of interference with the courts. Hesilrige joined the committee as those who had been sent to question the judges were added en bloc.[5] His appointment, on 19 June 1641, for the committee stage of the bills against Ship-money and knighthood money suggests that he was active in the original committee which drafted them.[6] His continued commitment to the attack on the judges was demonstrated in the autumn.

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1. C.J., ii. 46; Notebook of Sir John Northcote, ed. A.H.A. Hamilton, 36-9.
2. Clarendon, History, i. 229-30 nn.
3. C.J., ii. 46.
4. Moore, Harl. MS. 541, f. 113a; C.J., ii. 196.
5. C.J., ii. 47.
6. C.J., ii. 181, 184.

When, on 27 October 1641, Judge Barkley pleaded not guilty to the Commons' impeachment, Hesilrige led the successful demand that consideration of how to press the case should supersede other business next day.[1]

The topic which occupied most of Hesilrige's time during the first seven months of the parliament was religion. This may seem paradoxical in view of his cool, pragmatic approach to differences between Presbyterians and main-stream Independents in later years. In reality his later stance arose from the relative simplicity of his religious aims and beliefs. 'Bred a puritan',[2] his experience in the 1630s had made him fiercely anti-Laudian. His aims were the destruction of Laudianism and the episcopal system which had given rise to it, and the creation of an environment conducive to measures of practical reform. Once this was achieved, arguments over the precise organisational form of the Church had little attraction for him, and he tended to give priority to secular issues, working with allies regardless of their position on that question.

In the period between November 1640 and May 1641 more than half of Hesilrige's numerous committee appointments were related to aspects of religion. Since there was no shortage of members interested in the subject this suggests that Hesilrige was both interested and known to be willing to work hard in this area. The multi-faceted nature of the attack on Laudianism gave distinct advantages to a member who knew what was happening in a large number of related committees, and Hesilrige was one of those best placed to follow progress, and intervene accordingly.

One group of committees was concerned with the crimes of individual Laudians and the sufferings of their victims. Hesilrige was involved in

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1. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 41, 42.
2. Diary of Thomas Burton, ed. J.T. Rutt, iv. 77.

the investigations concerning Dr. Cosin, the Bishop of Ely, the Bishop of Norwich, the Bishop of Llandaff and Bishop Mainwaring.[1] His active participation in this work is indicated by the way he followed cases when they were transferred from one committee to another. Thus Bishop Mainwaring had been investigated by the Ship-money committee, and the Bishop of Norwich by the Bishop of Ely's committee; when a new committee took over their cases, Hesilrige, who had sat on the other two committees, was appointed to it.[2] Similarly he was one of five members added to Sir Henry Spiller's committee on 6 March, when the grievances of a Buckinghamshire parish were transferred to it from the committee for scandalous ministers.[3]

He was also a member of committees investigating broader problems and their solutions. He was clearly an active participant in the debates of the Grand Committee for Religion and was appointed to its sub-committees on abuses of the censorship, and on the punishment of scandalous ministers and the encouragement of preaching ministers, both of which subsequently became full committees of the House.[4] In February 1641 he was appointed to the committee to which the bill for the abolition of superstition and idolatry was referred,[5] and in the following month he was appointed to the committee which dealt with two bills concerning pluralism.[6] In early April he was appointed to the committee for the bill for the 'more free Passage of the Gospel'.[7] Given his view of Laudianism, he probably saw his work

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1. C.J., ii. 28-9, 71, 56, 67, 91.
2. C.J., ii. 91, 38, 56.
3. C.J., ii. 97.
4. Proceedings, principally in the county of Kent, in connection with the parliaments called in 1640 and especially with the committee of religion, ed. L.B. Larking, (Camd. Soc., 1st ser., lxxx, 1862) 98; C.J., ii. 54, 84.
5. C.J., ii. 84.
6. C.J., ii. 101, 105.
7. C.J., ii. 119.

on the Committee for the Popish Hierarchy,[1] which had wide responsibilities for the investigation of Catholic organisation in England, as part of the same process of purification and reconstruction.

If Hesilrige ever had any doubts about the need to abolish episcopacy, they were removed by his experience on these committees. Those who hoped to preserve the system, once Laudianism had been dealt with, were hampered by the intransigence of the Lords in dealing with compromise proposals during the spring. On 1 March Hesilrige was appointed to the committee to prepare reasons for pressing the Lords to support the Commons' demands for the exclusion of the clergy from the new year's commissions of the peace.[2] That the Lords needed to be pressed suggests that they had failed to appreciate the strength of support for more drastic measures.

A week later Hesilrige was appointed to the committee for the relatively mild bill to disable the clergy from exercising secular office.[3] The same committee was entrusted with the stronger bill to restrain bishops and others in holy orders from 'intermeddling' in secular affairs, when this received its second reading on 1 April.[4] This bill would not have satisfied men like Hesilrige, but it would probably have been sufficient for a majority of the Commons. By rejecting it the Lords opened the way for the Root and Branch bill.

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1. C.J., ii. 105.
2. C.J., ii. 94-5.
3. C.J., ii. 95.
4. C.J., ii. 114.

(ii) Strafford, Root and Branch, and Tumults

By the end of March 1641, Hesilrige was clearly established as one of the large minority of members who were more heavily involved in the detailed, day-to-day work of the Commons than most of their colleagues. He had not, however, done anything particularly dramatic, and it would be difficult to argue that the overall course of events would have been significantly different had he been absent. That changed during the period from April to August, as the Commons' programme of reform met unforeseen obstacles, and the hoped-for agreement between the King and the opposition leadership remained elusive. Faced with these frustrations, Hesilrige emerged as a champion of aggressive action to break the stalemate, whatever the cost in terms of the unity of the Commons.

From the outset, the attack on Strafford had been central to the work of the Long Parliament. His condemnation and death would both symbolise the destruction of the system of the 1630s and remove the minister most feared by the opposition leadership. Unfortunately his trial before the Lords, which began on 22 March, went very badly for his accusers. He consistently won the arguments concerning the evidence, technical legal points, and, above all, the central question of whether a series of lesser crimes could constitute treason by accumulation. In the process he won increasing sympathy and support from the Lords.[1] On 5 April he savaged the Commons' evidence on the crucial charge that he had proposed to bring the Irish army into England, which relied on the elder Vane's faltering recollection of a Privy Council meeting, and pointed out that two witnesses were required to prove treason.[2] When he appeared to conclude his defence on the tenth, the

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1. J.H. Timmis, Thine is the Kingdom: The Trial for Treason of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, First Minister to King Charles I, and Last Hope of the English Crown (Alabama U.P., 1974), 64-127.
2. Ibid., 110-119.

Commons' managers requested permission to present new evidence, but opposed his request for the same right. When the Lords, after two adjournments, ruled in favour of Strafford, 'a great number of the precise part' of the Commons shouted 'Withdraw! Withdraw!' and the two Houses parted in confusion.[1]

Returning to their own house, the Commons began to debate their next step. Pym read out the younger Vane's copy of his father's notes of the crucial Council meeting.[2] Pym clearly expected this revelation to revive the prospects of the impeachment by completing the evidence against Strafford on the central point and providing a second 'witness' to confirm the elder Vane's recollection of events. Instead it inspired a debate on whether to continue with the impeachment or change to a Bill of Attainder. According to D'Ewes, 'most enclined that wee should goe by bill'. The debate continued for some time with breaks to deal with messages from the Lords.[3] Eventually Hesilrige 'drew out of his pocket a bill, supposed to have been prepared before that day, for the Earl's attainder and punishment by death'.[4] After some debate the bill was given a first reading and the managers were ordered to summarise the charges in time for further debate on the Monday morning.[5]

Hesilrige's production of the bill was not a sudden personal initiative. It was a response to the debate and an attempt to capitalise on the mood of the majority. The intriguing question is where Hesilrige, who lacked the necessary technical skills and knowledge to draft the bill himself, got the text. As early as 19 November St. John had secured the appointment of a committee to view the records of past attainders 'for the furtherance of the businesse concerning my Lo: Strafford's charge'.[6] On 26 February

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1640-41, 539.
2. C.J., ii. 118.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 163b; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1640-41, 539.
4. Ibid.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 163b; C.J., ii. 118.
6. Peyton, Bodl., MS. Film 39, pp. 20, 21.

Lord Digby had gone further and moved that the lawyers should draft a bill of attainder as 'the best and only way' of achieving their object in view of the Lords' likely scruples concerning the extension of the definition of treason.[1] By 10 April Digby shared the Lords' scruples, and their doubts concerning the evidence. The same cannot be said of St. John who had first raised the question, had seen the precedents, knew the evidence as a manager and was well equipped to draft such a bill.

Clarendon later portrayed the introduction of the bill as part of a plot involving Pym, and described Hesilrige, in connection with these events, as 'an absurd, bold man, brought up by Mr. Pimm, and so employed by that party to make any attempt'.[2] But Hesilrige's bill cut across Pym's efforts to save the impeachment by producing Vane's notes. In the subsequent debates Pym and allies such as Strode, Earle and Hampden, fought to slow progress on the bill and to press on with the impeachment. Their most prominent opponents were St. John, Henry Marten and Sir John Hotham.[3] The true picture is one of a division over tactics within the Pym group, in which Hesilrige acted for those who differed from Pym.

It has been suggested that this tactical divergence extended to principles, and that Hesilrige acted to prevent an agreement between the King and the opposition leadership under which Strafford's life could have been spared.[4] There is no evidence to show that Hesilrige opposed a compromise settlement in general, and St. John, who had already accepted the post of Solicitor-General, was a keen supporter of such projects. On the other hand Pym's production of the Vane notes suggests that he was determined to save the

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1. D'Ewes, ed. Notestein, 410-11 n. 7.
2. Clarendon, History, i. 300.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MSS. 163, ff. 163b - 172b and 164, ff. 43a - 53a.
4. P. Christianson, 'The Peers, the People, and Parliamentary Management in the First Six Months of the Long Parliament', Jour. of Mod. Hist., 1.(1978), 592.

impeachment and secure the condemnation of Strafford. Logically, indeed, a bill offered more scope for negotiations since it could be kept in play between the Houses for weeks, whereas the Lords' vote on the impeachment could not be long delayed.

The real choice was between two sets of risks. Pym was prepared to gamble that the Lords could be persuaded to convict Strafford. Hesilrige and St. John saw too great a risk of a politically disastrous acquittal. They preferred to face the dangers inherent in the use of a bill, including the threat to the Commons' unity, and the alienation which would result from the use of nakedly political arguments and the mobilisation of popular pressure to ensure that the Lords and the King passed it.

Hesilrige was probably influenced by the links between Strafford's case and the obstacles to progress in religious matters. The need for unity against Strafford had been a powerful argument against pressing Root and Branch proposals. In March the Scots Commissioners had accepted the advice of their parliamentary sympathisers that they should hold back their paper against episcopacy, since 'any division among them, till Strafford's process was closed, might prove unhappie'.[1] An acquittal would have extended this embargo indefinitely: politically damaged by such a defeat, and menaced by Strafford, the Pym group would have needed the broadest possible support.

The bill of attainder certainly demonstrated the fragility of the Commons' unity. On 14 April D'Ewes was 'much amazed to see so many of the howse speake on the Earle of Strafford's side'.[2] The supporters of proceeding by bill and proceeding with the impeachment could not afford to appear too divided in the face of a sizeable Straffordian minority. After

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1. The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing (3 vols., Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1841-2), i. 346.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 45a.

a heated debate on 16 April, concerning the advisability of continuing to attend the trial in Westminster Hall on a temporary basis, Hesilrige, as a leading supporter of the bill of attainder, was one of six members added to the committee charged with saving seats for members at the impeachment proceedings.[1]

During the debate on the third reading of the bill on 21 April, Lord Digby, who had been one of the managers, made a detailed attack on Vane's evidence and warned the House of the dangers of confrontation with King and Lords. When he divided the House against the bill he found fifty-nine supporters.[2] Hesilrige was prominent amongst those who attacked Digby in a debate two days later, alleging that he had described the Vane notes as 'the broaken and rotten fragments of a venomous counsell'. But Digby withstood the pressure, and the debate, having prolonged the morning sitting until two in the afternoon, ended inconclusively.[3]

The opposition needed to rally the Commons and increase the pressure on the Lords, and two bills introduced and given two readings on 27 April served this dual purpose. In the morning the Commons dealt with a bill for the punishment of John James, who had made a deranged attack on a Westminster justice who was compiling a list of the area's Catholics. This bill appealed to members' common fear of Catholic conspiracies, while increasing the pressure on the Catholic peers. In the afternoon they dealt with a bill to punish the members of Convocation who had continued to sit after the dissolution of the Short Parliament and had passed the Laudian canons. D'Ewes estimated that supporters of this bill outnumbered opponents by ten to one. It also threatened all of the bishops apart from Williams.

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1. C.J., ii. 122.
2. E. 198(1), The Lord Digby, His Last Speech against the Earle of Strafford, Occasioned upon the reading of the Bill of Attainder touching the point of Treason; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 183a; C.J., ii. 125.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 185b.

Hesilrige was named to the committees for both bills.[1]

The Protestation taken by the Commons on 3 May[2] increased the pressure, but it was becoming increasingly obvious that Pym would have to use his knowledge of the Army Plot, and the King's involvement with the conspirators, in order to ensure victory. Hesilrige proposed on the fourth that the Lords should be asked to join the House in requesting that the King dismiss 'evil counsellors' and put others in their place (a motion which incidentally suggests that he was not opposed in principle to the entry of opposition leaders into government). He found plenty of support, and several members added that the Queen Mother should also be sent away, but the purpose of his proposal was revealed when further motions were proposed, 'concerning papists and recusants; and concerning the declaring of them enemies to the State, that shall negotiate the bringing of any foreign force in the Kingdom'. Consideration of these new motions was deferred until next morning, and Pym then revealed the details of the Army Plot.[3] Hesilrige's proposal was clearly designed to prepare the way for these revelations.

Next day the Commons gave two readings to 'An Act for the Security of the True Religion; the Safety and Honour of his Majesty's person; the just rights of the subject; and the better discovery and punishment of popish recusants'. The title of this bill, which was sent to a large committee including Hesilrige, conveys the Commons' sense of manifold dangers rooted in Catholic conspiracy, while its practical effect was to put pressure on Catholics, including Catholic peers, by compelling all Englishmen to take the Protestation, including its religious section.[4] The bill against the dissolution of the parliament without its own consent was justified in terms of the need to reassure those who might lend money. But the fact that it

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1. C.J., ii. 129; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 108a.
2. C.J., ii. 133.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 197a; C.J., ii. 134, 135.
4. C.J., ii. 136.

was given two readings in this atmosphere, and sent to the same committee, suggests that its wider implications were well understood.[1] It was reported that afternoon and sent up to the Lords next morning.[2]

Saturday and Sunday 8 and 9 May saw widespread rioting as the King was placed under pressure to assent to the bill of attainder. Even after his surrender there was more trouble on the night of the tenth. Next day the Lords heard the details of this rioting, and that the Queen Mother, alarmed by reports that the rioters were planning to march on her residence, had requested a guard.[3] When they communicated this to the Commons, the radicals were faced with a dilemma. They could not ignore it but the mob was vital to ensure that the execution was carried out. Hesilrige and Henry Marten were among twenty-six members appointed to prepare heads for a further conference with the Lords.[4] Their report was delayed until 18 May when the mob was no longer needed. The Commons then expressed decent regret at the incidents and offered to join the Lords in suppressing disorder, but also argued that since the Queen Mother's Catholic entourage and practices provoked the people, the King should be asked to send her out of the country.[5] The radicals had won on every point in both the committee and the House.

They were aided by the continued state of tension which had not been ended by Strafford's execution on the twelfth. An incident on 19 May showed the nervous state of members. A sudden loud noise caused panic and 'They in the Gallery ran all out to save themselves thinking it was falling, and Sir Arthur Hasilrigge, a stiffe precise man, hung about one of the old Images'.[6] Peyton's ironic contrast between Hesilrige's religious beliefs

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1. C.J., ii. 136.
2. C.J., ii. 137.
3. L.J., iv. 244.
4. C.J., ii. 143.
5. C.J., ii. 149.
6. Peyton, Bodl. MS. Film 39, p. 121.

and his action, echoed more explicitly in a newsletter writer's description of him flying 'to the horns of the altar',[1] shows how religious differences had returned to the surface once the alarm had died down. Hesilrige's religious position was further marked on 25 May when he was appointed to the committee for the bill to make the Church and inhabitants of Covent Garden parochial, a favourite project of 'stiff precise' men.[2]

The religious question was returning to the forefront of politics, as the Lords dragged their feet on the Bishops' Exclusion bill, which represented the last chance of compromise. On 24 May they voted that the Bishops should keep their seats in Parliament.[3] With this rejection there was no longer any reason for the Commons' radicals to hold back.

On Thursday 27 May Sir Henry Vane the younger and Oliver Cromwell gave Hesilrige the text of the Root and Branch bill for the abolition of the episcopal system. Hesilrige passed it to his friend and neighbour in the gallery, Sir Edward Dering. He told Dering that 'he was resolved it should go in, but was earnestly urgent that I would present it'. Before Dering had finished reading it, a strong petition from Lincolnshire was presented, probably by prearrangement, and provided the perfect opportunity for an intervention. Dering stood up in the gallery and proposed the bill, making it clear that a moderated episcopy was his ideal but that he no longer saw any chance of achieving this.[4] After a long debate it was read twice, receiving its second reading after a division of 139 to 108. It was committed to the whole house and the first meeting on it was set for 3 June.[5]

Dering described Hesilrige as his friend, and they sat together in

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1. quoted in A. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War (1981), 28.
2. C.J., ii. 156.
3. L.J., iv. 256.
4. A Collection of Speeches made by Sir Edward Dering (1642), 3, 26-7.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 237a.- 239a; C.J., ii. 159.

the gallery. But Hesilrige clearly set out to exploit Dering's reputation as a supporter of more moderate solutions to the problem of episcopacy. There were obvious advantages in disguising this from Dering and giving him a disingenuous account of the bill's origins. Hesilrige had known Vane since 1635, but it is difficult to see him, Vane and Cromwell taking so major a step on their own. Clarendon, who is a suspect witness but was deeply involved in the struggle, writes of those who pressed for the bill to be read, 'and none so importunately as St. John ... (who in truth had drawn it)'.[1] Cromwell was St. John's cousin, Vane and St. John were to work closely in the future, and certainly knew each other at this stage,[2] and Hesilrige's cooperation with St. John may well already have borne fruit in the bill of attainder. Taking this circumstantial evidence together with Clarendon's direct accusation, the case for St. John's authorship is strong. Within the informal, undisciplined structure of the Pym group, he could provide the expertise lacked by his less experienced colleagues who felt that their allies were being over-cautious on this issue.

Although Pym spoke in favour of the bill on 27 May,[3] there are signs that he and other opposition leaders were surprised by it and sought time to decide their attitude and to see whether the bill would push the Lords towards a compromise. The delay before the first meeting of the committee of the whole House may explain Hesilrige's attempts to raise the political temperature in early June. On the fifth he alleged that hundreds of recusants of quality were being protected in London by the Popish Lords,[4] thus stimulating fears of Catholic conspiracy and highlighting the group who, along with the bishops, were supposed to be blocking reform in the upper House. On Tuesday the eighth Digby alleged that Goring, the key witness

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1. Clarendon, History, i. 315.
2. V.A. Rowe, Sir Henry Vane the Younger, 27.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 239a.
4. Anonymous Diary, Brit. Lib., Harl. MS. 5047, f. 11a.

to the Army Plot, was perjured. Hesilrige said that Digby did not deserve to sit, and precipitated a debate in which, 'The heate was so hyghe yn the house ... as ytt was much feared they would have gone together by the eares. Mr. Speaker sayd he thoughte he should never have come out of his chayre alyve'.[1]

On the same day, the Lords rejected the Bishops' Exclusion bill outright,[2] ending the chance of compromise. In the Commons the programme of generally agreed reforms was completed with the passing of the bills for the abolition of Star-chamber and High Commission.[3] On the tenth the urgency of disbanding the armies was demonstrated when a committee, including Hesilrige, was appointed to consider the best and readiest way of doing this, with instructions to report next morning, or the day after at the latest.[4] These signs of an approaching return to normality and of the departure of the Scots lent weight to the demands of those, like Hesilrige, who demanded rapid progress on the Root and Branch bill.

On the evening of 10 June Sir Robert Harley, Pym and John Hampden presided at a meeting which decided to proceed with the bill next morning.[5] This meeting was probably responsible too for the key tactical decision to silence the bill's opponent Edward Hyde by placing him in the chair.[6] The secrecy was so great that D'Ewes, a speaker upon whom they relied, was absent next day and had to be fetched by the minister Stephen Marshall.[7] In the event the debate continued from seven in the morning until night, but they succeeded in setting the committee in motion and electing Hyde to the chair.[8]

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1. Framlingham Gawdy's Notes, Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 14, 828, ff. 69a, 70a.
2. L.J., iv. 269.
3. C.J., ii. 171.
4. C.J., ii. 172.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 306b.
6. Clarendon, History, i. 362-3.
7. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 211b.
8. E. 523, The Diurnall Occurrences or Dayly Proceedings of Both Houses, in this Great and Happy Parliament 3 November 1640 - 3 November 1641 (1642), 122.

Hesilrige contributed a bitter attack on the bishops to the committee's debate on 12 June. He described them as enemies to the Commonwealth who had trampled on the laws. Supporting his claim that they were 'enemies to our liberties and peace', he cited the Bishops' War, and alleged that they were to have provided a thousand horse as part of the Army Plot. Lord Falkland was moved to demand that he should be forced to explain his insinuation that 'whosoever should speak for bishops was either papist or popishly affected'. Vane explained away this phrase, but the broad effect of the speech was certainly to smear the bishops and their supporters. The account of the debate in The Diurnall Occurrences or Dayly Proceedings, a compilation of newsletter accounts, mentions only one specific argument: Hesilrige's connection of the bishops with the army plot.[1]

This speech set the tone for Hesilrige's interventions in debate during the next three months. Pym and his supporters all exploited the alarm generated by fears of conspiracy, but Hesilrige stood out for his bluntness and readiness to smear opponents. He acted with the tacit approval of Pym. When it became clear that Hyde was more, rather than less, dangerous in the chair, the bill's supporters began to court him, and invited him to dinner at Pym's lodgings. There Pym, Hampden, Hesilrige and two or three others, 'upon a stock kept a table, where they transacted much business, and invited thither those of whose conversion they had any hope'.[2] While this could have been a long-standing arrangement, Clarendon suggests a practical motive for it during these long debates which disrupted members' plans for dinner, and the earlier divergences between Pym and Hesilrige make it unlikely that such an expensive and tight form of organisation was maintained throughout the

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1. Moore, Harl. MS. 478, f. 55ab; E. 523, The Diurnall Occurrences or Dayly Proceedings, p. 136.
2. The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon (2 vols., Oxf., 1857), i. 74-5.

first session. It probably began at about the time of the meeting of 10 June, at which Hesilrige was almost certainly present. He was certainly party to the decision to elect Hyde, exclaiming, when the bill was abandoned in August, that 'he would never hereafter put an enemy into the chair'.[1]

His association with Pym and Hampden placed him at the heart of the opposition's planning, as they tried to force the Root and Branch bill through its committee stage, while simultaneously seeking to consolidate their own position and the parliament's existing gains before the King left for Scotland. Hesilrige was fully involved in completing the process of basic reform. He was a member of the committee to which the Ship-money and Knighthood-money bills were sent on receiving their second readings on 19 and 24 June, and was also a member of the Committee for Scandalous Ministers, which was entrusted with the committee stage of its own bill for the punishment of scandalous ministers.[2]

Their progress depended upon delaying the King's departure for Scotland. On 22 June Hesilrige raised the question of Montrose's plot, details of which had been communicated to the English Commissions three days earlier. He argued that the King's journey would be dangerous and urged the House to 'use some humble remonstrances to his Ma^{ty} to persuade his stay heer till all things were better settled'.[3] His speech set the stage for Pym's proposals, made during the following day's debate, which were to form the basis for the Ten Propositions. Hesilrige then supported Sir Walter Earle's demand for the inclusion of the removal of evil counsellors, and insisted on the need 'not to skim over but deale plainly'.[4]

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1. Clarendon, History, i. 364.
2. C.J., ii. 181, 184.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 339b.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 343a; Anon Diary, Harl. MS. 5047, f. 34b.

The heads reported by Pym next day included the removal of evil counsellors, but Hesilrige still felt the need to press for a specific reference to the 'wicked councell by Jermyn and Percy to lett his Ma^{ty} know how daungerous to him and the realme such councell'.[1] He certainly earned his place as one of the 'Committee of Forty-Eight' appointed on 28 June to join a Lords committee in dealing with the Ten Propositions.[2]

The punishment of religious as well as secular enemies continued to preoccupy Hesilrige. On 28 June he demanded a progress report on the impeachment of Dr. Cosin which was now in the hands of a small committee, having been prepared by a committee on which he had sat.[3] On 8 and 9 July the Commons ordered the Committee of Forty-Eight to concentrate on the Catholic threat posed by the harbouring of priests at Court and in foreign embassies, and by foreign recruitment of Irish soldiers.[4] Hesilrige's involvement in the revival of this potent theme is indicated by his inclusion amongst ten members added, on 10 July, to the committee for Secretary Windebank, whose responsibilities included the investigation of past leniency towards Catholics and the preparation of a bill against recusancy.[5]

On 12 July the Commons received the King's reply to the Ten Propositions, in which he denied that he had any evil counsellors and suggested that there was a campaign of slander designed to intimidate his advisers.[6] Next day the House passed a series of votes condemning Digby and requesting the King to deny him employment, but the closeness of the division on the latter proposal, which was carried by only 128 votes to 114,[7] showed that further

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1. C.J., ii. 184-5; Harl. MS. 5047, f. 36b.
2. C.J., ii. 190.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 360b.
4. C.J., ii. 202, 204.
5. C.J., ii. 205, 41-2.
6. C.J., ii. 208.
7. C.J., ii. 209.

dramatic revelations were required. Hesilrige obliged with his charge, on the fourteenth, that the Queen intended to take jewels out of the country. The Commons were sufficiently concerned to refer this to the committee for the Queen's jointure, and to add Hesilrige to that committee.[1] The address to the King prepared by this committee went further, arguing that 'divers Papists and others' would also export large sums under cover of her baggage, which 'will not only impoverish the state, but may be employed to the Fomenting some mischievous Attempts, to the Trouble of the publick Peace'.[2] Henrietta Maria, who was anxious to avoid being left in Parliament's power when the King went north, at first resisted this pressure, but fear of a renewed inquiry into the Army Plot designed to implicate her, and of 'other and more violent measures', led her to surrender on 21 July.[3]

On 24 July the Commons gave a second reading to a bill concerning the trained bands, which had been prepared by a committee appointed on the fifteenth. Hesilrige had been on that committee, and now found a place on the committee to which the bill was sent.[4] Clarendon's unusually large chronological error in placing his account of Hesilrige's December Militia Bill at this point in his narrative[5] may be indicative of Hesilrige's attitude in July. On the same day the committee investigating the Army Plot reported that Henry Percy, who had been allowed to escape from England in return for disclosing the details of the plot, had administered the oath of secrecy to his colleagues. Hesilrige was quick to deny this suggestion that Percy, whose evidence was crucial, had taken the lead in intensifying the conspiracy.[6]

Hesilrige had failed in an attempt to hasten action against the bishops

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1. Moore, Harl. MS. 479, f. 61b; C.J., ii. 210.
2. C.J., ii. 213.
3. Cal. S.P. Ven. 1640-42, 183, 186-7; C.J., ii. 218.
4. C.J., ii. 222-3, 212.
5. Clarendon, History, i. 365.
6. Anon. Diary, Harl. MS. 5047, f. 50a.

on 23 July,[1] but the Lords' rejection, on the twenty-ninth, of the bill 'for the Security of True Religion', which would have forced the Catholic peers to vacate their seats,[2] made the Commons more eager to deal with the other bloc of enemies in the Lords. The House abandoned the bill for the punishment of bishops who had participated in the last Convocation, and appointed a new committee to prepare impeachments.[3] This committee, which like its predecessor included Hesilrige, worked quickly and the Commons were able to send the impeachments to the Lords on 4 August.[4]

By then, however, it was clear that the King was determined to leave for Scotland on 9 August. Ensuring the satisfaction of the Scots and the disbandment of their army became a priority. Hesilrige was appointed on the fifth to the committee for the bill to secure the arrears of the Brotherly Assistance, and his contribution was recognized on the ninth, when he was given the honour of carrying it up to the Lords.[5] The ninth was also the one extra day for which the King agreed to delay his journey, and Hesilrige was involved in the efforts to deal with the problems and dangers which would be created by the King's departure. Charles' offer to leave a commission for the passing of certain named bills did not satisfy him and he suggested that instead a 'Custos Regni' should be appointed, with unlimited power to pass bills and act as head of government in the King's absence.[6] So revolutionary a proposal was not practical, given the pressure of business, but it does foreshadow Hesilrige's willingness to entrust sweeping powers to two or three individuals in his December Militia bill.

Later in the day he attacked three conservative peers appointed to Privy Council on the eighth, contrasting the Commons' desire for good councillors

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1. Anon. Diary, Harl. MS. 5047, f. 47a.
2. L.J., iv. 333.
3. C.J., ii. 230
4. C.J., ii. 236.
5. C.J., ii. 239, 249.
6. Anon. Diary, Harl. MS. 5047, f. 60a; Clarendon, History, i. 367.

with the fears provoked by their previous public conduct. He narrowly escaped being forced to explain his remarks, and the House preferred to pursue a positive course by asking the King to appoint Salisbury as Lord Treasurer (a suggestion which Hesilrige had supported in his speech), and Pembroke as Lord High Steward.[1]

Charles left for Scotland on the tenth. Next day the Commons returned to the question of the impeachment of the thirteen bishops, which could be carried forward in his absence. Hesilrige was sent to the Lords with a message requesting that they should be made to answer the Commons' accusations, and was appointed one of the Commons' managers for the resultant conference. The outcome was disappointing, as the Lords threw up a series of technical objections to the impeachments and refused to be hurried.[2] They were more cooperative on the question of disarming recusants. Hesilrige was one of the thirteen man committee who drafted heads for a conference on the seventeenth, and acted as managers. They succeeded in persuading the Lords to agree to the appointment of commissioners for this purpose in each county, but the peers reserved their position on crucial details of their proposals, including the removal of parliamentary privilege in such cases.[3]

The Commons had decided, on 7 August, to summon absent members to return, and to call the House on the eighteenth.[4] Hesilrige was certainly present on that day and made a speech supporting an elderly member's request to be allowed to retire.[5] But next morning William Purefoy reported that he and the Northampton member Zouch Tate 'weere now going out of towne'.[6]

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1. Anon. Diary, Harl. MS. 5047; Moore, Harl. MS. 479, f. 139a.
2. C.J., ii. 251.
3. C.J., ii. 261; L.J., iv. 369-70.
4. C.J., ii. 244.
5. Peyton, Bodl., MS. Film 39, p. 147.
6. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 43a.

Exhaustion or boredom might explain the departure of other members, but it seems unlikely in Hesilrige's case. He may have been worried about developments in Leicestershire where, for example, the letter which he, Ruthen and Grey of Groby had sent to the borough urging them to promote the Protestation, had met with a lukewarm response from the aldermen at meetings on 7 July and 6 August.[1] But if he wished merely to return to Leicestershire, he could have achieved this by slipping away before the House was called.

Instead he stayed for the call, and left in an openly defiant manner which seems to justify the comment that he and Tate 'went out upon discontent'.[2] They had to travel in the same direction, but it may be significant that Tate's later career was marked by fervent Presbyterianism. If their departure represented a protest, it seems likely that it was directed against the opposition leaders' failure to revive the Root and Branch bill, which had been dormant since this interruption caused by the crisis over the King's departure.[3] Whatever the cause, Hesilrige's departure came at a time when his prominence in the opposition was clearly established. As late as 9 September the enemies who published The Protestants Protestation classed him among the thirteen leading oppositionists in the Commons.[4] Had he continued to work at Westminster until the adjournment, he would almost certainly have found a place on the powerful committee which met during the recess. As it was, the momentum created by his work before 19 August was sufficient to carry him back into the front ranks of the opposition when Parliament reassembled at the end of October.

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1. J. Thompson, The History of Leicester, i. 362; Records of the Borough of Leicester, iv., 1603 - 1688, ed. H. Stocks and W.H. Stevenson, 307.
2. E. 523, The Diurnall Occurrences or Dayly Proceedings, p. 342.
3. W.A. Shaw, A History of the English Church (2 vols., 1900), i. 99-100.
4. Hist. MSS. Comm., Salisbury, xxiv. 277.

(iii) Confrontation

When Parliament resumed on 20 October the prospects for an orderly compromise settlement were poor. The issues which had prevented such a settlement, notably religion and the problem of finding ministers acceptable to both King and opposition, remained unresolved. The King had turned away from the idea of negotiation with his opponents and was trying to build a party in both Houses which could challenge them.[1] Pym and his associates knew that the petition circulated in the north as part of the second Army Plot in June had demanded the punishment of those who had organised and exploited the mob, and that Charles had approved the petition.[2] In Scotland the King had got the worst of both worlds. He had conceded parliamentary control over government appointments, creating a precedent which was bound to be used in England, without winning solid support. As Parliament returned, Pym and his friends had full knowledge of the Scottish 'Incident', the failed attempt to seize Argyle and Hamilton, and were using this information to promote fears of a larger plot involving both countries, while Secretary Nicholas lacked an alternative account with which to satisfy the King's parliamentary supporters.[3] The dangerous game of escalating pressure and counter-pressure, which suited Hesilrige's talents perfectly, had begun.

The Commons returned to the problems which had not been resolved during the first session. A new Bishops' Exclusion bill was introduced

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1. 'Private Correspondence between King Charles I and his Secretary of State, Sir Edward Nicholas', Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn, ed. W. Bray, (4 vols., 1852), iv. 74, 76, 80, 84, 85, 92.
2. S.R. Gardiner, History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603 - 1642 (10 vols., 1883-4), ix. 398-9.
3. Nicholas to the King, 20 Oct. 1641, Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn, ed. W. Bray, iv. 92.

on 21 October and sent to the Lords two days later.[1] During the debates, Hesilrige spoke in favour of the preamble, 'and brought his proofes out of Tyme: 2.2.,' which refers to 'faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also', 'and alsoe the practice of Christ and his Apostles and all their Auncient Councells'.[2] This speech serves, incidentally, to demonstrate that Hesilrige could command a wider range of tone and material than might be suggested by the blunt, dramatic interventions which usually attracted the attention of parliamentary diarists.

On the twenty-fifth he moved successfully that the Commons' committee dealing with Laud should bring in the evidence quickly, arguing that this would give 'great satisfaction to the people'.[3] He was less successful next day, when he joined Holles, D'Ewes and others in urging that the charge against the thirteen bishops should be one of treason. Their pressure may, however, have helped Pym to win a vote that the Lords should be asked to sequester the bishops' votes.[4] On the twenty-seventh he persuaded the Commons to agree to discuss the prosecution of Judge Barkley next morning,[5] following Barkley's plea of not guilty to his impeachment, and on the twenty-eighth he was appointed to a committee charged with drafting a petition to the King against the appointment and retention of evil counsellors, ambassadors, judges, officers and other ministers.[6] Next day he was one of eight members appointed to draft heads for a conference at which the Lords were to be asked to join the Commons in petitioning the King to delay the appointment of five new bishops, an appointment which signalled the King's

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1. C.J., ii. 291, 293.
2. MS. 'Diurnall Occurrences or the proceedings in Parliament', 20-25 Oct. 1641, Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 34, 485, f. 86ab.
3. E 523, The Diurnall Occurrences or Dayly Proceedings ..., p. 384.
4. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 39-40; C.J., ii. 295.
5. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 42.
6. C.J., ii. 297.

intention to fight any attack on episcopacy.[1] During a financial debate later in the day he was appointed to a committee charged with compiling a list of delinquents who had failed to answer the Commons' warrants, following a proposal that the estates of such delinquents should be confiscated.[2] Hesilrige, whose zeal for the punishment of delinquents was matched by his unwillingness to face the need for financial reform, probably supported this proposal during the debate.

Other issues were, however, swept aside by the arrival on 1 November of news of the Irish Rebellion, which confirmed and amplified Pym's warnings of Catholic conspiracy. The Lords agreed to the appointment of two joint committees, one to raise £50,000 from the City, the other to direct Parliaments' efforts with regard to Ireland.[3] The link between the rebellion and conspiracies in England was demonstrated by the Lords' vote to give Essex complete control over Parliament's guard, and the Commons' orders designed to clamp down on English Catholics.[4] When the Commons appointed its representatives to the two joint committees next day, Hesilrige found a place on both, thus confirming his position among the twenty or so leading members.[5]

The committees had mixed success. The newly elected, conservative, Lord Mayor and aldermen agreed, in principle, to provide £50,000, but asked, in return, for political support against their opponents on Common Council.[6] On the other hand, the crisis blunted constitutional scruples, and the Commons endorsed proposals from the other committee which showed a remarkable readiness to dispose of troops and magazines without reference

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1. C.J., ii. 298.
2. C.J., ii. 298.
3. C.J., ii. 300-301.
4. L.J., iv. 418: C.J., ii. 300-301.
5. C.J., ii. 302.
6. C.J., ii. 303-4; L.J., iv. 420.

to the King.[1] On the sixth they accepted Cromwell's suggestion that they should ask the Lords to agree that Essex should be empowered by the Houses to command the trained bands south of the Trent, 'till this parliament shall take further order'.[2]

There is little evidence for Hesilrige's participation in the heated debate of mid-November concerning the Grand Remonstrance and the efforts to persuade the Lords to pass the ordinance for Essex and Holland to command as generals North and South of the Trent.[3] While Hesilrige may have been busy in committees, notably those for Ireland, it is unlikely that he would have remained silent throughout these debates. D'Ewes' account of a debate on 17 November, in which the diarist moved that the depositions concerning the second Army Plot should be read, provides a clue. In his journal his own speech was originally followed by the words, 'Sir Arthur Hesilrige moved ... ' but he crossed these out, leaving his own speech to lead directly to the Commons' decision to hear the depositions.[4] He and Hesilrige were generally on the same side during these debates and D'Ewes' characteristic vanity may well have led him to omit Hesilrige's speeches on other occasions.

Charles I returned to London on 25 November and received a warm public welcome coordinated by the City authorities. His return terminated Essex's commission and he proceeded to dismiss the parliamentary guard commanded by Essex, and to substitute a new guard under Dorset.[5] On Saturday 27 November, Strode moved that a bill should be drafted, 'for the putting the Kingdome into a posture of defence, and for the commanding of the armies therof'. The following Monday saw a debate, in which Hesilrige spoke, concerning

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1. C.J., ii. 304.
2. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 7-8; C.J., ii. 306.
3. Ibid., 148-9.
4. Ibid., 155.
5. S.R. Gardiner, History of England, x. 86.

the immediate question of parliament's guard and the King's substitution of Dorset for Essex.[1]

Events later that day brought the question into sharper focus. Crowds from the City gathered in Westminster to present petitions against episcopacy and to demand that members should vote against the bishops. At one point Sir John Strangeways was cornered by the mob in the Court of Requests. Only the guards' disobedience to Dorset's order to fire on the crowd prevented a number of deaths.[2] Strangeways' complaint about these events, next day, produced one of the most dangerous debates so far. Hesilrige was involved, with Strode and Pury, in an attempt to turn the direction of the debate by reporting Chillingworth's remark that some members of the Commons would be accused of treason within two or three days. Strangeways, far from retreating, urged that the mob's attempt to intimidate members was 'little lesse then treason', alleged that some members had contrived or consented to the mob's action, and moved that a committee including Falkland and Culpepper should be appointed to examine the matter.[3] Strangeways and his allies believed that they could prove that the radical London member, Captain Venn, had summoned the crowd of apprentices who had surrounded the House on the twenty-fifth.[4] Skilfully used, this evidence could have secured the appointment of a committee, whose investigations would have ranged far beyond Captain Venn and the events of the twenty-fifth. Strangeways spoiled this chance by his frightening talk of treason, the general aspersions implied by his allegation against 'some members' and his improper attempt

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1. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 202, 208.
2. Sir Philip Warwick, Memoires of the Reign of King Charles I (1702), 185-6; S.R. Gardiner, History of England, x. 86.
3. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 212, 214; Sir John Holland's Journal, Bodl., Rawl. MS. D932, f. 56-7.
4. Ibid., f. 57ab; 'Notes of Evidence against Captain Venn', Bodl., Clar. MS. 20, f. 129.

to name particular members to the committee he was proposing. He was also hampered by the early intervention of Hesilrige, Strode and Pury which made his allegations seem the fulfilment of Chillingworth's prediction.

Before the Commons rose, Hesilrige succeeded in securing an order that they should consider their next step in the impeachment of the thirteen bishops next morning.[1] The thirtieth also saw his appointment as one of the twelve members to present the Grand Remonstrance to the King next day.[2] While he was certainly the most radical of the twelve, and the closest to Pym, it would be wrong to see him as an isolated figure in a generally conservative delegation. D'Ewes, for one, was certainly close to the Pym group at this point. Hesilrige's membership of the delegation meant that he was absent next morning when Chillingworth was questioned at the bar and denied saying any more than Strangeways had said in the House.[3]

On 3 December the Commons appointed a committee to prepare heads for a conference. They were instructed to remind the Lords of all the bills passed by the Commons which had not been passed by the Lords, and threaten that if they continued to refuse consent to these,

> 'and others necessary to the Preservation and Safety of the Kingdom, that then this House, together with such of the Lords, that are more sensible of the Safety of the Kingdom, may join together, and represent the same unto his Majesty'.

This was a radical challenge to the Lords, and it clearly implied readiness to use the mob, whose action alone could make the King more pliable than the Lords majority. The committee was also ordered to consider ways of guarding Hull and Newcastle and, later in the day, to consider 'what is needful for the Safety of the Kingdom'. It is at least interesting that Hesilrige, Pym, Hampden, Strode and Holles were all

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1. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 217.
2. C.J., ii. 327.
3. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 219-20, 221.

members of the twelve man committee given these revolutionary instructions, while Kimbolton was clearly part of the virtuous minority in the Lords.[1]

The opposition leaders were genuinely afraid of a Catholic conspiracy in England, Ireland and Scotland, which reached into Charles I's immediate circle. But they also faced the political problems of a well-organised royalist bloc in the Commons and the deadlock imposed by the refusal of cooperation from the King and the majority in the Lords. The debate of 30 November and the instructions given to the committee on 3 December signalled their turn to a strategy of heightening tension in order to win over waverers in the Commons, break the deadlock and create the conditions for firm action against the conspiracy.

Hesilrige's militia bill represented the next stage in this strategy. It was more extreme than the quite separate Militia Ordinance introduced in January 1642. It answered members' immediate concern with the need for a parliamentary guard under their own control and it built upon reaction to the Lords' rejection of the Commons' restrictions on the Impressment bill for Ireland.[2] His introduction of the bill, on 7 December, clearly surprised the vast majority of members. It proposed the appointment of generals to control all forces in England and Wales and the fleet, leaving blanks for specific nominations. Contemporaries seem to have been uncertain whether there were to be one or two land generals,[3] but it seems likely that the bill conformed to earlier attempts to institutionalise, under parliamentary control, the arrangements Charles had made for his absence in Scotland. The appointment of a single land general would have given unnecessary offence to either Essex or Holland.

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1. C.J., ii. 330, 331.
2. see Lois G. Schwoerer, '"The Fittest Subject for a King's Quarrel" An Essay on the Militia Controversy 1641-2', Jour. Brit. Stud., xi. (1971 - 2), 47-8, 48, 53.
3. see e.g., Hist. MSS. Comm., Cowper, ii. 296; D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 244.

Where the bill differed radically from earlier proposals was in the powers assigned to the generals. Their authority was to be independent of King and Parliament, and they were to have power to raise men and money to pay them, and to execute martial law.[1] Naturally the bill produced heated debate. Culpepper pointed out that as well as infringing the King's rights, the arbitrary powers proposed in the bill were inconsistent with Hesilrige's earlier attacks on the lieutenants.[2] The Leicester member Thomas Coke made the dangerous assertion that it was, 'worse than the bill brought in by Hexam in Richard the seconds time, for which hee was accused of high treason', but was admonished by the Speaker, after some quick research by D'Ewes revealed that Hexam had been cleared by Parliament.[3] Even Sir Thomas Barrington moved for the rejection of the bill 'because hee thought that another bill to the same purpose might be brought into the howse, which might probablie passe, wheras this was too unlimited and arbitrarie'.[4] Strode and others spoke in favour, and D'Ewes, after dealing with a number of objections, made the point that the bill could be amended in committee.[5] Even on this basis the radicals were unwilling to risk a division on a motion for a first reading. Instead the division took place on a motion to reject the bill and, aided by the nature of the question, the noes won by 158 to 125.[6]

The question which arises is why Hesilrige introduced a bill with such unnecessarily provocative clauses. As in the cases of the bill of attainder and the Root and Branch bill, St. John is to be found in the

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1. Holland, Rawl. MS. D932, f. 62a; D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 244.
2. Ibid., 244-5.
3. Ibid., 246-8; Verney Papers: Notes of Proceedings in the Long Parliament ... by Sir Ralph Verney, ed. J. Bruce, (Camd. Soc., 1st ser., xxxi., 1845), 132.
4. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 245.
5. Ibid., 245-6.
6. C.J., ii. 234.

background. Clarendon makes the direct accusation that he drafted it.[1] He made a powerful intervention in the debate, emphasising the need for emergency measures in view of the imminent danger from invasion and conspiracy.[2] A month earlier, St. John's cousin Cromwell had moved that the Lords should be asked to agree to the drafting of an ordinance giving Essex 'power to assemble at all time the trained bands of the kingdome on this side Trent ... '[3] Barrington's reaction suggests that a large part of the Pym group was taken by surprise. Following the indications of cooperation between Hesilrige, St. John and others in launching the attainder and the Root and Branch bill, this suggests that a small number of radicals once again acted, without prior consultation, to cut through the faltering of the wider group. If Hesilrige was acting as anyone's 'dove out of the ark'[4] there is a strong case for casting St. John in the rôle of Noah.

The debate itself suggests motives for the bill's extremism. Its sweeping terms promoted the idea that an emergency existed, and its supporters emphasised this theme. Opponents were so keen to attack the powers proposed in the bill, that they all but allowed the principle of the generals being appointed by parliament to go by default, and this prepared the way for the more moderate bill which Barrington had expected. The bill received two readings, on 21 and 28 December,[5] but it seems likely that it was always designed to be amended or replaced by a more moderate measure, once it had changed members' concept of moderation.

The arguments for the reality of present conspiracies depended in part upon the existence of earlier plots, and suitable punishment for those

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1. Clarendon, History, i. 336.
2. Ibid., Holland, Rawl. MS. D 932, f. 62a.
3. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 97-8.
4. Clarendon, History, i. 365.
5. C.J., ii. 351, 356.

involved was a test of the seriousness with which these were regarded. Faced on 9 December with a well prepared attempt to reduce the charge against three participants in the first army plot to misprision of treason, Hesilrige led those who insisted that the charge be treason but, in spite of support from D'Ewes, John Glyn and Arthur Goodwin, he failed to dissuade the House from accepting the lesser charge. Undismayed, Hesilrige turned to the second army plot and urged that as the House had already agreed to charge Daniel O'Neale with treason, they should do the same in the case of Captain Legg who was at least as guilty.[1] Next day he raised the fear that members' habit of taking papers and the journal away from the clerk's table, in order to copy them, might allow a member to change the sense of a decision by altering key words. The House was unimpressed, and merely reasserted the clerk's duty to keep all papers in his own custody,[2] but Hesilrige had come as close as he could, without violating procedure, to suggesting that some members were untrustworthy.

When the Lords informed the Commons of the King's request for advice concerning seven convicted priests on the eleventh, Hesilrige's immediate reaction was to press for the execution of all seven. After the House had heard a report from John Maynard, Hesilrige renewed this motion and pressed it to a division which he lost by eleven votes. The House then agreed to execution in four cases, made no recommendation in another, and agreed, after separate divisions, to support a reprieve in the other two.[3] These decisions were reversed three days later,[4] but the initial defeat demonstrated that fears of Catholic conspiracy were weakening.

The King helped his opponents by sending a guard to Westminster, without consulting either House, on 10 December. Hesilrige was one of the

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1. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 258, 259-60.
2. C.J., ii. 337.
3. C.J., ii. 339; D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 270, 273, 274.
4. C.J., ii. 342-3.

committee appointed to investigate this on the thirteenth.[1] On the fifteenth the divisive order to print the Grand Remonstrance was carried by 135 votes to 83.[2] On the twentieth fears of Catholic conspiracy were fanned by the second reading of a bill for the disarming of recusants and Hesilrige was named third when the committee was appointed.[3] On the same day Holborne implied that members might be called to account for their votes, arguing that, 'if wee may not aske leave to protest, wee shall bee involved, and perhaps loose our heads in the crowd, when there is nothing to show who was innocent'.[4]

The threat acquired substance next day when Charles I dismissed Balfour from his post as Lieutenant of the Tower and substituted the adventurer Lunsford. When Newport, at the Commons' request, tried to take personal charge as Constable of the Tower, the King dismissed him. By the time Charles replaced Lunsford with a more respectable supporter, Sir John Byron, on 26 December, it was too late to calm the fears of the radicals in Parliament and the City.[5] The activity of the London crowd had helped to force this concession, and on the twenty-seventh they flocked to Westminster shouting, 'No Bishops, No Popish Lords'. Next day all but two of the bishops absented themselves from the Lords, while the crowd attacked Westminster Abbey.[6] When the Lords sought the Commons' help in suppressing disorder, Pym defended the right to petition, and said, 'God forbid yt the house of Commons should proceed in any way to dishearten people to obtain th⌈ei⌋r just desires in such a way'.[7] The Lords rejected attempts to declare that Parliament was unfree, by only four votes.[8] In the Commons even

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1. C.J., ii. 340.
2. C.J., ii. 344.
3. C.J., ii. 349-50
4. Verney Papers: Notes of Proceedings in the Long Parliament, ed. J. Bruce, 136.
5. S.R. Gardiner, History of England, x. 108, 111-12.
6. E 201 (5), Diurnall Occurrences..., 27 Dec - 3 Jan 1641/2; S.R. Gardiner, History of England, x. 118.
7. Minutes by the Earl of Dover, Bodl. Clar. MS. 21, f. 56b.
8. L.J., iv. 494; S.R. Gardiner, History of England, x. 120.

supporters of Pym like Sir Gilbert Gerrard and D'Ewes were disturbed by the riots. Faced with such doubts Hesilrige successfully moved that the House should rise for the day.[1] The Venetian ambassador, probably reflecting the views of the Court, reported that moderate members regretted the riots, but that, 'those who place their hopes of self-preservation in trouble approve and secretly foment the movement to keep it alive'.[2]

The bloody clashes in Whitehall on 29 December could have tipped the balance in the Commons but the petition of the twelve bishops, alleging that they had been kept from the Lords by force and challenging the validity of all votes since the twenty-eighth, changed the atmosphere.[3] The two Houses were united in impeaching and imprisoning the twelve.[4] But Pym's efforts to convince the Commons that they faced an immediate plot met with overwhelming scepticism.[5]

Hesilrige had more success next day, with his story that 'one Mr. Robert Carson a papist', had said that 'hee hoped ere long to see halfe a dozen Parliament men hanged'. The House was ready to send for Carson as a delinquent until Hotham, anxious to make his report on Irish matters, showed that Carson was 'a fellow of noe worth'.[6] Hesilrige was, however, named to the small committee appointed to investigate the King's recruitment of troops for Ireland and, implying that Catholics might have been recruited, to tender the oaths of allegiance and supremacy.[7] The Commons ended the day by adjourning until 3 January and ordering that the committee for parliament's guard, which was open to all members, should meet at Guildhall in the interim.[8]

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1. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 358.
2. Cal. S.P. Ven. 1640 - 1642, 272.
3. S.R. Gardiner, History of England, x. 121-4; D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 365.
4. C.J., ii. 363; L.J., iv. 497.
5. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 366.
6. Ibid., 371.
7. C.J., ii. 365.
8. C.J., ii. 365.

When Parliament resumed on the afternoon of Monday the third, the Attorney General appeared in the Lords and presented articles of impeachment against Lord Kimbolton (or Mandeville) and Holles, Hesilrige, Pym, Hampden and Strode, charging them with 'high treason and other high misdemeanours'.[1] Digby, who had promised to press for Kimbolton's imprisonment, left the House and no other peer was prepared to speak for the impeachment.[2] The Lords refused to commit the six and appointed a committee to investigate the legality of the Attorney General's procedure.[3]

When the Serjeant at Arms arrived to demand the five accused members of the Commons, the House refused to deliver them. Instead they decided to inform the King that this was a question of privilege and that they would consider it and give an answer as quickly as the 'greatness of the business will permit'. They would guarantee the availability of the members to answer 'any legal charge laid against them'. Accordingly each of the five was formally enjoined to attend from day to day until further order.[4] The King's initial attack had been rebuffed but his charges had not been rejected in either House. Patient work by his parliamentary supporters in pressing for an investigation could, at least, have inflicted serious political damage on his opponents.

Instead he decided to surprise the Commons and arrest the five members in person. Such an attempt was doomed to failure by the unreliability of his own court. The five received a series of warnings, including one from the Countess of Carlisle which Hesilrige singled out for mention in a speech in 1659.[5] These warnings were reinforced by the King's obvious preparations for action. During the morning of the fourth, the Commons heard reports of his efforts to gather armed men and sent members to tell the Common Council

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1. L.J., iv. 500-501.
2. Clarendon, History, i. 484, 482
3. L.J., iv. 501
4. C.J., ii. 367.
5. Diary of Thomas Burton, ed. J.T. Rutt, iii. 93.

'in what danger the Parliament, the Kingdom and City is in'.[1] In spite of this, and a further explicit warning from Essex during the lunchtime adjournment,[2] the five members were present at the beginning of the afternoon and made sure that their obedience to the previous day's order was recorded.[3] At about three o'clock the Commons were warned that the King was on his way with some four hundred armed men.[4] Captain Hercules Langres, acting for the French ambassador, had left Whitehall as the King entered his coach, and reached Westminster with his warning with fifteen to thirty minutes to spare.[5] The five members were given permission to leave but they delayed so long that, in Hesilrige's words, the King 'was in the House before we got to the water'.[6] As a result the King alarmed and outraged the Commons without achieving his aim.

So good a result suggests a characteristic degree of calculation on the part of the five members. Had they left in the morning, Charles could have cancelled the attempt, they would have breached the Commons order, and the failure of yet another conspiracy to materialise would have provoked a reaction. Even after Langres's warning they secured the permissive vote which allowed them to stay until they were sure that it was not a false alarm. Strode provided the final insurance against a last minute failure of of nerve on the King's part, by refusing to leave until pulled out by Earle.[7]

The King's motives on the third and fourth are interesting. The previous fortnight had created an intolerable combination of deadlock and tension. Since compromise seemed impossible, one side was bound to attack.

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1. C.J., ii. 367-8.
2. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 384.
3. C.J., ii. 368.
4. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 38.
5. Ibid., 383-4, 383 n. 19, 382 n. 18; Clarendon, History, i. 483.
6. Verney Papers, Notes of Proceedings in the Long Parliament, ed. J. Bruce, 138; Diary of Thomas Burton, ed. J.T. Rutt, iii 93.
7. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 381, 384.

The King's decision seems to have been precipitated by his belief that the opposition leaders were ready to impeach the Queen.[1] Charles' tactical errors, notably his failure to consult his parliamentary supporters and the last minute decision to include Kimbolton,[2] strongly suggest that he reacted emotionally to an immediate threat. He may have been goaded into this by a miscalculation on the part of his opponents, for whom the circulation of such rumours would have been a logical development in their strategy of increasing pressure on the King.

The threat to the Queen can only have precipitated the attack. The wider crisis had produced rumours in late December that some members would be impeached. An impeachment would have distracted Pym and his colleagues from their work in Parliament and given Hyde, Falkland and Culpepper their chance to bid for leadership. It would also have allowed them to dig for further evidence and to publicise a wide range of damaging material, providing a counter to his opponents' conspiracy theories. As in previous cases the initial articles were wide and unspecific, and the Attorney General was instructed to reserve the right to expand them.[3]

Two articles appear central: the fourth concerning inviting and encouraging 'a foreign power' to invade the Kingdom, and the sixth, 'That for the completing of their traitorous designs they have endeavoured ... by force and terror to compel the Parliament to join with them in their traitorous designs, and to that end have actually raised and countenanced tumults against the King and Parliament'. The other five articles depended on these for their proof or effect.

There are serious objections to the view that article four related to

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1. Gawdy, Add. MS. 14,827, f. 2a; Cal. S.P. Ven. 1640-42, 276.
2. The Nicholas Papers, ed. G.F. Warner, (Camd. Soc., 4 vols., 1886 - 1920) i. 62.
3. L.J., iv. 501; The Nicholas Papers, ed. G.F. Warner, i. 62.

contacts with the Scots in 1639 and 1640. Charles had been forced to appease his opponents in Scotland and their security would have been threatened by such a charge. It would also have threatened an influential section of the Lords, and many of Charles' supporters would have been alienated by the implied threat to the validity of the parliament's early reforms. The King's declaration of August 1642 suggests that the charge related to plans for future action. The accused had 'entered into Treatye with Foraigne Power to assist them if they should not bee able to goe through with their desperate Designes'.[1] This article worried the French ambassador, 'because divers times some of these men have been with him at his lodgings'. The King reassured him[2] but Sir Philip Warwick thought that the information obtained by Charles in Scotland concerned, 'the confederacies against him and the intelligence some of our great Members have held with the Ambassadors of foreign princes, particularly the French'.[3] It would have been difficult to link Hesilrige to a conspiracy with the Scots in 1639 and 1640. It seems likely that this charge was based on contact with the French ambassador, although it would also have allowed the prosecution to introduce politically damaging material concerning attempts to delay the departure of the Scots army.

The sixth article provided a much more direct means of proving that Hesilrige had committed treason. If they had encouraged and organised the tumults they were necessarily guilty of levying war against the King and conspiring 'to subvert the rights and very being of Parliaments'. A direct attack on the achievements of the first session could be avoided by drawing the evidence from the events of the autumn. The tumults had

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1. Bodl., Clar. MS. 21, f. 127a.
2. MSs Newsletter, Brit. Lib., Sloane MS. 3317, f. 34a.
3. Sir Philip Warwick, Memoires of the Reign of King Charles I, 203.

aroused widespread disquiet in both Houses, and the King's supporters had been trying to obtain an enquiry into their organisation since 30 November. Hesilrige had helped to block that investigation and had been prominent in attempts to raise the level of tension, thus creating the environment in which they took place. According to Clarendon it was Digby's willingness to prove that Kimbolton had redirected the mob towards Whitehall which led to his inclusion in the impeachment.[1]

The selection of Pym and Hampden was inevitable. What linked Hesilrige, Strode and Holles to them was a shared commitment in autumn 1641 to the policies of confrontation which necessarily led to the use of the mob. Even on those grounds others might have been chosen. Clarendon thought that

> Sir Arthur Hesilrigge and Strode were persons of too low an account and esteem; and though their virulence and malice was as conspicuous and transcendant as any man's, yet their reputation and interest to do any mischieve, otherwise then in concurring in it was so small that they gained credit and authority by being joined with the rest.[2]

This was a wilful underestimate of Hesilrige's position, but, in any case, 'virulence and malice' were at a premium in the context of the opposition's tactics by this stage. Over and above these rational considerations, there is much to suggest that Digby alone had Charles' confidence in this matter and drafted the impeachment.[3] Hesilrige had been prominent in attacks on him in April and June, and if there was ever any doubt over his inclusion in the impeachment Digby's enmity would have tipped the balance.

After the events of the fourth, these decisions were irrevocable. Having escaped the King, Kimbolton and the five members went into hiding in the City, and lived together in a house in Coleman Street until they were able to return to Westminster a week later.[4] When the King visited

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1. Clarendon, History, i. 506.
2. Ibid., i. 506.
3. Ibid., i. 478, 484; Gawdy, Add. MS. 14, 827, f. 216.
4. Clarendon, History, i. 485, 489.

the City on the morning of the fifth he found the authorities uncooperative and the crowds openly defiant.[1] Both Houses adjourned until the eleventh and authorised their joint committee for Ireland to sit where and when they chose. The Commons went further and appointed a committee to sit in the City and consider the safety of the City and the Kingdom, and the vindication of Parliament's privileges. Since all who came were to have voices this represented a de facto adjournment of the House itself to the City.[2]

Under the pressure of emergency, the Committee at Grocers' Hall cut through all the difficulties concerning the demand for parliamentary control of armed force, and mobilised embarrassingly large numbers of Londoners. They pushed aside legal niceties to vindicate the accused members and condemn the King's action, endorsing the view that the King had intended, or at least risked, the use of weapons against members. They launched a petitioning campaign, which openly sought to mobilise the country against the King or his 'evil counsellors'.[3] Though Hesilrige was still in hiding and unable to attend the committee's meetings, he was well placed to contribute to key decisions from the house in Colemen Street, 'near the place where the committee sat, and whither persons trusted passed to and fro to communicate and receive directions'.[4] The accused members seem to have attended the committee for the first time on 10 January.[5] That night the King left London for Hampton Court. Next day the accused members returned to Westminster in triumph, accompanied by large armed demonstrations.[6]

It looked like a victory parade, but the reality was different. The failure to achieve a settlement and the stalemate which this had produced by the autumn of 1641 had forced Pym and his allies to adopt revolutionary

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1. Clarendon, History, i. 486.
2. C.J., ii. 368-9; L.J., iv. 503.
3. Clarendon, History, i. 491-507; A. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, 182-4; S.R. Gardiner, History of England, x. 143-9.
4. Clarendon, History, i. 485.
5. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 399.
6. Clarendon, History, i. 508-10.

methods in spite of themselves. Each side had screwed up the tension in the hope of cracking the other's resistance. In the end it was the King's willingness to abide by the rules of the game which cracked. His opponents had defeated his coup by following suit. But the underlying problems remained, and the search for solutions would have to be resumed in an atmosphere of anti-climax, as the immediate day-to-day crises of the autumn were replaced by more sober parliamentary conditions.

Hesilrige had come to Westminster with the fairly simple aims of making a restoration of Huntingdon's power in Leicestershire impossible, and destroying Laudianism. In spite of his contacts with wider opposition thinking during the 1630s, he was not prepared for the integral connections between these and other issues, which he discovered in the course of his work in the House and on committees. His anger widened to embrace a system of government and the conspiracy which he detected behind it. His temperament, and, perhaps, an amateur's preference for simple, direct solutions, led him to join other radicals, both inside and outside the Pym group, in advocating strong action, whatever the cost in terms of division. As the wider Pym group turned to confrontation as the only way to win, or indeed to survive, Hesilrige came to the fore. As the tension subsided, the question was how far he could retain his place amongst the leading men of the Commons in the changed conditions of 1642.

Chapter 3. The Transition to War:

January to December 1642

Both the King and his opponents had expected their conflict to be settled within the confines of Westminster and London. The King's removal from the capital changed the terms of the conflict. Compromise became a matter for formal negotiations, and if these failed the resultant violence would be a national phenomenon. Both in Parliament and in the country, the fear and tension which had fostered radicalism during the autumn became a force for moderation as civil war came to seem possible. As Pym struggled to reassure the moderates while maintaining a sense of urgency, Hesilrige returned to his position of mid-1641, on the radical edge of the Pym group, and continued to advocate confrontation. When control of the Leicestershire militia became a test of resolve for both sides, Hesilrige was able to combine his national and local politics in a struggle which helped to precipitate war. When it came he played an active rôle and, his convictions reinforced by the discovery of a taste for combining political and military life, he was not revolted by his experience but decided to press for a more vigorous war-effort and to play a continued part in it himself. By December 1642 he had found a distinct rôle for himself and was linked to Sir William Waller, his military partner for the next two years.

(i) Work in the Commons: January to May

Hesilrige did not immediately resume the earlier pace and vehemence of his work. Until the first week in February, at least, he was dining and spending his nights with his fellow accused in the safety of a house in

the City.[1] Their common danger and constant exposure to the subtler influence of Pym and Hampden may have checked his aggression, while access to the leadership reduced the need for interventions on the floor of the House. On 13 January he was the fourth member named to the committee for informations, which was given wide powers to investigate the activities of delinquents.[2] Next day the five members protested their innocence in the Commons.[3] On the fifteenth they demanded that the House should punish Attorney General Herbert and clear them of the charges. Hesilrige was characteristically emphatic, protesting that if they were guilty 'then let us be hanged'.[4] After this, however, there is no record of any activity on his part until 29 January, when he was appointed to a committee.[5]

A pamphlet purports to represent the text of a Leicestershire petition presented on the fifteenth. It attacks the bishops and 'other malignant and inauspicious papisticall delinquents', religious innovations, ignorant and non-preaching ministers, and the abuses of church courts.[6] If genuine it suggests that Hesilrige had support in the county for his demands for a thorough purge of the Church's practices and personnel. If faked, and there is no record of its presentation, it clearly reflects Hesilrige's reputation for religious radicalism.

His wider radicalism was demonstrated on 31 January when the Commons were summoned to the Lords to see the tonnage and poundage bill passed by commission. Since their Speaker was going up and the King would not be present, he moved that the Commons should put on their hats. This dramatic method of asserting their equality with the Lords was 'disliked' by the

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1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Buccleuch-Whitehall, i. 290.
2. C.J., ii. 375
3. E. 201(8), Diurnall Occurrences, 10-17 Jan. 1641/2.
4. Moore, Harl. MS. 480, f. 23ab.
5. C.J., ii. 402.
6. E. 131(25), Leycestershires Petition (1642).

House,[1] but it was not an isolated proposal. On the same day Brooke said in the Lords, 'that for his part he thought that all those which did not Joyne with the howse of comons in thr Petition to the Kinge were to be accounted of the Malignant Party'.[2] Five days earlier Pym had told the Lords at a conference that 'The Commons would be glad to have their help and concurrence in saving of the kingdom; but if their lordships should fail it should not discourage them in doing their duty'.[3] On 1 February the Commons forced the Lords to concur in the petition for control of the militia by inviting the minority to join with the Commons if the majority held out.[4] Hesilrige's proposal represented too great a breach with social convention for most members but it was part of a wider challenge to the Lords.

It was one thing to win the Lords' agreement to the petition, another to secure that of the King. On Friday 4 February Hesilrige picked up the City radicals' connection between economic and political problems, arguing that the stop of trade was caused by the lack of 'good understanding' between King and Parliament. He wanted to 'send to hys matye for a present answeare and if the evyll councellors be nott removed the greate councell of the kingdome must'.[5] Next day the Lords voted for the Bishops' Exclusion bill, in a division which marked the definite ascendancy of those peers who supported the Commons majority.[6]

On 8 February, Stapleton reported the draft of arguments to be sent to the King with this bill. Hesilrige argued against sending reasons: 'they would be of dangerous consequence'. Henry Marten made the point

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1. Gawdy, Add. MS. 14,827, f. 24a.
2. Dover's Notes, Clar. MS. 21, f. 57.
3. Clarendon, History, iv 541.
4. Dover's Notes, Clar. MS. 21, f. 57.
5. Gawdy, Add. MS. 14, 827, f. 28b.
6. A. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, 242-3.

explicit: it should be sufficient that the houses had passed the bill since the King was bound to take the advice of his great council and his vote was included in that of the Lords. These radical doctrines went too far for the majority who agreed to send the reasons to the Lords for their agreement.[1]

The House also considered a letter from the King complaining of Pym's assertion at the conference of 26 January that since Parliament had barred the ports to Irish papists, many leading rebels had been permitted to travel to Ireland by the King's immediate warrant. Hesilrige was one of a highly unsympathetic committee appointed to consider the King's demand for vindication.[2] They acted quickly and their draft reply, avowing Pym's allegations as the sense of the House and confirming that the speech had been printed by order of the House, was reported and agreed later that day.[3]

On Friday 11 February the House considered members' nominations for the lord lieutenancies. During the debate Hesilrige, speaking from his usual place in the gallery, supported Arthur Goodwin's objection to the nomination of Hertford for Somerset. In answer to the argument that the House should take account of Hertford's influence in the West, he insisted that 'in this case wee were to use conscience & not prudence'.[4] The procedure adopted by the Commons made Stamford's nomination as lord lieutenant of Leicestershire almost inevitable: a peer was required and Hesilrige and Grey of Ruthen could not nominate their enemy Huntingdon. This, rather than a long-standing feud between the Grey and Hastings families, was responsible for his leadership of the Leicestershire parliamentarians in the civil war.[5]

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 162, f. 375b.
2. C.J., ii. 420.
3. C.J., ii. 423; Clarendon, History, i. 560-1.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 162, f. 380a-380*b.
5. See Ch. 1 for my view that the major challenges to the Hastings family came from dissident gentlemen in the 1620s and 1630s. For the opposing view see A. Everitt, The Local Community and the Great Rebellion (Hist. Assoc. pamph., G.S. 70, 1969), 15-16.

On Monday 14 February Hesilrige was named third of the fifteen man committee appointed to consider the revival of the Suffolk cloth trade to Turkey and the wider question of freeing and promoting the clothing and wool trades.[1] The appointment reflected Hesilrige's previous experience on a committee concerned with the cloth industry.[2] The committee was clearly designed to preempt the report later that day of the King's latest letter which referred to his concern for the Suffolk clothiers who had petitioned him about the decay of trade caused by the political crisis.[3] By acting first the Commons' leadership deflected the King's attempt to reverse the thrust of the link between political and economic crises which Hesilrige had used ten days earlier.

Next day Hesilrige had the satisfaction of seeing the presentation of a Leicestershire petition which indicated support for his radical positions. Hesilrige was clearly in the petitioners' minds when, referring to the attempted arrest of the five members, they declared, 'Wee conceive ourselves exceedingly concerned in this, and the greatest hazzard of our lives could not more affect us'. The petition to the Commons expressed their confidence in the House's will to remedy their grievances, its resolve to aid their 'distressed bretheren of Ireland', and its determination to carry through a thorough reformation 'according to the Word of God', including the suppression of idolatry in England and Ireland. Above all they demanded that

> The Counsellors and Actors of that most horrid, high and wicked attempt against his Majestie, the Parliament, and the very foundation of our government, and also tending to the destruction and utter ruine of some of your Members, may be made publick examples to all posterity.

The petition to the Lords, presented next day, made many of the same points but insisted on the need for 'a constant concurrence (by) this Honourable

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1. C.J., ii. 429.
2. C.J., ii. 77.
3. C.J., ii. 430.

House, with the House of Commons in all their noble designes and endeavours for the publick good'.[1] The petitions were broadly in line with those from other counties at this time. Their relative brevity may explain the absence of local grievances but the effect is to emphasise their central demand for joint action by the Houses against delinquents. This, and the repeated emphasis on the petitioners' willingness to sacrifice their lives and estates in defence of Parliament and its privileges, places the Leicestershire petitions among the harder-edged and least optimistic of the petitions presented in early 1642.[2]

The religious aspirations of the petitioners were Hesilrige's own. On the seventeenth he was appointed to the committee for a bill for the suppression of innovations, due observance of the sabbath, and the advancement of preaching.[3] Speaking in a debate on the bill against pluralities, four days later, he linked this abuse to the wider problems of the Church. The lure of rich benefices had led the clergy to neglect 'the sound and pure preaching of the word of God', and to concentrate on winning the favour of the powerful and learning 'to dance after the Bishops Musicke'. This had made it easy for their superiors to corrupt the Church, and make ambitious clergymen, 'at any time ready to chuse what religion to be of, according as the times alter'. His proposals for further legislation included compelling patrons to examine the character and ability of their presentees, transferring the patronage of 'Popish Lords' and 'disaffected Prelates' to men appointed by Parliament, and ensuring that 'Men of most vertue may bee planted in the best Benefices'.[4] This was one of Hesilrige's clearest statements on religion and it confirms that he was deeply committed

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1. Two Petitions of the County of Leicester, Delivered on the 15. of February 1641 to the high and honourable Court of Parliament (1642); C.J., ii. 434; L.J., iv. 589-90.
2. See A. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, Ch. 6.
3. C.J., ii. 437-8.
4. Sir Arthur Haselrigg His Speech in Parliament concerning The Bill Passed against Plurality of Livings ... February 21 An. Dom. 1641 (1641/1).

to basic puritan reform.

On the same day he was the first member named to the committee to consider the 'grievances pretended to be occasioned by the bill for the relief of the captives of Algiers'.[1] Moore, who mentions Hesilrige's appointment as well as his own, explains that this committee was the result of a petition presented by Alderman Pennington on behalf of the Spanish merchants.[2] Hesilrige's prominence on the committee probably reflects his links with Pennington and other City radicals. Later in the day he took up a theme found in many county petitions, by proposing the establishment of a committee to consider ways of preventing the coming over of Irish papists and of dealing with those who had already arrived. He was the first member named to the committee, and his colleagues included another City radical, William Spurstowe, who had a strong interest in Irish affairs.[3] Hesilrige shared and stimulated the fears which could mobilise men for confrontation, and bring together the confused alarm of the provinces and the aims of the radicals in Parliament and the City.

Hesilrige's interest in City politics was confirmed on 25 February. He seized upon a petition from some searchers who had arrested men drinking in a tavern on Sunday only to see them released without punishment by the Lord Mayor. Hesilrige succeeded in starting a general collection of evidence against the conservative and obstructive Lord Mayor by moving that all committees with relevant material should present it to the committee for London. He commented that the Lord Mayor was 'not fytt to governe so greate a cyttye'.[4]

In late February the King replied to Parliament's justification of Pym's charge that he had helped leading rebels to travel to Ireland. This

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1. C.J., ii. 440.
2. Moore, Harl. MS. 480, f. 159a.
3. Ibid., f. 162a; C.J., ii. 447
4. Gawdy, Add. MS. 14,827, f. 53b.

reply was referred to the committee which had drafted the justification. In the absence of the chairman, Sir William Lewes, Hesilrige reported the committee's draft reply on 8 March. He was presumably responsible for much of the extremism of the draft's attack on Charles I's actions. D'Ewes and others opposed the relevant clause, ensuring that it was recommitted and that they were added to the committee.[1] A week later Sir William Lewes came back with a draft which merely cited further evidence to support Pym's original assertions, and this was passed without difficulty.[2]

On Saturday 12 March the bill concerning innovations was reported from committee with amendments and additions. The changes were read twice and the bill was recommitted to eight members, including Hesilrige, whose enthusiasm for the bill presumably accounts for his selection from amongst the thirty-nine members of the original committee.[3] The attack on Laudianism was one of Hesilrige's long-standing interests. His concern to secure the City in safe hands had been growing since the previous autumn. His recent attack on the Lord Mayor made him a logical choice for the thirteen man committee appointed on 22 March to draft a charge against the City's recorder Thomas Gardiner.[4] Next day another growing interest was reflected in his appointment to the committee for the bill for 'explanation of certain clauses' in the Act for the reduction of the Irish rebels.[5] Another similar bill, permitting Dutch investment in the Irish Adventure, was referred to the same committee on the twenty-fifth and passed the following day.[6]

At about this time, Hesilrige himself pledged £1,000 for the Irish Adventure.[7] It is impossible to prove that Hesilrige actually paid this

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1. C.J., ii. 471-2.
2. C.J., ii. 479; Clarendon, History, i. 562
3. C.J., ii. 476, 437-8.
4. C.J., ii. 492.
5. C.J., ii. 493.
6. C.J., ii. 498-500.
7. J.P. Prendergast, The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland (Dublin, 1865), 403; J. Rushworth, Historical Collections, v. 564, dates Hesilrige's subscription to 29 March but the date, like the amount (£1200), may be wrong.

sum since Prendergast's source has since been destroyed.[1] The same is true of his later pledge of £600 for the Sea Adventure[2] which brought the total to £1,600. In February 1659 Hesilrige spoke of his financial contributions to the parliamentary cause, in a House containing many who would have been glad to catch him out in a lie. When he claimed to have given £1,600 at the start of the Irish war, the only challenge came from one who 'said that he had well improved it. "I have so," said he. "Time will work all things"'.[3] His investment, one of the largest in the Commons,[4] made him a member of the committee of M.P. adventurers and drew him closer to a number of radicals in Parliament and the City.

Hesilrige was uninhibited in breaching the Commons' traditions of consensus and was to precipitate a very large number of divisions in the later 1640s. So far, however, he had acted as a teller on only one occasion, in a division on a private bill in February 1641.[5] The Commons' Journal for 24 March records that he and his fellow radical Purefoy were the tellers in favour of recommending Mr. Stephen Anderson to the Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire for addition to his deputy lieutenants.[6] Unfortunately this was probably one of those occasions on which the clerk transposed the tellers' names, since Anderson was to be a commissioner of array and had to compound in 1646.[7] Unless Hesilrige and Purefoy had misjudged their man it seems likely that they were the tellers who secured Anderson's rejection by five votes.

On the twenty-fifth Hesilrige was named to the committee for the bill for the better maintenance of the ministry.[8] Next day he had the honour,

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1. See K.S. Bottigheimer, English Money and Irish Land (Oxford, 1971), 59-61.
2. J.P. Prendergast, The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland, 442.
3. Diary of Thomas Burton, ed. J.T. Rutt, iii. 84.
4. See K.S. Bottigheimer, English Money and Irish Land, 175-195 (App. A., Original Investors in Irish Land).
5. C.J., ii. 91.
6. C.J., ii. 496.
7. Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding &c. 1643-1660, ed. M.A.E. Green (5 vols., 1889-92), ii. 1069.
8. C.J., ii. 49 6-7.

unusual for him, of carrying some Commons' business to the Lords.[1] More characteristically his talents as an investigator of delinquents were recognised on the twenty-eighth when he was named second, after Pym, to the joint committee to consider informations regarding the Kent petition.[2]

The Kent petition seemed dangerous, but the twenty-ninth brought news from Monmouth which appeared to confirm all the Commons' fears of a papist plot in mainland Britain. On Henry Herbert's motion the House heard a letter alleging that Monmouth corporation had refused to allow the county magazine to be moved to Newport because they had been overawed by the powerful local papists, headed by the Earl of Worcester. Cromwell intensified the reaction by reading another letter from four Monmouthshire ministers in which they showed 'that the strength of papists was soe great about the town of Monmouth as they feared if some speedie course were not taken it would be in as great danger as Ireland'. This letter was addressed to Hesilrige, Cromwell and Pym.[3] Why four Monmouthshire ministers should have chosen these three is unclear. Pym was nationally famous on many counts, he and Hesilrige were famous as two of the five members, Dering had drawn attention to the rôle of Hesilrige and Cromwell in connection with the Root and Branch bill, and, as recently as 7 February, Cromwell had presented a petition on behalf of some Monmouthshire puritans.[4] None of these would explain why the three were written to as a group. The most probable explanation lies in their common membership of the Committee for Scandalous Ministers, appointed in December 1640 and revived on 19 February 1642,[5] which had specifically investigated Welsh cases in June and July 1641.[6] Whatever the explanation, the letter

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1. C.J., ii. 499.
2. C.J., ii. 501.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 54a.
4. A. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the Egnlish Civil War, 220.
5. C.J., ii. 54, 441-2.
6. C.J., ii. 193, 225.

suggests that these ministers had encountered the three working as a group in some context.

Hesilrige's experience in religious matters was recognised in his appointment on 4 April to the twenty-one man committee to draft a declaration outlining the House's position on the doctrine, government, discipline and liturgy of the Church, and its intention to consult with divines on these topics. The committee was then to consider the establishment and maintenance of a preaching ministry throughout the kingdom.[1] The creation of the committee both marked the House's determination to move forward from the piece-meal methods of reform represented by the numerous religious committees on which Hesilrige had sat to the comprehensive approach of the Westminster assembly, and, in the second part of its brief, recognised the need for a specialised committee to oversee the construction of a network of preaching ministers distinct from the committee for scandalous ministers which had previously borne this responsibility.

In his declarations Charles I had made much play with the riots and seditious publications which had driven him and those loyal to him from Westminster. The Parliamentary leadership decided to call his bluff and on 4 and 5 April the two Houses agreed to set up a joint committee to examine any evidence presented to them by the King's Counsel.[2] The Solicitor General St. John was sympathetic to the tumults, the Attorney General was under house arrest, and any lawyer seeking to prove the King's charges would inevitably have been drawn into the crime of the twelve bishops by impugning the validity of the Houses' actions since December 1641. To make matters yet more certain, the Commons committee was packed with unsympathetic figures such as Hesilrige, Strode, Cromwell and Ludlow.[3] Having rigged the

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1. C.J., ii. 510-11.
2. C.J., ii. 510; L.J., iv. 700.
3. C.J., ii. 512.

enquiry, Parliament could proceed in its declaration of 19 May to make capital out of having set up a committee to consider the allegations, 'who several times met thereupon and received this answer and declaration of the King's counsel, that they knew of no such thing as yet'.[1]

Over the months the Long Parliament had shown itself willing to investigate allegations against many individuals and institutions but it remained sensitive to any criticism of itself, even from friendly sources. Preaching on the fast day on 30 March, Cornelius Burges had sought to hasten the pace of reform, arguing that 'be the Representative Body never so good, yet are they not without their pollutions which contribute much to the common heap of Provocations', and going so far as to suggest that the Irish Rebellion was divine retribution for Parliament's slow progress in Church reform. His fellow preacher Ash concentrated on the need to abolish 'prelaticall government'.[2] The Commons were moving in this direction, but they disliked the preachers' tone, and Burges in particular 'had given manye (of) the Howse some offence by an expression or two hee had in his sermon'. The customary thanks to the preachers were not moved when the House resumed and Hesilrige had to step in to propose this on 12 April. There was opposition 'but at last it was ordered that the saied Sr Arthur Haslerigg should give them thankes'.[3] Hesilrige was no stranger to verbal excess and remained strongly committed to thorough-going church reform. Two days later he was sent to urge the Lords to hasten the bill concerning Innovations,[4] and he may well have raised the matter, given the Commons' usual practice and his earlier involvement with the bill.

On 8 April Charles I had mounted a major challenge to parliament by issuing a declaration of his intention to go to Ireland in person at the

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1. Clarendon, History, ii. 100.
2. Cornelius Burges, Two Sermons Preached to the Honourable House of Commons.. (1645); J.F. Wilson, Pulpit in Parliament (Princeton U.P. 1969), 64, 184-5.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 71b.
4. C.J., ii. 527.

head of the army.[1] Such a move would threaten Parliament by giving Charles an army and the opportunity to win its wholehearted loyalty. Hesilrige's links with the City radicals and involvement in Irish affairs were demonstrated by his selection to spearhead the Irish Adventurers' contribution to the protests in London: on 15 April he presented their petition which argued that the King's announcement was discouraging investment in the Adventure and urged the Houses to press the King to change his mind and return to Westminster. Elements of collusion are clear from the fact that these points had already found a place in the Houses' answer to the King's message, but some members of the Commons still urged that this petition should be sent along with the official answer, and desisted only when they discovered that the Lords had already risen.[2]

The strength of the King's position lay in Parliament's failure to send significant relief to Ireland. The positive response of the radicals was the 'Sea' or 'Additional Adventure to Ireland'. On 16 April the Commons accepted proposals from 'some persons who are desirous to further the Conquest of Ireland'. The Sea Adventurers were to set out some five to seven ships and five hundred soldiers, blockade the Irish coast and conduct operations on land at their own discretion. In return they were to receive allocations of land on the same basis as participants in the main adventure and were also to keep any prizes or spoil.[3]

Hesilrige was, with Robert Reynolds and Oliver Cromwell, one of only three M.P.s who subscribed.[4] His subscription was a sizeable £600.[5] His brother-in-law Lord Brooke was the first of the sixteen commissioners named in the ordinance of 17 June[6] and was intended to be the overall commander of

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1. Clarendon, History, ii. 33-4.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 79a; Clarendon, History, i. 35-7.
3. C.J., ii. 531.
4. R.P. Brenner, Commercial Change and Political Conflict: The Merchant Community in Civil War London (Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton, 1970), 314.
5. J.P. Prendergast, The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland, 443
6. Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum 1642-1660, ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, (3 vols., 1911), i. 10.

the expedition.[1] Hugh Peters, who accompanied the expedition in the summer and published an account of it,[2] had been one of the three commissioners sent out by Hesilrige and his fellow Saybrook patentees in 1635.[3] At the heart of the venture were Maurice Thompson, his brothers, and several of their business associates.[4] Maurice Thompson and his brother Robert (rear-admiral of the expedition) were associated with George Fenwick and Hesilrige's brother Thomas in a commercial venture in Massachusetts.[5] Hesilrige's participation in the Sea Adventure strengthened these links and forged new links for the future. With two exceptions 'all of the organizers of the Additional Adventure were important participants in London's parliamentary cause and ... were leaders of its more radical wing'.[6]

On 19 April Hesilrige presented a petition from Mr. Nathaniel Burnand, a Leicestershire minister who 'was desired' to take a cure in Northumberland and wanted a parliamentary recommendation in case the 'profaneness and ignorance' of the area produced opposition to him.[7] The petition was more controversial than it seemed. The actual wording of the resultant order refers to Burnand 'being chosen by the Parishioners of Ovingham',[8] which Howell sees as significant in the context of the anti-Laudian purge, and the efforts to obtain sound ministers in their places, going on in the area at the time.[9] Hesilrige and his parliamentary colleague John Blakiston may well have helped the parishioners of Ovingham to find Nathaniel Burnand in Leicestershire.

When M.P.s nominated ministers for the assembly of divines on the twenty-fifth, the Leicestershire nominees were Mr. Cleyton of Showell and Mr. Gibbs

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1. E. 242(15), Hugh Peters, A True Relation of the Passages of God's Providence in a Voyage for Ireland ... (1642), 3.
2. op. cit.
3. see above, 29 - 30.
4. R.P. Brenner, Commercial Change and Political Conflict, 309.
5. see above
6. R.P. Brenner, Commercial Change and Political Conflict, 311.
7. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 82b.
8. C.J., ii. 535.
9. Howell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Puritan Revolution, (Clar. Pr., 1967), 140.

of 'Elston' or Ilston.[1] Hesilrige would certainly have suggested, and approved of, Gibbs, since he owned not only land in Ilston but also its tithes.[2] It was time to decide how to work with the ministers who had been nominated and Hesilrige was one of twenty-seven members appointed to consider the readiest way of executing the House's resolutions by consulting with them 'touching the government of the Church &c'. He had been a member of the committee appointed to draft a declaration on this subject three weeks earlier,[3] and his experience and interest make it probable that he played an active and effective rôle in this committee's work.

On Tuesday 26 April Hesilrige tried to inject some urgency into the preparation of the long-awaited riposte to the King's propagandist replies to Parliament's messages presented to him on 9 and 26 March. The draft prepared by a committee appointed on 29 March had been recommitted on 22 April.[4] Hesilrige was added to the committee, 'upon his owne motion' and the House ordered 'that he take care of that Business: and that he bring it in on Thursday Morning next'.[3] The resultant declaration, which was finally approved on 19 May,[6] set out to show how, since 1641,

> The heads of the malignant party, disappointed of their prey, the religion and liberty of the kingdom, which they were ready to seize upon and devour before the beginning of this Parliament, had still persisted by new practices, both of force and subtlety, to recover the same again.

and to justify Parliament's actions which had been slandered by these evil counsellors.[7] In Clarendon's view, they sought, by reciting old grievances, to render the King himself 'odious or unacceptable'.[8] The tone and content

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1. C.J., ii. 400.
2. Hazlerigg Papers, Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, no. 54.
3. C.J., ii. 541, 510.
4. C.J., ii. 504, 538.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 93b; C.J., ii. 543.
6. C.J., ii. 579
7. Clarendon, History, ii. 88-106.
8. Ibid., ii. 88.

matched Hesilrige's own preoccupations, and suggest that he played an active rôle in maintaining or increasing the draft's radicalism.

Propaganda against evil counsellors was not enough. The House recognised the need for coordination and speed in dealing with individual delinquents, and on 4 May appointed a sixteen man committee to consider the state of delinquents and expedite proceedings against them. The committee was freed from the usual constraints: any four members could act, they were to meet daily at times and places of their own choosing, and they were to report from time to time. Hesilrige, who was named fourth, certainly had the appetite and experience for the committee's work.[1]

At a conference next day, the Lords informed the Commons of Hertford's evasive reply to their request for an undertaking that the Prince of Wales would not be taken out of the kingdom. Hesilrige, whose February warnings of Hertford's unreliability had now been vindicated, was named seventh to the large committee appointed to consult with the Lords.[2] As such he was one of the Commons' members of the joint committee appointed on the seventh to consider the King's messages regarding Hull.[3] On the same day he was named second, after Pym, to the committee for the bill to use all impeachment fines for the Irish war.[4]

Hesilrige and Pym presumably agreed on this measure but they differed on more substantial financial questions. On 20 May Pym proposed that a bill for a special levy of £50,000 a year for seven years should be drafted. He tried to reassure the House that the aim was to provide security for an immediate loan of £25,000 and that the bill would not necessarily have to be implemented. The Commons, however, continued to recoil from radical financial

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1. C.J., ii. 556.
2. C.J., ii. 561, 562.
3. C.J., ii. 563, 568.
4. C.J., ii. 562-3.

solutions. Crew suggested that drafting a subsidy bill to raise £200,000 in 1643 would suffice, but it was Hesilrige who effectively wrecked Pym's proposal. He suggested a poll tax on those with more than £100 a year, the tax-payers being assigned land in Ireland in return. In effect his scheme involved forced participation in the Adventure by a broad range of the propertied classes and a consequent expansion of the confiscations which would be required after re-conquest. If enforceable it would have committed large numbers of influential tax-payers to Parliament, since the King was markedly luke-warm about a crushing conquest and wholesale confiscations. In the subsequent debate Wheeler and Culpepper took up Hesilrige's suggestion that they should confine the burden to the wealthy, while Glyn supported his proposal in its entirety.[1]

On 23 May the Commons received letters from their committee at York which reported the King's success in rallying support and their problems in countering this. The Commons appointed a fourteen man committee to prepare new instructions for the committee at York, and draft an order to the civic authorities to suppress all forces raised in York and publish and enforce Parliament's orders. The committee was also instructed to consider the best means of publishing its recent declarations in all counties. The committee's composition was notably radical, including Hesilrige, the younger Vane, Cromwell, Strode, Ludlow and Marten.[2]

Next day Pym made a fresh attempt to tackle Parliament's financial problems. A committee was appointed in terms which recognised that resources might well be needed for war in England. Having recited the Commons' earlier vote, 'That it doth appear that the King, seduced by evil Counsel, doth intend to levy War upon his Parliament', the order directed the committee

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1. Gawdy, Add. MS. 14,827, f. 110b-111a.
2. C.J., ii. 582, 583.

to 'Consider how a stock of Money, or any other Means, may be provided for the better Defence of his Majesty's Person, the Parliament, and the Publick Peace of the Kingdom, against any such Force'. Of the nine members of the committee, Pym, Crew, Hesilrige and Glyn had spoken in the debate four days earlier.[1]

On 27 May the Commons appointed a committee to consider the delays in granting recruiting warrants for the Sea Adventurers. Hesilrige was the second of the six members named and he was joined by his fellow Sea Adventurer Reynolds.[2] They worked quickly and produced an order empowering Brooke, as commander-in-chief, to 'beat a drum' to recruit a thousand volunteers, which was sent up to the Lords on the thirtieth. The Lords passed it next day leaving the Lord Lieutenant, Leicester, to enter a dissent.[3] His opposition owed something to doubts about the use to which the recruits might be put in England. On the twenty-seventh the Lords agreed to the Commons' request for a joint committee to consider the defence of the kingdom. Hesilrige was the eighth of the twenty-four members appointed by the Commons. While the Commons moderates did secure an addition to the committee's instructions to include consideration of 'all Means for continuing and preserving the Peace of the Kingdom, and the preventing of Civil War', the central purpose of the committee was clear.[4]

Hesilrige was more directly concerned in the Commons' order of the twenty-eighth that the Lords should be asked to agree that the militia ordinance should be put in execution forthwith in Worcestershire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Derbyshire.[5] The Lords approved the order on the thirtieth.[6] On the same day the Commons appointed a committee consisting

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1. C.J., ii. 586.
2. C.J., ii. 588
3. L.J., v. 92, 95.
4. C.J., ii. 589.
5. C.J., ii. 592.
6. L.J., v. 92.

of Glyn, Fiennes, Pym, Hesilrige, Hampden and Marten. They were to prepare one declaration showing how dangerously the King had broken Parliament's privileges of late, and another answering the King's reply to their votes and petitions presented to him on 23 May, and his proclamation of 27 May forbidding his subjects to obey the militia ordinance.[1] The second declaration was approved on 6 June. It argued that Parliament, like lower courts, 'must do their duty ... though the king in his own person should forbid them'. Parliament was

> a council, to provide for the necessities, prevent the imminent dangers, and preserve the public peace and safety of the kingdom, and to declare the King's pleasure in those things as are requisite thereunto; and what they do herein hath the stamp of the royal authority, although His Majesty, seduced by evil counsel do in his person oppose or interrupt the same.

It therefore ordered obedience to the militia ordinance, threatened those who opposed it, and promised protection to those who obeyed it.[2] As Gardiner says, this was the most explicit claim to sovereignty yet, and 'From such a declaration there was no drawing back'.[3]

This was particularly true for Hesilrige whose own county was in the front line of the conflict over the militia. On 1 June he was one of three members who drafted the punitive order, directed against those who had gone to York, commanding all M.P.s to attend the House forthwith on pain of a fine of £100 and further penalties to be determined by the House.[4] On Saturday 4 June he, along with Ruthen and Grey of Groby, was enjoined to go down to Leicestershire and see the militia put into execution according to the ordinance.[5]

A phase of Hesilrige's parliamentary career had come to an end. While

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1. C.J., ii. 594.
2. L.J., v. 112.
3. S.R. Gardiner, History of England, x. 200, 201.
4. C.J., ii. 598.
5. C.J., ii. 604.

continuing to shoulder a heavy burden of routine parliamentary work he had done all that he could to advance his favourite causes (Ireland, the pursuit of delinquents, and church reform), and to prevent an unacceptable compromise with the King. He had acted sometimes in cooperation with Pym, sometimes in cooperation with fierier spirits in the Commons and the City. For the rest of 1642, and beyond, he was to be engaged in the preliminaries to war and war itself, while the time he could spend at Westminster was largely devoted to matters arising from that commitment.

(ii) The Struggle for Leicestershire

Leicestershire had obvious attractions for both King and Parliament. Its position, between Yorkshire and the home counties, meant that it could offer major defensive and offensive advantages to whichever side controlled it. Thanks to Huntingdon's efforts, the militia was well trained and the magazine well stocked, as the sheriff, Archdale Palmer, had confirmed when he took control of it in January.[1] The bitter divisions within the county community gave both sides reason to believe that they could win a trial of strength.

As the contest developed, so Leicestershire acquired further importance as an example to other counties faced with the choice between the competing claims of the Militia Ordinance and the Commission of Array. While this intensified the struggle, the propaganda battle clearly exceeded the ferocity of events on the ground. This complicates the assessment of the outcome of the struggle, as does the accident of Leicestershire becoming the main base

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1. P.R.O., S.P. 16/488/90.

for the royalist cavalry in early September while Parliament concentrated its forces in Northamptonshire. The local struggle was overtaken by national events before it had run its course.

The reconstruction of events between June and July, which follows, is necessarily dependent, in the main, on Parliamentarian sources. This is due to two basic differences between the opposing sides. The first, and simpler, is that Parliament controlled London, the centre of the printing and publishing trade. While the King possessed the technical means of printing proclamations and other documents, there was nothing, as yet, to compare with Mercurius Aulicus and the royalist pamphlets of later years. The second concerns the contexts in which decisions were made in London and at York. The King and a small group of advisers were secure in their control of strategy and policy. Hastings did not need to persuade them of the rightness of their cause, or to hearten them with morale-boosting accounts of his actions. By contrast, Pym and his associates, including Hesilrige, were constrained both by the need to take decisions in a parliamentary manner and by the difficulties of persuading a majority in both Houses, when these contained not only a royalist remnant and a strong Peace Party but also a very large number of members who were doubtful, afraid and unclear about aims and means. Naturally Hesilrige, Ruthen and Stamford provided reports which were over-optimistic and over-simplified.

Such reports, and the printed propaganda inspired by them, had no place for analysis of the composition of the Parliamentarian party in Leicestershire, of gradations of support, or of shades of neutralism. Analysis of this kind would have undermined their purpose. Nevertheless they do provide basic factual material which can be used to reconstruct events and a chronology, while, inasofar as they had to explain setbacks and demonstrate the need for action, they could not wholly avoid implying

the existence of half-hearted support and neutralism. These implications are discussed below. The first task is, however, to reconstruct the events themselves.

Stamford reached Leicester on 4 June and began the struggle by issuing warrants for a muster on the eighth.[1] The corporation decided on the sixth that they should obey Stamford's warrant unless the King's proclamation against the Militia Ordinance arrived first.[2] Henry Hastings arrived next day with a set of proclamations which he sent out to the head constables.

Hesilrige and Ruthen had also arrived by this time. On the morning of the eighth Hastings went to see the Mayor to ensure that the town's trained bands were not sent to the muster. The contingents coming in from other parts of the county were told that Stamford, Hesilrige and Ruthen had said that they need not attend, and threatened with punishment if they appeared with their arms. Many compromised by leaving their arms behind while going on to attend the muster.[3] They were joined by perhaps a hundred individuals from Leicester including some aldermen.[4] The Parliamentary commissioners reported that 'there was a good appearance of men', most of whom seemed favourable to Parliament, but they were unarmed.[5]

Hesilrige and Ruthen decided that there 'was an absolute Necessity of our stay in the County', and joined Stamford in issuing warrants for a muster in each hundred in the course of the following week.[6] On the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth they held successful musters at Broughton-Ashley, Kibworth and Melton Mowbray. Almost all of the members of the trained bands

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1. E. 154(4), A True Relation of the Transaction of the Commands of both Houses of Parliament in the Execution of the Militia in the County of Leicester (1642), 1.
2. Records of the Borough of Leicester, iii., 1603-88, ed. H. Stocks and W.H. Stevenson, 312.
3. L.J., v. 147.
4. E. 154(4), A True Relation of the Transaction ... 6
5. Ibid., p. 1; L.J., v. 147.
6. L.J., v. 147.

appeared, with the exception of those from the home villages of Sir Richard Halford, Sir John Bale and John Pate. In addition a hundred and eighty well-armed volunteers appeared.[1]

Meanwhile the King had signed the Commission of Array for Leicestershire. The commission, issued on 11 June, was a direct response to the attempt to execute the Militia Ordinance and was the first of its kind.[2] The commission was headed in theory by the Earls of Huntingdon and Devon, and in practice by Huntingdon's son Henry Hastings. Huntingdon's old deputy lieutenants, with whom Hesilrige had clashed in the 1630s - Skipwith, Skeffington, Halford, Bale and Pate - were prominent in the list of commissioners.[3]

Stamford learned of Hastings' return with the commissioners on the evening of the fifteenth and transferred 'a great part' of the county magazine to his own house, Bradgate. But he and his colleagues did not expect any immediate royalist action and left Leicester to conduct the next day's muster at Melton Mowbray.[4] On their return they discovered that Hastings had been at Leicester in their absence. The commission had been read publicly and the Mayor had been persuaded to set a guard, reinforced by one of Hastings' servants and 'divers desperate fellows', on the part of the magazine which remained there. Hastings had also persuaded the under Sheriff Gregory to send out warrants calling a county muster at the Raw Dykes near Leicester for 22 June.[5] Stamford, Hesilrige and Ruthen went to Leicester, accompanied by sympathetic gentlemen, and ordered the Mayor to remove the magazine to 'a place of more strength and safety'.[6] Hesilrige and Ruthen despatched a

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1. L.J., v. 147; E. 154(4), A True Relation of the Transaction .. 1-2.
2. Clarendon, History, ii. 197n.
3. L.J., v. 147.
4. E. 154(4), A True Relation of the Transaction .. 2; L.J., v. 139.
5. L.J., v. 147, 148; E. 154(4), A True Relation of the Transaction .. 2
6. Ibid.

long report to the Commons, which was read on 18 June. The Houses voted the Commission of Array illegal and resolved to send for Hastings, Bale, Pate, Gregory and Henry Hastings of Humberston as delinquents.[1] Warrants were issued to two parliamentary messengers when the House rose.[2]

On the same day Parliament's supporters organised a meeting to petition the King and claimed that the 'Knights, Ministers, Gentry, Free-holders, and many thousands of the Inhabitants of the County of Leicester .. assembled on Horsefairlays' near Leicester.[3] The meeting was an ambitious effort amounting to an unofficial and unarmed equivalent of a county muster, and Stamford, Hesilrige and Ruthen must have played some part in organising it. The petition was totally uncompromising and reflected many of Hesilrige's preoccupations. It deplored the King's resort to arms and demanded that he rejoin Parliament 'for surely that high Assembly with God's blessing and your assenting unto them can soone procure your and our safety, and annihilate all distractions and distempers'. With their immediate problems in mind, the petitioners called on the King to recall his warrants prohibiting the mustering of the trained bands. If Charles refused their demands they would, when Parliament had named the culprits, 'take upon (us) the boldness to remove from your Majesty such prosecutors as are enemies to the State and hinderers to the tranquility of the same'. They urged him to cooperate with Parliament to deal with the Irish rebels, settle a godly ministry and disarm the papists, and to dismiss his 'subverting' counsellors and the cavaliers. Finally they called for a full acquittal of the five members, 'one of them being chiefly intrusted for the good and welfare of our Country'.[4]

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1. C.J., ii. 630, 631, 632; L.J., v. 147-8.
2. E. 154(4) A True Relation of the Transaction .. app.
3. His Maiesties Letter to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the Citie of London, with The humble Petition of the Knights, Ministers, Gentry, Free-holders, and other Inhabitants of the Countie of Leicester, to the King ... (1642)
4. Ibid.

Hesilrige may well have had a hand in the drafting, although even he might have refrained from writing the flattering reference to himself.

Hastings issued warrants on 19 June, ordering the head constables to prevent any obedience to the Militia Ordinance.[1] Next day Stamford set a guard of a hundred and fifty of his neighbours, tenants and servants at Bradgate and went with Hesilrige and Ruthen to conduct the fifth muster at Coptoake, three miles away. On their return they found the Parliamentary messengers waiting at Bradgate.[2] They all went on to Leicester to supervise the transfer of the part of the magazine left there to the 'strong Tower called Neworks-Gate neere the Town'.

Next day they posted copies of Parliament's votes on the gates of the inn where Hastings and his followers were to stay. Having heard that their opponents intended to come 'in a Warlike manner against them' Stamford, Ruthen and Hesilrige withdrew to Bradgate at about nine on the morning of Wednesday 22nd to avoid a direct confrontation, leaving the Sheriff the two parliamentary messengers and 'one Thomas Horton one of the said Sir Arthurs servants at Leicester' to manage things.[3] Hesilrige and his parliamentary colleagues thus missed the drama of Hastings' arrival accompanied by a large armed force, the confrontation on the Horse Fair Leas during which the two sides tried to read the rival orders issued by King and Parliament, the attempt to arrest Hastings and his colleagues, and Hastings' entry into the town. The Sheriff and the messengers barricaded themselves in their inn and sent to Bradgate for instructions. A message arrived at one in the morning ordering them to attempt to surprise Hastings and his colleagues, but they, like the parliamentary leaders, preferred to avoid trouble and

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1. L.J., v. 232.
2. E. 154(4), A True Relation of the Transaction ... 2, 3. App.
3. Ibid., App.

had left Leicester by this time. The first round had effectively ended in a draw. Hesilrige stayed long enough to gather some evidence from witnesses,[1] but by Saturday 25 June he was back in the Commons where he was ordered to prepare a report for Monday morning.[2]

Hesilrige and the situation in Leicestershire had a crucial rôle to play in Pym's parliamentary strategy in late June and early July. As the Commons considered moderating the Nineteen Propositions, following the King's negative response of 21 June, Pym had to work cleverly to limit the dilution of Parliament's demands and ensure that preparations for war continued.[3] on 28 June, 'Mr Pym moved iust as wee weere about to goe on with the propositions that a Lre of great moment was come out of Leicestershire'. The letter, from Sheriff Palmer to Hesilrige, reported that he had received a writ commanding him to publish a bundle of proclamations. Another letter from one of Stamford's servants was also read. The county was 'in great feare and distraction', with rumours circulating that the King intended to send a thousand horse, five hundred of whom were on their way. Having put the House into the right frame of mind Hesilrige, seconded by Grey, secured an order that these reports should be discussed at the start of business on the thirtieth.[4] Hesilrige then went back over Hastings' actions on the twenty-second and reported rumours that he had now returned to Leicester as Sheriff.[5] He secured the appointment of an eight-member committee, including himself, to draft an impeachment against Hastings and others, consider the matter of the Shrievalty, and report next day.[6]

Pym repeated the manoeuvre on 1 July. Some proposed proceeding to further consideration of the Propositions, 'but Mr Pym diverted the business and said

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1. C.J., ii. 641.
2. C.J., ii. 640.
3. See A. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, 273-4.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 239a, 241a; E. 202(13), A Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament, no. 3, 27 June - 4 July 1642, 3.
5. Gawdy, Add. MS. 14,827, f. 147a.
6. C.J., iii. 645.

wee must looke to our present safeties', and produced a letter of 30 June sent from Bradgate to Stamford. Hastings had returned to Leicestershire with arms, ammunition and men and had been proclaimed Sheriff. It was reported that Hastings was planning to attack Bradgate. In the ensuing debate some 'did incline very strongly to send downe some horsemen speedily', but it was agreed that the Lords should be consulted first. The committee appointed the previous day was ordered to produce recommendations for action in the afternoon and given extra weight by the addition of Pym, Hampden and Holles. D'Ewes commented 'This was a sadd mornings worke'.[1] In the afternoon, Pym linked the crisis in Leicestershire with developments elsewhere, and concluded that 'our relygyon and lybertye ys aymed att that wee should declare to the kingdome yn what state wee stand that wee should provide for our safety'. Hesilrige joined in the debate to emphasise the irregularity of Hastings' appointment as Sheriff.[2] The Commons had been well prepared for the next day's debate of the article on the militia which turned the tide against the Peace Party.[3] The sense of crisis also allowed Pym to attack the royalists in the City: the Leicestershire committee was ordered to bring in an impeachment against the Lord Mayor, who had published the Commission of Array.[4] Hesilrige, who had attacked Gurney in February, may well have played a part in this side of the Committee's work.

The continuing crisis in Leicestershire was, however, his main concern. On 4 July the Commons heard that Hastings was marching about the county in a threatening manner, recruiting vigorously, and had made known his readiness to seize the magazine at Bradgate if it was not surrendered peacefully. He had already led forces to Leicester to demand the residue of the magazine

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 252b; Gawdy, Add. MS. 14,827, f. 147ab; C.J., ii. 646, 647.
2. Gawdy, add. MS. 14,827, f. 148a.
3. See A. Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War, 274.
4. C.J., ii. 647.

and proclaimed William Reyner and others traitors when they refused him. Stamford and his adherents in general had also been proclaimed traitors.[1] The Commons voted that officers should be sent to assist the Lord Lieutenant and his deputies to execute the militia ordinance and to secure the county and its magazine. The Lord Lieutenant and his deputies were also empowered to request help from neighbouring counties should the royalists introduce outside forces, and by another vote this power was extended to all Lord Lieutenants and their Deputies. In the afternoon, the Commons ordered Hastings' impeachment to be brought in next day and ordered the arrest of the Mayor of Leicester and Dr Lake who had collaborated with Hastings.[2]

Next day Hesilrige was one of a ten-man committee appointed to withdraw immediately to consider the legality of changing the Sheriff of Leicestershire and of declaring Stamford and others traitors, to prepare a declaration concerning this and the Sheriff's power to seize the magazine and to consider the impeachment of the Lord Mayor. It concentrated on the last that day and the Lord Mayor's impeachment was passed before the House rose.[3] Wilde's report of the Leicestershire affair on 5 July drew almost entirely on the earlier reports of Hesilrige and the Parliamentary messengers.[4] Next day the Commons passed a formal indemnity for Stamford and all who were proclaimed traitors for adhering to him and the articles of impeachment against Hastings, Halford and the others were approved and sent up to the Lords.[5]

On Friday 8 July Pym reported a declaration setting forth Parliament's grounds for raising forces. These were agreed but recommitted for six additions, two of which, concerning the change of Sheriffs and the attempt

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1. C.J., ii. 649; E. 202(15), A Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament No. 4, 4-11 July 1642; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 255b.
2. C.J., ii. 649, 651.
3. C.J., ii. 653.
4. C.J., ii. 654-5.
5. C.J., ii. 658.

to seize the magazine, related to Leicester.[1] Later the House voted that Hesilrige should draw £500 to cover the pay of the officers who were sent down to Leicester under the House's order of the fourth.[2] Major Grey was almost certainly Stamford's son Henry, but Hesilrige was probably responsible for selecting his two colleagues. The choice of Dr. Bastwicke was clearly provocative, while the third officer was a son of the notoriously radical M.P., Sir Henry Ludlow.[3]

On the morning of 11 July, the Commons voted that Hesilrige and Ruthen should be empowered to keep safe the magazine of Leicester.[4] Either alone, or at an impromptu meeting of one of the committees dealing with the crisis, Hesilrige drafted instructions for himself and Ruthen as the Commons' Committees in Leicestershire. He brought them in that afternoon and they were immediately endorsed and sent up to the Lords,[5] who agreed them with minor amendments.[6] The instructions, which were to form the model for other counties, naturally emphasised the practical tasks of securing the county and its magazine, executing the Militia Ordinance and other orders from Parliament, suppressing rival forces, and arresting delinquents, but they also stressed the committees' duty to 'clear the Proceedings of Parliament from all Imputations and Aspersions' and publicise Parliament's view of events in Leicestershire.[7]

Hesilrige and Ruthen probably left for Leicestershire next day. On the thirteenth it was Grey of Groby who reported the contents of a letter sent to Hesilrige by his servant in Leicestershire.[8] According to A Perfect Diurnall this prompted William Spurstowe to make 'an offer in the name of

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1. C.J., ii. 659.
2. C.J., ii. 660.
3. Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, ed. C.H. Firth, (2 vols., Oxf. 1894), i. 28.
4. C.J., ii. 664.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 263b; C.J., ii. 665.
6. L.J., v. 200.
7. L.J., v. 202-3.
8. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 269b.

sundry Citizens to send 300 Horse into Leicestershire'.[1] If true, this provides a precedent for Rigby's more famous proposal of 12 September to send an independent City force to the North-West,[2] which is usually regarded as foreshadowing the major efforts to create a citizen army in the late autumn of 1642 and the early summer of 1643. Hesilrige was to be closely involved in those efforts and must certainly have known Spurstowe as a fellow member of numerous Commons committees, a City radical, and a leading Adventurer for Ireland.

Hesilrige and Ruthen arrived in Leicestershire before the end of the week bringing £500 and the three captains, who set to work to recruit their companies.[3] On 18 July Hesilrige and Ruthen issued a warrant to the head constables of Hesilrige's own Gartree Hundred calling a muster at the Raw Dykes on Wednesday morning. They mentioned the 'able officers' sent by Parliament 'to teach the Souldiers the use of their armes', and emphasised that the men were to be 'trained and exercised' and that not only the trained bands but all who possessed arms should attend.[4] Similar warrants were probably sent to the other hundreds and Ruthen and Hesilrige trained 'a good part of the Trained Bands' on two days that week.[5] But they and their officers were working against time. The summer assizes at Leicester had been called for Saturday 23 July and reports reaching London on 19 and 20 July indicated that Charles I was on his way to Leicester with a large force.[6] The king reached Nottingham on the twenty-first.[7]

Hesilrige and Ruthen must have known that Charles was coming to Leicester

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1. E. 202(18), A Perfect Diurnall or the Proceedings in Parliament, 11-19 July 1642.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 163, f. 343a.
3. Hist. MS. Comm. Rep. V, Sutherland, 182; Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, ed. C.H. Firth, i. 29.
4. Bodl., Clar. MS. 21, f. 102.
5. Thomason Tracts, 669 f. 6 (57), Truths from Leicester and Nottingham (1642).
6. E. 202(23), A Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament, no. 6, 18-25 July 1642.
7. T. Manley, 'Iter Carolinum', Somers Tracts, ed. W. Scott, (13 vols., 1809-15), v. 264.

next day and that Hastings was organising forces to welcome him.[1] Their actions on the twenty-second were not, therefore, the result of sudden panic. They had at their disposal sixty or more paid soldiers hired by Hesilrige and the three captains brought from London.[2] The trained bands whom they had exercised during the week were said to have been 'resolved to have stood with them with the losse of their lives',[3] but they might have weakened had it come to actual fighting in the King's presence. No military purpose was to be served by seeking an open confrontation and sooner or later the King and his outside forces would leave the county and Hastings would send his supporters home. In political terms, avoiding military confrontation opened the way for protests by Parliament's supporters and meant that the King would have to appear as the aggressor if he wished to change the military balance in the county.

Such tactics dictated the withdrawal of Hesilrige and Ruthen, whose arrest could only have been prevented by fighting.[4] The magazine in Leicester was irreplaceable and had to be defended so Major Grey took one company, consisting of between twenty-five and sixty of the paid soldiers, into the 'little storehouse at the end of the town' where it was stored. They were well supplied and, with the door barricaded, only a full-scale assault could have dislodged them by force.[5] On the political front, a petition was prepared by the Leicestershire parliamentarians in which they lamented the King's estrangement from Parliament and protested at Hastings' protection and appointment as sheriff after his crimes of the last few weeks. They asked the King to recall the commission of array, dismiss the

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1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Hastings, II. 85.
2. Hist. MSS. Comm., Rep., v, Sutherland, 182.
3. Thomason Tracts, 669 f. 6 (57), Truths from Leicester and Nottingham.
4. Ibid.
5. Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, ed. C.H. Firth, i. 29; Clarendon, History, ii. 241-2.

'desperate persons' who wished to provoke civil war, rejoin his Parliament and leave the magazine and militia in the hands of Stamford.[1]

Hesilrige and Ruthen left their departure until dangerously late. When the King arrived, he found that his enemies had left 'upon his approach'. Hesilrige 'the Chief of them was said to bee lurking thereabouts' and the King sent out a search party under Sir John Byron.[2] Hesilrige and Ruthen escaped to the parliamentary stronghold of Northampton,[3] but Bastwick and Ludlow were captured and brought back to Leicester.[4]

The defensive tactics of the parliamentarians worked well with this exception. The King received a warm welcome but the presentation of the parliamentarian petition, alongside a royalist petition, signalled the existence of hard-core opposition in the county, and the limits to support for the King in the wider community were demonstrated over the next three days.[5] Some hot-heads urged the King to take the magazine by force but the grand jury, representing the county community as a whole, petitioned for a compromise. Moved both by fear of violence and by localism, they petitioned the King to allow the magazine to be distributed amongst the hundreds and to give its parliamentarian defenders a safe-conduct. Charles had little alternative but to agree.[6] Similarly the King wished to have Bastwick indicted for treason at the assizes, but even the Leicestershire royalists and the judge were persuaded to request his release. The King was forced to have Bastwick and Ludlow smuggled out of Leicester and sent to York early on the

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1. E. 108(20), A Petition from the Towne and County of Leicester.. (29 July 1642).
2. Hist. MSS. Comm, Rep xii, Beaufort, 10.
3. Clarendon, History, ii. 242.
4. Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, ed. C.H. Firth, i. 29.
5. Records of the Borough of Leicester iii. 1603-1688 ed. H. Stocks and W.H. Stevenson, 316; E. 202(21), A Diurnall or Particular of the Last Weekes daily Occurents 16-26 July 1642; Clarendon, History, ii. 241.
6. E. 108(20), A Petition from the Towne and County of Leicester.. (29 July 1642); Clarendon, History, ii. 241-2.

morning of his departure.[1] The King's visit was a setback for Leicestershire's parliamentarians but it produced a stalemate rather than a victory for the county's royalists.

Hesilrige and Ruthen probably waited in Northampton to see the outcome of these events and decide whether they should return to Leicestershire once the King had left. Hesilrige returned to the Commons on Thursday 4 August when he was ordered to make a report on events in Leicestershire next day.[2] The future of Leicestershire now depended on the national army, being raised under Essex, which was assembling at Northampton.

This rupture in the development of events within the Leicestershire community, which was to be accentuated by the accident of the county becoming Rupert's base in September, and by a period of peaceful obscurity once the national armies had marched away from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, makes it impossible to interpret the events of June and July 1642 in the light of later developments. The problems of interpretation raised by the nature of the evidence have already been discussed. A third complication is provided by the fact that both sides were manoeuvring in a situation short of war: they were keen to secure military advantages (notably possession of the magazine) but they were also acutely aware of the need to secure moral and political advantages. There were important elements of gesture and demonstration in their activities, while the need to seem strong was balanced by the desire to appear to be in the right.

It is, therefore, difficult to assess the strengths of royalism, parliamentarianism and neutralism. The Leicester Corporation's decision,

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1. Clarendon, History, ii. 242-4; Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, ed. Firth, i. 10.
2. C.J., ii. 703

on 6 June, to obey Stamford's warrants for a muster unless the King's proclamation against the Militia Ordinance arrived first may appear to provide an excellent example of neutralism in action. But the Mayor's royalist leanings were to become apparent in the following weeks, while a number of aldermen joined those who attended the muster of 8 June after the King's proclamation had arrived. Without evidence of the internal politics of the corporation, it is impossible to judge the extent to which the decision was the outcome of the inability of either partisan faction to command a majority, and the extent to which it represented a neutralist consensus on the best interests of the town. On a wider scale the significance of the unarmed muster on the eighth is unclear. It is likely that some of those who attended were strong supporters of Parliament, unwilling to initiate fighting in the face of Hastings' threats, some welcomed the excuse to obey both Parliament and King, and others were simply spectators.

The subsequent success of the musters called in individual hundreds by Parliament's representatives depends on their report, but, assuming the truth of their account, it may reflect genuine support or the willingness of men to accept apparently authoritative orders in the absence of contrary orders outside the home villages of leading royalists. If the claims that the musters were also well attended by armed volunteers are believed, however, this would certainly demonstrate the existence of committed elements.

The meeting on the Horse Fair Leas on 18 June which drew up a parliamentarian petition was attended, according to the printed version, by the 'Knights, Ministers, Gentry, Free-holders, and many thousands of the Inhabitants of the County of Leicester.' The pamphlet itself makes no claims as to the attendance of the freeholders and those above them,

and makes no distinction between attendance and support for the petition. The inclusion of 'many thousands of the Inhabitants' could be regarded as an attempt to introduce quantity as a partial substitute for quality. On the other hand it could indicate a genuine popular dimension to support for Parliament. The uncompromising tone of the petition suggests an attempt to rally a body of committed support rather than an effort to win over the uncommitted. Given that the pamphlet was not likely to remain unknown in Leicestershire, both this tone and the claims regarding attendance, if untrue, would have weakened the parliamentary cause had there not been a substantial body of committed support in the county.

The events of 22 June, which saw the parliamentary representatives on the one hand and Hastings and his associates on the other withdraw from Leicester at critical points, suggest that both were anxious to avoid an outright confrontation. It is, however, unclear how far their caution was dictated by uncertainty regarding the support they could expect if it came to a fight and how far by the political need to place their opponents in the wrong as aggressors. In the latter case, the balance between county and national considerations is unclear. What is, perhaps, impressive is that there were Leicestershire parliamentarians willing and able, in the absence of their principals, to mount effective counter-demonstrations in the face of superior armed force.

The decisions by both sides to introduce outside forces are open to differing interpretations. They could be seen as symptoms of a lack of confidence, on both sides, in the willingness of their Leicestershire partisans to fight. Alternatively small forces of trained, paid soldiers would provide an indispensable core for larger amateur groups should it come to fighting but would not be sufficient in themselves. Unlike local

forces they could be kept together as a guarantee against surprise and as a sign of strength to encourage supporters and impress waverers. On the parliamentary side the sending of outside forces was also, it should be added, a defensive counter to Hastings' introduction of such forces.

It has been argued above that the parliamentarians' tactics and resilience were vindicated by the outcome of the King's visit on 22 July. Placed at a military and political disadvantage they kept the King from seizing the county's magazine. The grand jury's successful localist compromise solution to the problem of the magazine, and the general request to the King to release Bastwick, certainly suggest some lukewarmness amongst his supporters. But parliament's supporters, having made their gesture of defiance by presenting their own petition to the King, were in a very different position. Since they could not fight, with any reasonable prospect of success, the logical alternative was to work on the localism and fear of war amongst their neutral and moderate royalist neighbours. Certainly the King's visit revealed these latter tendencies, but the circumstances obscured their relative strengths and the contribution of parliamentarians pursuing a politic course.

The development of political and military groupings within the Leicestershire community during June and July 1642 was indecisive, in large part because neither side wished to force a confrontation at this stage. Further development of the forces inherent in the Leicestershire community itself was aborted by the intervention of national forces drawn to the county and its neighbours by their national strategic significance. This discontinuity stands in the way of any attempt to deduce an individual's stance in 1642 from his record in later years, or the balance of forces at that time from the balance in 1643.

Some conclusions are, however, possible. The old Hastings establishment, Huntingdon's associates in the controversies of the 1630s, provided the core of Leicestershire royalism. On the other side the success of Hesilrige and his allies in 1640 had been shown to be neither ephemeral nor fragile: after two years of a parliament which had seen national opposition fragment and the popularity of the opposition leadership decline, they were, at least, able to hold their ground in the face of those who had appeared to be the county's natural rulers in the 1630s and before. Despite the limitations of the evidence, it can be said that, whatever its dimensions, there was a body of committed parliamentarians in the county, extending beyond the gentry, who could function effectively in the absence of Stamford, Hesilrige and Ruthen. Within the political and military constraints upon them, Hesilrige and his colleagues were as successful as they could have been in the circumstances. For Hesilrige there were two clear lessons. The struggle in Leicestershire could not be won within the county's borders: its outcome would depend upon the wider conflict. Secondly he had seen a demonstration of the dynamic potential of combining command in the field with the pursuit of political goals at Westminster. These lessons were to guide his subsequent actions.

(iii) A Captain of Horse under Essex: August to December 1642

Hesilrige played comparatively little part in the affairs of the House of Commons during August. On the fourth he was named to the eight-man committee to examine any information offered to them concerning the defence of the Kingdom and report it to the House.[1] On the ninth he and his fellow radicals Peard, Rigby and Mildmay were appointed to draft

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1. C.J., ii. 703.

a declaration concerning the raising of money and forces for the King. Their appointment reflected the strength of those who were now committed to war and the declaration, issued on the eighteenth, defined all who helped the King in this way as traitors.[1] On 13 August the Commons resolved to increase the charge against Henry Hastings to one of high treason.[2]

On 23 August Hesilrige was one of six named members who, together with the House's lawyers, were to consider the King's changing sheriffs and justices of the peace and report their opinions.[3] Hesilrige was clearly appointed because of his experience of the problem in Leicestershire, and this was probably the subject of an order which he was directed to prepare.[4] An order instructing the sheriffs of Leicestershire and three other counties to continue in their places was agreed on 30 August.[5] On the twenty-seventh he was one of four members appointed to consider a Lords order dealing with those who plundered houses on their own initiative.[6]

Hesilrige's energies were largely absorbed in preparations for war. He was included in a list of fifty-nine captains of horse published on 19 August,[7] and his troop was complete by 30 August when he received an advance payment for himself, his officers and his men.[8]

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1. C.J., ii. 711; L.J., i. 303.
2. C.J., ii. 718.
3. C.J., ii. 734.
4. C.J., ii. 734 (the subject of the order is left blank).
5. C.J., ii. 744.
6. C.J., ii. 740.
7. E. 112(33), A True and Exact Relation of all the Proceedings of Marquesse Hartford ... Also a list of the Horse ... (19 August 1642).
8. P.R.O., S.P. 28/143, f. 16.

Hesilrige is described as 'having raised a Troop according to the Propo/sitions/',[1] and this may indicate that he recruited at least some of his own men. His cornet was Thomas Horton,[2] his 'servant' in Leicestershire, and there may have been other recruits from the county.

Hesilrige's troop, whose colours depicted an anchor with the words 'only in God',[3] was attended by a minister, William Morton.[4] He had been the unofficial lecturer in Newcastle between 1634 and 1639, and was an intimate of John Blakiston and George Fenwick's brother-in-law Thomas Ledgard.[5] He had lived in Leicester before taking up this position; he had hoped to obtain a benefice there in 1634, and his relatives and correspondents there included Alderman William Stanley.[6] His attachment to Hesilrige's troop can hardly have been accidental.

Hesilrige's recruiting and other preparations must have been spurred on by the news from Leicestershire in the second half of August. The King made another visit to Leicester on 18 August[7] and left the main body of royalist cavalry there, under the command of Prince Rupert, when he went on to Nottingham.[8] Parliament was informed of this and their attacks on local parliamentarians on 30 August. Stamford was directed to march to Northampton, there to rendezvous with Brooke, Hampden, Goodwyn and others for an advance into Leicestershire.[9]

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1. C.J., ii. 748.
2. The Army Lists of the Roundheads and Cavaliers, ed. E. Peacock (1874), 53.
3. Bodl., Rawl. MS. D942, f. 19b.
4. Peacock, Army Lists, 64n.
5. Howell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Puritan Revolution, 89, 92-3, 103, 140; J.C. Hodgson, A History of Northumberland, vii. 473.
6. P.R.O., S.P. 16/540/446, nos. 5-7, 15, 16, 25, 27.
7. Records of the Borough of Leicestershire iii 1603-88, ed. H. Stocks and W.H. Stevenson, 317.
8. Clarendon, History, ii. 289n.
9. E. 116(8), A Continuation of Certain Speciall and Remarkable passages ... No. 5, 30 August - 6 September 1642.

On 1 September, Hesilrige received the Commons' permission to be absent in order to take charge of his troop.[1] They reached Northampton on the third.[2] The situation there was not a happy one. In a letter of the fifth or sixth Hesilrige, Hampden and four others informed Essex that 'the Souldiers are growne so outrageous that they Plunder every place' and that this was alienating the local people. They were doing all that they could to combat this by sending out squadrons of horse 'who doe theire duty very well', but they needed the power to inflict exemplary punishment under martial law. They also begged Essex 'to put these unruly Souldiers upon present action'.[3]

Matters grew worse on the seventh. When the London regiments were drawn out for exercise in the morning they threatened to lay down their arms unless they were paid the five shillings a month addition to their pay which they had been promised by the London Militia Committee, and Hampden and his colleagues were unable to appease them.[4] The officers had some sympathy for the demand itself, in view of the price of victuals, but they were 'perplexed wth the insolencies of the Souldiers already comitted & wth the apprehension of greater if they be not prevented forthwith'. Fearing to commit details of the disorders to paper, they sent Hesilrige to give Essex a full account and reinforce their insistence on the need for his presence.[5]

Hesilrige's mission was successful and Essex marched out of

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1. C.J., ii. 748.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1641-3, 385.
3. Bodl., Tanner MS. 63, f. 153.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1641-3, 365-6.
5. Bodl., Tanner MS. 63, f. 153

London on the ninth, arriving at Northampton next day.[1] The general expectation and hope in the army, during the next week, was that Essex would lead them into Leicestershire.[2] But the King left Nottingham for the West on 13 September and six days later Essex's army followed suit,[3] incidentally separating Hesilrige's national military career from the war in his own county.

It is impossible to trace Hesilrige's individual rôle in the march to Worcester and back in pursuit of the King's army. As an M.P. he was a member of the committee with the army and as such signed a letter to the Houses from Worcester on 12 October.[4] It is, however, impossible to say how active or influential he was in this capacity.

He reappears in accounts of the battle of Edgehill on 23 October. Holles speaks of Hesilrige, 'having the good Fortune to be in a gallant Regiment, under Sir William Balfore, at Kenton-Field, and so not to run away'.[5] Holles' insinuation that Hesilrige was generally a coward can be dismissed, but he was certainly lucky not to be on the left wing or in Fielding's regiment of parliamentary horse which were broken at the start of the battle. As the whole of the royalist cavalry pursued them, a few troops led by Balfour and Stapleton were the only cavalry left on the battlefield. They kept themselves inconspicuous on the edges of the battlefield and went unnoticed by the royalist foot or were taken for the royalist reserve. When the royalist foot advanced on Essex and his foot, Balfour allowed them to get within a pistol

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1. S.R. Gardiner, History of the Great Civil War 1642 - 1649 (4 vols., London and NY, 1893), i. 20, 21.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1641-3, 388
3. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 23. 29.
4. Hist. MSS. Comm., Portland, 1. 64.
5. Memoirs of Denzil Holles 1641 - 1648 (London 1699), 12.

shot and then crashed into their flank. The shock of their attack allowed them to break two royalist regiments and reach the royalist guns, although they were unable to spike them for lack of nails.[1] Hesilrige's was one of five names which reached Richard Baxter on the day of the battle as being principally responsible for Parliament's 'victory'[2] and he is named in many subsequent reports.[3] Lord Wharton, in his speech to the City on 27 October, went further, saying that Hesilrige 'was a helpe to give a great turne to the day, by cutting off a Regiment of the King's which was called the blew Regiment'.[4] Hesilrige was among the minority of parliamentarian commanders to participate in successful action during the battle and, while Wharton clearly over-stated his individual rôle, such exaggeration did his reputation no harm.

The dogged resistance of the Parliamentarian foot and Balfour's charge had saved the day but they had insufficient strength to secure a decisive victory, especially as the royalist horse returned. The battle came to a halt as darkness fell, leaving both sides to claim victory. The two armies continued to confront each other on 24 October but the battle was not renewed. Next day Essex drew off to Warwick and allowed the King to march South, entering Oxford on

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1. Clarendon, History, ii. 352n; A Collection of Original Letters and Papers, concerning the Affairs of England, From the Year 1641 to 1660. Found among the Duke of Ormond's Papers, ed. T. Carte, (1739), i. 10-11; Gardiner, Civil War, i. 47-8.
2. Reliquiae Baxterianae, ed. M. Sylvester, (1696), 43.
3. e.g. E. 126(1), Speciall Passages no. 12, 25 Oct. - 1 Nov. 1642; E. 124(33) Speciall Newes from the Army at Warwick since the Fight (29 Oct. 1642); Nathaniel Fiennes, A Most True and Exact Relation.
4. E. 127(27), The Two Speeches of the Lord Wharton spoken in Guild-hall Octob. 27 1642 ... (1642).

the twenty-ninth.[1]

While Essex's army recuperated at Warwick and then marched slowly southward, the royalists pushed eastward along the Thames towards London. By Monday 7 November, when Essex's army returned to the capital, the fears of Parliament and the City had produced two parallel developments: on the one hand energetic efforts to renew negotiations with the King, and on the other a drive to recruit large numbers of soldiers in London.[2] Hesilrige was in his seat in the Commons on the morning of the seventh[3] and probably returned shortly before the main body of the army.

On 22 October Parliament, worried by the King's progress towards London, had made Warwick Captain General of a second Army to be raised in London and the Eastern counties.[4] On 7 November Hesilrige was one of nine members appointed to inform Warwick that the apprentices were in the fields waiting to be enlisted and to ask him to take command.[5] Warwick went to the fields accompanied by members of both Houses, amongst whom Hesilrige alone was singled out for special mention in at least two accounts.[6] This may have been due to his prominence at Edgehill but he may also have been an active supporter of the new army after his experience of Essex's cautious methods.

On 5 November Warwick had asked the London Militia Committee for

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1. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 49-51.
2. Ibid., 52-54.
3. C.J., ii. 838.
4. L.J., v. 415.
5. C.J., ii. 838.
6. E. 242(10), A Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament 7-14 Nov. 1642 (for Cook and Wood); John Vicars, Jehovah-Jireh, (1644), 213.

4,000 horses to turn his foot from Essex into dragoons.[1] In doing so he launched the idea of a 'running army', which was to be taken up with enthusiasm by radical associates of Hesilrige like Henry Marten and Richard Shute, who combined it with fervent opposition to negotiations with the King.[2] Unfortunately for Warwick, the idea became separated from support for his command. On Wednesday 9 November the City member Captain Long proposed the formation of a body of horse to act as a 'flying army' independent of both Warwick and Essex.[3] Hesilrige was one of twenty M.P.s appointed to consider how this force might be raised.[4]

On 15 November the City offered to raise 1,000 light horse and 3,000 dragoons, who were to be commanded by Philip Skippon as General with Urrey under him. They were 'not to be contradicted by any but by the E of Essex wth the Assent of both ho:^{s} of Parliam^{t}.'. The offer was accepted by both Houses but next day Vassall reported that the City was discouraged by Essex's unwillingness to sign the necessary commission. It required the diplomatic efforts of four members, including Pym and Vassall, to reconcile the two sides by the end of the day.[5] Next day Essex outmanoeuvred his critics by securing the Common Council's agreement that Skippon should become his Major-General, or commander of his foot.[6]

Warwick continued to act as though his independent army would remain in

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1. E. 242(12), England's Memorable Accidents, 7-14 November, 1642.
2. C.M. Williams, The Political Career of Henry Marten, with Special Reference to the Origins of Republicanism in the Long Parliament, (D. Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1954), 87-88.
3. E. 242(11), A Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament 7-14 Nov. 1642 (by Cook's former writer).
4. C.J., ii. 841.
5. Lawrence Whitacre's Journal, Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 31, 116, ff. 9b, 10a.
6. E. 242(19), England's Memorable Accidents, 14-21 Nov. 1642.

being: on 19 November he issued, as Captain General, the 'Laws and Ordinances of Warre' which were to apply to his army.[1] But the manoeuvres of both Essex and his radical critics had rendered Warwick's position marginal, and on 22 November he resigned his commission.[2] At the price of some concessions to the City, Essex had secured his position as commander-in-chief, which had been threatened both by Warwick's possession of an independent commission and by the radicals' proposal for another independent 'running army'. Hesilrige was to be a central figure in the much more serious struggle which arose when these projects were revived in the summer of 1643.

On 21 and 22 November Hesilrige was one of the radicals who fought proposals to revive the peace negotiations broken off after Brentford. On the twenty-first he joined Strode, the younger Vane and Marten in speaking against the sending of propositions. He argued that this would be seen as a sign of weakness by a King who 'spoak nothing but of victory'. But Pym's silence isolated the radicals and the House agreed to continue the debate next day.[3] When debate resumed, Marten shocked the House by suggesting that they should 'let the King know that if hee would returne wee would settle the crowne upon his head'. The Speaker's intervention to demand an explanation allowed him to make the Speaker's right to do this the issue, and he received strong support from Mildmay, Hesilrige and one or two others. This did not mean that they endorsed his original remark - Mildmay had been the second member to challenge it - but that Marten was an ally who had to be rescued.

The effort succeeded and the House eventually accepted Marten's rather

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1. E. 127(31), Laws and Ordinances of Warre Established .. by His Excellency the Earl of Warwick... (1642).
2. L.J., v. 454.
3. J.H. Hexter, The Reign of King Pym, (Harvard, 1941), 51; Walter Yonge's Journal, Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 18,777, f. 64b.

strained explanation.[1]

Hesilrige's best course was to return to the practical business of fighting an aggressive war. He had been recruiting his troop under a warrant from Essex and the Commons gave him seven horses brought in under the Propositions on 21 November and a total of five confiscated horses on the twenty-third.[2] By then he was ready to return to the army. Hesilrige was ordered to

> Move the Lord General from this House, not to omit any opportunity of Advantage, in disposing of his Army for the Preservation of the Kingdom, and keeping the People from being plundered and particularly to have a Care of Farnham Castle.[3]

This demand for more vigorous action to defend the South-East matched Hesilrige's own views.

Sir William Waller stormed Farnham Castle on 26 November. On his return to the Lord General's camp he was given command of four incomplete regiments of horse and two of dragoons. The dragoons were to be commanded by John Middleton and the Londoner Richard Browne. The three regiments of horse, in addition to Waller's own, were to be commanded by Urrey, Arthur Goodwin and Hesilrige.[4] This force represented the remains of the 'running army' scheme. Its composition, its purpose of pursuing royalist forces in the South, and the presence of Urrey, who was to have commanded the 'running army' under Skippon, all serve to show this, and Robert Baillie's informants in London certainly saw it in this light.[5] Waller and Hesilrige thus carried, from the start of their association, some of the hopes of Essex's radical critics.

Hesilrige was not with Waller's force when it took Winchester on

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 106a, 108b.
2. C.J., ii. 857, 860, 861.
3. C.J., ii. 860.
4. John Adair, Roundhead General, (1969), 50.
5. Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie (3 vols, Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1841) II. 56-7.

13 December, perhaps requiring more time to complete the two or three troops of which his regiment was composed.[1] He had, however, joined Waller by the time he began the siege of Chichester on 20 December.[2] He was to stay with Waller, in command of a variety of forces, until the autumn of 1644.

Hesilrige, unlike many of his colleagues, had decided to continue to fight the war in the field, as well as in the Commons. Although named to the committee of the new association in the Midlands on 15 December, he preferred to fight with a field army.[3] There is no reason to suppose that he disliked the association or Grey of Groby who succeeded his father as the inevitable aristocratic commander, indeed he may have joined Brooke in promoting the idea.[4] Service with Waller offered more chance of participation in decisive battles and a better chance of maintaining some presence in the Commons. By joining Waller, Hesilrige linked himself to one of Parliament's few aggressive and successful commanders in the winter of 1642-3, and one whose radical support complemented Hesilrige's own links with the radicals in Parliament and the City.

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1. John Adair, Roundhead General, 50-51; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 20a.
2. E. 84(22), A True Relation of the Fortunate S. William Waller (Jan. 1642/3).
3. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, eds., Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum 1642 - 1660 (3 vols., 1911), i. 48.
4. J.F. Hollings, The History of Leicester during the Great Civil War (Leicester, 1840), 24.

Chapter 4. Hesilrige and Waller: January - July 1643

During the first half of 1643 Hesilrige became identified with the army of Sir William Waller. His participation in the dangers, victories and defeats of its campaigns in the West created a bond which lasted until 1645. He became a soldier politician and a political soldier, devoting much of his political energy to promoting the reputation of that army and fighting to secure resources for it. As a result he was actively involved in the developing feud between Waller and Essex which was to come to occupy a central place in parliamentary politics, alongside existing ideological divisions.

(i) Waller's General of Horse: Spring 1643

Hesilrige was with Waller when he reached Chichester on 20 December 1642. As an M.P. he shared the credit with Waller and Arthur Goodwin, when the town surrendered a week later.[1] Waller, Hesilrige and the local M.P. William Cawley wrote that their 'greate Care and desire,' was then, 'to p'serve the Cyttie of Chichester from vtter ruine,' and claimed to have prevented plundering.[2] But the Cathedral suffered considerable damage and loss on 28 December and 3 January, as the soldiers ran riot and Waller and his officers were unable to restrain them.[3] These incidents reflected the religious enthusiasm of Waller's army, but they were also a product of the indiscipline resulting from the commanders' inability to fulfil their promise of a donative, or bonus, of a month's pay. Fines levied on local royalists, and nine hundred pounds worth of plate captured in the town, were distributed to the soldiers but this was

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1. E. 84(22), A True Relation of the Fortunate S. William Waller (Jan. 1642/3); E. 244(32), A Perfect Diurnall, no. 29, 26 Dec. - 2 Jan. 1641/2.
2. Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, ed. J. Webb, (Camd. Soc., 2nd. ser., vii., 1873), App. ii., 202-3.
3. B. Ryves, Mercurius Rusticus (1685), 239-41.

not enough. Waller, Hesilrige and Cawley wrote to the Speaker on 6 January explaining their problems and requesting permission to send for a thousand pounds worth of plate which had earlier been lent on the Propositions and sent to Portsmouth. They subsequently did this, and a further £950 was eventually distributed.[1]

Meanwhile Hesilrige led a party to the Chapter House on 8 or 9 January to break down the panelling behind which the bulk of the cathedral plate was hidden. As the work progressed, a Royalist writer alleged,

> 'Sir Arthur's Tongue was not enough to express his joy, it was operative at his very heels, for dancing and skipping .. he cryed out <u>there Boys, there Boys, heark, heark, it Rattles, it Rattles.</u>'[2]

The writer no doubt exaggerates, but Hesilrige's joy must have been real enough given the commanders' desperate need for money. If this story is sometimes used to indicate Hesilrige's personal greed, his ruthlessness is often illustrated by his suggestion, in 1648, that royalist prisoners should be sent to the colonies.[3] A reference in the letter of 6 January to some captured royalists as 'men that Can'ot but doe mischiefe & only fitt for a pla'tac'on',[4] shows that the idea was neither new in 1648 nor peculiar to Hesilrige.

He and Waller were back in Westminster by 16 January when they were thanked by the House.[5] Hesilrige's main concern was now to prepare for renewed campaigning. On the nineteenth the Committee of Safety authorised payment for ten sets of half armour which had been delivered to him.[6] On 30 January the Commons ordered that whenever the Speaker was informed of a

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1. <u>Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch</u>, ed. J. Webb, App. ii., 202; <u>Cal. S.P. Dom. 1645-7</u>, 447.
2. B. Ryves, <u>Mercurius Rusticus</u>, 242-3.
3. <u>Hist. MSS. Comm., Rep. xiii., Portland</u>, i. 476-7; G. Bate, <u>Elenchi Motuum Nuperorum in Anglia</u>, Pt. ii. (1662), 187.
4. <u>Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch</u>, ed. J. Webb, App. ii., 203.
5. <u>C.J.</u>, ii. 929.
6. P.R.O., S.P. 28/263, f. 67a.

horse belonging to anyone in arms against Parliament, he should give Hesilrige a warrant to seize it.[1] This valuable privilege did not prevent Hesilrige from receiving other horses seized from individual delinquents, under votes of 4 and 11 February.[2]

Essex commissioned Waller as Major General of the newly associated counties of Worcestershire, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Shropshire on 11 February.[3] Waller, who must have been impressed both by his conduct at Chichester and by his ability to use his private wealth and his political influence to assemble resources, chose Hesilrige to be his general of horse. The Committee of Accounts accepted, in 1646, Hesilrige's claim to have been appointed on 1 February,[4] and this probably reflects the fact that he was hard at work before the formal commission was granted.

The task for Waller and Hesilrige was to fill the gap in Gloucestershire and the neighbouring counties created by the removal of Stamford's army to the South-West. Hertford had already marched his Welsh regiments through this gap to Oxford and the royalists' capture of Cirencester on 2 February had given them control of most of Gloucestershire.[5] The remaining parliamentary garrison at Gloucester was also threatened by Lord Herbert's new Welsh army across the Severn.[6] The arguments for prompt action were reinforced by political developments at Westminster. Parliament was again moving in the direction of negotiations and on 7 February the Lords voted to seek a cessation of arms.[7] When they sought a conference to discuss this Hesilrige opposed their request and 'shewed that the howse of Commons had abilitie

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1. C.J., ii. 949.
2. C.J., ii. 957, 963.
3. J. Adair, Roundhead General, 54.
4. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252i, f. 261a.
5. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 85-6.
6. Clarendon, History, ii. 482.
7. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 90.

enough to consult amongst themselves and not to receive direction by the Votes of the Lords'. After a division, however, the Commons voted in favour of a conference.[1] Parliamentarians in general wanted to improve the position in Gloucestershire before any cease-fire came into effect, in order to strengthen Parliament's hand in negotiations. For radicals like Hesilrige solid military success would provide a stronger argument for continuing the war than mere debating points at Westminster.

Unfortunately Waller and Hesilrige were unable to march immediately. In a pattern which was to be repeated many times during the next two years, they were held back by a lack of men, money and supplies, while inadequate information raised wildly unrealistic hopes of their progress. Thus on 16 February many M.P.s thought that Waller had already marched for Gloucestershire until colleagues reported that they had seen him in the Court of Requests that morning.[2] Special Passages for 14 - 21 February reported that Waller had at last marched,[3] and both versions of A Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament for the following week[4] joined a special pamphlet in celebrating 'A Famous Victorie obtained Against the Cavaliers in the County of Gloucester by Sir William Waller on Munday last at a town called Padsworth'. The true position was revealed on 24 February when a Gloucestershire member reported that Waller was still at Guildford. He had only 400 dragoons, as against a notional 1500, and his five troops of horse were seriously under strength, while his artillery was stuck at Kingston-upon-Thames because he could not pay for its transport to Guildford. The Commons decided to ask the Lord General to help Waller but this was an empty gesture, since Essex

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164 f. 291b; C.J., ii. 959.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f. 298b.
3. E. 90(12), Special Passages 14-21 Feb. 1642/3.
4. E. 246(29), (30).

himself was in grave difficulties. Even the afternoon's report that the royalists had advanced from Gloucestershire into Wiltshire, forcing Sir Edward Hungerford to evacuate Devizes, failed to stir the Commons into effective action.[1]

Hesilrige may well have been with Waller at Guildford as one newspaper report suggested.[2] There is no record of his presence in the Commons between 8 February and his return from Gloucestershire in April, and it is unlikely that he would have remained silent during this crisis for Waller's army and the continued disputes over peace negotiations. Waller finally succeeded in assembling a reasonable body of horse and dragoons and marched west at the end of February, reaching Winchester on 3 March. Hesilrige was left to follow when he had completed the second regiment of horse.[3] The work was presumably well-advanced. As on later occasions, he probably recruited most of his men in London, and this may have helped to fuel rumours that radical M.P.s were plotting a coup against the Peace Lords.[4]

Hesilrige joined Waller between Salisbury and Shaftesbury, and together they entered Bristol on 15 March.[5] Their arrival confirmed parliamentary control of Bristol, already strengthened by Nathaniel Fiennes' determined action against the city's royalists and Rupert's consequent abandonment of plans to attack it.[6] Their first priority was to secure Gloucester and start reversing recent royalist gains in the county. In addition to their own horse and dragoons, they now had the Wiltshire forces commanded by Sir Edward Hungerford and some foot borrowed from the Bristol garrison.[7]

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, ff. 305b, 306ab.
2. E. 246(25), A Continuation of Certain Speciall and Remarkable Passages, 33, 16-23 Feb. 1642/3.
3. J. Adair, Roundhead General, 55, 56.
4. Cal. S.P. Ven. 1642-3, 251.
5. J. Adair, Roundhead General, 56-8; E. 92(25), Mercurius Aulicus, 11th week, p. 130.
6. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 99.
7. J. Adair, Roundhead General, 59.

On 19 March they advanced to Chelston with three or four thousand horse and dragoons and two thousand foot and they arrived before Malmesbury on the morning of the twenty-first.[1] After a day's fighting, during which Hesilrige chased off some troops of enemy horse which appeared near the town, the defenders surrendered in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Waller entered the town at seven or eight on the morning of the twenty-second.[2]

Waller and Hesilrige rested in Malmesbury for a day but, as they wrote to Parliament, 'It was not for us to have stood long there, nor for your service, for us to Garrison Townes, unlesse it is intended wee shall leave the Field'.[3] They left Sir Edward Hungerford in command at Malmesbury with some four hundred men, and arms for another two hundred to be recruited locally. That night, or on Thursday morning, they marched to Tetbury, five miles to the North-West.[4] Hungerford had to deal with some three hundred prisoners[5] as well as defend the town with forces he considered inadequate. He detached part of his force to convoy the prisoners to Bath, and followed Waller to Tetbury to explain the dangers of the situation. These had increased by the time he arrived, since Waller had now decided to surprise the Welsh forces across the Severn from Gloucester rather than make the more obvious advance on Cirencester. This plan left the royalists at Cirencester free to attack Malmesbury. Having failed to convince Waller, Hungerford went to Bath to gather reinforcements. In his absence a royalist force secured the surrender of the depleted Malmesbury garrison on 24 March. Hungerford

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1. Journal of Sir Samuel Luke, ed. I.G. Phillip, (3 vols., Oxon Rec. Soc., 1947-53), i. 42.
2. Ibid.; E. 94(12), A Letter from Sir William Waller to the Earl of Essex of a Great Victory he obtained at Malmesbury (1643).
3. E. 97(2), The Victorious and Fortunate Proceedings of Sir William Waller and his Forces in Wales, and other places since they left Malmesbury (1642).
4. Ibid.; Journal of Sir Samuel Luke, i. 43, 48, 50.
5. E. 94(12), A Letter from Sir William Waller to the Earl of Essex of a Great Victory he obtained at Malmesbury.

blamed both Waller - a charge which he and Hesilrige angrily rebutted - and the garrison.[1]

By this time Waller was carrying out his plan to surprise the Welsh. At Tetbury he had received news of fresh Welsh pressure on Gloucester.[2] Waller sent a message to Gloucester to have pontoons floated down to Frampton and to arrange a diversionary attack on the Welsh. He crossed the Severn that night. He had hoped to attack the Welsh at Highnam House on Friday but the terrain slowed his army and it was not until the afternoon of 25 March that he arrived at Highnam, where the Welsh had been fighting the Gloucester forces since the morning of the previous day. The surprise was so complete that the Welsh at first mistook his army for royalist reinforcements. After inconclusive negotiations, Waller stormed the house and secured the unconditional surrender of the defenders. He had captured more than fourteen hundred soldiers and one hundred and fifty officers. Clarendon might write of 'that mushrump-army', destroyed almost before Oxford was aware of its existence, but it could have played a significant rôle had it survived and even Clarendon had to regret the loss of the £60,000 spent in raising it.[3]

When the royalists left Tewkesbury on the thirty-first to join Rupert in his march North from Cirencester to Birmingham, Waller was free to pursue his victory in Wales. Between 4 and 8 April he occupied a series of towns in Monmouthshire and encountered little resistance. Unfortunately, as Waller and Hesilrige had recognised when they left Malmesbury, the task of their army was to seek out and destroy royalist forces rather than establish

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1. E. 100(30), Sir Edward Hungerford's Vindication for the surrendering of Malmesbury (1643); E. 97(2), The Victorious and Fortunate Proceedings of Sir William Waller ...; Journal of Sir Samuel Luke, i. 48.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., i. 50-54; E. 97(2), The Victorious and Fortunate Proceedings of Sir William Waller ... ; Clarendon, History, ii. 483-4.

garrisons. Their advance was made easy because Lord Herbert had withdrawn his garrisons to form a new field army. The only prospect of permanent success lay in the hope that the presence of Waller's army would encourage a rising by Parliament's local supporters. Waller had undertaken the expedition on the basis of promises from Monmouthshire gentlemen, but it soon became clear that support for Parliament was limited by the Earl of Worcester's influence in the area, and that the well-affected would not declare themselves unless a parliamentarian stronghold was established.[1]

By 10 April it was obvious that Waller (whom Hesilrige had rejoined after a trip to Bristol to collect ammunition) had marched into a trap. Now at Chepstow, he faced Herbert's regrouped forces to the West and a new threat to the North, cutting him off from his base at Gloucester. While Waller's army had been tramping through Monmouthshire, Prince Maurice had entered Tewkesbury and advanced to occupy Little Dean, Newnham, Mitcheldean and Rosse.[2] The terrain made an attack on Herbert's forces too dangerous, so Waller and Hesilrige 'resolved for Gloucester through Prince Maurices Army'. Having sent their ordnance, baggage and foot across the Severn to Aust, they assembled their horse on the night of 10 April. Their night march through the Forest of Dean took longer than expected, and 'the right time for beating up a quarter was past, before we gained Newnham'. Deprived of the advantage of surprise, they could not prevent the garrison from falling back to join Maurice at Little Dean. They followed them and found Maurice's foot drawn up in front of the town, his horse on a hill on the other side. The royalist

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1. E. 97(2), The Victorious and Fortunate Proceedings of Sir William Waller...; John Corbet, An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester (1645), 31; Journal of Sir Samuel Luke, i. 58, 60.
2. E. 247(25), A Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament 10-17 Apr. 1643; E. 97(2), The Victorious and Fortunate Proceedings of Sir William Waller ... ; J. Corbet, An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester, 32.

foot retreated after firing a single volley and allowed the parliamentarian dragoons to take the town. Waller and Hesilrige 'stood about three houres expecting their charge, the report being they had vow'd wee should never returne'.[1] But without the foot Maurice could not risk a charge down 'a steep plain hill of above twelve score yards in length: as good a Mark as they could wish'.[2] He was forced to watch while Waller and Hesilrige marched off towards Gloucester.[3]

Waller and Hesilrige decided to turn the tables on Maurice and sent Massey to take Maurice's base at Tewkesbury. Before setting out to join him, Waller and Hesilrige concluded their letter to the Houses with an assessment of their situation:

> The taking and keeping Tewkesbury is of great consequence to these parts, Prince Maurices designe of taking us in the Forrest is now spoyled; And so have we the Bridge he passed over, but he makes hast, wee feare he will find another before wee can give a stop, if not wee hope he may taste a little of Wales as well as we have done.[4]

Reaching Tewkesbury on the evening of 12 April they found their fears confirmed: Maurice had succeeded in taking the crossing at Upton on Severn.

Waller and Hesilrige had gambled on having the tactical advantage of defending a river crossing. Having lost it, they still advanced to Ripple Field next morning. On reaching the field it became apparent that they faced an enemy three to four times their size, with ineffective guns and very few foot. They had no alternative but to attempt a dangerous retreat along a narrow, two mile long lane. As they did so, the dragoons and

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1. E. 97(2), The Victorious and Fortunate Proceedings of Sir William Waller ...
2. 'The Vindication of Richard Atkyns' in P. Young and N. Tucker, ed., Military Memoirs: The Civil War (1967), 9.
3. E. 97(2), The Victorious and Fortunate Proceedings of Sir William Waller ...
4. Ibid.

musketeers left to hold the entrance broke at the first royalist charge.

While Massey sent to Tewkesbury for reinforcements

> Sir Arthur Hazelrigg prevailed with his owne Troope to charge, and in his owne person performed gallantly; the Foot with those Horse put the Enemy to a stand, and in part tooke off the foulnesse of the retreat through that straite passage.

Hesilrige's stand prevented a total rout,[1] and the royalists were unable to recapture Tewkesbury, but Mercurius Aulicus had some grounds for claiming a victory.[2]

On the day of Ripple Field, Essex finally advanced from Windsor and, two days later, laid siege to Reading. Faced with this major threat, the King recalled his forces from Gloucestershire.[3] Their withdrawal created both chances and problems for Waller and Hesilrige. On the positive side, they had the chance to extend and consolidate their gains in the Severn valley without facing serious opposition. Given the importance of reputation in securing parliamentary support, they were fortunate that Maurice withdrew while Waller's standing as a lucky and successful general was still intact in spite of the risks and misjudgements of the preceding weeks. On the other hand the departure of Maurice's army was bound to lead to pressure from Essex for Waller to end his independent campaign and join him at Reading.

Waller's army needed an effective representative at Westminster who could recruit men and secure Commons' support. Hesilrige was the obvious choice and could also link Waller's needs, and his desire to stay in the West, to the growing criticism of Essex amongst radicals in Parliament and the City. He left Waller soon after Ripple Field and made his way to London

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1. J. Corbet, An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester, 32-4; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 44b.
2. E. 100(18), Mercurius Aulicus, 16th Week, 16-22 Apr. 1643.
3. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 128; J. Corbet, An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester, 35.

with a small escort, which Mercurius Aulicus naturally sought to depict as the remnants of his regiment.[1] On 18 April he gave the Commons a report of 'how happy' Waller had been to escape from a trap set by vastly greater royalist forces.[2] This reinforced the impression made on the House three days earlier, when they had received his and Waller's letter recounting their escape from Monmouthshire, with 'much joy' and admiration for Waller's 'extraordinary valour and integritie', his 'skill and wisdome'.[3] Mercurius Aulicus might scoff at Hesilrige's 'care and caution in publishing nothing to the House but of Waller's victories, how many times he had distrested Prince Maurice, and how often beate him; and after moving privately for a supply of 2000 men to be sent to him ... '[4] but these tactics worked. Waller

> got great reputation with the Parliament and the city, and was called William the Conqueror. And it is very true that they who looked upon the earl of Essex as a man that would not keep them company to the end of their journey, had their eyes upon sir William Waller as a man more for their turn, and were desirous to extol him the more that he might eclipse the other.[5]

Hesilrige was quick to capitalise on this mood. On 24 April Hesilrige, Wilde and Clotworthy were appointed to draft a declaration showing 'what an acceptable Service it will be to the Publick, in those that shall assist Sir Wm. Waller'.[6] Next day both Houses passed this declaration, encouraging the public to make loans to Waller, Hesilrige or their agents.[7] The Lords' acquiescence was the more remarkable in that they had just heard Essex's letter complaining that Waller had disobeyed his orders to join him at Reading 'though Prince Maurice be come from him, and turned upon me'.[8]

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1. E. 100(18), Mercurius Aulicus, 16th Week, 16-22 Apr. 1643, 203.
2. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f.44b.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 164, f.368a.
4. E. 101(10), Mercurius Aulicus, 17th Week, 23-29 Apr. 1643, 216.
5. Clarendon, History, iii. 81.
6. C.J., iii. 57-8.
7. C.J., iii. 59, 61; L.J., vi. 17.
8. L.J., vi. 17.

Waller and Hesilrige were in a strong position when even the Lords were prepared to tolerate this defiance of the Lord General.

They were able to maintain this position during the next few weeks and Waller got the chance to build on his reputation as a successful general by scoring a series of easy victories in the West, while Essex's army, denied his assistance and weakened by disease, stagnated at Reading. It is doubtful whether Hesilrige and Waller could have defied Essex indefinitely but Hopton's victory at Stratton on 16 May, and the subsequent advance from Oxford to Salisbury of Maurice and Hertford, placed the South-West in new danger. Waller's presence in the West was justified, the strengthening of his army became a priority, and he acquired fresh parliamentary support from the M.P.s of the threatened counties. During these weeks Hesilrige's activities in London centred on Waller's army. Outside Parliament he was busy raising his six new troops of horse. When present in the Commons he concentrated on securing votes of resources for Waller's army, and his own troops in particular, although he was occasionally involved in wider political and military questions.

Around this time, Hesilrige appears to have rejected a tempting alternative to his rôle in Waller's army. The death of his brother-in-law, Lord Brooke, at Lichfield on 2 March, had created a vacuum in the parliamentarian command in the West Midlands. Essex had sent a commission entrusting temporary command to Sir John Gell, Hesilrige and the radical M.P.s and commanders, William Purefoy of Warwickshire and Sir William Brereton of Cheshire.[1] This was confirmed by a further commission of 24 March appointing the four as a committee to command in chief.[2] Hesilrige, who may have owed this appointment to his position in Leicestershire or to his connection with

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1. E. 92(20), A Continuation of Certain Speciall and Remarkable Passages, No. 35, 2-9 March 1642/3.
2. Hist. MSS. Comm. Rep. ix, Chandos-Pole-Gell, 391.

Brooke, made no attempt to take it up. His decision reflected his growing commitment to Waller's army and he may also have anticipated the problems which were to beset Denbigh when he eventually became commander-in-chief in June 1643.[1] The delay in settling the command contributed to the dispersal of Brooke's officers amongst the other parliamentary armies including Waller's.[2] From a political point of view, Hesilrige had lost his only close associate in the Lords, although he may have strengthened his relationship with St. John who became deeply involved in the affairs of the widowed Lady Brooke.[3] Lord Brooke had also been the most radical of Parliament's commanders and the Venetian Secretary believed that he had been considered for the post of Lord General at one time.[4] His death left those radicals who were dissatisfied with Essex to look for another alternative, and Hesilrige was well placed to promote the claims of Waller.

Hesilrige's immediate task was, however, to secure resources for himself and Waller. On 8 May he took advantage of the reaction to Waller's letter outlining some recent successes, to obtain an order that he should draft an ordinance to raise money from delinquents' houses in the London area for the benefit of Waller's army.[5] The Commons passed this ordinance, which would have allowed the sequestrators to mortgage the houses of delinquents and absentees, on 25 May. It was blocked in the Lords[6] but may have accelerated the decision to let these properties. (Hesilrige himself found a London home as a result of this policy: on 10 June the Committee for Sequestrations ordered that the Earl of Thanet's house in Aldersgate Street should be let to

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1. C.J., iii. 121, 127.
2. For numerous examples see P.R.O., S.P. 28/252, 253A (Letter Books of the Committee for taking the Accounts of the Kingdom).
3. Earl of Radnor's extracts from the Lords Journals, Brit. Lib., Harl. MS. 2224, f. 53b.
4. Cal. S.P. (Ven.) 1642-3, 256.
5. C.J., iii. 76.
6. C.J., iii. 103-4, 112, 115.

Lady Hesilrige, and the family lived there for at least a year.)[1]

The corollary of punishing those who defied Parliament was that those who obeyed its orders should be protected from random demands for goods, money and horses. Two committees chaired by Reynolds were looking into this in early May.[2] An ordinance 'for securing such in their Estates as shall pay all Taxes, and obey all Ordinances and associate ... ' was brought in on 9 May. This may have imposed unacceptably rigid restrictions on the armies and it was recommitted to the same committee with the addition of four radicals, including Hesilrige.[3] A week later the Commons ordered Reynolds to report the ordinance but, perhaps because of the efforts of Hesilrige and his fellow radicals, it died in committee.[4]

On the twelfth the Commons ordered the deputy lieutenants of Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Essex, Surrey, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Sussex and Hampshire to meet in the afternoon to prepare a list of malignants in their counties for Hesilrige, so that he could seize their horses for his troops. Later in the day, the House ordered that payments due to judges, officers and clerks who had absented themselves from the Westminster courts, should be stopped and given to Hesilrige for Waller's army.[5] On Sunday 14 May the declaration, drafted by Hesilrige, urging well-affected persons to supply money and men for Hesilrige to take to Waller, was read in many London churches. According to Mercurius Civicus this produced a good response and several wealthy men agreed to pay large weekly contributions.[6]

Hesilrige was the first of a twenty-four man committee named on 17 May to consider the best method of listing all the horses in London and within a

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1. P.R.O., S.P. 20/1 pp. 68, 283.
2. C.J., iii. 65, 73.
3. C.J., iii. 77.
4. C.J., iii. 88 - there is no further trace.
5. C.J., iii. 81, 83.
6. E. 102(8), Mercurius Civicus, No. 8, 11-18 May 1643.

ten mile radius, equipping them for use in emergency and providing riders.[1] This scheme, arising from the general deterioration in Parliament's military position and the weakness of Essex's army in particular, looked back to the autumn's attempts to create a reserve army in London and a running army to carry the war to the enemy, and prefigured the renewed attempts to create such forces in the summer. Hesilrige's prominence on the committee suggests that he may have prompted, or at least strongly supported, its appointment.

On 23 May the radicals and Pym, aware that a large number of peers were anxious for a compromise peace and suspecting some of the outlines of Edmund Waller's plot,[2] counter-attacked by proposing the impeachment of the Queen. Hesilrige spoke in favour of impeachment emphasising, 'her countenancing and protecting of traytors'.[3] In spite of the opposition of moderates, who argued that an impeachment would 'take away all hopes of peace',[4] the Commons cleared the way for an immediate vote by sending Sir Gilbert Gerrard to ask the Lords to sit awhile. Hesilrige and seven other supporters of impeachment were appointed to accompany him. In order to create an expectant atmosphere in the Lords, and avoid alerting the Peace peers, they were instructed to say that the Commons had 'Business of very great Importance to come unto them with' but to say nothing 'of anything that is now in agitation in the House'. On their return, the Commons voted for immediate impeachment and Pym carried it up to the Lords.[5] The tactics, preparation and alignment of Pym and more radical members were reminiscent of the manoeuvres of 1641 and Hesilrige, who had played a part in these and had led earlier attacks on the Queen, slipped

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1. C.J., iii. 89.
2. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 145-6.
3. Somer's Tracts iv. 500.
4. Ibid. iv. 501.
5. C.J., iii. 98.

back into a familiar rôle.

But this was only a temporary diversion from his practical tasks. On 26 and 27 May he secured orders granting him some confiscated horses.[1] On the twenty-ninth Hesilrige was added to the committee for sequestrations, which was ordered to meet in the afternoon to consider raising money for Waller. As an interim measure the House ordered that some confiscated goods should be sold for the benefit of Waller and that Hesilrige should be paid an initial £1000 of sequestration money.[2] On 1 June the Commons decided that the assessment money from Kent should be reserved for the purchase of arms. Hesilrige was the first beneficiary, securing an order to pay him £140 for 'great saddles' and £60 for swords.[3] Next day the House ordered that two sets of captured plate should be coined and given to Hesilrige, and that he should receive £736 from the aqueduct money.[4] On the third a confiscated horse and a set of pistols were allocated to Hesilrige, and the House ordered that £700 of Sussex assessment money should be paid to him for Waller. On the sixth Hesilrige was voted £150 to be raised from the sequestrated goods of Bristol and Digby.[5]

These votes, like those of early May, suggest that Hesilrige was constantly on the alert for opportunities to bid for resources. Whether it was a case of a single horse or of several hundred pounds, he was ready to ask for it and used his political connections to ensure success. As the time approached for his return to Waller's army, it was clear that someone else would have to take on this parliamentary rôle. John Trenchard's committee for accounts at Grocers' Hall was already responsible for the administration of sums raised

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1. C.J., iii. 105, 106.
2. C.J., iii. 109.
3. C.J., iii. 111, 112; P.R.O., S.P. 28/264 f. 275a.
4. C.J., iii. 112-3, 113.
5. C.J., iii. 114, 116.

under the declaration of 25 April,[1] and on 6 June they were ordered to arrange the collection, and payment to Hesilrige, of money arising from the soap monopoly. Next day Hesilrige and Trenchard were jointly empowered to search for some concealed money, for Waller's benefit, and on the ninth they were authorised to break open a trunk which they had discovered. Later in the day the Commons ordered that Trenchard and John Wilde should in future receive and forward all sums allocated to Waller by the House or the Committee of Safety.[2] The transfer of responsibility and Hesilrige's previous rôle were officially recognised in the Speaker's letter to Waller of the same day, in which he spoke of the Commons having 'given an express command to two worthy members ... to take a more particular care of you in the absence of Sir Arthur Hesilrige'.[3] Their work for Waller's army was to continue until 1645.

Hesilrige had completed the business which had brought him to London. Parliament had voted considerable sums for Waller's army and on 9 June Hesilrige collected £2,000 from the Treasurer of the Army to be taken to Waller for payment of his forces.[4] So far as Hesilrige's own new regiment was concerned, £1,547 of the £2,037 required to set it up were provided by subscribers attracted by the declaration of 25 April.[5] The accounts of George Foxcroft, the treasurer appointed by Hesilrige, do not include payments for Hesilrige's own troop and it is unclear how far he financed it out of his own pocket (in 1646 he successfully claimed to have paid out a total of £7,691 'for the service of the State' during the war[6]), and how far he used the other sums voted him by Parliament which did not pass through Foxcroft's hands.

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1. P.R.O., S.P. 28/7, ff. 540a, 541a, 541b; S.P. 28/4 Pt. iii., f. 558a.
2. C.J., iii. 116, 119, 122.
3. Hist MSS. Comm., Portland, i. 713.
4. P.R.O., S.P. 28/264 f. 292.
5. P.R.O., S.P. 28/7 ff. 539b, 541a, 543a.
6. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252 Pt. i. f. 212a.

If he paid the full cost himself, he would have had to have found a substantial sum since the new regiment was composed of cuirassiers, heavy cavalry who wore three-quarter armour rather than the half armour of the normal harquebusiers, and consequently required better horses. Contemporaries were clearly impressed by their armour, and Clarendon says that it attracted the nickname 'Lobsters' from the royalists, but he exaggerates when he describes them as 'the first seen so armed on either side'.[1] Individual troops, belonging to senior officers, were known: Sir John Conyers had raised one for the Scots wars, Essex's lifeguard was composed of cuirassiers, and Balfour certainly had a troop by 20 July 1643.[2] Cuirassiers were expensive and were recruited from 'men of the best degree',[3] and these troops were clearly intended to reflect the status of their commanders. The novelty of Hesilrige's cuirassiers lay in the fact that they formed a complete regiment, which implied a practical rather than an ornamental purpose.

After Edgehill and Ripple Field, Hesilrige, like Cromwell, must have been aware of the deficiencies of the parliamentarian horse compared with their royalist counterparts. Increased weight was a possible solution, and Clarendon describes the Lobsters as 'the first that made any impression upon the King's horse'.[4] Allied to the question of weight was the question of the quality of the troopers. By marking his regiment out as an elite force Hesilrige was able to attract gentlemen and a large number of reformadoes. Captain John Okey's troop was composed of fifty reformadoes and there were probably more spread amongst the other troops.[5] At least one gentleman, Erasmus Mawbey or Mauteby of Raunston, Leicester, joined the regiment

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1. Clarendon, History, iii. 89.
2. D'Ewes, ed. Coates, 7; Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, ed. C.H. Firth (2 vols., Oxf., 1894), i. 44; P.R.O., S.P. 28/9 f. 181a.
3. G. Markham, The Souldier's Exercise (1643), 35-6, quoted in J. Adair, The Life of Sir William Waller (London Ph.D. thesis 1965).
4. Clarendon, History, iii. 89.
5. P.R.O., S.P. 28/7 f. 540ab.

'with many recruits raised at his own expense'. As this suggests there were some financial advantages to set against the cost of the regiment: the reformadoes too were expected to present themselves, 'compleatlie with horse and armes at their own charge'.[1]

The regiment consisted of some five hundred men divided into six troops.[2] The officers and men were a mixed group. The reformadoes and the group from Leicestershire have been mentioned, but most of the troopers were probably recruited in London - The Parliament Scout's account of Lansdowne described the regiment as 'those Londoners that Sir Arthur Haselrig had downe with him'.[3] Others came from Warwickshire and Staffordshire. Samuel Gardiner probably brought at least the nucleus of the troop which he had commanded under Lord Brooke, when he joined Hesilrige on 15 May. By 9 June he had fifty-six men in his troop.[4] Edward Foley had also served as a captain in Brooke's regiment and was paid a lump sum of £200 'at the entertainment of his troope', which suggests that he brought it in as a unit.[5] John Okey had also served under Brooke but his position was rather different. A Londoner, he had been a captain of dragoons under Major-General Richard Browne from November 1642 to February 1642/3 and then a captain in Brooke's regiment of foot from February to May. His troop was composed of fifty reformadoes.[6] Richard Fincher, who received payment for sixty troopers, had served under Waller as a captain of dragoons since March.[7] John Butler may have served under Waller in the same capacity. Foxcroft's surviving accounts show only two payments of £20 to him but he may have received other sums or been allocated all or most of the

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1. Nichols, Leicestershire, III.ii. 935; S.P. 28/7, f. 540a.
2. Clarendon, History, iii. 88; E. 55(8), The Kingdome's Weekly Intelligencer, no. 24, 13-20 June 1643.
3. E. 60(8), The Parliament Scout No. 3, 6-13 July 1643.
4. J. Adair, Cheriton 1644 (Kineton: The Roundwood Press, 1973), 174; P.R.O., S.P. 28/7 f. 540; P.R.O., S.P. 28/147 Pt. iii., f. 558.
5. J. Adair, Cheriton 1644, 174; P.R.O., S.P. 28/7 f. 540b.
6. Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, ed. C.H. Firth, ii. 333; P.R.O., S.P. 28/253[A] Pt. vi, f. 55a; S.P. 28/7 f. 540b.
7. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252 Pt. i, f. 273a.

fifty-three reformadoes and others who volunteered in early May and received advances 'to be repaide in service'. His troop was certainly completed in June.[1] It seems likely that Hesilrige's original troop, raised in 1642, had accompanied him to London and been reequipped and recruited to form the sixth troop. Day to day command of it would have been in the hands of his captain-lieutenant Thomas Horton.[2]

In view of the rôle Hesilrige may have played in vetting the officers of Waller's new army in the summer, his choice of officers for his own regiment is interesting. Their competence is indicated by their future careers: Butler became colonel of the regiment after its absorption into the New Model and was succeeded by Horton, while Okey commanded the New Model's regiment of dragoons and Fincher became Quartermaster General.[3] Their political paths were to diverge in 1647. Horton, Okey and Gardiner supported the Army and Horton and Okey went on to become regicides. Okey was an Anabaptist and a staunch republican. Although, like Ludlow, he initially supported the expulsion of the Rump, he was prominent in the opposition to the Protectorate, played a crucial rôle in the restored Rump's struggle with Lambert and Fleetwood, and fought to the end to prevent the Restoration. The link forged between him and Hesilrige in 1643 may have been significant in the 1650s. Butler, on the other hand, supported the parliamentary majority in the spring of 1647, and left the Army and went to London in June. Foley left the Army at about the

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1. P.R.O., S.P. 28/7 ff. 540ab, 541a; C.H. Firth and G. Davies, The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army (2 vols., Oxf., 1940), 81n.
2. J. Adair, Cheriton 1644, 174.
3. C.H. Firth and G. Davies, The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army, 81-4, 291. The identity of Captain and Colonel Okey is confirmed by his 1647 claim for pay at P.R.O., S.P. 28/253[A] f. 55a, and the 1651 land purchase document cited by H.G. Tibbutt, John Okey 1606 - 1662 (Publ. of the Beds. Hist. Rec. Soc., xxxv., 1955), 4.

same time, as did Fincher.[1] The divergence was hardly surprising since Hesilrige could not, in 1643, have foreseen a political future in which Waller, and many War Party Presbyterians, would become enemies, still less guess the positions which potential officers would adopt in those circumstances.

(ii) Lansdown and Roundway Down

Hesilrige and his regiment left London on 10 June and reached Bath by the seventeenth.[2] They, and the money which Hesilrige brought, were badly needed. After Stratton Waller had rushed South to place Colonel Popham and six companies of Bristol foot in Bath. On his return to Gloucester, however, he had decided to attack Worcester before leaving that area, and this delay had been compounded by his lack of money and the resultant refusal of his men to march. As a result Hopton's Cornish army and the Oxford horse, under Maurice and Hertford, had succeeded in joining at Chard on 4 June. Waller had finally reached Bath on the eighth, just in time to send troops to help cover the retreat of the Somerset forces and to halt the royalist pursuit at Chewton. A stalemate followed as the royalist forces at Wells confronted Waller's army in Bath.[3]

Hesilrige's arrival strengthened Waller but it could not resolve his basic problems. As they explained in a letter of 22 June, the countryside around Wells was 'altogeather unfitt for horse. It greaves our soules wee

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1. C.H. Firth and G. Davies, The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army, 83-4, 295-303; M. Noble, Lives of the English Regicides (1798), 104, 362; H.G. Tibbutt, John Okey 1606-62, passim; M.A. Kishlansky, The Rise of the New Model Army (Camb. 1979), 219.
2. E. 249(17)/(18), A Perfect Diurnall, no. 54, 12-19 June 1643; Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley, ed. T.T. Lewis (Camd. Soc., 1st ser., lviii, 1854), 203.
3. J. Adair, Roundhead General, 70-3; Hist. MSS. Comm., Portland, i. 710-12.

dare not attempt what wee desire. Wee must not hazard your trust like fooles. Neither can wee stay heare and starve'. They needed money and feared that unless it arrived soon, the horse would disband.[1] They had fewer than five hundred foot, and on 24 June Edward Coke wrote to Nathaniel Fiennes begging him to send another five hundred on horseback as well as hastening the arrival of the Bristol horse.[2] The royalist advance to Frome made this still more urgent. In a letter of 1 July Waller and Hesilrige complained of Fiennes' delay in sending the promised regiment of foot and emphasised that an enemy attack was imminent. 'What good will this Regiment do Bristoll, if we perish?', they asked, and argued that the city's fate was bound up with that of their army.[3] In spite of Fiennes' later claim to have sent 1200 foot in response to this letter, John Adair argues convincingly that he sent no more than five hundred.[4]

The royalists advanced to Bradford-on-Avon, four miles South-East of Bath, on 2 July. The following day saw heavy but inconclusive fighting to the East of the city, in the course of which a large part of the royalist horse became detached from Maurice and the rest of the army as they pursued some parliamentarian troops. By night they found themselves in the fields below Lansdown to the North of Bath. Around midnight the royalist commanders there debated occupying the high ground immediately, but decided that in the dark it would be impossible to coordinate this with the rest of the army, and withdrew to Batheaston. By the time the royalist army had reassembled and prepared to march, on the morning of the fourth, Waller had led his men on

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1. Bodl., Tanner MS. 62/1, f. 128.
2. Bodl., Clar. MS. 22, f. 87.
3. E. 64(12), A Relation made in the House of Commons by Col: Nathaniel Fiennes concerning the Surrender of the City and Castle of Bristoll (1643), 26-7.
4. J. Adair, The Life of Sir William Waller 1598 - 1668 (London, Ph. D. Thesis 1965), 129-30.

to Lansdown. Faced with this, and under heavy fire from his guns, the royalists retreated northwards to Marshfield. Once there they were free to march East or West, towards Oxford or Bristol.[1]

Waller dealt with this danger by spending the night on Lansdown and advancing, on the morning of the fifth, to its northern end. This brought him closer to Marshfield, made it unsafe for the royalists to march along the nearby road to Bristol, and gave him a strong defensive position at the top of a steep hill, which he improved by building barricades. The royalists waited at Marshfield, in the hope of forcing Waller to advance over unfavourable ground, but when it became clear that this would not succeed they moved forward to Toghill, close to Waller's position. The armies faced each other for some two hours. Eventually the royalist commanders decided that it would be useless to attempt an assault and began to retreat towards Marshfield. Waller sent his horse and dragoons after them.[2]

Hesilrige's 'Lobsters' now had the chance to justify their cost. The horse and dragoons charged the royalist flanks and rear,

> the regiment of cuirassiers so amating /terrifying/ the horse they charged that they totally routed them, and, standing firm and unshaken themselves, gave so great terror to the King's horse, who had never before turned from an enemy, that no example of their officers, who did their parts with invincible courage, could make them charge with the same confidence and in the same manner they had done.

But no horse, however heavily armed, could face a combination of enemy horse and musketeers for long without support. Once the parliamentarian dragoons had been beaten back and Maurice began to advance with horse winged with musketeers, Hesilrige and the rest of the horse had no choice but to retreat.[3]

They did, however, succeed in drawing the royalists back to the ground

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1. Hopton's Account, Bodl., Clar. MS. 23, ff. 46a-48a.
2. Ibid., f. 48a; Clarendon, History, iii. 89-90.
3. Clarendon, History, iii. 90.

which Waller had chosen. This time the royalist commanders decided to risk an assault. They fought their way up to the top of the hill, only to be pushed back when the parliamentarian horse charged them.[1] The royalists rallied and advanced again, their horse supported by musketeers and pikes. The parliamentarian horse, which charged them repeatedly, had the advantage of the slope but lacked infantry support. Hesilrige

> charged most bravely, and was himself so far engaged, that had he not gallantly bestirred himself, and killed the man that encountered with him, he had been taken prisoner: In which conflict he received a wound in the thigh at push of Pike.[2]

His troops 'did most excelent service'[3] and, with the combined advantages of weight and the slope, they 'brake through and did much execution on' the enemy.[4]

Eventually, however, the horse were forced to retreat, first to the brow of the hill, and then, with the rest of Waller's army, to a stone wall a short distance back across Lansdown. The royalists, having taken Waller's former position at the top of the slope, halted. 'Each side played upon the other with ordnance but neither advanced being both soundly batterd.'[5] At about one in the morning Waller withdrew, leaving pikes stuck in the ground and matches burning to deceive the enemy. Having discovered the trick, they in turn withdrew to Marshfield. The royalist, Slingsby, was relieved that the parliamentarians had retreated first, 'for if they had not I know who had within an hower b/ut/ indeed had our horse bin as good as the Enemys the rebells had never gone of the feild unruin'd'.[6]

Such an admission was a tribute to Hesilrige and Waller. Clarendon

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1. E. 60(8), The Parliament Scout, no. 3, 6-13 July 1643, 20.
2. E. 60(12), A True Relation of the great and glorious Victory Through God's Providence obtained by Sir William Waller, Sir Arthur Haselrig, and others of the Parliament Forces ...(1643), 4.
3. Hesilrige and Waller to the Speaker, 12 July 1643, Bodl., Tanner MS. 62/3, f. 164.
4. E. 59(25), The Copie of a Letter sent from the Mayor of Bristoll .. (1643), 3.
5. Clar. MS. 23, f. 49ab.
6. Clar. MS. 23, ff.49b, 37a.

singled out the 'Lobsters' as 'the first that made any impression upon the King's horse, who, being unarmed, were not able to bear a shock with them'.[1] The quality of the horse, combined with Waller's tactical skill, had enabled the parliamentarians to inflict serious damage on their opponents. Although they had not won the field of battle, their success in fighting the larger royalist army to a halt, and their subsequent ability to take the offensive, amounted to a substantial achievement.

The battle also brought Hesilrige politically advantageous publicity in London. His courage and his wound were mentioned in a number of accounts. His recruiting in London, where the newsletters were published, attracted special attention to 'those Londoners that Sir Arthur Haslerig had downe with him, who like Romans, fought with undaunted courage as long as light would afford to distinguish friend from foe'.[2] On Sunday 9 July news of Hesilrige's wound prompted prayers for him in many London churches.[3] Lansdown ensured that Waller's army, and Hesilrige's rôle in it, were well known and popular in London.

The effect would have been even greater had Lansdown been followed by a decisive victory. The prospects seemed good. On 6 July Waller rested his army at Bath, and sent out warrants claiming that victory was imminent and urging the country to rise in his support.[4] The royalists had been weakened by deaths, injuries and desertions and their stock of ammunition had been reduced by an explosion during their march back to Marshfield. The explosion, in which Hopton was injured, also accelerated the decline of their morale.[5]

They decided to move towards Oxford and, on Friday the seventh, they marched

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1. Clarendon, History, iii. 89.
2. E. 60(8), The Parliament Scout, no. 3, 6-13 July 1643, 21.
3. E. 62(3), Mercurius Aulicus, 28th week, (1643).
4. J.M. Prest, 'The Campaign of Roundway Down', The Wilts. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Mag., liii (1949-50), 278.
5. Clar. MS. 23, f. 37; Clarendon, History, iii. 91-2.

to Chippenham. Learning of this, Waller left Bath around midday and advanced to Marshfield.[1]

The royalists rested at Chippenham next day and Waller was able to catch up with them. During the late afternoon of Saturday and Sunday morning the two armies confronted each other near the town but neither was prepared to risk an advance.[2] Eventually the royalists decided to march to Devizes where the fortifications would help their foot to make a stand. They left Chippenham at midday, pursued by the parliamentarians. Waller and Hesilrige caught their rearguard two or three miles from Devizes, and inflicted heavy casualties. Nightfall, however, prevented an immediate attack on the town.[3]

Next day, 10 July, Waller and Hesilrige took up a position on Roundway Hill to the North of the town. Waller found time to write to Essex emphasising their recent successes. More cautiously, Hesilrige sent a separate letter at midday, in which he asked Essex to take care of the forces at Oxford to prevent the despatch of any relief to the royalists in Devizes.[4] Hesilrige was probably reluctant to place too much stress on the danger to Waller's army for fear of detracting from its successes, and his warning must have been weakened by Waller's more optimistic letter. The result was that Essex was not sufficiently stirred to take the necessary steps, while Waller and Hesilrige proceeded with unfounded confidence.

During the night the royalist horse broke out of Devizes and went to fetch help from Oxford.[5] Next day Waller and Hesilrige, assuming that Essex would cover Oxford, advanced to Devizes but allowed Hopton to gain most of the day by engaging in pointless negotiations. It was six in the evening

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1. E. 60(12), A True Relation of the great and glorious Victory ... , 5; Clar. MS. 23, f. 37.
2. Tanner MS. 62/3, f. 164; Clar. MS. 23, f. 50a.
3. Tanner MS. 62/3, f. 164; Clar. MS. 23, f. 37b.
4. E. 71(7), A Remonstrance to Vindicate His Excellencie Robert Earle of Essex from some false Aspersions cast upon His Proceedings to the 17 of August, (1643), 9, 10.
5. Clar. MS. 23, f. 50b-51a.

before they attempted an assault, and stiff resistance, combined with the shortness of time before nightfall, made this a failure.[1]

On the twelfth they wrote to the Speaker, outlining events since Lansdown. Although they mentioned that the royalists in Devizes expected a 'great strength' from Oxford, they hoped that Essex would deal with this, and the emphasis was on their hope that 'God will scatter if not destroy this mightie armie of the West he hath wrought wonders for us ... we have had such experience of God that we doubt not to give you a good account of S^{r} Ra. Hopton'.[2] They also wrote to Essex, urging him to take care of Oxford, but by this time he had marched the other way to Great Brickhill, while Maurice and Byron's regiments had already left Oxford, following Wilmot's which had left two days earlier.[3] Unaware of this, Waller launched a fierce assault on Devizes but, although his horse penetrated the streets of the town, they were defeated by the royalist barricades.[4] Waller and Hesilrige's ignorance of the danger from the relieving force was shown by their again allowing Hopton to draw them into several hours of fruitless negotiations.[5]

Next morning Waller began preparations for a night attack on the town.[6] News of the unexpected approach of the Oxford horse compelled him to raise the siege and march his army to the top of Roundway Hill, blocking the road to Devizes. Fortunately the majority of Hopton's officers thought that this was a ruse, and the royalist foot played no part in the decisive early stages of the ensuing battle.[7] Waller's foot, by contrast, had attracted

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1. Tanner MS. 62/3, f. 164.
2. Ibid.
3. J. Adair, The Life of Sir William Waller (Ph. D. Thesis, London, 1865), 179.
4. E. 61(1), The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer, no. 26, 11-18 July 1643, 207.
5. Clar. MS. 23, f. 52b.
6. E. 61(6), A True Relation of the Late Fight Between S^{r} William Wallers Forces, and those sent from Oxford (1643), 3.
7. Clar. MS, 23 f. 51b-52a; Clarendon, History, iii. 98.

many recruits since Lansdown. He also had more horse than the royalists, although Byron's estimate that he had 2500 horse and 500 dragoons to the royalists' 1500 horse is probably exaggerated.[1]

Given this advantage the royalist victory was not easy to explain. Partisans of Waller and Hesilrige blamed Essex for allowing the royalist horse to leave Oxford, and explained the outcome of the battle in terms of misfortune. Political opponents blamed Waller's tactics or, particularly in later years when Waller had become a 'Presbyterian' leader, argued that Hesilrige had thrown the battle away by acting impetuously without orders. Royalists naturally emphasised the skill of their own commanders. These conflicting interpretations obscure basic factual details of the battle.

This confusion extends to the position and arrangement of the armies at its start. Waller originally drew up his army on Roundway Hill, with the foot in the centre and two wings of horse commanded by himself and Hesilrige, facing the royalists approaching from the North-East. They may have been in this position when the battle started. Alternatively Waller may have decided to move the horse in front of the foot, with Hesilrige's nearest the enemy, followed by his own and then by a reserve. This change could have been forced on him by a royalist swing southwards to Rough Ridge Hill, to the East of Roundway Hill, which would have left Hesilrige's right wing as the vanguard, separated from Waller's wing by the foot, until Waller moved forward. Finally it is possible that Waller was unable to complete this manoeuvre, and that Hesilrige's wing was facing the royalists without support as the battle began.[2] Even in the armies' original positions, Hesilrige's right wing would have been closest to the royalists since their three brigades overlapped from left to

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1. P. Young, 'The Royalist Army at the Battle of Roundway Down, 13th July 1643', Journ. of the Soc. for Army Hist. Res., xxxi. (1953), 131 (app.: Sir John Byron's relation).
2. For these interpretations see: J. Adair, Roundhead General 91-2; Clarendon, History, iii. 99; J.H. Prest, 'The Campaign of Roundway Down', 286, 287, 290; P. Young, 'The Royalist Army at the Battle of Roundway Down', 128.

right and Wilmot's leading brigade would have been on Hesilrige's side of the field.[1] Clarendon suggests that a royalist council of war before the battle decided to concentrate their attack on Hesilrige's cuirassiers since they 'were the men upon whom Waller principally depended'.[2]

The royalist forlorn hope beat their parliamentarian counterparts.[3] Hesilrige responded by leading his horse in a charge down the hill. Denzil Holles and Clement Walker later portrayed his action as that of one 'who would not be govern'd by his Commander in Chief', who was 'too ignorant to command, and too insolent to obey', and consequently charged, 'contrary to order, without sense or reason'.[4] According to Clarendon, however, it was Waller himself who, 'out of pure gaiety', abandoned the advantages of his original position and 'marched with his whole body of horse, from his foot, to charge the enemy, appointing sir Arthur Haslerigge with his cuirassiers apart to make the first impression'.[5] Peter Young, who argues that the royalists outmanoeuvred Waller by advancing to Rough Ridge Hill, suggests that Hesilrige was forced to take the initiative and charged in order to give Waller time to get his wing through the foot to the eastern end of the hill.[6]

Wilmot's brigade, which was leading the royalist advance, absorbed the charge and forced the Lobsters to retreat. According to Sir John Byron, Hesilrige's regiment made a second charge but were routed by the combined

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1. P. Young, 'The Royalist Army at the Battle of Roundway Down', 127.
2. Clarendon, History, iii. 84n.
3. P. Young, 'The Royalist Army at the Battle of Roundway Down', 130, (Byron's relation); 'The Vindication of Richard Atkyns', Military Memoirs: The Civil War, ed. P. Young and N. Tucker, (1967), 23.
4. Memoirs of Denzil Holles 1641-8 (1699), 12; Clement Walker, The History of Independency (1648), 3.
5. Clarendon, History, iii. 99.
6. P. Young, 'The Royalist Army at the Battle of Roundway Down', 128.

weight of his and Wilmot's brigades.[1] Mercurius Civicus also depicted Hesilrige as rallying his men and 'charging in the face of the enemy, and thereby making them retreat till more fresh forces came upon him, and so overpower'd him'.[2] The royalists Sir John Digby and Richard Atkyns claim, however, that they charged Hesilrige. Atkyns adds that he saw Hesilrige fire a carbine and a pistol as the royalists charged.[3] Whether Hesilrige charged or was charged, the outcome was the same: his troops were routed and Hesilrige, who was wounded in the arm, fled with them.

A body of royalist horse chased them over the steep slopes of the hill. According to Atkyns, Hesilrige's arm wound caused him to stagger and wheel away from his party. Atkyns pursued him and, after a hundred and twenty yards' chase, fired his pistol at Hesilrige's head at point blank range. This

> amazed him at that present, but he was too well armed all over for a pistol shot to do him any hurt, having a coat of mail over his arms and a headpiece (I am confident) musket proof.

Hesilrige managed to escape and as the chase continued Atkyns fired several more shots at close range while Hesilrige gave him a sword wound and cut his horse's nose. Hesilrige was finally wounded when his headpiece was dislodged and his neck exposed to Atkyns' sword. He was in the process of surrendering to Atkyns and two other royalist officers when a fleeing parliamentarian troop rescued him. Atkyns' story is clearly exaggerated, and the King may well have been expressing scepticism, as well as amusement at Hesilrige's

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1. P. Young, 'The Royalist Army at the Battle of Roundway Down', 130 (Byron's relation).
2. E. 61(11), Mercurius Civicus, no. 8, 13-20 July 1643.
3. 'Hector Britannicus', ed. G. Bernard, Camden Misc. xii, (Camd. Soc., 3rd ser., xviii, 1910), 85; Military Memoirs: The Civil War, ed. P. Young and N. Tucker, 23.

discomfiture, when he commented, 'Had he been victualled as well as fortified he might have endured a siege of seven years'.[1] The story does, however, match contemporary newsletter reports that Hesilrige was wounded in the neck or ear and that his horse was shot six times.[2] Having escaped from this immediate danger, Hesilrige and his rescuers resumed their flight.

Meanwhile Waller had lost what chance he still had of saving the battle. He led his horse and the foot some way down the hill and stopped, relying on his guns and musketeers to halt the royalists. But Byron's brigade charged in spite of this, and managed to fire at Waller's horse at short range. After a brief struggle Waller's horse were routed.[3] Waller and the foot fought on for another hour and a half but the return of Byron's brigade and the arrival of the foot from Devizes made their position hopeless. Waller and his officers escaped on horseback and made for Bristol.[4]

They arrived there that night [5] and began to reassemble the horse which had escaped from Roundway Down. Waller's enemies were to allege that he had claimed, in letters to Essex, to have two thousand horse left and to have lost only a hundred. Waller's hopes of retaining his independent command and securing support for the rebuilding of his army depended upon the maintenance of confidence, and he may well have exaggerated the numbers left to him, just as he insisted that he was ready to take the field again.[6] More credible estimates from friends and opponents on his own side, and from royalists, suggest that Waller could dispose of some five to six hundred horse of his

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1. Military Memoirs: The Civil War, ed. P. Young and N. Tucker, 24-5.
2. E. 249(29), A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament, no. 4, 17-24 July 1643; E. 61(11), Mercurius Civicus, no. 8, 13-20 July 1643.
3. P. Young, 'The Royalist Army at the Battle of Roundway Down', 130.
4. Ibid.; Bodl., Clar. MS. 23f. 52b; Clarendon, History, vii. 118.
5. E. 255(1), W. Prynne and C. Walker, A True and Full Relation of the Prosecution, Arraignment Tryall and Condemnation of Nathaniel Fiennes .. (1644), 26.
6. E. 71(7), A Remonstrance to Vindicate His Excellencie Robert Earle of Essex .. 10, 11.

own,[1] as well as some local horse.

Waller's problems were complicated by the strained relationship existing between him and the governor of Bristol, Nathaniel Fiennes. Fiennes had resisted Waller's claims to authority as major general of the area, and had written to Essex, Hampden and his father, Lord Say, complaining of Waller and threatening to resign his command.[2] Not content with the commission guaranteeing his independence in Bristol, which he obtained on 1 May, he had pressed for sole authority in the area for twenty miles around.[3] In pursuit of these objectives he had worked on Essex's antagonism towards Waller, and had mobilised his father's parliamentary influence.[4] He had also been slow and grudging in responding to requests for men and money. These past quarrels now made it difficult for Waller and Fiennes to cooperate.

The subsequent disputes over responsibility for the loss of Bristol produced two very different accounts of events after Waller's return to the city. According to Fiennes, Waller was desperate to leave before the royalists arrived. Finding him determined, Fiennes asked him to leave the Bristol horse and foot. Waller resisted, claiming that he would need the foot when he took the field, but eventually gave in. At Waller's request, Fiennes then signed a certificate acknowledging that Waller's horse would be a drain on the city's provisions and of little use during a siege, and approving his decision to leave. Fiennes claimed to have done this on the understanding that Waller intended to recruit forces at Gloucester or Exeter,

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1. E. 64(12), A Relation made in the House of Commons by Col: Nathaniel Fiennes ... , (1643), 12; E. 255(1), Prynne and Walker, A True and Full Relation .. 49; C.H. Firth, 'The Siege and Capture of Bristol by the Royalist Forces in 1643', Jour. of the Soc. for Army Hist. Res., iv. (1925), 183 (A Royalist Journal).
2. E. 64(12), A Relation made in the House of Commons by Col: Nathaniel Fiennes ... 21-4.
3. E. 255(1), Prynne and Walker, A True and Full Relation .., 33, 94; E. 67(36), C. Walker, An Answer to Col: Nathaniel Fiennes Relation ... (1643), 1-2.
4. Bodl., Clar. MS. 22, ff. 31a, 83a.

and to return to relieve Bristol.[1]

The story told by Waller and his supporters, notably Fiennes' localist critics, Prynne and Walker, was quite different. Fiennes argued against Waller's plans to stay and defend the city and to move forward to oppose the royalist advance. He had made the latter option impossible by refusing Waller the use of the Bristol foot. Waller's council of war on 17 July, at which Hesilrige was present, made the formal decision to leave, but recorded that this was done 'according to the importunity of the Governor and his Officers'. They also decided that Waller should 'speedily march towards his Excellencie the Earl of ESSEX or to London'.[2]

Waller marched to Gloucester on the nineteenth. Rupert, who had been considering an attack on the city, marched directly to the siege of Bristol, cutting off Waller's route back. Waller left two of his troops to strengthen the Gloucester garrison and set off for Northampton.[3] By the time he got there his force was too weak to undertake an immediate return to the West. Leaving his troops quartered around Warwick, Northampton and St. Albans, Waller rode to London on the twenty-fifth. It made little difference since Fiennes surrendered Bristol next day.[4]

Although Hesilrige had been well enough to attend the council of war on the seventeenth, his wounds meant that he was in no condition to undertake this long ride. He therefore decided to return to London by sea. Fiennes

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1. E. 255(1), Prynne and Walker, A True and Full Relation ... , 26; E. 64(12), A Relation made in the House of Commons by Col: Nathaniel Fiennes ..., 12-13; E. 63(12), Mercurius Civicus, no. 10, 27 July - 3 Aug. 1643, 76.
2. E. 255(1), Prynne and Walker, A True and Full Relation ... , App. 'A Catalogue of the Witnesses', 6; E. 63(11), Mercurius Civicus, no. 10, 27 July - 3 Aug. 1643, 76.
3. E. 61(25), A Continuation of Certain Speciall and Remarkable Passages, no. 51, 20-27 July 1643; C.H. Firth, 'The Siege and Capture of Bristol by the Royalist Forces in 1643', 183.
4. E. 71(25), A Remonstrance to Vindicate His Excellencie Robert Earl of Essex, 11; E. 62(16), Certain Informations, no. 28, 24-31 July 1643, 220; Gardiner, Civil War, i. 179.

was to make much of his departure, accompanied by his wounded colleague Colonel Burghill, and some Western officers who were on bad terms with the governor, and to claim that this demonstrated that they had not thought that the city could be defended.[1] But Hesilrige was wounded, he had no particular rôle to play in Bristol, and he was probably anxious to get back to London where the future of Waller's command would be decided.

He sailed before the siege began on 23 July. From Portsmouth he travelled by land to London, arriving on 3 August.[2] Although he was present in the Commons on at least two occasions during August,[3] he was so little in the public eye that Mercurius Aulicus could suggest in mid-September that he had only just returned, having broken his journey in the company of 'a handsome Merchants Wife.'[4] His recent experiences may well have blunted his appetite for abrasive confrontations in the Commons for a few weeks. In addition to the physical effects of his wounds, he had also to deal with the psychological effects of these and the defeat at Roundway Down - in Holles' words he had 'found himself to be mortal'. While this did not, as Holles suggests, turn him into a coward,[5] it may well have left him subdued or even, given the volatility usually expressed in aggressive outbursts, seriously depressed. This, like the sheer volume of practical work involved in building Waller's new army, and his own regiments in particular, would have made the recruiting grounds rather than the Commons the place for Hesilrige in August 1643.

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1. E. 64(12), A Relation made in the House of Commons by Col: Nathaniel Fiennes, 6.
2. E. 64(7), Certaine Informations, no. 29, 31 July - 7 Aug. 1643, 224.
3. C.J., iii. 212, 218.
4. E. 69(18), Mercurius Aulicus, 38th week, 17 Sept. 1643, 519.
5. Memoirs of Denzil Holles 1641 - 1648 (1699), 11-12.

Chapter 5. New Forces: Summer and Autumn 1643

The loss of the West contributed to a major shift in the pattern of parliamentary politics during the summer of 1643. Together with the disintegration of Essex's army and the Fairfaxes' defeat at Adwalton Moor, it provoked a military and political crisis by raising, in a new and sharper form, the twin questions whether and how the war could be won. The outcome of the closely fought political contest at Westminster was a victory for Pym over both the Peace Party, which was further weakened by the resultant defection of Holland and other leaders to Oxford, and the Martenite radicals. But these victories did not introduce a period of political tranquillity. Rather they opened the way for the emergence of a new alignment of ideological groupings and for the development of a close relationship between those groupings and the new political forces created by the attempt to resolve the military crisis: the English military lobbies and the Scots.

The nature of Commons politics gave great strength to small groups who knew what they wanted. In an assembly where most members acted independently, and prided themselves on their independence, there was little scope for the emergence of large blocs voting in a disciplined manner. The content of a speech, the prestige of the speaker, the timing and form of a proposal, could sway the House. Hence the characteristic form of organisation was the small group of close associates who generally, though not invariably, worked together, coordinating their initiatives, supporting one another in debate, planning their manoeuvres or picking up their cues when an opportunity for improvisation presented itself. Quite apart from the risk of alienating other members by acting as a

faction, a larger group would have lost the advantages of flexibility and subtlety which this form of organisation offered. The Pym group had operated in this way during the early months of the Long Parliament, the serious challenge to them during the autumn of 1641 had come from a similar group gathered around Hyde and Falkland, while, as is argued in Chapter 2, a sub-group within the Pym group had been able to change the course of debate on at least three occasions during 1641. J.H. Hexter showed that Pym and his 'Middle Group' pursued the same tactics during 1642 and 1643, and although he did not extend this critique of the old picture of Commons' politics to an examination of the reality of the 'War' and 'Peace' parties, there is no evidence to suggest that these terms can be used to denote more than currents of opinion within the House.[1] Certainly when Pym wished to strike against his radical critics in August 1643 he did what Charles I had tried to do in January 1641, by discrediting and removing a key figure, Henry Marten.

If purely political, or ideological, groupings could sway the House, there was no reason why other small groups, working together with narrower aims, should not pursue similar tactics either alone or in cooperation with ideological groups. The attempt to carry through a comprehensive reorganisation of Parliament's armies, and the unsatisfactory compromises which resulted, created tensions and conflicts of interest between parliamentary commanders which were to persist until the passage of the

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1. J.H. Hexter, The Reign of King Pym. In practice it is difficult to dispense entirely with traditional terms as a form of shorthand, and 'Peace Party' will occasionally be used in place of the more precise 'Holles-Holland group', 'War Party Presbyterian' in place of 'a religious Presbyterian who opposed the sending of peace propositions and favoured an aggressive war.' This does not, however, imply any retreat from the view that parliamentary politics can best be described in terms of small groups and broad currents of opinion.

Self-Denying Ordinance. These pressures necessarily affected Parliament, which had to determine the allocation of resources and authority, and included the leading generals and many of their officers amongst its members. Strong military lobbies emerged, cutting across, and interacting with, political alignments based on ideology, regional interests and personal relationships. This development generated a new degree of political instability since the unpredictable course of warfare constantly threw up fresh disputes between military lobbies. By the end of 1643 one member could conclude, 'that there are now 3 parties or factions in the howse', distinguished by their support for different armies. At the same time other members, like D'Ewes, who was clearly surprised and intrigued by this analysis, continued to view politics primarily in terms of ideological divisions.[1] The confusion was understandable since in any particular debate an ideological group might be supporting a military lobby or vice versa. Waller soon learned that generals could not afford to ignore the wider views of the coalitions of groups which supported them: on Saturday 5 August he voted in favour of sending propositions to the King, but on Monday 7 August, after the City had been stirred up to oppose this, he voted to overturn this decision.[2] He had little choice if he was to retain the support of radicals in debates on purely military matters.

Most M.P.s did not understand how their armies worked, or why they succeeded or failed. The armies were chronically undersupplied with money and provisions and, given Parliament's reluctance to increase the total sums available for them, the military lobbies were in constant competition for resources. In parallel with this, Parliament was faced

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 233ab.
2. Ibid., 148b.

with constant disputes over military authority, which derived their significance from the fact that important strategic decisions had often to be taken quickly because of the fluidity of the military situation and at a distance from Westminster which made consultation all but impossible. Since M.P.s were not equipped to take these decisions on the basis of rational strategic argument, the generals and their supporters had little choice but to resort to political campaigning. Most M.P.s were influenced by a dramatic case, and could be moved by the threat of an imminent collapse or the promise of rapid victories. The problem for the military lobbies was to put both cases simultaneously. An army which emphasised its weakness had an obvious case for a greater share of resources and, at least temporarily, an excuse for inaction, but it risked being written off as a poor investment by members who craved success. Conversely an army whose supporters emphasised its strength and successes might benefit from members' tendency to reward success, but it also risked creating the impression that its needs were not pressing and raising unjustified expectations. According to any one military lobby its own army's failures were always caused by its lack of resources, other armies failed because of incompetence and insufficient will to win. Attacks on rivals in these terms were attractive to M.P.s, who were reluctant to face up to the need for greater resources, and reflected a political culture in which policy differences were habitually discussed in terms of individual culpability. The effect was to reinforce the ignorance of most M.P.s and to lock the military lobbies into a continual cycle of political campaigns against one another.

More than military prestige and authority was involved. The ability

of soldier-politicians to influence general political debates was clearly affected by their military success or failure, and the same was true of civilian politicians who had openly supported their demands. There was also a powerful, if seldom expressed, fear that those who controlled armies might use that power to exert implicit or explicit pressure on Parliament. The politicians of the mid-1640s shared the traditional suspicion of standing armies, they knew the connection between military and political power in much of Europe, and they were, after all, fighting a war for control of the militia. Fears, in the summer of 1643, that Essex might exploit his military position for the benefit of the Peace Party,[1] or that Henry Marten might use a radical London army to counter-balance the radicals' weakness in the Commons,[2] were early expressions of a suspicion that was to emerge openly in the following year's allegations against Cromwell and in the confrontations of the later 1640s.

The day-to-day conflicts between the military lobbies also provided a key test for those who aspired to wider leadership. Given the lack of a formally constituted leadership or executive, such politicians, like the participants in court struggles for control of patronage, had continually to demonstrate their power and ability to secure the decisions they wanted. Military issues, as well as being intrinsically important and generating a great deal of business, were also peculiarly testing. The progress and timing of most issues, like religion or the sending of peace propositions, could, within limits, be controlled or predicted by civilian politicians. A war fought by underresourced field armies threw up constant surprises. Military crises, sudden defeats, and urgent demands for resources had to be dealt with as they arose. A group which

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1. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 181-5.
2. C.M. Williams, 'The Political Career of Henry Marten' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1954) 105-7.

could, like Pym's, stand above the military lobbies and balance their demands or, failing that, one which could secure decisions for its favoured army or armies, would clearly enjoy wider political prestige and authority. Arguments over the allocation of military resources and command were obviously important in themselves to a Parliament desperate to avoid defeat by the King, but they also provided the ground on which more profound political conflicts within Parliament could be fought out.

The Earl of Essex occupied a peculiar position within this political environment. Unlike other leading generals he enjoyed a political stature and following independent of his position as Lord General, he had been active in opposition politics since the 1620s, and he had played a significant part in the pre-war politics of the Long Parliament. It is, however, doubtful whether he would have acquired the great political influence which he was able to wield by late 1644, had he not been Lord General. That post conferred great political advantages on its holder. His power to appoint a large number of officers gave Essex the disposal of a large amount of patronage, the value of which is evident from the tenacity with which he fought to retain control of appointments and from the Lords' reluctance to confer similar powers on Fairfax in 1645. Those appointed were bound to Essex by ties of gratitude and by the loyalty inspired by common experience. In a Parliament run by committees, in which leading civilian politicians had continually to demonstrate their claims to respect, the Lord General, with whom both Houses had sworn to live and die, held an office which guaranteed his standing. As Lord General and commander of Parliament's main army, he could expect a hearing on the broader questions of war and peace which divided the ideological groupings.

That Essex made little attempt to exploit this political potential

before the end of 1643 was largely due to the trust between him and Pym. Essex valued his position as Lord General for its own sake, and Pym only deviated from support for Essex's army when it was essential to do so if he was to keep his own political footing in the Commons. Pym's moderate rivals, led by Holland and Holles, were handicapped by their own ambivalent attitude towards the war effort, and still more by the attitudes of the wider body of members who would support them in their demands for peace. So long as moderates were unwilling to give effective support to any army Essex had little option but to trust Pym, and refrain from supporting his rivals on wider political issues.

Things were to change in late 1643. In part this was a result of the summer's compromises over military command which forced Essex, like other generals, to mobilise a military lobby which had to work with ideological groups. Pym might have controlled this tendency by retaining Essex's confidence, but Vane and St. John, who had less regard for the Lord General and certainly enjoyed less respect from him, could not. At the same time Essex now had a choice of political supporters, since the King's uncompromising attitude had forced Holles's moderate group to adopt a more positive attitude towards the fighting of the war. By the end of 1643 this ideological group was moving towards regular cooperation with Essex's military supporters, led by Stapleton, on both political and military questions. If Vane and St. John were to establish their political leadership, they had either to tame Essex by making him concentrate on his military rôle or to destroy his power. As a result they lent their support to the military lobbies of Essex's rivals in their attempts to undermine Essex's military power base. Essex, in turn, could only defend his powers as Lord General, which he valued both for their own sake and

for the political weight which they gave him, by mounting an explicitly political challenge to Vane and St. John.

The first result of this was a period of intense factional conflict during January and February 1643/4, but the stalemate which followed saw an uneven alignment of groups. On one side was the Essex party, or in Commons' terms the Holles-Stapleton group, which combined the rôles of a moderate ideological group and of Essex's military lobby. On the other side, the Vane-St. John group worked in loose cooperation with the military lobbies of Essex's rivals. What prevented a closer fusion was the hope, felt most strongly by St. John, that Essex might yet be persuaded to accept his group's rôle as the successor to Pym's in balancing and controlling the competition of the military lobbies, and that a wedge could be driven between Holles' ideological group and Essex's military supporters if the Vane-St. John group could avoid becoming wholly identified with attacks on Essex's army. By the autumn of 1644 the illusory character of these hopes was clear.

If the military and political crises of summer 1643 provoked a realignment within parliament, it also led to the introduction of a new outside force in the shape of the Scots. The decision to ally with the Scots was designed to compensate for Parliament's military weakness, and to stiffen the resolve of those wavering on the point of accepting the case for peace at any price by offering some hope of military success. The royalists' strength in the North following the defeat of the Fairfaxes made it seem likely that they would succeed in consolidating their control over the whole of the North, and that the King would be able to call forces South to tilt the balance still further against Parliament which was already facing the consequences of the loss of the West. At the very

least the intervention of the Scots army would tie the Northern royalists to the defence of what they held. On a more optimistic view, they might reverse the military prospects by forcing their way southwards to join with Parliament's major southern armies.

The entry of the Scots into the war, and the arrival of their commissioners in London, was bound to have a major impact on the competition of both military and ideological groups in Parliament. The most obvious effect of the Scots' intervention for the military lobbies was that they had to be paid and supplied by Parliament, the resources available for the southern armies would necessarily be still more tightly stretched, and as a result competition between the lobbies would be intensified. At the same time both national pride and the need to sustain Scots' confidence in their allies would increase the pressure for victories in the South. Finally the entry of the Scots increased the options available to civilian politicians in deciding which armies to support.

The political impact of the Scots owed much to the limited character of their political aims. Essentially any political group which was prepared to say that it supported Presbyterianism as an essential element in any settlement with the King might attract their support. To a great extent even this qualification lacked force since the Scots had no clear idea of the religious leanings of most English politicians, while the rarity of enthusiasts for Presbyterianism in Parliament meant that no group had much reason to enlighten them. The Scots' ignorance of English politics meant that they needed to find English politicians they could trust and work with. Other things being equal it was likely that they would opt for whichever political group was strongest when they arrived. This expectation added heat and urgency to the struggles of the ideological groupings at Westminster in late 1643, early 1644.

The prize was the support of a political force which, unlike English groups, was not bound by parliamentary conventions. The Scots could address direct demands to Parliament on a range of issues in a forceful manner. This, and the fact that their English associates could let their views be known to other members, meant that they provided a useful source of pressure in support of any English group they allied with. The basis of their influence was that they, unlike English groupings, could say explicitly that their support for Parliament was conditional - and English parliamentarians knew that without their military support the situation would be desperate.

The Vane-St. John group won the Scots' support when they arrived, but that support was not secure. In the first place the Scots were as intent on using English politicians as the English groups were on using them. The longer the Scots commissioners were in London, the more they learnt about the options available to them and the more they found to dislike in the political and religious radicalism of some English politicians whose support the Vane-St. John group could not do without. Secondly the group could not use its strength against political opponents as determinedly as it might have wished for fear of alienating the Scots. They were intolerant of factionalism, regarded English quarrels over political and military issues as diversions from the central task of securing a victory or a peace settlement which would establish Presbyterian-ism in England and guarantee the permanence of their own revolution, and showed an alarming tendency to set themselves up as mediators in English conflicts. As a result, it was only when the Scots were evidently moving towards a rapprochement with Essex and Holles in late 1644 that the Vane-St. John group as a whole felt able to launch a decisive attack on Essex and his supporters by seeking to remove Essex's military power base.

The new political framework brought into being by the events and decisions of summer 1643 created new opportunities for Hesilrige. He had made use of his political connections for the benefit of Waller's army during the early months of 1643, but there had been a distinction between his rôle as a parliamentary representative of that army and his rôle as an M.P. with strong views on wider political questions. The new political environment, in which army politics occupied a more central position, gave him a new rôle in linking and reconciling the interests of his ideological allies, fellow supporters of Waller's army, and those M.P.s who judged policies according to the needs of their counties. From the account which follows it will become clear that, so far as his own work in the Commons was concerned, Hesilrige gave priority to fighting for the interests of Waller's army. This priority needs to be placed in perspective.

It certainly does not mean that Hesilrige ceased to care about other issues, or that he did not consult and vote with political associates on a wide range of questions. Hesilrige was a fully functioning member of the Vane-St. John group which coalesced in late 1643 to early 1644. But one of the strengths of that group was the ability of its different members in specialised areas. So, for instance, Hesilrige's confrontations with Laudianism and Laud himself in the 1630s and his commitment to the pursuit of the bishops during the first two years of the Long Parliament suggest that he would have been a strong supporter of the trial of Laud. That matter was, however, safe in the hands of another group member, Samuel Browne, and Hesilrige's rôle was confined to a brief appearance as a witness. Similarly Hesilrige's involvement in military affairs and his experience as a member of the Pym group during the early months of the Long Parliament equipped him to understand the significance,

both military and political, of the Scots' intervention and he was to play an active rôle in the Commons in ensuring that the group reaped the full benefit of good relations with them, notably in the case of the establishment of the Committee of Both Kingdoms. But the job of dealing with the Scots on a regular basis was best left to subtler and more diplomatic men like Vane and St. John. Hesilrige's concentration on military matters can thus be seen as a result of a necessary division of labour amongst political allies.

But it is also necessary to recognise both that political groups were relatively loose associations of individuals for tactical purposes, which could accommodate substantial differences of emphasis amongst members, and that even leading politicians had their own priorities which did not necessarily reflect the importance which historians, looking back, might attach to particular issues. Lesser members certainly had their own priorities and might, for instance, have no fixed views on how the war should be fought outside their own regions. It was because most members would not be fiercely committed on any one issue that came before the House that debate was so important, and a small group of political allies could sway the Commons. While leading politicians were more likely to have clear views on major issues, and much less likely to give excessive weight to minor questions, there was considerable scope for variation in their interests.

It should, however, be emphasised that the organisation and supply of the armies was more than just one of many issues which members might choose to regard as important. For men who did not know who was going to win the war, who could not know that the politics of the later 1640s were to be dominated by the question of what Parliament should

do with its victory, military success was bound to be the key issue. Because Parliament retained direct control over a mass of detailed decisions concerning military affairs, the military lobbies had constantly to make their case, offering military success if only they, rather than their rivals, were given the resources. The vast majority of M.P.s were passionately interested in avoiding a military defeat, whatever their other interests.

The struggles between military lobbies necessarily come to the fore in an account of Hesilrige's actions during 1643 and 1644, because Hesilrige himself gave so much of his time and energy to them. But it is also argued that this should provoke a reconsideration of the perspective in which other members viewed this and other issues, and that from any viewpoint these struggles should be recognised as a central element in the parliamentary politics of the mid-1640s, both because of their intrinsic importance and because of their rôle as vehicles for wider conflicts.

The link forged between military and political faction in 1643 outlived the specific conflicts which gave rise to it and helped to shape the politics of the later 1640s. It is not surprising that men then sought to trace a direct connection between the divisions of 1648 and those of 1643. Political Presbyterians, needing to explain away the earlier rivalry between their heroes Essex and Waller, portrayed their conflict as the product of Hesilrige's machinations. According to Clement Walker, the 'Independents' planned to displace both generals,

'For which purpose that hot-headed Schismatique Sir A. Haslerigge was imployed with Sir W. Waller and some others ... with the E. of Essex

to break them one upon another'.[1] D'Ewes echoed this view and described how 'The Independents divided themselves some to take part with the Earle of Essex and some with Sir William Waller, soe to keepe up the difference'. Lord Say led those who worked with Essex while Hesilrige led those who supported Waller.[2] In his Recollections, Waller himself endorsed this revised version of his relations with Essex, writing that 'There were those who fomented our discords for their own advancement. Some whom I att that time commanded, but who have since sat in a higher seat, were not wanting to misrepresent and to inflame on either side'.[3]

These explanations were based on an ingenious misreading of events in 1643, and ignored the logic of military competition at that time. The men and resources required to rebuild Waller's army could be obtained only at the expense of Essex's forces. If Waller was to become an independent general Essex would suffer a diminution of his authority. Above all, perhaps, it appeared that one or other of them would have to take the blame for the loss of the West. They and their supporters spent much of the summer hurling accusations at each other in an attempt to preserve their own reputations.[4] Well-publicised disputes over responsibility for the disaster reflected and intensified genuine personal bitterness on the part of both Waller and Essex. This was evident in Essex's stinging letter of 25 August in which he referred sarcastically to Waller's 'late services' and went on to say that 'for

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1. C. Walker, The History of Independency (1648), 2-3.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 179a.
3. 'Recollections written by General Sir William Waller', in The Poetry of Anna Matilda (1788), 120.
4. See above, Ch. 4.

some reasons to my owne perticuler I have no great reason to confid in' him.[1] On Waller's side bitterness persisted long after his supposed reconciliation with Essex. Elsewhere in his Recollections he wrote that Essex's determination to 'have his great name stand alone' was responsible for his refusal to aid him later in the year and went on to say that, 'My dismal defeat att Roundway Down was owing to those heartburnings and jealoucies; for the General suffered the enemies horse to pass quietly and without molestation'.[2]

Say's support for Essex was not the product of a Machiavellian division of labour amongst the 'Independents'. Waller's claims to authority in the West had earlier prompted Nathaniel Fiennes and Say to turn to Essex for support. Fiennes' best defence against charges that he had surrendered Bristol too easily was to argue that its fall had been the inevitable result of Waller's and Hesilrige's defeat at Roundway Down. Similarly they would benefit if it could be shown that the West might still have been saved had Fiennes held out. Hence Waller and Hesilrige supported and encouraged Fiennes' localist critics, William Prynne and Clement Walker, in their long campaign against him, culminating in Fiennes' conviction by a court martial in December 1643.[3]

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1. Bodl., Tanner MS., 62/1 f. 293.
2. Waller, Recollections, in The Poetry of Anna Matilda, 123.
3. See above, 180 - 182; E. 376(25), Colonell Fiennes Letter to My Lord General, concerning Bristol; E. 64(12), A Relation made in the House of Commons by Col: Nathaniel Fiennes; E. 67(36) (Walker), An Answer to Col: Nathaniel Fiennes Relation ... ; E. 70(1), Colonell Fiennes His Reply to a Pamphlet Entituled an Answer ... ; E. 251(6) W. Prynne, The Doom of Cowardisze and Treachery ... ; E. 78(3), Articles of Impeachment and Accusation Exhibited in Parliament, Against Colonel Nathaniel Fiennes ... By Clement Walker and William Prynne, Esquires: (All 1643); W. Prynne and C. Walker, A True and Full Relation of the Prosecution, Arraignment Tryall and Condemnation of Nathaniel Fiennes ... (1644).

Military politics forced Say, the most radical of the peers, to side with Essex, just as they forced 'that hot-headed Schismatique Sir A. Haslerigge' to side with Clement Walker.

The quarrels provoked by the loss of the West became linked with wider political and military disputes. Many radicals in the City and Parliament had been critical of Essex's handling of the war since the previous autumn. During the spring, his poor performance, which contrasted with Waller's well-publicised successes, had produced a wider sense of dissatisfaction. Essex's letter of 9 July, in which he stressed the problems of his army and argued that new peace propositions should be sent to the King with a request that he accept them or withdraw from his army and allow the war to be decided by an arranged battle,[1] further stimulated criticism. Waller believed that this message 'so inflamed the zealous that they moved that the command of their army might be bestow'd upon me; but news of this defeat /Roundway Down/ arrived whilst they were deliberating on my advancement and itt was to me a double defeat'.[2] The Venetian Ambassador had heard similar rumours.[3] Even before Roundway Down, however, it would have been difficult to persuade most M.P.s to risk the military and political disruption resulting from dismissing Essex or deliberately provoking his resignation. His critics therefore sought to create new forces which could be built up at the expense of his army until they were

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1. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 164.
2. Waller, Recollections, in The Poetry of Anna Matilda, 131.
3. Cal. S.P. (Ven) 1642-43, 300.

ready to replace it. In Holles' words,

> They resolve to lay him aside, beginning to draw supplies from him, neither providing Arms (except some times for a pinch, when the necessity of their own preservation required it), clogging him all they could, countenancing and supporting whoever did oppose him.[1]

As the last phrase suggests, many of Essex's critics were never wedded to any one commander or army. This was to be demonstrated by the emergence of Manchester as a credible alternative to both Essex and Waller, a process which began during the summer while they were preoccupied with fighting one another.[2] In the spring and early summer of 1643 it led Essex's critics to produce a variety of overlapping schemes, some of which were compatible, others not. While Waller's army (which was in part a product of the previous autumn's radical agitation for a 'running army') was successful in the West, it represented a focus for the hopes of many of Essex's critics. Popular as Waller was, however, his commitments in the West meant that his army could not offer the security for London and the counties of the East and South East which was now an essential component in any scheme to replace Essex. While Waller and Hesilrige were away a number of plans evolved.

One answer was to strengthen existing Associations and form new ones, which could harness localism to the task of creating new forces. Conservatives were attracted by its defensive aspects, while radicals could look forward to the aggressive use of these armies. In a parallel development, the Militia Committee was moving towards demanding that all troops raised in London should be united under its control, with a commander appointed by it.[3] A further plan which would have been compatible with these ideas, a moderate variant of the 'running army' demand, was the creation of a command structure for a large reserve of horse, with the London and Association, or county

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1. Memoirs of Denzil Holles 1641 - 1648, 8-9.
2. C. Holmes, The Eastern Association, 113-4.
3. V. Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, 268.

militia, horse at its core, which could be drawn together when there was a chance to attack the royalists, or concentrated to defend vulnerable areas in the absence of the field armies. The Commons committee, including Hesilrige, appointed in May to consider methods of listing horses in London and the area for ten miles around, and providing equipment and riders for use in emergency,[1] represented an early stage in the development of this idea.

None of these plans met radical ideas of a new army. In a series of proposals put forward by men associated with the sub-committee at Salters' Hall between March and July the essentials of the General Rising scheme emerged. The new army was to be large, independent of the Militia Committee, commanded by officers who were 'known and trusted' or 'godly or of honest life or conversation', and brought into being by the mobilisation of the whole population of the City either to serve in person without immediate payment or to lend money, horse and arms.[2] By the second week of July the latest version of these proposals was reported to be attracting enthusiastic support in the City.[3]

Essex's letter of 9 July heightened criticism and intensified the search for alternatives. The deterioration of his army, the King's strength following the Queen's arrival with arms and reinforcements from the North, and the Kent rising, created a military crisis which made Parliament receptive to any proposals which might produce additional forces. The sense of crisis deepened on 17 July when several members received private news of Waller's defeat at Roundway Down.[4] This advance information probably explains the

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1. C.J., iii. 89.
2. V. Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, 260, 267-9; E. 59(15), Instructions and Propositions Drawne up and agreed on by divers well affected persons in the City of London (7 July 1643).
3. E. 60(9), Mercurius Civicus, no. 7, 6-13 July 1643.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 127a.

flurry of activity which followed the official report of the disaster to the Commons next day.[1]

On the eighteenth the Commons ordered the preparation of an ordinance for the association of Hampshire, Sussex, Kent and Surrey, agreed to raise a 6,500 strong 'moving Body of Horse and Dragoons' from London and the fifteen parliamentary-held counties in the East and South East, and accepted the City's demand that the Militia Committee should control all forces raised in London.[2] On the twentieth the City radicals presented their petition calling for a new volunteer army, and the appointment of a group of named radical M.P.s and peers, led by Henry Marten, as a committee to organise this. The Commons, after a token protest, agreed and appointed the committee which was to sit at Merchant Taylors' Hall.[3] The Commons, facing a military crisis at a moment when Pym's leadership was faltering, failed to make choices and instead set alternative schemes in motion simultaneously.

Waller's popularity in the City had been demonstrated on 18 July when Londoners had subscribed thousands of pounds for the rebuilding of his army, and it was assumed that he would get command of some of these new forces.[4] Recognising this, Essex may have tried to win him over, just as in November 1642 he had countered pressure for an independent London army by making its intended commander, Philip Skippon, his Major General of foot.[5] According to two newsletter accounts he offered Waller the post of Lieutenant General of horse, as well as command of the forces to be sent to relieve Bristol.[6] Instead

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1. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 63b.
2. C.J., iii. 171-2.
3. C.J., iii. 175-6.
4. E. 61(9), Wednesday's Mercury or Speciall Passages, no. 1, to 19 July 1643; E. 61(13), The Parliament Scout, no. 4, 13-20 July; E. 61(16), Certaine Informations, no. 27, 17-24 July.
5. See above, 129 - 130.
6. E. 61(25), A Continuation of Certaine Speciall and Remarkable Passages .. , no. 51, 20-27 July 1643; Mercurius Civicus, no. 9, 20-28 July 1643.

Waller pressed on to London, and received an enthusiastic welcome on 25 July.[1] His first action was to visit the Militia Committee to discuss the recruitment of his existing army.[2] The continuing validity of his commission as Major General of Gloucestershire and the neighbouring counties was a major asset to Waller during the summer and autumn since it provided a consistent basis for the rebuilding of his army while disputes raged over other commissions he might hold.

The implementation of the various schemes for new armies began well. On 22 July Manchester had been appointed sole commander of the reserve of 6,500 horse following the refusal to serve of the three other regional commanders nominated in the original plan.[3] On 27 July the Commons accepted the General Rising committee's nomination of Waller as their commander-in-chief and two days later endorsed the Militia Committee's choice of him to command their forces.[4] On 7 August, Essex was persuaded to grant Waller a commission as commander-in-chief of the Militia's forces.[5] Next day the Commons agreed, at the prompting of the General Rising committee, to ask Essex for a commission for Waller to command ten new regiments of horse, and ten of foot.[6] As later debates showed, Essex was particularly offended by the provision that Waller should be independent of him, subject only to the command of the two Houses.[7] He delayed and resisted until 26 August, and then sent a commission with the name of the commander-in-chief left blank, leaving the Commons to insert Waller's name.[8] By then the commission's main value to Waller lay in the

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1. Clarendon, History, iii. 140; E. 62(16), Certaine Informations ... , no. 28, 24-31 July 1643.
2. Ibid.
3. C.J., iii. 177; L.J., vi. 145.
4. C.J., iii. 183, 186.
5. C.J., iii. 197.
6. C.J., iii. 198.
7. L.J., vi. 246-7; C.J., iii. 267.
8. C.J., iii. 219.

independence it conferred upon him. In practical terms the plan for a General Rising had proved a failure, and much of the political drive behind it had been lost with Henry Marten's expulsion and imprisonment on 16 August.[1]

Waller did not find it easy to work with Marten and his radical colleagues. In his Vindication, he recalls that the Committee at Merchant Taylors' Hall demanded that he should 'entertain none but godly officers, such as should be recommended to me'. He insisted that competence was essential and 'that where I could find persons qualify'd with piety and ability I would preferr them before all others', but that otherwise he would employ able soldiers, whatever their other defects. To resolve the conflict he 'appointed a council of war, whereof Sir Arthur Hesilrigg was president, to examine the merits of every man that should stand to bear any office in that army, with power to cross all such as should be judged unfitt or unworthy to be employed. But this did not satisfy; and I then found they had it in their designe to modell and form an army, that should be all of their owne party and devoted to their own ends. Upon this we differed'.[2] Earlier radical schemes had stressed the godliness and good character required of officers.[3] But the central question was one of control over appointments. Mercurius Aulicus caught wind of this in early August, writing that 'Sir William Waller begins to be discontented with his friends the Citizens', partly because recruitment had gone badly and partly because the committee had made it clear that they intended to choose his officers.

Waller accepted the pretence that the godliness of his officers was the main point, and offered the committee a compromise: a council of war chaired by that undeniably godly man, Sir Arthur Hesilrige, who had worked with Marten

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1. C.J., iii. 206.
2. Vindication of the Character and Conduct of Sir William Waller, 14-16.
3. V. Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, 268; E. 59(15), Instructions and Propositions Drawne up and agreed on by divers well affected persons in the City of London.

and the City radicals in the past. Not surprisingly they refused this offer, knowing that Hesilrige was virtually certain to support Waller's choice of officers. The quarrel probably gave rise to the rumours in the City that the radicals would make Marten himself their general, in place of Waller.[1] Waller and Hesilrige had no reason to regret Marten's imprisonment and expulsion from the Commons on 16 August, and the split may help to explain Marten's isolation in the face of Pym's attack. With Marten's fall, the Committee at Merchant Taylors' Hall, already weakened by its failure to attract significant numbers of recruits, was in no position to contest Waller's control over the appointment of officers.

Although statements such as, 'There is great circumspection in the choice of his Officers both for valiant and faithfull men', which appeared in The Parliament Scout for 17-24 August, continued to play an important part in propaganda for the army,[2] there is no definite evidence that the council of war headed by Hesilrige ever vetted Waller's nominees. Even if it did, Waller's account does not place Hesilrige amongst those who sought 'to modell and form an army' for their own ends. As has been shown,[3] Hesilrige had not selected a politically homogeneous group of officers for his regiment of cuirassiers earlier in the year. The same was true of his new regiment of foot. His Lieutenant Colonel was John Birch, a Bristol man who had commanded a company of the Bristol foot from November 1642 to 20 July 1643.[4] Leaving Bristol before its surrender, he came to London and raised 'a foote regiment, by the assistance and under the command of Sir Arthur Haslerig (though under your /Birch's/ own whole management)'. Birch's secretary recalled that

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1. V. Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, 271.
2. E. 65(30), The Parliament Scout no. 9, 17-24 August 1643.
3. See above, 152.
4. P.R.O., S.P. 28/253[A] Pt. vi., f. 82b.

Hesilrige 'would never doe any thing as collonell of foote, delighting all in horse'.[1] The view that Hesilrige left effective control of the regiment to Birch receives striking confirmation from the fact that he refused all payment for his services as a foot colonel.[2] The man to whom he entrusted these responsibilities was to become a 'Presbyterian' M.P. and suffer exclusion at Pride's Purge.[3]

Of the regiment's captains, Thomas Smith and Joshua Hayward had served as Captain and Lieutenant of a foot company in Lord Brooke's army from January to May 1643.[4] In 1647 Smith sided with the Army, and exhorted his men to 'stand for your liberties and privileges now and ever'.[5] He was lieutenant-colonel of Hardress Waller's regiment from 1649 to 1650 when he died.[6] Hayward did not live to see these divisions, dying in service during 1644, and the same is true of his colleague Captain Humphrey Heathcott.[7] Ralph Cotsforth or Coatsworth, who was major of the regiment by February 1644, had, like Smith and Hayward, served in Lord Brooke's regiment.[8] He was killed at the siege of Oxford, while serving as Hardress Waller's lieutenant-colonel.[9] Hesilrige also appointed two new captains in his regiment of horse, which suggests that he hoped to expand it. James Haxton, who served as a captain in the regiment from 29 August 1643 until 6 December 1644, described himself as Colonel James Haxton in December 1646 but no other details can be traced.[10] Captain William Guilliams had probably served as one of Hesilrige's reformadoes, since he acknowledged receipt of five pounds, 'y^{t} S^{r} Arthur

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1. Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, 3, 14.
2. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252 Pt. i, ff. 212a, 216a.
3. Dict. Nat. Biog., Birch.
4. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252 Pt. i, ff. 183a, 274a.
5. M.A. Kishlansky, The Rise of the New Model Army, 216.
6. C.H. Firth and G. Davies, The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army, 449.
7. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252 Pt. i, ff. 183a, 182b.
8. J. Adair, Cheriton 1644, 184.
9. C.H. Firth and G. Davies, The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army, 443.
10. P.R.O., S.P. 28/253^{A}, f. 23b.

Hessilrigg sent unto him to Bristoll being Wounded'. He transferred to Waller's regiment of horse as a captain on 7 February 1644, having failed to raise a troop for Hesilrige, and was killed in August 1645 while serving in Ireton's regiment during the parliamentarian siege of Bristol.[1] As in April, Hesilrige appears to have selected his own officers on the basis of experience and previous service in forces associated with Waller's command or in Brooke's army, rather than on political grounds.

Apart from choosing these officers, who like the rest of Waller's officers were commissioned on 29 August, it is difficult to pinpoint Hesilrige's military activity during August. The regiment of foot was not ready to march until mid-November,[2] almost a month later than the rest of Waller's army, which suggests that recruiting was delayed until September or October. In any case the Military Memoir of Birch implies that Birch did the practical work, supported by Hesilrige's reputation, and perhaps by his wealth.[3] Hesilrige probably concentrated on finding men and horses to recruit his horse to full strength.

Hesilrige's return to parliamentary activity made no mark until 19 August. When the Commons wound up the affairs of Henry Marten's regiment, ordering Captain La Tour's troop to stay with Waller while the rest were sent to join Essex, they appointed a nine man committee, including Hesilrige, to examine Marten's accounts. The committee's membership, perhaps reflecting a wish to appear scrupulously fair to Marten, was very radical and Hesilrige may have owed his place to this but he may also have been representing Waller's interests.[4]

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1. P.R.O., S.P. 28/253[A] Pt. vi, f. 80a; J. Adair, Cheriton 1644, 174; C.H. Firth and G. Davies, The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army, 116.
2. E. 76(10), The True Informer, no. 9, 11-18 Nov. 1643.
3. Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, 3.
4. C.J., iii. 213.

On 25 August Hesilrige, St. John and Major Browne were added to the Council of War appointed on 2 August.[1] This Council had the dual function of advising the Commons on the raising and use of the army of 6,500 and of considering 'the whole State of the War' and proposing to the Houses, Essex and other commanders-in-chief 'such Things as they shall conceive will conduce to the Service of the Kingdom'.[2] As Hexter points out this latter, coordinating, rôle prefigured the work of the Committee of Both Kingdoms, as did the attempt to include representatives of a number of parliamentary armies and the oath of secrecy imposed on members.[3] It represented an attempt to circumvent the delays and inefficiency of the Committee of Safety. Its formation in early August was probably prompted by the obvious need for coordination as new forces were created and by the political dangers at this point in the strength of the Peace Party on the Committee of Safety. The addition of Hesilrige, St. John and Browne on 25 August shows that the project was still alive but its failure is indicated by the fact that the process of setting up a Council of War was to begin again in mid-October.[4] That critics of the Committee of Safety were undecided between reform and the alternative of a Council of War is demonstrated by the fact that St. John had also been added on the previous day.[5] In November Hesilrige's appointment to the Committee of Safety[6] was to signal the end of the second attempt to create a Council of War. The first Council was probably a casualty of Essex's strength after his return from Gloucester and Newbury. Hesilrige's appointment did, however, mark his entry into general military administration and coordination, and was to lead on to his membership of the Committee of Safety and the Committee of Both Kingdoms.

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1. C.J., iii. 218.
2. C.J., iii. 191.
3. J.H. Hexter, The Reign of King Pym, 144n.
4. C.J., iii. 278-9.
5. L.J., vi. 195.
6. C.J., iii. 299.

Essex's march to Gloucester and its success produced further changes in the nature of Waller's army. Waller had used the commission of 25 August to appoint a large number of officers on the twenty-ninth,[1] but it was unclear where their men were to come from. Essex had taken a large number of volunteers and conscripts from the capital, as well as six regiments of the trained bands.[2] Waller was busy recruiting but it was doubtful whether his army would be ready to act if Essex got into trouble. On 1 September the Commons voted that troops of horse raised in Middlesex, presumably as part of the 6,500 horse, and some Dorset horse formerly commanded by Sir Walter Earle, should be placed under Waller's command. Hesilrige, Earle and Mr. Browne were charged with ensuring that they were ready to march.[3] On the sixth both Houses passed an ordinance enabling the Militia Committee to order as many regiments of the City forces as they pleased to march out with Waller but, as D'Ewes noted, the Committee was also empowered to recall them at any time.[4]

Six days later the Commons decided to press 5,000 foot for Waller in the City and six neighbouring counties and to ask Manchester to consent to Waller taking temporary control of those elements of the 6,500 horse raised in counties south of the Thames.[5] This was, in part, a reversion to the original plan to divide this horse between regional commanders, and Manchester, who had been appointed Major General of the Eastern Association on 9 August, with power to more than double its number of foot and dragoons,[6] was by now most interested in those sections of the 6,500 horse which could be integrated with his new command. The future course of Waller's army, as part of a

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1. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252, 253[A]
2. S.R. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 202.
3. C.J., iii. 224.
4. C.J., iii. 229, 230; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 169a.
5. C.J., iii. 238.
6. C.J., iii. 199.

network of association forces, was clearly indicated on 14 September when the Committee at Merchant Taylors' Hall was wound up, and responsibility for Waller's finances again concentrated in the hands of Trenchard's committee at Grocers' Hall, which had administered the affairs of his earlier commands in the West. On the same day a group of M.P.s, dominated by men who sat for Western constituencies or had interests there, lent substantial sums for Waller's army.[1] Further votes on 20 September confirmed that Waller's task was now to deal with the royalist armies in the West. Hesilrige's particular responsibility for Waller's army was recognised in the order that he and Nichols should 'speak with the several Committees this Afternoon to hasten all Things concerning Sir Wm. Waller'.[2]

Hesilrige was also involved in efforts to increase the total resources available for Parliament's war-effort. In mid-September he played an important part in arranging the deal under which the Commissioners for the Customs advanced £30,000 for the navy, in return for an ordinance confirming them in office until 1645.[3] Hesilrige was the first named of the committee of five appointed to approach the customers on 13 September, and reported their success on the sixteenth.[4] The members appointed on the thirtieth were then included in a larger committee, alongside naval specialists like Vane and Green, which conducted the formal negotiations which led to the passing of the necessary ordinance on 18 September.[5] The customers were a radical group, including Aldermen Fowke and Andrewes, who had been prominent in radical agitation for a new army during the spring and early summer, and Maurice Thompson.[6] Thompson had been associated with Hesilrige since the

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1. C.J., iii. 240.
2. C.J., iii. 249.
3. C.J., iii. 246.
4. C.J., iii. 239, 243.
5. C.J., iii. 243, 245, 246.
6. C.J., iii. 246; V. Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, 260ff.

1630s, and he had been one of the moving spirits behind the Sea Adventure for Ireland, in which Andrewes had invested £500, while Hesilrige and Reynolds who also sat on the committee appointed on 13 September were two of only three M.P.s who had invested in it.[1] Five of the eight customers were members of the Militia Committee.[2] In spite of the differences between Waller and some of the London radicals during the summer, Hesilrige was negotiating with friends. The initial approach may, indeed, have come from the customers themselves, and it is interesting that on the sixteenth the Commons rejected the deal which the Navy Committee had negotiated with the more conservative Merchant Adventurers for the advance of £60,000 on the credit of the customs.[3]

On 28 September Hesilrige was appointed to two further committees dealing with Parliament's financial problems. One was ordered 'to consider what Course is fitted to be taken for the present getting in of Monies; and how a continual supply may be had; and to propose what Committees are fit to be settled for that Purpose'. The other was to ask the City to appoint a committee, and to negotiate with this committee for a loan of £100,000 for the payment of the Scots army when it marched into England. The Commons and City Committees thus appointed became the Committee at Goldsmiths' Hall which played a major rôle in financing the Scots armies, and from mid-1644 onwards evolved the system of compounding.[5] Membership of this committee would neatly complement Hesilrige's membership of the Committee for Sequestration and the Committee for Both Kingdoms.

Religious reform was another area of activity from which Hesilrige had

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1. See above, 104 – 105 ; J.P. Prendergast, The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland, 443.
2. V. Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution, 240.
3. C.J., iii. 243.
4. C.J., iii. 258; Hist. MSS. Comm., MSS. of the House of Lords, N.S. XI, 357-8
5. Cal. of the Proc. of the Comm. for Compounding 1643-60, ed. M.A.E. Green, (5 vols. 1889-92), i., pp. v-vi.

been drawn away by his military reponsibilities. On 30 September the Commons ordered Sir Robert Harley to prepare an order to prohibit the wearing of surplices. An order instructing the Committee for removing of Scandalous and Superstitious Monuments to remove copes and surplices from churches and educational establishments was passed on 3 October. This order also specified that the committee should 'apply them to the Relief and Succour of the wounded and maimed Soldiers'. Mercurius Aulicus claimed that Hesilrige and Prideaux had

> moved the House, that for as much as the poore wounded Soldiers were in want of Linen to make Lint, they might have all the Surplices belonging to the Kings Schollars at Westminster, to supply their necessities; for (said Sir Arthur) this foolish Linnen would doe the the poore Souldiers a great deale of good, whereas it does the Schollars no good at all, but a great deale of hurt.[1]

Although Prideaux, a Western M.P., worked alongside Hesilrige and Trenchard in support of Waller's army, it seems likely that the religious motive was uppermost and that he and Hesilrige used the needs of the soldiers to initiate or support this action to meet a long-standing puritan demand.

Such opportunities to reaffirm a simple connection between the war and godly purposes were rare. Essex's political strength in the wake of Gloucester and Newbury enabled him to challenge Waller's gains during the summer. Conflict seemed to have been averted on 28 September when Waller agreed 'to submit to my Lord General's Directions', and Essex, at the request of a Commons' delegation, agreed to 'begin upon a new Score', and give Waller 'the best Encouragement he can'.[2] One indication that all was not well was given on 5 October, when the Commons felt it necessary to send a delegation to Essex to explain its proceedings regarding the horses assigned to Waller and Hesilrige's regiments under commissions from

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1. C.J., iii. 259, 262; E. 71(8), Mercurius Aulicus, Week 40 (1643), 552.
2. C.J., iii. 256.

Manchester, who, as commander of the 6,500 horse, had power to levy horses in most of Parliament's territory. The delegation consisted of Hesilrige, Trenchard and Prideaux, who were clearly identified with Waller, and Nichols and Gerard who supported Pym's policy of sustaining both generals. They were instructed to tell Essex that it was left to him, 'to do herein as shall seem best to His Excellency, for Dispatch of the Service'.[1]

This conciliatory message did not forestall, and may even have provoked, Essex's attack in the Lords. He pointed out 'the great Inconvenience that is by the Quartering of Sir William Waller's Forces within his Army; and that, unless the Forces of Sir William Waller be under his Command, he doubts some Inconvenience will soon happen'. The Lords agreed that Waller's forces should be subordinated to Essex and referred consideration of how this should be achieved to the Committee of Safety.[2] On the seventh the Commons attempted to save Waller's commission of 25 August by resolving that, notwithstanding anything contained in it, Waller was bound to obey Essex's orders.[3] This was insufficient for Essex who was determined to destroy Waller's independence and was confident enough to threaten resignation if he did not get his way.[4] Eventually, after sitting until midnight, both Houses agreed to amend Waller's commission to remove the original reference to him receiving instructions from both Houses and substitute the instructions of the Lord General.[5] Whether because this left the commission meaningless (Waller had long abandoned any hope of receiving any practical benefits from the General Rising scheme) or because of further pressure from Essex, Waller voluntarily surrendered his commission on the ninth, 'upon M^{r} Pym's affirmac$\bar{o}$n y^{t} he was confident the Lo: Gen'all would Grant him another Commission to be

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1. C.J., iii. 263.
2. L.J., vi. 242-3.
3. C.J., iii. 266.
4. L.J., vi. 246-7.
5. C.J., iii. 267; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116 f. 82b.

Serg^{t} Major Gen'all of the West, in as Ample manner as ever any Commission was granted to a Commander by any Gen'all'.[1] The destruction of the work of the summer was completed on 11 October when the Commons endorsed the Militia Committee's request to Essex for a separate commander for the City forces.[2]

In the midst of this crisis for Waller's army, Hesilrige's renewed involvement in wider questions continued to grow. On the seventh he was one of the Commons' members of a joint committee to consider the French ambassador's complaint concerning the arrest of Walter Montague. He was probably appointed because of his earlier involvement in the loan from the Customers, since the same joint committee was also to consider the ordinance by which the Merchant Adventurers were to be incorporated in return for a loan secured on the customs revenue.[3] The committee worked quickly, producing an uncompromising answer to the French ambassador which was agreed by the House on 9 October,[4] and settling the details of the Merchant Adventurers' ordinance in time for it to be passed by the Commons on the eleventh.[5] Hesilrige clearly took some interest in the diplomatic side of the committee's work. When, on 16 October, it became necessary to send three members to apologise to the ambassador for the stopping of his coach by the City's guards, Hesilrige was chosen along with Vane and Holles.[6]

By mid-October Pym was sick and in consequence the Committee of Safety had ceased to sit.[7] Both routine military administration and the compromise which Pym had persuaded the commanders to accept were in danger. On 12 October the Commons had appointed a committee to take care of the supply of Essex's army, which included supporters of both Essex and Waller.[8] This balance

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1. C.J., iii. 269; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116 f. 82b.
2. C.J., iii. 273.
3. C.J., iii. 266.
4. C.J., iii. 269; L.J., vi. 250.
5. C.J., iii. 273.
6. C.J., iii. 275.
7. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116 f. 84b.
8. C.J., iii. 274.

was maintained on the sixteenth when the members added to the committee included Hesilrige and Tate on the one hand, and Stapleton and Sir Samuel Luke on the other.[1] Next day Waller and Hesilrige were among ten members appointed to a joint committee to consult with Essex on measures for the advance of the armies.[2] Such committees could not, however, compensate for the loss of coordination resulting from the paralysis of the Committee of Safety, and this led to the revival of the Council of War project. On the seventeenth the Commons appointed a committee to nominate members and prepare instructions for a Council. Pym was appointed in name, but the politics of 1644 were foreshadowed by the presence of Vane and St. John and the fact that of eleven other members at least five - Hesilrige, Waller, Prideaux, Mildmay and Tate - were War Party critics of Essex.[3]

A fresh outbreak of conflict between Waller and Essex was narrowly avoided on the seventeenth, when the Western men agreed to raise money for Waller on their own credit, after Essex had appropriated the whole of £20,000 which had been sent to him for the use of both his and Waller's armies.[4] On the twenty-sixth the Lords refused a Commons' request that half of the £20,000 fine on Judge Berkley should be allocated to Waller, insisting that Essex should have it all. The Commons stood firm because this allocation was essential to enable the Western men to raise immediate loans. They requested a conference and appointed Prideaux, Wilde, Trenchard and Hesilrige as managers; at a second conference later in the day their managers were Vane, St. John, Prideaux and Strode. They were chosen to express the Commons' determination to carry this point and next day the Lords gave in.[5]

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1. C.J., iii. 276.
2. C.J., iii. 278.
3. C.J., iii. 278-9.
4. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116 f. 84b.
5. C.J., iii. 289, 290, 291; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116 f. 87a.

27 October saw the formation of a committee, consisting of the M.P.s for Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, to take care of the western counties, and the passing by the Commons of the Ordinance for the association of Sussex, Kent, Surrey and Hampshire.[1] The Lords passed this ordinance on 4 November and agreed to join the Commons in requesting Essex to grant Waller a commission as Major General of the Association.[2] The machinery required to support Waller's army in a march westward across southern England was being constructed.

The key questions were whether Essex would acquiesce in these plans, and whether the Commons would be prepared to override any opposition on his part. The position of governors in relation to Major Generals commanding field armies was, as Waller had discovered from his dealings with Fiennes, an anomalous one. The question of the governorship of Portsmouth, an important town within the area in which Waller was to operate, became a test for Waller and his supporters. On 12 September the Commons had received a petition from the town requesting that Waller should be appointed governor and had asked Essex to grant him a commission with power to appoint a deputy.[3] Essex, however, nominated Lord Wharton, and provoked a fresh debate on 28 October. Faced with this conflict, the Commons attempted a compromise and sent a delegation to ask Wharton to resign and then ask Essex to appoint a man, 'whose Occasions will give him leave to reside upon the Place'.[4] Waller's supporters may have been under strength, or they may have seen the advantages of persuading Wharton to resign on this basis before counter-attacking on Waller's behalf. When Wharton's agreement to resign was reported to the

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1. C.J., iii. 291, 292.
2. L.J., vi. 294.
3. C.J., iii. 237.
4. C.J., iii. 293; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 198b; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 87b.

Commons on the thirtieth, 'the Westerne men viz Whitehead & Trenchard especiallie & S^r Arthur Haselrigg /spoke/ violentlie for S^r William Waller & that clause to be putt out'.[1] They forced a division on the deletion of the clause, with Hesilrige acting as a teller, and won by forty-six votes to thirty-seven.[2] The clear implication was that Waller should be appointed, but Essex decided to keep the post in his own hands and appoint a deputy.[3]

On Thursday 2 November the Commons decided to ask the Lords to agree to Hesilrige's addition to the Committee of Safety, and this was followed, later in the day, by a similar decision to nominate Sir Peter Wentworth. This request, agreed by the Lords on the third,[4] marked the abandonment of the Council of War project in favour of strengthening the War Party or pro-Waller elements on the Committee of Safety. Although there is evidence of Hesilrige attending meetings on only two occasions in 1643 (as well as two in 1644 when most of the committee's functions had been taken over by the Committee of Both Kingdoms) he may have attended others and one of these meetings was important for Waller's army.[5] The recognition of his suitability for such a position was, in any case, to give him a strong claim to membership of the Committee of Both Kingdoms when it was created.

Hesilrige had become increasingly involved in financial matters since the beginning of September. His competence was recognised on Saturday 4 November when he was the fourth member named to a twenty-two man committee appointed to draft the ordinance to set up a new Committee of Public Accounts.[6] The importance he attributed to work on financial committees was demonstrated

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 199a.
2. Ibid.; C.J., iii. 294.
3. C.J., iii. 302.
4. C.J., iii. 301.
5. P.R.O., S.P. 28/264 ff. 85a, 91a (13 Nov. 1643); L.J., vi. 347 (letter of 13 or 14 Dec. 1643); P.R.O., S.P. 16/501 f. 170a (20 April 1644), /502 f. 23a (12 June 1644).
6. C.J., iii. 302.

later in the day when he joined Clotworthy as teller for the proposal that the House should adjourn until Tuesday the seventh, in a division in which they were successfully opposed by two of Hesilrige's usual allies, Wentworth and Strode.[1] When the House did agree to a two day adjournment, on 8 November, it was to allow committees, especially those concerned with the provision of money, additional time for their work.[2]

The Earl of Holland's return from Oxford threatened a revival of the Peace Party, particularly if Holland and other defectors were readmitted to the Lords. Essex, and his Commons supporters led by Stapleton, were already drawing close to Peace Party men like Holles,[3] and they too would be strengthened. The potential of this coalition was demonstrated on 11 November when the Commons debated the treatment of Holland. It was proposed that the Lords should be asked to commit him to the Tower but in a division on whether to put this question Holles and Stapleton defeated Wentworth and Strode by fifty-nine votes to fifty-eight. Led by Wentworth and St. John, Holland's enemies then pressed the demand that Holland should be committed but that the choice of prison should be left to the Lords. The gap widened in a further division on whether this question should be put, as Wentworth and Hesilrige were defeated by Holles and Stapleton by fifty-nine votes to fifty-six.[4] This failure meant that Holland's influence could never be entirely eliminated. It also pushed St. John into an alliance with Essex's critics and brought Hesilrige into close association with Vane and St. John in a series of manoeuvres in early 1644 designed to ensure Holland's exclusion from the Lords.

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1. C.J., iii. 302.
2. C.J., iii. 305.
3. M.P. Mahony, The Presbyterian Party in the Long Parliament, 2 July 1644 - 3 June 1647 (Oxford, D. Phil., 1973) 6, 31; Whitelocke, Annals, Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 37, 343 f. 285a.
4. C.J., iii. 308; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, 229b-230a, 230b. The Journal transposes the tellers and voting figures for the second division.

The dangers posed to Waller's army by Essex's political strength were evident in mid-November. Waller had advanced from Farnham towards Winchester on 3 November but reports of a strong force from Oxford advancing to cut off his retreat had forced him to pull back to Basing. While Hopton and his Western forces advanced to Winchester, Waller made several attempts to take Basing House, but was handicapped by the mutinous attitude of his borrowed regiments of Londoners. This and the approach of a royalist force from Oxford forced him to retreat to Farnham on 15 November.[1] The uncertainties surrounding Waller's command resulted in occasional Commons orders rather than consistent support. Thus on 3 November Pennington and Hesilrige had been sent to ask the Militia Committee to ensure that Waller was supplied with all necessities.[2] Four days later, in response to complaints from Middlesex about those of Waller's soldiers still billeted on them, Hesilrige and Browne were ordered to meet the Committee for the Safety of the West and the Middlesex deputy lieutenants to consider how they could be moved.[3] Essex's hostility towards Waller, demonstrated by his denial that Waller faced any threat from Oxford, in spite of the reports reaching his own Scoutmaster General, Sir Samuel Luke,[4] was a major obstacle to the resolution of these difficulties. The Western men were willing to support Waller in spite of Essex's failure to grant Waller the commission as Major General of the West promised on 9 October, but the loyalty and commitment of the newly-formed South-Eastern Association was more doubtful. On 10 November Essex told the Lords that his army lacked money and provisions and argued that the new

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1. J. Adair, Roundhead General, 112-21.
2. C.J., iii. 300.
3. C.J., iii. 303.
4. C.J., iii. 302; Journal of Sir Samuel Luke (Oxon. Rec. Soc., 3 vols., 1947 - 1953) III 187, 190, 193, 194.

Association would 'be prejudicial to the Forces under his Command'.[1] He was to refuse to grant Waller a commission until January 1644.

One answer to the competition between Waller and Essex was to seek to increase the total funds available for the armies. On Monday 13 November the Commons resolved not to sit on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays so that committees, especially financial committees, could sit on those days. Hesilrige found a place on a new committee appointed to consult with the Militia Committee regarding obstacles to the collection of the Weekly Assessment and ways of minimising demands for free quarter which were damaging the flow of taxes and contributions from the counties around London.[2] The Commons also took up Essex's complaints about the state of his army and ordered that the Committee of Safety should review its current and desirable size, recruitment, payment and cost. The fact that Hesilrige was given special responsibility for this order, as well as the scope of the inquiry, indicated that Essex's critics, while continuing to support his rivals, also intended to seek stronger parliamentary control over his army in return for material assistance.[3] Hesilrige also secured an order that the Committee of Safety should take special care to enable his own horse and foot to march to Waller, and consider 'a settled way of payment' for Waller's forces.[4]

The dangers of Waller's dependence on the goodwill of the Western men were demonstrated on 15 November, when their interests and his diverged over Plymouth. It was reported that the town was facing increasing royalist pressure and the Western men 'Earnestly desired' that five hundred of Waller's men should be sent there by sea. Hesilrige, knowing Waller's need for men

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1. L.J., vi. 301.
2. C.J., iii. 309.
3. C.J., iii. 310.
4. C.J., iii. 310.

at Farnham, obviously opposed this, for it was only 'after some debate' that this 'was yielded unto by S^{r} Ar. Haselrigge'. He and Trenchard were ordered to write to Waller, explaining this decision and assuring him that these men would remain under his command.[1] The loss of these men was partially balanced by two orders allocating confiscated sums for use in despatching Hesilrige's foot and by an order giving the Committee for the West power to investigate rumours that Mr. Curteen held a royalist estate worth £2,000 and to use this for Waller's benefit if the information was correct.[2] Hesilrige's foot finally marched on the seventeenth, followed three days later by his horse.[3]

Hesilrige did not leave with his men. He could be of more use to Waller's army, and the aggressive prosecution of the war, by remaining at Westminster. Negotiations for peace were again an issue, with the French Ambassador Extraordinary, the Prince d'Harcourt's, offer of mediation. Hesilrige was a member of an evenly balanced twelve man committee appointed on 20 November to consider this offer.[4] Whether because men like Holles and Stapleton won the debates in committee, or because Hesilrige and fellow hard-liners like Vane and St. John realised that a straight rejection could not be carried in the House, the committee reported a draft answer, on 22 November, expressing Parliament's willingness to listen to any proposal.[5] If this was a tactical retreat it worked well since it enabled them to take advantage of d'Harcourt's refusal to follow the agreed procedure under which ambassadors had to approach the Houses through one of their Speakers. On 30 November the Commons rejected the Lords' proposed compromise of a joint committee to hear d'Harcourt and appointed a committee, including Hesilrige, to draft reasons for this rejection.[6]

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1. C.J., iii. 312; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116 f. 92ab.
2. C.J., iii. 312, 313.
3. E. 76(10). The True Informer, no. 9, 11-18 Nov. 1643; E. 76(24), Mercurius Civicus, no. 26, 16-23 Nov. 1643.
4. C.J., iii. 316.
5. C.J., iii. 318-9.
6. C.J., iii. 325.

On 25 November the Commons had received a letter from Waller, thanking them for the vote of £5,000 for his army a week earlier, but insisting that at least twice that amount was required. He predicted mutiny if he did not receive more money, for 'I have reason to doubt what command I shall be able to retain upon those whom I can neither reward nor punish'.[1] The Commons reacted promptly, agreeing to raise £5,000 for Waller on the credit of the excise, and to advance £1,000 of this immediately. Hesilrige and Trenchard were given responsibility for raising the money and sending it to Waller.[2] Hesilrige's rôle in routine military administration was confirmed on 28 November when he was named to a five man committee charged with finding a way to satisfy the existing claims of suppliers of arms and ammunition and with devising an orderly system for future provision and payment.[3]

On the previous day Waller had succeeded in beating off Hopton's long awaited attack on Farnham.[4] His forces were, however, still desperately short of money and supplies. On 3 December he came to London to plead his army's needs but was forced to return to Farnham on news of the King's advance to Basing with a large force.[5] Fortunately the King abandoned his advance, and Hopton decided to split his army into winter quarters at Winchester, Alresford, Alton and Petersfield.[6] On the fourth the Commons, on hearing the letter which Waller had written before his departure, ordered that a further thousand pounds should be raised for Waller on the credit of the excise and that the Committee of Safety should give urgent consideration to his supplies.[7] The importance of support for Waller was emphasised by the capture of Arundel in Sussex by a royalist force under Colonel Bamfield and Sir Edward Ford on

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1. C.J., iii. 314, 319; Hist. MSS. Comm., Portland, i. 159-60.
2. C.J., iii. 319.
3. C.J., iii. 322.
4. E. 77(14), A Great Over-throw Given to Sir Ralph Hopton's whole Army (1643); Colonel Joseph Bamfeild's Apologie (The Hague, 1685), 7-8; Journal of Sir Samuel Luke. iii. 202-4.
5. Bodl., Tanner MS. 62. 2, f. 410.
6. Colonel Joseph Bamfeild's Apologie, 7-8.
7. C.J., iii. 328.

6 December.[1] On 9 December this produced a series of orders designed to mobilise the counties of the South Eastern Association and to persuade the Militia Committee to allow its forces to remain with Waller.[2] This latter order was probably secured by Hesilrige who produced a letter of 6 December from Waller, warning that the City regiments had been prevented from leaving him immediately only by a promise that they could leave with his permission on the thirteenth.[3] Whatever happened in the capital, Waller had decided to use his City regiments while he had the chance. Taking advantage of Hopton's dispersal of his forces, Waller marched towards Alton on the night of 12 December, and surprised Crawford's brigade on the thirteenth. He inflicted heavy casualties and took large numbers of prisoners. This victory, and Hopton's subsequent withdrawal of the brigade quartered at Petersfield, opened Waller's route to Arundel.[4]

Hesilrige spent the day of this victory hard at work in Westminster. He successfully urged that three M.P.s should be injoined to attend Nathaniel Fiennes' court martial where they were required as prosecution witnesses, and pointed out 'how Earnest & importunate suit was made to the ho: for Justice to be done'.[5] He was the fourth member named to a committee appointed to 'find out an expedient course, that those statutes that are made against Popish Recusants, may not be put in execution against Protestants' - an interesting committee given the Commons' supposed commitment to a uniform Presbyterian settlement.[6] He also presented the account of the Commissioners of the Excise for the first quarter,[7] which suggests that he was closely

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1. Gardiner, Civil War, i. 253; Colonel Joseph Bamfeild's Apologie, 8-9.
2. C.J., iii. 334-5.
3. E. 79(19), Mercurius Aulicus, 50th week, (December 1643).
4. J. Adair, Roundhead General, 125-8; Colonel Joseph Bamfeild's Apologie, 8-9; E. 78(22), A Narration of the Great Victorie (Through God's Providence) Obtained by the Parliaments Forces under Sir William Waller At Alton in Surrey the 13. of this instant December 1643 Against the Cavaliers, (1643).
5. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116 f. 100b, cf. f. 102a.
6. C.J., iii. 340.
7. C.J., iii. 340.

involved in Parliament's dealings with them. This would have paralleled his involvement in negotiations with the Customers (whose personnel overlapped with the Excise) and the Merchant Adventurers. Along with Trenchard, he had of course been responsible for raising large sums of money for Waller on the credit of the Excise.

Late that night or next morning, Hesilrige was one of six signatories to a letter from the Committee of Safety to Essex welcoming his decision to send five hundred horse under Colonel Behr to join Waller but urging him either to move his whole army closer to Waller's or to send some foot to Waller, in order to counter the royalist build-up in Sussex and Hampshire and enable Waller to 'prosecute this great Advantage which he has now gotten'.[1] Essex's resistance to the idea of helping his rival, combined with the revival of Waller's prestige and self-confidence after Alton, was about to produce a new upsurge in political conflict between the generals. Hesilrige made the most of Alton, reporting the details to the Commons at great length on 15 December. The Commons decided to send a letter of thanks and entrusted the drafting to Hesilrige and Gerard.[2]

Hesilrige announced in his speech that he was going down to Waller's army. It was only to be a weekend visit.[3] Hesilrige could not afford to be absent from Westminster for longer at this stage. He was deeply involved in the work of financial and administrative support for the war-effort in general, while the threat of renewed conflict between Waller and Essex emphasised his value as a spokesman and lobbyist for Waller's army. Above all there was now a vacuum at the centre of Parliament's affairs. Pym had died on the eighth and Hesilrige was one of the pall-bearers at his funeral on the fifteenth.[4]

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1. L.J., vi. 347.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 243b-244a; C.J., iii. 341.
3. See D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 248b (Monday 18 Nov.).
4. J.H. Hexter, The Reign of King Pym, 5.

While he lived he had helped to restrain the new political forces and divisions created by the conflicts of the generals. Hesilrige, who had moved closer to the centre of affairs with his appointment to the Committee of Safety, and whose earlier links with St. John and Vane had been revived during the autumn, was to play an important part in forging a new, more radical leadership in the Commons, and in linking that leadership with Waller's supporters.

Chapter 6. Parliament and the Generals: December 1643 to November 1644

(i) The Struggle for Power: December - March

By the end of 1643 Parliament was faced with problems which could not be resolved without major political conflict. A year of fighting had brought neither victory nor peace, and Parliament's armies were in a poor state to resist further royalist offensives. At St. Albans Essex's army had disintegrated to the point where Baillie believed that, leaving aside the City regiments, he had no more than three thousand men for his fourteen hundred officers to command.[1] In the South-East Waller's composite army was chronically short of money and, as forces from Oxford prepared to join Hopton in a drive towards London, his ability to hold that army together was in doubt. Few M.P.s can have been surprised when, on 18 December, they heard the letter, which Hesilrige brought back from the army, warning that the London regiments were about to return home while the Kent forces had yet to arrive.[2] There was hope that when the Scots marched into England they would reduce the threat from the North, but it was already clear that their arrival would place still greater strain on Parliament's limited resources. This would intensify the already fierce competition between Essex, Waller and the commanders of other Association armies.

To make matters worse the City, which would have to provide most of the money for the armies in general as well as finding men for Waller and Essex,

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1. Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing, ii. 112.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 248b-249a.

was becoming war-weary. Royalists, observing the conservative trend of City politics and the growing pressure for peace, hoped to build a party there. The danger was sufficient to prompt St. John to introduce an ordinance on 20 December to prevent the election of ill-affected men to the Common Council.[1]

These problems would have taxed Pym, but his death had created a gap which noone could yet fill. Instead the Commons drifted as groups manoeuvred for position. The conflict was precipitated by Essex's letter of 18 December in which he sought both Houses' support for his refusal to follow the Committee of Safety's advice to move South to help Waller. Hesilrige was one of the Commons' managers for the conference on the twentieth at which the Lords were persuaded to side with the Committee. Later in the day he was one of the Commons' six representatives on the joint committee which drafted Parliament's letter, insisting that Essex should march to protect the borders of the South-Eastern Association while Waller went to deal with the royalists who had seized Arundel.[2] Essex could point to the weakness of his army and to the fact that he had sent five or six hundred horse to join Waller, but the tone of his letter and his dismissal of the threat to Waller and the South-East made it easy for his opponents to conclude that his refusal to assist his rival was inspired by his desire to 'have his great name stand alone',[3] and to convince others of this. Waller, by contrast, enjoyed the support generated by his obvious danger and by success. On 23 December Hesilrige reported the details of his capture of Arundel and 'therefore', urged, 'that some speedy summe of money might be sent unto him'. The House responded by voting him £2,500.[4]

When Essex returned to London at the end of December he was 'not well pleased with some members and proceedings of the House of Commons'.[5] His

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1. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 102b.
2. L.J., vi. 347-9; C.J., iii. 346-7.
3. Waller, Recollections, in The Poetry of Anna Matilda, 123.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 255b - 256a; C.J., iii. 350.
5. B. Whitelocke, Memorials of English Affairs (4 vols., Oxf., 1853), i. 232.

anger was clearly directed against Vane, St. John and their associates who had thrown their weight behind his rivals, and Waller in particular. There was now nothing to inhibit him from seeking direct political power, or to restrain him from a firm alliance with Holland and other Peace Lords who had returned from Oxford.[1] Their readmission to the Lords would give him control of that House, and if Vane and St. John could be discredited or removed, Holles and Stapleton would be able to provide a sympathetic leadership in the Commons. An increasingly conservative City would welcome this, while the Scots would have to work with those they found in power.

On the other side, Vane and St. John's record suggests that they had no wish to destroy Essex's army, which had a key rôle to play in the war-effort, but they had to contain his political power. So long as they were threatened by Essex there was little to distinguish their tactics, in diverting resources from his army and obstructing its recruitment, from those of out and out opponents of Essex's military rôle like Hesilrige. Under pressure a loose grouping which included Vane, St. John, Hesilrige, Tate and Cromwell, who had worked together occasionally since 1641, became a much more tightly organised group capable of fighting Essex and his Commons allies for the leadership. To a great extent their chances of success depended upon their ability to hold Essex at bay until the Scots arrived to support them.

On 1 January Hesilrige provoked a 'vehement debate' by telling the Commons that Essex had still not sent Waller a commission as Major-General of the South-Eastern Association. During the debate it emerged that Essex had sent a commission but that it had been more limited than those granted to other major-generals and that Waller had refused to accept it because it was to continue only during the Lord General's pleasure. St. John spoke against the

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1. B. Whitelocke, Memorials of English Affairs (4 vols., Oxf., 1853), i. 232.

divisiveness of these limitations with 'great fervency', while Sir Peter Wentworth proposed sending to Essex to find out who had given the ill counsel to insert the words 'during pleasure'. A letter of complaint from Waller to Nichols had been read during the debate and Stapleton now proposed that they should ask Waller who had given him the evil counsel to include expressions concerning Essex which were 'the most uncivile ones that hee had ever heard offe'. The bitterness between the factions had obviously reached new heights when the participants were prepared to describe each other in terms previously reserved for Parliament's enemies. Alarmed by this the House brushed aside Hesilrige's demand that Stapleton should be questioned for his words, and accepted Earle's assurance that Essex would be willing to grant a new commission once he knew the sense of the House.[1]

The main point had been won and Hesilrige was far from subdued as the House went on to debate the establishment of an excise on poultry. Hesilrige knew the importance of excise duties to the financing of the armies and was one of three members who were 'very earnest' in opposing the majority's decision to limit this new excise to rabbits and pigeons.[2] On the third he reported Waller's success in driving off the royalist force marching to the relief of Arundel Castle and secured a vote of £4,000 from the Excise.[3] Later the House heard Essex's letter confirming that he had now granted Waller a full commission, but his intention to continue the fight against his rival was made clear by his offer to 'mack it appeare, I deed no more than I ought to doe' in imposing the original limitations.[4] Hesilrige's strong interest in religious reform probably accounts for his addition to the Assembly that day, but there was a certain symmetry in the fact that he and Reynolds were appointed in

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 266ab.
2. Ibid., f. 266b-267a; C.J., iii. 356
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, ff. 268a, 269a; C.J., iii. 356.
4. Bodl., Tanner MS. 62/2, f. 490.

order to balance the Lords' addition of Essex to that body.[1]

When the House met again on 6 January, Vane, St. John and Hesilrige were ready to reveal Brooke's plot. Their report not only thwarted this attempt to exploit the moderate trend of City politics to create a royalist party there, but also branded talk of City pressure on Parliament for a rapid peace as seditious. The exposure of conspiracies had served the Pym group well in 1641 and the Vane - St. John group were now ready to follow that example as they fought off the challenge from Essex. Hesilrige shared with Vane and St. John the Commons' thanks for having discovered the plot and was added to the committee which was given the task of investigating it.[2] Later in the day he was named to the committee appointed to discuss this and the declaration summoning the Oxford Parliament, with a Lords' committee, and on the eighth he was appointed to the joint committee sent to give the Common Council an account of the plot.[3] The City mounted a demonstration of unity at a banquet later in the month to which both Houses, the Scots and the Assembly were invited. Agostini remarked that it had 'pleased the interested parties, but others recognise it as the result of fear, which will be used, however, to extract considerable help in money'.[4] By revealing the plot Vane, St. John and Hesilrige had disposed of one important threat and thrown their political opponents on to the defensive.

To ensure that effect they presented their discovery of the plot as a fortunate deliverance at the last moment.[5] It seems likely, however, that they had been following its progress for some time, and that Hesilrige knew what he was doing when, on 25 December, he secured the Commons order for an

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1. C.J., iii. 357.
2. C.J., iii. 358.
3. C.J., iii. 359, 360.
4. Cal. S.P. Ven. 1643-7, 67.
5. E. 29(3), A Cunning Plot to Divide and Destroy the Parliament and the City of London (1643/4).

exchange for three of his Leicestershire supporters which provided the excuse for one of the conspirators to travel to Oxford. Indeed Theophilus Riley, the City's Scoutmaster who was one of the plotters, suggested that it was the Hesilrige family who had asked him to suggest a suitable exchange.[1] Riley was already under suspicion as a result of his success in arranging an exchange for the Irish rebel Colonel Reade, and a committee had been investigating this affair since mid-October.[2] At some point the conspirators made the mistake of approaching Sir David Watkins, who then gave the three M.P.s regular information about the plot.[3] If this began before 25 December, it is virtually certain that Hesilrige accepted or asked for Riley's suggestion in order to discover more.

The position of the Vane - St. John group was strengthened by this success but they had yet to inflict any direct damage on Essex's supporters, and Vane's attempts to implicate Clotworthy in the plot on 8 and 10 January proved inconclusive.[4] When Vane received an invitation from Lord Lovelace to receive offers from the King, he saw a chance of discovering further information which could be used against political opponents, notably Holland. Having consulted Hesilrige, St. John and Samuel Browne, he opened negotiations with Lovelace, covering himself by keeping the Speaker and the Scots fully informed.[5] On 10 January the Lords voted to readmit Holland.[6] At some point during the following week Essex, who had discovered traces of Vane's dealings with Lovelace, sent emissaries to him and St. John, threatening to charge them with treason for holding intelligence with Oxford unless they accepted Holland's

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1. E. 29(3), A Cunning Plot to Divide and Destroy the Parliament and the City of London (1643/4); C.J., iii. 353.
2. C.J., iii. 296.
3. J. Rushworth, Historical Collections, vi. 381.
4. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, ff. 106ab, 107a.
5. Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing, ii. 135; Journal of Occurrences, Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 4a.
6. L.J., vi. 377.

return and dropped plans to charge him with treason.[1]

On the seventeenth Holles was due to report a conference at which the Lords had requested the lifting of Holland's sequestration while Essex was prepared to accuse Vane and St. John in the Lords. But at the beginning of the morning the Speaker reported the whole matter to the Commons, and Vane gave the House a report of his actions.[2] Vane and his associates had preempted Essex's attack, and could now go on to the offensive. When Gilbert Millington reported that the Earl of Clare had used a pass from Essex to return to his house in Nottingham, 'Haselrigg smell a plot &c.' and Holles had to defend his brother and Essex against this charge.[3] The report of the Lords' request for the lifting of Holland's sequestration was followed immediately by Samuel Browne's report from his committee recommending that Holland be impeached for treason. After a long debate the House divided on whether to put the question that Holland was guilty of treason and, with Vane and Hesilrige telling for the Yeas and Holles and Stapleton for the Noes, the vote was lost by 75 votes to 60.[4] While the Vane - St. John group failed in this vote, they had succeeded in changing the terms of the debate.

Essex was still determined to exploit the group's contacts with Oxford and, ignoring the advice of his supporters in the Commons, set his Advocate-General to take further examinations, with a view to having Vane, St. John, Hesilrige, Browne and Lenthall tried by his Council of War. This was a clear breach of privilege, and when Vane and St. John learnt of it they were quick to report to the Commons on 24 January. They, Hesilrige and Browne again explained their actions and Essex's breach of privilege was referred to a

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1. Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing, ii. 135.
2. C.J., iii. 369; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 278a.
3. Ibid.
4. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 109ab; C.J., iii. 370.

committee.[1] Although the matter was allowed to end there, Essex had blundered and the Vane - St. John group made sure that this was obvious to all. The incident brought into the open the danger that Essex would exploit his position as Lord General for political ends, and drove the Scots, who had been involved in the affair from the start, still closer to his opponents.[2] It can hardly have been coincidental that the twenty-fourth also saw Warwick, who was one of Essex's closest collaborators in the campaign for Holland's readmission, attempt to defuse some of the tension by proposing an ordinance under which future decisions to readmit members who returned from Oxford were to require the consent of both Houses.[3]

According to one account Essex explained his attempt to destroy Vane on the grounds that 'Vane was always against the recruiting of his army'.[4] Alongside the dramatic struggle for political power, competition for resources and military authority continued. On 8 January Hesilrige and Vane were ordered to write a letter of thanks to Waller for his capture of Arundel Castle. The House also appointed a committee to join with the Committee for the Excise to expedite the loan of £4,000 for Waller's army, and ordered the committee of the Navy to negotiate with the Merchant Adventurers for a loan of £10,000 on the credit of the Excise, for the service of the West.[5] The terms of this loan were agreed on the tenth and the committee's work was extended to include consideration of Waller's musters; Hesilrige was added five days later.[6] The unity imposed on Essex's rivals by his bid for power was demonstrated on the twenty-second when Hesilrige supported Cromwell's attack on Willoughby of Parham, who was still contesting Manchester's authority in Lincolnshire,

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1. C.J., iii. 374, 375, 376; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, ff. 281a, 282a; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 110b - 111a; Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing, ii. 136.
2. Journal of Occurrences, Add. MS. 25, 465, f. 4b - 5a.
3. Whitelocke, Annals, Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 37,343, f. 285a; L.J., vi. 391.
4. Journal of Occurrences, Add. MS. 25,465, f. 4a.
5. C.J., iii. 360.
6. C.J., iii. 362, 367.

and was the first member named to the committee appointed to investigate his charges.[1] On the twenty-sixth Hesilrige was added to the Committee for the Excise when the Commons recommitted its report on obstructions to the Excise.[2] Four days later he was appointed to the committee for an ordinance for the better raising of money in Waller's South-Eastern Association.[3]

The events of December and January had demonstrated the need for an executive body which could exercise greater control over Essex than the Committee of Safety had been able to do, coordinate the work of the armies, and deal with royalist conspiracies. The imminent arrival of the Scots commissioners provided a reason for setting up a new body. In late January or early February Vane and St. John agreed the draft of an ordinance with Baillie and the other Scots already in London. This first Committee of Both Kingdoms ordinance was 'gotten through the House of Lords with little difficultie, where most was expected', largely because Say had been alienated from Essex by recent events while Northumberland was keen to establish good relations with the Scots.[4]

Hesilrige was among the fourteen M.P.s named in the ordinance. There were some respectable reasons for this. As a member of the Committee of Safety and the old Council of War he had obvious claims to be considered. The English representation was also designed, in part, to be representative of Parliament's major military units in the South: Essex's army (Essex, Roberts, Gerard and Stapleton), Manchester's army (Manchester and Cromwell), the City (Glyn) and the Navy (Warwick).[5] It would have been difficult to deny Waller a second representative and Hesilrige was the obvious choice. But the selection of

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 165, f. 280b; C.J., iii. 374.
2. C.J., iii. 378.
3. C.J., iii. 383.
4. Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing, ii. 141.
5. L.J., vi. 430.

members was also deliberately factional and the drafters deliberately excluded Holles and Clotworthy for instance.[1] Those nominated included Vane, St. John, Hesilrige, Browne and Cromwell, the core of the group, and others like Waller, the elder Vane, Roberts and Manchester, who were close to one or more of them.

The Lords' ordinance ran into heavy criticism when it reached its second reading on 3 February. The Lords' nomination of the Commons' members was attacked and those nominated had to stand up and say that they had known nothing of it. There were also strong objections to the powers given to the committee. The ordinance was not committed at the end of the debate and the most that could be agreed was that a temporary joint committee, including Hesilrige, should be appointed to hear communications from the Scots, while the arguments over the ordinance continued.[2]

Another ordinance to create a joint committee of both kingdoms had been given two readings on 30 January and sent to a committee which included Crew, Vane and St. John.[3] That ordinance might provide a vehicle for the salvage of some parts of the Lords' ordinance. On 7 February, after a further debate, the committee was ordered to withdraw and prepare amendments to the 30 January ordinance in the light of the debate.[4] They probably incorporated elements of the Lords' ordinance, but the end result was more acceptable to the Commons since the committee's life was limited to three months and it was barred from handling peace negotiations. When Crew reported the amendments they were apparently passed without difficulty. The problem now was to ensure that the carefully selected membership nominated in the Lords' ordinance was retained.

It was therefore proposed that those names should be read to the House and in

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1. Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing, ii. 141.
2. C.J., iii. 387; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 113b; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 7a.
3. C.J., iii. 382.
4. C.J., iii. 390.

a division Vane and Hesilrige carried this by 65 votes to 51 against Holles and Lewes. These names were then put to the vote one by one and approved, and the resemblance to the Lords' ordinance was completed by inserting the names they had inserted for their House en bloc.[1]

Unfortunately it was no longer the Lords' ordinance but a Commons' ordinance which would require the peers' agreement. Urged on by Holles, Essex and his friends in the Lords now set out to dilute it still further and in particular to restrict the committee's power over him as Lord General.[2] Mercurius Aulicus's assertion that Essex was particularly incensed 'because Sir William Waller's friend (Sir Arthur Haslerig) conceives it unfitting the Generall should have power in it',[3] is probably an accurate reflection of Essex's view of a committee which at this point seemed dominated by his rival's friends. Hesilrige was a manager at two of the conferences at which the Commons wore down the Lords' determination to adhere to their amendments.[4] Under heavy pressure from the Scots too[5] the Lords eventually passed the ordinance in its original form on the sixteenth.[6]

Essex's formal subordination to the Committee of Both Kingdoms damaged neither his ability to pose a political threat to the Vane - St. John group in Parliament, not his ability to undermine Waller's position. Hesilrige was concerned to obstruct his recruitment on both grounds and, for the moment, the rest of the group agreed with him. On 19 February the ordinance for the recruitment of Essex's army was reported from committee, '& when the House expected it should have passed Sr Arthur Haselrigg, Mr. Sollicitor and some others who had for some months retarded it moved new and impertinent objections'.

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1. C.J., iii. 391, 392.
2. Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing, ii. 141.
3. E. 35(27), Mercurius Aulicus, 17 Feb. 1643/4.
4. C.J., iii. 395, 396.
5. Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, ed. D. Laing, ii. 142.
6. L.J., vi. 430.

There were answered by Glyn, Stapleton and Sir Henry Cholmely, and the House made steady progress through the amendments reported from the committee.[1] The majority of members were not prepared to tolerate obviously factious opposition to the reconstruction of Essex's army.

His opponents could, however, delay progress by interfering in the details of its organisation. On the twentieth the Commons' members of the Committee of Both Kingdoms were given the task of reviewing Essex's swollen officer list.[2] They had made little progress by 26 February and the work was transferred to a new committee.[3] Chaired by Tate, another member of the Vane - St. John group, this committee made painfully slow progress and its reports provided fresh scope for interference. On 11 March the committee's recommendation that 'Colonel F. Marten' should be retained provoked a division in which Brereton and Stapleton defeated Vane and Hesilrige by nine votes.[4] With one hundred and thirty five members present this was clearly a factional division and its subject may well have been the radical Henry Marten, expelled from the Commons in August 1643.[5] The Establishment of Essex's army, its composition, structure and pay, offered further scope for interference and delay. Hesilrige secured a key position when, on 7 March, the Commons appointed him as one of a four man committee to consider this.[6] If men like Vane and St. John wished only to tame Essex's power, he could be forgiven for thinking that they intended to provoke his resignation.[7]

Hesilrige worked hard to exploit Essex's unhappy position, for the benefit of Waller. On 8 February Hesilrige had been named to a committee appointed to

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166 f. 15a; C.J., iii. 402-3.
2. C.J., iii. 404.
3. C.J., iii. 408.
4. C.J., iii. 424.
5. See C.M. Williams, 'The Political Career of Henry Marten, with Special Reference to the Origins of Republicanism in the Long Parliament' (D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1954), 327-8.
6. C.J., iii. 419.
7. Cal. S.P. Ven. 1643-7, 78.

consider Colonel Stapley's refusal, as the governor of Chichester appointed by Essex, to obey Waller's orders.[1] His refusal to compromise was reported to the Commons on the sixteenth, and when, on the twentieth, he was present to reject the committee's proposal that he should keep his place subject to Waller's orders, the Commons referred the matter to the Committee of Both Kingdoms.[2] With Hesilrige present, the committee wasted no time in deciding, on 23 February, that Stapley should retain nominal command but stay at Westminster and order his subordinates to obey Waller.[3]

On 1 March the committee ordered that Hesilrige should go to the Committee of the West 'to quicken their expediting of Sir William Waller', and he was obviously effective: on the seventh the Commons authorised the Committee of the West to raise £3,000 on the credit of the tin farmers to support those of Waller's forces not taken on by the South-Eastern Association.[4] Next day the Lords returned the South-Eastern Association ordinance designed to provide Waller's basic source of income. Knowing that he needed it, his opponents in the Lords had set out to exploit this by amending it at three points to emphasise that he was to be 'under His Excellency the Earl of Essex, Lord General'. Hesilrige and St. John had to divide the House in order to ensure that the Commons would delay its answer rather than accept this immediately. They defeated Earle and Clotworthy with ease, and although the Commons accepted two of the amendments next day, the third was referred to a committee of seven members headed by Hesilrige.[5] The time thus gained gave Waller a chance to write to the Speaker from Mitcham in Surrey setting out his objections to

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1. C.J., iii. 393.
2. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, ff. 117a, 117b - 118a.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 24.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 32; C.J., iii. 419.
5. C.J., iii. 422, 423.

the Lords' amendments. While he was willing to accept Essex's nominal superiority, he could not accept a situation in which he would be outranked by any of Essex's senior officers who entered the Association, he would be unable to appoint his own general officers, and his authority over garrisons would be in question once more.[1] To D'Ewes' horror this letter, which breached normal rules by taking notice of a matter before the House, was read on the eleventh.[2]

On the thirteenth, taking advantage of the absence of Holles, Lewes and others at Laud's trial, the committee reported and the third amendment was rejected. Hesilrige, 'seeing this vote so clearly carried', proposed that the question on the amendments agreed on the ninth should be reopened, and at length won this point. During the two hours of debate which followed, Stapleton, Glyn and others spoke three or four times each against vacating these votes, as did Hesilrige and Prideaux on the other side. In a division St. John and Hesilrige defeated Stapleton and Glyn by 69 votes to 52, and the votes were referred to the same committee.[3] Having won this point, Waller's supporters attempted to avoid a long confrontation with the Lords. On 16 March the House accepted the committee's report that the amendments should be agreed with a proviso guaranteeing Waller the full powers of a commander-in-chief within the Association unless Essex himself was present.[4] This compromise, which met Waller's practical objections to the amendments, did not satisfy the Lords and they delayed the ordinance for another two weeks.[5]

The position regarding those of Waller's forces which were not to be paid by the South-Eastern Association was still not settled. On 19 March the Committee of Both Kingdoms ordered Hesilrige to report on this to the Commons.

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1. Bodl., Tanner MS. 62/3, f. 619.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 316.
3. Ibid., f. 32ab; C.J., iii. 427.
4. C.J., iii. 429.
5. L.J., vi. 492.

As a result Waller's officer list was referred to the Committee of the West, and the Ashes were ordered to show Hesilrige their accounts of money formerly raised for the West. The House also ordered that the committee should examine the ownership of some jewels and, if they were sequestrable, use the proceeds to pay for arms for which Hesilrige had engaged himself.[1] On 21 March he reported that Waller was still owed £2,200 from Haberdashers' Hall. The Commons ordered that after loans to Waller from the City Militia Committee and some individuals in Bristol, which totalled some £1,700, had been repaid, the remainder should be used to discharge Hesilrige's engagements for arms and other provisions for his regiment.[2]

Hesilrige also continued to play his part in continued conflict with Essex. Some weeks before he had told D'Ewes 'That hee did not knowe whether it weere better that the L. Generall had no army or not for they would obey no bodie'.[3] On 20 March, when Scawen had reported the amendments to the ordinance for Essex's recruitment and these had been passed, John Lisle copied the Lords' tactics with regard to the South-Eastern Association ordinance, by proposing a proviso to make Essex's army subject to the orders and directions of the Committee of Both Kingdoms. Lisle was associated with the Vane - St. John group, and Glyn and Stapleton not only opposed this proviso, but also attacked Vane for deliberately obstructing the bill. But Hesilrige, St. John and others supported Vane, and the proviso was carried.[4] Next morning the House voted that Essex should be asked to find 'a place of honour' for Vane's associate Lord Roberts. This was not enough for Vane and later in the day he demanded that the post of Field Marshal should be specified, but although Hesilrige supported him, the House was unimpressed and took no action.[5]

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1. C.J., iii. 432.
2. C.J., iii. 433; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 32b.
3. Ibid., f. 37a.
4. Ibid., f. 36a; C.J., iii. 432-3.
5. C.J., iii. 433; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 37a.

The mood of the Commons was changing with the season. It was one thing to obstruct the reconstruction of Essex's army while the royalists were in winter quarters, another to continue this opposition when a new offensive could be expected. The dangers were dramatically demonstrated by Rupert's march to relieve Newark and the surrender of the parliamentarian besiegers on 22 March. The need to get Essex's army into the field was clear, and Vane and St. John, while continuing to support the claims of other armies, ceased to obstruct and began to work for a speedy completion of Parliament's main army.

The crisis after Newark increased the stakes in the South-East. On the twenty-fourth the Committee of Both Kingdoms wrote to Waller and Balfour,

> knowing we have no other reserve ready if your army should receive a blow, we assure ourselves you will be most careful not to engage in fight but upon such terms as, considering the state of our affairs you believe to be most for the good of the kingdom.[1]

On the other hand Waller's London regiments were only with difficulty being restrained from returning home, while it was only a matter of time before Essex would recall Balfour and his horse: if Waller was to strike a blow at Forth and Hopton's armies, he would have to do so quickly while he still had a sizeable army.

Faced with these contradictory pressures, the commanders, whom Hesilrige joined at some point after the twenty-second, found it difficult to decide whether to risk a battle when it came to the point. By 28 March Waller's army was confronting the royalists near Alresford. At a Council of War that evening the commanders decided to retreat during the night. Hesilrige's lieutenant-colonel, John Birch, was outraged and protested to Hesilrige that when God 'called us to fight with his enemies, wee should not run from them; for mans extremitie is Gods oppertunitie'.[2] Retreating in the face of the

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 70 - 71.
2. Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, ed. J. Webb, 9 - 10.

enemy was always difficult and with some officers in this mood it proved impossible, although Birch's secretary, Roe, almost certainly overstated his individual contribution to the plan's frustration.[1] Early next morning Waller changed his mind and advanced towards the royalists, sending a party to occupy Cheriton Wood, a key point on his right flank.[2]

At the worst point of the battle which followed, when the parliamentary foot were driven from this wood, Hesilrige turned to Birch and asked, 'Now, Collonel, have you ffighting enough?'[3] This ironic reference to Birch's earlier fire-eating does not sound like the comment of a man gripped by panic. Holles alleges that Hesilrige stood crying under a hedge,

> bellowing out Ah wo is me, all is lost! we are all undone! insomuch that a great officer, a Scotch-man, finding him in that tune, wished him to go off the Field and not stand gudding there (a Scotch term for crying) to dishearten the soldiers.[4]

Such allegations were part of the standard polemical repertoire in the 1640s, and it is difficult to see when this incident could have occurred. If there was ever a moment for crying under a hedge it was at the point in the battle when it is known that he was talking to Birch. If his resolution did falter he recovered remarkably quickly.

Sir Henry Bard's impetuous advance from the royalist right wing left a gap between his regiment and the main body. Hesilrige's horse thrust themselves into this gap, '& their in the view of our whole Army (much to our discouragement) kills & takes every Man'.[5] His foot also repaid his months of effort as, led by Birch, they crossed to the right wing and retook Cheriton Wood.[6] As the royalist position grew hopeless, Forth and Hopton sent their baggage and artillery towards Winchester, their foot through the lanes towards Basing

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1. Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, ed. J. Webb, 9 - 10.
2. Bodl., Clar. MS. 23, ff. 77, 84a (Hopton's and Slingsby's accounts).
3. Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, ed. J. Webb, 10.
4. Holles, Memoirs, 27, 28.
5. Clar. MS. 23, f. 84b (Slingsby).
6. Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, ed. J. Webb, 10.

and their horse over the downs. Hesilrige led the pursuit of the horse, causing some casualties in close pursuit.[1]

Cheriton was an impressive victory. Sir Edward Walker, the King's military secretary, later credited it with having destroyed the King's plans for an offensive strategy, and forced him on to the defensive.[2] It dispelled the memory of Roundway Down and justified the claims which Hesilrige and his associates had made for Waller and their fight to secure resources and authority for him in the face of Essex's opposition. The problems which existed before the battle had not, however, disappeared and some were made worse by victory. By easing the royalist threat to the South-East it weakened the arguments for favouring Waller's army at the expense of others, it permitted Essex to recall his horse, and it gave the London regiments an excuse to redouble their demands to be allowed to go home. It raised expectations that Waller would pursue his victory while helping to ensure that he did not have the means to do so.

Hesilrige returned to the Commons on 2 April and reported Waller's 'great and absolute Victory over all Sir Ralph Hopton's Forces, in totally routing, dispersing, and defeating of them'.[3] On the same day he went to the Militia Committee, on behalf of the Committee of Both Kingdoms, to urge them to try to persuade their regiments to stay with Waller. Next day he went again to urge them to hasten the departure of a new brigade to Waller and to ask them to appoint Colonel Harvey as its commander, and on the fourth the Committee of Both Kingdoms sent him to both the Militia Committee and the Common Council, to press them to send the men they already had and hasten the rest.[4] The choice of Harvey turned out to be a mistake as valuable time

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1. E. 40(22), A Continuation of Certaine Speciall and Remarkable Passages, 28 March - 4 Apr. 1644.
2. Sir Edward Walker, Historical Discourses upon Several Occasions (1705), 7.
3. C.J., iii. 444.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 91,92, 94.

was wasted while efforts were made to wear down his insistence that 'he would rather carry a musket under his excellencie than have any charge under Waller'.[1] Meanwhile Hesilrige was the second member named to a Commons committee appointed on 6 April to go to the Militia Committee to inform them of the Commons' progress on the Ordinance empowering them to send forces out and to emphasise the danger to Waller as the King gathered fresh forces to attack him.[2] On the eighth he was the first member named to the joint committee which was to attend a Common Hall next day to urge the citizens to provide men and money for Essex and Waller.[3] Hesilrige's knowledge of, and contacts in, the City, together with his rôle in Waller's army and on the Committee of Both Kingdoms, obviously made him an important figure in these attempts to mobilise the City's resources.

At some point during the period between his return from Cheriton and 8 April, Hesilrige spoke against one of Waller's Scots officers, Colonel William Carr. On the eighth he wrote to Hesilrige protesting at his opposition to his business in the House, accusing him of 'undeserved Malice' and 'inveterat spleane' and threatening him with a challenge if he persisted. Hesilrige had, Carr alleged, accused him of duplicity in his dealings with Waller and Essex for a regiment under one or other and had said, incorrectly, that Carr had come to England without previous military experience.[4] Carr's letter was read in the House on the tenth and he was summoned to the bar. He refused to say who had informed him of Hesilrige's speech and was sent to the Compter for threatening a member, noticing words spoken in the House and refusing to answer the House's question.[5] Hesilrige clearly considered Carr untrustworthy and the Scotsman played into his hands by committing to paper so comprehensive

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1. Journal of Occurrences, Add. MS. 25,465, f. 24b.
2. C.J., iii. 451.
3. C.J., iii. 454.
4. Bodl., Tanner MS. 61, f. 11.
5. C.J., iii. 455, 456.

a breach of privilege. Carr's claim, when questioned at the bar, that 'very near an Hundred several Persons' had told him about Hesilrige's speech, while clearly exaggerated, suggests that Hesilrige had many enemies who were keen to stir up trouble for him.

Essex and his opponents were now involved in a complicated series of manoeuvres as the Vane - St. John group tried to ensure that he left London to join his army before peace propositions were formulated. On 13 April the Lords sent down an ordinance empowering the Committee of Both Kingdoms to draft propositions providing they did so within four days. Hesilrige joined Vane as a teller against giving the ordinance a second reading. They won by two votes,[1] thus gaining more time in which to weaken Essex's party by despatching him. When the House considered the ordinance again on the fifteenth they amended the deadline to the twenty-sixth.[2] As this date drew closer Hesilrige's report of the twentieth urging a speedy rendezvous for Essex's army was one of a series of moves designed to remove Essex from Westminster.[3]

The advance of Essex's army would also relieve the pressure on Waller. With his army fragmenting he had been forced to retreat towards Farnham, sacrificing the gains of the Cheriton campaign. The Committee of Both Kingdoms sent Hesilrige to impress upon him the necessity of maintaining a position as far West as possible, and to discover his reasons for retreating. The tone of their letter announcing this on 14 April provided an indication of the Committee's failure to understand the structural weaknesses underlying Waller's inability to follow up his successes.[4] The Committee's lessened faith in Waller was reflected in its order of 17 April that all correspondence with

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1. C.J., iii. 458.
2. C.J., iii. 460.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 50b.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 117-8.

Waller since Cheriton should be collated, the usual prelude to a critical report. Hesilrige was however ordered to repeat his, presumably sympathetic, report to the Committee, in the Commons.[1]

With London's resources being directed towards Essex's army, it was vital to harness the resources of the West for Waller's army. On 16 April, Hesilrige and Crew were sent from the Committee of Both Kingdoms to ask the Western Committee to supply Waller with £5,000, and ten days later Hesilrige was one of a five-man subcommittee ordered to expedite Waller's business by recommending it to the Western Committee.[2] As the position of Waller's army deteriorated, Hesilrige and Wallop were sent to the Western Committee to communicate a letter from Waller and 'acquaint them with the extreme necessity his army stands in'.[3] In early May Hesilrige paid a brief visit to Waller's army. In his absence, the Committee of Both Kingdoms decided to write to Waller regarding their efforts with the Western Committee and asking him to investigate the problems with the Surrey forces and report via Hesilrige when he returned.[4] The latter half of this message was symptomatic of the petty friction between Waller and his Association. A more fundamental problem was stated by the Kent Committee in a letter of the sixth: whilst recognising that his remaining static in the Association would be ruinous from all viewpoints, they were unwilling to see their country stripped of all forces for Waller's westward push while a major royalist army remained poised for a thrust into the South-East from Oxford.[5] Waller's allies were giving significant hostages to fortune: Waller's army could only be equipped for a major independent rôle with Western money, which was given on the understanding that he would march West. If he failed to do so he risked losing the support of the Western men.

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 123.
2. Ibid., 122, 136.
3. Ibid., 139.
4. Ibid., 145.
5. Ibid., 147-8.

Hesilrige was recruiting for his own regiments as well as fighting the political battle for Waller. When Edmund Ludlow was released by the royalists, Essex offered him a commission but, having been made Sheriff of Wiltshire, he accepted Hesilrige's invitation to be major of his regiment of horse in Waller's army, 'which was designed for the service of the West'. Ludlow selected the best of his old soldiers and mounted them, 'Sir Arthur buying a hundred horse in Smithfield for that purpose'.[1] Hesilrige had worked with Ludlow's father in the early years of the Long Parliament and Ludlow's brother had been one of the three captains taken by Hesilrige to Leicester in 1642. The manoeuvres of Essex's supporters on the Wiltshire committee were to separate Ludlow's troop from Waller's army, but in May 1645, when Ludlow belatedly sought a commission in the New Model, Hesilrige wrote to Rushworth asking him to present Ludlow to Fairfax and do him 'what good Offices you can'.[2] Hesilrige may have made a special effort to assist Ludlow's preparations in 1643 but he was clearly heavily committed to the practical work of recruiting Waller's army.

The Lords' refusal to pass a simple renewal ordinance, and their determination to pass Stamford's new ordinance swamping the Committee with additional conservatives, led to the suspension of the Committee from 10 to 22 May.[3] The reception of Stamford's ordinance on 7 May produced the strange pairing of Hesilrige and Clotworthy as tellers against its being read. This was probably produced by Clotworthy's eagerness to proceed with the scheduled discussion of Peace Propositions, coinciding with Hesilrige's opposition to the ordinance as such. Their sizeable majority would confirm this view.[4] Refusing to bow to the Lords' pressure, the Commons appointed on 13 May an ad hoc committee of six of its representatives on the Committee of Both Kingdoms, including Hesilrige, to deal with correspondence directed to that body,[5] and next day

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1. Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow, ed. c.h. Firth, i. 89-90.
2. Ibid., i. pp. xx., 115-6.
3. L.J., vi. 542; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 156, 167.
4. C.J., iii. 483; M.P. Mahony, 'The Presbyterian Party', 98
5. C.J., iii. 492.

went further by ordering its representatives on the old committee to sit at Derby House to deal with letters and consult with the Scots.[1] When on 15 May a letter from Essex was read desiring a speedy junction with Waller, 'Haselrigg moved that Sr Wm Waller might be cutt off in going. That difference betweene 2 Howses nott co/m/posed. Soe Waller ordered to goe to Farnham Castle, his owne quarter'.[2] Again on 20 May Hesilrige broke off his report of a letter from Waller which proposed strategies if the King marched North or West. Disclaiming personal ambition 'as one going to the army', Hesilrige insisted that the remainder of the letter required secrecy, and used this to secure the sending of two messages to the Lords urging them to pass the renewal ordinance.[3] The committee was finally reinstated on 22 May, when Vane and St. John revived their original ordinance, which had already been passed by the Lords in February, and persuaded the Commons to pass it. The Vane - St. John group and their Scots allies again had the formal power to 'order and direct' the Lord General. The question, as he and Waller advanced on Oxford, was whether he would pay any more attention to their orders than he had to the 'advice' of the Committee of Safety.

(ii) The Struggle in Leicestershire: December 1643 - May 1644

Since late 1642 Hesilrige's political activities had been dominated by national issues and interests. During the winter, however, a new factional struggle had broken out in Leicestershire, setting Grey of

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1. C.J., iii. 492.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 61b.
3. Ibid., f. 63b - 64a.

Groby,[1] his father Stamford, and many of the higher gentry families amongst the county's parliamentarians, against Hesilrige and his supporters, a group of lesser men, led by Peter Temple and Thomas Hesilrige, who had come to dominate the county committee. In part this was a reflection of national divisions, since Stamford and Grey were supporters of Essex, but it was mainly the product of tensions within the county.

The crisis of summer 1642 and the subsequent war had pushed Stamford and then Grey into a position of leadership based on military command rather than the rôle they had played in county politics before 1640. The threat from Hastings, and the need to rally the widest possible support, had also created a fragile parliamentary coalition embracing supporters of Hesilrige, the Greys and conservative men like Sir Thomas Hartopp (one of the deputy lieutenants whose actions had been investigated at Hesilrige's instigation in 1641) and Thomas Beaumont (whose family had been involved in the conservative opposition to Huntingdon in the 1620s). This coalition was reflected in the Leicester Committee appointed on 15 December 1642.[2] Most of the conservative higher gentry members of the committee seem, however, to have been unwilling to play an active part. As a result Hesilrige's supporters had taken over most of the work of the committee. They later admitted that they were generally of lower social rank, but insisted

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1. The emergence of Stamford's son Thomas, Lord Grey of Groby, as a leading figure in Leicestershire politics and the contemporary practice of referring to him as Lord Grey, make it advisable to distinguish between the two, quite separate, Grey families active in Leicestershire. Stamford and his son Lord Grey were related in only the most distant sense to the Earl of Kent and his son Lord Grey of Ruthen.
2. Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum 1642 - 1660, ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, (3 vols., 1911), 49-50.

that they had been forced to act when the higher gentry deserted them.[1] When conflict developed between Grey and the remaining conservatives, like Thomas Cotton and Sir Edward Hartopp, on the one hand, and this group on the other, Grey was forced to rely on his authority as commander-in-chief to override the majority.

A certain jostling for position was inevitable in a county where a family so dominant as the Hastingses had been swept aside. There was no reason why Hesilrige, or his supporters, should accept the dominance of the Greys, and equally no reason why a family like the Hartopps should accept Hesilrige's claims to power, based on his position as one of the county's M.P.s The war, and the unimpressive military performance of both Grey and his opponents, provided fertile ground for new quarrels. When Grey was in control his critics argued that the soldiers were oppressing the civilian population without doing anything effective to defend them against the royalists. When Hesilrige's supporters gained control later in 1644, Grey's supporters made precisely the same charges. As a result it is difficult to identify the precise questions of policy or tactics separating the two sides. What is clear is that by early 1644 they were unable to work together.

The papers of the Leicester Committee, like Hesilrige's own, are lost. Any account of Leicestershire's parliamentarian politics during the Civil War is therefore dependent on national sources. Leicestershire was not of great strategic importance to either King or Parliament so long as

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1. E. 289(6), P. Temple, A Narration of the Siege and Taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 9 - 10; E. 261(18), An Examination Examined: Being a full and moderate Answer to Maior Innes Relation concerning the Siege and taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 14 - 15.

the war in the North remained unresolved. As a result Parliament, the Committee of Safety and London newsletters paid little attention to the county during 1643. They certainly had no reason to record the beginnings of tension between Lord Grey and his opponents on the Leicester Committee. Only when these quarrels became open, and each side sought to enlist the support of friends at Westminster, was there any cause to notice them at national level.

The war in Leicestershire had developed slowly, following the removal of royalist forces for the Edgehill campaign. On the royalist side, the Hastingses' home at Ashby had been fortified, and Colonel Gervase Lucas and his Lincolnshire royalists had seized Belvoir Castle in January 1642/3.[1] Meanwhile Grey and the county's parliamentarians had secured control of Leicester and Grey had moved to establish garrisons in Rutland. By April 1643 they had fortified Leicester and they received cannon from the Committee of Safety.[2] The situation in the countryside remained doubtful, however, and this accounts for Grey's refusal in June to march any further north than Nottingham when Cromwell sought his assistance in going to the relief of the Fairfaxes.[3] His caution was vindicated in August, when his absence in Rutland to raise money and horses allowed Hastings to threaten Leicester.[4] Hastings' attempt was an unusually dramatic move in a local war which had largely settled into a pattern of raids and skirmishes.

It seems likely that it was their common inability to break this stalemate which provoked the rift between Grey and a group of the Leicester Committee. On 24 November 1643, Arthur Staveley, Thomas Hesilrige

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1. Victoria County History of Leicestershire ii 113.
2. E. 100(10) Certaine Informations from Severall Parts of the Kingdom, No. 15, 24 April - 1 May 1643, 118; VCH Leics. ii 113.
3. Ibid.
4. Grey to the Speaker, 14 Aug. 1643, Bodl., Tanner MS. 62/1, f. 259.

and others wrote to the Speaker outlining their frustrations. With garrisons at Ashby and Belvoir, the royalists could threaten communications throughout the county. The small body of parliamentarian horse were forced to concentrate on convoy duty and countering royalist raids. As a result the royalists, whose horse was stronger, were able to seize parliamentarian sympathisers, gather rents belonging to parliamentarians, and prevent the collection of taxes. The resulting lack of money to pay the soldiers led, in turn, to mutinies. They therefore asked that all money raised in the county should be reserved for the payment of their forces.[1] Four days later, Staveley, Hesilrige and Captain Hacker were captured, along with their escort, while attempting to gather taxes at Melton Mowbray.[2] If their letter of the twenty-fourth had been the opening shot in a campaign to weaken Grey's control over parliamentarian forces and resources in the county, their capture both dramatised the need to do something and gave Grey an opportunity to strike at their supporters on the Leicester Committee during their enforced absence.

Grey's critics on the committee probably included men with divergent reasons for attacking him. Those who objected to the costs of the war or to the wider rôle of Grey's army could, however, unite with radicals who wished to see a more aggressive strategy, on the basis that Grey had wasted the county's resources without securing matching results. When his critics got control of the war in Leicestershire in 1644, the central feature of their strategy was to be the use of resources to establish new

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1. Hist. MSS. Comm., 13th Rep./Portland i 160.
2. Nichols, Leicestershire, II i 51.

garrisons at Coleorton, Bagworth House, and Kirby in order to confine the activities of troops from the royalist garrisons and create relatively secure parliamentarian areas which could provide the money and supplies to support their forces.[1] This strategy, which had both aggressive and defensive features, was probably in their minds in late 1643.

When conflict between Grey and his critics broke out, the latter clearly looked to Sir Arthur Hesilrige for support and he did not disappoint them. Since they looked to him as their patron, they have been described, for convenience, as his supporters. As with most patronage relationships, however, there was at least as much pushing from below as pulling from above. It is not necessary to assume that Hesilrige sought a confrontation with Grey: once his supporters in Leicestershire had become embroiled in such a confrontation, however, he had no choice but to support them. Insofar as evidence exists, it does not appear that he had taken much interest in the county, except as a source of recruits for his own regiments, since the summer of 1642. In national terms, however, he had diverged sharply from Stamford and Grey who were aligned with Essex in the struggles of the military lobbies, while Stamford was one of the more conservative peers. If he did not actively promote criticism of Grey in Leicestershire, he had no reason to seek to restrain his friends there.

Hesilrige's readiness to work with Grey's opponents was demonstrated in the neighbouring county of Rutland. By mid-December he was reported to be acting as the London 'agent' of the county committee who sat in Rockingham Castle, just over the Northamptonshire border, and openly

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1. E289(6) A Narration of the Siege and Taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 9.

refused to cooperate with Grey.[1] Grey's attempt to remove Captain Horseman, a member of that committee, from his post as governor of Rockingham Castle, was defeated on the twenty-third, when the Commons ordered that he should keep that place.[2] Grey then turned on Hesilrige's supporters in Leicestershire, and on 15 January court martialled and imprisoned Alderman Ludlam, for 'some affront' done to him. Hesilrige was clearly prominent in the debate which followed the reading, on 20 January, of Grey's letter explaining his action. As a result he and Stapleton were ordered to ask Essex to resolve these differences in such a way as to satisfy both Grey and the Leicester Committee. Later in the day the House received a petition and paper of grievances from the Leicester Committee and referred this to a committee which included Hesilrige, political allies like Vane, Lisle, Prideaux and Cromwell, and political enemies like Stapleton, Reynolds, Sir Henry Cholmely and Glyn.[3]

It appears that Hesilrige's opponents got the upper hand and tried to kill the matter in committee. On 10 February Hesilrige attacked the committee, alleging that it was biassed towards Grey, had met at times when he could not be present, and had adjourned from week to week. He demanded 'that the matter might be putt into his hand'. His opponents denied Hesilrige's charges and argued that he had absented himself deliberately. Faced with this conflict

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1. Bodl., Tanner MS. 60/2, f. 459.
2. C.J., iii. 351.
3. Certain Informations, no. 54, 22 - 29 Jan. 1643/4; C.J., iii. 371-2, 372.

the Commons 'revived' the committee, in effect making it start afresh.[1]

The conflict returned to the floor of the House on 11 March when Grey, who was now back at Westminster, asked for money to pay his soldiers and that he should be sent down to Leicestershire. Hesilrige 'showed that betweene his souldiers & and King's the countrie ... was utterlie ruined and destroied' and asked that they should either be paid or removed. This speech, which was deliberately provocative, secured a Commons order that Knightley should make a report from the committee next day.[2] Two days earlier Grey had found a way of circumventing the House's order protecting Captain Horseman in his position as Governor of Rockingham Castle. Horseman was arrested under a warrant from Essex's Advocate-General and taken to face a court martial at St. Albans. He wrote to his relative Sir Gilbert Pickering before he was taken from Rockingham, and on 16 March the matter was raised in the Commons. In spite of the efforts of Grey to justify his action, with support from Stapleton and Cholmely, Tate, Pickering, Hesilrige, St. John and Vane persuaded the House to refer the matter to the committee which was already dealing with Leicestershire, and to order the court martial proceedings to be stayed.[3]

If Grey's tactics were reminiscent of those which Essex had attempted to use against the Vane - St. John group at the time of the

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 21a; C.J., iii. 396.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 31a; C.J., iii. 424.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 34a; C.J., iii. 430; Bodl., Tanner MS. 62/2, ff. 459, 603, 610, 635, 636 (pages examined by the committee).

Lovelace affair, the Leicester Committee's next move was probably inspired by Hesilrige's experience of exploiting plots. On 23 March a letter from Thomas Hesilrige and other members of the committee was read in the Commons. They accused Major Bingley and Sir Edward Hartopp junior of treasonable contact with the enemy, and enclosed depositions to prove this. The house referred this to the Committee of Both Kingdoms.[1] On 4 April a further letter, enclosing more examinations, was read and consideration of the matter was referred to Tate's committee, to which the Leicestershire members were added for this purpose.[2]

The committee had sent out warrants for witnesses to attend by 23 April, and on the twenty-fifth they gave the copies of examinations and other papers which they had already received to Peter Temple so that he could draft articles from them. He had presumably completed this task when he returned the pages two days later[3] and the committee began to hear witnesses in early May. The arrival of a number of Hesilrige's supporters at Westminster to give evidence provoked Stamford, Grey and their supporters into ill-advised attempts to intimidate them. On 6 May Stamford approached a group who had just given evidence and after repeatedly calling them 'a company of rogues', picked on Thomas Buckley, abusing him and his entire family, and 'shaking his Caine-staff att him, threatning him that hee should fight uppon him, and bee uppon his Bones one of these daies'.[4] Three days later Hartopp prompted his lieutenant, Cotton, another conservative member of the Leicester Committee, to approach two witnesses, Jeoffrey Hawkins and William Swynfen, and threaten them.[5] Thomas Hesilrige was approached by Grey in the same manner.[6]

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 38a; C.J., iii. 435.
2. C.J., iii. 447.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 134-5.
4. P.R.O., S.P., 16/50. f. 181; see also f. 191ab.
5. P.R.O., S.P. 16/501, ff. 180, 191b, 192a.
6. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 188; P.R.O., S.P. 16/501, f. 231.

Attacking witnesses who were attending a Commons committee was a clear breach of privilege. Those who had been threatened prepared petitions to the Commons giving details of these incidents, emphasising that they had done nothing to provoke attack and asking for their names to be indicated. They probably gave them to Hesilrige, and they were presented just as the Commons had finished discussing Anthony Nichols' charges against Stamford for his conduct in the West, the previous year.[1] This linked their complaints with those of Nichols, who had a sizeable moderate following and reinforced their intrinsic force. Given that Stamford was also leading the Lords in their confrontation with the Commons over the Committee of Both Kingdoms, Hesilrige could hope to secure widespread sympathy for an attack on his son's position in Leicestershire.

On the ninth the House had received a petition from the members of the Leicester committee who were present in London, in which they set out 'their Sufferings under the Soldiery there'. Although the Commons ordered the Leicester Committee to provide another two weeks pay for Grey's regiment, they also gave Hesilrige the chance he had been demanding since 10 February, by giving him sole responsibility for drafting an ordinance 'for raising of forces for the Preservation and Settling the County of Leicester'.[2] He now had the political support he needed in the Commons to remodel the Leicester committee and cut Grey's powers.

Hesilrige introduced his ordinance on 27 May. Much of the debate concentrated on the powers given to the committee to levy what taxes and raise what forces they wished, 'w^{ch} many in the Howse did much Mislike'. These powers, which included the right to fine uncooperative constables up to £10, were designed to give the committee control of the county's resources and enable them to wage war independently from Grey.[3] The new Committee which was to exercise these

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1. C.J., iii. 473.
2. C.J., iii. 486.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, ff. 65b, 67a.

powers was also controversial. In effect he took the committee appointed in 1642, purged Grey's supporters including men like Sir Edward Hartopp junior and Thomas Cotton, who had been active in Leicestershire, as well as the absentees, and added some new names including his 'creature' Francis Hacker.[1] Sir Martin Lister, who sat for Brackley but had lived in Leicestershire, attacked Hesilrige's new committee as being mostly composed 'of meare men in birth and fortune', some of whom were foreigners to the county. Grey himself tried to add Sir Edward Hartopp senior and others to the list but Hesilrige insisted 'that they had been named before but had never acted anything'.[2] In spite of the opposition, the bill was read twice and committed to a large new committee which included Grey, Hesilrige and Lister and a fair balance of radicals and conservatives, as well as the committee already investigating Hartopp and Bingley's cases. The House then approved first Hesilrige and Grey's inclusion in the new Leicester Committee, and then the rest of those nominated. As an interim measure they ordered that no money or horses should be levied in the county without an order of the committee, and specifically barred soldiers from doing so without the committee's consent.[3]

Hesilrige had won the first round in the new battle for control of Leicestershire. His own tactical skill and determination, the willingness of his supporters to do the work of the committee, the mistakes of his opponents, and some fortunate timing had brought him this success. Grey and Stamford would fight back in the months to come but Hesilrige had ensured that most of their efforts would have to be directed towards regaining lost ground.

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1. Compare Acts and Ordinances i. 49 - 50 with 470, disregarding Hartopp and Lister who were added, against Hesilrige's wishes, by the Lords in July; L.J., vi. 821; C.J., iii. 556.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 67a.
3. C.J., iii. 507-8.

(iii) Cropredy and Lostwithiel

By late May 1644 Parliament had a military strategy which offered hopes of a decisive reversal of the tide of war. In the North, the Scots, Fairfax and Manchester were to join in removing the constant threat posed by Newcastle's army. In the South, Essex and Waller were to cooperate in an attack on Oxford and, once the King's capital had been taken, Waller was to march to regain the West. The Southern part of this plan, which always underestimated the weakness of the Southern armies and the unpredictability of seventeenth century warfare, was wrecked by the rivalry of Essex and Waller. By the end of the summer their armies were in ruins, the King was more powerful than ever in the South, and the political atmosphere at Westminster was embittered by the redoubled ferocity of the conflicts among the military factions.

On 20 May Hesilrige secured an order for payments to cover his military debts and the costs of recruiting his regiment.[1] On the twenty-fifth he went, with the support of the Committee of Both Kingdoms, to borrow a City troop from the Militia Committee,[2] and later in the day he marched to join Waller.[3] He and Waller were at Abingdon on 31 May and from there advanced towards Oxford. By mid-day on 4 June they were convinced that two armies alone could not impose an effective siege and wrote urging the committee to assemble a third force from the Midlands.[4] Later that day they learned that the King, accompanied by a light force, had slipped past Essex and marched West to Burford. They set off to follow him, assuming that Essex was also in pursuit.[5]

On 5 June they received a letter from Essex indicating his intention to

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1. C.J., iii. 501.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 168-9.
3. E. 49(34), Mercurius Civicus, no. 53, 23 - 30 May 1644.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 83ab.
5. Ibid., f. 83b - 84a.

usurp Waller's rôle by marching West, and Essex wrote to the Committee of Both Kingdoms on the sixth, announcing his decision.[1] When Waller and Hesilrige met Essex at a Council of War that day they found that they had no choice in the matter: Essex was determined to march West and 'being thus put out of our way and his Excellency commanding that an eye should be had which way the King takes, we resolve to follow the King wherever an army can march'.[2] They put a brave face on it, but the decision was disastrous for Waller. He had no commission to command in the Midlands, the cohesion of his army was unlikely to survive long marches in unfamiliar territory, and the political support of his South-Eastern and Western backers was put in question.

While Waller did his best to surmount the practical difficulties of his task, Hesilrige 'posted up to London breathing out nothing but ruin and destruction to the Earl of Essex, spoke it out in the hearing of several persons, That he would ruin him or be ruined himself'.[3] He attended the Committee of Both Kingdoms on 10 June, with an anodyne message from Essex and Waller which contained the half-truth that both armies were marching West.[4] But when he spoke in the House that afternoon

> hee related all agst L. Generall, how caused them to stay at Newbridge when they would have quartered at Witney &c. That sent no succour after them. That commanded them to follow King &c. So Wallers designe for West prevented &c.

He emphasised that Waller's army, which was now at Sudely, would be destroyed if it was forced to undertake sieges.[5]

Hesilrige's efforts were successful. Next day the Commons voted that Waller should march into the West and the Committee of Both Kingdoms wrote to both generals with the necessary orders.[6] On 17 June they gave two

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 206, 211-12.
2. Ibid., 214.
3. Holles, Memoirs, 24, 25.
4. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 143a.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, ff. 71a, 72a.
6. C.J., iii. 526; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 226.

readings to an ordinance to raise forces in the Western counties to serve under Waller as commander.[1] Waller himself undid Hesilrige's good work. In his letters of 15 and 16 June he emphasised the importance of the West Midlands and the opportunities opened up by his junction with Denbigh and other commanders in the area.[2] The Committee of Both Kingdoms replied on the seventeenth, agreeing that he should stay in the West Midlands. By then he had lost the King and was once more keen to march West, but he had missed his chance.[3]

As the King marched back towards London, M.P.s were alarmed and demanded to know where Waller was. On 24 June Hesilrige and Strode could counter Holles' demand to know where Waller was and whether he intended to follow the King, only by invoking the need for secrecy.[4] The pressure was eased next day, when the House received Waller's letter of 21 June in which he assured them that he would hasten from Gloucestershire.[5] The continued strength of support for Waller was demonstrated on the twenty-eighth when the Commons heard his letter warning that his army was disintegrating as a result of want, weariness and demoralisation at not being sent into the West. The House voted him £10,000 and appointed a committee, including Hesilrige, the Committee for the West and the M.P.s of the South-Eastern Association, to consider the formation of an army of seven thousand foot and three thousand horse, to operate under Waller's command in the South and the Midlands.[6] But Waller's chances of obtaining yet another new army were weakened by the debacle at Cropredy Bridge next day. He attempted to minimise the damage in his letter read on 3 July, claiming 'That ther was noe considerable loss in this but of honour'.[7]

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1. C.J., iii. 532.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 238, 239, 242.
3. Ibid., 245, 244.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, ff. 76a, 77a.
5. Ibid., f. 77a.
6. Ibid., f. 78a; C.J., iii. 544.
7. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 79b.

This prevented an immediate collapse of confidence in him and his army but left the Commons wholly unprepared for the disintegration of his forces and his consequent inability to follow as the King marched West.

Meanwhile Hesilrige had left London on 29 or 30 June and joined Major-General Browne at Leighton-Buzzard on 1 July. They worked hard to gather forces to go to Waller's aid,[1] and by the fourth Hesilrige had succeeded in joining Waller. Together they wrote to the Committee of Both Kingdoms suggesting that they might follow the King across the Midlands at a discreet distance, but warned the committee of the army's extreme weakness.[2] When they met Browne, one of the City regiments deserted in a body, and the other could be persuaded to stay for three weeks only. Abandoned by Browne, who took his brigade to besiege Greenland House, they had few men left by 8 July. Their only hope was to mount their musketeers and follow the King.[3]

Hesilrige's regiment of foot was amongst those who became dragoons in this way. The change appears to have taken place on the thirteenth[4] although Birch, who lost his place as a result, did not formally resign until the twenty-fourth.[5] Hesilrige presided at the court martial of three mutineers on the twelfth.[6] Next day he set off for London to explain Waller's fear that the King's march West was a ruse and that he would double back if Waller followed him.[7] By the fifteenth the King was far ahead of Waller and although he was resolved to follow him, he warned the Committee of Both Kingdoms that he had practical difficulties which Hesilrige would explain.[8]

Hesilrige did this well, and on 17 July the Commons voted to hasten the

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 289, 292, 296-7.
2. Ibid., 307.
3. Ibid., 326-7.
4. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252 Pt. i, f. 274a.
5. Military Memoir of Colonel John Birch, ed. J. Webb, 13-14; P.R.O., S.P. 28/253A Pt. vi, f. 82b.
6. J. Adair, Cheriton 1644, 209, 216.
7. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 347.
8. Ibid., 352.

formation of Waller's new army and to allow him to stay in the Midlands and recruit.[1]

The mood of the House soon changed as the danger to Essex became more apparent. On the twentieth the Commons heard Essex's letter in which he referred to an intercepted royalist letter alleging that Hesilrige had preferred articles of high treason against him, and demanded vindication. Hesilrige felt compelled to profess

> that he had none but honourable thoughts of my Lord of Essex and as the house could beare him witness that he never said any such thing in the house neither had he ever such intention.

His ally Strode was quick to move that Essex should be informed of this denial and of the House's esteem for him.[2]

The Committee of Both Kingdoms sent Hesilrige to confer with Major General Browne and Waller on the twenty-second. In his absence they confirmed their former view that Waller should stay in the Midlands, sending only a party of horse to the West.[3] On the twenty-fourth, however, Samuel Browne told the Commons that the committee had ordered Waller to march West on the seventeenth. This suggests that most of the Vane - St. John group, whose support for Waller had always been qualified, had decided that the risks of continuing to defend him outweighed the advantages. Led by Holles and Earle, Essex's supporters spoke vehemently against Waller, 'showing that this delay of his would ruine the West', while D'Ewes' ironic reference to Hesilrige as a modest man was greeted with laughter. Hesilrige could not hope to win understanding for Waller's fundamental problems in this atmosphere, and any attempt to explain them might have led to the complete abandonment of that army. Instead he concentrated on immediate difficulties such as Waller's

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1. C.J., iii. 563.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 99a.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 367, 369

lack of money, leaving members with the impression that, once these were sorted out, 'Waller would speedilie goe'.[1]

Hesilrige was active in seeking to resolve Waller's practical problems, and maintained his record as an assiduous attender at meetings of the Committee of Both Kingdoms. In early August he joined Vane in a trip to consult with the Kent committee about Sir Michael Livesey's uncooperative attitude towards Waller.[2] On 14 August he was one of six members sent by the Commons to obtain from the Excise Commissioners a loan of £10,000 for Waller.[3] Long and patient work was required to rebuild Waller's army but, as the danger to Essex grew at Lostwithiel, the Commons were not prepared to wait. During a 'long & hott debate' on the tenth, Waller walked out, and 'notwithstanding all that S^{r} Arthur Haslerig & his other freinds could alledge to the contrarie' the House resolved that he should march West, although the precise arrangements were left to the Committee of Both Kingdoms.[4]

If Hesilrige could no longer do much to help Waller in the Commons, he could still play an effective rôle on other issues. He was one of the commissioners named in the Martial Law Ordinance passed by the Commons on 15 July, and as a military commander was one of the quorum.[5] The Lords resisted the ordinance and sought to dilute it. Hesilrige was one of the Commons' managers for the conferences on 29 July and 12 August at which the Lords were persuaded to give way on their proviso allowing either House to intervene before executions.[6] Although the Lords would pass the ordinance for four months only, Parliament now had a speedy, reliable way of dealing with traitors and Essex's opponents could counter the threat that he would

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 100b.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 387, 394-5.
3. C.J., iii. 590.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, 106a.
5. C.J., iii. 562.
6. C.J., iii. 574, 588.

use his court martial for factional ends.

Hesilrige had been a keen supporter of the Adventure for Ireland and the Sea Adventure in 1642, but although he had attended meetings of the relevant Commons' committees since then,[1] and his brother Thomas was involved in supplying the English armies there,[2] he had not been prominent in Commons' debates on the issue. On 29 July he was named to the committee appointed to consider the propositions of the British regiments in Ulster.[3] On 10 August the Commons ordered that he should report the Committee of Both Kingdoms' proposals for aid to the Munster Protestants who had rejected the King's Cessation with the Irish.[4] After he had reported on the twelfth, the Commons agreed to provide them with the full range of military supplies and ordered the Commons' Committee of Adventurers to meet daily with the City committee to arrange the finance for this. As a result Hesilrige found himself at odds with his usual allies, the Western men led by Prideaux, who objected that they had far more need of arms.[5]

Hesilrige was sincere in his commitment to the war in Ireland but this activity had another aspect. Since late 1643 the Irish planter group, led by Reynolds and Clotworthy, who had been alienated by the leading rôle assigned to the Scots in Ireland, had gravitated towards Essex and Holles.[6] By the same token some of the City Adventurers, who had always been on bad terms with this group, moved in the opposite direction[7] - hence, perhaps, the

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1. Orders of the Committee of Adventurers 1642-3, Brit. Lib., Add. MS. 4782, f. 150b; Letters and Orders of the Commons Committee for the Affairs of Ireland Nov. 1643 - Sept. 1644, P.R.O., S.P. 16/539 Pt. ii., f. 130a.
2. see e.g. L.J., vi. 179.
3. C.J., iii. 574.
4. C.J., iii. 587.
5. C.J., iii. 587; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 106b.
6. M.P. Mahony, 'The Presbyterian Party in the Long Parliament 2 July 1644 - 3 June 1647' (D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1973), 5-6; see also the division on this issue, 22 Dec. 1643, C.J., iii. 350.
7. J.R. MacCormack, 'The Irish Adventurers and the English Civil War', Irish Hist. Stud., x. (1956-7), 29.

moderate Sir David Watkins' cooperation with the Vane - St. John group in foiling Brooke's plot earlier in the year. On 20 August the Committee of Both Kingdoms reported a petition from the Committee of London Adventurers attacking Reynolds and Clotworthy. The attack went wrong as they and their friends turned the House's anger against Watkins and Mr. Alexander, who had inspired this petition. Strode stepped in to save Watkins and the debate centred on Alexander, who had refused to account for monies he had received as a Treasurer for Ireland. Hesilrige and Bainton divided the House against Stapleton and Dacres in an attempt to prevent the question of Alexander's suspension being put, and after the Speaker had given his casting vote against them they lost the division on the question itself by five votes.[1] Clearly this was a factional question and it suggests that Hesilrige and his allies, debarred by the mood of the House from attacking Essex directly, were using the Irish issue and their contacts in the City to attack some of his leading supporters in the Commons. Their opponents were equally keen to remove those radicals who still held office in an increasingly conservative City. On the nineteenth Hesilrige had to intervene to save Pennington's position as Lieutenant of the Tower, when Glyn tried to exploit the escape of Macguire and MacMahon as a means of forcing his dismissal.[2]

Hesilrige also had to fight to save the gains which he had made for his Leicestershire allies earlier in the year. His ordinance creating a new county committee had been held up until July. When the Lords finally passed it on 8 July they added two supporters of Grey, Sir Edward Hartopp junior and Sir Martin Lister who had launched a violent attack on Hesilrige's original nominations in May. Hesilrige was absent with Waller's army, and on 10 July the Commons accepted these amendments.[3] After the fall of Leicester Hesilrige's

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1. C.J., iii. 599; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 155b-156a; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 108b.
2. Journal of Occurrences, Add. MS. 25, 465, f. 17b.
3. L.J., vi. 821; C.J., iii. 556.

supporters, led by Peter Temple, were to use this as part of their defence against the charge that the Committee had been packed with men of lesser rank,[1] but in the short term it undermined Hesilrige's attempt to create a committee chosen by himself.

Grey was not satisfied and continued to attack the Leicestershire committee. Hesilrige was present when the Committee of Both Kingdoms heard his complaints on 12 August, but was, presumably, unable to block the committee's decision to report these to the Commons.[2] When, on the sixteenth, the Commons referred Grey's complaints to a committee, it included a fair balance of radicals and conservative from outside the area but Lister found a place while Hesilrige did not.[3] He was, however, added to it on 21 August.

The quarrels in Leicestershire were part of a wider pattern, and on 3 September the Lords asked the Commons to agree to the creation of a joint committee to deal with differences between commanders-in-chief and county committees. In two straightforwardly factional divisions Holles and Stapleton defeated Vane and St. John by 28 votes to 25 to win the Commons' support for this proposal. Their victory was short-lived. As D'Ewes noted angrily, 'when committee named &c. Clarke being out of House R/ushworth/ put in all violent except some 3 or 4', and Hesilrige's was one of the names that Rushworth chose to hear.[4]

The real mood of the House was shown next day, when a group of Leicestershire men led by William Quarles, William Sherman and a Mr. Davenport, presented a petition asking that Lord Grey should be sent down with power to protect the county. This petition, which was almost certainly organised by

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1. E. 261(18), P. Temple, An Examination Examined: Being a full and moderate Answer to Maior Innes Relation Concerning the Siege and Taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 14-15.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 421.
3. C.J., iii. 592
4. C.J., iii. 617; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 112a.

Grey and his supporters, was the more effective in that the three men who headed the delegation had not served on the original committee. The Commons appointed a committee to review the original ordinance and that brought in by Hesilrige, how forces might be raised, and what could be done to reconcile the parties. The appointment of allies like Samuel Browne was outweighed by the appointment of enemies like Holles, Stapleton and Lewes, and again Lister was named while Hesilrige was not.[1] When Knightley reported on 16 September 'a great dispute ensued', the House seized on the suggestion that Leicestershire might be associated with Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and other Northern counties and recommitted this idea to Knightley's committee and the Committee for the Northern Counties.[2] Hesilrige's allies had a little longer to consolidate their position in the county.

By 16 September the quarrels of Leicestershire had been pushed into the background by a major military and political disaster. On 29 August Hesilrige's colleague Lieutenant-General Middleton, whom Waller had finally managed to send West with a party of horse and dragoons, was forced to retreat from Bridgewater. Essex realised that he could not expect relief. His horse, led by Balfour, broke through the royalist lines on 31 August, Essex left by sea on 1 September, and Skippon and the foot surrendered next day.[3]

The Speaker reported this to the Commons on the morning of 7 September. Fortunately Waller had managed to march from Farnham that day, but when the Commons discussed Lostwithiel in the afternoon the predominant opinion was that 'My Lord Generall had not power fitt for a Lord Generall, by which meanes Col. John Middleton proceeded not as hee ought to have done with Waller's horse'. A letter was prepared to be sent from both Houses to Essex,

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1. C.J., iii. 618.
2. C.J., iii. 628; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 112a. (D'Ewes dates this 4 September but he clearly became confused while copying his rough notes.)
3. Walker, Historical Discourses, 69ff.

reaffirming their confidence in him. As other members expressed their sympathy for the Lord General, Hesilrige, 'laughing and jeering to him selfe gave offence to many'.[1]

Hesilrige could not be effective in a House where his desire to see Essex ruined was well known. Anything he said in support of Waller's army was likely to be counterproductive. On the ninth he attended his last meeting of the Committee of Both Kingdoms for two months. By the twelfth he was with Waller at Salisbury.[2]

(iv) Newbury and Donnington

The autumn campaign was Hesilrige's last during the Civil War. It represented his longest, and most intense, experience of fighting. As things turned out, the campaign also represented the King's last, and perhaps best, chance of winning the war. The parliamentary generals succeeded in preventing that, but their failure to pursue their victory provoked the final crisis of the old military factions.

The strategy at the start of the campaign seemed clear enough. On 7 September the Committee of Both Kingdoms ordered Waller to march to Dorchester as quickly as possible in order to join with Middleton's party and Essex's horse, and secure the coastal towns.[3] On the same day the Houses wrote to Manchester, who now commanded Parliament's only complete army in

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, ff. 112a - 113a; C.J., iii. 620-1.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 483, 495.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 481.

the South, ordering him to march to Dorchester.[1] In his reply, read in the Lords on the ninth, he undertook 'to make all possible Speed I can to march towards Dorchester'.[2] Opposing the King's army in Dorset would have left the Parliamentary armies with room for manoeuvre, screened the advance of forces such as Essex's foot which could not be ready immediately, and kept the fighting away from parliamentary territory and from the sieges of Banbury, Basing and Donnington. Hesilrige later deposed that if Manchester had advanced to Dorchester, as planned,

> the King's forces could not have advanced beyond that place, but that the forces of the Parliament might in all probability have safely fought with the King's army, or compelled them to have remained in those parts about Sherborne.[3]

Waller and Hesilrige were conscious of the weakness of their force from the outset. On 12 September they told the Committee of Both Kingdoms, 'You see what condition we are in, the enemy advancing. We beseech you to take this presently into your thoughts and hasten up the Earl of Manchester'.[4] From Salisbury, Hesilrige went to Poole to encourage the coastal towns while Waller advanced to Blandford to rally the Wiltshire and Dorset horse.[5] By the fourteenth they knew the worst: the coastal garrisons were ill-prepared, very few local horse had come in, and the Wiltshire committee was not even prepared to allow them to keep Ludlow's troops, one of which had been raised as part of Hesilrige's regiment. They therefore decided to place their foot in the coastal towns, and to use their horse to delay the King's advance until Manchester arrived.[6] They advanced to Shaftesbury and waited, with increasing frustration, as the King advanced and Manchester failed to come to their aid.

On the twenty-fourth the King advanced to Chard. Waller and Hesilrige

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1. L.J., vi. 699.
2. L.J., vi. 700.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 156.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 496.
5. Ibid., 495-6, 501-2.
6. Ibid.

were able to report the encouraging news that he did not have more than ten thousand men, but they warned that they had received no reinforcements, and that without foot they could not engage the enemy in enclosed country. If the King continued to advance they would have to retreat. 'We are a gallant forlorn hope.'[1] As Manchester continued to delay his advance, Waller and Hesilrige wrote to the Committee of Both Kingdoms on 30 September urging the virtues of a junction as far West as possible:

> You will not only grow upon the King in the West, but keep your armies on the enemy's /quarters/ and preserve your Association. If this be timely done we may most easily restrict the miseries of our war within a narrow space, if not bring it to an end.

But they were also preparing for a dogged retreat; 'We shall not yield any ground but what we must needs'.[2]

They were joined by Essex's horse, under Balfour, at the beginning of October,[3] but their great need was still for foot. With it, they argued, there was a good chance of destroying the main royalist army. Without it they could only stand and wait, their horse suffering constant hardship as the uncertainty of the King's intentions kept them on the cold plains and barren hills of the Shaftesbury area.[4] On 8 October the King advanced and next day Waller and Hesilrige decided that it was time to withdraw, 'being not able to do service by our stay, but only exposing ourselves to certain ruin or disgrace, our horse being unfit for a hedge fight'. They retreated to Winterbourne Stoke, and warned the Committee of Both Kingdoms that the horse which Manchester had finally agreed to send to Salisbury would not make up for this lack of foot.[5]

In a letter to the Speaker from Winterbourne Stoke, they emphasised that 'it troubles us not a little to yeild the least ground yet wee must hazard all censure rather than expose your forces upon extreame disadvantage'.[6]

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644, 532.
2. Ibid., 545.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 7.
4. Ibid., 12-13.
5. Ibid., 28-9.
6. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 137b.

On the same day Manchester made it inevitable that their retreat would continue, by suggesting that his foot should rendezvous with Essex's at Basingstoke.[1] The question now was not how far West the armies would join, but whether they would join at all before Charles reached the Oxford area.

As the King advanced towards Salisbury on the fourteenth, Waller and Hesilrige were acutely aware that time was running short for the parliamentary armies. They undertook to harass and delay the royalist advance but they could not risk losing the horse in an unsuccessful engagement which would leave the King free to advance and destroy the foot. They prayed that the foot would rendezvous before the King arrived;

> 'The Lord has kept him back by his own power, using our weakness to amazement. We have oft called upon men to help, /but now/ we desire to rely wholly upon God'.[2]

Next day they fell back to Andover, accepting that the most they could now achieve was to cover the junction of the foot.[3]

That night the King decided to attempt a surprise attack on Waller next day. Although his foot did not reach the rendezvous until eleven, and the army did not march until noon, the King managed to get within four miles of Andover before Waller heard of his approach. Waller retreated, having left a strong body of horse and dragoons to cover his rear, but this force was soon broken and Waller could easily have been trapped had Charles thought to take the obvious step of sending as few as five hundred horse to the East of the town before starting his advance.[4] Waller's escape, which he later recalled as one of God's greatest mercies to him,[5] removed the danger that the King would succeed in destroying the parliamentary armies one by one.

This advantage was nearly thrown away by Manchester. As Waller retreated

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 34.
2. Ibid., 41-2.
3. Ibid., 46.
4. Walker, Historical Discourses, 105-6.
5. Waller, Recollections, in The Poetry of Anna Matilda, 113.

towards Basingstoke Manchester prepared to fall back to Odiham. Cromwell was certain that Manchester would have done so 'had not Sir William Waller and Sir Arthur Haslerig, coming in the nicke, diswaded him from the dishonour of it.[1] Manchester flatly denied this in his reply to Tate's committee[2] but other witnesses, including Hesilrige and Waller, confirmed that he had been on the point of leaving when they arrived.[3] Their success in persuading him to await the arrival of Essex and the City regiments ensured that the King would now be faced with a parliamentary army larger than his own.

The King clearly underestimated this danger. Persuaded that Waller's retreat from Andover would cause general demoralisation amongst the parliamentary forces, he advanced to Whitchurch and thence, on 21 October, to Kingsclere, half-way between Basing and Newbury. Next day he marched to Newbury, sent a large party to relieve Banbury, and settled down to await their return, after which he intended to relieve Basing House.[4] The parliamentary armies, misreading his intentions, marched to protect Reading. Leaving Essex, who was seriously ill, there, they then advanced towards Newbury, reaching Bucklebury Heath, five miles from the town, on the twenty-fifth. Next day they occupied positions overlooking the town and drew up their plans for an attack on the twenty-seventh.[5]

The Council of War faced formidable difficulties. The King's army was drawn up in front of the town, protected by its fortifications and by two rivers, and might be reinforced at any time by Rupert or the horse which had been sent to Banbury. They decided that Manchester should remain on that side of the town while Essex's foot and most of the horse, including Waller and Hesilrige's, marched around to the other side. This force was to make the main attack through the village of Speen but witnesses later differed over whether the Council of

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1. The Quarrel between the Earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell, ed. T. Bruce and D. Masson (Camd. Soc., 2nd ser., xii, 1875), 85.
2. Manchester's Answer, Brit. Lib., Loan 29/123/Misc. 31 (unfoliated).
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 155-7.
4. Walker, Historical Discourses, 106-10.
5. Gardiner, Civil War, ii. 44-5.

War had decided that Manchester should attack simultaneously, or merely distract the King's main force.[1]

At about two in the afternoon the force which included Waller and Hesilrige reached a small heath to the East of the village of Speen where Maurice was ready for them. As they advanced through narrow hedged lanes, Maurice's guns played on them from behind a barricade. The horses could not manoeuvre in these circumstances and 'there was no way left but to fall on with horse and ffoote, and that without delay'. In the hand-to-hand fighting which followed, Waller's life was saved only by the prompt action of one of his lifeguard[3] and Hesilrige was, presumably, in similar danger. Eventually they drove the enemy back. Waller and Hesilrige thought that the royalists would have been totally routed had nightfall not forced the parliamentary commanders to halt the attack, 'it not being possible to distinguish ffreinds from enemies'.[4]

That night the king, having left his baggage and guns, set off for Bath to rally new forces in the West, while the royalist army retreated towards Wallingford.[5] During the later arguments over these events, Manchester's supporters alleged that the commanders at Speen had been negligent in failing to prevent this, but as Gardiner points out it was Manchester's force, past whom the royalists had to march, who had the best chance of noticing their escape.[6] Next morning the horse pursued the royalists but on reaching Blewbury discovered that they had crossed the river at Wallingford. The nearest ford was at Abingdon and the horse were exhausted so they halted there. Next morning the

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1. Waller and Hesilrige to the Speaker, 28 Oct., D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 140a; Bruce and Masson, 86; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 152; Manchester's Answer, Loan 29/123/Misc. 31 - this section printed at J. Rushworth, Historical Collections, vi. 733.
2. Harl. MS. 166, f. 140a.
3. Waller, Recollections, in The Poetry of Anna Matilda, 113.
4. Harl. MS. 166, f. 140a.
5. Walker, Historical Discourses, 113-4.
6. Bruce and Masson, 64 (Crawford's Narrative); S. Ashe, A True Relation of the Most Chiefe Occurrences at, and since the late Battell at Newbery (1644), 4; Gardiner, Civil War, ii. 52.

commanders decided that they would need foot if they were to pursue the enemy across rivers and through wooded country, and returned to Newbury to obtain some. According to both Waller and Hesilrige, Manchester had made repeated attempts to persuade them to abandon the pursuit.[1] Manchester, by contrast, was to claim that he had 'resented with trouble, the returne of S^{r} William Waller, S^{r} Arthur Hesilrig & Leiten^{t} Generall Cromwell unto Newbury'.[2]

At the Council of War on the twenty-ninth Cromwell, Waller and Hesilrige pressed for an advance into Oxfordshire, but Skippon and most of the foot commanders opposed this on the grounds that their men were already exhausted, while Manchester was keen to return to the Eastern Association.[3] Over the next three days as Cromwell and his supporters continued to press for the adoption of their strategy[4] Waller and Hesilrige still supported an advance, but by 30 October they thought that it would be better to march towards Bath, to disperse Rupert's army or force it into winter quarters, and to pen most of the King's forces into the West.[5]

During this period, Colonel Samuel Jones was talking to Manchester when news arrived that the royalist Lord Paget had returned to London. Manchester

> said that he was very glad to hear that honest Pagett was come in, whereupon Sir Arthur Haselrigg replied that he would have called him honest likewise if he had continued with the Parliament, to whom the Earl said, speaking in a merry and familiar way to Sir Arthur, 'Thou art a bloody fellow' and prayed God to send us peace, for He did never prosper us in our victories to make them clear victories.[6]

Meanwhile the King was working hard to undo the effects of the battle. He reached Oxford on 1 November and was joined by Rupert with reinforcements from the West. While the parliamentary armies marched to Harwell on the second, and back to Newbury on the sixth, he prepared to advance.

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1. Bruce and Masson, 87 (Cromwell's Narrative), Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 156-157.
2. Manchester's Answer, Loan 29/123/Misc. 31.
3. Bruce and Masson, 87-88; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 156, 157.
4. Ibid., 154.
5. Ibid., 83.
6. Ibid., 160.
7. Gardiner, Civil War, ii. 54-6.

Late in the afternoon of 8 November the commanders at Newbury received news that the King's army was within five or six miles of the town. The horse were ordered to rendezvous, but at a full Council of War it was decided that it would not be possible to bar the King's passage to Donnington Castle in darkness. Instead they decided to stand on the defensive in Newbury until the enemy retreated, and then fall on their rear.[1] Next morning the King advanced to Donnington Castle, resupplied the garrison, and retrieved his artillery.

Charles was now eager to fight the parliamentary armies again, before going into winter quarters.[2] At a Council of War that morning there was a general consensus that it would be too dangerous to attack the King while he was at Donnington Castle. The parliamentary forces began to assemble on Shaw field to the North of the town and prepared breastworks and batteries. When the King attacked at about two, however, most of the horse had not yet arrived. Nevertheless the foot succeeded in repelling the royalist attack, and the King's army withdrew towards the castle.[3] When the horse arrived in Shaw field it was agreed that they should stay there, and rendezvous at three next morning to begin following the enemy, who were expected to retreat during the night.[4] But Charles, who still wished to fight, marched no further than Winterbourne Heath, three miles away.

Next day Manchester and the rest of the commanders rode forward to view the enemy and then held a council of war, at which they decided not to advance. Manchester, Waller and Balfour explained in a letter of 10 November that an advance would have been too dangerous in view of the strength of the King's position, the bad weather, the poor condition of their forces, and the possibility that the king might have outmanoeuvred them to re-occupy Newbury.[5]

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1. Bruce and Masson, 91.
2. Clarendon, History, iii. 439.
3. Ibid., 439-40; Bruce and Masson, 67; Manchester's Answer, Loan 29/123/ Misc. 31, printed at Rushworth, Historical Collections, vi. 734.
4. Bruce and Masson, 92.
5. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 110.

In a letter of the eleventh Waller argued that the only alternative to the decision they had taken would have been 'a rash and precipitate engagement'.[1] It seems clear that this was the general view at the Council of War.

Hesilrige was prominent amongst those who advocated caution. When Crawford proposed that they should send three thousand horse and some musketeers to fall on the royalist rear, Hesilrige spoke strongly against this plan. Broadening the issue, he argued that it would be unwise to engage since if Charles was beaten they would not be able to take his garrisons or prevent him from gathering a new army, whereas if they were defeated Parliament's forces would disintegrate and the King would be left dominant in Southern England. He therefore urged that they should stay at Newbury in the hope of retaining it and blocking the royalists' route to Basing. After some further debate along the same lines, Manchester seconded Hesilrige's opinion and, since noone spoke in favour of fighting the King at that time, caution prevailed.[2]

Hesilrige's argument was very similar to those which he and Waller had used in their letters from Shaftesbury and during their retreat to Basingstoke. In spite of Manchester's subsequent assertion that 'It was far from our Intentions (as it was impertinent for the present purpose) to urge any of these Arguments as to the final result of the War',[3] it seems clear that in supporting Hesilrige's argument he strayed into more general questions. Hesilrige was among those who later testified that Manchester had said, 'If we beat the King 99 times yet he is King still, and so will his posterity be after him, but if the King beats us once we shall be all hanged and our posterity be made slaves', to which Cromwell replied 'My Lord if this be so, why did we take up arms at first? this is against fighting ever hereafter,

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 113.
2. Bruce and Masson, 68 (Crawford); Manchester's Answer, Loan 29/123/Misc. 31, printed at J. Rushworth, Historical Collections, vi. 735.
3. Ibid.

if so, let us make peace, be it never so base'.[1]

By the time Hesilrige gave this evidence the generals had split apart in their efforts to divert public and parliamentary anger at this outcome away from themselves and on to their colleagues. Before they reached that point, however, they had tried to present a common defence of their actions. On 12 November Manchester, Waller and Balfour wrote to the Committee of Both Kingdoms that it was 'fitter that Sir Arthur Haselrigg, who was present here, should give you an account of it than to make a relation of it by letter',[2] and two days later Hesilrige returned to London.

Another year of campaigns had brought Parliament no closer to victory. Essex had made it clear that he was not prepared to be controlled by the Committee of Both Kingdoms. He now had the chance to exploit the military failure of his rivals and the Vane - St. John group, deprived of the support of the Scots, had as much to fear as they had during the previous winter. Hesilrige had established himself more firmly as one of the Commons' leading members, but in the process he had made more enemies and with the rest of the commanders he was now vulnerable to criticism. He and his allies were faced with the task of beginning again, in a Parliament embittered by a year of factional conflict.

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 151.
2. Ibid., 116.

Chapter 7. Survival and Success:

November 1644 to mid-1645

These months witnessed critical changes in the political and military situation. The failures at Newbury and Donnington, following the disaster at Lostwithiel, demonstrated that none of the military factions could deliver the victories they promised. The generals resumed their attacks on their rivals on the assumption that a majority of members would now be prepared to give decisive political victory to one or other coalition of commanders. But, as Cromwell and Tate were quick to realise, Parliament and its supporters were not only war weary, they were also weary of the political warfare between the military factions. The Self Denying Ordinance represented a welcome alternative to the seemingly inescapable cycle of conflict and sullen compromise. As a result the old military lobbies, whose politics overlapped with, and cut across, ideological divisions, were swept away, although the assumption that military interests could play a central part in politics, in unstable coalition with ideological groupings, survived to reemerge in a more dangerous form in 1647-8.

The removal of the old military factions created the conditions for the emergence of clearer, more stable ideological factions amongst the grandees and the development of a more confrontational style of politics in the Commons, marked not only by the increasing frequency of divisions but also by the consistency with which certain leading members, including Hesilrige, acted as tellers with the same allies and the same opponents. It is true that some convergence of military and ideological groupings had already taken place but this was far from complete in November 1644. The Scots rapprochement with Essex and Holles would certainly have accelerated this trend, but it was the dissolution of the old armies and the old military lobbies which opened

the way to a full realignment of political forces. However much St. John and others might wish to play a middle group rôle, and however skilfully they might attempt it, in the later 1640s, they had much less room for manoeuvre than Pym who had, for instance, been able to retain Essex's support against the Peace Party in the summer of 1643 by throwing his own weight behind Essex's military demands.

These months also witnessed a shift in the nature of the political issues at Westminster. Since 1642 the cycle of military competition had been paralleled by an equally unproductive cycle of peace negotiations. Each time the King rejected Parliamentary propositions the view that sustained military success was the essential precondition for successful negotiations was strengthened - only to be undermined by the failures of the parliamentary armies. Uxbridge was different because it was followed by Naseby, the first of a series of victories which slowly destroyed the royalist armies. As the trend became evident in Parliament, so the manoeuvres to shape the post-war settlement and gain both factional and personal advantage were to become more intense.

These changes propelled Hesilrige into a position of factional leadership. The Self Denying Ordinance freed him, or forced him, to spend more time at Westminster, while the disappearance of Waller's army allowed the energies previously devoted to that interest to be spread across a wider range of political issues. Hesilrige had established himself as a serious politician by his assiduous committee work and by his practical and political efforts on behalf of Waller's army. His natural aptitude, however, lay in his unapologetic talent for aggressive confrontation and opposition. The political atmosphere which developed from mid-1645 onwards enabled him to rival and surpass his subtler colleagues, Vane and St. John. The events of these months which created the conditions for Hesilrige's emergence as a

leader in his own right, also strengthened his links with Cromwell and prepared the way for their close collaboration in 1647-8 and the destructive disillusionment which followed in the 1650s.

However prominent Hesilrige might become at the national level, he was deeply committed to Leicestershire and its county politics. For decades the county had been dominated by the Hastings family. That dominance had been shattered in 1640, largely as a result of Hesilrige's efforts, and this had created the possibility of more open political competition. The development of such rivalry amongst the parliamentarian gentry families was retarded by the political and military crises of 1642 and 1643, but by the end of 1643 a bitter division had appeared between Grey of Groby and his conservative supporters like the Hartopps on one side, and Hesilrige's allies on the other. Hesilrige had used his parliamentary skills and influence to secure victory for his supporters with the exclusion of most of Grey's supporters from the county committee appointed in July 1644. They fought back in the autumn and were reinstated. This, together with the recriminations following the fall of Leicester, and the diminution of the military threat after Naseby, opened a period of unprecedentedly fierce factional competition in Leicestershire. In his own county, as in national politics, Hesilrige was once more engaged in the sort of fight at which he excelled.

(i) After Donnington

Hesilrige returned to the Commons on 14 November.[1] As Waller, Manchester and Balfour had explained in a letter of the twelfth, the 'chief officers' at Newbury wished the Committee of Both Kingdoms to have 'a right understanding of this late action', and had nominated Hesilrige to give the committee an account of it in person.[2] On his arrival Hesilrige found that the Commons had already ordered the committee to make a report on the fourteenth.[3] Whether because he had really just arrived, or because he wished to create an impression, Hesilrige went to the Commons, 'all in beaten Buff, cross girt with Swords and Pistols, as if he had been killing his thousands'.[4] Whitacre's brief note of Hesilrige's speech picks up his argument that the commanders' principal aim had been to retain control of Newbury, as does the account in A Perfect Diurnall, which also mentions his insistence that the key decisions had been taken by vote at councils of war and that the commanders had intended to attack the King as he retreated but had been dissuaded by the evident tactical advantages he enjoyed.[5] Holles suggests that Hesilrige went so far as to repeat to the House the argument that 'It had been no wisdom to have adventur'd to fight, for that the King would be King still, and would soon have had another Army, tho they had gotten the better, but if he had beaten them, they had been utterly lost'.[6] Although Hesilrige certainly sought to justify the commanders' caution in tactical terms, it is highly unlikely that he would have courted trouble by repeating

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1. C.J., iii. 696.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 116.
3. C.J., iii. 694.
4. Holles, Memoirs, 27, § 28.
5. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 174a; E. 256(36), A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament, no. 67, 11-18 Nov. 1644, 541.
6. Holles, Memoirs, 27-8, § 28.

this ambiguous formula.

Hesilrige's position was difficult enough without such a blunder. Having spent the last two years demanding a more aggressive approach to the conduct of the war, he had been forced by the particular tactical circumstances at Donnington to play a leading rôle in advocating caution. Political enemies would, in any case, have exploited the apparent contradiction, while many of Hesilrige's usual allies would not have been sympathetic to nice distinctions between tactics and strategy. But this danger was intensified by Hesilrige's misfortune or misjudgement in returning to London and appearing in the Commons as the spokesman for the commanders' common defence of their actions. If the unity of the commanders broke down and more details emerged, he was vulnerable to the charge that his rather bland account had been designed 'to cast a mist before the peoples eyes, and stop their mouths',[1] while the credibility of any alternative account he might give in those circumstances was bound to be undermined by members' memory of his first story.

It was already inevitable that more details would emerge. Essex blamed his rivals for Lostwithiel and had been further embittered by his critics' attempts to discredit his army by investigating allegations of treachery. Essex's opponents had tried to block the reconstruction of his army and to prevent his participation in the autumn campaign. Vane and St. John's part in one such manoeuvre had led D'Ewes to conclude that they wished 'to draw all power to Waller, Hesilrige &c.'[2] Although Essex had defeated these attempts with the help of the Scots, it was clear that once the campaign was over he would have to fight hard to maintain his authority and secure the

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1. Holles, Memoirs, 28, §28.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 128b.

resources his army needed. His good fortune in being absent from Newbury and Donnington gave him the opportunity to attack his rivals. Essex, and the officers who had been kept in London by Tate's committee, argued publicly that things would have been very different had they been present, and attacked Waller in particular.[1]

The commanders sent Hesilrige back to counter the criticism and rumours. But if they kept their tacit agreement to maintain a common line of defence, they were unable to restrain their subordinates. On 14 or 15 November Cromwell was confronted with a letter from the Committee of Both Kingdoms which emphasised the need for unanimity, and letters received from London which said that Manchester, Middleton, Crawford and Holborne were receiving all the blame for Donnington. 'My Lord', he protested, 'I hold him for a knave that would doe any man ill offices, but there was nothing done but what was justifiable and by joint consent of the councell of Warr'.[2] The Parliament Scout for the week ending on the fourteenth printed an account from an army officer identifying Hesilrige, Waller, Skippon, Balfour and Cromwell as the leaders of those at the Council of War who 'were for fighting the enemy in the champion, and to leave the success to the King of heaven'.[3] Other newspapers were less specific but outlined the divisions in general terms. Everyone knew that Hesilrige had not told the whole story and the commanders knew that partisan reports were circulating in London.

The poor performance of the armies during the week after Hesilrige's departure deepened the divisions amongst the commanders, and heightened public dissatisfaction with them. When Waller and Cromwell returned to the Commons on 22 November 'they were not much welcomed'.[4] Next day Waller presented

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1. Trelawny Papers, Camden Misc. ii (Camden Soc., 1st ser., lv.), 7; Journal of Occurrences, Add. MS. 25, 465, f. 23b-24a.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 117; Crawford's Narrative, Bruce and Masson, 69.
3. E. 17(4), The Parliament Scout, no. 73, 7-14 Nov. 1644.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 166a.

documents from all of the commanders explaining their decision to go into winter quarters. This alone provoked long debate, and the House deferred Waller and Cromwell's report on the campaign as a whole until Monday the twenty-fifth, fearing that 'it might tend to the Increasing of divisions in the Army'.[1]

Waller and Cromwell worked together so closely in preparing their speeches that contemporaries, including the Commons' clerk,[2] regarded the results as a single narrative. Hesilrige must have been consulted: he was as much at risk as they were, he had represented Waller's army at Westminster since 1643, and he had more experience than Waller of working with Cromwell. Judging by the promptness with which Tate proposed the immediate impeachment of Manchester after Cromwell's speech on the twenty-fifth,[3] he too was probably consulted and the same may be true of other members of the Vane - St. John group.

The attack on Manchester was certainly a calculated risk. They knew that Essex was ready to attack them, that the Commons were hostile and that the common defence presented by Hesilrige had been damaged by leaks from the armies. They also knew that the Commons had ordered the Committee of Both Kingdoms 'to consider of a Frame or Model of the whole Militia ... notwithstanding any former ordinance of Parliament'.[4] They had to clear themselves quickly if they were to be free to fight for their interests in the course of this major reorganisation. Cromwell, Waller and Hesilrige had genuine grievances against Manchester, but the decision to attack him solved their tactical problems by providing a scapegoat and changing the focus of the debate. It was arguable that Waller and Cromwell had favoured caution in the specific circumstances of 9 and 10 November, while Hesilrige had justified those decisions in the House. The answer was to argue that it was Manchester's fault that the situation had

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 156a; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 175a.
2. C.J., iii. 704, 713.
3. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 156ab.
4. C.J., iii. 703.

arisen and that his intention in arguing for caution had been peculiarly culpable. Learning from earlier impeachments, they set out to prove Manchester guilty of disloyalty by accumulation, using a series of incidents to demonstrate a pattern of unwillingness to fight arising from his reluctance to see a decisive victory.

Waller spoke first on 25 November but he 'read out of a paper' and made little impression.[1] Cromwell's speech has not survived in its original form, and the written version, which may have incorporated suggestions from Waller and Hesilrige,[2] claims only to be 'An accompt of the effect and substance' of the sections dealing with Manchester.[3] But D'Ewes' and Whitacre's notes of the speech suggest that in outline at least it was very similar to the written version.[4] The defeat of Tate's proposal for an immediate impeachment, and the decision to refer the charges to a committee instead, demonstrated that Manchester was not without friends in the Commons. After some debate his attackers did, however, ensure that they were referred to Tate's committee rather than the more evenly balanced Committee of Both Kingdoms.[5]

The key question now was whether Essex and his supporters would throw their full weight behind Manchester. Their prime concern was still the defeat of Waller, who was now Essex's only serious rival in the South. The damage done to Manchester's reputation by Waller and Cromwell's charges, and the open breach between him and Essex's opponents, meant that he no longer posed a threat; Cromwell, whose known political and religious radicalism was already a handicap, had now split the supporters of the Eastern Association army. The importance of the friction between Waller and Essex

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 156a.
2. Bruce and Masson, 95n; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 144. The additions to the MS. (P.R.O., S.P. 16/503/55) are merely marginal headings and minor stylistic amendments, and do not prove collaboration.
3. Bruce and Masson, 78.
4. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 156a; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 176l.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 156ab.

was demonstrated yet again by the arguments over Major Carr. The Commons had rejected Waller and Hesilrige's original proposal to exchange a Colonel Warren for him and forced them to accept an unsuitable alternative in the shape of Major-General Porter.[1] But Essex, 'on information that Carr was dead', had then agreed to exchange Porter for one of his own officers.[2] On 29 November the Commons voted to adhere to its original order,[3] but the question was reopened next day and the debate continued on 2 December, taking up most of the day and culminating in a division in which Hesilrige and Strode were defeated by Stapleton and Lewes.[4] The interest generated, and time consumed, by this relatively minor issue, shows how easily any dispute could become a test of strength between the two military factions.

Public response to Waller and Cromwell's narrative[5] suggested that Waller and his officers were likely to escape censure over recent failures, and even to emerge with their reputations enhanced. Essex had an obvious interest in preventing this, especially as few were now likely to be interested in listening to his stale charges regarding their conduct before Lostwithiel. Given Manchester's weakness, Essex had nothing to lose by supporting him against Waller and Cromwell.

On 28 November Manchester spoke in the Lords, and provided a narrative of events at Newbury and of some speeches made by Cromwell.[6] On 2 December he presented a written version divided into a military narrative and a series of political charges against Cromwell. The Lords endorsed the military narrative and agreed to request the appointment of a joint committee to examine the business at Donnington Castle. Recognising the problems of privilege raised

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1. C.J., iii. 658.
2. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 177a.
3. C.J., iii. 708.
4. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 177ab; C.J., iii. 711
5. See, e.g., E. 19(4), Mercurius Civicus, no. 79, 21-28 Nov. 1644; E. 19(8), The Scottish Dove, no. 58, 22-29 Nov. 1644.
6. L.J., vii. 76.

by the political charges they agreed merely to transmit these to the Commons at a conference.[1] The military investigation was to be taken away from Tate's Committee and placed in more sympathetic hands, while the political charges were to match and counter the effect of the charges against Manchester. When the papers were reported to the Commons, Cromwell 'gave a very large Answer', and succeeded in leaving members with the impression that the Lords wanted the joint committee to investigate the political charges. The Commons appointed a committee ('Fisle's committee') to consider whether their privileges had been broken by the Lords' proposal. Holles and his allies found places on this committee alongside St. John, Vane, Hesilrige and other friends of Cromwell, but the damage had been done: there would be no separate inquiry into events at Donnington and, while Manchester's charges were blocked, Tate's committee could continue to prepare the case against Manchester.[2]

Hesilrige appears to have been particularly fortunate. The text of Manchester's second paper, the political charges, has survived and matches the clerk's note of his speech on 28 November.[3] The text of the first paper, the military narrative, has not been found. The narrative printed by Rushworth[4] is an edited version of a document headed, 'The Answer which I doe make to the Informacon read to me by the Comittee of the House of Commons as farre as the notes I then tooke can bring it to my remembrance'.[5] After votes by the Lords and Commons in January, which would have allowed Tate's committee to hear Manchester,[6] the Commons agreed on 13 February that the committee should be empowered to give him the heads of the charges against him, though not the copies of the examinations which he had requested.[7] This

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1. L.J., vii. 79, 80.
2. C.J., iii. 713-4; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 178a.
3. Camden Misc. viii., (Camden Soc., 2nd ser., xxxi., 1883), 1-2.
4. J. Rushworth, Historical Collections, vi. 735-6.
5. Brit. Lib., Loan 29/123/Misc. 31.
6. L.J., vii. 141; C.J., iv. 27.
7. C.J., iv. 47; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 192b.

document, dealing with each head in turn, was Manchester's reply. At the least, it can be said that there is no proof that Manchester made any reference to Hesilrige's rôle at Donnington before late February or early March.

The earlier narrative was much more limited in scope, dealing solely with 'the Affairs of the Army at Donnington Castle'.[1] Alongside a defence of Manchester's own rôle, it probably contained criticism of Cromwell's conduct - it had originally formed part of the same speech as the political charges and Cromwell was able to blur the distinction between the two papers on 4 December. Waller's part in the attack on Manchester had attracted relatively little attention and although Manchester's narrative must have emphasised the near unanimity of the council of war at Donnington, he had no reason to single out Waller and Hesilrige for attack. Even in February, when he knew that they and their officers had given evidence against him, he reserved his for Cromwell. It is particularly unlikely that he laid any special stress on Hesilrige's arguments at the council of war. Cromwell had mentioned Manchester's alleged speech beginning, 'if we beate the King 99 times he would be King still ... ' in his written narrative,[2] and it may have figured in his speech of 25 November, but it had attracted no particular attention. It became important because it was emphasised in the evidence given to Tate's committee, starting with the examination of Waller's Scoutmaster-General Pitsom on 4 December. Hesilrige himself did not testify that Manchester had used the words until 6 December.[3] By February Manchester had good reason to emphasise his allegation that Hesilrige had originated the crucial phrases; he had no reason to do so on 2 December. Reaction at the

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1. L.J., vii. 79.
2. Bruce and Masson, 93.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 150-1.

time suggests that it was not mentioned. Commons convention would have barred Hesilrige from appointment to Lisle's committee on 4 December, had the inclusion of so serious an allegation against him given him an obvious personal interest in preventing consideration of the substance of the military narrative. Equally Hesilrige and his allies would hardly have emphasised these phrases in their evidence to Tate's committee after 4 December had they known that Manchester intended to turn them against Hesilrige himself. When, eventually, Manchester did accuse Hesilrige, it was too late. Tate's committee heard his defence in late February or March, but they did not report it to the Commons, and an order of 2 April was the last attempt to force them to do so.[1] Well-informed individuals like Holles[2] knew of the allegation, but most members did not. Given that Waller and Cromwell had also enabled him to escape blame for his misleadingly bland report of 14 November, Hesilrige had emerged from a politically dangerous situation virtually unscathed.

Waller and Hesilrige were, therefore, more or less safe from recriminations over Donnington. Their ally Cromwell had blocked Manchester's counter-attack, while Tate's committee was free to continue the preparation of charges against Manchester. The problem was that for many of their supporters the survival of particular commanders was merely a means to an end. The central aim for men like Tate, Vane and, by now, St. John, was fundamental military reorganisation including the removal of Essex. By early December their chances of achieving this were slipping away.

On 9 December Tate, 'set on by that Party who contrived the outing of the Lord General, and to bring on their own designes, and .. could find no other way',[3] moved, 'That during the Time of this War, no Member of either House

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1. C.J., iv. 97.
2. Holles, Memoirs, 27, §28. By 1648 he had apparently forgotten the occasion on which Hesilrige was supposed to have used the words.
3. Whitelock, Memorials, I. 349.

shall have or execute any Office or Command, Military or Civil'. The motion was seconded by Vane, and Cromwell spoke strongly and effectively in favour of it. The Commons passed the resolution and appointed a committee, to which St. John was the first member named, to draft an ordinance.[1] This coup had all the hall-marks of the Vane - St. John group: surprise, effective team-work, and the promotion of a simple, and apparently straightforward, idea. Once Tate's record as an able political tactician and member of the Vane - St. John group is recognised, it is apparent that he was almost certainly acting by agreement with his usual colleagues. If so, Hesilrige, who had been involved in similar manoeuvres alongside St. John, Vane and Cromwell since 1641, was probably consulted. Like Cromwell he straddled the ideological and military factions, and like him he could have been convinced that this was the only solution, whatever the effect on his own military career and on the army to which he was attached.

The appeal of wider arguments for Self-Denial[2] attracted support from members who would not have supported Essex's rivals or the Vane - St. John group. Even so the attempt to commit the Commons to the removal of Essex was nearly frustrated. On the seventeenth an attempt to insert a proviso exempting Essex from the provisions of the ordinance was defeated by only 100 votes to 93.[3] Clearly no other course could have succeeded against Essex when this 'cunning Contrivance of his Enemies'[4] came so close to disaster. On 21 December Pierrepoint, accompanied by the whole House, carried the ordinance up to the Lords.[5] This demonstration was more than a gesture: the Commons were committed to military reorganisation and the removal of Essex. If he

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1. J. Rushworth, Historical Collections, vii. 4; C.J., iii. 718.
2. J. Rushworth, Historical Collections, vii. 4, 5.
3. C.J., iii. 726; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 180a.
4. Whitelock, Memorials, i. 349.
5. C.J., iii. 730.

accepted defeat his opponents would have won, if he and the Lords resisted, the Commons' decision would give unprecedented legitimacy to the tactic of obstructing the reconstruction of his army and diverting resources into a new army.

(ii) Changes at Westminster: December to May

Hesilrige was, simultaneously, the head or patron of a Leicestershire faction, an M.P. with a continuing interest in matters apart from military affairs, a hard-working member of the Committee of Both Kingdoms and of Commons committees concerned with the practicalities of military organisation, a representative of Waller's army, and a 'violent' who could be expected to play a vigorous part in the political struggle to establish the New Model. These are of course artificial distinctions, and neither Hesilrige nor his allies and enemies saw these as separate activities. Put it is peculiarly difficult to make sense of his rôle in these months without making such distinctions. The pressure of business and the speed of change at Westminster were great, and Hesilrige's centre of interest shifted from day to day in response to the opportunities and threats which presented themselves. This, together with the fragmentary nature of the evidence, gives his activity a disjointed, irrational appearance, and obscures the consistent interests and aims underlying it.

One attraction of Self-Denial from Hesilrige's point of view was that it would remove Grey of Groby from command in Leicestershire. The quarrels between Grey's supporters and the majority of the Leicester committee had intensified during the autumn. Grey himself was in London, and his brother, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Grey, who had quarrelled with Alderman Ludlam during

the summer, had finally resigned his commission on 22 September.[1] The committee, left in sole charge, made the most of their opportunity. When their forces joined those of neighbouring counties in defeating a royalist force in the Vale of Belvoir in late October, they lost no time in writing to the Commons, enclosing Francis Hacker's eye-witness acount of the action. They also took the chance to enclose a petition, presumably intended to strengthen their position.[2]

They were seeking to preempt a petition from Grey's supporters, which was presented to the Commons on 6 November. It was presented by a number of Leicestershire gentlemen, headed by Thomas Beaumont of Stoughton, who had lost his place on the committee in July. Then Hesilrige and his supporters had alleged that Grey's soldiers were ineffective and out of control, that money was being extorted by force from a resentful population, and that the only remedy was a new committee with stronger powers. Now the petition, which, it was claimed, had attracted more than two thousand signatures, and Beaumont's speech made the same allegations but blamed the problems on Grey's absence and the replacement of the old committee composed of 'Gentlemen of Judgements and Estates of this County' by the 'Government of such, whose defects of number, acquaintance amongst us, and interests in the County, cannot afford us any probable hopes of preservation'. They called for Grey to return with full power to command, for the return of absentee members of the committee, and for the addition of 'Gentlemen of knowne integrity and interest in the County'.[3]

The Commons were sufficiently impressed to bypass Knightley's committee, which had made no significant progress on the milder petition of 4 September,

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1. Nichols, Leicestershire, III. ii., App. 4, p. 7; P.R.O., S.P. 28/253A Pt. vi. f. 84a.
2. C.J., iii. 682; Nichols, Leicestershire, III. ii., App. 4, p. 38.
3. E. 16(19), A Speech Delivered in the Commons House of Parliament by that judicious and worthy Gentleman, Thomas Beaumont Esquire ... (1644).

and referred the new petition to the Committee of Both Kingdoms.[1] On 12 November the committee ordered the Leicester Committee to send representatives to answer the allegations by 21 November, and appointed a sub-committee to investigate the matter.[2] Two days later they decided that they were too busy to deal with it, and to ask the Commons to hear it themselves or refer it to a select committee. It is probably significant that the fourteenth was the day of Hesilrige's return to the Committee.[3] A further week was wasted before this was reported to the Commons, who then referred the petition to Knightley's committee. There was, however, some comfort for Grey and his supporters in the Commons decision to add thirteen, mainly conservative, members to that committee.[4]

Leicestershire quarrels were seldom unmarked by the threat of violence, and this was no exception. Sir Martin Lister had attacked Hesilrige's proposed new committee in May, and had been added to it, against Hesilrige's wishes, in July. On 6 December the Commons were informed 'That some words of Heat passed between Sir Martin Lister and Sir Arthur Haselrigge, in the House, tending to a Quarrel'. Both were formally rebuked by the Speaker for this offence against the 'Privilege and Respect due to the House', and required to give an immediate assurance that they would not engage themselves in a 'quarrel' or duel.[5] Although they presumably kept their word, the underlying antagonism was not resolved, and may well have been sharpened by a common resentment of this public humiliation.

One solution to the problem of command in Leicestershire, which had been floated by Knightley's committee in September,[6] would have been to associate

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1. C.J., iii. 688.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 116.
3. Ibid., 123.
4. C.J., iii. 701.
5. C.J., iii. 716-7.
6. C.J., iii. 628.

the county's forces with the Northern army. This idea reappeared during the Commons' discussions of the New Model on 3 January, and was part of the work referred to a sub-committee by the Committee of Both Kingdoms next day,[1] but it seems to have disappeared during the rush to complete the main plan of the new army. On 10 February the Commons approved the appointment of Arthur Staveley, one of Hesilrige's allies on the Leicester committee, to the post of sheriff, the usual importance of which was likely to be increased by the holding of recruiter elections.[2] But a more accurate indication of Commons attitudes towards Leicestershire was given in the New Model ordinance passed a week later. The committee appointed to collect the county's financial contributions included most of the existing county committee, but it also included Sir Edward and Sir Thomas Hartopp, John St. John, William Danvers, Thomas Beaumont and Thomas Cotton who had been removed from that committee in July, and other Grey supporters like Sir Roger Smith, William Quarles and William Sherman. The places given to Hesilrige's supporters Francis Smalley and John Swynfen could not disguise the obvious intention to make this committee more evenly balanced.[3]

This trend was confirmed on 14 March when the Commons added thirteen men to the main county committee.[4] Francis Smalley and John Swynfen again found places, and Archdale Palmer, John Browne and Valentine Swynfen may also have been Hesilrige supporters. But Sir Edward and Sir Thomas Hartopp, Sir Roger Smith and John St. John were supporters of Grey and the same is probably true of Sir George Villiers.[5] The Lords were not satisfied and, on 17 March, insisted on the addition of seven further names: of these Sir Edward Hartopp, Thomas Beaumont, William Quarles, Thomas Cotton,

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1. C.J., iv. 9; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 229.
2. C.J., iv. 45.
3. Acts and Ordinances I. 622, cf. 49-50, 470.
4. C.J., iv. 78. They named 14 but Alderman Craddock had been appointed in July, Acts and Ordinances I. 470.
5. I have been unable to find indications of the allegiances of John Whatton, John Stafford and John Pratt.

William Sherman and William Danvers were clearly Grey supporters and it would be remarkable if the seventh, Thomas Goddard, did not belong in the same category.[1] The Lords' intervention ensured that the Grey faction on the county committee would be greatly strengthened, especially as men like Beaumont were likely to play an active rôle. Hesilrige could comfort himself with a small victory on the twenty-eighth, when the Committee for Sequestrations, of which he was a member, voted to appoint his brother-in-law Francis Blithe, whom he, Kent, and 'some of' the Leicester committee had nominated, rather than Stamford and Grey's nominee, to the post of Solicitor for Sequestrations in Leicestershire.[2] He might also have reflected that while his allies still formed the majority of the active members of the Leicester committee, his enemies could no longer blame them for all the county's problems.

Much of Hesilrige's work to retain control of Leicestershire took place out of the public eye and the same is probably true of his work in other areas. Although he concentrated on military affairs at this time, a few incidents, in which he happened to play a prominent rôle, suggest that he remained actively involved in a wider range of issues. Two related questions, which had concerned him in the past, provoked Hesilrige's first voluntary reappearance at the centre of attention in the Commons, on the afternoon of 19 December. The elections for London's Common Council were due to take place on 24 December, and conservatism and the desire for peace were growing in the City. St. John had dealt with a similar danger a year earlier by successfully proposing an ordinance enjoining Londoners not to elect anyone whose estate had been sequestered, who had been convicted of malignancy, or who had refused the Covenant.[3] Hesilrige now followed this example by presenting an ordinance to

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1. L.J., vii. 276-7. Hartopp's inclusion was clearly a mistake on either 14 or 17 March: Sir Edward Hartopp, Kt., had been added by the Lords to the original committee in July 1644.
2. P.R.O., S.P. 20/1 Pt. i, ff. 6, 624.
3. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 102b.

ensure 'That well-affected Persons may be elected of the Common Council'. This was read once and referred to Hesilrige, St. John and Strode for some alterations. When Hesilrige had reported the amended version and it had been passed, the Commons agreed to send it up to the Lords, but also decided that their vote should constitute an 'Order of this House' and instructed Venn to deliver it to the City. The terms of the order extended the 1643 criteria to electors, and laid down that candidates should, in addition, be ineligible if they had not voluntarily contributed upon the Propositions or had 'otherwise testified their Disaffection to the Parliament'.[1] These terms, together with the procedure adopted, suggest that Hesilrige, probably in consultation with St. John, was taking advantage of an unusually weak moderate attendance in the Commons.

Encouraged by this success, he and Cromwell attempted a more ambitious coup. Parliament had sent peace propositions to the King at the end of November and he had responded with a request for detailed negotiations. Both Houses now agreed that there should be a treaty, and that the King's messengers should be sent back with an interim message asking Charles to wait while they prepared detailed instructions for their commissioners. Direct opposition would have been futile, so Hesilrige and Cromwell pressed for an addition to the message, which would, presumably, have made it much less acceptable to the King. The younger Vane, concerned at the effect this would have on uncommitted members and the wider public, and the damage it would do to his chances of influencing the outcome of negotiations, joined Glyn in dividing the House against the putting of this question. Even with Vane against them, Hesilrige and Cromwell lost by only 65 votes to 56.[2]

In September 1643 Hesilrige had played a leading rôle in negotiating the

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1. C.J., iii. 729.
2. C.J., iii. 729; see V. Rowe, Sir Henry Vane the Younger, 63ff. for his general attitude towards the negotiations.

agreement with the Commissioners of the Customs under which they advanced £30,000 for the navy in return for an ordinance granting them security of tenure until 25 March 1645.[1] As this date approached, the Commons opened negotiations with them and with rival groups. One of the latter offered to cut their fee from £10,000 to £4,000 a year and to provide a loan of £50,000 within six days, with a further £20,000 as money came in. On 11 February this provoked a debate in the committee of the whole House which lasted all morning and was still continuing at one o'clock as Glyn, Hesilrige and other friends of the Customers demanded that they should be heard and given a chance to match this offer, eventually securing an order that they should be heard next day. The Customers were, however, unable to satisfy the committee on the twelfth and it voted to accept the rival offer. The Commons accepted the committee's report on the fifteenth, and although Venn and other 'violent' members secured a delay until the seventeenth so that enquiries could be made about the new group they were merely postponing the inevitable.[2] Like his prompt reaction to the danger in December, this suggests that Hesilrige's links with the City radicals were still strong. It also suggests that the gap between Glyn and the radicals was not yet unbridgeable, and that Hesilrige and Glyn could still work together on some issues.

Alderman Fowke was in trouble again on 18 April, when the Committee of Accounts' report began with his refusal to answer their questions or to take an oath tendered by them. Although the report also dealt with other cases, it was Fowke's conduct which impressed contemporaries, and Hesilrige's appointment to the committee to which this report was referred probably reflected his known friendship with Fowke.[3] Hesilrige's involvement in the affairs of the Customers had in the past been paralleled by an interest in the Excise. An

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1. See above, p. 181-2.
2. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 177ab; C.J., iv. 49, 51.
3. C.J., iv. 116.

ordinance for the better regulation of the excise of flesh was read for the second time on 31 May, and Hesilrige was the third of eighteen members to whom it was committed, preceded only by Giles Greene, an acknowledged expert, and Glyn. The ordinance was clearly contentious, since the House ordered that the committee's report should be made between the hours of ten and twelve,[1] and Glyn and Hesilrige may again have been working together to protect the interests of the Excise Commissioners. Under the ordinance for regulating the Excise, passed on 6 June, Hesilrige found a place on the large joint committee which was to meet at least once a fortnight to consider ways of improving the Excise in pursuit of existing ordinances and draft new ordinances for this purpose.[2]

Although Hesilrige was not solely concerned with military questions, they occupied most of his time. Much of this work was technical and administrative. He attended about half of the meetings of the Committee of Both Kingdoms in the months following his return from the armies,[3] and cannot have avoided becoming involved in the routine executive decisions which dominated these meetings. The Committee appointed relatively few sub-committees and their membership was usually small, so Hesilrige's appointment to five between December and April suggests that he was an active member.[4] He probably made numerous reports to the Commons but the names of those who reported were seldom noted. D'Ewes happened to be interested enough in a report made by Hesilrige on 18 February to note his name, and the importance of a paper from the Scots regarding their army, reported to the Commons on 9 May, prompted the clerk to do the same, but these were exceptions.[5] When on 1 April the Commons wanted to ensure prompt action on Major-General Browne's problems at Abingdon, it was Hesilrige who was ordered to report next day on what the committee had done,

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1. C.J., iv. 158.
2. Acts and Ordinances, i. 691-2.
3. Attendance Lists: Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, passim.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 205, 285, 340, 400.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 178a; C.J., iv. 137.

and the series of orders passed at the committee suggests that he made certain that he would have something to report.[1]

He was also a member of Commons' committees concerned with military organisation. He was one of five members added to Scawen's committee on 27 January,[2] and was the second of a number of members added on 18 February to the committee considering the recruitment of the New Model.[3] His experience of military finance, and of obtaining money from the City, brought him a place on the joint committee to oversee the collection of the New Model Army assessment, under the ordinance, passed on 31 March, to secure the £80,000 which had been pledged in loans.[4] When a joint committee was set up after Naseby to deal with the prisoners, Hesilrige was one of the members named by the Commons. The spirit in which he approached this task was demonstrated in a subsequent debate, when the Lords urged that new arrangements should be made for the prisoners placed in the Artillery Yard, 'who were lately anoied with the extreame wet (being faine to lie in the slab and wet worse then some mens swine)'. During the debate Hesilrige, 'very indiscreetly said that the fault was not in them but in the heavens, for which he was answered and iustly reproved'.[5] Hesilrige was also one of the committee whose names were inserted in an ordinance 'for providing Ammunition, Match and Pullet, and for regulating the Office of the Ordnance', when this received its second reading on 18 June.[6] His interest in the Ordnance had clearly started before this date, since a Thomas Hesilrige was one of the officers of the Ordnance,[7] and presumably owed his place to Sir Arthur's patronage.

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1. C.J., iv. 95-6; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 379.
2. C.J., iv. 31.
3. C.J., iv. 31.
4. Acts and Ordinances, i. 658.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 222b. This is one of the very few occasions on which Hesilrige is recorded as having attempted an intentionally humorous remark.
6. C.J., iv. 178.
7. P.R.O., S.P. 28/30, 279ff.

Hesilrige's military expertise and, to some extent, his place on the Committee of Both Kingdoms, were a product of his position in Waller's army and the rôle he had played in representing its interests at Westminster. There are indications that Hesilrige played a much less active rôle in supporting Waller's army during the spring of 1645. After Waller's appointment by the Commons as commander-in-chief of the Western expedition on 15 January, The London Post assumed that Hesilrige would join him in the campaign.[1] In practice he made no attempt to join the army. Although Hesilrige had never been a full-time soldier, he had always managed to spend some time with the army during previous campaigns. The Commons' support for Self-Denial, and his own active support for the absorption of Waller's army into the New Model, clearly made a difference to Hesilrige's priorities.

Judging by the relative paucity of references linking Hesilrige to Waller's army during the Western expedition, this changed attitude extended to the provision of political support for that army. On 25 January he secured a Commons' order for the completion of payments previously promised to his own regiment of horse, which had returned to the South-East at the beginning of the month after participating in Holborne's expedition to Taunton.[2] On 8 February Hesilrige was one of a four man committee appointed to sort out the problems which were keeping the surgeons from their posts with Waller's army.[3]

He was most active during the crisis which blew up on 12 February, when the Commons received a letter from Waller, informing them of his problems in controlling the regiments drawn from Essex's army, and warning that, however much he might wish to march West, he could not safely do so unless he was

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1. C.J., iv. 20-1; E. 25(13), The London Post, no. 20, 21 Jan. 1644/5.
2. C.J., iv. 31; The Weekly Account, 1-8 Jan. 1644/5.
3. C.J., iv. 43.

given a full commission as commander-in-chief and assured of adequate forces. But the Commons, alarmed by reports from Weymouth, ordered him to march West immediately.[1] Next day the House received a further letter from Waller, emphasising that his troops were mutinous and that he could not march without money, and this provoked 'a long debate &c. in w^ch Haselrigg Glynne & others spake several times'. This violation of normal Commons procedure suggests that the debate was very fierce, but the outcome was an inadequate compromise: the Committee of Poth Kingdoms were ordered to write again urging a speedy departure but were also to make it clear that Waller was to be obeyed by all forces in the West and to send Middleton to join Waller immediately. The Commons also ordered the committee of the West to recruit Middleton's troops[2] and later in the day the Committee of Both Kingdoms ordered Hesilrige to accompany Middleton to that committee.[3]

Meanwhile Waller had decided to march West with what horse and dragoons he could gather. His letter announcing this concluded, 'I have discharged my conscience, and now if I perish, I perish.'[4] He persisted in this decision in spite of the mutiny of the horse drawn from other armies, including the regiments of Essex, Balfour and Dalbier who cried out, 'Essex, Essex &c; and yt they would not serve under yt rogue Waller'.[5] Hesilrige seems to have been more concerned to exploit the wider political potential of these events than to help Waller, and there is little sign of him taking the initiative to secure the help Waller needed during the rest of the campaign. On 14 March he was a teller in a division concerning the treatment of the mutinous troops drawn from Essex's army who had by then submitted, but his resistance to the

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1. C.J., iv. 46-7; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 176ab.
2. C.J., iv. 47; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 177a; Whitelock, Memorials, i. 388.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 303
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 303-4.
5. C.J., iv. 48-9; L.J., vii. 193-4; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 192b-193a.

proposal that they should be put 'upon present Employment'[1] was more likely to damage Essex, by emphasising the gravity of their offence, than to help Waller who needed any troops he could get.

In retrospect Waller endorsed John Lilburne's description of his last campaign as 'that hopeless employment into the West'. He wrote bitterly of being sent, with a body of horse and a few dragoons,

> against a complete formed army, far exceeding my strength, in deep enclosed country; where it was known, that every field was as good as a fortification, and every lane as disputable as a pass. So that, in effect, I was in no better condition than those gladiators of old among the Romans, preserved awhile, to perish in the end, and kept only to be lost. This was the friendship I parted with.[2]

Waller seldom criticises individuals by name in the Vindication, but contemporaries would surely have seen this passage as being particularly directed at Hesilrige. The 'party now termed independential' had used Waller 'in the nature of a stale' in opposition to Essex, and had abandoned him when they found another way of attacking the Lord General.[3] Hesilrige was the member of the Vane - St. John group, and the leading 'Independent' of the later 1640s, who had been closest to Waller and most strongly identified with his interests. Much in the Vindication, particularly Waller's attempt to obscure his own desire to supplant Essex, is disingenuous, but the sense of betrayal expressed in this passage rings true. Taken together with Hesilrige's apparent lack of vigour in promoting the interests of Waller's army, it suggests that Waller's 'Fidus Achates'[4] (or, as a royalist writer put it, 'his Zany)[5] left his old loyalties behind him as he joined in the struggle to create a new army.

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1. C.J., iv. 78.
2. Waller, Vindication, 18-19.
3. Ibid., 9-10. 16.
4. J. Vicars, Jehovah-Jireh (1644), 352.
5. E. 268(12), The Character of a London Diurnall (Oxf. 1644-5).

The Commons' votes for Self-Denial had changed the nature of military politics. As a member of Lisle's committee, Hesilrige was involved in defeating all attempts by Manchester and his allies to reopen the question of responsibility for Newbury and Donnington or to press the political charges against Cromwell. As a witness before Tate's committee on 6 and 28 December,[1] he helped to build up the case which could have been used to defeat Manchester's challenge, had Lisle's committee failed in its work. With the old disputes safely contained, the main questions were the nature of the new army, and the speed with which it could be brought into being and Essex's commission terminated.

The Committee of Both Kingdoms' report on the New Model was presented to the Commons on 9 January. The House approved the outline of the New Model Army on the eleventh and two days later appointed three members to draft the ordinances.[2] On the twenty-first the Commons voted, by 101 votes to 69, in favour of Sir Thomas Fairfax's appointment as commander-in-chief, with Hesilrige's allies Vane and Cromwell telling for the majority against Holles and Stapleton.[3] Holles later claimed that Hesilrige had described Fairfax as being 'as if he had been hew'd out of the Block for them, fit for their turns to do whatever they will have him, without considering or being able to judge whether honourable or honest'.[4] It is quite likely that Hesilrige (though neither indiscreet nor prescient enough to use these words) spoke in favour of the appointment, relying on Vane and Cromwell's direct knowledge of Fairfax, and the judgement of Lisle and Tate, whose committee had prompted the proposal by nominating Fairfax for the post of senior colonel. The New Model ordinance, which had received its second reading on 18 January, made rapid

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1. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 151, 156-7.
2. C.J., iv. 15, 16, 17-18.
3. C.J., iv. 26.
4. Holles, Memoirs, 34, §37.

progress through the committee of the whole under Lisle's chairmanship, and was passed on the twenty-seventh.[1]

The Lords stopped short of rejecting it, but when the ordinance was returned to the Commons on 4 February, it was accompanied by provisoes designed to make its passage more difficult.[2] When the House considered these next day, Hesilrige was the fifth member named to the committee appointed to consider the first proviso, concerning the appointment of officers, which also included his allies Cromwell, Strode, Wentworth, Vane, Heyman and Lisle. The same committee, with five additions, formed the committee to which the second and third provisoes, concerning religion, were referred.[3] The committee removed the crucial part of the Lords' first proviso, and when it was reported on the seventh, Stapleton and Reynolds had to resort to a division, in which they defeated Cromwell and John Evelyn of Wiltshire by 82 votes to 63, in order to restore the point that officers nominated by Fairfax should require the approval of both Houses.[4] The committee also weakened the religious tests which the Lords had sought to apply to officers and men, and the House agreed. The committee was then entrusted with the preparation of reasons to be put to the Lords at a conference.[5]

The mutinies amongst the troops under Waller, which demonstrated that the quarrels of the generals had infected their men and that continued dissension and uncertainty would threaten the discipline of the armies, probably had more effect than the arguments of the Commons. On 15 February the Lords finally agreed to pass the ordinance and the formalities were completed two days later.[6] On the nineteenth Hesilrige was chosen, along with his fellow radicals Rigby and Heyman, and the new general's brother-in-law Sir Thomas Widdrington, to

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1. C.J., iv. 24, 31.
2. C.J., iv. 41; L.J., vii. 175.
3. C.J., iv. 42.
4. C.J., iv. 43
5. C.J., iv. 44.
6. C.J., iv. 50, 51.

bring Fairfax into the House to receive his commission.[1] The mutinies also offered a means of increasing pressure on Essex, who was leading the Lords' continued resistance to the principle of Self-Denial. On the twentieth, Tate's committee was ordered to investigate whether there was a plot behind the mutinies,[2] and four days later that committee finally produced its report on Colonel Butler, reviving memories of earlier 'plots'.[3]

On 25 February the Commons revived the committee which had drafted the first Self-Denying Ordinance and ordered it to draft another. They also sent members to urge Fairfax to hasten his officer list.[4] This was read in the House on the twenty-eighth. The Commons made few changes and only two were pressed to a division. The first, concerning Captain Boughe, probably arose from quarrels within the Wiltshire community, since three of the four tellers sat for seats in that county.[5] The second was more political. There were apparently neutral arguments against approving Nathaniel Rich's appointment as a colonel: his youth and the fact that it would involve the displacement of Sir Robert Pye, who had raised the regiment. But Rich was also a supporter of Cromwell who had given evidence against Manchester.[6] When the House divided on whether to put the question for Rich's approval, Hesilrige and Heyman lost by 31 votes to 28 against Glyn and Sir Christopher Wray.[7] The identity of the tellers and the closeness of the vote suggest that this was a factional question. Next day D'Ewes and other moderates stressed Rich's youth and suggested that Fairfax should be asked to consider appointing him to a more junior position, but 'Haslerigg wanton & violent & would have the question putt'. D'Ewes, claiming to wish to spare Rich a 'dedecorous reiection',

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1. C.J., iv. 53-4.
2. C.J., iv. 56.
3. C.J., iv. 60-61
4. C.J., iv. 62.
5. Long, Evelyn and Bainton, C.J., iv. 64. I assume that Long's partner was his fellow member for Ludgershall rather than the elder Sir John Evelyn.
6. M. Kishlansky, The Rise of the New Model Army, 42.
7. C.J., iv. 64.

pressed for another vote on whether the question should be put, but 'the violent', deceived by the closeness of the previous day's vote and by the moderates' wish to avoid a direct vote, 'would not yield to that'. They had underestimated the effect of their opponents' reasonableness on uncommitted members, and the vote by voice against approving Rich's appointment was so large that there was no point in forcing a division.[1] The moderates could not challenge nominations on overtly factional grounds, but when they had a respectable argument they could act, and leave Hesilrige and the 'violent' looking factious.

The Commons sent the officer list to the Lords on 3 March.[2] They sent it back a week later with a large number of amendments.[3] The Commons insisted at a conference that they would accept no nomination which had not come from Fairfax and on 14 March the Lords decided to adhere to their objections but to withdraw their recommendations concerning replacements.[4] The Lords offered this compromise at a conference on Saturday 15 March and it was reported to the Commons on the seventeenth. The House voted to adhere to their original list, and Hesilrige, Glyn, Browne and Wentworth were added to the managers of the last conference, to form a committee to prepare reasons for a further conference later in the day.[5] They emphasised the dangers of delay and the unreasonableness of the Lords' approach, and appealed to them 'to concur with the Commons of England for the Saving of the Kingdom'. When the votes were equal in the Lords' subsequent division, Say broke an informal understanding by casting a proxy in favour of the officer list.[6] Next day the clerk reported that there was no formal order against their use, and the list therefore passed.[7]

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 181a.
2. C.J., iv. 66.
3. C.J., iv. 74.
4. L.J., vii. 272, 273.
5. L.J., vii. 274; C.J., iv. 80, 81.
6. C.J., iv. 81-2; L.J., vii. 276-7.
7. L.J., vii. 277.

Say's eldest son, James Fiennes, was at the centre of a Commons debate that morning. Reynolds reported from the committee which was considering the value of offices held by members and ways of supplying the needs of members, and recommended a payment of £500 to Fiennes. Hesilrige led those who insisted that he should receive nothing until a general scheme was approved, and Heyman and Painton divided the House against the question being put, losing, by 71 votes to 61, to Wray and Stapleton. Hesilrige had been on bad terms with the Fiennes family in 1643 but Say was now a crucial ally of the Vane - St. John group, and the issue was not the individual case but the House's determination to press ahead with Self-Denial as a comprehensive scheme. Although Hesilrige and his allies lost the vote on Fiennes, they won their main point, as the committee was instructed to bring in its general report and Ellis was ordered to report the draft of the Self-Denying Ordinance next day. The ordinance was read twice and committed on the twenty-fourth.[1]

On the same day, the Commons passed the ordinance granting Fairfax a commission with increased powers and sent it up to the Lords.[2] The ordinance was returned, with amendments, on the twenty-eighth, and the Commons, having rejected the main changes, appointed a radical committee, including Hesilrige, to prepare reasons for a conference.[3] This took place next day and the Commons argued that the clause binding Fairfax and his army to preserve the safety of the King's person was impracticable if the King led an army, while the clause limiting Fairfax's power to 'adjacent' forts and garrisons would impair the army's efficiency. The Lords voted to adhere to the latter amendment but the votes were equal on the 'King's person' clause, after Say had again cast a proxy.[4] This vote was repeated on the morning of the thirty-first with the

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1. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 193a; C.J., iv. 82, 88.
2. C.J., iv. 87-8.
3. L.J., vii. 289; C.J., iv. 90-91.
4. C.J., iv. 94; L.J., vii. 293.

same result. The Commons, meanwhile, passed the Self-Denying Ordinance, and then went up in a body to demand an answer on Fairfax's commission.[1] That afternoon the Lords received the Self-Denying Ordinance and finally decided to adhere to the 'King's person' clause.[2]

While they were deciding this, Hesilrige and his allies revived a weapon they had used against the moderate peers in January 1644. St. John and others complained that the royalist Lord Saville had been seen in London, and after some debate it was agreed that he should be expelled from Parliament's territory. But this was probably just a means of opening the way for the main attack. During the debate Samuel Browne, who had played a leading rôle in the previous year's attack on Holland, mentioned another Lord. After the vote to expel Saville, Miles Corbet reported

> yt the Earle of Holland did by resideinge here in towne doe Ill Offices & give Ill Councell & yt since he retorne from Oxford we had found more Opposition in the Lds ho: to all good propositions then before & principally by those whoe had neere relation to him & did most Converse with him.

During the 'long and tedious' debate which followed on the question of expelling Holland from the lines of communication, St. John 'fell upon the other Lords who sate in the Howse', echoing Corbet's attempt to taint the whole of Essex's party with disloyalty.[3] After a tied vote, in which Strode and Hesilrige acted as tellers against Holles and Irby, the Speaker gave his casting vote in favour of bringing in candles and continuing the debate. But in a further division, with the same tellers, the moderates succeeded, by 52 votes to 46, in preventing the question of Holland's expulsion from being put, and so, thought D'Ewes, the 'violent &c missed ther end & Speaker did them little service in voting for candles &c.'[4]

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1. C.J., iv. 94; L.J., vii. 293.
2. L.J., vii. 297.
3. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 202a; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 196b.
4. C.J., iv. 95; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 196b

The debate had, however, shown that men like St. John were prepared to join the radicals in a blanket attack on the Lords' majority, and that a large number of M.P.s were prepared to follow them. It must have been obvious to Essex that continued confrontation between the Houses would only serve to increase the number of M.P.s willing to join the radicals in future divisions. Next day Essex offered to surrender his commission, thus allowing the Lords to agree to Fairfax's authority over all forts and garrisons. Although the Lords still pressed for the inclusion of the 'King's person' clause at a free conference, at which Hesilrige was one of the Commons' managers, they then accepted the Commons' arguments, and passed the ordinance.[1] Essex's formal resignation on the second was followed by those of Manchester and Denbigh.[2] On receipt of the news, the Commons appointed a committee to devise fit marks of gratitude for the aristocratic generals, and Hesilrige was one of a number of their long-standing opponents who were named to it.[3] The resignation of the generals not only removed the point of resistance to the Self-Denying Ordinance, but also made it attractive as a means of ensuring that their rivals in the Commons would follow suit. The ordinance was passed by them on the third, and their request for further legislation to confirm some exceptions was accepted after a conference next day at which Hesilrige was one of the reporters.[4]

The struggle to remove Essex from command had finally been won. The question now was whether the New Model could perform what Hesilrige and others had always claimed for a new army. In the circumstances of 1645 the prospects for a sudden improvement in Parliament's military fortunes were not bright. Before that breakthrough came, Hesilrige was involved in a crisis which brought together his rôles as a supporter of the New Model, a member of the Committee of Both Kingdoms, and the patron of the Leicestershire radicals.

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1. L.J., vii. 298-9; C.J., iv. 95
2. L.J., vii. 299.
3. C.J., iv. 97.
4. L.J., vii. 302-3; C.J., iv. 100.

(iii) Leicester and Naseby

> This noble Lord was chosen the Parliament's General. The Commission as to him, was from Parliament only; the name 'King' was left out. I appeal to all the world for the undeniable, the unquestionable victories after that. We had not one doubtful battle. The King after that never gave thanks.
>
> (Hesilrige, 7 February 1658/9)[1]

The campaign which led to Leicester and Naseby was one of the most confused of the war. The Committee of Both Kingdoms decided to send Fairfax and the bulk of the New Model westward, to the relief of Taunton. Hesilrige was involved in ensuring that those of the forces which had just returned from Waller's expedition who were to be retained were integrated into the new army, and the rest disbanded. On 21 April he and John Ashe were ordered to repair to the army to help reduce Waller's forces.[2] Next day the Commons ordered two weeks' pay for these forces, and they and two others were sent to arrange an advance from the Excise Commissioners.[3] Having done this, Hesilrige went to the army, missing the meetings of the Committee of Both Kingdoms between 23 April and 1 May.[4] At Windsor he joined Say, Waller, Crew and others in writing a letter urging strong action to make officers and men report for duty, which was read in the Commons on the thirtieth.[5]

Fairfax marched from Windsor that day and made good progress westward. But on 5 May the Committee of Both Kingdoms, alarmed by the junction of the King and Rupert, ordered him to return, leaving a large force to proceed to the relief of Taunton.[6] Hesilrige was sent to Surrey to 'endeavour to induce' the regiments of Popham and Cook to march West to form part of this relieving force, and succeeded in doing so.[7] On the eighth the King held a council of

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1. Diary of Thomas Burton, Esquire, ed. J.T. Rutt, iii. 96.
2. C.J., iv. 118.
3. C.J., iv. 119.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 427-446.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 205b-206a.
6. Cal. S.P. Dom, 1644-5, 453, 357-8.
7. Ibid., 457, 464.

war at Stow-on-the-Wold, at which Rupert's view, that the King should march North, once again prevailed over those who argued for a western strategy.[1] As the King marched northward, the Committee of Both Kingdoms formulated a new plan, under which the Scots and some of the northern and midlands forces were to meet him in the field while Fairfax and the New Model besieged Oxford. The question was whether the Scots were willing or, in view of Montrose's recent successes, able to play the part assigned to them.

On 9 May Hesilrige reported the Scots' paper demanding assurances that if they marched South, the North would be kept secure and proper provision made for the needs of their army. A paper giving the necessary assurances had already been drafted, and Lisle persuaded the House to approve it immediately.[2] The continuity of Hesilrige's involvement in attempts to enable the Scots to march South is indicated by his prominence on committees appointed on 13 and 26 June to seek loans from the City for this purpose,[3] and he was probably active in negotiations with the Scots during the intervening period. The New Model also needed money. On 17 May Hesilrige was one of ten named members who, together with the Committee at Goldsmiths' Hall on which he already sat, were to prepare an ordinance to raise money by the sale of delinquents' estates. The first £50,000 was to be used for the Oxford project.[4] He was also the second member named that day to the Commons side of a joint committee which was to go to the Common Council on the twentieth to inform them of the plan to take Oxford and seek their assistance.[5] Hesilrige was thus fully identified with the Committee of Both Kingdoms' strategy which was to go disastrously wrong.

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1. Gardiner, Civil War, ii. 209-10; Walker, Historical Discourses, 125-6; Clarendon, History, iv. 34-5.
2. C.J., iv. 137; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 208a.
3. C.J., iv. 173, 186.
4. C.J., iv. 146.
5. C.J., iv. 147.

The plan began to go wrong even before Fairfax joined Browne and Cromwell at Marston on 22 May. Four days earlier Brereton had raised the siege of Chester, and on the twenty-first Leven had decided to march across country to Westmoreland instead of advancing directly southward.[1] Learning, at Drayton on 22 May, that Chester no longer needed to be relieved and that Oxford was now in danger, the King marched eastward via Stone and Uttoxeter to Tutbury, arriving there on the twenty-sixth. By marching to Ashby, and thence to Loughborough, he could keep open the chance of going North, perhaps picking off some of the forces which had been intended to cooperate with the Scots, before they could join. Leicestershire would also be convenient for Gerard and his Welsh forces who had been ordered to join the King, and it was within reasonable distance of Oxford in case the defenders became desperate. Finally the King's presence in Leicestershire might tempt Fairfax to abandon the siege and march north.[2] As Clarendon put it, 'the best way to draw him from thence would be to fall upon some place possessed by the Parliament ... And they had no considerable town so near the place where the King then was as Leicester'.[3]

In this accidental fashion, Hesilrige's allies on the Leicester committee found themselves put to the test. To understand how well prepared they were, it is necessary to go back to March. The town's walls, which had been constructed in 1643,[4] had a total length of three to four miles.[5] The committee claimed to have kept them in good repair[6] and the artillery barrage

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1. Gardiner, Civil War, ii. 214.
2. Digby to Nicholas, 25 and 26 May, Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 521-2, 522-3.
3. Clarendon, History, iv. 38.
4. E. 100(10), Certaine Informations, no. 15, 24 Apr. - 1 May 1643; E. 261(18), P. Temple, An Examination Examined: Being a full and moderate Answer to Maior Innes Relation concerning the Siege and taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 2.
5. Ibid., '13' (mispaginated); E. 261(3), J. Innes, An Examination of a Printed Pamphlet Entituled A Narration of the Siege of the Town of Leicester (1645), 2; E. 288(4), A Perfect Relation of the Taking of Leicester (1645), 1.
6. E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege and Taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 12.

required to breach them, and the royalist casualties during the assault, suggest that they were relatively effective. The major problem was their excessive length, which was admitted by the committee's critics.[1] In March the committee decided, with, they claimed, the consent of the townsmen, to fortify the Newarke as a stronghold which could be defended if the town itself fell. The work was disrupted by Colonel Booth who, passing through the town, wrote to Grey on 12 April, alleging that the committee were merely providing for their own safety, thus damaging the morale of the townsmen. Grey reported this to the Committee of Both Kingdoms during Hesilrige's absence with the army in late April, and on the twenty-fifth they wrote to the Leicester committee, emphasising the supposed dangers of the scheme. The committee defended their actions in a letter of 1 May, but seem to have abandoned the plan.[2] Subsequently, as the committee pointed out, it was adopted by the royalists and by Fairfax.[3]

The committee's awareness of the potential threat to Leicester had been demonstrated by their wish to fortify the Newarke. In their letter of 1 May they requested that arms and ordnance should be sent back with the bearer, their commissary, Blount or Blunt. Hesilrige had apparently told them that the guns would be available, and Blount was also to buy two hundred muskets, to add to the seventy carbines already supplied by Hesilrige.[4] On 7 May the Committee of Both Kingdoms agreed to recommend to the Commons that the Leicester committee should have power to press a thousand men.[5]

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1. E. 261(3), J. Innes, An Examination of a Printed Pamphlet, 2.
2. E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege and Taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 8, 11-12; Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 434.
3. E. 261(18), P. Temple, An Examination Examined, 9-10; Walker, Historical Discourses, 128.
4. E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege, 4, 12.
5. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 462.

A few days later Henry Purefoy, a royalist cousin of Kent and Theophilus Grey,[1] turned up with a story which was probably intended to ease his defection to Parliament. His account, presented to the Lords by Essex on 4 June, was that on 30 April he had overheard Lord Hawley, governor of Bristol, and Bryan O'Neale discussing a definite royalist plan to take Leicester with the help of sympathisers within the town. Love of his native county had prompted him to send his wife next day to warn Kent, and on the fourteenth he himself had managed to get to Leicestershire, where he had warned Theophilus Grey and the committee directly. Next day he had come to London and had since warned Kent, Hesilrige and Corbet.[2]

Although officers at Bristol might have discussed Leicester, it would be remarkable if they had known of such a plan eight days before the King finally decided to march North, and more than three weeks before Rupert improvised it as the answer to a number of unexpected problems. Purefoy's claim, in June, that he had predicted the precise place of the successful royalist assault[3] merely confirms his unreliability. According to the Leicester committee, they had to send out some horse to arrest Purefoy after hearing that he had said something at Belgrave about a design against Leicester, and they had then interrogated him.[4] When Purefoy arrived in London, Kent took him to the Committee of Both Kingdoms where Gerard and Pierrepoint directed them to the committee of examinations, whose chairman, Miles Corbet, examined Purefoy, at his own request, in private.[5] After the

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1. L.J., vii. 405; Nichols, Leicestershire, IV. ii. 458.
2. L.J., vii. 405.
3. Ibid.
4. E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege and Taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 3.
5. C.J., iv. 163.

fall of Leicester, it was easy to say that more vigorous action should have followed. But noone would have forgiven them if they had believed Purefoy's lies and concentrated resources on Leicester, only to have the blow fall elsewhere.

Hesilrige and the Leicester committee had nothing to lose by using the warning to create a sense of urgency in the town and to strengthen its claim to help from London. The committee summoned a Common Hall and secured a loyalty oath from the townsmen, and wrote again to the Committee of Both Kingdoms emphasising their needs. They wrote to Cromwell, and at his suggestion, to Vermuyden, and also wrote to the committees of neighbouring counties asking for help which was, not surprisingly in view of the danger the whole region, denied them in spite of their offer to pay for men. In the town they shortened their line by cutting off part of the walls, mobilised the population to repair the remainder, and secured a list of townsmen who could be conscripted in emergency.[1]

On the fifteenth, the day of Purefoy's arrival, Hesilrige secured an order from the Committee of Both Kingdoms that a demi-culverin and two drakes should be delivered to Commissary Blount.[2] This would have brought the town's total number of guns to ten, which was something, although A Perfect Diurnall was probably correct in its assertion that it really needed at least fourteen to defend its long walls.[3] The order was reported to the Lords on 20 May with the misleading comment that this was all that

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1. E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege and Taking of the Town of Leicester (1645), 3, 4.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 490.
3. E. 262(4), A Perfect Diurnall, no. 97, 2-9 June, 798.

the Leicester Committee had asked for.[1] But on the twenty-third, when Hesilrige was absent, the Committee of Both Kingdoms suspended the order until it had more information.[2] Unfortunately Hesilrige's absence continued on the next three days, and it was not until he returned on the twenty-seventh that the Committee reaffirmed the order of the fifteenth.[3] By then it was too late and the guns got no further than Hesilrige's house at Islington.[4]

Hesilrige had a good excuse for his absences. On the evening of 20 May, as he was riding home from the Commons, he was accosted by Stamford and two of his footmen. 'Some words ... passed betwixt them about the Committee at Leicester, and about the saving of Leicestershire from destruction', in the course of which Stamford said that the committee 'was a base co^{ttee}.' As Hesilrige moved away, Stamford drew his sword and struck him two or three times on the shoulder with the flat of it. Hesilrige turned and Stamford thrust at him, wounding him in the face, while one of the footmen threw a stone which hit him on the back of his head. Stamford's sense of social hierarchy saved Hesilrige from further harm: when he asked Stamford, 'if he were mad, and whether he kept ffootmen to knocke out his braines', the Earl put up his sword.[5]

Clement Walker later cited Hesilrige's 'complaint openly made in the House of Commons of the Earle of Stamford Bastonading him' as one of the proofs of his cowardice.[6] Formally Hesilrige told his story next day 'by the command of this House' after 'Mr Stephens' had made an initial complaint, prompted by the fortuitous arrival of a message from the Lords requesting

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1. L.J., vii. 384.
2. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 515.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 529.
4. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 553.
5. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 212ab; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 211a; C.J., iv. 188.
6. C. Walker, The History of Independency, 3.

Commons' agreement to a grant for Stamford which they had agreed the previous day.[1] A member with a sword cut on his face was bound to attract attention in a House hostile to duelling, and 'Mr Stephens' may have acted spontaneously, but both Nathaniel and Edward Stephens were Gloucestershire M.P.s who could have acted at Hesilrige's request. Once called upon to speak, Hesilrige would have been foolish to waste such an opportunity, provided by Stamford's flagrant breach of privilege, to rally the support of the House in his quarrels with the Grey family. In the ensuing debate Hesilrige's ally Samuel Browne spoke effectively, and the Commons gave him special responsibility for the matter when it was referred to a committee.[2] Two days later he reported Hesilrige's written relation, and the testimony of three witnesses, and the House voted that Stamford should be impeached, appointing three members to draft the formal impeachment.[3]

While they were working on it, events came to a head in Leicester. On 26 May the royalists marched to Ashby. The Leicester Committee drew off one hundred horse from their garrison at Kirby, sent out warrants for the county to come in, sent to Vermuyden for help, and, hearing that Sir Robert Pye was now prevented from marching on to join Vermuyden, invited him to join them.[4] Next day they persuaded Major James Ennis, who was in the area, en route to join the Scots, to follow suit.[5] The royalist cavalry and infantry arrived on the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth, surrounded the town, and set up their batteries, in spite of heavy fire from the defenders.[6] By the morning of

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1. C.J., iv. 150; L.J., vii. 383; Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 211a.
2. Ibid.; C.J., iv. 150.
3. C.J., iv. 152.
4. E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege, 4-5; E. 262(2), Perfect Passages no. 32, 28 May - 4 June.
5. E. 287(6), R. Pye and J. Ennis, A More Exact Relation of the Siege laid to the Town of Leicester, 3.
6. Ibid., 4 - 5; E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege, 5 - 6.

Friday 30 May the besiegers were in position and ready for action. Their batteries opened up and created a breach in the Newarke wall. Having demonstrated their power they summoned the town to surrender. Pye and Ennis on the one hand, and the Leicester Committee on the other, later accused each other of having wished to surrender at this point, but the eventual consensus was that they should hold out, consult the townsmen to ensure their continued support, and play for time while a breastwork was constructed behind the Newarke breach.[1]

Rupert was too experienced to accept this, and demanded an answer within a quarter of an hour. When this did not arrive he reopened fire. The enemy finally assaulted the town at about ten at night. While disputing the allocation of praise and blame, Ennis and the Committee agreed that the fiercest fighting took place at the Newarke breach where the royalists were held off. But on the other side of the town, the royalists succeeded, with the help of grenades, in taking the Belgrave and Galtree gates at their second attempt. The royalist horse charged through the streets of the town in the early hours of Saturday 31 May and took the defenders at the Newarke breach in the rear, thus ending the resistance.[2] By the admission of Sir Edward Walker, the town was then 'miserably sackt without regard to Church or Hospital'.[3]

By any normal standard the defenders - both the Committee and the professionals who came in at the last moment - had done well. Walker went on to say, 'It cannot be said whether for the time ours better attempted it, or they defended themselves; but I am confident we lost three for one in

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1. E. 287(6), R. Pye and J. Ennis, A More Exact Relation, 5 - 6; E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege, 6 - 7.
2. E. 287(6), R. Pye and J. Ennis, A More Exact Relation, 6 - 7; E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege, 7 - 8.
3. Walker, Historical Discourses, 128.

the Assault; the number slain on both sides being about 300'.[1] Taking together the killed and wounded, the garrison which had to be left in the town, and those who deserted with their plunder, the King's army was severely reduced in size.[2] Parliamentarians could not, however, be expected to assess the defeat in this light.

The news reached the Committee of Both Kingdoms next day, Sunday 1 June, and was known to most M.P.s by the beginning of business on Monday morning.[3] The shock was aggravated by reports, not corrected until 7 June, that the surrender had been followed by a massacre.[4] Faced with such a disaster men were bound to react angrily, 'each one venting his discontent according as passion byassed his affections'.[5]

The Committee of Both Kingdoms was immediately blamed, both in Parliament and in the newsletters, for having tied the New Model to Oxford while the King roamed free.[6] The automatic reaction to any disaster at Westminster was to look for treachery and negligence, and this was a reaction which Hesilrige and his allies had encouraged and exploited in the past. Purefoy's allegations, reported to the Lords by Essex on 4 June, pointed to negligence on the part of Kent, Hesilrige, Corbet, Gerard and Pierrepoint, and the Commons appointed a committee to investigate this.[7] Three days later the committee's work was extended to the investigation of 'any Treachery or Miscarriages concerning the Loss of Leicester'.[8]

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1. Walker, Historical Discourses, 128.
2. Ibid., 128-9.
3. Cal. S.P. Dom. 1644-5, 553; D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 214b.
4. Whitelocke, Memorials, i. 441, 443; E. 262(1) and (4), A Perfect Diurnall, nos. 96 and 97, 26 May - 1 June and 2-9 June; E. 262(2), Perfect Passages, No. 32, 28 May - 4 June 1645.
5. J. Sprigge, Anglia Rediviva; Englands Recovery (1647), 3.
6. D'Ewes, Harl. MS. 166, f. 215a; E. 262(2), Perfect Passages, no. 32, 28 May - 6 June 1645; E. 262(3), Perfect Occurrences, 25th week, 30 May - 6 June.
7. Ibid.; L.J., vii, 405; C.J., iv. 163; Hist. MSS. Comm., Egmont, i. 256.
8. C.J., iv. 167.

The Leicester Committee were obvious scapegoats and were immediately criticised for having failed to make proper preparations to withstand attack.[1] On 15 June William Lilly published The Starry Messenger with an epistle to the reader which was more than 'a little too plain with the Committee of Leicestershire'. Lilly, who came from a Leicestershire family, accused the Committee of corruption and treachery, of replacing 'the valiant Gentlemen' with 'men of inferiour rank', and of being 'a scabby Sect of covetous Sectaries'. Hesilrige's demand for an investigation by the committee of examinations was as natural and necessary as a modern politician's resort to a libel action. The fact that the friends who rallied round to kill this matter in committee included Selden, Reynolds, and Stapleton, demonstrates that Lilly was no political innocent.[2] Given Hesilrige's reputation for bearing personal grudges, it is worth noting that when Lilly came under attack from 'Presbyterians' in 1648, Hesilrige was prominent amongst his defenders.[3]

The appearance of The Starry Messenger, and news that other allegations were being made in London, provoked the Leicester Committee's A Narration of the Siege. This was answered by Major Ennis, with obvious help from those who knew the history of the quarrels in Leicestershire, in his An Examination of a Printed Pamphlet Entituled A Narration of the Siege of the Town of Leicester, which the Committee, in turn, answered with An Examination Examined.[4] Within a month of the fall of Leicester there can have been few at Westminster who had not read at least some of the allegations against the Committee.

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1. E. 262(2), Perfect Passages, no. 32, 28 May - 4 June 1645.
2. E. 288(17), William Lilly, The Starry Messenger (1645); William Lilly, History of his Life and Times (1715), 48-9.
3. Ibid., 72.
4. E. 289(6), A Narration of the Siege; E. 261(3), J. Innes, An Examination of a Printed Pamphlet; E. 261(18), P. Temple, An Examination Examined.

Whoever was blamed for the disaster, Hesilrige seemed certain to be implicated, whether as a member of the Committee of Both Kingdoms, as one of those to whom Purefoy had spoken, or as the patron of the dominant faction on the Leicester Committee. Although, as has been demonstrated, he and the Leicester Committee could have mounted a strong defence, he was saved largely by developments beyond his control. The New Model's victory at Naseby - the battle in which 'the King and the Kingdom were lost'[1] - eased the tension, provided a new focus of attention, and appeared to vindicate those who had fought for the creation of the New Model. Three days later Leicester was recaptured, and the ease with which a strong professional garrison were persuaded to surrender helped to clear the Leicester Committee of incompetence and treachery,[2] just as Rupert's surrender of Bristol was to clear Nathaniel Fiennes.

On 11 June the Commons heard the first allegations that a small sub-committee of the Committee of Both Kingdoms had had secret dealings with Oxford and that Holles was in regular communication with Digby.[3] These twin scandals, which came to dominate politics during June and July, helped Hesilrige in several ways. The 'Presbyterians' attempted to deflect anger over the mistaken decision to besiege Oxford, away from the full Committee of Both Kingdoms and on to the sub-committee headed by Say, in order to minimise their own rôle in that decision but Hesilrige, who had not been a member of the sub-committee, was an accidental beneficiary of their tactics. Their argument that the sub-committee had been wrong to trust royalists who offered to defect, and that Saville could not be believed when he made

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1. Clarendon, History, iv. 46.
2. E. 261(18), P. Temple, An Examination Examined, '13'.
3. Whitacre, Add. MS. 31, 116, f. 214b.

allegations against Holles and Whitelocke, had clear implications for the cautious approach adopted by Kent, Hesilrige and Corbet in dealing with Purefoy.

Stamford's attack on Hesilrige on 20 May made it difficult for him to do more than stir up accusations against Hesilrige and his Leicestershire allies outside Parliament. Indirectly it may have helped to kill the Purefoy allegations, since at least some contemporaries, considering his anger on the twentieth, must have wondered whether Purefoy, failing to receive satisfaction from Kent and Hesilrige, had taken his story to Grey and Stamford. More directly the Commons' decision to impeach Stamford, and the formal impeachment which was eventually passed on 28 June,[1] would have made it virtually impossible for the Commons to side with Stamford against Hesilrige on the issues which had provoked the attack. Arguments between the Houses over the conduct of the impeachment kept it alive for months; it was still under discussion in January 1645/6[2] and it was never resolved. The Commons could not even be persuaded to vote Stamford the financial support requested in May 1645 until a year later.[3]

Over and above these parliamentary manoeuvres, the autumn was to show that Hesilrige and his allies had won the political battle in Leicestershire itself. The claim that they were an unpopular clique who had usurped the places of the county's natural rulers was tested in recruiter elections. The borough election, ordered on 30 September, was won by Peter Temple on 17 November.[4] The county election, ordered on 30 October, took place three days later. Both Hesilrige and Grey went down to Leicester to participate in the campaign. On the fourteenth Grey sent out a letter via the head

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1. C.J., iv. 188.
2. L.J., viii. 87.
3. C.J., iv. 535.
4. C.J., iv. 295; Official Return of Members of Parliament i. 490.

constables of each hundred and the ministers calling on the freeholders to vote for Thomas Beaumont. On the eighteenth Hesilrige followed suit, asking for 'such a companion ... as will drawe in the boat and not hinder', and recommending Henry Smith of Withcock.[1] It was Hesilrige's candidate Henry Smith who won the election,[2] and although their opponents retained their places on the Leicester Committee, and were able to harass them from positions on the county's committee of accounts,[3] Hesilrige and his allies were clearly the dominant force in the county. From a Leicestershire point of view, Grey's subsequent abandonment of his father's conservatism, in favour of a radicalism which outflanked Hesilrige, was a logical reaction.

Hesilrige's Leicestershire base was secure. His standing in the Commons had survived the threats posed by the failure at Newbury and Donnington, and the fall of Leicester. Self-Denial had freed him from military duties and the responsibility of representing Waller's army. His record of solid work on military and other questions meant that he was now one of the leading men in the Commons and the Committee of Both Kingdoms. All of this had, however, done nothing to blunt his aggression or his appetite for factional conflict. As a Parliamentary victory came to seem likely, Hesilrige, who had played a significant part in creating and shaping the English Civil War, was ready to take a leading role in the struggles to decide the nature of the post-war political order.

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1. Bodl., Rawl. MS. D116, ff. 18, 19.
2. Official Return of Members of Parliament, i. 490.
3. P.R.O., S.P. 28/252 Pt. i., ff. 28a, 324b, 328b, 334a, 364a, 384a - 387b.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This thesis attempts to explain what one politician did, how he did it, and what he was trying to achieve. Just as the nature and course of national politics cannot be understood without reference to the structure and politics of individual local communities, or the outcome of the Civil War without reference to particular armies and campaigns, so an analysis of the actions, methods and priorities of individual MPs is required in order to understand the politics of the Long Parliament. Like all studies of particular aspects of the period, it is designed both to illuminate the particular and contribute to the interpretation of wider issues. Hesilrige's personal contribution to the course of events in the early 1640s was significant, and it acquires added interest as a result of the leading rôle he was to play in the later 1640s and the 1650s. But the thesis is also designed to be read alongside the growing number of studies of other individual members as a contribution to the task of reconstructing the politics of a parliament composed of individuals and individualists rather than parties. The author of a biographical study may be tempted to magnify its subject and his achievements. It is hoped that this tendency has been kept within bounds in this account of Hesilrige's activities. Even so, we need in conclusion to assess the significance of Hesilrige's actions, and the contribution which the study of his behaviour can make to the understanding of wider issues. This will require consideration of his temperament, his religious convictions, the politics of Leicestershire, and the development of national politics, and Hesilrige's rôle in that development, down to 1645.

Hesilrige was, and is, an unlikeable and unattractive figure in many ways. His anger and unwillingness to forget past grievances were a constantly recurring feature of his public activity. Taken together with his tactlessness and his generally joyless and morose manner, which occasionally gave way to outbursts of inappropriate elation or private mirth, they suggest a man not easily in command of his own emotions, compensating for this weakness by an effort at self-control which left little room for warmth or sympathy. The self-importance and occasional ostentation, which provided easy targets for hostile contemporaries, may well have been part of such an effort. Such a picture would certainly help to explain his aggression and relish for short-term action both in the Commons and on the battlefield. This concentration on the immediate was reflected in his lack of constructive long-term aims and his inability to match his tactical skills with strategic vision.

Yet Hesilrige was an effective politician. This can, in part, be explained in terms of the character of politics in the 1640s. Anger, which could easily spill over into physical violence, was close to the surface of seventeenth-century politics. The Commons' prompt reaction to reports of quarrels between members sprang from the fear that these could easily lead to duels, while Hesilrige and his Leicestershire allies were victims of Stamford's quick temper in 1644 and 1645. Moreover Hesilrige attracted support from radicals whom D'Ewes described as "the violent" with reference both to their views and their mode of expression. To such men Hesilrige's anger was a sign of righteousness, his tactlessness evidence of bluntness and straightforwardness. Indeed Hesilrige's later career suggests that many radicals, like conservative critics, mistook the form for the substance. Similarly

a degree of dourness was not wholly a disability in the eyes of those who valued seriousness and sobriety.

When every allowance has been made, however, it remains true that Hesilrige's faults and weaknesses were a handicap in seventeenth-century politics. They certainly vitiated his later attempts to act independently, as a leader in his own right. But political effectiveness has seldom been reserved for those with charm and vision. Hesilrige's great strength was his willingness to risk distrust, unpopularity and ridicule, to do and say what he considered right and necessary to achieve his short-term aims. Like his courage in battle, this owed something to his lack of imagination, but it also flowed from a dogged determination to do what needed to be done regardless of consequences. For Hesilrige himself this implied a commitment to constant and detailed hard work, a relentless willingness to fight political skirmishes and battles, and a stubborn refusal (except at the very end of his career) to give up in the face of unfavourable odds or temporary defeats. For those who became his enemies, it implied at best the need to be constantly on the alert for annoyance and attacks from Hesilrige, even when he was weak and they were strong, at worst a ruthless pursuit designed to destroy them, politically if not physically.

Religious conviction may well have played a part in enabling Hesilrige to endure setbacks and unpopularity. One advantage of reading his career forwards from the 1630s, rather than backwards from the late 1640s and the 1650s, is that it brings out the importance in his life and political development of a broad puritanism. Its sources cannot easily be disentangled, one from another. It seems likely that his family background was sober and godly, while his

temperament suggests a need for a strong religious faith. His speeches, and his close association with a series of godly individuals including Brooke, the younger Vane, Cromwell, Tate and Waller, tend to confirm the importance of deeply held personal religious convictions in Hesilrige's life. His family's troubled history with respect to Noseley church, and his general tenacity in defending and pursuing his property rights, contributed to his Erastianism. Both the attack on traditional doctrine and forms of worship in the 1630s, and his direct experience of Laud's attempt to challenge lay rights in the church, made him fervently anti-Laudian. During the first two years of the Long Parliament, religion occupied more of his time and energy than any other issue. Like Pym and most of their associates, he believed in and increasingly came to fear the threat from Catholic and crypto-Catholic conspiracy. The genuine character of this belief did not, however, preclude him from recognising and exploiting the political potential of the threat as a means of mobilising support and justifying revolutionary steps, as confrontation with the King developed.

This duality is also evident in Hesilrige's later career. In the period 1646 - 7 he consistently joined political allies like Vane and Cromwell in opposing attempts to enforce a uniform Presbyterian system and this has often led to him being classified as a religious Independent.[1] In the first Protectorate Parliament, by contrast, his attitude led the French ambassador to conclude that he was one of those who would be willing to concede the Presbyterians' religious demands in order to

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1. See, for instance, D. Underdown, Pride's Purge 375.

win their political support against Cromwell.[1] The clearest evidence for Hesilrige's views on church organisation is to be found in his conduct in Newcastle and the North East, where he had the power to influence the outcome of competition between Presbyterians and Independents. In practice he and his Independent chaplain Samuel Hammond successfully promoted co-operation between Independent and Presbyterian clergy in Newcastle while creating difficulties for Baptists and attacking Quakers. His evenhandedness in dealing with mainstream puritans was also reflected in his work as a Propagator for the Northern Counties.[2] During the Council of State's debates on the Rhode Island charter in 1651, Roger Williams placed Hesilrige as an ally of 'all priests, both Presbyterian and Independent'[3] and this appears to be a reasonable summary of his position in the 1650s. In pursuit of his political goals he might lend his support to one or the other at different times, but in practice he was happy to work with both.

This should not, however, be construed as religious indifference. As Howell shows he worked hard to promote a godly reformation in the North East, and this is confirmed by the fact that, in spite of their political differences, Cromwell appointed him to the Commission of Triers and Ejectors which succeeded the Propagators in 1654.[4] His religious commitment, developed in the context of opposition to Laudianism, was to an orthodox protestant church without bishops. Since Presbyterians and Independents shared this broad commitment,

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1. Quoted in G.H. Brown, 'The Place of Sir Arthur Hesilrige in English Politics 1959-60' (Oxford Univ., B. Litt. thesis, 1949) 27.
2. R. Howell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Puritan Revolution 234-47, 252-8.
3. V.A. Rowe, Sir Henry Vane the Younger 199.
4. R. Howell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Puritan Revolution 234-6.

he was not obliged to make a definite choice between their alternative positions regarding the precise form of church government. If he opposed Presbyterianism in the later 1640s, this was partly a consequence of his secular political alliances but it probably also reflected his Erastianism and fear that a strong Presbyterian church on the Scots model would interfere in parishes such as Noseley just as Laud had in the 1630s. If he took a friendlier view of the Presbyterians in the 1650s it was partly because he needed their political co-operation, but it was also a consequence of his fear of the threat posed by the sects. When he said, in 1659, 'I was bred a Puritan,'[1] he was asserting a life-long religious commitment which transcended arguments regarding the organisation of the church once Laudianism and episcopacy had been abolished.

Religion was one of the major influences on Hesilrige's political development before 1640. Another was the conflict within the Leicestershire county community. The thesis asserts the specificity of the factors shaping political relations and conflicts within different county communities. Leicestershire politics had been shaped by the long dominance of the Hastings family, which could not seriously be challenged by any one of the county's lesser aristocratic or greater gentry families. The Hastingses' dominance necessarily produced strains and resentments, but these were ameliorated by the sense that they ruled in the interests of the gentry, and shared in the consensus on wider political and religious values. Taken in isolation, the structure of Leicestershire politics was remarkably stable: the Hastingses' position was impregnable,

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1. Diary of Thomas Burton, Esquire, ed. J.T. Rutt, iv. 77.

and that in turn removed the incentives to factional conflict between gentry families which existed in counties with more open political systems. The defeat of the 1620s challenge from Beaumont and Shirley, who sought to capitalise on their court connections and on gentry resentment of Huntingdon's militia policy, appeared to confirm this stability.

In the 1630s two new developments transformed the political significance of submerged resentment of the Hastingses and hostility to the militia policy. The government's centralising pressure, and particularly its financial and religious policies, increasingly forced Huntingdon and his associates to become agents of central government, thus sacrificing their claim to represent the material interests and ideological positions of the gentry. At the same time, the wider connections of Hesilrige and others like William Halford of Welham with the more sophisticated political culture of national opposition elements in neighbouring Northamptonshire and beyond gave them the confidence and the perspective to challenge Huntingdon. These two forces interacted: the greater the challenge from his opponents, the greater was Huntingdon's need for central government support and the closer he moved towards central government, the more Hesilrige and his allies identified local and national grievances. This dynamic combination propelled Hesilrige into the Long Parliament.

Hesilrige's election was a serious defeat for the Hastingses and their supporters. But the scale and permanence of the change in Leicestershire politics were unclear. Hesilrige's attempts to use his position in parliament to strike decisive blows againts the Hastingses petered out partly because of the technical complexities of pushing

home the attack in a parliament overloaded with business, and partly because Hesilrige came to see national legislation on questions such as the lieutenancy and national power as the key to what would happen in Leicestershire. The conflict over the militia in 1642 demonstrated the ability of both Hesilrige and his opponents to rally support in the county, but once war broke out it was clear that the outcome of this old struggle would be determined by the national conflict, a fact recognised by Hesilrige's decision to join Waller's army rather than the parliamentary forces in Leicestershire.

The unresolved question of the Hastingses' power postponed the emergence of factional competition for power and influence in a much more equal and open political structure in which no family could hope to inherit the Hastingses' dominance. When such competition did break out, for reasons which remain obscure so far as immediate causes are concerned, it did so in circumstances changed by the fact of war. The need for an aristocratic commander brought Stamford's son Lord Grey of Groby to the fore, although the family had no great political influence or standing in the county before 1640. Many of the county's leading parliamentarian gentry left for London, although some remained and served under Grey. As a result the active membership of the Leicestershire committee came to consist predominantly of lesser men who also contributed officers to Grey's forces. During 1643 they and Grey appear to have worked harmoniously, as parliamentary and royalist garrisons were established and a war of inconclusive raids and skirmishes developed.

By early 1644 the relationship had broken down. It seems likely that Grey's opponents on the committee had a variety of motives.

Some were no doubt resentful of the costs of war or had localist objections to the wider rôle of Grey's army in the midlands. Others, however, wanted the war pursued in more radical and aggressive ways. The position around which they could unite was that Grey had wasted the resources of the county by failing to pursue an aggressive war in Leicestershire. How far Hesilrige encouraged Grey's opponents is obscure. He was at odds with Stamford on wider political and military issues, and he had close connections with Leicestershire radicals like Thomas Hesilrige and Peter Temple, but his national political and military commitments were heavy. When conflict broke out, however, the Leicestershire radicals looked to Hesilrige for support, while Stamford and the conservative Leicestershire parliamentarians in London backed Grey. Whether or not Hesilrige sought a confrontation, he had no choice but to exploit his parliamentary standing and connections for the benefit of Grey's opponents. Not to have done so would have been to throw away his base of support in the county.

Hesilrige's temporary success in winning control of the war in Leicestershire for his allies exposed them to exactly the charges they had levelled against Grey. The truth is probably that anyone attempting to run a small scale war of attrition in an area which was not a priority for either King or Parliament was bound to make heavy demands on local resources without achieving matching military success. Fortunately, in the event, Grey's supporters succeeded in using these complaints to force the restoration of Grey and his allies in late 1644 - when the King's main army suddenly, and unpredictably, erupted into this small local war and took Leicester, both sides were implicated

in the disaster and were left to share, and dispute, the blame. Hesilrige's political strength in the county was demonstrated in the recruiter election for the county later in the year, when his candidate defeated Grey's. The latter's evolution from conservative supported general in the early years of the war to extreme radical in the later 1640s may well have owed something to the need to outflank Hesilrige in Leicestershire.

Hesilrige could not hope to dominate Leicestershire politics, but his allies were secured in influential positions and his own standing as a leading figure in the county, until the Restoration, was established. In the later 1640s, as governor of Newcastle, he was to establish a second local power base in the North East from which his family had sprung. Local power and influence were important to all seventeenth-century politicians, however prominent they might become in national politics. For Hesilrige, who had spent a formative decade in a struggle against the dominant group in his home county, they were to be doubly prized. His conservatism during the years of the Rump was, in great measure, that of a man with much to lose. If Cromwell and his supporters sought comfort in the face of Hesilrige's vocal parliamentary opposition to the Protectorate, they could look to the example of the opposition peers of the 1620s. The ultimate dependence of local power on the support and protection of the central state had tamed men like Huntingdon during the 1630s, while more persistently critical peers had continued to serve the government in their counties and, in 1640-42, had made strenuous efforts to arrive at a settlement. Hesilrige rejected Cromwell's offer of a place in the "Other House" but he was subject to the same constraints as the

peers of the 1630s. Had the Protectorate survived the crisis after Cromwell's death, those constraints would have helped to stabilise the regime.

Hesilrige's rôle in Leicestershire politics won him his place in the Long Parliament, and his experience of that struggle combined with his own temperament to make him more personally angry at the government, which had supported and used Huntingdon, than associates like Pym and Vane whose opposition was rooted in a more cerebral view of national policy. But what distinguished him from the majority of members were his contacts with national opposition figures. The term "opposition" is not intended to imply the existence of a structured party or coalition with a coherent programme or strategy. It is, rather, a shorthand term for those loosely connected and often accidental groups around the country who, for varying reasons, were alienated by the course which government had taken since the 1620s. Amongst them were men like Pym whose parliamentary experience and national contacts gave them a wider view of developments. Hesilrige was fortunate to be born into, and then marry into, a network of like-minded people which in turn brought him into contact with major national figures, notably in the Saybrook Company.

It is not suggested that ties of kinship, marriage or friendship necessarily led to political co-operation. What they did was to make that co-operation possible by bringing individuals into contact with one another and exposing them to one another's influence and views. For those who did find common ground, such networks provided an education in wider political issues and a knowledge that sympathetic support existed. Hesilrige's persistence in opposing Huntingdon and Laudianism

in the 1630s was in part attributable to his own character, but he was also sustained through local defeats, appearances before the Privy Council and High Commission, and imprisonment in the Fleet, by the knowledge that this was part of a wider national struggle and that there were people who would, for instance, see his removal from the Leicestershire Commission of Oyer and Terminer as a mark of honour rather than disgrace.

The need for mutual support of this kind is emphasised by the history of the Saybrook venture. The seriousness of preparations for emigration either to the Saybrook colony or, if suitable constitutional arrangements could have been negotiated, Massachusetts, shows how close leading opposition figures were to despairing of England in the mid-1630s. Most were revived by the prospects of war with Spain and the hope that this would necessitate the calling of a parliament. Hesilrige, whether because of his lesser interest in such a war or because he was less optimistic by nature, played a leading rôle in keeping the option of emigration open. Given the deterrent effects of problems at Saybrook, especially after war with the Indians had broken out, the pressures which made emigration attractive were clearly strong.

Why did opposition figures feel so alienated from the crown during the 1630s? Hesilrige's career cannot be regarded as representative or typical but it provides some indications capable of wider application. Constitutional issues were clearly important. In the 1620s men like Hesilrige's father and father-in-law had been willing to risk imprisonment in order to resist forced loans. The absence of parliaments and the increasing pace and scale of governmental

innovation would in themselves have made such resistance more common. Such issues were, however, relatively abstract taken as national questions. In the 1630s they became closely connected with two much more emotive forces. The government's pressure on local government to implement national policies threatened opponents who enjoyed power in their county communities and identified national and local opposition in counties such as Leicestershire. The effect was to create a link between the conflicts of principle involved in national politics and the visceral emotions generated by the personalised politics of the county communities. In parallel with this, Laudianism and the perceived threat from Catholicism, open and covert, provoked a deeper response than any secular issue could have aroused. By 1640 opposition carried a heavy emotional charge.

Most people nevertheless expected and hoped for a settlement. Had the King been willing to accept defeat, take his leading opponents into government, and implement their major demands, this would have been possible. While such a compromise would have been unstable, it would have defused the situation and opened the way to a less intense, more protracted political struggle around the question how to make English government more effective without resorting to absolutism. But the King refused to give ground gracefully, in part because he too expected a settlement and sought to preserve the strongest possible bargaining position. As a result his opponents, despite their lack of revolutionary aims, were increasingly forced to resort to revolutionary means in their attempts to overcome his resistance. They were forced to adopt increasingly radical policies, such as Root and Branch, and increasingly radical methods, such as the attainder against Strafford,

which could only succeed with the help of the mob. The polarisation within parliament produced by these tactics, and the price which would have to be paid for failure, brought the Pym group, by the autumn of 1641, to the point where they had to adopt yet more revolutionary tactics in order to force a crisis which would break the King's resistance. Charles too sought a crisis which would either bring the Pym group to a reasonable negotiating position or lead to their replacement by a more moderate parliamentary leadership. Together they racked up the tension to an intolerable point. The King's patience and nerve cracked, and he attempted a poorly judged and executed coup against his leading opponents.

The events of 1640-42 can only be understood in the context of the forms of parliamentary organisation and tactics which developed during the early months of the Long Parliament. Much effort has, rightly, been devoted to demonstrating the traditional character of the beliefs and expectations regarding Commons practices which members brought to the Long Parliament. The early months of the parliament created, however, an unprecedented situation. In spite of the inhibitions and theoretical beliefs of the participants, the duration of the parliament and the power given to it by the actions of the Scots generated in the parliament many of the characteristics of a standing assembly. Members like Hesilrige received an education in issues and tactics which would, in the past, have taken a series of parliaments. The experience of working with, and against, other members, week after week, produced new associations and new organisational and tactical habits. The longer a settlement was delayed, the more members came to assume that their rôle was to legislate on national

issues, rather than to protest, secure the passage of private and local bills, and vote supply. If not, why were they still at Westminster months after they had expected to return to their communities and homes? The impulse to justify their continued corporate existence and to do something was a major advantage to the Pym group.

Members could not, however, accept that they were doing something new. The political groupings which emerged had, therefore, to respect the sensitivities of most members and to accommodate the influence on their own members of traditional views and attitudes. There was no room for the emergence of cohesive, disciplined parties or of a formal Commons leadership. The unpredictable character not only of debates but also of Commons business gave the advantage to individuals and groups who could react flexibly to arguments, challenges, and unexpected opportunities. As points were constantly won and lost on the floor of the House, groups whose members knew each other well enough to support one another's initiatives and arguments on the spur of the moment could exercise disproportionate influence over the outcome of debates. Sometimes manoeuvres could be planned with knowledge of the business due to be debated on a particular day, as the Pym group coordinated its tactics during the Root and Branch debates in committee. On other occasions it was possible to plan an initiative, leaving one member to set it in motion when an opportunity presented itself, as Hesilrige produced the attainder bill and the militia bill. But for much of the time groups had to react instinctively, riding the House rather than controlling it.

This had serious implications for the power of the peers. Hesilrige's wealth and temperament no doubt made him unusually free from aristocratic influence. But the nature of Commons politics, the need for quick decisions in the House, meant that even those like Pym, who were more open to guidance from the peers, had to act independently. Pym, rather than Bedford, knew what had to be done in order to retain leadership in a volatile House, and this

necessarily affected the balance of power between aristocratic "patrons" and their "clients" in the Commons. Once a decision had been made in the Commons, corporate pride and the formality with which relations between the Houses were conducted made it difficult to moderate Commons' decisions in deference to objections from the Lords. However aristocratic society and political culture might be, the form of parliamentary politics made it extremely difficult for peers to exercise political leadership in parliament.

The instability of Commons' politics fed upon itself. The knowledge that one day's defeat might be reversed the next prompted winners to press further in order to consolidate their success and losers to continue the fight. Opposition leaders' attempts to reach a settlement with the King, both in 1641 and during the war, were complicated both by their uncertain hold on the Commons and by Charles' hope that alternative leaders might supplant them. This technical difficulty reinforced the political obstacles to compromise. The absence of consensus on goals and methods amongst the members left at Westminster after the departure of the King and his supporters made it inevitable that the patterns of political behaviour established in 1641, and the resultant instability, would be reproduced as different groupings emerged amongst those who remained.

In the first instance these groups were differentiated by varying degrees of enthusiasm for the vigorous prosecution of the war, and the extent to which they were willing to make concessions to the King in order to secure peace. In the course of 1643, however, military lobbies promoting the interests of rival generals and armies emerged alongside, and overlapping with, the ideological groupings. The shortage of resources which made it impossible for Parliament to support all of its armies satisfactorily, the conflicts over authority arising from the unplanned

way in which the various armies had developed, and the unpredictability of seventeenth-century warfare, which constantly threw up the need for quick decisions, sharpened the conflict between military lobbies. The overlap of membership, exemplified by Hesilrige's rôle in both the Vane - St. John group and Waller's military lobby, the need to take up a position in relation to the issues raised by the military lobbies, and the sense that association with military success and military power could lead to political power, produced alliances between the ideological groupings and the military lobbies. This, together with the arrival of the Scots and the need to compete for their confidence and support, intensified political conflict and instability within the Commons. In these circumstances members reached the point of turning on one another the tactics, and accusations of evil counsel, which had been used against the King's supporters.

The breadth of support for Self-Denial and the reorganisation of the armies in the winter of 1644-5 was a measure of members' relief at discovering a course which offered a chance of ending these dangerous conflicts. In practice, however, the linkage between factional conflict in the Commons and the demands of Parliament's armies could not be wished out of existence. Just as the experiences of 1640-42 set a pattern for the competing groups within parliament in 1643-5, so the rôle then played by alliances between ideological groupings and military lobbies created a precedent for the co-operation between the "Independent" minority in the Commons and the New Model's leaders in 1647 and 1648. The existence of such political weapons did not make their use inevitable but it made possible the events which led to Pride's Purge.

Hesilrige played an important part in these developments. As a Commons tactician he suddenly discovered, in his forties, a talent which, in the normal course of events, would have remained hidden and

useless. He was good at, and probably derived satisfaction from, tactical games in the Commons: surprising opponents, turning the course of a debate with a well-judged intervention, or assisting in a complex manoeuvre. If his lack of long-term vision was generally a defect, it also freed him to concentrate on immediate tactical problems, undistracted by fears or doubts regarding the consequences of victory or defeat. His anger and taste for confrontation, along with his courage and the strength of his convictions, made him willing to risk the hatred of political opponents and the distaste of a wider range of members in order to achieve his ends. This made him the man to introduce controversial and unpopular proposals, such as the Strafford attainder and the militia bill, and, together with his persistence, an effective participant in the dogged pursuit of victory in innumerable day-to-day parliamentary battles. As a member of groups like the Pym group and the smaller ginger group including St. John, Cromwell and Vane with which he worked during the first two years of the parliament, or the Vane - St. John group and Waller's military lobby with which he worked during the period 1643-5, he supplied an essential ingredient in their success. So long as he worked with associates who could supply the qualities he lacked, his weaknesses were far outweighed by his strengths.

As the 1640s allowed Hesilrige to discover his talent as a Commons tactician, so they revealed his enthusiasm, if limited talent, for military command and action. He fought through some of the most difficult campaigns of the Civil War, and much of his time away from the army was devoted to military affaits. Insofar as the constant importunity of the military lobbies succeeded in forcing Parliament

to seek ways of mobilising greater resources, he played an important part in ensuring that the greater wealth of the areas controlled by Parliament was eventually made to tell against the King. When he again had the chance to assume a military rôle as governor of Newcastle, he seized the opportunity with enthusiasm. His lack of sensitivity to military susceptibilities during the 1650s, and his attempt to play a direct rôle in command in 1659 and 1660, owed much to his sense that he too was a soldier, that he had as much right to command as did a Lambert or a Monk. If the early 1640s produced full-time parliamentary politicians and professional soldiers, they also produced, in men like Hesilrige and Cromwell, a new breed of soldier-politicians who were to have a profound effect on the politics of the later 1640s and 1650s.

Had Hesilrige died in 1645 he would still have made a significant contribution to the development of Civil War in England. In reality he lived for a further sixteen years, and played a more prominent individual part in the politics of those years. The triumph of Holles' "Presbyterian" party in the Commons placed a premium upon Hesilrige's abilities as a parliamentary tactician willing to continue fighting in spite of defeats. He became the most prominent of the "Independent" leaders in the Commons and their most consistent teller in divisions.[1] During the summer of 1647 he supported the Army against the Commons' majority and played a key rôle in organising the minority's flight to the Army. On their return to Westminster he worked hard to consolidate

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1. Dict. Nat. Biog. article by C.H. Firth; for a convenient list of significant divisions between December 1646 and May 1647, see V.A. Rowe, Sir Henry Vane the Younger 264-7.

the advantages gained through the Army's intervention.[1] In December 1647 he was appointed governor of Newcastle, and spent much of his time there during the following six years, playing an important part in the second civil war and Cromwell's Scottish campaigns.[2]

Hesilrige was conveniently absent in the North when the Army purged the parliament's "Presbyterian" members in December 1648 and during the King's trial which followed. Although his later attempts to use this fact to disclaim all responsibility for these events[3] were self-serving, and glossed over his rôle in creating the conditions for the Army's intervention by, for instance, organising the flight to the Army in 1647 and moving the Vote of No Addresses in January 1648, there was an element of truth in them. However attached he later became to its subsequent achievements, Hesilrige regarded the Commonwealth as an expedient means of maintaining some form of parliamentary government once outside force had removed King, Lords, and a substantial proportion of the Commons.[4] As one of the Rump's leaders, along with Vane, Cromwell and Scot, he sought to consolidate the regime by broadening its base of support, and was recognised as a conservative influence in its debates.[5] His resistance to radical

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1. Dict. Nat. Biog.: G.H. Brown, 'The Place of Sir Arthur Hesilrige in English Politics 1659-60', 18 - 19.
2. Dict. Nat. Biog.: Brown, 20 - 23; for a detailed account of Hesilrige's rule in Newcastle, see R. Howell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Puritan Revolution.
3. Diary of Thomas Burton, Esquire, ed. J.T. Rutt, iii. 97, iv. 78; Leics. R.O., D.G. 21, 254, Petition to King Charles 2nd after his Restoration.
4. Diary of Thomas Burton, Esquire, ed. J.T. Rutt, iii. 97.
5. B. Worden, The Rump Parliament (Cambridge, 1974) 66-7, 183-4.

reform did much to alienate the Army from the Rump, and by leading the Commons in speeding the passage of the bill for a new representative, in the face of the Army's objections, he provoked Cromwell's decision to dissolve the Rump.[1]

Hesilrige was elected to both Protectorate parliaments and, when permitted to sit, used his tactical skills and experience to oppose and obstruct the new regime's business. Before his exclusion from the first Protectorate parliament he succeeded in mobilising a coalition of old Rumpers, Presbyterians and new members to question and attack the Instrument of Government.[2] He was barred from taking his place in the second until the Humble Petition and Advice had been carried, and Cromwell then tried unsuccessfully to keep him from the Commons by summoning him to the new upper house. He refused this place and insisted on sitting in the Commons. There he continued his campaign of obstruction and continually challenged the validity of the new constitution.[3]

With Cromwell at its head, the regime could ride these challenges. Cromwell's death created fresh opportunities for opposition, notably by weakening the government's grip on the Army. Without a majority in the Commons, Hesilrige succeeded in creating a political crisis by blocking or delaying progress on constructive measures and opposing all moves to legitimise Richard Cromwell's rule while simultaneously intriguing with army officers. When Richard fell, Hesilrige was one

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1. B. Worden, The Rump Parliament (Cambridge, 1974) 333-9.
2. Dict. Nat. Biog.; G.H. Brown, 'The Place of Sir Arthur Hesilrige in English Politics 1659-60', 27.
3. Ibid., 29-32.

of the four republican leaders who negotiated the Army's support for the restoration of the Rump. As the parliament's recognised leader he was principally responsible for its disastrous attempts to curb the Army's power by means of restrictive legislation. When this led Lambert to dissolve the Rump, he was one of those who wrote to Monk promising support for action to restore the parliament, and himself secured control of Portsmouth where he gathered troops to oppose Lambert. These tactics secured the further restoration of the Rump, with Hesilrige as its undoubted leader. While Monk continued to march South, Hesilrige used his triumph to purge the Army and those members of the Rump who had supported Lambert. This had the effect of narrowing his base of support and he then sacrificed any remaining chance to secure Monk's loyalty by using his parliamentary majority to challenge Monk's control of the Army. When Monk and the Army declared against him, he had no choice but to concede on issue after issue, including the readmission of the members secluded in 1648, and eventually to retire on Monk's assurance of his personal safety. That promise, together with his lack of direct participation in the King's trial, saved his life after the Restoration but he was sent to the Tower and died there in January 1661.[1]

Hesilrige's later career was both foreshadowed and influenced by his experiences in the 1630s and early 1640s. His parliamentary skills and confrontational temperament made him a formidable opposition leader in the periods 1646-8 and 1653-9. Within the Rump, his lack of any long-term vision or programme enabled him to play a major part in the pragmatic consolidation and maintenance of the regime's power. It

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1. Dict. Nst. Biog.; G.H. Brown, 'The Place of Sir Arthur Hesilrige in English Politics 1659-60' 41ff; G. Davies, The Restoration of Charles II 1658-1660, passim.

also blinded him to the extent of frustration amongst those who expected the Rump not merely to survive and run the country but also to use its power to bring about reform. When he secured a leading rôle in government in 1659, he again concentrated on establishing control while ignoring the need to win support with a positive programme of policies which would justify his power.

His failure is largely attributable to two related characteristics which can be traced back to the early 1640s. Although he had helped to bring the London mob into play in 1641 and had played a crucial rôle in forging the connections between military lobbies and ideological groupings in 1643 and 1644, he was never reconciled to the need to recognise the implications of using outside forces to put pressure on the Commons. Together with his belief in his own capacities and claims as a soldier, this made him incapable of dealing successfully with the reality of the Army's power. In 1653 and 1659-60 he assumed that the Army, having used its power to place him and his allies in government, would meekly allow that power to be undermined by parliamentary votes. He was then outraged when his own failure to respect the sensitivities and views of the Army led to that power being used against him and the parliaments he led.

This flaw had a more attractive aspect. It flowed from a positive commitment to the supremacy of parliament. Hesilrige's talent as a parliamentary tactician, discovered and developed during the early 1640s, combined with his pride in the Long Parliament's achievements to produce a passionate attachment to parliamentary rule as an end it itself. In opposition, in February 1659, he could ignore the reality of the Protectorate and express his belief in the supremacy of parliament,

telling the Speaker, "Yourself is now the greatest man in England."[1] Unfortunately he allowed himself, when in government, to forget the gap between principle and reality, to behave as though parliamentary majorities could bind those outside parliament because he thought that they should.

Hesilrige was one of those who, without knowing where they were going, led England into a series of increasingly revolutionary situations. Equally blindly, he was one of those who created the conditions for a Restoration which could not restore the England which had existed before 1640. He was not a great man, in terms of character, vision or achievement, but he was an important figure whose career in the early 1640s is significant both for the effect of his actions and for the forces which they reveal at work.

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