

THE EARLY LOLLARDS

A survey of Popular Lollard Activity in England,
1382-1428

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis takes the form of a survey of all known incidences of popular lollard activity between 1382, when the persecution of Wycliffe's followers began in earnest, and 1428, when rumours of a new lollard rising brought about a wave of investigations and prosecutions of heretics. Special attention has been paid to that great crisis of lollardy, Sir John Oldcastle's revolt in 1414, and to the contingents of rebels and heretics who took part in it. Emphasis throughout has been laid on the identity, background, nature and inter-relationships of lollard congregations and individual lollards, and no attempt has been made to give a detailed account of the development of lollard theology or literature.

The work is divided into eight regional chapters, each covering the growth of the lollard heresy in a particular part of the country : the eighth chapter (on London) also includes a detailed account of the central events of Sir John Oldcastle's revolt. The ninth and final chapter provides a chronological basis for the thesis by briefly enumerating all major incidences of lollardy during the period.

For many reasons it is difficult to generalise about the nature of early lollardy, but nevertheless several conclusions can be drawn. It is clear that there was at this time no real corpus of lollard opinion, in the sense of a set of beliefs common to all members of the sect : in general, however, popular lollardy was more concerned with the corruptions of the contemporary church than with empirical and metaphysical questions such as tran-

substantiation. Lollard beliefs were frequently disseminated by wandering preachers, who were mostly priests but who also included some laymen. Crucial to their success, and to the growth of the lollard movement as a whole, was the support of sections of the gentry and of the urban middle-classes, and such support has been discovered in almost every area where lollardy flourished. After the 1414 rising, when lollardy became inextricably associated with treason, this support was withdrawn, and popular lollardy became a lost cause.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is intended to give as full an account as is now possible of all incidences of popular lollard activity in England between 1382, when the persecution of Wycliffe's followers began in earnest, and 1428, when rumours of a new lollard rising brought about a wave of investigations and prosecutions of heretics. Special attention has been paid to that great crisis of lollardy, Sir John Oldcastle's revolt in 1414, and to the contingents of rebels and heretics who took part in it. Above all, an attempt has been made to discover to what extent the early lollards received support from members of the gentry and of the urban middle-classes. Emphasis throughout has been laid on the identity, background, nature and inter-relationships of lollard congregations and individual lollards, and no attempt has been made to give a detailed account of the development of lollard theology or literature during the period. Nor has the progress of academic heresy at the University of Oxford been considered in detail.

The earlier part of the period, up to and including 1414, has been succinctly dealt with by the late K. B. McFarlane in his "John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of the English Nonconformity" and his "Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights", but the very nature of these works (the first a short popular history and the second mainly concerned with the biographies of the knights themselves) precludes them from being comprehensive, though had

he lived Mr. McFarlane might well have produced the definitive study of early lollardy. A number of excellent articles on early lollardy have also appeared, notably those by Margaret Aston on "Lollardy and Sedition, 1381-1431", by W. T. Waugh on "Sir John Oldcastle", by James Crompton on the lollards of Leicestershire and by M. G. Snape on those of Northumberland, and by Anne Hudson on aspects of lollard theology. The later progress of heresy is, of course, described in detail by Dr. J. A. F. Thomson in his admirable book on "The Later Lollards 1414-1520".

Nevertheless, a fully comprehensive account of the lollards and their supporters in the period before 1414 is still wanting, as is a detailed investigation of the backgrounds of those who rose with Oldcastle. Despite the dangers attendant upon re-treading ground already passed over by such an eminent historian as Mr. McFarlane, I have attempted to provide such an account, gratefully using the work of those before me in the field and endeavouring to augment it, as well as to fill in some of the remaining gaps, by means of my own research.

I had originally intended to terminate this survey after Oldcastle's revolt, but so many lollard congregations showed signs of continuing existence after the rising that to conclude in 1414 proved to be impracticable. I therefore decided to extend the period under consideration to include the remainder of Henry V's reign and the beginning of that of Henry VI, concluding it in 1428, when investigations resulting from rumours of a new lollard revolt produced valuable evidence of the progress of heresy during the previous few years. Unfortunately, however, the extension of period has involved trespassing on an area already well covered by

Dr. Thomson : nevertheless some little new evidence has come to light concerning heretical activity in the period between 1414 and 1428, and there is no doubt that the study of early lollardy benefits from being considered over the wider range of time.

Following Dr. Thomson's example, I have divided this survey into a number of regional chapters, the last of which (that on London) also includes an account of the central events of Oldcastle's rebellion in 1414. Each chapter is divided into two parts, the first covering the period between 1382 and 1413, and the second describing the region's contribution to Oldcastle's rising and going on to discuss the activities of the local lollards between 1414 and 1428. Where lollards moved from one region to another, or where groups of heretics in different regions were inter-connected, extensive cross-referencing has been employed. In the eight regional chapters, then, I have attempted to cover in detail every instance of non-University lollardy that occurred between 1382 and 1428, as well as endeavouring (by means of biographical research) to discover as far as possible what kind of people gave support to the lollards at this time. To assist the reader and provide a chronological basis for this study, I have added a ninth chapter briefly enumerating all lollard activities during the period on a national basis, with references to the more detailed accounts in the regional chapters.

In the use of original sources I have cast my net wide, and have endeavoured to inspect all those which might have any bearing on the subject. The documents used fall into four principal classes, namely ecclesiastical records, the records of

the secular courts of law, the administrative records of the central government, and chronicles.

The ecclesiastical records mainly consist of bishop's registers, some printed and some still in manuscript, which have proved useful throughout the period. In many dioceses, however, gaps exist where registers have been lost, and in other cases registers contain no record of prosecutions before the bishop which we know from other sources to have taken place. Other church records used include visitation returns and a formulary, as well as the extremely important collection of documents relating to lollardy known as the Fasciculi Zizaniorum.

The records of the courts of law (which are mainly still in manuscript at the Public Record Office) have proved most useful in the study of Oldcastle's revolt and the period between 1414 and 1428, when lollardy had become inextricably associated with sedition. The documents most frequently used have been the ancient indictments (KB9) and coram rege rolls (KB27) of the King's Bench, though useful information has also come from the gaol delivery rolls (Just. 3) petitions in Chancery (SC8) and other records. Once again, however, these records are not comprehensive, for several files of important indictments relating to Oldcastle's rebellion are missing, and many cases mentioned are incompletely or inconclusively reported.

The records of the central government (notably the printed Chancery enrolments but also including some manuscript records) have been useful throughout the period, especially in biographical research, but the evidence of lollardy contained in them is nearly always fragmentary. Chronicles, especially those

by Thomas Walsingham and Henry Knighton, also provide indispensable and detailed information on lollard activities throughout the period : due to the political prejudices and universal anti-lollard bias of the chroniclers, however, the evidence they provide must be used with caution. Apart from the four main classes of records mentioned, a number of other sources have been used, a complete list of which will be found in the bibliography.

It may be worth emphasising here that any account of early lollardy now obtainable can only be partial, for apart from the gaps and defects in the relevant records, it is likely, if not certain, that groups of lollards in several areas succeeded in altogether avoiding detection, and certainly a number of heretics well-known to their contemporaries have come down to us as names only.

Finally, it is a pleasure to acknowledge with thanks the help received from very many people during the course of work on this thesis. I should especially like to mention the staff of the Public Record Office and the British Library, the keepers of manuscripts at the Guildhall Library and the Corporation of London Record Office, the Librarians at Magdalen College, Oxford and Lambeth Palace, the Diocesan Archivists at Salisbury and Lincoln, the County Archivists at Maidstone, Northampton and Worcester, and the executors of the late K. B. McFarlane. Particular thanks are due to Mrs. Rita Green, the York City Archivist, Mr. Bernard Barr, of York Minster Library, and Dr. Bill Shiels of the Borth-

wick Institute of Historical Research, as well as to Mrs. Sue Medd who typed the thesis. Most of all, however, I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr. R. B. Dobson, and to Professor G. E. Aylmer of York University and Mr. E. L. C. Mullins of the History of Parliament Trust, without whose help this thesis could never have been written.

CHAPTER ONE

LOLLARDY IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND AND THE NORTH MIDLANDS. 1382c-1422

The area covered by this chapter comprises Northumberland, Durham, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, or, in ecclesiastical terms, the whole of the Province of York plus a part of the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield. This large area has been considered as one unit, largely because of the lack of evidence of lollard activity there. The counties of Durham, Cumberland and Lancashire, indeed, produce no evidence at all, while Cheshire and Westmoreland provide only one case each. In view of the geographical isolation of the area, however, it is perhaps not surprising that most of the heresy cases there come from the counties along its southern borders, nearest to the lollard centres in the midlands and the south.

I. Before Oldcastle's rising c. 1382-1414

As in almost every other part of England, the early history of the lollard movement in the north is extremely obscure. It is most probable, however, that one of the first to preach Wycliffe's doctrines there was a priest named William Thorpe, a native of the diocese of York.⁽¹⁾ Most of our information concerning him comes from his own report of his examination before Archbishop Arundel of Canterbury, which took place in 1407 and which is printed in Foxe's 'Acts and Monuments'.⁽²⁾ From this we learn that he came of a relatively wealthy family, who 'spent mikle money in divers places about my learning, for the intent to have made mee a priest to God. But when I came to yeeres of discretion, I had no will to be priest, and therefore my friends were right heavie to me'.⁽³⁾ Eventually, however, in about 1377,⁽⁴⁾ he agreed to 'goe to them that were named wise priests, and of vertuous conversation, to have their counsell, and to knowe of them the office and the charge of priest-hood' : he names the 'wise priests' he visited as Philip Repingdon, Nicholas Hereford, John Purvey, and a certain Davie Gotraie of

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1. John Lydford's Book ed. D. M. Owen. (HMC Joint Publications 1975) p. 108. It is just possible that he is to be identified with the 'domini Willelmi Corpp' who was related to a priest called Henry de Topclyf, who came from Topcliffe in the North Riding and was an associate of Richard Wyche and the Northumberland lollards. M. G. Snape 'Some Evidence of Lollard activity in the diocese of Durham' in Arch. Aeliana (4th Series) XXXIX. p. 355 ff; EHR V. 530 ff. see below pp. 15-17.
 2. Foxe. Acts and Monuments (1632) i. 687-708. The original manuscript had disappeared by Foxe's time, but he claimed to know a man who had seen it 'in the hands of George Constantine'. Though Foxe's evidence cannot always be relied on, the authenticity of Thorpe's examination can be confirmed from internal evidence.
 3. Foxe p. 691.
 4. In 1407 he claimed to have exercised himself in lollard doctrine for thirty years or more.

Pickering, monk of Byland and master of Divinity.⁽¹⁾ 'And with all these men I was right homely, and communed with them long time and oft : and so before all other men I chose willingly to bee informed of them and by them, and specially of Wickliffe himselfe, as of the most vertuous and godly wise man that I heard of or knew. And therefore of him specially, and of these men I tooke the learning that I have taught.'

After, presumably, spending some time at Oxford, Thorpe began preaching lollardy, and in 1407 Arundel asserted that 'thou hast this twenty winters and more (i.e. since 1387) travelled about busily in the North countrey, and in divers other countries of England, sowing about false doctrine'⁽²⁾: it was also said of him that 'thy venomous doctrine is so knowne throughout England, that no bishop will admit thee to preach'.⁽³⁾ Despite Thorpe's apparent notoriety in the north, however, no record remains of his activities there, though from his "Examination" and from accounts of his preaching elsewhere in England we can gain a fairly clear idea of the 'venomous doctrines' he taught.

Thorpe seems to have upheld Wycliffe's doctrine of remanence, though he was not violently anti-sacramental, and when questioned as to whether material bread remained after the words of consecration he replied that "I dare not deny it nor grant it,

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1. Foxe, 692. Nothing further is known of Gotraie, but from the company in which he is mentioned we can assume that he was a sympathiser with Wycliffe's doctrines.
 2. Foxe, 689.
 3. *ibid.* 693.

for it is schoole matter, about which I busied mee never to know".⁽¹⁾ He was more confident in asserting that priests in mortal sin cannot consecrate, and that the clergy were more bound to preach than to say mass : he taught these last two doctrines in about 1386,⁽²⁾ and at the same time he declared that most priests were worthless, and that laymen were entitled to discipline them both by the use of force and by withholding tithes. According to Thorpe, indeed, tithes were pure alms and not compulsory payments.⁽³⁾ All these doctrines are fairly common lollard beliefs, based comparatively closely on the teaching of Wycliffe : so too were Thorpe's denunciations of images, pilgrimages and auricular confession.⁽⁴⁾ His opposition to oaths of any kind,⁽⁵⁾ however, is rather more unusual.

Though Thorpe was apparently best known for his activities in the north, he was also active in London and the south-east. During Trinity week 1386 he preached heresy at the city parish churches of St. Martin Orgar and St. Benet Hythe, as well as elsewhere in the capital : as a result he was haled before Robert Braybroke, bishop of London, and excommunicated, having refused to recant.⁽⁶⁾ Nothing is known of him thereafter until 1397, when he was imprisoned on the

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1. Foxe. Acts and Monuments pp. 695-6
 2. John Lydford's Book 109-111.
 3. Foxe. pp. 699-700.
 4. Foxe. 696-9, 703.
 5. Foxe. 701.
 6. John Lydford's Book 108-112. see below pp.438-441

orders of Archbishop Arundel, only to be released shortly afterwards (while the Primate was in exile) by Braybroke, who could find nothing against him.⁽¹⁾ Presumably, therefore, he had purged himself in some way of the accusations made against him in 1386, but several passages in the 1407 examination indicate that he did not actually abjure his heresies.⁽²⁾

After 1397 Thorpe again disappears into obscurity for a time. He may be identifiable with 'domini Willelmi Corpp' who in about 1402 is mentioned as an associate of Richard Wyche and the Northumberland lollards,⁽³⁾ and on his own admission he was at Canterbury on Mid-Lent Sunday 1405, when he heard a sermon on confession, of dubious orthodoxy, given by a monk of Faversham.⁽⁴⁾ During 1406 he was present at Paul's Cross, London, when William Taillour preached his famous sermon against the temporal possessions of the religious orders, and on the following day he continually interrupted the orthodox rejoinder made to it by Richard Alkerton.⁽⁵⁾ Even so he managed to avoid arrest until the following year, when he was taken by the bailiffs of Shrewsbury after preaching a heretical sermon at St. Chad's church there on the 17th April 1407.⁽⁶⁾ After being imprisoned at Canterbury with another lollard whose identity

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1. Foxe. Acts and Monuments. i. 705 see below p.450
 2. *ibid.* 691-708.
 3. Arch. Aeliana (4th series) XXXIX p. 355 ff. see below p.i5-17
 4. Foxe. i. 703 see below p.372
 5. *ibid.* 704 see below p.457-8.
 6. *ibid.* 692-3 see below pp.200-202

is unknown, ⁽¹⁾ Thorpe was brought before Archbishop Arundel at Saltwood Castle, near Hythe, during the first week in August 1407. ⁽²⁾ There, according to his own account, he made a spirited defence against the verbal attacks of Arundel and his officials, and gave what Foxe calls 'wittie answeres' to the Archbishop's questions concerning his beliefs. Despite the machinations of agents provocateurs, ⁽³⁾ and threats of burning, drowning or torture, ⁽⁴⁾ Thorpe refused to recant or abjure, and when last heard of he was still confined in a 'foule dishonest prison' ⁽⁵⁾ at Saltwood. His ultimate fate is unknown, but since there is no record either of his execution or of his recantation and release ⁽⁶⁾ it is perhaps most likely that he was (like William James, Ralph Mungyn and other prominent lollards) eventually condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The record of his 'Examination' seems to have been well known amongst his fellow lollards, and a Buckinghamshire heretic had a copy of it in 1521. ⁽⁷⁾

In 1386-7, at about the same time as Thorpe was beginning his preaching career in the north, another prominent lollard paid a brief visit to the area. This was Nicholas Hereford, "Doctoris Theologiae gradum habens, sed seductoris sequens officium, quippe cui, post haeresiarcham Johannem Wyclef, omnes hujus sectae viri

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1. ibid. 687, 705.
 2. ibid. 689.
 3. ibid. 702-3.
 4. ibid. 691, 706.
 5. ibid. p. 706.
 6. Which, in the case of such a notorious heretic as Thorpe, would surely have been widely reported.
 7. Thomson, Later Lollards p. 240.

maxime adhaerebant".⁽¹⁾ Hereford, an Oxford man who had been one of Thorpe's mentors, had been excommunicated in London⁽²⁾ by Archbishop Courtenay on 13th July 1382, and had subsequently fled to Rome to appeal personally to the Pope against his sentence. Urban VI, however, had thrown him into prison, where he had remained until he was released by the Roman mob during a riot which probably took place in June 1385.⁽³⁾ Exactly when he returned to England is uncertain, but in November 1386 he was reported to the bishop of London to be preaching heresy in the capital, along with John Aston.⁽⁴⁾ When the archdeacon of London investigated, however, he could find no trace of Hereford, perhaps because he had already moved to the north midlands, and on January 17th 1387 a royal writ ordering his arrest was sent to the authorities in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire.⁽⁵⁾

By the 1st February following Hereford had been arrested in or near Nottingham, and handed over to the mayor and bailiffs of that town.⁽⁶⁾ On that day, however, the mayor was ordered to deliver him to Sir William Neville, constable of Nottingham castle, who had "prayed that the prisoner be committed to his custody in the castle because of the honesty of his person, mainperning and faithfully promising to keep him so safe that he shall not walk abroad, nor preach

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1. Historia Anglicana ii. 159.
 2. Concilia iii. 1656. see below p.437
 3. Knighton, Chronicon ii. p. 173; McFarlane, Wycliffe 126.
 4. Reg. Braybroke (London) f. 390^{1/2} see below p.441-2
 5. CPR. 1385-9 p. 316.
 6. CCR. 1385-9 p. 208.

errors, nor publish unlawful sermons". Apart from the partiality towards Hereford displayed by the wording of his petition, there are other reasons for suspecting the constable of more than purely humanitarian motives, for Neville was a member of that group of Richard II's courtiers known as the 'Lollard Knights'⁽¹⁾ because of their alleged support for heretical doctrines : 'Erant autem milites qui hanc sectam coluerunt quam maxime et sustenerunt, Willelmus Nevile, Lodowicus Clifford, Johannes Clanvowe, Ricardus Stiry, Thomas Latimer, et inter caeteros major fatuus, Johannes Mountagu'.⁽²⁾ We shall have cause to notice the influence of members of this group on the development of lollardy in other areas. Suffice it here to say that Neville had long been closely associated with this tightly-knit group of friends, and especially with Sir John Clanvowe.⁽³⁾

Despite Neville's promises of safe custody, there is some evidence that Hereford either escaped or was released from Nottingham Castle during 1387. On the 10th August of that year, certainly, Bishop Wakefield of Worcester published an order forbidding either Hereford or his associates John Aston, John Purvey, William Swynderby or John Parker to preach anywhere in his diocese.⁽⁴⁾ The publication of this prohibition assumes either that Hereford was once more at large, and had rejoined his fellow-lollards in his own home country⁽⁵⁾

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1. W. T. Waugh, 'The Lollard Knights' in Scottish Historical Review XI. pp. 55-92, now superseded by McFarlane, Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights pp. 139-226.
 2. Hist. Anglic ii. 159.
 3. CGR 1377-81 p. 374; CPR 1381-5 p. 8, 1385-9 pp. 72, 214; Testamenta Vestusta 14, 109; Rot. Scot. ii. 75A; Chronique ... Loys de Bourbon 222; Polychronicon IX 261-2; E 364/13 m.1; McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 165, 171, 197-206,
 4. Reg. Wakefield (Wigorn) f. 128.
 5. Nicholas Hereford was said to be related to the minor gentry family of Hereford of Sufton, Herefs. see below p. 153

of the Welsh March, or else that Bishop Wakefield was unaware that the most prominent heretic in England was in prison and had been so for the last six or seven months. In addition to this evidence, Hereford is also said by Walsingham to have stayed during 1387 at the house of another of the 'Lollard Knights', Sir John Montagu, at Shenley, Herts., where he refused confession to a dying priest.⁽¹⁾

It is possible, therefore, to stretch these two slender pieces of evidence, and to postulate the theory that during 1387 Hereford somehow managed (probably with the connivance of Sir William Neville)⁽²⁾ to obtain his release from Nottingham Castle, and took shelter with Neville's friend Montagu on his way to join his co-religionists in the Welsh March.

To return to Nottingham, it seems almost certain that at the time of Hereford's visit, or at least shortly afterwards, there was an important lollard congregation in the town. The Nottingham lollards may, indeed, have owed their origins to Hereford's teaching, though it seems more likely that they were influenced by the energetic evangelisation of William Swynderby, who in or before 1382 had preached as near to Nottingham as Melton Mowbray.⁽³⁾ They also, no doubt, maintained contacts with the thriving lollard congregation based on the chapel of St. John at Leicester (some twenty miles to the south) which until its suppression in 1389 was led by the layman William Smyth and the priest Richard Waytestathe.⁽⁴⁾

1. Hist. Anglic ii. 159-60; Polychronicon VIII. 479-80 see below p. 35-8. Shenley is within a few miles of Walsingham's base at St. Alban's.

2. Hereford's release may possibly have been connected with the fact that Nottingham fell under the jurisdiction of Sir William's brother Alexander, then Archbishop of York. McFarlane, Lollard Knights p. 199.

3. Melton Mowbray was one of the places where Swynderby had to recant his heresies in 1382. Knighton Chronicon ii. 195; Fasciculi Zizaniorum 336.

4. See below pp. 52-4, 72, 80-84

The Nottingham lollards are first known to have come to the official attention of the authorities in the spring of 1388. On March 30th of that year a royal commission (one of several like it sent out at about that time)⁽¹⁾ was despatched to the mayor and bailiffs of the town, ordering them to seek out and confiscate all books by Hereford or Wycliffe found there, and also to make proclamation against maintaining heretical doctrines : they were to arrest and imprison all those who persisted in their heresy after the proclamation had been made.⁽²⁾ Just over two weeks later, on April 15th, a royal sergeant-at-arms was ordered to arrest a Nottingham chaplain, John Bradburne, and five townsmen, William Dyvet, spicer, William Steynour, John Scryveyn, Robert Wright and Nicholas Pouchemaker, and to bring them before the King in chancery⁽³⁾: the crime of which they were accused is not mentioned, but later events prove that it was in fact lollardy. At about the beginning of August,⁽⁴⁾ the mayor and bailiffs of Nottingham were ordered by the government to release certain lollards in their custody - possibly the men arrested by the sergeant-at-arms - taking from each of them a surety in the sum of £200 that they would appear in Chancery on the 15th August to answer 'for breach of the catholic faith', and in the meantime would refrain from teaching or maintaining heresies. The result of their trial, however, is unknown.

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1. CPR 1385-9. pp. 427, 448, 468, 550.
 2. Concilia ii. 204.
 3. CPR 1385-9. p. 471.
 4. CCR 1385-9. p. 519. The document is undated, but the context on the roll is 1st-3rd August.

During the autumn of 1388 another local heretic was imprisoned in Nottingham castle, "at suit of certain lieges upon pretence that he preached divers heresies"⁽¹⁾: this was John de Stoke, a chaplain from Widmerpool, six miles south of Nottingham town. He was released on October 17th after Thomas Mapperle, a prominent citizen of Nottingham,⁽²⁾ had stood surety for him in the sum of £20, undertaking that he would appear before either the royal council or the Archbishop of York whenever required. Again, nothing more is known of the case, nor of the further career of John de Stoke, unless he is to be identified with the 'parson of Wynkpole' who was accused of preaching heresy at Northampton in 1392.⁽³⁾ The other Nottingham chaplain, John Bradburne, who had apparently evaded capture earlier in the year,⁽⁴⁾ was still at large and preaching lollardy in the area in November 1388, when one of the Nottinghamshire J.P's was ordered to arrest him and hand him over to the Archbishop of York.⁽⁵⁾

After the end of 1388, no more is heard of the Nottingham lollards for nearly seven years, but by the autumn of 1395 William Dyvet was once again in trouble, and on the 5th August the mayor was ordered to deliver him to the constable of Nottingham castle,⁽⁶⁾ where he was to be kept incommunicado until further notice. Three weeks

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1. CCR 1385-9. p. 529.
 2. He was sometime bailiff (in 1382) Mayor (in 1402) Recorder (in 1410) and M.P. for the town.
CCR 1381-5. p. 310, 1392-6 pp. 82, 261, 1396-9 pp.199,433;
CPR 1399-1401 p. 414; Records of Nottingham i. pp. 224, 280.
 3. See below p101.
 4. CPR 1385-9. p. 471.
 5. CCR 1385-9. p. 550. There is no mention whatever of the Nottingham lollards in the York registers.
 6. CCR 1392-6 pp. 435, 438. The constable was now John Golafre.

later, on 1st September 1395, Dyvet appear in the chancery at London along with Nicholas Poucher⁽¹⁾ and William Steynour, both of whom had been arrested with him in 1388, and a certain Nicholas Taillour, also of Nottingham.⁽²⁾ The four men there took an oath before the Archbishop of York (who was both Chancellor of England and the ordinary for Nottingham) declaring that :

'fro this day forthwarde I shall worship ymages with preying and offering unto hem in the worschip of the seintes yat yey be made after, and also I shall never-mor despise pylgremage ne states of holy chyrche in no degree ... and also I shall never more meynten ne techen ne defend errors conclusions ne techynges of ye lollardes ne swych conclusions and techynges yat men clopith Lollards doctryn, ne I shall her bokes ne swych bokes ne hem or ony suspeit or diffamede of lollardery resceyve or company ... and if I knowe any swich I shall withall the haste that I may do yhowe or els your ner officers to wyten and of her bokes, and all so I shall excite and stirre al tho to good doctrone that I have hinderyd with myn doctryn.'

They promised to perform any penance enjoined upon them, and to "make no other glose of this myn oth bot as ye wordes stande"⁽³⁾: all this on pain of being proceeded against as a heretic, and forfeiting all their goods without further trial, if they broke any part of the oath.⁽⁴⁾

All that is known of the Nottingham lollards of this period is contained in the few official records quoted above. Even from these, however, it is clear that during the closing years of

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1. Nicholas Pouchemaker in 1388.
 2. This Nicholas Taillour may be the same as the man of that name who was a follower of William Smith of Leicester in 1389, and who was again accused of lollardy at Leicester in 1414. Concilia iii. 208-9; KB9/204/1/141 see below pp. 80, 135.
 3. This wording may suggest that they had circumvented an earlier oath, perhaps that taken in 1388.
 4. CCR 1392-6 p. 487.

the fourteenth century Nottingham, like neighbouring Leicester and farther-off Northampton, contained a lollard congregation made up of both chaplains and townsmen. As in the latter two places, the Nottingham heretics seem to have enjoyed a degree of middle-class support for their cause, for William Dyvet was a substantial citizen⁽¹⁾ and Thomas Mapperle (who stood surety for John de Stoke) was amongst the most outstanding Nottingham men of the period. We know little of the doctrines held by the Nottingham heretics, but inasmuch as they were opposed to images, pilgrimages and 'states of holy chyrche' they resembled their brethren in Leicester,⁽²⁾ though it is notable that the oath taken by Dyvet and his companions makes no mention of the commonly-held lollard doctrine of remanence.

Unlike their fellow-lollards in other parts of the midlands, however, the activities of the Nottingham congregation seem to have ceased not long after 1395. Nothing is heard of them during the reign of Henry IV, and though John Lay, chantry-priest of St. Mary's Nottingham, was involved with Oldcastle in March 1413,⁽³⁾ no local men are known to have taken part in the lollard rising of 1414, and no further cases of heresy are recorded in Nottingham during the remainder of the fifteenth century.⁽⁴⁾

By the beginning of the reign of Henry IV, however, another lollard congregation had established itself over a hundred miles further northwards, in and around Newcastle-on-Tyne. The evidence concerning

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1. Records of Nottingham i. pp. 246, 258, 320, 332, ii. 405. Note also the large sums of money (£200 each) in which the Nottingham lollards were required to give bail in 1388.
 2. Concilia iii. 208-9; Knighton Chronicon ii. 182; KB9/204/1/130, 134, 137, 139. See below p.75-81.
 3. Concilia iii. 338.
 4. See J. A. F. Thomson, Later Lollards

this congregation is scanty, consisting only of a letter written by Richard Wyche (probably the founder and leader of the group) to a member of his flock,⁽¹⁾ and of two or three other references collected together and analysed by M. G. Snape.⁽²⁾

Wyche, who calls himself 'of Worcester',⁽³⁾ wrote to an unknown member of his congregation from the bishop's prison, describing how he set off (probably from Newcastle)⁽⁴⁾ and travelled via Chester-le-Street to answer a summons to appear before Bishop Skirlaw of Durham at Bishop's Auckland.⁽⁵⁾ His trial began on 7th December (probably of 1402)⁽⁶⁾ when he denied preaching the unspecified conclusions laid against him. When he was asked to make a public declaration in favour of the mendicant friars, however, he several times refused to do so, claiming that such begging was against the law of God. At the end of the day, therefore, he was excommunicated and imprisoned.⁽⁸⁾ On the following Saturday he appeared again, and Skirlaw asked him by what license he preached in the diocese : Wyche replied that he

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1. This letter was found by Professor Loserth in the Prague University Library and is printed (edited by F. D. Matthew) in EHR v p. 530 ff.
 2. Archeologia Aeliana (4th Series) XXXIX pp. 355-61.
 3. EHR v. 535 : in Fasciculi Zizaniorum 501, however, he calls himself 'of Hereford'. It is possible that Wyche began his career as a disciple of Swynderby in the Welsh March, and there are certain similarities between the doctrines of Swynderby and those recanted by Wyche after 1404. Reg. Trefnant p. 231 ff, Fasc. Ziz. 501-5.
 4. Arch. Ael. Vol. cit. p. 360.
 5. ibid. 358.
 6. ibid. 357.
 7. cf. Fasc. Ziz. p. 502 'Nullus sacerdos debet alicquid mendicare'.
 8. EHR V. p. 531.

could preach in any place where he had the rector's permission. This set off a long argument, during which the lollard urged that every priest was bound by the law of God to preach the gospel,⁽¹⁾ and backed his argument with quotations from the Bible and the Doctors. Skirlaw now changed his tack, and, declaring that Wyche was suspected of being one of the sect of Lollards who denied the truth of the Eucharist, he demanded to hear his views on that subject. Another long discussion ensued, with the Archdeacon of Durham insisting that the Sacrament was the Body of Christ 'in specie panis' and Wyche (who admitted to having been unsettled by the question) insisting that it was Christ's body 'in forma panis'⁽²⁾: by adopting this frequently-employed lollard formula,⁽³⁾ Wyche was in fact covertly defending the doctrine of remanence, and accordingly he was once again returned to prison. He appeared again at Christmastide, this time before the Prior of the Newcastle Augustinians, and others acting as the Bishop's ministers: the argument concerning the Eucharist continued (with two knights who were present agreeing with Wyche) and subsequently the lollard asserted the doctrine that a sinful priest could not consecrate the Eucharist, though he admitted that auricular confession was necessary to the salvation of the soul.⁽⁴⁾ On the following day the Prior visited Wyche in prison, 'et multa blandia verba et utilia michi loquebatur, promittens quod dominus suus, comes vel episcopus, promoveret me, si consentirem eis'. Threats of burning were also tried, to which, however, Wyche only replied: 'Sicut Deus voluerit, fiat'.

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1. EHR v. p. 531; cf. Fasc. Ziz. p. 502.
 2. EHR v. p. 532.
 3. cf. the trial of William Thorpe in Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 687-708.
 4. EHR v pp. 532-3. cf. Fasc. Ziz. p. 502 'Si debes confiteri etc. ...'

During the next three months⁽¹⁾ many further attempts were made both in and out of court to cause Wyche to recant, but all of them failed, and in March 1403 Skirlaw gave up and sentenced Wyche to indefinite imprisonment, pending degradation from his priestly orders and confiscation of all his property⁽²⁾; it was at this stage that the letter we have was written.

Apart from detailing his many disputes with the Bishop, Wyche's letter mentions by name several of his fellow-members of the Northumbrian lollard congregation, thus giving us an unusual picture of a heretical community from within : the tone of the letter, perhaps intentionally, is reminiscent of one of St. Paul's epistles to the scattered Christian churches of the first century. The anonymous receiver of the letter is asked to send it on to a certain 'Bhytebi, ut secrete legatur magistro meo de Balknolle et Bynkfeld'.⁽³⁾ Wyche also sends greetings to 'John Maya' and his wife, and to 'fratri meo Roberto Herl', who had apparently visited him in prison, and "quia dictum fuit michi circa Quadragesimam,⁽⁴⁾ quod cancellarius episcopi ad Novumcastrum venit ad explorandum Lollardos, et invenit unum ibi quodammodo magistrum Lollardorum, cui nomen Robertus".⁽⁵⁾ He also salutes 'Laudens' and 'Grene', and various members of the addressee's family, and asks that certain volumes of the evangelists and other books should be sent to him via 'unum presbyterum commorantem quodammodo iuxta ecclesiam aclude sancti Andree,⁽⁶⁾ qui ut credo vocatur Henricus de Topclyf, quia ipse habet fratrem in Topclyf'⁽⁷⁾ qui desponsatur sorori domini Wilhelmi Corpp'. In the

1. EHR V pp. 534-541.

2. *ibid.* p. 541.

3. EHR p. 541.

4. *i.e.* March 4th 1403?

5. EHR V p. 542.

6. *i.e.* Auckland St. Andrew.

7. Topcliffe, North Yorkshire. EHR V 543-4

account of the trial itself mention is also made of a certain 'Jacobus', whom Bishop Skirlaw accused of sharing with Wyche the responsibility for subverting the population of Northumberland.⁽¹⁾

Two of those mentioned above can be at least tentatively identified from a series of Skirlaw's mandates which have survived only in a cartulary of Kelso Abbey.⁽²⁾ These show that on 8th February 1403, while Wyche's trial was in progress, two priests named James Nottingham and John de Roxburgh were cited to appear at Bishop's Auckland on the 23rd of the same month to answer charges of upholding and preaching heresy. On the 17th February a third priest, John Whitby, who had already been once unsuccessfully cited to appear, was excommunicated and again summoned to appear on the 14th March to answer similar charges. James Nottingham also failed to appear on his appointed day (though John Roxburgh seems to have done so) and he too was excommunicated and cited for the 14th March. Neither he nor Whitby did, however, appear on that day, and they were once again cited to appear on the 6th April, though whether or not they actually did so is unknown. Allowing for the fact that Wyche's letter was written in March 1403, therefore, it is at least possible that the 'Jacobus' mentioned is to be identified with James Nottingham, while 'Bhytebi' may be the Bohemian scribe of the manuscript's version of the name of John Whitby.⁽³⁾

The other names in the letter are more difficult to identify. Mr. Snape guesses that, again allowing for Bohemian

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1. EHR V p. 535.
 2. Liber. S. Marie de Calchou (Bannantyne Club 1846) II pp. 435-6, quoted by M. G. Snape, Arch Aeliana (4th Series) XXXIX pp. 356-7.
 3. Arch. Aeliana vol. cit. p. 357.

distortion, 'magistro meo de Balknolle' may be Robert York, master of Walknoll Hospital, Newcastle : he would, however, have been an odd companion for the pious Wyche, for in March 1403 he was being charged by Skirlaw with receiving money from penitents and other corruptions.⁽¹⁾ 'Bynkfeld', his companion in the letter, may possibly be identified with Henry Bynkfelde (or Bingfield) a prominent citizen of Newcastle at this time, or with some member of his family.⁽²⁾ Robert Herl, the 'magister lollardorum' of Newcastle, is unfortunately almost impossible to identify,⁽³⁾ as are 'Laudens', 'Grene', 'John Maya', 'Henry Topcliffe'⁽⁴⁾ and 'William Corpp', though it is tempting to guess that the last was the lollard evangelist, William Thorpe. All we can say with certainty, however, is that : 'There was clearly an established Lollard community among the more prosperous and literate inhabitants of Newcastle ...'⁽⁵⁾

How long the Newcastle congregation lasted is difficult to say, though during the first months of 1403 Bishop Skirlaw was plainly conducting a determined attack on it : Wyche was then in prison and James Nottingham, John de Roxburgh and John Whitby were all being cited, while during the first week in March the Bishop's chancellor went to Newcastle 'ad explorandum Lollardos'.⁽⁶⁾ Wyche, as he admitted at a

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1. ibid. p. 359. Mr. Snape remarks that 'it is at least possible that these charges were preferred for want of any more valid ones which could be laid against him with any hope of success.'
 2. CPR 1401-5 p. 463; Arch. Aeliana (Third Series) XIX p. 204.
 3. There is no reason to identify him with Robert Harley, esquire, who probably came from London or the Welsh March, and who was executed in 1414. See below p. 500-501
 4. Henry Topcliffe, who lived in Auckland St. Andrew, was not a canon thereof : nor are any of the others mentioned known to have held any benefice in the diocese of Durham. Fasti Dunelmenses (Surtees Soc. vol. 139).
 5. Arch. Aeliana (4th Series) XXXIX p. 361.
 6. EHR V. p. 542.

later trial,⁽¹⁾ remained in prison for some time after his condemnation, but eventually agreed to recant, which he did at some time between October 1404 and March 1406.⁽²⁾ The fourteen heresies he then abjured are given here in detail, for (apart from their general interest) they are the only indication remaining of the doctrines to which the New-castle heretics adhered.⁽³⁾

1. Imagines non sunt adorandae.
2. Deus non potest facere de sua potentia ordinata imaginem sanguinare, vel sanguinem minere.
3. Si debes confiteri, non confitearis sacerdoti vitioso, sed eligas tibi confessorem discretum, in vita bonum; cui si plene confitearis, ita plenarie te absolvet, ac si sanctus Petrus descendendo de coelo te absolveret.
4. Cuilibet laicus tenetur scire totum evangelium; et illud, postquam sciverit, praedicare.
5. Totum quod laicus orat in idiomate proprio debet orare; ut quod orat intelligat, quia sic orando magis meretur.
6. Quilibet sacerdos secundum capacitatem sui ingenii tenetur scire totam sacram Scripturam secundum quatuor sensus ejusdem; et illam tenetur ex officio praedicare.
7. Frustra itur Jerusalem sive Romam, quia quicquid habebis ibi habebis hic, ut baptismum pro deletione originalis peccati, et sic de aliis.
8. Viri ac mulieres peregre profiscientes de sacra Scriptura suas communicationes semper debent habere.
9. Nullus sacerdos debet aliquid mendicare.
10. Eleemosyna tantum decrepidis et debilibus et infirmis ac spoliatis est facienda.

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1. i.e. Before Archbishop Chichele in 1419. (Reg. Chichele ii, p. 57,)
 2. Innocent VII, the Pope mentioned in the recantation, was elected in October 1404, and Bishop Skirlaw died in March 1406. Arch. Aeliana Vol. cit. p. 359.
 3. Fasciculi Zizaniorum pp. 501-505.

11. Crux Christi super qua mortuus est non est adoranda
12. Quilibet locus est ita aptus pro oratione sicut alius.
13. Illegitime faciunt qui homines comburunt.
14. Stulti sunt qui dicunt quod Ricardus Wyche in aliquo erravit.

At the same time Wyche swore on the Gospels to uphold the laws of the church, and in particular affirmed transubstantiation, the legality of the mendicant orders, and the right of bishops to restrict preaching. Thereafter he had been brought by a writ of corpus cum causa into the court of Chancery, where he had been released, presumably after finding surety for his future good behaviour.

Despite this recantation, Wyche's career as a heretic was only just beginning, though it is apparent that after his release by Skirlaw he moved permanently to the south of England. In 1410 he wrote a letter to John Hus on the same day as Sir John Oldcastle had written to one of the Bohemian reformer's supporters.⁽¹⁾ Though he is not known to have taken part in the 1414 rising, Wyche and another priest named William Brown were arrested in Hampshire in October 1417, and brought to London to answer questions concerning a sum of money belonging to Oldcastle.⁽²⁾ After this he may have been again imprisoned, for it was not until November 1419⁽³⁾ that he and Brown appeared before Convocation on a heresy charge : Brown was soon released, but Wyche, who admitted his previous trial, was under suspicion of relapse and was imprisoned in the Fleet. Relapse was not proven, but Wyche remained

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1. Emden. Biog. Reg. Oxon iii. 2101. This link with this may explain how Wyche's letter of 1403 came to be in a Prague library.
 2. Wylie. Henry V iii p. 88; Devon Issues p. 352-3.
 3. Reg. Chichele iii. p. 57.

in prison until July 1420, when he was released on the surety of two Herefordshire men, one from Worcester and two from London.⁽¹⁾ During the next twenty years he held a number of benefices in the south-east,⁽²⁾ but in 1440 he was again arrested for heresy and relapse, and on the 17th June⁽³⁾ of that year he was burnt at Tower Hill, after a uniquely long career as a preacher of lollardy. His execution gave rise to considerable lollard unrest in London, and even people of orthodox opinions seem to have looked on him as a martyr.⁽⁴⁾

Another member of the Newcastle lollard community, John Whitby, may also have carried on his lollardy long after 1403, for a priest of that name was hanged at Oxford on 27th August 1417 for harbouring Oldcastle at Piddington, Oxon, on 26th October 1416.⁽⁵⁾

Nothing more is heard of the Newcastle congregation itself after Wyche's recantation, though it is possible that James Resby, the English lollard burnt at Perth in 1407 for spreading heresy in Scotland, may have had connections with any heretics remaining in Northumberland.⁽⁶⁾ No north-easterners, however, are known to have taken part in the 1414 rising (though this may in part be due to the distance of the area from London) and no lollard prosecutions are known to have taken place there during the remainder of the fifteenth century.⁽⁷⁾

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1. CGR 1419-22 p. 82.
 2. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon iii. 2101
 3. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 339; *ibid.* Chronicles of London 147, 153-4.
 4. Thomson, Later Lollards 148-151. See below p.548.
 5. KB9/209/52,62;E136/174/14. See below p.295.
 6. Bower, Scotichronicon ed. Goodall. ii. 441-2. See also Thomson, Later Lollards. 202-4.
 7. Thomson *op. cit.* pp. 192-4.

Apart from a lollard group who are known to have existed on the southermost borders at the area at the end of the reign of Henry IV (and who are more fittingly dealt with below)⁽¹⁾ no further heretical congregations are known to have existed before 1414 north of the Trent. We must now turn, therefore, to the activities of the northern lollards in the 1414 revolt, and during the years immediately following. As in other parts of the country, the evidence for this later period is rather more profuse, but it is at the same more difficult to deal with. Much of it is derived from the records of the trials before the King's Bench of those who rose in 1414, or were suspected of helping or sympathising with Sir John Oldcastle during the time he was hiding from the authorities. By no means all these were in any real sense lollards : some were criminals, some political adventurers, and some were apparently insane, but amongst them were a number of men who were without doubt heretics of long standing.

1. For these Derbyshire lollards, see below p. 31 ff. .

II. Sir John Oldcastle's revolt and afterwards. 1413-1428

As in the previous period, it is the southern part of our area which produces most evidence of lollard activity. Northumberland and Durham, despite the efforts of Wyche and his disciples, produce no evidence of heresy after 1403 : their distance from the capital would, in any case, have proved a great obstacle to their sending any physical help to Oldcastle in 1414. The county of Westmoreland, however, produced one "lollard" (or, at least, one man who took part in rising) in the person of Thomas Seggeswyke, gentleman, alias yeoman, alias tailor, of Kirkby Stephen. The beginning of his career is obscure, and he is first heard of on 29th January 1417, when a certain Henry Taillour of Leicester was indicted in the King's Bench for harbouring Seggeswyke, William Smith, yeoman, of Mountsorrel and William Tonge of Quorndon, Leics, knowing that on 6th May 1413 the three men had stolen ten marks from a house at Quorndon : both Smith and Tonge had previous convictions for forgery and theft.⁽¹⁾ Seggeswyke himself was arrested at some time before August 1422, and though he was indicted only of felony, he may have also been suspected of political crimes, for he was lodged in the Tower.⁽²⁾ On the night of the 6th August 1422, however, he was rescued by Hugo Venables 'gentilman alias comyn cutpurse' of London and Thomas Clement of Faversham, Kent, who with others unknown broke into the Tower and carried him off to Westminster, where for a long time they plotted the murder of the King. Both Clement and Venables were

1. Just. 3/52/16/6, 52/17/2, 195/70.

2. CPR 1422-9 p. 186.

also accused of thefts and mayhem.⁽¹⁾ There were a number of escapes from the Tower at this time, including that of the lollard plotter Thomas Payne of Glamorgan.⁽²⁾ None of these, however, seem to have any connection with the Venables gang, and all the escapers except Seggeswyke were recaptured after a few months.⁽³⁾ Seggeswyke himself seems to have remained at large until about 1426, when he was taken and indicted before the court of King's Bench for having risen with Oldcastle in 1414, of being 'in le vowarde belli' on that occasion, and of having afterwards aided Oldcastle until 21st February 1417:⁽⁴⁾ he was found guilty and hanged.⁽⁵⁾ Venables and Clement were also hanged as traitors some four years later⁽⁶⁾: at no time were either of them directly accused of lollardy, though Venables was associated with the Buckinghamshire criminal William Wawe, who was said to be a companion of heretics.⁽⁷⁾

Another north-westerner who was accused of lollardy in the early part of Henry VI's reign was Matthew Appulby, a priest from Denton in Cumberland. During January 1429 he was said to have held lollard 'schools' in Finchley, near London, and elsewhere, and to have declared that any man, whether ordained or not, might baptise

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1. KB27/675/18
 2. See below p. 533 .
 3. CPR 1422-9. 186; Devon, Issues. 375. ~~see below~~
 4. KB27/660/5; KB9/83/2.
 5. Amundesham, Annales Mon. St. Alban i. 9. The account of his execution makes no mention of his lollard commitments, but simply refers to him as 'latronis et proditoris'.
 6. KB27/675/18.
 7. Annales. Mon. St. Alban. i. 47-48; CPR 1422-9. p. 422 for Wawe see below p. 422-3.

children or solemnise marriages : accordingly, though he had no license to do so, Appulby had carried out a number of fraudulent baptisms and marriages. Significantly, he was also indicted of forging coins of the realm at a hide-out in Finchley woods, but the civil authorities took his heresies seriously enough to hand him over to the bishop of London for examination.⁽¹⁾

The cases of Seggeswyke and Appulby illustrate well the decline in respectability which lollardy suffered after the failure of the 1414 revolt. It is, of course, doubtful whether Seggeswyke (like Venables and Wawe) was anything more than a ruffian with a grudge against the government, who supported Oldcastle in the hope of plunder. That such a man should in any way have been associated with the lollards says much for the moral decline of the movement even by 1414. Appulby, however, does appear to have been doctrinally unorthodox, and the version of the 'priesthood of all believers' which he taught may have been a garbled corruption of a lollard doctrine. If he can indeed be said to have been a lollard, it is notable that he should also have been a forger, a thing unthinkable in the early days of the movement. Finally, it is extremely likely that the two north-westerners learnt any heretical doctrines they may have held during their sojourn in the south rather than in Westmoreland and Cumberland, where there is no other evidence of lollard activities.

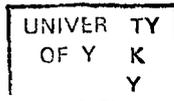
If evidence of local participation in the revolt is scanty in the far north, it is scarcely less so in Yorkshire, despite the large size of the county, the importance of the city of York, and the

1. KB27/675/18.

reasonably good communications with the Midlands. Only two Yorkshiremen, in fact, are certainly known to have risen in 1414 : these were John Fraunk, chaplain, 'of Yorkshire', and Richard Whit, plumber of York, and both were pardoned soon after the revolt, which would seem to indicate that their part in it was a small one.⁽¹⁾ Nothing further is known of Fraunk,⁽²⁾ and a thorough search of the York records has revealed only that Whit was a freeman of the city in 1413.⁽³⁾ There is certainly no evidence that York boasted a lollard community comparable to those in Newcastle, Nottingham, Leicester or Northampton. It is true that in 1394 John Hoperton, a chantry priest of Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, York, left in his will⁽⁴⁾ 'unum librum evangeliorum in Anglicis', which may well have been a lollard translation of the gospels, and also 'unum librum qui vocat speculum ecclesie', which could possibly be identified with Wycliffe's 'Speculum Ecclesie militantis'.⁽⁵⁾ The rest of his will, however, is strictly orthodox, and there is no evidence that he had any connections with other lollard suspects.

Another Yorkshireman who was accused of taking part in the 1414 rising was John Woodcock, of Blackmoor near Wetherby, who was also accused of highway robbery and of passing himself off as an ambas ador of the Pope and the Emperor.⁽⁶⁾ Thomson⁽⁷⁾ states of him

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1. Whit was pardoned on May 24th, and Fraunk on June 15th 1414. CPR 1413-16 p. 261.
 2. Unless he is to be identified with the William Fraunk imprisoned on suspicion of lollardy in Northampton gaol in 1417. Just. 3/52/18/18.
 3. Register of the Freemen of York (Surtees Soc. 1897) i.p.120.
 4. Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York Will Register i.f.72.
 5. Lechler, Wycliffe and his English Precursors pp. 491-2. It was, however, more probably the "Speculum Ecclesie" of St. Edmund Rich, a copy of which is known to have existed in York in about 1400 (C.H. Lawrence, St. Edmund of Abandon pp. 120-122 and information of B. Barr, York Minster Library).
 6. KB27/651/6.
 7. Later Lollards 196.



that it is likely that "much of the indictment against him was based on his insane ravings and should be discounted entirely", and in any case his criminal record makes it likely that his participation in the revolt, if it ever occurred, was motivated by hope of gain rather than lollard enthusiasm.

Equally uncertain is the lollardy of Henry Talbot, an esquire from Easington on the Yorkshire-Lancashire border. During 1413 he had been connected with the plots of John Whitlock and his Scots contact Sir Andrew Hake, who were said to have conspired the deaths of Henry IV and V and to have spread abroad bills claiming that Richard II was still alive in Scotland.⁽¹⁾ He was not apparently involved in Oldcastle's revolt, but in May 1415 he was again plotting with the Scots to rescue Murdoch earl of Fife, son of the duke of Albany, regent of Scotland and harbourer of the counterfeit Richard II. Murdoch was imprisoned at Kippax in south Yorkshire, and Talbot and his accomplices actually succeeded in kidnapping him, though not in getting him to Scotland.⁽²⁾ Early in 1417 Talbot was stirring up revolt in Yorkshire and Northumberland, claiming once again that Richard II was about to invade with a Scots army : he was captured at Newcastle in April, and subsequently executed. Though several chroniclers link Talbot's conspiracies with an alliance between Oldcastle and the Scots which is supposed to have existed at this time,⁽³⁾ no trace of such an association appears in his indictment or trial, during which he declared, amongst other 'verba obliqua et sinistra' that his actions had all been directed towards destroying sin in England

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1. CPR 1413-16 p. 35; KB27/609/14. See below pp. 466 , 470 .
 2. St. Alban's Chron. 86; Wylie Henry V i. 515, iii. 88; Otterbourne Chronica 277; KB27/624/4.
 3. St. Alban's Chron. 115; Otterbourne Chronica 278-9.

'et hoc per consilium quorundam confessorum suorum, tam episcoporum quam aliorum virorum ecclesiasticorum'.⁽¹⁾ This mention of bishops and churchmen make it seem unlikely that Henry had lollard sympathies, but his links with Oldcastle cannot be ruled out, especially since his elder brother Sir Thomas Talbot was one of the lollard leader's close associates and one of the prime movers of the 1414 rising.⁽²⁾

John Taillour, alias Bilton, who appeared charged with heresy before ^{Archbishop} ~~Bishop~~ Bowet of York in 1421, is also difficult to classify. His name may indicate that he came from one of the three Yorkshire Biltons, but he may have come from Nottinghamshire, which was also within the diocese of York. He adhered to the doctrine of remanence, the most usual Lollard heresy, and he also discounted the necessity for confession to priests, another fairly common lollard view, though Taillour went further than most when he said -

'That he was never shryven but of God and he had powr of God to shryve himself'

and

'That none had power to shryve since St. Peter was slayn'

He also denied the Pope and the church itself, saying -

'That ther was no Pope sithen St. Peter was slayn and left no powr behind and ther was noon holikirk sithen.'

Perhaps his wildest view was that -

'He trusted in the fader and in the moder and in the hooly ghost of heven and that Mary was the moder of Ihu that was deed ... but nought the moder of God Almyghte' ...

he also denied that Christ was the son of God and the second person of the Trinity.⁽³⁾

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1. KB27/624/4
 2. See below p.399-403
 3. B. M. Harl. Ms. 421 f. 135.

The wildness of Tailour's statements seem to indicate that he was insane, but his opposition to transubstantiation and auricular confession make it clear that he had at least some contact with real lollards, though it is difficult to ascribe his views to the basic teachings of either Wyche or Thorpe, two most likely original mentors in the area. The closest parallel we have is some of the more extreme statements of the Leicestershire lollards, notably that of John Belgrave, that there had been no Pope since St. Gregory,⁽¹⁾ and that of William Warde of Belton and his associates that confession to God was sufficient.⁽²⁾ Taillour's views, however, may have been derived from the Derbyshire lollards, who were apparently still active in 1419, and their teacher William Ederyk, whose opinions are not known. He was certainly not merely drunk or maliciously misreported, for he maintained his views and was turned over to the secular power as an obstinate heretic. It is possible that through him we hear the views of a geographically isolated man (or indeed, a geographically isolated community) who had learnt some lollard tenets, probably at second or third hand, and had placed their own insane constructions on them. Taillour's case concludes the evidence for lollardy in Yorkshire : it will be noticed that all the records are from secular, rather than ecclesiastical, sources - the registers of the Archbishops of York are quite silent on lollardy within the diocese or province until the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁽³⁾

The Registers of Carlisle and of Coventry and Litchfield are equally unhelpful, though we know of a few cases of heresy in these

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1. KB9/204/1/141
 2. KB9/204/1/130; KB27/617/4.
 3. Thomson. Later Lollards pp. 192-198; Dickens Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York '.

dioceses. Chester contributed at least one rebel to the 1414 revolt, Thomas Blake, a weaver, who was pardoned in December 1414, though he may still have been in the Sheriff of London's prison in 1415.⁽¹⁾

Whether he was an isolated case, or the representative of a Chester lollard community, we have no means of knowing. Two other men with Cheshire links and one from Lancashire also appear to have been involved with Sir John Oldcastle either in 1414 or later on. The first of these was Richard Colfox, esquire, a personal friend of Oldcastle's and a moving spirit of the revolt : usually described as 'of London', in one document he is referred to as 'of London alias of Wico Malbano' (i.e. Nantwich, Cheshire),⁽²⁾ though there is no record of his having held lands there. Also, presumably, close to Oldcastle was Thomas Tiperton 'gentilman' of Cheshire 'nuper comorantem cum John Oldecastell' accused of treason with two others (John Smith of Wolverhampton and John Thomesson of Chester-le-Street) by an approver in 1425 and still being prosecuted for it in 1432.⁽³⁾ He is probably to be identified with the Thomas Tiberton who was pardoned for felonies and trespasses in November 1414, which may indicate that he took some part in the revolt (though in that case one would have expected treason and insurrection to have been included in the pardon) and with the Thomas Tipirton 'yeoman' of Tottenham, London, who was accused of treason with five other men, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire tradesmen, in 1417.⁽⁴⁾ He is, however, nowhere accused of lollardy, and it is difficult to fill in the gaps in his career. Even more obscure is John

1. GPR 1413-16 p. 271; E199/26/30.

2. KB27/615/14 see below p 50-4.

3. KB27/655/5, 680/10, 683/10.

4. GPR 1413-16 p. 251, KB27/623/1.

Walmsley, yeoman, of Walmsley (now Edgerton) in Bolton, Lancashire, who was indicted for treason in 1418 in a context which suggests that he may have helped Oldcastle while the latter was hiding in Northamptonshire in the previous year : on this occasion, however, Walmsley escaped arrest,⁽¹⁾ and nothing more is known of him. No others from Lancashire or Cheshire are known to have been either Lollards or involved in the 1414 revolt.

Before leaving these two counties, however, it is interesting to note that the Elizabethan poet, John Weever, a native of Lancashire, in his 'Mirror of Martyrs',⁽²⁾ a poetic life of Oldcastle, makes the two counties the scene of part of Oldcastle's wanderings in the period (1414-17) when he was on the run :

'Through many bywaies, many countries fled
 In midst of Cheshire now I'm on a river ...'
 'Her tumbling streame my guide was to Vaile Roiall
 Through all the Wyches unto Ashton's chapel
 Frodsham, Rockesavage, thus I had a triall ...'
 'To Lancashire from thence my journey lies ...'
 'So there, through many paines and perils past
 I'm safe returned back to Wales at last.'

Weever appears to be describing a journey from central Cheshire, via Vale Royal, Northwich, Aston and Frodsham to the sea at Rocksavage, following the line of the river Weaver. The poet's story is almost certainly fabricated,⁽³⁾ probably to associate his hero Oldcastle with a part of the country well known and loved by Weever, whose own family probably came originally from Northwich.⁽⁴⁾ On the other hand we cannot completely rule out the possibility that Weever, who appears

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1. KB27/630.18.
 2. J. Weever : 'Mirror of Martyres' p. 126.
 3. It does not appear in Hall, apparently the source of most of John Weever's 'facts' about Oldcastle.
 4. Ormerod : Cheshire ii p. 113.

to keep to historical "facts" (as they were known to him from the popular chronicles of his time) in the rest of the poem, was repeating a local tradition, known to his family, that Oldcastle really did hide in those parts.

We now pass on to consider Derbyshire, a county where lollardy seems to have been comparatively strong - or perhaps it would be better to say that the evidence for it is more abundant, mainly because a number of Derbyshire lollards took part in the 1414 revolt, and in most cases records of their indictments and trials survive. Most of them came from the south-east corner of the county, around the town of Derby. Perhaps significantly, this is also the part of the county nearest to Leicestershire, where lollardy was stronger still, and whence we have reason to believe much heretical influence came. Particularly close are Belton, where the revolt's first outbreak occurred (under the leadership of William Smith and William Warde) on the 26th December 1413, and Mountsorrel, where a chaplain called John Edward was preaching heresy in 1412, and which produced a number of rebels in 1414.⁽¹⁾

The 'evangelisation' of the county appears to have been the work of two unbeneficed priests (one of them from Leicestershire) and a number of laymen, and of these the most important was William Ederyk, chaplain, probably a local man.⁽²⁾ Ederyk operated from a base at Aston-on-Trent, on the Derby-Leicestershire border (and thus, conveniently, on the line dividing the jurisdiction of the Bishop of

1. See below *pp.* 133 .

2. Perhaps originating from Idridgehay, formerly Iderich, in south central Derbyshire.

Coventry and Lichfield from that of the Bishop of Lincoln) : here he lived at the house of Thomas Tykhill and Agnes his wife, who were accused of having sheltered him from the 5th October 1411 until the time of the revolt.⁽¹⁾ From here he preached heretical doctrine at Derby, Tutbury, and elsewhere in the county, on the 6th November 1413, and at various other times between 1410 and 1414 'publice affirmando opiniones illas pro sana et salubri doctrina' : unfortunately we are not told what his opinions were, but only that they were repugnant to the church.⁽²⁾ Nor did Ederyk confine himself to Derbyshire, for we know that he frequently crossed into Leicestershire and preached there, thus coming to the notice of that reformed lollard, Bishop Repingdon of Lincoln, when the latter made his diocesan visitation of Leicestershire in 1413. Twelve parishioners of Castle Donington, a few miles to the south of Aston-on-Trent, testified to Repingdon that 'quendam dominum William Tykelprest capellanum pretensum ad predicandum in ecclesia ibidem in die Pasche ultimo (i.e. 1413) preterita contra tenorem constitutionis nuper Oxonie celebrate'.⁽³⁾ From Ederyk's alias, 'Tykelprest', we can see that his support by Thomas Tykhill was well known, at least to his neighbours at Castle Donington. His preaching there brought him at least one 'convert', John Anneys 'sutor', 'discipulus ut asseritur ipsius Willelmi lollardi' who preached in taverns and other places 'quamplures conclusiones et opiniones erroneas et hereticas determinationi sancte matris ecclesie

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1. 'die lune post festum Sci Michael Archangeli 12 Hen. IV' Since the regnal years of Henry IV began on the 30th September (i.e. the day after Michaelmas day) this date could mean either 5th October 1411 or the 6th October 1410. KB9.204/1/58,60,61; KB27/627/12.
 2. KB.9/204/1/59,60,61.
 3. Lincoln Joint Record Office, Visitation Book Vj/o.f.16v.

repugnantes expresse, et reputatur pro publico lollardo. Item dicit se nolle uni sacerdoti integre et plenarie una et eadem vice confiteri, sed si quid sibi placuerit reservare, non confessurum. Item dicit quod omnes doctores et episcopi in ecclesia militante inste breve essent fatui et pro fatuis reputabantur'.⁽¹⁾

Anneys' views, if these are really they, give us the only information we have about the doctrine Ederyk preached. It would, however, be dangerous to make too much of them, for they may well be simply Anneys' own anti-clerical mutterings, too freely expressed, which led his neighbours to condemn him as a Lollard. The first tenet, that he need not confess all to one priest, may perhaps be a garbled version of the more usual lollard disbelief in the necessity for auricular confession, held by the Leicester lollards in 1389 and by William Warde of Belton in 1414. The second, that all bishops were fools, may well have been Anneys' own, but it is equally likely that it reflected something Ederyk had said in his sermons : another Leicestershire lollard, Ralph Friday, was said to have gone yet further, and declared that Archbishop Arundel was a disciple of Antichrist.⁽²⁾

Anneys was ordered to appear at Sleaford with twelve compurgators, having in the first place denied the charges 'prout articulantur'⁽³⁾: he was to abjure all heretical opinions, and also the company of 'aliquibus personis suspectis vel diffamatis, et presertim cum prefato domino Willelmo, nec eos aut eum favebyt, sustentabit aut

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1. ibid. f. 14v.
 2. For these, and other Leicestershire matters, see the chapter on that county pp.47-152.
 3. There is perhaps a suggestion here that the garbling of the tenets came from the Bishop's informants rather than from Anneys.

manutenebit nec eis aliqualiter ei adherebit'. There is perhaps a suggestion here that Ederyk was fairly well known to the authorities as having some degree of local support. His patron, Thomas Tykhill, was also probably known to Repingdon, but was not easy to proceed against, being both a subject of the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield and a fairly influential man, as we shall see shortly.

Ederyk was also said, by the vicar of Breedon-on-the-Hill, to have taught at Ulverscroft in Charnwood Forest (near Mountsorrel and Woodhouse, where the lollard chaplain John Edward was said to have preached in September 1412⁽¹⁾) and 'Willelmus Tykyll capellanus, non admissus nec privelegiatus' was also said to have been active in the area of Kegworth, a few miles east of Castle Donington.⁽²⁾

If Derbyshire men preached lollardy in Leicestershire, then the reverse is also true : in 1414, Henry Bothe, an esquire of Littleover, eight miles west of Aston-on-Trent, was accused of receiving, supporting, and maintaining 'quendam Walter Gilbert capellanum' at his home, on the 31st July, 1413. Bothe was also said to have preached heresy at Littleover himself, both on the 26th June 1413 and at other times.⁽³⁾ Gilbert came from Kibworth Harcourt, (a manor in Leicestershire formerly belonging to the 'lollard knight' Sir Thomas Latimer) where he stirred up the population to revolt in January 1414 : he was caught at St. Giles' Fields and subsequently hanged.⁽⁴⁾ It is difficult to learn much about Gilbert's activities in Derbyshire,

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1. Visitation book V.j/o. f. 10, f. 14. For John Edward see below pp. 128.
 2. *ibid.* f. 16.
 3. KB9/204/1/58. KB27/627/9.
 4. KB9/204/1/134, 206/1/32; KB27/614/1; CCR 1413-19 56-7 see below pp. 187-8.

though it seems likely he preached at Derby itself, and may even have led the Derby contingent to St. Giles' Fields : in one warrant for his arrest he is called 'Walter Kybworth de Derby capellano'.⁽¹⁾

Apart from Ederyk and Gilbert, there were a number of other lollard preachers active in Derby itself, perhaps as subsidiaries of Gilbert. Thomas Netknytt and a chaplain, John Corbrig,⁽²⁾ were said to hold and maintain lollard opinions, and to have taught them in the town on the 24th April 1413.⁽³⁾ In the far south of the county, at Stretton-en-le-Field (now in Leicestershire), William Marshall, yeoman, was said to hold heretical opinions and to have preached them at Stretton on the 1st October 1413,⁽⁴⁾ while ten miles north of Derby, John Prynce of Windley, 'gentilman', was said to have taught and maintained heresy, both at his home and elsewhere in the county on the 23rd June 1413, and at other times.⁽⁵⁾ These last two may well have been converts made by Ederyk during one of his preaching tours : it is thus doubly unfortunate that we are ignorant of their views.

The quantity of heretical preaching going on in Derbyshire in the year 1413 makes it not at all surprising that the county sent a sizeable contingent to St. Giles' Fields in January 1414 - it is, indeed, surprising that more did not go. Probably the first to leave, on the

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1. KB9/204/1/63; KB/27/614/45. The first of these is nearly illegible : the second, issued in Michaelmas 1414, seems to be in error, as Gilbert had already been executed by them.
 2. Perhaps a relation of Henry Corbrig, executed in 1414, who was a servant of the London lollard priest, John Purvey. CCR 1413-19 56-7; E.357/24/m.39.
 3. KB9/204/1/63; KB27/669/12.
 4. KB9/204/1/66.
 5. KB9/204/1/59; KB27/627/9.

30th December 1413, was the party led by William Ederyk, and recruited by him in the environs of Aston-on-Trent. He had persuaded four men of Thulston, a village adjacent to Aston, to join the revolt by promising them wages of 13s. 4d. : these were a thatcher, Thomas Chapman, a smith, John Lete, a mason, Thomas Mason, and a weaver, John Webre. With them may have been a fifth Thulston man, John Lovett, who also took part in the revolt, and John de Grene from nearby Chaddesden, a weaver, who left his village on the same day as the Thulston party. The indictments state that Ederyk, who led the party, rode "modo guerri armati ... cum palletis, doublettys de defensis⁽¹⁾ et aliis" towards London "in auxilium John Oldcastle ... versus London usque villam de Ware". Ware, twenty miles north of London on the Great North Road, may well have been a mustering point for contingents from outlying areas. The Derbyshire men were heard to say that when they reached London they would go to a tavern in Smithfield called 'le Wrasteleyre on the hope' where one William Frome would tell them what they were to do.⁽²⁾ This is another proof of the links between the Leicestershire and Derbyshire lollards, for Frome came from Sileby, near Mountsorrel in Leicestershire, and was one of those who were accused of having risen at Leicester on January 5th, 1414.⁽³⁾

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1. i.e. 'palletts' breastplates of iron or stiff leather, and 'doublets of defence' a quilted garment, perhaps reinforced with metal plates, worn under the breastplate. Hewitt Ancient Armour ii. 130. 221. For the equipment of Walter Blake, leader of the Bristol lollards see below p.243 .
 2. KB9/204/1/57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66; KB27/614/5 see p. 487 .
 3. KB9/204/1/130; KB27/614/i.

Ederyk's contingent seems to have one of the better organised of those going to St. Giles' Fields. Since it is unlikely or impossible that men who required to be paid to join the revolt would provide their own horses and equipment, even if they could afford to,⁽¹⁾ we must assume that Ederyk had a sponsor, probably Thomas Tykhill, who paid for both the wages and the equipment.⁽²⁾ Tykhill himself almost certainly took no active part in the revolt.

Much less is known about the other Derbyshire contingent, which probably came from Derby itself. It may have been led by Walter Kybworth alias Gilbert, (though it seems likely that he was at Kibworth Harcourt at the time),⁽³⁾ and included William Scot, labourer alias cordwainer, John Maysham, 'brasyer' alias 'sythmaker', and Peter Clifton, cordwainer. Neither Netknytt nor the chaplain John Corbrig, who had preached in Derby in 1413, apparently went to London⁽⁴⁾ - nor, seemingly, did Marshall or Prynce, or Kybworth's patron Henry Bothe.

Most of those who went to St. Giles' Fields were very quickly taken : Ederyk managed to escape at first, and probably returned to Aston,⁽⁵⁾ where he may have been arrested, though it is possible he was still at large at Michaelmas 1414.⁽⁶⁾ By the end of the year

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1. John Grene of Chaddesden was apparently a poor man : his goods, when valued by the escheator, came to only 2s. 6d. (E.357/24.m.77) It is possible that, like Thomas Noveray of Illeston, he sold all his goods before the revolt (KB9/204/1/139.)
 2. A 'dublet de defens' seems to have cost about 5/- at this time e.g. E136/108/12.
 3. KB9/204/1/134, 206/1/32.
 4. KB9.204/1/63; KB.27/614/45; E 357/24m.77.
 5. Thomas Tykhill's indictments accused him of sheltering Ederyk on the 2nd February, 1414, after the revolt. According to CCR 1413-19 p. 116 and KB27/611/m.13, however, Tykhill was said to have been imprisoned in the tower by January 25th 1414.
 6. KB27/614/45.

he was taken and imprisoned in Kenilworth castle, whose constable produced him in court in January 1415, at which time he was, rather surprisingly, pardoned, on condition he would purge himself of heresy before his ordinary.⁽¹⁾ The extraordinary lenience shown to Ederyk, the leader of the Derbyshire rebels and one who had spread heresy far and wide for years, makes us wonder if some influence, such as that of Tykhill, was used on his behalf.⁽²⁾ Walter Kybworth was not so lucky, for he was taken at St. Giles' Field and hanged on January 13th, a few days after the revolt, along with Clifton and Scot from Derby⁽³⁾: the fate of the other Derby man, Maysam, is unknown, though his goods were confiscated. John Grene was taken by July 1414, and condemned to death, though he was later pardoned: he was apparently still in Newgate prison in September 1415.⁽⁴⁾ As for the Thulston men, Lete and Mason appeared in court in Michaelmas term 1414, and were pardoned on condition they would be corrected of heresy by the ordinary - which proves that the authorities did not see them simply as peasants deluded by Ederyk's wages, but as possible, or probable, lollards. Though they were pardoned in 1414, they were still in Nottingham gaol in October 1416.⁽⁵⁾ Chapman and Webster were also pardoned, in January 1415, each producing four mainpernors for their good behaviour.⁽⁶⁾ Lovett's fate is unknown.

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1. KB27/615/23
 2. See below pp.43.
 3. CCR 1413-19 pp. 56-7.
 4. CCR 1413-19 p. 148; KB27/616/23; E.199/26/30.
 5. CPR 1413-16 p. 200; KB27/614/5; Just.3/56/10/4, 56/11/1, 56/13/1
 6. KB27/615/36., 616/7.

The authorities also acted quickly against those who remained at home : by the 25th January, 1414, Thomas Tykhill was said to be imprisoned in the Tower, and by the 8th February he had been joined there by Henry Bothe.⁽¹⁾ On the last-mentioned date both gave surety not to escape or attempt to do so, and were backed in this by a recognisance in the very large sum of £1,000 each, put up by four mainpernors. Bothe's mainpernors were members of his own family from Lancashire, but Tykhill's included two very notable London wool merchants, Walter Cotton and John Reynewell, both aldermen and former sheriffs of London and both extremely rich,⁽²⁾ and a namesake of his, Thomas Tykhill, a London mercer. By May both were being allowed to "dwell ... without irons ... and live in certain houses" within the Tower, and in the same month they appeared for the first time before the King.⁽³⁾ They both remained in prison until the end of October, when Tykhill was found not guilty of rebellion by a jury and Bothe was acquitted, and bailed by two of the more powerful of his Derbyshire neighbours, Sir Richard Stanhope and Sir Roger Leche,⁽⁴⁾ Both were then released, probably on condition of purging themselves of heresy before the ordinary. This however, they did not do until January 1418, when they were joined by Agnes, Tykhill's wife, also obviously under suspicion of heresy.⁽⁵⁾ The delay is explained by J. A. F. Thomson⁽⁶⁾ as being

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1. CCR 1413-19 p. 116; KB27/611/13.
 2. CPR 1408-13 pp. 408, 461; CCR 1409-13 p. 371; Cal. Ltr. Bks. I. 75, 81 etc.
 3. CCR 1413-19 pp. 121, 124.
 4. KB.27/614/15/24.
 5. KB27/627/9/12.
 6. Later Lollards pp. 96-7.

due to the death of Bishop Burghill of Coventry and Lichfield in 1414 and the absence of his successor at the council of Constance : another reason may have been some kind of resurgence of heresy in Derbyshire for which, as we shall see shortly, there is some other evidence. At some time in 1418, John Prynce of Windley, who had apparently not been arrested in 1414 (though his name appears in the indictments for that year) purged himself.⁽¹⁾

Others indicted in 1414 were treated with even greater lenience than Prynce : William Marshall, cited then, was not called upon to take purgation until Easter 1418, along with John Corbrig the Derby chaplain. Both failed to obey, and were cited again in 1428, with the addition of Netknytt, the other 1414 Derby man : Corbrig and Netknytt may have complied then, but Marshall did not finally clear himself until 1436.⁽²⁾ Nor is there any grounds to suspect that Marshall was hiding, for we have every reason to suppose that he was living throughout the whole period at his home at Stretton, where he witnessed charters in February and May 1415.⁽³⁾

Perhaps because of the lax attitude of the authorities, or the absence of the ordinary, murmurs of lollardy continued in southern Derbyshire long after the 1414 revolt. In October 1416 John Derby, a chaplain from Chaddesden, (the home of John Grene in 1414) venturing into the diocese of York, was captured on suspicion of being a lollard at Stoke Bardolf near Nottingham and thrown into Nottingham jail, whence he was released by a priest of Nottingham who claimed him for the courts of the Archbishop of York. What became of him there we do not know.⁽⁴⁾

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1. KB.9 204/1/59; KB.27/627/9.
 2. KB.9.204/1/63,66; KB.27/628/19, 669/12, 699/5.
 3. CCR 1413-19 p. 273; Wigston Documents p. 287.
 4. Just. 3/56/13/16, 195/54.

In the same year south-east Derbyshire probably received a visit from the arch-lollard, Sir John Oldcastle, himself : a villainous chaplain, Robert Rose, accused of counterfeiting, theft, highway robbery and rape, admitted to being a 'communis allocutor cum Johannes Oldecastell ... et abbetator, fautor, auxiliator et consilior suorum'. Rose claimed to have met Oldcastle, at some time before the 7th January 1417, at Swarkeston Bridge, a few miles from Aston-on-Trent : Rose rode with him for some distance and drank with him, fully knowing his identity. This was probably more than a chance meeting, for Rose, apart from his other crimes, was accused of being a "communis factor et scriptor billarum felonie et lollardrie", such as had been found at nearby Burton-on-Trent. Despite all this, when Rose was tried, he managed to get himself acquitted : it is possible that the Oldcastle story was a fabrication, so that by turning 'King's evidence' on such an important matter he might cover his other crimes. (1)

It is, however, certainly conceivable that Oldcastle was in the area during his period of hiding, for a few weeks beforehand, on 10th December 1416, he was rumoured to have been at Hickling, in Nottinghamshire, where John Howes, 'gentleman' of Hose on the Leicestershire-Nottinghamshire border, was said to have taken him bread, wine, meat and 12 marks in cash. Howes was brought to trial at Nottingham in August 1421, and acquitted of his offence : even if the accusation were untrue, however, it may have been based on a knowledge that Oldcastle was really somewhere in Nottinghamshire in December 1416. We cannot rule out the possibility that Rose really did meet him in January 1417, and that he had been visiting Bothe, Tyekhill or Marshall at the time. (2)

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1. Just. 3/56/14/1/14; 195/50.
 2. Just. 3/195/37.

Two men of Tamworth, not far from Stretton, were arrested in the course of 1418, on charges that suggest that Sir John may have paid a visit there : Henry Joke, a yeoman, was charged with 'suspeccio lollardrie et assensie John Oldcastle' (it is notable that one of Joke's mainpernors was John Finderne of Finderne, a neighbour of Tykhill's and Henry Bothe's father-in-law) and William Halweton was arrested on suspicion of holding heretical opinions.⁽¹⁾

In the following year, 1419, an indictment occurs that suggests that lollardy was still flourishing at Aston-on-Trent; an exigent was put out for Thomas Tykhill senior, Thomas Tykhill junior (presumably a son), John Prynce, 'gentilman', and nine of Tykhill's servants and tenants; including one 'Thomas Idrych de Aston taillour fratrum Willelmus Idrych capellano et lollardo', and a Thomas Chapman who may possibly be identifiable with the Thomas Chapman who rose in 1414. Though the sheriff claimed to have arrested the elder Tykhill and Prynce in 1419, and the younger Tykhill in 1420, they were all still wanted men at Easter 1423.⁽²⁾ Though no charges of lollardy were made, the Aston men were charged with 'insurrections and congregations', which makes it appear that lollard services and meetings were still going on. Unfortunately we know no more of the matter. Nor do we hear any more of lollardy in Derbyshire until seventy years later,⁽³⁾ a period of time so long as to seem to defy any claims of a continuous tradition. If, as seems possible, a tradition of heresy survived after 1419 in southern Derbyshire (as it certainly did in the person of the unpurged William Marshall, if

1. KB27/627/12; E.357/25.m.87.

2. KB27/634/34; 635/15; 648/4.

3. Margery Goyte of Ashbourne, who appears to have learnt her heresy in Coventry. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 105-7.

nowhere else) it had almost certainly died out completely by the middle of the century.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about lollardy in Derbyshire at this time, apart from the apparent laxity of the authorities, is the support given to it by local gentry, which was both comparatively widespread and apparently overt. Probably its leading supporters were the Tykhills, who perhaps originally came from Yorkshire. Thomas Tykhill, described in the indictment as 'lege aprenticius', had been prominent in Derbyshire since about 1400 : he had been a Justice of the Peace for the county in 1404, 1406, 1407, 1408, 1412 and 1413, and at other times had been employed on various royal commissions in the area,⁽¹⁾ thus he was in an ideal position to help the Derbyshire lollards by simply turning a blind eye to their activities in his area, and a sympathiser on the bench would be helpful to any heretic who was taken by the civil power. Tykhill was also prominent on a national level : from 1410 he held the position of King's attorney in the court of common pleas, which position he retained right up to the time of the revolt : in 1412 he became a serjeant of the law.⁽²⁾ Another Thomas Tykhill, perhaps his son, was a successful London mercer, and it was probably through him that Thomas the lawyer acquired the support of two influential London aldermen (one of them a mercer) as his sureties in 1414.⁽³⁾ Yet another probable member of his family, Richard Tykhill of Yorkshire, seems also to have been an active supporter of the lollards : not only did he stand surety in 1414 for Thomas Chapman of Thulston, but also acted

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1. CPR 1401-5 p. 516, 1405-8 pp. 417, 431, 475, 490, 1408-13 pp 107, 148, 480, 1413-16 pp. 418; CFR XII p. 251.
 2. CPR 1408-13 pp. 163, 376, 1413-16 p. 9; E403/614/6.
 3. CPR 1408-13 pp. 163, 330, 339, 1413-16 p. 82.

for one of the London rebels, John Otteford of Birchen Lane in Cornhill.⁽¹⁾ The Tykhills may also have been influential in obtaining sureties for the release of Thomas Chapman and another Thulston man, John Webre, in 1414 : two of these sureties, William Scalby of Yorkshire and Thomas Whatton of Mountsorrel, were, like Tykhill, lawyers and attornies, while a third, Thomas Marsshall, may have been a relation of William Marrshall of Stretton.⁽²⁾ It is difficult to guess why the Tykhills supported heresy - one would be glad, for instance, to know the maiden name of Agnes Tykhill - but in the absence of any other evidence, a genuine desire for church reform is possible. Tykhill's support probably cost him his office - he never appears after 1414 as King's attorney, and, apart from a rather surprising appointment in February 1415, was never again appointed J.P.⁽³⁾ It is notable that he retained his position even until 1414, since his support for William Ederyk, a notorious heretic, was obviously well known in 1413⁽⁴⁾: he probably died before 1431.⁽⁵⁾

Henry Bothe, probably the son of Sir John Bothe of Barrow-on-Trent, was not quite so influential in the county as Tykhill, though he was escheator for it in 1402 and 1409.⁽⁶⁾ He was able to obtain two Derbyshire magnates, Sir Richard Stanhope and Sir Roger Leche, as his sureties in 1414,⁽⁷⁾ as well as the support of his father-in-law,

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1. KB27/615/32,36.
 2. KB27/615/36, 616/7; CPR 1401-5 p. 527, 1405-8 p. 284, 1416-22 pp. 28, 101; CCR 1402-5 pp. 208, 433, 1413-19 p. 273.
 3. CPR. 1413-16 p. 418.
 4. See above.
 5. Feudal Aids i. p. 298.
 6. CFR XII p. 185, XIII p. 168.
 7. KB27/614/24; Wigston Documents 284, 285.

the influential John Finderne of Finderne. Finderne may well have been something of a Lollard sympathiser himself : there is evidence that he knew both Oldcastle and William Marshall of Stretton, and he appears in 1418 as surety for Henry Joke, one of the Tamworth lollards.⁽¹⁾ One article of the lollard programme, the disendowment of monasteries, would almost certainly have appealed to Finderne : most of his revenues came from three alien priories, Lapley in Staffordshire, Shelford in Derbyshire, and Hinkley in Leicestershire. He also attempted to take over the alien house at Tutbury, and mounted an attack on Repingdon priory, breaking their weirs, destroying their crops, and assaulting the canons.⁽²⁾ Finderne was imprisoned in the Tower, for some unknown reason in 1411, with Sir Thomas Chaworth, who may have been involved in Oldcastle's rising, and in October 1413, again for an unknown reason, he and Bothe were ordered to appear in chancery.⁽³⁾ To return to Bothe, his lollard tendencies seem to have been eventually forgotten, for he sat as M.P. for Derbyshire in 1421 and at other times in the reign of Henry VI, as well as serving on various royal commissions.⁽⁴⁾

The support of the Tykhills, of Henry Bothe, and possibly of John Finderne, as well as of the lesser gentlemen Prynce and Marshall; the geographical position on the borders of the sees of York, Lincoln, and Coventry; and the apparent laxity of the local church authorities all combined to make southern Derbyshire an ideal centre of lollardy. Before 1414 the protection given by the influential Thomas

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1. CFR XII p. 249; CCR 1413-19 p. 273; Wigston Docts. 287; KB27/627/12.
 2. CPR 1401-5 p. 366, 1413-16 p. 73, 1416-22 p. 105; CFR XII pp. 196, 198, 241.
 3. CCR 1409-13 pp. 243, 244, 261; E403/614/1.
 4. CPR 1422-9 p. 299, 1429-36 p. 130.

Tykhill rendered Ederyk and his followers almost immune, while for several years afterwards the absence of a bishop saved them from the worst rigours of persecution. In this part of the north, then, if nowhere else, relatively large numbers of lollards are to be found, protected and supported by members of the local gentry. We shall now turn to Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, where a similar situation obtained.

CHAPTER TWOLollardy in the East Midlands

The east Midlands, and especially the counties of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, was the area in which popular lollardy first took root; originated by the preaching of William Swynderby, the greatest of all lollard evangelists, and continued by lesser known men, heresy gained support not only from the burgesses of Leicester and Northampton, but also from one or more knights and several other members of the gentry. There is ample evidence that a number of separate, though interlinked, lollard congregations flourished in the area from before 1382 until 1414, when they produced a considerable number of recruits for Oldcastle's rising : even after the rising the area, and especially Northamptonshire, produced a comparatively large number of obstinate heretics, and on several occasions provided a sanctuary for Sir John Oldcastle. Valuable work had already been done by the late K. B. McFarlane and James Crompton,⁽¹⁾ on the Leicestershire communities, but comparatively little on their neighbours in Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire and Huntingdonshire, and on the links between the communities.

The evidence for heresy in the area falls into several categories : first, the chronicles of Henry Knighton, a canon of Leicester and the chronicler of early lollardy in that town, and to a lesser extent the work of Walsingham and others. Secondly, the

1. McFarlane, Wycliffe Chapters 4, 5 and 6; J. Crompton "Leicestershire Lollards" in Trans. Leics. Arch. and Hist. Soc. XLIV p. 11 ff.

ecclesiastical records, mercifully well preserved (though not yet printed) of the see of Lincoln, which covered the whole area, provide much useful information. Finally the records of the royal courts, especially the ancient indictments and other related records of the court of King's Bench, both immediately after the 1414 revolt and at later times, contain much of great use, though the stories they tell are frequently inconclusive.

Popular lollardy in our area first took root at Leicester (which was to remain throughout the period perhaps the most important lollard centre) either in the year 1382 or shortly before that time. It was for long thought that the heresiarch Wycliffe, who had retired from persecution in Oxford to his rectory of Lutterworth, some ten miles south of Leicester, was himself the originator of heresy there : not only is there no evidence that this is true, but likelihood militates against it.⁽¹⁾ A much more likely candidate is Philip Repingdon, who had become attached to Wycliffe's doctrines while at Oxford, and became for a short time one of their most enthusiastic defenders. Repingdon was an Augustinian canon of the great abbey of St. Mary in the Meadows at Leicester, and it was at one of the abbey's manors, Brackley in Northamptonshire, that he first publicly proclaimed his attachment to Wycliffe's views on that most controversial subject, transubstantiation. This took place in early 1382,⁽²⁾ and shortly afterwards Repingdon was chosen to preach at St. Frideswide's, in Oxford itself, on Corpus Christi day.⁽³⁾ The news of his appointment caused Archbishop Courtenay to order the pro-Wycliffite chancellor of

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1. McFarlane, 'Wycliffe' p. 101; Crompton op. cit. pp. 15-18.
 2. Fasciculi Zizaniorum p. 292; McFarlane op. cit. p. 102.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. p. 297.

the University, Robert Rygge, to publish the decrees of the synod against Wycliffe's views, but Rygge only temporised and delayed until after Corpus Christi.⁽¹⁾ Repingdon's sermon on that day has been called 'that memorable last triumph of Oxford lollardy',⁽²⁾ it was attended by the Chancellor, the Mayor and many others, including, if Courtenay's frightened messenger is to be believed, 'viginti hominibus subtus pannos armatis' : Repingdon is supposed (by the same hostile witness) to have excited 'populum ad insurrectionem,⁽³⁾ et ad spoliandas ecclesias; et excusans magistrum Johannem Wyclyff in omnibus sibi favens. Ubi praedicavit, inter cetera, quod domini temporales debent prius recommendari in sermonibus quam papa vel episcopi; et qui sic non recommendat fecit contra Scripturam sacram : et multa alia dixit de statibus, et variis personis. Et inter cetera dixit quod dominus Dux Lancastrie multum afficiebatur, et defendere vellet omnes Lollardos; ipsos tamen nominavit sanctos sacerdotes'.⁽⁴⁾

According to another source, perhaps taken from another eye-witness account, Repingdon is said to have preached concerning the sacrament of the altar : 'In doctrina autem speculativa cujusmodi est materia de Sacramento altaris, ponam ... custodiam ori meo, donec Deus aliter illustraverit, sive instruxerit, corda cleri' : Walsingham remarks that this was a sidelong blow at the Archbishop - 'ad irritationem paternae patientiae et lenitatis'.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 299-301.
 2. McFarlane p. 108.
 3. A charge made particularly apposite by the recent Peasant's Revolt.
 4. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 299-300.
 5. Walsingham, Historia Anglicana ii. 60.

Two days after his sermon, Repingdon further shocked the Archbishop's messenger, Stokes, by preaching provocatively in the schools - 'inter cetera, quod ordo suus erat melior quando erat decennis, quam jam quando est millenis; et multa alia; et semper litigiose ad modum meretricum procedens'.⁽¹⁾ When Stokes opposed him, he is supposed to have produced twelve armed men to threaten his opponent. It was perhaps this last sermon that caused Walsingham to complain that Repingdon, (called simply 'quidam Canonicus Leycestriae') had preached that 'se solummodo laudare suum Ordinem, ex hoc quod caeteris Ordinibus erat prior et conformior vitae saeculari'.⁽²⁾

But if Repingdon's Corpus Christi sermon was a triumph of Oxford lollardy, it was also its last major demonstration. Before 1382 was over it had been all but extirpated by Courtenay's Council of the Earthquake, and its remaining supporters had scattered or recanted. Repingdon, after holding out for some time by evasive answers, and being excommunicated for contumacy, recanted in October 1382, thus bringing to an end his time as a lollard.⁽³⁾

Was Repingdon the originator of lollardy in Leicester? If he was, we should at first sight expect him to be named as such in the pages of the Leicester chronicler Knighton. Knighton, however, had good reason for not mentioning Repingdon, for the chronicler was himself an Austin Canon of St. Mary's, of which Abbey the ex-lollard had risen, by the time the chronicle was being written, to be Abbot. With this fact in mind, let us examine Knighton's story of the beginnings of heresy in his area, attempting to superimpose some kind of chronology on his detailed, if rather confused, account.

1. Fasc. Ziz. p. 302.

2. Hist. Anglic. ii. 57.

3. Reg. Gilbert (Hereford) 22-3; Concilia iii. 165, 169; Fasc. Ziz. 319-329; McFarlane, Wycliffe pp. 110-112.

He begins (under the date 1382, which covers his entire first account of the Leicester lollards) by describing Wycliffe, and telling how he translated the Scriptures into English 'linguam non angelicam', 'et sic evangelica margarita spargitur et a porcis concu- latur'.⁽¹⁾ He inveighs against Wycliffe's beliefs, and goes on to tell how he was taken to London before the Archbishop of Canterbury,⁽²⁾ (but was protected by the Duke of Lancaster) and how his opinions were eventually condemned. At this point he introduces a story not found elsewhere, of 'unius venerabilis miles, nomine Cornelius Cloune' who adhered to Wycliffe's views on transubstantiation until converted in London by an anti-lollard sermon by the Carmelite John Cunningham⁽³⁾ and by a miraculous vision. Cloune, despite his rather unlikely name, was a real person, also known as Cornelius D'Ireland or Cornelius de Fynachta, an Irishman who had been an esquire to Edward III and, knighted, continued in the royal service until his death in 1384.⁽⁴⁾ He appears, however, to have no connection with Leicester, unless he was a relation of the Abbot of Leicester, William de Clowme or de Cloune, who died in 1377.⁽⁵⁾

The chronicler goes on to give a copy of the Archbishop of Canterbury's condemnation of Wycliffe's views, with Bishop Buckingham of Lincoln's letter to the clergy of Leicester passing on the Arch- bishop's words.⁽⁶⁾ He then gives a brief account of Nicholas Hereford,

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1. Knighton. Chronicon ii. 152. Knighton presumably believed that Wycliffe himself, and not Hereford or Purvey, had translated the Bible.
 2. recte William Courtenay, then Bishop of London.
 3. Cunningham subsequently became Gaunt's confessor, and Gaunt was a patron of the abbey, so that the story of Cloune may have come to Knighton via one of Gaunt's retinue. Knighton ii. 163.
 4. CPR 1374-7 p. 240, 1377-81 pp. 274, 409, 481, 1381-5 pp. 121, 226, 257, 316; CCR 1381-5 pp. 154, 430.
 5. Knighton ii. 125-7, however, makes no mention of Cloune being an Irishman.
 6. Knighton ii. 164-170

without, however, stating that he visited Leicester, just as, slightly later, he gives an account of John Purvey in which, though he states that Purvey lived with Wycliffe (presumably at Lutterworth), he makes no mention of his ever coming to Leicester. Since Knighton had apparently no particular reason to suppress facts about Purvey and Hereford, we may be fairly safe in assuming that neither of these most prominent heretics visited the town, or that if they did, then the Chronicler knew nothing of it.⁽¹⁾

We must now do violence to Henry Knighton's ordering of his account, to arrive at what appears to be the true chronology of events : after describing Purvey, Knighton turns to:

'Willelmus Smith principalis colator,⁽²⁾ ab artificio sic vocatus, persona despicibilis et deformis, qui cupiens in uxorem juventulam quandam, sed ab ea spreus, intantam prorupit sanctitatis ostentationem, quod omnia mundi concupiscibilia despexit, muliebrem amplexum perpetuo abdicavit, lineis renunciavit, carnes et carnea, pisces et piscina nullatenus admisit, vinum et cervisiam quasi venenum recusavit, nudis pedibus per plures annos incedens, medio tempore abcedarium didicit et manusua scribere fecit' (3)

Smith's barefoot wanderings apparently brought him to Leicester, where he went into partnership with Richard Waytestathe,⁽⁴⁾ an unbeneficed chaplain, and one of the first of the clerical underworld of dissatisfied lower-grade seculars who were to serve lollardy so well. They set up their headquarters at

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1. Knighton ii 171-174; 178-179.
 2. i.e. of heresy in Leicester.
 3. Knighton, ii. 180-181.
 4. Also called Richard Hynkely (Concilia iii. 208-9) and perhaps originating from Hinckley, about 15 miles south of Leicester.

'quadam capella sancti Johannis Baptistae extra Leycestriam prope mansionem leprosororum, ubi caeteri de illa secta saepe convenerunt conventiculaque fecerunt, et consilia de suis nefariis cogitationibus communicaverunt; ibi enim erat hospitium et diversorium omnium talium adventantium, et ibi habuerunt gignasium malignorum dogmatum et opinionum, et errorem haereticorumque communicationem.' (1)

This chapel of St. John stood in Belgravegate, near the Spital outside the East gate of the town : it apparently belonged to the hospital of St. John, within the city walls, and later had a connection with the Guild of St. John (founded in 1355) whose chaplain, after 1477, said Mass there twice weekly. Knighton insinuates that the chapel was disused at the time that Smith and Waytestathe moved in, but it is possible that it was already connected with either the Hospital or the Guild, or both, and that Waytestathe was an officially appointed guild chaplain,⁽²⁾ rather than simply a 'squatter'.

From this centre they began preaching heresy, abusing especially the begging friars and:

'talem habebant terminum in omnibus suis dictis semper praetendendo legem dei "Goddis lawe"'

and soon attracted a large following.⁽³⁾ The problems that now face us are difficult to unravel : firstly, what exactly were Waytestathe and Smith preaching? Knighton calls them 'Wyclif discipuli', and describes how

'Principales pseudo-lollardi prima introductione hujus sectae nefandae vestibus de russeto utebantur pro majore parte, illorum quasi simplicitatem cordis ostendentes exterius' (4)

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1. Knighton ii. 182.
 2. In 1355 the originators of the Guild of St. John provided for a chaplain to say masses for the soul of the founder and his kin : cf. Leicester Records Vol. i. map, Vol. ii, lxii, 100, 177, 282-3; VCH. Leics. iv, 50, 342, 359.
 3. Knighton, ii. 182-188.
 4. *ibid.* 184, 187.

This last description tallies with Walsingham's account of the early Lollards :

'comites atque socios uniussectae insimul Oxoniis et alibi commorantes, talaribus indutos vestibus de russeto, in signum perfectionis amplioris, incedentes nudis pedibus, qui suos errores in populo ventilarent, et palam et publice in suis sermonibus praedicarent'. (1)

However, one cannot help wondering whether Smith and his followers were really early followers of Wycliffe, or simply a rather eccentric pietistic movement which eventually became involved with lollardy, perhaps through the influence of Repingdon or Swinderby.

The second problem is the date of the first beginnings at St. John's chapel : Knighton insinuates that Waytestathe and Smith were active for some time before the advent of Swynderby as a lollard preacher - that is to say, before the spring of 1382 - and that it was only after joining them that Swynderby turned to heresy.⁽²⁾ If this is in fact true, and there was a Wycliffite community in Leicester as early as 1381, a number of further problems arise : firstly, whence did their doctrine come? for Wycliffe himself was still at Oxford, and Repingdon, as we have shown above, was not yet a declared heretic. Secondly, why does Knighton, who takes great pains to connect Wycliffe with John Ball and the Peasants' Revolt, refrain from mentioning this community in connection with the latter event? Finally, why or how did Waytestathe and Smith escape persecution with Swynderby in 1382, and continue unmolested until 1389? A simple solution to all these problems is that Knighton's account is chronologically muddled, and that the doings at St. John's chapel took place after 1382 rather than before that time.⁽³⁾ Alternatively, Knighton may have been

1. Hist. Anglic. i. 324 (under 1377) qv. also the case of William Ramsbury p.322.

2. Knighton ii. 191.

3. ibid ii. 151, 170. For another example of Knighton's careless or deliberate errors, see the confusion of Swynderby and John Aston below.

attempting to disguise the fact of the origins of Swynderby's preaching by fathering them on Smith rather than on their more likely source, Repingdon, whom Knighton wished to 'whitewash' for the reasons stated earlier.

Leaving Smith and Waytestathe for the moment, we turn to a man probably much more influential on the growth of popular lollardy, William Swynderby, and for an account of him we turn once more to Knighton:

'Erat quoque illis diebus apud Leycestriam quidam sacerdos Willelmas de Swyndurby, quem Willelmum heremitam vulgus vocabant ... Hic unde venerit aut ubi originem duxerit non occurrit' (1)

At first, Knighton tells us, Swynderby lived the life of an ordinary secular priest, but then he took to preaching 'de mulierum defectibus et superbia' : being threatened with stoning by the ladies, respectable and otherwise, of the town, he then changed the subject of his attacks to 'mercatores et divites stilum ... frequenter asserens in suis praedicationibus, neminem posse habere divitias hujus seculi et affluentiam temporalium bonorum et consequi posse regnum coelum.'⁽²⁾ So effective was his preaching on this subject (which, with the failings of women, was part of the stock in trade of the fourteenth century preacher)⁽³⁾ that several of the richer men of the town were said to have despaired of salvation.

Swynderby then left Leicester and began a hermit's life in 'bosco domini ducis'⁽⁴⁾ : there he gained a great reputation for sanctity, and the interest and support of the owner of the wood, the

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1. As Crompton says (op. cit. p. 19) he probably came from Swynderby on the borders of Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Knighton ii. p. 189.
 2. *ibid.* pp. 189-190.
 3. Perfectly orthodox preachers and friars frequently preached on these subjects : see Owst ¶ Literature and the Pulpit.
 4. Perhaps in the Western park area of Leicester : Crompton p. 43n.

'lord duke', John of Gaunt, which was shortly to prove most useful to him. Returning to Leicester, he was installed by the canons of St. Mary's (influenced, perhaps, by Repingdon) in 'quadam camera infra ecclesia'. From thence he went on preaching journeys : 'ecclesias in patria ubique non in villa praedicando visitavit'.⁽¹⁾ Finally, he made one more move, and associated himself with Smith and Waytestathe at St. John's chapel :

'Nam secta illa in maximo honore illis diebus habebatur, et in tantum multiplicata fuit, quod vix duas videres in via quin alter eorum discipulus Wycliffe fuerit.' (2)

Up to this point Knighton has given us no evidence that Swynderby was anything but orthodox, if eccentric : when and where, one wonders, did William first become a heretic? There are several possible explanations : Knighton, who had a motive for distorting the facts, seems to infer that Swynderby only really became a heretic after he took up with the 'lollards' at St. John's Chapel. Walsingham, however, who mentions Swynderby, though not by name, has it that he learnt his heresies from Wycliffe himself:

'(Wycliffe) emisit viros apostatas, de fide Catholice pessime sentientes, ad dogmatizandum et praedicandum ... Inter quos erat quidam vultum et habitum praeferens heremitae, veniens equidem in vestimentis ovium, sed intrinsecus erat lupus rapax. Hic emissas per dictum Johannem, publice praedicavit leycestriae ...' (3)

It is just possible that Swynderby, who must have passed through or near Lutterworth on his preaching journeys, may have at one time met Wycliffe or his amanuensis Purvey, but if there was any question of Swynderby being 'sent' or taught by the heresiarch, we can be sure that Knighton would have told us of it.

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1. Knighton ii. 190. This was presumably the time when he preached heresies at Melton Mowbray, Hallaton, Loughborough and Market Harborough, as was alleged at his trial. See below.
 2. *ibid.* ii. 191.
 3. Hist. Anglicana ii. 53.

A third explanation is that Swynderby, an eccentric but probably originally orthodox priest, was introduced to lollardy by Repingdon and his fellow canons, who by early 1382 probably also included Thomas Bryghtwell, later in that year accused of favouring Wycliffe at Oxford.⁽¹⁾

Having set the scene from Knighton's rather muddled and dateless account, we can now begin a more ordered study of heresy in the town. Leaving aside the question of when it was that Swynderby first began preaching heresy, we know that by the early spring of 1382 reports had reached Bishop Buckingham of Lincoln which caused him to forbid Swynderby from preaching at all : this prohibition was apparently issued on March 5th, 1382,⁽²⁾ and it also summoned William to appear for trial before his bishop.

Far from obeying Buckingham, Swynderby defied him and went on from strength to strength. His first sermon of which we have a record was preached on Palm Sunday ⁽³⁾1382, from a makeshift pulpit of millstones (the churches being closed to him by Buckingham's prohibition) :

'Stabat autem unum par molarum ad vendendum extra capellam in alta strata, et dictus Willelmus ibidem inter illos lapides paravit sibi pulpitem, et convocavit populum, atque ibi pluries in contemptum episcopi praedicavit, dicens, Se posse et velle in strata regia, invitis dentibus episcopi, praedicare, dum tamen benevolentiam populi obtineret.' (4)

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1. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 304, 208; Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon i. 266-7: Bryghtwell had, however, ceased to be a follower of Wycliffe by June 1382.
 2. Knighton ii. p. 192; McFarlane, Wycliffe 121
 3. i.e. March 30th.
 4. Knighton ii. 192.

Several accounts, more or less tallying, exist of what was said in this sermon. Knighton gives us one, but appends it to an account of the activities of John Aston, an Oxford lollard and friend of Nicholas Hereford, who he describes as :

'vehiculum equorum non requisivit sed pedestris effectus, cum baculo incedens, ubique ecclesias regni cum veneni ampulla indefesse cursitando visitavit.' (1)

The Leicester chronicler goes on to credit the Palm Sunday sermon to Aston : Walsingham, however, attributes the same sermon to Swynderby, and its content seems to tally well with other doctrinal statements made by the Leicester heretic, as we shall see below. The conclusion must be that the Palm Sunday sermon was all but certainly given by Swynderby, and that Knighton either made a genuine mistake or was again twisting facts to keep suspicion away from Repingdon, who may perhaps have encouraged the sermon. We know that Aston was an energetic and far-ranging preacher, preaching in such far distant parts as Odiham (in May 1382), Gloucester (1383), London (1386) and the diocese of Worcester (1387).⁽²⁾ There is no particular reason why he should not have visited Leicester early in 1382, though Knighton is our only authority : such a visit near the time of the Palm Sunday sermon may thus have given rise to genuine confusion on Knighton's part.⁽³⁾

The text of the Palm Sunday sermon, as well as Swynderby's other reported statements, will be given here in full, as a basis for comparison with the views of later lollards in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. According to Knighton, Swynderby (sic 'Aston') said

1. Knighton ii. 176.

2. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon p. 67. see below pp 307, 218-9, 44-3,
153 .

- K.(1) Quod nullus debet aliquem excommunicare nisi ex caritate, et pro salute animae suae.
- K.(2) Excommunicatio quae datur ad impediendum homines audire verbum dei est excommunicatio Antichristi et non boni Christiani.
- K.(3) Quod praelati ecclesie adquirunt beneficia sua per aurum, et sic sunt simoniaci et haeretici.
- K.(4) Nunquam est bona pax et plenaria in regno isto quousque ista temporalia auferantur ab ecclesiasticis, et ideo rogabat populum manibus extensis, ut unusquisque adjuvaret, quantum posset, in ista materia.
- K.(5) Viri ecclesiastici, dummodo vixerint in divitiis et voluptatibus, sicut iam vivunt, sunt inhabiles ad orandum pro populo, pro quo fine fuerant principaliter instituti.
- K.(6) Si rex haberet in manu sua temporalia virorum ecclesiasticorum non oporteret eum tunc accipere tallagia nec communitatem Regni spoliare.
- K.(7) Quod istae novae sectae, quasi hesterno die venerunt, asserunt vitam suam et religionem perfectiorem quam religionem Christi communem et apostolorum.
- K.(8) Beatus Paulus adquisivit manibus suis victum pro se et discipulis suis, et sic deberent religiosi manibus suis laborare et non publice mendicare.
- K.(9) Quod sacramento altaris post consecrationem est verus panis : et haec est sententia apostoli et doctorum antiquorum et sanctorum : et in ista materia doctores novelli vel contradicunt inter se vel non dant sufficientem istius sacramenti descriptionem.
- K.(10) Religiosi praedicantes, qui nolunt dicere populo et scribere veram descriptionem istius sacramenti, et fidem fundatum in Evangelio et in sacra scriptura, sunt excommunicati et haeretici, et si quis talibus eleemosynam suam dederit ipse est fautor illorum et cum ipsis excommunicatus.
- K.(11) Fratres verecundatur dicere fidem suam de sacramento altaris, et pro confirmatione omnium doctorum suorum dixit quod haec est fides quam deberent habere ex Evangelio et dictis apostolorum; et si quis oppositum praedicatorum diceret vel praedicaret quod nullo modo esset ei credendum.(1)

Walsingham's account of the same sermon⁽¹⁾ mentions all the above points, and adds the following:

- (W.1) Quod nullus Prelatus debet excommunicare aliquem, nisi prius sciat ipsum excommunicatum a Deo; et si quis aliter aliquem excommunicaverit, ipse excommunicatus est, et haereticus.
- (W.2) Praelatus excommunicans clericum, qui appellat ad Regem et consilium regni, eo ipso traditor Dei est, et regis, regni.
- (W.3) Contra antiquam legem est, et etiam contra novam, quod viri ecclesiastici habeant possessiones temporales.

According again to Walsingham.⁽²⁾

'Nec sufficit huic Diei malitia sua, nisi ut et apponeret iterum in die Sanctae Parasceves praedicare nequitiam inauditam in eodem loco ...'

the St. Alban's chronicler goes on to give a list of the 'Conclusiones, vel potius "Abusiones" that he preached on that Good Friday.⁽³⁾

- (WA.1) 'Quod si parochiani sciverint curatum eorum incontinentem esse, et malum, debent subtrahere ab eo decimas; et alias, sunt fautores criminis, et consentientes ejus malis operibus.
- (WA.2) Quod decimae sunt purae eleemosynae, et in caso quo curati fuerint mali, possunt licite eas allis conferre.
- (WA.3) Quod homines possunt debita ex cavitare petere, sed nullo modo propter debita aliquem incarcerare.
- (WA.4) Quod curatus malus subditos excommunicans pro decimarum detentione, non est nisi pecuniam ab eis indebite et male extorqueri.
- (WA.5) Si aliquis capellanus, vel compatres et commatres infantium puerorum, temporibus quibus hujusmodi pueros seu infantes baptizaverunt et levaverunt de sacro fonte, fuerint in aliquo mortali peccato detenti, infans hujusmodi, sive puer, non est baptizatus, nec recipit tempore hujusmodi Sacramentum baptismi.

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1. Hist. Anglicana. 53-55.
 2. ibid. 55-56.
 3. 4th April 1382.

(WA.6) Quicumque Episcopus conferens alicui sacros ordines presbyteratus - hujusmodi persona taliter ordinata non est presbyter ratione collationis hujusmodi sibi factae, nisi sit et esset electus a Deo.

Of these 'Conclusiones', W.1, WA.1, WA.2, WA.3, WA.4, and WA.5 appear, similarly worded, amongst the points abjured by Swynderby at his trial,⁽¹⁾ so that it is possible that Walsingham, wishing to describe the Good Friday sermon, put words into William's mouth which were possibly not said at this time, but derived from an account of his trial. To this account Walsingham adds a number of points made at other times, which may well be eye-witness reports : Swynderby is said to have publicly preached, in the presence of the Mayor of Leicester and many others, that Jesus did not institute the Mass, and that it would be better if fewer masses were celebrated.⁽²⁾ He was also said to have preached, in the presence of the Vicar of Frisby-by-Galby, 8 miles south-east of Leicester, (probably in the course of one of his preaching expeditions) that if a parishioner gives tithes to his parish priest, knowing the priest to be in mortal sin, or openly or secretly living with a woman, then the parishioner is an accessory to the priest's crimes.⁽³⁾ Walsingham also reports (without authority given) that Swynderby said that Canon law was a human tradition, and that he publicly preached at Leicester that he knew that the Holy Sacrament was God's body:

'sed, ut asseruit, scivit plus dixisse de ista materia, si voluisset.'⁽⁴⁾ By this sidelong reference to the doctrine of remanence,

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1. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 338-9; Knighton ii. pp. 196-7.
 2. Historia Anglicana ii. 56.
 3. This is simply an expansion of Conclusion (WA.1).
 4. Hist. Anglic. ii. 56.

and his other preaching, he caused great doubt and perplexity in simple Christians, so that many despaired of the true Catholic faith, and many others turned aside from truth and justice.

Knighton, too, includes some apparently eye-witness examples of lollard preaching at this time, but their provenance is more obscure. After giving a description of the doings of Nicholas Hereford, he gives a list of heretical conclusions under the heading of '*Opiniones unius alterius quas audivi praedicatas*';⁽¹⁾

- (KA.1) *Si persona ecclesiastica delinquerit et se non emendaverit, licitum est dominis secularibus hujusmodi radere perscapulas, scilicet caput auferre licet corona ejus de nova rasa sit et larga.*
- (KA.2) *Similiter, quod si dominus temporalis deliquerit et se non emendaverit, licitum est popularibus ipsum corrigere.*
- Die palmaram quadam praedicavit;*
- (KA.3) *Quod multiplicare voces labiorum in oratione scilicet 'blaber with thi lyppus', Anglice, nihil est.*
- (KA.4) *Quod dare denarios pro psalteriis dicendis nihil est.*
- (KA.5) *Quod dare denarios pro missis celebrandis nisi bene vixerit nihil est : quod si bene vixerit, semper orat, et quod sufficit ad orationem bene vivere.*
- (KA.6) *Similiter ibidem praedicavit, Quod poena Christi quam sustinuit in passione fuit major quam tota poena inferna.*
- (KA.7) *In eodem sermone - Quod Christus nunquam mandavit aliquem mendicare. Item quod praedicavit in aliis locis.*
- (KA.8) *Quod Christus nunquam expressit in sacra scriptura quod voluit quod homo reliqueret omnia sua temporalia nihil sibi retinendo.*
- (KA.9) *Omne Christi consilium est praeceptum.*

1. Knighton. ii. 174-6.

- (KA.10) Nullus debet dare eleemosynam alicui qui habet meliores pannos et meliores domos quam sic conferens.
- (KA.11) Nullus est vere praelatus nec habilis ad praelatum nisi sit doctor et praedicator.
- (KA.12) Quilibet absolutus a peccato est in gratia, et in tanta gratia quod non est capax majoris.
- (KA.13) Quod iste habuit auctoritatem confessandi et communicandi parochianos ecclesiarum Leycestriae, sine licentia vicariorum, ratione rectoriae dictarum ecclesiarum.
- (KA.14) Denarius confessionum est maledictus, et tam conferens quam recipiens excommunicatus.
- (KA.15) Nullus debet dare eleemosynam alicui quem noverit esset malum.
- (KA.16) Nulli viri ecclesiastici plus habere debent quam nudum victum et vestitum.
- (KA.17) Propter peccatum noviter commissum omnia peccata prius dimissa redeunt.
- (KA.18) Praedicatores sacculos portantes sunt falsi praedicatores cum Christi in Evangelio oppositum praecipiat, nec veri praedicatores Christi discipuli hoc fecerunt.
- (KA.19) Mendicitas valentium laborare est reprobata in jure civili, et non invenitur a lege evangelica approbata.
- (KA.20) Christus multos de diversis status convertit ad fidem sed non invenitur in scriptura sacra quod umquam convertit sacerdotem.
- (KA.21) Similiter, frequenter asseruit in praedicationibus suis, quod populus fuit deceptus istis ducentis annis postquam istae novae sectae intraverunt per falsos praedicatores, adulatores, Antichristi discipulos, sed ipse eundem populum reformaret per suam veram praedicationem.
- (KA.22) Frequenter dixit in suis praedicationibus, quod isti praedicatores nituntur falsificare sacram scripturam, dicentes et concedentes, et ipsemet saepius audivit publice Oxoniae, quod ipsa est plena de haeresibus. Et causa istis falsae assertionis, ut dixit, quia sacra scriptura fuit contra vitam illorum, et ideo ad defendendum vitam illorum malam hoc assuerunt.
- (KA.23) Solet quoque idem frequenter asserere, quod vix quilibet decimus homo salvus erit.

These conclusions present a number of problems : firstly, who was the 'unius alterius'? From their position in the chronicle, directly after an account of Hereford, and before accounts of Aston and Purvey, we might expect them to refer to a major 'haeresiarcha', the second of the series of which Hereford is the first and Purvey the 'Quartus haeresiarcha'.⁽¹⁾ Repingdon seems at first to fit exactly : a major heretic, fitting into the series, whom Knighton could not name, but whom he had heard preach. This interpretation is born out by conclusions KA.1 and KA.2, which are very similar to one of the conclusions preached by Repingdon and Hereford at Oxford:⁽²⁾

'Item quod domini temporales possint ad arbitrium eorum, auferre bona temporalia ab ecclesiasticis habitualiter deliquentibus, vel quod populares possint, ab eorum arbitrium, dominos deliquentes corrigere.'

and by other similarities.⁽³⁾ We should also note that in conclusion KA.22 the preacher states that he has often heard 'false preachers' at Oxford, which Repingdon would have been in an ideal position to do.

Militating against attribution to Repingdon is the wildness of some of the conclusions, especially conclusions KA.6, KA.12, KA.17 and KA.18 : these have given rise to the attribution of all the statements to Swynderby.⁽⁴⁾ There are also other reasons for the latter theory : firstly, Swynderby's preaching, not surprisingly, contained elements found in Hereford and Repingdon's Oxford articles, which would explain conclusions KA.1 and KA.2. Also, these conclusions were apparently mostly preached on 'die quadam palmarum', which would

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1. So described, Knighton ii. 178.
 2. Fasc. Ziz. 280 Art. XVII.
 3. i.e. KA.7 cf. Fasc. Ziz. p. 282 Articles XXIII; KA.14. cf. ibid. articles XXIV; KA.15 cf. ibid. p. 279 Article X
 4. e.g. Crompton op. cit. p. 21-22.

seem to make them simply another description of Swynderby's sermon on Palm Sunday 1382 : however, comparison of articles K.1-10 and W.1-3 will show that, while there are similarities, it is clearly not the same sermon which is being described. Nor are there any conclusive similarities with Swynderby's later statements. Finally, if we consider conclusion KA.13, that the preacher was able to confess and communicate the people of Leicester, without permission of the Parish priests, '*ratione rectoriae dictarum ecclesiarum*' : this can be taken in two ways - as Swynderby saying that he did not recognise the fact that the rectories had been appropriated to St. Mary's Abbey, or as Repingdon saying that, as a canon of the same abbey, he was entitled to ignore the vicars of the appropriated parishes.

To sum up, then, several theories are tenable with regard to the '*Opiniones unius alterius*' : either these are Repingdon's views, perhaps slightly garbled in the telling, and possibly preached on a Palm Sunday previous to 1382, or else they are Swynderby's, in which case they may have been preached on Palm Sunday 1382, perhaps in another sermon than that described elsewhere by Knighton. Alternatively, they may be the views of both men, confused by Knighton into one unit. One final point is that, if these conclusions are entirely Swynderby's, and are correctly reported, then, on the evidence of KA.22, we must assume that 'William the hermit' had frequently been to Oxford, perhaps in the company of Repingdon.

To return to more solid ground, we must now consider the corpus of preaching certainly attributed to Swynderby, its derivations, effect on the people of Leicester, and culmination in his first trial. That many of Swynderby's points are traceable to the teaching of Hereford and Repingdon, and especially the latter, is obvious if a

comparison is made between them and the conclusions of the two Oxford lollards given in the "Fasciculi Zizaniorum".⁽¹⁾ This would seem to bear out the theory that William was encouraged by Repingdon : the Leicester hermit's preaching, however, is biased in a slightly different direction than that of the Canon of St. Mary's. If we analyse the contents of Swynderby's preaching, we find that four of his points⁽²⁾ deal with theories of excommunication, seven with tithes,⁽³⁾ only two with the sacrament of the altar,⁽⁴⁾ and no less than twenty one with attacks on the church, six of these being specifically aimed at the mendicant orders,⁽⁵⁾ and many of the rest being aimed at evil-living priests and bishops : the whole direction of his preaching, in fact, was anti-clerical. This last impression is backed by Knighton's description of the Leicester lollards' abuse of orthodox preachers and especially of 'falsos fratres ...'.⁽⁶⁾

It was perhaps this anti-clericalism which appealed to the citizens of Leicester and the surrounding area. Though the city records do not show any long standing quarrel between town and abbey or town and bishop, such as is found in other medieval communities, two incidents which occurred twenty or so years before Swynderby began his preaching show that there had been some ill-feeling between the Abbey of St. Mary's and the surrounding laity. In 1357 the men of Belgrave near

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1. pp. 277-282. Swynderby's conclusion K.2 cf. Art. XIV : K.8 cf. Art. XXIII : K.9 cf. Articles I and II W.1 cf. Article XI : W.2 cf. Article XIII : W.3 cf. Article XI : WA.2, WA.1 cf. Article XVIII. Swynderby's remarks about the Mass, cf. Article VI.
 2. K.1/K.2/W.1/W.2
 3. WA.1/WA.2/WA.4/KA.4/KA.5/KA.14/KA.15
 4. K.9/K.10.
 5. K.3/K.4/K.5/K.6/K.7/K.10/W.2/W.3/WA.6/KA.1/KA.11/KA.16 KA.20/KA.21/KA.22. Attacks on mendicants K.8/K.11/KA.7/KA.10/KA.18/KA.19
 6. Knighton ii. 187-8.

Leicester, in the course of a dispute between themselves and the Abbey, had demolished the Abbot's gallows at Belgrave and disrupted road-traffic between the Abbey and its outlying manors : the offenders had been punished by heavy fines.⁽¹⁾ Three years later, a local knight had been supported in his quarrel with St. Mary's, 'per favorem et auxilium multo rem majorum de patria.'⁽²⁾

More probably, however, it was Swynderby's reputation for holiness (first gained during his period as a hermit)⁽³⁾ and the power of his preaching that earned him support. His popularity in Leicester is undoubted, even if we allow for the exaggeration of the chroniclers. Knighton⁽⁴⁾ tells us:

'Crevit populus credentium in ista doctrina, et quasi germinantes multiplicati sunt nimis, et impleverunt ubique orbem regni, et adeo domestici facti sunt ac si essent de uno die procreati; audacesque ad plenum facti sunt nec in aliquo erubuerunt, sed quasi inverecundi tam in occultis quam in publicis locis impudice latrantes veluti canes indefessis vocibus.'⁽⁵⁾

Even after Buckingham's condemnation of Swynderby's preaching crowds flocked to hear William preach from his open-air pulpit:

'Tunc videres populorum turbas ex omni parte, tam de villa quam de patria copiosus solito, quasi in duplo, ad ejus praedicationem ruere post talem inhibitionem et sententiam excommunicationis tam in abbathia quam in multis aliis ecclesiis.'⁽⁶⁾

Walsingham also testifies to his great popularity; saying that the clergy of Leicester could not prevent him from preaching :

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1. Knighton ii. 96-97.
 2. *ibid.* 112-113.
 3. *ibid.* 190.
 4. *ibid.* 183.
 5. *ibid.* 186 etc.
 6. *ibid.* 192.

'ob favorem populum; qui libentissime eum audiebant ... quae vulgus commune solet libenter audire, lingua protulit venenata, captans per singula verba sermonis sui favorem, laudem quoque vulgi; callide talibus seducens et decipiens populum imprudentum.' (1)

Nor was it only the common people who supported Swynderby : if Walsingham is to be believed (and other evidence supports him) the Mayor and many of the prominent men of the town defied the Bishop's ban and attended one of his sermons. (2)

It may have been Swynderby's growing popular support that led Bishop Buckingham (no doubt encouraged by the friars whom William and his friends were constantly attacking) to take further action (3) against him. Having once ignored the Bishop's summons in March, he did so again when cited to appear on June 9th : somewhere about this time there seems to have been a public demonstration in the lollard's favour, perhaps when an agent of the Bishop attempted to read the citation in Leicester, or even to capture Swynderby and forcibly take him for trial. Walsingham tells us:

'Unde postea contigit, cum Episcopus Lincolniensis eum correxisse parasset, et ab eo facultatem praedicandi tulisse, saeviens turba demens Episcopum adeo deterrebat, ut nihil auderet agere contra eum'. (4)

Swynderby did, however, appear for trial shortly after the 9th June : Mr. McFarlane (5) remarks that 'it is more than likely that force was employed to compel his attendance'. He flatly denied preaching, maintaining or believing any of the sixteen conclusions which he was said to have promulgated. We are fortunate at this point in being

1. Hist. Anglic. ii. 55.

2. ibid. ii. 56.

3. The following is taken from K.B. McFarlane's account, based on Buckingham's register: Wycliffe pp. 122-4.

4. Hist. Anglic. ii. 55 qu. also 56.

5. Wycliffe p. 122.

able to draw on Swynderby's own description of his trial, written down eight years later when he was being tried for preaching heresy in the diocese of Hereford by the Bishop of that see, John Trefnant:⁽¹⁾

'To this I say, wytnessyng God that is in hefen, to my witte and understondyng that I never preschyd, held, ny taught the conclusions and articles the whyche falsly of freres were put upon me, and of lecherouse prestes to the bysschoppe of Lincoln. For I was ordeyned be process, thei seyde, of here lawe by ye byschoppe and hysse commys saryes, so as I deneyd hem, to brynge my purgacion of xiii prestes of gode fame ...' (2)

Buckingham gave him a month to produce this purgation, and meanwhile called upon all who could speak against him to come forward and do so at the time of his purgation.⁽³⁾ When that day came, (probably on the 9th or 10th July) Swynderby appeared with a letter denying his heresy, signed and sealed, not by 'xiii prestes of good fame', but by the Mayor of Leicester (at this time John Stafford)⁽⁴⁾ and twelve burgesses : he also brought with him thirty supporters, probably mainly from Leicester -

'to wyttenes with me, as the Duke of Lancastre knywe and herde, the erle of Derby, and other mony grete that weren that tyme (in) the tone, that I never seyde hem, tauhte hem, ny preschyd hem. Bot when I schulde hafe made my purgacyon there stoden forth fyfe freres or more,⁽⁵⁾ that sum of hem never sawe me byfore ne herde me, and thre lecheres prestes openly knowen ... sum of this thei cleppydden denunciators, and sum weren clepped comprobatours, that weren there falsly forsworne pour-syewyng bysyle and cryinge, with many and other frere with instance, to gif ye dome upon my, to berne my, and bouhten dry wode byfore ... Thei seyden thi hilde my as convictyd, and myhte nohte have forth my purgacyone.'⁽⁶⁾

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1. see Reg. Trefnant pp. 237-244.
 2. ibid. 238.
 3. Wycliffe p. 123.
 4. Leic. Records ii. 447. He had twice before been Mayor, in 1370-71, 1371-2 and was an M.P. for Leicester in 1380 and 1384 (ibid. ii. 461)
 5. Perhaps from the much-insulted houses of Franciscan, Dominican and Augustinian friars in Leicester. See VCH Leics. IV.p.50.
 6. Reg. Trefnant 238-9.

These churchmen may well have been especially enraged by Swynderby's substitution of secular compurgators for the clerical ones demanded by the court. Whether, however, they really intended to burn him, or simply to frighten him into submission, it is difficult to say, for at this point the secular power intervened to save him. The first to appeal for the court's clemency were apparently the men of Leicester, probably meaning the thirty witnesses Swynderby had taken with him : Knighton describes how, threatened with fire, he 'Tunc Flebant sui et palmas et capita ad parietes cum voce lacrimosa jecerunt. Nam plures de villa Leycestrensi qualibet vice comitabantur eum ad ferendum ei auxilium, licet nicassum'.⁽¹⁾ Their appeal failing, John of Gaunt himself, who had supported Swynderby in his hermit days,⁽²⁾ and who -

'Credidit namque eos sanctos dei, propter blanditiem sermonis et vultus, tamen deceptus sicut et multi alii. Hic intervenit apud episcopum pro praedicto Willelmo ut poenam ejus transferret in aliam poenam.' (3)

This put the court in rather an odd position : since Swynderby had never admitted to believing the articles presented against him, he could not logically be asked to recant them :

'So as I fully forsoke hem and never graunted that I seyde hem, over this they maken me swere nevere to holde heme, teche hem, ne preche hem, priveyly ne apertly, and that I schulde go to certeyn churches to revoke the conclusions that I never seyde in sclander of me selfe ... And so for dryde of deth and fleyshly consail that I hadde I assented, and so I dyd.' (4)

He was made to forswear 11 out of the original 16 articles laid against him, the accusation that he had preached against transubstantiation being (significantly) dropped. According to Knighton⁽⁵⁾ and Fasciculi Zizaniorum⁽⁶⁾ he was forced to promise not to hold

1. Knighton ii. 192-3.

2. *ibid.* ii. 120.

3. *ibid.* ii. 193.

4. Reg. Trefnant 239.

5. ii. 196-7.

6. Fasc. Ziz. 337-8.

the following five errors and six heresies:

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| Error | <p>(1) Quod homines possunt debita ex caritate petere, sed nullo modo propter debita aliquem incarcerare.</p> <p>(2) Si parochiani sciverint curatum illorum esse incontinentum et malum debent ab eo subtrahere decimas, et alias sunt fautores criminis et consentientes ejus malis operibus.</p> <p>(3) Quod decimae sunt purae eleemosynae. Et in casu quod curati mali, possunt eas licite aliis conferre</p> <p>(4) Quod curatus malus subditos excommunicans pro decimarum detentione non est nisi ab eis pecuniam indebite et male extorquens.</p> <p>(5) Quod nullus praelatus potest aliquem excommunicare nisi prius sciat ipsum excommunicatum a deo.</p> |
| Heresy | <p>(1) Quod puer non est vere baptizatus si sacerdos baptizans, compater, vel commater, fuerit in peccato mortali.</p> <p>(2) Nullus vivens contra legem dei est sacerdos qualitercumque fuerit ab aliquo episcopo ordinatus in sacerdotem.</p> <p>(3) Quod sacerdos recipiens aliquid pro annuali ex pacto, eo ipso symoniacus est et excommunicans.</p> <p>(4) Quilibet sacerdos potest, habita contritione, quemlibet peccatorem absolvere, et, non obstante prohibitione episcopi, tenetur evangelium populo praedicare.</p> <p>(5) Quilibet sacerdos existens in mortali peccato si ponat se ad conficiendum corpus Christi, potius committit idolatriam quam conficit.</p> <p>(6) Nullus sacerdos in aliquam domum intrat nisi ad male tractandum vxorem, filiam aut ancillam, et ide6 rogabat ut mariti caveant ne sacerdotem aliquem in domum suam intrare permittant.</p> |

Many of these are familiar to us from accounts of Swynderby's preaching⁽¹⁾: we have, however, not yet heard of heresies (2),(4),(5)

1. i.e. Error 1cf. WA.3 supra/Error 2 cf. WA.1/Error 3 cf. WA.2/Error 4 cf. WA.4/Error 5 cf. W.1/Heresy 1 cf. WA.5/Heresy 3 cf. KA.14.

and (6), the last of which sounds like a report by some scandalised clerical observer of one of William's racier sermons. Though Swynderby denied holding or teaching these points, it is obvious from his comments on them written down in 1390⁽¹⁾ that his denial was based on mere quibbles and word-plays. Probably realising this, Buckingham assigned him, on the 11th July, a penance which involved renouncing these 11 articles in the various places in which he was known to have preached - the churches of St. Margaret, St. Martin, and St. Mary in the Newark in Leicester,⁽²⁾ and in the parish churches of Melton Mowbray, Hallaton, Market Harborough and Loughborough. This list (though almost certainly not complete) gives us some idea of his preaching range, extending in a radius of ten to fifteen miles round Leicester.⁽³⁾ Suspicious of Swynderby's intentions, Buckingham sent Stephen Syresham, vicar of Barrow and the bishop's sequestrator, to accompany him on his penitential progress, presumably to make sure that William really did abjure his opinions in every place.⁽⁴⁾

Having completed his penance, according to Knighton, Swynderby returned to Leicester, only to find that his popularity had waned :

'His atque transactis antedictus Willelmus heremita mansit apud Leycestriam apud praedictum capellam tristis et moerens, eo quod hi qui aliquando, dum prospera succederunt, videbantur ejus amici, jam quasi desolatum eum dimittebant non visitando nec consolando, neque ei solitam annonam ministrando. Quia sic eo a praedicatione solita cessante fragor et favor popul erga eum coepit tepescere, et de die in diem magis et magis frigescere, et inde ipse de rita sua fastidire. Sicque infra breve, in se reversus, fugam de villa occulte iniit, et ad villam de Coventria abiit ...' (5)

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1. Reg. Trefnant 238-44.
 2. Where Thomas Bryghtwell was a prebendary by April 1382 Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon p. 266-7 ; H. Thompson, St. Mary in Newarke 231.
 3. Knighton ii. 193-7 : Fasc. Ziz. 336
 4. Knighton ii. 193.
 5. ibid. 197-8.

There we shall attempt to follow his doings in the section on Lollardy in the south-west Midlands. We do not know exactly when he left Leicester, but he was almost certainly still there on the 15th September, 1382, when one Thomas Beeby left forty shillings to 'Willelmus de Swynderby capellanus capello Sancti Johannis Leycestriae'. The will was not proved until February 1384, by which time no alteration or erasure of Swynderby's name had been carried out, so that William may even still have been in the town nearly two years after his trial, though this is unlikely if Knighton's evidence is to be taken at all seriously.

Apart from its dating, Beeby's will⁽¹⁾ is interesting in several other ways. The testator was a man of some note in Leicester, having been Mayor in 1363 and 1368-9, and burgess in Parliament for the city in 1355, 1360 and 1361.⁽²⁾ His will shows us that he was a wealthy mercer, well able to leave several hundred pounds to various charities, and in all probability a member of the important Guild of Corpus Christi. One of his executors, William de Humberston, was to be mayor in 1390-91, and another, his son-in-law Henry de Assheby, was M.P. for Leicester in the year of Swynderby's trial.⁽³⁾ He was, in fact, a very worthwhile supporter.

Beeby's will also shows us, however, that while the rich mercer may have been a supporter of Swynderby as a holy man, he was by no means an upholder of his doctrines. The largest single bequest in the will was for Masses to be said for the soul of the deceased, a practice that Swynderby would almost certainly not have approved,⁽⁴⁾ and which William Smith specifically condemned.⁽⁵⁾ The Leicester

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1. Reg. Buckingham (Lincoln) f. 303-4.
 2. Leic. Records, ii. 133, 143, 461.
 3. *ibid.* ii. 461.
 4. See above, Conclusions W.3, KA.4, KA.5, the last two not certainly Swynderby's.
 5. see below, Conclusion S.11.

lollards, with their views on the necessity of poverty amongst the clergy, ~~are~~^{were} also unlikely to approve of Beeby's wish that certain specified paupers should be given one penny each, while each Canon of St. Mary's should receive 6s. 8d., each vicar thereof 3s. 4d., and each clerk one shilling. Most galling of all to Swynderby and his followers, perhaps, would be the forty shillings which Beeby left to the friars of the town. There is, in fact, nothing, save the name of Swynderby, in Beeby's will to show that he was anything but orthodox, though perhaps a shade more pious than some, in his belief - that he was at very most a mild reformist, and not a revolutionary. One wonders to what extent Beeby's point of view was shared by the men of Leicester who risked excommunication to hear Swynderby preach, and who accompanied him to his trial in 1382. Bishop Buckingham seems to have thought them harmless enough, for, having succeeded in (at least temporarily) silencing Swynderby, the Bishop seems to have taken no action against his followers or sympathisers.

In the early spring of 1384, however, Buckingham proceeded against a heretical preacher in a more southerly part of his diocese. This was John Corynham, a fellow of Merton College, Oxford⁽¹⁾ (and a contemporary there of the lollards John Aston and William James)⁽²⁾ who had been appointed to the college's living of Diddington, a village half-way between Huntingdon and St. Neots.⁽³⁾ When he began preaching lollard doctrines is unknown, but certainly he had been arrested and tried by 9th March 1384. On that date the bishop

1. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. i, 494.

2. ibid. i. 67, ii. 1012

3. Early Rolls of Merton College (O.H.S., N.S. XVIII) p. 45.

issued a commission to the Archdeacon of Huntingdon, the rural deans of Huntingdon and St. Neots, and the vicars of the parishes adjacent to Diddington, in which he informed them that Corynham had been excommunicated for publicly preaching errors and heresies, but that he had now agreed to abjure the conclusions that he had taught. The commissioners, therefore, were to see that Corynham made a public abjuration at Huntingdon during Mass on the following Sunday, and that on the three succeeding Sundays he made similar retractations at Diddington, St. Neots and nearby Southoe : when this had been done they were to send a written report to the Bishop. (1)

It seems probably, therefore, that Corynham had taught in Huntingdon, in St. Neots, and in many of the villages between : the content of his preaching is known to us from the nine articles of heresy that he was to abjure.

- JC.1 In sacramento altaris non videtur corpus christi verum set signum tantum eiusdem ac species et figura nec est christus in e(o)dem sacramento ydemptice vere realiter et in presencia personali.
- JC.2 Item quod liceat sibi et alii cuicumque presbitero predicare verbum dei absque auctoritate sedis apostolice vel episcopi loci seu alia de qua sufficienter constet.
- JC.3 Item quod ita est l(icit)um quod quod (sic) duo simul existancium obtinentes dignitatem papalem quorum uterque simul sit papa sicut est licitum quod duo sint simul presbyteri et sacerdotes.
- JC.4 Item quod antepapa est coadiutor domini nostri pape Urbani sexti.
- JC.5 Item quod diabolus est coadiutor eius et eciam dei.

1. Reg. Buckingham (Lincoln) ff. 271-2.

- JC.6 Item quod non licet iuxta sacram scripturam domino episcopo Norwycensi exequi negocium cruciate in forma sibi commissa.
- JC.7 Item quod nullo casu liceat ei nec alicui in negocio cruciate proficiscenti occidere scismaticum vel hereticum.
- JC.8 Item quod nulli liceat pro defensione sue persone non volens mortem aliter evitare interficere aliquem volentem eum occidere set tenetur permittere se interface ab eodem.
- JC.9 Item quod omnes et quicumque concedentes aut solventes Regi subsidium pro guerris extra regnum Anglie faciendis sint eo ipso excommunicati.

Article one, concerning remanence, and article two, concerning unlicensed preaching, were both very widely held lollard views, and can both be directly traced to the teachings of Wycliffe, whom Corynham had probably known at Oxford.⁽¹⁾ The remainder of the conclusions, however, are more political than theological. Articles three to five all concern the Great Schism : article three, that two men might be Pope at the same time, is not found elsewhere, and is probably Corynham's own, but articles four and five may be related to Wycliffe's theories that no Pope should be recognised after Urban VI⁽²⁾ and that God ought to obey the Devil.⁽³⁾ Corynham's disapproval of Bishop Despenser of Norwich's "crusade", expressed in articles six and seven, was shared by a number of other lollards, including John Aston (who preached a sermon against the crusade at Gloucester in September 1383)⁽⁴⁾ William Swynderby,⁽⁵⁾ and Walter Brute.⁽⁶⁾ His extreme pacifism, expressed in the view

1. Fasc. Ziz. 277-9.

2. Ibid. 279.

3. ibid. 278.

4. See below p. 218-9, also Fasc. Ziz. p. 366.

5. See below p. 165.

6. See below p. 174.

that a man ought to allow himself to be killed rather than defend himself, is more difficult to parallel, being found elsewhere only in the teachings of Ralph Mungyn during the 1420's.⁽¹⁾

Corynham's views, then, were both highly individual and (in some directions at least) extreme. What effect his teaching had on the people of the Huntingdon area is unknown, but no further case of heresy is known to have occurred there until 1405, some thirty years later.⁽²⁾ After his abjuration, Corynham was allowed to return to Diddington, where he remained until 1388⁽³⁾; he apparently never relapsed into heresy, and after occupying a number of other livings he died in 1444 as registrar of the Order of the Garter and a prebendary of Windsor.⁽⁴⁾ In his unregenerate youth, however, it is probably that he should be ranked with Hereford, Repingdon and Aston amongst that select band of Oxford Wycliffites who were so instrumental in the dissemination of early lollardy.

Little is known for certain about the doings of the Leicester lollards in the years immediately following the trial of William Swynderby in 1382, but there are a number of indications that heretics continued to be active there. On the 19th September 1385 William Whytsyde (a bailiff of Ashby-de-la-Zouche on the Leicestershire-Staffordshire border) who may well have been a lollard, was signified as an obdurate excommunicate.⁽⁵⁾ Shortly

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1. See below p. 539.
 2. See below, pp. 114-5.
 3. CPR 1385-9 p. 398.
 4. Emden, Bioq. Reg. Oxon. i. 494.
 5. C85/108/14.

afterwards he was imprisoned in Leicester gaol, but his gaoler allowed him to wander at large about the town and to visit churches, where he was said to have infected many people with his "disease". This seems most likely to have been heresy, for on 7th November Bishop Buckingham ordered Whytesyde and his supporters to be excommunicated, and cited them to appear before his commissaries : the gaoler was ordered to keep Whytesyde in close confinement, and was himself threatened with excommunication if he failed to do so.⁽¹⁾ Save that Whytesyde was still excommunicate in January 1386,⁽²⁾ nothing further is known about this case, but the enthusiasm with which the bailiff's doctrines were apparently received gives the impression that heresy still found favour in Leicester, and this is reinforced by two events which occurred in 1387.

In January of that year the borough authorities were ordered to keep a watch for Nicholas Hereford, the greatest of Wycliffe's Oxford disciples, who was suspected of being in the area and who was in fact arrested in Nottingham shortly afterwards⁽³⁾: whether Hereford actually came to Leicester, however, is uncertain. Later in the year another suspected heretic certainly did visit the town, in the person of the apostate Austin friar William Pateshull, whom the Leicester authorities were ordered to arrest in July 1387.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Reg. Buckingham f. 315.
 2. C85/108/17
 3. CPR 1385-9 pp. 208, 316. See above, p. 6.
 4. CPR 1385-9 p. 386, for Pateshull see below pp. 443-4.

The continuing existence of a Leicester lollard congregation is confirmed beyond all doubt by the events of 1388 and 1389. At this time, according to Knighton :

'florescunt et increscunt Wycliviani ... et erroribus suis abundant et inedicibiliter in eis ripescent nec in eis adhuc erubescunt, sed tamen impetuositate clamosa aliqualicumque tabescunt' (1)

He claims that Lollards were active in Parliament, though their views were now extremely unpopular both there and everywhere else : and he then gives a list of 25 conclusions held by them -

(KB.1) Quod papa modernus Urbanus sextus non gerit vices beati Petri in terris sed est filius Antichristi, nec erat verus papa a tempore sancti Silvestri.

(KB.2) Quod papa non potest concedere aliquas indulgentias nec episcopi quicumque, et quod omnes confidentes in hujusmodi indulgentias sunt maledicti

(KB.3) Quod papa non potest condere canones decretales seu constitutiones, et si quos condiderit nullus tenetur eos observare.

1. Knighton ii. 260.

- (KB.4) Quod ex sola cordis contritione deletur omne peccatum absque oris confessione, nec requiritur oris confessio etiam ubi copia sacerdotum haberi poterit.
- (KB.5) Quod imagines crucifixi, beatæ Mariæ⁽¹⁾ Virginis aliorumque sanctorum nullo modo sunt venerandæ, immo ipsas vel picturas aliquas quomodolibet venerantes peccant et idolatriam committunt, et quod deus non facit aliqua miracula per illas, et quod omnes facientes peregrinationes⁽²⁾ ad ipsas, vel eas aliquo modo adorantes, lumen vel alias devotiones coram ipsis imaginibus exhibentes, sunt maledicti.
- (KB.6) Quod non tenet⁽³⁾ neque ligat excommunicatio papæ vel episcopi.
- (KB.7) Quod non est supplicandum sanctis orare pro viventibus, nec dicenda est letania, affirmant enim deum omnia facere, ipsos nil facere posse quos sanctos vocamus. Sed multos eorum predicant esse in inferno quorum festa celebrantur.
- (KB.8) Quod non est decimandum rectori existenti in mortali peccato. Nec oblationes⁽⁴⁾ aut donationes pecuniales sunt faciendæ in purificationibus mulierum, nec in celebrationibus missarum pro defunctis.
- (KB.9) Quod presbyteri et diaconi quicumque tenentur et debent populo publice prædicare ratione ordinis suscepti, licet populum non habeant nec curam animarum.
- (KB.10) Quod papa, cardinales, archiepiscopi, episcopi, archidiaconi, decani, officiales, utique omnes personæ majores ecclesiæ sunt maledicti.
- (KB.11) Quod nullus intrabit regnum caelorum nisi omnibus renuntiaverit ea dando pauperibus, solum deum sequendo, modo ipsorum.
- (KB.12) Quod vir vel mulier offerendo sacerdoti denarium petendo pro ipso missam celebrari, tam ille quam sacerdos sic recipiens sunt maledicti.
- (KB.13) Quod omnia inter clericos debent esse communia.
- (KB.14) Quod est contra sacram scripturam quod clerici habeant possessiones temporales.

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1. Mariæ om. A.
2. peregrinationes om. MS.
3. non ligat neque tenet MS
4. oblationes MS.

- (KB.15) Quod divina officia non sunt cantanda cum nota, et quod deus non delectatur in hujusmodi cantu.
- (KB.16) Quod non licet aliquo modo jurare. Nota ibi isti firmandis, nam sequela cujuslibet dicti eorum talis erat, I am sykyr, (1) It is soth, vel sic, Withoute (2) doute (3) it is so.
- (KB.17) Quod illud quod fuit panis ante consecrationem in sacramento altaris, post consecrationem non est corpus Christi, sed signum rei, non ipsa res.
- (KB.18) Quod quilibet presbyter existens in peccato mortali non conficit neque baptizat nec confert aliquod sacramentum.
- (KB.19) Quod non potius orandum est in ecclesia quam alibi.
- (KB.20) Quod festa sanctorum, scilicet Stephani, Laurentii, Margaretae, Katerinae, et aliorum sanctorum non sunt colenda neque celebranda, eo quod nescitur, ut dicunt, utrum sunt damnati vel non, nec (4) credendum est neque standum eorum canonizationi et approbationi dictorum sanctorum factae per curiam Romanam in hac parte.
- (KB.21) Quod sancta Trinitas nullo modo est figuranda, formanda nec depingenda in ~~ea~~ forma qua communiter depingitur per totam ecclesiam.
- (KB.22) Quod nullus rector vel vicarius aut A.D. 1388 praelatus aliquis excusatur a personali residentia facienda in suis, beneficiis commorando in obsequiis episcoporum, archiepiscopi seu papae.
- (KB.23) Non licet presbytero locare operas suas.
- (KB.24) Quod rectores et vicarii non celebrantes nec ministrantes sacramenta ecclesiastica etiam removendi et alii loco eorum instituendi, quia indigni sunt et dissipatores bonorum ecclesiae.
- (KB.25) Quod viri ecclesiastici non deberent tam validis incedere equis, nec uti tantis jocalibus, vestibus pretiosis aut prandiis delicatis, sed omnibus renunciare et dare ea pauperibus, pedibusque incedentes accipientesque baculos in manibus formam pauperum suscipientes aliis dando exempla per conversationem.

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1. sykur, MS.
 2. Withouten MS.
 3. douzte MS.
 4. nec neque, MS.

Knighton gives us no provenance for these articles, so that we do not know whether the chronicler copied them from a written source or an eye-witness account, and whether they were promulgated on a national level or only in Leicester. They are far more extreme than anything we have so far seen, their main bias lying in the direction of a puritanism which is almost seventeenth century in character : particular targets are the Papacy, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, any kind of clerical possessions, images, pilgrimages and church ceremony. Their ideal church is one without riches or ornament, composed of simple poor priests. No special reference can be made to Swynderby's preaching before 1382, but there are a number of anticipations of the views of William Smith declared in 1389, and, more strikingly, of tenets held by lollards in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire in ¹³⁹³1395, 1414 and later. It seems likely that these conclusions emanated from Leicester, possibly being the work of Smith or one of his disciples, and formed the basis on which later popular Lollardy (and 'popular' should here be emphasised) in the south-east Midlands was founded. There is little or no evidence, either in the rolls of parliament or the lists of members, for Knighton's contention that the lollards were active during the two parliaments of 1388. There is, however, more truth in his subsequent statement⁽¹⁾ that the Lords and Commons were shocked by the proceedings of the heretics, and petitioned the King to act against them : certainly a number of royal commissions directed against the lollards were issued in March 1388, during the session of the so-called "Merciless Parliament".⁽²⁾

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1. Knighton ii. 263-4.
 2. e.g. CCR. 1385-9 p. 430.

It was perhaps as a result of this upsurge of anti-Lollard activity that a local knight, Sir Thomas Latimer (who held land in the Leicestershire villages of Gumley, Langton, Smeeton Westerby and Foxton, as well as in Northamptonshire)⁽¹⁾ was summoned to appear before the royal council on the 2nd May, 'cum certis libris et quaternis in custodia sua existentibus de erronia et perversa doctrina fidei catholice, ut dicitur'.⁽²⁾ We shall have cause to study Latimer more closely below : the outcome of his appearance before the council is not known, but it may have been no coincidence that a royal commission was issued three weeks later to investigate heresy in the town of Leicester.⁽³⁾

By the terms of this commission, a former Wycliffite sympathiser Thomas Bryghtwell, now Dean of St. Mary in the Newarke, William Chesulden, prebendary and subsequently Dean of the same college,⁽⁴⁾ Sir Richard Barowe and Robert Langham, were to seize any books or quires containing the works of Wyclif, Hereford or Aston, and to make proclamation forbidding keeping, writing, or sell such, or holding the opinions contained therein. Anyone continuing to hold heretical beliefs after this proclamation was to be at once confined to the nearest prison, and all civic and other authorities were ordered to aid Bryghtwell in carrying this out. Unfortunately we know nothing of the results of the commission's investigations : William Smith and his followers, however, appear to have been untouched.

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1. PRO Inquisitiones Post Mortem. iii. p. 275.
 2. E403/519/4. Waugh ('The Lollard Knights' in Scottish Historical Review XI pp. 72, 91) thought that Latimer, a J.P., had confiscated these books from local lollards, but his later record makes it far more likely that they belonged to him.
 3. GPR 1385-9 p. 468; Knighton ii. 263-4.
 4. St. Mary in the Newarke, p. 232.

Their turn came in October of the following year, 1389, when the fervently anti-Lollard Archbishop of Canterbury, William Courtenay, appeared in Leicester in the course of his metropolitan visitation. There, at St. Mary's Abbey on either the 30th or the 31st October,⁽¹⁾ the 'probiores viros, tam ecclesiasticis, quam laicos, villae Leycestrensis' denounced to him eight heretics living in the town. Of those denounced, we have already come across William Smith and Richard Waytstathe, chaplain : the other six were Roger Dexter,⁽²⁾ Nicholas Taylor, Michael Scryvener, John Harry, William Parchmener and Roger Goldsmyth. These, with many others whose names and persons were unknown, were said to have held and taught the following tenets :

- (S.1) Quod in sacramento altaris post verba consecracionis remanet simul Corpus Christi, cum pane materiali.
- (S.2) Quod decimae non debent solvi rectoribus vel vicariis, quamdiu sunt in mortali peccato.
- (S.3) Quod imagines non debent aliquo modo venerari, nec luminaria coram eis apponi.
- (S.4) Quod nulla crux est veneranda.
- (S.5) Quod missae et matutinae non debent cum nota seu alta voce in ecclesia dici.
- (S.6) Quod curatus, vel alius presbyter aliquo crimine irretitus, non potest consecrare, vel confessiones audire, nec aliqua sacramenta ecclesiastica ministrare.
- (S.7) Quod papa et praelati ecclesiae non possunt aliquem excommunicationis sententiae ligare, nisi prius sciant excommunicatam a Deo.
- (S.8) Quod nullus ecclesiae praelatus potest indulgentias impertiri.
- (S.9) Quod quilibet laicus potest sancta evangelia ubique praedicare et docere.

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- 1. The record is confused on this point. Reg. Courtenay (Cantuar) f. 139.
 - 2. Who may possibly be identifiable with the man of that name who was M.P. for Leicester in 1406.

(S.10) Quod est peccatum aliquid fratribus Praedicatoribus, Minoribus, Augustinensibus aut Carmelitis charitable conferre.

(S.11) Quod oblationes non sunt faciendae in obsequiis mortuorum.

(S.12) Quod peccatorum confessio facienda sacerdoti non est necessaria; et quod quilibet bonus homo, licet literaturam nesciat, est sacerdos.

Though Swynderby's preaching has obviously influenced these conclusions,⁽¹⁾ a closer parallel will be found in the unattributed conclusions which Knighton claims were promulgated in 1388,⁽²⁾ and which we have already noted^{as} possibly another version of Smith's doctrines. What is completely new in the 1389 articles is the concept that laymen could preach and teach, and that every good man, though unlearned, was a priest : this idea, of course, would have been considered more revolutionary and also more dangerous to the church than the heresies about the sacraments. Even the heretics of the diocese of Salisbury, who were said in this year to have taken upon themselves the power of ordination,⁽³⁾ apparently recognised a distinction between clergy and laymen which Smith and his followers (if their accusers are to be believed) did not.

Having heard the denunciations of Smith and his followers, the Archbishop 'cupiens oves errantes ad viam reducere Veritatis', summoned them by special messenger⁽⁴⁾ to appear before him. The lollards, however, 'cupientes potius intenebris ambulare quam luce' betook themselves to hiding. On the following day, therefore, the 1st November, 'hora vesperarum',⁽⁵⁾ Courtenay summoned together all

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1. S.2 cf. WA.1; S.6 cf. Heresy 5; S.7 cf. W.1; S.10 cf. K.10.
 2. S.2 cf. KB.8; S.3, 4 cf. KB.5; S.5 cf. KB.15; S.6 cf. KB.18; S.8 cf. KB.2; S.12 cf. KB.4.
 3. Hist. Anglic. 188-9; Mon.Evesham 113-4; Reg. Waltham (Sarum) ff 31-2 see below p.323⁴.
 4. Presumably to St. John's Chapel.
 5. Knighton. ii. 312.

the canons of St. Mary's, and from the high altar of that abbey solemnly denounced all who held, taught or followed the doctrines mentioned above, and anyone who helped or supported heretics. All such were then publicly excommunicated with full ceremony 'pulsatis campanis, candelis accensis et extinctis, ac in terram projectis, cruce etiam in manibus erecta'.⁽¹⁾

Not content with this general excommunication, the Archbishop summoned before him early in the morning of the 2nd November, 'omnes et singulos ecclesiasticos, curatos et laicos, fide digniores communitatis villae Leycestriae', and set up a tribunal consisting of the Vicars of All Saints, St. Margaret's and St. Mary's churches, William Soxton and William Torsyngton priests, and Geoffrey Clerk, Roger Belgrave and Richard Burgh, townsmen.⁽²⁾ These claimed that Smith and the others were well-known heretics : 'super praemissis adeo notorie laborantes, quod nulla poterant tergiversatione celari'.⁽³⁾ Accordingly, Courtenay excommunicated them by name, circulating the excommunication to every parish priest in the town for publication : perhaps suspecting continuing sympathy for the lollards in Leicester, he also put an interdict on the town until they were taken.

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1. Reg. Courtenay (Cantuar) f. 139.
 2. Clerk : Mayor 1391-2; Burgess in Parliament. 1384, 1388, (twice), 1390, 1391, 1394 : Roger Belgrave : Burgess in Parliament 1360, 1368, 1377, 1383; Mayor 1364-5. (Leic. Records ii. 447-8, 461). Burgh appears to have been a lesser person. One wonders if the presence of these townsmen on the tribunal indicates a general change of attitude towards lollardy in Leicester, but such an assumption cannot safely be made.
 3. Reg. Courtenay (Cantuar) f. 139.

On the same day (or, according to Knighton, on the previous one)⁽¹⁾ the Archbishop saw another suspected heretic, an anchoress called Matilda who had her cell at St. Peter's church, and who was suspected of being infected with Lollard doctrine : upon questioning, 'potius sophisticæ respondebat', with the result that Courtenay ordered her to be imprisoned at St. Mary's until the 6th, when she was to appear before him at Northampton to purge herself of error. This she succeeded in doing, and was allowed to return to her cell.⁽²⁾

What happened after Courtenay had left Leicester on the 2nd is not absolutely clear. As Mr. Crompton says:⁽³⁾ 'Of five out of the nine⁽⁴⁾ Lollards denounced ... we do not know how, or indeed if, they made their peace. It may be that they were not under so much suspicion as the other four, and that on promises of good behaviour in the future, supported by their friends, they were allowed to make their peace in Leicester. On the other hand, the record may simply have been lost'. Smith, Waytstathe, Dexter and his wife, however, had still not appeared by November 7th, when Courtenay, in Towcester, ordered the Leicester civil authorities to arrest them.⁽⁵⁾ Within six days⁽⁶⁾ they had appeared, probably under arrest, and on the 17th November Courtenay assigned a penance to Smith and the Dexters.⁽⁷⁾ Waytstathe had also recanted by that time, and was

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1. Knighton ii. 312
 2. Which she did, according to Knighton ii. 312, in December.
 3. Crompton op. cit. p. 24.
 4. i.e. William Smith, Waytstathe, Taylor, Scryvener, Harry, Parchmener, Goldsmyth and the two Dexters.
 5. Reg. Courtenay (Cantuar) f. 142.
 6. *ibid.* f. 143, 13th November
 7. *ibid.* f. 144.

restored to the church : we do not know what penance, if any, was imposed on him.⁽¹⁾

Smith and the Dexters, on the first Sunday after their return from the Archbishop's presence, were to appear in the procession at the church of St. Mary-in-the-Newarke, 'Willelmus et Rogerus camisiis et braccis, ipsa vero Alicia sola camisia induti, nudis pedibus et capitibus, dictus Willelmus cum imagine sanctae Catherinae, praefati vero Rogerus et Alicia cum imaginibus crucifixi, et singuli eorum cum singulis cereis ... easdem imagines trina vice, in principio processionis hujusmodi, in medio, et in fine, ad laudem crucifixi, et memoriam passionis suae, ipsiusque virginis honorem genuflectando.'⁽²⁾ They were then to stand in front of the crucifix during Mass. On the following Sunday they were to process round the market place in the same way, Smith 'quod aliquali literatura est instructus' chanting the office of St. Catharine, and the Dexters, who were illiterate, saying Paters and Aves. Finally, on the third Sunday, they were to repeat the process in their own parish churches. The vigour of the penance was slightly ameliorated in that - 'propter nimium frigus aeris et temporei jam instantis' - they were allowed to dress on the way to their penances, so long as their heads and feet were bare.

The details of the penance are interesting in that they illustrate that the Leicester heretics' greatest offence was perhaps considered to be irreverence to images, a view that we shall find to be widespread amongst the lollards of the south-east Midlands indicted in 1414. Knighton⁽³⁾ reminds us that Smith carried an image of

1. Reg. Courtenay (Cantuar) f. 145.

2. *ibid.* f. 144.

3. Knighton ii. 313. Knighton tells this story as happening before the advent of Swynderby (ii. 182-183) in 1382, but the event may well have occurred between 1382-9. If it were indeed well known in 1382, one wonders why Buckingham did not persecute Smith as well as Swynderby.

St. Catharine because of the scandal that he and Waytstathe had caused by chopping up an old image of that saint, which they found in St. John's chapel, in order to obtain firewood to cook some cabbages. They were said to have joked that their fire would martyr her anew, and that they would only worship the image if blood flowed from it : this, and their reference to two well-known images of the Virgin as the 'wyche of Lincolne' and the 'wyche of Walsyngham', had gained them a local notoriety, and a verse quoted by Knighton⁽¹⁾ had been composed on the subject. The Archbishop wanted to make it obvious to the men of Leicester that such irreverence would not be allowed to go scot-free.

Knighton also tells us that Smith was forced to hand over his collection of books, which included 'in materna lingua de evangelio, et de epistolis et aliis episcopiis' which he had been laboriously compiling for the last eight years.⁽²⁾

After the 1389 persecution, Knighton informs us,

'in magna parte publica audacia profanae doctrinae Lollardorum sive Wyclivianorum - timore potius archiepiscopi quam amore dei repressa est, cordis tamen perseverantia in antiquis delusionibus adhuc in occultis prout audebant pullulante nimis' (3)

With the Leicester lollards temporarily quiescent, we turn to what appears at first sight to be a completely unconnected outbreak of heresy which occurred, nine months before Courtenay's visitation of

1. Knighton ii. 183-4.

2. *ibid.* ii. 313 i.e. since 1381 : but he may not have been a heretic all this time. There are no grounds, however, for assuming with Deanesly, *Lollard Bible* p. 232 that William Smith's books were lollard translations of the bible emanating from Lutterworth. If Smith had been copying them for eight years, he must have been doing so since 1381, before translation began. Deanesly's statement on p. 275 that copying had begun in 1384 is based on her acceptance of Knighton's date (1392) for Smith's trial.

3. Knighton ii. 313.

Leicester, in Chipping Warden, a remote village in south-west Northamptonshire, near that county's borders with Warwickshire and Oxfordshire. Closely connected with this case was Sir Thomas Latimer, one of the most important (if not the most important) early patron of heresy in the South-East Midlands. In view of its importance to the subject, we must now digress slightly, in order to give a brief account of Sir Thomas' life and the events that led up to his involvement with the Chipping Warden Lollards.⁽¹⁾

Sir Thomas was born at Braybrooke, in Northamptonshire near the Leicestershire border, in September 1341, the third son of Sir Warin Latimer and his wife Katharine, daughter of John Lord de la Warr.⁽²⁾ His two elder brothers dying, he inherited all his father's lands in 1362.⁽³⁾ These consisted of lands in the south-east Leicestershire manors of East Langton, Foxton, Gumley and Smeeton Westerby, in the Market Harborough area,⁽⁴⁾ and extensive lands in Northamptonshire including the manors of Braybrooke and Chipping Warden : by his death in 1401 he had added considerably to his landed property,⁽⁵⁾ both in these counties and elsewhere. Many of these additions, especially property in Staffordshire and Shropshire, may have come to him on his marriage, at some time between 1360 and 1366, to Anne, daughter of John Beysin of Ashley, Staffordshire, a lady in waiting to Princess Joan, wife of the Black Prince.⁽⁶⁾

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1. For a fuller account of Latimer see McFarlane Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights pp. 145, 148, 161-2, 166-7, 171-3, 174 n., 175-6, 179, 181, 193-7, 207-19, 211, 215.
 2. Cal. IPM XI Nos. 108, 109, 378; Bridges. Northants i.p. 113
 3. CCR 1360-64 p. 371.
 4. Cal. IPM XI No. 109; VCH Leics. V. 196, 199.
 5. PRO. Inquisitiones post mortem iii. pp. 275, 281.
 6. Cal. Pap. Letters IV. 54.

Latimer saw extensive military service abroad : in 1366-7 he was serving with the Black Prince in France and Spain, and in 1367 and 1369 he was in Aquitaine.⁽¹⁾ In 1373-4, accompanied by his brother Edward and a small retinue, he was with John of Gaunt in France,⁽²⁾ and he was again abroad with Sir John Cheyne in 1378.⁽³⁾ During the same period he was frequently employed on royal commissions relating to Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, and in 1377 he was an M.P. for the former county⁽⁴⁾; his employment by the government, however, ceased abruptly in 1385, either because of illness or old age or possibly because his adherence to lollardy was becoming well-known.

In addition to his activities abroad and in local government, Latimer was also closely connected with the group of Richard II's courtiers known as the "Lollard Knights".⁽⁵⁾ We have already seen that he was associated with one of these men, Sir John Cheyne, in 1378, and by 1385 he appears to have been a member of Princess Joan's household, whose ranks also included Sir Richard Stury, Sir Lewis Clifford, Sir John Clanvowe and Sir William Neville, all members of the group.⁽⁶⁾ Latimer's name is also connected with the group in many private transactions. In 1390, he was associated with Sir Lewis Clifford, Sir John Montagu and others in making a recognisance in the sum of

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1. Dugdale, Baronage ii. 33; Foedera iii. pt. ii. p. 857; Carte. Gascon Rolls i. 155.
 2. John of Gaunt's Register 1371-6 i. p. 34.
 3. Carte, op. cit. ii. 124.
 4. CPR 1370-74 p. 474, 1377-81 p. 51, 1381-5 pp. 84, 246, 252, 254, 358, 421, 496, 505, 590, 593; CFR VIII p. 389, XI p. 163; CCR 1374-7 pp. 432, 536, 1381-5 p. 636.
 5. see K. B. McFarlane, Lollard Knights, pp. 138-231; Waugh, 'The Lollard Knights', Scottish Hist. Review XI pp. 55-92.
 6. CCR 1381-5 p. 553; Testamenta Vetusta p. 14.

20,000 marks to the Archbishop of Canterbury and other bishops.⁽¹⁾ Three years later Clifford enfeoffed Latimer, Montagu and Sir John Cheyne of his manor and lordship of Ewyas Harold in the Welsh March, with all its appurtenant lands in Somerset and Wiltshire.⁽²⁾ In 1395 Latimer was again associated with Clifford and Stury as Sir John Pavely's feoffee for Westperry, Northants, and with Cheyne and Montagu as Clifford's feoffee for Hickling, Norfolk.⁽³⁾ Other documents indicate that the connections continued until Latimer's death.⁽⁴⁾

Latimer's association with the "Lollard Knights" may have originated during his military service under the Black Prince (whom most of the others had also followed) or else during his period in the household of the Prince's widow. Kinship may also have played a part, for Latimer was distantly related to Clifford's wife, Eleanor de la Warr.⁽⁵⁾ Despite his close links with the "Lollard Knights", however, Latimer's career differed markedly from those of other members of the group. Unlike them, his connections with the court were never strong, and they ended altogether in 1385 : also unlike them, he never served as a diplomat. Finally, whereas most of the Lollard Knights owed their lands and revenues to a series of royal grants, Latimer received few of these, and held his estates by hereditary right and by marriage.⁽⁶⁾

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1. CCR 1389-92 p. 108. The undertaking for which the recognisance was surety is unknown, but it is unlikely that lollardy was involved.
 2. CPR 1391-6 p. 227.
 3. CPR 1413-16 p. 138; Ms. Magdalen College Oxford, Hickling 109.
 4. CPR 1399-1401 pp. 200, 207; CCR 1399-1402 p. 117.
 5. Cal. IPM XI p. 169; Beltz, Memorials of the Garter p. 260; K. B. McFarlane, unpublished papers at Magdalen College, Oxford.
 6. McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 166-7, 171-3.

This, then, is Sir Thomas Latimer's background : we must now turn to the evidence for his heresy. Firstly, we find him as we might expect, accused with the other Lollard Knights in the chronicles. In Walsingham's Historia Anglicana, and related chronicles he is mentioned as one of those who supported heresy in 1387, at the time of the Pateshull affair:

'Erant autem milites qui hanc sectam coluerunt quam maxime et sustenaverunt, Willelmus Nevile, Lodowicus Clifford, Johannes Clanvowe, Ricardus Stury, Thomas Latymer, et, inter caeteros major fatuus, Johannes Mountagu'. (1)

The same chronicles name Latimer as one of the foremost knightly supporters of the 12 Lollard conclusions said to have been promulgated in the Parliament of 1395.

'Inter quos campi-ductores fuerunt Ricardus Stury, Lodewicus de Clifford, Thomas Latymer, Johannes de Monte Acuto, qui instigabant et confortabant haereticos, ad confudendum si posse daretur, praecipue religiosos' (2)

The Lollard Knights, then and their activities, had become notorious enough around London to attract the attention of the St. Alban's Chronicler. What is perhaps more interesting and important to us is that Latimer and some of the others were also accused of heresy in another, and entirely unrelated, chronicle, that of the Leicester canon Knighton : describing the Lollards led by William Smith in Leicester, under the general date of 1382, (3) he tells us: (4)

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1. Hist. Anglic. ii. 159 : related accounts in Ypodigma Neustriae p. 348; Chron. Angl. p. 377; Mon Evesham p. 80-83.
 2. Hist. Anglic. ii. 216; Annales. Ric. II p. 174.
 3. Which cannot here be taken as having any chronological authority.
 4. Knighton ii. 181-2.

'Erant etiam milites dominus Thomas Latymer, dominus Johannes Trussell, dominus Iodowycus Clifford, dominus Johannes Pecche, dominus Ricardus Stury, dominus Reginaldus de Hilton, cum ducibus et comitibus. Isti erant praecipue eis adhaerentes et in omnibus eos faventes. Isti erant hujus sectae promotores strenuissimi, et propugnatores fortissimi; erantque defensatores validissimi et invincibiles protractatores'

'Cumque aliquis pseudo praedicator ad partes alicujus istorum militum se diverteret praedicationis causa, incontinenti cum omni promptitudine populum patriae convocare et ad certum locum vel ecclesiam cum ingenti sollicitudine congregare satagebat ad audiendum voces eorum licet invitos, resistere tamen vel contradicere non audentes, acsi cum propheta clamaret et diceret, Si eum audire nolueritis, et me ad iracundiam provocaveritis, gladiis devorabit vos.'

'Si quis vos non audiet, vel contra vos aliquid dixerit, eximite gladium et eum percutite, aut lingua mordaci famum ejus vulnerate.'

What are we to make of Knighton's list of 'Lollard Knights'?

It is certainly more interesting than Walsingham's, for apart from the three courtiers, Latimer, Clifford and Stury, we get the names of three far more obscure figures, Trussell, Pecche, and Hilton. More detailed research reveals that five of the six (no definition identification of Hilton can be made)⁽¹⁾ were more or less local men, with land near Leicester or one of the granges or properties of Leicester Abbey. We have already noticed this in Latimer's case : Stury had the manor and advowson of Barnwell All Saints, in Northamptonshire⁽²⁾; Trussell held, at one time or another, extensive lands in Northamptonshire, three manors in Leicestershire, and Solihull ~~in~~

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1. K. B. McFarlane (Lollard Knights pp. 151-2) identifies Reynold Hilton not as a knight but as a clerk, who began his career (like the Lollard Knights) in the service of the Black Prince and later became Controller of the Royal Household for Richard II.
 2. Bridges, Northants ii. 24; VCH Northants iii. pp. 174-5.

in Warwickshire.⁽¹⁾ Pecche's lands were in Warwickshire, but included Dunchurch on the Leicestershire border,⁽²⁾ and Fenny Compton and Wormleighton, only a few miles from Chipping Warden.⁽³⁾ Clifford, apart from being, as we shall see, closely connected with Latimer, was described in 1379 as 'of Leicestershire'.⁽⁴⁾ Knighton's suspicions were therefore probably based on local rumour rather than simply gleaned from Walsingham, with a few local examples tacked on for good measure : in Latimer's case, as we shall see, his suspicions were amply justified, and many others shared his views on Stury and Clifford. What, then, of Trussell and Pecche?

Sir John Trussell⁽⁵⁾ must have been a fairly well-known figure in both Northamptonshire and Leicestershire : the son of Sir Theobald Trussell of Flore, Northants, he held extensive lands in both counties. He sat as an M.P. for Northamptonshire in 1403 and November 1414,⁽⁶⁾ and also served on a few royal commissions, though not as many as might be expected in one of his standing.⁽⁷⁾ This lack of government employment may well be explained by the fact that he seems to have been a violent and lawless man : he was frequently

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1. He held lands at Flore, Scaldwell, Collyweston, Gayton, and Great Creaton in Northants, at Nevill Holt, Theddingworth and Bringhurst, all in Leics., and at Solihull, Warwicks. Bridges, Northants i. 263-4, 507, 562-3, ii. 126, 434; Baker, Northants 154; VCH. Leics. V. pp. 244, 315; Nichols, Leics. II pt. ii. p. 511; VCH Warwicks. IV p. 218.
 2. Cal. IPM XIV p. 278; VCH. Warwicks. vi pp. 80-81.
 3. VCH. Warwicks ii. p. 121, iv. p. 83, v. pp. 48, 221.
 4. CFR IX p. 167.
 5. For a fuller account of Trussell (not, however, including some of the points made below) see McFarlane Lollard Knights pp. 152-8.
 6. Official Returns pp. 265, 283.
 7. CPR 1381-5 p. 590, 1402-5 p. 137, 1408-13 p. 109.

charged with trespasses and assaults, ⁽¹⁾ twice outlawed for debt, ⁽²⁾ once imprisoned in the Tower, ⁽³⁾ and on another occasion summoned before the royal council 'to answer certain matters touching the government'. ⁽⁴⁾ He also conducted a number of personal feuds, ⁽⁵⁾ including one with Lord Strange of Knockyn, which culminated (in 1417) in a murderous attack on Trussell as he knelt at vespers in the church of St. Dunstan-in-the-East, London. ⁽⁶⁾ Apart from Knighton's accusation, however, there is little direct evidence that Trussell was a heretic, and he certainly does not seem to have been involved in Oldcastle's rebellion. That he was a lollard sympathiser cannot, nevertheless, be entirely ruled out, and it is notable that in 1418 he went surety for Joan, widow of Robert Burdet, guaranteeing that she should not cause unlawful assemblies, nor maintain or aid any person in their heresy. ⁽⁷⁾ Another surety on this occasion was Richard Trussell, doubtless one of Sir John's relations, who in the previous year, 1417, had been a mainpernor for the lollard priest Ralph Clerik of Coventry, then accused of heresy and of harbouring Oldcastle. ⁽⁸⁾

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1. CCR. 1377-81 pp. 214-5, 1385-9 p. 26, 1396-9 p. 497.
 2. CPR. 1405-8 p. 397, 1413-16 p. 319.
 3. CCR. 1377-81 p.200.
 4. CCR. 1396-9 p. 277.
 5. CPR. 1413-16 pp. 111, 223.
 6. McFarlane, Lollard Knights, pp. 157-8.
 7. CCR. 1413-19 p. 455 see below p. 300.
 8. KB9/209/50 see below p. 299 .

Sir John Pecche⁽¹⁾ is a far more obscure figure. Born in about 1361, he inherited his father's lands at Honiley, Hampton-in-Arden, Fenny Compton, Wormleighton and Dunchurch, Warwickshire, in 1376, at the age of fifteen.⁽²⁾ Shortly afterwards he became the ward, by royal grant, of the "Lollard Knight" Sir Richard Stury : he probably succeeded to his rights in 1382, and at about that time is to be found in the retinue of John of Gaunt. He is said by Dugdale to have accompanied Gaunt's expedition to Castile in 1386, but he appears to have died shortly before the expedition sailed.⁽³⁾ The last of his line, he left a widow, Katharine, who subsequently married the Herefordshire knight Sir Kynard de la Bere, and ^{had} two infant daughters.⁽⁴⁾ This is the sum total of our knowledge of this obscure and short-lived knight. Was Pecche a Lollard sympathiser? We shall probably never know for certain, but the fact that he was Stury's ward might indicate some heretical influence. Even more pertinently, one wonders what reasons Knighton could possibly have had for falsely accusing an obscure Warwickshire knight of lollardy : it is much easier to believe that rumours (which probably had some basis in fact) of Pecche's suspicious activities had reached Knighton at Leicester either via Pecche's manor of Dunchurch or else from members of Gaunt's retinue.

Leaving the putative heresy of Trussell and Pecche, we return once again to the more conclusive case of Sir Thomas Latimer.

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1. see McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 159-60.
 2. Cal. IPM XIV No. 278; VCH Warwicks. iii p. 121, iv. p. 83, v. pp. 48, 221, vi. pp. 80-81, 85.
 3. John of Gaunt's Register 1374-83. i. p. 9., Dugdale, Warwickshire p. 699; CPR. 1385-9 pp. 179-80.
 4. VCH. Warwicks. iii p. 121; Dugdale op. cit. 411, 488.

We have already seen that he was accused of supporting Lollardy by both the St. Alban's and the Leicester chroniclers, that he was called before the council in May 1388 for possessing heretical books, and that he was closely connected with a group of courtiers greatly suspected of heresy. It is now time to consider his involvement with the Chipping Warden congregation.

Late in 1388 (a year notable for an increase in the persecution of lollards) John Buckingham, Bishop of Lincoln, learnt that one John Wodarde of Knebworth, chaplain, was staying at the village of Chipping Warden and preaching heresy there. Nothing further is known of Wodarde (or Wodwarde) who was, however, apparently known to the ecclesiastical authorities as a 'chaplain publicly defamed for heresy', who had also preached in other parts of the diocese of Lincoln.⁽¹⁾ Accordingly, the Bishop sent William Sleugh, vicar of nearby Blakesley and Rural Dean of Brackley, and William Stoke, chaplain, to investigate, and to cite Wodarde to appear before him at his manor of Sleaford on the 18th December, 1388. On the 8th September Sleugh with two others set off for Chipping Warden to serve the writ : it is apparent that the 8th was a Tuesday, the day on which the weekly market at Warden was held, and on which Wodarde was in the habit of preaching. On the 8th, and on six successive Tuesdays following, Sleugh attempted to serve his writ, but to no avail. His visits were marked by riots and disorders by the people of Warden in support of the lollard preacher : on one occasion Sleugh recorded⁽²⁾ that the villagers, 'diabolice iniquitatis

1. CCR. 1385-9 p. 668 : it would be most interesting to know more about Wodwarde's activity but absolutely no other record of him survives. He may have been one of those unbeneficed chaplains, like Swynderby, William Ederyk and Walter Gilbert, who did so much to spread popular lollardy.

2. Reg. Buckingham (Lincoln) f. 357.

incitante seducti', drove him into the church in fear of his life - 'ipso ad ecclesie de Cheppyng persequendo quibus fuge presidio pro eorum vite securitate ad ecclesiam antedecte accedentibus et infra eundem ab immunitatis ecclesiam tutelam se continientibus malefici antedicti cuju sacrilegio manus nepharias et violentes'.

On the 20th December, two days after the day on which Wodarde had been cited to appear before him, but had failed to do so, Buckingham wrote from Sleaford denouncing the Warden congregation, and sent letters to the Chancery naming 45 villagers of Warden, four of them women, who were known to be followers of heresy. About two months later, on March 8th 1389, the King ordered the Sheriff of Northamptonshire to arrest the 45 'believers, maintainers and favourers of heretics, and especially of John Wodewarde, chaplain, publicly defamed of heresy, and bring them before the Bishop of Lincoln, as they will not be justified by censure of the church.'⁽¹⁾ No record, however, remains to show whether they were ever arrested : Wodewarde himself certainly remained free on the 10th March, when he was being cited for the eighth time.⁽²⁾

How far was Latimer involved in all this? Firstly, he was lord of the manor of Warden,⁽³⁾ and also held the advowson. The incumbent at the time of the incident was John de Middleton, who was vicar in 1370 and apparently remained so until 1397 : he seems to have been a pluralist, holding the living of Potterspury from 1383-90 and of Wooton from 1386-89, both in Northamptonshire.

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1. Reg. Buckingham f. 347; CCR 1385-9 p. 668.
 2. Reg. Buckingham f. 357.
 3. Cal. IPM XI No. 109; PRO Inquisitiones Post Mortem iii. p. 275.

He was also Latimer's feoffee in 1383 and 1397.⁽¹⁾ He appears not to have been involved in the incident, though he cannot have avoided knowing of Wodarde's presence, which he presumably approved, or at least tolerated. That Latimer knew of the lollard's presence, and was, in fact, protecting him is proved conclusively by the fact that, far from aiding Sleugh, Latimer attempted to sue him. He claimed that the Dean was stirring up riots by his attempts to cite Wodarde, with the result that the villagers were scared away from the market and Sir Thomas lost the ensuing profits, which were due to him as Lord of the Manor.⁽²⁾

This story, ~~then~~, proves that Latimer was not at all cowed by his appearance before the council in 1388, and also ~~shows~~ demonstrates graphically that it was still possible in 1389 for men of sufficiently high social position to protect heretics with impunity.

What of the rest of the Chipping Warden lollards? The Close Rolls preserve all their names : most were probably villagers of Warden, though one, Thomas Draper, is described as of Byfield, a few miles north of Warden. The list includes the village smith, John Brackley, who was present during some of the riots, his two servants, and a number of family groups. More significantly, it also includes the name of Thomas Wakelyn : this is almost certainly Thomas Wakelyn of Trafford, a junior member of the family of Eydon, (two miles from Warden), Trafford and Boddington.⁽³⁾ The Wakelyns seem to have been closely connected with the Latimer family : Thomas'

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1. Bridges Northants i. 115; Baker, Northants i. 528; CPR 1381-5 p. 236, 1396-9 p. 17; PRO Inquisitiones Post Mortem iii. p. 89.
 2. Northants Record Office, Griffin Cartulary ff. 43,44,46, 82 see also McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 192-5.
 3. Baker, Northants i. pp. 479, 490, 503, 504.

elder brother William was in Sir Thomas Latimer's retinue when the latter was serving Gaunt in 1373.⁽¹⁾ Thomas himself was executor to both Sir Thomas and Lady Anne Latimer,⁽²⁾ and after their death was feoffee-to-uses for Sir Thomas' son and heir Edward Latimer.⁽³⁾ The Wakelyns appear to have been difficult neighbours, several times launching murderous and destructive attacks on nearby landowners and threatening and assaulting their tenants : Thomas took part in one of these incidents, an attempted ambush on Sir John Lovell near Aynho, in 1391.⁽⁴⁾ With this in mind, it is perhaps possible to see Wakelyn, socially the highest ranking person mentioned, as ringleader of the Warden disturbances.

Was Wakelyn really a lollard? We cannot say, but he certainly appears to have been a supporter of heresy in 1389. This fact is made even more interesting if we can identify him with the Thomas Wakelyne who was twice Mayor of Northampton, (shortly to become a notorious centre of heresy) in 1382-3 and 1394-5, and who was still living there in 1397.⁽⁵⁾ He may have returned to complete orthodoxy by 1400, when the Bishop of Lincoln granted him a license to have Mass said privately at Trafford.⁽⁶⁾ The fact remains, however, that he was closely associated with known lollards as executor of the Latimer wills in 1401-2.

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1. John of Gaunt's Register, 1371-6 i. p. 34.
 2. The Ancestor X. pp. 19-21.
 3. CCR 1409-13 p. 230, 1419-22 p. 171.
 4. CPR. 1385-9 p. 383, 1388-92 p. 520.
 5. Northampton Records ii. p. 549; CPR 1396-9 p. 162.
 6. Lincoln Joint Record Office, Reg. Repington i. f. 57.

We can see from all this, then, that lollardy had a fairly firm hold in Chipping Warden in 1388-9, being supported by the Lord of the Manor, a neighbouring gentleman, and what must have been a sizeable proportion, if not a majority, of the villagers. Though Archbishop Courtenay did not feel it necessary to investigate the area when he passed close by it in late 1389,⁽¹⁾ (during a visitation of Lincoln diocese), lollardy appears to have persisted there, almost certainly supported by Latimer. The area produced a number of rebels in 1414, and incidents occurred in Pyfield up to 1417, when Sir John Oldcastle, fleeing from the authorities, hid there.⁽²⁾ Beyond this, however, we have no information on the activities of the lollards of the Warden area between 1389 and 1414.

The next notable outbreak of heresy in the South-east Midlands also took place in Northamptonshire, apparently in late 1392. This time it was the county town, Northampton itself, that was involved. It is difficult to say when or how lollard doctrines first appeared in this town:⁽³⁾ it is not impossible that Swynderby visited Northampton during one of his preaching tours, or that William Smith and his disciples proselytised there from Leicester, only twenty miles to the north. It may also be significant that a Thomas Wakelyne, probably though not certainly to be identified with the Wakelyn of the Warden affair, was mayor of Northampton in 1382-3 and again in 1394-5,⁽⁴⁾ and appears to have held property in the town in 1397.⁽⁵⁾ No heresy, however, was noticed in the

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1. Reg. Courtenay (Cantuar) f. 142.
 2. see below p. 47-8.
 3. Richard Stormsworth's petition (see below) claims that a Londoner named Janyn Colyn was the first helper and sustainer of lollardy in Northampton.
 4. Northampton Records ii. p. 549.
 5. CPR 1396-9 p. 162.

town when it was visited by Courtenay in 1389 during his metropolitan visitation, though this is not, of course, to say that none existed.

Howsoever this may be, it is certain that an active lollard congregation existed in Northampton by the autumn of 1392. Its history is remarkably well documented, the most important source (and indeed one of the most interesting documents relating to the early history of lollardy) being a petition sent into chancery by a Northampton woolman named Richard Stormsworth, apparently in early 1393.⁽¹⁾ This consists mainly of a series of complaints against the then mayor, John Fox (who had previously served as a town bailiff in 1379 and as mayor in 1384-5).⁽²⁾ The original, in French, is so mutilated that almost a quarter of it is completely unreadable, but as full a translation as possible has been made with the help of a rather inaccurate translation made in the early seventeenth century, when the document was in better condition.⁽³⁾

'To our sovereign Lord the King and his wise council shows Richard Stormsworth of Northampton and complains of John Fox Mayor of the town of Northampton. That whereas it is ordained by statute of parliament and also by the law of the Holy Church that heretics and lollards and their maintainers openly or privately preaching the new doctrine of lollardy should be destroyed and grievously punished after their desert, in salvation of Holy Church, of the true faith and of the Church's liberties, and in maintenance of the peace of the King and realm. Yet the said Mayor by colour of his royal office ... has encouraged lollards to preach, inspite of the bishop of Lincoln and the curates

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1. SC8/142/7099.
 2. Northampton Records ii. pp. 549, 556.
 3. Ms. Cotton Cleo. E II f. 201, printed in Powell and Trevelyan, Peasants Rising and the Lollards pp. 45-51.

of the churches, and against their prohibition, in subversion of Holy Church and of the true faith, and in breach of the King's peace.

'Item how (the Mayor) is a lollard (and) maintainer of lollards and miscreants of the town and of the country of whatever condition and a receiver of them both privately and openly. (He) keeps in his house and in his service (1) one Richard Bullok chaplain who was convicted of ... heresies at Northampton before Thomas Botiller Archdeacon of Northampton and one Janyn Colyn who was an apprentice in mercery at London (and) who gave up mercery to be a lollard. And the said Janyn was the first abbetor and sustainer of lollardy in Northampton. And (the said) Mayor has drawn to his company and counsel one Thomas Compworth of the county of Oxford who was convicted before the Chancellor and University of Oxford of many errors and heresies. And a certain friar Nicholas Weston, apostate Carmelite and ... (without?) license of his order. The which Mayor has made the said Nicholas by his procurement a parish chaplain of the church of St. Gregory, Northampton to preach lollardy for the comfort and maintenance of the miscreants of the town. And the said Mayor has drawn ... counsel and covine one Master William Northwold lollard and common preacher of the new doctrine of lollardy and common teacher (2) and confessor of the lollard lay people of the town, without license of the Bishop or the parish priests of the churches, by the maintenance of the Mayor. Which Master William wrongly and through false title occupied the Archdeaconry of Sudbury for about seven years and took the profits thereof, and then he took a great sum of money by way of simony when he left that benefice. With which money the said Master William lived luxuriously in the house (i.e. monastery) of St. Andrew of Northampton and there he has made such a debate between the Prior and the monks that the house is almost destroyed and many of the monks have fled ... and such debate the said Master William made at Tikkesworth, and at Olney and at the house of St. John at Bedford and elsewhere. And all his conversation in the court of Rome and in England has been of Simony and false living who notwithstanding is in Northampton amongst the lollards

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1. "retenance"
 2. "enfourmour"

and misdoers as a true preacher, speaking with the tongue of an angel.'

'Item how the said Mayor by the maintenance aforesaid has made almost all the town of Northampton to be lollards and misdoers of his covine and retenance and he maintains and comforts them in right and wrong especially the ... people of the town, so that all the town is ruled by them and no man of the town is against them for fear of his life and of grievous punishment of the Mayor. And all those men of the town who do not wish to assent to the said Mayor's maintenance of lollardy, he holds them for his enemies and for rebels against his mayoralty. And the said Mayor plots how he may hurt them by his office and ... by malice of other people before him ... and will not permit them to win their suits before him, (1) all against the law. And all the ribalds infected with lollardy who came to the town, of whatever condition they are, they are favourably received, favoured and maintained as much as he can by the said Mayor ...'

'Item the said Richard shows how the said Mayor, on the eve of Christmas last past, brought with him one Robert Braybrook, chaplain and errant lollard to preach in the church of All Saints, Northampton, in spite of the Bishop and his ministers (and) against their prohibition. And there were preached divers errors and heresies in maintenance of all the lollards of the town and in subversion of Holy Church and detraction of the laws of the same. And by reason of the said preaching there were disputes between man and man against the peace, by maintenance of the Mayor.'

'Item the said Richard shows how the said Mayor, before St. Hilary's day last, (2) took upon himself the authority of Holy Church by colour of his office and brought with him one (blank in MS) parson of the church of Wynkpole ... to preach in the said church, in spite of the Bishop and the parish priest of the church and against the Bishop's prohibition and his express orders, by maintenance of the said Mayor, and by force of the lollards of the town who by common assent had assembled to maintain and support the said preacher. They were secretly armed against the peace. The which preacher got up into the pulpit to preach when the parish priest was at the offertory of the parochial mass and was turning to the altar to (continue) singing (the Mass) ... the said Mayor went to the priest in great

1. "davoir bon recouvrer devant ly"

2. i.e. before 13th January 1393.

anger ... and took him by the back of his vestments to make him (stop) until the said preacher had finished the priest replied 'Non possum'. And then the said parson (of Wynkpole) preached heresies and errors in the aforesaid manner.'

'And after dinner on the same day the said parson returned with the Mayor and a great power of armed lollards to preach again in the said church. And there he preached heresies and errors depraving the people's devotions done to Holy Church, of pilgrimages, of images, of painted tables, of high and curious works of Holy Church, of chalices made of gold or silver for divine services, and denounced the states touching the King as well as the church ... by subtle reasons of lollardy ... Which hearing the said Richard Stormesworth cried to the said preacher 'Tu autem, tu autem' to make him stop, ordering him to come down for a false lollard, without further speech or doing anything against the peace. The said Richard did not know anything about the confederacy ... And at once the said Mayor with great malice and rancour of heart, and with a great power of the lollards both of the town and of the country, in indignation at the words of the said Richard ... with loud clamour, murmuring and noise, and with force of arms against the peace, that is to say with swords, basilards, daggers and knives, and some of them dressed in hauberks under their clothes ... to take the said Richard and slay him in the church. And some of the said lollards thus armed lay in wait for the said Richard outside the church to kill him there. The said Richard, having been carried out of the church by some of his friends, was (at once brought into it again for fear of the lollards outside).(1) The Mayor came and arrested the said Richard (for breach of) the peace to please the lollards, and at this the lollards were so furious and full of malice to kill Richard that he with great difficulty escaped and was secretly carried ... (into the vestry of the)(1) church until the tumult ceased. All the other people within the church who were not of the assent and covine of the lollards were in great fear of their lives because of the affray ... (Whereupon William Broughton and John Tony chaplains)(1) rang the bells of the church to collect the people and stop the affray ... and the affray was ceased ... the lollards aforesaid, ordering the preacher to go on with his sermon until the end without fear or contradiction. And the said Mayor from the pulpit commanded the people (to keep

1. Phrases now lost, supplied from the seventeenth-century translation.

silence and give heed to the sermon upon paine of death)(1) the said Mayor remaining in the pulpit with the preacher and supporting him until the end of his sermon, in support and maintenance of the lollards, and in contempt of the King ... (And after the sermon the said Mayor and the lollards)(1) with great jollity took the preacher to the Mayor's house in despite of Holy Church ... (And after the lollards returning to the churchyard of the said church and with angry words threatened blows to any)(1) that would argue any point of the said sermon. And thus the whole town has become a domain of lollards, and no man of the town dares (to open his mouth against their liking, for fear of the said Mayor and the lollards)(1)"

'Item the said Mayor on the Tuesday(2) following the said Sunday before St. Hilary(3) supposing (he might be blamed for what he had done, gate unto him eight or nine of the)(1) twenty-four most sufficient men of the town to maintain and aid him in indicting the said Richard for the affray, and also the said two chaplains for ringing the bells ... and the same Tuesday ... the Mayor ... the said Richard as chief affrayer in the said debates and riots in the church because of his words 'Tu autem, tu autem' said to the preacher ... aforesaid named Laurence Barbour, the which Laurence wanted to assent to the present of the said ... by cause of which the said Richard had said 'Tu autem, tu autem' to silence the said preacher against their assent ... the body of the said Laurence Barbour ... they were enemies and the same Laurence for the cause abovesaid...'

'Item ... how the said Mayor made an inquest infected with lollardy to be held before him and William Pysford one of the bailiffs ... which inquest ... before the Mayor, must indict the said Richard as chief breaker of the peace in the church by his words 'Tu autem, tu autem' ... and the said inquest found thus for fear of the Mayor and the lollards. And in the same way the Mayor made another inquest on the said William Broughton and John Tony chaplains of the said affray, because they rang the bells, the mayor saying in front of the court that they had done it against the peace ... The inquest found that they had sounded the bells in maintenance ...

'Item ... how the said Mayor by the assent of the lollards of the town sent messengers to Oxford and elsewhere to hire preachers of lollardy (to be brought)(4) to Northamp-

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1. Supplied from seventeenth century translation.
 2. 14th January 1393
 3. 12th January 1393.
 4. Supplied as above.

to preach there every Sunday in Lent last past to preach at the cross in front of the cemetery in the market place of Northampton. The said Mayor draped the cross with his carpets(1) and other draperies(2) at the time of the sermon. (The which preachers)(3) preached there in support of lollardy against the prohibition of the bishop and of the church, by maintenance and appointment of the Mayor. Many of the said preachers were encouraged in Northampton to borrow (furred hoods and habits)(3) during the time of their sermons, in order to pass themselves off as great clerks in deception of the common people, so that these would support the lollards.'

'Item ... how the said Mayor ... holds himself with such pride in the town for the support of the said lollards that the officials of the bishop of Lincoln (dare not sitt within the same town to enquire of lollardy)(4). And each session(5) that begins in that place, the said Mayor goes ... to disturb it, in contempt of Holy Church and of our Lord the King'.

'Item, the said Richard shows how on the first Sunday in Lent last past(6) the said Mayor with a great company of men of the town of his persuasion(7) went to the house of St. Andrew of Northampton to bring the said Master William Northwold to preach. And they brought him (back) with them ceremoniously, wearing a cloak, a tabard, a furred chaperon and a doctor's hat(8) on his head, as if he were a doctor or master of divinity though he has never been in the schools, to preach in the said church. The same Master William mounted the pulpit to preach immediately after the offertory of the mass, despite a prohibition made to him by the priest at the Bishops orders(9), and he preached with great pride and courage of heart when the priest turned to the altar to sing Mass, the said William went on, not heeding the Mass, nor the divine service, nor the Levation of the Sacrament, disturbing the priest by the loudness(10) of his words. So that the vicar twice began in a loud voice

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1. 'tapites'
 2. 'vestures'
 3. Supplied as above.
 4. Supplied from seventeenth-century translation.
 5. i.e. of the inquisitions held by the Bishop's officials.
 6. 23rd February 1393.
 7. couvyne
 8. pilion
 9. commission
 10. graunt noys.

the preface of the mass, and no chaplain in the church dared respond to him for fear of the Mayor and of Master Northwold and of their supporters. And the vicar was greatly distracted and distressed ... and the said William preached after the fashion ... of the forenamed other preachers by maintenance of the Mayor in support of the lollards, and in contempt of Holy Church and of our Lord the King.'

'Item ... the Sunday before St. Gregory last(1) the said Master William by procurement of the Mayor came back to preach at the foresaid Cross in the previous manner, the which William before his sermon went into the vestry of All Saints Church until the people were assembled ... and there the ministers of the Bishop and the Archdeacon of Northampton came to him with special commissions (and letters)(2) from the Bishop to prohibit William from preaching and to summon him before the Bishop within seven days at some suitable place, to answer to seven articles touching his foresaid actions, but the said William disobeyed the officials. Then the Mayor came in a great fury(3) with a great press of the commons following him and threatened the said officials for what they had done, making a great clamour, so that the said officials were in great fear of their lives in the vestry. The Mayor said openly that he and the commons wished Master William to preach that day at the Cross, in spite of the Bishop, the Archdeacon and their ministers, and that they would be furious at anyone who tried to balk(4) them. And the said Mayor commanded the officials (at their perill to abide or departe thence for that they had done)(2). The Mayor took the Bishop's letters out of the hands of the official, taking with him by force of the Commons the said Master William to preach at the Cross (The said officials remained)(2) in the vestry for fear of their lives until the Mayor returned to them for their deliverance and commanded them to come out and hear the sermon. Not wishing to hear the sermon, (they asked)(2) the Mayor to give them leave to return to their lodging and ride out of town without hurt to their bodies, and the Mayor gave them safe conduct, after which they went away to their lodgings. The said Mayor (came again to the Cross to hear)(2) the sermon which Master William had not begun preaching until the Mayor returned. Then he began his sermon ... preaching in the manner above-said and begging the commons to pray for him and to sustain him in this case against the Bishop ... and his

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1. 9th March 1393.
 2. Supplied from translation
 3. graunt rancoude coer
 4. gruccher

summoners, whom he called the members of the Devil and disciples of Antichrist, persecuting him against the law of God. All this was done by the said Mayor and William in support of the lollards and in contempt of Holy Church and of our Lord the King.'

This petition is the best eye-witness account of early lollardy extant : it has, however, one drawback, in that the petitioner, Richard Stormsworth, apparently had a grudge against John Fox, his fellow woolman, over an accusation of false weights and measures levied against him before Fox as Mayor. In the course of this Stormsworth's wool had been confiscated and he had been ordered to pay his complainants twice its value.⁽¹⁾ Further, when the ensuing trouble over Stormsworth's petition caused Fox's removal from the mayoralty, the former succeeded in obtaining letters under the royal signet getting himself appointed mayor in Fox's place. He never, however, enjoyed the office, for shortly afterwards a royal writ appeared nullifying the signet letters, because he was not 'cleared of felonies and deceits within the town' - for which he was not finally pardoned until 1395.⁽²⁾ 'Even so', as McFarlane says, 'it is difficult to believe that he did not choose the ground that was mostly likely to give him firm ground against his opponent. He may have exaggerated wildly, but it is improbable that he invented the whole series of incidents he describes'.⁽³⁾

There is much evidence to support Mr. McFarlane's statement : little is known of Friar Weston one way or the other : true, he had recently become a Papal chaplain, but such posts appear to have not been difficult to obtain, and it is possible to point to William Pateshull, another 'apostate' friar, who caused the anti-clerical riot in London in 1387, and who was also a Papal chaplain. The evidence against

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1. CCR. 1392-6
 2. CCR. 1392-6 pp. 167,627.
 3. Wycliffe p. 143.

Fox's other associates is far more damning. Richard Bullok was one of those indicted for lollardy in Northampton by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1393, as was Simon Colyn, possibly either a relation of, or the same man as, the 'Janyng Colyn' of the Petition.⁽¹⁾ Master William Northwold had been in prison in 1384 for 'attempting to pass to foreign parts to prosecute things against the King and many of the people' - making it seem likely that there was some foundation in Stormsworth's remarks about Northwold's visits to the court of Rome. He is also recorded, in 1386, as Archdeacon of Sudbury, in which year a writ had been put out to arrest him and bring him before the King : the writ, for unspecified offences, was cancelled, but Northwold was at other times twice outlawed for debt.⁽²⁾ Most damning of all, in 1397, he was ordered, 'for needful and notable causes nearly moving the King', not to preach privately or openly anywhere in England.⁽³⁾ Thus it seems likely that Northwold was, if not actually a Lollard, at least a very suspicious character.

Thomas Compworth of Oxfordshire had indeed been previously convicted of heresy, in 1385 at Oxford, on a charge of refusing to pay tithes, and 'per plures annos per diversas partes Angliae discurrebat, praedicans et docens ferre omnes conclusiones haereticas et erroneas'.⁽⁴⁾ He had eventually recanted and done penance, and, according to the chroniclers, died shortly afterwards. A Thomas Compworth was, however, closely connected with Northampton in the 1390's and later⁽⁵⁾: towards the end of his life he presumably became more respectable, for he was

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1. C85/109.
 2. CCR 1381-5 p. 595; CPR. 1385-9 pp. 179, 256, 1388-92 p. 68, 1391-6 p. 258.
 3. CCR 1392-6 p. 102.
 4. Mon. Evesham 67-69; Polychronicon VIII p. 473, IX p. 174. see below pp. 268-272.
 5. CCR 1396-9 p. 68, 1399-1402 p. 503, 1409-13 pp. 171, 297; CPR 1391-6 p. 600, 1408-13 p. 482, 1413-16 p. 421, 1416-22 p. 308, 1422-9 p. 300; CFR XII pp. 73, 102, XIII p. 84, XIV p. 391.

several times a Justice of the Peace, M.P. for Northampton in 1427, and served on royal commissions relating to Northamptonshire, especially in the 1420's.

The 'parson of Wynkpole' and 'Robert Braybrook' are more problematic : the first may perhaps have been John de Stoke, parson of Wydmerpool, imprisoned at Nottingham in 1388 on suspicion of heresy.⁽¹⁾ For 'Robert Braybrook' there are two possibilities, both connected with Sir Thomas Latimer, who, apart from his other Northamptonshire manors, owned land in Duston and Upton, in the suburbs of Northampton, as well as at 'Kyngesale' in the town itself.⁽²⁾ The first, and least likely of these possibilities is William Braibroc or Braybrooke, Latimer's parson of his manor of Braybrooke from 1379 until before 1402.⁽³⁾ More likely, perhaps, is Robert Hoke, chaplain, of Braybrooke; Hoke subsequently became, as we shall see, easily the most prominent heretic in the county, being convicted of lollardy in 1405 (at Northampton) 1414, and 1425.⁽⁴⁾ Though not appointed rector of Braybrooke until 1401,⁽⁵⁾ he may well have been active, possibly under Latimer's protection, in 1393, under the by-name of Robert Braybrook.

This evidence does much to confirm that Stormsworth's petition, if not entirely true, was at least partially so, and that a sizeable proportion of the middle class of the town, as well as a 'grant presse des communes' were lollard sympathisers. The government, at least, apparently thought so, and acted at once : on April

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1. CCR 1385-9 p. 529. see above p. 10 .
 2. PRO Inquisitiones Post Mortem iii. p. 275.
 3. Bridges Northants ii. 13.
 4. Reg. Chichele iii. p. 101 ff.
 5. Reg. Beaufort (Lincoln) f. 229.

24th 1393, the corporation were ordered to elect a new mayor to replace Fox, who was ejected by royal command.⁽¹⁾ Four days later the Baillifs (the John Spryng and William Pysford of Stormsworth's petition)⁽²⁾ and Commons of the town counter-petitioned, warning the King of the 'malicious' petition of Stormsworth 'et autres de sa couvyne' and stating that 'John Fox ad bien et loialment governez' - which, they said, would be confirmed by all the country roundabout. Perhaps significantly, they do not state that Fox gave no support to heresy.⁽³⁾ Their petition, at any rate, was to no avail, for in under a week, on the 4th May, Fox was imprisoned in Nottingham Castle.⁽⁴⁾ Despite Stormsworth's efforts to be elected, they apparently refused to elect him or anyone else until at least September, when they were ordered to elect a mayor who was neither a heretical suspect nor Stormsworth, who was not yet cleared of his fraud.⁽⁵⁾ Eventually, John Shrovesbury was elected, followed in 1394 by Thomas Wakelyn, perhaps the Chipping Warden lollard.⁽⁶⁾ Fox retained his popularity, and a further attempt was made to elect him in 1395, but was again quashed by the King : it was not until the reign of Henry IV that Fox returned, when he served two terms in succession, from 1399-1401.⁽⁷⁾ Stormsworth, one is not surprised to learn, never became Mayor. Before leaving Northampton corporation, it would be most

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1. CCR 1392-6 p. 56.
 2. Northampton Records ii. 556.
 3. SC8/215/10719.
 4. CCR 1392-6 p. 57.
 5. *ibid.* p. 167.
 6. Northampton Records ii. 549.
 7. Northampton Records ii. p. 549; CCR 1392-6 p. 439.

interesting to know whether the frequent efforts to elect Fox (and the perhaps symptomatic election of Wakelyn) were due to his personal popularity, to his religious views, or simply to a dislike of governmental interference.

Some further confirmation of the facts of Stormsworth's petition, as well as much additional information about the Northampton lollards, comes from the register of Bishop Buckingham of Lincoln. On or about the 20th January 1393 (a week after the disturbances caused by the "parson of Wynkpole"'s sermon on the 13th) the bishop issued a mandate to a group of unnamed commissaries, warning them that certain "pretended priests" were preaching "erronea enormia" in Northampton. The commissaries were ordered to officially prohibit these men from preaching, if necessary repeating the warnings on three successive Sundays : should the preachers refuse to comply, they were to be excommunicated and cited to appear before the bishop.⁽¹⁾ It was, no doubt, while issuing one of these prohibitions that the commissaries fell foul of Mayor Fox, and Stormsworth's story⁽²⁾ that they were forced to take refuge in All Saints' vestry is also confirmed by a letter which the bishop later sent to the government.⁽²⁾ Whether Buckingham's prohibitions or citations were actually promulgated is unknown, but none of the Northampton lollard preachers are recorded as having been tried before him during the early part of the year.

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1. Reg. Buckingham f. 398.
 2. See above.
 2. Reg. Buckingham ii. (Royal Mandates) f. 64.

Despite the intervention of the government and the dismissal and imprisonment of Mayor Fox, the Northampton lollards continued to be active, and on 3rd August 1393 Buckingham set up a further commission to investigate their doings : it was to be headed by his suffragan bishop, William Ownby, and to include the abbot of Northampton, the local archdeacon, William Beauford (a Carmelite doctor of theology) Eudo de la Zouch, LL.D, and Robert Palmer, rector of Towcester.⁽¹⁾ (The presence of the last may indicate some suspicion of heresy in the Towcester area, which produced a number of lollard rebels in 1414.) This highly qualified group was ordered to gather together the "probi homines" of the town and enquire from them the names of the preachers and supporters of heresy, which they were to pass on to the bishop by the 8th September. The situation which the commissaries discovered in Northampton was a very serious one, and according to Buckingham's report to the government⁽²⁾ a majority of the townspeople were infected with heresy. Accordingly, he himself visited the town, and personally conducted an investigation at All Saints' Church between the 5th and the 7th September.

At that time appeared before him an anchoress⁽³⁾ named Anne Palmer, who lived in a house adjoining St. Peter's church. There she had received lollards both by day and by night, foremost amongst whom were Thomas Pateshull, John Cory, Simon Colyn,⁽⁴⁾

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1. Reg. Buckingham f. 406.
 2. Reg. Buckingham ii. f. 64.
 3. cf. Matilda, the lollard anchoress of Leicester in 1389, above p. 83.
 4. Perhaps the same as the 'Janyn Colyn' of Storms-worth's petition.

John Wolfe, and the chaplains John and Thomas Whelewryght : this group held secret conventicles and meetings, and also publicly preached and maintained a number of heresies of the most extreme kind.⁽¹⁾ Faced with these charges, Anne Palmer flatly refused to answer them (except for an incidental charge of incontinence, which she denied) and referred to Bishop Buckingham as Antichrist and to his officials as Antichrist's disciples.⁽²⁾ Accordingly, she was imprisoned in the bishop's castle at Banbury until such time as she would agree to recant : she remained there throughout the winter, until on 26th March 1394 Buckingham was ordered to send her to London for examination by the royal council.⁽³⁾ A second female lollard, an apostate nun named Agnes Nowers, was also associated with the Northampton congregation : her arrest was ordered on 20th September 1393, but nothing further is known of her case.⁽⁴⁾

The male members of Anne Palmer's group were all apparently arrested during the winter of 1393-4, and by the 13th March 1394 they were all imprisoned in Northampton castle : on that date, however, John Peyntour (a woolman and former bailiff of Northampton)⁽⁵⁾ and others stood surety that they would all appear to stand trial, either before the royal council or the bishop, whenever required.⁽⁶⁾ No more is heard of John Cory or John Wolfe after this, but on the 8th November following Thomas

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1. See below.
 2. Reg. Buckingham ii. f. 64.
 3. *ibid.*
 4. *ibid.* f. 406.
 5. CCR 1377-81 p. 342; CPR 1381-5 p. 368; Records of Northampton ii. 556.
 6. CCR 1392-6 p. 260.

Patashull, Simon Colyn and the two Whelewryghts were signified as obdurate excommunicates, so that it is probable that they had either failed to appear for trial or else relapsed after examination.⁽¹⁾ Signified at the same time was Richard Bullok,⁽²⁾ the chaplain referred to in Stormsworth's petition as an associate of Mayor Fox. It is notable that none of the other heretics mentioned by Stormsworth appear in Buckingham's register, but it is possible that they had been brought to book at the time of Fox's dismissal in April 1393. However that may be, it seems almost certain that Anne Palmer and her friends were closely connected with the events described in the petition.

The opinions of this Northampton group are recorded in considerable detail in Buckingham's register. They are very forcefully put, and even after translation into Latin, they retain a colloquial bite which suggests that they were taken down verbatim, perhaps from sermons : this may also account for the lack of logical order in the list

- (N.1) IN PRIMIS DICITUR quod prefata Anna et ceteri supradicti dicunt palam et expresse quod Innocentes ad dominum migrantes nec in inferno nec in paradiso post decessum collocantur set in medio loco sunt examen extremi iudicii expectantes.
- (N.2) Item quod cuilibet christiano sufficiens est dei mandata servare in cubili vel in campo deum secrete adorare, nec in domo materiali publice precibus incumbere, ne phariseis se conformans ypocrita computetur, nec ecclesia materialiter constructa apud illos pro sacra ecclesia reputatur ymmo quedam domus materialis et apud quosdam constructa castellum 'caym' vocatur.

1. C85/109/38.

2. He is perhaps identifiable with the Richard Bullok who was rector of Great Harrowden (1368-77) and of Upperlsham (1377-90) both in Northants. Bridges, Northamptonshire ii. 105, 109.

- (N.3) Item qui proximus est deo in hac vita sanctitate causante papa confirmatur, nec papa quem nos dicimus summum pontificem pontificem potestatem habet a pena et culpa veniam peccantium concedendi. Et quod tempore sancti Silvestri pape erat universalis ecclesia simoniace dotata. Et sic usque in hodiernum diem residet toxicata et ideo de potestate pape et aliorum placitorum eis omnino desperatur.
- (N.4) Item cum iniungatur alicui nomine penitentie propter peccata peregre proficisci affirmant illi lollardi magis meritorium quantitatem summe illius in peregrinationis itinere expendende fore pauperibus erogande quam penitentiam sibi pro commissis iniunctam peragere iuxta canonis instituta. Et dicunt quod post annum millenarium a nativitate domini sathanas erat solutus nexibus et omnes quos postmodum natos reputamus fore sanctos taliter credunt diabolice infectos quod citius credendos est illos fore dampnatos quam salvatos et huiusmodi sanctos vocant sanctos millenos.
- (N.5) Item sanctum Thomam Cantuar' vel alium sanctum quem peregrini in partibus anglicanis adorant pro sancto affirmare omnino indubio suspendunt nec credunt articulos fore licitos nec divine commendabiles voluntati pro quibus sanctus Thomas persolvit tributum condicionis humane.
- (N.6) Item affirmant quod capellanus non tenetur matutinas et horas canonicas dicere ante celebrationem divinorum neque postea nisi ex mera sua voluntate eiusdem capellani nec indiget confiteri nisi soli deo ante celebrationem.
- (N.7) Item si sacerdos sit in mortali peccato caret potestate sacramentum Eucharistie et baptismi consecrandi et idem capellanus diabolus est.
- (N.8) Item quod ita meritorium est ut eis videtur osculare lapides in campo iacentes sicut pedes crucifixi in ecclesia vel aliquas ymagines in ecclesia cum luminibus adorare vel munera eis offerre.

- (N.9) Item quod oblationes facte in sponsalibus et sepulturis mortuorum sunt subtrahende eo quod in simoniam penitus redundant.
- (N.10) Item quod si aliquis commiserit aliquod peccatum mortale et illud oblitus fuerit et inde obierit non confessus licet misericordiam dei peccerit dampnatus est pro illo peccato mortali oblito et quod non est in potestate dei ipsum salvare per misericordiam.
- (N.11) Item quod non est licitum sacerdotibus fore stipendiarios pro celebracione divinorum.
- (N.12) Item quod est licitum cuilibet christiano informare fratrem suum in decem mandatis et sanctis evangeliiis ut ea sciat et predicet et quod quilibet paterfamilias respondebit pro se et commissis familie sue.
- (N.13) Item dicunt ut dicitur quod est cassum dare alicui mendicanti elemosinam nisi solummodo claudis et curvis et cecis que fuerint debiles aut paralitice iacentes et quod omnes contribuentes huiusmodi elemosinam sunt fautores et sustentatores dictorum mendicancium in peccatis et qui ita dat elemosinam servit diabolo.
- (N.14) Item affirmant ut dicitur quod si aliquis in mortali peccato existens audieret missam quod illa missa erit sibi in dampnacionem.
- (N.15) Item dicunt ut dicitur quod omnes indulgencie concesse a domino papa in remissionem peccatorum vel ad relevacionem alicuius hospitalis seu alterius loci propter elemosinas dandas et querendas per questores sunt false casse et vane, et in cupidinem redundant absque salute anime quia questores et receptores huiusmodi elemosinarum inde superbiose et delicate vivunt et nullum aliud bonum inde provenit.

Some few of the opinions recorded here, namely articles one (concerning the fate of unbaptised children) ten (concerning automatic damnation for unconfessed mortal sin) and fourteen (damnation for hearing mass in a state of mortal sin) are not recorded elsewhere, and may have been unique to the Northampton

group. Many of their beliefs, however, were more extreme or more forcefully-put versions of views held by lollards elsewhere. Many other heretics, for instance, shared their distaste for images and pilgrimages⁽¹⁾ (articles four, five and eight) and William Sautre (in 1399) agreed that money spent on pilgrimages would be better distributed to the poor.⁽²⁾ Wycliffe's teaching⁽³⁾ that a priest in mortal sin could neither baptise nor consecrate (article seven) was also a commonly-held lollard belief, as was the disapproval of payments for wedding or funeral masses⁽⁴⁾ (article nine) or indeed for any masses at all (article eleven). The belief that priests need not say matins or hours before celebrating mass (article six) is less common, but it was shared by William Sautre in 1399.⁽⁵⁾

The most striking parallel with the opinions of the Northampton group, however, is the list of beliefs recorded by Knighton as being held by the Leicester lollards in 1388.⁽⁶⁾ No less than ten of the fifteen Northampton articles approximate closely to beliefs held by the Leicester group,⁽⁷⁾ including the extremist views that church buildings were unnecessary (article two) that there had been no true Pope since Silvester (article ~~two~~^{three}) that many of the saints were really damned (article four)

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1. cf. The Leicester lollards in 1388 (pp. 76, 77) William Smith in 1389 (p. 80) the Twelve Conclusions of 1395 (Fasc. Ziz. p. 364) and William Sautre in 1399 (p. 360) etc.
 2. See below p. 360-361.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. p. 278.
 4. cf. The Leicester lollards in 1388 (p. 77) William Smith (p. 80) and William Ramsbury (p. 315) etc.
 5. See p. 360.
 6. See pp. 75-77.
 7. N2 cf. Leicester article KB19; N3 cf. KB1; N4 cf. KB7, KB20; N5 cf. KB7; N7 cf. KB18; N8 cf. KB5; N9 cf. KB8; N11 cf. KB12; N13 cf. KB10, N15 cf. KB2.

and that in any case they could do nothing for men (article five). The Northampton belief that every Christian has a duty to teach the ten commandments and the gospels cannot be exactly paralleled in Knighton's list, but a similar belief was held by William Smith of Leicester in 1389.⁽¹⁾

It is all but certain, therefore, that the Northampton lollards had close links with their co-religionists in Leicester, twenty miles to the north-east, and it is also evident that both congregations maintained beliefs of the most radical kind, especially in their rejection of any form of established church. It is remarkable, however, that the Northampton group apparently did not share their Leicester brethren's unorthodox views on transubstantiation, excommunication, tithes, or confession. Who the leader of this particular congregation was is uncertain, and the extent to which their opinions coincided with those of Master William Northwold and the other preachers introduced by Mayor Fox is also unknown.

To sum up, then, it is clear from the evidence set out above that lollardy, perhaps originally introduced from nearby Leicester, obtained a firm footing in Northampton during the early 1390's when (if Bishop Buckingham's evidence is to be believed) it commanded for a time the sympathies of a large proportion of the inhabitants as well as (according to Stormsworth) the active

1. William Smith's article S11, see above p. 81.

support of many of the town's ruling class. The combined efforts of Bishop Buckingham and the government during 1393 seem to have been successful in temporarily suppressing lollardy in the town, or at least in driving it underground, for between 1394 and 1414 (when a number of townsmen joined Oldcastle) no further prosecutions are recorded there. The persistence of heresy in Northampton in 1414 and afterwards, however, suggests that the suppression was never more than partial, and that a continuous tradition of lollardy existed there.⁽¹⁾

That lollardy, or at least violent anti-clericalism, also persisted in Leicester, the other major town in our area, is clearly shown by an incident that occurred there in 1395 or 1396. John de Elhet[✓], Archdeacon of Leicester, made a complaint to the Keeper of the Great Seal : he stated that

1. See below p. 141.

'whereas Walter Barnake, clerk, Official of the said Archdeacon, had fixed a day to sit and do what belonged to his office in the church of St. Martin ... Leicester, one John Belgrave the night before or early the same morning privily and maliciously caused to be placed in the said church, below where the said Official ought to sit, a bill ... alleging that the said Official might well compare with the judges who condemned Susannah, giving unrighteous judgements, oppressing the innocent, and suffering the evil-doers, and also (comparing him) to a judge of the devil in iniquity ... and further made censure generally on the said Official, of the Holy Church, and of all those putting the said bill in reproof ... John Belgrave openly and proudly defended that the said censures were published a long time before, knowing what he had done, and that he would fully avow it; whereby all evil-doers in those parts are so emboldered and comforted to do evil and to sustain their errors, and the said Archdeacon and his officers are so affrighted ... and through these ill-done riots it is like that the said John Belgrave and others, his adherents, will make an insurrection in a short time unless due remedy be made ...' (1)

If we take this case out of context, it is not immediately clear (apart from a reference to 'errors') that any actual heresy; rather than rabid anti-clericalism - is involved. We must consider, however, that the incident took place in Leicester, both before and after 1395 known as the 'lollards' metropolis', and that the man involved, John Belgrave, was later accused (in 1413 and 1414) of preaching more obviously heretical views in the same church. One wonders however, how much the Archdeacon was exaggerating the number and ferocity of Belgrave's followers.

We must now move on into the fifteenth century; between 1395 and the next great investigations of lollardy in 1413 and 1414, isolated cases from various sources give us tantalising glimpses of small groups of heretics in many hitherto unnoticed parts of the

1. Select cases in Chancery 1364-1471 (Selden Soc. X) p. 106.

south-east Midlands. Chronologically, the first of these is the case of John Seynon of 'Downton' in the diocese of Lincoln (probably either Dunton, Bedfordshire, or Dunton Bassett, between Leicester and Lutterworth). On 19th April, 1400,⁽¹⁾ Seynon recanted his heresies before Archbishop Arundel at Canterbury : he had 'tenui, communicavi, scripsi, dogmatizavi et publice defensavi'

1. That the office of the Holy Cross contained idolatry
2. That it was idolatry to worship crucifixes
3. That the sacrament was not the very Body of Christ
4. That the Mass was only a memorial of the Passion.
5. That the decrees of the Archbishop, King and Parliament were not sufficient to make him change his views on the Sacrament.

Nothing else is known of Seynon : he was presumably a literate layman, but his heresies are not especially distinctive. If, however, 'Downton' refers to Dunton Bassett, he may have obtained his dislike of crucifixes from the views of William Smith in nearby Leicester. At any rate, though he held genuinely 'lollard' views in 1400, Seynon was obviously a religious eccentric of a type more frequently found amongst the later lollards : by 1402 he had apparently moved to London, and had changed his lollardy for a kind of Judaism. He insisted that the Sabbath should be kept in the Mosaic fashion, and that pork was unclean : when he refused to recant, the Archbishop passed him off onto his diocesan, the Bishop of London,⁽²⁾ probably with a sigh of relief.

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1. Reg. Arundel (Cantuar) i. f. 411.
 2. *ibid.* ii. f. 54 see below p. 455.

Probably taken more seriously by the authorities were the heretics of Wigston, on the outskirts of Leicester, whom Arundel condemned in a letter to the vicar of Wigston in 1402 : the vicar was ordered to cite the unnamed persons, both clerical and lay, who were preaching heresies and errors in the parish.⁽¹⁾ The records do not, unfortunately, show whether they were brought to trial at that time : but they were almost certainly connected with the lollard congregation detected at Wigston in 1413, if they were not actually the same men.

Shortly after the Wigston admonition, the south-east Midlands acquired a new spiritual head in Philip Repingdon, the former lollard, who was consecrated Bishop of Lincoln in March 1405. Far from being lenient with his former co-religionists, he appears to have been especially hard on them.⁽²⁾ Archbishop Arundel said of him in 1407, during the trial of William Thorpe, a lollard priest:

'For he nee holdeth now, nor will hold the learning that hee taught, when hee was a Canon of Leicester. For no bishop of this land pursueth now more sharply them that hold thy way, than hee doth'

To which Thorpe replied :

'full many men and women wondreth on him, and speaketh him mikle shame, and holdeth him for a cursed enemy of the truth'.⁽³⁾

One of Repingdon's first acts as Bishop was to warn the Archdeacon of Huntingdon against unlicensed and heretical preachers in his area, and to order him to take action against them. In the course of the letter Repingdon declared that heresies were being preached in his diocese :

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1. Reg. Arundel i. f. 432.
 2. Except in the notable case of Robert Hoke, see below.
 3. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. p. 497.

'tam in ecclesiis et capellis nostrarum civitatis et diocesis ac eciam in hospiciis privatis et aliis et obscenis et indebitis locis' (1)

Only three prosecutions of heretics from our area, however, survive for the period 1405-1413, though doubtless there were more of which we have no record. The first is that of Robert Hoke, which will be considered below : the second that of John Edwards, chaplain, of Lincoln diocese, who was tried at Norwich on the 12th April, 1405, by the Bishop of Norwich, in whose diocese he had been preaching. Edwards' trial may well have some connection with the mandate of the Archdeacon of Huntingdon, (which was issued one day before it), since the chaplain is called of Brington, Huntingdonshire.⁽²⁾ The points that he recanted - that laymen may preach anywhere, that it is sin to give to friars, that no payment should be made for obsequies, that it is not necessary to confess to a priest, that any good man is a priest, that unbaptised children are saved, that no power of the Church can compel the swearing of oaths, and that the power of a good-living layman is equal to a priest or a bishop - show him to have been a heretic of the most extreme kind. His views bear a marked resemblance to those promulgated by William Smith of Leicester in 1389, especially points:- S.9, S.10, S.11 and S.12,⁽³⁾ though Edwards does not appear to have held heretical views on the Sacraments. It is possible, however, or even likely, that Edwards had learnt his heresies from Smith or one his Leicester disciples. We do not know if he remained orthodox after his Norwich recantation, but it is perhaps significant that a heretical priest with the same name was active at Mountsorrel, near Leicester, in 1413.

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1. Reg. Rippingdon (Lincoln Record Soc. 57,58) i. p. 7-8.
 2. Reg. Arundel i. f. 390.
 3. see above p. 80-81.

The only other heretic whom we know to have been cited during this period is John Barton,⁽¹⁾ priest, of Lincoln diocese, who appeared before Convocation in 1416 accused of being :

'super crimine heresis ut dicebatur suspectus et per plures partes Anglie de et super eodem crimine notorie diffamatus.' (2)

At this time Repingdon declared that he had cited Barton, in 1409 or 1410, to answer various heretical articles, and had excommunicated him when he had not appeared. There is no record of where Barton operated, or the doctrines that he taught.

More relevant to the history of lollardy than the little we know of these prosecutions are the activities at the Lollard centre of Braybrook, for which there remains a variety of interesting, if puzzling, evidence, much of which is contained in the wills of Sir Thomas Latimer and his wife Lady Anne, which we must now examine.⁽³⁾ Sir Thomas died either in late 1401 or early the next year, leaving behind him a most interesting and extraordinary testament : it is in English, and begins thus -

'I Thomas Latymere of Braybrok a fals knyght to God thankyng God of hys mercy havynghe syche mynde as he vouchit saff desyryngge that Goddes wyl be fulfillyd in me and in alle godys that he hath taken me to kepe ant to th~~at~~ make I my testament in this maner. Furst I knowlyche on worthy to bethequyn to hym any thhyngge of my power and therefore i preye to hym mekely of hys grace that he wole take so pore a present as my wrecchud soule is in to hys mercy thorw the besechyngge of his blyssyd modyr and hys holy seyntys and my wruchud body to be buryid were that ever i dye in the nexte churche yerd God vouche saff andraut in the churche but in the utereste corner as he that ys unworthi to lyn therinne save the mercy of God and that ther be non maner of cost aboute my biryngge neyther in methe nether in dryngg non in no other thyngge but yt be to any swech on that nedyth of after the lawe of God save twey taperc of wax and anon as i be ded thud me in the erthe ...' (3)

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1. Presumably not the same as John Barton, doctor of medicine of London, who purged himself of heresy before Archbishop Chichele in November 1416. Reg. Chichele IV. pp. 168-9.
 2. Reg. Chichele iii. p. 15.
 3. The Ancestor X pp. 19-20; see McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 207-20 esp. p. 218.

Latimer goes on to order his debts to be paid, and his servants and tenants to be rewarded and fairly dealt with, with special reference to those that are poor, crippled, or needy. Nothing whatsoever is left to any church or cleric. As overseers to the will he appoints Lady Anne Latimer and Sir Lewis Clifford, and as executors Thomas Wakelyn, Herry Sleyer, Richard Marmion, John Pulton and Janyn Baker.

The most remarkable things about this will are the almost unparalleled contempt of the language used of the testator's body, the lack of provision for any requiem mass, and the complete lack of bequests to church or clergy. These elements, and especially the first of them, have become the hallmark of a small class of fourteenth and early fifteenth century wills, known as 'Lollard wills'.⁽¹⁾

Significantly, a similar will was made by Sir Lewis Clifford, overseer of Latimer's will, before he died in 1404, having made, according to Walsingham,⁽²⁾ an abjuration of heresy.

'I Lowys Clyfforth fals and traytor to my Lord God
... my wrecchid careyne to be beryed in the ferthest
corner of the cherchyerd ... ne stoon ne othre thing
whereby man may witt where my stinkyng careyne
liggeth.' (3)

The resemblance in the language is quite striking, as is the lack of any funeral pomp or bequests to the Church. Just as obviously, the will of Sir John Cheyne, one of the 'Lollard Knights',⁽⁴⁾ and also Clifford's executor, is based on Latimer's or ^{Clifford's} ~~Cheyne's~~, or both. Cheyne speaks, like Clifford of being 'fals and traytour to God', and refers to his 'stinkyng careyne'.

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1. McFarlane Lollard Knights pp. 207-20.
 2. Historia Anglicana ii. 252-3.
 3. PCC Marche 7.
 4. Reg. Arundel ii. f. 203.

The significance of these wills is discussed fully by McFarlane, and it suffices here to say that those who made them were for the most part either lollard suspects or closely connected with them, and that Latimer's will was the prototype of all the others. This testament makes it seem extremely unlikely that Latimer returned to the orthodox fold before his death. True, it is pious and charitable in the extreme, but the piety has no reference to the orthodox church, and the charity is directed, not to friars or church institutions, as in the usual medieval will, but to the poor themselves. It is, in fact, the piety of Swynderby or William Smith rather than that of 'Holy Church'.

Nor does Latimer's choice of executors do anything to convince us that he did not die an active supporter of lollardy. Thomas Wakelyn we last saw as a member of the Chipping Warden congregation, and a possible promoter of heresy in Northampton, and there is no really convincing evidence that he had changed his ways by 1401. True, he had obtained a license to have Mass said privately in his own house, but Repingdon himself admitted in his mandate to the Archdeacon of Huntingdon that heresy was being practiced in private houses.⁽¹⁾ 'Herry Sleyer', or Henry Sleyre, was Latimer's own appointment as Vicar of Chipping Warden in 1397⁽²⁾: he cannot be directly connected with the incidents of 1389, but we have already noticed that heresy persisted in that area until 1417. Little is known of Richard Marmion, probably vicar of Ashley in Staffordshire, where Latimer also owned the advowson,⁽³⁾ or of John Pulton, lord of the manor of Desborough (where Latimer owned land) and former owner, with John Waryner (possibly one of the three

1. Reg. Repingdon (Lincoln Record Soc. 57, 58) i. p. 7-8.
2. Bridges, Northants i. p. 115.
3. Reg. Chichele iii. pp. 335-7.

men of that name who were mentioned as members of the 1389 Warden congregation) of Latimer's manor of Trafford⁽¹⁾ by Chipping Warden. Of Janyyn Baker nothing is known.

We have already seen the close connections, both in life and in the form of their wills, between Latimer and Sir Lewis Clifford, a supervisor of his testament, and it is notable that the supervisors of Clifford's own will were two more 'lollard knights', Sir John Cheyne and Sir Thomas Clanvowe. Clifford himself seems to have been a rather different type of man to Latimer the hereditary landowner : born of an obscure Devon family, he rose via the Black Prince's household to be one of the chamber knights closest to Richard II, acquiring many lands and rents in the process. He also fell under great suspicion of heresy, if the chroniclers are to be believed : apart from being mentioned many times in the same context as Latimer and the other 'Lollard Knights', it was Clifford who was sent by Princess Joan to Archbishop Sudbury in 1378, with a message forbidding the consistory court to take strong measures against Wycliffe.⁽²⁾ More important, he is alleged to have made a complete recantation of his heresy in about 1402, to have given a complete list of lollard conclusions to the Archbishop, and also the names of the chief heretics. The passing of the statute 'de heretico comburendo' in 1401 may well have some connection with this abjuration; the important point, however, is that in all probability Clifford was still an avowed heretic at the time Latimer chose him an executor. Sir Lewis died in 1404, by which time he had become associated with Sir John Oldcastle and Richard Colfox, another 1414 rebel, both of whom call themselves Clifford's executors in 1413.⁽³⁾

1. Bridges, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 25, 167.

2. Hist. Anglic. i. pp. 356, 363. For Clifford see McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 145n., 148, 160-2, 166n., 167-9, 173-6, 178-81, 185, 187, 189-91, 197, 207-11, 212, 214, 218.

3. CPR. 1413-16 p. 73; Foedera IX. p. 41. see below pp. 495, 563.

The whole circumstances and form of Latimer's will indicate, though they do not absolutely prove, that he died an unrepentant lollard. One name we might expect to find in his will, but do not, is Robert Hoke, the lollard parson of Braybrook. Hoke was, in fact, not preferred until shortly after Sir Thomas' death, when he was given the parish by Lady Anne, who also appointed a new chaplain to the subsidiary chapel of Westhall.⁽¹⁾

Shortly after appointing Hoke, Lady Anne made her will : by the end of October 1402, she had followed her husband to the grave. Her will is obviously based on that of Sir Thomas.

'First I be take my soule into the hands of God preynge to him mekely of his grace that he wole take so pore a present as my wrechud soule is to his mercy ...'⁽²⁾

Like her husband, she makes no arrangements for funeral services or obsequies, nor any bequests to the Church : after a few small legacies apparently to household servants -

'The residue off my goodes I wole to be solde and deled to nedy pore men after the lawe of goode by avisse and discreccion of the overseers and executores of this testament ... I desyre and prey maystre Philipp (Repingdon) Abbot of Leycestre and syr Lowes Clifford and Robert parson of Braybroke to be overseers that alle these thyngs ben fulfilld after the lawe of God. Myn executoures of this testament I praye sr. Robert Lethelade parson of Kynmerton, Thomas Wakelyn, Sir Henry Slayer parson of Warden and John Pulton ...'

Here, indeed, is a puzzling list of names : Clifford and Wakelyn are lollard suspects, Hoke a known and persistent heretic. To this list is now added 'Sir Robert Lethelade, parson of Kynmerton' -

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1. Reg. Beaufort (Lincoln) ff. 229, 254. Hoke may have been appointed on Clifford's advice.
 2. The Ancestor X. p. 21.

or Robert Lechlade, parson of Kemerton in Gloucestershire. Lechlade was one of the most prominent of the post-Wycliffe Oxford lollards, who first attracted the attention of the authorities by a series of heretical sermons, one of them against religious orders.⁽¹⁾ In 1395, at the same time as his return from Ireland and reported action against the Lollards,⁽²⁾ Richard II sent to a mandate to the chancellor of Oxford, instructing him to root out all heretics from the University, and especially Robert Lechlade:

'if it shall be found that he is such a one as will like a diseased sheep infect the flock ... (as certain lollards) especially the said Robert Lechlade whose profane conversation is there suffered, have for a long while published and taught nefarious opinions ... in the university and other secret places, as it were ~~sem~~ing tares amongst the people ...'⁽³⁾

In 1399, however, Lechlade was allowed to return to the University - 'from which he was banished by (Richard II) without reasonable cause'.⁽⁴⁾ No mention of any recantation is made. Lechlade probably regained his position through the influence of Sir William Beauchamp, Lord Abergavenny, a close associate of the 'Lollard Knights', who was high in favour with the new King. Certainly, before 1402, Beauchamp had presented him to the rectory of Kemerton, Gloucestershire, whose advowson he owned.⁽⁵⁾ Kemerton was in an area much associated with the 'Lollard Knights': ~~✓~~ Cheyne owned the neighbouring manor of Beckford, and (together with Sir Thomas Clanvowe) the nearby manor of Aston-on-Carent.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon ii. 1184.
 2. Annales Ric. II p. 183; Hist. Anglic. ii. 216-7.
 3. CCR 1392-6 p. 434.
 4. ~~CCR~~ ^{CPR} 1399-1401 p. 84.
 5. VCH. Gloucestershire viii p. 216-7; Worcester Sede Vacante Register (Worcs. Hist. Soc) i. p. exvi; CCR 1402-5 pp. 119-20
 6. CPR 1385-9 p. 130; Reg. Chichele ii. pp. 45-9.

Not far away was Pyrton, where another Beauchamp - appointed rector, William Counter, compiled the manuscript which contains Sir John Clanvowe's quasi-heretical treatise 'De Viis Duabus'.⁽¹⁾

Why was Lechlade chosen as executor? Latimer held no land near Kemerton, so the connection must either be a tenuous one from Beauchamp through Clifford, or, more probably, Lechlade's religious views. His presence as an executor, along with the other known or suspected lollards, goes still further towards confirming the view that the Latimers were prominent supporters of lollardy on a national level and that Braybroke was a major lollard centre.

How, then, are we to account for the presence of Philip Repingdon amongst the overseers? Like many of the others, he had a heretical background, but had recanted in 1382, and almost certainly not relapsed. By 1402 he had been Abbot of Leicester, a position he could not possibly have held in common with lollard views, for six years: he was shortly to become Bishop, and a noted persecutor of heretics.⁽²⁾ There are a number of explanations possible, but none likely. Repingdon's presence may whitewash Hoke, Clifford and Lechlade of heresy - yet Hoke was a practising heretic in 1405, and Lechlade in 1407.⁽³⁾ Nor can we believe that Repingdon was still a heretical sympathiser in 1402. More questions present themselves - if the Latimers died orthodox, why appoint some heretical executors?

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1. See below p. ~~189-90~~. Sir Richard Stury also presumably had some connected with Pyrton, for his coat-of-arms was formerly in a stained-glass window there. Nash, Worcestershire ii. p. 159.
 2. McFarlane, Lollard Knights p. 218 claims that Repingdon was not a zealous persecutor of lollards, and for no good reason rejects the testimony of William Thorpe to that effect as 'doubtful'. He also fails to establish the identity of Robert Lechlade.
 3. See below p. 273-4

equally, if they died lollards, why appoint Repingdon, the despised turncoat? Some motive based on old friendships may be the answer. The whole problem underlines the peculiarly ambiguous and inconsistent nature of heresy and persecution in England, well illustrated (to take only one example) by the fact that William Sawtre, in 1401, was burnt for only one relapse into heresy, while Hoke himself, in 1425, got away with two such relapses, apparently scot-free.

Repingdon's ties with the Latimers, possibly through old friendship and certainly through his overseership of Lady Anne's will, go far to explain why the Bishop turned a practically blind eye to the development of Braybrooke as a Lollard centre in the period 1402-1414. The activities there centred on Robert Hoke, who, we have already seen, may have been preaching heresy in Northampton as early as 1392, and whose activities may well have gone on continuously, at Braybrooke and elsewhere, from that date until his first arrest in 1406. At his third trial, before Convocation in 1425,⁽¹⁾ he was accused that :

'quod tu xv. die mensis Januarii anno domini MCCCC quinto^① eras judicialiter evocatus et comparuisti coram ... Philippo tunc Lincolnien' episcopo in ecclesia parochiali omnium sanctorum Northampton', responsurus certis articulis tunc tibi per eundem dominum Philippum seriosis objectis ... quod tu per annos, dies et tempora et longe et diu ante dictum xv tum diem infra provinciam nostram Cantuarien' presertim in diocesi Lincolnien' eras de heresi et lollardi publice apud bonos et graves diffamatus ac vehementer suspectus, necnon pro seminatore heresum et errorum publice dictus tentus et reputatus.'

At this point Hoke denied that he had been 'vehementer suspectus': presumably he meant that up to that time he had kept his activities secret. What had apparently brought him to Repingdon's (possibly reluctant) notice was that :

1. Reg. Chichele iii. pp. 106-7, 110-112.

2.

i.e. 1406, new style

'quodam die parasceves ante prefatum xv. diem per duas annos crucem ut moris est in ecclesia anglicana non adorasti, et quod parachiani tui eam non adorarent sed in sedilibus suis manerent absque adoracione hujusmodi approbasti.'

It is interesting here to note that the office of the Holy Cross was one particularly objected to by the eccentric enthusiast Seynon,⁽¹⁾ who may at one time have come under Hoke's influence.

As a result of his irregularities over the Good Friday service Hoke appeared before Repingdon in 1406, recanted his errors, and was ordered to do penance at Braybrook : however, in his own words:

'the whiche penaunce I perfourmed nat as I was enjoyned, for the whiche cause and my rebellion in that caas I was by auctorite of the forsaide bisshop accursed and openly denounced.'

Repingdon may have denounced him, but he did nothing else, and Hoke was apparently left in peace until October 1414, when he was brought before Chichele at St. Paul's, where he was made to perform the penance enjoined in 1406, and to recant once more. This second trial was brought about by his continuing ill-fame, and probably by the testimony against him as a fomenter of the 1414 revolt, which will be noticed in the section⁽²⁾ on the revolt itself. In 1425 he was again brought before convocation for a second relapse, and once more forced to abjure. It was said at that time that both before and after 1414 he had:

'viros et mulieres de heresibus et erroribus ... vehementer suspectos in comitivam tuam scienter recepisti, confortasti, eis in suis heresibus et erroribus favisti ac ipsorum sectam et mores approbasti ac cum scolas tenuisti ac conventiculas celebrasti ... libros diversos in lingua tam latina quam anglicana conscriptos in se multos errores et hereses continentes composuisti, scripsisti, et per alios scribi fecisti, ac scienter penes te habuisti, tenuisti et servasti ... eosdem libros et contenta in eisdem aliis personis tam viris quam mulieribus communicasti, erroresque et hereses in eos contentos

1. see above p. 113 .

2. below p. 140 .

credidisti, predicasti, docuisti et eciam aprobasti ...'

Two of Hoke's most important visitors were the Bohemian Hussites Nicholas Faulfisch and Jiří z Kninice, who came to England in 1406 to make copies of Wycliffe's tracts for the University of Prague. Unsuccessful in this at Oxford, they went first to Kemerton, where Lady Latimer's executor Robert Lechlade was presumably still rector, and then to Braybrook. On the way they passed through Lutterworth, rather ironically breaking a chip from Wycliffe's tomb there to carry off as a relic. While at Braybrook in Spring 1407 they made copies, presumably from originals supplied by Hoke, of various tracts by Wycliffe, including 'De Dominio Divino', their copy of which is annotated as having been written there.⁽¹⁾ Their visit proves that the link between Kemerton and Braybrook in Lady Latimer's will was a doctrinal one, and that by 1407 Braybrook was known to lollards as a centre of national, if not international, importance. Yet Repingdon, apparently, made no effort, after the rather half-hearted prosecution of 1406, to stamp it out : presumably his reasons for this were connected with his overseership of the Latimer will.

What makes Repingdon's forbearance even more surprising are the doctrines which Hoke admitted to spreading :

1. 'yif hit were in a prestes power to make goddis body he myghte make the foulest thing in kind his god, for the sacrament of the Auter is more imperfyt in kynde thanne hors breede or rattes breed, and the sacrament in the chalys is withouten comparison more imperfyt thanne venym.'
2. 'that the pharyseyes that now been as monkes, nennes, chanons and freres and alle other privat religions the whiche ben apprevd by holy cherche ben membres of the devel and not of god almyghty.'
3. 'confessions maad to the preest is nat necessarie to hele of mannes soule, but a craft brought in by the devell.'

1. De Dominio Divino, ed. R. L. Poole iii, pp. x-xii, 249; Deanesly, Lollard Bible p. 400; O. Odložilik, Wycliffe and Bohemia p. 14.

4. 'that lordes temporell been holden of the lawe of god to have all thinges in commun.'⁽¹⁾

This is lollardy of the most extreme kind, and perhaps most startling of all is Hoke's advocacy of lay communism, which can only be compared during this period with the views of the London lollard priest Ralph Mungyn⁽²⁾ in 1428.

From all this it will be clear that the village of Braybrook was, from at least 1402 until 1425, a lollard centre of great importance, and the influence of Hoke and his companions on the surrounding villages will become still clearer when we come to study the area's part in the 1414 rising.

Valuable evidence as to the state of lollardy in other parts of the south-east Midlands on the very eve of that revolt comes from Bishop Repington's visitation of the Archdeaconry of Leicester in May 1413. The records of this visitation still exist,⁽³⁾ and it has been well described by James Crompton,⁽⁴⁾ to whose work I am indebted. Eight cases of lollardy are reported : the first is that of William Tryvet of Twyford, north-east of Leicester and near Melton Mowbray. It was alleged that he

'tenet et affirmat quamplures opiniones et conclusiones erroneas et hereticas contra determinacionem universalis ecclesie, et eas publice predicat in tabernis publicis et reputatur publice diffamatus super heretica pravitate et lollardria, nec exercet ecclesiam suam diebus dominicis et festivis tempore divinorum et presertim in festis Pasche et Nativitatis Domini ultimo (i.e. 1412) preteritis non eger, iacebat in lecto suo usque post altas missas decantatas, et predicat aperte de evangelio in tabernis publicis ...'⁽⁵⁾

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1. Reg. Chichele iii. 110.
 2. See below p. 539.
 3. Lincoln Joint Registry, Visitation Book V j/o.
 4. Trans. Leics. Arch. and Hist. Soc., XLIV. p. 11 ff.
 5. Vj/o. f. 6. '

Tryvet denied the charge, and was told to appear at Sleaford on the 31st July with twelve compurgators to support his denial; when he failed to produce any supporters, he was sent home and ordered to return to Sleaford (a distance of twenty-five miles from Twyford) in September. At that time he was assigned a penance : he was to be whipped seven times round the church,⁽¹⁾ carrying a candle worth two-pence, and once round the market place at Leicester, carrying a candle worth threepence. During the whippings he was to be, like William Smith in 1389, 'nudus capud et pedes camisia et braccis tantum indutus'. It is difficult to know what to make of this rather inconclusive case : Twyford is somewhat isolated from other known heresy cases, though it is no more than eight miles from Leicester, and about the same from Sileby, where there were lollards in 1414. Tryvet may have picked up his heresy during a visit to one of these places. On the other hand he may not have been a 'lollard', as such, at all, but rather an individual who disliked going to church, and was given to talking about the New Testament in pubs. Whichever he was, we hear no more of him after 1413.

We have already examined⁽²⁾ the activities of the Derbyshire lollard preacher, William Ederyk or Tickhillpriest, who preached in the northern part of Leicestershire, and one of whose disciples, John Anneys of Castle Donington, was prosecuted during the 1413 Visitation.⁽³⁾ Ederyk was also said to have preached at Ulverscroft, four miles north-west of Leicester. His visit there almost certainly had connections with the activities of a chaplain, John Edward,⁽⁴⁾ who may conceivably be identified with the John Edwards of Brington who

1. It is by no means clear which church is meant - Sleaford, Twyford, or most probably, St. Martin's Leicester.

2. See above p.31-8.

3. Vj/o. f.14.

4. Vj/o. f.10.

recanted in 1405.⁽¹⁾ Edward was said to have preached without license, in 1412, at Mountsorrel and Woodhouse, both within two miles of Ulvercroft : it was not, however, actually alleged that he had preached heresy. Edward appeared before Repingdon's official, Pryce, with a number of his parishioners : these declared that neither Edward nor they were aware that unlicensed preaching was illegal. The authorities apparently believed them, for they were allowed to go home in peace : we should less inclined to be so credulous, especially in view of the number of extremely active rebels who appeared in the Mountsorrel area in 1414. One of these rebels was a chaplain called John Parlebien or Parlibien, which Mr. Crompton⁽²⁾ points out may well be an alias of John Edward. If this is so, and John Edward of Mountsorrel is also to be identified with John Edwards of Brington,⁽³⁾ we have in him another example of the persistent, wandering, heretical preacher appearing in Norwich in 1405 and (having been forced to abjure there) turning up in Leicestershire in 1412 and 1414.

Another town in which heresy was apparently strongly based was Wigston, now a southern suburb of Leicester, whose lollards had become so notorious in 1402 that Archbishop Arundel himself had sent a mandate to the vicar there ordering him to take action⁽⁴⁾ against them. In 1413, John Hutte junior, William Smith and Peter Eyyrke (or Herrick) were accused of possessing:

'quamplures libros anglicos suspectos et sunt publice diffamati super nephanda doctrina vocata lollardia nam cum personis super huiusmodi doctrinam multum suspectis confabulantur et communicant et tenent opinionem quod non obstantibus constitutionibus novellis Oxonie nuper editis possit et potest quilibet presbyter indifferenter predicare.'⁽⁵⁾

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1. See above p.115 .
 2. Crompton op. cit. p. 28.
 3. Parlibien, however, was pardoned in 1414, which makes it less likely that he had abjured in 1405 and then relapsed.
 4. See above p.115 .
 5. Vj/o.f.22.

In this last belief they agree with the parishioners of Mountsorrel. Hutte, Smith and Eyryke completely denied the charges, and apparently they were more or less believed. Because of their ill-fame, however, they were required to swear on the gospels that they would never hold or support heretical views, or consort with heretics : they were also required to submit their English books for inspection by their ordinary, according to the Oxford constitutions. This done, they were free to go - 'pro contemplacione' William Neuport, their vicar. A fourth Wigston man, John Friday, was charged that he - 'multum favet et adheret huiusmodi suspectis personis', but the case was dismissed on Friday's promise to amend himself.

The Wigston lollards got off remarkably lightly : as Crompton says 'In view of the background of lollardy in Wigston, it is not clear why their sins were considered to be less serious than those of Anneys and Trivet, and merited so slight a penalty, unless their higher social status was of assistance'.⁽¹⁾ This may indeed be the explanation, for the families of Friday, Hutte, Eyryke and Smith were amongst the most substantial in Wigston, the Fridays having been established as freeholders there since the 12th century. They had also become interlinked by marriage and tenure, and it is obvious that the four men accused in 1413 were very closely connected.⁽²⁾ Frequently mentioned with them is Ralph Friday, an associate of the Leicester Lollard John Belgrave⁽³⁾ in 1413, and accused of stirring up revolt in the following year. It seems possible that heresy had a strong hold on the richer families of Wigston, which makes the lack of activity there in 1414 the more surprising.

1. Crompton op. cit., p. 29.

2. Wigston Documents pp. 966, 967, 968, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 977, 978, 980, 986, 993, 995-6, 998, 1000-2, 1006, 1007, 1009, 1010, 1012, 1023 etc. Hoskins. The Midland Peasant pp. 31, 32, 42, 44, 71, 74, 87 etc.

3. See below.

The last case dealt with by Repingdon in 1413 was that of John Belgrave, whom we last heard of in 1395 insulting and threatening the Archdeacon's official, at St. Martin's Leicester. In 1413, at the same church, he was accused of being. (1)

'... notatus super heretica pravitate et reputatus secundum vulgus communis publicus et notorius lollardus nam tenet publice asserit et docet in aperto huiusmodi opiniones.'

First he preached against fasting, and devised a clever, if casuistic, method of avoiding it himself : he declared

'quod secundum legem divinam non sunt aliqua ieiunia precepta, in tantum quod ipsemet non ieiunat in quattuor temporibus anni secundum instituta canonica. Et si quis ipsum super violacionem huiusmodi ieiuniorum fuerit allocutus, accipit prandium suum paratum pro una dieta et dividit illud in tres partes, et dicit, si liceat mihi comedere istas tres partes in una dieta, quis prohibebit me comedere eas unam partem videlicet in iantaculo, aliam in prandio et terciam in cena in una die, quia dicit quod satis est ut quis ieiunet a viciis licet non ieiunandem ab escis carnalibus.'

Next, he stated that offerings should not be made in the church unless the rector were present - or in other words, he attacked the fact that the rectory of St. Martin's like all the other churches in Leicester, had been appropriated by the Abbey of Leicester. The Abbey had left the chancel of Belgrave's church unfinished, and he often interrupted services, especially when the Mayor was present

'prohibuit et interdixit ne quis eorum quicquam offerent in dicta ecclesia quousque proprietarii ... structuram cancelli eiusdem ecclesie usque ad plenum consummassent.'

The amount of support for Belgrave, not only amongst his own parishioners, but also amongst the rulers of the town, may be judged by the following:

1. Vj/o. f.10.

'... huiusmodi prohibiciones et interdicta, fecit sepius singularibus maioribus et quasi omnibus parochianis eiusdem ecclesie ne quicquam in ipsa ecclesia offerent'

Belgrave was stated to have remained in the above errors 'et pluribus aliis' for more than five years - that is, since about 1407-8.

Lastly, he spoke against all estates of the church, and reminded his listeners - 'in tabernis coram laicos et aliis locis tam publicis quam privatis' - that Repeyngdon, now Bishop of Lincoln, went against the precepts that he himself preached as a young man before 1382 ...

'... quia si faceret secundum quod diu in minoribus constitutus predicavit, circuiret per patrias pedibus eundo et more apostolorum predicaret.'

Belgrave at first absolutely denied all the charges, but later partly admitted the last two, throwing himself on the grace of the authorities. Of the first three articles he purged himself with twelve compurgators, and was allowed to go free after he had sworn not to adhere to heresy or heretics. Though his offences were more heinous than those of any others prosecuted in 1413, he got off the lightest, even though this was the second complaint against him. The lenience shown in 1413, and the fact that he escaped prosecution for five years and more, probably indicates the amount of powerful support he had in the town, and the church's desire not to antagonise a notoriously anti-clerical community.

Belgrave appears to have been comparatively well off, significantly owning land in Wigston. His compurgators were all substantial burgesses; Richard Chaloner (who had been associated with Ralph Chapman, one of the 1414 lollards)⁽¹⁾ John Barbour,⁽²⁾

1. Wigston Docts. 571, 572, 579.

2. Wig. Docts. 569 ; Leics. Recds. ii. 203, 449.

(perhaps related to Laurence and Roger Barbour, accused in 1414) Ralph Friday (himself accused in 1414 and possibly the son of John Friday of Wigston), Thomas Lewyn, William Coupere, William Skynnere and John Wyngar. Mr. Crompton states that they were all connected with Guild of Corpus Christi, which had a chapel at St. Martin's, and remarks : 'There seems little doubt that the church, if not the Guild, contained Lollard sympathisers if not active Lollards ...' (1) There also seems little doubt that the lollard movement, or at least an extreme anti-clericalism, remained strong in the town as a whole. Certainly Leicester produced a number of lollards in 1414, with Belgrave and Ralph Friday, as well as at least one veteran of 1389, amongst them.

This, then, is the south-east Midlands on the eve of the lollard revolt. Lollardy was active (as usual) in Leicester, and in various parts of Leicestershire, especially the north of the county where William Ederyk and his followers had been at work. Just over the Northamptonshire border was the important lollard centre at Braybrook, and outbreaks of heresy had occurred within the last thirty years both at Northampton and in south-western Northamptonshire. The rising itself was to reveal that heresy still persisted in most of these areas, and that lollard groups also existed in parts of the east midlands from which we have so far heard nothing.

1. Crompton op. cit. p. 30.

The South-East Midlands : Oldcastle's Revolt and
after, 1414-20.

The counties of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire were both deeply involved in Sir John Oldcastle's revolt. One of the first incidents of the revolt took place at Belton, in North-West Leicestershire, on the 26th December 1413, when William Warde of Merrill Grange, near Belton, 'ploughman' or 'farmer' and William Smith⁽¹⁾ of Belton rose 'vi et armis' in support of Sir John Oldcastle. We are not told exactly what the nature of their 'rising' was - perhaps they made a speech in the market place to raise support for their cause. Their action may have been a little premature, for it was not until the 5th January that they appeared in Leicester, arrayed in armour with swords and bows. By now they were accompanied by a number of their neighbours from the Mountsorrel area : John Parlibien, a chaplain of Belton or Mountsorrel, William Frome 'webster' of Sileby, John Ludbrooke, 'ironmonger' of Mountsorrel, and two more Mountsorrel men, John Scot and Richard Webster. At Leicester they probably received support, and perhaps reinforcements, from their co-religionists in that town, and then moved south to London, where some, at least, of them appeared in St. Giles' fields on the 10th January.

This group of rebels seem to have had genuine religious motives for their actions : Warde, Smith and Parlibien were said to have refused to honour the sacraments (probably indicating a belief in the doctrine of remanence) and to have preached that confession to priests was unnecessary and that pilgrimages were valueless. Their beliefs were almost certainly a result of the preaching of the Derbyshire lollard William Ederyk, who is known to have visited Castle

1. The ranks of the lollard movement are full of men named William Smith. There is no evidence to identify William Smith of Belton with the man of the same name accused of heresy in Wigston in 1413, or with William Smith of Leicester, active in 1389. He is definitely not to be identified with the William Smith of Leicester indicted in 1414.

Donington and Kegworth, near Belton, and Ulverscroft, near Mountsorrel,⁽¹⁾ in the years immediately before the revolt. They may also have been influenced by the teaching of John Edward, (perhaps an alias of John Parlibien) who had preached in the Mountsorrel area.⁽²⁾ Their connection with Ederyk is proved by the fact that he told some of his Derbyshire followers to meet William Frome of Sileby in the inn called 'le Wrastleyre on the hope' in London, and receive their instructions from him as to what they should do.⁽³⁾

The Belton and Mountsorrel group were fortunate in their dealings with the authorities after the revolt : Warde was tried for his life for heresy and rebellion, and though he pleaded not guilty, was condemned to be hanged and burnt hanging at St. Giles' Field. The sentence was, however, not carried out, and after a time in the Sherrif of London's prison he was pardoned and handed over to the Abbot of Westminster for correction. Ludbrooke, Scot and Parlibien were pardoned in 1414, and Webster in early 1416. The fate of William Smith and Frome is not known, but if Frome was, as he appears to have been, one of the organisers of the plot, he may well have been one of those executed. None of the group are heard of again after the revolt.⁽⁴⁾

As might be expected, a number of lollards were arrested in Leicester after the revolt, though what part they actually took in it is very difficult to say. In Trinity term 1414, William Mably, parchmentmaker, Nicholas Taillour, Ralph Chapman, Roger Godd Smyth, Laurence Barbour, William Smith and John Belgrave were stated to be in the Marshal's prison in London.⁽⁵⁾ Whether this means that they

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1. see above p.31-8.
 2. see above p.127-8.
 3. KB9/204/1/58 see above p.36 .
 4. KB9/204/1/130,137; KB27/614/1,615/7,617/4,619/8; Elii/26/30; CPR 1413-16 pp. 153, 252; CCR 1413-19 p. 262.
 5. KB27/613/6; KB9/204/1/141

had been arrested in London during the course of the revolt, or arrested in Leicester and taken to London is difficult to say, but the former alternative is more likely. Indicted in addition to these were Roger Barbour, probably a relation to Laurence Barbour, and Ralph Friday. Most of these men are already known to us : Nicholas Taillour, Roger Goldsmith, William Mably (in the guise of William Parchemyner) and probably William Smith were amongst those indicted at Leicester in 1389, and Smyth at least had recanted then. Belgrave had already been indicted twice, in 1395 and 1413, on which last occasion Ralph Friday (probably connected to John Friday of Wigston) had stood surety for him - as had John Barbour, probably related to Laurence and Roger Barbour.

Mably, Taillour, Chapman, Goldsmith and Laurence Barbour were indicted only as being 'common lollards' : they were handed over to Repingdon, who released them after a recantation.⁽¹⁾ The charges against the others were more serious : Belgrave, despite his 1413 recantation, was declared to be a lollard and a great speaker against Papal power, saying that there had been no Pope since the time of St. Gregory. Despite his previous record he too was allowed to recant, and was released. His associate Friday was also said to be a lollard, and to have said that Archbishop Arundel was a disciple of Antichrist - unfortunately we do not know what punishment this unwise statement brought him.

The influence of Braybrook can be seen in the charges against Smith and Roger Barbour. Smith had received a heretical bill from Thomas Ile of Braybrook, 'compositor et asportator billarum Johannis Oldcastle', and had passed it on to Roger Barbour. In neither

1. BM Add. MS. 38525 f.28.

case is their fate known, though if Smith is to be identified with the lollard leader of 1389, his recantation at that time, and subsequent relapse, will have gone against him in 1414.

The 1414 Leicester indictments and penalties seem to indicate that, though there was probably still a lollard congregation of sorts in the town, it did little to aid the revolt. It is even possible that some of the 1414 accusations were made purely on grounds of bad reputation. If, however, Smith and his associates were really guilty, a remarkable continuity from 1389 to 1414 is indicated. The fact that they did not, apparently, take much part in the revolt is perhaps due to a divergence of aims between the old, purely religious, lollardy of the earlier days, and the political, revolutionary, lollardy of 1414. Many of the veterans of 1389 must also have been well struck in years by 1414.

A far more active role in Oldcastle's revolt was played by the lollards of south Leicestershire, an area where we know of no previous cases of lollardy. The influences in this area are not hard to find : firstly, it is only a few miles from Braybrooke, where the vicar, Robert Hoke and a 'scrivener' called Thomas Scot or Thomas Ile were active in 1414. Scot was known to both the Leicestershire and Northamptonshire juries as a heretic and a writer and circulator of lollard bills, one of which he sent to William Smith in Leicester. These bills, which must also have been current in the Braybrook~~k~~ area, were said to have contained attacks on the orthodox doctrine of the sacraments, on auricular confession, and on pilgrimages : they were also said by one jury to be 'billarum Johannis Oldcastle', so it is possible that some of them had been originally composed by Sir John himself.⁽¹⁾ Probably working in close connection with Hoke and Scot

1. P.R.O. KB9/204/1,130.134,141; KB27/613/6 (Leics.) KB9/204/1 iii., KB27/615/28, 616/5 (Northants)

were Thomas Noveray of Illston-on-the-Hill, gentleman, and Walter Gilbert, a chaplain of Kibworth Harcourt who had also preached in Derbyshire under the name of Walter Kibworth.⁽¹⁾

Noveray, who held land in Illston and whose family had once owned nearby Burton Overy,⁽²⁾ was well known to the Leicestershire juries as a preacher against pilgrimages and the worship of crucifixes or images of the saints. He had preached at Carlton Curlieu, between Illston and Kibworth, as well as in many 'locis illicitis', and had opposed the Church's burial rites. So confident was he of the success of Oldcastle's rising that he had sold his goods before he rode off to London on the 4th January⁽³⁾; probably accompanying him was John Colleson, sometimes called 'clerk', of his neighbouring village of Coston, who left home on the same day.⁽⁴⁾

A larger contingent gathered, also on January 4th, at Kibworth Harcourt, under the leadership of Walter Gilbert. Four Kibworth men - John Blackwell, Henry Valentyn, Simon Carter and Walter's kinsman Nicholas Gilbert - were joined by William Upton from Smeeton Westerby (formerly owned by Sir Thomas Latimer) and John Symon of Shangton 'apparati in armis in auxilio Johannis Oldcastle'. They were probably joined there by another Shangton man, John Scriptor - from his name perhaps another disseminator of heretical literature. Like William Ederyk in Derbyshire, Gilbert was not above buying support, and Upton and Blackwell had received the large sum of twenty shillings each⁽⁵⁾ to join the revolt, perhaps drawn from money provided by Noveray.⁽⁶⁾ Probably connected with the Kibworth Harcourt

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1. KB9/204/1/58,63; KB27/614/45, 627/9 see above p.34-5.
 2. VCH Leics. iv. p. 71; Wigston Documents pp. 428,429,430.
 3. KB9/204/1/134,139; KB27/613/6; Reg. Repingdon (memo)f.132.
 4. KB9/204/1/144; KB27/614/1
 5. The Derbyshire lollards got only 6s. 8d. each.
 6. KB9/204/1/132,134, 206/1/32; KB27/613/6,614/7,616/17

lollards were two men of the neighbouring village of Saddington, John Warrewyk and Roger Vaux, who while they apparently did not join the revolt, were indicted of being lollards, of publicly debating ten heretical propositions and holding unorthodox views.⁽¹⁾ Also associated may have been Nicholas Selby 'ironmonger of Leicestershire', whom we know to have been at St. Giles' Fields.⁽²⁾ The number of lollards produced by this very small area - all their villages of origin fit into the same five square miles - is probably mainly due to the work of Noveray and Gilbert immediately before the revolt, but it is possible that the foundations of their work had been laid much earlier by Robert Hoke or another protégé of Sir Thomas Latimer, who owned land in four villages between Saddington and Kibworth Harcourt, and the advowson of another.⁽³⁾

Nearly all the rebels from the Kibworth area were taken prisoner either during or immediately after the revolt, and were treated with varying degrees of severity. Walter Gilbert, rightly considered to be the ringleader, was hung at St. Giles' Fields a few days after the defeat of the rising, as was his brother Nicholas.⁽⁴⁾ A less severe line, probably allowing for the fact that many of them had been bribed or cajoled into revolt, was taken with the peasants : Upton, Valentyn, Nicholas, Selby, Carter, Colleson of Coston and Scriptor of Shangton were all pardoned,⁽⁵⁾ though Upton probably languished in prison for a year after the revolt, and Valentyn for longer still. There is no record of any of them being ordered to

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1. KB9/204/1/132; KB27/613/6
 2. CPR 1413-16 p. 271; E199/26/30.
 3. i.e. Foxton, Gumley, Smeeton Westerby, Langton, and the advowson of Church Langton. PRO Inquisitiones Post Mortem iii. p. 275.
 4. CCR 1413-19 pp. 56-7. .
 5. KB27/613/6,617/17; CCR 1413-19 p. 262; CPR 1413-16 p. 271.

recant, which may indicate that the government thought of them only as minor political offenders and not as dangerous heretics.

Warrewyk and Vaux of Saddington, though they probably took no part in the revolt itself, were brought to London and imprisoned with William Smith and the Leicester lollards, and afterwards made to recant before Repingdon, their ordinary.⁽¹⁾ Also forced to recant was the lollard gentleman Thomas Noveray, who had succeeded in gaining a pardon from the civil power in January 1415.⁽²⁾ He was ordered to appear before the Abbot of St. Mary's, Leicester, and the Archdeacon of Leicester, on October 26th 1415, with twelve compurgators 'sui gradus et status super huiusmodi oppinionibus minime suspectis'. It would be interesting to know whether Noveray managed to find twelve gentlemen 'sui gradus et status', to support him. The place of his appearance, the church of St. Martin's, Leicester, had been the scene of a number of anti-clerical incidents (instigated by John Belgrave) in 1413 and before, and it is possible that Noveray's purgation there was designed to discourage any remaining lollards in the congregation. After he had purged himself, Noveray was to make recantation at his own parish church of Carlton Curlieu, and in other places where he had spread his 'insane' doctrines : by this it was hoped that he would repair any damage that his preaching had already done.⁽³⁾

Thomas Scot (or Ile), whose crimes as a lollard pamphleteer might have earned him the death sentence, escaped even more lightly : shortly after the revolt he was arrested at Braybrook on suspicion of lollardy, but by December 1414 he had received a full pardon, after

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1. KB27/613/6; BM. Add. Mss. 38525 f. 28.
 2. KB27/613/6
 3. Reg. Repingdon (memo.) f. 132.

giving surety in Chancery for his future good behaviour. No recantation, rather surprisingly, seems to have been required of him.⁽¹⁾

His companion at Braybrook, Robert Hoke, continued to bear his 'charmed life'. Though previously cited for heresy in 1405, in a state of relapse and excommunication for not having performed the penance given to him then,⁽²⁾ and indicted by the jury of Gartree hundred as a notorious lollard in 1414,⁽³⁾ Hoke suffered nothing worse than being made to ~~perform~~^{perform} the 1405 penance.

To sum up : there were three main groups of lollards in Leicestershire in 1414. Firstly, those from Mountsorrel, led by William Smith of Belton and William Warde : secondly, those from Leicester, who took little or no part in the revolt, but whose traditions and many of whose members went back to 1389, and thirdly those from the Kibworth area, led by Walter Gilbert and Thomas Noveray. Both the second and the third groups were influenced by the lollard centre at Braybroke, while the first was probably influenced by the Derbyshire preacher Ederyk. The government was very lenient with the Leicestershire rebels, and only two of them, Walter and Nicholas Gilbert, are known to have been executed.

Over the county boundary, the Northamptonshire lollards were equally active, the most important centre, as we might expect after the incidents of 1392, being the Northampton area. Active there, apparently under the leadership of John Preest of Northampton,⁽⁴⁾ were Thomas Mandesford of Northampton, John Turnour of Kingsthorpe, a suburb of the town, and Thomas Gyle of Brixworth, five miles to the

1. Just. 3/52/16/10,12.

2. Reg. Chichele iii. pp. 106-7, 110-111.

3. KB9/204/1/134.

4. From his name, perhaps another unbeneficed cleric.

north, who rose in support of Oldcastle on the 5th January. Also involved was John Billyng, a prisoner in Northampton gaol at the time of the enquiry, whom the Northampton jury stated to have been sent by John Preest post-haste to London with a letter, though the purport and contents of the letter were unknown - as they unfortunately remain. Presumably Preest, like the other local teachers, was in direct contact with Oldcastle, which would explain the simultaneous risings at Kibworth, Leicester, Northampton, Daventry, and other places in the south Midlands.⁽¹⁾ Three more Northampton men, Thomas Seyton, hosier, John Clerk, fuller, and John Tukley, were not accused of rebellion but 'diffamant fuerint quod essent de secta lollardorum et recessit', though the jury declared that they were ignorant of the reason for this defamation.⁽²⁾ These three may have been the remnant of a lollard congregation which grew up between 1393 and 1414, and their past record told against them at the time of the revolt. The government apparently took the defamation seriously enough to act against them, for Seyton applied for and received a pardon in June 1414.⁽³⁾

The area to the north of the town also produced a few lollards, whose origins can perhaps be attributed to the Vicar of Pitsford, four miles due north of the town. We know little of this man, Thomas Spencer, save that he received a pardon for his part in the revolt in June 1414, and that he was Vicar from 1402 to 1418. Presumably his heresy was not considered serious enough to remove him from his flock.⁽⁴⁾ From the next village to the west, Brixworth, came Thomas

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1. KB9/204/1/93,95,99,100; KB27/615/28.,616/5.
 2. KB9/204/1/99,100.
 3. CCR 1413-19 p. 262.
 4. CCR 1413-19 p. 262; Bridges, Northants i. p. 462; Baker, Northants i. p. 63.

Gyle, who joined the Northampton rebels, while from the next to the east, Holcot, came William Tebaud. Tebaud, though he was not accused of rising in 1414, seems to have been a fairly extreme heretic : he was indicted of declaring that the Pope had no more power than he, William, had.⁽¹⁾ At Harleston, nearer Northampton, William Asshe rose in support of Oldcastle on January 5th, probably at the instigation of Preest.⁽²⁾

Another small congregation of lollards seem to have existed at Daventry, ten miles west of Northampton. Here, the leaders were a 'hostiler', Philip Turnour, and a parchmentmaker, John Asser : these preached that pilgrimages to the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury or any other shrine were useless, and also against the worship of images. Asser did not, apparently, go to St. Giles himself, but on the 3rd January encouraged others to do so. The next day another Daventry man, Edward Clerk, rode out of town on his way to London, perhaps accompanied by Turnour. Turnour himself got as near to London as Barnet, where he was arrested by the King's officers on the night of the 6th January, and conveyed to London. He succeeded, however, in escaping, and fled 'quo nescit'. Two more members of the Daventry group were a female disciple, Eleanora Warde, and one Roger Swan, who was indicted of violating an image of the Holy Trinity, of preaching against pilgrimages, and of consenting to Oldcastle's revolt. Also indicted by the Daventry jury was Thomas Robyns, of Grandborough in Warwickshire, ten or so miles to the north-west : he was said to have left his home on the 5th January and

1. KB9/204/1/11; KB27/619/2.

2. KB9/204/1/85; KB27/615/28,616/5.

ridden to London.⁽¹⁾

The Chipping Warden area, to the south of Daventry, produced only two rebels in 1414 (though lollardy was still active there in 1417). These were Robert Aleyn of Blakesley and John Wykyn 'honeymonger' of Towcester - both were pardoned soon after the revolt, so we can presume their part in it was not great.⁽²⁾

As in Leicestershire, the government was surprisingly lenient with the Northamptonshire rebels. All the Northampton rebels, including Preest the ringleader, were pardoned by January 1415,⁽³⁾ as were the non-rebelling lollard Seyton, and the priest Spencer of Brixworth.⁽⁴⁾ A more serious view was apparently taken of the heresies of William Tebaud, who remained in prison until 1416, when he made purgation before the Abbot of Westminster,⁽⁵⁾ and Thomas Robyns of Grandborough died in the Sheriff's prison in London on October 13th 1414.⁽⁶⁾ The case of Asser and Turnour is more complicated : pardons were issued for them in early 1414,⁽⁷⁾ on the condition that they purged themselves of heresy before the ordinary, which Turnour did not do until Easter 1416.⁽⁸⁾ Shortly afterwards they were wanted men again, probably for aiding Oldcastle while he was on the run.⁽⁹⁾ The fate of the other Northamptonshire lollards

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1. KB9/204/1/104/105; KB27/616/5, 619/13,620/8.
 2. CCR 1413-19 p. 262.
 3. KB27/615/1; C67/37/48.
 4. CCR 1413-19 p. 262.
 5. KB27/619/2.
 6. E199/26/30.
 7. CCR 1413-19 p. 262; KB27/616/5
 8. KB27/620/8.
 9. see below p. 146 .

is unknown but there is no evidence that any of them were executed.

The information arising out of the 1414 indictments shows that lollardy was still a living force in the county, and especially in the Northampton and Daventry areas. It continued to survive all over the south-east Midlands, and especially in Northamptonshire, for some three or four years after the revolt, at which time heresy in this area either disappeared almost completely until the 1440's, or escaped detection by the authorities.

The concern of Bishop Repingdon to extirpate all trace of lollardy in the area is shown by the number of commissions issued by him to local clergy, ordering them to seek out heretics and bring them to justice. Beginning immediately after the revolt with orders to all the clergy of Lincoln cathedral to be present on February 19th 1414 at an enquiry into heresy, which was said to be widespread both in the city and the diocese,⁽¹⁾ the Bishop sent out mandates to investigate heresy in Leicestershire (September 1416),⁽²⁾ Lincolnshire (1416),⁽³⁾ and Northamptonshire (1415, 1416 and 1417).⁽⁴⁾ Leicestershire, perhaps surprisingly, seems to have been quiescent, for no prosecutions are recorded there after 1414. Lincolnshire, however, which apparently sent no rebels to London in 1414, produced a small number of lollards in 1416-17. Early in 1416, or late in the previous year, John Baggeworth, perpetual vicar of Wilsford, near Sleaford, and 'N.B.', chaplain of 'K',⁽⁵⁾ were charged with giving shelter, help and support to a notorious heretic, one John Bonde, pretended

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1. Reg. Repingdon (Memo.) f. 100.
 2. *ibid.* ff. 160-161, 165.
 3. *ibid.* f. 166.
 4. *ibid.* ff 134, 156, 174 *qv.* M. Archer, Reg. Repingdon (Lincoln Record Soc.) i. p. xxxvi.
 5. Perhaps Nicholas B., chaplain of Kelby, next to Wilsford.

chaplain, and other lollards, despite the Bishop's warning against heresy. Baggeworth and Nicholas both appeared before Repingdon, and, after abjuring, were assigned penance and released.⁽¹⁾ In August 1416, however, Repingdon set up a commission to investigate certain suspect books belonging to Baggeworth. The books, which were both in Latin and English, were found to contain errors, and publicly burned at Lincoln, at the time of procession on a holy day to give maximum publicity, and so deter any would-be lollards. Baggeworth himself was confined to the Bishop's prison as a relapsed heretic.⁽²⁾ The whole case suggests that there may have been a lollard centre at Wilsford, but no cases of heresy from the surrounding area are recorded to bear this out.

Most of the incidences of lollardy in this part of the midlands, however, took place in Northamptonshire, where heresy was still especially prevalent, as can be seen by the fact that Repingdon issued at least three mandates, in 1415, 1416, and 1417, to deal with lollards in this county. Persistent rumours linked Sir John Oldcastle, hiding from the authorities after the failure of his revolt, with south-west Northamptonshire. In the summer of 1415 we know that he was hiding at Chesterton in Warwickshire, seven or so miles from the Northamptonshire boundary,⁽³⁾ and it is possible that he was at Daventry in June of 1416, hiding at the house of Philip Turnour. Turnour had been pardoned early in the year for lollardy and participation in the 1414 revolt,⁽⁴⁾ but he had apparently relapsed a few months afterwards. In 1419 Simon Horn, a yeoman of Daventry, was

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1. Reg. Repingdon (Memo.) f. 132.
 2. Reg. Repingdon (Memo.) ff 152,157.
 3. KB9/209/40; C81/1422/75 see below p.293 .
 4. KB27/620/8.

accused of conspiring with Turnour on the 8th June, 1416, knowing him to be a traitor and to have received Oldcastle in his home. Horn was acquitted, after finding mainpernors for his good conduct, but other evidence examined below suggest that the charge may have been a true one. (1) Turnour himself was re-arrested before Michaelmas 1417, when he died of pestilence in the King's Bench prison, (2) though orders for his arrest, along with his Daventry companion, John Asser, (who must also have relapsed after his pardon in 1415), were still being issued in 1418. (3)

Oldcastle may also have been in Daventry on May 8th 1417 : one John Heywode 'husbondman', who apparently occupied a house formerly belonging to Philip Turnour, was accused of sheltering him at that time. Heywode was also said to have conspired against the King with Turnour and Asser on the 28th December 1413, just before the revolt. (4) The jury dismissed the case, but the truth of the accusations may be borne out by the charge made against Sir Thomas Talbot, who took part in the 1414 revolt. Talbot was accused of having conspired with Oldcastle and others at Silverstone, fifteen miles south of Daventry, on the 29th May 1417. They were said to have plotted against the King, planning to join with the Scots and other national enemies *in totius destructionem regem*. (5) Talbot was found not guilty by the jury, but he was nevertheless imprisoned in the Tower of London by the King's orders.

Whether or not Oldcastle was in Silverstone in May, he was certainly there two months later, being sheltered by one Hugh Frayn

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1. KB9/83/m.24; KB27/632/11
 2. KB9/210/39
 3. CCR 1413-19 p. 262; KB27/630/18.
 4. KB27/630/17
 5. KB27/630/13 see below p. ~~377~~ 403 for Sir Thomas Talbot

of Silverstone and Joan his wife : another villager, John Henkeman, and his wife Alice, may also have been involved. The royal authorities presumably had wind of his presence there, for he decamped in such a hurry that he left behind him a complete suit of plate armour, including a 'basenet de nova faccione', worth 56s. 4d. On the same day, perhaps after his hurried flight from Silverstone, he was at Byfield, a few miles from Chipping Warden, where he was sheltered by William atte Well and his wife. At Byfield, and perhaps at Silverstone, he was accompanied by John Langacre, a mercer of London and High Wycombe who had taken part in the 1414 revolt, and had been pardoned after some time in prison, but had subsequently relapsed.⁽¹⁾ Langacre was taken prisoner, perhaps at Byfield, and subsequently executed at Northampton, though Oldcastle escaped to remain at liberty for a few more months. William atte Well and Hugh Frayn were hanged with Langacre, and their heads were displayed on the gates, respectively, of Coventry and Northampton, to discourage any rebels remaining there. Joan Frayn and John Henkeman were still imprisoned in Northampton castle in February 1418.⁽²⁾

Byfield, where Oldcastle took shelter in July 1417, seems to have had a tradition of lollardy stretching back at least as far as 1389, when several inhabitants of the village had been involved with the heretical congregation in nearby Chipping Warden. Oldcastle himself plainly had more than one contact there, for (in addition to the atte Well family) he was also well acquainted with Simon 'nuper clericum parochialem de Byfield, et postea manutentum cum Johannis Oldcastle lollardus'. This Simon was indicted in 1421 of breaking into

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1. CPR 1413-16 p. 271; CCR 1413-19 p. 148; E199/26/30 see below p. 391 .
 2. KB9/209/6,27; Just. 3/52/19/4,8,21; E136/148/3; E357/24/83.

Byfield parish church during the night of 26th December 1416, and there cutting off and burning the head of an image of the Virgin.⁽¹⁾ How long Simon had been parish clerk is unknown, but he may well have been one of the leaders of the local lollard congregation.

At least one Byfield lollard, William Emayn, was not content to remain at home, but took to spreading his doctrines far and wide.⁽²⁾ Born in the village,⁽³⁾ his first move was to Buckingham, where he fell foul of the authorities and was brought to trial before Bishop Repingdon⁽⁴⁾ at Caldwell priory, near Bedford, as a result of which he spent two years in the Bishop's prison. He subsequently appeared before Repingdon at Northampton and Sleaford successively, though whether this was as a result of the first charge, or of subsequent accusations, is not clear. Emayn eventually purged himself of heresy, with six compurgators, at Chacombe, Northants., during his fourth appearance before Repingdon.⁽⁵⁾ He thereafter drifted to Bristol (another centre of lollardy) where he relapsed, and in March 1429, ten years or more after his purgation in Northamptonshire, he was

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1. KB9/93/9; KB27/641/14.
 2. Reg. Stafford (Bath and Wells) i. pp. 76-80 see below p 261-3.
 3. He may have been one of the few lollards to have been brought up a heretic.
 4. Bishop from 1405-1419.
 5. No record of Emayn whatsoever remains in Bishop Repingdon's register, and all the evidence above is drawn from the record of his trial before Bishop Stafford of Bath and Wells in 1429. Had it not been for his relapse, therefore, we would have known nothing of Emayn's earlier activities in the midlands, and this case well illustrates the danger of making definite statements concerning the early lollards.

brought to trial before Bishop Stafford at Wells.⁽¹⁾ His trial is described in detail elsewhere,⁽²⁾ and it suffices here to say that he disbelieved in images, pilgrimages, prayers to the saints and the legality of the mendicant friars, though he does not seem to have held unorthodox views on the sacraments. To what extent Emayn's views reflected those of the Byfield lollards, however, is unknown, and his opinions may well have been more closely based on the teachings of the Bristol Lollards, and especially of Master William Taillour.⁽³⁾

No record remains of a lollard congregation in Byfield after 1417, but nevertheless one may have persisted there for many years afterwards, to be remembered in a still-surviving local tradition. The village pub is called the "Cross Tree", and is said to be named after a place in the surrounding woodland where 'some religious people' met secretly to avoid persecution.⁽⁴⁾

Apart from the records and rumours of Oldcastle's presence in south-west Northamptonshire during the period after 1414, evidence remains of lollard activity at that time in other parts of the county. The Northampton lollards, for instance, were probably implicated in a plot against Henry V (then at Kenilworth) which took place at Christmas 1416, at which time,⁽⁵⁾ 'sparsae sunt scedulae Lollardorum venenosae, impingentes contra cunctos status Ecclesiae, fere in qualibet magna dome vel hospitio villarum de Sancte Albano, de Northamptona, de Radingia, auctorem nullo sciente'.

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1. Reg. Stafford (Bath and Wells) i. pp. 76-80. His purgation must have taken place before 1419, when Repingdon resigned.
 2. See below p. 261-3.
 3. See below p. 264.
 4. Author's observation and enquiries at Byfield, 1971 cf. the surviving traditions of lollard hiding places at Tenterden, Kent and Lingen, Herefs.
 5. Hist. Anglic. ii. 317.

It was perhaps in connection with this plot that two itinerant Northamptonshire lollards, Laurence Fuller and Robert Taillour, came to be at Kidlington, Oxon., on the 6th or 7th January 1417, being sheltered there by a local man named Richard Fuller : there may have been other links between Northamptonshire and Kidlington, which had been the original home of Thomas Compworth (one of the founders of heresy in Northampton) and which was a centre of rebellion in 1414. Richard Fuller and his two visitors were ordered to appear before Bishop Repingdon to answer for their heresy, but they did not apparently do so, for they were still being cited in 1428.⁽¹⁾ Less fortunate were John Walsche and William Frank, who were imprisoned in Northampton gaol in February 1417 on suspicion of lollardy, perhaps in connection with the distribution of heretical bills at the previous Christmas.⁽²⁾

Support for lollardy in Northamptonshire was still strong enough to make it necessary for Repingdon to establish a commission there in August 1417 to proceed against heretics and all those who supported, received or defended Oldcastle. This commission, headed by the abbot of St. James', Northampton, actually handed over a number of persons (unfortunately not named) to the Bishop for correction.⁽³⁾ Early in the next year, 1418, proceedings were begun against William Smith, a 'pretended chaplain' of Corby, in the northern part of the county.⁽⁴⁾ He had taught, amongst other heresies, that the elevation of torches at the moment of consecration in the Mass was 'pompa et

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1. KB9/209/57,62; KB27/630/3,669/15 for Kidlington see below p. 272 .
 2. Just. 3/52/18/18.
 3. Reg. Repingdon (memo.) f. 174.
 4. *ibid.* f. 177.

vana gloria' : this was not a very serious dereliction from orthodoxy, but we cannot rule out the possibility that Smith had been in contact with Robert Hoke at Braybrook, only eight miles away.

Hoke himself remained active until 1425, when his third and final arrest took place, apparently after the King's officers had found in his possession 'many divers bokes and trettees, the whiche contene many foule and horrible errours and heresies'.⁽¹⁾ In view of Hoke's mysterious relationship with Repingdon, and the 'charmed life' Braybrook had enjoyed for nearly 25 years, it may be significant that the raid and arrest did not take place until after the Bishop's resignation in 1419 and his death in 1424. Even so, Hoke managed to escape serious punishment in 1425, despite his two previous relapses, and he was once again allowed to recant.⁽²⁾ After this date we hear no more of him, and he may finally have genuinely abandoned heresy : in any case, he must by this time have been well struck in years.

Little more is heard of lollardy in Northamptonshire, or indeed in any other part of the east Midlands, until the middle of the fifteenth century, though the lollard rebels of 1431 thought it worthwhile to distribute their bills at Northampton, and the duke of Gloucester visited Leicester in the course of putting down the revolt.⁽³⁾ Heresy may have continued in the east Midlands long after 1425, but it did so at a reduced level and in secrecy, amongst people fairly low down the social scale. By this time, indeed, lollardy all over the country had lost the support of the gentry and of wealthy

1. Reg. Chichele iii p. 111.

2. Reg. Chichele iii pp. 110-112.

3. M. Aston, 'Lollardy and Sedition 1381-1431' in Past and Present pp. 25, 29.

merchants who had made it so widespread and successful in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, and after the death of Oldcastle no more men like Sir Thomas Latimer, Thomas Compworth, John Fox of Northampton and Swynderby's well-to-do Leicester supporters were to come forward. In the east Midlands, as elsewhere, lollardy was reduced (where it survived) to a few small working-class congregations.

CHAPTER THREELOLLARDY IN THE WELSH MARCH. 1382-1422

The area covered by this chapter is, to all intents and purposes, co-extensive with the diocese of Hereford, being the counties of Monmouthshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire. Such little information as we have about the activities of the lollards in Wales is also included.

It is difficult to say exactly when the first heretics appeared in the March. Certainly amongst the first of them was the extremely active Oxford lollard, John Aston, who, despite his recantation in 1382, was preaching heresy at Gloucester in 1383, and in various parts of the diocese of Worcester in 1385. By 1387⁽¹⁾ he had been joined there by two more Oxford lollards, John Purvey and Nicholas Hereford, of whom the latter was a native of Herefordshire, and possibly a scion of the family of Hereford of Sufton.⁽²⁾ Also active in the diocese of Worcester at this time were William Swynderby, last heard of in Coventry in 1384,⁽³⁾ and the otherwise unknown Robert Parker. Details are lacking, but it seems reasonable to suppose that some at least of this formidable group of lollards also operated in the Welsh March, where the King's writ (and therefore the power of the 'secular arm' employed by persecuting bishops) ran less strongly than elsewhere. Further, the remoteness and difficulty

1. See ~~above~~ pp. 7, 220.

2. Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club Transactions, Vol. for 1927 pp. 11-20.

3. See ~~above~~ p. 266-7.

of the terrain, and the close proximity of the Welsh border, made escape from the authorities a comparatively easy matter. Thirdly, since we already know that Hereford had useful friends in high places,⁽¹⁾ and was possibly a member of the minor gentry of the area, the lollards may have expected lay protection in the March : whether they received it, and if so, from whom, will be one of the questions dealt with below. Finally, there was a 'marked tradition of anti-clericalism in the area'⁽²⁾ (which was almost proverbial for its godlessness both amongst clergy and laity) and it is possible that Swynderby and his companions saw in these conditions an ideal opportunity for Lollard evangelisation.

The scandalous state of the spiritual life of the March during the late fourteenth century is amply illustrated from numerous contemporary sources. The religious houses of the area are shown by the Hereford registers to have been in a deplorable condition; one of them, the Priory of Ewyas Harold, had been closed in 1358, not only because its atmosphere corrupted even the godliest of monks, but also 'propter populi circumvicini infestam inquietationem et inquietam infestationem'.⁽³⁾ The moral state of parish clergy was no better, as is graphically shown by the returns of the Visitation of the diocese conducted in 1397.⁽⁴⁾ Incontinence was particularly rife, no fewer than 21 parish priests being accused of openly keeping

1. See above p.6-8 .

2. G Williams, The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation p. 205 ff.

3. A.T.Bannister, History of Ewyas Harold pp. 64-5.

4. A. T. Bannister 'Visitation Returns of the Diocese of Hereford in 1397', EHR XLIV pp. 279 ff, 444 ff, XIV. pp. 92, 444.

a concubine,⁽¹⁾ while seven more were said to keep two, three, or even four mistresses. Nor was it only the lower clergy that were involved, for according to the parishioners of Westbury-on-Severn, the Abbot of nearby Flaxley had kept a concubine, together with two other women, for thirteen years, while ten of his monks followed his example.⁽²⁾

Neglect, both of the cure of souls and of church property, was even more rife than incontinence : many cases of absenteeism, often combined with failure to provide curates, were reported; and in one or two parishes, such as Goodrich and Cusop, no services were held at all.⁽³⁾ Even when there was a resident, he frequently neglected his duty, as at Clunbury, where the priest allowed a parishioner to die without the sacrament, and to be buried without a service.⁽⁴⁾ Many of the churches were totally ruinous, and a number of parish priests had sold church plate and other valuables for their own benefit. Others again sold absolution, got drunk and revealed confessions, or took to usury. A few examples of specific parishes follow.

At Kilpeck, for example, the visitors found that John ap Gwilliam ap Rys, chaplain, was committing fornication with two

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1. The chaplain of Kinnersley was said to have stated quite baldly, when accused of keeping a mistress 'quod credunt eos immunes de peccato commisso' EHR XLV p. 448.
 2. *ibid.* XLIV p. 451.
 3. *ibid.* XLIV p. 444, XLV p. 448.
 4. *ibid.* XLV pp. 458-9.

women, while the rector had apparently turned to pagan practices 'ut eis videtur, non est firmus in fide, eo quod pluries fecit pompam suam tempore nocturno cum spiritibus fantasticis'.⁽¹⁾ At Garway the vicar, Thomas Ffollyot, haunted taverns daily and revealed confessions whilst in his cups 'in magnum scandalum clericorum' : in the same place, the parish chaplain illegally celebrated Mass twice a day to double his fees, and he spoke no Welsh, while most of his flock spoke no English.⁽²⁾ The vicar of Eardisley was suspected of sexual relations with both his maidservants : besides this he allowed parishioners to die without the sacrament, baptised a child without the essential chrism, refused the Communion to his enemies, insisted on being paid for absolution and was a common userer and 'mercator diversorum bonorum'.⁽³⁾ At Codinton, near Ledbury, the visitors reported that 'Rector est nimis tepidus et negligens in servicio divino' : he was frequently absent, and publicly kept a concubine. His pigs ruined the cemetery, and he used the church tower as a stable for his calves.⁽⁴⁾ A final example is provided by the town of Leominster: there, the vicar kept cows in the church yard, and (perhaps for this reason) prevented the parishioners from repairing their damaged and ruinous church. Of the chaplains in the town, one was a common criminal, one was incontinent, one a drunkard and tavern haunter, and another had taken up the harmless but uncanonical calling of a merchant of sheep.⁽⁵⁾

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1. EHR XLIV p. 287.
 2. ibid. XLIV p. 290.
 3. ibid XLV p. 447.
 4. XLV pp. 934.
 5. ibid. XLV p. 96.

As might be expected this state of affairs gave rise to a great amount of anti-clericalism, and the Hereford registers are full of records of those who refused rents and tithes to the church,⁽¹⁾ or who made violent assaults on its ministers. Prominent amongst these last was one Thomas de Charlton, who in 1383 attacked the vicar of Whitton Aston during Mass, and forcibly prevented him from reading out the Bishop's denunciation of tithe defaulters. When the Bishop sent his apparitor to summon Charlton to the episcopal court for his offences, the ecclesiastical official was chased out of town by the offender, accompanied by an armed gang of 'fautoribus, malefactoribus, satrapis et complicibus'.⁽²⁾ The Bishops also found it necessary to suppress at least one outbreak of paganism : in 1407 Bishop Mascall condemned the cult of a holy well and stone at Turnaston in the Golden Valley, whose devotees worshipped 'genibus flexis et cum diversorum rerum oblacionibus'.⁽³⁾

Having filled in the background, we must now look more closely at lollard activities in our area. We have already shown that Aston, Hereford, Purvey, Parker and Swynderby were all probably in the March by 1387 : little is known, however, of their activities. It is not until November 1388, when the Sheriff of Herefordshire was ordered to arrest Swynderby and bring him before Bishop Gilbert,⁽⁴⁾ that we have any concrete information. Though a copy of the heretic's trial before Bishop Buckingham of Lincoln in 1382 was obtained by the Hereford authorities,⁽⁵⁾ little else was done until the following

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1. Reg. Gilbert pp. 7-8, 12-13, 92-3; Reg. Mascall p. 32-3
 2. Reg. Gilbert p. 13-14.
 3. Reg. Mascall pp. 74-5.
 4. CCR 1385-9 p. 543.
 5. Reg. Trefnant p. 231.

year, when Gilbert had been succeeded by Bishop John Trefnant.

Trefnant's first move, in December 1389, was to issue from his house in London a general denunciation of heresy in the diocese of Hereford.⁽¹⁾ This denunciation came to Swynderby's notice at Monmouth (where he had presumably been preaching) early in 1390. Despite Trefnant's direct orders that one should preach heresy in the diocese, and despite his own vow in 1382 to abjure lollardy, Swynderby continued his evangelisation of the March. In August 1390 he preached a sermon at Whitney-on-Wye, very close to the Welsh border, in which he was said to have stated -⁽²⁾

SH.(1) 'quod nullus prelatus mundi cuiuscumque status ... habens curam animarum, existens in mortali peccato audiensque confessionem subditi sui ipsum absolvendo, nichil agit nec ipsum absolvit a peccato suo vel eciam ipsum subditum publice peccantem corrigendo et propter sua demerita excommunicando non ligat sua sententia, nisi prelatus ipse fuerit immunis a mortali peccato sicut fuit beatus Petrus cui dedit dominus potestatem ligandi atque solvendi.'

He was also said to have preached in many places that

SH.(2) 'quod post verba sacramentalia prolata a sacerdote habente intencionem consecrandi non fit verum corpus Christi in sacramento Eucharistie'

SH.(3) 'quod accidentia non possunt esse ... sine subiecto et quod panis materialis remanet ... in eodem sacramento.

SH.(4) 'quod sacerdos existens in mortali peccato non poterit vi verborum sacramentalium corpus Christi conficere, seu aliud quodcumque sacramentum ecclesie perficere nec ecclesie membris ministrare.

1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 234-5

2. ibid. p. 235-6.

- SH.(5) Quod omnes sacerdotes sunt equalis potestatis in omnibus non obstante quod aliqui sint in hoc mundo altioris dignitatis, gradus, vel preeminencie
- SH.(6) Quod sola contritio delet peccatum, si homo fuerit debite contritus, et omnis vocalis confessio et exterior est superflua ...
- SH.(7) Curati inferiores suam potestatem ligandi et solvendi non habent mediante papa vel episcopo sed immediate a Christo et ideo nec papa nec episcopus huiusmodi potestatem revocare pro tempore seu loco ad libitum et beneplacitum suum.
- SH.(8) Quod papa non potest huiusmodi indulgencias annuales concedere quia non erunt tot anni usque ad diem iudicii quot continentur in bullis seu indulgenciis papalibus : ex quibus sequitur quod indulgencias non tantum valent quantum sonant et predicantur.
- SH.(9) Quod non est in potestate ape remissionem a pena nec a culpa alicui penitenti concedere.
- SH.(10) Quod conferens elemosinam alicui secundum iudicium suum necessitatem non patienti peccat sic conferendo.
- SH.(11) Quod non stat in potestate alicuius prelati cuiuscumque religionis private litteras de beneficiis ordinis concedere, nec huiusmodi beneficia concessa prosunt illis quibus conceduntur ad salutem anime.

Swynderby was further accused that he had 'immemor multociens et sepius' celebrated Mass in 'quodam capella non sacra, ymmo prophano tigurio' in 'quodam desertum nemus vocatum Dervaldeswode' 'Dervaldeswode' is almost certainly identifiable as Deerfold Wood, near Wigmore, where there existed until recently a 14th century building known locally as the 'Lollard's Chapel', and mentioned in a 17th century note as the 'Chapel of Dervold'.⁽¹⁾

1. Owst, Preaching in Medieval England p. 128; Summers, Our Lollard Ancestors p. 51; Woolhope NFC 1930 p.1; Archeologia Cambrensis (4th Series) ii. pp. 40, 48; B. M. Harl. Ms. 6726. The name seems now to have died out.

He was also said to have celebrated in 'quadam capella prophana situata in parco de Neutone juxta villam de Leyntwardyn'.⁽¹⁾

By the spring of 1391 Swynderby seems to have extended his preaching activities over the border into Wales, for in May of that year Archbishop Courtenay addressed a letter to the bishops of Llandaff and Bangor (the two Welsh dioceses nearest England) condemning Swynderby as a relapsed heretic and forbidding him to preach.⁽²⁾

It was not until June 1391, however, that Bishop Trefnant finally summoned Swynderby to appear before him to answer the accusations made against him. The lollard appeared, as cited, at Kington on the 14th July, when he was given until the end of the month to prepare his defence, and instructed to appear again at Bodenham on the 30th.⁽³⁾ Swynderby duly appeared on that day, but instead of remaining to stand trial, he presented the bishop with a lengthy written defence and withdrew from the court, under the terms of a safe-conduct negotiated for him 'ad instancium quorundam nobilium ... videlicet illo die pro huiusmodi responsionibus exhibendis, ac eciam liberum regressum sine prefixione alicuius termini vel citacione seu aliqua alia offensa in corpore vel in rebus'.⁽⁴⁾ As Mr. McFarlane rightly says, 'There are signs that he had powerful friends amongst the gentry of the diocese'.⁽⁵⁾

Swynderby's written defence began with a 'protestacioun', stating 'that it is not myn entent any thinge to say or afferme, to

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1. Where there is a field called Chapel Meadow. Wolhope NFC 1930. p. 1.
 2. Concilia iii p. 215.
 3. Reg. Trefnant pp. 232-3.
 4. Reg. Trefnant p. 237.
 5. McFarlane, Wycliffe p. 130.

meyntene or defende, that is contrary to holy Wrytte, agens the belefe of holy churche, or that chulde offende the holy determynacyon of Cryste's church or the trewe sentences of holy doctours'.⁽¹⁾ He professed himself ready to be corrected by the bishop or any other, so long as his faults could be demonstrated as offences against 'Christe's lawes and holy Wrytte', and declared that he withdrew anything he might have mistakenly said against the 'lawe of God' as if he had never said it. Much of Swynderby's defence throughout his trial turned on the ambiguous notion of the 'lawe of God', but he wisely never defined exactly what he meant by the term.

After this 'protestacion', the lollard went on to condemn the illegality of his trial before Buckingham, when he had recanted after a threat of burning 'be what lawe I wot not, but sothly not by Godes lawe'.⁽²⁾ He continued by defending himself against the accusations laid against him at this ealier trial, preceding the answer to each article with the words 'with protestacyon put before'. The effect of this formula was that he could make heretical statements without being, technically, an 'obstinate heretic', for he had already offered to submit to correction 'after Christe's lawes and holy Wrytte'. Swynderby's mode of defence was to deny that he had ever held the doctrine in question, at the same time stating the doctrine he did hold, which in most cases was so like the heresy as to be indistinguishable from it. For example, he was accused in 1382 of saying :-

1. Reg. Trefnant, p. 237

2. ibid. p. 239 for a full account of the trial, see above pp. 68-72.

'That men mowen axen heire dettes by charyty, bot in no maner for dette to enprison any man, and that he so emprisonyng is acursyd'.

To this he replies:-

'Seyd I not but thus. I hafe seyde, and yit sey with protestacion put by fore, that whoso persues his brother with malice pursoues him cruely for dette withoute mercy that faen wolde paye him yef hi mighte, he synnes agayns Cristes techyng. "Estote misericordes sicut pater vester misericors est."'

He also defended his view that tithes may be withdrawn from an evil-living parish priest:-

'that yef hit be knowen openly to the puple that persones or curates comme to hor benefys be symonye and lyven in notory fornicacioun and dou noght thaire office and hcre dewetees to hor parochiens by gode ensample of holy lyf in trewe preschyng, levying, resydence, wending away fro his cure, occupiet in seculer office.'

This teaching must have appealed particularly to the faithful of the March, where there were, as we have seen, so very many evil-living priests, and where the Bishops were always ready to press for tithes. Popular with the gentry of the area, also, would have been Swynderby's view that

'hit were mydeful and lyfful to seculer lordes ... in defaulte of prelates that amenden not ... cursyd curates ... to take away and withdrawe from such curates pore mennes godes ... and heire owen wilful offurynges ... and gife them to suche that duwely serfen God ... (and) hore temporaltees and hore almes ... And namenly when suche temporaltees maken heme the more proude both in herte and in aray than thai shulden ben elles, more in strif and debate agayn pees and charytee and evel ensauple to the world more to by occupiet in worldly business' (1)

The more acute of Swynderby's audience might have seen a reference here, not only to the generality of clergy, but to Bishop

1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 240-41.

Trefnant's endless petty litigiousness over worldly goods.⁽¹⁾ The rest of Swynderby's 1382 points were that⁽²⁾

- (a) Priests should not excommunicate for tithes - which Bishop Gilbert had been particularly prone to doing. (3)
- (b) That sin excommunicates the sinner without further ceremony, and that priests should only excommunicate out of charity.
- (c) That any priest may absolve the contrite, or preach where he wished 'noughtwithstanding forbidding of the bishop'.
- (d) That no priest should take money for 'his gostly travail' - for any kind of religious services. This was particularly apposite in a diocese in which many priests illegally celebrated Mass twice a day, like the curate of Garway,⁽⁴⁾ to double their fees.
- (e) That a priest in mortal sin making the sacrament commits idolatry and damns himself.
- (f) That no priest enters a house but to mistreat the wife or daughter : Swynderby clarifies this by saying that he prays Christian men

'to bewar that thai norisshe ne maintene no lecherous preste in hore synnes, for ther be yer, as men well knowen, thai ben maintenet in moni plas, continuing homly with hore wymmyn.'

Again, this is a point that scarcely needed making in the lax diocese of Hereford.
- (g) That a child is not truly baptised if the priest or godparents are in mortal sin.
- (h) That no man living against the law of God is a priest. 'Certes this is false', said Swynderby - his real view was, if anything, more extreme. It was that any prelate or priest living against the law of God 'is veray antichrist, adversare of Jesus Crist and his apostles'.

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- 1. Reg. Trefnant pp. ii-v.
 - 2. ibid. pp. 240-244.
 - 3. Reg. Gilbert pp. 7-8, 12-13, 92-3.
 - 4. See above.

Having answered (to his own satisfaction if to no one else's) the articles laid against him in 1382, Swynderby proceeded to defend himself against unlicensed heretical preaching in the diocese of Hereford.⁽¹⁾ First, he dispensed with the idea of the Bishop's license being necessary for preachers:

'... al the contree knowes whether this be sothe or noght : for, sire, I presumede noght, sithen hit is the office of prieste be the lawe of Criste to preche the gospell ...'

He denied, in direct contradiction of the ecclesiastical records,⁽²⁾ ever receiving Trefnant's 'mandement' not to preach. He then went over to the attack

'But, sire, hit semes me that ye charge noght be evidence of the punyschyng so gretley the brekyng of God is hestes as ye don of youre owne ... yif it be youre wille in defaute that the puple wanted yowe to teche them, and hore curates dede noght be the desir of the people that wern hongry and firsty afture Goddes word, ich on to bere up others charge as Goddes lawe bidde, I presched noghte for the ...'

He now began to answer the points of which Trefnant had specifically accused him in the previous year, 1390. First, his point about confession (SH.(1)), which he preached at Whitney : he called upon the 'lord of the toun (i.e. Sir Robert Whitney)⁽³⁾ that has the same sermon writen, and mony gentiles and others that herden me that day' to witness that what he actually said was that excommunication is only binding if it accords with the law of God.

Going on to the articles on transubstantiation, he said of the first, (SH.(2)) simply 'This seide I never, God Wot, and trewe

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1. Reg. Trefnant p. 244-5.
 2. ibid. p. 234.
 3. see below p. 184-5.

men that have herde me', and of the second (SH.β) 'I have nocht medled my of that matier, me wytte suffiseth nocht therto'. These are the only straight denials in the trial, yet Swynderby's real view on the Sacrament seems to have been the rather ambiguous one 'that hit is brede and Cristes body'.⁽¹⁾

To the point about evil priests not making the sacrament (SH.(4)), he modified the accusation by saying that the priests' wickedness 'may appaire no verray sacrament, but ye wykednesse of the pruste appaires hymselfen',⁽²⁾ The next point, that all clerics are equal, (SH.(5)) he also changed, saying that he who lives most holily is the best priest, and he who lives in a wordly manner is antichrist. He then urged contrition as the only prerequisite of absolution (SH.(6)), but says that confession to a 'wise preste and gode' is also 'nedefull and helping'. To his point that all priests are ordained only by God (SH.(7)) he gave a confused answer, but he confirmed his view (SH.(8)) that the Pope cannot grant indulgences.⁽³⁾ He was bolder against the Pope in his reply to SH.(9), saying that if the Pope gives remission of penance to those who:

'feghte and sle hem that contrarien hem, as men saiden he dede by the bysshope of Northwyche⁽⁴⁾ ... he is Antecristus, for he does contrary to the manndements of God that bad Petre forgeve to his brother seventy sithes seven sithes'

He also, in effect, confirmed his views on articles SH.(10) and SH.(11)⁽⁵⁾

He denied that the chapel of 'Derwaldeswode' was unhallowed -

'for hit is a chapel where a prest synges certain dayes in the yere with great solempnitee' -

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1. Reg. Trefnant p. 245-6.
 2. ibid. p. 246.
 3. ibid. 247-8.
 4. i.e. Henry, Bishop of Norwich, who campaigned against 'schismatics' in Flanders in 1383.
 5. Reg. Trefnant pp. 248-9.

but also denied having sung Mass there. He denied knowing even the whereabouts of the chapel at Newton-by-Leintwardine. He then⁽¹⁾ went on to answer two articles not before noted, but which had presumably been added to the charges against him by the time of his trial : the first is that no man should swear at all, but simply confirm or deny. To this he replied that he did not remember preaching it, but that he holds to it, upbraiding the Bishop for not 'pursuing' those who 'swere in ydel, as welnigh al the poeple useth'. The final accusation laid against Swynderby was that he had preached against images and crucifixes, saying they were idolatrous. He supported this point from Biblical references, and stated that images were idolatrous unless used simply as 'kalenders' to lead the mind to God.

How long Swynderby had held these last two views is uncertain: there is no record of his having preached them in Leicester, though both subsequently became part of the beliefs of William Smith and the Leicester lollards of 1389, and the second opinion, in particular, had become almost general amongst lollards by 1414.

To conclude his written answer,⁽²⁾ Swynderby stated that he would stand by the statements he had made until the bishop or another showed 'be Goddes lawe the contrury of this'. If anyone could convince him of his error, he was 'evermor redy to be amendet be the lawe of Jesus Crist'.

After his trial at Bodenham on the 30th June 1391, Swynderby became more difficult to catch : on July 5th, Trefnant cited him to

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1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 249-50.
 2. Reg. Trefnant p. 250.

appear again at Lydbury North, Shropshire on the 20th of the same month.⁽¹⁾ An idea of the lollard's known haunts can be gathered from the places in which the citation was ordered to be read : these were Croft, next to 'Dervaldeswode'; the town of Leominster; Kington, on the Welsh border; Almeley, Eardisley and Whitney, in the Upper Wye Valley; and, much further south, the border town of Monmouth. Any number of hiding places must have been available to him in this wild country, and it was from one of these that he sent a written reply to the bishop's citation.⁽²⁾ This reply is one of the more interesting of the trial documents, and it shows that Swynderby had (at least once) appeared uninvited to speak to Trefnant :

'for ye wyten wel that I hafe comme to yow when ye sende not aftur me, as to Pembrugge and to other places where that ye have ben to hafe conversed with yow of suche maters and to hafe ben enfourmed of hem by you yif I hadde any thinge erred; I come also at yowre owen byddyng ... and knowelechid openly what I had sayde ... and sayde pleynty rihte, as I say now, that I am redy to ben amendyd through youre informacyon be Goddes lawe ...'

All the same, he refused to appear at Lydbury:-

'I besyche yow mekely that ye hafe me excused of my comynge to Ledebury : for it is certifiende me be me frendes that I hafe many enemyes that ligger in awayte for me, also yt is told me that the kyngges comysson is ycommen for me and cried in townes, and baylefes charged to take me yif thai mowen and puten me in prisone.'

Swynderby did not want to go to prison because:-

'many gret clerkes for durese of prison han fallen away from trowye, and summe welnye lost heire wytes'

Whether this refers to 'clerkes' in general, or to lollard clerks in particular is difficult to say : it may be a reference to the recantation of Nicholas Hereford, imprisoned since 1387, who 'fell away from trowye' at about this time,⁽³⁾ or to some other lollard, the record

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1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 251-2.
 2. *ibid.* pp. 252-3.
 3. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. i. p. 914.

of whose sufferings is now lost.

For the reason mentioned above, Swynderby declined to come to Lydbury or even into Shropshire :

'I dryde to come into the schire or owte of the schire
ther as I am not knowen ...'

this seems to indicate that the lollard was living in Herefordshire at this time. There are also indications that the Bishop was expected to know Swynderby's whereabouts :

'yif ye comen nyh me there as I durste wel come to yow,
I wol be redy to com to yow ...'

'yif ye han founden in my confessioun any many erreoure
... I wold beseche yow mekely to send it me wryten ...'

If Swynderby was indeed in a position to make known his whereabouts with impunity, the only explanation can be that he was under the protection of someone too powerful to be challenged.⁽¹⁾ Failing to appear at Lydbury, Swynderby was cited to appear nine days later at Pontesbury⁽²⁾: on his non-appearance there, the Bishop successively cited him to appear at Cleobury Mortimer on the 8th August and at Whitbourne eight days later.⁽³⁾ At this point the prosecution produced more evidence, in the shape of four witnesses against Swynderby.⁽⁴⁾ The first of these was William Lebyot, rector of Kinnersley, between Almeley and Eardisley : he had been present when the lollard preached in Whitney church in August 1390, and who testified that Swynderby had indeed preached there the heresies laid against him by Trefnant :

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1. see below.
 2. Reg. Trefnant p. 252.
 3. *ibid.* p. 254.
 4. *ibid.* pp. 255-6.

'excepto quod idem Willelmus predicavit in Anglicis
verbis et articulus est in Latinis.'

Lebyot's testimony was confirmed by the second witness, Edward Waterden,
chaplain of "Bettus".⁽¹⁾

The third witness was a forty-year-old layman, Roger
Newton, who testified that he had heard Swynderby sing Mass at the
chapel at Newton-by-Leintwardine on numerous occasions in 1390 'in
presencia multorum de quorum nominibus non recordatur'. Asked if the
"chapel" were sanctified or not - 'dicit quod ignorat sed bene scit
quod antequam idem Willelmus veniret ad celebrandum in eadem et post
recessum eiusdem porci solebant pernoctare et in estu dierum jacere
in eadem'. The final witness, Hugh Scheppert of Newton, confirmed this
testimony. It is interesting to note that no witnesses to Swynderby's
presence in Deerfold Wood were produced : either the authorities were
unsure of their ground on this accusation or, more likely, no witness
from the congregation there could be induced to testify against their
pastor.⁽²⁾

Fortified by this evidence, Trefnant continued to cite
Swynderby,⁽³⁾ first to appear at Whitbourne on the 2nd September, and
then at Hereford on the 3rd October. On the second occasion, a cita-
tion is recorded in the Register, showing us that the lollard was cited,
as before, by the clergy of Croft, Almeley, Whitney, Kington, Eardisley
and Clifford, but this time also by the vicar of Wigmore, the nearest
parish to Deerfold wood. The citations continued to be unsuccessful,
but Swynderby and his followers sent a document to the Bishop at about
this time. It is a justification :

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1. Perhaps Upper Betwys, two miles east of Whitney.
 2. Another possible explanation, based on lay support at
Deerfold, is adduced below.
 3. Reg. Trefnant pp. 256-7.

'quod ... cuilibet sacerdoti predicare in qualibet diocesi eciam episcopis invitis et prohibentibus ...'

It is in Latin,⁽¹⁾ and is made up principally of quotations from the Bible, Gregory, Augustine, Bede, St. Paul, St. John Chrysostom, and saints Isidore and Jerome.

On October 3rd 1391 Swynderby finally appeared, apparently of his own free will, before the Bishop and his tribunal at Hereford. He refused, first privately and then publicly, to recant his heresies, and handed over to the court a second written defence.⁽²⁾ This began with a passionate testimony to Swynderby's belief in God's law as derived by him from the New Testament, and went on to defend the opinions which he had taught : 'trewely I can see non errour in hem; yef al thai semen to many men that thei sowmen agayn theire profyte and theire worldly worschyppe'. Then followed a defence in detail, employing the Bible, the Fathers, Canon Law, and Swynderby's own lively mind - concerning indulgences, for instance, he asked 'sithe the popes power ne mai not kepe us in this world fro bodily paynes as from cold, from hunger, from drede, from sorwe and other suche paynes, how schuld his powre help us from spiritual paynes when wy ben dede?'

Having presented his defence, Swynderby apparently once again withdrew from the court, just as he had done at Bodenham on the previous 30th July. The tribunal, having examined his defence, passed final judgment on him in his absence, declaring him to be "hereticam, scismaticum, falsum informatorem in populo et seductorem", and formally forbade anyone in the diocese to listen to his preaching.⁽³⁾ It is most remarkable that, on the verge of condemnation, Swynderby was allowed

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1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 258-61.
 2. ibid. 262-70.
 3. Reg. Trefnant pp. 270-271.

to leave the court a free man : the register is not forthcoming as to the reasons why he was permitted to go, but powerful lay support for his cause seems to be the most likely explanation.

Swynderby refused to accept his condemnation, and at some time shortly after his trial he produced a written appeal against his sentence,⁽¹⁾ directed to the civil courts which, he asserted, were of higher status than the episcopal tribunal : 'for aftur that the byshope has accurset he mae no ferrer be his lawe. But thanne mot he seche socour of the kinges law ...' He declared that he had, in his absence, been wrongfully condemned, 'for no man is an heretic but he that maysterfully defendes his errour ... and myn answer has ben alway condicionel, for ever I sayde and yet say, and always wil, that yf thai connen schewe me by Godes lawe that I have erret I wil gladly ben amendet ...'⁽²⁾ The appeal concluded with a swingeing condemnation of canon law, which allowed prostitution, simony, swearing and rich priests, and an open declaration that the Pope was Antichrist and his law contrary to the law of Christ.⁽³⁾

It is not absolutely clear to whom this appeal was addressed, or how it was published, but (apparently at the same time) the heretic also addressed a separate appeal to the House of Commons, to be shown by them to the Lords.⁽⁴⁾ Whether this document was ever delivered to parliament is unknown,⁽⁵⁾ but it may be that Swynderby hoped to have it presented to the Commons by his supporter Sir Robert Whitney, who was one of the knights of the shire for Herefordshire

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1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 271-5.
 2. *ibid.* p. 272.
 3. *ibid.* p. 275.
 4. *ibid.* p. 272.
 5. No mention of it occurs in the parliament rolls.

in the parliament of November 1391.⁽¹⁾ Swynderby appeals to the M.P's⁽²⁾ to be 'stable and trewe to God and ye schuln see his help abow you ... This londe is ful of ghostly cowardise, in ghostly battaill few du stonde ...' He sent them a list of his beliefs, and begged them to consider them, and to cause them to be "schewet in the parliament", so that all could openly judge whether or not they contained any error.

Despite his condemnation in October 1391, Swynderby plainly had no real fear of the Hereford diocesan authorities, and he was certainly still in the diocese in January 1392, when he ate, drank and communicated with his supporter Walter Brute, soon to stand trial for heresy himself.⁽³⁾ His continued presence apparently stirred Trefnant to further action, and in February 1392 the Bishop applied to the King for permission to arrest and imprison him. As a result of this petition, a royal mandate was issued on the 9th March 1392 ordering the civil authorities in Herefordshire and Wales to arrest Swynderby and an otherwise unknown layman called Stephen Belle, who to avoid the effects of Trefnant's condemnation had fled into Wales 'cum eorum fautoribus et complicibus latitando'.⁽⁴⁾

No record remains of Swynderby's activities after March 1392, so that we cannot tell whether he was eventually captured, whether he died in Wales, or whether he appeared again in another part of the country on some unrecorded preaching tour. It was perhaps at this time that he met John Walcote of Hasleton, near Northleach, Glos., who was tried for heresy nearly thirty years later in 1425,⁽⁵⁾

1. Official Returns 241.

2. Reg. Trefnant pp. 275-8.

3. ibid. pp. 284-5.

4. Reg. Trefnant pp. 408-9.

5. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) ii. ff. 46-7 see below p.266

and who then confessed to having known the man who has been rightly called 'one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, of Lollard evangelists'.⁽¹⁾

Before going on with the story of lollardy in the March, it is important to recapitulate the facts we have learnt from the accounts of Swynderby's trial. First, we know that, despite Trefnant's rather half-hearted attempts to stop him, Swynderby had been preaching in the diocese of Hereford and in Wales from at least 1389 until early 1392. His preaching area extended from Leintwardine in the north to Monmouth in the south, with congregations and fixed meeting-places at Newton-by-Leintwardine and in Deerfold Wood : he was also especially active in the Almeley-Eardisley-Whitney area of the Upper Wye Valley. He appears to have enjoyed almost complete freedom of movement in this area, probably due to the protection given him by the local gentry, who obtained a safe-conduct for him during his trial and who apparently encouraged him to preach at Whitney in August 1390. The nature of his heresy appears to have been, as in his earlier days, anti-clerical rather than anti-sacramental, though his views on transubstantiation were suspect. When, in early 1392, his presence in the diocese of Hereford finally became too dangerous, he fled into Wales (where he had obviously preached before) with one or more of his disciples.

Shortly after Swynderby's final condemnation in October 1391, one of the most important of his disciples was also brought to trial. This was Walter Brute or Brit, who described himself as 'peccator, laycus, agricola, cristianus, a Britonibus ex utraque parente originem habens'.⁽²⁾ He was apparently a small landowner, holding property at Lyde, a few miles north of Hereford,⁽³⁾ and may

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1. McFarlane, Wycliffe p. 135.
 2. Reg. Trefnant p. 285.
 3. CPR 1401-5 p. 412.

have been related to Sir Thomas Brut, a Welsh 'King's Knight'.⁽¹⁾
 When the accusations against him were presented to Trefnant by 'non-nullos Cristi fideles precipuosque fidei catholice zelatores', he had evidently been a heretic for some time, for they described him as:

'multipliciter, fama cleri et scandalo et rumore populi precedentibus, de heretica pravitate accusatus fuitque eciam pluries citatus ad respondendum super articulis contra fidem catholicam per ipsum assertis ac palam et publice dogmatizatas'⁽²⁾

No indication is given as to where his preaching took place, though his racial origin and preaching style suggest that it may have been mainly amongst the Welsh-speakers of the March.⁽³⁾ Of the content of his preaching, however, we know more : it appears to have been more extreme and more anti-sacramental than Swynderby's. He was accused of holding that:-

- (B.1) 'quod cuilibet Cristianus eciam mulier extra peccatum existens potest conficere Corpus Cristi ita bene sicut sacerdos.'
- (B.2) 'asseruit notorie quod in sacramento altaris non est verum corpus sed signum et memoriale dumtaxat.'
- (B.3) 'quod nullus tenetur dare decimas nec oblaciones, et si quis omnino voluerit dare, poterit dare suas decimas et oblaciones cui voluerit, curatos suas inde excludendo.'

He also agreed with John Aston and Swynderby in his opposition to Despenser's 'crusade' of 1383.

- (B.4) 'quod predicantes cruciata et indulgencias per summum pontificem concessas auxiliantibus propositum ... episcopi Norwicensis quando iter arripuit contra antipapam, sunt scismatici et heretici et quod papa huiusmodi indulgencias non potest concedere.'

Perhaps his baldest statement was

- (B.5) 'quod Papa est Anticristus et seductor populi ac omnino legi Cristi et rita contrarius.'

1. CCR 1392-6 pp. 189, 195, 196, 1396-9 p. 362, 1399-1402 pp. 240-241; 1409-13 p. 337.

2. Reg. Trefnant pp. 278-9.

3. Williams. Welsh Church p. 206 ff.

Apart from his own views, he supported each and every one of the articles advanced by Swynderby at his trials.⁽¹⁾ According to Walter Pryde, penitentiary of Hereford, he had first appeared before an ecclesiastical court on the 14th October, 1391, a few days after Swynderby's condemnation⁽²⁾: then, at the house of one of the Canons of Hereford, he had declared before witnesses that Swynderby's conclusions were true and catholic. At the same time he declared his belief in the doctrine of remanence, and that the Pope was Antichrist. A few months later, on the 19th January 1392, he had appeared before Trefnant,⁽³⁾ and declared that no one was bound to pay tithes, either by the law of Christ or of Moses - a view more extreme than Swynderby's. He also said that no one should swear for any reason whatsoever, and declared 'publice et sponte', that he had eaten, drunk and communicated with Swynderby earlier in that very month.

After this examination Brute's trial dragged on until October 1393, and even the indefatigable writer of Trefnant's register does not describe all the occasions on which Brute appeared 'diversis locis et temporibus'.⁽⁴⁾ He does, however, record in full the extremely lengthy written answers produced by the Welshman in his own defence.⁽⁵⁾ These, unlike those of Swynderby, are in Latin, and are of such complexity of style and content that we can well believe that Brute is to be identified with the man of the same name who was a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford in 1379, and who is said to have been the author of two treatises on astronomy, one on surgery, and a possibly heretical work 'De auferendis clero possessionibus'.⁽⁶⁾

1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 280-283.

2. ibid. pp. 283-4

3. ibid. pp. 284-5.

4. ibid. p. 285.

5. ibid. pp. 285-358.

6. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon i. pp. 270-271. If Brut were at Oxford in 1379, he would have been able to attend the lectures given by Wycliffe at that time.

The impression gained by reading Brute's essays is that the Welshman was slightly unbalanced - a kind of fourteenth-century British Israelite. In them, he touches on the fact that the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter presages the Second Coming,⁽¹⁾ on the special place of the Welsh in creation - 'sic videtur michi Britones inter omnes alias gentes quasi ex Dei elleccione specialiter fuisse ad fidem vocatos et conversos'⁽²⁾ on the numerology of the Roman Emperors and on the Pope's identification with Antichrist⁽³⁾ through the number of his title DUX CLERI being 666.

These and other matters were considered by a panel of no less than 22 Masters and Doctors, including the now reformed Nicholas Hereford, Adam of Usk, and the Chancellor of Cambridge,⁽⁴⁾ who extracted 37 heresies and errors from Brute's schedules, amongst which were the following⁽⁵⁾:

- (3) That the Pope is certainly Antichrist
- (4) That wars, even against infidels, are not legal
- (8) That it is alien to the Scriptures for priests to be judges of men's sins.
- (9) All baptised Christians have the power to remit sin.
- (13)(14)(15) Heresies on baptism.
- (16) It is not necessary for salvation to confess all sins to a priest.
- (18) The Pope cannot absolve or remit sin by indulgences, unless the subjects thereof are in a state of grace.
- (24) The Pope is neither the successor of Peter nor the senior Bishop.
- (26) That the sacrament does not change after consecration, but is really bread and spiritually the Body of Christ.

1. Reg. Trefnant p. 291

2. ibid. p. 294.

3. ibid. p. 356.

4. ibid. pp. 359-60.

5. The numbers given here are those given in the register.

- (27) That Christ did not found the Mass
- (28) That it is not proper that only the priest should be at the altar to offer Mass for the people.
- (29) The Sacrament is not a sacrifice for sin but a memorial of Christ's sacrifice.
- (30) That women have the power to preach, make the sacrament, and perform other priestly duties.
- (32) That any priest or deacon may preach without authority of Pope or bishop.
- (33) Tithes are illegal.
- (34) That all swearing is illegal.
- (35) That it is wrong to worship images
- (37) That it is illegal for priests to receive money for celebrating Mass for the living or the dead.

Many of these are fairly conventional lollard views, some of them probably derived from Swynderby. The notion that all wars are illegal may have derived from Purvey, and appears as the tenth of the lollard 'Twelve Conclusions' of 1395, of which Purvey was probably the author.⁽¹⁾ Articles eight, twenty-eight, and especially thirty, however, seem to have been Brute's own, and the last of them, referring to women, is extremely unusual and revolutionary. Despite his pan-Britonism and his astrology, Brute appears to have been a sincere, if extreme, reformer, who had in mind a church similar to some of the present day non-conformist sects.

It is evident that Brute's friends and supporters were not idle during his long trial : it may well have been they who

1. EHR XXII pp. 292-304. See below p.225-6.

sent an abusive letter to the turncoat Hereford, which claimed, amongst other things, that Swynderby's conclusions 'fideles sunt ubique'.⁽¹⁾ Perhaps as a counter to this, Trefnant submitted the conclusions of both Swynderby⁽²⁾ and Brute⁽³⁾ to a panel of Cambridge theologians,⁽⁴⁾ who declared them erroneous and heretical.

Towards the end of Brute's trial, his supporters apparently planned a more violent form of protest. In September 1393, the King issued a mandate to fourteen Marcher knights and esquires and to the mayor of Hereford and the sheriff of the county, ordering them to arrest and imprison all those who joined together in conventicles, confederations or congregations to resist Brute's judges:

'et execucione eiusdem faciendi cassare et adnullare ac manu forti resistere et pertubare pro viribus se conantur in nostri et corone nostre maximum vituperium ac pacis nostre lesionem aliorumque exemplum perniciosum.' (5)

No indication is given as to the identity of Brute's friends, or whether they were lords, gentry, or commoners.⁽⁶⁾ That their strength was not negligible is attested by the very existence of the commission.

Their plans, however, evidently came to nothing, for on October 3rd, 1393, exactly two years after Swynderby's condemnation, Brute appeared before his judges at Hereford.⁽⁷⁾ Over the next

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1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 394-6.
 2. ibid. pp. 365-68.
 3. ibid. pp. 368-394.
 4. Perhaps the theologians at Oxford could not then be relied upon to condemn Wycliffite conclusions.
 5. Reg. Trefnant pp. 410-411.
 6. See below.
 7. Reg. Trefnant pp. 359-60.

two days he submitted himself to the church, and on the 6th he read his submission in English from the cross in the Cathedral close before a large number of people. To press home the lesson of Brute's recantation, a sermon was afterwards preached on the text "Noli altum sapere ..."⁽¹⁾ Brute was then allowed to depart, as an expression of the Bishop's lenience and also, perhaps, of expediency in the face of the attitude of the Welshman's supporters.

Brute's career after 1393 is difficult to follow, as we might expect of such a man. In 1394 he was involved in an affray with the servants of the Prior of Leominster, but no relapse into heresy is implied, for he was merely fined £40 rather than imprisoned as a relapsed heretic.⁽²⁾ There is, indeed, no evidence (except for an unsupported tradition that he was burnt at Bodenham)⁽³⁾ of Brute's continuing heresy. It is more likely that his Welshness overcame his lollardy, for he ended his life at some time before 1404, as an adherent of Owain Glendower,⁽⁴⁾ and Glendower (though for political reasons he supported the anti-Pope) was never anything but orthodox.⁽⁵⁾

A number of other lollards, possibly disciples of Swynderby, were also cited by Trefnant in 1392 and 1393, though apparently without success. In February 1392 two women, Margaret Layborn and Juliana 'filia David Smyth de Salopia' were cited : failing to appear, they were again cited in April 1392 and in December 1393. On the last occasion, a number of others - John Ely, chaplain, Holwelias (i.e. Hywel) Bach, Jevan ap Byvyde and Matilda, wife of David Bond - were

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1. Romans XI v. 20.
 2. Hereford (SPCK Diocesan Histories) pp. 133-4.
 3. Woolhope NFC vol. for 1906 p. 283.
 4. His forfeited lands were granted to his widow. CPR 1401-5 p. 412.
 5. G. Williams, Welsh Church p. 233; J. Lloyd, Owain Glendower pp. 109-110.

cited with them.⁽¹⁾ Ely is possibly identifiable with the priest of the same name who was vicar of Winforton, one mile east of Whitney (where Swynderby had preached) : if so, he was not a very pious lollard, for he was accused in 1397 of incontinence.⁽²⁾

Despite Trefnant's efforts to put down heresy in his diocese the lollards were still causing enough trouble there in September 1394 for a special Bull to be sent to the Bishop by Pope Boniface, urging him to greater efforts against them.⁽³⁾ Three years later, Trefnant licensed John Hatfield, precentor of Worcester, to hear the recantation of another heretic, Isabel Prustes, whom he had excommunicated some time before 'tanquam hereticam et sedulam seductricem in populo.'⁽⁴⁾ It is not clear whether Isabel actually preached heresy, but if she did she may well have originally been a follower of Walter Brute, the only lollard known to have encouraged female preachers.

Having considered the lollard preachers themselves, we must now turn to the problem of their supporters amongst the gentry. That such supporters existed is abundantly clear from evidence we have already seen : firstly, Swynderby was able to obtain a safe-conduct from his trial at Bodenham 'ad instanciam quorundam nobilium ...'⁽⁵⁾ and thereafter enjoyed a freedom of movement and apparent immunity from arrest which may well have been due to the gentry's

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1. C85/91/2,5,9.
 2. Reg. Gilbert p. 126; Reg. Trefnant p. 188; EHR XLV p.444.
 3. Reg. Trefnant pp. 405-6.
 4. ibid. pp. 144-5.
 5. ibid. p. 237. See above.

support. Trefnant's reluctance and delays in beginning the trial in the first place may also have been due to local pressure in favour of the Lollards. Further evidence for support by the gentry for Swynderby is the fact that when he preached at Whitney in August 1390, a number of 'gentiles' were present, having probably gathered together specially for the occasion, since the day was a Monday and not a major holiday.⁽¹⁾ The 'lord of the town' of Whitney also had a written copy of Swynderby's sermon, a sign that he took more than a passing interest in the lollard's work. Finally Swynderby himself obviously expected support from the lay gentry, and particularly the 'knights in Parliament'.

Whether Swynderby's congregations at Newton and Deerfold Wood received any protection from lay magnates is difficult to say, but we know of no action taken against them by the Bishop. One, at least of Swynderby's disciples, however, Walter Brute, had enough lay supporters to warrant the setting up of a royal commission to oppose them.⁽²⁾ We cannot be sure from what class or classes his friends came, though Brute's position as a small landowner might have gained him some support from his equals, if not from his social superiors.

This is the evidence for gentry support for the early lollards of the March : it remains for us now to discover the identity of these supporters and the extent of their support. By far the most obvious suspect amongst the county gentry is John Croft,

1. Reg. Trefnant p. 245.

2. See above.

esquire, lord of Croft, between Leominster and Wigmore, and of Edvin Ralph near Bromyard.⁽¹⁾ Son of Sir John Croft, he came into prominence in the 1380's, when he was very frequently employed as 'a justice of the peace and royal commissioner in Herefordshire.⁽²⁾ In 1385 he signed indentures to serve Richard II on the Scots expedition,⁽³⁾ and in that year was also made King's Esquire, thereafter receiving grants of land, wardships, and other favours,⁽⁴⁾ nearly all connected with the March. Despite his favour with the civil power, however, he was early at odds with the church : in 1382 he was excommunicated, and his excommunication read at Hereford and Leominster, for detaining the tithes of Newton, which belonged to Leominster Priory.⁽⁵⁾

There is little record of his employment in the March in the 1390's, possibly because of disfavour with the church. We do not know what finally prompted his arrest, but on September 1st, 1394, he was ordered to be imprisoned at Windsor Castle until further notice.⁽⁶⁾ He apparently remained there for nearly a year, appearing before the King at Windsor on August 29th, 1395, on the latter's return from Ireland.⁽⁷⁾

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1. Reg. Trefnant p. 184 ; Reg. Mascall p. 184; CPR 1388-92 p. 33; Croft, House of Croft pp. 28-9; History of Ewyas Harold p. 77.
 2. CPR 1381-5 pp. 86, 134, 138, 201, 246, 256, 429; CCR 1381-5 p. 148; CFR IX p. 250, 353.
 3. BM.Ms. Stowe 440 ff. 22-3.
 4. CPR 1381-5 pp. 429, 540, 1385-9 pp. 301, 338, 1391-6 p. 22; CFR IX pp. 250, 349.
 5. Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum IV p. 52.
 6. CCR 1392-6 p. 314.
 7. This incident may well be that referred to in E403/551/16, and may also have partially given rise to the chroniclers' stories of the King's accelerated return from Ireland to deal with the lollards.

At that time Croft was compelled to take an oath, as

follows:

'Juravit insuper tactis sacrosanctis evangelis per eum corporaliter quod fidei Christiane articulis et institutionibus ... so velle firmiter adherere ... necnon eciam promisit sub eodem juramento quod nunquam de cetero legeret vel predicaret publice vel occulte aliquam novam doctrinam dicte fidei catholice reluctantem nec in effectu audiret voluntario set neque libros Anglicos secundum nudum textum de sacra scriptura sinistre extractos per quosdam Lollardos ... fidei Catholice et doctrine Romane ecclesie obviantes et lesionem prejudiciumque eidem inferentes, qui non tantum nostram simplicitatem infatuare procurant, immo pocius a dicto sacre scripture et evangelice doctrine ac fidei orthodoxe sano et vero intellectu contrariantes faciunt pertinaciter deviare, per se, uxorem suam, vel liberos suos seu famulos suos in domo sua vel extra legi, predicari, seu doceri vel audiri cum effectu permittet, set neque alios eos legere volentes quovismodo sustentabit; set quodsi huiusmodi libros sive erroneas doctrinas variasque et peregrinas et anime Christiane periculosus in domo sua vel et inter familiam suam invenerit eos omnino auferret ab eis et funditus annullabit ... predictam familiam suam debita coercione castigando.'⁽¹⁾

The oath has been almost fully quoted because it tells us much about John Croft. His house, Croft Castle, appears to have been something of a centre of lollardy, perhaps even the headquarters of a congregation identifiable with the one which met in Deerfold Forest, a few miles to the west. The village of Croft was also one of the places at which Swynderby was cited during 1391,⁽²⁾ indicating that the authorities suspected his presence there. The authorities' main concern seems to have been with Lollard books, in whole or in part translations of the Scriptures into English, which may well have been written or copied under John Croft's auspices. The terms of the oath indicate that Croft's wife (probably Janet, daughter of the rebel-to-be Owain Glendower)⁽³⁾ his family and his household were specifically

1. Reg. Trefnant pp. 147-8.

2. See above.

3. History of Ewyas Harold p. 77.

involved with heresy.

Having taken the oath before the King, Croft was then required to repeat the process before Trefnant, his ordinary, before the end of October 1395.⁽¹⁾ The esquire's subsequent actions indicate that his penitence may have been feigned or short-lived. On October 17th Trefnant sent him a polite letter asking him to take the oath⁽²⁾; Croft refused to appear, but sent a letter to Trefnant by another King's Esquire, William Hontone :⁽³⁾

'admirando secundum se quod ego requirem ab eo aliquod
inveniam ex quo in presencia vestra regali illud
iuramentum prestiterat'

It was not until March 5th, 1396, that Croft was finally induced to take the oath before Trefnant.⁽⁴⁾ The reasons for his delay in doing so may have been genuine, though it would have been in keeping with Lollard opinions to submit to the King but not to the Bishop.

Whether Croft kept his promise to avoid lollardy is difficult to say, due to lack of information. We do know, however, that he was involved in another tithe dispute, this time with the Abbot of Oseney, in 1401.⁽⁵⁾ Though his public employment appears to have ceased after 1394, it resumed in 1399, and he was several times employed in Herefordshire until his death soon after 1407.⁽⁶⁾ Though married to the daughter of Owain Glendower, he appears to have taken no part in the Welsh revolt.

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1. Reg. Trefnant p. 147.
 2. ibid. pp. 148-9.
 3. ibid. pp. 149-50.
 4. ibid. p. 150.
 5. Croft House of Croft p. 28.
 6. CFR XII p. 114, 286, XIII p. 65; CPR 1405-8 p. 382.

The extent of Croft's support for lollardy is impossible to gauge. There can be no doubt that he was, at least for a time, a convinced heretic, whose house was used as a lollard centre. It also seems likely that he aided the Deerfold lollards, and received Swynderby at Croft Castle : in addition, he may have been one of the 'nobilium' who procured Swynderby a safe-conduct in 1391. His support for heresy was probably quite open, and he seems to have been capable of standing up to Trefnant even when supposedly penitent. The circumstantial evidence, then, points to Croft as one of the most important of lollard sympathisers amongst the gentry of the March.

We know less about the support given by Sir Robert Whitney. He, like Croft, had led a full public life, being frequently employed as a J.P. in Herefordshire, of which county he had also been twice Knight of the Shire and once Sheriff.⁽¹⁾ He apparently encouraged Swynderby to preach in his town of Whitney-on-Wye in August 1390,⁽²⁾ and possessed a written copy of the lollard's sermon on that occasion, a fact which was cited by Swynderby during his trial

'I never thoughte this, ny spak this, ny preched this ... and that wil witnesse the lord of the toun that has the same sermon writen, and mony gentiles and other that herden me that day.'

Whitney-on-Wye, like Croft, was one of the places in which Swynderby was cited while he was in hiding from Trefnant.

It is also noteworthy that Sir Robert was Knight of Shire for Herefordshire at the time of Swynderby's condemnation,⁽³⁾ and it may have been through him that Swynderby hoped to publish his appeal in the Commons. How long Whitney's interest in the lollards lasted we

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1. CCR 1377-81 pp. 258, 356; 1381-5 p. 148; CPR 1377-81 p.515, 1381-5 pp. 26,138,246; Official Returns pp. 237, 241.
 2. Reg. Trefnant p. 245. He held the manor and advowson of Whitney (near Hay-on-Wye) from the Bohun family.
 3. i.e. in the parliament of November 1391

do not know, but if it lasted long after 1391, he would have been a powerful friend, for his influence increased both in the March and at court, where he became a King's Knight and accompanied King Richard on both his Irish expeditions.⁽¹⁾ He also had connections with other county families such as the Oldcastles and the Clanvowes, both of which subsequently produced lollard sympathisers.⁽²⁾

Sir Robert was killed in battle with Owain Glendower at Pilleth in 1402,⁽³⁾ and was succeeded by his son, another Robert. This Robert carried on his father's responsibilities in the county, of which he was sheriff in 1413.⁽⁴⁾ He may also have shared his father's sympathies, for he stood surety for Sir John ap Harry in 1417, when the latter promised to give no aid to Oldcastle, then still at large.⁽⁵⁾ He may have had still closer links with lollardy, for in 1419 he presented to his living of Pencombe, Herefs. one Robert Herleston, perhaps identifiable with the man of the same name who was an active lollard preacher in Warwickshire from 1409 until 1417.⁽⁶⁾

Robert's sister, Perryne, is equally interesting. Lady in Waiting to Queen Anne, she married before 1392 into another Marcher family suspected of lollard sympathies, the Clanvowes of Cusop Castle.⁽⁷⁾ It is to this family we shall now turn.

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1. CPR 1391-6 pp. 320, 450-51, 698, 1396-9 pp. 227, 436, 480-1, 1399-1401 p. 211.
 2. CPR 1391-6 p. 467, 1396-9 p. 487.
 3. CPR 1401-5 p. 354.
 4. CPR 1408-13 pp. 379, 433, 1416-22 p. 198; CFR XIV p. 40.
 5. CCR 1413-19 p. 435.
 6. Reg. Lacy p. 116 for Herleston see below p. 297.
 7. CPR 1388-92 p. 250, 1392-6 pp. 183, 185, 187.

This first member of the family to concern us is Sir John Clanvowe.⁽¹⁾ Born in 1341,⁽²⁾ he had a long and distinguished military career, serving in Sir Robert Knolly's chevauchée in 1370, on various expeditions against the French in 1375, 1377-8 and 1385-7, against the Scots in 1385, and, near the end of his life, on Louis de Bourbon's abortive crusade against the Barbary Saracens.⁽³⁾ Sir John, however, was courtier as well as soldier : beginning life as a retainer of the great Marcher family of Bohun,⁽⁴⁾ he soon passed into the service of the Black Prince.⁽⁵⁾ He remained with Princess Joan after the Prince's death, and went on to serve her son, Richard II. Soon after Richard came to the throne, Clanvowe became a knight of the Chamber, and in 1389, when the King had begun to break free from the grip of the Appellants, he became a Privy Counsellor.⁽⁶⁾ Throughout his life he was constantly employed as a commissioner of enquiry, of the peace, and of trailbaston, both in his own March and elsewhere, and also as ambassador in Europe.⁽⁷⁾ For these services he received a number of rewards, in the form of money, offices (mainly in Wales) and lands, especially those of alien priories.⁽⁸⁾

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1. Also spelt Clambowe, Clanvou etc. For a fuller account of Sir John Clanvowe see McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 145, 148-9, 160-3, 165-6, 171-2, 176-7, 179-80, 183-4, 186, 189, 192, 197, 199, 201, 203-8, 211-13, 221, 230.
 2. Nicolas, Scrope and Grosvenor Roll ii p. 437.
 3. Polychronicon IX p. 234; Rot. Scot ii. p. 75A; Chronique du Bon Duc Loys de Bourbon p. 222; E101/319/14; E364/13/1.
 4. CPR 1370-74 p. 325.
 5. John of Gunt's Register 1371-6 ii p. 192; Testamenta Vetusta pp. 14, 109.
 6. Tott, Chapters IV p. 345; Proc. PC. i. p. 6.
 7. CPR 1381-5 pp 17, 246, 285, 575, 587, 1385-9 p. 214, 1388-92 p. 217; CCR 1381-5 p. 148; Polychronicon VIII pp. 489-90.
 8. CPR 1370-74 pp. 301-3, 1381-5 pp. 8, 104, 1385-9 pp. 8, 14, 130; CPR IX p. 274.

In Sir John Clanvowe, then, we see a man of many parts and talents : fairly rich, influential, and close to the centre of events. So far, however, we have not seen the lollard : what is the evidence for his giving support to heretics? First, and most obvious, he was closely associated with Sir Lewis Clifford, Sir William Neville, Sir Richard Stury, Sir Thomas Latimer, Sir John Montagu, and Sir John Cheyne, a group which, with the addition of Clanvowe himself, are known as the "Lollard Knights". Their activities, and the probably justified suspicion that many of them were lollard sympathisers, have been discussed elsewhere.⁽¹⁾ That Clanvowe was on terms of close friendship with these men admits of no doubt. The association almost certainly grew up in the Black Prince's household, in which most of the knights served - as early as 1373 Clifford and Clanvowe were associated in receiving gifts from John of Gaunt,⁽²⁾ and in 1380 Clanvowe, Clifford and Neville were amongst the executors of the Prince's old comrade-in-arms Guichard d'Angle.⁽³⁾ Sometime after this, in 1385, Clanvowe appears with Clifford, Neville and Stury as an executor for their mistress, Princess Joan.⁽⁴⁾

Clanvowe was particularly closely associated with Sir William Neville : as early as 1377 they were companions in arms,⁽⁵⁾ and the two men continue to appear together⁽⁶⁾ until 1391, when they

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1. See McFarlane, Lollard Knights 138-233 esp. 197-206 and 230-232.
 2. John of Gaunt's Register 1371-6 ii. p. 192.
 3. Test. Vet. p. 109.
 4. ibid. p. 14.
 5. Foedera IX p. 379.
 6. CPR 1385-9 p. 214; Chron ... Loys de Bourbon p. 222; Polychronicon IX p. 234.

went together either on pilgrimage or crusade, and Clanvowe died 'in quadam vico juxta Constantinopolium in Graecia'.⁽¹⁾ Neville, according to the chronicler, was so broken-hearted that he died two days later 'inconsolabiliter dolens'. The Chronicle adds: 'Erant iste milites inter Anglicos famosi viri nobiles et strenui et etiam de genere claro producti'. Neville, it will be remembered, appears to have been a friend, or at least an admirer, of the Lollard Nicholas Hereford. When Hereford was imprisoned at Nottingham in 1387, Neville had specially asked to have custody of him 'because of the honesty of his person', and subsequently may have allowed him to escape.⁽²⁾

So far, then, the only evidence for Clanvowe's lollard sympathies lies in his close association with the Lollard Knights, and particularly with Neville. But the many-sided Clanvowe had another facet to his character, which proves more illuminating: a friend of Chaucer's,⁽³⁾ he is the only "Lollard knight" to have left literary works which are still extant. The first of these is the "Boke of Cupide", (also known as the "Cuckowe and the Nightingale") formerly attributed to Chaucer,⁽⁴⁾ but now almost certainly proved to be by Sir John Clanvowe, and to have been written between 1386 and 1391.⁽⁵⁾ It describes a typical courtly debate between a cuckoo

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1. Polychronicon. IX. pp. 261-2.
 2. See above pp. 6-8.
 3. He was a witness, with Neville, to Cicely Chaumpaigne's release, in 1380, of all her claims against Chaucer for rape. CCR 1377-81, p. 374; Chaucer Life Records p. 343 ff.
 4. e.g. in Thynne's edition of Chaucer, 1532 pp. 784-6.
 5. V. J. Scattergood, "The Authorship of the Boke of Cupide", Anglia 1964 p. 137 ff.

and a nightingale on the subject of Love, recorded by a lover who, though 'old and un lusty',⁽¹⁾ (Clanvowe was in his ^{forties} ~~fifties~~ at the time of writing) is so stricken by love that

'I am so shaken with the fevers whyte
Of al this May slepe I but a lyte' (l. 41-2)

The poem also describes something with which, as a courtier, Sir John must have been familiar :

'Under a maple that is fayre and grene
Before the chambre wyndowe of the quene
At Wodestoke upon the grene lay' (lines 283-5)

Agreeable though the poem is, both as an illustration of Clanvowe's mind and of his discipleship of Chaucer, his other work, in prose, is far more important to us.

This is an untitled treatise which has been named 'de Viis Duabus' or 'the Two Ways'⁽²⁾: it exists in one manuscript only, MS University College Oxford. 97, which also contains a will of the distinctive "Lollard type" (that of Robert Folkingham, Treasurer of Calais 1394-6), and a number of other treatises, including some by Richard Rolle the mystic. From internal evidence, the late KB. McFarlane⁽³⁾ has deduced that the manuscript was compiled by William Counter, appointed Vicar of Pyrton, Worcestershire, by Sir William Beauchamp, a close associate of Sir William Neville and of the other "Lollard knights".⁽⁴⁾ Other internal evidence indicates that it was written during Clanvowe's last journey :

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1. Thynne's edition p. 783 line 37.
 2. Unless otherwise stated, all information comes from V. J. Scattergood's edition in English Philological Studies X p.33 ff.
 3. See McFarlane pp. 200-206.
 4. CCR 1377-81 p. 374, 1389-92 p. 108; CPR 1388-92 p. 428, 1392-6 p. 17; John of Gaunt's Register 1379-83 ii p. 299; Kervyn de Lettenhove, Froissart's Chronicle VIII p. 280 See McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 166, 169, 171, 183, 189, 209, 214-5.

'This tretis next folewynge maade Sir Johan Clanvowe knight the last viage that he maade, in which dyede ...'

The work is at first sight dull and unrevealing, an exhortation for men to leave the broad road to Hell and enter the narrow way to heaven, eschewing both the Scylla of overconfidence in God's mercy and the Charybdis of despair in it :

'oure beleefe teecheth us that neythere glotonye ne overmuchel abstinence been vertues but the meene bytwene thise two is a vertue' (lines 286-9)

Sir John urges a contempt for worldly values and especially for worldly pomp - a sentiment that fits in very well with the disregard for funeral pomp in the "Lollard wills", and with Swynderby's views on the subject. Despite the apparent unexceptionability of the work, Mr. McFarlane⁽¹⁾ has noticed a number of significant points about it. The first is the author himself; what would be a normal clerical sermon becomes remarkable when written by a layman - in other words, it is not what Clanvowe says that is remarkable, but rather that he says anything at all. It is also notable that while he places much reliance on the Bible (without mention of the Fathers, commentaries, or official interpretations : almost John Croft's 'nudum textum de sacra scriptura'), he says nothing at all about confession, priests, prayers to saints, pilgrimages or any of the functions of the church. He is essentially a layman preaching a lay religion to other laymen - as McFarlane says: 'The literate laity were taking the clergy's words as well as their bread out of their mouths'. Sir John's treatise displays a strain of deep lay piety, apparently unconnected with the Church, which is almost a hallmark of early lollardy.

1. McFarlane op. cit. pp. 200-206.

The third significant point appears towards the end of the treatise :⁽¹⁾

'And also swiche folke that wolden fayne lyven meeke-liche in this world and ben out off swich forseid riot noise and stryf and lyven sympely and usen to eten and drynken in mesure and to cloothen them mekely and suffren paciently wroonges that othere folke doon and seyn to hem and holden hem apayed with litel good of this world ne no pris therof/Swiche folke the world scorneth and hooldeth hem lolleris and losels foolis and shameful wrecches but sikerly God holdeth hem moost wise and moost worshipful ...'

Clanvowe is admitting here that the accusation of lollardy has been levelled at him and his friends - as it certainly had been by two unrelated chroniclers : the question then arises as to whether he is saying - 'Yes, we are Lollards, but our way is right', or 'Because we are pious and try to follow Christ, you call us heretics'? The same ambiguous answer could have been made by Chaucer's Parson to the Host who 'smelt a loller in the wind'. Clanvowe's treatise presents many other ambiguities and some downright contradictions : a soldier himself, he condemns soldiers in his treatise (line 458), a courtier himself, he condemns worldly advancement; a 'worldly' writer on love, he condemns worldliness. His case, however, is not unique, for a parallel can be found in the work of his friend Geoffrey Chaucer, whose "Parson's Tale" and Retraction, written at the close of his life, contrast so oddly with the rest of his work.

What, then, is the evidence for Sir John's heretical sympathies? We know him to have been a close associate of men widely accused of heresy, and a specially close friend of an admirer of Nicholas Hereford. We also know him to have been, at any rate in the latter part of his life, a pietist, who wrote a very unusual treatise on religion : this treatise, whose authorship is in itself

1. lines 476-90.

a phenomenon, did not so much attack as completely ignore the church. The author was aware that he and his friends were accused of being "lollers", a charge he takes no trouble to refute. Yet we also know him to have gone on two pilgrimages or crusades - to Barbary in 1390 and to Greece in 1391 : both pilgrimages and crusades, and especially the latter, were frowned on by most lollards. Clanvowe's heresy, like his treatise, seems full of contradictions. We must remember, however, that in these early days of lollardy, attitudes had not yet hardened to the extent which they had done in, say, 1414 : it would have been quite possible for Clanvowe to hold some lollard beliefs while rejecting others. There seems no doubt that the knight had some lollard leanings, though V. J. Scattergood may be right in saying :

'the heresy practised by ... Sir John Clanvowe, was more in the nature of a practical secular response to a religious movement than a philosophic doctrinal support of its strict tenets.' (1)

As for whether Clanvowe supported lollardy in his native March, it seems more likely than not that Sir John, a proven lay pietist of apparently radical views, would have supported Swynderby as a good, simple, man following Christ, though ignoring the church just as the knight himself seems to do. That Swynderby was called a Lollard would mean little to one who had been called so himself. The extent of his support, however, cannot have been very great, for he was occupied throughout 1390, either on royal business⁽²⁾ or on crusade with Louis de Bourbon, and in 1391, at the time of Swynderby's trial, he was occupied in embassy to France in February,⁽³⁾ and later in the year by the pilgrimage which culminated in his death. The

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1. V. J. Scattergood, English Philological Studies X. p. 36.
 2. CPR 1388-92 pp. 178, 218.
 3. K. de Lettenhove, Froissart's Chronicle XIV pp. 287-8, 355-6.

support he gave, however, may well have been moral - he was possibly involved, for instance, in Swynderby's safe-conduct - but moral support, from such an eminent soldier, courtier, and pietist would have been valuable indeed.

The next member of the Clanvowe family who concerns us is Sir Thomas Clanvowe, who was probably Sir John's son and certainly his heir.⁽¹⁾ Like his father, Sir Thomas was closely linked with the court, where he was a King's Esquire by 1391;⁽²⁾ in the following year he married Perryne,⁽³⁾ daughter of his neighbour Sir Robert Whitney, who was most probably a patron of Swynderby. In 1394 he accompanied the King to Ireland, and was appointed a Knight of the Chamber in 1397 : in the following year he was employed to take New Year's gifts to the relations of Queen Isabella.⁽⁴⁾ He seems not to have been affected by the usurpation of Henry IV, who employed him to accompany Isabella back to France in 1401, as well as maintaining him as Knight of the Chamber and other marks of favour.⁽⁵⁾

His main employment, however, was related to his native March : he was knight of the Shire for Herefordshire in 1394, 1397 and 1398,⁽⁶⁾ and Sheriff of the county in 1397 and 1399,⁽⁷⁾ as well as serving on numerous royal commissions.⁽⁸⁾ His estates suffered in

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1. see McFarlane, Lollard Knights 262-3.
 2. CPR 1388-92 p. 496.
 3. CPR 1388-92 pp. 250, 1392-6 pp. 183, 496.
 4. CPR 1392-6 p. 477, 1396-9 p. 46; E364/F.21. Ric. II.A.
 5. Proc. P.C. ii. 136-8; CPR 1401-5 pp. 392, 471.
 6. Official Returns
 7. PRO. List of Sheriffs p. 60.
 8. CPR 1399-1401 p. 520, 1401-5 p. 128, CCR 1399-1402 p. 543.

Welsh wars,⁽¹⁾ in which he himself took part, having as his comrades Sir John Oldcastle, Sir Roger Acton, Sir John Greyndour and others who subsequently revealed themselves as lollards.⁽²⁾

The evidence for Sir Thomas' own heretical leanings is fairly substantial. First, he seems to have maintained Sir John Clanvowe's links with the Lollard Knights, and especially with Sir Lewis Clifford, for whom he was a feoffee in 1399 and 1404,⁽³⁾ and for whom he acted as an executor (with Clifford's son-in-law Sir Philip de la Vache and Sir John Cheyne, another "lollard knight") in 1404⁽⁴⁾. Four years later he was also appointed surveyor of Vache's will.⁽⁵⁾ Clanvowe's links with Cheyne and Clifford in connection with the latter's will are significant because they involve him in the inner circle of those knights most suspected of lollardy⁽⁶⁾: both Cheyne and Clifford can be indicted of lollardy on a number of counts.

Apart from the general accusation of heresy levelled at him as one of the Lollard Knights, it was Clifford who was sent by Princess Joan to interfere with Wycliffe's second trial in 1378.⁽⁷⁾ Only two years before his death, he was also said to have made confession and recantation of his lifelong heresy, and given a list of heretics to the authorities. In 1401, Sir Lewis was executor for

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1. CPR 1405-8 pp. 95, 114.
 2. E. F. Jacob, Fifteenth Century p. 103; W. T. Waugh, 'Sir John Oldcastle', in EHR XX p. 441. For Acton see p. 281-2, and for Greyndour p. 207.
 3. CPR 1396-9 p. 558; Ms. Magdalen College Oxford Hickling 64 f. 247.
 4. PCC Marche 7.
 5. Rickert, Chaucer's World p. 404 ff.
 6. see McFarlane, Lollard Knights
 7. Hist. Anglic. i. 353, 356.

the confirmed Lollard, Sir Thomas Latimer of Braybroke, a position he shared with another lollard suspect, Thomas Wakelyn, and with the lollard priest Robert Hoke.⁽¹⁾ Latimer also left the prototype "lollard will", contemptuous in its language for the body and eschewing all funeral pomp,⁽²⁾ which was subsequently copied by Clifford, by Sir John Cheyne and a number of others under suspicion of heresy.

Sir John Cheyne was also well-known as an anti-clerical, if not a heretic : so much so that when he was elected Speaker⁽³⁾ in the first Parliament of Henry IV, Archbishop Arundel thought it necessary to warn Convocation against his malice. Walsingham also makes him responsible for the suggestion of the Commons in 1404 that the King should resume church property. At that time Arundel is said to have once again condemned him as a notorious anti-clerical and a renegade deacon.⁽⁴⁾

Another interesting fact concerning Clifford's will is that executorship of it had passed by 1413 to Sir John Oldcastle and Richard Colfox,⁽⁵⁾ esquire, one of his accomplices in the 1414

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1. see above p. 119-121
 2. see McFarlane op. cit. 207-220.
 3. He never served, ostensibly 'ratione debilitatis et infirmitatis.'
 4. Hist. Anglic. ii. 265-6. Cheyne is here called 'prolocutor miles', yet he is not known even to have been an M.P. in 1404. As a member of the royal council, however, he may have been chosen as 'prolocutor' by a certain element in the Commons. J. S. Roskell, 'Sir John Cheyne of Beckford', in Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc. Trans. LXXV p. 43 ff.
 5. For Colfox see below p. 502-4

revolt. In the original will,⁽¹⁾ no mention is made of these two, the surveyors of the testament being Clanvowe, Cheyne, and Vache and the executors being John Carleton,⁽²⁾ Walter Gayton, Thomas Berebowe and John Andrewe. At some unspecified time in the Easter Term of 1413, however, £133. 6s. 8d. was paid to Oldcastle, Colfox, Gayton, Berebowe and Andrewe, described as 'executors of Lewis Clifford' for a clasp of gold, set with jewels, formerly belonging to Clifford.⁽³⁾ This was in part payment of 1200 marks for which it had been sold to the King. At the same time, or slightly later, Joan Bohun, Countess of Hereford, was paid £400 in part payment of her share in a certain clasp, also belonging to Clifford, which had been sold to the King.⁽⁴⁾ It is evident that Oldcastle and Colfox had either been given or bequeathed the executorship by Carleton, or had been appointed to it by Vache, Clanvowe, or Cheyne. The most likely link is between Clanvowe and Oldcastle, who both held their lands in the same county and who had served together in the Welsh wars. More information is needed to unravel the affair, but it certainly suggests an almost unique link between the Lollard Knights (especially Clanvowe) and the more violent revolutionaries of 1414.⁽⁵⁾

A final piece of evidence of Sir Thomas' lollardy is provided by the will of his wife, the daughter of Sir Robert Whitney, whose support for lollardy we have already noticed. Perryne Clanvowe's will⁽⁶⁾ has a definitely Lollard flavour, for it is in English (a thing

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1. PCC Marche 7.
 2. Carleton was connected with Clanvowe, de la Vache and Cheyne in private deeds. MS. Magdalen College Hickling 64 f.27; Ms. Bodl. Dodsworth 71 f.15; CPR 1399-1401 p. 207.
 3. Devon, Issues p. 323. In July 1413 (by which time Oldcastle was on the verge of prosecution for heresy) the executors were promised that the remainder should be paid. CPR 1413-16 p. 73.
 4. Devon, Issues p. 323.
 5. see McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 212-3 and below p.502-4 for Clifford's links with Colfox.
 6. Earliest English Wills (EETS) pp. 49-51. She died in 1422. See McFarlane op. cit. pp. 209-10.

still by no means usual) and it resembles the "Lollard wills" in its lack of funeral masses or other pomp:

'And as son as yt may be don godly after that I hame dede, porelych to be beryed, with-oute gret cost doon thereupon'

Lady Clanvowe made legacies to Sir Robert Whitney the younger, her brother; to Sir John Scudamore, her nephew, and to her servants. To one Elizabeth Joye she left 'a booke of Englyssh deped "pore caytife" : "pore caytife" was a fairly common lay devotional work, at one time attributed to Wycliffe or Purvey, but in fact containing nothing definitely heretical or unorthodox.⁽¹⁾ She also left to Reynold, her priest 'iiij quayres on Matthew' and orders 'two prestes, honest men and good lives, and ellys not', to say mass for herself and Sir Thomas for one year.⁽²⁾

Here, surely, is the same vein of lay pietism, based probably on Bible study (hence the "iiij quayres") which we have seen in her father-in-law Sir John, and also a desire for the purification of the church, seen in her desire for "honest priests". It is possible that she believed, with the lollards, than only a sinless priest could make the sacrament.

In all the Clanvoves, then, we see the same strain of essentially lay piety which could so easily turn to support for lollard doctrines. Added to Sir Thomas' close associations with the most suspect of the Lollard Knights, this makes it seem not unlikely that the later Clanvoves would support men like Swynderby, whom they would have seen more as a godly reformer than a dangerous heretic. Any anti-clerical views they might have had would, no doubt, have been

1. Deanesly, Lollard Bible pp. 346-7.

2. McFarlane, Lollard Knights 185 n.3. confuses Lady Perryne's will with that of Elizabeth de la Vache.

exacerpated by the disgraceful state of the clergy in their diocese, ruled over as it often was by absentee or over-worldly bishops.

What kind of help would the Clanvowes have been able to give to the local lollards of the March? Their lands lay almost entirely within Swynderby's preaching area in the Upper Wye valley, and marched with those of John Croft and the Oldcastle family. Their main seat was at Cusop Castle,⁽¹⁾ near Clifford, and they also owned the manors of Michaelchurch-on-Arrow,⁽²⁾ Hergest, near Kington,⁽³⁾ and Yazor, near Kinnersley.⁽⁴⁾ Apart from this, Yazor and Ocle Pychard, another Clanvowe manor,⁽⁵⁾ flanked the land held by Walter Brute at Lyde, where Sir Thomas also owned land,⁽⁶⁾ so that the Clanvowes could scarcely have escaped knowing of the lollard. These lands meant that the family had an immediate interest in the area, and they may well have joined with their neighbours and relations (like Croft and the Whitneys) in protecting lollard preachers. Sir Thomas, like Sir John, may have been instrumental in obtaining Swynderby's safe conduct. He may also have been active in defending Brute in 1393, for it is notable that both he and his father-in-law Whitney, though resident in the March at the time, were absent from the commission set up to suppress the Welsh lollard's supporters.⁽⁷⁾

Clanvowes, Whitneys and Crofts may also have gained a freedom from persecution for the lollards in other parts of the March

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1. Duncumb, Herefordshire ii. 286; McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 230-232.
 2. CCR 1360-64 p. 153.
 3. Duncumb op. cit. iii p. 71.
 4. Feudal Aids i. 391 Sir Thomas is buried at Yazor
 5. Feudal Aids i. 394; Earliest English Wills p. 51.
 6. PRO. Inquisitiones Post Mortem iii. p. 239.
 7. Reg. Trefnant 410-411.

than those in which they actually held lands, for in the close-knit and intermarried society of the area, the three families could claim close blood relationships with nearly all their landowning neighbours, especially the Skydemores, the Monnington, the Oldcastles and the Walweyns.⁽¹⁾

Thus concludes the evidence we have for support by the gentry of the March for the Lollards of the early nineties. After 1397, however, the evidence for lollardy in the area becomes more difficult to find. The only possible evidences of lollardy that we can find in the early years of the fifteenth century, in fact, are some unelaborate excommunications and purgations in Bishop Mascall's register - some of which may be for heresy.⁽²⁾ Part of the reason for this lack of information may be that the area formerly strong in lollardy (that is to say, the Welsh border between Leintwardine and Monmouth) was in the period after 1400 overrun and plundered by Owain Glendower⁽³⁾ and the Welsh rebels, and many of the inhabitants were driven into flight. The next interesting entry in the Hereford Registers does not occur until 1407, when the Glendower war was past its crisis. In February of that year Trefnant's successor, Bishop Mascall, promulgated a sentence of excommunication against those who:

'maliciose suo jure private nituntur aut qui libertates eusdem infirmare aut perturbare presumunt necnon omnes et singuli qui de domibus maneriis grangiis vel aliis locis quibuscumque ad archiepiscopos ... vel alias personas ecclesiasticas ... pertinentibus.' (4)

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1. History of Ewyas Harold p. 77; Mansions of Herefordshire p.81.
 2. Reg. Mascall 41-2 (Thomas Winter of Micheldean) 81 (John Lane and William Monemouth of Hereford) 84 (William Podmore of Madeley and others).
 3. see Reg. Mascall 20-21 for a list of areas impoverished in Glendower's revolt, including Whitney, Winforton, Eardisley, Kington and Leominster.
 4. Reg. Mascall pp. 32-3.

Those referred to were probably criminals and nothing more :
in the same letter, however, Mascall also condemned another, separate,
group, those who

'in conventiculis suis a jure prohibitis conspiraciones
illicitas in prejudicium ecclesie facere ... in grande
animarum suarum periculum et perniciosum exemplum
aliorum.'

This second group were certainly anti-clerical, and almost certainly
heretical, though we can only guess at their location, size, and
leadership.

At about the same time there appears to have been an out-
break of lollardy further north than usual, in the town of Shrewsbury.
Twelve men of the town had been arrested in May 1395 during a national
purge of lollards, and had been imprisoned in Beaumaris Castle with the
known Oxford heretics Thomas Lucas, John Gamlingay and Richard Whelp-
ington.⁽¹⁾ The likelihood is, then, that these men were lollards, but
no more is known either of them or of heresy in Shrewsbury until 1407.
On April 17th of that year, however, William Thorpe,⁽²⁾ a lollard
preacher of some twenty years' standing, preached a sermon at St. Chad's
parish church there 'through leave granted', presumably by the parish
priest.⁽³⁾ His teaching there so alarmed the town bailiffs that they
at once arrested him and, after keeping him in prison for over a
month,⁽⁴⁾ handed him over to Archbishop Arundel of Canterbury, to-
gether with a covering letter claiming that he had "said openly ...
that the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration, was materiall
bread. And that images should in no wise be worshipped. And that men
should not go on pilgrimages. And that priests have no title to tithes.
And that it is not lawful to swear in any wise."⁽⁵⁾

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1. CPR 1391-6 p. 591; CCR 1392-6 pp. 344-5 see below p. 448.
 2. For Thorpe see above pp. 1-5 . and below p. 434.
 3. All details of Thorpe's activities in Shrewsbury come from his own account of his examination by Archbishop Arundel at Saltwood Castle in August 1407. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. pp. 687-708.
 4. Foxe. op. cit. i. 699.
 5. ibid. i. 692-3.

Cross-examined by Archbishop Arundel on these points, Thorpe claimed that he had not even touched on the sacraments in his sermon. During his preaching, however, his listeners had been distracted by the sacring bell of a mass, and he had recalled them by saying "Good men yee were better to stand here still and to heare Gods word. For certs the vertue and the meede of the most holy Sacrament ... standeth mickle more in the beleefe thereof that yee ought to have in your soule, than it doth in the outward sight thereof".⁽¹⁾ Despite Thorpe's denials, Arundel believed that he had preached against transubstantiation at Shrewsbury, and on his own admission the lollard did uphold the Wycliffite doctrine of remanence.⁽²⁾

Thorpe also denied having made a direct attack on images, though he was plainly violently opposed to them.⁽³⁾ Concerning pilgrimages, Thorpe was alleged to have preached at St. Chad's that "those men and women that goe on pilgrimages to Canturburie, to Beverley, to Karlington, to Walsingham and to any such other places, are accursed and made foolish, spending their goods in waste!"⁽⁴⁾ Once again he denied using these words, but admitted being opposed to pilgrimages. As to tithes, Thorpe claimed not to have mentioned them in his sermon, but admitted that a month afterwards, during a conversation with a man (presumably an agent provocateur) who had visited him in prison, he had denounced excommunication for tithes

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1. Foxe op. cit. i. p. 695.
 2. ibid. i. 695-6.
 3. ibid. i. 696-7
 4. ibid. i. 697-8.

and declared that tithes were pure alms.⁽¹⁾ Finally, he denied preaching against any form of swearing, but admitted having preached at Shrewsbury and elsewhere that it was sinful to swear by any creature.⁽²⁾

Included in the letter sent by the bailiffs of Shrewsbury to Arundel was a request⁽³⁾ that 'if thou (i.e. Thorpe) shalt bee made ... to suffer open iouresse for thine heresies, that thou may have thy iouresse openly there among them. So that all they whom thou and such other lossels have there perverted, may through feare of thy deede be reconciled againe to the unitie of holy Church". From this passage it is apparent that by 1407 there were lollard sympathisers in Shrewsbury, and that other lollard preachers had visited the town. The Shrewsbury authorities, however (unlike their counterparts in Leicester and Northampton) seem to have been implacably opposed to heresy, though the arrest of Thorpe may have been the culmination of a long build-up of lollard activity in the town. It is probably no coincidence that on 11th May 1407, three weeks after Thorpe's arrest, a royal commission was issued to the authorities in Shrewsbury, Bridgenorth and Ludlow and to a number of Shropshire knights, ordering them to arrest all maintainers or preachers of lollardy.⁽⁴⁾

How much connection there was between the Shropshire lollards and their brethren in Herefordshire is unknown. Thorpe's opinions, which (in addition to those noted above) included a belief

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1. Foxe op. cit. pp. 699-701.
 2. *ibid.* pp. 701-2.
 3. *ibid.* p. 693.
 4. CPR 1405-8 p. 352.

that confession to priests was not needful, and that it was possible to confess to a good layman, did not differ much from those held by Swynderby.⁽¹⁾ As Thorpe had been preaching since about 1387, it is possible the two men may have met, though Thorpe makes no mention of it in his examination, during which he commended Repingdon, Purvey, and Hereford (before their recantations) and especially Wycliffe and Aston. The prompt and severe action taken against him by the Shrewsbury authorities may well have succeeded in checking heresy in their area, for little more is heard of it there after 1407.

Information is also lacking on lollards elsewhere in the March in the years immediately following 1407 : in 1414, however, the area was once again to become notorious for the heretical activities of the most important lay supporter lollardy ever attracted - Sir John Oldcastle. He was born, probably in about 1378⁽²⁾ to a family whose main seat was at Oldcastle in the parish of Almeley, in the Upper Wye Valley between Kington and Eardisley.⁽³⁾ Little is known about his youth, but by about 1400 he had begun to make a name for himself in the Welsh wars against Glendower⁽⁴⁾ : in 1401 he served as Captain of Builth Castle, in 1402-3 as Captain of Kidwelly, in 1404 as Captain of Hay, and in 1407 he took part in the attack on Aberystwyth.⁽⁵⁾ It was during these arduous years of campaigning that Oldcastle first came into contact with the fellow-soldiers who were to play such an important part in his later life : first and most important, Henry,

1. see above.

2. Most of the information concerning Oldcastle is summarised from W. T. Waugh, "Sir John Oldcastle" in EHR xx.

3. For a list of Oldcastle lands in the Almeley area, see CPR 1422-9 pp. 546-8. The family also hold lands in Hereford.

4. Jacob, Fifteenth Century p. 103; CPR 1399-1401 p. 518, 1401-5 pp. 299, 504, 1405-8 p. 149.

5. CPR 1401-5 p. 464; Proc. P.C. i. p. 174, ii. 68; St. Alban's Chron. p. 23.

Prince of Wales, with whom he became intimate, and the Marcher Knights Sir John ap Harry, Thomas Walweyn, John Greyndour, Roger Acton, Robert Whitney and Thomas Clanvowe.⁽¹⁾ At the same time Oldcastle followed his family tradition of public service in Herefordshire, of which he was a J.P. in 1404-6, Knight of the Shire in 1404, and Sheriff in 1406-7.⁽²⁾

Already successful and influential, both nationally and in the March, Oldcastle set the seal on his fortunes in June 1408 when he married as his second wife⁽³⁾ Joan Cobham, heiress to the Cobham estates in Kent and elsewhere, and became Lord Cobham jure uxoris.⁽⁴⁾ Two years later, however, signs of his heresy began to appear, both in his support for a heretical chaplain preaching in Kent,⁽⁵⁾ and in his letters supporting the Bohemian Hussites, in which it is made clear that Oldcastle accepted the main lollard tenets and was considered to be one of the leaders of the sect in England.⁽⁶⁾

Sir John's views, though well-known at least to the higher clergy, made little or no difference to Oldcastle's public life : he attended Parliament in 1412, served on royal commissions, and accompanied Prince Henry on a private expedition to aid the Burgundians.⁽⁷⁾ This last is significant, for it was mainly the close and long-standing friendship between himself and Prince Henry that caused Oldcastle to escape citation as a heretic for so long. It was not

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1. CPR 1399-1401 p. 518, 1401-5 pp. 299,504, 1405-8 pp. 149, 492; CCR 1405-9 pp. 278,526, 1409-13 p. 211; CFR XIII pp. 29,60; Proc. P.C. i. 174 ii. 68.
 2. CPR 1401-5 p. 517, 1405-8 p. 492; CFR XIII p. 52; CCR 1402-5 p. 366; PR List of Sheriffs p. 60.
 3. His first had been Katherine, daughter of Richard ap Yevan. Waugh. art. cit. 437.
 4. Waugh. 437-8.
 5. *ibid.* 442; Concilia iii p. 330 see below pp. 372-5
 6. Waugh pp. 443-4.
 7. CCR 1409-13 p. 406; CPR 1408-13 p. 314; Hist. Anglic ii. 286; Wylie. Henry IV iv. p. 57.

until 1413 that the blow fell, and Sir John was cited before Convocation as a 'fautor, protector, et defensor' of heretics, especially in the dioceses of London, Rochester (where the Cobham lands were situated) and Hereford.⁽¹⁾

Oldcastle almost certainly learnt his lollardy in his native March, most probably at his home at Almeley. Swynderby had preached at nearby Whitney in 1390, when Sir John was a boy of 12, and in 1391 had been cited at Whitney, Eardisley, and at Almeley itself. Many of the Oldcastle family's neighbours, such as the Whitneys of Whitney, the Clanvowes at Cusop and Michaelchurch-on-Arrow, and the Crofts of Croft, were also in all probability supporters of heresy. Whether Sir John nourished an unbroken faith in lollardy all his life, or merely remembered the teachings of his youth in his middle age, is difficult to say.

Since the date of the beginning of Oldcastle's active heresy is unknown, it is almost impossible to say what support he gave to the lollards of the March. Any support of Swynderby, Brute, or the original Deerfold congregation, though posited by some over-enthusiastic Protestant martyrologists, can be ruled out on grounds of chronology alone. It may, however, be significant that the only direct evidence of probable lollardy in Herefordshire in the period 1400-1413, Mascall's condemnation of illegal conventicles, was issued during the time that Oldcastle was Sheriff. Sir John was specifically accused in 1413 of aiding lollards in Hereford diocese, but the identity, quantity, and location of these lollards is quite unknown to us.

(1) Concilia iii. p. 353. see below p. 475ff

They may, indeed, have been very few, for the number of recruits from the March who joined Oldcastle's revolt in 1414 was very small. Various reasons have been advanced for this : one is the great distance of the March from London - distance, however, did not deter the contingent from Derbyshire, that from Bristol, or indeed the contingent led from Worcestershire by Oldcastle's old comrade Sir Roger Acton. Better explanations are that the March may have been under special surveillance after Oldcastle's escape from the Tower, or that numbers were few because Sir John himself was not there to encourage and lead them - for it is certain that he was hiding in London, at the house of William Fisher, from the time of his escape to the outbreak of the revolt.⁽¹⁾

We can only guess at the identity of any March lollards who did answer Oldcastle's call. Some of them may well have joined Acton's contingent near Tenbury : another may have been that Thomas Sarnefield who was specifically excluded from the general pardon after the revolt. Sarnefield may have been related to or identifiable with the Thomas Sarnesfield who held the manor of the same name, two miles west of Almeley.⁽²⁾ Four other men who may conceivably have taken part were David Draper, Richard Howton, John Colyer and Richard Prat, all of Hereford : these were appealed in 1421 by John fitz Harry, an Irish criminal, who claimed that they had risen with Oldcastle in January 1414, and that five weeks after the revolt they rode to Great Malvern to maintain and comfort Oldcastle with their goods. When, however, fitz Harry was faced with the Hereford men, he claimed that he had meant to accuse four men of the same name but from 'Westthereford in Wallia' (i.e. Haverfordwest), this

1. see below p. 481.

2. CCR 1413-19 pp. 176-7; PRO Inquisitiones Post Mortem iii pp. 118, 239; Reg. Gilbert p. 121.

would seem to make nonsense of the whole story.⁽¹⁾ The authorities, however, believed fitz Harry, and he was certainly right in connecting Oldcastle with Great Malvern⁽²⁾

We know far more about lollard activities in the March in 1414-18, when Oldcastle was on the run from the authorities, and spent much time in the area. Immediately after the failure of the revolt, Sir John was believed by the authorities (probably with good reason) to have fled to Wales, perhaps hoping to raise support amongst his former comrades-in-arms there. The government believed this to be a very real danger, as can be seen by their reinforcement of Welsh castles at this time : Cardigan was reinforced in February 1414, by John Smith and five other soldiers 'lest John Oldcastle and othere heretics ... should take the said castle by night after they had fled from England into Wales, as the King is informed and rumour hath it'⁽³⁾ - Richard Oldcastle, constable of Aberystwyth and ~~possibly~~ Sir John's ~~uncle~~^{cousin (CK) i.e. the s. of Thos. Oldcastle}⁽⁴⁾ was ordered to reinforce his castle with eight additional archers - 'pour la sauf garde dicelle ... ad temps del Rumour et Insurrection des Lollardes et autres voz Desloialux lieges'.⁽⁵⁾

The next indication we have of Oldcastle's presence in the March is his attempted revolt near Malvern in 1415,⁽⁶⁾ in which

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1. KB27/639/1
 2. see below.
 3. SC6/1222/13
 4. BM. Ms. Lansdowne. 259 f. 35.
 5. BM. Add. Ms. 38525 f. 34.
 6. see p.273⁴below.

some of his local supporters, including the Hereford men accused by Fitz Harry, may have taken part.⁽¹⁾ Sir John's movements in the March for the next year or so are difficult to trace, though we know he spent much of the time out of the area. Stories, most of them little more than legends, exist of his having hidden at various places along the Welsh border. A tradition, probably confused, connects him with a house in Deerfold Wood, where there may still have been a lollard congregation.⁽²⁾ Another story tells of an escape from Olchon Court, in the wild country of the Black Mountains.⁽³⁾ More reliable is the strong local tradition of his hiding at Birtingsmorton, south of Great Malvern; this may be the hide-out 'fast by Malverne'⁽⁴⁾ from which he launched his attempted revolt in 1415, and at which stores of his goods were subsequently found. Almost certainly to be discounted, on the other hand, is the story of William Carsewell, indicted for the capital offence of coining: he attempted to save himself by appealing both the Prior of Malvern and the Prior of Wenlock of aiding Oldcastle. Carsewell claimed to have asked by the latter to mint coin for Oldcastle, and to have met Sir John in April 1417 'quodam domo infra Prioratus de Wenlok vocat le Misericorde', where the heretic was accompanied by Peter de Trym, chaplain of Ireland, John Hardelagh, a Welsh yeoman, and Hugh Sheldon, clerk. No other trace has been found of these men, whose names may have been invented. Though the appeal was soon proved false, however, it may have contained some element of truth.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Given a confusion of dates on Fitz Harry's part.
 2. Wylie, Henry V iii. p. 86.
 3. Woolhope NFC vol. for 1902-4 p. 234.
 4. Hist. Anglic. ii. 306-7; Capgrave. Chronicle p. 309. See p. 293-4 below.
 5. KB27/631/7,8,9, 632/12,14, 633/2,10, 634/5.

A few other clues exist as to Oldcastle's whereabouts and doings at this time. At some time before the spring of 1416 one of Oldcastle's supporters, Thomas Crompt of Hereford, was denounced to the authorities for 'maintaining Oldcastle' : Crompt appears to have been a lollard of long standing, for he had been condemned for heresy by Archbishop Arundel, who died early in 1414. Despite this previous charge, however, Crompt was released after swearing not to support lollardy or Oldcastle.⁽¹⁾ Probably a more important supporter was Henry Greyndour, esquire, of Clearwell in the Forest of Dean, who was ~~probably a relation~~ ^{the uncle} of Sir John Oldcastle's old companion-in-arms, Sir John Greyndour. Henry, if the chroniclers are to be believed, was bold or foolish enough to present the King, in 1417, with a bill from Oldcastle urging him to confiscate all the temporalities of the church. The King, not surprisingly, became extremely angry, and cast Greyndour into prison 'quasi haereticorum fautorem'.⁽²⁾

There is also evidence that Oldcastle spent some time at his own manor at Almeley. In January 1419 nine men were accused before a Herefordshire commission charged with "lollardriis sive feloniiis" and with aiding Oldcastle;⁽³⁾ these were Walter Harald of Wigmore, clerk and Nicholas his brother, John Bailly of Aylmestrey, near Croft, William Lydum, John Yonge of Almeley, formerly Oldcastle's bailiff,⁽⁴⁾ John Carpenter of Almeley, Richard Webbe and Richard Dryver of the same, and David Seys of Hay. The first four were acquitted, but the rest stood trial : Dryver claimed to have met

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1. Reg. Chichele IV. 151.
 2. de Illustribus Henricis p. 121; Liber Metricus 148; Wylie, Henry V iii. p. 86.
 3. KB27/634/11 q. by H.G. Richardson, 'Sir John Oldcastle in Hiding' in EHR LV pp. 432-8.
 4. E159/195/3.

Oldcastle by chance while fetching the vicar of Almeley, John Stanf^forde, to his dying father. Oldcastle had forced him to swear to serve him, which he did 'negligenter et propter metum mortis' : Dryver denied any intention to commit treason or lollardy, and threw himself on the King's mercy. His meeting with Sir John had taken place on the 20th August, 1417, and three days later Dryver, again 'propter metum mortis' went on Oldcastle's orders to the house of John Yonge, and persuaded him to go to the village cross, on the pretext that the vicar wanted to speak to him there. When they arrived at the cross, they found Oldcastle there, who forced Yonge to serve him also : Yonge claimed that 'quamcisius idem Johanne Yonge potuit', he left Oldcastle and went to warn the Sheriff, Sir John Merbury, of Oldcastle's presence. Merbury offered him the large sum of £100 to privately reveal the lollard's whereabouts, but Yonge said he did not know them, and that even if he did, he could not reveal them for fear of his life. Yonge also denied intention of treason or lollardy.

Richard Webbe had been sent for to visit Oldcastle at his manor house at Almeley, in which Sir John was openly living : Oldcastle asked him to make him a pair of shoes, and other things, which Webbe refused to do. Nevertheless, he had been forced to swear to keep Sir John's presence secret, and had sent him food. Webbe, like the others, denied treasonable intention. Seys, who appears to have been a relation of Oldcastle's,⁽¹⁾ had been tricked into coming to Almeley to seek out some cattle, and had been asked to take care of two of Sir John's horses : Seys at first refused, but eventually took one, which he never returned. The last accused, Carpenter, claimed to have been more or less kidnaped by Oldcastle, who told him that he

1. Oldcastle called him 'consanguine mi'. He may have been a relation of Sir John's first wife Katharine ap Yevan.

still wished to be a true subject to the King. Carpenter had been forced to accompany Oldcastle on a visit to Gruffydd, son of Owen Glendower, in North Wales : hearing them discussing treason, Carpenter had slipped away, leaving his horse, and had returned to Almeley on foot. This meeting had taken place in mid-October, and Oldcastle's presense at Almeley appears to have lasted from August 20th 1417 to the time he left for North Wales.

All the accused were eventually acquitted, after twice appearing before the Council, at Michaelmas 1419. This case raises many significant points : firstly, it is obvious that government surveillance on Almeley was sporadic if not absolutely non-existent, and that Oldcastle's movements there were more or less completely free . Many of the villagers no doubt supported him, despite or notwithstanding his lollardy : it must be remembered that any of them could have betrayed him to the authorities for a large reward, yet none did. Even Yonge, who was the only one who went to ~~the~~ authorities, would not reveal Sir John's whereabouts. The attitude of the authorities is also puzzling : it is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that the county justices did not know of Oldcastle's presence amongst them, yet they did nothing about it. Nor, apparently, did Merbury move against Oldcastle, though Yonge had warned him of his whereabouts : perhaps the fact that he was married to Alice Oldcastle, Sir John's aunt, had something to do with it. ⁽¹⁾ Finally, it would be interesting to know what the ^Arole of the four men immediately acquitted was : two of them, the Harald brothers, had previously been connected with Oldcastle. They had been bound over

1. CPR 1401-5 p. 116.

in February 1418, in the large sum of £100, not to cause unlawful assemblies or to maintain heresy⁽¹⁾ it is possible that Walter, the priest, may have been a lollard preacher. Their sureties in 1418 included two esquires of Dewchurch and one of Wynnesley, but no more is known of them.

It is probable that Oldcastle was not only visiting his lands in the March, but actually drawing rent from them, despite the fact that, as the lands of a traitor, they should have escheated to the crown. According to a survey taken after Oldcastle's death, however, the rents were collected not by the crown, but by one of Oldcastle's closest former associates, Sir John ap Harry.⁽³⁾ Mr. Waugh believes⁽⁴⁾, very credibly, that he either passed these directly to Sir John, or at least shared them with him. Oldcastle's property in Hereford, the 'foreboresyn', also failed to escheat, and was retained by the tenant, Nicholas Skryven, scrivener. When charged with defrauding the crown, both ap Harry and Skryven answered that they were not aware that the property was forfeit! Certainly the government suspected both men of links with Sir John, for in July 1417 ap Harry was bound over in the sum of £1,000 not to lead unlawful assemblies, nor to adhere to Oldcastle against the Church, nor go nor ride with him against the King.⁽⁵⁾ The wording of this promise leads us to believe that ap Harry, a former Sheriff and Knight of the Shire, was

1. CCR 1413-19 p. 459.

2. E159/196/3.

3. see above.

4. Waugh. art. cit. p. 625n.

5. CCR 1413-19 pp. 434-5. None of his sureties was Sir Robert Whitney, a member of a family with lollard associations.

considered to be a possible lollard leader. Nicholas Skryven was also arrested on suspicion of heresy but never brought to trial.⁽¹⁾ This case, together with the fact of Oldcastle's presence at Almeley, makes it clear Sir John could operate almost with impunity in his native March, supported as he apparently was by the help of friends and the apparent indifference of his relations and former associates among the authorities. This is not to say that all those who aided or failed to arrest him were lollard sympathisers : more likely they were old companions-in-arms who were embarrassed by the presence of a comrade who had 'got religion' and gone to the bad.

Yet Oldcastle was finally taken, though the capture took place outside his own part of the March. He was taken near Welshpool, possibly at Broniarth,⁽²⁾ at the end of November 1417, perhaps on his way back from his meeting with Gruffydd ap Owen. His captors were Jevan and Gruffydd, sons of Gruffydd ap Madoc ap Gwennoys, gentleman, of Powysland, and two yeomen, all of them tenants of Sir Edward Charleton, Lord Powys : they did not, however take him without a struggle - 'In captione sua multa mala captoribus inferebat, quia fortis erat valde, ut dicunt. Sed una mulier percussit tibiam ejus scabello, et mox accidit'.⁽³⁾ He was turned over to Lord Powys, who imprisoned him in Welshpool Castle : on December 1st he was ordered to bring him to London, with 'sufficient men and carriages' to prevent yet another escape. Oldcastle was said to have been so badly wounded that he had to travel in a 'horsliter'.⁽⁴⁾ He appeared before Parliament

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1. KB27/636/9.
 2. Accounts vary : Strecche's Chronicle p. 148 gives 'in villa Walschepole', while Montgomeryshire Collections p. 290 mentions Broniarth specifically. See also Hist. Anglic ii.327; Liber Metricus 158; de Illustribus Henricis 122; CPR 1416-22 pp. 145-6; CCR 1419-22 p. 196; Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. p.308.
 3. de Illustribus Henricis 122.
 4. Kingsford. Eng. Hist. Lit. p. 308 gives a 'Whirlecote', a fast two-wheeled carriage.

shortly after his arrival, but another trial was not held, as he was already a condemned traitor. On the 14th December he was hanged and burnt hanging on a new gallows set up for the purpose at St. Giles Fields.⁽¹⁾

Oldcastle's death was the end of an era for the lollards of the March, as it was for those in the rest of England. Yet lollardy apparently lingered on there, especially around Almeley and Swynderby's preaching area. The Bishop, Lacy, was obviously still worried by lollardy in June 1418, when he sent out letters to the clergy recommending the preaching of Lewis Newchirch :

'Cum utique post lollium iam noviter quod, proh dolor in pluribus huius regni partibus per varios ecclesie catholice degeneres et privignos emulosque et detractatores sub simulate specie sanctitatis Christicolas varios demnabiliter seducendo nequiter sit aspersum et dogmatizatum' (2)

Nothing more is known of heresy in the March until February 1433, when Lacy's successor, Bishop Spofford, became concerned about a revival of lollard doctrines in Oldcastle's home parish of Almeley.

'Quia, ut accepimus, heretica pravitas que, ut per prisca patet vestigia, olim in parochia de Almaly suas fimbrias dilatavit, jam reviviscere satagat et venenum ad infra latens jam alios pro vicibus intoxicare intendit ...' (3)

To combat this, he set up a special commission to investigate, consisting of Richard Roderham, professor of Theology and Treasurer of Hereford, Walter Swanne, vicar of Pembridge and John Virr, vicar of Leominster. Within a few months, they had indicted John Woohulle, an unbeneficed clerk of Almeley, of holding unorthodox views, and of keeping heretical books, which had been found 'tam in domo dicti Johannis quam alibi'.⁽⁴⁾ These books were examined, and found to

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1. Hist. Anglic. ii. 327; Liber Metricus 158; English Chronicle p. 46 see below p. 530.
 2. Reg. Lacy p. 25.
 3. Reg. Spofford p. 152-3.
 4. ibid. p. 156.

contain many heresies and errors : accordingly, in April 1433, Woodhulle was made to renounce fifteen conclusions said to have been contained in various 'libri, opusculi, cedula et scripture'. They were as follows -

- (1) 'that in the sacrament of the awter efter the consecraciō es abydyng materiall brede
- (2) 'a man shold not gef his almes to prestes, freres, ne pardoneres, for thei ben fals enemyes of God'
- (3) 'A man shold not set his trust in pardouns ne trentalis'
- (4) 'A man shold put his trust in God alone, and in nothing bot in hym, the whiche wordes as doctores saith is in grete faut, for all yif Almighty God be all one the end of all oure trust, yit is aw for to put oure truste and hope of help in all the seyntes of heven as menes and mediators that may brynge us to heven.
- (5) 'yif a man woll forsake hys synne he ys in the state of salvacion, and abel to receyve the blyssfull sacrament of the auter ... (i.e. without necessity for confession and absolution.)
- (6) 'Parsones ne prelates schold not wrynge the godes of his suggettes fro hem by cursyng ne worldly plee.
- (7) 'That tythes or dymes be pure almes geven of wyll wyth oute reason of mannes det.
- (8) 'God in the lawe told lytell or nocht of thytyng of dymes.
- (9) 'Ther schuld no man pleet another.
- (10) 'A prest and he plete for hys gode he schulde rather leve his pepull and goo fro tham, and gete his gode be holy worchyng.
- (11) 'Parychones schulde wyth drawe fro prestes and prelates ther offrynges and dymes whan they fall to synne openly and fayles in ther offis.
- (12) 'What so ever an yvel prelat or prest dos in masse, matens, or other dedes they harm hem silf, the parischoners, and all other men.
- (13) 'Sogettes may lefulli deme the manor of levyng of her prelates, and who so saith other it is but a feynyng, for yevell prelates ben the traytours of God.

- (14) That John Wyclyf opinions and his felawes er commendable and all thes dampnable and to be reproved that his bokes dampned.
- (15) Also it is said and put to me that I schuld say that the worst dede a man dos is better than the best dede that a woman dos ... the whiche words was never sayde for no sooth.

The origin of Woodhulle's opinions is not difficult to track down : nearly all can be directly traced to the pronouncements of William Swynderby, and nine of them are characteristically Swynderbian in their anti-clerical rather than anti-sacramental line.⁽¹⁾ Woodhulle's last article was obviously a piece of eccentricity on his part or a piece of mis-recording on the part of his accusers : apart from this, however, the Almeley chaplain's views descend directly from Swynderby, though some are slightly garbled and vulgarised. The 'libri, opusculi, cedula et scripture', from which these views were said to have come were, indeed, possibly by Swynderby himself, or else by one of his disciples in the March. Whether they came to Almeley via Oldcastle, or were in any way connected with him, we do not know, though the likelihood is that they were : it is possible that they may have been written or copied at Almeley especially for Sir John. Whatever the explanation, Woodhulle's case proves that lollardy, and lollardy of an essentially Swynderbian kind, still persisted in the Upper Wye valley in 1433, fifteen years after the death of Oldcastle and over forty years after the disappearance of Swynderby himself.

It may well have persisted in the area longer still.

Though most of the later fifteenth century prosecutions in Hereford diocese were in the Forest of Dean area, and followed a different

1. Woodhulle's conclusion (1) is based on Swynderby's 1391 conclusion (3), Woodhulle's (5) on Swynderby's (6), Woodhulle's (3) on Swynderby's (8) and (9), Woodhulle's (6) on Swynderby's 1382 conclusion (4), Woodhulle's (7) on Swynderby's 1382 conclusion (3) and Woodhulle's (11) on the 1382 conclusion (2). See above pp. 158-9, 162-4 and Reg. Trefnant pp. 237-50.

doctrinal tradition,⁽¹⁾ there is evidence of lollardy in the Upper Wye valley as late as 1505. In that year Bishop Mayew proceeded against John Croft of Eardisley and two other men of the same village.⁽²⁾ Croft confessed that ...

'I have hadde in my ward and kepyng diverse bookys conteynyng heresies and errouris ... declaryng and techyng agaynst the blessed sacrament of the awter othirwise then me oghte to have done, also agaynst ... confession to prestis ... also agaynst the solemnization of matrimony. Also ... agaynst ... the pope, showyng that he hath not the power of byndyng and lowsyng ... but in usurpyng that power upon him he makyth hymself Antechriste. Also I have redde and taughte agayn ... images standyng in churches and agayn the shrynyng of seyntis bonys in gold and silver ...'

Croft's books indicate a tradition going back some way, and there is a strong possibility of a more or less continuous lollard congregation in the area, stretching back to Swynderby's teaching in the 1390's. The beliefs expressed in 1505 echo those of the earlier lollards of the March, though there are now a number of accretions.

Our investigation of early lollardy on the borders of Wales, then, shows a hopeful beginning in the 1380's and 90's, with Swynderby's powerful preaching supported by many of the local gentry. Heresy appears to have gone underground in about 1397, though it revived under Oldcastle : after his death, it once again went underground. It seems likely, however, that it did not completely disappear, but that its early foundations were strong enough to carry some sort of tradition through almost to the Reformation.

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1. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 40-42, 47-48. The Forest of Dean lollards were violently anti-sacramental.
 2. Reg. Mayew pp. 66-7.

CHAPTER FOURBRISTOL

Bristol, at the time of this survey the second greatest seaport and third largest town in England, was also, with London and Leicester, one of the most important centres of the lollard heresy. From the 1380's until at least the middle of the fifteenth century it sheltered comparatively large numbers of active heretics, who spread their doctrines not only within the town, but into the surrounding cloth-weaving districts for which Bristol served as a market. Throughout the period under consideration the town also attracted the best-known lollard preachers : their existence there, and that of their local converts, was made less hazardous by the fact that part of Bristol lay in the diocese of Worcester and part in that of Bath and Wells, so that those persecuted in one diocese could often escape by simply crossing the Avon into the other. Bristol's status as a great centre of heresy was confirmed in 1414, when the town sent the largest known contingent - more than thirty men, led by six priests - to join Sir John Oldcastle at St. Giles' Fields. Even after the revolt had been crushed, and many Bristol lollards had been executed, imprisoned, or forced to recant, the town apparently continued to support a thriving heretical congregation, and to attract other lollards from all over the country.

1382-1414

There is little documentary evidence of the beginnings of lollardy in Bristol, but there is no doubt that the town was a centre of heresy from a comparatively early date.⁽¹⁾ It seems most likely that the originator of lollardy in Bristol, or at least one of its first exponents there, was that most energetic of Wycliffe's Oxford disciples, Master John Aston, who was a native of the diocese of Worcester and who may even have originated in or near Bristol itself. We have already noted Aston's activities in Leicester, Hampshire and London during the early part of 1382⁽²⁾: he continued to defy the authorities until November 24th of that year, when he appeared before Convocation at Oxford, recanting his belief in Wycliffe's doctrine of remanence and all his other heresies. His submission having been accepted, Archbishop Courtenay restored him to his place in Oxford University on 27th November 1382.⁽³⁾ Aston's reversion to orthodoxy was, however, short-lived, for on the 21st September 1383 he preached a sermon at Gloucester against Bishop Despenser of Norwich's "crusade"; in the course of this he declared:

(1) Quod episcopi accipientes pecuniam pro peccatis sunt filii diaboli

(2) Quod inter omnia, facta quae unquam fuerunt reputat statum cruciatae malignissimum.

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1. Adam of Usk, Chronicon pp. 3-4 : the registers of the diocese of Bath and Wells, which might have given much information about early lollardy in Bristol, are lost for the period 1366-1401.
 2. qv. pp. 58, 308 and 433-6.
 3. Knighton, Chronicon ii. 171; Wilkins, Concilia iii. pp. 160, 163-4, 166-7, 169, 172; Fasc. Ziz. 331-3.

- (3) Promoventes causam cruciatae sunt fures
- (4) Promoventes cruciatam inducunt Christianos ad conferendum bona ad occidendum homines.
- (5) Quod concedentes participationem omnium bonorum spiritualium sunt blasphemii.
- (6) Quod Christus natus fuit in stabulo et mortuus in cruce ad reprobandum castra Gayni, scilicet ecclesias et domos altas religiosorum et ecclesiasticorum (1)

Apart from the last point, there is nothing overtly lollard about this sermon as reported,⁽²⁾ but, if Aston was not openly spreading lollardy by 1383, he was certainly doing so by the autumn of the following year. In September and October 1384⁽³⁾ Archbishop Courtenay made his metropolitan visitation of the dioceses of Bath and Wells and of Worcester, and in both places he frequently heard reports that, despite his recantation in 1382, Aston 'quampures hereticas et erroneas in pluribus locis ... docuit et predicavit'.⁽⁴⁾ For some reason now unclear, however, Courtenay waited until 15th March 1385 before sending a mandate to Bishop Wakefield of Worcester ordering him to prevent Aston from preaching in his diocese.⁽⁵⁾ Rumours of Aston's preaching may also have been partly responsible for Courtenay's re-issue, on the day after his letter to Wakefield, of his general mandate against the lollards originally sent out on 30th May 1382. Despite Courtenay's concern, however,

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- 1. Knighton. ii. 178.
 - 2. McFarlane, Wycliffe. 126.
 - 3. Dahmus, William Courtenay pp. 132-4.
 - 4. Reg. Wakefield (Wigorn) ff. 112.
 - 5. qv. W. P. Marrett, A Calendar of the Register of Henry Wakefield (Worcs. Hist. Soc. 1972) pp. XX, XXI. No doubt Courtenay sent a similar letter to the Bishop of Bath and Wells, but record of it is lost.

Bishop Wakefield appears not to have acted on either mandate for nearly two and a half years.⁽¹⁾

It seems inconceivable that, if John Aston was well known in the dioceses of Bath and Wells and Worcester by the end of 1384, he had not by that time preached in Bristol, which lay on the borders of the two dioceses and was the largest town in either.⁽²⁾ It was perhaps the success of his evangelisation there, combined with the inactivity of the local bishop, that attracted a number of his colleagues to join him in the diocese of Worcester over the next few years. Probably the first of these to arrive was John Purvey, Wycliffe's amanuensis and the principal translator of the lollard bible, who left Lutterworth after his master's death there on 31st December 1384.⁽³⁾ By 1387 Nicholas Hereford (who had escaped from his prison in Rome in the summer of 1385)⁽⁴⁾ William Swynderby (last heard of in Coventry in about 1383)⁽⁵⁾ and the otherwise unknown John Parker were all active in the diocese of Worcester, and some or all of them may well have preached in Bristol.⁽⁶⁾ It was, perhaps, the activities of this group that prompted the issue on 16th January 1387 of a royal commission to the bishop of Bath and Wells

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1. Reg. Wakefield (Wigorn) f. 113; Concilia iii. 158-9.
 2. For Aston's preaching in London at the end of 1386 see pp. 441-3 below.
 3. McFarlane, Wycliffe 127; Workman, John Wycliffe ii. 316; Netter, Doctrinale I. p. 619, III p. 732.
 4. McFarlane, Wycliffe p. 126. Hereford had been preaching with Aston in London in the autumn of 1386 see p. 441-3 below.
 5. See above pp. 248.
 6. Though Swynderby and Hereford's area of operations was more probably the Welsh March qv. pp. 153-73. Aston and Hereford were also preaching in London at the end of 1386 qv. pp. 441-3.

ordering him to arrest and imprison lollards in his diocese.⁽¹⁾

It was also, perhaps, a visit to Bristol that finally induced Bishop Wakefield of Worcester to act on Courtenay's mandate and to move against lollards in that diocese : on the 10th August 1387, writing from his manor of Henbury, near Bristol,⁽²⁾ he published the sentence of excommunication on all those who preached, taught or defended lollard doctrines, or allowed Aston, Hereford, Purvey, Parker or Swynderby to preach in their parishes.⁽³⁾

Though we can safely assume that Aston preached in Bristol, no evidence remains that Hereford, Swynderby⁽⁴⁾ or Parker did so. None of them are known to have been taken by the bishop of Worcester's officials, but other circumstances soon afterwards scattered the group. John Aston may have died soon after 1388 (perhaps in the prison where he had been confined as a relapsed heretic).⁽⁵⁾ The veteran lollard William Thorpe declared in 1407

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1. CPR 1385-9 p. 200.
 2. Now on the north-western outskirts of Bristol.
 3. Reg Wakefield (Wigorn) f. 128.
 4. Though John Walcote of Hasleton near Cheltenham, Glos., who had practised heresy in Bristol, claimed when arrested in 1425 to have met Swynderby, and may have done so in Bristol. See below p. 20-6.
 5. According to Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. p. 654. Aston 'for the same doctrine of the sacrament was condemned by the bishops, and because he would not recant, he was committed to perpetual prison, wherein in the good man continued until his death.' Bale, quoted by Workman, Wycliffe ii. 336, gives his place of imprisonment as St. Alban's, but this is a confusion with the events of Aston's earlier trial in 1382 (see Fasc. Ziz. 331-3 and below p. 433-6). The statement by both Foxe and Bale that Aston died in 1382 is also clearly wrong.

that 'John Ashton taught and writ accordingly, and full busily, where and when, and to whom that he might, and he used it himselve right perfectly unto his lives end.'⁽¹⁾ Nicholas Hereford, on the other hand, had recanted by the end of 1391,⁽²⁾ and by that time William Swynderby had established himself in the Welsh March.⁽³⁾ Nothing more is known of Parker.

If Aston was the first to bring lollardy to Bristol, however, undoubtedly the greatest influence on its development there was John Purvey. Purvey had lived at Lutterworth with Wycliffe after the heresiarch's withdrawal from Oxford in 1382,⁽⁴⁾ and had served as his secretary :

'nam magistri sui, dum adhuc viveret, commensalis extiterat, et sic majus de ejus documentis debriatus, copiosus mente hauserat, atque usque ad mortis metas comes indivuus ipsum cum doctrinis et opinionibus suis concomitabatur indefesse laborans.'⁽⁵⁾

Known even by his enemies as 'bibliotheca Lollardorum sive librarius Lollardorum',⁽⁶⁾ Purvey probably completed the first version of the lollard translation of the Bible (begun by Nicholas Hereford) whilst he was still at Lutterworth, which he left after Wycliffe's death on the last day of 1384.⁽⁷⁾ His exact whereabouts between 1385 and

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1. Foxe op. cit. i. p. 692. It is possible, however, that Aston did in the end recant, and resumed his fellowship at Merton College in 1391-2. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon i.67.
 2. Workman, Wycliffe ii. 336-7; McFarlane, Wycliffe 128; CPR 1391-6 p. 8.
 3. See above, Chapter Three.
 4. It is uncertain whether Purvey, who came from Buckinghamshire and had been ordained a priest in 1377, was ever a scholar at Oxford. Knighton (ii. p.178) calls him "capellanus simplex", but Thomas Netter of Walden refers to him as 'doctor eximius'. Doctrinale i.619; Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon iii. pp. 1526-7.
 5. Knighton ii. 178-9 : Netter, Doctrinale I. 619, III.732.
 6. Netter op. cit.
 7. Deanesly, Lollard Bible pp. 253-67.

1387 are not certainly known, but by August 10th 1387, when Bishop Wakefield issued his mandate, he had almost certainly joined Aston in the diocese of Worcester. At this latter time Purvey was probably working on an English translation of the patristic glosses on the four Gospels,⁽¹⁾ and very possibly living in or near Bristol. A sermon preached by him there, at an unknown date,⁽²⁾ became well enough known to be recorded by Knighton:⁽³⁾ in it he declared -

- (P.1) Quod celebratio missae est traditio humana et non evangelica, nec Christus eam ordinavit. Similiter, Quod Christus patiebatur in apertione lateris et cordis.
- (P.2) Quilibet sacerdos magis debet dimittere matutinas, missam et vespervas, et caeteras horas canonicas quam praedicationem verbum dei, eo quod solum traditione humana ordinantur.
- (P.3) Quilibet sacerdos potest ex lege divina praedicare verbum dei alia licentia non obtenta.
- (P.4) Episcopi et alii qui impediunt praedicationem verbi dei faciunt hoc ne peccata eorum videantur.
- (P.5) Ingredientes religionem privatam quamcumque ex hoc redduntur inhabiliores ad observantiam mandatorum dei.
- (P.6) Conferens eleemosynam fratri praedicanti evangelium propter ejus sermonem est symoniacus et excommunicatus, et dans et recipiens.

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1. In the epilogue to the Gospel according to St. Luke Purvey refers to himself as 'a pore caitiff letted from preaching for a time for causes known of God'. Deanesly p. 275 takes these causes to be Bishop Wakefield's mandate forbidding him to preach. But the "causes known to God" could equally well refer to illness rather than to some human prohibition.
 2. It is given with the rest of the Chronicler's attacks on the major lollards, under the blanket date of 1382, which is certainly far too early. The sermon must date from before 1395, when the chronicle ends.
 3. Knighton ii. 179-80.

- (P.7) Fratres non sub hoc nomine sed sub nomine Phariseorum tenentur victum suum non per mendicationem sed aliunde per laborem manuum acquirere.
- (P.8) Nullus sacerdos debet dimittere praedicare evangelium, nec aliquis debet dimittere audire evangelium praedicatum propter excommunicationem cujuscumque.
- (P.9) Nullae religiones privatae sunt in aliquo ita perfectae sicut aestimant quod sunt.
- (P.10) Quilibet curatus est perfectioris status quam quicumque religiosus cujuscumque religionis privatae.
- (P.11) Episcopi litterati et bonae vitae hortantur nos ad praedicandum verbum dei ne eorum peccata videantur.
- (P.12) Episcopus nolens consecrare ecclesiam pauperrimae parochiae absque xl. solidis ubi tota parochia non sufficit solvere, et si xl. denarii deficient, per xl dies eandem ecclesiam suspendat, et sic parochiani per tantum tempus a missa et omni sacramento sunt suspensi, est symoniacus et excommunicatus.

In this sermon, if it is correctly reported, Purvey was mainly concerned with an attack on the religious orders and a defence of the free preaching of the Gospel, and his views on these subjects are strikingly similar to those expressed by Hereford, Repingdon, Aston and Bedeman, and condemned by Archbishop Courtenay in 1382⁽¹⁾: they are also, of course, close to Wycliffe's own beliefs. Unfortunately this particular sermon tells us nothing of Purvey's views on the Eucharist or on the relationship between state, church and papacy, but its tone is mild compared with some of his later statements. The general impression given is that this sermon was preached

1. Concilia iii. pp. 158-62; Fasc. Ziz. 275-82.

comparatively early in Purvey's career, and before he had fully developed the series of political heresies for which he subsequently became notorious.

Nothing is known of Purvey's whereabouts between 1387 and 1395, but it is at least possible that he was in Bristol for all or part of this period. By 1395, following the death of Aston, the disappearance of Swynderby, and the recantation of Nicholas Hereford and several other notable heretics, Purvey had probably come to be regarded, temporarily at least, as the leader of the lollards. As such he was all but certainly involved in the preparation of the Twelve Articles of lollard proposals which were nailed to the doors of Westminster Hall and St. Paul's during the session of parliament in January-February 1395.⁽¹⁾ At any rate, it was definitely Purvey who wrote (or at least edited) the Ecclesie Regimen or Thirty-Seven Conclusions, also published in 1395, to which readers of the Twelve Articles were referred for a fuller exposition of lollard doctrine.⁽²⁾ He may well have been resident in Bristol at this time : certainly he was well enough known there for Richard Lavenham, prior of the local Carmelites, to compile a collection of his heresies 'extracti de libello suo heretico'. It is evident that the collection

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1. EHR xxii. pp. 292-304, Walsingham, Hist. Anglic. ii. 216-7; Deanesly, Lollard Bible. pp. 257-8, 265, 282-3, 374-6; McFarlane, Wycliffe 147. For further details of this episode see pp. 478 below.
 2. EHR xxvi. 738-49; Deanesly op. cit. pp. 266, 282-3, 374-6, 379-81.

was made in 1395 or 1396,⁽¹⁾ using as sources not only Purvey's Thirty-Seven Conclusions, but a number of other writings by him, now lost, including a treatise on marriage and 'quodam alio tractatu speciale' which later became the basis for the lollard disendowment bill presented to the parliament of 1410.⁽²⁾ The list is long and comprehensive, and allows us to gain a very good idea of the doctrines, both political and religious, that Purvey was canvassing in the 1390's : it is given in full in a readily available edition⁽³⁾ so that it is here only necessary to comment upon its most significant points.

From Lavenham's first article it appears that Purvey, like Wycliffe his mentor, believed in the doctrine of remanence - that the sacrament was at the same time both the Body of Christ and material bread.⁽⁴⁾ He did not, apparently, hold the most extreme lollard view that the sacrament was no more than bread which had been blessed. Included in the same article is Purvey's advice to the unlettered lollard (or 'simplex christiane') questioned about the Eucharist by the authorities ('Antichristus, vel aliquis suorum mundialium clericorum')⁽⁵⁾: the simple Christian is advised to give

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1. i.e. after the date of the Thirty-Seven Conclusions, and before Lavenham's promotion to be prior of the large and important Carmelite House in London. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. 1109-1110; DNB xi. 652-3; Dugdale, Monasticon VI iii. 1572; Stowe, Survey of London ed. Kingsford ii. 46-7 : Workman, Wycliffe ii. 168-7. There is no reason not to accept Foxe's date of 1396 for Lavenham's compilation (Acts and Monuments i. p. 712). Shirley (Fasc. Ziz. preface pp. i, lxviii) puts the date of the collections as late as 1410, on the evidence of the inclusion of the passage from which the lollard disendowment bill of that year was based, but there is no reason why the 1410 bill should not have been derived from a far earlier pamphlet.
 2. Synopsis of Romish Corruptions in the Church (i.e. Ecclesie Regimen) ed. J. Forshall 1851; EHR xxii 738-49; Walsingham, Hist. Anglicana ii. 382-3; Deanesly Lollard Bible pp. 266, 283, 375, 381-2; Workman, Wycliffe ii. 166-7.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 383-399.
 4. Fasc. Ziz. 383-4.
 5. ibid. 384-5.

evasive answers, and, like the apostles in Matthew 10 v.17-20, to trust in the words put into his mind by the Holy Spirit. Further evidence that Purvey thought of the lollards as comparable to the early Christians is provided by his reference to them as 'veri martyres Jesu Christi'.

The second article⁽¹⁾ shows that, in addition to believing with most of his fellow-lollards that auricular confession was unnecessary, Purvey also believed it to be 'plenum hypocrisi et haeresi, avaritia, superbia et blasphemia' and to have been invented by the popes, 'ad intricandum conscientias hominum cum peccato, et trahendas eos in infernum'. His beliefs on the ordination of priests, recorded in the third article⁽²⁾ and elsewhere, were also extreme : he believed that 'omnes boni christiani sunt praedestinati veri sacerdotes ordinati ... a Deo', so that ordination by bishops was irrelevant, since they could not know who God had chosen. Nevertheless he does not seem to have believed absolutely in the priesthood of all believers, for though in the fourth section of the fourth article⁽³⁾ he is said to have written that laymen could perform baptism, preaching and matrimony, he implies there that they cannot make the sacrament of the altar. There is no indication in Lavenham's articles, incidentally, that Purvey supported the idea of a separate lollard priesthood : that such a priesthood did exist is shown by the fact that one member of it, William Ramsbury, was active in Wiltshire and Dorset between

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1. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 386-7.
 2. ibid. pp. 387-9.
 3. ibid. p. 390.

1385 and 1389,⁽¹⁾ and another, John Rakyar, was operating from Bristol in or about 1408.

In the fourth article⁽²⁾ Purvey is stated to have held that the Pope - whom he called "Satan" - had no power of excommunication, or right to grant indulgences, and that a Papal interdict on England would be a positive advantage, freeing the nation from obedience to unjust canon laws, 'et a sumptibus sustentandi tot millia mundialium sacerdotum, ad garrulandum usum Sarum, et novum cantum sine devotione'. The fifth article⁽³⁾ confirms Purvey's belief in the all-importance of preaching, claiming that all priests who will not preach are damned, and that those who cannot do so should resign their benefices. The sixth article⁽⁴⁾ is concerned with Purvey's views on marriage, including an attack by him on the doctrine that persons related spiritually (i.e. through godparents) could not marry without papal dispensation : the seventh⁽⁵⁾ records his belief that rashly-made vows of chastity need not be kept by those who found themselves unprovided with divine Grace to do so.

The first seven articles of heresy collected by Lavenham record Purvey's beliefs concerning the doctrine and spiritual power of the church. The first five are extreme forms of conventional lollard doctrines developed, directly or indirectly, from Wycliffe's

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1. See below pp. 314-28. Some of Ramsbury's beliefs, however, were close to those held by Purvey.
 2. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 389-90.
 3. *ibid.* pp. 390-391.
 4. *ibid.* p. 391-2.
 5. *ibid.* p. 392-3.

writings,⁽¹⁾ but the sixth and seventh articles, on marriage and vows, are not found elsewhere, and may be of Purvey's own devising. The most important beliefs contained in all these articles except the sixth (which is nowhere else recorded) were publicly abjured by Purvey in 1401.⁽²⁾

The eighth to the eleventh articles of Lavenham's collection record Purvey's heresies concerning the temporal power of the church and the relationship between church and state : these 'political' heresies, doubtless derived from Wycliffe's theories on the same subjects,⁽³⁾ are in effect more revolutionary than Purvey's doctrinal heresies listed above. The first section of the eighth article,⁽⁴⁾ for instance, is taken from a 'tractatu speciale' addressed to the King, lords and commons urging them to confiscate all the temporalities of the church. If this were done, Purvey claimed, the proceeds and lands obtained would provide for the creation of fifteen earls, fifteen thousand knights and esquires, fifteen universities, fifteen thousand priests and one hundred almshouses : '*etiam minatur finalem destructionem vel translationem regni si non fiat; et promittit exaltationem totius regni et specialiter militiae, si hoc fiat*'. There is evidence that Purvey's tract containing the above proposals had a wide and prolonged circulation : it is possible that a copy of it was presented to the King at the time of publication of the 'Twelve Articles' of 1395,⁽⁵⁾ and it certainly formed the basis, not only for

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1. For example cf. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 277-85 (the lollard articles condemned by Courtenay in May 1382)
 2. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 400-407 see below p.233-4.
 3. cf. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 248, 254-6.
 4. Fasc. Ziz. p. 393.
 5. Workman, Wycliffe ii. 397.n.3. Part of article VII of the Twelve Articles of 1395 reads 'quia fuit probatum in uno libro quem rex habuit, quod centum domos eleemosynarum sufficiunt toto regno.' (Fasc. Ziz. 364).

the lollard disendowment bill presented to the parliament of 1410, but also for the programme of the anti-clerical lollard rebels of 1431.⁽¹⁾

Subsequent sections of Lavenham's eighth article record Purvey's development of the theory that the civil power (and in particular lay noblemen) had the right and duty to reform a corrupt church, if necessary by force : he therefore proposed that all temporal power should be taken from the church, and its wealth transferred to knights and squires 'ad reducendum clericos mundiales ad humilitatem, et paupertatem Christi, et apostolorum suorum. Et si quis ita non fecit, assentit haeresi'.⁽²⁾ In the following articles Purvey is recorded as having proposed that Kings should govern all priests and bishops, that the state should have the power to punish sexual offenders, that it was the duty of all Christians to invade Italy and purify the church there, if necessary deposing the pope, and that canon law was valueless and heretical unless founded on the Scriptures.⁽³⁾ Lavenham concludes his list of heresies by repeating Purvey's statements that the Pope was plainly Anti-christ, and that the Roman Church 'est meretrix illa magna, scilicet Babylon, sedens super aquas et praedicans peccatum suum, sicut Sodoma et Gomorrha'.⁽⁴⁾

From this summary of Purvey's beliefs it can be seen that they were both doctrinally and politically revolutionary. It seems likely, therefore, that it was his teaching in Bristol that fostered

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1. Workman. op. cit. ii. 420-421; Kingsford, Chron. London pp. 295-6; Fabyan, Chronicle 575; Walsingham, Hist. Anglicana ii. 282-3; Amundesham, Annales i. 453-6. For the lollard disendowment act of 1410 see below pp. 461-2
 2. Fasc. Ziz. p. 394.
 3. ibid. pp. 395-8.
 4. ibid. p. 399.

the growth there of a lollard congregation which showed a constant tendency towards extremist forms of heresy, and which in 1414 sent a large number of volunteers to assist Sir John Oldcastle in putting Purvey's ideas of civil dominion over the church into action.

Despite his part in the lollard disturbances of January and February 1395, no writ is known to have been issued ordering Purvey's arrest at this time when, as has been stated, he was probably resident in Bristol. Other lollards were, however, then being pursued by the government,⁽¹⁾ and one of these, Master William James (warrants for whose arrest had been sent to the authorities in London and Oxford on 20th December 1394) apparently came to Bristol in the summer of 1395, perhaps to join Purvey there. A warrant for his arrest was sent to the Mayor of Bristol on 16th July 1395, but it is not known if he was captured as a result of it.⁽²⁾

William James, a fellow of Merton (and a native of the diocese of Wells in which part of Bristol lay) had been one of Wycliffe's Oxford followers, and had publicly defended his master's doctrine of the Eucharist there early in 1382.⁽³⁾ He apparently persisted in his lollardy after most of the other Oxford lollards

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1. Warrants were sent out for the arrest of William James and John Gamlyngeye, two Oxford lollards, on 20th December 1394, and for the arrest of a Londoner, John Claydon, on 20th May 1395. On 27th May 1395 Richard Whelpyngton, John Gamlyngeye, and Thomas Lucas, three Oxford lollards, and a number of other suspects were being conveyed to prison in Beaumaris Castle. CPR 1391-6 pp. 586, 591. See below p. 4478.
 2. CPR 1391-6 p. 651.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. 307.

had recanted, and it was perhaps for this reason that he seems to have been suspended from his fellowship of Merton between 1384 and 1391⁽¹⁾ and probably between 1394 and 1399. How long James remained in Bristol and what doctrines, if any, he taught there, remains unknown, and the rest of his career is equally obscure. At some time between 1395 and 1399 he was probably imprisoned, but he had recanted and been released by 5th November 1399, when he was restored to his place in the University as one banished from it by Richard II without reasonable cause.⁽²⁾ In 1400 he seems to have returned to the west country, and probably to Bristol : he was again imprisoned, perhaps in error or as a result of an earlier order, for on 27th May 1400 Archbishop Arundel ordered the vicar-general of the diocese of Bath and Wells to release him.⁽³⁾ He is recorded as a fellow of Merton until 1411 : after this date he seems to have again relapsed into open heresy, for after being captured and imprisoned for many years, he finally abjured lollardy before Archbishop Chichele on 31st March 1420. As a relapsed heretic, he was sentenced to be confined to the episcopal manor of Maidstone for the rest of his life.⁽⁴⁾

After William James' visit to Bristol in 1395, nothing more is known either of Purvey or of the other local lollards for some years. In 1400,⁽⁵⁾ however, Purvey was at last arrested, and

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1. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. pp. 1012-13.
 2. CPR 1399-1401 pp. 75,166 : three days later another Oxford lollard, Robert Lechlade, was also restored to the University: he, too, was said to have been banished without a reasonable cause. CPR 1399-1401 p. 84.
 3. Reg. Arundel (Cantuar) i. f.99.
 4. Emden op. cit; Reg. Chichele iv. 203-4.
 5. Or perhaps early in 1401, when he may have been arrested for his part in organising petitions to Henry IV, both in and out of parliament (which met on 21st January 1401) asking that the use of the Bible in English should be legalised for all people. Deanesly, Lollard Bible p.297.n.4.

confined in the Archbishop of Canterbury's 'foule ... unhoneste prison' at Saltwood Castle, Kent, where he seems to have been ill-treated in an effort to induce him to recant.⁽¹⁾ On the 28th February 1401 he was brought before Convocation in London, where he was accused of holding and teaching seven of the doctrinal heresies attributed to him in Lavenham's earlier collection : these were⁽²⁾ -

- (1) That in the sacrament of the altar there is no accident without substance, and that material bread remains after consecration.
- (2) That auricular confession destroys the liberty of the gospel, and was introduced by the pope and clergy to lead men into sin.
- (3) That all men who are holy and predestined to eternal life, even if they are laymen, are true priests ordained of God, regardless of whether they have been ordained by a bishop.
- (4) That evil-living priests do not have the keys of heaven, but those of hell, and that their excommunications are to be disregarded. That it would be a great advantage to England if the Pope put an interdict on the land.
- (5) That anyone who holds the office of priesthood, even if he does not have a cure of souls, has a duty to preach the gospel : those who do not are thieves excommunicated by God.
- (6) That anyone who makes an unwise vow of chastity, and is not given strength by God to keep it, may be absolved from it, and no prelate can force him to keep it.
- (7) That Innocent III and his fellow clerics, who ruled at the Council of Lyons that in the sacrament of the altar accidents occurred without substance, and that all Christians must confess

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1. Six years later Archbishop Arundel threatened William Thorpe, also imprisoned at Saltwood, that 'thou shalt go thither, where Nicolas Hereford and John Purvey were harbored, and I undertake, or this day eight days, thou shalt be right glad for to do whatever thing I bid thee do.' Foxe, Acts and Monuments 498-500.
 2. Fasc. Ziz. 400-407.

once a year and receive the sacrament at Easter, were fools and heretics. Therefore their decrees, and those of their successors, may be disregarded.

It is notable that, for some reason now unknown, Purvey was not accused of holding any of the 'political' heresies mentioned by Lavenham.⁽¹⁾

No doubt cowed by the burning of William Sautre a few days earlier, Purvey publicly recanted his errors at St. Paul's Cross on the 6th March 1401.⁽²⁾ After this date his career is not always easy to follow. On the 11th August 1401 he was presented to the benefice of West Hythe, Kent, significantly, only a mile from Saltwood; there, according to Archbishop Arundel, he showed himself covetous for tithes.⁽³⁾ By October 1403⁽⁴⁾ he had resigned his benefice, and after this date he appears to have embraced a mild and covert form of heresy which pleased neither Arundel (who in 1407 called him a 'false heretic. But come he more for such cause before me, ere we depart. I shall know with whom he holdith') or the lollards (of whom William Thorpe referred to him in 1407 as 'neither hot nor cold')⁽⁵⁾ In or about 1405 he produced a tract entitled 'De Versione Bibliorum', defending his Biblical translations, and at the same time he wrote concerning sixteen points 'wiche ben putte be bishcoppes ordinares upon men, which thei clepen lollardis'. The latter tract seems to be an attempt to arrive at a compromise between lollard doctrines and orthodoxy, for it declares that 'who ever schal see thes sixtene

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1. It is possible, therefore, that Arundel did not believe (or less likely, did not know) that Purvey held these 'political' lollard beliefs.
 2. Concilia iii. 260-262; Fasc. Ziz. 400-407; Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 708.
 3. 'I heard more complaints about his covetousness for tithes and other misdoings than I did of all men that were advanced within my diocese.' Foxe, i. 692; Reg. Arundel (Cantuar) i. f.278.
 4. Reg. Arundel. i.f.290.
 5. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 692.

poyntes be he wel ware that in everiche of hem is hidde trewthe and falsehede, and who ever that grantith al, grantith myche falsehede, and who that ever denyeth al, denyeth many trewthes'.⁽¹⁾

It seems likely that by 1410 he had abandoned his moderate position and returned to his former support for the more extreme lollard doctrines. He may well, indeed, have assisted in the compilation of the lollard bill for church disendowment which was presented to the parliament of 1410, and this bill was certainly based on a tract by him, quoted by Lavenham in 1396.⁽²⁾ In 1414 Purvey seems to have been living in London, and to have been involved in Sir John Oldcastle's rising, as a result of which his servant Henry Corbrig was executed and his goods (worth £12.18s.0d.) were confiscated by the London escheator.⁽²⁾ What part Purvey himself played in the rising is unknown, though he is mentioned in the indictment of a Londoner⁽³⁾ as one of the ringleaders. No record of his own indictment or trial for treason survives, but he is not known to have been executed,⁽⁴⁾ though he may well have suffered a term of imprisonment. How long Purvey survived after 1414 is uncertain, and he may even have been

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1. Deanesly, Lollard Bible pp. 290-291, 439-45, 461-5.
 2. CCR 1413-19 pp. 56-7; E357/24/49.
 3. KB27/616/15. Indictment of Nicholas Underwode of Turmill Street.
 4. The execution of such a notable heretic would surely not have gone unrecorded by the chroniclers.

still alive, and in prison, in the late 1420's.⁽¹⁾ Whether he ever re-visited Bristol during his years in the wilderness is unknown, but if so no further record remains of his activities there.

The Bristol lollards, however, evidently remained active after Purvey's capture in about 1400. In the summer of 1401, perhaps as a result of disclosures made by Purvey after his recantation on 6th March, Arundel ordered William Milton, canon of Salisbury, to investigate lollardy in Bristol and submit an account 'de nominibus et cognominibus quorumcunque suspectorum de lollardria, sive heretica pravitate, necnon de articulis, opinionibus et conclusionibus, quos et quas hactenus tenuerunt, praedicarunt, publicarunt seu dogmatizarunt ...'⁽²⁾ Nothing is known of any lollards arrested as a result of Arundel's mandate, but it is perhaps significant that the priest to whom it was addressed was the prebendary of Redcliffe and Bedminster. These parishes, which together made up that part of Bristol which lay south of the Avon, are shown by subsequent events to have been the main centre of lollardy in the town during the early fifteenth century.

1. Netter, in his Doctrinale i. p.619, which was written between 1420 and 1426, claims that he had at that time in his hands a book taken from Purvey in prison. This has been taken to mean that Purvey was actually in prison during the 1420's (Deanesly, Lollard Bible p. 297; Workman, John Wycliffe ii. 169-70). If so, he may have been there as a result of his part in the 1414 rising. On the other hand, the book in question may have been taken from him during his imprisonment in 1400-01.

The name "J. Pervie", and notes possibly by him, appear in a manuscript belonging to a lollard suspect, the vicar of Chiddingfold, hants, which is dated by Deanesly op. cit.p. 379 in 1427, but from a letter in it more probably dates from about 1440 (Thompson, Later Lollards p. 63). Since Purvey was ordained in 1377, however, he would have been well over 80 by 1440, and it seems unlikely that he survived so long without further notices of him.

2. Concilia iii.265. The mandate also ordered Milton to investigate "de statu, fundatione, numero personarum, ac redditibus ... regiae hospitalis sancti Johannis". i.e. St. John the Baptist's Hospital, Redcliffe. It is nowhere implied, however, that this hospital was a centre of heresy: it was apparently in serious debt by 1404, and in 1413 the master was dismissed for allowing it to fall into disrepair, but no mention of heresy was made at his dismissal. CPR. 1401-5 p. 413; Reg. Bubwith (Bath and Wells) i. lxx, 145-7.

Possibly connected with the lollards of this area was John Bount, a wealthy burgess of the parish of St. Mary Redcliffe : he died in 1404,⁽¹⁾ leaving to John Canterbury, his feoffee, a book of the gospels in English (probably Purvey's translation) which had been lent to William Stourton, a Wiltshire gentleman. Although from the rest of his will⁽²⁾ (in which he made a legacy to the friars, which no serious lollard would have done) Bount appears to have been orthodox, his connections with the lollards cannot altogether be ruled out,⁽³⁾ especially since there are also grounds for suspecting William Stourton of lollard leanings.⁽⁴⁾ At any rate, it is interesting that English translations of the Bible were circulating amongst the burgess class of Bristol at this time.

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1. Before Archbishop Arundel's prohibition of 1408 made the possession of English bibles illegal Deanesly, Lollard Bible p. 289.
 2. Gt. Orphan Book of Bristol pp.73-4,82-3,89. For other details of Bount see Gt. Red. Book of Bristol i.118,198; CPR 1391-6 p. 677.
 3. William More, a Bristol burgess who was almost certainly a lollard sympathiser, witnessed the confirmation of Bount's son in his father's lands on 16th November 1404, shortly after the elder Bount's death. CCR 1401-5 pp.473-5. for William More see below.
 4. William Stourton of Stourton, Wilts, served as M.P. for both Somerset and Wiltshire, and was an important figure in both counties. (J.S. Roskell, Commons and their Speakers pp.363-4). He died in September 1413 leaving a will which, with its reference to a 'putrid body' buried naked, its prohibition of funeral pomp and its orders for distribution to the poor, is typically "lollard" in tone. On the other hand, Stourton requested burial in a monastic cloister, and made a legacy to his 'reverend lord and father', Archbishop Arundel, two things not to be expected if he really were a lollard sympathiser. From the list of books bequeathed by Stourton it appears that he was both a pietist and a book-collector, and these two facets of his character may explain both the austere tone of his will and his interest in Bount's English gospels. PCC Marche f. 216; McFarlane, Lollard Knights p. 215; J.S. Roskell, 'William Stourton of Stourton' in Proc. Dorset Nat. Hist. and Arch. Soc. 82 pp. 155-66.

It is plain that the Bristol lollards, and especially those of the Redcliffe area, remained active throughout the first decade of the fifteenth century. On the 2nd August 1408, the vicar-general of the diocese of Bath and Wells⁽¹⁾ sent a letter to the dean of St. Mary Redcliffe and all the other clergy of the suburb, ordering them to summon before them all those suspected or known to be preaching heresy there⁽²⁾: no record remains, however, of any lollards cited as a result of this letter.

Indeed, little is known of the organisation of the Bristol lollards of this time, though some light is thrown on their beliefs by the statements of John Badby, a tailor of Evesham, Glos., a town which had strong trading links with Bristol. Badby had been arrested by the Bishop of Worcester in 1408 : when brought to trial in January 1409⁽³⁾ he obstinately maintained his belief that the sacrament of the altar remained material bread after the words of consecration, and that no priest had the power to make the Body of Christ. To this he added 'quod John Rakyer de Bristol habet tantam potestatem, et tantam auctoritatem hujusmodi Corpus Christi conficere sicut presbyter qualiscunque'. Badby stuck to his beliefs through more than a year's imprisonment, and continued to maintain them at his second trial before Archbishop Arundel in London in March 1410, declaring that the sacrament was no more than blessed bread 'signum tamen est Dei vivi' and that 'si Johannes (Rakyer) fuerit bonae vitae, et diliget Deum perfecte,

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1. In which Redcliffe and Bedminster lay : the greater part of Bristol, which lay north of the Avon, was in the diocese of Worcester.
 2. Reg. Bubwith I. 35-6.
 3. Concilia iii. 325-8.

quod habet tantam potestatem sicut presbyter'. It is clear that Badby had actually received the sacrament from John Rakyer, for he had been condemned by 'sacrae paginae professoribus' for so doing. Just before his final condemnation Badby claimed that 'quilibet homo qui est vel fuit per tempus Adam, est majoris pretii et reputationis, quam sacramentum altaris'.⁽¹⁾

Badby's statements make it clear that at least one lollard 'priest', John Rakyer, was active in Bristol in the first decade of the fifteenth century. We have no other record of Rakyer, and thus we cannot tell whether his mode of operations was similar to that of the only other known lollard 'priest', William Ramsbury, who was active in Wiltshire and Dorset in 1385-9 : it is probably significant, however, that Badby's beliefs (which he had presumably learned from Rakyer) were similar to some of those held by Ramsbury.⁽²⁾ Because of Badby's link with Rakyer, it is also possible that the extreme anti-sacramentalism of the Evesham lollard reflects the opinions of some, at least, of his brethren in Bristol. If so, it is clear that the Bristol congregation had developed much more radical beliefs concerning the sacrament than those taught by Purvey.⁽³⁾

Only one record of the activities of the Bristol lollards between 1410 and 1414 remains. Significantly, it relates to the parish of Holy Cross of the Temple, in the Redcliffe area, where the lollards were especially active. It seems that the vicar of the

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1. Walsingham (Hist. Anglic.ii.282) claims that Badby had said that the sacrament, being no more than bread, was 'pejor buffone vel aranea, quae sunt animalia animata ...'. For a fuller description of Badby's case, qv. pp.27-8.
 2. See ^{below} ~~above~~ pp.34-28.
 3. See above p.226.

Temple church incurred their wrath in some way, for in the spring of 1413 Richard Devenyssh, a weaver, 'quemdam libellum famosum vicarii dicte ecclesie Sancte Crucis scandalum et infamium gravia valde continentem a certis satellitibus, Lollardis nuncupatis quin verius heresiarchis, scienter accepit et in stallo dicti vicarii in choro ecclesie predicte maliciose posuit'.⁽¹⁾ Unfortunately we know nothing of the nature of the 'libellum', nor from whom Devenyssh received it. Devenyssh was excommunicated, and by April 1413 he had been brought before Bishop Bubwith of Bath and Wells, to whom he confessed. The Bishop enjoined that on the following Easter Sunday he should publicly confess his fault at the Temple church during High Mass, begging forgiveness of the vicar whose character had been impugned : on the following Whit Sunday he was to go, barefoot and holding a candle, in procession at the Temple church, and on the Sunday after that he was to repeat the process at St. Mary Redcliffe. It was presumably hoped that his penance would thus provide the maximum possible discouragement to the heretics of the Redcliffe and Bedminster areas.

Though no other record survives of the Bristol lollards in the years before Oldcastle's revolt, it seems likely that by this time the leadership of the community had been assumed by Walter Blake (also known as Walter Blakeford or Walter More) who by 1411⁽²⁾ was acting as chaplain to the lollard More family of the parish of St. Thomas the Martyr, Redcliffe.⁽³⁾ Their success in recruiting at this time, and the strength and efficiency of their organisation, is best testified to by the fact that Bristol provided the largest and probably the best equipped of all the contingents of rebels which joined Oldcastle at St. Giles' Fields in 1414.

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1. Reg. Bubwith (Bath and Wells) 142-3.
 2. Gt. Orphan Book of Bristol pp. 88-9.
 3. For the Mores see below pp. 247-9.

II. Oldcastle's Revolt and afterwards.
1414c. 1428.

While something is known of the history of lollardy in Bristol, and of the beliefs preached there, between 1382 and 1413, little has been discovered about the organisation or social composition of the lollard community there during this period. By comparison, much more is known of the Bristol lollard congregation as it existed both at the time of Sir John Oldcastle's revolt in 1414 and during the period immediately following. Most of our knowledge of Bristol's part in the revolt is gleaned from the legal records of the government. After the final defeat of the rising in London on the 10th January 1414, the government lost no time in sending out commissions to all parts of the country where lollards were thought or known to exist, ordering their arrest and imprisonment. One such commission was sent to Bristol on the 11th January, and less than a month later, on 8th February 1414, three Bristol juries met to give evidence against the local heretics and rebels, which indictments were recorded and sent to the court of King's Bench in London.⁽¹⁾

The jurors reported that, on the 4th January 1414, Walter Blake, chaplain, also called Walter More, had plotted the death of the King, the destruction of the Catholic church and the downfall of the lords and magnates of England in various 'conventiculas illicitas' in Bristol. In this, the jurors reported, he had been helped and supported by Walter Pollard, John Batyn, John Scorlay, Robert Patyn and William Worcestre, chaplains; Richard Keyfote, John

1. CPR 1413-16 p. 178; KB9/205/1/ 82,83,84.

Wylly and his servant Thomas Swyfte, John Hunte, John Colchestre, John Wermynstre, Thomas Smalcombe, John Boys, William Terell, John Porteshede, John Pomfreyt of Keynsham, John Reymond, Philip Coke, Geoffrey Clerk and Elias Monke, all weavers; Henry Nucombe, labourer, Richard Sharpe spinner, Robert Bayon alias Heytesbury, Richard Sterre, skinner, Edward Greylake, servant of Robert Harreys, weaver, James Merrshe, servant of Christina More (also the employer of Walter Blake) and one William Gogh, 'walschman'.⁽¹⁾ On the same 4th January, Blake and the whole company named above, 'cum diversis aliis personibus ignotis', rode out of Bristol on the London road, after which the jurors did not know what had become of them. From other records we can deduce that amongst the members of Blake's contingent whose names were unknown to the jurors were John Touker, a weaver,⁽²⁾ and John Rewell, a hosier,⁽³⁾ two Bristol men later pardoned for their part in the revolt, and possibly a party from rural Somerset including one Nicholas Taillour of Ditchheat, who was later arrested with Walter Blake.⁽⁴⁾

The Bristol rebels, then, numbered at least thirty, and probably many more : as such they were the largest contingent to join Oldcastle from any part of the country. There is also evidence that they were well-equipped as well as numerous : according to a reliable London chronicler, they brought with them bows and arrows worth a total of six pounds,⁽⁵⁾ and Blake himself was expensively accoutred with

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1. This list has been compiled from a synthesis of the three lists of indictments produced by the three separate juries. Some names appear in all three lists, some in two or only one. KB9/205/1/82,83,84.
 2. KB27/681/13.
 3. C67/37/48.
 4. KB27/611/17.
 5. London Chronicle 1413-18 in C.L. Kingsford, English Historical Literature pp. 292-3.

body-armour worth £5 and a sword worth twenty shillings.⁽¹⁾ Obviously they were equipped materially, if not morally, for a fight, though what actually happened to them when they reached St. Giles' Fields (presumably on the night of the 9th January) we do not know. Some were certainly taken prisoner then : Richard Keyfote, Thomas Smalcombe and John Wyllly were amongst those drawn on hurdles from Newgate on the 13th January and executed in St. Giles' Fields, and Geoffrey Clerk was also hanged soon after the revolt.⁽²⁾ Walter Blake escaped immediate capture, and fled north-westwards accompanied by James Merrshe (his fellow-member of the More household), Nicholas Taillour of Ditchheat, and three Londoners.⁽³⁾ Rightly seeing Blake as one of the ringleaders of the revolt, the government included him amongst those whose immediate capture was ordered, and he and his companions were arrested at Oxford. Whether they were seeking sanctuary there, or whether they were on their way either to Bristol or to the fastnesses of Wales, is unknown.⁽⁴⁾ Blake was taken to London, where he was tried on the 27th January, and soon afterwards drawn through the streets and hanged at St. Giles.⁽⁵⁾ It is notable that he was hanged for treason, and that his body was not burnt hanging for heresy, so that it is possible he recanted his lollardy before execution.

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1. When he was captured at Oxford after the rising, 'unam loriam ... valoris Cs. et unam equam valoris xl.s et unam gladium valoris xxs.' were confiscated from him by the mayor. E159/190/24. It is notable that Blake's equipment was worth more than that captured from Oldcastle at Byfield, Northants., in 1417, whose total value was 56s.4d. E136/148/3. See above p.147.
 2. CGR 1413-19 pp. 56-7; KB27/614/56.
 3. John Swepston, John Sporle and Gilbert Lilbourne. see below p.508.
 4. KB27/611/13,17; KB29/52 pt. 2/19; E159/100/24.
 5. KB27/611/7 states that Blake was tried on the 27th January, so that the date given for his execution (January 25th) in the London Chronicle 1413-18 quoted in Kingeford, Eng. Hist. Lit. p. 293, seems to be wrong.

Other members of the Bristol contingent were luckier :
 John Scorlay, chaplain, Robert Bayon, John Boys, John Colchestre,
 Edward Greylake, Henry Nucombe, Thomas Pomfreyt, John Reymond, John
 Rewell and William Terell were all apparently imprisoned, but were
 pardoned on the 20th and 21st January 1415,⁽¹⁾ and Philip Coke and
 John Hurte were pardoned on the 5th August of the same year.⁽²⁾
 James Merrshe, perhaps because of his close connection with Walter
 Blake, had to wait until the 5th October 1416 for his pardon.⁽³⁾
 The fate of John Batyn, Robert Patyn, Walter Pollard and William
 Worcestre, the four remaining chaplains of the party, is unknown :
 exigeants were put out for their arrest at Michaelmas 1414 and Trinity
 1415, but no more is heard of them after that date, and it is possible
 that they were taken and handed over to their ordinary for correction.⁽⁴⁾
 Equally mysterious is the fate of Philip Coke, William Gogh, Elias
 Monke, John Porteshede, Thomas Swyfte and John Wermynstre, who were
 still being sought by the authorities at Trinity 1417.⁽⁵⁾ It is, of
 course, possible that these missing Bristol lollards were killed in
 the fighting at St. Giles' Fields, but it is equally likely that they
 went to ground so effectively that the authorities could not find
 them. Again, their cases may have been held over, like that of
 John Touker, outlawed in 1414, who did not succeed in getting his
 outlawry reversed until 1431, although even then he was handed over
 to the church authorities to do penance for heresy.⁽⁶⁾

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1. KB27/614/56; 615/5, 616/12, 16; C67/37/48.
 2. KB27/617/17, 620/24, 625/6, 627/1
 3. KB27/622/24.
 4. KB27/614/56, 617/17.
 5. KB27/614/56, 617/17, 620/24, 625/6.
 6. KB27/681/13; KB29/54/20.

The Bristol juries of 1414 did not, however, confine themselves to indicting those who had actually taken part in the revolt, but, true to the terms of their royal commission, they also brought evidence against others known to be lollards. One jury declared that Walter Blake and Jordan Corveser were common lollards and receivers of heretics, whilst another indicted Richard Lanender, a fuller, Henry Lesy, John and Thomas Knett, John Jordan, John Colchestre, barber, John Rewell, James Mostardmaker, John Hampton, Edward Broun, Robert Wykeham, dyer, the wife of John Kenfeko, Robert Harreys, weaver, Ludlow Dyer and Christina More of being lollards, and of having been so for a long time before the rising.⁽²⁾ Of these, only John Rewell is known to have actually taken part in the revolt, though Robert Harrys' servant Edward Greylake had done so, while Christina More employed both Walter Blake, as a chaplain, and James Merrshe, as a servant.

As a result of this indictment, the Bristol authorities arrested John Colchestre, James Mostardmaker, Edward Broun, John Rewell, Robert Wykeham, Robert Harreys, Jordan Corveser (alias John Jordan) and Christina More : the other seven accused are not heard of again, and presumably escaped capture. Those arrested were handed over, by the civil authority, to the Bishop of Bath and Wells for questioning⁽³⁾: on the 5th July 1414, Broun, Wykeham, Mostardmaker and Harryes appeared before Canons Wells and Storthwayt, and after being put on oath, they were questioned as to their beliefs concerning the seven sacraments, the fourteen articles of

2. KB9/205/1/83, 84.

3. Req. Bubwith (Bath and Wells) 283-90.

faith, the seven works of mercy and the seven cardinal virtues. The register does not record the examination in detail, but it is clear that the questions were in general terms, and that the authorities were not attempting to elicit a confession of belief in some specific heresy.⁽¹⁾ All four lollards examined on the 5th claimed that they believed in the doctrine of the church and nothing else, that they were innocent of lollardy, and that they had never read, heard or possessed any heretical books. They were therefore assigned the 23rd July for their purgation, all their compurgators to be of good fame and not suspect of lollardy. After producing the compurgators they all abjured heresy, and promised to abstain from illegal conventicles and to reveal any lollards known by them to the Bishop, following which they were released.

On the 23rd July,⁽²⁾ the same day as Broun and the others purged themselves, Christina More was handed over and questioned in the way described above. As a probable patroness of the Bristol lollard community,⁽³⁾ and the employer for some years of Walter Blake, she no doubt fell under very grave suspicion of heresy : either for this reason, or because of her unsatisfactory answers during questioning, she was not allowed to purge herself until the 23rd October 1414. Finally, on the 6th February 1415, John Rewell, John Colchestre and Jordan Corveser were questioned and - despite Corveser's reputation as a 'communis lollardus ... ac recentor et manutenor lollardorum et cognitus ac lollardia et secta lollardorum per longum tempus' - on the 25th February they were admitted to purgation.⁽⁴⁾ It is notable that all eight lollards mentioned above

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1. Such as remanence or the priesthood of all believers.
 2. Reg. Bubwith 298.
 3. See below p. 249.
 4. Reg. Bubwith 284.

were residents of the Redcliffe and Bedminster areas of Bristol, notorious for some time as centres of lollardy : Broun and his three companions purged themselves at the Temple Church, while Christina More and the three heretics tried in 1415 made their purgation at the church at St. Thomas the Martyr, Redcliffe.

Even after their final purgation of heresy, the civil authority continued to take an interest in these eight Bristol lollards, as it had a duty to do since they had originally been indicted before a secular court. In June 1417 a royal writ directed the Bishop of Bath and Wells to send certificates of their purgation to the court of King's Bench, and this was done in October of the same year : for some possibly significant reason, however, the certificate of Christina More's purgation was not returned until January 1418, after the Bishop had received a second demand for it.⁽¹⁾

So much, then, for the facts concerning the participation of the Bristol lollards in Sir John Oldcastle's revolt and their subsequent trials. A more detailed study of the biographies of those named by the Bristol juries in 1414, however, reveals a number of important facts about the organisation and social composition of the local lollard community. Walter Blake, the leader of the 1414 rebels, had for some time been chaplain to the More family, and that his association with them was well known is proved by the fact that he was also known as Walter More. The head of this family was William More, a substantial burgess of the parish of St. Thomas the Martyr, Redcliffe, who not only owned a considerable amount of property in Bristol, but also some twenty-six houses in Wells : in 1388 he was of sufficient local standing to be appointed collector

1. KB27/626/18; KB29/54/20.

of a parliamentary subsidy, and it is more than likely that he was a member of Bristol's ruling Common Council. More enhanced his wealth and importance by marrying Christina, daughter of Thomas Sampson, twice bailiff and once sheriff of Bristol, who died in 1387 leaving his daughter and son-in-law executors and beneficiaries of his will. After Thomas Sampson's death, Christina's mother Joan married another Bristol notable, John Barton, bailiff of Bristol in 1391, whose son, another John, was successively bailiff, sheriff, and four times mayor of the town, as well as representing it in parliament five times between 1417 and 1432.⁽¹⁾ It will thus be clearly seen that William More and his wife were wealthy members of the governing class of Bristol, closely connected with some of the most important families of the town.

William More made his will in October 1411, and died about a year later⁽²⁾: on the surface there is nothing in his testament to prove him a lollard, and indeed he made legacies to his parish church of St. Thomas and to the vicar there. He also left money, however, to his servant James Merrshe, a rebel in 1414, and appointed as his executors his chaplain William Blake, leader of the Bristol rebels, and his wife Christina, indicted in 1414 as a heretic of long standing. With such a household, it is difficult to believe that William More did not have heretical sympathies, and of his wife's lollardy there can be no doubt. It is probable, in fact, that the More household was the principal centre of lollardy in the Redcliffe area, if not in the whole of Bristol, during the

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1. CPR 1385-9 p. 333; CCR 1401-5 pp. 473,475; CFR x. 219, Somerset Fines 1399-1413 p. 42; Gt. Orphan Bk. of Bristol pp. 17,44-5,66; Gt. Red Bk. i. 193-4,205,220,226,236; Mayor of Brystowe is Kalendar pp. 36,38-40; Trans. Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc. six pp. 120-3, xxvi pp. 130-131.
 2. Gt. Orphan Bk. pp. 88-9.

years preceding Oldcastle's rising. Though obviously well known to the jurors in 1414, before that date the household seems to have enjoyed a degree of immunity from persecution, probably because of the social position of the Mores themselves. When the rising came, Christina More obviously gave it her wholehearted support, and it was probably she who provided the money for Walter Blake's costly armour, and also perhaps for the bows and arrows carried by the other Bristol rebels, some of whom may have been, like James Merrshe, her employees. Any immunity from persecution that Christina may have had, however, ended in 1414, and it is obvious from the facts of her subsequent trial that both church and civil authorities regarded her with particular suspicion : indeed, it may have been only her connections with the Bristol ruling class that saved her from a worse fate than imprisonment and purgation.

Though the Mores were the only members of the Bristol ruling class known to have been actively involved in lollardy, a number of members of the town's middle class of tradesmen were indicted in 1414. Amongst those who accompanied the rebels to London was Robert Bayon, also known as Heytesbury, the son-in-law and heir of John Heytesbury, a wealthy weaver of the parish of St. Mary Redcliffe.⁽¹⁾ Amongst those indicted of long-standing lollardy were John Colchestre, one of the masters of the barbers guild in 1408, and after the revolt a surveyor of the guild in 1418,⁽²⁾ Jordan Corveser, a master of the cordwainers' guild,⁽³⁾ and the wife of John Kenfeke, another master of the cordwainers'.⁽⁴⁾ Also involved may have been Richard Marche, a master of the dyers' guild, who sheltered the lollard Ludlow Dyer.⁽⁵⁾

1. Gt. Orphan Bk. p. 108.
2. Little Red Bk. of Bristol pp. 69,135. Another John Colchestre, a weaver, took part in the rising.
3. Little Red Bk. p. 102.
4. ibid. 102; Gt. Orphan Bk. p.70.
5. Little Red Bk. p. 87.

Apart from Walter Blake, nothing is known of the biographies of the clerks who accompanied the rebels, but since none of them are known to have been vicars of any of the Bristol parishes, it is likely that they were either chantry priests or else members of the 'clerical underworld' of unbeneficed clergy which provided so many recruits for the lollard cause. Little is known, either, of the remaining twenty-eight laymen indicted for rebellion or heresy in 1414, save that no less than twenty-one of them were employed in the cloth trade which was then Bristol's staple industry, sixteen of them as weavers.

It appears, then, that the Bristol lollards of 1414 and the preceding years were recruited from the craftsmen of the Redcliffe area of Bristol, led by Walter Blake and other unbeneficed clergy, and encouraged and probably financed by the More family, and possibly by other members of the ruling class of the town. The prosecutions that ensued from the rising appear to have driven the lollards of Redcliffe underground for a time, for no more is heard of them for some years, though subsequent events prove that the area continued to be a major centre of heresy throughout the fifteenth century.⁽¹⁾

Despite the prosecutions which followed the revolt of 1414, Bristol was clearly still a place that attracted lollards : in the years after the rising, however, the centre of their activities seems to have been transferred from Redcliffe to the Broad Street area, north of the Avon and in the diocese of Worcester. In January 1416 Thomas Drayton, rector of Drayton Beauchamp, Bucks., exchanged his benefice with that of Holy Trinity, Broad Street, Bristol.⁽²⁾ Drayton

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1. For cases of lollardy in Redcliffe in 1441, 1448, 1457, 1499 and 1511 see Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 33-4, 37, 39, 46-7.
 2. Reg. Peverell (Wigorn) f. 74-5.

was already a notorious lollard, who had been active before 1414 in both Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire,⁽¹⁾ and whose part in the rising itself was taken so seriously by the government that he had at first been excepted from pardon, though in May 1415 he had been allowed to abjure and had been restored to his Buckinghamshire benefice.⁽²⁾ It is probably no coincidence that another priest who had taken part in the rising - John Mybbe, formerly master of St. Cuthbert's Hall, Oxford⁽³⁾ - obtained the benefice of St. John's, Broad Street (which adjoined Drayton's parish) in February 1418.⁽⁴⁾

A third lollard priest, Master William Taillour, who was certainly known to Drayton and probably to Mybbe, was also in the Bristol area by this time. Taillour had been principal of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, before 1406, when he had preached a heretical sermon at St. Paul's Cross, London, and subsequently published the text of it in writing. After the sermon he had appeared before Archbishop Arundel at Lambeth in an attempt to justify himself, but on being cited by the Archbishop to appear again, he had failed to do so and had been excommunicated for contumacy. He was again summoned to appear before the Archbishop in 1410, and again failed to do so.⁽⁵⁾

Little is known about Taillour's movements between 1407 and 1420, and he may well have visited Bristol during this time. Probably he spent some time in his home village of Aston Somerville,

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1. See ~~above~~^{below} pp. 284, 389.
 2. Foedera IX p. 120; C67/37 m.59; Reg. Chichele iii. 107.
 3. See ~~above~~^{below} pp. 287.
 4. Mybbe had formerly been vicar of Ashton Keynes, Wilts, which he exchanged for St. John's, Bristol. The advowsons of both the churches of Holy Trinity and St. John's were the property of Tewkesbury Abbey. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. 1332; Reg. Chichele iii. 427; Barrett, Bristol p. 468.
 5. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. 1852; Emden, An Oxford Hall in Medieval Times p. 125-133 see below p. 456. Reg. Arundel (Cantuar) ii. ff. 118-9; St. Alban's Chron. 1406-20 pp. 1-2.

south of Evesham in Worcestershire, and in the nearby village of Kemerton, home of the lollard rector Robert Lechlade and a well-known centre of heresy.⁽¹⁾ So notorious did his activities in this area become that a Worcestershire jury indicted him of preaching lollardy at 'Norton Underhill' (probably Bredon's Norton, near Kemerton) on the 29th May 1417, and in other places after that time. He was said to have declared that images should on no account be honoured, and that if a man fasted on bread and water on the vigils of the feasts of Saints Peter and Paul and of St. John the Baptist, he needed make no further confession. The first of these views is one consistently held by Taillour, but the second accusation could be based on a garbled account of one of his sermons. He had also spoken 'contra dignitatem domini nostri regis~~is~~ et statuti suum ordinacionem apud Leycestre inde nuper edidit'.⁽²⁾

It is not clear when or where Taillour was arrested, but on the 12th February 1420 he appeared before Archbishop Chichele at Lambeth Palace, where he admitted that he was 'vehementer suspectus super diversis erroribus, heresi et lollardia' and that he had remained excommunicate since 1406. Having submitted himself to the church, sworn to uphold its laws, and agreed to perform any penance given to him, Taillour was absolved of his excommunication.⁽³⁾ He still had to face, however, the charges laid against him by the Worcestershire jury, and after his absolution in London he seems to have been sent to Worcester Castle,⁽⁴⁾ where he was imprisoned pending interrogation by

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1. See ^{above} below p.274-5.
 2. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) vicar-general. f.13.
 3. Reg. Chich. iii. 157-8.
 4. The record is not clear whether Taillour was confined to Worcester Castle before his appearance before Chichele, or afterwards.

the Bishop of Worcester's officials. Upon examination Taillour denied all the articles laid against him, and he was assigned a day on which to purge himself of them with the help of sufficient persons of good fame and orthodox beliefs. He produced his compurgators on the 20th June 1420, when he was granted absolution and released.⁽¹⁾

Taillour's recantation of heresy was clearly no more than a ruse to escape from custody, for less than two months after his purgation at Worcester he was again spreading lollard doctrines, this time in Bristol, where he was acting as unofficial curate to Thomas Drayton,⁽²⁾ vicar of Holy Trinity, Broad Street. Taillour soon began teaching heretical doctrines in Drayton's church, while Drayton himself, doubtless emboldened by Taillour's presence, preached a heretical sermon in the churchyard of the monastic church of St. Augustine's. It was not long before their preaching came to the notice of a Bristol Carmelite, John Walton S.T.D.,⁽³⁾ who reported them to the Mayor and Sheriff of Bristol. The latter, no doubt anxious to prove their zeal against the lollards for which their town was notorious, arrested both Taillour and Drayton on the 5th August 1420, taking surety from them to appear before the vicar-general of the diocese of Worcester within ten days.⁽⁴⁾ In fact, Taillour was considered too important to be tried by a diocesan court, and he was imprisoned pending the

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1. Reg. Morgan (vicar-general) f.16.
 2. Taillour may well have taken refuge with Drayton-doubtless an old acquaintance-on previous occasions.
 3. Identified by Emden, An Oxford Hall in Medieval Times p.130, with Thomas Netter of Walden, OC,STD, the author of Fasciculi Zizaniorum
 4. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) vicar-general's register f.16r.

the next meeting of Convocation, but Drayton, as the lesser offender, appeared at Worcester on the 13th August, when six charges were laid against him, as follows. (1)

- (1) 'quod dictus dominus Thomas Drayton predicarunt private(2) in villa Bristoll predicta contra adoraciones ymaginum videlicet quod ymagine non deberent quomodolibet adorari.'
- (2) 'quod ... predicarunt quod oraciones presbyterorum non plus valent ^{quam} ~~extra~~ mugitus ^{BOVUM} ~~bovorum~~ vel grunitus porcorum.'
- (3) 'quod ... predicarunt in scandalum Religiosis videlicet duo homines venerunt in templum ut orarent unius phariseus et aliter publicanus iste phariseus fuit religiosus et superbe oravit sicut religiosi facerunt hiis diebus et ideo oracio illius a deo non fuerat exaudita. Publicanus autem non fuerat religiosus et ipse humiliter oravit et oracio illius a deo fuerat exaudita.'
- (4) 'quod memoratus Thomas Drayton ab ecclesia sua predicta se noverit divertebat quendam Magistrum Willielmum Taylor personam super crimine heretice pravitate notatam et pro lollardo reputatem multipliciter ab antiquo in ecclesia sua predicta suo deputando atque eidem Willielmum cura ecclesie memorate committendo sciens eidem Willielmum super criminibus errorum et heresium fuisse et esse suspectum ...'
- (5) 'Quod idem ... Drayton ea intencione predictum Magistrum Willielmum Taylor in dicta ecclesia sua ... deputavit ut colorem hereticum ibidem publice predicandi, cum alios predicare non posset eo quod per aliquem ordinarium ad exercend officium predicacionibus (prohibere).'
- (6) 'quod post quem supradictas Magister Willielmus Taylor per eidem ... Drayton ad custodiam cure sue ecclesie supradicte fuerat specialiter deputatus ... idem Taylor ... per suam nephandissimum doctrinam in predicacionibus suis plebem et populum quasi ad insurrectiones periculosius incitant ipsius ... Drayton absentia vel consilio hoc causante.'

1. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) vicar-general's register ff. 17v - 18r.
 2. Presumably in the house of some lay supporter.

Drayton denied all the articles except the fourth - that he had received Taillour knowing him to be a heretic, and had deputed to him the cure of his church : the vicar-general accepted his submission on this article, and instructed him to appear on the 2nd September 1420 to purge himself of the other five. He was to produce twelve compurgators, who were to be priests of good fame and orthodox opinions, and half of whom were to be Bristol residents. Meanwhile, on the 21st August the vicar-general wrote to the Dean of Bristol and all the other clergy of the town, informing them of what had occurred, and instructing any of them who objected to Drayton's purgation to come forward. Three days later the date of the proposed purgation was publicly announced in all the Bristol parish churches, with the same injunction.⁽¹⁾ It is clear that the vicar-general found it hard to believe in Drayton's innocence, probably because of his former record. Surprisingly enough, however, none came forward to challenge Drayton's purgation, and on the 2nd September he duly appeared and was granted absolution. Amongst his compurgators were John Bele, rector of St. Helen's, Worcester, and John Wylle and John Mybbe, vicars of the parishes of St. Laurence and St. John, Bristol, which adjoined Drayton's parish of Holy Trinity.⁽²⁾ As we have already seen, Mybbe had a record of past adherence to lollardy, having been involved in the 1414 revolt, and it is difficult to believe that he was not in some way implicated in the schemes of Taillour and Drayton. Whether the other compurgators were lollard sympathisers is unknown, but it is at least possible that some of them were.

1. Reg. Morgan (vicar-general) f.17.

2. Ibid. f. 18.

Drayton was lucky to escape so lightly, especially in view of his past record. It is plain, however, that the authorities - prompted, no doubt, as much by reports of his attempts to stir up the people of Bristol to insurrection as by his long-standing heresy - took Taillour's case far more seriously. After his arrest in August 1420, he was returned to the prison in Worcester from which he had emerged only two months before, and kept there until Philip Morgan, bishop of Worcester, produced him before a full Convocation at St. Paul's on the 24th May 1421.⁽¹⁾ There, Taillour was accused of having preached, written and upheld the following articles at Bristol in the previous year :

- (1) Quicumque suspenderit ad collum suum aliquod scriptum ipso facto tollit honorem soli deo debitum et prebet diabolo.
- (2) Quod Christus non est exorandus ratione humanitatis.
- (3) Quod sancti in celo non sunt exorandi a populo.

It is difficult to see the significance of the first article, which may well have been a misrepresentation or a garbled version of a remark made by Taillour in a sermon : at any rate, he denied having preached, written or upheld it, and also denied preaching the second and third articles, though he admitted having written them 'et communicasse eosdem per modum comunicacionis'. It is notable that at this trial Taillour was not accused of maintaining heresies concerning the worship of images or clerical lordship, such as he subsequently admitted to upholding.

In an effort to defend his beliefs, Taillour produced a written schedule in support of them : this was examined by a committee

1. Reg. Chicheley iii. 160-161.

of theologians, who two days later declared the articles contained in it to be heretical.⁽¹⁾ At this Taillour submitted himself to the church : he was granted absolution, but as a relapsed heretic he was sentenced to life imprisonment. A proviso was made, however, that if he showed signs of penitence, and could find surety in chancery never again to hold heretical views, the bishop of Worcester might release him after consultation with his fellow bishops. Evidently Taillour was soon able to convince the bishops of his penitence, for only a week later, on 2nd June 1421, he found sureties in the sum of £100 that he would appear before the council within fifteen days, if ordered to do so, and that henceforward he would preach or teach no heresy. Thereupon he was once again released.⁽²⁾

Taillour's penitence, however, like his previous recantation in June 1420, was again no more than a ruse, and before long he was once more in contact with the lollards of Bristol. Though by 1422 Thomas Drayton had moved from Bristol to Kent (where he was once again prosecuted for heresy)⁽³⁾ and John Mybbe had probably returned to Oxford,⁽⁴⁾ lollardy seems to have continued to exist in the Broad Street area, perhaps due to the presence there of lay supporters such as those to whom Drayton had preached privately in 1420. The authorities, however, were obviously on the look-out for traces of heresy, and in

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1. No details of the schedule are given in Chicheley's Register.
 2. CCR 1419-22 p. 199. His mainpernors were John Singleton, gentl. of Great Chart, near Ashford, Kent and three Londoners.
 3. He had transferred from Holy Trinity Bristol to Staines, Bucks., by 1422, and by December of the same year he exchanged the parish of Staines for Snave, Kent. Reg. Chicheley i. 207, 227, iii. 107-9. See below p. 407-8.
 4. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. 1332. He paid rent at University College from 1422-4. Barrett, Bristol 488, however, indicates that he remained vicar of St. John's Bristol until 1427.

late 1422 or early 1423 they intercepted or otherwise obtained 'certa folia papiri scripta' ⁽¹⁾ containing lollard doctrines, sent by William Taillour to Thomas Smyth, a priest of Bristol. There is little doubt that this Thomas Smyth is to be identified with the man of the same name who was chaplain of Richard Spycer's chantry in the church of St. Nicholas, a few hundred yards from Holy Trinity Broad Street. ⁽²⁾

On the 11th February 1423 Taillour once again appeared before Convocation in London. ⁽³⁾ His letter to Thomas Smyth was produced, and examined by a committee of theologians, who extracted four articles of belief from it : on the 25th February ⁽⁴⁾ they declared these beliefs to be heretical

- (1) 'Omnis oracio que est peticio alicujus doni supernaturalis vel gratuiti soli deo dirigenda est.'
- (2) 'Oracio soli deo dirigenda est'
- (3) 'Orare aliquam creaturam est committere ydolatram.'
- (4) 'Fideles nunquam dirigerent oraciones suas ad deum sub racione humanitatis, sed solum sub racione deitatis.'

The opinion of a number of ecclesiastical lawyers was sought as to what should be done with Taillour, and it was decided that he must be handed over to a secular court ⁽⁵⁾ as a relapsed heretic. On the

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- 1. Reg. Chichele iii. 162.
 - 2. Gt. Orphan Book of Bristol pp. 69,72-3; Barrett,Bristol p.497.
 - 3. Reg. Chichele iii. 161.
 - 4. ibid. 167-8.
 - 5. Reg. Chich. iii. 168-9.

following day, the 26th February, the Bishop of Lincoln accused him of holding five further heresies, not contained in the letter to Thomas Smyth : these were,

- (1) 'Dominium civile vel seculare, quod juxta me est idem cum civili, est ita imperfectum quod nullo modo licite stat cum perfeccione sacerdotali, et nullo modo Christus voluit sacerdotes ecclesie taliter dominari.'
- (2) 'Communis modus mendicandi fratrum est omnino dampnosus et execrabilis.'
- (3) 'Quicumque sancte crucis Christi offerens vel alicui sancto committit ydolatriam.'
- (4) 'Licet quedam conclusiones premissae dampnate sint et reprobate per sacrum generale consilium Constantien^s, non minus tamen sunt vere catholice et approbate per legem domini nostri Jesu Christi.'
- (5) 'Deus non vult voluntate beneplaciti sed permissive solum reges et principes qualitercumque bonos dominari civiliter super servos suos et regna aut dominia eorum temporalia.' (1)

Although already condemned to be handed over to the secular arm as a relapsed heretic, Taillour could probably still have saved his life by recanting his heresies, ⁽²⁾ but this he refused to do. Upon examination he confessed that he still believed the four heresies concerning prayer contained in his letter to Thomas Smyth, and he also admitted holding four of the five other articles laid against him. He at first disavowed the fifth of these articles - that Kings rule only by God's permission, not by His pleasure - but admitted it when the Bishop of Lincoln and others swore to having heard him assert it

1. Reg. Chichele 169-70.

2. Thomas Drayton, who like Taillour had twice relapsed into heresy, saved himself from death and even from degradation from the priesthood by recanting his heresies after his third trial in 1425. Reg. Chich. iii. 107-9.

at Lincoln's own inn on February 11th, the first day of his trial.⁽¹⁾
 Nothing could now save Taillour : on 27th February 1423 Archbishop
 Chicheley passed final sentence on him at St. Paul's, and on the
 1st March he was formally degraded from the priesthood in the presence
 of the Duke of Gloucester and other magnates of the church and state.⁽²⁾
 Finally, on the 2nd March 1423, William Taillour was burnt at the stake
 at Smithfield, displaying, as we might expect from such a notable and
 persistent lollard, 'a mervailous constancy and boldnes.'⁽³⁾

The heresies canvassed in Bristol by Taillour and Drayton
 mainly concerned the worship of images and prayers made to the saints,
 though Taillour also attacked the mendicants and clerical possessioners.
 Neither Taillour nor Drayton, however, was at any time accused of hav-
 ing denied transubstantiation or the efficacy of the priesthood, or to
 have made any violent attacks on the church as a whole. Their teaching
 was, in fact, clearly in a different and less extreme tradition from
 that prevalent in Bristol before 1414, when extreme anti-sacerdotalism
 and anti-sacramentalism were apparently common there.

After Drayton's departure and Taillour's death, little is
 known about lollardy in Bristol for some six years, and it is possible
 that the latter's execution may have temporarily cowed the local
 heretics. Taillour's influence on the lollards of Bristol and the
 surrounding area, however, is clearly visible in the only two cases
 of heresy connected with the town which are known to have occurred
 between 1423 and 1441. The first of these cases concerns John Walcote,
 a shepherd of Hasleton near Northleach, Glos., who was tried at Winch-
 combe in October 1425.⁽⁴⁾ Walcote was a heretic of long standing, and

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1. Reg. Chich. iii. 170.
 2. ibid. 171-2
 3. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 865.
 4. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) ff. 46-48.

had been defamed of lollardy not only in his home village but in London, Northampton, and Bristol. He admitted to having known William Swynderby (who disappears from the records in the early 1390's),⁽¹⁾ John Purvey and Sir John Oldcastle, and to having communicated with John Beverley⁽²⁾ and John Claydon,⁽³⁾ two London lollards, and with William Taillour, probably in Bristol. Like Taillour, Walcote did not deny transubstantiation, though he held that the sacrament ought not to be adored, and he admitted having heard in a sermon by John Beverley that a priest in mortal sin could not perform the Mass. He also held that images of any kind ought not to be worshipped and that he would burn one if he were cold, that it was more meritorious to give money to the poor than to go on pilgrimages, and that the saints canonised by the church did not pray for the faithful. The last-mentioned heresy, in particular, is directly traceable to the views of William Taillour, and it seems likely that Walcote was one of his followers.⁽⁴⁾

The second case was that of William Emayn, born at the lollard centre of Byfield, Northants,⁽⁵⁾ who had been imprisoned for two years by Bishop Repingdon of Lincoln (1414-20) and had appeared four times before him before being allowed to purge himself.⁽⁶⁾

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1. See above pp. 172 .
 2. See below p. 464 .
 3. See below p. 463 .
 4. Walcote's home village of Hasleton is no more than twelve miles from Taillour's place of origin at Aston Somerville and not much further from the lollard centre of Kemerton. See pp. 272-7.
 5. Where heresy had flourished since 1389. See above pp. 94-5.
 6. See above pp. 147-8. Emayn's imprisonment and appearances must have occurred between 1405 and 1420, the dates of Repingdon's episcopate.

He had subsequently moved to the Redcliffe area of Bristol, where he was again accused of heresy and brought before Bishop Stafford of Bath and Wells on the 10th March 1430.⁽¹⁾ As this is the only recorded case of lollardy in Bristol itself between 1423 and 1441, his opinions are worth quoting as an example of what was being preached there during that time. Sixteen articles were laid against him, in English, since he presumably knew no Latin:

- (1) 'In primis every praier should be maad immediatly to God and not to Seintes right as the child that had wast his faderis good come immediatly to his fader and asked mercy and his fader forgaf hym his trespas.'
- (2) 'hit is not lawful for a spirituel man to charge or to compelle ony man to swere on a book.'
- (3) 'confession is but a counsail : right as Peter cried God mercy and David and Magdalene and here synne was forgif, so should we do and non otherwise.'
- (4) 'the pope in dedly sinne is Antecrist and not the viker of Crist : for Crist saith he that is not with me in ayenst me.'
- (5) 'every prest is bounde under the payne of dedly synne to prech Word of God openly.'
- (6) 'it is ayenst Goddes lawe to ony man or womman that is foole to entre into ony hous of religion : for thoo places be the dennes of foxes and of briddes nestes.'
- (7) 'freres shuld not begge but wercke as Poule dede with there handes for thair liflode for they be the childre of sathan.'
- (8) 'hit is not lawful to ony prest which ministreth the sacrament or singeth for a soule in church collage or other place to take ony salary for his labour.'
- (9) 'the hed of the church is Crist and thoo that be most vertuouus in lyvyng be most highest in the church, and thoo that be in dedly synne be out of the church of Goddes ordinance and on the sinagog of Sathanas.'

1. Reg. Stafford i. pp. 76-80. Since Emayn was described as 'of Bristol' and was a subject of the diocese of Bath and Wells, he must have been a resident of the Redcliffe and Bedminster areas, the only part of Bristol within that diocese.

- (10) 'to ymages shulde no maner worship be do neither genufleccious ner insensing ne non othre thing of worship.'
- (11) 'hit is dampnable to goo on pilgrimage to ony sepulture reliquys of Seintes : for a pilgrimage shulde be do to pouer men.
- (12) 'hit is dampnable to offre to ony ymage.'
- (13) 'hit is not lawful to the king lordes spirituel and temporel be calling to hem the comones to kepe and execute such ordinances and statutes but they be founded and grounded in Cristes gospel : and the writers of such statutes be like to scribes and pharisees to whom Crist saide. Ve vobis scribis et phariseis, Woo to you scribis and pharisesues.'
- (14) 'hit is not lawful neither to spiritual lordes as the pope, archbushops, busshops, abbotes and al other of the prelacie, ne to lordes temporal as the king, princes or ony other of the temporalte to occupie temporal goodes if thay be in dedly synne : for than they be not lordes ne owners of the same goodes.
- (15) 'the opinions that Sir John Oldecastel, called the lord Cobham, Maister John Wiclif, Maister William Taillour, Sir William Sawtry, Sir John Beverley and Sir James — (1) which persones for their errours and heresies that they pertinatlich defended were convicted and demed for heretikes, and so take to secular pouer and punisshed to the deth, were holy men and thair doctrine and opinions were trewe and catholik, and therfor thay be worshipped in heven as holy martirs.'
- (16) 'Master John Wyclif was holier and now is more in blisse and hier in heven glorified than Seint Thomas of Cantirbury the glorious Martir.'

These are all fairly common lollard beliefs, perhaps derived severally from the teachings of a number of heretical preachers with whom Emayn had come into contact during his travels.

1. There is a blank in the manuscript here. James Resby, an English priest burnt at Perth in 1407, is probably referred to. Bower, Scotichronicon ii. 441-2.

The fact that he was not accused of holding any heresies concerning the sacrament, however, may well indicate that Emayn, like Walcote, may have come under the influence of William Taillour, who figures highly in his list of lollard 'martyrs'. It seems likely, indeed, that Taillour's teachings remained current in Bristol and the surrounding area for some time after his execution in 1423.

Though Bristol was apparently not involved in the abortive lollard rising of 1431, it continued throughout the fifteenth century to be one of the most important national centres of popular lollardy. Prosecutions for heresy are recorded there in 1441, 1448, 1476, 1499 and 1511,⁽¹⁾ all of them, significantly, of men from the Redcliffe area, where lollardy had been strong since at least 1400. There is no evidence, however, that after 1414 the Bristol lollards ever regained the support of the burgess class of the town which had protected and sustained them in the years before Oldcastle's revolt.

1. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 33-9, 44, 46-7, 68-9.

CHAPTER FIVELOLLARDY IN THE SOUTH-WEST MIDLANDS

The area covered in this section - Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire excluding Bristol - is less of a natural unit than many of the others covered. Many of the lollard influences came from outside the area (eastward from the Welsh March, northwards from Bristol, or westward from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire) but nevertheless the south-west midlands contained its own centres of lollardy, namely the centre of academic lollardy at Oxford, the urban centre at Coventry, and the rural parishes of Kemerton in Gloucestershire and Sutton-by-Tenbury in Worcestershire. The evidence for lollard activity in the area is, on the whole, both sparse and fragmentary, but such as it is it bears out the conclusions drawn from other areas - that is, that early lollardy flourished best where it enjoyed the support either of the local gentry or of the urban middle class.

I. Before Oldcastle's revolt. 1382-1413

It is appropriate that Coventry, not only the most prominent centre of fifteenth-century lollardy in the south-west Midlands but also the region's most important town,⁽¹⁾ should have been amongst the first places in the area to be evangelised. The man responsible was that energetic and well-nigh ubiquitous preacher William Swynderby, whose activities in Leicester (fifteen miles north-west of Coventry) have already been noticed. After his trial and recantation before Bishop Buckingham of Lincoln during the summer of 1382,⁽²⁾ Swynderby had returned to Leicester, where he probably remained until at least September 1382.⁽³⁾ According to Knighton,⁽⁴⁾ however, he had become unpopular in Leicester after his recantation, and after a short while he decided to move to Coventry. His alleged unpopularity may not, nevertheless, have been the only reason for his move, for Coventry was the nearest large town to Leicester which was outside Bishop Buckingham's jurisdiction. Temporarily safe in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, Swynderby allegedly repeated there his earlier successes in the east Midlands.

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1. In 1377 Coventry was the fourth largest town in England Russell, British Medieval Population p. 142.
 2. See above pp. 68-72.
 3. When he is mentioned in the will of Thomas Beeby, a Leicester burgess. Reg. Buckingham f. 303 and see above p. 73-4.
 4. Chronicon ii. p. 198.

'Sicque infra breve, in se reversus, fugam de villa occulte iniit, et ad villam de Coventria abiit, ubi infra breve a laicis in majori honore, quam antea fuerat, ibidem habebatur, circiter per annum praedicans sicut et prius docens, et plures ad sectam execrabilem subvertens, donec lustrata ejus fama et pestifera ejus seductione per diocesanum et clerum de diocesi illa ridiculose dejectus est cum maximo rubore.'⁽¹⁾

No other record whatever remains, however, of Swynderby's activities in Coventry, which appear to have taken place in or about 1383. Whether or not those that he allegedly converted remained true to their new faith is unknown, but no further evidence of lollard activity in the town occurs until over twenty years after his visit there. This is not to say, however, that no such activity occurred, for at this time Coventry was in an unsettled condition, and was apparently an ideal breeding ground for lollard ideas.⁽²⁾

Moving further southwards, we have already seen that John Aston (despite his recantation in 1382) preached a controversial sermon at Gloucester in September 1383.⁽³⁾ By the autumn of 1384 he was openly preaching heresy throughout the diocese of Worcester, probably operating from a base in or near Bristol.⁽⁴⁾ He seems to

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1. Knighton ii. p. 198.
 2. For unrest in Coventry at this time see VCH Warwicks viii pp. 152, 208-10; Warwickshire and Coventry Sessions of the Peace (Dugdale Soc. XVI) pp. 75-8; Coventry Leet Book (EETS) i. p. 35; Kendall, Yorkist Age p. 121.
 3. Knighton ii. p. 178. See above pp. 219-20
 4. Reg. Wakefield (Wigorn) f. 112. See above p. 220-1.

have been active in the diocese until at least August 1387, by which time (if Bishop Wakefield's prohibition is to be believed) Nicholas Hereford, John Purvey, William Swynderby and the obscure John Parker had joined him in preaching there.⁽¹⁾ In which parts of the diocese (which included all of Worcestershire, most of Gloucestershire and part of Warwickshire) this formidable group of lollards preached, or what was the result of their proselytisation^{ing/} there, however, we do not know.⁽²⁾

Little is known, likewise, concerning the influence exercised by those academic lollards who remained at Oxford over the inhabitants of the area immediately surrounding the University town. We know, however, of at least one of their converts, an esquire named Thomas Compworth, who lived at Kidlington, a few miles north of Oxford, where both the advowson and the tithes belonged to the abbot of Osney.⁽³⁾ By 1385 (according to the monk of Evesham's chronicle)⁽⁴⁾ he had become infected with lollard doctrines, and had already spread his views far and wide "plures annos per diversas partes Angliae discurrebat, praedicans et docens ferre omnes conclusiones haereticas et erroneas ... et specialiter de confessione suo Curato facienda exterius non curavit, nec eidem solvere Decimas voluit, et idem aliis ... edocuit."⁽⁵⁾

"This⁽⁶⁾ gentille man was accusede to the bischop of Lincolne of the seide heresyys and errours, whom the bischop pursuede,

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1. Reg. Wakefield (Wigorn) f. 128 see above p. 221.
 2. See above p. 220-22
 3. English Register of Osney (EETS) p. 87.
 4. Mon. Evesham pp. 67-69.
 5. *ibid.* p. 68.
 6. This English version of the story is taken from M.S. Harl 2261, printed in Polychronicon VIII pp. 473-4. It is substantially the same as the latin version of the monk of Evesham.

but he cowthe not fynde hym in eny wise. Wherefore the seide bischop purchased of the Kynge by his letters patent that what so ever man myghte take him scholde make hym sure in the nexte castelle. The abbot of Oseney herynge that, made grete labor to take hym, in that he wolde not pay his tythes to seide abbote by meny yeres afore; whom the seide abbot toke at the laste in his awne place at Cudlynton,⁽¹⁾ and causede hym to be broughte to the castelle at Bannebery, where he taryede longe excommunicate, a competent processe made ageyne hym."⁽²⁾

It is possible that Compworth made an attempt to escape from Banbury, and to evade the bishop's clutches, by purchasing letters of pardon from the then Chancellor, Michael de la Pole. At any rate Lalverne⁽³⁾ (probably in an attempt to blacken de la Pole's name) tells the story of an unnamed 'scutifero Lollardo, qui denegavit debitas solvere decimas abbati de Osneye, quare ad prosecutionem dicti abbatis fuit captus et in carceribus aliquamdiu detentus. Ille vero per brevia regia a Michaele de la Pole tunc temporis cancellario cum favore habita et concessa de carcere nitebatur evadere, et totum processum praedicti abbatis penitus annullare." The abbot, however, appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who told the King, who at once quashed the letters of pardon, confirming his desire to uphold canon law.

After a consultation between the Archbishop and the Bishop of Lincoln,⁽⁴⁾ therefore, Compworth was brought to trial before "the chaunceller of Oxenforde and ... other doctors. Afore whom the seid esqwyer apperede in the day prefixede at Oxenforde, whiche answered

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1. i.e. Kidlington.
 2. Polychronicon viii. p. 473.
 3. Polychronicon ix pp. 174-5.
 4. Mon. Evesham p. 68; Polychronicon viii p. 473.

to the inquisicions made to hym after the oppinions of maister Wyclif; and so he was convicte ther as an heretike of his awne confession. Whiche esqwyer broughte afore the iugges did see mony of his secte and of his movers to that heresy, but they were dombe and durste not speke, and departede. The esqwyer perceyvynge that, thoughte veryly that thei hade inducede into a wronge way ... Wherefore he abiurede the thynges usede by hym afore as erroneus and full of heresy, promisyng that he wolde not sustene eny oppinion erroneus after that tyme.' He was condemned to pay £40 expenses (later commuted to £10) to the abbot of Osney, and to walk in penance before the end of term procession at Oxford carrying a taper. The penance was never performed, however, for 'what thro infirmite causede by sorowe and what for schame' he either died⁽¹⁾ or at least contracted a grave illness.⁽²⁾

This story (which, since it appears in two separate versions, seems to have been fairly well known) is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provides evidence of the direct influence of Oxford academic lollards on the laity of the surrounding countryside, and it would be interesting indeed to know the identity of those of Compworth's 'secte and movers to that heresy' whom he later recognised amongst his judges. If Malverne's addition to the story is true, it would seem to confirm that there was some sympathy for lollardy (or at least for anti-clericalism) in high places during the 1380's. No other record remains, however, either to associate Compworth with de la Pole, or de la Pole with the lollards, and it is possible that Compworth obtained his letters of pardon through the influence of Sir Philip de la Vache, lord of the manor of Kidlington,⁽³⁾ who in 1385 was in high favour at court.⁽⁴⁾ De la

1. According to Polychronicon viii p. 474.

2. According to Mon. Evesham p. 69.

3. CCR 1377-81 p. 299; CPR 1377-81 p. 492; CCR 1413-19 p. 56.

4. Tout, Chapters iv. p. 346; CCR 1381-5 p. 553; Test. Vet. p. 14.

Vache himself is not entirely above suspicion of lollard sympathies, for he was the son-in-law of Sir Lewis Clifford, one of the foremost of the "Lollard Knights", and was also closely associated with other members of that ambiguous group.⁽¹⁾

Compworth's story does not, of course, end in 1385, for though a convenient "illness"⁽²⁾ may have prevented him from carrying out his penance, he does not seem to have died at that time. After participating in a murderous ambush in 1388,⁽³⁾ he appears to have moved to Northamptonshire by the early 1390's,⁽⁴⁾ and by the autumn of 1392 he had become involved with John Fox and the lollards of Northampton.⁽⁵⁾ Richard Stormsworth describes in his petition how Fox, the allegedly lollard mayor of Northampton, had drawn to his counsel and 'covyne';

'Thomas Compworth del countee d'Oxenford que fut convict devant le Chancellor et la universitee d'Oxenford des plusours erreurs et heresyas.' (6)

Fox was dismissed from office, but what became of Compworth as a result of his involvement with the Northampton lollards is unknown, though his previous record must have told against him if he was again brought to trial. It is probable, however, that he eventually reverted (at least ostensibly) to orthodoxy, and he is probably to be identified with the man of the same name who was active as a surety

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1. McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 161, 165, 166n., 171, 174, 182, 185, 209, 212. The will attributed to Lady Elizabeth de la Vache on p. 185 of this work, however, is really that of Lady Perryne Clanvowe.
 2. McFarlane. Wycliffe p. 143.
 3. Murder of Roger Foliot in an ambush at Thrupp, near Kidlington, 28th December 1388, for which he was pardoned in 1395. CPR 1391-6 p. 600.
 4. CPR 1396-9 p. 68; CFR XII pp. 73, 102; CCR 1399-1402 p. 503.
 5. See above pp. 167-8.
 6. SC8/142/7099.

and an attorney in Northamptonshire during the first thirty years of the fifteenth century : in 1412 and 1413 he was a county J.P., in 1421 he acted as royal escheator there, and in 1420 and 1425 he served on royal commissions.⁽¹⁾

Howsoever this may be, there seems little doubt that, during the closing years of the fourteenth century, Compworth had been an enthusiastic supporter of lollardy both in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. It seems likely, too, that he laid the foundations of a heretical congregation at his home village of Kidlington, for the area produced a contingent of lollard rebels in 1414, and in 1417 a local man received two lollards who, significantly, had come from Northampton.⁽²⁾

During the opening years of the fifteenth century there is evidence of lollard activity (possibly or even probably interconnected) in at least two areas of Warwickshire and at three places in Worcestershire : of these latter, the most interesting case concerns the village of Kemerton (now in Gloucestershire) and an Oxford lollard named Robert Lychelade or Lechlade. Lechlade had been expelled from the University, 'where he has for a long time published and taught nefarious opinions and conclusions', by a royal mandate dated 1st October 1395,⁽³⁾ the issue of which may well have been prompted by a sermon he had preached violently attacking the religious orders.⁽⁴⁾ After a short time as a fellow of Winchester college,⁽⁵⁾ however, he was restored to his place in the University on 8th November 1399

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1. CPR 1405-8 p. 437, 1408-13 p. 482, 1413-16 p. 421, 1416-22 p. 308, 1422-9 p. 300, 1429-36 p. 334; CCR 1396-9 pp. 68, 405, 1399-1401 pp. 318, 480, 1409-13 pp. 171, 297, 404; CFR XII pp. 73, 102, XIII pp. 84, 132, XIV p. 391, XV. p.13.
 2. See below p.296.
 3. CCR 1392-6 p. 434.
 4. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. 1184.
 5. Emden, op. cit.

(shortly after the accession of Henry IV) on the grounds that he had been wrongfully banished by Richard II, without reasonable cause⁽¹⁾; three days earlier another banished Oxford lollard, William James, had been reinstated on the same terms.⁽²⁾

At some time within the next eighteen months, Lechlade was presented to the living of Kemerton, between Cheltenham and Worcester, by the lord of the manor there, Sir William Beauchamp, Lord Abergavenny.⁽³⁾ He was certainly incumbent there by 14th July 1402, when he was appointed an executor of the will of Lady Anne Latimer, widow of the lollard supporter Sir Thomas Latimer of Braybrooke, Northants: two of the three supervisors of the will, Robert Hoke, parson of Braybrooke and Sir Lewis Clifford, were also lollard suspects, as was Thomas Wakelyn, one of Lechlade's co-executors.⁽⁴⁾ The significance of this will, which links Lechlade with the lollard centre at Braybrooke, had already been discussed.⁽⁵⁾

Other evidence indicates that Lechlade's parish was well-known as a lollard centre in its own right, for when the Bohemian x scholars Nicholas Faulfiš and Jiří of Kninice came to England in 1406 to seek out manuscripts of Wycliffe's works, Kemerton was one of the places that they visited. First of all, however, they had called at Oxford, where they obtained a document purporting to attest

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1. CPR 1399-1401 p. 84.
 2. ibid. p. 75.
 3. VCH. Gloucs. viii pp. 216-7; Worcester Sede Vancante Register i. p. cxvi; CCR 1402-5 pp. 119-120.
 4. PGC Marche 3 f.18.
 5. See above pp. 16-26.

to that University's support for Wycliffe's doctrines : it had been sealed with the University seal, fraudulently obtained by the Oxford lollard Peter Payne.⁽¹⁾ Payne plainly had close links with Bohemia, whence in 1413 he fled to escape persecution.⁽²⁾ Whilst in Oxford the Bohemians also probably met William Taillour, at that time still principal of St. Edmunds Hall, and near the beginning of his long career as a preacher of heresy.⁽³⁾ Leaving Oxford early in 1407, the Bohemian scholars moved on to Kemerton, where they found a manuscript of Wycliffe's treatise 'de Ecclesia' (presumably belonging to Lechlade) and made a rough copy of it, which was subsequently corrected at Oxford in February of either 1407 or 1408. Later they went northwards to Braybrooke, where they made a partial copy of Wycliffe's 'de Dominio Divino', using a manuscript which almost certainly belonged to the lollard rector there, Robert Hoke.⁽⁴⁾

The Bohemians' itinerary not only confirms the links between Kemerton and Braybrooke, but also indicates that Robert Lechlade was still in touch with the remaining lollards at Oxford. One of these, William Taillour, originated in the village of Aston Somerville, some eight miles east of Kemerton, and he may well have returned to his home area after his excommunication and expulsion from the University in about 1407, as a result of a famous sermon attacking clerical

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1. Concilia iii. p. 302.
 2. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. iii. pp. 1141-2; An Oxford Hall pp. 139, 154 ff.
 3. Emden, An Oxford Hall pp. 125-133. Taillour's successor as principal of St. Edmund's was Payne.
 4. See above p. 26 for Braybrooke : for the visit of the Bohemians, see J. Loserth (ed.) De Ecclesia (Wycliffe Society) p. 47n; R. L. Poole (ed.) De Dominio Divino (Wycliffe Society) pp. x, xii, 249n.; O. Odlozilik, Wycliffe and Bohemia p. 14; Deanesly, Lollard Bible p. 400; Emden, An Oxford Hall p. 139n.3.

possessions preached at St. Paul's Cross in 1406.⁽¹⁾ No details of his activities in the area, however, are known until 29th May 1417 when (according to a Worcestershire jury) he preached a heretical sermon at 'Norton Undurhulle'.⁽²⁾ No village of this name now exists, but it is likely that the place where Taillour preached was the village now called Bredons Norton, which lies in the shadow of Bredon Hill⁽³⁾ and is just one mile north of Kemerton. Whether Lechlade was still at Kemerton in 1417 is unknown, but Taillour's motive for preaching at Norton may well have been connected with that village's close proximity to what was apparently an established centre of lollardy.⁽⁴⁾

It is possible, therefore, to compare Kemerton with the rather better-known lollard centre at Braybrooke, with Robert Lechlade in the former filling the position occupied in the latter by Robert Hoke : so far, however, we have seen no direct evidence that Kemerton enjoyed the protection of a lay magnate, such as was afforded to Braybrooke by Sir Thomas Latimer. The most probable candidate, however, is Sir William Beauchamp, Lord Abergavenny, lord of the manor of Kemerton and patron of the church there. Beauchamp was by birth a member of the higher nobility, being the fourth

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1. Reg. Arundel (Cantuar) ii. 118-119; St. Alban's Cron. pp. 1-2 see below pp. ~~456-66~~
 2. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) Vicar-general f.13; see above p.252.
 3. cf. the neighbouring village of Ashton, often called Ashton-under-Hill. It is possible, however, that Taillour preached at Morton Underhill, a small hamlet near Inkberrow on the Worcestershire-Warwickshire boundary. Nash, Worcestershire ii. p. 12.
 4. For Taillour's subsequent activities in Bristol see above p. 253-60

son of Thomas, earl of Warwick by Katherine Mortimer, daughter of the earl of March : he held extensive lands in the west Midlands (especially Worcestershire) and in the Welsh March,⁽¹⁾ and was also well-known in Coventry, of whose powerful Trinity guild he was a member.⁽²⁾

More significantly, Beauchamp was closely associated with that group of Richard II's courtiers called the "Lollard Knights", and in particular with Sir Lewis Clifford and Sir John Clanvowe.⁽³⁾ Clanvowe and another member of the group, Sir John Cheyne, owned nearly all the land round Kemerton, namely the manors of Beckford, Aston-on-Carent, and Ashton-under-Hill.⁽⁴⁾ It is also notable that one William Countour, appointed by Beauchamp to the living of Pyrton (six miles north of Kemerton) in 1392, was responsible for the compilation of the manuscript collection⁽⁵⁾ which includes the ambiguous devotional treatise "de Viis Duabus" by the lollard suspect Sir John Clanvowe.⁽⁶⁾ The strongest evidence for Beauchamp's lollard sympathies, however, is that he appointed Lechlade, already a convicted heretic, to one of

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1. GEC, Complete Peerage i. pp. 24-26; Nash, Worcestershire i. pp. 184-5.
 2. Register of the Trinity Guild of Coventry (Dugdale Soc.) i. p. 74.
 3. McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 166, 169, 171, 183, 189, 201, 209, 214-5; Kervyn de Lettenhove (ed.) Froissart's Chronicle viii. pp. 280, 284; Warwicks. Feet of Fines (Dugdale Soc) iii. p. 73; CCR 1377-81 p. 374, 1389-92 pp. 108, 428, 1392-6 p. 17; CPR 1388-92 p. 508, 1399-1401 p. 220; Tout, Charters iii. pp. 353-6; Test. Vet. pp. 14, 209; John of Gaunt's Register (1379-83) ii. p. 299.
 4. CPR 1385-9 p. 130; CFR ix.p. 167.
 5. Ms. University Coll. Oxford (Coxe) 97.
 6. McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 200-201, 213-4.

his livings. It also seems possible that he allowed (or at least turned a blind eye to) the use of Kemerton as a repository for Wycliffe's forbidden works, and perhaps also as a centre for lollard preaching.

There are also indications, however, that Beauchamp was unexceptionably orthodox. Some of the evidence is negative, in that none of the chroniclers include him amongst the list of "Lollard Knights" accused of unorthodoxy. Nor does his will (proved in 1411)⁽¹⁾ contain any of the features of the "Lollard wills" left by Cheyne, Clanvowe, Clifford and other lollard suspects, though his wife Joan⁽²⁾ (who survived until 1435) left a testament which included some of these puritan elements.⁽³⁾ More positively, Beauchamp was one of the influential laymen called in by Bishop Peverell of Worcester to witness the first trial of the Evesham lollard John Badby in January 1409.⁽⁴⁾ Thus the lollardy of Sir William Beauchamp remains unproven.

How long Kemerton remained important as a lollard centre is unknown, as is the extent to which it influenced the surrounding area. Neither is it known whether Robert Lechlade's teaching had any influence on John Badby, a tailor of Evesham (eight miles north-east of Kemerton) who was arrested for lollardy at some time in 1408. In January 1409 he was brought to trial at Worcester, before Bishop Peverell and a tribunal which included a number of local magnates :

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1. Reg. Arundel (Cantuar) ii. f.155.
 2. Referred to by Adam of Usk as a second Jezebel. Even Usk, however, makes no accusations of heresy against either Joan or her husband : Usk, Chronicon pp. 182,227-8.
 3. McFarlane, Lollard Knights 214-5; Reg. Chichele ii. pp. 534-9.
 4. Concilia iii. p. 325.

at this time he declared his belief in the doctrine of remanence, and denied that any priest could make the Body of Christ by his words, 'ulteriusque dixit, quod John Rakyer de Bristol habet tantam potestatem, et tantam auctoritatem huiusmodi Corpus Christi conficere sicut presbyter qualiscunque'.⁽¹⁾ He also asserted that 'cum Christus cum discipulis suis sederet in coena, in vanum esset sibi corpus suum ibidem eisdem discipulis suis distribuere : et dixit expresse, quod hoc non fecit'.

Badby had publicly taught and maintained all these heresies, 'ac alia quamplurima verba, dictam haeresim tangentia et fortificantia, gravia et enormia, ac auribus audentium horribilia ...' Nor would he withdraw any of them, though cajoled and threatened by Peverell, but 'respondebat expresse, se nolle aliter credere'. He was therefore declared to be an obdurate heretic, and imprisoned for more than a year before being brought before Archbishop Arundel in London on the 1st March 1410. It is suggested elsewhere⁽²⁾ that the timing of this second trial was not entirely fortuitous, but that it was part of an attempt by Arundel to discourage the parliament then in session from voting in favour of a Lollard-inspired disendowment bill at that time being considered.

Examined by Arundel, Badby continued to maintain his heresies, declaring that the sacrament was not Christ's body but 'signum tamen est Dei vivi'. To the second article, that no priest could make the Body of Christ by his words, he added 'quod non potest invenire in mente sua secundum quod articulatur, nisi quod crederet

1. Concilia iii. 325-8.

2. See below pp. 462.

incarnationem esse falsam'. He continued to insist that John Raker, so long as he lived a good life and served God perfectly, had as much power to make the sacrament as any priest, even though 'prout audivit alias a sacrae paginae professoribus, quod si hujusmodi panem sic consecratum reciperet, esset eo facto condemnandus, et in facto condemnatus'.⁽¹⁾ He went on to say 'quod vellet credere omnipotenti Deo in Trinitate, et dicit, quos si esset ita, quod quaelibet hostia in altari consecrata esset corpus dominicum, quod tunc sunt 20 millia Deorum in Anglia'. Finally he followed up his point about the Last Supper, saying 'esset sibi mirum, quod si quis haberet unum panem, et ipsum frangeret, et daret discipulis unum bucellum, quod idem panis postmodum integer remaneret'.

After again refusing to recant, Badby was remanded until the 5th March, when he appeared again before the Archbishop, who had now been joined by the Duke of York and other notable laymen.⁽²⁾ Badby remained firm, and even added another point to his argument against transubstantiation, 'quilibet homo qui est, vel fuit, per tempus Adam, est majoris pretii et reputationis, quam sacramentum altaris per presbyterum in forma debita. Et dum sic fuerat in examinando, venenum aspidum apparuit juxta labia sua ...' It perhaps at this time that he made the remark alleged by Walsingham; 'quod sacramentum non est Corpus Christi, quod sacramentaliter tractatur in Ecclesia, sed res quaedam inanimata, pejor buffone vel aranea, quae sunt animalia animata'.⁽³⁾ His obduracy finally caused Arundel to declare him a hopeless case; 'videns per eum fronte indomita cor

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1. Concilia iii. p. 326.
 2. ibid. p. 327.
 3. Hist. Anglic. ii. 282.

habentem animo indurato, ut apparuit, Pharaonis'.⁽¹⁾ Accordingly he was turned over to the secular power, and within a few hours he was sentenced to death, and taken to be burned at Smithfield, in the presence of the Prince of Wales. Prince Henry

'counseiled hym to holde the right beleve of holy chirche and hym shuld fayle no good. Also Courtney that tyme Chaunceller of Oxenford preyd hym and enfourmyd hym of the feythe of holy Chirche. And the p^rour of seynt Bartilmewes brought the holy sacrament of goddes body with xii torches bore to fore this cursed heretyk. And it was asked how he belevyd. And he answered he wyst well that it was halowed brede. And not goddys body. And thanne was the tonne put ovyr hym and fyr put unto hym. And when he felte the fire he cryed mercy. And anone the prince commaunded to take away the tonne and quench the fire ... And thanne the prynce asked hym yf he wold forsake heresy and take hym to the feythe of holy Chirche which thing yf he wolde do he shuld have good I nough. And the cursyd shrewe wold not but contynued forth in his cursed heresie. Wherefore he was brent.'⁽²⁾

The presence of Prince Henry at Badby's execution, and the attendance of Prince John of Lancaster, the Duke of York and other great men at his trial, helps to reinforce the theory that the timing of his examination before Arundel was dictated as much by political as by religious considerations. Certainly the case (which was widely reported by the chroniclers) was a cause celebre, for Badby was only the second lollard to suffer death for his beliefs. The impression of him that comes down to us is of an intelligent, fanatical and rather eccentric layman, who may well have been afflicted by fits which caused him to foam at the mouth.

What cannot now be discovered is whether Badby was a member (or even the leader) of an Evesham lollard congregation, or

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1. Concilia iii. p. 327.
 2. Gt. Chron. of London 87-88; see also Hist. Anglic. ii.282; St. Alban's Chron. 51-2; Polychronicon viii 546; Eulogium Historiarum 416-7 etc.

whether he was an isolated heretic. One of his beliefs, the denial that Christ broke the bread at the Last Supper, is not found elsewhere, and may be Badby's own. His connection with the Bristol lollard 'priest', John Raker, has already been discussed,⁽¹⁾ as has the suggestion that his beliefs were derived from the teachings current in the Bristol lollard congregation. There may, however, have been other influences, for, apart from its closeness to Kemerton, Evesham was an important route-centre, within easy reach of the lollards of Oxford, Coventry or the Welsh March. There is no further record of lollardy in Evesham after Badby's execution, which must have acted as a powerful deterrent to further growth.

Lollards were, however, active on the western side of Worcestershire in the closing years of Henry IV's reign, though their doings did not come to light until 1414, when Oldcastle's revolt had increased the vigilance of the authorities. In those parts the lollards enjoyed the support and protection of a local knight, Sir Roger Acton of Sutton-by-Tenbury on the Worcestershire-Shropshire border. According to Adam of Usk; '*Iste miles, tegulatorius filius, ex infimo genere Salopie oriundus, prediis et spoliis guerre Wallie ditatus, se nimis extollendo, ordinis militaris prerogativa obtinuit. Post tamen in ipsos quam ingratus recalcitrari non erubuit.*'⁽²⁾ It is certainly true that Acton had risen in the royal service : by 1396 he was a King's Esquire, and by 1413 a King's Knight, and he had received numerous grants of royal lands and wardships, mainly in Shropshire.⁽³⁾ He had fought side-by-side with Prince Henry and Sir John Oldcastle in

1. See above p.238-9.

2. Usk, Chronicon p. 121.

3. CPR 1391-6 p. 684, 1399-1401 p. 394, 1401-5 p. 323, 1409-13 p. 465.

the wars against Owen Glendower, and had served successively as constable of Criccieth and of Ludlow castles⁽¹⁾: it was probably at this time that Acton (like a number of other veterans of the Welsh wars)⁽²⁾ became infected with lollardy, perhaps due to the influence of his comrade Oldcastle.

Sir Roger appears to have been supporting lollard preachers since at least 1407, by which time (according to a 1414 jury) a certain John Casewey and one John 'the chaplain of Roger Acton' were preaching against images and pilgrimages at Sutton-by-Tenbury, at Bransford Bridge near Worcester, and elsewhere in the county.⁽³⁾ Nothing else is known of their activities at this time, but Sir Roger Acton must have been a useful supporter, for he had much local influence, and served as sheriff of Shropshire in 1409-10.⁽⁴⁾

Comparatively little is known about lollard activities in Warwickshire in the years immediately preceding Oldcastle's rising. Though, as we have already seen, the important town of Coventry seems to have been evangelised as early as 1383, there is no further evidence of lollardy there until at least twenty years after that date.⁽⁵⁾ In October 1404, however, when the parliament called the 'Unlearned'⁽⁶⁾ was held in the town, an incident occurred there which (whilst it probably had little to do with local lollardy) is worth recording. This parliament was notable for clashes between its clerical and its lay members, and for the introduction of a bill proposing the resumption by the crown of all church lands⁽⁷⁾: no doubt feeling ran high, and

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1. Proc. P.C. ii. 64; Wylie Henry V i. p.271.n.i.
 2. Jacob, Fifteenth Century p. 103.
 3. KB9/204/1/15.
 4. PRO. List of Sheriffs p. 118.
 5. Knighton ii. p. 198. See above p.267.
 6. Because the election to it of lawyers was forbidden by royal writ.
 7. Roskell. Commons and Speakers p.

one day a number of knights and squires, mostly members of the King's household, refused to reverence the Host as it was carried through the streets to a sick man. They 'turned her bakkes and avaled not her hodes, ne ded no maner reverens' : Archbishop Arundel, observing this, railed at them and complained to the King, who 'ded in this mater dew coreccion, for many of hem were of his hous'.⁽¹⁾ This incident is construed by the chroniclers as a lollard demonstration, but it may well have been no more than anti-clericalism prompted by political considerations. Some Coventry men may have been involved, but the sources make it clear that most of those involved were visiting members of the royal household.

It seems certain, however, that indigenous lollards were active in Coventry by 1407. On the 28th August of that year a royal commission was sent to the prior of the local Benedictine house, and to the mayor and bailiffs of the town, ordering them to arrest and imprison anyone 'preaching, publishing, maintaining or holding schools' of any sect opposed to the Catholic church : in January 1408 the commission was not only renewed, but also extended to cover Warwickshire as a whole.⁽²⁾ Whether any lollards were taken in Coventry itself is unknown, but it is not unlikely that the heretics the commissioners had to deal with in rural Warwickshire included some of those men accused in 1417 of having preached lollard doctrines in the county since 1409.⁽³⁾ These were Robert Herlaston, parson of Baddesley Clinton (between Warwick and Coventry) from 1409 until 1414,⁽⁴⁾ John

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1. Capgrave, Chronicle p. 288; Hist. Anglic. ii. p. 419; Annales Hen. IV pp. 395-6.
 2. CPR 1405-8 pp. 352, 476.
 3. KB9/209/45.
 4. Reg. Burghill (Coventry and Lichfield) f.25; Dugdale, Warwickshire pp. 711-12.

Clerk, vicar of Chesterton (near Warwick) Peter Colby of Kenilworth and Thomas Drayton, vicar of Drayton Beauchamp. Drayton is, of course, well-known for his activities in Buckinghamshire (before 1414)⁽¹⁾ Bristol (in 1420)⁽²⁾ and Kent (in 1425)⁽³⁾ but no other record remains of his doings in Warwickshire.

Though nothing is known for certain of their identity, it is certain that there was also a lollard congregation in Coventry itself just before Oldcastle's rising, to which the town sent at least six men, probably under the influence (if not the leadership) of Ralph Garton, a wealthy local mercer.⁽⁴⁾ Nine months earlier, in March 1413, a lollard book from Coventry "plenus toxico et veneno contra ecclesiam Dei", was displayed to a shocked Convocation at London, but neither its contents nor its exact provenance have come down to us.⁽⁵⁾

No further records remain of lollardy in the south-west Midlands before 1414. This is not, however, to say that other groups of heretics did not exist in the area, whose activities were either never discovered by the authorities, or else were only discovered as a result of Sir John Oldcastle's rising.

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1. see below p. 389.
 2. see above p. 250-4.
 3. see below p. ~~257~~ 407-8
 4. see below p. 289.
 5. Concilia iii. p. 352.

II. Sir John Oldcastle's revolt and afterwards.
1414-c.1421.

Comparatively little, as has been shown above, is known of the lollards of the south-west Midlands during the period before 1414 : rather more is known of their activities after that date, when both the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities had been aroused by the fear of political upheaval to greater diligence in seeking out heretics. It is notable that much the same parts of the region which harboured lollards during the earlier period - the Kidlington area of Oxfordshire, the town of Coventry, and parts of Warwickshire and Worcestershire - continued to do so during the later. Each of these areas sent a contingent of rebels to St. Giles' Fields in 1414, and in each lollard activity is traceable for some years after the rising.

None of the rebel contingents from the region are known to have been very large, but one of the most sizeable was that which consisted of eleven or more men from the Upper Cherwell valley area of Oxfordshire. This was not led, as elsewhere, by a priest or a gentleman, but by William Broun alias Davy, a Woodstock glover. With him were a number of craftsmen from the surrounding villages : John Geoffray, a mason of Bladon; Henry Melleward, miller, and John Parchmyner from Long Hanborough; William Dygge, labourer and William Taillour, tailor, from Kirtlington; John Rook, fuller, of Upper Heyford; Robert Coupe, cooper, and John Webbe, weaver, of Kidlington; John Chacombe, also called William de Banbury, carpenter, and perhaps John Wynforlong, weaver. These set off from Woodstock and Bladon on the 2nd January (giving themselves a week to reach London) and

were present at St. Giles' Fields on the night of the 9th-10th January, though what happened to them there is unknown.⁽¹⁾

After the rising this group seems to have escaped fairly lightly, and none of them are known to have been executed. Broun, the ringleader, was pardoned in December 1414, and Chacombe, Geoffray and Parchmyner also received pardons, though Parchmyner and Rook both spent nine months in Newgate, and, like Wynforlong, lost their goods to the King's escheator.⁽²⁾ The fate of the others is unknown, though Melleward, Coupe, Webbe, Dygge and Taillour were still being sought by the authorities in the summer of 1415.⁽³⁾ Nor was it only the civil authorities which required satisfaction, for in the autumn of 1415 certain Oxfordshire rebels (all but certainly members of this group) already tried before the civil courts were ordered by Bishop Repingdon to be imprisoned in Banbury Castle until they had made purgation of their heresy.⁽⁴⁾ Though nothing is known of the beliefs of William Broun and his friends, the church obviously took their lollardy seriously, and did not dismiss them as mere misguided peasants.

It seems almost certain that the lollards of the upper Cherwell valley had their origins thirty years or more before the rising, in the teaching and support of the Kidlington esquire Thomas Compworth.⁽⁵⁾ The possibility of a direct link between the Oxfordshire rebels of 1414 and their brethren in Buckinghamshire, however, cannot

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1. KB9/205/1/51,55.
 2. KB27/615/6,617/6; E199/26/30; CPR 1413-16 pp. 262, 271; CCR 1413-19 p. 148; E357/24/49.
 3. KB27/615/32
 4. Reg. Repingdon (memo.) f.33.
 5. See above p.~~288~~72 and below.p. 296

be ruled out, for Roger Cheyne of Drayton, leader of the Buckinghamshire rebels, owned the manor of Cassington, only a mile or so from Bladon and Long Hanborough.⁽¹⁾

Probably only marginally connected with this group were the three clerks from Oxford University known to have participated in the rising. Two of these, John Garthorp, 'scoler' and Thomas Gray, clerk, of Oxford alias of Northamptonshire, were imprisoned for some time in Newgate before being eventually pardoned : nothing further is known of them.⁽²⁾ Rather more interesting is John Mybbe, master of University Hall "vulgariter dict' Cuddeberteshall",⁽³⁾ a small grammar hall in Oriel Street. His indictment states that he rose at Oxford in support of Oldcastle, of whose 'assent and covine' he was, but does not make it clear whether anyone joined him in his rebellion, or whether he actually journeyed to St. Giles' Fields in pursuance of it. Later events suggest that Mybbe knew William Taillour, the lollard principal of St. Edmund's Hall, and he may also have known Taillour's predecessor Peter Payne.⁽⁴⁾ It is doubly unfortunate, therefore, that no record of his trial survives : he was certainly a free man, however, by December 1417, when he was appointed vicar of Ashton Keynes, near Cricklade in Wiltshire.⁽⁵⁾ Only two months afterwards he transferred to St. John's, Bristol,⁽⁶⁾ where in September 1420 he acted as a

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1. C138/7/19.
 2. E199/26/30; CPR 1413-16 p. 271; CCR 1413-19 p. 148.
 3. KB9/205/1/57.
 4. Emden, An Oxford Hall Chapter VII.
 5. Reg. Chichele iii. p. 427.
 6. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. p. 1332.

compurgator for the lollard priest Thomas Drayton (then rector of the neighbouring church of Holy Trinity) accused of preaching heresy himself and of allowing William Taillour to preach in his church.⁽¹⁾ Shortly afterwards he returned to Oxford, where he rented a room at University College from 1422 until 1424.⁽²⁾ After this, nothing further is known of him : he has some claim to be the last, as well as one of the least known, of the Oxford lollards.

Equally obscure is John Wykeham, esquire, of Swalcliffe near Banbury in northern Oxfordshire : he is not known to have had any connection with the Cherwell valley group, and it may be that his links were with the lollards of Northamptonshire. Present at St. Giles' Fields, he was captured and brought before the justices on the 10th January, the day following the revolt, when he was sentenced to be hanged forthwith. He managed, however, to avoid execution, and by November 1414 he had not only obtained a pardon, but also the restoration of his lands, which were in Middlesex. The extent of his involvement in the rising, and his reasons for joining it, are unknown.⁽³⁾

We have already noted some evidence of lollard activity in Warwickshire in the years immediately preceding 1414, but since the relevant King's Bench indictments are lost, it is difficult to deduce how many rebels that county contributed to the rising. From other records, however, it is plain that a number of men from Coventry,

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1. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) Vicar-general. f.18. See above p.255.
 2. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. 1332.
 3. C81/1422/22; CPR 1413-16 p. 250.

at least, were involved. Of these, by far the most socially important was Ralph Garton, a wealthy mercer who dealt in land, and who was a prominent member of the town's dominant Holy Trinity Guild.⁽¹⁾ Garton either did not go to St. Giles' Fields, or else he went, but escaped the trap and returned home to Coventry, where he was arrested on the 30th January on suspicion of lollardy. He appeared before the court of King's Bench a few days later, and was released upon finding sureties in the very large sum of 1,000 marks to appear again when required⁽²⁾ the names of Garton's nine sureties on this occasion amply testify to his wealth and influence. He was by trade a mercer, and amongst his mainpernors were several of the most influential London members of that mystery, with whom the Coventry man most probably had business connections. These were Alan Everard, alderman of Bread Street Ward and sometime twice M.P. and once sheriff of London,⁽³⁾ and William Walderne, alderman and sometime once sheriff, twice M.P. and twice Lord Mayor of London.⁽⁴⁾ Everard was also a member of the Holy Trinity Guild of Coventry, from which, however, he was expelled for perjury.⁽⁵⁾ Four other sureties - William Style, Nicholas Assheburne, John Burton and Edward Colshulle⁽⁶⁾ - were Coventry merchants and Guild members, while Robert Passomer was a royal sergent-at-arms and a former escheator for Warwickshire,⁽⁷⁾ and Philip Strethay owned land in

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1. Statute Merchant Roll of Coventry (Dugdale Soc.) p.18; Register of the Holy Trinity Guild i. p.68; Warwickshire Fines p. 125; CCR 1405-9 p. 520.
 2. KB27/611/13.
 3. Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1413-37 pp. 16,21,46,169; Riley Memorials 661; Cal. Ltr. Bks. I p. 33.
 4. Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1381-1412 p. 271, 1413-37 pp.15,16, 28,98,167; London and the Kingdom iii. 479; Rulers of London pp. 218-19.
 5. Register H.T.G. i. p.5.
 6. Statute Merchant Roll 62,66,69,74; Register H.T.G. i. pp. 15,33,38,53,92; Warwickshire Fines p. 123.
 7. CPR 1405-8 p. 345, 1408-13 p. 475; CCR 1409-13 p. 382.

Staffordshire and Somerset.⁽¹⁾

Garton may well have had links, both before and after 1414,⁽²⁾ with the lollard congregation in London. Certainly he was considered to be amongst the more important rebels, for he was one of those for whom warrants were issued immediately after the rising.⁽³⁾ It seems probable that a man of his standing would have been amongst the leaders of the Coventry lollards : the remainder of those known to have been involved in 1414 seem to have been lesser men, and not Guild members. These were John Glover, Thomas Smyth "servant of Busteler of Sponstrete"; Robert Hendes, hosier; John sturdy and Thomas Robyns⁽⁴⁾: the 1st of these is probably to be distinguished from the man of the same name from Grandborough, Warwicks, who joined the Northamptonshire contingent.

Like their brethren from Oxfordshire, the Coventry rebels seem to have escaped comparatively lightly, and none are known to have suffered execution. Ralph Garton himself, with Glover and Smyth, obtained a pardon,⁽⁵⁾ while Hendes died in Newgate⁽⁶⁾ and Robyns and Sturdy apparently escaped capture.⁽⁷⁾ The subsequent doings of Garton and other Coventry lollards will be considered below, as will the nature of the support they received both from their fellow-burgesses and from the local gentry.

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1. CPR 1409-13 p. 160-161, 254.
 2. See below.
 3. KB27/611/13.
 4. CPR 1413-16 p. 262; CPR 1413-19 p. 148; KB27/611/23.
 5. KB27/615/14; CPR 1/13-16 p. 262.
 6. E199/26/30.
 7. KB27/611/23, 614/20, 618/1; KE29/52/2/20.

The only other contingent known to have come from the south-west Midlands in 1414 was that led by Sir Roger Acton. According to the Worcestershire juries, he left his home at Sutton-by-Tenbury on the 6th January (giving himself only three days to reach London) and passed through Worcester and Evesham (on the 7th) on his way to St. Giles' Fields.⁽¹⁾ He probably picked up men along the way : we know that he was joined at Worcester by a local goldsmith, John Gybon, and perhaps also by John Casewey, from nearby Bransford Bridge. Evesham, the home of John Badby, may have provided further recruits. By the time he reached Stow-on-the-Wold his company was said by a Gloucestershire jury to have numbered sixteen men armed and equipped for war.⁽²⁾

An experienced soldier as well as, apparently, a convinced lollard, Acton obviously played an important part in the revolt, as is borne out by the chroniclers, who refer to him as 'ejusdem sectae fautor et dampnabilis aemulator' and as 'princeps sectae cujusdam nephariaeque superstitionis'.⁽³⁾ Taken soon after the rising, he was at once found guilty of both lollardy and treason and, despite his pleas of innocence, he was hanged at St. Giles' Fields, where his body hung for a month before being buried under the gallows.⁽⁴⁾ It

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1. KB9/204/1/15,16.
 2. KB9/205/1/81. The jury gave the date of his passage through Stow as the 4th January, which is almost certainly an error. If the date is correct, then Acton must have been returning to Sutton with a contingent collected from elsewhere, rather than actually going to London.
 3. Vita et Gest pp. 30-32; Tito Livio pp. 6-7.
 4. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. pp. 284, 324; Polychronicon viii 548-9; Usk p. 121; Gregory's Chron., p. 106; Stow, Annals. p. 344; English Chron. p. 39. See below p. .

is not clear why he was not burnt hanging, like other convicted heretics, for he had been convicted of unorthodoxy,⁽¹⁾ and his record of support for lollards over a period of at least seven years makes it fairly certain that he held heretical opinions. The fate of John Gybon is unknown, and John Casewey and Acton's chaplain John were still being sought by the authorities in 1416.⁽²⁾

Despite the measures taken against the lollard rebels in 1414, there is considerable evidence that lollardy persisted in the south-west Midlands for some years after the rising, especially in those parts of the region where it was already well-established, and most notably in the Coventry area. There may have been murmurings of lollard unrest in Coventry in July 1415, and amongst the accusations made against a Londoner called "John B."⁽³⁾ at about that time was that "he shulde, at Coventre, Sunday thre wekes nexte bifore Lammesse day last was (i.e. 14th July) have taught and stirred Loullers to rise ..." and "that he shulde have made vi hundred tabardes for the same entent".⁽⁴⁾ Nothing further is known of this alleged rising, which may simply have been a figment of the eccentric 'John B's' imagination : the rumour cannot, however, be entirely discounted, for

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1. KB27/611/7.
 2. KB27/219/5
 3. Probably John Barton, doctor of medicine. See below pp. 522-4
 4. Letters of Margaret of Anjou (Camden Soc. 1863) p. 27.

it is certain that Sir John Oldcastle himself was in the Coventry area at the end of July 1415 (though this fact did not come to the notice of the authorities until more than two years later). On either the 29th July⁽¹⁾ or the 5th August 1415,⁽²⁾ or possibly on both occasions, Sir John had been harboured at Chesterton, about seven miles south of Coventry, by the vicar there, John Prest (also called John Lacy and John Clerk).⁽³⁾

According to Walsingham,⁽⁴⁾ the departure of King Henry V for France on 11th August 1415 gave rise not only to an outbreak of lollard pamphleteering, but also to a threatened new uprising.

"In regem nempe, post iter arreptum transmarinum, multa vomuere convicia talibus se cohortantes. 'Iam', inquiunt, 'princeps presbiterorum abiit, iam hostis noster abcessit, iam nobis arrisit tempus acceptabile quo nostras impune licebit iniurias vindicare.'"

The chief fomenter of this unrest was Oldcastle, who by now had moved from Chesterton to a new hide-out near Malvern in Worcestershire.

Emboldened by the King's departure, he sent a threatening letter to the most important local magnate, Richard Beauchamp, Lord Abergavenny,⁽⁵⁾

"comminans se in capite eius ulcisci velle sibi suisque illatas iniurias ab eodem."⁽⁶⁾ In reply Beauchamp secretly sent out messengers

to Worcester, Pershore and Tewkesbury, and gathered together a force of some 5,000 archers and men-at-arms at Hanley Castle, near Malvern.

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1. C81/1422/75.
 2. KB9/209/40.
 3. Prest had been vicar of Chesterton only since 10th May 1414. Dugdale, Warwickshire pp. 382-3. See below. p.297
 4. St. Alban's Chron. pp. 88-9
 5. Son of Sir William, the patron of Robert Lechlade. G.E.C, Peerage i. 26-27.
 6. St. Alban's Chron. p. 88.

At this, Oldcastle was forced to flee to a new hiding place, but Beauchamp succeeded in taking five of his accomplices, including an anonymous priest and (according to Walsingham) the same William Parchmyner who had sheltered Sir John after his escape from the Tower in 1413.⁽¹⁾ The authorities also discovered a cache of Oldcastle's money and weapons, stored up against the coming revolt : 'in quadam domo inter duos parietes, sic erectos ut nullus sine indice percepisset fallaciam dicte structure. Illic eciam invenere signa sua cum vexillo in quibus depingi fecerat callicem et hostiam in forma anis tanquam ibi fuisset adoranda res sacramenti. Ibi insuper conspicienda fuere quasi crux Christi cum flagris, lancea cum clav's, que depinxerat in vexillis suis ad decepcionem simplicium...'⁽²⁾

The first of these banners, whose depiction of a chalice and wafer seems so inappropriate to the lollards, was apparently similar to the device carried by the Bohemian Hussite armies at this time.⁽³⁾ The similarity may not have been entirely fortuitous, for Oldcastle is known to have been in contact with Hussite leaders in 1410.⁽⁴⁾ The house in which the cache was found may well have been Birtsmorton Court, five miles south of Malvern, which is named by a strong local tradition as Oldcastle's hiding-place⁽⁵⁾: in 1415 it was apparently owned by a member of the Ruyhale family, who were

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1. Parchmyner was not, however, tried and executed until October 1416, which makes it seem rather unlikely that he was taken as early as August 1415. Riley. Memorials p.641. See below p.486f.
 2. St. Alban's Chron. p. 89.
 3. Author's observation in the Czech Military Museum, Prague, and cf. Czech Hussite illuminated Ms .
 4. Waugh, 'Sir John Oldcastle' in EHR xx. pp. 443-4.
 5. E.S. Smith, History of Malvern p. 91; 'Birtsmorton Court', in Woolhore N.F.C. Vol. for 1905-7 pp. 274-5.

distantly connected to Sir John Oldcastle by marriage.⁽¹⁾

It is difficult to say how much support Oldcastle actually commanded in the Malvern area, but if the chronicler is to be believed, it was considerable enough to cause the most important local magnate to take drastic defensive action. Some of Sir John's supporters on this occasion may have come from Warwickshire and from the Welsh March,⁽²⁾ and it is also possible that others came from Sutton-by-Tenbury, Worcester, Evesham and the Kemerton area, all parts of Worcestershire where lollards are known to have existed before 1414.

Oldcastle may once again have been in the Coventry area at the end of 1415 and two men of the town, a hosier called John Hunte and a cardmaker named William Smyth, are said to have ridden to support him on 30th December, when they and others conspired to kill the King. The two men were also said to be common lollards and heretics, and to have contributed money from their own pockets towards the cause of rebellion.⁽³⁾

Thereafter, no record remains⁽⁴⁾ of Oldcastle's presence in the south-west Midlands until 26th October 1416,⁽⁵⁾ when a chaplain named John Whitby is said to have harboured him at the remote upland village of Piddington, on the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire border. Despite his pleas of innocence, Whitby was condemned by an Oxford jury and hanged immediately after his trial, on the 27th August 1417.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Nash, Worcestershire i. p. 84; VCH. Worcs. iv. p. 31.
 2. Four men from Hereford are said to have supported him at Malvern. See above pp. 26-7.
 3. KB9/209/36.
 4. Oldcastle's movements in the early part of 1416 are obscure.
 5. Earlier in October, Oldcastle was rumoured to be in or near London. KB27/644/11 see below p. 526.
 6. KB9/209/52, 62 : E136/174/14.

It is possible that he is to be identified with a priest of the same name who was active in Northumberland in the opening years of the fifteenth century, when he had worked in close association with the better-known lollard evangelist Richard Wyche.⁽¹⁾

Though no direct connection is traceable between John Whitby and the lollards of the Cherwell valley, ten miles away to the west, it is probable that some heretics survived in the Kidlington area. On the 7th January 1417 a certain Richard Fuller of that village was alleged to have sheltered Laurence Fuller and Robert Taillour, two Northamptonshire lollards, well knowing that they held heretical opinions.⁽²⁾ All three men were ordered to purge themselves of their heresy before the Bishop of Lincoln at Michaelmas 1418, but they still had not done so ten years later.⁽³⁾ Two men from the neighbouring village of Kirtlington (which had sent two rebels to St. Giles' Fields in 1414) were involved in an outbreak of 'congregaciones et conventiculas illicitas' which took place at Oxford during the summer of 1418, and which may have been connected with lollardy : these were a farmer named John Repyngdon and a scholar called Richard Buxton, but the exact nature of their offence is not specified, and it may well have been no more than brawling.⁽⁴⁾

After about 1416, however, most of the evidence of lollard activity in the south-west midlands emanates from the Coventry area of Warwickshire. We have already seen that Oldcastle visited the

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1. See above p. 16 .
 2. KB9/209/57, 62.
 3. KB27/630/3, 669/15.
 4. KB27/630/2.

area at least twice in 1415, and at Christmas 1416 there was said to have been a lollard conspiracy to murder the King whilst he was at Kenilworth, between Coventry and Warwick.⁽¹⁾ In August 1417 a royal commission was set up to investigate heresies and treasons in the area, and this not only brought to light Sir John's earlier visits,⁽²⁾ but also revealed that the lollard leader had been in Warwickshire during the summer of 1417, just before his visit to Byfield in Northamptonshire.⁽³⁾

On the 28th June 1417 Ralph Clerk, chaplain to a burgess of Coventry named Geoffrey Gippeswych, was said to have ridden fully armed out of the town to give support and comfort to Oldcastle, though the place of their meeting (which may have been Chesterton) is not recorded. Clerk was also accused of being of Oldcastle's assent and covine, and of holding heretical opinions : at the same time one of his followers, the widow Elizabeth Meryngton of Coventry, was indicted of being an accessory to his offences.⁽⁴⁾

Other lollards were also indicted before the commissioners : Robert Ferlaston, parson of Baddesley Clinton (between Warwick and Coventry) John Prest, vicar of Chesterton (who had sheltered Oldcastle in 1415) Peter Colby of Kenilworth and the Buckinghamshire priest Thomas Drayton were all accused of having preached unspecified heresies in various parts of Warwickshire since about 1409.⁽⁵⁾ A husbandman, John Ewyk, was also accused of holding unorthodox opinions, and since

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1. St. Alban's Chron. pp. 103-4.
 2. KB9/209/36,40.
 3. See above pp. 146-7.
 4. KB9/209/30,34.
 5. KB9/209/45 see above p. 283.

he came from Nether Norton, near Baddesley Clinton, he may have been a follower of Robert Herlaston.⁽¹⁾

As a result of the commissioners' findings, Ralph Clerk and the widow Meryngton were brought to trial early in September 1417. Clerk was found not guilty of treason, but both he and Meryngton were found to be suspect of lollardy, and were compelled to purge themselves of heresy before the dean of Coventry.⁽²⁾ The rest of those indicted were not so easy to track down, and John Prest had still not been arrested at the end of 1418⁽³⁾ in June 1421, however, he successfully sued for pardon,⁽⁴⁾ and a month later he found sureties in the sum of £100 that he would not maintain opinions repugnant to the church.⁽⁵⁾ Herlaston, Colby, Drayton and Ewyk apparently evaded arrest (though Drayton was tried in 1420 for offences committed in Bristol)⁽⁶⁾ for they were still being sought by the authorities in 1428.⁽⁷⁾

On 16th September 1417, a few days after Ralph Clerk's trial, a certain "Garton of Coventry" (almost certainly to be identified with the Ralph Garton accused in 1414) appeared before the Common Council of London, and was examined concerning the heresy charges which had been laid against Robert Arnold, a prominent citizen of London.⁽⁸⁾ Little

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1. KB9/209/47, 50.
 2. KB9/209/50.
 3. KB27/630/2.
 4. C81/1422/75.
 5. CCR 1416-22 pp. 206, 372.
 6. See above p.2504.
 7. KB27/669/15.
 8. Journal of the Common Council. i. f.33. See below p.528.

more is known about this case, but it suggests that some kind of link existed between the Coventry lollards and their brethren in London,⁽¹⁾ as well as indicating that Ralph Garton himself may still have been under suspicion of heresy.

If Garton's lollard sympathies did indeed continue after 1414, his support must have been most valuable to the Coventry lollards. His arrest at the time of the rising had affected neither his wealth nor his prestige, so that by 1420 he had become a member of the ruling body of the town, known as the Twenty-Four.⁽²⁾ Support for the lollards may also have come from Ralph Clerk's employer, a burgess named Geoffrey Gippeswyche who had been associated with Ralph Garton in the purchase of land⁽³⁾: it is hard to believe that Gippeswyche did not both know and approve of the religious views of his own chaplain. Ralph Clerk's disciple Elizabeth Meryngton also came of a wealthy Warwickshire family, who owned land in Coventry as well as in the manor of Little Lawford in the parish of Newbold-on-Avon, near Rugby.⁽⁴⁾ It was, significantly, Elizabeth's neighbours (all members of the minor local gentry) who stood surety for Clerk during his trial in 1417: these were Robert Arderne, senior and junior, of Newbold Paunton, Thomas Arderne of nearby Brinklow, and Richard Trussell of Long Lawford, esquire.⁽⁵⁾

More direct evidence of support for lollardy by the local gentry is provided by the case of Robert Burdet, esquire, who like

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1. cf. 'John B.' of London, accused of fomenting revolt in Coventry in July 1415. See above.
 2. Coventry Leet Book (EETS) i.pp. 20,22, 37, 42. etc.
 3. Warwicks. Feet of Fines no. 2472.
 4. VCH. Warwicks vi.p.188; Statute Merchant Roll p. 30; Register T.G.C. pp. 1,75; CCR 1405-9 pp.115, 237; Cal.Inq. Misc. 1399-1422 no. 245.
 5. KB9/209/50.

Richard Trussell and the Ardernes represented a junior branch of a Warwickshire county family. In 1409 Burdet presented the lollard preacher Robert Herlaston to the living of his manor of Baddesley Clinton,⁽¹⁾ and in the same year Herlaston was said to have begun preaching heresy in various parts of Warwickshire⁽²⁾ Herlaston had resigned his benefice by the end of 1414,⁽³⁾ but the Burdet family's connection with lollardy did not apparently end there. In January 1418, shortly after Robert's death, his widow Joan was compelled to find sureties in the sum of £500 that she would "make, lead or procure no unlawful assemblies, nor adhere to anyone for the breach of the rights of Holy Church, nor maintain nor aid anyone in his heresy."⁽⁴⁾ Her mainpennors on this occasion included three members of the local gentry - Robert Ulgarthorp of Lapworth, Richard Trussell of Long Lawford (who had also stood surety for Ralph Clerk) and Sir John Trussell of Dunchurch, who is almost certainly to be identified with the "Lollard Knight" accused by Knighton⁽⁵⁾ of being amongst the foremost lay supporters of heresy.⁽⁶⁾

It seems probable, therefore, that at this time the lollards of the Coventry area received support and protection, not only from one or two of the more influential burgesses, but also from a group of Warwickshire gentry (notably the Burdet, Trussell, and Arderne

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1. Warwicks. Feet of Fines no. 2386; VCH. Warwicks. iv.p.16; Dugdale, Warwickshire p. 711.
 2. KB9/209/45.
 3. Dugdale op. cit. p. 712.
 4. CCR 1413-19 p. 455.
 5. Knighton ii. p. 181.
 6. For Trussell see above p.91-2.

families) who lived in the part of the county between Coventry, Rugby and Warwick.

It is scarcely surprising, then, that lollard activity persisted in the area during the early part of Henry VI's reign. In September 1422 a Warwickshire heretic named Henry Taillour appeared before Bishop Morgan of Worcester, charged with denying the resurrection of the dead and with declaring that the body and soul decay together.⁽¹⁾ It is improbable that Taillour was himself a lollard, but it is notable that, in addition to recanting his own errors, he was compelled to take an oath against lollards and their supporters.

Two years later, in 1424, there was a commotion in Coventry itself when a wandering preacher named John Grace came to the town. So much disorder apparently resulted from his presence that the government sent a mandate to the corporation ordering his arrest,⁽²⁾ and at the same time despatched a sergeant-at-arms to take him and convey him to the Tower, whence he was to be brought before the royal council. The sergeant's commission described Grace as 'a certain false prophet ... who, although having no license of the church, daily preaches matters manifestly contrary to the church ... especially in the town of Coventre ... and rouses terrible seditions among the people to the damage of the peace and the likely overthrow of the Catholic faith.'⁽³⁾

The Mayor and corporation of Coventry, however, were of a different opinion, and they retorted to the government with the following letter, which in effect exonerates Grace, and casts the

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1. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn.) Bishop f.6.
 2. Leet Book i.p.97.
 3. CPR 1422-9. pp. 275-6.

blame for the riot on the prior of Coventry and one of the local grey friars. (1)

'At the feest of saynt Andrew theapostull, the yer of our liege lorde our kyng Henry the vjte aftur the conquest the iijd, com John Grace, the wich at that tyme was callyd John Grace, heremyte, and sithen men said he was a moonke, aftur that a frere, and sithen a recluse, com to this cite, and prechid v daies to-gethur in the Lytull-parke, seyng that he was lycenciate and licens had to preche of the bishops minysters of this diocese, and he had prechid at Lichfeld ther in the Close among the Canons iij dayes to-gethur, and aftur he prechid at Brymmyngham, and aftur at Wallsall, and aftur at Collyshull and so com down hithur. The wich John Grace was at that tyme a famous man among the peopull ther, as he had prechid seyng that he was a gracyous man in sayng, and a hooly lyuer, and many marvelous made and shewed; for the wich sayng many men trowen that it had byn so as hit was said apon hym a-fore tyme, and that causyd the people the more and tenderer to her his prechyng. But neuer-the-later apon the said saynt Andrew day, when the said John Grace had prechid, hit was said he was not licentiate, nor noo lycens had to preche notwithstanding he hym-selffe said in euery sermon that he made that he was licienciate and lycens had to preche. And at the same day at afturnone when Evensong was doon, Ric. Croseby, priour of saynt Mary church in Couentre, was in purpose to haue gone in-to the pulpit in the Trinite churche, as the comon voise was then, to haue denouncyd acursyd all tho that herd the sermon of the said John Grace; and so, what thurgh the gouernance of the priour, and the sayng of oone Master John Bredon, frere of the Gray frers in Couentre, castyng ouerthwart wordes amonges the people, grett seyng was a-mong the people that the priour and frer Bredon wold haue cursid all tho that herdon the said John Grace preche; for the wich sayng the priour nor the said frere Bredon wold nott goo oute of the church vnto the tyme that the maiour com to hem, notwithstanding they myght haue goone well I-noughze whethur thei wold, and that wott Allmyghty God. And apon this matur a-bouenamyd grett noise rose in the Contre that the comens of Couentre wer rysen, and wold haue distroyd the priour and the said frer, wher God wott hit was not so, nor non suche thyng wrought nor purposid; the wich noise com to the counsell of the said our leige lorde, for the wich the counsell at that tyme beyng in London leten make a lettre to the maiour and bayleffes and comens of this Cite.

1. Leet Book i. pp. 96-7.

There are obvious parallels here with the situation which obtained in Northampton in 1392-4.⁽¹⁾ It is clear that the corporation of Coventry supported Grace, and that they resented the interference of the church, and particularly of the prior of Coventry, the traditional enemy of the borough. What doctrines Grace preached is unknown, but both Church and government declared that he was a lollard, and that all who had supported him were culpable. As a result, a total of fifty-two Coventry men were compelled to swear oaths not to maintain lollardies or heresies, though only one of these, Hugh Ellesmere (who apparently escaped arrest) was actually required to make purgation of heresy before the bishop.⁽²⁾ Examination of the town's records⁽³⁾ shows that at least half the accused were substantial burgesses, while five of them⁽⁴⁾ were members of the ruling council of Twenty-Four (of which, incidentally, Ralph Garton was also still a member).⁽⁵⁾

Two years later, in 1426, a labourer named Roger Warde from Milverton near Warwick appeared before Bishop Morgan of Worcester and made purgation of heresy and lollardy. He was released after performing a penance and taking an oath to shun his former errors, but in 1428 a further order for his arrest was made, presumably because he had relapsed.⁽⁶⁾

In view of the evidence for continuing support for heresy in Coventry during the 1420's, it is not surprising that the town was involved in the abortive lollard rising of 1431. Few details are

1. See above pp. 99-111.

2. KB27/655/6, 656/5,6,7,8,16, 657/4,6,18, 658/4, 659/4; CCR 1422-9 pp. 201, 204.

3. Leet Book i. 69-97. (Entries for 1424, especially tax-returns and lists of officials).

4. Robert Praty (subsequently mayor) John Bramston, Matthew White, John Golafre and John Frankeleyne. Praty and Bramston were referred to as ringleaders of the riot.

5. Leet Book i. 68,98,102,109,113,117,122,137.

6. KB27/658/4, 669/15; Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) Bishop ff.47-48.

known, however, save that lollard bills were scattered in the town,⁽¹⁾ and that John Hals, a justice of the King's Bench, was paid for going to Kenilworth to witness the execution of 'certorum insurrectorum contra regem alioribus Lollardorum et proditorum ad mandatum Domine de Gloucestre apud Coventre et partis adjacentis'.⁽²⁾ The identity of these Coventry rebels is, however, completely unknown.

Perhaps because of the executions in 1431, no record remains of lollard activity in Coventry for over fifty years afterwards. It is possible, however, that lollardy there simply went underground, for from the late 1480's until the Reformation there is considerable evidence of a strong lollard congregation in Coventry.⁽³⁾ It is even just conceivable that the lollard tradition in Coventry was a continuous one, stretching from Swynderby's visit to the town in 1383 until the sixteenth century.

In other parts of the south-west Midlands evidence of lollard activity is hard to find after about 1418. John Walcote, a veteran lollard from Hasleton, near Northleach in Gloucestershire, was prosecuted in 1425⁽⁴⁾: he had been defamed of heresy in London, Bristol, and Northampton, as well as in his home diocese. No details of his activities are known, but he seems to have been a follower of Master William Taillour, whose links with the Bredon area of Worcestershire have already been discussed. It is possible that lollardy also survived in the Cherwell valley region of Oxfordshire, for a lollard teacher named George Carpenter was said to have been operating at Woodstock in the 1440's.⁽⁵⁾

1. Amundesham, Annales i. p. 63.

2. Proc. P.C. iv. pp. 89, 91.

3. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 104-114.

4. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn.) ff. 46-48. See below p. 264.

5. Thomson, Later Lollards p. 74.

The importance to the growth and survival of lollardy of the support of the gentry and the urban middle-classes is particularly marked in the south-west Midlands. In all four parts of the region - Coventry, the Cherwell Valley, west Worcestershire and the Kemerton area - where lollardy is known to have flourished, in fact, such support (provided by men like Ralph Garton, Robert Burdet, Thomas Compworth, Sir Roger Acton and perhaps Sir William Beauchamp) was clearly crucial. Even after 1414, when lollardy in most of the region seems to have all but died out, it was kept alive at least into the 1430's in the Coventry area, apparently by a combination of burgess and gentry support.

CHAPTER SIXTHE SOUTH-WESTERN COUNTIES. 1382-c.1430.

The south-western counties - that is to say, Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Berkshire, or in ecclesiastical terms the dioceses of Exeter, Bath and Wells, (excluding Bristol), Salisbury and Winchester - is one of the areas in which we know least about the early development of lollardy. Several of the bishops' registers of the diocese of Bath and Wells are lost,⁽¹⁾ and the civil records yield disappointingly little useful evidence. The area contained no known great centres of lollardy, though the Somerset lollards, and possibly those of Wiltshire, were most probably influenced by the thriving heretical congregation of Bristol, part of which city lay within the diocese of Bath and Wells. Such evidence as remains indicates that there were lollard congregations in south Somerset, probably under the protection of the Brooke family, Sir Thomas Beauchamp, and other local gentlemen; in Wiltshire; probably centred on Salisbury; and in Berkshire, probably centred on Reading. Only scattered evidence of lollard activity in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Hampshire remains, and only a handful of rebels from the south-west are known to have been present at St. Giles' Fields in 1414. In the years following the revolt, however, the central and eastern parts of the area became increasingly important as lollard centres.

1. i.e. the Registers of Bps. Harewell (1366-86), Skirlaw (1386-88) and Erghum (1388-1400) of Bath and Wells.

1382-1414

The first known lollard activity in the south-western counties took place in the spring of 1382. On the 17th May of that year Archbishop Courtenay, alarmed by the activities of Wycliffe's followers in the University of Oxford and by the spreading of his doctrines in other parts of the country, called together a Council in London, during which ten bishops and an impressive array of theologians and canon lawyers condemned twenty-four heretical conclusions upheld by the lollards.⁽¹⁾ At this time rumours were rife of a plot (supposedly confessed to the Archbishop by the rebel priest John Ball after the Peasants' Revolt in the previous year) conceived by Wycliffe's chief followers Nicholas Hereford, John Aston and Laurence Bedeman 'qui conspiraverant quandam confoederationem, et se ordinaverant circuire totam Angliam praedicando praedicti Wycclif materias quas docuerat, ut sic simul tota Anglia consentiret suae perversae doctrinae'.⁽²⁾

Whatever the origins or truth of this rumour, it is evident that in May 1382, and perhaps even during the session of the Council which he was attending, Bishop William of Wykeham of Winchester received information that Hereford and his associates were preaching in his diocese. No doubt encouraged by the Archbishop, on May 21st, the last day of the first session of the Council, Wykeham sent a letter to Master John Norton, Chancellor of Salisbury Cathedral and vicar

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1. Wilkins, Concilia iii. pp. 157 ff; Fasciculi Zizaniorum pp. 286, 493-8.
 2. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 272-4.

of Odiham, Hants.,⁽¹⁾ and to the other clergy there and in the surrounding parishes, forbidding them on pain of excommunication to allow Nicholas Hereford, John Aston, Robert Alyngton or Laurence Bedeman to preach in the parish church of Odiham or anywhere else in the area. It was, according to the letter, already notorious that the four men:-

"sectam Deo et fidei ecclesie Catholice detestabilem et horrendam inter se per mutua ipsorum illicita conventicula facientes ... quia de diversis dampnatis erroribus ... utputa de sacramento corporis et sanguinis domini nostri Iesu Christi, baptismatae peccatorum confessione etcetera ... in ecclesia predicta de Odiham et aliis eiusdem nostre diocesis ecclesiis publice docere et predicare."⁽²⁾

Hereford and Aston were, of course, well known lollards : Hereford had, in fact, preached an inflammatory heretical sermon in St. Frideswide's churchyard, Oxford, on Ascension Day (15th May) 1382, only a week before Wykeham's letter. Shortly after the Odiham incident he left the country on his ill-advised journey to appeal to the Pope in Rome.⁽³⁾ Aston was suspended by the Archbishop from all academic acts on the 12th June 1382, but continued to defy the authorities until the following November, when he made a temporary submission.⁽⁴⁾ Laurence Bedeman, alias Stephen, is less well-known, the only one of his heretical acts recorded in any detail being, in fact, the Odiham incident. In the summer of 1382 he appears to have returned to his native county of Cornwall, and to have preached heresy

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1. The advowson of the parish of Odiham, in the diocese of Winchester, was nevertheless attached throughout the middle ages to the Chancellors of Salisbury. VCH. Hants. IV. p. 268.
 2. Reg. Wykeham (Winton) i. p. 238, ii. 337-8.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. p. 296.
 4. Concilia iii. 160-164; Fasc. Ziz. pp. 329-30. For Aston's later activities in other parts of the country qv. 218-222.

there until detected by Bishop Brantyngham of Exeter, who sent a letter to the Priors of Bodmin and Launceston and other diocesan officials, ordering them to cite the 'pseudopropheta' Bedeman to appear before him at Clyst on 18th September 1382.⁽¹⁾ It is likely that Bedeman appeared then, and submitted to the authority of the church. Certainly, by October he had appeared before Bishop Wykeham and sworn, not only that he would not hold heretical views in future, but also that he had never held them in the past (a statement whose truth seems doubtful). On 22nd October 1382 he was officially reconciled to the Church at Southwark.⁽²⁾ Even less is known of the heresy of Robert Alyngton, a fellow of Queens' College who had been associated with Wycliffe and others in obtaining a loan from that college in 1381. He was not amongst those whose preaching was condemned by the Council of the Earthquake in 1382, and it is likely that his adherence to heresy was short-lived : he later became Chancellor of Oxford and wrote several works attacking Wycliffe.⁽³⁾

It is difficult to discover the reason why the four Oxford men should have been preaching in the Odiham area. It is, of course, possible that they were invited to do so by the vicar, Master John Norton, who may well have been an Oxford graduate and sympathetic to their cause; if this is so, he had certainly ceased to favour lollardy by May 1388, when, as Chancellor of Salisbury, he

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1. Reg. Brantyngham (Exon.) i. pp. 480-81.
 2. Reg. Wykeham (Winton) ii. pp. 342-3; McFarlane. Wycliffe p. 112.
 3. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. i. 30-31.

was the chief member of a royal commission ordered to stamp out heresy in that diocese.⁽¹⁾ As Chancellor of Salisbury, however, Norton must have been an absentee from Odiham, and it is perhaps more likely that Hereford and his friends were invited to preach there by the unknown clerk who acted as Norton's curate. Howsoever this may be, the heretics must have had some support in Odiham, probably clerical but possibly lay, to be allowed to preach in the parish church there. It was, perhaps, these unknown supporters of heresy in north-east Hampshire who were responsible for the outbreak of heretical preaching in the archdeaconries of Alresford and Basingstoke (which last contained Odiham) which was condemned by Bishop Wykeham in 1394.⁽²⁾

We have seen that there was some heretical activity in the dioceses of Winchester and Exeter as early as 1382. The bishops' registers of Bath and Wells between 1366 and 1401 are lost, and it is thus almost impossible to trace the beginnings of heresy there. It is all but certain that any early heresy spread from Bristol, which lay partly in the diocese of Bath and Wells and partly in that of Worcester. As is described elsewhere in this work,⁽³⁾ John Aston was active in Bristol by late 1384, when Archbishop Courtenay heard of his preaching in both dioceses : we do not know, however, whether Aston's activities were confined to Bristol and its

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1. CPR 1385-9 p. 468.
 2. Reg. Wykeham (Winton) ii. 543-4.
 3. See pp. 218-222 .

suburbs, or whether he penetrated into rural Somerset. In January 1387 a royal mandate was sent to the bishop of Bath and Wells⁽¹⁾ ordering him to imprison lollards in his diocese, but this was part of a general issue of such commissions sent out at this time : if it was directed at any specific congregation, it is likely to have been that in Bristol. While it is probable that the Bristol lollards, or others like William Ramsbury,⁽²⁾ were spreading heresy in Somerset from a fairly early date, because of the missing registers we know nothing of lollard activities there until after 1407. The beginnings of heresy in the diocese of Salisbury are almost as obscure. As early as 1381 an extraordinary incident took place near the city of Salisbury, which may perhaps have been connected with Wycliffe's teaching. At Easter of that year (according to Thomas Walsingham) a Wiltshire knight, Sir Laurence de St. Martin, seduced by the teachings of Wycliffe concerning the Eucharist, asked the priest of his parish church near Salisbury if he might receive the Sacrament privately on Easter Saturday :

'Miles vero, post datam a sacerdote hostiam, illam manu recepit, et continuo surgens, ad domum suam, portans Corpus Dominicam, properavit.'

Despite the priest's entreaties to return the Host, or to treat it in a Christian manner, Sir Laurence 'excluso presbytero, adhibitis ostreis, divideret, et partem cum ostreis, partem cum cepis, partem cum vino deglutiret : affirmans quemlibet panem apud domum suam tanti

1. CPR. 1385-9 p. 200.

2. See pp. 314-28.

esse valoris, quanti fuit ille quem sumpsisse tali modo gaudebat.' The outraged priest informed the Bishop of Salisbury of the affair, and Sir Laurence was cited to appear before him to explain his conduct. Before his appearance, however, the knight, 'quia vir in illis partibus magnae aestimationis fuerat,' was visited by a number of learned clerics, who convinced him of the error of his views, so that he recanted and was forgiven by the Bishop on condition that he performed certain onerous penances. Amongst other things, he was to build a stone cross inscribed with a record of the incident in a public place in Salisbury, and visit it every Saturday of his life, clad only in a shirt and breeches, and there make confession of his crime on bended knees.⁽¹⁾

Walsingham attributes Sir Laurence's conduct to the heresies 'quanta mala bestia quae ascendit de abyso, collega Sathanae, Johannes Wycliff, sive Wikkebeleve, seminavit in terra'. It is difficult to say whether this really was the case. It is more certain that the knight involved is to be identified with Sir Laurence de St. Martin of Alvington, Hants., who held land in the villages of Grimstead and Dean near Salisbury : born in 1319, he had fought at Crécy, had served on a number of royal commissions, as a justice of the peace in Wiltshire, and as sheriff of Hampshire in 1373-4. He was, in fact, actually acting as sheriff of Wiltshire at the time the incident occurred : significantly, he was prematurely removed from the shrievalty only three weeks later, on 6th May 1381, and was

1. Historia Anglicana ii. 450-451; cf. Chronicon Angliae pp. 281-3. For a shorter version, under the date 1387 qv. Chron. Angliae. pp. 377-8 and Ypodigma Neustriae p. 349. Capgrave p. 245 attributes the offence to the 'lollard knight' Sir John Montagu, though he agrees that 'Summe write that Laurens de Sancte Martino did this ded.'

never again appointed to any government office. He died in 1385.⁽¹⁾

It seems, on the whole, unlikely that Sir Laurence de St. Martin's odd behaviour really stemmed from an adherence to Wycliffe's heresies, which in Easter 1381 can have been but little known outside Oxford. Sir Laurence is not known to have had any links with that University, nor with the group of lollard sympathisers in the royal household known as the 'Lollard Knights'. Though Walsingham, naturally enough, made political capital out of his offence, it seems likely that his behaviour was no more than the eccentricity of an old man- for he was over 60 at Easter 1381.

Although a subsequent trial shows that at least one heretical preacher, William Ramsbury, was active in Wiltshire and Dorset by 1385, no official move is known to have been made against the lollards of the diocese of Salisbury until the 23rd May 1388, when a royal commission was sent to Master John Norton, Chancellor of Salisbury Cathedral, Sir Hugh Cheyne (a former sheriff of Wiltshire) and John Bitterle, a prominent citizen of Salisbury, ordering them to confiscate books by Wycliffe, Hereford or Aston, to proclaim the prohibition of the maintenance of heretical views, and to imprison lollards within the city of Salisbury. Similar commissions were sent, presumably as part of a national campaign against heresy,⁽²⁾ to the towns of Leicester and

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1. Cl36/40/49; G. Wrottesley, Crécy and Calais pp.84,90,128, 138,146,160,163; Cal. I.P.M. vi. p.110. CFR 1361-4 pp.63, 293,448, 1364-7 pp. 365,430, 1370-74 pp. 30,34,120,480, 483, 1374-77 pp. 43,139,153,498, 1377-81 pp. 38,47,473 510,512,568; CFR 1369-77 p.221, 1377-83 p. 220. Workman, in John Wycliffe ii. p.255, identifies the Laurence de St. Martin of the incident with a Jew of that name in the domus conversorum of London (CCR 1381-5 p.39). But Walsingham specifically refers to him as a knight of Wiltshire and 'Vir magnae aestimationis'.
 2. Inspired by the Cambridge parliament of Feb. 1388, of which both Sir Hugh Cheyne and John Bitterle were members. CCR 1385-9 pp. 495-6.

Nottingham on the same date⁽¹⁾: this suggests that Salisbury, like the former towns, was known to have contained a lollard congregation at this time.⁽²⁾ Nothing, however, is known of the investigations of the Salisbury commissioners, though it may well have been their findings which brought about the issue (on 18th January 1389) of a further royal commission authorising the Bishop of Salisbury to arrest heretics not only in the city of Salisbury but throughout the diocese.⁽³⁾ By midsummer, at least eight heretics had been arrested: on the 10th July 1389 seven of them - Richard Talton, John Romesey, Robert Paniot, William Beaumynster, Laurence Loupe, Roger Lonehulle and William Cove - who were imprisoned in Old Sarum Gaol were ordered to be handed over to Bishop Waltham of Salisbury for chastisement, having been convicted of publicly preaching errors contrary to the catholic faith. Unfortunately there is no further record of these men,⁽⁴⁾ so that we do not know what heresies they preached, what part of the diocese they came from, or even whether they were all members of one congregation.

Probably a more important catch for the Salisbury authorities, and from our point of view one of the most interesting of all the early lollards, was William Ramsbury, who appeared before Bishop Waltham at his manor of Sonning, Berks., on either the 1st or the 3rd July 1389.⁽⁵⁾ Since his case is such an important one, a

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1. Commissions were also sent during April and May 1388 to the authorities in Yorkshire, and in the dioceses of Lincoln, Worcester and Norwich. CPR 1385-9 pp.427,448, 468,550.
 2. qv. p.79 and p.9 .
 3. CPR 1385-9 p. 536.
 4. It is just possible that Ricd. Talton is to be identified with Richard Talton or Dalton, scrivener of London, who was associating with heretics there in 1408 and who took part in Oldcastle's revolt in 1414. CCR 1405-9 p.379; E357/24/m.39. qv. below p.506 .
 5. Reg. Waltham (Sarum) iii.f.31 has the date as the 3rd July, f.32 as the 1st.

very full account of it will be given. He was accused by the authorities of holding and preaching "quasdam opiniones et conclusiones abhominabiles, hereses et errores in se continentes, fidei catholice evangelice et apostolice ... repugnantes ... Ac officium predicandi, cum quasi laicus existebat, modicam habens litteraturam, presumptuosa temeritate sibi usurpans, easdem plebi et populo diversorum locorum dicte Sarum diocesis coram eo congregatis palam et publice, ac etiam clanculo in confabulacionibus et potacionibus, tam in ecclesiis cimiteriis quam etiam tabernis et aliis locis, predicavit, sermoceravit et docuit..."⁽¹⁾

Ramsbury himself confessed to the following fourteen heresies⁽²⁾:

- (R.1) In primis tenuit, asseruit et predicavit quod nec papa habet potestatem creandi episcopos, nec episcopus sacerdotes.
- (R.2) Item quod nec papa nec episcopus neque sacerdos potuit vel potest conficere corpus Christi.
- (R.3) Item quod in altari post consecracionem non est corpus Christi set panis.
- (R.4) Item quod nullus debet offerre in ecclesia in exequiis mortuorum, purificationibus mulierum, solemnitatibus nubencium; et si quis hoc fecerint, sunt excommunicati a Deo.
- (R.5) Item quod si quis dederit sacerdoti pro missis celebrandis denarios vel aliquam pecuniam sunt excommunicati a Deo.
- (R.6) Item quod nullus nec papa nec episcopus nec aliquis sub eis, habet potestatem excommunicandi, et quod sunt apostate omnes eo quod omnes predicti postponunt fidei Christi, ut dixit.

1. Reg. Waltham (Sarum) iii. ff. 31-33.

2. Here numbered and classified for comparison with other heresies enumerated elsewhere in this work.

- (R.7) Item quod dictus Willielmus et sequaces sui fuerunt et sunt in vera fide et nulli alii.
- (R.8) Item quod non tenebatur confiteri se sacerdoti, nec sacerdos habet potestatem se absolvendi, set sufficiebat confiteri Deo.
- (R.9) Item quod melius et maius meritorium esset sacerdotibus et religiosis quibuscumque accipere sibi uxores et apostotare quam vivere religiose sive in castitate; ed idem tenuit et predicavit de monialibus.
- (R.10) Item quodsi coniugatus haberet uxorem de qua non posset procreare prolem, quod meritorium ei esset ipsam dimittere et capere aliam de qua posset prolem procreare.
- (R.11) Item quod maius meritorium esset sacerdotibus transire per patriam cum biblia sub brachio et predicare populo quam dicere matutinas vel celebrare missas vel alia divina officia excercere.
- (R.12) Item quod nullus debet venerari aliquas ymagines in ecclesia, et si quis fecerit est excommunicatus.
- (R.13) Item quod licitum est cuicumque sacerdoti et alii cognoscere carnaliter quascumque mulieres eciam moniales, virgines et uxores, et hoc propter multiplicacionem generis humani; et ita fecit dictus Willielmus cognoscendo virgines, uxores et alias mulieres solutas a tempore quodictas opiniones tenuit.

Certainly the most important part of his confession, was that:

'prefatus Willielmus, tonsuratus ut asseruit per quemdam dominum Thomam Fishburn ipsum de erroribus et heresibus predictis informantem, tonsura sacerdotali et quodam habitu, videlicet tunica de russet cum mantello de eadem secta, per eundem indutus, data sibi potestate per ipsum dominum Thomam publice predicandi et missas sub forma infrascripta celebrandi, diversas missas sancteque beate Marie et de sancta Trinitate in diversis locis, secundum informacionem eiusdem domini Thome, prophanavit sub hac videlicet forma :

Primo indubat se vestimentis sacerdotalibus, et ad gradum altaris dixit Adiutorium etc., Confiteor et Misereatur, Absolucionem et sic, absque oracionibus alijs, processit ad Officium cum oracionibus, videlicet prima Concede, vel Omnipotens quando celebravit de Trinitate, Deus qui corda, Deus qui unigeniti et Fidelium. Quibus dictis, legeret Epistolam, Gradalem, postea Euangelium. Et tunc vertebat ad populum et dixit Dominus vobiscum; deinde Offertorium. Et fecit signa crucis super hostiam et calicem, nichil dicendo set

labia movendo ac si diceret, et sic processit ad lavandum. Postea redijt ad altare et iterum revertebatur ad populum nichil dicendo. Deinde revertebatur ad altare et ibidem fecit moram nichil dicendo usque ad Prefacionem. Et Prefacione publice lecta, nichil dixit set signa fecit usque ad Levacionem nichil dicendo, et sic levavit panem et calicem. Post Levacionem nichil dixit usque ad Pater Noster; quo dicto, nichil dixit usque ad Agnus Dei; et dicto Agnus Dei, silvit usque ad fraccionem panis. Factaque fraccione, recepit panem more presbiterorum, et alia fecit ad modum presbiterorum. Et missas sic finivit cum duobus Euangelijs, videlicet Missus est et In principio.

Et diebus diversis quando solebat distribuere panem benedictum post missam, movebat labia super panem et fecit signum crucis, nichil dicendo.

In order to arrive at the possible origins of Ramsbury's heresies, we must examine his confession in detail. His first point (R.1) that the pope has no power to create bishops, and that bishops have no power to make priests, is a version of a fairly common lollard view, being part of the heretical attack on the powers of their chief opponents, the higher clergy. It is also possible that it is based on the opinion preached by John Purvey on the Bristol area that only God could consecrate priests, and that ordination by bishops was a vain outward show, made valueless because the bishops could not know who had been chosen by God for the office. 'Et quilibet homo sanctus, qui est membrum Christi, et erit salvatus, est verus presbyter ordinatus a Deo, licet nullus secularis episcopus unquam ei manum imponat'.⁽¹⁾ R.2 and R.3, Ramsbury's denials of transubstantiation, are conventional lollard beliefs, widely held both before and after his period of activity. R.3, that material bread, and not the body of Christ, remained on the altar after consecration is a more extremist

1. Fasc. Ziz. 389. One of Purvey's heresies collected by Richard Lavenham, Carmelite prior of Bristol. Purvey, it should be remembered, was preaching in Bristol at the time of Ramsbury's activity in nearby Wiltshire.

development of the Wycliffite doctrine that the sacrament was, at the same time, materially bread and spiritually the body of Christ. This view, and its corollary (R.2) that no priest had power to ~~confer~~^{consecrate} the body of Christ, was held by such men as William Smith, the Leicester lollard, in 1389, by the enthusiast John Seynon in 1400, by Robert Hoke, the lollard priest of Braybrooke in Northamptonshire, and later by John Badby, the Evesham tailor, whose trial in 1410 indicates that his heresy stemmed from Bristol. William Wakeham, who abjured in 1434, held exactly similar views, and since his home was in Devizes, not far from Ramsbury's area of activity, his beliefs may be a distant echo of the earlier lollard's teaching.⁽¹⁾

(R.4) and (R.5), that no-one should pay fees for masses, or make offerings at funerals, the churching of women, or at weddings, was also a widelyheld lollard opinion,⁽²⁾ as was (R.6) that neither the pope nor the bishops had the power of excommunication - an opinion expressed particularly strongly by Purvey at Bristol, where he is supposed to have declared "Quod nullus christianus debet appretiare Sathanam, quem ibi vocat Papam, et censuras ibi injustas, plus quam sibilum unius serpentis, aut flatum Luciferi".⁽³⁾ The seventh article (that William and his followers have been and are in the true faith and that no others are) is more extraordinary : as Dr. Hudson, to whose article on William Ramsbury I am indebted, says, it "is obviously the normal exclusive claim of the propheta, though

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1. Knighton, Chronicon ii. 262; Concilia iii. 208-9, 323 ff.; Reg. Arundel. i. 411; Reg Chichele iii. 106-7; Reg Neville (Sarum) f.57.
 2. e.g. Knighton ii. 174-6, 261-2; Concilia iii. 208-9; Reg. Arundel i. 390; Fasc. Ziz. 374-5.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. 389; cf. also Knighton, Chronicon ii. 261-2, Concilia iii. 208-9.

its terminology may owe something to the jargon of the Lollards, with their 'true men' and 'true priests'."⁽¹⁾ Article 8, that it was not necessary to confess to a priest, but only to God, is another common lollard view,⁽²⁾ but Article 9, that it would be better for priests and the religious to be married than to live to chastity, is far less usual, and obviously related to the even more extreme Article 14. Dr. Hudson states that Article 9 "could be a popularised form of Wyclif's often-stated objections to *religiones privatae*"⁽³⁾; a closer analogy, though not an identical view, is to be found in the third of the twelve conclusions (possibly by Purvey) presented by the lollards to the parliament of 1395.⁽⁴⁾

Article 11, that it would be more meritorious for priests to go about the country preaching to the people than to say matins or other divine offices, may also be based on Purvey's preaching: he is reported by Knighton as having said in a sermon at Bristol (probably by 1385 already a centre of lollard activity) that '*Quilibet sacerdos magis debet dimittere matutinas, missam et vespervas, et caeteras horas canonicas quam praedicationem verbum dei ...*'⁽⁵⁾ Article 12, that images should not be worshipped, was common to many lollards both before and after Ramsbury's time.⁽⁶⁾

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1. A. Hudson, 'A Lollard Mass' in Journal of Theological Studies (N.S.) Vol. XXIII pt. 2 p. 409.
 2. Concilia iii. 208-9; Fasc. Ziz. 386; Reg. Arundel (Cantuar) i. 390; Reg. Chichele (Cantuar) iii. 106-7; Reg. Trefnant 234-5.
 3. Hudson art. cit. p. 209 cf. Fasc. Ziz. 281-2.
 4. Fasc. Ziz. 361; Deanesly, Lollard Bible pp 282-3, 374-6.
 5. Knighton. ii. 179-180: both Purvey and Aston, as well as William Swynderby were, of course, in the habit of making preaching tours, 'cum biblia sub brachio'.
 6. e.g. Knighton ii. 261; Concilia iii. 208-9; ~~...~~

All the articles so far commented upon have shown William Ramsbury as being in the mainstream of lollardy, though perhaps more extreme than many of his brethren. There appears to be some grounds for thinking that he, or perhaps his mentor Thomas Fishbourn, was influenced by the preaching of John Purvey at Bristol. Some of Ramsbury's views, at least as they are recorded in the bishop's Register, seem over-simplified, and others garbled, but this may, as Dr. Hudson points out, as well be due to the failings of the bishop's scribe as to any muddle-headedness on the lollard's part.

Three of the articles confessed by Ramsbury, however, are of a far more unusual type, not usually associated with the lollards : these are Articles 10, 13, and 14, which state respectively that if a man has a wife who is unable to bear children, he should leave her and marry again; that it is not a sin to know women carnally; and that any priest may have sexual intercourse with any woman for the increase of the human race, whether the woman be married or unmarried. Ramsbury himself had put this last doctrine into practice throughout the period of his heretical ministry. Dr. Hudson claims that these beliefs make it clear that Ramsbury (or at least Thomas Fishbourn) had in some way come under the influence of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, a group of European heretics "whose more extreme adherents used their asserted freedom from the possibility of sin to justify all forms of immorality".⁽¹⁾ While there is no documentary evidence of the existence of any other English adherents of the Free Spirit, there is literary evidence that the opinions of the sect were known

1. Hudson op. cit. 409; cf. Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages i. pp. 308-407.

of in this country.⁽¹⁾ Howsoever this may be, the present writer is far from being convinced that Ramsbury had ever even heard of the Brethren or their opinions : it seems far more likely, rather, that like many other lollards of his type, William had added a few eccentric beliefs of his own devising to the body of more conventional Wycliffite views he held. Certainly his advocacy of promiscuity and the necessity of increasing the human race by every possible means seems to have had little influence on later lollard thinking in the south-western counties : it is true that several fifteenth-century lollards,⁽²⁾ particularly those active in the diocese of Norwich in the late 1420's, denied the necessity of the solemnisation of marriage by the church, but this was part of a general attack on the powers of the priesthood and on the 'unnecessary sacraments'. In 1431 a Kentish lollard denied that adultery was a sin, and about the same time a Norfolk man (possibly not a lollard) declared that marriage ought to be abandoned, and women held in common, but there are no other parallels for the extremity of Ramsbury's views.⁽³⁾

Having considered Ramsbury's beliefs, we must now pass on to the most remarkable fact about this important heretic - that he was, in fact, one of the only two recorded examples of a lollard priest,⁽⁴⁾ as opposed to a regularly ordained priest who adopted lollard opinions. According to his own account he had been 'tansuratus ... per quemdam dominum Thomam Fishburn, ipsum de erroribus et

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1. Hudson op. cit. 410.
 2. cf. the views of the Essex lollard John Beket in 1400, below p. 366 .
 3. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 66, 127-8, 130, 133, 177; Fasc. Ziz. 426. Ramsbury's views on sexual matters differed widely from those of Purvey, who preached the indissolubility of marriage. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 391-2.
 4. The other being John Rakyet of Bristol. c. 1408, see above pp. 238-9.

heresibus predictis informantem, tonsura sacerdotali et quodam habitu, videlicet tunica de russet cum mantello de eadem secta, per eundem indutus, data sibi potestate per ipsum dominum Thomam publice predicandi et missas sub forma infrascripta celebrandi'. Nothing further is known of Thomas Fishburn,⁽¹⁾ so that we cannot know whether he was a regularly ordained priest,⁽²⁾ or ordained only in the manner in which he himself ordained Ramsbury. The russet habit 'de eadem secta', however, with which Ramsbury was invested agrees with the statement by Knighton that "principales pseudo-lollardi prima introductione hujus sectae nefandae vestibus de russeto utebantur pro majore parte, illorum quasi simplicitatem cordis ostendentes exterius".⁽³⁾ Walsingham also describes how 'comites atque socios unius sectae insimul Oxoniis et alibi commorantes, talaribus indutos vestibus de russeto, in signum perfectionis amplioris, incedentes nudis pedibus, qui suos errores in populo ventilarent, et palam et publice in suis sermonibus praedicarent'.⁽⁴⁾ We are told, also, by the chroniclers that such lollards as Swynderby, Purvey and Aston deliberately went about in simple clothes - 'in habitu homo communis' - in order to deceive the unwary.⁽⁵⁾

There is evidence, then for a lollard preaching ministry, some of whom wore a russet habit. Apart from Ramsbury's case, however, there is little evidence of the existence of, or demands for, a separate lollard priesthood which could administer lollard sacraments.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Not to be identified with Thomas Fishbourn, confessor-general of the Brigittines of Sion in 1420. Hudson op. cit. p. 411 and n.1.
 2. Since a number of the relevant Bishops' registers, with their lists of ordinations, are missing
 3. Knighton, Chronicon ii. 184-5.
 4. Hist. Anglic. i. p. 324.
 5. Hist. Anglic. ii. 53; Knighton ii. 176-8.
 6. 'The Lollards never devised a new sacrament of their own ... and the evidence that they ever had celebrations of the Holy Communion, conducted by unconsecrated priests, is scanty'. Deanesly, Lollard Bible 335.

A number of early lollards believed, conversely, in the priesthood of all believers⁽¹⁾ - that every good man is a priest - and John Purvey preached that, 'laici possunt legitime ministrare omnia sacramenta necessaria ad salutem, ut baptismum, et praedicationem, et matrimonium, et multa alia. Et sine sacramento chrismatis, vel eucharistiae, possunt homines bene esse'.⁽²⁾ Walter Brute, the Welsh disciple of Swynderby, went even further in this belief when he declared 'quod cuilibet Christianus eciam mulier extra peccatum existens potest conficere Corpus Christi ita bene sicut sacerdos'.⁽³⁾ This widespread heretical belief in the priestly powers of ordinary laymen would seem to militate against the need for separately ordained lollard priests.

Yet such priests existed, as is proved by the case of William Ramsbury, even if, as is likely, they were extremely few in number. There is no doubt that the case was considered unusual, and was sufficiently notorious to be known to Walsingham at St. Albans, who states in his account of the year 1389 that

'Lollardi sequaces Johannis Wiclef, per idem tempus in errorem suum plurimos seduxerunt, et tantam praesumpserunt audaciam, ut eorum presbyteri, more pontificum, novos crearent presbyteros, asserentes, et frequenter supra retulimus, quemlibet sacerdotem tantam consecutum potestatem ligandi atque solvendi, et caetera ecclesiastica ministrandi, quantam ipse Papa dat, vel dare potest : practizaverunt autem istam perfidiam in Diocesi Sarum. Et qui taliter ordinati sunt ab haereticis, sibi cuncta licere putantes, Missis celebrare, divina tractare, et Sacramenta conferre, minime timuerunt. Proditum est hac nequitia per quemdam ab eis ordinatum, qui, stimulatus conscientia, Episcopo Sarum confessus est errorem, apud manerium suum de Sonnyng'.⁽⁴⁾

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1. e.g. William Smith in 1389 (Concilia. iii. 208-9) John Edwards in 1405 (Reg. Arundel i. 390) and John Badby in 1408 (Concilia iii. 325-6).
 2. Fasc. Ziz. 390. It is notable that Purvey did not claim that laymen could perform Holy Communion.
 3. Reg. Trefnant pp. 278-9.
 4. Hist. Anglic. ii. 188. Obviously Ramsbury is here referred to.

Walsingham implies that there were a number of other irregularly ordained lollard priests at this time, but no evidence of them remains. They may not, indeed, have ever existed, for it is possible that the chronicler merely inferred their existence from his knowledge of Ramsbury's case. The only other known case of a lollard 'priest', John Rakyer of Bristol, occurs nearly twenty years later in 1408.

Finally, what was the nature of the 'lollard mass' performed by Ramsbury? Since I do not feel able to better her account, I quote Dr. Hudson on this matter⁽¹⁾

Basically, it followed the orthodox Ordinary of the Mass in the Sarum rite. From the references to the altar, it was performed in church and not outside, as some later Lollards professed to prefer; equally, Ramsbury wore priestly vestments. No mention is made of a sermon, a surprising omission in view both of Ramsbury's own opinion (accusation II) that preaching was more important than the celebration of masses, and of the normal insistence of Wyclif and his followers on instruction. The sequence of prayers used and of actions performed is straightforward, apart from two inversions: the *Adiutorium* stands before the Confession, instead of being in its normal medieval position after the Absolution, and the *Agnus Dei* apparently preceded the fraction of the bread. The omission of the *Gloria*, and that of the *Creed*, is not likely to be on doctrinal grounds. The specified excision of prayers after the Absolution, presumably those concerning the blessing and censing of the altar, however, may result from Lollard beliefs; these prayers, like that over the chalice following the offertory, would have been repugnant to Ramsbury as unscriptural and as liable to lead to veneration of 'stocks and stones'. One of the questions to be asked of Lollard suspects in a later list is 'an genuflexiones, inclinaciones, thurificaciones, deosculaciones necnon luminarium accenciones et aque benedicte asperciones in ecclesia fieri consueve sint licite et meritorie'. This inclusion suggests that, although direct reference to such practices is rare in Lollard abjurations, disapproval amongst the sect was commonplace. It is clear, however, that the established form of service still exercised an overwhelmingly strong influence on Ramsbury: he might leave out prayers, but as yet there is no indication of the insertion of new material. It is unlikely that the two inversions mentioned above have doctrinal motivation. Furthermore, the traditional actions appear to have been

1. Hudson op. cit. pp. 412-4.

retained, even though there was no longer any reason for them : thus after the Lavandum, Ramsbury returned to the altar, 'iterum revertebatur ad populum, nichil dicendo, deinde revertebatur ad altare'. The omission of the prayer *Orate fratres et sorores ...* makes these actions meaningless. It is in the form of consecration that the influence of the orthodox service is most clearly seen : the prayer is not said, but the elevation is made. Despite the stress placed by Wyclif and the Lollards on the words of institution, the normal prayer would imply to Ramsbury an unacceptable interpretation of those words : yet no substitution of another prayer was made. The retention of the elevation, with its traditional association of adoration, is perhaps more surprising : the typical Lollard view is expressed in a later abjuration 'the sacramente of the awter lyfte vp ouer the priestis hed is not to be wurshipped more than materyall brede lifte vp ouer myn hede'. It may have been Ramsbury's method of demonstrating to the congregation his view that 'in altari post consecracionem non est corpus Christi set panis'. Equally, and more simply, the retention may be due to Ramsbury's efforts to avoid detection, a supposition that may also explain the earlier phrase 'nichil dicendo set labia movendo ac si diceret'. Certainly, the four years during which it was alleged that Ramsbury had celebrated this form of mass would suggest, not merely that Waltham and his predecessor Ralph Erghum had been inactive in their pursuit of Lollards, but also that its unorthodox implications may not have been entirely obvious.

Four years is, indeed, a long time for such a prominent lollard as Ramsbury to have remained at liberty and apparently undetected, but his case is paralleled by those of William Swynderby, Robert Lechlade, Master William Taillour, Robert Hoke and William of Thaxted,⁽¹⁾ all of whom succeeded in evading the attention of the authorities for even longer periods of time. Since the middle of 1385, when he first became active, Ramsbury had said his lollard masses in the churches of Sherston, Aldbourne, Warminster, Brixton Deverill, Slaughterford, at St. Mary's Marlborough, and at Calne, Bradenstoke, Christian Malford and Ramsbury, all in Wiltshire : in all these places 'presumably ... the priest in charge was favourable to his views, could be hoodwinked, or was absent'⁽²⁾ He had also preached and taught in 'clanculo in

1. See pp. 173, 272-5, 151 and 420. .

2. Hudson op. cit. 412.

confabulationibus et potacionibus, tam in ecclesiis, cimiteriis quam eciam tabernis et aliis locis' at Sutton (probably Sutton Benger), Kington St. Michael, Yatton Keynell, Box, Aldbourne, Ramsbury, Brinkworth, Chippenham, Steeple Ashton, Melksham, Westbury, Warminster, Longbridge Deverill, Brixton Deverill, Kingston Deverill and Boyton in Wiltshire, at Hungerford in Berkshire, and, much further south, at Blandford Forum, Sturminster Marshall and Swanage in Dorset. Plainly, though he ventured further south and east, his main areas of activity was west Wiltshire, between Warminster and the Deverills in the south and Malmesbury in the north. This area is on the western edge of the diocese of Salisbury, near its borders with the dioceses of Worcester and Bath and Wells, and it is very likely that Ramsbury was also active in those dioceses : there is, however, no mention of him in the Register of Bishop Wakefield of Worcester (1375-95)⁽¹⁾ and no registers of the bishops of Bath and Wells between 1366 and 1401 survive. Perhaps surprisingly, no record survives of any heretic whose conversion can be attributed with any degree of certainty to Ramsbury, and though there were scattered outbreaks of lollard activity in west Wiltshire, none of these is known to have occurred until at least 25 years after his trial.⁽²⁾ Perhaps his views on free love scared off those who might otherwise have been attracted to his less revolutionary doctrines.

If William Ramsbury was extreme in his views, however, he appears not to have been obdurate in maintaining them at his trial.

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1. Calendar of the Register of Henry Wakefield ed. W.P. Marett (Worcs. Hist. Soc.) 1972.
 2. The case of John Doune of Frome, only a few miles from Warminster (where Ramsbury had both preached and celebrated 'Mass') in 1414. See p.339.

Since 'spontanei ut apparuit voluntate'⁽¹⁾ he confessed all the heresies and errors mentioned, and threw himself on the Bishop's mercy, he was allowed to abjure, on condition he performed the penances enjoined on him. On the Whit Sunday following his trial he was to abjure all his heresies in Salisbury Cathedral before the whole congregation, and during High Mass on that day he was to prostrate himself before the altar between the time of the elevation of the Host and communion. This action was to be repeated on each of the three days after Whit Sunday, and thereafter Ramsbury was to visit all the greater churches of the diocese, and especially those in which he had taught, and confess and abjure his heresies in each of them, paying special respect to all the clergy he met. He was then to return to the bishop, who would reconsider his case. The bishop added that for the rest of his life Ramsbury was to abstain from "*omnimoda arte mimorum gestis et cantilonis, exceptis hiis que in ecclesiis ad honorem Dei vel alicuius sancti fiunt.*" This was perhaps because he had been in the habit of preaching at such public gatherings. Every day of his life he was to say certain conventional prayers, and six days of each week he was to fast on bread and water. If possible he was to make a pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles in Rome, to gain the benefits announced by Pope Urban to mark the Jubilee year of 1390. The penance given to Ramsbury was a fairly harsh one, but the church was bound to take a serious view not only of his sacrilegious masses but of his four years preaching of revolutionary heresy : it was also necessary, of course, for him to do penance for his large-scale sexual misconduct. After the trial William Ramsbury, like his mentor Thomas Fishburn, vanishes into obscurity.

1. Reg. Waltham iii. f. 32.

Little evidence survives of lollard activity in the south-western counties during the twenty years after Ramsbury's trial in 1389, though there are indications that the Bristol lollards continued to thrive during this period⁽¹⁾. In June 1394 Bishop Wykeham of Winchester issued an admonition against those who 'sub magne sanctitatis velamine, virtutem eius abnegantes, et a communi hominem conversacione, vita et moribus dissidentes, nonnullas opiniones falsas et erroneas, determinacionibus sacrosanc̄te Romane ecclesie repugnantes, in ecclesiis et lociis aliis ... asserere et eciam dogmatizare, ac in eorum sermonibus neplandissimis talia proponere et predicare, que a decimarum et oblacionum, ac aliarum eorum ecclesiis debitarum solucione retrahunt.'⁽²⁾ The preachers referred to were not necessarily lollards, and are not specifically referred to even as heretics : the description of them going about 'sub magne sanctitatis velamine' and appealing to the common people, however, is similar to that applied by the chroniclers to early lollard preachers, and the right to withhold alms and oblations was, of course, a standard lollard heresy. It may be significant, also, that they were active in the northern part of Hampshire, in the deaneries of Alresford and Basingstoke, the second of which contained the parish of Odiham,⁽³⁾ where a number of eminent lollards had preached twelve years earlier.

Moving to the diocese of Salisbury, there is evidence of lollard activity in Reading, Perks., by 1396, when the bailiffs of the town were ordered to arrest any lollards there and to hand them

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1. See pp. 223-39.
 2. Reg. Wykeham ii. 453-4.
 3. See above p. 308 .

over to the bishop of Salisbury for imprisonment and correction.⁽¹⁾
 No record of any Reading lollards appears in the bishop's register, however, and we hear no more of heresy there for some years, though the town was to become a minor centre of lollardy in the next century. There was a case of what may have been lollardy in the north Berkshire village of Drayton, near Abingdon, in 1397,⁽²⁾ when the Archdeacon of Berkshire was ordered by the bishop to hear the purgation of Thomas Kent, a chaplain of the place, who had been ordered to purge himself of 'certos articulos' alleged against him. He had constantly denied the articles (details of which are not given) before the bishop, and was now called upon to support his denials by the oaths of 12 compurgators, half of whom were to be parishioners of Drayton, and half priests of good fame. Heresy is nowhere specifically mentioned, but the necessity for six priests of good fame amongst the compurgators make it possible that this was the crime of which Kent was accused.⁽³⁾

No record whatever survives of the prosecution of lollards anywhere in the region between 1397 and 1409, but between the latter date and the time of Oldcastle's revolt we know of a number of cases in both the diocese of Salisbury and that of Bath and Wells. We shall begin with the diocese of Salisbury, where bishop Hallum was obviously comparatively active in the pursuit of heretics, and where there were

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1. CCR 1396-9 p. 9.
 2. Reg. Metford (Sarum) iii. f. 124.
 3. It is just possible that Thomas Kent of Drayton is to be identified with the extremely active lollard priest named Thomas Drayton, who was rector of Didcot, a few miles from Drayton, in 1410 (Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f.10). He was subsequently active in Buckinghamshire, Warwickshire, Bristol, and Kent. *qv.* pp. ~~250-4, 284, 389, 407~~. The area round the village of Drayton became a centre of lollardy and sedition some thirty years after Kent's purgation: in 1428 there was a case of heresy at the neighbouring village of Steventon, and Abingdon was a centre of the lollard revolt of 1431. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 57-59.

two cases of possible heresy at the end of 1409. On the 4th December of that year a writ of significavit was issued for the arrest of two women from Hungerford in West Berkshire, named Margery Coterell and Juliana Ferman, who had remained unrepentant for forty days after being excommunicated by the bishop for not appearing to answer him 'super certis articulis meram animarum suarum coreccionem et salutem concernentibus'.⁽¹⁾ Only a few days beforehand, on 26th November, William Holtham, canon of Salisbury and vicar and prebendary of Ramsbury, Wilts.,⁽²⁾ a few miles west of Hungerford, had been cited to appear to answer certain articles 'correccionem anime sue concernentibus'. On the 6th December⁽³⁾ he appeared before the bishop's commissary at Ramsbury and heard the articles, details of which are unfortunately not given : he claimed to have already purged himself of the first of them before the Dean of Salisbury, but he admitted the second article 'submittens se misericordie domini'. He denied an unspecified number of further articles laid against him. A few weeks later, on the 23rd December, Holtham abjured all the articles under threat of deprivation of his cure, and was absolved on condition that he went to Salisbury and publicly offered a candle of one pound weight before the image of the Virgin in the cathedral there : he was also to distribute 2 marks amongst his poor parishioners. Though the first penance given could suggest that the articles against Holtham

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1. C85/148/22.
 2. It is probably no more than a coincidence that, twenty years beforehand, William Ramsbury had preached at Hungerford, and had both preached and said Mass at Ramsbury, probably his home village.
 3. Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f. 108.

may have included an accusation of heresy, perhaps relating to an attack made by him on images, the second makes it seem more probable that his crime was not heresy, but rather some offence against his parishioners.

We are on somewhat firmer ground with the case of another canon of Salisbury, Master Thomas Turk, prebendary of Bere Regis, Dorset. In the spring of 1411 Bishop Hallum of Salisbury sent a letter to the dean of Salisbury requiring him to cite Turk before the bishop's court at Potterne on 11th May 'super certis articulis hereticam pravitatem sapientibus meram anime sue salutem et correctionem'. On the 6th May, therefore, the dean apprehended Turk at Salisbury and haled him before the bishop where he was, however, able to excuse himself of the accusations laid against him and was allowed to go free.⁽¹⁾ Turk had been at Oxford University at the time of the Wycliffite triumphs there,⁽²⁾ and the suspicion of heresy under which he had fallen may have been in some way connected with presence of the Oxford lollard, Peter Clerk (better known as Peter Payne) in the diocese of Salisbury earlier in 1411. There is now no record of Payne's activities there, but whatever they were, they must have aroused the suspicions of the vigilant bishop Hallum, before whom (on 26th February 1411) Payne was required to produce a letter from the chancellor of Oxford stating that he had been examined in the University on 6th November 1410 concerning certain articles of heresy, 'de et super articulo sacramentum altaris concernente', and had been found to be orthodox. In view of his later career, Payne's orthodoxy at any time seems at best dubious.⁽³⁾

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1. Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f.189.
 2. He was a fellow of Exeter College in 1384, and Principal of Hart Hall in 1399-1400. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. iii.p.1917.
 3. Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f.186. Payne's career does not fall within the scope of this thesis, but see Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon.iii.1141-2 and An Oxford Hall in Medieval Times esp. pp.139,154 ff. also see above p.274 .

In 1412 there were two heresy prosecutions in the Reading area of Berkshire, where there may have been lollard activity as early as 1396.⁽¹⁾ On the 15th February 1412, William Mundy, a chapman of Wokingham, appeared before the bishop's commissary at Potterne,⁽²⁾ where he was accused of publicly preaching, holding and affirming the following conventional lollard heresies -

- (1) quod omnes adorantes vel aliquam reverenciam dantes ymagini sancte Crucis vel ymagini alterius sancti sunt maledicti
- (2) quod omnes et singuli aliquid conferentes fratribus cuiuscumque ordinis vel eos sustinentes, sunt maledicti, quia inimici Dei sunt, quia voluntarii mendicantes
- (3) quod omnes profeciscentes ad sanctum Thomam Cantuar' vel ad crucem de Boxle aut ad prioratum de Bride-lyngton vel aliqua alia talia loca maledicti sunt, nam non credit nec credere potuit quod Thomas Cantuar' archiepiscopus est sanctus in celo quamvis ita nominetur in terra (3)
- (4) quilibet maritus bene et fideliter observans ordinam conjugii sui adeo altus est in dignitate sicut summus sacerdos videlicet Papa
- (5) quod Deus menciebatur et fecit mendacia
- (6) quod Corpus Christi consecratum in altari per sacerdotem panis est benedictus et non ultra

These articles sound as if they have been taken from the report of an eye-witness, perhaps someone who had heard Mundy preaching as he travelled about the area as a chapman. Mundy, however, denied ever having held the first, fourth, fifth and sixth articles, the last of which was the accusation of disbelief in transubstantiation, an article possibly urged by the authorities against suspected lollards as a matter of course. He maintained that it was wrong to give to begging friars, *inquantum ordo eorum non fundatur superjure divino sed*

1. CCR 1396-9 p.9. see above.

2. Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f.190.

3. It is, perhaps, more than a coincidence that a similar view was held by the lollards of Henley-on-Thames, only a few miles from Wokingham, in the 1460's. Thomson, Later Lollards p.71.

expresse est contra', this view being, of course, directly traceable to Wycliffe's own teaching.⁽¹⁾ In response to the third article, he replied that he did not know whether it was lawful to go on pilgrimages or not. On the following day, however, he abjured all the articles, and all other 'heresim et Lollardiam', swearing on the gospels to hold to all the laws of the Church in future. As a penance, he appeared on the 28th February in the parish church at Wokingham at the time of Sunday mass, and again confessed and abjured his heretical opinions.

It seems likely that the authorities, possibly alerted by Mundy's case, were on the look-out for lollards in the Reading area at this time, for a few months later, Thomas Punche of that town was accused;

'de et super gravi crimine heresis sive Lollardie in scribendo vel saltem scribi faciendo libros in lingua Anglicana continentes in se doctrinas et opiniones fidei orthodoxe ac determinacioni sancte Romane ecclesie contrarias, necnon in tenendo et observando opiniones easdem in villa de Radyng predicta in locis vicinis publice ...'(2)

On the 2nd May 1412, however, he appeared before the bishop's official at Sonning and denied all the accusations, supporting his denial 'cum laudabili numero compurgatorum', after which he was acquitted. It is impossible to say whether Punche was a lollard or the victim of a false accusation, but the seriousness with which the ecclesiastical authorities view his case, along with William Mundy's admitted guilt, makes it certain that there was heretical activity in Reading shortly before Oldcastle's revolt, as there was some two years afterwards.⁽³⁾

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1. Fasc. Ziz. 282.
 2. Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f.189.
 3. See below.

There is also evidence, though tantalisingly slight, of heresy in north-west Wiltshire⁽¹⁾ at about this time. At some time early in 1413 John Flemyng of Great Somerford near Malmesbury had been excommunicated for not appearing in the bishop's court to answer accusations, not of heresy itself, but 'a fautoria et defensione quorundam perversorum sacris canonibus et determinacioni ecclesie sacrosancte rebelliam'. On the 25th⁽²⁾ August in that year, however, he appeared before the bishops' official and swore 'huiusmodi perversos seu rebelles aut de heretica seu erronea pravitate probabiliter suspectos nullatenus de cetero tuebitur seu defendet, sed ab eorum communione et favore penitus astinebit'. Thereafter he was given penance and absolved. The identity of the suspected heretics who Flemyng supported unfortunately remains unknown,⁽³⁾ though it seems likely that they were lollards.⁽⁴⁾

Moving westwards to the diocese of Bath and Wells, we find no prosecutions of lollards there recorded in the register of Bishop Bowet (1401-7) but on the 3rd August 1408 a royal mandate was sent to

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1. William Ramsbury's centre of activities in ~~1413~~¹³⁸⁵⁻⁹.
 2. Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f. 121.
 3. The author has found no records of lollards in north Wilshire during the course of more than a year's study of the area during this period.
 4. They may, however, have been those unknown persons who were excommunicated in the summer of 1412 for an armed assault which they made on the vicar of St. Mary's Westport, Malmesbury. Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f. 108.

his successor Bishop Bubwith ordering him to make proclamation against heretics in the diocese, and to arrest and imprison offenders.⁽¹⁾ We have no record of any lollards captured as a result of this mandate, but in April 1409 Bubwith wrote to the King asking him to order the arrest of John Colyford, vicar of North Petherton near Bridgewater, who had been excommunicated by Bishop Bowet before 1407 for contumacy in not appearing to answer charges 'in negocio correccionis anime sue'. Despite this excommunication, Colyford had still not come forward to seek absolution 'claves sancte matris ecclesie nequiter contempnendo'.⁽²⁾ The terms of his excommunication make it possible that Colyford had been accused of heresy, though the offence is not mentioned in the record, and what we know of his career makes it, on the whole, unlikely that he was a lollard.⁽³⁾

If Colyford's heresy is doubtful, however, there is definite evidence for lollard activity in south and east Somerset in the years before Sir John Oldcastle's revolt. On the 20th October 1410 Bubwith wrote to the King asking him to order the arrest, as an obstinate heretic, of one John of Court, of Weston Bampfylde,⁽⁴⁾ a

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1. CPR 1405-8 p. 476. This was, however, one of a number of such mandates issued to the authorities in various parts of the country at this time, and does not necessarily indicate that the government knew specifically of any lollards in the diocese.
 2. Reg. Bubwith i. 54-5.
 3. He was both a pluralist - holding the advowsons of North Petherton and of Stourton, Wilts., in plurality - and a farmer of crown lands - with Thomas Bathe he held the farm of the borough of Lyme Regis, Dorset, between 1396 and 1406. His pluralism would make him unusual, though not unique, among lollard supporters. CPR 1391-6 p.743; CFR XI 182; Somerset Fines 1347-99 p.172; Somerset Medieval Wills p. 9.
 4. Reg. Bubwith 93.

few miles north of Yeovil, and three weeks later he made a similar request for the arrest of Walter Saymer and Sibyl Luydes of Wincanton, a few miles away to the west. The same group of heretics may have been connected with an outbreak of heretical preaching eighteen months later on the other side of Yeovil. In the spring of 1412 Bubwith placed an interdict on the parishes of Crewkerne, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Seavington-St. Michael, Whitelackington, Ilminster, Shepton Beauchamp, Kingsbury, Langport, Huish and Aller, all between Yeovil and Taunton, on the grounds that they or their incumbents had admitted an unlicensed preacher to preach in their churches. The interdict was lifted on the 2nd April 1412, but the unlicensed preacher had apparently not been captured at that time, for the incumbents were ordered to publicly and continually announce his excommunication in each of the churches at the time of mass. The preacher, described as 'quidam secte nepharie, inobediencie filii, pseudo-prophete, Lollardi nuncupati ...', is identified as John Bacon, a chaplain of Stoke-sub-Hamdon,⁽¹⁾ and possibly a chantry priest of the chantry there, which was controlled by a prominent member of the local gentry, Sir Thomas Beauchamp of Whitelackington,⁽²⁾ whose family had been responsible for its foundation.

Subsequent events make it seem likely that the lollards of the Yeovil area received tacit, if not overt, support and protection from Sir Thomas Beauchamp, who owned land in the many of the parishes put under interdict in 1412.⁽³⁾ Beauchamp, with the younger Thomas

1. Reg. Bubwith i. pp. 115-6.

2. ~~Hamilton~~ Thompson, English Clergy p. 148.

3. CFR x. 345, xiv. 320.419, xv. 129; CCR 1389-92 pp. 262-3, 1413-19 pp. 346, 350, 1422-9 pp. 51, 207, 403; CPR 1391-6 214, 1422-9 pp. 37, 400; Somerset Fines 1347-99 p. 156; Dorset Fines 279-80, 301-2, 304-6; Feudal Aids iv. 371-3, vi. 507; Collinson, Somerset i. 67.

Brooke of Holditch, and possibly John Seymour, esquire, of Castle Cary near Wincanton, were all arrested in 1414 on suspicion of supporting lollards and of having taken part in Sir John Oldcastle's uprising. The careers of these men, and the extent of their involvement in heresy, will be discussed below.

We know no more of lollardy in the diocese of Bath and Wells before 1414, but in early 1413 there may possibly have been some heretical activity in the diocese of Exeter, whose registers record no prosecution of lollards since that of Laurence Bedeman in 1382. On the 23rd March 1413 a royal mandate was sent to Bishop Stafford informing him that certain 'satellites of Satan' were preaching heresy in his diocese (and attracting many converts) and ordering him to arrest those concerned. Stafford did not have the writ proclaimed until July, and nothing is known of any heretics taken as a result of it, but the existence of lollardy in the diocese of Exeter cannot be entirely ruled out, especially since there may have been some Devonians amongst those who rebelled in the following year.⁽¹⁾

1. CPR 1413-16 p. 34; Reg. Stafford (Exon) i. ff. 182; ii. f. 321.

Sir John Oldcastle's Revolt and afterwards.
1414-c.1422.

If we know comparatively little about lollard activity in the south-west between 1382 and 1413, we know even less about the extent of the area's participation in Sir John Oldcastle's revolt. It is probable, however, that the government suspected the south-west of harbouring some rebels and lollards, for Devon, Hampshire, Somerset and Dorset were amongst those counties to which royal commissions ordering their arrest were sent on 11th January 1414, shortly after the rising.⁽¹⁾ The Hampshire commissioners, having consulted juries from each of the county's constituent hundreds, returned that they knew of no lollards there,⁽²⁾ but the returns of the commissioners for Devon and for Somerset and Dorset are lost.⁽³⁾ In the year before the rising, however, there had apparently been an outbreak of heresy in the diocese of Exeter, and some lollards may have been arrested by the Devon commissioners in 1414, for a few days after the issue of the commission the government despatched John Norton, chief justice of the Common Pleas, to aid them in their investigations.⁽⁴⁾

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1. CPR 1413-16 p. 178.
 2. C Inq. Misc. 1399-1422 no. 462.
 3. An exhaustive search in the PRO has failed to find these returns, though a file of 'nil' returns in KB9/205/2 may be connected with them. The fact that no lollards from this area, apart from those mentioned in the text above, are recorded in the coram rege rolls (KB27) or the local gaol delivery records (Just. 3/72,196,198) seems to indicate that rebels from the south-west were few.
 4. The issue roll records that he received £20 on the 25th January 1414 for his expenses in going to Devon to try lollards there E403/614/m.10.

A small number of Somerset men certainly went to London to support Oldcastle. Two of them, James Merrsh alias More, of Bristol alias of Norton St. Philip, and Nicholas Taillour of Ditcheat near Castle Cary, were plainly connected with the Bristol lollards. Having escaped capture by the King's forces at St. Giles' Fields, they were taken a few days later at Oxford, in the company of Walter Blake, leader of the Bristol rebels and chaplain to the lollard More family of that town, by whom James Merrsh was employed as a servant.⁽¹⁾ Blake was hanged shortly afterwards, but Merrsh and Taillour were released on bail given by two Bristol men, who promised to produce them for trial when required.⁽²⁾ Taillour's ultimate fate is unknown, but Merrsh finally received a royal pardon on the 5th October 1416.⁽³⁾ Nothing is known, however, about the connections of John Doune, a shearman of Frome near the Wiltshire border : he was presumably captured at St. Giles' Fields, for he was tried and convicted in London, and imprisoned in the sheriffs' prison there from 23rd July 1414 until 16th December of the same year, when he received the royal pardon.⁽⁴⁾

It is, perhaps, surprising that no rebels are known to have come from the southern borders of Somerset, where there had been lollard activity for some years before the revolt,⁽⁵⁾ and where several of the local gentry - to wit, Sir Thomas Beauchamp, Thomas Brooke junior, and possibly John Seymour of Castle Cary - were

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1. KB9/205/1/83; KB27/611/17, 614/56; KB29/52 pt.2/19 for Walter Blake see above p.240-3
 2. Their trials, which were to be before, 'King and Council' are not recorded.
 3. KB27/622/23.
 4. CPR 1413-16 p. 271; CCR 1413-19 p. 148; E199/26/30.
 5. See above pp.335-6.

arrested in 1414 on suspicion of supporting Oldcastle. The first of these, Sir Thomas Beauchamp of Whitelackington near Ilminster, owned land in most of the parishes in which the lollard priest John Bacon had preached in 1412,⁽¹⁾ and may even have been his patron. Beauchamp had been an early supporter (and probably a retainer) of Henry Bolingbroke, who at his accession made him a Knight of the Bath and granted him, jointly with Sir Walter Hungerford, £200 "in recompense of their great expenses in the King's service after his last advent into England". He was returned as knight of the shire for Somerset to the parliament of 1401, and thereafter received many marks of royal favour - he was a King's knight by 1412 - as well as being appointed to a number of royal commissions.⁽²⁾ He was, however, imprisoned in the Tower of London, for reasons unknown, in February 1407.⁽³⁾ As is to be expected in such an important county figure, Beauchamp was connected with most of the prominent families of the area, including the Bonvilles of Shute, to whom he was related by marriage,⁽⁴⁾ and his near neighbours the Brookes of Ilminster and of Holditch, Devon, for whom he acted as a feoffee and with whom he is several times associated as a party and witness to local deeds.⁽⁵⁾ It is not impossible that it was through this association with the Brookes that Beauchamp first came into contact with lollardy.

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1. See above p. 336 n. 3.
 2. Holinshed iii. 3; Nicolas, Chronicle of London 48; CPR 1399-1401 pp. 154, 534, 1408-13 p. 471; DKR xli. 761; xlii 337; E28/97/28.
 3. CCR 1405-9 p. 174.
 4. CFR x. 345; Somerset Fines 1347-99 p. 156; CPR 1391-6 p. 214.
 5. Dorset Fines pp. 278-80, 301-2, 304-6; CAD i. 490; GCR 1413-9 pp. 202, 346.

The Brookes were an even more influential family than the Beauchamps. The head of the family, Sir Thomas Brooke, had added to his already considerable lands in Somerset, Dorset and Devon by marrying Joan, widow of the great Bristol merchant Robert Cheddar, who brought him a further sixteen manors and divers properties all over the south-west.⁽¹⁾ He was, in fact, very rich, and also very influential locally, as is demonstrated by his twelve returns to parliament for Somerset between 1386 and 1413, his service as sheriff of Somerset and Dorset in 1389-90 and of Devon in 1393-4, his membership of the benches of Devon, Dorset and Somerset, and his appointment to more than forty royal commissions between 1385 and 1410.⁽²⁾ No suspicion of heretical sympathies attach to Sir Thomas until the spring of 1410, when he arranged with Sir John Oldcastle that his son, another Thomas, should marry Joan Braybroke, only daughter and heiress of Oldcastle's wife Joan Lady Cobham.⁽³⁾ We know of no connection between Oldcastle and Brooke before 1410, and thus it must be a matter for conjecture whether the latter knew of the former's heretical views at the time of the marriage.⁽⁴⁾ Howsoever this may be, subsequent events lead us to believe that at one time or another, but most probably after the Oldcastle marriage, both Sir Thomas and his son Thomas Brooke junior

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1. Cal. IPM ix. 89, xii 42,92; CCR 1360-64 pp. 563-4, 1399-1402 pp. 283, 304, 1405-8 p. 350, 1413-19 pp. 478-82; CPR 1396-9 p. 85.
 2. CFR x. 307; xi. 95; CPR 1389-92 pp. 62,136,139,518,526, 1392-6 pp. 93,237,254,401, 434,437-8,655, 1396-9 pp. 85, 234,308,373,437, 1399-1401 pp. 87,169,211,267,272,348, 415,464,494,554,564, 1401-5 pp. 114,126,275,282-91,296, 439,510,516,517, 1405-9 pp. 31,62,85,154,200,491,497, 1409-13 pp. 179,205,374,378,481,485, 1413-16 pp. 418,423.
 3. CCR 1409-13 p. 81.
 4. The Archbishop of Canterbury was already suspicious of Oldcastle by early 1410, but Sir John's views were probably not generally known at that date. McFarlane, John Wycliffe p.161; Waugh, 'Sir John Oldcastle' in EHR xx. p. 442.

adopted lollard views, though only the latter was actually accused of taking part in the revolt of 1414.

We have no record of the movements of Sir Thomas Beauchamp or the younger Thomas Brooke during the first two weeks of January 1414, but there is nothing to indicate that either of them were present at St. Giles' Fields. It is, indeed, impossible to say what part they were intended to play in the rising, though it seems likely that Oldcastle would have attempted to assign his stepson-in-law a prominent role.⁽¹⁾ Their complicity in the rising, however, soon became known to the government, and by the 23rd January, less than a fortnight after the final defeat of the rebels, Beauchamp had been arrested and was being kept in irons at the Tower of London. No doubt Brooke was arrested at about the same time.⁽²⁾ On February 8th four of Brooke's friends went surety for him in the sum of 1,000 marks that he would be the King's 'true prisoner' and make no attempt to escape from the Tower, and four days later Beauchamp's friends performed the same service for him, hazarding the same large amount.⁽³⁾ After this they were no longer kept in chains, but allowed to 'go at large within the Tower'. Beauchamp's

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1. Thomson, Later Lollards 21. thinks that Brooke may have had little to do with the revolt, and have been arrested simply because he was Oldcastle's stepson-in-law. However, subsequent events prove that Brooke was himself suspected of lollardy, and it is notable that Richard Cliderowe, who as husband of Sir John's daughter Mabilia was a nearer relation, was never arrested. For Cliderowe's marriage see Haines, Mon. Brasses II p. 91 and Vaugh, 'Sir John Oldcastle' EHR XX p. 65ln.
 2. CCR 1413-19 p. 49; KB27/611/13. The date of Brooke's arrest is unknown.
 3. CCR 1413-19 pp. 116, 121.

sureties at this time included Richard Whittington, twice mayor of London, Richard Everarde, another prominent citizen of London, and John Kendale esquire, a Somerset neighbour and associate⁽¹⁾: Brooke's were Sir William Palton, member of an important Somerset and Devon family and a J.P. in both counties,⁽²⁾ Richard Cheddar, his step-brother,⁽³⁾ Thomas Beaumont, sometime sheriff of Devon,⁽⁴⁾ and Edmund Pyne, a feoffee of his father's.⁽⁵⁾ It is plain that both men could call upon people of some influence as sureties.

Nevertheless, both men spent some months in the Tower. Brooke was probably a free man by 24th August 1414, when, at the request of his mother-in-law Joan Cobham, he and Oldcastle's other son-in-law Richard Cliderowe were granted the custody of all the lands which Oldcastle had held jointly with Lady Cobham, and all the lands he had held in her right.⁽⁶⁾ Although he was yet to stand trial, the government had by now obviously decided that Brooke was relatively harmless. Beauchamp remained in the Tower until the 13th September, when he was released on giving security to present himself for trial when ordered to do so.⁽⁷⁾ On or about the 29th September 1414 both he and Brooke came before the King at Westminster, where they were accused both of stirring up rebellion and of holding

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1. CFR XIV pp. 320, 419.
 2. Roskell, Commons in the Parliament of 1422 p. 208.
 3. See below.
 4. CFR XIV 5,296,428 : sheriff in 1413, 1419-20 and 1422.
 5. CCR 1413-19 pp. 479-81; CFR 1416-22 pp. 197,210.
 6. CFR XIV 76; CCR 1413-19 487,489,591.
 7. C81/1364/18.

heretical opinions : they pleaded not guilty, and were ordered to appear again on the 26th October, when they were acquitted of both charges by a jury.⁽¹⁾ Despite this verdict, there can be no doubt that both Sir Thomas Beauchamp and Thomas Brooke junior were implicated in the revolt, though possibly not to any great extent.⁽²⁾

Much less is known about a third member of the Somerset gentry who may possibly have been involved in the rising. Amongst those pardoned in July 1414 for their rebellion earlier in the year were one John Seymour and Margaret his wife,⁽³⁾ and it is possible that these are to be identified with John Seymour, the rather obscure squire of Castle Cary, and his wife Margaret, daughter of John Erlegh.⁽⁴⁾ The case against John Seymour of Castle Cary rests on the slender and negative evidence that no other Somerset gentleman of that name extant in 1414 is known to have had a wife called Margaret, but it should not be forgotten that there were at least three heretics in the Castle Cary area in 1410, and that a man from the neighbouring village of Ditchheat, Nicholas Taillour, took part in the rising in 1414. .

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1. KB27/614/15.
 2. Roskell, Commons of 1422 pp. 157-8; McFarlane, Wycliffe 177; Lollard Knights p. 216.
 3. CPR 1413-16 p. 261.
 4. He was the son of Richard Seymour of Castle Cary : he had been imprisoned in the Tower in May 1398 for reasons unknown. By November 1415 he was dead. CCR 1392-6 p. 246, 1405-9 p. 95; CPR 1415-18 p. 369; CP25(1)/256/59/10. No other John Seymour extant in 1414 is known to have had a wife called Margaret.

After the revolt, Sir Thomas Beauchamp is not known to have been again accused of lollardy, and, though he seems to have been dropped from government service between 1414 and 1419, after the latter date he once again assumed his place in the government of Somerset, which he represented in parliament four times between 1425 and 1432. His life, however, appears to have been far from law-abiding : in November 1419 he and others went to the manor of Chaffcombe 'in warlike array' and forcibly expelled the owner, and in the same year he and his servants drove out the occupants of the manors of Lillesdon and Stathe, both near Whitelackington. Eight years later, in October 1427, he and three of his tenants were forced to purge themselves before the Bishop of Exeter of the crime of forging and publishing fictitious charters, in order to oust the owners of two Devon manors.⁽¹⁾

Brooke, like Beauchamp, remained under a cloud for some years after the revolt, though (as we have seen) he was allowed to farm some of Oldcastle's lands. He probably maintained contact with his step-father while the latter was on the run, and may even have given him shelter and support.⁽²⁾ At any rate, the government was

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1. C137/80/46; CPR 1416-22 pp. 271-2; KB9/196,201; Reg. Lacy (Exon.) i. pp. 283-5.
 2. It is possible that Brooke sent Oldcastle part of the rents of the confiscated Cobham lands : a parallel is provided by Sir John ap Harry, a friend of Oldcastle's, who farmed his confiscated lands in Herefordshire and passed on the rents, not, as he should have, to the crown, but to the fugitive heretic. See p.211. Significantly, ap Harry was made to give surety in the sum of £1,000 not to support Oldcastle on July 17th 1417, only four days after Brooke had been forced to make the same undertaking CCR 1413-19 pp. 434-5.

obviously extremely suspicious of his activities, and on 13th July 1417 he and his step-brother Richard Cheddar were both compelled to find surety in the very large sum of £1,000 each that neither would make or lead unlawful assemblies, or adhere to Oldcastle against the church, or secretly or openly maintain him in his heretical opinions.⁽¹⁾ After the surety Brooke seems to have been gradually received back into governmental favour, and, indeed, was returned for Somerset to the parliament which in the winter of 1417-18 consigned Oldcastle to the gallows.⁽²⁾

Brooke's step-brother Richard Cheddar, who also came under suspicion in July 1417, had a parently not been implicated in the 1414 revolt, though he and Edmund Pyne (a surety for both Brooke and Cheddar in 1417) had been mainpernors for Brooke when he was imprisoned in the Tower. Richard was the son and heir of the great Bristol merchant Robert Cheddar, whose widow married Sir Thomas Brooke the elder, in whose household Richard had been brought up. Though he represented Somerset in parliament five times,⁽³⁾ Cheddar was never a J.P., nor did he ever hold any other responsible post in local government, possibly because of his doubtful orthodoxy, but more likely because of his character, for by all accounts he was a violent and lawless man. Early in 1404 he had been the victim of a murderous assault, and in October of that year he and Edmund Pyne had attempted to obtain revenge by ambushing and murdering his assailant, one John Savage esquire. In 1405 he and Pyne were compelled to find surety in the sum of £300 that neither would assault or harm Richard Metford, Bishop of Salisbury, or his servants,⁽⁴⁾

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1. CCR 1413-19 p. 428.
 2. Roskell, Commons of 1422 pp. 157-8.
 3. In 1407, 1413 (April), 1417 (with Thomas Brooke junior) 1421 (December and 1427.) Official Returns
 4. CPR 1401-5 p. 502; CCR 1405-9 p. 78; KB27/573/42,581/69.

and at other times he was indicted of threatening and attempted bribery of juries, murder, manslaughter and attempted rape.⁽¹⁾ Richard Cheddar seems to have been, in fact, an upper-class ruffian who does not in any way fit in with the lollard ideal of the pious layman, and while it is possible that he supported Oldcastle out of family loyalty or for personal gain, it seems unlikely that he ever seriously adopted lollard views.⁽²⁾

This brings us to the question of how far Sir Thomas Beauchamp and the Brookes, father and son, really believed in the lollard programme. It is possible, given the evidence above, that Sir Thomas Beauchamp was, like Cheddar, a 'mere adventurer without principle',⁽³⁾ though we should not forget his possible protection and support for the lollard John Bacon in 1412. The case against the Brookes, however, is far more damning, for not only were their contacts with Oldcastle closer, but both the elder and the younger Sir Thomas left wills of what is known as the 'Lollard type'.⁽⁴⁾ The will of Sir Thomas the elder, made in June 1415 and proved after his death in 1418, describes the testator as a 'wrichyd synner', and asks God to 'fouchesafe to receyve my wreched unclene soule into his mercy and kepe hyt from dampnacioun ...' Brooke further directs

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1. KB27/641/7; E159/197m.11; E28/38. In 1421 he was fined 300 marks by the Privy Counsel for contempt of the Somerset justices. Proc. P.C. ii. pp. 298, 303, 321.
 2. cf. the cases of Thomas Seggeswyke and other adventurers and criminals associated with the lollards after 1414 pp. 22-4 .
 3. McFarlane, Wycliffe p. 177.
 4. McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 207-223 for a full account of these.

that 'my body beryed in the churchehy of the parysch church of Thornecombe as men goth over into ye church at ye south side ryghte as they mowe stappe on me and a flat playne stone save my name ygraved yarin⁽¹⁾ ... And nether huche ne leede to be layde in, bot a grete clothe to hely my foule caryin ... And no fest nether terment yhold bote iij masses at my buryng save CCC poure men schullen have mete and drynke ynowe and every man and woman of ham iijd. and every child of CCC child ld ... and xij poure men clothes in russett ylined with white and every of ham to have viid ...'

He goes on to leave money to his poor tenants and to poor and blind men, but not a penny to the church or to the religious orders.⁽²⁾

The will of the younger Sir Thomas, who died in 1439, is strikingly similar : he, too, is a 'wrechid synner', and orders that : 'at the day of my buryng there be saide iij masses. And all-so that ther be xij pore men clothid in white ... every pore blynde or lame man and woman that cummith to myne obite (to) have iijd ...'

Once again, the testator leaves money to the poor, but none to the church.⁽³⁾

Both these wills share the characteristics - emphasis on the testator's unworthiness, contemptuous language used of the corpse, injunctions against funeral pomp, and legacies to the poor instead of the church - which are typical of a distinctive group of wills the

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1. It is notable that Sir Thomas' wife Joan Cheddar did not share her husband's taste in plain tombs, and when she came to be buried with him after her death in 1437, a magnificent brass was placed over their joint grave, which remains to be seen.
 2. PCC Marche pt. ii. ff. 316-7.
 3. PCC Luffenham f. 217.

great majority of which were left either by proven lollards such as Sir Thomas Latimer and Sir Lewis Clifford or by others either suspected of heresy or related to lollards.⁽¹⁾ Even if Sir Thomas Beauchamp and Richard Cheddar⁽²⁾ were simply anti-clerical adventurers, the wills of the Brookes suggest (if they do not prove) that both the elder and the younger Sir Thomas really believed in at least some of the lollard doctrines. If so, they were amongst the most influential, as well as amongst the last, of the upper-class lollards, and it is perhaps surprising that their influence on popular lollardy in the south-west is not more noticeable.

Indeed, there is very little evidence of lollard activity in any of the south-western counties in the years immediately following Sir John Oldcastle's rising. On Christmas Eve 1416, however, 'scedulae Lollardorum venenosae, impingentes contra cunctas status ecclesiae', and supposedly connected with a plot "be a swiere of that Oldcastelle" to kill the King, were distributed to every major house and inn in Northampton, St. Alban's and Reading.⁽³⁾ This report suggests that the Reading lollards, of whom we last heard in 1412, were once again active, and were probably in contact with their brethren in Northampton and elsewhere.

Unless he visited his stepson-in-law Brooke at Holditch, Sir John Oldcastle himself is not known to have passed through the south-west during his clandestine travels about the country. In the autumn of 1417, however, two priests, William Brown and the

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1. For instance, Sir Gerard Braybroke, uncle of Sir Thomas Brooke junior's wife. in Reg. Chichele ii. 409-14 for other examples see McFarlane op. cit. 207-220.
 2. Whose wills have, unfortunately, not survived.
 3. Historia Anglicana. ii. p. 317; Capgrave p. 317; St. Alban's Chron. p. 104.

notorious lollard Richard Wyche,⁽¹⁾ were arrested in Hampshire whilst in possession of a sum of money belonging to him, and they may well have been acting as his agents.⁽²⁾ Possibly connected with them was one Ivo Foke, 'lollardus', who escaped from Southampton gaol in the early months of 1418.⁽³⁾

Rather more is known about the case of John "of Bath", who, having been imprisoned in the diocese of Salisbury on suspicion of lollardy, was examined by Bishop Chandler at Sherborne on 16th May 1418 concerning certain articles contained in heretical books in English found in his possession.⁽⁴⁾ On the subject of images, the books declared 'God wole nought be y worshipped in dede ymage and also Only quick men ben goddes ymag and liknesse of the trinite'. On oaths, 'Be your word ye ye nay nay and all that is more is synne' : on religious orders, 'Kepyng of ye behestes of god passeth all other vertues and devoci~~ons~~ and voves and religions of man seme they never soo holy'. On the need for priests, the books claimed that 'A resonable nombr taught in goddes lawe is sufficaunt to do the Sacrament and preche only Goddis lawe in word and dede were enow too

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1. For Wyche's activities elsewhere see Chapter One pp.13-20.
 2. Devon, Issues p. 352.
 3. Nothing more is known of Foke. He may either have been a Hampshire man imprisoned in his local gaol, or a heretic from another part of the country who had been brought to Southampton for an interview with Henry V during one of the King's frequent visits to the town in connection with the French war. DKR xli. p. 685.
 4. Reg. Chandler (Sarum) ii. ff. 17 -18

the church for bastardes braunches and ydell drones wasteth muche gode and letteth gode prestes to profete in prechyng'.

Questioned about the articles, John denied that he disbelieved in images, and accepted that swearing before judges was permissable. He maintained, however, that the keeping of God's commandments was more important than honouring any human institution or religious order. As for the statement that a reasonable number of good priests was sufficient, John said he did not know what to believe about this, but that he was prepared to submit himself to the Bishop and accept the church's teaching on this and the other three articles. Two days later, on the 18th May, John publicly recanted the articles before a large crowd at the market cross of Sherborne, and then stood by with bare head and feet while the heretical books were burnt. He then swore never again to hold heretical views, to detect any lollards known to him, to refrain from reading English books containing passages of scripture, and to return to his wife in the diocese of Bath and Wells. All the facts of this case seem to indicate that, though John of Bath undoubtedly had contacts with literate lollards, he was not himself a very prominent member of the sect. His name and his wife's place of residence both indicate that he came from Bath, and John may well have had contacts in nearby Bristol, where the lollards were extremely active. On the other hand, Sherborne is only a few miles from Yeovil, and it is just possible that John may have had some connection with the Brooke family.

Apart from two doubtful cases in 1421,⁽¹⁾ there is no record of lollard activity in any part of the south-west outside Bristol for nearly ten years after 1418, which seems, therefore, a convenient date to end our survey of this area in depth. During the period following, that between the beginning of the reign of Henry VI and the Reformation, lollardy continued to flourish, as in earlier times, mainly in the eastern part of the area. Indeed, though direct connections are difficult to make, it is notable that many of the principal groups of lollards recorded in the south-western counties between 1422 and 1536 came from areas where the foundations of heresy had been laid in the period before Sir John Oldcastle's rising. Thus, in north and west Wiltshire, where William Ramsbury had preached between 1385 and 1389, and where lollards are recorded in 1409 and 1412, there were prosecutions in 1428, 1434, 1437, 1438, 1488, 1514-17 and 1518.⁽²⁾ Salisbury, where lollards had been arrested in 1389 and 1411, was implicated in the lollard revolt of 1431, as was Frome, which had sent a man to help Oldcastle in 1414.⁽³⁾ In the Reading area of Berkshire, where

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1. In 1421 there was an outbreak of iconoclasm and attacks on church property at Exeter, but there is no evidence that these were in any way connected with heresy or heretics : Le Moyen Age vol. 69 pp. 691 ff. In November of the same year one John Taborer of Cannington, near Bridgewater, Somerset, was ordered to be arrested by the civil power for persisting in excommunication, but he is not referred to as a heretic. Reg. Bubwith (Bathon) p. 412.
 2. Reg. Neville (Sarum) iii. ff. 32-33, 48, 52, 57; Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 45, 50-51.
 3. Thomson op. cit. 30, 58-61.

there had been heretical activity in 1396, 1412 and 1416, there were further prosecutions in 1434, 1491 and 1508,⁽¹⁾ and it is just possible that the origins of heresy in the north of the same county, around Abingdon (where there were prosecutions in 1427, 1443 and 1491, and which was the centre of the 1431 revolt) can be traced to the activities there of Thomas Kent in 1397 or those of Thomas Drayton before 1410.⁽²⁾ Finally, in the Odiham area of north Hampshire, where there had been lollard activity in 1382 and 1394, there was a sizeable heretical congregation in 1440.⁽³⁾

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1. Thomson op. cit. 61-2, 76-9, 80-81, 84.
 2. Reg. Neville. iii. 77; Thomson op. cit. 58-61, 65, 79
see above p. 329.
 3. Thomson pp. 64-5.

CHAPTER SEVENEASTERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN COUNTIES
1386-1422

The area covered by this chapter comprises the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Sussex and Kent. During this period Norfolk and Suffolk together formed the diocese of Norwich, Essex was in the diocese of London, and Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire were in that of Lincoln : Sussex was in the diocese of Chichester, and Kent was divided between Canterbury and Rochester. For the sake of convenience, such information as remains concerning heresy in the port of Calais has been included in this section. The evidence for lollardy in these parts is, as usual, patchy : it is derived in roughly equal parts from bishops' registers (especially those of the Archbishops of Canterbury) and from legal records, the latter being particularly valuable where they concern Sir John Oldcastle's rebellion.

Despite the proximity of the area to London and Oxford, there is little evidence of heresy in the east and south-east before 1400. Between that date and 1414, however, heretical communities seem to have grown up in south-east Buckinghamshire (under the protection of the knightly Cheyne family) and in north-east Essex (under the leadership of the parish priest of Thaxted and other local clergy). Both these areas sent sizeable contingents to join Oldcastle's revolt in 1414 (when they were joined by rebels from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) and maintained a strong tradition of lollardy throughout the fifteenth century. Apart from events

immediately connected with Sir John Oldcastle, however, there is little evidence of heresy in Kent or Sussex before 1422. Nor, apart from the case of William Sautre in 1401, is there much sign of lollardy in Norfolk and Suffolk until the end of the period covered here.

Before Oldcastle's Revolt. 1382-1414

Despite the proximity of Oxford and London, two of the greatest centres of early Wycliffism, there is very little evidence of lollardy in the east and south-east before 1400. The area had, of course, been the scene of most of the principal events of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, but, whilst those who took part in this rising were certainly swayed by the quasi-heretical preaching of such priests as John Ball,⁽¹⁾ it is more than doubtful that they were in any way influenced by the teachings of Wycliffe himself - or, indeed, that they had ever heard of them. Only one part of the country, in fact, which rose in 1381 - north-east Essex - is known to have subsequently produced lollards in any numbers.⁽²⁾

The first recorded incidence of lollard activity proper in our area occurred at the house of Sir John Montagu (subsequently earl of Salisbury 1397-1400) at Shenley, Herts.⁽³⁾ in 1387. The story gains credence from the fact that it was reported by Thomas Walsingham,⁽⁴⁾ admittedly a biased observer, but one who lived only a few miles away at St. Alban's. Walsingham describes how

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1. Despite R. Hilton, Bond Men made Free pp. 213, 228, it is doubtful whether John Ball was in any real sense a 'lollard'. In the period before the revolt he had been accused of preaching 'errors and scandals' but was never called a heretic. Reg. Langham p. 149.
 2. FZ 274; Hist. Anglic. ii. 32-3; Dobson, Peasants' Revolt 373; Réville, Soulèvement; Oman, Great Revolt see below pp. 365-7, 380-87
 3. Montagu had obtained Shenley by his marriage to Maud, d. of Adam Fraunceys. He made it his principal residence before his accession to the earldom. McFarlane, Lollard Knights 168n., 196.
 4. Hist. Anglic ii. 159-60 also in English in Polychronicon VIII 479-80.

the activities of William Pateshull, an apostate Austin friar and supposedly a heretic, were supported by a group of Richard II's household retainers known as the 'Lollard Knights'. The worse of these, he says, was Sir John Montagu, who was so sunk in his error that he removed all the images of the saints set up in the chapel at Shenley by its previous owners, and hid them away ... 'unum solummodo privilegium adeptam est imago Beatae Katerinae, quam in pistrinum suum deferri permisit, quia plures afficiebantur eidem'. At about this time, the chronicler continues, Montagu had in his house a certain priest 'sectator acerrimus Lollardorum' who, being near to death, asked for a confessor. 'Cui quidam de familia, velut cum admiratione, responderunt - "Quid est", inquiunt, "quod quaeritis? Quid quod desideratis? Nonne vos praedicastis omnem confessionem extrinsecam, sacerdotibus faciendam, supervacuum? Solummodo sufficere, ut quis soli Deo confiteatur'. The priest admitted that he had taught erroneously, and continued to demand confession. It happened that at this time Nicholas Hereford, 'quippe cui, post haeresiarchem Johannem Wyclef, omnes hujus sectae viri maxime adhaerebant', was also at Shenley, and he upbraided the dying man, telling him to confess to God, who has more power than any priest to forgive sins, and refusing to let him confess to a priest. Soon afterwards the man died, placing the blame for his unconfessed sins on Hereford's head.

There is no reason to doubt that this incident, or something like it, actually took place. Walsingham certainly believed his neighbour to be a heretic, and in reporting Montagu's

death in 1400 he refers to 'Comes Sarum, qui lollardorum fautor in tota vita fuerat, et imaginum vilipensor, contemptum Canonum, Sacramentorumque derisor, sine Sacramento confessionis, ut fertur, vitam finivit'.⁽¹⁾ The chronicle dates the events at Shenley in 1387, a year in which Nicholas Hereford's movements are somewhat obscure : in February he was imprisoned at Nottingham castle, in the special care of the constable there, Sir William Neville, but by August he seems to have been a free man, and to have been preaching with John Purvey, John Aston, and other fellow-lollards in the diocese of Worcester.⁽²⁾ It has been suggested elsewhere in this thesis⁽³⁾ that Hereford escaped from Nottingham with the connivance of Sir William Neville (another of the 'Lollard Knights' and thus an associate of Montagu's) and that he stayed at Shenley on his way to the Welsh March.

Due to lack of evidence, it is impossible to say whether Montagu's house was merely a place where lollards occasionally found shelter, or whether it was actually used as a centre for the dissemination of heretical doctrines. If the latter is the case, then one of the priests connected with it may have been John Wodewarde of Knebworth, ten miles to the northward. Wodewarde was in trouble with the Bishop of Lincoln in December 1388, and subsequently with the civil authorities, for persistently preaching heretical doctrines

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1. Montagu was lynched by a mob in Cirencester after taking part in an unsuccessful revolt against Henry IV. Hist. Anglic. ii. 216, 244 qv. also Creton 71-5.
 2. See above pp. 220-1.
 3. See above pp. 6-8.

to a large congregation at Chipping Warden, Northants. - a congregation, significantly enough, which was under the protection of a close associate of Montagu's, the 'Lollard Knight' Sir Thomas Latimer.⁽¹⁾ After 1388, no more is heard of lollardy in Hertfordshire until 1414.

In the area as a whole there are no further records of heretical activities until October 1397, when Robert Rede, Bishop of Chichester, received a royal mandate ordering him to arrest and imprison all lollards in his diocese. The heretics living there had, according to the mandate, for a long time preached and published their errors both privately and openly, 'to the ruin of the diocese if speedy resistance be not made'.⁽²⁾ There is, unfortunately, no evidence as to the identity of these Sussex lollards, the Chichester registers before 1396, which might have contained such information, being lost. Nor is there any indication, either in the civil records or in Bishop Rede's register,⁽³⁾ that the offenders were ever brought to book. Perhaps the outbreak was an isolated one, for there is no further record of lollardy in Sussex until at least 1418.⁽⁴⁾

The next case of heresy, a most important one, occurred in 1399 in the diocese of Norwich, which seems to have previously been free of lollards. The diocese may have owed its orthodoxy partly to the character of its bishop, the ferocious Henry Despenser, who

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1. See above pp. 94-8.
 2. CCR 1396-9 p. 158.
 3. Register of Robert Rede (1396-1415) (Sussex Recd. Soc. vols. VIII and XI).
 4. The case of John Boreham, arrested in 1438, but supposed to have been practising for twenty years. Thomson, Later Lollards p. 179.

in about 1389 had issued a proclamation in which 'Juravit nempe, et non poeni tebit illum, quod si quisquam de secta perversa praedicare praesumeret in Dioecesi sua, vel ignibus traderetur vel capite privaretur. Nullusque fuit de tanta sequela, qui, hiis cognitis, vellet ad martyrium properare; propter quod, in Episcopatu suo hactenus fides et religio inviolata permansit'.⁽¹⁾

Despite Despenser's threats, however, by 1399 lollard doctrines were being preached in Norfolk by William Sautre⁽²⁾ or Chatrys, a chaplain employed in the church of St. Margaret, King's Lynn and in the nearby parish of Tilney. On the 30th April 1399, and on the following day, Sautre was examined by the bishop and other diocesan officials at the episcopal palace at South Elmham : during the examination he apparently remained defiant, publicly asserting the following beliefs:

- WS(1) Quod non vult crucem, in qua Christus passus est, adorare; sed Christum solum passum in cruce.
- WS(2) Quod vult magis adorare regem temporalem, quam crucem ligneam predictam.
- WS(3) Quod vult magis adorare corpora sanctorum, quam veram crucem Christi, in qua Christus pependit; hoc dato quod vera crux esset coram eo.
- WS(4) Quod diaconus, et quilibet presbyter, magis tenetur praedicare verbum Dei, quam dicere matutinas, et alias horas canonicas.
- WS(5) Dicit, se multis diebus omisisse matutinas, et alias horas canonicas, existentem in sanitate, propter diversas occupationes, viz audiendo confessiones, et insistendo aliis precibus, ac propter studium, et illis diebus missas celebrasse; et dicit ulterius, quod presbyter taliter occupatus in confessionibus, orationibus, seu studio non tenetur dicere matutinas, et alias horas canonicas.

1. Hist. Anglic. ii. 189.

2. Perhaps from Sawtry in Huntingdonshire.

- WS(6) Dicit, quodsi aliquis vovit peregre proficisci ad tumbam Sanctae Thomae Cantuar vel alibi pro aliquo beneficio temporali obtinendo, utputa pro liberatione infirmitatis, vel salvatione bonorum temporalium, vel hujusmodi, non tenetur implere illud votum, sed expensas voti distribuere in eleemosynas pauperum.
- WS(7) Dicit, quod saepius mutavit talia vota auctoritate sacerdotali sine auctoritate diocesani.
- WS(8) Dicit, quod post prolationem verborum sacramentalium corporis Christi remanet panis ejusdem naturae, quae fuit prius, cum corpore Christi, nec definit esse panis.
- WS(9) Dicit, quod vult potius adorare hominem vere confessum et contritum, quam crucem, in qua Christus pependit.
- WS(10) Dicit, quod vult potius adorare hominem vere confessum et contritum, quam aliquem angelum Dei.

The beliefs recorded here ⁽¹⁾ are in the mainstream of the early lollard tradition, though they place particular emphasis on the divinity of human nature and they lack the anti-clerical bias found elsewhere : unfortunately they give us no clue as to where Sautre learned his heresy. Though at first defiant, it was not long before Sautre succumbed either to a change of heart or, more probably, to the Bishop's threats and persuasions. On 19th May, still at South Elmham, he abjured his heresies before Despenser, swearing on the Gospels never again to hold, preach or teach them. Six days later he made a further abjuration, in English, before a crowd gathered in the churchyard of St. James', Lynn, and finally, on the 25th May, he again swore not to teach or preach heresy, and also agreed not to hear confessions in future without the Bishop's special permission.

1. Concilia iii. 257.

Sautre's return to orthodoxy (if, indeed, it was ever genuine) was short-lived. Moving to London, where he became parish priest of St. Osyth's, Wallbrook, he resumed his lollard teaching there. By 12th February 1401, however, he had been arrested as a relapsed heretic and brought before Archbishop Arundel in Convocation, accused of teaching virtually the same conclusions as in 1399. On indictment he asked for a copy of the conclusions, and for time to reply to them. He was given until the 18th February, when he appeared again, remaining defiant and upholding all his heresies in their original form except that concerning the sacrament : on this last point he made the ambiguous statement 'quod post prolationem verborum sacramentalium corporis Christi remanet panis, quam fragimus, et panis cum corpore Christi; nec definit esse panis simpliciter, sed remanet sanctus, verus et panis vitae; et credo ille este verum corpus Christi post prolationem verborum sacramentalium'.⁽¹⁾

On the 18th and the 19th Sautre was examined concerning his beliefs on the sacraments by Arundel himself, who gave him every opportunity to recant. The heretic, however, refused to give a straight answer to any of the archbishop's questions, speaking either 'quasi vacillando' or 'quasi deridendo'. Asked eventually whether he would conform to the determination of the church, he replied that he would only do so where such determination was not contrary to the will of God. By the 19th it had become clear that Sautre would not recant, and he was therefore declared to be a relapsed and obstinate heretic, and sentenced to be degraded from the priesthood and handed over to the secular power.

1. Concilia iii. 255-6.

Sautre's second trial took place at a particularly crucial time, during the session of the parliament which passed the statute "de heretico comburendo", by which relapsed and obstinate heretics could be executed. It is not clear whether this law had been as good as passed by the time Sautre came to judgment,⁽¹⁾ or whether it was put through after his execution. Mr. McFarlane thinks that the former is true,⁽²⁾ and that Sautre's defiance of the archbishop was born of a certainty of impending death. Howsoever this may be, Sautre seems, at some time during his trial, to have petitioned parliament, sending them a list of his beliefs with the following appeal attached:

'Ego Willelmus Sautrye; protestor me nolle defendere in sensu falso, nec istas nec aliquas conclusiones, sine sufficienti deliberatione, cogente me persecutione et carceratione violenta : supplicans dominum meum regem, omnes regales, et totum parliamentum, quod possum venire ad manifestam audientiam domini regis et totius parliamenti : ad quem et ad quam audientiam ego appello, propter salutem et pacem totius regni'.⁽³⁾

Even if Sautre's petition ever reached Parliament, that body could or would do nothing to save him. On the 26th February he was degraded of his priestly office at St. Paul's, Archbishop Arundel using the occasion to expound the whole story of the trial to the congregation in English : on the same day the secular power to which he had been relinquished sentenced him to death.⁽⁴⁾ At the time of his degradation he is said to have prophesied to the Archbishop : 'Ego, missus a Deo, dico tibi quod tu et totus clerus tuus et eciam rex estis in breve mala morte morituri; et extranea nacionis lingua in regno superveniet regnatura'.⁽⁵⁾ On the same

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1. It was not promulgated until mid-March. Rot. Parl. iii. 467
 2. McFarlane, Wycliffe p. 151 : the form of ~~Sunderby's~~ ^{Sautre's} condemnation certainly makes it appear that 'de heretico comburendo' was already in force. Rot. Parl. iii. 459.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. p. 408. The text of this appeal does not appear in the rolls of Parliament or in any other source save this.
 4. Concilia iii. 259-60; Rot. Parl. iii. 459.
 5. Usk p. 58.

day, Sautre was burnt at the stake at Smithfield.⁽¹⁾

Perhaps because of the deterrent effect of Sautre's execution, heresy seems to have been quiescent in Norfolk and Suffolk during the next twenty years - at least, few records of it survive. Some lollards, however, did probably exist in the area, for in May 1408⁽²⁾ a royal commission was sent to Alexander Totyngton, Bishop of Norwich (1406-13), the sheriffs of Norfolk and Suffolk and the mayor and sheriffs of Norwich, ordering them to make proclamation in the two counties against the preaching of heresy and to arrest any offenders. Furthermore, amongst the charges laid against Bishop Totyngton by his enemies in 1411⁽³⁾ was one that he had 'authorised' the growth of many heresies and errors amongst the clergy of the diocese. The accusation was judged to be untrue and malicious, but it may have had some basis in fact : perhaps Totyngton was not over-zealous in the pursuit of lollards, and certainly no prosecutions are recorded either in his register or in those of his successors, Bishops Richard Courtenay (1413-15) and Wakering (1415-25). Perhaps even more significantly, no lollards from the diocese⁽⁴⁾ are known to have taken part in Oldcastle's revolt⁽⁵⁾: nor, after the revolt, when royal commis-

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1. Usk *ibid*; Hist. Anglic. ii.247; Workman ii.167.
 2. CPR 1405-8 p. 476.
 3. Cal. Pap.L vi. 299.
 4. Except Edmund Fryth of Mildenhall, Suff., one of Oldcastle's household, and William Reyneham, a Suffolk tenant of Oldcastle's.
 5. An outbreak of 'unlawful conventicles and riots' in Norwich in January 1414, may have had some link with the revolt, but heresy is nowhere mentioned in connection with these events. CPR 1413-16 p. 176.

sions were sent out ordering investigations of heresy in the counties where lollards were known to exist, were any such commissions sent to Norfolk or Suffolk. No prosecutions, in fact, are known to have taken place in these counties until 1424, though throughout the remainder of the fifteenth century the area was a major centre of heresy.⁽¹⁾

Further south, in Essex, then in the diocese of London, the lollards were active at a far earlier date, mostly in the north-east of the county near Colchester, an area where John Ball had been active in the 1360's and 1370's,⁽²⁾ and where there had been a local rising during the Peasants' Revolt.⁽³⁾ Definite links between the Revolt and the rise of lollardy are, however, difficult to make. The first known lollard evangelist as such in Essex appears to have been one John Beket of Pattiswick, a layman, who at some unknown date in the closing years of the fourteenth century was excommunicated for preaching heresy. By June 1400, however, '*illo inspirante, sicut pie creditur, qui neminem vult perire, ad cor reversus, et de propria salute cogitans, nonnullas conclusiones sive assertiones haereticas ... per eum prius tentas, doctas ... et publice praedicatas ... pro magna parte ad ipsius petitionis instantiam describi fecimus, coram nobis extitis spontanee et lachrymabiliter confessatus*'.⁽⁴⁾ No doubt impressed by this unusual voluntary

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1. qv. Thompson pp. 120 ff.
 2. In 1367 Ball was preaching in the deanery of Bocking, and in 1376 orders for his arrest were sent to the vicars of Tye, Panfield and Shalford, as well as to the authorities in Colchester. Reg. Langham 149; CPR 1374-7 p. 415.
 3. Attacks were made on the property of Coggeshall Abbey, and the house of John Sewall, sheriff of Essex, in the same town was burnt, possibly under the influence of Thomas Sweyn of Coggeshall, said to be one of the leaders of the Suffolk rebels. Réville, Soulevement lxxii, 59, 181, 220.
 4. Reg. Arundel. ff. 406-8.

recantation, Archbishop Arundel, to whom he had confessed, granted him absolution and restored him to good fame. We are fortunate in possessing a list of the doctrines preached by Beket, which since it was written at his own instance is likely to be a true record :

- JB(1) Asserere, quod presbyter existens in mortali peccato non conficit consecracionem, nec baptizat.
- JB(2) Asserere, quod regibus et secularibus potestatibus vel quibuscunque, coercionem spiritualem vel temporalem habentibus, dum sunt in mortali peccato, a subditis et subjectis nullatenus obediendum vel obtemperandum existit.
- JB(3) Asserere, quod actus carnalis sive coitus extra matrimonium, secundum formam et observantiam ecclesiae contractum, est licitus et permis ivus, ac jure divino fieri potest sine periculo animae et peccato.
- JB(4) Asserere, duliam et reverentiam cruci et sanctorum imaginibus a Christi fidelibus nullatenus exhiberi.
- JB(5) Asserere, quod chrismatio et confirmatio puerorum aequaliter committitur simplici sacerdoti, sicut constituto in episcopali et pontificali dignitate.
- JB(6) Asserere, quod presbyteri et constituti in sacris jure divino nubere possunt sine periculo et peccato.
- JB(7) Assere, quod licitum est et etiam meritorium religionis personis, utriusque sexus, et in quacunq[ue] religione approbata eorum libero arbitrio egredi religionem, et redire ad seculum, et ducere uxores; et e converso, praeter et contra ordinationem ecclesiae, ac sacrorum canonum institutiones.
- JB(8) Informare et instruere pueros carnes comedere in die Sabbati, asserendo, hoc sanum esse, sine aliquo peccato et offensa.
- JB(9) Quod doctrina eorum et praedicatio magis est aedificatura et Deo placabilis quam doctrina totius ecclesiae docta vel praedicata primitus a quocunque.

Though it is noticeable that he does not deny transubstantiation, it is obvious that Beket's heresy was of a fairly radical nature. His articles (1), (4) and (5) are fairly commonly-held lollard beliefs, and article (2) is an extreme form of Wycliffe's ideas on civil dominion. Article (8), on the other hand, is probably Beket's own. More unusual are his ideas on sex and marriage, expressed in articles (3), (6) and (7) : these resemble most closely the views on the same subjects held by William Ramsbury, who was preaching in Wiltshire between 1385 and 1389,⁽¹⁾ and who also, like Beket in article (~~1~~⁷) claimed a monopoly of rectitude. Ramsbury (like Beket a layman) had been ordained a member of the obscure lollard 'priesthood', and it is just possible that Beket was also a member of this 'order', for though (unlike Ramsbury) he is not accused of havin^r said lollard masses, he is said to have deceived the people 'asserens ipsum fuisse fratrem de aliquo ordine predicatorum'. On the other han', Beket may simply have been posing as a friar, and this view is made more credible by the existence of a letter from Arundel to the prior provincial of the Dominicans announcing the heretic's recantation.⁽²⁾ Also militating against a close connection between Ramsbury and Beket is the fact that the former canvassed a number of doctrines, including a denial of transubstantiation, not touched upon by the latter.

Whether John Beket was a member of a lollard preaching order or a counterfeit friar, there can be little doubt that his

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1. See above pp.315-6.
 2. Re . Arundel. f. 408. Letters were also sent to the heads of the other mendicant orders.

evangelism left its mark. At the time of Oldcastle's revolt three villages within five miles of his home in Pattiswick - Halstead, Kelvedon and Coggeshall - produced lollard rebels, and Pattiswick itself was the home of John and Thomas Cok, who were amongst the local organisers of the rising.⁽¹⁾

Perhaps even more important than Beket to the development of lollardy in Essex, however, was a man known to us only as William,⁽²⁾ parish priest of Thaxted, a village twelve miles north-west of Pattiswick. According to the jurors in 1414, William had preached heresy in Thaxted itself, in Maldon on the sea-coast, and in many other places in Essex from Michaelmas 1401 right up to the outbreak of Oldcastle's revolt,⁽³⁾ though he had apparently not attracted the attention of the authorities during this time. What doctrines he preached, and whether (as is probable) he was connected with Beket, remains unknown : the effects of his teaching, and of that of his disciple John Smyth of Thaxted, are best dealt with in the section on the revolt.

Apart from the accounts of the activities of Beket and William of Thaxted, there are few other extant records of lollardy in Essex before 1414. In about 1405⁽⁴⁾ the authorities seem to have suspected the existence of heresy in Colchester, and the bailiffs

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1. KB9/204/1/4,5,6,9,12 etc. see below p.32-3.
 2. An exhaustive search of the records has failed to produce a surname for William : it seems likely that he was not actually the vicar of Thaxted but rather a curate of sorts. The vicars of Thaxted before 1407 are unknown. Robert Whytton. DD, was vicar in 1407 (March-December) Thomas Orton from December 1407-March 1410, and John Dey after 1410. Reg. Bubwith (London) f.3; Reg. Clifford (London) i.71, ii. 2,23.
 3. KB9/204/1/2,4.
 4. KB9/204/1/11.

of the town received orders from Archbishop Arundel to confiscate all English books in the town and to hand them over for examination by the Prior of Smithfield. The books collected, however, were apparently found not to be heretical, for after examination they were handed back to their owners. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the Archbishop had some grounds for his suspicions : certainly Colchester produced one rebel and a number of suspected lollard sympathisers in 1414, and in the years after the revolt the town became an important centre of heresy.

Leaving Essex and moving westwards, we find little evidence of lollardy in Hertfordshire or Bedfordshire in the years preceding Oldcastle's revolt, save that from a later record we know that by 1410 a lollard community existed in the latter county at Dunstable. This was probably under the leadership of Richard (or Robert) Morley, a rich brewer later to become notorious for his rôle in the rising, and its members included three of the atte Well family, ploughmen from nearby Stanbridge.⁽¹⁾

It is more unfortunate that we know little about the development of lollardy in Buckinghamshire, a county which sent one of the larger contingents to join Oldcastle : not only are the indictments of the 1414 rebels missing, however, but earlier records are also sparse. Nothing at all, indeed, is known of heresy in the county until 1405. In that year Philip Repingdon, bishop of Lincoln (in which diocese Buckinghamshire lay) sent a mandate to the abbot of Notley warning him that 'quidem dampnate temeritatis filii' were

1. Just. 3/2/7/1 (Delivery of Bedford Gaol. 3rd May 1418).

preaching without license in the parish church of Chilton, not far from Oxford, and in other churches in the same area whose advowsons had been appropriated to the abbey,⁽¹⁾ 'in suarum grave periculum animarum aliorum perniciosum exemplum vestrum prejudicium non modicum nostre que jurisdictionis contemptum manifestum'.⁽²⁾ The abbot was ordered to cite the offenders to appear before Repingdon within twelve days of the summons. Who these unlicensed preachers were, or whence they came, is unknown⁽³⁾: nor can we even be sure that they preached lollardy or heresy, for such an accusation, while it is implied in Repingdon's letter, is not specifically made there.

Whether or not lollards were preaching in west Buckinghamshire in the years before 1414, there can be no doubt that during these years they were active in the south-east of the county, between Aylesbury and High Wycombe, an area which sent at least twenty rebels to join Oldcastle. Though no records of the heretics in these parts exist for the period before 1414, from later records it is safe to assume that their leaders were the gentry family of Cheyne of Drayton Beauchamp on the Hertfordshire border, three members of which were arrested for their part in Oldcastle's rising. If the Cheynes were the leaders, the most important preacher of heresy in the area was Thomas Drayton, appointed vicar of Drayton Beauchamp in October 1410 by Roger Cheyne.⁽⁴⁾ The effects of this classic combination of

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1. These were Prince's Risborough, Ashendon, Chearsley, Dorton, Long Crendon, Lower Winchendon and Hillesden. all in S.W. Bucks. near the Oxford border. VCH Bucks. ii.266, iv.7, 21,45,48,121,180.
 2. Reg. Repingdon I. 48-9.
 3. Oxford, which even in 1405 contained a few active lollards, is the nearest large town. Piddington, Oxon., a few miles to the north, had a lollard chaplain in 1416. See above p.295
 4. Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f.40. He had previously been vicar of Didcot.

lollard preaching with gentry support will be considered below in the account of Buckinghamshire's part in the revolt.

If traces of early lollardy in the south-eastern counties north of the Thames are hard to find, the evidence of it in Kent, Sussex and Surrey is scantier still. Between 1400 and 1414 in fact, no more than a handful of cases are known, all occurring after 1405 and all of them in Kent. Across the Channel, however, in the English-ruled and largely English-populated town of Calais, there seems to have been a community of lollards, or at least of heretics, as early as 1401. In November of that year Walter Skirlaw, bishop of Durham, then returning from negotiations in France,⁽¹⁾ was ordered by Archbishop Arundel to deal with "nonnullas personis de heretica et erronea pravitate suspecto ac gravi vicis apostasie notate, necnon in diversis criminibus notoriis et enormibus impetit in villa et partibus Calesie latent in tenebrarum obscuris et serpentina volencia inficunt gregem nostrum".⁽²⁾ It is notable that Skirlaw was not commissioned to investigate rumours of heresy in the port, but rather to punish those heretics known to exist there. No more is heard of these Calais heretics, but it is fairly safe to assume that, in a town more English than French, the heresy they followed was some form of lollardy rather than the teachings of a European sect. The prosecution carried out in 1401 seems to have been effective, for there is no further evidence of heresy in Calais at any time during the fifteenth century.

1. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. iii. 1710.

2. Reg. Arundel. i. f.105.

Returning to Kent, we find no evidence of lollard activity there until 1405, when William Thorpe, the itinerant lollard preacher, a parently paid a visit to Canterbury, where on Mid-lent Sunday he heard a sermon (of dubious orthodoxy) on confession given by a Faversham monk named Morden.⁽¹⁾ Thorpe's visit to Canterbury may have been connected with a lollard group there of which the traces have been lost, but whose members may have included Henry Cok of Chartham (near Canterbury) and Thomas atte Mille of Canterbury, excommunicated by Arundel in March and June 1405 respectively for contumacy in not appearing 'super certis articulis animarum suarum correccionem et salutem tangentibus'.⁽²⁾

More significant than Thorpe's visit to Kent was the marriage, in June 1408, of Joan Lady Cobham, one of the county's great heiresses, to Sir John Oldcastle, who thus became Lord Cobham.⁽³⁾ As a result of this union Oldcastle gained, amongst other lands, the north Kent manors of Cooling, Cobham, Pole, Stone and Beckley, with the advowsons of Cobham and Cooling and the castle of Cooling, which Sir John seems to have made his principal residence.⁽⁴⁾ It is probable, if not certain, that Oldcastle held lollard views by the time of the marriage : certainly, within two years of it, he was organising the spread of heresy in his new lands. On April 3rd 1410 Archbishop Arundel sent a mandate to the dean of Rochester informing him that one John 'capellanum se praetendens, moram trahens ... cum domino John Oldcastle milite ... in ecclesiis B. Mariae et sanctae

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1. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. p. 497. During his examination before Arundel in 1407, Thorpe claimed that Morden, an orthodox monk, had preached the lollard doctrine that oracular confession was unnecessary.
 2. Reg. Arundel. i. ff.21,439.
 3. Waugh, 'Sir John Oldcastle' in ESR xx pp. 437-8.
 4. C.Inq. Misc. 1399-1422 no. 561.

Werbungae in Hoo, ac Halstow, et Conlyng ... nuper propria temeritate praedicare, quin verius decreta evangelica et sanctiones orthodoxorum patrum blasphemare et subsannari non metuit; lollium et zizania, ac haereses ... in oppressionem veri seminis Jesu Christi, et praesertim in dicta ecclesia de Coulyng, damnabiliter seminando.⁽¹⁾

The dean was ordered to place an interdict on the churches mentioned, and to cite John the chaplain, who had gone into hiding, to appear before the Archbishop within twelve days, on pain of excommunication.

Though it is perfectly clear that John the chaplain was living in Oldcastle's household and preaching under his protection, no attempt seems to have been made at this time to proceed directly against Sir John. Two days later, indeed, the interdict was lifted, ostensibly to allow the wedding at Cooling of Joan Braybroke,⁽²⁾ Oldcastle's step-daughter, to Thomas Brooke.⁽³⁾ Thereafter it was lifted altogether. No more is heard of John the chaplain, who disappears into obscurity : it is possible that he is to be identified with John Lay, priest of Nottingham, who was arrested for preaching before Oldcastle in 1413.⁽⁴⁾

Archbishop Arundel's actions in first ordering the interdict, and then so soon countermanding it, are hard to explain. It is worth noticing that the incident occurred in the Easter recess of the parliament of 1410, during the previous session of which a radical

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1. Concilia iii. 329-30.
 2. Daughter of Oldcastle's wife Joan Cobham by her 2nd husband, Sir Reginald Braybroke, Joan Braybroke was sole heiress of the Cobham lands.
 3. Concilia iii. 330-31 for Thomas Brooke, son of Sir Thomas Brooke of Holditch, Devon, see above pp. 34-9.
 4. See ^{below} ~~above~~ pp. 473-4.

Bill for the confiscation of church lands had been debated⁽¹⁾; this Bill was apparently based on the proposals of John Purvey, and was all but certainly promoted by Oldcastle, sitting in the lords as Lord Cobham. It is possible then, that Arundel's interdict was a counter-attack, designed to frighten Oldcastle out of his support for the disendowment Bill and for other anti-clerical legislation debated by this parliament,⁽²⁾ which was due to begin a new session on 7th April, four days after the Archbishop sent out his order. Whether the ban was lifted as a result of pressure on Arundel by Joan Lady Cobham (or even by Oldcastle's friend Prince Henry) or whether it was removed in return for an undertaking by Oldcastle, it is impossible to say. At any rate, Oldcastle's support for heresy remained unwavering, as is demonstrated by the fact that he and the veteran lollard Richard Wyche were in correspondence with the Bohemian Hussites in September 1410, a mere six months after the lifting of the interdict.⁽³⁾

There is little doubt that Oldcastle continued to encourage the spread of heresy in his Kentish lands during the years immediately preceding 1414, and one of the priests who preached there during this time was Robert Chapell alias Holbeche, presumably an Oxford graduate,⁽⁴⁾ who in either 1412 or 1413 was excommunicated for heresy not only by the Chancellor of Oxford, but also by the Bishops of

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1. Fasc. Ziz. p.393; Roskell, Commons and Speakers p. 151; Hist. Anglic. ii. p. 283; Waugh, 'Sir John Oldcastle' in EHR xx. pp. 440-1; see below p. 461-2.
 2. Hist. Anglic. ii. 283; Rot. Parl. iii. 627, 645.
 3. Waugh. art. cit. pp. 442-3.
 4. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. i. 388.

London and Rochester. He remained at large, however, until the spring of 1416, when he was arrested and brought before Convocation by the Bishop of Rochester.⁽¹⁾ Chapell denied knowledge of his previous excommunication, but admitted being defamed of heresy in many parts of England, and especially in the diocese of Rochester, where Oldcastle's Kentish lands lay : he also admitted preaching many times in the churches of Cobham, Cooling and Shorne,⁽²⁾ and being a member of Oldcastle's household for six months or more.⁽³⁾ No date is given in the records for Chapell's preaching in Kent, but it may be presumed to have taken place before 1414 (while Oldcastle was still resident at Cooling) and it may well be that it was as a result of his activities there that he was originally excommunicated. In addition to his links with Oldcastle, Chapell also admitted to having at one time or another associated with Peter Clerk (alias Payne), the Oxford lollard,⁽⁴⁾ and with the obscure chaplain Robert Shene, who was one of those excluded from pardon after the 1414 rising.⁽⁵⁾

Despite his bad record, Chapell was absolved from excommunication after abjuring his heresies and swearing never again to hold them. As part of his penance, he publicly upheld the following articles (which he may be presumed to have previously preached against) at St. Paul's Cross on 19th July 1416.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Reg. Chich. iii. 15.
 2. Cobham and Shorne are between Rochester and Gravesend.
 3. Reg. Chich. iv. 155-6.
 4. Payne was supposed to have encouraged Oldcastle to revolt in 1414. Emden, An Oxford Hall 152n, 153.
 5. CCR 1413-19 p. 176.
 6. Reg. Chich. IV 156-8.

1. In primis confiteor quod episcopi, sacerdotes et alii viri ecclesiastici quos professio contraria non astringit licite possunt habere, recipere et retinere predia et possessiones temporales ad dispensandum et disponendum de eisdem et eorum redditibus and utilitatem suam et ecclesie cui presunt ac alios usus prout secundum domini et sacros canones melius eis visum fuerit expedire.
2. Item confiteor quod foret valde illicitum, ymmo prorsus iniquum, quod domini temporales quacumque sumpta occasione auferrent predia et possessiones hujusmodi ab ecclesia nedum universali sed eciam particulari quacumque cui donata sunt, eciam propter abusiones mortalium prelatorum, sacerdotum seu aliorum ministrorum in ecclesia hujusmodi conversancium, inter quos boni cum malis communiter sunt admixti.
3. Item confiteor quod peregrinationes ad reliquias sanctorum et loca religiosa non sunt prohibite nec a viro catholico contempnende, sed sunt in remissionem peccaminum utiles et a sanctis patribus approbate et merito com(m)endande.
4. Item confiteor quod venerari ymagine in ecclesia vel aliis locis positas Christi vel alicujus sanctorum representativas non est prohibitum nec eo modo quo a sanctis patribus venerari jubentur ydolatrie inductivum sed tales ymagine multum proficiunt ad salutem populi christiani pro eo quod ad memoriam reducunt merita sanctorum quos representant, et ipsorum aspectus populum ad devocionem et oracionem excitat et invitat.
5. Item confiteor quod confessio vocalis peccatorum in forma ecclesie in foro penitencie usitata est homini peccatori ad salutem anime necessaria, et homini sacerdoti qui secundum ordinacionem ecclesie potest confitentem (fo. 321) hujusmodi absolvere et eidem penitenciam salutarem injungere facienda, sine qua si haberi possit non est mortaliter peccentibus vera remissio peccatorum.
6. Item confiteor et firmiter teneo quod quamvis sacerdos existat in mortali peccato, corpus Christi conficere potest et alia sacramenta et sacramentalia ministrare, nec ipsa eo minus fidelibus quibuscumque proficiunt ea in fide et devocione ecclesie recipientibus.
7. Item confiteor quod episcopi in suis diocesibus possunt ex causis recionabilibus ipsos ad hoc moventibus satuere et ordinare quod sacerdotes absque eorum licencia petita et obtenta infra easdem non predicent verbum dei et in contrafacientes censuras ecclesiasticas fulminare poterint.

8. Item confiteor quod religiones private tam possessionatorum quam mendicantium ab ecclesia romana approbate sunt universali ecclesia proficientes et nullatenus jure divino contrarie sed potius in eodem fundabiles et auctorizat.

Item promitto et juro ad hec sancta dei evangelia que hic in manibus meis teneo quod nunquam tenebo, asseram seu quovismodo docebo contrarium ad aliquod premissorum publice vel occulte.

It is notable that Chapell is not recorded to have made any direct attack on the doctrine of transubstantiation. Apart from this, his doctrines (almost certainly the same as those which he had preached in Kent) seem to have been those favoured by the majority of the better educated lollards of his time. His attacks on clerical possessions, indicated in articles 1. and 2., may well have been derived from the teaching of John Purvey, perhaps through the agency of Peter Payne, whom Chapell probably knew at Oxford.⁽¹⁾ We can also assume, since he was employed in Oldcastle's household, that Chapell's views met with Sir John's approval.

Lollard priests, possibly including Chapell, were also active in Rochester (the nearest large town to Oldcastle's Kentish lands) by the summer of 1413. On the 21st August of that year, at about the same time as King Henry finally gave Archbishop Arundel permission to proceed against Oldcastle,⁽²⁾ a royal mandate was also sent to the bailiffs of Rochester.⁽³⁾ This informed them that certain unlicensed chaplains "de nova secta lollardorum" were preaching heresies and errors in various private places within the city;

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1. Fasciculi Zizaniorum pp. 393-4; Emden, An Oxford Hall 137-8.
 2. Concilia iii. pp. 353-4; K.B.McFarlane, Wycliffe 164; Waugh, EHR vol. XX p. 449.
 3. Rochester Register ii. f. 192.

"ad excitacionem et procuracionem nonullorum qui in fidem Catholicam et determinacionem Sancte Matris Ecclesiam male sapiunt ... ad seminand' discordia in populo nostro ac semen pestiferum lollardrie et male doctrine."

So popular were these preachers that the people of Rochester were gathering together in great congregations to listen to them "ad pertubacionem et lesionem non modicum pacis".

The bailiffs were ordered to make proclamation at whatever places in Rochester seemed best to them that no priest of whatever status or condition should preach heretical doctrines, and that no layman should adhere to them. All heretical preachers, and all those who received or supported them, or who gathered themselves together into illegal conventicles, were to be arrested and imprisoned until they could be examined by the bishop of Rochester or his commissaries. This letter seems to indicate that lollardy (no doubt with Oldcastle's active encouragement) had gained a large number of supporters in Rochester : perhaps because of the action taken by the government in August 1413, however, the city is not known to have sent any rebels to Saint Giles' Fields in the following January. Nor, despite the preaching of Robert Chapell and John the chaplain, are other parts of Kent known to have produced more than a handful of rebels at that time.⁽¹⁾ The reasons for this must, however, be discussed in the next section.

To briefly sum up, then, our knowledge of lollardy in the eastern and south-eastern counties between 1382 and 1414. There is no evidence whatever of lollard activities during this period in Surrey, and little in Sussex, Hertfordshire or (after 1399) the

1. The registers of the bishops of Rochester between 1406 and 1417 are, however, lost, and government records of Kent's part in Sir John Oldcastle's revolt are scanty. See below pp.398-403

diocese of Norwich. In north-east Essex, southern Buckinghamshire and north Kent, however, there is evidence of the existence of energetic lollard preachers, and in the last two areas these were plainly supported by leading members of the local gentry.

(b) Sir John Oldcastle's Revolt and afterwards.
1414-c.1428.

After the final failure of the lollard revolt in London on the night of the 9th-10th January 1414, the government lost no time in despatching royal commissions to every county where lollards were thought or known to exist, ordering their arrest and imprisonment. On 11th January such commissions were sent to the authorities in Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, and the joint shrievalty of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire⁽¹⁾; significantly, no commissions were sent to Norfolk,⁽²⁾ Suffolk,⁽³⁾ Surrey or Sussex, none of which are known to have harboured any rebels. The indictments returned to the court of King's Bench by the commissioners in Essex and Hertfordshire survive, so that we have a fairly clear picture of the involvement of those counties in the revolt, but the returns for Kent and Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire are missing, so that information concerning the rebels in those counties is harder to come by, and must be assembled from other records.

The indictments for Essex show that the county sent a relatively large contingent, twenty men or more, to join Sir John Oldcastle at St. Giles' Fields, and also revealed the existence of well-established lollard congregations in the northern part of the county, between Colchester and Saffron Walden. Probably the most

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1. CPR 1413-16 pp. 176-7.
 2. On January 30th 1414 a royal commission was issued to Richard Drewe, mayor of Norwich, to enquire into reports of 'unlawful conventicles and no small riots' there, but there is no evidence to suggest that these disturbances were in any way connected with Oldcastle's revolt.
CPR 1413-16 p. 176.
 3. Edmund Fryth of Mildenhall, Suffolk did take part in the revolt, but he was a member of Oldcastle's household.

important centre of heresy here was the small town of Thaxted, which William the parish chaplain had made a base for his preaching operations since 1401. Since about 1409 he had been assisted in his evangelisation by a local shoemaker, one John Smyth, known to the jurors as a 'magnus lollardus'. Both men were said to possess and use a number of heretical books in English, as were several of their converts, namely William atte Fan, William Hamond, Thomas Hadstoke and his son John, John Vyly, William Wymbyssh, Thomas Droughte and Henry Bernard, all of whom were specifically indicted of lollardy. Only atte Fan and Hammond, however, were also indicted of rebellion. atte Fan had set off for London on the 7th January (two days before the rebellion was due to begin) and on the following day Hamond had followed him with six other Thaxted men - John Cok, John son of Henry Bernard, Robert Smyth, Geoffrey Fysshwyk, John Boton and John servant of John Smyth the preacher.⁽¹⁾

It is notable that neither John Smyth himself nor William the chaplain are reported to have accompanied the Thaxted rebels, but it is possible that two such important lollards were already in London by the 7th January. The Thaxted men may well have been joined on their journey, however, by another local priest who is known to have taken part in the revolt, namely John Witheryn, parson of the neighbouring village of Widdington.⁽²⁾

1. KB9/204/1/2,3,4.

2. CPR 1413-16 p. 261. Witheryn may well be identifiable with the clerk of the same name who before 1390 had been bailiff to Sir John Cheyne of Isenhampstead, Bucks. Isenhampstead was at the centre of an area notorious for its lollards, and its own vicar, John Angret, himself took part in the 1414 revolt. CCR 1389-91 p. 161.

Something is known of the social background of the Thaxted lollards : the town's main manufacture was cutlery, and of the fourteen men accused six were cutlers, one was a sheathmaker, one a goldsmith and one a shoemaker. Hamond, Hadstoke, atte Fan and Boton were all members of long-established and prosperous cutling families, small landowners in their own right and masters of the cutler's guild of St. Laurence.⁽¹⁾ atte Fan's heresy, or perhaps his disaffection with the government, may have been of long standing, for in 1407 he and a number of other Thaxted men were accused of unspecified treasons by an a prover in Huntingdon gaol, though the appeal was later acknowledged to be false and no charges were pressed.⁽²⁾

Another lollard contingent came from the villages between Braintree and Colchester, somewhat to the east of Thaxted, under the leadership of the Cok family of Pattiswick Green. Though they no doubt had links with the Thaxted lollards, this group may have had its origins even earlier, in the preaching of John Beket of Pattiswick,⁽³⁾ who had been active there in the last years of the fourteenth century : if so, it is likely that they held fairly extremist views.

As early as 28th December 1413 a member of the group, Thomas atte Brook (also called Thomas Pelle) a Colchester shoemaker, had armed himself and secretly left his home to ride to London, presumably to receive instructions from the leaders of the rebellion.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Simcoe, History of Thaxted pp. 20-21, 51-3, 55; K.C. Newton, Thaxted in the 14th Century (Essex Recd. Office Publications) p. 20 etc.
 2. CPR 1405-8 p. 354.
 3. See above pp. 35-7.
 4. KB9/204/1/11.

Four days later the brothers John and Thomas Cok of Pattiswick, weavers, rode into the neighbouring village of Kelvedon and offered John Warner and Thomas Sawyer, also weavers, the sum of 6d. a day each to join the revolt : a third local man, Robert Capedok, had consented to accompany them, presumably without wages.⁽¹⁾ On the following day, the 2nd January, the Coks went to the neighbouring small town of Coggeshall and there they assembled, presumably by previous arrangement, a number of armed men 'adherencia, assensu, covina, consilio et oppinione Johannis Oldcastell', to each of whom they gave wages.⁽²⁾ Amongst these men were William Sprotford of Coggeshall, John Whiteryk, fuller, and probably Hugh White of Halstead.⁽³⁾ The same night the Cocks and Sprotford returned to Pattiswick, where they were received and aided by Laurence Cok, father of John and Thomas and an accessory to their treason.⁽⁴⁾

Thomas and John Cok set off from Pattiswick to London on 6th January, three days before the revolt was due to begin and one day before the first of the Thaxted contingent : on the same day Warner, Sawyer and Capedok left Kelvedon, led by Thomas atte Brook (who had by now returned to Essex, perhaps to act as a guide). The group, accompanied by William Sprotford and others, probably rode to London together and made for the inn called 'the Wrasteleyre on the hope'⁽⁵⁾ - a prearranged lollard meeting place - where John Cok gave

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1. KB9/204/1/9,13.
 2. KB9/204/1/4,5,12.
 3. KB9/204/1/4,5,9.
 4. KB9/204/1/12.
 5. For the 'Wrasteleyre on the hope' see pp. 486-7.

Warner and Sawyer wages of 1s. 8d. each.⁽¹⁾ We know nothing of the part which this Essex contingent played in the revolt itself, but it was certainly present at St. Giles' Fields.⁽²⁾ After the revolt the Kelvedon men, at least, returned home unharmed, probably on the 12th January, on which day Laurence Cok (who had stayed behind) fled from Pattiswick.⁽³⁾ Hugh White of Halstead, who may or may not have actually accompanied the rebels to London, stayed at home until the night of the 30th January, when he fled for fear of being appealed of treason to the royal commission meeting at Braintree on the following day.⁽⁴⁾

The Braintree jurors also indicted another local man, a weaver named Walter Coggeshale, who by 1414 had moved to London. Coggeshale was alleged to have held various unspecified lollard opinions, to have made insulting remarks concerning the revered cross at the North Door of St. Paul's Cathedral, and to have recommended that the image of St. Saviour at Bermondsey (which he slightly called "Simme Savyere") should be cast down.⁽⁵⁾

The jurors at Colchester, which had been suspected of harbouring lollard sympathisers as early as 1405, indicted only one rebel, the Thomas atte Brook whose story we already know. They also mentioned the existence, however, of a mixed group of clergy and laymen, including John Brettenham (a Franciscan friar) John Wells, parish

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1. KB9/204/1/6,9,10,13.
 2. KB9/204/1/9.
 3. KB9/204/1/12.
 4. KB9/204/1/4,5.
 5. KB9/204/1/5. The image of St. Saviour seems to have been a particular target for Lollard attacks, and nearly a hundred years later, in 1508, a London lollard recommended the destruction of 'Sim Saviour with kit lippes'.
Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. p. 1012.

clerk of St. Giles' church, John Andrewe, a shoemaker, John Bryce, Robert Sweyn and William Chilton, the last three being well-to-do burgesses.⁽¹⁾ This group was said to own many books in English and to meet secretly in their houses to read them, sometimes assembling by night as well as by day : the jurors did not, however, directly accuse Brettenham and his friends of heresy, and admitted that they did not know for what reasons the group read their books.⁽²⁾ It is probable that these men were no more than a private society of orthodox enthusiasts, perhaps connected with the Colchester burgesses who had been wrongfully accused of possessing heretical books in 1405.⁽³⁾ At any rate, they succeeded in convincing the royal commissioners of their innocence, for they were all acquitted 'sine die per iudicium curie'. Nor, apparently, were they required to make purgation of heresy before the ecclesiastical authorities, as they would certainly have been had any hint of unorthodoxy attached to them. Despite all this, however, it is tempting to see in this middle-class group the progenitors of the lollards for which Colchester had become so notorious by the end of the 1420's.⁽⁴⁾

Those Essex men who had actually been indicted of heresy seem to have escaped remarkably lightly, and not one of them is known to have suffered execution. Of the Thaxted congregation, all but one

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1. Oath Book of Colchester pp. 95, 103.
 2. KB9/204/1/10,11
 3. See above p.368-9.
 4. See below pp.419-20

of those accused of lollardy and of possessing heretical books (even including the ringleader John Smyth) had purged themselves before the ecclesiastical authorities by January 1416⁽¹⁾; the only exception was Thomas Hadstoke, who was still being summoned to appear in court at the end of 1417.⁽²⁾ The fate of several of the Thaxted men who went to London to join the revolt, however, is unknown, and it is possible that some of them may have been killed in the confused fighting in St. Giles' Fields.⁽³⁾

Of the two priests that accompanied the Thaxted contingent, John Witheryn of Widdington was pardoned as soon after the rising as 20th May 1414, so his part in it was probably a small one.⁽⁴⁾ More difficult to trace is the subsequent career of that influential heretic William the chaplain: according to the Thaxted jurors of 5th February 1414, he was then already in the custody of the bishop of London, having presumably been taken soon after the revolt.⁽⁵⁾ Nevertheless it appears that, despite the serious nature of his crimes, he was allowed to abjure and thereafter released, probably at some time in 1415. Between Michaelmas 1415 and Hilary 1438,⁽⁶⁾ however, he was continually and fruitlessly summoned to appear in

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1. KB27/619/2.
 2. KB27/619/13, 620/8, 622/8, 623/9.
 3. William atte Fan and William Hamond were amongst those who had made purgation by January 1416 (see above, n.1) and John Boton was still alive in 1428 (CPR 1422-9 p. 509).
 4. CPR 1413-16 p. 261.
 5. KB9/204/1/2.
 6. KB27/619/13, 620/8, 622/8, 623/9 etc. until KB9/707/12.

the court of King's Bench with proof of his purgation, and these summonses may indicate that William had relapsed into heresy shortly after his release by the ecclesiastical authorities. He succeeded in avoiding capture, however, until 1431, when he was burnt at Smithfield on April 23rd,⁽¹⁾ a month after another priest from the Thaxted area, Thos Bagley, vicar of Manuden, had suffered a similar fate.⁽²⁾

Of the lollard contingent from the Pattiswick area at least one, Thomas atte Brooke, was captured during the rising, and spent some time in the sheriff of London's prison before being pardoned on the 15th December 1414.⁽³⁾ John Warner and Thomas Sawyer, who had also probably spent some time in prison, were pardoned on the 25th and the 28th January 1415 respectively.⁽⁴⁾ Laurence Cok apparently remained at large throughout 1414 and 1415,⁽⁵⁾ but was pardoned on the 29th January 1416, the day after a pardon was issued to his son John, the leader of the contingent.⁽⁶⁾ The fate of the remaining members of the group (including Thomas Cok the other ring-leader) is unknown, though Walter Coggeshale, the would-be iconoclast, was still being summoned to appear in the court of King's Bench at the end of 1416.⁽⁷⁾

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1. B. M. Cotton. Cleopatra C.IV.f.37 William is not mentioned by name, but there is little doubt that he is to be identified with the 'prest of Thaksted that whas vicary sumtyme ther' who was executed on St. George's Day.
 2. See below p.420.
 3. CPR 1413-16 p. 271; CCR 1413-19 p. 148; E199/26/30.
 4. KB27/616/13.
 5. KB27/614/47, 615/8, 616/10, 617/19.
 6. KB27/619/29.
 7. KB27/619/13, 620/8, 622/8.

Though we know something of the organisation of the Essex lollards in 1414, we know virtually nothing of the doctrines which they held. It is notable, however, that (unlike the lollard communities in many other counties) they apparently had never received any support from the local gentry. Such middle-class support as they enjoyed came from the well-to-do cutlers of Thaxted and perhaps from the more cautious burgesses of Colchester.

By contrast, the lollard rebels of Buckinghamshire, to whom we now turn, plainly owed a great deal to the support of the local gentry. None of the King's Bench indictments for the county survive, so that it is virtually impossible to plot the course of the rebellion there : much, however, can be deduced from other records, which indicate that Buckinghamshire sent at least twenty rebels to St. Giles' Fields, including four gentlemen and two priests.

It is all but certain that their leader was Roger Cheyne, esquire, of Drayton Beauchamp near Aylesbury, a descendant of Edward III's standard-bearer and a relation of the 'Lollard Knight' Sir John Cheyne of Beckford, to whom he may well have originally owed his heretical leanings.⁽¹⁾ Roger, who was born in 1362, was a man of some standing, holding lands worth nearly £40 a year : apart from Drayton Beauchamp, he owned the manor of Grove in Chesham and lands at Marsworth, Saunderton and Wendover, all in south Buckinghamshire, the manor of Cassington, Oxfordshire, and lands at Bovingden, Berkhamstead and elsewhere in Hertfordshire.⁽²⁾ He had served as a

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1. Bridges, Northants i. p. 348; McFarlane, Lollard Knights pp. 163-5; Ms. Magdalen College Hickling 98, 105. Roger Cheyne and Sir John Cheyne of Beckford, who bore similar (if not identical) arms, may well have been cousins.
 2. C138/7/19; CPR 1381-5 pp. 550-551; CFR xiv. p. 70; VCH Bucks. iii. pp. 26, 94, 211, 341, 392.

county tax-collector and a local commissioner of array, and (more significantly) he had sat as M.P. for Buckinghamshire in the parliament of October 1404, during which a lollard-inspired act of resumption of church lands had been urged and anti-clerical demonstrations had taken place.⁽¹⁾

When Roger Cheyne first became a lollard sympathiser is unknown, but he may well have already been one by October 1410, when he presented the priest Thomas Drayton to his living of Drayton Beauchamp.⁽²⁾ Drayton, formerly rector of Didcot, Berks., may have already had a record of lollardy,⁽³⁾ and in the years between 1410 and 1414 he was certainly preaching heresy (no doubt with Cheyne's support and protection) not only in Buckinghamshire but in other counties as far afield as Warwickshire.⁽⁴⁾ We know little of what doctrines Drayton preached in the years before 1414, the only clues being the articles laid against him in 1420, when he was accused of attacking images, special prayers and the religious orders in sermons preached at Bristol.⁽⁵⁾ His part in the 1414 revolt was important enough, however, to cause him to be specifically excluded from the pardon issued after it.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Official Returns; Capgrave 288; Hist. Anglicana ii. p. 419; Annales Henry IV 395-6; B.P. Wolffe, 'Acts of Resumption in the Lancastrian Parliaments' in Fryde and Miller, Historical Studies of the English Parliament ii.
 2. CPR 1381-5 p. 550-51. Drayton obtained the benefice by exchange with the former rector John Warmington, who had held it since 1398. Lipscomb, Bucks. iii. 334; Reg. Hallum (Sarum) f. 40.
 3. He is perhaps to be identified with Thomas Kent of Drayton, Berks., defamed in 1397 see above p. 329.
 4. KB9/209/45 See above p. 284.
 5. See above p. 250-54.
 6. CCR 1413-19 p. 177.

Amongst the other leaders of the Buckinghamshire rebels were Roger Cheyne's eldest son John⁽¹⁾ (of whom we shall hear more later) and his younger son Thomas who, like Drayton, was for a time excluded from pardon.⁽²⁾ With them was another priest, John Angret, vicar of Isenhampstead Latimer,⁽³⁾ near Amersham (and also near the home of Roger Cheyne's cousin John Cheyne of Isenhampstead Cheyne who was not, however, apparently involved either with lollardy or rebellion.)⁽⁴⁾ Angret had occupied his benefice since 1396,⁽⁵⁾ and it may have been partly his teaching that influenced the formation of lollard congregations in Amersham and the nearby village of Little Missenden (both of which, of course, were also close to the Cheyne manor of Grove in Chesham).

At least six rebels came from Amersham - Walter Yonge, John Horewode, taverner, Richard Sprotford, carpenter, Richard Turner, baker, John Wynchestre, weaver and John Fletcher, fletcher⁽⁶⁾: the first two of these, at least, were not poor, and Horewode owned his own tenement.⁽⁷⁾ With them were at least two men from Little

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1. CCR 1413-19 p. 54. John Cheyne of Drayton may have sat for Bucks. in the first parliament of 1413, but it is not possible to confirm this, since the 1413 M.P. may as well have been his relation John Cheyne of Isenhampstead.
 2. CCR 1413-19 p. 177.
 3. CPR 1413-16 p. 261.
 4. After the revolt John Cheyne of Isenhampstead received a government grant of Angret's confiscated goods, which were worth only £2 (E357/24/34). The Isenhampstead Cheynes were descended from Alexander Cheyne (d.1350) and Sir John Cheyne, knight of the shire for Beds. in 1372 and for Bucks. in 1373, who died in about 1400. Margaret Basset, "Biographies of Knights of the Shire for Beds." in Beds. Hist. Recd. Soc. vol. XXIX.
 5. Lipscomb, Bucks. iii. 262,269. Angret was, however, pardoned by June 5th 1414, which suggests that the government did not take his part in the revolt too seriously. CPR 1413-16 p.261.
 6. CCR 1413-19 pp.56-7, 148; CPR 1413-16 p.271; E357/24/34,68.
 7. Yonge's goods, confiscated after the revolt, were worth £8, and Horewode's £6.6s.8d. E357/24/34; CFR XIV p. 407.

Missenden, Thomas Sybyly, fletcher, and John Fynche,⁽¹⁾ perhaps accompanied by a third man, William Hardyng.⁽²⁾

Another lollard contingent came from High Wycombe, a few miles further south. Their leader was probably John Bryan, a local gentleman who was also a member of the borough corporation,⁽³⁾ and amongst their ranks were Roger Bonville, glover and Richard Norton, cooper.⁽⁴⁾ This group may have had links with their fellow-heretics in London, for one of their number was John Langacre, a Wycombe mercer who was also a citizen of London and who frequently had dealings with his fellow-mercers there.⁽⁵⁾

It also seems likely that four of the five rebels indicted by the Hertfordshire jurors to the royal commissioners there were also connected with the Buckinghamshire lollards. Two of them, John Gambon, shoemaker and John Walter, came from Bovingden, where Roger Cheyne owned a small estate. They were reported to have left their homes on 9th January (the day before the revolt was due to take place) and to have ridden armed to London.⁽⁶⁾ John Cok 'landtilyer' and Henry Seel 'husbandman' were reported to have left Great Gaddesden

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1. Their goods were worth £8 and £6.6s.8d. respectively (E357/24/34).
 2. Hardyng was in the earl marshal's prison at London (where many other lollards were confined after the rebellion) on 12th February 1414, when he was released on the bail of four men from Missenden. CGR 1413-19 p. 55.
 3. CGR 1385-9 pp. 322-3, 487, 1413-19 54; CPR 1413-16 p.188; C219/12/4,6.
 4. CPR 1413-16 p. 261, CGR 1413-19 p. 57.
 5. CPR 1408-13 p. 343; 1413-16 pp. 255,271; CGR 1409-13 p.262. During this period the trading links between London and Wycombe were particularly strong, and many merchants, like Langacre, had interests in both places. Ashford, History of Wycombe 38-43.
 6. KB9/204/1/115; C138/7/19.

(near Drayton Beauchamp) on the 8th January, and to have appeared armed at dawn on the 10th in St. Giles' Fields : these two apparently escaped capture, for they returned to Gaddesden together on the 13th.⁽¹⁾ Of these, only John Gambon is referred to in the indictment as a lollard.

We know nothing of the part played by the Buckinghamshire contingent in the revolt itself, but whatever it was they suffered heavily for it. Of the fifteen rank and file whose names are known, no less than nine - five from Amersham, one each from Little Missenden and Wycombe, and the two men from Bovingden - were taken, and after a summary trial on the 12th January, were drawn on hurdles to St. Giles' Fields and hanged there on the 13th, along with 29 other rebels.⁽²⁾ The remainder were more fortunate : Richard Norton of Wycombe and Thomas Sybyly of Missenden were pardoned in June 1414,⁽³⁾ though Richard Sprotford of Amersham had to spend nearly a year in Newgate before obtaining his pardon on 16th December 1414⁽⁴⁾ and John Cok of Great Gaddesden did not obtain his until February 1415.⁽⁵⁾ The fate of the other Gaddesden man, Henry Seel, and of William Hardyng of Missenden is not known for certain, but neither is known to have

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1. KB9/204/1/116. The fifth Hertfordshire rebel indicted, Luke Cotereall of Hitchin, came from another part of the county, and is more likely to have been connected with the lollard group at Dunstable, see below.
 2. CCR 1413-19 pp. 56-7. On the 26th January following the government granted four of the dead men's widows a portion of their husbands' confiscated goods.
 3. CPR 1413-16 pp. 261,271.
 4. CCR 1413-19 p. 148; CPR 1413-16 p. 271; E199/26/30.
 5. KB27/615/36.

suffered execution.

Their leaders got off rather more lightly, for none of them were actually executed, though the government plainly took a very serious view of their part in the rising. On the 18th January (a week after the revolt) Roger and John Cheyne and John Bryan were handed over to the governor of the Tower for imprisonment, though whether they had been taken at St. Giles' Fields, or whether they had escaped to Buckinghamshire and had been arrested there is unknown.⁽¹⁾ Thomas Cheyne and the priest Thomas Drayton, however, were still at large on 28th March 1414, when they were both specifically excluded from the general pardon issued on that day.⁽²⁾ Roger Cheyne died, perhaps still in the Tower,⁽³⁾ at the beginning of May, possibly from wounds received during the fighting at St. Giles'.⁽⁴⁾ His son John remained in prison until 2nd November 1414, when he received a royal pardon, and five days later his father's confiscated lands were restored to him.⁽⁵⁾ Thomas Cheyne and Thomas Drayton, who had presumably been arrested (or had given themselves up) sometime in 1414, were both admitted to pardon on 24th January 1415,⁽⁶⁾ though

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1. CCR 1413-19 p.54; KB27/611/13.
 2. CCR 1413-19 pp. 176-7.
 3. There is no record of his having been released, or pardoned before his death, but he was buried at his manor of Cassington, Oxon., which may indicate that he died there, and not in the Tower. His monument, a plain brass cross, is still to be seen.
 4. He died on the 14th May. C138/7/19; CFR XIX p. 62.
 5. CPR 1413-16 p. 244; CCR 1413-19 p. 327; CFR XIV 70.
 6. C67/37/58,59.

Drayton also had to purge himself of heresy before the Bishop of Lincoln's commissioners at Tring, Herts. on the following 24th May before being re-admitted to his benefice.⁽¹⁾

John Bryan and the priest John Angret, whose parts in the rising had presumably been relatively small, were pardoned as early as 18th May and 5th June 1414 respectively,⁽²⁾ but John Langacre, the Wycombe mercer, remained in the sheriff of London's prison for nearly a year before being pardoned on 16th December 1414.⁽³⁾ Langacre, however, was executed in September 1417, having relapsed into heresy and been arrested at Byfield, Northants. after a meeting with Sir John Oldcastle there⁽⁴⁾; nor was he the only Buckinghamshire lollard to relapse, for Thomas Drayton was arrested for preaching heresy at St. James Bristol (whence he had transferred from Drayton Beauchamp) in 1420,⁽⁵⁾ and both Thomas and John Cheyne were again supporting lollards by the late 1420's, being arrested in 1431 for suspected complicity in the revolt of that year.⁽⁶⁾

Comparatively little is known about the part played in the 1414 revolt by the lollards of Bedfordshire, and, as in Buckinghamshire, the King's Bench indictments covering the county are lost.

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1. Reg. Chichele iii. 107.
 2. CPR 1413-16 pp. 188,261.
 3. CCR 1413-19 p. 148; CPR 1413-16 pp. 255,261; E199/26/30.
 4. KB9/209/6,12,20,27 see above p. 147 .
 5. See below pp. 250-54.
 6. See below pp. 427-8.

It is certain, however, that a few rebels came from the Dunstable area, led by Richard (or Robert, or William) Morley,⁽¹⁾ a wealthy⁽²⁾ brewer or maltman of that town. He had been actively canvassing lollardy in his home town since 1410,⁽³⁾ and may well have been one of the prime movers of the revolt. He certainly considered himself to be a leading light, for when he was taken he had with him two warhorses whose harness was decorated with gold, and he carried a pair of gilded spurs, claiming that he was to be knighted by Oldcastle on the day following the revolt. Even more shocking, in the eyes of the St. Alban's chronicler who reported it, was the fact that Morley carried in his pouch a complete list of the monks of that abbey, with a note of those who were to be eliminated when the brewer (again by grant of Oldcastle) became ruler of all Hertfordshire.⁽⁴⁾ Morley and his contingent may have had some special role to play in the revolt itself, for he was not captured in St. Giles' Fields, but at Harringay (several miles to the northward) where he and others were waiting in "an ambushment",⁽⁵⁾ presumably designed to surprise some of the royal forces. Morley was hanged, and then burnt 'gallows and all', at St. Giles' Fields on the 13th January, three days after the revolt: the fact that he was one of the few to be burnt as well as hanged proved

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1. He is called William by the St. Alban's Chronicler and his imitators, Robert by the escheator for Northants. (E401/660/5) and Richard in government records. (CCR 1413-19 pp. 56-7; Just. 3/2/7.)
 2. Apart from property in Dunstable, he owned land in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire (E357/24/34; E401/660/5)
 3. Just.3/2/7.
 4. St. Alban's Chron. p. 79; Capgrave, Chronicon p. 307; Stowe, Annales p. 344.
 5. Stowe, Annales p. 344.

that he had been condemned as an unrepentant heretic as well as a traitor, but what doctrines he held are unknown.⁽¹⁾

We have absolutely no idea of how many Bedfordshire men followed Morley to London. Amongst his staunchest supporters, however, were the atte Well family, small farmers from the village of Stanbridge two miles west of Dunstable. John atte Well and his sons John and William had been 'de consilio et covina Richard Morlegh de Dunstable lollere' since the year 1410, and had supported him until the 6th January 1414, when he left for London, though only William apparently accompanied him then. William was pardoned of his part in the rising on 28th October 1414,⁽²⁾ but was re-arrested with his father and brother (who had not been indicted at the time of the revolt) on 30th September 1415.⁽³⁾ All three were then accused, not only of having supported Morley before the revolt, but also of planning a new rising since that time : between January 1414 and September 1415 they were said to have organised conventicles and congregations of lollards by night in a wood called Blackgrove in the parish of Tilsworth, between Dunstable and Stanbridge. Despite the heinous nature of their crimes, however, none of them suffered execution. After appearing before the King in Chancery in October 1415,⁽⁴⁾ they were returned to Bedford gaol, where they remained until May 1418, when they were handed over for examination and

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1. St. Alban's Chron. p. 79; Stowe, Annales. p. 344.
 2. CPR 1413-16 p. 261.
 3. Just 3/2/7m.1. (Delivery of Bedford Gaol 3rd May 1418)
 4. CPR 1413-16 p. 410.

correction to the prior of Newenham, commissary of the Bishop of Lincoln. Nothing is heard of them after this date, and nor is anything known of those with whom they plotted rebellion at Blackgrove.

It is less certain that Luke Coterell, of Hitchin, Herts. (some fifteen miles north-west of Dunstable) was connected with Morley, though no other lollard groups are known to have existed in the area. Coterell was indicted immediately after the 1414 revolt by a Hertfordshire jury, who reported that he was commonly known as a lollard, and that he had ridden from Hitchin to London on the 7th January, two days before the rising was due to take place. For some reason now unknown, however, he had returned home on the 9th, so that he cannot have been present at the fighting in St. Giles' Fields, and the jury declared that they were ignorant as to whether he had committed any treason.⁽¹⁾ Coterell seems to have evaded arrest, for he was still being ordered to appear before the court, and to purge himself of heresy, at the end of 1415, though no more is heard of him after this.⁽²⁾ This case concludes our survey of the rebels from the northern home counties, and we now move south of the Thames to Surrey, Sussex and Kent.

It is evident that few, if any, rebels from Surrey or Sussex took part in Oldcastle's rising. Neither county had so far been known as a centre of heresy, and it is apparent that the government expected to find no rebels there, for neither county was included amongst those to which commissions of enquiry and

1. KB9/204/1/114.

2. KB27/219/12.

arrest were sent on 11th January 1414, immediately after the rising.

Such a commission was, however, sent to the authorities in Kent,⁽¹⁾ where Oldcastle himself had lived during the three years immediately preceding the revolt, where lollard priests under his protection had taught, and where lollard-inspired disturbances had taken place at Rochester in August 1413.⁽²⁾ One might, therefore, expect to find fairly widespread support for the rising in Kent, and especially in those parts of the county nearest to Oldcastle's home at Cooling. Surprisingly enough, however, little evidence of such support remains. The indictments made to the royal commissioners of enquiry are lost, as are the registers of the bishops of Rochester⁽³⁾ during this period, but the extant registers of the diocese of Canterbury mention no abjurations or prosecutions before 1422 and the Coram Rege rolls of the King's Bench record the names of only two Kentish rebels, Robert Bird of Dover and Sir Thomas Talbot of Davington. One reason for the apparent lack of Kentish involvement in the rising may have been that Oldcastle's lands there were being closely watched by the authorities, who had taken a firm line with supporters of heresy in Rochester in August 1413. Certainly Sir John had some partisans in the county, if only amongst his own tenants, for when John Darrell, the royal escheator in Kent, went to take possession of Oldcastle's forfeited lands, he was forced to take with him an escort of 20 or 30 horsemen 'for fear of soldiers and other

1. CPR 1413-16 pp. 176-7.

2. See above p.377-8.

3. In which diocese Cooling lay. The Rochester registers for the years 1406-1417 are lost.

malefactors adhering to and obstinately favouring John Oldcastle'.⁽¹⁾
 We do not know, however, whether this incident took place before or
 after the rising,⁽²⁾ and nor is it possible to say whether or not
 the 'malefactors' mentioned were lollard sympathisers.

Of the two recorded Kentish rebels, nothing is known of
 Robert Bird of Dover, save that he escaped arrest at the time of the
 rising and was outlawed in June 1414 for failing to appear to answer
 the charges against him.⁽³⁾ Sir Thomas Talbot, however, of Davington
 near Faversham, was a much more important figure, though the details
 of his career are not easy to disentangle. He was a comparative new-
 comer to Kent,⁽⁴⁾ for his family came from Bashall on the Yorkshire-
 Lancashire border,⁽⁵⁾ and he is perhaps to be identified with the
 man who, having been appointed a King's Knight by Richard II in 1392,⁽⁶⁾
 led a revolt in Cheshire in 1393 against the dukes of Lancaster and
 Gloucester. This uprising may have been connived at by the King,⁽⁷⁾
 and certainly Talbot did not suffer much for his part in it, for after
 a spell of imprisonment in the Tower in 1394⁽⁸⁾ he was given a pardon,⁽⁹⁾

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1. Devon, Issues of the Exchequer p. 353.
 2. It could have occurred at any time between Oldcastle's condemnation in October 1413 and the end of Darrell's term of office on 12th November 1414. PRO List of Escheators p. 66.
 3. KB27/611/13.
 4. He had been established at Davington since before 1407, when he was first a commissioner of array there. CPR 1405-8 p. 303.
 5. Dugdale's Visitation of Yorkshire 1666 (Surtees Soc. 1859) p. 239; KB27/630/13.
 6. CPR 1391-6 p. 182.
 7. Steel, Richard II p. 201; Tout, Chapters in Mediaeval Administrative History iii pp. 482-4.
 8. CPR 1391-6 p. 294; CCR 1392-6 pp. 208, 316. He seems to have escaped from the Tower in 1395. CPR 1391-6 p. 560.
 9. Despite the demands of John of Gaunt, who was still pressing for justice to be carried out on him during the first parliament of 1397. Rot. Parl. iii. 338

confirmed as a King's Knight and (in the early part of 1399) granted lands and offices in Lancashire.⁽¹⁾ He accompanied Richard II to Ireland in May 1399, but by September 1400 he had made his peace with Henry IV and received confirmation of most of his previous grants.⁽²⁾ He probably first became acquainted with Oldcastle during the Welsh wars, for between 1403 and 1405 he was acting as Constable of Montgomery Castle,⁽³⁾ and in 1407 he was a commissioner of array in Kent, whence he had now moved.⁽⁴⁾ Despite his apparent reconciliation to the rule of the house of Lancaster, Sir Thomas may have been involved with the group of conspirators who were planning to restore a real or a supposed Richard II : certainly his younger brother, Henry Talbot of Easington,⁽⁵⁾ was wanted in April 1413 for plotting with Sir Andrew Hake (a Scot) and John Whitlock (formerly Richard II's groom of the chamber). They were in contact with Thomas Warde of Trumpington, the counterfeit King Richard, then living in Scotland under the protection of the duke of Albany.⁽⁶⁾

We do not know what part Sir Thomas played in Oldcastle's revolt, but it must have been an important one for, having escaped arrest at St. Giles' Fields, he was one of those specifically excluded

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1. CPR 1396-9 pp. 109,495; CCR 1396-9 p. 444.
 2. CPR 1399-1401 pp. 543, 486.
 3. CPR 1401-5 pp. 184,194; 1405-8 p. 486.
 4. CPR 1405-8 p. 303.
 5. Dugdale Visn. of Yorkshire 1666 (Surtees Soc. 1859) p. 239; CFR XIII p. 75.
 6. CPR 1413-16 p. 35; KB27/609/14.

from the general pardon offered to the rebels on 28th March 1414.⁽¹⁾ It may be that, as a professional soldier, he was originally intended to lead the Kentish contingent, though there is no evidence that he actually did so. He was still at large on 8th June 1414, when he was outlawed for treason,⁽²⁾ and during most of 1415 : he was obviously considered to be a very dangerous man, and rumours concerning his activities were rife. The St. Alban's chronicler claims that he was responsible for the abduction of Murdoch earl of Fife, son of the duke of Albany, from his English captors on 31st May 1415,⁽³⁾ and though it appears that Sir Thomas' brother Henry was really the prime mover in this plot,⁽⁴⁾ he himself was almost certainly involved. Later in 1415, Richard earl of Cambridge, leader of the Southampton plotters, told his fellow-conspirators that 'Sir Thomas Talbot wolde rise in yis mater'.⁽⁵⁾ By September 1415, however, Sir Thomas seems to have obtained a pardon, and to have given sureties for his good behaviour, though part of his lands remained in the King's hands.⁽⁶⁾

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1. CCR 1413-19 p. 177.
 2. CCR 1413-19 p. 414; KB27/611/13.
 3. St. Alban's Chron. p. 86; Wylie, Henry V i. p. 515, iii. p.88. Murdoch was then being taken northwards to be exchanged for the son of Henry "Hotspur" Percy, then a prisoner in Scotland. Though the conspirators (whose motives are obscure, but who may have been in Albany's pay) succeeded in abducting Murdoch, he was subsequently recaptured by the earl of Westmoreland.
 4. Otterbourne, Chronica. Regum Angliae p. 277, confirmed by KB27/624/4 See Select Cases in the King's Bench Ricd. II-Hen. V. (Selden Soc. vol. 88) p. 236-9.
 5. DKR XLIII p. 587.
 6. CCR 1413-19 pp. 359,414,424.

Even now, however, Sir Thomas' conspiracies were not at an end. In April 1417 his brother Henry was finally taken at Newcastle, having been caught stirring up rebellion in the northern counties (on behalf of the duke of Albany, regent of Scotland) by announcing that Richard II was about to invade with a Scots army.⁽¹⁾ It was believed at the time⁽²⁾ that Oldcastle was also in collusion with the Scots, having entered into some kind of written agreement with Albany, and it seems likely that Sir Thomas acted as an intermediary. According to a Northamptonshire jury, Talbot and others unknown had met Oldcastle on 29th May 1417 at Silverstone,⁽³⁾ and there they had plotted to overthrow both King and realm, with the help of the Scots, the Welsh, and other foreign enemies. When Sir Thomas was brought to trial in November 1418 and in January 1419, however, he was on both occasions found not guilty by the jury: the King, nevertheless, remembering his past record, had him imprisoned in the Tower during pleasure, 'for safe keeping'. No more is heard of him after this. It is notable that at no time during their careers were either Sir Thomas or Henry Talbot directly accused of lollardy,⁽⁴⁾ and the motivation behind their conspiracies was probably more political (and pro-Ricardian) than religious (and pro-lollard). Like a number of others, Talbot may well have seen Oldcastle's rising simply as another opportunity to overthrow the Lancastrian government rather than as a crusade to reform the church. Whatever his sympathies,

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1. KB27/624/4; Wylie, Henry V iii. p.88. Henry Talbot was taken to London and questioned by the King on May 1st and May 4th 1417, and executed on 13th June.
 2. St. Alban's Chron. p.115; Otterbourne, Chronica pp.278-9; Wylie, Henry V. iii. p. 87.
 3. KB27/630/13 see above pp.146 .
 4. See above pp.26-7.

there is no evidence that Sir Thomas Talbot had any influence on the development of lollardy in Kent.

This completes our survey of the part played by south-eastern and eastern England in the 1414 rising. We have seen that fairly strong contingents of rebels came from northern Essex and south Buckinghamshire, while another party, probably smaller, came from the Dunstable region of Bedfordshire. Only a handful of rebels, however, came from south of the Thames, and though Kent may well have contained a number of lollard sympathisers, no more than two of these are known to have taken part in the revolt.

The evidence of lollard activity in the area during the years immediately following the revolt is somewhat sparse, and in the part of the region north of London, at least, lollardy seems to have been quiescent for ten years after 1414. There is some evidence, however, of the existence of a group of lollard sympathisers in the St. Alban's area, a stronghold of the Church and the seat of one of the largest abbeys in England. On 26th December 1416 Lollard tracts 'impincentes contra cunctos status Ecclesiae' were posted in every major house and inn in the town, as well as in Northampton, Reading and London : their authorship could not be traced, but they may well have been connected with a plot by 'quendam scutiferum, complicem Johannis Oldcastelle' to kill the King while he spent Christmas at Kenilworth.⁽¹⁾ At some time during 1417, probably towards the end of the year,⁽²⁾ Oldcastle himself was rumoured to be in St. Alban's, hiding in the house of a villein. Though the abbot's servants made

1. Historia Anglicana ii. 317; St. Albans Chron. pp.103-4; Capgrave 317; Elmham, Liber Metricus 147,151.

2. According to the position of the report in the chronicle. Historia Anglicana ii. 327; St. Alban's Chron. 115.

a sudden raid on his hide-out by night, Sir John (if he was ever really there) had heard of their approach and fled. The abbot's men did, however, manage to arrest some of his su porters and 'special attendants' and to carry them off to prison : also found were a number of books (presumably heretical) in English and some Latin service books, in which the haloes round the heads of the illuminated saints had been scratched out and their names excised from the litanies. These books, together with 'quedam scripta plena blasphemie in beatam Mariam, que propter horrorem scribere supersedi', were taken to London, where they could be exposed during sermon time 'ut vel sic civibus innotesceret quanta furia lollardi vehebantur qui, non dico ymagines sed nec ipsa sanctorum nomina, in suis membranis inseri permittebant'. We have no information, however, as to the fate of the arrested lollards, though it is possible that the three heretics tried at St. Alban's ten years later had links with them.⁽¹⁾

In the same year, 1417, three priests of the diocese of Norwich - John Taillour, chaplain of Carlton Rode, Norfolk, Simon Farewel, rector of Ousden, Suffolk, and Henry Blake - were excommunicated for unlicensed preaching contrary to Archbishop Arundel's constitutions of 1408. It is unlikely that any suspicion of heresy was involved, for they were absolved soon afterwards, having declared that they had preached out of ignorance of the constitutions rather than in contempt of them : this case does, however, show that the Norwich authorities were on the look-out for any doctrinal irregularities.⁽²⁾

1. These included William Redhed 'maltman' of Barnet and an unnamed parchment-maker of St. Alban's. They owned a number of books containing condemnations of images and indulgences, and claimed to have learnt their heresy from the rector of nearby Totteridge. Amundesham, Annales Mon. St. Albani pp. 13,222-9.

2. Reg. Chichele IV pp. 53-4.

A direct charge of heresy was, however, laid against John Langley, perpetual vicar of Pulloxhill, near Luton in Bedfordshire, who was arrested in October 1418 by the Archdeacon of Bedford and taken before Bishop Repingdon of Lincoln for questioning.⁽¹⁾ Nothing more is known of Langley, but he may have been connected in some way with the Bedfordshire rebels of 1414, whose centre was at Dunstable, only a few miles south of Pulloxhill. During all this time, however, the lollards of northern Essex and southern Buckinghamshire, the two main centres of revolt in 1414, remained quiet, and we know of no prosecutions in either place until 1428.

There is no evidence to show that Oldcastle visited the region south of the Thames in the years following the revolt, and indeed his Kentish lands were probably being closely watched by the government. At about this time, however, an act of lollard-inspired iconoclasm occurred in Kent which, though apparently well-known at the time, is not mentioned in any official record now extant. The only surviving reference to it, in fact, occurs in a poem called 'Defende us all fro lollardie', which was written between Oldcastle's rebellion and his capture in November 1417 : discussing the lollards' distaste for images, the poem refers to

'And namly James among hem alle
for he twyes had turnement
Moch mischaunse mot him befall
That last beheded hym in Kent
and alle that were of that assent'(2)

No more, unfortunately, is known about the incident.

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1. Reg. Repingdon (Memo. book) f.199.
 2. Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries, ed. by R. H. Robbins p. 156.

Lollard doctrines were certainly well-established in western Kent by the early 1420's, mainly (it appears) due to the activities of an unbeneficed chaplain named William White, who was to emerge as one of the more important national influences on post-Oldcastle lollardy. Nothing is known about his early life or place of origin, but he is not known to have taken part in the 1414 rising,⁽¹⁾ and he was never accused of being in any way connected with Oldcastle. His first appearance in extant records occurs on the 11th July 1422,⁽²⁾ when he was produced before a full Convocation by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had already kept him in prison for some time as one 'vehementer suspectum et notorie diffamatum de errore et heresi'. White admitted having preached without license in the parish church of Tenterden, in south-west Kent, for which he had incurred sentence of excommunication, and he also confessed to being defamed in many places for his heresies, errors and lollardies. From another record⁽³⁾ (that of his subsequent trial in 1428) it appears that before July 1422 White had not only preached in Tenterden, but also as far afield as Gillingham, not far from Rochester on the north coast of Kent. Amongst the views he admitted to writing, preaching and holding at this time were three doctrines fairly common amongst the more extreme wing of the lollard movement.

- (1) 'quod in sacramento eucharistie manet substantia panis, post ejus completam consecrationem in altari, nec desinit esse panis materialis, sed est simul caro Christi, et panis in substantia, sanguis etiam Christi, et vinum non transubstantiatem.'
- (2) 'quod illicitum est sacerdotibus et levitis legis gratiae, tam secularibus quam regularibus, dotari in possessionibus temporalibus.'

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1. Wylie, Henry V i. p.271 states that he was involved in the 1414 revolt, but cites no supporting evidence. He was certainly not accused of rebellion at either of his trials.
2. Reg. Chichele iii. 85.
3. Fasciculi Zizaniorum pp.418-20.

- (3) 'quod fratres quatuor ordinum mendicantium sunt pseudo-prophetae, et magistri mendaces, decipientes populum, sectas perditionis introducentes, et viam veritatis blasphemantes, quorum mendicitas nullibi est fundabilis in Scriptura, sed omnino repugnat evangelicae perfectioni.'(1)

As a first offender, White was permitted by Convocation to abjure his heresies, and, having been informed of the penalties for relapsing, he swore upon the Gospels, 'sponte ut apparuit et voluntarie' not to teach, preach or believe heresy in future, nor to receive or favour heretics : thereafter he was apparently released and allowed to return to Tenterden. His abjuration (if, indeed, it was ever genuine) was short-lived, and subsequent events make it likely that White was again preaching heresy within a few years of 1422.

It may well have been White's influence, in fact, that brought an even more notorious lollard priest to the Tenterden area of Kent. This was Thomas Drayton, whose record of heretical activity stretches back at least as far as 1410, when as rector of Drayton Beauchamp he had preached heresy in Buckinghamshire and other parts of the south Midlands.⁽²⁾ Having been (eventually) pardoned for his part in Oldcastle's rebellion, he had moved to Bristol, where in 1420 he had again fallen foul of the authorities.⁽³⁾ Yet again tried and released, he had moved to Staines, Middlesex, where he remained until December, 1422, when he exchanged his benefice for

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1. At his trial before the Bishop of Norwich in 1428 (Fasc. Ziz. pp. 417-32) White was also accused of 27 further articles of heresy which he had taught in the diocese of Norwich. The three articles given here, however, are the only ones which White confessed to having taught in Kent previous to his trial in 1422.
 2. See above p. 389.
 3. See above p. 250-4

the living at Snave, seven miles west of Tenterden.⁽¹⁾ Within 18 months of his move, Drayton had again fallen under suspicion, and on the 8th June 1425 he appeared before Convocation, having been arrested by the Archbishop of Canterbury 'cujus capcionis causa modoque et forma per dictum reverendissimum patrem ... expositis'.⁽²⁾ He confessed to having been previously defamed of heresy, and to having twice before (in 1415 and 1420) abjured. He strenuously denied, however, that since his abjuration he had written, composed or caused others to write heretical books in English or Latin, and that he had owned or approved any such. It is clear that nothing could be proved against Drayton, for having once again abjured and found sureties in chancery for his good behaviour, he was released and restored to his benefice of Snave, though a few weeks later he was transferred to the living of Herne, near Canterbury and under the Archbishop's eye.⁽³⁾ This seems to have put an end to Drayton's career as a lollard, and no more is heard of him after 1425.

No more is heard of lollardy in the Tenterden area for the time being, but in the same year, 1425, there is evidence of renewed lollard activity in the north-western part of the county, which formed the diocese of Rochester. On 20th September a citizen of Rochester, Thomas Halle, appeared before Bishop John Langdon accused

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1. Reg. Chichele i. 207, 227.
 2. The reasons for Drayton's arrest, however, are not given in the record. Reg. Chichele iii. 107-9.
 3. Reg. Chichele i. 227, iii. 108-9. Herne is within five miles of Canterbury, and not far from one of the Archbishop's country houses at Ford.

of heresy, and particularly of attacks on pilgrimages and the veneration of relics.⁽¹⁾ On this occasion Halle was able to purge himself of heresy with the assistance of 16 of his neighbours, but since he was publicly defamed as a heretic, and had appeared before previous bishops of Rochester on similar charges,⁽²⁾ he was also required to abjure and to swear that he would detect any lollards that he knew, and especially those who owned heretical books in English. It is just possible that Halle's lollardy was in some way connected with the preaching of William White at nearby Gillingham, but (unlike White) Halle was not accused of holding anti-sacramental views, and the fact that he was known as an old offender makes it more likely that his links were with those lollards who had caused disturbances in Rochester in 1413.⁽³⁾

Halle may also have had links with a group of lollards a few miles further south, in the area to the west of Maidstone. At about the same time as the Rochester lollard's trial, a woman named Alice Mychelot from the village of West Malling confessed that one Mone⁽⁴⁾ of the same place, who was vehemently suspect of heresies and errors, had given her late husband two books in English,⁽⁵⁾ West Malling seems to have been well-known as a centre of heresy, for

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1. Rochester Register iii. f.31.
 2. There is no record of his previous appearances, but the Rochester registers between 1406 and 1417 are lost, as are those between 1418 and 1422.
 3. Rochester Reg. ii. f.192 see above.
 4. It is not impossible that Mone (or Moon) like several other Kentish lollards, subsequently moved to East Anglia. See below p. 414. and J.A.F. Thomson, Later Lollards p.122, 124, 126
 5. Rochester Register iii. f.31.

two lollards tried in 1431, Richard Herberd of Hadlow and Thomas Hellis of Brenchley⁽¹⁾ were both required to repeat their abjurations there, as well as in their home parishes, presumably as a warning to any local heretics.⁽²⁾ In August 1426 a man from the neighbouring village of Addington, John Burgh, appeared before the Rochester authorities accused (like Thomas Halle in the previous year) of errors concerning the veneration of images and pilgrimages. He confessed himself 'suspect, diffamyd and disclaundryd of errour and heresy' and was allowed to abjure, swearing that he would give no help to heretics in future and that he would repeat his abjuration at Addington and in all other places 'wher as it may be likely supposyd that my evyll condicion hath hindered christen peple'. This last phrase suggests that Burgh had at one time been an itinerant preacher.⁽³⁾

The main centre of heresy in Kent was, however, still the Tenterden area. In the early spring of 1428 Archbishop Chichele heard rumours of renewed lollard activity in the area, and on the 8th May⁽⁴⁾ he ordered James Burbache, official of the Archdeacon of Canterbury, to cite some 23 suspects. The list was headed by the relapsed William White 'late parish chaplain of Tenterden' and Thomas Grenestede 'pretended chaplain' of the same place : of the laymen, the largest number came from Tenterden - Bartholomew Cormmonger, John

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1. Hadlow and Brenchley are six and eleven miles south of West Malling respectively.
 2. Rochester Register iii. ff.93-4.
 3. *ibid.* f.76.
 4. Re. Chichele IV 297-301 see also J.A.F. Thomson, Later Lollards 174-5.

and Joan Waddon, Thomas and William Everden, Stephen Robyn, John Tame, William Chiveling, Henry Estheghe and Peter Attewynde. Others came from towns and villages within a ten mile radius : John and Margery Iford and John Ricard from New Romney, John Fowlyn from Wittersham, John Abraham and William and Marion Somere from Woodchurch, Robert Mundene from Staplehurst, Laurence Coke from Benenden, Thomas Dole from Halden and Robert Herward from Rolvenden.

By the 25th May, however, Burbache had only managed to arrest four of those named : as for the rest, he reported that he had diligently searched for them, but had been unable to find them, and he had heard that for fear of the execution of law against them they had fled from their homes, and now hid themselves in various other parts of the province of Canterbury. The suspects were again cited on 22nd June and (in their parish churches and homes) 11th July, but none of them appeared and on 31st July they were all excommunicated in their absence. (1)

An undated letter sent by an anonymous English cleric to a friend in Rome at this time (2) throws more light on the Kentish lollards. More significantly, it shows that there was at this time a lollard organisation linking heretics all over the south-east : an organisation, in fact, that felt itself strong enough to plan a new revolt. At some time during the early summer of 1428, possibly

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1. Reg. Chichele IV. pp. ²97-301.
 2. B. M. Cotton. Cleopatra CIV f. 198. The letter was sent to William Swan, an English canon lawyer then at the Curia.

at the beginning of June, one of the lollard leaders,⁽¹⁾ Bartholomew Cornmonger of Tenterden, was taken⁽²⁾: perhaps to save his life, he detected to the authorities lollards all over England. Some of those captured as a result were well-known,⁽³⁾ and these were hanged,⁽⁴⁾ while others were imprisoned for life: they confessed that they had planned to gather together 'multa millia hereticorum' on Midsummer Day, and to bring about the 'extinction' of the church, but that their plans had been completely spoilt by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Chichele had personally ridden for several days and nights together and had captured about 30 lollards, whom he had incarcerated in his prisons.⁽⁵⁾ The writer of the letter was sure that the Archbishop's prompt actions had completely squashed the threatened rising, and in London the young Henry VI had personally led a procession of thanksgiving, accompanied by many of the nobility, and clergy and by a great number of the citizens.

Cornmonger's confession and, more important, the revelation of a new lollard plot, triggered off prosecutions all over southern England. A number of heretics, including two from Buckinghamshire, one from Kent and a woman from the diocese of Winchester, appeared before Convocation in July 1428, and these may have been amongst

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1. 'heresiarcha'
 2. His capture is not, however, recorded in the Archbishop's register.
 3. Presumably as relapsed heretics.
 4. Unfortunately, neither their identity nor their execution is recorded in any other surviving record.
 5. The archbishop's prisons are known to have been overcrowded in 1428. J. A. F. Thomson, Later Lollards p. 175.

those 'detected' by Cornmonger.⁽¹⁾ Nothing whatever is known, however, of those lollards who were executed, or of the 30 or so captured by Chichele⁽²⁾: nor can we be certain in what part of the country the Archbishop's raid took place, though it is at least possible that it was directed at the lollards of the Tenterden area of Kent. Indeed, it may have been Chichele's raid which caused so many of the Tenterden congregation to flee the county.

Several of those who fled from Kent in 1428 can be traced. Batholomew Cornmonger himself, 'virum de secta et ritu lollardorum notorie diffamatum', apparently went to London, where he associated with the lollard priest Ralph Mungyn before being taken.⁽³⁾ Another Tenterden man, William Harry (who was not, however, amongst those cited by Burbache, perhaps because he had already been arrested) was taken in London, whence he had fled 'pro timore examinacionis extra villam de Tenterdene'.⁽⁴⁾ Examined before Convocation, Harry admitted to having read the scriptures in English and to having frequently attended secret conventicles with various men suspected of lollardy. He was allowed to abjure, but because he did not know how to find sufficient security for his good behaviour he was afterwards returned to prison to await the Archbishop's pleasure.

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1. B.M. Cotton. Cleopatra CIV. 198; Reg. Chichele iii. 188-207 for details of these examinations see below pp. It is also likely that Cornmonger detected the whereabouts of William White, whose arrest was ordered on 6th July, and of the other Kentish lollards who had fled to East Anglia.
 2. It is notable that the plotted rising is not mentioned in accounts of the trials of any of those arrested in 1428: perhaps the threat was less serious than the writer of the letter to William Swan believed.
 3. Reg. Chichele. iii. p. 199. Mungyn was tried before Convocation in December 1428 and, having refused to abjure, he was imprisoned for life.
 4. Reg. Chichele iii. 189-90.

At least six of the Kentish lollards, including William White himself, moved to East Anglia which suggests, if it does not prove, links between the two communities. When, and for what reason they moved must be a matter for conjecture, but some of them seem to have been established in East Anglia well before the apparent beginnings of the prosecution in Kent. White abandoned his tonsure and clerical garb and married a woman named Joan⁽¹⁾; he took to teaching heresy at Loddon, Needham, Ditchingham and other places along the Waveney valley, as well as further south at East Bergholt, near Ipswich, where he apparently had a house.⁽²⁾ By the beginning of April 1428 White had been joined by John Fowlyn of Wittersham and William Everdon of Tenterden, two of those cited in Kent : on Easter Day (April 5th)⁽³⁾ the three men, together with White's wife and a lollard priest from Colchester called William Caleys,⁽⁴⁾ were supposed to have attended a communion service at Bergholt performed by one John Scutte, a layman and one of White's disciples.⁽⁵⁾ Yet another Tenterden man, John Waddon, also fled to the diocese of Norwich,⁽⁶⁾ while William Chiveling of Tentenden and John Abraham of Woodchurch took refuge at Colchester, a town long suspected of harbouring lollards.⁽⁷⁾

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1. Fasc. Ziz. 120-121.
 2. Thomson, Later Lollards 120-132; Fasc. Ziz. 123-4. White's activities in East Anglia have been fully described by Dr. Thomson, and thus are only summarised here.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 423-4.
 4. Caleys was burned for heresy at Colchester in June 1430. Amundesham, Annales p. 51.
 5. White denied that such a communion service had taken place.
 6. Records of the City of Norwich ii. 66; Thomson, Later Lollards 122.
 7. See above p.368-9.

The security of the Kentish refugees, however, was short-lived, and it is probable that they were amongst those lollards 'detected' to the authorities by their countryman Bartholomew Cornmonger. On 6th July a royal warrant for White's arrest was sent to the Constable of Colchester castle,⁽¹⁾ and on 13th September he appeared before the bishop of Norwich's court in the cathedral city. He admitted preaching heresy, including the doctrine of remanence, in Kent,⁽²⁾ and having abjured there, and he also confessed that since his abjuration he had moved to the diocese of Norwich, abandoned clerical garb, and married. Whilst in East Anglia he confessed to having preached the following doctrines, in addition to those he had canvassed in Kent⁽³⁾

- (1) 'quod omnis remissio peccatorum solum est a Deo; et ideo poenitentia non est a sacerdote, vel ab homine injugenda'.
- (2) 'quod omnes pie et juste viventes, in utroque sexu, aequalem habent potestatem jurisdictionalem ligandi et solvendi hic in terris; sic quod potestas ligandi et solvendi sacerdotibus concessa, non exedit potestatem aliorum virorum perfectorum vel mulierum.'
- (3) 'quod nullus sacerdos secundum ritum et consuetudinem ecclesiae universalis ordinatus, ... habet potestatem conficiendi corpus Christi; sed post verba sacramentalia a tali presbytero prolata, panis materialis remanet in altari.'
- (4) 'quod in hoc quod Christus dixit, "Hoc est corpus meum", non oportet quod destruat materiam panis, et sic convertat in naturam sui corporis; sed sufficit fideli christiano credere quod est corpus Christi in memoria, et verus panis in natura.'

1. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 867.
 2. See above p. 406-7.
 3. Fasc. Ziz. 417-32.

- (5) 'quod Lollardorum opinio sive doctrina informat homines ponere fidem, spem, timorem, et amorem, solum in Deo et in lege ejus, et non in papa, aut in suis falsis legibus ...'
- (6) 'quod legem nubendi a Christo libere cuilibet trium statuum militantis ecclesiae ordinatam, papa, quem tu Antichristum appellas, cum suis consiliariis ... cum stultis capitibus et caputiis furruratis in destructionem sacerdotii in Anglia infirmavit, post solutionem Sathanae, id est, millesimum annum Christi : et quod acceptantes dictam ordinationem de continentia sacerdotum praeferunt captivitatem Antichristi execrabilis creaturae libertati generali Christi Creatoris.'
- (7) 'quod praesumptuosis presbyteris coronatis, qui se dicunt sequi Salvatorem in eximia virtute castitatis, per eorum professionem tactam Antichristo, clausit erit janna, lampadibus extinctis, cum venerit Sponsus nocte.'
- (8) 'quod postquam presbyteri prohibebantur in Anglia uxores ducere per curiam Romanam, ex tunc eorum salaria horribiliter creverunt, in tantum, ut de pauperibus et manibus laborantibus jam fiunt generosi otio vacantes et libidini.'
- (9) 'quod multum tibi, qui presbyteres, esset inexpediens licitam virtutem virginitatis corporalis, nunquam a Deo tibi traditam, usurpare, at abjicere tuum proprium donum matrimonii, tibi a Domino libere collatum.'
- (10) 'quod infirmorum corpora frustra cum oleo materiali per episcopum consecrato linuntur seu ununtur, cum extrema unctio nihil aliud sit quam misericordiae et Spiritus Sancti gratiae infusio.'
- (11) quod in quadragesima, diebus quatuor temporum, vigiliis sanctorum, vel adventu Domini, nullus fidelis obligatur ad jejunium, cum Christus talia tempora non jejunaverit, eo quod per mille annos post Christi ascensionem tales observantiae a summis pontificibus erant deceptorie institutae.
- (12) 'quod temporibus et diebus proximis suprascriptis licitum est, secundum doctrinam apostoli Pauli, fidelibus carnes et omnia cibaria indistincte comedere inter seipsos, et etiam in praesentia infidelium, ut eos fideles faciant; quod tamen non licet infirmorum fratrum conscientias habentium infatuatas, ne ex hoc scandalum oriatur.'
- (13) 'quod diebus Dominicis, et aliis festivis temporibus indictis per ecclesiam, licitum est fidelibus operare, et quaecunque opera corporalia facere, et exercere, praeterquam opera servilia, quae peccata sive vitia fore exposuisti, et tuis auditoribus declarasti.'

- (14) 'quod decimae sunt a clericis et ecclesiis subtrahendae, dum tamen hoc prudenter fiat, pro eo quod decimarum solutio cessabat in passione Christi, a quo tempore, ut asseris, usque ad Gregorium decimum, populus solis pauperibus libere decimabat, et tunc pauci erant mendici, et non mirum, quia tempore illo non erant isti quatuor ordines mendicantium spoliantes populum, sicut modo.'
- (15) 'quod non est honor aliquis exhibendus imaginibus Crucifixi, B. Mariae Virginis, aut alicujus sancti. Nam arbores, crescentes in silva sunt majoris virtutis, et vigoris, et expressiorem gerunt similitudinem Dei et imaginem quam lapis vel lignum mortuum ad similitudinem hominis sculptum; et ideo hujusmodi arbores crescentes magis sunt adorandae orationibus, genuflectionibus, oblationibus, peregrinationibus et luminibus, quam aliquod idolum in ecclesia mortuum.'
- (16) 'quod si passio Christi fuit utilis et pretiosa, mors S. Thomae martyris Cantuariensis archiepiscopi fuit vilis, et a fidelibus vituperanda, quia propter dominium ecclesiae temporalis mortis sustinuit passionem : et si ipsius Thomae mors fuerit commendanda, passio Christi fuit reprobanda.'
- (17) 'quod nullibi in nova lege Christus concessit latrones et malefactores suspendio vel aliquo alio modo occidi, qui tempore necessitatis bona proximorum abstulerunt ad seipsos relevandos, sed, e converso, justus judex Christus per mulierem deprehensam in adulterio, dicens Vade, etc., exemplificavit nobis homicidium nullo modo fore licitum.

Ad istum dictus Willelmus Whyte dixit et asseruit in iudicio tunc ibidem, quod nullo modo licet illis qui deberent esse discipuli Christi interficere aliquem.'

- (18) 'quod licitum est dominis temporalibus, immo ad hoc tenentur sub poena peccati mortalis, ecclesiae possessiones ab ipsa auferre.
- Super quo quidem articulo ... fatebatur. Dixit tamen quod ipse nunquam tenuit, scripsit, nec docuit, quod domini temporales hoc tenentur facere sub poena peccati mortalis.'
- (19) 'quod nulli licet pro jure haereditario suo, vel pro patria pugnare, dum talis cum pugnat caritatem perdit, qua proximum diligeret, et sic in peccato mortali existens, totum dominium temporalis possessionis amittit, quia talis non est servus Dei sed peccati.'

He also admitted that since his abjuration in Kent he had written, or caused to be written, many books of heresies and errors, some of which were displayed at the trial. He denied, however, that he had preached against the doctrines of infant baptism or auricular confession, or that he had upheld the priesthood of all believers. It is notable that no mention of the proposed 1428 'rising' was made at his trial. The doctrines he admitted upholding, however, were quite sufficient to prove his guilt as a relapsed heretic, and immediately after his condemnation he was handed over to the secular power to be burnt at Norwich. Another Kentish man, John Waddon, the records of whose trial have not survived, was also burnt there at about the same time.⁽¹⁾ On the 4th November 1428 William Chiveling of Tenterden was burnt at Colchester, and it is probable that John Abraham, called Father Abraham (who is perhaps to be identified with John Abraham of Woodchurch, Kent) was also executed there during the same month.⁽²⁾

Perhaps because of the threat of a new lollard rebellion in Kent, the authorities all over south-eastern England were especially on the look-out for heretics during the second half of 1428, and in the years immediately following.⁽³⁾ The arrest of William White triggered off a major campaign by Bishop Alnwick of Norwich against

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1. Fasc. Ziz. 432; Records of the City of Norwich ii. 66; Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 869.
 2. Red Paper Book of Colchester 52-3; Foxe i. 870; Thomson, Later Lollards 121-2.
 3. Since they do not strictly fall within the chronological limits of this work, and since most of them have already been covered by J.A.F. Thomson, Later Lollards, the prosecutions of 1428-30 will only be summarised here.

the lollards of his diocese. Between September 1428 and March 1431 nearly a hundred men and women were examined, of whom at least one was burnt, at least 40 abjured and 10 purged themselves.⁽¹⁾ The immense influence of William White on this unusually large group can best be seen in the fact that many of the accused admitted to receiving him in their houses, or at least to knowing him, and nearly all those whose beliefs are recorded adhered to doctrines taught by him.

During the same period there were prosecutions further south, in Essex, where the chief centre of lollardy seems to have been Colchester. In 1405 and 1414⁽²⁾ the town had sheltered suspicious groups of lay pietists, including members of the ruling class of burgesses, and by 1428 the abbot of St. John's convent there was complaining that many of the commonalty of Colchester were 'detected, noysed and endited of lollardrye' and that even the town bailiffs had some of 'the secte of lollardes' amongst their number.⁽³⁾ It is evident that the Colchester lollards had links with their co-religionists both in the diocese of Norwich and in Kent : at least two Kentish lollards, William Chiveling and John Abraham, took refuge there before being caught and burnt in November 1428,⁽⁴⁾

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1. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 866-74; Thomson, Later Lollards 120-131. Foxe 867-8, gives a list of the names of 96 persons examined, but records now remaining name only just over 50, of whom 40 abjured, 10 took purgation and at least one (Hugh Pie, chaplain of Loddon, who had previously abjured lollardy in 1424) had been executed. Thomson, 120, 237.
 2. See above p .365-7, 384-5
 3. Red Paper Book of Colchester 54-5. The abbot's statements, which were made during a dispute between the abbey and the burgesses, were probably exaggerated, but they all but certainly contained some grain of truth.
 4. Red Paper Bk. 52-3; Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 870.

and William White's house at East Bergholt was only a few miles away, so that he too probably taught there.⁽¹⁾ A local man, John Finche, who was apparently a lesser offender, was also tried in the Autumn of 1428, but after perjuring himself he was released without having to abjure.⁽²⁾

Surprisingly enough, in view of the town's apparent notoriety, no further prosecutions are recorded at Colchester for the time being. In May 1430, however, an unnamed tiler who denied the efficacy of all the sacraments of the church was burnt at Maldon,⁽³⁾ and a month later William Caleys, a priest who had been associated both with William White and the Colchester lollards, suffered the same fate at Chelmsford.⁽⁴⁾ Finally, in March 1431 Thomas Bagley, vicar of Manuden on the western border of Essex, and according to Amundesham 'veteranus et in mente insanus', was burnt at Smithfield. During his trial before Convocation he had obstinately refused to recant his belief in the doctrine of remanence or his opposition to images and pilgrimages, and to make matters worse he had declared that he preferred the teachings of Wycliffe to those of Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose or Gregory.⁽⁵⁾ A month later, on April 23rd 1431, Bagley was followed to the stake by the veteran lollard William of Thaxted, whose preaching career stretched as far back as 1401.⁽⁶⁾ Manuden is

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1. The first royal writ for his arrest was issued to the Constable of Colchester Castle. Foxe i. 867.
 2. He was re-arrested at Ipswich two years later, and after admitting his perjury in 1428 was given a severe penance. Thomson, Later Lollards 121; Foxe i. 873.
 3. Amundesham, Annales p. 56.
 4. Amundesham. op. cit. 51; Foxe, Acts and Monuments 873; Fasc. Ziz. 424.
 5. Reg. Chichele iii. 221-3, 226; Amundesham, Annales p. 61.
 6. B. M. Cotton. Cleopatra CIV. f. 37. See above p. 368

no more than seven miles from Thaxted, and it is likely that the two men had been associated, though no details of their activities are known. Thaxted had, of course, been one of the centres of revolt in 1414, and it is perhaps surprising that the town did not produce more heretics during this later period. Maldon, the home of the lollard tiler executed in 1430, had also been on William the chaplain's preaching circuit.

The lollards indicted in Buckinghamshire between 1428 and 1431 also had links with the rebels of 1414, and certainly they came from the same parts of the county. Three suspected heretics, all from south-east Buckinghamshire, were tried before Convocation during the second half of 1428, perhaps as a result of being detected by Bartholomew Cornmonger. The first to appear, on 15th July,⁽¹⁾ was John Jourdelay of Amersham, a town that had produced a number of rebels in 1414. Jourdelay was a man of some local importance,⁽²⁾ who had served as a county tax-collector and who held the manor of Amersham from the Crown at a farm of £40 a year⁽³⁾; he also leased the inn belonging to John Horewode, who had been executed for his part in Oldcastle's revolt.⁽⁴⁾ He was accused of being suspect of

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1. Reg. Chichele iii. 187.
 2. He frequently appears as a principal witness to local deeds. e.g. CCR 1413-19 p. 194, 1422-9 p. 331, 1429-35 p. 43 and was important enough to be one of those sworn to the peace in May 1434. CPR 1429-36 p. 398.
 3. CFR xii p. 283, xv p. 331; VCH Bucks. iii. 416-7.
 4. CFR xiv 407; CPR 1422-9 p. 77.

heresy, in that he had for a long time kept a certain book full of heresies and errors,⁽¹⁾ and had not given it up to the ordinary as he was required to do by law : on the same day as he appeared before Convocation he was allowed to abjure, and was apparently then released. Jourdelay's involvement with lollardy seems to have been comparatively slight, but it is notable that one of his social class should have been suspect as late as 1428. The survival of lollardy in Amersham from before 1414 until the Reformation⁽²⁾ may well have owed a great deal to the covert sympathy, if not the support, of men like him.

A very different kind of offender was produced before Convocation on the following day, the 16th July.⁽³⁾ This was Robert⁽⁴⁾ rector of Hedgerley near Beaconsfield, 'communis confessor cujusdam latronis William Wawe'. Wawe and his gang, who had been active throughout the home counties in 1426 and 1427, made a speciality of attacking churchmen and church property : they had besieged and robbed the nunnery of Sopwell, Herts., frightened the St. Alban's monks into keeping a nightly watch, plundered the nuns of Burnham, Bucks., and robbed parish priests in the neighbourhood of Sleaford, Lincs.⁽⁵⁾ When Wawe was finally taken and executed, in July 1427,

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1. The book may well have come from John Horewode's house.
 2. J.A.F. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 68-94.
 3. Reg. Chichele iii. 188-9.
 4. A thorough search of the records has so far failed to produce a surname for him. A Richard Stondon was rector in August 1414. Despite Roskell, Commons in the Parliament of 1422 p. 18n., Hedgerley was not within the patronage of the lollard Cheyne family, but belonged to the Saundertons of Wycombe. VCH Bucks. iii. 279-80; Lipscomb, Bucks. IV. 508.
 5. Amundesham, Annales pp. 11, 12, 14, 17.

it was on a charge of being 'a notorious public robber, besetter of hig' ways and despoiler of churches, indicted of high treason ... and a companion of heretics⁽¹⁾: neither the government record nor the St. Alban's chronicle accuse the robber himself of holding heretical views. However unlikely it may seem, however, Wawe must at least have had lollard sympathies, for his 'confessor' Robert was all but certainly a lollard. When the priest was taken is unknown, but he had spent some time in the Tower before being handed over to Archbishop Chichele on 9th July and brought before Convocation, in chains, a week later.⁽²⁾ He was then questioned about his beliefs concerning the sacrament of the altar, pilgrimages, the veneration of images, and whether it was lawful for the clergy to have possessions. To all these and other unspecified articles he replied 'ficta et dubitative ac semper quasi ridendo ut apparuit', except that he declared that he firmly held the orthodox view concerning the sacrament. After a private examination by the bishop of Lincoln, Robert again appeared on the 20th July, when it was reported that 'graviter errasse ac male ac erronee in quamp pluribus sapuisse', but that he had promised to recant and be better informed in future. He was allowed to abjure, but having done so he was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment as a penance, unless he could obtain better grace of the Archbishop: this unusually harsh sentence may indicate that Chichele did not trust Robert's promises, but it was more probably a punishment for crimes

1. CPR 1422-9 p. 422.

2. Reg. Chichele iii. 188; CCR 1422-9 p. 371.

against the civil law. It is unfortunate that more is not known of this case, and it is difficult to be certain whether Robert was an extremist lollard who had turned to crime to further his theories on the illegality of clerical property, or whether he was primarily a criminal who used semi-heretical beliefs as an excuse for his misdeeds.⁽¹⁾ Nor do we know whether he had ever preached heresy at Hedgerley,⁽²⁾ or whether he had links with other lollards in the area.

More in the mainstream of lollardy was Richard Monke, rector of Chesham, where the Cheyne family owned land⁽³⁾ and where a lollard priest, John Angret, had been active before the 1414 revolt. Monke's own lollardy have gone back almost that far, for he admitted to having been defamed for many years and to having previously appeared before Bishop Fleming of Lincoln on a heresy charge.⁽⁴⁾ He appeared before Convocation on the 2nd December 1428, having probably been arrested in connection with the charges against the London lollard and opponent of private property, Ralph Mungyn⁽⁵⁾: during his own trial, which ran concurrently, Mungyn admitted to having frequently visited Monke, but not to knowing that he was suspect of lollardy.⁽⁶⁾

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1. cf. Thomas Seggeswyke (who was also, indirectly, connected with Wawe) a criminal who had risen with Oldcastle in 1414, and ~~Henry~~ Matthew Appleby, a lollard priest and forger. pp.224.
 2. No such charge is recorded in Chichele's register, and the appropriate Lincoln register, that of Bishop Fleming, is lost.
 3. Despite Roskell, Commons in 1422 p. 18n. Monke was not appointed to his living by the Cheynes, who owned the manor of Grove in Chesham, which had no rectorial rights. The advowson of Chesham belonged to the Abbey of St. Mary, Leicester, by whom Monke (himself a Leicestershire man) must have been appointed. VCH Bucks iii 207,215; Lipscomb, Bucks.iii. 265.
 4. Reg. Chichele iii. 197. Fleming had been bishop of Lincoln since 1419.
 5. See below p.542.
 6. Reg. Chichele iii. 199.

Though Mungyn was imprisoned for life, Monke was allowed to abjure, and afterwards released. In his public abjuration, read in English at St. Paul's Cross on the 5th December, he admitted that he had been 'openly and gretly suspect of heresies and divers errours and of conversacyon and famylyaryte hadde with heretikes and with many persones suspect of heresie.'⁽¹⁾

How much support the Buckinghamshire lollards were receiving from the local gentry at this time is a matter for conjecture. Their great patrons at the time of Oldcastle's revolt had, of course, been the Cheyne family, three members of which (Roger and his sons John and Thomas) had suffered imprisonment as a result. Though Roger Cheyne had died shortly after the rising, however, his family had suffered neither confiscation of lands or loss of local prestige. John Cheyne, now head of the family, was knighted before 1420, and served as sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1423-4 and as county escheator in the following year, as well as acting as a local J.P. and knight of the shire for Buckinghamshire in 1421, 1425 and 1426⁽²⁾: all of which would tend to suggest that he had found favour with the government, and that his loyalty was no longer suspect. Thomas Cheyne, on the other hand, did not apparently hold any public office, perhaps because he was not considered to be so trustworthy.

1. Reg. Chich. iii. p. 207.

2. List of Sheriffs p. 2; List of Escheators p. 5; Wedgwood, History of Parliament, Biographies p. 180-181; Official Returns; CPR 1416-22 pp. 310, 150, 560. Care must be taken not to confuse this Sir John Cheyne of Drayton with his cousin John Cheyne, esquire, of Isenhampstead, sheriff in 1426 and 1430-31.

Despite his status in the county, however, Sir John Cheyne seems to have been far from law-abiding. In 1429 he was unseated as knight of the shire when it was discovered that his return had been rigged by the then sheriff, Cheyne's associate Sir William Waweton⁽¹⁾; worse was to come. In July 1430 a royal commission of oyer and terminer was set up to investigate complaints from Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire concerning the oppressions, extortions, assaults and injuries committed there by the Cheyne brothers and their accomplices⁽²⁾: "some", it was said "they have with fort mayne driven from their own lands, beaten, imprisoned, and tortured for ransom". A number of local juries indicted the Cheynes of robbery, bribery of juries, holding false assizes, kidnapping and (in November 1429) of making an armed attack with over 40 men on the manor of Magdalen, Hertfordshire, ejecting the owner and plundering his goods.⁽³⁾ As a result of this array of charges the Cheynes were arrested, but during the Michaelmas Term of 1430 they and their associates were found not guilty by the court of King's Bench and acquitted.⁽⁴⁾

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1. For details qv. Roskell, Commons in the Parlt. of 1422 pp.17-19 and n. The Buckinghamshire electors chose Andrew Sperlyng and John Hampden as M.P's, but their election was quashed by the sheriff, who privately substituted the names of Cheyne and Walter Strickland. Sir William Waweton had been Speaker in 1425, and Professor Roskell thinks he may have had lollard sympathies.
 2. These accomplices included two Buckinghamshire gentlemen, another of the same status from Bedfordshire, tradesmen from Dunstable, Hitchin and Berkhamstead, and a yeoman and a husbandman from Chesham. Though many of them came from areas which produced rebels in 1414, none are themselves known to have been involved in heresy. CPR 1429-36 p.75; KB9/225/4off.
 3. KB9/225/4off; KB27/681/19,20,21,22,23.
 4. KB27/682/3-8.

Amongst all their misdeeds, the Cheynes had not so far been accused of lollardy or support for heretics. On June 19th 1431, however, shortly after 'Jak Sharpe's' abortive lollard rising, the Buckinghamshire authorities were ordered to arrest Sir John Cheyne, to seize his manors of Grove (in Chesham) and Drayton Beauchamp, to confiscate all books, rolls, schedules, bills and suspicious memoranda found there, and to certify the details of his armoury and library to the royal council.⁽¹⁾ It is apparent that Thomas Cheyne was arrested at the same time, and both men were imprisoned in the Tower until the following August 4th, when they were allowed to go free.⁽²⁾ The crime of which they were accused is not specified in the records, but the fact that the authorities were instructed to search for bills and suspicious memoranda, combined with the coincidence of date, makes it most likely that the Cheynes were suspected of complicity in the lollard rising, and not merely of 'riot and rout'.⁽³⁾ Whether they actually had been involved is difficult to say.⁽⁴⁾ It is unlikely that a man like Sir John Cheyne would have been arrested merely on the grounds of his part in the Oldcastle revolt some sixteen years earlier, so that it is probable (if not certain) that more recent evidence of his support for heretics must have been forthcoming. On the other hand, the fact that the Cheynes were released from prison

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1. CPR 1429-36 p. 153.
 2. CCR 1429-35 p. 89.
 3. qv. J.A.F. Thomson Later Lollards p. 61
 4. Another Buckinghamshire man who may have been involved was Roger Leghton of Wendover (where the Cheynes owned land) who in November 1431 was bound over not to support lollardy or give aid to lollards. CCR 1429-35 p. 168.

after less than two months can only mean that their complicity in the rising was, at most, peripheral.⁽¹⁾

Even if, however, the Cheynes failed to involve themselves deeply in a crack-brained scheme like Jak Sharpe's rising, their continued support for local lollards cannot be ruled out. Such support, combined with that of lesser gentlemen like John Jourdelay of Amersham, may well help to explain the remarkable persistence of lollardy in south Buckinghamshire. Amersham, Chesham, Little Missenden and Wycombe, all of which had been centres of heresy before 1414, continued to produce lollards throughout the fifteenth century and still boasted strong congregations as late as the 1520's.⁽²⁾

In Kent, too, lollardy persisted long after the period covered by this thesis, particularly in the Tenterden area, where William White had preached. We have already seen that a rising was probably planned there in 1428, and a revolt (albeit on a small scale) actually appears to have occurred there ten years afterwards.⁽³⁾ Persecutions continued throughout the fifteenth century, and in 1511 the area was still an important centre of heresy.⁽⁴⁾

In northern Essex, however, the other main centre of lollardy during our period, there is little evidence of continuing

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1. Sir John Cheyne's career continued undisturbed after 1431, and he was M.P. for Buckinghamshire in 1432, 1435 and 1445. Official Returns
 2. J.A.F. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 69-72, 86-7, 92-3.
 3. *ibid.* 177-8; 'A Lollard Rising in Kent' in BIHR xxxvii.
 4. *ibid.* 177-189.

lollardy during the latter part of the fifteenth century, and it may well be that the executions in Colchester in 1428 and the burning of William of Thaxted and Thomas Bagley in 1431 had proved to be an effective deterrent.

CHAPTER EIGHTLOLLARDY IN LONDON. 1376-1428.

London, with its population of more than 40,000, was by far the largest city in medieval England, as well as being the most usual residence of the monarch and the seat of all but a handful of the period's parliaments. As such, it was bound to attract the foremost exponents of heresy, and between 1376 and 1428 John Wycliffe, Nicholas Hereford, Philip Repington, John Aston, William Thorpe, John Purvey and William Tailleur all preached there at one time or another. A number of lesser lollards were also drawn to the capital, some of them, no doubt, seeking anonymity and freedom from persecution. Others came less willingly, to face trial before civil or ecclesiastical courts and in some cases the fire or the gallows. Not least in importance were the lollards from all over the country who converged on London in January 1414 at the behest of Sir John Oldcastle.

It is at times difficult to distinguish the activities of "visiting" heretics from the proceedings of those resident in London, and in this chapter all important incidences of lollardy in the capital have been described. Comparatively little, indeed, is known of London's own lollard congregation and our lack of information is in part due to the reticence of the registers of the bishops of London, even though an almost complete series of these survives. Most of our information concerning the London heretics, therefore, is derived from the City records, chronicles, government

records and the registers of the Archbishops of Canterbury. These show that a lollard congregation was certainly in existence by 1386, and that heretics remained intermittently active until 1414, when at least forty Londoners took part in Oldcastle's revolt : nor were the London lollards cowed by their losses on that occasion, for they remained active throughout the latter part of Henry V's reign and into that of his son. The records also reveal the names of some of the Londoners' leaders, notably John Claydon, Richard Gurmyn, John Beverley, William Parchmyner, John Russell and Ralph Mungyn. Of these, Claydon is the only member of the city's ruling class certainly known to have supported lollardy, though two others, John Shadworth and Robert Arnold, also fell under suspicion. On the whole, however, there is little evidence that heresy ever received any large-scale support from London's rulers, and most of its adherents appear to have been small merchants or tradesmen.

Before Oldcastle's revolt. 1382-1414.

As in many other parts of the country, the beginning of lollardy in London are wrapped in obscurity. On at least three occasions between 1372 and 1382 the London mob (then particularly active) intervened in the trials of prominent lollards, but its actions were almost certainly due to local and national political conditions rather than to religious motives. According to the St. Alban's chronicler, however, Wycliffe himself had gained supporters amongst the citizens of London as early as the autumn of 1376, when he had preached in the city churches (at the instigation of John of Gaunt) against William of Wykeham and the other 'Caesarean' clergy.⁽¹⁾

These supporters were, however, little in evidence at the time of Wycliffe's appearance before Bishop Courtenay of London at St. Paul's Cathedral on the 19th February 1377. Wycliffe arrived accompanied by his patron Gaunt, by Henry Percy, marshal of England, and by four doctors of divinity whom Gaunt had employed to defend him. The trial never took place, for after an exchange of insults between Gaunt and Courtenay, the proceedings were broken up by Londoners, who hated Gaunt and Percy and suspected them of planning to overthrow the city's liberties. Though Gaunt was subsequently forced to take refuge from the mob, and several of the duke's supporters were ill-treated by it, Wycliffe himself was not apparently

1. Chronicon Anglie 115-6; McFarlane, Wycliffe p. 70.

harmed, and there can be no doubt that the fury of the Londoners was directed at Gaunt for political rather than religious reasons.⁽¹⁾ Indeed, when Wycliffe again appeared before the assembled bishops at Lambeth Palace in March 1378, a London mob⁽²⁾ actually demonstrated in his favour, reinforcing the demand already made by Princess Joan that no judgment should be passed upon him. The Londoners' motives on this occasion can only be guessed at, but their intervention is perhaps more likely to have been a gesture of support for the popular Princess⁽³⁾ than an indication of support for Wycliffe himself or for his ideas.

The Londoners also played a part in the examination of Wycliffe's most prominent Oxford supporters before Archbishop Courtenay at Blackfriars in 1382. On the 18th (or 19th)⁽⁴⁾ of June Nicholas Hereford, Philip Repingdon and John Aston had appeared before a committee of theologians, and had been asked to give their opinions on twenty-four conclusions condemned by the church as either heretical or erroneous.⁽⁵⁾ Hereford and Repingdon asked for time to deliberate, which was granted, but Aston agreed to answer at once, though his

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1. Chronicon Anglie. pp. 119-127; McFarlane, Wycliffe pp.75-7.
 2. 'non dico cives tantum Londonienses, sed viles ipsius civitates' Chron. Anglie. p. 183.
 3. During the riots of the previous year Gaunt had taken refuge with Princess Joan, who as widow of the Black Prince seems to have been particularly beloved of the Londoners.
 4. Courtenay's register gives the date as the 18th (Concilia iii. 160) but Aston and Hereford state that their examination took place on the 19th June (Fasciculi Zizaniorum 320; Knighton, Chronicon ii. 171-2).
 5. Concilia iii. 157-8.

answers were so ambiguous as to infuriate the court : eventually, all three were ordered to re-appear for further questioning on the 20th.⁽¹⁾ In the meantime, however, Hereford and Aston appealed to the Londoners by distributing 'confessions', written in both Latin and English,⁽²⁾ in the streets and market places of the city. Hereford, speaking on behalf of himself and his companions, stated that their intent was 'to be treve sones and meke of holy chirche and yif happe ... that we erren agaynes this entent in wordus or in werkus we submytte us mekelyche to the corr ctcion of ... the erchebyshop of Canturbury' : he went on to state his belief in the orthodox view of the sacrament, and to specifically deny the Wycliffean doctrine of remanence. Aston's confession was less disarming : he expressed no willingness to be corrected, and though he declared that he held the orthodox view of the sacrament, he made no definite statement concerning remanence - 'For I wote wele that tle mater and the speculation thereof passes in heygte myn understandyng'. Rather ambiguously he continued that 'of this mater, or of any other touchyng the ryght beleve of holy kyrke, that is nought expresside in holy writte, I beleve, as oure modur holy kirke beleves'. Both confessions ended by beseeching all men and women who received them to bear witness to Hereford's and Aston's views at the Day of Judgment, and also, by implication, on the 20th June at Blackfriars.

1. Concilia iii. 160-161.

2. The Latin text of Aston's confession is in Fasc. Ziz. 329-30, the English of both confessions in Knighton ii. 170-2.

On that day, Hereford and Repingdon were the first to be examined and, though they agreed that the 24 conclusions put to them were rightly condemned as heretical or erroneous, their answers were deemed to be unsatisfactory, and they were found guilty of heresy : no judgment was passed on them, however, and they were ordered to appear again in eight days time.⁽¹⁾ John Aston was then produced, and asked to give a reason, if he could, why he too should not be condemned as a heretic. He was also ordered to once more give his views on the 24 conclusions, this time 'subductis quibuscunque verbis subtilis, sophisticatedibus, aut logicis'.⁽²⁾

It was at about this point, apparently, that the Londoners intervened⁽³⁾: "irreverens turba praesumpsit in civitate sedentem impedire, cum processum fecisset contra quendam Johannem Astone ... effractis foribus conclavis in quo idem archiepiscopus sedit". Aston began to play to the crowd, and encourage them to further uproar, and though Courtenay several times ordered him to answer to the conclusions in Latin, "propter astantes laicos responderet in lingua materna, clamando verba frivola, opprobriosa, et contumeliosa valde, et ad commovend' et excitand' populum contra eundem dominum Cantuar".⁽⁴⁾ He refused to give straight answers to the court's questions, and in reply to a point concerning remanence he rudely told the Archbishop that he could take the word 'material' and stick it in his purse, if he had one.⁽⁵⁾ From Aston's behaviour it is clear that he expected

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1. Concilia iii. 161-165.
 2. ibid. iii. 163.
 3. Chron. Anglie. 350 only states that they disturbed the trial of Aston, and not those of Hereford or Repingdon. The account in Courtenay's register of Hereford's and Repingdon's trial indicates orderly progress, whereas the trial of Aston was obviously disturbed.
 4. Concilia iii. 164.
 5. 'Illud verbum "materialis", ponas in bursa tua si quam habes': the Latin probably conceals the colloquial bite of the insult, though it is notable that 'bursa' could also mean scrotum. (Rev. Med. Latin Word List).

the Londoners to rescue him, but they were apparently unable or unwilling to do so, and he was convicted of heresy and imprisoned (probably at Saint Albans) until November, when, claiming to have had a change of heart, he apologised, recanted, and was restored to his status in the University.⁽¹⁾ His return to orthodoxy, however, was short-lived, and he was soon to trouble the London authorities again.

A week later Hereford and Repingdon also made an appeal (though not such a violent one) to the sympathies of the Londoners. On the 28th June they appeared, as ordered, at Blackfriars⁽²⁾ and (according to their own account) offered to make purgation of their heresy : they were not allowed to do so, but cited to appear yet again on 1st July, this time at Canterbury.⁽³⁾ During the afternoon⁽⁴⁾ of the 28th, however, the two men prepared an appeal to Pope Urban VI against their conviction for heresy, vindicating their own conduct and accusing the Archbishop and his court of deliberate injustice. The appeal was written at the house of one of their London supporters, John Hampton,⁽⁵⁾ in Woolchurch Haw, and was posted in the porches of St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Mary-le-Bow,⁽⁶⁾ where it could be read

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1. Fasc. Ziz. 331-2; Concilia iii. 169; Polychronicon VIII 462.
 2. John Lydford's Book (HMC) pp. 112-7. The statement (in Concilia iii. 164) that they appeared on 27th June at the Archbishop's palace at Otford, Kent, rather than at Blackfriars on the 28th, must be treated as suspect. It is, of course, possible that they appeared in both places on successive days.
 3. Concilia iii. 164
 4. 'circiter primum horam post nonam' John Lydford's Book 112
 5. Nothing more is known of Hampton, but he does not appear ever to have held an important office in the city.
 6. Concilia iii. 165.

by all : we have no knowledge of how the Londoners reacted. Hereford and Repeingdon, however, having failed to appear on 1st July, were solemnly and publicly excommunicated at St. Paul's Cross on the 13th.⁽¹⁾

The St. Alban's chronicler blames the Londoners' intervention in Aston's trial on their then mayor, John de Northampton, a client of John of Gaunt and leader of the so-called 'popular' faction in city government. He also reports insulting remarks said to have been made by Northampton concerning the London clergy, and attributes the mayor's statutes against fornicators and usurers (which encroached on the bishop of London's jurisdiction over these offenders) to the influence of Wycliffe and the lollards.⁽²⁾ The chronicler was, however, hostile to Northampton's party, and it is unlikely that the mayor really was a lollard sympathiser. Certainly no such accusation was included amongst the large number of charges laid against him by his former secretary, Thomas Usk, during his trial in 1384.⁽³⁾ That some of Northampton's party were lollard sympathisers cannot, however, be entirely ruled out, and when the former mayor was released from prison in 1386 one of his sureties was John Claydon, a skinner and Common Councilman who later became one of the best-known London lollards.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Concilia iii. 165-6. ~~For this point see the~~
~~below~~
 2. Chron. Anglie. 349-351; Walsingham, Historia Anglicana ii. 65.
 3. For Usk's appeal, Chambers and Daunt, A Book of London English 1384-1425 pp. 22-31; cf. Polychron. IX 45-6, 134, 150, 169; Knighton, Chronicon ii. 276-294; Hist. Anglicana ii. 116. Northampton's will (Cal. of Wills in Court of Hastings ii. 333-5) certainly gives no evidence of unorthodoxy, and includes several legacies to monks and religious houses.
 4. CPR 1385-9 p. 159; Cal. Letter Bks. H. 238, 280, 334; Cal. Plea and Memo. Rolls 1381-1412 p. 85.

At some time between 1382 and 1387, and probably in the summer of 1386, there was a further outbreak of lollard preaching in London.⁽¹⁾ The man responsible was Master William Thorpe, who came from the diocese of York but who had apparently learnt his doctrines from Wycliffe himself, as well as from Nicholas Hereford and the other Oxford lollards,⁽²⁾ and who at this time was near the beginning of a long career as a preacher of heresy.⁽³⁾ According to an indictment made against him by the bishop of London, Thorpe had preached at the church of St. Martin Orgar, Candlewick Street, on Corpus Christi day, without either the bishop's license or the permission of the rector,

1. The evidence for this incident is contained in two documents from the recently-discovered formulary of a canon lawyer, John Lydford (John Lydford's Book, ed. D.M. Owen., HMC. Joint Publications 1975 pp. 108-12). The documents, and therefore the incidents described, are not dated in the formulary, but the modern editor has erroneously dated them c.1395. From internal evidence, however, the incident can be more precisely dated. It must have taken place after January 5th 1382 (when Robert Braybroke, for whom the document was drawn up, became bishop of London) and before January 24th 1387 (by which date William Chestre, rector of St. Martins Orgar at the time of the incident, had been replaced as such by Henry Churchehull). (Hennessey, Novum Repertorium ... Londinense p. 130; Cal. Pap. Letters IV p. 363; CCR 1392-6 p. 524). Thorpe's preaching is therefore known to have taken place during the week after one Trinity Sunday between 1382 and 1386. The general history of lollardy makes the latter part of the period more likely, and the fact that the autumn of 1386 was marked by lollard disturbances in London makes Trinity week 1386 the most probable date for the incident to have occurred.
2. Much of our information concerning Thorpe comes from his own account of his examination before Archbishop Arundel in 1407. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. pp. 697-708.
3. In 1407 he was said to have preached heresy for '20 years and more'. Foxe. *ibid.* i. p. 698.

Master William Chestre.⁽¹⁾ During his sermon he was alleged to have expounded three main heretical points :

- (1) 'quod sacerdos in mortali peccato existens in missa corpus Christi non conficit nec poterit magis conficere quam unus laicus pastor ovium.'
- (2) 'quod sacerdotes et ceteri ecclesiastici ad horas canonicas astriciti non tenebantur dicere horas canonicas sed tamen oracionem dominicam cum simbolo et predicare.'
- (3) 'quod sacerdos non debet amplius dicere ad missa nec tenetur nisi oracionem dominicam et verba sacramentalia.'

On another unspecified day in the same week Thorpe had also preached at the church of St. Benet Hithe (also called St. Benet Paul's Wharf) again without the rector's permission.⁽²⁾ Here his sermon had been more directly anti-clerical :

- (1) 'publice predicasti quod laycis et temporalibus dominis quibuscunque licet et licite poterunt contra ecclesiasticos et beneficiatos gladium et ipsos duro carceri mancipare et ab eisdem decimas etc. iura ecclesiastica propria auctoritate retrahere et auferre et quod mortaliter peccarent qui aliquid ab ecclesiis vel ecclesiasticis conferrent et taliter easdem conferentes videntur auctores et fructores.'
- (2) 'quod ... episcopis et ceteris ecclesiasticis prelatis nequiter detraxisti asserendo quod alia talenta seu fructus in sancta dei ecclesia episcopi modernis temporibus non asserunt seu faciant nisi sotulares rostratos et liripipia incisa aliter daggrd tapitys in vulgari et quod ribaldos in vestibibus difformatis sumptuose mittebant et quod populum non convertebant ut olim set pocius pervertebant.'

1. John Lydford's Book p. 109.

2. Here the rector is simply called 'master Richard'.

- (3) 'quod in baptismo amplius dici non debuit nisi verba illa docete omnes gentes baptisatos eos in nomine patris etc. ut quod missio (document torn) et sputa etc. vel alia de solemnitate in ea parte per ecclesia instituta non sunt nisi temporalia et invalida etc.'

Thorpe was also accused of preaching heresy at other unspecified times and places within the city and diocese of London, in one of which, according to a certain 'Master W. Stapleford',⁽¹⁾ he stated :

- (1) 'quod ... laicis et dominis temporalibus capere clericos et presbiteros delinquentes et eos castigare ac carceri mancipare'
- (2) 'quod ... si laycus sciverit presbiterum in mortali peccato ipsius post tunc ubi audiret missam sic docet decretum.'⁽²⁾

Thorpe replied to the bishop's indictment with a written statement, full of Biblical quotations, justifying his preaching. He gave an ambiguous answer concerning the first point he had preached at St. Martin Orgar, but admitted upholding the second two : he also admitted teaching the first article of his sermon at St. Benet Hithe, but did not mention the second two. Finally, he confessed to preaching both the articles urged against him by Master Stapleford, and stated 'quantum ad alios articulos mihi impositos nihil per hos testes contra me productos est testatum.'⁽³⁾

Thorpe apparently appeared before bishop Braybroke and, not surprisingly, was convicted of heresy : he refused to recant, and was accordingly excommunicated.⁽⁴⁾ Whether he was subsequently kept

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1. Stapleford has not been identified, but he is not known to have been a London parish priest. Hennessey, Novum Repertorium ... Londinense'
 2. John Lydford's Book p. 111.
 3. ibid. p. 112.
 4. ibid.

in prison, and if so for how long, does not appear, but he must eventually have purged himself, for when he again came into contact with bishop Braybroke in 1397 the bishop could find nothing against him.⁽¹⁾

There is no indication in the record as to the reaction of the Londoners to Thorpe's preaching amongst them. His presence in the capital, however, may well have been connected with an outbreak of lollard disturbances there in the late autumn of 1386. During the summer of that year rumours of heretical activities (probably those of Thorpe himself) reached the government, and on 11th August a royal mandate was sent to bishop Braybroke, ordering him to arrest all maintainers of heresy in the city and diocese, and forbidding anyone there from giving help to heretics.⁽²⁾

No doubt as a result of this mandate, investigations were carried out, and on the 9th November 1386⁽³⁾ Braybroke wrote to Thomas de Baketon, Archdeacon of London, informing him that he had heard many reports and complaints that Nicholas Hereford, John Aston⁽⁴⁾ 'et alii maledictionibus filii in insaniam mentis perducti sub magne sanctitatis velamine ... predicandi ac nonnullas propositiones et conclusiones erroneas hereticas atque falsas ab ecclesia dei dampnatus et determinacionibus sancte ecclesie repugnantes tam in ecclesiis Archidiaconatus vestri quam in hospitibus et pluribus aliis

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1. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 705 see below p.450. That Thorpe never actually abjured heresy is proved by certain statements in his Examination of 1407.
 2. CPR 1386-9 p. 200.
 3. Reg. Braybroke (London) f.390.
 4. Aston had last been heard of in the diocese of Bath and Wells, probably in Bristol, at the end of 1384. Reg. Wakefield (Wigorn) f.112 see above p.218-22.

locis prophanis asserere dogmatizare et ... predicare illis nonullos Christi fideles inficientes'. The Archdeacon was ordered, therefore, to prohibit Hereford, Aston, or any other unlicensed preacher from teaching anywhere in the city, and to publish the prohibition not only in each parish church but also during the public sermons at St. Paul's Cross : anyone who allowed unlicensed preachers to preach was threatened with excommunication, and any church in which they preached was liable to be placed under an interdict. Baketon was further ordered that before the end of November he should cite Hereford and Aston and their supporters to appear before the bishop's special commissioners at Fulham church, within ten days of citation.

It was not until nearly a month later, on the 6th December 1386, that the Archdeacon replied.⁽¹⁾ He had published the prohibition as ordered, but citation of the offenders had proved not only difficult, but dangerous. 'Predictum Nicholaum Hereford', he reported, 'a tempore receptionis mandati vestri diligenter quesivi et queri feci ipsium tamen a tempore receptionis eusdem invenire non potui. Prefatum Johannem Aston in diversis locis Civitatis London' contra formam et tenorem dicti mandati praedicantem propter metum mortis et cruciatum corporibus mei et meorum servencium ac rabiem et insultam populi dicte Civitatis sibi assistent' et contra me et ministros meos in hac parte vehementer insurgent' et mortem dictam Johannem citare volencium et proponencium notor et alta voce comminavit citare vel citare facere non audebam'.

1. Reg. Braybroke (London) f. 390.

Unfortunately we know nothing more concerning this case, nor of what (if any) further measures were taken against Aston and his London supporters.⁽¹⁾ From the text of the Archdeacon's letter, however, and particularly from the fact that the heretics were preaching in private houses, it is reasonable to deduce the existence of a large and active lollard congregation in London at this time, a supposition borne out by the statement of the St. Alban's chronicler - 'Wiclenfensibus ... qui, sui tenentes doctrinam magistri, jam examina multa suorum sequacium Londoniis fecerant, et plures doctrina polluerant sua prava'.⁽²⁾

It also seems probable that the London lollards were in some way connected with an incident which occurred in the city during the first half of 1387.⁽³⁾ According to the St. Alban's chronicler,⁽⁴⁾ a certain Austin friar, Peter (or William) Pateshulle, bought a papal chaplaincy, and was so affected by this dignity that he decided to

1. There are no records, in the London chronicles or elsewhere, of riots in the city at the end of 1386, nor of any measures by the government or city authorities to put down unrest. As for Hereford and Aston themselves, Hereford had apparently already left London by November 1386, and in January 1387 he was being sought by the authorities in the north midlands : by the 1st February 1387 he was a prisoner in Nottingham castle. When John Aston left the capital is unknown, but by August 1387 he was apparently preaching in the diocese of Worcester, probably in or near his usual haunt of Bristol. CPR 1385-9 p. 316; CCR 1385-9, p. 208; Reg. Wakefield (Wigorn) ff. 112-3, 128. See above pp. 5-8, 218-22.
2. Hist. Anglic. ii. 157.
3. Despite McFarlane, Wycliffe 138-9, who thinks that the following incident was an expression of anti-clericalism unconnected with lollardy. He did not, however, know of the pro-Aston riots of November 1386.
4. Hist. Anglic. ii. 157-9.

leave his order and join the followers of Wycliffe. Encouraged by them, he went to the church of St. Christopher-at-Stocks, followed by nearly a hundred 'de Lollardis', and there publicly preached against the vices of his order 'et ibidem tanta mala facinora in confratres quondam suos evomuit, ut horrore foret audientibus, et stupori'. Some Austin friars who attempted to intervene, and to contradict Pateshull, were chased away by the crowd, and one of their number was beaten up by 'Lollards'. The infuriated mob then moved off to burn a nearby Augustinian house, crying out - 'Disperdamus homicidas, incendamus sodomitas, suspendamus Regis et Angliae proditores'. Fortunately for the friars, however, they were impeded in their purpose by the preaching of two accomplished Augustinian preachers until such time as one of the sheriffs of London arrived to persuade them to disperse.

Pateshull was not, however, to be so easily foiled : again encouraged by the lollards, he reduced his accusations of murder, sodomy and treason by the friars to writing, and posted them on the doors of St. Paul's cathedral. Many who saw the bill, including some knights 'pro firmo praedicaverunt cuncta fore vera quae scribebantur; unde et transcripta exinde sibi fecerunt, ut valerent suae malitiae satisfacere in futurum'. Despite the support he is reported to have received in London, Pateshull was apparently forced to take to flight, and on 18th July 1387 the authorities at Leicester were ordered to arrest him and bring him before the King and Council.⁽¹⁾ That Pateshull fled to Leicester is interesting, for that town was already well-known

1. CPR 1385-9 p. 386.

as a centre of lollardy. In the last analysis, however, it must remain doubtful whether the apostate friar was himself really a lollard, though it seems more than likely that the London heretics who had so frightened their Archdeacon in the previous year had a hand in the disturbances he caused.

After the Pateshull affair, we know nothing of the activities of the London lollards for more than four years.⁽¹⁾ There seems to have been a further outbreak of heresy in the city, however, towards the end of 1391. On 10th December a writ of significavit was issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the arrest of one Nicholas Ipswich, layman, who had incurred excommunication by Archbishop Courtenay for his contumacy in failing to appear before the dean of Arches to answer a charge of holding and teaching heresies and errors both within the city of London and elsewhere in the province.⁽²⁾ Shortly afterwards, on 21st January 1392,⁽³⁾ the government ordered the mayor and sheriffs of London to make proclamation throughout the city against the holding of secret conventicles 'gathering together and disputing heretically and erroneously touching certain matters of holy scripture and the orthodox faith, communicating and damnably stirring up nefarious opinions.' All who continued to thus gather themselves together after the proclamation had been made were to be arrested and imprisoned until further notice. The reason given for

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1. A London mercer's apprentice named Janyn Colyn was said in 1392 to be the first helper and sustainer of lollardy in Northampton, so it may be that at about this time the London heretics were exporting their doctrines. SC8/142/7099 see above.p. 100 .
 2. C85/11/74.
 3. CCR 1392-6 530-1.

this order was that the King and council had recently heard that 'certain lay persons of the city, craftsmen and others, do frequently so meet together in no small number, to the subversion of the catholic faith and for a pernicious example to the people of the city ...' The government plainly took a serious view of the situation in the capital.

On 26th May 1392 their order was reinforced by a letter from Bishop Braybroke to the Archdeacon of London, informing him that certain unnamed 'malediccionis filii' were preaching heresies in churches, chapels and in private houses throughout the city. The Archdeacon, as in 1386, was to repeat the prohibition of all unlicensed preaching in London, and to cite the offenders and their supporters to appear before Braybroke at Stepney on Palm Sunday (7th April).⁽¹⁾

No records remain to show whether the anti-lollard measures of early 1392 were successful nor, indeed, whether anyone was arrested. It is certain, however, that the city's heretics were (if at all) no more than temporarily suppressed, and in May 1394 the government issued a further commission to Braybroke to arrest and imprison lollards within his diocese.⁽²⁾

Up until now, the London lollards have remained unusually anonymous. Though Nicholas Hereford, John Aston and perhaps William Thorpe can be associated with them as teachers, nothing whatever is known of their indigenous leaders, unless Nicholas Ipswich was one such. More specific information, however, is provided by the records of 1395.

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1. Reg. Braybroke (London) f. 402.
 2. CPR 1391-6 p. 414.

It seems almost certain that the London lollards were implicated in the attempted presentation of the heretical tract called the '12 Conclusions' to the parliament which sat at Westminster in January and February 1395.⁽¹⁾ There is no evidence that (despite the help alleged to have been given by Sir John Montagu and other 'Lollard Knights') the tract was ever debated in parliament, but copies of it (probably in English) were fixed to the doors of St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. The authorship of the '12 Conclusions' is usually ascribed to John Purvey, then probably resident in Bristol,⁽²⁾ and there is no means of knowing to what extent the opinions canvassed in it represent the views of the London lollard congregation.

Perhaps because of increased lollard activity surrounding the presentation of the '12 Conclusions', the sheriffs of London were ordered to make a number of arrests of suspected heretics at this time. On 20th December 1394 they (as well as the authorities at Oxford) were ordered to arrest two fellows of Merton, William James and John Gamlyngeye,⁽³⁾ but both men seem to have succeeded in evading capture.⁽⁴⁾ Five months afterwards (at the instigation of Bishop

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1. EHR xxii pp. 292-304; Hist. Anglicana ii. 216-7; Deanesly, Lollard Bible pp. 257-8, 265, 282-3, 371-6; Fasc. Ziz. 360-370; McFarlane, Wycliffe 147. See above p.225.
 2. See above p.22-6
 3. CPR. 1391-6 p. 586; Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. 741, 1012-13.
 4. At least, further warrants for their arrest were issued in 1395. In May of that year such a warrant for Gamlyngeye was sent to the sheriffs of London, and in the following July the authorities at Bristol were ordered to capture William James, who may have fled there to join John Purvey. CPR 1391-6 p. 651 see above p.231-2.

Braybroke) the sheriffs were ordered to arrest a Londoner, John Claydon, and to produce him before the Council on suspicion of heresy;⁽¹⁾ and another Londoner, John Bryghtwelle, was also taken at about this time. A week later, on 27th May, after certain information had been laid before the council (perhaps by Claydon) the London authorities were told to arrest John Gamlyngeye, Thomas Lucas and Richard Whelpeyngton, all fellows of Merton College, Oxford.⁽²⁾ The exact nature of the crimes of which the suspects were indicted is unknown, but they must have been of a serious nature, for immediately following their arrest the Oxford men were taken to Beaumaris Castle, where they were to be imprisoned with a group of Shrewsbury burgesses and a canon lawyer, Master William Menuse.⁽³⁾ Claydon and Bryghtwelle, however, were kept in Newgate until 6th July 1395, when they were transferred to Conway Castle, where they were to be kept 'so that no man have speech or treaty with them.'⁽⁴⁾

The arrest of the Oxford lollards in London may well indicate that links existed between the heretics in the capital and the remaining supporters of lollardy at Merton, Wycliffe's former college. Nothing is known of John Bryghtwelle, but his fellow-prisoner John Claydon was

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1. CPR 1391-6 p. 591, 1399-1401 p. 39; CCR 1392-6 p. 430; Rev. Chichele IV p. 132.
 2. CCR 1392-6 p. 344-5; Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. 1170,iii 2032.
 3. CPR 1391-6 p. 591; CCR 1392-6 pp. 344-5. The Shrewsbury men were also probably lollard suspects (see above p.200). There are no grounds, however, for suspecting Menuse of heresy, though he had twice before been imprisoned for offences against the Statute of Provisors. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. ii. 1259. It is possible, of course, that Claydon and the Oxford lollards were accused of writing and publishing the '12 Conclusions'.
 4. CCR 1392-6 p. 430. It is probable that Conway and Bryghtwelle were conveyed to Conway at Bishop Braybroke's expense. Thomson, Later Lollards p. 140.

most probably one of the leaders of the London lollards at this time. A prosperous skinner, Claydon had served as Common Counsellor for Billingsgate Ward in 1384, 1386 and 1388,⁽¹⁾ and in June 1386⁽²⁾ he had acted as a surety for the release from prison of the late mayor, John de Northampton, and other leaders of the 'Clothiers' party in city government.⁽³⁾ He and Bryghtwelle were kept at Conway until 1397, when they were moved to the Fleet, where they remained until 23rd December 1399. On that date they were released on the orders of Henry IV, on the grounds that they had been imprisoned, on verbal instructions only, for a crime of which they were not guilty. Despite Claydon's alleged innocence, however, he was forced to abjure heresy before Henry IV's chancellor, John Scarle, before he was allowed to go free.⁽⁴⁾ After his release he remained an active lollard, falling foul of the authorities again in 1413 and finally suffering execution in 1415. As one of the few members of the London ruling class to whole-heartedly embrace lollardy, Claydon can hardly have avoided being one of the leaders of the sect within the city.

Little is known about the activities of the London lollards between 1395 and 1400. Possibly connected with them at this time was John Mountfort who, with a certain Thomas Craft,⁽⁵⁾ appeared at Easter

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1. Cal. Letter Books. H. pp. 238, 280, 334; Cal. Plea and Memo. Rolls 1381-1412 85.
 2. CPR 1385-9 p. 159.
 3. John de Northampton was himself accused of lollard sympathies, but the charge was probably without foundation, see above p. 437.
 4. CCR 1399-1401 p. 39; Reg. Chichele IV p. 132.
 5. Also, perhaps, a London lollard.

1397 before the royal council : he was required to answer to "certeines articles contenantz lollardrie", a number of English books "touch-antz le dite lollardrie" being produced as evidence.⁽¹⁾ Mountfort's fate on this occasion is unknown, but he is almost definitely to be identified with "quidam cognominatus Montfort quide lollardria tenebantur vehementer suspecti", who in 1415 was associated with the leading city heretics John Claydon and Richard Gurmyn.⁽²⁾

At some time during 1397 Master William Thorpe was imprisoned in the bishop of London's prison by Archbishop Arundel : his incarceration, however, apparently had nothing to do with his preaching in London ten years before, and there is no evidence that he was even arrested in the city. He must by now have made his peace with bishop Braybroke concerning his earlier activities in the capital, for when Arundel went into exile in September 1397, Braybroke had him released. Thorpe himself reported in 1407 that Braybroke 'found in mee no cause for to hold mee longer in his prison, but at the request of my friends, he delivered me to them, asking no maner of submitting'.⁽³⁾ This story could be taken to show that Braybroke was inclined to be lenient with suspected heretics, a possibility which may partly explain the small number of prosecutions for lollardy during his episcopate, which lasted from 1381 until 1404.

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1. C81/563/11026. Before appearing before the Council, Craft had been imprisoned at Stortford Castle and Mountfort at 'Bristuyt' Castle (Bristol?).
 2. Reg. Chichele IV. 135-136.
 3. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 705.

In the spring of 1400⁽¹⁾ the London Lollards were apparently active enough to cause the government concern, and on the 12th May a writ was sent to the sheriffs, informing them that much heresy was being preached within the city, and ordering them to publicly prohibit any chaplain from teaching there unless he had been licensed to do so by Braybroke. ~~(1)~~ (2)

The London lollards were most probably prime movers in the agitations which occurred there in early January 1401, sparked off by the visit of the Greek Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus and his entourage, whose Orthodox religious services amazed the English by being carried on in the vernacular, with laity as well as clergy participating. As a result of this example, petitions were sent to the King, and also to the parliament which met on 21st January, asking that Bibles and services in English should also be permitted. So pressing were the demands that the King employed Richard Hall, Chancellor of Cambridge, to explain in a sermon at St. Paul's Cross

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1. On 8th March 1400 Robert Bowland, rector of St. Antonine's, London, publicly confessed at St. Paul's Cross to having had sexual relations with a nun of Nuneaton, and of having got her with child. Adam of Usk, who investigated the case, says that Bowland was also accused 'super diversis criminibus, heresibus et erroribus ibidem per eum, ut diffamabatur, tanquam a colubro sub sanctitatis simulate specie nequiter perpetratis'. (Usk. Chronicon 57) and Bowland abjured 'omnem errorem et haeresim tacitam vel expressam' before Convocation, but it is likely that the 'heresy' involved was that of spiritual incest rather than anything to do with lollardy, which is nowhere mentioned in the account of Bowland's trial. (Concilia iii.262-3). Bowland was condemned to life imprisonment, but had been released by December 1409, when he was involved in an anti-Lancastrian plot. Despite his past record, he received a royal pardon in April 1410. CPR 1408-13 177,184.

on the 23rd January that the Greek in which the services were held was a different language from that used by the common people.⁽¹⁾

Far from gaining any support from the parliament of 1401, the lollard movement suffered a considerable setback from it, in the form of the statute "de Heretico Comburendo", which decreed execution by burning for relapsed heretics. The act was probably passed at some time in early February, though it was not officially promulgated until March.⁽²⁾ The first to suffer as a result of it was a priest from Norfolk, William Sautre, who in May 1399 had abjured heresy before bishop Despenser of Norwich,⁽³⁾ and had received a royal pardon in February 1400.⁽⁴⁾ To escape the notice of the Norwich authorities, he had moved to London and obtained the cure of St. Osyth's Walbrook, but had soon returned to his old heretical ways, preaching the same doctrines in London as he had done in Norfolk. He was again arrested, and appeared before Arundel at St. Paul's on 12th February 1401 : this time he would not recant, and on the 26th February he was publicly condemned and degraded of his orders, after Arundel had expounded the story of his examination to the people in English. On the same day he was handed over to

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1. Usk, Chronicon p. 56; Deanesly, Lollard Bible 297.n.4.
 2. McFarlane, Wycliffe 151.
 3. For full details of his case, and his opinions, see above, p. 357-66.
 4. CPR 1399-1401. 190..

the secular arm, in this case the sheriffs of London, and soon afterwards he was burnt at Smithfield, calling down curses on King and Kingdom.⁽¹⁾

A few days later, on the 28th February, John Purvey appeared before the Archbishop at St. Paul's, having previously been arrested at some unknown time and place. Purvey was an important catch, for he had been Wycliffe's secretary, and in 1401 he was probably the most prominent surviving member of the lollard sect⁽²⁾; he had not, however, been tried before, and therefore he could not be accused of relapsing. No doubt shaken by Sautre's execution, on 5th March Purvey abjured his heresies before Convocation,⁽³⁾ and on the following day, a Sunday, he repeated his recantation and abjuration in English before a large crowd gathered at St. Paul's Cross. After 1401 Purvey retreated into obscurity and dubious orthodoxy, 'showing himself neither hot nor cold' until he re-emerged in London at the time of the 1414 revolt.⁽⁴⁾

The execution of Sautre and the public recantation of Purvey must have been a considerable blow to the lollard sect as a whole, and especially to the London heretics, many of whom may have

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1. Concilia iii. 254060; Fasc. Ziz. 408-411; Rot. Parl. iii. 459; Usk, Chronicon 57; Hist. Anglicana ii. 247; Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 671. ff.
 2. For further evidence concerning Purvey, see above pp. 222-36.
 3. Concilia iii. 260-262; Fasc. Ziz. 400-407; Foxe, Acts and Monuments p. 706; Deanesly, Lollard Bible 233 n.3.
 4. Deanesly, Lollard Bible 289-297 qv. above p. 235-6, below p. 498-506

witnessed both events and realised how dangerous it had become to hold heretical beliefs. Indeed, there is evidence that a number of voluntary recantations occurred at about this time, especially amongst the London lollards. According to the continuation of the *Eulogium*,⁽¹⁾ some of Sautre's "complices", moved by 'hoc exemplo terribili', publicly revoked their heresies at Paul's Cross, and on 17th November 1401⁽²⁾ Archbishop Arundel sent a commission to the Prior of St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, licensing him to hear abjurations and to absolve penitent heretics from excommunication. The preamble to the commission states that many persons who lately believed, wrote and taught heretical opinions have by the inspiration of divine grace voluntarily submitted themselves for correction, and that they wish to abjure their heretical opinions and give up the heretical books in English which they possess.

The identity of those London lollards who recanted in 1401 is unknown to us, but the names of four of those tried in 1402 remain, even if little else about them can be discovered. Three of them appeared at St. Paul's before Archbishop Arundel and a number of other bishops on the 27th October 1402.⁽³⁾ The first, Richard Herbert, absolutely denied holding any of the beliefs of which he was accused,⁽⁴⁾ but all the same he was made to abjure all heresies

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1. Eulogium Historiarum iii. p. 388.
 2. Reg. Arundel i. f.105.
 3. Concilia iii. 271.
 4. These beliefs are unfortunately not recorded in the register.

and errors, and the attendance of heretical 'dogmatizationes' and conventicles, before being released. The second case heard, that of John Seynon or Seygno, was altogether a more curious one. Seynon came from Dunton Basset, Leics. and on 19th April 1400 he had abjured six very definitely lollard heresies (concerning transubstantiation and the veneration of images) before Archbishop Arundel at Canterbury Cathedral.⁽¹⁾ Obviously an unstable character, Seynon had thereafter moved to London, where he began holding two quite different heresies (which had nothing to do with the teachings of Wycliffe) namely that the Sabbath ought to be kept according to the Jewish laws and rites, and that pork ought not to be eaten. Temporarily puzzled as to how to handle this abrupt change of doctrine, Arundel ordered Seynon to be kept in the bishop of London's prison until such time as the Archbishop had taken the advice of his colleagues.

The third person to appear on the 27th October was a woman, Emmota Wyly.⁽²⁾ She denied believing any of the articles of heresy laid against her, but admitted 'quod hujusmodi articulos inter quosdam, quorum nomina et personas penitus ignoravit, communicatos ante haec tempora saepius audivit'. She, too, was compelled to abjure all heresies, and the attendance of illegal conventicles, before being allowed to go.⁽³⁾ Finally, on the 1st December 1402⁽⁴⁾

1. Concilia iii. 248-9 see above p. 113 .

2. She may well have been a relation of the John Wyly who was arrested for heresy in London in April 1410. CPR 1408-13, 244 and see below p. 462 .

3. Concilia iii. 271.

4. Reg. Arundel i. f. 433.

a heretic from south of the river, Nicholas Otteley of Southwark, appeared before Arundel at Lambeth Palace. He was accused of heresy and of associating with other heretics, but after examination he was allowed to abjure, swearing on a Bible to abandon both his beliefs and his associations. Before being released, he also had to promise that within a fortnight he would move away from the area where he had fallen under suspicion, and live in 'quocumque loco honesto'.

Our knowledge of the activities of the London lollards between 1402 and the outbreak of revolt in 1414 is fragmentary in the extreme. On 14th November 1403⁽¹⁾ a certain Edmund Hedyngham, who had been detained in the sheriff of London's prison, was remanded on bail to appear before Archbishop Arundel or his proctors to answer charges of holding and preaching heresies : Hedyngham may have been a Londoner, but of his four mainperners only one was a City man, the others being from Northumberland, Yorkshire and Kent respectively.

In 1406 a considerable stir was caused in London by a sermon given at St. Paul's Cross by Master William Taillour, then principal of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford⁽³⁾: his theme was 'contra clerum possessionatum in adulacionem dominorum temporalium; asseruitque religiosos non debere possessiones mundiales habere et quas habebant

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1. CCR 1401-5 p. 221. Hedyngham may have been imprisoned in the sheriff of London's prison as a matter of convenience rather than because he was a Londoner.
 2. No more precise date can be put on the sermon, except that it occurred between the opening of parliament on 1st March and 22nd December. Rot. Parl. iii. 583-4.
 3. A.B. Emden, An Oxford Hall in Medieval Times pp. 125-133. That the notorious sermon was given by Taillour, and not by Peter Payne (as in Deanesly, Lollard Bible 292) is proved by the entry in the St. Alban's Chronicle 1406-20 pp. 1-2.

per temporales dominas in certis casibus meritorie auferri posse'.⁽¹⁾

According to another hostile report, he stirred up his hearers to anti-clerical violence : 'inter cetera possessiones ecclesie quasi per violentam cedicionem populi ad ecclesia auferendas verbis suis ficturis et figuris ad sensum verbum quantum in eo fuit populum incitavit aliaque gravia et enormia dixisse'.⁽²⁾

The church lost no time in making rejoinder, and the next day the well-known preacher Richard⁽³⁾ Alkerton was sent to St. Paul's Cross to refute Taillour's arguments : 'et destruxit rationibus evidentibus omnes prioris argucias, ostenditque innodatos anathematis vinculo omnes direptores bonorum ecclesiasticorum sine excepcione aliqua personarum'.⁽⁴⁾ Many of Alkerton's audience, however, were less than pleased with his sermon, and he seems to have received a rather hostile reception : the lollard William Thorpe⁽⁵⁾ (admittedly a biased witness) declared that 'I thinke certenly that there was no man nor woman that hated verely sin and lovid vertues, hearing the sermone of the clerk of Oxenforde (Taillour) and also Alkerton's

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1. St. Alban's Chron. p. 1.
 2. Reg. Arundel ii. f.118.
 3. Not Thomas, as in St. Alban's Chron. p. 2. Alkerton, or Alkrynton, was a fellow of Merton and a Professor of Theology. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. i. 25.
 4. St. Alban's Chron. p. 2.
 5. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 704 William Thorpe, an itinerant lollard priest who mainly operated in the north of England (see above pp. 1-5) was present both at Taillour's sermon and Alkerton's rejoinder. Thorpe himself was arrested in the following year as a result of a sermon he preached at Shrewsbury on April 17th 1407, and was examined by Archbishop Arundel at Saltwood in the following August.

sermon, but they sayd or might justly say, that Alkerton reproved the clerk untruly and sclaudered hym wrongfully and uncharitably.'

Admittedly the unfortunate Alkerton had much to bear, for Thorpe himself was seen to "stand there harde^{by} with thy tippet bounden about thine head, and to repreve in his sermone the worthy clerke Alkerton drawyng away all that thou myghtest. Yea and the same daye at after noone thou metinge the worthy doctour in Watlyng streate, calledst him false flatterer and Ipocrite."⁽¹⁾ Alkerton also attracted the disapproval and derision of a far more important member of his audience, Robert Waterton, esquire of the body, privy counsellor and close friend of Henry IV.⁽²⁾ Immediately after the sermon was over, Waterton mockingly sent his servant to present Alkerton with a curry-comb 'quod instrumentum pecten est ad depulverisandum equos, velut et ipse prelatis ecclesie adulatus fuisset'.⁽³⁾ The outraged preacher took the offending object to Archbishop Arundel, who in turn brought it to the King. Henry at first roared with laughter,⁽⁴⁾ but Arundel took the matter seriously, and Waterton was forced to make a public apology in Parliament, and to swear to uphold the mandates of the church.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 704.
 2. For Waterton's career see Somerville, Duchy of Lancaster i. 137, 139, 174, 176, 185, 378-9, 381, 417-8, 513, 515, 518, 522, 528-9, 533, 563, 573.
 3. St. Alban's Chron. p. 2.
 4. "voluisset in cachinnum".
 5. The unfortunate servant, who was only obeying his master's orders, was forced to do penance by walking barefoot in procession with the curry-comb in one hand and a candle in the other. St. Alban's Chron. p. 2.

Arundel was probably right to be alarmed, for just as there were some who mocked at Alkerton's sermon, there were apparently many who approved of Taillour's, which was written down in both Latin and English 'and many men have it, and they set great price thereby'.⁽¹⁾ So numerous, seemingly, were Taillour's supporters, and so widespread the agitation for the disendowment of the church, that on the 22nd December 1406 Prince Henry and both Houses of Parliament petitioned the King for the condign punishment of those who 'purposantz de moever les cuers des bones Christians encountre la suis dite Esglise et les Prelatz et Ministres d'icelle, si bien en Sermones publiques, come en Conventicles, et lieux secretes appelez Escolles, erroneusement et mauveisement ont excitez et moevez publiquement le poeple de Vostre Roiaume pur oustier et tollir des ditz Prelatz et Ministres de seinte Esglise lour ditz possessions temporelx'.⁽²⁾

The cause of all the trouble, William Taillour himself, was apparently arraigned before Arundel at Lambeth Palace, where for two days he defiantly maintained his heretical opinions.⁽³⁾ Mysteriously,

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1. Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 704.
 2. Rot. Parl. iii. 58304. The same petition also asked for the punishment of those who claimed that Richard II was still alive (see below p. 471) and those that made and repeated false prophecies. Three separate classes of offenders are clearly meant, though they are perhaps associated with each other. qv. M. Aston, Lollardy and Seditjon 1381-1431, 19, 22.
 3. 'whan this clerke appeared and was at his aunswere before the Archebyshope, ye wote well that this clerke denied not there his sermone, but two dayes he maynteined it before the Archebyshop and his clerkes.' Foxe, Acts and Monuments i. 704.

however, he seems either to have escaped or to have been allowed to leave, but he was subsequently cited to appear again to answer for the heresies contained in his sermon and for other heresies and errors : failing to appear, he was excommunicated for contumacy.⁽¹⁾ By August 1407⁽²⁾ he had completely gone to ground, and he was not finally taken until more than ten years later.⁽³⁾

It is probable that the indigenous London lollards were involved in the disturbances of 1406, though none of the names of those thus concerned are definitely known. One such, however, may have been Richard Gurmyn alias Baker, a citizen and 'frenchbaker' who was accused of heresy at some time in 1407-8.⁽⁴⁾ Gurmyn was apparently an old offender, who on 20th August 1404 had been pardoned for unspecified treasons and felonies, which may well have included heresy.⁽⁵⁾ Despite this previous charge, he apparently succeeded in avoiding the penalties for relapse in 1407-8, though he was charged with felony.⁽⁶⁾ The result of his trial is unknown, and

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1. Reg. Arundel ii. f. 118-9.
 2. Foxe. op. cit. i. 497. During Thorpe's examination by the Archbishop's clerks.
 3. For Taillour's subsequent career see above pp. 25-60.
 4. Probably in the early spring of 1408 : on 6th March 1408 he made over all his property in London, Shrewsbury and Lichfield to John Russell, woolmonger (probably a fellow-lollard, who was eventually executed in 1431, see below pp. 520-22) and others. It was afterwards alleged that this was a collusive action to avoid the confiscation of his goods by the royal escheator in the event of his condemnation. CCR 1409-13 p. 111; KB27/620/7; BM. Ms. Cotton Cleo. E. II. f. 335.
 5. CPR 1401-5 p. 415 cf. the pardon of William Sautre in February 1400, which was for treasons and felonies; CPR 1399-1401 p. 190.
 6. KB27/620/7.

he is not heard of again until January 1415 when he received a royal pardon, either for his offences of 1407-8 or perhaps for his part in Oldcastle's revolt.⁽¹⁾ He relapsed once again, however, and was burnt at Smithfield in September 1415.⁽²⁾ Gurmyn was a man of some small property, not only in London but also in Shrewsbury and the west Midlands,⁽³⁾ and it is likely that he was amongst the leaders of the city lollards. Certainly he had close links with other prominent London heretics. By 1408⁽⁴⁾ he was associated with John Russell, the chief London agent of the revolt of 1431⁽⁵⁾; between 1413 and 1415 he is also known to have been connected with the veteran lollard John Claydon, and there is no reason to doubt that this association also dated back for some years.⁽⁶⁾

There may have been lollard disturbances in London during the early spring of 1410, in connection with the lollard-inspired bill for the disendowment of the church being debated by the session of parliament which lasted from 27th January until the 15th March.⁽⁷⁾ During this same session, on February 8th,⁽⁸⁾ the Commons also

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1. C67/37/58.
 2. B.M. Cotton Cleo. E.II. f.335.
 3. KB27/620/7; E136/108/12; CPR 1413-16 p. 388. His movables in London were worth £21.
 4. CCR 1409-13 p. 111.
 5. See below p.520-22
 6. See below p.516 .
 7. Historia Anglicana ii. 282-3; St. Alban's Chron. 52-6; Roskell, Commons and their Speakers 151.
 8. Rot. Parl. iii. 623.

unsuccessfully attempted to modify the statute "de Heretico Comburendo." It was perhaps as a warning to lollard sympathisers in this parliament that Archbishop Arundel caused the trial of the Evesham heretic John Badby to be held at this time, culminating in his burning at Smithfield on March 5th.⁽¹⁾ Four days later, on March 9th, all preachers at Paul's Cross were ordered to publicly renew the citation for heresy of Master William Taillour : Taillour, whose advocacy of church disendowment had caused so much trouble in 1406,⁽²⁾ may well also have been implicated in the parliamentary agitation for disendowment in 1410.⁽³⁾

Certainly some indigenous London lollards were arrested at about this time, though whether their activities had any connection with the disendowment question is unknown.⁽³⁾ On April 5th 1410⁽⁴⁾ John Drax, a royal serjeant-at-arms, was ordered to arrest John Cohithe, John Willy, John Jolyf and John Copshef, and hand them over to the sheriffs of London for imprisonment : at the same time Drax was to remove any books that he found in their possession, and deliver these to Archbishop Arundel. Nothing more is known of this case, and nothing whatever is known of Copshef or Cohithe. John Willy, however, may well have been a relation of that Emmota Wyly

1. Concilia iii. 325-8; St. Alban's Chron. 51-2; Hist. Anglic. ii. 282 see above pp. 277-80.

2. See above pp. 456-60.

3. Reg. Arundel ii. ff. 118-9.

3. We must view with great suspicion the statement in Gregory's Chronicle p. 106 that at the time of Badby's execution, 'John Gylott, vyntner, he made ii wevers to be take, the whyche folowyd the same way of heresy'. This is all but certainly a garbled version of the statement in all the other contemporary London chronicles, that 'John Gylot, a versyfer, made of hym ii verses that followen' Great Chronicle of London p. 88. etc.

4. CPR 1408-13. p. 224.

who in 1402 had admitted associating with heretics,⁽¹⁾ while John Jolyf was one of those who suffered execution immediately after Oldcastle's revolt in 1414.⁽²⁾

Few records survive of the activities of the London lollards between 1410 and the outbreak of the revolt four years later, though the existence of a strong and active city congregation during this period can be surmised from the numerous Londoners who took part in the rising and from the important part they played in it. The names of the leaders of the London congregation at this time are not known for certain, but amongst them were probably the skinner John Claydon and the priest John Beverley.

We have already seen⁽³⁾ that John Claydon, after spending the years between 1395 and 1399 in prison, was released on the 23rd December 1399 after abjuring all his heresies before the then Chancellor, John Scarle.⁽⁴⁾ Between then and 1413 he appears to have remained at liberty in London, though he not unnaturally held no further corporation office. During this time he presumably associated with, if he did not lead, the London lollard congregation,⁽⁵⁾ and he may also have been known to heretics in other parts of the country.⁽⁶⁾ At some

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1. See above p. 455 .
 2. John Jolyf senior and junior were both executed on 13th January 1414 (CCR 1413-19 p. 56) Thomas Jolyf, armourer, perhaps another member of the same family, was accused of lollardy in 1416-17, but exonerated in 1422 Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1413-37 p. 115; Journal Common Council f. 50.
 3. For Claydon's early history see above p. 448-9.
 4. Reg. Chichele IV p. 132.
 5. The Mayor and Alderman of London referred to him in 1415 as 'the arch-parent of this heretical depravity' Riley, Memorials pp. 617-8.
 6. He was certainly known to John Walcote of Hasleton, Glos., who when arrested in 1425 also admitted to knowing William Swynderby, John Purvey, Oldcastle, William Taillour and John Beverley. Walcote had, however, been defamed of heresy in London, Bristol and Northampton as well as in Gloucestershire, and may have known Claydon whilst he was in London. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) f. 46-48 see above p. 261 .

time in 1413,⁽¹⁾ however, he was re-arrested and brought before Convocation at St. Paul's on suspicion of heresy and of upholding certain heretical articles. Though he was known to have abjured previously, in 1399, he somehow managed to avoid the death penalty usually awarded for relapse, and was allowed to abjure once again, swearing to avoid the company, aid or counsel of all suspect persons.⁽²⁾

John Beverley, a priest who seems to have been active in London in the years before the revolt, is a far more obscure figure, though he was apparently well-known to his lollard contemporaries.⁽³⁾ It is possible that he is to be identified with the John Beverley who escaped from the bishop of London's prison in 1404,⁽⁴⁾ but there is no evidence to connect him with the Carmelite who had graduated as a Bachelor of Theology at Oxford by 1392⁽⁵⁾: nor is any clerk of his name known to have held a cure of souls in London during the period under consideration.⁽⁶⁾ Beverley is known, however, to have preached

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1. Probably in the autumn. In August 1415 the arrest was said to have taken place about two years before. Reg. Chichele IV 133.
 2. J.A.F. Thomson, Later Lollards p. 140 thinks it possible that Claydon was allowed to purge himself in 1399, rather than actually abjuring. This would mean that in 1413 he would not technically be liable to the penalties for relapse. In Chichele's register, however, Claydon is specifically stated to have abjured in 1399, and a number of other lollards - like Robert Hoke and William Taillour - got away with more than one abjuration.
 3. Beverley had been known personally to John Walcote (arrested in 1425) of Gloucestershire, who had been defamed of heresy in London and who had heard Beverley preach at Greenwich (Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) ff. 46-48 qv. p. 261 above). Beverley was also included in the lollard martyrology recited by the Bristol heretic William Emayn at his trial in 1429 (Reg. Stafford (Bath and Wells) i. 79. qv. p. 263 above).
 4. CPR 1401-5 p. 418.
 5. Emden, Bioq. Reg. Oxon. i. 183.
 6. It is just possible that Beverley is to be identified with 'John the chaplain' who in 1410 was cited for preaching heresy (under Oldcastle's protection) in Hoo, Halstow, Cooling and other places in north Kent. Concilia iii. 329-31. See above p. 372-3.

a sermon at Greenwich at some time before 1414, during which he declared amongst other things that a priest in mortal sin could not consecrate.⁽¹⁾ According to some chroniclers,⁽²⁾ he was amongst the prime movers of Oldcastle's revolt, and certainly he suffered execution for his part in it, being hanged at St. Giles' Fields on 19th January 1414, along with the carpenter John Burgate and two other Londoners.⁽³⁾

Before finally leaving the history of lollardy in London up until 1413, it may be appropriate briefly to consider what part (if any) was played by the lollards in the many political plots and conspiracies with which the capital abounded throughout the reign of Henry IV. Most, if not all, of these conspiracies were based on the premise that Richard II was not dead, but living in Scotland with the duke of Albany, and that given the right conditions he would invade and re-claim his crown : in some versions of the story 'King Richard' was to be assisted by the Scots, the Welsh, and even the French. Whether the various conspirators really believed in Richard's

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1. The sermon was attended by John Walcote see above p. 1. p. 464 n. 3.
 2. Redmayne p. 23, Hall p. 48. Both these, however, are sixteenth century works of dubious authenticity.
 3. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. p. 293; Stowe, Annals. 344. Gregory's Chron. p. 108.

continued existence, or whether they knew 'celuy fool qu'est en Escoce',⁽¹⁾ to be an impostor called Thomas Warde of Trumpington, is a point that need not be considered here. A careful examination of the remaining records⁽²⁾ relating to these plots has revealed the names of only two men connected with them who may have been tainted with heresy.

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1. As he was referred to in a parliamentary petition of 1406 (Rot. Parl. iii. 583). In 1417 Henry V referred to Warde as the 'mammet of Scotland' (B. Williams, Traison et Mort lxxiii) Warde died, probably at Stirling, by 1420 (KB27/646/22; Traison et Mort lii-liv). Ranald Nicholson, Scotland in the Later Middle Ages p. 222.
 2. The most important of the conspiracies under consideration are as follows. Between 1402 and 1404, Maud de Vere, Countess of Oxford and widow of Richard's favourite, was distributing the late King's cognizances in Essex and planning a revolt there to coincide with a French invasion. She was aided and abetted by three local abbots and also, apparently, by a group of Londoners (CPR 1401-5 p. 503; Traison et Mort 267-77; KB27/575/5) At the end of 1406 many bills were posted up in London (possibly by agents of John Whitlock, formerly a groom and yeoman of Richard's chamber) stating that Richard was still alive and would soon invade (Hist. Anglic. ii. 276; KB27/609/14). Probably as a result of this, as well as of the preaching of Master William Taillour (see above p. 456-61) a petition was presented to parliament on 22nd December 1406 asking for condign punishment of lollards, those who claimed Richard was still alive, and false prophets (Rot. Parl. iii. 583-4). Three years later, in the autumn of 1409, Benedict Wolman and a number of other Londoners (including a late servant of the Countess of Oxford) were plotting the death of Henry IV and his sons : at the same time they had sent treasonable bills to Scotland, Wales, France and Flanders, presumably asking for support, while messengers were despatched all over England confirming that Richard would invade by Christmas (KB27/595/1,3,8; CPR 1408-13 177). In 1413, the year before the outbreak of Old-castle's revolt, there was another outbreak of pro-Ricardian conspiracy. The ringleader was John Whitlock, who was said to have been plotting the death of Henry IV for seven years, during which time he had frequently visited Scotland and paid homage to Thomas Warde there. In March 1413, on his return from one of these trips, he had brought with him Sir Andrew Hake and other Scots as spies, and had concealed them in the sanctuary at Westminster, where he himself had taken refuge. Between

Footnote 2. continued

March 19th and 7th June 1413 Whitlock and his accomplices (who included Sir Elias Lyvet, the Yorkshire plotter Henry Talbot (see above p. 26-7.) and one Thomas Clerk (see above p. 470) openly spoke against the Lancastrian dynasty and posted bills in English (one of which survives) on the doors of Westminster abbey and various other churches in London and Bermondsey, claiming that Richard was alive. Whitlock was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower, but escaped before he could be tried. He was still plotting in 1416 (KB27/609/14,17, 611/17, 624/9; CPR 1413-16 35; CCR 1413-19 24; Stowe, Annales. 345). See Margaret Aston, "Lollardy and Sedition 1381-1431" in Past and Present xvii

The first of these was Richard Benet, alias Benedict Wolman, a Southwark inn-keeper who had once been an under-marshal of the Marshalsea of the royal household, presumably during the reign of Richard II.⁽¹⁾ When first mentioned in the records in January 1404 he was already in prison, but by petitioning parliament he succeeded in getting himself released on bail. On October 10th of the same year, however, a royal warrant was issued for his arrest (along with Sir Robert Stury and others) and he was imprisoned in Kenilworth castle pending appearance before the royal council.⁽²⁾ The nature of the charges against him at this juncture is unknown, but the timing of his arrest makes it possible that he was involved with the Countess of Oxford's plots to restore "Richard II" to the throne.⁽³⁾

Nothing further is known of Wolman until January 1409,⁽⁴⁾ when he received a royal pardon for treasons, insurrections and felonies, but despite this he was, by the following October, involved in yet another conspiracy. At that time, according to the indictment,⁽⁵⁾ Wolman and his accomplices⁽⁶⁾ plotted the deaths of Henry IV and his sons at Westminster, and on the 16th October they sent out, at their

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1. Cal. Letters Bks. I. p. 165-6.
 2. Rot. Parl. iii. 530; CPR 1401-5 p. 503; SC8/148/7362. While imprisoned at Kenilworth he petitioned parliament, then sitting nearby at Coventry, that he might have a speedy trial.
 3. KB27/575/5; Traison et Mort 267-77 see above p. 466 .
 4. CPR 1408-13 p. 46.
 5. KB27/595/3.
 6. Who now included John Whywel, a London goldsmith, and Simon Warde, a former servant of the Countess of Oxford who was still wanted for his part in her plot. KB27/575/5, 578/10, 595/1,3,8.

own expense, messengers to Scotland, Wales, France and Flanders with treasonable bills, presumably asking for assistance. About a week later they also sent out bills to divers parts of England, confirming that Richard II was living in Scotland and would come to England by Christmas, and urging the people to rise in his support. If the record is to be believed, Wolman's plot was well-organised and its ramifications were widespread, and it included amongst its sympathisers at least one minor member of the royal household.⁽¹⁾

So far, Wolman is at no time known to have been accused of lollardy, or even of association with lollards. In 1414, however, he took part in Oldcastle's revolt, and was apparently considered by the government to be one of its ringleaders.⁽²⁾ Despite this, however, and his past record, he managed to obtain another pardon in January 1415,⁽³⁾ but was finally brought to book and executed at Michaelmas 1416 for his part in yet another plot to bring "Richard II" to England, during which he unwisely attempted to enlist the aid of the visiting Emperor Sigismund.⁽⁴⁾ Though at least one lollard, namely Master Thomas Lucas, was involved in this plot, and part of its programme seems to have been the confiscation of the temporal possessions of the religious orders, Wolman himself was apparently not himself accused of heresy at his final trial.⁽⁵⁾ Whether or not Wolman

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1. A certain Henry Porter, who aided Wolman within the sanctuary at Westminster on 8th November 1409.
 2. KB27/611/13; E357/24/39.
 3. C67/37/58.
 4. Sigismund promptly revealed the conspiracy to Henry V. Cal. Letter Bk. I. pp. 165-6.
 5. Cal. Letter Bks. I. 165-6; KB27/624/9; E136/108/13. Walsingham's Historia Anglicana ii. 317 mentions his execution, but simply refers to him as 'civis Londoniarum' : the later version of the same work (St. Alban's Chron. 102) inserts 'lollardus' after his name. See below p. 524-7.

was at any stage a lollard must remain an open question, but it is on the whole more likely that, in common with a number of others, he was merely using the lollard movement to further his own political ends. Howsoever this may be, there is little evidence that he had any connections with the lollards before 1414.

The only other possible lollard involved in pro-Ricardian plots before 1414 was Thomas Clerk, who in June 1413 was imprisoned in the Tower for manufacturing bills (claiming that Richard II was still alive) for the plotter John ^Witlock, and also for fixing them to the doors of churches in Bermondsey.⁽¹⁾ It is possible that this Thomas Clerk can be identified with "Thomas Payne alias Clerk, scrivener of London alias clerk of Glamorgan"; who was a "serviens and familiaris" of Sir John Oldcastle and who was involved in various anti-government plots between 1416 and 1422.⁽²⁾

If there is little evidence in fact for connections between lollards and pro-Ricardian plotters during the reign of Henry IV, there is also little to show that the two were generally connected in the eyes of public opinion: even the chroniclers, bitterly opposed to the lollards as they were, do not generally connect them with anti-Lancastrian plotters before 1414. The only important document which could be taken as linking the two movements at this period, indeed, is the petition presented to parliament on

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1. KB27/609/17; CCR 1413-19 p. 21.
 2. KB9/217/17; KB27/634/30, 644/11; Proc. P.C. iii. 4,309 V. 104-6; Devon, Issues 373,375; Rot. Parl. IV 196 see below pp. 526, 532-4.

22nd December 1406 by the Prince of Wales and others.⁽¹⁾ This called upon the government to take strong measures against three sorts of people who were considered to be a menace to the state : those who in public sermons and secret schools moved the people to take away the temporal possessions of the church; those who, whilst dwelling in privileged sanctuaries, published bills to show that 'celuy fool qu'est en Escoce ... estre le Roy Richard qui mort est'; and those who wrote and published false prophecies. It is important to note, however, that the wording of the petition does not imply that the three classes of conspirators were associated with each other,⁽²⁾ and it is clear that the document is a reaction to two separate events, namely the preaching activities of Master William Taillour and his supporters,⁽³⁾ and the outbreak of pro-Ricardian bills produced by John Whitlock and his accomplices in the Westminster sanctuary.⁽⁴⁾

In the last analysis, then, there is little evidence of any kind for links between lollards and anti-Lancastrian plotters before the outbreak of Oldcastle's rebellion in 1414. During the remainder of Henry V's reign, however, things were somewhat different, for having proved themselves to be dangerous to the state as well as

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1. Rot. Parl. iii. 583-4.
 2. Despite M. Aston, 'Lollardy and Sedition' p. 22.
 3. See above pp. 456-6
 4. KB27/609/14; Hist. Anglic. ii. 276 see above p. .

In church, the lollards were popularly supposed to be behind every treasonable plot or threatened foreign invasion. That they actually were implicated in many anti-government conspiracies during this latter period is not to be doubted. The reasons for this change, it is clear, are rooted in the increasing desperation of the political wing of the lollards after the failure of their ill-advised appeal to violence at St. Giles' Fields. Under the strong and relatively stable government of Henry V, other kinds of anti-Lancastrian conspirators also found themselves hard-pressed, and in these circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that all elements opposed to the government should draw closer together, even though this did make some strange bedfellows.

Oldcastle's Revolt and afterwards
1413-28.

All the main events of Oldcastle's rising took place in London, and the Londoners themselves were deeply involved. At least forty men from the capital played some part in the rising, and it was members of the London lollard congregation who engineered Oldcastle's escape from the Tower, who hid him for nearly three months afterwards and, apparently, who were prime movers in the plot to capture the King at Eltham. The organisers of the revolt plainly expected a great deal of support from the Londoners, and that more of them did not appear at the rendezvous at St. Giles' Fields may have been as much due to the King's preventive action in shutting the city gates as to any lack of enthusiasm on the Londoners' part.

Unfortunately, however, we know relatively little of the activities of the London congregation during the spring and summer of 1413, at which time the church (and specifically the Convocation which met intermittently at St. Paul's from 6th March onwards) was developing its attack on lollardy in general and on Sir John Oldcastle in particular. At first it seems that both sides were confident of victory in the dispute, as can be demonstrated by the case of John Lay, a chaplain from Nottingham who was temporarily visiting London. On the 6th March,⁽¹⁾ the first day of the session

1. Concilia iii. 338.

of Convocation, Lay had the temerity to appear in the cathedral, even though he was much suspected of heresy, and had that very day celebrated mass before Oldcastle himself, presumably somewhere in the city. When his presence was known, Lay was haled before Convocation and cross-questioned, and asked to produce his certificate of ordination and license to celebrate : since he claimed not to have the documents to hand, he was ordered to return with them on the following Saturday, though whether he actually did so is unknown. If, as Mr. McFarlane says,⁽¹⁾ this case suggests that Oldcastle was being watched at this time, Lay's lackadaisical attitude seems also to suggest that neither he nor his patron was very much concerned by the fact.

Convocation went on, in June, to condemn some 267 heretical articles drawn from Wycliffe's works, and to write to the Pope asking him to confirm their sentence on the heresiarch and his followers.⁽²⁾ They also seem to have been keeping a close watch on the London lollards, and a search of an illuminator's shop in Paternoster Row produced a certain tractate 'in quaternis non ligatis, continentes plures modicos tractatus periculosissimos, ad subversionem fidei nostrae et ecclesiae',⁽³⁾ whether the illuminator was himself suspected of heresy,⁽⁴⁾ or what other reason the authorities had

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1. McFarlane, Wycliffe p. 163.
 2. Concilia iii. pp. 338-351.
 3. Ibid. p. 352.
 4. It is possible that the illuminator is to be identified with one of the three parchmentmakers, one scrivener and one textwriter who took part in the rising.

for searching his shop is unknown, but on questioning he revealed that the offending tractate belonged to Sir John Oldcastle.

The illuminator's admission gave Convocation a most important tool against Oldcastle, and they were not slow to make use of it. On the 6th June the tracts, with another from Coventry and the 267 conclusions extracted from Wycliffe, were publicly burnt at St. Pauls' Cross, while Archbishop Arundel explained the reason for their destruction.⁽¹⁾ Later in the same day a deputation went to visit the King at Kensington palace, where in the presence of Oldcastle and many others they read out the most heretical of the points taken from Sir John's tract. Despite this revelation, however, and the King's expressed horror, it was not until the third week in August 1413 that Archbishop Arundel finally persuaded Henry to allow him to begin proceedings against his old friend and comrade-in-arms.⁽²⁾

It may have been during this period, between June and August 1413, that the lollards fixed bills to the church porches of London which, according to Thomas Walsingham, 'continebant centum millia parata ad insurgendum contra cunctos qui non saperent sectam suam'.⁽³⁾ It was also at about this time that Convocation, perhaps as a counterblast to the threats of the lollards, proceeded against John Claydon, one of the leaders of the London congregation.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Concilia iii. pp. 338, 351, 352.
 2. Concilia iii. pp. 352-4; Bale, Brefe Chronycle 242-3.
 3. St. Alban's Chron. p. 70; Hist. Anglic. ii. 291. The report of this event is so positioned in the chronicles as to make it appear that it occurred before Oldcastle's citation and trial, but it is perhaps as likely that it actually took place between Sir John's escape from the Tower and the outbreak of the revolt i.e. between October 19th 1413 and January 9th 1414.
 4. Reg. Chichele IV. 132. When Claydon was tried for the third and final time in August 1415, he admitted to having abjured in St. Paul's chapter house 'circa biennium elapsum'

Save only that he was allowed to abjure, however, nothing is known of the circumstances of his trial, which took place at St. Paul's.

On August 21st 1413, shortly after King Henry finally agreed to the initiation of proceedings against Oldcastle,⁽¹⁾ a royal writ was sent to all the sheriffs of England, including those of London, ordering them to make proclamation against heretical preaching and the holding of illegal conventicles, since the government had heard that many unlicensed chaplains 'de nova secta lollar-dorum' were teaching in public places and stirring up great multitudes of the people to murmuring and sedition.⁽²⁾ Nothing specific, however, is known of the activities of the London lollards during the period of Oldcastle's citation (from about 20th August until the 18th September) or of his trial on the 23rd and 25th September, during which one of the charges made against him was that he had been a 'receptator, fautor, protector et defensor' of lollards in the diocese of London, as well as in those of Rochester and Hereford.

Oldcastle was condemned to be handed over to the secular power as a heretic on 25th September, but all the same the King persuaded Arundel to grant a stay of execution for 40 days in the hope that Sir John might even now recant, and accordingly he was

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1. Concilia iii. 353. The King's agreement was given shortly after the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin (15th August).
 2. CCR 1413-19 p. 86; Cal. Ltr. Bk. I. 116.

once more committed to the Tower.⁽¹⁾ According to bishop Bale, however, who quotes from a "vestusto Exemplari Londinensium" now lost,⁽²⁾ Oldcastle contrived to remain in contact with the London lollards, and asked them to make copies of a bill "to be set up in dyverse Quarters of London, that the People shulde not beleve the Slaundres and Lyes that his Ennemies, the Bishops' Servaunts, and Pryestes, had made on him Abroade". In the bill, which was apparently in English and of which Bale gives a copy, Sir John stated that he was unrightfully convicted and imprisoned, and untruly accused of departing from his statement of his beliefs "which was indented and taken to the Clergye, and so set up in diverse open Places in the Citie of London. Knowen be it here to all the World, that he never sens varyed in any poynt therefrom; but this is playnely his Beleve, that all the Sacraments of the Church be proffitable and expedient also to all them that shall be saved, taking them after the Intent that Chryst and his true Church hath ordanyd. Furthermore, he believeth that, in the blessed Sacrament of the aulter is verely and truly Chrystes Body, in Fourme of Breade'.

Again according to Bale,⁽³⁾ this rather ambiguously worded bill caused many of the laity who read it to mutter against Oldcastle's conviction, and in order to discredit him the clergy forged an abjuration 'in his Name, that the People shuld take no

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1. Gesta Henr. V. p. 3; St. Alban's Chron. p. 76; Hist. Anglic ii. 296; Capgrave, De Illustr. Henricis 113.
 2. Brefe Chronycle 257.
 3. ibid. p. 257.

Hold of that opinion, by any Thing they had hearde of him before, and to stande so in the more Awe of them, considering him so great a Manne, and by them subdued'. Such an abjuration does indeed exist, amongst the papers of Thomas Walden,⁽¹⁾ who was present at Oldcastle's trial,⁽²⁾ but there is no record of it elsewhere : nor is there any evidence either that Sir John ever subscribed to it, or even that he was rumoured to have done so.⁽³⁾ It is likely, therefore, that the abjuration was not a clerical forgery at all, but that it was drawn up in the hope of a change of heart on Oldcastle's part which never actually occurred. According to one contemporary chronicler,⁽⁴⁾ indeed, Sir John deliberately gave the impression that his resolve was weakening in order to gain more freedom within the Tower, and thus to facilitate his escape. 'Intra fines Octobris solutus a vinculis tergiversator ille sub promisso quod revocaret suas oppiniones hereticas et staret iudicio ecclesiae, in custodia tum tentus usque ante tribunal convocandi cleri sisti posse, rupit carceres et aufugit.'

The circumstances of Oldcastle's escape from the Tower are not exactly known, and most of the chroniclers state simply that 'he brak the prison and went away',⁽⁵⁾ or words to that effect. Stow's

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1. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 414-6.
 2. Concilia iii. 355.
 3. qv. Waugh, 'Sir John Oldcastle' in EHR Vol. XX. pp.455-6.
 4. Gesta Henr. V. p. 3.
 5. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293 : See also Gt. Chron. London 91, Stow, Survey i. 58, Gregory's Chron. 107; Usk, Chron. 121; Polychron. VIII 548; St. Alban's Chron. 76.

Annales, however, record that 'he brak over the walls at night',⁽¹⁾ and one version of the Brut states that 'moo othir prisoneres' escaped with him.⁽²⁾ The sixteenth-century writer Robert Redmayne (possibly drawing on an earlier chronicle) guesses that he got away "vel amicorum praesidio tectus et adiutus, vel eorum perfidia qui custodes constituebantur, quos praemiorum spe et pecuniae magnitudine corruerat",⁽³⁾ and it is likely that this comes close to the truth. Certainly the officials at the Tower were not all above suspicion, and in the previous July another important political prisoner, the pro-Ricardian plotter John Whitlock, had escaped with the connivance of two minor Tower functionaries.⁽⁴⁾

Whether or not Oldcastle had bribed his guards, and been released from his chains on the promise of recantation, there is no doubt that his escape was effected with the help of his London

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1. Annales p. 344. The account of the revolt in Stow's Annales is taken from a very detailed London chronicle, of which the original appears to be lost. That the escape took place 'noctanter' and 'subdole' is confirmed by the original of the writ to the sheriffs of London announcing Oldcastle's escape. Guildhall Library, London Letter Book I. f.129.
 2. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. p. 308.
 3. Vita Henrici Quinti p. 16.
 4. Whitlock escaped between 5th and 7th July 1413, on the day before his trial for treason. His accomplices were Richard Bache, sub-janitor of the Tower, and Robert Galbrugge, a servant of the King's lesser wardrobe there. Both officials were outlawed, and Bache was executed in May 1414. Stow, Survey i. 38; KB27/609/14. Escapes from the Tower occurred several times during Henry V's reign; for the escape of Oldcastle's clerk, Thomas Payne, with Sir John Mortimer and two French prisoners of war, in April 1422. see KB9/217/7, KB27/644/11.

supporters (with whom, according to Bale, he had been in contact since the beginning of his imprisonment).⁽¹⁾ The ringleader in the escape plans seems to have been a certain William Parchmyner or William Fisher,⁽²⁾ from the record of whose trial (in 1416)⁽³⁾ most of our information concerning the escape comes. Parchmyner and other traitors, whose names were not known to the jury, had met at the former's house in the parish of St. Sepulchre's Smithfield on October 19th, and (presumably by night) 'did go privily to the Tower foresaid, and break into that prison, and falsely and traitorously withdraw the said John Oldcastelle therefrom, and take him from thence to his own dwelling house in the Parish of St. Sepulchre's ... and did falsely and traitorously harbour him in such dwelling-house ... until the Wednesday next after Epiphany (6th January 1414). None of the names of Parchmyner's accomplices are known for certain, but they probably included a London tailor, Richard Wrothe, who in a Chancery case brought against him by a Tower official was said to be 'une de les pluys grantz susteignours del malveys secte susdite, et qu'il estoiet une de ceux q'estoient assentuz a son eschape'.⁽⁴⁾ He may also have had the help of three

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1. Brefe Chronycle 257.
 2. Also called 'William Hampden of Buckinghamshire' in one record. C67/37/56.
 3. Riley. Memorials 641-2. According to the St. Alban's Chron. p. 89, Parchmyner was captured in or near Worcester-shire in about August 1415, but this seems unlikely in view of the fact that he was not tried until October 1416, when he faced his judges at Newgate. He had been one of those excluded from the general pardon of 28th March 1414 CCR 1413-19 pp. 176-7.
 4. Select Cases in Chancery (1364-1471) Selden Soc. p. 109. See below p. 482-3.

of his neighbours from Turnmill Street, Clerkenwell,⁽¹⁾ who are known to have been involved in the rising,⁽²⁾ and of members of Oldcastle's household. Of Parchmyner's own career before 1413, nothing whatever is known⁽³⁾ for certain.

There is no reason to disbelieve the statement of Parchmyner's indictment that Oldcastle remained at the house in Smithfield for the whole period between his escape from the Tower and the first outbreak of the revolt on the 6th January 1414.⁽⁴⁾ For reasons we can only guess at, the government appear to have waited for nearly ten days before making the news of the escape generally known.⁽⁵⁾ It was not until the 28th October that Sir Robert Morley, the keeper of the prisoners in the Tower, was removed from office for his negligence,⁽⁶⁾ and on the same day the sheriffs of London were ordered to make proclamation forbidding anyone from helping or harbouring Oldcastle.⁽⁷⁾ No record exists of such writs

1. Turnmill Street is in the neighbouring parish to that in which Parchmyner had his 'dwelling house' : nevertheless, in the notice of his execution in one London chronicle (Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 294) he is referred to as of Turnmill Street. Perhaps his shop was there.
2. These were Nicholas Brewere alias atte Cok, Thomas Lyttleton, parchmentmaker, and Nicholas Underwode, weaver. Underwode, in particular, seems to have been deeply involved, and his house was used as a meeting place for the rebels (see below) E357/24/39; KB27/611/23, 616/15; KB29/52 pt. 2/20.
3. He is almost certainly not to be identified with the William Mably alias Parchmener who was charged with lollardy at Leicester in 1389 and again accused in 1414. Concilia iii. 210; KB9/204/1/141.
4. Riley, Memorials 642; St. Alban's Chron. 79.
5. McFarlane, Wycliffe 166 suggests that the escape may have been hushed up, and that even the King may not have known of it until the 28th.
6. He was replaced by Sir John Dabridgecourt, and on the next day, the 29th October, he was himself imprisoned in the Tower from which, however, he was released on the 15th November. CPR 1413-16 p. 103; CCR 1413-19 p. 41.
7. Cal. Letter Bks. I 119.

being sent to other counties, and it is possible that the government knew that Sir John was still in London, though it is extremely doubtful if they knew his exact whereabouts.⁽¹⁾ The fugitive and all his followers and supporters were solemnly and publicly excommunicated from St. Paul's Cross on the 10th December by Archbishop Arundel and some of his suffragans.⁽²⁾

Doubtless the government took other measures against the lollards during the closing months of 1413, but unfortunately we know nothing of them. Some anonymous supporters of Oldcastle, however, seem to have been imprisoned in the Tower by the end of November. According to a petition in Chancery by Thomas Okore, esquire (one of the deputy-keepers of the prisoners within the Tower)⁽³⁾ a London tailor, Richard Wrothe, 'del secte et couvne de

1. In the Issue roll are two undated payments, the first of £1 to a certain Constable of Smithfield for watching by night to take Oldcastle, and for finding and taking certain books in the house of a parchmener (almost certainly William Parchmyner's house at St. Sepulchre's). The second payment is to John Barton, yeoman of Sir Robert Morley, also for watching Parchmyner's house, 'in qua quidem domo Joh. Oldecastell hospitatus iam fuit'. (E403/614/12,13). It seems likely, however, that a watch was only kept on Parchmyner's house after the Eltham plot had been revealed on or about the 5th January. If Oldcastle's whereabouts had been known before that time, he would surely have been arrested at once. See below p. 486.
2. Nicolas, Chron. London p. 96-7.
3. Select Cases in Chancery (Selden Soc.) p. 109. The petition is undated, but from internal evidence the incident referred to must have taken place between 28th October 1413 (when Okore's master Sir John Dabrichescourt was appointed warden of the prisoners in the Tower) and 1st. October 1415 (when Dabrichescourt died). (CPR 1413-16 p. 108; Beltz, Memorials of the Garter p. clvii). It must, therefore, have occurred either on November 26th 1413 and November 26th 1414. The fact that no reference is made in the petition to Oldcastle's rising, and that Oldcastle and the lollards are referred to throughout as a 'malveys secte', rather than as rebels and traitors, suggests the earlier date, before the revolt.

Johan Olde Castle', sent his wife into the prison on the morning of the 26th November 1413 'd'avoir enparle ovesque certains prisoners la detenuz pur mesme la secte des certains maters et causes les ditz Sire de Cobham et auters de lour secte pur accomplire lour malveys purpos et entent entouchauntz les ditz Richard'. Mistress Wrothe declared that the judgment given against Oldcastle was altogether against divine law, and that Sir John was a strong knight of God, falsely condemned by the ministers of Antichrist. Thomas Okore therefore petitioned Chancellor Beaufort that Wrothe might himself be arrested and imprisoned, for not only was he 'une de les pluys grantz susteignours del malveys secte suisdite', but he had also been one of those who was privy to Sir John's escape from the Tower. The outcome of the case is, however, unknown, as are the names of those lollards who Mistress Wrothe visited.

We have little detailed information concerning the activities of the London lollards in the period between Oldcastle's escape from the Tower and the outbreak of the revolt. During this time Sir John, no doubt still operating from Parchmyner's house in Smithfield, laid his plans and sent out messengers to lollard congregations all over England : "discurrebant undique lollardorum nuncii, qui rurales et quoscunque poterant excessivis promissis stipendiis allectarent quatinus in certum diem, eis denunciandum, parati forent ad standum viriliter et actus marcios peragendum".⁽¹⁾ For practical reasons it seems likely that most of the messengers initially sent to the outlying congregations were Londoners, though most of the actual recruitment of rebels seems to have been carried out by local leaders.

1. St. Alban's Chron. p. 76 cf. Usk Chronicon p. 121; Gesta Henr. V. p. 4.

Oldcastle's supporters were summoned to gather on the night of the 9th-10th January 1414 at St. Giles' Fields (also called Fickett's Fields) an open space outside the city walls near the present site of Lincoln's Inn. By this time,⁽¹⁾ it was hoped, a picked body of conspirators dressed as mummers would have either captured or assassinated the King and many of the royal family, who were celebrating Epiphany (January 6th) at Eltham palace, just south of London. The London lollards were scheduled to play an important part in the conspiracy, but on the 5th January, just as it was about to take place, two of them lost their nerve and revealed the plot to the government : these were John de Burgh, a carpenter, and Thomas Kentford, who were each granted a life annuity of ten marks for their services.⁽²⁾

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1. St. Alban's Chron. p. 77; Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 284, 293, 324; de Illustribus Henricis 12; Liber Metricus 98; Gesta Henr. V. 4; Vita et Gesta 31; Stow, Annales 344; Gregory's Chron. 108. For full details of the Eltham plot see below p. 485. It is by no means clear when the attempt on the royal family was meant to have taken place. Several of the London chronicles (Kingsford op. cit. 293; Stow p. 344; Gregory's Chron. p. 108) seem to indicate that it was planned for Twelfth Night or Epiphany, which that year fell on 6th January, and which would be the most likely time for a mumming. This date does not, however, seem to tie in well with the date of the general muster at Fickett's Fields, four whole days later. Furthermore, according to Stow p. 344, the 'mummers' were still at Bishopsgate at 10p.m. on January 6th, which would not leave them time to get to Eltham, some distance south of the city, that evening. For another view of what the conspirators planned to do with the King if they could capture him, see Mon. Evesham p. 363 ~~and p. 364 below~~
 2. CPR 1413-16 p. 157. According to the 'Northern Chronicle' (Kingsford Eng. Hist. Lit. 284) the plot was betrayed by "quendam carpentarium London'." That Burgh and Kentford were former conspirators, rather than government spies, is borne out by St. Alban's Chron. p. 77 'sed immiset timorem suum in corda quorundam conspiratorum qui regem clam monuere vitare periculum et iam structus insidias declinare'.

As a result of these revelations, the King alerted William Crowmer, Lord Mayor of London,⁽¹⁾ warning him to arrest all suspicious persons and to order each alderman to keep special watch in his own ward.⁽²⁾ On the following day, the 6th January, the mayor himself went 'at about ten of the clock at night ... with a strong power, to the signe of the Axe without Bishopsgate where they apprehended the man of the house called John Burgate carpenter⁽³⁾ and seven others, one of them being an Esquire belonging to Oldcastle'⁽⁴⁾; these were the party of conspirators which 'had caste to have made a mommyng at Eltham and undyr coloure of the mommyng to have distryte the King and hooly Chyrche'.⁽⁵⁾ The plotters were brought before the King at Eltham, where they confessed to being 'confederated with Oldcastle' and revealed the plans for a large-scale muster of lollards at St. Giles' Fields.⁽⁶⁾ The identity of the esquire who was taken cannot certainly be established, but it may have been Robert Harley 'of London', who was executed immediately after the rising.⁽⁷⁾

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1. Cal. Ltr. Bks.I. p. 119.
 2. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293.
 3. The similarity of names and professions between John Burgh and John Burgate gives rise to some suspicion of confusion by the chronicler.
 4. Stow, Annales p. 344.
 5. Gregory's Chron. 108.
 6. Stow, Annales p. 344.
 7. E357/24/39; CCR 1413-19 p. 57. No other esquire involved in the rising will fit the bill, since most of them were taken some time after the revolt. Nothing, unfortunately, is known of Harley's antecedents, unless he was a member of the family from Brampton Bryan in Herefordshire, about 20 miles north of Oldcastle's home at Almeley.

It is probable that by this time the King had also been informed of Oldcastle's hiding place, and that it was about now that a yeoman called John Barton and his fellows were set to watch and spy on 'unam domo in Smythfeld que fuit Wm. Parchmener in qua quidem domo Johannes Oldecastell hospitatus iam fuit'.⁽¹⁾ One of the constables of Smithfield ward was also subsequently rewarded for making an assiduous search for Oldcastle by night, and for finding a number of lollard books in the house of a certain parchmener, presumably that of William Parchmyner himself.⁽²⁾ Despite these searches, however, and the efforts of Thomas Burton 'the King's spy', who was afterwards paid £5 for his services in revealing the plans of the lollards,⁽³⁾ neither Oldcastle nor Parchmyner were taken. According to Parchmyner's indictment, indeed, he and Sir John left the house on the 6th January⁽⁴⁾ (probably on the first suspicion of an alarm) and this would account for their not being taken when the constable searched the house for books.

At this stage Oldcastle may have transferred his headquarters to a Smithfield inn called 'the Wraстеleyre on the Hope', whose whereabouts are not precisely known.⁽⁵⁾ Certainly the inn

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1. E403/614/13 Barton was a yeoman of Sir Robert Morley, the former warden of the Tower who had been disgraced after Oldcastle's escape. Barton and his fellows were paid £1 for watching the house.
 2. E404/612/12. The constable was paid £1 for his services.
 3. Devon, Issues p. 333
 4. Riley, Memorials 641. Parchmyner was accused of harbouring Oldcastle only until the 6th January.
 5. According to KB9/204/1/58 the inn was definitely in Smithfield, and if this is so it cannot be identified with the better-known inn called 'the Wrastlers', which stood just inside Bishopgate, near the house of the conspirator John de Burgh. Stow, Survey (ed. Kingsford) i. 150, 170.

was a gathering place for in-coming lollard contingents : some of the Derbyshire lollards were heard to say before they left home that when they reached London they would go there to receive orders, while John Cok, one of the Essex rebel leaders, distributed wages to his men there.⁽¹⁾ Whether by accident or design, however, the authorities apparently did not raid 'the Wrasteleyre' before the muster at St. Giles' Fields, and unfortunately we do not know the name of the inn holder.

On the 7th January, the day after the arrest of the plotters at the sign of the Axe, the King issued a writ to the sheriffs throughout England ordering them to make proclamation against making, procuring or attending any unlawful assemblies whatsoever : the document went on to say that certain lollards had voluntarily confessed that they and others of their sect had planned to make such assemblies all over the realm, "to the destruction of the catholic faith, of the King's person and the estate of the lords and great men of the realm spiritual and temporal".⁽²⁾ It is plain that by now Oldcastle's plans were fully known to the government, and it must have been equally clear to Sir John that one part of his scheme had failed and that the remaining part had, at the very least, lost the element of surprise. He did not, however, call off the revolt, and indeed it would have been almost impossible for him to do so, since most of his followers were by now on the London road and some must already have arrived in the capital.

1. KB9/204/1/9,58; KB27/616/13.

2. CCR 1413-19 pp. 114-5.

The actions of King Henry at this time, and the motives behind them, need not be considered in detail here. It suffices to say that, probably on the 8th January,⁽¹⁾ the King and his lords rode through London on their way from Eltham to Westminster, which for a number of reasons was considered the best base for operations against the rebels who were to assemble at St. Giles Fields (half-way between the cities of London and Westminster) on the night of the 9th-10th. Though the King's move through the city was deliberately made 'sine strepitu' and 'modeste',⁽²⁾ the London lollards must have been to some extent aware of the preparations being made against them and their co-religionists, and this may well have caused them some degree of demoralisation. At least one Londoner, a carpenter called Thomas Corneville, thought it safest to voluntarily give himself up to the mayor on the 9th January, though only after an information for treason and felony touching the King's person had been laid against him by a servant of the earl of Arundel.⁽³⁾ Corneville claimed to be innocent of the offence, but since he was subsequently ordered to be confined in the King's Bench prison, and was not pardoned until Michaelmas 1414, it is perhaps more likely that he was a lollard conspirator who had lost his nerve.⁽⁴⁾

Stirred up, according to one chronicler,⁽⁵⁾ by the news

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1. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. p. 293 : Nicolas, Chronicle p. 97 : some chronicles insinuate, though they do not actually state, that the King moved his base on the previous day, Sunday 7th. Stow, Annales 344; Gesta Hen.V. p.4. cf. Vita et Gestap. 31; Kingsford op. cit. p. 324, St. Alban's Chron. 77.
 2. St. Alban's Chron. p. 77.
 3. Q Plea Memo. Rolls 1413-37 pp. 14,56; KB27/611/13.
 4. KB27/611/13, 613/25. Before he was pardoned the city escheator had confiscated his goods, worth 57s., for treason. E357/24/39.
 5. St. Alban's Chron. 78. An eminently biased source.

that the lollards intended destroying the houses of the London friars, as well as the monasteries of Westminster, St. Paul's and St. Alban's, Henry decided to attack them during the night of the 9th-10th, and so to disperse them before they could do any such damage. This action was taken against the advice of some of his counsellors, amongst whom many favoured waiting until daylight 'quo discernere possent qui cum rege vel contra dominum stare vellent', while others advised waiting for reinforcements⁽¹⁾ before attacking a force of lollards which they apparently expected to number some 25,000.⁽²⁾ Nevertheless, the King 'took the field' near St. John's Priory, Clerkenwell,⁽³⁾ not long after midnight⁽⁴⁾: he was accompanied by his brothers, by Archbishop Arundel, and by the earl of Warwick and many other lords,⁽⁵⁾ and according to some reports he had carried before him a banner bearing a cross.⁽⁶⁾ At St. John's the King's force would be in a good position to intercept rebel contingents coming towards St. Giles' Fields from the north,

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1. St. Alban's Chron. 78.
 2. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293 : Stow, Annales 344
 3. Gregory's Chronicle 108; Strecche, Chronicle 148; Greyfriars' Chronicle in Monumenta Franciscana ii. 165. 'betwen Westm' and the high weye toward Tyborne' Nicolas, Chronicle 97.
 4. Stow, Annales 344; cf. St. Alban's Chron. 78 'nocte media'. According to a northern chronicle, however, he took the field at about 10 p.m. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. p. 285.
 5. Davies, English Chronicle 1377-1461 p. 39; Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 324; Mon. Evesham 363-4; CPR 1413-16 p. 172. Nicolas, Chronicle 97.
 6. Liber Metricus 98; Bale, Brefe Chronycle 260

and it would also be close to Smithfield, which was probably known to contain Oldcastle's headquarters. Meanwhile other parties were sent out to 'keep the other weies about London'.⁽¹⁾

The King plainly had good reason to expect a rising of the London lollards, and in order to prevent the city rebels from joining their fellows in St. Giles' Fields, he ordered 'ut civitatis porte clauderentur et per armatos servarentur arcus ut nullus pateret egressus nisi hiis quos scirent ad signa regia properare'.⁽²⁾ Had the King not taken this action, claims the St. Alban's chronicler, 'exiissent de servis et apprenticiis simul cum quibusdam de civibus eorundem magistris ad quinquaginta milia contra regem', and he goes on to say that the non-appearance of the London contingent was one of the major factors in the demoralisation and defeat of the rebels: 'Consternati sunt peramplius quia neminem viderent de Londoniis adventare, unde putabant milia ruitura in auxilium eorundem'.⁽³⁾

Though the chronicler is obviously guilty of gross exaggeration when he talks of a London contingent greater in numbers than the whole population of the city,⁽⁴⁾ it is most probably true that a sizeable force of Londoners was originally intended to join the rebels at St. Giles'. The city lollards must, however, have already been severely shaken by the failure of the Eltham plot and the resultant

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1. Davies, English Chron. p. 39.
 2. St. Alban's Chron. 78 cf. Gesta Henr. V. p. 5 'statutis custodiis et vigiliis per civitatem Londoniis'. McFarlane, Wycliffe p. 169. claims that 'the sanctuary at Westminster was searched by the duke of Clarence in case Oldcastle lay hidden there', but this search did not in fact take place until February. KB9/205/1/15,17. See p.511-2 below.
 3. St. Alban's Chron. 79; Stow, Annals 344.
 4. Which, according to estimates based on the poll-tax return of 1377, was about 40,000 at this time. Myers, London in the Age of Chaucer p. 20.

arrests of John ~~Burgh~~^{Burgate} and others, so that the appearance of armed men at the walls and gates must have been, for many of them, the final straw, causing them to return to their homes and lie low until the danger was past. Even so, nearly forty Londoners (several of them, significantly, from districts outside the walls)⁽¹⁾ did apparently manage to take part in the rising. The failure to appear of the promised larger contingent, together with the news (previously unknown to most of them) of the partial failure of the conspiracy must have been a heavy blow to the incoming country rebels, adding further to their sense of confusion and panic.

No detailed description exists of the events of the night of the 9th-10th January, and the only eye-witness who has left us an account, the monk Thomas Elmham, is disappointingly brief. He gives us a picture of the King and 'sua fideli gente armigera' waiting under a starry sky for the rebels to appear, and seeing a brilliant comet or shooting star cross the sky, which some took to be an omen of the downfall of the lollards.⁽²⁾ Elmham and all the other chronicle accounts agree, however, that many of the lollards 'de remotis partibus accurrentes ad castra hostilia prius intrarent per errorem castra regia, ubi requisiti quem quererent, responderunt dominum suum de Cobham. Quapropter contra spem capti sunt et carceribus mancipati'.⁽³⁾ There seems to have been relatively

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1. Of the London rebels whose addresses are known, eight came from districts without the walls (five from Clerkenwell, one from Smithfield, one from Aldgate and one from Southwark) while only three came from intramural wards (one each from London Bridge, Dowgate and Cornhill).
 2. Others, apparently, took a less hopeful view, and 'De cujus significantia plurimi loquebantur' Gesta Hen. V. 5-6.
 3. St. Alban's Chron. 78-9. The chronicle sources are remarkably unanimous on this point. Gesta Hen. V. 5-6; Gt. Chron. London 91; Polychronicon VIII. 548-9; Strecche, Chronicle 148; Usk, Chronicon 121; Illustribus Henricis 113; Vita et Gesta 32; Stow, Annales 344; Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 285.

little fighting,⁽¹⁾ and most of those rebels who avoided blundering into the royal camp in the darkness are reported to have fled when they heard the King was in the field.⁽²⁾ Amongst the fugitives (apart from Oldcastle himself) were at least three Londoners, John Swebston, Gilbert Milbourne and John Sporle, vintner, who were subsequently taken at Oxford in the company of Walter Blake and other members of the Bristol contingent, to whom they may conceivably have been acting as guides or messengers.⁽³⁾

Others, braver or more foolhardy, formed an 'ambushment' at Harringay park, to the north of the city, perhaps hoping to counter-attack the royal forces who were chasing their comrades : these too, however, were soon rounded up, their number including the Dunstable brewer William Morley.⁽⁴⁾ We are, unfortunately, almost entirely ignorant of what part the London lollards played in the night's events, though the indictment of one of them, a weaver called Nicholas Underwode, intimates that he sheltered three of the lollard leaders (John Purvey, Robert Harley and William Morley) at his house in Turnmill Street, Clerkenwell, on the day of the rising.⁽⁵⁾

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1. No one on either side is certainly known to have been killed, but several of the chronicles state that some lollards were slain. St. Alban's Chron. p. 79; Vita et Gesta p. 32; Stow, Annales 344. Most other sources, however, simply state that many lollards were taken, and do not mention any killing.
 2. Many such rebels, as can be seen from their indictments, managed to reach their homes in various parts of the country, only to be subsequently taken by the county commissioners of oyer and terminer ~~see below~~
 3. Whether these fugitives were heading for Bristol is unknown. (KB27/611/17, KB29/52 pt. ii/19; E159/190/R.24.) and for Walter Blake and the Bristol lollards see above p.243.
 4. St. Alban's Chron. 79-80; Stow, Annales 344. The Kenilworth chronicler John Strecche (Chronicle 148) thought that all the rebels assembled at Harringay, so the incident there may have been of some importance and widely reported.
 5. KB27/616/15.

By the morning of the 10th January the rising had been completely defeated, and later in that day a commission of oyer and terminer, consisting of the Lord Mayor, two lords and three judges,⁽¹⁾ was set up to try the 80⁽²⁾ rebels who had fallen into the King's hands and were now in the custody of the earl Marshal. The less scrupulous Londoners appear to have been quick to take advantage of the unrest and suspicion caused by the rising, and on the 11th the government was forced to order the city sheriffs to make proclamation that no-one was to take or arrest the goods of persons accused of lollardy, or otherwise proceed against them except by direct order of the King⁽³⁾: a number of false informers had, it seems, accused their neighbours of lollardy simply in order to extort from them their goods and chattels.⁽⁴⁾

On the same day, the 11th January, the commissioners, sitting at Westminster, tried a small number of rebels⁽⁵⁾: these included three Londoners (Henry Dene, fuller, John Goddeshulle, parchmentmaker and John Langacre, mercer) all of whom were sentenced

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1. CPR 1413-16 p. 175.
 2. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. p. 293
 3. CCR 1413-19 109-110.
 4. For case of false accusations of lollardy in London during 1416-18 see below pp. 530.
 5. Probably numbering 11, the difference between the 80 that were captured and the 69 tried on the following day (Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293; Stow, Annales 344). The record of their trials does not survive, but the fact that they occurred on the 11th can be proved by the wording of the pardons some of them later received. CPR 1413-16 pp. 162, 237, 250, 271.

to death and taken to the Tower to await execution, though all were, in fact, subsequently pardoned.⁽¹⁾ Sixty-nine more were tried on the following day, Friday 12th, and these were also sent to the Tower : in the evening twelve of them were drawn through the streets of Newgate,⁽²⁾ where they were officially handed over to the sheriffs of London for execution.⁽³⁾ On Saturday 13th, twenty-five more were drawn to Newgate, and then all thirty-seven⁽⁴⁾ were drawn to St. Giles' Fields, where four new pairs of gallows, called the 'Lollards' gallows' had been set up 'by the hye weye'.⁽⁵⁾ One man, a London carpenter called Thomas Pyer or Ydeor, seems to have received a last-minute reprieve,⁽⁶⁾ but the other 36 were then hanged : seven of them who were accused of lollardy as well as treason, and who

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1. CPR 1413-16 pp. 162, 237, 271.
 2. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293; Stow, Annales 344; Nicolas, Chronicle 97.
 3. Whilst in the Tower they had been in the custody of the earl Marshal. CCR 1413-19 56-7.
 4. Kingsford op. cit. 293; Stow op. cit. 344, Nicolas, Chronicle p. 97; state that 37 were drawn to St. Giles, and 36 were hung there (see also Greyfriars' Chronicle in Mon. Franciscana ii. 165) and this is borne out by the official records which show that 37 rebels were handed over to the sheriffs of London for execution (CCR 1413-19 56-7) of whom one was reprieved (see below) Gt. Chron. London p. 91, however, says that 39 were executed, while Gregory's Chron. 108 gives the number as 38.
 5. Gregory's Chron. p. 108; Kingsford p. 293; Stow. p. 344; Mon. Franciscana ii. 165; Polychron. VIII 548-9; Davies, Eng. Chron. p. 139.
 6. Though he was one of those handed over for execution on the 13th (CCR 1413-19 pp. 56-7) he was still alive and in Newgate on 28th September 1414, where he remained until he was released and pardoned on 20th January 1415 (CPR 1413-16 271; E199/26/30).

obdurately refused to recant,⁽¹⁾ were burnt hanging 'galowes and all'.⁽²⁾ One of those thus dealt with was William Morley,⁽³⁾ but the identity of the others is unknown, so that we do not know whether any Londoners were amongst them. At least nine Londoners,⁽⁴⁾ however, including Robert Harley,⁽⁵⁾ esquire, were amongst those executed on the 13th.

On the following Monday, the 15th January, Archbishop Arundel ordered a procession (complete with a specially composed prayer) to be made through the streets of London to give thanks for the King's victory and to pray for the deliverance of England from heretics.⁽⁶⁾ The Archbishop plainly considered that the lollard threat to his church was a very real one, and on the 21st January he ordered further processions to be made in all the cathedral and conventual churches in his province, with forty days' indulgence for anyone who would offer up prayers to the saints for the extirpation of the lollards and for the good estate of church and King.

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1. St. Alban's Chron. 79-80.
 2. Gt. Chron. London 91; Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293; Stow, Annales 344; Polychron VIII 548-9; Gesta Hen V. 5. Mon. Franciscana ii. 165 says that only five were burnt.
 3. St. Alban's Chron. 79
 4. As can be seen from the list handed over to the sheriff (CCR. 1413019 pp. 56-7).
 5. According to Historia Anglicana ii. 300, two gentlemen were executed at this time 'quia quidam de suis Regi nunciaverunt eorum conspirationes'. The two were probably Harley and William Reyneham, and of these it was most likely Harley, who seems to have been one of those arrested on the 6th January, who gave the plot away. See above p. 485.
 6. Reg. Clifford (London) ff. 155-6 cf. Liber Metricus 99.

Meanwhile, the London commissioners continued their work, and on the 16th January they were granted a license 'for this time only' to hold sessions within the Tower itself⁽¹⁾: this unusual arrangement was probably made for the safer keeping of those leading lollards who had not yet been examined. On the 19th several more London rebels suffered execution at St. Giles' Fields : these were the priest John Beverley,⁽²⁾ an anonymous 'textwriter' of St. Johns' Street, Clerkenwell,⁽³⁾ a glover of London Bridge and also, perhaps, the Eltham plotter John Burgate.⁽⁴⁾ Their bodies are not reported to have been burnt hanging, so it is probable that they had either not been convicted of heresy or (which is more likely in Beverley's case, at least) that they had recanted their lollardy before execution.

The government could, however, deal leniently with those less deeply implicated in heresy and treason, and on January 23rd the first of many royal pardons was granted, in this instance to the London fuller Henry Dene, who had been condemned to death on the day after the rising.⁽⁵⁾ At the same time the search for the more dangerous rebels went on, and on the same day as Dene received

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1. CCR 1413-19 49.
 2. For what little is known of Beverley see above p. 464-5.
 3. This street was next to Turnmill Street, which seems to have been a centre of lollardy.
 4. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293; Stow, Annales 344. According to the official record (CCR 1413-19 p.56-7) however, Burgate was one of those handed over for execution on the 13th.
 5. CPR 1413-16 p. 162.

his pardon a writ was issued to the Mayor of Oxford for the arrest of Oldcastle's esquire John Brown, who had apparently fled there.⁽¹⁾ Brown was brought to London and executed⁽²⁾; so too was the chaplain Walter Blake (the leader of the Bristol contingent) who was also taken at Oxford and who suffered at St. Giles' on either the 25th or the 27th January.⁽³⁾ Finally, on the 8th February Sir Roger Acton, one of the main ringleaders of the rising, was convicted of treason, and two days later he too was drawn through the streets and hanged at St. Giles.⁽⁴⁾

It is now time to consider in detail those Londoners who are known to have taken some part in the rising. It is, of course, impossible to compile a definitive list, and the loss of most of the indictments⁽⁵⁾ made before the London commissioners of oyer and terminer renders it difficult to arrive at a complete tally even of those who were actually caught and convicted. What appears to be a fairly comprehensive list can, however, be compiled from the records of the King's Bench, from royal pardons, and from a list of goods and chattels confiscated from convicted traitors by the

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1. CPR 1413-16 p. 176.
 2. Gregory's Chronicle p. 108. The date of his execution is unknown.
 3. KB27/611/17; KB29/52ii/19; E/159/190/24. According to Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293, Stow, Annales 344 he was hanged for treason (but not burnt for heresy) on 25th January, but since his trial seems to have taken place on the 27th this date may be wrong. KB27/611/7.
 4. Stow, Annales 344; Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293; Usk Chronicon 121; CCR 1413-16 p. 54; KB27/611/7.
 5. If, indeed, there ever were any.

escheator for London.⁽¹⁾ The names of just over forty London rebels have thus been retrieved, their number including three esquires, a number of well-established citizens, and two priests, John Beverley and the veteran lollard preacher and translator John Purvey.

Disappointingly little is known of the part played by either of the clerics, though John Beverley, who had apparently been preaching heresy around London for some time before the rising,⁽²⁾ may well have been one of the leaders of the city lollards. He had the misfortune to be taken, and was one of those hanged at St. Giles' Fields on the 19th January⁽³⁾: since his body was not reported to have been burnt hanging, he may have recanted his heresy before execution. Purvey's connection with the revolt, which has hitherto been unnoticed by historians, is even more obscure. After acting as Wycliffe's secretary, and a ministry amongst the lollards of Bristol,⁽⁴⁾ he had been taken and compelled to publicly recant his heresies at St. Paul's Cross on the 6th March 1401.⁽⁵⁾ In the following August he had been presented to the benefice of West Hythe, Kent, under the shadow of the Archbishop's palace at Saltwood⁽⁶⁾: by October 1403, however, he

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1. E357/24/39.
 2. For Beverley's career see above p. 44-5.
 3. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293; Stow, Annales 344.
 4. See above pp. 222-35 for details of Purvey's career prior to 1414.
 5. Concilia iii. 260-262; Fasc. Ziz. 400-407; Foxe, Acts and Monuments p. 706.
 6. Reg. Arundel. i. 278; Foxe op. cit. 498.

had resigned, and for the next ten years his movements are obscure.⁽¹⁾ He seems for a time to have upheld a mild and covert form of lollardy which pleased neither the church nor his former co-religionists, and in 1407 Archbishop Arundel referred to him as a 'false harlot', while the lollard William Thorpe complained that he was 'neither hot nor cold'.⁽²⁾ It is probable, however, that by 1410 he had reverted to his former whole-hearted support for heresy, and he may well have been concerned in the preparation of the lollard church disendowment bill presented to parliament in that year. Certainly the bill was based on a tract by him, written as long ago as 1395.⁽³⁾

By 1414 Purvey was apparently living in London, for immediately after the rising the city escheator confiscated goods of his there worth a total of £12.18s.0d.⁽⁴⁾ What part he himself played in the revolt is unknown: his eminence as a veteran lollard and a friend of Wycliffe should have ensured him a leading rôle, but this is belied by the fact that he is mentioned neither by the chroniclers nor by the government records. It may be that his former apostasy from the cause had damaged his credit with the lollards, or that his by now advancing years disabled him from playing an important part in their designs. In one indictment

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1. Reg. Arundel i. 290. See above p. 234-5.
 2. Foxe op. cit. 498.
 3. Deanesly, Lollard Bible 297. See above p. 226.
 4. E357/24/39.

only, that of Nicholas Underwode of Turnmill Street, is he mentioned amongst the leaders of the revolt, along with Robert Harley and William Morley of Dunstable⁽¹⁾: his servant Henry Corbrig, however, was one of those captured immediately after the rising and executed on the 13th January.⁽²⁾ What subsequently happened to Purvey himself is obscure : we have already seen that his goods were confiscated, which indicates that he was convicted of some major offence, but there is no evidence that he suffered execution either for treason or as a relapsed lollard, and it seems unlikely that the death of such a notable heretic would have gone unreported. There is some rather vague evidence,⁽³⁾ however, that he was still alive, and in prison, in the 1420's, and he may have then been serving a sentence of life imprisonment for relapse, such as was enjoined upon his former comrade William James.⁽⁴⁾ Certainly he is not heard of again in connection with the lollards of London.

Of the three London esquires involved in the rising, we have already noticed Robert Harley, whose antecedents are obscure, but who is mentioned in several indictments as being amongst the lollard leaders.⁽⁵⁾ It is possible that he is to be identified

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1. KB27/616/15.
 2. CCR 1413-19 56-7. Corbrig's goods and chattels were worth 6s. 6d. E357/24/39.
 3. See p. 236 above.
 4. Reg. Chichele IV 203-4 see above p. 232 .
 5. KB27/611/23, 616/15; KB29/52ii/20.

with the esquire of Oldcastle's who was arrested with the Eltham plotters at Bishopgate on the night of the 6th January⁽¹⁾: some of those then arrested are said to have revealed the details of the whole conspiracy to the King, and amongst those who did so may have been Harley.⁽²⁾ Certainly he was one of the two gentlemen, 'quia quidam de suis Regi nunciaverunt eorum conspirationes', amongst those hanged at St. Giles on the 13th January.⁽³⁾ The second esquire, John (or Nicholas) Hoper, 'nuper comorans cum Oldcastle', is equally obscure, but since he was one of those specifically excepted from the general pardon of March 28th 1414 he must have played a fairly important part in the rising,⁽⁴⁾ and his servant Howel ap David, alias Howel Walschman, was amongst those taken and executed immediately afterwards.⁽⁵⁾ Hoper himself contrived to remain at large for many years after the revolt, and as late as 1428 the London lollard priest Ralph Mungyn was accused of having frequent communication 'cum quodam Nicholao Hoper quondam serviente Johannis Oldcastell' viro eciam de et super premissis vehementer suspecto et publice diffamato ... sciensque ipsum fore talem

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1. Stowe, Annales 344 see above. p.485.
 2. Stowe op. cit. 344; CCR 1413-19 114-5.
 3. Hist. Anglic. ii. 300; CCR 1413-19 56-7.
 4. CCR 1413-19 176-7.
 5. E357/24/39; CCR 1413-19 56-7. The fact that Hoper had a Welsh servant may indicate that he, like Oldcastle, came from the Welsh March.

non detexit'.⁽¹⁾ Unfortunately we know nothing of Hoper's activities between 1414 and 1428, for he may well have been implicated in some of the lollard plots of that period.⁽²⁾

Undoubtedly the most interesting of the three esquires, however, is Richard Colfox, usually referred to as 'of London',⁽³⁾ though he also held lands in Cheshire⁽⁴⁾ and was most probably a relation of Nicholas Colfox of Barton Segrave, Northants., who in 1397 had been implicated in the murder of Thomas duke of Gloucester.⁽⁵⁾ Richard had received a grant of land in Cheshire from Richard II in 1395,⁽⁶⁾ but by February 1402 he had passed into the service of Henry V, then Prince of Wales⁽⁷⁾: ironically enough, he was also a retainer of the Arundel family though not, apparently, of the Archbishop himself.⁽⁸⁾ More significant for us, however, are his long-standing connections (through the Arundels) with the 'Lollard Knights', and particularly with Sir Lewis Clifford.

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1. Reg. Chichele iii. 199-200. Mungyn admitted having communication with Hoper, but "non tamen communicavit cum eo super lollardia aliqua."
 2. It is possible that he is to be identified with 'quendam scutiferum, complicem lohannis Oldkastell' who was plotting against Henry V's life at Kenilworth at Christmas 1416. St. Alban's Chron. p. 103.
 3. KB27/611/13; E357/24/39; CCR 1413-19 514, 520 : called of Kent in 1412. CCR 1409-13 357.
 4. CPR 1391-6 p. 649. His pardon, dated 12th December 1414, refers to him as of London alias of Nantwich, Cheshire, KB27/615/14.
 5. CPR 1401-5 381, 1405-9 116, 413; Feudal Aids VI 501; Rot. Parl. iii. 452-3.
 6. CPR 1391-6 p. 649.
 7. CPR 1422-9 p. 77.
 8. Reg. Arundel i. f.183; CPR 1405-9 p. 166; CCR 1409-13 p. 357.

In September 1401 Colfox had acted as an executor of the will of Lady Agnes Arundel, of which Clifford and his son-in-law Sir Philip de la Vache were overseers, and both Clifford and Colfox were Sir Richard Arundel's feoffees for Wooder and several other Northumberland manors.⁽¹⁾ When Clifford made his will in 1404 he appointed as his overseers Sir Philip de la Vache and two of the 'Lollard Knights',⁽²⁾ Sir John Cheyne and Sir Thomas Clanvowe. Amongst his executors (though they are not mentioned in the will, and there is some doubt as to how they obtained the post)⁽³⁾ were Richard Colfox and Sir John Oldcastle⁽⁴⁾: thus we are provided with one of the very few known links between the rebels of 1414 and the earlier 'Lollard Knights'. During the first part of 1413 Oldcastle and Colfox were associated in the sale to the King of a certain costly clasp which had formerly belonged to Clifford. They received the first down-payment in the spring, and on 20th July (only a month before Oldcastle's citation for heresy) King Henry gave them a promissory note that the remaining payment should be made by Michaelmas 1414.⁽⁵⁾

In view of his background, it is especially unfortunate that we do not know what part Colfox played in the rising, though

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1. Reg. Arundel. i. f. 283; CPR 1405-9 166, 433.
 2. Testamenta Vetusta 164.
 3. McFarlane, Lollard Knights 212 see above pp 119-21, 196 .
 4. Devon, Issues 323; CPR 1413-16 p. 73.
 5. *ibid.*

he was considered an important enough rebel to be amongst those specifically excluded from the general pardon issued on 28th March 1414.⁽¹⁾ At that time he was still at large, but by the end of the year he had made his peace with the authorities, and on the 12th December he was granted a royal pardon.⁽²⁾ He subsequently fought in the duke of Gloucester's retinue at Agincourt, and he does not seem to have relapsed either into heresy or treason.⁽³⁾

Apart from the above, some thirty-four inhabitants of London are known to have been involved in the revolt, and of these fourteen were executed and thirteen pardoned, while the fate of the remainder is unknown. The large number of executions amongst the Londoners was probably mainly due to the fact that many of them were taken and sentenced immediately after the revolt, before the government had adopted the policy of clemency which was subsequently to save the lives of many provincial rebels : it may also reflect, however, the important part played in the rising by the city lollards.

Of those London citizens most deeply involved, we have already come across John Burgate, the Eltham plotter (who was executed immediately after the rising) and William Parchmyner and Richard Wrothe, who helped Oldcastle to escape from the Tower. What

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1. CCR 1413-19 176-7. The escheator for London confiscated goods and chattels of his worth 79s.0d. E357/24/39.
 2. KB27/615/14.
 3. Nicolas, Battle of Agincourt 333; CCR 1413-19 pp. 514, 520; CPR 1422-9 p. 77.

became of Wrothe is completely unknown, but Parchmyner was amongst those excluded from the pardon of 28th March 1414, and eventually suffered execution in October 1416.⁽¹⁾ Nothing is known, however, of what rôle was played by Thomas Eston,⁽²⁾ a London mercer who had interests in Buckinghamshire,⁽³⁾ and who was also excluded from pardon.⁽⁴⁾ Whether he subsequently obtained grace, or simply evaded arrest, he was again in trouble in 1421-2, when the King sent a writ to the Mayor of London for his arrest, amongst others 'found defectyfe in certayne poyntes of Eresy and Lollardy'.⁽⁵⁾ Eston may have been connected with another mercer, John Langacre, of London alias of High Wycombe, Bucks.,⁽⁶⁾ who after spending nearly a year in Newgate obtained a pardon on 16th December 1414:⁽⁷⁾ he afterwards relapsed, however, and in July 1417 he was taken at Byfield, Northants., while accompanying Oldcastle on his travels, and shortly afterwards executed.⁽⁸⁾ It seems likely that the

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1. CCR 1413-19 pp. 176-7; Riley, Memorials 641-2 see above p. 477-81.
 2. Not to be confused with Thomas Est, gentleman, yeoman of the King's beds. M.P. for Lyme in 1417, and a friend of Oldcastle's stepson-in-law, Sir Thomas Brooke. (CPR 1422-9 p. 35; CCR 1422-9 347, 1435-41 190-1, 397. CFR XIV 249; Dorset Fines ii. 317; E404/46/302/303; C64/10/31) Est was in possession of 200 marks belonging to Sir John Oldcastle in April 1417 (E357/25/69) but he was a career royal servant and no lollard.
 3. Where the county escheator confiscated goods worth 24s.8d. of his. E357/24/34/67.
 4. CCR 1413-19 pp. 176-7.
 5. Brut ii. 448.
 6. CCR 1409-13 262; CPR 1408-13 343, 1413-16 255. See above p. 394.
 7. CPR 1413-16 271; CCR 1413-19 148; E199/26/30.
 8. KB9/209/6, 27. See above p. 147.

veteran anti-Lancastrian plotter, Benedict Wolman,⁽¹⁾ was also deeply involved in the organisation of the revolt, and certainly a writ was issued for his arrest immediately afterwards.⁽²⁾ Despite his past record, however, he managed to obtain a pardon in January 1415, only to be re-arrested in 1416, when he was executed for his part in yet another conspiracy, this time combining lollardy with support for "Richard II".⁽³⁾

Few of the London citizens indicted in 1414 are known to have been long-standing supporters of lollardy. One of the two John Jolyfs (senior and junior) executed on the 13th January, however, was amongst those Londoners whose arrest for lollardy had been ordered in April 1410.⁽⁴⁾ It is also just possible that Richard Dalton or Talton, a scrivener of the parish of St. Mary Matfelon outside Aldgate,⁽⁵⁾ who had long-standing links with John Burgate,⁽⁶⁾ is to be identified with the man of the same name imprisoned for heresy at Salisbury in 1389.⁽⁷⁾ It is uncertain whether the London lollard Richard Gurmyn (previously convicted of lollardy in 1404 and 1408)⁽⁸⁾ took any part in the rising at

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1. For Wolman's earlier career see above p.468-70
 2. KB27/611/13. The escheator for London could find no goods of his to confiscate. E357/24/39.
 3. KB27/624/19; C67/37/58; Riley, Memorials 638; Cal.Ltr.Bk. I 165-6; St. Alban's Chron. 102 see below p.525-6.
 4. CPR 1409-13 p. 224; CCR 1413-19 56-7.
 5. E357/24/39. His confiscated goods were worth 25s.0d.
 6. CCR 1405-9 379, 389, 1409-13 225.
 7. CCR 1389-92 p. 4. see above p.314. Dalton's ultimate fate is unknown.
 8. CPR 1401-5 p. 415; B.M. Cotton. Cleo. E. II f. 335. See above p.460-1.

all, for he is not mentioned in any documents relating to it, and though he was granted a royal pardon in January 1415, this may well have referred to his previous offences.⁽¹⁾

A group of lollards appears to have existed, probably under the leadership of William Parchmyner, in the Smithfield-Clerkenwell area, and these may have been deeply involved in the revolt as well in the concealment of Oldcastle after his escape from the Tower. They included Robert Cryngelford, a relatively wealthy goldsmith (his confiscated goods were worth £10.6s.9d.) of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, who obtained a royal pardon on 6th October 1414,⁽²⁾ and three men from Turnmill Street, Clerkenwell. These were Nicholas atte Cok, brewer, Thomas Lyttleton, parchment-maker, and Nicholas Underwode, weaver : all three escaped arrest immediately after the rising, but were ordered to appear before the court of King's Bench on the 13th February 1414 when, however, the sheriff reported that he had been unable to find them.⁽³⁾ The fate of atte Cok and Lyttleton is unknown,⁽⁴⁾ but Underwode obtained a royal pardon on 14th December 1414,⁽⁵⁾ despite the fact that his indictment implied that he had given favour and counsel

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1. C67/37/58. See below p. 520.
 2. E357/24/39; KB27/611/13, 614/24. In 1424 Cryngelford acted as a mainpernor in the sum of £25 for a fellow-citizen, and in 1429 he acquired a rent in Sussex. Cal. Pl. Memo. Rolls. 1413-37 178, 231.
 3. KB27/611/23; KB29/52 pt.2/20.
 4. They both suffered confiscation of their goods by the city escheator : those of atte Cok (also called Brewer) were worth 9s. 6d., and those of Lyttleton worth £1. E357/24/39.
 5. KB27/616/15.

to the lollard leaders John Purvey, Robert Harley and William Morley at the time of the rising. A fifth member of this group, an anonymous 'textwriter' of St. John's Street, Clerkenwell, was amongst those executed on the 19th January 1414.⁽¹⁾

Another interesting grouping is that of the three Londoners - Gilbert Milbourne, John Swepton and John Sporle, vintner - who were taken at Oxford before the 25th January 1414, in the company of the Bristol lollard leader Walter Blake and two other Bristol rebels.⁽²⁾ This group may, of course, have come together fortuitously during the chaos which ensued upon the defeat of the rising, but it is also possible that the three Londoners had been attached to the large Bristol contingent as guides or messengers. One wonders whether the little group of fugitives planned to take refuge in Oxford,⁽³⁾ or whether they were passing through on their way to Bristol or even to the Welsh border. Howsoever this may be, Swepton and Sporle appeared before the court of King's Bench on the 9th February 1414, when they were released on bail put up by eight fellow-citizens of London⁽⁴⁾: what became of them subsequently is unknown, as is the fate of Gilbert Milbourne.

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1. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293; Stow's Annales 344.
 2. KB27/611/17; KB29/52 pt.2/19; E159/190/24. See above p. 243 .
 3. It is notable that Oldcastle's esquire John Brown was also taken at Oxford on 23rd January, about the same time as Blake and his party passed through. CPR 1413-16 p. 176.
 4. None of whom are known to have had lollard connections. KB29/52 pt.2/19.

Concerning the remainder of the London rebels there is little, excepting a few biographical details, to be said. Amongst those pardoned was Henry Dene, fuller, who, despite the fact that he was condemned to death on the 11th January 1414, (the day after the revolt) obtained a royal pardon on the 23rd of the same month, the first of all the rebels to do so⁽¹⁾; nevertheless his goods, worth 45s. 3d., were confiscated by the escheator for London.⁽²⁾ Next to obtain pardon, on 18th April 1414, was John Child, a prosperous goldsmith,⁽³⁾ followed on 1st June by Laurence Keye, a weaver of Cosin Lane in Dowgate ward.⁽⁴⁾ John Goddeshulle, parchmentmaker (who like Dene had been condemned to death on the 11th January) had to spend several months in Newgate before being pardoned on September 18th,⁽⁵⁾ and Thomas Cornevyle, the carpenter who had given himself up just before the rising, was pardoned eleven days later on Michaelmas Day.⁽⁶⁾ John Otford, a hosier of Birchen Lane, Cornhill (a warrant for whose arrest had been issued immediately after the rising, and whose servant Thomas Kent had been amongst those hanged) was pardoned on 14th December 1414⁽⁷⁾; he may have had business connections outside London, for his main-pernors included men from Yorkshire⁽⁸⁾ and Gloucestershire. Finally

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1. CPR 1413-16 p. 162.
 2. This, and all other figures of the values of escheated goods, is from the London escheator's account. E357/24/39.
 3. CPR 1413-16 p. 162. In 1416 he was wealthy enough to undertake bail for a fellow-citizen in the sum of £100. CCR 1413-19. 321.
 4. CPR 1413-16 p. 162.
 5. CPR 1413-16 236-7; CCR 1413-19 148.
 6. KB27/611/13, 613/25 see above p. 488 .
 7. KB27/611/13, 615/32.
 8. Richard Tikhill, perhaps a relation of the Derbyshire lollard Thomas Tikhill. See above p. 43-4.

Richard Subray, fuller and Thomas Ydeor, carpenter, were pardoned on the 20th January 1415⁽¹⁾: the latter had actually been handed over for execution on the 13th January 1414, but had been reprieved and had spent a year in Newgate.⁽²⁾

Save that they were unfortunate enough to be executed on the 13th January 1414,⁽³⁾ nothing more is known of Henry Corbrig (servant of John Purvey) Luke Gregory, Thomas Kent (servant of John Otford), John Savage and John Sutton, weavers, or Hywel Walschman, servant of John Hoper, nor of the anonymous glover of London Bridge who died on the 19th January,⁽⁴⁾ nor of John Parker, cordwainer, whose fate is unknown.⁽⁵⁾

It is difficult to arrive at any conclusions concerning the social status of the London lollards of 1414, but they seem on the whole to have been minor tradesmen of no great importance. Certainly none of them are known to have held corporation office, though some (namely John Child, Robert Cryngelford, John Langacre and perhaps John Otford) seem to have been relatively prosperous. Of those 29 whose trades are known, five were weavers, three were carpenters, three parchmentmakers and three servants, two were scribes, two mercers and two fullers, and there were solitary examples of a brewer, vintner, hosteller, hosier, cordwainer, glover and tailor.

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1. KB27/611/13, 615/37.
 2. CCR 1413-19 56-7, 148; CPR 1413-16 271; E199/26/30.
 3. CCR 1413-19 56-7.
 4. Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 293.
 5. E357/24/39.

It is possible that Oldcastle himself may have remained in London for nearly a month after the failure of the rising, if the story told by Richard Makerell, a disreputable ex-soldier, is to be believed.⁽¹⁾ Makerell claimed that he had returned from France on or about the 2nd February 1414, after service in the retinue of Thomas duke of Clarence,⁽²⁾ and had at once taken refuge in the sanctuary at Westminster to avoid being arrested for debt. He remained there until 'Carnisprivium',⁽³⁾ (either the 4th or the 11th February 1414) on which night, at about 9 p.m., Clarence entered the sanctuary with a body of soldiers seeking Sir John Oldcastle. According to Makerell's story, they found nothing because Oldcastle's friends had been forewarned. About an hour before Clarence's raid, the monk Archdeacon of Westminster⁽⁴⁾ had asked Makerell and three other inmates of the sanctuary to accompany him into the Abbey : there he revealed himself to be fully armed and armoured, and after swearing the four men to secrecy he gave them 20s. each, which they received (it was claimed) for fear of him.

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1. KB9/205/1/f.15.
 2. Clarence had, however, returned to England much earlier on, and had been present with his brother the King at St. Giles' Fields.
 3. This could be taken to mean (a) the first days of Lent, from 25th February 1414 onwards (b) Septuagesima Sunday, 4th February or (c) Sexagesima Sunday, 11th February. Since Makerell refers to 'Carnisprivium' as a day rather than a period, one of the second two alternatives has been preferred.
 4. Whose identity has not yet been established.

In return for these wages, Makerell and his comrades were to be given horses and, accompanied by the Archdeacon himself and by a certain esquire of Oldcastle's then in the sanctuary, they were to escort Sir John safely wherever he might wish to go. The Archdeacon is also said to have added that within 16 days the King would be in more danger from Oldcastle than Oldcastle was now in from the King. After this cryptic statement, Makerell claimed that he and his three companions had returned the Archdeacon's money and had refused to undertake the mission.

It is unfortunate that the credibility of Makerell's story is somewhat marred by the fact that he was well-known as a common thief and highwayman, and that he did not tell his story until November 1414, when he was on trial for his life for a series of armed robberies.⁽¹⁾ It is at least possible, therefore, that he wholly or partly fabricated his tale simply to delay his execution by turning King's Approver,⁽²⁾ though it is equally true that genuine information about such an important figure as Oldcastle could have earned Makerell a pardon : what eventually happened to him is unknown, so it is necessary to assess his story purely on its own merits. The lollard Archdeacon is rather hard to swallow, but the remainder of the story could be true, and Clarence's raid, since it could easily be verified by the courts, is unlikely to be a fabrication. This is interesting, for it shows that the authorities were still searching for Oldcastle in London a full month after the

1. KB9/205/1/15,17.

2. For other approvers who made up dubious stories about lollards see William Carsewell (above p.208) and John Fitz Harry, above p.206 .

rising. The identity of Sir John's remaining supporters in the capital is unknown, but if Makerell's story is to be believed they were in such short supply that sanctuary-men had to be hired to escort their leader away.

It seems likely, indeed, that during the remainder of 1414 the London lollards were somewhat cowed by the suppression of the revolt and the execution, in their very midst, of their leaders and comrades. Certainly, nothing is known of them until the late summer of 1415, when a number of London heretics⁽¹⁾ were arrested by the city authorities and handed over to the bishop of London's commissaries. Easily the most important of these was the veteran lollard and former Common Council-man, John Claydon, who on the 17th August 1415 came up for trial at St. Paul's chapter-house before Archbishop Chichele, several other bishops, and the Lord Mayor of London, Thomas Fauconer.

Claydon's trial⁽²⁾ presents us with an interesting and unique picture of life in a well-to-do lollard household. First of all he admitted to having been defamed as a Lollard, in London and elsewhere, since 1395, and to having suffered imprisonment between that date and 1399, when he had been released after abjuring his heresies.⁽³⁾ He further confessed to having appeared before Archbishop Arundel in 1413, two years before, and to having then

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1. Riley, Memorials 617-8. A letter written by the city authorities to King Henry, then in France, on the 22nd August, makes it clear that a number of lollards had been arrested, but does not give their names. It is most probable, however, that both John Claydon and Richard Gurmyn (see below) were amongst them.
 2. Req. Chichele IV 132-8.
 3. See above p. 448-9.

once again abjured.⁽¹⁾ Either because of this abjuration, or for other reasons, he had not taken part in Oldcastle's rising, but he obviously remained a convinced lollard.

When asked if he had owned or kept any English books since his last abjuration, he replied that he could not deny it, since a number of such books had been found in his house and confiscated by the Lord Mayor and his officials : at this point the Mayor himself intervened to say that the books were indeed in his possession, 'qui iudicio suo erant pessimi et perversissimi libri quos unquam legit vel vidit.'⁽²⁾ The books were then exhibited to the court, amongst them being a copy of the lollard 'lanterne of light', well written and finely bound in red leather. Asked if he knew this book, Claydon confessed that he had himself caused it to be written and bound, almost entirely at his own expense, since the time of his abjuration. He admitted that one John Gryme had been the copyist, but said that he did not know his present whereabouts.

During further questioning Claydon stated that he could not read himself, but that he had heard about a quarter of the 'lanterne of light' read to him by John Fuller, one of his servants. He declared that much of the doctrine he had heard thereby was good and useful for the salvation of the soul, and that he particularly favoured the book because it contained a written version of a sermon preached at Horsleydown, Southwark.⁽³⁾ He further confessed that

1. See above p. 463-4.

2. Reg. Chichele IV 133.

3. Which Claydon had presumably heard himself, though this is not stated. Reg. Chichele. IV 133.

since his abjuration the veteran lollard Richard Baker (alias Gurmyn) had many times visited his house, despite the fact that he well knew Gurmyn to be greatly defamed and suspect of lollardy. At this point the court was adjourned over Sunday, while a committee of theologians examined the heretical books taken from Claydon's house and while three of his servants were questioned by Master John Estcourt.

It was re-convened on Monday 19th August, when Estcourt presented the results of his enquiries.⁽¹⁾ The first witness examined had been one David Berde, who had been Claydon's servant and apprentice, and who had lived with him in St. Martin's Lane for a year and nine months : like his master, he was illiterate. Berde testified that he had known of the book the 'lanterne of light' since Easter 1415, and that he knew it to contain an exposition of the Ten Commandments in English. He went on to say that he had often seen John Fuller reading the book to Claydon on feast days and holidays around the said Easter, and that Claydon had seemed very pleased with what he had heard, greatly commending the book and declaring the doctrine in it to be true and catholic and not at all heretical.

Next to testify was Saundre Phelip, aged fifteen, who had been Claydon's servant and apprentice for two years and nine months.⁽²⁾ He agreed with most of what Berde had said, but added that about the middle of Lent (17th February-30th March) 1415 he had seen John Gryme, the copyist of the 'lanterne', carry it into Claydon's house in unbound quires. On the Sunday afterwards Gryme

1. Reg. Chichele IV 134.

2. At the time of the trial Phelip was living in the Lord Mayor of London's household, and one wonders if he had acted as an informer. Reg. Chichele IV 135.

and John Fuller had sat correcting and reading the book in Claydon's room from 8 a.m. until dusk, Claydon himself also being present for much of the time : on that occasion, as well as many others, Claydon had publicly praised the book. Phelip also stated that during the last year Richard Gurmyn and 'quidam cognominatus Montfort qui de lollardria tenebantur vehementer suspecti' had often visited the house and had talked and disputed about the contents of the book and other articles of religion. The last to be examined was Baltasar Mero, a paid servant of Claydon's for nine months, who agreed with both the previous statements, and confirmed that he had often heard his master discuss Holy Scripture with Gurmyn and Montfort.⁽¹⁾ The identity of 'Montfort' cannot definitely be established, but it is most probable that he was that John Mountford who appeared before the royal council in 1397 on a lollardy charge.⁽²⁾

The three servants examined were all apparently considered to be free of the taint of heresy, for no charges seem to have been laid against them. The literate John Fuller, however, most probably shared his master's beliefs, but it is not known whether the authorities succeeded in taking him, or what his subsequent fate was.

On the same day, the 19th August, the court also heard the findings of the committee of theologians who had examined Claydon's books, and who had extracted from them some fifteen heresies, nearly all of which are derived from the 'lanterne of light'.⁽³⁾ A summary follows:-

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1. Req. Chichele IV 136.
 2. C81/563/11026 see above p. 449.
 3. Req. Chichele IV. 136-7 cf. Lanterne of Light, ed. Swinburn, EETS., O.S. 151.

- (1) The Pope is worse than Antichrist, and papal law is corrupt and without authority.
- (2) Archbishops and bishops are the seats of Antichrist, on which he sits and rules over all people in darkness, heresy and error.
- (3) Bishops' letters licensing men to preach are signs of the Beast. Simple faithful priests may preach anywhere, episcopal prohibitions or provincial constitutions notwithstanding.
- (4) The roman Curia is the head of Antichrist, bishops are his body, and his poisonous tail is made up of the religious orders, which were founded by the Pope and not by Christ.
- (5) No-one is a member of the church except those who are finally saved, for the church is none other than the congregation of faithful souls.
- (6) Christ did not found 'private religions' which are useless to the church and ought to be completely extirpated.
- (7) Churches ought not to be decorated with gold, silver or jewels, but ought to imitate the humility of Christ by being in simple and ordinary houses.
- (8) There are two principal causes for the persecution of Christians. One is the illicit retention of temporal goods in the hands of priests, and the other is the illegal begging of friars.
- (9) That almsgiving is neither virtuous nor permissible except when it is done under the following conditions: first, it must be done for the honour of God, second, it must come from goods justly acquired, third, the almsgiver must give in true charity, fourthly, it must only be directed to those really in need.
- (10) Much singing in church is not founded in Scripture, and it is not proper for a priest to be occupied in singing but rather in studying the law of Christ and sedulously preaching His word.
- (11) 'quod Judas recepit corpus Christi in pane et sanguinem ejus in vino, in quo palam inimitur quod facta consecracione panis et vini eadem panis et vinum qui prius fuerant veraciter remanent in altari'(1)

1. This would seem to be a denial of transubstantiation, but according to Thomson, Later Lollards 141 n.2., the 'lanterne' contains only the first part of the sentence, as far as '... ejus in vino', which does not discount transubstantiation. Thomson suggests that either the theologians read more into the 'lanterne' than was there, or that they derived the above statement from one of Claydon's other books.

- (12) 'universa suffragia ecclesiastica prosunt indifferenter omnibus virtuosis'
- (13) Papal or episcopal indulgences are unfounded, and those who receive them do not profit in any way.
- (14) Subjects need not obey the wishes of prelates.
- (15) Pilgrimages should not be made to images, and nor should they be venerated in any other way.

Without hesitation the court ordered the books to be burnt,⁽¹⁾ and the fate of Claydon himself was also a foregone conclusion, for he had twice relapsed, and stood condemned out of his own mouth as a friend of lollards and a patron of extremist literature. Walsingham's story about him⁽²⁾ - "in tantam demenciam ruerat, ut etiam filiam sacerdotem constituerat et missam celebrare faceret in domo sua die quo coniunx eius a puerperio surgens purganda ad ecclesiam processisset"⁽³⁾ - is, however, almost certainly untrue, for no mention of such activities appears in the full version of Claydon's trial given in Archbishop Chichele's register.

If the record is to be believed, Claydon was most co-operative throughout his trial, either out of resignation or, more likely, in an attempt to gain a further pardon. Nevertheless, on August 19th 1415 he was sentenced to be handed over to the secular arm for punishment,⁽⁴⁾ and some time later, apparently on the 10th September,⁽⁵⁾ he

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1. Reg. Chichele IV. 137.
 2. St. Alban's Chron. 89.
 3. According to Hist. Anglic. ii. 307, it was his son that was made to celebrate. There is no evidence that Claydon, who must have been at least 55 in 1415, had a wife or child at this time.
 4. Reg. Chichele IV. 137-8.
 5. According to the Greyfriars' Chron. in Mon. Franciscana ii. 165. The 12th August, the date given for his execution in Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. p. 294, cannot be right, since it was before his trial. A similar confusion exists over the date of the execution of Richard Gurmyn. For undated notices of Claydon's execution, qv. Riley. Memorials 617-8; Kingsford. Chronicles of London 70; Gregory's Chron. 108; St. Alban's Chron. 89.

was burnt to death at Smithfield. One of the most persistent of the London lollards, he was also one of the highest in social status, for he was one of the only two known to have held corporation office (as a Common Council-man in 1384, 1386 and 1388).⁽¹⁾ It is perhaps, all the more remarkable that Oldcastle's rising, not eighteen months before, is not mentioned once during his trial, and neither Claydon nor any of his circle - Gurmyn, 'Montfort', Gryme and Fuller - are known to have taken part. One wonders how many other devout lollards were also unwilling or unable to revolt in 1414.

On September 9th 1415,⁽²⁾ the day before Claydon's execution, his associate Richard Gurmyn (alias Baker)⁽³⁾ was also burnt at Smithfield. Gurmyn, a "frenchbaker"⁽⁴⁾ of Lombard Street, was likewise an old offender, who had been pardoned for unspecified treasons (probably including heresy) in 1404 and who in 1407 or 1408 had been tried as a reputed lollard.⁽⁵⁾ In January 1415 he had received a royal pardon,⁽⁶⁾ possibly to cover his participation in Oldcastle's rising,⁽⁷⁾ but more probably relating to earlier offences. The account of Claydon's trial, however, proves that by the succeeding

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1. Cal. Ltr. Books H. 238, 280, 334. The other was the lollard suspect Robert Arnold, sheriff in 1426-7. See below p. 527-7.
 2. B.M. Cotton Cleo. E. II. f.335; a less reliable source, the London chronicle in Kingsford, Eng. Hist. Lit. 294, states that he was executed on St. Bartholomew's Eve (22nd August). For other notices of his death see Kingsford, Chron. London 70; Gregory's Chron. 108; Cal. Ltr. Bks. I 180; CPR 1413-16 388; Nicolas, Chronicle 99.
 3. Also called Turmyn and Gutmyn in chronicle records.
 4. CCR 1409-13 p. 111.
 5. CPR 1401-5 p. 415; B. M. Cotton Cleo. E. II f. 335. See above p. 460-1.
 6. C67/37/58.
 7. Of which participation, however, there is no other record. See above p. 506-7.

Easter Gurmyn was once again associating with heretics, and after being arrested (perhaps at the same time as Claydon) he was tried before Bishop Clifford of London at St. Paul's on 7th September 1415,⁽¹⁾ and executed two days later by order of a letter from the King to the sheriffs of London. His goods, which were worth £21.2s.4d. and included three swords and a 'dublet of defenses', were granted to a yeoman of the King's chamber.⁽²⁾

Gurmyn indirectly continued to cause trouble to the city authorities for some time after his execution. In March 1408, when he was threatened with conviction for heresy and the resultant confiscation of his possessions, he had made over all his real property in London, Shrewsbury and Lichfield to three trustees, John Russell, wooldmonger, John Eston, joiner and Richard Anable, pewterer, all of London.⁽³⁾ After his execution, nevertheless, all his possessions were confiscated by Thomas Fauconer, then Lord Mayor, who also acted ex-officio as city escheator until the end of his term of office on 28th October 1415. Gurmyn's trustees were not so easily to be defeated, and they brought an action against Fauconer in the court of King's Bench, to which the city authorities replied by summoning them to appear at the Guildhall. When one of them, Richard Anable, refused to do so, the corporation disenfranchised him and nailed up his shop windows so that he could not practice his trade.⁽⁴⁾

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1. B. M. Cotton Cleo. E. II. f. 335; CPR 1413-16 p. 388.
 2. CPR 1413-16 p. 388; E136/108/12.
 3. CCR 1409-13 p. 111; KB27/620/7 (Common Pleas) see p. 4604.
 4. KB27/620/7 (Common Pleas); Cal. Letter Bks. I. 56; Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1413-37 p. 40.

The trustees complained to the court of Exchequer, and on 1st January 1416 they were granted an injunction ordering the corporation to cease molesting them and to unblock Anable's windows, but the London authorities temporised and refused to comply. By now the dispute seems to have resolved itself into a feud between Fauconer and John Russell, one of the trustees. According to Fauconer, Russell ambushed his servant and apprentices at St. Bride's on 1st June 1416, and continued to assault and threaten them during the two months following, so that they dared not go about their business.⁽¹⁾ Not content with this, between the 4th and 20th July Russell assiduously spread false rumours about Fauconer, claiming that whilst he was Mayor he had caused Richard Gurmyn to be burnt despite the fact that he had a royal pardon,⁽²⁾ in manifest contempt of the King. Russell further asserted that as a result Fauconer had been imprisoned in the Tower and fined £1,000. This insult was too much, and on 29th July the ex-mayor haled Russell before a city court and charged him with slander. Russell pleaded not guilty, but before a jury could be convened he fled to the sanctuary at Westminster, remaining there until April 1417, when he apologised to Fauconer and gave himself up for punishment.⁽³⁾

It is most probable that John Russell was a lollard, or at least a lollard sympathiser, and that his feud with Fauconer was something more than a dispute about real estate. His connection with Gurmyn itself casts some suspicion on him, as does his gift

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1. Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1413-37 p. 44.
 2. Gurmyn had been granted a royal pardon in January 1415, but this would have been invalidated by his association with Claydon.
 3. Riley, Memorials 630-634; Cal. Ltr. Bks. I. 180; Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1413-37 pp. 43-5, 52, 60.

in February 1415 of his goods and chattels to a certain Thomas Tickhill, whose namesake and relative was a leader of the Derbyshire lollards.⁽¹⁾ More conclusively, it is very likely that he is to be identified with the John Russell, 'wolman', who was the principal London agent of the lollard revolt of 1431, after which (it is said) 'he wolde have made new lordys, dukys, erlys and baronys, after hys entente'. He was hanged drawn and quartered at Tyburn in July 1431.⁽²⁾

Rumours and counter-rumours concerning Oldcastle, Claydon and the lollards were apparently rife in London during 1415 and 1416, and some of these are catalogued in a petition sent to Henry V some time after his return from the Agincourt campaign on the 23rd November 1415.⁽³⁾ It came from a certain "John B."⁽⁴⁾ an eccentric religious enthusiast who had taken sanctuary to avoid imprisonment for heresy. It is most unlikely, however, that he was a lollard, for his first request to the King is that a certain "service of oure ladye, in laten, contening al the bible, with gret part of the Catholic Doctours ...

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1. CCR 1413-19 p. 270. See above p. 434.
 2. Kingsford, Chronicles of London pp. 97, 134; Gt. Chron. of London pp. 156; Gregory's Chronicle p. 172; Brut ii. p. 457; KB9/225/2,3,4,22; J.A.F. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 146-8.
 3. Letters of Margaret of Anjou ed. C. Monro. (Camden Soc. 1863) 24-28. From internal evidence the petition can be dated between 23rd November 1415 and July 1417 (G.E.C., Peerage ii. 71).
 4. Perhaps John Barton, doctor of medicine of London, who at his own request purged himself of heresy before Archbishop Chichele on 23rd November 1416 (Reg. Chichele IV. 168-9). Not the same as John Barton, priest, of Lincoln diocese, who was prosecuted by Bishop Repingdon in 1409-10, and on 26th May 1416 was again handed over to Repingdon for further correction. Reg. Chichele iii. pp. 15-16. See above p. 127.

be confermed soo that whooever wol use hit, mowe bodely withouten
 sclaundre ... and also he asketh for a privat religion named cristys
 Knightis, for the same service to use. And also to werry on the
 hethen and other heretikes ... to make oo fold and one herde, oure
 Lorde Jhu criste and his chief Vicar in erthe, oure hooly ffader the
 pope of Rome."

Latin services, 'private religions' and Papal crusades
 against heathens and heretics all seem to be perfectly orthodox,
 but when 'John B.' presented his views in three books to the bishop
 of London, the bishop refused either to answer him or to return the
 books. More significantly, the climate of opinion in London after
 the executions of Claydon and Gurmyn was such that religious
 eccentricity was liable to be confused with heresy, and various
 persons unknown accused John of being in league with the lollards.
 It was said that 'he shulde have made a letter' (presumably protest-
 ing about the executions) 'y sett upon Fawkener is gate thanne
 maire of London,' and he was further accused of 'declaring' Old-
 castle and of owning 'a book thei clepe the launtern of light', which
 had become notorious during Claydon's trial. His detractors also
 declared that 'he shulde at Coventre, Sunday thre wekes nexte
 bifore Lammesse day last was,⁽¹⁾ have taught and stirred Loullers
 to rise ... (and) ... that he shulde have made vi hundred tabardes
 for the same entent'. Though we have no further information
 concerning such a projected rising, this last rumour may contain
 some elements of truth, for the Coventry lollards are known to

1. Perhaps 14th July 1415 or 12th July 1416.

have been active during the summer of 1415,⁽¹⁾ and there is also some evidence that they had links with their co-religionists in London at about this time.⁽²⁾

Because of the accusations levelled at him, 'John B.' claimed that he dared not leave sanctuary, and begged the King to take the case into his own hands, at the same time requesting him to promote the 'private religion' of 'cristys Knightis'. The end of the story is unknown, unless 'John B.' can be identified with the John Barton, 'medicus' of London, who at his own request appeared before Archbishop Chichele at St. Paul's on 23rd November 1416 to purge himself of the lollardy of which he was defamed in the capital and elsewhere. Seeing that none came forward to accuse him, Chichele declared him to be of good fame, and he seems subsequently to have moved to Oxford.⁽³⁾

Some of the rumours of lollard involvement in plots against the state, however, had more foundation. In April 1416 the incorrigible Benedict Wolman,⁽⁴⁾ in association with a Lincolnshire gentleman called John Bekeryng, was plotting within the parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-West, Fleet Street, to bring Thomas Warde of Trumpington from Scotland and set him on the throne in the guise

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1. Oldcastle himself was in Warwickshire in August 1415. See above p. 292 .
 2. See the case of Robert Arnold below p. 528 .
 3. On 11th May 1417 the University of Oxford received a certificate from Chichele declaring Barton to be of good fame. Reg. Chichele IV 168-9.
 4. For Wolman's earlier career see above p. 468-70.

of Richard II.⁽¹⁾ During the summer the conspirators were joined by John Whitlock, another veteran pro-Ricardian agitator,⁽²⁾ and by Thomas Lucas M.A., who had been imprisoned for lollardy as early as 1395⁽³⁾ and who was now said to support Oldcastle in his opinions as well as in his treasonable deeds.⁽⁴⁾ Lucas (who was also accused of inciting Wolman, Whitlock and others to murder Henry V) apparently introduced a lollard element into the plot, and on 14th August 1416 the conspirators sent a letter to the Emperor Sigismund, then visiting London,⁽⁵⁾ which (in addition to claiming that Richard II was still alive in Scotland) asserted that it was illegal for the religious orders to have any temporal possessions.⁽⁶⁾ At the same time Wolman distributed 'scedulas in multis locis errore plenus', presumably to the same effect as the letter to Sigismund.⁽⁷⁾

Sigismund promptly revealed the plot to Henry V, and on Michaelmas Day Wolman was convicted of high treason. He had at least twice before (in 1409 and 1415) received royal pardons for this offence, but this time there was to be no escape, and he was

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1. Cal. Letter Bks. I. 165-6
 2. See above p. 466 .
 3. Emden, Bioq. Reg. Oxon. ii. 1170 see above p. 448 .
 4. KB27/624/9.
 5. Waugh, Henry V iii. 9, 21.
 6. Cal. Letter Bks. I. 165-6; KB27/624/9.
 7. St. Alban's Chron. 102.

executed immediately after his trial.⁽¹⁾ It is notable that he was not at this time accused of heresy.⁽²⁾ Of the remaining conspirators, Bekeryng⁽³⁾ died in prison, and the fate of Whitlock is unknown. Thomas Lucas was tried for treason and lollardy in February 1417 but was, surprisingly enough, acquitted by the jury.⁽⁴⁾

Sir John Oldcastle is not known to have been directly connected with Wolman's plot, but towards the latter part of 1416 the lollard leader was rumoured to be in the London area. His 'serviens et familiaris', Thomas Payne of Glamorgan, alias scrivener of London, who had escaped unhurt from St. Giles' Fields in 1414, was said to have harboured him in or near that same place in early October 1416.⁽⁵⁾ Later, on the 11th November, Richard Clodsdale, an esquire in the royal household, was said to have met Oldcastle at Acton and to have given him £100 for the wages of men to rise against the King.⁽⁶⁾ Both Clodsdale and Payne were, however,

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1. Cal. Letter Bk. I 165-6 Amongst his possessions confiscated by the London escheator was a psalter 'glosed in English' E136/108/13.
 2. Walsingham's Historia Anglicana ii. 317 records his execution and mentions his treasonable bills, but refers to him simply as 'civis Londoniarum' : in the later versions of the chronicle (St. Alban's Chron.102; Capgrave. Chronicle 316) however, he is called 'lollardus'.
 3. Cal. Letter Bk. I 165-6.
 4. KB27/624/9.
 5. KB27/644/11; Proc. Privy Council V. 104 for other references to Payne see above p.470 and below p.524.
 6. As a result of this accusation, laid against him by two other members of the household, Clodsdale was imprisoned between 16th April 1417 and February 1418, when he was tried but acquitted. In July 1418, therefore, he successfully sued his accusers for £100 damages KB27/638/32 (Civil Pleas side)

acquitted of their offences, and Sir John seems to have been in the Midlands during the autumn of 1416.⁽¹⁾ The rumours cannot, nevertheless, be altogether discounted, for they may have been based on a real visit paid to the capital at about this time.

A number of prosecutions of London lollards are recorded during the following year, 1417. On 2nd July⁽²⁾ Archbishop Chichele wrote to the abbot of Westminster requiring him to produce for examination a certain John Hill, who was vehemently suspect of heresy and erroneous opinions both in London and elsewhere. Hill had formerly lived in the city, but had recently fled and now lurked within the precincts of the monastery, presumably in the sanctuary there. No further details of the case are known. At about the same time Henry Barton, Lord Mayor of London, arrested a man named 'Youn',⁽³⁾ on suspicion of lollardy and adherence to Sir John Oldcastle. The degree of suspicion must have been very great, for by royal command the prisoner was sent to Southampton (where between 21st and 30th July Henry V was waiting to sail for France) for an interview with the King himself.⁽⁴⁾

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1. See above p. 295 and below p. 568-9.
 2. Reg. Chichele IV 176-7.
 3. It is most unlikely that 'Youn' is to be identified with Oldcastle's tenant John Yonge of Almeley (cf. Thomson, Later Lollards 16) John Yonge did not shelter Oldcastle until 23rd August 1417, a month after 'Youn's' arrest in London. See above p. 209-10.
 4. E364/51C. This incident must have taken place in the last week of July, which was the only time during Henry Barton's mayoralty that the King was at Southampton. It cannot have occurred in November (as Thomson, Later Lollards 16 asserts) when Henry was at Alençon. Waugh, Henry V iii. 48-50, 66.

Several prominent citizens of London seem to have been suspected of lollardy during the autumn of 1417, though all that we know of the case is contained in a single obscure record in the journal of the city's Common Council.⁽¹⁾ According to this, on the 16th September Richard Merlawe (an alderman and former mayor and sheriff)⁽²⁾ Robert Arnold (a wealthy and well-established grocer)⁽³⁾ John Norman, weaver, and William Jurdan, tailor, were required to give surety for their good behaviour. Their offences are not specified, but at the same time a certain "Garton of Coventry" was called upon to testify 'super materia lollardrie mota super Robert Arnold et uxor eius'. This Garton is almost definitely to be identified with Ralph Garton, a prominent Coventry merchant who had many business connections in London, and who had also been deeply involved in the 1414 uprising.⁽⁴⁾

Amongst other things unspecified, Garton stated that four notable persons of London, of whom Arnold was one, had been arrested there by order of the King and sent to be imprisoned in

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1. Journal i. f.33.
 2. Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1381-1412 pp. 267, 272; 1413-37 p. 10; Cal. Letter Bks. I. pp. 78, 95, 121, 143. He had been a sheriff in 1402-3, mayor in 1409-10, and M.P. for the city in 1411, 1413 and 1415.
 3. Arnold had first obtained freedom of the city in 1384 as a haberdasher, but had transferred to the grocers in 1402, and in the same year he had a license to export 5,000 rabbit skins. Jointly with other prominent citizens, he had stood surety in the sum of 10,000 marks for Henry Somer in 1413, and in June 1417, shortly before his appearance in court, he had lent £40 for the King's expedition to France. CCR 1399-1402 pp. 388, 523; 1405-9 p. 253; 1409-13 p. 396; 1413-19 p. 61; CPR 1416-22 234; Cal. Letter Bks. I. 16, 51, 55, 157, 203.
 4. See above p. 289-90

four separate castles. Whether the other three notable persons supposed to have been imprisoned were Merlawe, Norman and Jurdon is not clear, but if Merlawe was under suspicion of lollardy it seems unlikely that he would have been elected mayor a month later, on 13th October 1417.⁽¹⁾ No more is known for certain about this puzzling case, but the implied links between the lollards of London and Coventry are especially interesting in view of the rumours connecting "John B." of London with a lollard rising in Coventry in 1415.⁽²⁾

If Robert Arnold really was a lollard supporter, he ranks with John Claydon amongst the most socially important of the London heretics. The accusation of heresy made against him,⁽³⁾ however, seems to have made little difference to his career, and he remained prominent in city politics, serving as Master of the Grocer's Company in 1420-21 and as a city sheriff in 1426-7.⁽⁴⁾ It is possible, therefore, that the charges which seem to have resulted in Arnold's imprisonment were false or malicious ones.

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1. Cal. Letter Bk. I. 190.
 2. See above pp. 292, 522-4.
 3. An appeal of treason made in the summer of 1421 against Robert Arnold of London junior, born at Trim in Ireland, may refer to him, but it was made by an Irish criminal, John Fitz Harry, whose appeals were notoriously false (for another of them see p. 206). At any rate, the sheriff of London declared he could not find the man named. KB27/641/1.
 4. Grocer's Company Records p. 130; CPR 1422-9 411; CCR 1422-9 311; Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1413-37 pp. 73, 75, 173, 174, 214, 296.

Indeed, at least three cases of malicious accusation of heresy are known to have occurred in London between 1417 and 1419,⁽¹⁾ each of which resulted in the arrest of the innocent party accused. In November 1417 Richard Richer was released from the prison where he had lain for some time on a false charge of preaching heresy, levied by a certain William Cokeram (who subsequently confessed his "untrue words")⁽²⁾ John Selby, clerk of the counter prison, who before 1417 was accused of harbouring and abetting Oldcastle, was not cleared until 1419 (when his accuser, a felon, admitted that the charge was false)⁽³⁾ while Thomas Jolyf, armourer, who was accused of lollardy in February 1418, was not exonerated until 1422.⁽⁴⁾ False charges of heresy were plainly considered to be an effective way of attacking enemies, and these three cases serve to show that at this time the London authorities were quick to act where any suspicion of lollardy was involved.

The 14th December 1417 saw the execution of Oldcastle at St. Giles' Fields, supervised by the sheriffs of London, whose expenses for the fire came to 56s.0d.⁽⁵⁾ According to the unreliable Kenilworth chronicler John Strecche, a number of Sir John's disciples

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1. cf. also the case of Richard Clodsdale in 1416 above p. 526.
 2. Journal of the Common Council i. f. 37.
 3. *ibid.* i. f. 62.
 4. *ibid.* i. f. 50; Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls 1413-37 p. 115. The accusation against Jolyf may have been based on a relationship to John Jolyf, arrested for heresy in 1410 and executed after the 1414 rising. See above p. 506.
 5. E364/52A.

(some of them probably Londoners) hung about the gallows for some time after the execution, expecting their leader to rise again as he had prophesied.⁽¹⁾ One of these is said to have rubbed his eyes with the ashes of the execution fire, as a result of which he went blind. Whether or not this tale is true, the London authorities may have been expecting some violent reaction to the execution of the lollard leader, and in January 1418⁽²⁾ each alderman, constable, and bailiff was ordered to make diligent and secret enquiries into any congregations or conventicles that might be held in their wards, and to report any such to the mayor.

It was perhaps as a result of these investigations that Thomas Jolyf was indicted of lollardy on 25th February 1418, though the charge subsequently proved to be false.⁽³⁾ On March 18th, three weeks later, another Londoner, John Taylour, of the parish of St. Michael at Quern, abjured his heresies before Archbishop Chichele at Maidstone.⁽⁴⁾ At the same time he swore to perform penance : during the next general procession in London he was to walk barefoot and bareheaded and carrying a candle, and on the following Palm Sunday he was to offer 2d. to the crucifix in his parish church at the time of divine service. The mildness of the penance seems to indicate that Taylour's dereliction from orthodoxy was not serious, and the nature of it may mean that his heresy was connected with the veneration of images and crucifixes.

Despite the capture and execution of Oldcastle and the established popularity of Henry V, a number of London lollards

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1. Strecche, Chronicle pp. 148-9; St. Alban's Chron. 117.
 2. Journal of the Common Council i. f. 38.
 3. Journal of Common Council i. f. 50; Cal. Plea and Memo. Rolls 1413-37 p. 115.
 4. Reg. Chichele IV 192-3.

continued to involve themselves in political plots against the state. Foremost amongst these was Thomas Payne of Glamorgan, alias scrivener of London and "sumtyme clerk and chief conseillour to Sir John Oldecastell",⁽¹⁾ who had been "in the feld armed ... with the Lollardes beside Seint James next Charyngcrosse and eschaped unhurt or taken". His career after 1414 is difficult to follow, but he apparently remained at large for some years, and was alleged to have harboured Oldcastle in London in October 1416.⁽²⁾ At some time between 30th July 1417 and Michaelmas 1419 he became involved in a conspiracy to rescue King James I of Scotland, then a prisoner at Windsor Castle.⁽³⁾ News of the plot leaked out, however, and a chancery clerk called Thomas Haseley, "accompanied atte his cost

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1. Proc. P.C. V. 104-5; KB27/634/30. He was also known as Thomas Clerk see above pp. 470, 526.
 2. He was, however, acquitted of the charge. KB27/644/11; KB9/217/7.
 3. All known information concerning this incident is contained in the petition of Payne's captor, Thomas Haseley, which was apparently submitted in 1438. From internal evidence in this we know the rescue attempt to have been made after 30th July 1417 (when Henry V left England and Thomas Langley, bishop of Durham, became Chancellor) and it must have occurred before Michaelmas 1419, by which time Payne and John Philip, labourer (perhaps an accomplice) were imprisoned in Maidstone gaol. (Proc. P.C. V. 104-5; KB27/634/30; Waugh, Henry V iii. 50). The incident cannot be more precisely dated, mainly because the movements of James I during this period are not well documented. He was transferred to Windsor Castle after 22nd February 1417, but during the summer of 1418 he seems to have been in London and Kenilworth. (DNB X. 567; CPR 1416-22 p. 200). It is just possible that Payne's conspiracy was connected with Oldcastle's alleged negotiations with the Scots in the Autumn of 1417 (see p. 402) but the duke of Albany, regent of Scotland, (with whom Sir John is said to have come to an agreement) had no reason to wish for James' return, and it is perhaps more likely that the plot was Payne's own idea, about which the Scots King may have known nothing. R. Nicholson, Scotland in the Later Middle Ages pp. 248-250.

and alle maner expenses with notable poiar be the space of v. daies and vi. nyghtes lay for hym in the most secrete wyse ... and arested hym atte mydnyght in a place beside your castell of Wyndesore ... and that same nyght this seid traitour shulde have broken the seid castell be treson and goen with the seid Kyng toward Scotland in proef whereof I founde in the traitours purs a cedula wreten of alle places of gistes and loggynges appointed for hem fro Wyndesore to Edynboure in Scotland and so he confessed".

By Michaelmas 1419 Payne was in prison, where he remained until May 1421, when he appeared before the King in parliament, and was afterwards consigned to the Tower under suspicion of treason, lollardy and heresy.⁽¹⁾ There he fell in with the political conspirator Sir John Mortimer and two French prisoners of war, and together they escaped on the night of the 11th April 1422 intending, it was alleged, to go into Wales and cause a new rising against the King, taking several of the royal castles there and handing them over to the Dauphin.⁽²⁾ Payne was, however, recaptured in Somerset, and appeared in the court of King's Bench before 6th June 1422, when he was committed to Newgate for safe-custody : he was still there at the end of the year, when he petitioned parliament that he might be properly tried.⁽³⁾ Despite his long record of treason and conspiracy, there is no evidence that Payne suffered execution : nor, unfortunately, does any record remain of his examination for heresy, though he was

1. CPR 1422-9 p. 186; Proc. RC. ii. 309, v. 104-5; KB27/634/30.

2. Devon, Issues. 373; KB9/217/7; KB27/644/11.

3. Devon, Issues 375; Proc. P.C. iii. 4; Rot. Parl. IV 196.

probably amongst those lollards imprisoned in London who in November 1422 were ordered to be handed over to their ordinaries for correction.⁽¹⁾ Though Payne is known to have been indicted of lollardy and heresy,⁽²⁾ however, the evidence still extant suggests that his plots were exclusively designed for the overthrow of the government rather than the reform of the church.

During 1420 two other London lollards were implicated in what must surely have been the last of the many plots instigated by Thomas Warde of Trumpington, the counterfeit Richard II.⁽³⁾ A London fishmonger called Thomas Cobold visited Warde in Scotland, and on his return to the capital hid himself in the Cripplegate house of William Newton, a barber who was greatly defamed of heresy. There the two men conspired with William Bryan, a wealthy stock-fishmonger who was also suspected of lollardy,⁽⁴⁾ to spread the news that Warde was King Richard and would shortly return to England. The Lord Mayor, however, got wind of the plot, and on 7th September 1420⁽⁵⁾ Newton, Cobold and their fellow-conspirators were arrested, though Bryan succeeded in escaping to sanctuary at Westminster.⁽⁶⁾ Cross-examined concerning the identity of Thomas Warde, Newton declared that it was of no importance, since the "mammet of Scotland" had recently died there. The ultimate fate of the two lollard suspects is unknown, though Cobold was released on bail in 1422.⁽⁷⁾

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1. Rot. Parl. IV. 174.
 2. CPR 1422-9 p. 186.
 3. See above p. 466.
 4. CCR 1409-13 219, 222; Cal. Letter Bk. I. 39; E357/25/96.
 5. KB27/646/22; E357/25/96.
 6. His confiscated goods were valued at £13.12.0d. E357/25/96.
 7. KB27/646/22.

The remaining evidence of lollard activities in London during the latter part of Henry V's reign is fragmentary. From evidence given at his trial in 1428⁽¹⁾ we know that the lollard priest Ralph Mungyn was active in the capital at about this time. Mungyn had been a logic pupil of the heretical Peter Payne at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and after Payne's flight to Bohemia in 1413 he had moved to London where, it was alleged, he had spread lollard doctrines and distributed heretical books, so that those who received them had themselves become teachers of heresy. Mungyn denied these charges, but admitted owning copies of Wycliffe's 'Triologus' and 'De Evangelia' until 1416, when he had sold them to a chaplain from Hampshire. He also admitted having appeared on a heresy charge before Bishop Clifford of London, who because of a sermon he had preached had suspended him indefinitely from the cure of souls.⁽²⁾ This sermon cannot be precisely dated, but it must have taken place between 1419 (when Mungyn is known to have been an assistant priest at St. Stephen's Walbrook)⁽³⁾ and August 1421 (when Clifford died).⁽⁴⁾ No more is known of Mungyn's activities at this time,⁽⁵⁾ but it seems likely that his influence on the London lollard community was considerable.

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1. Reg. Chichele iii. 195-204.
 2. Reg. Chichele iii. 198-9.
 3. B. M. Add. Ms. 35096.
 4. Reg. Chichele i. 74.
 5. But see below pp. 537-46

During the autumn of 1421 a London tailor named John Reynalde was arrested on the allegation of a fellow-citizen that he was of 'assent and covine' with Oldcastle. To what extent the accusation was true is unknown, but on the 22nd November he had to find surety in Chancery that he would be the King's true liege, that he would not preach or reveal Oldcastle's doctrines, and that he would appear before the royal Council at 15 days' notice.⁽¹⁾

In the same mayoral year (from 28th October 1421 until the like date in 1422) there seems to have been a rather more serious outbreak of lollard activity in the city, for 'ther come a wrytte from the Kyng unto the Maire of London for to a-rest certayne persones the whch wer found defectyfe in certayne poyntes of Erysy and Lollardy. And these ben thaire names : Eston, mercer and other moo'.⁽²⁾ There seems little doubt that this Eston is to be identified with the Thomas Eston, mercer, who was excluded from pardon after the 1414 revolt.⁽³⁾ He and the others arrested with him were probably amongst those lollards imprisoned in the Tower of London and elsewhere in the city who during November or December 1422 were ordered by parliament⁽⁴⁾ to be handed over to John Kempe, bishop of London, for correction.

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1. CCR 1419-22 p. 213; C47/112/32.
 2. Brut ii. p. 448.
 3. See above p. 505 .
 4. Rot. Parl. IV. 174. The parliament of 1422 sat from 9th November until 18th December.

Kempe's register (1421-26) contains no record of prosecutions of London lollards, though this is not to say that there were none during his bishopric.⁽¹⁾ William Russell, the warden of the London Franciscans, who was in trouble during 1425-8 for a sermon preached at St. Paul's Cross in January 1425, does not really come within the scope of this thesis. Though his opinions (that personal tithes need not by divine law be paid to parish priests, but might be distributed for pious uses) were undoubtedly unorthodox, there is nothing to link him with the lollard movement, and the time when mendicants might be found in alliance with lollards was long past.⁽²⁾

The next known prosecutions of London lollards, and the last to be covered here, took place in 1428, during the summer of which year a number of heretics appeared before Convocation after rumours of a new rising in Kent. Amongst these was a London chaplain called John Galle,⁽³⁾ who appeared on 21st July, but who on interrogation expressed irreproachably orthodox opinions : nevertheless, since a book of the Gospels in English 'vocatus liber nove legis in Anglico' had been found in his possession he was sent to the bishop of London for further examination. Nothing further is known of him.⁽⁴⁾

Far more important was Ralph Mungyn, whose earlier activities in the capital we have already noticed.⁽⁵⁾ He had

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1. John Walcote of Hasleton, Glos., had been defamed of lollardy in London at some time between 1415 and 1425. Reg. Morgan (Wigorn) ii. 46-47 see above p.260f.
 2. Reg. Chichele iii. 104-5, 118-157; Reg. Stafford (Bath and Wells) i. 41.
 3. Possibly to be identified with Thomas Galle, vicar of St. Mary Matfelon extra Aldgate, 1410-23, and of St. Michael Bassishaw. 1435-7. Hennessey, Novum Repertorium 331, 457.
 4. Reg. Chichele iii. 190.
 5. See above p.535.

apparently remained there since his suspension from priestly office by Bishop Clifford in about 1420, but nothing is known of him until a certain Wednesday in February 1428,⁽¹⁾ when he was heard to voice scandalous and heretical opinions while sitting at dinner in the house of John Shadworth, sometime alderman, sheriff and Lord Mayor of London.⁽²⁾ Either as a direct result of this, or perhaps because he was informed on by his associate Bartholomew Cornmonger (the Kentish lollard who also detected a number of other heretics during the summer of 1428)⁽³⁾ Mungyn was arrested by order of the Chancellor, apparently in July, and handed over to Archbishop Chichele.⁽⁴⁾ The Archbishop, who was dealing with another group of lollards at this time,⁽⁵⁾ delated him to Bishop William Gray of London for further investigation, and on the 27th July 1428 an inquisition into his life, conversation and opinions was held at St. Michael Bassishaw (or Basinghall) in which parish Shadworth's house lay.⁽⁶⁾

First to be examined by the Bishop's commissaries was

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1. Req. Chichele iii. 204.
 2. Cal. Letter Book H. p. 213, 235, 239, 284, 367, 408; Letter Bk. I. 15, 123; Cal. Plea. Memo. Rolls (1381-1412) 57, 85, 92, 186. For further details of Shadworth see below.
 3. Req. Chichele iii. 199; B. M. Cotton Cleo. CIV f. 198. For the stir caused by Cornmonger's revelation of a proposed new lollard rising, and the other heretics arrested at this time, see above pp. 410-12.
 4. Req. Chichele iii. 196-7. In November 1428 Mungyn was said to have been in prison for heresy for about four months.
 5. Robert of Hedgerley, Katherine Dertford and John Jourdeley, tried before Convocation during July 1428. Req. Chichele iii. 187-9. See above pp. 421-5.
 6. Req. Chichele iii. 202-3.

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 6. Req. Chichele iii. 202-3.

The conversation concerning Bohemia, which from other evidence is known to have occurred in February 1428, may well have been prompted by the news of the defeat of Cardinal Beaufort and the Catholic forces at Tachov in July 1427, as well as by Papal efforts to gain men and money in England to fight the Hussites.⁽¹⁾ Mungyn's championship of the Bohemians is particularly interesting in view of his links with Peter Payne, formerly his teacher at Oxford, and now one of the foremost Hussite leaders.⁽²⁾

On 28th July 1428,⁽³⁾ the day following the inquisition, Mungyn appeared in St. Paul's chapter-house before Bishop Gray sitting in tribunal, and denied supporting the Hussites or condemning private property. When, however, he was asked to abjure these opinions, as well as all other heresies and lollardies, he several times refused to do so, even though the Bishop personally pleaded with him. Accordingly, he was committed to the episcopal prison for four months, during which period more investigations were carried out into his past and two of his associates, the priests Thomas Garenter and Richard Nonke,⁽⁴⁾ were arrested.

Mungyn appeared before Archbishop Chichele in Convocation on 28th November 1428,⁽⁵⁾ when it was officially stated that he had been defamed of heresy in Oxford and elsewhere for more than 20 years : he was once again called on to abjure, but answered that it did not seem right for him to do so,⁽⁶⁾ so that he was returned

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1. DNB ii. 44; Emden. Biog. Reg. Oxon. i. 41; Heymann, John Zizka 462-3; Gregory's Chron. 162.
 2. Emden, Biog. Reg. Oxon. iii. 1442. But see below p. 543.
 3. Reg. Chichele iii. 203.
 4. For their trials, which ran concurrently with Mungyn's, see above p. 424 and below p. 546.
 5. Reg. Chichele iii. 195-6.
 6. 'sibi videbatur non erat justum quod taliter abjuraret'.

to prison while the court considered what should be done with him. Chichele was plainly anxious to be lenient, and when Mungyn appeared again on 2nd December the Archbishop begged him to abjure 'in nomine domini Jesu Christi' and 'quasi cum lacrimis', warning him that unless he did so the process against him would be set in motion.

Since Mungyn continued to be obstinate, his trial began on the following day, the 3rd December, when he was required to answer fifteen articles laid against him by the famous canon lawyer William Lyndwode.⁽¹⁾ He admitted that he had known Master Peter Payne (alias Peter Clerk) before the latter's flight from England,⁽²⁾ and that Payne had been publicly defamed as a follower of Wycliffe in London, Oxford and elsewhere. He further confessed to being a disciple and familiar of Payne's at Oxford, where he had studied logic with him, but denied communicating with him in London, or receiving any doctrine from him. After Payne's flight Mungyn was accused of coming to London and distributing many books by Wycliffe, and others, in English, containing the opinions of Wycliffe and Peter Payne : he denied this, but admitted owning copies of Wycliffes 'Triologus' and 'De Evangelia' until 1416, when he had sold them to a Hampshire chaplain named John Botte. He completely denied⁽³⁾ communicating lollard books and doctrines to certain men and women in London and Oxford, so that they in their turn became teachers of heresy. Accused of being commonly and openly defamed of lollardy for more than twenty years, Mungyn answered that he knew of no such reputation, and had always thought of himself as

1. Req. Chichele iii. 198.

2. Payne apparently left England in 1413 (Emden, Bioq. Req. iii. 1442.

3. Req. Chichele iii. 199.

of good fame. Further accused of having faced heresy charges on a number of previous occasions, he admitted only to his trial before Bishop Clifford in 1420.

The next few charges reveal the names of Mungyn's circle of associates. He confessed to having frequently communicated with the Kentish lollard Bartholomew Cornmonger⁽¹⁾ whilst knowing him to be suspect, but denied having failed to detect him to the ordinary, saying that he had denounced him to Bishop Gray of London (1426-31) three times. He further admitted to frequently visiting Richard Monke, vicar of Chesham, Bucks.⁽²⁾ and a suspected lollard, but added that he did not know him to be suspect. Next he confessed to associating with another defamed lollard, Nicholas Hoper,⁽³⁾ a former servant of Oldcastle's, but stated that he had not spoken to him about heresy. He admitted⁽⁴⁾ to being familiar with Thomas Garenter⁽⁵⁾ (chaplain of Nicholas (recte John) Shadworth of London) who was by his own admission guilty of lollardy, but added that he had not detected him because he had not known that he was suspected.

Finally, Mungyn totally denied holding the doctrines (concerning the Hussites and the right to private property) which he was alleged to have maintained at Shadworth's house, and declared that he did not believe himself to be defamed because of them.

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1. For Cornmonger see above p. 410-11
 2. For Richard Monke see above p. 424-5.
 3. For Nicholas (or John) Hoper see above p. 501.
 4. Reg. Chichele iii. 200.
 5. See below p. 546.

He could hardly deny, however, that he had several times refused to abjure, since he now once again refused to do so, despite the threats and persuasions of the court. Even now, nevertheless, he was not condemned, but given twenty-four more hours to change his mind.⁽¹⁾

His last appearance in court occurred on the 4th December, when he stoutly refused to admit that he was defamed, and declared that he would never abjure as long as he lived. In a final effort to make him at least admit his guilt, the inquisition held on his life and opinions on the previous 27th July was produced and read out,⁽²⁾ and later in the day two more men who had been present in Shadworth's house when Mungyn upheld his views were interviewed. William Estfeld, alderman, testified that Mungyn had expressly said that it was wrong to fight the Bohemians, because whoever did so would break the commandment "Thou Shalt not Kill", and Christians ought to suffer death rather than inflict it. If this testimony is true, it seems that Mungyn was more of a pacifist than a supporter of the extremely belligerent Hussites. Estfeld further stated that Mungyn had declared that it was lawful for the needy to take the goods of others without sin, and that in that way all goods were common. The second witness interviewed, a mercer named John Russell,⁽³⁾ agreed with Estfeld, and added that, when one of the company asked Mungyn's opinion on the papal indulgences issued in aid of the redemption of Christians in infidel hands, the lollard had replied

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1. Reg. Chichele iii. 201.
 2. ibid. 203-4.
 3. This Russell may be identifiable with the man of the same name who was a friend of Richard Gurmyn's in 1408, who was in trouble with the authorities in 1416-17, and who was executed for his part in the lollard revolt of 1431 (see above pp. 520-2, 548). If so, it is ironic that he should have been asked to testify against Mungyn.

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that they were of no value, since the Pope had no more power to give indulgences than he himself had.

Mungyn remained defiant even in the face of this fresh evidence, and later in the same day (the 4th December) he was convicted of heresy and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, unless in future he could obtain mitigation from Chichele or one of his successors.⁽¹⁾ Despite the extremity of Mungyn's alleged opinions, it is noticeable that he was treated with remarkable lenience throughout his examination, during which he was given at least ten opportunities to abjure. That he was not sentenced to death is also noteworthy, for the church was within its rights to burn obstinate heretics, even if they had not relapsed, as in the case of John Badby in 1410.⁽²⁾

Mungyn's associates Richard Monke and Thomas Garenter were also tried during the first few days of December, in the intervals of the examination of the more prominent heretic. Monke (whose trial is described more fully elsewhere)⁽³⁾ was another veteran lollard, who had previously fallen foul of the bishop of Lincoln. Nevertheless he was allowed to abjure and released after making a public confession at Paul's Cross on the 5th December, during which he declared that he was 'gretly suspect of heresies and divers errours and of conversacyon and famylyaryte haddle with heretikes and with many persones suspecte of heresie'.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Reg. Chichele iii. 205. There is no evidence that Mungyn ever did emerge from prison.
 2. See above pp. 277-81.
 3. See above p. 42-5.
 4. Reg. Chichele iii. 197-8, 207-8.

Thomas Garenter, about whose background nothing is known, but who at the time of his arrest was chaplain to the wealthy ex-mayor John Shadworth, first appeared before Convocation on the 3rd December, when he confessed to a number of (unspecified) articles of heresy laid against him. Asked if he could give any reason why he should not be preceded against, he at once submitted himself to the Archbishop and swore to perform any penance given him. Two days later he appeared with Richard Monke at Paul's Cross and made a public abjuration in English. He confessed⁽¹⁾ that he had held and affirmed certain heresies within the city of London, declaring "that he that Crysten men callen pope is not verray pope ner goddes vicarge in erthe, but I said he was anti-crist". He had also upheld the doctrine of remanence and condemned pilgrimages, saying that "hit was better I saide to abyde atte hoome and beete the stoles wyth thaire heelys, for hit was I saide but tree and stoon that they soughten". Finally, he had affirmed "that I helde noo scripture' catholyk ner holy but oonly that ys contened in the bible. For the legendes and lyves of saintes I held hem nought and the miracles wryten of hem I helde untrew". Afterwards he made the usual promises never again to teach, preach or believe heresy or to associate with heretics, but the authorities plainly took a grave view of his previous activities, for they not only sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment but also excluded him from ever again holding a cure of souls.⁽²⁾

We have already seen that Mungyn and his London associates had links with lollards in Kent and Buckinghamshire,

1. Reg. Chichele iii. 206-7.

2. ibid. iii. 210.

as well as with a former member of Oldcastle's household, but there is no clear evidence as to what support they enjoyed in the city itself. Suspicion must, however, fall upon alderman John Shadworth, in whose house Mungyn had made his pronouncement, for he employed Thomas Garenter as a chaplain and can hardly have avoided knowing of his lollard beliefs. Shadworth's background, nevertheless, was one of unimpeachable respectability : he was a contemporary of John Claydon's, who had been prominent in city politics since 1378, having been an alderman since 1383, sheriff in 1391, M.P. in 1390 and 1399 and Lord Mayor in 1401-2,⁽¹⁾ and at no time is he known to have been accused of heresy. It is, perhaps, odd that he was not called to be a witness at Mungyn's trial, but this may be accounted for by his considerable age : his wills, made in 1428 and 1429, are orthodox enough,⁽²⁾ and at the last the case against him must remain unproven for want of evidence.

At any rate, the corporation of London decided that such a situation should not be allowed to arise again, and two days after Garenter's abjuration they made a decree that no citizen, upon pain of fine and imprisonment, should employ anyone convicted of lollardy, whether or not they had abjured.⁽³⁾

Despite the efforts of both city and ecclesiastical authorities, lollardy seems to have survived in London throughout the remainder of the fifteenth century, and the city continued to attract heretics from other parts of the country.⁽⁴⁾ Under the

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1. Cal. Letter Bks. H. pp. 94, 207, 213, 235, 239, 263, 284, 325, 349, 367, 398, 408, 448; Letter Bks I. p. 15, 123; Cal. Plea and Memo. Rolls 1381-1412 pp. 57, 59, 64, 69, 85, 92, 183, 186, 1413-37 pp. 9, 27, 77, 86, 111.
 2. Cal. Wills in Court of Hustings ii. 452-3; Stowe Survey ii. 352.
 3. Journal of the Common Council ii. 127.
 4. See the case of Matthew Appulby. Above p. 23-4.

leadership of John Russell,⁽¹⁾ the London lollards played some part in the rising of 1431, though the comparative unimportance of their contribution can be gauged by the fact that only two of them (including Russell himself) are known to have been prosecuted as a result.⁽²⁾ The execution in 1440 of the veteran lollard Richard Wyche seems to have provoked another outbreak of lollard activity in the capital,⁽³⁾ but after this few records of heresy there occur until the 1490's.⁽⁴⁾ Between then and the advent of Lutheran doctrines in England, however, there were a whole series of abjurations and executions in London, and the details of these cases show that the lollardy then being taught was of a conventional kind, particularly opposed to transubstantiation and to images and pilgrimages. Though there is no clear evidence, it seems at least possible that these later lollards were the direct heirs of a London lollard congregation which had survived, continually reinforced and revitalised from outside, since at least 1386.

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1. See above pp. 520-2, 543 .
 2. Thomson, Later Lollards 146-8.
 3. *ibid.* 148-151.
 4. *ibid.* 151-154. There were prosecutions in 1448, 1452 and 1467.

CHAPTER NINEBRIEF SUMMARY OF LOLLARD ACTIVITIES
1382-1428

Since this thesis as a whole is organised on a regional basis, it has been thought worthwhile to assist the reader by providing a chronological survey of all important lollard activities during the period : reference throughout is made to the more detailed accounts in the relevant regional chapters. The summary is divided into five sections :

- (1) From the Blackfriars Synod of 1382 until the passing of the statute 'De Heretico Comburendo' in 1401.
- (2) From 1401 until 1413, the eve of Oldcastle's rising.
- (3) Oldcastle's rising, 1414.
- (4) From the rising until Oldcastle's execution in December 1417.
- (5) From 1418 until 1428.

(1) 1382-1401

Though by the beginning of 1382 Wycliffe had retired from public controversy and established himself at Lutterworth, versions of his doctrines were being taught in several parts of the country. The first of these was OXFORD, where Wycliffe's followers Nicholas Hereford, Philip Repingdon and others were publicly preaching heresy throughout the spring and early summer, with the tacit support of the University's chancellor and of many other academics.⁽¹⁾ Hereford, Repingdon, and two other Oxford men, John Aston and Laurence Bedeman, also preached at ODIHAM, Hampshire, probably in early May.⁽²⁾

Meanwhile, with the encouragement of Philip Repingdon and the support of many local burgesses, William Swynderby had established himself as a popular preacher of heresy in the LEICESTER area by the early spring, despite the efforts of Bishop Buckingham of Lincoln to dislodge him.⁽³⁾ In June, however, he was brought to trial and forced to recant his heresies both in Leicester and in the other parts of Leicestershire where he had preached.⁽⁴⁾

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1. pp. 49-50.
 2. pp. 307-10
 3. pp. 55-68
 4. see pp. 68-72.

The days of open support for lollardy in Oxford were also numbered. On 17th May 1382 Archbishop Courtenay convened a synod at Blackfriars in LONDON, which soon afterwards condemned twenty-four propositions taken from Wycliffe's works as either heretical or erroneous. During June, Hereford, Repingdon and Aston appeared several times before the synod, one of their examinations being disturbed by a mob of Londoners, to whom the lollards had appealed in writing : eventually Aston was imprisoned while Hereford and Repingdon, who evaded capture, were excommunicated on July 13th.⁽¹⁾ During October and November 1382, however, Repingdon, Aston and Laurence Bedeman all recanted and were restored to the church.⁽²⁾ Hereford fled to Rome to appeal to the Pope, but was imprisoned there until 1385.

At some time in 1383 William Swynderby moved from Leicester to COVENTRY where, despite his recantation, he once again began preaching heresy : he is alleged to have made a number of converts, and to have remained there for a year before being driven out by the ecclesiastical authorities.⁽³⁾ By September 1383, when he preached a sermon of dubious orthodoxy at GLOUCESTER, John Aston had also probably relapsed, and he had certainly done so by the autumn of 1384, when he was preaching heresy in the dioceses of WORCESTER and WELLS, probably operating from a base at BRISTOL.⁽⁴⁾

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1. See pp. 433-7 .
 2. See pp. 309, 436.
 3. See pp. 266-7 .
 4. See pp. 218-22.

On the last day of 1384 Wycliffe died at Lutterworth, and by 1385 his former secretary, John Purvey, had joined Aston in the BRISTOL area.⁽¹⁾ In the same year, 1385, an esquire named Thomas Compworth from KIDLINGTON, Oxfordshire was tried before the Chancellor of Oxford for preaching heresy and refusing to pay tithes : Compworth had been converted by Oxford lollards, and he agreed to recant after seeing many of his former teachers amongst his judges.⁽²⁾ Meanwhile William Ramsbury, a layman irregularly "ordained" as a lollard "priest", had begun preaching heresy and saying doctored lollard masses in many parts of WILTSHIRE and DORSET : he continued to do so until his arrest four years later.⁽³⁾

During the summer of 1386 William Thorpe, a Yorkshire follower of Wycliffe's, was preaching in LONDON, and in the late autumn John Aston and perhaps Nicholas Hereford were also active there : in December riots ensued when the Archdeacon of London tried to arrest Aston,⁽⁴⁾ but Hereford seems to have fled to the north midlands, where he was taken at NOTTINGHAM in February 1387,⁽⁵⁾ and imprisoned in the castle there. Possibly with the connivance of his gaoler, Sir William Neville (one of the "lollard knights"). Hereford obtained release and (after probably spending some time at SHENLEY, Herts.)⁽⁶⁾ joined John Aston, John Purvey and William Swynderby, who by August 1387 were all apparently in the diocese of Worcester.⁽⁷⁾ Earlier in 1387 the LONDON lollards are said to

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1. See pp. 222-36.
 2. See pp. 268-72.
 3. See pp. 314-28.
 4. See pp. 438-43.
 5. See pp. 5-8. .
 6. See pp. 356-7 .
 7. See pp. 221 .

have rioted in favour of an apostate Augustinian friar named William Patteshull, and by this time William Thorpe had begun his twenty years of preaching heresy in THE NORTH.⁽¹⁾

1388 saw an increase in attacks on the lollards by the Government, and during the spring royal commissions were issued ordering investigations to be made at NOTTINGHAM, LEICESTER, SALISBURY and elsewhere.⁽²⁾ During the course of the year a number of lollards, including both burgesses and chaplains, were arrested in the NOTTINGHAM area.⁽³⁾ From September until December several unsuccessful attempts were made by the Bishop of Lincoln to arrest a chaplain named John Wodwarde, who was preaching heresy at CHIPPING UARDEN, Northants., with the support of the villagers and the protection of the lord of the manor, Sir Thomas Latimer (who had already been charged with possessing heretical books). Eventually the arrest of some 45 of the villagers (including a local gentleman) was ordered, but Latimer remained at liberty and apparently continued to support lollardy from his home at BRAYBROOK, Northants.⁽⁴⁾ By the end of 1388 William Swynderby had begun preaching in HEREFORDSHIRE and the WELSH MARCH.⁽⁵⁾

In July 1389 seven lollards, including the "priest" William Ramsbury, were taken in the diocese of SALISBURY.⁽⁶⁾ In October and November the lollard congregation led by William Smith of LEICESTER suffered prosecution by Archbishop Courtenay, and several of its members were forced to recant.⁽⁷⁾

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1. See pp. 1-5, 48-5
 2. See pp. 9, 79, 313
 3. See pp. 9-10.
 4. See pp. 94-98.
 5. See pp. 157-73.
 6. See pp. 314-28.
 7. See pp. 80-85.

During 1390 and 1391 William Swynderby, supported and protected by several members of the local gentry, was preaching heresy in many parts of the WELSH MARCH. Though tried before Bishop Trefnant of Hereford and eventually condemned as a heretic, Swynderby succeeded in evading arrest and apparently continued his activities during and after 1392.⁽¹⁾

In the early part of 1392 proclamations against heresy were made in both LONDON⁽²⁾ and NORTHAMPTON, and between Christmas 1392 and Easter 1393 a number of lollards are alleged to have preached in NORTHAMPTON, where the mayor and many of the burgesses were said to be lollard sympathisers.⁽³⁾

In September 1393 a royal commission had to be set up to suppress the supporters of Swynderby's Welsh disciple Walter Brute, and at about the same time a number of other lollards were arrested in the WELSH MARCH.⁽⁴⁾ In the early part of 1394 the arrest of five NORTHAMPTON lollards was ordered,⁽⁵⁾ and in June there was an outbreak of heretical preaching in north-east HAMPSHIRE⁽⁶⁾: in September a HEREFORDSHIRE esquire named John Croft was arrested, and subsequently forced to recant.⁽⁷⁾

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1. See pp. 158-73 .
 2. See pp. 445-6 .
 3. See pp. 98-111 .
 4. See pp. 177-9 .
 5. See pp. 110 .
 6. See pp. 328-9 .
 7. See pp. 180-184 .

1395 saw the promulgation of the lollard tract known as the Twelve Conclusions (probably by John Purvey) which may have been presented to parliament, and which was certainly nailed to church doors in LONDON during January and February.⁽¹⁾ Perhaps as a result, there were many arrests during the following summer : in May two LONDON men, three fellows of Merton College, Oxford⁽²⁾ and twelve burgesses of SHREWSBURY⁽³⁾ were imprisoned, and in July the arrest of another Oxford man was ordered at BRISTOL.⁽⁴⁾ In August several burgesses of NOTTINGHAM, previously arrested in 1388, were compelled to take an oath against maintaining heresy.

During 1396 John Purvey was active in BRISTOL,⁽⁵⁾ and there was apparently an outbreak of heresy at READING.⁽⁶⁾ In the following year, 1397, the lollard William Thorpe was arrested, possibly in LONDON,⁽⁷⁾ and the lollards were allegedly active in SUSSEX.⁽⁸⁾

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1. See pp. 447 .
 2. See pp. 447-9 .
 3. See pp. 200 .
 4. See pp. 231-2 .
 5. See pp. 225-32 .
 6. See pp. 328-9 .
 7. See pp. 450 .
 8. See pp. 359 .

In April 1399 William Sautre of KING'S LYNN was tried before Bishop Despenser of Norwich and allowed to recant, only to relapse and suffer execution two years afterwards.⁽¹⁾ A further proclamation against lollardy was issued in LONDON in May 1400, and in the subsequent June John Beket, a radical heretic from PATTISWICK, Essex, voluntarily renounced his heresy.⁽²⁾

1. See pp. 360-5.

2. See pp. 365-8, 451.

(2) 1401-1413

At the end of February 1401 the relapsed heretic William Sautre was burnt at Smithfield, the first lollard to suffer death for his faith. Not long afterwards, on March 6th, the cowed John Purvey made a public recantation of his heresy.⁽¹⁾ Later in the same month the statute "de Heretico Comburendo" (which provided for the execution of obstinate or relapsed heretics) was promulgated, though it may have been already decided upon before Sautre's death. As a result of his execution, and of the passing of the statute, a number of LONDON heretics voluntarily recanted and handed over their suspect books.⁽²⁾

During the summer of 1401 an investigation was ordered into lollard activities in BRISTOL,⁽³⁾ and in November a number of heretics in CALAIS⁽⁴⁾ were brought to trial. By this time William of Thaxted had begun his long career as a preacher in ESSEX.⁽⁵⁾

By 1402 the lollard Robert Hoke had become vicar of BRAYBROOK, Northants. which became a centre of heresy, and in the same year there was lollard activity at Wigston, near LEICESTER.⁽⁶⁾

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1. See pp. ~~233-4~~, 452-3
 2. See pp. 453-4 .
 3. See pp. 236 .
 4. See pp. 371 .
 5. See pp. 368 .
 6. See p. 102, 114 .

A number of LONDON heretics recanted in October and December.⁽¹⁾
 Between December 1402 and March 1403 Bishop Skirlaw of Durham was prosecuting the lollards of NORTHUMBERLAND and NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE : their leader, Richard Wyche, was arrested, and attempts were made to capture three other chaplains.⁽²⁾

During the parliament of 1404 (when a lollard-inspired bill for the disendowment of the church was before the Commons) a number of courtiers caused a scandal at COVENTRY⁽³⁾ by refusing to honour the sacrament.

In April 1405 a lollard from HUNTINGDOMSHIRE⁽⁴⁾ stood trial, and later in that year mandates were issued against the lollards of that county and of west BUCKINGHAMS. IRE.⁽⁵⁾ There may also have been lollard activity in KENT. In January 1406 Robert Hoke of BRAYBROOK⁽⁶⁾ was tried at Northampton, but released after being assigned penance. At some time after March of the same year William Taillour preached a popular sermon in LONDON against clerical possessions : the church's spokesman who replied to Taillour was heckled by William Thorpe, and abused by other spectators. Taillour escaped arrest, but parliament was petitioned for stronger measures against lollardy.⁽⁷⁾

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1. See pp. 454-6 .
 2. See pp. 12-19 .
 3. See pp. 282-3 .
 4. See pp. ~~367-70~~ 372, 115
 5. See pp. 367-70, 372
 6. See pp. 4 123-4 .
 7. See pp. 456-60 .

At the end of 1406 two Bohemian Hussites visited England. They went first to OXFORD, where Peter Payne gave them a forged letter purporting to declare the University's approbation for Wycliffe's opinions : early in 1407 they went on to KEMERTON, Glos. where they copied one of Wycliffe's works belonging to the lollard rector, Robert Lechlade, and they also visited Robert Hoke at BRAYBROOK.⁽¹⁾

In early 1407 there was lollard activity in HEREFORDSHIRE,⁽²⁾ and in April William Thorpe was arrested for preaching heresy at SHREWSBURY,⁽³⁾ which resulted in a royal commission being set up to investigate lollardy in SHROPSHIRE. By this time heretical preachers, under the protection of Sir Roger Acton, were also active in western WORCESTERSHIRE.⁽⁴⁾ In the autumn there was an enquiry into lollardy in COVENTRY.⁽⁵⁾ At some time during this year James Resby, an English priest, was burnt for heresy in Perth, SCOTLAND.⁽⁶⁾

Richard Gurmyn, a LONDON lollard, was tried in March 1408.⁽⁷⁾ John Badby, an EVESHAM heretic who had links with BRISTOL,⁽⁸⁾ was also arrested in this year, and in August there was an investigation into the activities of the lollards of the Redcliffe and Bedminster

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1. See pp. 116-26, 272-5.
 2. See pp. 199-200 .
 3. See pp. 200-203 .
 4. See pp. 281-2 .
 5. See pp. 283 .
 6. See pp. 20 .
 7. See pp. 460-1 .
 8. See pp. 277-81 .

areas of BRISTOL.⁽¹⁾ During 1409 William of Thaxted and John Smyth of that town were preaching heresy in ESSEX,⁽²⁾ and a number of chaplains, including Thomas Drayton, were doing the same in WARWICK-SHIRE.⁽³⁾

Between January and March 1410 a bill for the disendowment of the church, based on the works of Purvey and supported by Sir John Oldcastle, was before the Commons. In an effort to prevent the passage of the bill, and to cow the lollards, Archbishop Arundel initiated a series of counter-measures. The Evesham lollard John Badby was brought to London and, after the trial, burnt in the presence of Prince Henry on 5th March⁽⁴⁾: four days later William Tailleur was cited for heresy,⁽⁵⁾ and in April a chaplain named John, who was under the protection of Sir John Oldcastle, was also cited, and Oldcastle's Kentish lands were temporarily placed under an interdict.⁽⁶⁾ At the same time certain lollards were arrested in LONDON.⁽⁷⁾

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1. See pp. 238-9 .
 2. See pp. 380-1 .
 3. See pp. 283-4 .
 4. See pp. 462 .
 5. See pp. 462 .
 6. See pp. 372-4 .
 7. See pp. 462-3 .

Though the disendowment bill was dropped, Arundel did not succeed in frightening Oldcastle, who was by now an open supporter of lollardy, and who in September 1410 wrote an encouraging letter to the Bohemian Hussites.⁽¹⁾ In October there was lollard activity in SOMERSET,⁽²⁾ and in November Peter Payne was brought before a tribunal at OXFORD.⁽³⁾ By this time Thomas Drayton was active in BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.⁽⁴⁾

In the early part of 1411 there seems to have been some lollard activity, perhaps initiated by Peter Payne, in the diocese of Salisbury.⁽⁵⁾ By October the lollard preacher William Ederyk, supported and protected by Thomas Tykhill of Aston-on-Trent, had begun preaching in south DERBYSHIRE and northern LEICESTERSHIRE,⁽⁶⁾ in which latter place several other lollards were also active during 1412.⁽⁷⁾ In the spring and early summer of 1412 there was heresy in the READING area,⁽⁸⁾ and John Bacon (possibly under the protection of a local knight, Sir Thomas Beauchamp) was preaching around YEOVIL.⁽⁹⁾ Meanwhile Robert Chapell, operating from Sir John Oldcastle's manors, was active in northern KENT.⁽¹⁰⁾

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1. See pp. 374 .
 2. See pp. 335-6 .
 3. See pp. 331 .
 4. See pp. 370-1 .
 5. See pp. 331 .
 6. See pp. 31-5 .
 7. See pp. ~~332-3~~ . 126-30
 8. See pp. 332-3 .
 9. See pp. 336-7 .
 10. See pp. 374-7 .

In 1413, the year before Oldcastle's revolt, there seems to have been considerable lollard activity in many parts of the county. Early in the year there is evidence of lollardy in BRISTOL,⁽¹⁾ WILTSHIRE⁽²⁾ and the diocese of EXETER,⁽³⁾ and throughout the spring and summer William Ederyk, Walter Gilbert and other lollard priests, supported by several members of the local gentry, were preaching throughout DERBYSHIRE and LEICESTERSHIRE,⁽⁴⁾ while the local lollards were active in LEICESTER and WIGSTON.⁽⁵⁾ During August a royal writ ordered the suppression of lollard preachers at ROCHESTER, Kent,⁽⁶⁾ and in the same month the LONDON lollard leader John Claydon was forced to recant.⁽⁷⁾ At some time in this year Peter Payne fled to Bohemia to escape persecution.⁽⁸⁾

1413 also saw the prosecution for lollardy of Sir John Oldcastle. It is clear that he was already being watched in March, when a suspect chaplain connected with him was arrested in London.⁽⁹⁾ Early in June a heretical book belonging to him was produced before Convocation, and armed with this Archbishop Arundel began the long

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1. See p. 240 .
 2. See p. 334
 3. See p. 337
 4. See pp. 32-5 .
 5. See pp. ~~377-8~~ . 129-32
 6. See pp. 377-8 .
 7. See pp. 463-4 .
 8. See pp. 274, 541 .
 9. See pp. 473-4 .

process of persuading King Henry to allow proceedings for heresy to be initiated against his friend Sir John.⁽¹⁾ It was not until the third week in August, however, that proceedings began, and not until the 23rd September that Oldcastle was brought to trial.⁽²⁾ Condemned as a heretic, he was nevertheless allowed forty days grace before execution, in the hope that he could be persuaded to recant. On the night of the 19th October, however, he escaped from the Tower with the aid of some London lollards led by William Parchmyner, and concealed himself in the latter's house in Smithfield.⁽³⁾

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1. See pp. 472-5 .
 2. See p. 476
 3. See pp. 476-81 .

(3) Oldcastle's Rising

After his escape from the Tower on the night of the 19th October 1413, Oldcastle remained in London at the Smithfield house of his rescuer William Parchmyner. During November a number of lollards seem to have been imprisoned in the Tower,⁽¹⁾ and on the 10th December Sir John and his supporters were publicly excommunicated from St. Paul's Cross.⁽²⁾ At what stage Oldcastle decided to raise a revolt is unknown, but well before Christmas he sent messages to his provincial supporters.⁽³⁾ Some local lollard leaders raised additional men for their contingents by offers of wages ranging from 6d. a day up to a lump sum of 20s.⁽⁴⁾ How these wages were to be financed is unknown, but it is likely that both they and the cost of arming and equipping the rebels were to be paid from funds provided locally by the wealthier lollards.⁽⁵⁾ The rebels were to be in London by the night of the 9th January 1414, when they were to meet Oldcastle at St. Giles' Fields, near the present site of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Some of the rebels, at least, were to rendezvous at an inn called the 'Urasteleyre on the Hoop' in Smithfield,⁽⁶⁾ and there may also have been a rendezvous point at Ware, Hertfordshire,⁽⁷⁾ on the main road from the north to London.

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1. See pp. 482-3 .
 2. See p. 482 .
 3. See p. 483 .
 4. See pp. 36, 137, 383
 5. See pp. 37, 249
 6. See pp. 486-7
 7. See pp. 36

The first recorded outbreak of revolt occurred at Belton in northern Leicestershire on the 26th December 1413, when William Warde and others rose in support of Oldcastle, though since they did not leave for London until several days later it is difficult to say what form their rebellion took.⁽¹⁾ Apparently the first lollard contingent to start for London was that led by the priest William Ederyk, which left south Derbyshire on the 30th December.⁽²⁾ On the 1st and 2nd January 1414 the Cok brothers were recruiting men in northern Essex,⁽³⁾ and about that time lollard bills, emanating from Braybrook, were being circulated in Leicestershire.⁽⁴⁾

On the 4th January the large rebel contingent from Bristol⁽⁵⁾ set out, and on the same day other contingents left Daventry in Northamptonshire⁽⁶⁾ and the Braybrook area of Leicestershire.⁽⁷⁾ On the 5th groups of rebels from Leicester⁽⁸⁾ and Northampton⁽⁹⁾ took the London road, and on the 6th a party under Sir Roger Acton left Sutton in Worcestershire,⁽¹⁰⁾ while the first of the Essex contingents, led by the Cok brothers, set out from Pattiswick.⁽¹¹⁾

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1. See pp. 133-4 .
 2. See pp. 36 .
 3. See pp. 383 .
 4. See pp. 135-6 .
 5. See pp. 241-2 .
 6. See pp. 142-3 .
 7. See pp. 136-7 .
 8. See p. 135-6
 9. See p. ~~271~~ . 140-141
 10. See p. 291 .
 11. See p. 383 .

The second Essex contingent, from Thaxted, set out on the 8th,⁽¹⁾ as did a party from Hertfordshire, and two more Hertfordshire men left home on the 9th, the day before the rising was scheduled to take place.⁽²⁾ Other parties of rebels are known to have come from Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Warwickshire, and smaller groups or isolated lollards came from other parts of the country, but details of their journeys to London are not known.

The total number of men known or surmised on reasonable evidence to have actually taken part in the rising (rather than merely sympathising with it) does not exceed two hundred and twenty two. Of these, three were knights, fifteen were esquires or gentlemen, and twenty-four were priests or clerks, while of the remainder at least seven were relatively prosperous merchants. Of the one hundred and seven rebels whose crafts or trades are recorded, no less than thirty-one (half of them from Bristol) were weavers, and five each were parchmentmakers, cordwainers, fullers and carpenters, while the remainder were distributed amongst some twenty-nine other trades.

The central events of the revolt are described in detail in the chapter on London, and need not be summarised here.

1. See p. 381 .

2. See pp. 391-2 .

(4) 1414-18

There is some reason to believe that, after the revolt, Sir John Oldcastle remained in LONDON until the early part of February 1414.⁽¹⁾ In the same month, however, the government ordered the reinforcement of Cardigan and Aberystwyth castles against him, as it was rumoured that he had fled to his old haunts in WALES.⁽²⁾ There is no other evidence for his whereabouts during the remainder of this year. Throughout 1414 the examinations of those who had taken part in the rising continued, and in October Robert Hoke of Braybrook was brought to his second trial before Convocation, but despite his previous relapse, he was once again released after a further recantation.⁽³⁾

At the end of July 1415 Oldcastle was being harboured by John Prest, the vicar of CHESTERTON, Warwickshire, and he may have had some connection with a lollard rising alleged to have been planned at COVENTRY during that month.⁽⁴⁾ In about August, (probably operating from Birtsmorton Court, near MALVERN) he is himself said to have planned a new rising, which was, however, suppressed at an early stage by Lord Abergavenny.⁽⁵⁾ At the end of the year he seems once again to have been in the Coventry area.⁽⁶⁾

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1. See pp. 511-2 .
 2. See pp. 207 .
 3. See pp. ~~297-3~~ . 124-5
 4. See pp. 292-3 .
 5. See pp. 293-5 .
 6. See pp. 295 .

In May 1415 the lollard suspect Sir Thomas Talbot was implicated in a partially successful plot to kidnap Murdoch, earl of Fife,⁽¹⁾ and he and other lollards were also alleged to have been party to the plot to kill King Henry at Southampton.⁽²⁾ During the course of the year several investigations, including one at NORTHAMPTON,⁽³⁾ were carried out into lollard activities. In September two LONDON lollards, John Claydon and Richard Gurmyrn, were burnt for relapse,⁽⁴⁾ and in the same month a group of heretics were arrested in BEDFORDSHIRE.⁽⁵⁾

At various times in 1416 commissions were set up to investigate lollardy in LEICESTERSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE and NORTHAMPTONSHIRE,⁽⁶⁾ and there is also evidence of heretical activity in NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.⁽⁷⁾ At Christmas lollard bills were distributed in LONDON, READING, NORTHAMPTON and ST. ALBAN'S, probably in connection with a plot by one of Oldcastle's esquires to kill the King at Kenilworth.⁽⁸⁾

Oldcastle himself appears to have spent a good deal of 1416 and 1417 in the Midlands. In the early summer of 1416 he was at Philip Turnour's house at DAVENTRY, Northants.⁽⁹⁾ he may

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1. See pp. 26, 401 .
 2. See p. 401 .
 3. See pp. 145 .
 4. See pp. 513-20 .
 5. See pp. 395-6 .
 6. See pp. 144 .
 7. See pp. 40 .
 8. See pp. 276-7, 344, 403
 9. See pp. 145-6 .

have visited LONDON at about Michaelmas,⁽¹⁾ and more certainly he was being sheltered by John Whitby at PIDDINGTON, Oxon on the 26th October.⁽²⁾ At the end of 1416, on the 10th December, he was rumoured to have visited HICKLING in Nottinghamshire,⁽³⁾ and early in 1417, on 7th January, he met one of his supporters at SLARKES-TON BRIDGE⁽⁴⁾ in Derbyshire. During April he was alleged (by a very dubious witness) to have been at WENLOCK in Shropshire.⁽⁵⁾ It is more certain, however, that during the early summer of 1417 Sir John was hiding in NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, probably in the Byfield-Chipping Warden area, which had long been a centre of heresy.⁽⁶⁾ On the 8th May he was once again at DAVENTRY, and three weeks later he met Sir Thomas Talbot at SILVERSTONE, where they allegedly plotted to overthrow the government with the aid of the Scots and other national enemies.⁽⁷⁾ Sir John may have visited COVENTRY at the end of June,⁽⁸⁾ but by early July he was back in Northamptonshire at SILVERSTONE and BYFIELD, in which last place he narrowly escaped capture by the authorities.⁽⁹⁾ At some time during 1417 he also paid a visit to ST. ALBANS.⁽¹⁰⁾ The government still looked upon him as a very dangerous man, and during July 1417 a number of

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1. See p. 526 .
 2. See p. 295 .
 3. See p. 41 .
 4. See p. 41 .
 5. See p. 208 .
 6. See pp. 147-8 .
 7. See p. 146 .
 8. See p. 297 .
 9. See pp. 146-7 .
 10. See pp. 403-4 .

his former friends were bound over not to give him aid or support⁽¹⁾:
 in August a royal commission was set up to arrest his supporters
 in Northamptonshire.⁽²⁾

Despite the government's apparent anxiety to capture
 him, Oldcastle seems to have been living quite openly at his manor
 of ALMELEY, Herefs. from about August 20th 1417 until the middle of
 October, when he visited Gruffydd, son of Owen Glendower, somewhere
 in NORTH WALES.⁽³⁾ He may have been on his way home from this
 visit when, at the end of November 1417, he was finally captured
 at Broniarth, near WELSHPOOL, by retainers of Lord Powys.⁽⁴⁾ He
 was taken to London under heavy guard, and was burnt hanging at
 Smithfield on the 14th December 1417.⁽⁵⁾

Apart from Oldcastle's activities, there is evidence
 of lollardy in NORTHAMPTON in the early part of 1417,⁽⁶⁾ and during
 May William Taillour was preaching heresy at BREDON'S NORTON and
 probably elsewhere in WORCESTERSHIRE.⁽⁷⁾ A royal commission set
 up in August revealed considerable lollard activity in the COVEN-
 TRY⁽⁸⁾ area, while in LONDON (where two lollards had been arrested
 in July)⁽⁹⁾ four eminent citizens were accused of heresy in
 September.⁽¹⁰⁾

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1. See pp. 211, 345 .
 2. See pp. 145 .
 3. See pp. 209-11 .
 4. See p. 212 .
 5. See pp. 530-1 .
 6. See p. 149-50 .
 7. See p. 275 .
 8. See pp. 297-300 .
 9. See p. 527 .
 10. See p. 528 .

(5) 1418-1428

Despite the failure of the revolt and the execution of Oldcastle, lollardy continued to survive (albeit on a rather reduced scale) after 1418, especially in those areas where a tradition of heresy already existed. It may be, however, that the lollards were becoming more skilful in evading arrest, and certainly prosecutions of groups, rather than individual lollards, are less common than heretofore. During the course of 1418 there were proceedings against individual lollards in WARWICKSHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, LONDON, DORSET and BEDFORDSHIRE.⁽¹⁾ It may have been about this time, too, that the lollard Thomas Payne attempted to kidnap King James I of Scotland from Windsor Castle. In 1419 there is evidence of continuing lollardy amongst the heretics of south DERBYSHIRE (led by Thomas Tykhill) who had been implicated in Oldcastle's revolt, and October of that year also saw the second trial of the relapsed Richard Wyche.

Early in 1420 William Taillour, wanted for heresy since 1406, faced trial at Lambeth, but after recantation and a period in prison he managed to obtain his release in June.⁽²⁾ By July, however, he had joined another veteran lollard priest, Thomas Drayton, in BRISTOL and was once again preaching heresy, but before long both were taken by the authorities.⁽³⁾ Meanwhile another

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1. See pp. 300, 150, 531, 350-1, 405 respectively.
 2. See pp. 251-3 .
 3. See pp. 253-7 .

lollard priest, Ralph Mungyn, was active in LONDON,⁽¹⁾ where two lollards (one a prosperous merchant) were involved in an anti-government conspiracy during September.⁽²⁾

In May 1421 William Taillour was tried and condemned for relapse, but once again managed to obtain his release after giving surety of good behaviour.⁽³⁾ Towards the end of the year there were prosecutions in LONDON,⁽⁴⁾ and by this time William White was preaching heresy in the TENTERDEN area of Kent.⁽⁵⁾ Despite the efforts of the local authorities, the BRISTOL lollards were still active in 1422, in which year William Taillour was once again arrested for communicating with one of them.⁽⁶⁾ He was tried (for the third time) in February 1423, and burnt on the 2nd March in that year.⁽⁷⁾

In 1424 the preaching of the lollard suspect John Grace caused an uproar at COVENTRY.⁽⁸⁾ The following year, 1425, saw the prosecution of three veteran lollards : in June Robert Hoke of BRAYBROOK⁽⁹⁾ and Thomas Drayton⁽¹⁰⁾ (who had now moved to KENT) were each tried for the third time, but both managed to avoid the penalties for relapse. In October John Walcote of Hasleton, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, who had been a lollard for many years and had

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1. See pp. 535 .
 2. See pp. 534 .
 3. See pp. 257 .
 4. See pp. 536 .
 5. See pp. 406-7 .
 6. See p. 258.
 7. See pp. 259-60 .
 8. See pp. 301-3 .
 9. See pp. 124-6 .
 10. See pp. 407-8 .

known Swynderby, was examined at Worcester.⁽¹⁾ There is also evidence of lollardy in north and west KENT during this year.⁽²⁾ In 1426 there was a case of heresy in WARWICKSHIRE,⁽³⁾ and in 1427 there were prosecutions in HERTFORDSHIRE.⁽⁴⁾

The year 1428 saw a very large number of prosecutions for lollardy, apparently prompted by rumours of a planned new rising. At the beginning of May orders were sent out for the arrest of a large group of heretics (the disciples of William White) in the TENTERDEN area of Kent. Few of these were taken, but one of them, Bartholomew Cornmon_{er}, confessed that a rising was planned for Midsummer Day, and also revealed the names and whereabouts of many lollards. As a result of this revelation Archbishop Chichele himself mounted a raid (perhaps in Kent) which resulted in the arrest of many heretics, some of whom were executed forthwith, and a thanksgiving procession for the aversion of the revolt was held in London.⁽⁵⁾ From July onwards several lollards were tried before Convocation, notably Ralph Mungyn and two other LONDON priests,⁽⁶⁾ and two priests and a layman from BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.⁽⁷⁾ Many of the Kentish lollards had fled to East Anglia, and in September William White and another Kentish heretic were burnt at NORWICH,⁽⁸⁾ while in November two more men from the same county were executed at

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1. See pp. 260-1 .
 2. See pp. 408-10.
 3. See p. 303 .
 4. See p. 404 .
 5. See pp. 410-13 .
 6. See pp. 537-47.
 7. See pp. 421-5 .
 8. See pp. 415-8 .

COLCHESTER, a town notorious for its heretical leanings.⁽¹⁾ The remainder of White's East Anglian followers were also rounded up, and between 1428 and 1431 nearly a hundred heretics were prosecuted in the diocese of Norwich alone.⁽²⁾

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1. See pp. 418-20 .
 2. See pp. 419 .

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have tried to collect together and examine all the evidence now available concerning English popular lollardy between 1382 and 1428, paying particular attention to the identity, background and inter-relationships of the heretical congregations and their supporters. It is most probable that some of the extant evidence has evaded me, but I hope that the amount thus overlooked has been relatively small and that I can reasonably claim to have made a comprehensive (if not absolutely complete) survey of the relevant information.

Analysis and interpretation of the evidence thus assembled is a hazardous and difficult task, for though it is plain that we do not now possess all the facts about the early lollards, it is impossible to know how much has been lost and to judge how many heretical congregations existed of whom we now know nothing. Many records have, of course, completely disappeared and of those that remain some are demonstrably unsatisfactory or incomplete. Processes against lollards were by no means invariably recorded in bishop's registers (as is proved by extant trials for relapse where no previous prosecutions are known,⁽¹⁾ and by other cross-references) while the secular courts provide many instances of heretics who were indicted but apparently never arrested. Doubtless there were many more lollards who succeeded in avoiding detection altogether. In short, it is difficult to say whether the data we have is the main body of the iceberg or simply its tip.

1. See pp. 260-264.

Generalisations are difficult to make even from the information which we have, and it is perhaps most difficult of all to generalise about lollard beliefs. In the majority of cases where heretics were tried by the royal courts, their views are not recorded, and thus we know nothing at all about the doctrines preached by such influential lollards as William Ederyk, the evangelist of Derbyshire and northern Leicestershire, or William of Thaxted, who for more than twenty years spread heresy in Essex. In all, the views of rather fewer than forty lollards or groups of lollards are recorded for this period and even these must be used with caution. Where lists of beliefs are given in episcopal registers we are entirely reliant on the accuracy and veracity of the possibly careless and certainly biased clerks who recorded them. Also reports of lollard sermons or opinions by the invariably hostile chroniclers must also be viewed with suspicion. Even when (during trials) beliefs were apparently recorded verbatim from the mouths of the lollards themselves, we must allow for the possibility that leading questions were asked by the courts and also consider the confusion which the less well-educated heretics may have experienced when faced by a battery of learned clerics.

Bearing all these reservations in mind, an analytical table of the beliefs of some thirty-seven heretics or groups of heretics has been compiled and annexed. From this it will be clear that during the period under consideration there was no real corpus of lollard belief, in the sense of a set of doctrines shared by all known lollards, indeed, not one of the fifteen beliefs listed was common to all the heretics considered.

It is perhaps surprising to find that a disbelief in transubstantiation was seemingly not the most frequently held lollard opinion at this time. In fact the most commonly held belief was that images and pilgrimages were vain and idolatrous and that those who put their faith in them were, at best, misguided. Versions of this opinion were held by twenty-six of the thirty-seven lollards considered : eleven of these were active before 1400 and the other fifteen flourished after that date. At least seven of the twenty-six upheld the related belief that the saints could not intercede for men, but that all prayers should be made directly to God. Only two congregations, however (that at Leicester in 1388 and the related group at Northampton in 1393) went so far as to assert that many of those called saints were in fact damned souls in Hell. The lollard disapproval of images gave rise to several local outbreaks of iconoclasm⁽¹⁾ during our period, and the heretics of the St. Albans area are alleged to have cut the very names of the saints from their psalters.⁽²⁾ Though the dislike of images and pilgrimages was so widespread amongst the lollards, it is notable that neither Wycliffe nor his immediate followers Nicholas Hereford and John Purvey are known to have preached against them.

The second most common lollard opinion, upheld by twenty-one of the thirty-seven heretics dealt with, was a disbelief in the doctrine of transubstantiation. Most lollards at this time seem to have believed in versions of Wycliffe's doctrine of remanence, declaring that the sacrament of the altar was, at the same time,

1. See pp. 84, 85, 147-8, 357, 384, 405.

2. See p. 404.

spiritually Christ's body and actually material bread, but some of the more extreme groups asserted that it was no more than bread which had been blessed. This partial or total removal of the magical element in the Eucharist was, of course, a most important factor, for it detracted from the special sanctity of the priestly office and gave rise to attacks, not only on that office itself, but also on the whole structure of the church. During our period, however, no more than six heretics are known to have held versions of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, declaring that any good man or woman, whether ordained or not, could perform priestly functions. Rather more common was the belief that a priest in mortal sin could neither baptise nor make the sacrament, an opinion which originated with Wycliffe and which was followed by at least nine of the thirty-seven lollards or groups of lollards considered.

Confession, another prerogative of the orthodox priesthood, also came under attack, and fifteen of the thirty-seven believed that, since only God could forgive sins, confession should be made directly to Him, without the intervention of a confessor. Many lollards considered that preaching the gospel (rather than the saying of masses) was the priest's primary function and the Church's attempts to control preaching by licenses were widely resented. At least thirteen of those considered held that the Gospel might be preached anywhere, with or without episcopal permission, and of these many also believed that laymen as well as clerics had a right and duty to preach.

Other aspects of the medieval Church also attracted lollard disapproval, notably the religious orders, which Wycliffe

himself had attacked with some vigour.⁽¹⁾ The mendicant orders were especially unpopular, many lollards claiming that their begging was unscriptural, and that it was sinful to give alms to the able-bodied, or to anyone better-off than the donor himself.⁽²⁾ Twelve of the thirty-seven heretics considered declared specific objections to religious orders and of these, two (John Beket and William Ramsbury)⁽³⁾ recommended that the religious should marry and return to the secular world. Wycliffe's attacks on the institution of the Papacy were also enthusiastically adopted by many lollards, several of whom (including Sir John Oldcastle)⁽⁴⁾ held the Pope to be none other than Antichrist himself. Attacks on bishops and other clergy were also common, with particular reference to their avarice : the necessity of paying for masses (and especially the demand for oblations at weddings, funerals and the churching of women) was considered particularly obnoxious. Related to this last was the contention (also derived from Wycliffe)⁽⁵⁾ that tithes were pure alms, and that they could and should be withdrawn from sinful priests : the Church's right to excommunicate for non-payment of tithes, or indeed for any other reason, was also challenged.

Wycliffe had declared, as a logical corollary of his theory of dominion, that the laity had the right to take away the possessions of sinful churchmen,⁽⁶⁾ and a number of lollards believed

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1. Fasc. Ziz. pp. 281-2.
 2. e.g. pp. 75-77, 110 iii-v.
 3. pp. 316, 366.
 4. Fasc. Ziz. p. 444.
 5. ibid. p. 260-1.
 6. Fasc. Ziz. p. 280.

that the Church had no right to any temporal property whatsoever, and that priests should live in apostolic poverty. The extremist Leicester lollards of 1388, indeed, held that priest's possessions should be held in common, while Robert Hoke in 1425 and Ralph Mungyn in 1428 are both alleged to have asserted the revolutionary doctrine that temporal goods should be held communally. This belief in primitive communism was, however, exceptional, and no other cases of it are known during our period.

A rather larger minority of lollards (namely the author of Twelve Conclusions of 1395, Walter Brute, John Corynham, Ralph Mungyn and William White) embraced pacifist ideals, and were opposed to all wars : of these, the author of the Twelve Conclusions and William White were also opposed to capital punishment, but this, again, seems to have been exceptional. Other beliefs apparently upheld only by a minority of lollards included a refusal to swear oaths,⁽¹⁾ and a dislike of singing or decoration in churches⁽²⁾: both the Leicester Lollards of 1388 and Richard Wyche held that one place to pray in was as good as another, while the Northampton congregation of 1393 seem to have been actively opposed to any church buildings whatsoever. Probably the wildest aberration recorded was the free love advocated by William Ramsbury and John Beket. On the whole, however, the lollards of our period seem to have been less eccentric in their beliefs than their later counterparts, and there is no trace before 1428 of the millenarianism occasionally apparent amongst the heretics of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁽²⁾

1. qv. Leicester Lollards, 1388; William Thorpe; John Edwards; John of Bath.

2. Thomson, Later Lollards pp. 240-1.

Before finally leaving the subject of lollard beliefs, it is worth noticing that, of the fifteen opinions most commonly held between 1382 and 1428, no less than twelve relate to corruptions in the contemporary church, while only three are concerned with the more empirical questions of transubstantiation, pacifism, and the priesthood of all believers. There are some grounds, therefore, for seeing popular lollardy at this time as more of a practical reaction to local conditions than a movement carried along by some great doctrinal truth.

Leaving aside the question of lollard beliefs, two further important points about the nature of early lollardy have emerged from this thesis. The first is the important role played in the movement by itinerant preachers, by whose efforts the foundations of popular lollardy were to a great extent initially laid. The names of more than twenty of these men are known and doubtless there were several more of whom no record has come down to us : between them they are known to have visited nearly every part of the country in which lollardy subsequently flourished. Probably the greatest of them all (as well as one of the earliest) was William Swynderby who, after playing an important part in the establishment of the Leicester lollard congregation during 1382, moved on to Coventry, where he laid the foundations of another heretical group before passing on to evangelise the marches of Wales.⁽¹⁾ The two Oxford lollards, John Aston and Nicholas Hereford, also ranged far and wide during the early days of lollardy : between

1. See pp. 55-68, 157-73, 266-7.

1382 and 1388 both men are known to have preached in Oxford, Hampshire, London and the diocese of Worcester, and in addition Aston is alleged to have taught in Leicester, Bristol and Gloucester, while Hereford visited Nottinghamshire and Hertfordshire.⁽¹⁾ Several other Oxford men were active at this time, including William Thorpe, who taught in London, Shrewsbury and the north of England from 1387 onwards.⁽²⁾ Among the other, less well-known, itinerants who spread heresy during the reign of Richard II were the lollard "priest" William Ramsbury,⁽³⁾ who preached his eccentric doctrines in Wiltshire and Dorset, John Wodewarde,⁽⁴⁾ who preached to the congregation at Chipping Warden, and 'the parson of Wynkpole' and the other shadowy figures who taught lollardy at Northampton in 1392 and 1393.⁽⁵⁾

Wandering preachers like Richard Wyche⁽⁶⁾ and John Edwards⁽⁷⁾ continued to operate during the reign of Henry IV, becoming particularly active in the years immediately before Old-castle's revolt. At that time William Ederyk⁽⁸⁾ was active in Leicestershire and Derbyshire, Thomas Drayton⁽⁹⁾ in Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire, and William of Thaxted⁽¹⁰⁾ in Essex. Each of these was directly responsible for raising contingents of rebels in 1414, as were a number of other clerks about whom less is known. After

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1. See pp. 5-8, 49-50, 218-222, 307-10, 433-7.
 2. See pp. 1-5, 200-203, 438-45.
 3. See pp. 314-28.
 4. See pp. 94-98.
 5. See pp. 98-111.
 6. See pp. 12-19.
 7. See p. 115
 8. See pp. 31-5.
 9. See pp. 283-4, 370-1.
 10. See pp. 368, 380-1.

Oldcastle's rising there seem to have been fewer itinerant preachers, though both William Taillour (who taught in Bristol and the West Country)⁽¹⁾ and William White (who taught in Kent and East Anglia)⁽²⁾ both continued the tradition. Finally, in enumerating itinerant preachers, we must not forget that rather smaller number who exercised considerable influence on the lollard movement while remaining in one place : amongst these were John Purvey and Walter Blake at Bristol,⁽³⁾ Robert Lechlade at Kemerton⁽⁴⁾ and, most notably, Robert Hoke at Braybrook.⁽⁵⁾

The majority of these early preachers of heresy were ordained priests, though it is significant that their number also included several laymen : few were wealthy or educated men and some lacked even a benefice. Most were remarkably adept at avoiding capture by the authorities, and, when taken, were not above making false abjurations to save their skins and allow them to continue preaching lollardy at a later date : if examples of this are required, we have only to consider William of Thaxted, who preached heresy in Essex for more than thirty years, Robert Hoke, with a record of twenty-four years lollard activity and three abjurations, William Taillour, who also abjured three times and taught for seventeen years, or Thomas Drayton, who abjured in three different dioceses during his fifteen years as a lollard. The initial success of these lollard preachers, and thus of lollardy itself, was in part due to the

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1. See pp. 251-60.
 2. pp. 406, 415-8.
 3. pp. 225-32, 240-3.
 4. pp. 272-5.
 5. pp. 116-26.

occasionally lax, sometimes ambiguous, and often lenient attitude of the Church towards heresy at this time.

To a much greater extent, however, it was due to the support which heresy received from sections of the gentry and of the urban middle class. In all but one of the areas where lollardy flourished during our period, in fact, there is evidence of such support, and in many cases it was demonstrably crucial to the sect's growth and survival.

In Leicestershire, probably the earliest centre of popular lollardy, the efforts of Swynderby and others were supported, at least at first, by the wealthy burgesses of Leicester, and sympathy for heresy seems to have remained endemic in the town until at least 1414.⁽¹⁾ Meanwhile, in the northern part of the county, William Ederyk preached with the support and protection of the Derbyshire gentleman Thomas Tickhill⁽²⁾ and south of Leicester the lollard centre at Braybrook (and its vicar Robert Hoke) enjoyed the protection of Sir Thomas Latimer, one of the "Lollard Knights".⁽³⁾ Latimer (assisted by a local gentleman named Thomas Wakelyn) was also instrumental in planting heresy in the Chipping Warden-Byfield area of Northamptonshire, which remained a lollard centre for many years.⁽⁴⁾ In Northampton itself, lollard preachers received powerful support from the town rulers in 1392-3, and there too heresy remained active at least into the reign of Henry V.⁽⁵⁾ Thomas

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1. See pp. 67-9, 73-5, 111-2, 128-32, 134-6.
 2. pp. 31-4, 43-4, 126-8.
 3. pp. 116-26. cf. the suspicious activities of Sir William Neville, another of the "Lollard Knights", pp. 6-8.
 4. pp. 94-8, 147-9.
 5. pp. 98-111, 140-1, 144, 150.

Compworth, a gentleman who had been amongst the ringleaders of the Northampton congregation, also encouraged the growth of lollardy in the area of his home village of Kidlington, Oxfordshire, where it survived at least until 1417, and perhaps much further into the fifteenth century.⁽¹⁾

Further north, the lollards of the Nottingham area appear to have enjoyed some sympathy from influential burgesses,⁽²⁾ while in south Derbyshire several members of the local gentry lent active support to heresy from before 1410 until at least 1419. Amongst these were the lawyer and county J.P. Thomas Tickhill, whose house at Aston-on-Trent served for more than three years as a base for the lollard preacher William Ederyk, and Henry Bothe, who not only sheltered teachers of heresy, but also preached lollardy himself, as did John Prynce and William Marshall, two other local gentlemen.⁽³⁾

Along the Welsh border gentry support for lollardy was especially strong, allowing William Swynderby to preach there unmolested, and even providing him with a safe-conduct to appear unharmed before the local bishop⁽⁴⁾: shortly afterwards, efforts to try one of his followers were met with opposition so violent that a royal commission had to be set up to deal with it.⁽⁵⁾ Amongst known lollard sympathisers in the March were the King's

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1. See pp. 268-72, 285-6, 296, 304.
 2. pp. 9-12.
 3. pp. 31-46.
 4. pp. 160, 168.
 5. p. 177.

esquire John Croft and two knightly families, the Clanvowes and the Whitneys⁽¹⁾: further east, an even more influential figure, Sir William Beauchamp, Lord Abergavenny, may have lent support for a time to the lollard centre at his manor of Kemerton, Gloucestershire.⁽²⁾ At a later date two other Marcher knights, Sir John Oldcastle⁽³⁾ and Sir Roger Acton,⁽⁴⁾ both encouraged heresy in their home areas, and subsequently acted as prime movers in the 1414 rising : as late as 1417 Oldcastle felt able to live openly at his Herefordshire home without fear of detection to the authorities.⁽⁴⁾

The lollard community in the important town of Coventry received active support from at least one influential burgess, Ralph Garton.⁽⁵⁾ Even after the 1414 rising three Warwickshire families (the Trussells, the Burdets and the Ardernes)⁽⁶⁾ also lent them support, and as late as 1424 heretical doctrines were received with sympathy by the town's ruling corporation.⁽⁷⁾ The large Bristol lollard congregation also enjoyed the support of at least one wealthy burgess family, the Mores, whose private chaplain led the Bristol rebels in 1414 and who probably financed the contingent's military equipment.⁽⁸⁾ There is also some evidence that a

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1. See pp. 179-99.
 2. pp. 272-7.
 3. pp. 203-7.
 4. pp. 281-2.
 4. pp. 209-212.
 5. pp. 288-90, 298-9.
 6. pp. 299-301.
 7. pp. 301-4.
 8. pp. 240, 247-9.

group of lollard priests operating in the town in the 1420's had some burgess support.⁽¹⁾

In the Yeovil area of Somerset the local lollards seem to have received protection from Sir Thomas Beauchamp of Whitelackington and possibly from the influential Brook family : Thomas Brook was Oldcastle's son-in-law, and both he and Beauchamp took part in the 1414 rising.⁽²⁾ Even more enthusiastic supporters of lollardy were the knightly Cheyne family of Drayton Beauchamp, Buckinghamshire, the protectors of Thomas Drayton and other heretical priests.⁽³⁾ The Cheynes led the Buckinghamshire rebels in 1414 - when several minor local gentry and merchants of Wycombe were also involved⁽⁴⁾ - and apparently remained covert supporters of lollardy up until 1431.⁽⁵⁾ The lollards of the St. Alban's area of Hertfordshire may have owed something to the early support of the "Lollard Knight", Sir John Montagu of Shenley,⁽⁶⁾ and amongst the leaders of a Bedfordshire group was William Morley, a Dunstable brewer who owned land in three counties.⁽⁷⁾ In Rochester and northern Kent the local lollards received for a time the support of Sir John Oldcastle and the encouragement of priests protected by him.⁽⁸⁾ Finally, though no evidence can be found for a continuous tradition of burgess support for lollardy in London, the city congregation did

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1. See p. 257.
 2. pp. 336-7, 339-49.
 3. pp. 370-1, 388-90.
 4. pp. 390-1.
 5. pp. 426-8.
 6. pp. 356-8.
 7. pp. 395-7.
 8. pp. 372-8.

number amongst its ranks such influential citizens as John Claydon, as well as several merchants of the middle rank.⁽¹⁾

During our period, in fact, there was apparently only one area where the local lollard congregation is not known to have enjoyed, at one time or another, the support of either the gentry or the urban middle-class. This was Essex, and even there several of William of Thaxted's converts were prosperous local guildsmen and cutlers,⁽²⁾ while towards the end of our period of the burghess rulers of Colchester were alleged to have had lollard sympathies.⁽³⁾

Between 1382 and 1428, then, the support of the gentry and the middle-class was as crucial to the growth of lollardy as the activities of the many heretical preachers. After the ill-advised appeal to violence in 1414, however, when lollardy became inextricably entangled with treason against the secular state, the pattern changed, and upper and middle-class support began to be withdrawn, to be finally extinguished after the hopeless rising of 1431. Shorn of the support of the influential, during the remainder of its existence popular lollardy was no more than a lost cause.

1. See pp. 463-4, 475, 505-8, 513-20, 529, 547.

2. p. 382.

3. p. 419.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Add. MS.	Additional MS. in British Museum
<u>B.I.H.R.</u>	Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research
<u>B.M.</u>	British Museum
<u>C.A.D.</u>	Calendar of Ancient Deeds
<u>Cal. I.P.M.</u>	Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem
<u>Cal. Ltr. Bks.</u>	Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London
<u>Cal. Pap. Letters</u>	Calendar of Papal Registers : Papal Letters
<u>Cal. Plea Memo. Rolls</u>	Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London
<u>CCR</u>	Calendar of Close Rolls
<u>CFR</u>	Calendar of Fine Rolls
<u>C.I. Misc.</u>	Calendar of Inquisitions, Miscellaneous
<u>CPR</u>	Calendar of Patent Rolls
<u>DKR</u>	Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records
<u>E.E.T.S.</u>	Early English Text Society
<u>E.H.R.</u>	English Historical Review
<u>Fasc. Ziz.</u>	Fasciculi Zizaniorum
Harl. MS.	Harleian MS. in British Museum
<u>HMC</u>	Historic Manuscripts Commission
K.B.	King's Bench
O.H.S.	Oxford Historical Society
<u>Proc. P.C.</u>	Proceedings of the Privy Council
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
Reg.	Register
<u>Rot. Parl.</u>	Rotuli Parliamentorum
<u>R.S.</u>	Rolls Series
Soc.	Society
<u>Trans. R.H.S.</u>	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society
<u>VCH</u>	Victoria County History

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- (d) Oxford
- (e) Northampton Record Office
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- (h) York : Borthwick Institute for Historical Research

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 C.85 Significations of excommunications
 C.88 Records upon outlawry
 C.136 Inquisitions post mortem, Richard II
 C.137 Inquisitions post mortem, Henry IV
 C.138 Inquisitions post mortem, Henry V
 C.139 Inquisitions post mortem, Henry VI
 C.144 Chancery, Criminal Inquisitions

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 E.368 Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer,
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 E.403 Issue Rolls
 E.404 Warrants for Issue

Just. 1 Justices Itinerant, Assize Rolls
 Just. 3 Justices Itinerant, Gaol Delivery
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K.B.9 King's Bench, Ancient Indictments
 K.B.27 King's Bench, Coram Rege Rolls
 (Crown side)
 K.B.29 King's Bench, Controlment Rolls

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