

## THE ASSOCIATION OATH ROLLS FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, A.D. 1696.

Among the inedited sources of county history the voluminous, but almost neglected records known as the Association Oath Rolls of William III.'s reign, 1696, are of extreme importance to genealogists, as they give a most unusually full list of inhabitants of this country at that time.

The Rolls are preserved and calendared in the Public Record Office, London, among the documents of the Petty Bag, those relating to Buckinghamshire being numbered 15-23 inclusive. At a rough estimation, the names therein contained number more than seventeen thousand, a figure which makes it impossible to give here a complete transcript. This article therefore will limit itself first to an account of the political events which led to the formation of the Association throughout England and Wales, afterwards passing on to survey the material comprised by the Rolls 15-23, and, in passing, a few notes of special interest.

The reign of William III. was greatly troubled with Jacobite plots, but successively the result of these was the increase of popularity of William. Early in 1696, immediately after the King made his dramatic announcement in Parliament that a plot against his life had been discovered, his popularity was probably at its highest point. The wave of enthusiasm which spread over England, Wales, and the Plantations was unequalled, reminding one of the state of England as depicted in Macaulay's famous poem, "The Armada," or latterly, under the great influence wielded by Kitchener.

As early as April, 1690, Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury (who had accompanied William from Holland), called the King's attention to Jacobite enlistments and securing of arms. Talbot was then Secretary of State for the Northern Province, and his letter named Lancashire and Cheshire as centres of Jacobite disaffection. Action was taken upon his

letter, but his informers did not fulfil his expectations; the trial resulted in acquittal of those charged, with nothing worse than a severe censure.

A more serious conspiracy was formed in 1695, but its execution was postponed owing to the King's departure for the Continent; but after his return it revived, and came to a head in February, 1696, when it was disclosed to William Bentinck, Earl of Portland, by Captain Fisher (Feb. 11). Portland undoubtedly handled the conspiracy with consummate skill in William's interests. This new venture was more or less supported by general sanction from the Court of St. Germain. Sir George Barclay, a Scottish Roman Catholic, acted as agent for the exiled James, and was commissioned to rally his adherents. James Duke of Berwick, a son of James II., had already secretly arrived in London as agent for Louis, who, on his part, prepared a French fleet at Calais and Dunkirk. James II. waited at Calais to take command. Sir John Fenwick led the conspiracy, in which about forty plotters were involved.

William was in the habit of hunting in Richmond Park on Saturdays, and it was decided to make an attempt on his life in the lane leading from Brentford to Turnham Green. In spite of warning, William persisted in his intention up to the evening of Friday, Feb. 14th, when Prendergast, an Irish Roman Catholic, whose object was to save life, called upon Portland, who saw the King, with the result that the hunt was postponed. On the following day Prendergast and another witness, De la Rue, were questioned by the King, and they revealed the names of the conspirators.

Several of the plotters were arrested that night, and rewards of £1,000 were proclaimed for the capture of the others. The proclamation is reprinted in the writer's "Guide to Some Original Manuscript Sources of British and Colonial Family and Political History," 1921, and need not be reproduced here.

Politically the plot was of great service to William, and, like the statesman he was, he made the most of the situation. On Monday, the 24th February, William, in person, appeared in Parliament, and

made the following speech, duly reported in the "London Gazette" that day:—

I am come hither this day upon an Extraordinary occasion, which might have proved Fatal if it had not been Disappointed by the singular mercy and Goodness of God, and may now, by the Continuance of the same Providence, and our own Prudent Endeavours, be so improved as to become a sufficient Warning to us to provide for our Security against the pernicious Practices and Attempts of our Enemies. I have received several concurring Informations of a Design to assassinate me, and that our Enemies at the same time are very forward in their Preparations for a sudden Invasion of this Kingdom, and have therefore thought it necessary to lose no time in acquainting my Parliament with these things, in which the safety of the Kingdom and the Public Welfare are so nearly concerned, That I assure myself that nothing will be omitted on Your Part which may be thought proper for Our present future Security. [After setting out the steps taken to bring the Navy to home waters, and a large number of Soldiers home, the King concludes.] Having now acquainted you with the Danger that hath Threatened us, I cannot doubt of your Readiness and Zeal to do everything which you shall Judge Proper for Our Common Safety, and I Persuade myself we must be all Sensible how Necessary it is in our Present circumstances that all possible Dispatch should be given in the Business before you.

The Lords and Commons replied with an address declaring "detestation and abhorrence of so vilanous and barbarous a design," urging his Majesty to take more than usual care of his Royal Person, and promising not only support, but also to take revenge upon his enemies should the King meet with a violent death. They empowered the King to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. In the House of Commons Sir Rowland Gwyn proposed an Oath of Association, which was drawn up and immediately signed by an overwhelming majority: 400 to 113. The authorities of the City of

London signed on Feb. 25th. While the Houses proceeded to pass an Act to legalise it, the oath was taken in town and country, and the South Coast was put in a position of defence. As it conditioned the proceedings, the preamble of the Act is given below.

PREAMBLE OF THE ACT.

Rot. Parl. 7 and 8 Gul. III. p 6. n 1, 7 and 8 Will. III c 27. An Act for the better Security of His Maties Royal Person and Government.

Whereas the Welfare and safety of this Kingdom and the Reformed Religion do next under God entirely depend upon the Preservation of Your Majesties Royal Person and Government which by the Merciful Providence of God of late have been delivered from the bloody and barbarous attempts of Traytors and other Your Majesties Enemies who there is just Reason to believe have been in great measure encouraged to undertake and prosecute such their wicked designs partly by Your Majesties great and undeserved Clemency towards them and partly by the want of a sufficient Provision in the Law for the securing offices and Places of Trust to such as are well affected to Your Majesties' Government and for the repressing and punishing such as are knowne to be disaffected to the same. For Remedy whereof may it please your Majesty that it may be enacted That from and after the First day of May, One Thousand Six Hundred and Ninety-Six all and every such Person and Persons who shall refuse to take the oaths mentioned and appointed to be taken in an Act of Parliament (1 Wm. & M. c 3) intituled An Act for the abrogating of the oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance and appointing other oaths or either of them when tendered to him or them by Persons lawfully authorized to administer or tender the same or shall refuse or neglect to appear when lawfully summoned in order to have the said oaths tendered to him or them shall until he or they have duly taken the said oaths be liable to incur forfeit pay or suffer all and every the Penalties Forfeitures Sums of money disabilities and incapacities which by the

Laws and Statutes of this Realme now in Force or any of them are inflicted upon Popish Recusants duely convict of Recusancy and that for the better and more orderly levying and answering the said Penalties and Forfeitures to his majesty His Heirs and successors the Persons so tending the said oaths shall upon every such Refusal or Default of appearances as aforesaid record and enter in parchment the Christian and Surnames and the Place of abode of the Person or Persons so refusing or not appearing as aforesaid to take the said oaths or either of them together with the time of such Tender and Refusal or Default of appearance and shall deliver and certifie the said Record or Entry to the Justices of Assize, Justices of Oyer and Terminer or Gaol Delivery att their next session within the same county who shall forthwith estreate and certifie the same into His Majesties' Court of Exchequer to be there entered of Record to the end that the said Court of Exchequer may thereupon award and issue such processe against the lands and goods of the said Person or Persons mentioned in such Estreat or Certificate as may by the Laws and Statutes of the realme be awarded and issued against the lands and goods of a Popish Recusant convict.

Now follows a section forbidding that any by writing, printing, preaching, teaching or advised speaking shall publish or declare that His present Majesty is other than lawful and rightful King of these Realms, or that the late King James, or the pretended Prince of Wales, or any other, have right and title to the Crown, otherwise they incur the danger and penalty of Premunire (16 Ric. II., c. 5). The Act consisted of twenty-one clauses, mostly concerning penalties and dates. A summary can be seen in the "Guide" already mentioned or in the Author's "Lancashire Association Oath Roll" in the Society's Library at Aylesbury.

The oath which was written or printed at the head of the roll was as follows:—

## THE OATH.

Whereas there has been a horrid and detestable Conspiracy formed and carried on by Papists and other wicked and traiterous Persons for assassinating His Majesties Royal Person in order to encourage an Invasion from France to subvert our Religion Laws and Liberty. Wee whose names are hereunder subscribed doe heartily sincerely and solemnly professe testifie and declare That His present Majesty King William is rightfull and lawfull King of these Realmes and wee doe mutually promise and engage to stand by and assist each other to the utmost of our Power in the support and defence of His Majesties most sacred Person and government against the late King James and all his adherents and in case His Majesty come to any violent or untimely death (which God forbid) wee do hereby further freely and unanimously oblige ourselves to unite associate and stand by each other in revenging the same upon His Enemies and their adherents and defending the succession of the Crown according to an act made in the first yeare of the Reigne of King William and Queen Mary entituled an Act declaring the Rights and Liberties of the subject and settling the succession of the Crowne.

The officers responsible for the actual signing of the Rolls were the Deputy Lieutenants. They issued directions to the Chief Constable of the division, who in turn gave orders to the constables of the townships, and sometimes endorsed the returns. The constables appear to have used a certain amount of discretion, and were certainly energetic in securing the signatures. At times the constables or their assistants wrote the names of the subscribers. Large numbers of illiterate persons signed by mark, hence the Rolls afford an indication of the extent of education, at least as regards writing, at the end of the seventeenth century.

It is very interesting to record here, as we pass to a closer consideration of the Buckinghamshire Rolls, that it was the constable of Marsh Gibbon who achieved immortality by the sturdy expression of

opinion he penned in the Rolls as a stout justification for exceeding his duty. He wrote as he felt, and spelled as he spoke.

“SIRS, (he wrote)

“I thought it convenient at shuch a Juntur of time as this is to bring in y<sup>e</sup> names of Servants and Labourous as wel as householders to show our Royalty to King William. Let others hoalt be-twixt too opinions I thinke it my dewty and inturist to be for the present gournment I wittness my hart and hand hoo am constabl of Marsh Giburn.—ANTONY RIURS.”

The Rolls of Buckinghamshire have been preserved in two methods. The more general plan was to stitch each additional membrane to the foot of that immediately preceding it. Thus a continuous roll was formed. There is naturally no uniformity in the width or in the texture of the skins, and occasionally a stout piece of paper is used instead.

Roll 16, however, is differently made up. It consists of four piles of membranes stitched at the top corners.

The Members of Parliament signed the Commons Roll, and there was also a Clergy Roll, although the rectors, vicars, and ministers usually signed the sheets brought by the Constables.

#### ASSOCIATION OATH ROLL, 15.

35 feet 6 inches × 8½ inches to 15 inches: continuous roll of nineteen membranes, sewn, the last two being of paper.

m.l. The Sheriff, Justices, Grand Jury, and Gentry.

As this membrane affords a good example of the form of loyal address, and the names thereon will perhaps be found of widest interest to the readers of this paper, it is transcribed in full.

#### ROLL 15. M. 1.

To the King's most Excellent Majtie——

Wee Your Majties most dutifull and Loyall subjects the High Sherriff Justices of the Peace Grand Jury and other Gentlemen Freeholders

and Inhabitants of the County of Bucks beg leave humbly to offer to yo<sup>r</sup> Maj<sup>ties</sup> the forme of the Association which wee have entred into for the defence and p<sup>r</sup>eservation of yo<sup>r</sup> Maj<sup>ties</sup> Royall person And for the support of this Governmt.

Whereas, etc. (Here follows the Oath as given on page 114.)

## COL. 1.

John Lee, Sheriffe

## GRAND INQUEST.

Richard Atkins	Charles Holte
W. Cheyne	Richard Seare
Tho: Lee	Wm: Theed
Ric: Beke	Henry Corke
Simon Mayne	John Throckmorton
Fr: Ligo	Joshua Barnes
Edw: Bate	Fleet Dormer
Joseph Cleaver	Tho: Ligo
Tho: Ligo	John Theed
Tho: Deverell	Rich: Rose
Hen: Gould	Wm. Busby
John Grubb	J. Tyrrell
W. Russell	John Wittewrong
Willi: Hill	John Wittewrong, Jr.

## COL. 2.

T. Wharton Custos Rotlor	Henry Furnese
G. Wharton	Tho. Barnewell
E. Waller	Tho. Smithyes Pa
C. Godfrey	John James, Rector of
Jno. Crosse	Latimer
Hen. Neale	Wm. (?) Faner
H. Horton	John Heale
Christopher Mayne	John Parratt
James Chase	S. Aldridge
Fra. Egringham	Jos. Young
Fr. Duncombe	Robert Meade
William Johnson	Jo. Thompson

## COL. 3.

Tho. Tipping	Wm. Lowndes
Edm. Reeve	Philip Dymond
John Rogers	Tho. Pigott

James Tyrrell	M. Thompson
Tho. Tyrrell	Ra. Lowton
Jos: Somner	Tho. Skepwith
Franc. Knollys	L. Wharton
Thos. Somner	M. Bradshaw
Lau: Kingford Clerke	James Herbert
Jo. Tyrrell	John Backwell
Tho. Aspin	Alex. Denton

## M. 2. VARIOUS GENTRY, 17,

Including

John Heale of Hartwell  
 Joseph Goodchild of Great Kimbell  
 John Wade of Elsbrgh  
 Edwin Martin of Buckland  
 Edward Bigg of Great Kimbell  
 Willi Reynolds of Elsbrgh  
 Thomas Wright of St. Leonards  
 Joseph Cleydon of Stone  
 Richard Strickland, Vicar of Stone  
 Thomas Nore of Beirton  
 Peter Cross of Beirton  
 William Collings of Great Kimbell.

The Roll for Stone is transcribed fully, as it will furnish material for comparison with the list given by Mr. Fredk. G. Gurney in RECORDS X., 4, entitled "A Fourteenth Century Subsidy List for Stone." It may be said at once that there are but few coincidences; Farmbrow, Clark, and possibly Torner are the only names occurring in both lists.

## ROLL 16. M. 23 (SECT. 1).

## STONE.

Richard Strickland, Vicar	Richard Jeffs
John Hail	John Dewbry
William Farmbrow	Joseph Kingham
John Robbins	Samuell Kingham
Josias Brandon	William Wright
John Kerbe senior	William Torner
John Kerbe junor	Richard Solesbury
Alexander Douer	Thomas Parnam
Micaell Stop	William Andrew, Sen:
John Whidburn	William Andrew, Jun:

Rowland Clearck	John Arnett
John Saxbee	John Green
Richard Jenings	Joseph Cleydon
Henry Stanbridge	Thomas Allin
John Plomer	Thomas Tompson
Richard Whiteed	Cristo Torner
Heany Clark	John barnat
Robard Ashbe	William Hodgkins
John Ashbe	Fransis Jorny
Henry Wilmot	James Paddon
Joseph Ovets	Francis Cleydon
Thomas Green	Michael Andrew
Nick Welled	Edward Doyley
John Tornar	William Luckas
John Delafield	

And Roll 17 is fully transcribed as probably of wide interest:—

THE LIEUTENANT, DEPUTY LIEUTENANTS, AND OFFICERS  
OF Y<sup>E</sup> MILITIA OF Y<sup>E</sup> COUNTY OF BUCKS:

[23½ × 14]

C. Hampden	J. Bridgewater
Will. Noke	Ri. Beke
Robert Gainsford	Edm. Waller
Pet. Tyrrill	Ch. Duncombe
Anth. Chapman	Ro. Chapman
John Chevall	John Tyringham
Wm. Theed	James Hosell
Edw. Hart	Hart Beddall
Wm. Cock	T. Wharton
Will Duncombe	Richard Atkins
Ri. Ingoldesby	James Herbert
Tho. Ligo	Raphe Verney
Nath. Birch	Richd. Temple
Nich. Seare	Tho: Lee
Will. Rice	Alex Denton
Tho. Hodson	Tho. Pigott
John Wittewrong	Tho. Chapman
J. Pagett	John Sticke ? or Kirke
W. Cheyne	Joseph Etheridge
E. Waller	Jo <sup>n</sup> West
Tho. Ligo	Jo. Manaseree

As regards the Rolls for other parishes (and nearly every parish in the county appears, together with one or two which are no longer part of Buckinghamshire), an index has been prepared and is deposited in the Society's Library, Aylesbury, in which the parishes are set out in alphabetical order, together with the number of signatories and the reference to the membrane on which they appear. Anyone, therefore, who wishes to examine any particular list may obtain the particulars from this index, and thus go directly to the proper place in the Roll.

The Rolls in general consist merely of names, but the following declarations by Quakers are of interest. The first appears upon the dorse of the Cholesbury Roll, and is by Robert Jones:—

This is to certife whom it may concerne that I have nothing in my heart towards ye King and ye Government but real love and good will praising the Lord God whose power is over all who has preserved him and us his faithfull & Loyall Subjects from that horrid conspiracy that was intended and as for we that are called Quakers we are entered into a quiet peaceable assotiation and therefore we cannot subscribe to annother especially where use of carnall weapons is required for we cannot feight no more at present from him that is near his grave called Rob<sup>t</sup> Jones.

The two following statements are given under North Crawley:—

Robert Newman was never concerned in any plot against the King or Government nor never will be but as for promysing to bee Reunged on enemys is contrary to God's commandments.

I William Mouse am no ploter against the King or his Government and doe promise I neaver will bee but the Lord sayes Vengeance is myne and I will repay it.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Association Oath Rolls for the County are remarkably full. Their great value will be at once apparent. The internal evidence of the thorough way in which the constables went to work convinces one of the completeness of the record

of the loyalists of Buckingham, undoubtedly the vast majority of the population. The historical, genealogical and statistical value of the lists cannot be overrated, the more so as there are no other general lists between the Hearth Tax of 1676 and the earliest Poll Books.

From the point of view of the modern directory the Association Oath Rolls are remarkably valuable, and it is to be hoped that means may be found for the transcription and publication of the entire entries for Buckinghamshire.

WALLACE GANDY.