

CHAPTER III.

Politics and further Preparations for War—Derby and the Covenanters—Derby's March to Wigan—Colonel Lilburne—Battle of Wigan Lane—Fatalities of the Battle—Fugitives—Derby's Flight—Condition of the Town—Derby Executed—His Body in Wigan—Parish Registers and the Battle—Sir William Widdrington—Sir Thomas Tyldesley—The Tyldesley Monument—Civil War Tract—Letters Written at Wigan—Jury List for 1651—Churchwardens' Accounts.

THE Long Parliament was now divided against itself in a struggle for predominance in the kingdom, but Cromwell stood with the whole army of England at his back, and knew that, thus armed, he was stronger than any power that could oppose him. Dissension made him determined, and he steadily hewed a way for his ambition. He was the darling of his soldiers, and he fostered their affection. At the beginning of his eventful career he longed to be the saviour of his country, but now his selfish ambition told him he was the greatest man in England. His glorious victories in the people's cause were dazzling the eyes of all. But his opportunity was not fully come. It was not yet the time to lay down the sword, for the Scots had taken up the cause of the king and invaded the land. He learned from his couriers, who were hurrying to him from every county, that the king had taken the field with a large army. Preparations were at once made to meet him. His plans were made known by spies. Lord Derby, ever loyal, had arrived in England at the king's request, with three hundred Manxmen, to assist his sovereign in taking the crown and kingdom, which were justly his. His forces were soon augmented by many Wigan men and Lancashire Presbyterians, who, however, were only half-heartedly attached to him because he stoutly refused to sign their Covenant at their request. The Scotch had a strong, deeply-rooted, Calvinistic belief in their Presbyterianism, and were intolerable to other creeds. They argued that there could only be one true religion, and Presbyterianism they looked upon as a religion and creed in itself, and so, according to their logic, no other religion could stand near its threshold. It suited their religious spirit to struggle with something tangible. Episcopacy, like

a giant Antichrist, was in their midst, and in struggling with it they persuaded themselves they were wrestling with the very devil himself, and, therefore, were making themselves heroes in the eyes of the Deity. This strongly-expressed feeling of bigotry, like Puritanism in England, fostered a national hypocrisy that even many of the people themselves were duped into believing was true religion. Covenanters of Scotland and Puritans of England—with many most laudable exceptions—derogated into canting hypocrites, and were continually mouthing Scriptural phrases in their houses, their markets, and taverns. The whole Scottish nation was imbued with a religious mania, and so infatuated was it—for then it was a religion that lived, not by faith, but by works and public professions—that every proselyte was received into their midst, and considered a fresh sparkling jewel in their crown of glory. If there were such rejoicing over the conversion of ordinary mortals, how much more would they rejoice over the conversion of their king. The army under Hamilton had been led to believe that Charles was a true convert to Presbyterianism, and, moreover, that the great Lord Derby would gladly become one of their own faithful creed. Derby was an honourable man, whose conscience was as inviolate as the religious convictions of many in the army now ready to take the field with him. He refused to sign their covenant, and the spirit of the old Crusaders was aroused in the Covenanters, and their enthusiasm for Derby died. The most honest part of the army immediately left their prospective leaders, but the other part gave a pretentious adherence to him, allowed themselves to be maintained by him, whilst longing for a way of escape. With such an army of such Christians Derby set out to aid his king. At the beginning of the Rebellion many of his followers had been but raw recruits, who knew nothing of the hardships of a soldier's life, and many indeed, whose clothes were but rags, were impressed into his service and armed with nothing better than implements of agriculture, clubs, or bludgeons; but now there were no able-bodied men who did not know something of the art of war, although many were as poorly armed as any had been at the commencement of the great civil strife. Cromwell's men, on the other hand, were well armed, and, from severe discipline and almost constant practice, had become veterans, and were superior both in numbers and warlike ability. Still, with the conscious feeling of right on his side, Derby, with his comparatively untrained followers, pushed towards Wigan with the intention of capturing it and afterwards joining the king, who had set up his royal standard at Worcester on the 22nd of August, 1651. Under Lord Derby was Major-General Sir Thomas Tyldesley, son of Edward Tyldesley, Esq., and Elizabeth, daughter of Christopher Preston, of Holker, Esq. All the Tyldesleys were zealous Royalists, and Sir Thomas was the very heart and soul of the Derby division. His courage and zeal always brought him to the van, and he is said to have been

the bravest and best of the Lancashire Royalists' leaders. Like most of the Royalist generals, he had been trained as a soldier in the low countries, and, like many a nobleman, he had beggared his estate to equip troops in the king's cause.

Secret intelligence of Derby's movements had been brought to Colonel Lilburne. The earl's troops had just approached within sight of the dismantled town of Wigan on the forenoon of the 25th August, 1651, when the progress of the vanguard was suddenly arrested by the unexpected appearance of Lilburne's forces prepared to receive them. The bewilderment of the men lasted but a moment, and all the energy and skill of Derby and his generals were at once brought into play. The emergency and necessity for a *coup de main* were seen at a glance. On the rising bank of the Douglas on their left a large contingent of the enemy were arrayed under protection, whilst many were ensconced behind hedges on the right. It was impossible to march through the lines to Wigan except by a struggle that would inevitably be fatal to many. To retreat meant defeat and an entire failure in the object of their rising. There was nothing for it but to fight desperately. Derby had 1,500 men, or, as Secombe says, only 600, and these not all "leal and true." The enemy's cavalry were very superior, and every soldier was true to his gallant leader. Although thus surprised, Derby instantly and confidently halted, and marshalled his men in readiness for the attack. Towards midday the battle began, and the enemy, being weak in infantry, were like to be instantly routed and an easy victory gained by the Royalists. Yet every man contested his ground, and looked eagerly for an advantage. The flintlocks of Derby's sharpshooters wrought deadly work among the Puritans. The engagement was a sanguinary one from the very beginning. Victory seemed now on this side, now on that, as the eager war cries rallied the regiments and roused the individual courage. "The King and the Earl of Derby!" cried the Royalists, "Liberty! Liberty!" cried the infuriated foe, levelling their swords with every cry on Scotchman, Manxman, and Lancashire lad. There was, in the midst of bitter determination, no calling for quarter, for death or victory was the object of the brave. Derby himself was ever in the heat of the battle, and seemed to have a charmed life, as if a predetermined fate purposely spared him for future history. Notwithstanding the gallant onsets of the Royalists, the Puritans had gained an advantage, and the battle seemed to be going sorely against Derby's forces, whilst he himself, as if filled by some superhuman courage, in order to rally the drooping spirits of his men, frequently rode into the thick of the foe, displaying the while prodigious strength and valour. Again and again he charged past bullets and swords. His horse was slain, and he himself severely wounded; yet he seemed not to be inconvenienced, nor even to feel his wounds. His faithful French servant clung to him, and followed him into the very jaws of death, whilst many of his men were

already throwing down their arms in despair, calling for quarter, and, wounded, submitting as prisoners of the foe. Derby's charger had fallen, but a riderless steed was then only too easily obtained. Again he mounted and charged whilst calling on his men to follow. He seemed to be re-animated by a courage that defied physical weakness. His was a determination to conquer and live rather than the courage of despair. Shots were fired at him, but they either missed or glanced from his breastplate: spear-thrusts pierced him, and he was hacked at with swords; yet he galloped, as with mad impetuosity, through the masses of the enemy, the wonder and admiration of friend and foe, slaying and wounding as he rode. Again was his horse shot under him, and he himself wounded afresh, and his faithful French servant was at last struck dead at his feet. Fiercer and yet more hopeless grew the battle, for now there were seemingly neither chances of escape nor hope of victory, yet bravely Derby fought and well, but all in vain. The gallant Cavalier, Sir Thomas Tyldesley, ever in the vanguard of his division, had been no less courageous than Derby. Again and again had he renewed the attack, showing an example of envious bravery; yet, with him, too, affairs had gone from bad to worse, and in a desperate onslaught he was slain, and his men, as if their courage had fallen with their leader, were terror-stricken, and fell easy victims to the foe. Lord Widderington, who had only lately been made a baron for his gallant services to the king, had been fatally wounded, and Colonel Boynton had been slain. Throughout the whole lines a panic ensued, and the army became a disordered multitude, in which each soldier thrust his neighbour aside in his eagerness for personal safety. Horse and foot were commingled, friends and foes lay side by side, weltering in their blood or calmly oblivious in death to the struggles in which they themselves had a moment before taken such dreadful part. Flintlocks, pitchforks, and swords were but impediments, and so were thrown away in the wild effort for self-preservation. As the defeated faltered or fled, the bloodthirsty ambition of the victors aroused in them the fiend for fellow-destruction, and every fatal stroke of the sword brought a smile of sweet revenge to the face of the overpowering foe, whose pitiless war cries drowned the groans of the wounded and dying, who lay prone on the blood-stained field, unable to remove from danger or join further in the conflict. The cause for which they fought was forgotten, and each man thought of himself as he cast away his armour and arms, gave himself up to the foe, sought shelter in the neighbouring woods, or slunk by byeways into the town, and thus, in despair, sought shelter in the very stronghold of the enemy. All hope was now lost, and to fight further was but a display of recklessness. Every man was left to his own resources, and Derby, mounted on his third horse, and accompanied by six officers, cut his way through the astonished but victorious forces, and, hotly pursued, fled

into Wigan. For two hours had the battle raged and every inch of the ground been hotly contested. In a few hours the battle of Wigan Lane was fought and lost, and during this short time many a brave fellow had fallen to rise no more. Derby himself had performed prodigies of valour, often against fearful odds, but he had not escaped unscathed. He had received seven shots in his breastplate, thirteen cuts on his beaver, and five or six wounds on his arms and shoulders. Twice had he passed through the whole body of the enemy, and two horses had been killed under him. Besides the slain, five colonels, three adjutant-generals, four lieutenant-colonels, one major, four captains, two lieutenants, and four hundred rank and file were taken prisoners.

Confusion, desolation, and excitement had taken possession of the town. Alexander Thompson was mayor; William Baldwin and Robert Winstanley were the bailiffs, or, as they are termed in the churchwardens' accounts, *balinos*, or *balivos*; Robert Litherbarrow and Roger Wycroft were churchwardens. The Royalist, or malignant, inhabitants were in high hopes that Derby would succeed in taking the town, and the Parliamentary portion were terror-stricken at the very thought of the consequences of such an issue to the battle raging beyond the ruins of the old walls. Some were bold enough to venture to advantageous places of safety to view the conflict from afar. When it became known that the Royalists were being defeated, the Parish Church became the theatre of confusion, for there many had already retired to pray. The confused multitudes believed the victors would sack the town whilst in search of fugitives, and were also seized by the strange delusion, common to ignorant and superstitious civilians under such circumstances, that soldiers in time of battle are so infatuated by a thirsty desire for blood and the destruction of human life as to be altogether unable to observe any distinction except the colours of their own regiments. The church was literally besieged, and filled to overflowing, in the hope that by their prayers even the most relentless and bloodthirsty enemies might sheathe their swords within the precincts of the sacred edifice. There gossip and prayer were commingled, and when the news of the defeat, flight, and pursuit arrived, the anxious, woe-begotten looks of despondency and fear of the inhabitants, who looked more like conscience-stricken guilty sinners than unfortunate citizens sadly sinned against, were pitiful to behold. They were panic-stricken, and in their bewilderment much damage was done in the church and churchyard, and this is testified to by this very significant and memorable entry in the churchwardens' accounts:—"Paid to William Johnson, Richard Dobson, and others, for dressing the church and churchyard after the fight, 15s." The wages paid for a good workman by the churchwardens was a shilling a day, and therefore fifteen shillings represents a great deal of labour. The battle had been fought and

lost, and subsequent history revealed that, notwithstanding the stubborn resistance of some of Derby's men, it was impossible for them to win, for many of his leaders confessed that "carnal self-seeking" led them on, and that when they saw no hopes of self-aggrandisement they saw nothing to fight for.

There is a hero in every war, and a romance in connection with every hero. In the battle of Wigan Lane there were not only heroes who were in themselves full of romance, but who each in himself made Wigan romantic. The history of a common soldier, however brave he may be or however strange his history—and God knows the histories of the poor are as strange, romantic, and full of sympathy as any history of king or Cæsar might be, and yet they are by no means full of interest, but pass away as a tale that is told. But not so is it with the rich and influential, who, surrounded with all the luxuries which wealth commands, disdain these as trifles and descend to the common level of humanity, court bravery that brings distinction and manliness into bold relief, and gives to an appreciating public a national picture of patriotism, of which they themselves are the central figure, if not personified patriotism itself. Of such self-denying and nation-loving men and women there were abundant specimens in the Great Rebellion period, many of whom the malignant Wigan nourished and brought up, and at length gave a resting place to in or near her sacred edifice. These heroes appear on both sides. Many of them sacrificed all they had for a principle dear to their hearts, and many laid down their lives because they considered it a duty to their lawful king. Whether for principle or king, they all deserve the most honourable mention by their grateful or ungrateful descendants. It is easy to condemn, and even to condemn reasonably, when all the facts of the case are laid bare by a historical *post-mortem* examination; but to understand aright the nobleness of the natures of friends and foes, it is necessary to imagine oneself standing in the very same position in contemporary times, and prejudiced by the same illogical reasoning, which no arguments were forthcoming to refute. He that looks on from a distance can easily criticise or even dictate what ought not to be or should be, but he that is eagerly engaged in the struggle must act on the impulse of the moment or with flashing judgment. Although many had been enforced into the military ranks, there were few who were not convinced at heart that their sacrificial work was a duty to themselves and to their country. No Englishman, and certainly no Wiganer, can hear of the battle of Wigan Lane without taking in an interesting retrospective view of the history of that period. Although the king was not personally engaged in the conflict there, the restoration and peace of the kingdom depended much on its results. Had the battle there brought victory to the Royalists, a very different record might have been left of the doings at Worcester shortly after, for, although the battle was by

no means insignificant in itself, the army destroyed there would have been spared and inspirited for fighting under the king's own banner.

Amongst those who escaped into the town was Lord Derby himself, severely wounded. In the tottering old walls of Wigan there were then more breaches than gates, and these were unguarded in the excitement of success, and so became thoroughfares into the town for the fugitives who feared to enter by the gates. To most of the fugitives the town was already well known, for they had garrisoned it, fought for it, and knew the abode of every loyal person in it, and thus felt they would be safer there than in the open country (harried by troopers) if the adventure past the soldiers were once safely accomplished. Many blood-stained, ragged, and wearied soldiers crept stealthily, like wounded game in the forests, into quiet and unfrequented corners of the old thatch-covered Wigan houses. Many were gladly and hospitably, though secretly, received, for everyone who sheltered a fugitive felt he was defying the enemy and working for the king. Many a brave woman in malignant Wigan ministered that day, as often before, at the risk of her own life, to the wants of fugitive Royalists, for, though these women fought not in the field, their loyalty and great-heartedness were often seen in their strong devotion and self-sacrifice. The greater the danger of doing a good deed is the greater is the glory when it is done. To protect Lord Derby was a perilous act. To have delivered him over to the enemy would have brought a rich reward. That he was sheltering in the town many knew, yet none betrayed him, so little power have money-bribes over true friends. Wearied and wounded, he made the best of his way towards the Market Place. Yet as a wounded soldier, unknown as Lord Derby, he might have been taken publicly into the town with small risk of detection, for Cromwell's orders to his officers were that the inhabitants should have free liberty to the place of engagement, with carts or in any other peaceable way, to carry away wounded soldiers to such places as they should think fit, provided they meddled not with nor took away the arms there. Derby, however, went secretly, but undisguised, as a fugitive, into the town, and had his wounds dressed in a house off the Market Place. He sought shelter in "The Dog" tavern, the door of which was immediately barred within by the Royalist landlady. Here he rested for some time, and was refreshed. Henceforth the house was historically distinguished, and on the door was placed a brass plate bearing the three legs of man—part of the Derby arms—and the inscription "Honi soit qui mal y pense." Getting away in disguise, he pursued his way by Warrington to Worcester. But events proved he only escaped from danger to death. After the defeat and dispersion at Worcester, he gave himself up, and was most unjustly treated according to the recognised rules of war. Like his royal master, he underwent a mock trial, inasmuch as he was prejudged,

and was condemned to be executed at Bolton because of the falsely called massacre which he caused there. His speech on the scaffold and execution are fully treated of in works on his life and history of the times. His execution was conducted by the member for Wigan, Alexander Rigby, who, as if in cold-blooded revenge, had the scaffold made of wood brought from Lathom House.

The body of the deceased nobleman was given to his relatives, a poor concession for the irreparable deed, and was carried in mournful procession from Bolton to Wigan, where it rested for the night. As the Romans of old looked on the sadly wounded body of their dead Cæsar, and listened to the harangue of Marc Antony, so was the headless body of the once great, now martyred, Derby looked at by many a tearful eye in Wigan, the very stronghold of his family. A town bravely held and defended by him now mourned his untimely end, and longed for unseen but apparently impracticable revenge. There was a strange mixture of sadness and joy in Wigan that night that Lord Derby's corpse lay in the town: sadness from all true Royalists and men of right sympathetic feeling, and joy among the Roundheads at the final overthrow of their foe. There lay the beheaded trunk of him who, for the good of his country, in his unselfishness, had, through nearly twelve years of almost unbroken trial and disaster, clung to his ill-fated king, with nothing to win, but vast estates, an honoured name, and a precious life to lose. Brave even in a multitude of brave ones, to this ignominious end had his enemy brought him, as if revenge were sweeter and dearer than admiration of courage. Not in battle had he fallen, but on the scaffold, after a prejudged trial, and yet this was a small matter for a party that could unscrupulously behead its king. Like the representative of his country, trodden down by usurping tyranny, his mangled remains lay there in the full gaze of wondering men and women, to whom his face in life had been familiar, and who, like him, were participants in the common national degradation and struggle. Unavailing but heartfelt tears copiously displayed the grief of Wigan over its dead chief. Very kindly did the inhabitants speak of his gentleness and courage displayed throughout his dark career. His errors or failings were suppressed or spoken of in such condoling language that even they seemed virtues. Wigan had long been lying in sackcloth and ashes, but this new grief seemed to eclipse the others. It seemed a crowning calamity to the retrospective misfortunes and humiliations brought upon Wigan during the preceding ten years. Next morning all the inhabitants followed the mournful cavalcade beyond the town, and returned forgetful of his known faults, determined to bear him in happy memory.

Whether the soldiers of the rank and file who fell in the conflict in Wigan Lane were buried on the battle field or in the churchyard cannot now be ascertained, although the likelihood is that the large expenditure of 15s. paid to the

gravedigger, Dobson, and his hired assistants was chiefly incurred by burying the dead. If they were buried there, they would be laid in one common grave. Certainly no mention is made of them in the registers, as was done at Bolton after the battle there. In the registry of burials for August there are only eleven entries, three of which were subsequent to the battle of Wigan Lane. These are entered in a clear, bold hand, altogether different from the writing of the other eight. They are :—

27th (August) My Lord Witherington de Northumberland.
 27th Collonell Boyneton de Yorkshire.
 29th Collonell trollope, Governor of Newark.

Sir William Widdrington, of Widdrington Castle, in the county of Northumberland, was a knight, and for his good services to the king was raised to the dignity of Baron of the realm by letters patent, dated 10th November, 19th Car. II., by the title of Lord Widdrington, of Blankney, in the county of Lincoln. He first raised a force under the Duke of Newcastle. By his wife Mary, daughter and sole heiress of Sir Anthony Thorold, of Blankney, Knight, he had seven sons and two daughters. His eldest son, William, succeeded to his title and estates.—(Dugdale's Baronage of England, page 471).

The remains of Sir Thomas Tyldesley were buried in the family vault, and twenty-eight years afterwards a monument raised by his cornet, Alexander Rigby, to his memory. This monument was afterwards taken down, but again rebuilt where it now stands in Wigan Lane. The original inscription on this monument was :—

A high Act of Gratitude erected this Monument, and
 Conveys the
 Memory of Sir Thomas Tyldesley to Posterity,
 Who served K.C. 1st. as Left. Col. at Edghill Battall.
 After raised
 Regiments of Horse, Foot, and Dragoons,
 And for the desperate Storming Burton-upon-Trent,
 over a bridge of 36 arches,
 Received the Honour of Knighthood.
 He afterwards served in all the Warrs in great Command,
 Was Governour of Litchfield,
 And followed the Fortune of the Crown through the 3
 Kingdoms.
 Would never Compound with the Rebels, though strongly
 invested,
 And on the 25th of Aug., 1651,
 Was here slain, commanding as Major General under
 E. of Derby,
 To whom the grateful Erector,
 Alex. Rigby, Esq., was Cornet,
 And when he was High Sheriff of the County of Lancaster,
 Anno 1678, placed this high obligation
 On the whole Family of the TYLDESLEYS.

The title of one of the many Civil War Tracts now issued was:—"A great victory, by the blessing of God, obtained by the Parliament's forces against the Scot's forces, commanded by the Earl of Derby, on the 25th of August, 1651, near Wigan, in Lancashire. Certified by a letter from Col. Lilburne and two letters from Chester; also a letter from Colonel Birch to Mr. Speaker. Fifteen hundred totally routed. Earl of Derby wounded, and pursued towards Bolton. Four hundred prisoners taken, amongst which many officers and gentlemen of note. Slaine, three knights and divers colonels and other considerable officers and gentlemen; with a list of the chief particulars of the victory. Imprimatur, Hen. Scobel Cleric, Parliamenti, London. Printed by Robert Ibbitson, dwelling in Smithfield, neere Hosier Lane End, 1651."

Col. Thos. Birch's letter to Mr. Speaker:—

"Liverpool, August 26th, 1651.

Sir,—It hath pleased the Lord, yesterday, to give an utter overthrow, by Col. Lilburne's regiment of horse, to the Earl of Derby, who was raising men here in this county for the Scot's King. The Earl, at his coming over from the Isle of Man, brought but 300 men, whereof 60 were horse; but landing about the middle of the shire, when the Scot's army were passing out of it, he had the better opportunity, by our distractions, to march up to Warrington to them, and there he had the assistance of Major-General Massy, with a regiment of horse to countenance his proceedings, while he gathered more to him; who afterwards leaving him when the Earle's forces were reputed considerable, to carry on the works, and here being none in this county left competent to make opposition, but all marched out with the army. I sent both to my Lord Generall and Major's-Generalls to acquaint them with it, whereupon Col. Lilburne came very opportunely; yet the enemy being stronger in foot, and securing himself betwixt two rivers, he was not to be attempted by horse only, and all that could be afforded in assistance were two foot companies from Chester, one of my regiments, left about Manchester, not being so ready as the rest to march out, and what musketeers I horsed from hand, with some few country men; but since my Lord Generall's owne regiment of foot being sent up, and within one day's march, the enemy attempted towards the Scot's army, and being pursued by Col. Lilburne's regiment, and the small addition before-named, without the conjunction of my Lord Generall's regiment, it pleased God to give them an absolute overthrow, as the inclosed from Col. Lilburne intimates. The number of the prisoners and the slaine, with their qualifications, I cannot yet give further account of, but I hope the successe prevents all designs in these parts. I must excuse for this distracted letter,

And ever am, Sir, your most reall and humble Servant, THOS. BIRCH.

For the Right Honourable William Lenthall, Esq., Speaker of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England, at Westminster, these presents."

Colonel Lilburne's letter was as follows:—

"Wigan, 15th August, 1651.

Honoured Sir,—The Lord hath pleased, this day, to appeare for us, in the total rout and overthrow of the Lord of Derby and his forces, which was increased to about 1,500. He himself, though wounded, escaped, though narrowly. I would only entreat you to send out what horse you have, or can get, to ride up and downe the country to gather up stragglers. I cannot enlarge myself at present, but I entreat you to accept of this from him that desires to expresse himself. Your ammunition is come safe. The Lord of Derby I heare is fled towards Bolton, but his sumptures and tresure are here. We intended for Manchester this night, and had hopes to take my Lord Generall's regiment of foot, and to have had five hundred men in readiness to joyne with them. The Lord Witherington cannot live long. Colonell Boynton and Tyldesley are slaine, and others very considerable. I have divers collonels prisoners.

Your very humble Servant,

ROBERT LILBURNE.

For my honoured friend, Col. Birch, Governor of Liverpool, these haste."

The following letter also refers to the battle of Wigan Lane:—

“Chester, 26th August, 1651.

Sir,—The last night, within three miles of Wigan, your forces engaged the Earl of Derby, and put them to a perfect route; about 400 prisoners taken. About five o'clock this day the country men brought in about 10 stubborn, resolute gentlemen of the scattered party. Whither the Earl is fled is doubtful, but it is certain he is wounded, and of 1,500 men not any left to engage.”

The following is a true copy of the Call Book or Jury List for the Quarter Sessions held in the Moot Hall, before the Mayor, Robert Baron, in the year 1651. This is the shortest Jury List I have seen, and is the only one for 1651.

Burg de Wigan } Visus franck pleg sive Leth tent in le Moot hall infra villa and Burg de Wigan in
in Com Lanc. } Com Lanc cora Robt. Baron, Gen. Major vill and Burgi quinto die Aprilis anno
Dm 1651.

Noia Jur.

Ricus Casson, jur.
Willus Browne, Plumber.
Willus Baldwin, jur.
Gilbtus fford.
Jacobus Croucke, jur.
Robtus Winstanley, jur.
Edrus Grimshaw, jur.
Radus Markland, jur.
Robtus Langshaw.
Willus fford de Swinley
Robtus Briggs, jur.
Jacobus Atherton.
Robtus Markland, Braseer, jur.
Jacobus Higham.
Willus Cookson, jur.
Carolus Bancks, sen., jur.

Noia Jur.

Alex. Greene, jur.
Willus Gardner, jur.
Thomas Barrow.
Radus Hulme.
Roger Laithwaite.
Thomas Tarleton.
Seath Mason.
Thomas Rylands.
Thomas Bullocke.
Thomas Pattericke, jur.
Robtus Shugsmith, jur.
Rogerus Bibby.
Humphridus Lee, jur.
Jacobus Bancks, jur.
Hugo Moulding, jur.

It is for this year (1651), so fatal to the Royalists, and ever memorable in the annals of Wigan history, that the churchwardens' accounts for the parish are first preserved. Before this their names are only to be found on the pages of the registers of baptisms, marriages, and funerals. They were officials who had far more important duties to perform than their successors of the present day. They were indeed the representatives of the parish, being parish rate collectors, poor-law guardians, and general overseers. When they acted the good Samaritan, by relieving a poor beggar by the wayside, they received the poor man's blessing, but charged the parish for the gratuity. A poor blind man in Pemberton received fourpence, and the parish was charged with it whenever the churchwarden returned from his country ramble. The very smallest receipts and disbursements were entered in the accounts. These accounts, which are written in a paper ledger, are in themselves a miniature history of the parish. According to them Haigh, Aspull, Hindley, Abram, Ince, and

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Pemberton were equally rated for the support of the poor of the parish, whilst Billinge and Winstanley had to pay much less. A few items taken from the first page of these accounts are here subjoined, as an interesting specimen, when Robert Litherbarrow and Roger Wycroft were churchwardens.

	£	s.	d.
Received of the Bailiffs of Wigan, August 20th	9	0	0
Received of the Constable of Haigh and Aspull	4	10	0
Received of the Constable of Hindley and Abram	4	10	0
Received of the Constable of Ince and Pemberton	4	10	0
Received of the Constable of Billinge and Winstanley	1	10	0
Received of the old Churchwardens	1	4	2
	£25	4	2
	£	s.	d.
Pd. to the poore the forth of May	3	0	6
Pd. to a poor blind man in Pemberton	0	0	4
Pd. to the poor on the third of August	3	5	6
Pd. to William Johnson, Richard Dobson, and others for dressing the church and churchyard after the fight	0	15	0
Pd. to M. Mitton for one day's work	0	1	0
Pd. to Francis Rigbie in prison	0	1	0
Pd. to Edward Winstanley for a fox	0	1	0
for frankincens, Rosin, Pitch, and Brimstone	8	0	5
&c., &c.	*	*	*
Disbursed in all ...	£33	15	2