

'The Last Godly Army in English History'? The Monmouth Rebellion and Nonconformity

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I

Although the government of James II was caught off-guard by both the timing and the location of the Monmouth rebellion, it clearly had a firm conviction regarding those elements amongst the population most likely to provide Monmouth's supporters. The government order authorising mass arrests issued immediately after the landing, directed magistrates' attention towards Civil War veterans and nonconformists. As Robin Clifton has commented, this assumption regarding who was likely to rebel has led to similar assumptions being made by historians ever since.¹

A proportion of those in Monmouth's ranks saw their actions in terms that fused the political and the religious in ways reminiscent of the 'Good Old Cause'. Like many whose scaffold speeches were recorded, John Sprake, a Colyton mason, 'believed that no Christian ought to resist a lawful power; but the case being between popery and protestantism, altered the matter; and the latter being in danger, he believed it was lawful for him to do what he did'.²

Calling Monmouth's supporters 'the last godly army in English history', Peter Earle argues that it was 'an army made up almost entirely of Nonconformists from the great bastion of Dissent in the three western counties of Somerset, Devon and Dorset'.³ Clifton, more cautiously, points out the separateness of political and religious opposition in most circumstances, yet his study of Somerset, the 'nursery of rebellion', emphasises not only its cohort of semi-employed cloth workers, its 'independently minded husbandmen, yeomen and lesser gentry', and its parliamentary allegiance during the civil war, but also the strength of its nonconformity.⁴

Despite the possible importance of nonconformity as a source of inspiration, justification and manpower for rebellion, little detailed work

has been done to establish the extent of links between the nonconformist congregations of the south-west and Monmouth's recruits. Of recent accounts, Earle finds himself unable to go beyond the assertion that the rebels were 'mainly Dissenters', but confesses that 'what sort of Dissenters . . . is difficult to determine'.⁵ Clifton, in reaching a much more negative conclusion, has done most to provide a detailed analysis of the distribution of nonconformity in Somerset, but has been unable to relate this to the composition of Monmouth's army. He was hampered by the limited sources available for the study of Somerset nonconformity; the Somerset entry in the Compton Census of 1676 lacked a detailed parish-by-parish survey of nonconformist strength.⁶

The Devon records provide the opportunity to reconstruct the religious affiliations of the Monmouth rebels with a level of precision not possible elsewhere. Not only is it possible to use detailed surveys of nonconformist strength from the 1676 Compton Census and the less informative 1669 Bishop's survey, but also these sources can be supplemented by analysis of nonconformist prosecutions both in the ecclesiastical courts and at Quarter Sessions and by the handful of extant nonconformist registers. From this evidence we can attempt to answer questions about the coincidence of centres of nonconformity with major sources of rebellion. We can also investigate the link between the generation of support for Monmouth and the harshness and relentlessness of the prosecution of nonconformist congregations in the years preceding 1685. We will also be able to go some way towards linking individual rebels with particular congregations and gain some insight into their experience of religious persecution.

II

The geographical pattern of recruitment for Monmouth's army is quite distinct in south-east Devon. Almost one third of the Devon contingent came from the two populous parishes of Axminster and Colyton.⁷ Axminster was unusual in being the only Devon town occupied by Monmouth. He moved there from Lyme Regis on June 15, as he did so brushing aside the Devon Militia in their only military encounter. In Axminster his reception was enthusiastic, particularly from members of the Congregational meeting who recorded their response in the *Axminster Ecclesiastica*, the narrative of their experience of persecution. The Axminster meeting acclaimed Monmouth's 'declaration to restore liberty to the people of God for the worship of God, to preserve the privileges of the nation, etc.'. They proclaimed him a divinely appointed saviour, at whose arrival 'were the hearts of the people of God gladdened, and their

hopes and expectations raised that this man might be a deliverer for the nation, and the interest of Christ in it'.⁸

Other parishes in the area also contributed significant numbers of rebels such as the thirty-nine from Axmouth, the thirty-four from Luppitt and the forty-eight from Thorncombe. The full significance of the impact of Monmouth's cause can only be adequately assessed, however, in terms of the proportion of a parish's manpower that enlisted. Large, densely populated parishes may well have provided many recruits, but even a relatively small number from a tiny parish may signify substantial support. Using the totals of population from the 1676 Compton Census we are able to obtain an approximate measure of the level of support represented by the numbers recruited by Monmouth. In these terms the highest level of support was obtained in the parishes of Axmouth, Axminster, Colyton and Combyne. All these parishes recorded over ten percent of their population as rebels. In Axmouth the level of recruitment was as high as sixteen per cent, which represents an overwhelming commitment to Monmouth's cause on the part of this small coastal parish. The full significance can be seen when one considers what that sixteen per cent probably meant in terms of the manpower of the parish. If we assume equal numbers of male and female inhabitants (probably an over-estimation of the male proportion) then some 32 per cent of the male population participated in the rebellion. If one was to exclude the elderly, the infirm and those totally unsuited to military service, then the depth of commitment in a parish such as Axmouth becomes clear.⁹

Geographical position was undoubtedly an important factor in the strength of support in these four parishes. Axmouth, Colyton and Combyne all enjoyed easy access to Lyme Regis, Monmouth's landing point, along the Exeter to Lyme road. One might suggest that this provided the route both for volunteers from these Devon parishes and also recruiters from Lyme. Axminster, as a staging post in Monmouth's march to Taunton, also contributed a high proportion of its male inhabitants to the rebellion and also probably operated as a focus for a second wave of recruitment and volunteering from the adjacent parishes of Musbury, Membury and Stockland where support was above ten percent of the male population. As Monmouth moved on to Chard and Ilminster a third wave of recruitment probably took place along the Honiton to Chard road, bringing in supporters from Luppitt and Upottery. These were the main centres of support for Monmouth, but rebels came from a wider area of south-east Devon. Beyond were a number of parishes that provided lesser levels of support such as Yarcombe, Seaton and Beere, Honiton, Gittisham and Combe Raleigh. Together with a small group of parishes where only a handful of rebels originated, such as Shute, Offwell and

Southleigh, these parishes form a sizable cluster, almost all of which are located to the east of the Honiton to Taunton road and to the south of the Honiton to Exeter road. Clustering of support for Monmouth in the far south-east of Devon is not unexpected; this was the area of Devon closest to Monmouth's landing point and to his line of march through Dorset. It was also the only point at which his army entered Devon itself.

One might well expect that the level of support for Monmouth would be strongest in the extreme south-east, as indeed it was, and that the level would gradually decline with growing distance from the area of Monmouth's activity. In fact, however, it disappears abruptly at the Exeter to Honiton and Honiton to Taunton roads, only to reappear at a much weaker level some distance to the west and north of those roads in parishes such as Plymtree, Cullompton, Uffculme and Culmstock. Remarkably too, there is no evidence of a single rebel in the parishes lying astride either of these roads, with the exception of Churchstanton, at the extreme edge of the county. What this would suggest is that the otherwise unreliable and ineffective Devon militia, in their attempts to create a *cordon sanitaire* around the centres of the rebellion, patrolled these roads with extra vigilance and maintained such a strong presence right along their length that rebellion was out of the question for inhabitants of the parishes adjacent to the roads.¹⁰

The major exceptions to the pattern described are provided by the handful of parishes in the south-east which did not supply any known recruits to Monmouth: Farway, Widworthy, Monkton, Salcombe Regis and Branscombe. Another exception is the parish of Bampton, some distance to the north-west, where a level of support occurred which was comparable to that otherwise only found in the extreme south-east. The lack of recruits in a number of south-eastern parishes needs to be explained by reference to a range of factors, and will be considered later. The situation in Bampton, however, can be explained partly by geographical factors: the town lay on the border of the county and on the Tiverton to Taunton road, suggesting that the rebels from Bampton were likely to have joined Monmouth at Taunton during his triumphal occupation of the town.

It would seem then, that almost everywhere throughout the south-east, where access to Monmouth's forces was not impeded, men were willing to join his cause. Can we find any evidence in what we know of non-conformity and its prosecution in the south-east to help explain the motivation of these men?

III

In general terms, the relationship between the level of nonconformity and support for Monmouth is relatively strong. The parishes of south-eastern Devon had some of the highest concentrations of nonconformity in the county. The ten parishes with the highest levels of support for Monmouth also had significant levels of nonconformity as measured by the 1676 Compton Census.¹¹ As the level of support for Monmouth drops, so does the level of nonconformity; however, the reverse is not the case. Five of the ten parishes in the south-east with the highest levels of nonconformity had a relatively low level of support for Monmouth.¹² This clearly indicates that the presence of nonconformity in a parish did not guarantee a positive response to Monmouth. This pattern is not unexpected. The most visible nonconformists in the south-east were Quakers. Although there is evidence that some Devon Quakers became involved in the rebellion, given the emerging importance of pacifism within the doctrine of the Quaker movement, it is unlikely that a strong response could be expected from amongst their membership.¹³ It is from amongst the congregations of Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists that we might expect to find support for Monmouth. It is therefore important to identify the areas of strength of each of these nonconformist groups, not only identifying the location of their meetings, but also the distribution of their membership.

This area of Devon supported significant congregations of all three of these nonconformist groups; Presbyterians met at Thorncombe, Honiton and Colyton, Congregationalists at Axminster, and Baptists at Kilminster, Honiton, Bampton and Tiverton.¹⁴ The members of these congregations were distributed widely throughout the area. The meeting house licences granted in 1672 under the short-lived Declaration of Indulgence indicate that Presbyterians met occasionally at a wide range of places in the south-east, and Congregationalists convened at Shute and Luppitt.¹⁵

The ancestry of nonconformity in the area was a long one, beginning with the activities of radical puritan clergy and gentry in the early years of the seventeenth century. The ideas that they sowed spread their influence through the willingness, even eagerness, of many ordinary men and women to travel considerable distances to hear a powerful, zealous preacher.¹⁶ At some places such as Colyton and Axminster nonconformity was the result of the earlier activities of nearby sectarian and separatist preachers, coupled with the incumbencies of Presbyterians or Independents during the 1640s and 1650s, supported by sympathetic gentry, and sustained through the post-Restoration period by the ministrations of resident nonconformist

clergy.¹⁷ The strong development and survival of nonconformity in centres such as these undoubtedly helped sustain nonconformity in their rural hinterlands; in parishes such as Musbury, Uplyme, Seaton and Membury. Throughout much of the area the continuing activities of the Baptists and Quakers was important in maintaining a nonconformist presence, particularly in some of the more remote rural areas.¹⁸ The only parishes that did not have known puritan incumbents prior to 1660 were Thorncombe, Offwell and Widworthy. The latter two parishes failed to respond to Monmouth.

The south-east occupied the kind of border region in which dissent and unorthodoxy traditionally thrived. Seven of the parishes bordered Dorset and the Diocese of Bristol, while one parish, Thorncombe, was an outlier of the Diocese of Exeter and the county of Devon, wholly detached from the rest of the county and bordered by both Dorset and Somerset; it lay between the Dioceses of Bristol, and Bath and Wells. This situation provided considerable advantages to nonconformist groups in times of persecution. Seth Ward, bishop of Exeter, was aware of this factor when he wrote in 1663 that the area was 'disorderly and troublesome . . . being the border of 3 Dioceses as well as 3 Counties which gives great opportunity to the sectaries to play their tricks and escape'.¹⁹

After the Restoration, south-east Devon was replete with many ejected clergy and strong nonconformist congregations developed in many places, with their members spread even more widely throughout the region. Ejections took place at Axminster, Honiton, Uplyme, Colyton, Shute, Musbury and probably Monkton. Of those ejected all but one retained connections with the area.²⁰ Many others from this category were active in the area too. The large numbers of nonconformists in the region promised some security for ejected ministers especially in towns such as Thorncombe, Axminster, Colyton and Honiton where sympathetic local gentry were able to lend a protective and generous hand.²¹

At Axminster the ejected minister Bartholemew Ashwood gathered a Congregational meeting soon after his ejection and remained as their pastor until his death in 1678.²² More long-serving nonconformist ministers were based nearby at Musbury, Shute, Uplyme and Axmouth.²³ It was at Thorncombe, under the protection of the Prideauxs of Forde Abbey, that the principal refuge for nonconformist ministers in the area was provided. Bishop Ward's extremely thorough 1665 survey of dissenting clergy revealed four Presbyterians living in the parish.²⁴ The strength of the nonconformist ministry in the south-east was maintained throughout the post-Restoration period with new men replacing those ejected on their deaths.²⁵ The numbers of nonconformist clergy serving in the area reflects the general strength and broad spectrum of its nonconformity.

Nonconformity did not depend upon clerical influence alone. Even without manorial control, a gentleman could use the patronage of the living or, if he was resident, his own personal influence and ties of obligation, to shape the religious tenor of the local community. In Thorncombe, the absence of puritan clergy was compensated for by the staunch puritanism of the chief gentry family, resident at Forde Abbey. The religious opinions of the parish were determined less by control of the advowson, which was in the hands of the minor gentry family, the Bragges, than the direct influence of the most powerful gentry family. Prior to 1649 these were the puritan Rosewells and after that date, the Presbyterian Prideauxs. In 1669 Bishop Sparrow reported a Presbyterian conventicle numbering about one hundred persons meeting at Forde Abbey and the parish became a common refuge for ejected ministers.²⁶

Few of the other parishes in the region had such a dominating non-conformist gentry presence as provided by the Prideauxs. Four other strongly puritan gentry, however, had influence in the area; the Erles of Charborough in Dorset, held advowsons and manors at Axmouth, the Yonges of Colyton, at Axmouth, Honiton, Luppitt and Seaton, the Drake family of Ashe in Musbury and Great Trill in Axminster, at Axminster, Yarcombe, Colyton, Musbury and Uplyme, and Sir William Courtenay of Powderham Castle in Kenton, at Honiton.²⁷ The presence of an unsympathetic member of the gentry within a parish could have the reverse effect. Farway, which produced few nonconformists and no Monmouth rebels, was the home of Peter Prideaux, an active magistrate involved in many of the Conventicle Act prosecutions in the south-east.²⁸

In other parishes it may be that those with power in the parish could conspire to effectively hide the true level of nonconformity. This may have been the case in Musbury where 20 per cent of the male population were involved in the rebellion, but where very few nonconformists were recorded. It may well be that the patrons, the Drakes, in collusion with the resident ejected minister, Richard Farrant, and the incumbent, the Presbyterian fellow-traveller Richard Cresson, managed to conceal the true nature of religious nonconformity in their parish.²⁹

Of all the parts of south Devon at which Monmouth might have chosen to land, with the possible exceptions of Plymouth and parts of the South Hams, the south-east was the one with the strongest traditions of religious radicalism and fervent protestantism. Yet, before we conclude that it was nonconformity that made the south-east a fertile recruiting ground for Monmouth, we need to consider alternative sets of conditions that might have contributed to the development of support for a radical challenge to existing authority.

IV

The cloth industry has been seen as a potential seedbed for nonconformity, radicalism and rebellion during the seventeenth century and it played a major role in the economy of the south-east.³⁰ In the latter part of the seventeenth century the area was involved in the manufacture of serges using Irish wool shipped through Minehead and Bridgwater, spun near these north Somerset towns then passed through Taunton or Wellington to clothiers in Tiverton, Culmstock, Uffculme, Axminster and Thorncombe. The clothiers distributed the yarn to weavers in the towns and surrounding villages, passed the cloth back to the dyers and finishers and then on to London, Exeter or Lyme Regis for export.³¹

Many of the parishes of the region were of the proto-industrial type where domestic textile production served to absorb the spasmodic under-employment resulting from the pastoral economy.³² This was certainly the case in Axminster, Thorncombe and Colyton.³³ At Colyton, the high proportion of tithe income from small and personal tithes indicated the degree to which its economy was non-agricultural; given over to small-holdings with a substantial proportion of its population being cottagers and urban dwellers engaged in manual or industrial occupations.³⁴ By the second half of the seventeenth century the economy of Colyton was severely depressed, reflected in the 53 per cent of its population listed as paupers in the Hearth Tax returns, one of the highest levels of poverty in the county.³⁵

It is possible to assess the link between the cloth industry and rebellion since a significant number of rebels were identified by their occupation as well as their place of residence, giving us data on some 501 of the 652 Devon rebels. Of these seventy per cent were in agricultural occupations (yeomen and husbandmen) while nineteen per cent were from occupations connected with the cloth industry, clothiers, serge makers, weavers, lace makers, and worsted combers. The textile occupations occurred predominantly in parishes with an urban core such as Honiton, Axminster, Colyton and Tiverton, but were also widely scattered amongst predominantly rural parishes. Cloth-working occupations occur in as many parishes as agricultural occupations; however, the proportion of textile workers amongst the rebels was slightly above that in the population as a whole, whereas the proportion of agricultural workers was substantially above the norm.³⁶ This pattern differs widely from that observed by Clifton in his study of the occupations of Somerset participants in the rebellion.³⁷ In the Somerset sample ten per cent were agricultural workers: yeomen, husbandmen and labourers, 38 per cent craftsmen, traders or professionals and 52 per cent cloth workers. Clifton

ascribes the predominance of cloth workers and craftsmen, and the corresponding lack of agricultural workers, to the success of Monmouth's recruitment from a handful of towns such as Taunton, Bridgewater and Chard. These were all urban centres where Monmouth paused long enough to recruit. It may well be that if Monmouth's route had taken in urban centres of the cloth industry such as Tiverton and Honiton, then the Devon contingent would have included a far higher proportion of cloth workers. Nevertheless, even in centres of the cloth-working industry where Monmouth did achieve significant support, such as Colyton and Axminster, textile workers were only a minority of those recruited.³⁸

The organization of the clothing industry in the extreme south-east corner of Devon was largely decentralised. Litigation over issues involving apprenticeship prosecutions show that the woollen industry in Devon and west Somerset was more loosely organized and more scattered than in Wiltshire and east Somerset. The industry in east Devon was based on weaving done in hamlets and isolated farmhouses and cottages rather than clothing villages that developed in counties further east.³⁹ The exception made of Devon from the inhibition against wool-jobbers, who would buy and sell wool in small lots, illustrates the distinctive, decentralised nature of the industry.⁴⁰

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, however, saw the emergence of the merchant manufacturer in certain areas such as Exeter and Tiverton.⁴¹ Professor Hoskins argued that this development was most advanced in the Tiverton area where difficulties over the supply of wool led to the early predominance of the merchant engaged in the importing of wool.⁴² This process was not uniform throughout east Devon but was dependent upon the favourability of local conditions.⁴³

It is certainly noticeable that all the parishes that incorporated clothing towns contributed forces to Monmouth's army, as did most of the parishes surrounding them. We might conjecture that the clothing towns acted as centres for the radical vanguard and that close proximity to such a town provided the kind of environment in which dissent could be fostered and survive. Perhaps here the frequency and nature of the interactions between the town and those living in the hinterland was important. Yet it was the less advanced industrial towns of Axminster and Thorncombe that were most conducive to rebellion. It was the individual engaged in industry in the form of by-employment, perhaps alongside pastoral and other agricultural activities, with some property of his own, and hence a degree of independence, who was able to resist official pressure and put his principles in practice by positively responding to Monmouth.⁴⁴

In other ways too, the economic structure of the region lent itself to the influence of nonconformity and radicalism in general. The well-established and regionally-important markets such as Bampton's cattle and sheep market and the area's position straddling the main routes out of south and east Devon towards London and Bristol meant that it was well placed to encounter new ideas and influences and was familiar territory for many of the wayfaring community who operated in the south-west. It has been suggested that members of the wayfaring trades and occupations were strongly influenced by nonconformity and radicalism, particularly its independent and sectarian strains. Individuals engaged in mobile activities such as seamen, carters, traders and middlemen, and soldiers were not only more likely to be attracted to an individualistic, 'mobile, virile and impatient' form of religion such as Independency or separatist nonconformity, but were also well placed to act as brokers of change; introducing and spreading their ideas as they moved from port to port or market town to market town along the highways of the kingdom.⁴⁵

These factors help to explain the importance of Independency and sectarianism in major market centres such as Tiverton, Bampton, Honiton and Axminster. Nevertheless, amongst the Devon rebels the number of craftsmen, artisans, traders and transport workers was small. Towns such as Honiton, Colyton and Axminster contributed a handful of shoemakers, carters, blacksmiths, joiners and cordwainers. Thirty-eight crafts are represented, but craftsmen comprised only eleven per cent of rebels.

Clifton has also argued for the low status and youth of the rebels, even suggesting that many were from the criminal element.⁴⁶ Again the Devon evidence differs significantly from the picture derived from Clifton's Somerset sample. As the occupational structure of the Devon rebels would lead one to expect, there was a significant number of men of some status and wealth among them. Using the 1674 Hearth Tax records it is possible to make an assessment of the wealth of fifty rebels.⁴⁷ Of these twenty per cent were listed as paupers and 38 per cent were relatively humble occupying houses with one or two hearths, but another 42 per cent were more substantial individuals occupying houses with between three and eight hearths. In terms of age, 56 per cent of the Devon rebels were over twenty-five. Although this age profile is not as high as that calculated by Earle, who arrived at proportions of those over twenty-five ranging between 77 and 86 per cent amongst the rebels from Colyton, nevertheless, it does not lend support to Clifton's suggestion that this was an army of young criminals and malcontents.⁴⁸ One further observation which becomes crystal clear from the age profile of the rebels, is that the number of possible Old Commonwealthmen must have been tiny. Only eight per cent of the Devon rebels were aged over forty-five. Hence, even if all these

were old soldiers, the number of rebels who could possibly have served in the armies of the Commonwealth and Protectorate was significantly less than the number of identifiable nonconformists in the ranks.

In sharp contrast to Clifton's contention that Monmouth did not recruit from the agricultural population of the rural parishes, our conclusion must be that rebellion found its greatest strength, not amongst the weavers and woolcombers of south-east Devon, but amongst the solid, mature, independent yeoman farmers with their secure freeholds or leases for three lives. Such were the men who comprised the bulk of the Devon contingent in Monmouth's army. Although the south-east was heavily involved in the decentralised Devon cloth industry, amongst those who flocked to Monmouth, only a slightly higher proportion were involved in the cloth industry than in the population as a whole. While the cloth industry may have been a conducive environment for the development of nonconformity, dissent and rebellion, these results suggest that in south-east Devon it was certainly no more conducive, and may have been less so, than engagement in agriculture as an independent producer. Compared with the influence of nonconformity, the economic structure of employment in the south-east seems a less significant factor in explaining the level of support for Monmouth.

V

By the 1680s then, south-eastern Devon had a long tradition of religious nonconformity and these nonconformists made a substantial contribution to Monmouth's army, but there is no simple correlation between the forces of religious dissent and political rebellion in 1685. It has been suggested that the existence of nonconformity in itself was a less powerful motivation to rebellion than the harsh persecution of nonconformists carried out by the ecclesiastical and civil courts in the years after 1660.⁴⁹

Nonconformity, with its emphasis on godly behaviour, the maintenance of an unblemished reputation, and the pursuit of one's calling, placed a high value on social and political stability. Despite the remnant of old-Commonwealthsmen among the nonconformists, the lack of general enthusiasm for plotting after 1660 is clear.⁵⁰ Yet the declaration of the Congregationalists of Axminster, that they were 'harrassed out with trouble and persecution, and . . . broken with the weight of oppression' in the years immediately prior to the Rebellion suggests that they were driven to join Monmouth by the remorseless and unjust persecution to which they had been subjected by the authorities. It is important therefore to examine the history of the campaigns against nonconformists in the south-east of the county.

The vigour with which the ecclesiastical and civil courts pursued nonconformists varied considerably from year to year as central government and church policy changed, as national and local personnel were replaced or fell out of favour, and as new methods were tried, or old methods found wanting.⁵¹ There are some grounds for the claim that the nonconformists of the south-east experienced a particularly harsh period of persecution in the years leading up to the Monmouth Rebellion.⁵² Of the prosecutions of nonconformists in the south-east in the years between the Restoration and the rebellion, 57 per cent occurred in the five years prior to the rebellion. If, however, we focus on the ten parishes with the highest concentration of support for the rebellion the harshness of the persecution in the pre-rebellion years is even clearer. In these parishes 79 per cent of prosecutions for nonconformity between 1660 and 1685 occurred in the five years prior to 1685. The nonconformists of the parishes where the highest proportion of the population turned out for Monmouth had a relatively easy time in the 1660s and 1670s, years in which they could build their support in some security, only to have this relative calm thoroughly shattered by the activities of the justices, constables and churchwardens in the 1680s.

This dramatic change of fortune is reflected in the *Axminster Ecclesiastica* which recorded that after 1681 'a dreadful storm of persecution began to fall and it proved to be a violent storm, and of some continuance . . . [The] adversaries . . . raging up and down like roaring and ravening lions, with fierceness and rage in many places'.⁵³ The congregation was forced to abandon its usual meetings at Wyecroft, an estate near the town on the road to Chard, and assemble in woods, constantly changing the place of meeting. In 1682 the Axminster congregation observed that the 'Twenty pound Act' and the acts against papists were 'formed as weapons . . . and the edge of them directed against the dissenting protestants'.⁵⁴

Although few convictions were recorded under the Conventicle Act, during these years, informers were active. These 'lewd and base fellows were encouraged to assault houses, to hunt up and down to give information against the assemblies of the people of God'.⁵⁵ The result of this intensified persecution was that many who had remained loyal to their nonconformist principles over the previous twenty years were induced to 'turn and warp and let go their profession . . . falling in with the worship of the nations'.⁵⁶ In 1683 the congregation reported that the

high winds of persecution continued to blow. . . . On one Sabbath the tidings was that such a congregation was broken and scattered, and another time, such and such a congregation was broken and scattered.

Thus the assemblies of the people of God were broken almost in all places, so that about the 4th month of this year there was no other congregation round about that could keep up their open constant assembling together on Lord's days, except at uncertain times and places, only this congregation whom the Lord wonderfully preserved and helped to maintain their constant assembling together every Sabbath, openly in woods and retired places.⁵⁷

The intensity of activity against nonconformists was uneven. The persecution described by the Congregationalists at Axminster was probably the most vigorous in the county, largely due to the efforts of Justice William Bragge of Thorncombe. Of seven prosecutions of conventicles in Devon in 1684, four involved Bragge.⁵⁸ It is probable that Bragge's heavy-handedness in 1684 made a significant contribution to building the flood of support which Monmouth received from Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists in this region, during the following year.⁵⁹

The Axminster Congregationalists believed themselves to have been the target of some of the most violent and vigorous actions of the campaign, although their observation that other congregations were 'broken and scattered' while they were able to continue meeting, suggests that other groups may have fared far worse.⁶⁰ A detailed examination of all prosecutions for nonconformity in the 1680s in the ten parishes with strongest support for Monmouth reveals that the largest group of those prosecuted, whose denomination can be identified, were Quakers (65 per cent), with much smaller numbers of Congregationalists (thirteen per cent), Baptists (twelve per cent) and Presbyterians (nine per cent), although, with 66 per cent of those prosecuted unable to be linked with any congregation, we need to be cautious in the conclusions we draw. The information furnished by the *Axminster Ecclesiastica*, with its frequent reference to members and membership list for 1687-88, means that we are far more likely to be able to identify Congregationalists than members of any other group in the south-east, yet it is still the Quakers who predominate. The conclusion would seem to be that the Congregationalists were far from the most heavily prosecuted of the nonconformists in the region.

The group which felt the full blast of the 'violent storm' against nonconformists which raged in the area during the 1680s was the Quakers, yet, as we would expect, their contribution to the Rebellion was slight. It may well be that there was a general sense of fear and apprehension amongst the nonconformists of the area resulting from the actions of Justice Bragge. Although the Presbyterians, Baptists and

Congregationalist did not bear the brunt of the campaign, and they may not have been unsympathetic towards attempts to repress Quakers, yet they may well have feared that, as had happened in the 1660s, methods that had first been directed towards the Quakers, could easily be turned against them when conformist passions became inflamed.⁶¹

If we turn our attention to the ninety Monmouth rebels who had faced prosecution for nonconformity by the courts, we find that 72 per cent of the prosecutions had occurred in the 1680s and 33 per cent between the beginning of 1684 and mid-1685. More than one in ten of the Devon rebels, therefore, had been prosecuted by the courts for nonconformity and almost three quarters of those had been proceeded against in the five years before the Rebellion. Although the number of rebels who had faced prosecution is not large, it is not necessary to formally prosecute every nonconformist in a community to create a strong sense of threat and fear. Not all those prosecuted turned out for Monmouth, but here again, it may be that many of those prosecuted were unsuitable to serve, or unwilling to take the ultimate risk for the sake of their beliefs.

It is undoubtedly the case that this corner of Devon experienced an unusually intense period of official repression directed against nonconformists throughout the 1680s and intensifying in 1684. Even more significant in explaining the effect of this persecution on raising support for Monmouth is that it followed a long period of relative official inaction during the 1660s and 1670s which may well have raised expectations amongst the nonconformists of the south-east that they might remain unmolested and left them unprepared for the wrath which men like Justice Bragge turned upon them.

VI

Possibly the most striking observation from a comparison of the list of Monmouth rebels in the south-east and the list of those convicted of nonconformity over the years of persecution from 1660 to 1687 is the lack of overlap between the two. Of the 654 rebels from the area only ninety, little less than fourteen per cent, appear to have been caught up in the campaign against nonconformists. Of those ninety, only forty-five can be identified with a particular nonconformist group. The largest number – fifteen – were Congregationalists, almost all from Axminster, while Quakers, Baptists, and Presbyterians appear in smaller numbers, with ten each.

Although they had experienced the fury of the adversaries at their hottest, the Quakers of the south-east generally did not allow this to inflame their desire for retaliation to such an extent that they were willing

to ignore their testimony against bearing arms.⁶² It is likely, however, that a number of individuals who were Quakers, or had been associated with them, participated in the rebellion. As ever, the identification of individuals in seventeenth century records is fraught with dangers. We can however, be reasonably confident that the Nathaniel Pottle, sergeweaver of Bradninch, who was tried in Taunton at the 'Bloody Assizes' and transported to Jamaica on the *Jamaica Merchant*, was the same Nathaniel Pottle of Bradninch who was fined for attending Quaker conventicles at Bradninch on 31 March 1679 and Cullompton on 25 July 1680.⁶³

There are a number of other Quakers, or their associates, who were participants in the Rebellion. Thomas Layton, senior, a yeoman of Colyton, who was at large when he was presented at the Assizes at Exeter as a participant in the rebellion, had attended a Quaker conventicle at Membury in December 1684. William Tapscott, a serge-weaver of Culmstock, who was transported to Jamaica, had attended a Quaker conventicle in Cullompton in April 1680 with his son.⁶⁴ His wife, Mary, was buried in the Quaker burial ground in February 1677 and earlier had been described in the Quaker register as 'convict of truth'.⁶⁵ Three other rebels, William Brinsdon and John Newberry, yeomen of Membury, and William Wooldridge, a serge-weaver of Tiverton, were all Quakers or had had links with the group. Another nine rebels appear to have family links to the Quakers.⁶⁶ So, although Quakers and their supporters do not loom large in the ranks of the Devon rebels, they were not entirely absent. A small number of Quakers had found the appeal of a protestant pretender to the throne sufficient to overcome their emerging pacifist principles.

Our difficulty in identifying nonconformist rebels may have a number of explanations. Earle has suggested that it was strategically, and practically, sensible for families to send only one or two of their male number, perhaps young adult sons, to join Monmouth, thereby avoiding the risk of being left without male heads of households and male labour.⁶⁷ Another factor which reduced the number of Monmouth rebels to be found in the court records is the high proportion of women amongst nonconformists prosecuted. Certainly at the upper levels of Devon society, and, one suspects, amongst property owners lower down the social scale, it was the practice for the women of the household to absent themselves from church and attend nonconformist conventicles while the head of household conformed, thus preserving the family against the potentially disastrous economic and social consequences of excommunication.⁶⁸ Further, presentments by local officials were often inconsistent and incomplete. Not every known nonconformist was presented. Even amongst the Quakers, the most unacceptable and uncompromising of the nonconformists, there are several hundred known

from registers during the period, who never appear before the courts.⁶⁹ This may be partly to do with the obligations and expectations of good neighbourlihood which militated against stirring up local trouble by prosecuting otherwise peaceful and respectable neighbours, partly the nonconformist sympathies of some local officials, and partly the inadequacies of the administrative and judicial methods of the courts.

On the other hand there were clearly some individuals who were targeted by the courts and their officials to such an extent that their harassment would have easily driven them to the kind of anger and despair that made them ideal recruits for Monmouth. John Wyatt, junior, a husbandman of Uplyme had been prosecuted twice, once by the ecclesiastical and once by the civil courts in the 1680s and had been excommunicated in 1682.⁷⁰ His father, a weaver, had been prosecuted a total of fourteen times, beginning with a couple of prosecutions in the 1660s and then, persistently, from 1682 onwards. He had also suffered excommunication in 1682 and 1684.⁷¹ In 1684 he was prosecuted six times for absence from church. The father did not enlist with Monmouth, but the son did, perhaps, in part, motivated by the treatment meted out to his father.⁷² The father did not completely avoid implication in the Rebellion, however, since in February 1686 he was discovered hiding his son and another rebel in his house. He was gaoled with them at Dorchester, but pardoned in March 1686.⁷³

Although few of the nonconformist rebels had personally felt the force of the waves of persecution which swept through the various dissenting congregations of the south-east, it is certain that their sense of security and protection from injustice would have been severely undermined by the experiences of their fellows in the years preceding the rebellion. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that in this area of Devon the vigorous enforcing of the laws against dissenters by magistrates such as William Bragge in the early 1680s and after the Rye House Plot scare in 1683, had driven a substantial number of the area's nonconformists to conclude that no justice was possible under the hand of the existing authority, and that regime change alone offered relief from their oppression.

VII

Finally we need to return to the question asked earlier in this discussion, namely, to what extent can the factors discussed here help us explain the relationship between nonconformity and support for Monmouth's cause in those few brief weeks of 1685? The first point to be made is that the proportion of identifiable nonconformists amongst Monmouth's troops, although appearing low, at fourteen per cent, is considerably higher than

the 3 per cent of the general population of the south-east who were nonconformists.⁷⁴ Further if we exclude the female nonconformists from that percentage then the proportion of nonconformists amongst Monmouth's Devon supporters would be ten times that of male nonconformists amongst the population of the south-east as a whole. The proportion of nonconformists amongst Monmouth's Devon contingent even exceeded the level of male nonconformity in the most strongly nonconformist parish in the south-east, Thorncombe. Thus, although only slightly more than one in eight of the Devon rebels was an identifiable nonconformist, dissenters formed a much more significant group amongst the rebels than in the population as a whole. It would thus clearly be wrong to dismiss nonconformity as a significant factor in the identity of the rebels. Further, it would appear that Monmouth managed to draw support from all the nonconformist groups in the south-east, Independents, Presbyterians, Baptists, and, surprisingly, even Quakers. Certainly nonconformity would seem to be a much more significant factor in the membership of Monmouth's Devon contingent than the other most likely contributing factors; employment in the textile industry or involvement in the Parliamentary cause during the Civil War and Interregnum. It was not the cloth workers who flocked to Monmouth in south-east Devon, but the nonconformist yeomen farmers.

Beyond this nonconformist core, did Monmouth's army deserve its epithet 'godly'? It would be wrong to see godliness as only located amongst nonconformists. Protestant zeal was not a nonconformist monopoly. In late seventeenth-century Devon there was no sharp divide between conformists and nonconformists.⁷⁵ Amongst the laity were many individuals who lapsed in and out of membership of the nonconformist congregations as the pressure on nonconformity rose and fell. As the *Axminster Ecclesiastica* notes, as the fury of the persecutors rose, members fell away and returned to the 'worship of the nations', the Church of England. During the brief period in 1672 when the laws against nonconformity were temporarily suspended under the Declaration of Indulgence, it is clear from nonconformist registers that membership of nonconformist congregations expanded considerably.⁷⁶ Of course, amongst the completely conformist laity too there were many who felt their protestantism deeply and a number who found that their protestant loyalty overrode their political loyalty to the Catholic James and who resolved to defend their protestantism alongside Monmouth.

Certainly as far as the Devon contingent of Monmouth's army was concerned they were far from being comprised 'the less propertied, less respectable' and there was far more than 'only a limited nonconformist presence'.⁷⁷ While it is clear that the Rebellion was not 'all the work of

the Dissenters', it is equally clear that the Monmouth rebels came from amongst an unusually godly people. Without the dissenters of south-west England, it is likely that Monmouth's forces would have been far weaker and would have received a much colder reception.

Notes

1. Robin Clifton, *The Last Popular Rebellion: The Western Rising of 1685* (1984), and p. 156. Narratives of the rebellion can be found in *ibid.*, Chs.5-7, and Peter Earle, *Monmouth's Rebels. The Road to Sedgemoor 1685* (1977), pp.57-134.
2. *Ibid.*, p.20.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.5, 11.
4. Clifton, *op.cit.*, pp. 48-56.
5. Earle, *op.cit.*, pp.5-6.
6. Clifton, *op.cit.*, p.48. Anne E O Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census of 1676: a Critical Edition* (Oxford, 1986). For a discussion of the reliability of the Compton Census as an indication of nonconformist strength see Peter Jackson, 'Nonconformity and the Compton Census in late seventeenth-century Devon', in Kevin Schurer and Tom Arkell (eds.), *Surveying the People* (Oxford, 1992).
7. Data on the rebels is drawn from W M Wigfield, *The Monmouth Rebels* (Gloucester, 1985).
8. K W H. Howard (ed), *The Axminster Ecclesiastica 1660-1698* (Sheffield, 1976), pp.93-4.
9. Comparison can be made with the levels of recruitment during the First World War. In 1914/15, before conscription was introduced, 26.9% of Scotland's male population had enlisted and 24.2% of that of England and Wales: I Beckett, 'The British Army, 1914-1918' in J Turner (ed.), *Britain and the First World War* (1988), p.105.
10. Clifton, *op.cit.*, p.249. Earle, *op.cit.* p.83.
11. In descending order of support as a proportion of population these parishes were: Axmouth, Combpyne, Axminster, Colyton, Musbury, Luppitt, Thorncombe, Uptontery, Membury and Uplyme.
12. Shute, Holcombe Rogus, Cotleigh, Northleigh and Churchstanton.
13. Michael Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford, 1978) pp.192-3.
14. Peter Jackson, 'Nonconformists and Society in Devon, 1660-1689' (Unpublished, University of Exeter Ph.D. Thesis, 1986); See maps 2.2-2.6 pp. 58-62, and maps 7.1-7.4 pp.267-70.
15. Jackson, thesis, maps pp. 55, 56, 58, 59. Presbyterian Meeting House Licences were taken out in Axminster, Awliscombe, Bradninch, Broadhembury, Buckerell, Colyton, Cullompton, Dunkeswell, Gittisham, Halberton, Hennock, Honiton, Kentisbeare, Luppitt, Membury, Salcombe Regis, Silvertown, Sidbury, Sidmouth, the Silvertown, Thorncombe, Tiverton.
16. Ian W Gowers, 'Puritanism in the County of Devon Between 1570 and 1641' (Unpublished Exeter M.A. Thesis, 1970) pp.48-102. D[evon] R[ecord] O[ffice] Chanter C.42 p.261. C[onsistory] C[ourt] C.C.181/199/34, n.d. (c.1625). C.764, 22 Oct 1630. C.C. 178/196, 14 Nov 1627. J T Cliffe,

- The Puritan Gentry* (1984), p.191. A G Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (Oxford, 1934), pp.274-5. DRO. L[oughwood] M[eeeting] H[ouse] B[look] pp.2-5.
17. R N Worth, 'Puritanism in Devon and the Exeter Assembly' *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 9 (1877). p.253. Matthews, *op.cit* pp.16, 20, 80, 93, 121, 191, 272, 306, 424, 440-41, 456, 494, 518, 530, 550, 567. Howard, *op.cit.*, pp. 11, 21-2. G Lyon Turner, *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, 3 Vols. (1911-4), 2, p.1145. *Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter D.N.B.), 22 Vols. (Oxford, 1921-22), 9, p. 814. L[ambeth] P[alace] L[ibrary] Ms. 639 fol. 185. DRO. P[rincipal] R[egistry] 362-364/33/9; PR. D/6/61.
18. For Baptists see R L Greaves and R Zaller (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*, 3 Vols. (Brighton, 1982, 1984), 1 p. 11; 3 p.242. W T Whitely, 'Loughwood and Honiton, 1650-1800', *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, 2 (1910-1), pp. 130-1. J P Russell, 'The Loughwood Meeting House and the founding at Dalwood of the Baptist Church at Kilmington and Loughwood', *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, XXVII (1959-60) p.54. DRO. LMHB. pp. 1-3, 8. For Quakers see W J M Thomasson, 'The Friends of East Devon and Their Meetings 1654-1928', (Typescript, Exeter University Library, 1928), p. 3.
19. J Simmons, 'Some letters from Bishop Ward of Exeter 1663-1667', *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, XXI (1940-1) p.226. Substantial traditions of puritanism existed at the major centres of rebellion; Axmouth (1590-1637, 1648-70), Colyton (c.1622-62), Honiton (1634-62), Seaton (1612-56), Luppitt (1639/40-45, 1648-62), Northleigh (1621-50) and Tiverton (1622-62), while briefer ministries occurred at Membury (1636-38), Combpyne (1637-38), and Kilmington (1630-38, 1662).
20. Matthews, *op.cit.*, p.325.
21. *Ibid.*, pp.272, 306, 440-1, 452, 456, 530. DRO. PR. 362-364/33/9. D.N.B. Vol. 9, p.814.
22. Matthews, *op.cit.*, p.16; Howard, *op.cit.*, p.11.
23. Matthews, *op.cit.*, pp.191, 424, 518, 550, 567. DRO. PR. 362-364/33/9; P.R. D/6/61. Lyon Turner, *Original Records* . . . , Vol. 2, pp.76, 1145.
24. DRO. PR. 362-364/33/9.
25. A. Gordon, *Freedom after Ejection* (Manchester, 1917), p.30.
26. Matthews, *op.cit.*, pp.20, 80, 269, 494, 497, 506. J T Cliffe, *The Puritan Gentry Besieged, 1650-1700* (1993), p.180.
27. Thomas Risdon, *Chorographical Description or Survey of the County of Devon* (1811), pp.25-7, 39. B D Henning, *The History of Parliament The House of Commons 1660-1689*, 3 Vols. (1983), 1 pp.268-9; 2, pp. 144-6, 235, 269-271. M F Keeler, *The Long Parliament 1640-1641* (Philadelphia, 1954), pp.165-7. Cliffe, *Puritan Gentry* . . . , pp.31, 92, 240. D R Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics In England 1661-1689* (New Brunswick, 1969), pp. 387-8, 457-8. Matthews, *op.cit.*, pp.139, 452. A G Matthews, *Walker Revised* (Oxford, 1948), p.111. W J Harte, 'Ecclesiastical and religious affairs in Exeter 1640-62' *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 69 (1937) p.313. J Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714* (Oxford, 1891-92), 1, pp. 50, 348. Worth, *op.cit.*, p. 283. Keeler, *op.cit.*, p.404 and Henning, *op.cit.*, Vol. 3 pp.787-90 trace through four generations of staunchly puritan and nonconformist Yonges. See also G Roberts (ed.), *Diary of Walter Yonge Esq* (1848), p.86; Risdon, *op.cit.*, pp. 17-20, 21-2, 23-5, 27-31.

28. DRO. Q[uarter] S[essions], Constables Presentments, QS.15/86/11, Colton, 7 May 1684; QS.15/86/9, Colyton, 7 March 1683/4; QS.15/177/8, Ottery St Mary, 2 September 1685.
29. Matthews, *op.cit.*, pp 191, 554. DRO. PR. 362-364/33/9.
30. For a recent discussion which evaluates much of the literature on this issue, see M Spufford (ed.), *The World of Rural Dissenters 1520-1725* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.40-5.
31. This point is based on papers of the Dymond family of Axminster in the possession of Mr James Dymond of Stoke Canon, to whom I am grateful for drawing the documents to my attention and for access. K G Ponting, *The Woollen Industry of South West England* (Bath, 1971), p.32. Peter J Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (1962), p.61. D Seward, 'The Devonshire cloth industry in the early seventeenth century', in R Burt (ed.), *Industry and Society in the South-West* (Exeter, 1970), pp.33, 38, 41-6. Cf. W G Hoskins, 'The rise and decline of the serge industry in the South-west of England with special reference to the eighteenth century', (Unpublished London M.Sc. Thesis, 1929), Appendix, Map 1; Hoskins does not include the west Dorset, south-east Devon clothing area.
32. Keith Wrightson, 'Aspects of social differentiation in rural England c1580-1660', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 5 (1977), pp.34-5. Joan Thirsk, 'Industries in the countryside', in F J Fisher (ed.), *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England*, in Honour of R.H.Tawney (Cambridge, 1961), pp.72-84. J Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales IV 1500-1640* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 425-6, 429. D C Coleman, *Industry in Tudor and Stuart England* (1975), pp. 23-9.
33. H S A Fox, 'Field systems of east and south Devon. Part 1: East Devon', *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 104 (1972), pp.124-5.
34. See comments by local justices about the high level of poverty in the parish in 1674: DRO. PR. A/2663, 7 June 1674. The 1674 Hearth Tax returns indicate that 53% of the householders in the parish were paupers; this is one of the highest levels of poverty in the county. T L Stoaate, *Devon Hearth Tax Return Lady Day 1674* (Bristol, 1982).
35. Some of the causes and demographic consequences of the state of the economy in Colyton can be traced in the classics of demographic history: Pamela Sharpe, *Population and Society in an East Devon Parish, Reproducing Colyton 1540-1840* (Exeter, 2002); E A Wrigley, 'Family limitation in pre-industrial England', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series XIX (1966); *idem.*, 'Mortality in pre-industrial England: the example of Colyton, Devon over three centuries', *Daedalus* (1968); *idem.*, 'The changing occupational structure of Colyton over two centuries', *Local Population Studies*, 18 (1977); *idem.*, *Population and History* (1969), pp.81-9; R S Schofield, 'An anatomy of an epidemic: Colyton, November 1645 to November 1646' in *The Plague Reconsidered, Local Population Studies Supplement* (1977); David Levine, *Family Formation in an Age of Nascent Capitalism* (Cambridge, 1977), pp.103-111. The data gathered for this study adds some points to the debate on the causes of the population crisis at Colyton. The omission of the far south east of Devon from Hoskins' map of the Devon serge industry cannot be read as evidence that such industry did not exist there: Levine, *op.cit.*, pp. 107-8. Serge-makers are mentioned among residents of Thorncombe in the 1680s, and a Thorncombe clothier was providing wool to parishioners of

- Luppitt, and 'setting some in the parish to spinning' in the 1670s: DRO. Quarter Sessions. Conventicle Act Prosecutions and Papers QS. 74/39/8, 8 December 1684; Churchwardens' Presentments Box 8, nd. [1671]. The south-east therefore did not miss out on the introduction of Irish wool or the 'new draperies'. It may be, however, that due to the devastating loss of population in the mid-seventeenth century plague epidemic, or for some other structural reason, Colyton lagged far behind in the switch to the 'new draperies' in contrast to the neighbouring parishes. Hence producing the crisis in the economy that resulted in the extreme level of poverty and the remarkable, and now extensively reconstructed, pattern of fertility and mortality.
36. For a discussion of the proportion of occupations in the general population, based on Gregory King's 1688 survey, see P Lindert, 'English occupations 1670-1811', *Journal of Economic History*, XL (1980). Cf. Wrigley, 'Changing Occupational Structure of Colyton' especially pp.10-3.
 37. Clifton, *op.cit.*, pp.253-61.
 38. The numbers engaged in the cloth industry, especially in the rural areas, were probably under represented since some of the husbandmen and yeomen may have engaged in by-employment in cloth. Amongst the Monmouth rebels from Devon there were five yeoman-clothiers and a yeoman-mercator. Joan Thirsk, 'Seventeenth Century Agriculture and Social Change' in *idem.*, (ed.), 'Land, Church and People', *Agricultural History Review* 18, (Supplement) (Reading, 1970), pp. 171-2. D C Coleman, *The Economy of England 1450-1750* (Oxford, 1977), pp.69-71, 75-78. *Idem.*, *Industry in Tudor and Stuart England* (1975), pp.23-9.
 39. M G Davies, *The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956), p.109.
 40. Joan Thirsk and J P Cooper (eds.), *Seventeenth Century Economic Documents* (Oxford, 1972), p.212. Seward, *op.cit.*, pp.41-6.
 41. *Ibid.*, pp.43-9. Hoskins, thesis, pp.3-4.
 42. *Ibid.*, p.3. Seward, *op.cit.*, pp. 43-46. Joyce Youings, *Tucker's Hall Exeter* (Exeter, 1968), pp.73, 91. D C Coleman, 'An innovation and its diffusion: the "New Draperies"', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, XXII (1969), p.428.
 43. Coleman, *Industry . . .*, pp.25, 28-9.
 44. R H Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Harmondsworth, 1938), pp. 202-207. Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (1964), pp.133-4. Brian Manning, *English People and the English Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1978), pp.133-4, 168-80, esp. 177-80. Seward, *op.cit.*, pp.46-7.
 45. Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants. The Church in English Society 1559-1625* (Oxford, 1982), p.247. Alan Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce', in Thirsk (ed.) *Agrarian History . . .*, pp.557-8, 562. Alan Everitt, *Change in the Provinces: the Seventeenth Century* (Leicester, 1969), pp. 38-43. M. Frearson, 'Communications and the continuity of dissent in the Chiltern Hundreds during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in Spufford, *Rural Dissenters . . .*, pp.275-7, 285.
 46. Clifton, *op.cit.*, p.265.
 47. Stoate, *loc.cit.*
 48. Clifton, *op.cit.*, p.267.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 67–72. Earle, *op.cit.*, pp. 47, 49. Bryan Little, *The Monmouth Episode* (1956), pp. 74–9.
50. The few examples of plotting and plotters in post-Restoration Devon can be traced in Richard L Greaves' trilogy, *Deliver Us from Evil The Radical Underground in Britain, 1660–1663* (Oxford, 1986), *Enemies Under His Feet. Radicals and Nonconformists in Britain, 1664–1677* (Stanford, 1990) and *Secrets of the Kingdom British Radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688–89* (Stanford, 1992). See also B S Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (1972), and Greaves and Zaller, *op.cit.* Plotters with links to south-east Devon include a group of General Baptists comprising the Monmouth rebel Thomas Parsons of Membury, Edward and William Radden of Offwell, Captain Humphrey Spurway of Tiverton, and the 'old Oliverian' John Trowde (or Rowde) of Upottery. *Calendar of State Papers Domestic*, Charles II, XXIII, pp. 357, 435, 463–64, 476, 491, 493–7. Lt.-Colonel William Allen and Quarter-Master-General. John Vernon had been founders of the Baptist congregation at Dalwood and Kilmington, and had married daughters of William Doyley, one of its senior members. DRO. Loughwood Meeting House Book.
51. Jackson, thesis, Chs. 4 and 7.
52. Based on a study of prosecutions in the records of the Devon Quarter Sessions, the Diocese of Exeter and the Archdeaconry of Exeter: DRO. Quarter Sessions Order Books, Q.S.1/10–14; Constables' Presentments QS.15; Conventicle Act Prosecutions and Papers QS.74. Vicar General's Court Act Books, C.765, C.770, C.771, C.772, C.757; Churchwardens' Presentments and Certificates C.C.165. E[xeter] C[athedral] L[ibrary] A[rchdeaconry of] E[xeter], Ex Officio Court Act Books, A.E.1/1–4.
53. Howard, *op.cit.*, p. 77.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. DRO. QS.74/39/9, 16 July 1684; QS.74/39/8, 19 October 1684; QS.74/3/4, 22 October 1684; QS.74/28, 7 December 1684; QS.1/12 Michaelmas 1684, 16 July 1684, 12 October 1684, 7 December 1684.
59. Earle, *op.cit.*, pp. 196–201. Churchwardens' presentments list a number of suspicious absentees from church during September and October 1685. These include some listed by Wigfield as Monmouth rebels, but also an additional seven from Axminster, two from Southleigh and twenty-two from Bampton, who are not in any of the Monmouth lists: ECL. AE. 1/4, 24 August 1685, Axminster; A.E. 1/4, 23 October 1685, Bampton; DRO. QS.15/208, 19 August 1685, Southleigh.
60. Howard, *op.cit.*, p. 80.
61. Jackson, thesis, pp. 120–2. Barry Reay, 'The authorities and early Restoration Quakerism' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XXXIV (1983). C.E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660–1688* (London, 1931), pp. 144–5. Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration A Political and Religious History of England and Wales 1658–1667* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 208–2.
62. Watts, *op.cit.*, pp. 192–3.
63. Wigfield, *op.cit.*, p. 137. DRO. QS.74/7; QS.74/17/4.

64. DRO. QS.74/17/3.
65. P[ublic] RO. Quaker Registers, R.G.6/1033; R.G.6/1545.
66. William Brinsdon was described as a Quaker when he was cited to the Exeter episcopal court for absence from church in 1674: DRO. C.771, 5 March 1674. He was also prosecuted in the archdeaconry court for absence from church in 1681: ECL. AE.1/3, 19 September 1681. John Newberry appears as a member of the Membury Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends from 1677 onwards: DRO. Quaker Registers, 874D/M49. He was also fined £5 as part of the fine levied on the preacher at a Quaker conventicle at Membury in 1684: DRO. QS.74/28, 8 December 1684. William Woolridge was fined for attendance at a Quaker meeting in Cullompton in 1680: DRO. QS.74/17/3, 25 April 1680. Wigfield, *op.cit.*, p.21, has identified at least one other Quaker participant in the rebellion, Israel Bryant of Glastonbury.
67. Earle, *op.cit.*, pp.207–2. See Clifton, *op.cit.*, pp.266–8, for arguments regarding the youth of rebels, although the evidence offered is far from conclusive.
68. Jackson, thesis p. 341. Watts, *op.cit.*, p. 360. Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England 1500–1720* (1993), p.210. For an alternative interpretation of the 'feminisation of nonconformity', see *ibid.*, pp.185, 204–8 and Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650–1850. The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (1998), pp.210–2, 216–7.
69. PRO. R.G.6/1033, Cullompton; R.G.6/1347, Topsham; R.G.6/1480, Plymouth; R.G.6/1545, Burlescombe; R.G.6/1596, West Alvington.
70. DRO. QS.15/238/7, 28 November 1684. E.C.L. A.E. 1/3, 19 September 1682, 19 January 1682/3. In 1697 his house in Uplyme was licensed as a meeting house: DRO. QS.1/13 Easter 1697.
71. DRO. CP. B/13, 8 September 1665; C.770, 8 January 1665/6; QS.15/238/2, 4 February [1683/4?]; QS.15/238/3, 7 March 1683/4; QS.15/238/4, 5 June 1684; QS.15/238/5, 3 July 1684; QS.15/238/6, 30 October 1684; QS.15/238/7, 28 November 1684; QS.15/238/8, 2 January 1684/5; QS.15/238/9, 4 February 1684/5; QS.15/238/10, 10 July 1685; QS.15/238/11, 19 August 1685. ECL. AE. 1/3, 19 September 1682, 13 January 1682/3; AE. 1/4, 25 October 1684. In 1682 he was imprisoned for refusing the Oath of Allegiance: DRO. QS.1/12, Michaelmas 1682 Gaol Calendar. His wife, Bathsheba was also fined four times for absence from church during 1684 and 1685. She was excommunicated in 1684: DRO. QS.15/238/7, 28 November 1684; QS.15/238/8, 2 January 1684/5; QS.15/238/9, 4 February 1684/5; QS.15/238/11, 19 August 1685. ECL. AE. 1/4, 25 October 1684.
72. Wigfield, *op.cit.*, p. 191.
73. *Ibid.*
74. The latter figure is based on the 'Compton Census' of 1675. Whiteman, *loc.cit.*
75. Jackson, thesis, pp.80–108.
76. Based on a study of the Presbyterian registers of Nicholas Sherwill and Thomas Martin of Plymouth and the Cross Meeting, Moretonhampstead: PRO., Nonconformist Registers, RG4/4091; RG4/444.
77. Clifton, *op.cit.*, pp. 265, 273.