

**THE 1641 - 42 PROTESTATION
OF
MIDDLESEX**



Oliver Cromwell outside the Houses of Parliament.

The oath

In 1641 Parliament decreed that ALL males over the age of 18 should swear an “Oath of Allegiance” to the Protestant Church of England, Parliament and the King Charles. Although many parts of England have no record of these returns, the returns for Middlesex include 16,600 names, which it is estimated are 80% of the total returns due for the county.

The following is the oath which each male had to swear:-

I,....., do, in the Presence of Almighty God, promise, vow, and protest to maintain and defend, as far as lawfully I may, I with my Life, Power, and Estate, the true Reformed Protestant Religion, expressed in the Doctrine of the Church of England, against all Popery and Popish Innovations, within this Realm, contrary to the same Doctrine, and according to the Duty of my Allegiance, to His Majesty's Royal Person, Honour, and Estate, as also the Power and Privileges of Parliaments, the lawful Rights and Liberties of the Subjects, and every Person that maketh this Protestation, in whatsoever he shall do in the lawful Pursuance of the same; and to my power, and as far as lawfully I may, I will oppose and by all good Ways and Means endeavour to bring to condign Punishment all such as shall, either by Force, Practice, Counsels, Plots, Conspiracies, or otherwise, do any Thing to the contrary of any Thing in this present Protestation contained; and further, that I shall, in all just and honourable Ways, endeavour to preserve the Union and Peace betwixt the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland: and neither for Hope, Fear, nor other Respect, shall relinquish this Promise, Vow, and Protestation."

The Returns

The Protestation Returns are held by the Parliamentary Archives at the House of Lords. Middlesex is held under ref, HL/PO/JO/10/99. The Society has transcribed these records from these originals, where they are now searchable by members through our website (www.west-middlesex-fhs.org.uk).

The Protestation of Middlesex threw up a few interesting speculations which may help the family history researchers with their task.

The smaller parishes would seem to have had the Oath taken in the local church and probably when the parishioners were seated in their usual pews. This gives us an idea as to the friends and relatives sitting around them, and in the case of the unmarried, where the future bride's family may have come from.

Stepney, in the east end of the County, had the largest population and most of these were fishermen. The way that the Local Constable carried out his task appears to have been by walking down each street and recording who was in and who was "At Sea" and the grouping of the latter appears to indicate the men who shared a boat at sea (i.e., fishing in the Thames Estuary) as well as the group of men who probably used the same boat when the others came home.

Information in the Returns

In the significant majority of cases the Constable or Minister who was filing the returns made out a list of all those who had taken the oath, and then also stated on the return that this was all the males aged 18 or over in their parish, with none refusing to take the Protestation. In practice it wasn't only men who swore the oath; in the parishes of Bromley and Bow it appears that essentially all the women took the oath as well as the men.

There were various reasons given for those who did not take the oath. In the case of Limehouse and Ratcliff in Stepney it has already been mentioned that many were recorded as being 'At sea', which it can be assumed was an entirely legitimate reason for not taking the oath. There were several other reasons given, as follows: Sick (only 2), Out of Town (5), In Country (2), Absent from Parish (1), Absent on earnest occasion (3), and the questionable Absent but will take oath (3).

Limehouse in Stepney, which had many of those who were 'At sea' also listed 72 men as 'Summoned but did not make an appearance'. Overall there were 100 men simply listed as 'Did not take the oath', it being unclear whether they did so from lack of attending when summoned, or in fact by refusal to take it. As to direct refusals, and thereby qualifying as recusants there were just 31 in total.

For the most part the names were simply listed, with one hand doing all the writing; but there clearly were people who preferred/were allowed to sign their names on the Return, and where this has occurred this information is given under Note on Person, as also when the individual has had his name listed, but has then made his mark on the listing as well.

Note on Person is used to provide any further information on the individual as listed on the Return. The information includes detail of those who administered the Protestation in their area, and who usually also signed it. These particularly included the Vicar, or Minister, the Curate, and usually several Churchwardens, Constables, and Collectors for the Poor.

Notes on Person also mentions the many cases of Senior and Junior, The elder and The younger, Esquire and Gent, the occasional Sir and Knight, and also the occasional use of Mr. There are some occupations, but not many, and with quite a few identified as Servant to their particular Master.

The county of Middlesex in 1641



This Map, dated 1573, is reproduced by kind permission of the London Metropolitan Archives, and is taken from Joannes Norden's *Speculum Britanniae* and was GLC publication No 170. The map is shown again on page 6 with the names of the places referred to in the Protestations highlighted.

Note also that the map will enlarge if you use the PDF zoom option.

Summary of the Returns for Middlesex

The surviving Protestation Returns for Middlesex are archived at the House of Lords as per the following list. The archive references are HL/PO/JO/10/1/99/No, with No as indicated below:

No	Title	Pages	No Men	No Women	Took oath	At sea	Didn't take it	Refused
1	Edmonton Hundred – Edmonton	8	534		534			
2	Edmonton Hundred – South Mimms	3	286		286			
3	Edmonton Hundred – Enfield	10	501		500			1
4	Edmonton Hundred – Monken Hadley	3	94		94			
5	Edmonton Hundred – Tottenham	5	257		257			
6	Elthorne Hundred – Certificate of the JPs	5	83		80		3	
7	Elthorne Hundred – New Brentford	2	136		136			
8	Elthorne Hundred – Cowley	1	26		26			
9	Elthorne Hundred – Cranford2=	2	44		44			
10	Elthorne Hundred – West Drayton	1	79		79			
11	Elthorne Hundred – Greenford	2	82		82			
12	Elthorne Hundred – Perivale	2	23		23			
13	Elthorne Hundred – Hanwell	2	22		22			
14	Elthorne Hundred – Harefield	1	159		159			
15	Elthorne Hundred – Harlington	1	72		72			
16	Elthorne Hundred – Harmondsworth	2	147		144		3	
17	Elthorne Hundred – Hayes	4	176		176			
18	Elthorne Hundred – Hillingdon	3	322		322			
19	Elthorne Hundred – Ickenham	1	56		56			
20	Elthorne Hundred – Northolt	2	90		90			
21	Elthorne Hundred – Norwood	2	143		139		4	
22	Elthorne Hundred – Ruislip	3	256		256			
23	Elthorne Hundred – Uxbridge	3	288		288			
24	Part of Ossulston Hundred – Certificate of the JPs	1	35		35			
25	Part of Ossulston Hundred – Edgware	2	106		106			
26	Part of Ossulston Hundred – Harrow	4	422		422			
27	Part of Ossulston Hundred – Hendon	3	337		337			
28	Part of Ossulston Hundred – Kingsbury	1	60		60			
29	Part of Ossulston Hundred – Pinner	2	194		194			
30	Part of Ossulston Hundred – Stanmore	2	88		88			
31	Part of Ossulston Hundred – Whitchurch	2	96		96			
32	Isleworth Hundred – Heston	3	159		159			
33	Isleworth Hundred – Hounslow	1	56		56			
34	Isleworth Hundred – Isleworth	4	412		397		26	2
35	Isleworth Hundred – Twickenham	2	249		249			
36	Isleworth Hundred – Return of officer	1	13		13			
37	Ossulston Division – Finchley	5	252		252			
38	Ossulston Division – Friern Barnet	2	83		83			
39	Ossulston Division – Hampstead	3	187		187			
40	Ossulston Division – Hornsey	1	121		121			
40	Ossulston Division – Highgate	1	86		86			
41	Ossulston Division – Islington	6	432		428		1	3
41	Ossulston Division – Stoke Newington	2	77		71			6
42	Ossulston Division – Cripplegate	56	1528		1526			2
43	Ossulston Division – Shoreditch	11	1061		1061			
44	Ossulston Division – Clerkenwell	17	1172		1086		75	11
45	Ossulston Division – St Sepulchre	40	916		913			3
46	Ossulston Division – Willesden	3	156		156			

No	Title	Pages	No Men	No Women	Took oath	At sea	Didn't take it	Refused
47	Ossulston Hundred, Tower Division – Cert of JPs	1	1		1			
48	Ossulston Division – Bromley	3	102	96	198			
49	Ossulston Division – Limehouse, Stepney	12	746		525	217	4	
50	Ossulston Division – Stepney and Hamlets	39	2247		1920	252	72	3
51	Ossulston Division – Bow	6	175	192	367			
52	Spelthorne Hundred – Ashford	1	43		43			
53	Spelthorne Hundred – Bedfont	1	81		81			
54	Spelthorne Hundred – Feltham	1	63		63			
55	Spelthorne Hundred – Hampton	2	187		187			
56	Spelthorne Hundred – Hanworth	1	51		51			
57	Spelthorne Hundred – Laleham	1	71		71			
58	Spelthorne Hundred – Littleton	1	32		32			
59	Spelthorne Hundred – Shepperton	1	54		54			
60	Spelthorne Hundred – Staines	3	227		227			
61	Spelthorne Hundred – Stanwell	4	180		180			
62	Spelthorne Hundred – Sunbury	2	110		110			
63	Spelthorne Hundred – Teddington	1	77		77			
	TOTALS	328	16616	388	15543	469	188	31

The places for which returns exist

When the map of 1573, already shown, has the place names of the surviving Protestant Returns written upon it, it serves as a useful finding aid. It also makes it fairly easy to see the gap where Returns must have existed, but which are no longer to be found. It is essentially one large area including the following place names, from west to east: Gunnersbury, Acton, Paddington, Kensington, Brompton, Hammersmith, Chelsea, Knightsbridge, and Westminster.

In the 17th century these places, except for Westminster, formed the Kensington and Holborn divisions of Ossulstone Hundred, while Westminster had its own area called the City and Liberty of Westminster.

Note that the map will enlarge if you use the PDF zoom option.

