

# Puritans and Roundheads

*The Harleys of Brampton Bryan  
and the outbreak of the English Civil War*



Jacqueline Eales

## PURITANS AND ROUNDHEADS

On first publication, *Puritans and Roundheads* was runner up in the prestigious 1991 Royal Historical Society Whitfield Prize Competition. This is a welcome reprint of Dr Jackie Eales' acclaimed classic work on the Harley family and the outbreak of the English Civil Wars in Herefordshire. Her book is based on the private papers of the Harley family of Brampton Bryan and in particular on the letters of Lady Brilliana Harley (1598-1643), which contain an unparalleled account of the development of civil war parties in an English county. The Harleys were the only major gentry family in Herefordshire to support Parliament against the King during the Civil Wars. Sir Robert Harley KB (1579-1656) was a prominent member of the Long Parliament until his exclusion at Pride's Purge in 1648. His wife, Lady Brilliana, was also a staunch supporter of Parliament and led the successful defence of Brampton Castle against a royalist siege in the summer of 1643.

This study is much more than a family history. The Harleys were in contact with a wide circle of puritan clergy and laity throughout the English and Welsh marcher counties, the Midlands and London. The Harley papers are used here to demonstrate the growth of conflicting religious and political ideologies in the early Stuart period and to show how those competing ideologies contributed to the outbreak of a civil war in 1642. The role of Lady Harley as the chief representative of the Harley family in the county in 1640-43 also sheds light on the role of women during the civil wars.

Dr Jackie Eales is Reader in History at Canterbury Christ Church University College. She is an expert on the English Civil Wars, Puritanism and Women's History in the Tudor and Stuart period. Her other publications include *Women in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Routledge, 1998).



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