

# **GREAT STAUGHTON AND ITS PEOPLE**

**HOW A HUNTINGDONSHIRE VILLAGE LEFT ITS MARK ON ENGLAND'S  
HISTORY**

by

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## Valentine Walton: curriculum vitae of a regicide

As one of the fifty-nine signatories of King Charles I's death warrant, Valentine Walton is, unsurprisingly, not one of English history's heroes; indeed, in his home village of Great Staughton, there are no statues or memorial plaques celebrating his life. He was the comrade-in-arms (and brother-in-law) of Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector. From the beginning of his political career, when he was imprisoned for non-payment of tax, Valentine Walton was a staunch Parliamentarian who believed that the power of the monarch should be curtailed by elected members of parliament representing the views of their constituents. As such, he was one of the architects of Europe's first revolution. He was also a regicide, a signatory of Charles I's death warrant, one of the killers of the king.

Valentine Walton was born c. 1592, the son of Nicholas Walton, a member of the lower gentry in Huntingdonshire, and at the age of twelve, in 1604, he inherited the Manor of Staughton from his grandfather's cousin, Sir George Wauton. The young Valentine seems to have been a ward of Sir Oliver Cromwell, *amicus optimus* of George Wauton and spent his childhood at the Cromwell's family seat at Hinchingsbrooke House in Huntingdon. At the age of twenty-five, in 1617, Valentine Walton married Margaret Cromwell, sister of the future Protector. The marriage registers of St John's Church, Huntingdon recorded the occasion: *Anno Domini 1617, Mr. Valentyne Walton, and Miss Margaret Cromwell, marry'd the XXth day of June.*

Valentine Walton was not the only heir of George Wauton and in 1624, he received a rude awakening when his inheritance was challenged by one John Throgmorton, who took illegal possession of Cretingsbury with the help of a band of armed men, described in contemporary accounts as 'Papists' and 'divers foreigners'. Prompted by Walton, the sheriff of Huntingdon intervened and with the help of a warrant from the Chancery in London attempted to wrest possession of the manor from Throgmorton's band. A violent struggle ensued in which several men were killed or wounded. The sheriff issued a writ and Throgmorton promptly abandoned the manor in a ploy to mislead the forces of the law. On 25 May 1624, Throgmorton and his band of armed men again took possession of the manor. When his servant, Allabone, was accused of killing one of the sheriff's men, Throgmorton refused to surrender him to the officers of the law. It took a lengthy appeal to the Privy Council and the House of Commons before Walton was able to regain his inheritance.

### Walton's first steps to power

For eleven years King Charles had refused to summon Parliament and his spendthrift ways, particularly his penchant for collecting European art, went unchecked. In 1639, the so-called Bishops' Wars broke out, an ugly conflict brought about by Charles' wish to bring the Scottish church into line with its English counterpart. Charles needed money to fund this venture and his solution was to re-introduce a tax known as Ship Money, originally levied on coastal towns to provide funds to protect their coastline. To extend the tax to inland areas was considered an affront by many, including Valentine Walton, who on refusing to pay the tax, amounting to 2s 6d, was promptly gaoled. Not only did his sentence help to burnish his increasingly radical support of Parliament, it raised his political profile to the extent that on 10 October 1640 he was elected

Member of Parliament for Huntingdonshire, defeating a candidate who had the formidable backing of the now elderly (and staunch Royalist) Sir Oliver Cromwell.

In the early years of the parliament, Walton 'a private obscure gentleman' as one observer described him, sat together with his brother-in-law on a number of committees, mostly concerned to ensure the preservation of 'the true Reformed Protestant Religion in His Majesty's Dominions established'.

### **The affair of the Cambridge plate**

By 1642, the country was moving inexorably towards civil war. Charles was again in need of money to fund the coming campaign. A useful source of funds was the silver plate held by the Cambridge Colleges and from his stronghold in York, the king demanded that the plate, valued at £20,000, be delivered to him. Parliament was equally determined to thwart the king's plans and delegated Oliver Cromwell to take the necessary steps to prevent the plate falling into the king's hands. Realising that he would need reinforcements, Cromwell called upon his brother-in-law, Valentine Walton, to raise a militia in Huntingdonshire. Walton encountered stiff resistance from his constituents. A certain John Merrill wrote to Lord Mandeville in Kimbolton trenchantly summarising the situation: 'the town of Huntingdon is so disaffected to Capt. Walton, that when he sent out his warrants to raise 200 of the "train bands" ... very few of the train men would come at time.' To add to Walton's discomfort, Mr Heyton, one of the Chief Constables of the county, informed Walton in no uncertain terms that 'he would not obey the Parliament for he had received a warrant from the king'. Even worse was the reaction of Sir Oliver Cromwell's son Henry. With a troop of fifty well-armed men, flanked by horse and equipped with musket, Henry Cromwell swept through Huntingdon one Saturday morning to obstruct Captain Walton's militia in their attempt to seize the plate. He was not successful.

Matters came to a head on 15 August 1642. The conclusive battle, or more likely skirmish, that secured the plate for Cromwell and Walton took place at 'Lowler Hedges, betwixt Cambridge and Huntingdon'. The spectacle attracted a huge band of Cambridge citizens, keen to witness the action. There were marching men, brandishing banners and beating drums, troops of men equipped with musket and pike and a procession of cavalry. At the head of his troops 'a disorderly Band of Peasants on Foot' was Oliver Cromwell and his son, also Oliver; riding by his side were Valentine Walton and his son, also Valentine, and together they prevented the plate from reaching the king. There were casualties amongst the spectators: Richard Langley, a 76-year-old from Hemingford Grey, prosecuted for being present at the incident, pleaded that his only 'delinquency' was being a spectator as the two sides fought over the spoils.

### **Outbreak of the first Civil War**

The first major battle of the Civil War was fought at Edgehill on 23 October 1642. In the summer of that year Captain Walton had raised and commanded a troop of horse which joined the earl of Essex's Army, but he arrived too late to play any significant role in what turned out to be an inconclusive engagement. However, he had the misfortune to be captured by Royalist forces and was imprisoned in Oxford (a Royalist stronghold) in the care of the Master of Balliol College, Thomas Laurence. Walton was forced to endure his Oxford sojourn until July 1643, when the *House of Commons Journal* reported: '8 Julii, 1643, Exchange of Prisoners ... That my Lord General shall be desired to exchange Sir Tho. Lunsford, Colonel, Prisoner in Warwick Castle, for Captain Walton, Prisoner at Oxon.' Walton enjoyed a comfortable captivity, so much so that years later he

showed his gratitude for the treatment he had received by granting Laurence the advowson of the church at Somersham.

Shortly after his release from captivity, Walton was again in action to counter a Royalist advance on Stamford. The Royalist garrison refused to surrender until a show of arms from Cromwell brought a swift change of heart. Cromwell ordered Captains Walton, Dodson and Disbrow into the fray. Captain Dodson was first, quickly wounded and dragged from his horse. He was rescued by Captain Walton and together they fell upon the Royalist troops, killing fifty of their number and routing the rest.

### **Battle of King's Lynn**

In September 1643, Captain Walton informed Parliament of Royalist plans to surprise King's Lynn and Crowland. The enemy, he reported, had 'an eye especially on the Isle of Ely'. This would have been disturbing news for Oliver Cromwell who had moved to Ely with his family in 1631. King's Lynn was a key strategic port, a vital supply route for food, weapons and ammunition and it was situated on the high road that connected it directly with London. It was a prime target for both Royalists and Parliamentarians. Although the town was held by Parliamentary forces, danger threatened from within from the considerable local sympathy for the Royalist cause. Walton, stationed in King's Lynn with his troops, began to organise the town's defences 'in putting the Isle of Ely — the south part — into a posture of defence, caused breastworks to be made upon other places, and all great boats upon the fresh rivers'. Leading the Royalist faction in the town was Sir Hamon l'Estrange, who, capitalising on the growing disaffection of many King's Lynn citizens, elected himself governor of the town, but cunningly allowed Walton to continue his defensive works. In August, in a daring attack bankrolled to the tune of £1,000 from l'Estrange's generous purse, the Royalist faction seized the now strongly defended port.

### **Captain Walton, governor of King's Lynn**

The Parliamentarians could not afford to ignore the threat of not only King's Lynn but much of East Anglia falling to Royalist forces. A large force of 5,000 men, under the command of Edward Montagu, earl of Manchester, Walton's neighbour in Kimbolton, and Oliver Cromwell himself was despatched to quell the insurgency and retake the town. The Royalist publicity machine roared into action, proclaiming that the earl's men had 'as much hope of Heaven's gate as to enter Lynn'. Brute force, rather than a lengthy siege, was the Parliamentarians decided course of action. The bombardment by the Parliamentary canons began its work, causing panic amongst the population. Rev. Hinson, delivering his sermon in St Margaret's Church, was rudely interrupted by a canon shot crashing through the window; his congregation 'departed in a most confused manner ... some leaving their hats, some their books, and some their scarves'.

The Parliamentarians drew up their Horse and Foot regiment in the meadows before the town, then, 'with beating drums and sounding trumpets, as if we had been presently to march into the town', Colonel Russell, leading, with Captain Walton in the rear, marched on foot to the East Gate, at which point he was brusquely informed that the Great Gate could not be opened at night. It was a stalemate until a few brisk rounds from Walton's soldiers killed a number of the defenders and settled the issue. The regiments of Captain Walton and Colonel Russell entered the town, to a subdued reception from townspeople, fearful of what might ensue. The siege of King's Lynn ended on 16 September with an ultimatum from the earl of Manchester: 'if they surrender the town by Saturday nine in the morning, they shall be pardoned'. It was Captain Walton who effectively

assumed all the responsibilities of governor. Royalist sympathisers in the town were rounded up and placed under house arrest, guarded by soldiers.

### **Walton accused**

It was at this point that the Regiment of Foote was formed under the command of the newly promoted Colonel Valentine Walton. His conduct during the siege of the town led to him being accused of ordering the destruction of an otherwise undamaged alms-house and selling off the materials. He was also the beneficiary of the sum of £300 'towards finishing the Work at Lynne'. Walton's signature is to be found on numerous documents connected with the movement of goods, ammunition, grain and supplies and on the associated financial records. He signed himself Valentine Walton.

### **Death of Walton's son**

Marston Moor, one of the bloodiest engagements in the whole of the Civil War, was described by Thomas Carlyle in his biography of Cromwell, as 'the most enormous hurly-burly, of fire and smoke ... the end of which ... was four thousand one hundred and fifty bodies to be buried'. Parliamentary and Royalist forces clashed at Marston Moor on 2 July 1644 between seven and ten o'clock in the evening. Amongst the many fallen was Valentine Walton, the son of Colonel Walton.

His death prompted the famous consolatory letter from Oliver Cromwell to his brother-in-law, simultaneously reporting on the triumphant God-inspired outcome of the battle and breaking the news of the 20-year-old Walton's death. Cromwell had lost his own son Oliver (though not on the battlefield) and this must have been on his mind as he wrote his letter, expressing his heartfelt grief, but reminding his brother-in-law that his son's death was for the greater glory of the Puritan cause. 'You know my own trials this way ... Let this drink up your sorrow; seeing these are not feigned words to comfort you, but the thing is so real and undoubted a truth. Let this public mercy to the Church of God make you forget your private sorrow.' After these consolatory words, Cromwell gets to the heart of the matter; 'Sir, God hath taken away your eldest son by a cannon shot, it brake his leg, we were necessitated to have it cut off, wherof he died ... He was a gallant young man, exceeding gracious ... he was a precious young man, fit for God. ... You have cause to blesse the Lord, he is a glorious saint in heaven, wherein you ought exceedingly to rejoice.' Cromwell's eulogy concluded: 'Let this public mercy to the church of God make you to forget your private sorrow. The Lord be your strength, so prays your truly faithful and loving brother, Oliver Cromwell.'

The letter ends somewhat prosaically: 'My love to your daughter and my cousin Percevall, sister Desbrowe and all friends with you.' Comrades of the fallen soldier duly made their way to Great Staughton to offer their condolences to Valentine's mother on the loss of her son. Two years later, in 1646, Margaret Walton died.

### **A threat from Sir Hamon l'Estrange**

In December 1644, Colonel Walton had to face another Royalist threat as governor of King's Lynn when Sir Hamon l'Estrange, undeterred by his previous failure, entrusted his highly indebted, feckless son Sir Roger with a bold plot to secure the town for the king. The 'trusty and well-beloved Roger le Strange [*sic*]' managed to win over the king with a foolhardy plan to retake King's Lynn for the Royalists. A fatal flaw in Roger le Strange's plot was his failure to take into account that he would need money and men to succeed: 'he knew not where to get the men'. An old sea-dog, Thomas Leman, was recruited in the expectation of a generous reward: 'in case the work succeeded

it should be worth to him a thousand pounds'. Leman immediately alerted Colonel Walton who quickly put in place a plan to capture the miscreants. In the courtyard below the room where the plot was being hatched there was a sudden disturbance. Half a dozen 'poor old seamen', in reality Walton's men, suddenly erupted on the scene clamouring to be given alms and captured the plotters. Roger l'Estrange escaped the gallows thanks to the influence of his father.

The security of King's Lynn was a continuing preoccupation for Parliament. The *House of Commons Journal* recorded: 'Die Lunæ (Monday), 20 Septembris, 1647 Order for £1,500 for the Garrison of King's Lynn. It is this Day Ordered, by the Lords and Commons, That the Treasurers do forthwith pay unto Colonel Valentine Walton, Governor of King's Lynn, or his Assigns, the Sum of Fifteen hundred Pounds, upon Account, towards the present Relief of the said Garrison of King's Lynn.'

### **Army or Parliament?**

At the height of the first Civil War, in 1645, Parliament passed the Self-Denying Ordinance, forbidding any member of either House of Parliament from holding a position in the army, and Valentine Walton promptly relinquished his military duties. The Ordinance highlighted the cracks that were beginning to appear amongst the Parliamentary elite. A fervent supporter of the authority of Parliament, Walton, in common with many republicans, deeply distrusted the increasing power of the New Model Army.

### **The desperate flight of the monarch 1646**

By April 1646, things were going badly for the king in the west. Strongholds such as Bristol, Winchester and Basing House had been taken. Royalist forces fell back to Oxford and by the end of the year the king had been soundly defeated in the area and forced to hide out in this, his last redoubt. A desperate dilemma faced him: stay in Oxford and risk almost certain capture or death at the hands of General Thomas Fairfax or undertake a hazardous flight to safety through enemy territory. Flight was the only option and thus it was, that at three o'clock in the morning of 27 April 1646, Charles I, king of England, submitted to the demeaning disguise of a humble servant and prepared to set off on a hair-raising and eventful journey across England to seek the safety of his Scottish allies encamped at Newark. Parliamentary agents, prominent among them Valentine Walton, having got wind of the king's intention, redoubled their efforts to capture him. A decree of Parliament stated that 'the Committee of the Militia of London shall have power, and are hereby enjoined to ... apprehend and secure such as shall come with him, and to secure his [i.e. the king's] person'.

To reach Newark and safety, the king would have to negotiate his way through territory under the control of Valentine Walton who quickly raised a militia but he was too late. Valentine Walton and the recorder of King's Lynn, Miles Corbet, submitted a laconic account to Parliament of the affair: 'Sir, Since our coming to Lynn we have done what service we were able.' It was not enough; the king had slipped through their fingers.

### **The 'battle' of St Neots**

It was July 1648 and in Valentine Walton's bailiwick, St Neots, five miles from Cretingsbury, all was not well. The inhabitants of the town were not overly enthused with the disruption of the Civil War, which had largely left them untouched until the remnants of a Royalist army, led by the Earl of Holland and numbering about 100 men, entered St Neots. Colonel Scroop and his Parliamentary forces, encamped forty miles away in Hertford, quickly marched north to deal with

the threat. The ensuing battle was short and, for the Royalists, disastrous. Driven back into the Market Square, the battle, described in contemporary accounts as 'hot', was quickly over. Thus ended St Neots' sole military contribution to the Civil War.

### **Pride's Purge**

On 6 December 1648, Colonel Thomas Pride burst into the House of Commons and forcibly ejected those he arrogantly regarded as not only opponents of the army, but also as rather too keen on seeking peace with the king. Out of a total of around 470 MPs eligible to sit, about 180 were to be 'secluded' or prevented from entering Parliament. Some 45 MPs, regarded as extremists, were to be placed under arrest. The purged House of Commons came to be known as the Rump Parliament. Valentine Walton escaped the Purge, possibly because of his closeness to Oliver Cromwell, but the incident may have tested his loyalty to his brother-in-law.

### **The second Civil War**

A prelude to the outbreak of the second Civil War was a series of uprisings of 'malignants' (Royalist supporters) that took place throughout the eastern counties. The king was now a prisoner of Parliament in Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight, but he still enjoyed considerable popularity and prestige even in the Parliamentary heartlands of East Anglia. There was a violent uprising in Norwich, riots in Colchester and Bury St Edmunds, followed by serious unrest in Thetford. Finance to help quell the insurrection was urgently required and in February and March 1648 Huntingdonshire was to receive 'the monethly sum of Six hundred eighty-seven pounds, three shillings, five pence, three farthings'. The insurrections in support of the king were the last throw of the dice for the Royalists. On 20 January 1649, the king was brought to London to face trial.

### **'A wicked Design'**

The charges against the king were laid out in 'An Act of the Commons of England assembled in Parliament for erecting a High Court of Justice for trying and judging of Charles Stuart King of England, Jan. 29 1648: That Charles Stuart, ... hath had a wicked Design totally to subvert the antient and fundamental Laws and Liberties of this Nation.' Amongst the Commissioners and Judges appointed to judge the king were Oliver Cromwel [*sic*] and Valentine Wallton [*sic*]. Of the 135 Commissioners appointed fewer than half were to attend the hearings. One of the most dedicated was Valentine Walton, who attended all but five of the hearings, missing days 12, 17, 18, 19 and 24.

### **Sentence is pronounced**

On 26 January 1649, Charles I, King of England, was condemned to death by the court. The following day, Walton was present when the death sentence was pronounced. 'That the court being satisfied that he, Charles Stuart, was guilty of the crimes of which he had been accused ... to be put to death by the severing of his head from his body.' The death warrant was 'sealed and subscribed' by fifty-nine of the Commissioners, amongst whom was Valentine Walton. The official record tersely describes the event, unique in English history, of the killing of the lawful king of England: 'his Sacred Majestie was brought unto a Scaffold and there publicly murdered before the Gates of his owne Royall Pallace'.

Walton's signature is to be found at the foot of the fifth column of the death warrant. Throughout his career, in all the numerous official documents he had signed or where his presence was recorded, his name was given as Valentine Walton. Exceptionally, on the king's death warrant,

he signed himself, in an uncharacteristic scrawl, with the old form of his family name, Valentine Wauton. Did he hope that this modest orthographic subterfuge would shield him from any retribution which might be brought by those still loyal to the monarchy?

### **The triumph of Parliament**

A month after the execution of the king, other significant constitutional changes were passed in February 1649, when a Council of State was appointed. Its first act was to declare that the House of Commons was henceforth to be the single source of authority in the country, thus abolishing the monarchy and the House of Lords and thwarting at least for a time the power of the Army. Three months later, an Act was passed by the Council of State and the Rump Parliament declaring England and all its territories as a republic and a Commonwealth. Valentine Walton was one of thirty-seven councillors convened to the first meeting of the Council of State, chaired by Oliver Cromwell. Under the Commonwealth, Walton served on all five of the Councils of State appointed by Parliament in 1650, 1651 and 1652. In addition, he retained the position of Governor of King's Lynn and Croyland (Crowland).

### **The Protectorate**

On 16 December 1653, Oliver Cromwell dissolved the Rump Parliament and established the Protectorate, proclaiming himself Lord Protector. Valentine Walton grew increasingly uneasy at what he considered Cromwell's assumption of almost regal powers, 'king in all but name' and retired from public life for five years. Under Cromwell, Walton had refused all honours, preferring to remain faithful to his republican principles. Seemingly, this aroused Cromwell's suspicions as to Walton's loyalty to the cause and he had him carefully watched, fearful that he might instigate a revolt. The Lord Protector need not have worried. Valentine Walton found a more profitable use of his time in the marshlands of the Fens, familiar to him from his time in Kings Lynn.

### **Valentine Walton, 'adventurer'**

As early as 1650, Walton was turning his attention away from Parliament, focusing instead on a scheme for self-enrichment. A scheme was proposed by William, earl of Bedford to form a consortium of 'Adventurers' (venture capitalists) whose business mission was 'to drain the Great Levell of the Fennes'. When drained, rich arable land would thereby be reclaimed, which could be sold on for a vast profit. The engineer in charge of works was the Dutchman Sir Cornelius Vermuyden. Between 1650 and 1656 Valentine Walton was a keen participant in the scheme and his name features prominently on the many meetings of the Committee. On 29 September 1656, for example, Walton, along with some thirty other petitioners, made a claim before the Commissioners for 'dreyning of the Great Levell of the Fennes, extending itself into the counties of Northants, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincoln, Cambs, and Hunts'. The Commissioners found in favour of the applicants and Valentine Walton Esq. became the legitimate (and profitable) 'owner of 500 acres' of newly drained fens.

### **The end of a political career**

In September 1658, Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell died and was replaced by his son Richard who was unable to control serious discontent amongst the ranks of the army and the internecine squabbles in Parliament's ranks. The Protectorate collapsed, to be replaced by a Committee of Safety, which included Valentine Walton who had resumed his seat in the Rump Parliament. Across the North Sea, meanwhile, the son of Charles I watched the unfolding events with interest,

as the army and Parliament fought a bitter battle for control of government. Valentine Walton found himself caught between a rebellious army and the political manoeuvring of General Monck. Unconvinced that Walton was 'one of us', Monck summarily dismissed him from command, thus bringing to an abrupt end Valentine Walton's political career.

### **The restoration of Charles II**

King Charles II returned from exile in Holland, on 25 May 1660. He entered London on 29 May 1660, his thirtieth birthday, and was crowned at Westminster Abbey on 23 April 1661. Almost his first move was to instruct Parliament to bring an Act into force: 'for the Attainder of severall persons guilty of the horrid Murther of his late Sacred Majestie King Charles the first', committed, in the words of the Act 'by a party of wretched men desperately wicked and hardened in their impietie'. The Act then goes on to name the guilty men: 'And whereas Oliver Cromwell deceased ... Valentine Wauton ... (and some 50 other regicides) ... are notoriously knowne to have beene wicked and active Instruments in the prosecution and compassing that traiterous Murther of His late Majesty.'

The regicides' lands were to be immediately sequestrated: 'as followeth; viz. Lincolne, Valentine Walton, Manor of Crowland, part of the Manor of Spalding. Huntingdonshire, Five manors of Somersham, with the parks and chase'. Many of the regicides, including Walton 'shall by vertue of this Act be adjudged to be convicted and attainted of High Treason'. All English ports were to be closely watched so that none of the regicides 'may make Escape beyond the Seas'. Valentine Walton and five others are named specifically.

### **A burgess in Hanau**

Walton, realising the fate that awaited him, fled 'from Justice, not dareing to abide a Legall Tryall' to Hanau, in the Landgraviate of Hessen-Kassel in Germany. The town was a bustling international centre of trade and commerce and Valentine Walton became a burgess (freeman) of the town, a position that required both money and influence to achieve. However, the Queen of the province was not pleased to learn that her realm was harbouring a regicide and Walton was forced to flee again. He took refuge in Flanders, where he spent the few months left to him 'in the greatest privacy' according to one of Cromwell's biographers, who recorded what he claimed were Walton's final days: 'finding himself ill and at the point of death, he discovered himself, and desired that after his death his relations in England might be acquainted of it'. He sagely concluded that Walton's death was 'probably occasioned by disappointment, anxiety, and dread of a violent and ignominious end'.

### **The testimony of an Oxford antiquarian**

A contemporary source gives more details of Walton's end. Anthony Wood (1632–1695), an Oxford antiquary, kept a detailed record of his life and the events around him. His life covered the entire period of the two Civil Wars to the restoration of Charles II. His *The Life and times of Anthony Wood* gives a graphic and perhaps somewhat fanciful account of the end of Valentine Walton. It begins with a description of the miserable end of Walton's second wife: 'Friscis, daughter of Pym of Brill in com. Bucks, widdow of . . . Austen of Brill, the wife of collonell Valentine Walton the noted regicid, died a little better than in an obscure condition in the house of Anne Lichfeild, a printer's widdow, in Cat Street, 14 Nov. 1662 (of the [small]pox as they say), and was buried in St. Marie's church, Oxford.'

Wood records that he had received a report of Walton's end from a friend of Mrs Walton, before her death in November 1662: 'to save himself from hanging, fled into Flanders or the Low Countries, and having skill in gardning and manuring hired himselfe with a certaine gentleman, there for that imployment; but falling sick and seing his time draw neare, sent for his (master's) wife and told that he had bin a man of fashion etc. and desired that after his death his wife and relations may be acquainted with it, etc'.

Valentine Walton, regicide, died in Flanders, an impoverished gardener. It was claimed that at his death, Walton left behind a now vanished manuscript containing his account of the Civil War including many letters from Cromwell. It was last reported to be in existence in the eighteenth century, but is now lost to history. Valentine Walton's estates in Great Staughton, including Cretingsbury, were subsequently sequestrated by the Crown.