

'LIVING THROUGH THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS' IN WARWICKSHIRE

Maureen Harris

A unique Civil-Wars project which will benefit Warwickshire historians began in June. The project, led by Dr Maureen Harris of the University of Leicester through the 'Friends of Warwickshire County Record Office', and supported by Mairi Macdonald and the Dugdale Society, has been made possible by means of a grant of £13,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund with money raised by National Lottery players. It is training inexperienced volunteers from 22 history societies and parish and civic groups from all over 'old' Warwickshire (which includes Birmingham, Coventry, Solihull and Sutton Coldfield) to transcribe more than 200 parliamentarian 'Accounts' covering three-quarters of Warwickshire's parishes. The 'Accounts' reveal the traumatic effects of four years of continuous civil warfare (1642 to 1646) in a 'frontier' county like Warwickshire and the losses sustained by thousands of named individuals in the county's towns and villages through onerous taxation, the free billeting of dozens, sometimes hundreds, of cavalry and infantry, the constant demands for horses and provisions and the plunder of personal belongings by passing troops. The project, which continues till the end of 2019, aims to look beyond the major battles like Edgehill and to raise awareness of the human suffering of ordinary people in a 'war without an enemy'. In 2020 the Dugdale Society will make the completed transcriptions publicly available on a searchable Warwickshire County Record Office website to accompany a volume of selected examples, with an introductory chapter and a full index. For further information contact Maureen Harris on meharris362@gmail.com or check out the 'Friends' Facebook page on www.facebook.com/@Friends-Of-The-Warwickshire-County-Record-Office .



Above L: Lynn feels the weight of a 'lobster-pot' helmet



Above: Discussion and personal interaction are important components of the project