

# Charles I's first three Parliaments

## MEMBER FOR WENDOVER

The House of Commons had gained the right in Elizabeth's reign to decide upon disputed elections and this right it exercised in 1620 to investigate the rigging of the vote by Sir Thomas Wentworth in his Yorkshire constituency. The future Lord Strafford was fortunate to escape censure by a small majority. This Committee of Privileges, under Serjeant Glanville, also attempted for the first time to lay down a proper code for voting and it considered petitions on behalf of lapsed boroughs which sought to be re-franchised.

John Hampden had found that in Buckinghamshire the three boroughs of Amersham, Marlow and Wendover had once sent burgesses to Parliament but no longer did so. He thereupon organised petitions from these boroughs seeking to re-establish their ancient privilege of representation. When a search confirmed the right, the Committee of Privileges ruled that they be allowed to send members. However it incurred King James's displeasure, for the King saw it as a means of gaining greater representation in the House of Commons for members who would oppose him and align themselves with the Country Party. He told Serjeant Glanville he was unwilling to have the number of burgesses increased as he was 'troubled by too great a number already'. He ordered his Solicitor General to oppose the ruling in the House. It was of no avail. The House confirmed the Committee's decision and the three boroughs reassumed their right to send members. Wendover was less than five miles from Great Hampden and one of the first two members it was now allowed to send to Parliament was John Hampden.

Charles's first Parliament met in June 1625, a month after his marriage to Henrietta Maria, and the new member for Wendover took his place alongside many of his former colleagues, including Pym,