

## *Why did people go to war in 1642?*

### Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 6

#### A rude poem sent to Sir John Coke, 4 May 1639

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/420/48)

#### What is this source?

This report was sent to Sir John Coke in May 1639 by a local judge. Coke was Secretary of State to Charles I.

Judges often sent reports to the king's top officials. In the 1630s the reports were mainly concerned with discovering any evidence of opposition to the king.

#### What's the background to this source?

In 1639 Charles I's kingdoms were very tense. Charles was facing a major rebellion in Scotland. There was also tension in England. One of the biggest concerns was religion. The Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, was bringing in changes to the English church that some people were against.

During the 1630s Charles and William Laud brought in new types of church services. Charles also gave greater power and wealth to the church. To some Protestants (especially hard-line Protestants, called Puritans), his actions seemed to be making the Church of England more like the Roman Catholic Church. They began to be against Charles.

#### It's worth knowing that ...

Charles had no time for opponents of his policies.

Charles ordered his officials to look out for people who might oppose him. The person being reported in this source was probably a Puritan who was against the changes that Charles and William Laud were bringing into the church.



## Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What is the judge sending to Coke?
2. Do you think the alehouse keeper and his wife really found the poem in the road?
3. Try to guess - what does this poem mean when it talks about bishops? Which bishop might it be referring to?
4. What does this poem mean when it says: 'we are of great might, we mean to make you a bloody fight'? Who will fight whom?
5. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?

## Source 6a

May it please y<sup>e</sup> to be advertised that this inclosed note (having the time of receipt indorsed upon it of mine owne hand writing) was deliuered to me at Shrewsbury by one Mr. Thomas Jones a young utter barrister having there who receaved it that day of one Tong an Alehouse keeper who receaved it of his wife who upon her examination alledged she found it in a common road leading towards Shrewsbury the writer is not yet to be distroued nor any abbetter thereof Now S<sup>r</sup> I being a Justice of peace in the towne and County of Salop and observing towards the end of his Ma<sup>ty</sup> proclamation against the S<sup>r</sup>otts that things of that nature are to be sent to one of his Ma<sup>ty</sup> Secretaries have according to my duty sent it to y<sup>e</sup> hon<sup>or</sup> and will y<sup>e</sup> willing doo my best endeavor to distrow the





## Source 6b

