



# The King's Smuggler

John Fox

The first biography of  
Jane Whorwood – Secret Agent to  
Charles I in the  
British Civil War

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Jane Whorwood, a child of the Whitehall Stuart court, married (unhappily) to become the lady of Holton Park, near Oxford. In 1642 Charles I made Oxford his war capital, Jane spied for him and smuggled nearly a ton of gold to fund his army. In 1646 her home was billet to Lord Fairfax, Parliamentarian commander of the end siege of Oxford. The daughter of Oliver Cromwell (2-in-C) married at the house.

The King fled just before Oxford surrendered, the Scots held him for ransom, and Parliament held him as a 'prisoner in a gilded cage'. He fled from Hampton Court to the Isle of Wight. Jane organised correspondence, raised money, and managed his escape attempts, the last to try for Holland in the middle of a navy mutiny. The collapse of Jane's marriage was one of the most public and acrimonious cases of the 17th century.

**Financial Times** *'Pungent, convincing, one of the most resourceful women of the Civil War'*

**Daily Mail** *'This brilliant Scotswoman, Charles I's agent and lover, forgotten – until now'*

**Oxford Mail** *'The untold adventure story of the Civil War, one of our greatest female spies.'*

**Oxford Times** *'Vividly portrayed ... a fascinating read ... 8/10 rating'*. **History Today** *'A remarkable story'* [7 page feature].

**The Historical Association** *'Written for the general reader, but documented for the scholar'*. **Women of History Website**. *'I cannot recommend this book enough, an eye opener, one of the most remarkable women of the Civil War'*.

**BBC History** [2 page feature] *'She helped Charles I when he needed all the help he could get'*

**Sunday Times Oxford Literary Festival, 2010 ; Thame Arts/Lit Festival, 2010.**

Besides the new *Jane Whorwood* entry for the ODNB, **John Fox** wrote **Forgotten Divisions** (Sigma 1994) on WWI in Bonn and Manchester, (*'a publishing rarity'*, Geoffrey Moorhouse; *'A very good idea carried off well'*, Brig. Richard Holmes). **El Proyecto Macnamara** (2014, Irish Academic Press) uncovers the British race to seize Mexican California ahead of the US, 1844-46 (*'fascinating evidence, superb cast'*, Prof. Roy Foster, Oxford; *'a complex and fascinating story'*, Prof. Kerby Miller, Missouri).