

# Cromwelliana

The Journal of

The  
Cromwell Association



2003

## The Cromwell Association

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THE CROMWELL ASSOCIATION was founded in 1935 by the late Rt Hon Isaac Foot and others to commemorate Oliver Cromwell, the great Puritan statesman, and to encourage the study of the history of his times, his achievements and influence. It is neither political nor sectarian, its aims being essentially historical. The Association seeks to advance its aims in a variety of ways, which have included:

- the erection of commemorative tablets (e.g. at Naseby, Dunbar, Worcester, Preston, etc);
- helping to establish the Cromwell Museum in the Old Grammar School at Huntingdon;
- holding two annual meetings, one the now traditional memorial service by the Cromwell statue outside the Houses of Parliament, the other a business meeting at which the Council presents a report on its year's work for discussion by members. At both, an address is given by a distinguished Cromwellian;
- producing an annual publication, *Cromwelliana*, which is free to members;
- awarding an annual prize for work on a Cromwellian theme;
- maintaining a small reference library for the use of members;
- supporting the formation of local groups of paid-up members of the Association meeting for study or social purposes;
- acting as a 'lobby' at both national and local levels whenever aspects or items of our Cromwellian heritage appear to be endangered.

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## CROMWELLIANA 2003

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The AGM was held at Huntingdon this year and the guest speaker was scheduled to be Professor Blair Worden. The subject of his lecture was to be the expulsion of the Long Parliament. Unfortunately he was unable to give the public lecture on the day and at very short notice our President Dr Barry Coward was able to speak in stead.

As Professor Worden wanted to be part of the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Long Parliament I felt it was only right and proper to publish both lectures not for comparison, but as a compliment to one another. Professor Worden and Dr Coward agreed to their inclusion and I am sure our readers will find them both rewarding and enlightening.

The lectures are reproduced as they were without footnotes; though Dr Barry Coward has provided a bibliography of further reading on the subject, which you will find of great use.

CROMWELL AND THE EXPULSION  
OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT, 20 APRIL 1653.  
(A LECTURE GIVEN AT THE CROMWELL ASSOCIATION  
AGM ON 26 APRIL 2003 IN HUNTINGDON).

*by Dr Barry Coward*

It is doubly unfortunate that Professor Blair Worden cannot be here to give this lecture today to commemorate this 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the expulsion of the Rump Parliament by Oliver Cromwell. Not only is he (as he has been for over thirty years) a leading authority on the topic, but he also has some interesting ideas that explain why this particular anniversary has gone by relatively unnoticed in the media, as you may have seen from an article he published in *The Times* on 19 April. Certainly, in comparison with other historical anniversaries, like the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Elizabeth 1 in March 1603, which was greeted with a torrent of press and journal articles, and radio and TV programmes, the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the expulsion of the Rump has been met with a deafening silence. It would have been good, amongst other things, to have heard more of Blair's explanation for that, perhaps developing his idea that it was a reflection of the status of parliament nowadays, which is so poor that

hardly anyone considers Cromwell's gross onslaught on parliamentary liberties 350 years ago worthy of notice.

I think that what happened on 20 April 1653 is worthy of notice, which is why I was not too unhappy about stepping into the breach left by Blair's illness when I heard about it two days ago; although I must say I would have valued more time to prepare for it! This lecture that I've hurriedly put together since then is focused on the major puzzle of why Oliver Cromwell did what he did on 20 April 1653. What I want to examine is what drove a man who I believe was a sincere champion of parliamentary liberties to expel a parliament using naked military force? Answering that question will I hope help us to get a glimpse of the real Oliver Cromwell (I say a glimpse only, because the more I work on and think about Oliver Cromwell the more I become aware of just how elusive is the search for a *complete* picture of the real Oliver). But I think that attempting to explain his extraordinary behaviour on 20 April 1653 will take us somewhere along the route towards understanding the complexities and ambiguities of this remarkable man and his aspirations for Britain and Ireland. What we'll see is someone who combined low political cunning with high visionary idealism, and the selfish pursuit of power for himself and the army with the unselfish use of that power to pursue changes that he considered were essential for the nation's good. If looking back 350 years to the events of 20 April 1653 helps to reveal more about the character of Oliver Cromwell and what drove him on, then commemorating this anniversary will be well worthwhile for that reason alone.

But first, before I wade into those uncertain waters, let me simply tell you what happened on that eventful 20 April 350 years ago. This is a relatively easy task, since, so extraordinary were those events, they were very well reported by those present and by those who heard about them from others. We even know what Cromwell wore on that day: informal plain black clothes with grey worsted stockings, suggesting that he had not planned to do what he did when he got up that morning (a suggestion that, as I'll explain later, I think is correct). Dressed in this informal way, sometime in the late morning of 20 April 1653 he marshalled a party of soldiers at his lodgings, the Cockpit, near to the House of Commons, and marched with them to the House. Most of the soldiers he left in the lobby of the chamber of the Commons, but he took a file of thirty musketeers with him into the chamber leaving them at the door, while he slipped into his usual seat (he was of course an MP) while the House was debating a constitutional bill (the details of which I'll come to later on). After listening in silence to the debate, at about midday he got to his feet

and delivered a speech that soon became full of anger. Leaving his seat, he put on his hat and from the middle of the chamber delivered a stinging attack on all MPs, shouting at them 'You are no parliament, I say you are no parliament, I will put an end to your sitting'. He then stamped his feet to call in the musketeers and, when they did not hear him he called to Major Thomas Harrison to call them in. When they marched in, he told MPs that 'the Lord had done with them and had chosen other instruments for the carrying on his work that were more worthy'. Speaker William Lenthall was ordered out and some MPs filed out with him, Cromwell saying to them 'It's you that have forced me to do this, for I have sought the Lord day and night, that he would rather slay me than put me upon doing of this work'. When some others resisted, Cromwell began ranting at them, calling them 'whoremasters' (some reports said he looked directly at Henry Marten and Peter Wentworth as he said the word). Others he called 'drunkards, and some corrupt and unjust men, and scandalous to the profession of the gospel'. Henry Marten he called an atheist and adulterer, others, including a major Rumper, Thomas Scot, he accused of embezzling public money. And as they left, they were jeered by the musketeers. When another major Rumper, Sir Henry Vane junior, protested: 'This is not honest, yea it is against morality and common honesty', Oliver shouted 'O, Sir Henry Vane, Sir Henry Vane, the Lord deliver me from Sir Henry Vane'. There then followed the famous episode when Cromwell pointed to the mace, the symbol of the Commons' authority, saying 'What shall we do with this bauble?' 'Here, take it away' he ordered a soldier. When the chamber was cleared the doors were locked. Once back in Whitehall, Cromwell found some members of the Rump Council of State, including Arthur Heselrige, Thomas Scot and John Bradshaw, about to hold a Council session. They were told that that the Council's authority had terminated with the dissolution of the parliament, to which Bradshaw replied: 'Sir, we have heard what you did at the House this morning, and before many hours all England will hear it: but, sir, you are mistaken to think that the parliament is dissolved, for no power under heaven can dissolve them but themselves, therefore take you notice of that'. But that, of course, was true only in legal theory. In the real world the Rump Parliament, the remnant of the Long Parliament that had sat since November 1640, was dissolved by force of armed might and it remained so until it met again briefly six years later in 1659.

That's what happened on 20 April 1653 as Oliver Cromwell, once a small farmer in this part of the world, played a major decisive rôle on the national political stage. *What* happened is fairly clear. But *why* it happened

is definitely not clear. All the rest of this lecture is my attempt to provide an answer to why Cromwell did what he did on that day.

My starting point is to make clear what I think were the two main aims that Cromwell worked out for himself as he climbed up the greasy pole of political power in the 1640s and 1650s. The first was the achievement of what he called 'settlement', healing the wounds of the country after the military and political violence and economic crises, that had torn it apart since 1642, and restoring something like political and social normality. What's important to stress about this aim is that the constitutional settlement Cromwell aspired to make was one that was not all that novel. True, by 1653 it was a constitution without a king, but nevertheless it was still one that had as its central feature a single person executive ruling with regular parliaments. During the Civil War Cromwell had laid his life on the line for parliamentary liberties; after the war he had worked very hard politically attempting in 1647 to prevent the army moving against parliament; and the document that he and his son-in-law Henry Ireton drew up in 1647 as a proposed constitutional settlement, the Heads of the Proposals, legislated for heads of state calling regular parliaments. There is a great deal of historical justification for the placing of the statue of Cromwell beside the Palace of Westminster where the Cromwell Association holds its annual Cromwell Day services. Cromwell was a champion of parliamentary liberties.

Of course, this did not make him a democrat in any modern sense of the word. On the contrary, his stance on parliament was fairly unremarkable, traditional, indeed backward-looking. It was a stance shared by the late fifteenth-century writer, Sir John Fortescue, who wrote of England being a mixed monarchy, a *dominium politicum and regale*, by people at the heart of the establishment in Elizabethan England like William Cecil Lord Burghley, who believed (using Professor Patrick Collinson's recent phrase) that England was 'a monarchical republic', and by many MPs in early Stuart parliaments who called their ideal constitution with heads of state ruling with regular parliaments and under the law 'the ancient constitution'. All these conceptions of what England's constitution was, Fortescue's mixed monarchy, Burghley's 'monarchical republic' and the early Stuart conception of 'the ancient constitution', were very similar to Cromwell's. What is noteworthy about Cromwell's aim of 'settlement' is not only its traditional nature, but also that it makes very puzzling what Cromwell, a believer in regular parliaments, did when he violated parliamentary privileges on 20 April 1653.

The beginning of a clue to the resolution of that puzzle is that alongside Cromwell's aim of 'settlement' he also had another aim, one which was far from traditional and one which was not shared by many other people, an aim which was rooted in his religious beliefs. Cromwell was, of course, what many have called a Puritan but what he and others like him called 'the godly'. Analysing the kind of Britain the godly wanted to bring about would take at least a lecture by itself, and so I cannot go into great detail about their mentality and aspirations. But, take it from me, their views were as fervently held and had as profound a political impact as the religious beliefs of the Shi'ite Muslims in present-day Iraq. In order to understand the powerful religious views of Cromwell and the godly, I think it makes a lot of sense to divide their religious-based aspirations into two. The first are ones that are easy for the Western secular-mind to appreciate, since these are largely aspirations for greater justice in society, the pursuit of measures, like legal reform, that would cure the ills and injustices of English society. It's a reforming aspiration that I think has never been better put than by Cromwell himself in his letter of 4 September 1650 after the great victory of the New Model Army over the Scots at Dunbar on the previous day. 'Relieve the oppressed', he wrote, 'hear the groans of poor prisoners in England; be pleased to reform the abuses of all professions; and if there be anyone that makes many poor to make a few rich, that suits not a Commonwealth'.

But allied with this desire of the godly for social justice was another religious-based aspiration that takes one spinning back into a different world from ours (certainly from mine) where religion was absolutely central to men's thinking and action. At the heart of the godly mentality was a yearning to bring about a true Reformation in society, not simply one that abolished Catholic practices in church government and liturgy, but a reformation in the way people thought and lived, what they often called 'a reformation of manners', which (to put it bluntly) envisaged the abolition of sin (drunkenness, swearing, loose living and so on) from people's lives. And with that aspiration to demolish sin, they also linked a positive aspiration: they believed that when people lived purer lives, they would find their way to God and become part of the broad true Church to which the godly were anxious to welcome as many people as possible. These are not, of course, tolerant views that a modern advocate of 'religious toleration' would accept, but they are views of 'liberty for tender consciences' that are much broader than many others had in the middle of the seventeenth century. What's also important to note about these religious aspirations for what many of them (including Cromwell) called a godly reformation is that they believed that the achievement of this godly

reformation was absolutely essential for both personal and national prosperity and well-being. This was so since it was a reformation required by God. Therefore, if reformation was pursued, God would bless them; if they did not, He would spit in their faces. And as they fought and won battles Cromwell and others in the New Model Army became certain that their victories had been given them by God as signs that they indeed had God's blessing. So that, as Ian Gentles has written, 'there is ample evidence that after the establishment of the Commonwealth [in 1649] the officers [of the NMA] lost neither their religious ardour nor their critical attitudes towards the ills and injustices of English society'. And that, I am fairly certain, can also be said of Oliver Cromwell.

These religious ideas are a key feature of the mentality of Oliver Cromwell that helps to explain what he did on 20 April 1653. I think that so powerful was that religious ardour that, devoted as he was to the desire to bring about 'settlement', the lawful ways of doing things, the parliamentary way of doing things, if those ways imperilled the path towards the godly reformation, then he was willing (albeit with some reluctance and not as we'll see without some mental anguish) to consider abandoning those ways, and to use extraordinary, unconstitutional measures. That's what he had done in December 1648/January 1649 when he abandoned the safe route of 'settlement' to take the (literally) awful decision to support the trial and execution of Charles I. That's what he was to do as Lord Protector especially in 1655-6 when he did away with parliament and ruled England and Wales by Major-Generals. That is what he did in April 1653, as I hope you'll see as I now begin to look at the lead-up to that event in more detail.

The Rump Parliament that was expelled in April 1653 got its name from the fact that it was the remnant – the rump – of the Long Parliament that had been purged by Colonel Pride and the New Model Army in December 1648. After the king was executed a month or so later and monarchy was declared abolished and the country declared a republic, the Rump and its Council of State became effectively the government of the country (calling itself the Commonwealth). Since the old commander-in-chief, Fairfax, declined to serve the new republic, Cromwell stepped into his place and from 1649 to 1651 he spent most of his time as a soldier on the momentous campaign in Ireland and Scotland that played a major part in bringing the whole of the British Isles for the first time ever under the control of one government. The English Republic thus became the British Republic. But Cromwell was never just a soldier. Even when he was away on campaigns in Ireland and Scotland he kept in touch with

political allies in London, so that when he returned to (as it were) full-time employment as an MP again after the decisive victory over Charles II at Worcester on 3 September 1651 he was soon politically active. And what he seems to have been politically active at is attempting to press for the progress in the Rump Parliament of the kind of reformation I've just described. In this he was closely allied, not only with soldiers who (as we'll see) were actively lobbying him to work for that godly reformation, but also with moderate MPs like Philip Lisle, Oliver St. John, Sir Gilbert Pickering and Bulstrode Whitelocke. In particular, he pressed for legal reforms that would make the law more accessible, for indemnity for ex-royalists that would broaden the basis of support for the new republic, for measures that would loosen the laws of religious intolerance, and for progress towards the dissolution of the Rump Parliament and the election of a new parliament i.e. measures that would satisfy both the yearning for reform of soldiers that had been sharpened by the experience of war and the hopes of some civilian MPs in the Rump.

As we'll soon see, this was a strategy that was doomed to failure because only a few MPs in the Rump responded to Cromwell's and the army's calls for reform. The consequence is that many have written off the Rump as a reactionary, inefficient, indeed corrupt regime, largely following Cromwell's denunciation of it in that tirade he delivered on 20 April 1653, parts of which I quoted earlier. Other similar contemporary hostile depictions of it have also been very influential in shaping how the Rump has been portrayed. One of these is a description of the Rump by Clement Walker, a man who had been expelled from parliament by Colonel Pride in December 1648. The Rump, wrote Walker, was 'the fag end, the veritable rump of a parliament with corrupt maggots in it. It were endless to name the father and the son, the brother and brother that fills the house; they come in couples more than unclean beasts to the Ark'. But, of course, these charges of corruption and (in Walker's case) nepotism came from the Rump's critics. However, if you re-position yourself (something that historians should always be ready to do in my view), you can get another more positive view of the Rump. Building on Blair Worden's work, Sean Kelsey does this in a book on the Rump called *Inventing a Republic: the Political Culture of the English Commonwealth*. That book (supplemented by other works) has convinced me that the Rump was not a regime of reluctant republicans and corrupt men who were driven only by a desire to hold onto power for its own sake. They proclaimed their newly minted republican status and its superiority to monarchy proudly in public pageants. For example, when Cromwell returned in triumph to London from Worcester in September 1651 his

march through the capital was stage-managed like that of a Roman general returning home from great foreign victories over the barbarians. Cromwell's march displaying 4000 Scottish prisoners of war in the triumphal procession, said a newspaper report at the time, showed 'the cavaliers a true copy of their king's countenance in his gallant design to overrun the nation at once with barbarism and tyranny'. This triumphant celebratory republicanism is well in line with iconographic images the new regime put out, like that on its new Great Seal that was adorned with the ringing revolutionary words 'In the first year of freedom by God's blessing restored'. Here after all was a regime that represented a momentous break with the country's monarchical past, the replacement of monarchy by a republic, the abolition of the House of Lords, the establishment of a single chamber parliament, the replacement of royal prerogative courts, the royal privy council, the exchequer and the admiralty by a parliamentary Council of State and numerous sub-committees. There were also changes in the type of people who ran government. Periodic purges of the commissions of the peace excluded men hostile to the new republic. Increasingly the regime relied on lesser gentry of the kind who had not figured prominently in pre-Civil War county and town government.

Moreover, once you re-position yourselves in this way and free yourselves from hostile contemporary views of the Rump, you begin to judge it not by the standards of radicals inside and outside the army, but as a regime that worked. You begin to see it as a regime that brought about major changes including the achievement of national security and international respectability. In 1649 the new regime was fragile and insecure, beset by threats of royalist invasion, backed by opponents from Ireland and Scotland. It also faced massive international hostility as a king-killing regime. Yet within a few years that had changed dramatically. With Cromwell's military help all resistance in Ireland and Scotland was quashed and the foundations laid for the unified rule of the whole of Britain and Ireland that was completed by the Cromwellian Protectorate after 1653. The Rump too developed dazzlingly successful commercial and international policies, based on the creation of a powerful navy, again laying the foundations for the subsequent foreign policy achievements of the Cromwellian Protectorate. Behind its successes was the efficient administration of committed Commonwealthsmen like Henry Marten and Thomas Chaloner, who raised money by taxes, sales of ex-cathedral estates and loans to pay for the first Anglo-Dutch war that began in 1652 and which was marked by notable English naval successes.

My point quite simply is that the Rump was not (as Cromwell portrayed it) a corrupt, inefficient regime waiting to be given a *coup de grace* to put it out of its misery. By seventeenth-century standards it was a fairly efficient regime that seized the opportunity given it to establish republican government in this country, marking a sharp departure from its millennium-long monarchical tradition, and it made a reasonably good job of doing that.

So why did it face such strong opposition from Cromwell and the army that eventually Oliver was impelled to get rid of it forcibly? To answer that I need to return (as perhaps befits the President of the Cromwell Association) to seeing the Rump from the perspective of Oliver Cromwell. From his point of view, there were two things that were wrong with the Rump. The first was that it clearly dragged its feet in carrying out the kinds of reform that he and others in the army wanted to see. It's true that the Rump passed an Act for General Pardon and Oblivion in February 1652, but the intentions of the act (which, paraphrasing its own words, were to bury in perpetual oblivion all rancour and evil will occasioned by late differences) were frustrated by many exceptions that were made to it.

Much more irritating for Cromwell was the Rump's barren record on religious toleration, law and parliamentary reform. Increasingly it became clear that there was little substance in the promises made by MPs to pass measures on each of these topics. They seemed keener on passing acts suppressing religious nonconformity than on promoting religious tolerance and spreading the word to 'the dark corners of the land'. What caused a lot of Cromwellian anger was the passage in 1650 of repressive acts like the Blasphemy Act and the Adultery Act that reflected MPs' paranoid fears of religious sects, as well as, later in March 1653, the Rump's decision not to renew the Commission for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales. Nor was much progress made on legal reform. True, a law commission under Matthew Hale was appointed by the Rump and this produced a string of proposals for law reform, but significantly none of them were put into effect. Moreover, although Cromwellian and army pressure after Worcester succeeded in pushing the Rump towards arranging its own dissolution and new elections, MPs continually hedged on the \$64,000 question of exactly when it was to be dissolved and replaced by a new parliament.

I said that there were two things that in Cromwell's eyes were wrong with the Rump. In addition to its foot-dragging on reform, what also angered

him about the Rump was that its members made little attempt to hide how much they loathed the army. The history of parliamentary proceedings between 1649 and 1653 is littered with examples of anti-army decisions: for example, in November 1651 two prominent soldiers, Philip Skippon and Thomas Harrison, were dropped from the Council of State; in May 1652 the Rump made an inveterate enemy of the soldier who came anywhere near to matching Cromwell's prominence in the army, John Lambert, who had been appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland and was about to go to take up his post when the Rump deliberately slapped him in the face by abolishing the post; and in late December 1652 Cromwell personally suffered from this anti-army vengeance when the Rump voted to sell Hampton Court which was being fitted out for Cromwell's use. Moreover, the Rump made many attacks on the army's honour, especially by refusing to ratify the articles the army had made with its defeated enemies; and crucially the Rump continually passed measures making troop reductions and army pay cuts

By the winter of 1652 it must have seemed to Cromwell that the Rump was intent on following other agenda than godly reformation and that it was determined to reduce the size and significance of the army that Cromwell knew was the main means of achieving that reformation if the Rump failed to back it. Something of his disillusion with the Rump may be captured in the later recollection by Bulstrode Whitelocke of a conversation he had with Oliver as they bumped into each other one evening in November 1652 in St. James's Park. According to Whitelocke, Cromwell, told him that MPs in the Rump were full of 'pride and ambition, and self-seeking, ingrossing all places to themselves and their friends'. 'Their delays of business and designs to perpetuate themselves, and to continue the power in their own hands [he went on] do give too much ground for people to open their mouths against them, and to dislike them'. By abandoning the path of godly reformation, Whitelocke reported Cromwell as saying, they 'will destroy again what the Lord hath done graciously for them and us; we all forget God, and God will forget us, and give us to confusion...some course must be thought on to curb and restrain them, or we shall be ruined by them'. Some have doubted the reliability of Whitelocke's text, but the words he recorded Cromwell saying have touches of Cromwellian authenticity about them. I think that by this stage Cromwell was thinking of moving against the Rump, especially since at this time army pressure on him was immense. He had many meetings with army officers and army prayer meetings were common, from which newsletters were sent out to regiments throughout Britain and Ireland, indicting the Rump for corruption, and setting out

the need for new parliaments full of 'men of truth, fearing God and hating covetousness' (as one of them said).

It must have been impossible for Cromwell not to have been moved by this great wave of rising religious-political fervour in the army. So when did he decide to act against the Rump? It's impossible to know. What is certain is that by early March 1653 he was absent from Parliament (he didn't attend it between 12 March and 15 April); nor did he attend the Council of State, with one exception, between 8 March and 7 April. During those weeks Cromwell virtually disappears from the historical record, as he did at other times when hard decisions were called for. I think that what he was doing was undergoing a long period of introspection, wrestling with his conscience, confronting the awful dilemma of a man who had fought for parliamentary liberties who was contemplating invading those liberties. That taking that drastic step was in his mind in late March can be seen in a rare report of Cromwell at this time, when he had a meeting with leading City of London divines. At the meeting Cromwell floated the idea of dissolving the parliament. When this was denounced as unlawful and impracticable, significantly Cromwell only dealt with the objection of impracticability. 'Why impracticable?', he asked the objector, who replied 'tis against the voice of the nation; there will be nine in ten against you'. To which Cromwell responded, 'Very well, but what if I should disarm the nine, and put a sword in the tenth man's hand; would that not do the business?' This again I think is the authentic voice of Cromwell, this time in what I call his 'iron-fisted' moments when he was coming to believe that authoritarian action was necessary to safeguard the good old cause of godly reformation.

What pushed him finally to act on 20 April 1653? Well here the answer lies in the nature of the constitutional bill that the Rump was discussing on that day (or better in what he thought was the nature of that bill). On the previous afternoon and evening Cromwell had met with officers and some MPs in his Cockpit lodgings in Whitehall. During the meeting that went on late in the night Cromwell thought that a majority of those present were in favour of a proposal he had made that when the Rump had dissolved itself, the country should be run by a council of forty MPs and officers nominated by the present parliament. The meeting ended in the early hours of Wednesday 20 April. Later that morning, after Cromwell climbed out of bed after a few hours' sleep and got into his plain black clothes and pulled on his grey worsted stockings, he was told that a more than usually well-attended session of parliament was in progress and that they were debating an act, which he was told 'would

occasion other meetings of them, and prolong their sitting'. What exactly the bill said we don't know because Cromwell destroyed it when he expelled the parliament. But Cromwell clearly was incensed by the news that parliament was proceeding with any kind of bill, ignoring his proposal that had been discussed the previous night/early morning. Bear in mind, too, that he was short of sleep and you have a Cromwell who when he heard the news, flew off the handle (as it were), following his heart not his head. Indeed that is exactly what he is reported to have said he did to a meeting of officers on the afternoon of 20 April. 'When he went into the House he intended not to do it; but the spirit was so upon him; that he was over-ruled by it: and he consulted not with flesh and blood at all, nor did premeditate the doing thereof; he seeing the parliament designing to spin an everlasting thread'.

But one of Blair Worden's many important contributions to the history of this period has been to show that without much doubt the bill that was being debated in the Rump on 20 April was not one designed 'to spin an everlasting thread' i.e. to perpetuate the Rump in power. What Blair has shown is that the bill probably made provision for a general election to be held with either provision for new MPs to be vetted by existing MPs or no provision for vetting at all. If that is so, and if Cromwell knew about it before, then his mistrust of the Rump was even greater than has been realised. My view is that he didn't know of it and was probably amazed when he got hold of the copy of the bill that the Rump was debating. But so angry was he with the Rump that he decided to proceed regardless and destroy the copy of the bill. The only problem he faced was that (like Prime Minister Tony Blair and President George Bush in another circumstance recently) he had to change the reasons he announced for doing what he did. Before the event the main reason he stressed was the Rump's intentions to (in his words) 'perpetuate' itself. That you'll remember was what Whitelocke said he said in November 1652. Those too were the words an eyewitness recorded that Cromwell said to the soldiers before he marched with them to the Commons on the morning of 20 April: MPs, he said, 'intend nothing but to seek themselves, and to perpetuate themselves to the great hurt and danger of the nation'. But after the event (and, of course, after he had seen the bill and realised that the Rump was not intent on perpetuating itself) he rarely referred to that justification. There was no 'smoking gun'. Instead he concentrated on the Rump's failure to get on with reformation. Typical is the declaration issued by Cromwell and the Council of Officers on 22 April when the stated justification for action had become the general failure of the Rump 'to give the people the harvest of all their labour, blood and treasure, and

to settle a due liberty both in reference to civil and spiritual things'. It had become clear, the declaration concluded, that the Rump 'would never answer those ends which God, his people, and the whole nation expected from them'.

The debate about the nature of the constitutional bill has tended to dominate discussion and speculation about why Cromwell forcibly expelled the Rump. I hope it has not dominated this lecture and obscured its central argument. Let me end by underlining what it has been. To Ronald Hutton in his book *The British Republic* the question of why Cromwell did it is 'an unresolved mystery'. Sean Kelsey finds the answer by turning the usual explanation on its head. To him the reason for the expulsion of the Rump is to be found in Cromwell's and the army's (not the Rump's) naked ambition for power. I think that Kelsey is only half-right. He's right to assert that Cromwell wanted power for himself and was willing to use force to achieve it. Cromwell clearly saw his power being threatened by the Rump. Indeed two reports say that the constitutional bill that was being considered on 20 April 1653 also included a clause that would have fired Cromwell as commander-in-chief of the army. And there's no doubt in the days after 20 April the army consolidated its power by garrisoning key government and legal buildings. Moreover, at that time the Council of Officers was very busy working out what kind of government should replace the Rump. But I depart from this view of Cromwell acting now like a military dictator. He was not a stereotypical military dictator who used power for his own personal purposes and comfort. Cromwell was no Saddam Hussein figure who used power simply to build lavish palaces with gold-lined bathrooms. He wanted to have power to achieve something other than personal profit; he wanted it to achieve a reformation in Britain that he believed the continued existence of the Rump would prevent. What spurred him to act so violently and impulsively on 20 April 350 years ago was that he believed that, if he did not act, then his vision of revolutionary change in Britain would never be achieved, and that if this happened God would rebuke him and the nation forever. In other words, Cromwell got rid of the Rump not because it was an inefficient regime but because the kind of Britain the Rump was creating lacked the kind of changes he considered to be essential.

When Cromwell became Lord Protector of Britain and Ireland eight months after the expulsion of the Rump, he continued to try to square the circle by bringing about both a godly reformation and a traditional-type settlement. If I had another lecture to give on the Cromwellian

Protectorate I'd argue that that attempt was not totally unsuccessful for a time, but that one reason it eventually failed is that what Cromwell did on 20 April 1653 gained him the unending hatred of those who had served in the Rump. People like Arthur Heselrige and others now saw Cromwell as a military dictator whom they could never support again, and after Oliver's death in September 1658 it was they who pounced and who were key actors in the downfall of Richard Cromwell and the end of the Protectorate in May 1659. And their hatred of military power in politics and standing armies lived on for centuries in Britain and became part of the political culture of the country. What Oliver Cromwell did on 20 April 1653 may not have caused much interest 350 years after the event. But that was certainly not the case for much of those three and a half centuries, when arguably the enduring legacy of that event was to strengthen the determination of the British to prevent the army ever again having political power.

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## 350 YEARS ON: CROMWELL AND THE EXPULSION OF THE LONG PARLIAMENT

by Professor Blair Worden

I am delighted that the Association is taking notice of this anniversary, as very few other people are. The civil war was fought between king and parliament. Four years ago the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the destruction of the king by Cromwell and the army was widely noticed. The destruction of the Long Parliament by Cromwell and the army four years later – the only military coup to have terminated an elected parliament in our history – was as dramatic and arguably an equally important event.

The coup, and the intemperate harangue by Cromwell that launched it, broke whatever sense of constitutional legitimacy the Puritan cause had preserved. There had been doubts about that legitimacy since 1642. Parliament's decision to enact legislation without the royal consent, and the king's summoning of MPs from the treasonous assembly at Westminster to the Oxford parliament, presented harsh problems of justification to the parliamentarians. Doubts increased with Pride's Purge in 1648, when the parliament would have met the fate it would suffer in April 1653 had not prominent army officers been persuaded to settle instead for the exclusion of their parliamentary enemies from the Commons. Thanks to that change of heart, the parliament remained in being. And so, it seemed, it would have to do until it resigned its authority, for one of the most precious gains of the parliamentary revolution of 1641 had been the act, to which the king assented, stipulating that the parliament could not be dissolved without its own consent.

Revolutions have their own unexpected logic. The divisions within the Long Parliament in the 1640s over church government, liberty of conscience and the making of peace with Charles can be explained in terms of tensions already perceptible before the war broke out. But what no one could have foreseen was that those conflicts would be subsumed by a larger one, between the parliament and its soldiery. So intense was the hostility by 1647 that the Cromwellians for a time preferred the thought of the king's restoration to that of the undiminished sovereignty of the parliament. Between 1649 and 1651 parliament and army had, however grudgingly, to live together, for only their union could overcome the nation's hostility to the regicide and to the republic and secure victory over the royalist threats in Ireland and Scotland. From the battle of

Worcester in September 1651, however, the rule of the Rump was militarily secure. No longer could the regime put off, as it had done in 1649, the problem of constitutional settlement or the demands for religious, social and electoral reform pressed by a victorious army which now had time on its hands. Within months of the battle of Worcester antagonism had flared to a degree unknown since 1647-8, with Sir Arthur Hesilrige taking the place previously occupied by Denzil Holles as the army's *bête noire*.

Much of the conflict derived from a factor which historians who concentrate only on ideological divisions tend to overlook, but which is crucial to an understanding of civil-war and Interregnum politics: self-esteem. The army believed itself to have been contemptuously treated in the later 1640s over questions of pay and indemnity, and though those particular grievances had been largely resolved, parliament's view of the soldiers as its 'servants' or 'children' was a huge affront. So was parliament's readiness to overturn agreements that had been negotiated by army officers to secure the surrender of royalist strongholds during the civil wars. Behind those grievances there lay a sense of the parliament's ingratitude, its unwillingness to give proper honour and respect to the victories won with such courage and skill, at such risk, and with so much loss of blood.

In fact many MPs – and not only those of them who were also army officers – did acknowledge the bravery and sacrifice of the soldiery. But they too felt affronted. The arduous labours of the MPs who staffed the committees that organized and supplied the war effort, and who struggled to get their proposals through the house, prompted no gratitude from the army, which benefited from them. Perhaps too, the MPs who had fought in the civil war in its early, localist phase, or until the Self-Denying Ordinance or the purge of the New Model in 1647, were grieved to find their own military services forgotten.

But above all parliament could not stomach the army's political pretensions. From 1649 to 1653 – the only time, except for the brief revival in 1659, in our history – England was a republic, governed without king or indeed House of Lords. Yet what governed the political thinking of most MPs was not republicanism, if by that we mean either a determination to rule without a king or an enthusiasm for the constitutional practices of classical antiquity. In parliament republicanism was the creed of a small minority, who prevailed because they offered the

only practical route out of the constitutional impasse of 1649, but who won few converts to their principles.

The governing principle in most parliamentary minds was not republicanism but, instead, what it had been at least since 1642, that of parliamentary sovereignty. The claim that parliaments were sovereign did not necessarily betoken republicanism. Until 1649, after all, the king was almost universally talked of as one of the three estates of parliament, who, if only proper peace terms could be secured, would soon resume his rightful throne. A sovereign and victorious parliament might choose to entrust at least a measure of power to a king, and most people assumed that it would do so. Yet parliament, in such thinking, was sovereign nonetheless. When, as happened in the civil wars, a constitutional impasse was reached and the king, in parliament's eyes, betrayed his trust and abandoned his office, the ultimate arbiter of conflict had, on that view, to be the parliament, the people's representative. Some MPs were much readier to embrace the radical logic of that position than others, who struggled to reconcile it with the more familiar ideal of the ancient and balanced constitution. But whatever stand they took, how could MPs allow themselves to be bullied by soldiers whose authority derived solely from parliament and whose job was to win battles, not to use the sword to press political demands?

Whatever else we may say about Cromwell's coup of 20 April 1653, it was an acknowledgement of personal failure, for which he emphatically blamed his opponents. Since Worcester he had consistently tried to hold parliament and army together. He knew that, if only harmony between the two bodies could be achieved, there were many MPs who would accept much in the army's reforming programme, though the prospects of reform were not aided by the swelling of extreme religious and social radicalism, both in the army and in the religious sects, after Worcester. Cromwell had always wanted as broad a base for the godly cause as possible, and he believed that parliamentary sanction was an essential condition for the acceptance of reforms by a wider nation. Through the 1640s and the early 1650s his position was consistent: the only legitimate basis for resistance to the king was the rights of parliament, and to bypass parliament would be self-destructive. 'That which you have by force', he told the army in 1647, 'I look upon as nothing'. What he had from April 1653 he had by force.

From the autumn of 1651 to early 1653 his tactics were consistent. He aimed to pressure parliament towards measures of reform that would

secure the acceptance, and thus diminish the impatience, of the army. He commissioned detailed schemes for law reform and for the propagation of the gospel, which were presented to parliament and protractedly debated by it. Yet he was thwarted – as indeed he was over virtually every other subject on which he tried to influence the Rump, especially over his belief that ex-royalists should be leniently treated and so won round to the new regime, and over his wish to steer the parliament away from its conflict with the Dutch towards a Protestant foreign policy. On every subject on which the Rump frustrated him, he adopted, from the outset of the protectorate, the policies he had vainly submitted to that parliament.

There was no more decisive or consequential a move in Cromwell's career than the expulsion of the Rump – and none that had been less carefully thought out. It was an outburst of fury. As he afterwards admitted, he had prepared no plans for an alternative government. Passion governed all. He had always looked for good in the Rump, the improvised constitutional solution to the crisis of 1649 for which he more than anyone had been responsible. Now he turned on it in vituperation. MPs on whose usefulness he had depended he now condemned as 'drunkards' and 'whoremasters'. After the musketeers had been called into the chamber, the Speaker William Lenthall, who in 1642 had so spiritedly defended parliamentary privilege when Charles sought to arrest the five members, was taken from his chair by Major-General Harrison. 'Take away these baubles!' Cromwell ordered, referring principally to the mace. The members were escorted out and the doors of the chamber then locked. 'Thus', reflected the MP, Bulstrode Whitelocke, who was present, 'was this great parliament, which had done such great things, this assembly famous through the world for its undertakings, actions and successes, wholly at the time routed'. After thirteen years the thread of continuity in the Roundhead cause, and of such constitutional legitimacy as it could still claim, was snapped.

The worst thing, from Cromwell's point of view, was that the whole episode was based on a misunderstanding on his part. He dissolved the parliament just as it was about to pass into law its 'bill for a new representative', for a new parliament to meet in November 1653. A fuller discussion of the coup and its antecedents than I can offer this morning would have to address the question of the bill's contents. I shall keep to the essentials. On this subject I have had to go back to read the account of the episode I wrote more than 30 years ago – a doubtful pleasure, of a kind historians generally do better to avoid. I am glad at least that so

much of it has survived the exacting scrutiny of Austin Woolrych, who in his book *Commonwealth to Protectorate* has offered a much more mature and measured assessment of the bill's provisions; his findings are conveniently summarised in his wonderful recent book *Britain in Revolution*. I am not sure that, on this particular subject, he and I would ever wholly agree, but for this morning's purposes it is the common ground between us that matters. In both his account and mine, the only explanation that makes sense of the evidence is that Cromwell, in his anger on that morning, acted under a misapprehension about the bill's contents. He believed, what posterity has generally asserted, that the bill ready to pass on 20 April 1653 provided for the 'recruiting' of the Long Parliament. In other words, it provided for elections only in the constituencies where the death or desertion or expulsion of the members who had been elected to the parliament had created vacancies. Though the parliament had sat for 13 years, the members who survived in it would retain their seats. On that assumption Cromwell and his followers portrayed the Rump as a corrupt oligarchy bent on the prolongation of their own power.

The assumption was erroneous, as Cromwell must have discovered within a day or two after the coup, when he read the bill, which he had taken with him from the chamber. In fact the bill provided not for recruiter elections but for wholly fresh ones, from which ex-royalists and papists would be excluded (a necessity on which parliament and army were agreed), but which would otherwise be open to the political nation. Far from clinging to power, the Rump was willing to dissolve in favour of an assembly, which could confront the army with a surer sense of constitutional legitimacy than it could itself possess. Thereafter there would be regular parliaments, each to sit for two years before yielding to a freshly elected one. Cromwell must have realized, when he read the bill, how closely it conformed to the electoral policy he had pressed on parliament since Worcester; and, with a supreme irony, many of its provisions would be incorporated, with only slight adjustments, into the Instrument of Government by which Cromwell ruled as protector from December 1653.

His error would trouble him ever after. It is striking to notice the contrast between his references, in his speeches of the protectorate, to the execution of the king, for which he never seems to have experienced the slightest regret, and those to the coup of April 1653, which in speech after speech he struggled to vindicate in ever cloudier and less plausible language.

However we explain his conduct on that fateful day, its consequences were profound. Not all members of the Rump were antagonized by the coup, or at least not unequivocally so. Apart from the currently serving Cromwellian officers there was a handful of members, Sir Gilbert Pickering and Walter Strickland and Sir William Sydenham at their head, who would follow Cromwell through thick and thin for the rest of his days. There were also members, like Edmund Ludlow, who were less shocked by the coup than they afterwards maintained. The reforming minority in parliament may not have liked the army's behaviour, but it knew that the majority had thwarted reform; and when Cromwell summoned, in the Rump's place, Barebone's Parliament, the assembly of the saints, men like Ludlow went along with it. Their break with Cromwell came not in April but in December, after the next military coup, the expulsion of Barebone's parliament in December 1653, when in their eyes he usurped power from a godly, even if unelected, parliament and sacrificed the cause to his ruthless and hypocritical ambition.

In general, however, Cromwell broke in April 1653 not merely with the Long Parliament but with the great majority of its members. Some of them would sit in the protectorate parliaments, where they would give him a great deal of trouble. Some of them continued to act in the government of their local communities, whose interests they wished to protect. Some, like Oliver St John, were willing to give private advice to Cromwell, provided their influence remained invisible. Yet it is striking how few of the men at the centre of power under the protectorate had sat in the Rump. Aside from the inclusion of some of Cromwell's former commanders in arms – Desborough, Skippon, Fleewood and so on – very few places were given on Cromwell's council, or on the administrative bodies that worked under it, to former MPs. How far that pattern was Cromwell's choice, how far due to refusal of offers he may have made, we generally cannot tell. At all events, not only was the bulk of the backbench MPs excluded: so were those major figures with whom Cromwell had worked for so long, Sir Arthur Hesilrige, Sir Henry Vane and Thomas Scot. In their place among Cromwell's counsels there came new, more flexible politicians like John Thurloe, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Broghil, Oliver's son Henry, and George Monck. The days of the radical advisers of Cromwell – again excepting the leading officers – were passed. Very few men who had signed Charles I's death warrant had high influence under Cromwell's rule.

There would have been plenty of trouble ahead even had Cromwell behaved differently on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April: had he allowed the parliament to

pass the bill and the elections for which it provided to be held. The army would still have been the obstacle to parliament's plan, which was to isolate the army by broadening the basis of the regime: in effect, to reverse Pride's Purge, or rather to admit MPs who shared the outlook of those who had been excluded at it. Whether that plan could have worked it is impossible to say; but it would only have been an attempt, through the mechanism of parliament, to follow the broadening strategy which Cromwell himself had pressed for so long in the Rump and which, through the mechanism of a military coup, he would introduce in December 1653.

## II

I have indicated the importance of the coup within Cromwell's lifetime. Now I move beyond it, to its place in the nation's memory. Among Cromwell's deeds it has had a posthumous importance second only to the execution of Charles I. The description of the coup in 1889 as 'one of the most famous scenes of our history' would not have been contested at any time over the previous two centuries. Dr Johnson had no love for either the perpetrators or the victims of the deed. Yet in 1759 he suggested that a painting of the moment when Cromwell 'ordered the bauble to be taken away' would make 'a picture of unexampled variety and irresistible instruction'. In 1783 Benjamin West obliged with a picture of Cromwell ordering the removal of the mace. The painting acquired a lasting fame and influence and was often reproduced in the nineteenth century. (Its impact did not cease then: the historian John Walsh tells me that, when he used to visit his grandfather's terraced mill-town house in Lancashire between the wars, a Victorian print, 'Take Away that Bauble!', 'hit the eye immediately as one came in through the front door'.)

Through the nineteenth century, that high age of parliamentary constitutionalism, Cromwell's violation of parliamentary proceedings sprang repeatedly to the public mind. In 1832 the historian Macaulay, watching the passage of the Great Reform Bill through the Commons, that vivid moment of nineteenth-century parliamentary conflict, remarked that it was 'like seeing Cromwell taking the mace from the table'. In 1845 Thomas Carlyle, the man who – though less single-handedly than he imagined – rescued Cromwell's reputation from nearly two centuries of vilification and caricature and pioneered the Victorian cult of the protector, described the coup of April 1653 as Cromwell's 'big hour', and noticed the 'shudder' with which it was still remembered. The episode is a set piece in Gilbert Beckett's celebrated *Comic History of England* in 1848,

that Victorian equivalent of *1066 and All That*, and in Dickens's *A Child's History of England* in the early 1850s.

There were twentieth-century echoes too. During the famous debate of May 1940, which produced the fall of Chamberlain, Leo Amery found, as he reached the climax of his devastating speech, that words spoken by Cromwell surfaced – with some embellishment – in his mind. 'In the name of God go', he instructed the hapless Prime Minister. In 1976 Michael Heseltine's seizure of the mace in a debate, a protest against the conduct of the Labour government Whips in securing the passage of a vote, was a perhaps less conscious, but was a no less indebted, tribute to the staying-power of Cromwellian memory.

Down the generations the memory of the execution of Charles I has shocked royalists and thrilled republicans. Royalists and Tories have in general been less excited by the coup of 1653, for in their eyes the parliament and the army had deserved each other. Among men of Roundhead sympathies, however, the memory of the expulsion has run deep. It had a central place in the republican tradition of English historical writing, which, from Slingsby Bethel and Edmund Ludlow in the later seventeenth century to William Godwin in the early nineteenth, saw it as the moment of fatal apostasy that sacrificed England's liberties to a usurping tyrant and robbed the land of its nascent tradition of representative government. That version of the event is a familiar one. But there is a less familiar one, too, on which I shall concentrate here: a version in which the coup showed Cromwell to be not villain but hero.

In the eighteenth century, admiration for Cromwell was for the most part rare and heavily qualified. Yet it existed. However evil the means by which he had gained power, it was often acknowledged, he had put it to some good uses, which put the run of kings and governments after him to shame. He became a stick to beat modern rulers. The dynamism of his foreign policy, which had made England feared abroad, was on a number of occasions contrasted with the feebleness of a present regime.

The eighteenth century credited him with another virtue too, one more directly relevant to our theme. His regime, it judged, had been incorruptible. In the seventeenth century the principal focus of political anxiety was the prospect of tyranny. In the eighteenth it was corruption. The executive, who in the seventeenth century had sought to bypass the legislature, was now accused of corrupting it through patronage, place

and bribery. The fear of absolute monarchy largely yielded to the fear of oligarchy.

The Long Parliament, too, had been attacked as a corrupt oligarchy, clinging to office, as the septennial ministries of the eighteenth century would be accused of doing, sooner than face the electorate. Corruption and the self-interested perpetuation of power were the burden of Cromwell's accusations in his furious speech at the dissolution. So in the eighteenth century his expulsion of the Rump could seem a mark of virtue. Sir Robert Walpole's oligarchy was often equated with the Rump: you may know the famous contemporary cartoon which shows Walpole's followers worshipping beneath that unflatteringly represented feature of his anatomy. Later Hanoverian ministries were judged in the same light. In 1767 parliament's maltreatment of John Wilkes provoked the publication of a forged version of Cromwell's speech at the coup, in which Oliver is made to say: 'Your country, therefore, calls upon me to cleanse the Augean stables'. George Crabbe's poem 'The Frank Courtship' describes a Dissenting congregation, apparently modelled on one of the 1770s, whose members revered Cromwell's memory and liked to remember the moment when he 'turned out the members and made fast the door, / Ridding the House of every knave and drone.'

By the early nineteenth century, when the balance of constitutional power between Crown and parliament had clearly tilted in the latter's favour, it was increasingly parliament rather than the Crown that got the blame for public grievances. The hardship of the decades after 1800, and the rise of popular agitation that produced the radical movements for social and parliamentary reform, brought a popular dimension to admiration of Cromwell's coup. Though it would be long before his reputation became predominantly favourable, there were movements of ideas in the decades from 1800 that would make of him a champion of working-class radicalism, of Chartists and socialists and republicans, of Mechanics Institutes and popular debating societies. Cromwell had come of gentle origins, but in the nineteenth century he was widely held to have 'belonged to', or 'sprung from', 'the people', and to have defied the 'delusive' aristocratic values of 'honour' and 'chivalry'. 'The aristocracy of England', remarked Edmund Clarke to the Manchester Mechanics Institute in 1846, 'have always regarded Cromwell as their chief enemy', for he 'infused the loftiest energy into the common people, and showed that there was a soul in the plebeian, and a might in his arm, before which the aristocrat and his retainer were as dry twigs before the blast'.

But those who made most of the memory of the dissolution of the Long Parliament were more radical, and more despairing, than Clarke. In 1811 a letter from starving and unemployed workmen to the Home Secretary warned him of impending 'vengeance': 'It's time a second Oliver made his appearance to cleanse the Augean stables' (that phrase again). When, around 1816, the radical weaver and poet Samuel Bamford first visited the House of Commons, in the old chamber of St Stephen's chapel, he was shocked by what he saw: 'And are these, I thought, the beings whose laws we must obey? This "the most illustrious assembly of free men in the world"? Perish freedom then and her children too. Oh for the stamp of stern old Oliver on this floor; and the clank of his scabbard, and the rush of his iron-armed band, and his voice to arise above this babel-howl: Take away this bauble! Be gone, give place to honest men!' Fifteen years later, at the crisis over the Great Reform Act, the following notice appeared in Henry Hetherington's journal *The Poor Man's Guardian*: 'Wanted, a man of the most uncompromising honest and enterprising activity, who will undertake to clear St Stephen's, and the whole country, of a host of vermin who are fattening themselves upon the productions of our poor starving and miserable fellow-countrymen. Any person by the name of Cromwell would be preferred'.

If we move forward from the early to the late nineteenth century we find further endorsements of the coup; but now they come from more respectable quarters. People complain today that parliament is too weak in relation to the executive. A century or so ago they complained that it was too strong. This was the era of the National Efficiency movement, whose devotees fretted at the confinement of government power, in both domestic and foreign policy, by outdated principles of parliamentary rule, from which Britain's continental rivals were free. The last years of the century produced what Cromwell's biographer the Liberal cabinet minister John Morley called 'a fresh spell of vigorous popularity' for Oliver. It 'fell in', he would recall, 'with some notions of the day about the beneficent activities of the state, the virtues of a Strong Man, and the Hero as Ruler'. Lord Rosebery, the Liberal Prime Minister who financed – at a small financial cost and a huge one of political embarrassment – the building of the statue of Cromwell that stands outside the Houses of Parliament, was a prominent advocate of National Efficiency. He hailed Cromwell as 'a mighty man of action' and remarked that 'we could find employment for a few Cromwells now'. In one influential public speech Rosebery echoed Cromwell's words at the dissolution of the Long Parliament. In 1900 Leo Maxe's *National Review*, the organ of National Efficiency feeling, remarked that 'never has parliament sunk so low; never

have Englishmen been so able to apprehend the joy with which their forefathers saw the Commons bundled out of their seats by the strong hand of Cromwell'.

I do not think that such parallels would carry such resonance now. Every age thinks of historical parallels, for all political assessment or argument has to appeal to experience, and experience is history. The recent outbreak of war in Iraq has prompted immediate comparisons with Vietnam or Suez or Munich. Yet those parallels fall within living memory. I have not noticed many comparisons with wars fought two centuries ago, let alone the kind of political thinking that in Cromwell's own time would have looked for instruction to examples across the range of known history, classical, biblical, medieval, recent. There is a strange paradox about the present standing of history. Never have history books sold better, and yet never has public life been historically less conscious or informed. To the government the past is something not to be respected or learned from but the source of outdated or incorrect attitudes that we are to be modernized out of. The nineteenth century witnessed a huge debate, fought over more than fifty years in London, in the provincial cities, in the national and local press, about whether a national statue should be erected of Oliver Cromwell. The present Mayor of London has called for the removal of the statues of two Victorian generals in Trafalgar Square, not because he objects to their deeds or views but, he says cheerfully, because he has no idea who they are.

There is, I think, a second reason why the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coup has generally made so little impression. Cromwell's expulsion of the Long Parliament mattered to the nation so long as parliament mattered. Admirers of his coup often judged the parliaments of their own time to be corrupt or overweening, but the institution's place at the centre of the nation's life was indisputable. The modern decline of Westminster in public consciousness and esteem has had its own effect on our view of the parliamentary past. In professional historical writing it has produced a challenge to the old Whig narrative, which traced the growing power of parliament in the decades before the civil war. In the popular mind it has obscured an episode that remains unique in our history, and which this Association has today done a service by recalling.

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## LEARNING THE ROPES IN 'HIS OWN FIELDS': CROMWELL'S EARLY SIEGES IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

*by Dr Peter Gaunt*

...Which storm was about eight o'clock in the morning in the month of May and the English entered without any opposition; and but few were to be seen in the town till they so entered, and the lane was crammed full of horsemen armed with helmets, back breast swords, musquetoons and pistols. On which those in the front seeing themselves in a pound, and could not make their way further, cried out, 'Halt! Halt!' On which those entering behind at the breach thought by those words that they were all running away, and cried out 'Advance! Advance!' as fast as those before them, till that pound or lane was full and could hold no more.

Then suddenly rushes a resolute party of pike men and musqueteers to the breach, and scoured off and knocked back those entering. At which instance Hugh Duff's men within fell on those in the pound with shots, pikes, scythes, stones, and casting off great long pieces of timber with the engines amongst them, and then two guns firing at them from the end of the pound, slaughtering them by the middle or knees, with chained bullets, that in less than an hour's time about a thousand men were killed in that pound, being a top one another.

At this time Cromwell was on horseback at the gate, with his guard, expecting the gates to be opened by those who had entered, until he saw those in the breach beaten back and heard the cannons going off within. Then he fell off as much vexed as ever he was since he first put on a helmet against the King, for such a repulse he did not usually meet with.<sup>1</sup>

The attempt by Cromwell to conclude the siege of Clonmel in Ireland in May 1650 by storming the town was an unmitigated disaster and ended with the slaughter of a tenth or more of the besieging army. Arriving before the town on 27 April, Cromwell had initially sought to capture Clonmel through a mixture of siege and subterfuge. When this proved ineffective, around mid May he deployed his heavy artillery against the north wall of the town, soon opening a breach which he considered wide enough to storm. But under cover of darkness and apparently undetected by the parliamentarians, the townspeople and the garrison had prepared a trap, constructing an enclosure or 'pound' of mud, stone and timber

walls, with a ditch at the far end guarded by cannon loaded with chain shot set at about waist height. Musketeers were also deployed at the upper storey windows of the houses which overlooked this enclosure. On the following morning, probably 16 May, Cromwell sent part of his army, a mixture of horse and foot, charging through the quiet and apparently undefended breach, expecting them to gain control of the northern part of the town and to open the main gate. Instead, they blundered into the trap. Some of the garrison then sealed the breach to prevent their escape or relief and the killing began. Waiting outside the main gate, Cromwell at length became aware that something had gone badly wrong, but even then he did not significantly alter his plan or abandon the operation. Instead for several hours more he sent further waves of horse and foot through the breach, many of them to their deaths, while others attempted to scale the walls, also in vain. Eventually even Cromwell had to accept defeat and ordered a retreat, by which time somewhere between 1500 and 2500 parliamentarian corpses adorned the defences of Clonmel. It was by some way the New Model Army's blackest and costliest day and also the most dismal and disastrous episode in Cromwell's military career. As had become Cromwell's usual practice, throughout his campaign in Ireland in 1649-50 he had sent a series of long and detailed letters back to London, most of them addressed to the Speaker of the House of Commons, relating military events. But there is a deafening silence surrounding the operation at Clonmel – no surviving letter from Cromwell gives an account of this expensive episode. Even the English newspapers struggled to put a positive spin on the operation and although they stressed that the town had surrendered on the following day, once the defending garrison had withdrawn, and so could be considered a success of sorts, they conceded that the English death toll had been high.

Most assessments of Cromwell's abilities as a soldier are very positive and the label 'natural military genius' is often deployed. With considerable justification, historians and biographers stress his achievements on and off the battlefield, as probably the most conspicuously and consistently successful general on either side in the course of the civil wars of the mid seventeenth century. Many focus on his early military career in East Anglia and the East Midlands in the first eighteen months of the English civil war, not only exploring how Cromwell – who apparently had no military experience before summer 1642 – learnt his trade in this period, but also searching for and claiming to detect those traits and abilities which underpinned his subsequent military career and led on to such glittering success and almost unbroken run of victories – his complete commitment to the parliamentary cause and to a military resolution, his

care in raising and training troops, the tight discipline he maintained on and off the battlefield and his close attention to the administrative and material elements which maintained the war effort. For most historians and biographers, Cromwell's military apprenticeship in his home region early in the war laid solid and firm foundations for the successful and triumphant career which followed.

However, the story of Cromwell and siege warfare is not such a happy and glorious one. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that he was not so deft or skilled at handling sieges. During the English civil war of 1642-46 he was involved in a number of sieges, most of which ended quite speedily with the garrison surrendering on terms. The principal exception was the siege of Basing House in Hampshire in October 1645, which was concluded by bloody storm and slaughter. In Wales in summer 1648 Cromwell was not so convincing, for he clearly under-estimated the difficulties presented by the castle and walled town of Pembroke and the tenacity of his opponents. The operation proved far more protracted than he had hoped or expected, his predictions that the town would surrender or fall quite swiftly proved very wide of the mark and, increasingly frustrated, he ordered several premature and unsuccessful attempts to capture Pembroke by storm. The Irish campaign of 1649-50 was dominated by a series of sieges and attacks upon towns and castles in eastern and southern Ireland. The results were mixed, with hard-won and terrible victories at Drogheda and Wexford, eventual success at Kilkenny and Clonmel, though only at a high cost in parliamentarian dead, and failure at Duncannon and Waterford. Although the Scottish campaign of 1650-51 brought Cromwell two of his greatest victories in battle, it was also marked by inactivity and frustration, by Cromwell's inability to bring to battle an enemy who skilfully used the geographical and logistical potential of their home country. But by now Cromwell had become more cautious and, tempting though it might have been to attack and lay siege to the enemy HQ of Edinburgh and Leith in 1650 and Stirling in 1651, he now fought shy of that type of campaign. With some very minor exceptions – for example, in winter 1650-51 he besieged Edinburgh castle, which was holding out even after the town had fallen – Clonmel proved to be Cromwell's last major siege.

In the mid seventeenth century there were two broad approaches to capturing a defended town, castle or other stronghold. One approach was formally to besiege the stronghold, to surround and completely isolate it, perhaps building around it lines of circumvallation – earthwork banks and ditches, strengthened by earthwork artillery forts. The defenders might

then be harassed by bombardment directed against the walls and gates or by mortars lobbed into the stronghold, together with military shows of force to dissuade them from sallying out, but there was no real expectation or intention of actually capturing the stronghold in this way. Instead, a long, formal siege operation was envisaged, which would eventually lead to the surrender of the stronghold as a combination of starvation, disease, isolation and the hopelessness of their position would lead to a collapse in morale and physical well-being amongst the defenders and their unwillingness or inability to hold out any longer. This was an approach seen, for example, in parliamentary operations against the towns of Newark and Oxford and the castle of Raglan towards the end of the main civil war and against rebel-held Colchester in 1648. It was the method generally favoured by Sir Thomas Fairfax. The second approach, far more aggressive and designed to capture the stronghold quickly, involved an intense bombardment directed at one or more weak spots in the defences to open up a breach and then an attempt to storm the stronghold, charging in through the breach, overwhelming the hopefully weakened defenders and capturing the town or castle outright. This approach, which Cromwell generally favoured, carried greater risks – the attacking force was almost bound to suffer some casualties in the process and if the attack proved premature and met with fierce resistance it would fail and the attackers would suffer a much higher death toll.

Cromwell's sieges of the period from autumn 1645, when he gained independent command of a New Model Army unit wrapping up a cluster of royalist bases (including Basing House) in central southern England, through to his Irish campaign of 1649-50, closing with the bloody siege of Clonmel (after which he largely eschewed formal siege operations), were predominantly of the second, more aggressive type. Although at Pembroke and elsewhere he was forced on occasion to engage in a fairly long, static siege, this was generally only because attempts to conclude the operation more swiftly by storm had proved ineffective.<sup>2</sup> More often, as at Basing House, Drogheda and Wexford, Cromwell spent just a few days bombarding the stronghold to open up one or more breaches in the defences and then stormed in. In some cases, this approach worked and brought a speedy victory at a modest price in terms of parliamentary dead and injured. But in others, it failed and proved far more costly, leading to prolonged siege operations (as at Pembroke, where the attempt to storm proved premature, and at Waterford, where Cromwell was eventually turned back as much by disease and the weather as by the tenacity of the defenders) or to a very bloody, pyrrhic victory which was really a defeat (as at Clonmel). Cromwell's record in undertaking siege operations was a

mixed one, far more mixed than his almost unblemished record in field engagements. This can be explained in several ways. It could be argued that Cromwell's own character, his desire evident many times during the 1640s to push ahead and engage the enemy as quickly as possible, an almost impetuous streak, generally worked well enough in battle, but was not so suited to siege operations; his desire to end things as quickly as possible by bombardment and storm did not always work. It may also be true that at Clonmel and at some other Irish towns, and perhaps at Pembroke too, he came up against military leaders who were generally cannier than many of those whom he met on the battlefield.

However, part of the explanation for Cromwell's rather mixed record in handling sieges may also be found in his military apprenticeship in East Anglia and the East Midlands during the first full year of the civil war. He had learnt well enough how to conduct field engagements through his involvement in a whole string of skirmishes and larger battles in his home region during the opening phase of the civil war. But if we look to that region and that period, it soon becomes clear that Cromwell's early experiences of siege operations were very slender and limited and his apprenticeship sadly lacking. Although he visited both besieged Hull and the siege of King's Lynn in early autumn 1643, throughout the period 1642-43 Cromwell actively participated and took a prominent role in just two operations which might be labelled sieges – the operations against Crowland in April 1643 and against Burghley House in July 1643. Both were quite brief and limited though successful affairs, part of the defensive operation to hold the northern frontier of the parliamentary heartlands of East Anglia against the tide of royalism sweeping both south and east through Lincolnshire during 1643. Accordingly, both sieges took place close to the southern boundary of Lincolnshire.

The earliest clear sign of royalism in south Lincolnshire, an abortive rising led by Captain Welby in the opening weeks of 1643, had been put down by local parliamentary forces out of Boston. But following an expansion in royalist activity elsewhere in the county, much of it from the major royalist base of Newark, including the capture of Grantham in late March, there was another outburst of royalism in the south of the county. This came to be focused on the small settlement of Crowland and it was in response to these activities that Crowland became the scene of Cromwell's earliest siege, in April 1643.

The origins of Crowland or Croyland supposedly dated back to 716, when St Guthlac founded an abbey on the site. Rebuilt several times

following Scandinavian raids and accidental fires, the abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII in the 1530s. However, its church was retained to serve as the parish church of the small village, which had grown up around the abbey during the medieval period. By the seventeenth century, many of the other abbey buildings had already fallen ruinous or were being plundered for stone. The topography of the area has changed greatly over the centuries, with rivers artificially channelled and supplemented by other artificial drains or ditches as part of the process of draining and reclaiming the land – a process which was underway on a small scale in the medieval period and which greatly expanded during the seventeenth century. But at the time of the civil war, Crowland was still largely surrounded by fens, giving rise to the idea that it was an island. Several early modern commentators noted the insularity of the area, writing of 'ague stricken fenmen with lustreless, opium bleared eyes', of 'foul and flabby quagmires, yea and most troublesome Fennes, which the very inhabitants themselves, for all their stilts, cannot stalk through' and 'this so famous monastery lying amongst the deepest fens and waters stagnating off muddy lands'.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Crowland was not a true island, for it lay at the north-east end of a gravel promontory, by the junction of the rivers Nene and Welland. It could be approached from the south-west along the promontory, and less easily from the north and south along raised banks. To the east lay a large and inaccessible area of bog and fen.

The nature of the topography and the potential for mounting resistance in the area were made clear by a parliamentary ordinance of 1644, passed at a time when Crowland had again risen up in support of the king. It noted that 'by reason of the unseasonableness of the weather the approaches to the said Garrison are become so inaccessible that though forces were drawn out to reduce the same, it cannot now possibly be done without much charge and difficulty'. Accordingly, to surround and isolate the Crowland royalists, parliament ordered three small forts built north-east, south-east and west of the village, each to be garrisoned by fifty men equipped with a boat. Even so, parliament recognised that 'by reason of the divers and various creeks and dranes in the severall Fennes wherewith the said Garrison of Crowland is environed' it would still be possible for the royalists to 'issue out of small Boats with parties to the towns and villages adjacent'. Therefore, two forces, each numbering 120 horse and foot, were to be kept stationed nearby, one on the Northamptonshire side, the other manned by the Eastern Association.<sup>4</sup>

Taking advantage of their isolated and naturally defended position, sometime during the opening months of 1643 the villagers of Crowland

came out for the king, taking up arms and building bulwarks and other earthwork fortifications to defend themselves from possible parliamentary attack. On 25 March a body of 80-90 Crowlanders, led by Captain Thomas Stiles and actively supported by the minister of Crowland, swooped down on the parliamentary town of Spalding. They plundered the town, but the main purpose of the attack seems to have been to take and carry back as prisoners and hostages some of the townsmen. Several were seized but then were either released or managed to escape. However, three leading townsmen were taken back to Crowland – Mr Ram, minister of Spalding, John Harrington and Sergeant Edward Horne. A few days later, royalist scouts seized and similarly imprisoned a fourth man, the elderly William Slater. Denied pen, ink and paper and threatened with the confiscation of their bible, the four were held prisoner in Crowland. In mid April local forces out of Spalding attempted both to rescue their friends and to put down the Crowland rising. However, attacks upon the town from the north and the west proved ineffective for a number of reasons. Firstly, Crowland was by then well protected with newly built earthworks, referred to variously as breastworks or bulwarks, enhancing the natural defences. The banks and ditches were lined with musketeers, who also had access to a variety of knives and other fenland implements, which could serve as weapons. The minister of Crowland reportedly toured the defences, urging vigilance and resolution. Secondly, the attacking force had few artillery pieces at their disposal and able to be deployed against the village; the one cannon which they did possess and moved into possession, soon broke and could not be repaired. Thirdly, the defenders employed their hostages as human shields, trussing them up and making them stand on top of the bulwarks where the attack was heaviest. At first, the attackers did not recognise their friends and relatives and shot at them regardless, though luckily without hitting any of them. Once they realised who they were, they were forced to desist and shift their attack to another area; the hostages, in turn, were shuffled round to deter this new attack. Eventually, the Spalding forces gave up and retreated.

Ten days later, on Tuesday 25 April, a larger force of parliamentarians arrived to attack Crowland. Cromwell appears to have been the leading figure in this operation, though he was assisted by Sir Miles Hobart and Sir Anthony Ireby. The parliamentarians attacked on three sides, the south, west and north. Again, the hostages were wheeled out to deter and discourage the attack, though Cromwell's threat to deny quarter if these tactics persisted seems to have caused a change of heart, and contemporary accounts make no mention of the use of human shields in

the later stages of the operation. However, bad weather intervened and for two days heavy rain and strong winds forced many of the parliamentarians to fall back for a time, though units were left north and south of the town, firing on and harassing the Crowlanders. When the weather abated on the Thursday, Cromwell and his colleagues renewed their attack, again approaching the town from the south, west and north and maintaining such heavy fire throughout the afternoon that the defenders began to lose heart. During the evening and overnight many of them slipped away eastwards into the large area of bog and fen. On the morning of Friday 28 April the depleted forces remaining in the village indicated their wish to negotiate, though the terms they initially suggested were deemed so unreasonable that the parliamentarians immediately rejected them. Instead, they advanced and entered the village virtually opposed, meeting no serious resistance as they did so. Cromwell acted mercifully, granting quarter and maintaining military discipline, though a clutch of ringleaders, either captured in Crowland when the village fell or secured soon after in the surrounding fens, were dispatched to prisons in Ipswich and Colchester. According to contemporary accounts, casualties were surprisingly low – the royalist defenders lost one dead and one seriously injured, while the parliamentarians lost five dead but around twenty seriously injured, several of whom died later from their wounds. Indeed, parliamentary accounts alleged bitterly that the royalist had used deliberately roughened and jagged bullets in order to make wounds more severe and subsequent infection more likely. Cromwell soon moved on, returning to Peterborough from whence he had marched on Crowland, but his exploits received full and laudatory coverage in the parliamentary press. Thus *Certain Informations* recorded that ‘the Heroicke and valiant Colonel Cromwell passing that way from Peterborough hath regained the town of Crowland, driven the said Captain Welby and his wicked imps from thence and reduced those parts to their former peace and tranquility’.<sup>5</sup>

If Cromwell’s besieging and capture of Crowland in late April had concluded a prolonged and fairly well organised stand by royalist forces, the operation against Burghley House in late July was unexpected and unplanned. By July 1643 the royalist star was in the ascendant in Lincolnshire. The king’s men had occupied Stamford and were reportedly attempting to fortify the weakly defended town. During the third week of July the Stamford royalists, reinforced by colleagues out of Newark and Belvoir, ventured south-east, intent upon attacking and perhaps even attempting to capture parliamentary Peterborough. However, they were severely rebuffed by Colonel Palgrave and they fell back on Stamford in

some disorder. Attempting to capitalise on this royalist reverse, Cromwell swiftly advanced upon the town from the south, in the hope of catching them off balance and unawares as well as retaking Stamford. By accident or design, the principal royalist force did not attempt to hold the town itself, probably recognising that Stamford’s decayed medieval defences, bolstered by whatever the royalists had managed to throw up over the preceding few days, would be too weak to hold off Cromwell’s men. Instead, the main force at first attempted to hold Wothrop or Worthorp House, a mansion to the south-west of the town, though minor skirmishing – in which Cromwell lost one dead, the royalists a dozen men – soon encouraged them to move on. Instead, most of the royalists took shelter in Burghley House and tried to hold the main building and its surrounding grounds.

Burghley House, which was and is one of the greatest mansions of the Elizabethan age, was built by William Cecil, Lord Burghley, between the 1560s and the 1580s on the site of an earlier house, parts of which may have been incorporated within the Elizabethan edifice. The mansion is of Barnack stone and comprises three main storeys arranged in four principal wings around a rectangular courtyard. The surrounding grounds were encircled and enclosed by a stone wall and – although the contemporary accounts are not entirely clear on this point – the royalists may initially have attempted to hold and fortify that enclosure. If so, the attempt was brief and unsuccessful, for the royalists soon fell back on Burghley House itself and set about trying to hold the mansion. This in itself was a measure of their desperation, for its undefended ground floor entrances and its large outward facing windows on all three storeys meant that, without any additional earthworks or outer defences, the mansion had very limited military potential.

In fact, the royalists enjoyed a brief interlude of fairly peaceful occupation of Burghley House. Although Cromwell had with him six or seven troops of horse, he needed both infantry and ordnance before he could seriously attempt to capture the mansion. He therefore halted and awaited reinforcements brought up by Colonels Hobart and Palgrave and possibly Sir Samuel Luke. They duly arrived, though their deployment, and the operation as a whole, was further delayed by heavy rain. Thus reinforced, the parliamentarians numbered around 3-4,000 men, plus a dozen artillery pieces.

The siege operation began in the early hours of 24 July, when the artillery opened up and bombarded the house for several hours, though

reportedly with little effect upon its main fabric. Attempts by Cromwell and his fellow-officers to open negotiations, offering the royalists quarter and the right to march off, were rebuffed. As at Crowland, the collapse of negotiations was followed almost immediately by a full-scale parliamentary attack. At Crowland, the depleted and demoralised defenders appear to have lost their nerve by this stage and had offered no serious resistance, but at Burghley House the royalists put up a stiff fight. The attempt by the parliamentary infantry to storm the stronghold was countered by heavy musket fire. The principal contemporary account of the operation rightly notes that Cromwell's attempt to storm the house, to fight his way in through a frontal attack, was 'a difficult task and full of danger' and that the ensuing fight was 'very hot and well performed on both sides'.<sup>6</sup> However, by early afternoon the royalist defenders judged that their position was untenable – 'their Spirits began to faile them'<sup>7</sup> – and they sought to open negotiations. As at Crowland, Cromwell acted with restraint, quarter was granted and the house passed to the parliamentarians in an orderly manner. Cromwell captured Burghley House and with it took prisoner two royalist colonels, six or seven captains, 400 foot and 200 horse.

The entire siege operation at Burghley had lasted eleven hours, from 2 am, when the ordnance had opened up, until around 1 pm, when the royalists opened negotiations. The parliamentarians lost just a handful dead, though many more were wounded. While the main operation was in progress, Cromwell had dispatched three of his troops of horse to intercept and scatter a body of 400 royalists, some regular soldiers, others described as 'Club-men comming in to the aid of the Cavaliers', who were advancing on Burghley from Grantham to support the beleaguered defenders. They were engaged and routed about two miles outside Stamford, leaving fifty royalists dead.<sup>8</sup>

As at Crowland, the brief operation at Burghley House on 24 July received detailed coverage in many of the parliamentary newspapers. One of the fullest and most colourful appeared in *The Parliament Scout*.

Our Scout told you that Colonell Cromwell was hindred by the raine on Saturday seven-night otherwaies he had accepted of the kinde proffer of the Cavaliers in Burleigh house which was to dine with them, but on Monday or Tuesday they came, and falling roundly to it, eate up every bit, for there was not one man or horse that escaped; there were divers killed among the rest a Haberdasher of Ludgate Hill, there were five hundred prisoners

taken, two hundred and thirty were brought to Cambridge, and so to London; there were about four and twenty commanders also brought to Cambridge, who are ordered to divers prisons...most of the Common men were but lately entertained, they pretend a willingnesse to serve the Parliament...The Colonell having thus happily cloathed and horst divers of his men, for there were three troopes of Horse and two of Dragoones of the Enemy, not willing to have his men die with idleness and lying still, speeds to the reliefe of Gainsborough.<sup>9</sup>

Several salient points emerge from this brief review of Cromwell's early sieges. Most obviously, there were not many of them – just two operations in which Cromwell was actively involved as a commander, which might justify the label 'siege'. Both were very brief affairs – Cromwell's attack on Crowland began on a Tuesday but was then largely abandoned until the Thursday afternoon and was then concluded on Friday morning, while the operation against Burghley House lasted just eleven hours on a single day. Both sieges met with limited opposition, which inflicted few casualties, were disrupted as much by bad weather as by royalist action, and ended with very swift and in the end quite easy parliamentary victories. The surviving contemporary source material for both operations is limited and almost without exception is parliamentary in origin, so we need to exercise some caution in how we employ and interpret it. Sadly, at this early stage in his military career, Cromwell was not yet in the habit of writing long letters about his campaigns and his surviving correspondence of 1643 gives no account of either operation. Yet these sieges do play an important part of Cromwell's unfolding military career and historians' assessments of it. They enhanced Cromwell's reputation, for it is noticeable that the parliamentary newspapers give quite full and laudatory coverage to both operations. Moreover, in *A True Relation of Colonell Cromwells Proceedings Against the Cavaliers* of late July 1643, giving an account of his actions at Burghley House and Stamford, we find the earliest pamphlet in Thomason's collection which has Cromwell's name as part of its main title.<sup>10</sup>

Above all, Cromwell's approach to, and experience of, these two sieges in 1643 set the tone for what was to follow. From the outset, he adopted an active, aggressive stance, keen to end the siege and secure the stronghold as quickly as possible, unwilling to sit back and play the long game. There was a degree of haste, impetuosity almost, in Cromwell ordering his men to launch frontal assaults on Crowland and Burghley House. As it turned out, both brought quick successes with minimal parliamentary casualties,

but in both cases Cromwell had taken something of a risk – as the main parliamentary account of the operation had noted, the decision to launch a frontal attack on Burghley House was fraught with danger. It may be that Cromwell's rather thin grounding in siege operations early in his military career, his rather inadequate apprenticeship in East Anglia and the East Midlands during the opening year or so of the conflict, combined with the rich rewards – the quick and easy victories – which in these cases his speedy and high risk approach had brought, reinforced his own character and inclination and encouraged him later in the war to adopt the same approach towards capturing defended strongholds. Alas, the tactic of bombarding a stronghold for a day or two and then launching a frontal attack to take it by storm did not always work and at times proved very expensive or utterly futile. A connection can be made between the shortcomings of some of Cromwell's later sieges and his limited grounding in siege warfare during the opening year or so of the conflict. The terrible failings of Cromwell's last major siege, and with it the hundreds of New Model Army corpses scattered in and around Clonmel in May 1650, may in part be linked to the inadequacies of Cromwell's military apprenticeship in 1643 in 'his own fields'.

#### Notes

1. Account reproduced in full as an appendix to T Reilly, *Cromwell, An Honourable Enemy* (Dingle, 1999), pp. 300-02.
2. This makes Cromwell's long and rather uneventful siege of Pontefract castle in autumn 1648 all the more unusual and out of character, adding to suspicions that the nature and duration of the operation were being shaped, at least in part, by non-military factors.
3. P Hayes & T Lane, *The Fenland Project, Number 5: Lincolnshire Survey, the South-West Fens* (Sleaford, 1992), pp. 203-4.
4. British Library, Thomason Tract [hereafter BL TT] E16 (12).
5. BL, TT E101 (2); for other accounts see also *Speciall Passages*, BL TT E100 (17); *Speciall Passages*, BL TT E99 (21); *Speciall Passages*, BL TT E101 (6); and, above all, *Divers Remarkable Passages of Gods Good Providence in the Wonderfull preservation and deliverance of...who were taken prisons by the Cavaliers of Croyland*, BL TT E104 (34).
6. *A True Relation of Colonell Cromwels Proceedings against the Cavaliers*, BL TT E62 (7), an account reproduced in full as an appendix to C Davies, *Stamford and the Civil War* (Stamford, 1992).
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. *The Parliament Scout*, BL TT E63 (13); for other accounts see also *The Parliament Scout*, BL TT 61 (23); *Mercurius Civicus*, BL TT E63 (11); *Certaine*

- Informations*, BL TT E62 (16); *Speciall Passages*, BL TT 62 (8); *The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer*, BL TT E61 (22); and *A Perfect Diurnall*, BL TT E249 (30).
10. BL TT E62 (7). However, Cromwell's name had appeared amongst the 'sub-titles' of some slightly earlier pamphlets, such as *A True Relation of a Great Victory Obtained by the Parliament Forces in Lincolnshire of late May 1643*, as revealed by 'severall letters, one from Colonel Cromwell...', BL TT E104 (12).

Dr Peter Gaunt is chairman of The Cromwell Association. This is a slightly revised version of a paper first given at a dayschool on 'His Own Fields: Cromwell and East Anglia' held at Huntingdon in May 1999, organised by John Sutton and run by Anglia Polytechnic University in conjunction with The Cromwell Association and The Cromwell Museum.

## WRITINGS AND SOURCES VI. DURHAM UNIVERSITY: 'A PIOUS AND LAUDABLE WORK'<sup>1</sup>

by Jane A. Mills

The story of Durham and higher education started long before the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1249 William of Durham, Rector of Wearmouth and Archbishop-elect of Rouen, left 310 marks for the support of students to study Masters of Arts in the University of Oxford. Thirty-seven years later the Prior of Durham, Hugh of Darlington provided money so that his eight young monks could receive an education at Oxford. His successor Richard of Houghton then provided the buildings, which became Durham Hall, admitting eight secular students and four monks. On the completion of the dissolution, Hugh Whitehead, the last Prior of Durham left his Abbey and became the first Dean of Durham College. Unfortunately the venture failed and the site and the buildings comprising of a hall, chapel, library and rooms were bought by Sir Thomas Pope in 1555. He founded his own college on the site and took the name from Durham College's dedication: to the Trinity, the Virgin and St Cuthbert. Trinity College Oxford has changed over the years and the only original Durham College building to survive is the Old Library.

During the 1640s education was becoming an important topic of conversation and people such as William Petty and Gerard Winstanley had strong opinions, while Samuel Hartlib and John Dury<sup>2</sup> became very influential during this period.

Samuel Hartlib, John Pym and John Selden MP for Oxford University, invited Comenius (John Amos Komensky 1592-1671) a prominent Czech educationalist to England to set up a great college of scientific learning. He had worked in Poland, Sweden and the Netherlands trying to promote reforms in education. The idea was to educate both sexes in sciences, and make them pure in morals and trained in piety. This was to be achieved by local schools provided by lay authorities, they could then advance to gymnasia (in every city) and universities (in every province). It was hoped that this would create individuals to be part of a peaceful civilization. Hartlib had ideas for founding trade school so the population of England would be far superior.

During this time John Pym had been working on The Grand Remonstrance, a manifesto of demands requested by the House of Commons that was presented to Charles I on 1 December 1641 at

Hampton Court. In two of the clauses they clearly state their wish for educational reform.

They have maliciously charged us that we intend to destroy and discourage learning, whereas it is our chiefest care and desire to advance it, and to provide a competent maintenance for conscionable and preaching ministers throughout the kingdom, which will be a great encouragement to scholars, and a certain means whereby the want, meanness and ignorance, to which a great part of the clergy is now subject, will be prevented.<sup>3</sup>

And we intended likewise to reform and purge the fountains of learning, the two Universities, that the streams flowing from thence may be clear and pure, and an honour and comfort to the whole land.<sup>4</sup>

John Milton wrote a pamphlet called *Of Education* in 1644, this was an open letter addressed to Samuel Hartlib about his thoughts on how schools should provide children with

... a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war.<sup>5</sup>

Milton was continuing the debate, which Francis Bacon started in 1605 when he wrote *The Advancement of Learning* where he set out his belief that the nation would become a world leader through a thoroughly educated population. He wanted combined schools and universities, which would provide a general education up to Master of Arts, from the age of twelve to twenty-one. A student would only need to leave to attend a specialised college for law or medicine in order to become a practitioner. The general education would allow the population to be more proficient in any career they wished to pursue.

Unfortunately these grand ideas came to nothing due to the start of the Civil Wars, which obviously became a drain on the Parliamentary purses; though a few schools benefited from grants from sequestrated revenues of ecclesiastics. During the Protectorate there were opportunities to make small improvements in specific areas such as teaching appointments.

One of the earliest letters we have written by Cromwell is dated 1635. In this letter he passionately explains his belief in the importance of a religious education.

...Building of hospitals provides for men's bodies; to build material temples is judged a work of piety; but they that procure spiritual food, they that build-up spiritual temples, they are the men truly charitable, truly pious.<sup>6</sup>

So it was obvious that when various people from Durham and the North approached Cromwell about establishing a college, he would take a personal interest.

The Recommendatory letter of Oliver Cromwell (when General of the Forces of the Commonwealth) to William Lenthall Esq; Speaker of the Parliament, for erecting a College at Durham.

Sir,

Having received information from the Mayor & Citizens of Durham & some Gentlemen of the Northerne Counties that upon their Petition to the Parliament, that the Howses of the late Deane & Chapter in the Citie of Durham might be converted into a Colledge or Schoole of literature; the Parliament was pleased in May last to refer the same to the Committee for removing obstructions in the Sale of Deane & Chapter Lands to consider thereof & to report their opinion therein to the Howse, which said Committee (as I am also informed) have so far approved thereof as that they are of opinion that the said Howses will be a fitt place to erect a Colledge or Scoole for all the Sociences & literature, and that it will be a pious and laudable worke, & of greate use to the Northerne parte; And have ordered Sir Arthur Hesilrige to make report thereof to the Howse accordingly. And the said Citizens & Gentlemen having made some Adresse to me to contribute my Assisstance to them therein, to which in soe good & pious worke I could not but willingly and Hartily concur: And not knowing wherein I might better serve them or answere their desires then by recommending the same to the Parliament by Sir your selfe their Speaker: I doe therefore make it my Humble & earnest request that the Howse my be moved as speedily as conveniently may be to heare the Reporte of the Said Committee concerning the said

business from Sir Arthur Hesilrige; that soe the Howse, taking the same into consideration may doe therein what shall seeme meete for the goode of those poore countries; Truly it seemes to me a matter of great concernment and importnace as that which (by the blessing of God) may much conduce to the promoting of Learning & Piety in these poore rude & ignorant parts, there being also many concurring advantages to this place, as pleasantness & aptness of Scrituation healthfull Aire & Plenty of Provisions which seeme to favor & plead for their desires therein; And (besides the good so obvious to us those Northerne Counties may reape thereby) who knows but the setting on foote of this worke at this tyme may suite with Gods present dispensacious, & may (if due care & circumspection be used in the right constituting & carrying on the same) tend to to & (by the blessing of God) produce such happy & glorious Fruites as are scarce thought on, or foreseene, sir not doubting of your readiness & zeale to promote so good and publiq; a worke I crave pardon for this boldness & rest.

Sir

Edinburgh, the  
11<sup>th</sup> March 1650

Your most humble Servant  
O.CROMWELL

For the Right Honorable William  
Lenthall Esq. Speaker of the  
Parliament of the Commonwealth  
Of England. These.<sup>7</sup>

The project languished in the doldrums until the Gentlemen Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Durham made a petition to Parliament for a College, School or Academy for the benefit of the Northern Counties, and at the same time Major-General Robert Lilburne added his name to the request, when he wrote a letter updating Secretary Thurloe on the Northern Counties business.

I hope you will also be pleased to further our adresse about a college. I doubt not but it will turne to the greate renowne of his highness, and very much affect the inhabitants of that poore county and citty to him and the government.<sup>8</sup>

On 1 February 1655-6 the Council discussed a report from the Committee for the establishment of a college for religious education. It was decided that the houses of the Dean and prebends including other property, which were to be sold, instead are allocated to trustees for use as a college. They included £282 4s 4d a year augmentation to be paid to '3 able and godly preachers to be members of the college',<sup>9</sup> the rents from the Bishop of Durham's manors at Wickham and Gatesside totalling £117 15s 4d should be paid to the trustees for erecting and maintaining the college. When the lease expired a yearly sum of £500 was to be paid to the college for the provost and fellows from the manors. Cromwell was to nominate the Provost, fellows, scholars and other necessary officers of the foundation. A Committee would be appointed to consider laws, statutes and ordinances in order to present them to Cromwell. The mayor and aldermen were to 'set up'<sup>10</sup> the Cathedral church for a chapel and college. This was approved on 6 February.

The Committee of Council prepared orders and statutes for the better government of Durham College and on 10 March the Council approved the list of names who were 'to prepare rules and statutes'<sup>11</sup>

Pres. Lawrence	Earl of Mulgrave
The Lord-Deputy	Viscount Lisle
Lord Lambert	Sir Chas. Wolsley
Sir Gilb. Pickering	Lord Strickland
Fras. Rous.	Lord-Commissioner
	Widdrington
Lord Chief Baron	Sir Gilb. Gerard
Sir Hen. Blount	The Solicitor-General
John Crew	Thos. Bonner, Alderman
	of Newcastle
Ant. Smith, of Durham	Dr. Cudworth
Dr. Thos. Goodwyn	Mr. Carill
Mr Lockyer	Mr. Calamy
Mr. Griffith	Wm. Berry
Mr. Cressett	Lord Commissioner
	Fiennes

On 12 April Cromwell and the Council approved the petition for Durham College, 'a new college for the advancement of learning and piety, and the training up of youth, and as a foundation'.<sup>12</sup>

The process of founding the college seemed to be a slow task. By August 1656 Lambert gave a report to Council from the committee for the draft of a charter for the new college and six days later seven new committee members were added, which included Samuel Hartlib and Ezerell Tonge D.D. from University College Oxford.<sup>13</sup> A month later Lambert introduced more changes for the draft and Cromwell ordered the Attorney General to prepare the draft of the charter with these amendments. The Council also ordered

The Major-General and Commissioners for County Durham ...that from the overplus profit of Sedgfield rectory...200l a year be allowed to the new College at Durham, to maintain two itinerant ministers to preach the Gospel thereabouts. Approved 23 Dec.<sup>14</sup>

Finally on 17 May 1657 Cromwell signed a writ of Privy Seal and the Letters Patent were issued for founding a College at Durham; which included the liberty to purchase land, sue and be sued, exemption from paying taxes and the privilege of printing Bibles and licensing books.

OLIVER Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, and the Dominions thereto belonging. To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting. WHEREAS it hath been represented unto Us by our right trusty and right well beloved Councillor John Lambert, and our right trusty and well beloved General Mountague, and our right trusty and well beloved Francis Rous Esq.; a Committee of our Councill (to whom the Petitions of the Justices, Grand Jury's, Gentlemen and Inhabitants of our City and County of Durham, County of Northumberland, and Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne, for the founding of a College at the City of Durham, was referred by our said Councill) that the founding of a College at Durham will be of great advantage to those Counties and to all the Northern Parts of this Island, as well in reference to the promoting of the Gospel, as the religious and prudent Education of young Men there: And it having thereupon been ordered by Us and our Council (according to the Opinion of the said Committee in Pursuance of the Petitioners desires) that a College be erected & founded at Durham. KNOW YE therefore that We having taken the Premises into our Consideration, of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere motion, have thought fit to erect and found, and by these Presents for Us and

our Successors do erect and found a College, in our said City of Durham, in our County of Durham, within the Scite of the College Houses, Cathedral Church and Castle in our said City of Durham or some of them; to be and continue a College from time to time hereafter for ever.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately the founding of Durham College was never going to be easy especially when Oxford and Cambridge Universities were very reluctant to give up their monopoly of conferring degrees, and successfully petitioned Richard Cromwell on 18 April 1659. Cromwell's death had already brought a halt to work on preparing the patent for granting degrees and Durham's university status. The return of the Monarchy to Britain meant that Durham College would not be 'hereafter for ever', the see of Durham was re-established.

#### Notes.

1. British Library *Tracts on Oliver Cromwell* 1302K 21.
2. Samuel Hartlib and John Dury were both Polish immigrants involved in politics, social reform and education. Hartlib introduced the writings of Comenius to England and was influential in the group, which founded the Royal Society.
3. S R Gardiner, *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660* (Oxford, 1906), The Grand Remonstrance clause 186, p 229.
4. *ibid* clause 187, p 230.
5. John Milton, *Prose Writing* (London, 1970), 323.; E.H. Visiak (ed), *Milton Complete Poetry and Selected Prose* (Nonesuch, 1948), 675.
6. T. Carlyle, *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols, London, 1897), II, 89-90; W C Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols, Oxford, 1988) I, 80.
7. British Library *Tracts of Oliver Cromwell* 1302K 21.
8. Thurloe iv p442 Jan 22 1655.
9. British Library Calendar of State papers Domestic 1655-56 Vol cxxiv p 156
10. *ibid*.
11. *ibid* p 218.
12. *ibid* vol cxxvi p262.
13. For a more detailed account of Hartlib and Tonge's involvement in the founding of Durham College see G H Turnbull, *Oliver Cromwell's College at Durham* (Durham Research Review, 1952), I, No. 3.
14. BL CSPD 1656-57 vol cxxxii p191.
15. British Library *Tracts of Oliver Cromwell* 1302.K.21.

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## THE REVOLUTIONARY NAVY, 1648-1654

By Bernard Capp

1648 may seem an odd point at which to start an account of the 'revolutionary navy', for Parliament's navy was far from revolutionary in spirit. Indeed, as the political situation on land slid inexorably towards a second civil war, the naval forces in the Downs demonstrated their disgust at what they saw as the extremism of the New Model army and its political allies by breaking out into open mutiny. This was probably the most serious political revolt in English naval history. On 27 May sailors in the Downs unceremoniously ejected their new commander-in-chief, Vice-Admiral Thomas Rainborough, best remembered today as a radical voice at the Putney Debates the previous autumn, and demanded a settlement with the king. The earl of Warwick, commander of the navy for most of the civil war and still respected in the fleet, was sent down in haste to see if he could reassert parliamentary authority over the mutineers, but his mission proved fruitless. After a brief standoff, nine ships sailed away to place themselves at disposal of the royalists based in Holland.<sup>1</sup>

This episode contrasts dramatically with the navy's reaction to the outbreak of the first civil war in 1642. On that occasion most officers had sided with Parliament, and the seamen followed their lead; those officers who held firmly to the king were quickly overpowered and removed. The navy's loyalty to Parliament remained firm throughout the war. Its very different stance in 1648 is not hard to explain, for it paralleled a similar shift among many parliamentarians ashore. They had fought to defend the Protestant religion and the rights of parliament, hoping and believing the war would end with a compromise peace and national reconciliation. Instead the king now appeared to be little more than a prisoner, and Parliament itself seemed at the mercy of a politicised army, viewed with deep suspicion as a hotbed of extremism. In forcing Rainborough on the navy, Parliament had offered a gratuitous insult, and discontent had been festering for months. The mutineers could argue, and may well have believed, that their own moderate principles had remained constant throughout.<sup>2</sup>

That, of course, was not how it looked at Westminster. The authorities quickly discovered that the mutiny in the Downs was only the tip of an iceberg of disaffection. Eighteen of the 39 warships in service in the

Summer Guard of 1648 were affected to varying degrees, and it was soon abundantly clear that most of the maritime community in London also favoured a personal treaty with the king, not the cause of the Independents and army. A petition of Trinity House mariners, the professional body of the seafaring community, attracted the support of 468 shipmasters and mariners, while a reply organized by radicals could muster only 62.<sup>3</sup>

The events of 1648 underlined the huge gulf between the mood of the navy and the outlook of those in political control ashore. And if the political situation in the summer of 1648 had triggered such upheavals, how could the navy be trusted after the revolution that followed a few months later, which saw Pride's Purge of the Commons in December quickly succeeded by the trial and execution of the king, the abolition of monarchy, and the declaration of a Commonwealth?

I want to explore here some of the huge problems facing the navy and its rulers in this period, which affected the ships, officers, and seamen, and the administration ashore. How were these problems tackled, and how far were they overcome? More generally, what did the new regime see as the navy's function and purpose? And how can we explain the rapid shift from the nervous, defensive mood of 1648-9 to the assertive, even triumphalist flavour of 1653?

The new regime faced enormous external problems. In 1649 it controlled only England and Wales, with its authority rejected in Scotland, Ireland, and even the Scillies and Channel Islands, as well as the colonies in Barbados and Virginia. The new government was repudiated by continental Europe too; every ruler from Muscovy to Portugal saw the Rump as rebels and traitors, and recoiled with horror at the execution of a crowned king by his subjects. Moreover the ruling families of England's closest neighbours, France and the Netherlands, were bound to the royalist cause by close marital links between the Stuart, Bourbon and Orange families. The new republican regime was a political pariah, living in constant fear of invasion. Its predicament and mood foreshadowed that of Bolshevik Russia after 1917, and paradoxically we find the Tsar of Muscovy calling for a pan-European alliance to intervene and restore the Stuarts by force.<sup>4</sup>

If a grand European alliance and invasion was never likely, the possibility of the French or Dutch sending support to anti-parliamentarian forces in Scotland or Ireland was a real concern. Other dangers were still more

pressing. Prince Rupert commanded a royalist naval force in the Netherlands, largely made up of the parliamentary squadron that had mutinied in 1648, and led it to Kinsale in southern Ireland in January 1649, from where it could harry English merchant shipping in the western approaches as well as the Irish Sea. The French government, moreover, allowed and encouraged a 'cold war' at sea, in which privateers seized and plundered English shipping in the Channel and Mediterranean. Many English merchants reacted by switching to Dutch vessels to transport their goods, which reduced their risks, but inevitably brought further hardship to the English maritime community.

The navy of the new Commonwealth presented serious problems of its own. The officer corps was full of men hostile, or at best deeply uneasy about the turn of political events ashore, which raised the danger of further mutinous outbreaks. Parliament had responded to the mutiny by recalling the earl of Warwick to be Lord Admiral, Warwick was now an elderly man, his energy waning, and of questionable loyalty himself. His brother, the earl of Holland, was executed in March for supporting the King in the second civil war, which, at the very least, cannot have endeared Warwick to the Rump. The common sailors, it was reasonable to assume, were likely to share the national mood of sullen resentment. And a new government that rested so obviously on the power of the military might well trigger a more violent response from the seamen, as in 1648. Colonel Rainborough's appointment to the fleet had been seen as provocative, and royalist agents had used it very effectively to fan discontent.

The Rump's aims and objectives for the navy are easy to identify. It needed to create a navy that was both strong and politically dependable. It needed, without delay, to crush Prince Rupert's squadron, which posed a serious threat to the regime's international standing and credibility as well as to English commerce. And it needed to protect English merchant shipping from French and other marauders, deter other states from challenging its authority, and reassert its control over all the territories traditionally subject to the English crown. Easy to list, these constituted a formidable agenda.

The work of rebuilding began with naval administration. The office of Lord High Admiral was abolished, with admiralty matters henceforth handled by a small committee of the Council of State. In the winter of 1652-3, in the early stages of the First Dutch War, administration was further reorganised with the establishment of a small body of Admiralty Commissioners. The

personnel were as important as the structure. Sir Henry Vane played a key role from 1649 to 1653. Col. Valentine Walton, Cromwell's brother-in-law, was almost equally active, while the Admiralty Commissioners brought in men such as John Carew, MP and regicide, and Richard Salwey. These were heavyweight political figures, energetic, and committed radicals. The reorganized naval administration quickly proved its determination and effectiveness.<sup>5</sup>

Building up the fleet itself was inevitably a much longer and more expensive process. The Rump gave it a very high priority, however, and despite its financial problems promptly embarked on an ambitious programme of rearmament. Twenty new warships had been added to the fleet by the close of 1651, and twenty-five more had been purchased or acquired by capture. This rapid expansion, moreover, was sustained up to the mid-1650s. Equally striking is the political symbolism of the names bestowed on the new ships, and on the older ships it had inherited, many of them built by Charles I with the proceeds of the notorious Ship Money. The Rump chose names to make a point that was politically partisan rather than an assertion of national prestige. Thus the *Charles* was renamed the *Liberty*, while the *Henrietta Maria* became the *Paragon*. The message was blunt: Charles had stood not for liberty but tyranny, while to parliamentarians Henrietta Maria, as both woman and queen, had been the shame not the paragon of her sex. The great *Sovereign of the Seas* was sometimes now known henceforth as the *Commonwealth*, while new vessels honoured political figures – the *Speaker* (of the House of Commons) and *President* (of the Council of State) – and parliamentarian generals and victories, such as the *Fairfax*, *Marston Moor*, *Naseby*, *Dunbar*, and *Worcester*. The *Tredagh* and *Wexford* commemorated Cromwellian victories in Ireland.<sup>6</sup>

Remodelling the officer corps was a far greater challenge: money alone could not provide a solution. Roughly two-thirds of the captains who had commanded in 1647 never served again after execution of the king. They had either refused to serve again, or were laid aside as unreliable. The size of the turnover throws into sharp relief the scale of the problem.

Change began at the very top. Warwick was dismissed in February 1649, and replaced by three Generals-at-Sea, Blake, Popham, and Deane. All had some maritime experience, but just as important, they were men of committed radical views, trusted by the army and the new republican leaders. Richard Deane was a regicide, while Edward Popham and Robert Blake both sat in the Rump. Cromwell's high esteem for Blake was

underlined a few months later by an invitation to join him in the reconquest of Ireland, as major-general of the foot.<sup>7</sup> Later Generals-at-Sea included George Monck and Edward Mountagu, both from an army background and trusted by Cromwell. When Blake's wounds led to fears that he might die, in 1653, there was speculation that Col. Pride would be appointed to succeed him. The military flavour of this leadership was a calculated gamble, in the wake of the furore over Rainborough.

That made the remoulding of the rest of the officer corps, especially the captains, even more important. It was not easy to create a new senior corps from scratch, and the Rump had to tap several sources. One favoured course was to recruit experienced shipmasters from the merchant marine, who provided a key element in the Commonwealth's navy. Nicholas Reed's only naval command, in the course of his whole career, was as captain of the *Sovereign*, the greatest warship in the fleet. Such an appointment would have been unthinkable in earlier or later periods, but made sense in 1652. Though a newcomer to the navy, Reed had huge experience in the merchant marine, as master and co-owner of the 500-ton *Smyrna Merchant*, trading to the Mediterranean and East Indies. And in the seventeenth century, merchant shipping in such dangerous areas had to be heavily armed and prepared for action. Reed had experience of fighting as well as commerce. Several other new commanders were drawn from the American trade, which had a high concentration of masters with puritan links. The brothers Nehemiah and John Bourne, the most prominent examples, fitted the pattern well. From a long-established family of shipbuilders and traders based in Wapping, the Bournes had long-standing connections with New England until they were head-hunted by Sir Henry Vane, himself a former New Englander. Both proved themselves able and energetic, as well as reassuringly radical and godly, and both reached flag-rank. Nehemiah was then appointed a Navy Commissioner in 1652, and played a prominent role in naval administration during the Dutch War and beyond. We can also find commanders recruited from other branches of maritime trade, such as Peter Strong, who had experience in both the East and West Indies, and Richard Badiley, a Mediterranean trader who was soon to be commanding a naval squadron in the same region.<sup>8</sup> A small minority of radical, godly commanders were already serving in the navy, and Vane and his colleagues naturally did their best to retain them. Their greatest success was holding on to John Lawson, a north countryman (like Vane) who had been intending to retire back to private life. Vane's appeal to his idealism proved effective, and Lawson went on to a distinguished naval career.

The criteria for all these appointments were similar: experience, trustworthiness, and religious and political reliability. After the Restoration Robert Blackborne, formerly secretary to the Admiralty Commissioners, recalled how the Commissioners had been wont to discuss names proposed for senior commands, and 'would with a sigh and casting up the eye say "Such a man fears the Lord" or "I hope such a man hath the spirit of God"'.<sup>9</sup> (Blackborne was poking fun, in the new political climate; at the time, he had been a radical too.) Many of the new commanders were members of 'gathered' or separatist congregations (Independents and Baptists) – not a feature of the naval officer corps in any later generation. Several were lay preachers, while Richard Badiley and Robert Dornford published works of religious meditation, and two commanders later abandoned the navy to become Quakers evangelists. In lists of the names under consideration for naval commissions in the early 1650s we often find them categorised as 'godly' or merely 'civil'. Ideology, both religious and political, was a key criterion for advancement in the Commonwealth's navy.<sup>10</sup>

Recruiting commanders from among merchant shipmasters was necessary, but neither a complete nor lasting solution. By definition, most of them had a complex web of business activities – shares in ships and trading voyages. Willing to serve for a time, they often felt called back to attend to their private affairs. The Admiralty could not simply appoint such people, but had to negotiate with them on an individual basis, offering commands that might tempt them, and allowing them time off to sort out their business affairs. Many of these recruits, such as Reed and Strong, only stayed for a short period. Others had been pushed rather than pulled into naval service, because their own ships had been seized, captured or impounded by the enemy, or their livelihood had been damaged by events such as the closure of the Baltic Sound. Men in these circumstances were far more likely to remain in naval service, but even so, the authorities needed to widen their search.

A second important group of Commonwealth commanders were men promoted from the lower ranks. There had been such 'tarpaulin' officers in earlier times too, of course, but the officer corps of the early 1650s differed significantly from that of the 1630s or the Restoration era. It had to expand to match the growing fleet, and the expansion accelerated rapidly with the outbreak of war with the Dutch in 1652. Some men of humble origins reaped the rewards of their efficiency and drive. Nicholas Heaton rose from the rank of trumpeter's mate to become one of the

most successful commanders of the period, while Anthony Young had begun his life at sea as a ship's boy under Buckingham. Some of these men might have made it to the top in other periods, but far more were able to succeed in the exceptional circumstances of the interregnum, and to rise far more rapidly. William Whitehorne rose from being a ship's gunner to become commander-in-chief in the Downs in the space of only four years. Many other captains had graduated from among the masters, gunners, and even pursers who filled the ranks of warrant officers:

A third important source was the army, less surprising than might appear. The primary function of a naval captain and lieutenant was to direct their ship as a fighting unit; the technical responsibilities of navigating and sailing the vessel belonged to the warrant officers. Even so, the Admiralty Commissioners were reluctant to give commands to army officers with no experience at all of the sea. A few of the army recruits did have a maritime background, among them Jeremiah Smyth, a friend and protégé of Monck who rose far thanks to his patronage. It was more common to find army officers entering as lieutenants, and clearly selected for their proven record as leaders in battle. We find a typical Admiralty minute noting that an applicant was 'No seaman but stout, fit for lieutenant'. Some of these men went on to secure commands of their own after a few months or years. We might well ask why an experienced army officer would choose to face the hazards of a new life at sea, but there were, in fact, several compelling reasons. The army was shrinking in size, now that the civil wars were over, and much of it was committed to arduous and unpopular service in Ireland or Scotland. The expanding navy offered not only employment but also the attractive prospect of rapid promotion and prize-money.

Leadership within each ship was crucial for the navy's effectiveness. Unless the captain possessed courage, efficiency, and loyalty, the calibre of the rest of the ship's company counted for little. But the new-modelled navy also needed to find large numbers of ordinary seamen, men who would be both competent and politically reliable. The government responded with a combination of stick and carrot. The stick came in the form of new disciplinary codes in 1649 and 1652, codes which make plain the government's fear of further politically inspired insubordination. Articles specifying the death penalty for mutiny and carrying ships to the enemy were aimed at deterring any repeat of the 1648 revolt. The carrot, such as it was, related to pay and conditions. The pay increases introduced in 1649 applied only to commissioned and warrant officers, and ordinary sailors had to wait until December 1652 for a rise. Even

then, naval wages lagged behind what an experienced seaman could earn on merchant ship. The only real incentive for service in the navy was the prospect of prize-money, a fact the government recognised by significantly improving prize-money arrangements. Even so, the navy had to recruit a substantial proportion of its manpower by the press, as for most of its history. Most warships carried a core of volunteers and a larger number of pressed men, and captains were always aware that their company was as likely to shrink through desertion as by enemy action.<sup>11</sup>

We have looked at the remodelling of the navy. How much did it achieve, when put to the test? In terms of discipline, the results were impressive. In the wake of the upheavals of 1648, the royalists hoped and expected further mutinies and desertions. They did not materialize. Royalist hopes revived with the outbreak of the Dutch war in 1652, which brought the possibility of ships changing sides in the midst of battle, but again to no avail. While the draconian disciplinary code doubtless played some part in preserving the seamen's loyalty, there is nothing to indicate that discipline was any harsher than in other periods, and it may have been less. The Commonwealth navy had its share of petty tyrants, and drunkards too, but we can also find an impressive number of captains who were able to bring volunteers with them when they joined the navy, or moved to a new ship. Former merchant shipmasters, and tarpaulin captains who had risen through the ranks, were perhaps better attuned to the rough culture of their men, and more able to inspire loyalty, trust and even affection.

The new navy's operational record was also impressive, though success took some time to achieve. The most immediate challenge came from Prince Rupert, ensconced in his base at Kinsale. Blake mounted a lengthy blockade of the port, but the guns protecting it made him unable to press home the attack. It was only when the parliamentary forces in Ireland moved south that the position changed; when Cork switched allegiance, Rupert realized that he was no longer safe at Kinsale and escaped to sea at the first opportunity. He found a new refuge and base in Portugal, in the mouth of the Tagus. Blake and Popham soon followed, and another prolonged blockade followed. It was a frustrating period for all parties. The King of Portugal, though embarrassed by his uninvited guest, refused to make Rupert leave, and the Tagus was too heavily defended by shore batteries to allow a direct attack. Blake eventually changed the king's mind by seizing an outward-bound Brazil fleet and several months later, a rich, homeward-bound Brazil fleet. This second blow was a disaster, and the king indicated that Rupert was no longer welcome. Rupert managed to slip out once more, unscathed, and passed through the Straits with the

hope of raiding English shipping in the Mediterranean. But his luck had almost run out. By November 1650 almost all his ships had been wrecked or captured. Rupert himself escaped again, to range down the coast of Africa and across the Atlantic before creeping back to seek refuge in France in 1653 with his last remaining and battered vessel. As a threat or political embarrassment, Rupert had long been irrelevant.<sup>12</sup>

The navy proved equally effective in its mission to force recalcitrant provinces to accept the new government. The conquest of Ireland and Scotland had to be performed by the army, of course, and the navy played no more than a subsidiary though important supporting role. Major operations to subdue the Scillies and Channel Islands in 1651 were genuinely amphibious affairs, however, with naval forces playing a key role. The same applied to the expedition dispatched to reduce Barbados and the American colonies. The force led by Sir George Ayscue in 1651 was not strong enough to launch a direct assault on Barbados, but sufficient to persuade the colonists submit, and Virginia yielded without a struggle.

On the European mainland, every power had made plain its abhorrence and defiance of the new regime. England's powerful army might, with luck, prove sufficient to deter or defeat a foreign invasion, but the navy was now the front line of defence. It was also the most promising means of pressuring other governments to swallow their distaste and come to terms with the new order, and one by one they did so. Spain and the Dutch recognized the Commonwealth in 1650. France proved the hardest nut to crack, and an undeclared war at sea dragged on from 1649, with heavy losses on both sides. The turning point came in 1652, when the French-held port of Dunkirk was on the point of surrendering to the besieging Spaniards and Cardinal Mazarin sent a fleet to relieve it. To Mazarin's horror, Blake intercepted and destroyed his fleet, leaving the Dunkirk garrison with no choice but to surrender. Faced with such a brutal display of force, Mazarin climbed down and sent diplomats to London to negotiate. By 1652 the navy had thus forced the European states to come to terms with a regime they still detested. The language of naval commanders began to reflect a pride, and even arrogance, in their achievements. Edward Hyde, the royalist minister, observed with anger and disgust that the Spaniards 'abhor the rebels perfectly, yet court them with all submission'.<sup>13</sup>

The new mood of confidence and assertion, among politicians at Westminster as well as within the fleet, culminated in the outbreak of war

with the Dutch in 1652.<sup>14</sup> Three Anglo-Dutch naval wars erupted in the space of little more than twenty years, all of them generally seen in the seventeenth century and still today as struggles over the control of trade. For the first war, this assessment is at best a half-truth. On the English side, at least, political issues loomed equally large. Dutch political and popular opinion still favoured the Stuart cause, and the English government was well aware that the Dutch had the greatest opportunities to inflict serious damage on English interests, through the size and strength of their fleet, and by permitting privateers to operate from their harbours and harass English shipping in the Channel and North Sea. There was a further political dimension: the naïve but genuine belief, on the part of some English political leaders, that the Dutch could be persuaded or pushed into a close political and military alliance, perhaps even some sort of union, against the Catholic powers of France or Spain. The Dutch were fellow Protestants, after all; the English had helped secure their independence in the sixteenth century; and now, with the fall of Antichrist approaching, surely they would want to join in the good fight? At the same time, of course, a close military alliance would ensure that if England were ever engaged in war, Dutch merchants and shipowners would no longer be able to exploit the situation by remaining neutral. However plausible such arguments might sound to English ears, there was no chance whatever of them convincing the Dutch. Such an alliance would spell the ruin of the Dutch economy.

Economic rivalries were certainly among the factors that triggered the collapse of negotiations between the two states. The English insisted on the traditional demand that Dutch ships, like others, should 'honour the flag', a symbolic tribute to English rights at sea that was linked to the very practical demand that they also possessed the right to stop and search Dutch merchant vessels suspected of carrying 'enemy' (e.g. French) goods. That too would deal a massive blow to Dutch commerce. It did not help that the Dutch were taking an ever-greater share of international trade because English shipping was so vulnerable to French, royalist, or Irish privateers. Even in the English West Indies, the Dutch were beginning to squeeze out English carriers. The Navigation Act of 1651 was a response to that, and a reaction against the Dutch refusal to accede to English demands. The war that erupted in 1652 was not deliberately engineered by either side. But both sides were angry, frustrated, simmering with resentment – and confident. If they stumbled into war, they both did so quite happily.

This is not the place to pursue the story of the war itself. The English had an easier set of objectives: to inflict maximum damage on Dutch commerce. The primary task of the Dutch commanders was to protect and defend their convoys, with defeating the English fleet no more than a secondary concern. Dutch admirals faced a real dilemma each time they encountered the English forces: should they simply try to shepherd their merchant ships safely back to port, or take on the English warships and try to destroy them?

We usually see the war mainly in terms of the fierce actions in the Channel and North Sea: Blake's success at the Kentish Knock and his defeat off Dungeness, both in late 1652, and the three massive and bloody actions in 1653 off Portland, the Gabbard and the Texel. By the late summer of 1653 the advantage lay clearly with the English. Their fleet contained more purpose-built and newer warships, most of them stronger and more heavily gunned than the Dutch. The best Dutch admiral, Tromp, had been killed, the Dutch fleet was penned in its harbours by an English blockade, and the Channel was largely closed to Dutch merchant shipping. But further afield the situation looked rather different. In the Baltic, it was the English who found themselves at a loss. Denmark, straddling and controlling the Sound, was a firm ally of the Dutch, and barred all English shipping for the duration of the war. This was a major blow, for the Baltic was an important source of grain and naval supplies, including timber. In the Mediterranean, things were little better. English squadrons had been despatched before the war, under Appleton and Badiley, to protect English merchant shipping, but they were too weak to confront the larger and more powerful Dutch forces. Appleton took shelter in Leghorn, where he remained trapped for several months; and when he eventually attempted to break out, in March 1653, his force was annihilated. The Mediterranean too was largely closed to the English.

These setbacks help to explain the terms of the Treaty of Westminster that brought the war to an end in 1654. Many contemporaries, and later historians, judged that England won the war and then lost the peace. Certainly, the Dutch made no major economic concessions, and still refused to accept any close alliance or union. But to Cromwell, now Lord Protector, the war was a political victory. The Dutch now totally renounced the Stuart cause, and agreed to expel all royalist privateers. In a secret clause, they renounced the House of Orange too, which would help to guarantee the permanent abandonment of the Stuarts. They also agreed, with gritted teeth, on the obligation of Dutch shipping to honour the flag, a concession which carried political as well as economic

implications. And while nothing was said about the right of search, it was obvious that since the English fleet had emerged the stronger, the English could enforce it whenever they so wished.

The successes of the 'revolutionary' navy before and during the Dutch war carried significant implications for the future. The navy had grown to a huge size, swollen by hired merchantmen and prizes as well as the building programme. The fleet and the officer corps were now strong enough to make possible the ambitious campaigns of the later 1650s, in the Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Baltic, expeditions on a scale that the Tudors and early Stuarts could never have dreamed of. In that sense, the Cromwellian navy was a turning point in British naval and imperial history. But the 'Cromwellian' navy was essentially the creation of the Commonwealth, its 'revolutionary' navy. And just as Naseby was the New Model Army's baptism of fire, the First Dutch War represented the New Model Navy's equally bloody and triumphant baptism.

#### Notes.

1. This survey draws heavily on my *Cromwell's Navy. The Fleet and the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1989; reissued 2002). On the 1648 revolt see also J. R. Powell, *The Navy in the English Civil War* (London, 1962); D. E. Kennedy, 'The English Naval Revolt of 1648', *English Historical Review*, 77 (1962).
2. R. Ashton, *Counter-Revolution. The Second Civil War and its Origins* (London, 1994); A. Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution 1625-1660* (Oxford, 2002), chapter 13. On the navy during the civil war see Powell, *Navy*, and B. Capp, 'Naval Operations' in J. Kenyon and J. Ohlmeyer, eds., *The Civil Wars. A Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998).
3. Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, 30-1.
4. On the Rump and its problems see B. Worden, *The Rump Parliament* (Cambridge, 1974).
5. For Vane and the navy see V. A. Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger* (1970); on naval organization see also A. C. Dewar, 'The Naval Organization of the Interregnum, 1641-1659', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 12 (1926); G. Aylmer, *The State's Servants* (London, 1973).
6. For a list of ships and their specifications see R. C. Anderson, *Lists of Men-of-War 1560-1700* (Society for Nautical Research Occasional Publications, no. 5; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, no date (first published 1935)); B. Lavery, *The Ship of the Line* (1984).
7. Blake was to become the most celebrated of the three Generals. There are numerous biographies, e.g. M. L. Baumber, *General-at-Sea: Robert Blake and the Seventeenth Century Revolution in Naval Warfare* (1989); J. R. Powell, *Robert Blake: General at Sea* (London, 1972) See also J. R. Powell, ed., *The Letters of Robert Blake* (Navy Records Society, 1937).
8. On the remodelling of the officer corps see Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, 54-8, and chapter 6, *passim*. On the Bourne see W. R. Chaplain, 'Nehemiah Bourne',

*Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 42 (Boston, Mass., 1952-6); for Badiley, see T. A. Spalding, *A Life of Richard Badiley* (Westminster, 1899).

9. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R. Latham and W. Matthews (London, 1970-83), iv.375.
10. Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, 156-7, 293-307.
11. *Ibid.*, 57-9, chapter 8, *passim*.
12. *Ibid.*, 62-6; Powell, *Robert Blake*, 77-107.
13. Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, 69.
14. On the Dutch War see C. Wilson, *Profit and Power* (1957); S. A. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism. Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650-1668* (Cambridge, 1996); Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, 72-86; on the peace and its aftermath, T. Venning, *Cromwellian Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke, 1995), 153-71. On operations at sea see R. Hainsworth and C. Churches, *The Anglo-Dutch Wars 1652-1674* (Stroud, 1998); S. R. Gardiner and C. T. Atkinson, eds., *Letters and Papers Relating to the First Dutch War, 1652-4* (6 vols., Navy Records Society, 1899-1930), and, for the Mediterranean theatre, Spalding, *Life of Badiley*.

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'ANCIENT AND FAMILIAR NEIGHBOURS':  
ENGLAND AND HOLLAND ON THE EVE OF THE  
FIRST ANGLO-DUTCH WAR

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*by Dr Hugh Dunthorne*

Three hundred and fifty-one years ago, in late May 1652, the first Anglo-Dutch War broke out following an incident at sea, off Dover, between the English and Dutch fleets. Precisely what form the incident took is difficult to say with any certainty. The Dutch may have failed to salute the English flag. The English may have pressed what they claimed was their right to search Dutch merchant ships, a right which the Dutch were determined to resist. But whatever the precise circumstances, there is no doubt that the incident led to a two-hour naval battle (in which the Dutch lost two ships) and the battle in turn led to war, officially declared by the English government on 30 June/10 July.

What happened off Dover in May 1652 sparked the conflict. But it was not the real cause. As with all wars, the real cause lay deeper. And when we begin to look for the cause or causes of the First Anglo-Dutch War, we immediately come upon a paradox. For is it not strange that in an age of religious conflict, an age when Protestants fought Catholics and Christians fought Turks, this was a war between two Protestant countries? As fellow Protestants, surely the English and the Dutch should have been friends not foes. And is it not equally strange that in an age of constitutional confrontation, an age when subjects fought sovereigns and parliaments fought kings (as they were doing not only in England but in Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain and other countries), this was a war between two republics, both of them parliamentary states which had been born out of rebellion against an absolute monarch – the English Commonwealth out of the civil wars of the 1640s, the Dutch Republic out of the Revolt of the Netherlands against Spain some sixty years earlier? Surely, these newborn republics should have been allies not enemies.

So indeed they should have been, from a political point of view as well as from a religious one. What is more, the fact that they went to war with one another in the summer of 1652 is not only a paradox for historians looking back on events. It was also a matter of regret for many English people living at the time. Even those directly engaged in the fighting could feel a sense of regret. In August 1653, for example, following an

English naval victory off the Texel, one English sea-captain wrote: 'I pray God make this mercy a further blessing unto us in the preserving a good peace betwixt us both, who have been so long formerly [at peace] and so useful one to the other.'<sup>1</sup> At the very least, the war seemed unfortunate; and between two countries who were often seen as natural allies, the sooner peace could be restored the better. This was probably Cromwell's attitude too. Initially carried along by the Council of State's decision to go to war, his support for the conflict (it has been suggested) became 'more and more reluctant'; and in 1653 and 1654 he played an active part in bringing it to an end.<sup>2</sup> To him, as to others of his generation, it was not against the Protestant Dutch Republic but against the Catholic monarchy of Spain that England should be fighting. Why, then, did this war – at once paradoxical and regrettable – happen at all?

The answer usually given by historians is economic. This was a war, so the argument runs, not about religion, nor about politics, but about trade. Holland and England in the seventeenth century were both capitalist – or capitalising – countries, and conflict between them was the inevitable result of the aggressive competitiveness inherent in capitalism. In October 1651 the new English Republic passed the so-called Navigation Act, requiring that goods imported into the country must be carried in English ships or in those of the country from which the goods came. That legislation was a direct attack on Holland's dominance of the European carrying trade, a blow at the very heart of the Dutch economy. No wonder, then, that within six months the two countries were at war.

There is, of course, much to be said for this economic explanation of the origins of the First Anglo-Dutch War. Commercial rivalry had been a recurring theme in Anglo-Dutch relations for a couple of generations before 1652, and in the late 1640s and 1650s (for reasons which will be considered presently) that rivalry reached unprecedented levels of intensity. Yet the frictions associated with burgeoning capitalism do not tell the whole story. Just as important in the background to the war – though perhaps more difficult to explain – is the effect of what might be called disappointed expectations. The English thought of the Dutch as natural friends and allies and therefore expected a degree of co-operation and support from them, especially in the years after 1649 when the fledgling English Republic's need for international recognition and assistance was at its height. When they did not receive that co-operation and support, their feeling of friendship and partnership changed quickly into bitter resentment and hostility – and hostility led naturally to war. To understand the war, then, we need to take a broader view of Anglo-

Dutch relations in the half-century before 1652. How did the English regard their neighbours in the Netherlands during these years? And how was it that English expectations of Dutch support and co-operation came to be disappointed in the decade between 1642 and 1652?

Let us begin with the phrase quoted in the title of this essay: 'ancient and familiar neighbours'. These are the words of Queen Elizabeth I, or rather of her ghost writers, Lord Burghley and Sir Francis Walsingham, who together composed the *Declaration* that was published in 1585 in order to justify the queen's decision to give military assistance to those whom she called 'the poor people afflicted and oppressed in the Low Countries'.<sup>3</sup> The Netherlands (it was argued in Elizabeth's *Declaration*) were linked to England by ties of geography, by ties of commerce, especially in the cloth trade, and by what were termed 'special obligations' and 'mutual amity' – in other words, diplomatic agreements of various kinds, of which the most important was the *Intercursus Magnus* of 1496. Any attack on one partner to the alliance, either on the Netherlands or on England, would therefore be an attack on the other as well; and in the 1580s it was evident that Spain was threatening both, despite Queen Elizabeth's attempts to dissuade Philip II from his policy of imposing 'absolute government' on the Low Countries. Hence the queen's decision to enter a new alliance, the Treaty of Nonsuch signed in August 1585 with the provinces of the emerging Dutch Republic – an alliance which was to involve England in war with Spain for most of the next twenty years.

Such, in brief, was the account of Anglo-Netherlands relations given by Queen Elizabeth and her ministers in 1585. And it was mainly in the terms outlined in Elizabeth's *Declaration* that English people continued to think of their country's relations with the Dutch Republic for the next half-century or more. Every year when the queen's birthday was commemorated or when Armada day was celebrated – both important dates in the Protestant calendar – they remembered how Elizabethan England and the Dutch provinces had fought side by side and prevailed against Catholic Spain. And of course they remembered 'with advantages' (in Shakespeare's phrase), embroidering and idealising the Anglo-Dutch relationship of Elizabethan times. Never mind that Elizabeth I had actually been the most reluctant and penny-pinching of allies to the Netherlands. Never mind that the Earl of Leicester, who led the queen's army to the Low Countries in 1586, had been the most incompetent of commanders and the most inept of negotiators in the complex political world of the young Dutch Republic. Never mind that the defeat of the Spanish Armada had been achieved not by Anglo-Dutch naval co-

operation, which in 1588 had been virtually non-existent, but rather by the weather. Never mind the confusing ebb and flow of events. What English people remembered was something altogether simpler – the ideal of Anglo-Dutch friendship and collaboration. They remembered the death at Zutphen in 1587 of Sir Philip Sidney, that archetypal Elizabethan hero, giving his life for the common Protestant cause. And they made the comforting and self-congratulatory assumption that it was England above all, which had 'preserved' the Dutch 'from bondage'. 'Next to God', England was the 'maker' of the Dutch Republic.<sup>4</sup> 'Never any nation was more obliged to another', said the traveller Fynes Moryson in 1617, than the Netherlanders to the English; 'and so long as the memory thereof can live, it must needs quench all malice between us'.<sup>5</sup>

Not only, though, did the English remember and idealise the Anglo-Dutch alliance of Elizabethan times. They also contrasted this fine Elizabethan ideal with the grubby reality of early Stuart foreign policy – wrong-headed, half-hearted, indeed not a Protestant foreign policy at all. For what had Queen Elizabeth's successors done in their dealings with Europe and with the Netherlands in particular? James I had made peace with Spain and had then sought to cement the peace with an Anglo-Spanish marriage alliance. What is more, when Holland's long war with Spain was resumed in 1621, he had stood aside from the conflict, content to remain neutral. True, his son Charles I had temporarily changed direction, yielding, as it seemed, to parliamentary criticism of royal policy. At the start of the new reign, the Anglo-Dutch alliance of Elizabethan times was reborn in the Treaty of Southampton of September 1625, and for a few years England was once again fighting alongside Holland against Spain. But to little effect and not for long. The war was mismanaged by the Duke of Buckingham; and by the 1630s Charles I had reverted to his father's policy of friendship with Spain. No wonder, then, that members of parliament in the early 1620s and again in 1641-43 were to be heard attacking Stuart foreign policy and urging the crown (as in the Nineteen Propositions of June 1642) 'to enter into a more strict alliance with the States of the United Provinces' of the Netherlands 'for the defence and maintenance' of 'the Protestant religion'.<sup>6</sup> This was how English people thought of the Dutch for most of the first half of the seventeenth century. They were our natural allies, our ancient and familiar neighbours. And if the Anglo-Dutch partnership of Elizabeth's days had been allowed to wither since the queen's death, the fault lay with the Stuart monarchy and its betrayal of England's duty to uphold the cause of international Protestantism.<sup>7</sup>

But, besides the failings of royal policy, were there not other reasons why Anglo-Dutch friendship was withering? Some English observers, and especially those whose interests and outlook were more commercial, believed that there were. As early as 1592 Sir Walter Raleigh, another archetypal Elizabethan, had warned Parliament that Holland was fast becoming a dangerous commercial rival to England and that its North Sea fishing industry in particular posed a threat not only to the country's economic interests but also to her 'sovereignty of the British seas'.<sup>8</sup> And the next twenty years were to prove just how shrewd and accurate Raleigh's warning was. For wherever the two states had trading interests in common – not just in the herring fisheries of the North Sea but in the Russian trade to Archangel; in the whaling industry off Greenland as well as in cloth industry at home; and in the Far East too, on Java and in the Moluccan spice islands – in all these areas of common commercial activity, the English found themselves facing stiff and sometimes overwhelming Dutch competition. It was, for instance, Holland's refusal to import finished cloth from England that largely caused the failure of Alderman William Cokayne's project to revive the English cloth industry after 1614. And there were occasions when commercial competition spilled over into open violence. In 1613 a major sea-battle between the English and Dutch whaling fleets off Spitzbergen was won by the Dutch, prompting enthusiastic celebrations in Holland 'as if it were a glorious victory over the enemies of the country'.<sup>9</sup> A few years later, in 1618, the English 'factory' in the port of Bantam on Java was burned down. And conflict culminated in 1623 when ten English merchants on the island of Amboyna were tried, tortured and executed for allegedly breaching Holland's commercial monopoly in the Spice Islands. All this of course provoked outcries in England, loudly orchestrated after the Amboyna atrocity by the English East India Company. And there was resentment too among merchants over the failure of a whole series of English diplomatic missions to Holland (no fewer than eight were sent between 1610 and 1630) to achieve any settlement of their commercial grievances.

In the longer term, however, commercial rivalry did rather less than might have been expected to undermine English feelings of friendship towards their Dutch neighbours. For one thing, the resumption in 1621 of Holland's long war with Spain led to Dutch merchants being banned from Spanish and Portuguese ports. This allowed English merchants to take their place, both in the carrying trade between the Baltic and the Iberian Peninsula and even more in the trade of the Mediterranean; and the consequent expansion of English commerce undoubtedly took some of the steam out of Anglo-Dutch commercial competition, at least from

England's point of view. Secondly, there was a growing feeling among English merchants and others that the country's best road to economic recovery and growth lay not in attacking Dutch trade, as was advocated in court circles (where proposals for an Anglo-Spanish alliance against Holland were considered in 1620, 1631 and 1632), but rather in emulating and learning from the Netherlands. 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise,' urged the Puritan pamphleteer Thomas Scott in 1622, quoting the *Proverbs* of King Solomon. For Holland was the model of a diligent community; it was *The Belgicke Pismire* (pismire being the old English word for ant), whose ingenuity and industriousness had much to teach the 'slothful' English.<sup>10</sup> Nor was Scott alone in taking this view. From Sir Edwin Sandys's parliamentary report on free trade in 1604 to Lewes Roberts's *Treasure of Traffike* of 1641, the first half of the seventeenth century saw a steady succession of English attempts to analyse, and ultimately to emulate, the secrets of Dutch economic success.<sup>11</sup>

By the early 1640s, then, when the Long Parliament was calling for a stricter alliance with the United Provinces of the Netherlands and was beginning to make diplomatic moves of its own in that direction, the prospects for restoring the Anglo-Dutch entente must have seemed reasonably good. Commercial rivalry was less intense than it had been at any time over the past twenty or thirty years. And on political and religious grounds, too, parliament believed it had good reason to expect Dutch help. Just as Elizabethan England had befriended the Netherlands in their struggle against Spanish tyranny, so now Holland surely had a moral duty to support England in its struggle against Stuart tyranny. Indeed, as Parliament pointed out to the Dutch States General in a declaration of September 1642, the same 'Jesuitical Faction' which had earlier sought to deprive the Netherlands of their 'Religion and Liberty' was now threatening England too – and must once again be resisted jointly.<sup>12</sup>

Joint action, however, proved impossible to achieve. And what made it impossible to achieve was the English Civil War itself and the contradictory pressures which it placed on Anglo-Dutch relations between 1642 and 1652.<sup>13</sup> At the start of this decade, as England descended into conflict during the late summer of 1642, one thing which became clear was that it was not only Parliament that wanted closer co-operation with the Dutch. King Charles I wanted Dutch help too. A year earlier, in 1641, he had responded to an approach from the States General of the Netherlands by consenting to the marriage of his daughter,

Princess Mary Stuart, with William of Orange-Nassau, son of the stadholder and effective political leader of the Dutch Republic, Frederick Henry. The Dutch had made the approach because they wished to detach Charles I, and hence England, from his policy of friendship towards Spain. And Charles I had responded for similarly tactical reasons. He had no particular liking for the Dutch; indeed he mistrusted them as rebels and republicans. But at a time when his relations with Parliament were deteriorating rapidly, he needed foreign allies wherever he could find them. Spain, now racked by rebellions in Catalonia and Portugal, was manifestly in decline, so a renewed Dutch alliance seemed the best alternative. Thus by the latter part of 1642 a situation had developed in which both sides in the English Civil War were looking to the Dutch Republic for support. Charles I was doing so on the basis of the 1641 Stuart-Orange marriage treaty; Parliament on the more principled and deep-rooted grounds that England and Holland were both Protestant countries, both committed to parliamentary government, and both opponents of absolute monarchy.

The States General of the Dutch Republic, on the other hand, did not want to respond to either side, and certainly did not want to respond positively. After all, the Dutch were still at war with Spain, and would continue at war until 1648: the last thing they wanted was to be drawn into the internal political troubles of the British Isles. In November 1642 the States General passed a resolution formally declaring Dutch neutrality in the English Civil War, and that remained the Republic's position throughout the 1640s. Given both royalist and parliamentary expectations of Dutch support, the declaration of neutrality was bound to cause resentment in England. And it caused resentment all the more since in practice both royalist and parliamentary agents were able at various times during the 1640s to buy arms and recruit soldiers in the Netherlands – with the result that both sides in the Civil War accused the Dutch of favouring the enemy. Thus it is not surprising that when in 1644 the States General offered to mediate in the English Civil War, both King and Parliament rejected the offer and Parliament accused the Dutch embassy sent to London of pro-royalist bias.

At the same time as the English Civil War increased mutual mistrust in Anglo-Dutch political relations, the war also had the effect of reviving and intensifying commercial rivalry. One of the economic effects of the war was that both sides sought to prevent 'neutral' ships (which in many cases were Dutch ships) from trading with the enemy. So Parliament forbade neutral ships from carrying goods to royalist ports, especially in

Ireland; and the king forbade all trade with parliamentary ports. Moreover, since both sides took steps to enforce their orders, the result, throughout the Civil War and even into the 1650s, was that many Dutch ships and cargoes were seized and Dutch merchants suffered substantial losses. (Between 1647 and 1652, for example, almost four hundred Dutch merchant ships were lost to royalist and parliamentary attacks, besides several fishing vessels.) Naturally, the Dutch resented these losses. And there was resentment on the English side too. By the late 1640s England's economy was in serious difficulties, suffering partly under the impact of the Civil War and also from the effects of an undeclared war with France, while the Dutch economy, despite the losses just mentioned, seemed to be reaching new heights of prosperity, especially after the States General made peace with Spain in 1648. The effect of this peace was to reopen Spanish ports to Dutch merchants and so to bring them back in large numbers, not only to Spain itself but to the whole Mediterranean and to the West Indies, quickly overtaking the commercial progress that English merchants had made in these areas during the 1620s and 1630s.

It was against this background of mutual and intensifying political mistrust and commercial rivalry that the English Commonwealth in 1651 made one further attempt to secure Dutch support. Given the story of deteriorating relations during the previous ten years, this may seem a surprising step to take. But underlying England's diplomatic mission to Holland in 1651 was the expectation that the common Protestantism of the two republics would somehow cut through their economic difficulties. And underlying it, too, was the belief that there was a better chance of achieving political co-operation now that the Orange-Nassau family had been removed from its position of power in the Dutch Republic. In November 1650 the young Prince William II, allied to the Stuarts by his marriage of 1641, had died of smallpox; and following his death the Orangist office of stadholder had been left vacant in the majority of the Dutch provinces. These expectations – that conditions were now ripe for Anglo-Dutch reconciliation and partnership – were reflected in the ambitious instructions given to Oliver St. John and Walter Strickland, the two Englishmen sent as diplomatic representatives to The Hague in April 1651. For what the English wanted was not just an alliance to give some much-needed security to the new Commonwealth regime. They also wanted what the ambassadors' instructions called 'a strict union', nothing less than the bringing together of the two republics 'into a single political and commercial unit'.<sup>14</sup>

Not surprisingly, the mission failed. In part, no doubt, this was because of the diplomatic inexperience of St John, the chief English negotiator. But it was also because English expectations were quite unrealistic. The Dutch simply had no wish to unite with a regicide commonwealth that was viewed with hostility by all Europe. Nor could they overlook the fundamental constitutional incompatibility between their own federal republic and the much larger and more centralised English state. The Dutch were willing to offer some degree of colonial and commercial co-operation, but the main English proposal for union they simply rejected. That rejection in turn caused St John and Strickland to break off negotiations abruptly and to return to London, thoroughly disillusioned. St John, in particular, seems to have become convinced that, despite the death of William II of Orange, most of the provinces – with the exception of Holland – were still basically Orangist in their political sympathies, and therefore pro-Stuart; and he had become convinced, too, that the Dutch were now too commercialised and materialistic to join England in a Protestant republican partnership. As he left The Hague in July 1651, St John told the States General: 'You will repent of having rejected our offers.' And once back in London he took the initiative in drafting the Navigation Act as a punitive measure deliberately aimed at the Dutch carrying trade.<sup>15</sup> To protect its merchant shipping, the States General in turn put a large fleet of one hundred and fifty ships to sea the following spring; and it was that force which clashed with the English fleet off Dover in May 1652.

What conclusions can be drawn from our survey of relations between England and the Netherlands over the half-century before the outbreak of the first Anglo-Dutch War? Two points are worth making. One is that the traditional emphasis on commercial rivalry as a cause of the war still seems valid and convincing. Rivalry may have faded in the 1620s and 1630s. But it undoubtedly returned and intensified in the 1640s, fuelling resentment and bad feeling on both sides of the North Sea. At the same time – and this is the second point – commercial rivalry was mixed (on the British side at least) with another factor, one that is harder to pin down but which combined feelings of disillusion and frustrated expectation. From Elizabethan times, English people – and especially English Puritans – had inherited an idealised view of the Dutch as ancient and familiar neighbours, fellow Protestants and therefore natural allies. It was a view which proved remarkably persistent and which underlay all Parliament's attempts to secure Dutch assistance, in 1642-43, 1648, 1649 and finally 1651. Each attempt failed, prompting growing resentment and

1651 was the point at which disappointed expectation finally boiled over into bitterness, hostility and war.

The experiences of 1651 and of the war, which followed, did not destroy the old Elizabethan myth of Anglo-Dutch partnership. What they did, rather, was to inject into England's conduct of its relations with the Dutch Republic some much-needed realism. As has been suggested above, Cromwell still thought of the Dutch as fellow Protestants. But he also came to recognise that they, even more than the English, lived by trade. And it was with that more practical consideration in mind that he negotiated the Anglo-Dutch peace treaty of Westminster in April 1654.

#### Notes.

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3. Sir Walter Scott (ed), *A Declaration of the Causes Mooving the Queene of England to give aide to the Defence of the People afflicted and oppressed in the Lowe Countries* (1585), in *Somers Tracts* (13 vols, London, 1809-15), i,, 410-19. On the composition of the *Declaration*, see Conyers Read, *William Cecil and Elizabethan public relations* in S T Bindoff et al (ed), *Elizabethan government and society* (London, 1961), 40-2.
4. Francis Osborne, *A Seasonable Expostulation with the Netherlands* (London, 1652), 2-3.
5. F Moryson, *An Itinerary* (London, 1617), pt. iii, 291.
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7. For Stuart foreign policy and public reactions to it, see S Adams, *Spain or the Netherlands? The dilemmas of early Stuart foreign* in H Tomlinson, *Before the English Civil War* (London, 1983), 79-101; W Hunt, *Spectral origins of the English Revolution: legitimisation crisis in early modern England* in G Eley and W Hunt (eds), *Reviving the English Revolution* (London, 1988), 305-32.
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9. A Th Van Deursen, *Plain lives in a golden age: popular culture, religion and society in seventeenth-century Holland* (Cambridge, 1991), 141.
10. Scott, *The Belgicke Pismire* (Netherlands, 1622), 1, 49, 67-70, 75-80, 89-92, 95-99.
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12. *Journals of the House of Lords* (31 vols, 1767-77), v, 316.
13. For the substance of this and the two paragraphs following see S Groenveld, *The English Civil Wars as a cause of the first Anglo-Dutch war, 1640-52*, *Historical Journal* 30 (London, 1987), 541-66.
14. St John's and Strickland's instructions are printed in *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Portland Manuscripts I* (London, 1891), 557-8; the second quotation is from R Hutton, *The British Republic 1649-1660* (London, 1990), 55.
15. St John's parting short is quoted in S Pincus, *England and the World in the 1650s* in J Morrill (ed), *Revolution and Restoration: England in the 1650s* (London, 1992), 133. For a broader survey of English anti-Dutch opinion at this time, see Pincus's larger study *Protestantism and patriotism: ideologies and the making of English foreign policy 1650-1668* (Cambridge, 1996).

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*By Dr David Davies*

As far as the first Anglo-Dutch War is concerned, the title 'Cromwell's Admirals' is something of a misnomer – after all, during that conflict they were only 'his' for five months, after he became Lord Protector and before the signing of the Peace of Westminster. As is well known, Cromwell had deep misgivings about war against England's co-religionists, the Dutch. He stopped the war before his admirals could give the country the total annihilation of the Dutch state and maritime economy that they believed they would be able to deliver in a putative 1654 campaign – or at least, that was the 'spin' put on events after 1660 by the likes of his general-at-sea, George Monck, as part of a successful campaign to convince the easily persuaded court of King Charles II that it would be easy to crush the old enemy in a second Anglo-Dutch war. However, Cromwell had no grounds for underestimating the importance of the navy that he inherited, even if he had reservations about the foe it was fighting. He had already been grateful for naval support on several occasions in his own campaigns. In 1649, Cromwell's army crossing to Ireland had been transported in 130 ships with a naval escort to guard against royalist privateers. In Scotland, naval support was essential to support the Dunbar campaign and later played its part in the reduction of the last royalist garrisons of the 'third civil war', such as Tantallon and Dunnotar castles. He would continue to be grateful to that navy, and especially to the officer corps that he inherited. Those who had commanded in the first Anglo-Dutch War generally then served for duration of his Protectorate. Between 1649 and 1653, the Rump had given first commissions to 230 captains. Cromwell and his successors to 1660 commissioned only another 89.<sup>1</sup> They did not need to appoint more simply because of the number that already been appointed in the war; therefore, the officer corps of the navy was very much an inheritance, not a creation, of Oliver Cromwell's.

The 'Cromwellian' navy is centrally important in the history of the British navy as a whole, not just in the history of its period. Many of the key features of the 'classic age' of the sailing navy developed in this period: for instance, the tactic of fighting in 'line of battle', and the system of 'red, white and blue squadrons', with their concomitant flag officers. The navy of this period also provided role models for future generations: when the naval 'greats' of the eighteenth century looked for their exemplars and role models, they looked to this period. In 1797, for

example, a British rear admiral contemplated an attack on Tenerife, explained his doubts about success, and wrote 'I do not reckon myself equal to Blake', who had successfully attacked exactly the same harbour of Santa Cruz in 1657. The rear-admiral, of course, was a certain Horatio Nelson.<sup>2</sup> On 21 October 1805, after he was mortally wounded by the single rifleman on the *Redoubtable*, Nelson was carried below decks with a handkerchief covering his face and decorations, so that his crew would not be discouraged. But as Richard Harding and Peter Le Fevre have recently reminded us, '152 years earlier at the battle of the Gabbard on 2 June 1653, General-at-sea George Monck is supposed to have thrown a cloak over the body of his fellow general, Richard Deane, to prevent news of his death discouraging the crew'.<sup>3</sup> The navy of the first Anglo-Dutch war, and especially its officer corps, gave much by way of example to its successors, but arguably it also gave something more tangible. Quite simply, this war saw the first sustained series of set-piece naval actions that England had ever fought, and the general (if not quite unanimous) record of triumph in those actions established the reputation of the navy as a successful, invariably victorious, fighting service. There is a nice irony in the fact that the reputation of the later Royal Navy was thus established to a large extent by the navy of the one and only British republic.

This paper considers the commanders of Cromwell's fleets (both the 'admirals' and captains) in several contexts – their origins; their political and religious attitudes; and makes some comparison with their contemporary Dutch counterparts. Above all, it examines whether the naval officers match up to Cromwell's oft-quoted criteria for selecting officers in his army, namely promotion by merit regardless of political and religious attitudes. In other words, did the 1650s witness the employment of the maritime equivalents of the famous 'plain russet-coated captains'?

The title of this paper is a misnomer in another sense, for technically the overall commanders of the British fleet in the first Anglo-Dutch war did not bear the title of admirals at all, but were just as much generals as Cromwell, Lambert or Fleetwood. In February 1649, in one of the first acts of the new republican government, Edward Popham, Robert Blake and Richard Deane were appointed 'generals-at-sea', replacing the former Lord Admiral, Robert Rich, earl of Warwick. The concept of the 'generals at sea' is perhaps the most famously distinctive element of the navy in this period. They were appointed for their political reliability, and in the belief that they would be more accountable to the council of state than a

Lord Admiral. Their appointment was also intended as a means of giving tighter control over a sometimes fractious service that had revolted as recently as 1648. This can be seen particularly clearly in the appointment of Deane and George Monck to act alongside Blake after the defeat at Dungeness in December 1652, as both had reputations as strict disciplinarians. This theme of developing a more centralised command structure can also be seen in the reorganisation of flag ranks on 14 January 1653 – the reform that established the principle of the red, white and blue squadrons, with an admiral, vice-admiral and rear-admiral to each. This scheme was based on the assumption that the three generals would be working apart as commanders of separate squadrons, not altogether in one ship. In practice, practicalities meant that it was rare for all three to be at sea at once, and they often worked apart, with the third – initially Popham – left ashore to co-ordinate support and administration.<sup>4</sup>

All of the generals-at-sea were successful military leaders, but they also had maritime experience; the exception, John Desborough, never commanded at sea, but took over Popham's shore-based role. Popham had commanded a warship in the ship money fleets and had subsequently commanded the regiment in which Blake began his military career. Deane had early maritime experience. Additionally, he was distantly related to both Cromwell and Hampden, was an artillery expert, and had commanded the Parliamentarian right wing at the battle of Preston. A regicide, he was a member of the subcommittee that decided on the exact time and place of the execution of Charles I.<sup>5</sup> Deane was to be given an astonishingly grand state funeral after his death at Gabbard; it has been suggested that this was done in part to overawe Dutch negotiators, who were in London at that time, and was a forerunner of Blake's equally great interment in 1657.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the most famous of the generals-at-sea was Robert Blake, but he also probably had the most complex background. He had been a soldier, but he also had a degree from William Laud's Oxford. If one contemplates the fashionable trend for 'alternative history', epitomised by books like *Virtual History* and *What If?*, one might wonder how different the history of the Royal Navy and these islands might have been if in 1619 the fellows of Merton College, Oxford, had elected him to their number, and Blake had lived out his life as an obscure don. His career in the 1630s is unknown, but there are hints that he might have been in trade, perhaps even living in the Netherlands.<sup>7</sup> George Monck was appointed a general at sea at the end of 1652. His was more classically a military career stretching back to the Cadiz expedition of 1625, and he gained experience in the Low Countries in the 1630s.

Surprisingly, though, given the apparent emphasis on political reliability in the appointment of the generals, Monck had been a royalist as recently as the battle of Nantwich. The politics of the other general at sea of the first Anglo-Dutch war also came to be questioned. William Penn was appointed in December 1653 despite having been under arrest in 1648. He had gained much experience on merchant voyages, especially in the Mediterranean, in the 1630s and 40s, but was certainly sympathetic to royalist approaches by 1659.<sup>8</sup> The general at sea who was most truly 'Cromwell's admiral', Edward Montagu, was appointed only in January 1656, long after the end of the Dutch war. Cromwell had known him since he was a young man and had given him a regimental command; Montagu's loyalty to his Huntingdonshire neighbours is perhaps best epitomised by the fact that he was still writing to Richard Cromwell as 'your highness' in December 1659, long after the fall of the second Lord Protector. He had no seagoing experience beforehand but learned quickly, as his journals prove, and as Cromwell presumably knew he would.<sup>9</sup>

Joint command was a relatively unusual idea, and it is sometimes assumed that in the history of the British navy it was an idea that was unique to the first Anglo-Dutch war. In fact, the experiment was repeated both in 1666 and in the early stages of William III's war against France, albeit with the critical variation in the latter that the three 'generals' were all placed in the same ship. Moreover, of course, the essential concept of generals at sea, in the literal sense of the term, was not new – except for the title itself, and for the fact that the holders of the title were lower born than the aristocratic commanders who had previously moved between land and sea service. Howard of Effingham had commanded troops against the northern rebels in 1569, long before he went to sea to confront the Armada, while Charles I's ship money fleet had been commanded by Algernon Percy, earl of Northumberland, who had no previous military experience at all unless one counts being on a commission to suppress disorder on the Anglo-Scottish border. The parliamentarian Lord Admiral in the civil war, the earl of Warwick, had been involved in trade, privateering and military campaigns from 1620s onwards – in other words, essentially a similar career pattern to Blake's. Indeed, it is too easy with the generals at sea, as it is with the lesser officers, to suggest a clear-cut contrast between so-called 'aristocrats' or 'gentlemen captains' commanding before 1642 or 1649, and low-born 'tarpaulins' commanding afterwards. Popham was from a substantial Somerset landed family; Deane was from the Gloucestershire gentry – although he was a younger son, as was Monck. Penn might have been the son of the Bristol

sea captain Giles Penn, but in turn Giles was the second son of a reasonably substantial Gloucestershire gentleman. Blake's family was accepted as being of gentle status by the time of the 1614 visitation of Somerset; his father and grandfather had been mayors of Bridgwater and the latter had been an MP, as was Blake himself in the Short Parliament and subsequently in the Rump. Thus the generals at sea may have been lower born than the admirals they replaced, but they were certainly not low born – a point emphasised even more when Montagu was appointed to their number.

The generals at sea were involved in selecting subordinate officers, but the actual appointment process in the war was a cumbersome affair, as the council of state's orders concerning Penn's appointment as vice-admiral in January 1653 indicate:

Whereas Captain William Penn is nominated by the Commissioners of the Admiralty and approved of by the Council to be Vice-Admiral of the fleet, ordered that the generals of the fleet do give unto him a commission accordingly, and that the Commissioners of the Admiralty be desired to acquaint the General herewith.<sup>10</sup>

Few officers of higher social status were willing to serve or considered politically reliable, so by default, naval command opened up much more to those from the merchant service and elsewhere. Shipmasters with direct experience of particular trades were recommended for commands in those areas, and captains would often be assigned to trade protection duties on coasts they knew. For example, John Wetwang had been trading out of Newcastle when his ship was captured by the Dutch. The mayor petitioned the Admiralty for him to be given a ship, and he was duly appointed to command the *Sparrow*, a small Dutch prize then fitting out at Newcastle. Wetwang spent the rest of the war cruising against Dutch privateers on the east coast, and convoying trade from Newcastle to London and Hamburg. Other captains who had previously served in the merchant service and went on to rather greater commands than Wetwang included the likes of Christopher Myngs, Robert Sansum and William Goodson. As Bernard Capp has shown, there was strong representation from the American trades. Some, like the flag officer Nehemiah Bourne, had even been domiciled in America, something that might have struck a chord with the Lord Protector, who had himself once contemplated emigration. Others, like Richard Badiley, came from the Mediterranean trade, and it was no coincidence that Badiley was

subsequently assigned to command in that sea, where he was disastrously defeated at the battle of Leghorn in March 1653.<sup>11</sup> John Lawson was one of the most prominent of this sort of officer; he became a vice-admiral by the end of the first Dutch war. Lawson's father had been a reasonably prosperous master mariner and shipowner of Scarborough. Lawson himself had about three years experience as skipper of a collier when the civil war began; he was clearly enthusiastic for 'the good old cause' as he immediately offered his ship to parliament, although it is possible that his father was a royalist. Lawson served as a captain throughout the first civil war, invariably commanding in his own east coast waters. He then became a captain in the Scarborough garrison in 1646. Lawson is a particularly complex character who reveals the dangers of over-generalising about the attitudes of those who lived through the 'English revolution'. Politically and religiously radical, he was also financially acquisitive and interested in the advancement of his own family. He obtained rapid promotion in the Dutch war and further advancement from Cromwell, but he eventually came to oppose the Protector, leading to his imprisonment in the Tower in 1657. In a seemingly incredible *volte face* in 1660, Lawson not only accepted the Restoration but became a knight, but his abiding quest for financial security might have had much to do with his apparent apostasy.<sup>12</sup> The generals at sea and subordinate flag officers sought to recommend and promote those whom they knew and could trust to commands under them. Not surprisingly, then, these were often relatives or neighbours; for example, Lawson advanced the careers of relatives like James Abelson, and there was a closely intertwined network of officers drawn from Great Yarmouth. Apart from the merchant service, many of the republic's other captains were promoted from lower ranks in the navy, especially from warrant posts. Anthony Young had been a cabin boy aboard the earl of Lindsey's flagship on the Ile de Re expedition in 1627 and went on to survive the Glorious Revolution, despite the interruption to his career when he was imprisoned for misconduct at the battle of Dungeness in 1652.

Granting commissions to merchant masters or warrant officers was necessary because, as has already been noted, most officers of higher social status, who had largely dominated the commands in the ship money fleets, were removed or retired in 1642 or later. Nevertheless, as was the case with generals at sea, not all captains and junior flag officers who served under the republic were drawn from 'the lower orders'. The still prevalent impression of low born 'tarpaulin' officers is in part a myth created by twentieth-century writers, often based on barbed comments by snobbish contemporary writers like Clarendon – who called William Penn

'common' – or the rose-tinted nostalgia of the likes of Pepys's informant Richard Gibson, who listed those Interregnum captains whom he believed had risen from being cabin boys to flag rank.<sup>13</sup> In fact, the various Commonwealth regimes were generally composed of conservative and landed men, so they were unlikely to adopt a deliberate policy of favouring those of low birth. As we have already seen, whatever Clarendon might say the generals at sea (including Penn) were good examples of the sorts of well connected widely experienced men who formed the ruling elite of the republic. In lower commands, too, so-called 'tarpaulins' often turn out to have been prominent men in their local communities: Lawson's father had been prominent on the town council in Scarborough, while two mayors of Dover and a mayor of Weymouth held command in this period. One of the few old-style 'gentlemen officers' to serve the republic was George Ayscue, best known in the first Dutch war for his running fight off Plymouth in 1652. He was from a well-off landowning family of Weybridge; his father had been a gentleman of the privy chamber to Charles I, while Ayscue himself had been a godson to Archbishop Abbott, whose will included a bequest to George of ten pounds and a horse. He was knighted by Charles in August 1641 for reasons unknown. He gained his first seagoing command in 1646 at the siege of Pendennis. Although his background might seem to make him an unlikely candidate for high command under the commonwealth, Ayscue shared a common trait with many other captains of the period, namely a personal connection to a key member or members of the political elite: in his case, he was related by marriage to Sir Henry Vane. He was removed from command in 1652. Both at the time and since, there were hints that this was because he was suspected of royalism, and royalist agents were certainly approaching him by 1656. In fact, this seems unlikely, as he was regularly under consideration for high commands and had sound reasons of ill health for retiring in 1652.<sup>14</sup> (Nevertheless, his wife was a member of one of leading royalist families in Kent, and Hugh Peters certainly wrote to him during the war to suggest that he should not be fighting against the Dutch.) Even some of the 'lower born' captains could still claim distinguished lineages: the prominent interregnum naval family of Haddock, from Leigh on Sea in Essex, had been seafarers since at least the fourteenth century.

Below the generals at sea, relatively few officers came in directly from the army. One of the least successful transitions was that of Colonel Richard Cobbett, who had commanded the escort bringing Charles I from Carisbrooke to his trial. Although never properly a commissioned naval officer, in September 1653 he was commanding a squadron of six ships

sent to capture Duart Castle, the seat of the Clan Maclean, which had joined the ninth earl of Glencairn's royalist rebellion. The squadron was decimated by a great storm, with three ships sunk and the other three crippled; Cobbett escaped in a rowing boat.<sup>15</sup> More successful was Monck's protégé Major Jeremy Smith, who went on after the Restoration to become an admiral and a knight, but his career, like those of the generals-at-sea, shows how difficult it is to generalise – for Smith had been a sailor before he became a soldier, serving on a Hull merchantman in 1642 when Charles I was trying to seize the town, and following his service in Monck's Scottish army and then at sea in the first Dutch war, he returned to Hull to become a merchant and shipowner. A little known dimension of interplay between Cromwell's army and the navy is the involvement of army officers in privateering during the first Dutch war. British privateering played a significant part in the decimation of Dutch merchant shipping during the war, but there has been virtually no examination of the ownership and command of these vessels. In fact, five privateers were owned or part owned by majors or colonels of the New Model. The owner of the *Example* was a certain Colonel George Joyce, who had made a more significant mark on history when a mere cornet six years earlier at Holdenby House. However, the involvement of these army officers needs to be seen in context: the great majority of privateers were set out by syndicates of London and Dover merchants.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, they could be a training ground for future naval captains; for example, Thomas Teddeman of Dover was captain of the *Speedwell* privateer in the first Dutch war, became a naval captain later in the 1650s, and eventually became a flag officer after the Restoration; Jeremy Smith, too, had commanded a privateer, albeit a few years earlier.

Regardless of their social origins, a factor common to many of the republic's sea officers was religious radicalism, or at least the perception of it. Lawson was a baptist; after emigrating to New England, Nehemiah Bourne supported the toleration of baptists. Deane said of the dissolution of the Rump that he hoped 'the end of all these terrible shakings' would be 'that Christ alone may be exalted'.<sup>17</sup> Blake's letters are full of religious imagery. He shared the Protector's vision of Providence: writing to give account to the Admiralty of his defeat at Dungeness in December 1652, Blake hoped that 'you have hearts prepared to receive evil as well as good from the hand of God...into what capacity or condition soever it shall please the Lord to cast me, I shall labour to approve myself a faithful patriot'.<sup>18</sup> Blake was wont to summon councils of war that look remarkably like prayer meetings.<sup>19</sup> It is easy to be cynical about all this, given the apparent ease with which some of the more radical, eg Lawson,

seem to have jettisoned their principles in order to go on to high command after the Restoration. Perhaps the classic example is Richard Haddock, whose father and grandfather had held high command for the republic, who gained his first naval command under Lord Protector Oliver in 1657 after serving under his father in the Dutch war, and who survived every change of regime of the following half century to die as controller of the navy to George I. But it is important to present a balanced picture, for there also very many who stuck to their principles and suffered as a result; perhaps the most prominent example was William Goodson, widely regarded as one of the republic's best seamen, who refused to compromise in 1660 and never served again.

What, then, of the force that 'Cromwell's', or at least the Commonwealth's, admirals and captains had to fight, the Dutch naval officer corps? The Dutch had more flag officers, primarily because they had five admiralties, each with three flag officers appointed for any campaign. But they had set up a permanent retained list of captains as early as 1626, and had also witnessed a shift from 'noble' to more professional captains during the 1630s and 1640s. Dutch officers were drawn primarily from the merchant shipping communities: both the father and grandfather of Maarten Tromp, their best commander of the period, had been fine seamen, and the father had eventually entered naval service. Others were drawn from the city elites; there was still a reasonable degree of social mobility in seventeenth century Dutch cities. Therefore, the social origins of the Dutch captains were very similar to those of their opponents in the English Commonwealth. However, the advantages of the successive purges of the English officer corps between 1642 and 1649 are suggested by the fact that the politically less homogenous Dutch service was divided by bitter provincial and political rivalries. There had always been rivalry between Holland and Zeeland over which province should have its nominee in supreme command of the fleet. This was exacerbated by the ongoing conflict between Orangist and republican elements in Dutch state; the latter gained the upper hand following the 1650 coup that followed the death of Charles I's son-in-law William II, but the navy remained divided, with strong Orangist sentiment surviving there. There was considerable opposition to the Orangist Tromp in 1652-3, but when he was replaced in 1652 his crew refused to have his republican successor Witte de With aboard the flagship. Tromp's death after his recall in the following year led to an attempt to emulate the British 'generals at sea' approach, namely the appointment of Wassenaar van Obdam. The new admiral possessed twenty years' experience in the army but critically lacked the early

seagoing experience that his English counterparts possessed, and even more critically, Obdam proved to be utterly incompetent. Perhaps the most important difference between English and Dutch officers, but also the hardest to quantify, is a difference of mentality. Geography and economics dictated that in the first Dutch war, as in the two subsequent wars after the Restoration, the Dutch were on the defensive, the English on the offensive. The stakes for the Dutch were simply higher, hinging on the preservation of their vital maritime trades, but it was not to be until the third war (1672-4) that the Dutch evolved a consistently successful defensive naval strategy.<sup>20</sup>

Returning finally to the question posed at the beginning of this paper – how far did the naval officers of the first Anglo-Dutch war match up to Cromwell's well-known criteria for selecting army officers? It seems clear from the evidence that they did, to a very considerable extent. This was a service where men could rise on merit – social rank was less important in the navy of the 1650s than it had been before that period, and certainly than it became after it. It was also a service where religious diversity, and even to an extent political diversity, did not matter as long as an officer was demonstrably competent. Therefore, although this was an armed force that the Lord Protector had played no part in creating, it clearly accorded very much with the principles he had adopted in the army. In that sense, this was certainly a navy with which Oliver Cromwell could do business.

#### Notes.

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3. R Harding and P Le Fevre, eds., *Precursors of Nelson: British Admirals of the Eighteenth Century* (2000), 1.
4. For the generals, see Capp, 53-4, 58-9, 79-80.
5. There is no more recent life of Deane than J B Deane's *The Life of Richard Deane* (1870).
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10. S R Gardiner and C T Atkinson (eds), *Letters and Papers Relating to the First Dutch War* (Navy Records Society, 1898-1930), iii, 408.
11. Capp, 165-7.
12. J Binns, 'Sir John Lawson: Scarborough's Admiral of the Red', *Northern History*, 32 (1996), 90-108; Davies, *Gentlemen and Taraulins*,
13. *The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon...in which is included a Continuation of his History of the Great Rebellion* (Oxford, 1827), ii, 355, 386; for Gibson, see *The Naval Miscellany*, ii, ed J K Laughton (Navy Records Society, 1912), 160-1.
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16. Public Record Office, HCA 25/10.
17. Quoted, Capp p. 300; cf *ibid.*, 293-307, for more detail on the religion of the officer corps.
18. *The Letters of Robert Blake*, ed. J R Powell (Navy Records Society, 1937), 184-6.
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20. J R Bruijn, *The Dutch Navy of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1990).

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## MOSES AND THE MILKSOP: THE RELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OLIVER CROMWELL AND CHARLES FLEETWOOD.

*By Professor Christopher Durston*

Oliver Cromwell was one of the most religiously motivated individuals ever to rule England. The details of his career are well known. Born into a minor gentry family in East Anglia, he underwent a classic Calvinist conversion experience in the early 1630s, and thereafter became staunchly puritan in outlook. He rose to prominence as a soldier in the 1640s, and was deeply implicated in the revolution and regicide of 1649. After coming to power as Lord Protector in the mid 1650s, he made a strenuous attempt to implement the godly reformation, which he believed God had raised him to effect. Throughout the 1640s and 1650s, the Hebrew Bible was his constant reference point; he repeatedly compared his career to those of the Israelite leaders, Moses, Gideon and David, and he drew close parallels between the Israelites' desert experience and the history of England in the 1650s. Colin Davis has stated that 'no event or facet of his life was untouched by God's presence and guiding will', but has also commented that his personal religious beliefs are sparsely documented and that our knowledge about them is almost entirely based on public utterances.<sup>1</sup> One place, however, where Cromwell did privately express his spiritual convictions was in his correspondence with his son-in-law, fellow army officer and protectoral councillor, Charles Fleetwood.

While most of those who helped Cromwell govern England in the 1650s shared his godly religious outlook, few were closer to him in this respect than Fleetwood. He was born about 1618 into a Northamptonshire gentry family, the younger son of Sir Miles Fleetwood, receiver of the Court of Wards. He joined the earl of Essex's army at the start of the civil war and by 1644 was a commander of a regiment in the earl of Manchester's army notorious for its religious zeal. He later commanded a New Model Army cavalry regiment and was heavily involved in the power struggles of the late 1640s, though he took no part in the regicide. He fought in Scotland in 1650 and at Worcester in 1651, and was subsequently appointed to the republican council of state. In 1652 he married Cromwell's most godly child, Bridget, Henry Ireton's widow, and was chosen to lead the army in Ireland, where he remained from September 1652 to September 1655. There he gained a reputation as a favourer of the radical sectaries in the army, and vigorously pursued the policy of the dispossession and transportation of the native Catholic

population. He was named as major-general for East Anglia in 1655 but only acted through deputies, and in 1657 he opposed the plan to make Cromwell king. He may for a while have been considered as a possible successor for Cromwell, but, if so, was passed over on account of his lack of resolve. An emotional, highly-strung man, he was notorious for resorting to tears and impassioned public prayers. When he protested at the closure of parliament in February 1658, Cromwell called him a milksop, and Clarendon later reported that during discussions with his fellow soldiers 'he would invite them all to prayers, and put himself upon his knees before them'.<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that the two shared a very close and deep relationship. Cromwell clearly missed Fleetwood when he left for Ireland in the autumn of 1652; in early September he wrote to another absent friend: 'Have I one friend in our society to whom I can unbowell myself? You absent; Fleetwood is gone. I am left alone – almost so – but not forsaken.'<sup>3</sup> Fleetwood for his part told Henry Cromwell in 1656: 'the state hath a mercy beyond what I feare wee have harte to price in His Highnes', and in 1657 described Oliver as 'a man of great prayer and faith and to whom the Lord hath given much of his councill in darke cases'.<sup>4</sup> During the kingship crisis of early 1657, attempts were made to detach Fleetwood from Cromwell, and one anonymous address called on him to dissociate himself from 'Pharaoh's court'; but, despite his grave misgivings about the offer of the crown, he stayed steadfastly loyal.<sup>5</sup>

Three extant letters from Cromwell to Fleetwood, dating from the early and mid 1650s when the latter was in Ireland, provide a tantalisingly brief, but nonetheless fascinating insight into Cromwell's religious outlook. In them, he opened up to a godly friend who he entirely trusted and talked freely both about his sense of confidence and trust in God and his distress at the problems he was encountering, and in particular at the divisions within the ranks of the saints.

In the remarkable first letter, probably written in late 1652, Cromwell begins by discussing the mental state of his daughter Bridget, who seems to have been suffering from some form of anxiety or depression, possibly as a result of her first husband's recent death.<sup>6</sup> Drawing perhaps on his own spiritual struggles twenty years before, he tells Fleetwood to counsel her to beware of a 'bondage spirit', adding that 'Fear is the natural issue of such a spirit' and that 'the antidote is, love'. He goes on to say that Bridget should avoid recriminations, commenting: 'The voice of fear is (If I had done this; if I had avoided that, how well it had been with me) – I

know this hath been her vain reasoning.' He advises her instead to put her trust in the God of love and, in passages given added psychological resonance by being addressed to his daughter and son-in-law, he adopts an ecstatic preaching style to deliver a moving mini-sermon on the nature of God the Father, His relationship with His son Christ, and the promise of the new covenant of grace. He writes:

Love argueth on this wise. What a Christ have I; what a Father,...Merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. What a nature hath my Father: He is love – free in it, unchangeable, infinite.

After thus describing the first person of the Trinity in terms very different from the traditional image of the wrathful, vengeful Calvinist deity, he goes on stress the importance for his beliefs of the covenant of grace between divine father and son, and its promise to humankind:

What a covenant between Him and Christ, for all the seed, for everyone; wherein He undertakes all, and the poor soul nothing. The new Covenant is grace to or upon the soul to which it is passive and receptive. I do away their sins; I'll write my law, etc.; I'll put it in their hearts; they shall never depart from me, etc.

He concludes by arguing that comfort is only to be found by trusting fully in Christ and striving to have an ever-closer relationship with Him:

And shall we seek for the root of our comforts within us; what God hath done, what He is to us in Christ, is the root of our comfort. In this is stability; in us is weakness. Acts of obedience are not perfect, and therefore yield not perfect peace. Faith, as an act, yields it not, but as it carries us unto Him, who is our perfect rest and peace; in whom we are accounted of, and received by, the Father, even as Christ Himself. This is our high calling. Rest we here, and here only.

The second letter was written in August 1653. Penned at a time when deep divisions were emerging within the ranks of the godly members of Barebone's Parliament, it reveals Cromwell's distress at the lack of unity amongst the saints.<sup>7</sup> Cromwell tells Fleetwood:

Truly I never more needed all helps from my Christian friends than now! Fain would I have my service accepted of the saints (if the Lord will) but it is not so. Being of different judgements, and of each sort most seeking to propagate their own, that spirit of kindness that is to them all, is hardly accepted of any. I hope I can say it, my life has been a willing sacrifice, and I hope, [word missing] for them all. Yet it much falls out as when two Hebrews were rebuked: you know upon whom they turned their displeasure...If every one (instead of contending) would justify his form 'of judgement' by love and meekness, Wisdom would be justified of her children.

By this reference to the story of the two Hebrews in Exodus, Cromwell was very consciously identifying himself with Moses. In an incident, which was of crucial importance in establishing his true identity as a Hebrew, Moses first encounters an Egyptian attacking a Hebrew slave, and kills him. Shortly afterwards, he intervenes when he finds two Hebrews fighting, only for one of them to turn on him and declare 'Who made thee a prince and a judge over us; thinkest thou to kill me as thou killed the Egyptian.' Cromwell is obviously Moses, the fighting Hebrews the quarrelling saints, and the Egyptian probably Charles I.

Cromwell then goes on to confide that the many problems he faces have tempted him to consider retiring from public office: 'But, alas I am, in my temptation, ready to say, Oh, would I had wings like a dove, then would I,...'. This was a reference to Psalm 55 where the psalmist under attack longs for a shelter from the storm, wind and tempest. Fleetwood was clearly affected by this reference, for in a letter back to Cromwell a year later, in which he complains about his own difficulties in Ireland, he writes:

I often remember a passage in a former letter from your Highnes, wherein you were pleased to mention, that in your hast[e] you was ready to wish, that you had wings to fly away, etc. I confess when I consider it as the Lord's hand, I am silent, and can subscribe; but often, when I meet with my very great tryals, burdens, and difficulties, I am ready to complain: and if it were not to serve your highnes and this pretious cause, I hope for no reward of man, [I would have] indured what I have done.<sup>8</sup>

The third letter was written in June 1655 a few months before Fleetwood's return from Ireland, and at a time when serious tensions had

developed between Fleetwood and Cromwell's son, Henry, who was also now holding military office there.<sup>9</sup> Writing in the colloquial 'thee' form, Cromwell begins by assuring Fleetwood of his continuing affection and repeating his distress at the divisions among the people of God:

I desire thee to know I most dearly love thee, and indeed my heart is plain to thee as thy heart can well desire: let nothing shake thee in this. The wretched jealousies that are amongst us, and the spirit of calumny, turns all into gall and wormwood. My heart is for the people of God: that the Lord knows, and I trust will in due time manifest; yet thence are my wounds; which though it grieves me, yet through the grace of God doth not discourage me totally.

He then goes on specifically to deny that he wishes to supplant Fleetwood's authority and replace him with his son, and alluding once more to Bridget's spiritual doubts, he pens another moving passage about the covenant of grace:

Dear Charles, my dear love to thee; to my dear Bidy, who is a joy to my heart, for what I hear of the Lord in her. Bid her be cheerful, and rejoice in the Lord once and again: If she knows the Covenant thoroughly, she cannot but do. [So,] For that transaction is without her, sure and steadfast, between the Father and the Mediator in His blood: therefore leaning upon the Son, or looking to Him, thirsting after Him, embracing Him, we are His seed;...God is bound in faithfulness to Christ, and in Him to us: the Covenant is without us; a transaction between God and Christ. Look up to it. God engageth in it to pardon us; to write His law in our heart; to plant His fear [so] that we shall never depart from Him. We, under all our sins and infirmities, can daily offer a perfect Christ; and thus we have peace and safety, and apprehension of love, from a Father in Covenant, who cannot deny Himself. And truly in this is all my salvation; and this helps me to bear my great burdens.

Fleetwood sent only a couple of replies directly to Cromwell during these years; he did, however, write nearly twenty letters to John Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary, and some of these at least must have been seen by Oliver. The correspondence makes clear both his great love and attachment to his father-in-law, and his firm conviction that he was engaged upon God's work and should therefore receive the continued

support of the godly section of the nation. In July 1654 he told Thurloe: 'You will easily believe me, when I tell you, how much my interest is concerned both as a man, and as a Christian, in my lord protector'.<sup>10</sup> Three months later, after hearing of the failure of the Gerard-Vowel assassination plot, he wrote to Thurloe:

The late wonderfull deliverance of my lord protector is such, as indeede ought exceedingly to affect the hearte of all that feare the Lord; for certainly there hath not bine for many ages past more concernment in one man's life then in his, for the good of these three nations; and I am very confident, it will be more and more manifest suddenly, how much the mercy to all the Lord's people is in his preservation.<sup>11</sup>

What these letters make clear is that, for Fleetwood, Lord Protector Cromwell was first and foremost the protector of God's people. In November 1656, shortly after the meeting of the second protectorate parliament, Fleetwood wrote to Thurloe:

I know my lord's streight is great; but I trust his heart will ever keepe firme to the saints interest, and then we neede not care or feare. I am perswaded, that will still be a rocke will split all, who fall upon it. That one principle of his in tenderness to all saints, as saints, is that which God will own him in through all diffycultyes and discouradgments...I remember an expression of his, which one latly minded me of, and that is this; when they talked of his policy, his answer was, that his policy lay in this, to witnes against, and punish wicked men, and to incorredge and get into the army as many good men as he could, and that was his strength. That frame I trust he still reteines; and I know God will beare him out, and carry him through all.<sup>12</sup>

It was, moreover, imperative for Fleetwood that Cromwell's championing of God's people was carried on abroad as well as at home. In July 1654 he told Thurloe that the protector's 'tenderness to the Protestant party' was 'an interest to be regarded above all things in the world', and he went on to argue that the protectorate's foreign policy should be dictated by religious principle alone. He advised Thurloe – and doubtless through him Cromwell – that:

though it is against the rules of politicks; yet whatever comes, it will be found the best, surest, and lasting way to minde thos

most, who com nearest to the name of saintshippe: and I had rather my lord should break with France and Spayne etc. then to heare he had left behinde him the interest of thos poore (and even darke) people called Protestants. Wheare ther is most of God, ther is the best choyce; and I hope amongst them there is a pretious seade, who rather waite for a spring-time to budde forth and appeare, then that they want life in the roote.<sup>13</sup>

When he heard in May 1655 of the massacre of the Protestant Vaudois by the Duke of Savoy, Fleetwood was naturally outraged and horrified, and immediately called upon Cromwell to take up their cause. He told Thurloe:

I confess I am not without my hopes that his highness may be particularly raised up for such a day as this is, in being a shelter to those poor persecuted protestants in forraine parts. It is a worke, the more his heart is enlarged thereunto, the greater witnes I trust there will be from the Lord in owning of him. I hope providence will open some way for him therein.<sup>14</sup>

Diplomatic pressure initiated by Cromwell did subsequently force the Duke of Savoy to make some restitution for the massacre.

When Oliver Cromwell died on 3 September 1658, Fleetwood was devastated. In a letter to Henry Cromwell on 7 September, he described his passing as 'this late grivious stroake', and went on to declare:

Oh! that the Lord would give us hearts to search and try our wayes, and turn to him, who hath thus sorely smitten us! Great displeasur is broken forth: we have cause to lay our mouths in the dust, and to say, 'We have sined': that we have great cause to bewaile; else there would not have bine such a sore rebuke as at this day is our porcon.

He then told Henry that the army had lost not

a generall and protector only, but a dear and tender father to them and all the Lord's people...He hath left us a blessed example for us to walke by: his heart was full of love to the interest of the Lord's people, yea above all other concernments; and made everything else bow down unto it.<sup>15</sup>

As a humble and self-abasing puritan, Oliver Cromwell would have demurred at such an epitaph; it was nonetheless one of which he would have thoroughly approved, and which, had he known of it, might even have led him to succumb briefly to the sin of pride. This brief study of Cromwell and Fleetwood's correspondence has attempted to shed a little extra light on the deep and sustaining religious beliefs that these two men so closely shared, and to emphasise again the absolute centrality of these beliefs to the outlook of those who ruled the British Isles during the Interregnum.

#### Notes.

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8. Birch, *State Papers of John Thurloe*, vol. 2, p. 530.
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11. Birch, *State Papers of John Thurloe*, vol. 2, p. 693.
12. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 548-9.
13. British Library, Additional MSS, 4156, f. 71; printed in Birch, *State Papers of John Thurloe*, vol. 2, pp. 492-3.
14. Birch, *State Papers of John Thurloe*, vol. 3, p. 468.
15. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 375.

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by Professor Ivan Roots

Christopher Hill died on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2003, a few days into his 92<sup>nd</sup> year. He had been among the most influential and certainly the most read, worldwide, of twentieth-century historians of the Stuart era. Hill was a Marxist, as taken up with the intellectual and social concerns and aspirations of his own times as of those of his chosen period, which he saw as one of revolution, as S R Gardiner had. Gardiner's emphasis was on religion – specifically Puritanism. Hill took a broader view, yet religion runs through the canon of his writings – their very titles a litany – from *The Economic Problems of the Church* (1956), through *The English Bible and the Seventeenth Century Revolution* (1993), to *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution Revisited* (1997). Coming from a comfortably-off but rather strait Methodist home in York, he had had first-hand experience and, surely, retained some instinctive understanding of dissenting Protestantism, which, along with a response to the literature of the age of Milton and Marvell must have underlain his abiding enthusiasm for Interregnum radicals like Arise Evans and Abiezer Coppe. They shared in heart and head the urge of Gerrard Winstanley, who if anyone was Hill's hero, to grasp the inwardness of the relations not only of God and men, but of men and men (women, too) during an age which he saw as 'going up like parchment in the fire'. Hill himself came to intellectual maturity at just such a time – the 1930s of the Depression, the Spanish Civil War and the rise of fascism. These clearly were strong among the influences which produced his Marxism and membership of the Communist Party.

He left in 1967 over the Soviet intervention in Hungary, much to the disappointment of some of his detractors who would have much preferred to have had him still susceptible to innuendoes about pursuing an alien tradition. It must be said, too, that Hill's Marxism was never of the sort obsessed with 'the masses', but one which observed and wondered about faces, individual, yet in their way representative, glimpsed in the crowd.

After his 'first' at Balliol in 1932 and a winning try, of which he was always very proud, in Torpids, he held briefly a fellowship at All Souls, where he met A L Rowse, who would confide to his self-revelatory diary that 'dear Christopher's intellect' was not very strong, 'feminine', in fact. Nevertheless Rowse later signed him up for a volume on Lenin in his *Teach Yourself History* series (1947). Ironically it became the best seller of

all. Meanwhile Hill had spent nearly a year in the Soviet Union, learning Russian and conversing with historians. There followed a spell at University College, Cardiff, where he introduced a 'special subject' on Oliver Cromwell. (I would take that over in 1946). He worked there, too, among Basque children, refugees of the Civil War. He taught them carpentry and they called him Cristobel. Back briefly at Balliol in 1938, he went on to a varied war service which, drawing on his fluent grasp of the language, put him into the Russian Department. The war over he returned to Balliol as fellow and tutor and from 1965 to 1978, to much surprise, as elected Master. It was always a difficult office, but to his own stint he brought tact, balance and common sense, making for changes which ensured a place for undergraduates in the government of the college and paving the way for the admission of women, while maintaining the respect of the fellows, even those who disagreed with him. All the while he bore a full teaching load of lectures and tutorials in which he encouraged, demanded, even, the formulation and clear expression of ideas, listening, his silences punctuated by what one of his grateful pupils, Chris Patten, has characterised as a 'sniff'. It was, in fact, his effort to control a stammer, a disability that he would at length turn, as Nye Bevan did, into an asset.

On retirement from Balliol Christopher was for two years a visiting professor at the Open University, an institution of which he thoroughly approved. Meanwhile the books and articles and the lectures, often given abroad – in Brazil or the USA – continued. There were honorary degrees and the fellowship of the British Academy. He was living now at Sibford Ferris, not far from Oxford and the Bodleian, with Bridget, his second wife, whom he had married in 1956. Their close-knit partnership was one of shared interests. She was a historian, too, particularly of women. Their happy life together lasted until her death in 2002, a few months before his.

Christopher Hill's formidable erudition was the fruit of an unparalleled mastery of the myriad printed primary sources lodged in major libraries, including his own. Where possible he would obtain his own copy of this or that volume, often in contemporary editions, such as the *Works of William Perkins* (3 vols, 1609-12), pencilling in his own cryptic index on a back flyleaf. Not an archival researcher, he was yet appreciative of those who were, and drew, always with meticulous acknowledgement, on their published results to reinforce or to argue with his own conclusions. Always he welcomed discussion and controversy. The contributors to his festschrift, mostly pursuing approaches somewhat different from his,

were united in their respect for the scholar and the complex human being who had scrawled his signature across their exciting seventeenth century.

With Rodney Hilton and Eric Hobsbawn, fellow Marxists, he founded *Past and Present*, now celebrating fifty glorious years as 'a journal of scientific history', its pages open to contributions from all schools of historical thought and practice, from all periods and places, fostering debate, as for instance, on Gerrard Winstanley, with whom Christopher had lived since 1938, when he had stirred the Oxford University History Society into action towards a (sadly frustrated) complete edition of the Digger's scattered tracts. (Hill would later achieve a selection as a Penguin Classic, a rare distinction for an author still, in the estimation of some historians, stuck firmly in a lunatic fringe).

Alongside Winstanley Hill had pursued Oliver Cromwell, who in a contemporary portrait looked down, benignly, maybe, on Christopher's tutorials at Balliol. His *God's Englishman* (1970) is still in print as a Penguin. A set of searching studies rather than a biography, it expresses an admiration held this side idolatry, with a preference for the dynamic leader of the Civil Wars over the tiring statesman of the 1650s coping with the vagaries of the Good Old Cause. Cromwell's relationship with Providence is set in context, seeing him as one of Calvin's 'tried wrestlers', for whom waiting on God was a necessary activity, not a retreat from the world, making for a character confident that God would be on his because he was on God's, and for a doer who could create an opportunity as well as exploit one, turning each towards a persistent purpose. Diverse as we are, members of the Cromwell Association will recognise something of their man in that.

Many have criticised what they see as Christopher Hill's inordinate present-centeredness, unaware of, or forgetful of, their own ideological positions, which have certainly included Thatcherism. But like Shakespeare, who comes on well in modern dress, the past in the hands of Clio, a muse, not a despot, is patient of interpretation, and in David Cannadine's acute observation that 'the same accusing finger' pointed at Hill (and Lawrence Stone and others) will be – and, indeed, is already – directed at revisionists of all varieties. Standing on the shoulders of their predecessors, with Christopher Hill of that company, they will in their turn be trodden on. Meantime keep your Christopher Hills on the bookshelves – and from time to time take them down for their unflinching stimulation.

## CROMWELLIAN BRITAIN XVI. DURHAM, COUNTY DURHAM

by Jane A Mills

County Durham covers an area of 2,436 sq km and due to its close proximity to Scotland has always been seen as a strategically important area. It is bordered on three sides by water, the River Tyne to the north, the River Tees in the south and on the east side the North Sea. The Romans built Hadrian's Wall to keep the Celts in Scotland and Durham was a military outpost. There is proof they occupied the area as there are several place names with a Roman origin such as Binchester, Lanchester and Ebchester.

The City of Durham owes its origins to St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, who became a monk at the Melrose monastery near the River Tweed. Because of his remarkable qualities and his ability to work miracles he was promoted to Bishop of Lindisfarne and travelled throughout the North converting people to the Christian faith. He later retired to Inner Farne and became a hermit receiving pilgrims. On his death in 687AD he was buried on Lindisfarne. Years later his body was found to be incorruptible, so he was proclaimed a saint and the news of this miracle made Lindisfarne the centre of a tourist trade, making the monastery very wealthy from gifts.

Unfortunately the wealth attracted the Vikings who raided the Holy Island, the monks fled to the mainland with Cuthbert and the Lindisfarne Gospels. For over a century successive monks carried his coffin around the North, until they reached Chester-le-Street and the coffin refused to be moved. St Cuthbert appeared in a vision telling them to take the coffin to Dun Holm, which is Anglo Saxon for Hill Island. The monks could not find the site until they reached Mount Joy and overheard two milkmaids talking about a missing Dun Cow who was last seen near Dun Holm. This was seen as Divine Providence as the site was on high ground protected on three sides by the steep wooded gorge of the River Wear.

The first church was wood and then in 998AD a stone church was built and became an important pilgrimage site, even King Canute paid a visit. In 1006 the Scots raided the settlement, because of the wealth, they were defeated and had their heads cut off and placed on poles as a warning against any further invasion. In 1066 William the Conqueror visited St Cuthbert's body, but he became ill after threatening the inhabitants and

fled. Three years later he sent an army of seven hundred but was defeated by the inhabitants and a Northumbrian army. Durham finally came under Norman control when William sent a much larger army. He was concerned that England was so vulnerable to invasion by the Scots and a Saxon rebellion, so he appointed Bishop Walcher of Durham as fled. Three years later he sent an army of seven hundred but was defeated Earl-Bishop of Northumbria. After his murder he appointed Bishop Carileph Prince Bishop with powers to raise taxes, mint coins with supreme juridical power over civilians and the military. During this period the Cathedral and Castle were built to give the region better protection. The Normans called the City Duresme and in Latin Dunelm which later became Durham.

In 1633 the roads were repaired in Durham in honour of the visit of Charles I who was stopping while on route to Scotland to be crowned in Edinburgh. He attended evensong at the Cathedral and saw the graves of St Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede, Britain's first Historian. He visited the city again six years later because of the first Bishops' war; this second visit was paid for by proportional taxation, this caused arguments amongst the residents. His final visit was in 1647 when he was a prisoner and in the custody of Scottish Commissioners on route to Holmby House.

Durham became a centre of military occupation during the second Bishop's War in 1640, troops stayed in the city on their way to fight the Scots army. The Scotch army approached the Tyne and on the 28 August tried to cross at Newburn the Durham troops were in trenches nearby but unfortunately the Scots were on high ground and had artillery therefore the trenches soon became useless. The Scots cavalry charged at low tide forcing the English back who fled to Newcastle and Durham prompting the evacuation of Bishop Thomas Morton and his circle. Durham was seized on 2 September; the invading Scots Army stayed until August 1641 and the County of Durham had to pay £350 a day towards its subsistence.

During their occupation they did considerable damage to the City: in the interior of the Cathedral they smashed the font and the organ; they caused damage to the fabric of the castle and after the Restoration the newly appointed Bishop Cosin (1660-72) found it in a deplorable state. He started repairs and destroyed the barbican and partially filled the moat, he built an elaborate porch and four great buttresses on to the hall converting part of the hall into a council chamber. Durham was occupied

again in 1644 by the Earl of Newcastle's army sheltering from a snowstorm after skirmishing with Lord Leven's army. After he left Leven's army of 22,000 descended on Durham looking for supplies but they soon left for Sunderland.

In October 1646 an Ordinance was passed for the total abolition of episcopacy, which led to an order for the sale of bishops' lands in November the same year and therefore the process of selling the see of Durham was started. The Lord Mayor of London, Thomas Andrews bought Durham Castle for £1,267 0s 10d, and Sir Arthur Haselrig spent a vast amount on three properties.<sup>1</sup>

January 1650 saw the Second Engagement where an oath of faithfulness to the Commonwealth was imposed on all men eighteen or over. The citizens of Durham were very enthusiastic, they even made Lieutenant Colonel Hobson (Deputy Governor of Newcastle) freeman of the city. And it was during this time that a petition was made for the law courts to be re-established and to found a college at Durham.

In July 1650 Oliver Cromwell stayed in Durham while on his way to Scotland, which would culminate in the battle of Dunbar and prove to be the highlight of his military career. Scotland was a difficult venue, the land had been stripped of food and Cromwell was forced to retreat to Dunbar in order to receive supplies from ships. The Parliamentary army of only 11,000 had their backs to the sea and faced a force of 22,000; but experience triumphed over inexperience and Cromwell was victorious.

After the victory, over 10,000 prisoners were taken and due to the condition of his own men Cromwell released about 5,000 who were wounded and fatigued.

The Lord Generals Proclamation concerning the wounded men left in the field.

For as much as I understand there are several soldiers of the Enemies Army yet abiding in the Field, who by reason of their wounds could not march from thence: These are therefore to give notice to the Inhabitants of this Nation, that they may and have free liberty to repair to the Field aforesaid, and with their carts, or any other peaceable way, to carry the said Soldiers to such places as they shall think fit; provided they meddle not or take away any the Arms there; and all officers and Soldiers are to

take notice that the same is permitted. Given under my Hand at Dunbar Sept 4 1650.

To be Proclaimed by beat  
Of Drum<sup>2</sup>

In two letters Cromwell set out his plan for disposal of the remaining 5,100, which were considered a possible future threat. In the first letter to the President of the Council of State he discloses that his decision took into account the state of his own men.

We are put to exceeding trouble, though it be an effect of abundant mercy, with the numerousness of our Prisoners; having so few hands, so many of our men sick; - so little conveniency of disposing of them; and not, by attendance thereupon, to omit the seasonableness of the prosecution of this mercy as Providence shall direct. We have been constrained, even out of Christianity, humanity, and the forementioned necessity, to dismiss between four and five thousand Prisoners, almost starved, sick and wounded; the remainder, which are the like, or a greater number, I am fain to send by a convoy of four troops of Colonel Hacker's, to Berwick, and so on to Newcastle, southwards.<sup>3</sup>

In the second letter to Haselrig he explains his dilemma and confirms his trust in Haselrig as 'a man of business' to make sure the job is done.

We have despatched away near 5,000 poor wretches of them; very many of which, it's probable, will die of their wounds, or be rendered unserviceable for time to come by reason thereof. I have written to the Council of State, desiring them to direct how they shall be disposed of: and I make no question but you will hasten the Prisoners up Southwards, and second my desires with your own to the Council.<sup>4</sup>

Sir Arthur Haselrig under Cromwell's orders marched them south on 4 September, by the evening they had marched 28 miles to Berwick; three days later they reached Morpeth and camped in a farmer's cabbage field.

the Prisoners being put into a large walled garden, they eat up raw cabbages, leaves and roots; so many, . . . poisoned their bodies; for as they were coming from thence Newcastle, some dyed by the wayside.<sup>5</sup>

There had been given very little food on the way only what civilians managed to give them and the drinking water was from muddy puddles of rainwater. By the time they had reached Newcastle many had died of dysentery and typhoid. Several died overnight in St Nicholas' Church and 500 were left behind as they were unfit to travel.

The last march from Newcastle to Durham brought the death toll to 1,500. The remaining 3,000 arrived in Durham on 11 September and were quartered in Durham Cathedral. It is not surprising that Durham had little sympathy for the defeated Scots Army; the memory of the Scots occupation was still vivid in the residents' minds. But it did not justify the conditions the prisoners had to endure, which were intolerable, 1,600 died in 58 days. Charles Carlton described it as 'an atrocity as ugly as that of the Burma Railway'.<sup>6</sup>

Haselrig was under the impression that the prisoners were well cared for 'I also sent them a daily supply of bread from Newcastle. And they had Pottage made with Oatmeal, and beef and cabbages, a full quart at a meal for every prisoner: They had also coals daily brought to them, as many as made about a hundred fires both day and night'.<sup>7</sup> The sick were to be housed in the castle with 'very good mutton broth, and sometimes veal broth, and beef and mutton boild together, and old women appointed to look to them in the several rooms: There was also a Physitian'.<sup>8</sup>

But in reality any civilised behaviour completely broke down, through lack of food and fuel (the prisoners demolished the altar and pews for fire wood), supplies for the prisoners were being sold by the guards to local merchants. What did reach the prisoners was fought over, and through desperation the Scots were killing one another for clothes money and food.

If a man was perceived to have any money, it was two to one but he was killed before morning, and robbed.<sup>9</sup>

During the period of incarceration the Council of State debated the fate of the Scots.

where the Council of State may exercise their wisdom and better judgment I so dispersing and disposing of them.<sup>10</sup>

Hasilrige was to 'dispose of so many as he conceives he may to the work of the coal mines'.<sup>11</sup> Secretary Gualter Frost was to confer with petitioners 'as to the terms upon which they will transport them beyond seas'.<sup>12</sup> Hasilrige was instructed to send 500 to Ireland but 'the Highlanders, by reason of their affinity to the Irish, are proper for the service'.<sup>13</sup>

By November the number going overseas was finely confirmed; 150 were to be delivered to Augustine Walker Commander of the *Unity* and they were to travel by water to Blackwell on the Thames. Council was to write to the Justices to receive the sick prisoners 'into their pest houses to be there cured at the charge of some persons who have fetched them from the North, in order to their transportations'.<sup>14</sup>

The ship set sail and six weeks later arrived in Boston. Of those, which survived the crossing fifteen to twenty-five went to the sawmill on the Piscataqua River in Maine, sixty-two went to the Iron works at Lynn Massachusetts (now the Saugus Iron Works), and the remainder were sold as servants to local residents. They were all indentured servants for a period of seven years.

They were the lucky ones; the other prisoners went to Barbados, Virginia or became forced labourers draining the Fens in King's Lynn. Another 500 were sold to the French army to fight in Spain and those that survived were still there seven years later. The last prisoners left in 1652.

So where did the 1,600 who died in the Cathedral end up? In 1946, when workmen were digging a trench on the north side of the Cathedral for heating pipes, for the Cathedral's Music School, they found a mass grave of corpses piled on top of one another. It is presumed this is the last resting place of the Dunbar prisoners.

On the establishment of the Protectorate in 1653 the County of Durham petitioned Cromwell for representation in Parliament, the Bishops had prevented them from sending members to Parliament. They had tried during the 1620s but the Lords had thrown out the bill. In June 1654 they received representation, two for the County and one for the City. Cromwell granted Anthony Smith as the first represented member and he served again in 1656. The County and City were denied representation after 1659 when Bishop Cosin was appointed Bishop Prince of Durham. After his death the County was free to send representatives to Parliament, two for the County and two for the City of Durham.

1655 saw the establishment of the rule by the Major-Generals, seen as a way of policing the country with the help of militia. The constant fear of Royalist uprisings needed to be checked and with the successful defeat of Penruddock by Major-General Desborough it was inevitable. Lambert had been instrumental in designing the system and was given Yorkshire and the north of England except Lancashire. But because Lambert was very important and needed in London, his area was split in two and administered by two Deputy Major-Generals, Colonel Charles Howard (Cumberland, Westmoreland and Northumberland) and Colonel Robert Lilburne (Yorkshire and Durham). Lilburne was initially disappointed to be a deputy to Lambert but carried out his duties with zeal. He wrote a letter to Cromwell in December 1655:

Yet your highness may be confident of a faithfull performance of my duty to the utmost of my abillities; and if I were reduced to a corporall, I should cheerefully undertake it rather than this worke should want my best assistance to carry it on.<sup>15</sup>

Robert Lilburne was born in Durham in 1613 of a prosperous family who would be classified as lesser gentry. He was the elder brother of John Lilburne, Free-born John the hero of the Levellers. Robert started his military service with the Parliamentary army in 1643 as lieutenant in Richard Crosse's troop; by 1644 he was a Colonel with his own regiment of horse raised in Durham. In 1646 he joined the New Model and was colonel of Weldon's regiment of foot, returning to the north to command his old regiment by autumn 1647. He was to play a prominent part in the army's opposition to Parliament, but after appearing before the House of Commons he was discharged and became Governor of Newcastle. In December 1648 he was appointed one of the 135 commissioners of the High Court of Justice who were to try Charles I, and he also signed the death warrant.

During the Scottish campaigns he guarded Lancashire, successfully defeating the Earl of Derby at Wigan in 1651, thus preventing a Royalist uprising in the north. He was rewarded with land in Scotland and in 1652 replaced Deane as Commander in Chief in Scotland. He knew he was out of his depth and asked to be replaced. In his letter to Cromwell he wrote:

I am doubtful so great affairs as are here to be managed may suffer for the want of one more fit to wrestle with them than your

Excellency's most humble servant...Me. thinks Monk's spirit would do well amongst them.<sup>16</sup>

Proving he was loyal and knowing his limitations endeared him to Cromwell who already had a high opinion of him. He continued to serve Parliament and during the revolution of 1659 he joined Lambert against Monck. He surrendered at York and was sentenced to imprisonment on St. Nicholas Island where died in 1665.

It was while he served as deputy Major-General that he entered the debate for a college at Durham writing to Thurloe in January 1655. In 1656 it was decided that the sale of the property of the Dean and Chapter should be stopped and instead it could be used for the foundation for a Northern college. (For a full account of the erecting of a college at Durham see 'Writings and Sources VI' page 40).

The County accepted the Restoration but the City was against it. Their life was to change with the re-introduction of the Prince Bishop, church landlords and the Assize system. During this period repair work was carried out on the City and parish churches. A conduit was built to supply water to the castle and college precincts from Elvet Moor enabling them to abandon the Norman well, which was the Castle's only water supply.

It is interesting that in 1677 Durham entertained James, Duke of Monmouth at the castle before he became the leader of the rebellion.

#### Notes.

1. E. Mackenzie and M. Ross, *View of the County Palatine of Durham* (2 vols, Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1834), I, iii-iv. Haselrig purchased Bishop Auckland Manor £6,102 8s 11 1/2d, Easingwood Burrough £5,833 9s 9d, Wolsingham Manor £6,764 14s 4d.
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3. T. Carlyle, *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols, London, 1897), II, 219; W C Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols, Oxford, 1988), II, 326.
4. Carlyle, IV, 259; Abbott, II, 331-2.
5. British Library, Thomason Tract [hereafter BL TT] E615 (18).
6. Charles Carlton, *Going to the Wars* (Routledge, 1994), 334.
7. BL TT E615 (18).
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. Carlyle, IV, 259; Abbott, II, 331-2.
11. BL. CSPD p334 1650 September 10

12. *ibid* p340 September 16
13. *ibid* p419 November 7
14. *ibid* p438 November 22
15. T. Birch (ed), *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe Esq* (7 vols, London, 1742), iv, 294.
16. Charles Firth, *Scotland and the Commonwealth*, Lilburne to Protector Dec 20, Lilburne to Lambert Dec 29, p301, p306

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## BOOK REVIEWS

by Professor John Morrill

There can be little doubting what most Cromwellians will find the book of the year 2002. It is Austin Woolrych's *Britain in Revolution 1625-1660* (Oxford University Press). If ever a book was a distillation of a lifetime's work, this is it. Few if any scholars have had such glorious 'third ages'. After so many years as a tireless teacher and administrator as the founding Professor of History at Lancaster University, Austin Woolrych has written three extraordinary books since his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, all key works for Cromwellians: First there was *From Commonwealth to Protectorate* (Oxford University Press, 1982) his study of the last days of the Rump Parliament and of the Nominated Assembly; then *Soldiers and Statesmen: The General Council of the Army and its Debates 1647-8* (Oxford University Press, 1987); and now this masterpiece. It is a reasoned narrative of British and Irish History, the stories of the three kingdoms effectively interwoven as rarely before, from the accession of Charles 'I to the Restoration of Charles II. It is more than 800 pages in length but it is a hugely enjoyable read. Its judgements on a whole range of contentious points in the history is impeccable, its sympathies broadly parliamentary and religious-libertarian, its hero Cromwell. Anyone who remembers with affection (as I do) C.V. Wedgwood's *The King's Peace 1637-41* and *The King's War 1641-7* published forty years ago, will find these worthy successors only on a larger scale. The appearance of this book at long last means we do not automatically have to turn to S.R. Gardiner as a standard work of reference. It is a triumph. It is a snip at £25 in hardback, but a paperback at an even better price is promised for later in 2003.

Next in interest and importance, I would rate Barry Coward's *The Cromwellian Protectorate* (Manchester University Press) – available in both hardback and paperback. In 250 pages (twice what Woolrych devotes to the period) Coward offers both an account and evaluation of the protectorates of Oliver and Richard and a study of the 'impact of the Protectorate' on Scotland and Ireland, on 'the wider world' and on England itself, and the book also contains more than thirty extracts, many of them from little-known sources, relating to the themes of the book. Coward's well-known *relish* for the history of the Revolution is brought out in this consistently entertaining and lively book.

Extracts from source materials are the real (in fact the only) virtue of Tristram Hunt's *The English Civil War at First Hand* (Weidenfeld and Nicholson). Hunt demonstrated on TV recently how little he knows about the civil war, an even greater example than Simon Schama of the shallow BBC belief that Television History is best when put into the hands of those who are ignorant of the subject and therefore bring a 'fresh perspective'. Hunt is a very good historian of 19<sup>th</sup> town-hall cultures. Fortunately in Dr Simon Dyton, he had a wonderful – if less than generously acknowledged -- research assistant and this book contains a great deal of really interesting extracts from civil-war letters, pamphlets, ballads and other materials, and the book is handsomely illustrated. Cromwellians will be reassured that Oliver has the longest entry in the index as well as eight images of him from the time and from the nineteenth century. These are joined not only by an illustration of the magnificent hat which Oliver wore when he dissolved the Rump, now in the Cromwell Museum, but also a photograph of his watch, now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford which I, at least, had not seen before.

But back to that busy man Barry Coward! As well as writing his book on the Protectorate, he has been editing *A Companion to Stuart History* (Blackwell). This, sadly, is not something you will want to rush out to buy – it costs £85! But it is well worth pestering your local library to acquire. It is a collection of 24 essays; each of about 20 pages, together with a 40-page bibliography and it represents state-of-the-art summaries of interpretations of major aspects of Stuart History. Part I looks at 'Stuart Britain and a Wider World', with essays on the Multiple Kingdoms of Britain and Ireland – what I have elsewhere called 'the rise of a British state system but not a British state' – and of the development of a British trading and colonial Empire around the rims of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Part II looks at 'the changing face of Stuart Britain' with essays on the rise of the fiscal state, the press and popular political opinion, gender relations, crime and popular protest, economic and urban development, literature and history, art and architecture, and scientific knowledge. Parts III to V look in turn at the politics, religion and intellectual history of 1603-42, 1642-60, 1660-1714. It is written by the younger generation of established scholars – almost two thirds by scholars in their thirties – and (I cannot resist noting) half of the authors, and most of the youngsters, a brilliant generation of scholars from Cromwell's University. If you want to be up to speed on the cutting edge in Stuart scholarship, this is the book to read.

I cannot resist mentioning two more books. Joad Raymond has taught English Literature at Oxford, Aberdeen and now at the University of East Anglia. But like a number of other gifted English Literature specialists of our period, he is a very good historian and his most recent book, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge University Press) is a triumph. It is in hardback and costs £45, so again borrowing may be easier than buying. But it is full of good things and a very large part is about the Cromwellian period. This is the book that explains how cheap pamphlets were physically manufactured and marketed, and it has thrilling chapters on the teeming liberty of the presses in the 1640s and 1650s and on the way the female voice cut through the stridency of male voices and demanded to be heard.

Finally, there is a new biography of *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self* (Penguin-Viking) by Claire Tomalin. Pepys, of course, spent some time in the same small schoolroom in which Oliver learnt to read and write and to perspire over Latin. It is written with a graceful ease and is the ideal holiday read. I have to admit that I can see no case for reading Tomalin on Pepys rather than Pepys on himself, but so many people have been enchanted by it, and it is so inexpensive (Amazon and most chain-bookshops are promoting it with a huge discount on its £20 cover price) that it would be churlish not to include it in my survey!

## LITERARY PRIZES

by Jane A Mills

To mark the tercentenary of the death of Samuel Pepys, the Samuel Pepys Club has established a trust to make a biennial award to an author of a book published in English, about Pepys or his contemporaries, and his times, which advances knowledge of the period. The winner receives £2,000 and the Robert Latham Medal (silver medal).

On the 15<sup>th</sup> April the shortlist was announced; the four to be considered were Claire Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self*; Gerald Aylmer, *The Crown's Servants: Government and the Civil Service under Charles II*; Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution 1625-1660*; Nick Hawksmoor, *Rebuilding Ancient Wonders*.

It was auspicious for our Association to have two Vice Presidents (the late Gerald Aylmer and Austin Woolrych) nominated, but a forgone conclusion that Claire Tomalin would win. In January Tomalin had won the Whitbread Biography Award and the Whitbread Book of the Year Award. It was obvious that a book about Samuel Pepys, which had previously won such prestigious prizes, was bound to be successful in winning an award with the same name as the book.

## SUMMER SEASON 2003

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The Cromwell Museum,  
Grammar School Walk,  
Huntingdon.  
Tel (01480) 375830.

Open Tuesday-Friday 11am-1pm 2-5pm  
Saturday & Sunday 11am-1pm 2-4pm  
Monday closed

Admission free

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Oliver Cromwell's House,  
29 St Mary's Street,  
Ely.  
Tel (01353) 662062.

Open every day 10am-5.30pm

Admission charge

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The Commandery,  
Sidbury,  
Worcester.  
Tel (01905) 361821.

Open Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm  
Sunday 1.30-5pm

Admission charge

## CROMWELLIANA

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'promoting our understanding of the 17<sup>th</sup> century'