



Cromwelliana

The Journal of

The
Cromwell Association

2020

The Cromwell Association

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The Cromwell Association was formed in 1937 and is a registered charity (reg. no. 1132954). The purpose of the Association is to advance the education of the public in both the life and legacy of Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), politician, soldier and statesman, and the wider history of the seventeenth century.

The Association seeks to progress its aims in the following ways:

- campaigns for the preservation and conservation of buildings and sites relevant to Cromwell
- commissions, on behalf of the Association, or in collaboration with others, plaques, panels and monuments at sites associated with Cromwell
- supports the Cromwell Museum and the Cromwell Collection in Huntingdon
- provides, within the competence of the Association, advice to the media on all matters relating to the period
- encourages interest in the period in all phases of formal education by the publication of reading lists, information and teachers' guidance
- publishes news and information about the period, including an annual journal and regular newsletters
- organises an annual service, day schools, conferences, lectures, exhibitions and other educational events
- provides a web-based resource for researchers in the period including school students, genealogists and interested parties
- offers, from time to time grants, awards and prizes to individuals and organisations working towards the objectives stated above.

Editor of *Cromwelliana*: Dr MAXINE FORSHAW, BSc, PhD

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Editor: Dr Maxine Forshaw

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Cover image: Lincoln Cathedral from the West by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677); artwork from the University of Toronto Wenceslaus Hollar Digital Collection.

Opinions expressed herein are solely those of the contributors and do not express the views or opinions of the Cromwell Association.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue of the journal has been compiled during the rather surreal time of the coronavirus pandemic. I am especially indebted to all the contributors for their sterling efforts in getting their articles to me during this time, and for providing us with interesting reading under exceptional circumstances.

We have a number of papers from the study day held in June 2019 on The Civil War in Lincolnshire 1642–1660, including in-depth articles on Newark, Lincoln and Cromwell's activities in the county in 1643. Our cover image is a striking 17th century engraving of Lincoln Cathedral by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677). Hollar was born in Prague but spent much of his life in England, and is buried at St Margaret's Church, Westminster. Interestingly, Hollar was captured by parliamentary forces in 1645 during the final siege of Basing House.

The Writings & Sources article by Ismini Pells tackles the fascinating subject of civil war petitions. Reading these really brings to life the hardships of the times and gives us a chance to see how ordinary people were affected by the civil wars. You can then explore this further by reading about how the inhabitants of Thame in Oxfordshire were affected by these turbulent times. One of the numerous impacts soldiers had on a town or city was unfortunately that of the introduction of disease, usually typhus. In the articles on Newark and Thame, the effect of this on the locals of both these towns is thrown into sharp relief.

Again, my heartfelt thanks to all our contributors in 2020.

If you are interested in contributing to future issues of the journal, please contact the Cromwell Association via the email address:
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by Professor Ted Vallance

When I agreed to give this address,¹ I gave little thought to the possibility that its contents might have anything in the way of contemporary resonance. The prorogation of Parliament by Boris Johnson in September 2019, however, suddenly made Oliver Cromwell and the trial and execution of Charles I newsworthy again. At the demonstration against the prorogation in August of the same year, placards could be seen urging that the country needed a ‘new Cromwell’, while others declared that ‘Charles I didn’t die for this’. The appropriateness of these seventeenth-century allusions provoked further controversy, with some accusing protestors of a lack of sensitivity in invoking Cromwell’s name, especially given the centrality of the question of the Irish border to the UK’s Brexit negotiations. In the press, historians mused on the value of these revolutionary comparisons.²

The controversy, at least, is unsurprising: Cromwell remains a divisive figure, his historical legacy highly contested in both academic circles and in public discourse. What is perhaps more remarkable is that the analogy made with the regicide caused so little consternation. This lack of comment is surprising given that, until the second half of the twentieth century, even conducting academic research into the trial and execution of Charles I was fraught with reputational risk.

The career of the clergyman and antiquary Mark Noble, probably familiar to many Cromwell Association members as the author of the collective biography *The Protectoral House of Cromwell* (1784), provides a case in point. As early as 1785, Noble’s main literary patron, the Earl of Sandwich, was warning him off pursuing his next literary project, a collective biography of the regicides.

Sandwich told Noble he did not think:

it a good subject for a history, especially as many of those persons were of very mean extraction; & to many of the families who are not so, the enquiring into their pedigree might not be pleasing to them when dated from that period; besides it would be impossible to divest

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such a work of the appearance of a Republican spirit, which I am sure you would wish to keep clear of.³

As it turned out, this was a prescient bit of advice: when the work *The Lives of the Regicides* was finally published in 1798, it drew letters of complaint from readers who objected to Noble identifying family connections (even worse, sometimes erroneously) with Charles I's judges.⁴ The work as a whole, which it was rumoured Noble hoped would boost his chances of gaining a bishopric, instead effectively stalled both his literary and ecclesiastical careers.⁵

The risks of addressing the topic of the trial and execution of Charles I dissipated only slightly in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, as first the revolutions of 1848 and then the Russian Revolution continued to make regicidal violence a very real threat to the monarchs of Europe. While the publication of C. V. Wedgwood's narrative account of Charles I's trial in 1964 heralded the beginning of an academic re-engagement with the topic, some thirty years' later it was still possible to find A. L. Rowse describing the actions of the regicides as not only 'unprecedented' but also 'unforgiveable'.⁶

The reluctance of historians, until recently, to address the regicide has been nowhere more evident than in biographical accounts of Cromwell himself. An early eighteenth century biography of the Lord Protector stated that two actions above all sullied Cromwell's character: 'dipping his hands in a cold murder ... of his sovereign' and subsequently seizing power himself, showing that all his 'gallantry' on the field of battle had been with the 'secret aim to gratify his private ambition'.⁷

The trial and execution of Charles I continues to occupy relatively little space in biographies of Cromwell. In part this is a consequence of recent scholarship on the regicide, which has moved away from the interpretation that the king's trial was the work of a small number of men, including Cromwell, in the army and the Commons, and from the view that Charles' death was the predetermined outcome of the court proceedings. Instead, the whole process of putting the king on trial, his condemnation and execution, are now viewed as far more contingent events, influenced by a much greater

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range of historical forces and actors.⁸ Cromwell himself now looms less large in recent discussions of the regicide largely on the grounds of a lack of relevant primary evidence rather than political sensitivity. As Phil Baker and John Morrill have pointed out, Cromwell's correspondence between Pride's Purge and the execution of the king is conspicuously silent on political matters, focusing instead on mundane military and family affairs.⁹ To circumvent this evidence gap, Baker and Morrill painstakingly reviewed Cromwell's letters and speeches between 1647 and late 1648. They identified a shift in attitude from the Putney Debates, where Cromwell could be found urging the participants to stay proceeding against the king until God's providence was more clearly revealed to them, to that displayed in his letter to Robert Hammond, governor of the Isle of Wight and Charles I's captor, on 25 November 1648 in which Cromwell now declared the king a man 'against whom the Lord hath witnessed'.¹⁰ The 'chain of Providence', far more than 'fleshly reasonings' had led the army to see that it would now go 'ill' with the 'wicked and their partakers'.¹¹ It was a position emphasised again in Cromwell's reported words during the Commons' debate on trying the king on 26 December 1648: 'since the Providence of God hath cast this upon us, I cannot but submit to Providence'.¹² Nonetheless, we are largely reliant on the testimony of others for Cromwell's words and actions during the trial itself, some of which, as Morrill has also stressed, are of dubious provenance. Yet, Cromwell would subsequently reiterate the view of the trial and execution of the king as providentially ordained in his speech on being appointed commander-in-chief of the Parliament's forces in Ireland in March 1649:

god hath brought the warre to an issue here, and given you a greater fruite of that warre, to witt: the execution of exemplary justice upon the prime leader of all this quarrel into the three Kingedomes, and of divers persons of very great quality who did co-operate with him in the destruction of this Kingdome.¹³

I

The idea of the regicide as the fulfilment of divine providence could be connected to other Biblically-based arguments for king-killing, most notably the idea of 'blood guilt'. This idea was encapsulated in the Old Testament

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text Numbers 35:33 ‘So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it’. The notion that the blood of those slain in the civil wars could only be expiated by spilling the blood of those responsible for the war was alluded to in the Army’s Remonstrance of November 1648 which asked Parliament how far the ‘Publike justice of the kingdom can be satisfied, the blood, rapine &c. avenged or expiated, and the wrath of God for the same appeased without judgment executed against him’.¹⁴

At both Putney and, allegedly, at prayer meetings held in April 1648, Charles was referred to as a ‘man of blood’. During the trial, the president of the court, John Bradshaw, would refer to the verses from the book of Numbers and a similar Biblical text, Genesis 9:6, in passing judgment on the king. The same texts would be employed by Charles’ prosecutor, John Cook, after the king’s execution in his pamphlet *King Charles His Case* (1649).¹⁵ In 1650, the army itself would declare that:

the Lord’s purpose was to deal with the late King as a man of blood ... and being witnesses to so much of the innocent blood of the Saints that he had shed in supporting the Beast, and considering the loud cries of the souls of the Saints under the altar, we were extraordinarily carried forth to desire justice upon the King, that man of blood.¹⁶

Yet Cromwell himself, however much he clearly later came to the view that the proceedings against Charles were authorised by God’s providence, in his statements at the Putney debates rejected the ‘blood for blood’ interpretation of scripture evident in these texts. In response to Thomas Harrison’s repetition of Captain Bishop’s assertion that Charles was a ‘Man of Blood’ and should be prosecuted, Cromwell answered that there were ‘severall cases in which merther was nott to bee punished’.¹⁷ In her pathbreaking article on the subject, Patricia Crawford cited Cromwell’s response to demonstrate that the concept of blood guilt was not always employed to justify capital punishment and could be applied simply to assign moral guilt, as it was used by Presbyterian ministers against the king in the 1640s.¹⁸ Indeed, with the exception of Clive Holmes, historians have

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generally argued that the idea played relatively little part in the legal proceedings against the king.¹⁹

An understanding of blood guilt that was less directly rooted in Old Testament examples may, however, have influenced Cromwell and other commissioners to ultimately support the execution of the king. Morrill and Baker suggest that Cromwell's initial hesitance, though Biblically-informed, was pragmatic: at Putney, as he told Harrison, he believed the 'sons of Zeruiah' were too powerful. Morrill and Baker interpret this citation of David's failure to avenge the murder of Abner as Cromwell suggesting that the forces arrayed against the army were too great to countenance bringing the king to justice at that moment. Even after Pride's Purge, opposition to launching legal proceedings against the king appeared considerable: politically, the House of Lords was wholly opposed to placing the king on trial; militarily, an alliance between the Royalist forces and the Irish Catholic Confederacy threatened a new invasion attempt and a third civil war. International intervention on the Royalist side by France and/or the Dutch Republic was also a distinct possibility, especially in the case of the Dutch who had recently entered into a commercial treaty with the Catholic Confederacy.²⁰

Ian Gentles, in his biography of Cromwell, suggests that the risk of trying the king was soon outweighed by a contrasting set of pressures. The first of these, according to Gentles, was the 'constant pressure emanating from the army for vengeance against the king for his treason and blood guilt ... expressed in a flood of letters and petitions that were sent to army headquarters from garrisons all over the country between October and December of 1648'.²¹

Vengeance, perhaps, is not quite the right term here. These petitions, as the work of John Rees and Norah Carlin has demonstrated, largely contained a rather different conception of blood guilt than the gory 'blood for blood' imperative contained in the books of Genesis and Numbers. Instead, these were demands for justice – the phrase 'impartial justice' occurs in several of them – based not directly on the Bible, but upon the need for legal restitution for the army's and the kingdom's losses during the civil wars.²²

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Thanks to the work of Charles Carlton, Barbara Donagan and others we are now far more aware of the terrible impact of the fighting on communities across the British Isles – that as a proportion of the population in England, more died during the civil wars than during the First World War. (In Ireland, the consequences were even more disastrous, with 25% of the population dying as a result of the twelve years of war.)²³ But we are only now beginning to fully understand the emotional toll of this catastrophe on England's population. The surviving evidence we have concerning the mental anguish caused by the conflict often comes through petitions, whether individual requests for relief from maimed soldiers and/or their families, or in collective texts.²⁴ The petitions and letters that were produced by the army in the autumn and winter of 1648 articulated the anger felt at those identified as responsible for these human and material losses. Cromwell's own regiment petitioned Fairfax in November 1648:

That some speedy and effectual course may be taken for the discovery, tryal, and due punishment of all English, Welch and Scottish Enemies, especially those that are principally guilty of all the bloods and treasures that hath bin spent in the Kingdoms, and particularly all those that have abetted, contrived and countenanced the late Rebellions, that impartial Justice may be done upon them, according to the many Petitions to that purpose, especially that large Petition of Sept. 11. 1648. [meaning the Levellers' 'Large' petition] without which we cannot expect a happy issue of all our hazards and labors.²⁵

Cromwell had also recommended an earlier petition from Harrison's regiment to Fairfax, commending it for the petitioners' 'very great sence ... of the sufferings and the ruine of this poor Kingdom, and in them all a very great zeal to have impartial Justice done upon Offenders'.²⁶

That some of these petitions were more concerned with addressing the depredations of the civil war than assuaging divine wrath is indicated by the petition from the Northumberland Cavalry regiment. This urged 'That all destitute Widdows and poor Orphans, which have lost their husbands and parents, and all Souldiers that have lost their limbs in the service of the Parliament against the King, be comfortably provided for, by way of

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constant stipend, and education of the children to 'Trades.' This demand came before the petitioners' request that 'the capital delinquents and incendiaries of the people be brought to speedy justice; and in the first place, that the King (instead of a Treaty) be brought to a fair tryal, to make answer for all the innocent blood that hath been spilt in the land'.²⁷ Again, we can note here that the demand was for the king to face a 'fair trial', not for bloody vengeance in capital punishment. In fact, Carlin's research on these petitions has shown that only two of them made specific references to the verses from the books of Numbers and Genesis usually associated with the idea of 'blood guilt', though a larger number (18 of 65) contained more general references to divine wrath.²⁸

II

The view of contemporaries, subsequently followed by some historians, that these petitions began 'the design against the king's person' therefore needs to be qualified.²⁹ Nonetheless, further evidence from these petitions suggests that we need to see some of these texts as certainly attempting to exert a direct influence on the High Court of Justice's proceedings. On 22 January 1649, the court received a petition from the *Souldiers under the Command of His Excellency, Thomas Lord Fairfax, now quartering in the city of London; ... with other well-affected persons in this Nation*.³⁰ The petition has been little noted by historians and is not included in Carlin's recent collection of these texts.³¹ The petition is distinctive in a number of respects. First, unlike the other petitions of the autumn and winter of 1648 which were either directed to Parliament or the army leadership, this was delivered to the court itself. Second, it was presented while the court sat in private session in the Painted Chamber. Third, in contrast to the vaguer demands for justice in many other petitions, this text explicitly denounced the king as 'our grand Tyrant, Charles Steward'.

Jason Peacey's work has shown us that political petitioning activity was often carefully targeted, designed to lobby specific individuals to take action.³² Similarly, this petition also appears to be a direct political intervention, intended to influence the court's manner of proceeding. Again, in line with more recent scholarship on petitioning, these petitions operated in conjunction with other strategies, namely the delivery of witness

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testimony, to urge the condemnation of the king at a critical juncture in the trial proceedings. Considered with the witness testimony and other connected petitions, this evidence suggests we should consider petitioning activity in this revolutionary moment as less of an external ‘push’ factor, as described by Gentles, and more as a form of political communication that secured a hearing even during the court’s private sittings.

The lack of attention to this petition can perhaps be explained by the fact that, unlike those texts presented to Parliament, recorded in the Commons’ Journals, its delivery was not noted in any of the records of the trial proceedings.³³ Equally, the petition may have been overlooked as the broadsheet copy is not preserved in the familiar Thomason collection of civil war tracts, newsbooks and broadsides, but rather in the Burney collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century newsbooks and newspapers.³⁴

Addressed to the ‘noble Senators’ of the court, the petition combined the popular idea of an oppressive ‘Norman Yoke’ with the belief that God had opened a ‘window of hope’ of freedom from bondage and that the nation’s deliverance drew near.³⁵ Yet, if this opportunity was spurned and justice denied, God’s wrath would ensure that both the commissioners of the court and the petitioners would perish. Unequivocally calling for vengeance against the king for the ‘innocent blood’ that he had shed, the petition displayed none of the ambiguity of other contemporaneous petitions for justice. Reminding the court that God’s providence had blessed the Parliament’s armies in the field of battle, it urged the commissioners in stirring words to ‘put on righteousness as a robe and judgement as a crown, walking in the light and strength of God, fulfilling his will, in loosing the bands of wickedness and letting the oppressed go free, by breaking every heavy yoke’.

As has already been noted, one unique feature of the petition was that it was addressed to the court, not Parliament or the army leadership. Typically, petitions needed to contain an acknowledgement of the authority of the body or person being addressed by the petitioners in order to be considered legitimate. Such an acknowledgement was particularly fraught in the case of the High Court of Justice, a new legal institution whose creation was only

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authorized by a purged 'Rump' of the Commons. The Court's questionable legitimacy had been effectively exploited by the king during the first two days of the trial proceedings. Charles had denied that the High Court of Justice had the right to try any man, let alone their king. They were, as he cuttingly put it, undoubtedly a *power* but no lawful authority.³⁶

The petition spent considerable space in acknowledging the High Court of Justice to be a 'lawful and just Court' for three reasons: first, they were 'chosen by the People's representatives'; second, they stood by 'vertue of the same power Charles Steward did stand by, viz., the sword'; third, they were founded in truth and righteousness, the source of all lawful power. The petition finished by promising that the petitioners would support the court in its proceedings against all 'inhumane Murderers' and promised their lives and fortunes against any 'Tyrants' who would 'refuse to submit to the justness of your power'. The text ended with names of three of the petitioners: Lieutenant John Raye, William Reynolds and George Jellus.

A John Raye served as quartermaster and then lieutenant in the regiment of the court commissioner Adrian Scroope.³⁷ Scroope was present at the army's deliberations at Whitehall in November and December 1648, making it likely that his regiment was also near London at the time.³⁸ There are also similarities between the petition delivered to the High Court and the petition delivered by Scroope's regiment, along with the regiment of Thomas Saunders or Sanders. This petition, like the petition to the court, employed the idea of blood guilt to explicitly call for vengeance, being one of only two of the petitions for justice to employ the Biblical text Genesis 9:6.³⁹ More telling perhaps was a further text which purported to come from the 'private souldierie' of both regiments. In terms strikingly similar to the petition to the Court, it argued that, as Charles I's title was founded on conquest, he could lose his crown by the same means.⁴⁰

These strong similarities make it highly likely that the two petitions were produced by the same authors. Scroope himself was one of the commissioners in attendance when the court sat in the Painted Chamber on 22 January.⁴¹ We should not assume, however, that the petitioners were the mere cat's paws of Scroope. The text from the private soldiers had anticipated the creation of the High Court of Justice by calling for a mixed

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military-civilian tribunal which would try all those involved on the Royalist side in the first and second civil wars. This tribunal would be manned by elected commissioners, a literal realization of the Rump Parliament's later assertion of popular sovereignty as the basis of its and, by extension, the court's authority. The pamphlet ended with another pregnant Biblical text, Duet 1:17 : 'God is no respecter of persons'. In this instance, however, the soldiers directed the text at their commanders rather than the king. Here the verse served as a scarcely veiled threat of reprisals should the officers not heed the demand for justice in the private soldiers' 'moderate and cleer Relation'.

The Biblical citation was one which would also be deployed by the President of the Court, John Bradshaw. It also resonated with the demand within the Levellers' 'Large Petition' of September 1648 that 'all Persons' whether 'Kings, Queens, Princes, Dukes, Earls, Lords' should alike be 'liable to every Law of the Land'.⁴² It is possible that some of these army petitioners were Leveller sympathizers. George Jellus, who subscribed the petition to the High Court of Justice, may have been the same man as the George Jelles or Jellis who petitioned with fellow soldiers in March 1649 calling for the restoration of the army 'agitators' who had served as spokesmen for the army rank and file at Putney. The petition also expressed support for the arguments of John Lilburne's *England's New Chains Discovered* (1649). If Jellus had once seen the High Court of Justice as grounded on popular sovereignty, the petition now denounced the court as a republican equivalent of the royal prerogative courts of High Commission and Star Chamber. The vision of justice founded on the sovereignty of the people had been corrupted into just another weapon of the new military tyranny which had taken power in England.⁴³ Jellus, along with five other soldiers, would be sentenced to ride the wooden horse and cashiered from the army for his efforts. (Some of the other petitioners disowned the petition and remained in service, including Richard Rumbold, the future Rye House plotter who had been one of the soldiers on the scaffold at the king's execution.)⁴⁴

These post-regicide petitions also give us some additional insight into the production of the regimental petitions for justice in the autumn and winter of 1648. In a further petition to the Commons protesting against their

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punishment, Jellus and his fellow soldiers complained that army petitions must now 'pass the Test from Officer to Officer, by which the sense and understanding of the Souldier is surprised and over-awed to speak the pleasure of the Officer that he must neither hear, see, nor speak, but by the eyes, ears and mouth of the Officer; so that the Souldiers right of petition is hereby taken from them'.⁴⁵ This claim was suggestive in a number of respects. First, it indicated that shortly after the king's execution, it was felt necessary to reassert control over army petitioning activity. This in turn suggested that the army petitions of the autumn and winter of 1648 had not been the sole creations of military commissioners such as Cromwell but, as Norah Carlin has suggested, were vehicles for the expression of the demands of rank and file soldiers.⁴⁶

III

The timing of the presentation of the petition to the High Court of Justice was also significant. As the petition indicated, on 22 January the court was sitting in private session in the Painted Chamber, considering how to respond to the king's strategy of refusing to plead. On the same day, Parliament had received addresses from Scottish commissioners, strongly objecting to the proceedings against the king.⁴⁷ According to one newsletter writer, possibly the then Royalist Marchamont Nedham, these addresses had 'broken the neck' of the design of those driving for Charles to be tried swiftly and condemned. The newsletter claimed that, thrown into disarray by the communication from the Scottish commissioners, those seeking the king's death stalled for time 'under the pretence of examining witnesses'.⁴⁸

The hearing of witness testimony, along with the petition of 22 January, however, was arguably intended to persuade and pressure wavering commissioners to condemn the king rather than simply to buy time. The content of the 22 January petition seemed to allude to the king's defence strategy in its reference to those tyrants who would refuse to acknowledge the justness of the court's authority: denying the High Court of Justice's legitimacy and refusing to plead was Charles' approach during the entirety of the trial. The lack of reference to the petition in the trial journal means we cannot tell how it was received by the court. Nonetheless, the commissioners' discussion on 22nd focused on the king's strategy and

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notably resolved that should the king continue to challenge the authority of the court, the President would inform him that it was ‘contumacie’ (extreme contempt of court) and would be recorded as such.⁴⁹ The testimony of the witnesses, many of them drawn from the regiments of trial commissioners such as John Hewson and John Barkstead, also echoed the petition in acknowledging the mass bloodshed of the civil wars and providing evidence of the king’s tyrannical and murderous behaviour. The regiments of these commissioners had also issued petitions for justice. In the case of Hewson’s regiment, the text had even mooted the possibility of establishing a republican government, modelled on European examples, in place of the Stuart monarchy. Barkstead’s regiment unequivocally described Charles as a tyrant, intent on enslaving the people to his ‘exorbitant will and lust’.⁵⁰

While as a whole the army petitions of autumn and winter 1648 cannot be characterized as demanding vengeance for the king’s blood guilt, the petition of 22 January, along with the testimony of witnesses linked to regiments which had also petitioned that the king was a tyrant and a murderer, represented an important intervention at a critical point in the trial. At this moment in time, both Charles’ impressive defence and the Scottish commissioners’ addresses had seemed to throw the king’s condemnation and execution into doubt. The soldiers’ petition, along with the witnesses’ testimony, both reasserted Charles’ guilt and exerted pressure on the commissioners themselves, directing them to show resolve in the face of the king’s challenge to their authority and ensure that justice was done.

IV

This evidence supports and extends Ian Gentles’ arguments about the influence of these petitions on the court’s proceedings. The calls for justice contained within these texts were heard within the court itself, via the text presented in the Painted Chamber on 22 January and buttressed in the accounts of suffering, destruction and bloodshed recorded in the witness depositions. Cromwell’s letters both to Hammond and to Fairfax suggest, if anything, that he sympathized with many of the demands within these petitions. This was in keeping with what we know about Cromwell’s assiduous approach to other petitioners that addressed him⁵¹. There were, of

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course, more strategic reasons for listening to the petitioners' requests in January 1649. As we have seen, some of these petitions provided potentially worrying reading for the court's commissioners and army commanders as well as the king. They redirected the language of blood guilt to make it hang over the heads of the king's judges, as much as upon Charles himself, and connected demands for justice against 'delinquents' with wider calls for political and social reform. As J. C. Davis has noted, faced with an imminent Royalist threat from Ireland, it was imperative that army unity was maintained, even if the immediate price was the unprecedented step of trying a reigning monarch.⁵² For the army petitioners of 1648/9 that call for justice, however, was not only about the fulfilment of divine providence, as Cromwell would later cast it. It was also concerned with the human and material losses of the civil wars and the justice, both social and legal, that was required to remedy them. Those demands, ranging from 'bread and butter' issues such as pay and indemnity to much broader aspirations for religious toleration, reform of the law, and the settlement of the government on the basis of an 'Agreement of the People', would prove much harder to satisfy, even for a natural 'coalition builder' such as Oliver Cromwell.⁵³

¹ This text is a revised version of the address presented at St. Mary's Putney, September 2019. I am very grateful to the Cromwell Association for the invitation to deliver that year's address.

² John Rees, 'Why comparisons between Boris Johnson and Charles I aren't just lazy rhetoric', *The Guardian*, 29 August, 2019 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/29/boris-johnson-charles-i-king>; Ali Ansari et al., 'Are there any meaningful historical parallels for Brexit?' *History Today*, October 2019, <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/head-head/are-there-any-meaningful-historical-analogies-brexit>; Paul Seaward, 'On the History of Prorogation', *History Workshop Journal Online*, <http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/on-the-history-of-prorogation/>, all accessed 24 April 2020.

³ Bodl[ean Library Oxford], MS Eng Misc d. 150 f. 222v. Quoted in my 'Remembering the Regicide in an Age of Revolution: The Case of Mark Noble', in E. Vallance ed., *Remembering Early Modern Revolutions: England, North America, France and Haiti*, (London, 2018), ch. 3, p. 50.

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- ⁴ See letter of John Stockdale to Noble, 10 April 1798, in which he relays a demand for a correction from a 'Mr Pennington' who had wrongly been identified as a descendant of the High Court of Justice commissioner Isaac Pennington, Bodl MS Eng Misc d 156 f. 175b.
- ⁵ For this text and its impact on Noble's career, see my 'Remembering the Regicide in an Age of Revolution: The Case of Mark Noble', *passim*.
- ⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 56.
- ⁷ *The Life of Oliver Cromwell, L. Protector of the Commonwealth* (London, 1724), preface.
- ⁸ For an overview of recent scholarship on the regicide, see P. Baker, 'The Regicide' in M. J. Braddick ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution* (Oxford, 2015), ch. 9.
- ⁹ J. S. Morrill and P. Baker, 'Oliver Cromwell, the Regicide and the Sons of Zeriah', in J. Peacey ed., *The Regicides and the Execution of Charles I* (Basingstoke, 2001), ch. 1.
- ¹⁰ Thomas Carlyle, *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, ed. S.C. Lomas (3 vols., London, 1904), i, p. 399.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 394–5.
- ¹² See for this quotation Christopher Hill, 'Providence and Oliver Cromwell', in I. Roots ed., *Cromwell: A Profile* (London, 1973), pp. 190–220 at p. 204.
- ¹³ J. S. Morrill, 'Cromwell, Oliver, Lord Protector', ODNB; General Council of the Army, 23 March 1648/9 in C. H. Firth, ed., *The Clarke Papers: Selections from the Papers of William Clarke*, (2 vols., reprinted edition 1992), ii, p. 202.
- ¹⁴ *A Remonstrance of His Excellency Thomas, Lord Fairfax* (1648), p. 24. I am using the Hathi trust digitised edition here:
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31175035164477&view=1up&seq=7>, accessed 24 April 2020.
- ¹⁵ Genesis 9:6 in the Authorised King James Version reads 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.' On these references see P. Baker, 'The Regicide' in M. J. Braddick ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution* (Oxford, 2015), ch. 9, at p. 158.
- ¹⁶ Quoted in I. J. Gentles, *Oliver Cromwell: God's Warrior and the English Revolution* (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 74.
- ¹⁷ *Clarke Papers*, i, p. 417.
- ¹⁸ P. Crawford, 'Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood', *Journal of British Studies*, 16 (1977), pp. 41–61 at p. 53.
- ¹⁹ C. Holmes, 'Why was the King executed?' in C. Holmes, *Why Was Charles I Executed?* (London, 2006), ch. 5; C. Holmes, 'The Remonstrance of the Army and the Execution of Charles I', *History*, 104 (2019), pp. 585–605.

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- ²⁰ Morrill and Baker, 'Oliver Cromwell', pp. 18–21.
- ²¹ Gentles, *Oliver Cromwell*, p. 79.
- ²² J. Rees, *The Leveller Revolution* (London, 2016), p. 275 and see *ibid.*, pp. 272–4 for reference to Carlin's unpublished work on these petitions. I am grateful to Norah Carlin for sharing with me her unpublished paper on 'Petitions and Revolution in England, September 1648–January 1649' and her excellent edition of these texts *Regicide or Revolution? What Petitioners Wanted, September 1648–January 1649* (London, 2020) prior to publication, see pp. 8–9 for the idea of justice present in these petitions.
- ²³ C. Carlton, *Going to the Wars: the Experience of the British Civil Wars, 1638–1651* (London, 1992); B. Donagan, *War in England: 1642–49* (Oxford, 2010).
- ²⁴ See the excellent Civil War Petitions website for some of this material, <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/>, accessed 24 April 2020.
- ²⁵ Carlin, *Regicide or Revolution?*, p. 115.
- ²⁶ Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches*, i., p. 319
- ²⁷ The petition goes further than this in also suggesting that the King should answer to the other charges made against him in the Declaration attached to the Vote of No Addresses, Carlin, *Regicide or Revolution?*, p. 144.
- ²⁸ (The petitions from Scroope and Sanders's regiments, E. 475 [24]; and post-regicide petition from Kent E. 527 [15].) See Carlin, *Regicide or Revolution?*, p. 7. For the text of these petitions see *ibid.*, pp. 153–6 (Scroope and Sanders), pp. 288–9 (Kent). For Scroope's regiment see further below.
- ²⁹ For examples of this view of the petitions, see S. Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism*, (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 112; Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 267–9. The quotation is from Bulstrode Whitelocke, referring to the petition from Ireton's regiment, quoted in D. Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford, 1971), p. 116
- ³⁰ ESTC Citation No R222991; Gale Reference No GALE Z2001379417; the petition was also noted in the newsbook *A Perfect Summary*, 22–29 Jan 1649, no. 1. This, however, dated the petition as being presented on 25 January. For further contemporary references see *The Perfect Weekly Account*, 24–31 Jan 1649.
- ³¹ It is mentioned in David Massarella's doctoral thesis, D. P. Massarella, 'The Politics of the Army, 1647–1660', (University of York D.Phil. thesis, 2 vols., 1977), i, p. 192.
- ³² J. Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013), esp ch. 8.

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- ³³ It is not noted in either the copy of the trial journal in state papers (TNA SP 16/517) or in that held in the House of Lords Record Office, HL/PO/JO/10/14/11A.
- ³⁴ Another copy is held in the Society of Antiquaries library.
- ³⁵ References to the idea of the Norman Yoke are rare in the petitions of late 1648, early 1649, providing further indication of the petition's provenance. See below.
- ³⁶ J. G. Muddiman, *The Trial of King Charles the First* (Glasgow and Edinburgh, 1928), p. 100.
- ³⁷ The National Archives, Kew E 121/3/4/77; M. Wanklyn, *Reconstructing the New Model Army* (2 vols. Solihull, 2016), i. pp. 126–7 and pp. 144–5.
- ³⁸ C. H. Firth with the assistance of G. Davies, *The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army* (2 vols., Oxford, 1940) i., p. 109.
- ³⁹ Carlin, *Regicide or Revolution?*, p. 154. For this petition and for Saunders/Sanders see also P. Gaunt, 'The Radicalisation of Colonel Thomas Saunders', *Cromwelliana*, series 3, no. 6 (2017), pp. 79–97.
- ⁴⁰ Carlin, *Regicide or Revolution?*, pp. 155–6; *A Moderate and Cleer Relation of the private souldierie of Colonell Scroops and Col. Sanders Regiments*, (E. 476 [25]) (unpaginated, Thomason received his copy on 25 December). Like the petition, this text also employed the concept of the Norman Yoke.
- ⁴¹ Muddiman, *Trial of Charles I*, p. 209.
- ⁴² Carlin, *Regicide or Revolution?*, p. 17; Muddiman, *Trial of Charles I*, p. 134.
- ⁴³ *Clarke Papers*, ii, pp. 193–194n; [John Lilburne], *The Hunting of the Foxes from New-Market and Triploe-Heaths to White-hall* ([London], 1649), pp. 19, 23–4. This tract has also been attributed to Richard Overton, see B. J. Gibbons, 'Overton, Richard', ODNB.
- ⁴⁴ R. Clifton, 'Rumbold, Richard', ODNB, *Clarke Papers*, ii., p. 194n.
- ⁴⁵ [Lilburne], *Hunting of the Foxes*, p. 26. From a review of the Commons' Journal, it doesn't appear that this petition was presented to the House.
- ⁴⁶ Carlin, *Regicide or Revolution?*, p. 10.
- ⁴⁷ Commons Journal, vi, p. 122.
- ⁴⁸ Quoted in J. Peacey, 'Marchamont Nedham and the Lawrans Letters', *Bodleian Library Record*, 17 (2000), pp. 25–34, at p. 31.
- ⁴⁹ Muddiman, *Trial of Charles I*, p. 209.
- ⁵⁰ My paper on the witnesses 'Testimony, Tyranny and Treason: The Witnesses at Charles I's Trial' is currently under review by a major historical journal. Some witnesses, such as Arthur Young, can be identified using *The Cromwell Association Online Directory of Parliamentarian Army Officers*, <https://www.british->

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history.ac.uk/no-series/cromwell-army-officers, accessed 24 April 2020. For the petition from Barkstead's regiment, see Carlin, *Regicide or Revolution?*, pp. 82–5, quotation at p. 83. For Hewson's see *ibid.*, pp. 132–4.

⁵¹ J. Peacey, 'Oliver Cromwell and His Public', *Cromwelliana*, series 3, no. 4 (2015), pp. 5–19, at pp. 12–14.

⁵² J. C. Davis, 'Oliver Cromwell' in Braddick ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*, ch. 13 p. 230

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

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THE CITY OF LINCOLN DURING AND AFTER THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS, 1642–1660

by Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons

Visiting Lincoln in 1690, the antiquarian Abraham de la Pryme found a city in disarray: ‘several stately houses and churches’ were ‘let fall down to the ground, piece by piece’. Apart from the cathedral, he concluded that there was ‘scarce anything worth seeing’ in Lincoln.¹ Arguably, the city had been in decline for centuries by that point. The cloth industry collapsed in the late thirteenth century and the population stagnated after the Black Death, with many parishes reportedly deserted by the mid-fifteenth century.² Yet it seems likely that the Civil Wars of the 1640s compounded Lincoln’s miserable state by the late seventeenth century. After all, the city witnessed plenty of action during the conflict, changing hands between the parliamentarians and royalists on no fewer than six occasions!

The first part of this article will provide an overview of the wars in Lincoln and explain how and why it changed hands so many times. The second part will then assess the impact of the wars on the city. The conflict left its impression on more than just the fabric of the buildings. Like most people living in England at this time, the inhabitants of Lincoln saw significant changes to the world around them, experiencing political, social and religious upheaval.

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In the summer of 1642, as the prospect of war grew, partisans for both sides emerged in Lincoln. An early manifestation of these divisions occurred in June when parliament’s lord lieutenant for Lincolnshire, Lord Willoughby of Parham, attempted to muster the city’s militia forces. While the parliamentary committee claimed that the majority presented themselves ‘willingly and readily’, it was noted that ‘the Baile of Lincolne and most of the Close of the great Church neglected to appear’, ostensibly on the grounds that plague was rife in the city. The parliamentary committee, however, suspected that the real reason was that Charles Dallison, the recorder of the city, and others ‘of his Leaven (Popishly inclined) near the Great Cathedral’ were disaffected.³ The committee proved to be correct in their assessment of Dallison. When the king visited Lincoln in July 1642, Dallison was at the forefront of the proceedings, offering a toadying speech

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on behalf of the corporation and receiving a knighthood in return.⁴ Others living near the cathedral also joined the royalist cause. The diocesan chancellor, Dr John Farmery, served as a colonel in the king's army; the precentor of the cathedral, Dr Hamlett Marshall, was sequestered after the wars, admitting that he had spent the entire conflict living in royalist quarters.⁵

In June 1642, then, the impression was that Lincoln was largely sympathetic to parliament with a few royalist malcontents living near the cathedral. On 13 July 1642, however, Charles I's impromptu visit to the city seemed to reveal a very different pattern of allegiance. According to the royalist printed accounts, despite the short notice of the visit, thousands of local inhabitants lined the city's streets for miles and the 'whole Corporation' came out for the king.⁶ Of course, this report must be read with caution. It is just another example of the phoney war that raged in print between the royalists and parliamentarians during that summer. In reality, contrary to the claims of the royalist propagandists, not all members of the corporation turned out during the visit – at least one of the aldermen, William Watson, along with the city's sheriff, Edward Emis, had already been arrested on the king's orders for executing parliament's militia ordinance in the city.⁷ Ultimately, it appears that the city's governors were split in their loyalties. Of the aldermen serving at the outbreak of war in 1642, half would be sequestered for royalism with the rest remaining faithful to the parliamentary cause.⁸

For the majority dwelling in Lincoln in 1642, however, there is little evidence of enthusiastic commitment to one side or the other. Perhaps they simply could not afford to take sides. The fact that the city changed hands many times during the wars meant Lincolners had a very different experience to those living in towns like Newark that remained under the control of one side throughout. While some prudently fled the city when it fell into the hands of those they considered their enemy, most were unwilling, or unable, to abandon their home and businesses and had little choice but to submit to whoever held military control. Consequently, the Lincolners got a reputation for being unreliable allies. Writing in May 1644, one parliamentary newsbook lamented how it was a running theme in 'these unnaturall Warres' for 'in-land Townes' such as Lincoln, 'though garrisoned', to be 'but uncertain refuges' because 'either through wisdom

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or through weaknesse, they are ready to obey the fortune of the Master of the Field'.⁹

This analysis proved to be mostly correct. The fate of Lincoln was intimately tied up with the struggle over Lincolnshire. Lincoln was a frontier garrison in a contested county. The territory between Lincoln and the western border of the county remained disputed throughout the conflict thanks to the perennial royalist presence over the county border in Newark and Belvoir Castle.¹⁰ What is particularly notable about Lincoln during the opening years of the war, however, is that the city changed hands with relatively little effort.

In theory, Lincoln should have been difficult to attack. While the defences of the lower city were makeshift (remnants of medieval wall augmented by earth banks, ditches and rivers), the fortifications of the upper part of the city, sitting on top of Steep Hill, were formidable. The walls of the cathedral close and castle bail were still mostly intact, forming an imposing defensive network. The garrison guarding Lincoln was also large, typically in the region of 2,000 soldiers – albeit this fluctuated depending on whether manpower was needed elsewhere. The presence of these soldiers, not all of whom were recruited locally, would have potentially increased the city's population by around fifty per cent.¹¹ The garrison brought with it all of the unpleasantness associated with the military presence, not least having to quarter, feed and pay the soldiers. Unlike Newark, however, it does not appear that the garrison caused significant levels of dearth or disease, perhaps reflecting the fact that Lincoln was under-populated on the eve of the wars and consequently better able to absorb more people.

Initially, the city was garrisoned by the parliamentarians. By early 1643, however, allegiances began to waver. The parliamentary governor, Sergeant Major Purfoy, conspired to surrender Lincoln to the royalists. Towards the end of June, at Purfoy's connivance, sixty royalists disguised as 'country marketmen' entered the city by a back gate. They hid in the Deanery until midnight, when they planned to emerge and open the city's gates to a waiting force of 3,000 royalists. Purfoy's treachery was discovered in the nick of time: when the royalist 'hellhounds' sprang from their 'kennels', as one parliamentarian reported it, the garrison was waiting. One

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soldier, a ‘plain mean fellow of the Town’, discharged a canon, killing ten of the royalists in one blow.¹²

One month later, however, Lincoln finally fell to the royalists. Despite Oliver Cromwell’s heroics at Gainsborough on 28 July, the earl of Newcastle’s army relieved the town a day later, putting the parliamentarians into retreat. In the face of Newcastle’s advance, the parliamentarian commander Willoughby abandoned Lincoln without a fight and fled to Boston. Willoughby defended his actions by claiming that Lincoln’s garrison was weakened by ‘the running away of the men’, adding that no more than 200 soldiers marched out of the city with him.¹³ The royalist army entered Lincoln unopposed and established a garrison under the governorship of Sir William Widdrington.¹⁴ At this point it seems several of the city’s elite, who had previously complied with parliament, showed themselves to be committed royalists. Four aldermen were subsequently removed from office by parliament for joining Newcastle’s forces during the royalist occupation, with only one of them, Robert Becke, claiming that his service was ‘enforced’.¹⁵

Royalist control over Lincoln proved short-lived. By October 1643, parliament’s Eastern Association army, led by the earl of Manchester, began to regain control of Lincolnshire. Flushed with success following the routing of the royalist cavalry at Winceby (near Horncastle) on 11 October, Manchester’s forces marched on Lincoln. Like Lord Willoughby after Gainsborough earlier that year, the royalists were in disarray following their defeat at Winceby. When Manchester’s army arrived at Lincoln on 20 October he caught governor Widdrington unprepared and he surrendered after a brief skirmish.¹⁶ Under the articles of surrender, the royalists were allowed to march out of Lincoln but had to leave behind all their arms and munitions, enough for 2,500 soldiers according to the reports of the victorious parliamentarians.¹⁷

So, in 1643, the fate of Lincoln was tied closely to what happened in Lincolnshire as a whole. Defeat in the field led to surrender of the city once the victorious army arrived at its gates. This pattern continued in the following spring. Many from Lincoln’s garrison took part in the abortive siege of royalist Newark in March 1644, including the governor Colonel

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Edward King. When the parliamentarians at Newark were routed by Prince Rupert, many of them fled to Hull and Boston, abandoning Gainsborough and Lincoln along the way. According to one royalist account, the parliamentarians gathered their 'ordnance, arms and ammunition' hurriedly, giving orders to the townspeople to ferry it to Boston. Yet, as soon as they left, the 'Townes men' sent word to Prince Rupert that 'the Rebels' had gone and offered their military supplies to the royalist cause.¹⁸ For their part, the parliamentary news reporters were unimpressed by the performance of the Lincoln garrison, lamenting how the city was 'deserted.... before the enemy came against it, which else might likely have been kept' had they held firm.¹⁹ The parliamentary press also cast doubt on claims that the city's inhabitants welcomed the royalists, noting that many had to be 'compelled' to serve them.²⁰

Despite the royalists rebuilding and strengthening many of the city's fortifications during this second occupation, their tenure proved to be short-lived once again. Manchester's Eastern Association army, marching north to join the siege of royalist York, arrived to the south of Lincoln on the afternoon of Friday 3 May 1644.²¹ Drawing up his entire force 'in the face of the City' on the top of Canwick Hill, it seems that Manchester hoped to repeat his swift victory of the previous year by intimidating the royalists into surrender. A trumpeter was sent to the city gates to offer the royalists the chance to surrender. Yet, according to one account, that offer was met with a 'very uncivil answer'.²²

In response, Manchester immediately sent his infantry against the Great Bargate and southern defences of the lower city. According to reports, the battle was 'very short' and the parliamentarians soon 'possest themselves of the low town'.²³ The royalists fled 'to the upper town and Castle', reportedly setting fire to several buildings as they retreated.²⁴ The flames of the burning houses were quenched, in part, by the parliamentary soldiers, but also by the heavy rain that began to fall that night and continued for the next couple of days. In fact, so severe was the weather that the parliamentarians were forced to suspend their assault on the upper part of the city.²⁵ As one account put it, it was 'so slippery that it was not possible... to crawl up the hill' to the royalist defences.²⁶

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On the morning of 6 May, however, between two and three in the morning, the parliamentarians finally attacked. Contrary to what we might read on information panels in Lincoln today, those soldiers who carried out the attack were not ‘Cromwell’s troops’. Oliver Cromwell was then only second-in-command in Manchester’s army and, as a cavalry officer, took no part in the assault, which was conducted by the infantry. Instead, the task of Cromwell and his troops that day was to patrol the terrain to the west of the city, shielding Lincoln from any royalist relief forces coming from over the River Trent.²⁷

To launch the assault on the upper town, Manchester divided his infantry into three groups, which attacked simultaneously from various points around the bail and close walls on hearing the firing of ‘the great Ordinance’.²⁸ One group was concentrated on storming the cathedral close from the east end, using the ruins of the church of St Peter’s in Eastgate as the jumping-off point.²⁹ Manchester’s main force was concentrated against the castle mount.³⁰ It took just fifteen minutes for the attackers to get up to the castle walls, all the while under fire from the royalists. Once the parliamentarians planted their scaling ladders, the royalists began hurling ‘mighty stones’ over the walls at the attackers. Falling masonry aside, the parliamentarians found scaling the castle no easy task: their ladders were too short to reach the top of the defences, which were reportedly ‘as high as London wall’.³¹

Once the parliamentarians struggled over the defences, the royalists apparently had ‘no spirit left in them’ and took ‘to their heels’. Some stood their ground – with around fifty killed in all – but most of the defenders simply gave up: they cried out for quarter, claiming they were nothing more than ‘poor Array men’, pressed into the king’s service against their will.³² Others fled and hid around the city, a number having ‘crept into the Cathedral’ as one report put it.³³ By the end of the day, a hundred royalist officers and gentlemen were captured, including the governor Sir Francis Fane and the renegade recorder of the city, Sir Charles Dallison.³⁴ Somewhere in the region of seven to eight hundred royalist common soldiers were also taken prisoner.³⁵ Once again, the commitment of those defending Lincoln was called into question, with many appearing to change sides readily. As the parliamentarians reported gleefully, ‘all the Common

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Souldiers after they were taken did chearfully desire to serve the Parliament, making many Protestations of their readiness to venture their lives for our cause'.³⁶

In all, the storming of the close and bail took little more than half an hour.³⁷ The losses were remarkably light for the attackers, with some reports claiming as few as eight parliamentarians killed and forty injured, mostly due to stones being hurled from the battlements.³⁸ In recognition of their efforts, the victorious soldiers were granted 'all the pillage of the upper Town'.³⁹ It is worth noting that pillaging was not a parliamentary preserve. It was practiced by both sides, particularly when a garrisoned town was taken by storm having had the chance to surrender, as was the case at Lincoln. Incensed by the mocking response their summons had received, and suspecting that 'many' of Lincoln's inhabitants had helped the royalists, the parliamentary soldiers clearly took to the task of pillaging with great alacrity.⁴⁰ According to one report some soldiers managed to get 'an hundred pound, some an hundred and fifty for his part'.⁴¹

Clearly, Lincoln and its inhabitants suffered during the wars, particularly during the storming of 1644 and in its immediate aftermath. Yet, the extent of the war's impact on the fabric and people of Lincoln is not always easy to gauge. Take, for instance, Lincoln's famous cathedral. Many tall tales have been told about what happened to the cathedral during the wars – and who was responsible for it. The chief charge derives from a royalist newspaper, printed in September 1644, which claims that 'Cromwell's barbarous crew' had 'torne to pieces all monuments and Tombes, laid them even with the earth, shot downe all Scutcheons and Armes of such Lords and Gentlemen as were... buried there, and (for which all Christians will for ever abhorre them) have filled each corner of that holy place with their owne and horses dung'.⁴²

Such claims, colourful and memorable as they are, must be read with caution. Undeniably, parliamentary soldiers were responsible for iconoclasm in churches across England during the wars. They did so not simply out of religious zeal, but also because they were commanded to do so, not by Cromwell but by parliament. In August 1643, parliament passed legislation demanding the removal of all 'superstitious' images in churches.⁴³

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A further ordinance was issued on 9 May 1644, three days after Manchester's forces stormed Lincoln, which re-emphasised the need to cleanse the churches, adding church organs and depictions of angels to the puritanical hit list.⁴⁴

Another important point to note is that any iconoclasm that befell the cathedral during the civil war did not take place in a pristine, untouched, building. Much damage had already occurred in the sixteenth century, during the Reformation. In 1641, a year before the war began, the antiquarian William Dugdale made an illustrated survey of the cathedral's monuments that suggests significant damage had already been inflicted long before parliament's soldiers arrived in the city. Several monuments had brasses missing; others had defaced saints and angels.⁴⁵ Any damage subsequently caused by the parliamentarians represented a second wave of cleansing, adding to the dilapidated state of what, if the visitation accounts of the 1630s are to be believed, was an already run-down building.⁴⁶

The scale of the damage inflicted during the war can best be ascertained by comparing Dugdale's drawings of 1641 with the cathedral today. The shrine of St Hugh, for instance, had its canopy, including an elaborate depiction of the crucifixion, removed.⁴⁷ The shrine of little Hugh also suffered heavy damage with parts of the masonry dumped in a nearby well at St Paul-in-the-Bail.⁴⁸ The diarist John Evelyn also notes that the parliamentarian soldiers targeted the brasses in the cathedral. Evelyn was told during a visit in 1654 how 'these men went in with axes and hammers, and shut themselves in, till they had rent and torn off some barge loads of metal... so hellish an avarice possessed them'.⁴⁹ Yet, as Evelyn hints, the motivations behind this destruction were more material than religious. Under the parliamentary legislation, monuments to any dead person 'not commonly reputed a saint' were supposed to be left alone.⁵⁰ It seems the brasses were stripped, like the lead roofs of the city, for military purposes, to make cannon and munitions. The stained glass in the cathedral also suffered, both as a result of fighting in the close and deliberate iconoclasm. In the 1650s there were complaints among those worshipping at the cathedral about the draught due to the many broken windows.⁵¹ So, clearly, the parliamentarians did much damage to the fabric of the cathedral. Windows were smashed, stonework was chipped away, brasses were torn out.

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Much worse might have followed. According to one story, recorded in the late-seventeenth century, there were plans ‘in Cromwell’s days’ to *pull down* Lincoln cathedral! The disaster was only averted when Original Peart, who served as mayor and MP for the city during the 1650s, personally implored Cromwell to desist, telling him that ‘Lincoln would soon be one of the worst towns in the county’ without its cathedral.⁵² The story has been immortalised in the stained glass of the cathedral’s chapter house. Yet, like so many legends about Cromwell, it has only a modicum of substance. It is true that, after the abolition of monarchy in 1649, the Rump Parliament prepared legislation for the demolition of some cathedrals to sell off the materials and land associated with them.⁵³ Whether Lincoln was in their sights is unknown. Yet Cromwell’s dissolution of that parliament in 1653 ensured that the legislation never came to fruition. There is no evidence Cromwell had any appetite for the scheme and it was not pursued any further during his reign as Lord Protector.

Leaving aside the cathedral, it is worth glancing at some of the other destruction inflicted on the city. Many of Lincoln’s churches were demolished or extensively rebuilt in the decades after the wars. This destruction was more the product of military strategy or collateral damage than religious enthusiasm. Some churches, such as St Peter-in-Eastgate and St Nicholas Newport, were almost certainly slighted during the wars because they were just outside the close and bail walls, thereby compromising the city’s security.⁵⁴ Other churches were damaged due to their proximity to key strategic positions – such as St Botolph’s, which was close to the city’s southern entrance or Mary Magdalene, which adjoined the outer exchequer gate at the western entrance to the cathedral close. St Benedict’s, St Swithin’s and St Martin’s were caught up in the skirmishing through the lower part of the city on 3 May 1644.⁵⁵

The fate of the homes and shops of the people of Lincoln is less clear. The parliamentary assault and the tactical retreat of the royalists probably caused extensive damage to the lower city, even if the heavy rain saved many of the burning houses. More certain is the damage done to the upper city. A series of surveys taken by the parliamentarians from 1649 to 1651 of the properties belonging to the cathedral dean and chapter, provide detailed commentary on their condition after the wars. It seems those properties in

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the midst of the parliamentary assault on the close, near the church of St Peter-in-Eastgate, were hardest hit; many are described as ‘ruined in the wars’ or ‘utterly demolished’.⁵⁶ A number of dwellings on the eastern side of the cathedral close are also described as ‘injured at the Storming of the Town’.⁵⁷ Buildings in the close belonging to cathedral officials suffered heavily too, including the Precentory which was ‘pulled down by the soldiers’, and the adjoining Subdeanary which was described as ‘unusefull and ruinated’ with part of the structure converted into mean ‘tenementes for poor people’.⁵⁸

Doubtless, the destruction left many homeless or in dire financial straits, particularly those subjected to pillaging following the storming. In fact, Manchester, the parliamentary commander, was so concerned for the ‘poore plundered’ inhabitants of Lincoln, as he described them, that he issued orders to dole out relief to those in most need.⁵⁹ Parliament too seems to have tried to limit the levels of damage inflicted on the city by scavenging soldiers. On 27 June 1644 the Commons issued an order that the ‘lead upon the churches of Lincoln’ and ‘private Mens Houses’ should not be ‘meddled with, or pulled down’.⁶⁰

Many mansion houses in the vicinity of the cathedral, leased by the county gentry prior to the wars, were also damaged. For instance, Cottesford Place on James Street to the north of the cathedral had been leased by the parliamentary commander Lord Willoughby prior to the wars. Yet, by 1651 the house was described as ‘very much decayed and ruined by the garrisons of the late warrs and is now uninhabitable’.⁶¹ This example of a parliamentary household trashed by royalists serves as a reminder that, contrary to the simplistic legend of barbarous roundheads, both sides inflicted damage on the city, targeting the property and possessions of their enemies.

In fact, it could even be argued that it was the royalists who perpetrated the most significant act of cultural vandalism on Lincoln: the destruction of the medieval bishop’s palace. Although used as a magazine and prison, the palace escaped from the first Civil War unscathed. In 1647, a parliamentary survey found the property in remarkably good repair, concluding that it was worth somewhere in the region of £2,000.⁶² A year

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later, however, England was embroiled in a new war. Charles I, not content to accept defeat in the first war, negotiated an alliance with Scottish supporters leading to a second Civil War in 1648, which saw an invasion from Scotland combined with a number of local pro-royalist uprisings across England and Wales. Parliament's forces in Lincolnshire, including the bulk of Lincoln's garrison, were dispatched towards Newark and Belvoir Castle, out of fear that the royalists would occupy these strongholds once again. This left Lincoln with a small garrison of no more than 100 men commanded by a woollen draper of the city, named Captain Bee.⁶³

Catching wind of Lincoln's relatively defenceless state, a group of royalists from Pontefract, led by Sir Philip Monckton, invaded the city on 30 June 1648. In response, Captain Bee and his men retreated to the bishop's palace, which was probably one of the few areas of the upper city with its defences intact following the first Civil War. The parliamentarians held out for three hours but were forced to surrender when the cavaliers set fire to the palace.⁶⁴ The building was reduced to a burnt-out shell and was seemingly irreparable. By the 1720s the bishop of Lincoln permitted the materials of much of that 'Great Ruinated Building', as he described it, to be removed to help repair the cathedral.⁶⁵

Besides destroying the palace, the royalists also singled out several houses belonging to parliamentarians for destruction and plunder.⁶⁶ Ultimately, the royalist occupation of 1648 was furious and short. A mere 24 hours after entering Lincoln, the royalists were gone, taking their prisoners and plunder with them.⁶⁷ A parliamentary army, led by Colonel Edward Rossiter, was in hot pursuit and caught up with Monckton's force at Willoughby near Nottingham on 4 July, totally routing the royalists and freeing the prisoners.⁶⁸ This brought down the curtain on the final act of the Civil Wars in Lincoln and Lincolnshire.

The following decade, up to the Restoration of 1660, was one of relative peace and limited renewal for the city. New buildings were erected among the ruins, particularly by members of the civic elite, such as Original Peart who had a smart new townhouse built in the lower city on lands once belonging to the bishop.⁶⁹ Other buildings were rebuilt or renovated, such

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as the Precentory which was purchased by the puritan gentleman John Disney and rebuilt at a cost of £370.⁷⁰

That the lands belonging to the bishop and dean and chapter were sold off also reminds us of the religious upheaval that attended the wars. In Lincolnshire, as elsewhere, the clergy were caught up in the conflict – with many threatened or ejected from their posts by both sides depending on their religious and political sympathies. A good example is Edward Reyner, the puritan rector of St Peter-at-Arches, the church of the city's corporation. Reyner resided comfortably in the city during the opening months of the war but was harassed by the royalists when they occupied Lincoln in the summer of 1643. According to one account, he was threatened with being 'pistolled' in his church and soon after fled to the safety of parliamentary Norwich. After Lincoln fell to the parliamentarians in May 1644, Reyner returned and was shortly after appointed lecturer at the cathedral, with a stipend of £150 per year paid for out of the revenues of the abolished dean and chapter.⁷¹ He was to suffer at the hands of the royalists again during their short-lived occupation in 1648, being chased into the cathedral library by soldiers who threatened him with 'drawn swords'. He only managed to escape unmolested when one of the royalist captains recognised Reyner as his old schoolmaster and ordered his release.⁷²

Religious life in the city became even more fractured after the wars. With the effective collapse of the Church of England following the abolition of the bishops and purging of the parish ministry, independent congregations and sects flourished. Even before the war, Lincoln saw the emergence of non-conformist groups, such as the Baptists.⁷³ After the wars, however, new and more exotic groups appeared in the city, most notably the Quakers. Members of this sect were notorious for interrupting church services, berating the paid ministry and emphasising the inner light as the best source of religious guidance. While some within the city supported the Quakers, it seems many more feared them. For instance, when in 1654 the Quaker John Whitehead tried to bear testimony in the cathedral, he found himself 'buffeted' and 'often knocked downe by the rude and barbarous people'.⁷⁴ Rather than break up the scuffle, the local magistrates apparently joined in the beating, and Whitehead was only saved by the intervention of some soldiers. Other Quakers, such as the Lincoln-born scrivener Martin Mason,

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directly criticised the city's ministers, including Reyner, who, according to Mason 'calls himself a Minister of the Gospel in Lincoln. But [really] is found a Lyar by a Child of the Light'.⁷⁵ Not only were the Quakers viewed as religiously dangerous, their tendency to speak truth to power made them seem socially subversive too. The ire with which the elite viewed the Quakers, not just within the city but also across the county, is best measured through the rising numbers of that sect sent to prison in Lincoln castle by the late 1650s.⁷⁶

In contrast to religion, the civil government of the city returned to a semblance of normality by the 1650s, particularly during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. The corporation was purged of active royalists during the 1640s, nominally leaving a body sympathetic to the parliamentary cause. The only setback occurred in 1655 when Cromwell and his council, to suppress royalist disaffection, divided England into a number of military districts each overseen by a Major General. The Major General appointed to oversee Lincolnshire was Edward Whalley, who was Cromwell's cousin and one of the men who signed Charles I's death warrant. Besides taxing former royalists, the Major Generals were tasked with implementing a series of godly reforms, including the suppression of alehouses, drunkenness and swearing.⁷⁷ Unsurprisingly, these measures were not universally popular. Whalley met with little success in his moral crusade in Lincoln or the surrounding county. As he complained to secretary of state, John Thurloe, in December 1655, he simply did not have enough support on the ground. In Lincoln he found that 'wicked magistrates, by reason of their number, over-power the godly magistrates' meaning 'they no sooner suppress alehouses, but they are set up agayne'.⁷⁸

Many among the city elite viewed the rule of the Major Generals as an unwelcome intrusion by the centre into the jurisdiction of local government. While there were clearly some Cromwellian acolytes, including Original Peart and John Disney, who served as assistants to Whalley, many of the corporation opposed his interference in their affairs. Matters came to a head in late 1655 when the pro- and anti-Cromwellian factions clashed over the appointment of the town clerk. Whalley intervened in the dispute, reporting to Thurloe that for the 'composeing' of that 'long and hot difference... betwixt the mayor, aldermen, and citizens' he had to 'assume a little more

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power than (I thinke) belonged to me'.⁷⁹ Those on the receiving end of Whalley's wrath were more forthright, claiming that he acted by 'an usurped illegall pretended power' and that he had threatened to 'take their sword and charter from them' if they did not comply.⁸⁰

Ultimately the rule of the Major Generals was short-lived but left a bitter taste. By late 1658 Oliver Cromwell was dead and although the corporation enthusiastically proclaimed his eldest son Richard as his successor, the Protectorate collapsed a few months later.⁸¹ By early 1660 monarchy was restored and King Charles II was on the throne.

After the Restoration, attempts were made to return to how things were before the wars. Land that had been confiscated was clawed back by the dean and chapter, albeit in some cases only after prolonged legal battles. It took the Precentor more than two years of costly legal proceedings before he was able to recover the Precentory from John Disney.⁸² As the eyewitness account from 1690 that opened this article attests, the majority of the city took much longer to recover. Only in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century did many of the parish churches begin to be rebuilt. Other buildings, such as the bishop's palace and cathedral, remained in a ruinous state, albeit there were some not insignificant enhancements, such as Sir Christopher Wren's library built over the cathedral cloisters in the 1670s.

The process of rebuilding was slow. Yet, the broken buildings were more quickly and easily repaired than the shattered lives and deep political and religious divisions that the conflict created in local society. While the royalists were restored to their civic offices, including the recorder Sir Charles Dallison, those who served under the parliamentary and Cromwellian regimes were permanently barred from the corporation.⁸³ The religious complexion of the city also remained fractured. While the dean and chapter were restored along with the Church of England, the attempt to stamp out those dissenting groups that had grown out of the Civil War years was unsuccessful. The Quakers, Baptists and Presbyterians endured, despite persecution and imprisonment by the Restoration authorities.

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During the 1640s and 50s, for most of those living in Lincoln, the wars had been disruptive, traumatic and unsettling times. The Restoration of 1660 was an attempt to try to forget, if not quite forgive, what had happened during and after the wars. Yet, ultimately, things were never quite the same again.

- ¹ Charles Jackson (ed.), *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme* (Durham, 1870), p. 19.
- ² Alan Vince, 'Lincoln in the Early Modern Era (c. 1350–c.1750): Archaeological Account', in M. Jones, D. Stocker and A. Vince (eds), *The City by the Pool: Assessing the Archaeology of the City of Lincoln* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 303–304.
- ³ *Journal of the House of Lords*, v. 131–2 (14 June 1642).
- ⁴ *A True Relation of His Majesties Reception and Royall Entertainment at Lincoln* (London, 1642), p. 4.
- ⁵ Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), *Calendar, Committee for Compounding* (London, 1890), Part 2: June 1646 (John Farmery); Part 3: May 1649 (Hamlett Marshall); J.G. Williams, 'Lincoln Civic Insignia – The Charles I or Third Sword (continued)', *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, 8:65 (1905), pp. 145–7.
- ⁶ *True Relation of His Majesties Reception*, p. 4.
- ⁷ *Journal of the House of Lords*, v. 216; *Journal of the House of Commons*, ii. 684.
- ⁸ J.G. Williams, 'Lincoln Civic Insignia', *LNQ*, 8:64 (1904), pp. 101–2.
- ⁹ *The Perfect Weekly Account*, 37 (8–15 May 1644), sig. B2v-B3r.
- ¹⁰ C. Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1980), p. 167.
- ¹¹ By the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642 the population of the city was somewhere in the region of 3,500. See J.A. Johnson (ed.), *Probate Inventories of Lincoln Citizens, 1661–1714* (Woodbridge, 1991), appendix.
- ¹² John Vicars, *God on the Mount, or a Continuation of Englands Parliamentary Chronicle* (London, 1643), pp. 372–373.
- ¹³ Letter from Willoughby to the Earl of Essex, 6 Aug. 1643 transcribed in C.H. Firth, 'The Raising of the Ironsides', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 13 (1899), p. 72.
- ¹⁴ J.W.F. Hill, *Tudor & Stuart Lincoln* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 155.
- ¹⁵ *Calendar, Committee for Compounding*, Part 2: Anthony Kent (10 February 1646); William Bishop (11 April 1646); Richard Wetherall (16 May 1646); Robert Becke (13 July 1646).
- ¹⁶ *Certain Informations*, 41 (23–30 Oct. 1643), p. 319.

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- ¹⁷ *A Perfect Diurnall of some Passage in Parliament* (23–30 October 1643), p. 115; *The True Informer*, 6 (21–28 Oct. 1643), pp. 42–3; *Mercurius Civicus*, 22 (19–26 Oct. 1643), p. 174; *The Scottish Dove*, 2 (20–27 Oct. 1643), p. 15.
- ¹⁸ *Mercurius Aulicus* (30 March 1644), p. 914.
- ¹⁹ *The Scottish Dove*, 25 (29 March – 5 April 1644), p. 196.
- ²⁰ *The Parliamentarian Scout*, 43 (11–18 April 1644), p. 358.
- ²¹ The following discussion is based primarily on the two surviving accounts of the siege of 1644, both of which were printed by parliament: W. Goode, *A Particular Relation of the Severall Removes, Services and Successes of the Right Honorable the Earle of Manchester Army*, 1 (London, 1644); *A True Relation of the Taking of the City, Minster, and Castle of Lincolne* (London, 1644).
- ²² Goode, *Particular Relation*, pp. 4–5; *The Flying Post*, 1 (3–10 May 1644), sig. A3v–A4r.
- ²³ Goode, *Particular Relation*, p. 5.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5; *A True Relation*, p. 1.
- ²⁶ *A True Relation*, p. 2.
- ²⁷ *A True Relation*, p. 2; Goode, *Particular Relation*, p. 6.
- ²⁸ *A True Relation*, p. 2; Goode, *Particular Relation*, p. 5.
- ²⁹ The National Archives (TNA), Kew, SP28/26, fol. 414.
- ³⁰ *A True Relation*, p. 2.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 3. The notion that Lincoln’s defenders were pressed men is reinforced in *Perfect Occurrences of some Passages in Parliament*, 20 (3–10 May 1644), sig. A1v–A2v.
- ³³ Goode, *Particular Relation*, p. 6.
- ³⁴ *A True Relation*, pp. 4–5.
- ³⁵ *A True Relation*, p. 6; Goode, *Particular Relation*, p. 8.
- ³⁶ *A True Relation*, p. 3.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ⁴⁰ Goode, *Particular Relation*, p. 6.
- ⁴¹ *The Parliament Scout*, 47 (9–16 May 1644), p. 391.
- ⁴² *Mercurius Aulicus*, 38 (21 Sept. 1644), p. 1168.
- ⁴³ C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660* (3 vols, London, 1911), i. 265–66.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 425–6.
- ⁴⁵ British Library, London, Additional MS 71474, fols. 92r–113r.

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- ⁴⁶ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1634–35*, p. 204.
- ⁴⁷ BL, Add. MS 71474, fol. 101r.
- ⁴⁸ BL, Add. MS 71474, fol. 108v; Vince, 'Archaeological Account', p. 323.
- ⁴⁹ William Bray (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn* (2 vols., London, 1901), i. 298 (entry for 19 Aug. 1654).
- ⁵⁰ Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*, i. 425–6.
- ⁵¹ TNA, SP25/76, fol. 73.
- ⁵² *Diary of Abraham de la Pryme*, pp. 158–9.
- ⁵³ *Journal of the House of Commons*, vii. 152 (9 July 1652); 245, 249 (11 Jan 1653).
- ⁵⁴ J.G. Williams, 'Lincoln Civic Insignia', *LNQ*, 8:66 (1905), p. 175.
- ⁵⁵ Vince, 'Archaeological Account', p. 324.
- ⁵⁶ Lincolnshire Archives Office (LAO), FRISWELL 1/1.
- ⁵⁷ Edmund Venables, 'A Survey of the Houses in the Minster Close of Lincoln, taken by order of Parliament in 1649 and 1651', *Forty-fourth Report of the Lincoln and Nottingham Architectural and Archaeological Society* (1887), pp. 44–5.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 49–51.
- ⁵⁹ TNA, SP28/26, fol. 412.
- ⁶⁰ *Journal of the House of Commons*, iii. 543.
- ⁶¹ LAO, D&C, Cijj, 48/1/1, fol. 18.
- ⁶² LAO, D&C, Cijj 48/1/2.
- ⁶³ *An Impartiall and true Relation of the Great Victory obtained ... by the conjoynd Forces ... under the command of Col Edw. Rosseter* (London, 1648), p. 1.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- ⁶⁵ LAO, D&C, Cijj 48/1/2, fol. 15.
- ⁶⁶ J.G. Williams, 'Lincoln Civic Insignia', *LNQ*, 8:66 (1905), p. 169.
- ⁶⁷ *An Impartiall and true Relation of the Great Victory*, p. 1.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–4.
- ⁶⁹ Vince, 'Archaeological Account', p. 317.
- ⁷⁰ Venables, 'Survey', p. 50.
- ⁷¹ J.G. Williams, 'Lincoln Civic Insignia', *LNQ*, 8:66 (1905), pp. 177–78.
- ⁷² Edmund Calamy, *The Nonconformists Memorial*, ed. Samuel Palmer (3 vols, London, 1802), ii. 421–7.
- ⁷³ Hill, *Tudor & Stuart Lincoln*, p. 124.
- ⁷⁴ LAO, SOC FR 13, fol. 37.
- ⁷⁵ M. Mason, *The Proud Pharisee Reproved* (London, 1655), see front cover.
- ⁷⁶ See LAO, SOC FR 13.
- ⁷⁷ T. Birch (ed.), *Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe* (7 vols, London, 1742), iv. 607 (Whalley to Cromwell, 12 Mar. 1656).

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⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, iv. 272–3 (Whalley to Thurloe, 1 Dec. 1655).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, iv. 197 (Whalley to Thurloe, 14 Nov. 1655).

⁸⁰ LAO, L1/1/1/6, pp. 95–6.

⁸¹ LAO, L1/1/1/6, p. 70.

⁸² Venables, ‘Survey’, p. 50.

⁸³ The expulsion of former parliamentarians from the corporation is recorded in the common council’s order book, see LAO, L1/1/1/6, pp. 97, 101, 111–113.

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LIFE IN A GARRISONED TOWN: NEWARK, 1642–1646; A BOLTHOLE AND A BASTION FOR LINCOLNSHIRE ROYALISTS

by Dr Stuart B Jennings

Introduction

In 1642, Newark upon Trent was the second largest town in the county of Nottinghamshire. Situated on the east bank of the River Trent, it provided the main bridge crossing over the river before it reached the Humber estuary. The town lay adjacent to the Great North Road linking the capital with the cities of York and Newcastle; the old Roman Fosse Way ran through the town, providing a link across the country from east to west. Newark's situation on these major transport routes of the period, both road and river, meant that it would give a significant advantage to whichever of the protagonists could occupy it once the Civil War began.¹

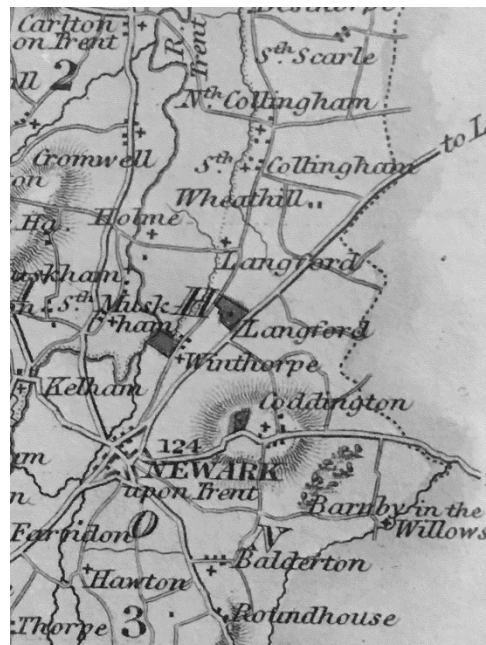


Plate 1 17th Century map of Newark

Lying only 16 miles south-west of the county town of Lincoln and only three miles west of the Lincolnshire border, it was also to play a

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considerable part in the fortunes of the war in that county. Newark's position on the east bank of the river meant that it was accessible to Lincolnshire without having to cross the Trent. The fact that the town was quickly secured for the king in December 1642 by Sir John Henderson with 4,000 Horse, and remained a Royalist garrison until ordered to surrender by Charles I in May 1646 meant that it soon became a focus for Lincolnshire Royalist.² Many moved both their families and valuables into the town for protection during periods when Parliamentarians held the upper hand in Lincolnshire, especially after the battle of Marston Moor in 1644. Not only was Newark easily accessible for Lincolnshire Royalist, it also proved to be a useful base from which the Newark Horse was able, throughout the war, to initiate raids into the county. For most of 1643 and a large part of 1644 when Newcastle and his forces were in and around Nottinghamshire, the Newark garrison was able to gather regular assessments from a number of Lincolnshire villages. This task was often undertaken by Lincolnshire troops based at Newark and it is not insignificant that of the twenty quartermasters identified as being in Newark over the war, eleven (55 per cent) were identified as being of Lincolnshire origin. Other Lincolnshire officers identified as having command at Newark over the war included ten colonels, five lieutenant colonels, three majors and twenty captains. Thus, though Newark was identified as a Nottinghamshire Royalist stronghold, it was also a significant base for Lincolnshire Royalists as well.³

Surviving evidence suggests that Oliver Cromwell never visited the town during the period of his military career but he was far from being unacquainted with Newark. During the time he was active across Lincolnshire and around Nottingham, he would have seen the garrison from afar and encountered troops from the Newark Horse in combat at Grantham, Gainsborough, and Winceby in 1643, and Naseby in 1645. On each of these occasions the Parliamentarian forces got the better of the encounter.⁴ There were also close family ties between Cromwell and Nottinghamshire. His aunt, the sister of Oliver's father, married Richard Whalley of Kirton in Nottinghamshire, and their son Edward Whalley served under Cromwell as both an officer in the New Model Army and later as one of his Major Generals.⁵

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Though Newark was a Nottinghamshire Royalist garrison, its close proximity to Lincolnshire meant that many of the regiments raised across that county, both Royalist and Parliamentary, probably spent periods of time either as part of the garrison or besieging it with Colonel Edward Rossiter. Their experiences form an integral part of the Civil War story for Lincolnshire.

Life in a Royalist garrisoned town

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Newark was a town of predominantly low-roofed timber houses, some with large gardens. It was surrounded by a largely complete medieval stonewall, though slightly ruinous in some places. Entry into the town was through four major narrow gates leading into congested streets within. There had been some ribbon developments beyond the walls along the roads into the town, much of which were probably dismantled or destroyed over the course of the war to allow the construction of large earth defences to surround and protect the stonewall from artillery fire. Within the town walls there were a few stone buildings, the castle and the parish church being the most prominent. There was also a Grammar School constructed of stone, which had been built in 1529 with the money bequeathed by Thomas Magnus in his will. Beyond the walls, but still within sight of them, stood the stone mansion of the Earl of Exeter which had been built on the site of the Spittal – an old medieval hospital. As with many towns of the period, the abundance of wood and thatched roofs left Newark vulnerable to the risk of fire, especially so during the three sieges of the town in 1643, 1644, and 1645–46.

At the west end of the town, situated alongside a secondary branch of the River Trent, stood Newark Castle. It was never a castle in the traditional sense but rather a fortified episcopal palace build by Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, over the years 1123 to 1148. It reverted to the Crown at the Reformation and over the course of the sixteenth century was rented out to a succession of different tenants who spent large sums of money to render the castle less of a military stronghold and more a fine residence. One of those tenants, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, spent over £400 in 1607 inserting fireplaces, new windows and turning many of the larger spaces into small bedrooms. In 1536, complaints were forwarded to Henry VIII that the

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castle possessed ‘scant lodgings for a 100 men and no water’.⁶ By the seventeenth century, when the castle had reverted back to the Crown, the accommodation was deemed comfortable enough to house James I in 1603 and Charles I stayed there on a number of occasions in the 1630s and 1640s, after it had been given to his queen, Henrietta Maria, as a wedding gift. When the town was garrisoned at the end of 1642, the castle could accommodate few soldiers and its stone undercroft, dungeons and hall were deemed more useful as a storage space for weapons, gunpowder and provisions. Being constructed of stone these areas were less prone to fire and destruction by artillery fire. Soldiers garrisoned at Newark found



Plate 2 Newark castle

themselves billeted elsewhere. Thus the war brought considerable disruption and discomfort to both civilian and soldier in the town and this paper will explore some of the hardships endured – under the headings of accommodation, destruction and demographics.

Population and the accommodation of soldiers

Estimating the size of Newark’s population in the first half of the seventeenth century is fraught with difficulty, as the surviving records from this period were not generated for that purpose. Professor A. C. Wood

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suggested that the 70 burials registered between the years 1599 to 1600 indicated a population in excess of 2,000.⁷ More recent work on a wider range of sources over a longer period of time suggests that by 1642, the population was in the range 2,000 to 2,400.⁸ The arrival of Sir John Henderson with 4,000 horse in December 1642 to garrison Newark would have placed considerable pressure on both the fabric and resources of the town. Once the garrison became permanently secured, it appears that around 2,000 soldiers were kept in the town, thus nearly doubling the population for most of the war.⁹

The experience of hosting Henderson's force until its withdrawal in 1643 would have meant that the town authorities had some arrangements already in hand to billet a permanent garrison after his force was withdrawn in that year (see below). That Newark was to become a strategic fortress and crossing point for Royalists travelling between the north and south of the country meant that often they also had to accommodate armies in addition to the permanent garrison. This was possibly easier in 1643 and for the opening months of 1644 when the presence of the Earl (later Marquis) of Newcastle meant that local Royalists held the upper hand across much of the east Midlands, thus enabling troops to be billeted in villages further away from Newark across Nottinghamshire and into parts of Lincolnshire. The Kirke Inn at the village of Upton is often referred to in the Constables' accounts as a place where soldiers were lodged over the years 1643–45.¹⁰

After the Earl of Manchester moved into Lincolnshire with 6,000 troops to join other Parliamentary forces assembling to begin besieging Royalist York, and the subsequent defeat of Prince Rupert at Marston Moor on 2 July 1644, Newark found itself increasingly at risk from raids and attack by local Parliamentary forces. Thereafter, soldiers had to be accommodated ever nearer to, and often within, the town for their safety. Amongst the additional large forces accommodated by the Newark Royalists were the 4,500 troopers accompanying Queen Henrietta Maria in June 1643, the estimated 3,000 horse and 3,000 foot who arrived under Prince Rupert to lift the second siege in March 1644, and the 1,400 troops who arrived with the King in October 1645, just prior to the third and final siege of the town.

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A number of soldiers who served at the garrison at Newark were local men from the east midlands serving in locally-raised regiments, such as that of Colonel William Staunton of Staunton, a village that lay just six miles away from Newark. It is possible that such forces, when not on garrison duty, could be billeted in their own homes when such armies arrived, thus freeing up additional resources for the garrison governor to utilise.

Situated as it was at the junction of three major travel highways, as well as being the largest market town in north Nottinghamshire, by the seventeenth century Newark had acquired a number of large timber-framed inns with stabling facilities for travellers and tradesmen visiting or passing through the town. These were quickly commandeered at the end of 1642 for the use of regimental officers and the Nottinghamshire Royalist Commissioners who were based at Newark for the duration of the war. The surviving military accounts for the regiment of Colonel William Staunton of Staunton, which ran from 10 December 1644 through to 20 April 1645, recorded that the Colonel and his senior officers were accommodated at ‘ye Hart’ inn whilst other significant troops were based at ‘ye Angell’ inn. Several payments were made, amounting to £1. 2s. for ‘clenging ye yard at ye Angell’ and ‘repaireing of ye stables at ye Angell’.¹¹

The majority of the garrison soldiers were billeted in the homes of ordinary parishioners, the size of their homes dictating the number of soldiers each Newark household were allocated. The fact that the garrison’s accounts have failed to survive, probably deliberately destroyed before the surrender in May 1646 to hide any incriminating evidence, makes it difficult to ascertain the logistics of how billeting was implemented. The outbreak of plague in Newark at the end of 1645, and the payments made by the town constables to ‘visited homes’ clearly shows the presence of soldiers in homes and payments being made for ‘inkles and winding sheets’ for their burials being covered by the Corporation.¹²

The impact of destruction

On the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, the Corporation of Newark petitioned him in 1661 for the renewal of the town’s charter as a reward for their loyal service to his late father in the Civil War. They claimed that the

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sum of £40,000 was lost ‘by the burning of a sixth part of the town when it was made a garrison, by erection of works, money lent and never repaid, [and] quartering of soldiers’.¹³

Some of the destruction identified may have been the consequence of the three sieges that the town endured, but the majority of it was almost certainly the result of constructing defensive outworks beyond the old medieval stonewalls. Ribbon development beyond the original walls was probably the first to go to give the defenders a clear range of fire. The construction of earth works, sconces and bulwarks over the years 1643–1645, to defend the town against artillery fire, may well have resulted in the destruction of smaller properties in the way of, or lying beyond, these new defences. The poorer hovels and huts were probably just cleared by setting fire to them. More substantial timber-framed houses could be dismantled and moved. A Corporation Minute Book entry for 23 September 1645 recorded:

whereas there is a small tenement consisting of two bayes of building lately erected upon the town’s land at Milngate and nere the river of Trent by Thomas Waite deceased, wch said tenement is by order of the Generall and Commissioners appointed to be taken downe for the strengthening and better fortification of the Bulworks there...and the same to be reedifie upon some part of the ground belonging to the Corporation, soe soone as the same may or can be done with convenience.¹⁴

What then was the consequence of such destruction upon the lives of both soldier and civilian within the town? One of the most significant outcomes of such destruction was the movement of people into the perimeters of these newly constructed defences, resulting in tremendous overcrowding and deteriorating sanitary conditions within the town. Over a period in which the number of inhabitants at Newark doubled, and on occasions trebled or even quadrupled, the amount of properties available to accommodate them was substantially diminished. The overcrowding appears to have been particularly bad in the poorer areas of the town, such as Barnby Gate and North Gate, which were adjacent to the newly constructed outer defences. These areas were both the nearest and cheapest

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to relocate to if your accommodation lay beyond the defences and was demolished. It is not surprising therefore to discover that in these areas particularly, disease was to quickly follow in the wake of such an influx of people. I shall explore this later, but a surviving Bill in the records of the Newark Corporation, undated but almost certainly from early 1646, clearly underlines this fact: ‘A Bill for bread for the vizitted for barnabee gate and norgate and the tonne to me Samuel Croft – £4. 16s. 6d.’¹⁵ That such a large sum of money had to be expended over a relatively short period of time is a reflection of the severity and impact of the pestilence in its early stages.

A secondary, and often overlooked, effect of the construction of the earthworks and outer defences around the town was the destruction of large areas of meadows both within the parish and in some adjacent parishes. To stabilise the earthen banks, sconces and bulwarks, and stop them eroding in bad weather they had to be faced with large amounts of turf. This would have led to the digging up of a number of nearby meadows to obtain the turf, and the damage done over this period of construction was to stay with local communities for many years. It has been estimated that it can take up to 15 years for an established wild meadow to be completely restored to full health after such destruction.¹⁶ The Royalist garrison at Newark was infamous for its regiment of horse, giving it the ability to attack, raid and gather provisions from across much of the east Midlands. As the network of outer defences became ever more elaborate, it proved increasingly difficult to keep and feed large numbers of horse safely close to Newark on the remaining meadows. Also, the amount of hay and fodder the garrison was able to gather and requisition from its surrounding hinterland was quickly diminishing as the Parliamentary forces moved ever closer to begin the third and final siege of Newark. According to A. C. Wood, as the final siege began to tighten towards the end of 1645, the governor of Newark had to send away around a 1,000 of his horse to the Royalist garrison at Lichfield, retaining only about 800 horse for raids and foraging.¹⁷

Disease and demographics

One of the significant consequences (for modern historians) of Newark remaining an unconquered Royalist stronghold over the course of the first Civil War was that many of its civic and ecclesiastical records not only

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continued to be kept but also survived after its surrender, possibly because the presence of plague discouraged Parliamentary troops from either entering or looting the town.

The parish registers and the churchwarden accounts appear to be relatively complete for both the Civil War and subsequent Interregnum, although as with many parishes there are gaps in the marriage entries during the time of civil registration in the Commonwealth period. The registers record not only details of the births and deaths of Newark citizens but also those of families from other parishes who took refuge in the town during the war. Detailed family reconstruction has identified a few omissions from the burial register, often during periods of intense fighting, but they are often subsequently identified in both Corporation and churchwarden records from the time.¹⁸

When it comes to soldiers who died at the garrison, the issue becomes much more complex.¹⁹ Over the course of the war, the names of only 28 officers (many of them either high ranking or local gentry) and four soldiers are recorded in the burial register. Given the prevalence of disease, three sieges and a number of military encounters experienced at Newark over the four years, the number of casualties would have been far in excess of those numbers. In a parish where such care was taken over the register details, one is left to assume two possible reasons. Either the clerk did not know, or feel obliged to record ordinary soldiers' names, or that the garrison had a separate burial pit for its troops so as to avoid filling up the churchyard. If the latter was the case and this seems most likely, then the church clerk may have felt that as the register was for burials in the churchyard, he did not need to record such details for the garrison pit. Certainly the churchwarden accounts record payments made for inkles and winding sheets to bury soldiers' corpses in, and on occasions the digging of mass graves. In 1645 the churchwardens paid Richard Yoxall and Ralph Walker 3s. 4d. for 'passing bells and macking soldiers graves by Mr Mayors command'.²⁰ As the cost for digging a single grave in the churchyard was 3d., this was obviously a mass grave but there is no mention of it at all in the burial registers. Possibly the bells were rung at the church, but the grave wasn't dug in the immediate churchyard. Without surviving garrison accounts it is hard to be certain about what was happening.

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The combination of overcrowding, insanitary conditions and the constant coming and going of soldiers and civilians into Newark, left the garrisoned town open to infectious disease and malnutrition. Extensive work on the parish burial registers for the period 1640–1662, reveal the presence of at least two virulent epidemics over the period of the Civil War.²¹

One of the most virulent infectious diseases identified within the town, with three major outbreaks over the course of the war, was typhus. This was a disease spread by human body lice and its symptoms included fever with red pustules all over the body. Whilst potentially lethal for adults, it rarely proved fatal for children, though it did cause considerable distress for them. The disease is usually associated with overcrowding and poor hygiene conditions and is particularly active over the winter months. During much of the early modern period, typhus was often regularly recorded in most field armies across Europe. Soldiers usually carried it into towns and garrisons in the winter months as the harsh conditions brought campaigning to a halt and they moved into accommodation. The winters of 1644 and 1645 were particularly harsh in the Midlands with the River Trent freezing over and blocks of ice causing damage to Newark's wooden bridges at the thaw. In such conditions, clothes were rarely removed and washing and bathing proved extremely difficult in the crowded homes of Newark. Such conditions were ideal for body lice to thrive.

The major outbreaks of typhus in Newark were over the winters of 1643–44, 1644–45 and 1645–46. The burial registers clearly demonstrate a large number of adult burials, with few children, in numbers far in excess of those recorded within the parish for previous years. The worst of the outbreaks appears to have been over the winter of 1644–45, where the highest monthly total of burials for the century thus far was recorded in October 1644, with 27 interments recorded. In the 1630s the average annual totals for burials were 90, but the 1644 register recorded 217. Not until the arrival of plague at the end of 1645 were there to be higher monthly figures.²² As already shown, these figures were not inflated by soldier burials, which were rarely recorded in the parish registers. Overall, it is estimated that between 12–15 per cent of Newark's civilians died from typhus during the war.

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In October 1645, an even greater feared pestilence was recorded in the town – that of plague. According to a contemporary eye witness, John Twentyman, ‘the plague being brought in among them by soldiers which came from some other places’.²³ The infection was almost certainly brought into Newark by soldiers accompanying Prince Rupert on 16 October 1645. He had surrendered the plague-ridden town of Bristol to the Parliamentarians on 11 September. For this action his uncle, the king, had the prince cashiered. As a consequence, Rupert rode directly across the country, with 300 horse, to defend his actions in person. By the middle of November, bills of payment ‘for coales and oatmeale to ye visited people’ began to appear in the Corporation accounts.²⁴ Mention is made in these early bills of a ‘visite house’ or ‘pest house’ suggesting that, initially, an isolation building was used for those people identified with plague. As the epidemic became more widespread among both civilians and soldiers, this proved to be inadequate and payments thereafter suggest that infected families were shut up in their homes with watchers being employed to make sure that the quarantine was kept.

With the arrival of much colder weather in mid-December, the rate of plague infection appears to slow down and remained at a low rate through until February. The suffering did not abate though as a weakened population appeared to succumb to another minor outbreak of typhus over this same period. With the arrival of warmer conditions in March 1646, infections began to soar again. On 9 March 1646, the mayor and alderman issued public orders for control of the plague, which were duly recorded in the Corporation Minute book.²⁵ Amongst the orders were instructions for the appointment of watchers and guards in every street of the town where infected families dwelt, and the digging of a plague pit at Appleton Gate.

As ordinary soldiers were billeted in family homes, they too could find themselves caught up in quarantine if the infection appeared amongst the family they were staying with. The relationship between military and civic responsibilities in the face of such occurrences was complex in such circumstances and lies beyond the immediate scope of this paper.²⁶ It appears most likely that in the midst of the final siege, the Governor transferred the care of sick soldiers billeted in the town to civic authorities

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but if they died responsibility for burial became a military matter, possibly focussed on a military burial pit.

With the surrender of the town in May 1646 and the departure of the garrison, the plague continued to rage within Newark and, in spite of attempts to contain it, the lifting of the siege made it extremely difficult to stop it from spreading to neighbouring parishes. Within Newark itself the month of July 1646 witnessed the burial of 36 individuals in the churchyard, the worst monthly total for the century. Many other Newark citizens are recorded in the burial registers of neighbouring parishes such as East Stoke where they had fled to stay with relatives and friends. In East Stoke there are even entries in the parish register recording the burial of individuals (some from Newark) in the fields where they fell rather than bringing them into the village and risking further infection.²⁷ A petition to the Committee for Compounding from the town of Newark dated 21 January 1647 pleaded for further time to pay their fines to Parliament because ‘the plague has consumed over 1,000 persons and the town is not yet clear.’²⁸ In fact the disease spread out across much of the eastern side of the county over 1646 resulting in the cancellation of the Goose Fair at Nottingham by the city Corporation on 16 September 1646, the very first time in its history.²⁹ Royalist soldiers returning home after the surrender of Newark carried the pestilence further afield than just Nottinghamshire. There is a direct link with such soldiers and a number of outbreaks in South Yorkshire, especially at Doncaster. Further detailed research on Lincolnshire parish registers may also show similar links.³⁰

The burial registers certainly show a heavy cost for Newark’s citizens over the course of the war, but nowhere near as heavy as the 1,000 mentioned in the petition to Parliament (see table 1 below). That many fled and died in neighbouring parishes after the siege ended is borne out by local surviving parish registers, though a great number haven’t survived for the years 1644–46. Certainly the population of the town did not recover to its pre-war size until well into the eighteenth century. Unlike the larger cities of Bristol, Leicester or Nottingham, Newark did not possess such a strong economic base to attract migration back into the town until decades later. Even a cursory glance at the registers for the period clearly suggests a downward trend in the population.

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Year	Burials	Percentage of soldier and stranger burials	Baptisms	Baptisms over Burials
1642	87		98	+11
1643	194	3.1	131	-63
1644	217	5.1	155	-62
1645	160	7.5	170	+10
1646	177	8.0	85	-92
1647	48		64	+16
1648	52		94	+42
Totals	935		797	-138

Table 1 Baptisms and Burials recorded in the registers at Newark, 1642–1648³¹

For residents across the east Midlands with either Royalist sympathies or a desire to fight for the King in the war, Newark appeared to be a safe place to move their families and possessions to. It was also the garrison where locally raised regiments often ended up being stationed at, either for a period of garrison duty or as winter quarters. Whilst its defences became increasingly impressive as the war progressed, these proved insufficient to halt the decline of the King's cause elsewhere across the country as his field armies experienced defeat. They also failed to halt the impact of disease and death, which came to thrive in the growing insanitary conditions of the town as more people retreated back into the garrison. For citizens across the region the period certainly proved to be one of 'dangerous times of God's heave judgements of plague and pestilence amongst us'.³²

¹ For a more detailed account see S. B. Jennings, *'These Uncertain Tymes': Newark and the Civilian Experience of the Civil Wars, 1640–1660* (Nottinghamshire County, 2009), Chapter 1.

² Jennings, *These Uncertain Tymes*, Chapter 2.

³ Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *Newark on Trent: The Civil War Sieges* (London: HMSO, 1964), pp. 75–95.

⁴ A. C. Wood, *Nottinghamshire in the Civil War* (East Ardsley: S. R. Publishers, 1971, reprint of 1937 edition), pp. 44–8, 51–3, 58–59.

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- ⁵ William Dugdale's 'Visitation of Nottinghamshire: 1662 & 1664', *Publications of the Harleian Society, New Series Vol. 5* (1986), 5.
- ⁶ P. Marshall and J. Samuels, *Guardian of the Trent: The Story of Newark Castle* (Nottingham: Nottinghamshire County Council, 1997), pp. 37–39.
- ⁷ Wood, *Nottinghamshire Civil War*, p. 6.
- ⁸ Jennings, *These Uncertain Tymes*, pp. 14–15.
- ⁹ Jennings, *These Uncertain Tymes*, Chapter 2.
- ¹⁰ M. Bennett (ed.), *A Nottinghamshire village in War and Peace: The Accounts of the Constables of Upton, 1640–1660*, Thoroton Society Record Series, XXXIX (Nottingham, 1995), p. 14.
- ¹¹ M. Bennett, S. Jennings & M. Whyld, 'Two Military Account Books for the Civil War in Nottinghamshire', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 101 (1997, pp. 118–119).
- ¹² S. B. Jennings, "'A miserable, Stinking, Infected Town'", Pestilence, Plague and Death in a Civil War Garrison, Newark, 1640–1649', *Midland History*, XXVIII (2003), pp. 51–70.
- ¹³ Calendar of State Papers Domestic, 1661–1662 (London, 1891), 27 July 1661, p. 45.
- ¹⁴ Nottinghamshire Archives Office (hereafter NAO), Newark Borough Minutes, DC/NW/3/1/1, 214a.
- ¹⁵ NAO, Newark Borough Miscellaneous Papers, DC/NW D6. 75/C46/9.
- ¹⁶ 'Restoring Wildflower Meadows – Common Reasons for Not Succeeding' <http://www.magnificentmeadows.org.uk/assets/uploads/Common_reasons_why_restorations_may_not_be_successful.pdf> (accessed 14 January 2020).
- ¹⁷ Wood, *Nottinghamshire Civil War*, p. 107.
- ¹⁸ See Jennings, *These Uncertain Tymes*, Chapter 4.
- ¹⁹ See S. B. Jennings, 'Controlling disease in a civil-war garrison town: military discipline or civic duty: The surviving evidence for Newark-upon-Trent, 1642–1646 in D. Appleby & A. Hopper (eds.), *Battle Scarred: Mortality, medical care and military welfare in the British Civil Wars* (MUP, 2018), pp. 40–54.
- ²⁰ NAO, Newark Churchwarden Accounts, 1640–1662, PR/24,810, 1645
- ²¹ Jennings, 'A Miserable, Stinking, Infected Town', pp. 51–70.
- ²² Jennings, *These Uncertain Tymes*, pp. 62–84.
- ²³ Nottingham University Manuscripts Department (hereafter NUMD), The Mellish Papers, Twentyman Manuscript, Me Lm 11.
- ²⁴ NAO, Newark Borough Misc., DC/NW D6. 75/C46/7.
- ²⁵ NAO, Newark Borough Minute Book, 1642–1674, DC/NW/3/1/1, 279v–280.

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- ²⁶ For a fuller discussion, see Jennings, ‘Controlling disease in a civil-war garrison town’ in Appleby & Hopper (eds.), *Battle Scarred*.
- ²⁷ S. B. Jennings, ‘The Anatomy of a Civil War Plague in a Rural Parish: East Stoke, Nottinghamshire, 1646’, *Midland History*, 40:2 (Autumn 2015), pp. 201–19.
- ²⁸ C. Brown, *A History of Newark-on-Trent, 2 Vols. (Newark, 1907)*, II, p. 133.
- ²⁹ S. B. Jennings, ‘Nottinghamshire 1646; Plague, Disruption of Trade and Commerce and the Cancellation of the Goose Fair in the County Town of Nottingham’, *Midland History*, 43:2 (Autumn 2018), pp. 174–89.
- ³⁰ Jennings, ‘Nottinghamshire 1646’, pp. 182–3.
- ³¹ Figures taken from S. Jennings, ‘*These Uncertain Tymes*’, p. 68.
- ³² NAO, Will of Robert Baguley of East Stoke, PRNW 18 March 1647.

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'T HATH PLEASED THE LORD TO GIVE YOUR SERVANT A
NOTABLE VICTORY...'
OLIVER CROMWELL IN LINCOLNSHIRE, 1643

by Stuart Orme

In the popular imagination Oliver Cromwell's military career is indelibly associated with the major battles in which he played a key role: Marston Moor, Naseby, Preston, Dunbar and Worcester. However, his military reputation began to be forged in a less well-known setting: the campaign in Lincolnshire in the spring and summer of 1643. It was here that Cromwell experienced his first field action, siege and significant victory.

The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of these events, describing Cromwell's role at Peterborough, Crowland, Grantham, Burghley and Gainsborough, the latter being particularly important as it was arguably the 'lightbulb moment' that convinced him that he could be successful as a soldier and that the hand of God's providence was behind him in this regard. As such I would argue that this campaign was a transformational experience for him, from being what John Morrill has described as being the 'twentieth most important man from the four hundredth most important place in the country',¹ to becoming a rising star in the Parliamentary war effort.

Background

The traditional view is that Oliver Cromwell had no military experience prior to the Civil Wars. Certainly, he had no field experience in a military campaign such as the Thirty Years' War, as did some of his contemporaries. It is possible, indeed likely, that he may have had some nominal practice of arms with the 'Trained Bands', the equivalent of the local militia and England's proxy for a military force at the time, although (with the notable exception of the London units) as Austin Woolrych wryly commented 'the trained bands of the counties were anything but trained ... their monthly muster-days in summer were devoted less to drill than to drinking and good fellowship'.²

Whether he had some training or not, Cromwell seems to have been quite industrious in supporting the Parliamentary war effort from quite early on, proposing the raising of companies of volunteers in Cambridge in July 1642 despite being asked if there was 'a colour of high treason in all this...'.³ It

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was further noted in the House of Commons on 15 August 1642 that he 'hath seized the magazine in the Castle of Cambridge and hath hindered the carrying of the plate from the university... the value of 20,000L or thereabouts...'⁴ although the exact date of this action is unclear.⁵ His patrols were ranging beyond Cambridge; Judge Bramston's son, returning from visiting the King's court at York in the middle of August, recounted that: 'near Huntingdon, between that town and Cambridge, certain musketeers start out of the corn and command us to stand, telling us that we must be searched and to that end go before Mr Cromwell...'.⁶ It is clear that Cromwell was active in the already increasing level of military activity carried out by both sides in the summer of 1642, albeit prior to the popular perception of the outbreak of war with the raising of the King's standard at Nottingham on 22 August.

During September Cromwell raised a troop of horse in and around Huntingdon (by local tradition using the Falcon Inn as his headquarters) with his brother-in-law John Disbrowe as its quartermaster. This troop, number 67, joined the Earl of Essex's army and played an oft-debated role at the Battle of Edgehill on 23 October, most probably arriving late.⁷ With the lack of a decisive resolution in these early months, and the realisation that the war was likely to become increasingly prolonged and regional, Cromwell returned to his home county by the end of the year. On 20 December 1642 the Eastern Association was founded from the counties of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire; a regional force in which he was to play a pivotal role.

Raising a Regiment

By the end of January Cromwell had been promoted to Colonel, and was expanding his regiment of horse on the principles that would make them famous throughout the rest of the conflict, described by Bulstrode Whitelock as freeholders who joined up 'upon a matter of conscience ... And thus being well armed within, by the satisfaction of their consciences, and without by good iron arms, they would as one man stand firmly and charge desperately'.⁸ By March 1643 the regiment had swelled to five troops in strength; John Vicars described this expansion as being due to the 'Noble and Active Colonell Cromwell ... Thus we see how God infuses and

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inflames into the hearts of his people, to show themselves ready and cheerful to come forth to help the Lord against the mighty Nimrods and Hunting Furies of our time...'.⁹ The selection of his first five troop commanders is interesting: James Berry, Edmund Whalley (cousin), John Desborough (brother-in-law), Oliver Cromwell (son) and Valentine Walton (nephew). So, four of these were relatives and in this regard Cromwell was appointing on the basis of patronage common to most officers of the period, placing trusted people from his close circle into positions of authority. The fifth, James Berry, was the son of an ironworker and is the first example of the pattern of promoting 'russet coated captains' of talent from humble backgrounds with which Cromwell is often associated.

The process of recruiting, training and paying for such a regiment was not an easy one. Donations of munitions were gratefully accepted from a variety of sources, as evinced by a surviving receipt countersigned by Cromwell on 16 January 1643 from Sir John Hewett of 'eleven muskets, one blunderbuss ... pistols...'.¹⁰ Establishing military discipline also had its challenges, with two troopers having to be flogged in April 1643 on the market square in Huntingdon for attempting to desert, and rules set that 'no man swears but he pays his twelpepence, if he be drunk he is set in the stocks or worse; if he calls the other roundhead, he is cashiered...'.¹¹ A brief military expedition was undertaken in mid-March into Suffolk, with Cromwell and his freshly-minted troopers supporting the commander of the Eastern Association, Lord Grey of Warke, by quelling Royalist agents trying to stir up support in the town of Lowestoft. The town's slender defence of a chain stretched across the street was removed, the town quickly seized with barely a shot fired; two cannons and a large quantity of pistols secured, the latter which can only have helped equip Cromwell's troops.

Dealing with any suspected local Royalists was also considered a priority, several of whom Cromwell knew personally. His troopers had searched the Huntingdon home of Robert Barnard, a member of the Midland Counties Association and his local rival, upon information that he was not as loyal to the Parliamentary cause as he had professed. When Barnard protested at this treatment, Cromwell wrote back on 17 April, stating very simply that it was true that 'my Lieutenant with some other soldiers of my troop were at your house ... the reason was, I heard you reported active against the

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proceedings of parliament, and for those also that disturb the peace of this county and this kingdom...’¹² Likewise, he visited and confronted his uncle (and godfather) Sir Oliver Cromwell at Ramsey with head uncovered, who was also known to be a supporter of the King. Cromwell was obviously keen to ensure loyalty in the area that he had responsibility for.

Peterborough, April 1643

The strategic situation developed quickly into April 1643. On the 7 April, having delayed for some time, Lord Grey of Warke took the bulk of his Eastern Association forces (some 5,000 men) south in order to support the operations of the Earl of Essex. Accordingly, Oliver Cromwell found himself left in charge with a skeleton defence of the Eastern Association. Within days he would find himself on alert as news reached him that a strong Royalist raiding force from Newark had marched into Lincolnshire, seizing Grantham and causing Cromwell to write to Sir John Burgoyne from Huntingdon on 10 April ‘These plunderers draw near. I think it will do well if you can afford us any assistance of Dragoons to help in this great Exigence...’¹³ Just the following day the same ‘plunderers’, commanded by the 23-year-old Colonel Charles Cavendish, routed the Lincolnshire Parliamentarians under Lord Willoughby at the battle of Ancaster Heath. Emboldened by their victory, the Royalist forces continued south, briefly occupying Stamford and Peterborough.

The news that Cavendish’s forces had reached Peterborough must have rung alarm bells with Cromwell’s forces, stationed in Huntingdon on 17 April. The Royalists had reached the border of the Eastern Association and taken one of the key crossing points of the River Nene in the process. Accordingly, Cromwell sent a force of dragoons to secure the other key crossing at Wisbech, then sent troops north to take Peterborough from the Royalist raiders.

By the time Sir Miles Hobart’s regiment of foot arrived in Peterborough on 18 April the Royalists had already gone, and the small cathedral city, which was Royalist in sympathy, was taken with barely a shot fired. Cromwell arrived with his regiment of horse two days later, to be quartered in a house

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known as the Vineyard at the east end of the cathedral precincts. Any local Royalist sympathisers were secured.

For more detail on Cromwell’s occupation of Peterborough and a discussion of the sources relating to it, it would be best to refer to my more detailed article on this which was published in the 2018 edition of *Cromwelliana*.¹⁴ Suffice to say, the day after Cromwell’s arrival the Cathedral was sacked by Parliamentary troops whilst ‘their Commanders, of whom Cromwell was one, if not acting, yet not restraining the Soldiers in this heat of their fury’.¹⁵ Despite popular mythology, it would be the only time that a cathedral would be the subject of an iconoclastic assault by troops directly under Cromwell’s command.

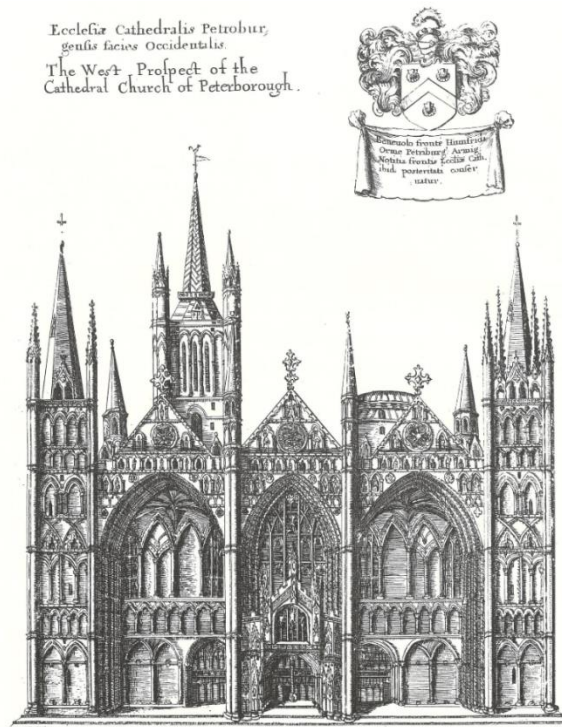


Plate 3 West front of Peterborough Cathedral – Frontispiece from Gunton’s *History of the Church in Peterburgh* (1685). (Author’s Collection)

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The damage done was extensive, as described by eyewitness Francis Standish – the soldiers went to:

break and batter the Windows and any Carved work that was yet remaining, or to pull down Crosses wheresoever they could find them: which the first Founders did not set up with so much zeal, as these last Confounders pulled them down. Thus in a short time, a fair and goodly Structure was quite strip'd of all its ornamental Beauty and made a rueful Spectacle, a very Chaos of Desolation and Confusion, nothing scarce remaining but only bare walls, broken Seats and shatter'd Windows on every side.¹⁶

A recent archaeological survey of the fabric of the Cathedral's north side has revealed extensive shot marks in the stonework, indicating that troops were using muskets and even light artillery pieces to target some of the stained-glass windows.¹⁷ Cromwell seems to have remained in Peterborough for several days before moving on to tackle a more stoutly defended Royalist stronghold: Crowland Abbey.

The Siege of Crowland Abbey, April 1643

Crowland had been an important monastic site at the heart of the Fens during the medieval period; like Peterborough, it had been one of the wealthy 'Fen Five' abbeys founded in the 7th century. The dissolution of the monastery in 1539 hit the town hard, and by the 1600s water levels had risen, meaning farming had declined as land turned to marsh. The town itself was also stagnating, with a population of c.500 by the time of the Civil War. A visitor in 1625 described it thus: 'Crowland is seated in ... raw and muddy land, whither no people of fashion have recourse but to their ducking sport in moulting time (wildfowling in season) ... I could not find good quarter...'.¹⁸

Like many communities during the Civil War, loyalty to one side or the other was as much determined by local rivalries as national politics. In the case of Crowland, that appears to have been a rivalry with nearby Spalding, the latter being a centre for a substantial Puritan community. This was manifest with a rivalry between the Spalding preacher Mr Ram and the

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Crowland parson Mr Styles; on 31 January 1643 Mr Ram wrote to Mr Styles advising him that he was aware that the people of Crowland were making moves to fortify the area around the Abbey and appealing to him to abandon this move ‘...though but a stander by, perhaps sees more than you that play the game ... Do you think that to take up arms, to make bulwarks and fortifications ... are not very high contempt...?’¹⁹

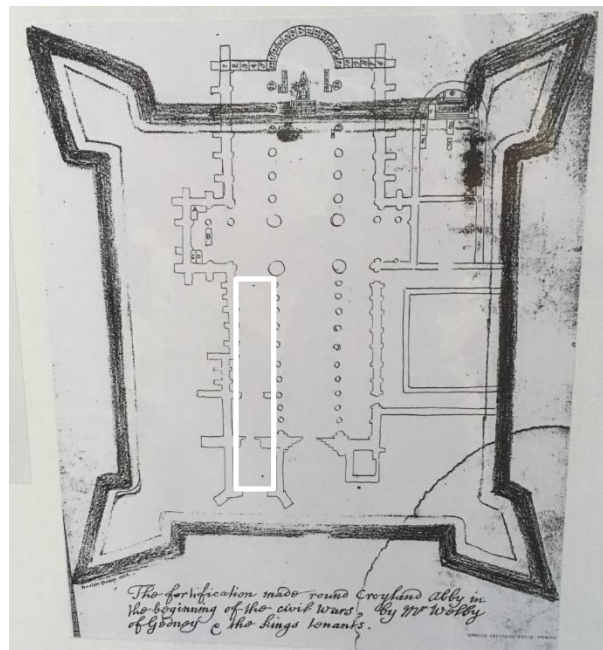


Plate 4 The 1643 fortifications around the ruins of Crowland Abbey as depicted in a 17th century sketch by Mr Welby of Gedney. The white rectangle shows the size of the surviving church today.
(Courtesy of Crowland Abbey)

The fortifications that were being constructed were very substantial, of the type of bastioned earthwork known as a ‘sconce’, similar to the Queen’s Sconce which still survives at Newark, but much larger in size. Judging by a surviving 17th century sketch by a Mr Welby of Gedney, a copy of which is displayed at the Abbey today, the earthworks encompassed an area corresponding roughly to the modern abbey precincts and churchyard, the north-western bastion occupying the site of the current Abbey car park.

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The fortifications completed, the Crowlanders embarked upon more offensive action, our key source for which is again the Spalding minister Mr Ram in his subsequent pamphlet *Divers Remarkable Passages of God's Good Providence*, who found himself at the heart of what took place: 'Upon Saturday 25 March ... early in the morning Captain Thomas Styles, Captain Cromwell, Mr Wil. Styles, minister of Croyland with about 80 or 90 men, came to the town of Spalding...'.²⁰ The Cromwell referred to appears to have been one of Oliver Cromwell's cousins, possibly Sir Oliver's son. Four hostages (Mr Ram, John Harington, Edward Horn and a 66-year-old gentleman by the name of William Slater) were taken and imprisoned in lodgings that were 'indifferent good' for the next three weeks. A further hostage, a Daniel Pegg from Deeping was added to the collection just before a siege was laid to the Abbey by the Lincolnshire Parliamentarians. They attacked the north side of the fortifications on the 13 April, during which the five hostages were made to stand in the open by the defenders as potential targets. The attack was driven off after three hours as, in Mr Ram's words, 'their works being very strong and well lined with musketeers backed with a store of hassock knives, long scythes and such like fennish weapons...'.²¹

It is likely after this failed assault that reinforcements were summoned, which arrived by 24 April, consisting of Cromwell's horse, Hobart's foot and Irby's dragoon regiments. An assault was again undertaken the following day when:

the town was assaulted on three sides by part of the regiments of those noble gentlemen Col. Sir Miles Hobart, Col. Sir Anthony Irby, and Col. Cromwell... Mr Ram was again called for and brought out of his lodgings and carried with all speed to the north bulwark, and there being very straitly pinioned, but was laid within the work upon the wet ground, where he lay for the space of five hours...²²

The assault failed, perhaps less due to the risk of hitting Mr Ram and more to do with the appalling weather and its effect on both the mud and gunpowder weapons.

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On Friday 28 April the defenders asked for a parley to discuss terms, but the Parliamentarians rejected those that were offered. The defenders seem to have realised that the jig was up, and began to melt away, and, as such, the remainder offered no resistance when an assault was staged later that morning. One of those who escaped was Crowland's rector Mr Styles, accused by his rival Ram of 'horrible villainy and more than Turkish cruelty...'.²³

Casualties overall were light – one man killed and another wounded amongst the defenders; five killed and eighteen wounded amongst the attackers 'whereof some are since dead, their wounds being incurable by reason of their poisoned bullets...'.²⁴ More likely these infected wounds were a feature of the muddy landscape and fenland conditions than any deliberate poisoning. Damage to the Abbey also seems to have been limited, not least as there was not the opportunity to bring heavy guns up given the ground conditions. Popular folklore that the Abbey's ruinous state is down to Cromwell is belied by early 18th century engravings of the building which show it far more intact than it is today, and that the majority of the assaults were against the north side of the fortifications, which is today dominated by the very much intact church building.

Cromwell's exact role at Crowland is unclear. It seems that he was present, judging by Mr Ram's account, but his importance at the siege may well have been inflated in the minds of many later writers due to his later significance. His cavalry regiment would not have been a major player by their very nature in siege operations, although it was not unusual for dismounted cavalymen, often better armoured than their infantry colleagues, to have been used in storming parties. His regiment may have been principally engaged in screening the siege to watch for any relief force. Nevertheless, Crowland would seem to have been Cromwell's first exposure, albeit at a distance, to siege operations.

Skirmish at Grantham, May 1643

Early May found the Midlands and Eastern Association forces moving to combine and put pressure on their most significant threat: the Royalist garrison at Newark. Accordingly, arrangements were made for Oliver

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Cromwell to rendezvous with forces commanded by Lord Grey of Groby at Stamford. Grey, however, fearing an attack on Leicester, failed to appear, causing Cromwell to write with some frustration on 3 May to the Lincoln Committee 'My Lord Grey hath now again failed me of the rendezvous at Stamford ... If we could unite those forces, both of yours and ours, I think it would do well...'.²⁵ Cromwell's suggestion was to then seek to retake Grantham, a suggestion that seems to have been accepted, as Cromwell joined his forces with those of Lord Willoughby and Captain John Hotham at Sleaford on 9 May.

The combined forces moved forward to Grantham by 11 May. Two days later, Royalist forces from Newark commanded by Charles Cavendish surprised the Parliamentary advance guard at Belton, near Grantham, in the evening, killing or making prisoner most of them. A number managed to escape and bring news of the Royalists' proximity to Cromwell and his allies, who brought out 12 troops of cavalry (about 900 men and some dragoons). They confronted the Royalist forces despite being outnumbered two to one, with some skirmishing between the dragoons for about half an hour. Then, as Cromwell described in a letter written that evening:

they not advancing towards us, we agreed to charge them ... we came on with our troops a pretty round trot; they standing firm to receive us: and our men charging fiercely upon them, by God's providence they were immediately routed and ran all away; and we had the execution of them two or three miles.²⁶

The engagement was significant as it was Cromwell's first experience of a field action; it was also, through his letter, the first time that his activities started to be reported in the Newsbooks. However, despite his hyperbolic introduction in his letter 'God hath given us, this evening, a glorious victory over our enemies...'.²⁷ it was only a minor skirmish. What is interesting to note is the terminology which Cromwell used to describe the action, being far less decisive and assertive than we are perhaps used to, summed up in the phrase 'we agreed to charge'. This was clearly a man still learning his trade and not having yet developed full confidence in his abilities.

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The Taking of Burghley House, July 1643

Cromwell spent the next two months engaged in operations outside of Lincolnshire. For much of that time he was at the rendezvous of forces at Nottingham with Lord Willoughby, Lord Grey of Groby, Sir John Gell and John Hotham. Disagreement and confrontation between the parties led to inertia, not least fanned by the activities of Hotham who by now was in the process of changing sides to the Royalists and was deliberately promoting discord in the manner of an agent provocateur. In June his role was uncovered, and the vacillating Grey was replaced by Sir John Meldrum, but already the possibility of combined action against Newark had been lost.²⁸

Cromwell's next engagement and foray into Lincolnshire came in July, as a thousand Royalist troops tried to retake Peterborough on the 18 July, it being reported that 'Lord Campden intends to set before Peterborough, and hath a far greater force come into Stamford fortifying there...'.²⁹ The force certainly caused alarm, a letter being sent by Henry Cromwell on behalf of his father to the forces at Whittlesey, instructing them to 'hold Peterborough at all costs, as if it is the Key to the Fen, which if lost much ill may ensure ... Hold the Town secure; none go in or out on pain of law of arms and war...'.³⁰

The hasty reinforcements seem to have done the trick; after a brisk skirmish at Millfield on the north side of Peterborough the Royalists were driven off by Col. Palgrave, who 'sallied out to them with some ordnance'.³¹ The Royalists withdrew towards Stamford, initially occupying the semi-ruinous Wothorpe Tower before realising it was indefensible and withdrawing instead a short distance to Burghley House.

Palgrave surrounded the house, with reinforcements arriving quickly to support him, and Cromwell arriving to take charge from Rockingham where he had been with Sir John Meldrum. By the end of the day Cromwell had 'a considerable strength, of 3 or 4,000 and they say 12 or 14 Pieces of Ordnance ... that night advance all to Burghley House, sit downe against it, shot with their ordnance 2 or 3 hours (beginning at 2 of clock this morning)...'.³²

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The Royalists were summoned to surrender the following morning but refused to ‘take nor give quarter’.³³ An initial assault was made on the house where ‘the fight was very hot and well performed on both sides’.³⁴ After 1 pm the Royalist garrison seem to have thought better of their resistance and asked for a parley, after which terms were concluded that they would surrender upon being guaranteed quarter. As a result, the Parliamentary forces had secured ‘two Colonels, six or seven Captains, three or 400 foote, 150 or 200 horse with and their arms...’.³⁵

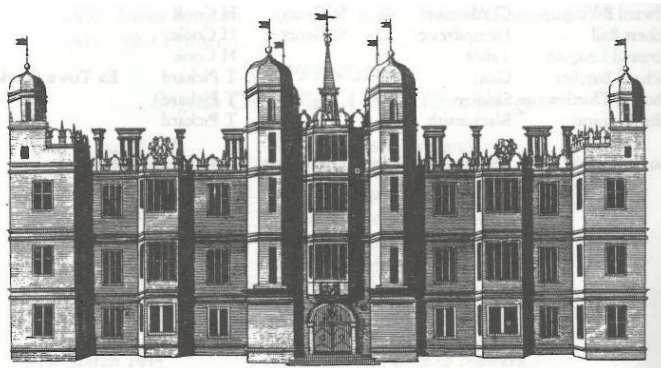


Plate 5 Burghley House as depicted in a 17th century engraving. (Author's Collection)

The taking of Burghley established what would become a typical Cromwellian approach to sieges: an impatience to get them over as quickly as possible, by whatever means – equally by offering terms, or by throwing bombardments and storming parties in to end any resistance. Cromwell was not to rest long though after his victory, thanks to events in the north of the county.

The Battle of Gainsborough, July 1643

Gainsborough was in a strategically important position as a major crossing point on the River Trent; it had been fortified by the townspeople in January 1643, but then in March was seized by Royalist forces, who garrisoned the town under command of the Earl of Kingston. On 20 July Lord Willoughby and the Lincolnshire Parliamentary forces launched a surprise attack on Gainsborough, seizing the town before even the alarm could be sounded and capturing Kingston before he was even fully dressed.

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But Willoughby's triumph was short-lived as by the end of the day Gainsborough was again under siege, as Royalist cavalry from Newark arrived under Charles Cavendish to try to retake the town. Willoughby ruefully commented that 'the same day I took it I was besieged before night, and there kept in some 10 days before I had any release...'.³⁶ An attempt to get their prisoner, Kingston, out by boat on the 25 July to the Parliamentary stronghold of Hull failed when he fell victim to 'friendly fire', being cut in half by a cannon ball when the boat was bombarded by Royalist artillery.

News of Willoughby's predicament had percolated south, and Cromwell, together with Sir John Meldrum, headed north to his aid. The two men and their cavalry rendezvoused at North Scarle, 10 miles south of Gainsborough, on 27 July. There they were also joined by a quantity of cavalry and dragoons from Lincoln. In total, the Parliamentary forces numbered perhaps 1,200 men.

The following day the Parliamentarians advanced on Gainsborough; about a mile and a half south of the town, around the village of Lea, they encountered a 'forlorn hope' of 100 Royalist horse. There was brisk fighting for a short time 'our dragooners laboured to beat them back, but not alighting off their horses, the enemy charged them and made them retire unto their main body...'.³⁷ After the Lincolnshire cavalry joined in to support the dragoons, the Royalists retired back to the main force to the east of Gainsborough, which was drawn up at the top of a steep hill known today as Foxby Hill.

The Royalist forces seem to have been drawn up with three regiments of horse abreast behind the brow of the hill; a fourth regiment under Cavendish was kept in reserve behind. The Parliamentarians deployed at the base of the hill, with the Lincolnshire troops on the left, Meldrum's Nottinghamshire horse in the centre, and the strongest element, Cromwell's cavalry on the right. The Parliamentary commanders seem to have concluded that they had no option but to attack, despite this being up 'a steep hill; we could not well get up but by some tracks...'.³⁸ The Lincolnshire forces led the way, but were engaged first by the Royalists as they reformed at the brow of the hill. The rest of the Parliamentary forces

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engaged as well and bitter fighting ensued, as Cromwell reported afterwards ‘I having the right wing; we came up horse to horse; where we disputed it with our swords and pistols a pretty time; all keeping close order so that none could break the other...’.³⁹

Eventually the Royalist line broke and fled the field, pursued by Meldrum’s men and some of Cromwell’s contingent some five or six miles. The Lincolnshire forces, presumably exhausted by having borne the brunt of the fighting thus far, remained where they were only to be swept away by a counterattack from Cavendish’s reserve regiment.

Cromwell, however, was still on the field, having kept back Major Whalley and three troops of his own regiment as a reserve. He described what happened next:

Immediately I fell on his rear with my three troops, which did so astonish him, that he gave over the chase ... But I pressing on forced them down a hill, having good execution of them, and below the hill drove the General with some of his soldiers into a quagmire; where my Captain-lieutenant slew him with a thrust ... The rest of the body was wholly routed...⁴⁰

The euphoria of victory was short-lived, as no sooner had the victorious Parliamentarians begun to reform than a mass of troops was sighted to the north: it was the Marquis of Newcastle’s Northern Royalist army. Willoughby’s forces, no longer to be relieved, were forced to retire into the town; the combined Parliamentary horse were obliged to fall back to Lincoln, with Cromwell commanding the rearguard with few losses.

Despite the pyrrhic nature of the victory at Gainsborough, it seems to have been hugely significant for Cromwell personally, as the very language in the letter he wrote to the Cambridge Committee on 31 July, describing the action, indicates. Gone was the more cautious and collegiate tone from his letter after the action at Grantham: ‘we’ had been increasingly replaced by ‘I’. There is a more confident tone, backed by a repeated conviction in the language of the letter that he was acting under God’s providence: ‘It hath pleased the Lord to give your servant and soldiers a notable victory...’.⁴¹ It

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seems very much that this was a 'lightbulb moment' for Cromwell, where some of the tactics for which he would become famous (maintaining a reserve, tight discipline over his men) came to fruition, accompanied with confidence in his abilities and a realisation that he was a successful soldier with a purpose.

Aftermath and Conclusions

The spring/summer 1643 campaign had proved to be less than successful strategically for the Parliamentary cause. After the retreat from Gainsborough, the town fell, as then did Lincoln to Newcastle's forces. By the end of July, the Royalists had expanded their territory and it would be May 1644 before Lincolnshire was regained and retained once and for all for Parliamentary forces.

One of the few people who came out well from the campaign was Oliver Cromwell, who, on arriving back in Cambridgeshire received news that he had been made Governor of Ely, and was awarded the special thanks of the Commons on 4 August for 'His faithful endeavours to God and the kingdom'.

The campaign in Lincolnshire had been Cromwell's first taste of command, and had helped develop his talents and what would become familiar aspects of his tactics: strict discipline, firm command and control; maintaining a reserve; ability to work with others (although impatient with those he perceived incompetent); impatience with siege warfare and, as his exploits received increasing attention, something of a talent for self-publicity. Above all – and I would argue specifically as a result of the action at Gainsborough – it gave him confidence in his own abilities and a conviction that it was God's will that he should become an instrument of the Parliamentary war effort. It was his making as a soldier.

- ¹ From an address given by John Morrill at the Cromwell Museum Launch at the Speaker's House, Houses of Parliament, 1 November 2018
- ² Woolrych, A, *Battles of the English Civil War* (Pimlico, 1991)
- ³ House of Commons Journals, ii, p.674

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- 4 Ibid, p.720
- 5 For a full discussion on this see Sadler, S, *From Civilian to Soldier: Recalling Cromwell in Cambridge, 1642* at http://www.olivercromwell.org/wordpress/?page_id=137
- 6 From the Autobiography of Sir John Bramston (Camden Society, 1845) quoted in Carlyle, T, *Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches Vol I* (Everyman, 1913), p.102
- 7 Robbins, S, *God’s General: Cromwell the Soldier* (Sutton, 2003); p.31 has a succinct account of the competing accounts of Cromwell’s role.
- 8 Vicars, J, ‘God in the Mount’, *England’s Parliamentary Chronicle*, etc, 1646
- 9 Quoted in Fraser, A, *Cromwell: Our Chief of Men* (Granada, 1973), p.101
- 10 Cromwell Museum’s collections dated 16 January 1643 (1642), L004
- 11 Fraser, *Cromwell: Our Chief of Men*, p.101
- 12 Ibid, p.99
- 13 Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches Vol 1*, p.115, letter 10 April 1643
- 14 Orme, S, ‘Bestowing a Visit upon that Little City; Cromwell and the taking of Peterborough, April 1643’, *Cromwelliana* 2018, p.85–100
- 15 Gunton, *History of the Church in Peterborough* (1686; reprinted, ed. Jack Higham, Clay Books, 1990), p.92
- 16 Ibid, p.337–8
- 17 I am grateful to Dr Paul Middleton for sharing his research with me on this survey, which is awaiting full publication.
- 18 Quoted in Chisholm, M, *In the Shadow of the Abbey: Crowland* (McLean, 2013) p.96
- 19 Mr Ram’s account, quoted in Kingston, A, *East Anglia and the Great Civil War* (Stock, 1897) p.102
- 20 *Divers Remarkable Passages of God’s Good Providence, 1643* quoted Ibid, p.103
- 21 Ibid, p.105
- 22 Ibid, p.107
- 23 Ibid, p.109
- 24 Ibid
- 25 Carlyle, *Letters and Speeches Vol 1*, p.119, letter 3 May 1643
- 26 Ibid, p 120, letter 13 May 1643
- 27 Ibid
- 28 For a succinct account of these events, see Marshall, A, *Oliver Cromwell: Soldier – the military life of a Revolutionary at War* (Brasseys, 2004) p.93–94
- 29 Quoted in Davies, C, *Stamford and the Civil War* (Watkins, 1992), p.32
- 30 Kingston, A, *East Anglia and the Great Civil War*, p.116, letter 18 July 1643
- 31 *True Relation of Colonell Cromwels Proceedings against the Cavaliers, July 24 1643*
- 32 Ibid p.2

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33 Ibid p.3

34 Ibid

35 Ibid p.4

36 West, J, Oliver Cromwell and the Battle of Gainsborough (Richard Kay, 1992),
p.10

37 Carlyle, Letters and Speeches Vol 1, p.125, letter 31 July 1643

38 Ibid

39 Ibid

40 Ibid, p.126

41 Ibid, p.125

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OLIVER CROMWELL IN THE NEWS: APRIL – MAY 1643

by Dr Clive Holmes

On the 27 May 1643 Benjamin Allen, a printer and publisher, of Pope's Head Alley, marketed a tract which has always been of the greatest interest to students of Cromwell's career, *A True Relation of a great Victory obtained by the parliament forces in Lincolnshire*.¹ Its first two pages print a note from Cromwell to 'Colonell Hobart' from 'Shasten' (Syston, three miles north of Grantham) describing the first cavalry engagement of his troops, where his men totally routed their opponents in a powerful charge that shattered the stationary force with whom they had initially exchanged volleys of pistol shots. Cromwell writes, at the end of a long day, with triumphant delight and a strong sense of God's providence in ensuring the victory: 'give glory to God, give glory, let all that know God, say, the Lord be prayed'. Newsmongers in London echoed his delight. Allen's text was downloaded into one of the weekly journals, and then was repeated five months later in a heavily edited form by the chronicler of Parliament's God-given triumphs, the aggressively Calvinist schoolmaster, John Vicars.² S.R. Gardiner, reading these accounts, waxed lyrical, 'The whole fortune of the Civil War was in that nameless skirmish. A body of Puritan horsemen had driven twice their number before them as chaff before the wind'.³

The remaining four pages of the tract have not elicited as much interest as its first two pages. What Allen had received was a bundle of notes sent by the Yarmouth minister, William Bridge, who had just joined the Norfolk infantry regiment commanded by Sir Miles Hobart and quartered at Sleaford. Bridge had earlier preached to the companies of volunteers raised in Norwich and Yarmouth, encouraging their martial commitment to the parliamentary cause: 'The volunteers of England under God are the Bullwarks of England, and England, under God, the Bullwark of the Protestant Religion'.⁴ No doubt many of his auditors were billeted there. Page 3 of the tract provides Bridge's explanatory note to his 'Friend in London'. That friend may well have been Allen himself. Bridge had already had three sermons, including those to the volunteers, printed by Allen earlier in 1643; Allen had also published his answer to the Royalist polemicist, Dr Henry Fearn.⁵ Allen had a sideline in news tracts as well as learned sermons and treatises, and he may have encouraged Bridge to send him any news from the front. We cannot determine how far Allen further

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edited the materials sent him by Bridge, but he understandably prioritised Cromwell's note.

Bridge's covering letter begins with a personal narrative. Shortly after he arrived in Sleaford, where Hobart's regiment was quartered, on 15 May 1643 it was reported that the Royalists from Newark were moving on the town. The Colonel and his officers 'went their rounds all the night' encouraging their men and awaiting an attack. It never came. The Royalists had turned down to Grantham, and Bridge appended a short synopsis of the ensuing fight, referring his reader to Cromwell's letter which he appends in confirmation of his account. Bridge echoed Cromwell's thanks for God's blessing (p. 4), but extended his focus to encompass the performance of the forces of the Eastern Association currently based outside its borders in Lincolnshire. Only two regiments were operational so far (more were expected soon) but both Cromwell's cavalry and Hobart's infantry had been crowned with success, Cromwell 'through God's blessing' at Belton, and for Hobart 'God hath done great things by Crowland being taken in'. And Bridge then provided copies of an exchange of letters concerning the surrender of Crowland (pp. 4–5). The first note, dated two o'clock this Friday morning (28 May), was from the minister, Robert Ram, and two gentlemen of Spalding who had been captured in a raid by the Crowland Royalists and then used as living shields when the parliamentarians began to attack the defensive works; they expressed their concern for the plight of the women and children of the beleaguered town and hoped that a cessation of arms could be arranged and then a surrender negotiated. Hobart responded angrily. He had not forgiven the Royalists for their seizure and harsh treatment of the Spalding men nor for their imprisonment of Captain Dodson's drummer, who had been arrested 'contrary to the Law of Arms' when he came to the town under a flag of truce to suggest a negotiation. He demanded that the Royalist commanders should initiate the treaty in proper form, not rely on the sympathy elicited by his prisoners to secure good terms.

Bridge concluded his letter (p.6) with a very positive analysis of the prospects of the parliamentary forces in Lincolnshire, and with praise for the strict discipline they displayed and for the support they had received, in terms of both supplies and 'the prayers of good people' from Boston.

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What is remarkable here is that no role is assigned to Cromwell in Bridge's account of the fall of Crowland. The town had been 'taken in by Colonel Hobart', and the fact that he was in chief command is clear in that it was he who responded to the garrison's initial moves to initiate a treaty. Yet since Firth's 1901 biography, Bridge's account has been neglected, and Cromwell's sole responsibility for securing Crowland has been asserted or implied by most commentators.⁶ Why this should be takes us again into the realm of the reporting of the news in London.

John Vicars, who provided a version of Cromwell's ecstatic letter concerning the Belton fight, also produced an account of the siege of Crowland.⁷ His account relied on two sources, which he revised considerably, both to denounce in general the role being played in the war by the anti-Puritan clergy, 'most loose and lazy hedge-priests....prating or babbling and rayling against god's choisest children, and the precious power of godlinesse', and to underline his sources' providentialist message, a theme which runs through Vicars's entire book. His major source was an account of the imprisonment endured by a number of parliamentary sympathisers from Spalding who had been seized during a raid on that town by the Crowland men on 25 March 1643.⁸ The group was headed by Robert Ram, the minister of Spalding; he had warned his Crowland neighbours that their attempts to fortify their town would only draw down parliamentary forces upon them, and his seizure was their response. The prisoners had to endure the taunts of their captors and the ultra Royalist and Laudian services and exhortations of the minister of the town, William Styles and his assistant, Thomas Jackson, previously the schoolmaster of Fleet, for three weeks until a parliamentary force arrived, at which point their imprisonment took a more dangerous turn. Some of the local forces and Captain William Dodson's company of dragoons, which had ridden across from Wisbech, demonstrated against the town, seeking to get the Crowlanders to surrender.⁹ It was then that the drummer (whose arrest so infuriated Hobart) was taken prisoner. As the attack developed the prisoners were used as a human shield to discourage the volleys of the assailants. The parliamentary force lacked the numbers to make a serious assault against a very strong position, and, perhaps discouraged by the bursting of a cannon, retired.¹⁰ Ten days later a Parliamentary force in greater numbers appeared before the town; again the local forces and Dodson's dragoons were

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involved but now reinforced by Hobart's infantry and Cromwell's cavalry regiments. Despite the bad weather on the 27 April the parliamentarians simultaneously attacked all three of the defensive walls, doing little physical damage but draining the morale of the besieged. Next day, while the Royalist leaders sought to negotiate favourable terms of surrender, the common soldiers melted away, taking refuge in the Great Porsand, a trackless swamp to the east of the town. On the 28 April the parliamentary forces entered the undefended town without a shot being fired and arrested those leaders of the insurrection who had not already fled.

Divers Remarkable Passages provided the basic story paraphrased by Vicars, but he also employed another, far more suspect, source in his narrative. This largely emerges in his marginal commentary. His first marginal annotation at the beginning of his narrative (p. 322) reads '*Crowland in Lincolnshire brought under obedience to the King and Parliament by Col. Cromwell*'. At the conclusion of the account he notes (p. 325) '*The taking of Crowland by Col. Cromwell*' writing in the text just before this point that the forces that appeared before the town were commanded by 'Collonel Sir Miles Hobart, Collonel Sir Anthony Irbie, and valiant and active Collonel Cromwell'; this phrase replaces Ram's listing 'those noble Gentlemen, Colonell Sir Miles Hobart, Colonel Sir Anthony Irby, and Colonell Cromwell'. This emphasis on the role of Cromwell is derived from a newsbook account of the capture. The editor of the weekly journal *Certaine Informations*, having noted the initial failure of the assault, continues 'yet since the Heroicke and valiant Collonell Cromwell passing that way from Peterburgh, hath regained the Towne of Crowland, driven the said Captaine Welby and his wicked Impes from thence, and reduced those parts to their former peace and tranquillity'.¹¹

The confident assertions of this source conceal a fundamental ignorance of the situation at Crowland. Captain Welby was certainly not involved. Philip Welby, a Spalding man, had sought to raise a Royalist force in the Fens early in the new year. The 'rabble' who followed him, few of them armed, were surprised by 'well affected' forces raised in Boston and cut to pieces.¹² Some of those who survived Welby's doomed attempt reappeared at Crowland, notably Thomas Jackson whose prayers were the focus of the derision of Robert Ram and the more general denunciation of Royalist clerics by Vicars. The London journalist, then, was poorly informed and his attribution of the

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success to 'Heroicke and valiant' Oliver Cromwell is worthless. And quite how his cavalry troopers could have been deployed in the attack on raised bulwarks from the narrow bank road that led from Peterborough into Crowland must be questionable. Hobart's infantry and Dodson's dragoons were of more obvious utility, and Dodson later claimed that his men had been the first to enter the town.

The experience of the lionisation of Cromwell by the London press left Dodson particularly embittered: early in 1645 he wrote of Crowland, 'that servisse, and all other done by me and others, must go in his name or ells alls was not well'.¹³ Historians must recognise that there is some truth in Dodson's complaint, and be prepared to interrogate the emphasis on the significance of Cromwell's victories by contemporary journalists

¹ Thomason Tracts in the British Library (hereafter TT), E.104[12].

² TT, E.249[10], *A perfect diurnal of the passages in Parliament*, no. 50, sig. [Ddd3v]; TT, E.73[4], [John Vicars], *God in the Mount, or a continuation of England's parliamentary chronicle* (1643), p. 336.

³ S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War* (4 vols., 1893) vol. 1, p.143. The skirmish is no longer nameless, the Lincolnshire historian A.C.E. Welby convincingly located the battle at Belton, see his 'Belton Fight', *Lincolnshire Notes and Queries*, 13 (1915), pp. 38–47.

⁴ TT, E.89[7], *A Sermon Preached unto the Voluntiers of the City of Norwich and also to the Voluntiers of Great Yarmouth* (this was approved for publication by John White, as chair of the Commons Committee for publication on 30 January 1642/3: Thomason acquired it on 11 February, p. 15).

⁵ Sermons: see note 4 above and TT, E.91[37 and 38], *Two Sermons*. (Thomason dates his acquisition of these to 6 March.) Treatise: TT, E.89[8], *The wounded conscience cured, the weak one strengthened, and the doubting satisfied* (White also licensed this for publication on 30 January: Thomason does not note the date of acquisition).

⁶ C.H. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England* (2nd edition, 1935), p. 90; J.C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell* (2001), p. 19; Peter Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford, 1996), p. 45; Peter Gaunt, 'Writings and Sources III: the siege of Crowland 1643', *Cromwelliana* (1999), pp. 24–31.

⁷ Vicars, *God on the Mount*, pp. 322–28.

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- ⁸ TT E.104[34], *Divers Remarkable Passages of Gods Good Providence* (London, June 5 1643): bibliographers attribute the tract to John Harrington, the first name listed on the final page; but it is obviously the work of the Spalding minister, Robert Ram. It is transcribed by Peter Gaunt in his ‘Writings and Sources III: the siege of Crowland 1643’, pp. 26–30.
- ⁹ For the mobilisation of Captain Dodson’s dragoon company at Wisbech, see my ‘The Identity of the Author of the “Statement by an unknown opponent of Cromwell”’, *English Historical Review*, CXXIX (2014), p. 1375.
- ¹⁰ The bursting of the cannon is reported by the writer of the newsbook *Speciall Passages and certain informations from severall places*, no. 37 (18–25 April 1643), p. 303, (TT, E.99[21]) whose sketch suggests he was better informed than his colleague journalists: he knew of the human shield tactic.
- ¹¹ TT, E.101[2], *Certain Informations from severall parts of the Kingdome*, no. 16 (1–8 May 1643) p. 123.
- ¹² TT, E.55[45], *Certain Informations from severall parts of the Kingdome*, no. 1 (16–23 January 1643), p. 3; TT, E.86[35], *Ibid.*, no.2 (23–30 January), p. 11.
- ¹³ J. Bruce and D. Masson (eds), *The Quarrel between the Earl of Manchester and Oliver Cromwell*, Camden Society, new series, xii (1875) p. 73. For the background to this, see my ‘Identity of the Author’, pp. 1371–82.

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‘THAT WHICH YOU HAVE BY FORCE, I COUNT AS NOTHING.’
WAS THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION ANYTHING MORE THAN
A MILITARY COUP D’ÉTAT?

by Christopher Conway

This was the Cromwell Association schools’ prize-winning essay 2019, funded by Frederic L. Borch III.

The English Revolution was the army’s revolution. It was only the army’s radicalisation that proved the trigger for the literal and metaphorical decapitation of the British political structure in 1649. This essay concedes that England’s Revolution was a coup: the military took power by force or threat of, and thereafter army officers held power which was based on army loyalty. However, England’s Revolution should not be judged as ‘simply’ a coup in the traditional mould, like recent ones in Sudan or Zimbabwe. The Revolution enjoyed propulsion from the lower ranks, which meant this coup was not limited to a self-interested junta as in many others but had widespread ideological support. More importantly, it did not stem from cynical motivations; army radicals felt they were safeguarding the public against Charles, who by his own royal policies had threatened the English people. A lofty aim by any standard – not one typical of our traditional *coup d’état*. Furthermore, a coup was not the preferred option. Rather, it was *intended* as a means to an end. That end was the spiritual and therefore political progress of England and its people – admittedly, towards a future dictated by army officers.

The men that drove the English Revolution were what one parliamentarian called ‘that violent and rash part of the army’.¹ They were a radical minority as compared to the >90% of soldiers who never took up arms for political ends.² Their impatience grew at Parliament’s reticence over decisive action against the King, who army radicals felt was personally responsible for the resumed bloodshed of 1648. By 1647, this faction was prepared to act alone to achieve their aims: in June, it did. Troopers led by Cornet Joyce seized Charles from Parliamentary custody to gain for them a bargaining chip in the game being played for England’s future. Army radicals found success when they resorted to arms or threat of their use: in January 1648, they pressured the Commons into denying further negotiation with the King. Furthermore, by November, the Council of Officers passed a death sentence upon Charles, a verdict then pressed on England’s civilian leadership. Officers were prominent in drafting the *Agreement of the People*,

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whose ‘popularity’ one colonel worried was falsely advertised: ‘I should be very unwilling we should force the people to an agreement’.³ Thus, even high-ranking officers were willing to admit publicly that the army’s influence was disproportionate to its popularity among the ‘political nation’. Army activity was responsible for the most ‘revolutionary’ act of the Revolution: the regicide. In December 1648, contradicting its January resolution, Parliament voted to continue negotiations with the King. The army reacted, and Colonel Pride’s regiment initiated a ‘purge’ of the Commons against men opposed to their outlook. Staffed solely by army sympathisers, in January 1649 the Commons charged the King with treason (for which the sentence was execution). Army men effectively took control of policy. He was beheaded soon after in what was arguably the civil war’s only ‘revolutionary’ moment. The army declared it had supported regicide to rid the country of the King’s ‘warmongering influence’. Similarly, it had purged Parliament to protect liberty ‘threatened’ by a Presbyterian faction which in May 1648 had passed blasphemy and heresy laws effectively forbidding dissent. However, it can seem that the army, by use of arms and political purges, was often guilty of the crimes it charged its opponents with.

Once the army assumed control, as with most coups, it directed grand policy through itself or proxies (sympathetic MPs). The Rump Parliament reflected this, a veritable echo chamber. With the Lords and Privy Council abolished, the army-dominated Commons and the Council of State held an unprecedented legislative monopoly. The role of the military in British politics became, as Professor Smith judges, inextricable almost to the point of symbiosis.⁴ Furthermore, an army general, Oliver Cromwell, became England’s political hegemon. His tenure is reminiscent of myriad military dictatorships, directed towards the interests of a minority thrust into power by coup. He dissolved the Rump [Parliament] in April 1653, evidently discarding the ‘free’ way he had so apparently favoured in war.⁵ Though he resurrected Parliament afterwards, this was likely to avoid accusations of dictatorship, whilst consolidating power for himself (like Caesar refusing the title ‘Rex’), as MPs were ‘nominated’ by army officers. Parliament was subjected to Cromwell and the army. In December 1653, Cromwell shattered any illusions by declaring himself Lord Protector, having the document ratifying this drafted by an army Major-General. His power base now rested on support from Puritan radicals and his troops, a franchise

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comprising *at most* 0.4% of the English population.⁶ Army men gained greater influence under the monarchic Protectorate: for example, between 1655–7, the infamous ‘Rule of the Major-Generals’ enforced, by military authorities (directly answerable to Cromwell), iconoclastic regulations upon a reluctant English populace. By threat and intelligent application of violence, the army came to dominate the public landscape of England. However, we cannot assume these results were those *intended* by the creators of the Revolution – when has a plan ever survived first contact with the enemy?

One thing distancing the English Revolution from our traditional coup was the driving force given to it by men of lower social status. Not limited to a cabal of senior officers, it comprised both ordinary soldiers and junior officers: many active revolutionaries had not previously been part of the ‘political nation’, and had few, if any, vested interests in the system they were proposing to implement – save ideological ones. Army radicals who participated in the mutinies of 1647 and the Putney Debates that shook army leaders into action contained a substantial proportion of men of a ‘lower social class’. Cornet Joyce, who seized the King in 1647, held the army’s lowest commissioned rank. Among the colonels, Ewer had been a manservant, Harrison was a butcher’s son, Jones was born into [a family whose annual income was] £8-10 annually [around the lowest income of an adult male who had regular employment at this time]. Colonel Pride, whose actions paved the way for regicide and thus the Commonwealth, was previously a brewer’s employee.⁷ We can compare it to Japanese Nationalist coups of the 1930s: these were often initiated by junior officers down to the rank of Lieutenant, angered by the inertia of their superiors, a phenomenon called *gekokuujō* in Japanese. We can see that the English Revolution differed from most coups in that it enjoyed a relatively diverse social base. Crucially, it consisted of men who did not have vested interests in the system Revolutionaries were supposing to implement as a replacement. It is important to differentiate this from many other coups because the men who played the main role in this were ideologically, rather than materially, invested. Their contribution meant that, as one royalist remembers, Cromwell often ‘carried his friends with him into that way which the army did choose’.⁸

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The army revolutionaries believed that *salus populi suprema lex* – public safety is the highest law. We can distance the army revolutionaries from the likes of Spanish Nationalists, for example, who moved against the Republican government out of personal disdain for its politics. Though this was by no means absent among radicals, they were acting in what they deemed was the public interest, ie the correction of ecclesiastical and political alterations made under Charles I. Addressing questions of worship and thus pursuit of Heaven was the chief concern of the revolutionaries, their politics was somewhat directed towards achieving eternal life with God (the means of achieving this were subjective). They saw Reformation as the means, and Catholicism as a threat to their aim. The Reformation would bring Heaven closer to Earth, and though they felt that Charles and Archbishop Laud stood in the way of this, army radicals did not initially see regicide as the answer. Revolution was also a defence against worldly tyranny. One foretaste of this was Laud’s intrusive and insensitive church reforms, interestingly labelled by one peer ‘an English, though not a Roman, popery’.⁹ As well as protecting English godliness, radicals saw themselves as defending earthly wellbeing against arbitrary rule. This was a rule which had used Catholic troops to suppress good Protestants in Scotland (1639–40), as well as enforcing unpopular doctrine upon the Scottish Kirk (eg usage of the Book of Common Prayer) and levying taxes such as Ship Money (1628–40) to finance such affairs. In order to achieve such heavenly aims, political changes needed to be made on the ground reflecting them. The very act of pursuing these goals was evidence of the radicals’ own predetermined ‘godliness’, which Calvinist theology ordained would convey them into Heaven. The intention here was not cynical subjection of the English people to the army, but to *subdue the King to them* for the spiritual and therefore political good of England. In this, the radicals deserve our empathy, if not our sympathy.

To rid England of these threats, it gradually became necessary to push Charles aside. However, the army originally intended to remove the King’s executive powers rather than his head. This is different from other coups, such as Sulla’s (82 BC): his end goal was power, and any compromise was sacrificed. However, Manning maintains that even after Pride’s Purge, Charles’s execution was not a foregone conclusion.¹⁰ Even Oliver Cromwell, the army man who was to become leader of the English Republic, wrote

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that regicide was ‘not only a most wicked’, but ‘impossible design’.¹¹ The Council of Officers, months before clamouring for regicide, voiced their desire that ‘the hearts of the king and people may be knit together’¹² – though this could be interpreted as a public relations manoeuvre designed to portray its authors as peacemakers. However, the fact that the army failed to act in a ‘revolutionary’ way not only during the First Civil War, but months into the Second, is evidence in itself. We can see that state control was not the endgame, and only became necessary when army radicals felt it was clear that national progress could not be assured with the King alive. Cromwell and the radicals came to believe, possibly correctly, that while Charles lived, England lay in a ‘bleeding, nay, almost dying condition’.¹³ This is where the English Revolution differs from other coups. The King’s enlistment of the Scots in 1648 to his cause resumed civil war, which the army knew would bring a new bout of bloodshed. Frustration at this birthed sentiments that facilitated the Revolution and regicide. Before this, however, the army *wanted* an accommodation to be possible. Charles’ actions, it appears, convinced radicals that the well-being of England could not be achieved without the elimination of Charles. Professor Kishlansky puts it best: ‘the war created radicalism; radicalism did not create the war’.¹⁴

To conclude, the English Revolution was essentially a coup. Military intervention initiated first political purge and then regicide. England was ruled by puppet parliaments subject to military dictatorship. One radical speaker was not entirely wrong when he declared ‘King, Monarchy and Parliament fell into the hands, and upon the swords of the Army’.¹⁵ However, we must understand the Revolution as a coup made up of conscientious, rather than power-hungry or bloodthirsty, radicals. The Revolution included an unusual contribution from men of lower social status, evidence of no small degree of popularity. It was spawned by long-term conscientious objections to royal behaviour shared by many across England. The army, rather than acting (primarily) in cynical self-interest, was greatly concerned with the *salus populi*. Though at its inception the Revolution was created to bring salvation, both religious and political, to the English people, it ultimately failed to achieve the aims that underpinned it (covered paragraph 2) – like Bolshevik ones centuries later, the radicals’ ideas proved incompatible with reality. Though we may display empathy towards army radicals and their ambitions, that does require sympathy with

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their movement, which was still a coup. The English Revolution demonstrates the near-impossibility of translating radical ideas (however lofty) into the positive, meaningful change they pursue. By 1660, English revolutionaries had failed in their calling to ‘remove mountains, [and do] such things as were never yet done by men on earth’.¹⁶

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- ² Gentles, pp. 345–6
- ³ Ibid, p. 288
- ⁴ Smith, p. 171
- ⁵ T. Sprat, *The History of the Royal Society of London* (1667), p. 73
- ⁶ (1650) Statistics from Gentles, p. 10 and Wrigley & Schofield, ‘The Population History of England, 1541–1871. A reconstruction’. Harvard University Press (Ann Arbor, 1981), pp. 208–9, table 7.8
- ⁷ Hill, GE, p. 65
- ⁸ Sir John Berkeley, in Hill, GE, p. 69; a statement tinged by natural Royalist hostility to Cromwell.
- ⁹ Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, *Speech Made to the House of Commons concerning episcopacy* (1641), p. 4
- ¹⁰ Manning, p. 26
- ¹¹ Cromwell in a letter to a royal adviser (July 1647) in Hill, GE, pp. 70–1
- ¹² *The Representation and Consultations of the Generall Council of the Armie at St. Albans*, 14 Nov 1648, Thomason Tracts, BL E472/3, p. 3
- ¹³ Cromwell to Parliament (December 1644) in Hill, GE, p. 54
- ¹⁴ Kishlansky, p. 161
- ¹⁵ Joseph Salmon, ‘A Rout, A Rout’ (1649) in N. Smith (ed.), *A Collection of Ranter Writings from the Seventeenth Century*. Junction Books (London, 1983) p. 190
- ¹⁶ Cornet Joyce during the Whitehall debates (January 1648) in Gentles, p. 290

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CROMWELLIAN BRITAIN XXIX
THAME, OXFORDSHIRE

by Vanessa Moir

Thame is an attractive small town in south-east Oxfordshire, around fourteen miles from Oxford, which today is probably best known as a filming location for the TV detective show *Midsomer Murders*. Although Thame started as a Saxon settlement around the church, it is mostly a purpose-built medieval town, ordered in the thirteenth century by the Bishop of Lincoln, and comprising a cigar-shaped high street and market place fronted by buildings backed by long and thin plots of land.¹ These were known as burgage plots, rented to traders for money rents rather than labour.² In the early modern period this purpose-designed area was known as New Thame, while the original area around the church was called Old Thame, and a smaller area to the west of the church, Priestend.³ Thame's markets were confirmed in 1227, and by the seventeenth century were well known for specialising in cattle and often frequented by London butchers, while surplus produce from Thame was sold in London and other urban areas.⁴

The presence of these markets meant that Thame in the seventeenth century was relatively prosperous, with a population of 800 people in around 1600 and 1,100 people in around 1700.⁵ The occupational and economic structure of Thame saw small- and large-scale farming alongside activities such as shopkeeping, innkeeping and other manufacturing trades, with around half of the population in the 1640s working in agriculture, around a third in occupations such as baker, butcher or tanner, and around 10 to 20 per cent each as skilled or semi-skilled tradesmen, or in titled or professional occupations.⁶ Of course many of the inhabitants would not have worked exclusively in agriculture or as tradesmen, but combined both. Probate records show that butchers Richards Cotton and Striblehill, and Nicholas Powell had 40 per cent of their wealth in livestock and agriculture, that John Louch was both a victualler and a yeoman farmer, and that Henry Ayres the miller had 30 per cent of his wealth in farming grain and livestock.⁷ The first half of the seventeenth century saw growing prosperity for those working in agriculture due to high grain and wheat prices, as rising demand from a growing population combined with bad harvests in the 1590s and 1630s.⁸ This allowed Thame's elite to make improvements to their houses, such as

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adding chimneys, staircases and upper floors, and granted them a general rise in living standards.⁹

Thame was an interconnected town, with several notable families. Surnames which occur more than 200 times in a database of seventeenth century records created by the local history society include Cotton, Messenger and variations on Cooke, Eustace, Clarke, Burten, Calcott, Tomlinson and Stribblehill.¹⁰ The wonderfully named Stribblehills were enmeshed in the life of the town: several generations were churchwardens; wills they left range from Richard Stribblehill the (rich) butcher in 1607 to Thomas Stribblehill the gentleman in 1679; Thomas and John Stribblehill paid tax on land in Priestend and Old Thame in the middle of the century; and the school accounts show a Thomas Stribblehill being paid for building materials.¹¹ Nearby great estates were Rycote, where Charles I stayed when Parliament was sitting in Oxford in 1625, and Thame Park, where former monastic buildings had been converted into a big house.¹² The poor are less evident in the records, particularly as the poor rate book only survives from 1609, but this shows the number receiving poor relief varying from 28 to 33, receiving on average 3s. 5d. a week.¹³ Another notable feature of Thame was the grammar school, which had been founded in the sixteenth century by Lord Williams, a local magnate and benefactor. It included among its pupils famous men of the period, such as the Parliamentarian leader John Hampden; William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons; two regicides; at least two bishops; one of the founders of the Royal Society; and a Lord Chief Justice.¹⁴

When civil war broke out in 1642, how it would affect Thame was determined by two things. The first was its position between areas controlled by either side, with little real change for the entirety of the First Civil War between 1642 and 1646. Boarstall, Oxford and Wallingford remained under Royalist control until their surrender in 1646, while Aylesbury was held by Parliament throughout. The second element was Thame's position as a major junction of the local road network in the late medieval and early modern period.¹⁵ It sat beside a crossing of the river Thame on the northern edge of town, while a crossing of a smaller river, the Cuttlebrook, is also on the western edge of town. These bridges meant that roads between Aylesbury, Oxford and Wallingford passed through it, with

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further passage to Wycombe and London.¹⁶ It is interesting that neither side tried to secure these bridges, as happened elsewhere, but Thame was presumably seen as too close to the opposing side to hold on to for long.¹⁷ It would suffer 'great disturbances ... by the soldiers of both parties, sometimes by the parliament soldiers of Aylesbury, sometimes by the king's from Borstall house, and sometimes from the king's at Oxon and Wallingford Castle', but neither side sought permanent control of it and it would never be occupied for more than a few weeks by either.¹⁸

There is some evidence that the local population was inclined to be Parliamentary supporters, rather than Royalist supporters. In 1628 inhabitants of the town refused to billet soldiers, and local nobles were opposed to Ship Money, while the bailiff of Thame Hundred refused to collect it.¹⁹ This predilection was formed of religious tendencies, personal loyalties and economic needs. Thomas Henant, the vicar leading up to and during the civil war, was a Puritan who probably stopped the long-standing communal fund-raising festival of church-ales because of fears it would encourage idleness and drinking.²⁰ His presence could be a consequence or causation of the local population holding Puritan sympathies. Henant and his wife were 'alwaies more kind to the parl soldiers or rebells than to the cavaliers', possibly because of shared religious beliefs.²¹

Similarly, the number of Parliamentary leaders who attended the grammar school meant that ties of personal loyalty developed. The school master William Burt was 'acquainted with and obliged to ... puritanical and factious families in the said countie [Buckinghamshire], who, while yong, had been mostly bred in the said school of Thame', including John Hampden.²² The leading noble of the immediate area, Thomas, Viscount Wenman, of Thame Park and a local MP, was a moderate Parliamentary supporter, whose sister Jane was married to the Parliamentary commander Arthur Goodwin.²³ In 1644 he would be appointed as one of the Parliamentary Commissioners to carry peace proposals to the King in Oxford.²⁴ Economically, Thame merchants and farmers had established links with butchers and long-standing markets for their goods and cattle in London, a Parliamentary stronghold. Reports that Thame cattle were still being sold in London in the summer of 1643 suggest that they were keen not to lose the economic benefits of this.²⁵ However, local sentiment was not all

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Parliament's way. David Thomas, an usher or junior teacher was 'a good loyalist', while it was claimed of Thomas Fletcher 'a hemp dresser in Tame whoe useth to carry hempe to the Kings army to make match' that 'if any man speake of the Parlyments side hee brings warrants from them along with him and makes him fly the towne'.²⁶

Thame probably had an early encounter with the war when a 'foot regiment of blewe coate soldiers, in number about 450' from London marched via Thame or Aylesbury on their way to join the brief Parliamentary occupation of Oxford in late September 1642.²⁷ However, its first meaningful encounter came on 5 December 1642, when Royalist forces comprising of 'a great multitude of soldiers ... both horse and foote and dragoners' led by Prince Rupert arrived to spend the night in the town, before an attempted attack on Parliamentary Aylesbury, around ten miles away, the following day.²⁸ Rupert would pass through Thame on the way to Aylesbury again in future, but from then on the military impact of the conflict upon Thame can be divided into two sections: 1643, a year of frequent raids and pillage by Royalist forces and a Parliamentary occupation of around four weeks; and the following years, which were much quieter.²⁹ Possibly because of its Parliamentary sympathies, Thame seems to have suffered most when the Royalists were at their height and done better when their fortunes dipped.

The focus of the Royalist forces on the town for the next year would come from its possible use by the Parliamentarians as a springboard for an attack on Oxford. This began on 2 February 1643, when reports reached Oxford that 'some of the parliament forces [had been] seene in & about Tame' under the command of Philip Skippon 'to prepare a waye to invade Oxford'.³⁰ This attack never materialised but on 12 March the Parliamentary general the Earl of Essex ordered Goodwin to take forces from Aylesbury to Thame and Chinnor in an attempt to take advantage of Prince Rupert's absence in Bristol. These were swiftly withdrawn after Essex learnt of Prince Rupert's return to Oxford, but Rupert and his brother Maurice briefly lead forces out of Oxford, Wheatley and Abingdon to Thame to be sure.³¹ The Royalists were further spooked when Parliamentary forces spent the night in Thame on 26 March, again briefly advancing on the town.³² Their fears came to fruition when the Earl of

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Essex moved his forces from the recently captured Reading, 'stealinge alonge, amonge & under the wooddes' via the villages of Nettlebed and Stokenchurch, to Thame, 'where & about the neere adjacent places they quartered', between 8–10 June 1643.³³ Parliamentary forces would remain quartered in Thame for nearly a month.³⁴ Exactly how many soldiers would have been in Thame and how many in the surrounding villages is not entirely clear, with reports before they arrived describing an army of between 15,000 and 30,000, while Essex was able to send a force of 2,500 to raid Islip.³⁵ The army was somewhat ragged, with John Hampden writing to appeal for men and money from Parliamentary supporting areas.³⁶

This occupation would have a significant impact on the town. First of all, households would have been expected to provide 'free quarter' or housing, material support and food to soldiers and their horses, in return for a promissory note or certificate, effectively an IOU. These were supposed to be redeemed once money became available, but in practice many never were.³⁷ Having to give such support with no immediate financial return was a big burden, with poorer citizens expected to provide quarter as well as wealthier ones.³⁸ The surviving records from Thame appear to make no mention of such financial outputs, but the parish accounts from neighbouring Haddenham give some idea of them. These include a debit of 100 pounds which was 'Eaten up in grasse when his Exⁿ the Earl of Exe laid in Thame by y^e state horsses'.³⁹ They also give the cost of supporting a trooper and his horse for a day and night as 1 shilling and 6 pence, so, for example, to provide 'free quarter in June & Julie 1643 [for] Cap^t Buller's troope [of] neare 80 men & 80 horses [for] 24 daies & 24 nights' cost 144 pounds.⁴⁰ The army had attempted to collect provisions for their stay, with '20 loads of hay sent into the towne by [Earl of Essex] to quarter horses there', but not all of it arrived as Royalist soldiers 'tooke 2 carts laden with provision coming to [Parliamentarian] army, and carryed them backe to Oxford'.⁴¹ On top of providing such material support, Essex also sent out warrants asking for monetary loans; twelve men in Haddenham are recorded as providing an average of around four to five pounds each.⁴² On the other hand, the armies would have provided a new market for selling supplies, and the combination of increased demand and decreased supply meant that the price of wheat increased from 48s. a quarter in 1641 to 59s. 10d. in 1643.⁴³

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These price rises would have been good for the tradesmen and merchants selling, but would have made life difficult for the poor.

Secondly, the presence of the Parliamentarians meant the near constant threat of attack from Royalist forces. On 12 June Prince Rupert 'ledd out a partee to quarter twixt Tame and Oxford' although he returned 'back that night to Oxford', while a Parliamentary spy report the following day stated that '3 troopes of [Royalist] horse ... came to our centry neere Shabbington [two miles from Thame] and kild one man, and tooke 3 prisoners'.⁴⁴ There were further descriptions of Royalist horse close to Thame on 14, 15 and 16 June, most notably a report on the 15th that 'there are about 200 [Royalist] forces within 3 miles of Tame scouting upp and downe the contry'.⁴⁵ These threats intensified after the Parliamentary defeat at the Battle of Chalgrove on the 18th, with a particularly frightening one on 20 June stating that 'if his Excellencie did not come on and leave Tame they would fire the towne about his eares'.⁴⁶ Any movement of the Royalist forces was seen as a possible attack, with troops leaving Woodstock on 30 June seen as going 'eyther to meete the Queene ore else to fall upon his Excellencies forces at Tame'.⁴⁷

There was also the behaviour of the troops themselves to contend with. They did not appeal themselves to the people of Thame by destroying the town maypole and causing damage in the church by defacing tombs and pulling down the organ, followed by (according to one possibly apocryphal story recorded in the early eighteenth century) 'going tooting about the town with the pipes'.⁴⁸ Green coat foot soldiers from Hampden's regiment seem to have been those responsible, and Essex placed a guard from his regiment in the church to try and ward off further damage.⁴⁹ Later, Parliament soldiers based in Thame went 'proggng for venison' in Thame Park to make pasties, despite its owner's rebel sympathies and this army may have does this as well.⁵⁰ Another story concerns a man called Beale from a village around four miles from Thame, who had two horses stolen by Essex's forces. When he and his brother went to Thame to try and get them back, both they and the horses they were riding were imprisoned and £20 demanded as the price of freedom. Worried that they would lose further horses, their mother walked from home with the money, whereupon the

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men were released, but only the two 'worse' horses were returned to them. Ironically enough, Beale was a Parliamentary supporter!⁵¹

The last mention of Parliamentary troops in Thame comes on 5 July, with horse from Wallingford said to be about to take 'such soldiers as are there left behind', implying that most had left.⁵² The aftermath of the occupation would be nearly as bad as the occupation itself. The Royalists sought to retake some measure of control short of full occupation, with troops reported to be in Thame pillaging left-behind armaments, horses, cattle for the markets and other supplies four times during the rest of July and August.⁵³ They also committed at least one reprisal against a known Parliament supporter when on 8 August they 'pillaged onely one mans howse because when some of the prisoners which were taken on the Kings side at [Chalgrove] were brought thither [to Thame] hee wisht them all hangd and Prince Robert alsoe'.⁵⁴ Parliamentary forces were in the vicinity of Thame on 29 August, so the control of the area was not absolute.⁵⁵ On 29 September Royalist forces passed through the town, followed within an hour by opposing troops, who stayed a further hour before leaving and taking two prisoners with them.⁵⁶

However, the biggest impact of the occupation would take another form, which can be seen in the parish burial records. Although prisoners and probably those who were wounded were brought back to Thame after Chalgrove, there is no evidence of the dead from the battle being buried there, with only two burials of women made on 18 June, and a further two named men (so likely to be local) buried on 22 June.⁵⁷ Despite not taking battle dead, the number of burials rose from seven each month in April, May and June to sixty-eight in July, sixty-one in August and seventeen in September, before dropping back to nine and six in October and November.⁵⁸ Over ten weeks, 141 people, or around one in nine of the population died.⁵⁹ These deaths were probably caused by typhus, brought by the Parliamentary army when it moved from Reading, which had seen similar high mortality rates in the spring of 1643 during the siege and subsequent capture of the town.⁶⁰ Of the 141 deaths, 75 were males, 66 females; matching surnames shows 23 family groupings of two or more deaths; and 69 adults can be clearly identified as permanent residents of the town.⁶¹ Thirteen babies aged less than 2 months old also died during this

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period. As typhus tends to kill adults rather than children, this was probably due to dysentery rather than typhus, especially given that the Thame water supply tended to be bad, 'its notoriously filthy gutters allied to the high water table'.⁶² The crisis did not discriminate within society, with 17 leaving probate documents implying a degree of wealth, nine of the women listed as 'Goodwife' suggesting that they were wives of yeomen or householders, and a member of the local noble Petty family among the dead.⁶³ Another indication of the impact of these events on the life of the town is seen in the fact that there are no marriage ceremonies recorded as being held in June, July and September, and only one held in August, a distinct difference from other years.⁶⁴

The final episode of the dramatic year of 1643 came between 20 November and 18 December, when a brief fight between parties of horse from both sides on the 22nd seems to have prompted forces from the Royalist Queen's regiment to spend around a month pillaging and terrorising the town. On the 24th they 'drove away to Oxford all the bease that were in the markt'; on the 26th they 'pilledged Tame and Hadnam and carried away all the sufficientest men in the townes to Wallingford Castle'; on 3 December 'they tooke a way some horse and some men and a greate parte of their goods', and by 19 December it was said 'That 3 or 4 troopes of horse goe dayly from Oxford to Tame, where they continue an hower or twoe drinking' before returning to their quarters.⁶⁵

Thankfully for Thame, the following years were notably quieter. While both sides spent occasional, intermittent periods of time in the town, there was not the focus of 1643. The only mention of forces in Thame in 1644 comes around 20–24 January 1644 when cavalry were at Thame under the command of Prince Rupert, preparing for a failed attack on Aylesbury, while no evidence can be found that a suggestion in December that Parliamentary soldiers be stationed there long term came to fruition.⁶⁶ This quieter period, and also the lack of another disease outbreak prompted the mother of the thirteen-year-old Anthony Wood and his brother Christopher to send them from Oxford to live in Thame 'out of harme's way' in May 1644, where they remained for two years, lodging in the vicarage, and attending the grammar school.⁶⁷ This period of less intense activity meant that life could continue slightly more as normal, for good and

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bad. The market continued to function, described by a Parliamentary commander in late 1644 as ‘our best market for cattle’.⁶⁸ The town was lucky not to lose its clergyman, meaning that despite the damage to the church, religious life could continue – important for a local community.⁶⁹ On 24 January 1644, around the same time that Rupert was in Thame, the eldest son of the schoolmaster William Burt and his wife Elizabeth, also called William, was buried aged nearly five and a half-years-old; followed a month later by his sister Elizabethana a few days past her fourth birthday. Another Elizabeth would be baptised for the couple on 19 September 1644, nearly nine months after her brother’s death.⁷⁰

Some military activity in the area resumed in 1645. Troopers from the Royalist garrison at Boarstall house would use the vicarage, which was the house closest to the bridge over the river Thame, as a base ‘while some of their partie were upon London road ... to lay in wait for provision or wine that came from London towards Aylesbury’. Some of them would chat with the schoolboys living in the house, including Anthony Wood, who found some ‘having been, or lived in Oxon, knew the relations’ of him, meaning that they would ‘shew kindness’ to Anthony and his brother.⁷¹ Hopefully this local connection meant that this kindness was shown to the rest of the town’s population as well!

Other impacts of the conflict also made themselves felt. In February 1643 Parliament had created a new weekly assessment tax, under which each county paid a fixed amount.⁷² Viscount Wenman served as one of the Assessment Commissioners, in charge of helping to administrate this in 1644, suggesting that Thame’s payment may have been enforced.⁷³ Parliament had also created an excise tax in July 1643, imposed on commodities such as meat, salt and beer, among other things, and collected by professional tax collectors.⁷⁴ A ‘committee for the excise’, lead by ‘goodman Heywood and goodman Hen the butcher his servant’ spent at least two days in Thame in April 1645, presumably to collect this tax.⁷⁵ Given that Thame market was focussed on meat, it seems unlikely that this tax was popular, and the locals may have been happy when Royalist troops took advantage of the stationary opposition to mount an attack.⁷⁶

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Besides this attack, at least two others of note took place in 1645. On Monday 27 January 1645, Colonel Thomas Blagge, the governor of the Royalist stronghold of Wallingford Castle, was 'roving about the country very early with a troop of stout horsmen', when he ran into a Parliamentary force lead by Colonel Crafford, governor of Aylesbury, at Long Crendon, around a mile from Thame. Despite being twice outnumbered, the Royalist forces initially prevailed, before being overwhelmed and forced to flee back to Wallingford.⁷⁷ Anthony Wood and the other inhabitants of the vicarage were just sitting down to dinner when they were startled by a loud noise. Rushing outside, they saw, led by Blagge with 'a bloody face', 'a great number of horsemen posting towards Thame over Crendon bridge', and then beyond, past their house. The soldiers 'did not all ride in order, but each made shift to be foremost; and one of them riding upon a shelving ground' caused his horse to slip and fall onto one side, whereupon it 'threw the rider (a lusty man)' onto the ground. Hot on the Royalist's heels was Colonel Crafford, 'well hors'd and at a pretty distance before his men in pursuit'. He levelled his pistol at the fallen man 'but the trooper crying "quarter", the rebels came up, rifled him, and took him and his horse away with them. Crafford rode on without touching him ... discharging his pistol at some of the fag-end of Blagg's horse' as they raced through the western end of Thame and out into the countryside. Crafford's men did not follow them further, but 'went into the towne, and refreshed themselves', before returning to Aylesbury.⁷⁸

After this, in September 1645, came a fight in the centre of Thame itself. At the beginning of that month 'a great partie of horse' from the Parliamentarians had been 'laying couchant for a considerable time in Thame'. The Royalist governor of Oxford, William Legge, found out about them and sent 400 horse and 60 musketeers to 'beat up' them. The Royalist forces arrived 'about break of day on Sunday morning Sept. 7 before any of the rebels were stirring'. Splitting into two forces, they 'found the towne very strongly barricaded at every avenue' with carts, but a brief initial charge allowed several to dismount and remove them. The Royalist vanguard then 'charged the rebels up thro the street, doing execution al the way to the market-place'. The Parliamentary troops were woken by the alarm, and 'many of them came out of their beds into the market place without their doublets', with some fighting in their shirts. They managed to gather 200

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horse to form a defence, but the Royalist vanguard, protected by the rear ‘gave the rebels such a charge as made them fly out of the towne’. Some ‘fled into the church’ with their horses ‘and going to the top of the tower’ watched ‘to see the cavaliers run into the houses where they quarter’d, to fetch away their goods’, while others ‘dropt plentifully in the street’. The Royalists returned to Oxford with multiple spoils, including twenty-seven officers, thirteen sergeants and an unknown number of ordinary soldiers as prisoners, ‘a great deal of money’, ‘many armes ... and between two and three hundred good horse’ and three regimental colours.⁷⁹ This episode demonstrates the difficulty of defending Thame unless large numbers of forces were committed.

The war ended for Thame on the evening of 24 June 1646, when ‘many of the king’s foot-partie that belonged to the [surrendered Oxford] garrison came into Thame, and layd downe their armes there, being then a wet season’. The following day Anthony Wood went to see them, and recognising some of them, ‘talked with them about Oxford and his relations and acquaintance there’, which earned him a telling-off from his Parliament-supporting host.⁸⁰ Thame does not seem to have played any role in the later fighting in the 1640s, and the main concern now was repairing the material damage. In 1645 Viscount Wenmen had been awarded four pounds a week by the Parliament as recompense for the damage on his Oxford properties inflicted by the Royalist forces.⁸¹ After 1646, church accounts show money paid for cleaning, painting and repairing windows, while schoolmaster Burt tried to claim money for loss of stolen goods, a reduced number of pupils at the school and the quartering of soldiers.⁸² Psychological damage to the people of Thame is less well recorded, but the behaviour of Anthony Wood gives us an insight into it. He had to get to and be at school first in the mornings, and ‘if any way hindred, he would be apt to cry and make a noise to the disturbance of the family’. He was also ‘much retired, walked mostly alone’ and ‘was given much ... to melancholy, which sometimes made his night’s rest so much disturb’d, that he would walk in his sleep ... and disturb and fright people of the house ... two or 3 houres after he had taken up his rest’.⁸³ Seventeenth-century understanding of behaviour would not have been the same as today, and Wood’s motivations for recording this in a memoir published later in his life are unclear. However, this behaviour appears to indicate that Wood found the upheavals and uncertainties of the

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time disturbing and possibly traumatising, an experience surely shared by others.

N.B. This article was primarily written between March and June 2020 during the lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, while libraries and archives were closed to the public, making access to sources more difficult than normal. The author managed to access the main primary sources for the period but may have missed some lesser ones.

All spelling in primary sources is original.

- ¹ Janet Spavold and Michael Gilman, 'The Burgage Plots of Thame, 1150–1340', in *Oxoniensia* LXVII, (2002), pp. 31–3
- ² *Ibid*, p. 40.
- ³ J. Howard Brown and William Guest, *A History of Thame*, (Thame, 1935), p. 50.
- ⁴ Spavold and Gilman, 'The Burgage Plots of Thame, 1150–1340', p. 34; Paresh Motla, 'The Occupational Structures of Thame c. 1600–c.1700', *Oxfordshire Local History* Vol. 4, No. 2, (1993), p.67; John Bell, 'The Mortality Crisis in Thame and East Oxfordshire 1643', *Oxfordshire Local History* Vol. 3, No. 4, (1990), p. 137; Adrienne Rosen, 'Early Modern Market Towns' in *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, ed. Kate Tiller and Giles Darkes, (Oxford, 2010), p. 79. Unlike further west in Oxfordshire, Thame farmers tended to have more cows and fewer sheep, while wheat was the main crop. (Joan Garlick, 'Farming Activities at Thame and Woodstock in the Early Seventeenth Century: the Evidence of Probate Inventories', *Oxfordshire Local History* Vol. 3, No. 7, (1991), pp. 296–7.)
- ⁵ Motla, 'The Occupational Structure of Thame c.1600–c.1700', p. 63.
- ⁶ *Ibid*, p.66. According to probate records analysed in this article, 32% worked in agriculture in the 1600s, 52% in the 1650s and 30% by 1700. 20% worked as butchers, bakers, tanners and similar occupations in the 1600s, 48% in the 1680s and 30% by 1700. 40% were skilled or semi-skilled tradesmen in the 1600s, 10% in the 1650s and 30% by 1700. 5% were in titled or professional occupations in the 1600s, 15% in the 1630s and 10% in the 1690s.
- ⁷ *Ibid*, p.69.
- ⁸ *Ibid*, p.120.
- ⁹ Anthony Buxton, 'Domestic Culture in Early Seventeenth-century Thame' *Oxoniensia* LXVII, (2002), p. 82.

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- ¹⁰ Bell, J., Bell, M., Bretherton, D., Cray, J., Fickling, H., Grof, L., Hammond, D., Hawkins, A., Hodges, M., Motla, P., Williams, P., *Thame, Oxfordshire in the Seventeenth Century*. [data collection]. (2000). Stored in the UK Data Service. SN: 4132, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-4132-1>
- ¹¹ Ibid
- ¹² Brown and Guest, *A History of Thame*, p. 110; Geoffrey Tyack, 'Country Houses 1500–1670' in *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, ed. Kate Tiller and Giles Darkes, (Oxford, 2010), p. 96.
- ¹³ Motla, 'The Occupational Structures of Thame c. 1600–c.1700', p.67.
- ¹⁴ 'Thame : Topography, manors and estates', in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 7, Dorchester and Thame Hundreds*, ed. Mary Lobel (London, 1962), pp. 160–178. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol7/pp160-178> [accessed 13 April 2020]; Brown and Guest, *A History of Thame*, pp. 111–2. The grammar school building had the founder's (Lord Williams) crest above the door, and would have had a big school room, rooms for masters and ushers, and an attic room for boys. It was damaged in the wars, repaired in 1661 and is extant today. Lord Williams's School still exists, although today it is the local secondary comprehensive, and resides in less auspicious buildings on the edge of town. The primary school is named after John Hampden.
- ¹⁵ Robert Peberdy, 'Late Medieval Communications', in *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, ed. Kate Tiller and Giles Darkes, (Oxford, 2010), pp. 50–51.
- ¹⁶ 'Thame : Topography, manors and estates'; Bell, 'The Mortality Crisis in Thame and East Oxfordshire 1643', p. 137. The significance of this network was recognised early, and medieval records make mention of bridge repairs. In the seventeenth century the Oxford to Aylesbury road would have run from Thame to Tetworth, and then on to Wallingford and Oxford, with the present Thame to Oxford road insignificant until the nineteenth century.
- ¹⁷ For example, in Oxfordshire the bridges at Wheatley and Islip were garrisoned.
- ¹⁸ Andrew Clark (ed.) *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, antiquary, of Oxford, 1632–1695, described by Himself, Vol. I: 1632–1663*, (Oxford, 1891), p. 114.
- ¹⁹ 'Thame : Topography, manors and estates'.
- ²⁰ Paresh Motla, 'Changing Attitudes to Poverty in Thame c. 1600–c.1700', *Oxfordshire Local History* Vol. 4, No. 4, (1993), p. 129.
- ²¹ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 124.
- ²² Ibid, p. 124.
- ²³ 'Thame : Topography, manors and estates'; 'Parishes : Upper Winchendon', in *A History of the County of Buckingham: Volume 4*, ed. William Page (London, 1927),

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- pp. 122–125. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/bucks/vol4/pp122-125> [accessed 1 June 2020].
- ²⁴ John Lodge and Mervyn Archdall, *The Peerage of Ireland: Or, A Genealogical History of the Present Nobility of that Kingdom, Volume 4*, (Dublin, 1789), p. 284.
- ²⁵ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, (Oxford, 1949), p. 140.
- ²⁶ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 124; *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 71.
- ²⁷ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 64.
- ²⁸ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 72; *The Journal of Prince Rupert's Marches (1642–1646)*, ed Sir Charles Firth, Stephen Ede-Borrett, (London, 2013), p. 34. This is the only time in the *Journal* that Rupert is listed as having been in Thame.
- ²⁹ The main proviso to this analysis is that it could be affected by the available sources. The main source for 1643 is Samuel Luke's spy reports, which provide daily updates on troop movements. After that, the main source is Anthony Wood's memoir, which goes into much less detail and may not include more minor engagements, giving the impression that things were quieter when they may not have been.
- ³⁰ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 87.
- ³¹ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 27, p. 29, p. 34; Oxford, Bodleian Libraries MS. Carte 193, fols 147–151; *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 28.
- ³² *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 39, p. 45, p. 47.
- ³³ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, pp. 92–93; *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 100; *The Journal of Prince Rupert's Marches*, p. 36. When exactly they arrived in Thame is not entirely clear from the sources, as one Parliamentary spy reported their army still in Stokenchurch on 10 June, while another stated that the Parliamentary forces arrived in Thame on the 10th, and Anthony Wood recorded the whole move from Reading as happening 'About the 8 or 9 of June'. Interestingly, Prince Rupert appears to have raided Stokenchurch on 8 June, probably the day before the Parliamentary troops arrived.
- ³⁴ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 112–3.
- ³⁵ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, pp. 92–93; John Stevenson and Andrew Carter, 'The Raid on Chinnor and the Fight at Chalgrove Field, June 17th and 18th, 1643', *Oxoniensia* XXXVIII, (1973), p. 347.
- ³⁶ John Barratt, *Cavalier Capital: Oxford in the English Civil War 1643–1646*, (Solihull, 2015), p. 108.
- ³⁷ Ian F. W. Beckett, *Wanton Troopers: Buckinghamshire in the Civil Wars, 1640–1660*, (Suffolk, 2015), p. 117.

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- ³⁸ Philip Tennant, 'Parish and People: South Warwickshire in the Civil War', in *The English Civil Wars: Local Aspects*, ed. R.C. Richardson, (Stroud, 1997), p. 181.
- ³⁹ 'Haddenham During the Civil War' in *Records of Buckinghamshire* Vol 12, Part 2 (1928), p. 77.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 78. Given that this coincides with Essex's stay in Thame, these men were probably part of his army.
- ⁴¹ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, pp. 92–3.
- ⁴² 'Haddenham During the Civil War', p. 75.
- ⁴³ Motla, 'Changing Attitudes to Poverty in Thame c. 1600–c.1700', p. 125. This was a slight fall from prices of 60s. 2d. in 1642.
- ⁴⁴ *The Journal of Prince Rupert's Marches*, p. 36; *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 95.
- ⁴⁵ *The Journal of Prince Rupert's Marches*, p. 36; *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 97.
- ⁴⁶ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, pp. 100–1.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 109.
- ⁴⁸ Barratt, *Cavalier Capital*, p. 108; Brown and Guest, *A History of Thame*, p. 116.
- ⁴⁹ Barratt, *Cavalier Capital*, p. 109.
- ⁵⁰ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 123.
- ⁵¹ *Mercurius Rusticus*, cited in Brown and Guest, *A History of Thame*, p. 116. This story was printed in a newspaper in 1685 after the Restoration, so is not without likely bias.
- ⁵² *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 112–3.
- ⁵³ Ibid, p. 115, p. 127, p. 131 and p.140
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 131.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 143.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 158–9.
- ⁵⁷ 'Burials' in *Thame, Oxfordshire in the Seventeenth Century*. The most famous death after the Battle of Chalgrove was that of John Hampden, who died in Thame six days after the battle. The building in which he died still survives in part and is bisected with a passage linking the high street with the local Waitrose. As far as the author can remember, there is a notice within the passage stating that Hampden died in the building.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Bell, 'The Mortality Crisis in Thame and East Oxfordshire 1643', p. 137.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 141–2. In fact, the decision of Essex to move his army from Reading to Thame may have been partly driven by the mortality rates in Reading and the surrounding areas.
- ⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 144–6.
- ⁶² Ibid, p. 144.

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- ⁶³ Ibid, p. 147
- ⁶⁴ ‘Marriages’ in *Thame, Oxfordshire in the Seventeenth Century*.
- ⁶⁵ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, pp. 196–197, p. 202, p. 205, p. 206, p. 215 and p. 220.
- ⁶⁶ *The Journal of Sir Samuel Luke*, p. 238 and p. 240; Sir James Harrington, cited in Brown and Guest, *A History of Thame*, p. 115.
- ⁶⁷ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, p. 108.
- ⁶⁸ Sir John Harrington, cited in Brown and Guest, *A History of Thame*, p. 126.
- ⁶⁹ Tennant, ‘Parish and People: South Warwickshire in the Civil War’, p. 182.
- ⁷⁰ ‘Burials’ and ‘Baptisms’ in *Thame, Oxfordshire in the Seventeenth Century*. The Burts had six children in total.
- ⁷¹ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, pp. 123–4.
- ⁷² Michael Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars*, (London, 2008), p. 269.
- ⁷³ Vivienne Larminie, ‘Elites and Office-Holders: mid 17th Century’, in *An Historical Atlas of Oxfordshire*, ed. Kate Tiller and Giles Darkes, (Oxford, 2010), pp. 88–9.
- ⁷⁴ Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire*, p. 296.
- ⁷⁵ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, pp. 117.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 117. The commander of the nearby Royalist garrison at Boarstall House sent a party of twenty horse to attack them. The Parliamentarians attempted to take a defensive position at the bridge below Thame mill, but after receiving a volley the Royalists ‘charged over the bridge’. The Parliamentarians fled, having ‘lost just half their number for besides him that was killed, there were nine taken ... ten only escaping, most of which had marks bestowed on them’.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 114.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 114–5.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 120–123. Anthony Wood and the schoolboys living in the vicarage also claimed some spoils in the aftermath of the battle: the pasties made from venison stolen in Thame Park that the Parliamentary soldiers had made, but not had time to eat.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 128.
- ⁸¹ Lodge and Archdall, *The Peerage of Ireland*, p. 284.
- ⁸² Brown and Guest, *A History of Thame*, pp. 125–6.
- ⁸³ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, pp. 108–9. This behaviour was so notable that Elizabeth Henant, the vicar’s wife, continued to remember and remark on it when they met in later life.

CROMWELLIAN BRITAIN XXIX
THAME, OXFORDSHIRE

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CROMWELLIAN BRITAIN XXIX
THAME, OXFORDSHIRE

Data tables in the Thame Database: <i>Thame, Oxfordshire in the Seventeenth Century</i>					
Table Name	No of Records	Year Span	Source Location	Source Class	Description
Baptisms	5203	1600–1700	Oxfordshire Archives	Thame Parish Register	Records of baptisms
Baptisms Sup	4230	1600–1700	Oxfordshire Archives	Thame Parish Register	Supplemental persons in baptism register
Burials	3493	1600–1700	Oxfordshire Archives	Thame Parish Register	Records of burials
Burials Sup	1278	1600–1700	Oxfordshire Archives	Thame Parish Register	Supplemental persons in burials register
Copyholders	6	1633	Bodleian Library	MS Top Gen e64	Berie manuscripts – list of copyholders
Copy Sup	111	1633	Bodleian Library	MS Top Gen e64	Berie manuscripts – supplemental persons on copyholders' list
Frankpledge	1472	1599–1661	Bodleian Library	MS Top Oxon b262	Persons mentioned in View of Frankpledge Court Rolls
Hearth Tax	370	1662 & 1665	Public Record Office	E179/163, E179/255	All persons in Hearth Tax Records
Lay Sub	228	1641, 1642: 1647; 1661	Public Record Office	E179	All persons in Lay Subsidy Returns
Marriages	2277	1600–1700	Oxfordshire Archives	Thame Parish Chest	Records of marriages
	24	1633–1654	Public Record Office	PROB 11	Administrations in Prerogative Court of Canterbury
	47	1587	Public Record Office	State Papers Domestic SP12	All persons in Corn Returns
Misc	4	1617–1620	Bucks Record Office	D/X 648	All persons in Giles Mompesson's Accounts for Innkeepers Licences
	18	17C	Oxfordshire Studies	Catalogue of Oxfordshire Tokens by J G Milne	All persons who issued Trade Tokens
Monthly Assess	299	1647	Public Record Office	E179, 164, 497	All persons in Parliamentary Monthly Assessment Rolls

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THAME, OXFORDSHIRE

Data tables in the Thame Database: <i>Thame, Oxfordshire in the Seventeenth Century</i>					
Monuments	46	1588-1710	Oxfordshire Archives	History of St Mary's Church Rev F G Lee	All persons with a Monumental Inscription in St Mary's Church
MonumentsSup	36	1588-1710	Oxfordshire Archives	History of St Mary's Church Rev F G Lee	Supplemental persons on the Monumental Inscriptions in St Mary's Church
PLDSup	217	17C	Oxfordshire Archives	Various	Supplemental persons mentioned in Property Leases and Deeds Records
PoorRate	429	1604 & 1609	Bodleian Library	MS Top Oxon c.5	List of persons Thame Parish Poor Rate Book
Probate	2	17C	Oxfordshire Archives	History of St Mary's Church Rev F G Lee	Probate Records
	6	17C	Oxfordshire Archives	Various	Probate Documents
	119	17C	Public Record Office	PROB 11	Probate Documents Wills
	11	17C	Public Record Office	PROB 4	Probate Documents Inventories
	347	17C	Oxfordshire Archives	Thame PEC	Probate Documents Wills
ProbateSup	312	17C	Oxfordshire Archives	Thame PEC	Probate Documents Inventories
	5545	17C	As per the probate document		Supplemental persons mentioned in the Probate Records
Property_Leases /Deeds	370	17C	Oxfordshire Archives	Various	Persons mentioned in Property Leases and Deeds
QuarterSessions	97	1687-1689	Oxfordshire Archives	Oxon Record Society Transcript	All persons in the Quarter Sessions Records
Rentals	64	Before 1607	Bodleian Library	MS Top Oxon b262	All persons renting property from Lord Bertie
SchoolAcc	207	1602-1694	New College Archives	3253	All persons in the Thame Grammar School Accounts
Wardens	366	1549-1700	Oxfordshire Archives	History of St Mary's Church Rev F G Lee	All Church Wardens

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CIVIL WAR PETITIONS

by Dr Ismini Pells

During the Civil Wars, thousands of war pensions and other financial gratuities were awarded to wounded soldiers, and the widows and orphans of those who had died in service. Maimed soldiers had actually been able to claim financial relief from the State since 1593. In this year, the Act for Relief of Soldiers created a system of parochial taxation, which was administered on a countrywide basis by special county treasurers. The money was then distributed by Justices of the Peace (JPs) at the courts of quarter sessions in each county.¹ However, as a result of the Civil Wars, the whole system was overhauled. On 24 October 1642, the day after the first major encounter of the Civil Wars at the battle of Edgehill, parliament passed an ordinance reaffirming its commitment to its troops to 'provide competent Maintenance and Allowance for such of them as shall be maimed, and thereby disabled by their Labour to provide for themselves, their Wives, their Children, as formerly they did'.² Furthermore, in a new development from the Elizabethan legislation, monetary provision was, for the first time, also made available to the widows and orphans of those who had died in service.³

By the closure of the first round of hostilities in 1646, the amount of money being collected for this purpose was wholly inadequate for the numbers of casualties. Moreover, war-weariness throughout the country and in parliament had generated an increasing apathy and, at times, outright hostility towards soldiers and military matters, meaning that the political will to uphold parliament's earlier promises towards its wounded veterans was generally lacking. After sustained pressure from the army throughout spring 1647, parliament passed another ordinance on 28 May 1647 which increased the levels of taxation used to fund the pension scheme and officially barred royalists from accessing it.⁴ Following the Restoration, when the boot was on the other foot, the policy was naturally reversed. Royalist veterans had been petitioning for pensions since 1660 but in 1662, an Act of Parliament was passed which again increased the amount of money collected to fund military pensions, and claimants had to demonstrate their unswerving loyalty to the Crown.⁵ The Act lapsed in 1679 and whilst the Elizabethan legislation was still in force, the increased rates were no longer legal. The pension scheme thus became largely ineffectual, though some Civil War soldiers

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continued to petition and receive pensions into the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁶

In order to obtain a pension, maimed soldiers and war widows had to present a petition to the court of quarter sessions in their home county, which were held four times a year. Although most petitions were written down on the claimant's behalf by a scribe (probably a local church minister, schoolmaster, literate neighbour or the clerk of the court), we know that the scribes relied upon the claimant's testimony, whilst claimants had to defend the truth of their petition in the court.⁷ Often, claimants supported their petitions with a certificate from either their (or their husband's) regimental commander testifying to his service, a medical practitioner outlining the extent of the soldier's wounds, or the local community underlining the deservingness of their case. The presiding JPs would then determine whether to award a payment. If a claimant was deemed deserving by the court, they would receive a pension, a regular payment which was given to them four times a year for as long as the JPs allowed – potentially for the rest of their life. If they were not so fortunate, they would receive a gratuity, in the form of a one-off payment. Most petitions were submitted directly to the quarter sessions, though some claimants appealed to funds controlled by other authorities such as borough corporations, the county committees set up to co-ordinate parliament's war effort, military officers, parliament, the Council of State/Privy Council or even directly to leading political figures, including the king. Sometimes such petitions were referred back to the relevant county quarter sessions, often with a note of endorsement.

There are likely to be as many as 4,000 petitions and certificates that have survived in county record offices and other archives across England and Wales. In addition, the records of tens of thousands of payments made as a result of these petitions (and those that have not survived) exist in the order books and treasurers' accounts of the quarter sessions and other authorities. These petitions and payments records are currently being collected by 'Conflict, Welfare and Memory during and after the English Civil Wars, 1642–1710', an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project run between the Universities of Leicester, Nottingham, Southampton and Cardiff. The project has developed a freely accessible website with quality

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images of the petitions and certificates, transcriptions of the text, and details of all the payment records. This is available at www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk.

But do these documents uncover anything about Oliver Cromwell's own role in the politics surrounding military welfare during and after the Civil Wars? In the analysis that follows, it must be emphasised that the Civil War Petitions project is still very much a work in progress and the resulting conclusions can, at this stage, only be regarded as tentative suggestions. A search of the Civil War Petitions website in its current state reveals that Cromwell is known to have provided certificates for the petitions of at least fifteen maimed soldiers and war widows. This is more than any other military commander, parliamentarian or royalist. This is particularly noteworthy considering that the overwhelming majority of material that has survived dates from the royalist period of administering the pension system from 1660 onwards: 475 petitions/certificates and 8,133 payments, compared to 140 petitions/certificates and 3,621 payments from the period of parliamentarian control from 1642–59.

Furthermore, it is worth exploring the document survival rate from the period of parliamentarian control in its own right. During the period that Sir Thomas Fairfax was commander-in-chief of the New Model Army, 62 petitions/certificates and 1,149 payments are available on Civil War Petitions at the current count. By way of comparison, whilst only 51 petitions/certificates are at present on the website from the period when Cromwell was in command, there are 2,268 payments for the same time – double that for the period of Fairfax's command. Nevertheless, Cromwell stands out for the ratio between numbers of claimants he provided certificates for and the number of surviving cases from the period of his command. It might be pointed out that Cromwell was Lord General for a much longer time period than Fairfax, and his later political prominence as Lord Protector may have made him a more attractive target to claimants seeking support for their petitions. However, all but four of the cases on the Civil War Petitions website that Cromwell provided certificates for date from the time before he was installed as Lord Protector. Of the remaining four, three date to 1654 and only one dates from as late as 1656. The earliest evidence for certificates issued by Cromwell dates from 1651. No doubt more instances will emerge of Cromwell supporting petitions from maimed

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soldiers and war widows during the time he was Lord Protector, especially as the Civil War Petitions project tackles the State Papers collections in The National Archives. These collections contain the petitions submitted to central government authorities and thus will include the petitions addressed to Cromwell from claimants seeking pensions funded from central government authorities, over which Cromwell had an influence as Lord Protector. However, as far as the veterans and widows who obtained pensions from the quarter sessions were concerned, the evidence found so far suggests that the number of certificates issued by Cromwell in support of these cases spiked during the period 1651–3.

Cromwell clearly had a long-standing commitment to the welfare of the men who fought under him. A letter published as part of Thomas Carlyle and Sophia Lomas's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* illustrates this point. It was written to the Committee at Cambridge on 21 January 1645 on behalf of George Frayne, a trooper in Cromwell's own troop whose long sickness had compounded his financial woes brought about by a lack of pay:

GENTLEMEN,

This soldier of mine (Mr. Frayne) is a man who on my knowledge hath very faithfully served you, his arrears are great, his sickness much and long, by occasion whereof he is brought to great lowness, and is much indebted. If now upon my recommendation of his person and condition unto you, you will please to help him with some competent sum of money to discharge his debt and relieve himself, I shall take it for a great favour, and be ready to repay such a respect with a thankful [acknow]ledgment, and ever [be]

Your real and faithful [servant],

OLIVER CROMWELL⁸

Yet Cromwell was hardly unique in his keen sense of the duty of care owed by an officer to his men. Andrew Hopper drew attention to the letter written by Sir Thomas Fairfax to parliament's Committee for Petitions on behalf of Ellen Askwith. Her husband John had been one of Fairfax's very first Yorkshire officers and known to him personally before John's death, possibly from wounds received at Marston Moor, on 23 July 1644. Fairfax also provided a certificate for Anthony West, 'desperately wounded at the

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storming of Selby' on 11 April 1644, who was also likely to have been known to Fairfax personally because he was from Fairfax's own parish of Otley.⁹ Likewise, Philip Skippon, commander of the infantry in the New Model Army, issued a certificate on behalf of the widow of John Francis, who had been killed at Naseby whilst Lieutenant-Colonel of Skippon's own regiment. Skippon maintained that he 'could not in justice and Charity refuse to give his [Francis's] executors this testimony'.¹⁰ On the royalist side, Mark Stoye highlighted the endorsements by Bartholomew Gidley of Winkleigh, a former captain in the king's forces in the South-west, on the petitions of several maimed soldiers from Devon in support of their claims. Stoye concluded that this was 'striking evidence of the fact that the bonds between some former Royalist officers and their soldiers had continued to endure long after the Civil War was over'.¹¹ Indeed, the Civil War Petitions website displays further evidence in support of Stoye's argument in the twelve certificates issued by James Compton, earl of Northampton, for veterans of his regiment from Northamptonshire who had fought for the king's cause.

Naturally, as these cases show, the sense of *noblesse oblige* was all the more keenly felt when the soldier was personally known to the commander. Thus, it is especially interesting that Cromwell seems to have issued numerous certificates on behalf of individuals that he cannot have known personally. For example, on 12 July 1653, the Denbighshire Quarter Sessions which met at Wrexham ordered that upon the certificate of the Lord General dated 15 June 1652 that Aron Hughes was killed in the parliament's service, a pension of 40 shillings per annum be granted and allowed to Ann Hughes, widow, to maintain herself and her children. It was recorded that 'the said Aron having taken armes in this county & killed at Mountgomery'.¹² The battle of Montgomery, fought on 18 September 1644, was a large-scale battle that resulted in a decisive parliamentary victory. However, the parliamentary army on this occasion was led by Sir Thomas Myddleton and Colonel Thomas Mytton, with detachments led by Sir John Meldrum, Sir William Brereton and Sir William Fairfax. Not only was Cromwell not present, but it is highly unlikely that he would have met Aron Hughes if Hughes, as his widow claimed, had enlisted in Myddleton's native Denbighshire and thus possibly only for the Montgomery campaign.

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A similar example is provided by the petition from Christian Markes of South Petherton, widow of Lieutenant Frauncis Markes, to the Somerset Quarter Sessions:

To the right Wor[shi]p[ful]l John Turburueile Esq[ui]r[e] & the rest of the Justices for the Countie of Som[er]s[e]tt.

The humble Petic[i]on of Christian Markes late wife of L[ieutenan]t Frauncis Marks.

Sheweth:

That yo[u]r petition[ne]rs husband, hauing formerly liued in very good Creditt and repute in South Petherton w[i]thin this Countie & well mainteyned his Chillardren & Family by his profession, did out of his affection to the Parliam[en]t betake himselfe to their Service in the Warre, where hee p[er]formed the States very good Service; And that yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r]s husband (beinge a Leiuenaunt to Capt[ain] George Sampson in the Regim[en]t of Major Gen[er]all Skippon, when the Earle of Essex was Gen[er]all & marched for Cornwall) hauing in the heate of that imploym[en]t receaued many wounds dyed w[i]th the same, And hauing Spent all his Estate in that Service, left yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r] charged w[i]th three small Chillardren, & nothing to maintaine them: yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r] therevppon by the aduice of some of her Freinds, petic[i]oned the Tresurers at Ealy howse to allow her a weekly pension who were pleased to take her Condi[i]on into Considerac[i]on & giuing her releife to helpe her in her Journey sent yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r] w[i]th their Publique passe and an act of Parliam[en]t to the Justices of this Countye for releife And his excellencie the Lord Gen[er]all taking yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r]s said Condi[i]on into his pious Considerac[i]on hath written the Certificate annexed w[i]th desire to yo[u]r worships to take yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r]s distressed Condi[i]on into yo[u]r Charitable Considerac[i]ons, & to settle a pension on her according to her quallity.

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Yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r] most humbly desires yo[u]r wor[shi]ps to take her distressed Condi[ti]on into yo[u]r Pious Considerac[i]ons & for the releife of her selfe & three poore Children to vouchsafe to settle on her a pe[n]sion somewhat equivolent to her greate losses & pr[e]sent distressed Condi[ti]on;

And yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r] shall eu[er] pray &c.¹³

As with Ann Hughes, despite providing a certificate for Christian Markes, any personal relationship between Cromwell and the deceased lieutenant seems unlikely. Cromwell did not fight in the earl of Essex's campaigns in the South-west in June to September 1644 and, with the exception of a brief sojourn between the battle of Edgehill on 23 October 1642 (to which Cromwell arrived late) and the battle of Turnham Green on 13 November (an abortive stand-off), Cromwell did not fight alongside the earl's army until the second battle of Newbury on 27 October 1644 – after Frauncis Markes's death. Nevertheless, Cromwell's certificate did the trick and the court awarded a gratuity of £4 'to Christian Markes recommended by the Generall for reliefe'.¹⁴

It is worth pausing here for a moment to note the significance of Cromwell's support for the widows in particular of soldiers who were most likely unknown to him. Geoffrey Hudson argued that in extending the provision of military welfare to widows and orphans in their ordinance of October 1642, parliament had made the bold step of recognising women's participation in the political nation during the Civil Wars by entitling them to State pensions in return for their sacrifices, not just parish poor relief.¹⁵ In contrast, Charles I had been unwilling to accord women the same status as maimed soldiers and grant them military pensions.¹⁶ Indeed, Charles I had issued a proclamation on 2 May 1643 – some six months after the parliamentary ordinance – in which he reinforced the stipulations of the Elizabethan pension scheme for those in his own service, but this made no mention of either war widows or orphans.¹⁷ Hudson maintained that the royalist attitude towards military welfare was underpinned by the authoritarian-absolutist notion of monarchy, which was based on the hierarchical relationship between king and subjects that was often supported by royalist theoreticians with analogies of the hierarchical relationship

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between husband and wife. As a consequence, a gender-based discrimination in military welfare emerged at the Restoration, when the 1662 Act stipulated that widows were only to claim monies that were surplus after maimed soldiers had been paid their pensions.¹⁸

It is only fair to point out that in this specification, the royalist legislation was no different from the ordinance of May 1647, which laid out parliament's pension scheme in more detail than the legislation of 1642.¹⁹ Furthermore, competition for pensions after the Restoration was particularly fierce, with the large numbers of claimants forcing JPs in counties such as Devon and Denbighshire to initiate surgeons' inspections to determine the neediest candidates.²⁰ In such circumstances, it was perhaps inevitable that the widows got short shrift. Where parliamentary and royalist attitudes towards gender-based entitlement to military pensions did diverge was – as Hudson pointed out – that at the Restoration, the widows' inferior status was made explicit in some counties. In Warwickshire and Shropshire, widows were eliminated from the pension lists, whilst Norfolk barred widows from receiving pensions in the future.²¹

In light of this debate, it is perhaps noteworthy that on the basis of the evidence so far, Cromwell provided certificates for war widows in almost equal numbers to those he issued for maimed soldiers: seven of the fifteen claimants Cromwell is known to have supported were widows. Moreover, another letter from Carlyle and Lomas's *Letters and Speeches* indicates Cromwell's firm support for the belief that the sacrifices made by widows and orphans in the parliamentary cause should be recognised alongside those made by soldiers, and compensated by the State accordingly. On 20 August 1648, Cromwell wrote to William Lenthall, Speaker of the House of Commons, from Warrington in the aftermath of the battle of Preston. During the pursuit of the enemy that had followed that battle, Colonel Francis Thornhagh had been killed in an impetuous cavalry charge.²² Cromwell related to Lenthall that:

Colonel Thornhaugh, pressing too boldly, was slain, being run into the body and thigh and head by the enemy's lancers. And give me leave to say, he was a man as faithful and gallant in your service as any, and one who often heretofore lost blood in your quarrel, and

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now his last. He hath left some behind him to inherit a father's honour, and a sad widow; both now the interest of the Commonwealth.²³

There is evidence from the later period, when claimants began to seek support from Cromwell as Lord Protector for monetary relief from central government funds, to suggest that his support for the widow's cause was both well known and well exploited. Jane Meldrum, widow of Colonel John Meldrum, submitted the following petition on 29 March 1655:

To his Highnes the Lord Protector of the Com[m]onwealth of England Scotland, & Ireland & the Dominions thereto belonging.

The humble petic[i]on of Jane Meldrum Relict of Col[onel] John Meldrum Eldest Colonell of Horse in ye late Established Army.

Sheweth

That for these 7. Years past shee hath attended & vsed her vtmost endeavo[u]rs for Stating ye Arreares of her deceased husband slaine at Cheriton fight, whose bloud & services shee prays may not bee buried in oblivion, and alsoe for payment of 300 li. by Ordinance ye 14th of June. 1648. Ordered to bee paid her in full of all demands w[h]ch shee could never receive, but hath beene inferred to take vp some small som[m]es vppon the Creditt of the same Ordinance to keepe her and her Children alive, but her Creditors impatient of longer delay threaten to put her in prison, refusing to Accept of Assignements out of the same for their security, though shee hath often requested them

Now Forasmuch as yo[u]r pet[it]ione[r] hath Entred her Claime vpon ye Certificates of his services & Arreares, w[h]ch have not beene stated, because the said order was intended to Conclude yo[u]r Pet[it]ione[r] and likewise Entred her Clayme to ye said 300 li. vpon the said Ordinance, w[h]ch hath not beene paid, nor any penny Interest, And in respect yt shee is now in a starving Condic[i]on, destitute of freinds or meanes, & hath nothing to depend vppon but ye 300 li. for

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her & her Childrens releife & maintenance, being Consumed w[i]th
her Attendance.

Yo[u]r Petic[i]on[er] (vpon Considerac[i]on of the Papers annexed
manifesting her Extreame poverty) Humbly prays yo[u]r Highnes that
the said 300 li. may bee presently paid her And that yo[u]r Highnes
wil bee graciously pleased to Number her amongst yo[u]r distressed
widows whom God hath drawne forth of yo[u]r pious heart
mercifully to relieve, And Christ will put it to yo[u]r Accompt on the
Great day

An yo[u]r pet[it]ione[r] shall eu[er] pray &c

Jane Meldrum²⁴

In the last paragraph of her petition, as Jane Meldrum aimed directly at Cromwell's sense of Christian duty in a cunning attempt to provoke him into affirmative action, she inferred that Cromwell was known for his willingness to look favourably on distressed war widows. It is tempting – and not unreasonable – to suggest that she was not the first widow to do so. Claimants at the quarter sessions likewise often displayed an acute awareness of their target audience and manipulated their petitions in order to achieve a favourable result.²⁵

Of course, it was not just widows who sought certificates from Cromwell to support their pension claims at the quarter sessions and Cromwell's propensity to assist maimed soldiers in this matter was equally well known. On 2 January 1652, Richard Mabbon, as governor of the Savoy Hospital (a dedicated military facility) wrote to William Malin, secretary to Cromwell at the time. Mabbon requested Malin's help in procuring a certificate from Cromwell for Samuell Miles, Robert Webb and six others maimed soldiers from Essex who intended to seek a pension from the quarter sessions at Chelmsford:

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Much hon[ou]r[e]d.

S[i]r, this souldyer is one of the eight menc[i]oned in the ticket w[hi]ch I have sent herew[i]th; his name is Samuell miles, you will doe him a favour, if you will please to p[ro]cuer him a certificat vnder ye lord Generalls hand and seale, to cary w[i]th him into the cuntry, being cuered he desyers to goe into essex, wher he formerlie liued, and to get a penc[i]on ther. He vnderstands that the quarter session is at Chemsford on Tewesday next; if you please to p[ro]cuer a letter from the lord Generall he will cary it safliie & deliuer it, w[hi]ch may not only be a benifit to him, but to severall others who wer wounded at wocester & are gon downe thither to get penc[i]ons being maimed & disabled men, this is ye Request of him who is

Your servant Rich[ard] Mabb[on]

Governour of the savoy hospi[tal]

<This ii of January 1651 [i.e. 1652]>

S[i]r ther is another souldyer whose name is Robert webb, and is one of the *eight* souldyers menc[i]oned in the said certificate my Request on his behalfe is, as for the form[e]r w[hi]ch granted, will farther ingage him who is yours to serue you

Richard Mabbon etc.

<This ii of January 1651 [i.e. 1652]>²⁶

As veterans of Worcester, Miles and his comrades had a clear claim to a certificate from Cromwell as the commander-in-chief of the New Model Army at that battle, fought on 3 September 1651. However, news of Cromwell's willingness to provide certificates for maimed soldiers seems to have travelled fast within the county of Essex and, as was shown in the cases of widows, soldiers with no prior connection to Cromwell sought his support for their pension claims at the quarter sessions. Sometime around

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the beginning of January 1652, Jeremiah Maye of Ashdon in Essex petitioned Cromwell:

To his Excellency the Lord Generall Cromwell,

The humble petic[i]on of Jeremiah Maye.

Sheweth, That aboute 7 yeeres since your pet[it]ione[r] w[i]th one John Wyeburne S[i]r Timothy Middletons mans did take a Cavelleere w[i]th his horse & armes at Stamford Mount Fitchett, and hee offered them his horse & 40 li. in money to lett him escape, Butt they refused the same, Not longe after your pet[it]ione[r] was imprest at Ashdon in the County of Essex for the Parliam[en]t service & served under the Com[m]and of Capt[ain] John Smith in the Regiment of S[i]r William Waller at Basing howse where hee receaved divers hurts & wounds in his Body, As by Certificate will appeare, The w[hi]ch hath altogether made him unfitt for future service & noe waies able to mainteyne himselfe & languishinge family beinge nowe in a most sadd & deplorable condic[i]on.

Humbly beseechinge your Excellency to take the p[re]misses into your wise Considerac[i]on and to bee pleased to grant your Excellencies Warrant directed to the hono[ur]able Bench assembled in Essex to afford your petitic[i]oner a Penc[i]on or some other Releife what they in their Wisedomes shall thinke fitt.

And hee shall ever pray for your Excellency.²⁷

Cromwell duly obliged with a certificate on 10 January. This is worth reproducing here as the only example found so far of a certificate from Cromwell that has actually survived, in contrast to the other cases where the order books of the quarter sessions recorded that a certificate from Cromwell was submitted but the document itself has been lost to posterity.

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<Symbol: seal of Oliver Cromwell>

Whereas the Bearer hereof Jeremiah May the peticon[e]r was wounded in the service of the Parliam[en]t thereby vnable to follow his calling as appeares by the annexed Certificate: These are therefore to require you to permitt & suffer the said him quietly to passe to Ashden in Essex his former aboad w[i]thout molestac[i]on. And I desire the Justices of peace for ye said County to allow vnto the said Jeremiah May a competent weekly penc[i]on for his releife & maintenance according to the late Act. Given vnder my hand & seale the 10th of January 1651.

<'To all office[e]rs & sould[i]ers und[er] my Com[m]and & others whome it may concerne.>

O[liver] Cromwell²⁸

Maye's petition had plainly stated that the siege of Basing House at which he was wounded was not Cromwell's devastating storm of 1645 but one of the earlier attempts made on the stronghold by Sir William Waller in either 1643 or 1644 (it is not entirely clear which). Thus, not only was there no military (let alone personal) connection between Maye and Cromwell, but Maye had been injured in an encounter that had happened at least seven or so years previously. Why did Maye approach Cromwell to support his belated claim for a pension and why did he consider the early 1650s to be a suitable time to do this? Indeed, why did Cromwell agree to issue Maye – a soldier with whom he had no connection – with a certificate at this time?

These questions bring us neatly back to the observation made at the start of the article that the evidence gathered by the Civil War Petitions project so far suggests that the number of certificates issued by Cromwell in support of veterans and widows who obtained pensions from the quarter sessions spiked during the period 1651–3. Why was this? Perhaps the answer to these questions lay in the tensions between the army and parliament that followed the battle of Worcester. Following the final defeat of the royalists at Worcester, the Commonwealth was now in a secure position and the leading army officers, including Cromwell, returned to active politics at

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Westminster. At this time, parliament's focus shifted from survival to debating the nature of the Commonwealth's political settlement.²⁹ Cromwell had signalled his vision for what form this political settlement should take in the oft-quoted passage from a letter written to Speaker Lenthall the day after the battle:

The dimensions of this mercy are above my thoughts. It is, for aught I know, a crowning mercy. Surely, if it be not, such a one we shall have, if this provoke those that are concerned in it to thankfulness, and the Parliament to do the will of Him who hath His will for it, and for the nation; whose good pleasure it is to establish the nation and the change of the government, by making the people so willing to the defence thereof, and so signally to bless the endeavours of your servants in this late great work. I am bold humbly to beg, that all thoughts may tend to the promoting of His honour who hath wrought so great salvation, and that the fatness of these continued mercies may not occasion pride and wantonness, as formerly the like hath done to a chosen nation; but that the fear of the Lord, even for His mercies, may keep an authority and a people so prospered, and blessed, and witnessed unto, humble and faithful; and that justice and righteousness, mercy and truth may flow from you as a thankful return to our gracious God.³⁰

For Cromwell, as Stephen Roberts argued, the lesson of Worcester was that God had demonstrated his favour towards the army, parliament and the nation.³¹ Cromwell thus exhorted parliament to repay God's favour in order to continue to benefit from it by showing their gratitude towards the 'servants in this great work' and adopting the programme of Church and law reform championed by the army. As these hopes failed to materialise over the next twelve months, the army became increasingly disillusioned with parliamentary delay in these matters and began agitating for the dissolution of the Rump. In August 1652, the army made a series of demands concerning the dissolution and calling of a new parliament, along with their requirements for religious reform, law reform, poor reform, and pay and welfare provisions for soldiers and veterans.³² Military welfare during the early 1650s was thus a matter interconnected with the army's reform programme during this period. Although Cromwell pleaded for restraint

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with the army in their actions, in John Morrill's words 'Cromwell must have agreed with every word'.³³ Furthermore, Cromwell was disappointed with the Rump's treatment of the army more generally, especially the failure to address the deficit in the army's wage bill and the privileging of MPs' friends over the army in the plans for the redistribution of Irish land.³⁴

There is thus reason to suggest that Cromwell may have viewed his provision of certificates in support of maimed soldiers and war widows who were seeking pensions at the quarter sessions as a way of demonstrating his support for the army and its political policies at this time. Helping to ensure that those who had suffered for the service to the parliamentary cause received some degree of compensation for their sacrifices was not only an issue that was dear to Cromwell's heart, but an area over which he perhaps had more direct influence than other aspects of the army's agenda. Issuing certificates for maimed soldiers and war widows did not require anyone else's consent, and was a far more straightforward affair than persuading his more conservative colleagues in parliament to pursue programmes of legal and religious reform which were prone to becoming bogged down in constitutional and spiritual entanglements. Cromwell's enthusiasm for the army's reform programme in the aftermath of the battle of Worcester reached its zenith around the time of his forcible dissolution of the Rump Parliament in April 1653 and the calling of Barebones Parliament in July of the same year. Yet within a year, Cromwell's position had become more cautious – the same time that the stream of certificates issued by Cromwell for maimed soldiers and war widows at the quarter sessions begins to run dry.³⁵ Time will tell if the hypothesis offered in this article will stand up to scrutiny with the completion of the Civil War Petitions project. However, at present, the evidence points towards the conclusion that Cromwell's support for the military pensions distributed at the quarter sessions should not be viewed as an entirely uncontentious issue. Instead, it seems that this should be placed within the broader context of the army and parliament's competing visions for the future of the nation that followed the end of the period of active fighting during the Civil Wars.

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- ¹ G. Hudson, 'Disabled Veterans and the State in Early Modern England', in D. Gerber, ed., *Disabled Veterans in History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 118–19.
- ² C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1911), I, p. 36.
- ³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 36.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 938–40.
- ⁵ J. Raithby, ed., *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628–80* (London: Dawsons, 1819), pp. 389–90.
- ⁶ Hudson, 'Disabled Veterans', p. 122. The last surviving Civil War veteran receiving a pension found so far is William Leaver of Aylesbury, who died in 1718: Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Q/SO/10, fol. 8 (Buckinghamshire Quarter Sessions Order Book, Easter 1718 to Easter 1724).
- ⁷ For more on this, see L. Bowen, 'Uncertain Authors: Who Wrote Civil War Petitions?', *Civil War Petitions*, <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/blog/uncertain-authors-who-wrote-civil-war-petitions/> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- ⁸ T. Carlyle and S. C. Lomas, eds, *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (3 vols, London: Methuen, 1904), III, p. 320.
- ⁹ A. Hopper, 'Sir Thomas Fairfax, the Leeds widow and the soldier of Otley', *Civil War Petitions*, <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/blog/sir-thomas-fairfax-the-leeds-widow-and-the-soldier-of-otley/> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- ¹⁰ TNA, SP 28/265, fol. 308 (certificate from Philip Skippon for Widow Francis, 27 July 1646).
- ¹¹ M. Stoye, 'Wounded att Stampford Worke': Two Devon 'Tinnners' Recall their Wartime Service', *Civil War Petitions*, <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/blog/wounded-att-stampford-worke-two-devon-tinnners-recall-their-wartime-service/> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- ¹² National Library of Wales, Chirk Castle MS B1, fol. 55 (Denbighshire Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1647 to 1662). See: <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/payments/ann-hughes-denbighshire-denbighshire-quarter-sessions-wrexham-12-july-1653/>.
- ¹³ Somerset Heritage Centre, Q/Spet1 (Part 2), no. 89 (petition of Christian Markes, 12 July 1653). See: <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/petition/the-petition-of-christian-markes-of-south-petherton-somerset-c-12-july-1653/>.
- ¹⁴ Somerset Heritage Centre, QS/SO5, fol. 361v (Quarter Sessions Minute Book, 1646–56). See: <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/payments/christian-markes-somerset-somerset-quarter-sessions-taunton-12-july-1653>.

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- ¹⁵ G. L. Hudson, 'Negotiating for Blood Money: War Widows and the Courts in Seventeenth-Century England', in J. Kermode and G. Walker, eds., *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 146–69, at p. 147.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 152.
- ¹⁷ *Mercurius Aulicus*, 18 (6 May 1643), p. 226.
- ¹⁸ Hudson, 'Negotiating for Blood Money', p. 151.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 938–40.
- ²⁰ Hudson, 'Disabled Veterans and the State', p. 129; National Library of Wales, Chirk Castle MS B1, fol. 158 (Denbighshire Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1647–62); National Library of Wales, Chirk Castle MS B2, fols 115 and 129 (Denbighshire Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1662–75).
- ²¹ Hudson, 'Negotiating for Blood Money', p. 151.
- ²² For more on Colonel Francis Thornhagh, see D. J. Appleby, 'The War Hero, the Eccentric and the Turncoat: the Men Behind Three Signatures', *Civil War Petitions*, <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/blog/the-war-hero-the-eccentric-and-the-turncoat-the-men-behind-three-signatures/> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- ²³ Carlyle and Lomas, *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, I, p. 340.
- ²⁴ The National Archives, SP 18/95/81, fol. 108 (petition from Jane Meldrum, 29 March 1655).
- ²⁵ For more on this, see I. Pells, 'How to Win Friends and Influence People: Negotiating Tactics of Civil War Petitioners', *Civil War Petitions*, <https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/blog/how-to-win-friends-and-influence-people-negotiating-tactics-of-civil-war-petitioners/> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- ²⁶ Essex Record Office, Q/SBa2/78 (Letter on behalf of Samuel Miles, Robert Webb and six other maimed soldiers, 2 January 1652).
- ²⁷ Essex Record Office, Q/SBa2/78 (petition of Jeremiah Maye, 1652).
- ²⁸ Essex Record Office, Q/SBa2/78 (certificate for Jeremiah May, 10 January 1652).
- ²⁹ B. Worden, *The Rump Parliament, 1648–1653* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 18–19.
- ³⁰ Carlyle and Lomas, *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, II, pp. 225–6.
- ³¹ S. Roberts, 'The battle of Worcester and the career of Oliver Cromwell', *Cromwelliana* (1989), pp. 9–13, at p. 10.
- ³² Worden, *Rump Parliament*, pp. 306–9.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 307; J. Morrill, 'Cromwell, Oliver (1599–1658), lord protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6765> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*

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³⁵ Roberts, 'battle of Worcester', p. 11.

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Andrew Abram, ***More Like Lions than men: Sir William Brereton and the Cheshire Army of Parliament, 1642–46***. Century of the Soldier; Helion & Company, 2020 (378pp.) ISBN-13: 978-1913118822, £24.85 paperback.

reviewed by Professor John Morrill

This is one of the very best of the excellent ‘Century of the Soldier’ series from Helion – in fact the 51st book in the series. Cromwellians who are familiar with other volumes will know how very well produced they are. So, first of all, congratulations to Helion for their production values. This handsome book of almost 400 pages contains 34 on-the-page black and white illustrations, 16 colour plates, 23 tables and 3 maps. The text is spaciouly laid out on good quality ‘heavy’ paper (more than 1kg and twice the weight of a novel of similar length!) and the subediting has been very good. I feel like a real curmudgeon to point out slight flaws, but I suppose that while many of the plates are beautifully realised by the always-excellent Alan Turton (four of men in uniform) and Les Prince (eight battle standards), the colour quality is rather disappointing. But if that is necessary to keep the price down to £24.85 (and £5 less on Amazon), we can live with it. More serious is the lack of an index which, given the level of detail in the book and its structure, is more than usually disappointing.

The contents are very good indeed. I do not know a better book on any provincial army from the civil-war period. I wrote my doctorate on the civil wars and Interregnum in Cheshire and submitted it in 1970. I was aware that the very complicated financial and administrative records would allow for a much fuller narrative of the ebb and flow of war and analysis of *how* the war in Cheshire was won, but I was baffled by a whole series of issues contained in those voluminous but incomplete records. Fifty years later, systematically exploring those records and correlating them with the correspondence of Sir William Brereton MP, the commander-in-chief of Parliament’s armies in Cheshire (in five large volumes of outgoing and incoming letters) and with other royalist and parliamentary collections (especially in a number of Historical Manuscripts Commission reports), Andrew Abram has resolved almost all my confusion.

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This is then a book which is by miles the best military history of the war in and around Cheshire, from the stand-offs in 1642 to the surrender of Chester to Brereton on 3 February 1646. And, because of the riches of the surviving evidence and the skill and determination of the author, this answers a host of questions that cannot be answered for most other counties but which are in many cases characteristic of issues common to all areas.

Abram has made one fundamental and very important decision about how to organise his book which is key to its success. It is in three parts: part 1 (pp. 23–112) is a narrative of the war in Cheshire and of the part Cheshire forces played in contiguous counties; part 2 (pp. 113–238) is a detailed account of how the army(ies) in Cheshire were organised, paid, equipped, fed and watered (or ale'd); the final part (pp. 239–363) is a discursive account of the one (but large) regiment of cavalry, the six regiments of infantry and the regiment of dragoons, drilling down into the officer corps and offering mini-biographies of all the officers, including the most junior lieutenants, ensigns and NCOs, some of whom went on to serve in the New Model and in the armies of the Commonwealth. This involves minute scrutiny of muster rolls and other records to explore *where* (within and far beyond Cheshire) the rank and file came from, and *why* Brereton's army was so successful. Amongst commanders in the whole of England north of the Trent and the Severn, only Sir Thomas Fairfax had a more distinguished military career.

Far more than even the pioneering work of R.N.Dore, whose great labour of love – and memorial – was to edit three of Brereton's letter books and who also wrote about each of his major battles (at Middlewich, Montgomery and Nantwich), the narrative chapters reveal Brereton's superhuman energy, his extraordinary sense of the big picture as he marched his troops in succession from Shropshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Yorkshire, Montgomeryshire. Indeed, in the course of 1644 alone he led all or much of his army into each of the five counties which shared borders with Cheshire, and into Yorkshire and two Welsh counties besides. He thereby earned the goodwill of other county leaders so that they reciprocated whenever he needed them to deal with royalist armies arriving from the south, the north or the west (Ireland). He is shown to have had the ability to make the right

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decisions about where he was most needed and how to improvise. No wonder he was popular everywhere except with his localist 'Cheshire-first' fellow gentry.

The second part of the book is at once the richest and the most difficult to follow. Brereton commanded an army that was a patchwork of local units, including elements of the militia and conscripts, but also of men from other counties; and the very kernel of it in early 1643 was a force of volunteer horse and foot he brought down with him from London; and across the war years he 'turned' perhaps 1,500 men who were prisoners of war and who were persuaded to change sides. Indeed, while his key supporters were minor gentry who shared his militant puritanism (best represented by a lay-preaching Jerome Zanckey from Shropshire), he was happy to promote protestants returning from Ireland, giving them key positions in his army (most obviously Michael Jones, the son of an Irish Bishop, Lord Calvin of Culross, Chidley Coote and the brother of George Monck), and he brought in veteran Scottish professionals like James Lothian, who trained and led his infantry. It was of his work with the infantry that Sir John Meldrum, calling Brereton's men 'more like lions than men' for their part in the battle of Montgomery (September 1644) which gave this book its title. This too grated with the greater gentry of Cheshire who felt themselves marginalised. The account of part 2 of how the army was assembled, organised, paid, armed, fed and clothed is a bit chaotic, but that is because it *was* chaotic. A bit more sense of the legislative underpinning and a bringing together of all the special ordinances and orders which Brereton received would have helped, and a small number of gaps in what is given here – for example the extent of free quarter – would have been filled. But what we are given is an utterly heroic reconstruction with exceptionally rich detail. No other study has demonstrated so well the identity and activity of all the support staff – engineers, pioneers, medical services, quartermasters, mustermasters, commissaries (even the cheese-factor), and chaplains, all with mini-biographies.

The final part of the book, working from army lists in Brereton's papers and from muster rolls buried away in the most chaotic parts of the national archives, offers us not only evidence of how troops and companies arose, morphed, amalgamated and disappeared, but gives us mini-biographies of

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almost all those named in the records, thus reinforcing the material in the previous parts of the book. As a counsel of perfection, I have to say that some national databases would have added more details (even Christian names in some cases) but I must not sound ungrateful. This is the best analysis of any civil-war army ever published. But a cross-check with the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (and the Dictionary of Irish Biography), the Clergy of the Church of England Database, Peter Newman's *Dictionary of Royalist Officers* (for some of the turncoats) and The Cromwell Association Online Directory of Parliamentary Army Officers would all have developed some of the entries. Or perhaps I should say that this book gives us all we need to know about the service in Cheshire of some hundreds of men, a few of whom have left traces elsewhere in the public record but unrecorded here.

A final quibble and then I will revert to very high praise. It is odd that this book ends with the surrender of Chester to Brereton on 3 February 1646. For the war itself had a few months to run, as did Brereton's commission. Before him lay the siege of Lichfield and the endgame across the north Midlands. He was now formally major general for Cheshire, all its contiguous counties and North Wales. The story is told in the fifth of his letter books in Birmingham. It seems sad to leave this coda to the story untold.

However, let's get back to the main point...

Helion have produced a lovely book for a remarkably affordable price; Andrew Abram has written a book based on profound research and very sound judgement, and anyone interested in the English Civil Wars (and not just those who love Cheshire history) will learn a lot from it while being beguiled by its illustrations and tables. Let's celebrate all of that.

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Paul Lay, *Providence Lost: The Rise and Fall of Cromwell's Protectorate*. Head of Zeus, Apollo, 2020. (326 pp., 15 colour illustrations.) ISBN 9781781852569 hardback; 9781781852576 e-book. £30 hardback.

reviewed by Dr Stephen Roberts

Modern studies of the interregnum can be said to have begun with Ivan Roots's *The Great Rebellion*, first published in 1966 and in a number of editions subsequently. It was the first handy narrative textbook that gave equal weight to both the 1640s and the 1650s, the latter decade characterized by Roots as 'an intense period of mingled experiments and expedients too readily dismissed as a mere tottering obstacle to the inevitable Restoration of 1660'. Since the 1970s, there have been many published academic works with commonwealth and protectorate as their focus: biographical studies, local studies, studies of parliaments or particular houses of parliament; of governments and of religious groups; of the army and of the navy.

The commonwealth of 1649–53, the period of England's first and only republic, is perhaps the most immediately appealing of the 'experiments and expedients', because of its arresting mixture of exalted and base motivations. In the aftermath of the regicide, the exultantly militant millenarian vision of Col. Thomas Harrison and the reforming instincts of republican MPs like Henry Marten or Sir Arthur Hesilrige make for a compelling story, even when set against the dogged, resistant conservatism of the lawyers of the Rump Parliament or the venality of Edward Howard, Lord Howard of Escrick. The essence of the protectorate, by contrast, lay in compromise and disappointment, in which genuinely uplifting or invigorating stories are harder to come by, which may help explain why modern academic studies came later to the second half of the 1650s, particularly to the period after 1656, and why treatments for the general reader of rule by the house of Cromwell are scarce. Paul Lay's full-length account of these years has no obvious competitor.

The narrative arc of this book follows that adumbrated in the title. The pun on the (republican) Milton's epic poem might suggest to any prospective reader that this will not be a good read for those seeking a pugnacious

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vindication of the Oliverian years. The opening chapter takes us to modern day Providencia in the western Caribbean, an island part of Colombia but much closer geographically to Nicaragua. Ambitious plans (hatched and nurtured in England) to colonize the island were scotched when the Spanish invaded the island in 1641, but the importance of the Providence Island Company in any case lay in its focus for Puritan imaginings of what a godly state, providing leadership to the European protestant cause, might look like. From this Caribbean-focused venture, and other foci of opposition to the government of Charles I, sprang the determination and confidence that drove MPs and peers of the Long Parliament to challenge the king, wage war against him and ultimately to try and execute him for treason against his own people. Providence Island is an apt place for Paul Lay to outline the making of English Puritanism as a political and not simply a confessional cause, not least because a significant element of his book is about the breaking of it; and in the undoing of it, another Caribbean island, Hispaniola, now containing the two sovereign states of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, played a very significant part. The Western Design, the concrete assertion of Cromwell's claim that 'truly, your great enemy is the Spaniard ... a natural enemy', intended as a triumph even to transcend the crowning mercy of Worcester in 1651, instead expired as a sultry, disease-ridden fiasco, and with it went much of the English Puritan internationalist dream.

The structure of this book foregrounds the Western Design as a paradigm of all that went wrong with the protectorate: the military might, the global reach, the Puritan vision, but also the hubris, the weak links in terms of resources and people, and the disappointment. The key episodes in domestic policy are subsequently given chapter-length treatment: the unsuccessful but enervating royalist plots by a tiny minority of England's 'natural rulers'; the major-generals and their limitations; the distinctly under-achieving three parliaments summoned by Protectors Oliver and Richard; the affair of James Naylor and the vengeful, unforgiving response it evoked in the ruling class both in the West Country and in London; the to-ing and fro-ing over the offer to Oliver of the crown. All are treated with verve and in a fair and balanced way, with judicious use and citation of the standard sources. There is a high level of accuracy in Paul Lay's writing, and ample reference is made to current scholarship on the 1650s. Few will quarrel with

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the judgments reached in each chapter, echoing as they do the conclusions reached by most historians down the years.

The general impression made on this reader is that overall the author is not entirely sympathetic towards his cast of characters. The depiction of Puritanism here is a pessimistic one, with the assessment of episodes in its governmental manifestation tending towards the negative. There is admittedly plenty of material on hand to bolster this line of interpretation: the expedient of the major-generals 'stained' the protectorate; Naylor's interrogation by committee was a 'show trial'; we are (gratuitously?) reminded of Macaulay's celebrated verdict that bear-baiting was banned not because of pain to the bears but because of the pleasure it gave spectators. There is an emphasis on the embattled regime in Whitehall and Westminster. More could have been made of the experience of provincial England: in the cities, where corporations recovered self-confidence after the devastation of war, so that civic culture revived; or in the shires, where the evidence points towards a broadly tolerant religious climate, even if details of the weekly parish liturgy remain obscure. Mention is made of the church at Staunton Harold in Leicestershire, described here as 'the only Anglican church to be constructed during the interregnum'. It was not the only parish church to be constructed: the Puritan Thomas Pury built the church at Taynton, Gloucestershire, in 1657. Shirley's church survives intact; Pury's was extended and altered beyond recognition in the nineteenth century.

Religion was at the heart of the protectorate, as it lay deep in Cromwell's own heart, and the author gives due emphasis to Calvinist predestination and the doctrine of providence. In his treatment of both these subjects he captures their bleak and alien aspects, but misses some of their subtleties. For the Calvinist, God has indeed preordained that a minority of humanity shall be saved, but it is not given to humanity to know who the elect are, and it is the duty of the chosen to evangelize tirelessly in a universal calling so that God's harvest can be brought in. And the essence of providence is that it has a meaning and purpose determined by God. It cannot be 'lost', only pondered and learned from. Paul Lay chooses to end his book, as he began it, in the Caribbean, leaving us with a reminder of slavery and

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oppression in Jamaica, as if the Cromwellians were the sole begetters and nurturers of that dismal legacy.

For this reviewer, it seems a pity that the author is unable to reach a more positive assessment of his subject. I was faintly reminded of the comment long ago that Hugh Trevor-Roper's biography of Archbishop Laud was comparable to a biography of Wordsworth by a man who didn't like poetry. However, as a very laudable presentation of the Cromwellian protectorate to a general readership it deserves to succeed, and should be read by serious students of the period.

Arran Johnston, ***'Essential Agony': The Battle of Dunbar 1650***, Helion & Company, 2019 (228 pp.) ISBN 978-1-912866-58-8, £25 paperback.

reviewed by Dr Ismini Pells

The Battle of Dunbar is, as readers of this journal will no doubt know, regarded as one of Oliver Cromwell's greatest military victories. Fought on 3 September 1650, his force of around 11,000 men representing the new Commonwealth of England crushed a numerically superior force of probably 12,500 – perhaps as many as 22,000 – Scotsmen under the command of David Leslie. The latter fought in defence of the Scottish Covenant, designed to protect reformed religion in the Scottish Kirk, and the claim of Charles Stuart (the future Charles II) to the throne of 'Great Britain'.

However, as Arran Johnston notes, there is far more to the encounter than a tale of two generals: 'whilst the generals can plan the finest tactical operations their minds can devise it is still the plain old soldier who has to execute them. Whether such men are tired or unhappy, angry or enthused can alter the direction of affairs ... So too can a failed harvest, a ship lost at sea, or a badly constructed sentence' (p. x). This book is a comprehensive new account of one of the major battles of the Civil Wars, one which reassesses interpretations of the events on the ground, yet is far from reducing the encounter to a simple map 'with neatly labelled blocks

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following the smooth courses of directional arrows' (p. xi). For this, Johnston is to be commended.

Dr Johnston is ideally placed to write a new history of the Battle of Dunbar. He is the founding director of the Scottish Battlefields Trust, and as well as authoring a number of books on Scottish military history, has been a consultant to a number of high-profile heritage/media organisations and is regularly involved in battlefield interpretation and re-enactment.

The book begins with a narrative of the Battle of Preston on 17–19 August 1648. As a prologue, this makes for a dramatic opening and the events are well told, though the essential point of this to explain that this incident taught Cromwell that 'he could defeat the Scots' is perhaps curious. None of the senior command in the 1648 Scottish army went on to fight at Dunbar. If Cromwell had gained any prior assessment as to how 'the Scots' fought before Dunbar, then Marston Moor might have been a better example, where many of Cromwell's future adversaries had fought in alliance with him.

Nevertheless, the first chapter provides a clear and concise overview of the evolution of the Covenanter movement: from the Bishops' Wars against Charles I's religious reforms of 1639–40, via the Solemn League and Covenant that led to Scottish intervention in the Civil Wars on the side of parliament in 1644, and finally to the rift that occurred between the erstwhile allies that led to some former Covenanters to intervene in the 'Second' Civil War on the side of the king in 1648. Similarly, the second chapter provides a succinct analysis of the tensions in Scottish politics after the regicide between the Covenanters and the overt royalists, and how Charles negotiated these to secure Scottish support for his attempt to regain the throne in 1650.

This is followed by a chapter detailing the military capabilities of the two armies that were to meet at Dunbar and their preparations, from the moment of Charles's reception in Scotland to the march north of the English army. The generous military details will ensure the book's appeal to re-enactors and military enthusiasts, but also provide a useful overview to non-specialists as to how early modern armies functioned. This is further

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complemented by colour illustrations of the uniforms and equipment of the various types of soldiers and of the regimental and troop flags on both sides.

From here, the book moves on to the Dunbar campaign itself: there are chapters covering Cromwell's advance into Scotland, the skirmishing between the two armies in the days leading up to the battle, the manoeuvres on 2 September and the events of the actual battle. Here the realities of seventeenth-century campaigning are made starkly clear, especially the bad weather, sickness and lack of food that could so easily demoralise troops. The prose in these sections may, at times, perhaps be a little purple for some readers' tastes, as the author seeks to bring these realities to life. Some of the details are fantastic, such as the description taken from a contemporary letter of the soldiers cooking porridge in their helmets. Others are more frustrating, such as the vignettes of the one-handed English soldier's cheekiness towards Leslie when captured, and the exchange between a Scottish trooper and Cromwell when the former narrowly missed shooting the latter. These add colour to the narrative but without evidential references, they come across as entertaining anecdotes rather than reliable occurrences. In contrast, the number of photographs taken by the author himself is testament to the diligence with which he has visited all the relevant locations and his knowledge of the terrain shines through. The pause for reflection to make the reader contemplate just what defeat at Dunbar would have meant for Cromwell is well-placed. Johnston's analysis of the personal, political and military factors that induced Leslie to take the momentous decision to come down off Doon Hill – traditionally written off as 'a classic military blunder' – is convincing. Likewise, Johnston's rejection of the Historic Environment Scotland repositioning of the battlefield and general concurrence with the 'mainstream' interpretation may offer few novelties, but the resulting argument is persuasive.

The final chapter on the aftermath of the battle and epilogue narrative of the events at Worcester, precisely one year later, are an excellent reminder that Dunbar resulted in unfinished business. Too often, battle accounts neglect to adequately consider the consequences of military encounters for the soldiers who actually fought in them. In particular, Johnston draws on the Scottish Soldiers Archaeology Project (to which he contributed) for the fate of the Scottish soldiers captured at Dunbar. This project uncovered the

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remains of the Scottish prisoners of war who died in incarceration in Durham Cathedral and Castle, and traced the descendants of the survivors who were sent as indentured servants to America. Johnston observes that this project demonstrated that ‘battlefields can be connecting points in our historical experience. Out of the bloodshed can come community, even hundreds of years on’ (p. xii). This is a sentiment to which members of the Cromwell Association might well relate.

Miki Garcia, *The Caribbean Irish: How the Slave Myth was made*. Chronos Books, Winchester, 2018, (223 pp.) ISBN 978-1-78904-268-9. £14.99 paperback.

reviewed by Professor John Morrill

This is a well-intentioned book, but it cannot be recommended to Cromwellians because of its fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the aftermath of the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland. It is well intentioned because it wants to deal with a dangerous and ugly lie (‘myth’ is not correct) that there were white (Irish) as well as black (African) slaves in the sugar and tobacco plantations, and the white slaves prospered and the black slaves did not – proof of their intrinsic inferiority. This vile lie is all over neo-fascist media in the USA and this book seeks to slay it, principally by showing that there were no white slaves. Up to 108,000 Irish, says Miki Garcia, were transported to the Americas and the Caribbean, but as indentured servants not as slaves, and although conditions were harsh, they were not dehumanising.

The book covers the two hundred years from the 1630s to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire and focuses on the British Caribbean with sideways glances at Virginia and the slave states of mainland America. But it takes the (re)conquest of Ireland in the decade after Cromwell’s arrival there in 1649 as the main launching pad, and it is this aspect that readers of *Cromwelliana* will probably be most interested in.

The book is in four parts: ‘Before it all happened’; ‘Life in the Tropics’; ‘Caribbean Islands’; and ‘Colonialism in Question’, and it is very repetitious

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and long-winded. It is based on an extensive reading of the best secondary sources (although key articles are missed, most notably by Kristen Block and Jenny Shaw (*Past and Present* 2011). In fact, in the February 2020 edition of *Past and Present*, Sonia Tycho has published an article, a precursor of her book *Captured Consent: Forced Labour and the rise of the freedom of contract* which will deal far more effectively and accurately [with this subject] than this book. The preface of *The Irish Caribbean* speaks of research in the archives around the Caribbean, but all the footnotes are to secondary sources.

The book is best on describing physical conditions in the plantations and giving some sense about how some of the Irish, who had been sent as prisoners of war or just as ‘vagrants’ for a few years of mandatory service, subsequently made very prosperous lives for themselves.

But on the 1650s the book is really weak. Its use of language is poor. There are no ‘tribes’ in Ireland; invocation of ‘ethnic cleansing’ is anachronistic and inappropriate; there is terrible chronological muddle; John Thurloe was secretary of state, not secretary to the council of state. Miki Garcia knows the Act of Settlement (1652) which is aspirational but not the Act of 1653 that laid down the detailed regulations. She thinks that all Irish who were not killed or transported were herded into Connacht, which they weren’t. The author also thinks eighty per cent of the land was taken from Catholic Irish and given to Protestant English (it was about forty per cent which is shocking enough, but most of those who worked the confiscated land were Irish).

Far more demobilised veterans were given assisted passages to Catholic Europe than were sent as indentured servants across the Atlantic. The number sent by that route is not known but was closer to 10,000 than the 100,000 claimed on pp. 14–15. There were Protestants who would have liked to clear Ireland of Catholics, but fewer than the number of Catholics who wanted to clear Ireland of Protestants. Cromwellians need to confront some unpalatable truths about the campaigns of 1649–53 and their aftermath. But there are now a lot of books that work with facts not myths. This book seeks to challenge lies with myth. Readers can do better elsewhere.

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by Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons

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by Professor Peter Gaunt

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N.B. This listing was compiled in spring 2020 during the coronavirus crisis and lockdown. While the coverage of national and international titles is largely unaffected, it has proved impossible to provide the normal broad coverage of regional and county journals issued by assorted local historical and archaeological societies. That is generally undertaken by directly and physically searching the holdings of a clutch of academic libraries, but they are all currently closed, and in most cases local societies do not keep their websites up to date or provide access to, or a contents list for, the current edition of their journal. Accordingly, many regional and county journals for 2019 which appeared later than spring last year (when the previous listing for *Cromwelliana* was compiled) and those for 2020 which appeared during the opening months of the year have proved elusive, though it is hoped that the listing in next year's edition of our journal will cover this lacuna.

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