

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CROMWELL ASSOCIATION

The Protector's Pen

Cromwell
Day 2015

National
Civil War
Centre

Reformation
Wall, Geneva

Exhibitions,
Book & Play
Reviews

Vol 17 Issue 2
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CROMWELL DAY



NATIONAL CIVIL WAR CENTRE



SAMUEL PEPYS EXHIBITION



MAGNA CARTA EXHIBITION



GENEVA



Front Cover : Statue of
Cromwell outside Houses of
Parliament

*(Courtesy of
Maxine Forshaw)*

If you have not received an email from the Association in the last few months, please send your current email address to robbins_P1@sky.com headed 'Cromwell Association email', and provide your name and mailing address in the body of the email.

The best email addresses for communication with the Association are that of the Chairman plittle@histparl.ac.uk and for membership and financial enquiries gbushx@hotmail.com. The email address on the website is not an efficient means for members to contact us.

President	: Peter Gaunt
Chairman	: Patrick Little
Treasurer	: Geoffrey Bush
Membership Officer	: Paul Robbins

The Protector's Pen

Chairman's Little Note



Members of the Cromwell Association at Basing House for the AGM, April 2015

Welcome to the summer issue of *The Protector's Pen*. This time we are mostly showcasing the many and varied events and publications concerning the civil war and interregnum that seem to be a feature of this year. So there are reviews of a popular historical novel set in 1654, an exhibition on Magna Carta (which was revered in our period) and a revival of the classic Caryl Churchill play, *Light Shining from Buckinghamshire*, centred on the Putney Debates. Other pieces look forward to conferences and exhibitions planned for the summer and also introduce the new civil war museum at Newark. I'm pleased to report that the Newark museum is keen to work with us; members will receive a 50% discount on the entry price on production of a membership card. Our AGM in 2016 will be hosted by the museum.

The Association has undertaken some more work on the Marston Moor memorial, which suffered in the very cold weather a few years ago, and the parish council is to tidy up the surrounding area. We have also been busy with the new schools' initiative, and our first teachers' study day will have taken place at Cambridge by the time you read this.

The main study day, to be held in association with the 'Dissenting Histories' group on 3rd October 2015 at City Temple in London, promises to be a cracker. Please see the enclosed leaflet for further details and a booking form. Note that payment can be made by cheque or online at (www.olivercromwell.org/whats_new.htm).

Two matters of housekeeping. Our appeal for a membership officer has been successful, and Paul Robbins (a faithful Cromwellian and a familiar face at our events) has taken over this role. Geoffrey Bush, our new treasurer, asks that subscriptions be paid promptly, as this greatly assists the administration of the Association.

Patrick Little
Chairman

The Protector's Pen

Cromwell Day: 3rd September 2015

I am very pleased to tell you that we are returning to the Palace of Westminster for our annual Cromwell Day service this year; and as Parliament is not in session until the following week, we can return to our traditional time and date as well.



The service will start at 3pm on Cromwell Green, just outside Westminster Hall, with Oliver's statue as the backdrop. We have been asked to congregate in Westminster Hall at 2.30pm before being escorted through to the Green. Please bring your new membership card with you, as you will have to show it to the staff at the top of the ramp to the Visitor Entrance by the St Stephen's Gate. Everyone will then have to pass through airport-style security before proceeding further. Please also fill in the enclosed form to

tell us that you will be coming, as the palace authorities will only admit those who appear on their list of names.

The address will be made by Dr David Smith of Selwyn College, University of Cambridge. The wreath will be laid at the statue by our president, Professor Peter Gaunt, as usual. Please bear in mind that the service lasts around 45 minutes and it is necessary to stand for that time. There will be a few chairs available for those who find this difficult - please indicate on the form if you require such assistance, and also if you are disabled, as special arrangements may have to be made for you to gain access to the Green. Members are more than welcome to visit the Jubilee Café, off Westminster Hall, for refreshments after the service.

The return to Cromwell Green has not been straightforward, and has required a great deal of careful negotiation over recent years. We are back in our traditional location this year, so please come along and join in!

The Cromwell Day visit will take place on the morning of Thursday 3rd September. This year we have arranged a guided tour of early modern London with a qualified Blue Badge Guide, entitled 'The City of London's East Side Story', and promising 'a glimpse into the seventeenth century world'. We meet at 10.45am outside Aldgate underground station (NB not Aldgate East), and the cost is £7, payable to the guide on the day. The tour leaves at 11pm sharp, and lasts an hour. It finishes at Monument tube station, which is on the Circle/District line to Westminster.



Please note that numbers are limited to 20, and this event will have to be booked (on a first come, first served basis) on the booking form for Cromwell Day.

Timetable:

- 10:45 Meet at Aldgate Underground Station
- 11:00 Guided tour of early modern London with a qualified Blue Badge Guide, entitled 'The City of London's East Side Story'
- 12:00 Break for lunch (own arrangements)
- 14:30 Meet Westminster Hall to be escorted to the Green
- 15:00 Service on Cromwell Green
- 16:00 Tea at Jubilee Café, Westminster Hall

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HOW MEMBERS CAN HELP INCREASE THE ASSOCIATION'S INCOME AT NO COST TO THEMSELVES!

The Association has a major advantage in being a registered charity in that we can participate in the Gift Aid scheme. We can reclaim from HM Revenue and Customs 25p for every £1 of subscription and donation from UK taxpayers. For us to make claims in respect of members' payments, UK taxpayers need to complete and sign the Gift Aid declaration which is on the reverse side of the membership renewal form. I know it is one more chore, but the refunds make a major difference to our finances!

By the way, if you have already filled in a Gift Aid declaration, and your details remain unchanged, then it is not necessary to complete a new one each time. However if your details have changed (eg a new address), please submit a new form.

The Protector's Pen

Cromwell Association AGM 2015 : Basing House

It was a treat to make a return visit to Hampshire for our AGM, and the weather was more like June than April! In the morning we assembled at the Lychpit Community Hall for the formal proceedings. The hall is a converted 17th century barn, possibly constructed from bricks taken from the siege of Basing House, and provided modern and comfortable accommodation. The AGM saw the election of Geoffrey Bush as our new treasurer, and the re-election of most of the existing officers and trustees. Dr David Smith and Mark Mehaffey stepped down after their three year term as trustees. The lecture, on Hampshire in the Civil War, was given by our old friend, Alan Turton. After a splendid lunch, we relocated to the nearby ruins of Basing House, where Alan took us on a fascinating guided tour of what was one of the largest private houses of its day. We visited the Tythe Barn, the outworks and the remains of the old and new houses, destroyed after Cromwell's successful siege in October 1645.



New Information Board, Basing House (courtesy Simon Blake)



Basing House Lego Model, entrance gatehouse

The day ended with the unveiling of the new information board, funded by the Association. My thanks to Alan and his wife Nicola for being our hosts and helping in so many ways to make the day a success.

Patrick Little

Merchandise

Full details of the Association's merchandise, including the Parker Vector Rollerball pen, can be found on the form at the back of this Newsletter.



Cromwelliana

The latest edition of Cromwelliana, the annual Journal of the Cromwell Association, is now in print; this year the journal has a military theme as well as including the latest Book and Journal Bibliographies.

Cromwelliana

The Journal of
The
Cromwell Association



2015

The Protector's Pen

National Maritime Museum Exhibition

SAMUEL PEPYS
**PLAGUE, FIRE
REVOLUTION**
SAMUEL PEPYS

20 November 2015 to 28 March 2016

Samuel Pepys was one of the most colourful and appealing characters of the 17th century and witness to the great events that shaped Stuart Britain, brilliantly brought to life in his famous diary. He lived through a time of turmoil which saw kings fighting for their crowns, the devastation of medieval London by plague, fire and war and its resurrection as a world city. He was a naval mastermind, a gossip and socialite and a lover of music, theatre, fine living - and women! He fought for survival on the operating table and in the cut-throat world of public life and politics, successfully navigating his way to wealth and status until his luck, intimately entwined with the King's fortunes, finally ran out.

Using the voice and personality of Samuel Pepys, the exhibition will explore and interpret the period from the execution of

Charles I in 1649 to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. This was a formative era in British history which saw the repositioning of the monarchy and the development of Britain's place as a maritime, economic and political force on the world stage. Samuel Pepys: Plague, Fire, Revolution will consist of 200 paintings and objects from museums, galleries and private collections across Britain and beyond, split into eight sections - Trial and Execution, Republic and Crisis, King and Crown, Court Pleasure, Plague and Fire, War and Navy, Science and Society, and Religion and Revolution.

Alongside the exhibition, the museum is hosting a full series of walks, talks, courses and evening events.

On Thursday 26 November, the museum will be open late for an evening of diary reading, gin tasting and country dancing. We follow in Pepys' footsteps with a number of themed walks, taking in the sites of Pepys' Greenwich featuring a behind the scenes look at the

archive at the National Maritime Museum. Our popular Maritime Lecture Series will explore all aspects of Pepys' world, from the reasons he kept a diary to the science of the Stuart era.



National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (courtesy of someoneinlondon.com)

* Article, exhibition graphic and Samuel Pepys picture, courtesy of Royal Museums, Greenwich

The Protector's Pen

Which side will you choose?

NATIONAL CIVIL WAR CENTRE NEWARK MUSEUM

It was Britain's deadliest conflict and one which shaped our modern world.

Now the UK's first ever National Civil War Centre - a flagship project by Newark and Sherwood District Council - has opened in Newark.

The amazing £5.4 million attraction, backed by £3.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, is based in the magnificent Grade II* Old Magnus Building, which began life as a Tudor grammar school.



National Civil War Centre (courtesy NCWC)

The epic British Civil Wars were fought across England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland from 1638 to 1652. Newark, held by the Royalists, played a major role, undergoing three sieges. The last of these in 1645-46 caused terrible suffering.

Historians have gained a unique insight into the town's experience with the discovery of a treasure trove of previously unexamined papers in local archives. They reveal how ordinary people coped with being caught in the cross-fire between cavalier, roundhead and the Scots army.



Old Magnus Building, NCWC

This glimpse into the past has been used with state-of-the-art technology and many previously unseen relics to create a unique museum experience. You can feel the weight of period armour on your shoulders and try your hand as a civil war artillery officer. A key aim is to tell the story of the man and woman in the street, as well as the fateful decisions of the power-brokers.

Newark's story has also inspired another UK first innovation - a brilliant augmented reality National Civil War Trail. This £300,000 project tells the story of plague and plot using a specially designed app for smart devices. Featuring lavishly filmed costumed scenes worthy of Hollywood and shot at locations in Newark, visitors are encouraged to explore key civil war sites across the town's fabulous historic landscape.

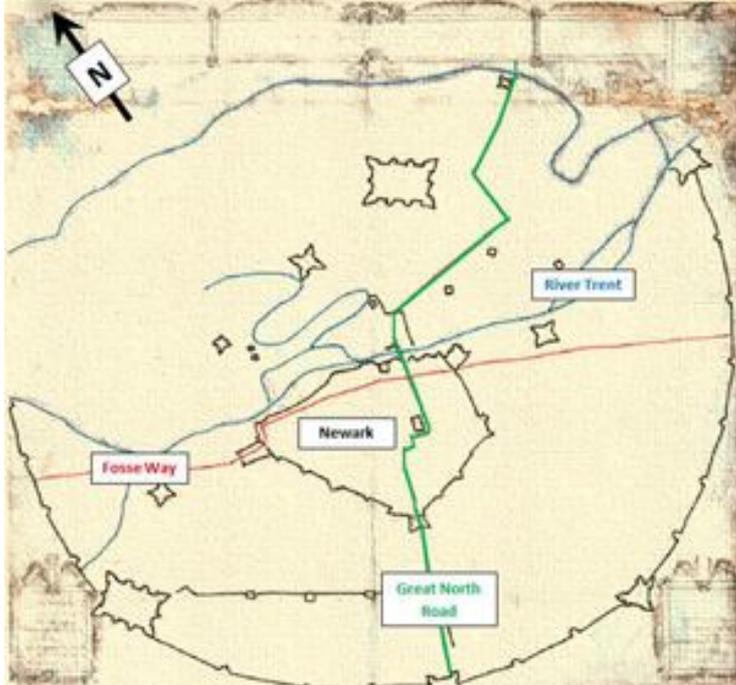
Michael Constantine, Business Manager at the National Civil War Centre, said:

"The British Civil Wars laid the foundations for the nation we are today. Yet for many it is an unknown episode. We want to change that. It was a cruel conflict, not a joust between gentlemen. Brother took up arms against brother and the lives of ordinary people were shattered. In Newark we have the perfect stage to tell this riveting story."

Newark was hotly disputed during the civil wars because it lay at the crossroads of the Great North Road and Fosse Way and provided a key crossing over the River Trent. Parliamentarian forces and their Scottish allies were desperate to oust the

(cont'd)

The Protector's Pen



Newark at the crossroads of the Fosse Way and Great North Road

Royalist garrison and the last siege saw over 16,000 troops seal off the town. An outbreak of typhus and plague added to Newark's woes as the population swelled to 6,000, creating near starvation conditions. A third of the inhabitants died and one in

six buildings were destroyed. Despite this calamity the Royalist garrison refused to surrender. The six month siege finally ended in May 1646 when King Charles ordered them to cease their brave resistance.

About 1,800 half-starved Cavaliers marched out, leaving behind 12 big guns, including a cannon known as "Sweet Lips" from the Parliamentary stronghold of Hull, captured during Newark's second siege and named after a prostitute who catered for both sides.

Richard Darn, Communications Officer, NCWC

Further information:

Opening times : 10am to 5pm daily.

Price £7 adults, £3 children, £6 concessions.

The town trail app can be freely downloaded on Google Play and the iTunes App Store. Search for NCWC.

www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com

 @civilwarcentre

 www.facebook.com/NationalCivilWarCentre

National Civil War Centre,
14 Appleton Gate,
Newark,
NG24 1JY

**NATIONAL
CIVIL WAR
CENTRE**
NEWARK MUSEUM

Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon: an update

Please find outlined below progress and activities for the month of May. As always, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries, suggestions or observations.

The closing date for applications for the post of Trustee has now passed. Interviews were to have been held this month but due to the availability of candidates this has now been moved to June.

Interviews have been held for the position of Museum Assistant. A most enthusiastic applicant has been offered the position and has accepted. The usual administrative checks and processes are being carried out and we hope these will shortly be completed.

I have been working on completing project documentation including the communications plan, project plan and keeping the risk register updated. The development of the project plan has been informed by detailed discussions with professionals in legal, property, IT and other specialist areas. These discussions will continue throughout the life of the project. These documents will be put to the Project Board which meets on 21st May.

I have started developing a volunteer database. This will be augmented by the appointment of a Volunteers' Coordinator as part of a Cambridgeshire-wide project. We expect to get some dedicated time from one of the posts. Although not directly involved in the recruitment, I know the interviews have been held.

I continue to make links with partners and stakeholders and attended the Cambridgeshire Museum's Forum. I will be making further contact with some of these to develop our thinking particularly in the area of volunteers and running a museum as a trust. This morning I spent some time with Ramsey Rural Museum discussing their set-up and how they manage an organisation run entirely by volunteers.

I have also been in contact with the new Civil War Museum in Newark and Cromwell House in Ely, and have plans to meet with both in the future to discuss partnership development and joint promotion.

Fiona O'Mahony
Museum Project Officer
Fiona.O'Mahony@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The Protector's Pen

Review of Exhibition - Magna Carta: Law, Liberty, Legacy



The Magna Carta Exhibition is on at the British Library from 13th March to 1st September 2015. Subtitled, *Law, Liberty, Legacy* it is well organized, thorough and penetrating. It is the sort of exhibition that is worth taking your time over. To get the best from it you should allow yourself a good 2 hours going round and possibly more. All the displays are well signposted and explained. The audio guide for the exhibition (at £3 extra) provides a great deal of additional expert commentary and background. It does greatly enhance the visiting experience and is to be recommended. Be advised though, there are just a couple of opportunities to sit down once inside. Sensible footwear is recommended.

After negotiating your way to the exhibition entrance (it's the usual timed entry slot procedure), the world becomes much darker. You plunge into a journey from 13th century civil strife through the 17th century to today via the American Revolution. You also plunge into actual semi-darkness for much of the time. Owing to the age and fragile condition of many of the artefacts on display (notably the medieval documents), lighting levels for the medieval portion of the exhibition are adequate but low.

The exhibition is divided into 9 sections. Sections 1 to 3 deal with the background to Magna Carta (the Great Charter), its mixed fortunes between 1215 and 1217 and embedding into English Statute Law in 1297. It explains the political background of 1215 in some detail and steps through the process of the next 2 years in a very straightforward manner. This involves the issue of the Magna Carta in 1215, its annulment by the Pope a few weeks later and its re-issue after King John's death by Henry III in 1217 to get the Barons back onside. The point is well made that had King John not died in 1216, he and the Barons would have slugged it out in their ongoing civil war and Magna Carta would have probably only been an obscure footnote in history.

Section 4 (English Liberties) is likely to be of most interest to Cromwell Association members. It focuses on the 17th century and the struggle between Parliament and the Crown. Centre-stage, and rightly so, is Parliamentary and lawyer, Sir Edward Coke. For him, Magna Carta safeguarded individual liberties and enshrined within its provisions the ancient constitution of England. It was a major source for his work in creating the 1628 Petition of Right. This placed some limitation on the power of Charles I. During the Civil War, Magna Carta was appealed to by both sides and it was invoked at the trial of the King. By the end of the century it had become a potent symbol of freedom and rights.

From Section 5 to Section 7 the emphasis moves from England to the wider world. Section 5 (Colonies and Revolutions) highlights how Magna Carta became a key element in the laws and constitutional thinking of several American colonies. Forming part of the ideological backdrop to the American Revolution, its resonance is seen in the United States Bill of Rights of 1791. As a counterweight to North America, where it had a substantial impact, this section also looks at its rejection by revolutionary France. For the French, having cast out the past by abolishing the monarchy, rights based on ancient documents were of less moment than those declared to exist by reason. In the contemporary British documents displayed, there is much crowing as to the superiority of British liberties compared to those of the French.

Section 6 (Radicalism and Reform) and 7 (Empire and After) take the story to the modern day. Section 6 illustrates how in the 18th century the idea of Magna Carta came into the popular consciousness and was used by various groups to challenge the authority of Parliament. The Chartists used it in their campaign to extend the franchise. Taking this forward, looking at four centuries of the British Empire from 1600 onwards, Section 7 explores the ways, sometimes contradictory, that Magna Carta could be invoked by expatriate Britons, colonial governors and colonial subjects. As part of this there is an audio extract from Nelson Mandela's trial where he invokes the spirit of the Charter.

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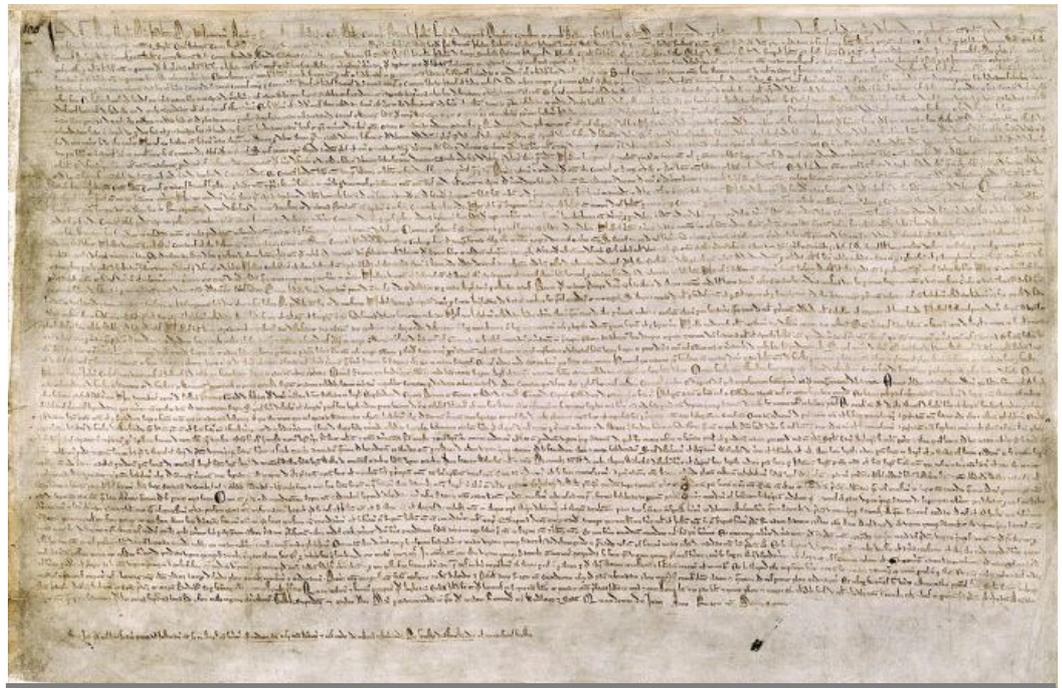
The final two sections in the exhibition wrap things up in a neat and tidy fashion. Section 8 (Magna Carta in the Modern Age) examines the influence of the Charter upon documents such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and shows how its original clauses have been superseded in British law by other legislation or repealed. Its importance lies in being a touchstone not only for what it said, but just as importantly for what later ages believed it had said.

The final section, Section 9 (Magna Carta Revealed), has one of the four remaining 1215 copies of Magna Carta as the centrepiece of its display. As with Sections 1 to 3, the light level is reduced to help conserve the manuscript. Despite this (and the actual document does look every year of its age), you really do get a frisson of emotion at this point looking at the genuine article.

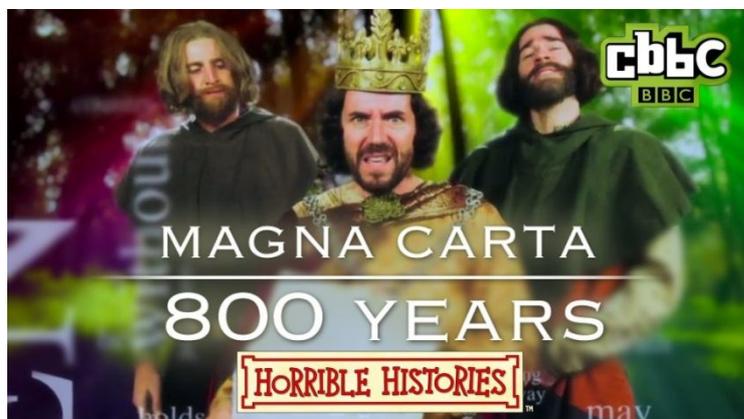
That's the end of the exhibition but it really isn't just old documents and the like. There has been a serious attempt to make the exhibition as accessible as can be accomplished whilst retaining the core and substance of the subject. The layout of the sections creates a flow that draws you along gradually from start to finish. Where possible, modern graphics are used to illustrate points. There are short visual clips (2 minutes) of experts explaining elements of the display. Other Magna Carta related material is provided as archive footage of pageants and similar.

For Association members, the visual extract not to miss is near the end in Section 8, for it features (briefly) Oliver Cromwell himself. This extract is from a Horrible History programme that gives the history of Magna Carta from 1215 to date but is less than charitable to Cromwell. Cromwell appears and is given the Charter itself. At this point he declares, "Magna Carta! Magna Farta!" and then throws it away. Think not. When King John died, it's not Oliver Cromwell they used the mould for again, it's Charles I.

John Newland



The Magna Carta (originally known as the Charter of Liberties) of 1215, written in iron gall ink on parchment in medieval Latin, using standard abbreviations of the period, authenticated with the Great Seal of King John



Further information:

<http://www.bl.uk/>
@britishlibrary
www.facebook.com/britishlibrary

The British Library
96 Euston Road
London
NW1 2DB

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The Reformation Wall in Geneva

The statue of Cromwell, that forms part of the Reformation Wall in Geneva, is illustrated on the Association's web site. Cromwell though is only one of a number of figures on this huge memorial that is over 100m long and commemorates Geneva's role in the Reformation. Although John Calvin was not born in Geneva, the work was inaugurated in 1909 to mark the 400th anniversary of his birth, and the work took eight years to complete. The



Oliver Cromwell on the Reformation Wall, Geneva
(courtesy John Goldsmith)

Reformation had started in Switzerland with the 'affair of the sausages' - an unlikely sounding event which describes a dispute over what could and couldn't be eaten in Lent. Geneva was one of the last cities in Switzerland to convert to Protestantism, which it did in 1536, just before Calvin arrived. He became regarded as the leader of the Reformation and remained there until his death in 1564.

Calvin is one of the four central figures of the monument, each standing about 5m tall. The other three are William Farel, Théodore de Bèze and John Knox, all of them closely linked to the city. The other six statues represent individuals who spread the Reformation elsewhere. Gaspard de Coligny in France, William the Silent in the Low Countries, Frederick William of Brandenburg in Germany, Roger Williams in New England, Stephen Bocskay in

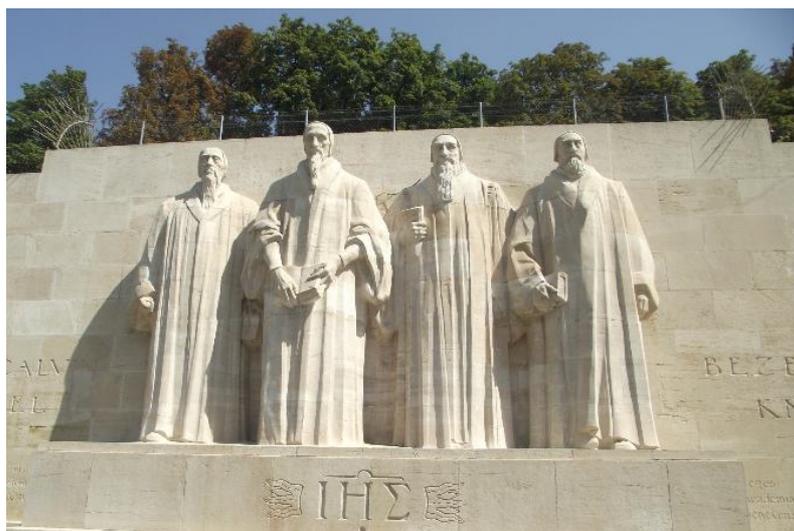
Hungary and Oliver Cromwell in Great Britain.

The connection is seldom made directly between Cromwell and the Reformation, and we often fail in this country to look at Cromwell and the civil wars in the context of what was happening in Europe, but even so there are probably other earlier and stronger contenders to represent the Reformation in England. Is it possible that the enthusiasm for the tercentenary of Cromwell in 1899, and the statue at Westminster, prompted his making the grade in Geneva?

There are also smaller relief panels on the Wall including the Presentation of the Bill of Rights to William of Orange by Parliament in 1689, and of John Knox teaching at St Giles Cathedral.

What this enormously impressive monument fails to make full reference to is the significance of its site, leaning against the city's ancient defensive wall, and the place where the attack by the catholic Duke of Savoy was successfully repulsed in December 1602. The local population and the town militia combined together and the event has become part of Geneva's folklore. Each year the *Fête de l'Escalade* is celebrated with re-enactments and chocolate cooking pots filled with sweets to represent the cauldron of hot soup poured over the Savoyard attackers. Why can't we commemorate the English Civil War with confectionery?

Geneva takes great pride in its role in the Reformation and is home to the International Museum of the Reformation which is next to the cathedral and a short walk from the Parc des Bastions. Perhaps properly, Cromwell barely gets a mention there. Should you ever find yourself in the city, it is worth taking time to visit the Wall and the Museum. It is also probably the only city in the world where the tourist postcard racks include a reproduction 17th century print of Calvin.



William Farel, John Calvin, Théodore de Bèze, and John Knox.
Reformation Wall, Geneva

John Goldsmith

The Protector's Pen

Play Review

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire

On 21st May, I entered the National Theatre in a state of high excitement! I was going to see a play called 'Light Shining in Buckinghamshire' which was about the impact of the Civil War on ordinary lives.

The play was written by Caryl Churchill and directed by Lyndsey Turner, and was timed to coincide with the election period. In fact on election night, in an extra performance, National Theatre actors read from the landmark 1647 Putney Debates about the contract between government and the people.

On the night we saw the play, my friend and I attended a talk before the actual play, in which Diane Purkiss and John Rees discussed the Civil War, and more specifically the protest movements that sprung up in the 1640s and 50s. Rather unfairly, Dr Purkiss was asked to give a 3 minute explanation of the causes of the Civil War, which she managed rather well. It was a godsend for my friend, who was ignorant of the period.

In fact, my biggest gripe with the play is that it would have been very tough for people with no background in the period to understand. Ms Churchill was trying to create a 'folk' play, telling the story of ordinary people whose lives were turned upside-down by the unrest and rebellion. The core of the play concerns labourers, soldiers, mothers and butchers. The action takes place in village squares, cottages and churches, not courts and palaces, and each scene is a reaction to an off-stage event, which means that unless you have a basic knowledge of these events, it's hard to understand the reaction.

The play therefore comprises a series of vignettes, and the message conveyed was very much that economic hardship was the well-spring of the radical political and religious ideas that gripped the communities. Some of the characters, the gentleman orator who persuaded his workers to fight for Parliament and the working man who followed him and eventually became disillusioned, were based on real people - in this case Abiezer Coppe and Laurence Clarkson. Others stood for the general experience, and included women preachers, Leveller soldiers, widows and even peaceniks. It was a play of two halves, and the first was vastly superior to the second mainly because it included a stirring re-creation of the Putney Debates. The actors playing Ireton and Rainborough were particularly convincing, and the words spoken by Winstanley were from the actual transcript of the debates, which added real poignancy and passion to the scene. Sadly, the second half was rather obscure, focusing on the activities of Digger communities and Ranters and totally losing my friend (and, I suspect, many others) in the process. However, it was a very interesting and enjoyable evening, especially as the play was a co-operation with the NT's Community Company, which seemed very appropriate. There was a huge cast and over half of them were ordinary people who work in ordinary jobs, but who belong to the theatre's Community Company. This meant that phone salesmen, hospital administrators, stay-at-home mums and shop workers were all on stage alongside the actors re-creating this extraordinary moment in our history. That seemed very apt!

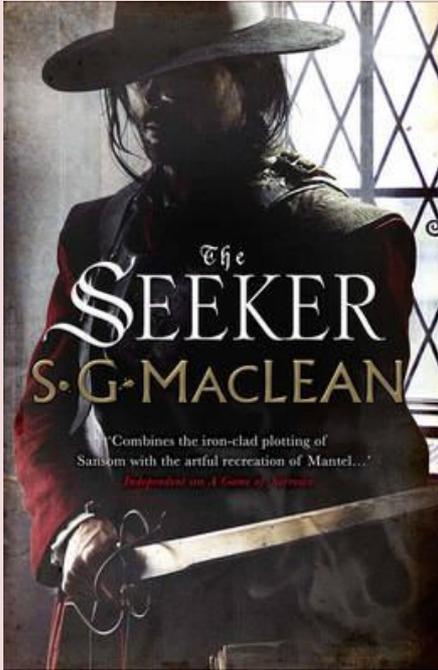
Serrie Meakins



The Protector's Pen

Book Review

The Seeker by S.G. MacLean



Historical fiction can often cause problems for, or apoplexy in, historians. The story of the civil war and its aftermath is so dramatic, why is it necessary to fictionalise it at all is a common response. It would be quite depressing, however, if all fiction had to be set in the present (or even the future) so why not fiction set in the Cromwellian Protectorate?

Novelists from Captain Marryat onwards, and quite likely before,

have found plenty of rich settings for their stories of the civil wars, some more inclined to historical accuracy than others. In the recent past Michael Arnold's Stryker series, set in the English civil wars, are all action adventures; Lindsay Davies' *Rebels and traitors* (2009) attempted to do far too much in the confines of a single novel, and so for me was ultimately unsatisfying. For an earlier period, the court of Henry VIII has had two recent authors picking over it to great acclaim. Hilary Mantel has brought Oliver Cromwell's ancestor, Thomas Cromwell, alive in a way that no one else has; and C.J. Sansom has created a 16th century lawyer-cum-detective, Matthew Shardlake, whose adventures are well-plotted and full of rich detail. So when a publisher's blurb quotes *The Independent* newspaper as describing the author of a new book set in the Protectorate as combining 'the ironclad plotting of Sansom with the artful recreation of Mantel' it is surely worth paying some attention, even if that puff related to the author's previous series, written under the name of Shona MacLean.

The previous series of four novels were set in Scotland and Ulster in the 1620s and 1630s with a central character, Alexander Seaton. Shona MacLean has a PhD in 17th century Scottish history and her knowledge of place, sources and events is used to great effect in creating her hero figure. But either she, or her publisher, felt it was time to move on to what might be potentially a broader market and readership, by setting a novel in the Protectorate, and perhaps as importantly, in London.

In an interview with *The Irish Times* she readily admits that Aberdeen, where she took her doctorate, was self-consciously non Anglocentric in its approach to the War of the Three Kingdoms, and that she had little knowledge of Cromwell, or indeed London, before she started. It is apparent from the outset, and in the interview, that she has an antipathy towards Cromwell, but that should not stop anyone who wants a good page-turning thriller from giving her new book a try.

Her principal character is Damian Seeker, an intelligence officer who reports to John Thurloe, and a civil war veteran prepared to put his life on the line to save Cromwell if necessary. That there were threats on Cromwell's life at the time provides a sound framework for the book, and the plot revolves around the discovery of a dead body in the Palace of Whitehall with a young lawyer standing over it with a knife in his hand. You know straight away that he didn't do it, but the reveal of who did commit the murder, and why, takes the best part of four hundred pages. It is classic crime fiction but the setting and the accompanying sub-plots are imaginative reconstructions of aspects of life in 1654. I was almost put off completely by the introductory historical note, *England in 1654*, so I suggest skipping that altogether, as it even gave me apoplexy, but once into the tale it zipped along.

There are really only two episodes where Cromwell does appear in the narrative, although he is a presence throughout, and despite the author's views of Cromwell, he is not portrayed unsympathetically. Fictional and real characters are mixed throughout the novel and the author makes no attempt to differentiate; why should she? Names and events are thrown in thick and fast, and most readers of historical fiction would be none the wiser as to which was which. The assassination of Dorislaus, the execution of the Marquess of Montrose and the Battle of Dalnaspidal are all referenced, with the assumption that either the reader knows what they are, or even if they do not, their mention will not obstruct the development of the plot. Was there an illicit trade in slaves to the West Indies? I have no idea but it all makes the story work.

By the end of the novel I had warmed considerably not only to the hero of the book but also to the novelist. Of course it isn't history, it doesn't pretend to be, but if it helps to engage readers with 17th century history then it is fine by me. The one thing that would have helped, as with Sansom's Shardlake novels, would have been a note at the end to explain the real events of the period and so encourage further reading.

Published by Quercus; hardback £19.99, in paperback in the autumn £7.99

John Goldsmith

The Protector's Pen

Publications, Exhibitions and Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Details</u>
Jun 27 - Jun 28, 2015	Wallingford, Oxfordshire	English Civil War Society, Re-enactments
Jul - Aug (Saturdays)	Cromwell's House, Ely	Costumed Guided Tour at Oliver Cromwell's House on Saturdays
Aug 07 - Aug 08, 2015	National Civil War Centre	Inaugural Conference of the National Civil War Centre: Mortality, Care & Military Welfare during the British Civil Wars
Aug 29 - Aug 30, 2015	Alton, Hampshire	English Civil War Society, Re-enactments
Mar 13 - Sep 01, 2015	British Library, London	The Magna Carta Exhibition: Law, Liberty, Legacy
Sep 03, 2015	London	Cromwell Association : Cromwell Day Service & Walk 'City of London's East Side Story'
Sep 12- Sep 13, 2015	Oakwell Hall, West Yorkshire	English Civil War Society, Re-enactments
Sep 19, 2015	Rowley's House, Shrewsbury	English Civil War Conference
Oct 03, 2015	City Temple, London	Cromwell Association Study day, 'Cromwell and Religion'
Jul 14 - Oct 19, 2015	National Portrait Gallery	Hidden: An unseen portrait of Oliver Cromwell
Nov 20, 2015 - Mar 28 2016	National Maritime Museum, Greenwich	Exhibition - Samuel Pepys: Plague, Fire and Revolution

All information correct at time of going to press



The Diary & Papers of Henry Townshend, 1640-1663

Edited by Stephen Porter, Stephen K. Roberts & Ian Roy

This new and authoritative edition of what is probably the most important single source for the history of the civil war in Worcestershire includes details of the royalist administration of the county and a vivid eye-witness account of the siege of Worcester in 1646.

Worcestershire Historical Society, new series 25 (2014). ISSN 0141-4577. 351pp. Introduction, illustrations, maps, glossary, biographical notes, index of persons, index of places.

Special discounted price for Cromwell Association members of £24.00 (£32.00 full retail price) plus postage and packing. Available by ordering from website;

<http://www.worcestershirehistoricalsociety.co.uk>

or from Robin Whittaker, 14 Scobell Close, Pershore, Worcs. WR10 1QJ
robin.whittaker@btinternet.com. Quote Cromwell Association Offer.

Stephen Porter's books include *Destruction in the English Civil Wars*, 1994 (reissued as *The Blast of War*, 2011), *London and the Civil War*, 1996, and, with Simon Marsh, *The Battle for London*, 2010. Stephen K. Roberts is editor of the History of Parliament, House of Commons 1640-1660 project and is a vice-president of the Cromwell Association. Ian Roy's wartime childhood was partly spent on a smallholding in West Worcestershire. He has been closely acquainted with the writings of Henry Townshend since 1956, and has made frequent use of them in his studies of civil war themes.

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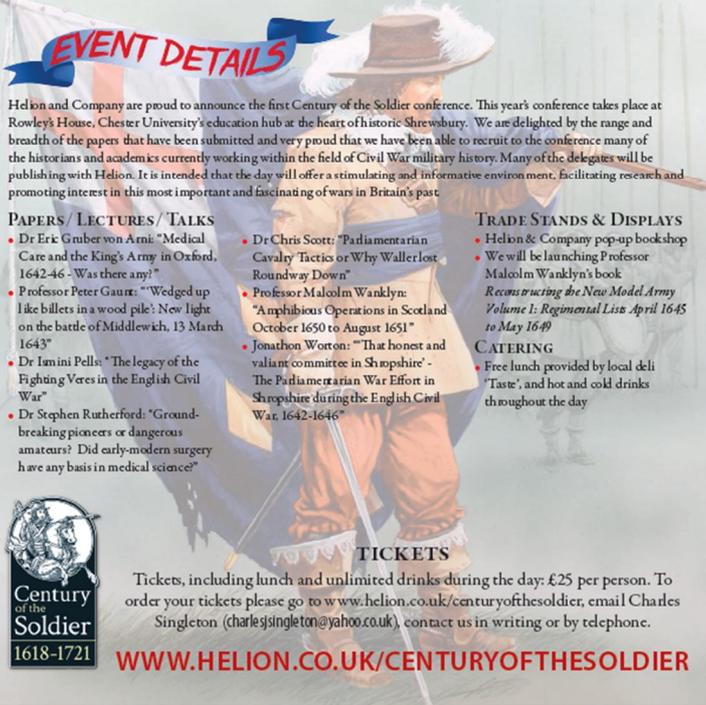
Publications, Exhibitions and Events (cont'd)



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ENGLISH CIVIL WAR CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2015, 10AM-5PM
 ROWLEY'S HOUSE, BARKER STREET, SHREWSBURY, SY1 1QH



Helion and Company are proud to announce the first Century of the Soldier conference. This year's conference takes place at Rowley's House, Chester University's education hub at the heart of historic Shrewsbury. We are delighted by the range and breadth of the papers that have been submitted and very proud that we have been able to recruit to the conference many of the historians and academics currently working within the field of Civil War military history. Many of the delegates will be publishing with Helion. It is intended that the day will offer a stimulating and informative environment, facilitating research and promoting interest in this most important and fascinating of wars in Britain's past.

PAPERS/ LECTURES/ TALKS

- Dr Erik Gruber von Arnim: "Medical Care and the King's Army in Oxford, 1642-46 - Was there any?"
- Professor Peter Gault: "Wedged up like billets in a wood pile: New light on the battle of Middlewich, 13 March 1643"
- Dr Iamini Pells: "The legacy of the Fighting Veres in the English Civil War"
- Dr Stephen Rutherford: "Ground-breaking pioneers or dangerous amateurs? Did early-modern surgery have any basis in medical science?"
- Dr Chris Scott: "Parliamentarian Cavalry Tactics or Why Waller lost Roundway Down"
- Professor Malcolm Wanklyn: "Amphibious Operations in Scotland October 1650 to August 1651"
- Jonathon Worton: "That honest and valiant committee in Shropshire - The Parliamentarian War Effort in Shropshire during the English Civil War, 1642-1646"

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- Helion & Company pop-up bookshop
- We will be launching Professor Malcolm Wanklyn's book *Reconstructing the New Model Army Volume 1: Regimental Lists April 1645 to May 1649*

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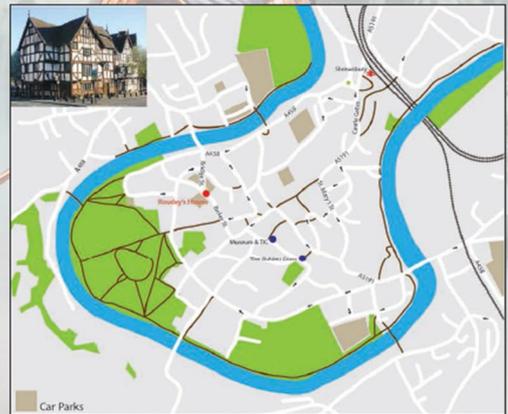
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In the Press

Daily Mirror, 9th March 2015.

Tories will leave us with the smallest army since Oliver Cromwell, Ed Balls warned (9 March 2015)

Ed Balls today set out the choices facing the Tories if George Osborne sticks to his "destructive" cuts programme. Tory spending cuts will leave the UK with its smallest Army since the days of Oliver Cromwell, Ed Balls warned....

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/tories-leave-smallest-army-oliver-5298182>



A proud moment for the Cromwell family... (courtesy Serrie Meakins)



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