

CROMWELLIANA 2012

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Editor: Dr Maxine Forshaw

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EDITOR'S NOTE

2011 was the 360th anniversary of the Battle of Worcester and was marked by Laura Stewart's address to the Association on Cromwell Day with her paper on 'Oliver Cromwell: a Scottish Perspective'.

'Risen from Obscurity – Cromwell's Early Life' was the subject of the study day in Huntingdon in October 2011 and three papers connected with the day are included here. Reflecting this subject, the cover illustration is the picture 'Cromwell on his Farm' by Ford Madox Brown (1821–1893), painted in 1874, and reproduced here courtesy of National Museums Liverpool. The painting can be found in the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight Village, Wirral, Cheshire.

In this edition of Cromwelliana, it should be noted that the bibliography of journal articles covers the period spring 2009 to spring 2012, addressing gaps in the past couple of years.

It is with sadness we report the death earlier this year of Trewin Copplestone, past Chairman and Vice President of the Association.

Note on the cover picture 'Cromwell on his Farm' (reprinted here with the kind permission of National Museums Liverpool): *In this lively painting Oliver Cromwell, the future Lord Protector of England, is shown as a Huntingdonshire farmer, before his rise to power during the English Civil War. His old, pale horse comes to a halt on the lanes of Huntingdon near his home. The local church can be seen in the background across the River Ouse, and Cromwell's wife and child observe him from the terrace of his house. Cromwell and his horse occupy the calm centre of the painting. Although everyday life goes on around them – animals browse, pigs escape, and the maid shouts to him while holding a squawking duck – Cromwell stares prophetically into the future, his place held in his Book of Common Prayer. There is lots of symbolism to ponder in this painting: the oak sapling in Cromwell's hand, in place of his forgotten whip, represents his physical or moral strength and future power. The bonfire represents divine wrath against Royalist England. Cromwell was one of the great leaders, hero-worshipped by Thomas Carlyle, whose writings deeply influenced Ford Madox Brown and inspired this painting; both author and artist profoundly admired Cromwell's political and religious radicalism.*

OLIVER CROMWELL: A SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

By Dr Laura A M Stewart

I

Oliver Cromwell stands as one of England's most remarkable rulers. England has experienced only one short-lived experiment in republican government. It followed on from years of civil war and was effected through the judicial execution of Charles I. The leading part played by Cromwell in these events, as a military commander, member of parliament, and signatory to a king's death warrant, would alone have secured his place in student textbooks. Equally as important is the way in which the surviving evidence has allowed successive generations to construct a Cromwell for their times; ambiguities surround his own utterances and writings, making his motives a topic of endless debate, while the manner in which he accrued power has divided opinion since his own lifetime.¹ Indeed, the fact that a minor landowner rose to become the most powerful man in England, and in his own right rather than by birthright, has ensured Oliver Cromwell's enduring fascination for scholars and the general public alike.

Cromwell is regarded very differently in Ireland. By the seventeenth century, Ireland had been an English dependency for centuries, but the complexity of the religious and ethnic divisions in Irish society made it almost impossible to govern effectively according to London-based ideas about civility and order. After the Catholic risings of October 1641, Ireland was plunged into a highly complicated and destructive civil war. In the aftermath of Charles I's execution, his son, Prince Charles, looked to use the resources of that country as a means to reclaim his throne in England. These hopes were dashed by Cromwell, who led an English army across the Irish Sea in August 1649. By the spring of the following year, the eastern seaboard had been subjugated to English military rule. The manner in which this was achieved has generated intense controversy ever since. What happened at Drogheda and Wexford were massacres, regardless of the scholarly sparring about how, why, and to whom they happened. Thereafter, Ireland was treated as a subject colony. Some two-thirds of Ireland's profitable land was in Catholic hands on the eve of the rebellion. By the 1660s, after much of it had been redistributed to English soldiers and adventurers, this figure had dropped to under one-third. This effected a permanent revolution in Irish society, by creating an English-speaking Protestant landowning class that shared little cultural common ground with its Gaelic-speaking Catholic tenancy. Regardless of scholarly debates on these issues, the public

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perception of Cromwell amongst Irish people is almost universally negative. Cromwell is seen as simply the most ruthless and effective of a long line of Englishmen who had come to Ireland with the express intention of extirpating Gaelic culture. The 1650s therefore has an important place for many Irish people in the larger narrative of the Republic's ultimately successful struggle for national self-determination.²

Cromwell's reputation is different again in Scotland. September 3rd is also the anniversary of two successive defeats of Scottish armies by Cromwell, at Dunbar in 1650 and Worcester in 1651. The latter victory was of decisive importance for the nascent English republic. With the obliteration of this predominantly Scottish force, led in person by Charles II, almost the entire archipelago came under English military control. Charles II was forced to flee from what he considered to be his own dominions for the safety, and impotency, of exile. The independent kingdom of Scotland was forcibly incorporated into a commonwealth with England, but it was not, in any straightforward sense, treated as a subject colony. Nonetheless, given that Scotland's early and precocious sense of its nationhood was, in large measure, informed by reactions against English pretensions to archipelagic dominion, it might be assumed that Cromwell's conquest of Scotland would see him raised up as a bogeyman in modern Scottish culture.

Why is it not so? Three-and-a-half centuries on, Cromwell's name is barely mentioned in Scotland and the English occupation has almost no resonance in the wider public imagination. Unlike the Jacobite risings in the next century, which left behind such relics of military domination as General Wade's roads, the stark ruin of Ruthven barracks at Kingussie, and the formidable garrison at Fort George near Arderseir, the seventeenth-century occupation generated almost no physical legacy. After the restoration of the British monarchy, Charles II commanded the destruction of all the major fortifications built by the English in Scotland and almost nothing of them remains. The visitor to Edinburgh's port of Leith can seek out the citadel that guarded it for several years in the mid-1650s. He or she will find an arched gateway tucked discreetly behind a later building and edging onto the car park belonging to Tiso, the outdoor specialists. Tiso has not – perhaps disappointingly – sought to give this decayed remnant a new lease of life by making it the United Kingdom's most historically interesting climbing wall.

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Cromwell and the occupation have been quietly forgotten north of the border but, as I hope to suggest here, Scotland's collective bout of amnesia is not simply or simplistically the obvious response to a prickly truth: Cromwell, unlike the 'hammer of the Scots', King Edward I, was not sent 'hameward tae think again'.³ As we will see, the way in which Scotland was incorporated into the English commonwealth meant that its peoples experienced English rule very differently from their neighbours in Ireland. Later developments, notably the (more or less) peaceful incorporation of Scotland into a long-lasting and, in many respects, very successful political union with England after 1707, have militated against any straightforward narrative of a valiant national struggle against English dominance.

It is worth pausing to reflect on why Scotland and Ireland ought not to be lumped together, as they often are, in discussions of the Cromwellian union. Scottish and Irish society are often thought to be similar and there are affinities between their respective peoples, but the differences between them are equally as important. Scottish Protestant settlers arriving in Ulster in the early seventeenth century complicated an already fragmented society; they regarded with hostility the Scotto-Irish Gaels who had been moving for centuries back and forth across the narrow waters separating northern Ireland from the Scottish western seaboard. Lowland Scots spoke a language that could be understood in England, although with increasing difficulty the further south one travelled, while their religion, social structures, and political institutions shared far greater similarities with England's than with Highland Gaeldom's (or the Norse-influenced islands of Orkney and Shetland). During the 1650s, a House of Commons populated by English gentlemen, who were largely ignorant of the rest of the archipelago and preoccupied by a plethora of other pressing issues, often treated Scotland and Ireland as 'a single entity'. Yet such an approach was not wholly incompatible with the existence of differing perceptions about the Scots and Irish.⁴ Tacit acknowledgement amongst the English governing elite that Ireland and Scotland were not, in fact, so very similar goes part way to explaining why the experience of occupation was different in each country.

That the Scottish public should be largely oblivious of the English occupation is regrettable but perhaps not surprising. Nobody likes to be reminded of defeat. Scholarly approaches to the Cromwellian period, however, are more complex. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the

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British empire was at its zenith, English historians viewed themselves as members of a society uniquely blessed in its attainment of liberty and duty-bound to extend those blessings to the benighted peoples inhabiting the rest of the globe. The Scots had been amongst the first of many proud, if backward, peoples to see the benefits of having the 'privileges of Englishmen' extended unto them. Unlike the Irish, the Scots also had the good sense to appreciate the point.⁵ Scottish scholars tended to agree: from around the middle of the eighteenth century, the incorporating union with England effected in 1707 came to be depicted as the means by which Scotland had attained its prosperity, secured the true reformed faith from the machinations of foreign Catholic powers, and embedded the liberties associated with Britain's unique constitutional monarchy. Scotland's over-mighty feudal magnates, it was thought, could not have been relied on to do the job, at least in part because the country's putatively weak institutions of governance and law had historically provided few checks on their power. David Hume, the philosopher and historian, argued a century after the occupation that Oliver Cromwell had given Scotland, for the first time, justice, order, and freedom from religious fanaticism.⁶ It was a view that would not be seriously challenged for another two hundred years.

As late as the 1970s and 1980s, Scottish historians continued to see seventeenth-century England as a benchmark of progressive religious, governmental, and constitutional development, against which their own country was found wanting. Although Cromwell's commitment to toleration did not extend to Catholics or certain sects, many historians regarded the policy as a necessary and welcome stepping-stone on the road to a modern secular society. By contrast, Scotland's Presbyterian church, or kirk, seemingly possessed a unique capacity for oppressing people. The introduction of toleration to Scotland must, therefore, have been an all-too-brief but merciful release from tyrannising clerics. In government, the putatively strong, centralised regime imposed by the English was regarded far more favourably than the indigenous structures of lordship with which the Scots were familiar. Echoes of David Hume resonate particularly in the work of Scotland's respected scholar, William Ferguson. Incorporation into the English republic augured not only administrative efficiency, but also the 'social justice' that had hitherto been denied the Scottish people. Cromwell's regime was apparently 'remarkable for its vision and its idealism':⁷ a phrase that will surely never grace the pages of even the most determinedly revisionist account of Cromwellian Ireland.

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In more recent times, historians have become more circumspect about the putative benefits of the English invasion. Frances Dow's meticulous and, as yet, unsurpassed study of Cromwellian Scotland cut the military regime down to size, by showing that no early modern government, least of all one that was chronically short of money, could possibly have achieved the levels of efficiency attributed to it. 'Conciliation and co-operation' blunted the weapons of reform that the English had initially hoped to wield, especially against alien legal frameworks that they found almost completely baffling.⁸ Important work by Patrick Little has fleshed out Dow's analysis. His emphasis on attempts to reintegrate Scottish elites into government is suggestive to this writer, not of growing confidence, but an ongoing struggle to stabilise and legitimise the enforced union with England.⁹ By granting formal representation to Scotland at Westminster, the regime generated the fiction that the Scots had consented to incorporation, as subordinate partners within a new, pan-archipelagic order. Achievements were very limited, however, and the tender of union was not, in fact, formally ratified until April 1657. Many of the representatives sent to attend what turned out to be a handful of short-lived parliamentary sessions were English military men, whose legitimacy surely remained questionable amongst the populace at large. Meanwhile, the republic's key decision-making body, the Council of State, had no place for Scotsmen. Government, as it was experienced on a daily basis by Scottish people, remained essentially government by garrison.

Overall, appraisals of the English occupation in Scotland have received a level of positive approbation, and escaped a degree of condemnation, that would be impossible in an Irish context. The most negative assessments have been put forward by those historians whose concern is less with what happened in the 1650s than the legacy of occupation. Allan Macinnes has asserted that the English invasion created 'a sense of defeatism that reverberated to the Union of 1707 and beyond'. Christopher Whatley claimed that the occupation was burned into the collective memory of the 1707 generation, whose inability to ignore the experience tacitly undermined the Scottish negotiating position when Queen Anne's administration demanded a full incorporating union.¹⁰ My own sense, as I have argued elsewhere, is that the occupation generated a more ambiguous – and potentially more intriguing – set of responses than defeatism. The next section of the paper considers how the nature of both the invasion and the occupation influenced subsequent interpretations of its historical significance. Cromwell the man seems even more elusive to the reader of

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Scottish rather than English sources, yet there can be little doubt that the unique character of the occupation was framed, in significant measure, by Cromwell's own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour.

II

Cromwell's interactions with Scottish people began, not with the invasion campaign of 1650, but the English civil war. A Scottish army crossed the Tweed in January 1644 at the behest of the English parliament and, for the next three years, Scots and English would fight alongside one another as allies. Almost from those first encounters, however, the Anglo-Scottish relationship was complicated by diverging ideas about the future of the English church. England's presbyterians saw Scotland providing a model for reform, but others looked with dismay on the prospect of a church as uniform in its disciplinary structures as what had preceded it in the 1630s. Although English independents shared some broad affinities, in doctrine and worship, with presbyterians, they remained fundamentally divided on the extent to which congregations ought to decide their own practices. For presbyterians, independency was the door to schism and heresy, while independents regarded the presbyterian hierarchy as a barrier to true knowledge of God. By the autumn of 1644, the Scottish commissioners then resident in London were beginning to note with alarm the increasing prominence of Oliver Cromwell and his 'partie' of independents. Robert Baillie, the presbyterian cleric, summed up how many godly Scots may have felt about this enigmatic individual. He reported that the Englishman was thought to be a 'wise and active head, universallie well beloved, as religious and stout; being a known Independent, the most of the sojourns who loved new ways putt themselves under his command'. Baillie's fear was that the talented and charismatic Cromwell, rather than the Scottish army, would decide the outcome of the civil war; the prize he sought, to the horror of all presbyterians, was 'a libertie for all religions'.¹¹

Scottish men and women were offered another opportunity to view Oliver Cromwell in the autumn of 1648, this time on home ground. Cromwell had since become, as Baillie had warned, one of the outstanding military and political forces in the country. That summer, a faction of Scottish nobles, known as Engagers (after the Engagement signed with the king the previous year), attempted to rescue King Charles from the independent-dominated new model army. They were defeated in battle by Cromwell, who promptly marched into Scotland in order to secure the return to power of the anti-

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Engagers, often known as the ‘Whiggamores’. Likely topics of conversation when Cromwell met and dined with leading Scottish politicians in Edinburgh have tantalised historians ever since. David Stevenson has rightly dismissed the unfounded suggestion that Cromwell took this opportunity to confide his thoughts on regicide to – of all people! – the presbyterian Scot and *de facto* leader of the government, Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll.¹² Cromwell made ‘bold to testify for that noble Lord the Marquis’, whom, with others, he called ‘Christians and men of honour’.¹³ Argyll’s thoughts about his new friend do not appear to have survived.

When Cromwell next encountered Scottish men and women, it was as invader and conqueror. Cromwell’s famous appeal to presbyterian Scots to ‘think it possible you may be mistaken?’ rings a seductive note to modern ears but, at the time, most of the inhabitants of the British Isles thought it was Cromwell who was mistaken. He had been a prime mover in the execution of the king and, regardless of the trouble Charles I had caused, it was widely thought not to be Cromwell’s prerogative to hold God’s anointed to account. Now Cromwell sought to make war on the Scots, who were a protestant people and, moreover, ‘brethren’, which some, including Sir Thomas Fairfax, regarded as bound with the English in Covenant with God.¹⁴ Cromwell was more astute, perhaps, in his assessment of the threat Scotland undoubtedly posed to the nascent English republic. Its parliament had reacted to Charles I’s death by declaring his son, as the son thought himself rightfully to be, successor to all his father’s dominions. Perhaps some Scots were tempted to give up Charles to avoid war with Cromwell, but it would have been difficult to defend the repudiation of the king who, unlike his father, was prepared to sign the Covenants. However reluctant and insincere Charles’s actions, he was, at least, the legitimate monarch. Leaving Argyll and his friends as puppet rulers for a regicidal English military regime, no doubt with English soldiers indefinitely stationed in Scotland just to remind them of the point, was not attractive, even to Argyll, who threw his political weight behind Charles’s cause. It was Argyll who placed the Scottish crown on Charles’s head in a threadbare ceremony held on 1 January 1651. The ancient coronation site of Scone in Perthshire was selected as much for its distance from the army that now occupied the capital, Edinburgh, as its symbolic significance.¹⁵

Cromwell could now have secured his place in the annals of Scottish infamy by staging a few wanton, unusual, and highly publicised acts of brutality,

preferably involving defenceless women and children. With the exception of a very particular event at Dundee in August 1651, which has never resonated for modern Scots in the way that Drogheda continues to do for the Irish, English troops were actively dissuaded by their commanders from mistreating the Scottish people. Estimated casualties, both on and beyond the battlefields, compare favourably with the destructive royalist rising in the mid-1640s led by the Scot, James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, and the Irish Gael, Alasdair MacColla. Cromwell appears to have believed that the Scots were godly but misguided and, therefore, did not warrant the treatment meted out to the Catholic Irish. There were also strategic considerations, of which strict discipline amongst his own army represented another component. During an exhausting year-long campaign, Cromwell sought to persuade the Scottish people to renounce Charles II. To this end, Cromwell engaged in debate with Scottish clerics and politicians about the legitimacy of their respective positions, both in person and in print. His behaviour, as reported in Scottish sources, once again conveys the sense of an inscrutable character. What are we to make of the story that the regicidal invader sat quietly in a Glasgow church, while its minister bade the congregation pray for his enemy, King Charles II? What impression did Cromwell make on one Lady Ingliston, whom he met several times in 1651 to discuss religious matters?¹⁶ His influence on Scottish opinion has, perhaps, been overstated by historians who are more familiar with Cromwell's words than those of his Scottish contemporaries. An English invader was probably less influential than Scotland's clerics, a minority of whom argued forcefully that the 'sectaries', as they referred to Cromwell's army, would only be expelled by God once the Scots displayed their sincerity about rooting out the so-called 'malignants' surrounding the king.¹⁷

Cromwell left Scotland in August 1651 in pursuit of the Scottish army that he would defeat at Worcester on 3 September. He never returned. During the rest of his life, both his personal contacts with Scots and his direct involvement in Scottish affairs were understandably constrained by the amount of attention that necessarily had to be given to the settlement of the commonwealth. Disinterest or preoccupation with other things were not, however, the only reasons behind the limited nature of the legacy Cromwell bequeathed to Scotland. There are two key ways in which Cromwell could have had a lasting influence on Scotland. A sustained attempt to break both the power of the landed elite and the hegemony of the presbyterian kirk could have transformed Scottish society forever. As David Stevenson has

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commented, however, the English republican regime had not ‘planned to conquer Scotland’ until forced into it by circumstance and, hence, its leaders had ‘no ready-made plans for what to do with their prize’.¹⁸ Scotland’s military governors quickly came to appreciate that managing a peaceable and stable country, rather than reshaping it in the English republic’s image, was an ambitious enough goal in itself.

III

It must have seemed obvious to the military commanders who, from the autumn of 1651, found themselves running an alien country, that the easiest and best way to govern Scotland was to make it more like England. One of the principle stumbling blocks to this aspiration was the perception that Scotland’s nobility exercised almost untrammelled power over their tenants and dependants. Hence, heritable jurisdictions, along with all forms of vassalage, were almost immediately outlawed. The central law courts were abolished. Military tribunals were set up instead, which were later replaced by a commission for the administration of civil justice, and a circuit court to deal with criminal cases.¹⁹ This attempted reordering of Scottish society neither elicited the expected expressions of gratitude from the people, nor prevented the eruption of a serious, if ultimately unsuccessful, rising spearheaded by William Cunningham, 4th Earl of Glencairn. Robert Lilburne, supreme commander of the army in Scotland from the beginning of 1653 until his replacement by George Monck the following year, expressed his perplexity at the attitude of the Scots. ‘Hardly any of these people will appeare either to give us intelligence, or doe any thing for preserving the peace’, he grumbled. They ‘have a deadely antipathy gainst us, though I thinke I may truely say it they have had from the generality of us a very large share of civillities.’²⁰

Glencairn’s rising exposed the dangers of alienating the landed elite in a conquered country where even lesser landowners and prosperous tenants, who might see gains for themselves in such developments, were not prepared to accept gifts from the hands of conquerors. One anonymous parliamentarian, speaking on the proposed Union Bill in November 1656, represented what must surely have been relatively commonplace English opinion about the regime’s obligations in Scotland. Spurred on by their ‘care’ for ‘the security and pease [*sic*] of these nations’, England’s rulers now had an opportunity to put the Scots ‘in a condition which promiseth much improvement and advantage to them’. Happiness, riches, and improved

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rents had hitherto eluded a people whose 'miseries' were the fault, not of occupation, but 'the unlemited power' of the indigenous landed elite. In union alone lay the hope that English-style justice would, at last, flow 'in an equall channell' from one end of the commonwealth to the other.²¹

Back in Scotland, political realities were far out of line with the rhetoric ringing around the rafters in Westminster. Amongst military governors who were perpetually 'in great straightes for monie',²² it quickly became apparent that indebted estates, abandoned by desperate landowners who were busy rebelling in the Highlands, were not productive estates. Crucially, they did not yield much in the way of taxes. In the wake of Glencairn's rising, the estates of 24 leading families were declared forfeit, but protections against sequestration and confiscation had already been extended, as in Ireland, to those persons below the top ranks of society who were prepared to accept English rule. When swingeing fines were also imposed on 73 families, the regime backtracked almost immediately by reducing or discharging the sums for all but the most incorrigible enemies of the regime.²³ Meanwhile, some of Scotland's distinctive organs of local government, notably baron courts and town councils, were allowed to resume at least some of their normal functions. It ultimately proved impossible to eliminate Scots law, lest the entire edifice of local government and, most importantly, property ownership, fell apart; consequently, the English were increasingly forced to make use of the trained experts, Scotland's lawyers, who understood it. By the mid-1650s, the imperatives of political and fiscal stability had persuaded the English regime tacitly to abandon the attempt to remodel Scottish society.

Much the same can be said about English religious policy. There is little doubt that, for a small body of Scots, the experience of toleration – almost unthinkable at any time since Reformation – was a life-changing experience. Separatist ideas had come to Scotland as early as the 1580s, carried on the lips of the English divine Robert Brown, but they do not seem to have achieved wide influence.²⁴ English sectarians and their preachers may have been regarded by some Scots as an exciting novelty when they arrived after 1650, especially in those areas where regular religious activity had been disrupted in the disturbed conditions of the previous half-decade. Yet few, perhaps no more than a few hundred individuals in widely scattered congregations, seem to have been prepared to abandon entirely the familiar rituals enacted in their parish churches. In many places, the weekly round of

activities, centred on the parish church, which included dealing with a wide range of community issues as well as the usual formal services, probably continued much as before. The continuity and stability offered by the kirk, despite the bitter in-fighting at its highest levels, recommended itself in obvious ways to the English regime. There was no systematic assault on the kirk's hierarchy of local courts or purging of its pulpits.

Those features which made the Scottish church presbyterian in government, and reformed (or calvinist) in doctrine, remained largely intact. It is true that the church's governing body, the general assembly, was closed down in July 1653. This was mainly the result of the assembly's refusal to censure those parish ministers who were routinely embarrassing the regime by using their pulpits to proclaim that monarchy still had the divine seal of approval. In the longer term, the experience of toleration was of less significance for Scottish religious culture than the National Covenant, which not only continued to influence the kirk itself, but also the secessionist movements of the eighteenth century. Only the Quakers, it might be argued, possessed the sufficiently distinctive spiritual vision (and the numbers) needed to survive as a coherent sect in the harsher climate of the Restoration era.²⁵

IV

It would be ludicrous to argue that Cromwell's decision to invade Scotland had no historical significance, or that ten years of military conquest left no lasting legacy. Nonetheless, it is curious that the Scots seem so much less interested in Cromwell than their Irish and English neighbours. The answers suggested here are, fittingly, as complex as the man himself. Cromwell's personal influence on what was, by contemporary standards, a remarkably controlled invasion reflected a wide sense of confusion and doubt about the Scots, their religious beliefs, and their influence on England's affairs. David Leslie, the highly capable commander who was out-manoeuvred by Cromwell at Dunbar, had faced the same enemy as the Englishman, from the same side of the moor at Marston, only half a decade earlier. It is probable that Cromwell genuinely saw war between two protestant peoples as unnecessary, but it was the Scots who were expected to do something about it and make the compromises. Having neutralised the threat posed by Scotland, Cromwell then failed to articulate a vision for the commonwealth that required a positive response from the Scots, or sought compromise with Scottish difference. With so little opportunity to contribute to the forging of this new union, it is not surprising that Scotland has largely been

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written out of Cromwell's story, and Cromwell out of Scotland's. The future of the Anglo-Scottish relationship lay in negotiation, not military subjugation, and in respecting Scotland's indigenous political and social values, not imposing English ones at the end of a gun. In many ways, as Ronald Hutton has suggested, the 1707 union represented a repudiation of its Cromwellian predecessor.²⁶

It is true that Cromwell did not kill many Scots, although it seems peculiar to praise someone for failing to be a murdering tyrant. His ambivalent attitude towards Covenanted Scotland's unique religious culture is significant, particularly when compared to the occasionally very violent attempts to extirpate it after 1660. Cromwell chose not to dismantle the presbyterian kirk in order to give Independent congregations sufficient space to flourish. He did seek a fundamental reordering of local power structures and social relations, the rationale for which drew on what English elites saw as Scotland's backwardness, weakness, and impoverishment. This caricature is wheeled out, perhaps, when English elites feel threatened: the current Scottish-led critique of the union correlates with the reappearance of that very old and familiar stereotype, the impoverished Scot.²⁷ In the mid-seventeenth century, the Scots were a threat to Cromwell. Downplaying this point, by assuming that the triumph of the new model army was something of an inevitability, surely does Cromwell's tenacity, tactical intelligence, and capacity for risk-taking, a disservice. A rewrite of the Cromwellian moment from a fresh Scottish perspective may, therefore, give us fresh ideas about Cromwell and his contested reputation. Perhaps Scottish scholars have been dissuaded from the task because of an intellectual climate that reduces academic work to a set of 'economic and societal impacts'.²⁸ Why publish the book or lead the research project about a historical figure who seems to have such little bearing on modern Scottish, or even British, public life? Yet the historically-specific ambiguities, dilemmas, and uncomfortable truths suggested by the Scottish perspective on Cromwell are exactly why the topic requires further attention. The history that is not written warts and all cannot be worth the writing.

- ¹ Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1714* (3rd edn, London, 2003), 253.
- ² T.C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English Government and Reform in Ireland, 1649-1660* (new edn, Oxford, 2000). This important work argues that the English presence in Ireland was not defined exclusively by violence, p. vii. It provides a thought-provoking counterweight to Micheál Ó Siochrú, *God's Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* (London, 2008).
- ³ 'The Flower of Scotland', written by Roy Williamson, is widely regarded as Scotland's 'unofficial' national anthem and sung at sporting events.
- ⁴ Patrick Little and David L. Smith, *Parliaments and Politics during the Cromwellian Protectorate* (Cambridge, 2007), 268.
- ⁵ G.M. Trevelyan, *England Under the Stuarts* (London and New York, new edn, 2002), 177. See also S.R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1660* (3 vols, London and New York, 1894), ii, 65.
- ⁶ The essential text is Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993).
- ⁷ Rosalind Mitchison, *Lordship to Patronage: Scotland 1603-1745* (Edinburgh, 1983), 63-5. William Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England: A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1977), 138, 140.
- ⁸ Frances D. Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland 1651-1660* (Edinburgh, 1979), 179.
- ⁹ Patrick Little, *Lord Broghill and the Cromwellian Union with Ireland and Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2004).
- ¹⁰ Allan I. Macinnes, *Union and Empire: The Making of the United Kingdom in 1707* (Cambridge, 2007), 75. Christopher A. Whatley with Derek J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh, 2006), 96.
- ¹¹ *Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, ed. D. Laing (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1841), ii, 229-30, 246.
- ¹² David Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Scotland, 1644-51* (Edinburgh, 2nd edn, 2003), 104.
- ¹³ Cromwell to Speaker Lenthall, 2 Oct. 1648, in W.C. Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols, Cambridge, Mass., 1937-47), i, 660.
- ¹⁴ At Whitehall, 24 Jun. 1650, Abbott, *Writings and Speeches*, ii, 269; *To The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland ...* [Edinburgh, 1650].
- ¹⁵ The National Covenant of 1638, and the Solemn League and Covenant, agreed by the Scottish and English parliaments in 1643, both committed signatories to the principle of monarchic government.

- ¹⁶ Kirsteen M. MacKenzie, 'Cromwell and the Solemn League and Covenant of the Three Kingdoms' in Patrick Little, ed., *Oliver Cromwell: New Perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2009), 158-9. *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, volume II, 1650-1654*, ed. D.H. Fleming (Edinburgh, 1919), 88.
- ¹⁷ Cf. Coward, *Stuart Age*, 249. *Wariston*, 48. *A seasonable and necessary warning concerning present dangers and duties, from the commissioners of the Generall Assembly ...* (Edinburgh, 1650). For the punishment of collaborators, see John Nicoll, *A Diary of Public Transactions and other Occurrences, chiefly in Scotland, from January 1650 to June 1667*, ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1836), 25, 27-8.
- ¹⁸ David Stevenson, 'Cromwell, Scotland and Ireland' in John Morrill, ed., *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (Harlow, 1990), 162.
- ¹⁹ Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 25, 36, 53, 55-7.
- ²⁰ Lilburne to Cromwell, 15 Nov. 1653, in *Scotland and the Commonwealth: Letters and Papers relating to the Military Government of Scotland, from August 1651 to December 1653*, ed. C.H. Firth (Edinburgh, 1895), 271.
- ²¹ A speech on the union between England and Scotland, 4 Nov. 1656, in *Scotland and the Protectorate: Letters and Papers relating to the Military Government of Scotland from January 1654 to June 1659*, ed. C.H. Firth (Edinburgh, 1899), 333-6.
- ²² Lilburne to Lambert, 7 Jan. 1654, in *Scotland and the Protectorate*, 13.
- ²³ Dow, *Cromwellian Scotland*, 157-9.
- ²⁴ *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, ed. D.K. McKim (Louisville, Kentucky and Edinburgh, 1992), 40-1, 69.
- ²⁵ Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997), 15-16, 22-5, 28-30.
- ²⁶ Ronald Hutton, *Debates in Stuart History* (Basingstoke, 2004), 94.
- ²⁷ The Scottish government is committed to presenting a referendum on independence to residents of Scotland in 2014. For the latest of many caricatures depicting Scotland as an impoverished land, see *The Economist*, 14 Apr. 2012.
- ²⁸ <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/impacts/RCUKPathwayspresentation.pdf>.

Note: I would like to thank Patrick Little for inviting me to address the Cromwell Association on 3rd September 2011. For a more thorough analysis of issues summarised here, including a fuller treatment of the historiography, see my chapter ‘Cromwell and the Scots’ in Jane Mills, ed., *Cromwell's Legacy* (Manchester, 2012).

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FARMER OLIVER? THE CULTIVATION OF CROMWELL'S IMAGE DURING THE PROTECTORATE

By Dr Patrick Little

Historians have always been impressed by Cromwell's rural origins, as his very ordinariness makes his rise to power all the more dramatic. In some ways, Cromwell fulfils the role of 'Everyman', or of the poor boy moving 'from log cabin to White House'.¹ When it comes to the details of his early life, there are two schools of thought. The traditional view is represented by Antonia Fraser, for whom examples of his 'deep-held country taste ... combined to make Oliver in many outward ways the pattern of the English country gentleman' who loved field sports and horses, and was further rooted in the soil by his experiences in St Ives in the early 1630s, 'farming his cattle, bringing up his family, and showing himself a solid local man'.² This view of Cromwell the country squire was modified, if not entirely thrown over, by the work of John Morrill, whose article on 'the making of Oliver Cromwell', published in 1990, has proved very influential. Morrill's argument is that Oliver 'was a man in humbler circumstances, a meaner man, than has been allowed' and that 'his social status was very ill-defined and his economic situation precarious'. This was particularly the case when Cromwell lived at St Ives, as 'his standing ... was essentially that of a yeoman, a working farmer', and he was even in danger of moving down 'from the gentry to the "middling sort"'. Morrill is quick to point out that Cromwell never actually left the ranks of the gentry – he retained the lineage, education and social network of the well-born – but, in economic terms 'Cromwell was not, then, as he is often portrayed, the typical country squire'.³ This downgrading of Cromwell's economic status, with its consequent threat to his own social standing (and, perhaps more pertinently, that of his children), has become something of an orthodoxy in recent years.⁴ Overall, there is now consensus that for much of the 1630s Cromwell was more a farmer than a squire, and that his career from 1640 was all the more remarkable for it. In Morrill's words, 'No man who rises from a working farmer to head of state in twenty years is less than great'.⁵

So much for the 1630s; what of the 1650s? What was Cromwell's own attitude to his humble origins when he had become head of state? In this, as in other aspects of his career, historians have tended to take Cromwell's own words at face value – an approach that is at best questionable. Cromwell's statement on 12 September 1654 that 'I was by birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity', has invariably been taken as the starting point for any discussion of his

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social origins.⁶ How obscure is obscure? What did he mean by 'gentleman'? The protector's speech to a parliamentary committee in April 1657 has also had a particular fascination for historians, who have pored over his claim that 'I am ready to serve not as a king, but as a constable ... a good constable to keep the peace of the parish', seeking inner truths about his style of government.⁷ As a result, what might have been intended as a light-hearted, even ironic remark, has been taken in deadly earnest by commentators, and is used as the supreme example of Cromwell's 'self-perception as lord protector' by John Morrill, who points out that 'in that role he never likened himself to the justice of the peace, the Christian magistrate that shaped policy and *interpreted* the law; but to "a good constable ..." – a role that lacked initiative and executive authority'.⁸ For Barry Coward, the same speech shows that Cromwell was intent on 'merely keeping the peace in order to allow others to pursue the path towards godly reformation'.⁹ Martyn Bennett analyses the nature of the parish constable's role in rural society, in order to gain further insight into the protector's character. Bennett describes the office of constable as being 'at the lower end of national government' and as 'the point of contact for the national and the local' – most notoriously in the case of ship money, the payment of which was enforced by constables, who were beaten up or prosecuted in return. According to Bennett, the 'dichotomy' inherent in the office was what Cromwell had in mind in 1657. He was in the middle, either as mediator between the ordinary MPs and the army, or between God (who had put him into power) and the people (whose acceptance he needed), and in either case 'he was ... like a constable, the meeting point of two sources of power'.¹⁰

Bennett, like other historians, sees Cromwell's choice of words here as reflecting his own experiences in the government of small rural communities before 1640. And, at first glance, there certainly seems to be plenty of other evidence for this in Cromwell's speeches. Indeed, rather than trying to cover up his humble, rural origins (as some modern politicians – and, indeed, historians – might try to do), it appears that Cromwell made free reference to them. His formal, set-piece speeches were dotted with agricultural terms. On 4 July 1653, he said that 'it pleased God ... to winnow, as I may say, the forces of this nation', and added that at Pride's Purge the Commons was 'winnowed, sifted, and brought to a handful'.¹¹ The new rule of the saints at London promised 'to be full of good fruits, bearing good fruits to the nation'.¹² On 22 January 1655, when

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he closed parliament with the warning that 'there be some trees that will not grow under the shadow of other trees. There be some that choose, – a man may say so by way of allusion, – to thrive under the shadow of other trees ...'; and he went on to attack 'the enemies of the peace of these nations abroad and at home, ... which I think no man will grudge to call by that name or to make to allude to briars and thorns, they have nourished themselves under your shadow'. Later in the same speech he repeated the charge that 'these weeds, briars and thorns, they have been preparing' while the parliament sat idle. In January 1658 he said of the godly interest that 'it was not trodden down under foot all at once, but by degrees, that that interest might be consumed as with a canker insensibly, as Jonah's gourd was, till it was quite withered in a night'.¹³ These references are not straightforward, of course, as many were images with biblical rather than agricultural resonance – the story of the trees, for example, was not derived from folklore but from Judges 9, verses 8 to 15 – although their very earthiness may have appealed to Cromwell.¹⁴

Other references do not appear to be biblical in origin. In his speech to Barebones, Cromwell described Wales, before the Propagation commission, as having 'watchings over them, men like so many wolves ready to catch the lamb as soon as it was brought out into the world'. In his speech of 12 September 1654 he attacked the Rump, saying that 'poor men under this arbitrary power were driven like flocks of sheep by forty in a morning'.¹⁵ In February 1657, when addressing the officers, and berating them for their criticism of parliament's offer of the crown to him, Cromwell told them that the discredited Barebone's parliament had been worse, as it had intended to 'fly at liberty and property, in so much as if one man had twelve cows, they held another that wanted cows ought to take a share with his neighbour'.¹⁶ On 8 April 1657 Cromwell again referred to animals – this time possibly with working horses in mind – when he said that he 'would not lay a burden on any beast, but I would consider his strength to bear it'.¹⁷ In his weary speech to parliament on 4 February 1658 an exasperated Cromwell told MPs that 'I would have been glad, as to my own conscience and spirit, to have been living under a woodside to have kept a flock of sheep, rather than to have undertaken such a place as this'.¹⁸ These examples no doubt include much that was commonplace, the stock phrases of the street or of the godly community, but the frequency with which Cromwell reached for rural metaphors or turns of phrase suggest that they were an ingrained part of his personal make-up – or perhaps, he intended to give that impression.

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There can be no doubt that those involved in celebrating and publicising Cromwell were aware of the importance of his rise from rural obscurity to military and political power.¹⁹ In 1650, Payne Fisher, in his poem *Marston Moor*, portrays Cromwell on the battlefield as:

Not unlike a Husbandman, who goes
Through all the fields, with his sickle mows
The riper Corne, and the first Grass for hay...
Where ere he comes making an open way,
Alaies those Plants which did so glorious stand,
Like to dead stubble, on the mowed land...²⁰

(This last image perhaps reflects Cromwell's own comments after the battle that 'God made them as stubble to our swords', and it also echoes Marvell's series of pastoral poems voiced by a 'mower' rather than the usual shepherd.)²¹ There are other, closer, parallels between Cromwell's words in his speech to parliament in January 1655 and Marvell's *First Anniversary*, written at about the same time. Both dwell on the parable of the trees in the Book of Judges, with Marvell portraying Oliver as the olive tree, which was offered the crown and yet 'still refuse[s] to reign'. In the same poem, Marvell also likens Cromwell to Farmer Gideon (who 'did from the war retreat'); and Edmund Waller's *Panegyrick* of May 1655 makes the even more flattering comparison between the protector and the great King David, 'Borne to command, your Princely virtues slept, / Like humble David, while ye flock he kept'.²² Again, the emphasis is on Cromwell's rural origins, his response to the call when the nation was in danger, and his refusal of the highest office when it was within his grasp. The political implications of this 'spin' on Cromwell's humble roots is obvious.

The full pastoral idyll, in its classical rather than biblical context, only appeared in November 1657, when Marvell's two songs, performed at the marriage of the protector's daughter Mary to the north-country landowner, Viscount Fauconberg, presented the bride and groom as Endymion and Cynthia, and Cromwell himself as another familiar pastoral character, Menalca. As one of the singers, Hobbinal, assures his fellows,

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Fear not; at Menalca's hall
There is bays enough for all.
He, when young, as we did graze,
But when old, he planted bays.²³

Here planting the bays of victory has replaced the husbandry concerns of the young Cromwell, but the nod towards his earlier career is significant. As Edward Holberton has commented, 'Cromwell's pastoral guise dignifies his East Anglian yeoman origins; it implies a rough social parity between him and "the Northern Shepherd", Fauconberg's late father', and he also argues that the emphasis on Cromwell's 'experience as a shepherd makes him a sympathetic prince' for ordinary people.²⁴

This use of pastoral imagery recurs in Marvell's *Poem Upon the Death of the Lord Protector*, which celebrated Cromwell's enduring achievement:

As long as rivers to the seas shall run,
As long as Cynthia shall relieve the sun,
While stags shall fly unto the forests thick,
While sheep delight the grassy downs to pick.

Marvell's emphasis on the natural world, the tending of flocks and so forth, reflects his own tastes for the pastoral, and his desire to connect with classical, biblical and more recent literary conventions; but there is another aspect to the public poetry produced by him, and by contemporaries such as Fisher and Waller: that this use of imagery was specific to Cromwell. These poets were intimately connected with Cromwell and his regime, either being relatives of the protector (Waller), or office-holders (Marvell). Marvell can be seen to be doing this in another context, when in his *Horatian Ode* he uses falconry metaphors – a tribute to the sport enjoyed by Cromwell – for perhaps the only time in his poetry.²⁵ As we have seen, Oliver's speeches drew on rural references, and there are examples of public poetry echoing (or pre-echoing?) exactly the same metaphors. This suggests a closer connection between the speeches and the various orations and commemorations, and a greater collaboration between the protector and his propagandists, than has been allowed. And at the heart of all these rural references lies not the countryside, but politics.

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The political motives for this constant harking back to Cromwell's humble rural origins appear to be fourfold. First, his image as an 'honest man' needs to be considered. Historians have tended to take this as read. Indeed, Cromwell's basic integrity is the starting point of all the recent biographies of him, based as they invariably are on his own letters and speeches. Peter Gaunt also comments that 'the surviving portraiture reflects a sense of realism and simplicity' and that the pictures 'do not seem to have been designed to disguise imperfections or unduly to flatter'.²⁶ Laura Lunger Knoppers writes of Samuel Cooper's miniature that it 'coheres closely with Cromwell's own plain-spoken biblicism and piety', and she also states that Cromwell's 'pointed self-deprecation contrasts with the protectoral panegyric'.²⁷ One is tempted to ask: wasn't that the point? Perhaps Cromwell's comments about being an obscure gentleman or constable should be read a little more critically. It is worth reflecting that, alongside the rural references, Cromwell constantly emphasised his own plain dealing and honesty. To take but three examples, on 17 September 1656 he protested to MPs that 'I am plain and shall use a homely expression'; on 8 April 1657 he told parliament that he would 'speak very clearly and plainly to you'; and on 21 April 1657 he protested to the parliamentary committee that 'I speak not this to evade... but I say plainly and clearly I hope', adding that he would 'be very ready, freely, and honestly and plainly, to discharge myself' in his dealings with them.²⁸ Run together, such claims of honesty begin to sound like Uriah Heep's protestations that he was 'the 'umblest person going', and this is perhaps unfair. But there is still an interesting parallel between the plain and honest persona Cromwell wished to put forward, and his image as the man 'risen from obscurity'.

Secondly, Cromwell's claim to have a kind of rustic integrity has a close connection with his years as a godly soldier. His publicly proclaimed humility had a deep resonance with the Independent churches and, above all, the army. As Ian Gentles puts it, in the ranks of the New Model 'intense piety was frequently accompanied by exaggerated humility and self-abasement. Man was reduced in order to make God seem all the greater. Paradoxically self-abasement grew with the army's worldly success. The more powerful it became the more it insisted on its weakness and humility'.²⁹ Exactly the same could be said about Cromwell. The greater his power, the more he distanced himself from it. There are parallels here between the celebration of Cromwell's rise from 'obscurity' and the reverence given to lay preachers of humble birth who served with the New

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Model Army in the 1640s.³⁰ There was a kind of inverted religious snobbery championed by some preachers, notably William Dell, chaplain to Fairfax's regiment in the mid-1640s and a friend of Cromwell, whose heroes were the apostles, 'poor, illiterate, mechanic men' who nevertheless 'turned the world upside down'. Dell also reminded his hearers that 'he that fears God is free from all other fear; he fears not men of high degree'.³¹ There was a close association between such religious egalitarianism and the 'liberty of conscience' that Cromwell and others thought fundamental. Gentles comments that 'lay preaching ineluctably implies the principle of liberty of conscience'.³² This connection was not lost on contemporaries. As Dell told parliament in the last months of the civil war, the reform of the church must be in the hands of individual congregations, among whom 'a poor plain countryman, by the spirit which he hath received, is better able to judge of truth and error touching the things of God than the greatest philosopher, scholar or doctor in the world that is destitute of it'.³³ Such ideas had a deep impact on the thinking – and the morale – of the New Model Army, and fostered a strain of egalitarianism best seen in the General Council of the army and the debates at Reading and Putney in 1647, when the ordinary soldiers argued with the most senior officers, apparently as equals. Furthermore, as Gentles reminds us, 'the commanders were not unaware of the practical benefits of spiritual egalitarianism in welding men into an effective fighting unit', and they were keen to accept the same risks that their men were taking, to emphasise that the cause was also shared.³⁴ Although Cromwell famously refused to accept the social implications of this when dealing with the Levellers in the late 1640s,³⁵ the principle of religious equality between those of differing social status was something that he certainly accepted. As early as 1643 he famously praised his officers as 'godly honest men', saying that 'I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else'.³⁶ The socially inferior were not *better* than gentlemen, but godliness was the acid test of commitment, and godliness knew no social distinctions.³⁷

This emphasis on plainness, on humility, became all the more important after Cromwell became protector, and he was all too conscious of the accusations of ambition, of selling-out, that were levelled against him by his former friends and colleagues from the New Model Army of the 1640s. Emphasising his ordinariness, his roots in the countryside, was an attempt to persuade them that he still held true to the 'good old cause'. In this

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context, his repeated appeal to being 'plain and honest' may have tied in with a familiar trope within rural writing in the early seventeenth century, especially that of Gervase Markham, who eulogised 'the honest plain English husbandman'.³⁸ Cromwell's rural plainness was thus a touchstone of his godly integrity – he was the exemplar of Dell's 'poor plain countryman' with unique access to God. It was perhaps this image of godly rustic ordinariness that encouraged the Digger, Gerrard Winstanley, to present his *Law of Freedom in a Platform* to Cromwell, and to complain in the dedicatory letter of the plight of the 'poor labourers... who are kept poor still, and the common freedom of the earth is kept from them'.³⁹

The third context for this emphasis of Cromwell's rural origins is the Bible. Cromwell's rise could be made to appeal to all sections of the godly by making direct parallels with the heroes of the Old Testament, especially Gideon and David, whose emergence from rural obscurity was also providential. This is especially apparent in the public literature celebrating the protector. The comparison with the shepherd boy-turned-king, David, was not only made by the sycophantic Waller: it also reappeared in the kingship debates, when courtiers such as Lord Broghill used the analogy with David to counter those who saw Cromwell's acceptance of the crown as the ultimate betrayal, as the 'sin of Achan'. The likeness was also clear to those outside the protector's circle. Carrington, writing later, also compared Cromwell to David, 'dormant tending his flocks until his country needed him'.⁴⁰ As we have seen, Cromwell's own rural references are often biblical, as with his mention of the parable of the trees in the Book of Judges or Jonah's gourd; and other remarks appear to have a biblical root, notably the image of the wolves snatching lambs, which may refer to Acts 20:29, and his constant use of 'good fruits' was probably derived from Matthew 7: 17-18.

Fourthly, and perhaps less obviously, there is a cultural aspect in all this. This is in two parts. First, the scientific side, involving the drive for 'improvement' in all areas of learning, which originated with Francis Bacon and found new vigour during the interregnum, notably under the influence of Samuel Hartlib and his circle. The new learning had its own religious dimension, and this was particularly so when it came to agricultural improvements, which were linked with a return to the Garden of Eden. The extent of Cromwell's direct support for such initiatives was probably stronger than has been realised. It is surely significant that Gerard Boate's *Natural History of Ireland* and Walter Blith's *English Improver Improved* (1652-3)

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were both dedicated to Cromwell. Hartlib received a government pension throughout the 1650s, and was a regular visitor to the protector's court.⁴¹ Cromwell was associated with the scientific endeavours of Oxford University, especially through Robert Boyle (the brother of the courtier, Lord Broghill) and John Wilkins, who married the protector's sister. The schemes of Hartlib's circle to improve the nation economically were closely linked to their philosophical interest in the natural world as a model for human society, and nowhere was this more apparent than in the study of bees. As Timothy Raylor puts it, 'Hartlib and his circle saw in the pious industry and good husbandry of the bees a natural analogue for their own public-spirited endeavours. And in the discipline, communalism, loyalty and full-employment of the hive they saw an image of the godly commonwealth they were striving to establish'.⁴² Hartlib's own book on 'the commonwealth of bees' was presented to Cromwell in the closing days of 1653; and the link between bees and the Cromwellian protectorate was made explicit by the Essex clergyman (and client of the Earl of Warwick) Samuel Purchas junior, in 1657.⁴³ In his *Theatre of Political Flying Insects*, Purchas writes of the queen bee as a quasi-military 'commander', who ruled not by heredity or election but by 'nature ... excelling all in goodness, in goodness, in mildness, and majesty'. The ordinary bees had 'great love to their commander, without whom they will be, they will do, nothing, and with whom they will be anything, go any whither, stay anywhere, be content with anything'.⁴⁴

The second cultural aspect concerned the arts. We have already seen the willingness of authors to celebrate the Cromwellian state through rural imagery, and Cromwell's own participation in this; but this must not be seen in isolation, rather as part of a long pastoral tradition in English (and European) culture, most famously seen in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* and Milton's *Comus*.⁴⁵ The court of Charles I and (particularly) Henrietta Maria, revered pastoral art, and this was reflected in the poetry and orations presented to them; the court masques; and the carefully planned and maintained gardens, which brought order to nature. Kevin Sharpe refers to this as a 'deep yearning for rural simplicity' that 'runs through all the court culture of early Stuart England'.⁴⁶ This reverence for the pastoral idyll certainly survived the civil war and regicide, and although deemed 'characteristically an instrument of the royalists' it has been recognised that 'no political, religious, or social group had a patent on pastoral' in literature.⁴⁷ This culture was not confined to the court. The

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pastoral, rural ideal, had long permeated into wider aristocratic society. Just as minor gentlemen sought to dress well, to entertain generously, to build (where possible) modern houses and cultivate modern gardens, so they absorbed the notions of the countryside current in the royal court. It is in this culture that we perhaps make the closest contact with Cromwell's own rural origins, as a gentleman who came of age in the last years of the reign of James I and the early years of Charles I. By the middle of the century pastoral was being displaced by a more practical, 'georgic' strain in literary culture. As in other matters, Cromwell was rather old-fashioned in his attitudes. His refurbished formal gardens at Hampton Court did not accord with the new fashion for 'wild pastoral' landscapes; his passion for falconry was decidedly 'retro'. But again this conservatism was not unusual. It was part of a culture he shared with the other gentlemen who peopled the court of the protectorate.

The effects of this shared culture are important, as it allowed Cromwell to connect with ordinary MPs, educated army officers and courtiers alike. To take an example, Cromwell repeatedly claimed that he had not sought high office, and that his dearest wish was to be allowed to retire. He said that he had always wished 'to have had leave to have retired to a private life';⁴⁸ and, most famously, in his last speech to parliament in 1658 he said that 'I would have been glad ... to have been living under a woodside to have kept a flock of sheep, rather than to have undertaken such a place as this'.⁴⁹ Like his rise from obscurity and his 'desire' to be a constable of a parish, such statements have beguiled historians. Morrill, summing up his ODNB (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography) article on Cromwell, has seen this as important in understanding the dilemma of the last months of his protectorate:

He yearned to 'keep a flock of sheep under a woodside', to emulate Gideon who led the armies of Israel and then returned to his farm. But God would not let him go. God would have him serve.

The problem with this polemical, narrowly religious, approach is that it misses the obvious. Threats to retire were a common rhetorical device, almost a cliché, by this period. There were plenty of biblical and classical precedents, from Gideon to Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus. These are traditionally associated only with royalists, notably Izaak Walton, who sought solace in pastoral retreat; but it is deeply misleading to see rural

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retirement as a purely royalist ideal. Sir Thomas Fairfax had threatened to resign in 1647, and his retirement to Appleton House was celebrated by Marvell;⁵⁰ Oliver's son, Henry, threatened to resign in the summer of 1656;⁵¹ Henry's father-in-law, Sir Francis Russell, protested in October 1658 that 'I have thoughts of leaving both court and city. I will be a lord no longer but a country man [and] follow the plough';⁵² and in the next month, Secretary Thurloe told Henry that he had asked Protector Richard 'that I might have leave to retire', to draw political flak away from the protector.⁵³ Interestingly, another man close to Cromwell, Lord Broghill, made such threats almost routinely, and used bucolic language to heighten the effect. In June 1651 Broghill told Bulstrode Whitelocke of his hopes that the Irish campaign would soon end, 'and that I shall be able next winter to turn ploughman';⁵⁴ in November 1657 he wrote to Edward Montagu that 'retirement is so much my desire';⁵⁵ and after the fall of the protectorate he said to Whitelocke that he 'now talks with no other but his thoughts, his small library, his wife and children, his ploughman and shepherds, and yet ... would not change that life for a king's, or which is more, a general's'.⁵⁶ Such claims by Broghill and the others do not reflect a real desire to retire, any more than they reveal a deep-seated interest in the views of ploughmen or shepherds. The same is surely true of Cromwell; and like the other rural references, whether in Cromwell's speeches or in the public orations produced to emulate his regime, his stated desire to tend a flock in retirement must be treated with caution.

As we have seen, there were many reasons to emphasise Cromwell's humble origins, his providential rise, and the ability of the protector and his court to join in the cultured, pastoral fashions of early modern Europe. At times it is perhaps better to look for the interest that lies behind the integrity. It may even be prudent to listen to Cromwell's harshest critics, who were well aware of what was happening. To take one example, James Harington, in *Oceana* (1656) called Cromwell's bluff. *His* hero, the all-powerful head of state, Lord Archon, really does retire 'to a country house'.⁵⁷ It is striking that Cromwell, for all his rural affectations, never left London or its immediate environs from the autumn of 1651 until his death, as lord protector, in September 1658. The closest he got to the countryside were his weekend breaks to Hampton Court, to hunt and hawk and ride and entertain, within an artificial rural scene, with formal gardens and carefully managed parklands. The farm – and the sheep – were left to the poets and the speech-writers.

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- ¹ The latter point was made in J.C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell* (2001), 65.
- ² A. Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men* (1994 edn.), 42, 44.
- ³ J. Morrill, 'The making of Oliver Cromwell', in his *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (1990), 19-20, 22-4.
- ⁴ See M. Bennett, *Oliver Cromwell* (2006), 28; B. Coward, *Oliver Cromwell* (1991), 11-12, P. Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford, 1996), 34-5; Davis, *Cromwell*, 68-71.
- ⁵ J. Morrill, *Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford, 2007), 122.
- ⁶ I. Roots (ed.), *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1989), 42; see Davis, *Cromwell*, 87, who says that this reference was made 'precisely in order to show that it was not his doing but God's'. Examples include Morrill, 'Making', 20.
- ⁷ W.C. Abbott (ed.), *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols., New Haven, 1937-47), iv. 470.
- ⁸ Morrill, 'Making', 23.
- ⁹ Coward, *Cromwell*, 120.
- ¹⁰ Bennett, *Cromwell*, 247-51.
- ¹¹ Roots, *Speeches*, 10.
- ¹² *Ibid*, 15, 21.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, 175.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, 61, 62, 64.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, 44.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, 111.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, 119.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid*, 189.
- ¹⁹ This section includes material already published in P. Little, 'The Culture of the Cromwellian Court', *Cromwelliana* (2009).
- ²⁰ Quoted in N. Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven, 1994), 285.
- ²¹ Abbott, i. 287. See the note in *Andrew Marvell*, ed. F. Kermode and K. Walker (Oxford, 1990), 295.
- ²² [E. Waller] *A Panegyrick to my Lord Protector* (1655), 7; see also *ibid*, 5. For a discussion of Cromwell as Gideon, see J. Morrill, 'King-Killing no Murder', *Cromwelliana*, 1998; and K. Sharpe, *Image Wars: promoting kings and commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven, 2010), 485, 489-91.
- ²³ A. Marvell, *Two Songs*, second song, lines 13-16. There may have been a humorous element to this 'masque', as Hobbinsol was also the 'rustic

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- swain' and dupe of Robert Cox's droll *Oenone*, published in 1656 (D.B.J. Randall, *Winter Fruit: English drama, 1642-1660* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1995) 151). See also P. Little, 'Oliver Cromwell's sense of humour', *Cromwelliana* (2007).
- ²⁴ E. Holberton, *Poetry and the Cromwellian Protectorate: Culture, Politics and Institutions* (Oxford, 2008), 160-1.
- ²⁵ See P. Little, 'Oliver Cromwell and Falconry', *Cromwelliana* (2008).
- ²⁶ Gaunt, *Cromwell*, 214.
- ²⁷ L.L. Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: ceremony, portrait and print, 1645-1661* (Cambridge, 2000), 43, 199, see also *ibid*, 129-30.
- ²⁸ Roots, *Speeches*, 92, 119, 163.
- ²⁹ I. Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Oxford, 1992), 99.
- ³⁰ Interestingly, John Bunyan almost certainly played down his own social origins, saying that he was from 'a low and inconsiderable generation' and his father was 'of the rank that is the meanest', and also made out that his education was meagre, his reading going no further than the Bible and Fox's *Acts and Monuments*. Yet, as Richard L. Greaves and others have pointed out, Bunyan was descended from the landed gentry and his father was a tradesman who owned his own house; and the complexity of his writing suggests that he was being disingenuous about his schooling (see his article on Bunyan in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*). In the words of one of Bunyan's editors, 'the truth is that, in having to defend themselves against the contempt of the established authorities, 'mechanick preachers' like Bunyan came positively to glory in their humble social origins and lack of worldly learning' (J. Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, ed. W. R. Owens (1987), p. xiii).
- ³¹ Quoted in C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: radical ideas during the English Revolution* (1975 edn.), 42, 94.
- ³² Gentles, *New Model*, 101.
- ³³ Quoted in Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*, 100.
- ³⁴ Gentles, *New Model*, 103-4.
- ³⁵ See Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*, 122; also see Andrew Hopper, *Black Tom: Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English Revolution* (Manchester, 2007), 216, which contrasts Fairfax and Cromwell, saying that the former was 'less alarmed than Cromwell at challenges from "social inferiors"'.
³⁶ Abbott, i. 256.

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- ³⁷ Gaunt, *Cromwell*, 49-50.
- ³⁸ Quoted in A. McRae, 'Husbandry Manuals and the Language of Agrarian Improvement', in M. Leslie and T. Raylor (eds), *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land* (Leicester, 1992), 47.
- ³⁹ G. Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom and Other Writings*, ed. Hill (1973), 281.
- ⁴⁰ S. Carrington, *History of... Oliver late Lord Protector* (1695), preface, quoted in Fraser, *Cromwell*, 43.
- ⁴¹ T. Raylor, 'Samuel Hartlib and the Commonwealth of Bees', in Leslie and Raylor (eds), *Culture and Cultivation*, 115, 128n.
- ⁴² Raylor, 'Hartlib and Bees', 108.
- ⁴³ Raylor, 'Hartlib and Bees', 111, 127n. For the Warwick connection see S. Purchas, *Theatre of Political Flying Insects*, (1657), epist. ded.
- ⁴⁴ Purchas, *Theatre*, 17.
- ⁴⁵ For a discussion, see Randall, *Winter Fruit*, ch. 10.
- ⁴⁶ K. Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992), 170.
- ⁴⁷ Randall, *Winter Fruit*, 187.
- ⁴⁸ Abbott, iii. 453.
- ⁴⁹ Roots, *Speeches*, 189.
- ⁵⁰ R. Bell, *Memorials of the Civil War, comprising the correspondence of the Fairfax family* (2 vols, 1849) i. 343-4.
- ⁵¹ T. Birch (ed.), *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esq* (7 vols, 1742), vi. 55-7.
- ⁵² P. Gaunt (ed.), *The Correspondence of Henry Cromwell, 1655-1659* (Camden 5th series, 31, 2007), 414.
- ⁵³ *Thurloe State Papers* vii. 490.
- ⁵⁴ Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 54, fo. 76v (7 June 1651).
- ⁵⁵ *Thurloe State Papers* vi. 622.
- ⁵⁶ Longleat House, Whitelocke Papers 19, fo. 31r (23 June 1659).
- ⁵⁷ Cited in Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, 115.

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By Dr Andrew Barclay

My views on the background to Cromwell's elections as one of the MPs for Cambridge in 1640, which have recently appeared in print, raise many new possibilities about a period of his career that has until now seemed especially impenetrable.¹ Not that I am claiming to have delivered any last words on the subject. On the contrary, there remains much scope for speculation. The most intriguing leads are mostly those that I have put forward most tentatively. I would therefore be the first to encourage others to look beyond my suggestions and, indeed, a number of historians have already drawn my attention to details that take on new significance in the light of my hypotheses. Asked to speak at the study day 'Risen from Obscurity – Cromwell's Early Life' on 22 October 2011, it struck me that the most fruitful approach would be to revisit that part of my theory that remains the most speculative. I put forward the idea that Cromwell was attending nonconformist conventicles in the late 1630s only as a particularly interesting possibility.

The major reason for such inescapable uncertainty is that this possibility depends on the reliability of a single passage in James Heath's *Flagellum*. You may not recognise the name, but the likelihood is that most *Cromwelliana* readers will have come across references to Heath in print at some point. Most modern Cromwell biographies mention him. They do so because his most famous book, *Flagellum*, first published in 1663, was one of the earliest full-length biographies of the late lord protector and because many of the most colourful anecdotes about Cromwell can be traced back to it. But the universal view of all modern scholars is that *Flagellum* is a tainted source. No one has been taking Heath's crude royalist propaganda seriously. Its claims have been discussed by historians only in order to dismiss them as hopelessly unreliable.

My initial heresy was to question this blanket rejection of *Flagellum*. Some details included by Heath I knew to be true and the more I examined his text, the more complex the issue of its unreliability became. Significant sections turned out to have been plagiarised from another writer, George Bate (Cromwell's former physician), and many of Heath's other stories had already been in circulation, either in print or orally. There remains no doubt that Heath was a hack who happily recycled any old rubbish. However, he had clearly consulted some well-informed witnesses and there is no real

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evidence of him actually inventing anything. All this only complicates the historian's task. The point is not that Heath is now to be trusted; rather it is that he should be neither accepted nor dismissed uncritically.²

This reassessment proved most fruitful when applied to its account of the 1640 Cambridge elections. That version was added to *Flagellum* for its revised 1665 edition.³ This is not the place to discuss in detail the full implications of what this revealed. Suffice to say that its story of a group of godly Cambridge citizens organising themselves to secure Cromwell's election as one of their local MPs can be shown to be surprisingly accurate. Only the first part of the story is important for our immediate purposes. *Flagellum* presents a Cambridge fellmonger, Richard Timbs, as the key figure behind Cromwell's election. This is how Timbs is introduced and how the connection between the two men is explained:

While he [Cromwell] continued here [the Isle of Ely] in this fashion, there were discourses of new Writs issuing out for the Parliament in 1640 and about the same time or a little before it was the hap of one Richard Tymes since Alderman of Cambridge, and a man generally known throughout all the late times, having sate in all the Juncto's thereof, to be at a Conventicle, (as he usually every Sunday rode to the Isle of Ely to that purpose, having a brother who entertained them in his course) where he heard this Oliver, with such admiration, that he thought there was not such a precious man in the Nation; and took such a liking to him, that from that time he did nothing but ruminate and meditate of the Man and his Gifts.⁴

What we have here is a direct claim that Cromwell was attending an illegal conventicle somewhere in the Isle of Ely at some point before his election to Parliament in 1640. There is even the implication that Cromwell was the preacher. If true, this would be sensational. But is it? There are some good reasons for scepticism. At best the reference to the conventicle is third-hand gossip and this particular claim need not be as reliable as the rest of the anecdote. We also need to be alert to a contemporary resonance that would have been rather more obvious to its earliest readers. The 1662 Act of Uniformity had created a new generation of nonconformists reduced to holding similar secret meetings. Readers of *Flagellum* were probably expected to recognise these latest dissenters as being every bit as subversive as Cromwell had proved to be. On its own, one would be inclined to reject this specific allegation against Cromwell as too good to be true.

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The really surprising thing, however, is that this is not the only such anecdote. Six other early sources tell similar stories. Most have been ignored by Cromwell's more recent biographers. Not that each carries the same weight. One problem is that *Flagellum*, a huge bestseller in its day, was widely read, so we cannot be confident that all these similar stories are independent of it. Thus, at first sight some of the claims made by John Nalson in 1678 seem most promising. As the rector of Doddington in the heart of the Isle of Ely, he was well-placed to record any local oral traditions 40 years after those events. Nalson even mentions Timbs, claiming that he was the man who had first got Cromwell involved with clandestine nonconformists in the area. But there is little in Nalson's account that could not just be an imaginative reworking of the equivalent passages in *Flagellum*.⁵ A further 40 years after that, Edmund Pettis, the historian of St Ives, stated that Cromwell had been 'an Independent Preacher in the Isle, & in Norfolk', and that this had helped get him elected at Cambridge.⁶ Again, the echo of *Flagellum* is too strong to be considered a separate tradition. One would like to believe the statement in the second edition of another early Cromwell biography that, 'he began to associate himself with the Puritans, and to entertain their Preachers at his house.'⁷ And there might even be something to Sir William Dugdale's allegation that Cromwell was involved with 'those unquiet Spirits, who were refractory to the Church-Discipline'.⁸ Or it may be simply that, thanks to Heath, this had become a stock insult to be used to undermine any positive views of Cromwell.

There are, nevertheless, two of these sources that merit further consideration. Both are known to date from well before the publication of *Flagellum* and so cannot be derived from it. Yet, just as importantly, as they were not published at the time, neither could have influenced anything in *Flagellum*. Moreover, although neither is first-hand, both were based on information from men who had been well-placed to pick up accurate gossip on the subject.

The fact that John Hacket mentions Cromwell in his biography of John Williams, the bishop of Lincoln during the 1630s and later the archbishop of York, has frequently been noted. According to Hacket, Williams had warned Charles I about Cromwell in 1645. While Hacket is retrospectively reporting comments that themselves must originally have been tainted by a measure of hindsight, that alleged conversation was quite possibly based on what Williams had known about Cromwell in the 1630s. What we can now

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say is that Williams had probably at least known of him. As Simon Healy has pointed out, Richard Oakeley, one of the two men to whom Cromwell had sold his properties in Huntingdon in 1631, was Williams's secretary and it may well be that he and the other purchaser, Richard Owen, had been buying those lands on Williams's behalf.⁹ Hacket recalled the 1645 conversation as follows:

I knew him [Cromwell], says he [Williams], at Bugden [Buckden], but never knew his Religion. He was a common Spokes-man for Sectaries, and maintained their part with stubbornness: He never discoursed as if he were pleased with your Majesty, and your great Officers...¹⁰

These comments have often been linked to Cromwell's opposition to fen drainage. That interpretation was always open to doubt and seems even less plausible now that we know that Cromwell's views on the Bedford Level project were far from straightforward.¹¹ That said, Williams's comments do not quite amount to a claim that Cromwell had been attending conventicles. The hint, however, seems to be that he had already been associating with the religiously disaffected.

No such ambiguities surround the other source. In the late 1650s the former royalist army officer, Richard Symonds, spoke to John Byng of Grantchester, the steward of the estates of King's College, Cambridge. During their conversation, Byng told Symonds a sensational story about his wife's uncle, the clergyman Christopher Goad, and Cromwell:

Afore the Parliament began, 17 yeare ago or there abouts, divers would meet with him [Cromwell] sometimes in a barne, and other places; among the rest one Mr. Goad, who was chaplin to Lord Say and brother to Dr. Goad, father-in-law to Mr. J. Byng, and their prayers tended to pulling downe that government, and for a reformation; and when he had prayed, this Goad (as beleiving it true) has told his said brother for certayne, that he has heard a voice saying, as afar off, 'Verily it shalbe done, Verily it shal be.'¹²

Not everything about this story inspires confidence. Symonds may have planned his own hostile biography of Cromwell, which would explain why he was collecting anecdotes about him. Byng's source was evidently his

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father-in-law, Thomas Goad, the regius professor of civil law at Cambridge, a Laudian who had been one of the commissioners for Bishop Wren's 1636 visitation of the Norwich diocese. The story was probably passed on by him and then by Byng with the deliberate intention of shocking the listener. But both men were talking about someone they knew well.

Christopher Goad was certainly a controversial figure. In 1635, Goad, who was a fellow of King's College, was reprimanded by the court of the vice-chancellor of Cambridge University for a sermon he had preached. That sermon, delivered in the university church, Great St Mary's, had condemned those who sought to introduce religious innovations that were not supported by Scripture. It is not too difficult to see this as a coded attack on the ascendant Laudians.¹³ Despite this trouble, or perhaps because of it, Goad was subsequently appointed as the lecturer of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, as the successor to Richard Sibbes. This only outraged the leading Cambridge Laudians. Several years later, the Long Parliament gathered evidence against some of the more suspect Cambridge dons. One of their main targets was the president of Queens', Edward Martin. The college cook confirmed Martin's theological and political untrustworthiness by telling the parliamentary investigators that the president had declared that 'he would rather see his son in a whore house than the lecture', referring to the sermons 'preached by a grave divine Mr Goad fellow of Kings Colledge, in Trinity Church in Cambridge'.¹⁴ At some point, as Symonds mentions, Goad became a chaplain to 'Old Subtlety' himself, Viscount Saye and Sele, and in 1646 he would be appointed by Saye to those living at Broughton in Oxfordshire. The full extent of his radicalism was made very clear in several publications that appeared in the early 1650s, including the collected edition of his own sermon published posthumously in 1653. Those show that during these final years of his life Goad was a radical Independent who rejected all compulsory ecclesiastical structures.¹⁵ His views may, of course, have changed over the years, but it would be fair to say that Goad had already been one of the more radical clerical voices in Cambridge by the late 1630s. That he was then preaching at secret meetings attended by Cromwell is not so implausible.

There is, however, another reason why the account in *Flagellum* needs to be reconsidered. Heath tells us almost nothing about the alleged conventicle. All we can deduce is that it seems to have met somewhere in the Isle of Ely on Sundays and that Richard Timbs's brother was somehow involved.

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These are unpromising leads. So what do we know about Richard Timbs? His later career is easily reconstructed, as he would rise to become the mayor of Cambridge and later one of the town's MPs. His origins, in contrast, are far more obscure. Indeed, nothing is known for certain about him before the 1630s. The few fragments of circumstantial evidence about his early life, however, suggest that he was born in Chatteris, probably in 1603.¹⁶ Timbs was, therefore, by origin a native of the Isle of Ely.

We also know that he had a brother, Thomas. What makes that even more intriguing is that in the late 1620s and early 1630s Thomas Timbs was living in St Ives. As Cromwell was, of course, also living there during the early 1630s, we can reasonably assume that the two men knew each other. Both were certainly members of the vestry of the parish church and, as one of the churchwardens in 1632-3, Thomas Timbs bought willows from Cromwell.¹⁷ What little *Flagellum* tells us about the conventicle therefore appears to be confirmed by the few known facts about Timbs and his brother. There is, however, a huge complication - Thomas Timbs had died in 1634. If Cromwell had been attending a conventicle hosted by him, this cannot have been, as *Flagellum* implied, shortly before Parliament was called in 1640. Yet this is less of an insuperable problem than it may seem. Dates were always Heath's weakest point (which is really saying something), so there would be no great surprise if some details had been fudged to make a better story. One possibility would be that Cromwell had got to know Richard Timbs via Thomas Timbs in the early 1630s, but that the two of them had only become involved in nonconformity later in the decade. The alternative would be that *Flagellum* was wrong to imply that their attendance at conventicles was a recent development in 1640. The latter would actually be the far more sensational possibility.

There were, after all, two crucial differences between the two halves of the 1630s. The first is that, as the decade progressed, the Laudian reforms began to alter the experience of worship in most local parishes. Every parishioner was now expected to conform to, and to participate in, the new ritualism. Cromwell's fears for the future of the Church of England can only have grown, making it ever more tempting for him to turn elsewhere. The second difference is that by the late 1630s Cromwell had moved to Ely. His attitudes towards the general national issues of church government would be decisively shaped by the specific peculiarities of the small cathedral city which was now his home.

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Cromwell's status in Ely during the time he lived there was highly ambiguous. His uncle, Sir Thomas Steward, had been the town's leading layman and, at least initially, everyone seems to have assumed that Cromwell would take on that same role. But Ely was a city without a borough corporation, in which the bishop and the cathedral chapter performed most of the functions of civic government. Sir Thomas's importance had derived from the fact that he had always been willing to be the cathedral chapter's most loyal servant. He had been the main tenant of the chapter's estates and, as such, he had acted as the collector of their tithes. He had also worked closely with several of the cathedral clerics to control the most important local charitable trust, the charity of Thomas Parsons. On Sir Thomas's death, the cathedral chapter simply appointed his nephew as his successor – Cromwell was re-granted his uncle's leases and was named to his vacant place on the charitable trust. Those appointments appeared to tie Cromwell directly to the clerical establishment within Ely. Like his uncle, he was now the principal tenant of the chapter's estates and he held those leases on the same highly favourable terms as Sir Thomas had done. In return, he collected the tithes for the two parish churches, Holy Trinity and St Mary's which, since the Reformation, had been impropriated to the cathedral, and paid the stipends of the two vicars. The house next to St Mary's, now known as 'Oliver Cromwell's House', came as part of the package. Not many years later Cromwell would be a very vocal critic of the cathedrals and their lavish endowments. Yet here he was directly involved in the financial affairs of his local cathedral, farming its lands, enforcing its tithes and taking a sizeable cut of its revenues for himself in the process. One has to wonder how far this troubled his conscience. Just as importantly, one also has to wonder what the cathedral chapter made of their new right-hand man. What we do know is that the relationship soon broke down. All involved probably got cold feet almost immediately.

When Cromwell first moved there the bishop of Ely was Francis White and, from Cromwell's perspective, he was probably bad enough. But when White died in early 1638, matters took their worst possible turn. White's successor was to be Matthew Wren. In his previous diocese, Norwich, Wren had enacted the king's religious agenda with particular rigour. His primary visitation there (in which Thomas Goad had assisted) had been especially thorough and the proceedings arising from it had helped persuade many clergymen who opposed him to seek refuge abroad. William Prynne's denunciation of the Laudian bishops, pointedly written in the form of a

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letter from Ipswich within the Norwich diocese, had therefore singled Wren out for special blame. It was Wren's visitation that Prynne had in mind when he fulminated that there was,

never such a persecution or havock made among Gods Ministers since Q[ueen] Maries dayes, as a lecherous proud insolante Prelate hath there lately made against all Lawes of God and Man, to the astonishment of the whole Realme.¹⁸

Such concerns were the reasons why the House of Commons would, in July 1641, impeach Wren for his conduct while bishop of Norwich. Among their accusations were that he had insisted that communion tables be placed at the east end of all churches, that sermons could be preached at times other than on Sunday mornings only with his special permission, that the clergy were to wear surplices and that parishioners were to kneel to receive communion. He was also charged with enforcing the collection of tithes in Norwich, despite the traditional exemptions claimed by the inhabitants.¹⁹ In presenting these impeachment articles to the House of Lords, Sir Thomas Widdrington, the MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed, recalled Wren's purges of the clergy while at Norwich:

This Noah (if I may so call him without offence) assoone as he entered into the arke of this Diocesse, he sends, nay forces Doves to fly out of this Arke, and when they returne unto him, with Olive branches in their mouthes of peaceable and humble submissions, he will not receive them into this arke againe, unlesse like Ravens they would feed upon the Carrion of his new Inventions, they must not have any footing there; he stands as a flaming sword to keepe such out of his Diocesse.²⁰

These were also the methods Wren had been determined to apply when he had been translated to Ely in 1638. His primary visitation there was modelled on that which he had held so controversially while at Norwich.²¹

Surprisingly, relations between Wren and Cromwell were initially rather friendly. In late 1638 Wren relied on Cromwell, as one of the local justices of the peace, for information about the recent protests in the Ely area against the draining of the fens, after Wren had been asked to prepare a report on the subject for the Privy Council.²² Moreover, this discontent over

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the Bedford Level drainage project does not seem to have been paralleled by any open protests within Ely itself against Wren's new rigid enforcement of his Laudian agenda. Everyone, including Cromwell, appears to have acquiesced.

Yet all was not well. The extent of the opposition to Wren in Ely only became clear in 1641, once the parliamentary proceedings against him had already begun. A group of Ely inhabitants organised two petitions which were then presented to the House of Lords. One complained about the management of Parsons' Charity, the trust of which Cromwell was one of the feoffees. The other argued that the cathedral chapter, as the impropiators of the tithes, were not providing adequate funding for the parish churches. Both were direct attacks on the cathedral chapter and the second petition, with its complaints involving the collection of tithes within the limits of the cathedral city, together with complaints about the restrictions on sermons, contained strong echoes of the charges against Wren as bishop of Norwich. But both could also be seen as implicating Cromwell. As a feoffee, he was directly involved in the affairs of Parsons' Charity. As the holder of the cathedral leases, he had been a party to the arrangements for the maintenance of the parish churches and their clergymen.²³

This becomes less of a paradox once it is realised that Cromwell had ceased to hold the cathedral leases in 1640. Both sides had probably come to realise that Cromwell was not the man for that role. The leases were transferred to the archdeacon of Ely, who, acting on behalf of the rest of the cathedral canons, probably bought Cromwell out.²⁴ Quite what the full story was behind this is unlikely ever to be known. The possibilities are, however, tantalising. One can easily believe that Cromwell's conscience was much exercised during the late 1630s by being so obviously implicated with the episcopal hierarchy. The sense that he was being a hypocrite would have been difficult to avoid. His guilt may have been made even worse if his disquiet and that of his like-minded neighbours in Ely had to remain especially furtive.

The really intriguing thing is that evidence for resistance to Wren's policies at the time is easier to document for Cambridge than it is for Ely. Wren's episcopal visitors were able to identify a number of laymen and women in the Cambridge parishes who were refusing to accept the liturgical

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innovations. Those resisters were not especially numerous, so one might conclude that this was no more than the sort of sporadic disobedience any changes could be expected to encounter. However, three of them were men who would be later named in *Flagellum* as part of the group who helped get Cromwell elected in 1640. They included Richard Timbs, as well as John Lowry, the other successful candidate at Cambridge in the second 1640 election.²⁵ The third man, Robert Ibbot, was excommunicated in October 1639 for refusing to bow at the name of Jesus during church services. We now know that this was after he had told the chancellor of the diocese that, 'He knew no more Reverence to be at the Name of Jesus, then at the Name of Satan.'²⁶ Moreover, a fourth man named in *Flagellum*, William Welbore, had also been excommunicated earlier that same year, after he had refused to cooperate with the episcopal visitors in his capacity as one of the churchwardens of St Edward's, Cambridge.²⁷ Welbore was almost certainly a personal friend of the Cromwells. Given all this, that there were informal connections between these individuals in Cambridge, unhappy with Wren's policies, and those in Ely who thought the same, does not now seem so unlikely. I would further suggest that these links were then the key to Cromwell's success in the Cambridge parliamentary elections. Just as *Flagellum* implies.

The evidence that Cromwell was associating with religious nonconformists during the late 1630s is therefore late, highly tainted or circumstantial. But it is not negligible. There may, moreover, be one hint about this from Cromwell himself. This came in the comments allegedly made by him when he arrested Lionel Gatford at Cambridge in late January 1643. Gatford's offence was that he planned to publish a book condemning those who defied the civil authorities on religious grounds. According to Laurence Womock, Cromwell told Gatford that 'he [Cromwell] had been a great opposer of the Archbishops Innovations, but carried himself so cunningly, that the Law could not lay hold upon him'.²⁸ Unfortunately, that cunning now hampers us as much as it did the authorities at the time. We are left strongly suspecting that he had been defying the Laudian bishops when they had been at the height of their powers without quite being able to pin down any of the details. What exactly Cromwell had been up to remains as elusive as ever.

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- ¹ Andrew Barclay, *Electing Cromwell: The Making of a Politician* (London, 2011); Andrew Barclay, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Cambridge elections of 1640', *Parliamentary History*, 29, pt. 2 (2010), pp. 155-70.
- ² The rather complex genesis of *Flagellum* is discussed in detail in Barclay, *Electing Cromwell*, pp. 13-32.
- ³ James Heath, *Flagellum* (1665), pp. 18-22.
- ⁴ Heath, *Flagellum* (1665), p. 18.
- ⁵ [John Nalson], *The Project of Peace* (1678), pp. 47-54.
- ⁶ Edmund Pettis' *Survey of St Ives, 1728*, ed. Mary Carter (Cambridgeshire Record Society, 2002), facsimile p. 85.
- ⁷ *A Perfect Politician: Or, A Full View Of the Life and Actions of O. Cromwel* (2nd edition, 1680), p. 2.
- ⁸ Sir William Dugdale, *A Short View of the Late Troubles in England* (Oxford, 1681), pp. 459-60.
- ⁹ Simon Healy, '1636: the unmaking of Oliver Cromwell', p. 24, in *Oliver Cromwell: New Perspectives*, ed. Patrick Little (Basingstoke, 2009).
- ¹⁰ John Hacket, *Scrinia Reserata* (1693), part II, p. 212.
- ¹¹ Barclay, *Electing Cromwell*, pp. 75-96.
- ¹² British Library, Harl. MS 991, fo. 13.
- ¹³ Cambridge University Archives, V.C.Ct.I.55, fo. 10; British Library, Harl. MS 7019, fo. 68.
- ¹⁴ British Library, Harl. MS 7019, fo. 78.
- ¹⁵ *Several Sermons and Discourses of William Dell* (1652), sig. a2-b2; R.W., *The Fourth Paper, Presented by Maior Butler* (1652), pp. 7-10; Christopher Goad, *Refreshing Drops and Scorching Vials* (1653).
- ¹⁶ Barclay, *Electing Cromwell*, pp. 61-4. A full account of Timbs's life will appear in the forthcoming 1640-1660 volumes of the *History of Parliament*.
- ¹⁷ All Saints, St Ives vestry book, 1626-1762, unfol. (on loan to the Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon).
- ¹⁸ [William Prynne], *Newes from Ipswich* (1638), sig. [A4v].
- ¹⁹ *Proceedings in the Opening Session of the Long Parliament: House of Commons*, ed. Maija Jansson (7 vols., Rochester, New York and Suffolk, 2000-7), v. 504-5, 506-10.
- ²⁰ *Sr. Tho. Widdringtons Speech At a Conference betweene Both Houses, on Tuesday the 20 of July 1641* (1641), sig. A2v.

OLIVER CROMWELL AND THE UNDERGROUND OPPOSITION
TO BISHOP WREN OF ELY

- ²¹ *Documents Relating to Cambridgeshire Villages*, ed. W. M. Palmer and W. H. Saunders (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 57-75; W. M. Palmer, 'Episcopal Visitation Returns, Cambridgeshire. (Diocese of Ely) 1638-1662', *Transactions of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society*, 4 (1930), pp. 313-83.
- ²² Barclay, *Electing Cromwell*, pp. 88-91.
- ²³ Reg Holmes, *Cromwell's Ely* (Ely, 1975, reprinted 1981), pp. 21-36; Barclay, *Electing Cromwell*, pp. 97-109.
- ²⁴ Barclay, *Electing Cromwell*, pp. 100-2.
- ²⁵ Barclay, 'Oliver Cromwell and the Cambridge elections of 1640', pp. 166-7; Barclay, *Electing Cromwell*, pp. 137-9.
- ²⁶ British Library, Add. MS 5825, fo. 36v. These extracts by William Cole from one of the lost episcopal registers have been kindly drawn to my attention by Sir Graham Hart.
- ²⁷ British Library, Add. MS 5825, fo. 37v.
- ²⁸ Laurence Womock, *Sober Sadnes* (1643), p. 35. This is another example of an important reference that has come to light since the publication of my book *Electing Cromwell* (2011). In this case, I am indebted to John Walter.

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FROM CIVILIAN TO SOLDIER: RECALLING CROMWELL IN CAMBRIDGE, 1642

By Dr Sue L Sadler

On 13th August 1642 George Swathe (1601-1664?) Minister of Denham, prayed;

O My Lord God, Etc ... I praise the for preventing Bloodshed at *Cambridge* upon *Thursday*, about the Quarrel of the College Plate, which was taken by the Parliament as it was going towards the King —.¹

This prayer leads to the heart of the story about Cromwell's entry into the civil war, or more accurately *conflicting* stories, and this is our problem. We know a good deal about Cromwell's past compared with many contemporaries, but we still strive in vain to unveil his years in obscurity.² We know Cromwell crossed the threshold between civilian and military activities before the official outbreak of war. His boundary between peace and war is our subject, where we begin reviewing what we know about Cromwell in the summer of 1642, by considering the transmission of evidence, discordant voices (problems we know exist in reconciling accounts of what happened) and silences (handling gaps).³ I hope through aligning distinctions between the past and history for Cromwell in 1642, noting aspects of the common inheritance and variability in histories about Cromwell, and studying what from the locality was represented as newsworthy at that moment, to illuminate a silent space ripe for exploration that might draw us nearer to what happened in Cromwell's transition from civilian to soldier.

Cromwell, Cambridge and the past

The story's components passed down in the retelling can be summarised as follows. In August 1642 Cromwell raced from Westminster to Cambridgeshire (sometimes accounts add companions) after warnings from his faction amongst Cambridge townsmen of the University's attempts to send convoys of plate to the King. Cromwell, with volunteers, guarded the road between Cambridge and Huntingdon before overpowering the militia protecting a convoy near Kings College. Sir Philip Stapleton told the Commons on 15th August that Cromwell had seized the magazine in Cambridge's castle and hindered the exportation of plate to Charles. In decisively pre-empting the outbreak of war, Cromwell risked charges of treason and Parliament indemnified him, Valentine Walton and anyone

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assisting them. Cromwell began securing his surroundings, prevented royalists from reading the Commission of Array, and sent the ring-leaders as prisoners to London on 1st September. He also mustered recruits on the 29th August, leading a company of sixty men by 6th September, and was ordered on 13th September, to prepare to join Essex's field army.

These components belong to an evaporating peace, characterised by improvisation, uncertainty and naivety, and connect to Cromwell's 1642 campaign. In joining Essex, he and his men were involved, to an unknown extent, at Edgehill and were initiated into the realities of warfare. The Cromwell who returned was developing, like others, a greater appreciation of military task and embarked on a distinctive plan to recruit and train soldiers capable of withstanding Prince Rupert's cavalry. This phase differed from the 1643 campaign onwards where Cromwell and others entered a world of death and taxes.⁴ We are concerned, therefore, with *the particular* (incidents, simultaneously familiar and obscured), when a relatively unknown MP dragged moderates, the fearful and the slow-of-thinking over the boundaries between peace and war.

Alongside these components, are the practicalities of retelling the story. The trajectories of individuals and communities intersect with Cromwell's past. Historians know that when they select a thread from the past within their sources, they necessarily let others fall away in the interest of coherence. Therefore, **selection** concerns us (choices in the transmission of events affecting our understanding of Cromwell)⁵.

In its published guise, like any history, fragmentary events from the past may be smoothed into the narrative of Cromwell biographies; for example, those of John Morley or John Buchan.⁶ Given their scope and constraints on word-limits, that is all it merits. What is striking about the published retelling of Cromwell's activities during the summer and autumn of 1642 is how badly they cohere once expanded beyond short summaries. Practitioners know the received account is constructed from sources that are difficult to reconcile. In lengthier biographies and specialised studies, word-limits expand allowing scope for interpretation of glimmers of the man who would become Lord Protector. Cromwell's actions and the lessons he learned increase our understanding of the man of escalating military renown who became a political force in his own right. Seizing the initiative worked. Colin Davis, for example, depicts Cromwell as a team player in part of his

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evaluation of his ‘rapid establishment ... as a commander of considerable military potential’.⁷

Evaluating an interpretation requires a reliable narrative, yet many variant stories exist. We are unsure with whom Cromwell acted (Desborough⁸ or Russell⁹), of the chronology, and how effective he was (see below). Such instability suggests something is wrong with the story. If the details shape what is extrapolated about his later reputation and the apparent duality of his identity, studying the gaps in what we know matters. Cromwell’s years in obscurity provide the baseline for measuring his rise. Understanding what Cromwell did in 1642, was said to have done, or what passed, then, is more than clarifying what is hazy and filling in some blanks in the period before he became famous. The impediments to a smooth narrative merit attention in their own right.

We know that inconsistent contemporary accounts of his transition from civilian to soldier in 1642 come from a chorus of voices, none of which are Cromwell’s own. From him there is near silence. With neither diary, nor letters near the event, we resort to traces of the past still available, his signature on a receipt of 19th July reimbursing him for arms and the receipt of 7th September for pay for Cromwell’s sixty troopers signed by his quartermaster.¹⁰ In seeking Cromwell’s own words historians focus on the retrospective nugget in notes of his extempore speech to Parliament, 13th April 1657:

I was a person, who, from my first employment, was suddenly preferred and lifted up from lesser trusts to greater; from my first being a captain of a troop of horse; and I did labour as well as I could to discharge of my trust, and God blessed me as it pleased him ...¹¹

This reveals something about his preoccupations in 1657, his difficult rejection of the Crown, his need to reclaim his past, as well as his present, from charges of covetous folly and betrayal, and his self-representation. In striving to reorder a crownless society and struggling towards the promised-land, Cromwell needed his actions in 1642 to be those of a ‘plain and honest man’.¹² It reveals less of his preoccupations in 1642, so we seek other sources to construct a sequence of events.

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The bulk of contemporary evidence used in published accounts belongs to the contradictory words of others about Cromwell. We mainly have a chain of parliamentary commands, university records, newsbooks, parliamentary investigations, and retrospective accounts (see below)¹³. Even so, it is startling how much variation appears on the incident ‘of which no historian gives any clear account’.¹⁴ Given that evidence and chronology affect the relationship between narrative and analysis, do our evaluations of Cromwell’s in 1642 shift if we test the chronology and sources? What happened was pivotal for Cromwell, the University and Cambridgeshire, but is an incident(s) we partially understand (derived from fragmentary, contradictory sources resulting in an unstable, possibly unreliable, narrative) suitable for interpretations of this phase in Cromwell’s career?

This steers us towards our interaction with the filters standing between us and what we want to know about Cromwell’s past. At a general level the *transmission of information* and *historiography* concerns us, or, the limits in what we might know about Cromwell through the survival *and absence* of evidence, and ways of manoeuvring through Chinese-whispers towards what happened. If the published story’s multiple versions suggest the retelling of events is inadequately sustained by the known facts, we must start revisiting sources underpinning the narratives, their creation, survival, potential for mutability, selection and deployment. Its variability emphasises that Cromwell’s past and history are not identical. Setting a historiographical thread on the transmission of the story alongside the perspective of newsbooks indicates that the task has potential.

The outwitting of Cromwell in Varley’s history

Swathe’s prayer was critical for F.J. Varley’s retelling of Cromwell’s activities. How do we track the trail from Varley to Swathe, when the account of Cromwell’s entry into military life emanates from the contradictory words of others? Cromwell’s arrival in Cambridgeshire marks his shift from organising arms to using force. We know he was at Westminster, 1st August¹⁵ and Stapleton reported, Monday 15th August:

Mr Cromwell, in Cambridgeshire, has seized the Magazine in the Castle at Cambridge, and hath hindered the carrying away of the plate from that University;¹⁶

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The sequence of events between is uncertain. Varley claimed in 1935 that he could identify Cromwell's arrival in Cambridge and defeat of the convoy of plate as the 10th of August, using Swathes prayer of the 13th.

Varley challenged the royalist account of the college plate incident in which Barnabus Oley's party of horse evaded Cromwell. To illustrate this version Varley quoted Helkiah Bedford's translation of Peter Barwick's biography of his brother John published in 1724. Barwick, a St John's student in 1642, began the biography in 1671, seven years after his brother's death.¹⁷

[Varley's quotation overlaid in bold on Barwick's passage.]

But this could not be effected without first outwitting Cromwell, who had been **appriz'd of their design by some of the townsmen of Cambridge** (by whose interest he had been chosen member of the town) and **with a disorderly band of peasants on foot, lay in wait for the rich booty at a place called Lowler Hedges, betwixt Cambridge and Huntington. But Mr Barwick and some other select persons of the University,** to whose care and prudence the management of this important affair was committed, **having got intelligence of Cromwell's way-laying them, send away the royal supply through by roads, convoy'd by a small party of horse, that very night in which Cromwell with his foot beset the common road, or else the spoil had the next morning certainly fallen into the enemy's hands. He that was made choice of to conduct this expedition, was the Reverend Mr. Barnaby Oley, a man of great prudence, and very well acquainted with all the by-ways, through which they were to pass. He was president of Clare Hall;** and none more proper to be the messenger of the University's duty and affection to their most gracious Sovereign and dearest country; for I question whether Cambridge ever bred a person of more learning, accompanied with so great modesty, and such an exemplary holiness of life. **Under the protection of God's good providence he arrived safe at Nottingham, where he had the honour to lay at his Majesty's feet this small testimony and earnest of the University's loyalty at that very time, when the royal standard was set up in the castle there, summoning the**

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King's good subjects from all parts to the performance of their faith and true allegiance.¹⁸

Rescuing Cromwell from 'prejudice' reduced the account's strident royalism, but apart from sidestepping 'outwitting Cromwell', the omissions are insignificant.¹⁹ Varley insisted there was one convoy, supervised by Captain James Docwra and overpowered by Cromwell, using sequestration depositions from 1646 quoted by Alfred Kingston in 1897, to identify parts of the narrative Varley believed to be reliable. (Kingston's work, situated within the resurgence of civil war local histories, included generous quotations from primary sources.²⁰) He discredited the *Querela's* dating, the beginning of August, as deliberate misinformation (the *Querela* was undoubtedly partisan) and dismissed Kingston's account:

'Kingston, in an attempt to reconcile two conflicting accounts, is driven to invent two removals, ignoring all evidence which points definitely to only one removal, or attempt to remove'.²¹

Varley then cited Swathe's prayer dated 13th August as his trump card, asserting 'His [Cromwell's] arrival in Cambridge may be dated as August 10th, for on Sunday, August 13th, George Swathe ... offered the following Prayer ...'²² The 10th has been used sporadically since 1935,²³ sometimes as a tentative date,²⁴ alternatively, the second week in August²⁵ and looser descriptions continue.²⁶

How credible was Varley's key source? A George Swathe studied at Cambridge 1619–1626 and was possibly vicar of Hatfield-Peveril 1661–4. The name appears in the Denham Parish Registers as minister from 1637 and previously as Snailwell's curate. We can partly track the provenance. Varley took Swathe's prayer from Appendix 1 in Zachery Grey's *The Schismatics delineated from Authentic Vouchers* (1739). Grey (1688–1766), an Anglican clergyman, religious historian and antiquary, opposing the Presbyterian historian Daniel Neale's characterisation of Puritans, described it as containing 'Some curious PRAYERS in the Time of the Grand Rebellion, copied from the Originals, and never before printed ...' proclaiming 'The Originals will be left in the Publisher's Hands for Six Months; to be perused by those who are desirous of comparing them with these Extracts' (printed for J. Roberts in Warwick Lane, London).²⁷ His second appendix, William Dowsing's journal, was 'Copied likewise from his

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Original Manuscript'. Trevor Cooper researched the provenance of Dowsing's journal, confirming the accuracy of Grey's transcription by comparison with those of his friend, the non-juring clergyman, and antiquary, Thomas Baker (1656–1740), a specialist in Cambridge's past. The manuscripts are now lost. Grey's widow sold some papers, including those intended for his life of Baker, to John Nichols in 1778.²⁸ Here the trail cools.

Varley, impatient of anything 'typical of the prejudice against Cromwell', may have reacted to anti-Cromwellian seventeenth century royalist polemic and 1930s representations of Cromwell as a proto-fascist dictator.²⁹ Varley failed to note that Grey loathed Cromwell, but Grey's anti-Puritan tone was clear, using Swathe's words 'against the grain'. If Grey transcribed accurately and Swathe's words were genuine, Swathe supported Parliament. With neither the original manuscript nor its provenance, questions remain, but stripped of Grey's irony and marginal notes, Swathe appears to be a good source for Varley's purpose.

But, how reliable was Varley? Regarding Cromwell's relationship with fenlanders, he was probably right.³⁰ With the college plate, he may have miscalculated dates and ignored internal discrepancies. In fact, Sunday was the 14th and the preceding Thursday was the 11th.³¹ The action lasted over two days and this is a minor issue, but the pagination is amiss. Grey's Appendix I is a selection of 52 prayers from January to November 1642 printed on pages 3–45. Grey's transcription included his source's pagination, revealing they were selections from a text with pages 2–476. All selections run in order from page 2–476. All dates run in order from January to November, except for two prayers, August 13th and 18th. On Grey's page 34, the 37th prayer selected, the first on page 34, is transcription page 354 and dated 18th August. The 38th prayer selected, second on that page (which Varley used), is transcription page 357, but is dated August 13th. The only error in sequencing happens where Varley provides evidence supporting the 10th August.

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It matters because the *preceding* prayer, also referring to trouble in Cambridge, reads:

Page 354 **Aug 18**

O My good Lord God, etc – I praise the for my Confidence in the, that thou hast, dost, wilt hear me for Helpe to the Town of *Cambridge*, who intercepted the *Schollers* Plate, which they sent to the King to help to pay Soldiers to bring in Tyranny, which Place, as I am credibly informed, by the Kings Command, **is to be assaulted this Day**, by the Trained Bands of *Cambridgeshire*, under the Command of *Sir John Cotton*, High Sheriff, and *Captain Dockray*, (Lord) I pray the appeare from Heaven this Day in thyne own Cause, for thy Servants of the Towne of Cambridge, shew some Token of Good to them, either diswade the Trained Bands, all, or most of them, from Appearance, discourage, dishearten all which shall appeare; if any shall dare to assault, let them be overthrowen, cut off, put to flight, discomfited (Lord from Heaven). **[my bold]**³²

We think of this as the culmination of Cromwell's charge to Cambridge, via Lolworth, of early on 10th August. Given the tense used, if the 18th August is correct the activities near Kings happened later than the accepted account suggests, the day the Commons summoned Docrwa and commenced arranging Cromwell's indemnity.³³ Should it be the 1st or the 8th? Was Swathes prayer of the 13th written retrospectively out of sequence, or were there repeated confrontations, and how does this relate to Stapleton's words of the 15th?

J.B. Mullinger (1834–1917) in *The University of Cambridge*, first published in 1873, used Swathe's prayer in Grey's Appendix to indicate a collision was anticipated, and suggested that Charles Henry Cooper's 1845 account confused plate which Cromwell hoped to intercept with that he prevented leaving, and cast doubt on Barwick's chronology. Handling the same source as Varley, Mullinger proposed separate convoys. Mullinger, whilst sometimes dangerously eccentric, held lecturing posts in London and Cambridge from 1881 and was sufficiently well regarded to collaborate with S.R. Gardiner.³⁴ Varley's depiction of one convoy captured by Cromwell is not conclusive; he ignored problems with his source (as did others), and his record elsewhere was variable.³⁵

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Claims that Cromwell acted on the 10th in a decisive swoop on a royalist convoy are potentially suspect. Without the manuscript, we can neither establish its authenticity, nor address the mis-ordering of dates.³⁶ Combined with the changed tense, this is a significant detail that might unravel the sequence we rely on. If Swathe's prayer, on which the dating of the 10th of August depends, prompts serious questions, there is a case for re-evaluating our information.

Cromwell and local news

Another reason for reconsidering royalist representations is the reaction of the 'Parliamentarian' press in August and September 1642. We find refracted glimmers of Cromwell's action in words about others, but the depths of shadow may be the most telling evidence. The immediate, transitory, ephemeral nature of these sources helps relax the strangle-hold of retrospective knowledge.³⁷ Cromwell is conspicuous by his absence from friendly press accounts of events that must have occupied him in August. Yet, by May 1643 he was already connected to Parliamentary propaganda which broadcast his successes beyond their locality in newsbooks and helped shape his reputation as valiant Colonel Cromwell, transforming intractable situations by his presence.³⁸ Writing between Parliament's licensing of newsbooks (April 1642), the introduction of the royalist *Mercurius Aulicus* (January 1643) and Parliamentary responses, local news in 1642 filtered through the press appears different to that of 1643, and later Cromwell histories. It was unlikely to have been completely disingenuous, though probably not amongst the blatant malpractices of some publishers.³⁹

We know news of Cromwell in Cambridgeshire was recorded in the Parliamentary arena on the 15th of August. Sir Simond's D'Ewes was in the Commons and noted in his diary:

That Mr. Cromwell, one of the burgesses [for] the town of Cambridge, had gotten together divers of the trained bands of that county, had seized upon the magazine of powder in the castle there, and had stopped the plate from going to York which the colleges were sending thither.⁴⁰

That D'Ewes noted who Cromwell was reminds us of his relative obscurity and the pressure on retrospective accounts. George Thomason (c.1602–1666), stationer, bookseller, archivist and collector of tracts, may be

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particularly significant for our purposes as he was known for supplying books to Cambridge.⁴¹ Thomason often annotated his collection with the works first appearance. This included *His Majesties Answer to the Declaration of both Houses of Parliament Concerning the Commission of Array of the First of July 1642* on which he wrote 'printed first at yorke reprinted at Camb ye 15 Aug prohibited to be printed at London'. The title page announced that this was 'Printed by his Majesties special command, At Cambridge, By Roger Daniel, Printer to the Famous University 1642'.⁴² Clearly, what had happened since Cromwell's arrival had not cowed all local royalists.

We see communication between Westminster and the locality recorded in Parliamentary journals in the aftermath of Cromwell and Daniel's actions.⁴³ Our focus is the time-lapse before that news appeared in the press. Why was so little that interests us reported between Stapleton's document on the 15th and late August? Undoubtedly, famous Wren, Bishop of Ely, was more newsworthy than unknown Cromwell to London publishers needing profits. However, the university *was* famous and had already proved newsworthy for the scrupulous editor Samuel Pecke.⁴⁴ Possibly journalists needed to adjust to the escalating pace of events. Did the outbreak of war eclipse events in Cambridge for journalists juggling word-limits? Alternatively, was Cromwell's intervention mentioned on the 15th insufficiently effective to broadcast as success? Parliament had already grasped the potential of printing.⁴⁵ August was punctuated by the release of '*Joyfull newes*' pamphlets from various printers such as '*... from Norwich*' published 17th August, reporting scotched royalist recruitment in late July (referred by the Commons on 3rd August) travelling just over a fortnight from Parliamentary to public arenas.⁴⁶ Printed news of successes in Cambridgeshire waited until early September. If Cromwell decisively seized control around the 10th, this seems a lengthy time-lapse. Using the lens of press stories without reference to the usual accounts of Cromwell's activities suggests the newsworthy turning point in Cambridge might be no earlier than 23rd–29th of August.

What was published on 2nd September was the search for Bishop Wren, in *Joyfull Newes From the Isle of Ely* printed for W.B. which described how on 29th August a troop of well-effected Horsemen met near Cherry-Hinton. This was the day Cromwell mustered his troop of 60 men.⁴⁷ The focus in *The Joyfull Newes* was Wren's capture, his considerable local influence, and the hope that fenlanders 'will stande firme to Parliament' in anticipation of Parliament returning 'their fennes' attested by George Hubbard of

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Downham. The pamphlet announced Wrens arrival in London. There was no suggestion that Cromwell's 'strong hand' had already secured that locality. Everything was still to play for, explaining 'The Isle is furnished with store of good horses, and able men, but in their discipline very rude for want of expert Commanders.'⁴⁸

Remarkable Passages from Nottingham, Lichfield Leicester and Cambridge printed for T. Underhill and *A True Relation of the late Expedition into Kent ... printed 2 September* quickly picked up where *Joyful Neues* left off, reporting events between 29th August and the afternoon of 1st September: stifling of the attempt to read the Commission of Array in Cambridgeshire, the arrival of London troops as re-enforcements, the surrounding of many colleges and arrest of some of their heads, Wren's capture and the armed escort to London. This time the turnaround from event, to message in Parliament (1st September), to release in the press, was swift.⁴⁹ This speed begs questions about the silence in the press regarding Cromwell's earlier activities. '*A True Relation ...*' explained how its information was received. A Cambridge minister set out from Cambridge on Wednesday 30th August arriving in London and by early morning on 31st had delivered the news it printed on the 2nd September.⁵⁰ *Remarkable Passages* printed for T. Underhill also published swiftly, claiming that the information came from a Cambridge scholar's letter written to another in London, dated 30th August. In this account, 400 hundred volunteer soldiers (London citizens) arrived the previous night, Monday 29th, taking others prisoner and beset most of the colleges.⁵¹

Cromwell's fame creates its own gravitational pull on the retelling of events. It is worth remembering that as well as scholars representing confident opponents, Cromwell's cousin Henry raised approximately 50 men as early as 6th August, rumoured to help conduct plate against Walton. Retrospective knowledge may push us towards assumptions about Cromwell's effectiveness without giving equal attention to his opponents. T.W published in *The Oxford Magazine* 1769 some private family memoirs, an oral account passed to Owen Fann, aged 87, from his father, regarding Henry Cromwell/William's death in 1673:

'the same old gentleman further informs me, that he has heard his father speak of these Cromwells here as men of the greatest military bravery, and of the most robust make and constitution. He

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remembers himself the chancel hung round with the spoils taken from the enemy during the civil war. But the genius of Oliver prevailed ...⁵²

Retrospective weighting applies here too, but if the Oxford talks had succeeded would Cromwell's actions still overshadow royalists' activities or those of other local activists? Did Cromwell's arrival tip the balance? *Remarkable Passages* published the Cambridge correspondent's comments on the arrival of the London troops, 'for now they begin to shake and quiver, that not long since were a terror to others'.⁵³ If Cromwell's actions earlier in August were decisive, such comments would be redundant. *An exact and True Diurnal ... 29 Aug – 5 September*, printed for William Cooke, briefly noted the arrests in Cambridge, the protagonists' presence in London on 1st September, and announced that letters from Cambridge were received in the House on the 2nd, revealing that the London volunteers 'had beset all the Colledges and are resolved to apprehend divers students which favoured and gave entertainment to the Earle of Carlisle and his complices' from the arrests of 'Thursday last'.⁵⁴ *A True and perfect Diurnall of the passages, from Nottingham Ashby and Leicester and other parts*, printed for Henry Blundell, repeated this news.⁵⁵ Perhaps our hazy chronology of Cromwell's activities needs to be set against a newsworthy agenda. Does the motif swell to a dissonant harmony?

The transmission of newsworthy events in the press suggests that a story about Bishop Wren and the University, not Cromwell, was the main focus of attention. It represents control of the locality as being in the balance throughout August. This may not damage our view of Cromwell's committed activism, but does suggest that his early actions were not portrayed by friendly journalists to be as central nor effective as some historians later depicted. The dissonance is interesting. Was that through lack of standing, of success, or something else? Given his absence from their story, we might speculate that Parliament's need to counter *Mercurius Aulicus's* popular message, as well as Cromwell's undoubted achievements, connects with his presence as a hero in the press after 1642. He was probably already alive to the possibilities. We know Cromwell was in London by 6th September, but his whereabouts for 27th–28th August and 30th August–5th September are unknown.⁵⁶ It is suggestive that the previous day the Commons addressed the lack of captains 'Joyfull Newes ...' had warned its

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readers about. So is the wording.⁵⁷ Soon, friend and foe would hear Cromwell's name in the forefront of their stories.

Words and Priorities

Conventional evidence is sparse for our purposes. Cromwell's own words speak to 1657 more than 1642. Words about Cromwell are patchy, from discordant voices yet to be reconciled, and silences, while potentially fruitful, remain relatively unexplored. We analyse absences, silences, as well as voices, try to comprehend the shape and potential impact of the void on those traces of the past we can discern. The gaps in the tale are significant, and so is the dissonance. Historians recount stories to make sense of Cromwell's past, reverberating with the stories that have gone before, while journalists told new tales to the people. The dissonance between the two gives us something to work with when facing black holes in the records. Comparing the retrospective retelling of events with what was newsworthy from the locality in 1642 is suggestive enough to justify revisiting Cromwell's transition from civilian to soldier.

We have seen that practitioners have long known that this episode is difficult to handle; historians frequently filled in gaps in the narrative, and, despite Varley's assertions, the existence of two convoys is not explained away. There may have been repeated confrontations. Henry Cromwell's men gathered on 6th August, reputedly to oppose Walton, who left Cromwell's side for Huntingdon, and reported opposition which was read to the Commons on the 12th and Swathe gave thanks on the 13th. There was possibly another cluster of activity around 15th–23rd August while Stapleton was reporting that Cromwell had **hindered** (not stopped) plate and seized the magazine, Swathe possibly prayed, and the University printed royalist tracts, ending in Commons orders, that do not square with Cromwell acting decisively on the 10th.⁵⁸ Wren, the Earl of Carlisle, John Russell and members of the University **were able to gather** to unsuccessfully implement the Commission of Array. We may learn from separating the sources and their perspectives instead of melding them. Friendly news reports passed over much of what happened, still depicting an unsettled situation when London reinforcements arrived in Cambridge, the night of the 29th, occupying it by 1st September, arresting royalists and sending news to London (without naming Cromwell). My next step will be to compare the perspective emerging from Parliamentary investigations. Docrwa had nothing to gain in 1645 when he told Parliamentarians he acted 'about the

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time when the Plate **was** carried from Cambridge to the King'. But, Cromwell had everything to gain in 1642 if people knew of recent arrests and the need for captains.⁵⁹ Were his priorities why journalists' tales to the people look different from historians' stories? For Cromwell in Cambridge in 1642 we might gain from listening to the sound of silence.

- ¹ Zachary Grey, *Schismatics Delineated*, (1739), Gale ECCO Print Editions, App. I, p. 34.
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‘DEAR ROBIN’: THE CORRESPONDENCE OF OLIVER CROMWELL AND ROBERT HAMMOND

By Dr Miranda Malins

In the autumn of 1648, the senior leaders of the New Model Army became convinced that the trial and execution of Charles Stuart, that ‘man of blood’, was the only answer for a nation crippled by ‘a long, bloody and consuming war’.¹ Having decided this, each man sat down in the latter part of November to write to colonel Robert Hammond, governor of the Isle of Wight and the king’s gaoler, to enlist his help. As a fellow officer who had been instrumental in the earlier politicisation of the army, the writers felt sure Hammond would prove loyal. They were, instead, to be bitterly disappointed. Failing to persuade Hammond of their cause, the army leaders had to forcibly remove him to enable their advance upon the king. The resulting purge of parliament and regicide are well known. The part played by Robert Hammond, the last senior officer to resist this military coup, is not.

The letter that Oliver Cromwell wrote to his close friend Robert Hammond on 25 November 1648 is widely held to be one of the most startling and revelatory of his career. Written shortly before the regicide, it outlines Cromwell’s justifications of military intervention, and hints, for the first time, at his conversion to the prospect of trying the king. This letter has been analysed in great detail by historians. Remarkably however, the man for whose eyes alone it was composed has been almost universally overlooked. Studying this letter from the perspective of Hammond, and in the context of his relationship with Cromwell, brings new insights into Cromwell’s thoughts and his involvement in the events of November 1648–January 1649. It also contributes to the recently identified ‘new perspective’ in Cromwellian studies provided through examining Cromwell’s colleagues.² Hammond’s role in these events was utterly unique: throughout the twelve months he oversaw the king’s incarceration at Carisbrooke castle on the Isle of Wight, Hammond stood at the epicentre of negotiations between the king, parliament and the New Model Army. Respectful of the king, fiercely loyal to parliament but also closely bound to the army from his formative military career, Hammond suffered greatly at their divergence. His is a truly ‘walk on’ part in history through which we can observe many of the complexities underlying the English revolution.

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I

Robert Hammond aroused strong feelings in his contemporaries. The Earl of Clarendon praised him for appearing to be an insurmountable obstacle to those who would have sought to kill the king quietly, observing that Hammond had ‘yet too much conscience to expose himself to that infamy’.³ Anthony Wood, drawing on the evidence of Thomas Herbert, an attendant of the King’s at Carisbrooke castle, maintained that ‘Hammond had all along managed his trust with sufficient circumspection and asperity; so as it continued him in the applause of most men in power’.⁴ To the royalist John Ashburnham, however, Hammond was a ‘detestable villain’ who had ill-treated and ultimately betrayed the King.⁵ Ashburnham’s descendant and editor vilified Hammond’s ‘chameleon-like passiveness and versatility’.⁶ Modern historians have taken up this mantle, albeit more mildly, with Ian Gentles speaking of Hammond’s ‘nervous wardenship’⁷ and Austin Woolrych labelling him ‘the King’s reluctant gaoler’.⁸ Hammond’s conflicting loyalties and evident unhappiness in his charge made him vulnerable to such accusations. Yet an analysis of his career and his correspondence reveals a man who was far more of an actor in these extraordinary events than has hitherto been realised.

Robert Hammond’s family was steeped in traditions of royal favour. His grandfather had been court physician to both James I and Prince Henry, and his cousin Sir William Temple later became a prominent diplomat and author under the Restoration. Robert’s uncle, Henry, was the renowned Laudian theologian and chaplain to Charles I who, in an odd twist of fate, later ministered to the King during his imprisonment on the Isle of Wight. With such a heritage, Hammond’s decision to join the parliamentary army is a surprising one. In this he may have found encouragement from the other rebel in his family, his uncle, the parliamentary officer and future regicide, Thomas Hammond. Certainly Hammond’s decision to join the army at the onset of the Irish rebellion in 1642 points to strong parliamentary convictions. His later correspondence and association with the men described as ‘royal independents’ suggest he held moderate parliamentary views, perhaps considering the king a destabilising force within the constitution.⁹

His military career was one of startling ascendancy. Having enlisted as a 21 year-old ensign, Hammond left the army in the summer of 1647 a colonel with an impressive military record and a reputation for bravery: ‘Thou hast

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naturally a valiant spirit’, Cromwell wrote in 1648.¹⁰ Hammond served as captain-lieutenant of the Earl of Essex’s bodyguard and was a banner-bearer at his funeral in 1646. Yet, as the war progressed, it was his growing relationship with Cromwell that became the most important of his career. The creation of the New Model Army propelled Hammond into Cromwell’s circle. Now commanding an infantry regiment, he fought closely alongside radical officers including Pride and Rainsborough, as Cromwell reported to parliament after the siege of Bristol: ‘Colonel Hammond did storm the Fort on that part which was inward; by which means Colonel Rainborowe and Colonel Hammond’s men entered the fort, and immediately put to the sword almost all in it, and as this was the place of most difficulty, so of most loss to us on that side, and of very great honour to the undertakers’.¹¹ Cromwell may also have been involved in Hammond’s marriage to Mary, the sixth daughter of the parliamentarian John Hampden: reviewing their affinity, the Earl of Clarendon wrote that Hammond was ‘of nearest trust with Cromwell, having by his advice been married to a daughter of John Hampden, whose memory he always adored’.¹² This marriage strengthened Hammond’s parliamentary credentials and brought him into kinship with Cromwell.

These years at war formed in Hammond a deep respect for the army and his colleagues – a strong affection of his own for those ‘russet-coated captains’.¹³ From their later correspondence it is clear that Hammond and Cromwell developed an intimate friendship: writing to Lord Wharton in 1650, Cromwell recalled a figure ‘whom truly I love in the Lord with most entire affection’.¹⁴ Hammond’s military career also enlarged his political experience: having been an emissary to parliament, Hammond was nominated to the committee that negotiated with the parliamentary commissioners at Saffron Walden.¹⁵ His was not a voice clamouring for increased political power; instead Hammond’s focus remained on meeting the material grievances of the soldiery. William Clarke, secretary to the army’s general council, records Hammond as saying: ‘I find my officers and soldiers very willing’, but ‘unless they have satisfaction as to indemnity and arrears, I must needs say – when we are satisfied in them as we are in the point of conduct be so settled upon the conditions before mentioned – to engage themselves and the army that is to serve with them upon that service’.¹⁶ This political engagement culminated in Hammond’s presence alongside Henry Ireton, Rainsborough and Colonel Rich to present the officers’ *Heads of Proposals* to the king. His leading role in the army’s entrance

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onto the political landscape was plain for all to see when Hammond led the army’s march into London on 6 August 1647 and gave the third signature, after Fairfax and Cromwell, on its letter to the Lord Mayor.

Yet within a month Hammond had retired from the army. His motivation for this may perhaps be gleaned from his support for the *Heads of Proposals* which offered the most favourable terms ever presented to the king, envisaging a settlement returning to the constitution achieved with the reforms of the Long Parliament in 1640–1. This manifesto casts Hammond as a moderate constitutionalist parliamentarian, desiring a settlement accommodating the king, both Houses and the process of reform; his views much aligned with those of both constitutional royalists and royal independents. While prepared to champion his men’s calls for fair treatment, Hammond was undoubtedly uneasy at the army’s increasing radicalisation and desire for a more permanent role in the body politic. In search of respite, Hammond was appointed to the honourable yet insignificant post of governor of the Isle of Wight. Unbeknown to him, however, his new role would shortly acquire international strategic and political importance with the arrival of the king.

II

The king’s escape from Hampton Court and flight to the Isle of Wight on the night of 11 November 1647 has provided food for conspiracy theorists ever since. The reasons why Charles and three companions – John Ashburnham, John Berkley and William Legge – made for the Isle of Wight are not certain, but it is likely that they detected the potential of some royalist, or at least personal sympathy from the new governor. It is feasible that Ashburnham had mooted the idea to Charles because a few weeks earlier he had met and conversed with Hammond at Kingston upon Thames en route to his new post. Ashburnham recalled Hammond saying ‘he was going down to his Government, because he found the Army was resolved to break all promises with the King, and that he would have nothing to do with such perfidious actions’.¹⁷ On this basis, Ashburnham had ‘conceived good hopes of him’.¹⁸ Wood suggests another reason why the king may have hoped for a sympathetic welcome, maintaining that Hammond was introduced to Charles over the summer as a ‘penitent convert’ by his Uncle Henry, the king’s favourite chaplain.¹⁹ Although the veracity of this account is at best uncertain, it is highly plausible that Hammond seemed sympathetic

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to the king, and was charmed by him, like so many other parliamentarians after the war’s conclusion.

An alternative theory persisted in subsequent years – that the whole affair had been stage-managed by Cromwell. The evidence seemed cogent: the swift and unexpected nature of Hammond’s appointment which was strongly supported by the army leaders, a mere two months before Charles’ arrival; the king’s receipt of a letter from Cromwell warning him of the menacing attitude held by some Levellers towards him on the eve of his flight; the joy with which Cromwell learnt of Charles’ arrival on the Isle of Wight and the conviction with which he reassured parliament that Hammond was capable and trustworthy of being Charles’ gaoler.²⁰ Such coincidences prompted Sir John Oglander to assert that ‘Hammond was made Commander of the Isle of Wight purposefully to be King Charles’ keeper’ and Andrew Marvell to immortalise the idea in rhyme:

And Hampton shows what part
He had of wiser art.
Where, twining subtle fears with hope,
He wove a net of such a scope,
That Charles himself might chase
To Caresbrook’s narrow case,
That thence the royal actor borne
The tragic scaffold might adorn!²¹

Although Cromwell’s involvement in Charles’ flight may be plausible, the idea that he controlled the entire affair is less so: the plot involved too many uncertainties. Furthermore, Cromwell later poured scorn on Hammond’s decision to retire to the post, writing in his letter of 25 November 1648 to Hammond: ‘Dear Robin, our fleshly reasonings ensnare us ... Was there not a little of this when Robert Hammond, through dissatisfaction too, desired retirement from the Army, and thought of quiet in the Isle of Wight?’²² Hammond was certainly perturbed by the king’s arrival. On learning of it from the king’s companions, he apparently turned very pale and began to tremble.²³ ‘O gentlemen’, he is reported to have said, ‘you have undone me in bringing the King into this island ... for what between my duty to the King, and gratitude to him upon this fresh obligation of confidence, and the discharge of my trust to the army, I shall be confounded’.²⁴

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Hammond’s unease continued throughout the twelve months that the king was interned under his care at Carisbrooke castle, as shown in his surviving correspondence. He exchanged regular letters with parliament as well as the army, through official channels and individual colleagues. Approximately forty letters addressed to Hammond and nineteen written by him survive and they provide a detailed picture of his custodianship. The ambiguous status of being at once his monarch’s subject, protector and gaoler was ‘a weighty business’²⁵ which Hammond found ‘a burden insupportable’.²⁶ He considered himself ‘engaged’ to his employers in ‘honour and honesty’ to ensure the king’s security and comfort.²⁷ This was a challenging task necessitating more men, money and munitions than he had at his disposal.²⁸ Furthermore, Hammond’s position was extremely dangerous. This is testified to in the many letters Hammond received claiming to reveal plots and conspiracies. Indeed, so convinced was the Derby House committee of its ‘sense of danger of the place’, it communicated these threats in cipher.²⁹ On the anniversary of the king’s accession, on 27 March, an effigy of Hammond was dragged through the streets of London, drawn, quartered and burnt.³⁰ The governor was now firmly in the spotlight, and had become the target of direct, physical hatred. That Hammond believed himself to be in danger is demonstrated by his decision on 2 June to compose instructions to his subordinate officers in the event that he was killed.³¹

Charles himself attempted to escape several times, only failing on 20 March because he became stuck while climbing through his window.³² This marked a low point in the relationship between Hammond and the king; returning from Newport to the news of the foiled escape ‘full of fury’, Hammond ‘locked up the gates, and doubled the guards, and went not to bed that night. In the morning, he commanded all his Majesty’s servants from him’.³³ Generally, however, relations between the king and his gaoler were cordial. Soon after his arrival, Charles wrote on 23 November, ‘I am daily more and more satisfied with this governor’.³⁴ Hammond sought to be helpful to his sovereign, often representing his wishes to parliament and the army, even as far as resisting their original orders for Charles’ companions’ banishment, accepting their parole instead until the king’s failed escape in March. He also took steps to enhance the king’s comfort and constructed a bowling green for his entertainment. Letters from informants on the Isle paint a picture of the two men’s frequent companionship, dining, walking and playing bowls together. It was commonplace for these spies to comment ‘all quiet and fair between his Majesty and the Governor’.³⁵ Nevertheless, Hammond did

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suffer disillusionment with the king: he was privy to Charles’ negotiations with the Earl of Denbigh and was shocked to witness his politique methods.³⁶ When challenged by the king over the discrepancy between his initial undertakings of loyalty and the king’s state of continued incarceration, Hammond did not shy away from reminding the king of his status and the consequences of ‘His Majesty acting by other counsels than those that stand for the good of the Kingdom’. ‘He was certain’, he added, that ‘his Majesty had found more from him than he could have expected before he came’.³⁷

III

Hammond’s relations with the king caused tension in his friendships with Cromwell and the other army leaders, who sought throughout this period to remind him of the fealty he owed to them above all others. Writing on 21 November 1647, Ireton advised ‘dear Robin’ not ‘to trust so wholly to the affections of islanders, but take in soldiers’, indicating that the army leadership considered the governor to be under their instruction. Ireton was sympathetic to his friend’s heavy responsibility however, recommending him to God’s ‘direction and good pleasure ... in the great charge and burden he hath brought upon thee, even in that place, where thou hadst, I believe, promised thyself nothing but ease and quiet.’³⁸ Towards the end of December, most likely on the 25th or 26th, Cromwell wrote the first of a ‘vital sequence’ of five surviving letters to Hammond from this period.³⁹ He wished Hammond ‘much comfort on thy great business, and the blessing of the Almighty upon thee’ and urged vigilance: ‘I wish great care to be taken. Truly I would have the castle well manned; you know how much lieth upon it.’⁴⁰ Cromwell assumed a position almost of Hammond’s direct commander, recommending he dismiss Charles’ companions, while tempering his instructions with the soothing offer that, ‘if you would have any thing more done let your friends know your mind they are ready to assist and secure you.’ While this appears affectionate, when seen in the context of Cromwell’s later letters to Hammond, it becomes a natural precursor to the vehement language of coercion through loyalty that was to follow. John Morrill and Philip Baker see a ‘chilling menace’ in Cromwell’s next letter, informing Hammond of the Commons’ Vote of No Addresses to the King on 3 January 1648 and exhorting him to ‘search [any ‘juggling’ by the king] out and let us know’. They interpret his expression that the king’s flight and subsequent events were ‘a mighty providence’ as indicating Cromwell’s conversion to the necessity of a trial. In this case Cromwell’s desire that ‘we shall (I hope) instantly go upon the business in relation to

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[the king], tending to prevent danger’ acquires a more threatening meaning.⁴¹ Cromwell expressed a heavy confidence in his friend commenting, ‘Some of us think the King well with you ... where can the King be better?’ His next letter, on 6 April 1648, tightened the ties of obligation, assuring Hammond that Parliament had increased his salary thanks to his friends’ efforts: ‘[your business in the House] was done with smoothness; your friends were not wanting to you’.⁴²

Writing to Hammond in February, Fairfax struck a rather different note. In describing his own responsibilities, Fairfax echoed Hammond’s anxious weariness: ‘how great a burden the Parliament hath laid upon me’, he wrote.⁴³ Unlike those of his colleagues, Fairfax’s letter does not refer to God’s workings – he simply wished Hammond ‘all success in your great trust and charge’ – and contains a reverence for parliament and acknowledgement of Hammond’s responsibility to the House: ‘It will be necessary, that you hasten this business, seeing the Parliament expects a speedy and effectual observance of their command herein’. Despite Ireton and Cromwell’s overtures, Hammond seems to have shared Fairfax’s view of Parliament’s supremacy. This is demonstrated in the instructions he prepared in June for his subordinates in the event of his death. Here Hammond described the governorship as ‘my duty, according to the trust reposed in me by the Parliament’ and urged his colleagues to continue in this ‘until the Parliament shall please otherwise to determine the matter’. At no point did Hammond mention his responsibility to the army.⁴⁴ In contrast, Ireton’s next letter on 9 July attempted to de-legitimise Parliament, describing a ‘rabble multitude and cavalierish party about London ... which most of the members of Parliament (if not the whole) have gone under’.⁴⁵ The threat these men posed had driven away ‘those faithful members of the Commons House, by whom under God the interest of Parliament and Kingdom has been hitherto carried or upheld’. With Parliament thus not Parliament at all, the implication was that Hammond should forget his proffered loyalty to that institution. It was to the banished ‘faithful members’ that he owed his position, and so to them and the army, which Ireton declared ‘is sensible of this situation, that he should look for authority. This letter provides the beginnings of the intellectual justification for Pride’s Purge.

Over the next few months, Hammond had an insider’s view of the negotiations at Newport and their effect upon the army. He was present each day of the negotiations and received a stream of correspondence from

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his army colleagues throughout. When he heard again from Ireton on 15 November 1648, it was to enlist his support for the *Remonstrance* and the letter was co-signed by Major Harrison, Colonels Desborough and Grosvenor.⁴⁶ Desperate to convince Hammond to abandon his scruples against military intervention, the writers adopted the coercive language of mutual interest: ‘Our relation is so nigh upon the best account, that nothing can concern you or us, but we believe they are of a mutual concernment’. Having explained their interference with the Treaty of Newport, Hammond’s colleagues proffered ‘our most earnest request, that, as you tender the interest of this nation, of God’s people, or of any moral men, or as you tender the ending of England’s troubles, or desire, that justice and righteousness may take place, you would see to the securing of that person [the king] from escape’. Cromwell was also concerned about Hammond’s reaction to the army’s plans. On 6 November he urged him to ‘be honest still’ reassuring him that ‘thy friends, dear Robin, are in heart and in profession what they were, have not dissembled their principles at all’.⁴⁷ Fairfax also wrote to Hammond with a summons, assuring him meanwhile of his awareness of ‘your great dissatisfaction, trouble, and burden, both in relation to your present employment, and some other things’.⁴⁸ Hammond’s absence from his post was presented as temporary but his forcible removal a week later suggests otherwise.

IV

The famous letter that Cromwell next wrote to Hammond on 25 November 1648 has received extensive analysis. In its lines, some historians have perceived the workings of a mind in turmoil struggling with the prospect of regicide, while others have concluded that this letter contains Cromwell’s acceptance of the necessity of the king’s trial.⁴⁹ Although differing in interpretation, all analyses of this letter overlook one of its most fundamental aspects – its recipient. The letter must be seen in the context of a dialogue rather than as a monologue. Cromwell’s immediate reason for writing was to respond to a recent letter received from Hammond which does not survive. Against this background, Cromwell’s motive was surely to answer the objections that Hammond had undoubtedly raised: ‘I find some trouble in your spirit’, Cromwell wrote, ‘occasioned first, not only by the continuance of your sad and heavy burden, as you call it, upon you, but by the dissatisfaction you take at the ways of some good men whom you love with your heart, who through this principle, That it is lawful for a lesser part, if in the right, to force (a numerical majority) etc’. Instead, Hammond

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should look to his own failings: ‘As to thy dissatisfaction with friends’ acting upon that supposed principle, I wonder not at that. If a man take not his own burden well, he shall hardly others’, especially if involved by so near a relation of love and Christian brotherhood as thou art’.

In Hammond’s dissatisfaction with his role, Cromwell saw an unwillingness to follow God’s manifest will: ‘call not your burden sad or heavy’, he wrote, because ‘if your Father laid it upon you, He intended neither’. Blaming Hammond’s ‘fleshly reasonings’ for his retirement to the Isle of Wight only for God to ‘find him out there’, Cromwell’s intimate sense of providential piety was exemplified by the simple instruction: ‘Dear Robin, beware of men, look up to the Lord’. Identifying the workings of providence that had directed Hammond’s own life, Cromwell urged him: ‘If thou wilt seek, seek to know the mind of God in all that chain of Providence, whereby God brought thee thither, and that person to thee; how God has ordered him, and affairs concerning him’. Beyond the entanglements of earthly reason, could not Hammond see ‘whether there be not some glorious and high meaning in all this, above what thou hast yet attained?’ Moving from providence to political theory, Cromwell posited the ethics of the clash between the civil authority of parliament and a ‘Christian brotherhood’ ascendant in military victory. Setting forth his argument he offers a tantalising glimpse of the content of Hammond’s previous letter: ‘You say: “God hath appointed authorities among the nations, to which active or passive authority is to be yielded. This resides in England in the Parliament”’. Cromwell disagreed, however, asking: ‘Whether this Army be not a lawful power, called by God to oppose and fight against the King upon some stated grounds; and being in power to such ends, may not oppose one name of authority’. With the Treaty promising ‘the whole fruit of the war like to be frustrated’, the service of God and the godly demanded fidelity to the army and compliance with the *Remonstrance*, necessarily leading to the trial of the king ‘against whom the Lord hath witnessed’.

Much is made, rightly, of the timing of this letter, penned shortly before Pride’s Purge and the subsequent regicide. What is equally important, however, is the point at which it was received in Hammond’s life. He had received, and was deciding how to answer, Fairfax’s summons and the instructions of his emissary Colonel Ewer to arrest the king and relinquish him to the army. It was at this climactic moment when he had to choose finally and irrevocably to remain loyal to parliament or the army. The

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argument, maintained by many historians, that this letter conveys Cromwell’s uncertainty over the correct course, and marks the moment of his cautious decision on the purge of parliament and the regicide, therefore seems less tenable.⁵⁰ Rather, this letter was written by Cromwell to persuade his great friend, and the man central to the success of the army’s coup, to agree with his already formed opinions: that while he did not desire the outright abolition of the monarchy, nonetheless the king needed to stand trial.⁵¹ This letter was not written as an indulgent exercise in self-deliberation but rather as a piece of advice to its audience of one. This is clear in its final sentiment: ‘This trouble I have been at, because my soul loves thee, and I would not have thee swerve, nor lose any glorious opportunity the Lord puts into thy hand’.

There is another crucial aspect of this letter of 25 November that has been largely overlooked yet casts it in a fundamentally altered light – its relationship to the strikingly similar letter that Ireton wrote to Hammond only three days earlier.⁵² Written ostensibly ‘for the love of a friend and brother’, it was a work of extreme coercion, packed with the language of guilt and of loyalty. The word ‘trust’ appears no fewer than twelve times, a term clearly meaningful for Hammond as he often used it himself. Ireton wrote that Hammond should not discharge his trust to ‘those carrying but the name of power, from which thou apprehendest it was committed to thee’ but instead ‘to those persons, by whom, and to those public ends and interests, for which, it was committed to thee’. These were not the formal guardians of a shrunken authority in the Commons, but those who had gathered real public, moral and even spiritual legitimacy in a time of crisis. Ireton struck at the right of Parliament not just in practice, but in theory, questioning ‘whether, so far as thou seemest to have the formality by way of confirmation from the Parliament, it were from any affection or trust of that sort or generation of men, which now, through accident, bear the sway and name?’ Englishmen must look instead ‘to some other higher and more public ends’. This was one and the same as the ‘glorious opportunity’ Cromwell’s God ‘puts into thy hand’⁵³; namely, the chance for Hammond to serve God, the Saints and his friends by repaying their trust and relinquishing the king. Ireton presented Hammond’s choice with underlying menace:

I shall appeal farther to thy conscience, or but ingenuity, to determine, to which of these several persons, and according to

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which commands and expectations, thou art to exhibit and approve thy faithfulness in the trust ... I hope, he will not give thee up to such delusion, as to follow an air of honour, and mere form and shadow of faithfulness, to the rejection or neglect of that, which is the reality and substance of both, as surely thou wouldst, if in the present case thou shouldst neither do the thing expected thyself, nor leave it to any other.

V

Both Cromwell and Ireton's letters appealed to Hammond's sense of loyalty and sought to convince him of the providential meaning of late events. Although varying in language and tone, both letters make more sense when studied in tandem, with Ireton's being a direct and threatening version of Cromwell's more subtle and affectionate approach. Viewed together, they suggest that Cromwell and Ireton were working much more closely together in these crucial days leading up to Pride's Purge than historians have previously believed. Although a degree of cooperation between the two is accepted, Ireton is seen as the driving force behind the revolution at this stage with a more distant Cromwell remaining in Pontefract. As Cromwell's missive was written to be a practical aid suggesting a dangerous course of action to one that he loved, it seems highly unlikely that he felt uncertainty in its principles and that he acted independently from Ireton. The similarity of the two letters is beyond the realm of coincidence, especially as they were written from opposite ends of the country. If they were working more closely together, it is also highly unlikely that Cromwell only accepted the argument for the trial of the king – so central to Ireton's programme as early as September – on writing his letter to Hammond on 25 November. Both epistles conveyed one basic message to the unfortunate Hammond: remain loyal to the army and release the king to them, thereby fulfilling the 'glorious opportunity' destined for him by God.

This, ultimately, Hammond was unwilling to do. Instead he wrote to parliament, on 26 November, asking for advice and enclosing Fairfax's message.⁵⁴ Two days later, Hammond wrote again, detailing the dilemma he faced because 'though I held myself obliged to obey the General's commands in going to him, yet I had a trust upon me from the parliament, no way, as I conceived, relating to the General of army, which I must be faithful unto, to the utmost of my power'.⁵⁵ Colonel Ewer insisted to Hammond that he was empowered to use force 'to bring the King over the

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water’ to which Hammond answered ‘that I knew none who even had authority over me as a soldier but the General (except the Parliament)’ and that ‘I ought not to give obedience to any save to the Parliament alone, who had entrusted me, and only had power to do so’. Although under obedience to Fairfax as a serving officer, Hammond saw this obligation as entirely separate and subordinate to the responsibility he owed to parliament. This Hammond believed so firmly that he told Ewer that ‘if he, or any other, should so proceed to violate my instructions from the Parliament, whilst I continued so in trust, I held myself bound, in conscience, honour, and duty, to oppose them to my utmost’.

But Hammond was not able to resist. Aware of his imminent removal, on 27 November, he drafted instructions ordering his subordinate officers to ‘take the care of the person of the King, and this island, according to the annexed instructions from both Houses of Parliament’ until ‘my return, or that you receive other directions from the Parliament’. ⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Hammond exhorted them to ‘resist, and to your utmost oppose’, ‘if any person whatever, under what pretence soever, shall endeavour the removing of the King out of this island, unless by direct order of Parliament’. These he forwarded to parliament on his removal the following day, along with two letters composed that day from Carisbrooke and Farnham. On receiving these, parliament wrote informing Fairfax that his order to Colonel Ewer ‘is contrary to the Resolution of the Houses, and the instructions given to Colonel Hammond’ and that they ‘desire him to recall the said order’.⁵⁷ Within a week, parliament was purged and the king, removed from the Isle of Wight shortly after Hammond, was put on trial.

Hammond, meanwhile, was an outcast, destined to play no further part in political events. His final thoughts, written to parliament on 28 November were that: ‘Whatever the event be, I can say, with the testimony of a good conscience, that in this whole weighty business, which hath now more than twelve months, been upon me, I have, as in the presence of God, faithfully and honestly discharged my trust to the best advantages of your services’.⁵⁸ Hammond’s friendship with Cromwell was irreparably damaged much to the sadness of both. Responding to Hammond’s suggestion to visit Cromwell in 1651, Cromwell sent ‘a thankful acknowledgement from your friends here, who retain in some measure their old principles, which are not unknown to you’. Nevertheless, Cromwell maintained that although Hammond had the ability ‘for the present dispensation’, ‘indeed I do not

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think you fitted for the work until the Lord give you a heart to beg of him that he will accept you into his service’.⁵⁹ Despite sharing family news, Hammond’s tone was supplicatory and distant, writing: ‘besides, my Lord, when I had the honour to know you well’. It is evident that Cromwell also suffered by their separation. In each of the three letters he wrote to Lord Wharton in 1650–1 he mentioned Hammond and his bitter sadness that they were no longer friends.⁶⁰ In these letters Cromwell grouped Hammond with Wharton, and those other former political allies and friends who could not reconcile themselves to the regicide. He accused them of bowing to temptation and of ‘ensnaring yourselves with disputes’. This grieved him, and as the 1650s wore on, he expended increasing efforts attempting a political reconciliation with them. In 1654 he offered Hammond a post on the Irish Council following his selection as High Steward and Burgess in parliament for Reading. In August, Hammond crossed over to Ireland to take up his seat, but he never had the opportunity to complete his political rehabilitation, dying of fever two months later at the age of 33.

VI

An examination of Robert Hammond’s life and his correspondence with Cromwell reveals a quite different man from that traditionally described as nervous, passive and suggestible. Instead Hammond emerges as active, able, conscientious and self-consciously honourable. In his role as governor of the Isle of Wight and the king’s guardian and gaoler, Hammond managed to balance all those who held expectations of him: he earned the respect of parliament, kept on good terms with the king, and maintained his friendship with Cromwell until the army’s coup, even leaving some residue of affection beyond that. Throughout his career he also proved his intelligence, realising in 1647 the possible consequences of the army’s rise to power and in November 1648 guessing the consequences of what the army leaders were planning. To the end, Hammond remained desperate to repay the trust laid upon him by parliament, the institution in which, in 1648 as in 1642, he chose to invest his hopes. In this and his other attitudes, Hammond proved himself the heir to his father-in-law, John Hampden.

These political opinions initially bound Hammond and Cromwell together, but ultimately drove them apart. Through their correspondence, Cromwell appears in a new light. Viewed in this context, the letter of 25 November 1648 suggests that Cromwell was convinced of the need for the king’s trial, and shows him to have been working more closely with Ireton and Pride.

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Having decided on the necessity of the trial, weeks or perhaps even a few months earlier than some historians have argued, Cromwell and his allies managed the New Model Army’s assumption of power with great success. Hammond had given the last warning against this military power, and his stance was vindicated in Cromwell’s continued struggles to integrate the army into the constitution. For the Lord Protector, Robert Hammond represented how far he and the New Model Army had come, and how much they had had to sacrifice.

- ¹ Richard Overton and William Walwyn, *A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens* (1646) in *The English Levellers*, ed. A. Sharp (1998), p. 40.
- ² Patrick Little ed. *Oliver Cromwell: new perspectives* (2009), Introduction.
- ³ Edward Hyde Earl of Clarendon, *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England begun in the year 1641*, ed. W. Dunn Macray (1888), IV, Book XI, p. 226.
- ⁴ A. Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, II (1691), p. 762.
- ⁵ J. Ashburnham, *A Narrative by John Ashburnham of his attendance on King Charles the First from Oxford to the Scottish army: and from Hampton-Court to the Isle of Wight*, prefixed by anonymous Vindication, 2 volumes (1830), p. 187.
- ⁶ Anonymous, *Vindication* prefixing Ashburnham’s *Narrative*, pp. 329-30.
- ⁷ I. Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland 1645–1653* (1992), p. 234.
- ⁸ A. Woolrych, ‘Cromwell as a Soldier’, in J. Morrill ed. *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (1990), p. 110.
- ⁹ See V. Pearl, ‘The ‘Royal Independents’ in the English Civil War’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, Vol 18 (1968) and M. C. J. Malins, ‘“Catholic Projects”: Oliver Cromwell and the Royal Independents 1648–1653’ (unpublished MPhil. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2007).
- ¹⁰ *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, I, ed. W. C. Abbott & C. D. Crane (1937), p. 678.
- ¹¹ Abbott & Crane, I, p. 376. NB. ‘Rainborowe’ refers to Colonel Rainsborough.
- ¹² Clarendon, *History*, IV, p. 264.
- ¹³ Oliver Cromwell’s words in a letter to the Suffolk Committee (29 August 1643) in Abbott & Crane, I, p. 256.

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- ¹⁴ Abbott & Crane, II, pp. 189-90.
- ¹⁵ *Journal of the House of Commons (JHC)* IV, pp. 276-8 (17 September 1645), 308-10 (15 October 1645).
- ¹⁶ *The Clarke Papers: selections from the papers of W. Clarke, Secretary to the Council of the army, 1647-9, and to General Monck and the commanders of the army in Scotland, 1651-61* ed. C. H. Firth, 2 volumes (London 1891-4), vol I, p. 65.
- ¹⁷ Ashburnham, *Narrative*, p. 108.
- ¹⁸ J. Berkley, *Memoirs of Sir John Berkley: containing an account of his negotiation with Lieutenant General Cromwell, Commissary General Ireton and other officers of the army, for restoring King Charles the First to the exercise of the government of England* (1699), p. 48.
- ¹⁹ Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, II, p. 158, no. 174.
- ²⁰ H. Cary, ed. *Memorials of the great civil war in England from 1646 to 1652*, I (1842), pp. 349-50.
- ²¹ J. Oglander quoted in F. Bamford, *A Royalist's Notebook: the commonplace book of Sir John Oglander* (1936), p. 127; Abbott & Crane, I, p. 554.
- ²² Abbott & Crane, I, p. 696.
- ²³ Berkley, *Memoirs*, p. 57.
- ²⁴ *The Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow 1625-1672* ed. C. H. Firth (1894), I, p. 169; Berkley, p. 57.
- ²⁵ *Journal of the House of Lords*, X, pp. 613-7 (30 November 1648).
- ²⁶ British Library, Add. MS 19399, fo. 46 (letter from Robert Hammond to Speaker Lenthall, 2 December 1647).
- ²⁷ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Charles I, 1648-9*, pp. 2-3.
- ²⁸ *Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond governor of the Isle and the Committee of Lords and Commons at Derby House, General Fairfax, Lieutenant-General Cromwell, Commissary General Ireton etc. relating to King Charles I while he was confined in Carisbrooke castle in that Island*, [ed. T. Birch] (1764), p. 55.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 26-7, 66.
- ³⁰ Gentles, *The New Model Army*, p. 238.
- ³¹ *Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond*, p. 64.
- ³² Jack D. Jones, *The Royal Prisoner* (1965), p. 69.
- ³³ Berkley, *Memoirs*, p. 91.
- ³⁴ Jones, *The Royal Prisoner*, p. 45.

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- ³⁵ J. Rushworth, *Historical Collections: of private passages of State, weighty matters in Law, remarkable proceedings in five Parliaments*, 8 volumes (1721–22), part IV, vol VII, pp. 986, 989, 1007 & 1060.
- ³⁶ Berkely, *Memoirs*, pp. 89-90; See also Mark Kishlansky, ‘Mission Impossible: Charles I, Oliver Cromwell and the Regicide’, *English Historical Review*, vol 125, issue no. 515 (2010), pp. 844-874 for a reassessment of this event.
- ³⁷ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Charles I, 1648–9*, pp. 2-3.
- ³⁸ *Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond*, p.19; throughout this correspondence, Hammond’s desperation to be relieved of his responsibility continued unabated: *Clarke*, I, p. 420. Hammond expressed this desire to all parties, writing, probably to Fairfax, on 19 December: ‘I have often asked that if he (the King) be not thought safe here he may be removed, which is the thing most desirable to me.’
- ³⁹ John Morrill and Philip Baker, ‘Oliver Cromwell, the Regicide and the sons of Zeruiah’, in J. Peacey, ed., *The regicides and the execution of Charles I* (2001) and reprinted in D. L. Smith, ed., *Cromwell and the Interregnum: the essential readings* (2003) p. 27; Abbott & Crane, I, p. 574; The attribution of the letter dated 6 November 1648 is currently in question, however, see below section IV.
- ⁴⁰ Clarendon, *History*, X, p. 146.
- ⁴¹ *Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond*, p. 23; Morrill and Baker, ‘Oliver Cromwell, the Regicide and the sons of Zeruiah’, pp. 27-8.
- ⁴² Abbott & Crane, I, p. 594.
- ⁴³ *Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond*, p. 31.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- ⁴⁶ D. Underdown, *Pride’s Purge* (1971), p. 120; *Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond*, p. 87.
- ⁴⁷ I will not dwell on the letter of 6 November 1648 usually attributed to Cromwell as this is currently under review in the project to produce a new critical edition of Cromwell’s letters and speeches for Oxford University Press, with John Morrill as general editor; Abbott & Crane, I, p. 676; see also Firth, *The Clarke Papers*, vol II (1894), footnote pp. 49-50 for an explanation of his attribution of this letter.
- ⁴⁸ Cary, *Memorials*, II, pp. 59-60.

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- ⁴⁹ See Morrill and Baker, ‘Oliver Cromwell, the Regicide and the sons of Zeruiah’, for a thorough examination of this question.
- ⁵⁰ See A. Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution* (2002), pp. 425-6; J. C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell* (2001), pp. 126, 179; Underdown, *Pride’s Purge*, p. 119.
- ⁵¹ In my reading of this text I agree with that given by Morrill and Baker in ‘Oliver Cromwell, the Regicide and the sons of Zeruiah’.
- ⁵² *Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond*, p. 95.
- ⁵³ Abbott & Crane, I, pp. 696-9.
- ⁵⁴ *Letters between Colonel Robert Hammond*, p. 61.
- ⁵⁵ Cary, *Memorials*, II, p. 66.
- ⁵⁶ *Journal of the House of Lords* X, pp. 613-7 (30 November 1648).
- ⁵⁷ *JHC* VI, p. 91 (29 November 1648).
- ⁵⁸ *JHL* X, pp. 613-7 (30 November 1648).
- ⁵⁹ *Original Letters and Papers of State addressed to Oliver Cromwell... found among the Political Collections of John Milton, collected by J. Nickolls* (1743), p. 75.
- ⁶⁰ Abbott & Crane, II, pp. 189-90, 328-9, 453.

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I

Cromwellian scholars will be familiar with the 1904 edition of Thomas Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 'edited in three volumes with notes, supplement and enlarged index by S.C. Lomas'.¹ Often referred to as Lomas-Carlyle, this edition is widely seen as less problematic and easier to use than the later edition by W.C. Abbott.² Yet the editor behind it remains a shadowy figure: there is no life of Sophia Crawford Lomas (1848-1929) in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and she is generally remembered, if at all, only as the less famous half of 'Lomas-Carlyle'. In fact, Lomas was a very active scholar who, between the 1890s and the 1920s, published several volumes in the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* and the *Calendar of State Papers Foreign*, as well as a large number of calendars for the Historical Manuscripts Commission. She has nevertheless remained much less well known than her more celebrated aunt, in whose footsteps she followed, Mary Anne Everett Green.³ This article will try to rescue Lomas from this relative obscurity, and to locate her revised edition of Carlyle within the broader context of her scholarly work as a whole.

II

Sophia Crawford Williamson was born at Chorlton in 1848, the daughter of Professor William Crawford Williamson, Professor of Natural History at Owens College, Manchester, and his wife Sophia Wood (Mrs Green's sister). Educated in Manchester at Ellerslie School and then Owens College, she married William Lomas in the summer of 1870, and they subsequently had two daughters, Winifred and Ethel.⁴ Mrs Lomas helped her aunt in preparing the calendars of the *Proceedings of the Committee for the Advance of Money* (3 volumes, 1888) and the *Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents* (5 volumes, 1889-92).⁵ In 1894, while Green was at work on the final volume of the *Calendar of State Papers Domestic* for the reign of Charles I, the *Addenda 1625-1649*, her assistant on that project, W.D. Hamilton, took his own life. Green invited Lomas to replace him, and when Green herself died on 1 November 1895, Lomas took over the volume and saw it through to publication in 1897, complete with a 37-page introduction.⁶

That same year, Lomas began working for the Historical Manuscripts Commission,⁷ and over the next three years she edited four calendars, on

the manuscripts of J.M. Heathcote (1899), F.W. Leyborne-Popham (1899), Lord Montagu of Beaulieu (1900), and Mrs Frankland-Russell-Astley (1900). These collections all date mainly from the seventeenth century and confirmed Lomas's growing specialization in that period. In each case, Lomas's 'report' consisted of an introduction of between 15 and 40 pages describing the manuscripts and then a detailed calendar that contained extensive transcriptions of key sections linked together by passages of summary. In the Heathcote manuscripts at Conington Castle in Huntingdonshire, Lomas highlighted especially a group of letters from Sir Edward Hyde in 1659-60, and the correspondence of Sir Richard Fanshaw, Charles II's ambassador to the Courts of Portugal and Spain, mostly covering the years 1661-6.⁸ The particular interest of the Leyborne-Popham manuscripts lay in a large deposit of Clarke papers that had become separated from the main collection at Worcester College, Oxford. These related above all to the period 1659-60, and shed a great deal of light on Monck's activities during those years. Lomas acknowledged that 'Mr C.H. Firth has given much help and advice during the progress of the work.'⁹ The papers of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu at Beaulieu Abbey consisted mainly of correspondence from the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and especially from the period 1604-49. The various newsletters are particularly valuable for the accounts they provide of political affairs during the reigns of James I and Charles I.¹⁰ Of the Frankland-Russell-Astley manuscripts at Chequers Court in Berkshire, Lomas wrote that 'the Report might almost be termed a new series of "Memorials of the House of Cromwell", so numerous are the figures of his descendants to be found in its pages, and so great the amount of light thrown upon the history of the Russell branch of the family tree'.¹¹ The collection contained many papers relating to Oliver Cromwell's youngest child Frances (1638-1720), and her two marriages, first to Robert Rich and then to John Russell. This material remains a principal source for the reconstruction of the lives of Frances, her husbands, and her descendants.¹² Lomas's interest in the seventeenth century in general, and in Cromwell in particular, may well help to explain why she turned shortly afterwards to revising and enlarging Carlyle's edition of the *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*.

Two years before that edition appeared on 19 June 1902, Lomas read a paper to the Royal Historical Society entitled 'The State Papers of the Early Stuarts and the Interregnum'.¹³ This paper contained a magisterial and still very helpful description of the history and character of various classes of

State Papers in what is now the National Archives. Lomas discussed first of all the State Papers Domestic for the reigns of James I and Charles I, and the Interregnum; the papers of Parliamentary committees such as the Committee of Both Kingdoms, the Committee for the Advance of Money, the Committee for Sequestrations, the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents, the Army Committee, the Committee for Plundered Ministers, and the Indemnity Committee; and the records of the Privy Council and the Council of State. She then turned to consider 'State Papers not in official custody, but remaining in the families of officials, such as the Cecil Papers at Hatfield or the Coke Papers at Melbourne Hall', and 'the State Papers found in "made" collections, i.e. collections acquired by gift or purchase'. Here she looked in detail at a number of collections in the British Library (at that time in the British Museum) and the Bodleian Library, and then at various papers that had been, or were about to be, calendared by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. In several cases, Lomas herself was either responsible for compiling the calendar (for example the Leyborne-Popham manuscripts) or (as with the Earl of Egmont's manuscripts) actively engaged upon it. The paper thus synthesized her immense knowledge of two categories of primary sources on which she had worked intensively for many years: the 'official' State Papers and the various private papers calendared by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

Lomas concluded with a touching tribute to the 'life work' of S.R. Gardiner, who had died four months earlier: 'the great teacher who has so lately passed away; mourned by all who knew him, but sorrowed for especially by those who felt, when he left them, that their master had indeed been taken from their head that day'.¹⁴ According to Firth, Lomas 'loved Dr S.R. Gardiner, which was easy, and tried to help him, which was difficult. He preferred to do all the work for himself. So all she could do was to feed him with titbits from the State Papers, which was like offering a bear the currants out of a bun'.¹⁵

Further light is shed on Lomas's relationship with Gardiner, and on the spirit in which she approached the work of editing and calendaring manuscripts, by a letter that Lomas wrote – probably in about 1900 – to J.J. Cartwright, who was at that time Secretary of both the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the Public Record Office.¹⁶ She observed delicately that 'while very cordially accepting Mr Gardiner's dictum that editors are neither intended to, nor (as a rule) capable of writing history, I a

little demur to his view that the Reports are only for the use of the historian, and those already versed in the periods treated of (I forget his exact words)'. She continued: 'I know from experience that when I have to venture upon comparatively untrodden ground, one of the first quarters in which I look for help is any Report already published dealing with the period in question'.¹⁷ In her many editions and calendars, Lomas helped to make widely available invaluable source materials for which many, and not just historians, have had reason to be grateful to her.

III

During the opening years of the twentieth century, Lomas was mainly preoccupied with the service to scholars for which she would be best remembered, namely her revised edition of Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*. This was published by Methuen in 1904, and Lomas explained her editorial principles in an 'editor's note' (I, pp. liii-lxii). She wrote that 'as regards the text of the letters, every effort has been made to see the originals, where they exist, in order to correct any errors, either of transcription or printing, which have crept into the copies used by Carlyle.' She concluded from this examination of the originals that 'taking Carlyle's edition as a whole, the mistakes in the letters are very numerous, but not, as a rule, important.' John Morrill notes that she helpfully 'removed many of the rephrasings introduced by Carlyle and restored the original text'.¹⁸ Most usefully, Lomas added a Supplement (III, pp. 313-517) containing 185 letters and speeches not printed by Carlyle. These supplementary materials comprise 145 letters, 19 speeches, and 21 miscellaneous declarations, orders, grants and passes. Very importantly, the letters include three to Robert Hammond (nos. 26, 35 and 65), and the speeches include Cromwell's speeches in the Council of War (no. 24: 16 July 1647) and at the Putney Debates (no. 25: 28 October – 8 November 1647), as well as his speeches to Army officers on 27 February 1657 (no. 127) and 6 February 1658 (no. 139). Cromwellian scholars have made extensive use of these, and many of the other sources printed in the Supplement, ever since.

Lomas's handling of Cromwell's speeches was somewhat less successful than that of his letters. She frankly admitted that 'the treatment of the letters has been easy; that of the speeches very difficult', and added that 'these volumes being only a new edition of *Carlyle's Cromwell*, the speeches have been for the most part left as he printed them'. She retained Carlyle's wording and 'also all his "embellishments" (as Dr Gardiner called the

interpolations), his ejaculations, lines of pause, and italics of emphasis'. Faced with variant versions of many of the speeches, Lomas took the robust view that 'as regards most of the speeches, we may feel pretty confident that we have a very fair report of what Cromwell said; for where two or more versions differ so much in detail as to make it unlikely that they are copied from the same source, or from each other, and yet agree not only in substance but in words and phrasing, we may be sure that we are not far from the true reading'.

When Lomas's edition was published, some scholars found this pragmatic approach less than satisfactory and commented on the disparity in quality between the texts of the letters and those of the speeches. Reviewing the edition in the *American Historical Review* in 1905, the Cornell historian R.C.H. Catterall praised Lomas as 'a scholar possessing sound sense, experience, and unusual familiarity with the period. She has gone to the originals of the letters and speeches where the originals exist, and as near to the originals as possible where these do not exist. She has added a large number of letters hitherto unpublished, and she has contributed critical notes of unusual value.' Catterall nevertheless felt that Lomas 'would have rendered a much more acceptable service to scholarship by producing an entirely new work'. He thought it 'a pity that she should have thought it necessary to re-edit Carlyle's text', and that 'it would have been better to include in the body of the work all the new letters and speeches, instead of relegating them to a supplement'. He believed that Lomas's treatment of the speeches – where 'she has allowed many of Carlyle's alterations to stand, and has not always indicated what these alterations are' – was less satisfactory than her handling of the letters.¹⁹ Indeed, it is generally acknowledged that the most helpful edition of the speeches published to date remains that by Charles L. Stainer (1901), which usefully notes many of the variations between different surviving versions of the speeches.²⁰

Interestingly, Lomas had herself reviewed Stainer's edition in the *English Historical Review* in October 1901.²¹ She wrote that he had 'successfully accomplished a rather thankless task', and had 'evidently done his work conscientiously (and for the most part very accurately) from the manuscripts themselves'. She felt, however, that Stainer was 'perhaps, inclined rather to undervalue' the texts, and took the view that 'if we have two or three different versions of a speech, with so many small differences that it is impossible to believe them to be copied from the same "original" (if one

may use the term), and yet a remarkable agreement, not only in substance but in actual phrase and wording, we may be pretty sure that we are not far from having Cromwell's own words.' These are intractable issues, and ones with which the editors of the forthcoming Oxford University Press edition of Cromwell's writings and speeches will inevitably be forced to grapple. Nevertheless, Stainer's cautious approach, which chooses one text and then lists the variants from it, produced what John Morrill has called 'probably the best edition of the speeches',²² whereas the greatest contribution of Lomas's volumes lay in her work on Cromwell's letters: her careful checking of Carlyle's texts against the originals, and her publication of 145 additional letters.

IV

In the Preface to her edition, Lomas wrote that her 'indebtedness to Mr Firth [was] beyond words'. Firth, who was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford in that same year 1904,²³ contributed a lengthy introduction to the edition (I, pp. xxi-lii) which even the watchful Catterall felt was 'all that could be asked'. Firth later wrote that the Cromwell edition was Lomas's 'best work', adding that 'what the publisher paid for it I never knew; but, after all, what porridge got John Keats?'²⁴ Immediately after it was published, Lomas collaborated with Firth on *Notes on the diplomatic relations of England and France, 1603–1688: lists of ambassadors from England to France and from France to England* (Oxford, 1906). This was a very useful little book that gave the names, dates and some key references to primary sources for each of the diplomats. In 1906, Lomas also edited *The Edwardian Inventories for Huntingdonshire*, using transcripts by T. Craib, and adding an introduction (pp. xi-xxx). This volume printed the 36 surviving inventories of church goods for Huntingdonshire parishes compiled during the Edwardian Reformation in 1552–3. The following year, Lomas edited for the Camden Society the memoirs of Sir George Courthop, a Sussex gentleman of Royalist sympathies who attempted to remain neutral during the Civil Wars, and who later sat in the second Protectorate Parliament.²⁵ Then, in 1909, she revised and wrote an introduction to her aunt's 1855 biography of Elizabeth of Bohemia. She explained that she had 'corrected any inaccuracies detected in the text', 'added here and there short notes, where new light has been shed on the subject', and '(so far as possible) identified and modernized the very numerous references to the Foreign and Departmental State Papers, now all at the Public Record Office'.²⁶ This last undertaking was particularly valuable because the State Papers had been

entirely rearranged since the book's first publication. The new edition was thus a serious work of scholarship as well as an act of familial piety.

These Edwardian years were extraordinarily busy for Lomas, for in addition to the publications already discussed she was also working intensively on further calendars for the Historical Manuscripts Commission. These labours took several forms. Between 1902 and 1910, she prepared the indexes for each of the first four volumes of the calendar of the Stuart Papers at Windsor Castle.²⁷ In 1901, she wrote the introduction and compiled the index for volume 7 of the calendar of the Duke of Portland's manuscripts at Welbeck Abbey, which had been calendared by Richard Ward before he was overtaken by ill health.²⁸ She likewise wrote the introduction and completed the calendar for volume 8 (1907), which Arthur Maxwell Lyte had left incomplete.²⁹ Both these volumes took Lomas into the eighteenth century: volume 7 contained letters from Dr William Stratford, canon of Christ Church, Oxford, to Edward Harley, later Earl of Oxford, between 1710 and 1729, while volume 8 consisted of letters, papers, petitions and memorials to Harley in the period 1700–1708. Lomas moved further into the eighteenth century when she helped to finish two volumes on the manuscripts of Mrs Stopford-Sackville at Drayton House in Northamptonshire: for volume 1 (1904) Lomas revised the text and prepared the index; and for volume 2 (1910) she revised and added to the text.³⁰ The first of these volumes mostly contained eighteenth-century Sackville family papers, especially correspondence and official documents to and from Lord George Sackville, son of Lionel Sackville, first Duke of Dorset, while the second consisted mainly of letters and papers relating to America, Canada and the West Indies between 1758 and 1785, of which those from 1775–82, concerning the American War of Independence, were particularly important.

In the years from 1903 to 1909, Lomas also contributed extensively to four volumes in a sequence of calendars of 'manuscripts in various collections'. For the first of these, she calendared the papers of Sir George Wombwell of Newburgh Priory, where what are believed to be Cromwell's headless remains are interred. This collection comprised a wide range of papers of the Belasyse family and especially the later seventeenth-century correspondence of Viscount Fauconberg.³¹ Lomas also contributed a shorter calendar of Mrs Wentworth's papers at Woolley Park, which included Wentworth family papers from the late seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries.³² In 1904, Lomas produced the whole of a volume covering four separate collections. This contained, firstly, the papers of T.B. Clarke-Thornhill of Rushton Hall, including Tresham family correspondence from the period 1585–1605. Lomas wrote in her introduction that ‘the most valuable aspect of the collection is the light it throws upon the views of the loyal Roman Catholic party in the reign of Elizabeth and at the accession of James I.’³³ This collection included some fascinating and detailed accounts of Sir Thomas Tresham’s building of the Triangular Lodge at Rushton between 1593 and 1597. Secondly, there were the papers of Sir Thomas Barrett-Lennard which contained extensive documents relating to the prolonged legal case between Lord Chancellor Loftus and Lord Deputy Wentworth in the 1630s, the implications of which rumbled on for decades.³⁴ Lastly, Lomas included two much smaller collections: the papers of Pelham R. Papillon, most notable for a hitherto unpublished letter from Oliver Cromwell to his cousin Edmund Dunch, dated 19 March 1652[/3],³⁵ and those of William Cleverly Alexander, especially a long letter from John Noies dated June 1610.³⁶

In 1909, Lomas contributed to two further volumes covering various collections. For the first of these, she calendared the papers of Sir John James Graham of Fintry: this was a large and diverse collection of Graham family papers ranging from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, including legal and financial documents and correspondence, significant mainly for the material relating to the Marquises of Montrose in the mid and late seventeenth century.³⁷ That same year, Lomas also contributed two sections to a further volume, both of which reflected her continuing interest in the eighteenth century. The first covered the papers of Mrs M. Eyre-Masham of Newhouse, Salisbury, containing extensive correspondence of George Buff Dodington, mainly from the 1730s to the 1760s, which revealed much about the politics and parliamentary proceedings of that period.³⁸ The second dealt with the papers of Captain Howard Vicente Knox: these included official papers and letters of William Knox, Under Secretary of the Colonial Department from 1770 to 1782, which shed much light on England’s relations with America during those troubled years.³⁹

In addition to compiling indexes, completing projects begun by others, and contributing to the calendars of manuscripts in various collections, Lomas published six further volumes for the Historical Manuscripts Commission between 1905 and 1922 that were entirely her own work, all of which were

prepared with her accustomed thoroughness, efficiency and meticulous eye for detail. The earliest of these, on the manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont (1905),⁴⁰ contained the papers, especially from the years 1640–7, of Sir Philip Percivalle, Clerk of the Wards and Feodary and Escheator in Munster, and of his eldest son John Percivalle, continuing to 1660. These sources revealed much about the impact of the 1641 rebellion in Munster, in addition to the Percivalles' relations with such prominent figures as Ormond and Broghill. This calendar remains an important source for Irish history during the 1640s and 1650s and is, for example, extensively cited in the footnotes of Patrick Little's recent study of Broghill.⁴¹

Lomas published two calendars in 1907. That on the manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster at Grimsthorpe dwelt particularly on papers relating to the military career of Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, between 1587 and 1590.⁴² These sources complemented the material in the State Papers Foreign with which Lomas would become closely involved a few years later. That same year also saw the appearance of the second volume of the calendar of the Marquis of Bath's manuscripts at Longleat House.⁴³ In this volume, Lomas calendared a very diverse set of Harley family papers dating from between the early sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth centuries. The most significant part was the correspondence of Gervase Holles which included many letters from Sir Edward Hyde to his wife in 1649–51, and letters from Hyde to Holles in 1652–54 and 1657–60, all of which helped to illuminate the history of the Royalists in exile during the Interregnum.

Lomas then moved on to compile the fifth part of the calendar of the Earl of Denbigh's manuscripts (1911).⁴⁴ This volume contained an interestingly eclectic range of papers: correspondence to and from Basil Lord Feilding, later second Earl of Denbigh, especially during his embassies in Venice and Turin (1634–39); papers of Everard de Weede, Baron de Dyckvelt, a trusted adviser of William III, including letters from the Count Tirimont in Brussels in 1689; and various eighteenth-century correspondence, particularly of Isabella, Countess of Denbigh, and the fifth and sixth Earls of Denbigh (1718–75). This calendar again demonstrated Lomas's chronological range and showed her to be equally at ease in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Lomas's last calendars for the Historical Manuscripts Commission were of the manuscripts of Allan George Finch. The first volume, published in

1913, consisted mainly of the papers of Heneage Finch, third Earl of Winchilsea, during the 1660s, especially those relating to his embassy to Constantinople.⁴⁵ The second volume, dated June 1917 but not published until 1922, covered the period from 1670 to 1690, and contained the papers of Heneage Finch, first Earl of Nottingham, his brother Sir John Finch, and his son Daniel Finch, later second Earl of Nottingham.⁴⁶ The introduction to the third volume – which was not published until 1957 and consisted almost entirely of the correspondence of the second earl of Nottingham in 1691 – notes that ‘the text was in part prepared by the late Mrs S.C. Lomas’.⁴⁷

Amidst all this incessant scholarly activity, Lomas also found time to edit *Festival of Empire: Souvenir of the Pageant of London* (1911) to mark the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary. This book presented a series of historical scenes forming a pageant that portrayed the history of Britain and the British Empire, from Roman times to the early twentieth century. The Preface recorded ‘hearty thanks’ to the ‘Historical Referees for the great amount of time and trouble which they have given to the compiling of their scenes’, and ‘especially to Mrs Lomas, whose help has been invaluable throughout, and who, on the recasting and enlarging of the Pageant, undertook the work of the Honorary Secretaryship and Editorship of this book’ (p. viii). Lomas herself acted as Historical Referee for a number of the scenes, including those depicting the Field of the Cloth of Gold (pp. 81-8), the departure of the Pilgrim Fathers (pp. 97-8), and the fall of the monarchy in 1649 (pp. 107-9). In her introductory note to this last scene, Lomas wrote that ‘Cromwell himself had only slowly and reluctantly come to believe that the execution of the King was necessary, and was actually absent from London when the vote for his death was passed. Yet the English nation has ever, and rightly, looked upon him as the protagonist of the Stuart rule, and to him it was given, after the Commonwealth had been tried and failed, to bring back government by a “single person”, and revive the monarchy in all but name’ (p. 107). This expressed an interpretation of Cromwell that was much in vogue in the early years of the twentieth century – as for example in Firth’s 1900 biography⁴⁸ – and that has proved remarkably durable ever since.

The year before the coronation, 1910, Lomas had been appointed to succeed A.J. Butler as the editor of the *Calendars of State Papers Foreign*.⁴⁹ This presumably explains why, after 1911, she published only two more reports

for the Historical Manuscripts Commission, namely the first two volumes of Finch manuscripts, discussed above. Instead, Lomas appears henceforth to have concentrated on the State Papers Foreign. She produced a sequence of *Calendars of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth I*: volumes 17 (1913), 18 (1914), 19 (1916), and 20 (1921), between them covering the period from January 1583 to May 1586. Lomas was at work on volume 21, spanning June 1586 to June 1588 when, in 1924, her health gave way. The exact nature of her illness is uncertain, but her *Times* obituary states that ‘she often carried [her work] far into the night, to the ultimate ruin of her health’. When Lomas fell ill, Allen B. Hinds took over the project, and volume 21 appeared in four parts: part 1 (1927) bore Lomas’s name as editor, and parts 2 (1927), 3 (1929) and 4 (1931) were listed as edited jointly by she and Hinds. These *Calendars of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth I* fully lived up to Lomas’s extraordinarily high standards of industry and attention to detail. The documents themselves shed much light on England’s relations with France and Spain during these years as well as on English interest, and, from 1585, intervention in the Netherlands. The introduction to each volume was a major piece of work in itself, typically running to about 50-55 pages, and offering a careful and thorough commentary on the documents calendared within it. Even A.F. Pollard, a notoriously stringent reviewer, was moved to write in 1916 that the project was ‘making unusually rapid progress under the editorship of Mrs Lomas’, and the following year that ‘Mrs Lomas’s editorial work is always done with care’.⁵⁰ The latter remark was, to say the least, an understatement.

V

Lomas’s husband, William, died on 23 February 1915, and sometime after that she sold their house in Sydenham and moved to number 51, Herne Hill. She died there on 17 April 1929, at the age of 81. When probate was granted in Manchester on 29 August 1930, her estate was valued at £13,731 12 s. 11d. gross, indicating that she was reasonably well off by the standards of the time.⁵¹ Since then, apart from in relation to Carlyle, Lomas’s name has been largely forgotten. She has not been the subject of the kind of excellent studies that Christine L. Krueger and Anne Laurence⁵² have devoted to her aunt’s life and work. Perhaps because Mary Anne Everett Green lived earlier, and therefore seems more obviously pioneering, or simply because her published output was even larger,⁵³ she is much better known today than Sophia Crawford Lomas. The quality and quantity of the latter’s work nevertheless command respect. Lomas gave unstinting and

largely unsung service to three great projects of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English scholarship: the *Calendars of State Papers* (five volumes of her own, together with contributions to perhaps as many as twelve others); the Historical Manuscripts Commission calendars (eleven volumes of her own, with contributions to twelve others); and her three-volume revision of Carlyle's edition of Cromwell's *Letters and Speeches*, in which her work on the letters was especially notable. She accomplished all this from her early forties onwards, working in a professional world that was at that time extraordinarily male-dominated. Indeed, at the Public Record Office in the years after her aunt's death, 'with the exception of the part-time cleaners and the ladies' attendant she was the only female on the strength'.⁵⁴ Lomas was a true servant of the historical sources, and her selflessness was evident in the fact that she ultimately worked to the detriment of her health. Self-effacing to a degree, little of her own personality comes through in her writings other than in warm expressions of gratitude to other scholars, especially Gardiner and Firth, and one senses that this was as she wished it to be. When she died, her obituary in *The Times* concluded thus: 'Of Mrs Lomas's ability all these [volumes] are ample evidence, while to her generous nature and brilliant qualities all who knew her personally will bear testimony.'⁵⁵ This is not a bad epitaph for any historian to receive.

- ¹ *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, with elucidations by Thomas Carlyle, edited in three volumes with notes, supplement and enlarged index by S.C. Lomas, with an introduction by C.H. Firth, M.A.* (3 vols., 1904). In the text and notes, place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.
- ² W.C. Abbott (ed.), *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (4 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1937–47; repr. Oxford, 1988). For the problems with Abbott's edition, see John Morrill, 'Textualizing and Contextualizing Cromwell', *Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), 629–39.
- ³ Christine L. Krueger, 'Green [*née* Wood], Mary Anne Everett (1818–1895)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB) (Oxford, 2004).
- ⁴ 'Obituary: Mrs Lomas', *The Times*, 25 April 1929; Sir Charles Firth, untitled note on S.C. Lomas, *History*, 14 (1929), 119–20.
- ⁵ Firth, *History*, 14 (1929), 119.

- ⁶ John D. Cantwell, *The Public Record Office, 1838-1958* (1991), p. 335; Christine L. Krueger, 'Why she lived at the PRO: Mary Anne Everett Green and the Profession of History', *Journal of British Studies*, 42 (2003), 65-90, at 87.
- ⁷ Firth, *History*, 14 (1929), 119.
- ⁸ Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), *Report on the Manuscripts of J.M. Heathcote* (1899); Lomas's introduction is at pp. i-xxvi.
- ⁹ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of F.W. Leyborne-Popham* (1899); Lomas's introduction is at pp. i-xxxi (quotation at p. xxxi). Lomas was working on this volume during 1897 and 1898: The National Archives (TNA), HMC 1/75, unfoliated (Lomas to J.J. Cartwright, 25 March 1897); HMC 1/345, unfoliated (Lomas to J.J. Cartwright, 30 November [? c. 1898]).
- ¹⁰ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu* (1900); Lomas's introduction is at pp. iii-xviii.
- ¹¹ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Mrs Frankland-Russell-Astley* (1900); Lomas's introduction is at pp. iii-xlii (quotation at p. iii).
- ¹² Peter Gaunt, 'Russell [*née* Cromwell], Frances, Lady Russell (*bap.* 1638, *d.* 1720)', *ODNB*.
- ¹³ S.C. Lomas, 'The State Papers of the Early Stuarts and the Interregnum', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series, 16 (1902), 97-132. Lomas was subsequently elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 1906, and served on its Council from 1923 to 1925: *ibid.*, 4th series, 13 (1930), 241.
- ¹⁴ Gardiner had died on 23 February 1902: Ivan Roots, 'Gardiner, Samuel Rawson (1829-1902)', *ODNB*.
- ¹⁵ Firth, *History*, 14 (1929), 120.
- ¹⁶ On Cartwright's career, see Cantwell, *Public Record Office*, pp. 241, 251, 316-17, 353, 560.
- ¹⁷ TNA, HMC 1/345, unfoliated (Lomas to J.J. Cartwright, 'Rosslyn, Tuesday night', [? c. 1900]).
- ¹⁸ Morrill, 'Textualizing and Contextualizing Cromwell', 632.

- ¹⁹ R.C.H. Catterall, review of Lomas-Carlyle, *American Historical Review*, 10 (1905), 646-8.
- ²⁰ Charles L. Stainer (ed.), *Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, 1644–1658* (1901).
- ²¹ S.C. Lomas, review of Stainer, *English Historical Review* (EHR), 16 (1901), 779-83.
- ²² Morrill, 'Textualizing and Contextualizing Cromwell', 629.
- ²³ Ivan Roots, 'Firth, Sir Charles Harding (1857–1936)', ODNB.
- ²⁴ Firth, *History*, 14 (1929), 120.
- ²⁵ S.C. Lomas (ed.), 'The memoirs of Sir George Courthop (1616–1685)', in *The Camden Miscellany*, 11 (Camden Society, 3rd series, 13, 1907), pp. 95-157.
- ²⁶ Mary Anne Everett Green, *Elizabeth, Electress Palatine and Queen of Bohemia* (rev. S.C. Lomas, 1909); Lomas's introduction is at pp. xiii-xxvii (quotations at p. xiii).
- ²⁷ HMC, *Calendar of the Stuart Papers belonging to His Majesty the King, preserved at Windsor Castle*, volumes 1 (1902), 2 (1904), 3 (1907), and 4 (1910).
- ²⁸ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace the Duke of Portland*, volume 7 (1901); Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-xxv. With characteristic modesty, Lomas queried whether anything should be said 'about the editing of this Report', adding that 'perhaps, as it is rather a polyglot affair, it might be better to say nothing at all': TNA, HMC 1/345, unfoliated (Lomas to J.J. Cartwright, 12 November 1901). Fortunately, the published volume duly acknowledged her contribution.
- ²⁹ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace the Duke of Portland*, volume 8 (1907); Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-xxiv.
- ³⁰ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Mrs Stopford-Sackville* (2 vols., 1904–10).
- ³¹ HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections: volume 2* (1903), pp. 1-226; Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-xix.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp. 367-432; Lomas's introduction is at pp. xxvii-xl.
- ³³ HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections: volume 3* (1904), pp. 1-154; Lomas's introduction, describing all four collections in this volume, is at pp. v-lxxi (quotation at p. v).

- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-255.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 256-8; this letter was also printed the same year in Lomas-Carlyle, III, 516-17 (Supplement, no. 149).
- ³⁶ HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections: volume 3*, pp. 259-64.
- ³⁷ HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections: volume 5* (1909), pp. 185-275; Lomas's introduction is at pp. 185-95.
- ³⁸ HMC, *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections: volume 6* (1909); pp. 1-80; Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-xiii. Lomas's daughter, Winifred, compiled the index for this volume.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-296, 440-9; Lomas's introduction is at pp. xiv-xxviii.
- ⁴⁰ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont: volume 1* (2 parts, 1905); Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-lxxii. Lomas had suggested in November 1898 that these papers deserved to be calendared: British Library, Add. MS 47172, fos. iii-iv (Lomas to J.J. Cartwright, 18 November 1898).
- ⁴¹ Patrick Little, *Lord Broghill and the Cromwellian Union with Ireland and Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2004).
- ⁴² HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster* (1907); Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-xl.
- ⁴³ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath: volume 2* (1907); Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-xxiv.
- ⁴⁴ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Denbigh: part 5* (1911); Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-xxix.
- ⁴⁵ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch: volume 1* (1913); Lomas's introduction is at pp. v-lv.
- ⁴⁶ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch: volume 2* (1922); Lomas's introduction, dated June 1917, is at pp. v-xxii.
- ⁴⁷ HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch: volume 3* (1957), p. iv.
- ⁴⁸ Charles Firth, *Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England* (1900).
- ⁴⁹ Cantwell, *Public Record Office*, p. 355.
- ⁵⁰ A.F. Pollard, reviews of *Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth I*, volumes 18 and 19, in *EHR*, 31 (1916), 163-4; 32 (1917), 440-1.

- ⁵¹ William Lomas, grant of probate: London, 17 April 1915; Sophia Crawford Lomas, grant of probate: Manchester, 29 August 1930.
- ⁵² Christine L. Krueger, 'Mary Anne Everett Green and the *Calendars of State Papers* as a genre of history writing', *Clio*, 36 (2006), 1-21; Krueger, 'Why she lived at the PRO'; Anne Laurence, 'Women historians and documentary research : Lucy Aikin, Agnes Strickland, Mary Anne Everett Green, and Lucy Toulmin Smith', in Joan Bellamy, Anne Laurence and Gill Perry (eds.), *Women, scholarship and criticism: gender and knowledge, c. 1790–1900* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 125-41.
- ⁵³ Between 1855 and 1895, Green produced 41 volumes of *Calendars of State Papers*, covering portions of the reigns of Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I, the entire reign of James I, the Interregnum (including the *Proceedings of the Committee for the Advance of Money* and the *Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents*, on which Lomas helped her), and part of the reign of Charles II: Krueger, 'Green [*née* Wood], Mary Anne Everett'; Krueger, 'Why she lived at the PRO', 67; Firth, *History*, 14 (1929), 119.
- ⁵⁴ Cantwell, *Public Record Office*, p. 351.
- ⁵⁵ *The Times*, 25 April 1929.

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By Jane A Mills

The market town of Frome,¹ Somerset, is situated on the eastern edge of the Mendip hills, on the valley side of the River Frome and very close to the border with Wiltshire. It is the fourth largest town in the county, with a population of 27,000 (14,000 households), and has more Grade I and II listed buildings than any other Somerset town.

The town dates back to 685 when St Aldhelm, the Abbot of Malmesbury, settled on the banks of the River Frome and built the Monastery of St John the Baptist, which was later replaced by a Norman church in the 12th century. The location was ideal for crossing the river, with a plentiful supply of spring water from the hills, and it was on the edge of the Selwood Forest, close to the tracks which used the Mendip Hills and Salisbury Plain gap. The spring water still feeds the fountain near the church and the leat down the centre of Cheap Street. Over the next three hundred years, parts of the church were rebuilt and extended until major restoration was undertaken during the Victorian period, when some stones which were part of a Saxon cross were placed in the walls of the tower.

In the 9th century, King Alfred created a network of fortified settlements across the kingdom in case of Danish attack; these burghs were for the protection of the locals and it is a strong possibility that Frome was a burgh. King Alfred the Great's grandson, Athelstan (893-939), who was the first king of a unified England, held a Witenagemot here in 934, and his half-brother King Eadred died in Frome on 23 November 955.²

In 1086, with the completion of William the Conqueror's great survey, we get a clearer picture of the size and importance of Frome. The Domesday Book (*Exon Domesday*) records that Frome belonged to Edward the Confessor and was one of the twelve manors of Somerset which were not liable to pay 'geld' (or land tax); they were therefore not assessed in 'hides' (units of taxation), but instead they supplied in kind to the Court (*firma unius noctis*). The population was 600 and there were four water mills for grinding flour.

Frome's location was perfect for the wool trade; with the river, and the sheep farmed on the Mendips and Salisbury Plain, it meant that by 1300 it became the primary trade. The town had five fulling mills for pounding the

wool which was dyed with locally grown woad. It allowed Frome to prosper and grow in importance; by 1492 it held three annual fairs and a second market day was established. It was described as a great market town by Henry VIII's commissioners. By the 1630s Frome had become one of the centres for the much sought-after fine quality Spanish cloth; the wealthy cloth manufacturers and merchants were now the major landowners and the Manor of Frome came under the ownership of cloth merchants. During this period there was much property speculation and building of artisan homes in the suburbs. Daniel Defoe commented on its rise in importance:

The Town of *Froom* ... is so prodigiously increased within these last Twenty or Thirty Years, that they have built a New Church, and so many New Streets of Houses, and those Houses are so full of inhabitants, that *Frome* is now reckoned to have more people in it, than the city of Bath, and some say, then even *Salisbury* itself, and if their Trade continues to increase for a few years more, as it has done for those past, it is very likely to be one of the greatest and wealthiest Inland Towns in *England*.³

After the 1740s there was a decline in the wool trade due to the town's reluctance to invest in modern production methods. There was a reprieve during the Napoleonic wars due to the high demand for blue cloth for military uniforms but eventually, during the Industrial Revolution, cloth manufacture moved to Manchester.

Situated 12 km from Frome is the large country estate of Longleat, home of the Marquess of Bath, its links with Frome extending back to the 16th century. In 1536 John Thynne became steward of the household to Edward Seymour, Viscount Beauchamp, and from then on his life was to change – as Seymour grew in wealth and importance, so did Thynne. By 1540 he was able to purchase from Sir John Horsey for £53 the near-derelict Wiltshire priory of *Longlete* together with property in three neighbouring parishes of Wiltshire and Somerset. The following year Seymour transferred to Thynne the Cirencester Abbey land which they held in Frome, plus the advowson of St John's; these had originally been a gift to Seymour from his brother-in-law, Henry VIII.

On the succession of Edward VI, Seymour became Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector of the Realm. Thynne followed Seymour on his military

exploits to Scotland, and after the successful Battle of Pinkie Cleugh on the banks of the river Esk (1547), Seymour knighted the wounded Thynne on the battlefield. He was made a freeman of the City of London, joined the Mercers company and married Sir Richard Gresham's daughter, Christian (1548), using her substantial dowry to purchase the nearby manor of Horningsham, woodland and a mill in Frome. He served as Sheriff of Somerset and Dorset between 1548 and 1549.⁴ Over the years the connection became stronger with further purchases of land and notably the influence the Marquesses held over the political representation in parliament for Frome. Lord Edward Thynne (younger son of Thomas, 2nd Marquess) represented Frome in 1859; Thomas, Viscount Weymouth (later 5th Marquess of Bath) was elected as Conservative Member of Parliament for Frome (1886–92 and 1895–96), and his son Henry (6th Marquess of Bath) also represented the Conservatives for Frome between 1931 and 1935.⁵

The year before the outbreak of civil war, John Thynne's grandson, Sir James Thynne, inherited Longleat; he tried to purchase a peerage but was prevented from doing so by parliament to stop the money benefiting the king. The family's strong allegiance to the king was now to be tested; Sir James would have to be neutral in order to protect Longleat. Although not joining the king's forces, he did loan money for arms for the royalist cause.⁶ In 1643 Sir Edward Hungerford, Area Commander for Parliament, sent troops to Longleat to seize horse, arms and plate; this was the only visit by either side.⁷

Throughout the civil war Frome escaped the fighting although there were incidents in the surrounding area. At Shepton Mallet (18.8 km from Frome) local Parliamentary leaders were intending to hold a meeting when, on 1 August 1642, Sir Ralph Hopton arrived with a troop of horse intent on proclaiming the King's Commission of Array; a fight broke out in the market place when parliamentary deputy-lieutenant Colonel William Strode called out the local militia; Hopton read out the commission but was forced to leave. Following this incident, John Pyne (MP for Poole) decided to recruit six hundred foot and match to join forces with Colonel Strode. They reached Marshall's Elm (3.4 km from Glastonbury and 18 km from Shepton Mallet) when they were ambushed by Sir John Stawell and a troop of eighty horse trying to prevent them from reaching Shepton Mallet. The Royalist Dragoons opened fire and the cavalry charged down the hill towards them;

the Parliamentarians fled due to their inexperience. There were seven dead and twenty wounded; this was one of the first fatal skirmishes of the war.

In 1643 Lord Arundell's home, Woodhouse Castle, the largest fortified manor house in the west of England was captured by Parliament, and later in 1644 became the scene of a fierce battle when it was bombarded by cannon. The ruin is now overgrown and part of the Longleat estate. On 19 June 1643 the Royalist Council of War made the decision to defeat Waller and follow him at all costs. Hopton and his troops marched towards Bradford-on-Avon to secure the bridge, stopping en route to spend the night in Frome, sleeping in St John's Church, resulting in the churchwardens having to spend two shillings to have it cleaned afterwards.⁸ Leigh-on-Mendip was the scene of a skirmish when Major Francis Duett took 250 cavalry and attacked the Royalist quarters of Sir James Hamilton's Regiment of Horse. They successfully captured 15 officers, 97 men, 140 horse and 60 cases of pistols.⁹

It was evident at the outbreak of the civil war that north Somerset, west Wiltshire and south Gloucester were solidly on the side of Parliament. So were the ports and clothing towns which were puritan in faith. Frome was a major clothing town whose merchants and workers were mostly puritan and therefore it was evitable that they would strongly support parliament; whenever there was a parliamentary victory the church bells were rung; lead from the roof was used to make bullets for Fairfax's soldiers besieging Nunney Castle.¹⁰ When Oliver Cromwell died, Bailiff Abraham Selfe and his drummer, Richard Wayland, proclaimed Richard Cromwell as Lord Protector; they had a bonfire costing 3s 6d and spent 5s on beer.

Frome had managed to stay out of the fighting or any direct involvement in the war but this was not the case with the Monmouth Rebellion.¹¹ As they had puritan leanings, James II was not popular so when it was known that James, Duke of Monmouth had landed at Lyme Regis, Frome showed where their loyalties lay. On 25 June 1685 in the Market Place Town Constable Robert Smith proclaimed Monmouth as king and posted his proclamation. The news reached the Earl of Pembroke, lord-lieutenant of Wiltshire, who, together with 160 horse and 36 mounted musketeers, immediately rode to Frome. They were fired at but the rebels fled to the other end of town. Pembroke removed the proclamation and made Smith write a declaration stating that Monmouth was a traitor, and this was

displayed instead. Pembroke, together with his troops and Smith, left the town and returned to Trowbridge. He reported the events to Lord Sutherland, the Secretary of State and he received this reply:

Earl of Pembroke

Whitehall, June 30th 1685

My Lord, I have received both your Lordships letters of Saturday morning from Trobridge and have shewed them to his Majestie who is very well satisfied with what your Lordship has done and as to the Constable of Frome his Majestie thinks it fit that orders bee given that hee bee hang'd as hee deserves.

I am my Lord

Your Lordships & c Sunderland¹²

It is not known if Robert Smith was hanged as there is no record, but a Robert Smith appears on the list of those who were deported after the Rebellion.

Monmouth and his army (8,000 men) left the outskirts of Bristol at midnight 25 June, deciding not to take on the Royalist army and a fortified city; instead they marched to Bath where the citizens answered his order for surrender with an overwhelming *No* when the city guards shot his herald dead.¹³ They carried on, arriving at Norton St Philip on the 26 June, staying the night at the Old House, now the George Inn.¹⁴ They barricaded the village and the following morning Monmouth was visited by his half-brother Henry FitzRoy, 1st Duke of Grafton, and an advanced guard of the Royal army. Over the next six hours the opposing sides fought an uncoordinated artillery battle in heavy rain; eventually, after 80 of his men died, Grafton withdrew to Bradford-on-Avon. Monmouth lost only 18 men.

As the king's army withdrew to Bradford-on-Avon, Monmouth and his bedraggled army trudged through the heavy rain the 9.6 km to Frome, arriving at 4am on the 28 June. Longleat's steward, Thomas Allen, was left in charge of the estate while the family were away, though he kept Thynne informed of proceedings. Allen visited the town while Monmouth was in residence and wrote to Thynne that the army was estimated at 30,000, 'but if there be so many, the greater part was asleep whilst I was there'.¹⁵ It is strongly believed that Monmouth stayed in a house in Cork Street, now known as Monmouth chambers, which has a plaque on the wall. The arms

and supplies which he was expecting had been captured by the Earl of Pembroke; without any money Monmouth was unable to feed his troops, discipline deteriorated and houses were looted; coupled with the bad weather conditions it was evitable that his army would start to desert, and an estimated 2,000 did so.¹⁶ While in Frome, Monmouth received the news of the 9th Earl of Argyll's defeat and capture (he was beheaded on the 30 June), he seriously contemplated discontinuing the rebellion and leaving for Holland. A council of war was held where Colonel Venner was in favour of the retreat, but Lord Grey gave an impassioned speech arguing that Monmouth should not leave as the people would never forgive him. Monmouth decided to continue but had to alter his plans to march on London as the Earl of Feversham and the Royal army had reached Westbury and had reinforcements which included artillery; instead he left for Shepton Mallet. On the 1 July, Feversham and his army arrived in Frome; he did not approve of the town's support of Monmouth, staying two days, and using St John's church as a gaol; once again it had to be cleaned after they left!

After Monmouth's defeat at the Battle of Sedgemoor, the west paid a heavy price for giving their support, and a series of trials were held in several locations in Devon, Dorset and Somerset. Judge Jeffreys was appointed to carry out the task and these became known as the Bloody Assizes. The judges arrived in Somerset, believed to be the chief seat of the rebellion, on Friday 18 September and ended in Wells on 23 September. Three hundred were sentenced to be hanged or hanged, drawn and quartered, and 800–850 were transported to the West Indies. The executions were to take place in 36 towns and villages as an example and to spread terror. In Frome 12 men were hung on Gibbet Hill and their quarters were hung at Gorehedge, just past the top of Bath Street.¹⁷ Residents of the area have claimed that on dark nights you can still hear the gasps...

During the 19th century, Frome's population had to rely on other industries as cloth manufacture had moved to the north. It was during this period that printing greatly expanded from when Abraham Crocker became master of the Frome Blue Coat School in 1783 and started printing posters, pamphlets and books. Pharmacist William Langford set up a printing press to print labels for his medicines, which later in 1845 became Butler and Tanners who printed the first Penguin paperbacks in 1935. They are now the very successful Butler, Tanner and Dennis.

In addition to printing, Frome moved into the new engineering industries of casting iron (see note 10). In 1848 John Webb Singer opened the Frome Art Metal Works producing ecclesiastical items such as lecterns, altar crosses, chancel screens and stained glass. They attended international exhibitions and their reputation grew; by 1866 he opened a factory in Cork Street and was employing craftsmen from Belgium, France and Switzerland. In 1888, with the support of the leading sculptors Alfred Drury, Onslow Ford and Hamo Thornycroft, Singer extended his factory to house The Statue Foundry. It had heavy cranes to move the giant moulds and castings. Their first casting was for Melbourne, Australia, of a copy of Thornycroft's statue of General Gordon.¹⁸

Three major sculpture foundries in the country were inundated with work and were failing to meet deadlines; Frome soon gained a reputation for producing quality work on time, and they acquired the commission to produce the bronze statues of Queen Victoria which were requested for towns and cities throughout the Empire. In 1898 they began the casting of the Hamo Thornycroft statue of Oliver Cromwell which stands outside the Houses of Parliament.¹⁹ In 1910 they cast Henry Fehr's statue of John Hampden which stands in Aylesbury Market Square; a line drawing of the statue is used as the logo for Aylesbury Vale District Council.

¹ Frome is pronounced 'Froome' which dates back to its Saxon origins when it was recorded as *Froom*; the surrounding forest of Selwood or *Seal wuda* – its Saxon name originates from the forest's high percentage of willow trees. Over the centuries it has been known as *Frome Branch* after the Branch family who were lords of the manor, and then, until recent times, *Frome Selwood* after the forest. It is also believed to have been derived from the Celtic river name *Fram* meaning brisk or fair.

² Encyclopædia Britannica

³ Peter Davies (ed.), Daniel Defoe, Gent, *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, vol 1 (1927, original edition 1724–26), 281.

⁴ For information about John Thynne's political career see www.historyofparliamentonline.org Thynne, John (1512/13-80), of London and Longleat, Wilts. Author T.F.T. Baker. Also David Burnett, *Longleat The Story of an English Country House*.

⁵ Burnett, *Longleat*.

⁶ Ibid.

- ⁷ For more information on Sir Edward Hungerford see Jane A. Mills, 'Cromwellian Britain XX: Farleigh Hungerford, Somerset', *Cromwelliana* Series II, 4 (2007), pp85-93.
- ⁸ *The Churchwardens' Book*, St John's Church. Michael McGarvie, *Frome Through the Ages* (2000, Frome Society for Local Study), 62.
- ⁹ John Barratt, *The Civil War in the South-West*, (2004, Pen & Sword Military books), 46. Michael McGarvie, *The book of Frome*, (2001, Frome Society for Local Study), 76.
- ¹⁰ Peter Belham, *The Making of Frome*, (1985, Frome Society for Local Study), 19. Between 1685 and 1752 Lewis Cockey cast church bells in Frome. There are 23 towers in Somerset and over 40 in Wiltshire and Dorset which contain Cockey bells. Cockey's went on to cast iron components for the gas industry, and as a result Frome had gas lit streets in 1832.
- ¹¹ For an account of Monmouth's landing at Lyme Regis, see Jane A. Mills, 'Cromwellian Britain XVII: Lyme Regis, Dorset', *Cromwelliana* Series II, 1 (2004), pp123-130.
- ¹² McGarvie, *Frome Ages*, 69.
- ¹³ Violet Wyndham, *The Protestant Duke, A Life of Monmouth*, (1976, Weidenfeld and Nicolson), pp141-3.
- ¹⁴ After the rebellion the George Inn was used as one of the sites for Judge Jeffreys' Bloody Assizes, which resulted in 12 executions being carried out on the village common.
- ¹⁵ His army probably did not exceed 3,000. Tim Harris, 'Scott [Crofts], James, duke of Monmouth and first duke of Buccleuch (1649-1685)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison (eds). (2004, Oxford: OUP).
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- ¹⁷ The 12 executed in Frome: Robert Beaumont, William Clement, John Humphreys, George Hussey, Laurence Lott, Thomas Lott, Robert Man, Thomas Paul, Francis Smith, Philip Usher, Samuel Vile, Thomas Warr.
- ¹⁸ Duncan S James, *A Century of Statues*, (The Morris Singer Foundry Ltd, 1984).
- ¹⁹ For the controversy surrounding the statue see S K Roberts, 'The legacy of Oliver Cromwell in the English and UK parliament, 1660-2010', in Jane A. Mills, ed., *Cromwell's Legacy* (Manchester, 2012), pp146, 150, 156, 161-3.

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Andrew Barclay, *Electing Cromwell: the making of a politician* (Pickering and Chatto, *Political and Popular Culture in the Early Modern Period*: 3; February 2011). ISBN 978 1 84893 018; hardback, 290 pp. £60.

Reviewed by Dr Patrick Little

This unprepossessing volume, with its anonymous brown cover, in fact contains one of the most original and engaging books on Oliver Cromwell to be published in recent years. The question Andrew Barclay asks at the very beginning is a deceptively simple one: ‘why was Oliver Cromwell elected as MP for Cambridge in 1640?’ (p. 1). His starting point is a re-evaluation of the surprisingly detailed passage concerning the election in James Heath’s notorious post-restoration attack on Cromwell, *Flagellum*. Heath’s story, that Cromwell was returned for Cambridge through the backing of a puritan clique within the town, has usually been dismissed as yet another fabrication. But Heath was a compiler rather than an author, and is known to have borrowed wholesale from other sources. Could his source for the Cambridge election turn out to be reliable after all?

What follows reads more like a detective story than a history book, as Barclay examines each element of Heath’s account in forensic detail. Who was the enigmatic ‘king’s fisherman’? Was William Welbore really Cromwell’s kinsman? Was there really a religious conventicle in the fens, and did Cromwell attend it? Barclay also analyses and dismisses other explanations for the election result. It turns out that Cromwell’s connection with the controversial drainage of the fens was not what we thought, and the issue was not of paramount importance to the Cambridge corporation in any case. Despite assertions to the contrary, there is no substantial evidence that a powerful aristocratic patron was pulling strings for Cromwell in Cambridge in 1640. Instead, the situation in Ely under the reforming Bishop Wren, and the impact that the new Laudian policies had on the townsfolk of Cambridge, prove to be vital in resolving the conundrum. The overall picture that emerges is compelling: that Cromwell’s reputation as a puritan, and his opposition to Wren, allowed his like-minded friends and kinsmen in Cambridge to secure his election.

This kind of detailed ‘micro-history’, which examines closely a particular incident or place, and thus reveals wider truths about the whole period, is familiar from the work of Margaret Spufford, Paul Seaver, David

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Underdown and John Walter, to name but a few. Usually, such case studies are based on unusually rich archival sources, but in this case the sources are disparate, neglected and often unreliable. Barclay's reconstruction of the world of Cambridge, Ely and the fens has been hard won, through painstaking research in a range of archives, and the careful piecing together of fragments. As such, it presents a challenge to those Cromwellian scholars content to rework those easily accessible printed documents that relate directly to Cromwell, as published by Carlyle, Lomas or Abbott. It also demonstrates the risks of studying Cromwell in isolation. Only by examining those around him can we start to understand the context within which he operated, and sift the fact from the misinformation – an approach that is as important when considering his later career as when reconstructing his early days of obscurity.

In conclusion, *Electing Cromwell* ought to have a prominent place on the bookshelves of anyone interested in Cromwell. There is, however, a snag. In its current austere academic format, and especially with its price tag, it is doubtful that this volume will be read by any but the most dedicated of Cromwellians. Thankfully, a revised version of one of the chapters appears elsewhere in this volume of *Cromwelliana*.

John Cunningham, *Conquest and Land in Ireland: The Transplantation to Connacht, 1649-1680*. (Royal Historical Society, studies in history, new series. Boydell Press, 2011). ISBN 978-0-86193-315-0; hardback, 184 + viii pp. £50.

Reviewed by Dr Patrick Little

Oliver Cromwell was in Ireland for only ten months in 1649–50, and both his friends and enemies usually focus on only two of those months – September and October – during which his army besieged and stormed Drogheda and Wexford. The eight years of government by Cromwell and his associates which followed his departure from the island in June 1650 have not captured historical attention in the same way. In particular, the most dramatic consequence of the Cromwellian conquest – the wholesale confiscation and redistribution of lands held by the Catholic Irish – has not

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received the systematic investigation that it deserves. This new book by a young Irish historian, Dr John Cunningham, fills that gap admirably.

The 'Cromwellian' transplantation of the Catholic Irish involved the surrender of their lands to commissioners in return for a new property allocation, inevitably of smaller size and inferior quality, in the western province of Connacht. The lands thus vacated would be granted to civilian 'adventurers', who had funded the reconquest; to members of the army, granted acres in lieu of pay arrears; and to the Old Protestants of Ireland. The penalties for Catholic non-cooperation were harsh – hence the popular summary of the policy as offering a choice between 'Hell or Connacht'. The initial plan, formulated by Henry Ireton in the early 1650s and continued by successive parliamentary commissioners and deputies and councils in Ireland, was to remove all the Irish to Connacht; but this soon proved unworkable, not least because the natives were needed to farm the land and perform other tasks for their new masters. In practice, it was the propertied classes which were transplanted, and the result was not so much ethnic cleansing as a mass change of land ownership. In 1641 Catholics held 61% of the land; by 1660 this had dropped to 10%. There was no attempt to reverse this injustice under Charles II, who swayed to pressure from the incomers, and the result was the creation of the Protestant Ascendancy, which lasted until the personal attacks and burning out of landlords that followed Irish Independence in 1921. The wholesale dispossession of the Catholic Irish, rather than the butchery at Drogheda and Wexford, was what prompted nationalists to talk of 'the Curse of Cromwell'.

For those familiar with Cromwell as the bugbear of the Irish people, Cunningham's analysis of his role in all this is surprising. Rather than being the prime instigator of the transplantation scheme (which was planned and executed by others), Cromwell in fact did his best to mitigate its effects, receiving petitions and personal representations from Catholic landowners, and often going out of his way to make sure they were treated justly. He was especially concerned to uphold the many articles of surrender agreed with Catholics during the wars, which sometimes included promises about lenient treatment and the protection of their landed estates. During the early months of the protectorate, Cromwell was able to pass ordinances to exempt a number of important Catholic landowners from transplantation. There were limits, of course. Only those who were prepared to collaborate with the new regime were favoured, and opposition, especially from the

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army, forced Cromwell to tread warily, and to allow the implementation of the modified scheme from 1655 onwards. By then, the damage to his own reputation had been done, and it could be said that the poisoning of relations between Oliver and his son-in-law, Charles Fleetwood, over the Irish land question was a major reason for political tensions later in the protectorate, and the fall of Richard Cromwell in 1659.

Jane A. Mills (editor), *Cromwell's Legacy* (Manchester University Press, February 2012). ISBN 978-0-7190-8089-0; hardback, 336 pp. £65.

Reviewed by Prof Ivan Roots

Persistence sometimes pays: Jane Mills long nursed an idea for a book on Oliver Cromwell, recruited contributors and at length has found an academic publisher for a miscellany of articles, diverse in depth, length and scope, illustrated, evaluating *Cromwell's Legacy*, but really reviewing his posthumous reputation.

In restoration England, harsh condemnation of the late ‘usurper’ was, of course, obligatory. Yet already in the 1660s, while Slingsby Bethel was deploring ‘the world’s mistake in Oliver Cromwell’, Samuel Pepys was confiding to his diary how people were commenting on what ‘brave things’ he had done. So began a long, slow meander, an erratic process of redemption, towards today’s assured place on any short list of ‘great Englishmen’, yet one still denied a commemorative stamp, even a second class one, by a (decreasingly) Royal Mail. Stephen Roberts traces an afterlife at Westminster of a former member who threw out parliaments but had called them too. His late Victorian statue, controversial at the time, is still there, now a familiar inhabitant of the precincts. Along the way the negative image of the standing army controversy faded as a military establishment – respectable, necessary, national, imperial – identified with a pioneer of order and discipline, (Alan Marshall). A folklore thick with instances of locations, urban and rural, where Oliver had been and where he never went is surveyed by Peter Gaunt, and illustrated with his own photographs. It seems everywhere wants to get in on the act, by instant tradition if necessary. Similarly, there has always been a demand for Cromwelliana and personalia.

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The real stuff has been in short supply, and most of that is of doubtful provenance, (John Goldsmith). Mummified heads do turn up, but the sad relic immured at Sidney Sussex College, where Oliver spent a (presumably) formative year, may surely rest in confidence, undisturbed.

Oliver in Ireland, ‘the Cromwellian Settlement’, is a blot, but Toby Barnard neatly fits it into England’s long intolerable record in that ‘most distressful country’. The rebellion of 1641 was more significant. Scots, too, look over their rather different 1650s, A.M. Stewart suggests, back to the union of the crowns in 1603. (Some nationalists would not retain the monarchy after independence.)

Further afield in the North Atlantic entity, Francis J. Bremer sees Puritan New England greet the Restoration bleakly, but before long, men of substance, socially conservative whatever their faith, hardened against the memory of the man who had once, it seems, thought he might brave things out in their erstwhile ‘howling wilderness’. Among ‘the meaner sort’ of people, ‘Oliver’ remained a popular given name. Soon, more generally, ‘Oliver’s Ghost’ seemed comforting as the urge for independence and revolution grew bolder. Half a century later, further south, Cromwell was invoked *pro* and *con* in fledgling states striving for freedom from Spain, his ‘natural enemy’, (Karen Racine).

Breaking step, Hugh Dunthorpe takes us back to the 1650s, celebrating the skill of the living Protector, who never set foot on Continental Europe, in formulating and pursuing a formidable foreign policy. Here the geographic spread of the volume falters. There is nothing on Eastern Europe and further east. Should there be?

‘Legacy’ is more specific in Patrick Little’s look into one ‘intended’: a continuing Protectorate in Cromwellian hands. But Providence abandoned Richard in 1659 to stony-faced Major-Generals and a mish-mash of good old and embryonic causes, with George Monck and his boys waiting in the wings. Bernard Capp, however, hits upon a genuine legacy – a multi-faith England as the Church of England, though re-Established, failed to enforce its monopoly.

Jane Mills is a self-effacing editor. The Introduction this eclectic volume calls for has been given to John Morrill, doyen of Cromwellian studies. It is,

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of course, an expert one but it cannot tell us what lay behind the editor's aspirations and her own assessment of what has been achieved. Morrill stresses the legacy of the power of Cromwell's words – speeches, conversations, letters, the occasional remarks – which, with a team of enthusiasts, he will bring together, evaluate in as definitive a text as may be, backed by a hitherto lacking critical apparatus, and, one suspects, hardly likely to clutter up a Kindle.

Half a century ago Christopher Hill – nothing by him appears in Jane Mills' 'Select Biography' – applauded Cromwell's ready quotability. He also, in *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, tackled its permanent legacy. The 'Some' was clearly much too much, but it was an initiative which no-one else it seems has taken on. There's an idea there, perhaps, to fire another Jane Mills.

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