

The Protector's Pen

Podcasting

A sword used by
Cromwell?

Cromwell Museum

The Van de Veldes –
eyewitness to battles

Cromwell's Quatercentenary
– 25 years on

Association News

AGM 2024

Cromwell Day 2023

Study Day

News & Events

In the press

Reviews

Vol 26 Issue 1 March 2024

ISSN 2635-0645



1666 AND



ALL THAT

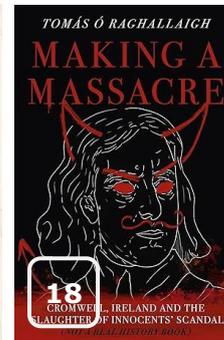
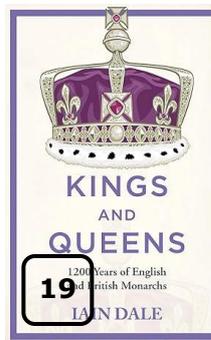
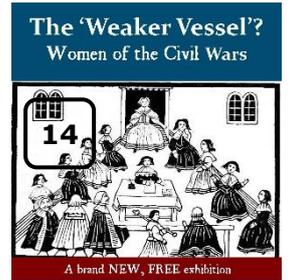
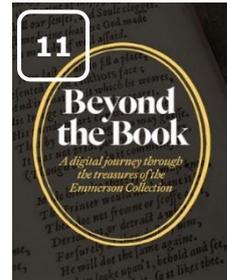
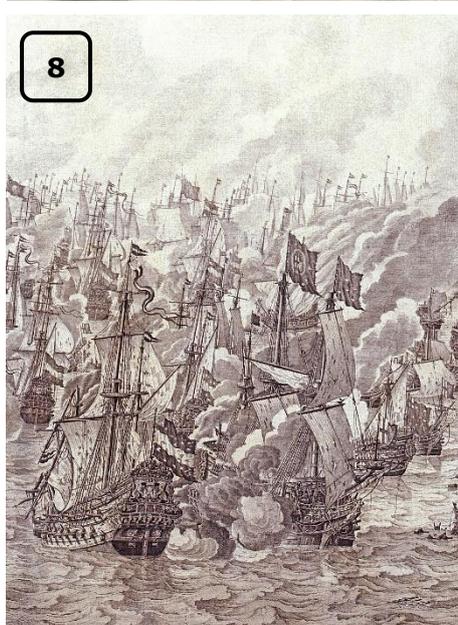
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ISSN 2635-0645



Miranda Malins and Paul Lay
1666 and all that podcast



The Protector's Pen is the newsletter of The Cromwell Association. Published twice a year and distributed to our membership, it is also available on our website in the members' area. If additional copies are required, to help promote the Association and our work, please contact our Chair.

The Association is governed by elected officers and Council members. For all matters relating to:

- subscriptions – contact our treasurer, Geoffrey Bush – finance@olivercromwell.org
- changes of address and email – contact our membership secretary, Paul Robbins – membership@olivercromwell.org
- all other matters – contact our chair, John Goldsmith – chair@olivercromwell.org

Full mailing addresses for these officers can also be found on your membership card.

President	:	Peter Gaunt	
Chair	:	John Goldsmith	www.olivercromwell.org
Treasurer	:	Geoffrey Bush	@Cromwellorg
Membership Secretary	:	Paul Robbins	

All opinions expressed in *The Protector's Pen* are the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Association. *The Protector's Pen* is produced twice a year (March and August) for the Cromwell Association and printed by Langham Press. All information is correct at the time of going to press.

Copy date for the next issue: **14th June 2024**

Notes from the Chair

Welcome to the spring edition of *The Protector's Pen*

It feels like we are coming to the end of an era. As you will see from the enclosed agenda for our Annual General Meeting, to be held in Cirencester on 27th April, Professor Peter Gaunt is standing down as president of the Association. For members who have joined in the last thirty-seven years, and that surely must be most of us, Peter is synonymous with our organisation. As chairman, and then president, he has been a constant presence at all our events since 1987. AGMs, Cromwell Day services, and study days, often chairing, speaking, organising, as well as editing *Cromwelliana* for many years. Behind the scenes the number of Council meetings he has missed can be counted on the fingers of one hand. His involvement spans almost half of the Association's life, and more than half of his own.

His involvement with the Association began with his being commissioned to write *The Cromwellian Gazetteer*, a project to mark our 50th anniversary, the result being significantly more substantial than was initially envisaged. Its success led to the proposal, in the spring of 1987, that Peter be invited to join the Council. By the summer he was at his first meeting, and by the following year he was taking the Chair. When he joined Council there were still some vestiges of the organisation created by Isaac Foot, and others, in 1937. The Association has moved forwards and developed on Peter's watch. For that we all owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. Thank you, Peter.

Peter is very keen to stress that he will maintain his links and connections with the Association, and although stepping back, he will not be stepping down completely. We look forward to seeing him at many events in the future.

You will have noticed that the cover of this issue is a bit different from our previous ones, with an image of Miranda Malins and Paul Lay in the studio, recording another excellent edition of their podcast, *1666 And All That*, which Miranda explains more about in her article (see page 7). The way in which ideas and information are communicated have changed radically over the last few years. The development of podcasting has been truly phenomenal, and in truth it is a medium that I have not properly explored myself and have only dipped my toes (ears?) into the water with *1666 And All That*. I was astonished to read that the company behind *The rest is ... suite* of podcasts, which includes both *politics* and *history* have registered over 236 million downloads, and the presenters of *The rest is politics*, Rory Stewart and Alistair Campbell, have sold out the Albert Hall. It is good to know that historians with a positive take on Cromwell are in the game, even if not (yet) at the Albert Hall.

I hope that you enjoy reading this edition of *The Protector's Pen*; and do not forget we are always interested to receive ideas for articles.

John Goldsmith

Chair
chair@olivercromwell.org



25 episodes

From the Gunpowder Plot to the killing of a king, from Cromwell and the Civil Wars to the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution. Hosts Miranda Malins and Paul Lay combine historical rigour, entertaining storytelling and revealing guest interviews to draw this vibrant period out of the shadows.

If you have an email address, but haven't already given it to us, please can you send your address to membership@olivercromwell.org to enable us to keep in touch with you. Thank you.

News from Council

The council has met twice since the last issue of *The Protector's Pen*, in October and January. The attendance level has been very high, and both meetings were productive.

- Thank you to those members outside the UK who responded to the question posed about digital membership. Digital membership will be offered to non-UK members from 3rd September 2024. Whether this is extended to the UK membership is a question for the future, but views are always welcome.
- The Association has offered a grant of £500 to Hursley Church for the repair and conservation of the Cromwell family memorial. Currently the church is deciding on the preferred contractor for the repair and awaiting an estimate of the full cost of the conservation work necessary. Our grant will not go very far but hopefully has helped to encourage the work to be initiated. When the full costs are known, an appeal will be launched and our membership will be advised of this.
- Long-standing vice-president Blair Worden has decided to step down from the role. Council is very grateful for the support Professor Worden has given to the Association, extending back to 1972 when he gave the Cromwell Day address which was published in the 1973 edition of our journal, available on our website. We hope that we may see him at many Association events in the future.
- The annual Cromwell Day service will be held this year on Saturday 7th September. As yet the venue is uncertain, and Council has had a lengthy discussion about the future of the service, but be assured that there will be one this year. Views of the membership on the subject are welcome and may be canvassed before the AGM where it will also be a subject for discussion.
- Our long-standing treasurer, Geoffrey Bush, has decided to step down from the post, but to date we have not found a successor. If you think that you might be interested, or you know of someone who might be, please do get in touch for a discussion about what the role entails.

Council meets again before Easter when decisions will be made about our Cromwell Day service. If you have any issues you would like to raise, please contact either the Secretary or the Chair; all details are on your membership card.

Contact chair@olivercromwell.org or write to:

John Goldsmith
 25 Fox's Way
 Comberton
 Cambridge
 CB23 7DL

Association News

Cirencester AGM 2024 Saturday 27th April



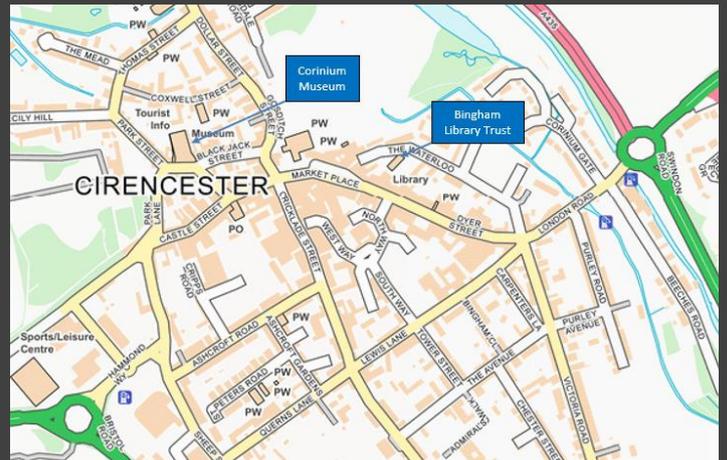
The AGM is one of the fixed points in the Association's year, and by the terms of our constitution is usually held as near as possible to 25th April, Cromwell's birthday. It is an opportunity to find out more about what the Association has planned, make your views known to the Council (Trustees) and meet with fellow members.

This year we are meeting in the attractive surroundings of the Corinium Museum in Cirencester, and full details are enclosed with the papers in this mailing. The AGM this year will be notable for holding elections to officer posts and for ordinary members of Council. The current Council has proposed candidates for all vacancies, but if you are interested in stepping forward to get involved, please do not be bashful.

After the formal business meeting there will be an open lecture by independent scholar, Nick Poyntz, entitled: *Lord Chandos's coach: Cirencester and the outbreak of the English Civil Wars.*

This will be followed by a buffet lunch and the opportunity to join a walking tour of civil war Cirencester. It is essential that places for the lunch and walking tour are booked (and paid for) in advance. There is of course no charge for attending the AGM, and no need to advise of your attendance, though it is helpful for planning to know if you intend to come but will not be staying for lunch or the walk. In addition, the museum, which houses many spectacular treasures from Roman Cirencester as well as smaller local history displays (including a section on the Civil War in the town), will be open and free to all AGM participants.

We very much look forward to meeting both old and new members in Cirencester.



The Bingham Library Trust has a large archive of art and photos of Cirencester, including John Beecham's painting *The Attack on Lord Chandos' Coach*, which is on display. Regrettably we are unable to reproduce this as we have been unable to obtain copyright permission in time for publication.

Timetable

- 10:30 : Coffee and registration
- 11:00 : AGM
- 12:00 : Open lecture *Lord Chandos's coach: Cirencester and the outbreak of the English Civil Wars* by Nick Poyntz
- 13:00 : Buffet lunch (booking required)
- 14:00 : Walking tour of civil war Cirencester (booking required)

Further information

The Bingham Library Trust
1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, GL7 2PP

<https://www.binghamlibrarytrust.org.uk/>



Sadly missed

We have received notice of the deaths of the following members during the last two years:

W.C. Bull, J.K. Evers, Rev. John Guise, John Bromilow, David Cozens, Vic Jackson, Julian Maskill, Geoff Oliver, George Pickering, David Steeds, Geoffrey Woollard* and Roy Sherwood* (obituary to follow in *Cromwelliana* 2024)

* Previously served on the Council of the Association

Cromwell Day 2023

Saturday 2nd September

Yet again it proved impossible to hold our annual service of commemoration for Oliver Cromwell at Westminster. The alternative venue selected for 2023 was Worcester, a place that is proud of its civil war connections, and of course the place where the last battle of the war was fought. As Cromwell Day, 3rd September, fell on a Sunday, the service took place on Saturday 2nd September.



A small group enjoyed the treasures of the cathedral library

A morning visit was organised to the Cathedral Library, where a selection of books and documents were on display for our benefit, arranged by the Librarian/Archivist, Dr David Morrison. As well as rare printed books, there was a range of manuscripts on show, including letters to and from Charles I. The library was moved to its present location above the south nave aisle in the 19th century. Rather than cut down the 18th century bookcases which housed the collection, the roof of the aisle was raised instead, such confidence, and no restrictions!

In the afternoon, by kind permission of the management, a wreath to commemorate



The Battle of Worcester Society was also marking the anniversary of the battle, and a Sealed Knot sentry was stationed at the Worcester Guildhall

Cromwell was laid by our president, Professor Peter Gaunt, in the Memorial Garden of The Commandery.

The service was held at 3.00pm at St Andrew's Methodist Church in the city centre and was conducted by the Rev. Dr Tim Woolley. The address, given by Dr Jonathan Fitzgibbons, was on the relationship between Cromwell and Bulstrode Whitelocke, the text of which will be published in the next edition of *Cromwelliana*. Following the service, tea was served in the church lounge.

Unfortunately, we were very few in number, in part probably due to industrial action on the railways on the day, but it does raise the question of whether or not the service should be continued in its present form. Unless we can be certain that we will have at least twenty-five members attending, the viability of future services is in question.

Cromwell Association Study Day 2024

Saturday 19th October, Friends Meeting House, Oxford

This year marks the 375th anniversary of the execution of Charles I, an event which continues to divide opinion and provides an endless topic for historians of the 17th century to debate.

Our Study Day is an opportunity for members to catch up on the latest research and interpretations of this key event. The full programme will be in the next edition of *The Protector's Pen*, and it will be promoted on our website from early July.

In the meantime, keep the date, Saturday 19th October clear. The event will be held in The Friends Meeting House in Oxford.

Celebration at Speaker's House

The Trustees of the History of Parliament celebrated the publication of *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1640–1660* in July 2023 in the State Rooms, Speaker's House at the House of Commons.

Mr Speaker, The Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, gave a speech on being presented with the nine-volume publication.



The editor of *The House of Commons 1640–1660*, and one of the Association's vice presidents, Stephen K Roberts, speaking at the celebration (image © Hari Ladwa)

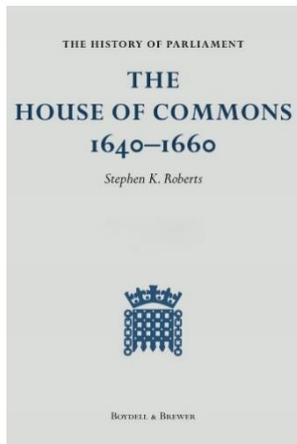
Cromwell Association Study Day 2023
Saturday 14th October, Huntingdon Library



**Parliament, politics and people:
the History of Parliament, House of Commons, 1640–1660**

Well over fifty Association members and others gathered in Huntingdon Library in mid-October for our 2023 study day, linked to the recent publication of *The History of Parliament volumes on members of the House of Commons of the various parliaments of 1640 to 1660*.

In welcoming those attending and introducing the volumes and the day, a trio of speakers – Peter Gaunt (the Association’s president), Jonathan Djanogly (MP for Huntingdon and trustee of *The History of Parliament Trust*) and Paul Seaward (Director of the Trust) – outlined the nature of the project and the resulting published volumes. The fruit of over a quarter of a century’s work by a small team of researchers, the nine volumes (a set of which was on display and available for inspection in the meeting room) are in the main given over to newly-researched biographies of all the MPs who sat in the parliaments of the 1640s and 1650s – well over 1800 men in total, representing over 320 English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish constituencies. The volumes provide a wealth of fascinating and extremely valuable new information about, and fresh insights into, the personnel and, more broadly, the nature and operation of these parliaments.



The introductory speakers also drew attention to other information found in the volumes, especially in the first volume, prepared by Stephen Roberts (a vice-president of the Association) as general editor, which sets out a new narrative of the parliaments, explores constituencies and elections, draws out salient features of the MPs of 1640–60 as a body, examines the organisation and business of the House and the role of committees and so on. As well as providing an historical outline of the development of *The History of Parliament* and its operation, Paul stressed that work on this section had been enhanced and deepened by the recent burgeoning of resources and source material available online, such that the 1640–60 volumes are probably richer than those on other periods researched, written and published over the past few decades.

Our four principal speakers – all of whom had contributed to the new volumes as assistant editor or senior research fellow – proceeded to explore some of the insights which their work has uncovered. The two talks before lunch explored what we might learn about these MPs as a group or groups. Vivienne Larminie expanded upon some of their characteristics, including education, business and property interests, local connections and so on, exploring – both cumulatively and then via a clutch of individual case studies – how those features may have guided their approach when they took their seats and shaped their political outlooks in these parliaments.

Nathaniel Fiennes I (c.1609-1669) of Broughton Castle, Oxon., Bromby, Lincs. and later, Newton Tony, Wilts.
MP for Banbury, 1640 April and Nov.; Oxfordshire, 1654; Oxford University, 1656



- Winchester 1623
- New College, Oxford 1624
- Leiden 1629
- Franeker 1630, under William Ames
- Basel, Padua 1633
- Back in England by Aug. 1636
- ?Abroad again 1644-5

Slide from Vivienne Larminie’s presentation

David Scott made a case for the 1640s being the first age of (political and parliamentary) party, seeing the divisions in the Commons of the Long Parliament, between the war and peace parties, and the Independents and Presbyterians, as well as the manner in which those divisions played out more widely in society, institutions and mentalities – many of the features associated with what is traditionally seen as the first age of party: the conflict between Whigs and Tories at the time of the Exclusion Crisis and the so-called ‘rage of party’ of the late seventeenth century.

After an excellent lunch, two further talks focused more tightly on individuals who served as MPs at this time. Patrick Little (another of our vice-presidents) reassessed the parliamentary careers and political outlooks of Oliver Cromwell’s brother-in-law John Disbrowe, and his son-in-law Charles Fleetwood, finding in their sometimes critical attitudes towards the Protectoral policies of Oliver the antecedents of their opposition to Protector Richard Cromwell in spring 1659 and the roots of their actions then in removing both Protector and Protectorate. Finally, Andrew Barclay sought to shift attention away from Oliver Cromwell as MP for Cambridge from 1640 until 1653 and on to some of his friends, allies, rivals and enemies who sat for Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire constituencies during these parliaments, revealing how new research has shed much fresh light on Oliver’s contemporaries active as MPs in his home patch.

The day ended with questions and comments from the floor, which led to further lively discussion on a wide range of topics, some of which – despite all the new insights provided by the volumes – remain problematic or uncertain, the speakers suggested. Everyone who indicated they wished to ask a question had a chance to do so, before the chair of the day closed proceedings by warmly thanking the speakers, the organisers, the venue, and the audience and by wishing everyone a safe journey home.

Peter Gaunt

Podcasting: the new medium for historians

In recent years, a new accessory has become de rigueur for the historian about town: a podcast. Historians, ever alive to societal shifts, have spotted that while print journalism may be waning, podcasts are booming. They are the 1640s pamphlets of our day when many people wish to consume content aurally, plugged in as they go about their daily lives.

Within the podcasting world, history podcasts are huge. There are hundreds, probably thousands, to choose from on every topic imaginable and the big beasts – such as *The Rest is History* with historians Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook – pull in millions of listeners around the world.

In many ways history and podcasting are a perfect match. Podcasts suit long-form conversation and historians of course love to talk. This is something the public appears to relish, no doubt as a corrective to the soundbite culture of social media. Without the time constraints of traditional broadcasting, podcasts can be as long or short as suits the subject; deep-dives into narrow topics work particularly well. Without the need for visual content, podcasts can be made cheaply and easily. And with no formal barriers to entry, anyone who has something to say has a means to say it.

Historians always hunger for wider audiences, especially new recruits to win to their particular historical cause. Podcasts offer a way to reach beyond the classroom, lecture hall or conference room straight into the homes of ordinary people. Linking academic experts directly to the public provides the kind of historical communication not seen since the days of A.J.P. Taylor. Podcasting truly is the new frontier in public history.

It was because we were convinced of this – and not simply because we follow fashion – that historian Paul Lay and I began our podcast on seventeenth century history, *1666 And All That*, in 2022. At first we recorded remotely over dodgy Wi-Fi, interrupted by children and pets. Now we record in a London

studio which is much better and allows for the crucial strategy meeting with our producer over a drink afterwards.

Our aim is to showcase this most dramatic yet often unsung century, exploring it from every angle both in Britain and globally, and telling its stories warts and all. We delight in informing and entertaining Early Modern enthusiasts but even more so in bringing new audiences to this most brilliant period of history. Move over the Tudors!



Miranda Malins and Paul Lay in the studio creating 1666 And All That

Over the last fifteen months we have interviewed some fantastic authors and historians, from Robert Harris to Jessie Childs, on topics ranging from James I to Robinson Crusoe, from Hampton Court to Mughal India, from Civil War London to beard fashions. Oliver Cromwell is of course central to proceedings – a ‘friend of the show’ as we like to style him – and we have already explored his family, his relationship with the Levellers, investiture as Lord Protector, his readmission of the Jews, and the new edition of his letters and speeches, with many more topics planned.

The experience of hosting *1666 And All That* has convinced me of the power and potential of podcasting. The medium enables us to have the perfect kinds of historical conversations: scholarly but accessible, specific and wide-ranging, researched yet spontaneous. Sometimes these are on subjects we know intimately, sometimes on those we know much less about – we are learning a huge amount too which is part of the joy.

I have also learned much from appearing as a guest on many other podcasts, from Suzannah Lipscomb’s *Not Just The Tudors* to the wonderfully irreverent *History Hack*. The best podcasts have a particular angle on the past, an easy style and an eye for detail. *History Rage*, which encourages historians to rail against the historical myths that enrage them, allowed me to spend a whole episode explaining that Cromwell didn’t cancel Christmas and I even got the slogan printed on a novelty mug which I gave all my friends and family for Christmas!

If you’re not already exploring Cromwell and the Civil Wars through podcasts, I urge you to give it a go. You can enjoy Civil War content in *Cavalier Cast* hosted by author Mark Turnbull, *The World Turned Upside Down* produced by the team behind the Civil War Petitions Project, and *The Early Stuart England Podcast* with Canadian academic Greg Koabel, among others. And do of course join Paul and I in *1666 And All That* – we’d love to have you!

Dr Miranda Malins

Find us at <https://www.podpage.com/1666-and-all-that/>



25 episodes

From the Gunpowder Plot to the killing of a king, from Cromwell and the Civil Wars to the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution. Hosts Miranda Malins and Paul Lay combine historical rigour, entertaining storytelling and revealing guest interviews to draw this vibrant period out of the shadows.

The Van de Veldes: eyewitness to battles



The Battle of Dungeness, 30 November 1652, (National Maritime Museum, Amsterdam (Het Scheepvaartmuseum), on permanent loan from the Stichting Vaderlandsch Fonds ter Aanmoediging van's Lands Zeedienst, inv. 1990.0949).

The military history of the years between 1640 and 1660 inevitably concentrate on the British Civil Wars, the wars in which Cromwell rose to prominence. Despite in-depth knowledge of the battles, major and minor, the disposition of the armies in the field, the colours carried, and the armaments used, it is unfortunately true that there are no accurate contemporary images of any of them. Every civil war battle scene depicted is an imaginative reconstruction, occasionally based on evidence of what happened but never by an artist who was in the field or who had direct experience of what a mid-seventeenth century battle was like. The same is not true for naval warfare.

The history of naval conflict during the civil wars has recently come to the fore with the publication *The British Civil Wars at Sea, 1638–1653* by Blakemore and Murphy (2018), reviewed in *Cromwelliana* in 2019. It makes the case that naval activity was significant although there was only one major battle between the Royalist and Commonwealth fleets, when Robert Blake defeated Prince Rupert's command at Malaga on 3rd November 1650. Although no image of that battle exists, there was a contemporary image made in 1648 of the Royalist and Parliamentary fleets at Hellevoetsluis in 1648.

The identification of the subject as *The Battle of Dungeness* is Robinson's, though it is exhibited in Amsterdam as *The Battle of the Gabbard*, which took place the following June.

The Battle of Dungeness took place off the coast of Kent and was the fourth major engagement of the First Anglo-Dutch war. The Dutch had been defeated by the English in early October 1652 at the Battle of the Kentish Knock. The English underestimated the Dutch navy's powers of recovery and a depleted field of 42 ships, commanded by Blake, were 'badly mauled' by a fleet under Tromp's command. Robinson's catalogue entry (413) runs to well over two thousand words and describes in detail the arrangement of the ships, and details of many of them:

'In general, the English ships are shown, starboard bow view, close-hauled on the starboard tack and the Dutch are port quarter view, close-hauled on the port tack ... The sun and light to moderate breeze are both from the left of the picture'.

In the bottom right corner a barrel is bobbing in the waves with the artist's name and initials, WVVelde 1654.

The artist was Willem Van de Velde the Elder (1611–1693) and the work is listed by him in 1677 as *The Kings Shippes lying before Helvoet Sluys under ye command of P.Rupert & ye Parliament shippes under ye E of Warwicke, and ye Dutch shippes under Tromp lying between them*. Although the work was listed, it hasn't survived and none of Van de Velde's drawings can obviously be identified as being preparatory for that work.

Recently the subject of an exhibition at the National Maritime Museum (NMM) in Greenwich, *The Van de Veldes: Greenwich, Art and the Sea*, Van de Velde and his son Willem (1633–1707) were hugely important and prolific artists who specialised in marine subjects. A younger son, Adriaan, (1636–1672), was better known as a landscape painter. Willem the Elder was born in 1611 in Leiden, five years after Rembrandt was born in the same city. He moved with his young family to Amsterdam in the mid-1630s and started to build a reputation as a marine artist, though he would most likely have been described as a *shipsdraughtsman*. By the outbreak of the First Anglo-Dutch War in 1652, a conflict which was a consequence of the Commonwealth passing the Navigation Act in October 1651, Willem the Elder was employed in a semi-official capacity by the Dutch fleet.

He was both prolific and accurate in his work, which is estimated, with that of Willem the Younger, to total well over 3,000 pieces, with over 800 paintings and 2,500 drawings. Of these, nearly 70 represent battle scenes, including three from the First Anglo-Dutch War: Dungeness in December 1652, Leghorn in March 1653, and Scheveningen in August 1653. By the time he produced his last painting of a naval battle, that of the Battle of Schoonveld in 1673, his allegiance had switched and he was working in England for Charles II.

The battle scenes rendered in black and white are termed *grisailles* and enable a huge amount of detail to be shown. They were created by building up layers of ground on carefully selected oak panels, which were then allowed to dry over a long period, before the surface was hard enough to take inks, grey washes and varnishes. There are also scenes in oils, worked up from Willem the Elder's sketches, and signed W.V.Velde, but most probably by Willem the Younger, who is held in higher regard than his father by art historians. (cont'd)



The most prominent ship, in the centre of the main image, with her stern facing the viewer is the Dutch ship, the *Kampen* with some damage to her foremasts. The English flagship, the *Triumph* commanded by Blake, is to the right of her and is displaying the flag of the Commonwealth. Robinson suggests, from a detail on the *Kampen's* stern, that the ship was commanded by Joris van der Zaan, and this is consistent with an inscription on the back of the painting that it was a gift from the Admiralty to Joris's brother, Willem.



In the bottom left of the main image, a small English ship is sinking, with sailors jumping from the stern into the sea, and an English ketch to her left is picking up survivors. By the time Van de Velde painted this picture he had been present at a battle and seen men drowning as their ships sank.

The first battle that Van de Velde (the Elder) saw for himself was Scheveningen 8–10 August 1653 which was the concluding battle of the First Anglo-Dutch War. It was one which both sides claimed as a victory; for the Dutch it was a success as it broke the English blockade of the Dutch coast, and for the English because the Dutch fleet was badly damaged, and Admiral Tromp was killed by a sniper's bullet. The peace negotiations which followed were concluded by Cromwell by the Treaty of Westminster in 1654.

Van de Velde made sketches during the battle from his small boat, and in the two resulting grisailles, one in the NMM and one in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, he depicts himself sitting on deck with his sketchbook on his knee. On his return he also wrote an account of the battle. He knew from first-hand experience what it was like to be in the middle of a battle, and so his pictures of Scheveningen and those that he reconstructed from others' information have the authenticity of a war reporter's account.

Both the Elder and Younger Willem Van de Velde, and Adriaan, were at Scheveningen in 1660 to see the departure of Charles Stuart to take the restored crown. The scene was depicted, in detail, in a painting now in the Wallace Collection. Although the Van de Veldes continued to work in Amsterdam throughout the 1660s, it is possible that they carried out a commission for Charles II and the Duke of York in 1666, even though the English and Dutch were at war again.

The senior Van de Velde was eyewitness to further battles in both the Second and Third Dutch Wars. He was present at the major engagements of the Battle of Lowestoft in June 1665, the Four Days' Battle the following June, and the Battle of Solebay in May 1672, when he sailed with De Ruyter's fleet.

By the end of 1672, with Holland collapsing under attack from the French, the Van de Veldes left Holland for England where they found safety under the patronage of Charles II. The sketches made at Solebay provided the basis for the magnificent tapestries, commissioned by the king, which now hang in the Queen's House at Greenwich, where the Van de Veldes were allocated space for a working studio. Both Willems continued to work in England until the end of their lives, the Elder dying in 1693, and the Younger in 1707.

John Goldsmith

For further information

M.S. Robinson *The paintings of the Willem Van de Veldes*, 2 vols. NMM and Sothebys, London 1990. This is a catalogue of the paintings of the Elder and Younger Willem Van de Velde. Robinson was Keeper of Pictures at the NMM, and his work is the main source of information for this article.

Tour William van de Velde, National Maritime Museum, Amsterdam by Jeroen van der Vliet. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1eQ3dTp9ag>

A Sea of Drawings, NMM; series of small videos about different aspects of the Van de Veldes. <https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/sea-of-drawings-van-de-veldes?wchannelid=9q44d4b59s>

Uses and Abuses

Over the years many examples of the use of Cromwell's name, often in the most peculiar situations, have come to our attention. Aldi's Cromwell gin became well known, and indeed loved; there was a Cromwell guitar made by the famous Gibson company in the 1930s; railway engines and naval vessels bore the name, as well as companies local to places connected to Cromwell. The list could go on and on, but it's always fun to add to it. So in this issue we introduce a new feature, *Uses and Abuses*, and we invite you to send in examples you have found that amuse you; even better if you can include an image or photo!



To kick off: in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire I recently came across *Cromwell's Antique Centre*. It comprised a couple of floors of attractive antiques, ceramics, and jewellery, but why *Cromwell's*? Oliver Cromwell may well have passed through the town but there is no obvious reason why anything should be named after him in the town. So, I asked a member of staff, and the answer was quite prosaic. The dealer, who set up the business, had bought an ex-*Madame Tussauds* figure of Oliver Cromwell and didn't know what to do with it, so positioned it in the entrance of the store and decided to name the antiques centre accordingly. As good a reason as any.

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum have been in touch to advise that a talk by Professor Andrew Hopper, on the **Civil War petitions project** – *The Civil Wars in Oxfordshire: Human Costs and Consequences* – is now available to view online, together with the Q&A that followed.



Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum



<https://www.sof.org.uk/whats-on/civilwarsinixon/>

The Emmerson Collection, State Library of Victoria, Australia

Australian member, Noel Turnbull, has drawn our attention to an attractive website that presents the collection of early modern literature bequeathed to the State Library of Victoria by John McLaren Emmerson (1938–2014). Emmerson was a physicist who retrained as a lawyer, and who was fascinated by the literature of the civil wars, and their aftermath. The collection of rare books includes more than 5,000 items bound in 3,500 volumes. One of the world's largest collections of rare British printed works, it features books and pamphlets from the 15th to 18th centuries, mostly produced in England. The collection has a particular emphasis on the reign of King Charles I and the English Civil War, fought during the 1640s. The only comparable collections belong to the British Library and Oxford's Bodleian Library. His collection is beautifully presented on the site <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/search-discover/explore-collections-theme/history-book/emmerson-collection> and shown through seven stories that feature books from the collection in exquisite detail.

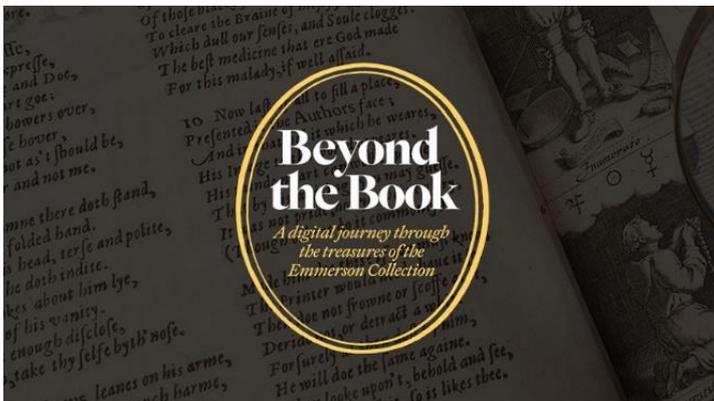
The John Emmerson Collection



Items from the John Emmerson Collection, State Library Victoria. Photo: Christian Capurro 2023

Emmerson was a bibliophile and his collection was built up over the years from studying in Oxford, until his death. He also published at least two papers about aspects of 17th century book collecting.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_QsEDI2Wnw



Cromwell's dressing gown?

Apparel that can be linked with certainty to Oliver Cromwell is, sadly, non-existent, but there are items that have been claimed to have been owned and worn by him. There is a splendid pair of slippers in the collection at Chequers, a large hat in the collection of the Cromwell Museum, and a set of christening robes that have been exhibited from time to time, and there are undoubtedly others. To this random collection of clothing can be added another fragment of a garment that claims to be associated with the Lord Protector.

From late September 2023 to the end of the year, the Guildhall Art Gallery in the City of London mounted an exhibition *Treasures of Gold and Silver Wire* to mark the 400th anniversary of the Worshipful Company of Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers, one of the long-established City livery companies. It was an extraordinary assemblage of examples of gold and silver wirework from royalty, military, ecclesiastical and civil sources, along with contemporary examples of the craft.

For 17th century enthusiasts the highlight was probably the Purse of the Great Seal of Charles II, unless of course they happened to spot an insignificant frame containing what claims to be a piece of Oliver Cromwell's dressing gown. It is a piece of what appears to be black cotton with a repeating motif of a leaf picked out in silver thread, with two leaves showing. There is a paper label in the frame which asserts 'Piece of Oliver Cromwell's dressing gown'.



The frame was donated to the Company some years ago, and nothing yet has been discovered of its provenance. It has been suggested that the fabric may be Indian, in which case a 17th century date for its appearance in this country would be very early.

But is it plausible that this is a piece of Cromwell's dressing gown? It was pretty chilly in the mid-17th century and the idea of the Lord Protector wafting about as a precursor of Noel Coward in a flimsy gown seems unlikely to me, but then who can tell!

John Goldsmith

Cromwell's Quatercentenary: 25 years on

Can it really be a quarter of a century since the 400th anniversary of Cromwell's birth - his quatercentenary? It hardly seems possible, but the calendar tells otherwise.

At the time I was responsible for the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon which itself had been created because of the tercentenary of Cromwell's death in 1958, so the 400th anniversary of his birth was always something that was going to be marked. Researching what had happened in 1899 led me to the conclusion that it was an anniversary that required more than local celebrations.

The museum though did not have the resources to organise a national event, or more correctly a series of events to run over the course of an entire year. We barely had the resources to run local events! The obvious solution was to try and foster collaboration between all interested, or potentially interested, partners and as collaboration implied getting others to pay for it, my masters were quite content for this path to be explored.



The launch of the quatercentenary leaflet at Westminster, December 1998. I-r, Lord Renton, former MP for Huntingdon, Anne Campbell, then MP for Cambridge, Geoffrey Bush, descendant of Cromwell and long-serving Council member of the Association

With support from the museum's management committee, especially from the Cromwell Association's representative on it at the time, Professor John Morrill, it was agreed that the water should be tested by sending out invitations to an exploratory meeting which was held in January 1997. We had given ourselves a reasonable lead time, and if

nothing else it reminded a range of organisations that the quatercentenary was approaching. It was also the first time that I had worked closely with the Association and the links between the Association and the museum were reinvigorated.

The initial meeting was a success, and a strategy developed that each organisation would mark the year in whatever way was feasible, and the Quatercentenary Committee (as it then became), chaired by John Morrill, would coordinate and promote all the activities jointly.

Organisations that participated, with events and exhibitions of their own, included the Museum of London, the National Army Museum, The Commandery in Worcester, and Sutton House in Hackney; various English Heritage properties joined in too. The Cromwell Museum produced its own series of exhibitions throughout the year and in Cambridge, at both Sidney Sussex and the University Library, special displays were mounted.

The two key outcomes for the committee were a national leaflet which listed as many events and places to visit as could be persuaded to contribute, and a website, which was jointly run by the Cromwell Museum and the Association. For those feeling peculiarly nostalgic, amazingly, the site is still available to browse as it remains part of Cambridge University Library's archive, see:

<https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/CUL/exhibitions/Cromwell/index.htm> .

It was the first website that the Association published, and our current website still shows some of the original skeleton in its structure.

The leaflet was a massive undertaking, the scale of which was brought home to me when I received the balance of the print run, which I think was 200,000, back at Huntingdon Library where I was based. There were an awful lot of boxes! The leaflet was launched at Westminster at a reception at the Speaker's House in early December 1998.

In Huntingdon the District Council, which at the time employed a highly effective Arts Officer, Viv Peters, organised a 17th century market and street festival, along with a birthday party for Oliver Cromwell which took place over the weekend of 24–26th April. Thankfully, the weather was kind, and it was judged to be a huge success. The Association was heavily involved, with public lectures by Peter Gaunt and John Morrill, and a memorable address by



The audience for the open lecture by Frank Dobson following the Association's AGM, 25th April 1999.

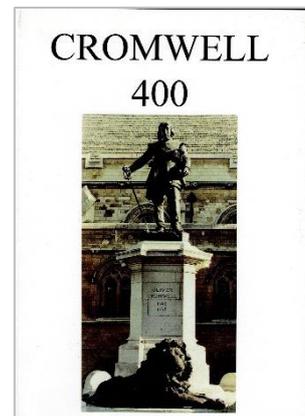
the late Frank Dobson MP as part of our AGM in the Commemoration Hall. The museum was also absurdly busy with queues to get in.

Although the quatercentenary never achieved the profile of the tercentenary, views about and attitudes to Cromwell were significantly different in 1999 compared to 1899. While I doubt that any readers of this article will be around to see if anything is marked in 2099, I hope that many of you, and the Association, will see the quatercentenary of Cromwell's death. Only another thirty-four years to wait.



A very busy weekend at the Cromwell Museum

John Goldsmith



Published by The Cromwell Association

'A sword used by Cromwell?': an assessment of a mid-17th century rapier in the collection of the Preston Park Museum, Stockton-on-Tees



This article is the result of a documentation review (started in 2017) of the arms and armour collections at Preston Park Museum, Stockton-on-Tees. The majority of the weapons in the collection date from the period c.1550–1660 and were collected as part of the Spence bequest, presented to Stockton Corporation in 1925. Amongst the many edged weapons that were purchased by Lieutenant-Colonel Gilbert Ormerod Spence (1879–1925) in the early 20th century, is a rapier, described in Spence's ledgers as 'a sword used by Cromwell', once owned by the Humby family of Dorset.



Rapier, c.1630–50 detail of hilt.
(Preston Park Museum,
Borough of Stockton-on-Tees)

There are many items in both public and private collections that are claimed to have connections with famous individuals or events, either verifiable or bogus, and have been the subject of much public debate and scholarly writings. The higher profile the person, the more likely they are to have a considerable number of these 'relics', and Oliver Cromwell is no exception. In his article, *Some swords associated with Oliver Cromwell*, Park Lane Arms Fair, (1995), Claude Blair discusses a number of weapons that have been considered to have associations with the Lord Protector. Blair emphasises the point that few of these weapons have any known history before the late 18th to early

19th centuries and fewer have any direct associations with the Protector. It is worth noting that, aside from a ceremonial sword, all weapons currently associated with Cromwell appear to be mortuary hilted backwords or broadswords, rather than rapiers. This rapier was not included in Blair's article.

Spence recorded the details and provenance of his collection in various ledgers, day books and photograph albums. This rapier was purchased for five pounds in July 1912, through a dealer from a sale at Knaresborough.

The rapier is recorded in a sale of the contents of the Old Manor House of Bichell, Knaresborough in 1912, as: 'a sword used by Cromwell and preserved in the family of Major Humby, of Farnham, Dorset, was sold for £2 2s. 6d'.

The Southampton estate of the last Humby owner of this weapon, Major Samuel Humby (1821–1903), was sold at auction but it is not known how this rapier ended up in the collection of the Old Manor House – a house supposedly with Cromwell associations.

The continuity of ownership in the Humby family is also uncertain. The family can be traced back to the mid-17th century, and were significant land holders with estates in Dorset and Wiltshire, from as far back as the 16th century. They were declared Protestants in the Protestation documentation from the 16th and 17th centuries. The family does not seem to have been militarily active and its allegiances and activities during the time of the British Civil Wars are unknown. Family members do not appear in lists of known parliamentarian officers or soldiers.

Major Samuel Humby's ancestry can be traced back to Broadchalk, Dorset, and later to Downton, Wiltshire. Although the family's military activity during the Civil War is not known, their wealth and likely associated social standing could have brought them into contact with people of influence and perhaps even Cromwell himself. The *Cromwellian Gazetteer* lists places in Dorset and Wiltshire associated

with Cromwell's southern campaign in 1645, especially Salisbury and Shaftesbury, close to Broadchalk, and in 1649–50 Cromwell travelled through Wiltshire on his way to and from Ireland.

In 2018 the rapier was re-catalogued following conventions used in a number of well-known published sources as a guide. The straight, doubled-edged, diamond-sectioned blade is mounted in rapier hilt (Norman type, 'Hilt 91'), probably English, dating from about 1630–1650. There are no identifying maker's marks on either the blade or the hilt.

The conclusion is that although this rapier is of the right period for it to have been used, either as a civilian or military weapon, during the Cromwellian period, any direct association, use and presentation to the Humby's by the Protector is circumstantial and must be treated with suspicion. This is the only known surviving rapier with supposed associations with Oliver Cromwell. Most surviving weapons with similarly unprovable associations with the Protector are broad and backwords, with basket hilted mortuary-type hilts, which, if Cromwell's, would seem to have been his weapon of choice. Generally, there is insufficient evidence to associate this rapier with Cromwell, further emphasising the general rule that association of objects with historic persons should be treated with extreme caution and scepticism if not supported with strong documentary evidence.

Phil Philo

Further reading

Blackmore, David (1990) *Arms and Armour of the English Civil Wars*.

Mowbray, Stuart C (2013) *British Military Swords, Volume 1: 1600 to 1660. The English Civil Wars and the Birth of the British Standing Army*.

Norman, A.V.B. (1980) *The Rapier and Smallsword, 1460–1820*.

The full article by Phil Philo and Christopher Young was published in *The Journal of the Arms and Armour Society, Vol XXIV, No 3, March 2023*.

Cromwell Curator's Corner

As you'll have seen elsewhere in this issue, it's 25 years since there were major commemorative events in Huntingdon for the 400th anniversary of Cromwell's birth. We're hoping that this year we can bring you some exciting news that will help commemorate 'Old Noll's' 425th birthday too, hence the slightly extended nature of my ramblings for this edition.

In terms of concrete activities that are taking place over the next few months, hopefully you'll have the opportunity to come and see our current exhibit *The Weaker Vessel? Women of the Civil War* which runs until 7th April. The exhibit looks at the roles that women played during the tumultuous period of the Civil Wars and Republic, as pamphleteers, businesswomen, preachers and even soldiers. It of course includes elements relating to the women of the Cromwell family, propelled from a Huntingdonshire market town to being elevated as the 'first family' of the nation. We are very grateful to the support of several people who have helped with this display, including our friends at the National Civil War Centre and the Norris Museum in St Ives, who have provided loans of items for display.

**The 'Weaker Vessel'?
Women of the Civil Wars**

A brand NEW, FREE exhibition

Our main summer exhibit ties in with the 425th anniversary of Cromwell's birth in Huntingdon. *Cromwell's Huntingdon* will look at what the town was like in the 1600s and try to provide a context for his early life, about which of course very little is known. We're grateful to Huntingdonshire Archives who are assisting with items for this display. We'll also be staging a series of events over the summer relating to this, including the launch of an updated version of the trail leaflet around the sites relating to Cromwell in the town, originally produced in 1999 and written with Professor John Morrill. There will also be a visit from some mounted Ironside cavalry back to the Market Square where their first troop was raised in 1642.

On top of all our usual activity, we're working on a potential project to expand the museum. Most of you will be aware of our wonderful historic building, the oldest in the town, which was once Huntingdon's grammar school that was attended by Cromwell. You'll also be aware that it has its limitations, in that it's rather smaller than we'd like for the story we tell, and the amazing collection we use to do that (less than 70 m² of space). It also has no toilets or space for the facilities that visitors now expect as standard from a museum visit. There has been talk for many years about a potential museum expansion, and it now finally looks like this is inching closer to a possibility.

In 2023 the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority earmarked £330,000 towards a potential expansion of the Cromwell Museum, a real vote of confidence in the work we have been doing to promote Cromwell's story and its significance, and our growing numbers of visitors. Working with Huntingdon Town Council, we have identified a property on the Market Square across the road from the



You can find more information on our exhibitions and events on our website at:

www.cromwellmuseum.org,

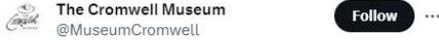
or via our social media:

@thecromwellmuseum

@thecromwellmuseum

@museumcromwell

www.youtube.com/c/CromwellMuseum



#OnThisDay (about) 1 February 1651, Oliver #Cromwell fell seriously ill, recovering in July. The illness was 'ague' - a form of malaria common in the (then undrained) Fens which he had bouts of throughout his life. We have his medical chest in our collection. #17thCentury #OTD



The Cromwell Museum @MuseumCromwell · Feb 6
#OnThisDay 6 February 1649, the House of Commons voted to abolish the House of Lords (funnily enough, they hadn't been getting on too well...) #17thCentury #OTD



existing building, which could be the focus for the main museum displays in the future, being substantially larger (350 m²) as well as having a garden. This would quadruple our permanent display space, as well as allow for a dedicated temporary exhibition gallery, a café, shop, toilets, a research room, onsite collections storage, and office space.

The existing museum building would be retained by us, interpreted as an historic building for visitors, and used as our education centre, for community events, and pop-up exhibits. We've done some visuals on what this might look like with our design company, and surveys are being conducted on the building.

There's a long way to go yet before we make a formal announcement that this is definitely going to go ahead, and even then we will have to raise some £3.5 million to achieve our vision, but I thought that at this stage it was important to share what we're thinking with Association members and give you an update.

As always, your support, enthusiasm and help are much appreciated, and I'll keep you posted over the coming months as we hopefully make progress!

Stuart Orme,
Curator, The Cromwell Museum

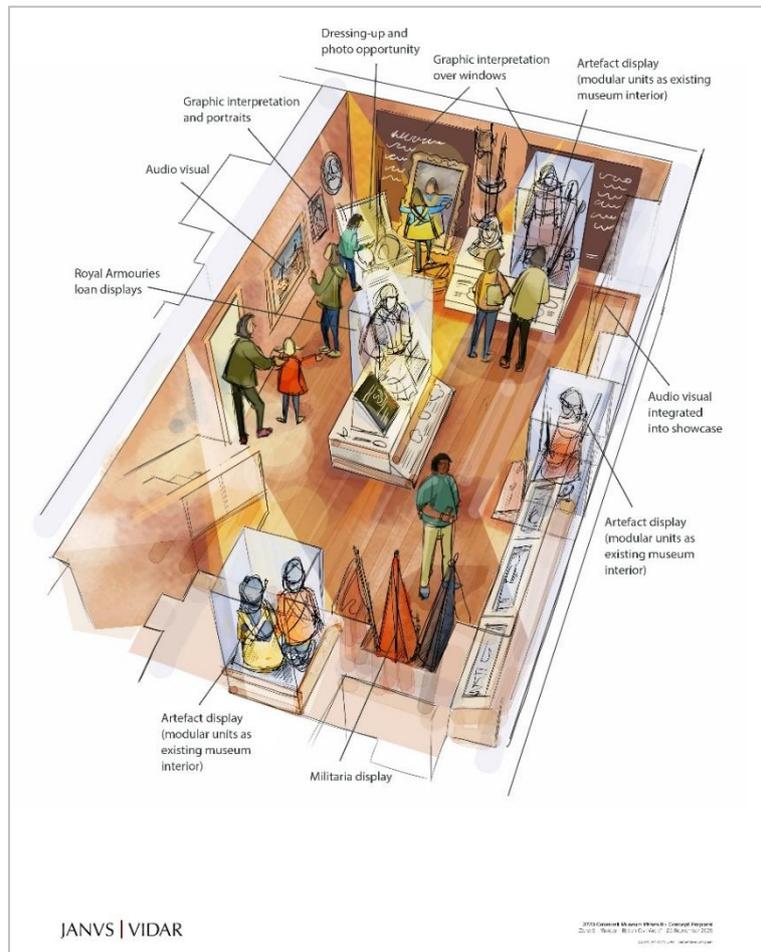


Cromwell proves top festive attraction as 'Christmas is cancelled' mugs sell out.

....Mr Orme added 'There is nothing to suggest Cromwell ever spoke about Christmas. But because he's the person everyone has heard of from this period, everything gets attached to him.

He gets the credit for stuff he didn't do – everyone thinks he won the Civil War single-handed when he was actually a subordinate for much of it. But he also gets blamed for stuff he didn't do, banning Christmas being one example.'

The Daily Telegraph, 24 December 2023



TV Review: *By the Sword Divided*

***By the Sword Divided*: BBC TV 1983–5**

This is REALLY good! It was shown by the BBC as two series from 1983 to 1985, but has not been shown by them since. It has been aired recently by Talking Pictures TV. Apart from that, it has been available on DVD, and all episodes can now be found on YouTube.

Set between 1640 and 1660, these two series follow the fortunes of the aristocratic Lacey family, living peacefully in Arnescote Castle (in real life, Rockingham Castle in Northamptonshire) before and after the onset of the civil war.

Sir Martin Lacey is the head of the Lacey family, and is steadfastly loyal to King Charles I. However, the family is torn apart when in 1640, his eldest daughter, Anne, marries John Fletcher, son of a rising merchant family headed by Sir Austin Fletcher. Whilst Sir Austin's political principles are as 'flexible' as the Vicar of Bray, the son is principled and a lawyer, and very much a supporter of the parliamentary opposition to the king.



Series 1 starts in the summer of 1640 with the marriage of Anne Lacey and John Fletcher, and continues until 1647 and the Leveller discontent within the Army. Series 2 starts in 1648 and ends in summer 1660 with a visit of the restored Charles II to Arnescote. Each episode of both series is focused on the central events of the year in which it is set. So, for 1642 it's the start of hostilities and the Battle of Edgehill and its consequences for Arnescote. And for 1649, guess what? Yes, indeed.

As this isn't a big-budget movie, great events happen off-camera except when they are able to be constrained within a dramatic studio setting or be fitted into a location shoot at Arnescote. Both types of scene are done very believably. Early on in Series 1, the 1642 episode deals with the Battle of Edgehill by having Arnescote servants outside hear the sounds of cannon on the nearby battlefield. This is followed by Sir Martin Lacey, fighting on the king's side, being carried into the Great Hall with a serious leg wound.

By the end of Series 1 things have moved on for Arnescote, and not in a good way for the Lacey family. Defending Arnescote for the king, Sir Martin has been killed in the battle and the castle is now garrisoned by parliamentary troops. Things get darker. The final episode of the first series is set in June 1647 and is pretty much all a location shoot. Colonel Marsh, the parliamentary officer commanding the garrison, has to deal with his own local Leveller mutiny. He defuses the situation but has one hard-line Leveller trooper executed by firing squad. Order is restored, and he is required to join with the rest of the army and move to London.

Series 2 starts with John Fletcher and family as the new owners of Arnescote. John is a staunch parliamentarian and well thought of by General Cromwell. As such, he's consulted (privately) by Cromwell and Henry Ireton as to what to do about King Charles, and later sits as a member of the High Court of Justice in January 1649. The king's trial covers almost the whole of the third episode of Series 2, and whilst truncated for dramatic effect, it gives a visible sense of how 'seat of the pants' it most likely was and how easily it might have collapsed.

This one episode (*Cruel Necessity*) stands out for another reason. It shows, and compassionately so, the humaneness of Charles and those around him, retainers and guards both, especially in the king's final hours. The episode ends in a tavern with Lucinda Lacey (Sir Martin's younger daughter) attempting to get Tom Lacey (Sir Martin's eldest son) to travel to Holland with her and be with Charles Stuart. He does.

The remainder of Series 2 takes in the 1650s. It has it all. There's a witchfinder that pops up, a local rising for Charles (fails), and John Fletcher becomes an Assistant Secretary of State. Then we all know what happens. John Fletcher is condemned as a regicide but reprieved when Charles is told that John Fletcher could have turned him in after Worcester but did not. Tom Lacey is restored to Arnescote. As Tom has no heir, the inheritance will pass to his nephew, John Fletcher's teenage son, and Tom is perfectly ok with that. No longer by the sword divided, it's all about the future.

So, what to make of all this? At forty years distance the whole thing, and it is a whole, is still dramatically rock solid. Why? Firstly, it's bookended, from 1640 to 1660, with historical events that did, and still do, define the nation. Secondly, it has a dramatic core that goes to the heart of all human society: families at war and reconciliation. Moreover, both the dialogue, and social attitudes displayed on screen, do feel as authentic as they could be, given when this drama is set. The clincher, for why it works, is that the pacing is spot on. There's an actual sense while watching it (and savour, don't binge) of the characters' world of the 1640s not upsetting in one tumult but of unravelling, thread by thread, until the world has indeed been turned upside down. Or if you're of the Godly persuasion – we're nearer Jerusalem – albeit only for a few years.

John Newland

Series 1, Episode 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=XMwvB2g6tZE>

Theatre Review

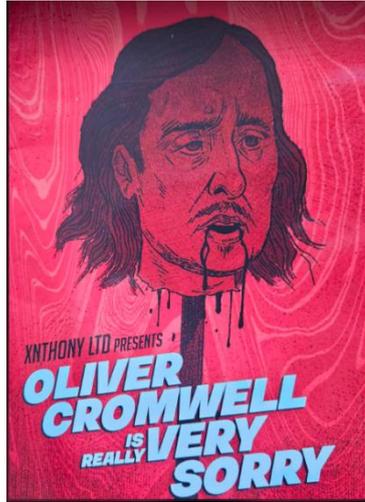


Oliver Cromwell is Really Very Sorry

The 'sexy' Civil War, the 'Supermodel' Army, Oliver Cromwell having a 'dad bod', God shouting 'eff off' to all and sundry from on high, and a genuine belter of an anthem entitled *Put Your Hands Up for Puritanism* pretty much encapsulates the maelstrom of deviant parody that this play presents. It is worth noting that the apology in the incendiary title is purely directed at the Irish, that the writers are both Irish and that this is a wholly Irish production.

That said, this play is uproariously funny. The two-hour long show had this writer belly-laughing from start to finish. The simple juxtaposition of lampooning so many austere historical characters, so familiar to readers of *The Protector's Pen*, with lurid contemporary vernacular straight out of the gay zeitgeist from the street is an irresistible comedic paradox.

Roscommon native, Anthony Keigher, who plays Cromwell is simply mesmerising. His stage presence demands the attention of the audience. Keigher, who now lives in the UK, conceived the show after coming to the conclusion that many people in the UK were 'ignorant of their historical ties to Ireland'. His lines are delivered with mischievous glares, provocative nods and inflammatory winks as he audaciously draws his audience straight back into his completely warped version of the seventeenth century through flamboyant song and dance.



The play opens with a troupe attempting to dig up Cromwell's head which, we are told, is buried in a biscuit tin. When they find the head, they somehow trigger the events of the past where Oliver is struggling to find his place in the world. And so, the mayhem ensues.

Oliver is an aspiring actor. He dreams of a life in the theatre – a nod perhaps to the tenuous story that he is said to have trod the boards during his time at Sidney Sussex, and according to some, even taking on the role of king for one production.

But after a few chats with God himself, Oliver becomes reluctantly convinced that his destiny is in fact to rid Ireland of Catholics. And so he forms the Supermodel Army and heads across the sea to Ireland. The apologetic soliloquy that the head makes from the biscuit tin towards the end is simply hilarious.

The traditional 'genocidal maniac' perception of Oliver is a prerequisite for the backdrop of the show. That was never challenged, and why would it be, given the nature of the presentation, which was essentially to shock, to shock and then to shock even more?

Following the performance there was a Q&A for anyone who wanted to stay. Here Keigher recognised recent revisionist work on Cromwell and insisted that there were nods to this in the narrative, which was certainly true. However, the potency in the message that dreadful things did happen in Ireland was in no way reduced by any pesky revisionism. It was clear that while Keigher was using the events as an entertainment vehicle, he was also insistent that historical facts could be learned from the show. Although the message that all Catholics would be hanged or deported if they didn't transplant to Connaught shows this writer that there is a lot more work to be done in this area yet.

As he departed, Keigher teased the company with a possible title of his next show, which is about a historical tragedy which took place in the early sixties – 'So apart from that Jackie, how was the spin?'

Tom Reilly



Exhibition about King's Trial and Execution

Historic objects telling the story of a beheaded king are on show at the Harley Foundation, Welbeck.

Marking 375 years since his execution, the Harley Foundation will show a rare miniature painting of Charles I with mica overlays, alongside a pair of black silk gloves said to have been worn by the king on the scaffold (on loan until July 28).

Other objects on show at the Foundation's museum tell the story of Charles I's trial and execution, giving context to permanent museum exhibits that include the pearl earring taken from his severed head, his gold toothpick and emerald seal. The pearl earring was given to his daughter, the mother of King William III, who, in turn, gave it to the 1st Duke of Portland.

These objects are on show in *Unseen Treasures of The Portland Collection*, a major free historic art exhibition at the Harley Foundation.

www.harleyfoundation.org

Mansfield, Ashfield & Sherwood News Journal, 17 Jan 2024



MUSEUM

Unseen Treasures of The Portland Collection

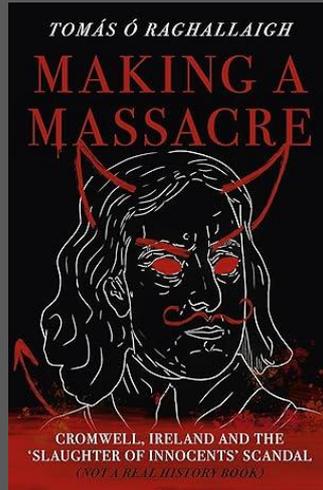
25 March 2023 – 31 December 2025

Book Reviews

Making a massacre: Cromwell, Ireland and the 'slaughter of innocents' scandal (not a real history book)

Tomás Ó Raghallaigh

Tomás Ó Raghallaigh, better known as Tom Reilly to many (perhaps all?) has been arguing with charm, wit and fervour, for the best part of three decades, that history has done Cromwell a disservice. For those unfamiliar with his work, though crusade might be a better term, he is from Drogheda, the place where, according to most historians, Cromwell besieged the town in 1649 and on breaching the walls set about slaughtering the inhabitants, whether in arms or not. Tom does not dispute that a great deal of blood was shed but does not accept that it was that of unarmed civilians.



This is not a book whose main purpose is to remake that case, though it does so very convincingly, but that is almost by the by. The book is an account of Tom's quest to set right what he sees as an enormous wrong, and it makes for a hilarious picaresque tale from which the history profession emerges, with few exceptions, with little credit. The writing style, a mash-up of *Father Ted* and *Catch 22*, rushes along at a hectic pace, taking few prisoners on the way.

The author repeatedly asserts that he is not a historian, and herein lies the problem. The ranks of professional academic historians closed on Tom after his first book, querying his credentials for challenging the historical orthodoxy. One historian, but not a historian of the 17th century, but one of Ireland, Ruth Dudley Edwards, was supportive in her review in *The Sunday Times* of Tom's second book *Cromwell: an Honourable Enemy* when she wrote:

Although professional historians are prone to be snuffy about amateurs, I have always believed they should be given a special accolade for being in love with their subject for its own sake ... he is scrupulous in his examination of evidence, he has the necessary scepticism, he is assiduous in research and he quotes primary sources extensively.

Tom was delighted, but as Dudley Edwards is, by her own admission, a revisionist Protestant historian, her opinion probably cut little mustard with Tom's main opponents, predominantly Irish nationalists.

Over the last twenty years the tide, to a considerable degree, has turned in Tom's favour, and the casual assertions that huge numbers of innocents were slaughtered at Drogheda cannot so

easily be made. Some who were opponents (and viciously so in some instances) now, if not friends, at least show some degree of respect.

The collection of essays edited by Martyn Bennett and others, but masterminded by Tom, *Cromwell and Ireland: New Perspectives*, was a significant milestone, only topped by James Scott Wheeler's recent exposure of the flimsiness of the supposed evidence of Thomas Wood, the alleged eyewitness to the massacre.

Tom's crusade has been about more than arguing for evidence, as it can be understood, to drive the narrative. His concern has been how Cromwell has been, in his words, weaponised, in the north of Ireland; how an incident in the long and difficult history of Anglo-Irish relations has prolonged feelings of hatred and mistrust. In his reckoning it might take another 500 years to get over it. And as for Tom's surname, you get a sense of what follows from his words in the preface, in reference to Irish historian and detractor, Micheál Ó Siochru: *I've just decided to call myself Tomás Ó Raghallaigh for this particular publication because I suppose anyone with an Irish name can play at that game. I used to be called Tom Reilly but that was over five minutes ago now.*

John Goldsmith

Tomás Ó Raghallaigh, *Making a massacre: Cromwell, Ireland and the 'slaughter of innocents' scandal (not a real history book)*, Liberalis Books, an imprint of Collective Ink, UK price £10.99. Books can be pre-ordered from the publisher's website, or Amazon or Barnes & Noble or any online book platform, and at local bookstores everywhere. Publication date 28 June 2024. ISBN 9781803415031

Social Media

The Cromwell Association's social media presence is expanding. In addition to our X (formerly known as Twitter) account, you can now find us on **Facebook** and **Mastodon**. Follow us to keep up to date with the Association's news and events, and contact us via any of these platforms if you have any events to share which would be of interest to our members.

-  @cromwellorg
-  olivercromwell.org
-  @cromwellorg@mastodon.social

For any queries relating to our social media please contact socialmedia@olivercromwell.org



Kings and Queens: 1200 Years of English and British Monarchs

Iain Dale

It is the commendable inclusion of both Oliver and Richard Cromwell in this volume which earns it a review in *The Protector's Pen*, all the more so as the entries on each of them (Oliver by Association Trustee Miranda Malins) are excellent. A companion to his earlier books on *The Prime Ministers* and *The Presidents*, Iain Dale has assembled an eclectic mix of contributors including academics, journalists and politicians, and has allowed them free range so the result is varied and interesting, with different approaches; should one entry fail to inspire, the next is likely to pique the interest. Having grown up with the *Ladybird Adventures from History* series, there is a slight familiarity about this entertaining and informative style – even the story of Oliver's adventure with the monkey gets a passing mention – but here such myths tend to get debunked.

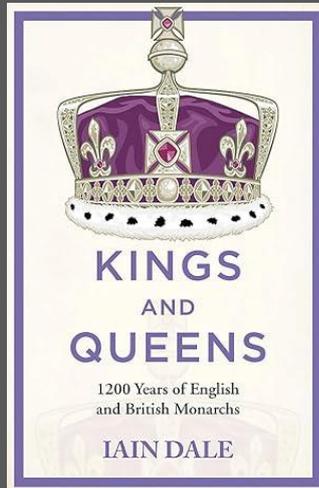
The collection covers Alfred the Great to Charles III (a work in progress!) and allows space for a number of little-known or disputed rulers, for instance Louis is given space after John's reign. The coverage of the Anglo-Saxon period is a strength, and certainly one where I learnt most, my schoolboy date-learning having only begun in 1066.

Many contributors make a point of highlighting the ways in which individual monarchs' legacies have come down to our own times, though in some cases the catalogue of rebellions and conflicts does cause one some sympathy for the view that 'history is just one damn thing after another'. The majority of entries are sympathetic to their subject, as individuals if not always as rulers, but there is no abject sycophancy either; assessments are generally well balanced and fair even when the author might be expected to be somewhat partisan – for instance the president of the Richard III Society.

For Cromwellians the treatment of the 17th century is pleasing. The entry on James I focuses, quite rightly, on his time in Scotland, and there is no 'Royal Martyr' concerning Charles I; in fact I found this entry to be somewhat half-hearted. The inclusion of the Protectorate, particularly including Richard's, serves to put the Restoration in context, rather than the common 'Cromwell died and Charles II was restored (inevitably)' summary. It is perhaps a further sign that the 17th century is becoming less of an ugly sister to the Tudors' *Cinderella* in popular understanding.

This book is a very enjoyable primer or revision aid in following the (not always straightforward or edifying) story of the English/British monarchy, ideal for dipping into.

Richard Warren



Iain Dale, *Kings and Queens: 1200 Years of English and British Monarchs*, 608pp, Hodder & Stoughton, 2023, ISBN 9781529379488

An epic poem in the making

Bill Carpenter is an American lawyer who studied literature at Stanford and Princeton. He has published an epic poem about King Alfred, which is available on Kindle, and he has now turned his attention to the English Civil War, the Commonwealth and Protectorate. His plan is for ten books, in blank verse. The Earl of Essex is the central figure of the first three, and Cromwell emerges in Book Four.

Below is a very brief extract from the Prologue to Book Two:

*STILL graver for Your Cause: the loss of Pym,
John Pym MP, dead of an inward abscess.
Raised by an old friend of Sir Francis Drake's
and first elected in the Russell interest,
he served Rich-Warwick as his business agent,
then served as treasurer for Warwick's, Brooke's,
and Saye and Sele's Providence Island Co.
He drafted the notorious Petition,
whereby the godly peers prevailed on Charles
to call the Parliament that cut down Strafford,
and drafted, joined by Hampden, the Remonstrance
enlarging on the wrongs of Charles's reign.
One of the Five Members Charles went to arrest,
he organized the loans to raise an army.
King Pym men called him, enemies and friends.
What meant You, Lord, by this unlooked-for blow?
That You were the godly party's heart, not Pym.
Of four surviving children, Charles MP
served as a P horse captain under Dalbier.*

This is a monumental undertaking. The Association wishes the author well, and looks forward to the completion of the work, which will almost certainly be the longest poem, of many, written about the period, if completed as planned.

Further reading

Members who want to read more can view extracts online:

From Book One, on *Expansive Poetry Online*:
['The Sword of Gideon, excerpt from an epic by William Carpenter | Expansive Poetry Online'](#)

From Book Two, on *The Brazen Head*:
[Dispatches from 1643 – The Brazen Head \(brazen-head.org\)](#)

Xbox

A few select tweets from a quick search of X (formerly known as Twitter)

The World Turned Upside Down @world_turned

Answering the big questions
 "Was Oliver Cromwell a principled defender of civil and religious liberties or a bigot and a tyrant?"
 David L. Smith, of @Selwyn1882 discusses this controversial figure.
 @MuseumCromwell @Cromwellorg
worldturnedupside.com/podcast/was-ol...



The Fens @TheFens3

Cambridgeshire flooding reveals English Civil War fort after Storm Henk [Great photo].



From cambsnews.co.uk

Cromwell Association @Cromwellorg

'Better than finding gold': towers' remains may rewrite history of English civil war



From theguardian.com

Exhibitions and Events

Date	Venue	Details (website)
Apr 27	Corinium Museum, Cirencester	Cromwell Association AGM
May 22	National Civil War Centre, Newark	Special event for teachers of A level history For more information contact: education@olivercromwell.org
Jun 26	Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon	Annual Schools' Conference For more information contact: education@olivercromwell.org
Sep 07	TBA	Cromwell Day service – full details to be published in the next issue, and on the website as soon as they are confirmed.
Oct 19	Friends Meeting House, Oxford	Cromwell Association Study Day

All information is correct at the time of going to press.

Links have been provided below to some websites should you wish to look up further details on forthcoming events as they are announced. Please note, events are also advertised through other media, including Facebook and X.

- Battlefields Trust** <http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/default.asp>
- Battle of Worcester Society** <https://thebattleofworcestersociety.com/>
- Cromwell's House, Ely** <http://visitely.org.uk/cromwell/oliver-cromwells-house>
- Cromwell Museum** <http://www.cromwellmuseum.org/>
- English Civil War Society** <http://www.ecws.org.uk/>
- John Hampden Society** <https://www.johnhampden.org/>
- NCWC, Newark** <http://www.nationalcivilwarcentre.com/events/>
- Pike and Shot Society** <https://www.pikeandshotsociety.org/>
- Scottish Battlefields Trust** <http://www.scottishbattlefields.org/events-1>
- Sealed Knot** <http://www.thesealedknot.org.uk/>
- Worcester Commandery** <http://www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk/>