

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

Exhibition at the National Civil War Centre, Newark Museum

Diane Strange and Andrew Hopper





THE World turn'd upside down

Introduction

The Civil Wars were turbulent and, for some, exciting times. They had a traumatic impact on everyday life, challenging and overturning many assumptions the British and Irish peoples had made about their world. The divinity of Stuart kingship was undermined, and many feared a consequent attack on the whole social hierarchy. The experience of combat, hardship and disease bereaved and impoverished hundreds of thousands of people. Up to 50,000 were made homeless in England and Wales alone, with refugees, widows, children and disbanded soldiers roaming the highways.

By the end of January 1649 Charles I had been tried and executed in public, leaving the old world shattered. The House of Lords, Bishops, Cathedral Deans and Chapters, and Church Courts were all abolished too, with a new republic declared. In the English localities, attendance at church could no longer be enforced, whilst thousands of manorial lords had lost control of their lands and tenants. It was little wonder that people envisaged these events in terms of their world being turned upside down.

This exhibition illustrates this cauldron of chaos and conflict, but also points to the creativity and new thinking that came about as a consequence of the conflict. Religious and political radicals like the Levellers, Diggers and Quakers emerged, demanding reforms that remain unachieved to this day. These ideas have particular resonance today because the 1640s were a period of accelerated revolutionary change when the relationships between the English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish peoples were forged in blood.

The conflicts over power relationships within and between the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland sparked an explosion of cheap printed pamphlets to mobilise support, in an open appeal to the people that unsettled many. In a similar way to the current revolution in social media, propaganda could access large audiences in its bid to shape the future.

The Word of God was central to everyday life in the seventeenth century. When the Digger visionary Gerrard Winstanley and others talked of the world being turned upside down, they drew on the New Testament, Acts 17:6, which described how those who sheltered Paul the Apostle in Thessalonica were summoned before the city government: 'And when they found them not, they drew Jason, and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also.' (Authorised Version, King James I Bible [1611], Acts 17:6–7).

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Image: *The World Turned Upside Down* (1647).
Image credit: World History Archive/Alamy stock photo.

*Freedom is the man that would turn the world
upside down therefore no wonder he hath enemies.*

Gerrard Winstanley, *A Watch-Word to the City of London and the Armie* (1649).

Introduction



The scale of what historians call the 'War of the Three Kingdoms' was unprecedented. At various times during the 1640s England, Scotland and Ireland all maintained armies in each other's kingdoms. As many as one in

eight of England's adult male population took up arms, with much of the infantry recruited by impressment. Both sides imposed oaths of allegiance. The Wars' destructive impact should not be underestimated. Dozens of castles were made indefensible. Over 100 country mansions were demolished and deer parks were emptied. Around 11,000 houses were destroyed, while churches were transformed by iconoclasm conducted by both civilians and soldiers.

Posy Rings

Personal items and jewellery were very important as mementos throughout the Civil Wars. When Sir William Fairfax was mortally wounded at the Battle of Montgomery on 18 September 1644, his commanding officer, Sir John Meldrum, prevented the surgeons treating Sir William from taking his gold bracelet and diamond ring, and sent them to Fairfax's widow, Frances, instead. Sir William died the following day. Frances remarked that she 'grieved not that he died in the cause, but that he died so soon that he could do no more for it.'

Gold wedding bands inscribed with romantic mottos, such as the example shown here, were very common in the seventeenth century. They were called 'posy rings', from the French word *poesie*, meaning *poem*. Such rings were worn by men and women. Their mottos might be chosen by the giver or taken from a list of examples held by the jeweller who crafted the band. Then as now, jewellery was very important to the wearer and their family. They were significant family heirlooms that were passed on to descendants and bequeathed in wills.



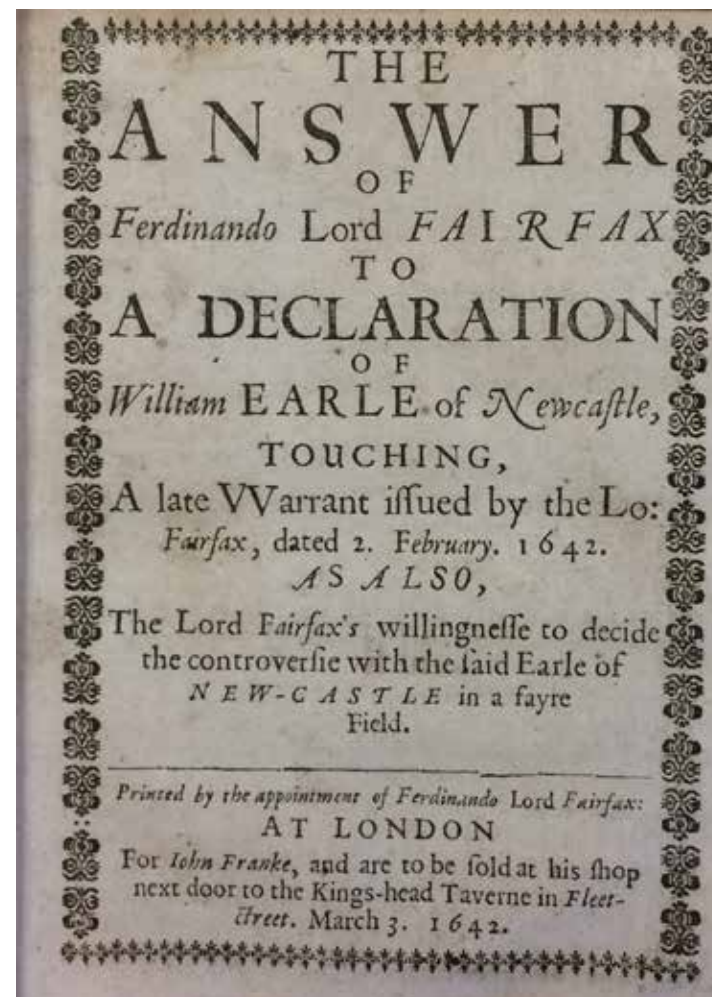
A typical example of a seventeenth-century posy ring.

Chivalry and Strategy

The Answer of Ferdinando Lord Fairfax to a Declaration of William Earle of Newcastle was published in March 1643. It responded to Newcastle's printed challenge to Fairfax to settle the northern war in a trial by battle. Newcastle wanted to tempt Fairfax out of Leeds and Bradford, and into the open where his Royalist cavalry would be more potent. Newcastle urged Fairfax to honour 'the Examples of our Heroic Ancestors, who used not spend their time in scratching one another out of holes, but in pitched fields determined their doubts.'

Fairfax sidestepped the challenge, disregarding Newcastle's romantic chivalry. Fairfax quoted Ben Jonson, Newcastle's own playwright, back at him, replying he would not follow 'the rules of Amadis de gaule, or the Knight of the Sun', to allow the fate of Yorkshire to be decided in a single day.

Fairfax understood that his infantry's firepower and his weakness in cavalry were far more suited to deployment on urban battlefields.



The Answer of Ferdinando Lord Fairfax to a Declaration of William Earle of Newcastle (1643).

Sir Thomas Fairfax's Bridle Arm



Sir Thomas Fairfax's bridle arm.
Image credit: Doug Jackson.

This bridle arm was worn by Sir Thomas Fairfax to protect his rein hand while on horseback. He was guarding the retreat of the army of Lord Fairfax, his father, in the streets of Selby in July 1643 when he was wounded in the very place protected by this type of armour. During the 1660s, he recalled in his *Short Memorials*:

'Here, I received a shot in the wrist of my arm, which made the bridle fall out of my hand, which being among the nerves and veins, suddenly let out such a quantity of blood, that I was ready to fall from my horse; so, taking the reins in the hand wherein I had my sword (the enemy minding nothing so much as how to get away) I drew myself out of the crowd, and came to our men that turned about, which were standing hard by. Seeing me ready to fall from my horse, they laid me on the ground, and now almost senseless. My surgeon came seasonably and bound up my wound, and so stopped the bleeding. After a quarter of an hour's rest I got on horseback again.'

Fairfax then remained in the saddle for a further 30 hours before reaching the safety of Hull.

Cautering Irons

This image shows modern-day reproductions of cauterising irons that were heated red-hot to burn and close up gunshot wounds. Not all surgeons used this method, as some were beginning to employ alternatives advanced by the French surgical writer Ambrose Paré. Instead, Paré advocated using a ligature, a thread or cord, to tie up a bleeding artery.

Cauterisation was also used to seal severed arteries after amputations, as advocated by the Royalist military surgeon Richard Wiseman. This method was still in use in the nineteenth century.



Modern reproductions of a surgeon's cauterising irons.

Mortuary Sword, c. 1635–1650

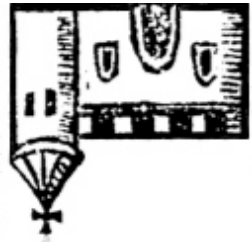
Unique to Britain, 'mortuary swords', or 'mortuary hilts', are the most widely recognised of all Civil War era basket hilt swords. Once thought to have been produced in memory of the martyred Charles I, due to the male heads found on the hilts of some examples, these swords were actually widely used long before his execution in 1649.

This particular sword comprises an iron hilt decorated with a fairly common design of grotesque faces and leaves, and an imported Continental blade bearing the counterfeit name of the sixteenth-century Italian blade-smith 'ANDRIA FARARA'.



Mortuary sword hilt detail.

The Prayer Book Riots



The Calvinist Church of Scotland, the Kirk, was more intensively Reformed than the

Church of England. Charles I distrusted it deeply, suspecting it of puritan and anti-monarchical tendencies. He tried to impose on Scotland the new English Prayer Book, which had been compiled by the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud. Laud's theology, dubbed 'Arminian' by his opponents after the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, was highly unpopular, especially among puritans.

The imposition of Laud's Prayer Book on Scottish congregations provoked widespread opposition. On 23 July 1637, a riot broke out in St Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, where women threw stools at the Dean, James Hannay, as he read from the new Prayer Book. Similar disturbances occurred in Glasgow a month later. By the 1670s it was widely accepted that a tradesman's wife, Jenny Geddes, had thrown the first stool, and so had struck the first blow in the British Civil Wars.

This low-born, female, and probably fictitious, character was held to symbolise the powerless rising up and overturning a suspect king who had threatened the Kirk. Jenny was celebrated for supposedly calling out to the Dean: 'Devil cause you colic in your stomach, false thief: dare you say the Mass in my ear?'

In February 1638 a National Covenant was drawn up to defend the Protestant Kirk from what many perceived to be Charles I's popish innovations. Amounting to a revolutionary attack on Charles I's kingship, it claimed the independence of 'a sovereign people under God'. It was subscribed by most of the nobility, gentry, ministers and townsmen in lowland Scotland. Refusers were denounced as papists.

Charles's attempt to subdue the Covenanters by force ended in humiliating failure during the First and Second Bishops' Wars (1639–40). Defeat, and a Scottish occupation of northern England, eventually forced Charles to call the Long Parliament in November 1640, which ended his Personal Rule, and ultimately led to the Civil Wars in England.

The Arch-Prelate of S^t Andrewes in Scotland reading the new Service-booke in his pontificalibus assaulted by men & Women, with Cricketts, Stooles Sticks and Stones.



Scottish Prayer Book riots. Image credit: Historic Images/Alamy Stock Photo.



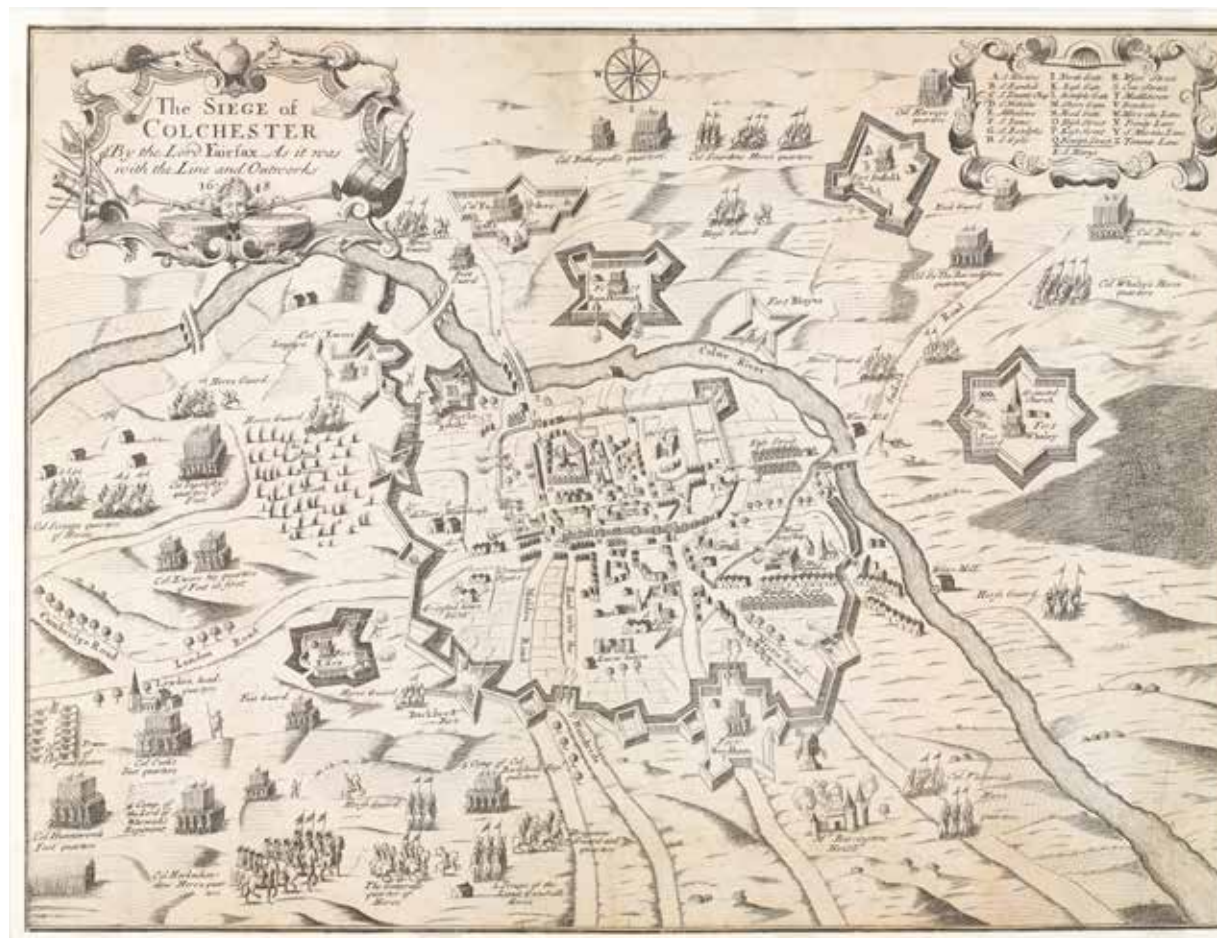
Archbishop William Laud (1573–1645).
Image credit: Fairclough Collection, University of Leicester.

The Siege of Colchester

The siege of Colchester lasted 75 days from 12 June 1648 and was the most vicious prolonged encounter of the Civil Wars in England. Defeated Royalist insurgents from across southeast England had taken shelter there from Sir Thomas Fairfax's Parliamentarians. Forced into a long siege, Fairfax severed the town's water supply and tried to starve out the 7,000 defenders and civilians inside.

At enormous expense, Fairfax transformed the landscape around Colchester, as seen in the siege plan shown below. He ordered ten forts built, connecting them with defensive stockades and earthworks, some of which were within 200 yards of the town walls. His soldiers suffered in appalling wet weather building these siegeworks, so Fairfax showed unusual harshness towards the defenders. Inside the town 300 houses were destroyed by fire and 800 horses butchered to feed the starving defenders.

Compelled by hunger and mutiny, Colchester finally surrendered to Fairfax's mercy on 28 August 1648. Two Royalist parole-breakers, Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle, were quickly shot, and Arthur Lord Capel was later beheaded. Royalist common soldiers were stripped and pillaged before being transported overseas or shot on the highways.



The siege of Colchester. Image courtesy of The National Army Museum, London.

Grace Portington

GRACE PORTINGTON was the widow of a Royalist, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Portington of Hatfield in Yorkshire.

Robert was imprisoned in Hull for his royalism from 1648 to 1660. Soon after his release home, he was bitten by a monkey and died of gangrene as a result. Like most widows, this left Grace facing a loss of status. In 1665 Charles II ordered she be maintained, not by the royal treasury, but by the West Riding's ratepayers, who had to raise an annual pension of £20, to be given her at the quarter sessions. This dwarfed the pensions received by all other West Riding widows combined and marked her high social standing. It was time to protect the social order after a period of overturning. It showed that despite Royalist discomfort with granting the widows of poor soldiers pensions, exceptions could be made for the high-status widows of field officers.

This pension kept Grace for 15 years, amounting to £300 in all. Soon after it was withdrawn, in 1681, a local clergyman, Edward Whitwell of Arksey, petitioned the quarter sessions that 'Mrs Portington had fallen into great want and necessity'. Whitwell maintained her for the last few months of her life before she died in 1681 and claimed to have paid for her funeral.

'Thus saith the Lord, I inform you, that I overturn, overturn, overturn. And as the Bishops, Charles, and the Lords, have had their turn, overturn, so your turn shall be next (ye surviving great ones)'.

Abiezer Coppe, *A Fiery Flying Roll* (1650)

Captain Lionel Copley

CAPTAIN LIONEL COPLEY of Wadworth, near Rotherham, Yorkshire, served as muster-master-general in the Earl of Essex's Parliamentarian army.

From 1645 onwards Copley became a prominent critic and enemy of Fairfax's New Model Army, and was imprisoned in the later 1640s for plotting against them. He seems to have particularly despised the Levellers. After the Restoration of Charles II, he inherited his family's valuable ironworks, and made a visible demonstration that the time of turning the world upside down was now over.

In 1664, he was prosecuted in the West Riding quarter sessions for beating Richard Firth of Rotherham. Copley put a bridle in Firth's mouth, got on his back, and rode him about for half an hour, kicking him to make him move. This bizarre display was likely provoked by the Leveller saying that had appeared in newsbooks in 1648 that 'no man was born with a saddle on his back, with others booted and spurred to ride upon him.'



'Oliver Cromwell at the Battle of Marston Moor'. Image credit: The History Collection/Alamy Stock Photo.

Richard Gough,
The History of Myddle

Considered by many to be England's first parish historian, Richard Gough looked back on the losses of his home locality of Myddle, Shropshire, during his childhood at the outbreak of the Civil Wars:

'King Charles the First set up his standard at Nottingham A.D. 1642 and because few there resorted to him, he moved thence to Shrewsbury about the later end of summer 1642, in hopes that this country and Wales would soon furnish him with an Army, and he was not disappointed in his expectation, for multitudes came to him daily. And out of these three towns, Myddle, Marton and Newton, there went no less than twenty men, of which number thirteen were killed in the wars.'

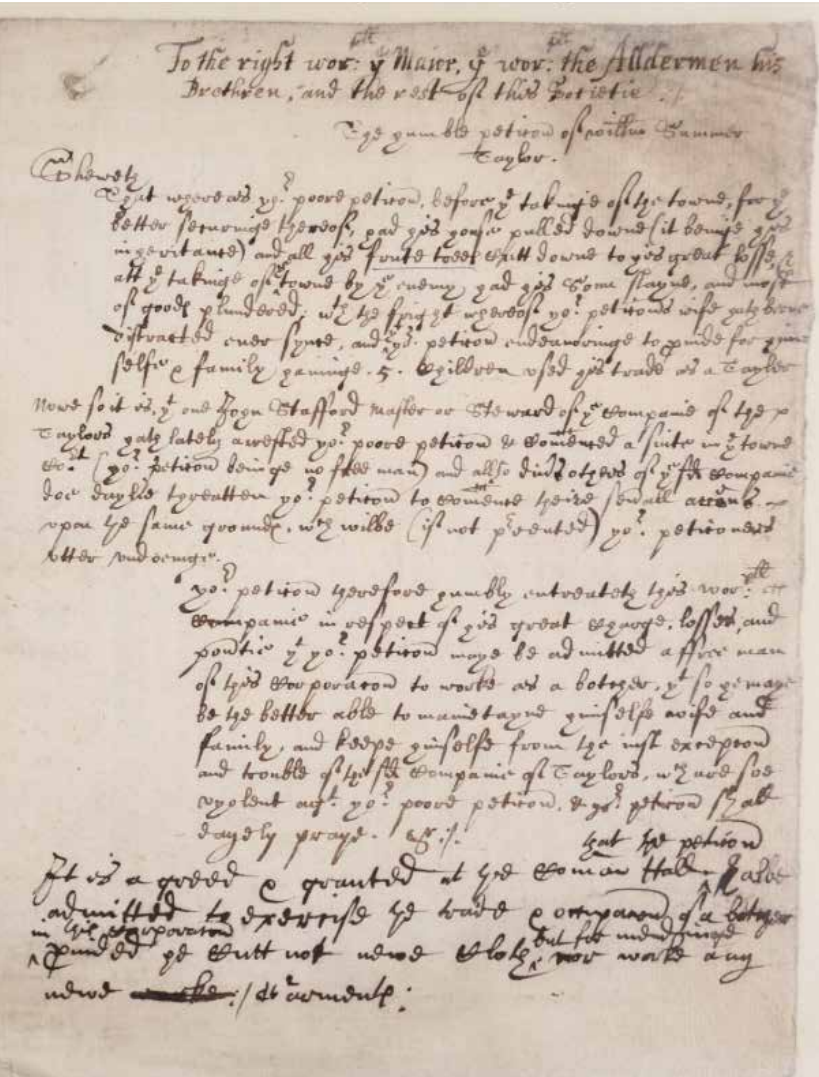


The Petition of William Summer

Around 50,000 people in England alone were de-housed during the conflict, creating a housing crisis and increasing the number of refugees on the roads. Houses in the suburbs of garrisoned towns were especially vulnerable if they lay outside the fortifications.

Garrison commanders pulled down houses that might give cover to besieging forces. The house of William Summer of Leicester was disposed of in this way before Prince Rupert stormed the town in May 1645. Summer later set out his losses in a moving petition to the town corporation.

To see more petitions from maimed soldiers and displaced persons, visit the website civilwarpetitions.ac.uk



The petition of William Summer. BR II/18/23A, Image credit: Record Office of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR), Leicester Borough Hall Book, 1645-1647, fo. 449.

To the right wor[shi]p[ful]l ye Maior ye wor[shi]p[ful]l the Aldermen his Brethren, and the rest of this Societie

The humble peticon of Will[ia]m Summer Taylor

Sheweth

That whereas yo[u]r poore peticon[er] before ye taking of the towne, for ye better securing thereof, had his house pulled downe (it beinge his inheritance) and all his frute trees Cutt downe to his great losse, & att ye taking of ye towne by ye enemy had his sonn slayne, and most of goods plundered; w[i]th the fright whereof yo[u]r peticon[er]s wife hath beene distracted ever synce, and yt yo[u]r peticon[er] endeavoringe to p[ro]vide for himselfe & family having 5 Children used his trade as a Tayler.

Nowe so it is, yt one John Stafford Master or Steward of ye Companie of the Taylors hath lately arrested yo[u]r poore peticon[er] & Com[m]enced a suite in ye towne Co[u]rt (yo[u]r peticon[er] beinge no free man) and also div[er]s others of ye s[ai]d Companie doe daylie threaten yo[u]r peticon[er] to Com[m]ence theire sev[er]all accouns upon the same grounds, w[hi]ch wilbe (if not p[re]vented) yo[u]r peticoners utter undoeinge.

Yo[u]r peticon[er] therefore humbly entreateth this wor[shi]p[ful]l Companie in respect of his great Charge, losses, and pov[er]tie yt yo[u]r peticon[er] maye be admitted a ffree man of this Corporacon to worke as a botcher, yt so he maye be the better able to mainetayne himselfe wife and family, and keepe himselfe from the iust excepcon and trouble of the s[ai]d Companie of Taylors, w[hi]ch are soe violent ag[ai]ns[t] yo[u]r poore peticon[er] & yo[u]r peticon[er] shall dayely praye &c.

It is agreed & granted at the Com[m]on Hall that the peticon[er] shall be admitted to exercise the trade & occupacon of a botcher in this Corporacon p[ro]vided he Cutt not newe Cloth but for mendinge nor worke any newe worke Garments.

Introduction



This conflict had many consequences beyond the battlefield. The 1640s brought about a breakdown of order in many counties as the main organ of local government, the quarter sessions, ceased to meet. Royalist local commanders and Parliamentary county committees

competed to extract resources from civilian populations. At times, marauding or disbanded soldiers and deserters became a social menace and a public order problem. Associations of clubmen took the law into their own hands to defend their local communities. By 1646 a war-torn population craved a return to order and pre-war normality.

Iconoclasm

Sometimes wrongly interpreted as showing Parliamentary soldier-iconoclasts, the print below represents damage inflicted by Charles I's soldiers on their way northwards to fight the Scottish Army of the Covenant in the Second Bishops' War of 1640.

Many of the recruits had been pressed by their parish officers and were unenthusiastic about facing the Scots. Some turned to iconoclasm instead. Venting further fury at the regime, two English Roman Catholic officers were murdered by their own men. Civilians suffered as soldiers were forcibly quartered on their households, and the English common law courts began to take a harder line against soldiers. As the royal forces withdrew, much of the north was further impoverished by a Scottish military occupation from September 1640 to August 1641, before the Civil War in England had even broken out. This collapse of discipline among the royal forces was the biggest public order problem yet faced by the Stuart monarchy in England.



Soldiers destroying alter rails. Image credit: Album/Alamy Stock Photo.

Bishop Joseph Hall and Iconoclasm in Norwich Cathedral

'Lord, what work was here! what clattering of glasses! what beating down of walls! what tearing up of monuments! what pulling down of seats! what wresting out of irons and brass from the windows and graves! what defacing of arms! what demolishing of curious stone-work, that had not any representation in the world, but only the cost of the founder, and skill of the mason! what tooting and piping upon the destroyed organ-pipes! and what a hideous triumph on the market-day before all the country; when, in a kind of sacrilegious and profane procession, all the organ-pipes, vestments, both copes and surplices, together with the leaden cross which had been newly sawn down from over the Green-yard pulpit, and the service-books and singing-books that could be had, were carried to the fire in the public market-place; a lewd wretch walking before the train, in his cope trailing in the dirt, with a service-book in his hand, imitating in an impious scorn the tune, and usurping the words of the litany used formerly in the church.'



Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich. Image credit: Fairclough Collection, University of Leicester.

The Gender Order Turned Upside Down

Moll Cutpurse, 'Roaring Girl'

Mary Frith (died 1659) was a London-based thief and fence whose life was glamourised and politicised after her death in the pamphlet *The Life of Mrs Mary Frith* (1662). She was said to stalk London's streets in men's clothing armed with a sword, and to be found swearing, drinking and blaspheming in the capital's alehouses. Such unwomanly behaviour stoked male fears of gender worlds turned upside down.

Mary's fame began with Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's play *The Roaring Girl, or, Moll Cutpurse* (1611), based on tales of her exploits, which soon grew in the retelling. *The Life* (1662) presented Moll as a swashbuckling highwaywoman who held up Sir Thomas Fairfax on Hounslow Heath. As she was aged over 60 by then, this would have been unlikely. Rather, the story was part of Royalist attempts to mock General Fairfax for being weak and ruled by women (including his own forceful wife, Anne).



Moll Cutpurse.

(Opposite) Extract from *Hard Measure* by Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich: *The Works of Joseph Hall, D.D. Successively Bishop of Exeter and Norwich: With some account of his life and sufferings written by himself*, edited by Peter Hall, 12 vols. (Oxford, 1837), vol. 1, pp. liv-lv.

Punishing a Scold

The scold's bridle, or 'branks', was a particularly cruel punishment inflicted on women – and, less commonly, men – for disorderly behaviour, especially unruly speech. The device was constructed either of wood and leather or, as in this example, iron. The head was set into the frame and a metal plate was inserted into the mouth, compressing the tongue against either the upper or lower palate. This prevented the victim from speaking or eating. The scold's bridle was little short of torture, as it caused great discomfort to the wearer in the form of pain and drooling. It inflicted lasting damage on the mouth, which could lead to infection and even death.

How often the bridle was used is not known, but it is thought to have been relatively rare. Other forms of punishment for scolds included the ducking, or cucking, stool; the stocks; being 'carted' through the town; and incarceration in the town 'cage'.

Convicted scolds were usually women who refused to be submissive to men, abusing them verbally or even physically. They might also have disturbed local communities by quarrelling with their neighbours. Such 'barators', as they were known, were seen as a threat to the male-dominated social order. Furthermore, threatening words were sometimes seen as violent, and could lead to accusations of witchcraft.



A seventeenth-century scold's bridle, or 'branks'. Courtesy of Spalding Gentlemen's Society.

Upsetting the Social Hierarchy: ‘Tinker Fox’ and Anne Clarges

Colonel John Fox

Colonel John Fox (1610–1650) of Walsall commanded the garrison at Edgbaston House in Warwickshire. He was nicknamed ‘the Jovial Tinker’ by the Royalist newsbook *Mercurius Aulicus*, in mockery of his supposedly lowly origins as a metalworker. He was the kind of tradesman-commander drawn from outside the landowning elite that made many fear that the social hierarchy was collapsing. By using this nickname, *Mercurius Aulicus* was presenting Fox as a dangerous outsider and social subversive. The itinerant ‘Jovial Tinker’ had threatened women’s chastity in ballads since 1616.

Like many plebeian Parliamentarians, Fox was never properly paid for his service. He was released from debtor’s prison to captain the guards of the Lord President, John Bradshaw, during the trial of Charles I. Some Royalists wrongly thought that Fox was the King’s executioner.



A pleafant new Songe of a iouiall Tinker 1616). Image by permission of the Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

Anne Clarges

Anne Clarges (1619–1670) worked as a seamstress at the Tower of London. Her background was a lowly one: her father was a farrier, whilst her mother was described as ‘one of the five women barbers’. Her brother Thomas had served as an apothecary to the Royalist army stationed around Oxford.

During her duties at the Tower, Anne met an imprisoned Royalist officer, George Monck. She was responsible for looking after his linen, but the couple formed a relationship. They went on to marry in 1653, after Anne had fallen pregnant. By this time, Monck had been released and had served Parliament as a military commander in Ireland and Scotland, and as general-at-sea in the First Anglo–Dutch War. However, an air of scandal surrounded Anne and George’s wedding. Anne had been married previously and they had separated. There was no proof that her first husband was dead.

More dramatically, Monck was to be instrumental in the Restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660 and the King rewarded him by creating him Duke of Albemarle. Royalist gossips portrayed Anne as quick-tempered and crude, though this is probably mostly revealing of their unease about the poor seamstress who became a duchess.



Anne Monck, née Clarges, Duchess of Albemarle. Image credit: National Portrait Gallery, London.

Overtaking Royalist Hierarchy: Sequestration

On 27 March 1643 the Houses of Parliament passed an ordinance that allowed them to confiscate legally the homes, estates, and property of anyone suspected of supporting Charles I, a procedure known as ‘sequestration’. Catholics were also targeted by the policy, even if they were not participating in the war. County committees were established in every county and major town in England and Wales. The committee members relied on local knowledge of Royalist families to decide who should be targeted. Nobody knows exactly how many families were sequestered during the 1640s and 1650s, but recent research has set the absolute minimum at 4,000. The total figure is likely to be much higher than that.

When the committees received evidence against a person or family they would issue a warrant for their sequestration. Their agents, accompanied by soldiers, would force their way into the target’s house, create an inventory of the property inside, and remove it to a secure location. Some families were left with no beds, tables, or chairs, while others were able to negotiate to keep at least the bare essentials they would need for survival. Parliament instructed that sequestered property should be sold within ten days of confiscation. The sales were to take place by auction in the nearest market place, as a deliberate act of humiliation.

The money raised through the sales would be sent to the Guildhall in London and used to support the Parliamentary military campaign.

Although moveable property would be sold immediately, it was possible for families to reclaim their homes or estates through a process called ‘composition’. They would be required to travel to London, appear before a committee based at Goldsmiths’ Hall, swear an oath of allegiance to Parliament, and promise to pay a fine, usually twice the annual value of their estates. When one half of the fine had been paid their estates would be discharged on good will, but if they did not pay the rest of the fine within a certain time it would be confiscated again.

The artwork shown below, *Pillar Chamber at Bolsover Castle*, was painted in 1846 by H.W. Todd. Even though it was created 200 years after sequestration raids were carried out, the image is a very accurate depiction. In the far right corner a soldier can be seen carrying a trunk of property into the room. In the foreground another soldier rifles through an open trunk to see what is inside, and at the table at the back two appraisers are creating an inventory of the goods they will be removing from the building. Bolsover was owned by the Royalist general, William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle.

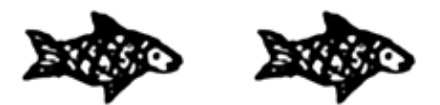


Pillar Chamber at Bolsover Castle by H.W. Todd (1846). Image credit: Historic England.

Turning Cromwell Upside Down!

EDWARD MOLINS was surgeon to St Thomas’s Hospital in London. He was a well-known lithotomist – someone who removed stones which sometimes form in the kidney, bladder and gallbladder. However, at the outbreak of the Civil Wars, Molins joined the King’s army at York. He served as a surgeon with the Royalist forces until he was captured at the siege of Arundel Castle in January 1644. Parliament ordered Molins to be removed from his post at St Thomas’s but he continued to practise surgery in London.

Despite his Royalist sympathies, Molins’s reputation was such that Oliver Cromwell sought his treatment when suffering from a bladder stone in 1656. The Genovese Ambassador, a friend of Cromwell, reported that Molins gave the Lord Protector a draught to relieve the pain. However, Molins (who was an eccentric character) then insisted on turning Cromwell upside down three times in imitation of how the surgeon claimed the Protector had treated England. Molins refused to accept any payment for his work but asked for a drink, which he used to toast King Charles. According to the Ambassador, Cromwell saw the funny side of his treatment and sent Molins £1,000 the next day in the name of the King.



Irish Refugees

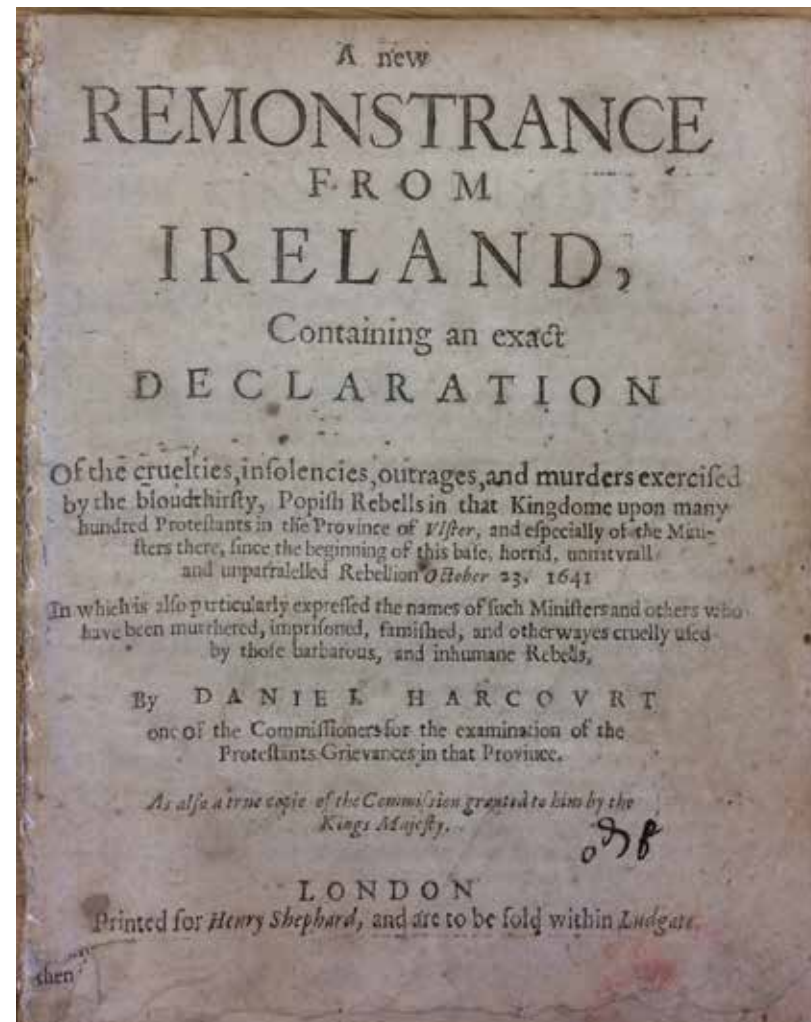
Over the first half of the seventeenth century, Catholics in Ireland had lost land, money and political power due to their faith. In 1641 members of the Irish Catholic elite hoped to reaffirm the rights of Catholics by organising a rebellion to overthrow the English administration in Ireland. The rebellion began in Ulster on 22 October 1641. It spread quickly across Ireland. Many members of the Irish Catholic population took the opportunity to reclaim land and possessions they had lost. In some places acts of violence were committed. In England sensational stories were printed of the rebels killing babies with pitchforks, cutting off the hands of Protestants and plucking out their eyes. In 1643 Daniel Harcourt published his *Remonstrance*, which detailed a number of these stories. Acts of violence, however, were committed by both Catholics and Protestants.

Thousands of Protestant refugees fled to England, Scotland, Wales and Continental Europe to escape the rebellion. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of refugees who arrived into England. In the winter of 1641-2 at least 1,300 refugees arrived into the ports of Chester and Bristol. Thousands more followed during the 1640s. The majority of these refugees were women and children. The men were often taken for the army in Ireland to help defeat the rebels.

In England, the reception of the refugees was mixed. Most people wanted to help these distressed people, but were worried about the financial cost. With the outbreak of the Civil War in England in August 1642 these financial concerns increased. In Upton, Nottinghamshire, at least 426 refugees were given charity between 1641 and 1651. Charity was usually given as shillings or just a couple of pence. Unusually, in Upton, refugees were also given shelter in people's homes for short periods of time.

The full accounts of refugees can be read on the 1641 Depositions website: 1641.tcd.ie

Recent estimates suggest that around **ten thousand** men, women and children, **Catholic** and **Protestant**, were **killed** in the first few months of the Irish rebellion.



Daniel Harcourt, *A new remonstrance from Ireland* (1643).



Wenceslaus Hollar, 'Supposed Irish atrocities during the Rebellion of 1641.' Image credit: Historic Images/Alamy Stock Photo.

Charles Anthony

CHARLES ANTHONY was an Englishman who moved to Ireland to become a religious minister. He became vicar of Ballyscion, a parish in county Derry, and lived in the town of Bellaghy. At the outbreak of the rebellion (October 1641) Charles fled the town and travelled across Ireland to find safety. In June 1642 he arrived in Dublin and gave an account of his sufferings to the Commission for the Despoiled Subject. This was a group of eight Church of Ireland clergymen given the task of collecting statements from refugees in Ireland. Charles then travelled from Dublin to London and petitioned Parliament for charity. He received £5, enough to maintain a poor family for six months. He likely lived in London with his brother Edward or his sister Mary.

After the Restoration (1660), Charles received a new church position. He became the vicar of St Anne's church in Catterick, Yorkshire. He resided there until his death in 1685.

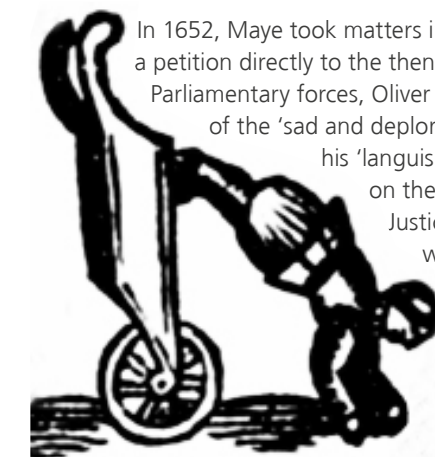
In his will Charles gave to each of his relatives in London forty shillings to 'buy tokens of my love'. This gift shows the continued relationship between Charles and his family in London who had helped him when he was a refugee.



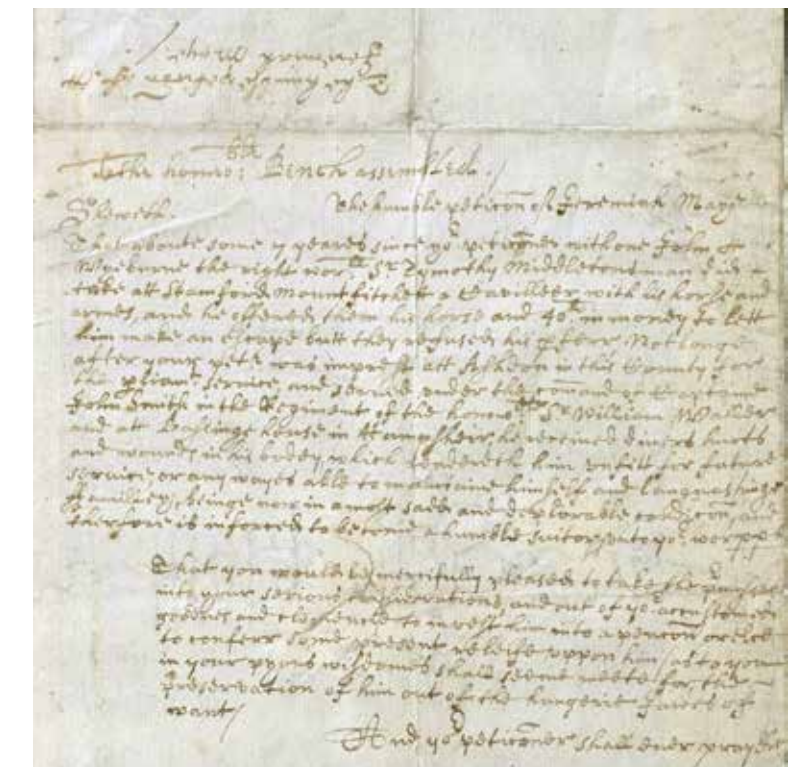
Jeremiah Maye, Maimed Soldier

Jeremiah Maye lived in the village of Ashdon in Essex. He seems to have been firmly in favour of the Parliamentary cause, as he later related how he had taken a Royalist cavalryman prisoner at nearby Stansted Mountfitchet in the early stages of the Civil Wars. The captive offered Maye his horse and £40 to let him escape but Maye refused.

Shortly afterwards, Maye was conscripted into the Parliamentary army under Sir William Waller and served at the siege of Basing House in November 1643. Maye was so badly injured that he was both unfit for further service and unable to undertake paid employment. Maye's injuries also had a profound impact on his family, as he could no longer support them.



In 1652, Maye took matters into his own hands and submitted a petition directly to the then commander-in-chief of the Parliamentary forces, Oliver Cromwell. Maye told Cromwell of the 'sad and deplorable condition' of himself and his 'languishing family'. Cromwell took pity on the injured veteran, directing Essex's Justices of the Peace to pay him a weekly pension. Maye had already received a one-off payment of £2 for, as he put it, 'the preservation of him out of the hungry jaws of want'.



Above: The petition of Jeremiah Maye (1652). Reproduced by courtesy of the Essex Record Office, document reference Q/SBa 2/78.

Left: Map of Bellaghy (1622), County Derry. Image courtesy of Lambeth Palace Library, London, reference MS 634 f73v-74r.

Introduction



The conflict widened horizons and accelerated change. Aided by the breakdown in censorship, political and religious turmoil stimulated new ideas.

Notions of divine kingship were undermined by notions of power residing in the people. A new religious market place opened up as a wide array of sects and gathered churches were tolerated for the first time. There were calls for an end to tithes, for religious toleration and a universal male franchise. Women participated in public life as petitioners, demonstrators, pamphleteers, spies, pensioners, medical practitioners, preachers and occasionally even as combatants. In a world turned upside down, anything became possible.

Church-Building During the Commonwealth

One of the few new churches built during the Interregnum was Bramhope Chapel in the parish of Otley in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It was built on land adjacent to the manor house of Captain Robert Dyneley, soon after the King's execution in 1649. Dyneley was a friend and neighbour of the Parliamentary commander-in-chief, Thomas, Lord Fairfax, who had been born in the parish.

Guyhirn Chapel in Cambridgeshire was another Godly meeting house built at the end of the Interregnum in 1659. The original wooden pews were constructed with narrow spaces in between them to prevent any superstitious kneeling for prayer.

In stark contrast to the plain style of these puritan chapels, Sir Robert Shirley commenced the building of the Chapel of the Holy Trinity at Staunton Harold in Leicestershire in 1653. Shirley was an active Royalist conspirator who was twice imprisoned in the Tower of London during the Interregnum. He sheltered Royalist clergy who had been ejected from their livings. He directed the rebuilding of his family estate's chapel in a ceremonial High Church Gothic style. He did not live to see completion of the work and died aged only 27 in the Tower of London in 1656. An inscription above the west entrance to the church at Staunton Harold commemorates him:

'In the year 1653 when all things Sacred were throughout the nation Either demolisht or profaned Sir Robert Shirley Barronet, Founded this Church; whose singular praise it is to have done the best thing in the worst times and hoped them in the most calamitous. The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.'



Holy Trinity, Staunton Harold, Leicestershire. Images courtesy of Leicester Photo.



Bramhope Chapel, Otley, West Riding of Yorkshire. Image credit (upper): Andrew Hopper; (lower): John Ashton.

Giles Strangways

GILES STRANGWAYS of Melbury Sampford, Dorset, was a Royalist cavalry colonel who was captured at the fall of Sherborne Castle in Dorset on 15 August 1645 where his brother-in-law, Sir Lewis Dyve, was governor. Giles was committed to the Tower of London, along with Dyve, where he was joined by his Royalist father, Sir John Strangways, in October 1645.

Father and son remained in the Tower until 1648, when Sir John compounded for the sum of £10,000. This sum secured pardons for himself and Giles, and released their estates from sequestration.

After the Restoration of Charles II, Giles was MP for Dorset in the Cavalier Parliament and held high office until his death in 1675. Following a fashion among some Royalists to boast of their service and suffering for the King during the Civil Wars, Strangways had a medal of himself struck in 1660. It was intended to advance his political career, as a reminder of his imprisonment for the Royalist cause, when the world had been turned upside down.



Giles Strangways. Image credit: Fairclough Collection, University of Leicester.

Devil Cromwell and Fool Fairfax

This medal depicting Cromwell as a devil and Fairfax as a fool was cast in the Netherlands in 1650, to satirise Fairfax's retirement as commander-in-chief of the New Model Army. It depicted Fairfax as Cromwell's stooge who had been outwitted by his ambitious subordinate over the execution of Charles I. This reading of the two men's role in the regicide was circulated in Royalist pamphlets at the time, and accepted at face value by late seventeenth-century memoirists such as Richard Baxter, Denzil Holles, Sir Philip Warwick and Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon. It provided a visual metaphor to stress Cromwell's culpability and cunning, and to reduce Fairfax to a dull-witted simpleton.



'Devil Cromwell and the Fool Fairfax'. Image credit: British Museum.

*The **Barbarous Murder of Gods Anointed** had been enough to informe what you might trust to; but that tis too apparent we are **wheel'd about** to those times, wherein **Sacrilege** is counted **Reformation; Rebellion, Devotion; Murder, Justice; and Traytors consecrated Saints and Martyrs.***

The Royalist astrologer, Captain George Wharton of Kendal, Westmorland.



Strangways medal, 1660, showing Strangways' portait on one side and the Tower of London on the other. Courtesy of Tom Fairfax.

‘Freeborn John’ Lilburne (1614–1657)

Born into a Sunderland gentry family in 1614, the Leveller leader, John Lilburne, was an outspoken exponent of radical religious and political ideas, and a constant critic of successive governments from the kingship of Charles I to the Rump Parliament.

Through a succession of writings, sensational court appearances, and political activism during the 1640s, Lilburne harnessed rising discontent among the soldiers and London apprentices, mobilising popular opposition to the King, the Lords, and the leaders of the Army. His radical views and scandalous printed propaganda consistently brought him into trouble, and he was called to the bar of the House of Lords on several occasions, resulting in periods of imprisonment. This only enhanced his popular support. He became increasingly associated with the radical Independents and was defended in print by well-known pamphleteers including Richard Overton and William

Walwyn. The Leveller cause was driven, at least in part, by his personal appeal to its supporters.

Lilburne advocated religious toleration and propagated the belief that authority was rooted not in the ruler or the governing elite, but in the people themselves. This ideology led, in 1647, to the Levellers drawing up a plan of reform called *An Agreement of the People*. This called for greater proportional representation; biannual Parliaments ‘that the People do ... chuse themselves’; the authority of the electorate; and the dissolution of the Long Parliament, which he wanted to take place in September 1648.

Lilburne did not support the execution of Charles I or the Interregnum government and his ongoing opposition finally caused the authorities to bring him to trial at the Guildhall, in London, in October 1649. He was acquitted, and this medal, dated 26 October 1649, was struck in his honour.



John Lilburne. Image credit: Fairclough Collection, University of Leicester.

Star Chamber

John Lilburne’s name became well known in 1637 when he appeared in the Court of Star Chamber, one of the King’s so-called ‘prerogative courts’, for distributing works considered ‘scandalous’ and ‘factious’. He was defiant in court, questioning its procedures, legitimacy, and right to try him. He was condemned and, scandalously for a gentleman, sentenced to be whipped from the Fleet prison to New Palace Yard in Westminster. He was then returned to the Fleet, where he was expected to ‘conform’. He continued to rail against his treatment from the pillory and to promote his anti-episcopal views, even managing to distribute pamphlets to the watching crowd. Rather than ‘conforming’, he appeared empowered by the experience. Nonetheless, he did not forgive this treatment, and was still petitioning the Lords for reparation in 1648.



Medal cast in celebration of Lilburne’s release from imprisonment (1649). Courtesy of Tom Fairfax.

I judge it lawful, praise-worthy, and expedient for every man, continually to watch over the rights and liberties of his country, and to see that they are violated upon none ... otherwise such violation, breaches, and incroachments will eat like a Gangrene upon the common Liberty, and become past remedy.

The just defence of John Lilburne, against such as charge him with Turbulency of Spirit (1653).

New Ways of Communicating

The 1640s witnessed an explosion of cheap printed materials that became available not just to the wealthy, but right across society. Print was widely distributed and read. Even the illiterate could participate by hearing the latest news through public readings. The subject matter was diverse and often flexible in its approach to truth, as print became a medium for propaganda and the broadcast of ideas.

Earlier tracts such as the anti-Spanish pamphlets of Thomas Scott had stirred up opposition to the Government in the 1620s, but it was in the 1640s that print became a powerful medium for popular politics. Access to printing presses and distribution networks stimulated ‘popular’ participation in revolutionary politics, which was alarming to the governing elite, but empowering to the masses. The Civil Wars accelerated this process and a print war emerged as each side published regular bulletins proclaiming their successes and taunting their rivals’ misfortunes. These publications often embellished the truth; they were designed to be polemic and discredit the opposition.

Mercurius Rusticus, a Royalist news sheet edited by Bruno Ryves, featured scabrous attacks on Parliamentary supporters, soldiers, and religious radicals. Ryves was at pains to point out the dichotomy between Parliamentarians’ behaviour and their voiced defence of liberty and true religion. Parliament’s *Mercurius Civicus*, or *London’s Intelligencer*, struck back at the Royalist propaganda effort ‘to prevent mis-information’. It was published weekly between 1643 and 1646 and supported the Parliamentarians. Costing one penny, it was readily affordable.



Bruno Ryves, *Mercurius Rusticus* (London, 1685).

Religious Sects

BAPTISTS were radical Protestants who rejected infant baptism. They were sometimes scornfully called Anabaptists to associate them with the failed commune of Munster in Germany in 1534.

DIGGERS were followers of Gerrard Winstanley, a prophet, who, to overcome harvest failure and famine, advocated the abolition of private property. Diggers planted crops on English common land in 1649–50. They established communes, most famously at St George’s Hill, Cobham, in Surrey, until they were broken up and dispersed by local landowners.

LEVELLERS were political radicals who emerged from London Baptist circles in 1646 and won sympathisers in the Parliamentary armies. They campaigned for religious toleration, greater proportional representation and the sovereignty of the Commons. They sought more regular elections and limits on executive power.

FIFTH MONARCHISTS were radical millenarians who believed that King Jesus would soon arrive in England to establish a thousand year rule of his saints. They won influential supporters in the New Model Army.

QUAKERS stressed the inner light of their spirit rather than Biblical study. They were notorious for challenging clergymen during services and refusing to show deference to magistrates. Their female prophetesses made many fear for the gender order. They numbered 50,000 by 1660.

RANTERS were a strange mix of charismatic preachers and their followers who believed they were free from sin and the constraints of moral law. They were accused of drunkenness and fornication, sparking many clergymen to write pamphlets denouncing their excesses.

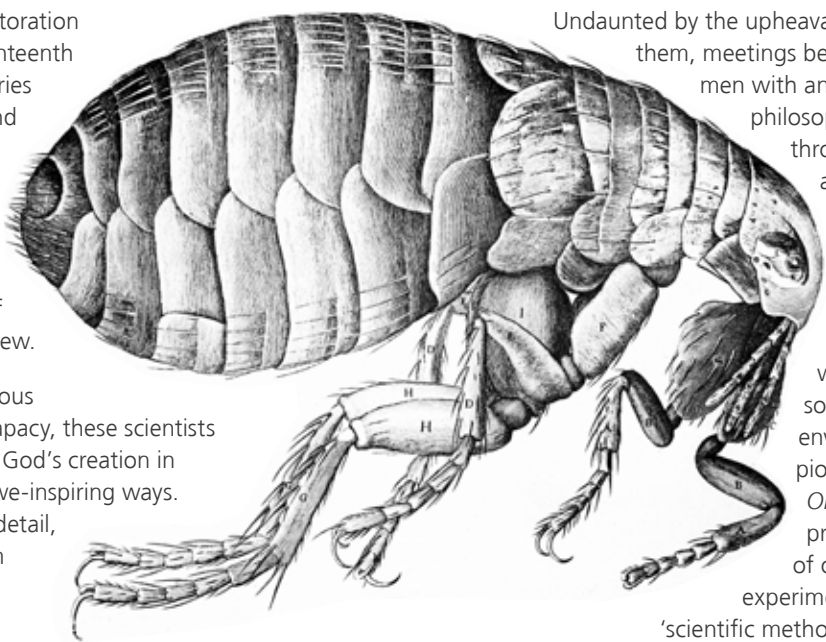
The Scientific Revolution

It was not just in the social, political, and religious spheres that the world was turned upside down. The seventeenth century also witnessed a revolution in science, technology, and medicine that some might argue is unparalleled even today. Belief systems that had existed since the days of Aristotle, Ptolemy and Pliny were turned on their head as concepts of nature and the universe were challenged by men whose names still resonate in the modern age such as Sir Christopher Wren, Isaac Newton, Robert Hooke, and Robert Boyle. The experiments and discoveries of these men and others like them changed forever the way we think, work, and understand the world we live in.

For many, this was an exciting time to be alive. For others it was unsettling, even threatening, to find their mental world come under attack. The established belief systems were founded on superstition, prayer, and tradition, and were closely bound up with religion. Now, as the century unfolded, belief in divine providence, alchemy, witchcraft, and trust in medical treatments grounded on humoral theory were all weakened as the new ideas took hold.

The scientific revolution was not a post-Restoration phenomenon. The sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries witnessed important new discoveries and philosophies that were to have profound importance, namely the work of pioneers such as Galileo, Bacon, and Kepler. But the Civil Wars and their aftermath were also causal, in that they ushered in greater toleration and receptivity to new ideas, meaning that thinkers could reconcile belief in an all-powerful God with a new world-view.

While these new ideas challenged old religious beliefs, especially those laid down by the Papacy, these scientists were not atheists. Instead, they showcased God’s creation in new, increasingly enlightened, and often awe-inspiring ways. They were sometimes illustrated in minute detail, such as this engraving of a human flea from Robert Hooke’s *Micrographia*, published by the Royal Society in 1665.



Undaunted by the upheavals going on around them, meetings between like-minded men with an interest in natural philosophy were taking place throughout the Civil Wars and Interregnum, largely centred on Gresham College in London. They called themselves the Invisible College. Its members were influenced by the so-called ‘new science’ envisaged by Bacon in his pioneering work *Novum Organum* (1620), which promoted the importance of observation and experimentation, the so-called ‘scientific method’.

By 1660, Gresham College had become a major seat of learning, boasting professorships in a wide range of subjects including astronomy, chemistry, and geometry. Public lectures were held, attracting the most enquiring minds, who afterwards met informally to discuss what they had heard.

It was these meetings that led to the founding of The Royal Society. On 28 November 1660 Christopher Wren, then Professor of Astronomy at Gresham, gave a lecture. Afterwards a core group of twelve enthusiasts attended a meeting to discuss how they might evolve their informal discussions into a more serious body dedicated to advancing natural philosophy. Among the attendees were Robert Boyle and John Wilkins, Oliver Cromwell’s son-in-law. They formed themselves into an association ‘for the promoting of Experimental Philosophy’, with Wilkins holding the Chair.

Two years later the organisation received a Royal Charter from Charles II, and in 1663 it became known as The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge.

Women of Courage – Prophetess, Spy and Martyr

Prophetess – Elizabeth Poole

Elizabeth Poole (c.1622–c.1668) was born in London but moved to Abingdon after she was expelled from a Baptist congregation for heresy and immorality. She became famous for having visions and making prophecies. In the build-up to the trial of Charles I, on 29 December 1648 and again on 5 January 1649, Elizabeth was called to speak of her visions before the Council of Officers of the New Model Army. They showed her great respect. She testified that the Army was God’s instrument, and that it might depose the King but should not execute him. Henry Ireton questioned how they could be sure her vision came from God. Elizabeth published an account of her dealings with the officers as *A Vision: Wherein is Manifested the Disease and Cure of the Kingdome* (1649). After the regicide, she published further defences of her ability as a prophetess, in which she explained her powers came from ‘the babe Jesus in me’. The last that is known of her is her imprisonment for maintaining an illegal printing press in her house in Southwark in 1668.

‘She-intelligencer’ – Jane Whorwood

Jane Whorwood (c.1612–1684) was a Royalist ‘she-intelligencer’, or spy. While the King was at Oxford Jane smuggled £80,000 worth of gold to him from a wealthy benefactor, Sir Paul Pindar. After the King’s surrender, in May 1646, she intrigued repeatedly for his escape from his captors. She smuggled letters and money to him from Sir Lewis Dyve, an intelligencer who was still working for the King despite incarceration in the Tower, and Thomas Adams, Dyve’s fellow inmate, who was sending money. At the King’s behest Jane consulted the astrologer William Lilly for an occult opinion as to his best means of escape, a strange choice as Lilly supported Parliament. The King’s ciphered letters suggest that Jane provided the King with more than espionage and that she was his lover during his confinement. Following the King’s execution, her underhand activities were concealed from the Government by John Ashburnham and Sir Edward Walker. Jane was imprisoned briefly in 1651 for bribery, after which she returned home, only to suffer abuse at the hands of her violent husband, Brome. She died in obscurity in 1684.



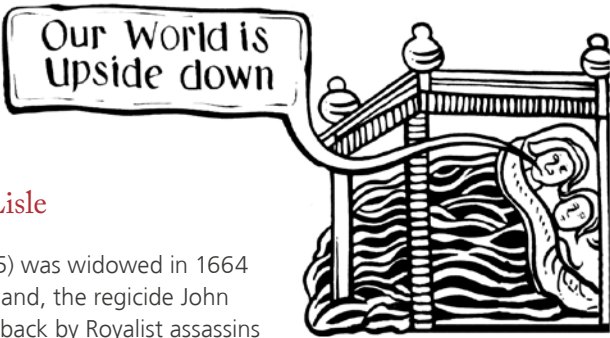
Lady Alice Lisle (1614–1685). Image credit: Fairclough Collection, University of Leicester.

Martyr – Alice Lisle

Alice Lisle (1614–1685) was widowed in 1664 when her exiled husband, the regicide John Lisle, was shot in the back by Royalist assassins in a churchyard in Lausanne, Switzerland.

She continued to sympathise with Protestant Dissenters after the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy. Following the collapse of the Duke of Monmouth’s rebellion against the Roman Catholic King James II in 1685, Alice harboured rebel fugitives in her home at Moyles Court in Hampshire. For this offence, she became the first victim of the notorious Judge Jeffreys during the Bloody Assizes. James II, perhaps in vengeance for his father’s death in 1649, was eager to make an example of her. Despite being over seventy years old, infirm and nearly deaf, Alice was sentenced after a six-hour trial to be burned alive. James eventually allowed her to be beheaded instead, in Winchester market place on 2 September 1685.

She became a martyr figure for Whigs and Dissenters, and after the enthronement of William III, her attainder for treason was revoked.



Have we not an equal interest with the men of this Nation, in those liberties and securities contained in the Petition of Right, and the other good laws of the land? Are any of our lives, limbs, liberties or goods to be taken from us more than from men?

Katherine Chidley, Leveller and petitioner to the House of Commons (1649).



‘Really I thinke that the poorest hee ... hath a life to live as the greatest hee; and therefore truly ... I thinke itt's cleare, that every man that is to live under a Government ought first by his owne consent to putt himself under that Government’.

Colonel Thomas Rainsborough, Putney Church, 29 October 1647.



The Martyrology of ‘Saint’ Charles I

Eikon Basilike

Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings, or ‘The King’s Book’, was available to buy in bookshops on 9 February 1649, just 10 days after the execution of Charles I. At the time widely believed to have been penned by the King himself, but most likely written by his chaplain, it was at once a justification, prayer, and advice book for Prince Charles. It was the King’s world turned inside out, a deep and, for many, emotional insight into the tortured mind of this introspective man.

The frontispiece below is a triumph of Royalist iconography. The troubled King is depicted kneeling in prayer. He is in his robes, but his earthly crown has been cast almost carelessly aside. In its stead he clasps a crown of thorns, while envisioning the crown of heavenly glory. From the looming clouds emits a beam of light, *clarius e tenebris*, ‘shining brightly out of darkness’. This powerful imagery and language, couched in religious terms deeply resonant with contemporaries, lent it tremendous power amid a populace in shock following this ultimate manifestation of a world turned upside down, the execution of the King.

The power of *Eikon Basilike* as pro-Royalist propaganda was not lost on the Commonwealth government. The Council of State commissioned John Milton to write a refutation, which was printed in October 1649. The result, *Eikonoklastes*, was a scathing attack on *Eikon Basilike* and its potent frontispiece. But the King had the last word: his *magnum opus*, ghost-written or not, was a massive posthumous success, running into 35 English editions before the end of 1649. It elevated Charles I from cast-off king to shining martyr, an emblem of hope and comfort for Royalists.

Eikon Basilike remained widely read well into the eighteenth century and offers a tantalising insight into the defeated King’s mind to this day.



Charles the Martyr Day

From 1660 the anniversary of the execution of Charles I was added into the Church of England’s liturgical calendar as Charles the Martyr Day. This included a set service in the Book of Common Prayer, with sermons stressing subjects’ due obedience, and the dangers posed by sectarians and democrats. It remained until the Anniversary Days Observance Act of 1859 removed it, without the consent of the Convocation of the Church of England. Yet go into an English Cathedral on 30 January, the anniversary of the King’s execution, and you will likely still hear a sermon in memory of ‘Blessed Charles the Martyr’ delivered by the cathedral clergy.

Charles I remains the only official saint in the Church of England. The Society of King Charles the Martyr was founded in 1894 with the stated purpose of ‘intercessory prayer for the defence of the Church of England against the attacks of her enemies.’



Statue of King Charles the Martyr in Grace & St Peter’s Parish, Baltimore, Maryland. Image credit: Megan Amoss, www.wikipedia.org.

‘The Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings’, the frontispiece of *Eikon Basilike* (1649). Image credit: Lebrecht Music & Arts/Alamy Stock Photo.

Legacy

The World Turned Upside Down bequeathed the English-speaking peoples numerous legacies that are still important today. Saint Charles the Martyr remains sacred to some within the Church of England and the Episcopal Church in North America. Yet religious plurality and toleration in modern Britain is the legacy of the overturning of Charles I’s church and state. Such religious liberty was purchased with blood. These freedoms should not be taken for granted and may need defending in future.

After 1660 religious nonconformity outside the Church of England was tainted with republicanism and social subversion, whilst establishment

suspicions about standing armies harked back to when the New Model Army shook the social order. Winston Churchill wrote of the English Republic as an aberration, a ‘triumph of some twenty thousand resolute, ruthless, disciplined military fanatics over all that England has ever willed or ever wished. Long years and unceasing irritations were required to reverse it.’

In his own lifetime, Churchill had witnessed how the radicals of the English Revolution had been rediscovered by the British Left. Levellers, Diggers, Fifth Monarchists, Ranters and Quakers were studied in detail by Christopher Hill, a member of the British Communist Party

(1934–57) and Master of Balliol College, Oxford (1965–78). His classic book celebrating their legacy was published in 1972, appropriately named *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution*.

With the future relationship between England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland cast into doubt by Brexit, the unintended consequences of civil war and the ‘world turned upside down’ might serve today as both an inspiration and a warning. The 1650s was the first decade when all of the British Isles were ruled directly from Westminster, and its series of constitutional experiments ended with the Restoration of Charles II.

Writing his short memorials in the 1660s, the New Model’s first commander-in-chief, Sir Thomas Fairfax, reflected on God’s plans for England: ‘I cannot believe such wonderful successes were given in vain’. His words invite us all to better understand the meanings of the English Revolution.

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The World Turned Upside Down (1647). Image credit: World History Archive/Alamy stock photo.



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