
CRITICAL APPROACHES TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
Creating Memory
Historical Fiction and the English Civil Wars
Farah Mendlesohn
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Dedicated to Speaker Bercow who took his place in the history books in the defence of the parliamentary prerogative on 18 March 2019; to Gina Miller and the Justices of the Supreme Court, 26 September 2019: Lady Hale, Lord Reed, Lord Kerr, Lord Wilson, Lord Carnwath, Lord Hodge, Lady Black, Lord Lloyd-Jones, Lady Arden, Lord Kitchin, Lord Sales; and to Carole Underwood, 1943–2020, who gifted me her passion and politics.

Preface

We did ride as Ironsides, a king to overcome!
Then as Levellers, Ranters, Diggers fought,
To hold what we had won, won;
To hold what we had won.
Dave Rogers, 1976 (from *Singing the Changes,* Banner Theatre, 2005)

The 'English Civil War' is now referred to by most historians as The Wars of the Three Kingdoms. The wars began in Scotland, and spread to Ireland and to England. Events in one country profoundly affected the outcome of events in the others. In reality it is not possible to segment the wars but two factors have affected the terminology in these books and led to my choice to use the term 'English Civil Wars' for the wars between King and Parliament, after Blair Worden's choice in *The English Civil Wars, 1640–1660* (2009).

Contemporaries understood themselves as living in three separate countries with the same king but different political systems, traditions and dispensation. Charles' attempt to unify this was one catalyst for the rebellions, and in the rhetoric of the various sides it is noticeable that there is a difference between the Royalists who saw the two islands as, in effect, one fiefdom or polity, and the Parliamentarians who were generally very clear that England, Scotland and Ireland were three distinct polities under one king. Indeed the impeachment of the Earl of Strafford in 1641 depended on the understanding of the Irish as 'foreigners' whose troops would be brought in to invade England, otherwise it could not

have been considered treason; the raising of English troops to control Scotland (whether by Charles or Parliament) was understood by Parliaments in England and Scotland as invasions; the decision of the Scots to support Charles II's attempt to retake England was seen similarly. Thus to the English, however affected they were by the Covenanter rising, or by Scottish politics generally, it remained an English Civil War.

The second factor is that this has descended into the fiction about the period. Overwhelmingly the texts considered in this book focus on England, and construct an England in which the war takes place on a curiously isolated island. Not only are the Scots and Irish mostly absent from the texts written by English (and American) men and women, but the continent of Europe is shrouded in fog. The backdrop of the Thirty Years' War is hardly to be seen, yet it is from there that many participants brought their experience, such as Sir John Hotham of Hull who became famous when he refused his town's armoury to Charles (Reckitt 1988) (see Murdoch 2019 for an overview of the influence of the German wars on the British wars). And it is from Spain and France that the parties sought funding, and during the Commonwealth where both parties contributed soldiers, fighting their quarrels within the larger landscape of the Thirty Years War (Barratt 2016). Thus, whatever the reality, this book is overwhelmingly about the *English* Civil Wars.

The terms used for the two sides will be Royalist and Parliamentarian throughout, except when discussing how texts use terminology. I will where possible avoid the term 'moderates' for the middling ground of Parliamentarians, as it is regularly used by too many historians and fiction writers to impose judgement, and the dividing line between the moderate and immoderate more often reflects the position of the historian or fiction writer than the self-perception of characters. 'Radicals' however will be used as a term that people used for themselves. For the period after the death of Charles, I will prefer the Commonwealth and then Protectorate, rather than the post-Restoration terminology the *interregnum* which implies a gap or space in which things are static (nothing could be further from the truth) and the inevitability of Restoration, which would not have been the case for those who were children in this period, and whom my authors are trying in some ways to recreate.

Not every reader of this book will be familiar with the events and arguments of the English Civil Wars, either because it is not part of their own national and cultural history (sadly it is not taught in American schools even though 'no taxation without representation' is at the core of the

conflict between Parliament and King), or because it was not on their school curriculum in England, as it was not for many years. Thus each chapter will begin with a short overview of the events and issues at stake.

NB:

Many of the books discussed are available only at the British Library or in facsimile reprints. Others (both old and contemporary) are available only on kindle. For the sake of consistency, all references to the fiction are to chapters.

This is not a book *about* the Civil Wars, so I have chosen to be very selective with secondary references, offering relatively few and referring the reader to the most important and the most recently published.

London, UK Farah Mendlesohn

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Acknowledgements

My interest in the English Civil Wars started with a primary school text book called simply *Looking at History: Tudors and Stuarts* by R. J. Unstead (1974). It was printed on cream paper (or maybe it had just yellowed) with black and white pictures. I've never seen it since and the colour version I obtained has been a reminder of the very thin threads on which a childhood passion can be built: it has a mere four paragraphs about the war. My interest was further sparked with the verse that opens the book, from the radical theatre group Banner Theatre. My mother was a member and I spent several years of my childhood sitting in rehearsal rooms. It was nourished by a second-hand copy of Christopher Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down* which my mother gave me when I was a teenager, and by membership in the radical choir the Birmingham Clarion Singers, with whom I learned to sing Leon Rosselson's *The World Turned Upside Down* and went to one of the early Burford commemorations. My interest in the intellectual thought of the seventeenth century was further stimulated by Dr. Ron Clayton at the University of York.

In the 1990s I wrote my Ph.D. on Quaker relief work in the 1930s. Digging around in the history of Quaker thought took me back to the seventeenth century. Slowly, the English Civil War became hobby reading. Then in 2011 I took up the challenge to write fiction for NaNoWriMo and in order to teach myself to write fiction picked up an old favourite, Geoffrey Trease, to emulate. That led to the decision to write a book on Geoffrey Trease (it will be the next book). I wanted to compare his work

directly to his predecessors and successors so took a look at which period he spent most time on, which turned out to be the English Civil Wars, so for a chapter of that book I scoured bibliographies and delved into the holdings of the British Library, and got buried in the historiography of the Civil Wars. It will surprise no one who knows me well that the resulting chapter was far, far too long. I put it to one side and ignored my partner who kept saying 'that would make a good book', until Palgrave Macmillan approached me and Edward reminded me, 'you have the outline for a book over there'.

So my primary overwhelming thank you goes to Edward James, without whom this book really would not exist.

I am not a Civil War or Early Modern historian but several of my friends are. For their encouragement and assistance I offer grateful thanks to: Norah Carlin, Andy Wood, Diane Purkiss, Ian Atherton, Anne Markey, Ciara Boylan and also Chris Collingwood (artist) www.collingwoodhistoricart.com who shared his interest in visual recreation of the past. Invaluable web sites were *The British Civil War Project: British Civil Wars, Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1638–1660*, http://bcw-project.org/ and the Univerity of Leicester Civil War Petitions project: https://www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk/.

Facebook friends: I have no truck with people who argue online friends are superficial. Over the years mine have been stalwart researchers of lost references (such as figuring out which primary school history book I was thinking of, above, and visits to museums I could not reach), and writing cheerleaders, and have been there for me in some rather tough times. Particular thanks go to the 300 Word Daily Challenge Group who bring to life my mother's sage advice about productivity: eat your elephant a spoonful at a time.

Ian Atherton, Norah Carlin, Edward James, Ken MacLeod and Kari Sperring all did enormous amounts of work on this manuscript to help me avoid errors and assist me in melding the several stories I was trying to tell. Norah and Ian supported my attempt to write about a period I have only briefly studied formally; Kari helped me with the wider genre context for those fictions whose authors had frequently written many other books set in other periods; Ken MacLeod took me around Covenanter memorials and explained Scottish Protestantism to me; Edward James accompanied me to museums and re-enactments in which he was not the least bit interested, because in the early stages he was a necessary companion to a learner driver.

Additional thanks go to Edward as always, for making sure my manuscript is fit to read, and because without his aid editing the manuscript, and indexing it, this book would never have been finished. It is the seventh of my books he has edited and they are all much improved for it.

All mistakes and strange interpretations are my own.

Introduction

> No event in English history has inspired as much lasting acrimony as the Civil War… For nearly two hundred years the writing of histories of the Civil War consisted really of attempts to marshal evidence to prove the virtues of the principles for which Royalists or Parliamentarians claimed to have fought. (Hutton 1982, xxxi)

This book is about memory, about the significance of memory, and the role which the wars that raged across the British Isles in the seventeenth century and which killed 11% of the population (compared to 3% in the First World War) have played in our understanding of nationhood. It is about the role that historical fiction—primarily for the young—has played in preserving and shaping those memories and in what Alan Robinson describes as creating an 'afterlife of the past' (2011, 7). All around us are markers of this past, some more obvious than others.

The English Civil Wars or, as they are now referred to by historians, the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, begin with the outbreak of war between the King and Scotland in 1638 over the imposition of a new Bible and service. When they end depends on what story is being told: they may end in 1649 with the trial and execution of the King; in 1660 with the Restoration; in 1688 with the Glorious Revolution and the overthrow of Charles I's second son, James II; or with the death of Queen Anne and the decision to overlook *fifty-one* Catholic heirs before the anointing of George of Hanover. Some feel that the wars ended only with the Battle of Culloden and the final defeat of the house of Stuart (Lenman 1986).

The Civil Wars are central to the construction of English, Irish and to a lesser extent Scottish, political identity over the three and a half centuries that have followed the Restoration. The Civil Wars contributed to the construction of England's and then Great Britain's identity as a bastion of Protestantism, the construction of the concept of a constitutional monarchy, and the value of political gradualism. This narrative did not emerge organically, it was an active project. As Edward Vallance notes, suppressing the memory of the wars and their causes came to be a matter of government policy in the first century after the wars (2019, 5). And for the nineteenth century, Timothy Lang argues that the Victorians—aware of the parallels with contemporary sectarian strife, and the legacies of the French Revolutions—were drawn naturally to the period: 'The Victorians wrote more on the Stuarts than on any other period in their nation's past… producing a body of literature that was both scholarly and politically engaged' (1995, 1), and which, as we will see in this book, spilled over into fiction.

Furthermore, there has always been a counter narrative usable by radical movements: one of workers' education, of the power of reading and speaking and thinking for oneself. At the People's History Museum in Manchester, for example, there is a large 'family tree' of ideology and thought in the main hall that can be bought as a poster for £2. The root of the tree is the English Revolution and as it descends Roundheads become Whigs, Cavaliers become Tories and Levellers become radicals. In Ned Palmer's *A Cheesemonger's History of the British Isles* (2019) even the radical artisan food movement is positioned as a legacy of the Levellers and Diggers.

Alan Robinson has argued that historical fiction is a kind of counterfactual, that seeks to rewrite the historical record (2011, 30). The English Civil War is a classic case of what Jerome de Groot describes as a *conflicted national history* (2009/210), and as such demonstrates vividly the potential for that counterfactual element. The English Civil War is part of a lived and living tradition. As Butler and O'Donovan observe, 'The disputes that lie behind the English Civil Wars… are still to some extent current… We are to an extent living still living with the dispensation that arose directly out of the Civil Wars and the 1688 revolution' (94). What one knows of the wars and what one believes about the wars shapes what one thinks now, and where one positions oneself now shapes how one thinks of the wars. At Cromwell's house in Ely, visitors are invited to decide whether they think the Parliamentarians are right or wrong: the gentleman in front

of us still thought it all hinged on whether it was right or wrong to execute a king. This author is Jewish and from a radical family; she is biased in favour of Cromwell. As a science fiction writer she is also attracted to the radical futurism of the Levellers. An entirely liberal colleague, from an Irish family, sees Cromwell the Genocide.

Brexit has reignited the currency of the English Civil Wars. Between 2016 and 2019 over 50 newspaper articles used the divisions of the English Civil Wars as both comparison and metaphor. It is no longer amusing to read headlines and twitter feeds (see #EnglishCivilWar) which compare Theresa May's defeat in the Commons with the King's defeats in 1641, John Bercow with Speaker Lenthall, or to realise that the failure to take the Good Friday Accord seriously may reignite conflict with and within Ireland. Simon Heffer in the *New Statesman* (16–22 June 2017, 13) reflected 'as with the English Civil War, ancient distinctions threaten to last a few generations yet'.

Historical fiction about this period is a genuine cultural battleground: Geoffrey Trease's 1948 complaints and those of Robert Leeson in 1976 about the overwhelming bias towards the Royalists in this body of fiction are more than simply a protest of unfairness, of a feeling that children are not getting a full picture. Trease and Leeson cared *passionately* about the story of the English Civil Wars in a way it is impossible to imagine transferring to arguments about Roman Britain, and which spreads far beyond the historical fiction that this book concerns itself with. The fantasy writer Terry Pratchett, for example, devotes pages to the theory of monarchy in his fantasy *Nation* (2008), while in his Discworld series he creates the historical character of Suffer-Not-Injustice Vimes, 'Old Stoneface' Vimes, who led his Ironheads to victory against a corrupt king and 'picked up the axe that had no legal blessing because the King wouldn't recognize a court even if a jury could be found, when he prepared to sever what people thought was a link between men and deity—' (*Feet of Clay*, 372). Sam Vimes' grandfather, like Oliver Cromwell's, is Guilliam; however, the revolution in *Night Watch* (2002) riffs on the French Revolution of 1789 (including the demands of the prostitutes for fair pay) and the Paris Commune of 1871.

The Civil War is a contested history important to the national narrative not in the way in which it is unifying—it is not, despite the attempts particularly of nineteenth-century authors—but in the ways in which it is divisive.

This book is trying to do something tricky, to explore how fiction and history have influenced each other. Part 1 sets up the context, beginning with a narrative history of the English Civil Wars from 1641 to 1648 for those new to the topic, focusing primarily on events in England. Part 2 focuses on the themes, both historical and historiographical, which have captured the attention of fiction writers, historians and both, and also tries to account for those themes and issues that fiction writers have ignored. The final chapter concludes by looking at the aftermath, the way the Restoration has been understood and depicted in fiction.

One hundred and eighty-six works of historical fiction covering the period from the 1620s right up to 1688 are considered in this book, of which one hundred and seventy-two are focused on the war. The earliest was published in 1720 (*Memoirs of a Cavalier*, by Daniel Defoe) and the most recent in 2020 (*The Puritan Princess* by Miranda Malins, and *Killing Beauties* by Pete Langman). The selection of titles for this project has been drawn as widely as was feasible, using every available bibliography (see works cited). However not all titles could be sourced (even using the British Library and various electronic facsimile services) and twenty or thirty books were lost from the analysis in this way (and there is no certainty that they would have been eligible). Some authors are represented more than once: both Geoffrey Trease and Jane Lane (a pen name) wrote extensively of the period. In the twenty-first century the popularity of ongoing series led me to collapse each series into one 'text'. I have included material which is about 'the road to war', such as Trease's *Curse on the Sea* (1996) and his Mandeville stories, and also J. MacLaren Cobban's *Angel of the Covenant* (1898) which tells the story of Montrose. I have excluded almost all novels set entirely during the Restoration (such as G.A. Henty's *When London Burned,* 1895), but exceptions were made where their political concerns were directly tied to the Civil War and positioned the fall of James II as the final conclusion of that war, as with Trease's *Trumpets in the West* and its opposite number the Royalist Jane Lane's *England for Sale* (1943), and Georgette Heyer's *The Great Roxhythe* (1923), or a novel such as Hester Burton's *Thomas* (1969) which begins in the Commonwealth but whose crucial scenes take place in the Restoration. One novel, by Geoffrey Trease, is set in the present day: in *The Gates of Bannerdale* (1956) the protagonists search for silver plate which was hidden by the College Warden in the Civil Wars. These out of period novels are included in the bibliography, but not in the counts of bias, or in the list in Appendix C.

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Contents

CHAPTER 1

The English Civil Wars

> May it please your majesty, I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak, in this place, but as the house is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here; and I humbly ask pardon that I cannot give any other answer to what your majesty is pleased to demand of me.
>
> —Speaker William Lenthall, 4 January 1642

The origins of the English Civil Wars lie in the failure of the Stuart state to secure its finances, the tension between political principle and practicality in its role as a Protestant State in Europe, and the unfinished business of a Protestant Reformation that was in many ways a compromise between a European intellectual tradition and an English state which saw the Church as a fundamental part of the cascade of central authority. It also lay in the personality of the King and the failure of attempts to unite the Scottish and English states under one crown. Not all of these things will be represented in the fiction.

The English Stuart State regularly outran its finances: although it had access to customs duties, all direct taxation had to go through Parliament. Parliament did not yet sit regularly but was called by the King expressly to authorise taxes. James I was able to hold things together during his reign in part by ensuring that King's men were elected to Parliament in rotten boroughs—seats with very few voters—but also through local influence, a practice illustrated in Geoffrey Trease's *Saraband for Shadows* (1982).

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James I also avoided overseas entanglements. Charles I very quickly made the mistake of seeking a short victorious war, first in France, and then against the Scots when he attempted to enforce a new prayer book. Both were disastrous: the English had no standing army and those who served abroad as mercenaries were yet to return. It reduced Charles to ever-increasing financial dependence on Parliament. Very few of the books about the *English* war discuss the Bishops' Wars: Daniel Defoe's Cavalier (*Memoirs of a Cavalier*, 1720) serves as a volunteer, and a number of the Scottish texts such as James Grant's *Harry Ogilvie, or the Black Dragoons* (1856) begin the civil conflicts in this first engagement, but generally, many of the novels treat the English war as discrete, not least because, as we shall see, most of the authors are uncomfortable with the religious aspects of the war.

It is not clear whether the economy was a factor in the outbreak of war. The population had risen from around two million in 1500 to five million around 1630, but with no corresponding rise in food production, and prices had risen around 400%. A shift towards farming for the market helped, but led to an increasing number of larger farms, which displaced tenant farmers. However, the small-scale economy of the period meant that labourers moved in and out of different kinds of work with the seasons, and there was no mass layoff in the winter. The industry was small scale with only a few areas—the weapons trade in Leicester and Birmingham, Nantwich's leather and salt industries—particularly specialised, and although manufacturing was growing it was still only a tiny fraction of the economy (Carlin 1999, 104–134). Perhaps only the wool trade had a major significance as an export, and increasingly cloth was exported fully finished. London had already become the first European mega-city, far outstripping other English urban settlements: between 1600 and 1640 the population doubled to at least 400,000 people, around 7% of the urban population. What happened in London affected the rest of the country. Thus it mattered that merchants tended to be undercapitalised, with low rates of profit which could be affected easily by foreign crisis affecting the price of imported raw materials, the safety of shipping or the assignment of monopolies (Coates 2004, 4–21).

The organisation of England was intensely parochial: the King and Parliament could only rule through the cooperation of local authorities in the form of magistrates drawn from the local gentry and aristocracy. MPs divided roughly into court and country: court appointments were just that, MPs placed there by the King. Some were themselves local but many

were not and did not represent local interest. When the system worked well local representation passed local interest up the chain. However, Charles's decision to rule without Parliament between 1629 and 1640 disrupted this process. In addition, as the exchequer was empty, the King had to find other ways of raising money. With little feedback from the localities he regularly chose ways—such as the extension of ship money from the ports to inland—which challenged local prerogative. Furthermore, in an attempt to extend the resources of the crown he resorted to an old Elizabethan tactic of selling monopolies: however rather than supporting new ventures as monopolies (the predecessors of patents) were intended to do, these frequently undermined established businesses. This also challenged the City of London which was emerging as a rival to Parliament as a centre of political as well as economic power. When Parliament was allied with London, as it was to be during much of the war, it put the weight of a mini-state behind the Parliamentary rebellion, something which, of earlier authors, only Jane Lane notes (and that to deride) and which comes to the fore only in the twenty-first-century novels by authors such as Lindsey Davis and Gillian Bradshaw.

In religion, England in 1640 was a hotchpotch. The Elizabethan Settlement had left the episcopate intact, had produced a Book of Common Prayer which was generally accepted, and supported by the King James translation of the Bible, which was accepted but was at this stage still what we might call a scholars' edition, used in churches. Most lay Protestants used the Geneva Bible with its rather more Calvinist bent. Much of the matter of ritual was left to the local minister, and as local ministers were placed as much by local landowners as by bishops, there was a strong regional variation.

In the 1630s the plainer and more Calvinist tendency dominated, but Charles was by nature inclined to ritual and despite having been raised in the Calvinist tradition rejected it for what is now known as Arminianism, which moved the act of salvation from a gift of God to works and rituals. From the point of view of the godly, it argued man could save himself (Fincham 1994, 161–186). In some areas the new High Church practices of the altar behind the rail, new glass put in place, and the churching of post-natal women were the norm; in others the communion table sat in the centre of the church and people (according to the scandalised) rested their hats there when it was not in use.

Charles I's favouring of William Laud (Bishop of London in 1628, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633), followed by Laud's purging

of Calvinists and others Laud considered too puritan, was a radical act designed to shift the belief system of the country, but which challenged local landowners' rights of patronage, by which they often bestowed benefices on their relatives and clients (Davies 1992). Repeatedly, Charles attempted to generate central power through the episcopate which he controlled, in the face of a distributed and tight-knit power network; for many of the Parliamentarians who opposed him were related to each other, to the aristocracy and to the gentry (Tyacke 1973, 140), of which the most unnerving may be *Sir* Oliver Cromwell, who served the King. In contrast, Charles had a very small personal network of power and patronage.

This brings us to the third problem which was Charles I's personality and style of governance. Blair Worden is blunt: 'He had alarming policies, which he pursed with alarming methods… He was incorrigibly deficient in political judgment… no one could trust him' (2009, 7). Charles had not been raised as the heir to the throne: he was small and sickly. The historian Pauline Gregg has suggested rickets (1981, 12), but another possibility is cerebral palsy which would also explain what is described by contemporaries as a stutter.

Charles was not raised in the court and did not make the generation of friends that would have supported his elder brother Henry (1594–1612). Henry died of a fever when he was sixteen, and Charles's first and for a long time only friend was his father's friend and perhaps lover, George Villiers, later Duke of Buckingham (it was very unusual for non-Royals to rise to the height of Duke). Buckingham's hostility to and later grooming of Charles is well documented (Carlton 1983, 22–34). It was with Buckingham that Charles undertook his politically rash journey to Spain to attempt to woo the Infanta (at one point he climbed over a wall to reach her and was halted by soldiers) (Samson 2006 for the full story, and Jane Lane's *The Young and Lonely King* 1969, for 'faction'). After his accession to the throne he eventually married Henrietta Maria of France. After Buckingham's death in 1628—and particularly after Charles was forced to accede to Strafford's execution in 1641—she became Charles' closest friend and advisor. They posed as a model married couple (the most famous portrait is by Daniel Mytens and depicts them holding between them a peace wreath). Their letters reveal an extremely close and intense relationship which was to challenge the gendered norms of kingly power, and which placed a Catholic at the heart of policy discussion (Hibbard 1983; Cressy 2015). Buckingham, Strafford and then Henrietta Maria

were not only Charles' intimates but his primary political advisors. The King's uxorious behaviour was also to form part of the construction of Charles the Martyr in the Interregnum and Restoration.

Although Charles was admired for bringing order to a licentious court, he was also seen as stiff, overly grand, and what friends described as dignity was to others distance and aloofness. Charles admitted people into his confidence only slowly, but once they were part of the inner circle, they were close to unchallengeable except by other intimates. It is noticeable that he was loved by those with whom he became intimate, as with Clarendon who had originally chosen to serve the King in the 1630s precisely in order to bring better advice to the King and who felt he could not abandon him in the face of war; similarly Sir Edmund Verney who famously declared that he could not refuse to serve a man whose bread he had eaten. Charles used this circle not only for advice, but to ensure a distance from others. But there was no attempt to build the kinds of alliances on which James and Elizabeth had depended. Finally, almost without fail, whatever project the King attempted, whether the attempt to woo the Infanta, or the attempt to force the Prayer Book on the Scots, went wrong: the King appeared to have no sense of timing, and no sense of political judgement and he coupled this with a belief (exposed when his letters to his wife were captured) that he did not have to keep his agreements or promises with mere subjects.

1625–1641: The Road to War

Charles I acceded to the thrones of both England and Scotland in 1625. Almost his first act was to declare war on Spain, stressing the exchequer, and his second was to use a loophole in Scottish law which protected minors from the appointments of regents, to revoke *all* appointments, thus instantly alienating the Scottish ruling class. In 1626 he sought to patch the state finances with a forced loan imposed on England and Wales and in 1627 went to war with France. In 1628, faced with the need to raise taxes Charles called his third Parliament: Parliament used this time to pass the Petition of Right which condemned non-Parliamentary taxation and a number of other royal policies. In response Charles dissolved Parliament and began a decade-long period of personal rule (Sharpe 1992 for the best account of this period). During this time he made peace with first France and then Spain, but rather than appease public opinion, this actually led to stress. He used the suddenly vacant see of London

(due to a scandal) to bring in William Laud as the new Bishop in 1628. Laud's preference for ritual sacramentalism raised fears that he would lead England back to Catholicism, worries begun when Charles married Henrietta Maria of France (Hibbard 1983, 96).

In 1631 Charles appointed Thomas Wentworth as Governor of Ireland, thus succeeding—as Blair Worden has noted (2009, 35)—in uniting the Anglo-Irish, the native Irish and the Ulster Scots solidly in opposition, and in 1633 Charles finally travelled to Scotland to be crowned, an event that did not go as well as he had hoped. But it was in 1637 that things really began to go awry, when Burton, Bastwick and Prynne were mutilated for seditious printing of anti-episcopal pamphlets, while the imposition of ship money on inland counties aroused fierce resentment in England and led to the trial of MP John Hampden for refusal to pay in 1637. Hampden emerged as a celebrated hero and was to lead the Grand Remonstrance in the Commons in 1641.

In Scotland things went no better: James had attempted to impose conformity with the Articles of Perth in 1621, but had failed. Under Charles the attempt to impose the new book of Canons in 1636 and the new prayer book in 1637 led to mass walk outs from the churches and the signing of the National Covenant in February 1638 (Stevenson 1973). In 1639 the General Assembly abolished the episcopate. The first Bishops' War broke out and an almost entirely southern English army was sent to Scotland, though it stalled at Kelso. In 1640 the Scottish Parliament, meeting without royal summons, voted to curb the monarch's powers. In August the Scots crossed the Tyne, threw back the English troops to Newburn and occupied most of the North, until a treaty was signed in Ripon by which the King paid the Scots to leave England.

Meanwhile, Thomas Wentworth had returned to England to advise the King, and in 1640 Charles called, and then dissolved the 'Short Parliament' (it lasted only a month). Forced to call another Parliament in the same year (this one known as the Long Parliament) it demanded the impeachment of Wentworth, now Lord Strafford, for his conduct in Ireland, and brought the Root and Branch petition which attacked the episcopacy. In May 1641 Charles was forced to allow Strafford to go to the gallows: most historians feel he was innocent of the treason of which he was accused, hence the use of an Act of Attainder rather than a conventional trial. James A. Shearman's *Kathleen Clare: Her Book* (1895) is a very deliberate attempt to reframe him as a kind and generous governor.

By this time momentum to limit the powers of the King was gathering speed. The English Parliament passed an Act preventing its own dissolution without parliamentary consent, and in June 1641 an act declaring that customs duties—traditionally the one area the monarch had controlled outright—could be levied only with the consent of Parliament. In July Parliament abolished the courts of the Star Chamber and High Commission which had been used to bring the King's own prosecutions. Ship money was abolished in August, the forced knighthood and accompanying fees, and the boundaries of royal forests, were limited. The King was losing control.

Then Ireland erupted. In 1641, seeing central control slipping with the execution of the hated Strafford, the native Irish launched attacks on the eastern settlements: their cultural impact outweighed their military success. The deaths of civilians in Dublin and the arrival of refugees in England was a major factor in intensifying English hostility to the Irish. In the Commons (not the Lords) the Grand Remonstrance, led by Hampden, proceeded to list every calamity that had beset the kingdom during Charles' reign. It passed by a narrow majority. Convinced that he had only to target the ringleaders and it would all collapse, in January 1642 Charles himself entered the Commons and tried to arrest five MPs—John Hampden, Arthur Haselrig, Denzil Holles, John Pym and William Strode: the first four would become major players in the next few years. Their escape left Charles looking weak.

Charles decided to leave an increasingly turbulent London. It proved a fatal mistake: it meant that for the first part of the war, it looked very much as if Charles was making war on his own capital city, and it removed him from the instruments of government, of revenue and from the East-facing ports that were needed for international supply. The only eastern port the Royalists would control during the war was Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Knowing this Charles marched North but in an indicator of what was to come, he failed to seize the armoury at Hull, its governor declaring for the legitimacy of Parliament and 'the King in Parliament', the phrase that would be used until late in the war.

In July 1642, Parliament appointed the Earl of Essex as commander-in-chief of its armies and in August Charles raised his standard in Nottingham and the war officially began.

1642–1646: Edgehill to the Capture of the King

Although there were a couple of minor skirmishes, the first major battle (first of the Big Three) took place at Edgehill, in Warwickshire, a county in the English Midlands where so much of the fighting would take place. The Earl of Essex commanded the Parliamentarian forces, and the King technically commanded the Royalists. In reality it was led by Prince Rupert, the King's Own Lifeguard preferring to serve under the Prince.

The King and his forces assumed a decisive win: they were gentlemen, trained to the sword. Cromwell reported to Hampden after the battle in a famous memo, 'Your troopers are most of them old decayed servingmen and tapsters; and their [the Royalists'] troopers are gentlemen's sons, younger sons and persons of quality' (Abbott 1939, vol. 4, 471). The Royalists had far more of the returning mercenary captains; they were led by the King himself, by his nephew the cavalry captain Prince Rupert and Lord Byron. Had they won there is a chance that the war would have been over. Hampden, Holles, Haselrig and Pym would have been executed as traitors, and we would never have heard of Oliver Cromwell. But under Essex the parliamentarians stood their ground: too poorly trained to make a good attacking force at this stage, and led by a man who—Parliament later concluded—wanted to bring the king to the negotiating table rather than defeat him, they yet withstood wave after wave of attack over the course of a day. When Parliamentarian troops broke and ran, Prince Rupert's unit lost all discipline and chased them, enabling Essex to regroup and press on. The day ended in a draw and both sides, exhausted and in shock from the reality of battle, withdrew.

Charles decided to go around Essex, and set out for London. He got as far as Turnham Green, but the citizens of London, in an effort that has never been commemorated in fiction but is easily as heroic as the events of the Blitz, turned out to dig ditches, build walls and defend their city from their King. The King halted and turned back, heading for Oxford where he established his capital in the university.

Parliament was still not determined on war and there were peace negotiations in Oxford. However, Charles had opened up negotiations with Ormond in Ireland with the plan to release English troops for the English war. Over the summer the Royalists made advances in the south, the Midlands and in the North of England. They needed to control the north-east in order to maintain access to the continent. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, they took Bristol. Parliament was able to relieve

Gloucester from the Royalist occupation, but the death of Parliament's leader John Pym (from cancer) was a blow to morale. At the end of the year, English troops arrived from Ireland for the King through Chester, causing the first of a number of panics about an Irish invasion.

In January 1644, worried that they were losing, Parliament made an alliance with the Scots. Here it is important to remember that Scotland was an independent nation which had *already* rebelled against the King. In January Parliament also held Nantwich through a siege (see D. W. Bradbridge, *The Winter Siege*, 2013), was mauled outside Newark but went on to win battles in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire. While the King was strengthening his hold in the South and Essex's army collapsed in Cornwall, the North fell to Parliament with the decisive second battle of the Big Three, the Battle of Marston Moor. After this Parliament took York and eventually Newcastle, cutting the King off from supplies from the continent. At Marston Moor, the Marquess of Newcastle's White Lambs (named for their undyed coats), refused to surrender, an act of bravery that resulted in the destruction of one of the King's best armies. By November Parliament was critical of the performance of Essex, and of the army as a whole: fearing they might lose Parliament offered new and easier terms to the King. Another round of peace negotiations began, but, these failing, in December Archbishop Laud was executed and the Westminster Assembly approved the new (Calvinist) Directory of Worship to replace the old Book of Common Prayer.

In April 1645 the self-denying ordinance was issued: this forced members of both Lords and Commons to resign their positions in the army, and allowed a whole slew of interpersonal conflicts to be swept aside (something the King never achieved). Sir Thomas Fairfax was appointed commander-in-chief of the Parliamentary armies, with Oliver Cromwell as his Lieutenant (exempted from the Act). Under Fairfax the army was New Modelled, its regional forces collapsed into one national army under one general its officers recruited from the godly (predominantly Independents), and famous for its cohesion and military discipline, despite the high level of conscription that continued.

In June, at Naseby in Northamptonshire, Parliament won a stunning victory and in the next year began to clear Royalist pockets in the Midlands, South-West and Wales; in October a major Royalist stronghold, Basing House, was stormed and slighted (razed). In Scotland however Montrose was winning Royalist victories against Parliament's allies, the Covenanters; but the Royalist plan to bring over Irish Catholics was

revealed, and Charles' letters to the Queen were captured and subsequently published, displaying the King's machinations and his belief that he did not have to honour any promises he made. This did much damage to the King's reputation and, worst, made it clear he was an unreliable negotiator.

In February 1646 Chester fell to Parliament: this cut the King off from his major entrepôt for Ireland, the one place where he was still winning. Torrington in Devon fell shortly afterwards. In May, Charles surrendered to the Scottish army besieging Newark. Oxford surrendered in June, effectively ending the war of 1642–1646.

1646–1649: From Surrender to the Gallows

In January 1646, Parliament paid the Scots for their promised aid, and the Scots withdrew, leaving Charles a prisoner of Parliament. Despite common allegations, this was not a trade. The Scots were already discovering what Parliament knew, that Charles was untrustworthy. With the war over, the Army began to be restive, wanting back-pay prior to being disbanded and knowing full well that if they were not paid before they were demobbed, they would not be paid at all. In June 1647 Cornet George Joyce, a low-ranking officer in the New Model, seized the king from Parliament's custody at Holden House, and took him into Fairfax's custody near Cambridge, thus tipping the balance of power to the army. He was imprisoned in Northampton.

In July representatives of the Army met near Reading to debate a new set of Proposals which would offer the King easier terms, although some he would never accept, concerning parliamentary reform. These were known as the Solemn Engagement. In August, with London in a ferment as the Presbyterian faction in Parliament tried to reorganise the Church to exclude Independents, the Army sent units to occupy London. It all passed peacefully. In November the army was calmed by the Putney debates (made famous by the discovery of notes and their editing in 1891 by C. H. Firth, and arriving in the fiction in Bernard Marshall's *The Torch Bearers* in 1923), and although there would be a mutiny in Hertfordshire it was easily crushed.

Charles escaped from Northampton in November 1647 and headed for the Isle of Wight where the Governor of Carisbrooke Castle promptly imprisoned him. In secret he concluded an alliance with the Scots who by this time were unhappy with the failure of Parliament to honour the

commitment to convert England to Presbyterianism. When his letters were intercepted it revealed that Charles was playing off Army against Parliament, and England against Scotland, while holding out for rescue from Royalist Scotland, Ireland or France. In March he tried to escape, but became stuck in the bars of his window. He tried again in May and was betrayed. The invasion that resulted from his attempts to negotiate with the Scots was defeated by Cromwell at Preston in 1648 and sealed his fate. The anti-royalist Covenanters regained the upper hand in Scotland. Charles was taken to Hurst Castle.

1648 saw the events in England that we call the Second Civil War. There were anti-parliamentarian risings in Wales, in Norwich and in Kent. The most famous and contentious was the siege of Colchester. In June Royalists entered Colchester, a Parliamentarian city. Fairfax laid siege and starved the defenders (who were not supported by the local population) into submission, a full account of which is given in Hester Burton's *Kate Rider* (1974). The subsequent military trial of Lucas, Lisle, Farre and Gascoigne on the grounds that they had broken their freely given paroles and the execution of Lucas and Lisle (Farre escaped and Gascoigne was an Italian citizen) is one of the controversies of the war. As we see in several texts, for Royalists this was murder, while for Parliamentarians it was a hint that the army, not Parliament, was in control.

In December, fearful that Parliament was about to treat with the King on the King's terms, the Army again entered London, and under Colonel Pride purged the House of Commons in preparation for seeking a trial of the King. What happened next will be outlined in Chapter 10, The Commonwealth and the Protectorate.

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