

THE CIVIL WARS
By Margaret Henson 9th June 2001

Causes:

Could the war have been averted?

Long-term causes:

1. A basic conflict in the Tudor system of government between a strong monarchy and Parliament, strengthened by the rise of the gentry.
2. The growth of Puritanism within the Church of England.
3. Monarchy had two great weaknesses: its financial base was inadequate, and it had no standing army. Trouble already brewing during Elizabeth's later years.

Personal influences.

James I laid much emphasis on the Divine Right of Kings. Charles I shared these views, but combined them with weakness, obstinacy and lack of statesmanship:

1625-9 he quarrelled with Parliament, partly over taxation

1629-40 he ruled without calling Parliament, and levied taxes without parliamentary consent.

Disastrous choice of ministers: Buckingham, incompetent and unpopular, assassinated 1629.

Archbishop Laud and Thomas Wentworth, able but very unpopular.

Scotland (N.B. a separate, Presbyterian Kingdom)

Charles' attempt to introduce Book of Common Prayer led to riots, the signing of the National Covenant and a successful Scottish war against England.

Charles forced to summon Parliament to raise money.

The Long Parliament and the Approach to War

Parliament, led by John ('King') Pym, was militant in its demands. At first Charles had little or no support but, as the Commons became more extreme, moderates rallied round him. Jan 1642 Charles tried, and failed, to arrest Pym and 4 other MPs. He left London, never to return till his execution. Country more or less drifted into war.

Summary:

Causes mainly political, but religion entered into it, and personal loyalty to the King influenced the decision of many. London and many cities for Parliament; North and West for King; but many exceptions, and some families were divided.

OUTLINE COURSE OF THE WAR:

1642 Chas I raised his standard in Nottingham, but moved S.W. towards Royalist areas as Nottingham declared for Parliament. Was intercepted at EDGEHILL (Warws.) in indecisive battle, and Parl. forces mistakenly did not prevent him from moving on London. Chas. was stopped at TURNHAM GREEN, and retreated to Oxford, which became his base.

1643 Royalist planned three-pronged attack on London: From Cornwall: Secured Devon (except Exeter, Plymouth, Barnstaple)& Bath : Defeated Parl. at ROUNDWAY DOWN. Should have pushed across to Kent & then N to London, but levies refused to leave home territory exposed to Parl. raids from Plymouth, which they besieged.

From the North, which was largely Royalist. Earl of Newcastle commanded northern army for the King: pushed down to Welbeck (his seat) preparatory to advance on London. Newark , garrisoned for the King, defortified Grantham & attacked as far as Lincoln, and Nott. feared to be attacked BUT Parl forces attacked Wakefield and Newcastle had to fall back. Newcastle recovered and regained Gainsborough and Lincoln, and the way south was open. BUT Parl. troops from Hull attacked westwards and Newcastle's levies insisted on returning to defend their locality. Thereafter they prepared to besiege Hull but failed. Newcastle then took Chesterfield, Bolsover and Welbeck, but by

this time (end of 1643) plan against London was a failure.

From Oxford: Chas. should have pushed along the Thames valley to attack London from the west, but when the Planned attack from Kent and the North failed, he besieged Gloucester (to secure route between Royalist SW and Salop and so to the North. Essex (Parl. general) forced Chas. to withdraw, but Royalist troops prevented Essex from marching on London in the first battle of NEWBURY. Sept 1643.

1643 August: Parl. and the Scots signed The Solemn League and Covenant

After the Bishops' Wars, the Scots pressed for religious uniformity between England and Scotland, which meant Parl. imposing Scottish Presbyterianism on England, but Parl. was not willing to pay this price for Scottish support against the King. But the apparently adverse military situation in 1643 led to a change of attitude. Terms: 1) Parliament would reform religion in England and Ireland according to the Word of God and the example of the best reformed churches, and would bring the churches of England, Ireland and Scotland to the closest possible uniformity. 2) in return for Scottish assistance against Chas. I.

1644 Jan. Scots invaded England aiming to join up with Parl. forces from Hull. Newcastle failed to stop them at Newcastle and Durham, and was blockaded in York, relieved by Prince Rupert, and the Royalists were defeated in July 1644 at MARSTON MOOR by the Parl. New Model Army. Newcastle escaped to France.

1645 Further Royalist attempts were unsuccessful; Fairfax mopped up Royalist strongholds in Yorks. In June 1645 Royalist final defeat at NASEBY by the Parl. New Model Army.

1646 Last remaining Royalist forces were beaten. May 1646 Chas. left Oxford for Southwell where he surrendered to the Scots whose forces were engaged in the siege of Newark (Chas. hoped for better terms from the Scots than from Parl.) The Scots eventually handed him over to Parl.

END OF THE FIRST CIVIL WAR.

Charles could not come to terms with the Scots or Parl. because all terms offered included the reduction of the King's powers and either the establishment of the Presbyterian form of religion or a form of religion decided on by Parl., none of which was Chas. prepared to accept.. His attempts to play one side off against the other led to their distrust of the King. They came to terms, by which the Scots left for home. Feb.1647.

Disagreement between the Parl. and the Army led to the seizure of the King by the Army. The King sought terms from all sides, and made an agreement with the Scots in return for their help.

SECOND CIVIL WAR:

1648 Scots invaded England and were defeated by Cromwell at the battle of PRESTON July 1648.

END OF SECOND CIVIL WAR.

The Army excluded from Parliament those members opposed to their policy. This "Rump" then set up a Commission to try the King. He was executed in Whitehall on the 31st January 1649

THE SCOTS agreed to support Chas.II in return for his undertaking to establish a Presbyterian church in England. Cromwell defeated the Scots at DUNBAR 1650, leaving the road to England open. The Scots reached WORCESTER and were defeated 1651. Chas.II escaped to France.

SOME EFFECTS OF THE WAR:

On ordinary people: Both sides levied taxes on the areas which they controlled. Where troops were stationed, they compelled the provision of food and fodder. Since the C16, parishes were legally responsible for their resident poor; during the wars, this included wounded soldiers passing through, which hit villages off main routes, which were used to evade military activity on such routes. Both sides tried to compel military service. Property was seized by soldiers etc. Religion: 1642 The King

assented to Bill abolishing bishops. 1643 (King's assent no longer required) Deans and Chapters were abolished and their property confiscated and sold (this produced another kind of landed gentry eg. Edward Cludd who bought Norwood Park and other local land. Church organisation to be by local and provincial assemblies, but not generally implemented outside London. Presbyterian Directory to replace Book of Common Prayer.

1647 Presbyterians were forced to withdraw from commissions in the Army: thereafter majority of Army Officers were sectaries .

Note: Many lower class Protestants, who had lived through the C16 Marian persecution, were unhappy with the 1559 religious settlement. Up to 1640 there was a great outpouring of religious tracts, and readers came to feel more independent and to regard bishops as unnecessary; there also developed many different interpretations of the Bible. Merchants and the wealthier classes remained presbyterian in outlook, and found the activities and beliefs of the other various groups (sectaries) repugnant. After 1649 the sectaries controlled the Army.... reduced the Long Parl. to the Rump...Commonwealth.

Cromwell as Lord Protector appointed commissioners to ensure that only fit people were appointed to livings, and to remove unfit people....about 1/3 clergy were removed (3000+); they went into voluntary exile, except those who were actively hostile, who were imprisoned. The remaining 2/3 & new appointees could, but did not have to, use the Directory, but the Book of Common Prayer was forbidden. Anglicans could be prosecuted for Anglican practices, so that for Anglicans, every Sunday service was a grievance, and Anglican rites of baptism, marriage and burial were illegal. Births had to be registered with an official, who also conducted the compulsory civil marriages.

In Southwell: Chapter abolished, Prebendaries displaced. Twelve local clergy displaced for non-Puritan practices. Minster lost its font and all usual services abolished. Minster lands largely bought by Edward Cludd: Norwood Park £964 and also the Little Park SE of Archbishop's Palace.

HOW MUCH SURVIVED THE RESTORATION?

A. Minster Chapter reconstructed and lands recovered. Church of England restored, but in Southwell was rather lax according to the Archbishop's visitation in 1690. Sectaries were not tolerated – they became non-conformists outside the established Church.

B. Parliament had greater prestige and authority than before 1642.

No taxation without Parliamentary consent.

No laws without Parliamentary consent.(ie. laws by proclamation)

No justice exercised outside the Courts of Common Law and Chancery

Bishops restored to the House of Lords.

Ministers were now accountable not only to the Crown but also to Parliament (ie no Divine Right).

NOTE: The real conclusion was achieved in the Bill of Rights 1689 after the deposition of James II and the invitation to William of Orange and his wife Mary to accept the throne of England. An elected Convention declared the throne vacant and offered the Crown to W. & M. The Coronation Oath: "to govern according to the statutes of Parliament" was agreed.

LOCAL INTEREST

A. Geographical importance of Newark:

Garrisoned for the King by end of 1642, Royalist base in the East Midlands ; on the Gt. North Rd., Fosse Way and Trent (navigable); vital link between the King, based in Oxford, and Newcastle, C-in-C Royalist troops in the North.

First siege Feb. 1643 lasted only 2 days due to dilatoriness of the Parliamentary Commander.

Second siege: Newcastle forced to fall back on York, which isolated Newark. Parl. troops completely surrounded Newark by 29.Feb. 1644. Relief attempts from surrounding Royalists strongholds failed.

Finally relieved by Prince Rupert from Chester (via Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Wolverhampton, Lichfield, Ashby, Rempstone to Bingham; he had to follow the Severn valley and routes, unlike cut-across roads of today); attacked from Beacon Hill. Largest battle fought in Notts. during the war. But no follow up: Rupert had to return, and some of his disparate forces returned to defend their

localities.

Third siege: 1645-6. After the Battle of Naseby June 1645, Parliamentary forces were mopping up remaining Royalist resistance; during the siege plague broke out in Newark, which caused more deaths than military action. When Chas. surrendered to the Scots in May 1646, he ordered Newark's to surrender, which it did on 8th May. Parl. then ordered the destruction of the Castle.

B. Notts, had two nationally important figures:

William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, was C-in-C Royalist forces in the North, with his HQ in York and his family seat at Welbeck. In 1643 he three times had to fall back from his attack to deal with Parl. forces elsewhere. Finally to defend the Royalist North against the invading Scots, Welbeck was garrisoned for the King, but fell to Parl. troops after Marston Moor, and was used as a base to keep a check on Newark. Newcastle escaped to Paris, where he established a riding school. He returned to Welbeck at the Restoration and was made a Duke in 1665. He died in 1676 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Henry Ireton of Attenborough, who married Cromwell's daughter. He commanded Parl. troops at Edgehill, Gainsborough and Naseby. He was one of the Commissioners who tried the King, and he signed the King's death warrant. He became Lord Deputy of Ireland and died there of swamp fever. He was buried in Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey, but in 1660 his body was exhumed and hanged at Tyburn.

C. Other families:

The Byron family of Newstead: all Royalists. Sir John fought at Edgehill, Roundway Down and Marston Moor. Sir Richard was Governor of Newark. All 7 fought for the King, but Sir Thomas died in 1643 in Oxford in a street quarrel.

Sir Roger Cooper of Thurgarton Priory garrisoned his house for the King in 1643. The following year he was forced to surrender to Notts troops who retaliated against his firing on Mansfield Parl. troops en route for Newark.

Colonel Hutchinson of Owthorpe : a Parliamentarian although his mother was a Byron !In 1642 prevented Royalists from seizing the County's ammunition and arms. He defended Nottingham throughout the war, and signed the King's death warrant. Although he managed to evade arrest in 1660, he was arrested in 1663, taken to the Talbot Inn in Newark (the Clinton Arms) accused of implication in a plot against Chas.II . Died in prison 1664 and is buried under the north wall of Owthorpe Church.

Edward Whalley of Screveton (east of Nottingham): Cousin of Cromwell. Fought at Gainsborough and Marston Moor and Naseby. Was one of the King's judges and signed his death warrant.

William Staunton of Staunton Manor: Fought at Edgehill and then commissioned to raise 1,200 troop of horse. Based at Newark, and was one who set out with the King to join Montrose, but had to turn back when Montrose was taken. Staunton Manor was attacked during his absence, and his wife finally escaped across the fields to Bennington. The Manor was stripped by Parliamentary forces.

