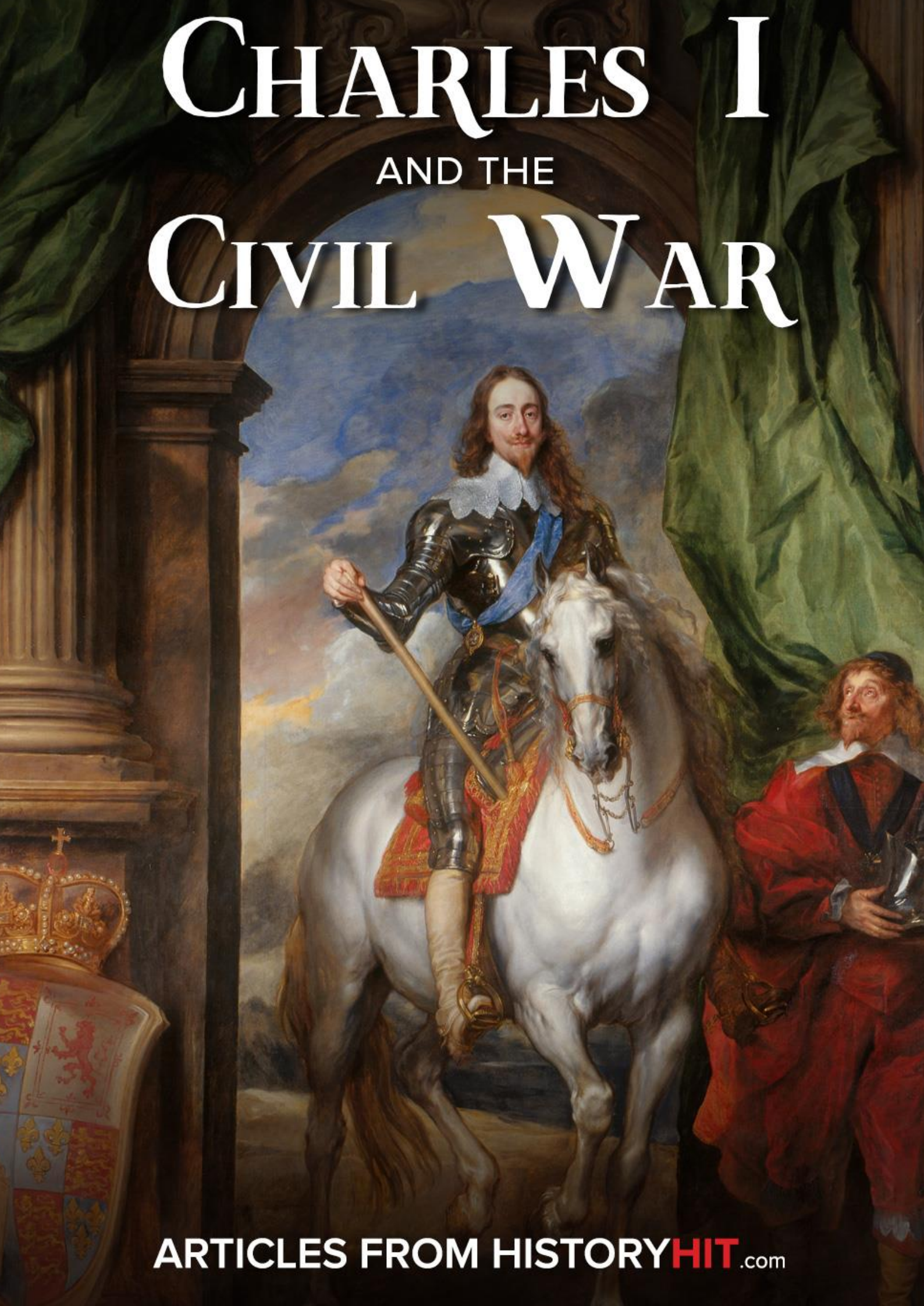


CHARLES I

AND THE

CIVIL WAR



ARTICLES FROM HISTORYHIT.com

We remember Charles as the first and only King to be executed in this country. Others had been deposed and quietly murdered in the past, but he was the first to have a full trial and execution.

He is remembered for failing to recognise the importance of Parliament and refusing to compromise with dissident MPs. He antagonised Parliament by his attempts to rule without them throughout the 1630s.

When war with the Scots forced him to recall Parliament, Charles found himself forced to go along with a series of measures – including the arrest of some of his key advisers. However, as soon as the opportunity arose, he attempted to have his opponents arrested.

When that failed Charles panicked and, believing his life was in danger, fled north and raised his royal standard at Nottingham – the moment war was declared between the King and the parliament. It was the start of The Civil War, or English Civil War (historians disagree over what title we should give it).

The Civil War was in fact a series of wars that pitted supporters of the monarchy, known as “Royalists” or “Cavaliers”, against supporters of the English parliament, known as “Parliamentarians” or “Roundheads”.

Ultimately, the war was a struggle over how much power parliament should have over the monarchy and would challenge forever the idea that an English monarch had the right to rule without the consent of their people.

From the 11 Years’ Tyranny to the development of propaganda this eBook explores the life and portrayal of King Charles I, as well as certain events during the Civil War. Detailed articles explain key topics, edited from various History Hit resources.

Included in this eBook are articles written for History Hit by leading Stuart historian Leanda de Lisle. Features written by History Hit staff past and present are also included. You can access all these articles on historyhit.com. Charles I and the Civil War was compiled by Tristan Hughes.

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How Charles I's Relationship with His Family and with Parliament Helps Us to Understand His Rule

History Hit Podcast with Leanda de Lisle

I'm not going to say that Charles I was great, but there were ups and downs. People remember the end.

They remember that he was executed at the hands of his own subjects. This is normally just read back across his whole life as if he was doomed from birth. That just wasn't the case, and things might have been so very different.

Charles wasn't the oldest son. He had an older brother called Henry. You hear a lot about, "The marvellous elder brother, if only he had lived."

But he died aged 18, just old enough to have raised great hopes without living long enough as to have had the chance to disappoint them. That's the point.

The kind of people who had nice things to say about Henry were the heirs to other people who had said all these lovely things about Elizabeth I, to use it as a stick to beat King James with.

But actually, during Elizabeth's lifetime, they hadn't been that loyal to her, so the idea that Henry was a brilliant ruler whose life was cut short isn't true.

Charles's father

James I was probably a difficult father: heavy drinking, opinionated, possibly gay.

Charles did find it a bit tricky in his early teens when his mother was still living and his father was clearly in love with the Duke of Buckingham, or the later Duke of Buckingham. I think he did find that bit embarrassing, but you know, he could have had a lot worse.

Charles enjoyed the kind of family love his father had never known. His father had never known his own father, who had been murdered.

James, aged five, had seen his grandfather die. Charles had a relatively easy childhood and James was a relatively loving father for a monarch.

Charles was twenty-four, when he ascends to the throne, so young still.

The English monarchy was also in a dire position in the 1620s. It was broke, which was partly the consequence of the way the Tudors had ruled.

They had sold a lot of land, they had spent a lot of money, they had left a lot of debts. James was, by nature, extravagant and those debts had accumulated.

When Charles came to the throne, he had a lot of debts, and he was keen to take Britain into war in Europe in support of the Protestant calls and his sister who had lost the crown of Bohemia with her husband. There was really no money to pay for it, so that was tricky.

He took Britain into the 30 Years' War as soon as he became king.

But he then found Parliament weren't actually prepared to pay for this war, so he then made peace and a lot of people started complaining that he wasn't fighting the Habsburgs after all.

He couldn't win really either way, poor man.

Charles and Parliament

Charles's relationship with Parliament was tricky. He understood that Parliament was extremely useful and that it was a good thing for kings to get on with parliaments.

But I think Charles, like his father, didn't really understand the importance of Parliament in English culture. I think that was part of it.

He also didn't have a good instinct for dealing with people, and particularly for opponents. He wasn't good at divide and rule, and he tended to lump all his enemies together.

He just wasn't good at reading people generally. He didn't have that instinct and that made him slightly insecure, which was unhelpful in his dealings with Parliament amongst other things.

He did have friends and allies with the British ruling classes. The whole point is there was a civil war. There were two sides to it. So yes, he had supporters.

As the war went on, many of the people who began by supporting "Parliament," and I put Parliament in inverted commas because it was only always a section of Parliament, moved to his side as Parliament became increasingly radical.

Charles and Parliament originally fell out over spending on war, but that seems to be very common in the 16th and 17th centuries. He did attempt to patch things up.

But unfortunately, for one reason or another, they all went pear shaped. I think there was just great mistrust on both sides.

Part of this was to do with religion. The Church of England was essentially a Calvinist church but with a Catholic structure. Charles thought this made the Church of England the best in the world.

But others disagreed and they felt it was half-reformed, a dangerous mix of a Popish government and pure religion.

They were appalled when they saw Charles reforming the Church of England on more ritualistic, ceremonial lines.

They felt it was a threat to the Calvinist credentials of the Church of England and there was a massive falling out about that.



Why Charles I's 11 Years' Tyranny Wasn't Tyrannical Enough

History Hit Podcast with Leanda de Lisle

England, Scotland and Ireland were difficult to govern in the 17th century.

Even if the amazing Elizabeth I had been there, she might have struggled to deal with the complexity and the lack of cash that the English monarchy had in this period, and many other Tudor monarchs would also have struggled.

But the Tudors did two things which Charles didn't really. The first was that each of the Tudor monarchs from Henry VIII onward introduced dramatic and very unpopular religious change.

But, importantly, on the one hand they used Parliament to give the actions legal force, and on the other they cut the testicles, heads, and various other body parts of their enemies.

That was something Charles didn't do. During his so called 11 years' tyranny, which were the 11 years he ruled without Parliament, there were no political or religious executions.

He would cut the ears of Puritan dissenters, but they kept their testicles and their heads. He was too soft on the opposition. Many royalists essentially said the 11 years' tyranny hadn't been nearly tyrannical enough and that was the great problem.

Charles was neither collegiate enough to work with Parliament, nor tyrannical enough to rule by himself.

The emergence of the 11 Years' Tyranny

The way we get to the 11 Years' Tyranny was an accumulation of hideous disasters. There are military failures in Europe. There are sections of Parliament who are desperate to get rid of his leading minister, the Duke of Buckingham.

Charles resists this but Buckingham is then assassinated.

There was an opportunity here to possibly rebuild trust between King and Parliament but, in fact, there's just a sort of further deterioration in trust between the two sides partly because Charles's religious reforms continue.

It ends up with a sort of virtual riot one day on the floor of the House of Commons and Charles then decides to dissolve Parliament.

Charles decides that it's been taken over by radical elements and he's going to rule without it for as long as he can.

Charles definitely wasn't just a passive victim. It wasn't that his belief in divine right monarchy meant Charles was instinctively unable to understand that rule involved compromise with these nasty people in Parliament.

He did understand that it involved compromise and he was willing to compromise.

But I think that he did lack confidence in a way. He was a highly intelligent man but he was one of those people who can't read people well. He didn't have an instinct for that.

He tends to lump his enemies together rather than being able to have the confidence to divide and rule and to know when he could afford to back down, when he needed to make a stand, who he needed to eliminate, who he needed to make friends with, however briefly.

He didn't have those natural, political instincts, or human instincts even.

Ruling without Parliament

Even in his period of rule without Parliament he does rather well. He leaves the Thirty Years War and makes peace because he can't afford the wars in Europe anymore, and he begins to rebuild royal finances.

He raises taxes without parliamentary consent, prerogative taxes, which are those taxes which he's permitted to raise without Parliament. But they're vastly increased and expanded.

So, for example, you have shipped money which used to be raised on coastal ports in time of war. He now brings these taxes inland in time of peace, and raises an enormous amount of money.

The judges back him. He starts building a huge navy because he foresees that naval power is going to be the source of Britain's future greatness.

So he's not just spending it on silk stockings. He's doing something purposeful with it.

Many people oppose his taxes and many people oppose his church reforms. But that doesn't mean people aren't also in favour. Maybe not of his taxation, but people certainly approve of his church reforms.

A lot of his opponents are old men dying off. Middle aged, he's by now got a brood of children to succeed him. I mean it was possible that he could have emerged as a kind of British Louis XIV.



Why Did Charles I Believe in the Divine Right of Kings?

History Hit Podcast with Leanda de Lisle

Charles I, in a way, saw himself in the mould of Louis XIV, even though obviously Louis had not been born yet. But unfortunately, he overextended himself.

He decided he wanted uniformity of religion, which his father hadn't achieved, across the three kingdoms. He began looking at Scotland, and brought in this Anglicised prayer book to impose on the Scots and the Scots got very annoyed.

Whereas English school children are always taught this was a war between King and Parliament, the war was started because of the complexity involved in ruling England, Scotland and Ireland simultaneously, which were distinct and yet joined by the personal union of the crowns.

The Tudors didn't have to deal with the complexity of ruling three kingdoms. But now there was Scotland to deal with, and when Charles tried to impose the prayer book there, it triggered a riot.

His supporters later said that he should have rounded up the ringleaders and had them executed, but he didn't.

This emboldened his enemies who then decided they didn't just not want this prayer book, they also wanted to abolish episcopacy, which is the government of a church by bishops, in Scotland. It ended up with an English invasion, which was part of the First and Second Bishop's Wars.

The divine right of kings

His opponents and his detractors in history have drawn a link between his fondness for extra-parliamentary taxation and his religious ideas about the importance of kings and bishops as central figures at the very top of these fixed hierarchies.

There were parallels between these structures. Charles saw that and his father saw that.

But this wasn't a simple sort of megalomania. The point of divine right kingship is that it was an argument against religious justifications for violence.

After the reformation, obviously there were Catholics, Protestants, and many different varieties of Protestants as well.

Arguments started to happen, which began in Britain in fact, that monarchs drew their authority from the people. Therefore the people had the right to overthrow any who were of the wrong religion.

Then the question emerges: Who are the people? Am I the people, are you the people, are we going to agree on everything? I think not. What is the right religion?

There was a free for all of people saying, "Right, well, now we're going to rebel because we don't like this king or we're going to blow him up with gunpowder or we're going to stab him or we're gonna shoot him, and so forth."

James argued against this with the divine right of kings, saying, "No, kings draw their authority from God, and only God has the right to overthrow a monarch."

Divine right monarchy was a bulwark against anarchy, against instability and religious violence, religious justifications for violence, which is something we should understand now.

It doesn't sound so crazy when viewed in that light.

It is a kind of sort of arrogance when we look back in the past and go, "Those people, they must have been so stupid believing in these idiotic things." No, they weren't idiotic.

There were reasons for them. They were products of their time and place.

The return of Parliament

Charles's Scottish subjects rebelled against him because of his religious reforms. That was the beginning of, per capita, the bloodiest war in the history of the British Isles.

The Scots had allies in England, members of the nobility like Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, who was the greatest privateering peer of his day, and his ally John Pym in the House of Commons.

These men had formed a secret treasonous alliance with the Scots.

Charles was forced to call what became known as the Long Parliament, to raise the taxes to buy off the Scots to get them out of England after they'd invaded.

The invading Scottish army means that Charles's attachment to peace without Parliament collapses, because he's got to have money to fight this war.

The one thing he can't afford without Parliament is war. So, now he has to call Parliament.

But the opposition now, particularly the extreme end of it, is no longer willing to just get guarantees from Charles that Parliament will be recalled, or guarantees for the Calvinist credentials of the Church of England.

They want more than that because they are fearful. They need to take away from Charles any power that might allow him to revenge himself on them in the future, and allow him to essentially execute them for their treason.

There is then a need to push through radical legislation, and to do that, they have to persuade a lot of people who are more conservative than they are, both in the country and in Parliament, to back them.

To do that, they raise the political temperature and they do this in the way that demagogues have always done. They raise a sense of national threat.

They suggest that "we're under attack, Catholics are about to kill us all in our beds," and you get these atrocity stories, particularly about Ireland, repeated and greatly inflated.

The queen is blamed as the sort of papist in chief. She's foreign, God, she's French.

It could hardly be worse. They sent soldiers into the Catholic homes to search for weapons. Eighty-year-old Catholic priests are being hung, drawn, and quartered again suddenly.

All really to sort of raise ethnic and religious tensions and a sense of threat.



Why Did Parliament Challenge Royal Power in the 17th Century?

History Hit Podcast with Leanda de Lisle

The 17th century saw a vicious attack on the king's prerogatives, and to understand why that happened, we need to look at several different factors.

There had been something in the water for a long time

It really goes back to when Elizabeth became Queen, because English Protestants did not think that women should rule. They felt there was a biblical imperative against female rule. So how did they justify the fact they have a queen?

They argued that the sovereignty didn't really reside in the person of the monarch. It resided in Parliament. It was all part and parcel of the same thing.

The threat to Parliament

But then at a key time in 1641, a more radical change occurred.

First of all, there had been a real danger to Parliament from Charles because if he can raise his own taxes, if he can support himself without Parliament, it was very possible there would be no Parliament.

In France, the last Parliament was called in 1614. It had been awkward about taxes and it wouldn't be recalled until late in 18th century, imminently before the French Revolution.

Parliament faced an existential threat as well.

This is a counterfactual, but it is difficult to say whether Charles would have been forced to call Parliament had the Scots, or the Covenanters, not invaded England. That Charles hadn't called Parliament was unpopular, but that doesn't necessarily mean he would have called it.

It's difficult to know because the English were extremely attached to Parliament but it's possible that over a passage of time, people would have forgotten. I think if they were sort of comfortable, if they had money in their pockets, then who knows?

Another possible eventuality might have seen Charles or one of his sons feeling that they could recall Parliament. Then things could have got back on an even keel because, actually, Parliament did serve a very useful purpose.

When a king worked with Parliament, he had the country with him, which is obviously extremely helpful.

One royalist said that,

“No king in the Orient was as powerful as an English monarch working with his Parliament.”

Just look at the Tudors, look at what they did. The dramatic religious change, they used Parliament to help them do that.

The arrest of the Five Members

Parliament agreed to help finance an army to defend them from this Scottish Covenants Army, but they also demanded all sorts of concessions from Charles.

It's the failure to get through this crisis that leads ultimately to his death, during this terrible period over the winter of 1641 to 1642.

He puts out an order in December, ordering all MPs to return to Parliament, because Parliament was then packed with radical MPs.

All those more moderate MPs are in the countryside because London is full of mobs, which have been raised by the more radical elements. These mobs kept the other MPs away.

Charles wants the moderate MPs to come back essentially so he can then crush the radical opposition and all will be fine and dandy. So he orders the MPs to return before 30 days are up.

But it all goes pear shaped. Charles is driven out of London after 28 days and doesn't return until his execution. It goes horribly wrong.

He's driven out of London following his attempt to arrest the members in the House of Commons. But they aren't there.

He burst into the House of Commons to arrest the five members, the five radical MPs who the King believed had encouraged the Scots to invade, and history hasn't been kind to him about that.

But, at the same time, he wasn't entirely wrong. A number of them were traitors, but unfortunately he didn't succeed and just ended up making an ass of himself and having to flee London.

He flees London, which is a strategic setback, and raises the standard in Nottingham.

The road to war

It is clear that, once he leaves London, Charles is going to return at the head of an army, although I think both sides try to pretend it's all going to be fine, that it will all be sorted out somehow.

Behind the scenes, both were attempting to generate support. Henrietta Maria, Charles I's wife, goes to Holland and talks with Charles's chief diplomats and arms buyers in Europe.

Parliament and Royalists alike spend the following months going around the villages of England raising men and looking for support.

I don't think compromise was possible at this stage. Both sides believed that they would all begin and end with one great battle.

It's the old story, the idea that it will all be over by Christmas. It was one of those things that it will all be over by Christmas. And of course, it wasn't.

The cult of the decisive battle has got soldiers in trouble throughout history.

Charles was unwilling to compromise with Parliament and one of the fundamental sticking points just before the fighting started was about the militia.

Parliament wanted to take from him the right to raise the militia. The English needed to raise an army to deal with the Catholic rebellion in Ireland.

The question was: who was going to be in charge of this army?

Technically that would be the king. But, obviously, the opposition didn't want the king in charge of this army. So there was a big riot about that.

Charles said that this was a power he wouldn't even give to his wife and his children. He certainly wasn't going to give the right to raise the militia to Parliament. That was really the sort of major sticking point at that particular time.

This is heady stuff. The idea that you could refuse to allow the king to command and lead an army in a war was contrary to historic norm, since that was the first duty of a sovereign in this period.



19th century painting of Charles (centre in blue sash) before the Battle of Edgehill.

Were the Parliamentarians Aware of How Radical Going to War Against Their King Was?

History Hit Podcast with Leanda de Lisle

Many people did realise how radical the Civil War was, and that's probably why there was a Civil War. Parliament wanted to strip the King of his rights to choose who his children married among other things.

As an aside, I hate calling them Parliament because it was only ever a portion of Parliament, but for ease, we'll call it Parliament.

People were aware that they were making very radical demands.

But equally, those who supported Parliament would say that it was necessary because Charles I himself was behaving radically by having been prepared to rule without Parliament for many years, by raising taxes without parliamentary consent, by his religious changes, and so forth.

Charles was radical. So there were two radical sides.

There's an interesting parallel with the Thirty Years War in which starts with protestant German states rejecting the authority of their catholic Habsburg overlord.

People had become much more radical in the wake of the Reformation. That was the reason for the need for the divine right of kings.

James I, of course, has seen his mother had been overthrown in Scotland, a catholic monarch overthrown by protestants.

He himself had faced problems in Scotland at the hands of fellow protestants, he'd come to England, he'd faced the gunpowder plots at the hands of Catholics.

I think the 30 Years' War had an enormous impact in Britain because English protestants who were, as I said, Calvinists, saw themselves as a part of a wider Calvinist church.

People think of Henry VIII's reformation as being a kind of Brexit. But his form of nationalised Catholicism had not survived him. Instead, afterwards you saw this

protestant church, which was introduced under Edward VI, which was a Calvinist church fundamentally.

British Calvinists saw themselves as a part of a European Calvinist church, and what happened in Europe mattered enormously to them.

Calvinism and Protestantism in general was in retreat by this time. In 1590, protestants held half the land area of Europe. A hundred years later, they only held a fifth.

People were also aware that Protestantism had only really survived where it was imposed or permitted by monarchs. This is another reason they felt they needed to have control over the monarchy, and over who the monarch was.

Charles as a commander had good qualities. He was personally extremely brave and he inspired great loyalty.

The problem is, Parliament has control of London and the Southeast, and with it, the majority of England's wealth and population, as well as the navy. For a time, they also have an alliance with the Scots.

Nevertheless, it takes many years to defeat Charles militarily. Everyone expected things to be over with one battle, which they expected the king to lose.

When he raised his standard at Nottingham, it was a pathetic scene. There were a couple of hundred sort of measly, sad looking people in the rain.

Then he fought the Battle of Edgehill, which ended in a sort of bloody draw, and which he almost won.

Parliament were suffering from battle shock at the end of it all, and they didn't defeat Charles for many years. It drove Cromwell dotty.

Charles' had money and support from magnates who would raise the local levies to fight and there were also committed volunteers signing up to fight for a cause they believed in.

Henrietta Maria actually did a pretty good job in Europe raising money and arms for her husband's cause. She was a very powerful supporter for him.

4 Key Battles That Turned the English Civil War

The English Civil War was an intermittent nine-year confrontation between King and Parliament, but how was it won and how was it lost? Here are four of the key battles that shaped the destiny of a nation.

1. Battle of Edgehill: 23 October 1642

This was the first battle of the Civil War and if the royalists had been a little more disciplined it could have been the last. After Charles fled London he made his way north to raise an army. The country quickly began to divide between the conservative north which largely proclaimed for the King and the south which veered towards Parliament.

The two sides met at Edgehill, not far from London. The Parliamentarians were commanded by the Earl of Essex who had been ordered to halt Charles' march on London. The Royalists on the other hand, were led by Prince Rupert, nephew to the King and veteran of the 30 Years War.

An initial charge by Rupert and his cavalry seemed to turn the battle decisively in Charles' favour. Much of the Parliamentary cavalry fled, but instead of returning to the battlefield and securing the victory, Rupert and his horsemen went off in search of the baggage train and plunder.

In their absence the remaining Parliamentary cavalry regiments attacked the Royalists. The two sides fought one another to a standstill and eventually agreed to call it a draw. Charles retreated to Oxford which he set up as a winter base.

2. Battle of Newbury: 20 September 1643

After Edgehill the Royalists began asserting their control, taking much of Yorkshire and winning a string of victories in the West. By now the Earl of Essex was leading the only Parliamentary army in the field, but he was in trouble.

After marching to relieve a siege at Gloucester he found it difficult to maintain his supply lines. He began making preparations for a retreat back to London. Charles moved to stop him and blocked his path at Newbury.

The first day saw heavy fighting between the two sides with no clear winner. That night, as both sides rested, Charles made the decision to withdraw against the advice of his commanders.

The next morning Essex, to his surprise and relief, discovered that the Royalists had left the field and his route to London was clear. He arrived back to jubilant crowds. Charles had missed his chance to destroy the Parliamentarians and from then on his cause began to suffer.

3. Battle of Marston Moor: 2 July 1644

Marston Moor was the largest battle of the Civil War and marked a major turning point. In 1644 York was being besieged by parliamentarian and Scottish troops. Charles ordered Rupert to relieve the siege and he headed North with the full force of his much feared cavalry.

But there was a new opponent on the scene. Oliver Cromwell, an MP, had risen quickly through the ranks and his Ironside cavalymen were developing a reputation to rival Rupert's.

Early on it seemed as if the royalists held the upper hand as Rupert's cavalry charges inflicted heavy losses. However, Cromwell led his cavalry behind royalist lines and attacked from the rear. Although the Royalists put up a brave fight they were unable to defeat the numerically superior force of Scots and Parliamentarians.

The victory handed York and the north to the Parliamentarians. It popped the myth of Rupert's invincibility and almost destroyed the Royalist army in the north.

4. Naseby: 14 June 1645

After Marston Moor, Cromwell established the New Model Army – a highly disciplined professional fighting force. Commanded by himself and Thomas Fairfax, it began to turn the tide of the war and would prove crucial in achieving a landmark battle at Naseby.

Again an initial charge from Rupert's cavalry was successful but once again they headed off in search of the Parliamentarian baggage train rather than finishing off the fight. The Parliamentarians were able to regroup and defeat the Royalist infantry. When Rupert returned to the battlefield his cavalry refused to fight.

The battle was lost and with it the war. This was the beginning of the end for Charles. He had lost his main army and captured correspondences showed he had been seeking Catholic help. Support flooded towards Parliament.

In April 1646 he fled the besieged Oxford and surrendered to the Scots who then handed him over to Parliament. The first Civil War was ended. Charles would later

escape and restart the war, but he was swiftly recaptured and royalist rebellions put down.



The Battle of Edgehill.

Oliver Cromwell and the New Model Army

Oliver Cromwell and his New Model Army were instrumental in turning the tide of the English Civil War. In doing so he changed the course of history and laid the framework for the modern English Army.

Turning the tide

If you were a Parliamentarian supporter in 1643 things were looking bleak. Royalist forces were sweeping all before them led by Prince Rupert. This veteran of the 30 Years War in Europe was recognised as a military genius and it seemed no force on Parliament's side could match him. However, in 1644 one MP from Huntington changed all that.

Oliver Cromwell had been a member of the Long and Short Parliaments, which had stood up to Charles and eventually taken the country to war. However, once war began he established a reputation as a brilliant military leader, quickly rising through the ranks until he had command of his own cavalry, which was beginning to develop a formidable reputation of its own.

In 1644, they encountered Rupert's army at Marston Moor and shattered their aura of invincibility. Leading a charge behind the lines, Cromwell's men snatched victory and helped to dramatically alter the balance of power in the war.

Creating a new army

Despite success at Marston Moor, there was still discontent within Parliamentarian ranks at how the war was being fought. Although they had a clear advantage in manpower and resources they found it difficult to raise men from local militias which could move around the country.

Cromwell's answer was to establish a full-time and professional fighting force, which would become known as the New Model Army. This initially consisted of around 20,000 men split into 11 regiments. Unlike the militias of old these would be trained fighting men able to go anywhere in the country.

The creation of the New Model Army was a watershed for many reasons. Firstly, it worked on a meritocratic system, where the best soldiers were the officers. Many of the gentlemen who had previously been officers in the army found it difficult to find a post in this new era. They were either quietly discharged or persuaded to continue serving as regular officers.

It was also an army in which religion played a key role. Cromwell would only accept men into his army who were firmly committed to his own Protestant ideologies. It quickly gained a reputation for being a well drilled and highly disciplined force, earning the nickname of God's Army.

However, fears grew that it was also becoming a hotbed of independents. Many of the early generals were known to be radicals and after the first civil war disagreements about pay led to agitation within the ranks.

The troops became increasingly radicalised and opposed the restoration of Charles without democratic concessions. Their goals went much further and are outlined in their Agreement of the People, which called for the vote for all men, religious freedom, an end to imprisonment for debt and a parliament elected every two years.

A new way of fighting

Perhaps the most tangible influence of the New Model Army, however, was its impact on the way England fought. At the end of the Interregnum, with the return of the monarchy, the New Model Army was disbanded.

Even so the new King James recognised the need for a standing army and established a full time professional army which led to the fully professional military force we know today.



Oliver Cromwell.

Was Charles I the Villain That History Depicts Him As?

History Hit Podcast with Leanda de Lisle

After the battle of Marsden Moor and the Battle of Naseby, the English Civil War slowly becomes a hopeless cause for King Charles I. But execution wasn't a certainty.

Regicide certainly comes into people's minds during the Second Civil War, that royalist rising from 1648. Many soldiers of the New Model Army are thoroughly fed up of having to fight again and lose people. A group of them decide that he should be tried, that man of blood.

Meanwhile, Charles gives himself up to the Scots. He believes that the Scots will be prepared to negotiate with him, as they are. But he becomes their prisoner, not their guest. That he hadn't expected.

He won't compromise with them, and what he will not do is say that Episcopacy is wrong, and innately wrong at that. Charles will never do that. The Scots didn't understand that.

They didn't understand that it was a core religious belief for Charles. When they realised this, they sell him to Parliament.

Thus he ends up with Parliament and then he's snatched by the New Model Army. Then while he's imprisoned by them there was a Royalist rising, which was effectively the Second Civil War.

This is brutally put down by the English Parliamentary Army and also involves the Scots. You end up with a lot of very fed up people.

This cements Charles' trial. Even then, it's still not a certainty that he's going to be executed.

Killing a king

But Parliament – again, it's even more absurd to call it Parliament at this stage because it's been purged by the New Model Army, so it's just a rump- don't know how people in Europe are going to react: how the great powers are going to react. It was a risk, chopping off a king's head, as you can imagine, and it was difficult on many levels.

What they really want is for Charles to recognise the court.

If he does that, he's essentially recognising the supremacy of the Commons, which means that he is admitting that he has no negative voice, that he cannot prevent the passing of any legislation.

He has to say yes to whatever the Commons wants. But Charles doesn't do that. Charles won't recognise the court and therefore won't recognise the supremacy of the Commons, and so they're left with really no choice but to chop off his head.

It is a possibility that Charles lost his life but saved the monarchy by doing that. There was no guarantee that the restoration of Charles II would ever happen. But the way that Charles I died bravely must have helped.

By a late stage he had also learned the value of the printed media and propaganda.

The *Eikon Basilike* helped the monarchy's cause. This was a reportedly autobiographical work, which argued that Charles had been right all along and that he was dying as essentially a martyr for the English people and for English law.

The Church of England also helped to keep the royalist cause alive until the restoration of Charles II. I suppose that it was fortunate for the monarchy that the Commonwealth was enormously unpopular.

Parliament seems to have departed most from historic norms during the 1640s, but then of course they tried to retreat in a way because they also tried to make Cromwell king. And he was a king because, if he wasn't one in name, he ruled like a monarch.

He even had masons, a court and a version of a coronation; his wife and his daughters were called princesses. It was extraordinary.

Cromwell was succeeded by his son, which didn't work. But they tried to imitate the old system.

Charles I therefore ends up being executed. He wears two shirts so he doesn't appear to shiver. The most moving part of this episode is when Charles says goodbye to his children.

He says goodbye to his two youngest children in person. Elizabeth is 13 years old and his son Henry is 5. It's very difficult to either read or write about those scenes to be honest, because they're so emotionally charged.

I would argue that people have been unusually harsh on him because he was on the losing side. Instead of remembering the ups and downs, the good and the bad, they read the end, and that failure is read across his whole life.

One of the things I find very striking is that since his childhood he had weak legs, this lingual deformity.

People still talk about Charles's weak legs as if they were somehow symptoms of weakness of character. His lingual deformity is seen as some kind of dumb stupidity.

In the past, people thought of disability as a mark of sin, of man's fallen nature. Shakespeare wrote Richard III with his crooked spine and is seen as a reflection of his crooked soul.

These old patterns of thought are very strong.

If anybody went to see "Wonder Woman", you would see that Wonder Woman was very beautiful and glamorous and physically perfect. Her opponent, who's also a woman, Dr. Poison, is disfigured. It's strange that we still think in similar ways.

I see Charles as a tragic figure.

He's like the protagonist of a Greek tragedy, really, because he is a man who's brought to ruin not by wickedness, because he's a man of great courage and a high principle, but he's brought to ruin simply by ordinary human flaws and misjudgements. So maybe we should have empathy for him.

The terrible 17th century

Geoffrey Parker argues in his book on the 17th century, that there was an explosion of violence in the 17th century across the world and he argues that around one third of the global population was killed in the 17th century.

So while Charles was desperately wrestling with these big issues, the environmental backdrop was awful as well.

The weather is a sort of notable feature, because it was always freezing cold or pissing with rain. Almost every moment where there was a weather report it was normally something terrible, bringing bad harvest and plague.

But the war itself was the really terrible thing here. There was a description from this European, who visits before the war and sees England as this agriculturally rich society where everyone seems quite sort of fat and happy.

This European returns after the war and everyone is embittered and angry and it had this vast psychological impact.

The same percentage of the population was killed in the English Civil War as was killed in the trenches of the First World War, so that's not surprising. In a way, it was a worse war because it's your friends, your neighbours, even members of your own family who you were fighting.

The White King

As an interesting aside, the phrase 'White King' was a sobriquet that was used about Charles during his lifetime. He was said to have been the only King of England ever to have been crowned in white.

This is untrue and it was actually first used by his enemies. They said he was the white king of the prophecies of Merlin, a doomed tyrant.

But it was then taken up by his friends who argued that his white robes had been the vestments of a future saint.

Then there was a famous description of his burial, which took place at Windsor, and it describes his coffin being taken from the Great Hall at Windsor to St. George's Chapel, and how there's a snowstorm and the snow covers the black velvet pool with white, the colour of innocence.

The witness says, "And so went the White King to his grave." But this is also untrue.

The man who spanned this story was actually a professional liar who had actually been employed by Parliament to spy on Charles in his captivity.

Then, of course, he had been quite keen to suck up to Charles II and spin this romantic story about how the innocent Charles was buried.

What Were the Key Developments in Propaganda During the English Civil War?

By Emma Irving

The English Civil War was a fertile ground for experimenting with new forms of propaganda. Civil war presented a peculiar new challenge in that armies now had to win people to their side rather than simply summoning them. Propaganda used fear to ensure that the conflict seemed necessary.

The English Civil War was also the time when a popular press emerged to record and report on the dramatic events to an increasingly literate public, one that was hungry for news.

1. The power of print

The proliferation of the printing press during the political crisis of the 1640's combined to make the English Civil War one of the first propaganda wars in history. Between 1640 and 1660 more than 30,000 publications were printed in London alone.

Many of these were written in plain English for the first time and were sold on the streets for as little as a penny making them available to the common people – it was political and religious propaganda on a grand scale.

The Parliamentarians had the immediate advantage in that they held London, the country's major printing centre.

The Royalists were initially reluctant to appeal to the commons because they felt they would not gather much support that way. Eventually a Royalist satirical paper, *Mercurius Aulicus*, was established. It was published weekly in Oxford and enjoyed some success, though never on the scale of the London papers.

2. Attacks on religion

The first surge in propaganda were the multiple publications upon which the good people of England choked over their breakfast, as they reported in graphic detail the atrocities supposedly committed on Protestants by Irish Catholics during the rebellion of 1641.

The image below of the 'puritans' nightmare' is a typical example of how religion would come to dominate political propaganda. It depicts a 3-headed beast whose

body is half-Royalist, half-armed papist. In the background the cities of the kingdom are burning.

3. Personal attacks

Often slander was more effective than general ideological attacks.

Marchamont Nedham would switch sides between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians multiple times, but he did pave the way for personal attacks being used as propaganda. Following King Charles I's defeat at the Battle of Naseby in 1645, Nedham published letters that he had retrieved from a captured Royalist baggage train, which included the private correspondence between Charles and his wife, Henrietta Maria.

The letters appeared to show the King was a weak man bewitched by his Catholic queen, and were a powerful propaganda tool.

4. Satirical attacks

Popular histories of the English Civil War of 1642-46 make frequent reference to a dog named 'Boy', which belonged to King Charles's nephew Prince Rupert. The authors of these histories confidently state that Boy was believed by the Parliamentarians to be a 'dog-witch' in league with the devil.

However, research by Professor Mark Stoye has revealed that the idea the Parliamentarians were petrified of Boy was an invention of the Royalists: an early example of wartime propaganda.

'Boy' was originally a Parliamentary attempt to hint that Rupert possessed occult powers, but the plan backfired when Royalists took up their enemies' claims, exaggerated them and,

'used them to their own advantage in order to portray the Parliamentarians as gullible fools',

as Professor Stoye says.

Cromwell's Convicts: The Death March of 5,000 Scottish Prisoners from Dunbar

By John Sadler and Rosie Serdiville

"I beseech you in the bowels of Christ think it possible you may be mistaken."

So Oliver Cromwell, not quite yet Lord Protector, implored the Scottish Parliament to abandon their shaky alliance with Charles II. He failed to persuade.

The campaign which followed, desultory at the outset, ended with Cromwell's decisive victory at Dunbar on 3 September 1650.

An English trail of tears

Approximately 5,000 men began a forced march from the battlefield of Dunbar to Durham, destined for the Southern ports.

It took them 7 days, without food or medical care and with little water. They were now property; the chattels of a ruthless regime determined to eradicate any possibility of further threat.

Hundreds died or were summarily executed on this English trail of tears. Those who survived long enough to reach Durham found no respite – only disease and despair.

Exhausted, starving and dreadfully weakened, perhaps another 1,700 died there – most probably from fever and dysentery.

For those who survived, hard labour awaited them. They faced forced exile as virtual slaves in a harsh new world across the Atlantic. And what were the prospects for their families left behind to fend for themselves?

Official tally of captives

Accounts suggest the full tally of Scottish prisoners after the battle was in the region of 10,000.

Almost half of these were non-combatants, camp-followers, tradesmen and the like; non-combatants who were released without sanction.

The uniformed captives – around 5,000 (an exact number cannot be given) – were deemed too great a threat and had to be neutralised.

The men of Dunbar embarked on a series of forced stages. The long convoy, easily 5 to 6 miles in length, was initially shepherded the 20 miles (32 km) to Berwick upon Tweed, guarded by a single troop of 25 cavalry/dragoons. Or so the record maintains.

This assertion could stand a challenge: it seems impossible that a single troop, even mounted could control so large a contingent.

We know most of the captives were quite young – in the 18-25 catchment – with some even younger. Cromwell saw a commercial opportunity here.

Transportation as an indentured servant had long been a means of capitalising on the American colonies' need for semi-skilled and skilled labour.

Their initial ordeal ended on 11 September when they were marched over Framwellgate Bridge into Durham and the bare sanctuary of the great Norman cathedral.

They had already spent a night in a church – that of St. Nicholas in Newcastle – where their disordered bellies had resulted in such fouling that the burgesses had been obliged to pay for a major cleaning up operation.

By now many were so weakened that disease spread easily. Of the 3,500 counted through the cathedral's doors, nearly half died within a short space of time.

Their remains were buried in pits dug on the city's Palace Green, then open ground as the name would suggest.

Holding such a large number of prisoners would be costly. However, letting them go could prove very dangerous.

Indentured servants

One week after the battle, the Council of State, England's governing junta, decided to turn the problem over to the powerful Committee of Safety. It informed veteran parliamentarian Sir Arthur Hesilrige, Governor of Newcastle, that he could dispose of as many of the Scots as he deemed fit to the coal mines and other industries.

Armed with that authority Hesilrige consigned 40 men to work as "indentured servants" (effectively forced labour) in the salt works at Shields.

He then sold another 40 off as general labourers and set up a trade in linen, with 12 of his prisoners becoming weavers.

He may have been making use of existing skills. Dental analysis carried out on one of the recently rediscovered bodies showed damage to the teeth consistent with regularly using them to saw thread ends.

Heselrige was clearly a strong believer in private enterprise and was not above using his position to build up his personal wealth and then flaunting it!

To the New World

Alongside these developments, the Council of State received several applications from entrepreneurs in the American colonies hungry for cheap labour.

On 16 September, negotiations began. The petitioners, John Becx and Joshua Foote, conferred with their partners, the ominously named 'Undertakers of the Iron Works'. Three days later, Hesilrige was directed to transport 150 prisoners of war to New England.

The brokers insisted they should only receive strong, healthy specimens – the best quality.

Discovery of remains

In November 2013, during construction of a new café for Durham University's Palace Green Library on the City's UNESCO World Heritage Site, human remains were uncovered by university archaeologists.

The jumbled skeletons of what would prove to be 28 individuals were subsequently excavated from two burial pits. It was the start of 5 years of meticulous investigation.

A team of experts from Archaeological Services, Durham University – the University's commercial archaeology consultancy unit – and academics from Durham's Archaeology and Earth Sciences departments worked together to excavate and analyse the bones.

From the outset, the Durham team acknowledged the possibility that these might be some of the Scots soldiers of 1650.

There has long been folklore about these men and what they did in the Cathedral where they were held.

In May 2018, the 28 men were reburied in Elvet Hill Road Cemetery in Durham, less than a mile from the spot where they were discovered.

There was huge interest in the event, particularly in Scotland where newspapers had covered the Durham discovery in some detail from day one.

Handfuls of Scottish earth were thrown onto the coffins and great care was taken to reflect the traditions of worship of these 17th century Presbyterians.

The service was put together by Durham Cathedral, representatives from the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Metrical Psalms from the 1650 Scottish Psalter and a Bible reading from the 1611 King James Version of the Bible were included in the service – an expression of the wish of all involved to honour the traditions of the dead.



Oliver Cromwell at the Battle of Dunbar.