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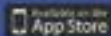
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# FOREWORD

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It is a pleasure, as Patron of the Holly Holy Day Society, to welcome you to the forty-third annual Nantwich Winter Fayre.

This event, which culminates with a re-enactment of the historically significant 1644 Battle of Nantwich, serves to remind us of our town's rich character and heritage.

More than that it brings colour and crowds, and affords our local shops, stalls, pubs and restaurants a terrific opportunity to showcase their goods and services.

A number of these businesses have become committed supporters of the Fayre, which is important, as without their generous financial support we could not stage the event.

I would therefore like to thank them for their contributions, and encourage you all (and, in particular, those visiting for the first time) to explore and sample all that our town has to offer!

Our biggest debt of gratitude, however, is owed to the Holly Holy Day Society, whose small group of volunteers raise funds, organise and ensure the continued staging of this event. My perennial thanks go to them for all their hard work, and for giving up their free time so the rest of us can have this enjoyable experience.

If you would like to learn more about the Society and its history, please do visit their stall today or get in touch with them via their website: [www.battleofnantwich.co.uk](http://www.battleofnantwich.co.uk)

I hope you have a wonderful day, and if this is your first visit to the area, I hope you enjoy yourself enough to want to come again!

Edward Timpson MP



Spectators are advised to comply at all times with regulations and the advice of the stewards and Police in attendance with regards to personal safety

## SPONSOR'S FOREWORD

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Applewood Independent is extremely proud for the second year to be the main sponsor of the Holy Holly Day Society's Battle of Nantwich for January 2016.

As a local independent financial adviser firm, we are highly committed to helping out the Nantwich community and to be associated with such a historic and important annual event is truly an honour for the company. The re-enactment of the Battle is a fantastic occasion which reminds everybody of the importance of the event and the effect on the lives of the people of Nantwich and the surrounding area.

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All of the team at Applewood hope you enjoy your day watching and participating in the re-enactment of the Battle of Nantwich.



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## THE SEALED KNOT

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The Society of Cavaliers and Roundheads was formed in 1968 to arouse interest in the period of the English Civil War, an event with lasting effect on the formation of modern Britain. The organisation was formed by Brigadier Peter Young, with six friends. Today, we number about four thousand members throughout the United Kingdom. Brigadier Young's qualifications, both as a scholar and as a soldier, are well known, and he had long been accepted as a leading authority on the military aspects of the Civil War. As a soldier, he fought with distinction in the second World War, and, eventually, commanded the First Commando Brigade. He was, for ten years, reader in military history at the R.M.A. Sandhurst.



In 1977, the Sealed Knot provided a guard of honour at Windsor Castle for the Queen's Silver Jubilee event. The Sealed Knot, which is registered as a limited company with charitable status, is organised on the lines of a seventeenth century army with horse, foot, dragons and a train of artillery. Members take pride in their self-reliance, and are responsible

for their own dress, food, transport and quartering.

The Society's aims are:-

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- (2) To operate as an educational charity for schools by recreating 17th century life
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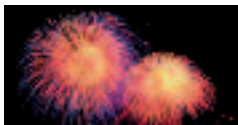
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# The English Civil Wars - A Brief History - 1642-1651

It is hard to imagine that a civil war could happen in Great Britain, but in the mid seventeenth century that is just what did happen. A 'civil' war is one in which people in the same country fight each other about the way they want to live their lives. Today we have elections and if one group wins, all the other voters who lost do not take up arms and fight, but 350 years ago things were very different.

## The Problems

Charles I became King of England in 1625, and like many kings before he believed that he had the 'Divine Right of Kings' to rule the country just as he wished and need not ask anyone else's opinion. The problem was that Parliament, who represented the merchants and common people, did not agree with him and this led to many arguments, especially about taxes. One really big argument was about 'Ship Money'. For years, it was only the towns on the coast that had to supply ships for the country's navy, but King Charles decided that every town had to pay and this made people angry, especially when those who refused to pay were sent to prison.

Another problem was with King Charles' wife - Queen Henrietta Maria. She was a French princess and a Roman Catholic, and many people were afraid that Charles would try to make everyone in Britain become a Catholic. Although today we are fortunate to live in a society where everyone is able to worship in their own way, in the 17th century people were very suspicious of different religions. Many were 'Puritans' who lived quiet and sober lives, wearing very plain clothes, and they thought that having ornate decorations and statues in churches was wrong. These people were particularly worried about King Charles and his Catholic wife.

The arguments between the King and Parliament got worse and the King tried to get Parliament closed so that he could rule the country alone. Parliament refused and finally in 1642 the King fled from London and raised his standard - the royal flag - in Nottingham, signifying the start of the Civil War. Parliament also formed an

army and the two sides became known as 'Cavaliers' (Royalists) and 'Roundheads' (Parliamentarians), both words being terms of abuse at that time. The Kings Armies drew their support mainly from the great landowners, leaders of the Church and the University of Oxford, whilst Parliament rallied its forces from London, the Puritan community and the smaller landowners.

Following a series of battles, including The Battle of Nantwich, King Charles was brought to trial, and finally 59 people, including Oliver Cromwell, signed a 'Death Warrant'. On 30th January 1649 King Charles I of England was beheaded outside Whitehall Palace in London. It was a cold, icy day and Charles put on two shirts, because he did not want to shiver and have the people think he was afraid. He died bravely and with dignity.

Queen Henrietta Maria (the wife of Charles I), and some of their children fled to France and for eleven years Great Britain was ruled by Parliament, led by Oliver Cromwell who was given the title of 'Lord Protector'. This period is known as 'The Commonwealth' period (1649-1660). However, during this time many of the King's supporters kept in touch with his son (later Charles II) and plotted to restore him to the throne. They had the support of a Scottish Army and in 1651 Prince Charles returned from France to try to get back the throne and become king. However the Royalist Army was defeated at the Battle of Worcester, Prince Charles escaped, but it took him 6 weeks running from the Parliament Army before he finally left the English coast again for France.

The end of this story is perhaps strange, because after so many people had died and families were split apart because they supported different sides, in 1660 the people of England invited Prince Charles (Charles I son and heir), back. On St. George's Day, 23rd April 1661, he was crowned King Charles II, King of England.



## NANTWICH IN THE CIVIL WAR – THE LEAD UP TO THE BATTLE

On the outbreak of Civil War Chester declared in favour of the King but the situation in the county's second most important town, Nantwich, was rather different, with the majority taking the side of "King and Parliament", in opposition to the royalist cause.

Initially, the King tried to bully the town into towing the line. When the war broke out in 1642 some of the most influential landowners in the area were imprisoned to discourage disloyalty – including Richard Wilbraham of Woodhey, Thomas Delves of Doddington and Roger Wilbraham of Dorfold and on September 29, 1642 the town was occupied and subsequently plundered by the royalist leader Lord Grandison.

At the end of 1642 attempts were made to neutralise Cheshire by getting both sides to disband their forces. This culminated in the Bunbury Agreement of December 23rd. The truce, however, was short lived and failed when the royalists in Chester failed to throw down their fortifications as agreed in the treaty.

After this the die was cast and a race ensued to occupy Nantwich. This was brought to a head on January 28th 1643 when the parliamentary leader Sir William Brereton defeated Sir Thomas Aston in a minor battle just outside Nantwich (between the end of Hospital Street and Cheerbrook). Brereton subsequently occupied Nantwich to the delight of the townsfolk and turned it into a garrison town, fortifying it with earthen walls and ditches. During 1643 Nantwich was never far from the action, coming under attack from royalist forces several times. However, a significant development occurred in November when 2,500 royalist forces returning from Ireland landed at Mostyn in Flintshire and headed to Chester to unite under the command of Lord John Byron. Brereton, who at the time was in Wales, was forced to retreat back into Cheshire. By this time it was clear that Nantwich was going to be a key objective for the royalist forces.

On 13 December a small group of firelocks under the command of Thomas Sandford succeeded in a daring raid on Beeston Castle, famously scaling the walls in the dead of night with only eight colleagues. The Governor of Beeston, Captain Thomas Steele surrendered without a fight and subsequently paid for his cowardice (some say treachery) with his life. Meanwhile the pressure grew greater on the inhabitants of Nantwich. On Sunday 17th December churchgoers at St Marys had their sermon interrupted by an attempt to approach the town from the direction of Acton.



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The resultant skirmish at Burford resulted in the capture of garrison commander Colonel George Booth's most senior officer, a Scottish mercenary called James Lothian. Following this the royalists continued to march on Nantwich. One group crossed the Weaver at Audlem and plundered several villages to the east of the river including Barthomley, where on December 23rd, twelve villagers were massacred in St Bertoline's church. Things got even worse on December 26th, when Brereton was defeated at Middlewich



removing the possibility of him being able to relieve the garrison at Nantwich on his own. By 30 December Nantwich was completely besieged. Parliament's response was to command Sir Thomas Fairfax to march from Lincolnshire with 2,800 cavalry and 500 dragoons to meet up with Brereton and to reinforce in Manchester before marching on Nantwich to relieve the beleaguered garrison. By early January Byron, now ensconced at Dorfold Hall, was in a race against time to win the siege or to storm Nantwich before Fairfax and Brereton's forces arrived. During the next three weeks Byron gradually increased the pressure on the garrison. On the 10th January

heavy artillery was installed near Dorfold Hall and fired "many gleed Redd Bullets into the Towne".

This was followed on January 16th by a written ultimatum to the town from Byron, which was rejected in no uncertain terms by Booth.

At daybreak on January 18th Byron launched a full scale assault on Nantwich, attacking the town at five different points simultaneously. The result was a disaster for the royalists. The attacks were repelled at all points and between 3-400 of Byron's men were killed including Thomas Sandford. Only three townsmen died.



Despite the defeat, the siege held but by now Byron was committed to fighting Fairfax's army, which had set off from Manchester, marching via Delamere. They met Byron's forces at Acton on January 25th.



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## THE JANUARY 18TH ASSAULT ON NANTWICH

Holly Holy Day celebrates the lifting of the Siege of Nantwich that was precipitated by the military engagement which took place in the fields near Acton on 25th January. However, the battle itself resulted in relatively few casualties, only about three hundred dead, most of which were royalists. It is a little-known fact that Byron's failed assault on the town a week earlier was much bloodier.



Byron's attempt to storm the town arose because he knew that Sir Thomas Fairfax and Sir William Brereton were on their way to try and raise the siege. He also knew he had a relatively short window of opportunity to press home his advantage and capture the town before Fairfax arrived. By this time the townsfolk were getting desperately short of food and Byron had shut the town off so effectively that the news of Fairfax's approach was unable to get through to the garrison.

On Wednesday 17th January Byron ordered a major artillery bombardment, launching "four score and sixteen" cannon shots against the town. It was a prelude for what was to happen an hour before daybreak the following morning.

At 5 am on 18th January, Byron attacked the town at five places simultaneously, targeting the sconces at the ends of Wall Lane, Welsh Row, Beam Street, Hospital Street and Pillory Street. According to papers found on the body of Thomas Sandford, who died in the assault, part of the plan was for firelocks carrying scaling ladders to attack together with dragoons also armed with firelocks or snaphaunches. These were to be backed up with 100 musketeers, supported by pikes and a reserve of musketeers.

Despite the concerted attack, Nantwich was well protected with tall earthen walls and defended by a highly motivated force, which knew it could expect little in the way of quarter if it succumbed. The assault lasted for about an hour but at the end of it the royalists were forced to retreat, leaving their scaling ladders, some of their arms and the bodies of around a hundred of their comrades behind them.

Only three townspeople died in the assault, John Beckett, Robert Goldsmith, a butcher and John Warren. Meanwhile, eyewitnesses recorded the bravery of the townswomen, in particular a heroine named Brett, who poured boiling hot brine onto the attackers.

The attack was a disaster for Byron. The sconces at Wall Lane, Welsh Row, Beam Street, Pillory Street and Hospital Street were piled high with dead. Parliament claimed five hundred royalists had perished in the attack. This figure was probably exaggerated but nonetheless it was a very serious loss for Byron, who retired to Acton to lick his wounds and prepare for the arrival of Fairfax.





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## THE BATTLE

Lord Byron was fully aware of Fairfax's approach but he had delayed abandoning the siege in the hope that the garrison would surrender. Late on 24 January, however, he sent an advanced guard to Barbridge and ordered his troops on the eastern side of the Weaver to cross the river and join the rest of his forces. Byron's plan was to force Fairfax to fight at Barbridge, which was far enough away from the town to rule out any intervention from the garrison.



However, on the night of 24th January there was a great thaw, which caused the Weaver to swell, which washed away the temporary wooden bridge built by the royalists at Beambridge, stranding the Eastern forces under Lord Byron's brother Robert on the wrong side of the river and forcing them to make a large detour via Shrewbridge to join up with the rest of the royalist army.

On the morning of 25th January, Fairfax quickly overwhelmed a small Royalist force waiting at Barbridge and continued

towards Nantwich, stopping on high ground at Hurleston, about a mile from Acton Church and village. From here he could see the Royalist concentration around Acton Church. These men were being reinforced by further troops from the East bank of the Weaver. Fairfax, himself delayed by the late arrival of his baggage and rearguard, did not believe that he could force his way through to Nantwich against such strong opposition. He decided that his only option was to leave the road, cut his way through the hedgerows, and bypass Acton across the open fields. Forming his army into column, with his baggage and guns in the van, he set off towards Welshman's Lane, leading towards the town of Nantwich and its garrison. It was now about 3.00 p.m.

In the event, Fairfax did not have enough time to carry out this manoeuvre and he was attacked in the rear by Byron's cavalry and in the front by Colonel Gibson. Fairfax was therefore forced to turn and face the enemy.

At first the parliamentarians were hard pressed by the left and right cavalry wings of the royalist force but because of the many hedgerows in the area, the royalists were unable to effect a proper charge and Sir William Fairfax (Sir Thomas's cousin) and Colonel Lambert, on the parliamentary right and left, respectively, were able to nullify the royalists by thrusting attacks down the narrow lines.

At this point the Nantwich garrison intervened, breaking out from Welsh Row and quickly overwhelming a small guard under the command of Sir Fulk Hunckes. The garrison then attacked the royalist centre from the rear, eventually isolating the two wings of the royalist army from each other. Byron and his brother fled across the fields back to Chester but the royalist centre and right were trapped. Many fled back to Acton church and barricaded themselves in but by the end of the winter's night all had surrendered.

Casualties in the battle were light, less than 300 were killed but 1500 men were captured and imprisoned in St Mary's Church, many of whom switched sides and joined the parliamentary army.

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## WHAT HAPPENED NEXT....?

The war went on.

Six months after Namptwich came the Battle of Marston Moor near York. This was the biggest battle of the civil war and involved 45,000 men. The Royalists under Prince Rupert lost after a Parliamentary cavalry charge. It was a major blow to an army that looked upon the north of England as a stronghold.

Other battles were to follow but it was the Battle of Naseby a year later that gave a decisive victory to Parliament. King Charles fled the battlefield knowing he had lost the battle and the war. In May 1646, he surrendered to the Scots. In January 1647, they handed him over to the Parliamentarians and he was imprisoned in Holden by House, to the north-west of Northampton. But he escaped in November and fled to Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight. Thirteen months later he was back in captivity, this time in Windsor Castle.

In 1649, the King was tried for treason and executed outside Whitehall Palace in London on 30 January. For a while, England was a republic. The regime was known as the Commonwealth of England and it was dominated by Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). Indeed he was 'Lord Protector' from 1653 until his death. Among other things, Cromwell sought to bring moral and spiritual reform to the country and this manifested itself in some seemingly eccentric ways like the banning of what had become a rather too secular observance of Christmas and Easter. He did however encourage Jews to settle again in England from 1657 – they had been banished by Edward I 350 years before – an act of tolerance that was to bring the country great benefit.

Cromwell was succeeded by his son Richard but by now the country was ready to restore the monarchy. The late King Charles' son Charles II, already proclaimed King of Scots in 1649, was crowned King of England and Ireland in Westminster Abbey in April 1661.



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## IN MEMORIAM – ANDREW GILLIT

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The Holly Holy Day Society wishes to pay tribute to the late Andrew Sydney Gillit, Second World War veteran and a key figure in the Sealed Knot Society and the Battle of Nantwich for over 40 Years. Andrew, affectionately nicknamed Syd, passed away on the 13th November 2015 aged 100 Years. News of his passing will be a source of sorrow to all who knew him.



The Nantwich Historical Society first commemorated the 1644 Battle of Nantwich with a wreath-laying ceremony held at the war memorial in the town square in 1971, but it was Andrew who suggested that the Sealed Knot Society became involved in the event, with the first modern re-enactment of the battle taking place in 1973.

Andrew was a familiar face

during the commemorations over the years, appearing in the town square – dressed in full costume – to give members of the public a briefing about the event prior to the troops marching into town. He also gave commentary during the battle well into his nineties.

Speaking to the Chronicle, Shaun Cafferty, vice chairman of the Holly Holy Day Society, said: “Everyone in the society and all those connected with the Battle of Nantwich were very sad to hear about Andrew, who was for so long a permanent fixture of the event. I had the great pleasure of meeting him on numerous occasions, and I admired his enthusiasm, determination and sense of duty, which was undimmed by the passage of so many years.”

The Holly Holy Day Society would like to express its appreciation and thanks to Andrew for the pivotal role he played in the creation of what has become a major annual event for the people of Nantwich, and we offer our sincere condolences to his family. R.I.P.





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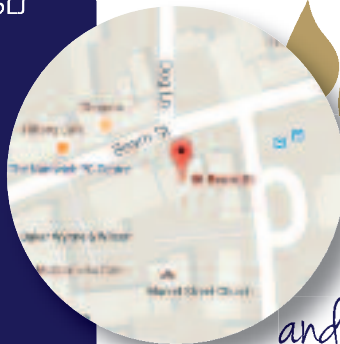
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## Around Town

- Visit Nantwich Market Hall – Tasty treats supplied by your local Nantwich Market traders!
- St Mary's Church, Nantwich – Living History Tableau on church lawns
- Horses on parade throughout the town.
- Mollies / Plough Witches Street Entertainment
- Hog Roast
- Domesday Morris Dancers
- **10.30 am** Book signing by Civil War authors at the Nantwich Bookshop
- **12.00 pm** (approx.) Pillory re-enactment at the pillory on Pillory Street (opposite Nantwich Museum)

## In the Square – The RedShift Stage

**10.00 am - 12.00 pm**

Entertainment on the RedShift Stage

The Funky Choir  
Josh Whittaker  
Benjamin Stubbs  
Sean Clark-Wilkinson  
Wistaston Young Drama Group  
Nantwich Players

**1.30 pm**

Wreath Laying Ceremony  
Troops march to Mill Island  
for battle re-enactment

## Museum Activities

**Open from 10.15am - 4.30pm**

**10.15 am - 11.30 am**

Civil War Town Tours – Meet at the Museum (£3 per person)

**10.15 am - 12.30 pm**

Children's activity: Biscuit decorating (Joseph Heler room, suggested donation £2)

**10.30 am - 11.30am**

Musketry Demonstration led by the Sealed Knot (free but donations welcome)

**11.30 am - 12.30pm**

Forlorne Hope perform 17th century music (Millennium Gallery, free but donations welcome)

**1.00 pm - 12.30pm**

Children's activity: Cartoon Workshop (Joseph Heler room, suggested donation £2)

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The Organisers of the event (Holy Holy Day Society) reserve the right to alter, amend or cancel any element of this event or activities without prior notice. Events for Health and Safety reasons and admission will be on a first come basis. The Organisers reserve the right to refuse admission. The Organisers Holy Holy Day activities of Holy Day 2015 although every care will be taken to provide the work. All members of the public participate in entirely their own risk.



**Soldier's Parade =** 

- 1 Nantwich Market
- 2 Hog Roast
- 3 Living History Exhibition
- 4 Nantwich Museum – Town History Tours, Musketry Demonstration, Forlorne Hope
- 5 Use of Pillory 12.00pm (Nantwich Players)  
Staged Events 9.30am to 12.30pm (Town Square)
- 6 Soldiers' Parade and
- 7 Wreath Laying 1.30pm

- 8 Battle Re-enactment 2.00pm  
Rosebowl Presentation 3.00pm
- 9 Artillery Demonstration 1.50pm
- 10 Disabled Area

-  Mobile Street Entertainment:  
Mounted Troops, Morris Dancers,  
Plough Witches
-  Parking

## THE PROTAGONISTS - SIR THOMAS FAIRFAX

Sir Thomas Fairfax (1612 – 71) was a leading general and served as parliamentary commander-in-chief for much of the Civil War. An adept and talented commander, Fairfax led Parliament to many victories, but he was eventually overshadowed by his subordinate Oliver Cromwell, who was more politically adept and radical in action against Charles I. Fairfax became unhappy with Cromwell's



*Sir Thomas Fairfax*

policy and publicly refused to take part in Charles's show trial. Eventually he resigned leaving Cromwell to control the republic. Honourable battlefield conduct and his role in the Restoration after Cromwell's death spared him from cavalier retribution. His dark hair and eyes and a swarthy complexion earned him the nickname Black Tom. Thomas Fairfax was born at Denton Hall, near Ilkley, Yorkshire, the eldest son of Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax. He studied at St John's College, Cambridge and Gray's Inn (1626–28), then volunteered to fight for the Protestant cause in the Netherlands. In 1639 he commanded a troop of Yorkshire dragoons which marched with King Charles I against the Scots in the First Bishops' War which ended with the Pacification of

Berwick before any fighting took place. In the Second Bishops' War the following year the English army was routed at the battle of Newburn. Fairfax fled with the rest of the defeated army but was nevertheless knighted for his services in January 1641. When the civil war broke out in 1642, his father, Lord Fairfax, was appointed general of the Parliamentary forces in the north, and Sir Thomas was made lieutenant-general of the horse under him. Both father and son distinguished themselves in the campaigns in Yorkshire.

Fairfax was in Lincolnshire in the period immediately prior to the siege of Nantwich and was commanded to march across the Pennines to join with Sir William Brereton's force in Manchester in order to relieve the siege.

Following Nantwich, Fairfax served at the Battle of Marston Moor, which was decisive in terms of the war in the North, after which he was selected as the new lord general with Cromwell as his lieutenant-general and cavalry commander. After a short preliminary campaign the "New Model" justified its existence in the decisive victory of Naseby (14 June 1645).

Fairfax served as an MP in the first parliament of the Protectorate but thereafter lived in retirement until the death of Cromwell in 1658, whereafter he played a significant role together with George Monck (who incidentally was one of the royalist officers taken prisoner in Acton Church following the Battle of Nantwich) in helping secure the restoration of the monarchy.



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## THE PROTAGONISTS - SIR WILLIAM BRERETON

Sir William Brereton (1604 – 1661) was the eldest son of William Brereton of Handforth in Cheshire. He inherited substantial estates in Cheshire on the death of his parents around 1610. After attending Oxford and Gray's Inn, Brereton emerged as an energetic magistrate in Cheshire during the 1620s and '30s. He was made a baronet in 1627, travelled extensively in Europe (he was



*Sir William Brereton*

an avid diarist) and acquired property in New England. Brereton was elected MP for Cheshire in 1628 and subsequently sat in the House of Commons at various times between then and 1659. Unlike Booth and Fairfax, he was also a staunch puritan. Brereton learned about warfare in Holland during his travels and was an extremely effective officer. He joined the parliamentary forces in 1642, and in March 1643 was appointed Commander-in-Chief for Parliament's army in Cheshire, where he quickly established a formidable intelligence network of spies and agents. He defeated the

royalist forces at the First Battle of Middlewich on 13 March and afterwards established the garrison at Nantwich. To the chagrin of many other local landowners and gentry, he established a firm power base in Cheshire during this time.

In 1643, when Parliament's cause was floundering elsewhere, Brereton stood out as a success, establishing Parliamentary dominance in Cheshire. With success came attention from the Royalists. More Cavaliers entered Cheshire to counter Brereton's forces and following his return from a campaign in North Wales on December 26, 1643 he suffered his only major defeat at the Second Battle of Middlewich, forcing him to retire to Manchester to await help from Fairfax in order to be able to relieve Nantwich. Following the Battle of Nantwich, Brereton spent some time in London but became one of only three officers specifically exempted by Parliament from the provisions of the Self Denying Ordinance.

In late 1644, Brereton turned his attentions to besieging Chester. Byron, now Governor of the City, held out until February 1646, but finally had to capitulate. Brereton played an important role in the first civil war's final major battle at Stow-on-the-Wold but thereafter faded into the background as far as military matters were concerned. Once his influence on military affairs diminished, so did his influence on local politics, which after the war, fell back into the hands of the county elite.

Brereton survived Pride's Purge in 1648 and although he was one of the commissioners on the trial of the King, he did not act with the regicides. He was present in the restored Rump Parliament in 1659.

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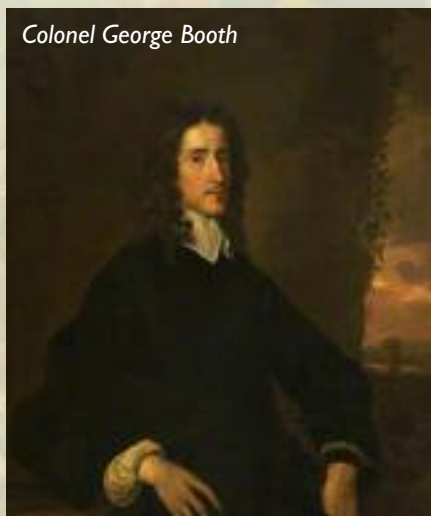
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## THE PROTAGONISTS - COLONEL GEORGE BOOTH

Colonel George Booth, part of the ancient family from Dunham Massey, was in command of the parliamentarian garrison at Nantwich during the siege and Battle of Nantwich. He was responsible to Sir William Brereton and led the sally from the town during the battle, which attacked Byron's forces from the rear, thereby contributing greatly to the successful defence of the



*Colonel George Booth*

town.

George Booth was only 21 at the time and is not to be confused with his grandfather, Sir George Booth the respected 1st Baron Delamere, who was town governor during this period. During the First Civil War the two were often referred to as Old George Booth and Young George Booth.

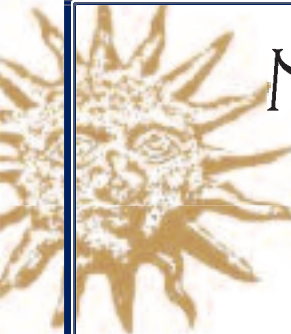
Booth had a rather fractious relationship with his commander Brereton. The Booths were moderate presbyterians and formed part of the local county elite, unlike Brereton who was a hardline puritan and whose standing in the social scale was somewhat in-

ferior to the Booths. Despite this, Brereton, through his political and military positions, had manoeuvred himself into a position of superior power within Cheshire at that time. The position was further complicated by the fact that Brereton's first wife had been Old George Booth's daughter. Brereton had therefore been uncle to Young George Booth.

On the conclusion of the First Civil War in 1645, Young George Booth was returned to the Long Parliament as Member of Parliament for Cheshire. He also served in the Barebones Parliament of 1643 and was the elected MP for Cheshire in the first and second Protectorate Parliaments in 1654 and 1656. Booth, himself eventually became known as Sir George Booth and was 2nd Bt from 1652-61 when he was elevated to the House of Lords as a peer.

Booth was also a leading player in the restoration. He led an uprising in Cheshire in 1659 in support of Charles II but was defeated by Lambert in the Battle of Winnington Bridge near Northwich in 1659. He escaped disguised as a woman but was arrested in Newport Pagnell and locked in the Tower of London. He was, however, soon freed and was returned to his seat in the Convention Parliament of 1660. On the coronation of King Charles II Booth was created Baron Delamere and lived until 1684.





# Nantwich Museum

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### Holly Holy Day Events, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>10.15am &amp; 11.30am</b> | Civil War Town Tours (Meet at the museum, £3 per person) |
| <b>10am – 12.30pm</b>        | Children's biscuit decorating (suggested donation £2)    |
| <b>10.30am – 11.30am</b>     | Musketry demonstration led by the Sealed Knot            |
| <b>11.30am – 12.30pm</b>     | Forlorne Hope perform 17 <sup>th</sup> century music     |
| <b>1pm – 3pm</b>             | Cartoon workshop (suggested donation £2)                 |

### 'A View to a Battle' exhibition 6<sup>th</sup> January – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2016

The English Civil War has been commemorated in literature and art, and particular attention is paid in this new exhibition to its portrayal in various stained glass windows, especially those local to Nantwich. Whilst some of the protagonists were clad in fine uniforms, others were ill-clad emphasising the frequent lack of distinction between opposing forces. Visitors to the exhibition may have preconceived notions concerning which side they would have chosen at the beginning of the war in 1642; the decision at the time may not have been that easy. The exhibition features new illustrations by artist Les Pickford.



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## THE PROTAGONISTS – JOHN LORD BYRON

John Lord Byron (1599 – 1652) was the leading royalist in charge of the attacking force at the Battle of Nantwich. He joined the King at York at the start of the war and took part in many of the early engagements including Powick Bridge, Edgehill and Roundway Down, gaining a reputation as a tough cavalry commander. He was created Baron Byron in October 1643 after distinguishing



*John Lord Byron*

himself at First Battle of Newbury. In December 1643, on the recommendation of Prince Rupert, Byron was commissioned as Field-Marshal of the Royalist forces in Cheshire, Lancashire and North Wales and given the responsibility of securing a route into England for troops released from service in Ireland to fight for the King. Reinforced with some of the first regiments to return from Ireland, Byron defeated Sir William Brereton at Middlewich on 26 December 1643 and then marched on Nantwich. He gained a reputation as the "Bloody Brag-

gadoccio" after allegedly boasting in an intercepted letter to the Marquis of Newcastle about the massacre of local Parliamentary supporters at Barthomley Church.

After the defeat at Nantwich, Byron withdrew to Chester where he was blockaded as the Parliamentarians reconquered most of Cheshire and Lancashire. In February 1644, however, Prince Rupert arrived at Shrewsbury with a commission as President of Wales. Rupert set about reforming the administration of the region and building a new army, enabling Byron and his officers to venture out and occupy parts of Cheshire, Shropshire and Herefordshire. In May 1644, Byron joined Rupert on the "York March" which culminated in the relief of York and the decisive battle of Marston Moor (July 1644). Byron commanded the cavalry on the Royalist right wing at Marston Moor, but his forces were routed by Cromwell's Ironsides. Rupert later claimed that Byron's faulty implementation of his orders was a major factor in the Royalist defeat.

Once again, Byron withdrew to Chester. After Prince Rupert's withdrawal from the region, Byron was defeated at the battle of Montgomery in September 1644, which ended Royalist power in north Wales. He steadily lost control of Cheshire to Brereton and was blockaded in Chester, which was subjected to a full siege following the King's defeat at Naseby in 1645. The King's attempt to lift the siege was defeated at the battle of Rowton Heath, after which Byron conducted a determined defence of the city, repulsing all attempts to take it by storm. He was, however, finally forced to surrender Chester in February 1646 after which he sailed away into exile. Byron died in Paris in 1652.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BATTLE OF NANTWICH

The Battle of Nantwich was highly significant because it represented the first clear-cut major victory by Parliamentary forces in the Civil War and, at a stroke, prevented the Royalists from establishing a permanent ascendancy in the North-West. During the previous year, 1643, the Royalists had enjoyed a string of victories across the country and Parliament was under severe pressure. Crucially, however, Parliament never lost control of London. Ever since his enforced departure from the capital in 1642, the major strategic objective for King Charles I had been to win back the city: he realised that without winning back London he could not win the war itself. He needed to establish Royalist control across the rest of the country, in order to amalgamate his regional armies into a larger, unified force with which to march on the capital and knock out the Parliamentarians for good. He hoped to see Nantwich captured by Lord Byron to help place the wider North-West region under lasting Royalist control. The Scots had allied with Parliament and it was known that they were preparing to invade northern England in early 1644. Charles I wanted Byron's army to bolster the Royalist forces which were tasked with the defence of the border regions from the imminent Scottish onslaught. This would enable the King's supporters to defeat the Scots, thereby removing the threat of a two-pronged front and permitting the Royalists to march south, adding more numbers as they went, before a final, decisive assault on London. The Parliamentary triumph at Nantwich, however, dashed the Royalist grand plan.

Whilst Byron did manage to escape to Chester after the battle with a single regiment of cavalry, the strong army he had led would never again constitute a single fighting force.

To add further to the Cavalier setbacks, a large number of the Royalist combatants from the battle actually switched their allegiance to Parliament once captured. This spoke volumes about the King's seriously-weakened position in the region.

It was inevitable that the vanquished Byron received hefty criticism. Some said that rather than invading Cheshire, he should instead have marched his army into Lancashire and seized Liverpool, to provide



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the King with another safe port to which reinforcements could be sent. Alternatively, Byron could have wintered at Chester, awaiting a fresh convoy of reinforcements which arrived from Ireland early in 1644. He might then have been in a stronger position to mount successful campaigns in the coming year. Yet with the imminent Scottish invasion of England, in support of Parliament, there was a sense that action needed to be taken sooner rather than later. Byron had hoped that a swift victory in Cheshire would have given him scope to push on into Lancashire afterwards or freedom to pursue a policy of wait and see, confident that Chester faced no realistic threat from Parliament.

Instead he oversaw the destruction of a significant Royalist field army. Byron's campaign in Cheshire had begun well, but the siege of Nantwich tied down his army long enough for the Parliamentary counter-attack under Fairfax and Brereton to prove successful. The Royalists were therefore unable to present a united front against the Scottish invasion of northern England in late-January 1644. They could only look back on a campaign which promised so much, but ultimately delivered so little. For Parliament, the victory at Nantwich provided a welcome boost to both manpower and morale, whilst heralding a key turning point in the war.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Holly Holy Day Society would like to offer its thanks and appreciation to a number of organisations and individuals, without whose help and generosity the annual re-enactment of the Battle of Nantwich would not be possible.

In no particular order:

The Sealed Knot – Joseph Heler Cheese – Chatwins Bakery – Nantwich Town Council – Cheshire East Council – St Mary's Church, Nantwich – Brine Leas School – Malbank School – Nantwich Museum – Acton Nomads – Crewe & Nantwich Weaver and Nantwich Rotary – Nantwich Players – Audlem Cricket Club – Judith and Volunteers of the Gables Luncheon Club – Peter at the Oddfellows Arms – Forlorne Hope – Nantwich Town FC – Cliff Astles – Jeff Woodall – Ezra and the Plough Witches – Alan Pennel and the St Marys Bellringers - Domesday Morris Dancers – RedShift Radio – Rease Heath College - Nantwich Bookshop – Nantwich Young Voices – The Funky Choir – Nantwich Players – and many others who have contributed in any way over the past year to assist us in organising our re-enactment.

Your support and help is greatly appreciated

Your Holly Holy Day Organising Committee

(Colin Bissett, Keith Cafferty, Shaun Cafferty, Kate Dobson, Nick Dyer, Graham Fenton, Jez Harper, Michael-John Parkin, Liz Southall, David Wilson)



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# CIVIL WAR AUTHORS EVENT AT NANTWICH BOOKSHOP



If you would like to experience more of the atmosphere of the 1640s and the turbulent period in our history that was the catalyst for our modern system of government, you could do worse than visit the Nantwich Bookshop, which will be hosting the third Civil War Authors Evening on Friday 22nd January followed by a book signing on the morning of Holly Holy Day itself.

Organised by Nantwich Bookshop, the civil war authors evening is rapidly establishing itself as an annual event. This year the bookshop will play host to civil war authors Jemahl Evans and local author DW Bradbridge, who will be talking about their latest books, *The Last Roundhead* and



*The Combermere Legacy*. Also present will be the well-known academic, Dr Andrew Hopper, the author of *Black Tom*, the biography of Sir Thomas Fairfax. On the Saturday morning all three authors will be present at the bookshop to sign copies of their books.

*The Last Roundhead* tells the story of Sir Blandford Candy who, as an old man, looks back on his life and the start of the Civil War. Young Blandford sets off for London following an illicit affair with his brother's betrothed and joins the army to fight the King, taking part in the battles of Edgehill and Turnham Green.

As he bounces from battlefield to bedroom,

Blandford unmasks Cavalier plots, earns the enmity of the King's agents and uncovers an attempt to steal thousands. All whilst dealing with murderous brothers, scheming sisters and puritan displeasure. Flashman meets the Three Musketeers in a picaresque romp through Stuart England.

*Black Tom* – Sir Thomas Fairfax and the English Revolution is the essential biography of Sir Thomas Fairfax, the creator and commander of Parliament's New Model Army from 1645 to 1650. Although Fairfax emerged as England's most successful commander of the 1640s, this book challenges the orthodoxy that he was purely a military figure. It is the first modern academic study of Fairfax, making it essential reading for university students as well as historians of the seventeenth century. Its accessible style will



appeal to a wider audience of those interested in the civil wars and interregnum more generally.

DW Bradbridge made his debut in 2013 with *The Winter Siege*, a historical whodunit set against the backdrop of the Battle of Nantwich, featuring the reluctant town constable Daniel Cheswis. *The Winter Siege* was the Nantwich Bookshop's best-selling book in any genre in 2014.



*The Combermere Legacy* is the third book in the series and sees Daniel Cheswis tasked with preventing royalist spy Jem Bressy from securing a hidden hoard of plate and valuables for use by the Royalist cause in Shrewsbury. Cheswis has to solve the connection between the seventy-year old murder of the landlord of Nantwich's main coaching inn and a series of killings in Nantwich and the nearby estate of Combermere.

# Joseph Heler – Our Story

Hidden away in the heart of the Cheshire countryside, near the market town of Nantwich, lies the Joseph Heler family dairy on Laurels Farm. It is here that our team of expert cheese makers produce classic



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dates back over a century, when Joseph Heler's grandmother started the family tradition by making one whole Cheshire cheese every day in the family's farmhouse – Laurels Farm – using her own special recipe.



This cheese making expertise was passed down through the generations to Joseph Heler himself, who developed a passion that was never to leave him. In 1957 this led to him founding his own company – Joseph

Heler Cheese. Although we have grown over the years as a company



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