

Archaeology of the English Civil War

It is difficult now to think, as we look around the peaceful countryside of modern Worcestershire, that 350 years ago the fate of England was being fought out in the fields, lanes and streets of the county. Few places, village or town, were spared some involvement, although little evidence now survives.

The English Civil War lasted nine years, divided into three main episodes: 1642-6, 1648 and 1650-1. There is a tendency to view this period in a colourful and romantic light, but for the people involved it was no less horrific than civil wars of more modern times.

Recent estimates put the national death toll at around 185,000 men and women but the local casualty figure is more difficult to estimate. Although there were few major battles (the most notable being the Battle of Ripple in 1643, Evesham in 1645 and the Battle of Worcester in 1651) there was a frequent record of skirmishes across the county.

No less traumatic was the grinding effect of repeated plundering and the disruption caused by the relentless progress of hungry armies of both sides as they roamed across the countryside heading for Oxford, Chester, Hereford or wherever the focus of action happened to be at that time. Or, indeed, the relentless demands for money that sucked vast amounts out of the local economy, or the conscription of local working men into the armies. Up to one quarter of the male population may have been brought into the struggle. The frustration at the collapse of law and order led, in 1645, to the rise of the Clubman Movement in the county.

Evidence of the English Civil War is still around us. It can be seen in the remains of earthwork forts, damaged city walls, and scatters of artefacts on battlefields. A study of the landscape of battle sites also can provide a much clearer insight into the tactics employed than can be found in a simple written account of the conflict.

Metal detecting has greatly increased the number of finds from the period. However, as with finds of other periods, much of the value of a find is lost if it is not properly recorded. The detailed recording and study of musket balls from a battlefield can provide unique information as to the course of a battle. The best example of this is the work on the 1645 Naseby battlefield. If removed unrecorded from a battlefield they simply become leaden curios. The discovery of any archaeological find should be reported to your local Finds Liaison Officer, see <http://www.finds.org.uk/involved/regional.php> for details.

The Worcestershire Clubmen

During the First Civil War the despair of the local population in many counties, continually at the mercy of either side, whatever their original loyalty had been, led to the rise of the 'Clubmen Movements'. These were associations or 'clubs' of local inhabitants who practised armed neutrality.

There were assemblies of Clubmen in Worcestershire throughout 1645. The best

evidence comes from the west of the county, around Woodbury Hill and the Malverns. These were areas that had so far escaped the worst excesses of the plundering by both sides and that wished to continue to do so. On 5 March, 1,000 men from north-west Worcestershire met on Woodbury Hill, under the leadership of Charles Nott of Shelsley. There they drew up a Declaration to protest the 'utter ruin by the outrages and violence of the soldier; threatening to fire our houses; endeavouring to ravish our wives and daughters, and menacing our persons'.

The Clubmen wanted to establish 'a mutual league for each other's defence', including provision to rescue members who were captured. Admission to the league was refused to any soldier or those marked for enlistment. This was not a revolutionary, or even Parliamentary movement. The Woodbury Clubmen, composed mainly of commoners, recognised the Royalist High Sheriff (Henry Bromley of Holt) and Grand Jury as the legitimate legal authority of the county and claimed that their league was to enforce the Royalist's own, oft-repeated and by now discredited, proclamation to improve the discipline of the troops. The practical consequence of this stance was, however, to oppose the Royalist occupying forces. The profession of loyalty to the king was in itself a well-used convention during the war. In practical terms this movement benefited the Parliamentarians, as it was the Royalists whose armies were the principal occupying power. Nevertheless, the refusal of the Clubmen to offer outright support to Parliament meant that an irritated Colonel Massey in Gloucester (who supplied them with some weapons) still described them as traitorous rebels.

Nothing seems to have come of this first phase of the movement in Worcestershire although the Committee of Salop wrote on 13 April that the Clubmen 'continue resolute to oppose the King's party'. Despite attempts to track down the ringleaders, local constables refused to give the names of those attending. After an abortive attempt to negotiate with the Clubmen at Tenbury, there is no recorded reaction to the demands of Prince Rupert in May for every man to forswear the leagues.

Despite this ominous sign of popular revolt, the exactions of the Royalist army continued unabated. In addition, there was an absence of any firm Royalist leadership in the county. By the Autumn of 1645, the ultimate defeat of the Royalists was becoming evermore obvious and this encouraged the waverers. A more politically-calculating movement, with a different power base therefore emerged in the winter, and was a more overt anti-Royalist movement. On 11 November, 3,000 men from the Evesham area met on the heights of Bredon Hill to declare formally for Parliament and seek armed support. This time they were led, not by commoners, but by gentry who had realised that they had been supporting a losing cause. Sir Edward Dineley of Charlton, formerly a Royalist Commissioner and then a member of the Parliamentary Committee of Sequestration (to investigate and seize the estates of proven Royalist gentry), was elected leader.

The hopes of the eastern Clubmen were short-lived. Fired with new-found enthusiasm they tried to blockade Royalist garrisons and, in early December, they rashly attacked Maurice and Rupert on their way to Oxford but were easily defeated and dispersed, at least temporarily. Nevertheless, the Committee of Salop wrote on 14 December that the troops at Evesham 'joined with the country who rise so freely that Worcester is already much straitened for provision'.

The Woodbury league also re-emerged in early December. On 6 December they presented a new manifesto to the governor of Worcester. Details were given for systems of warning of danger, arranging help for any that were wounded and declaring any that did not answer the summons as enemies who would be denied future protection. Every parishioner worth £10 a year had to provide himself with a musket. The new Royalist commander in the county from 6 December, Lord Astley, was ordered to 'keep the county from rendezvous and tumultuous assemblies of men without authority'. But the tide was now firmly with the parliamentary forces and the Clubmen formed an important new militia that supported the New Model Army as it regained control in the county via the sieges of the small county garrisons from January, culminating in the siege of Worcester itself in June.

The Woodbury Declaration

The Worcestershire Clubmen Declaration 5 March 1645

On Wednesday 5 March around 1,000 'Clubmen' from north west Worcestershire met on Woodbury Hill under the leadership of Mr Charles Nott, described there as the Parson of Shelsley. They drew up a Declaration of their grievances, to be presented to Henry Bromley Esq., High Sheriff of the county:



View towards Woodbury Hill, Worcestershire

"We having long groaned under many illegal taxations and unjust pressures and that contrary to orders presented to his Majesty by advice of the Lords and Commons assembled at Oxford And ratified and published by his Majesty's gracious proclamation. And nevertheless finding no redress of our grievances, but that we, our wives and children, have been exposed to utter ruin by the outrages and violence of the soldier; threatening to fire our houses; endeavouring to ravish our wives and daughters, and menacing our persons. We are now enforced to associate ourselves in a mutual league for each other's defence, and do declare to the world that our meetings have been, are, and shall be to no other intention or purpose than as followeth.

- *To maintain the true Reformed Protestant Religion contained in the Doctrine of the Church of England against all Popery and Popish superstitions and all other Heresies and schisms whatsoever.*
- *To defend the King's Majesty's person, honour, and estate against all those that shall oppose the same.*
- *To preserve and uphold the ancient and just privileges of Parliament and known laws of this kingdom against all arbitrary Government which shall be endeavoured to be introduced and put upon us under what pretence soever.*
- *To retain the property of the subject by protecting and safeguarding our persons and estates by the mutual aid and assistance of each other against all murders, rapines, plunder, robberies, or*

violences which shall be offered by the soldier or any oppressor whatsoever, as is allowed by those orders lately signed by his Highness Prince Maurice as appeareth by the 5th Article of the said orders.

- *To quicken the execution of those wholesome orders abovesaid ratified by his Majesty's proclamations as also those other orders which at several times since have been agreed upon and signed by his Highness Prince Rupert, Prince Maurice, and also consented unto by the Honourable the Governor and Commissioners for the safeguarding of this county and the great Inquest at several Sessions of the peace held for the body of the same.*
- *Our resolution is not to submit to the execution of any commission intrusted upon any pretence whatsoever in the hands of any Papist, or Papists, Recusant or Recusants or any other joined in commission with any Papist, or Papist Recusant for that by the known laws of this kingdom no Papist, nor Papist-recusants ought to be intrusted in any office of state, justice, or judicature: neither to keep any arms in their houses that may be or prove offensive to any of His Majesty's Loyal subjects.*
- *Our desire is that this our Declaration and resolution may be presented to the High Sheriff of this County to whom alone as his Majesty's Vicegerent we conceive we are bound to render an account of these our doings. And further our petition is that he would be pleased to endeavour that all Popish Recusants within this County may be pressed to take the oaths of Allegiance and supremacy as by law is provided. And upon refusal they may be disarmed as by law they ought.*
- *That it is our request that the Grand Inquest now intrusted for the body of this County may be moved seriously to weigh and consider how they do consent to the illegancy of such Commissions as shall be committed to the hands of Papist, or Popish Recusants lest they betray our trust and so expose both themselves and us to utter ruin."*

Extracts from parish accounts from Fladbury

The effects of the Civil War was not just confined to military action. Equally significant was the slow, grinding, effect of the war on everyday life. There was widespread plundering of private property at both an official and individual level. Soldiers were poorly, and irregularly, paid and armies on the march depended heavily on re-supplying themselves from the countryside through which they passed.

The extracts below are taken from the parish of Fladbury in East Worcestershire. They refer to losses suffered at the hands of Parliamentary troops, simply because the only documents that survive are claims against Parliament (there being little point in trying to recover damages from the defeated Royalists). The extracts illustrate a wide range of goods being seized, ranging from horses, foodstuffs and clothing. The extracts do not include the repeated costs of quartering troops or the monthly 'contributions' (taxes) to Parliament. Note the costs of providing ladders etc for the battle of Evesham in May 1645.

George Danby	2 horses taken from him by Capt Cotton, his souldiers under the Earl of Denbigh: when they came for the first Contribution	£ 6 6s 8d
	horses and other goods taken from him by Warwick soldiers worth	£40 0s 0d
	2 horses taken from him by Col. Archer's soldiers worth	£13 6s 8d
	Ladders boards and other materials taken from him att the Siege of Evesham	£2 10s 0d
Thomas Perkes	Taken from him by Capt Aston in money and in apparel	£7 0s 0d
	Taken from him by Capt Aston's men saddles, bridles and other implements	£1 0s 0d
	Taken from him by Capt Moore an Irishman under Sir William Waller 2 horses worth	£22 0s 0d

Thomas Weston	Ladders and other materials at the siege of Evesham	£ 0 2s 6d
William Saye	Taken from him by Sir William Waller's forces one roane Gelding worth	£ 6 0s 0d
	Taken from him by the Kentish regiment under Sir William Waller, wheat 30 bushels, barley 30 bushels, pulses 50 bushels, malt 24 bushels, millcorn 30 bushels, all worth	£ 24 0s 0d
	Taken from him 12 bushels of oates, and 6 bags	£ 1 11s 0d
Edward Harris	One Dunne Gelding taken from him by the Scotts in their march from Hereford	£5 0s 0d
	Boardes and other things lost at the siege of Evesham	£0 15s 0d

The Battle of Worcester

"Say you have been at Worcester, where England's sorrows began, and where they are happily ended."

Hugh Peters (Parliamentary army chaplain at Worcester 1651)

Introduction

The battle of Worcester on 3 September 1651 was the final act in the series of Civil Wars that had begun in August 1642. In January 1649 Charles I was executed by Parliament. A year later, Charles II decided to launch a bid to restore his throne by military might. He landed in Scotland and made an alliance with the Covenanters who had previously supported Parliament. Many on the Parliamentary side were reluctant to fight against their former allies: Fairfax, the original choice of commander refused to serve and Oliver Cromwell was appointed in his place. The Kidderminster preacher, Richard Baxter urged soldiers not to fight in Scotland. The campaign was dogged by sickness and Cromwell himself became seriously ill.



Lowland Scottish musketeer

Cromwell recovered in the Spring of 1651 and determined not to spend another winter in Scotland. He decided to draw the King's army into Scotland, gambling on the likelihood that few Englishmen would support an invading Scottish army, whatever their feelings for the monarchy. Cromwell was correct, very few Englishmen joined the 11,000 -13,000 strong Scottish army and waverers now flocked to join the parliamentary forces. Thousands joined the militias that were raised up and down the country. As a consequence, this was one of the few campaigns of the Civil Wars that showed any popular enthusiasm. The country knew that this was a chance to strike a decisive blow and restore the country to some form of stability.

The Worcester Campaign

As the Scottish army (now totalling up to 16,000 men) entered Worcestershire it was harassed by the local militia who desperately tried to slow up the advance in order to give the garrison of Worcester a chance to improve the defences of the City and to receive reinforcements.



Site of skirmish at Ombersley

Local troops under Andrew Yarranton fought a skirmish at Ombersley, just north of Worcester and continued to fight the advancing Scots to the very gates of Worcester. But the resolve of the citizens crumbled as they realised that no reinforcements were forthcoming. The City Council therefore decided to surrender and, to prove (somewhat belatedly) its loyalty to the Royalist cause they fired on the garrison as it retreated to Gloucester. Thus it was that the King entered Worcester on 22 August. But this was simply an act of pragmatism. Few local men joined the Royalist army and the militia joined the main Parliamentary army that then gathered around Worcester.

The Battle of Worcester

On August 28 part of the Parliamentary army crossed the River Severn at Upton. By nightfall, around 12,000 men had assembled there. Another 18,000 men began the march from Evesham to the outskirts of Worcester.

Cromwell was in no hurry and ensured that his men were properly rested and supplied before commencing the main battle. The battle may even have been delayed so that it fell anniversary of his other great victory against the Scots at Dunbar - on 3 September 1650.

At dawn on Wednesday 3 September, the army on the west bank of the Severn under General Fleetwood began their march towards Worcester, dragging with them pontoons to make bridges that would span the Rivers Teme and Severn. The Scots were unprepared and were slow to send reinforcements to the small

number of Highlanders that defended the river plain to the south of Worcester. Even so, they held back the parliamentary army until c.3pm when Cromwell ordered his reserve of crack New Model Army troops across the bridge of boats that spanned the Severn. Retreat became a rout and the lane back to Worcester was lined with the Scottish dead.

In an attempt to relieve the pressure on his men, King Charles attempted to counter-attack on the east side of the City. A mixed force of Highlanders, Lowlanders and English gentry managed to scale the high ground that overlooked the city and captured some of the Parliamentary gun positions. The parliamentary front line was composed of militia and for a time the battle looked to be in the balance. But the line held and once again Cromwell was able to save the situation with his New Model Army reserves. The militia now rose. They were determined to annihilate this foreign army that had brought the spectre of Civil war back to England. The Essex and Cheshire militias led the charge: the Scottish garrison at Fort Royal was massacred and the Cheshire militia entered the City.



The Parliamentary troops were in no mood to show mercy

By 6pm the battle was lost, although parties of Scottish troops and English gentry held out until around 10pm. The King made a narrow escape, with his retreat covered by two charges of troops under local gentry.

Fate of the prisoners

The story of the battle now passes into legend and the escape of the King to the south coast and thence to France has become part of English legend. less thought has been spared for the fate of the c.10,000 Scottish prisoners that were captured. Stripped of all possessions they were herded into prisons all over the country. Many were transported to new England, Virginia and the West Indies to work on the plantations and iron works. Others were sent to work on the drainage schemes of the fens. But, unable to maintain them in prison, eventually the government had simply to release the rest back to Scotland. Many of the English prisoners were conscripted into the army and were sent to Ireland.

A Contemporary Account

A number of contemporary accounts of the battles were published in letters and Newsheets. This example is taken from Mercurius Politicus for 4 - 11 September 1651.

"An exact Relation of the late glorious Victory, obtained (through Gods mercy) by the Forces of this Commonwealth, over the Scottish Army at Worcester, 3. Sept. 1651. being an Extract of the chiefest of that intelligence which is yet come to hand

Though no Tongue or Pen be able to express the greatness of this Action, suitable to that magnificent appearance of God, in the behalf of England; yet because it is a main part of our duty, in any measure, to become subservient to his glory, it is conceived nothing can more advance it, than by recounting before all the world, the many wondrous and mighty dispensations of his mercy. This Third day of September hath been a very glorious day of Decision; This day twelvemonth was glorious at Dunbar, but this day hath been very glorious before Worcester: The Word then was, The Lord of Hosts, and so it was now, the Lord of Hosts indeed having been wonderfully with us. The same Signall wee had now as then, which was to have no white about us; yet the Lord hath cloathed us with white Garments, though to the Enemy they have been bloody: Only here Lyes the difference, that at Dun bar our work was at break of Day, and done ere the morning was over; but now it began towards the close of the Evening, and ended not till the night came upon us. That was the beginning of their Fall before the appearance of the Lord Jesus; This seems to be the setting of the young Kings glory.

This Battell was fought with various Successes for some hours, but still hopefull on the behalf of the Commonwealth, and inauspicious to the Enemy; of whom the more were slain, because the dispute was long, and very near at hand, and often at push of Pike, wherein the new raised Forces did perform very singular good service, for which they deserve a very high estimation and acknowledgment, since they have added very much to the reputation of our Affairs, by their alacrity and courage in the work; And it pleased God so to order this Affair in the hands of his weak instruments, that in the end it became an absolute Victory, determined by an immediate possession of the Town, with a totall ruine and defeat of the Scottish Army: Concerning which, be pleased to take a short view of the whole action, in the following Particulars.

Upon Wednesday morning 3 September. between 5 and 6 a clock, the Forces under Lieut. Generall Fleetwood began their march from Upton; but by reason of som hindrances in their way, reached not to Team River till betwixt 2 or 3 in the Evening. As soon as our Boats came up (which was much about the same time) a Bridge was presently made over the Severn, on our main Armys side, and another over the River Team on the Lieut. Generals side, who made way as far as Powick, half a mile on this side the Bridge with his Van, before the Enemy took the Alarm: but the Alarm being taken, they immediately drew both their Hors and Foot from their Leaguer at St. Jones, to oppose the Lieut. Generals passage over our Bridges of Boats.

Whereupon the Generall presently commanded over Col. Inglesbies and Col. Fairfax their Regiments, with part of his own Regiment, and the Life-guard, and Col. Hacker's of hors over the River; his Excellency himself leading them in person, and being the first man that set foot on the Enemies ground: After these, the Lieut. General commanded Col. Goffs, and Major-gen. Deans Regiments, all which advanced towards the Enemy, who had wel-lined the hedges with men to impede the approach of our Forces; but it pleased the Lord after some sharp dispute (wherein ours beat them from hedge to hedge) to give a good issue there to our mens courage and resolution.

Then Col. Blague, and Col. Gibbons, with Col. Marsh's Regiment were commanded over Team as Seconds to the former, and to attempt the Enemy in other Places, where they had drawn their men; so which service the Lord Greys Regiment was likewise order'd over; who all acquitted themselves so valiantly, that after half an hour, or an hours dispute, it pleased the Lord that the Enemy quitted their ground, and fled away: Onely about Powick bridge, which they had broken down, having the advantage of Hedges and Ditches, they maintained a very hot dispute with Col. Haynes his Regiment and Col. Cobbets, Col. Mathews being as a Reserve to Them both; by which meanes it pleased the Lord, that the Enemy quitted that ground likewise, and ran away. As Col. Haynes his Regiment were wading over the River, to advance upon them, about a mile from Powick, the Enemy had broken down another bridge, upon a Pass unto which place were sent some of our Dragoons, who with assistance of some horse, forced the Enemy from that Place, and gained a passage over for the Lieut. Generals Regiment, Col. Twistletons, and Col. Kendricks that were commanded to pursue the Enemy, who (as it was supposed) made towards Hereford or

Ludlow; but at length they wheeled off, and all ran into Worcester, except some few that were taken. The Ground where this Controversie was acted, was so combred with Hedges, that our Horse had not much liberty to engage; but yet both Hors and Foot, where they had opportunity, did (through the Lords presence assisting) approve themselves very gallantly. After the Enemy had run away into Worcester, they renewed their Courage with apprehensions of shame and fury, and drew out what Hors and Foot they could upon the Generals side, supposing that most of his Army had bin advanced over the River, whereupon they made a very bold Sally on that side the Town in great Bodies, giving our men a very hot salute, insomuch that it put some of them to a little Retreat with disorder; but in a short space the Lord gave us Victory on this side also, being re-inforced with Major-gen. Desborough's Regiment of Horse, and Col. Cobbets of Foot. On that side was engaged part of the Generals Regiment of Hors, Major Gen. Lambert, Commissary gen. Whalies, Major-gen. Harisons Brigade, and Col. Tomlinsons Regiment, with some of the Surry and Essex Troops. Those of Foot, were the Major gen. Col. Pride, Col. Coopers, the Cheshire brigade, and the Essex Foot: All of these (as the Lord gave them opportunity) discharged themselves with much bravery; disputing also not only the hedges with the Enemy, but following them boldly to the very mouths of their Cannon; so that in the end they gained their Works, with their Fort-Royal, beating them into the town, and turning their own Cannon upon them; which so wrapt them up with a Spirit of terror and confusion, that afterwards, the night being come, we soon gaincd an Entry, and became Masters of the Town, whilst the Enemy disposed themselves for a flight, the same way that they came in hither, and many of their Horse got away. Their King (it is said) went out very meanly, with only 12 Horse; in all there escaped not above 3000 Hors, and these not 1000 together in a Body; of whom, Col. Barton, being commanded to Bewdly the day before, with some Hors and Dragoons, took many Prisoners as they fled, to the number of 1200. And the next morning, pursuit was made by 1500 Horse and Dragoons under Col. Blundel, and a stronger party under Major gen. Harrison. In the flight, Col. Lilburn, and the Generals Regiment of Foot that was with him, met with their Antagonist the E. of Derby, Lauderdale, and about 140 persons of quality. These Forces of Col, Lilburns, with those lying at Bewdly, and in Shropshire and Staffordshire, seem to have bin so happily disposed there by Providence, as if we had foreseen this fatal Rout, and accordingly provided to intercept the Enemy in their return.

In all the Ingagements that ever we had, never did a more immediate hand of God appear, than in this, nor more courage and resolution in an Army, though no flesh hath cause to boast, because it is the Lord only that hath don all these things. The number of Prisoners is near 10000. near 3000 were slain of the Enemy; but of all on our side, not above 200. which adds much unto the Mercy. Of Officers very few slain; onely Quartermaster gen. Mosely and Capt. Jones of Col. Cobbets Regiment: Maj. gen. Lamberts hors was shot under him: The number of Arms and Colours is so great, that as yet no certain accompt of them hath been given. My Lord Generall did exceedingly hazard himself, riding up and down in the midst of the shot, and riding himself in person to the Enemies foot offering them Quarter, whereto they returned no answer, but shot. The Major-generals, and all the rest of the Officers, in their places, gave many eminent Testimonies of a noble courage and behaviour. Let us conclude therefore in the words of our renowned General, The dimensions of this mercy are above all our thoughts; It is, for ought I know, a Crowning mercy. Surely, if it be not, such a one we shall have, if this provoke those that are concerned in it to Thankfulnesse, and the Parliament to do the will of him, who hath don his will for it, and for the Nation; whose good pleasure it is to establish the Nation, and the Change of government, by making the people so willing for the defence therof, & so signally to bless the endeavors of his Servants in this late great work. Let all our thoughts tend to the; promoting of his honor, who hath wrought so great Salvation: Let not the fatness of these continued mercys occasion pride and wantonness, as formerly the like hath done to a chosen Nation; but let the fear of the Lord even for his Mercies, keep an Authority and a People, so prospered and blessed, and witnessed unto, humble and faithfull, that Justice and Righteousness, Mercy and Truth, may flow forth as a thankful Return to our gracious God, for all his mercies."

Evidence of the Civil War in the Landscape

The following pictures illustrate some of the main types of archaeological finds, taken principally from Worcestershire.

Many Civil War battlefields may appear to have no visible interest. But the landscape itself is important in often providing an explanation of the particular tactics used (especially when the contemporary field system can be reconstructed). It is important to accurately plot the discovery of Civil War finds across such a landscape as this can identify troop locations and the course of a battle.



The medieval defences of English towns were generally in a state of disrepair before the war and had to be rebuilt. To provide better protection against cannon shot a bank of earth, 2m - 3m wide, was often built up against their rear.



Evidence of damage during the war on the defences of cities such as Chester and Worcester can be found in the form of later patching of the walls.



New town defences might be built, consisting of a ditch with an earth rampart.

Earthen defences provided a better protection against cannon fire as the soil absorbed the impact of the shot. Ditches might be 4m to 10 m wide and 2m - 4m deep. The work would usually be undertaken by the forced labour of local civilians rather than by the soldiers.



Excavation of Civil War defences at Worcester

Land around the defences might be cleared, as well as a strip inside the defences.

This was to provide a clear field of fire and allow free movement of the defenders.

This also provided material to construct the new earthworks. The Civil War created massive disruption to life within the towns.



Excavations at Sidbury, Worcester

City defences or siegeworks might incorporate star-shaped artillery forts. One of these survives as Fort Royal on the east side of Worcester.

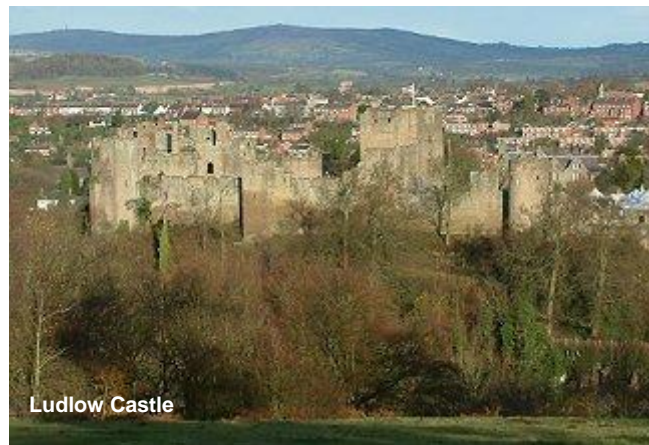


Fort Royal: Worcester, from tower of the Cathedral

Existing moated manor house sites might also be converted into Civil War forts. The ditches would be deepened and widened and artillery platforms built at the corners.



A besieging army might also create a network of trenches to contain the enemy. This trench system overlooks Ludlow Castle.



A number of buildings are pock-marked with holes reputed to be the result of Civil war battles. Some care is needed as 19th century Rifle Volunteers also had a bad reputation for firing at churches!! But Powick church was the scene of fighting during the Battle of Worcester in 1651 and these marks are probably genuine.





A selection of Civil War shot. From left to right: Musket ball (37gm); musket ball trimmed with a knife to fit bore of weapon; pistol ball (18gm) still showing casting scar from mould; possible musket ball drilled with a hole for scooping up dung (an early form of biological warfare and documented from sieges).



The lead tops from the Primer and Powder Flasks carried on a bandolier are a common find from battlefields and camps. A musket ball is undatable by itself, but the discovery of such flasks support the idea that they may date from the Civil War.



Specific military finds Civil war finds are likely to be accompanied by other objects that may be used by soldier and civilian alike. The illustration shows the bowl of a clay tobacco pipe dating from 1640 - 1660 and found in the backfill of the Civil War defence ditch at Evesham, Worcs.

Places to Visit

Lygon Arms, Broadway

Lygon Arms Tradition holds that Cromwell stayed here during the campaign of 1651. Civil War period armour is mounted on the walls of the Dining Room.

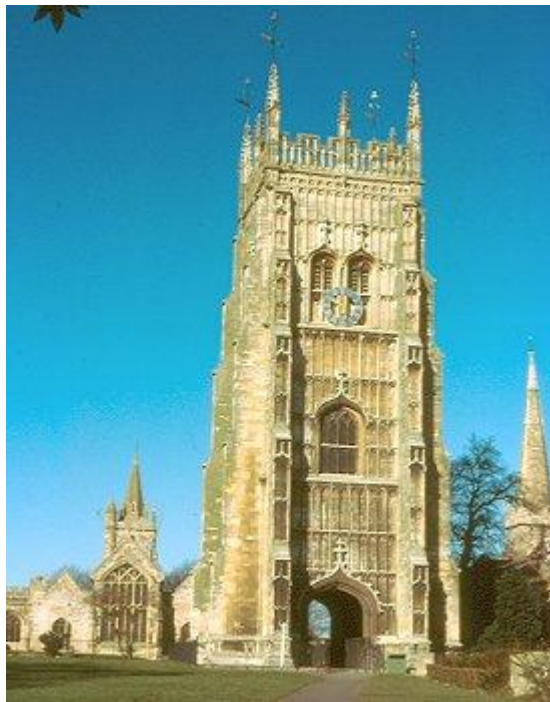
Site of Twyford Bridge, Evesham

The crossing of the River Avon on the old London Road was partially demolished by the retreating Royalist army in June 1644. This was to hinder the advance of Waller and Essex. The citizens quickly repaired the bridge in order to allow Waller's army to follow. This was much to the fury of the King who fined the town and again broke down the bridge. The bridge has now been demolished. Its site was to the east of the town at Offenham.

Langston's House, 13 Bridge Street, Evesham

Reputedly where Charles I stayed during July 1644.

Abbey Bell Tower, Evesham



The tower has marks on the south face, reputedly the result of damage from gunfire during the Civil War.

Evesham Defences

The line of the Civil War defences of the town survives on the north side as a watercourse and sunken way leading towards the railway station.

Hartlebury Castle

The present 'castle' is the result of late seventeenth and eighteenth century rebuilding. The original castle was fortified in the Civil War and served as a mint from 1644. Part of the possible Civil War ditches survive. Now the Bishop's Palace.

County Museum, Hartlebury

Beside the 'castle'. Houses some material from the period including a buff coat.

Pershore Bridge.

Like Twyford Bridge at Evesham, this bridge was also ordered by the King to be destroyed in June 1644. Unfortunately, the job was rushed so that around 40 of the soldiers and workmen fell into the river with the collapsing masonry and were killed. Some reports say that Waller had a similar experience a short while later when 'The great stone bridge being pulled down by the inhabitants, after they had demolished the arches the rest suddenly tumbled down, whereby about sixty of the workmen were knocked on the head or drowned.' This may, however, be a confused report of the earlier incident. The post-Civil War red sandstone replacement of the central arch is still visible.

**Powick Church, Powick**



Marks on the church tower are reputed to be the result of gun shot from the fierce battle of 1651 when the Parliamentary troops tried to dislodge the Scots.

Powick Bridge, Powick

The fifteenth century bridge was the centre of the first major action in the Civil War. The two northern spans, across the mill race, have clearly been repaired and were possibly those demolished during the battle of 1651.

Powick Ham, Powick

The open land to the south of the bridge, with its narrow lane and hedged fields is where the Parliamentary troops drew up their forces in 1642 and the site of fierce close-quarter combat during the battle of 1651. Despite the close proximity of new roadworks, it still preserves much of its character. Two shallow depressions on Powick Ham, which were visible in the 1900s, are reputed to mark the sites of burials from the 1651 battle.

Ripple (SO 86 37)

The site of the battle of Ripple, north of the village, in 1643 is still open farmland.

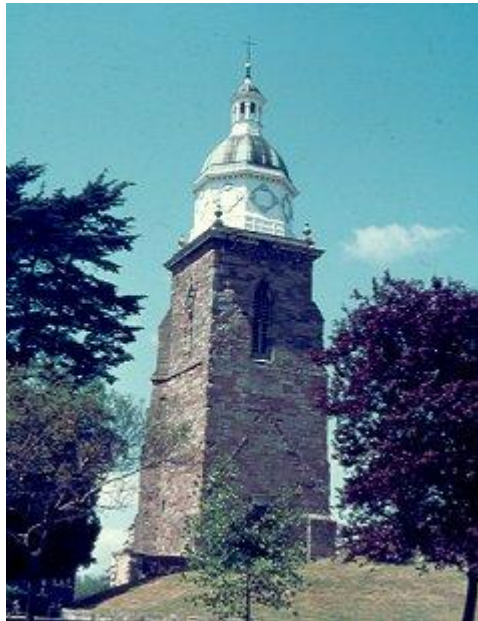
Strensham Castle (SO 91 40)

The overgrown earthworks of the fortified moated manor house (belonging to Sir William Russell, Governor of Worcester) still survive, on the slope below the church. The protrusions at the corners of the medieval moated site to provide artillery platforms are typical of works of this period.

Upton Bridge, Upton-upon-Severn

Scene of the critical skirmish prior to the Battle of Worcester in 1651. Abutments from the original bridge demolished in the Civil War still visible just downstream of present bridge.

Church of St Peter and St Paul, Upton-upon-Severn



The church was occupied by a Parliamentary advance guard in 1651, and held until the main force could cross the river. Only the fourteenth century tower of the church still survives.

Upton Heritage Centre, Upton-upon-Severn

Contains a display on Upton in the Civil War.

Pool Brook, Upton-upon-Severn

Part of a rectangular emplacement dug by Colonel Massey to protect the road to Worcester in 1651 is still visible from the road, adjacent to the stream.

Fort Royal, Worcester

Fort Royal Park contains the remains of the 1651 sconce. As viewed today, this now dominates the city, but the fort was really intended to face eastwards and defend Worcester against attack from the high ground to the east. The outline of the rectangular fort, with three of its four corner bastions, can still be easily made out on the ground, although the outlines have been softened by landscaping. The fort was built to help defend the city, but its capture during the battle of 1651 allowed Cromwell's army to pound the city with cannon from close range.

The Commandery, Sidbury Street, Worcester



The Royalist HQ during the battle of 1651. The Royalist general, the Duke of Hamilton, died here of his wounds. Now a Civil War museum.

The Cathedral, Worcester

Suffered from both Parliamentary and Royalist armies. It was used as a Royalist ammunition magazine and was then desecrated by Essex's army in 1642. Subsequently, Royalist troops stripped the lead off the roof to make into musket balls! Then the Bell-tower, with its 50yd-high lead-covered steeple was demolished in 1647. The Royalist general, the Duke of Hamilton (killed in the battle of 1651), is buried in front of the High Altar.

St Helen's Church and Records Office, Worcester

Collections of original documents of the period. Memorial to Colonel Dud Dudley (d. 1684) on the south side of the chancel. He was an ironmaster by trade and served as Royalist general of artillery during the siege of 1646. On the north side is the memorial to Alderman John Nash, a Parliamentary captain.

Guildhall, High Street, Worcester

The Georgian building has statues of Charles I and II in front, and a carving of Cromwell's head above the doorway - nailed to the wall by his ears! Cromwell is shown as a horned devil. On the morning of the Battle of Worcester in 1651 he is said to have met with the devil in Nunnery Wood and sold his soul to him in return for victory and seven more years good fortune - he died on 3 September 1658!

King Charles' House, New Street, Worcester



Built in 1577, and owned during the Civil War by Edward Durrant, King Charles took refuge here before escaping the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

Nos 4-5 New Street, Worcester

Built in 1605, it was occupied by Alderman John Nash. He was a captain in the Parliamentary army, local MP and JP, and is buried in St Helen's Church.

City Walls, City Walls Road, Worcester



Remains of the city walls and footings of St Martin's Gate are still visible. King Charles escaped through St Martin's Gate after the battle of 1651.

The Viewpoint, A38 Tewkesbury Road, Worcester (off the Malvern/Worcester roundabout)

Overlooks the site of the bridge of boats built by Cromwell's men to cross the Severn and attack the flank of the Scots during the battle of 1651. Despite the presence of modern roadworks, it is still possible to appreciate the character of the open countryside beside the Teme and Severn over which the battle was fought. Includes a panoramic display of the battlefield.

City Library, Foregate Street, Worcester

Collections of original documents of the period in the Stuart Collection.

Perry Wood, Worcester



Part of Worcester Woods Country Park, Spetchley. This was the scene of bitter fighting in 1651 as the gun positions on top of Perry Hill were stormed by the Earl of Hamilton. What are popularly described as 'Cromwell's Trenches' off Peterborough Close are actually part of a natural former watercourse but the feature was important in allowing an access on to the hill from the city. The view from the top of Perry Hill gives a good impression of the commanding position that Cromwell's artillery had over the city.

Tamar Close, off Ronkswood Crescent, Worcester



Rectangular earthwork, 73m x 82m, probably an artillery emplacement of Cromwell's army at the battle of 1651. The surrounding ditch is clearly visible on three sides. That on the city side has probably been ploughed flat.

Books to Read

There is a vast range of literature on the Civil War. The following is a selection of works relating particularly to the battle of Worcester.

Appleby, D. 1997. '**Essex Men at the Battle of Worcester**', **English Civil War Times**, 52, pp.24-8.

Atkin, M. 1995. **The Civil War in Worcestershire** (Stroud).

Atkin, M. 1998. **Cromwell's Crowning Mercy: the battle of Worcester 1651** . (Stroud).

Atkin, M. 2001. **The Battle of Worcester** (Stratford-on-Avon).

Blount, T. (1660) **Boscobel Tracts**.

Holmes, R. 1985. **Worcester 1651** (Market Drayton).

Matthews, W. 1967. **Charles II's Escape from Worcester** (London).

Ollard, R. 1986. **The Escape of Charles II after the Battle of Worcester** (London).

Willis-Bund, J.W. 1913. **The Battle of Worcester** (Worcester)

Other English Civil War Web Sites

The [English Civil War Society](#) is a society providing re-enactments of battles and 'living histories' of the period 1640-1660. Offers a limited query service.

The Fairfax Battalia (a part of ECWS) is widely regarded as producing some of the finest quality re-enactments of the period, with a focus on authenticity and educational content. One of its constituent regiments is [Devereux's](#).

The [Sealed Knot](#) is the largest re-enactment society of this period. Its web site also has a limited query service.

[English Civil War Battles](#) provides summary information and maps about key battles.

[Essex Men at the Battle of Worcester](#) by David Appleby has useful information on the human aspects of the campaign.

A [1642 Living History village](#) has been reconstructed at Gosport, Hants. There are regular events that try to give a flavour of daily life around the time of the Civil War.

For an earlier period, visit the [Tudor Group](#) website.

The [Jamestown Rediscovery](#) site has many illustrations of 17th century finds from the Virginia colony.

[The Monarch's Way](#) Web site provides details of the walk following the route of the escape of Charles II from the Battle of Worcester.

[HistoryAct](#) A guide to how to identify good quality English Civil War re-enactment