

**THIS ON-LINE VERSION OF
'ALPORT, CHOLMONDELEY AND DOD FOR THE KING:
MALPAS DURING THE CIVIL WARS'**

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Cholmondeley and
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Malpas during the
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OF THE CIVIL WARS

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REVEREND PHILIP HENRY
1631-1696

BORN IN WHITEHALL, HE WITNESSED THE EXECUTION THERE OF CHARLES I IN 1649. IN 1657 HE BECAME MINISTER AT WORTHENBURY BUT RESIGNED THE LIVING AT THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY IN 1662 AFTER WHICH HE CAME TO LIVE AT BROAD OAK, ISCOYD, IN THE OLD PARISH OF MALPAS.

A NATION AND A COUNTY DIVIDED

"The King came with all his guard ... and two or three hundred soldiers and gentlemen ... Then the King stepped up to his place and stood upon the step but sat not down in the chair ... he told us he would not break our privileges but treason has no privilege."

So wrote Sir Edmund Verney, Knight Marshal to King Charles I, of that momentous occasion in January 1642 when the King walked down to Westminster from his palace at Whitehall. He came to arrest for treason the five members of Parliament - Hollis, Hazelrigg, Hampden, Pym and Strode - who were leaders of the party opposed to him.

For more than seventy years absolute peace had reigned in England. By July 1642 the nation "stood at the pit's brink, ready to plunge into an ocean of troubles and miseries". The quarrels between the King and Parliament were long standing and complicated. At the heart of them lay a fundamental division in the country over religion. On the one hand were those who firmly supported the King, the Church of England, the Bishops and the Book of Common Prayer. On the other hand were the Puritans, for whom loyalty to God took precedence over loyalty to the King, who were suspicious of the Bishops and who wished to see the Church cleansed from "the dregs of Popery".

The political events leading up to the Civil Wars, including the long years (1629-1640) when Charles had ruled without a Parliament, are involved and still the subject of much discussion among historians. One major problem experienced by Charles arose from the fact that, without Parliament, he did not have the power to impose new taxes, which were essential to raise money for the government of the country. Therefore he had to survive by maintaining old taxes, by raising the rates of tax and by looking for other loopholes which would enable him to increase revenue. One source of income to the Crown which had been allowed to lapse but which Charles re-introduced was the fining of those gentry who had refused to accept a knighthood on the occasion of his coronation in 1626. The obligation to accept

a knighthood fell upon anyone in receipt of an annual income of forty pounds or more, a custom dating from the reign of Edward I in the thirteenth century. When Charles decided to levy the fines, known as 'Distrainment of Knighthood', in 1631 there were nine men from Malpas parish summoned for payment. Sums of either ten or fifteen pounds were declared due from Hugh Massie and Edward Tannot of Broxton, Edward Dod of Edge, John Stockton of Cuddington, Thomas Heath of Egerton, Thomas Buckley (Bulkeley?) of Bickerton, Thomas Brassie of Bulkeley, John Aldersey of Agden and Thomas Bromley of Hampton.

By August 1642 matters between King and Parliament had reached crisis point. At Nottingham on the twenty-second day of that month the King raised his standard - the ancient signal for feudal duty to be rendered. So began the first Civil War, when brother fought against brother, father against son. Sir Edmund Verney obeyed the King's summons to arms but spoke plainly of his misgivings: "I do not like the quarrel and do heartily wish that the king would yield and consent to what they desire; so that my conscience is only concerned in honour and gratitude to follow my master. I have eaten his bread and served him near thirty years and will not do so base a thing as to forsake him; and choose rather to lose my life (which I am sure I shall do) to preserve and defend those things that are against my conscience to preserve and defend".

Two months later his prophecy was fulfilled. Bearing the King's standard at Edgehill in Oxfordshire, the first major battle of the Civil War, Sir Edmund was cut down. His body was never recovered but legend tells us that his severed hand was discovered after the battle, still clutching the Royal standard.

The news did not have far to travel to the Verney family home at Claydon House in Buckinghamshire. It must have been hard to bear for Sir Edmund's ten children, particularly for his eldest son Ralph, who had taken up arms for the Parliamentarians, or 'Roundheads' as they came to be known. Sir Edward Sydenham, who had fought alongside Sir Edmund and later succeeded him as Knight Marshal, wrote to Ralph: "For all of our

great victory I have had the greatest loss by the death of your noble father than ever any friend did ... your loss is as great as a son can lose in a father". The loss was equally hard for Sir Edmund's eldest daughter Susan, the same Susan Verney who was to marry a Malpas man four years later.

After the indecisive battle at Edgehill, not quite the 'great victory' claimed by Sir Edward Sydenham, the King entered Oxford and made the city his headquarters until the end. England became a nation divided. "Throughout angry England, divided in every shire, in every town, in every village, and often in the very bosom of families, all eyes had been fixed upon the clash and manoeuvre of the two main armies. The hopes of both sides were that these would give a decision, and thereafter peace. When it was seen that nothing of the kind would happen, and that a long, balanced struggle lay ahead, all suspended antagonisms started into action. Fighting and pillage spread throughout the country. The constitutional issue, the religious quarrel, and countless local feuds were combined in a new surge of party hatred." (CHURCHILL: History of the English Speaking Peoples).

SIR EDMUND VERNEY
STANDARD BEARER
TO THE KING



KING CHARLES I

LORD JOHN BYRON
ROYALIST GOVERNOR
OF CHESTER



THE WAR COMES TO CHESHIRE

Chester was immediately of strategic importance, both as the port for Ireland and a staging post for troops and supplies, and, as the gateway to North Wales. Very quickly Chester and Nantwich were established as the main garrisons in Cheshire of the Royalists ('Cavaliers') and Parliamentarians respectively. The Roundheads, under Colonel Sir William Brereton, came to Nantwich in August 1642 where, in the following month, they were attacked by the Cavaliers under Lord Grandison, Lord Cholmondeley and Sir Hugh Calveley. At the same time the King, with his dashing nephew Prince Rupert, was at Chester. From there he went through Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Northampton and Warwick to Edgehill. There had been a possibility that Chester might become the King's headquarters but, following his withdrawal to Oxford after the Battle of Edgehill, that city was to become his base until the end of the first Civil War.

The conflict increased in intensity throughout Cheshire. Many towns, including Chester, Nantwich, Stockport, Knutsford and Northwich, threw up fortifications and there were many minor skirmishes and battles. However, the leaders of both sides discovered a certain reluctance among the local forces, perhaps born of the bewilderment expressed by many prominent persons across the country as to the circumstances which had precipitated the war. In December 1642 representatives of both parties agreed to meet at Bunbury, where they attempted to draw up a declaration of neutrality for Cheshire. According to Thomas Malbon of Haslington, whose 'Civil War Memorials' are the main source of information about the course of the Civil Wars in Cheshire, the declaration of neutrality "agreed that there be an absolute cessation of Arms from henceforth within this County, and no Arms be taken up to offend one and other, but by consent both of the King and two houses of Parliament unless it be to resist force brought into this County". Fortifications were to be dismantled and local troops disbanded. The truce was brief. In January 1643 Nantwich was garrisoned under the command of Brereton and Cheshire became the scene

of constant warfare until the Royalists finally surrendered Chester in 1646. Among the Royalist troops who occupied Chester was Sir Edmund Verney, third son of the Sir Edmund who was slain at Edgehill.

Y E A R	THE CIVIL WARS 1642-1649 P = PARLIAMENTARIANS R = ROYALISTS		
	KEY NATIONAL EVENTS	KEY EVENTS IN SOUTH CHESHIRE AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES	EVENTS IN THE OLD PARISH OF MALPAS
1642	JANUARY 4 KING ENTERS THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AUGUST 22 ROYAL STANDARD RAISED AT NOTTINGHAM OCTOBER 23 @ EDGEHILL	SEPTEMBER 21 NANTWICH DISARMED BY R SEPTEMBER 23 KING AT CHESTER DECEMBER 23 TREATY OF PEACE AT BUNBURY	AUTUMN LORD CHOLMONDELEY RAISES REGIMENT. CHOLMONDELEY HOUSE GARRISONED
1643		JAN. 30 NANTWICH GARRISONED (P) FEB. 21 BEESTON GARRISONED (P) APRIL 3 WHITCHURCH GARRISONED (R) MAY 29 WHITCHURCH TAKEN BY P JUNE 10/12 SHOCKLACH/CARDEN PLUNDERED (P) DEC. 13 BEESTON TAKEN BY R	APRIL 11 CHOLMONDELEY HOUSE ASSAULTED BY PARLIAMENTARIANS AUGUST 28 DIRTWICH SALTWORKS DESTROYED BY P
1644	JULY 2 @ MARSTON MOOR	JANUARY 25 @ NANTWICH NOVEMBER 16 BEESTON BESIEGED BY P	CHOLMONDELEY ASSAULTED (MAY 8) AND TAKEN (JULY 8) AUG. 25 @ OLDCASTLE SEPT. 12 DIRTWICH SALTWORKS ATTACKED. P. TROOPS IN M. CHURCH
1645	JUNE 14 @ NASEBY	JAN. 18 @ CHRISTLETON MAR. 17 BEESTON RELIEVED BY R MAR. 18 HUNGINGS AT HOLT (R) MAY 21 KING AT MARKET DRAYTON SEPT. 19 CHESTER BESIEGED BY P SEPT. 24 @ ROWTON MOOR NOV. 15 BEESTON SURRENDERED TO P	EARLY 1645? OVERTON HALL PLUNDERED MAY. 18/19 BULKELEY PLUNDERED - HANKINS AT GALLANTRY BANK MAY 20/23 R. TROOPS AT MALPAS
1646	MAY KING JOINS SCOTS ARMY AT NEWARK	FEB. 3 CHESTER SURRENDERED TO PARLIAMENT MAY/JUNE BEESTON CASTLE DISMANTLED	AUGUST 5 RICHARD ALPORT MARRIES SUSAN VERNEY (IN LONDON)
1647	JANUARY 30 SCOTS SURRENDER THE KING TO PARLIAMENT	JAN. 15 HOLT SURRENDERED TO PARLIAMENT	
1648	MARCH - AUGUST SECOND CIVIL WAR SCOTS ARMY (R) DEFEATED AT PRESTON AND WARRINGTON		JANUARY MALPAS PETITIONS QUARTER SESSIONS OVER HARDSHIPS JULY 7 RICHARD AND SUSAN ALPORT COME TO OVERTON HALL
1649	JANUARY 19 KING ON TRIAL JANUARY 30 KING EXECUTED		

MALPAS IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT

Besides Chester there were other Royalist garrisons, at various times, close to Malpas. These included Cholmondeley House (forerunner of today's Cholmondeley Castle), Beeston Castle, Whitchurch and Holt Castle. Robert, Lord Cholmondeley was one of the King's Commissioners of Array, which made him responsible for recruiting men for the Royalist army. Appointing Stanley Burrows of Bickley, his estate steward, as captain, he raised a regiment of his tenants which by October 1642 had a fighting strength of around 200 foot soldiers and 20 cavalry. Among others who held commissions in this regiment were Sir Thomas Cholmondeley, his Lordship's brother, and Edward Dod of Edge.

On April 11th 1643 most of Brereton's Nantwich troops marched to Cholmondeley, having been informed of the existence of the Royalist garrison there. As Malbon tells us "coming near to the House they found them ready awaiting their coming ... there was a fierce battle". The defending force was driven back into the house and the Roundheads returned to Nantwich, taking with them their dead and around sixty captured horses. The Malpas Parish register records, on April 22nd, the burials of "two soldiers slain at Cholmondeley" with a third "died about Cholmondeley" on May 11th.

Whitchurch did not fare very well as a Cavalier stronghold. After Lord Capel, who commanded the garrison there, had led an attack on Nantwich on May 27th 1643, while Colonel Brereton was absent at Stafford, the Roundheads returned the compliment, two days later. The 'Civil War Memorials' record that "upon May 29th about 11 or 12 o'clock in the night, Sir William Brereton, with all his horse and foot ... in all 800 or thereabout, marched toward Whitchurch, and came thither at 3 of the clock in the morning, assaulted the town which had in it about 600 or 700 horse and foot, who defended the town very stoutly; but it pleased God, after 2 hours dispute, to deliver the town into their hands, with the loss only of one man slain outright, and 2 or 3 more dangerously hurt, which died afterwards". The then Rector of Whitchurch summed

it up rather more succinctly with an entry in the Parish Register on May 30th: "This day Whitchurch was surprised and taken by Sir William Brereton's forces". After the assault the Roundheads returned to Nantwich "leaving much cheese, goods and ammunition behind them only for want of carts and carriage". Later, in September, Brereton and Capel clashed again, this time at Loppington near Wem. Wem had Parliamentary sympathies and the townsfolk helped to chase off the Royalist troops, giving rise to a local rhyme:

"The Women of Wem and a few Musketeers
Beat Lord Capel and all his Cavaliers".

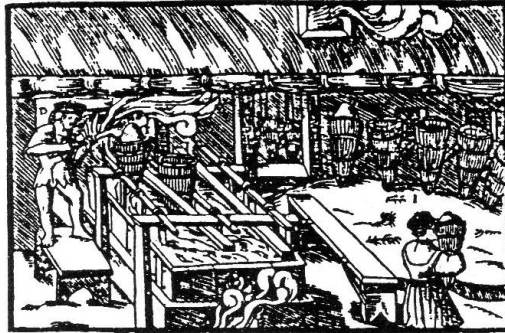
With so many troops either stationed in, or passing through the area, the burden on the local inhabitants was heavy. Those who did not volunteer supplies or money, to either side, were likely to find them taken by force. In June 1643 Roundhead troops returning to Nantwich after a foray against the Cavaliers at Holt took "fourscore and eighteen good oxen and cattle" from Shocklach and set upon Carden Hall. They plundered the Hall, killed a serving maid and marched back to Nantwich with captured horses and prisoners, including Mr Leech, the Squire of Carden.

In August the Nantwich troops were back in the area, this time to attack the Royalist held saltworks at Dirtwich (Higher and Lower Wych), where they "defaced, cut in pieces, and spoiled all their works, pumps and salt pits; and brought some of their (salt) pans to Nantwich". This was a great blow to the Royalists, who relied on the Dirtwich works for vital supplies of salt, since the main source of supply at Nantwich was closed to them.

The pressure on the countryside became so intolerable that in March 1644 Thomas Dod of Edge Hall felt compelled to write to Captain Horton, then commander of the Royalist garrison at Cholmondeley: "My good friends, I must move you in the behalf of our poor town(ship) of Edge that ever groans under the impositions laid upon us since these wars began, amongst the which your garrison hath been weekly supplied from us as long as we had any provision ... we have not subsistence left us ... I returned home to Edge

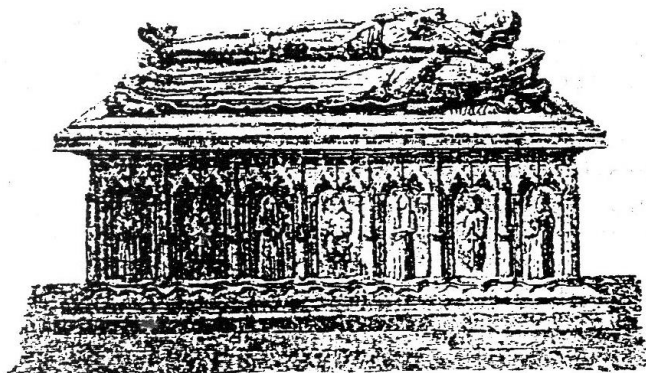
Friday night last, where the Constable brought me a warrant under your hand for £3 and odd money out of poor, poor nay poor townships, with a command to return their names that shall refuse it. I shall earnestly desire you to accept of what moneys the Constable can collect ... the courtesy is ordinary I request from you and if you refuse it our disability will constrain us to petition Lord Byron (the Governor of Chester) to appoint a council of war to examine the great charge this poor country is at weekly maintaining your garrison".

SIXTEENTH CENTURY
PRINT OF SALT
MAKING. THE
PROCESS USED AT
DIRTWICH WOULD
HAVE BEEN SIMILAR



ROUNDHEAD TROOPS
DESTROYING POPIST
CHURCH FURNISHINGS

THE BRERETON
TOMB IN THE
CHURCH AT
MALPAS



SLAUGHTER ON OLDCASTLE HEATH

From the middle of 1643 and throughout 1644 Parliament appeared to gain the upper hand in South Cheshire. In November 1643 the Roundheads took Holt and Hawarden Castles, perhaps to some degree compensating for the loss of Beeston Castle the following month. Then the rout of the Royalist troops at the Battle of Nantwich, on January 25th 1644, provided the Parliamentarians with their first clear-cut victory of the Civil War.

On July 2nd that same year came the shattering defeat of Prince Rupert and the Marquis of Newcastle at the Battle of Marston Moor, near York, and six days later two companies from Nantwich launched a successful attack on Cholmondeley House. "... about three or four of the clock in the morning, after they had summoned the house, they played upon it with their ordnance and shot it many times through (being a timber house). They in the house, with their muskets, did shoot very fast at them ... but the Parliament forces playing on the house with their ordnance and small shot continually, did beat them forth of the house ... they at the house, perceiving they were not able to stand out, about one o'clock in the afternoon ... called for quarter ... let down the drawbridge; opened the gates; and the Lord of Denbigh, Colonel Booth, and the rest of their officers, and some of their soldiers, entered the house; where they took Captain Horton and the rest in the house prisoner." (Malbon)

The following month, on August 25th 1644, the fighting came its closest ever to the town of Malpas itself. Following his defeat at Marston Moor, Prince Rupert had withdrawn to Chester and quartered his troops over a wide area. Around two and a half thousand of them, under the command of Sir Marmaduke Langdale, were camped in the Malpas district. Colonel Brereton, having received intelligence of them, marched on Malpas with 800 to 900 men. At the news of Brereton's approach the Cavaliers took their ground at Oldcastle Heath. Despite the imbalance in numbers, the Roundheads took control and put the King's men to flight, slaying about eighty of them and making prisoners of twenty-five, including six officers. Among the Royalist prisoners was one Major

Cromwell. Could he have been related to the great Oliver? The Roundheads escaped with a mere eight wounded and none slain.

Norman Tucker, in his novel 'Master of the Field', gives a lively, if fanciful, account of the battle. He tells how the Parliamentarians "came upon the Royalist army encamped near Malpas. Forty colours floated in the air. Sir Marmaduke had several thousand men with him. Sir William's own troop charged several times. The brunt of the fighting fell on them, for by reason of the narrowness of the lanes, the foot companies could not advance immediately. They beat back two parties of Royalists, killing and capturing many of their officers. Then, having driven the King's party back through the main street of Malpas, they resolved to wait in a lane until the foot came up to support them.

Sir Marmaduke had time to reform his army. He had them extended in six or seven divisions, in good order. While the Parliamentary infantry were recovering their breath, being spent with fast marching, the Royalists launched several vigorous charges against them. It was the boast of the weary pikemen that they yielded not a foot of ground".

Three weeks later the Roundheads were back in Malpas again. Needing somewhere secure to stay overnight, they slept in Saint Oswald's Church, "having but sorry quarter". In view of the Puritans' hatred of ornament in churches and the fact that in many other places they had destroyed statues and other 'popish' furnishings, it is surprising that they did not damage the ornate alabaster tombs of Sir Hugh Cholmondeley and Sir Ranulph Brereton. Local legend has it that, because the Breretons of Malpas were related to Sir William Brereton's Handforth branch of the family, the troops were under orders not to desecrate a church whose history was so bound up with that of the Breretons. The next day they marched for a second time to Dirtwich and carried a further six salt boiling pans off to Nantwich.

ROYALIST DECLINE

In November 1644 Colonel Brereton laid siege to Beeston Castle, having heard that the Royalist garrison there was desperately short of food and other supplies. However, the garrison held out and the siege dragged on until the following March, when Prince Rupert arrived to relieve them. Having broken the Roundheads' stranglehold on the Castle, Rupert and his troops set out on a trail of destruction, burning down Beeston Hall, plundering most of Bunbury parish and robbing Bulkeley Hall as he swept down the old salt road (now the A.534) to Holt. The prince was not without his problems and seems to have suffered from mutiny among his men. On March 19th 1645 twelve mutineers were "hanged on a crabtree at the Widow Fisher's house" and another twenty-four were hanged at Holt "for that they were not so forward in performing of the command as he expected". Widow Fisher's house stood not far from Bulkeley Hall and it is said that Gallantry Bank derives its name from 'Gallows Tree' Bank, being the site of Prince Rupert's disciplinary action.

On the following May 20th Colonel Brereton wrote that Lord Byron's forces were marching from Chester to meet the King at Market Drayton and had camped at Malpas for the night. Lord Byron's intention was to persuade the King to move northwards into Lancashire. However, the King instead swung first to the east and then south-east towards Leicester, finally falling into the arms of the 'Ironsides' of Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army at the Battle of Naseby on June 14th. The Royalist army was destroyed and the course of the first Civil War virtually decided, although the King and a large body of cavalry escaped into central Wales.

By September the Parliamentarians were forcing an assault on the Royalist stronghold of Chester. On the twenty-third of that month King Charles entered Chester over the old Dee bridge while Sir Marmaduke Langdale and his troops crossed the river at Holt and camped south-east of the city, hoping to block the retreat of the Roundheads to Tarvin. Next day battle was joined and it is said that the King himself stood on the walls of Chester, watching the disastrous defeat of his

army on Rowton Moor. He fled from Chester the next day, leaving permission for the city to yield if it felt that it could no longer defend itself. In the event, Chester held out for over five months more, finally surrendering on February 3rd 1646. During the siege Brereton used Tarvin as a forward base, with other forces established outside Beeston Castle and others in Farndon Church, to ward off possible attacks to the rear of the besiegers. Perhaps cocking a snook at the outrage of having had Roundheads billeted there, Farndon Church still preserves a painted window commemorating the King's supporters at the time of the siege.

The Cavaliers had surrendered Beeston Castle during the previous November, after a year-long siege. When the Parliament troops moved in "there was neither meat, ale, nor beer, found in the Castle, save only a piece of turkey pie, two biscuits, a live peacock and a peahen". Legend has it that the Castle's unfortunate cats had all ended up as nourishing stews for hungry Cavaliers! During May and June 1646 the Parliamentarians had the Castle demolished, so that it could never again serve as a fortress in time of war.



ROYALIST SUPPORTER FROM FARNDON CHURCH WINDOW



SIR WILLIAM BRERETON



PRINCE RUPERT

A MARRIAGE IS ARRANGED

One Malpas man who had suffered from the ravages of the Civil War was Richard Alport of Overton Hall. Like many Cheshire landowners, he was a staunch Royalist and had mortgaged his properties to provide funds for Sir Hugh Calveley, one of the Cheshire Royalist commanders. In addition to Overton, his estate included property in Tilston, Chorlton, Horton, Shocklach, Malpas, Edge, Cuddington and Oldcastle. It was on his Oldcastle lands that the Roundheads routed the Cavaliers in August 1644. By the end of 1644 his estates had been 'sequestered', that is confiscated by the Parliamentarians and Richard Alport found himself thrown into London's Fleet Prison, as a debtor.

Many years previously, in his student days at Saint Edmund's Hall, Oxford, Richard had met Edmund Verney, third son of the Sir Edmund who died at Edgehill. This younger Edmund Verney is the same one who was later to take part in the Royalist occupation of Chester. In the Fleet, Richard Alport was to encounter another of the late Sir Edmund Verney's sons. This time it was the second son, Thomas, the 'black sheep' of the family who seemed to have had a number of spells in prison, for various reasons. Taking advantage of what appear to have been fairly lenient parole arrangements at the prison, Tom Verney was able to introduce Richard Alport to his sister Susan, who at the time was living near Fleet Street.

Susan's eldest brother, Ralph, had disagreed with Parliament by refusing to accept the Solemn League and Covenant, which would pave the way for a Presbyterian system of government in the Church of England. By early 1644 he had taken himself into exile in France, where he lived under the assumed name of Ralph Smith. In November 1644, Susan wrote to him: "My brother Thomas has wished me to a gentleman, which has a very good fortune for me, for he has at the least £500 a year ... he is a widower but has no child ... he has seen me, vows it is the first time that ever he thought of marrying since his wife died". Ralph seems to have approved of the match but there appear to have been difficulties both in raising the dowry and in providing Susan with suitable wedding clothes.

There was considerable delay while negotiations dragged on between Susan's impoverished brother abroad and her still more needy relations at home. On August 5th 1646 they were finally married. Susan wrote to Ralph: "I hope that I am extremely happy in him: I would not have it to do again for anything in the world". On August 27th she wrote again: "The last time that I writ to you I sent you word that I was in the prison with my husband, which it may be you might wonder at, because I have formerly writ you that before I would marry he would be out of this place ... but ... the knight that Mr Alport is bound for (Sir Hugh Calveley) is at this present selling of land to redeem him ... it is no prison to me: I live here as well as ever I lived any where in all my life, and dare compare husbands with her that has the best". Susan was twenty-five years old, Richard thirty-two.

Despite Susan's optimism and Sir Hugh Calveley's endeavours, Richard was not finally released from prison until June 1648, when the couple were at last free to come home to Overton Hall. What a sorry homecoming it proved to be! Susan wrote to Ralph, still abroad in exile: "My long expected happiness to see home is come at last, I have been in Cheshire this ten days, where I find a pitiful house for want of living in, not only so but plundered besides. I found nothing in it but bare walls. I must be contented ... I can not brag that I am likely to tarry here. I fear this happiness will not last long ... if it were not for other people's debts I should live very handsomely: but it is a great way from all my friends which is something sad ...".

Like her father before her, Susan seemed to sense the tragedy to come. Lonely, cut off from her family and friends, she did not 'tarry' long in her new home. Susan died at the age of thirty, bearing her third child. All of her three children had been stillborn. Richard survived to marry a third time, to father a family and to see both his fortunes and the monarchy restored. He died in 1664 and was buried in Malpas Church.

AFTERMATH

Others had suffered too, particularly as a result of having soldiers of both parties forcibly billeted in their houses. In January 1648 the parishioners of Wrenbury, Marbury, Baddiley and Malpas lodged a petition of complaint with the Justices of the Peace at Quarter Sessions: "... showing that the extraordinary sufferings of the said parishes cannot be unknown both by reason of the sieges at Chester, Beeston Castle, Nantwich and the Garrisons of Whitchurch and Cholmondeley, and the free quartering of the armies on both sides besides the great payments and taxes the petitioners have ever since undergone and still do .. and (the petitioners) desire to know by what authority they offer this oppression upon the country".

Others out of pocket through trade or profession included James Banks, a surgeon from Cholmondeley, and Thomas Buckley of Tattenhall. James Banks, as befitted his profession, had given help to both sides when needed. At the end of the war he asked Sir William Brereton for recompense for labour and materials expended on "the curing of many soldiers under the command of King and Parliament at Nantwich, Cholmondeley and Beeston and diverse other places". Thomas Buckley had been appointed to supply pikes, at 2s 8d (about 13 pence) each, for the Royalist troops at Beeston Castle. He had organised a number of local blacksmiths to supply the numbers required. However, he was owed over twenty pounds by the defeated party and now his sub-contractors were suing him for the money due to them. In desperation he petitioned the Justices of the Peace to help him out "otherwise others that were employed by him in that work will suddenly fall upon him to the ruin of his wife and poor family".

Following the surrender of Holt Castle in January 1647, Brereton disbanded all his forces in the county, except for a garrison in Chester. Nevertheless, the after effects of the conflict continued to be felt. Parliament started to impose fines on those of the King's supporters who had surrendered. A 'Committee for Compounding with Delinquents' had been set up in 1646 to deal with them and twelve Malpas parish residents

appear in the list of those summoned. These included Lord Cholmondeley, his steward Stanley Burrows, Edward and Thomas Dod of Edge, Thomas Bromley of Hampton, Richard Heath of Egerton, William Edge of Larkton and the Reverend Thomas Bridge, who was Rector of the Higher Mediety of Malpas. The heaviest fine, £7,742, was imposed on Lord Cholmondeley, while Thomas Bridge was ejected from the Rectory and replaced by the Reverend George Mainwaring.

Cholmondeley House was in a sorry state following the assaults by the Roundheads and subsequent damage by the Parliament's tenants, such that it was described as "a hogsty ... unuseful and unfit for a place of residence for a person ... of quality". Without the money to restore his house, Lord Cholmondeley lived at Bickley Hall until his death in 1659.

On the national scene, the Battle of Naseby in June 1645 had been the final blow for the Royalists. Although conflict continued at local level, King Charles was a spent force. The Battle of Rowton Moor the following September and the surrender of Chester in February 1646 signalled the end of the Royalist campaign in Cheshire.

It was to be nearly three years before the previously unthinkable happened and Parliament brought the King to trial at Westminster. Philip Henry, a seventeen year old Puritan lad, was born in Whitehall and was present there on that fateful day in January 1649. "I stood amongst the crowd in the street ... where the scaffold was erected ... The blow I saw given and can truly say with a sad heart ... there was such a groan by the thousands then present as I never heard before and desire I may never hear again." Many years later this same Philip Henry was to live in Malpas parish, at Broad Oak, Iscoyd, and to become the father of Matthew Henry, the great non-conformist minister and theologian, whose memorial stands on the traffic roundabout opposite Chester Castle gates.

Although the Civil Wars were to continue until Cromwell's final defeat of Charles II at Worcester in September 1651 and Cheshire men continued to be involved on both sides, for the parish of Malpas the strife was over. It was time to pick up the pieces, time to forget old differences and time to attempt to return to a normal life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES

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David Hayns

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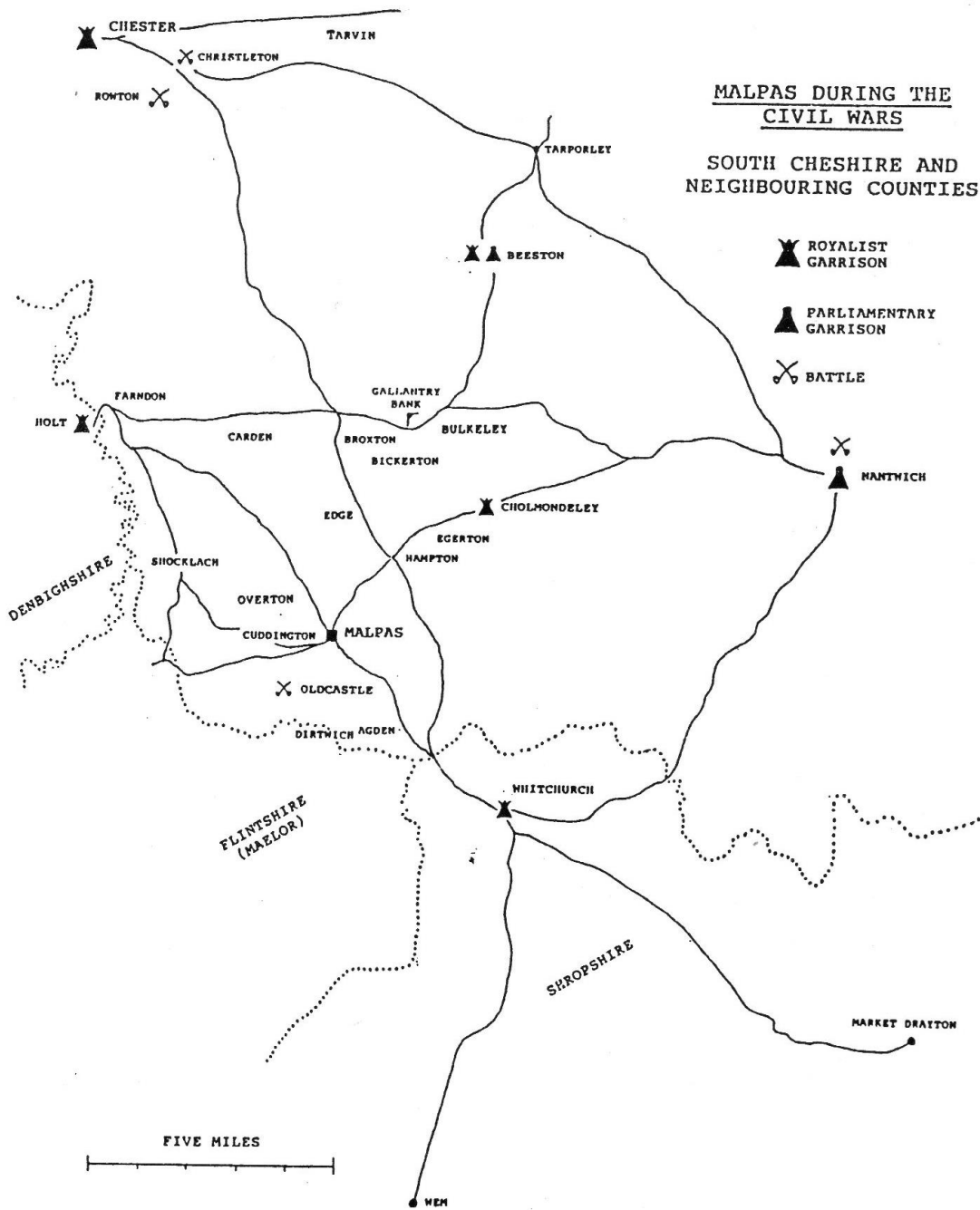
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MALPAS DURING THE
CIVIL WARS
SOUTH CHESHIRE AND
NEIGHBOURING COUNTIES



- ▲ ROYALIST GARRISON
- ▲ PARLIAMENTARY GARRISON
- ✕ BATTLE

FIVE MILES