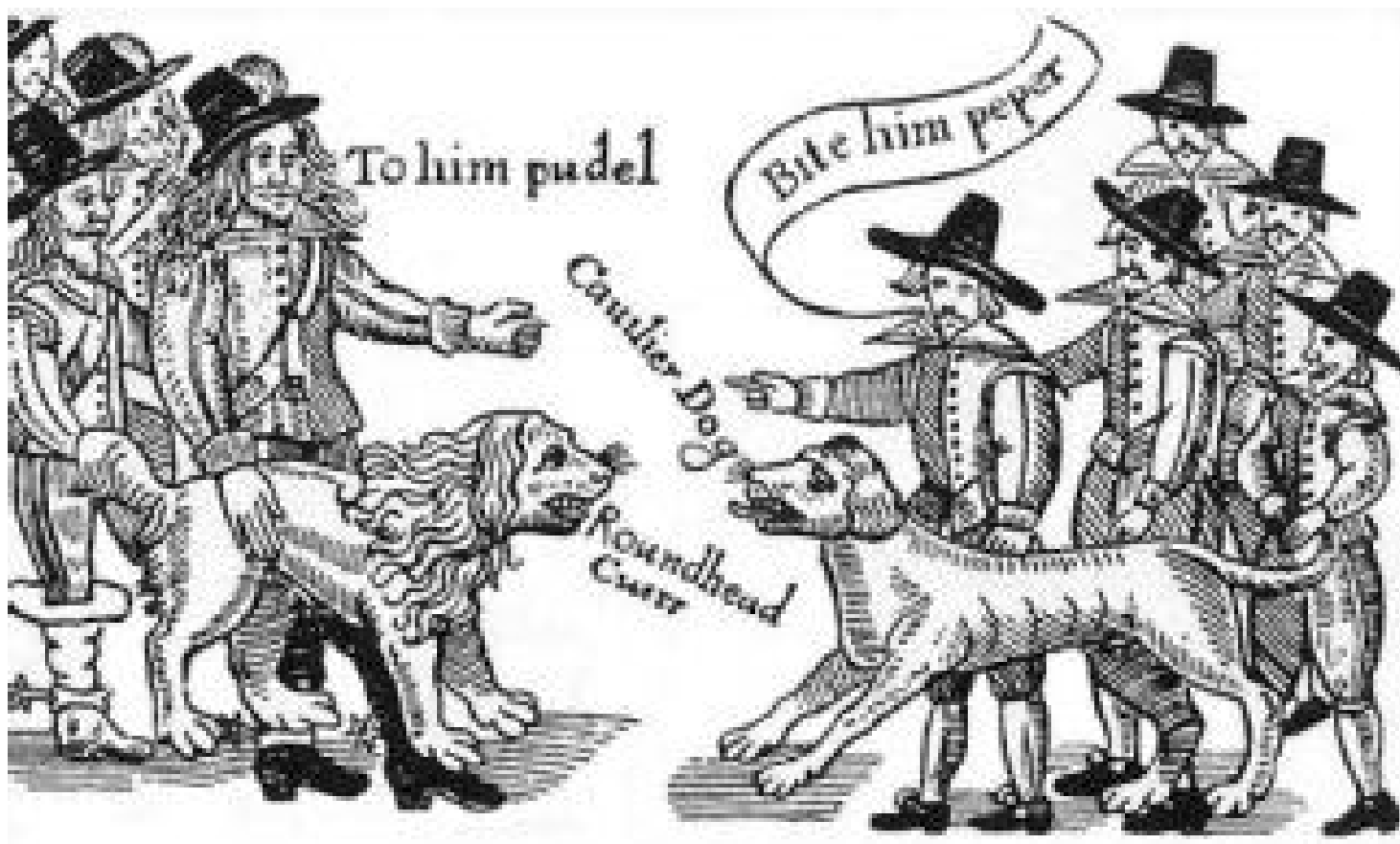


The Blachford and Waterton Families of Dorset and Hampshire in the English Civil War

By Mark Wareham, August 2012



Introduction

The English Civil war divided families as it divided the country and it set brother against brother and father against son. There are many examples of families at this time taking up arms against one another, like the Verneys and even the Cromwells. I too have discovered a divided family in my own ancestry and whilst many things have been written by other descendents and historians about the Blachfords and the Watertons during the civil war, I wanted to uncover the full story of their wartime experience and to discover what they actually did during this important conflict.

Richard, son of Richard Blachford of Dorchester, married Eleanor Waterton in 1623 in Fordingbridge in Hampshire. Richard and Eleanor's son was Robert Blachford who was born in 1624. These essays deal with three men; a grandson and two grandfathers who were divided by the civil war of 1642 to 1649. Two were royalists - Robert Waterton, born in 1565 and aged 77 at the outbreak of the war and his grandson Robert Blachford aged 18, and one was a roundhead – Richard Blachford, aged about 65-70.

My family line from Richard and Robert Blachford and Eleanor, daughter of Robert Waterton, is shown in appendix two.

Numbers in brackets and italics – see sources for reference.



Richard Blachford

Richard Blachford was born in about 1570/5, probably at Exeter in Devon. He was a gentleman merchant, a clothier, who lived most of his life in Dorchester in Dorset. Richard and his father William had been important traders out of the nearby port of Weymouth and in 1625 they accounted for three quarters of cargoes leaving the port that year. Richard was so successful that he became a bailiff, a capital burgess of the town and he became Mayor in 1630.

Dorchester was the largest town in the county at the time of the civil war and it had a strong Parliamentary allegiance. It had become home to the radical Calvinist preacher, John White, and it was, according to one royalist commentator, 'the magazine from whence the other places were supplied with the principles of rebellion' (1). The Presbyterian and later rebel leader, Denzil Holles, was one of the two Members of Parliament for Dorchester and he played a key role in the legislative struggles with King Charles I in the lead up to the outbreak of the war. In 1629 Holles held down the Speaker of the Commons when he tried to adjourn the House on instruction from King Charles. The other of Dorchester's two MPs at the outbreak of the war was Denis Bond. Bond had been one of Richard Blachford's fellow burgesses and in 1625 both Denis and Richard had been listed as two of the four leading clothiers in the town. They no doubt knew each other very well. According to the royalist commander, the Earl of Carnarvon, Dorchester was "... a place more entirely disaffected to the King, England had not" (1). Dorchester's puritanical verve spilled over in an infamous event that took place shortly before the war when a Catholic priest called Hugh Greene was captured after refusing to leave the country. He was brutally hanged, drawn and quartered by a mob of townspeople and his head was later used as a football (8). Many in Dorchester, and even in like other less disaffected towns in the Kingdom like Shaftesbury, had by the 1640's come to view Roman Catholicism as a foreign based religion and a threat to English freedoms.

Richard Blachford was not a puritan, he allied himself with the post-Elizabethan traditional elite of the town like fellow burgess Matthew Chubb (8). They were Protestant but not of the radical sort like Rev. John White and his followers. But Richard, like his former colleague Denis Bond MP, was a member of that class of merchants who were to be so pressed by the regime of King Charles I, and so heavily taxed as a result of decisions like the introduction of 'Ship Money', that he sided with Parliament when it came to the war. Richard must have been furious when the authorities of King Charles I convicted two of his sons, John and Thomas, for evading customs when trading out of Poole and for acting maliciously towards the collector of customs for the area. They fled to France where they took refuge and Thomas died there in 1644. So Richard's grievances against the King may not have been born out of a deep anti-monarchist or even radical religious feeling. But he no doubt wanted to restrain the power of the King and make him listen to the will of his peers in Parliament and so defend their wealth and profit making. When the King took up arms against his people by attacking the Commons and raising his standard at Nottingham, after fleeing the capital, men of means were forced to choose sides. Richard decided to stand against the King and to take up arms to defend his rights, the rights of his class and the main for avenue that they had of influence through law – the Parliament. Whilst the main motive may have been mainly pecuniary, it was still a brave decision to become a rebel against the crown. He would have been fully aware of his likely fate should the rebellion fail.



Maumbury Rings to the south of the town of Dorchester were a defensive battery emplacement during the civil war.

Richard would have been about sixty five to seventy years old when the war broke out. Despite his advanced age he apparently did not fade into the shadows but played an active part in supporting the roundhead cause. Given his age he may not have heavily engaged in hand to hand fighting, maybe preferring to leave that to younger officers in his troop of soldiers. But he was still to place himself in the way of danger and led as a captain of cavalry in the field. There isn't much evidence of his actions in the period from the start of the war until, possibly, in February 1643 when one of the soldiers of the Parliamentary garrison of Dorchester, Nathaniel White of Osmington, was holding arms provided by 'Mr

Blackston'. I think that this may be a transcription error and this may be 'Mr Blachford' which was sometimes written 'Mr Blackford'. There was no gentleman called Blackston in the town at this time and a number of other soldiers of the garrison were holding arms provided by Richard's fellow burgesses such as Whiteway and Bushrode. Soldiers of this militia garrison were recruited by the elders of the town and Richard was one of them. The arming of the Dorchester was done after an order by Parliament, made in 1642, for authorities to 'raise, train and arm volunteers to defend the town and magazine'. There was a particular preference for the recruitment of musketeers (shown left) as opposed to pikemen, as one would expect with a town defence as opposed to a field army, and they were armed and supplied with their own weapons, those from local worthies and others purchased by the town authorities. But Richard is not recorded in a list of troops and captains of Dorchester in 1642 and 1643 (15). The garrison under Governor Sir Walter



Erle was initially organised with three troops under Captains Churchill, Seward and Patty (see *appendix 1*). Later in the war they were brought together into a formal regiment and reissued with colours.

Given that it appears that Richard was not in command of troops in Dorchester in 1643, but we discover that he was later to become a captain of a troop of roundhead cavalry which was part of the southern association under Sir William Waller, where was he at this time? This record may help explain his absence (18) –

“On 7th July [1643] we hear that Sir William Waller had sent a letter to Dorchester, asking that two troops of horse and 100 dragoons [about 220 men in total] be sent to Colonel Norton, of Southwick Park [near Portsmouth in Hampshire], who was already in command of an equal number of men, and who was speedily joined by this welcome reinforcement.”

Sir Walter Erle (who was Colonel Norton's father-in-law) was to protest this order (1) –

“... that that left him with only 500 men and Dorchester and Weymouth 'by none of judgement can be thought tenable by twice that number'.”

So Dorchester was being denuded of military resources to help other more pressing conflicts elsewhere which demanded an army presence in the field in 1644 Richard is on record as having a commission from Parliament to lead and equip soldiers. In December 1646 the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Dorset (5) reported –

“... that you pay unto William Edmonds of Woolbridge, clothier, the sum of seven pounds for fourty (sic.) yards of broad cloth which the said Edmonds delivered to Captain Richard Blachford (see *appendix 1*) at the appointment of the committee of this county, for the clothing of his soldiers in February 1644.”

So for Richard to be active in arms for Parliament in February 1644 he was almost certainly not in the town of Dorchester because by that time it was held by cavalier forces. In late 1643 royalists had forced the town to surrender in a rather inglorious fashion, when a force of just a few hundred cavaliers, under the command of the Earl of Carnarvon, arrived at the town and faced the parliamentary force (1) -

“... well nigh 600 musketeers... with two troops of horse, and 14 or 15 great guns, or thereabouts ready mounted in the streets, and on the platforms; But such were their fears and distractions, that of those there appeared scarce the tenth man resolved to oppose, the soldiers that were of the garrison running away.... A few days later Prince Maurice arrived with the rest of the army, and

immediately broke the articles of surrender by looting and destroying the town brewhouse and many private homes.”

One of the houses that was plundered was that of the puritan preacher John White, who had fled to London (1). Maybe one of the other homes destroyed was also that of the gentleman Richard Blachford who may have been known to royalist sympathisers in the town who may have pointed to his property out for particular attention? He would by this time have been known to have been a captain in the roundhead army. Dorchester was to remain in royalist hands until June 1644 when it was recaptured by forces led by the Earl of Essex.

If Richard was not in Dorchester when it fell and was occupied by cavaliers then he was most likely to have been one of those placed in charge of the two troops of horse that Waller had ordered sent from Dorchester in July 1643. Other references to Richard being active in arms when Dorchester was occupied support this assumption. From the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Dorset (5) –

November 1646 - “Thomas Hayter.....where as it appeareth that Captain Richard Blachford did for two years since take up thirty yards of Broad cloth of one Thomas Hayter a clothier by order of the committee, It is ordered that the treasurer of this county pay unto said Thomas Hayter the sum of six pounds for the thirty yards of cloth aforesaid.”

March 1647 - “John Covett.....It is ordered that the treasurer pay unto John Covett the sum of twenty pounds as soon as he is able, being for one grey mare, and one horse with saddle and armes employed in the parliamentary service, as by several certificates under the hands of Captain Edward Masters and Captain Richard Blachford appeareth, and in the mean time the public faith of the Kingdom is for security unto the said John Covett engaged for the payment of the said sum of twentie pounds.”

Later in the war on 20th March 1645 the Committee of Both Kingdoms (set up by Parliament in its association with the Scottish Covenanters to oversee the conduct of the war) reported (7) –



“That Capt. Rich. Blackford's [Blachford] petition be recommended to the Committee of the West.”

What that petition was we don't know, maybe he was seeking reinforcements or supplies from his home county, but on 7th April 1645 it was reported (6) –

“Ordered, that it be referred to the Committee of the West, to consider of Recruiting and Disposing of Captain Blachford 's Troop.”

Given that Richard was within the scope of the ‘Committee of the West’, and was later reimbursed by the County Committee of Dorset for expenses equipping soldiers. we know that he was in the scope of that Parliamentary group in charge of the defence of the west country. A ‘troop’ indicates that Richard was in command of cavalry. Such cavalry troopers at the time of the civil war were generally ‘harquebusiers’ (pictured left). This cavalry were (12) –

“Originally, ... foot soldiers who had exchanged the crossbow for the arquebus (or harquebus), an early form of matchlock firearm. During the French religious wars of the 16th century, harquebusiers were mounted on horseback. By the early 17th century, they had evolved into the light cavalymen of western Europe. Ideally, harquebusiers were armed with a carbine or harquebus, a pair of pistols and a sword. During the civil wars, the carbine or harquebus was likely to be carried by officers only. The carbine is distinguished from the harquebus by being of larger bore and firing a larger,

heavier bullet. Both types had a barrel length of around three feet and were carried suspended from a shoulder belt. The pistols, carried in saddle holsters, had a barrel length of around twenty inches. Cavalry firearms were of the firelock pattern, either flintlocks or the more expensive and less popular wheel-lock. Harquebusier defensive armour consisted of a light breast- and back-plate and pot helmet, sometimes with a "gorget" to protect the throat. A thick leather buff-coat was usually worn underneath the armour, and often replaced it altogether. A distinctive feature of English harquebusier arms was the three-bar pot helmet with articulated neck-guard. Harquebusiers were classified as light cavalry, in contrast to cuirassiers who were regarded as heavy cavalry. In practice, however, cavalry tactics developed during the civil wars so that harquebusier regiments such as Prince Rupert's horse and Cromwell's Ironsides fought as shock troops, the role usually associated with cuirassiers."

Richard fits the profile of a captain of roundhead cavalry almost perfectly, he was older than most of his comrades but he was a wealthy gentleman who could afford some outlay to equip the elite soldiers of the age. Within his troop of cavalry Richard would have had men of some small substance who were decently rewarded for their service but who were generally expected to provide a horse and often their armour. Typically the cavalry trooper would have been a lower level gentleman, yeoman or merchant.

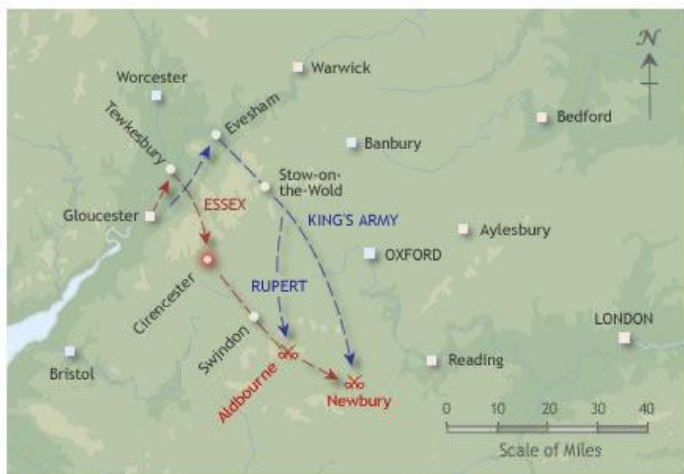
I think that it is safe to assume from this circumstantial evidence that from the middle of 1643 Richard had become a captain in a regiment of roundhead cavalry under the command of Colonel Richard Norton. It would therefore seem appropriate to guess about his experiences through this period from a record of Norton's war in late 1643.

On Wednesday 19th July 1643 Colonel Norton marched to Winchester in Hampshire and, it being a royalist town, plundered it of all arms and horses (18).

On Thursday 20th July (18) -

"... he proceeded to Salisbury ... where he also seized all the horses and arms to be found, and plundered the houses of the Cathedral Clergy, even taking away their servants' clothes, and confiscating about £80 which belonged to a hospital for poor people... On his march from Salisbury to Devizes to join Sir William Waller, hearing of the defeat of the latter upon Roundway Down, he retreated to Wardour Castle and from thence to Wilton. Preparing to attack Salisbury once more he found that the citizens, who had heard of the defeat of Waller, in arms to oppose him, and thinking "discretion the better part of valour" returned to Hampshire by a safer way because to him "the furthest way about was the next way home"."

In late July Norton attempted to attack Basing House in Hampshire but was soon repulsed and (18) –



"Colonel Norton and his allies retreated that night to Farnham, and from thence to Portsmouth, " plugging and plundering all the country as they passed along, for fear it should be thought that he had made so long a journey, and lain out so long, to undo nobody."

Some time later Norton's regiment proceeded north and linked up with the Earl of Essex's field army that was returning to London after relieving the siege of the garrison at Gloucester. Essex's army was closely followed by the King from the north who was hoping to engage the roundheads and crush the last army that could defend London from his advancing forces out of

the west country. The map above (12) shows the course of these two armies and the first engagement took place at Aldbourne in Berkshire on 18th September where the royalists forced Essex to cross the river

Kennet and enabled the King's main forces to reach Newbury before them and so cut off their march to London. This meant that on 20th September the King's forces were facing west with the road to London at their rear. Colonel Richard Norton's regiment of cavalry was part of Sir Philip Stapleton's brigade and lined up on the right wing of the roundhead force. After the start of the fighting the brigade that Richard Blachford could well have been amongst was engaged (12) –

“To the south of Round Hill, Sir Philip Stapleton's cavalry advanced along Bigg's Hill Lane and began to deploy on the open ground of Wash Common. Only one Parliamentary brigade had time to deploy before Prince Rupert's cavalry attacked. The Parliamentarians stood their ground and waited to receive the charge before firing into the Royalists. The attack was thrown back and Stapleton pursued the Royalists back to their starting point. This gave the other Parliamentary cavalry brigades time to advance onto the common. Parliamentary infantry marched up to support the cavalry. A second Royalist attack was beaten back, but then Rupert advanced with at least three brigades and the Parliamentary horse were driven from Wash Common and back into Bigg's Hill Lane. However, the Royalist cavalry were unable to break the supporting Parliamentary infantry.”

The Parliamentary infantry held and the London Trained Bands, no more than militia in arms, performed remarkably and saved the day for Essex. The King ordered a withdrawal. Then (12) -

“Around midday on 21 September, Essex resumed his march to London. Prince Rupert disrupted Essex's withdrawal with an attack on his rearguard at Aldermarston, during which Sir Philip Stapleton is reported to have ridden up to Rupert and fired point-blank in his face. Fortunately for Rupert, the pistol failed to go off.”

Essex's army reached Reading on 22nd and then was received jubilantly in London on 28th September. Total catastrophe had been avoided and a major roundhead field army spared for future engagements. London was safe and the King's strategy of a three pronged attack on the capital was resisted.

By December 1643 Norton had become Governor of Southampton and shortly before an attack on a nearby royalist garrison at Romsey he is said to have commanded less than 200 men. It is unlikely therefore that Richard Blachford and his troop of about 60 roundhead troopers was still with Norton by this time but that he was probably quartered elsewhere in the southern counties stronghold of Parliament. In 1644 Richard Norton does not appear to be commanding a regiment of cavalry any longer. Looking again at the record (see page 4), from December 1646, it states that Captain Richard Blachford was furnishing his soldiers using a clothier from 'Woolbridge'. Woolbridge is a manor just outside of Wool in south Dorset. If Richard was in this area in February 1644, as appears certain, he was probably garrisoned in the town of Wareham which had been held by Parliament since being recaptured from the royalists in November 1643. How long Richard remained in this part of Dorset is not certain but I expect that Richard's troop was soon to become part of the new army of Sir William Waller's southern association because we know that by early the following year his troop was recorded as belonging to a regiment within that force. If that was the case he may have been involved under Waller when in early 1644 he started manoeuvres that were to lead to the Battle of Cheriton in Hampshire.

Sir William Waller, pictured right (14), was a Presbyterian and had been a roundhead general in the western association of Parliament's army since 1642. After the defeat of that association in 1643 he had led the reformed roundhead southern association which recruited troops from Hampshire, Sussex, Berkshire and Surrey. With the self denying ordinance that was passed on 3rd April 1645 he was forced to resign his army commission to continue to hold his seat in Parliament. Waller continued to be involved with the Committee of Both Kingdoms after ceasing to command soldiers



in the field.

In the spring of 1644 Waller was in command of an army of 5,000 infantry, 3,000 horse and 600 dragoons. In addition he was given a regiment, under Sir William Balfour, of cavalry that was formerly part of Essex's army. Maybe Richard came under Balfour's command. Waller was given the order to advance against Sir Ralph Hopton's army that the previous year had defeated him in Wiltshire and which was now quartered in Winchester. Waller's army mustered around Petersfield in Hampshire and parts of his army soon encountered some royalist forces. After some jockeying for position the two armies came to face each other on 28th March at Cheriton. Battle ensued and the roundhead cavalry were heavily involved in inflicting a significant defeat on the cavaliers. The result of the roundhead victory was that (12) –

“Waller advanced to Winchester where the city, though not the castle, surrendered to him. The remnants of Hopton's southern army were subsequently absorbed into the King's Oxford army. Waller's victory at Cheriton terminated the Royalist advance in the south and ended all hopes of a direct attack on London. It was celebrated by Parliamentarians as their first decisive victory against a royalist army seeking battle — all major Parliamentary successes up to that point had been defensive. It was also the first defeat for the King's Oxford cavalry and significantly boosted the morale of the "War Party" in Parliament, which was now more determined than ever to inflict a military defeat on the King.”

The Earl of Essex was to comment after Cheriton (1) that it represented a turning point and –

“... last week there was but a step between us and death and (what is worse) slavery”.

However after this victory Waller's army became weakened by mutinies from infantry regiments who marched back to London and so he retreated to Farnham castle in Surrey to await reinforcements. In June Waller was able to join a concerted effort to attack the King's forces stationed at his capital at Oxford. He was however abandoned in this joint pursuit of the King by his commander the Earl of Essex who instead went into Dorset to relieve the siege of Lyme (en-route he was to recapture Dorchester). Waller eventually faced the King at the Battle of Cropedy Bridge in Oxfordshire, the result of which was a reverse of his fortunes at Cheriton. The King's forces then marched off in pursuit of the Earl of Essex in the west country whilst Waller's army suffered severe desertions that depleted his forces by about a half and as a result they no longer represented a threat to Oxford.

Essex's forces were eventually to be defeated by the King in Cornwall and fearing another march out of the west to London, Parliament sent a reinforced army under Waller into Dorset. Maybe it was at this time that Captain Richard Blachford was reacquainted with his home county and possibly was even able to visit his home town of Dorchester? If he did he would have found it much changed and may have been dismayed at finding his home and those of his fellow townspeople ransacked. In October 1644 Waller's army was in Dorset and was reinforcing the garrisons at Weymouth, Poole and Lyme and had occupied royalist Shaftesbury. After discovering his forces's disastrous defeat at Marston Moor in Yorkshire, the King then marched east through Sherbone and Salisbury whilst Waller moved through Salisbury and on to Andover where they received a surprise attack from cavalry under Lord Goring. Waller withdrew to Basingstoke where they were joined by remnants of the Earl of Essex's army in addition to eastern association forces that included Oliver Cromwell. From there they moved north and eventually took up a position facing the King's forces south of Newbury in Berkshire where the second battle of that name took place on 27th October. This battle is infamous for an incredible flanking march by Sir William Waller, with Oliver Cromwell in his number, which meant that the King's forces ended up facing Waller on the west and roundheads, under the Earl of Manchester, to the east. During the battle the cavalry under Sir William Balfour (which Richard Blachford may have been part of) pushed cavalier cavalry so far back that they almost surrounded the King himself until his lifeguard and reserve pressed them back. The battle was fought to a draw and overnight the King's forces found a way of slipping away north over an unwatched bridge. Whilst some in the roundhead command, like Cromwell, pressed for another fight, the Earl of

Manchester in overall charge was not willing to take the risk. So the cavaliers marched north with flags flying and drums beating (12) whilst the roundheads retired into winter quarters.

It is not clear when and why Captain Blachford and his troop of cavalry came to be separated from Sir William Waller's main army. Maybe this occurred during winter quartering when they were located in a different garrison and then they remained there when the rest of Waller's army went into the west? Early in 1645 Waller was sent campaigning in the west country with Lieutenant General Oliver Cromwell as his second in command. In this, his last and unsuccessful campaign, he was to be beset by more mutinous and disorderly troops.

On 10th April 1645 the Committee of Both Kingdoms sent the following order which refers to Richard (7) –

“... to Sir Wm. Waller. ... We intend sending you as a supply from these parts Captains Middleton, Blachford, Swallow, Saville, and Draper. We desire you to keep as near the King's forces as you can for the better preservation of those parts.”

From January 1645 Waller had been keeping a close watch on royalist troops under Lord Goring and was stationed in Salisbury whilst Goring was stationed in Shaftesbury. Waller pressed westwards but then in early April he retreated by way of Shaftesbury and by 11th April he was back in Salisbury. On that day the following order was sent to Richard (7) –

“The Committee of both kingdoms to Captain Blachford. We appointed your troop, together with the 4 troops of Cpts. Middleton, Saville, Swallow, and Draper, to march to Sir Wm. Waller to be employed with the regiments to which they severally belong. You are to march thither with all speed. We have desired the Committee of Surrey to take care for the effectual execution of these our orders. Sent by Mr. Durand.”

The comment about the ‘Committee of Surrey’ suggests that in early 1645 he was stationed in this county and maybe it is the case that after the second Battle of Newbury he had been located there awaiting orders which were to eventually come in April? All five captains received the same letters as Richard above and on 12th April (7) –

“... to Sir Thos. Fairfax. We are informed that there are two broken troops in Surrey, Capt. Stevens' and Capt. Bruce's, both unarmed. We desire you to send for them and employ the troopers for recruits, and send the officers hither to have their accounts audited that some provision may be made for them. There are besides these five other troops, viz., those of Captains Middleton, Blachford, Swallow, Saville (see appendix 1), and Draper, which belong to the regiments with Sir W. Waller, whom we have appointed to march hither to be joined with their regiments, and disposed of together with them. Sent by Mr. Durand.”

On 17th April (7) –

“... to the Committee of Surrey. We have appointed Captain Middleton's and four other troops of horse to march forthwith to Sir Wm. Waller, to be there employed in conjunction with those regiments to which they belong.”



The phrase ‘to which they belong’ above seems to confirm that Richard's troop was normally part of the southern association army under Waller.

On 17th April Sir William Waller was still at Salisbury in Wiltshire. No doubt that by then Captain Richard Blachford was with him, after marching from Surrey since 11th April, when Waller received these further orders (7) –

“The Committee of both kingdoms to Sir Wm. Waller. For the more convenience and security of reducing the forces under your command, we have thought fit they should be brought from Salisbury towards Reading to such place as Sir Thos. Fairfax shall appoint, whither you are to march accordingly. A copy of what we have written to Sir Thomas we send enclosed. The officers who are to be reduced, but who are not to be of the new army, shall have the same pay upon their reduction as the other officers who are [not] reduced. They are to be recommended to the Committee of the West to employ such of them as they may have occasion to use. We desire you to send such foot as you can spare for the security of the garrisons, especially of Poole and Wareham, so that they be not of those two regiments which are to be of the new army.”

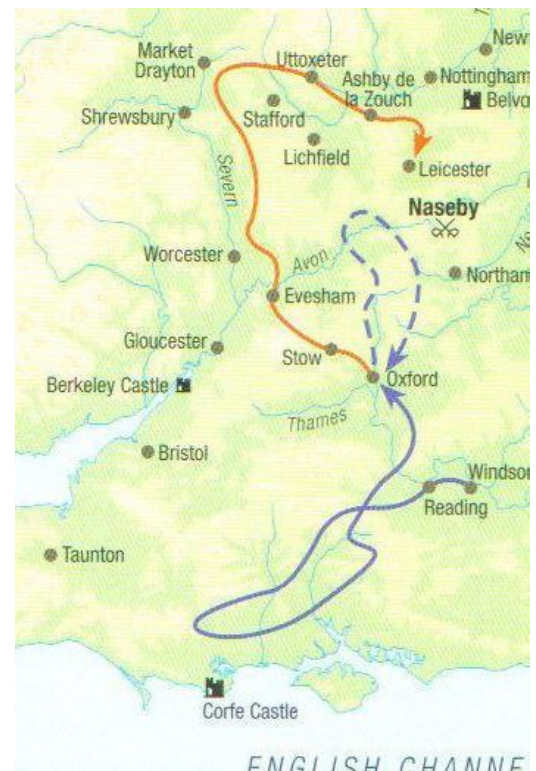
Parliamentary governors of Poole, Wareham, Weymouth, Lyme and Taunton were at the same time sent assurances that the withdrawal of Waller’s troops from Salisbury was only for reducing the force under his command, no doubt due to his resignation following the Self Denying Ordinance, and for the “settling of a constant force for the future service of the west”. They were asked not to be discontent about the retreat of Waller but to take courage because this was not leaving them to the mercy of the substantial royalist forces in the area. Given these statements it is unlikely that any troops under Waller’s former command were allowed to leave to return into the west until such a reformation of forces had occurred, and as it turned out events were to take over from such initial designs as the New Model Army continued to take shape.

On 29th April Sir Thomas Fairfax was given authority to decide which regiments formerly under the command of Sir William Waller would go to assist in the county of Gloucester and which would go into the west. Given that Captain Richard Blachford was from Dorset, it is most likely that he formed part of the troops designed to move into the west under Fairfax and as such he became part of the New Model Army intent on that course. Sir Thomas Fairfax had marched the bare bones of the New Model from Windsor to Reading on 30th April and en-route he was joined by Cromwell at Newbury (16). It must have also been at this rendezvous that the forces previously under the command of Sir William Waller, which had retreated



in good order from Salisbury with Richard in their number, merged into Sir Thomas’ forces as they moved back into the west. With Waller’s former forces the New Model Army was stronger and was probably about 10,000 strong. It was to become one of the most famous armies ever and it never lost a battle in its fifteen year existence.

On 3rd May the garrisons of the towns of Dorset were ordered to send further troops to join with Fairfax at a place between Salisbury and Taunton (7). On 4th May Fairfax was ordered to halt at Andover in Hampshire and the following day he was ordered to march into the west. On 6th May the army was at Sixpenny Handley in Dorset and the next day it was at Blandford in Dorset (1). On its march through the country the New Model Army was given strict instructions to demonstrate “wise and Christian-like discipline” and



any soldier found guilty of plunder was to be sentenced to death. By the time that the army reached Witchampton it had covered an impressive 78 miles in just nine days (1).

The picture above shows the relative movements of the New Model Army, in blue, and that of the King, in red, the this period up to June 1645 (16).

On 5th May Fairfax sent three regiments of foot (1200 men) and one of horse (600 men) to relieve the besieged town of Taunton (7). Meanwhile he advanced to Puddletown with his main forces before returning to Blandford and then on to Ringwood in Hampshire and by the 11th they were at Romsey (16). Royalist forces eventually retreated from Taunton, after initially forcing the relief force into the town, and a few days later they were able to rejoin Fairfax as he was ordered to march on to besiege Oxford, which he duly did from 22nd May. We don't know for sure that Captain Richard Blachford was still with the New Model Army by this time. However, unless he had been ordered to Taunton and then remained in the west, there is no evidence that Waller's former troops that had been subsumed into forces under Fairfax in the previous month had been separated away. Indeed most evidence shows that rather than dividing this force, which was still relatively weak, and which was now in hot pursuit of the King, that they endeavoured to recruit into it. Given the mutinous nature of some of the other previous forces it is easy to believe that Captain Richard Blachford's troop was now part of a regiment desperately needed in the main army of Parliament at this critical juncture of the war. As such I think that one can safely surmise that Richard and his soldiers were indeed in Fairfax's regiments of horse which stood in front of the Royalist capital of Oxford in late May 1645.

On 5th June the New Model raised the siege and marched away from Oxford, they were not strong enough and lacked the right equipment to storm the city (16). They went into Buckinghamshire and progressed north through that county into Northamptonshire. On 12th June at Guisborough in Northants the force under Fairfax was joined by 600 horse and dragoons under Lieutenant Oliver Cromwell who were greeted with banging of drums and sounding of trumpets. By this time Cromwell and his ironsides had started to gain an almost legendary status within the army and were starting to be feared by the enemy. With the royalist army under King Charles I encamped just a few miles north just south of Market Harborough, the scene was set for the famous Battle of Naseby.

A full description of the Battle of Naseby is available in many other books elsewhere. Whether Captain Richard Blachford and his troop of horse were one of the 5,500 to 6,000 Roundhead cavalry on the field that day one can only guess. But given the timeline described above from his order to join with Sir William Waller in April 1645 and the subsequent amalgamation of most of those forces into the New Model Army, I think that it is highly likely that he was. We do know for certain that Captain Richard Blachford's troop belonged to a regiment of horse formerly under Sir William Waller of the southern association of the army



of Parliament in late 1644 and into 1645. We also know that in the New Model Army the following commanders took over regiments of horse that had formerly been in Waller's association –

- Colonel John Butler
- Commissary-General Henry Ireton
- Colonel Robert Pye

At Naseby the regiments under Ireton and Burler lined up on the left wing of horse under the overall command of Ireton. Troops under Sir Robert Pye

were on the right wing under the overall command of Oliver Cromwell. Depending on whether Richard was on the left or the right wing of the horse, he would have experienced a very different battle. The first cavalry to be engaged for the roundheads was on their left when cavalry under the cavalier Prince Rupert

charged after coming under fire from dragoons hidden behind hedges on their right. After a fight of just over 30 minutes the roundhead cavalry on the left, following some initial successes, was eventually broken and the cavaliers pursued them into the baggage train and beyond. Butler and Ireton were both wounded and Ireton was briefly captured. This pursuit turned out to be a crucial error for the King's forces because just as those cavaliers took off in eager pursuit and keen for plunder, cavalry under Cromwell on the roundhead right had become engaged and soon broke their opponents. But whereas Prince Rupert raced off the battle field, Cromwell expertly marshalled his horse to muster and to fall into the exposed flank and rear of the royalist foot soldiers. This manoeuvre of Cromwell's was to tip the balance of the battle and changed what was an even fight in the centre between the infantry soldiers. The King's forces broke and eventually fled in panic. Some of the royalist soldiers did fight a valiant rear guard action, but these were in vain and there was a lot of slaughter in the aftermath, as often happened in the battles of the age. Whether Richard was in the forces of Butler and Ireton who were broken or in the forces of Pye that succeeded, if he was even there, we do not know for sure and I don't know whether any evidence exists that can prove it either way.

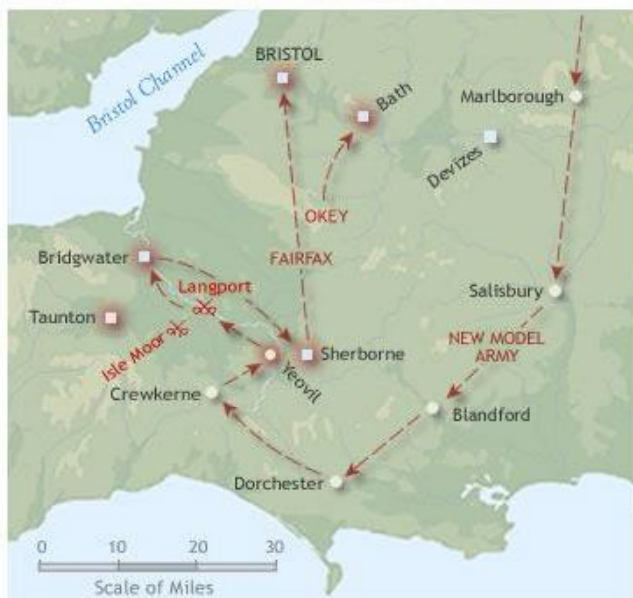
A report was made to the Committee of Both Kingdoms of this famous success (7) -

"... It having pleased God to give a great victory to our army under Sir Thos. Fairfax, we thought fit to give you notice of it that you might not be abused by any reports from the enemy. Upon Thursday last the King and his army marched from Daventry toward Haverborough [Market Harborough], and on Friday our army followed and quartered that night within six miles of them. On Saturday, by 5 in the morning, the enemy marched towards us, chose his ground, and put himself in battalia [about a mile and a half to the north of the village of Naseby, then a market town]. Our army put them-elves also in order [on Naseby Field], and expected the enemy, who, about 11 of the clock, came to charge them, the fight continued for three hours somewhat doubtful; at length the enemy was wholly routed, all their carriages, which were 200 in number, were taken, and all their cannon, which were 12 pieces, of which two demi-cannon, two demi-culverin, and the rest sacres, 5,000 [men] taken and [or] slain, many officers, all the foot colours, and many horse colours, and at least 2,000 horse. Our horse had the pursuit of them from four miles on this side Harborough to nine miles beyond, even to the sight of Leicester, whither the King fled. Our army quartered last night at [Market] Harborough, and this day are marching both horse and foot



toward Leicester. This is a very great victory, the King's army in which he was in person is wholly broken and destroyed. Let God have all the praise, and bear up your courage and spirits, the relief we have now sent you will we hope come seasonably and be sufficient for your succours."

The battle of Naseby effectively decided the outcome of the first civil war. The King's largest field army was defeated and the rest of the campaign for the roundheads was to be concerned with mopping up remaining royalist forces. After the city of Leicester was recaptured on 18th June, the New Model Army marched back into the west to



relieve the roundhead garrison towns. The cavalier Lord Goring commanded the only remaining royalist force in the field that was still capable of challenging the New Model Army and given times there was a chance that it could recruit and grow. Fairfax had no intention of giving Goring that time and moved to seal the victory of Naseby and avoid the mistakes made after the previous important victory at Marston Moor in 1644. With the aim of the further relief of Taunton he marched the army via Salisbury and Blandford to Dorchester, where the army was allowed a rest (16). This must have been another welcome taste of home for Captain Richard Blachford, assuming that he was still serving under Fairfax. The New Model Army then marched through west Dorset and into Somerset where near Crewkerne there was a brief clash with some royalist troopers who fell hastily back. Fairfax seized Yeovil and on 10th July between Langport and Long Sutton he defeated Lord Goring's forces and inflicted a further demoralising defeat on the remaining followers of the King.

We don't know exactly when Richard and his troops left the New Model Army but by late 1646 the Parliamentary Committee for Dorset (5) was sorting out recompense for his expenses incurred earlier in the war for arming and equipping his soldiers. He was most probably by then back home in Dorchester and returning to a civilian life he was elected as Mayor of the town in 1647, possibly as a mark of gratitude from this roundhead town for his gallant wartime service. It had been 17 years since he had last held that position.

Richard had survived the war but was to die aged 82 in 1652. What he thought about the execution of the King in 1649 and the coming of the Commonwealth under Lord Protector Cromwell we don't know. Almost certain Richard had met this 'chief of men', as they probably had served as cavalry commanders in the same engagements, but whether he associated with him or approved of his killing of the King is another matter. Given that Holles and others of a less Independent religious affiliation opposed Cromwell at this time it is likely that he too was disappointed by the direction that the new authority took. I expect that Richard was of the same mind as his previous commander Sir William Waller who opposed the killing of the King and disapproved of the rump Parliament.

Robert Blachford

Richard's grandson, my great x 9 grandfather, Robert Blachford, was a cavalier and a royalist. Richard's son Richard (junior), Robert's father, had been born in Dorchester in 1601. In January 1624 Richard junior's wife Eleanor (formerly Waterton) gave birth to Robert whilst he was living and working in the City of London as a merchant trader.

Richard junior died very young, whilst Robert was just 11 years old, and the young man probably came much more under the influence of Eleanor's Waterton family rather than the Blachfords of Dorchester. The Watertons were royalists and they had a Catholics affiliation (see next essay) and young Robert was to live with his mother Eleanor in Newport and Fordingbridge in properties owned by her father Robert. At the time of the outbreak of the civil war Robert was 18 years old and living in Hampshire. As a young cavalier he was probably very keen to see action and probably felt obliged, if not pressed by his family, to serve his King and fight for the royalist cause. He was possibly very excited about the chance to demonstrate his loyalty for the King and to show his cavalier spirit in battle.



The former Sandhill Manor house, near Fordingbridge, as it would have looked in the civil war

Evidence about Robert's activity in the war first comes to light in the case of delinquency (what the roundhead Parliament called support for the King) that was brought against him on 30th November 1648 (17) –

“Information that he [Robert Blashford [Blachford] of Fordingbridge] is a delinquent and was in arms at Oxford.”

On 8th February 1649 Robert's estate was sequestered and secured by Parliament but he was 'respited' by the Committee on 13th March until such time as the county commissioners could confirm his 'delinquency' and account for his behaviour since the war. On 23rd May 1649 his goods were again ordered to be sequestered and to be sold with the profits going to the Committee of Parliament for Hampshire.

By March 1651 it was found that the earlier order had not be carried out and the county commissioners were again ordered to follow out the instruction to seize Robert's property and to use his rents for 'the good of the state'. Robert (now described as 'of Over Burgate, Hampshire') pleaded for the fine to be compounded and on 21st September he paid a fine of 210 shillings and on 8th October he (17) –

“Begs to compound for a saving of ½ of Sandhill Manor, and old rents belonging to the manor of Cross, Somerset, now worth 2l. 10s. a year, but after three lives they will be worth 7l. 10s. more; also for a house in Salisbury, worth 6l. a year. Adds 10l. a year to the value of a farm in Fordingbridge, valued in his former particular at 70l. a year.”

On 21st October that same year he paid a further fine of 58 shillings.

It also appears that Robert Blachford and another 'delinquent' of Hampshire, Jasper Cornelius, were further fined on evidence produced by Welsh drovers. These cattle herders has since the time of Queen Elizabeth I been allowed to transport their stock throughout the country over long distances, they were in affect an old form of cowboy. The civil war disrupted their trade and when they made pleas to Parliament for recompense against losses they were granted such monies on condition that they provided evidence against papists and recusants (Catholics) and other delinquents (royalists). Robert Blashford (or Blachford) is named in cases brought by Welsh drovers on 12th June 1649 and 13th July 1653. There was then some dispute between the drovers and a man called Warner who was claiming that it was he who had made the discovery about Blachford's and Cornelius' delinquency. Warner did eventually receive payment for his information.

Given this documentary evidence of post-war trials what can we guess about Robert Blachford's wartime activity? The answer is that we are not able to find out a lot in terms of specifics of his movements and engagements in the war. Unlike his grandfather Richard there is not a lot to tie him down to particular actions or movements other than the reference to him being in arms at Oxford. We don't know whether he had a commission in the King's army or what he did in the fight. However we can guess that Robert was probably a cavalry trooper, like his roundhead grandfather. He was a son of gentry and had the means to equip himself with armour and a horse. It is unlikely that he rose as high as a captain but he may have been a lieutenant or other minor field officer.

Oxford was the King's capital from September 1642 and for most of the war. It was the place from which he garrisoned his main 'Oxford Army' that was eventually lost at the Battle of Naseby in 1645. Given the reference to Robert Blachford 'being in arms at Oxford', we may be able to guess that this is not just a reference to his location but to him being in the King's main Oxford army. If this is correct then it means that Robert Blachford may well have faced his grandfather Richard on more than one occasion when Sir William Waller or the Earl of Essex faced the King's forces at Newbury, Cheriton or Cropedy Bridge. He may have faced his grandfather when Fairfax besieged Oxford in early 1645 or when the New Model Army faced the King at Naseby. Was Robert with the right wing of royalist cavalry at Naseby under Prince Rupert or on the left wing that suffered defeat against Cromwell? Maybe he then fled to Oxford and was there when the King quartered there in the winter of 1645/6.

We do know that Robert was not still in Oxford when the King left the city in early 1646 and when the city finally surrendered in June of that year. That is because Robert was back in Hampshire by March 1646 as evidenced by his name and signature appearing on an indenture in that month relating to his grandfather's property of Sandhill in Fordingbridge. Maybe some more information will come to light which puts more colour on Robert's wartime exploits. Until then we can be guess at what this young man of 18-22 years old did during the years 1642 to 1646 in support of the King's cause.

Robert's signature can be seen below, from the indenture dated March 1646 (2) –

A photograph of a document showing the handwritten signature 'Robert Blachford' in cursive script. The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored paper. The word 'Robert' is written in a smaller, more compact cursive, and 'Blachford' is written in a larger, more flowing cursive. The signature is positioned on the right side of the document, with the word 'Robert' appearing to the left of a vertical line or fold in the paper.

Robert survived the war and in 1647 he married Elizabeth Wright of Winchester at Rockbourne in Hampshire. He was to live another 23 years and maintain his property despite his fines from Parliament In 1670 he left a will in which he refers to his Manor of Sandhill and in which he describes himself as a 'gentleman' of Newport on the Isle of Wight.

This is a picture of a coin that was found in the grounds of the former Sandhill manor that Robert held (now Forres Manor School) –

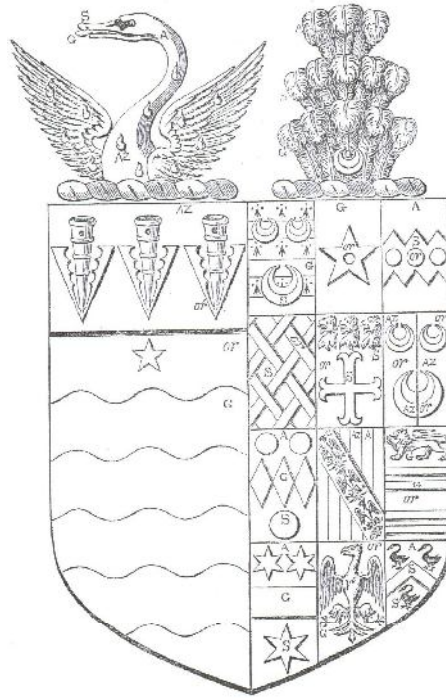


This coin was minted at the start of the reign of the restored King Charles II and it is quite possible that it was once owned and handled by Robert himself. Robert's son Robert eventually sold his old manor at Sandhill in 1702.

One wonders whether Robert junior and Richard senior ever met or conversed about the war. Did grandfather and grandson even know that they were on opposing sides or was it the case that because they lived in different counties and were so far apart that they did not know? Were they by this time estranged? Robert was not Richard's only grandchild and they may not have had a close relationship because Robert's father and Richard's son, Richard Blachford junior, had died ten years previously. Richard junior was also a younger son. It may therefore be the case that Robert Blachford was so strongly under the influence and care of his mother's family, the Watertons of Newport, that he lost complete touch with his father's family in Dorchester. There is no will that survives for Richard Blachford elder and he died in 1652, so we don't know if he left anything for this Hampshire family. Robert's will of 1670 does not refer to any of the Blachford family of Dorchester or to any Blachford property in Dorset, it only refers to his new Hampshire based Blachford line and to property inherited from the Watertons. Robert Blachford may also have inherited his mother's affinity to the Catholic religion although there is no evidence that he practiced this faith and he is not referred to as a 'recusant' or 'papist' in the fines imposed by Parliament, only as a 'delinquent'

Whatever happened to divide this particular family, strong views and opposing allegiances led these two ancestors of mine to take different sides in a civil conflict. In today's rather more settled Britain we may find this quite alien. But this was a war that helped found our nation and still influences who we are today. One family divided amongst many others and a nation torn apart that eventually led to the compromise that was to be the United Kingdom and modern Church of England.

Robert Waterton



Richard Blachford, son of Richard of Dorchester son of Robert, married Eleanor Waterton of Newport on Isle of Wight in 1623 and with that marriage he entered into a family with an ancient and noble family ancestry. In recognition of this union, whilst based in London in 1633, Richard was granted a coat of arms [shown above] by the Royal heralds which incorporated the Blachford arms on the left of the shield and (from top left to bottom right) those of Waterton, Assenhull, De Burgh, Bellew, Moleyns, Court, Montague, Grandison, Tregoz, Ewyas, Monthermer and Hymerford. The Montagues were in medieval times the Earls of Salisbury and Monthermer married a daughter of King Edward I, so Richard did well for his descendents through the marriage and passed on decent bloodline. Richard's wife Eleanor was sole heiress of her father Robert Waterton of Newport and through her was received the manors of Sandhill in Hampshire and Durston in Somerset, in addition to a number of other properties.

The Watertons were adherents to the old faith even after the reformation, Roman Catholicism. This tradition was to survive through to another descendent of the same line the naturalist, Charles Waterton of Walton Hall, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This 'recusancy' was to cost the Watertons dearly because after the reign of Queen Elizabeth and until more tolerant religious laws in the 19th century, Sir Thomas

BY THE KING.

Rustie and welbeloved, We greet you well. Having observed in the Presidents and customes of former times, That the Kings and Queenes of this our Realme upon extraordinary occasions have used either to resort to those contributions which arise from the generality of subjects, or to the private helpes of some well-affected in particular by way of loane; In the former of which courses as We have no doubt of the love and affection of Our people when they shall againe assemble in Parliament, so for the present We are enforced to proccede in the latter course for supply of some portions of Treasure for divers publique services, which without manifold inconveniences to Vs and Our Kingdomes, cannot be deferred: And therefore this being the first time that We have required any thing in this kind, We doubt not but that We shall receiue such a testimony of good affection from you (amongst other of Our subjects) and that with such alacrity and readines as may make the same so much the more acceptable, especially seeing We require but that of some, which few men would deny a friend, and have a minde resolved to expose all Our earthly fortune for preservation of the generall, The summe which We require of you by vertue of these presents is *£ 500000* which We doe promise in the name of Vs, our Heires and Successours to repay to you or your Assignes within eighteene moneths after the payment thereof vnto the Collector. The person that We haue appointed to collect, is *Sir Edward Denny Knight* to whose hands we doe require you to send it within twelue dayes after you haue received this Privy Seale, which together with the Collectors acquittance, shalbe sufficient warrant vnto the Officers of Our Receipt for the repayment thereof at the time limited. - Given vnder our Privy Seale at *Hampton Court the Countie of Surrey* day of *November* in the first yeare of our raigne of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland. 1625.

J. Bylles

Waterton, Robert's grandfather, was to be the last of the line to hold important national office when he became an MP in 1542.

Walton Hall is near Wakefield in Yorkshire and it was here in about 1536 that Eleanor's grandfather Francis was born. In about 1560 Francis moved to the Isle of Wight and his son Robert was born in Newport in 1565. Robert was still alive by the start of the civil war. He was a town burgess, like his father, and he was Mayor of Newport four times between 1610 and 1640. In 1625 Robert was one of several gentry and nobility of the island who made contributions to King Charles I's exchequer for his war with Spain, he 'loaned' £10. A copy of the letter sent to Robert and others by the King appealing for money is shown above (11).

I don't believe that Robert played much of an active part in the fighting in the civil war. But with his family ancestry, and despite Wight being mainly Parliamentary in allegiance, he was without doubt a royalist. This royalist affiliation is evident in his friendships at the time. He was friends with John Oglander, gentleman, one of the sons or grandsons of the ardent royalist and diarist; Sir John Oglander of the Isle of Wight. Robert refers to John Oglander junior as his 'loving friend' in his will of 1648. In 1628 Robert had signed a petition with Sir John Oglander protesting to King Charles I about the billeting of troops of the island. Robert's great grandson Robert Blachford, was to marry Elizabeth Mann, granddaughter of the royalist Eustace Mann of Osborne on the Isle of Wight. This marriage was probably due to the connections between Mann and Waterton in the civil war period. According to tradition (18) Eustace was alleged to have buried a large amount of money, during the troubles, in a spot still known as 'Money Coppice' and, not marking the spot, he was never able to recover the treasure. The marriage of Robert Blachford to Elizabeth Mann meant that the Osborne estate passed to the Blachfords of this line and in 1845 it was sold by Isabella Blachford to Queen Victoria.

Robert Waterton did have some financial dealings with fellow burgess Moses Read who was Mayor of Newport in 1642. Moses and his wife Jane are mentioned in Robert's will in 1648, but not as 'friends' like Oglander. Read was loyal to Parliament and in late 1642 he warned the Commons of the threat that was posed by allowing the royalist Countess of Portland to remain in Carisbrooke Castle and he was ordered to (18) "adopt any measures he [Read] may think necessary for the safety of the Island. Read then marched the militia of Newport with 400 roundhead naval auxiliaries to Carisbrooke which duly surrendered being poorly defended and unprepared for siege.

The war itself did not have much of a direct impact on Isle of Wight, which remained fairly tranquil during the period. This relative peace was to lead to an increase in farm rents during the period as some people chose to relocate to the island. Sir John Oglander blamed the fact that Wight was held for Parliament on the fact that the local gentry were "to a large extent of a 'newer' kind" (11), probably in contrast to more traditional gentry like Waterton. Robert may have found it hard to contribute to the King's cause from the Isle, other than possibly by encouraging his young grandson Robert Blachford to take up arms. But he may have had the opportunity to meet King Charles I in person when he was imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle, near Newport, from late 1647 to late 1648. Robert died in July 1648 but, if he had been of good enough health, he may well have been one of the many local gentry to have audience with the King during his captivity.

This is Robert Waterton's signature on the same indenture as that signed by Robert Blachford in March 1646 (2) –

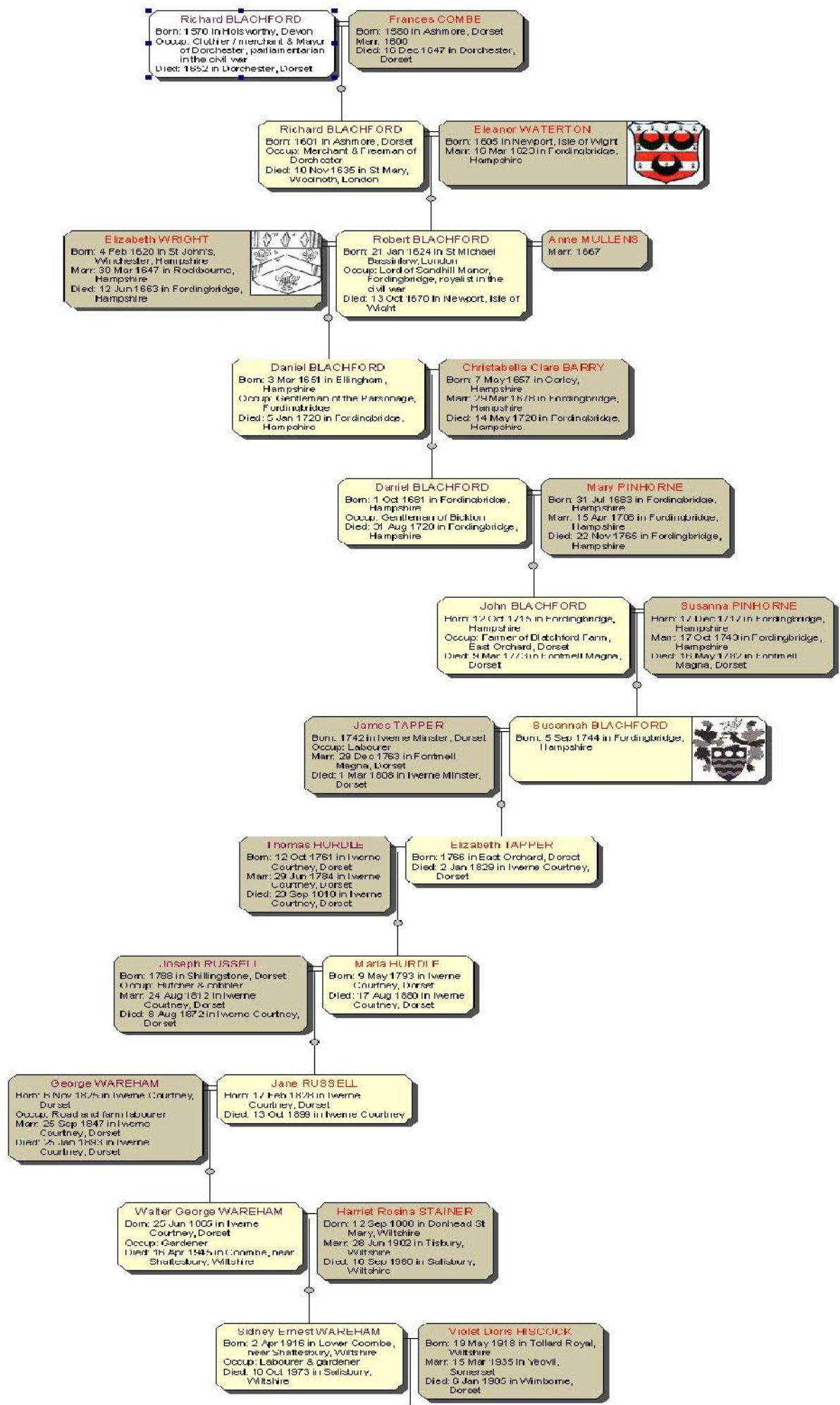


Appendix 1 - notes

Page 4 – connections – Richard's daughter Edith married Richard Churchill of Dorchester in 1630, Joseph Patie (or Patty), like Richard, was one of four clothiers of Dorchester listed as paying taxes in 1626.

Page 4 - There are three Richard Blachfords who were actually alive at the time – Richard senior of Dorchester and two of his grandsons – Richard of Hampshire, aged 16 in February 1644, (son of youngest son Richard) or Richard of Sussex, aged 13 in 1644 (son of 2nd oldest son Henry). Neither of the junior Richards are very realistic as they are unlikely to have been commissioned as Captains of Horse given their youthful ages. Richard the elder is by far the most likely given his seniority, background, county affiliation, wealth and pre-war experiences.

Page 6 - Captain Saville, I think from the south west, disobeyed his orders and his troops were withdrawn from his command and formed part of the New Model Army, he being forced to answer for his misconduct to Sir Thomas Fairfax.



Appendix 3 - sources

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- 7) Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Charles I, 1644-5 from British History (4)
- 8) 'Fire from Heaven' by David Underwood
- 9) Blachford family history by Jack AG Blachford
- 10) Forres Sandle Manor School, Fordingbridge, Hampshire
- 11) A royalist's notebook;: The commonplace book of Sir John Oglander, Kt., of Nunwell, born 1585, died 1655
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- 16) Naseby 1645, The triumph of the New Model Army, Martin Marix Evans 2007, Osprey
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- 18) The Civil War in Hampshire 1642-1645 and the Story of Basing House by Rev Godwin

