IN the course of an article\(^{(1)}\) that appeared in Volume III of these Transactions a brief account was given of the siege and battle of Nantwich, one of the turning-points of the first Civil War. In that account the description and analysis of the battle outside the town on 25 January 1644\(^{(2)}\), which occurred in the recent work of A. H. Burne and P. Young (The Great Civil War, 1642-6, London, 1959), were criticised on several particular as well as general grounds. For lack of space, however, it was not possible to deal with the battle as comprehensively as it deserved. This present paper has, accordingly, a twofold object: first, to put forward our own reconstruction of the battle based on the available evidence; and, secondly, to indicate in detail wherein we differ from Burne and Young. In the pursuit of these objects some overlapping cannot be avoided.

\(^{(1)}\) J. Lowe, "The Campaign of the Irish Royalist Army in Cheshire, November 1643—January 1644" in TRANSACTIONS (1960), pp. 47-76

\(^{(2)}\) The principal sources for a study were discussed in a bibliographical note appended to the above article and are simply listed below with the abbreviations used indicated in brackets. As they are all very short the pagination given will not be repeated; and further notes will be added only where the authority is not clearly indicated in the text or further matter is discussed.


Fairfax's letter to his commander-in-chief, the earl of Essex, reporting the battle was first published in the tract Magnalia Dei, and this was included in Civil War Tracts of Cheshire, Chetham Society, New Series, Vol. 65, pp. 107-9 (Fairfax: "Letter").

His memoirs were written some years later and eventually published as Short Memorials of Sir Thomas Fairfax written by himself (London, 1699), pp. 70-5. (Fairfax: Memorials).

The memoirs of Hodgson, one of Fairfax's officers, were published as The Autobiography of Captain John Hodgson of Coley Hall near Halifax, ed. J. Horsfall Turner (Brighouse, 1882), pp. 25-6 (Hodgson).
The royalist army was made up of two elements: troops and horse brought back from service against the Catholics in Ireland—hence its common but misleading label “The Irish Royalist Army”—and foot soldiers and horse seconded from Prince Rupert’s army. Its commander, Lord John Byron, was reputed a dashing and effective cavalry leader but had not previously handled such a large mixed force. Tough, ruthless, arrogant, Byron was even more reluctant than most generals to admit errors of judgment. His foot were divided into five regiments under the respective commands, in order of seniority, of Major-General Ernie, and Colonels Gibson, Robert Byron (Lord John’s brother), Warren and Hunckes. Ernie was unfit for the actual battle and so Gibson took over the general command; there is no indication as to who took over Ernie’s own regiment. These five had all seen much service in Ireland both in the field and as garrison commanders and had earned the good opinion of their lieutenant-general, the marquis of Ormond. Although embittered by a prolonged spell of hardship their rank and file were seasoned campaigners, accustomed to defeating or at least holding their own against superior numbers of Irish. A minority, concentrated it would seem in Warren’s regiment, were parliamentary sympathisers.

The foot drawn from Rupert’s army hailed from Lancashire and must have been tolerably experienced. They were not organised in a distinctive regiment but distributed among the five regiments from Ireland in order, presumably, to bring them up to strength. In the weeks preceding the battle, the last two of which had been spent in laying siege to Nantwich,

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(3) Frequent allusions to them appear in Ormond’s papers (Carte Papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford).
(6) The foot contingent from Ireland were in a majority of three to one. This may be deduced from the fact that on leaving Chester Byron had 4,000 infantry, of which about 3,000 can be identified as from Ireland. (Cf. two letters addressed to Ormond by Ernie and Robert Byron respectively, when they were about to embark for England with two separate convoys of troops. Thus Ernie wrote: “A List of the strength of those r(e)giments that are with me by your excellences command . . . in all 1800 . . . this is besides all officers” (Carte Papers, Vol. 7, p. 537), and Robert Byron reported that he had a strength aboard of 1,300 men (ibid. Vol. 8, p. 7).
the army had fought well and its morale was accordingly high.

To estimate the number of royalists at the time of the battle is difficult. Byron had marched out of Chester just seven weeks previously with at least 4,000 foot and 1,000 horse.\(^{(7)}\) Thereafter he had lost about 400 men in an abortive and bloody assault on Nantwich on 17 January,\(^{(8)}\) roughly 100 in skirmishes at Barbridge and Delamere, and an uncertain number in a minor engagement at Middlewich and in the capture of enemy villages and garrisons. The army's effective strength had been further reduced by the need to man the captured strongholds and by losses both through sickness, which must have been heavy because of the harsh weather, and through desertions which, according to one royalist source\(^{(9)}\) which there is no reason to distrust, amounted to 200. The total drain could scarcely have been less than 1,600.\(^{(10)}\) Byron may have collected some recruits but it would seem doubtful that their numbers were significant for he complained rather bitterly of the hostility he had encountered in the Cheshire countryside. It seems likely then that Byron was left with roughly 2,400 foot, 900 more, even so, than he himself claimed in his own improbable estimate of 1,500. At first sight, it might seem that Byron was grossly underestimating his numbers in order to palliate the magnitude of his defeat. But he allocated only 2,000 troops to Fairfax when he could easily have given him 3,000 or more. Thus he was not straying too far from the truth. His cavalry must also have suffered some losses—in a skirmish near Ellesmere, for instance—and could scarcely have mustered 900 by January 25. His artillery consisted of one heavy field gun and at least four light

\(^{(7)}\) Cf. Capt. Byrch to G. Carr (Ormond's secretary), Chester, 12 December 1643: "This day we march out 4,000 foot at least and 1,000 horse" (Carte, Original Letters, Vol. I, p. 33).

\(^{(8)}\) 400 is a conservative estimate. According to Clarendon their losses were "near" 300 (Rebellion (ed. W. D. Macray, Oxford, 1888), Vol. III, p. 315); to Robert Byron, 400; to the author of Magnalia Dei, a contemporary tract, 500; and to Malbon (p. 109), no fewer than 1,000.


\(^{(10)}\) The calculation that the number of royalist foot had been reduced by 1,600 between its departure from Chester and the afternoon of the battle is reached as follows: a drain of 45 at the battle of Middlewich (Cf. Robert Byron’s report to Ormond. Carte, Original Letters, p. 36); 400 during the first abortive assault on Nantwich of 17 January; at least 100 in the seizure of Crewe Hall (Malbon, p. 97, claimed that 60 were killed here apart from the wounded); at least 400 in the manning of captured garrisons (this figure is based on the numbers who subsequently surrendered to the parliamentarians—at Crewe Hall, for example, 120 surrendered according to Malbon, p. 120); 200 through desertions; an unknown number but probably in excess of 100 in the taking of villages and garrisons other than Crewe Hall; 30 taken prisoner at Delamere and another 30 at Barbridge where some were also killed; and finally losses through sickness which must have been heavy owing to the bad weather.
field pieces but evidently played no vital part in the action. Commanded by Sir Thomas Fairfax, the parliamentary army was composed of three elements: cavalry and dragoons brought by Fairfax himself; Cheshiremen under Sir William Brereton; and a contingent from Lancashire. Fairfax had already shown himself a fine commander, brave, swift, resolute, capable of inspiring the affection and respect of his men. On this particular occasion he displayed characteristic determination both in raising an army and driving it on to Nantwich. His own officers included Colonel Lambert, who was later to be one of Cromwell's most brilliant senior commanders, and Major Morgan, an experienced professional soldier. Among the Lancashire and Cheshire commanders Colonel John Booth had a reputation for daring in action and the fanatical sectarian, Colonel Duckenfield, subsequently became a successful officer in the New Model. Colonels Brereton and Ashton were typical examples of those intelligent, zealous M.P.s who, having no previous military experience, yet, as Clarendon observed, gave their more seasoned opponents no cause to despise them. Fairfax was nevertheless worried by the wrangling that apparently marred their relations with one another. He was uneasy, too, about the quality of the other ranks and certainly they were less experienced man for man than the royalists; furthermore, only one month previously, a number of them had suffered a humiliating defeat at Middlewich. But these were also the same men who had all but cleared Lancashire and Cheshire of their more numerous royalist adversaries and penetrated far into North Wales in the previous October and November. If they had not

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111 Malbon (p. 100) was obviously impressed by the enormous size of one of the royalist guns. It was probably a culverin or demi-culverin. Malbon gave the royalists four field pieces. Another account recorded that six ordnance were captured (Civil War Tracts of Cheshire, p. 110).

112 Both Clarendon (Rebellion, Vol. III, p. 315) and the Weekly Account (No. 22, week ending 1 February 1644, B.M.E. 31) referred to the recruitment of troops in Staffordshire and Derbyshire. But no eye-witness mentioned them nor do any of the names of senior commanders from those two counties occur in Malbon's list, although they were well known in Nantwich. As a source for the battle Clarendon is generally unreliable (see below Section II.d.).


114 The low morale of the Lancastrians may be inferred from a brief report submitted to London by a man calling himself I. Isack soon after the battle was over. In this (Cf. B. M. E. 31) he wrote: "... and although Sir William Brereton hath beene much distressed in these parts, for want of supplyes, and although the Cowardlinessse of the Manchester men; yet since they have gained thier lost reputation, and stick to us with a great deale of valour... The Lord Byron, the King's Generall, hath beene so terrible unto us, and sheweth so little mercy on those he overcommeth or taketh prisoners, that some of our forces were unwilling to venture on any designe, where Biron was;..."
quite the toughness of the mercenaries from Ireland, they were not therefore to be lightly regarded. And they may well have enjoyed a submerged advantage in that they were volunteers, passionately attached to their cause and incensed against Byron’s army because of its alleged maltreatment of prisoners and its generally delinquent behaviour.

Whereas it is easy to determine the break-down of the royalist regiments, it is difficult in the case of the parliamentarians. Robert Byron ascribed six infantry regiments to them but he could only have been guessing. Malbon named no fewer than eight Lancashire and Cheshire regimental commanders but it is quite plain that not all of them had full commands on this occasion. By piecing together the fragments of evidence left by the participants in the battle we are inclined to believe that the foot were in fact organized in six regiments commanded by Colonels Brereton, Ashton, Duckenfield, Holland and the two Booths, and these were supported by 500 dragoons.

As for cavalry, it would seem that the greater part had come all the way from Lincolnshire and that relatively few were from the north-west. Among the cavalry commanders the most distinguished were Sir William Fairfax and Colonel Lambert.

As to numbers we have four different figures for the infantry: in his “Letter” Fairfax gave himself 2,500 on leaving Manchester; in his Memorials he reported leaving Lincolnshire with 500 dragoons and added later on that at Manchester “I got up in a few days near 3,000 foot”. Malbon gave him 3,000; Byron, 2,000 and a “rabble of cudgellers”. A few casualties must have been incurred in pre-battle skirmishes at Delamere and Barbridge, and the snow-laden ground must also have taken its toll on the three-day march from Manchester. Thus on the fairly safe assumption that the dragoons fought on foot, the total strength of the infantry was rather less than 3,000.

For the cavalry we have five different figures: Malbon allowed 3,500 as against Robert Byron’s 1,200; John Byron

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(15) In his list Malbon confused their names with those of Fairfax’s Yorkshiremen. In fact, Colonels Brereton, Mainwaring, Duckenfield, and (George) Booth were Cheshire commanders; Colonels Ashton, Holland, Rigby and (John) Booth were Lancashire commanders.

(16) In other words, there were elements of considerably more than six regiments under Fairfax’s command. It is to be noted that the numbers in Brereton’s regiments could fluctuate from as low as 160 to as high as 1,500 (Cf. Add. MS. 11331, f.45).

(17) Malbon (p. 112 and p. 117) twice noted that the parliamentarians had a much bigger army than anyone else claimed, but he may have included the garrison in his calculations. One thing seems certain, however: they had nothing like 3,500 horse as he suggests.
said that they had about the same number as himself, presumably about 900. In his *Memorials* Fairfax mentioned a figure of 1,800 whereas in his "Letter" he had given himself 25 troops of horse. However, since the normal complement of troops was between 60 and 65, he was probably using two ways of describing the same thing. Malbon’s figure is again too high; the Byrons could only give a speculative estimate. It is perhaps safe to assume, therefore, that the parliamentarians had, as Fairfax reported, 1,800 horse.

This calculation has left out of account the Nantwich garrison, numbering between 600 and 1,000, which turned out to be a decisive factor in the situation. But it would still seem that in terms of numbers Fairfax had the advantage over the royalists of a ratio of six to five in foot and of two to one in cavalry. This makes his victory less spectacular than has traditionally been supposed.

(b) BEFORE THE BATTLE

Byron had been laying siege to Nantwich for about three weeks with his troops encamped all around the town on ground covered with snow. On the day before the battle he learnt that Fairfax was advancing from Manchester and accordingly transferred a part of his army camped on the east side of the town—exactly what proportion is uncertain—to the high ground about Acton Church on the west side. This turned out to be fortunate, for a rise in the temperature led to a sudden thaw and the melted snow swelled the river Weaver, which flows through the west side of the town, to such an extent that it flooded the adjoining fields and during the night swept away the only bridge at his disposal.

On the morning of January 25 Byron knew that Fairfax would shortly reach Nantwich and prepared to fight him. It is indeed possible that he intended to do so at Barbridge, a place about three and a half miles from Nantwich, for he not only said as much in his subsequent report to Ormond but also placed

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(18) This fact seems incontrovertible despite the testimony of John Byron himself that the cavalry were equal in strength and the even more striking statement of Robert Byron that the royalist cavalry were superior—he may have meant, of course, that they were of better quality. Curiously enough, the only complaints of being outnumbered came from the parliamentary side. Fairfax wanted to push through to the town without fighting precisely because he feared that he was at a disadvantage in foot! (Fairfax: "Letter" and *Memorials*; Hodgson).

(19) Clarendon recorded that Byron did not fear an attack (*Rebellion*, Vol. III, p. 315). This was probably true up to 24 January when Byron appears to have got wind of Fairfax’s imminent arrival.
two hundred or so troops there in order to block the bridge over which Fairfax’s column had to pass. As it was, the greater part of his foot were bestriding the road just in front of Acton Church and he had ordered Gibson to place a guard on the road out of Nantwich in case the garrison should try to attack him from the rear.

The disposition thus described would seem beyond dispute. The question is, however: where was that part of the royalist army that had not crossed the Weaver on the previous day? According to Fairfax, Byron was “taking a compass to get over the river to joyne” the troops at Acton Church. Byron himself let fall the cryptic remark “that one part of the army was forced to march six miles before it could join with the other: before which time the enemy had gained a pass upon us, where we thought to have stopt him”. This would seem decisive proof that while Fairfax was marching along the road from Tilston Heath a part of the royalist army was trying to reach the area of Acton Church with all speed. Now, as will be seen, Fairfax further stated that when he got to Hurleston, one mile from Acton Church, Byron had not yet appeared on the scene, but about one hour later, at 2 p.m., he had done so. If Byron had set out soon after first light, that is between 8 and 9 a.m., 2 p.m. is about the time he would have arrived at Acton Church. Since the battle did not begin for yet another hour this would have given Gibson just enough time to deploy the infantry in their elaborate formation and attack Fairfax.

On the face of it, Byron would appear to have been incredibly silly to get caught with his army divided into two parts but several factors have to be borne in mind. In the first place, he had not reckoned with the flooded Weaver carrying away the platt bridge that linked him with the other side. And, secondly, he had wished to maintain the siege of Nantwich until the last possible moment. Thus, when he informed Ormond that he had intended to stop Fairfax at Barbridge, he was no doubt telling the truth. It was the sudden thaw that wrecked his plan.

On the morning of January 25 Byron must then have wanted to rejoin the rest of his army at Acton Church with all speed. The problem is, what route did he take? To the north the nearest bridge was at Church Minshull, nearly six miles away. Now since Byron travelled only six miles altogether, plainly this crossing is ruled out. This would leave the nearest bridge to the

(20) Cf. John Byron to Ormond, 22 January 1644, Carte Papers, Vol. 9, p. 19: “... but that we still block it up and if it be not speedily relieved doubt not but by God’s help to take it, which being got Cheshire is wholly gained and Lancashire not likely to hold out long”. See also Malbon (p. 110) for shortages in the town.
Figure 11. THE BATTLE OF NANTWICH—PRELIMINARIES
south at Shrewbridge. (21) It is true that this was barely two miles away, but on account of the flood it is more than probable that Byron was forced to make a wide detour on both sides of the river and this would make the distance about right.

Wherever Byron was, it was Gibson’s responsibility to order the field, and he made his preparations to confront the parliamentarians confident that he held the advantage. According to Byron, Gibson’s own regiment was stationed on the right flank, Warren and Ernle’s regiment came next in the centre, and Robert Byron occupied the left flank. The cannon were in the grounds of Acton Church and 100 men from Hunckes’ regiment were watching the town. Where the remainder, if any, of this regiment was to be found it is impossible to say. Robert Byron stated that Gibson had been instructed to earmark 400 men for this task but allocated only 100. Yet curiously enough John Byron, who was anxious to find excuses for his defeat, made no mention of ordering any particular number to form this detachment or of Gibson’s being remiss.

Though coming from Manchester, Fairfax had not taken the Middlewich road—the quicker route—but the Chester road. He may well have decided to approach the town from the west side because the first intelligence reports must have placed a good part of the royalists on the east side of the Weaver. By the evening of the 24th he had heard that Byron had raised the siege, had moved troops to the west bank and was preparing to meet him in the field but it was then too late to change his line of march. Having camped for the night on Tilstone Heath his army set out for Nantwich on the morning of 25 January. They marched in battle order and an advance guard was obviously placed some way out in front. At Barbridge this “forlorn” came upon Byron’s forward detachment. Within half an hour the foot, aided by some dragoons, had dispersed the royalists, taking prisoner one major and some thirty others. Two miles further on at Hurleston they came to the top of the gently sloping ground and caught sight of what appeared to be about half of the royalist army drawn up in front of Acton Church. When they stopped in order to hold a council of war—and to pray—they must have been about one mile from the church for

(21) Cf. Cheshire Sheaf, 1925 (5255), p. 61, citing a contemporary report. In Nantwich Hundred Shrewbridge is given as: “(Over Weaver) made heretofore at the charge of the County and now in decay”. The decay simply meant that it wanted repairing and was said of many bridges. What is important is that it was made at the county charge and was therefore one of the most important bridges. Only one other bridge is accorded the same importance and that was on the road from Chester to London. Most bridges were maintained by the individual hundreds and the lesser ones by particular townships. See below note 35.
Plate 13. PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE FIELD OF THE BATTLE OF NANTWICH

(1) Welsh Row is indicated by the prominent white house.
(2) Acton Church.
(3) Beeston Castle.
(4) Delamere Forest.
Beam Bridge is well to the right of this photograph.
The information available to the council of war located only half the royalists in front of Acton Church. The other half, according to their intelligence, had been stationed on the other side of the river and were even then marching round to join Gibson. It was decided, therefore, to attack the formation at Acton Church before Byron could effect the union of his forces. Unfortunately, the rear of the column and the transport were so slow in coming up that Byron was able, in Fairfax’s own words, “to obtain that he fought for”. Upon this, Fairfax, who assumed that the royalist foot must now outnumber his own, reasoned that it would be sensible if not heroic to obtain the support of the infantry defending Nantwich before joining battle, and gave orders for his army to march straight to the town. As its progress would be impeded by the numerous hedges lying in the way, he instructed the pioneers to lead the column and make suitable gaps.

Of all the problems connected with the battle by far the most difficult is to determine exactly where it took place and how it began, for it was nothing like a set-piece. Quite plainly neither Fairfax, nor Byron, nor anyone else was in a position to have a coherent impression of what had happened. The general disorder was well illustrated by the misfortune of Francis Butler, one of Robert Byron’s officers, who mistook the enemy for his own side and got captured. This confusion, as much as his natural reticence, probably accounts for Fairfax’s laconic reports. Yet, although the extant evidence may be complicated, on close scrutiny it is not necessarily conflicting. As we have seen, the royalists were aware of Fairfax’s advance and at least half of their army had been drawn up to prevent his entry into Nantwich when his vanguard first marched into view. There is no reason to dissent from the conclusion of Burne and Young that at this point their left flank was on the west side of the road running through Acton village and to the north of the church, that the rest of their line was strung out eastwards on the other side of the road, and that elements of one regiment were lying back in reserve with the special task of containing any sortie en masse from the town.

We also know from his Memorials that Fairfax’s army had already been in battle order for twenty-four hours when it was

\(^{(22)}\) For the duties of the infantry commander and for the tactical role of the “forlorn (hope)” Cf. C. H. Firth, _Cromwell’s Army_ (London, 1902), pp. 61-2 and pp. 102-3. Firth also devoted several pages to explaining the various services performed by dragoons. It was their special duty to advance ahead of a marching column in order to secure passes and bridges.
resolved to head straight for the town. Now having made this decision he had no choice but to bear left, aiming for the Welsh Row, and to by-pass the royalist right wing. He could not advance with his regiments in line because there was insufficient space between the royalist right and the flooded ground to the east and in any case the many obstacles in the way made it impossible to adopt this formation. He advanced therefore in column. The royalists observed his manoeuvre and prepared to attack him. Their reaction could scarcely have been instantaneous, and so, presumably, he must have made a little headway before they began to wheel right in order to make contact with him. The emphasis is on a little. Hodgson stated that the column not only proceeded slowly but that it had not gone far when it was attacked. The fact that the guns and carriages were with the forward troops must also have made for slowness.

As he advanced, it was reported to Fairfax that the enemy were approaching his rear. This is precisely the impression that his rearguard would have received on getting its first glimpse of the royalist left flank completing its right wheel manoeuvre. It is to be noted that the terrain was covered with hedges which hampered vision and made it difficult, and as it would seem impossible, for anyone to have a clear picture of what was happening. Soon after, his van was attacked, presumably by the royalist right wing, which had thrust forward to interpose itself between the town and the enemy. The royalist army would seem to have come forward with its wings thrust forward in two horns and the centre somewhat depressed, and to have struck at an angle against the rear and van of the parliamentarians. There is plenty of evidence to confirm this. Hodgson, who was in the parliamentary van, said specifically that they were attacked on their right flank, and Fairfax soon changed his use of terms from rear and front to the wings. Both he, Hodgson and the two Byrons mentioned the heavy royalist pressure on the wings; indeed, Fairfax made no reference to the fighting in the centre.

The dispositions of the parliamentarians are difficult to ascertain because no order of battle has come down to us. It is only possible, therefore, to work them out from scattered references and even then some uncertainty must remain. In his "Letter" Fairfax reported that he had faced about the regiments of Holland and Booth. (This Booth was probably John rather than George Booth, for John was the older and more experienced man and a Lancastrian like Holland.) He mentioned Brereton and Ashton in the van along with Lambert’s horse, but
Hodgson recorded that on the march he was further forward again, presumably with “the forlorn” and just behind the pioneers, guns and carriages. It is to be presumed also that Lambert would have ridden forward to protect these troops once the action had begun. Hodgson was certainly near Ashton’s regiment in the fighting since he referred to one of its captains coming to the rescue of the “forlorn”. Neither Fairfax nor Hodgson made any mention of the centre, which may have been commanded by Lancashire and Cheshire colonels named by Malbon as being present, but not singled out by Fairfax.

So far we have described the position of the foot. What of the cavalry? They did not engage the royalists in the battle but whereas they were of great service to their foot, Byron claimed that his horse could not operate in such enclosed country. These two facts would fit in with a situation in which the parliamentary cavalry both backed up the infantry and ranged between as well as on the extreme flanks of the grappling regiments while Byron’s cavalry were more or less immobilised in the Acton Road and the adjoining fields. In the map the royalist cavalry are placed on the wings for two reasons—it was the normal position and in his Memorials Fairfax spoke of “beating it out of the lanes that flanked our foot”.

That there was no unbroken contact by armies fighting neatly aligned is clear. In fact, from a careful reading of Fairfax’s two accounts and a comment of Robert Byron—“... our army was drawn in several enclosures ... nor (could) we help one another, by reason of the great distance from one another”—it may be inferred that the armies fought in three separate parts. Fairfax stated in both accounts that he ordered the regiments of Colonels Holland and Booth to face about in order to deal with that part of the royalist army that seemed to be descending on his rear. In one account he added the further information: “I marched not far before we came to be engaged with the greatest part of their army ... then [our italics] the other part presently after assaulted our front”. He also remarked that there was a gap of about a quarter of a mile between his front and rear regiments and we learn from two of the Byrons’s statements

(23) Fairfax’s “Letter” and Memorials. Robert Byron reported that his regiment had been “overcharged on all sides by horse and foot”.
(24) It is important to ascertain precisely what Fairfax meant by the terminology he used. If his rear regiments had literally “faced about” they would have been facing nor’nor’west with their backs to their own forward troops. There is not the slightest indication that this was the extraordinary position in which they found themselves. What Fairfax probably intended to suggest was that his rear regiments had turned right from their axis of advance. But then so had the forward regiments, who were attacked in the flank of their column formation.
that the battle took place in enclosed fields "not above" one mile from Nantwich.

All the authorities confirm that it was the royalists who eventually retreated, the bulk of their army falling back on Acton Church and Robert Byron’s regiment on the left flank emerging comparatively unscathed somewhere to the northwest. Putting all these pieces of evidence together we deduce that the area of the battle and the disposition of forces were as indicated in Map 2.

(c) THE BATTLE

The battle of Nantwich began at or just about 3.30 p.m. and was hard fought for about two hours. John Byron may have exaggerated in reporting that Gibson and his brother made notable progress against the regiments opposing them, capturing many of their colours, but they do seem to have made some ground. It is clear from Hodgson’s remark, “and much ado we had to get our party into order”, that the parliamentarians in the van experienced some difficulty in changing from column to line formation. Fairfax also honestly admitted that his left flank was in danger for a time and “wee in the other wing were in as great distress”. What saved the right wing was the intervention of the horse under Fairfax’s brother William. For they not only drove away such elements of Byron’s cavalry as appeared on the narrow lanes on the right flank but took risks to give close support to the infantry, in spite of the ditches, hedges and cuttings that impeded their movements.

But while the royalist wings continued to hold their own, their centre crumbled. It is far from certain, however, that they proved as spineless and as treacherous as John Byron explicitly stated, for whereas he complained that both Ernle’s and Warren’s regiments retreated without scarcely striking a blow, the parliamentarians, who had every reason for discrediting their opponents, gave no such impression; on the contrary, they made it plain that the fighting all over the field was keen. And although Robert Byron also stated that Warren’s regiment fell back in disorder when first menaced by the parliamentarian pikes, rallied once and then disintegrated in face of a second thrust, again the parliamentarians afforded no sign that they found the opposition easy to overcome in the centre. (25) Bearing

(25) Robert Byron mentioned—without emphasis—a rumour that sixty of Warren’s men went over to the other side. Brereton’s report of the battle to parliament has been lost. However, what may have been a paraphrase of part of it appeared in The Parliament Scout (No. 32, 26 January—2 February 1643-4). This confirms that the battle was "bravely performed on both sides and the day
Figure 12. THE BATTLE OF NANTWICH—ENGAGEMENT

J was a strong force, which brushed aside Q and then attacked the rear of N and M.
in mind that the two Byrons could have had no more than a partial impression of what was going on and that after the battle there was no senior officer from the centre to report authoritatively on the course of the action, we may perhaps assume that they were trying to make the best of a bad brief. In other words, Warren’s regiment almost certainly collapsed, despite as we also learn, the attempts of George Monk to rally the men, but it may have shown some fight at first and held out for at least a while. John Byron’s allegation against Ernle’s regiment is substantiated by no one else and clashes with the evidence.

The gap left by Warren’s eventual collapse enabled the parliamentarians to turn Ernle’s flanks and to increase the pressure being exerted against Byron and Gibson. Even so, the advantage swung decisively in their favour only when the Nantwich garrison took a hand in the fight as night was beginning to come down. About 800 musketeers surged across the bridge leading out of the town, brushed aside Hunckes’s guard, captured the ordnance at Acton Church, and then rolled up Ernle’s rear. This dashing operation completely isolated Robert Byron and Gibson, and the parliamentarians quickly assailed their inner flanks. Gibson’s men struggled hard but their position was desperate. Step by step they gave ground and as they did so the parliamentarians inexorably surrounded them. Eventually at Acton Church the encirclement was complete and they had to surrender. On the other wing, how-

doubtful for a good space [sic], but at last upon an instance unexpected the enemy [Warren] gave ground, which those valiant champions Sir Thomas Fairfax and Sir William Brereton perceiving, lost no time to persue them, until they were utterly scattered and dispersed”. Malbon (p. 112) also testified that the contest was equal for some time.

It is significant that the only parts of the field specifically mentioned by Fairfax and Hodgson as the areas of heavy fighting were on the wings. Moreover, Fairfax in his letter did not single out for praise any of the parliamentary commanders in the centre which would have been churlish if it had been due to their efforts that the royalist army began to crumble. It may be, therefore, that the royalist centre did not collapse at once simply because it was not initially engaged. And yet to Fairfax, Hodgson and Brereton, all stationed on the wings, it may have appeared that the contest was equally contested in the centre as well. For lack of evidence no hard and fast conclusions can be drawn on this point.

At about 5 p.m. according to Malbon (p. 113).

600 according to John Byron; 1,000 according to Robert; 700-800 according to Fairfax (Memorials). All the sources seem to agree on the details of this sortie.

Hodgson’s account supports this description of the way in which Gibson was hounded to subjection. Cf., for example, “And one Captain Holt, with four or five companies of Ashton’s regiment, falls upon our enemy’s flank in the hedges”. The report contained in The Parliament Scout (No. 32) claimed that 200 had been killed on the royalist right wing. Though this figure was almost certainly excessive, it does confirm how tenaciously Gibson’s men had fought.
ever, Robert Byron’s regiment had stood firm to the last moment and then retreated in good order as two regiments of foot as well as parliamentary horse harassed them. With musketeers holding off their pursuers by pausing to fire an occasional volley they managed to fall back to a point where their own cavalry could give them cover.

By this time darkness had fallen and it was too late for Fairfax to harry the retreating royalists. It scarcely mattered, for his troops had won a decisive victory. Some 200 royalists had been killed, 1,500 had surrendered including nearly all the senior officers and indeed all the colonels except Robert Byron, and most of their equipment had been left behind. Nevertheless, as has been pointed out, his victory was less spectacular than it was regarded at the time. After all, he had started with a numerical advantage both in horse and foot. Furthermore, as the battle unfolded, his horse, unlike the royalist cavalry, extricated his infantry from their initial difficulties and thereafter sustained them, and the Nantwich garrison came into the battle on his side. This was what turned an impending minor victory into a splendid triumph. Sir William Brereton was so impressed by its importance that almost two years later he detached a considerable force from the army besieging Chester in order to meet the royalists as far away as Denbigh precisely because he remembered that, “when God delivered the Irish army into our hands at the Nantwich, the issuing out of the Nantwich soldiers and falling upon them in the Reare, put an end to that Hott and (till then) doubtfull dispute; routed that part of the enemies army wholey: and made way for a glorious victory”.

After the battle Byron stayed behind for two hours—or so he claimed—trying vainly to recover some of the guns and carts. On the next day he returned to Chester with his beaten army, pursued all the way by the parliamentarians. For his defeat he blamed everyone but himself, bemoaning in particular the treachery of his centre. And yet, surely, his desperate attempt to maintain the siege until the last moment and his own failure to make use of his cavalry when in similar country Fairfax managed to do so were the most striking features of the whole action.

As for Fairfax he had taken a tremendous risk in trying to link up with the garrison in the town and had got himself caught

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(30) For these losses Cf., for example, Rushworths Collection, Vol. V., p. 302; Malbon, pp. 114-5.
(31) B.M., Add. MS., 11332 f. 34.
(32) In fairness to Byron it should be said that this charge is insinuated rather than explicitly formulated. The whole question of the significance of this “treachery” is discussed in the article by J. Lowe, art. cit., pp. 72-3.
tactically on the wrong foot, but unlike Byron he evidently contrived to keep some control over his troops. Yet when the course of the action is pieced together from all the complicated evidence, it becomes clear that the true heroes of the battle of Nantwich were appropriately enough the defenders of the beleaguered town itself.

II BURNE AND YOUNG’S ACCOUNT

The account given by Colonels Burne and Young in The Great Civil War, 1642-6 is the only modern attempt to reconstruct the battle of Nantwich in any detail and has done a notable service in drawing attention to its importance. It seems to us, however, that those paragraphs that endeavour to explain Byron’s dispositions to meet Fairfax on the day before and on the morning of the battle, Fairfax’s own manoeuvres just before the actual engagement, and the manner in which this engagement took place, are based on false assumptions.

(a) DISPOSITION OF THE ARMIES

To begin with, Burne and Young argue that Byron was besieging Nantwich on the eastern bank of the Weaver alone, that on 24 January, because of the thaw and the flooding rather than the approach of Fairfax of which he had not yet heard, he transferred a large part of his forces to the higher ground on the west bank, and so divided them. During that night the river rose and made the bridge he was using impassable. In consequence, when, on the morning of 25 January, he learnt that Fairfax was advancing to attack his western force at Acton, he had to make a long detour down the eastern bank of the river to join them. Now this reconstruction ignores the evidence of almost all the authorities that Byron was already besieging the town on both sides of the river, as was indeed essential if he wished to cut it off from the outside world. Malbon records his capture of Acton Church and Dorfold Hall on the western bank and prints the royalist captain Sandford’s letter, written from “my battery and approaches before your Welsh Row”, the main street west of the river. Fairfax speaks of “the Lord Byron who had besieged the town on both sides of the river”, and Byron himself of “a little river that ran betwixt our quarters”. That there were troop movements in preparation for a withdrawal from the eastern royalist camp on 24 January is certain from Malbon’s account of the garrison’s sorties, although whether any troops crossed
the river that night is not so sure. But that these movements were caused, not by the fear of their quarters being flooded but because news had already been received of Fairfax's approach and it was accordingly necessary to unite the royalist army, is clear from both Byron's and Fairfax's account. Fairfax states in his *Memorials*: "When we came within a day's march we had intelligence the Lord Byron had drawn off his siege and intended to meet us in the field". The night before the battle Fairfax's army had quartered on Tilstone Heath, seven miles north-west of Nantwich, and, according to Malbon, earlier in the day it had clashed with one of Byron's patrols in Delamere Forest. The fliers from this skirmish would presumably have carried the news to Byron, who says "as soon as I had intelligence of their approach it was resolved we should rise and fight with them" and follows this with an account of how the rising of the river "the night before we fought with them", hindered the union of his forces, thus indicating that he knew of Fairfax's approach at least by 24 January and was taking measures to meet it. That, even so, Byron left his concentration dangerously late is obvious and deeply impressed contemporaries, who saw in it the cause of his downfall. But his delay had a purpose—the consummation of an almost successful siege—and there is no need to make his fault even more heinous by postulating a united army on the eastern side of the town (which could never have maintained a blockade) suddenly dividing itself for inadequate reasons on the eve of Fairfax's approach but in ignorance of it.

There are other categorical statements of great importance for the subsequent reconstruction of the battle which seem to have even less support from the authorities. First of all, it is asserted that the force now on the western bank was entirely foot and that on the eastern bank horse. Later on Burne and Young admit that Byron does not specify this himself, but they give no other authorities that might justify their conclusion. Their whole case seems to rest on the ineffectiveness of the royalist horse during the battle, but, although this is admitted on both sides, neither implies that it was in any way due to a separation of the horse from the foot. Secondly, they are convinced that Byron himself was in command of the eastern half. This is an important matter, for their reconstruction rests mainly on the belief that he never rejoined the main body of his troops during the battle, and that control there lay with his second-in-command, Major-General Gibson. Again, they admit that Byron himself does not say that he was in command of the eastern detachment, but add; "it is quite certain however from various statements made by others that he himself was in
command of them and remained with them throughout the battle’. These statements are not specified, but the only one that the present authors have been able to discover that might lend colour to their theory is Fairfax’s ‘We therefore understood that the Lord Byron who had besieged the town on both sides of the river was prevented by the overflowing of the water from joining that part about Acton church but heard he was taking a compass to get over the river to join with it’. The second half of this sentence might mean that Byron was in person with the troops on the east bank, but it is equally possible that his name is simply being used as the officer in command of all the troops, as it certainly is in the first half. That the ordering of the field was left to Major-General Gibson is no argument for the absence of Byron, since it was a common Civil War practice for the major-general, the officer in command of the foot, to undertake this duty and Byron himself indicates as much when he speaks of ‘Colonel Gibson, who had the ordering of the field as Major-General’. Furthermore, Byron’s whole manner of recounting his dealings with Gibson prior to the battle indicates that he was on the spot: ‘The place of the battle was an enclosed country where horse could do little service and not above a mile from Namptwich, which I forewarned the Major-General of and desired especial care lest we should receive prejudice by any sally out of the town which he assured me he had done’. As we shall see later on, even if Byron was with the troops on the eastern bank, it is a matter of far less significance than Burne and Young suppose, because it is virtually certain that the two halves of the royalist army had been united before the battle began.

But the two following paragraphs, which describe Fairfax’s arrival, the situation which faced him, his subsequent plan of action and the manner in which the two armies came to grips, seem to take even greater liberties with the available evidence:

“At 2 p.m. the Parliamentary army was within a mile of this position [the royalist one at Acton church] and heading straight for it, when the alarming news reached Fairfax that a large force of hostile cavalry was rapidly approaching his left rear. This was, of course Byron’s own force. . . . The Roundheads had, it would seem, been adroitly caught between two fires by the ‘bloody’ Byron. It was enough to upset the equilibrium of any commander. We do not know what Fairfax’s feelings were (he was always reticent about himself) but we can conclude from his actions that he was not unduly perturbed or unbalanced. In his report he merely states in matter of fact terms, ‘they told me the enemy was close upon our rear, so facing about two regiments I marched straight for Acton church’. Fairfax had made a quick calculation and decided to take the bold course of attempting to crush the isolated force at Acton before Byron could close on him.

“The two regiments detailed to hold Byron had no difficulty in carrying out their mission; indeed Byron made no decided effort to break through to the
assistance of his foot. The nature of the ground—small fields and hedges—undoubtedly was unsuitable for cavalry but not impossible."

Fairfax’s own account of his actions (given both in his "Letter" and his *Memorials*) tells a completely different story and, although there is little doubt he was a modest and reticent man, it can hardly be supposed that he would go to the length of fabricating fictitious movements purely in order to discredit himself. Arriving within a mile of the royalist position at Acton church (at Hurleston according to Malbon) he held a council of war. His own words in his "Letter" explain why his original decision to attack the force before him was altered and a quite different plan adopted: "We there understood that the Lord Byron who had besieged the town on both sides of the river was prevented by overflowing of the water from joining with that part at Acton church but heard he was taking a compass to get over the river to joyne with it, we resolved to fall upon that party at the church before he could get up to it, but staying to bring up our Reere and Carriages, we gave him time to obtain that he fought for; then we resolved to make way with Pioneers through the Hedges and then to march to the town to relieve it, and to add some more Force to our selves to enable better to fight with them”. *We gave him time to obtain that he fought for* can only mean that the two halves of the royalist army were joined before the action and this is supported by Lord Byron’s own account and the negative evidence of other witnesses, both royalist and parliamentarian. Lord Byron claims only that the division of his army caused by the swollen river “enabled the enemy to gain a pass upon us where we ought to have stopped him” and not that it forced him to fight the main battle with his army still split in two. Neither Robert Byron, Hodgson nor Malbon mentions any division at all. Therefore the whole theory of the royalist army divided into an infantry force under Gibson defending Acton church and a wandering section of cavalry somewhere to the north under Byron himself falls to the ground. Furthermore, Fairfax, so far from carrying out a previously planned offensive on the royalists at Acton church, expressly states that after a council of war he changed his intention completely and tried to get into Nantwich without an engagement in order to augment his infantry. This abandonment of the road and attempt to march across the fields is corroborated both by Hodgson and by Fairfax in his *Memorials*. Indeed, in the latter, Fairfax states that it was not his intention to fight the enemy until next day. What is most disturbing is the way in which Burne and Young use Fairfax’s words in order to make him appear to pursue the
course of action that they have decided he took. “In his report”, they say, “he merely states in matter of fact tones ‘they told me the enemy was close upon our rear, so facing about two regiments I marched’ straight for Acton church”. The vital words straight for Acton church were not written by Fairfax but by them. He finished his sentence quite differently: “I marched not far before we became engaged with the greatest part of their army, the other part presently after assaulted our front”. Thus, the hostile royalist force in the rear appeared not while Fairfax was still marching down the road to Acton church, but after the council of war when the march to the town across the fields had already begun. Fairfax’s army would then have been marching not south but south-east, and as it was moving right across the royalist front could easily have been attacked in its rear by the latter’s left flank moving round. It is quite unnecessary to postulate a separate royalist force away to the north behind Fairfax’s line of march. That the royalist army in general did move against the parliamentary flank is made clear by Hodgson’s statement that as they were moving across the fields “the enemy fell upon our right flank with all the power they could”, and from Fairfax’s alteration of his terms from “our rear” and “our front” to “both wings” and “our other wing”. But what is even more obvious from these parliamentary accounts is that it was they who were attacked and Fairfax, so far from coolly detaching two regiments to guard his rear while continuing his forward march, considered the threat so serious that he went back with these regiments in person.

These are the reasons which have led us to reject many vital parts of Burne and Young’s reconstruction. It is manifestly insufficient for them to blame their authorities for the difficulties of interpretation, when they refuse to consider what these same authorities say. Byron’s letter they dismiss as untrustworthy because he was trying to cover up his own unsatisfactory conduct in the battle. Now it is undoubtedly true that Byron, like most defeated commanders, was trying to minimise his own responsibility, but the conclusions they draw from this are not logical. Why should Byron try to conceal that he had been with the eastern detachment of his troops and had not been able to join the main force in time for the battle? This could have been attributed to an act of God (the sudden thaw and the overflowing of the river) and he would have been absolved from all blame for the blunders of Gibson. His actual excuse—that Gibson made these blunders while he was there, but that he so trusted his second in command that he had not seen to the matter himself—is so much weaker that it bears the stamp of
truth. But even if Byron's account can be ignored as untrustworthy Colonels Burne and Young cannot possibly regard Fairfax's in the same light. They profess the greatest respect for him and he can have had no reason for falsifying his actions, least of all for inventing a manoeuvre which, by his own account and that of Hodgson, involved his army in considerable difficulties. What possible excuse can there be for ignoring his plain statements about his council of war and his change of plan, and presenting the battle as if the royalists had throughout been on the defensive and the attack on Acton church had been the outcome of Fairfax's original plan, instead of coming, as it actually did, when the royalists—their attack having resulted in utter disaster—fled there for refuge?

(b) THE BATTLE ITSELF

To Burne and Young's account of the actual fighting we take no exception. The initial royalist success on their wings checked by the parliamentary horse, the unsteadiness of their centre turned to rout by the vigorous sortie of the garrison, the retreat of most of the infantry to Acton church and their subsequent capture—all incidents well attested by the authorities—are clearly presented. But their judgments on the causes of the parliamentary victory and the conduct of the commanders are what might be expected from their previous theories. Almost everything is put down to the superior generalship of Fairfax. That he was superior to Byron as a commander no one is likely to dispute, but it is certain that this battle does not prove it to the extent that Burne and Young believe. He is praised for actions which he says expressly he did not carry out and Byron blamed for blunders which no contemporary says he committed. In all this the true cause of the latter's downfall is overlooked. In a desperate attempt to force an all but successful siege to a conclusion, Byron left the concentration of his army against Fairfax so late that, through a sudden change in the weather, he was forced to fight with his back to the town. A vigorous sortie of the garrison destroyed him while he was maintaining a not unsuccessful combat with the relieving force.\(^{33}\) This sortie, rather than Fairfax's generalship, decided the outcome and the latter's preliminary movements show plainly that it was not a factor on which he had calculated.

\(^{33}\) This was remarked on by all the eye-witnesses, except Hodgson, and by Clarendon.
Burne and Young make several obvious mistakes in the naming and location of the bridges in and near Nantwich. In their map of the battle area they show the river Weaver running along the western edge of Nantwich and in their text they say “Dead opposite the town there is a bridge leading to Acton church”. Later on they add that the eastern end of this bridge was in the hands of the garrison. They also make this bridge the one that was guarded by Hunckes’s detachment and used by the garrison for its timely foray. Now there is ample evidence in contemporary documents that seventeenth-century Nantwich extended some distance to the west of the Weaver and that the Welsh Row, the most important thoroughfare in this sector, was inside the civil war defences. In other words, the bridge over the Weaver on the main road to Acton church was well within the town. Where then was the bridge guarded by Hunckes? In his History of Nantwich James Hall quotes authorities showing that a stream, subsequently filled in in the nineteenth century, flowed from Dorfold Hall into a gunnel at the upper end of Welsh Row. A bridge spanning this stream is one possibility. Another is that the bridge never existed at all except in the imagination of Robert Byron, who alone referred to it. In this case, of course, Hunckes would have been doing no more than blocking the road out of the town.

Over the question of Beambridge, the bridge over the Weaver slightly to the north of the town, Burne and Young are also confused. Malbon’s dialect term of a “platt”, meaning a flat, temporary, wooden structure, they translate incorrectly as a ferry. They then add that the reason for its construction is not clear although, in fact, Malbon goes on to say that it was because Beambridge itself had been broken down—presumably by the townspeople for the purpose of hampering the royalist communications. Perhaps they neglected to consult Malbon but relied instead upon excerpts from Edward Burghall’s Providence Improved, which James Hall published in his History of Nantwich before realising that Burghall had simply paraphrased Malbon’s account of events during the Civil War; Burghall had repeated Malbon’s reference to the building of a platt but had omitted the reason for it.

The confusion over these bridges does not seriously affect the main narrative of Burne and Young. On the other hand, the name of the bridge over which Byron’s eastern contingent passed

on the morning of 25 January would, if known, finally determine whose version of the battle is correct. For them a bridge well to the north of Nantwich is essential in order to explain how the eastern force descended unnoticed on the rear of Fairfax’s army as it marched southwards. For us a bridge not far to the south is equally necessary to allow the two parts of the royalist army to unite without the eastern portion having to fight its way through or round the enemy. From contemporary sources the only indication of the bridge’s position comes from Lord Byron’s statement that this eastern portion had to travel six miles, a distance that does not seem to support either their choice of Church Minshull or our choice of Shrewbridge, since the first is six miles downstream from Nantwich and the second only one mile upstream. Allowing for the meanderings of the seventeenth-century road system, whose exact layout we do not know, and the distance south of Minshull already covered by Fairfax, the royalists would have had to travel at least ten miles by this route before coming up with his rear. This scarcely strengthens the case for Church Minshull. On the other hand, a tenable case can be made out for Shrewbridge. From Beamheath, where the royalists had been encamped, to Acton church, by way of the eastern projection of the town, would have given a distance of about four miles. And this might easily have been increased by the vagaries of the local lanes and the overnight flooding to six miles; it is not without significance that the present road system reveals no link at all by this route. In conclusion, it must be pointed out that the argument in favour of Shrewbridge on the ground of distance is only an additional reason for stating that the royalists took the southern route; the main reason for postulating this route is that it fits in with all the other evidence provided by the authorities, whereas the argument for Church Minshull does not.

(d) CLARENDON’S RELIABILITY

Burne and Young would seem to have relied considerably on Clarendon’s account of the “Irish invasion” and the battle of Nantwich (W.D. Macray (ed.), Rebellion, Vol. III, pp. 311-316). Clarendon it is who says that Sir Thomas Fairfax charged one part of the royalist army before the other part, which was separated from it by a river swollen through sudden thaw, could

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(35) One item of contemporary evidence would appear to confirm that the choice lies between these two bridges. A list of bridges in the county for the year 1621, printed in the Cheshire Sheaf (1925), mentions no other bridges near the site of the battle that can be identified. Nor is there any indication that either, like Beambridge, had been pulled down.
work round and join it. He is also the probable source of the belief that Byron was in command of this second part and that it was entirely cavalry, although, in fact, he only says that "the greatest part of the horse" was with Lord Byron on the further side of the river, and that the horse could not go to the rescue of the foot because of the thaw, the narrow lanes and high hedges and (in omitted section cited in a footnote) because they were "placed too far from the foot". But from this evidence Burne and Young apparently infer that the horse and foot fought separately.

Now Clarendon is not a reliable authority on the details of this or indeed any action in the north. Not only did he write some sections of his History many years after the events described had occurred and in places where he had none of the relevant documents at hand, but he himself had neither been in the north nor in close contact with those who were. In this very passage he makes a number of demonstrable errors, one of them glaring. According to him, Byron, already the governor of Chester, received the royalist troops on their arrival from Ireland, whereas there is plentiful evidence that he was still coming up from Oxford at that time and that the reception was in fact organised by Orlando Bridgeman and the previous governor, Sir Abraham Shipman. He further states that the "whole body of the rebels" was routed by the "Irish army" at Middlewich and that the survivors fled into Nantwich where they were then besieged. The accounts of Malbon, who was in the town, and Robert Byron, who was at the battle, reveal that Nantwich was already under siege when the Middlewich skirmish took place, that the defeated army had tried to relieve it from the north, and that it had fled not south to Nantwich, but back whence it had come. Finally, he twice asserts that Sir Thomas Fairfax was free to come to the rescue at Nantwich because he had just defeated the Yorkshire royalists at Selby. The error could hardly be greater: Nantwich was fought on 25 January 1644, Selby three months later on April 11; and Sir Thomas Fairfax came to Nantwich not from Yorkshire, but from Falkingham in southern Lincolnshire.