**Civil War Timeline**

1642-1646 – The first Civil War and the victory of parliament

1646-1647 – The search for settlement

1648-1649 – The second Civil War and the execution of Charles I

1642-43 – Charles had the advantage, with much of the gentry and nobility

under his control. He controlled the existing officer corps. Supported by his nephews Prince Rupert and Maurice.

1642, October – Royalist forces gained a marginal advance at the Battle of

Edgehill.

1643 – Pym maintained parliamentary unity in the face of military defeats

and the strong desire among many MPs for peace.

Late 1643 – Pym was very ill. He managed to secure a Solemn League and

Covenant with the Scottish forces, thereby bringing an effective and experienced force to the aid of parliament’s forces in the North.

1644, July – The Battle of Marston Moor, a parliamentary victory. The Scots were

vital in securing the victory.

1645 – Failed peace talks at Uxbridge. A motion was presented in parliament for

a Self-Denying Ordinance, under which all the military leaders would sign their commands to facilitate the creation of a single New Model army. An army of 22,000 men was created. Sir Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell both achieved status through merit rather than title – both were gentlemen.

1645, June – The Battle of Naseby – a major success for Parliament, thanks to the

order and discipline of the New Model Army.

1645 – Laud executed. This removed one of the major sources of discontent for

parliament.

1646, April – Charles surrendered to the Scots. Desire for a speeding settlement among

Parliamentarians. There was no thought at this time of replacing or removing Charles, or having a government without monarchy.

1646 – While in captivity, Charles received offers from the Scots and English for deals

that would have restored him to the throne. The Scottish offer as more generous towards him. They agreed to support him for the promise of a Presbyterian England, which parliament hadn’t offered. The English offered a deal, with the Newcastle Propositions, including: Parliament would nominate the key officers of state; parliament would control the militia for 20 years; and bishops would be abolished, and a Presbyterian Church would be created for an experimental three years. Charles delayed his answer, but was unlikely to ever accept.

1647, February – The Scots got bored of waiting for Charles’ response and gave him to the

English.

1646-1647 – The Levellers started advocating religious toleration, developed with a political

programme. They had support from the New Model Army, who hadn’t been paid for their work. Despite support from Cromwell, parliament disbanded the army without pay, and the army then emerged as a rival political force, known as the Agitators.

1647, June – 4th June: Charles was taken to Hampton Court and held under army supervision.

5th June: The leading officers signed an Engagement to stand with the army, and established a General Council consisting of both officers and Agitators. Cromwell was still subordinate to Fairfax, but was more politically aware. He placed army unity above other concerns and was supported by other leading officers, including his son-in-law, Henry Ireton. Ireton wrote a document called the Representation of the Army, which demanded the expulsion of 11 Presbyterian MPs, and reasonable religious toleration as well as fresh elections to a wider electorate.

1647, August – The army leaders presented Charles with the Heads of the Proposals, drafted by

Ireton, including: the Triennial Act would be replaced with Biennial parliaments; parliament would nominate key officers of state for 10 years; parliament would control the militia for 10 years; and there would be continued use of bishops in the Church but a restriction on their coercive powers.

1647, October – The Leveller-influenced soldiers drew up The Agreement of the People and

presented it to the General Council by the Agitators, with the support of some junior officers. The debates at Putney that followed highlighted the gulf between the leading radicals and the leading officials. Cromwell focused on maintaining civility between Colonel Thomas Rainsborough, Leveller, and Henry Ireton, army officer. The debates ended abruptly with the news that Charles had escaped from Hampton Court, though he was soon captured and imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight. In the meantime, the Agitators had to return to their regiments.

1647, December – The King signed a secret Engagement with the Scots, where he promised to

establish a Presbyterian Church in England for three years in return for their military assistance.

1648, January – Parliament voted to hold no more negotiations with Charles, while the army

readied itself for more action.

1648, April – The Scots entered England.

1648, August – The Scots were easily defeated by Cromwell’s army in August. Some MPs still

had doubts about ending negotiations with Charles, though he refused point blank to abolish bishops.

1648, November – 20th: The army presented a Remonstrance by Ireton to Commons,

demanding that Charles be brought to justice. Cromwell agonised over his stance, but eventually decided that by deliberately renewing the war, Charles had betrayed his own people. Parliament sent four bills to Charles as a final demand, with a modified version of the Newcastle Propositions. He replied that he would consider it, though confided to his friends that he would not.

1648, December – The Commons voted for further negotiation. Ireton, set on punishing the

king, tried to forestall this. He had the Commons surrounded by the regiment of Colonel Thomas Pride, and excluded 186 MPs who supported negotiations, and arrested another 45 active in promoting further discussions. This left a ‘Rump’ House of 240 of whom 71 would become actively involved in the trial and execution of Charles I. A High Court of Justice was created to try Charles.

1649, January – 27th: Charles was found guilty of treason. 30th: Charles was beheaded outside

Banqueting House.