

THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS, 1642 – 1651

THE STORMING OF MAIDSTONE, 1 JUNE 1648

ACTION IN WEST FARLEIGH



Author's note:

The narrative that follows is based on facts insofar as we know them from contemporary records and accounts. The generally accepted view is that, during the 17th Century English Civil War, in order to attack Royalist Maidstone on 1 June 1648 from the southwest, the Parliamentary army virtually in its entirety crossed the River Medway by way of East Farleigh bridge. However, it is inconceivable that the commanding general, Sir Thomas Fairfax, would have committed probably seven thousand troops, which included cavalry, dragoons, infantry, pioneers and their baggage and equipment trains to the single sunken lane leading to the bridge, and to the narrow confines of the bridge itself, in the face of likely enemy (Royalist) resistance. The reality is that Fairfax split his army and crossed the river at both Teston and Barming, as well as East Farleigh. Part of the army therefore passed through West Farleigh en route to rendezvous with the main body at East Farleigh or beyond, perhaps at Tovil which is the area through which Fairfax's troops passed on their way to storm Maidstone.

Records of Colonel Edward Whalley, who commanded the column that crossed at Teston Bridge, and who fought his way to Tovil, are sparse. We know he saw action under Fairfax at the actual storming of Maidstone, but no information seemed to exist as to where or in what role, apart from those detailing his pursuit of the fleeing Royalists after the battle. Then in 2019, during an indepth audit of the archived records office of Kingston-upon-Hull, East Yorkshire, a letter of his to his son-in-law, William Goffe, detailing his crossing of the river was unexpectedly discovered. One of the very few surviving eyewitness accounts of the

battle of Maidstone, that of one George Thompson, had also been discovered in Hull, in 1884. (See Appendix 1).

Whalley was an interesting character, and I've appended a short note of his life, and his activities subsequent to the end of Cromwell's republic and the restoration of Charles II. (See Appendix 2).

*Brian Cushing
West Farleigh, July 2023*

Background

The three wars known collectively as the English Civil War comprised a series of actions fought between the Parliamentarian (Roundheads, so-called) and the Royalist (Cavaliers) armies, lasting from 1642 to '46, through 1648, and from 1649 to '51, and were part of a wider conflict known as the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, involving Wales, Scotland and Ireland. At the heart of the conflict was the challenging of the absolute power of the monarch, King Charles I, and the rise of Parliament as the principal instrument of power. Politics were entangled with deeply held religious beliefs, the latter divided between various factions adhering to Catholicism and Protestantism. The political structure during the period from 1649 to 1660 is known as the Commonwealth, when England and Wales, and later Ireland and Scotland, were governed as a republic (part of the time by Oliver Cromwell as 'Lord Protector') after the end of the Second English Civil War and the execution of King Charles I in 1649.

Over six hundred actions took place over the wars - battles, sieges, skirmishes and other encounters; four significant events, and possibly the best known, being the battles of Edgehill (1642), Newbury (1643), Marston Moor (1644) and Naseby (1645).

The **Battle of Maidstone** in 1648 was a relatively minor action which arose following a major uprising in Kent in support of the King. The Parliament despatched New Model Army troops under the command of General Sir Thomas Fairfax to deal with the rebels, Maidstone being the centre at which the Royalists were mainly congregated. Their commander, the Earl of Norwich, deployed some three thousand men in the town centre and immediate outskirts, while he remained with seven thousand men at Penenden Heath, to the north of the town, expecting the principal attack to develop from the direction of London. However, after preliminary skirmishes at the Heath, and a diversionary feint towards Aylesford, Fairfax with his main force circled the town to the west, crossed the Medway, and attacked from the southwest through Tovil.

The town was fiercely defended with barricades and cannon, but on the evening of 1 June 1648, in heavy rain, the Parliamentarians' New Model Army, comprising seasoned veteran soldiers, defeated the Royalists' army which included a motley collection of cavalier volunteers, local levies and royal navy defectors, and secured the town.

Colonel Edward Whalley's letter to his son-in-law, William Goffe, after the battle

In 1884, an unexpected discovery was made in the Kingston-upon-Hull archived records office. The MP for this East Yorkshire town during the Civil Wars was Peregrine Pelham, who was industrious in keeping his constituents in and about Hull fully informed of events

from London, by way of letters which frequently included reference documents. One such was what was considered to be one of the very few surviving eyewitness accounts of the Battle of Maidstone, by one George Thompson, a parliamentarian who was MP for Southwark, London, and who was an army veteran who had been forced to retire having lost a leg in battle. He was probably present at Maidstone at the behest of the House of Commons.

His account of the battle is intimate, and shows that he was embedded with the attacking New Model Army troops and present through much of the action in and around Maidstone town. The document was dated the morning of 2 June, immediately after the battle. (See Appendix 1).

What has only just come to light however, following an indepth audit in 2019 of the Hull records office, is a document comprising Colonel Edward Whalley's letter to his son-in-law, William Goffe, describing the crossing of the River Medway at Teston, prior to the storming of Maidstone. Whalley was in command of the column that crossed at Teston Bridge. The document was in poor condition, but just readable, and is reproduced below, exactly as found in the records:-



Colonel Edward Whalley

The letter:

"My deare William

At your request I herewith provide this Account of our successe at West Farley. Upon Thursday 1st June in the Afternoon about foure of the Clock, after the March from the East Malling Heath we got neare the Medway River, the Column under my Command making for the Teston Bridge, and the other under the command of Major Jackson making for the Barming Forde, these two river Crossings having been previously identified to us by our Kentish Guides. In the case of the Teston Bridge, upon coming in its sight, Earthen Barricadoes were seen barring the entrance to the Bridge from the North..."

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On the night of 31 May 1648, Fairfax's army, consisting of four regiments of horse (cavalry and dragoons) and three regiments of foot (musketeers and pikemen), about eight thousand men in all, bivouacked on East Malling Heath. On the morning of 1 June, Fairfax split his army into three, the main force to proceed to the East Farleigh bridge: one to Teston Bridge; and one to Barming, where the river was fordable. A subsidiary force was sent as a feint in the direction of Aylesford, in order to persuade the Royalists that the Parliamentarians intended crossing the Medway there.



Sir Thomas Fairfax

The force commanded by Col. Whalley, that headed for Teston Bridge, comprised a regiment of cavalry and dragoons, numbering about fifteen hundred men in all, and musketeers and pikemen on foot, about five hundred men.

After descending the road from East Malling, along what is now known as The Street, Whalley's scouts under the direction of scoutmaster Leonard Watson came into view of Teston Bridge, where it was observed that the Royalist enemy had thrown up a roadblock, an earthen barrier, across the bridge on the Teston side. A number of enemy troops could be seen manning the barrier, and were also visible on the bridge itself and beyond, to either side of Teston Lane. Activity was also observed along the river bank to the west, and in the oil mill situated by Teston lock. (The lock was of the flash type, a pound lock not being constructed there until the 1740's.) Watson reported all this back to Whalley.

*

Whalley...

"The Enemy was seen manning this Obstacle so a Troope of my Dragoones was despatched to make good a Passe it being resolved upon to force our passage in case of resistance, the gaining of that Bridge over the River being of great advantage to our Advance; the Dragoones dismounted and ingaged the

Enemy, and forc't them from the earthen Barricadoes which they had erected. The Dragoones being eager to ingage pursued, and so the Enemy drew forth a Party of Foote to commence a Passe against us, which necessitated the drawing downe of the greatest part of our Foote, and although troubled with enfilading Fire from the Woods to the east of the Bridge and from an Oil Mill to the west which was occupied by a Party of the Enemy armed with Musket and Robinette, through the goodnesse of God our men made their Entrance, and became masters of the Bridge, upon which my Pyoneers dismantled the Enemy Barricadoes and cleared the Way to further Advancement...”

*

The force which Whalley despatched initially to clear the road block and secure the bridge comprised a party of one hundred dragoons: lightly armoured mounted infantry whose modus operandi was to charge the enemy and once upon them to dismount and engage with carbines, pistols and, in hand to hand combat, broadswords. These were hardened soldiers who had seen much action in the New Model Army, who knew what they were about and who pressed their attack ruthlessly. The Royalist defenders comprised some veteran Cavaliers, but also a motley mix of London apprentices and Royal Navy mutineers (the Navy at Rochester having come out in favour of the King). They were no real match for the Roundheads, but nevertheless doggedly stood their ground until overwhelmed, when some threw down their arms and fled until overtaken and slaughtered or taken prisoner by the dragoons. In the heat of battle, many of those who surrendered were nevertheless despatched by the attackers who were understandably, given that their lives were at risk, charged with a mix of with anger and exhilaration, but also fear, with no time nor the inclination to consider mercy. Some luckier Royalists retained their weapons and escaped to the woods to the east of the bridge, where they resumed a stand with other troops there taking shelter in the undulating ground and behind trees and bushes. From here, they kept up an intermittent fire on the Parliamentarians.

Colonel Whalley's pioneers now dismantled the road block, clearing the way for his infantry to pass through, keeping low behind the bridge walls as incoming enfilading fire was experienced from the woods but, more seriously, from the oil mill situated some three hundred metres upstream from the bridge, which was occupied by the defenders and from which balls from musket and cannon, the latter small bore weapons of the Robinette type, took toll of the attackers.

From the Teston side of the bridge, where Whalley had halted to consolidate and take stock, he now addressed his officers. He held a sketch map of the immediate locale.

“Gentlemen – our immediate concern must be this wretched mill, which is wreaking some havoc upon our men. I do not consider that my cavalry can press an effective attack, given the broken ground and trees standing on the approach, so Captain Smith...” – a young officer stepped forward – “...take ye a hundred of your foot,

traverse the bridge and get upon this lane,..." – he put a finger on Mill Lane – "...get behind the mill and fall upon them. Captain Barraclough! As soon as Captain Smith is over the bridge and upon the lane, take ye your troop of foot around the bridge wall end, and advance by the river side toward the mill, keeping up a lively fire upon it. We'll see if the King's men can withstand an attack from two sides."

The officers hastened off to assemble their men and commence the attack which, in the onset of heavy rain, succeeded:

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Whalley...

"We did first direct our Effort upon the Oil Mill, from which the Enemy kept up a Lively Fire upon us, and my Foote effected a Charge at the Building, whereupon the Enemy laid down their Arms and surrendered, but those that fled. I estimate some thirty Prisoners were taken and kept under Guard."

It being clear that the Enemy would offer Resistance from within the Woods to the east of the Bridge, in the direction of Maidston, I did resolve to divide my Force into two Parts, the one under my Command to advance upon a Lane leading direct to the West Farley Church and the other under the command of Cornet William Amhurst to proceed along the Lane leading to the Farley Lower Road, by which means I hoped to outflank the Enemy from two Sides and effect their Defeat. I gave orders to Cornet Amhurst that any substantial Dwellings upon the Lower Road were to be entered and searched for Sympathisers to the King, as such we had heard from our local Informers..."

*

At this stage, Whalley had little idea of what resistance would be offered by the Royalist defenders, nor the disposition of their troops and the numbers that might be involved. Albeit that it was daylight, at about 5:00 pm, nevertheless rainfall was intermittent between spells of sunshine, which at times reduced visibility and rendered conditions difficult, the wet marshy ground by the river ground into a muddy morass by the hundreds of horses and men. Luckily, they were not encumbered by horse-drawn artillery, which was all with Fairfax at the East Farleigh bridge.

Whalley took the sensible decision to split his troops, sending a main force along a lane which led from just beyond the bridge direct to the West Farleigh church, and a smaller party comprising foot and dragoons up what is now Teston Lane to the Lower Road, along which it would proceed in the direction of Maidstone. In this way, he envisaged that Royalist defenders would be nipped between two flanks; one from the church lane and the other from the Lower Road. (See Figs. 1 & 2 below)

Fig.1. West Farleigh

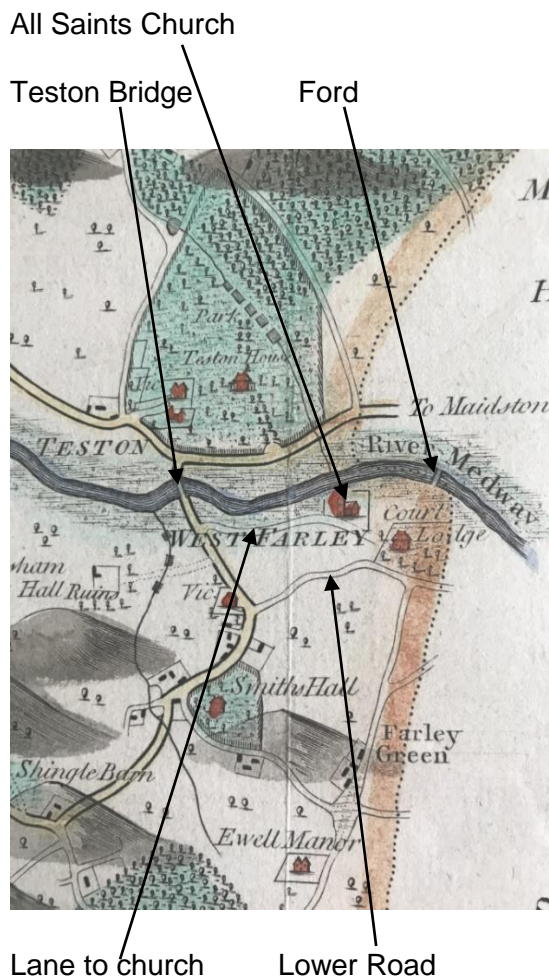
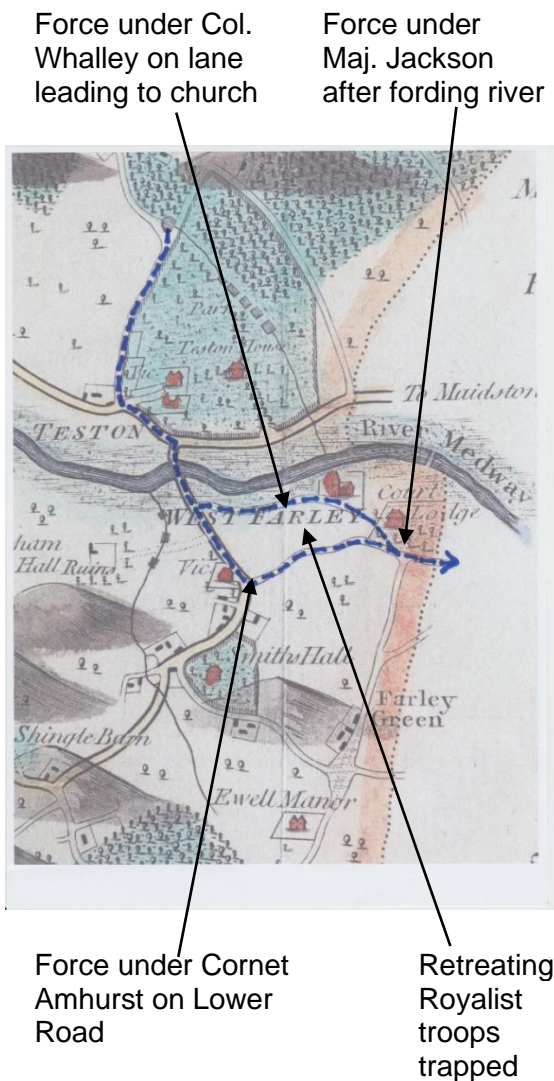


Fig.2. Route taken by Col. Whalley's troops



Whalley's mind was also preoccupied with the possibility of local collaborators sympathetic to the King, who might be harbouring Royalist troops able to set on his men from the flank or from the rear during his progress to Maidstone; hence his order to Amhurst to search any substantial house on the Lower Road whose occupants might be harbouring Royalists.

*

Whalley...

"After one or two houres hot service upon the Lane leading to the West Farley Church, and in the Corn Field beside the Lane, in which all Horse, Dragoones and Foote did exceeding well, the Enemy although being determind, was reduced to a Party which took refuge within the Church Walls, and within the

Church itself, from which they could offer a stiff Resistance. The remainder of the Enemy fled in the direction of Maidston, having been outflanked and come under Fire in enfilade from each side, as I had envisaged, but then came under the Fire of Major Jackson and his Barming Forde Troopes who had encountered no Resistance, the Forde and the River there being deserted and bereft of the Enemy. Upon his passage up the steep Gradient known as St Helens Lane, from the Forde, he was able to bring additional Fire to bear on the retreating Enemy, to theyre immense Confusion.

I hastened to bring my Men to a Ren-dez-vous with Major Jackson, and the Detachment under Cornet Amhurst which had traversed the Lower Road. At about sixe of the clock we did regroup at the confluence of St Helens Lane, the Lower Road, and Cattle, or Kettle, Lane. Throughout, my Men, Foote, Horse and Dragoones all, and my Pyoneers, had acted with valour and resolution, albeit that certain of the Detachment that had been sent along the Lower Road did smell strongly of Alcoholic Beverages and appeared drunk, having it seemed been plied with Liquors by certain Saucy Women from the Alehouse known The Chequers, but a furlong distant. I did Order and Require that the miscreant Men be dealt with by means of Flogging and loss of Pay & Rank, at the conclusion of this Present Campaign...”

*

In accordance with his orders, nineteen-year-old Cornet Amhurst had led his party up Teston Lane to the Lower Road, and once there split his men into five files with instructions to enter and search the bigger houses on the road. He himself led two files west, in the direction of Yalding, for three or four hundred yards to where Smiths Hall, and opposite, The Chequers inn, were situated. Orchards and hop fields proliferated to each side of the road.

He sent one file of foot soldiers and mounted dragoons to the inn, and with the other approached and knocked loudly on the Hall's front door. After a short silence, footsteps were heard from within, and the door creaked open. A grey-haired man who Amhurst judged to be late middle-aged, stood there. His expression was not welcoming, an impression reinforced by the fact that he was cradling a large blunderbuss firearm. Beyond him in the hallway, Amhurst could see six or seven younger people, including two women, who seemed to be the man's family.

“Good day, sir” said Amhurst, touching his hat. “I am William Amhurst, Cornet serving under Colonel Whalley of the Parliamentary Army. Whom do I have the honour of addressing?” “I am Thomas Brewer, sir. What is your business here?”

“Sir, I am under orders to enter and search your premises. We have just now had a hard time of it crossing the Teston Bridge and seek to turn up any of the enemy concealing themselves hereabouts.”

“Aye, we have been conscious of the great commotion. I have sent my servants into the cellar.” His expression softened a touch. “You will find us to be sympathetic to your cause. But if your orders are to search this house, then search it you must. Pray enter.” He turned to the young group. “James! Thomas! Philip! Accompany the officer and show him the way about. Daughters – take ye off to the kitchen and gather the servants there. John – stay here with me.”

“I thank you, sir.” Amhurst turned and addressed his non-commissioned officer. “Sergeant! Two men each to search every room of this house, if you please. The gentleman’s sons shall proceed with you. Lively now – we have still work to do.”

When the soldiers had departed the hallway, Brewer beckoned to his eldest son, John, sixteen years of age, and spoke softly in his ear. “Saddle up Applejack and take ye the bridal way to Maidstone. Stay off the main road. Find my lord Norwich at Penenden, or one his lieutenants, and tell him that this Parliament’s trash is heading his way through Tovil and will take his rear if he doesn’t take care. I know not the numbers, but I’ll wager they’ve crossed also at East Farleigh, maybe by the Barming ford too.”

He opened a nearby oak chest and took out two flintlock pistols, which he checked and handed to his son. “Take these, but use them only in the last resort. If you’re stopped, tell them you’re abroad to test the state of our hops. Take care, my son.” He embraced John, who then hastened away to the stables.

Cornet Amhurst and his men completed their search, and having found nothing untoward hastened back to the Lower Road, where they joined with the files that he had despatched to search nearby properties – again with no sign of Royalists having been discovered. He was mortified and angered to find that the party he had sent to The Chequers reeked strongly of alcohol and appeared drunk. He demanded an explanation of the sergeant in charge, who shamefacedly admitted that women from the village had pressed drinks on his men and thus diverted them from their duty.

On the other hand they had surprised and arrested a small party of Royalist troopers, a picket guarding the Yalding Road, who in dereliction of their duty were drinking ale at a table outside the inn.



Royalist picket surprised by Parliamentary dragoons

Amhurst had no time to deal in detail with his miscreant men, and anticipated, rightly as it turned out, that he would be in for a roasting from his commanding officer for allowing it to happen. He gave the order to his men to form up and resume their march along the Lower Road to rendezvous with Colonel Fairfax and his troops at the top of St Helens Lane, where he arrived in half an hour, having en route encountered and exchanged fire with the enemy troops retreating past the church.

*

Whalley...

"I now had perforce to consider the Enemy still within the West Farley Church, for they appeared to be well armed with Musket and Robinette, which could harass my Rearguard if not put down. I therefore instructed Cornet Amhurst to take a Party of his best Foote armed with Hand Granadoes, and a dozen Pyoneers to break the Doors, and take the Rear of the Church while I brought a Considerable Force with Captain Grimes to bear upon the front Walls. I did call upon the Enemy to surrender in the Name of the Parliament, but was met with Obscene Reposts, the Occupants calling that they did not give one Farto for the Parliament. I therefore gave the Order to move upon the Church with great Despatch and Force, Cornet Amhurst having gotten to the Rear, and was greatly pleased when the Enemy surrendered after but one Musket Fusillade, without the Requirement of damage to the Church with our Bombes and other Weapons. I estimate some one hundrede and twenty Prisoners to have been taken. The Church being of sound structure with but three Doors, I ordered that the Prisoners, and those from the Oil Mill, be locked in and detained there under Guard until provision can be made for their Dispersal.

This Skirmish having been successful, it is however with great sorrow that I record the death of Cornet Amhurst, slain by a Musket Ball fired from the Church Belltower. He was a faithfull and brave Officer.

My men having marched and fought valiantly, I ordered that such Victuals and Water that had been brought in our Traine be given out and consumed, while the men rested awhile..."

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Amhurst was a victim of a sharpshooter who had climbed the bell tower and opened fire through one of the slit windows. The cornet took the ball in his left shoulder and it passed through his left lung, severing a major artery on its way. The impact brought him to his knees. He died half an hour later, drowned in his own blood. Whalley and others knelt by the dying boy and succoured him as best they could. Whalley was a hardened soldier, but felt a rush of remorse and guilt when Amhurst died, as he had only just now given him a severe dressing down for allowing his men to get drunk.

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Meanwhile, John Brewer was experiencing his own problems. He had saddled the Brewer's best horse, Applejack, thrust the pair of pistols in his belt and mounted up. It was still daylight, but the rain was unrelenting. He spurred the horse and rode out through the garden and onto a bridal path leading uphill and south, away from the Lower Road. About a quarter of a mile on, he traversed a small level area known as The Hollow, crossed Charlton Lane and struck east through woods, riding parallel with the Lower Road.

Despite the noise of the rainfall, he could hear activity on the Lower Road – voices, horses whickering and the jingle of equipment. He could not tell whether he was hearing Parliamentary or Royalist troops on the move. The absence of gunfire suggested that actions had been fought and won by one side or the other, or that troops were manoeuvring into position to fight.

The bridal way through the woods was narrow and difficult going, so he was relieved when the trees ended at the boundary of a corn field. As he emerged from the gloom of the woods, however, his stomach turned over when a voice from his left said "Halt!" He stopped his horse and glanced sideways, to see a pair of cavalry vedettes, one of whom held a pistol directed at him. His heart sank when he saw that they wore leather top coats and rounded steel helmets with long nape guards, which meant that in all likelihood they were Parliamentary soldiers.

One of them spoke: "And where is the young sir bound on this fine day? Identify yourself!" Rain dripped from their helmets and splashed on their saddles.

Fighting rising panic, John answered: "Sir, I am John Brewer from Smiths Hall back yonder – " he gestured back through the woods " – and I'm verifying the state of our hops at my father's requirement."

The cavalrymen glanced at each other and ostentatiously looked about. One said to the other: "I can see plenty of corn, but can't see many hops, can you Wilf?" "Not a one" said Wilf. "And I don't believe a farmer needs a pair of pistols to do his duty." He raised the pistol he was holding. "I'll have those weapons, my friend. Hand 'em over to my mate here, butts first if you please."

John pulled the pistols from his belt, and held them out. "Now follow me close, and no tricks" said the first soldier. They led John out of the corn field, through a gate and on to the Lower Road. Here they found Colonel Whalley's troops regrouping, and taking a brief rest with food and water distributed.

Whalley was sitting with his officers. John was brought to them by his captors. "And who is this?" asked Whalley.

“Found ‘im passing through the woods above here, your honour” said one of the cavalrymen. “Armed with these -” holding out John’s pistols. “Says his name’s John Brewer.”

The name meant nothing to Whalley, and he did not recognise the young man. The only people that could have done so were Cornet Amhurst, and he was dead, and his men; who were not consulted.

“Take him to the church and put him with the other prisoners.” said Whalley after a minute’s thought. “We’ll deal with him later.”

John Brewer was luckier than he knew. This had been a moment of maximum danger for him and his young life – had Cornet Amhurst been alive and recognised him as Thomas Brewer’s son, he would have had an awkward time of it explaining why he was out and about, armed, at such a time with troops on the move everywhere.

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Whalley...

“After it pleased God to give us this great mercy in the gaining of West Farley, the Enemy received so great discouragement that we were troubled but little by their Presence upon the Road, and we were able to resume our Marche towards East Farley for our Ren-dez-vous with His Excellencie General Fairfax.

Particularly, I cannot but take notice of the valour and resolution of Captain Grimes, whose Men had a hard taske; Captain Smith his Subordinate being hurt, and Cornet Amhurst, a deserving and faithfull young Officer, slaine. I have also to record the loss to Enemy Activity of some five-and-twenty of my Foote and Dragoones, some further fifteen being wounded in varying Degrees of Severity. We took during these Actions some considerable Quantities of Arms and Ammunition, including one hundred and fifty Muskets, five pieces of small Canon, and two Foote-Colours.

I trust this Account will be of interest to you. And I remaine;

Your Affectionate Father-in-Law EDWARD WHALLEY.

Woolwich 12 Junii, 1648.”

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The Royalist troops that Whalley had encountered in West Farleigh had indeed retired in some disorder back towards Maidstone. Fairfax's troops had gained East Farleigh bridge, and despite significant resistance, including cannon fire from pieces installed in the vantage point of St Mary's church, and having to fight up the steep hill leading to the Lower Road, had routed the enemy.

There remained hard work to be done, however. Royalist resistance stiffened as the Parliamentary forces, combined now after their successful river crossings and assertive local victories, advanced through Tovil and so to the outskirts of Maidstone town. The final victory was won late that night, in pouring rain and darkness, when resistance collapsed and Norwich's Royalist troops retreated over Rochester Bridge towards Woolwich and Greenwich and thence Essex. Whalley was ordered to pursue the enemy with cavalry and dragoons.

Thousands of prisoners were taken, along with horses, arms, cannon and ammunition. Their officers had for the large part deserted them, and the men comprised in part a ragtag body including the apprentices and navy deserters noted above. Fairfax saw fit to release most of them to return to their homes; and that included the prisoners detained in West Farleigh church, John Brewer amongst them. His luck was indeed holding, not least because if he had not been detained and his mission had succeeded, the odds are that he would have found himself in the thick of the fighting in Maidstone that night.

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Appendix 1

George Thompson's despatch describing the storming of Maidstone

Sr .

*The particulars are too many to be related at this time concerning this last nightes engagements with the Enemy at Maydston w^h * in brief was such as was never since the warre began, This Army struggled with so much difficulty to overcome a stronge and resolute Enemy the fight began at 7 at night about a mile from Maydston & before wee could beete them from hedge to hedge and get at the Barracadoes it was past 9 o'. after wee had entered ye towne wee disputed every street and turning the Enemy had 8 peices of Ordinance w^h they discharged aboute 20 times when our men came into the streets, & by Gods mighty helpe & assistance wee over came them betweene 12 & one being every minut of the time firing upon them & they upon us it being extreme wet wether during all that time, Wee tooke 700 prisoners — about 400 horse — our forlorne hope of horse gave the red standard of horse as gallant a charge as ever was seene w^h is saide to be Gen." Hales Troope the reason why our Army began soe soone was because our forlorne hope of horse and foote were engaged in veiwing the towne: the Enemy being with the whole body of horse and foote with in 2 miles on the top of the Hill towards Rochester all day laying with in veiw of our Army aboute 8000 men who as they perceived wee did not dispute the pass at Alisforde Wh was very difficult for us to have done the[y] sent in a suply of 1200 men into Maidston who came in Just as wee engaged being Seamen apprentices & moste of them Comanders in the Kings Army there were in all 200 slayne in and about the towne, Captaine Prize a gallant honest man & Coll Hewsons Captaine Lft was alsoe slaine of ours & about 30 men moste of them fell at the Cannons mouth with Caise shott wee tooke 8 peices or [sic, should be 'of'] ordinance 6 Iron & 2 brass abundance of Armes having beene up all night and wanting time I cannot at pr sent give you any more only I desire God to make you see how theould quarrell is revived by the same parties with more violence then formerly you will shortly heare what Earles Lords & others of quality appeared in this business, his Excellencie from the first minut to the last could not be drawne of from his psonall & hazardos attendance in this service and is much in his health*

Maydstone June 2 1648 6 in the morning

George Thompson

Appendix 2

A short account of Edward Whalley's life

Edward Whalley (c. 1607 – c. 1675) was a military leader during the English Civil Wars and was one of the so-called regicides who signed the death warrant of King Charles I of England.

He is said to have started out as a woollen-draper. During the 1620s and 1630s, he was a farmer but this proved unsuccessful. On the outbreak of the English Civil War, he took up arms for Parliament, and obtained a position as a cornet in a cavalry troop. He distinguished himself in the field, and was praised by Cromwell. He fought at the Battle of Marston Moor, and commanded one of Cromwell's two regiments of cavalry at the Battle of Naseby and at the capture of Bristol.

In the Second English Civil War, Whalley again distinguished himself as a soldier. He was chosen to be a judge at the trial of Charles I and was the fourth to sign the king's death-warrant, immediately after Cromwell. The King was executed in London on 30 January 1649.

Whalley took part in many subsequent Civil War actions. At the Restoration of Charles II, Whalley, with his son-in-law, Major-General William Goffe, were wanted men and they escaped as fugitives to North America, landing at Boston on 27 July 1660, where they were well received by the Governor. They went about quite openly, and chose to live in Cambridge, about 2 miles (3.2 km) from Boston. During this period, the English Parliament was debating the content of the Indemnity and Oblivion Act, the edict in the wake of the fall of the English Commonwealth that pardoned all those who took up arms against the king save those who had a direct hand in Charles I's execution. Knowledge of the final contents of the Act did not reach the colony until November 1660, and for several months opinion among the leaders of the colony on what to do with Whalley and Goffe was divided.

By February 1661, Whalley and Goffe decided they were no longer safe in Cambridge and left on 26 February. Within a few days (on 8 March), orders arrived, via Barbados, from England, for their arrest.

The two moved to New Haven, Connecticut. News of the orders for their arrest later arrived in that town, so Whalley and Goffe used a subterfuge to throw off any pursuit. They made a show of leaving and going to Milford, where they made sure they were seen, but that night they returned in secret to New Haven. They again lodged secretly with a number of sympathizers until 13 May, when they resorted to hiding in some woodland and a cave on Providence Hill (spending some nights in a nearby house). In August they moved into a house in Milford belonging to a Mr. Tomkins, another sympathizer, and remained there for two years. In 1664 they were forced to return to the cave when the King's commissioners arrived in Boston, but Native Americans revealed the cave while the two were absent, which forced them to move further away from Boston. On 13 October, travelling only by night, they set off for Hadley, about one hundred miles away to the north in western Massachusetts. They remained there undiscovered for fifteen or sixteen years, receiving money from their wives in England and presents from a few supporters who knew where they were, in order to pay their hosts for their support. In the first few years, they were in constant fear of discovery and were much relieved to read in the newspapers that they were thought to have died in Switzerland while living in exile with other regicides. Every attempt by the English government to procure Whalley or Goffe's arrest failed. Whalley was alive but in poor health in 1674 and probably did not live long afterwards. Goffe's subsequent movements are unknown.

Source: Wikipedia