

Parliamentarians and royalists confronted each other at Brentford and at Turnham Green over a cold and foggy weekend in November 1642.



This map was drawn by Moses Glover in 1635. Sir Richard Wynn's House appears on the right, above – Syon House lies near the Thames to the left.

As a result of these battles early in the Civil War King Charles I was prevented from capturing London and ending the war. The struggle went on until 1646 but the royalists were never able to attack London again.

What happened here?

On Saturday 12 November at **Sir Richard Wynn's house** on the road from Brentford to Hounslow a small group of soldiers from Denzil Holles' red-coated parliamentary regiment heard approaching royalist horsemen.

These were part of the 12,000 strong royalist army commanded by **Prince Rupert** and **General Patrick Ruthven**, which had marched from Hounslow that morning.

About 2,000 parliamentarian soldiers, including 600 horsemen, had arrived in Brentford the day before. Short of supplies they had already ransacked the shops in this prosperous market town.

Around Wynn's house, on both sides of the road, were fields enclosed by hedges. These protected the parliamentary foot soldiers while they drove off the royalist horsemen with cannon fire. Only when the royalist foot soldiers came up could they force the parliamentarians from their defensive positions and advance to Brentford Bridge.

However, when the parliamentarian horsemen in Brentford heard the cannon fire, many of them fled back towards London, leaving the town defended only by foot soldiers.

1642

The Battle of Brentford



Prince Rupert (1619-82) was Charles I's nephew. A gifted child, skilled in languages and mathematics, he was involved in military actions from the age of 14.



House of the royalist, Sir Richard Wynn



General Sir Patrick Ruthven, Earl of Forth commanded the royalist troops with Prince Rupert



What happened next?

Fighting continued that afternoon further east at Brentford Bridge and near Ferry Lane. About 20 royalists were killed in the battle. Perhaps 50 parliamentarians died in the fighting and more again drowned in the Thames fleeing the royalists.

That night royalist soldiers stole supplies in Brentford and slept in the open.

Parliamentary barges from Kingston, laden with artillery and ammunition sailed down river overnight and came under royalist fire from Syon House, injuring a few men on board.

Royalist cannon on the river bank downstream threatened the barges so their crews sank them deliberately to prevent the capture of their cargoes.

MATTHEW SMALLWOOD, A ROYALIST SOLDIER, WROTE

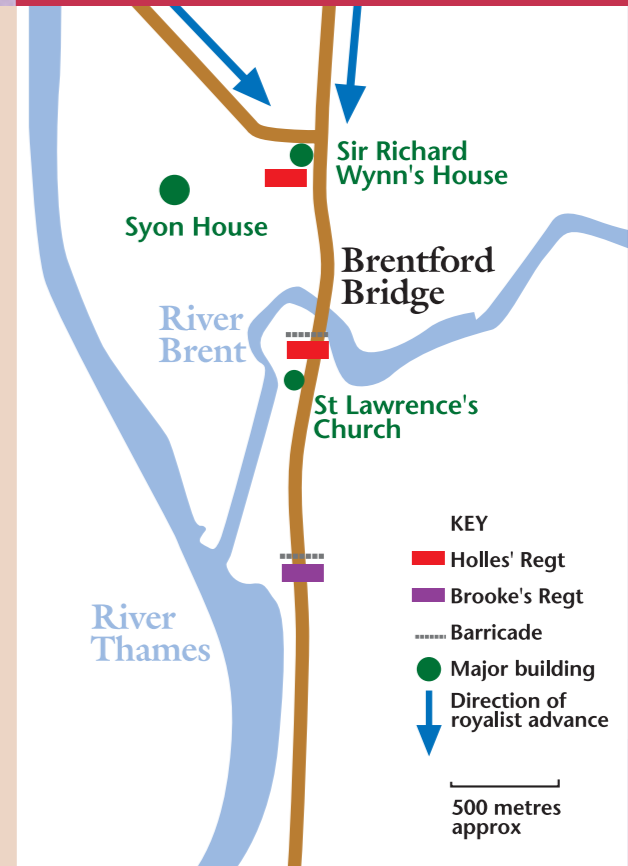
...we were left masters of the towne. That night most lay in the cold fields. Next morning early we were started afresh by the loud music of some cannon which proved to be some 14 BARGES of theirs who with thirteen ordnance and 600 men attempted (very indifferently) TO PASS UP THE RIVER from *Kingston* by the town where we lay to London, but being discovered, what from the bancke and from *Sion House* (the *Earl of Northumberland's*) where we had placed some four musketers, within two or three howers space WE SUNK 4 OR 5 OF THEIR VESSELS with the canons in them, took the rest, and 3 pieces in them for our breakfast.

Why were they fighting?

Strained relations between the King and Parliament, over the constitution, taxation and control of the army, came to a head when the King tried to arrest five MPs.

Parliament began recruiting soldiers in July and by August the Civil War had begun. Everyone thought it would be over quickly but between 1642 and 1646, about a quarter of English men became soldiers and one in 25 of the population died.

Lines of Battle on 12 November 1642

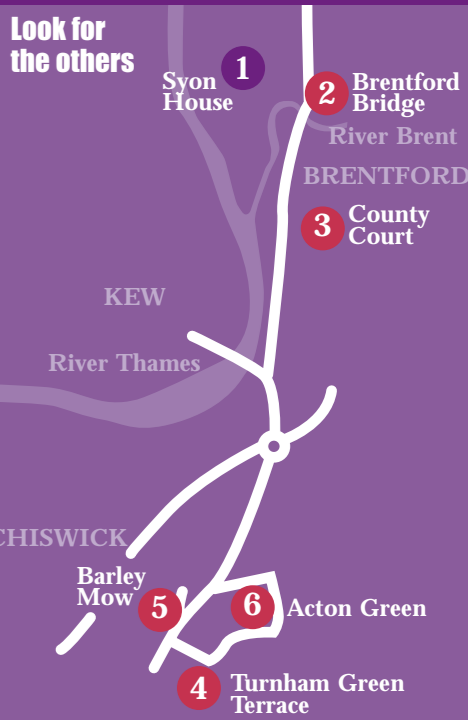


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Designed by Toni Marshall

This is one of six information panels in Brentford and Chiswick.



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