

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. The area where you are standing is near the bottom of the map; you can see Syon House near the Thames, above 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?

Parliamentarians had arrived in the prosperous market town on Friday 11 November. The following day the royalists marched from Hounslow Heath and, in the early afternoon broke through a parliamentary barricade at the bridge over the Brent.

Near this information panel, the royalists were delayed, fighting for two or three hours until the parliamentarian soldiers fled. This position was defended by about 480 men of Lord Brooke's regiment and survivors of the earlier fighting, with two small pieces of artillery.

The royalists soon gained the upper hand. There seem to have been no civilian dead despite the capture of the town. About 20 royalists were killed, and perhaps 50 parliamentarians died in the fighting with more drowning in the Thames. Parliamentary Captain **John Lilburne** was amongst those captured.

1642

The Battle of Brentford



King Charles I had ordered the attack on Brentford despite having agreed to peace negotiations with Parliament the day before.



Captain John Lilburne (1615-1657) was a parliamentarian officer in 1642. He later became the leader of the radical group, the Levellers.



Colonel John Hampden (1595-1683) was one of the five MPs Charles I tried to arrest in January 1642, and led a regiment of foot at this battle.



What happened next?

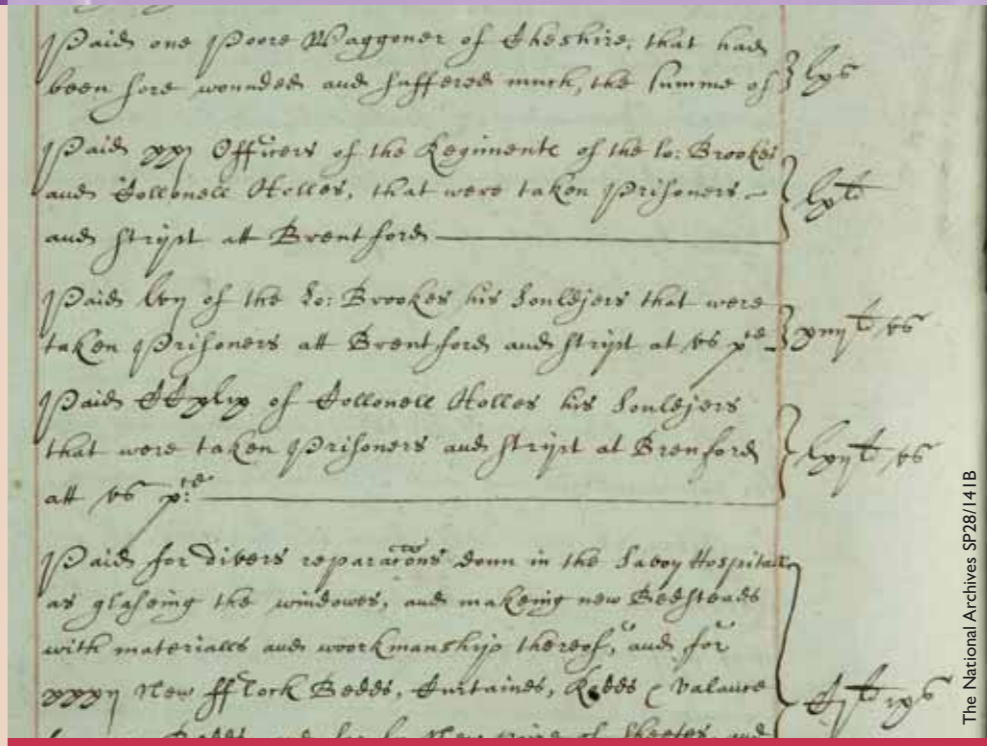
Later that afternoon the royalists pressed on towards London. There were more parliamentary troops in a large open area, probably Turnham Green and Chiswick's Common Field. These green-coated men of **John Hampden's** regiment of foot charged five times, holding the royalists back. But with night coming and the royalists exhausted from fighting both sides disengaged.

The royalist soldiers who had captured Brentford ransacked the town; most had to sleep in the open.

The Battle of Turnham Green took place the next day.

JOHN GWYN, A ROYALIST SOLDIER, WROTE

We beat them from one *Brainford* to the other, and from thence to the *open field*, with a RESOLUTE and EXPEDITIOUS FIGHTING, that once firing suddenly to advance up to push of pike and the butt-end of muskets, which proved SO FATAL to *Holles'* butchers and dyers that day.



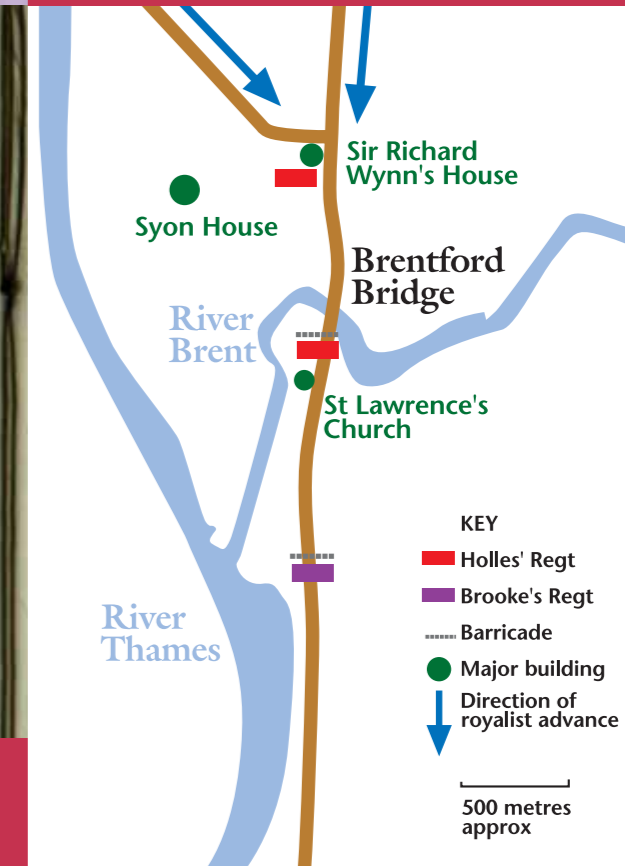
Accounts showing compensation paid to Colonel Holles' and Lord Brooke's men who were captured after the battle.

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

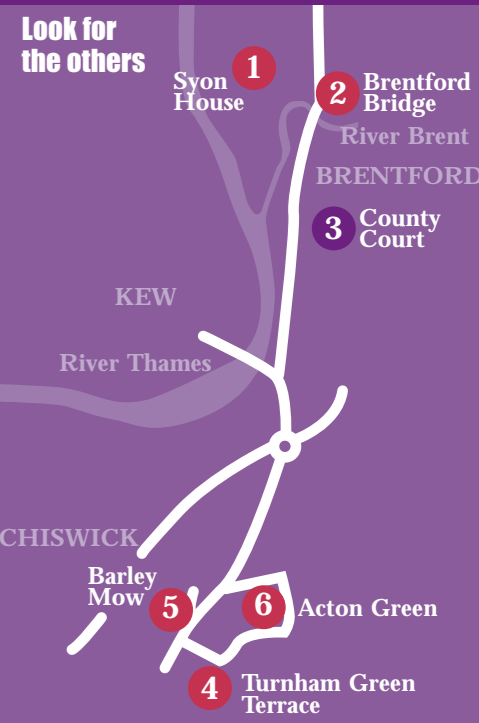


Heritage
LOTTERY FUNDED

Project supported by the Brentford & Chiswick Local History Society, Hounslow Heritage Guides, Syon Park and the John Hampden Society

Designed by Toni Marshall

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



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