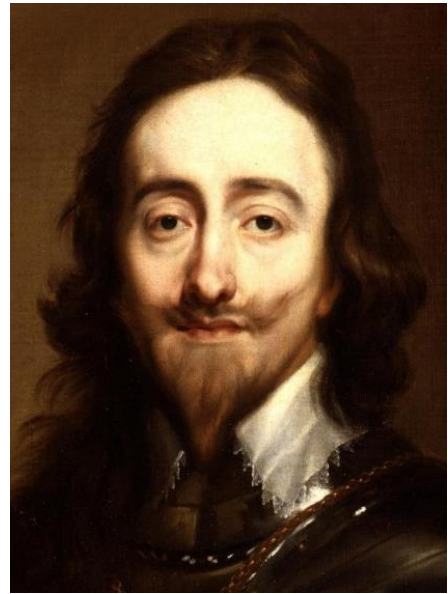


I thought for today's 'on this day' email we would go back to 5 May 1646, when KING CHARLES I surrendered to the Scottish army at Newark in Nottinghamshire, effectively bringing the English Civil War to an end.

What was a Scottish army doing in Newark? Well, when the English Civil War broke out in 1642 between the Cavaliers (on the side of the King) and the Roundheads (on the side of Parliament), the King's side actually did quite well and it looked like the Roundheads might be defeated. So they called on the Scots - who had revolted against King Charles I when he tried to alter their church services - for help and the Scots sent an army to England to fight on the side of the Roundheads. This helped swing the course of the war in favour of Parliament, and after the Roundheads scored a big victory in 1645 at NASEBY, they went on to more victories and King Charles I ended up in OXFORD. The Roundheads laid siege to Oxford (surrounding it, hoping either to break into the city, or to starve the people living in the city into surrendering) and King Charles I had to escape, disguised as a servant. He travelled north, and on this day almost 375 years ago, he surrendered to the Scottish army at Newark, hoping to persuade them to come over to his side and fight for him. But he couldn't reach an agreement with them, and in January 1647, the Scots handed King Charles I over to the English Parliament, for them to do whatever they wanted with him.



This clip from the film 'CROMWELL' depicts OLIVER CROMWELL, representing the English Parliament, arresting King Charles I:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWVp0x6KQ2g>

And I don't think I need to say 'spoiler alert' for what's next: the English Parliament put King Charles I on trial for treason, and he was found guilty and executed on 30 January 1649. This scene from the film 'Cromwell' depicts the execution:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQUAo7mjs3Q>

After the King's execution, Parliament tried to govern the country, but found that difficult when so many Members of Parliament had so many different views about how the country should be governed. So in 1653, Cromwell was appointed LORD PROTECTOR of England, and died six years later in 1659. After a short interval, King Charles I's son was restored to the throne in 1660, and became King Charles II, at the age of 30. Everyone was pretty relieved to have King Charles II in power, as life under Cromwell had been pretty grim - Cromwell was a PURITAN and didn't believe that life was to be enjoyed. So under Cromwell, Christmas was abolished, and the theatres were shut. Bringing King Charles II back allowed everyone to relax and enjoy life again - like we will when this lockdown finishes.

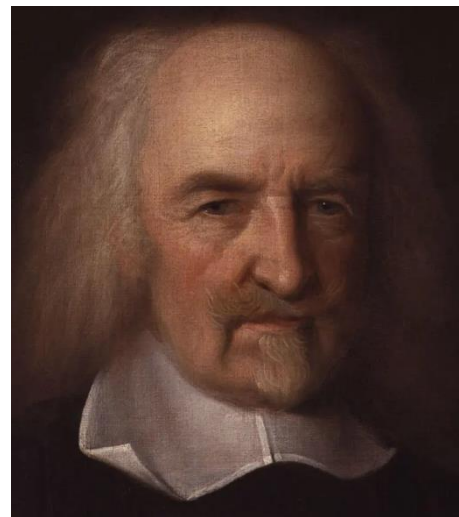


But King Charles II had learned the lesson of the English Civil War, which is that the King has to work with Parliament, and not try to have his own way all the time. After King Charles II died in 1685, at the age of 55, and his brother became King James II, King James II did not

learn the same lesson but tried to rule in the same way that his father King Charles I did. There is a famous saying that 'THOSE WHO CANNOT LEARN FROM HISTORY ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT' and King James II, having not learned from history, repeated the experience of his father - he was overthrown as King in 1688, just three years after having become King, in the GLORIOUS REVOLUTION, and was succeeded by a couple of monarchs imported from Holland - WILLIAM AND MARY. James went into exile in France and died in 1701, at the age of 67. And so the line of Stuarts came to the end, and the reign of the HANOVERS began. No King or Queen would ever again attempt to question THE SOVEREIGNTY (pronounced 'sov - a - ren - tee') OF PARLIAMENT, the idea that Parliament is the supreme holder of power in Britain, and no one can say that an ACT OF PARLIAMENT is invalid.

There were two other results of the English Civil War. First, the idea of the DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS - the idea that God appoints kings and queens to the throne and gives them the power to rule, and so questioning what the king or queen is like questioning God - came to an end. If England could get rid of their king and even kill him without any divine retribution, the idea of the 'divine right of kings' must be rubbish. And this encouraged the French to get rid of their King in the FRENCH REVOLUTION in 1789 (which I talked about in my first ever email to you, about NAPOLEON BONAPARTE) and the Russians to get rid of their Tsar in 1917 in the RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. In place of the idea of the 'divine right of kings' came the idea that instead of rulers being appointed by God, they should be appointed by the people in DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS. So the English Civil War helped encourage the spread of DEMOCRACY all over the world. Most importantly, it encouraged the AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE in 1776, where Americans living in British colonies decided that they wanted to decide how they should be ruled, and should not be told what to do (and what taxes to pay) by a Parliament thousands of miles away in England.

Second, a very clever man called THOMAS HOBBS (pronounced 'Hobbs') lived through the English Civil War and was so upset by the experience of the war that he wrote a book in 1651 arguing that the government of a country should be so powerful that it could easily squash anyone who tried to create trouble and bring about the kind of fighting and upset that he had lived through during the English Civil War. He argued that the government should be as powerful as the most powerful beast mentioned in the Bible - a sea monster described in the BOOK OF JOB (pronounced 'Joe - b') as having a 'double coat of armour', as having 'fearsome teeth', as having 'flames come out of its mouth' and 'flashing light' and 'smoke' coming out of its nostrils, and as having a 'chest that is as hard as rock'. The Bible says of this sea monster that 'Nothing on earth is its equal - it is a creature without fear'. The Bible calls the sea monster LEVIATHAN (pronounced 'Luv - i - a - thun') and that is what Thomas Hobbes called his book. This was a very important book because it encouraged people to think that it is a good thing if the government is extremely powerful - powerful enough that when there is a virus going about, it can shut up all businesses and stop people going outside. The Americans who fought the AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE disagreed with this, and thought a strong government was a bad idea - they wanted individuals to be strong and the government to be weak, and after the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA was created,



they passed a BILL OF RIGHTS to help ensure that individuals were protected from the government being too strong. But other countries went a different way - France under NAPOLEON, Russia after the RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, and CHINA after World War II, all agreed with Thomas Hobbes that the best government is a really strong government that is more powerful than anyone else in the country.