

|   |
|---|
| <b>Institution: University of Chester</b>   |
| <b>Unit of Assessment: 30: History</b>  |
| <b>Title of case study: Placing the English Civil War and Oliver Cromwell in the locale</b>   |
| <p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Peter Gaunt's extensive research explores local and national histories of Oliver Cromwell, one of Britain's most important national figures. While Cromwell tends to be remembered in a national context, the English civil war itself also had a dramatic effect on the people and landscapes of England and Wales as a whole. Communities were torn asunder, buildings destroyed and some 200,000 people lost their lives. But often little of this is known at a local level, so, through a range of activities, Gaunt has shared his findings with the most diverse of audiences, enabling people to rethink and reassess Cromwell and the Civil War's local impact in a new focused way.</p>  |
| <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Peter Gaunt has been based at the University of Chester for over two decades, first as Lecturer in History (from 1991), then as Senior Lecturer in History (from 1995), Reader in History (from 1999) and most recently as Professor of History (from 2006). During this time, he has researched many aspects of the civil war and of Cromwell's life and career, including publishing broad and national studies. He has written two major biographies of Oliver Cromwell, as well as studies of <i>The British Wars, 1637-51</i> and <i>The English Civil Wars</i>. In 2000, Gaunt also edited a collection of key articles on the war entitled <i>The English Civil War</i>, which weighed up the historiographical debates in the field. Most recently, he edited the prestigious <i>English Historical Documents, 1603-1660</i> with Professor Barry Coward, compiling the volume's documents and writing the commentaries for the 1640-60 section.</p> <p>Gaunt's wide-ranging work on the national dimensions of Cromwell and the civil wars has provided him with a framework in which to rethink local dimensions of this history. At both a regional and a local level, Gaunt has also contributed a significant body of scholarly literature. He has published a string of articles on aspects of the civil war, many of which reassess Cromwell's particular contribution. Among others, these include new studies of the battle of Gainsborough, the siege of Crowland, Cromwell's early sieges in the East Midlands, the battle of Dunbar and the battle of Worcester. Collectively these important local case studies have demonstrated the role of local factors in shaping Cromwell's battles, campaigns and overall military career, as well as the impact he in turn had upon localities.</p> <p>Leading on from this, another dimension to Gaunt's local research has been his exploration of Cromwell's overall relationship with Britain and its landscape. Using the county of Norfolk as a detailed case study, but ranging much more widely across England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, Gaunt has explored local aspects of Cromwellian folklore and mythology, assessing the hitherto neglected theme of the strength, origins and veracity of the folklore and folk memory linking Cromwell's war-time activity to many parts of Britain and Ireland. Gaunt's research into the local history of the 1640s, though, has not just focused on Cromwell himself. He has also published important new work on local dimensions of the civil war more generally, including in the South West, Chester and Cheshire and Montgomery and its hinterland. Whether researching the national history of this period or more specific local case studies, Gaunt's academic writing has contributed to our understanding of both the English civil wars and Oliver Cromwell.</p> |
| <p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Oliver Cromwell</i> (Oxford: Blackwell, hardback 1996; revised edition in paperback 1997).</li> <li>2. <i>The English Civil War</i> (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).</li> </ol>   |

## Impact case study (REF3b)

3. *English Historical Documents, 1603-60* (London: Routledge, 2010).
4. 'A Cromwellian Landscape? Oliver Cromwell and the Urban and Rural Environment of Britain' in J. Mills (ed.), *Cromwell's Legacy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 57-90.
5. 'Learning the Ropes in "his own field": Cromwell's early Sieges in the East Midlands' in P. Gaunt (ed.), *Cromwell Four Centuries On* (London: The Cromwell Association, 2013), pp. 26-37.
6. 'Oliver Cromwell's Last Battle', *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, 20 (2006), pp. 143-150.

Gaunt's six publications are all of a very high quality. His jointly edited volume, *English Historical Documents*, forms part of Routledge's prestigious source volumes on British history, which the *Times Literary Supplement* has called 'one of the most valuable historical works ever produced'. As a sign of their quality, the other two books listed above have been reviewed in *The Historical Journal*, *H-Net*, *Historische Zeitschrift*, *Journal of Military History* and *English Historical Review* amongst others. The three remaining publications above appear with solid university presses (Manchester), important regional journals (*Transactions*) or form part of a larger edited collection (*Cromwell: Four Centuries on*) which is also edited by Gaunt.

References 3 and 4 have been submitted in REF2. The remaining items can be supplied if requested.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Gaunt's tenure as chair of the Cromwell Association (1990-2009) and as president of the organisation (2009 to date) has facilitated his efforts to embed knowledge of Cromwell and the civil war in the locale. As the Cromwell Association's mission is to promote the understanding of Cromwell and the civil war period, his leadership has provided the vehicle for many of his activities. Indeed, he has consistently combined his academic research and publications with the Association's key projects and programmes, whether working individually or in collaboration.

Through Gaunt's leadership, the Association has worked to preserve and enhance the interpretation of local civil war and Cromwellian sites. In many cases, this has involved working with local heritage groups, including – since 2008 – Naseby battlefield (site visit April 2009) and Marston Moor battlefield, where work is on-going to improve the site and counter vandalism – site visit April 2013. He has also been instrumental in the erection of plaques and monuments at several sites, including Gainsborough, St Fagans and Montgomery, and most recently at the so-called 'Cromwell House' in Old Marston. Through Gaunt's work, the Cromwell Association funded a blue plaque to record the site where the surrender of Oxford was negotiated at the end of the civil war. In June 2013, Gaunt unveiled the plaque and addressed a local audience during its inauguration.

Gaunt's efforts to preserve these local sites have produced tremendous results. Not only have these new sites of memory helped to increase understanding of local histories, but many of the memorials and interpretative boards themselves have become a part of each region's heritage, some featuring in local tourist information guides and brochures, thereby ensuring that visitors are able to understand more fully how the civil war battles shaped these local landscapes.

Gaunt has also addressed diverse audiences about the local importance of Cromwell and the civil war. He has frequently organised and spoken at day-schools across the country embracing such local aspects. In 2008, for example, he organised a day-school on 'The Civil War in the North West' at Manchester's John Rylands Library (audience 55). The same year, he ran a day-school at Hampton Court (audience 60) to mark the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Oliver Cromwell, which included a reassessment of Cromwell's local impact and legacy. He has also spoken on the civil war in Denbighshire as part of the 'Denbigh Heritage Regeneration Project' (audience 120) in 2009

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

and in 2011 he reassessed Cromwell's role in the battle of Worcester for a Worcester audience (audience 110). Most recently, he has explored with the Chester Society for Landscape History the relationship between the civil war in Cheshire and the local environment (audience 70).

Enhancing the impact and spread of these public talks, Gaunt has arranged for many to be published by local interest groups such as Denbigh Town Council and The Battle of Worcester Society. Gaunt has also had the opportunity to lead walking tours for specialist and general audiences around key civil war sites. Between 2000 and 2013, he has taken groups around Chester, Edinburgh, Worcester, Sherborne Castle and Beeston Castle. All these were pitched at wide audiences, extending wide and public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the civil war and of Cromwell in a local context.

School audiences have provided another means for Gaunt to increase public awareness of the civil war's local dimensions. Discussing the locale with school pupils helps them to conceptualise more fully the scope of this period of history. During spring 2013 he addressed sixth-form groups at Withington Girls' School, Manchester, the Queen's School, Chester and St Mary's High School in Chesterfield. In spring 2012 he spoke at a study-day for sixth-form teachers held in Huntingdon organised by the Prince's Teaching Institute (audience 60). In spring 2013 he recorded two podcasts, on aspects of Cromwell, for the Historical Association, to be made available as part of the Association's scheme to help students and teachers.

Gaunt has also helped to produce the tools enabling the general public to locate Cromwell in their own ancestry and localities. He has been responsible for compiling and writing much of the material which appears on The Cromwell Association web-site ([www.olivercromwell.org](http://www.olivercromwell.org)), including 'Cromwellian Britain' entries for Barthomley, Evesham, Ilston, Lindsey House in London, Montgomery, Moray House in Edinburgh and Widecombe. Perhaps most notably and with the broadest appeal, he also researched and wrote a very detailed Cromwell genealogy. In collaboration with the East of England Museums and the Libraries and Archives Council, this fully searchable genealogy can also be accessed via the Association's web-site. As a measure of its wider impact, the website has averaged 320,000 'hits' per year.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. User statistics (hits) for The Cromwell Association general website, <http://www.olivercromwell.org> (Paragraph 7)

- 2012-2013 387,809
- 2011-2012 285,542
- 2010-2011 318,814
- 2009-2010 305,623
- 2008-2009 306,481

2. For the Marston Blue Plaque and Gaunt's role in its inauguration (paragraph 2), see text and photographs at [http://www.oxfordshireblueplaques.org.uk/plaques/civil\\_war.html](http://www.oxfordshireblueplaques.org.uk/plaques/civil_war.html)

3. For discussion of the Marston Moor battlefield site and interpretation (paragraph 2), see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/battlefields/battle-of-marston-moor>

4. Copies of emails received in support and appreciation of public talks (paragraphs 2 & 4) and school visits (paragraph 6) are held on file by the University.