

Newark civil war trail

This is the first leaflet in a series of seven and the full range may be viewed on our website www.newarkcivictrust.org.uk/

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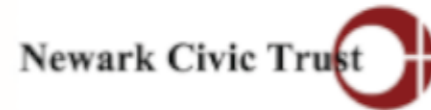
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Newark Civic Trust

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Newark Civil War Trail

Distance: 1.5km

Time: 1 hour. Easy trail

OS Map ref: SK 79700 - 54050

Start: at the Newark Bronze Map in the Castle Grounds

Finish: at the National Civil War Centre – Newark Museum or Queens Sconce
Wheelchair & pushchair friendly

This short walk around the town centre takes in many of the sites and buildings that relate to the Civil War period.

The castle owes its present state to the fact that over the years local people removed the stones as a convenient source of building material for their homes.

It is thought that the cannon may have been aiming at a Royalist gun battery below the walls, as the size of shot is too small to have any effect on the castle walls, however the stone splinters caused would have rained down on any Royalists below.

Now continue to follow the path around the castle, crossing the wooden walkway before turning left up the path onto Castle Gate. Turn right, walk for 50m and cross the pedestrian crossing. Walk down Stodman Street (to your left) to the timber framed Prince Rupert pub, (formerly The Woolpack). You may want to cross the road to get a better view. **The Prince Rupert (4)** was built around 1452 as a rich merchant's house and would

have been about 200 years old at the time of the Civil War. The roomy building would have provided ideal accommodation for soldiers. Following the Battle of Marston Moor in July 1644 the population of the town, thought to have been around 2,300 at the beginning of the Civil War, would

have tripled. The town's people would have had to accommodate the soldiers defending the town. Originally the building had 4 bays, with the upper floors built out (jettied) forward, however at some point the left hand bay was removed.

Continue along Stodman Street until you reach the large timber framed building on your right. This was the **Governor's House (5)**, home of the four military Governors between December 1642 and May 1646.



Walk back around the side of the gatehouse following the path down to the riverside. Turn left and follow the

length of the castle wall. Can you see the depressions in the wall? **Curtain Wall, Riverside (3)**. Circular depressions in the wall were probably caused by musket balls and a type of small cannon known as a 'Robinette'. These cannon had a calibre of 4cm (1.5in) and the balls weighed about 700g (1.5lbs). Larger scars higher up were possibly caused by larger cannon. These marks were caused by Scots cannon stationed on 'the island' opposite the castle during the final siege (26 Nov 1645 – 8 May 1646). There would have been around 7,000 Scots besieging the town at this time with 9,000 English Parliamentarians surrounding the town to the south and west.

Start the walk at the Bronze Plan of Newark in the **Castle grounds (1)**. Straight in front you will see the **Castle Gatehouse (2)**. This is the best preserved Norman castle gatehouse in Britain. Walk towards the gatehouse and look under the archway. The stonework is still blackened by the barrel of gunpowder used by Parliamentarian forces in their attempt to put the castle beyond further use, known as 'sighting', following the surrender of the town in May 1646. However, due to the presence of bubonic plague in the town, the Parliamentarians quickly left, causing no further damage.

During the first Civil War (1642-46) the market town of Newark played a role out of all proportion to its size. The town remained loyal to the King throughout the war and was besieged three times, only surrendering when ordered to do so by the King after his surrender to the Scots at Southwell. It was after the King ordered the town to surrender that the Mayor, who thought the town could hold out, said to the military Governor "Trust in God and sally forth." In 1922 the Latin version of this, *Deo Fretus Erumpe*, was adopted as the town's motto and can be seen below its coat of arms.

1

2

3

5

4



It was also the site of a major quarrel between King Charles I and his nephew, Prince Rupert, in October 1645. Originally built as a rich merchant's house (1474), its size and the number of floors jettied out show its high status. The first Governor was Sir John Henderson from December 1642 – October 1643. The second was Sir Richard Byron, one of 7 brothers fighting for the Royalists, from October 1643 – October 1644. The third was Sir Richard Willys from October 1644 – October 1645. Following Prince Rupert's surrender of Bristol in September 1645 his uncle dismissed him from the army. To clear his name Rupert, his brother Prince Maurice and around 300 troopers rode to Newark. His name was cleared following a courts martial. However, a few days later Rupert's supporter, Willys was about to be replaced by Lord John Bellasyse as Governor. A confrontation with the King took place in the upstairs rooms and the following day Rupert, Maurice, Willys and their men left Newark. It is said the King wept as he watched them go from one of the upstairs windows. Bellasyse had little time to prepare for the final siege and remained Governor until the surrender of the town in May 1646.

Move to the front of the Nat West Bank building facing the Market Place. A plaque records that this was once the site of Alderman Hercules Clay's house (6). The house was destroyed on March 11th 1644, during the second siege (29 February – 21 March 1644), by a type of fire bomb aimed at the Governor's House. Clay had dreamt three times that his house would be destroyed and moved his family out just in time. As a thank you for his deliverance he left £100 to be distributed amongst the poor of Newark and £100 for a church service to be held on the 11th March. To this day a service is still held in St Mary Magdalene church on the Sunday closest to 11th March.

You are now in the Market Place – walk along the right hand side until you reach the colourful timber framed building. This is **The Old White Hart (7)**, the oldest surviving inn in Newark. Parts of the building date to the early 14th century and these can be seen underneath the carriageway to the right. The ornate façade of the front (1459) was extensively restored in the 1980s, but is authentic in style and colour. The inn was used as quarters for the officers of Sir William Staunton's cavalry regiment during the Civil War and was damaged during the second siege.

Head directly across the Market Place keeping G H Porter's on your right and head towards St Mary Magdalene Church. When you reach Church Walk turn left and head towards the south door of the church. Stand to the left of the door and look at the empty niches on the lower levels of the church exterior Empty Niches (8) These are evidence of the 'sighting' of the church undertaken by Parliamentary soldiers following the end of the final siege. Many Parliamentarians were Puritans who believed there should be no statues of saints or stained glass windows in churches. The statues of the saints which once occupied these niches were smashed by the soldiers.

If you have time you can see further evidence of 'sighting' in the church where the font was smashed and restored by a local businessman, Nicholas Ridley, in 1660, following the restoration of Charles II to the throne. The font is close to the west door and if you look at the bottom of the font you can see 14th century stone and statues of saints in the fashion of the time, whereas the restored part of the font is in different stone and the saints have 17th century dress and hairstyles. You can also see a monument to Hercules Clay near the east end of the south wall, in the south choir aisle, whose story you are already familiar with.

Continue down Church Walk to the west end of the church and then turn left into Kirk Gate. Walk 50m down the road to the arch of the Old Post Office. On the opposite side of the road is a timber framed building. Queen Henrietta Maria's Visit (9). King Charles I French wife was sent to the continent to raise a mercenary army and stopped in Newark with around 2,500 soldiers between 16 June – 3 July 1643. Her hosts were Lord and Lady Frances Leeke, who owned this and other former church properties in the town. It is thought unlikely that the Queen herself would have stayed here as there are grander houses, such as the Governor's House and the Queen at this time owned the castle.

Retrace your footsteps along Kirk Gate and head down Church Walk North on the opposite side of the church. Walk down the path and then turn left towards the large slab in the middle of the garden. Civil War Memorial (10). This plaque records the removal of 31 bodies from the crypt in the church when it was refurbished in 1883. The names are of some of the officers killed during the sieges of

Newark. Baron Dohna was a German mercenary who came with Queen Henrietta Maria and was cut in half by a Parliamentary cannon ball as he was leading an attack against Parliamentary Nottingham. His body was brought back to Newark and buried in the crypt. It is thought that the left hand corner of the church yard, as you look at it, may have been one of the plague pits for the civilians that died as a result of the plague during the final siege.

Turn right and follow the path to an entrance in the brick wall surrounding the church yard. Once through the wall turn round and look up towards the spire of the church. If you look below the left hand side of the uppermost central window you should be able to see a hole. The Church Spire (11). This hole is said to have been caused by Parliamentary cannon firing from Beacon Hill, around 2 ¼km (1 ¼m) away, during the second siege.

Turn left and walk down Mount Lane. When you reach the bottom you have reached Appleton Gate. Opposite is the Palace Theatre and joined to it is the National Civil War Centre – Newark Museum (NCWC) (12). It is housed in the former Magnus Grammar School buildings, the earliest of which date to 1532 and were used for town council meetings during the Civil War. To find out more about the Civil Wars you can visit and see the cannon ball that caused the damage to the church spire, amongst many other artefacts.

If you do not want to visit NCWC or following your visit want to extend your walk you can either walk 1km (0.6m) or drive to Sconce and Devon Park. The Queen's Sconce (13) is probably the best preserved 17th century earthwork in Britain. It was built to defend the outer approaches to the town along the Fosse Way. The King's Sconce was constructed on the opposite side of the town to defend the approaches from Lincoln, but sadly there is nothing left of it apart from street names that refer to it. Sconce is the Dutch word for fort and comes from the wars that were taking place in that area at the same time (1618 – 48) as the Civil Wars. They were known as the Thirty Years War and many of the officers who fought in the Civil Wars had learnt their skills there. The four corner bastions would each have had a cannon on them, covering all approaches. The earthwork was defended by the steep ditches and beyond them 'pitfalls',



pits with a sharpened wooden stake in the bottom covered over to trap unwary attackers. The Sconce was never taken and was only surrendered on the orders of King Charles I.