

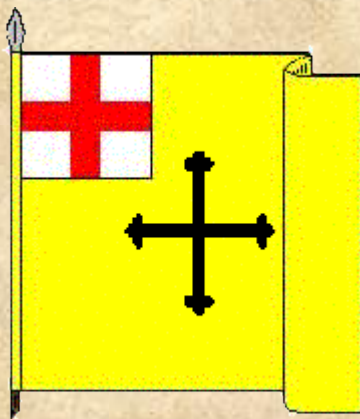
FOOT COLOURS OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

This is a highly complex subject and these pages can only scratch the surface of the subject. To anyone wishing to take the subject further I cannot recommend too highly the Publication *'English Colours of Foot'* by *Peachey and Prince*.

As with lots of things about the ECW this area is obscured by myth, romance, conjecture treated as fact and plain ignorance. To sum up the main points.

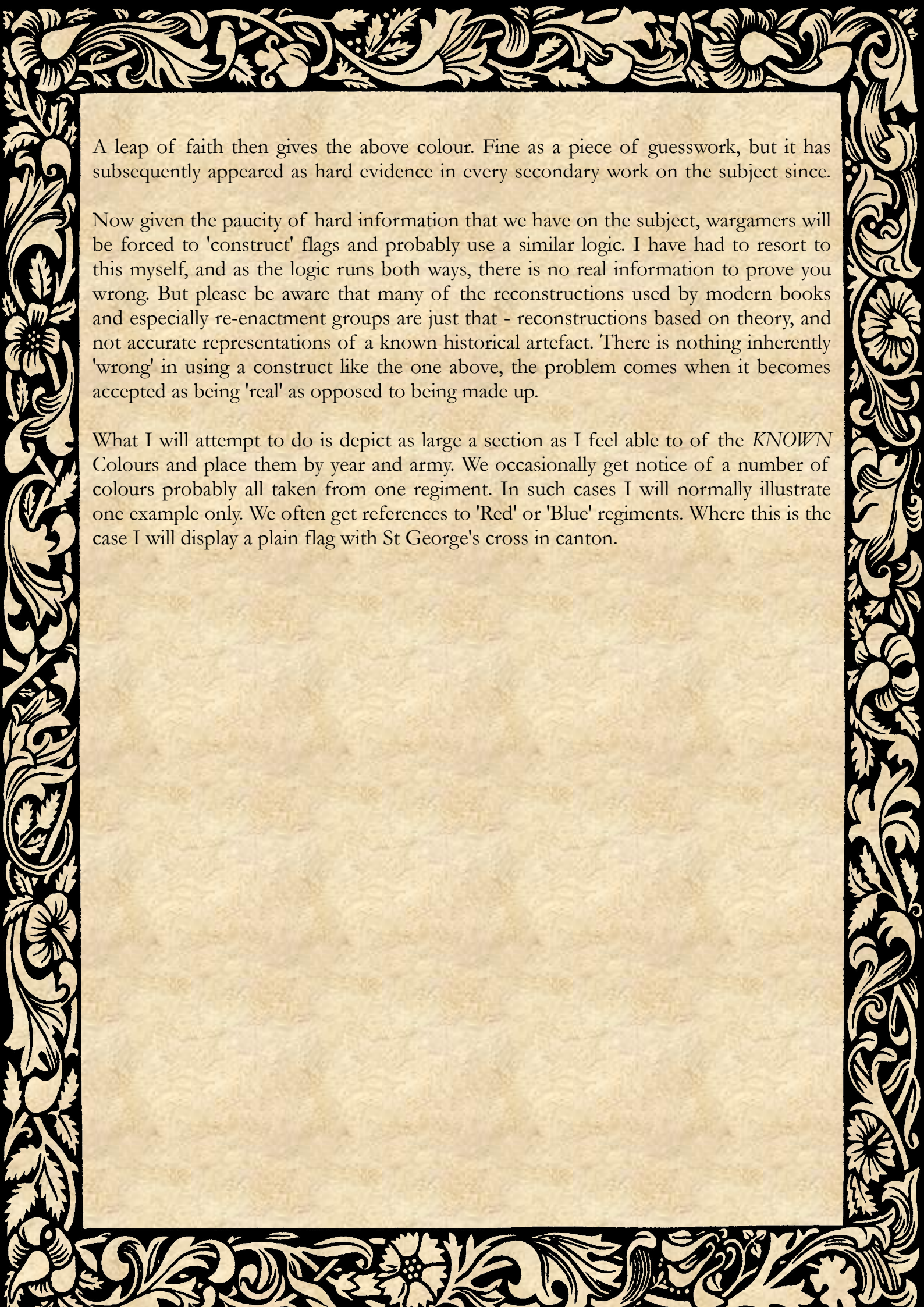
1. What we actually know in terms of primary evidence about ECW Colours is very little indeed.
2. The 'systems' that people in the past have used to 'reconstruct' colours are often wrong or misplaced.
3. **The colour of a regiment's coat did NOT dictate the field colour or vice versa.**
4. The fact a Colour was borne by a particular regiment in one year is no guarantee as to what was used in preceding or subsequent years.
5. Because of reductions or amalgamations a battalia may have been carrying a range of Colours with different fields and differencing.

To show you what I mean. Many secondary sources, (Haythornthwaite and Gush to name two) will give the example of this colour belonging to John Lamplugh's regiment of Newcastle's Army.



The source for this is Brigadier Peter Young's book on Marston Moor, which is the first time it appears. The Brigadier seems to have 'designed' this colour based on the following premises:

- The regiment is recorded as having flown a yellow colour.
- Lamplugh had a cross fleury on his coat of arms therefore would have used it as 'difference'.

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in black and white, framing the text on a light beige background.

A leap of faith then gives the above colour. Fine as a piece of guesswork, but it has subsequently appeared as hard evidence in every secondary work on the subject since.

Now given the paucity of hard information that we have on the subject, wargamers will be forced to 'construct' flags and probably use a similar logic. I have had to resort to this myself, and as the logic runs both ways, there is no real information to prove you wrong. But please be aware that many of the reconstructions used by modern books and especially re-enactment groups are just that - reconstructions based on theory, and not accurate representations of a known historical artefact. There is nothing inherently 'wrong' in using a construct like the one above, the problem comes when it becomes accepted as being 'real' as opposed to being made up.

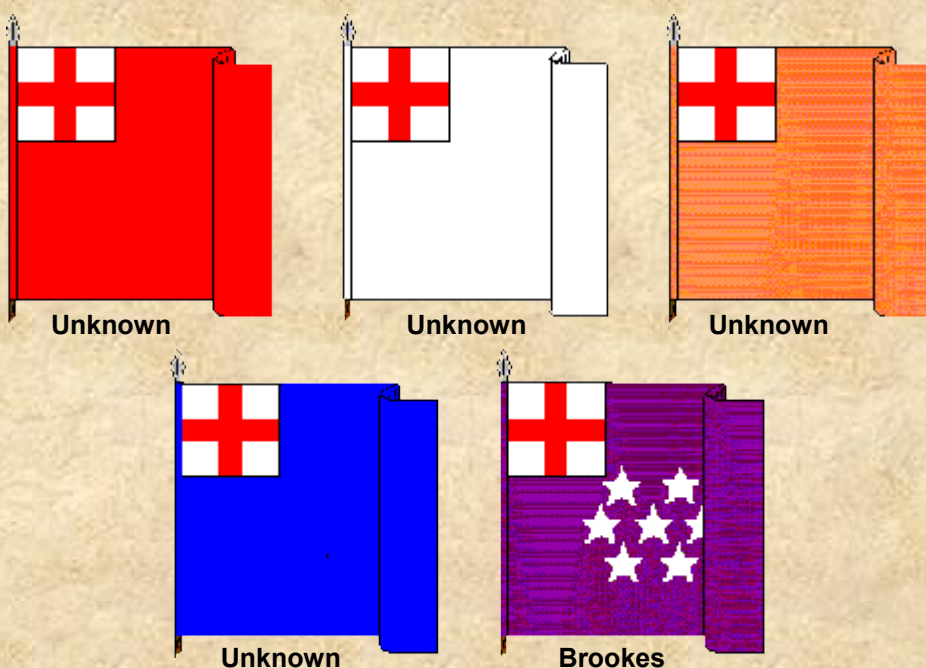
What I will attempt to do is depict as large a section as I feel able to of the *KNOWN* Colours and place them by year and army. We occasionally get notice of a number of colours probably all taken from one regiment. In such cases I will normally illustrate one example only. We often get references to 'Red' or 'Blue' regiments. Where this is the case I will display a plain flag with St George's cross in canton.

ESSEX'S FOOT - 1642-1644

1642

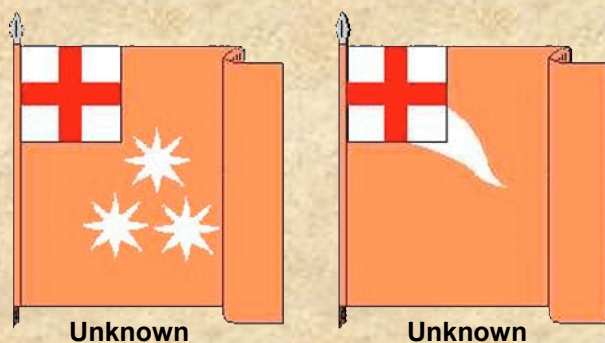
Of all the regiments of Parliament's main army in 1642, we have only one description - that of Lord Brookes. The only other source comes from a painting that includes four colours presumably taken as trophies at Edgehill. Many more were taken at the battle, so these may represent whole stands of Colours. No differences or markings can be seen.

So for all of 1642, we have the following:



1643

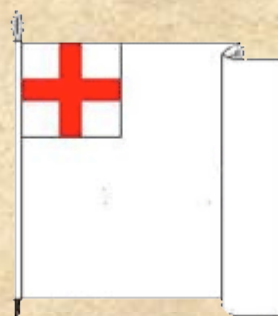
The only Colours from this year again are in the form of captured trophies. Four orange colours, differentiated by white stars and one major's colour. There is no regimental attribution.



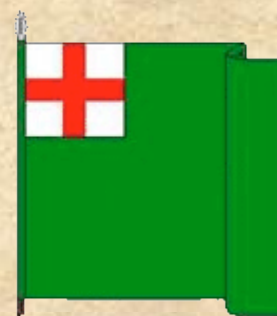
Once again trophies form a major source of information. Following the capitulation of the army at Lostwithiel three Colours are noted by Symonds.



Aldrich



Unknown

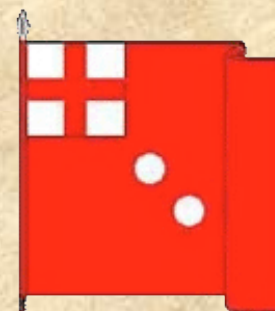


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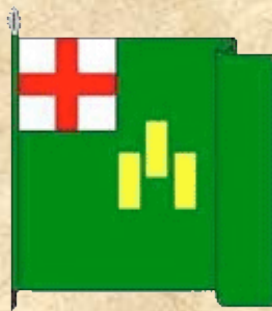
After Lostwithiel the army was completely refitted including Colours and we have the following patterns noted:



Unknown



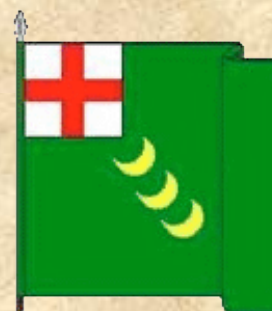
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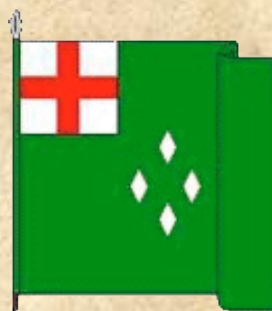
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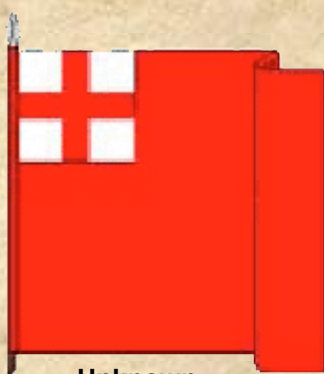
Aldrich

Of these it is know that Aldrich took his colours with him into the New Model in 1645. It is possible that other Colonels did the same.

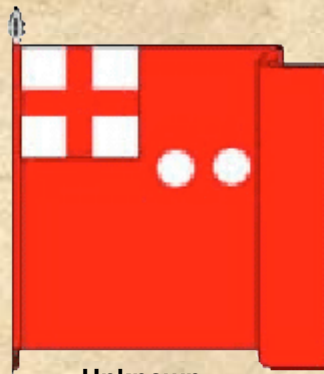
THE OXFORD FOOT - 1642~1645

1642

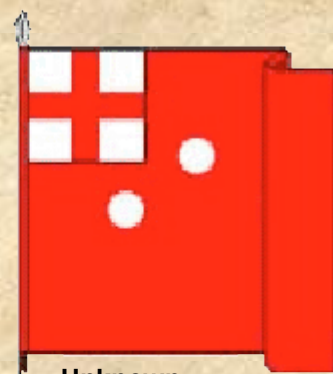
We have a number of unattributable colours and references to colours borne by regiments in the Edgehill campaign. The Kings Life Guard are noted as having red colours but with no further description. These may have been of the unusual design noted for the 1645, or may have simply have been of a 'standard' type. Other references are made to 'green regiments, and we do have a record of some captured colours, again unattributed, so for all of 1642, we have the following:



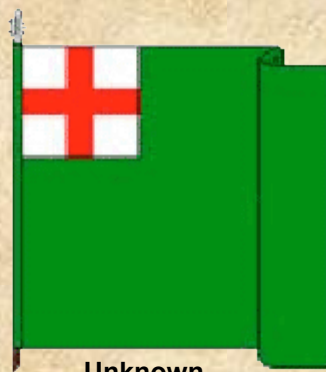
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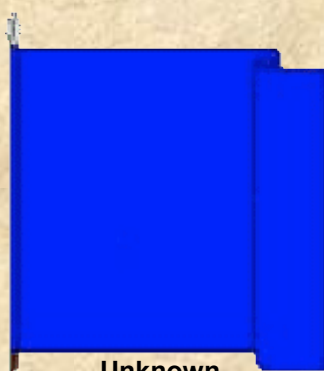
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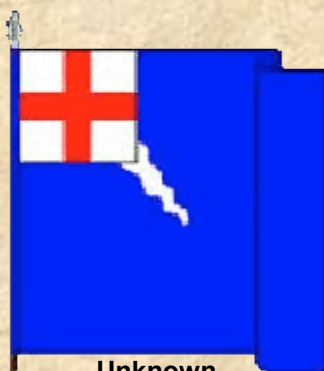
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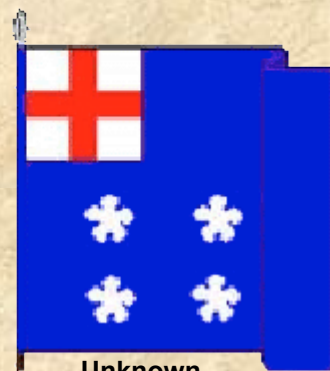
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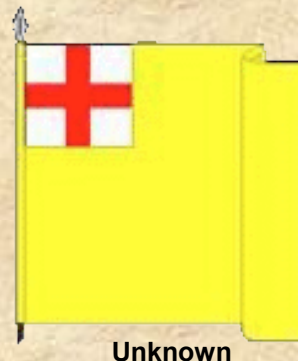
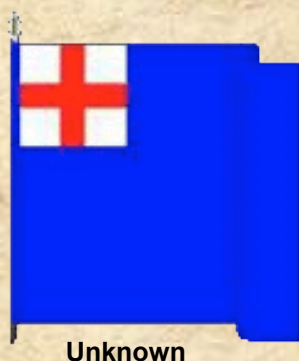
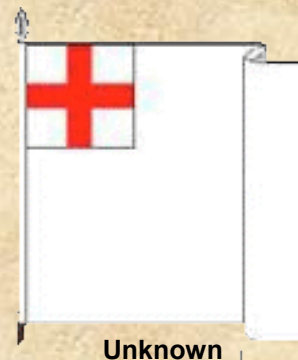
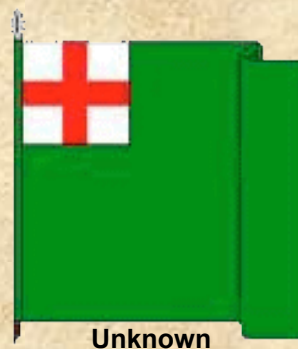
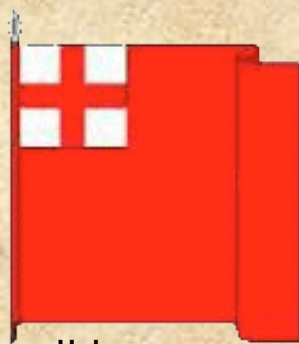


Unknown



Unknown

We have little information for this year, other than references to 'red', 'green', 'yellow', etc. regiments or colours. The following are all specifically mentioned but with no details other than the field colour. The only exception to this could be that of the black Colour which, in an ambiguous reference, can be traced to Sir Thomas Blackwell's regiment. Members of the present day re-enactment regiment choose to interpret this as black coats rather than Colours, but under the pressure of a certain amount of alcohol will usually concede the point that as an Oxford Army regiment they would probably wearing an issue blue or red suit, leaving the way open for the attribution of black Colours for their unit.



Frustrating isn't it? However, we begin to get more concrete evidence in 1644 and 1645.

Prior to the 1644 campaign season, the Oxford Army mustered at Aldbourne Chase in April. Symonds took details of some coat colours and very importantly made sketches of a number of Colours. The details are not always clear, and there are some inconsistencies, but we gain a very good picture of the Colours carried by the Foot. In most cases I have chose to illustrate only one example when many more from the stand are known. A full set of illustrations can be found in Peachey and Prince.



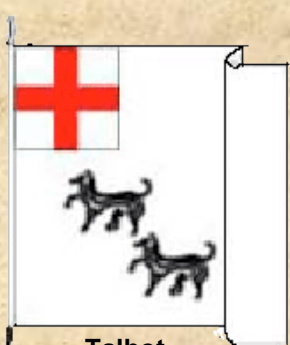
King's Lifeguard



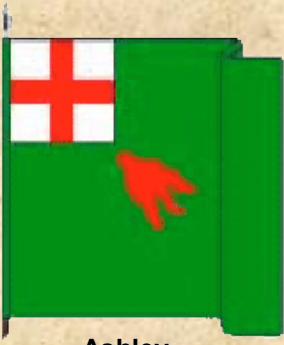
Apsley



Apsley



Talbot



Ashley



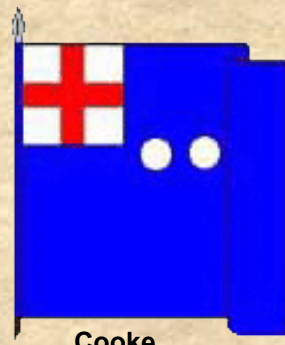
Hopton



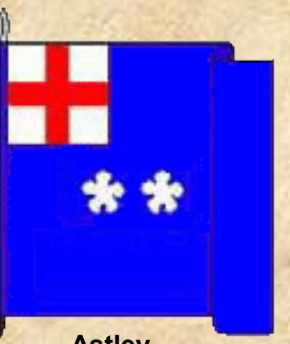
Lisle



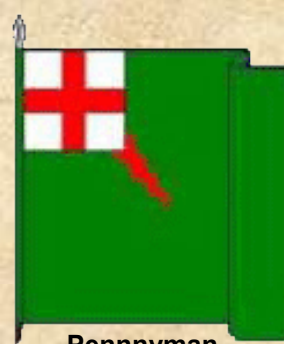
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Cooke



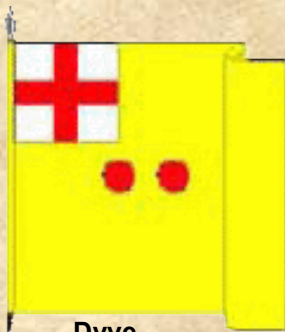
Astley



Pennyman



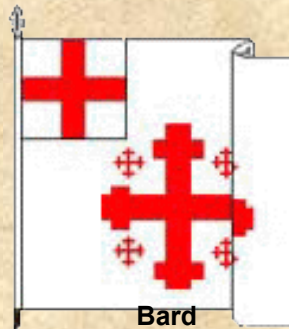
Pennyman



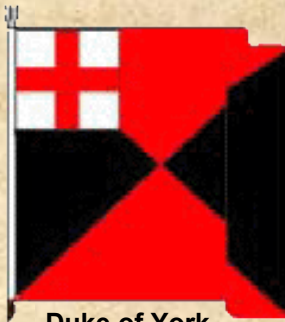
Dyve



Percy



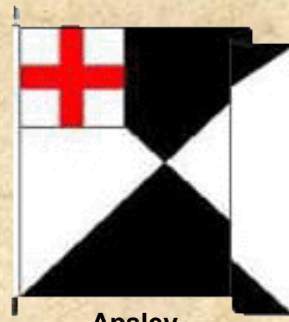
Bard



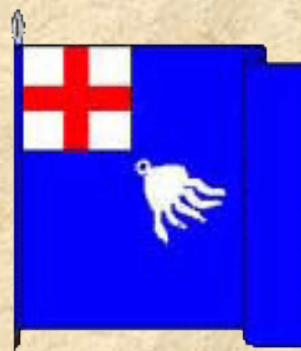
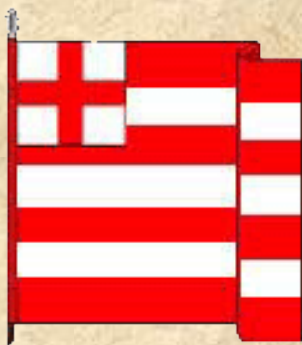
Duke of York



Gerard

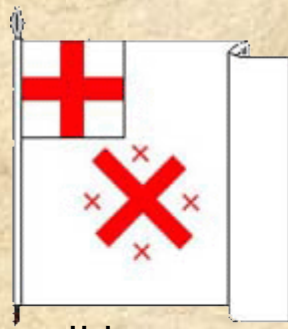


Apsley

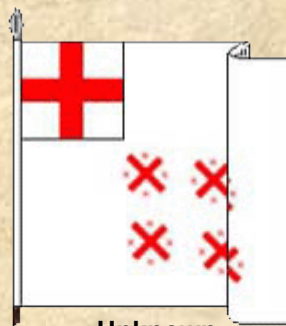


1645

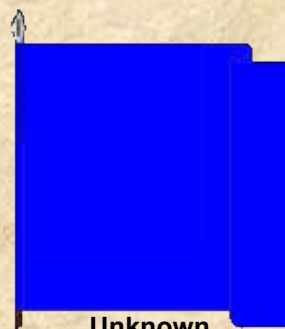
There is nothing like a spanking good victory to give us information about the colours of the defeated army. To the Parliamentarians, Naseby was that spanking good victory, and they proved it by parading the captured colours of the Royalist army. A series of eyewitness accounts and an illustrated manuscript enables us to add some more information about the Colours under which the Oxford army marched.



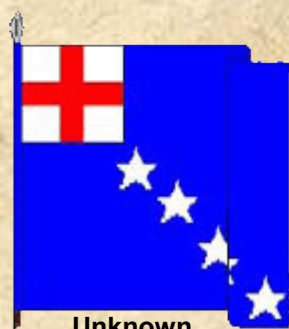
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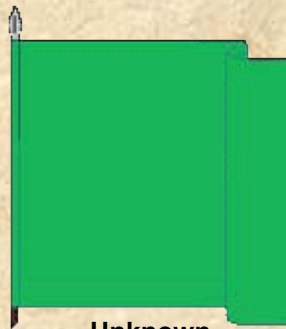
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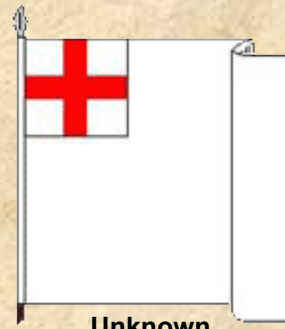
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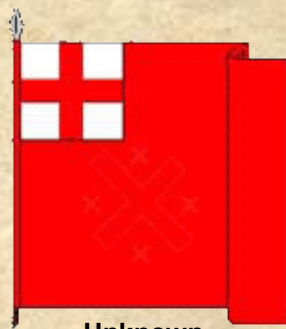


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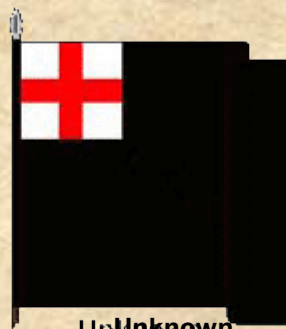


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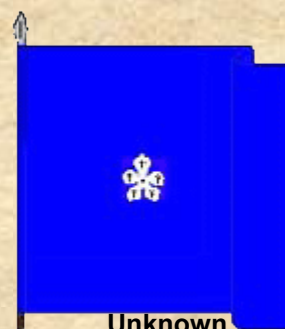
The unknown colours are based upon multiple references to Blue, Green, White, Yellow and Black colours mentioned by observers or illustrated by Turmile.



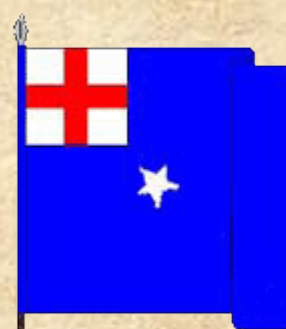
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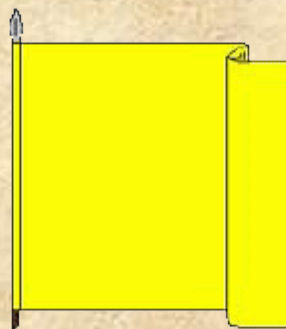
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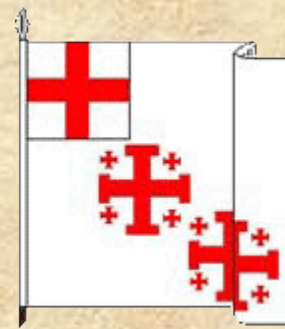
Unknown
Possibly Jacob Astley's



Unknown

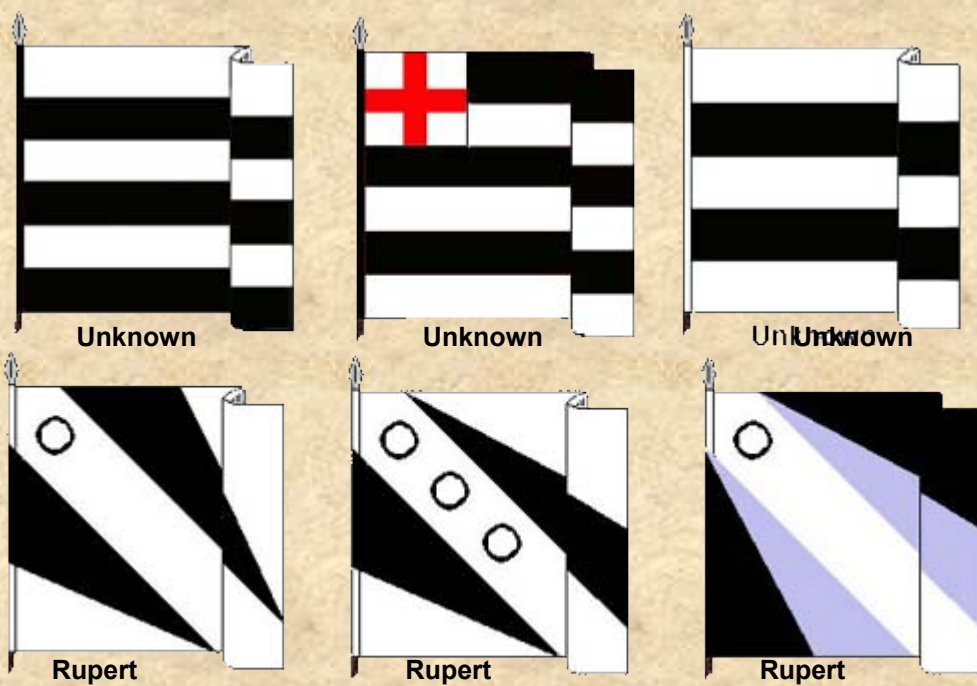


Unknown



Unknown

It is interesting to compare this version (Turmile's) of Bard's colours with those of Symond's, and the un-named regiment in the first plate, based on an eyewitness account.



The Stripy colours have been reconstructed from Turmile's illustrations of what are badly damaged flags. The actual colouring of the dark stripes is unclear, and has been presented here as black, although this is not certain.

Rupert's Colours continue to befuddle historians, wargamers and reenactors. There are two known sets of illustrations; Symond's (the first two), and four fragmentary drawings in Turmile (the third). Both versions have similarities, namely the black and white piles and the black annulets. Turmile's pictures of very badly damaged originals seem to show a more complicated patters and add a set of grey blue piles to the equation. There have been many valiant attempts to impose an order and a system on this information, alas none of it really satisfactory. The Turmile illustrations are so fragmentary that any reconstruction based on them, including the one illustrated can only be highly speculative.