

The newsletter of the King's Lynn Under Siege English Civil War Archaeological Project

June 2018
Issue 2

Welcome to the second issue of *Siegeworks*, the newsletter of KLUS – the King's Lynn Under Siege English Civil War Archaeological Project.

Since last time we have been busy mapping the southern fortifications: those running westwards from the South Gate to the River Ouse, then northwards to the point where the River Nar joins the Ouse.

Until the 1640s, the town relied on the River Nar as the principle defence in this area. But as the 1643 siege demonstrated, this was no defence against artillery. So as part of the post-siege review of the town's fortifications, Richard Clampe designed a new scheme to protect its southern edge. This comprised of a fort in front of the South Gate, and a modern system of multi-layered earth-work fortifications in front of the Nar, running from the South Gate to the Ouse, and then north to the Nar. Clampe's plan for these survives to this day in the town's archives (KL/C 48/16 (originally BC 21)). It is this plan which has been the focus of our investigation to date.

We have overlaid Clampe's plan onto a modern Google Earth image and in doing so have discovered that this produces a slightly different alignment to the generally accepted course which first appeared on Wenceslaus Hollar's plan of c1650 and has been used ever since (it should be noted that it is unlikely that Hollar actually visited King's Lynn in person). This may explain why the 2009 archaeological investigation of Harding's Pits failed to locate any definite traces of the fortifications.

Using this overlay, we subsequently field-walked the course of the defences, and from our findings, have identified the target areas that we wish to investigate further, initially using geophys. technology. The proposed targets will be presented at the end of June.

In the News

KLUS issued its first press release in March and as a consequence got coverage by *Lynn News*, the *Eastern Daily Press*, *Battlefields* (the magazine of the Battlefields Trust), and BBC Radio Norfolk.



*Phillip Skippon Esqr. Major
General of the Army etc.*

Phillip Skippon – West Norfolk's most famous soldier?

Phillip Skippon was born in West Lexham c1600. A professional soldier, he served on the Continent, seeing action at the 1624-5 and 1637 sieges of Breda in Holland.

Returning to England at the outbreak of the Civil Wars, he commanded London's militia (the Trained Bands), and was the hero of the Battle of Turnham Green (1642). He fought at both Battles of Newbury (1643 & 1644) and commanded the Parliamentary infantry at the Battle of Naseby (1645), where he was seriously wounded. Appointed as one of Cromwell's 'Major-Generals' during the 1650s, he was also returned as the MP for King's Lynn in 1654, 1656 and 1658. Skippon died in the summer of 1660.

What's in a name?

The 'English' Civil War

What is popularly called the 'English Civil War' was in fact several conflicts which started in 1639 and ended in 1652. Within this period there were three 'English' Civil Wars (1642-7, 1648-9 and 1649-52). The war engulfed the entire British Isles as England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales each witnessed bitter fighting. In acknowledgement of this, historians often refer to the conflict as the "British Civil Wars" or the "Wars of the three Kingdoms."

True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum

Who we are

True's Yard is a heritage site and Museum which tells the fascinating story of the fisherfolk of Lynn's Old North End. The complex also houses the Pat Midgley Research Centre which provides historical information for historians, students or those just curious about the past. Of particular importance has been the Museum's work with primary schools and offering IT and other facilities to adult learners.

What we've been up to

It's been a busy year for the Museum- we've had our spring series of True's Talks and took part in the Hanse Festival with a living history tour and guided tour of the Fisherfleet. Recently we've been giving out free copies of A History of King's Lynn to all Year 3s in King's Lynn and every primary school library in the Borough is getting 10 free copies of our King's Lynn and the Hanseatic League publication. On the 2nd June we celebrated Local History Day with an Open Day for our Pat Midgley Research Centre.

What's coming up?

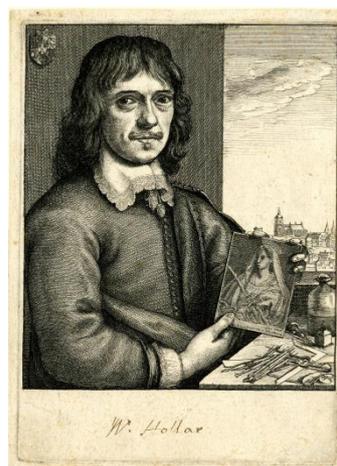
- June-September North End Guided Walks every Wednesday & Saturday
- 21st June Unveiling St Nicholas Chapel Lego Model
- 22nd June: Historic Pubs Walk with Dr Paul Richards
- 28th and 29th July- Auditions for Margery Kempe Play
- 16th September Heritage Open Day
- 22nd September Margery Kempe Play at King's Lynn Minster
- 27th September True's Talks Autumn Series
- 2nd November Exhibition Opening Scars of War
- 12th November WW1 Commemorative Evening at the Town Hall

With thanks to Lindsey Bavin, Museum Manager, True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum, for this article.

For further information visit <https://truesyard.co.uk/>

Siegeworks is produced by KLUS - the King's Lynn Under Siege English Civil War Archaeological Project. To learn more about the project and how to get involved e-mail kingslynnundersiege@outlook.com. Contributions to *Siegeworks* are welcome

Don't forget our website, hosted by *Military History Live*, KLUS's web page is at <https://www.militaryhistorylive.co.uk/mhl-kings-lynn-under-siege.html>



Richard Clampe and Wenceslaus Hollar

are responsible for the two most important maps/plans in our investigations into King's Lynn during the Civil War: Clampe's c1645 plan of the town's southern defences and Hollar's prospect and plan of King's Lynn dating from around 1650 (see

https://hollar.library.utoronto.ca/islandora/object/hollar%3AHollar_k_0961).

Prague-born Hollar (1607-77) is one of the best-known etchers of the 17th century, and is probably most famous for his views of London before and after the Great Fire of London. Richard Clampe (1617-96) was a resident of King's Lynn and during the Civil Wars served with the Parliamentarians as a military engineer, most notably at the third siege of Newark-upon-Trent.

(David Flintham has written biographies of both men: these will be published separately later this year.)

Dates for your diary

- 30 June - KLUS Project Group Meeting. 12:00, True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum, North Street, King's Lynn.
- 16 September - King's Lynn Heritage Open Day (<http://www.kingslynn-civicsociety.co.uk/heritage-open-day.asp>).
- 22 September - Century of the Soldier Conference, Royal Armouries, Leeds (<http://www.helion.co.uk/century-of-the-soldier-conference-2018-saturday-22nd-september-2018.html>)

Once a month through the spring, summer and autumn a group of volunteers meet to help keep the Harding's Pits in good heart for people and wildlife. Contact the organiser at enquiries@hardings-pits.org if you'd like to join any work party.