

In the year of 1642 AD [onset of the civil war] Derbyshire's population was approximately some 60,000, of which a good proportion lived in the now sparsely inhabited peak district.

Generally the towns supported the parliamentary cause and the countryside the king. For example Derby, Wirksworth, plus Chesterfield were staunchly for Cromwell, this in spite a long period of Royalist occupation in the latter.

It is a very blurred picture we have of the Rodes family allegiance, but it could be that it followed what ever side was in the ascendancy.

On the 19th of march 1642, the king arrived in York, where he was immediately presented with a petition from the Nottingham gentry; this prompted Sir Francis Rodes of Barlborough and five other gentlemen from Scarsdale to pen a letter to their fellow gentry in the southern hundreds of the county.

Part of it reads:

*"This day beinge with some of this side of the countrye, entringe into talke upon report that in some neighbouring counties [as HIS MAJESTIE hath come along] he hath been humbly sued and petitioned unto , to return back into the south partes and to vouchsafe his comfortable present to his parliament... we havinge as much reason to take it into consideration as anye other countrye do think it is not amisse to move and desire you the gentry of the other side of this countrye that we may likewise humblye petition his SACRED MAJESTIE for the same favour and happiness [as that would be] if his MAJESTIE would return to his parliament "*

This could be interpreted two ways; one ; that they were concerned for the king's safety. or a polite way of saying "get out of our business and county.

We all know the end result, a three phase civil war that lasted an overall nine years. That in Derbyshire resulted in a few skirmishes but no big battles. Nevertheless it split areas, villages and families. At the end we had a republic for a while!

Overleaf is a picture of Sir Francis Rodes' buff coloured thick leather coat , which gave a degree of protection and was much lighter than armour [it was worn at this time]

Note. Mr. John Battersby lost his left arm in a skirmish on Whitwell-Common during the civil war and his descendant Anne Battersby delivered coal by horse and cart in Barlborough around 1880.



Sir Francis Rodes' Uniform